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## Communication and Cultural Studies

### Critical Analysis of Press Reporting on the March Riots, the Day of the Explosion of Violence, March 17, 2004

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**Abstract:** The March 2004 riots were considered the worst inter-ethnic event in Kosovo, where dozens of citizens lost their lives, and thousands were injured. The media, from various domestic and international reports, were generally criticized for boosting interethnic tensions, but in the scientific and professional sphere, no one made a thorough analysis. In this paper, we will make a critical analysis of the daily press reporting for the March 2004 riots, dated March 17, when the outbreak of violence occurred. Media in democratic societies have an important role, so those during reporting, and especially in such tense and emotional situations, should be cautious in reporting. Through text analysis, it can be concluded that some of the daily newspapers have also expressed emotional status in the way of reporting, through the persons involved in the story. However, in this case, should not be overlooked the international mission of UNMIK, which did not do enough work to keep the public opinion informed about the event and the general tension created in Kosovo.

**Keywords:** Critical analysis; daily newspapers; interethnic relations; March riots; reporting

#### 1. Introduction

The March 2004 events are considered the most violent inter-ethnic events in post-war Kosovo. International organizations, including those of the United Nations (UN), for these riots that took the lives of many citizens and injured hundreds, also accused the media, including the daily press, of encouraging inter-ethnic hatred and pushing to escalate the situation. On the other hand, the media including journalist organizations have denied this, claiming that they have done their professional job. Therefore, the main focus of this research is directly related to the handling of this event, a critical analysis of reporting, also based on the theoretical background. In the daily press, all articles related to the event will be analyzed up to the start of the

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riots, including report analysis in professional terms, title analysis, header analysis, information resource analysis, and photo analysis. In the case of the study, a particular focus will be on analysing the discourse used in that period and reflecting the discourse on the content of the product. Also, part of the case study will be the analysis of March 17, a day which is considered the most violent day in post-1999 Kosovo.

Taking into account the events of March 2004, the escalation of the situation, the lost lives, the terms of professional reporting, accountability and accusations against the media to incite the riots, this paper has two hypothesis.

The main hypothesis of the paper is: Kosovo's Media in Albanian language, during their reporting on March 17, have helped escalate inter-ethnic violence in Kosovo.

Second hypothesis: Reporting of Kosovo's written Media in the Albanian language regarding the events of March 2004 has not been professional and as such can be considered as one of the factors in the tense interethnic relations.

The methodology is based on content analysis which is very important in media studies and according to Bell (2005, p. 128) "Content analysis has been used to analyse bias in news reporting, the content of newspapers ..." and comparative methods which "presents a procedure for comparing similar factors, phenomena, processes and reports, or too similar, to identify the similarities between the tires and the differences between the tire". (Jakupi, 2005, p. 33) Among other things, this paper will analyse the editorial policies of newspapers and also the political, social, economic, and cultural circumstances of that period. The sample of this paper is daily reporting of the five biggest newspapers in Kosovo, "Koha Ditore", "Epoka e Re", "Kosova Sot", "Zeri" dhe "Bota Sot". I collected the data from the reports of those newspapers.

## **2. Study Context**

The riots of March 17 of 2004, was the worst event in post-war Kosovo. At this riots, according to the international report presented to the UN General Council, "A total of 19 persons died in the violence, of whom 11 were Kosovo Albanians and 8 were Kosovo Serbs, and 954 persons were injured in the course of the clashes". (UN Security Council, 2004b, p. 2) Also according to this report were injured 65 UN international officers, 58 members of Kosovo police and 61 KFOR members. During riots have been damaged about 730 homes and dozens of cultural and religious

heritage sites. According to this report, during those riots that had occurred for about a week, there were also attacks on members of the international mission (UNMIK), whereby an international police member and a member of the Kosovo police died from an organized attack.

These several-days-long riots, besides the victims and other damages, also seriously damaged the status process of Kosovo, the criteria for status, and questioned the success and the work of the international mission, that of UNMIK. In the official report of this mission released after the riots, this mission by not taking responsibility for what was happening, a blatant part of the blame throws towards the media and accuses them of stirring up the riots. "The cumulative effect of those incidents, made worse by inflammatory and biased media reporting, were demonstrations, which, although apparently spontaneous at the outset, were quickly taken over by organized elements with an interest in driving the remaining Kosovo Serbs from Kosovo and threatening the international presence there". (UN Security Council, 2004b, p. 2)

Further, in this report, it was emphasized that the electronic media during the first two days of the riots were prone to an inaccurate, stimulating, unilateral and sensational journalism, while the newspapers that are close to the political parties had followed the capture model of events reporting with the anti-Serbian approach.

However, these conclusions about the media were strongly opposed by representatives of media organizations and editorial staff. Also, in 2001, this mission, through regulation, foresaw severe disciplinary measures against the media, which would act to foster interethnic and interfaith hatred. Even in the published report before the March events, published at the end of January 2004, the security situation in Kosovo was considered quiet, with some limited incidents, so this mission alone did not foresee any tendency to escalate the situation or manifest the dissatisfaction through the riots. However, what were the main agendas and events during March, and were there any elements or increasing tendencies for a destabilization and an outbreak of chain events. At the beginning of March, it was reported for explosive devices located at the UNMIK Building in Pristina. On March 12th, a hand grenade had exploded at the residence of Kosovo President Ibrahim Rugova, but fortunately, there were not any casualties. (Koha Ditore, 2004, pp. 1-3) On March 15th, a young Serb was killed in the village of Caglavica near Pristina, where local Serbs then blocked the traffic road for Pristina-Skopje. (Epoka e re, 2004, p. 2; Koha Ditore, 2004, p. 3)

On March 16th, War Veterans' Associations organized a nationwide protest to oppose the arrest of four former KLA fighters by UNMIK police officers, where several offices of this mission were attacked. (Zëri, 2004, p. 1) "The direction of the attacks of Albanian protesters to UNMIK personnel and property, turned into a response to a tendency of de internationalization of the Kosovo issue and its return to an issue that could be overwhelmed and probably required solution in a framework with the Serbian-Montenegrin community". (Krasniqi, 2011, p. 31) Also during these days was planned and organized a peaceful demonstration, as a sign of opposition to the assault on the residence of President Ibrahim Rugova (Koha Ditore, 2004, p. 3) On March 16th, another event was that in the Iber River where two Albanian children lost their lives. (Bota Sot, 2004, p. 2; Koha Ditore, 2004, p. 1) Despite the events during the first part of March, according to Secretary-General report in the UN, there are no indications that could be a warning sign for violent riots, although, in fact, tensions and dissatisfaction had reached a critical point. (UN Security Council, 2004a, p. 2)

### **3. Theoretical Background**

In addition to its efforts to free itself from control and political ideologies, in addition to its historic efforts to create legal safeguards that ensure and guarantee its action, journalism has managed to develop professionally and scientifically by developing its species and creating new professional standards.

Beside professional standards of reporting, scholars have study reporting on crises and how it can intensify, if they are part of an ongoing conflict. (Ben-Yehuda & Sandler, 2002; Brecher & Wilkenfeld, 1997) "The media convey the breaking news from and to people around the globe and play a crucial role in setting the conflict agenda and framing its reality". (Ben-Yehuda, Naveh & Levin-Banchik, 2013, p. 72) Hemant Shah in his paper about media coverage of Los Angeles Riots of 1992 emphasises that "the result in the mainstream press seems to be that news stories about interethnic and interracial conflict have within them imagery, narratives, explanations, etc., that perpetuate stereotypes, oversimplify underlying problems, ignore relevant history and context, and so forth, which may exacerbate tensions and may prevent reconciliation". (Shah, 2007, p. 8) Shah was focused in press coverage about interethnic conflict in LA and in two approaches of reporting are summarized and evaluated, mainstream and minority newspaper coverage of the 1992 Los Angeles riots.

Robert Manoff, director of the Center for War, Peace and the News Media at New York University, talks about the role of the media in preventing and moderating conflict. Manoff conclude that media, among others, could:

- “Promote and help enforce national or international norms regarding human rights, the conduct of war, the treatment of minorities, or other issues;
- Establish the transparency of one conflict party to another;
- Identify and explain underlying material and psychological needs of parties to conflict, clarifying the structural issues that are perceived to be at stake;
- Frame the issues involved in conflict in such a way that they become more susceptible to management;
- Identify resources that may be available to help resolve conflicts or to mobilize outside assistance in doing so”. (Manoff, 1997, p. 25)

Technological discoveries ranging from Johannes Gutenberg’s epochal revelation, the various revolutions at the forefront of the French Revolution, media expansion on the Internet, multimedialism, and its division into many kinds, forced the authors to develop scientifically different types of genre. Theoretical and professional development was indispensable to maintain quality, reliability, or as theorist David Randall states, not to reduce the demand on the part of the public. “The press that is perceived to be government-controlled or suffering from lack of quality or ethics can lower the demand”. (Randall, 2003, p. 235) Researcher of journalistic genres, Bajram Kosumi, in his theory, believes that journalism, as well as every other field of science, has created its genre typology. According to him in the journalism, there is some distinct analogy between the types and different forms of journalism. Thus, the typology of the genre in journalism is divided into several types, the typology of written journalism of which we have several kinds of genres; typology of electronic journalism at the top with television and typology of media online genres which is the main form of information dissemination to the public.

According to Kosumi, typology in journalism is divided into two main factors: external and internal. These two crucial factors are fundamental for sharing information on the type or typology of the medium in which it is transmitted and the internal structure of article construction within this type of media typology. “Radio and television are media, but the journalism that is being held in these two media is typified as a separate genre and is called the journalist of radio and television, namely radiojournalism and television journalism. It is also called digitized journalism,

printed, etc., are external factors that have influenced the typology of journalism” (Kosumi, 2013, p. 24), Kosumi points out, by distinguishing what is an internal typological factor: “The news of the printed newspaper and an editorial of that newspaper are different, but now because of an internal factor: the text structure of the news differs from the textual structure of the editorial, and this fact makes them completely different from the typological aspect”. (Kosumi, 2013, p. 24) In addition to typology, journalism is also divided into four major genres such as information journalism, analytical journalism, publicist journalism and entertainment journalism.

Since our case study is directly related to information journalism, the theoretical object will be just this genre with all its subtypes.

**The news** - is the story we live in and events that are taught and studied in the field of history were daily news, the news is heard of information for the first time, news for the individual and society is needed as much as oxygen because man as for air needs information. The news is the one who keeps us informed of the events surrounding our lives, making us more confident, better prepared for life, more responsible within the society, and participating in democratic governing systems. Today, the news is more widespread than ever, information and events are globalized, and the number of media, especially online, has increased.

British theorist Brian McNair points out that today in the world market the news in all his genres has developed thanks to the financial coverage greatly. “In the twenty-first century, the production of news in all types of journalism has turned into a big and growing business. According to a 2007 report by the World Society of Journalists, there are more than 10,000 newspaper titles, employing about two million people within them, generating \$180 billion in revenue”. (McNair, 2009, p. 16) Such a large number of newspapers, journalists, news produced within the day, best describes the role of the news and the human need for information from every genre. So this century has brought a global information industry and a powerful income generation industry that help the media to be free. However, what are the definitions, the concepts of the news, what is the structure that made it so? According to the theorists, there are so many definitions for the news and no one has yet established the point because, according to them, the definition of the news is not a science exact. When a report with limited information and uncertainty is part an ongoing conflict, there is always a danger of escalation. (Goertz & Diehl, 1993; Maoz & Mor, 1996)

**Value and Criteria of the News** - Since thousands of events occur in the country, the region and the world, journalists, editors and the media in general are those who decide which of those events should be covered. To be more confident in identifying and selecting these events, theorists have built the parameters or values that should cover an event. In his book, Professor of journalism, Milazim Krasniqi emphasizes that each event be important for the public, but some of them have higher importance for the public because they affect their lives. According to him, the news should have its values. "Relevance relates to the importance of a public interest event .... the usefulness is seen from how published information helps readers/the public improve their quality of life ... while in the interesting aspect of the events, satisfy the public's curiosity, so as such they are included in the editions, more in order to entertain the public". (Krasniqi, 2008, pp. 55-56) So, there are three main factors in which every journalist or editor should consider when deciding to cover an event.

Even theorists, Brian S. Brooks, George Kennedy, Daryl R. Moen, and Don Ranly, conclude that when it comes to the news, every journalist or editor should think in three words. "Relevance, Usefulness, Interest. These criteria are applicable, but every journalist and news organization uses them in a specific context that gives them a special meaning. The context is defined by the public" (Missouri Group, 2005, p. 12) Thus, most theorists agree on their theories when they talk about the value of the news. According to the relevance, usefulness, and interest are uncontested values that enable us to identify the most important events.

Media scholar David Randall continues his study of the news, based on his key factors. "Subject-is a general category of events – crime, environment, health, diplomacy, economy, consumer, army, politics ..., Development - it shows straightforwardly how unusual is a particular phenomenon ..., The source - the influencing force or the value of a development depends in part on the source from which it deals ..., Knowledge - this is related to the madness of people who are aware of a certain development ..., the time of publication, readers, and context" (Randall, 2003, pp. 38-39) Therefore, while the news value for journalists and media speaks more about events about the public, the news criteria are those that include journalists and editors themselves in the text to respect other elements or criteria that directly affect the quality of the text. Even researchers, Brian S. Brooks, George Kennedy, Daryl R. Moen and Don Ranly, in their theory, conclude that relevance, usefulness, and interest are just general guidelines to judge the value of the news, emphasize that reporters fulfil their standard, they require other specific elements.

**The lead of the news** - One of the main elements of a text in journalism is the lead of the news. The lead is the main paragraph of the text for which the journalist has to consider several factors. He first must identify the importance of that event, and its main story should be adapted to the editorial policies, the subject matter and its weight towards the reader and the public.

Professor Krasniqi, addressing the head of the news, states that if the lead of the news is well written, the chances of being successful are enormous. “Experienced journalists attach great importance to the beginning of the text because they know that it depends on whether the reader will follow his text until the end or interrupt his reading. Inexperienced and uneducated journalists, the opposite is true: they try to leave the main arguments for the end of the text to “empower” his message”. (Krasniqi, 2008, p. 67)

Experienced journalists are those who usually have an extraordinary role in society because they, apart from knowing how to handle relevant, current and important topics for the community and society, they know how to build the lead of the text so that the reader within the lead get the main information, written according to professional standards. Theorist Kosumi, in his study, emphasizes that the first paragraph has a fundamental importance for the news, which should sum up the main topic of the news. “The lead gives the essence of the news. It should be written in such a way as to emphasize all the basic elements of a news story. The lead, therefore, complying with the main information on the news, is compulsory for the daily event or the news topic: if the theme of the news is a fire, the fire should be in the lead of the news; but if the house of a family is destroyed in that fire, then the ruin of the house of fire must be in the lead of the news; but if fire and demolition have killed one person, his death must be the lead”. (Kosumi, 2015, p. 120)

Many times within an event or topic we can encounter two or three news within it. Therefore, journalists and editors prepared, especially the specialized ones, have their professional and intellectual ability to identify the main story of that event, in a way to place it in the first paragraph, or, in the lead. Most of the theorists have crystallized their ideas when it comes to the lead of the news; everyone has concluded that the lead of the news is the most important element within the journalistic text. However, the lead of the text is also divided into several leads that journalists use to adapt to the news. Depending on the events they report, journalists and editors demonstrate news leads, adapting them in the most professional way for the reader.

#### 4. Critical Analysis of Press Reporting on the day of the March Riots (March 17th)

Fifth newspapers are part of the analyze and analysis is based on four common criteria's, the title, lead of the story, sources and writing style.

##### 4.1. Newspaper "Koha Ditore"

On the day of the beginning of the March riots, the worst interethnic event in post-war Kosovo, "Koha Ditore" had two main articles on the front page about the event and the reports directly related to the impact of the situation's exacerbation, albeit it was a fragile situation.

Based on the flow of the event during March, based on UNMIK's political stances, and by the behavior of the Serb minority, there is repeatedly a provocation by the Albanian majority.

The main article in this number of the newspaper deals with an inter-ethnic clash between Albanians and Serbs in the village of Çabër in Zubin Potok, a region with deep interethnic divisions and a frozen conflict between Albanians and Serbs, after the intervention of international peacekeeping forces. The main article disregards professional reporting norms, rarely publishing its full-featured mainstream news just to the front page. Starting from the header, the title, paragraph 1, sources, citations, and the main article in this text has encountered professional problems that contradict the theorists of the press and the genre.

**Table 1. Report analysis - newspaper "Koha Ditore", 17th March 2004**

KOHA DITORE	Title	Lead	Primary Sources	Secondary Sources	Writing Style
	Three Albanian children sank in Ibër, escaping from Serbs	Three children aged 9, 11 and 12 have disappeared in the Ibër waves, while KPC rescue teams, who have been called late to the scene, have found the body of one of them sometime after midnight	Children, father of the child, village leader	Official	Interpretive

The title of the article is superstitious and a promoter of interethnic relations which does not match the lead of the article.

“Three Albanian children sank in Ibër, escaping from Serbs” (Ditore, 2004, p. 1), this title, in addition to a provocation and incitement to inter-ethnic hatred, does not match the lead of the article or the testimony of the witness child and make a conclusion about the deaths of three children even though only one was officially confirmed death, while for the fate of others and their situation there is still no official information.

“Three children aged 9, 11 and 12 have disappeared in the Ibër waves, while KPC rescue teams, who have been called late to the scene, have found the body of one of them sometime after midnight”. (Ditore, 2004, p. 1) Therefore, at the lead of the news, which according to genre theory should have the main information, confirmation of the only death from the three children. Therefore, professionally, the headline and the lead have a discrepancy in the interpretation of the facts. Further on, the text renders the interpretation of the event by the editorial board, describing it through a hypothetical situation, constructed from within the second and third paragraphs.

“The kids jumped in the river to find salvation, but were abducted by the waves of the Ibër River, and only one of them escaped the waves and ran alive on the shore”. (Ditore, 2004, p. 1) Here we have an interpretation of the event by the editorial board, which does not refer to any official source, which would describe and construct the event. Bypassing the official sources, the fourth paragraph in the article shows a child witness who had managed to escape from the disaster that occurred. However, theorists exclude any possibility of putting the eyewitness’s statement at the beginning of the news, and less of those witnesses who are part of that event. That is because they can make unilateral statements, they may be emotionally influenced and may provoke emotion to the masses. In such cases, most media theorists claim that witnesses should not be included in the report. Therefore, in this case under no circumstances should a statement of a minor witness be made, before the official statements of the competent institutions dealing with these events.

Then we have the official statement of UNMIK police regarding the event, which within the summarizing quotation by the editorial board states that it has taken up with reservations the child’s testimony and is working on the fate of children’s disappeared, without officially declaring and ascertaining the death of the children. “Tracy Backer spokeswoman of UNMIK police, based on statements made by Fitim, the surviving child, said that the police, for the moment takes on the reserve Fitim’s statement, and is now engaged in finding the children as soon as possible, while the investigations will continue after their fate is clear”. (Ditore, 2004, p. 1)

After this official statement, the text returns to the minor witness, drawing its statements out from the context. While in the summarized quotation of the young man, the newspaper notes that the oldest Serbs attacked young people, Fitim declares differently in the direct citation. “We were on the other side of the river, some 500 meters away from our homes, when two Serbs pushed the dog toward us and started to insult us”. (Ditore, 2004, p. 1)

So, at no time the child does not claim in the direct statement that Serbs physically attacked them, and as a result of that, the title is not based on the statements of the witness who was involved in the event. Therefore, this part also contradicts the genre and reporting theory, because Randall says that under any circumstances, journalists and editorial staff cannot drawing out from the context the statements of people involved in that event. Apart from this event, the editorial gives the epithet of the tragedy, evaluating the event, the last two paragraphs of the text close to the fear of a revolt of citizens. Using oblique discourse, the editorial team evaluate the opinion and shyness of UNMIK Police spokesperson. “The concern for the possible revolt of the Albanian residents had affected the officers of UNMIK Police in the evening” (Ditore, 2004, p. 1), ending the paragraph which cites directly the statement of the spokesperson in UNMIK police, inviting citizens to be calm and restrained by emotions. Encouraging hate speech, the national and religious non-patience endorsement through its regulations is penalized by the UNMIK mission because these elements had a great deal of sensitivity to the public, as treating these issues usually caused protests and riots. The main texts of the “Koha Ditore” newspaper, dated March 17th have made unilateral coverage of the event, where there is a lack of balance of the news, lack of official resources and lack of impartiality. The texts dealt with in this day reflect the fragile and tense situation regarding interethnic relations.

#### **4.2. Newspaper “Epoka e re”**

Similar to the “Koha Ditore” newspaper, “Epoka e re” also the main news set on its front page is about the event that occurred in the village of Çabër in the Mitrovica region. The title and the subtitling are built in such a way to provoke in public an emotional state. As in the analysis of the newspaper “Koha Ditore”, “Epoka e re” also conclude the death of three children, not based on professional statements, is a violation of ethics and professional rules.

So, the political, economic, security and social situation during this period has been delicate, not excluding here the interethnic tensions which in essence have been a

continuation of the past but many times in the public are provoked and seen as such as due to UNMIK policies.

**Table 2. Report analysis - newspaper “Epoka e re”, 17th March 2004**

EPOKA E RE	Title	Lead	Primary Sources	Secondary Sources	Writing Style
	Serbs kill three Albanian children in the Ibër River	According to the child who has survived, Fitim Veseli, a group of Serbs have swearing Albanian children, attacked them, and then they have swooned the dog. In an effort to rescue, children have entered in the Ibër River, but they did not get out alive. Meanwhile, on Monday evening at the Kodra e Minatorëve, Sadri Peci’s tent was burned, with all the furniture inside it. There lived the 12-member family of Sadri Peci. Serbs, throughout Kosovo, are creating problems and instability	Children, witness	Official	Interpretive

Therefore, such a title, “Serbs kill three Albanian children in the Ibër River” (Epoka e re, 2004, p. 1), has provoked openly the emotional condition of the mass, taking into account in this situation that during this day, in all the cities of Kosovo, has been protesting against the international administration and in defense of the values of the KLA war. The division and growth of a more prominent inter-ethnic division are in the subtitle of this front-page report, which speaks of Serbian attacks in relation to Albanians in other areas as well. “According to the child who has survived, Fitim Veseli, a group of Serbs have swearing Albanian children, attacked them, and then they have swooned the dog. In an effort to rescue, children have entered in the Ibër River, but they did not get out alive. Meanwhile, on Monday evening at the Kodra e Minatorëve, Sadri Peci’s tent was burned, with all the furniture inside it. There lived the 12-member family of Sadri Peci. Serbs, throughout Kosovo, are creating problems and instability”. (Epoka e re, 2004, p. 3) Neither the deaths of three children nor the incident at the “Kodra e Minatorëve” in Mitrovica, have no official confirmations within the text. Rather, the entire text for this event is constructed without official statements, except for a summarizing statement and without any direct citation. Also, within the text, neither in the headline of the news nor his body,

there is no mention of the number of the dead people. The whole story structure is built by the summarizing statement of the underage child, in the capacity of the witness and written emotionally by the journalist, which is contrary to the professional reporting standards. Neither in this text of the “Epoka e re” newspaper, as in the text of the newspaper “Koha Ditore”, there are no authors of the text, but it is text on behalf of the editorial. According to reporting, Serbs are those who have provoked situations of inter-ethnic escalation. So, by summing up the context of the reported events of March 16, we really have within reporting situations that affect the response of the mass. A turbulence created by UNMIK's international mission, which is attacked by Serbs in the protests and the blockades they have made, is protesting and warned of an escalation of the situation due to UNMIK's “wrong policies”, and escalating the interethnic situation between Albanians and Serbs, also helped through media reporting.

#### 4.3. Newspaper “Zëri”

Newspaper “Zëri” reports quite differently regarding the case of three Albanian children drowned in the Ibër River, an event which has been considered by international reports as the leading cause in the provocation of the March riots.

**Table 3. Report analysis - newspaper “Zëri”, 17th March 2004**

ZËRI	Title	Lead	Primary Sources	Secondary Sources	Writing Style
	Three Albanian children disappeared in the waters of Ibër River	Florian, Egzon, and Avni Veseli disappeared yesterday at 16:00 in the village of Çabër when they were abducted by the Ibër River waters while fleeing from two Serbs who had gone towards them. The River has managed to pass Fitim Cerkin Veseli	Official, The Council for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms	Children	Facultative

The article in this newspaper was professional based on facts, without trial and editorial assessment, which also reflects on the structure of this text. The journalist does not hasten to give estimates for the event, does not put the witness in the first plan and tries to avoid any inter-ethnic provocation during the text structure. The article overwhelming: “It fears for a tragedy in the village of Çabër in Zubin Potok”,

the title: “Three Albanian children disappeared in the waters of Ibër River” and the lead: “Florian, Egzon, and Avni Veseli disappeared yesterday at 16:00 in the village of Çabër when they were abducted by the Ibër River waters while fleeing from two Serbs who had gone towards them. The River has managed to pass Fitim Cerkin Veseli”. (Zëri, 2004, p. 1)

So, in this case, the journalist does not give his conclusions about the event by respecting the ethical and professional aspect, but reports that three Albanian children disappeared in the Ibër River, which meant that their fate in the reporting period was not closed because they might even be found alive or even hurt, or sheltered in a safe place. Therefore, while the official sources do not make such a decision, journalists do not dare to report, because according to the theorists it distorts public opinion. Meanwhile, on the title, the journalist does not use the dramaticness of the event and does not make any conclusions to the subtitling. At the lead of the article, the journalist emphasizes that there is nothing known about the fate of the children, unlike the newspapers “Koha Ditore” and “Epoka e re”, which conclude the deaths of all three children although they did not rely on facts and official statements.

#### **4.4. Newspaper “Bota Sot”**

That the media can sometimes be unilateral in reporting, unbalanced in information, and sensitive in the creation of public opinion, can best be seen in the critical analysis of one of the main reports of this newspaper. Starting from the general fragility in Kosovo, during the 17th the newspaper brings to its front page a news from the north of Kosovo, which is directly related to the mobilization of the mass and the increase of interethnic tensions. “Serbian gangs begin criminal activities for the expulsion of Albanians from the north.” Albanian sources from the 'Kodra e Minatorëve' neighborhood in the northern part of the city have announced that on Monday around 19:00, Serbian rebel gangs set fire to Sadri Peci's tent”. (Bota Sot, 2004, p. 1) This title together with the subtitle represents ethical and professional violations of journalism which contradict the theoretical concepts which we have dealt with above. This text which contains elements of the inter-ethnic hatred is based on newspaper sources. However, official statements in this report by Kosovo Police Service (KPS) contradict the title and lead of the report. Most of the text in the report is a hate speech that stems from the imposition of the journalist's opinions. According to the article, it can be seen that the journalist was not at all at the scene and the anonymous sources he uses cannot even argue with eyewitnesses.

**Table 4. Report analysis - newspaper “Bota Sot”, 17th March 2004**

BOTA SOT	Title	Lead	Primary Sources	Secondary Sources	Writing Style
	Serbian gangs begin criminal activities for the expulsion of Albanians from the north	Albanian sources from the neighborhood 'Kodra e Minatorëve' have announced that on Monday in the northern part of the city, around 19:00, the Serbian rebel put fire on the tent of Sadri Peci, a resident of the neighborhood above	Children, witness	/	Interpretive

“Albanian sources from the neighborhood “Kodra e Minatorëve” have announced that on Monday in the northern part of the city, around 19:00, the Serbian rebel put fire on the tent of Sadri Peci, a resident of the neighborhood above”. (Bota Sot, 2004, p. 3) The lead of this report published in the newspaper “Bota Sot”, which supports the title of this text published on the front page, contradicts the declaration of the institutions that are competent to declare the case. This degrades professional reporting, escaping from professional responsibility for fair and professional information.

“The fire in the Sadri tent has been confirmed by the KPS spokesman for the Mitrovica region, Arbër Beka. He said police were informed of this fire by phone by a person and immediately came out on the scene ... He said that there are no suspects yet, and investigations have been started by the respective police unit”. (Bota Sot, 2004, p. 3)

The language and the incitement of public hatred, even at this time, have been penalized through UNMIK regulations: “1.1 Anyone who incites or spreads hatred, disunity or intolerance between national, racial, religious, ethnic or any other group living in Kosovo, actions that may disturb calm or order public shall be punished by a fine or by imprisonment, which lasts no more than five years or is punished by both”. (UNMIK, 2000) However, such a language expressed by the journalist, which has only initials written in the text, in contrast to other texts given the first letter of the name and full surname, goes further including a language fiercely critical even to UNMIK’s international mission.

“I would point out that Sadri’s 12 family members, as well as thousands of other Albanian families, have expelled with violence from their home in the neighborhood of “Kodra e Minatorëve”, Serbian criminals with the aim of cleansing that part of the city from Albanians...” (Bota Sot, 2004, p. 3), continues his opinion and his journalist’s assessment of an event that in essence was an event that should be treated professionally. This newspaper in this issue had also reported on the event on the Ibër River. As other newspapers have reported, the main source of this event is the surviving young child who confesses the event as a witness at the scene and as involved in that event that later resulted in the loss of three children's life. The central space of this number was given to the protest of the citizens against the attack that occurred at the residence of President Ibrahim Rugova, but this newspaper did not devote any space to another nationwide protest held in all cities of Kosovo, against the arrest of former KLA members by UNMIK. This also emphasizes the editorial policies of the newspaper about the internal political divisions in Kosovo.

#### **4.5. Newspaper “Kosova Sot”**

Unlike the newspapers analysed above, “Kosova Sot” has not reported at all about the event in Zubin Potok, for the three missing children in the Ibër River. The main issue on March 17th was in the economic sector, about Kosovo’s million euro losses as a result of the lack of energy laws. This newsletter had also paid attention to two events that also reflect the fragility of the state, the protest of the KLA Veterans and the blockade by Serbs of the highways Prishtina-Gjilan and Prishtina-Skopje. “Tens of thousands of protesters blame UNMIK for criminalizing the KLA” (Kosova Sot, 2004, p. 2), an extended report on the nationwide protest held in all major Kosovo cities. Professionally treated with the straight lead, with official sources, citations and genre structure.

### **5. Conclusion**

On the day of the riots, the main electronic and print media reported that the murder of three Albanian children in the Ibër River in Zubin Potok had been the primary factor of the start of protests that resulted in violent riots where dozens were killed and hundreds injured. This is also highlighted in the ]=[international UN and OSCE reports. Therefore, started from the standard rules of professional reporting, supported and based on theories of the media, we see that the newspapers, regarding the reporting of this case, have report violating the professional rules. Contradicting the professional reporting standards, the press reporting on this event, which the

media itself is considered to be a source of disturbances, has made an unimpaired and emotional reporting by imposing an opinion on the text and not based on official statements. Also, the situation in Kosovo during this period had been tense, politically, economically and socially. During this period there was a growing dissatisfaction unto the international multi-ethnic mission in Kosovo - UNMIK, to whom this situation had come out of control. Media in democratic societies have an important role, so those in reporting, and especially in such tense and emotional situations, should be cautious in reporting.

Some of the daily newspapers in the way of reporting have also expressed an emotional state, through the persons involved in the story. However, in this case, should not be overlooked the international mission of UNMIK, which did not do enough work to keep the public opinion informed about the event and the general tension created in Kosovo.

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### ***Newspapers***

“Koha Ditore”

“Epoka e re”

“Zëri”

“Bota Sot”

“Kosova Sot”