

Original Article

Accepted: 1 June 2026

<https://doi.org/10.20901/pm.63.2.04>

---

## Constructing the Spectacle: Clickbait Strategies in the Media Coverage of Thompson's Concert in Zagreb\*

---

SILVIJA VUKOVIĆ, SUNČICA ŠOLJAN

University of Zagreb, Faculty of Political Science

### *Summary*

Drawing on Kellner's conceptualization of spectacle, this study situates the construction of spectacle within the contemporary digital media environment, emphasizing the role of platform logics and algorithmic visibility. It argues that clickbait practices coincide with this process, as the "click" has become the dominant metric of value in the digital information economy, often leading to the circulation of misleading, exaggerated, or incomplete information. This not only erodes journalistic standards but also facilitates the spread of misinformation and amplifies controversy. The study examines media coverage of Marko Perković Thompson's concert held in Croatia on July 5, 2025, a record-breaking and highly polarizing event that serves as a valuable case for analyzing the media's role in the construction of spectacle. A quantitative content analysis of three Facebook pages of the most-read Croatian news portals reveals high agenda saturation, with 71.43% of all published content on that day focused on Thompson or the concert. This dominance of content related to the event was formatted through clickbait strategies, as 89.6% of headlines contained at least one clickbait variable. The study highlights a circular relationship between news production, algorithmic logic, and the construction of contemporary media spectacles.

*Keywords:* Thompson, Media Spectacle, Clickbait Strategies, Croatian Media

---

\* This research was conducted as part of the Adria Digital Media Observatory (ADMO) project, co-funded by the European Union, Digital Europe Programme. It is also part of the POLIPOP project, funded by the European Union – NextGenerationEU. The views and opinions expressed are solely those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the European Union or the European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the European Commission can be held responsible for them.

## Introduction

“UNPRECEDENTED/VIDEO: This is how the spectacle at the Hipodrom began – half of Zagreb was shaking” (Jutarnji.hr, 2025a).<sup>1</sup> This headline, published on the day of what the Croatian media framed as “the concert of the century” (Večernji.hr, 2025a; 24sata.hr, 2025a), illustrates the intensity and tone of the coverage surrounding the concert of the Croatian most prominent nationalist singer (Rupčić, 2009), Marko Perković Thompson. On the day of the event, Croatia’s most-read online news outlets provided continuous, minute-by-minute updates, saturating the media space with content on ticket sales, security arrangements, logistics, and public reactions (Dnevnik.hr, 2025; Index.hr, 2025a; 2025b; Jutarnji.hr, 2025b; Tportal.hr, 2025a; 2025b; Telegram.hr, 2025; Večernji.hr, 2025b; 24sata.hr, 2025b). This concentrated and quantitatively dominating coverage placed the concert at the top of the agenda, and at the center of public attention, exemplifying what Douglas Kellner (2005, p. 59) identifies as one of the defining features of media spectacle.

Kellner’s concept of media spectacle, developed in his book *Media Spectacle* (2003) and later expanded (2012), builds on Debord’s foundational work (*The Society of the Spectacle*, 1967; 2014) by situating spectacle within modern mass media systems. However, Kellner’s framework primarily reflects a pre-platform, broadcast-oriented media environment and does not fully account for the algorithmic, engagement-driven dynamics of contemporary digital news ecosystems. In today’s platformized media landscape, content visibility is shaped not only by editorial decisions but also by the metrics of attention and algorithmic amplification. This shift increases the need to reconsider how media spectacles are constructed under platform conditions. In this context, this study proposes that the use of clickbait strategies could function as a plausible mediating mechanism of spectacularization.

Clickbait strategies align with the economic and algorithmic logics of digital media, where visibility is driven by clicks and engagement (Lischka and Garz, 2021). While clickbait is not a novel phenomenon (Munger, 2019) and has become a normalized standard in the news headline production, we argue it also needs to be considered when exploring the contemporary construction of spectacle. It is also worth noting that clickbait does not have a single, agreed-upon definition. Bazaco, Redondo and Sánchez-García (2019, p. 97) identify two main ways of understanding the concept: a narrow one, which limits clickbait to the way news headlines are written, and a broader one, which includes any technique used to “attract readers’ attention and increase visits to a webpage”. They also suggest that topics with high public interest and controversy are particularly conducive to such strategies

<sup>1</sup> The headlines and descriptions of Facebook posts from news media presented in this text were translated from Croatian by the authors of the study.

(Bazaco *et al.*, 2019, p. 108). In line with their theorization, the concert of Marko Perković Thompson, given its polarizing nature and longstanding public controversy, provides a suitable case for examining this dynamic.

This study analyzes the use of clickbait in headlines published on the day of the concert by three of Croatia's most-read online news outlets: Index.hr, 24sata.hr, and Dnevnik.hr. Drawing on Bazaco and colleagues' (2019) analytical framework, the study conducts a quantitative content analysis of headlines and descriptions shared via the outlets' Facebook pages, thereby also accounting for the role of platforms in the distribution of news (Cornia *et al.*, 2018). By focusing on peak-day coverage, this article tests the proposition that clickbait is not merely a stylistic feature of digital journalism, but a potential formatting mechanism that could achieve spectacularization within platformized environments.

While the case itself is politically charged, the aim of this study is not to evaluate the event, but to examine how its stylistic choices of media coverage formatting contribute to the production of spectacle.

The article begins with a theoretical exploration of the media construction of spectacles and the specific role of clickbait as a mechanism of the construction of spectacle. It then elaborates on the context and methodology used in the analysis before presenting the findings and the discussion. Finally, the article concludes by considering the broader implications of the study and offering recommendations for future research.

## Media Construction of Spectacles

Almost sixty years ago, Debord (1967; 2014) argued that a spectacle represents the reproduction of the reality of a capitalist society, in which social relations are mediated through images. He argued that the production of commodities becomes separated from lived experience itself (*ibid.*, p. 8), and emphasized that the conditions for the emergence of spectacle arise precisely from this separation, which leads individuals to require mediated representations (circulated through mass media) in order to relate to one another (*ibid.*). Within his framework, spectators are positioned as passive recipients of mediated images. Debord thus depicted a society structured by unilateral communication, in which individuals passively consume representations of social reality (spectacle) rather than directly participating in it.

While unilateral communication is a defining characteristic of traditional mass media, the conditions under which a spectacle is produced and circulated have significantly changed with the advent of digitalization. Describing how a spectacle operates within a transformed media environment, Kellner (2003) extended Debord's conceptual framework. In his analysis of what he terms "media megaspectacles",

Kellner demonstrated the power of media to focus public attention around singular events, such as the O.J. Simpson trial, which “hook[ed] a nation on a single murder trial, despite so many important political and social issues on the agenda” (Kellner, 2003, p. 102). He also observed (*ibid.*, p. 117) that the spectacle simultaneously constructs social reality and actively draws audiences into interaction with it, complicating Debord’s purely passive spectator. This tension becomes especially productive when spectacle is situated within what has since been theorized as the attention economy – an environment in which audience attention constitutes a scarce and valuable resource precisely because of the growing volume of content competing for it (Heitmayer, 2025, p. 25; Nickl *et al.*, 2025).

It is at this intersection, between the logic of spectacle and the economy of attention, that clickbait formatting becomes theoretically significant. In a platformized media environment, where social media platforms distribute news content and drive traffic to external news sites (Cornia *et al.*, 2018, p. 11), visibility is governed by engagement-driven algorithms (Caplan and Boyd, 2018). Media outlets must therefore develop production strategies capable of capturing user attention within this algorithmic infrastructure. Scholars have consistently identified clickbait as one such strategy (Bazaco *et al.*, 2019; Corredoira *et al.*, 2021; Jung *et al.*, 2022; Nickl *et al.*, 2025). What distinguishes clickbait from routine audience acquisition techniques, however, is its specific relationship to spectacle logic: rather than simply attracting attention to any content, clickbait formatting amplifies the affective charge and narrative momentum of events already constituted as spectacular – exploiting the singularity, urgency, and emotional intensity that define a media megaspectacle in order to convert ambient public attention into measurable engagement. In this sense, clickbait does not merely serve audience acquisition in general; it functions as a mechanism of spectacularization, one that sustains and extends the quantitative domination of a singular event across the media space.

Building on this premise, the present article examines clickbait formatting as employed by media outlets during peak-day reporting of an event considered the biggest of its era (Večernji.hr, 2025a; 24sata.hr, 2025a) – consistent with Kellner’s (2005, p. 59) definition of a media megaspectacle – and proposes that such formatting constitutes a structurally specific mechanism through which spectacle is reproduced within the platformized media environment. While acknowledging that audiences are active interpreters of media content (Frew, 2013; Hall, 1980; Wang, 2024), the analysis deliberately focuses on the production side: the stylistic and formatting choices through which outlets seek to capture attention and achieve algorithmic visibility during moments of peak spectacle intensity.

## The Role of Clickbait in Spectacle Construction

As previously noted, attention and engagement are the key drivers of today's media environment (Corredoira *et al.*, 2021; Munger, 2019), as clickable content attracts larger audiences, creating optimal conditions for advertising and enabling media organizations to generate revenue (Fuchs, 2024). The economic aspect of media production is a necessary factor that needs to be considered when talking about clickbait strategies, which this paper sees as a stylistic formatting of modern-day media spectacles, as they have become a regular occurrence in everyday media practices (Evens, 2018). Media organizations use social media to drive traffic by sharing hyperlinks that direct users to their websites, with Facebook remaining a key source of engagement, subscriptions, and on-site traffic (Cornia *et al.*, 2018), despite ongoing algorithmic changes (Caplan and Boyd, 2018). In this context, Vejby and Wittkower (2010, p. 108) argue that platforms such as Facebook function as "technological expansion of the spectacle by the way it co-opts our agency by involving us in the performance of the spectacle itself," a view that aligns with Kellner's (2012, p. 10) claim that the Internet enables individuals to become part of the spectacle. This highlights the role of user agency as attention allocation, where clicks not only direct traffic within platform infrastructures but also contribute to the production and circulation of the spectacle, positioning attention as a form of currency (Wojtowicz *et al.*, 2025).

Other than the economic motivations underlying clickbait strategies, it is also crucial to consider the influence of algorithmic mechanisms on their formation. Algorithms and clickbait mutually reinforce one another, generating a circular dynamic that shapes the contemporary media spectacle and significantly structures today's media landscape. Lischka and Garz (2021, p. 2074) analyze "the relationship between journalism, users, and platforms", showing that clickbait production involves multiple actors. They argue that interaction-rewarding algorithmic curation encourages users to engage in attention-grabbing content production and consumption (Caplan and Boyd, 2018, in Lischka and Garz, 2021, p. 2076). Lischka and Garz (2021, p. 2076) describe this as a condition of *stigmergy* – a circular dynamic in which actors continuously shape one another's behavior, causing successful content strategies to be rapidly replicated across outlets competing for algorithmic visibility. Within this logic, clickbait is not an aberration but a rational adaptation to the conditions under which media visibility is structurally achieved.

These perspectives suggest that the construction of a contemporary digital media spectacle relies on distributing mediated images through algorithmically governed platforms. Following Debord (1967; 2014), we argue that the usage of clickbait strategies takes on a specific character during a media megaspectacle, where the singular intensity of an event creates unusually high public attention, and there-

fore unusually high stakes for visibility. Bazaco and colleagues (2019) identify several clickbait variables that outlets utilize to stimulate user interaction: the use of incomplete information, striking audiovisual content, and appeals expressions. As engagement increases, content is more likely to be amplified within platform feeds, particularly on Facebook. In this way, clickbait strategies support the circulation and prominence of mediated images of the spectacle. To achieve quantitative dominance in the media sphere, media outlets use another clickbait variable recognized by Bazaco and colleagues (2019) – serialization. This strategy enables a single event to be divided into multiple news stories. Serialization is facilitated by soft news framing (another clickbait variable according to Bazaco *et al.*, 2019), which allows for repeated coverage of the same topic without the introduction of substantively new information relevant for the public good.

The construction of media spectacle in the digital environment can therefore be understood as a mutually reinforcing process in which two logics operate in tandem. The logic of the spectacle, as theorized by Debord (1967; 2014) and extended by Kellner (2003; 2005), drives the concentration of collective attention around singular events of exceptional intensity. The logic of algorithmic visibility then structures the conditions under which that attention is captured, sustained, and converted into measurable engagement. Clickbait formatting sits precisely at the intersection of these two logics: it exploits the affective and narrative charge of a spectacular event in order to achieve the quantitative dominance of its mediated images across the platform-based media space. It is on this basis that the present study examines clickbait as a mechanism of spectacularization.

### Context – Marko Perković Thompson

Marko Perković Thompson, referred to as one of the most prominent and controversial nationalist singers in Croatia (Rupčić, 2009; Vugdelija, 2023), presented himself to the public in 1991, with his first song *Bojna Čavoglave*, marking the direction of his musical career during the Homeland War (Baker, 2010). He quickly became one of the most popular (nationalist) Croatian performers (Pletenac, 2016), while staying closely tied to the issues of politics in the public sphere (Baker, 2010).

It is important to highlight the social context and the collective emotional climate in which Thompson became what journalist Boris Dežulović calls a “Croatian knight” (Dežulović, 2017). The circumstances in which his songs were created (and consumed), combined with the strong currents of patriotic feeling and national identity, played a crucial role in shaping how the public experienced his music and formed emotional connections to it during the Homeland War (Škojo and Drenjačević, 2023). While patriotism and national pride may be expressed dif-

ferently, the status that Thompson holds within a particular, right-leaning strand of these kinds of expressions is difficult to overlook (Poljak, 2016).

Still, such a favorable view of Thompson's life work is not shared by everyone. Very often, his lyrics are the target of criticism, not only from Serbian or Bosnian-Herzegovinian perspectives but also from Croatian ones. In the words of music critic Bojan Muščeta, Thompson is "the most controversial musician in Croatia" (Muščeta, 2024). Disagreements over Thompson's "politics" extend beyond the borders of Croatia. His concerts have so far been cancelled in Austria, Slovenia, Switzerland and several other countries (Index.hr, 2018). Despite all the controversy surrounding Thompson's reputation, he seems to survive in such currents. The title of an Index.hr article perhaps describes the contradiction between different perceptions of his work best: "Thompson is banned in half of Europe. In Croatia, he gets a seat on the bus with the national team" (*ibid.*).

His concert at the Hipodrom was the subject of discussion in the public sphere since the day it was announced – dividing the society into those who see his concert as the patriotic event of the decade (Index.hr, 2025c; Radio.105.hr, 2025), and those who believe that he is propagating nationalist and/or fascist ideas (BBC.com, 2025). Allegations of fascism are often associated with Thompson's song *Bojna Čavoglave*, which opens with the Ustasha regime salute "Za dom spremni". This call and response chant initiated by Thompson with "Za dom" and answered by the audience with "Spremni" has become a recurring feature of his concerts and has frequently led to their cancellation (Baker, 2010). Even in instances where Thompson himself does not actively initiate such practices, audience members often display symbols associated with the Ustasha movement, contributing to the overall atmosphere of the concert and reinforcing these associations, which are subsequently amplified through Croatian media reporting (*ibid.*; Brentin, 2016).

The Hipodrom concert event had several characteristics that showed its potential to become a true media spectacle. Firstly, this concert broke the world record for the highest number of paid tickets sold with over 480 thousand tickets sold (24sata.hr, 2025c), which positions it as one of the largest (live) events of its era – an occurrence that Kellner (2003, p. 117) sees as one of the most crucial aspects of a media megaspectacle. Secondly, the media coverage of Thompson's personal life and music career have been continuously sensationalized in the Croatian media. While examining ethnocentrism, xenophobia and chauvinism within the younger Croatian generations, Perasović (2008, p. 100) referred to Thompson's presence in the media arguing that "[Croatian media] are best understood as operating within the classic capitalist paradigm of 'spectacle' in which even stories and images related to national identification take on a Hollywood hue". Following that idea, Perasović (*ibid.*, p. 101) emphasizes that the characteristics of reporting on Thompson-related subjects are "superficial, campaign-like and sensationalist coverage".



Such characteristics were also visible in the Croatian media this time around when reporting on the Hipodrom concert. The biggest online media outlets had minute by minute updates on information regarding the concert, television broadcasters were live streaming the event with continuous updates and the Croatian public broadcasting service decided that three of their radio programs “will provide uninterrupted live coverage of the circumstances surrounding Marko Perković Thompson’s concert (...) from Friday, July 4th, to Sunday, July 6th” (HRT.hr, 2025). This development aligns with Kellner’s understanding of a media spectacle as an event that “disrupt[s] ordinary and habitual flows of information” (2012, p. 7). Following the *breaking news* spectacle logic (*ibid.*, p. 209) information about the concert was unavoidable across all the media outlets, in the days preceding it, during the event itself, and afterward.

Furthermore, as Kellner (*ibid.*, p. 13) argues, every spectacle generates consequences, producing an aftermath of subsequent developments. In the case of this highly politicized event, the aftermath included occurrences that may have been directly or indirectly connected to the public discourse surrounding the concert. Following the concert, the issue of fascism became increasingly visible in the Croatian public sphere. Several incidents were reported, including an attempted attack on a Serbian cultural association in Split, Croatia’s second-largest city (Index.hr, 2025d), and an attempted attack on an exhibition marking the Days of Serbian Culture in Zagreb (Jutarnji.hr, 2025c). These developments culminated in large anti-fascist protests held in several cities across Croatia (Jutarnji.hr, 2025d). As previously noted, the concert cannot be identified as the sole cause of these developments; however, these events can be understood as an extension of the spectacle’s thematic presence in the public sphere.

## Methodology

We base our study on the social constructionism paradigm, which among different actors that co-construct realities, sees the media as one of the crucial actors of reality construction (Couldry and Hepp, 2017, p. 243). Building on this premise, this study conceptualizes clickbait strategies as a form of stylistic formatting used by media outlets to operate within an algorithmic environment. Specifically, attention-maximizing headline techniques are treated as a key mechanism through which event coverage contributes to the construction of contemporary media spectacles.

The main goal of this research is to look at this contemporary connection between media construction of spectacle and clickbait strategies, in the case of Thompson’s concert in Croatia. Therefore, the research question leading the study was: To what extent were clickbait strategies used in the construction of the media



megaspectacle surrounding Marko Perković Thompson's concert at the Hipodrom, and which specific strategies were most prominently employed?

Quantitative content analysis was conducted to indicate the presence of clickbait variables used by news media when formatting content regarding the spectacle around the concert at the Hipodrom. More precisely, the quantitative analysis enabled us to assess the degree to which the overall news output on the day of the concert was saturated with content related to the event, as well as to determine the extent to which media outlets employed clickbait strategies in the construction of that content. We analyzed posts from official Facebook profiles of Croatia's three most read (Newman *et al.*, 2025) news outlets according to the official Reuters' Digital News Report for the year 2025: Index.hr, 24sata.hr, Dnevnik.hr. Facebook was intentionally selected, given it is the social network most frequently used by news outlets to generate on-site traffic (Cornia *et al.*, 2018, p. 11) as well as to distribute hyperlinks to the articles which in turn results in higher engagement and visibility (Opgenhaffen, 2021, p. 130). Moreover, it is the most used social media platform in Croatia with 48% of people using it to access news (Newman *et al.*, 2025).

The selected unit of analysis for this study was a Facebook post published on the official profile of one of the selected news outlets on the day of the concert (July 5, 2025). Although the analysis was limited to a single day, this date was chosen because it was expected to exhibit the highest intensity of spectacle construction in the media, thereby providing the most comprehensive dataset. More precisely, two components of each post were analyzed: 1) the description of the Facebook post itself; and 2) the headline of the article linked within the post. While headlines are an essential element when examining clickbait strategies, post descriptions were also included because they are often referred to as "an additional headline" that "acts to attract the attention of the audience and make them engage with the post and uses rhetorical tricks that are not seen in more conventional headlines" (Welbers and Opgenhaffen, 2019, in Lamot *et al.*, 2022, p. 4). As Opgenhaffen (2021, p. 130) notes, editors frequently include hyperlinks to Facebook post descriptions, encouraging users to click on news articles, thereby increasing the site traffic and stimulating interaction. For this reason, only posts containing a hyperlink to an article were included, since the primary aim of the study was to identify clickbait strategies used to attract users.

We used the analytical framework conceptualized by Bazaco, Redondo, and Sánchez-García (2019) in which they defined six clickbait variables. Their detailed conceptualization of clickbait variables allowed us to sufficiently implement them in our research. Bazaco *et al.* (2019, pp. 98; 99) include two categories for variables of clickbait which they refer to as "presentation variables" (incomplete information, appeals expressions, repetition, serialization and exaggeration) and "content vari-

ables” (soft news and striking audiovisual elements). Table 1 presents the conceptualization of each clickbait variable along with the characteristics that define their manifestations, as developed by Bazaco and colleagues (2019).

**Table 1.** Clickbait Variables

|                                 |                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A.<br>PRESENTATION<br>VARIABLES | 1.<br>Incomplete<br>information        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence of the most relevant data</li> <li>• Unanswered questions</li> <li>• Use of enumeration and lists</li> <li>• Deliberate ambiguity</li> </ul>                |
|                                 | 2.<br>Appeals<br>expressions           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocative</li> <li>• Imperative</li> <li>• Singularisation of reader</li> </ul>                                                                                      |
|                                 | 3.<br>Repetition<br>and serialisation  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thematic reiteration</li> <li>• Reiteration of frames</li> <li>• Dosage of data in successive deliveries</li> </ul>                                                 |
|                                 | 4.<br>Exaggeration                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hyperboles</li> <li>• Comparison of superiority and superlatives</li> <li>• Neologism formed with prefix “super”</li> <li>• Intensifying adjectivisation</li> </ul> |
| B.<br>CONTENT<br>VARIABLES      | 5.<br>Soft news                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soft or sensational content</li> <li>• Personal, emotional, episodic or anecdotal representation frames</li> </ul>                                                  |
|                                 | 6.<br>Striking audiovisual<br>elements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shocking and/or odd photos and videos</li> <li>• Use of funny memes</li> <li>• Image manipulation</li> </ul>                                                        |

Source: Bazaco *et al.* (2019, pp. 98–99).

As Bazaco and colleagues (*ibid.*, p. 99) note, the variables “are interrelated without being exclusive”. Serialization is often driven by soft news or the use of striking audiovisual content, such as photo galleries or video updates (often “minute by minute”), which fragment every possible update that a news outlet can use to generate additional content. For this reason, this study also examined the presence of multiple clickbait variables within a single headline.

The data was collected by accessing the official Facebook profiles of each news outlet and filtering the content to show only the day of the concert (July 5, 2025) using Facebook’s built-in content filtering option. On the day of the concert, 406 Facebook posts containing hyperlinks were published on the official pages of

the selected news outlets (Index.hr: 153 posts; 24sata.hr: 124 posts; Dnevnik.hr: 129 posts). The posts were retrieved by taking screenshots and collecting them together with the corresponding article hyperlinks. Screenshotting was selected as the method of data preservation in order to ensure the stability of the material, given that news outlets frequently delete or modify their content.

A coding sheet was created to code the previously defined clickbait variables in a systematic way. The coding sheet included eleven questions. The first question identified the news outlet that published the post, the second one whether the post was regarding Thompson or his concert. Posts were coded as Thompson-related if they mentioned Thompson or referred to his personal life, music career, or associates. Posts were also included if they contained information about the concert, such as event preparations, the city's readiness for attendees, fan activity on the day of the concert, traffic updates, comments from public or political figures, or ticket sales. Both coders showed 100% agreement, consistently identifying the content as related to Thompson based on the inclusion criteria. The remaining nine questions focused on specific clickbait features. Three of these questions addressed descriptive clickbait, while the remaining six examined headline clickbait. For these six variables concerning headlines, the inclusion criteria followed the framework outlined by Bazaco *et al.* (2019, pp. 98; 99), as summarized in Table 1 and described in greater detail in their paper. As for the three variables concerning description clickbait, since descriptions are theorized as additional headlines that either add informational value to the headline or invite readers to click on the link, we divided the theorized functions of descriptions into three variables: whether the description adds additional value to the headline by expressing information not mentioned in the headline but concerning its subject, and two additional variables following Bazaco and colleagues (2019), namely, incomplete information and appeal expressions, as they align with the theorized role of description functions. Each variable was coded using binary values (0 or 1), indicating the absence or presence of a given clickbait feature.

The data was coded manually by two coders using Jamovi software. Jamovi was also used to generate descriptive statistics, examine the co-occurrence of multiple clickbait variables within headlines, as well as to test the differences between media outlets. Intercoder reliability was assessed using Cohen's kappa on a sample of 140 posts. The average reliability across variables was 0.86, with values ranging from 0.84 to 1.00, indicating high agreement.

## Findings

Thompson's concert was the most prominent news topic of the day and dominated the news agenda across all three Facebook pages of the media outlets. Out of the 406 Facebook posts containing hyperlinks published on the day of the concert, 71.43%

were specifically related to Thompson or the event. Differences between the outlets were evident. Index.hr had the highest proportion of Thompson-related posts, with 83.66% of its posts focusing on the concert. This was followed by Dnevnik.hr, where 67.44% of the posts addressed the topic, while 24sata.hr showed the lowest level of agenda saturation, with 60.48% of its posts related to Thompson or the concert. Chi-square test shows that this difference is statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ). Despite these differences, coverage of the concert constituted more than half of each outlet's daily content output, indicating a high degree of agenda saturation. This saturation was supported by the use of clickbait strategies, as 89.6% of the articles contained at least one clickbait variable. For comparison, we coded and analyzed all other headlines from the same day (116 headlines) and found that at least one clickbait strategy was present in 80.17% of them, which shows, as we theorize, that clickbait is a common strategy in journalism. Still, the differences between variables point to how clickbait is used within spectacle construction in this case study.

### *Soft News*

The most prominent clickbait feature in headline formation for the coverage of Thompson's concert on the day of the event was the use of soft news. Across all three analyzed news outlets, 71.1% of headlines contained at least one soft news element. At the outlet level, soft news appeared in 73.6% of headlines shared on Facebook by Dnevnik.hr, 71.1% of headlines from Index.hr, and 70.7% of headlines shared by 24sata.hr, without a statistically significant difference ( $p = .900$ ). In the group with non-Thompson-related headlines, 44% of all headlines contained the soft news clickbait variable, with a statistically significant difference between portals ( $p = 0.024$ ): Index.hr 20%, 24sata.hr 51%, Dnevnik.hr 50%.

As previously defined, this variable manifests through anecdotal, personal, or emotional framing, as well as soft or sensational coverage. This is illustrated in the following examples. Articles with personal framing were most often those regarding information about Thompson's wife and family members, or his personal life and career, with headlines such as: "Who is Marko Perković Thompson's wife?" (24sata.hr); "Danijela and Thompson's marriage veiled in secrecy, ends in divorce by the Pope" (24sata.hr); "Thompson's niece reveals who she's spending time with before the Hipodrom concert" (Dnevnik.hr); "Do you remember what Thompson looked like in his youth? Here's how he changed over the years" (Dnevnik.hr); "Who is Marko Perković Thompson's wife? One song he dedicated only to her!" (Index.hr); "Thompson in 1997 on how he got his nickname: 'It's a weak gun'" (Index.hr).

The anecdotal and sensational coverage was visible in the headlines regarding the attendees of the concert as seen in the following headlines: "Unprecedented

revenge: he cheated on her, and she gave his Thompson ticket to someone else...” (24sata.hr); “Thompson’s fans in flags and berets, but some wore high heels: Check out the outfits!” (24sata.hr); “Is this possible? Man in black stole the spotlight at the Hipodrom” (Dnevnik.hr); “Croatian man asked people to give away tickets for Thompson for free, the post went viral” (Index.hr); “Photo: Thompson fan relaxing at Bundek before the concert” (Index.hr).

### *Incomplete Information*

Clickbait strategies involving incomplete information in headlines were identified in 53.4% of all headlines across the Facebook posts of the three news outlets. At the outlet level, this strategy was most prominent in Dnevnik.hr, appearing in 79.3% of headlines, followed by 24sata.hr with 48%, and was least used by Index.hr, with 39.1% of headlines employing this strategy. This difference was statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ). When it comes to non-Thompson-related headlines, incomplete information was present in 62.1% of headlines, with statistically significant differences ( $p = 0.022$ ). 24sata.hr had 73.8% of non-Thompson-related headlines with incomplete information, Dnevnik.hr 63.3% and Index.hr 40%. Characteristics of the incomplete information variable varied from absence of the most relevant data, unanswered questions to deliberate ambiguity and the usage of lists. Examples missing the most relevant data were visible in headlines such as: “When it gets tough...” (Index.hr); “The post made those who aren’t interested in Thompson laugh – check how they feel” (Dnevnik.hr); “Don’t look to the left at the path crossing: what do you think, did he look?” (24sata.hr).

The use of unanswered questions was evident in headlines such as: “Who are the four sisters performing with Thompson on stage? They grew up in the church.” (Index.hr); “Which song will Thompson open the concert with at the Hipodrom?” (Index.hr); “Do you know what ‘Maranatha’ in Thompson’s song means? Here is the meaning of the word” (Dnevnik.hr); “Do you know what Thompson’s famous sword, which he stabs on stage, symbolizes?” (Dnevnik.hr); “175 Red Cross members also arrived at the Hipodrom. Here’s what they told the visitors” (Dnevnik.hr). These headlines used ambiguous wording constructions to make users click the hyperlink to find the answer to an apparent question.

Headlines using enumeration and lists were visible in following examples: “What you can and cannot bring to the concert: Here’s a guide” (Dnevnik.hr); “PHOTO: Water, beer, sandwiches, and ice cream... Here are the food and drink prices in the fan zone at Bundek” (Dnevnik.hr); “Numerous records are being broken: here’s everything that awaits you at the Hipodrom!” (24sata.hr); “The biggest concerts of all time (by ticket sales). They’re not even close to Thompson’s record” (Index.hr). These examples provided just enough information to encourage

the reader to click on the link, since they present incomplete details that require reading the full article to get the complete information.

### *Serialization*

The clickbait strategy of iteration and serialization repeating a single theme or thematic frame that provides enough information for a published article but introduces no novel content was employed in 43.1% of all news articles, without significant difference ( $p = .473$ ). At the outlet level, this strategy appeared in 46.1% of headlines on Index.hr, 43.7% on Dnevnik.hr, and in a smaller proportion on 24sata.hr where 37.3% of articles utilized serialization. The intensity of this strategy varied, ranging from posting multiple articles on the same topic with only minor differences, to gradually dosing information about the same subject across several posts. In non-Thompson-related articles, only 5.2% of headlines used this strategy, with no statistically significant difference between outlets ( $p = 0.442$ ): 24sata.hr had 8.2% of serialization and repetition in headlines on non-Thompson-related articles, Index.hr 4%, and Dnevnik.hr 2.4%.

Driven by soft news, each new event can be fragmented into numerous micro-stories, with the dosing of information in each article about the same subject, as illustrated in the following three examples: “Thompson’s concert at the Hipodrom has started” (Index.hr); “Thompson’s concert started with fireworks” (Index.hr); and “In the beginning of Thompson’s concert at the Hipodrom torches were lit” (Index.hr). This occurrence is also evident in headlines posted on Index.hr, which provided continuous updates on fans arriving to the concert throughout the day of the concert, as reflected in the following headlines: “PHOTO: Fully packed buses from Otočac depart for Zagreb”; “PHOTO: Thompson’s fans gather in the center of Zagreb”; “VIDEO: See the situation in Novi Zagreb as fans arrive from all directions”; “VIDEO: See the situation on the Most Slobode as fans arrive at the Hipodrom”; “PHOTO: Buses full of Thompson’s fans arrive from Varaždin at the VIP entrance”.

Similarly, Dnevnik.hr fragmented the coverage of fans arriving to the Hipodrom into multiple micro stories: “VIDEO: Entrance to the Hipodrom opened – see the stampede that happened”; “VIDEO: Massive stream of people moves toward the Hipodrom: ‘The situation is getting worse’”; “Traffic jam at the Hipodrom entrance: ‘We waited three hours to get in. Organization was non-existent.’”

Serialization was also visible in the examples seen in headlines posted on 24sata.hr describing the drone show at the concert such as: “LIVE: Thousands of people sing along with Thompson, while drones in the sky create a spectacle.”; “PHOTO/VIDEO: Spectacle in the sky – drones formed a cross and the Virgin Mary”; “Unofficially, around 450,000 people attended the concert, a spectacle in the sky featuring drones, torches...”.

### *Audiovisual Clickbait*

The audiovisual clickbait variable was identified in 34.8% of headlines published across the Facebook pages of the three news outlets, appearing in headlines that used (and emphasized) the presence of photos or videos in order to entice readers to click on the article hyperlink and access such content. The audiovisual component was not presented as containing newsworthy content, rather as containing a shocking or odd, out-of-the-ordinary picture or video. Often, the emphasis on an article featuring a striking photograph or video is further reinforced by presenting it in capital letters using the labels “FOTO” or “VIDEO”.

At the outlet level, the difference in the use of the audiovisual clickbait feature was marginally significant ( $p = .049$ ). It was the most prominent in the coverage of Index.hr, appearing in 42.2% of analyzed headlines. This was followed by 24sata.hr, where the feature was present in 32% of headlines, while Dnevnik.hr showed the lowest percentage, with 26.4% of analyzed headlines containing this clickbait element. The usage can be illustrated in the following Index.hr headlines: “PHOTO & VIDEO: Thompson’s fans sing beneath the statue of King Tomislav”; “PHOTO: The madness at BundeK continues, fans light torches and sing”; “VIDEO: Thompson’s fans run across the Hipodrom to get better spots”; “PHOTO & VIDEO: The fan zone is ready for Thompson, his songs are echoing”; “VIDEO: Large crowds form around the embankment, fans sing ‘Lijepa li si’”.

Another manifestation of this variable was observed in headlines that invite readers to click on the hyperlink in order to view a photo gallery, a visual representation of an event, or an unusual or intriguing video or photograph, as illustrated in the following headlines: “Which famous Croatians arrived at Thompson’s concert? Take a look at the gallery” (Dnevnik.hr); “A video from the car on the way to Thompson made the entire region laugh: ‘We Balkans are special people’” (Dnevnik.hr); “Exclusive video! Thompson is preparing for the Hippodrome, and his best man Mate Bulić is with him...” (24sata.hr).

In non-Thompson-related articles, 19.8% of headlines used the audiovisual clickbait, without a statistically significant difference between them ( $p = 0.523$ ): Index.hr had 24% articles with this clickbait variable, 24sata.hr 22.4%, and Dnevnik.hr 14.3%.

### *Appeals Expressions*

The clickbait variable with the lowest percentages was the use of appeals expressions, appearing in 15.9% of articles overall. Differences between outlets were statistically insignificant ( $p = .742$ ): Dnevnik.hr had the highest usage at 18.4%, followed by 24sata.hr with 14.7%, and Index.hr with 14.1%. When it comes to non-Thompson-related headlines, the appeals expressions variable was even lower, with



4.3% of all headlines containing this clickbait variable, without a statistically significant difference between the analyzed outlets ( $p = 0.984$ ). Index.hr had 4%, 24sata.hr 4.1%, and Dnevnik.hr 4.8% of headlines with this clickbait variable.

This clickbait strategy was evident in the examples of directly addressing readers through the use of second-person pronouns, employing the “you” form to engage the audience as seen in these headlines: “Video: Watch the jet-ski patrol on the Sava!” (Index.hr); “Are you going to Thompson’s concert? Tell us in the poll!” (Dnevnik.hr); “Do you know what the number on Thompson’s shirt means?” (24sata.hr).

These examples not only demonstrate the use of the appeals expressions variable but also highlight the interrelations between multiple clickbait variables within a single headline, as evidenced by the simultaneous presence of audiovisual clickbait, incomplete information, appeals expressions, and soft news.

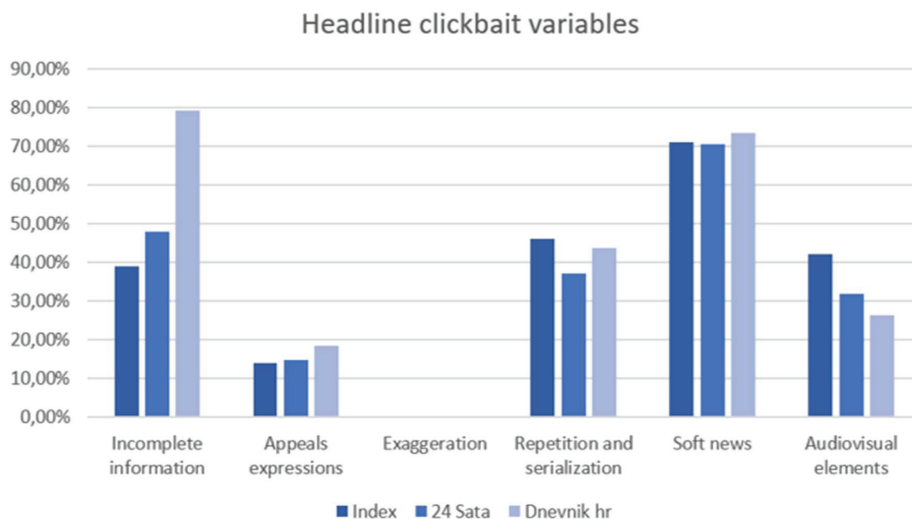
On the day of Thompson’s concert, only 10.3% of the headlines connected to the topic contained no clickbait variables, while 22.4% included a single variable and 67.2% featured between two and five clickbait variables within a single headline. Overall, this means that 89.6% of articles concerning the concert or Thompson incorporated at least one clickbait element in their headlines, indicating a systematic effort to attract audience attention and encourage engagement with the content. For comparison, in non-Thompson-related headlines, the share of headlines containing a single clickbait variable was 32% for Index.hr, 24.5% for 24sata.hr, and 40.48% for Dnevnik.hr. Meanwhile, headlines featuring between two and five clickbait variables accounted for 32% on Index.hr, 57.14% on 24sata.hr, and 47.62% on Dnevnik.hr. Compared to Thompson-related headlines, non-Thompson headlines, especially on Index.hr, show a notably lower use of multiple clickbait elements, while 24sata.hr and Dnevnik.hr still maintain relatively high levels, though generally more varied across outlets.

The exaggeration variable was not observed in the Thompson-related headlines (0 cases), while 5 cases (4.3%) were identified in the non-Thompson headlines. Although a numerical difference is present, the overall number of cases is low and the difference is not statistically significant; therefore, it is not discussed in detail, nor is it presented as a separate subsection within the findings.

Figure 1 visually represents different clickbait variables in Thompson-related headlines present in all three analyzed outlets on the day of Thompson’s concert. It is also evident from this figure that the differences between the analyzed portals are generally minor. The chi-square tests conducted for each variable indicate that the outlets were largely similar in most clickbait characteristics, with the only significant difference observed in the use of incomplete information, where Index.hr showed the highest prevalence. At the same time, Index.hr exhibited a significantly higher saturation of Thompson-related content compared to the other portals.

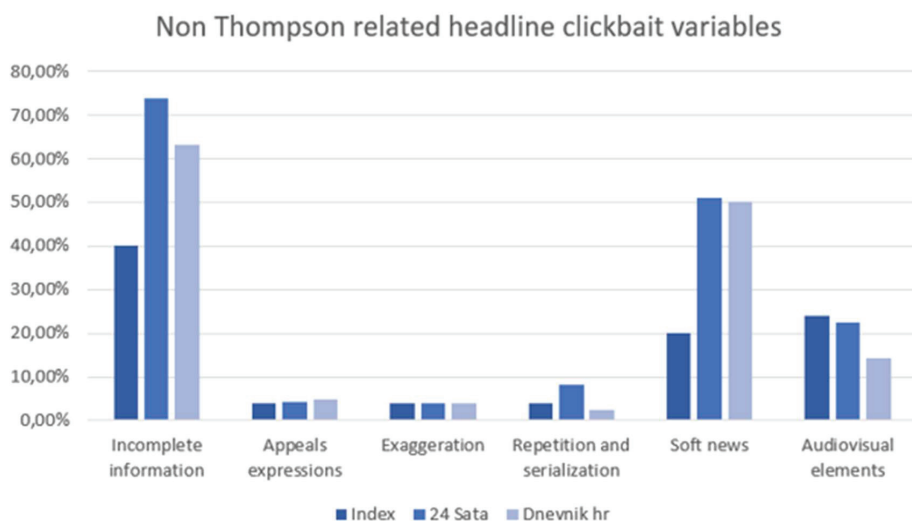
Figure 2 visually represents different clickbait variables for non-Thompson-related headlines, that are interpreted earlier in this section.

**Figure 1.** Clickbait Variables in Thompson-Related Headlines



Source: Authors.

**Figure 2.** Clickbait Variables for non-Thompson-Related Headlines



Source: Authors.

*Description Clickbait*

As previously defined, descriptions of Facebook posts containing a hyperlink are intended to function as secondary headlines, providing additional informational value to the main article headline. In the coverage of Thompson's concert, 66.2% of all post descriptions did not provide additional informational value beyond the headline. This tendency was most pronounced on 24sata.hr, where 73.3% of descriptions added no new information to the headline, followed by Dnevnik.hr with 69%, and Index.hr with 60.2% of descriptions lacking additional informational value. Chi-square test showed no statistically significant differences between media outlets for this variable ( $p = .129$ ). Examples of this variable were visible in descriptions such as: "This is his message" followed by an emoji pointing to the link of the article (Dnevnik.hr) or "He addressed the audience with a powerful message" (24sata.hr). Although some descriptions did provide supplementary information, nearly all were incomplete, with the incomplete information clickbait variable detected in 95.9% of descriptions overall.

The occurrence of incomplete information was without statistical significance between portals ( $p = 0.12$ ), with the highest percentage on Dnevnik.hr (100%), followed by Index.hr (96.1%) and 24sata.hr (90.7%). It was visible in descriptions such as: "Hmmm..." (Dnevnik.hr); "Not everyone is thrilled..." (24sata.hr); "He sent a message!" (Index.hr). Within post descriptions, the use of appeals expressions as a clickbait variable was observed in 12.1% of cases. Among the outlets, there was a statistically significant difference ( $p = 0.030$ ), as 24sata.hr had the highest proportion, with 17.3% of descriptions containing this feature, followed by Index.hr at 14.1%, while Dnevnik.hr showed a substantially lower percentage at 4.6%. The variable was evident in descriptions such as: "Take a look!" (Index.hr); "[Minute by minute] Follow all the concert updates on 24sata!" (24sata.hr); and "Test your knowledge!" (Dnevnik.hr), which directly addressed the reader while encouraging them to click on the article to access the desired information.

Similar patterns were observed in posts unrelated to Thompson. In 69% of cases, descriptions did not provide any additional informational value, with no statistically significant differences between the portals ( $p = 0.067$ ). However, variation is still visible: Index.hr had the highest share of such descriptions (88%), followed by 24sata.hr (63.3%) and Dnevnik.hr (64%).

Moreover, the prevalence of incomplete information in descriptions was notably high, occurring in 83.6% of all cases, with statistically significant differences between portals ( $p = 0.001$ ). Dnevnik.hr showed the highest proportion (97.6%), followed by Index.hr (88%) and 24sata.hr (69.4%).

Finally, appeal expressions appeared in 14.7% of non-Thompson-related posts, again with statistically significant differences ( $p = 0.01$ ). Their use was most fre-

quent on Index.hr (28%), followed by 24sata.hr (18.4%), while Dnevnik.hr used them only marginally (2.4%).

## Discussion

The findings of this study point to a clear empirical pattern: spectacle-like agenda saturation and clickbait-heavy formatting systematically coincided in the coverage of Marko Perković Thompson's concert. The event dominated the news agenda, accounting for over 70% of all published Facebook posts across the three analyzed outlets, confirming a strong degree of agenda concentration, with some differences between outlets as Index.hr showed the highest saturation. At the same time, clickbait strategies were nearly ubiquitous, appearing in 89.6% of Thompson-related headlines.

The comparison with non-Thompson-related headlines from the same day, where the clickbait presence was lower (80.17%) and the co-occurrence of multiple variables considerably less pronounced, further supports the interpretation that the spectacle-like coverage of the concert was formatted using attention-capturing devices beyond the outlets' everyday practice. At the same time, the presence of clickbait in non-Thompson-related content indicates that these strategies are normalized across digital journalism, rather than exclusive to spectacular events. However, the increased density and combination of clickbait variables in the case of the concert suggest that such events act as intensification points, where routine practices are amplified and aligned more closely with the logic of spectacle construction. This is particularly evident through the higher co-occurrence of multiple clickbait variables and the pronounced use of soft news and serialization in spectacle-related coverage.

Among the identified strategies, soft news clickbait emerged as the prevalent strategy transforming the event into a sequence of personalized, emotional, and anecdotal narratives. This was reinforced by serialization which fragmented the concert into numerous micro-events, and by the frequent use of incomplete information which encouraged users to click for additional details. The combination of these strategies, often layered within single headlines, suggests that clickbait was not used sporadically, but rather as a systematic communicative logic. Importantly, similar patterns in post descriptions, particularly the lack of additional informational value and the high prevalence of incomplete information, further indicate that attention-maximization strategies extend beyond headlines to the broader packaging of content on social media.

Soft news appeared in 71.1% of Thompson-related headlines but only 44% of non-Thompson ones – a substantial difference, though not as stark as with serialization. Incomplete information followed a similar pattern, present in 53.4% of Thompson headlines versus 62.1% in non-Thompson ones, though here the direc-

tion reverses slightly, suggesting that incompleteness is a broadly normalized feature of Croatian online news regardless of topic, rather than a strategy amplified specifically by the spectacle. Audiovisual clickbait showed a moderate gap (34.8% versus 19.8%), consistent with the event's inherent visual richness, crowds, drone shows, torches, providing ready material for striking imagery. The appeals expressions variable, meanwhile, remained low in both categories (15.9% versus 4.3%), confirming their status as the least structurally embedded of the six variables. Taken together, this comparative pattern suggests a rough hierarchy: incomplete information functions as a kind of baseline clickbait grammar common to the outlets' general output; soft news and audiovisual elements are amplified by the availability of emotionally and visually compelling event material; but serialization is the variable that most distinctly marks the transition from routine news production to the active, sustained construction of a media megaspectacle. It is the strategy through which an event is not merely covered but manufactured into an ongoing, space-dominating presence in the digital news environment.

These findings have important implications for the theories of media spectacle, particularly in relation to the work of Kellner (2003; 2012). While Kellner conceptualizes spectacle primarily through agenda domination and media amplification, this study suggests that, in a platformized media environment, spectacle is not only about what is covered, but also how it is formatted for algorithmic visibility. Clickbait strategies can thus be understood as micro-level mechanisms through which contemporary media spectacle is formatted. In this sense, the findings support an extension of Kellner's framework: spectacle in contemporary digital media is co-produced through the interaction between journalistic practices and platform logics. The prominence of serialization and continuous updates, for instance, reflects a shift from discrete news events to ongoing, real-time narrative streams, optimized for visibility and engagement. Similarly, the reliance on soft news and emotional framing aligns with the need to capture attention in competitive, high-choice environments. While our study aligns with similar research on Croatian media that shows the prevalence of the trivial (Vuković, 2025), dramatic and emotional (Grbeša *et al.*, 2025), and generally superficial topics (Benković and Balabanić, 2010), we want to emphasize that clickbait should not be seen merely as a degradation of journalistic standards, but as a structural adaptation to platformized distribution systems, which simultaneously enables and shapes the construction of a spectacle.

Taken together, the results demonstrate that, in this case, spectacle-like dominance and clickbait-heavy formatting coincided systematically, supporting the need to further theorize spectacle within platformized media environments.

## Conclusion

This article examined a peak-day case study of spectacularised event coverage, operationalizing spectacle construction through the dominance of a single event within an outlet's posting stream and the use of attention-maximizing headline techniques. The analysis measured the presence and variation of clickbait strategies in news headlines and Facebook post descriptions of the three most-read Croatian online news portals, showing that while clickbait appears across both event-related and non-related content, its use intensifies in the context of media megaspectacle construction. In this particular case, spectacle-like dominance coincided systematically with clickbait-heavy formatting, particularly through the use of soft news and serialization, which fragmented coverage into multiple micro-stories and extended the event's visibility.

These findings matter because they demonstrate how contemporary media spectacle formatting is shaped by platform dynamics, where algorithmic curation and engagement-driven metrics prioritize content that maximizes interaction. Clickbait strategies function as the key mechanisms for capturing attention and amplifying the circulation of mediated images of the spectacle. As a result, news outlets are able to achieve agenda saturation and sustain visibility, suggesting that spectacle construction in platformized environments is increasingly conditioned by the interplay between algorithms and attention-driven content strategies. Building on this premise, this study highlights platform-specific content adaptations as a crucial factor in understanding contemporary media megaspectacles. This supports further theorization of platformized spectacle as an extension of earlier spectacle theory.

However, the findings of this study are exploratory and illustrative rather than generalizable, as they are based on a single peak-day case. Therefore, despite the contributions mentioned, several aspects remain unproven and point to the limitations of the study. Firstly, while the findings demonstrate a strong association between clickbait strategies and spectacle construction, they do not establish causality. It remains unclear whether clickbait directly contributes to the formation of spectacle, or whether it simply co-occurs with high-interest events that would attract attention regardless of presentation style. Secondly, the analysis is limited to content production, without examining audience reception or engagement metrics. As such, the study cannot determine how users actually respond to clickbait or whether these strategies effectively increase visibility and interaction in practice. Thirdly, the focus on a single, peak-day of coverage captures the maximum intensity of spectacle, but does not account for its development over time or its longer-term dynamics. Finally, the study is limited to three Croatian news outlets and one social media platform, which constrains the generalizability of the findings to other media systems or platform environments.

In conclusion, future research should investigate the temporal dynamics of spectacle construction across multiple phases such as the buildup, climax, and the aftermath, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how media spectacles emerge, evolve, and sustain themselves within today's platformized media environment. Such research could illuminate not only the production strategies that shape visibility and attention but also how audiences actively participate in the process, both through their allocation of attention and through user-generated content. By tracking these dynamics over time, scholars can better capture the interplay between algorithmic curation, media formatting, and audience engagement, providing deeper insights into the mechanisms that drive contemporary media megaspectacles.

## REFERENCES

- Baker, C. (2010) 'Popular Music and Political Change in Post-Tuđman Croatia: "It's All the Same, Only He's Not Here"?', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 62(10), pp. 1741–1759.
- Bazaco, A., Redondo, M. and Sánchez-García, P. (2019) 'Clickbait as a strategy of viral journalism: conceptualisation and methods', *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 74, pp. 94–115.
- BBC.com (2025) 'Croatian ultra-nationalist mega-gig exposes divided society', August 18. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cz60nyp3714o> (Accessed: 20 November 2025).
- Benković, V. and Balabanić, I. (2010) 'Analiza sadržaja najposjećenijih hrvatskih internetskih portala', *Medijska istraživanja*, 16(2), pp. 43–57.
- Brentin, D. (2016) 'Ready for the homeland? Ritual, remembrance, and political extremism in Croatian football', *Nationalities Papers*, 44(6), pp. 860–876.
- Caplan, R. and Boyd, D. (2018) 'Isomorphism through algorithms: Institutional dependencies in the case of Facebook', *Big Data & Society*, 5(1). First published online, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053951718757253>.
- Cornia, A., Sehl, A., Levy, D. A. L. and Nielsen, R. K. (2018) *Private sector news, social media distribution, and algorithm change*. Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, pp. 1–32.
- Corredoira, L., Bel Mallen, I. and Cetina Presuel, R. (2021) *The Handbook of Communication Rights, Law, and Ethics*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Couldry, N. and Hepp, A. (2017) *The Mediated Construction of Reality*. Cambridge: Polity Press.



- Debord, G. (2014) *The Society of the Spectacle*, translated by K. Knabb. Bureau of Public Secrets [online].
- Dežulović, B. (2017) 'Marko Knopfler Thompson', N1info.hr, October 10. Available at: <https://n1info.hr/kolumne/boris-dezulovic/a253748-Marko-Knopfler-Thompson/> (Accessed: 20 November 2025).
- Dnevnik.hr (2025) 'Novi detalji plana za Thompsonov koncert: Poseban stožer, helikopter, mobilna bolnica, dodatni timovi...', July 2. Available at: <https://dnevnik.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/ministarstvo-zdravstva-predstavlja-posebne-mjere-za-thompsonov-koncert---922049.html> (Accessed: 20 November 2025).
- Evens, T. (2018) 'Media economics and transformation in a digital Europe' in d'Haenens, L., Sousa, H. and Trappel, J. (eds.) *Comparative Media Policy, Regulation and Governance in Europe: Unpacking the Policy Cycle*. Bristol: Intellect, pp. 41–54.
- Frew, M. (2013) 'Events and Media Spectacle' in Finkel, R., McGillivray, D., McPherson, G. and Robinson, P. (eds.) *Research Themes for Events*. Wallingford: CABI, pp. 101–117.
- Fuchs, C. (2024) *Media, economy and society: A critical introduction*. New York: Routledge.
- Goldhaber, M. (2006) 'The value of openness in an attention economy', *First Monday*, 11(6). Published online, <https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v11i6.1334>.
- Grbeša, M., Vučković, M. and Lechpammer, S. (2025) 'Media, Scandalization, and Mass Hysteria in the Coca-Cola Poisoning Scare in Croatia' in Michael, H. and Haller, A. (eds.) *Scandology 5*, Cham, Switzerland: Springer, pp. 81–99.
- Hall, S. (1980) 'Encoding/decoding' in Hall, S., Hobson, D., Lowe, A. and Willis, P. (eds.) *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972–79*. London: Hutchinson., pp. 128–138.
- Heitmayer, M. (2025) 'The Second Wave of Attention Economics: Attention as a Universal Symbolic Currency on Social Media and beyond', *Interacting with Computers*, 37(1), pp. 18–29.
- HRT.hr (2025) 'Hrvatski radio od petka do nedjelje prati sva zbivanja oko Thompsonovog koncerta', July 1. Available at: <https://magazin.hrt.hr/zabava/hrvatski-radio-na-svojim-ce-kanalima-od-petka-do-nedjelje-pratiti-sva-zbivanja-oko-koncerta-mar-ka-perkovica-thompsona-12227630> (Accessed: 20 November 2025).
- Index.hr (2018) 'Thompson je zabranjen u pola Europe. U Hrvatskoj dobiva mjesto u busu s reprezentativcima', July 17. Available at: [https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/thompson-je-zabranjen-u-pola-europe-u-hrvatskoj-dobiva-mjesto-u-busu-s-reprezentativcima/2011797.aspx#google\\_vignette](https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/thompson-je-zabranjen-u-pola-europe-u-hrvatskoj-dobiva-mjesto-u-busu-s-reprezentativcima/2011797.aspx#google_vignette) (Accessed: 20 November 2025).
- Index.hr (2025a) 'VIDEO I FOTO Zatvorena sva tri mosta i cijela Avenija Dubrovnik. 123 privedenih', July 6. Available at: <https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/video-i->

- foto-zatvorena-sva-tri-mosta-i-cijela-avenija-dubrovnik-123-privedenih/2687033.aspx (Accessed: 20 November 2025).
- Index.hr (2025b) 'Prodane sve karte za Thompsona. Entrio: Bit će preko pola milijuna ljudi na Hipodromu', March 3. Available at: <https://www.index.hr/magazin/clanak/prodane-sve-karte-za-thompsona-entrio-bit-ce-preko-pola-milijuna-ljudi-na-hipodromu/2658186.aspx> (Accessed: 20 November 2025).
- Index.hr (2025c) 'Iz Njemačke na koncert: "Thompson nam znači sve – domoljublje, ljubav, Bog i Hrvati"', July 4. Available at: <https://www.index.hr/magazin/clanak/iz-njemacke-na-koncert-thompson-nam-znaci-sve-domoljublje-ljubav-bog-i-hrvati/2686959.aspx> (Accessed: 20 November 2025).
- Index.hr (2025d) 'Pričali smo s čovjekom koji je sve vidio iz prve ruke: Bilo je 70 maskiranih huligana', November 4. Available at: <https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/razgovarali-smo-s-voditeljem-napadnute-srpske-folklorne-skupine-bili-smo-u-soku/2727313.aspx> (Accessed: 20 November 2025).
- Jung, A.-K., Stieglitz, S., Kissmer, T., Mirbabaie, M. and Kroll, T. (2022) 'Click me...! The influence of clickbait on user engagement in social media and the role of digital nudging', *PLOS ONE*, 17(6), pp. 1–22.
- Jutarnji.hr (2025a) 'VIDEO Ovako je počeo spektakl na Hipodromu, pola Zagreba se zatreslo', July 5. Available at: <https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/video-ovo-je-trenutak-kad-je-poceo-spektakl-na-hipodromu-pola-zagreba-se-zatreslo-15600975> (Accessed: 20 November 2025).
- Jutarnji.hr (2025b) 'Imamo podatke Porezne, evo kakav je jučer bio promet ugostitelja u Zagrebu; Stigla oštra reakcija stranke Možemo!', July 6. Available at: <https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/zagreb/organizatori-na-koncertu-bilo-504-000-ljudi-policija-objavila-broj-privedenih-ukupno-245-medicinskih-intervencija-pogledajte-kako-hipodrom-izgleda-nakon-rekordnog-koncerta-15601029> (Accessed: 20 November 2025).
- Jutarnji.hr (2025c) 'Interventna policija spriječila napad u centru grada! Na Dane srpske kulture stiglo 50-ak maskiranih muškaraca', November 7. Available at: <https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/interventna-policija-sprijecila-napad-u-centru-grada-na-dane-srpske-kulture-stiglo-50-ak-maskiranih-muskaraca-15640661> (Accessed: 20 November 2025).
- Jutarnji.hr (2025d) 'Tisuće ljudi na antifašističkim marševima u Zagrebu i Rijeci: "Kontra mraku, kontra sili!"', Mladići u crnom gađali sudionike u Zadru', November 30. Available at: <https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/zagreb/antifasisticki-mars-zagreb-rijeka-pula-zadar-prosvjed-15647974> (Accessed: 20 November 2025).
- Kellner, D. (2003) *Media Spectacle*. London: Routledge.
- Kellner, D. (2005) 'Media Culture and the Triumph of the Spectacle', *Fast Capitalism*, 1(1), Article 8.

- Kellner, D. (2012) *Media spectacle and insurrection, 2011: From the Arab uprisings to Occupy Everywhere*. London: Continuum/Bloomsbury.
- Lamot, K., Kreutz, T. and Opgenhaffen, M. (2022) ‘“We Rewrote This Title”: How News Headlines Are Remediated on Facebook and How This Affects Engagement’, *Social Media + Society*, 8(3). First published online, <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051221114827>.
- Lischka, J. A. and Garz, M. (2021) ‘Clickbait news and algorithmic curation: A game theory framework of the relation between journalism, users, and platforms’, *New Media & Society*, 25(8), pp. 2073–2094.
- Mast, J. and Temmerman, M. (2021) ‘What’s (The) News? Reassessing “News Values” as a Concept and Methodology in the Digital Age’, *Journalism Studies*, 22(6), pp. 689–701.
- Munger, K. (2019) ‘All the News That’s Fit to Click: The Economics of Clickbait Media’, *Political Communication*, 37(3), pp. 376–397.
- Mušćeta, B. (2024) ‘A u pjesmi Perkovića Marka svaka puška bit će ubojita’, Glazba.hr, August 21. Available at: <https://glazba.hr/citaj/kolumne/tonska-proba-thompson-svaka-puska/> (Accessed: 20 November 2025).
- Newman, N., Ross Arguedas, A., Robertson, C. T., Nielsen, R. K. and Fletcher, R. (2025) *Digital news report 2025*. Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.
- Nickl, P., Moussaïd, M. and Lorenz-Spreen, P. (2025) ‘The evolution of online news headlines’, *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 12, p. 364.
- Opgenhaffen, M. (2021) ‘Facebook status messages as seductive and engaging headlines: Interviews with social media news editors’ in Temmerman, M. and Mast, J. (eds.) *News values from an audience perspective*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer, pp. 121–138.
- Perasović, B. (2008) ‘Youth, Media, and Subculture in Post-Conflict Societies’, *The Anthropology of East Europe Review*, 26(1), pp. 98–113. Available at: <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/aeer/article/view/315> (Accessed: 20 November 2025).
- Pletenac, T. (2016) ‘Accidental celebrity? Constructing fame in post-war Croatia’, *Traditiones*, 45(1), pp. 31–46.
- Poljak, T. T. (2016) ‘The Role of Music in the Formation of Croatian Nation-State: Macro- and Micro-Perspectives’ in Colorado, A., Lloret, M. and Ucelay-Da Cal, E. (eds.) *El pentagrama político: Ensayos sobre música y nacionalismo*. Barcelona: Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF), pp. 136–172.
- Radio.105.hr (2025) ‘Domoljubni spektakl na Hipodromu: Thompsonov koncert obara sve rekorde posjećenosti’, July 5. Available at: <https://radio105.hr/domoljubni-spektakl-na-hipodromu-thompsonov-konzert-obara-sve-rekorde-posjecenosti/> (Accessed: 20 November 2025).

- Rupčić, M. (2009) *Thompson – The Weapon of the Contestation*. Doctoral dissertation. Budapest, Hungary: Central European University.
- Škojo, T. and Drenjačević, Z. (2023) ‘The Role of Popular Songs in Confirming Croatian National Identity’ in Buljubašić, I., Šain, M., Baraban, B. *et al.* (eds.) *European Realities – Power: Conference Proceedings 5th International Scientific Conference*. Osijek: Akademija za umjetnost i kulturu Sveučilišta Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku; Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, Centar za znanstveni rad u Vinkovcima, pp. 325–345.
- Telegram.hr (2025) ‘Povik “Za dom spremni” obilježio Thompsonov koncert na Hipodromu pred oko pola milijuna ljudi’, July 6. Available at: <https://www.telegram.hr/vijesti/foto-prvi-posjetitelji-poceli-ulaziti-na-hipodrom-centar-zagreba-prepun-natpisa-za-dom-spremni/> (Accessed: 20 November 2025).
- TPortal.hr (2025a) ‘Thompsonov koncert na Hipodromu iz minute u minutu’, July 5. Available at: <https://www.tportal.hr/vijesti/clanak/thompsonov-koncert-na-hipodromu-iz-minute-u-minutu-20250705> (Accessed: 20 November 2025).
- TPortal.hr (2025b) ‘Poznati Hrvati reagirali na Thompsonov koncert: “Krasan neki svijet. Kako ono? Domoljubi?”’, July 5. Available at: <https://www.tportal.hr/show-time/clanak/poznati-hrvati-reagirali-na-thompsonov-koncert-krasan-neki-svijet-kako-ono-domoljubi-foto-20250705> (Accessed: 20 November 2025).
- Večernji.hr (2025a) ‘FOTO Političari, sportaši, estradnjaci: Ova poznata lica stigla su na koncert stoljeća’, July 5. Available at: <https://www.vecernji.hr/showbiz/foto-politiciari-sportasi-estradnjaci-ova-poznata-lica-stigla-su-na-koncert-stoljeca-1874589> (Accessed: 20 November 2025).
- Večernji.hr (2025b) ‘IZ MINUTE U MINUTU FOTO/VIDEO Prava ludnica u centru Zagreba, ore se Thompsonovi hitovi’, July 5. Available at: <https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/krecu-blokade-prometa-u-zagrebu-hak-izdao-upozorenja-policija-snimat-cemo-thompsonov-koncert-1874185> (Accessed: 20 November 2025).
- Vejby, R. and Wittkower, D. E. (2010) ‘Spectacle 2.0?’ in Wittkower, D. E. (ed.) *Facebook and Philosophy*. Chicago: Open Court Publishing, pp. 97–108.
- Vugdelija, K. (2023) *Tvorba nacionalnih heroja u suvremenim kulturama sjećanja u Hrvatskoj*. Doctoral dissertation. Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Filozofski fakultet.
- Vuković, S. (2025) ‘Gdje je nestao sadržaj? Trivijalizacija predsjedničke debate u naslovima news portala’, *Communication Management Review*, 10(1), pp. 98–115.
- Wang, Y. (2024) *The spectacle of social media*. Doctoral dissertation. New York: Pratt Institute.
- Wojtowicz, Z., Jain, S. and Vincent, N. (2025) ‘Push and Pull: A Framework for Measuring Attentional Agency on Digital Platforms’ in *Proceedings of the 2025 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FAccT ’25)*. New York, NY: Association for Computing Machinery, pp. 679–689.

- 24sata.hr (2025a) 'DOZNAJEMO DETALJE Već kreće akcija "koncert stoljeća": Stižu dronovi, policija, kao za papu...', March 30. Available at: <https://www.24sata.hr/news/doznajemo-detalle-vec-krece-akcija-koncert-stoljeca-stizu-dronovi-policija-kao-za-papu-1041931> (Accessed: 20 November 2025).
- 24sata.hr (2025b) 'Policija o mjerama sigurnosti za Thompsona: "Najzahtjevniji je ovo javni skup u našoj povijesti"', July 2. Available at: <https://www.24sata.hr/news/uzivo-predstavili-sve-detalle-ovo-su-sigurnosne-zdravstvene-i-prometne-mjere-za-koncert-1060851> (Accessed: 20 November 2025).
- 24sata.hr (2025c) 'Božinović: Nemojmo etiketirati stotine tisuća ljudi zbog zabranjenih obilježja', July 5. Available at: <https://www.24sata.hr/news/bozinovic-nemojmo-etiketirati-stotine-tisuca-ljudi-zbog-zabranjenih-obiljezja-1061507> (Accessed: 20 November 2025).

Silvija Vuković, Sunčica Šoljan

KONSTRUKCIJA SPEKTAKLA: *CLICKBAIT* STRATEGIJE  
U MEDIJSKOM IZVJEŠTAVANJU O THOMPSONOVOM  
KONCERTU U ZAGREBU

*Sažetak*

Polazeći od Kellnerove konceptualizacije spektakla, ovo istraživanje smješta konstrukciju spektakla u suvremeno digitalno medijsko okruženje, s naglaškom na ulogu logike platformi i algoritamske vidljivosti. Rad tvrdi da su *clickbait* prakse povezane s tim procesom, budući da je "klik" postao dominantna mjera vrijednosti u digitalnoj informacijskoj ekonomiji, često dovodeći do širenja obmanjujućih, pretjeranih ili nepotpunih informacija. Time se ne samo narušavaju novinarski standardi već se i olakšava širenje dezinformacija te pojačava kontroverza. Istraživanje analizira medijsko izvještavanje o koncertu Marka Perkovića Thompsona održanom u Hrvatskoj 5. srpnja 2025. Taj izrazito polarizirajući događaj predstavlja dobar primjer za analizu uloge medija u konstrukciji spektakla. Kvantitativna analiza sadržaja triju Facebook stranica najčitanijih hrvatskih informativnih portala pokazuje visoku razinu zasićenja dnevnog reda, pri čemu je 71,43% svih objavljenih sadržaja toga dana bilo posvećeno Thompsonu ili koncertu. Dominacija sadržaja povezanog s događajem formatirana je *clickbait* strategijama, budući da je 89,6% naslova sadržavalo barem jednu *clickbait* varijablu. Rad ukazuje na kružni odnos između proizvodnje vijesti, algoritamskih logika i konstrukcije suvremenog medijskog spektakla.

*Ključne riječi:* Thompson, medijski spektakl, *clickbait* strategije, hrvatski mediji

**Silvija Vuković**, Assistant Professor, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Political Science. *E-mail*: [silvija.vukovic@fpzg.hr](mailto:silvija.vukovic@fpzg.hr)

**Sunčica Šoljan**, Student, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Political Science. *E-mail*: [suncica.soljan@studenti.fpzg.hr](mailto:suncica.soljan@studenti.fpzg.hr)

*Croatian Political Science Review* is an open access journal. All articles are published under the terms of the Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-ND) International License. No fees are charged to authors at any stage of the editorial or publication process, including submission, peer review, and publication.