

REPORTING ON  
INTERRELIGIOUS AND  
INTERETHNIC TENSIONS:

**THE MEANING  
BEHIND  
THE HEADLINES**





REPORTING ON INTERRELIGIOUS AND  
INTERETHNIC TENSIONS:  
THE MEANING BEHIND THE HEADLINES



Skopje, June 2013



## **REPORTING ON INTERRELIGIOUS AND INTERETHNIC TENSIONS: THE MEANING BEHIND THE HEADLINES**

Publishers: School of Journalism and Public Relations and the  
Institute for Communication Studies  
Jurij Gagarin 17/1-1 1000 Skopje, Macedonia  
[www.vs.edu.mk](http://www.vs.edu.mk)  
[www.iks.edu.mk](http://www.iks.edu.mk)

For the publishers: Zaneta Trajkoska, MA

Editor: Ljubomir Jakimovski, PhD  
Translation: Sami Bushi  
Design: Ljuben Dimanovski

# Contents

## FOREWORD

<i>Vesna Sopar</i> .....	7
--------------------------	---

## REPORTING DIVERSITY: BASIC CONCEPTS

<i>Marina Tuneva</i> .....	11
----------------------------	----

### Part One

## CONTENT ANALYSING COVERAGE ON INTERETHNIC AND INTERRELIGIOUS ISSUES

### INTERETHNIC TENSIONS: NEWS OF THE DAY

<i>Vesna Sopar, Snezana Trpevska and Zaneta Trajkoska</i> .....	19
Introduction .....	19
Printed media .....	23
Television .....	33
Radio stations .....	45
Online media .....	53
General conclusions .....	60

### Part Two

## DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THREE CASE STUDIES

<b>Notes on Methodology</b> .....	63
-----------------------------------	----

### I. MEDIA AND THE EUROPEAN HANDBALL CHAMPIONSHIP 2012 – BETWEEN SPORTS AND ETHNOPOLITICS

<i>Vesna Sopar and Igor Micevski</i> .....	67
--	----

#### 1. Ethnic matrix of reporting: EC in handball 2012 in television and radio

<i>Vesna Sopar</i> .....	69
--------------------------	----

#### 2. Constructing the „Ancient Macedonians“ and the „Oppressed Albanians“:

<b>EC in handball 2012 through the printed and online media</b> <i>Igor Micevski</i> .....	77
--	----

### II. MEDIA AND THE RELIGIOUS NARRATIVES:

#### THE CASE OF CARNIVAL OF VEVCANI COVERAGE

<i>Igor Micevski and Misha Popovik</i> .....	91
--	----

### III. MEDIA AND THE NARRATIVES OF THREAT:

#### THE CASE OF THE COVERAGE OF THE SMILKOVSKO LAKE MURDERS

<i>Misha Popovik and Igor Micevski</i> .....	117
--	-----

<b>NOTE FOR THE PUBLISHERS</b> .....	161
--------------------------------------	-----



## Foreword

Macedonia has a long multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-religious tradition. Still, even today it is faced with the challenge to “provide” mutual understanding, coexistence, cooperation and tolerance between different cultural and ethnic communities. The media have a key role in the supporting these processes. Media, as promoters of social cohesion and dialogue among different communities, have great influence on the formation of attitudes and beliefs of people, as well as their perceptions of other social and cultural groups and communities. Therefore, the questions such as whether and how different communities and groups are being represented in the media, what opportunity they have to express their views and opinions through the media contents, what the role of individual members of cultural groups is within newsrooms etc. are being continuously re-actualised.

The fact that in recent years in Macedonia there have been many examples of reckless reporting lacking the necessary “sensitivity” of the interethnic, intercultural and interreligious complexity in this country by itself incited particular research approach, which would thoroughly and comprehensively analyze media discourse in the multicultural context. A key applied research challenge was the improvement of compliance with professional standards in media reporting on diversity and strengthening the role of the media in improving interethnic and interreligious dialogue among different communities and groups in the Republic of Macedonia.

This research is a result of the joint effort of a team composed of researchers, analysts and associates within the activities of the UNESCO Chair on Media, Dialogue and Mutual Understanding at the School of Journalism and Public Relations. The analysis is conceptualized as a quantitative content analysis and a qualitative –discourse analysis of



media texts / stories related directly or indirectly to interethnic or interreligious issues from the point of view of the respect of fundamental professional journalistic standards. The quantitative analysis is focused on empirical verification and evaluation of the frequency, the forms and the content of media coverage of the events and qualitative, critical discourse analysis – on the reporting of three case studies of the most characteristic events that caused public concern regarding interethnic and interreligious relations.

The objective of the analysis was to encourage broad debate among the journalistic community and the public on the responsibility of the profession for different functions or impacts that journalistic “discourse” can have in the wider social and political context - particularly its impact on the values of the cultural diversity and intercultural communication as a unique characteristic of the Macedonian society and as a prerequisite for progress and development of all citizens. It has to be said that there is no intention in this study to stigmatize, to label or to condemn the editorial policy of the media and journalists whose texts, articles or packages are referred to as examples of phenomena and processes that (un)intentionally encourage stereotypes, prejudice, intolerance, hate speech.

Rather, synthesized findings from the analysis clearly “detect” the extent to which media and the journalistic community in Macedonia have developed awareness and sensitivity in reporting on sensitive religious and ethnic issues and problems of individuals or groups in the society, to what extent basic standards of impartial, accurate and balanced reporting are being observed, the practice of using violent, emotional language, “unilateral” reporting through the prism of “one’s own” ethnic group, the one sided use of sources of information, the extremes of complete absence of coverage on one hand or overstating of reporting on interethnic and interreligious issues on the other.

In conclusion I wish to express gratitude for the financial and technical support by the Government of Spain through the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F), the UNESCO Office in Venice, under the Joint Programme of the United Nations on “Enhancing Inter-Ethnic Dialogue and Collaboration between Communities”, UNDP, UNICEF and UNESCO.

Also, I wish to thank the panel of experts and the team of journalists, communicologists, sociologists and political scientists engaged as observers in this research, as well as for the many valuable suggestions, great patience and outstanding support they have given us.

Vesna Sopar, PhD







# REPORTING DIVERSITY: BASIC CONCEPTS

*Marina Tuneva*

## **Discrimination**

Discrimination is an occurrence in which negative attitudes towards a particular group “moves” into a particular kind of action. Discrimination disables communication because it involves “unequal treatment of individuals based on their ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation or other characteristics”<sup>1</sup>. The difference between prejudice and discrimination lies within the fact that prejudice is an attitude, while discrimination is an obvious behaviour. Members of minority groups take measures to fight against negative discrimination, which is sometimes supported by the members of majority groups. In this context, the term “positive discrimination” is mentioned. Positive discrimination is about policies or practices that favour groups (ofr example minority ethnic groups or women etc.) who throughout history have experienced discrimination on their expense (such as in employment or education). Those who advocate for positive discrimination deem that a special policy is needed to provide equal opportunities with historically privileged groups.

## **Discourse**

In the last decades “discourse” is the most commonly used term in the social sciences and humanity disciplines<sup>2</sup>. There are numerous interpretations of what discourse is (and what it is not) a. Three are among the best known definitions: the formalistic definition, the functionalist definition used in linguistics and the Foucauldian interpretation about the “order of discourse”.

First, the discourse can be defined as a specific linguistic unit that is larger than a sentence. Linguists treat language as a “system of systems”, where each system has its own characteristic structure or organization. When discourse-analysis deals with “the

<sup>1</sup> Rogers, M.E., Steinfatt, M.T. (1999) Intercultural Communication, Waveland Press Inc.

<sup>2</sup> The explanation is adapted from the edition “Key Concepts in Journalism Studies”, Franklin, B., Hamer, M., Hanna, M., Kinsey, M., and Richardson, J. (Eds), London: Sage Publications, 2005, pg.61.



language that is wider than the sentence”, that means it looks to detect patterns (structure, organization) in the units that are larger or wider than a sentence. Given that such an approach towards discourse focuses on the form of the language, especially on the way the linguistic units are semantically connected to the whole, it is usually referred to as formalist or structuralist definition of discourse. Theorists, who advocate for this approach, focus more on formal issues such as, for example, the question of how we know that a row of sentences are linked in a “text”. In answering these questions the researchers developed a method of *conversational analysis*, focusing on the order, cohesion and coherence of speech in the informative news items.

Second, functionalist approach considers that discourse should be researched as a “language used” in a specific context. Proponents of this approach are interested in how and which messages are transmitted with the language when it is deliberately used in a particular context. Language is used to convey the meaning and perform an action and that “meaning” and “action” are associated with the context. In other words, in addition to the immediate context “journalist-text-audience”, the broader “sociopolitical context” surrounding the communication act is also important for the analysis of the language used in the media messages. Therefore, in order to properly understand the discourse, it is necessary to do more than just analyze the meaning of sentences, their mutual relations and connections in a cohesive whole. For example, in order to properly interpret a press release or an informative news item in the news, it is necessary to discover what is the author “doing” through the discourse and how this “action” is related to the context. Such an approach is most productively used by researchers-advocates of the *Critical Discourse Analysis* (CDA).

Third, according to the interpretation of Foucault, discourses are viewed as “social practices” that systematically form the objects being spoken. In other words, discourses show in which manner the use of language has always been associated with other social, political and institutional practices. Pluralism - discourses - is particularly important. Foucault believes that discourses are “streams of knowledge / power” throughout society and across time, which create conditions for structuring and shaping of societies and for the establishment of subjects. Discourses are the means by which institutions define and shape the position and mutual relations of social actors. Institutions and their discourses are often in mutual conflict. According to Foucault, they offer different and often conflicting statements about the facts of reality and, by merging with past and other current discourses, produce “domains of objects and rituals of the truth.” So, we can talk about medical discourse, legal discourse, political discourse, academic discourse, etc.

Journalists do not simply reflect reality in reporting on a variety of topics, but by trying to explain and contextualize the story they rely on these and many other discourses. Even more than that, their use allows journalists to construct a new reality, more specifically many different realities.

### **Ethnocentrism**

Ethnocentrism is the belief in the central position of the own culture. It often involves estimation and judgment of aspects and values of one’s culture based on their own. Ethnocentrism is the extent to which individuals perceive other cultures inferior to

their culture<sup>3</sup>. The term ethnocentrism is introduced by William Sumner, and it comes from two Greek words (ethos - people or nation ketron - center), that means putting a cultural group in the center (and thus condemn other cultures according to their own cultural values). Sumner divided the term ethnocentric in two parts: believing in the superiority of the own group and subsequently believing that other groups are inferior. Thus, ethnocentrism prevents the existence of an effective intercultural communication, because, simply said, it prevents understanding those that are different.

Ethnocentrism is not only intellectually comparing with another culture, but, according to Levine and Campbell, it includes emotions as well. Symbols of one's ethnic group, religion or national in-group become objects of pride and respect, whereas symbols of the out-group (eg, the flag) become objects of contempt and hatred.

### Hate speech

There is no universally accepted definition of *hate speech*, although its spreading through the media is prohibited in the legislation of many countries. Most often, "*hate speech*" is described as a form of expression that is motivated and aims to encourage hostility towards a group or towards its members. The group in this sense is a social group, defined by specific features, mostly related to race, color, ethnic or national origin, religion and other personal characteristics such as gender, sexual orientation, disability, etc. Although the term "hate speech" itself associates with written or spoken speech, under this phrase it means "speech" in various forms: text, images, symbols, codes, gestures, video materials, etc. Also, the wording implies that the expression is accompanied by a visible emotional and / or psychological state of hatred, which is not necessarily present always.

The most commonly cited definition of "hate speech" is that of the Council of Europe established in the Recommendation 97 (20), according to which the term includes "... all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including: intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin"<sup>4</sup>. The term "hate speech" covers a multitude of situations: (1) inciting racial hatred directed towards individuals or groups based on their race, (2) inciting hatred based on religious grounds including the hatred that is based on the difference between believers and unbelievers; and (3) inciting all other forms of hatred based on intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism.

Identifying statements that are classified as "hate speech" is very difficult because this kind of speech does not always manifest itself through explicit expressions of "hated" or emotions. Hate speech can be concealed in statements which at first glance may seem rational and logical. However, several parameters which help us to identify terms that are of derogatory nature and which discriminate individuals or groups on the basis of their affiliation or origin can be extracted from the judicial practice of the European Court of Human Rights and other body's<sup>5</sup> texts.

The European Court of Human Rights uses the original purpose of the author of the statement as the primary criterion to determine whether a form of expression consti-

3 Rogers, M.E., Steinfatt, M.T. (1999) Intercultural Communication, Waveland Press Inc.

4 For more details, see: [http://www.coe.int/t/Doc/Committee\\_of\\_ministers/Exp%20Mem%20%28e%29%20Rec%20R%20%2897%29%2020.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/Doc/Committee_of_ministers/Exp%20Mem%20%28e%29%20Rec%20R%20%2897%29%2020.pdf)

5 For more details see: Anne Weber (2009) Manual on Hate Speech, Council of Europe, 2009.



tutes hate speech. This may not always be easily determined and therefore the Court gives great importance to the context in which the statement is given. Moreover, in determining whether there is hate speech, the intention whether the author of the statement is deliberately spreading racial or ideas for intolerance or is trying to inform the public on the topic of general interest, is being reviewed.

Hate speech can be described from different angles, and one of these is the linguistic. In the speech, various abusive and bad words towards individuals or groups can be used based on their characteristics, origin, attitude, commitment, etc. In addition, explicit words and metaphors that promote hate speech can be used. In order to analyze hate speech, the communicological aspect, which helps recognize the specific intention of the speaker, included in the message that he conveys, is used. Sometimes the intention is obvious, but it can also be hidden in messages that are used and which can be interpreted in different ways. Another angle in explaining the hate speech focuses on the emotional consequences of such speech, respectively the psychological aspect. The speech that qualifies the speaker based on his affiliation or non-affiliation may cause fear, embarrassment, anger or distress for the individual. With that kind of speech, one can call for inequality or subordination of a group or a member of the society.

### Reporting on diversity

Diversity is a condition or circumstances when someone is different or when there are differences. This term leads to heterogeneity, and when it is linked with the mankind, the word “diversity” refers to the differences in gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, ideological stances, political affiliations, place of residence, marital status, work experience, but not limited to these only<sup>6</sup>.

Reporting on diversity means that media texts should represent all members of the community in a fair and accurate manner by applying equal standards of treatment of all groups.

### Xenophobia

Xenophobia can be defined as the creation and dissemination of a picture about a community that has no place for “the others”, whereupon in this image others are seen as a destructive element for the respective culture. Xenophobia is a feeling or perception that is based on socially constructed images and ideas, rather than rational or objective facts. Xenophobic perception of the world involves reducing of the complex social and cultural phenomena to simplified good and bad scenarios. Xenophobic individuals would think in this way: we (the locals) serve as an example, we are good and normal, all should learn from us, to think and feel like we do, and they (the foreigners) are delinquent, are seen as a threat, they harass, they are violent, they steal, invade, etc. Or, shortly, we are the good and they are the bad ones.

### Prejudice

Prejudice, according to the definition of Samovar and Porter, means “unfair, biased or intolerant views or opinions towards another individual or group simply because they belong to a specific religion, race, nationality, or other group”<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Tuneva, M. (2011) Diversity Reporting Handbook, Skopje: School of Journalism and Public Relations

<sup>7</sup> L. A. Samovar, R. E. Porter, E. R. McDaniel's (2008) Intercultural Communication: A Reader, Wadsworth Publishing

Prejudices, same as stereotypes, can be either positive or negative. For example, if an individual says, “I do not want (this and that group) to live in my neighborhood,” than we are talking about expressing prejudice. Also, there is prejudice if, for example, one individual says, “Americans are not as smart as Europeans.” Prejudice can take many forms, ranging between those that are almost impossible to detect or unintentional, to those that are clearly reckless or intentional.

Richard Brislin, a scientist, attempted to classify prejudices in intercultural communications. According to him, some of the ways that you can express prejudice in intercultural communication are the following: 1) symbolic racism, 2) “tokenism” (formal, but not substantive treatment towards some groups), 3) real interests and aversions and 4) known and unknown<sup>8</sup>.

## Stereotypes

Stereotypes are obvious obstacles to intercultural communications. , They can be regarded as a kind of continuation to ethnocentrism. Stereotypes are defined as “perceptions or beliefs that one possesses for groups or individuals based on our previously formed opinions or views”<sup>9</sup>. As the definition says, stereotypes do not develop suddenly, but are formed over time through our culture. They are composed of information we store and use to “give sense” to what is happening around us. The psychologist Gordon Allport, who was famous for studying the process of creating prejudice, gave the following definition for stereotypes: they are “generalizations about any group of people, which greatly simplify the reality”<sup>10</sup>.

Stereotypes can be either positive or negative and, as mentioned above, they help us to “give sense” to the world by categorizing and classifying people and situations that we face. For example, we can create stereotypes when we are abroad and when we are faced with people and situations that we are not used to. Stereotypes become a kind of templates, so, for example, we often hear “The Germans construct the best cars”, “The French have the best chefs,” “Italians are the best opera singers”, “blacks are good for athletics and dance” etc. These are examples of positive stereotypes. But when you say “all Muslims are terrorists,” of course, it is a negative stereotype.

There are several ways in which stereotypes are harmful and hinder the communication<sup>11</sup>:

- First, stereotypes can lead us to the assumption that a widely accepted belief is true even when they are far from the truth;
- Second, the constant use of stereotypes reinforces our beliefs and can lead us to the assumption that a widely accepted belief is true for every individual in the group. If, for example, there are stereotypes for a group being aggressive, there may be a tendency of applying such a stereotype towards all members of the group, regardless of their individual characteristics;
- Third, when we use negative stereotypes to interpret the behavior of individuals within a group, it can lead to further limitation or prevention of intercultural communication through strengthening of these negative stereotypes. Imposing such

8 Brislin, R., Yoshida, T., Cushner, K (1997) Improving intercultural interactions: modules for cross-cultural training programs, Sage Publications  
 9 L. A. Samovar, R. E. Porter, E. R. McDaniel's (2008) Intercultural Communication: A Reader, Wadsworth Publishing  
 10 Allport, G. (1979) The Nature of Prejudice, Addison-Wesley Pub. Co  
 11 Jandt, F. (2001) Intercultural Communication: An Introduction, Sage Publications



negative stereotypes can become “accomplishing of prophecy” for those who are “targeted” by such trends and, therefore, to expose them to risk. Examples of this would be the widespread stereotypes that women are not good drivers, blondes are not so smart, etc. As a result of stereotypes, we may come to a situation where groups that are subject to them to adopt such beliefs and women, for example, to avoid driving cars.

Stereotypes and prejudices are often confused as concepts. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between these two terms in everyday language. Stereotypes are usually based on some kind of contact or image that we have acquired in school, through the media or in the family, which are then generalized to apply to as many related people as possible.

Gordon Allport suggested that stereotypes lead to prejudice<sup>12</sup>. Stereotypes are usually based on a contact or some kind of image that we have acquired in school, through the media or in the family, which are then generalized to apply to as many related people as possible. In other words, stereotypes are more associated with the mental image that one has towards a particular group and which may be true, and prejudices are associated with any assessment or creation of some kind of assurance, without doing research on this group.

### Segregation

In the Merriam Webster dictionary, segregation is defined as “the separation or isolation of a race, class, or ethnic group by enforced or voluntary residence in a restricted area, by barriers to social intercourse, by separate educational facilities, or by other discriminatory means”. Basically, segregation means separation of people based on different criteria, which basically are contrary to the principles of human rights and freedoms.

Segregation occurs when significant restrictions are imposed on less powerful groups through legal, political or regulatory requirements. Also, there is the so-called voluntary segregation, which occurs when people decide to associate only with those like themselves. Most severe form of segregation is the apartheid related to ethnic, religious and cultural diversities.

<sup>12</sup> Allport, G. (1979) *The Nature of Prejudice*, Addison-Wesley Pub. Co





# I

**Part**

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF MEDIA REPORTING  
ON INTERETHNIC AND INTERRELIGIOUS ISSUES

# INTERETHNIC TENSIONS: NEWS OF THE DAY

*Vesna Sopar, Snezana Trpevska and Zaneta Trajkoska*

## **1. Introduction**

### *1.1. Subject of the analysis*

Subject of this analysis is the media coverage of issues with multiethnic and interreligious character, i.e. the form and contents of articles, news items and online packages in the print, electronic and online media in Macedonia. The monitoring and analysis are focused on the “most relevant topics of public interest to all groups and communities” which stimulated a wider debate in the society in the period when the research was conducted – from January 16<sup>th</sup> until February 12<sup>th</sup> 2012. The analysis is focused on empirical verification of the intensity, forms and contents of the media coverage of the events, as well as on the compliance with the professional journalistic standards in the informing of the public.

### *1.2. Method*

The research was conducted by using the method of content analysis, through which quantitative – qualitative indicators for media monitoring and informing on the events from interethnic and interreligious character were obtained. A multiethnic team of several researchers competent to monitor and analyze the media selected was involved in the conducting of the research. Then, the data gathered was processed with software for statistical analysis, which allowed arriving to valid empirical knowledge on the phenomenon of research, as well as to synthesize the findings and draw conclusions on the situation and the tendencies in the media reporting of these issues.

The analysis was conducted to texts/news items/packages which explicitly or implicitly treat the interethnic or inter-religious issues in the area of politics (external, internal), economy, culture, education, sports and other areas of concern to the Republic of

Macedonia. The selection was made on the basis of the following criteria: (a) all news items in prime times news programs (news) in the electronic media – radio and TV stations; (b) all articles in the printed media (from the front to the last page) regardless of the section they belong to and (c) all packages in the online media.

A comprehensive coding framework for the media items, texts and packages was developed to conduct the content analysis: a coding sheet (for each type of media), coding manual and a plan for coding. The coding sheet was consisted of several groups of variables, structured in the following manner: (a) general data (context, area, genre, author, size of the text/duration of the item/length of the online text, page where the text is printed/order of the text/announcement of the text/news item), (b) professional aspects (title/header/subtitle of the text, internal/external title of the package, relationship between the title and the text, illustration, relationship between the illustration and the text, audio/video presentation of the news item, source of information by type, status, page, ethnic background, reason for writing of the text, access to the text) and (c) aspects related to the contents (thematic structure and rhetorical strategy of the text/news item/package).

Content wise, one text, i.e. journalistic item or online package is taken as a contextual unit of analysis. Within each text, news item or package, the units of analysis were the different aspects in the reporting, classified in the four groups of variables.

### 1.3. Goals and research questions

The purpose of this analysis was to identify to what extent the media respected particular professional principles of reporting on these issues:

- Which events focused on the interethnic and interreligious issues and to what extent were present in the reporting of all media?
- Which areas (or sectors) are most frequently reported in the media?
- How much importance did the media give to these topics, viewed from the aspect of the order and the announcement of the news items or the place and the page of the texts, i.e. Whether these topics were announced as main events of the day?
- What journalistic genres were most frequently used for treatment of these topics and whether the rule of separation of news and comments was respected in the journalistic practice?
- What sources are used in the reporting and to what extent the rule of using two sources in the reporting of a particular event is complied with?
- What was the approach by the media in the reporting of these topics (positive, negative, ambivalent or neutral)?
- How much the media reported these events “authentically”, i.e. whether the newsrooms worked on these topics by gathering data and doing field research?

### 1.4. Period and media included in the analysis

The analysis applies to all texts/news items or packages (in the online media) directly or indirectly related to interethnic and interreligious issues, published in the period from January 16<sup>th</sup> until February 12<sup>th</sup> 2012. Because of the specifics of the media scene in Macedonia and in order to obtain comparable data, a selection has been made by type (print, radio, TV), profile (public, private) and nature of the media (focus on specific

target audience, for instance, Albanian, Roma, Turkish population). The following media were included in the analysis:

- Daily newspapers - Dnevnik, Utrinski vesnik, Vecer, Vest, Nova Makedonija, Fokus, Koha (in Albanian language), Zurnal (in Albanian language), Lajm (in Albanian language);
- Radio – stations – Macedonian Radio 1, Macedonian Radio 2 (in Albanian language), Macedonian Radio 2 (in Roma language), Macedonian Radio 2 (in Turkish language), Kanal 77;
- TV stations – MTV 1, MTV 2 (in Albanian language), MTV 2 (in Turkish language), MTV 2 (in Roma language), Sitel, Kanal 5, Telma, Alfa, Alsat M (in Albanian language), Alsat M (in Macedonian language);
- Online informative media – Kurir, Sky, Plus Info, MKD MK (all working in Macedonian language).

### 1.5 Professional frameworks and standards

A starting point in the research of the media coverage of interethnic and interreligious issues were the fundamental international documents, as well as the provisions from the national legislation, journalistic codes and the professional journalistic practice:

- Provisions from article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights implemented in the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia and in the Broadcasting Law of 2005 which refer to the principles on which the programs should be based on, with a particular emphasis on the respect of rights and freedom of individuals and different groups and communities in the society.
- The Code of Journalists of Macedonia, i.e. article 10 according to which “the journalist should not consciously create or process information which threaten human rights or freedoms, should not speak the language of hatred and should not encourage violence and discrimination on any basis (national, religious, racial, gender, social, language, sexual orientation, political...), as well as the article 11 stating that “the journalist shall observe the generally accepted community standards of decency and respect for ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in Macedonia”.
- Code of principles of conduct of journalists by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), which, among other things, specifies that “the journalists shall be aware of the danger of inciting discrimination through the media and should invest maximum efforts to avoid discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion and national and social origin”.
- The Diversity Reporting Manual published for the Balkan countries by the Media Diversity Institute in London (MDI), where detailed guidelines are offered to the journalists in relation to the professional standards for diversity reporting.
- The editorial guidelines of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), which are the most precisely developed professional code for journalistic reporting on diverse topics, including diversity reporting;
- The Diversity Reporting Handbook produced by the School of Journalism and Public Relations, supported by the UNESCO Office in Venice.



### 1.6 Structure of the analysis

In the text below the results of the analysis are presented in the following order: print media, TV stations, radio stations, online media and the general conclusions from the entire analysis at the end. The key findings for each type of media are summarized at the beginning and the data is then analyzed to provide an insight on the general line of reporting and the use of the professional journalistic standards. At the end of the text that refers to the group of media an overview on the headlines of the articles or the news items analyzed is provided.

# PRINTED MEDIA

## Key Findings on the printed media reporting

- The press showed great interest in the interethnic and interreligious issues that colored the public debate in Macedonia during January and February, when the media reporting on these issues was analyzed. Thematically, the events associated with the Vevcani Carnival dominated in the print media, followed by the European Championship in Handball (texts in which this issue was treated in an interethnic context), the renaming of several schools in the Municipality of Cair in Skopje and the Project for integrated education of the Government and the OSCE.
- Most of the space for these topics was allocated by Fokus, Nova Makedonija and Dnevnik and the least space was provided by Lajm and Vest. They also differentiate in regard to the contextualization of the topics. The religious aspect dominates in Nova Makedonija and Fokus and the political one in all other newspapers analyzed.
- The analysis has clearly shown that the print media, instead of putting focus on a comprehensive and analytical processing of these sensitive topics, through the rich spectrum of journalistic genres, decided to use a dominantly “daily-informative” factual treatment of the topics. In most of the newspapers there are dominantly news and reports (70,6% of all analyzed texts), although there were media in which the analytical forms were mostly present (19,8% are analyses and commentaries). There are dominantly analytical genres in Dnevnik and Nova Makedonija, with half of the commentaries in Nova Makedonija only.
- The analysis has shown that in most of the articles (60,5% of the total number of texts), the actual interethnic and interreligious issues were treated as topics of big importance in the newspapers, because they were most frequently announced at the front page of the newspaper (especially in Koha and Zurnal), or published on the first four pages of the newspaper.
- Although most of the articles on these topics were signed by journalists (77,4% of all texts analyzed), it is of particular concern that there is a significant number of articles without their author mentioned (21,0%). Fokus and Vecer have most articles not being signed by the author, while in Fokus this is a case with almost half of the texts analyzed (or 45,4%).

- Professionally, the print gives an advantage to the precise sources of information; however the number of vague and imprecise sources of information is not to be neglected as well. The newspapers which most frequently used imprecise and vague sources of information are Utrinski vesnik and Dnevnik (in almost 1/3 of the texts analyzed), while Koha and Lajm had the least imprecise and vague sources of information.
- Although in half of the texts analyzed two or several sources of information were quoted, still it is of concern that in more than one third of the articles there was only one source of information stated.
- It is of concern that half of the articles analyzed have either “negative” (33,9%) or positive (8,5%) or “ambivalent” (6,9%) approach in the treatment of the interethnic and interreligious topics. This conclusion shows that in almost all newspapers there are serious violations of the responsibility for impartial and balanced reporting on sensitive issues of this kind. There is an exception of this in Utrinski vesnik, where 92,3% of the articles are neutral, i.e. they do not have any qualifications or assessments made.

### **General line of reporting**

In the period monitored, the analysis has registered 248 news items related with inter-ethnic and interreligious issues. The first three places by the number of written articles are taken up by Fokus (with the biggest number of articles on this topic – 26,6%), Nova Makedonija (with 18,5%) and Dnevnik (with 12,5%), while the last ones are taken up by Lajm and Vest (with 4,4% i.e. 3,2% of the total number of texts analyzed).

Daily	Number of texts	%
Utrinski vesnik	13	5,2
Dnevnik	31	12,5
Nova Makedonija	46	18,5
Vest	8	3,2
Vecer	26	10,5
Koha	22	8,9
Zurnal	25	10,1
Fokus	66	26,6
Lajm	11	4,4
Total	248	100,0

*Table1. Number of published texts in different dailies*

As for the areas in which the topics of inter-ethnic and interreligious character are placed, they dominantly have a political inclination (50,4% of the articles analyzed), followed by those in the area of religion (25,9%) and much less the other areas, such as sports and education.



Areas of the articles	Frequency of the articles	%
Politics – domestic	125	50,4
Politics – international	7	2,8
Economy	1	0,4
Culture	3	1,2
Education	20	8,1
Religion	64	25,8
Civil society	5	2,0
Crime and corruption	1	0,4
Quality of everyday life	2	0,8
Sports	18	7,3
Other	2	0,8
Total	248	100,0

Table 2. Area of the articles

Media are divided in terms of the area in which they “place” the analyzed articles of inter-ethnic and interreligious character. Those in Lajm, Utrinski vesnik, Koha, Zurnal and Vest are most frequently in the context of the domestic politics; in Dnevnik and Vecer, beside the context of domestic politics, the area of religion is treated as well, while in Nova Makedonija and Fokus texts dominate that are written from the perspective of religion followed by those covering the political perspective.

The print media also differ in the “equipment” and in the space provided for the texts of inter-ethnic and interreligious character. The informative genres such as news/extended news and reports dominate (70,6% of all texts analyzed), followed by the analytical forms with 19,8%, i.e. analyses and commentaries.

Genre	Package frequency	%
News item	94	37,9
Press release	6	2,4
Statement	12	4,8
Report/Dispatch	81	32,7
Analysis	28	11,3
Interview	2	0,8
Reportage	4	1,6
Comment	21	8,5
Total	248	100,0

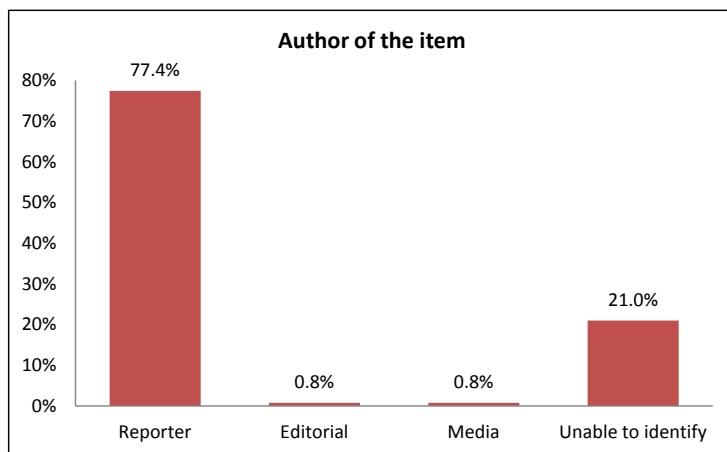
Table 3. Genre structure

In Utrinski vesnik and Vest the interreligious and inter-ethnic topics are most frequently processed in reports (61,5% of the texts and 62,5% of the texts subsequently), in Koha, Lajm and Zurnal in news/extended news (72,7%, 90,9% and 68,0% of the texts subsequently), while in Fokus and Vecer the two genre forms are represented with an equal frequency (in Fokus 45,4% of the articles are news, while 31,8% reports, and their number in Vecer is the same – 42,3% are news/extended news and reports). Dnevnik and Nova Makedonija are the only dailies in which, beside reports, analyses and com-

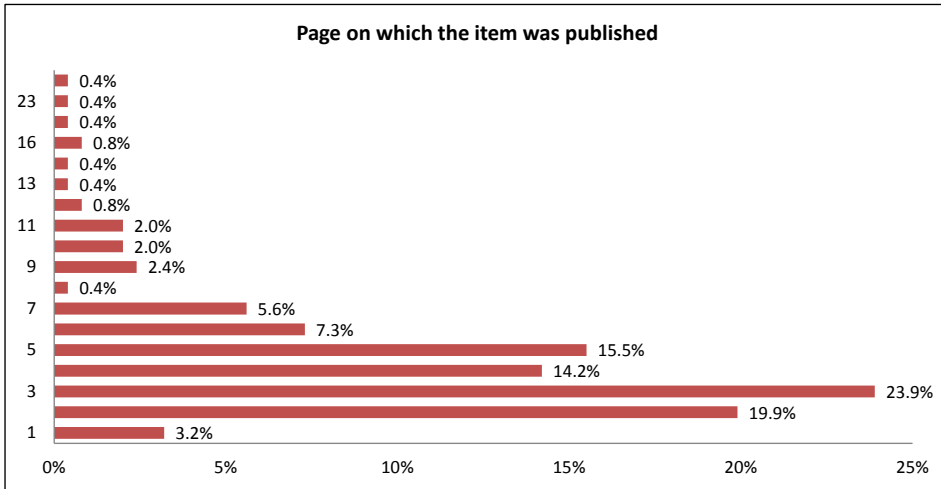
mentaries for these sensitive topics are used very frequently. More specifically, 70% of all analyses on topics of inter-ethnic and interreligious character are published in these two dailies, while half of all commentaries are most present in Nova Makedonija.

This genre “division” shows the internal profiling of the dailies which subsequently results with the particular approach towards the topics of inter-ethnic and interreligious inclination. Moreover, although the press in its nature is an additional and supportive source of information (especially in relation to the television), it has the ability and the “privilege” to not only inform citizens, but also to observe, interpret and explain events in depth, not binding to the time dynamics of the electronic media. Judging from the analysis, in most of the newspapers the “daily informative” factual approach dominates, rather than the focus to the comprehensive and analytical processing of the issues in the rich variety of journalistic genres.

Expectedly, the journalists are most common authors of the texts in the print media. Their names are signed in 77,4% of all texts analyzed. However, it is of concern that there is a significant number of texts with an author signed (21,0%), i.e. texts in which the author cannot be identified. Fokus and Vecer have most of the unsigned articles. This is a case of almost half of the texts analyzed in Fokus (or 45,4%), which is a fact that questions the authenticity of the information presented.



On the other hand, an indicator on the importance given to some article is certainly its cue at the front page, the number of the page in the newspaper where the text is printed and the size of the text itself. The analysis of the total number of texts analyzed has shown that most of the articles related with inter-ethnic and interreligious issues are treated as topics of great importance. 10,5% of the articles have cues on the front page, most of all in *Žoh* and *Žurnal* (although they are most of all news/extended news), while 89,5% of the texts do not have cues at the front page, mostly in *Vest*, *Fokus* and *Vecer*. Out of the texts without cues, 22,2% are printed at the first four pages and this refers to all dailies analyzed, and especially in *Vecer*, *Žoh* and *Žurnal*. In regard to the number of texts, almost half of all texts (45,4%) occupy a space of half or up to one page.



### ***Journalistic professionalism***

The print media differ in relation to the use of sources of information, the mentioning of several different sides as sources, the grounds, the approach and illustrations in the text. In relation to the sources of information by type, precise sources dominate in all newspapers; however the number of vague and imprecise sources of information is not to be neglected as well. Therefore, Utrinski vesnik and Dnevnik use vague or imprecise sources of information when treating inter-ethnic and interreligious issues in almost 1/3 of the texts analyzed. Koha and Lajm have the smallest number of imprecise or vague sources of information. This practice of using the so-called “our sources”, “high officials” or so violates one of the basic journalistic standards for publishing of accurate and checked information, which is especially important when such sensitive inter-ethnic and interreligious issues are covered.

Newspaper	Use of unclear/ unspecified sources		Use of specified sources		The journalist as a source		No sources of information	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Utrinski V.	4	30,8	10	76,9	4	30,8	2	15,4
Dnevnik	10	32,2	27	87,1	3	9,7	4	12,9
N. Makedonija	10	21,8	36	78,3	12	26,0	0	0,0
Vest	2	25,0	7	87,5	0	0,0	0	0,0
Vecer	6	23,1	22	84,6	12	46,2	4	15,4
Koha	2	9,0	18	81,8	8	36,4	4	18,2
Zurnal	4	16,0	21	84,0	6	24,0	4	16,0
Fokus	14	21,2	55	83,3	2	3,0	9	13,6
Lajm	1	9,1	11	100,0	3	27,3	0	0,0
Total	53	21,4	207	83,5	40	16,1	37	14,9

Table 4 Sources of information by type <sup>1)</sup>

1) Note: The total percentage of the data is larger than 100% because there are vague and imprecise sources of information in particular articles

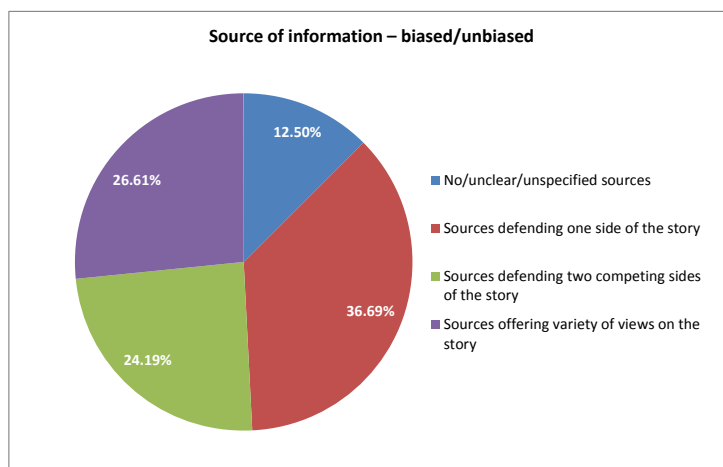
The analysis of the sources by the status of the source has shown the most frequent use of both official and alternative sources of information in one article. Almost 73% articles include one of the alternative and official sources or the two sources simultaneously. More specifically, when covering inter-ethnic and interreligious issues the print media rely on the state institutions or their representatives and the representatives of the ruling parties, as well as on the different institutions, associations, famous personalities, opposition political parties, citizens.

Status of the sources	Frequency of the packages	%
International sources only	8	3,9
Official sources only	62	28,9
Alternative sources only	56	26,1
International and official sources	7	3,4
International and alternative	5	2,5
Official and alternative sources	64	29,9
International, official and alternative sources	11	5,3
Total	215	100,0

Table 5 Sources of information by their status

Only Vest (with 62,5% of the articles) and Lajm (with 54,5% of the articles) do not comply with the presented tendency of reporting, where articles with only official sources dominate, as well as Zurnal, which is a media where the articles with only alternative sources dominate, beside the large percentage of articles with no sources or vague/ imprecise sources of information.

And probably most important issue in regard to topics that mention opposing sides is which sides are represented. In this context, it could be said that in half of the articles analyzed (50,8%) sources from two or several sides are consulted, while in 1/3 of the articles (36,7%) sources of one of the “concerned” parties is represented.



In regard to the illustrations used in the texts, the analysis has shown that 2/3 of the articles are “equipped” with illustrations, most frequently present in the reports and the analyses. These are usually photographs and some other types by coincidence, such as caricatures and artistic drawings.

The photographs are most frequently either formal illustrations that do not point out to the specific contents of the article (in 44,1% of the cases), or illustrations that express the main topic of the article (in 32,9% of the cases), while the number of illustrations that emphasize the main topic (in 13,5% of the cases) or distort it (in 5,0% of the cases) is much smaller or the illustrations that vividly, allegorically or in figurative terms supplement the contents of the article (only 3,6% of the texts). Regardless of the type of illustrations, formal, those that express or those that emphasize the contents of the article, they most frequently “support” the contents of the reports and the analyses. It could be concluded that there is an insufficient “creativity” of the press when using illustrations, especially if their meaning for this type of media is taken into consideration.

Types of illustrations	Frequency of the packages	%
Photograph	166	66,9
Comic	3	1,2
Cartoon	0	0,0
Artistic drawing	1	0,4
Graphics/tables	0	0,0
Total	170	100,0

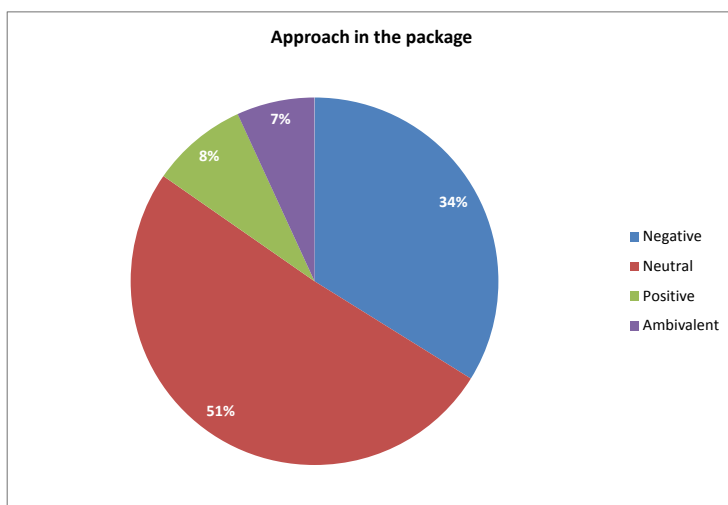
Table 6 Types of illustration of the packages

Reason for the texts published in the newspapers is the inter-ethnic or interreligious questions or pseudo – events (in 32.7% of cases) or actual real events (in 31.5% of cases). That is, the press reported on specific events and reactions to those events. Analyzed by media individually, it should be noted that current events are most common in Nova Makedonija and the pseudo – events in Zurnal and Koha, while in Vecer and Fokus the current and pseudo – events are almost equally represented. Dnevnik and Nova Makedonija are newspapers with the largest number of articles whose reason is the wider social and political significance of the topic, as well as more general issues (such are 48.4% of the articles in the first daily and 32.6% of the texts in the second one), which is to be expected given the biggest number of analytical articles, analyzes and commentaries.

Occasion	Frequency	%
Scheduled event	19	7,7
Actual event	78	31,5
Actual staged event	28	11,3
Pseudo-event	81	32,7
Social event	38	15,3
Other	4	1,6
Total	248	100,0

Table 7 Occasion

The analysis of the approach taken by the media towards the event and its participants shows that it is neutral in half of the articles (50,8%), but it is of concern that 1/3 of the texts have a negative approach (33,9%), 8,5% a positive one and 6,9% an ambivalent approach. Most neutral is Utrinski vesnik, where up to 92,3% of the articles do not have qualifications and assessments. It is followed by Dnevnik, Nova Makedonija and Vest with more than 60% neutral articles, while Fokus and Vecer are in the middle with more than 50% neutral articles. Koha and Zurnal have the smallest percentage of neutral texts (20%). In general terms, regardless of the extent to which the three types of “biased” approach (negative, positive or ambivalent) are present in each individual media, it could be concluded that both the “negative” and “positive” positioning in all newspapers directly affects the responsibility for impartial and balanced coverage of the events, especially in relation to sensitive issues.



### Overview of headlines

Most of the texts analyzed vary from half to one page in volume and they are most frequently published on the second or the third page of the newspaper and in the form of a report or an analysis by genre. Being supplemented with breaking headlines and subheadlines or headers, as well as with photographs, they emphasize the inter-ethnic i.e. the interreligious dimension of the events. Several illustrative examples of headlines/headers of the texts are given below.

**Utrinski vesnik** “Does the wind take the co-existence in Struga”; subheadline “The situation escalates with the burning of the state flag, demolishing of buses, announcements for resignations of Vevcani people, calls for resignations” (January 30), “The ethnic committee asks: Quo vadis Macedonia”; header “the MPs from the ‘omni’ were called for settling down of tensions and point out that it was a scenario of some political parties (February 2), “The Macedonian Orthodox Church and the Police are calming down tensions”, subheadline “Demonstrations of young Macedonians from Struga

announced for tonight (February 2), *“Local Albanians extinguished the burning church in Mala Recica”*, subheadline – In one year this is a third fire in the monastery, which is still in reconstruction after a fire was set up in 2001 (February 2), *“VMRO DPMNE and DUI like cats and dogs in Struga”*, subheadline – the local VMRO DPMNE people turned back to Merko some time ago and they treat him as “Crvenkovski’s product” .... (February 2). All these articles are reports by their genre.

**Dnevnik:** *„Skanderbeg and Mother Theresa should unite us“*, header – Historical lessons that were not learnt (January 20), *„Are ethnically clean educational institutions created“*, header – Macedonians leave the schools in Cair (February 6), *„We need a strategy for a peaceful co-existence“*, header – The inter-ethnic tensions calmed down, but were not resolved (February 9), *„Macedonians and Albanians look for a common ground to understand each other“*, header – Is the project for integrated education going to start (February 10), *„Everyone should work on advancing the co-existence“*, header – Meeting Gruevski – Volleback (February 10), *„Gruevski and Ahmeti are going to simmer down the language“*, header – The OSCE strategy for intergrated education on restoration (February 11). These are analytical texts by genre (five analyses and one commentary) and one report.

**Nova Makedonija:** *„Struga: the religious tolerance fell in front of the political struggles“*, subheadline – People did not understand the meaning of carnivalization...(January 30), *“Struga boils at minus 20”*, subheadline – Although everyone committed to calming down the situation after the protests...protests continue in Struga today...(January 31), *“Fire starters and perpetrators of tensions”*, subheadline – The leaders of religious communities, the President Ivanov and the Prime Minister Gruevski called for reconciliation and increased interreligious understanding (February 1), *“Whose the matchbox?”*, subheadline – Are the last incidents in Macedonia caused by marginal crime groups or...(February 2), *“They won’t succeed with a new 2001”*, header – Who decided and why to mess with the Balkans and confront the Christians and muslims in Europe (February 3), *“Struga is a proof of the fragile interreligious tolerance”*, subheadline – The events in Struga are not a surprise, but a consequence of the ongoing tensions...(February 4), *“Walk away and graze grass!”*, subheadline – It would be unserious to seriously understand OSCE if we look at the smiling and totally careless characters of Ali Ahmeti and its Chief of Staff Artan Grubi...(February 10). Most of them are analytical texts (three commentaries, two analyses) and two reports.

**Vest:** *„Night shifts in front of the two churches in Oktisi“*, header – Following the nationalist graffiti (January 31), *„Hatred as a political offer“*, header – Ethnic tensions serving the local elections (January 31), *„This is Skopje’s job“*, header – Vest in Labunista, after the fire in the church of Saint Nicola the day before yesterday (February 1), *„Who is to be blamed for the incidents“*, header – Committee on Relations Among the Communities has called for settling of the tensions (February 2). By their genre form, these are three reports and a reportage.

**Vecer:** *„The politics causes inter-ethnic divisions in Struga“*, header – New protests announced for today (January 31), *„Gruevski shall not distance himself from the events“*, header – The opposition calls (February 2), *„The co-existence should not be a victim of the burning heads“*, subheadline – All participants at the debate, the Committee members, mayors of Struga and Vevcani, political parties agree that those who are guilty should be punished, to calm down tensions and citizens and the inter-ethnic relations



should not be a victim of someone's political agenda (February 2), „*Reduce tensions and punish those who are guilty*“, header – The foreign missions in Macedonia appeal (February 2), „*A lot of progress after 2001, but the incidents in Struga are not to be neglected*“, header – The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Knut Vollebaek with a message (February 10). Three of the articles are reports, and two are news.

**Koha:** „*Vevcani is a risk for the co-existence*“, header – Protest in Struga in defence of the Islam values (February 28), „*The politics blames politics*“, header – The Committee on Relations Among the Communities discusses the last incidents (February 2), „*The monastery in Recica rescued*“, header – Locals prevent burning of a building (February 2), „*The police asks for a protection from citizens*“, header – Mol has closed eyes in front of the offenses coming from the Albanians (February 3), „*The snow has cooled down heads in Bitola*“, header – The protest “against Albanians” failed (February 4). Three of these articles are reports, one analysis and a news.

**Zurnal:** „*Who blows the fire?*“, header – Inter-ethnic tensions in Macedonia are heating up, „*How to return the devil in a bottle*“, subheadline – I want to be wrong, but with complete certainty I can say that in this case the devil is not among the hooligans. The devil sits in a different place from where he orchestrates the Nazi drives of the hooligans (January 28), „*Solution instead of provocations*“, header – The last tensions in the focus of the analysts (February 7), „*Mol has calmed down Merko and Ilievski*“, header – An influence over the mayors of Struga and Vevcani (February 11). Two of the articles are news, one is analysis and one commentary.

**Fokus:** „*Salty jokes, bitter consequences*“, subheadline – VMRO – DPMNE and DUI divide the central and local power in Struga – it is their responsibility to manage the hidden conflict, which can dangerously escalate (January 30), „*The Government has sponsored the Islamophobia in Vevcani*“, header – Reaction of the Islamic Religious Community (January 31), „*First they burned Struga and now they distinguish the fire*“, header – The incidents in the city of Drim River stopped, but...(January 31), „*Hitler scenarios in Labunista*“, header – Why is the church of Saint Nikola burnt (January 1), „*Everything is directed, let's find the directors*“, header – Who lights the inter-ethnic fuse in Struga region? (January 1), „*The state deliberately fuels the inter-ethnic fires*“, header – The Albanian opposition blames (February 2), „*The situation is under control, but it can get out of control*“, header – The experts warn (February 3), „*Crvenkovski: VMRO and DUI lighted the fuse in the region of Struga*“, subheadline – SDSM leader Branko Crvenkovski blamed the ruling parties at the debate in Bitola ... that they cause inter-ethnic tensions in the state (February 8), „*The ambassadors distinguish the inter-ethnic fires*“, header – The tensions activated the diplomacy (February 10). By their genre form, three of the articles are news, four reports and two reportages.

**Lajm:** „*Death for the Albanians again*“, header – Offensive graffiti in the Bitola mosque (February 2), „*Gruevski: The opposition has caused the tensions*“, header – The Prime Minister did not accept responsibility (February 6), „*The opposition criticizes the Government about the inter-ethnic relations*“, header – The national program on integration of Macedonia is presented (February 9), „*Gruevski should learn the Albanian language for the sake of good inter-ethnic relations*“, header – The inter-ethnic incidents brought Vollebaek in Skopje (February 11). All articles are news by their genre form.



# TELEVISION STATIONS

## Key Findings

- The interethnic and interreligious topics moved into the first places at the public agenda in the analyzed period, as some events occurred having an interreligious and interethnic dimension and they dominated in the reporting of all media: the Vevcani Carnival, the European Handball Championship (the news items in which the sport events were reported from an interethnic perspective), as well as the renaming of the schools in the Municipality of Cair in Skopje. Most of the items on these and similar events (almost 70%) were broadcasted among the first five news items.
- There was a big difference in the volume of reporting on the interethnic and interreligious issues in the TV stations. The private television stations Alsat M (news in Macedonian and news in Albanian language), Kanal 5 and Sitel TV allocated most of the time on these topics, while the public service broadcaster Macedonian Television – news in Macedonian and news in Albanian language as well as Telma TV allocated the least time for these topics. The items were predominantly located in the sphere of politics and religion.
- These topics were most frequently announced as “topics of the day” (especially in the media that were broadcasting program in Albanian language), with rich visuals and almost regularly supported with footages made in places where the events happened. Some media also used archival footages which, contrary to professional standards, were not properly marked most of the time.
- The television stations mostly reported the interethnic and interreligious issues in the informative genre forms (reports and news/extended news), which is quite expected because the analysis included the prime time daily informative shows. Part of the TV stations tried to introduce an analytical approach in the news (especially Alsat M both in the news in Macedonian and the news in Albanian language), which leaves the impression of a detailed and a comprehensive informing of the public, which is unusual for this type of shows.
- The practice of making comments in the announcement of the TV items, in order to influence the opinion of the audience and to interpret the events from a subjective point of view is of particular worry. This practice is noticed on Sitel TV, where the announcement of one of the news items was 9 minutes long.

- A priority was given to the precise sources of information in the main TV news, especially in the public service broadcaster (the first program of the MTV). However, the significant number of vague and imprecise sources of information should not be neglected, which clearly points out to the journalistic non-professionalism, therefore making the objectivity of reporting a questionable issue, especially in regard to the interethnic and interreligious topics.
- In the context of reporting on “sensitive” interethnic and interreligious issues, it is of special concern that there is no sufficient representation of two or more sources of information, i.e. the fact that there is one-sided reporting in most of the media only from the angle of their own “ethnic” group.
- It is of particular concern that most of the violations of this professional journalistic standard are noticed in the public service broadcaster, which has the obligation to promote social cohesion as stated in all documents and standards. Namely, in the MTV news in Albanian language, 92,3% of the news items have only one source of information. On the other hand, in the Macedonian language news there was a very professional conduct in this regard – 83,4% of the items consist two or several sources of information.
- In regard to the approach by the journalists/media towards these events, it was concluded that there was predominantly “positive<sup>[2]</sup>” approach used towards their own ethnic group, i.e. „negative“<sup>[3]</sup> approach towards the other ethnic group, to the expense of the “neutral” reporting without qualifications and assessments (most visible in the first program of MTV and Telma). This way of reporting does not only distort the “image” of the reality, but it also clearly indicates to a reporting through the ethnocentric perspective, which creates stereotypes towards the “Other”.

### **General line of reporting**

In the period analyzed, the TV stations published a total of 271 news items in which the main focus are the inter-ethnic and interreligious issues. Most of the news items on these issues were broadcasted by Alsat M, especially in the Macedonian language programme. This could be clearly seen from the following table:

TV station	Frequency of broadcasts	%
MTV 1	18	6,6
MTV 2 – Albanian	13	4,8
MTV 2 – Turkish	1	0,4
Sitel	40	14,8
Kanal 5	42	15,1
Alfa	36	13,3
Alsat M - Macedonian	62	22,9
Telma	14	5,2
Alsat M –Albanian	46	17,0
Total	271	100,0

**Table 8** Number of broadcasted packages across TV stations

2 The „positive“ approach includes non-critical support, approval, justification, exaltation or glorification of the event and the actors, which is not supported with facts, arguments or analyses. This is a subjective positioning by the author of the text.

3 The „negative“ approach is not based on facts and impartial arguments, but on unchecked information or rumors, there is a biased, one-sided approach and selection of particular aspects as a basis for a negative qualification. This is sometimes seemingly based on “facts” and “arguments”, but with an objective to “support” the qualifications for the actors expressed with negative adjectives full of emotions or to assign activities with negative connotation to the actors.

Out of all news items analyzed, half of them are in the area of politics (50,2%), 1/5 (22,2%) in the area of religion, while the others in the area of economy, culture, education, civil society, health and sports. The dominant political profiling of the events does not come as a surprise, most of all due to the fact that the politics, directly or indirectly, was “involved” in the events, either through the state and local bodies and institutions or through the political parties.

Topics	Frequency of broadcast	%
Politics – internal	136	50,2
Politics - external	12	4,4
Economy	2	0,7
Culture	11	4,1
Education	13	4,8
Religion	60	21,1
Civil society	18	6,6
Criminality and corruption	5	1,8
Health	1	0,4
Sport	13	4,8
Total	271	100,0

Table 9 Topics

The analysis of the genre structure of the news items published confirms that the TV stations mostly cover the events of inter-ethnic and/or interreligious character with reports (or 57,2% of the news items) followed by the news items packed in the form of news/extended news (18,5%), as well as statements and analyzes (8,1% i.e. 7,7% of the news items). The domination of the informative journalistic genres is logical, given the fact that only the main current affairs programmes were monitored, where the TV stations rarely use the analytical forms of reporting.

Genre	Frequency	%
News item	50	18,5
Press release	9	3,3
Statement	22	8,1
Report/dispatch	155	57,2
Analysis	21	7,7
Interview	7	2,6
Reportage	2	0,7
Comment	2	0,7
Vox pop	3	1,1
Total	271	100,0

Table 10 Genre

Moreover, in terms of genre structure of the news items there are two groups of TV stations. The Macedonian Television – news in Albanian language is in the first group, which most frequently covers the news in a “factual” manner and briefly, though news/extended news, reports on the inter-ethnic and interreligious issues (7,0% of the news

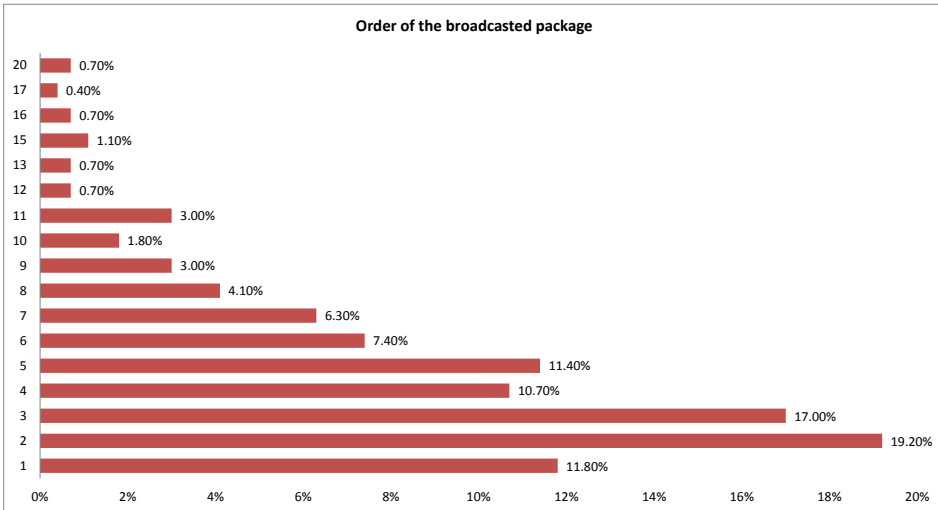


items). Sitel, Kanal 5 and Alsat M – news in Macedonian and Albanian language are in the second group. They try not only to inform, but also interpret these events, through more complex journalistic forms (analyzes and commentaries). This way of processing and presentation, unusual for the informative programmes, exposes the viewers to a journalistic view of the reality, rather than on the actors (individuals) that take part in the event itself. These are often long news items (longer than 4 minutes duration), which further highlights or “frames” the topic that is reported about in a different context, thus an effort is made to influence the public opinion. Most specific is the example of Sitel TV in the news item on the incidents in Struga and the region of Struga following the Vevcani Carnival broadcasted on January 31, which together with the cue lasts for more than 11 minutes (the news item is only 2,5 minutes long). The broadcasting of this news item/ cue not only consumes most of the current affairs programme, but it also gives an impression as if nothing else happened that day. In fact, with this interpretative – narrative approach, that does not rely on professional presentation of facts or testimony, an effort is made to construct i.e. reconstruct the reality and influence the opinion of the viewers.

The events that happened in the period analyzed (especially those related to the Vevcani Carnival and the European Championship in Handball) were in the focus of the daily agenda of the TV stations. Therefore, half of the news items analyzed (57,6%) were separated as “topics of the day”. This trend was followed by Kanal 5, Alsat M – news in Macedonian language and Telma. Contrary to this, most of the news items in Sitel, Macedonian Television – news in Macedonian language and Alfa did not have cues (or 67,5% of the news items in Sitel, 62,9% of the news items in Alfa and 61,1% of the news items on MTV first programme section). On the other hand, these issues bear the sign of very important in Alsat M – news in Albanian language and Macedonian Television – news in Albanian language. Up to 91,3% of the news items had cues at the beginning of the current affairs programme while in the Macedonian television – news in Albanian language all broadcasted news items were announced in the main cue at the beginning. This undoubtedly shows the importance that these TV stations give to such “sensitive” issues.

The fact that the TV stations give great importance to the events of inter-ethnic or interreligious character that happened in the period of analysis is also evident because most of them, or almost 70%, are broadcasted in the first 5 news items. Out of the total number of news items analyzed 11,8% take the first place in the central news programme, 19,2% the second and 17% the third.

This trend is, more or less, present in all television stations, while deviations are observed in a few cases only. Thus, most published news items in the first three places are identified in the Macedonian TV - news in Albanian language (77,0%) and Alsat M - news in Albanian language (69.5%) which is to be expected and coincides with the number of news items that had cues at the beginning. Telma has a separate place too and although it has the lowest number of broadcasted news items of inter-ethnic or interreligious character (along with Macedonian Television - news in Albanian), 78.6% of its news items take the first three places in the current affairs programme. In contrast, Sitel has the lowest number of such news items at the beginning of the current affairs programme (only 15.0%) and it usually places them from fourth to eighth place in the broadcasting.



In regard to the duration of the news items, the analysis shows that they are, on average, with a length of 2 minutes, with the shortest news item of 20 seconds (Alfa TV) and the longest one of even 684 seconds or 11 minutes and 24 seconds (Sitel TV). Sitel has the longest news items on the inter-ethnic and interreligious issues (above 4 minutes), followed by Alsat M – news in Macedonian and Albanian language, which is not normally a case for the informative programme, i.e. this is “ruining” the informative character of the news, although there is an “impression that the public is thoroughly and extensively informed about the events.

### ***Journalistic professionalism***

A very important indicator in the reporting, especially when it comes to inter-ethnic and interreligious issues, is the source of information on which television stations rely in the stories broadcasted. Data from the analysis show that television stations abide to the rule to use accurate sources of information - in 90.4% of the analyzed news items, while in 20.7% of the analyzed news items vague/imprecise sources of information were identified.

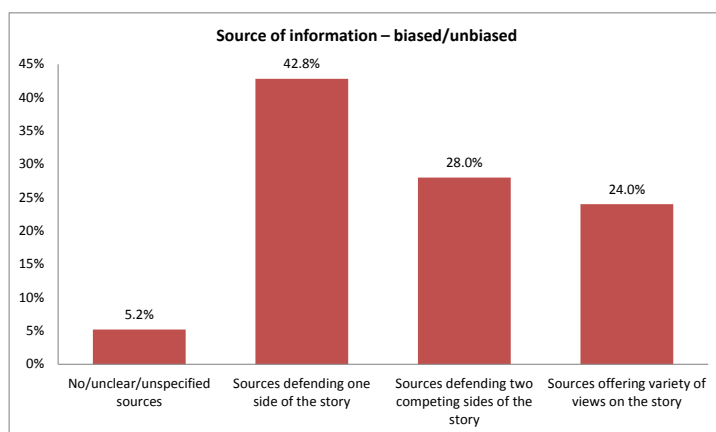
Viewed separately by television stations, Telma and the Macedonian Television – news in Macedonian language are the media that in 100% of their news items use precise sources of information. There is no single news item in Telma where vague and imprecise sources of information are used, while in the first programme of the Macedonian Television the number of imprecise/vague sources should not be neglected at all. Contrary to this, in regard to the use of vague and imprecise sources of information, Kanal 5 “leads” (with 34,2% of the news items) followed by Alsat M – news in Macedonian and Albanian language and Sitel TV. This approach in the informing, especially when it comes to sensitive interreligious and inter-ethnic issues, does not only open a space for speculations, but it could also seriously affect the distortion of the real “image” of the events. It is of particular danger that the use of “our sources”, “in the political circles”, “high govern-

ment officials” keeps the attention of the audience, but it also develops an alibi for the potential (ir)responsibility for the stated news, attitude and qualification. It should also not be neglected that the TV stations publish information without any source of information (especially Kanal 5 and Alsat M – news in Albanian language), which, without any exaggeration, may be placed in the category of “suspicious” information that indicate to an “extreme” unprofessionalism in the media reporting.

TV station	Unclear/imprecise sources		Precise sources		The journalist as a source		No sources	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
MTV 1	5	27,8	18	100,0	1	5,6	0	0,0
MTV 2 A	2	15,4	12	92,3	1	7,7	0	0,0
Sitel	9	22,5	36	90,0	11	27,5	3	7,5
Kanal 5	14	34,2	36	87,8	8	19,5	1	2,4
Alfa	5	13,9	33	91,7	4	11,1	2	5,6
Alsat M - Mac.	13	20,9	55	88,7	14	22,6	3	4,8
Telma	0	0,0	14	100,0	2	14,3	0	0,0
Alsat M Alb.	8	17,3	40	87,0	4	8,7	4	8,7
Total	56	20,7	245	90,4	45	16,6	13	4,8

Table 11 Sources of information by type

On the other hand, when the inter-ethnic and interreligious topics are covered both official (state institutions, their representatives, ruling parties, news agencies) and alternative sources of information (news agencies, institutions, famous personalities, opposition parties, citizens) are simultaneously used. The news items in which the official or the alternative sources only are used or when the two types of sources of information are simultaneously used count to 233 out of 271 news items, or 86% of all sources analyzed.



The use of sources of information from the two sides is certainly the most important part when reporting on sensitive issues and topics, therefore the large number of news items where only one – sided source of information is used is of particular concern. This is identified

in 42,8% of the news items analyzed, while in 28,0% of the news items sources of the two “concerned” parties are used, and in 24,0% of the news items sources from several sides.

The largest deviations from this journalistic standard are identified in the Macedonian Television – news in Albanian language, where up to 92,3% of the news items have one – sided source of information only, and the lowest number is identified in the Macedonian Television – news in Macedonian language, where in 83,4% of the news items sources from two or several sides are used. It is worrying that it is one “media house” with “a single editorial policy”, but it is entirely divided. This one-sided view of the events related to inter-ethnic and interreligious issues does not only violate the professional journalistic standards, but a distorted image about these events is also put forward.

The commercial TV stations violate this standard in most of the cases. For instance, in 57,5% of the news items in Sitel only sources from one side are mentioned, while in 40,0% of the news items two or several sides are mentioned. The ration in Alsat M – news in Albanian language is 43,5% versus 50,0% and in Telma 57,1,% versus 42,9%. Still there is a need of more serious approach in this segment of informing by the television stations if they pretend to present themselves as applying a “real” journalistic professionalism. This is particularly important because in cases of tensions or potential conflict every side has “its own truth” and it is in the interest of objective informing that the media outlet presents the arguments of all parties involved.

An important segment of TV journalism is the visualization of the news items broadcasted. A minimum visualization required for preparation of the current affairs programme is the moderator in the studio who can be seen at the monitor. But this is usually defined as a lack of a visual presentation. The analyzes confirmed that the number of such news items is very low, almost insignificant. Therefore, the news items on inter-ethnic and interreligious issues are dominantly “supported” with current or archived footage, which gives an even greater weight to the events reported. In 77,5% of the news items there is an actual footage provided to prove the reliability of the event, and in 57,2% of the news items an archived footage is used.

Type of illustration	Frequency of the packages	%
No illustration	15	5,5
Slide	25	9,2
Graphs, tables, text	5	1,8
Archived recording	155	57,2
Actual recording	210	77,5
Live broadcast	7	2,6
<b>Total</b>	<b>417</b>	

Table 12 Illustration

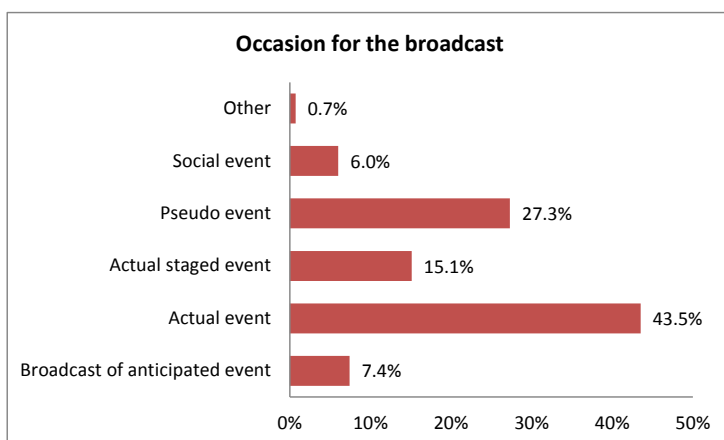
The news in Macedonian language on MTV have provided current footage for all presented news items of inter-ethnic and/or interreligious character, while the news in Albanian language only for half of the news items broadcasted. The percentage of current or archived footages in the other TV stations corresponds to the general distribution of data. Some deviations, i.e. a larger presence of current versus archived footages, are identified in Alfa, Telma and Alsat M - Albanian language.

It should be emphasized that when it comes to the archived footages, seen from a professional aspect, they should be marked as such. However, out of the news items analyzed, in 11,0% only the footages are marked as archived, while in 89,0% of the cases this principles has not been respected. Most of the unmarked archived footages are identified in Alsat M – news in Albanian language and news in Macedonian language and Telma, and the lowest number is in Sitel.

On the other hand, when it comes to the connection of the footage with the news item broadcasted (regardless if it is current or archived one), the data shows that most of the footages either express<sup>[4]</sup> the main topic (in 64,9% of the news items) or emphasize<sup>[5]</sup> the main message in the news item broadcasted (in 21,4% of the news items), while in 10,0% of the news items there is a formal footage. Viewed comparatively, by TV stations, the footages that express the main topic dominate in the Macedonian Television – news in Macedonian language (in 83,3% of the cases) and Telma (in 85,7% of the cases), while the footages that emphasize the main topic are most frequently present in Alsat M – news in Albanian language (37,0% of the cases). In the first case we could speak about the so-called “classical” professionalism with a footage that specifically points out to the contents of the news item, and in the second case – about the so-called “mounted” professionalism with a footage that has an emotional appeal and potentially great influence to the public.

The most frequent reason for producing the news items that treat inter-ethnic and interreligious issues are the current real events<sup>[6]</sup> and pseudo - events<sup>[7]</sup>, the first ones in 43,5% of the news items analyzed and the later in 27,3% of the news items analyzed.

Undoubtedly, in most of the cases journalists reported about specific current events that have occurred, followed by reactions to those events, in the form of press releases, press conferences, statements, reports.



4 The footage that “expresses” the main topic points out specifically to the contents of the news item and it is often recorded directly from the location where the event took place.

5 The footage that “emphasizes” the main message of the news item not only points out to the contents of the news item, but it also have an emotional appeal.

6 „Actual real event” is a specific event that has realistically occurred. The most important criteria is that the event itself is reported about.

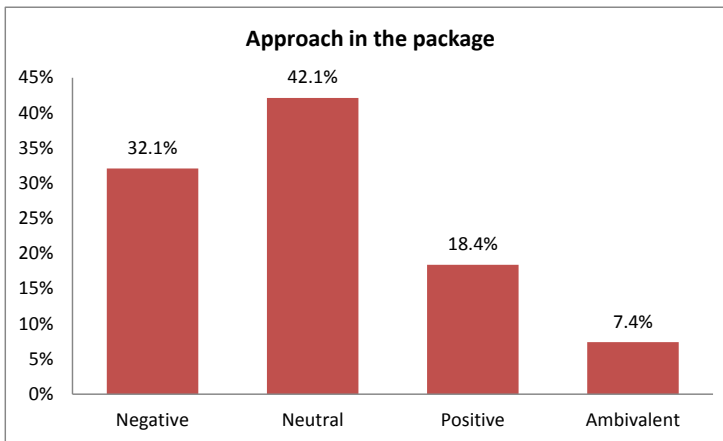
7 A news item for a „pseudo - event” is an item that refers to one or several reactions to a particular current event. This means press releases, press conferences, statements, results of public opinion survey, reports, analyses.



The most important part of the analysis refers to the approach by the journalists towards the sensitive topics for the different ethnic groups in Macedonia. The approach can be neutral, positive, negative or an ambivalent one.

The image for the approach used in the news items shows that the neutral one dominated in the reporting (42,1%), however there is a large percentage of news items in which the journalists had a negative approach (32,1%). The positive approach is identified in 18,5% and the ambivalent one in 7,4% of all news items analyzed. Most neutral in the reporting, without qualifications and assessments, are Telma (in 85,7% of the cases) and the Macedonian Television – news in Macedonian language (in 77,8% of the cases). In the other TV stations, the “negative”, i.e. the “positive” biased, single-sided or selective approach towards the actors and events of inter-ethnic and interreligious character is present to a large extent. This means that in more than half of the news items bias in the reporting is identified, either in “negative” or in a “positive” direction.

Regardless of the event, and especially when it is of “sensitive: multiethnic/religious dimension, what is least expected by journalists and the media is to assess the events and the actors through a “negative”, single-sided perspective, “positive”, subjective, non-critical support or “ambivalent”, positive-negative view. The news as an informative programme have a great influence to the formation or strengthening of the attitudes and convictions of the public towards the other communities, therefore the respect of professional principles for unbiased and objective informing is of exceptional importance.



### **Overview of headlines**

Most of the news items on inter-ethnic and interreligious issues have cues at the beginning of the current affairs programme. They take place among the first news items broadcasted in the form of reports, but also in analytical genres. They are most frequently long news items, almost regularly supported with current and archived footages. All these aspects clearly explain the significance given to these issues, with a clearly defined rhetoric strategy of emphasizing. Several illustrative examples of cues of the news items broadcasted:



**Macedonian Television – programme in Macedonian language:** „No one shall be blamed, the passions shall be calmed down. The Vice Prime Minister responsible for the Framework Agreement has the following statement: Both the central and local government should be involved ...“ (January 30), „The Macedonian inter-ethnic peace and interreligious tolerance and co-existence are stronger than the religious structures and the irresponsibility of some individuals. The MP Ademi has also reacted ...“ (February 1), „The tensions shall be calmed down, the co-existence and inter-ethnic dialogue shall be restored, and this was also asked for by the members of the Committee on Relations Among the Communities... They have asked for responsibility and accountability by the religious communities, local governments and the political parties (February 1), „The inter-ethnic tensions shall not be stirred up. The institutions responsible shall undertake measures to locate those who are guilty and punish them... these are the points of the debate in the Center for Understanding and Institutional Cooperation ...“ (February 3), „Is there any construction of an internal crisis in the country by some political actors in the wake of the NATO Summit in Chicago ... The Prime Minister Gruevski assesses that the initiators of the vandalism to the religious buildings will be soon revealed ...“ (February 5).

**Macedonian Television – programme in Albanian language:** „He burned the state flag of Macedonia today in Struga, in front of the municipal building. Witnesses claim he was drunk and in this way he wanted to express his anger about the insults of the Macedonian handball fans“ (January 23), „The last incidents are a consequence of the opposition, the Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski accused today. In his opinion, the opposition does not see any other way to reach power, therefore it chooses the inter-ethnic and interreligious incidents.“ (February 5), „The Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski met the OSCE representative, Knut Vollebaek. The implementation of the Framework Agreement was in the focus of the discussions.“ (February 9).

**Site1:** „The events in Struga were a central topic in this edition of the current affairs programme as well... let me express my opinion on the events in Struga. First, there was a carnival in Vevcani, as in the past and it is a tradition... Something occurred that has offended the Muslims in Macedonia at some point; we could say ... that they are offended with a reason... an entire ethnic and religious group was mentioned as a subject of joke and this group has done nothing to deserve this and it has the right to ask for an apology. But, is this the problem...certainly not...criteria should be introduced as soon as possible, it is a public event, it has to be known who is responsible and who would explain the consequences. On the other hand, everything that happened after the carnival is subject to criminal prosecution. Inciting religious and ethnic hatred, protests in terms of mono-ethnic and mono-religious gathering with provocations towards the others... threatening slogans, burning of a church is something the police have to deal with and these people must be sent to court and be punished ... “(January 31), “While expecting the responses from institutions soon we are looking for a decisive reactions towards the inciters in a more serious manner than during the last political duel about the Kale in Skopje ... “( February 5), “The vandalism and desecration of the inter-ethnic relations, by damaging churches and religious buildings and writing of graffiti as messages points out to the fact that someone needs a new incident or a conflict between Macedonians

and Albanians, by playing on ethnic grounds and it is a fact that it has nothing to do with Vevcani or the insulting of the Islam. Definitely, the political parties' actors bear the response about this, but until when the Balkans...." (February 5), "Almost all journalists knew, but some report and some avoid publishing that SDSM, especially after Branko Crvenkovski returned as a President, plans the incidents, many times of inter-ethnic type, thereby trying to topple the ruling of VMRO – DPMNE, because they do not have a political offer, a new staff and lose all possible elections....We all knew that even the ethnic peace in the country is at stake of the SDSM interests, but we know this officially from the recent past. Namely, an Albanian, a person from the civil society sector...Artan Grubi, claimed that he was offered by SDSM high officials, MPs, to cause ethnic incidents in a planned manner and jointly..." (February 6).

**Kanal 5:** „Is there a background of yesterday's protests in Struga? Whether the carnival with masks with many centuries tradition, two weeks after it was held, is the real reason to stone the Vevcani bus in Velesta and burn the Macedonian flag in Struga?...“ (January 28), “There are tensions in Struga today as well...Vevcani and Struga mufti condemned the incidents, but they continue to ask for justice...Kanal 5 found the leaflets that urged citizens to defend the honor of Allah. Instead of reconciliation, a contra-protest of Macedonians is announced for tomorrow in Struga.” (January 30), “Local water supply, fundamentalists in the center of Struga, poverty and misery, bad laws from the past, divided ethnic society. Or...preparation for local elections next year. All these are the reasons for the last events in Struga.” (February 5), “The inter-ethnic incidents strike the emotions of citizens on both sides, the religious and ethnic feelings. Playing with matches and with the inter-ethnic relations in Macedonia at any level is too dangerous to be interpreted as an introduction to the local elections...” (February 5), “Graffiti maniacs do not stop. Following Bitola, there are graffiti in Skopje as well. Death for Kauris. Scratched cross. This was written on the façade of the ancillary rooms for baptizing of the church Saint Cyril and Methodius in the Skopje settlement of Cair.” (February 5), “SDSM called the Prime Minister Gruevski to pinpoint those who are responsible for the incidents. Who are those individuals, members of SDSM asked and threatened to not leave them calm if the perpetrators are not identified...” (February 6), “OSCE is in action again. This time to prevent the religious incidents to flow into inter-ethnic conflict. The High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek has already started meetings aimed at preventing the incidents in Struga to become a bigger problem.” (February 8).

**Alfa:** „Last night incidents in Struga are a rude manipulation of the Vevcani Carnival, the mayor of Vevcani reacted today. He asked – if the masks offended the religious feelings of Muslims, why didn't they react instantly, but they do it two weeks after the Carnival is over...” (January 20), „Parties ask for calming down of the tensions. The opposition has asked the Prime Minister Gruevski to undertake responsibility for the last sharpening of the inter-ethnic and interreligious relations. The Prime Minister has sent across a message to the politicians, for whom he said were abusing this incident for their own purposes and called them to avoid that. (January 31), „We are concerned from the sharpening of the tensions and the demonstrations in Struga – this is the response from the US Ambassador ...“ (February 1), „Religious protests are advocated on Internet. The first ones are scheduled in Bitola. No one has announced to protest, Mol sources say...”



(February 2), „Macedonia is in discrepancy between those who call themselves patriots and do not want to integrate with Europe and those who like an Euro-Atlantic future of the country, speakers at the debate organized after the last incidents and provocations assessed...” (February 3), „The series of incidents in Struga and the region of Struga remind that the inter-ethnic and interreligious traumatic events do not belong only to the past and they can endanger the society if not prevented on time. This is the message from the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities...” (February 9).

**Alsat M – programme in Macedonian language:** „Part of the experts on inter-ethnic relations think that politics stands behind these events. In their opinion, the tensions will be calmed down after a condemnation of all parties involved is made.” (January 31), „Out of all relevant state and religious institutions, condemnations arrived on the religious tensions in Struga region. International organizations in the country have also asked for calming down of the situation and the anger.” (January 31), „Death for Siptars and other graffiti were written at the wall of the Isaak mosque in the center of Bitola”. It is assumed that the offensive graffiti were written during the night or early in the morning...” (February 1), „Phenomena that violate the inter-ethnic relations can go quiet, but a political will is needed for this – is the assessment of the analysts at today’s debate for the last inter-ethnic and interreligious incidents.” (February 3), „Political analysts assess that yesterday’s statement of Branko Crvenkovski is a pure political manipulation. Namely, the SDSM leader said that the Albanians in Macedonia became a hostage of Gruevski, on his way to the European integration.” (February 12).

**Alsat M – programme in Albanian language:** „The main authors of the incidents are the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and the Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski. This was stated by the second official in SDSM Gordan Georgiev for radio Free Europe, according to whom the same scenario was done by VMRO and DUI last year with the church on Kale fortress.” (February 5), „The Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski says that the opposition caused the last events that occurred in the country. He emphasized that in this way the opposition, by creating a crisis, wants to return to power.” (February 5), „The last incidents showed that there are tensions and a little is needed for the things to get out of control, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek warned after he met the political parties’ leaders. He asked for an involvement of all parties in order to keep good interpersonal relations.” (February 8).

**Telma:** „The Democratic Union for Integration and the Islamic Religious Community called for calming down of passions in Struga; they say that islamophobia should not be stirred up and appeal to VMRO DPMNE and SDSM not to exacerbate the inter-ethnic relations...” (January 30), „Graffiti with offensive messages were found in the morning at the walls of the biggest mosque in Bitola. The citizens are angry and say that they do not want their city to be involved in incidents of inter-ethnic and interreligious characted.” (February 1), „The last incidents in Struga are only reflection of the political parties’ interests. This is the conclusion from the debate organized by the Center for Understanding and Institutional Cooperation. The first step in the reconciliation shall be made by the ruling parties VMRO DPMNE and DUI.” (February 3).

# RADIO STATIONS

## Key Findings

- The radio – stations were almost exclusively focused on the tensions, incidents, reactions, arguments, statements, meetings, sessions of different institutions as a consequence of the Vevcani Carnival. This trend is noticed in all radio – stations, and especially in Kanal 77. Furthermore, this is followed by the events related to the European Championship in Handball with a visibly smaller representation (only in the Macedonian Radio – Program in Albanian language), the 100-year anniversary of the Albanian flag and the independence of Albania, as well as the setting of the cornerstone of the square Skender-beg in Skopje and the renaming of schools in the Municipality of Cair in Skopje.
- These topics were usually announced at the beginning of the news (mostly in the second program of the Macedonian Radio), broadcasted in the first four items in the news, while rarely having audio-footages from the field, which is a very significant “feature” of the radio as a media and the manner of its informing.
- The radio – stations dominantly used the informative genre forms (reports and news/extended news). They were mostly covering pseudo events or, more precisely, reactions on current events, which can be considered as a quite “comfort” position in the reporting.
- The radio – stations respected the rule to quote precise sources of information, by mostly quoting official and alternative sources of information. What is of concern is the large presence of sources of information from one side only (especially in the second program of the Macedonian Radio) when talking about sensitive topics such as the interethnic and interreligious issues.
- There is a dominance of the neutral approach in the informing, but it should not be neglected that there was a one-sided “positive” reporting of the media in the function of their own ethnic group (especially in the second program of the Macedonian Radio).

### General line of reporting

A total of 60 news items were identified in the central informative programs of the radio stations that, explicitly or implicitly, treat interethnic and interreligious issues, but they are differently distributed from one station to another, which explains their diametrically different dynamics of reporting. Most of the news items related to interethnic and interreligious topics are present in the Macedonian Radio – news in Macedonian language and the least in the Macedonian Radio – news in Turkish language.

Radio-stations	Frequency	%
Makedonsko radio 1	28	46,6
Makedonsko radio 2 – Albanian	19	31,7
Makedonsko radio 2 – Turkish	1	1,7
Kanal 77	12	20,0
Total	60	100,00

Table 13 Total number of analyzed packages of radio stations

All stories analyzed are dominantly “placed” either in the area of politics or in the area of religion. The Macedonian Radio – news in Macedonian language dominantly treats the aspect of religion, while the Macedonian Radio – news in Albanian language the aspect of politics.

Topics	Frequency	%
Politics – internal	29	48,3
Education	2	3,3
Religion	24	40,0
Civil society	1	1,7
Crime and corruption	3	5,0
Lifestyle	1	1,7
Total	60	100,0

Table 14 Topics

How did the radio stations report on interethnic and interreligious issues, in which genre form, how much space did they allocate for these stories in the news, were there cues provided in the same order of presenting the news items?

The analysis has shown that the news items dominate in the informative genres' form. Even 2/3 of all news items are “packed” either in the form of news/extended news or in the form of reports, which complies with the informative character of the news in the radio. The most diverse genre structure is present in the Macedonian Radio – news in Macedonian language, which is in fact expected from the public service. Out of the news items analyzed that treat interethnic and interreligious issues 35,7% are reports, 28,6% statements and 15% press releases and news/extended news. Kanal 77, first of all, insisted on reports (in 75% of the cases) followed by news/extended news (in 25% of the cases), while the Macedonian Radio – news in Albanian language almost exclusively on short factual reporting for these sensitive topics. There are even 95% of all analyzed news items on interethnic and interreligious issues in the form of news/extended news.

Genre	Frequency	%
News item	25	41,7
Press release	4	6,7
Statement	9	15,0
Report/dispatch	20	33,3
Analysis	1	1,7
Reportage	1	1,7
Total	60	100,0

Table 15 Genre

This is followed by the question of how much of these news items are treated as very important so that they could also be found in the cues of their current affairs programmes. Generally speaking, the number of items of interethnic and interreligious character with or without cues is the same in all radio stations, with a slight advantage of those without cues.

Headlines	Frequency	%
Yes	28	46,7
No	32	53,3
Total	60	100,00

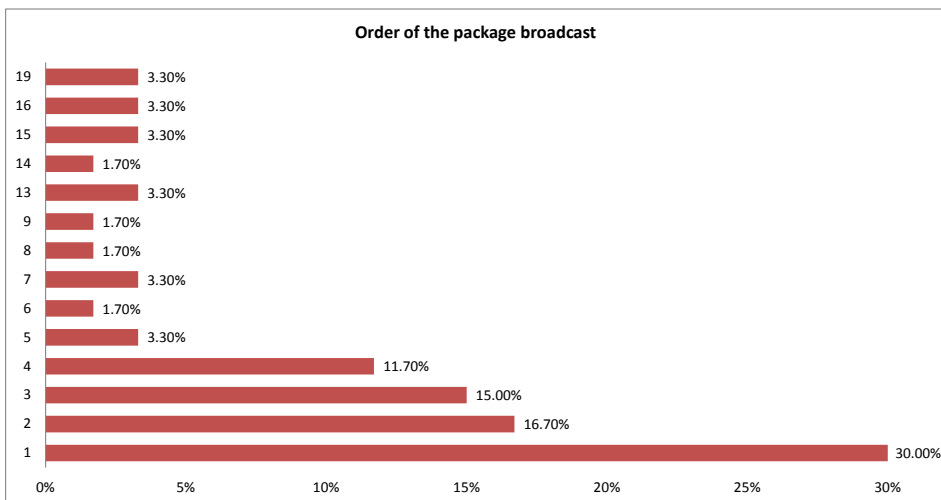
Table 16 Packages selected in the headlines

However, the cross-referenced data explain another trend. Namely, while the Macedonian Radio – news in Albanian language and Kanal 77 announce their news items in the highest percentage (the first in even 95% and the later in 75% of the cases), the Macedonian Radio – news in Macedonian language in most of the cases does not announce these items (82% of these topics are not announced at the beginning of the current affairs programme). Undoubtedly, the genre structure of the news items is not the deciding factor whether the news item will be mentioned in the cue or not. This is dictated by the nature of the event itself and, according to the newsroom, particularly in the Macedonian Radio – news in Albanian language such are undoubtedly the events that touch upon the interethnic and/or interreligious field. Beside this, it is not unusual for the informative programs to comment the events and this radio station is the only one that comments part of the news items announced at the beginning.

Another indicator that speaks about the manner in which the media outlet treats the events on the topic of interethnic and interreligious issues is the order in which the news item is presented.

The picture clearly shows that the radio stations give high priority to the topics of interethnic/interreligious character and they most frequently (in 75% of the cases) place them in the first 4 items of the informative programme. First by order are almost one third of all news items on this topic (31,7%), second are 16,7%, third 5% and fourth 11,7% of all news items analyzed. The other 25% of the news items are at the bottom of the list.

The analysis of the news items duration showed that the shortest one counted to 20 seconds, while the longest one 282 seconds (4 minutes and 42 seconds), both of them broadcasted in the Macedonian Radio – news in Macedonian language. The shortest and the longest news item in Kanal 77 are of 35 seconds and 160 seconds (2 minutes and 40 seconds) duration respectively. On average the news items on interethnic and interreligious issues of interest to the public service (Macedonian Radio) last 1 minute and 43 seconds and in the private (Kanal 77) media 23 seconds less.



### *Journalistic professionalism*

First of all, an analysis of the sources of information was made by their type or, more specifically, what sources dominate in the news items on topics that are related with the different ethnicities.

Radio-station	Unclear/ imprecise		Precise		The journalist as a source		No sources	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
MR 1	3	10,7	28	100,0	1	3,6	0	0,0
MR2/A	6	31,6	15	78,9	6	36,6	4	21,1
Kanal 77	0	00,0	12	100,0	0	0,0	0	0,0

*Table 17 Sources of information by type*

*Note: The total percentage of the data is larger than 100% because there are vague and imprecise sources of information as well as precise sources in the same particular articles*

The table shows that Kanal 77 uses only precise sources of information on topics of interethnic and interreligious issues. The precise sources dominate in most of the news items on Macedonian Radio – news in Macedonian language and there is only couple of news items with vague and imprecise sources of information. On the other hand, the Macedonian Radio – news in Albanian language did not mention any sources on these topics in 21% of the news items and it uses vague and imprecise sources in 31,6% of the news items.

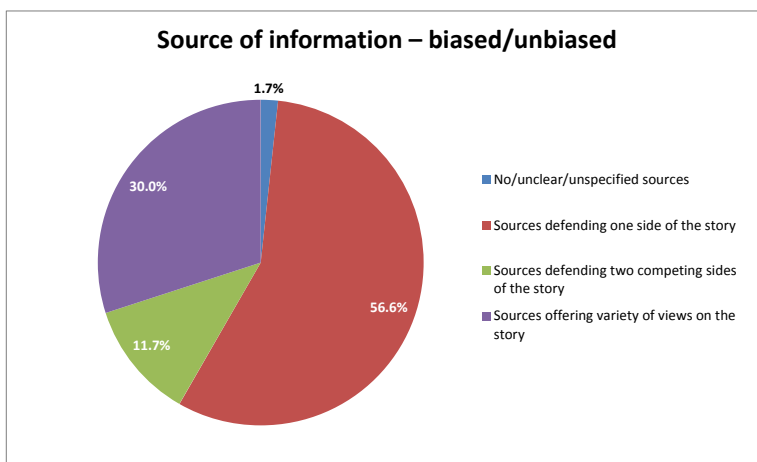
The analysis of the sources of information by their status showed that news items with alternative or official sources only dominate, or news items with both official and alternative sources. This is a case with 70% of the news items. The other 30 percents are news items with international sources or all types of sources or there is no source of information at all. There are no deviations from this trend by radio stations individually.



Status of the sources	Frequency of the packages	%
No/unclear/unspecified sources	4	6,7
International sources only	5	8,3
Official sources only	15	25,0
Alternative sources only	16	1,7
International and official sources	6	10,0
Official and alternative sources	11	18,3
International, official and alternative sources	3	5,0

Table 18 Sources of information by their status

In the context of the sources of information used by the journalists, particularly for topics that are related with the different ethnic groups in the country, is the issue of the side in the sources of information. In fact, the most frequent violation of the professional journalistic standards is the presentation of only one side when it comes to contentious issues (conflict, tension) or for imbalanced reporting.



It is of concern that more than half of the news items (56,7%) are with only one source of information. The news items with two or several sources count up to 38,3%. If analysed by media separately, the findings reveal that the Macedonian Radio both in Albanian (63,2%) and in Macedonian language (57,1%) reported in the most single-sided manner. Most of the single-sided news items in the Macedonian Radio news in Albanian language are announced at the beginning of the informative programme, which strengthens the angle of non-comprehensive view of the events and from the prism of the ethnic community.

Viewed from the angle of the journalistic professionalism, the extent to which footage from the same event are used in the radio news items is of particular importance. The data shows that half of the articles analysed (56,7%) do not have a recorded material, i.e. they are only presented by the journalist or the anchor in the studio. There is neither one news item with a direct call made in the informative programme. This trend is maintained in all radio stations analysed.

Radio-station	Recorded presentation		Telephone presentation		Live presentation		/	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
MR 1	15	53,6	2	7,1	11	39,3	0	0,0
MR 2 Alb.	11	57,9	0	0,0	7	36,8	0	0,0
Kanal 77	8	66,7	1	8,3	7	58,3	0	0,0
Total	34	56,7	3	5,0	25	42,6	0	0,0

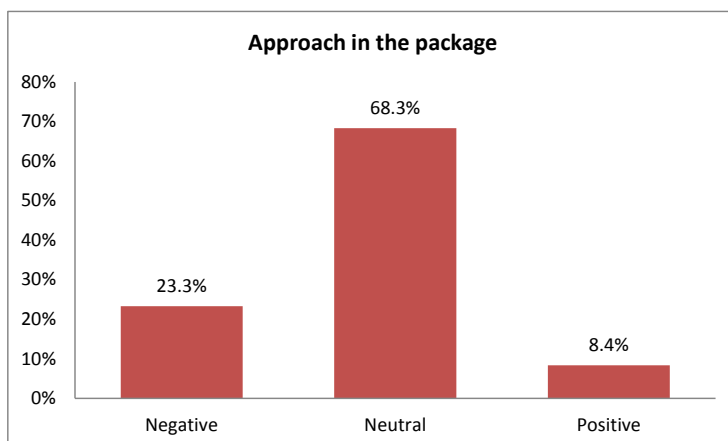
Table 19 Audio-presentation

Most of the news items on interethnic and interreligious issues broadcasted are the so-called pseudo – events (58,3% of the news items analyzed), i.e. reactions to some current event in the form of press releases, statements, reports, analyses and far behind are the news items on current (events that occurred) and actual staged (planned) events. This shows that the radio stations mainly “waited” what others would say and proclaim, with less field work and research. There are no major deviations from the general picture.

Occasion	Frequency	%
Anticipated event	5	8,3
Actual event	11	18,3
Actual staged event	8	13,3
Pseudo – event	35	58,3
Social event	1	1,7
Total	60	100,00

Table 19 Audio-presentation

The journalistic approach in covering sensitive issues is the most evident proof for the editorial policy in the media outlet. The neutral approach is present in 68% of the news items and the positive one in 8,3% only. In almost quarter of the news items a negative approach on the interethnic and interreligious topics is present.



Most neutral in the approach, in the sense of not using any qualifications and assessments, are the Macedonian Radio – news in Macedonian language (in 75% of the cases) and Kanal 77 (in 83,3% of the cases), while in the Macedonian Radio – news in Albanian language only a “positive” approach is identified, favoring “their own” ethnic group (in 26,3% of the cases).

### **Overview of headlines**

The analysis has confirmed that the radio stations pay more attention to issues of interethnic and interreligious character. Namely, the largest number of news items on these issues are announced at the beginning of the radio news programme and they are most frequently aired at the beginning. A few illustrative examples of cues about events, incidents, reactions following the Vevcani Carnival and the protests in Struga

**Macedonian Radio – programme in Macedonian language:** „Vevcani Carnival was grossly abused and used as a political tool to accomplish certain objectives by the organizers and the mayor of the Municipality of Struga, Ramiz Merko, is the reaction by the Municipality of Vevcani...” (January 28), „The protests in Struga create a bad climate and violate mutual respect and trust. We will take all measures at local and central level to calm down passions – the Vice Prime Minister for Implementation of the Framework Agreement Musa Xhaferi said...” (January 30), „Reaction on the last events in the region of Struga and the EU Office in Skopje. They ask the authorities to stop the incidents and bring the perpetrators to justice...” (January 31), “The stable interethnic relations are at the top of the state priorities and they should be built in the spirit of mutual respect and in compliance with the constitutional order of the Republic of Macedonia. The essence of today’s debate focused at the current events in the country is in this first of the seven conclusions at the session of the Committee on Relations Among the Communities...” (February 1), “Following the events in the region of Struga related to the Vevcani Carnival, where in some views the religious feelings of Muslims were offended, reactions do not stop...” (February 1), “The Ombudsman urges the authorities at central and local level to act on time, because declarative statements on maintaining co-existence are not allowed...” (February 2), “While the opposition demands the Prime Minister to announce the inciters of interethnic tensions, Mol works on investigating the incidents that happened recently...” (February 9).

**Macedonian Radio – programme in Albanian language:** „The Islam Religious Community demands an apology from the state institutions.” (January 30), „The interethnic and interreligious incidents can easily break out, while the politics should be able to prevent them, before they go out of control – these are the comments by analysis.” (January 31), “The last events and their influence to the interethnic and interreligious relations were the only topic at the agenda discussed by the Committee on Relations Among the Communities.” (February 1), “The series of incidents and events in Struga warn that the interethnic and interreligious incidents do not only belong to the past and if they are not prevented they can endanger the society – the High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek emphasized...” (February 2).

**Radio Kanal 77:** „Enhance police presence in Struga. More on the situation ...” (January 30), „Orthodox believers burned the church in Labunista, locals claim... Bishop



Timotej retorts that extremists structures may stand behind the fire.. This is unprecedented vandalism, for which I cannot claim who did it, but I can guess – these may be some new radical movements that are infiltrated here in the last period, but the Islam Religious Community should talk about them... Such a thing has never happened, neither in harder times, nor did the Orthodox believers did this to Muslims or Islamic followers to Christians...(January 31), „Entire Macedonia knows who organized the protests in Struga. The interethnic tensions are caused by the Government – this is how the SDSM leader replied...”(February 7), „The recent incidents in Struga only reminded us that the ethnic tensions do not only belong to the past. If they are not prevented, they may endanger the society in which you live... the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek said.“ (February 9).

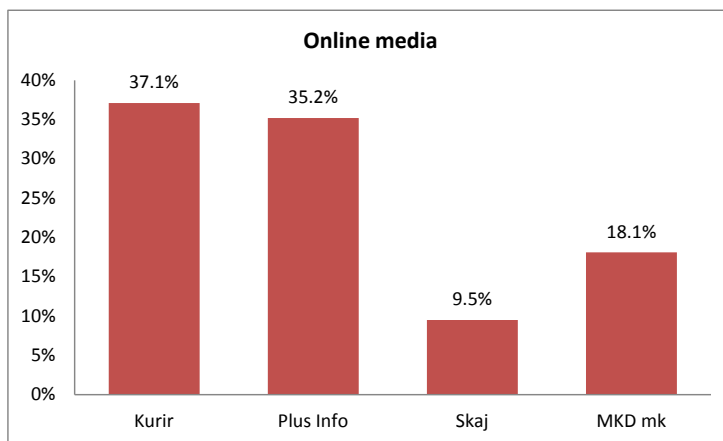
# ONLINE MEDIA

## Key Findings

- Thematically, the articles in the online media related to the interethnic and interreligious topics were almost exclusively focused on the events related to the Vevcani Carnival and the European Championship in Handball and incidentally with the setting of the cornerstone for building of the new square Skender-beg in Skopje, 100-year anniversary of the Albanian flag and the independence of Albania, the renaming of the schools in the Municipality of Cair in Skopje and the Project for integrated education (only in Plus Info and Kurir).
- In regard to the volume, i.e. the space allocated, they were differently reporting on these topics. There were differences not only in relation to the number of packages, but also in relation to the length of the online articles.
- All online media reported the interethnic and interreligious issues with short news/extended news, statements and press releases, with a very weak visualization and articles that were modestly supported with only one static illustration, most often a photograph and almost regularly without author of the package analyzed.
- The professional principle that is rarely respected in the online media is the signing of the texts/packages by the journalists. The author has been identified in only 11,4% of the online packages analyzed. Sky is especially a notable example where all the packages published are without any signature.
- The rule for a precise mentioning of the names of the sources of information is mainly respected in the online packages, but there are also media which are an exception of this conclusion.
- Although the online media used an approach of neutral reporting in general, still there is a concern about the one-sided reporting on these sensitive topics which resulted from the use of only one source of information.

### General line of reporting

A total of 105 packages on interethnic and interreligious issues were published in the online media. Most attention to these matters was dedicated by Kurir and Plus Info (the first one with 37,1% and the later with 35,2% packages), much less by MKD.mk (18%) and the least by Skaj (9,5%). This could be clearly seen from the following graph:



The packages are dominantly placed in the area of internal politics (59,0% of all packages analyzed), followed by civil society and religion, while the other areas are symbolically included only.

Topic	Frequency	%
Politics internal	62	59,0
Politics external	5	4,8
Culture	2	1,9
Education	4	3,8
Religion	10	9,5
Civil society	17	16,2
Sport	5	4,8
Total	105	100,0

Table 21 Topics

By genre form, short news and extended news dominate (in 38% of the overall number of packages), followed by statements (with 23,8%), press releases (17,1%) and then reports (in 12,3% of the cases). There is no difference between one and another online media in the representation of particular genre forms. Only as an exception Kurir has one analytical form, while Plus Info two analyses, MKD.mk two and Plus Info one commentary.

The analysis has shown another characteristic of this type of media. Namely, even in 81% of all packages analyzed the author cannot be identified. The journalist, as a full time member of the newsroom or part-time employed, is recognized as an author in 11,2% of all packages analyzed, and the media where the news items were taken from

or re-published in 7,6% only. Viewed individually, Skaj and Plus Info are set apart, the first one having packages without any signature, which is a proof for an extremely unprofessional approach, while the second one, in comparison to the others, with the largest number of packages with a signature by the journalist.

Genre	Frequency	%
News Item	40	38,1
Press release	18	17,1
Statement	25	23,8
Report/dispatch	15	14,3
Analysis	3	2,9
Reportage	1	1,0
Comment	3	2,9
Total	105	100,0

Table 22 Genre

Further more, there is a diversity of packages in relation to the length of the online texts. It is important to emphasize that in the packages analyzed dominant are the ones (92) in which the basic carrier of the information is the text (equipped with a photograph usually), while the packages in which the carrier of the information is a video-material (equipped with less text) are minimal (13).

The length of the texts analyzed in packages ranges from a minimum of 36 words in a text to a maximum of 1,318 words, while the duration of the video - material as a carrier of information ranges from 37 seconds to 124 seconds or a maximum of 2 minutes and 2 seconds.

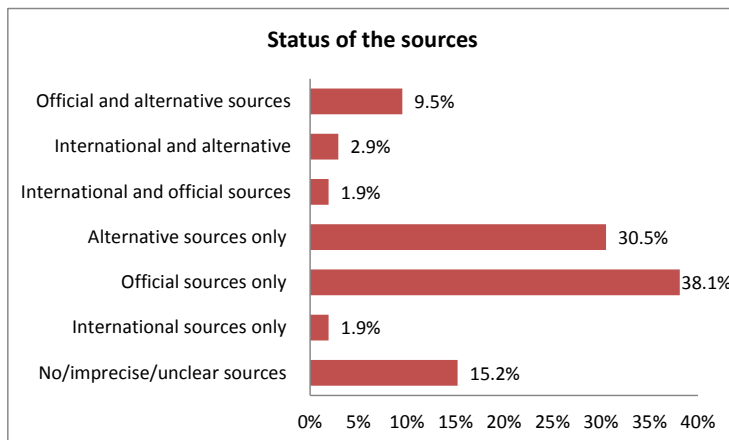
### **Journalistic professionalism**

What kind of sources of information do the online media use? In most of the packages which cover the topics of interethnic and interreligious character precise sources of information are used (81,0%), but also vague (7,6%) and imprecise (15,2%). Plus Info is set apart with the largest number of packages with vague/imprecise sources. Most of the packages without any source of information are published by Kurir.

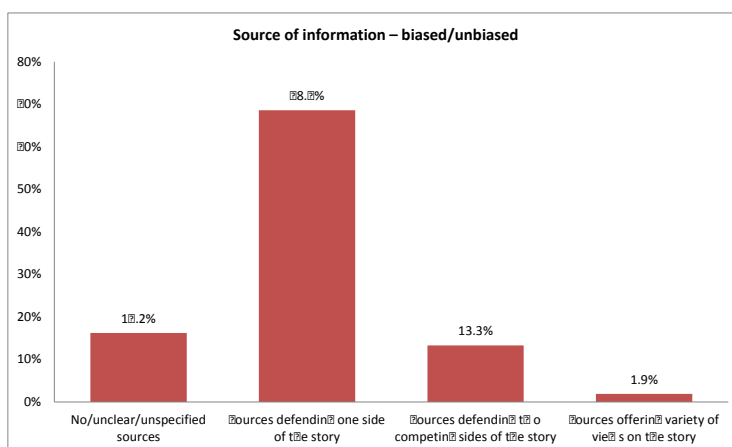
Online outlet	Unclear imprecise sources	Precise sources	The journalist as a source	No sources
Kurir	6	33	7	6
Plus info	11	32	11	3
Skaj	3	6	1	2
MKD MK	4	14	1	2
Total	24	85	20	13

Table 24 Sources of information by type

Viewed by the status of the source, most represented are the official (in 38,1% of all packages) and the alternative sources (in 30,5% of the packages) and there is a little parallel mentioning of the official and alternative sources (only 9,5% of all packages analyzed). Kurir mostly relies on official sources of information and there is a parallel use of official and alternative sources identified in Plus Info.



When it comes to the representation of sources of information from one, two or several sides, a characteristic of the online media is the “single-sided” reporting on interethnic and/or interreligious issues, which seen from a professional point of view is very worrying. A total of 68,6% of all packages cover information from only one source, while 13,3% only state two source. Negligible are the examples (1,9%) with several sources of interethnic and interreligious context. This conclusion equally applies to all media.



The analysis of the professional principles included both the external and the internal headline and the teaser (online cue), which are representing the whole package, but also determine the contents of the package itself. The analysis has shown that in more than half of the packages analyzed the main topic is summarized by using neutral words, but in 1/3 of the packages the external, internal headline and the teaser contain a message that over-emphasizes the main topic.



Relation	Frequency	%
Headline/teaser is a neutral resume of the main topic of the package	57	54,3
Headline/teaser contains message which overstates the main topic	39	37,1
Headline/teaser contains message which manipulates/spins the main topic	1	1,0
Headline/teaser is ironic or sarcastic towards the main topic in the package	8	7,6
Total	105	100,0

Table 25 relation between the headline/teaser and the package

In the same context, not less significant is the visualization (if the video is a carrier of the online package). Out of the total of 105 packages analyzed, 13 (or 12,4%) were packages where the video is a carrier, and not the text. Out of them, 8 have some visualization and 5 not any visualization (only the anchor in the studio who reads the news item).

Illustration	Frequency	%
Packages with no illustration	5	4,8
Packages with minimal illustration	8	7,6
Packages in which the text is the main information carrier	92	87,6
Total	105	100,0

Table 26 Illustration

All packages, regardless if the carrier is the video or the text, may contain static illustrations (photographs, cartoons, tables) or dynamic ones (animations, graphs, tables, maps). The analysis have shown that when it comes to static illustrations, online media have quite simply “created” the packages, i.e. beside the text very often there is only a photograph (in 96 of 105 packages analyzed).

There are no dynamic illustrations present as a supplement to the text. There are video-statements identified in three packages. In most of the packages that contain a photograph, it is most frequently (57,1%) used as a formal illustration of the event, while in 37,1% of the cases the photograph is from the same event.

Relation	Frequency	%
Un-explanatory illustration in the package	60	57,1
Illustration that reflects the main topic	39	37,1
Illustration that overemphasizes the main topic	3	2,9
Metaphor, irony	2	1,9
No illustration	1	1,0

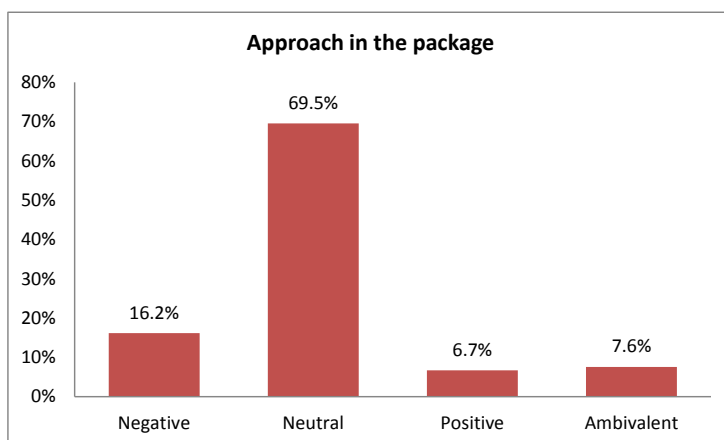
Table 27 Relation between illustration and the text

The reason to write about interethnic and/or interreligious issues in the online media is different. Most frequently it is about either current staged events, as result of planned events in the form of sessions, meetings or about social events, i.e. treatment of the events from the wider social and political context. This is followed by the current specific events and pseudo – events, i.e. reactions to the current events in the form of statements and press releases.

Occasion	Frequency	%
Actual event	17	16,2
Actual staged event	39	37,1
Pseudo event	14	13,3
Social event	30	28,6
Other	5	4,8
Total	105	100,0

Table 27 Relation between illustration and the text

In general, the analysis has shown that the online media have a neutral approach in the treatment of topics of interethnic and/or interreligious character. This is a case with more than 2/3 of all packages (or in 69,5% of the packages). The negative approach is present in 16,2% of the packages, the positive in 6,7% and the ambivalent in 7,6% packages. Seen individually, by media outlet, there are no large deviations from the general line.



### Overview of headlines

The external and internal headline, as well as the teaser (the online cue) have a very important role when presenting the events in the online media. They are not only the link which helps to enter the main contents, but it also identifies whether some package will be read or not. Several illustrative examples

**Example 1:** The government will take measures to calm down passions in Struga. Teaser: The protests in Struga create a bad climate and ruin the mutual respect and trust. The government will take all measures on central and local level to calm down passions. (January 30), The mayor urged for calming down of passions. Teaser: The Struga mayor immediately after the last night were around the church of Saint Nikola in the Struga village of Babunista urged for restraint and caution. (January 31), The police monitors the events in Struga with caution. Teaser: The Office in Skopje urged the authorities to stop the last incidents in Struga and bring the perpetrators to the justice. (January 31), The citizens should not succumb to provocations. Teaser: The Ministry of Interior took all necessary measures and activities to clarify the incidents that occurred the last days in Struga,

the Minister of Interior stated... (January 31), WMC: Religious beliefs and ethnic origins should be misused“, teaser – The World Macedonian Congress condemned the events in Struga, Oktisi and Labunista caused, as it is said, allegedly because of the Vevcani Carnival and they think this is done with an objective to destabilize the situation... (January 31), „At a joint event, VMRO – DPMNE and DUI jointly condemned the events in Struga“, teaser – The coalition partners analyzed the last events in the state, especially those in the region of Struga and jointly condemned all acts which have direct or indirect.... (February 1), „The co-existence should not be a victim to the heating heads!“, teaser – the Committee on Relations Among the Communities discussed the events in Struga and Vevcani (February 2), “Gruevski: Party motivated persons attacked the religious buildings“ (February 5), teaser – The attack of religious building throughout Macedonia is a result of party motivated persons from the opposition, the Prime Minister Gruevski considers, „Who organizes interethnic tensions?“ , teaser – The political, interethnic and interpersonal tensions still had their own background and an organizer. The fact that almost the same people appear at all protests is not a coincidence. (February 7).

**Plus Info:** „Artan Grubi from the arms of Bin Laden directly at the hands of Gruevski?“ , teaser – Following the statement by Artan Grubi from DUI, according to whom the SDSM members contacted him to cause little tensions ... (February 6), „Crvenkovski: The interethnic tensions in the state are caused by the ruling parties“, teaser – He thinks that the Government is to be blamed for the events in the region of Struga and he condemns the ruling parties for the incidents as well ... (February 7), „SDSM: Gruevski, go out and publicly announce who of the opposition caused the incidents“, teaser – According to SDSM, VMRO – DPMNE and DUI have protected those who caused the incident at the fortress of Kale for almost a year... (February 7), „SDSM: VMRO – DPMNE tries to wash down Gruevski’s lies with new manipulations“ teaser – VMRO DPMNE’s attitude that Mol still searches for the vandals in the region of Struga, as well as the funny constructions that today...(February 7), „Jankulovska demands patience to clear the incidents in Struga and the region of Struga“, teaser – The police works on clearing of all cases with incidents in which buildings were burnt and demolished...(February 9), “Merko and Ilievski were trying to find a common language for 5 hours“, teaser – Beside the two mayors, representatives of the municipalities took part at the joint meeting... (January 11), „Information provided that will solve the incidents in Struga and the region of Struga“, teaser – The Ministry of Interior provided the first information which should resolve....(February 12).

**Skaj:** „Where is the Macedonian flag that was in front of the municipality of Struga?“ (January 30), Musa Xheferi: Measures will be taken to calm down passions in Struga“ (January 30), „Georgiev: Gruevski finally goes public and condemns the events in Struga“ (January 31), „Mol: The citizens from Struga and the region should not succumb to provocations“ (January 31), „Vevcani citizens: The Carnival does not intend to offend anyone“ (February 1), „Protests against the Shiptars that burn the Macedonian churches announced on Facebook“ (February 2).

**MKD.mk:** „The next elections burned the church“ (January 31), „First the politics in the region of Struga, and then the religion“ (January 31), „Where have you seen a framework carnival?“ (February 1), „The burning of flags by the offended Muslims was considered as normal“ (February 1), „What is the price for one radical and a religious fanatic to become a loyal citizen“ (February 4), „Death for Kauri“ and a penis at a church in the settlement of Cento (February 5).

## General conclusions

The reporting of the media in Macedonia on the topics of interethnic and interreligious character was focused on several issues: the Vevcani Carnival and the events that were directly or indirectly related to the Carnival, burning of the Macedonian flag, burning of churches and the graffiti writing on the churches, reactions at the social networks, sessions and meetings focused on these events, the conflicts among the political parties on who caused the interethnic tensions, the European Championship in Handball, re-naming of the schools in the Municipality of Cair in Skopje, setting of the cornerstone of the new square Skender-beg in Skopje or the 100-year anniversary of the Albanian flag and the independence of Albania, as well as the integrated education and the Project for integrated education of the Government and OSCE. In general, all the media paid most of the attention to the Vevcani Carnival and the events that followed, however with a different volume of reporting. The print media and the TV stations have allocated most of the space and time on these topics. The topics were almost regularly on the top of the media reporting, on the first pages of the newspapers or as topics of the day in radio and TV stations, visually rich with photographs or actual footages on the places where events took place in the TV and in the newspapers, but with a poor audio-presentation in the radio and a modest visualization in the online media.

The radio and TV stations, as well as the online media mostly reported the interethnic and interreligious topics through informative genre forms (reports and news/extended news), which conforms with the character of the informative shows and the print media also having analytical forms (analyses and commentaries) which corresponds with the nature of this type of media. There is a practice in particular media to announce the articles with comments, in order to influence the public opinion, i.e. to present the events from a subjective viewpoint of the journalist.

Several violations of the journalistic principles and standards were recorded from the aspect of using sources of information. Although the media respected the rule to quote precise sources of information in general, they have frequently practiced to mention vague and imprecise sources of information or there was a lack of source of information. It is of particular concern that there was a one-sided reporting on these sensitive topics. This calls into question the reliability of the reporting and the public trust, especially when talking about the interethnic and interreligious issues.

There were large violations of this journalistic standard in the public service broadcaster, where a different editorial policy in the two programme services – MTV 1 and MTV 2 was noticed. Although MTV has a primary responsibility to promote social cohesion, the news in Albanian language have even 92,3% items with only one source of information, while in the news in Macedonian language there are two or more sources of information used in 83,4% of the news items.

The most serious remark to the media refer to the violation of the basic standards for impartial, accurate and balanced reporting, which is evident from the analysis of the media approach (“positive”, “negative” or “neutral”). In most of the media there is a biased approach towards the actors and the events of interethnic and interreligious character, both in the “negative” and in the “positive” direction. Regardless of the event,

and especially if it is about “sensitive” multiethnic/religious dimension, it is least expected from the journalists and the media to assess the events and the actors from the “negative”, one-sided perspective, “positive”, subjective, non-critical support or “ambivalent”, positive-negative point of view. The news as an informative program have a big influence in the creation and in the enhancing of attitudes and beliefs of the audience towards the members of other communities. Therefore, the respect of professional standards for impartial and objective informing is of utmost importance.

# II

**Part**

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS ON THREE CASE STUDIES

# INTRODUCTION

## Notes on Methodology\*

Mass media in multicultural and multi-faith societies have an important role in reflecting and cultivating the so called “cultural diversity”. The fashion in which media represent different societal groups and individual actors, the way they “frame” the negative processes and events may often overtly or subtly encourage ethnocentrism, stereotypes, xenophobia, intolerance or hate speech<sup>[1]</sup>, rather than tolerance. During the last decade journalism in Macedonia has been prone to a wide spread “diversity insensitive” professional practice. There have been numerous examples of such reporting. The three case studies incorporated in this publication focus on the media coverage of intercultural and interreligious relations in different aspects of reporting. The research and the analysis the publication is based upon is concerned with the most relevant topics for the public interest, topics that are a focal point of a vivid debate that incorporates opinions of various individuals and groups, as well as individuals and groups whose opinions are poorly represented in the media.

Subject matter of this analysis are the linguistic features, the rhetorical forms and the discursive structures and strategies used in the journalistic texts, as well as their different meanings and functions within the specific multiethnic context in Macedonia. The analysis is focused on the manner in which the media texts constitute or frame the discourses that might produce (open or hidden) ethnocentric, stereotyping, xenophobic or discriminatory social effect towards the collective “Other” in the country. Also, a focus of this analysis are the journalistic products that give “resistance” to the corrosive discursive strategies.

The researchers have applied Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in the analysis of the selected cases. CDA is a qualitative and an interdisciplinary approach in the research of

---

\* The authors of this publication distance themselves from the use of expressions or grammatical forms that are perceived as pejorative for various groups. The usage of these forms should be understood solely in the light of the analytical purposes. Still where possible some of the expressions in the remainder of the publication are deliberately erased or otherwise sanctioned. The purpose of this is to avoid perpetuation of the corrosive discourse through the study.

1 The explanation of these categories is given in the introduction of this book



the media texts that puts an emphasis on their function and importance in the specific social and political context.

The objective of the researcher is to offer a detailed description of the linguistic features, the rhetorical forms and the discursive strategies used in the journalistic text and also analyze the social context and the social, cognitive and psychological functions of the language use. The intention is to demonstrate that through the use of the specific type of 'discourse<sup>2</sup>' in the texts, media can construct, perpetuate or discourage relations of inequality or discrimination in society. A starting point of this study that the premise that discourse does not only have a pragmatic function of persuasion and improving perceptions of credibility of the news, but it also has a socio-political function of construction, legitimation and control.

The CDA cannot be reduced to a simple summary of paraphrasing the content, i.e. the narrative reconstruction of events. This approach starts from the assumption that the discourse plays a key role in the production and the reproduction of ethnic stereotypes and prejudices, because the convictions and the opinions for the ethnic groups can be transferred on a wider level in the society, through the communication and the language use. The manners in which the convictions and the opinions are transferred, shaped and reproduced through the media are multiple and complex (most frequently indirect and unconscious). It is a process which happens through the use of the language and the pictures, through the "common sense" perceptions and "definitions of situations" that are constructed through the transfer of viewpoints of the different actors represented in the news.

Subject of analysis in CDA is the texts on all its levels:

*Global semantics.* It focuses on the narrative organization of the text or the schematics of the news – which has a certain order of presentation and a hierarchy of the incorporated elements. News items rarely adopt a chronological presentation of events. Rather, they cluster and prioritize information on the basis of its informational value. The least valuable segments of the information are thus being pushed towards the bottom. The systematic undermining of one topic on the news agenda is an indicator that the newsroom has decided to attach a lesser informative value to it. The information and the structure of the text is subsequently compared to the information put in the headline and the subheading: often these elements of the text suggest a different conclusion about the topic.

*Local semantics:* The analysis focuses on the characteristics of the text itself – detecting if the details added to the words enables an interpretation which might encourage prejudices and stereotypes; if the texts operates with specific expressions or identifications for some of the cultural groups in society; if some cultural groups are attributed with characteristics that create discrimination or to be stigmatized, etc.

*Syntax style:* If the text uses nominalizations, verbs or passive clauses in connection to some individuals and groups and in what fashion it is being used

*Rhetoric:* Whether and how the text uses metaphors or metonymic strategies in order to emotionally charge the narrative or to justify certain views on issues.

*Headlines and topics:* The function of the headline is to present the main topic or is-

<sup>2</sup> Discourse is defined as a „language form that is used in a specific situation, including the use of a particular vocabulary, intonation, grammar, level of formality, etc“. (Dictionary of Media studies, London, A&Black, 2006).



sue that is to be elaborated in the text. The main topics on the daily agenda are revealed in the headlines which is why they require a special attention of the analysis.

*Argumentation:* Comments play a very important role in the justification or the refutation of official (mainstream) policies, ideas or definitions. The analysis of the argumentation strategies in the coverage reveals much about the power relations implied in the text.

A starting point in the research of the media coverage of interethnic and interreligious issues were the fundamental international documents, as well as the provisions from the national legislation, journalistic codes and the professional journalistic practice:

- Provisions from article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights implemented in the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia and in the Broadcasting Law of 2005 which refer to the principles on which the programs should be based on, with a particular emphasis on the respect of rights and freedom of individuals and different groups and communities in the society.
- The Code of Journalists of Macedonia, i.e. article 10 according to which “the journalist should not consciously create or process information which threaten human rights or freedoms, should not speak the language of hatred and should not encourage violence and discrimination on any basis (national, religious, racial, gender, social, language, sexual orientation, political...), as well as the article 11 stating that “the journalist shall observe the generally accepted community standards of decency and respect for ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in Macedonia”.
- Code of principles of conduct of journalists by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), which, among other things, specifies that “the journalists shall be aware of the danger of inciting discrimination through the media and should invest maximum efforts to avoid discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion and national and social origin”.
- The Diversity Reporting Manual published for the Balkan countries by the Media Diversity Institute in London (MDI), where detailed guidelines are offered to the journalists in relation to the professional standards for diversity reporting.
- The editorial guidelines of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), which are the most precisely developed professional code for journalistic reporting on diverse topics, including diversity reporting;
- The Diversity Reporting Handbook produced by the School of Journalism and Public Relations, supported by the UNESCO Office in Venice.

The research upon which this publication is based is practically oriented. It offers no additional theoretical contribution to different approaches of discourse analysis, even though the research takes into consideration the stand points of Norman Fairclough<sup>[3]</sup>, Teun van Dijk<sup>[4]</sup>, Michel Foucault<sup>[5]</sup> and Michael Billig<sup>[6]</sup>. The purpose here is rather to

3 Fairclough, N. (2001) *Language and Power*, Essex: Pearson Education Limited.

4 Van Dijk, T. (2009) *Critical Discourse studies: a sociocognitive approach*. In Wodak, R. and Meyer, M. (Ed.). *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, London: SAGE.

5 Foucault, M. (1998) *The will to knowledge: History of Sexuality Vol 1*. London: Penguin Books

6 Billig, M. (2002) *Banal nationalism*, London: SAGE



deconstruct the specific narratives which are constructed or perpetuated through the journalistic practice in the Macedonian media context. The idea is to isolate and point out the corrosive elements in the journalistic practice and to demonstrate what kinds of discourse strategies are being used to create such narratives – namely national narratives, narratives of ethnocentrism, prejudices, stereotypes etc. Still the publication is not a sociological study and it does not analyze in details the societal effects of the media discourse. However this approach implicitly has the impact on the audience.

The research is focused on three case studies – events that have been in the spotlight at the in the first half of 2012 and that have interethnic and inter religious implications: (1) the coverage of the European Handball Championship, (2) the coverage of the events in connection to the Vevcani Carnival and the consequential protests in Struga and (3) the coverage of the fivefold murder near Smilkovsko Lake. All these events were paradigmatic for the fashion in which the texts construct specific narratives with a strong ethnic-cum-religious particularistic framing. The successiveness of these events and the way the media made the coverage, reveals so much of the strategic evolution of discourses in which the solely ethnic narratives are being recreated in ethnic-cum- religious conflicting narratives.

## 1

# EUROPEAN HANDBALL CHAMPIONSHIP 2012 – BETWEEN SPORT AND ETHNO-POLITICS

*Vesna Sopar and Igor Micevski*

The European Handball Championship (men) was held in Serbia between 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> January 2012. Media in Macedonia have been following the competition closely since the national team was part of the event. Apart from the live transmission of the matches the news programs also made regular updates and analysis of the events. The focus of the reports was the Macedonian national team, but also the national team fans and the iconography that is characteristic for them. A very important part of the dynamics of the coverage was the metaphorical association of the sporting event to the notions of an ongoing “battle” or “war”, the handball players with “national heroes” and the fans with “an army” – this practice has framed the event in the existing national mythology mainstreamed in society in the past five years.

Additionally at the very beginning of the competition, during the match between Macedonia and Sweden (16<sup>th</sup> Jan), this event was connected to the issue of interethnic relations in Macedonia. Alsat M – a Albanian and Macedonian language private TV station in its central news program broadcasted an information that Macedonia fans apart from provoking the Serbian fans, also chanted slogans against the Albanians. With a few days delay the reactions and comments followed. This spilled over the sporting event to the wider societal context. Some of the media covering the events decided to completely ignore the controversy undermining the severity of the incident while others overstated and insisted on this coverage as if nothing else is going on at the championship. Mostly the media in Macedonian language undermined the importance and the media in Albanian language insisted on it.



Because of the difference in the qualitative approach that was used in the analysis of the TV and radio stations on one hand and the printed and online media on the other this case study is divided in two parts. Both of these approaches from a different angle are analyzing the fashion of reporting on the issue. The first part, which is focused on TV and radio stations, puts its focus on the journalistic professional standards and their breach. The second part, concerning the online and print media, deconstructs the specific narratives constructed through the reporting on this event.

# ETHICAL MATRIX OF REPORTING: EUROPEAN HANDBALL CHAMPIONSHIP 2012 IN THE TV AND RADIO PROGRAMMING

*Vesna Sopar*

This qualitative analysis focuses on the coverage of seven TV stations and three radio stations in Macedonia. Five TV stations broadcast in Macedonian language (MTV1, Sitel, Kanal 5, Alfa, Telma), one TV station broadcasts in Albanian only (MTV2) and one of them broadcasts in Macedonian and Albanian language (Alsat M). Two of the radio stations that have been analyzed broadcast in Macedonian language (Makedonsko radio and Kanal 77) and one in Albanian language (Makedonsko radio – Albanian section).

## General conclusions on the professional standards and the discourse practice

- TV and radio stations demonstrated a sharp division regarding the coverage of the European Handball Championship in congruence to their own pre-defined matrix of reporting, determined primarily by the linguistic-cum-ethnic and ideological-cum-political dimension.
- Media broadcasting in Albanian language focused their attention to the incidents that were caused by the fans and the offensive chanting on the expense of the Albanians. The media in Macedonian language on the other hand focused on the matches, the success of the Macedonian national team and the fun the fans had - there was almost no coverage of the incidents and the chanting of the fans against the Albanians. This meant that the audiences in Macedonia were “served” with two divergent truths about the events.
- Through this contextualization of the event the media introduced two dominantly divergent strategies – a strategy of “revealing” and a strategy of “covering”. Further on in the coverage one of medium adopted the strategy of “excluding”. In the first “scenario” the story of the nationalism and ethnocentrism of the fans was broke by Alsat M (a medium covering in Albanian and Macedonian language) – the rest of the media in Albanian language took over the story and developed it. In the second scenario the events were covered in a positive frame – this scenario was adopted by the media in Macedonian language and it varied from support (Telma, Alfa, Kanal 5 and MTV1) to glorification (Sitel). In the third

scenario the strategy of exclusion was detected in the attempt of the Albanian language service of Makedonsko radio to boycott the coverage of the competition all together because of the nationalistic rhetoric of the fans.

- Following the line of reporting suggests that there is consistency within the chosen strategy of „covering” – by this strategy the coverage reflects solely the sporting event with no references to the ethno-political context. A prominent place in this strategy has the glorification of the success of the national team.
- In contrast with this in the strategy of exposing there is a gradation of the content and in the intensity of the visual interpretation of the event. This strategy insists on the construction of an image of the event exclusively through ethno-centric prism disregarding the rest of the elements of the event.

### General line of reporting

The analysis isolated some specifics of the TV and radio coverage of the European Championship in terms of the editorial line of reporting on the sporting events. Two dominant opposing strategies emerged: a strategy of “revealing- overstating” and a strategy of “ignoring- understating” of the incidents which had the potential to spark interethnic tensions. A third strategy emerged later on in the coverage – the strategy of “excluding” which was present as an isolated case in the Makedonsko radio- program in Albanian language.

A comparison is possible here between two groups of media: (1) TV and radio stations that offered “one-sided” coverage of the European Championship by completely neglecting the interethnic consequences (Kanal 5, Sitel, Telma, MTV 1, Alfa), and (2) TV and radio stations that offered ethnic-cum-conflicting aspect in the coverage (Alasat M, MTV 2 – Albanian language, Makedonsko radio - Albanian language). The issue arising from the first type of coverage is whether the neglecting and ignoring as a possible attempt by the news rooms to avoid any implications of ethnic strife can be regarded as a responsible decision. The issue arising from the second type of coverage is whether putting an emphasis of the dichotomy between “us – good” and “you-bad” does not produce corrosive practice as well.

For the purpose of detecting the main straits of the line of reporting this part of the analysis will make a short description of the fashion in which each medium covered the event.

*MTV1 (Macedonian language section)* covered the European Handball Championship in a typical sports reporting manner. Within the frame of the primetime news program the coverage was focused on “our boys”, the game of the national team, the results, the success and the defeats, on the best scorers, their “incredible sacrifice during the matches”, the way they gave their maximum and how they “left their harts on the field”<sup>7</sup>, the way “they showed everyone how this game is played, how one should represent and defend Macedonia”. Whenever the national team would win the prime time news program would start with special reports on the Championship. MTV 1 in the prime time news did not broadcast any information or a footage that would suggest that there were any offensive chanting at the expense of ethnic Albanians. The program put a

<sup>7</sup> A Macedonian saying meaning that someone made a great sacrifice

special emphasis on the strong support for the national team of the big number of fans. There was no tendency to glorify the team. The coverage did not include any incidents or corrosive chanting.

*MTV 2 (Albanian language)* covered the Championship almost exclusively from a sporting angle. The program reported on the matches, the results, but also on the incidents (the graffiti “Macedonia is a Serbian land”). *MTV 2 Albanian* opened the issue of the chanting on the expense of ethnic-Albanians after Macedonian national team won against the Czech Republic (20 Jan). The package was broadcasted within the political section of the prime time news program. The report was live – the report focused on the offensive chanting of the fans which was reportedly supported by the handball players- the report said that they together “spilled their anger against the Albanians”. This was illustrated by a video recording of the fans chanting these slogans. In the reminding days of the Championship the incident was not mentioned in the coverage.

TV Sitel had the exclusive license to cover the matches of the Macedonian national team. Apart from the live coverage of the matches the TV station dedicated a significant portion of the prime time news programming to report on the scores, missed chances of the team, the “sensational” victories, the dramatic matches as well as the return of the team in Skopje and the reception by the crowd on the main square in Skopje where “Macedonia bowed before her heroes”. The coverage also reported on the euphoric atmosphere among the fans to the extent that the reports were filled with glorification -this was encouraged by the statements of the team captain and the coach who demanded more support by the fans as their “eighth player” as they called it. The editor of the news edition on the 20<sup>th</sup> January said: “Do not forget that the Macedonians are in fact hosts of this European Championship held in Serbia”. There were daily reports on the number of people traveling from Macedonia to attend the matches in Nish and Belgrade, about the off schedule train compositions headed in Serbia’s direction filled with Macedonian fans. TV Sitel made sharp criticism towards anyone who would “dare” to criticize the euphoria of the fans. The offensive cheering on the basis of ethnicity were not mentioned in any of the reports.

In the coverage of TV Kanal 5 there was a domination of the classic sporting reporting on the events of the Championship. There was a detailed overview and a rich recorded video material of all the matches, about the team members, the fans and their messages. The TV station did not send a special reporter to cover the Championship. When the national team was winning special interviews and videos were being broadcast. The attention was almost exclusively focused on what happened on the field and the support of the “Macedonia phalanx” as the fans were called. There was no mention of any chanting of offensive slogans or any incidents.

The coverage of TV Telma was also focused on the sporting event solely. There were classic reports that analyzed the performance of the Macedonian national team, the contribution of every player to the success, the mishaps and the mistakes, the expectations etc. The fans did not have a prominent place in the reports, but it has been reported that Macedonia fans are a trade mark of the Championship and there was some criticism of the incidents that involved the fans in contact with Serbia fans. There was no mention of the offensive chants at any point. The background cheering of the fans was muted during



the reports. There was only one case of a video depicting fans singing “Solunsko pole”<sup>[8]</sup> that report was made during the welcoming celebration of the team in Skopje. This background goes against the interview with Kire Lazarov – the captain of the team – who says that the team will not rest until it qualifies for the Olympic Games. Without a doubt the TV station has made an editorial decision to focus only to the sporting aspects of the Championship and to ignore the issue of the offensive chanting by the fans.

*TV Alfa* had almost identical approach to the reporting on the Championship. There were regular daily reports about the game of the national team, the scores the defense, the offense. Each time the Macedonian team would win a match that would be put on the first place of the daily agenda. Macedonian team is “powerful when circumstances are the toughest” etc was a regular way of reporting on the issue. The reports on the key matches of the team said that it would require an “attitude of a lion” to win the match, that the members of the team will “sacrifice their hearts” to win etc. The reports glorified the fans labeling them as “fantastic” etc. At no point in the reporting there was no mention of the offensive chanting and the singing if ethnically and nationally controversial songs.

*TV Alsat M (Albanian and Macedonian language)* broke the topic of the possible consequences that the chanting might have for the inter-ethnic relations. The reports focused mostly on the rhetoric of the fans, statements, reactions interviews and commentaries were also incorporated to criticize the events. This approach is visible in the first report published on January 16<sup>th</sup>.. The incidents between the Macedonian and the Serbian fans have a prominent place in the daily coverage on this date. This was followed by the reports on the controversial chanting of the Macedonian fans which in turn subsequently became the only angle of reporting. This line of reporting was reinforced by the reports that the members of the national team joined in the singing of songs offensive to the Albanians along with the fans. This started a wave of statements reactions of politicians, experts, NGO representatives, only of citizens of Albanian ethnic etc. In the midst of the competition (20<sup>th</sup> January) a short video was broadcast for the first time, that was later being often used – the sound in the background revealed the words of an offensive song. The TV station made an allegation that with this act the players support the fans and that the things that are going on at the playground are now being transferred in the realm of the interethnic relations in Macedonia.

The afternoon program of Makedonsko radio (program in Macedonian language) adopts a so called “protocol scheme of reporting” which can be detected also in the coverage of the European Handball Championship. In the sport section of the news program dedicated to the success of the national handball team there was a poor usage of audio material. The radio station broadcast had a separate section on the success of the national team. The newsroom did not report on any incidents and offensive behavior of the fans.

Makedonsko radio (Albanian language) covered the Championship from the beginning and it had only two reports on the offensive chanting. The first report was broadcast on 20<sup>th</sup> January during the match between Macedonia and the Czech Republic and the second report was broadcast on 24<sup>th</sup> January when the radio station issued a statement that it is not going to report on any event connected to the Macedonian national handball team. This decision was made as a reaction to the reported incident. There were no

<sup>8</sup> A nationalist song sang by the fans. Solun is the Macedonian name for the present day Thessaloniki



more broadcast reports between that event and the end of the Championship. Additionally the radio station called upon the other media in Albanian language to “boycott the Macedonian national team”.

Kanal 77 (Macedonian language) had a modest coverage of the European Cup. There were only brief reports on the matches in Serbia, and there were days when there was no mention of the Cup and the national team at all. There was a focus on short news items copied from the agencies, sport was insignificant element in the program of this station.

### Rhetoric and discourse strategies in the broadcasts

Several characteristic rhetoric strategies can be identified in the coverage of the European Handball Cup focused primarily on the behavior of the national team fans. The fans were represented through the media in three ways: a negative representation, a positive representation and a neutral representation, and these representations corresponded with the overall editorial strategy of the respective media.

All these representations were additionally reinforced by the visual effects which repetitively actualized the issue of the controversial “values” of the fans. For example the coverage of the media in Albanian language there was a strong negative representation – they insisted on the “ethnocentrism and chauvinism” of the Macedonian national fans by introducing sentences like: “they could not resist the chance to offend the Albanians” (Alsat M, 16<sup>th</sup> January) and “they wish death to their Albanian neighbors” (MTV 2 Albanian language 24<sup>th</sup> January). In opposition to this, the positive representation of the fans connotes them in sentences like: “they are the trade mark of the European Championship” (Telma, 20<sup>th</sup> January), “these are fans that any national team would desire” (MTV 1 Macedonian language 19<sup>th</sup> January)> the neutral representation defines the fans as “incredible” (Telma, 22 January) and “responsible” (Telma, 16 January).

With regards to the structure of isolated packages that were broadcast, the rhetoric is iconographically supplemented by videos depicting the fans and their cheering rituals. As the same footages were being repeated as an illustration too many news reports it can be concluded that they are used as a means for symbolical framing of the event. In the cases of positive representation of the fans, the footages are presented in a way that emphasizes their “sporting spirit” and “their patriotism”, whereas the negative representation emphasizes their “nationalism” and “frustrations”. This conclusion becomes even firmer because of the fact that majority of the reports and news items concerning the Cup were incorporated either in the headlines or towards the very beginning of the prime time broadcasts. This type of visual representation constructs a double “mystification” aimed at the “Other” – firstly it defines “Us” as good and “Them” as bad, and secondly it works as a fishing hook for the audience to follow that matrix.

Bellow I am analyzing several TV packages that illustrate the negative representation of the fans:

*TV Alsat M (Albanian and Macedonian Language)* reported on the ethnocentric chanting of the fans from the beginning to the end of the Cup coverage. Two TV packages are worth mentioning in this respect, both broadcasted on 20<sup>th</sup> January. The text



of the report says: “Yesterday’s scandal became something more than the ones that happened the previous day – the national team handball player joined the fans in the chanting”. The news then incorporates numerous reactions to this event. DUI issues a statement: “Honestly we expected that the anger of the Macedonian fans to be aimed at Serbia because the Serbian fans displayed a Greek flag on one of the matches. Unfortunately these frustrations continue to be demonstrated against the Albanians”. NDP also “All the fans have political agenda they have party inclinations and have been mobilized by the parties. Of course the Government tends to make interethnic tensions in Macedonia and then use them to defocus the public in Macedonia from the economic crisis we are all in. Then they would say be calm because we have a problem with the Albanians”. SDSM, it is said in the report, has not heard of any offensive anti-Albanian chanting, but the party said that if there was such an occurrence it should be condemned. The NGO “Wake Up” said that “this is a horrible behavior that encourages interethnic hatred among the fans. Unfortunately this time the fans have been supported by the Macedonian national team – the team which is supposed to represent us all”. There was a condemnation from the Black-red alliance that demands from the authorities to undertake corresponding measures as soon as possible- that the fans and the players should be sanctioned “not because they scare us with their threats but because the costs for the team’s participation is being covered by the tax payers money- with the contribution of the Albanians”. In the same broadcast the coverage incorporated a video material from the offensive chanting which happened a few days before the report. On photograph one of the players has been pointed out because he was allegedly singing along with the fans. The reporter underlines that despite the fact that the Serbian fans provoked the Macedonians by displaying the Greek flag on one of the matches the Macedonian fans still offended the Albanians.

The TV station with the coverage evoked the myth of the “discriminated nation”- the Albanians are being offended without any guilt of their own. The Macedonian sport fans are than being equated with all Macedonians. The reports than are searching for the guilty party in the story augmenting with various proofs: a video material isolating one of the players allegedly singing, the reports insisting on the claim that the political “parties of the Macedonians” pretend that they haven’t heard any chanting, making vox pops about the feelings of citizens, insisting on Albanian NGO statements etc. The overall conclusion of all that is that there is only one guilty party in society - the Macedonians. An interesting and a worrying aspect of the rhetoric strategy of Alsat M, apart from the persistent underlining of the ethnocentrism and chauvinism of the Macedonians is the insisting that the “We” is the righteous one. The coverage insisted that the anti-Albanian chanting is a result of the provocations of the Serbian fans and there were no Albanian fans or a national team at the European Cup. Also the reports insisted that the Albanians are angry and disappointed from the Macedonians who were the ones who made the “first provocation” etc.

*MTV 2 (Albanian language)* dedicated its special attention on the nationalist rhetoric of the Macedonian fans, especially in the 24<sup>th</sup> January edition. The CUE of the package was worded as follows: “*A scandal in Nish – the Macedonian handball players joined the fans in the anti-Albanian chanting*”. The reminder of the package has this wording: “the

offense towards the Albanians were repeated last night in Nish, but this time they did not only come from the fans but unfortunately also from part of the national team players, whose victory was desired also by the Albanians. Our colleague Sami Ademy had the worst of times as yesterday night found himself in Nish to report on this match. He had to endure while listening to the hard offenses on the basis of nationality even from the players”.

Subsequently there is the report of the reporter who says: “Unfortunately it is not the first time nor it will be the last when we are stuck in a situation when we have to report against our will on some event, or to write on issues that deeply jeopardize our national dignity, the dignity of a nation as was the case yesterday. Starting from one of the main principles in journalism, the unbiased reporting responsibly we say that the offenses and the anger against the Albanians was so severe that they crossed all boundaries of correctness... With the slogan ‘Let the damn Shiptars know that Macedonians will not bow’ was chanted for hours after the yesterday’s match. It was hard to be a part of an environment where over 5000 viewers wish the death for their Albanian neighbors. With this verse the match between Macedonia and the Czech Republic started and it finished with the same words. For the sake of the irony part of the players joined the chanting. You be the judge if this is just an spontaneous incident? After what we heard here a question arises - why did the Macedonian media not react on this event the way they raised their voice against the usage of the FYROM reverence and the displaying of the Greek flag” The reminder of the package reports on the reactions of the NGO “Wake Up” and the Red-Black-Alliance which said that the chanting of the fans was a scandal and demanded that the Home Office open a case for investigation.

*Makedonsko radio (Albanian language program)* reported on the incident for the first time on 20<sup>th</sup> January. The Cue of the package has this wording: “Unfortunately this is not the first nor it is the last time that we are offended. During the match between Macedonia and the Czech Republic in Nish, the fans and the players chanted offensive verses ... It was hard to be a protagonist at a match in which 5000 people wish for death of the Albanians”

Subsequently on the 24<sup>th</sup> of January the headline of the program the editorial board had announced that they would boycott the Cup and that all media in Albanian language should do the same: “Having in mind that the fact that that the Albanians have been continuously offended by the fans and the players regardless of the type of the sporting competition Macedonian national team competes in, Radio Skopje has decided not to inform of any such activities of the national teams” This call was accepted by the by the print media in Albanian Language as a type of ethnic solidarity in boycotting the Macedonian national team.



# CONSTRUCTING THE “ANCIENT MACEDONIANS” AND THE “DISADVANTAGED ALBANIANS”: PRINT AND ONLINE MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE EUROPEAN HANDBALL CHAMPIONSHIP 2012

*Igor Micevski*

## 1. PRINT MEDIA

The sampling in this analysis was conducted on the basis of the number of sold copies of the newspapers and the timeframe of the selected case – the whole duration of the European Handball Championship. All the texts concerning the coverage were taken into consideration during the discourse analysis. Six daily newspapers publishing in Macedonian language were selected (*Dnevnik*, *Nova Makedonija*, *Utrinski Vesnik Vecer*, *Vest and Fokus*) and three daily newspapers in Albanian (*Koha*, *Lajm* and *Zurnal*).

### General conclusions on the professional standards and the discourse practice

- No cases of explicit hate speech or xenophobia were identified in the reporting practice of the print media during the selected period of the European Handball Championship<sup>[9]</sup>.
- In some of the sampled media that publish in Macedonian and Albanian language the analysis detected a systematic practice which encourages open ethnocentrism and a practice of reproducing implicit negative stereotypes about ethnic communities<sup>[10]</sup>.
- In the reporting of some of the print media publishing in Macedonian language the analysis detected systematic attempts to minimize the fact that part of the Albanian community in the country expressed concern over the offensive chanting of the national team fans during the Championship. Yet there were media that have made a decision not to adopt that kind of a strategy – they criticized and condemned the behavior of the fans. The print media that publish in Albanian language there was an opposite situation. A dominant prism of reporting

<sup>9</sup> On the definition of ‘xenophobia’ see section 6

<sup>10</sup> On the definition of the concepts ‘ethnocentrism’ and ‘stereotypes’ see section 6

- was the chanting of the ‘Macedonian’ fans during the matches.
- This finding brings to the conclusion that the ethnic affiliation of the news room and the ethnicity of the audience it is concerned with<sup>[11]</sup> are the key factor that determines the editorial position or on the angle of coverage even of a sporting event. It has been noted that both ‘Macedonian’ and ‘Albanian’ language media neglect or understate the corrosive discourses that members of “their own” ethnic group construct and vice versa – they insist on overstating the offensive discourses toward “their own group”.
  - The rhetoric used in the reposts of the print media on the European Handball Championship symbolically shifts the discourse from the sporting event towards the political-cum-historical context of the interethnic relations. In the process several dominant narratives are being reproduced. Most of these narratives are generated from a different societal or political contexts. Visible and persistent throughout the coverage of the European Handball Championship were narratives of the “Ancient Macedonians” and the “Proud but disadvantaged Albanian”.
  - Some of the texts adopt so called “generalizing strategies” that enable the construction of equivalence between individual members of an ethnic group with the totality of that ethnic group.
  - The general conclusion of this analysis is that majority of the newspapers in Macedonia are ethnically biased, which is a common occurrence in multicultural societies. This practice is however unwelcomed because it encourages polarization rather than cohesion, understanding toleration.

### Newspapers in Macedonian language

The rhetoric used in the reporting practice of the print media that publish in Macedonian language demonstrates the presence of a strong “military expressiveness”. It either constructs or it reinforces the discourses of *historical legitimization of the idea of the natural ethno-space*. This particular discourse strategy ensures that the “*advance of a nation sporting team*” is equated or compared with a “campaign of military conquest”. This strategy is visible in the linguistic constructions of the headlines such as these: “The Macedonian tank is piercing the opponent’s defences” (Dnevnik 19<sup>th</sup> January), “Nish invaded” (Vecer 19<sup>th</sup> January), “And now let us march on Belgrade” (Nova Makedonija 21<sup>th</sup> January) etc. Some of the discourse analyzed reports there is a resistance to this rhetorical strategy: “Tears and applause for the handball team” (Fokus, 30 Januari), “Is there anyone left on their working place in this country?! Kire Lazarov delighted from the Macedonian support in Belgrade” (Vest, 25<sup>th</sup> January), “The day of wonders has a happy ending” (Vest, 27<sup>th</sup> January). It is also worth noting that some of the print media that publish in Macedonian language there are cases of an open condemnation of the corrosive chants of the fans during the matches. For example: “Über Makedonische where on earth are you going”? Nova Makadonija 18<sup>th</sup> February), “We have said NO to ‘Dzingo a

<sup>11</sup> This is a conclusion drawn from the research of the attitudes, perceptions and the practices of the newsrooms conducted by SJPR in 2011: Accessible at <http://respublic.edu.mk/>

fagot’ on the sporting events, let us say NO to the “Kauri and Shiptari too” (Dnevnik, 25<sup>th</sup> January), “The sporting spirit has to be nurtured” (Utrinski Vesnik 20 January).

The interchangeability of the notions of the “sporting success” and the “campaign of military conquest” is a type of metaphoric strategy which is considered “ordinary” for the coverage of sporting events. Still in a multiethnic society this kind of linguistic expressiveness is prone to spillover, re-contextualize and strengthen the ethno-political discourses that circulate in the wider social realm. In the following explication a few cases that demonstrate the manner in which this sport-specific discourse spills over from the particular context in the wider social realm i.e. how the “phalanxization”<sup>[12]</sup> from the iconography adopted by the fans translates in to the dominant societal accepted so called “Ancient Macedonian Narrative”:

The text “And now let us march on Belgrade” published in Nova Makedonija on 21<sup>th</sup> January has a very simple informational value – to inform that the Macedonian national team has passed the first phase of the European Handball Cup which was held in Nish. The next match phase was scheduled in Belgrade and hence the information that the players are “to travel to Belgrade”. The metaphor of the “march” (i.e. the campaign of military conquest) that has been used in the headline is reinforced with the lead of the report: “The Macedonian chanting army advances 240 km to the north”. It should be noted that the noun army is not marked by any special marker (i.e. italics or quotation marks etc) which means that it is not marked as a metaphoric re-contextualizer. Of course this kind of a discourse practice does not have to be problematic in it self. However, more important here is the aspect of the “*normalization of the narrative*”, which consequently allows for the “*natural*” spillover of this rhetoric from this benign context to other societal contexts. The photograph that illustrates the text which is also published on the front page depicts a Macedonian national flag overshadowing the whole location of “Kalemegdan” – a historical landmark of Belgrade and Serbia. This is an additional manifestation of the “narrative of national pride”.

A further interesting example of the way the sporting context slides into historical dimensions is the text published in Utrinski Vesnik on 15<sup>th</sup> January “Nish colored in red and yellow”. The wording is as follows: “Some twenty years later, some new “kids” occupied one of the oldest Balkan cities – the birthplace of Constantine I, the founder of Constantinople, present Istanbul. The Macedonian invasion of the “throne” of Southern Serbia numbering 180.000 people according to the last years census began on Saturday - it had its culmination yesterday morning” (Utrinski Vesnik 15 January). In this fashion the information of the arrival of the Macedonian team in Nish is becoming a symbolic historical description of the conquering endeavor of location which is a birthplace of the man who is the link between Antiquity and Christianity. This paragraph is interesting because of the usage of the word *invasion* which in a military context has the meaning of submission of the capital along with 180 000 inhabitants.

The spillover of discourses from the realm of the sports to the realm of the historical narratives is actually inter-melting with the idea of the (re)discovery of the Ancient strain in the modern Macedonian nation. This is most obvious in the cases of reporting in which the texts insist on the usage of the word “phalanx” in the need to describe the

12 This term is derived from the name of the phalanx – the army mobilized by Alexander the Great and it refers to the iconography that could be seen to be adopted by the fans during matches.



cheering iconography and strategy of the fans. There are many examples of this lexical choice in almost all newspapers publishing in Macedonian language.

A characteristic example is the text published on the 25<sup>th</sup> January in *Vecer* - “Belgrade trembles from the phalanx”. The Macedonian phalanx here is supposed to be a metaphor for the new Macedonian political-cum-cultural vigor. It conquers the birth city of Constantine the Great, it “makes Belgrade tremble”, it makes “everyone tremble” etc. A strategic exception from this strategy is the coverage of daily *Fokus* which was critical of the rhetoric arguing that it should be regarded as a strategy of the Government to “antiquate the nation”.

The reports in which the narrative structure is constructed around the mythologisation of the Macedonian national team as the “Alexander’s phalanx”, in fact hold the potential to develop a strong ethnocentric societal effect. This potential is constantly being transferred to other societal realms. In a situation where the sporting event adopts ethnic and political dimension this potential is exploding as a corrosive discourse of intolerance towards the “Other”.

An example of this process of the transfer of the ethnocentric strategy into a discourse of intolerance is the text “The Public” published in *Vecer* on 30<sup>th</sup> of January. The text has a somewhat neutral heading however the deconstruction reveals that there are two stereotyping and stigmatizing discursive strategies: the first is aimed against the “outcasts” and the “traitors” of one’s own ethnic group; and the second is aimed against members of the “Ethnic Other”. These two strategies are connected and mutually enhancing and are often employed in the context of the reporting on the name issue that Macedonia has with Greece. In the context of the European Cup the text is producing this double effect with this sentence: “This is a new, a different Macedonia, a positive Macedonia. Yes I know, there are many here who do not like this Macedonia. The day when Philip Ricker wearing a Macedonian national sports outfit was jumping with the fans in Nish every time Macedonia would score the same day the vice-president of SDSM Gordan Georgiev said that we have gone mad and that this euphoria is unhealthy for the nation. He likes defeats, darkness and despair. That’s where he sees his chance”. The text subsequently constructs a negative ideological stereotype according to which the present day dominant societal paradigm is the one of the “patriots” who produce the national vigor and who stimulate the “positive Macedonia” in contrast to the “traitors” who ruled in the “dark past”, who “do not like Macedonia to be positive”, who cannot be even as happy as an American man to the success of the national team. This stigma on the “political Other” is determined by the discourse of the “traitors among us” which is intertwined with the narrative of the ‘Ilinden epic’ which is today re-actualized through the rivalries between the ruling party (on the right) and the opposition (on the left).

The discourses produced in society are unstable structures – they however produce relatively stable narratives which then determine the way the whole community or a portion of that community thinks or perceives the world and imagines itself as a homogenous group<sup>[13]</sup>. This approach to reporting has an ethnocentric consequence and it determines the way Macedonians imagine their community. This “exclusivist effect” by which only the Macedonians who are complying with the dominant national narra-

13 A notion proposed by Benedict Anderson



tive are “true Macedonians” and the rest are the traitors goes in favor to the notion of the nation as ethnocentric and exclusive as opposed to the civic-oriented notion of the inclusive community which would include those who are not Macedonians in an ethnic sense of the word or those who do not consider themselves the decedents of Alexander the Great.

There was a series of texts in Macedonian and Albanian language which attempt to minimize the manifestations of intolerance of “their own” ethnic group, and which overemphasize the intolerance of the ethnic group of the Other. The mentioned text in Vecer produces exactly that effect: “Artan Grubi, the advisor to Ali Ahmeti, why by some miracle is also employed by the Dutch embassy condemned the chanting and all the joy of the fans just because in one brief moment ten of those fans sang the verse”. In this strategy the perception of the behavior of the group We belong to is sensitive to the offenses on Our expense while in the same time I minimizes the offense that has been done to the Others. By the same logic – majority of Macedonians do not think that the verse “Solunsko pole shall be ours” might be problematic for somebody. The expressions of nationalism of “Our own” in this discursive strategy is always “good and creative”, the nationalism of other groups in our proximity is always “Bad and destructive”.

This text is concluded with these sentences which are self-explanatorily corrosive as they adopt an explicate strategy of demonization of a whole ethnic group and spreading hate speech:

“Serbs, Bosnians, Croats they all cheered for Macedonia both in Lithuania and in Serbia... Lithuanians supported us. Only the Albanians didn’t.

Who would support Albania had it been playing on this Championship? The Macedonians? The Serbs? ... Maybe the Greeks? ... or the Bulgarians.... Nope.

That is the price for that politics. To constantly shoot at someone, to burn the national flag of a state you live in, to exile people from their homes and never to welcome them back.... Regardless of the location Pristina, Aracinovo, Matejce...

Friendship has to be earned. With respect, solidarity, love and care... not with offenses especially not with shooting...

The Public (the Audience) is the judge. You either have it or you don’t. It’s up to you. After all these decades we have it. Long live Macedonia. Forever!”

### **Newspapers in Albanian language**

The analysis of the rhetoric of the sports reporting in the Albanian language print media revealed that the coverage is predominately structured along ethnic lines. Albanian language print media either had a very vague coverage of the European Cup or they did not cover at all the information about the play of the Macedonian national team. On the other hand they published series of stories dedicated to the “verbal offenses against Albanians”. This approach may partially be explained by the decision of press newsrooms to respond to the call for boycott of the Macedonian national team matches. The published stories that were condemning the behavior of the fans in Nish and Belgrade were without exception “defending” an ethno-particular position. Some of the examples include the texts: “How to put the devil back into the bottle”? (Si ta fusim djallin



në shishe? Zhurnal 28 јануари), “Even when they play handball they are offending the Albanians” (Edhe hendbollistët e Maqedonisë ofenduan shqiptarët Lajm 20 јануари).

This ethno-specific approach in the coverage of the sporting events is manifested through two main discursive strategies: the first one is “defensive” and it reproduces the narrative of the “Discriminated Albanian” who is offended and abused by the dominant stereotypically portrayed Macedonians, but as well by the “Europeans” who “were supposed to be guarantors of the human rights in Macedonia. The second discursive strategy is taking a symbolic stance of “revenge against the usurper” – this one reproduces the narrative of the “Proud and Great Albanian nation”.

Both strategies can be noted in several examples published on the front page of the newspapers selected for the analysis. The headline of daily Lajm published on 20<sup>th</sup> January says: “Sports journalist Sami Ademi for Lajm: The Albanians have been offended by the Macedonians every five minutes” (Gazetari sportiv, Sami Ademi për Lajm: Shqiptarët janë fyer në çdo pesë minuta Lajm 20 јан). It should be noted that the reason for printing the article is the offensive behavior of a portion of the fans, not of all the “Macedonian people”. The noun “Albanians” in the context of the reporting for the European Cup is often being put into proximity with the verb “offended”. This is the case with this headline. Not only that its context suggests that “The Albanians” (understood as a homogenous group) are often being offended, by a portion of the fans, but even more so that they have been offended by “all” members of the ethnic “Other”. Implicitly it can be said that the text here produces a synecdoche effect, which is characteristic also for the articles published in Macedonian Language – this approach is one of the responsible linguistic strategies for the production of stereotypes. This headline demonstrates how only *a part* of the fans of the Macedonian national handball team is being assumed to be *a part* of the Macedonian ethno-collective which in turn is represented as in a stereotyped form as the ethno-collective as a whole. The employment of this strategy does not entail that only a small group of people “offended the Albanians every five minutes”, but it entails that that is the case with the “whole Macedonian ethno-nation” – *the part* is equated with *the whole*. These types of discursive approaches are an example for the way in which stereotypes are being constructed and reproduced. Но тука има нешто уште поважно, а тоа е имплицитната сугестија дека „Албанците во целост се тие што само трпат навреди“. Once the headline has made the switch the remaining of the text is a testimony of an Albanian reporter about the behavior of the fans in Nish and Belgrade – he does not state that the people chanting were a small group which is something different from all Macedonians. He also does not state that these types of manifestations are common within the Albanian fans towards the Macedonians, as well most other fans of national teams etc. This leaves the impression that the text suggest that “everyone is evil but Us” which is an ethno-centric outlook in which one’s own nation is “the only righteous one”.

The next “phase” of the creation of the ethnocentric social effect is the strategy minimizing of the success of the Macedonian national team in the light of the verbal offences towards the Albanians. For example the texts: “Macedonia is losing and Albanians are again offended” (Maqedonia humb dhe prapë fyen shqiptarët, Zhurnal 22 јануари) and “They play with the Czechs and they swear at Albanians” (“Luajnë me çekët, shajnë

shqiptarët”, *Koha* 20 januari). This textual strategy makes the discourse of “the dominant and aggressive stereotypical Other” more complex. The Other (understood as a monolith – a homogenous entity) is offending a lot of us “Us the Albanians” who are absolutely innocent of any guilt and who are a target of “all of Them”. There is another dimension here – the headline of the text “Macedonia loses and the Albanians are offended again” there is an interesting polarization that discursively connects the fact that the Macedonian handball team have lost the game with the fact that the Albanians are offended.

This figurative construction may imply a hidden social critique that “Macedonia will not be able to move forward unless it changes its approach towards the Albanians”. This is only one of the hermeneutical circles and in this circle the development of “Macedonia is solely tied to the approach towards the Albanians”.

Something similar can be found in the text “Honors instead of punishment” (*Dekorata në vend të dënimit!*, *Lajm*, 29<sup>th</sup> January). The headline suggests that the players should be punished because they, as it is being reported by the Albanian language press “instigated the Nazi chanting”. The photographs depict the goalkeeper Borko Ristevski who is jubilant and who is holding the red and yellow scarf with the name Macedonia on it. The interplay between the photograph and the headline suggests that this player is “taking pleasure” in the anti Albanian chanting and that instead of being punished for this act he is being rewarded. The sub-heading has a sarcastic content which if analyzed for its ethno-particular perspective it reproduces the narrative of the “Discriminated Albanian” who has been violated by the Macedonian and on top of that the Macedonian is taking pleasure in that. The text says: “President Ivanov will give honors to the players of the national handball team, because they offended the Albanians with Nazi chants and because they finished second in the handball group”. („Presidenti i shtetit, Gjorgje Ivanov do tu japë dekorata hendbollistëve të Maqedonisë për dy arsye kryesore, e para sepse fyen shqiptarët me parulla naziste dhe e dyta arritën rezultat në hendboll.“)

What is interesting in the narrative of the “Discriminated Albanian” Во наративот за „Обесправениот Албанец“ is the framing of the sub-narrative of “Europe” as a principle and politics. In the Albanian language media in general the United States are being treated as the “righteous big construct”, but this however is not the case of the position that “Europe” enjoys. Here is one example of the fashion in which the narrative of the Discriminated Albanian interplays with the narrative of the “Big Other who is not protecting Us”. The article “EHF encourages the anti-Albanian chants” (*Edhe FEH stimulon fyerjet antishqiptare*, *Koha* 24 januari) is a direct continuation of the article “Macedonian chauvinism under the European scrutiny” („Shovinizmi maqedonas në thjerrëzën evropiane“ *Koha*, 24 januari). In this rhetoric strategy the “Macedonian chauvinism” is located in the collective Other not as a fact that is true for the sporting events but for society in general. EHF or the European Handball Federation represents the source of the “European justice” that is expected to help the discriminated. At the same time the headline reveals a disappointment because the expectation for help is not fulfilled – not only that but it is suggested that the one who is supposed to bring justice is encouraging the injustice. This means that in the reporting cases can be isolated which suggest that the narrative of the “Albanian discriminated from the world” is also present.



The subheading adds a new component to this narrative – this time the institution President of Macedonia is being juxtaposed with “Europe” - that is that EHF is less aware of the magnitude of the problem even than the President: “The president George Ivanov, who recognized the anti-Albanian chanting, unlike the representatives of EHF who did not. As Roland said, they were still not able to gather information about the tension”. (Ndryshe nga presidenti i Maqedonisë, Gjorge Ivanov, që ka identifikuar sharjet anti-shqiptare, përfaqësuesit e FEH, siç ka thënë Rouland, akoma nuk kanë arritur të sigurojnë brohoritjet që kanë nxehur tensionet në Maqedoni. „Po vazhdohet monitorimi i situatës në ndeshjet e ardhshme finale”, ka thënë shkurt zëdhënësi i FEH, Rouland, duke mos u përgjigjur nëse do të merren masa konkrete për fyerjet që tashmë janë transmetuar në të gjithë mediat shqipe).

This ethno-centric effect which can be found in the deconstruction of journalistic texts concerning the European Championship takes its final shape in the suggestion that there should be rejection of the possibility of a unity with the “Macedonians”. A paradigmatic example of this narrative is the text “Macedonia ‘non grata’” (Maqedonia, ‘non grata’ Koha 9 February). It was published in the context of the European Championship, but it was also a prelude to the events of 16<sup>th</sup> February, when fans group “Plisat” burned the Macedonian flag during a football match in Pristina. The rhetorical strategy which can be read from the title is that Macedonia is completely undesirable and that it should be rejected as an invalid concept. This narrative is enhanced with photo released immediately under the title, depicting a group of fans holding a banner that reads “From Pristina with hate”. The reproduction of the discourse of Macedonia as an “invalid concept” because of its discriminatory and insulting policies towards the Albanians is an important thread in the political rhetoric of the Macedonian Albanians.

## 2. ONLINE MEDIA

The qualitative analysis included four Macedonian language online media: Plus Info, MKD.mk, Sky and Kurir.

### General conclusions on the professional standards and the discourse practice

- The analysis of online media content did not register any intentional and explicit stereotyping or discriminatory strategy. However, a number of examples of ‘reckless’ discursive practice show that there is no sensitivity to subtleties within the structure of the journalistic texts. They therefore very often encourage ethnocentrism, stereotypes, xenophobia and discrimination.
- In some articles the analysis noted inconsistency in respect of the professional journalistic standards – namely of truthful and accurate reporting. Online media not always refer with precision to the sources. Also authors rarely sign the text. This practice affects the credibility of the text as they may create the impression that the information is not based on facts.

- The analysis noted that some of the photographs incorporated in the online texts are not attributed. It is not clear when the photo is taken or even if it is taken from the original event. In some packages for the European Championship some photographs were controversial and unattributed. In such cases, editors should attribute the photographs stating where they were taken and when.
- In the context of this case study, it appears that the online media reported very little on concerns of the citizens of Albanian ethnicity on the chanting on the the slopes. At the expense of this they favored the national euphoria of the event.
- Careless use militant rhetoric in the online media reporting frames the discourse of the sports reporting into the preexisting “narratives” that cause associations with indisputable ethnocentric societal effect.
- The analysis showed that the online media coverage often uses “generalizing strategies” by which an individual or a small group of a particular community is identified with the characteristics of the whole community.

### Analysis of specific online packages

The rhetoric of the reporting in online media contained clear and at times strong “war metaphors”. “Sports matches” were transposed as in fact “armed conflicts “. These two concepts through the coverage became interchangeable. This strategy was most visible in the titles of the online packages – being the main carriers of information that leave the strongest mental effect on the audience. The strong “war” rhetoric was evident in titles such as: “Giving a life for Macedonia” (Kurir, 19 January) ‘Macedonian occupation of Belgrade - Part II “;” In about three hours war is expected war in Belgrade “(MKD. mk 23 and 27 January), “Will our handball heroes ‘break’ the German ‘body armor’?” (Sky, 17 January). As an exception to this practice for example, Plus Info went against this discursive strategy. The title of the text on the match with Germany says: “Undeserved defeat from Germany” (Plus Info, 17 January).

This interchangeability of the ‘sports competition’ and its hyperbolized metaphor of ‘armed struggle’ was all encompassing and a recurrent rhetorical strategy in sports reporting that determine the constitution of discourses that are produced anew; or of pre-existing discourses that were framed through this reporting practice.

One of the more illustrative packages released on 23 January on MKD.mk was titled “Rise up, to lift the nation.” The use of the terms “to look up” and “to lift” in the context of the “nation” is quite noticeable here. The emphasis on the two expressions is imperative and it suggests that handball players must get their spirit up not only in order to win the matches, but also “to raise the spirit of the nation.” Thus, on this discursive level ‘the fate’ of the nation is indissolubly linked with the success of the handball team. The mental impression that the title leaves is reinforced with the photography incorporated in the text. It depicts Kire Lazarov, a Macedonian handball player, attacking the goal of the opponents, and jumping in preparation to throw the ball towards the Danish goal. In front of him, there is a “wall” of six Danish handball players who form a defense. The impression that the photograph leaves is that “Our David - active” against “the Other Goliath, who is passive.” The lead of this article begins with the sentence “After a heavy



defeat Macedonia comes back a winner [...]” Here the words call upon a historical “narrative of the wounded nation”, which defies the odds and in the end inevitably triumphs.

The title, however, in the package published in Kurir on the 18<sup>th</sup> January illustrates how discourses constitute the “narrative of the superior Macedonian”. The article is titled “Swedes seek support from the Macedonian phalanx”, but in the very first sentence it reads: “Swedish internationals beg for our support [...]” The photograph which illustrates the package depicts a group of fans before which there is a banner that reads “United Phalanx.” Interpretative approach allows for the conclusion that the United Macedonian Phalanx stands as a metaphor for the Macedonian ethno-collective in front of the Swedes who beg and pray.

One of the most controversial elements of the European Basketball Championship 2011 was the cheering song sung by national team fans - “Come out on the balcony boy”. This song tells the story of the so-called “Goce’s Race” and it contained the sentence “Thessaloniki will be ours”. Because of this, part of the public opinion appeared to react negatively because the negative and even racist connotations associated with the song. But many formal and informal groups in the country have argued that this kind of discourse is a “normal” narrative for the sporting fans everywhere. However what was interesting to see then was the fact that this fan-specific behavior in the sporting context spilled over and ‘contaminated” in the general public. At times, the reporting of the online media for the Euro Cup in Handball looked like a conspicuous “discourse of normalization” of this kind of corrosive behavior. An example of this is the title of the package published on Sky on the 16<sup>th</sup> January “The famous song ‘Come out on the balcony boy’, echoes in Nis.” This means that the discursive strategy chosen by the journalist here by using the words “famous song” is to attach only a positive connotations on the song.

Similarly as in the Macedonian language print media, in some online media specific types of self-perception and self-imagination can be detected. The strategy of this discourse is to localize “symbolic guilt” in the “ideological other” (individuals or groups) within their own ethnic group. Thus, the rhetorical strategy of the text “Borjan Jovanovski is bothered by the euphoria” (Courier, 25<sup>th</sup> January), reveals a tendency of “unification and discipline” of the discourses that produce narratives about “the power of the ancient nation.” The text, which refers to the Facebook status of a Macedonian journalist in which he says that “the exaltation of the fans is unbearable” reads: “While the whole of Macedonia is united to celebrate the successes of our Handball team which wholeheartedly fights for the country’s flag, this euphoria obviously is not fit for someone”. It should be noted here that this online package makes a collectivist simplification which puts two contradicting concepts one against the other: on one side there is “the Macedonian nation, which is united and encourages the handball players to fight to the last breath”, and on the other side there is the isolated “sacrificial scapegoat” who is marked as a “defector”, a “traitor” etc. This type discourses have “disciplinary power”, it allows for any future attempt to challenge the dominant concept of self-imagination of the group to face the more powerful discourse of “euphoria and unification”. Simply put, the intention is to encourage the belief that anyone who opposes the dominant way that Macedonians are imagining themselves is a traitor. This discursive mechanism is very important in the establishment of ethnocentric narratives and finally it strongly determines discourses of negative stereotyping.

The ethnocentric effect generated by the excessive corrosive rhetoric of the sports coverage for the European Championship is further used as a basis for negative stereotyping and even xenophobia of entire ethnic group. Here is one example of this: on 16<sup>th</sup> February, at the occasion of jubilee of Kosovo's declaration of independence, a handball match between youth teams of Macedonia and Kosovo was held. There was an incident during that match - Macedonian flag was burned and the Kosovo fans were shouting insulting words towards Macedonians - "Macedonia does not exist" and "Bulgarians by God, Macedonians by Tito" etc. A week before the incident, on 9<sup>th</sup> February the Macedonian language website MKD.mk warned in a series of texts that such an incident would happen. The package is titled: "Threat from Kosovo: those who burned our flag threaten our Handball players now".

As is the case with the fashion of reporting on sporting events in general, this title also used "war" metaphors. But in this particular coverage there is an additional component - that is the specific security and political associations which construct "Kosovo" as a source of danger – this is the perception of most of the ethnic Macedonians in the country. This becomes obvious when analyzing the rhetoric that is used in the title. "Kosovo" in general, in this rhetorical strategy gets a negative semantics charge - it becomes a place which is a source of a "military threat." The term "Threat from Kosovo [...]" is visually separated from the rest of the sentence - it is accented with two capital letters. Furthermore, the effect of the stressed term "Threat from Kosovo" is semantically enhanced further in the sentence - "those who have burned the flag" are "threatening ..." This image of aggression that comes from the "External Other" makes a complete structure. "They" are usurpers who threaten us and burn our flag - the handball players are representatives of "our nation." But "They" in this sentence is not solely associated with "They" of Kosovo – a much larger discursive effect here is the equation of Them with the internal other as well – the Albanians from Macedonia. Thus this strategy envisages "the Albanians" as a monolith structure and it constructs a stereotype against "Them" as being a violent threat.

The phrase "burning the flag" leaves a particularly strong effect. The flag is a symbol of identity and in the dominant ethno-Macedonian context a symbol of the "narrative of defiance and defense of the uniqueness in opposition to those who threaten us". So in this sense the text is not about burning the flag as a direct target of a small group of fans but it's an insult and a threat to "our entire nation" of "all the people of Kosovo". Interestingly, the body of the text only reinforces the effect of expected "aggression". In the lead the report says: "Kosovo fan groups 'Plisat', which burnt the Macedonian flag at football match in Gnjilane last November, is preparing a new *action* directed against Macedonia. The incident should occur during the friendly handball tournament from 14 to 16 February in Pristina, with the participation of the youth teams of Macedonia, Bulgaria, Montenegro and Kosovo." The part of this sentence which states that the group is "preparing new action directed against Macedonia [...]" is noteworthy." The metaphorical use of warlike rhetoric in sports reporting in general, in this case is transferred in "actual aggression." The part of the sentence that says "expect an attack from Kosovo to Macedonia" frames the narrative of the conflict in 2001.



The article further states: “That would be regarded as a revenge for “the insults” the Macedonian fans expressed at the expense of the Albanians during the recent European Handball Championships (EP) in Serbia.” Also the word ‘insult’ is put in quotation marks. This suggests that the text proposes that it is questionable if insults towards Albanians ever occurred - it suggests that it maybe not true that there was an insult from Macedonian fans handball championships in Serbia. Therefore the Kosovo fans would have their “revenge without any reason”. This dichotomy of “We the innocent” and “They the evil” is a typical feature of stereotypical discourses. Re-framing the sports discourse in the 2001 conflict can be felt in the internalizing the events that have been announced to take place in Kosovo between 14 and 16 February to Macedonia. The text says: “Any incident in Pristina would mean the escalation of inter-ethnic crisis [...]” One of the dominant official versions of the causes for the conflict in 2001 was that it was “an attack by criminals from Kosovo.” This discursive pattern conveys the location of the threat from (1) the Kosovo sports fans, thorough (2) Kosovo as a political unit in general to (3) the internal other – Macedonian Albanians. The analysis of online media also isolated examples that give “resistance” of discursive strategies that favor ethnic intolerance. This is an article published in Plus Info “to cheer, but to hate” (Plus info 22 January), which has an open criticism of the fans’ behavior and the absence of adequate response to this tendency.

Multiethnic societies are especially vulnerable when religion, ethnicity or nationality of individuals or groups is clearly and deliberately misused or even when the affected group’s dominant perception is that it is being abused. The analysis coverage of the media in Macedonia related to the handball championship did not note examples of explicit hate speech towards “other” cultural groups, but part of the coverage demonstrated intentional and easily recognizable tendency towards construction of negative stereotypes. A careful analysis of special narratives and visual structure of journalistic texts, articles or online packages brings to a conclusion that a part of the journalistic community does not have a sufficient level of awareness and sensitivity to the subtle ways in which texts can lead to the creation or strengthening of ethnocentrism, negative stereotyping, xenophobia and discrimination.

Professional journalists in general, have to follow some rules of substantive and formal nature to ensure social credibility and to promote the principle of tolerance. Sports reporting is specific in the fashion of coverage but that does not mean that sports journalists should not abide by the general determinants of ‘good journalism’.

This is especially the case with multicultural societies such as Macedonia, in which the social sensitivity of the information is always emphasized, so even topics that have ethno particular seal imply intolerance.

The rhetoric used in media coverage of European Championship exceeds the usual practice of reporting on sports events. Militant rhetoric per se, need not be disputed in the context of sports reporting, but in this case it was clearly evident that its use in the specific context frames the discourse of sports reporting in established “narratives” beyond that context and cause associations with indisputable ethnocentric effect. Sports reporters are not distanced from the dominant rhetoric developed within the subculture of fan groups. Sports fields are often a kind of “laboratory” of xenophobic discourse and it is very important for journalists to possess knowledge not to spillover these specific discourses into wider ethnic and political context.



In general, all media reported European Championship through ethnocentric viewpoint or through the prism of “one’s own ethnic group”, which primarily is the result of the division of “Macedonian” and “Albanian” media in Macedonia. This fact directly influenced the fashion of discursive contextualization and the rhetorical strategy used. The analysis isolated two competing discursive strategies: the strategy of “exposing – highlighting” and strategy of “ignoring” – understating” the incidents. Albanian language media have stressed inter-ethnic aspect of these incidents, insults to “own” ethnic group, and the Macedonian language media (with rare exceptions) almost do not register the offensive chanting with anti-Albanian rhetoric. This means that two conflicting media stories are being created through the coverage. From a professional point of view, the analysis located several violations of journalistic principles and standards. The most serious breaches were the compromising of the basic standards for unbiased, accurate and balanced reporting. Impartiality as a principle, among other things, involves journalistic texts to be treated the way they “give due weight to events, opinions and positions of the main arguments” with journalists to cover and present a range of views about the subject they treat. However, due to ethnic and political polarization of media in Macedonia, the principle of impartiality reporting was often compromised.

The editorial decision to report or not to report on the European Handball Championship is a legitimate right and a matter of editorial autonomy of the editorial board. However focusing the coverage solely to the “anti Albanian nationalism of the fans” or solely on “creative patriotism” of the fans disrupted the primary rule of a comprehensive, complete, objective and accurate reporting respecting the ethical standards which state that “journalists should publish accurate, verified information and should not conceal essential information ...” (Article 1 of the Code of Journalists of Macedonia). Also the unilateral “insistence” or the unilateral “neglect” of the existence of an ethnic issue does not favor balanced and unbiased reporting (Article 11 of the Code of Journalists of Macedonia). On the other hand, the decision not to cover the tournament at all as part of an editorial decision of the Public Broadcaster denies the right of the public to be informed – and this provision is a constitutional category.

The analysis raised the question of the integrative function of the media, as a very important for Macedonian multicultural society, especially the role of public service broadcasting, which by definition has to assume the role of a cohesive factor in society. In this context, the decision of the Macedonian Radio (in Albanian language) to report on the European Championship due to offensive chanting on Albanians, and appeals to other media in Albanian language to do the same, seriously deviate from his role defined by law. It is a concern that this act of the public service was not followed by reaction of the MRT Council whose responsibility is to take action in these eventualities.



## 2

## MEDIA AND THE RELIGIOUS NARRATIVES – VEVCANI CARNIVAL

*Igor Micevski and Misa Popovikj*

The Vevcani Carnival was held on January 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> 2012 where masks appeared for which representatives of the Islamic religious community and part of the politicians claimed to be offensive for the Muslim population living in Macedonia. Resident of the Struga village Sum, Minir Ismaili, burned the Macedonian flag on January 23<sup>th</sup> in front of the municipal building in Struga. This event was explained with the revolt of this man against the “systematic offending of the Albanians” at the European Championship in Handball, which was held in Serbia between 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of January. Chanting was heard at the Championship which was offensive for the members of this ethnic group. Several days after the Macedonian flag was burned in front of the Municipality of Struga, demonstrations were organized in Struga on January 27<sup>th</sup>, where the Head Mufti of the Struga muftiate Ferat Polisi and the Mayor of the Municipality Ramiz Merko addressed the group of Struga citizens. They announced that the demonstration is organized because of the “offenses against the Muslims in Macedonia with the carnival masks in Vevcani”. After this event, offensive graffiti was written on several churches and mosques in the region during the next week, and there were tries to set the religious buildings on fire. That was a case with the church in Labunista and the church in Mala Recica, where certain damage was made in the fire. The media consequences of these events lasted for several days afterwards. This research shows which types of discourses did the journalistic texts constituted following the events.

## 1. PRINT MEDIA

The qualitative analysis included six daily newspapers published in Macedonian language (Dnevnik, Nova Makedonija, Utrinski Vesnik, Vecer and Focus) and three daily newspapers publishing in Albanian language (Koha, Lajm and Zurnal).

### General conclusions on the professional standards and the discourse practice

The analysis of media articles relating to Vevchani Carnival and Struga events can be summarized in the following observations:

- It was noted that there was a violation of the professional standards that hold imperative the practice of a precise, clear and a comprehensive reporting which calls for a tolerance and calming down of the tensions and a reporting which is not burdened with sensationalism and inflammatory statements and information. The disrespect of these standards in the multicultural societies in the reporting on ethnic and religious sensitive topics means encouraging of intolerance, divisions, xenophobia and discrimination.
- In the context of the reporting on the events related to Vevchani and Struga generalizing strategies were noticed in several texts meaning an identification of an individual or a small group of members of a particular ethnic community with the characteristics of the whole group. Consequently, in part of the texts analyzed there were ethnocentric strategies and strategies for a negative stereotyping noticed.
- In part of the reporting on these events, the *local* stereotypes were exceptionally and clearly reinforced with the *global* stereotypes of the groups. This narrative was detected in the texts which frame the events in Struga through the prism of a threat from outside – embodied in the construct of *infiltrated radical structures*.
- In part of the reporting by the print media there was a framing of the events noticed in a reactive and a defensive frame, i.e. the reporting was placed in the frame of a valid response to the *nationalism of the others and the threat by the religious and ethnic Other*.
- Part of the narratives constructed through these texts were produced through the ethnic prism, which leaves the impression that the ethnic background in the newsroom or the implied audience to which the text is addressed are important factors in the formulation of the contents.
- As a consequence of the constructions in which there is a division of “Us” and “Them” there was a practice noticed in several texts to minimize the incidents caused by Our side and to emphasize the offenses caused by the Others.
- In some of the texts there was a strategy noticed for a replacement between the ethnic and the religious identity and the motives of the actors, thus re-contextualizing the events as needed – as ethnic and/or as religious incidents. This has an implication on the way we imagine our own or the group of the Other.
- An occurrence of “charging” the event with political contents is noticed in several texts, prior to the existence of information and clear arguments that the event itself had such an effect.

## Print media in Macedonian language

The analysis of the Macedonian language print media noted the practice of negative stereotyping of groups as well as a manifestation of xenophobia and ethnocentrism. These elements were marked by discursive reproduction of several narratives with implications for interethnic and interfaith relations in Macedonian society.

One such narrative is constituted by framing the Struga protests in the context of “expansionist” tendencies of the so-called global Radical Islam, which in this stereotyped form is understood as a fundamentalist and corrosive phenomenon with local consequences for Macedonia. The most obvious form of the narrative that “Macedonia is a victim of the Eastern threat” is the text published in *Dnevnik* 1<sup>st</sup> February with the title “People with beards and Arabic slogans are inflaming Struga.” Text is featured on the front page as a central theme for the day, which emphasizes its importance. The image on the cover reveals several discursive strategies:

In the first instance the title maps the actors of Struga protests as “men with beards and Arabic slogans.” This rhetorical tool, called the chain of equivalence is a strategy which suggests a connection between two identities without them necessarily having in fact that kind of connection. The text is connecting the people protesting with “radical Islamic structures”. In doing so it borrows common stereotyped image of a radical Muslim - is “a man with a beard.” Such a conclusion, however, is not supported by any visualization because neither in print (including the front page) nor the online edition have a picture that supports the claim.

This discursive mapping of protesters as “radical Islamic structures” from abroad re-contextualized in protests in Struga in two ways: first, it suggests that the protests are not home or are organized by an external “Other”. In such a way the context has been shifted to the point that they are consumed by the domestic political dimension. Protests are labeled to be “a foreign installation”, without any attempt to be understood as positive or negative trends within the domestic social and political processes. An important consequence of this narrative is that citizens, groups or individuals from the domestic scene are not regarded as actors who assume the role of active participants and creators of events, but as puppets influenced by outside power puppets that are neither powerful nor responsible for what happens. Thus the domestic social order as a possible creator of strife remains unproblematic.

Another consequence of this globalizing contextualization of events is the reinforcement of the impression of a threat from the so-called global radical Islam. The narrative of international Islamic fundamentalism puts protests and incidents in a broader frame that carries the context of security threat to the community. This is present in two statements given in the text. The first suggests that the protests are “anti-European”, and the other underscores the idea of “infiltrated structures in recent years.” Thus performs translation of incidents of acts of vandalism and / or interfaith intolerance in incidents as part of a wider inter-religious *war* between Islam and Christianity.

This “Clash of Civilizations”<sup>[14]</sup> in Macedonia has a particularly corrosive effect because it re-actualizes the widespread myth that the Balkans acts as a barrier prevent-

14 Овој термин е насловна нишка во есејот на Семјуел Хантингтон.



ing the penetration of other civilizations into Europe. The re-actualization of the myth evokes ideas and actions in effort to defend society and its values from an outside civilization. At the same time this enhances the “production” of internal Other, in this case Muslims, using the existing images of International Islamic fundamentalism.

This brings us to the second part of the text that refers to the so called “radical structures.” This expression suggests that the protests are “radical”, which reinforces the impression that the reaction of citizens is not normal. The protests and incidents are categorized as ‘radical’ without an argument. On the front page the title “People with beards and Arabic slogans burned Struga” is visually matched with a photograph of the protesters and a unrelated photograph of burned part church in the village of Labunishta. In this way the title becomes a common denominator for both events, although for the latter the participants were not known at that time.

However, what is interesting in this text is the headline which suggests that this radicalism is against the interests of the Albanians. In that sense, through the collectivization of the implied “Albanian interests” the text makes the impression that Albanians are behind the protests and / or incidents. Yet, as already indicated, the text creates negative stereotyping of *Muslim* identity.

Several texts that were found to contain religious stereotypes at the expense of the Other more subtle elements that reproduce the narrative of the global radical Islam as a threat for primarily Christian Macedonia could be found. Two articles published in the newspaper Vecer are paradigmatic. The first is the text “The situation in Struga should not be used for political gain” published on February 1, which at first glance looks like a warning against party-political exploitation of the feelings of members of religious groups in Macedonia. But the text is illustrated with a photograph showing a woman masked as a “Facebook profile”. In the online edition of the newspaper the same photography is on the front page. The photograph in both cases is not attributed, so it is unclear whether it is a mask from Vevchani carnival or from a completely different context than Macedonian. It is crucial to mention that the woman is pictured wearing a burqa. The mask she wears writes: “We are the Facebook, resistance is futile you shall be assimilated.” The mask refers to the SF series “Star Trek” and the bio-cyber species Borg, whose existence depends on the assimilation of other species. The burqa re-contextualizes the image of Borg and Facebook into Islam - which has expansionist goals and which threatens us assimilate *Us* Christians, who are much weaker than him and who resist in vain. The mental image of the Borg here symbolically shifts the semantic charge of the Muslims. The photo of the woman with burqa and the rhetoric of assimilation are further in conjunction with the title: “The situation in Struga should not be used for political gain.” The implication of this relation between the photography and the headline is that in fact - *Muslims are the one who should not use Struga for political gain.*

The text reflects the positions of various political and religious leaders calling for calm or seeking an apology and responsibility for the choice of masks that offended Islamic community in Macedonia. It should only be noted here that at the end of the text in the online edition the front page there is an additional strengthening of the corrosive effect of the “message” sent to Muslims:

“Citizens of Labunishta sawthem. Their identity is known and police are searching for them, said measures. However, our findings say that a large group of people of Mus-

lim background prevented a fire-brigade vehicle from extinguishing the blaze. When the vehicle failed to break the group it began shouting religious insults”.

In the print edition this sentence has been put in a frame which means that it has been given a greater weight. It violates several basic professional principles written in the codes of ethics enacted by the journalist self-regulatory bodies in Macedonia. The Phrase “our findings” does not refer to any particular source that would support the claim stated then that means that it is very likely that it is based on speculation (understood as expressing “the story of the events of dubious reliability”). But the violation of this rule gets added professional weight - because content you locate this type of responsibility “growing group of people of Muslim faith” - participating in the burning of the church - can encourage religious intolerance. It is quite obvious that this text constitutes negative stereotyping and creates ground for discourse of xenophobia and even religious open hatred.

So how does this part of the text function discursively and how and what narratives are constituted by it: the text symbolically constructs the “Muslims” as “those who burn” in this context they are the “bearers of evil”. According to this corrosive construct they are “strong only when they group” and not individually - it is discursive effect of “large group of people of Muslim faith”. The semantic charge of the firefighters signifies “The good” - they *carry water to the fire* that is lit by the Muslims who burned the place. Firefighters in the text seem to be religiously neutral. Despite the explicit religious neutrality of firefighters, they are opposed to “people of Muslim faith.” This mythical discourse of confrontation is visually reinforced by the unattributed photograph in the text. It depicts a fire raging in the background (in which, as part of the text suggests, an early Christian symbol is burning and for which a “large group of people of Muslim faith” are struggling to prevent the firefighters from extinguishing it).

An example which creates an effect of subtle negative stereotyping and discursive division of “Us Christians” and “Them Muslims” are found in an editorial titled “Movies” (Vecer, 13<sup>th</sup> February). It was published when the situation caused by Vevchani Carnival already started to settle down but the events were still high on the media agenda. The text says: “In the past few days we have been talking about Angelina Jolie’s film, ‘Land of Blood and Honey’, shot in Bosnia. According to the film journalists the theme of the film is that Muslims in Bosnia were terrorized by the Serbs and the Croats. The victims were passive it suggests. They just suffered a religious aggression” This text calls into question the simplified thesis according to which the Bosnian Muslims were only victims in the Yugoslav conflict. But this position is taken out of historical context and the conflict is re-contextualized in this way: “Perhaps, for Angelina Jolie mujahedeen are just tourists. By comparison, 6,000 mujahedeen are an approximate figure which is equal to the total number of the Macedonian army. We agree pretty much”. This sets the context of the Bosnian War and the advent of mujahedeen in the Macedonian context in which these mujahedeen were confronted with a symbolic “Macedonian army.” Finally the text fixes the mythical antagonism between Islam and Christianity as follows:

“After the invasion of the Turkish TV series on the Balkans, especially in Macedonia, I wonder whether there was at all a reason for the Krusevo Republic? If Macedonians can voluntarily sit and watch Sultan Suleiman and his descendants are screwing every-



one across the Balkans and they at the same time become our heroes ... than something is wrong with us. The most common replica of the Sultan and his successors is – “cut his head”. That is the head of our grandfathers ...”

A more detailed discourse analysis would demonstrate on how many levels of re-contextualization narratives of negative stereotyping are constituted and the effect of intolerance towards other religions is created. It would additionally show that its discursive function is to construct a mythical re-actualization of the narrative of the Ottoman undisciplined bashbozuk in today’s set of Macedonia’s Clash of Civilizations. This text, which begins as an editorial in film art, creates a narrative that contextualizes “Christian Macedonian” in the frame of topos-victims of global Islamic fundamentalism.

The detected examples that seemingly have no negative connotation, however, in terms of potential inter-religious animosity they may have a negative effect on stereotyping because of the problematic way of contextualization of Islamic tradition.

Such is, for instance the serial feature “Dossier – blood vendetta”, which was published in Utrinski Vesnik, at the time when Struga events still received serious media attention. The text of the news article published on February 5<sup>th</sup> has the potential to reinforce negative stereotyping of “imagined Islam” through the chain of equivalence among non-Muslims to construct an imagined negative stereotyping of Albanian identity. Its contextualization is problematic at first glance. It treats a cultural problem in modern societies that is tied to the Islamic tradition. However this narrative is present in many religious traditions – among them in Hebrew and Christian tradition, but in this case the phenomenon is analyzed through the prism of Islam in Macedonia. Just the publishing of the article in the context in which the media reported daily on “protests”, “insults”, “ignition” and “revenge” reinforces the contextualization of Islam as a vengeful religious practice. Mapping the vengeful quality in the practice of Islam is strengthened on the syntactical level. The text says: “In the most extreme cases the all of this ends with bloodshed – and blood than requires another sacrifice so on indefinitely”. The quoted paragraph causes a very strong mythological image. The sound and visual association of the words “blood for blood”, “eye for an eye”, “tooth for a tooth” are potentially inflammatory in the context of Struga events. The effect is not reduced with the sentences which suggest that the so called “blood revenge” is less common in the country because the justification why the text was published in the first place is that the practice is “far from eradicated.”

The second spiral on syntactic level opens additional interpretative circle of the association between the “blood revenge” and the “Albanian families”. In the sequel on 5<sup>th</sup> February the text states:

“The Canon of Lek Dukagjini is persisting. ‘Blood for blood’, ‘Eye for an eye - a tooth for a tooth’ ethics which demands that a murder of a close person must be revenged is declining in recent years, but that does not mean that it has been eradicated. Blood feud is present in modified forms, often hidden and placed under the carpet away from the public eye. If in the past guns were triggered as a retribution for murder, now Albanian families more frequently get into violence because of a stolen dove, infidelity or an offensive word”.



In this context, a semantic dislocation is performed from the *Islam* to the so called “Albanianism”. The definite article used in the expression “*The Albanian families*” suggests generalization that extends the totality of Albanian families in Macedonia. Finally, this stereotyping effect produces the idea of homogeneous Muslims understood as a subject of anthropological observation, removing *Them* from the real social context and placing *Them* in the context of ethnological study. In this sense, the text allows interpretation of contemporary events through the assumption of a deep-rooted and traditional ways of behavior of parts of the population.

In the print media publishing in Macedonian language texts were detected whose rhetorical strategy constructs discourses which locate the ‘guilt’ outside the local religious context. The article published on 3<sup>rd</sup> February in Nova Makedonija entitled “The coexistence - a hostage of the infidels” – has two interviews incorporated in it with representatives of the MOC-OA (Bishop Timothy) and ICM (Plumi Velui). Although the interviews contain speech not given by the journalist but by the interviewees – still the choice of the headline contextualizes the content suggesting that the perpetrators of the incidents “are not believers”. At the same time, without giving a specific source for the statement in the headline the reporter internalizes that narrative as his own. In this discursive strategy there is an attempt to map out the events from the context of the interfaith conflict to an unspecified location. This may be seen as an attempt to justify the dimension of religiously motivated acts which further confirms the content through repetition (of both interlocutors) the thesis that this kind of incidents are not part of religious practice or tradition of the region. Mapping of this sort further enhances the speech of the two interlocutors - the first which suggests that it is the case of “infiltrated structures” and the second that it is a matter “of political calculations”. Without challenging these statements the reporter and the medium participate in the narrative of the ‘dangers from the outside’, in the first case seen as a ‘global danger from radical Islam’, and in the second case as ‘the risk of any conflict entrepreneurs’ without suggesting their concrete identity.

The article published in Dnevnik on January 30<sup>th</sup> “DUI and DPA charge for elections” has this subtitle: “What lies behind incidents in Struga?”. The content of the text does not reveal information about how the protests are related to pre-election period, but it is merely stating that “many people” see the possibility of collecting political points on the events. However, the headline a priori directs the reading of the text in the context of inter-party computation before elections. By all stakeholders of events are put under a common denominator, i.e. it reinforces the impression that the actors are an incarnation of partisan politics. Regardless of whether this statement is true or not, stating such assumptions about the motives of protests and incidents can easily move from a political to an ethnic or religious realm. The same way party or political identities are conceived - as coherent and sealed - equivalence is passed on ethnic or religious identity. The article titled “IRC: Islamophobia is often combined with government propaganda” (Vest 30<sup>th</sup> Jan) - uncritically reproduces narrative of the Islamic Religious Community in making the equivalence between “government propaganda” and carnival Vevchani. Thus, the disputed part of the carnival expands and gains significance as a government propaganda.

The text published in Nova Makedonia on February 3<sup>rd</sup> has this headline: “They are not going to get a new staged 2001”. The title is using the strategy of “Othering” of the enemy



whose attempt for violence will fail. At the same time, the title associated the conflict in 2001 and the current events constructing it as “staged”. In this way a framework is built through which the reader should understand current events as non-authentic or imposed.

## Albanian language Newspapers

The print media in Albanian language emphasized an ethnocentric line of reporting, and there were examples of negative stereotyping. These elements are marked by discursive reproduction of several narratives. There is a clearly visible narrative of defensive patriotism, which occurs in response to the “corrosive nationalism of the Other”. This makes the effect of victimization quite distinctive.

Indicative of this discourse is the text published in Lajm on 31th January titled “Hitler’s scenarios Labunishta?” (Skenare hitleriane në Llabunishtë?). The example shows how too tightly expressive rhetorical emphasis that rely on negative historical continuation, establish or allow for ethnocentric discourses of victimization and negative stereotyping, even when formal texts contain a range of different sources in compliance with professional standards. These effects get strong negative note and are emphasized several times in the text.

Firstly, although the title is set in the interrogative form (which gives the impression that the claim is put into question), it by all means associates the event re-contextualizing it from the church in Labunishta to the context of Nazism in the first half of the XX century and the burning of the Reichstag in 1933. The title is open to interpretation because at this level the link between Nazism (as metaphor of destruction) and Labunishta (an event in which something is destroyed) is not fully concretized.

Furthermore, the lead of the text produces two associated effects: a) a slightly higher positive approach (contrary to the headline that is in interrogative form) prompts suspicion that there is a connection between the burning of the church and Nazism and b) it opens by suggestion the argument the Nazi character of this destruction lies in the fact that the Macedonians themselves “burned the church and then blamed the Muslim population”. The alleged statement by Mayor Merko openly accused *the Macedonians*, who make a cunning plan to blame Muslims. But he does not make a link between the present events and Nazism – that link is made by the journalist, the article the articles. Here is the fashion in which this sliding was done by the journalist:

“In Struga village of Labunishta, which is inhabited mainly by Muslims, some of the facilities of the church St. Nikola were set on fire. But immediately after this event scenarios emerged which indicate that the events took a turn similar to those of Hitler’s Nazi Germany in the 1930’s. This is suggested by the statements of the Struga Mayor Ramiz Merko, who said that the Macedonians burning the church and then to blame the Muslim population: ‘No need to panic, the perpetrators of this act are known to the police. Witnesses themselves noted that the arson has been done by Orthodox believers, while Muslim residents helped for the fire to be extinguished’ Merko said<sup>[15]</sup>.

15 Në fshatin Llabunishtë të Strugës, e populluar kryesisht me myslimanë janë djegur ambientet ndihmëse të kishës ‘Shën Nikolla’. Mirëpo menjëherë pas rastit janë paraqitur dyshime se bëhet fjalë për skenare të ngjashme me ato të nacistëve të Hitlerit në vitet e 30-ta të shekullit të kaluar në Gjermani. Kjo mund të konstatohet nga deklaratat e kryetarit të komunës së Strugës Ramiz Merko, i cili tha se vetë maqedonasit kanë djegur kishën për të fajësuar më pas popullatën myslimane. “Nuk ka vend për panik, dihen autorët e kësaj veprë. Vetë dëshmitarët okular kanë vërejtur se zjarri është vënë nga besimtar ortodoks, ndërsa banorët myslimanë kanë ndihmuar në shuarjen e flakëve”, tha Merko

At the next level the text works in the frame in which there is a symbolic equivalent between Nazism and the act of burning of the church implicitly localized to the Macedonians. However ‘the blame’ of *The Macedonians* is not suggested in the statement, it is rather produced by the journalist. To clarify, the statement suggests that “Orthodox believers” and not “The Macedonians” are the ones that set the fire. Here it should be noted that the article uses the noun “The Macedonians” suggests that the semantics of those probably burned the church extends to the entire ethnic group, rather than isolated small part of it. Consequently the switch made in this text is indicative of two grounds - that replaces the Macedonians with the Orthodox believers and that it extends the meaning of all Macedonians.

Finally, the paraphrases and the statements of Mayor Merko do not attempt to challenge or to prove his claim. The only attempt to destabilize the claim is made with the sentence: “On the other hand, residents of Labunishta insist that the fire was caused by residents.” This claim does not deny nor does it confirm that the fire is lit by the Macedonians, it just says that it is not lit by residents Labunishta - so, this sentence fits other implicit thesis and it is not brought up by Merko.

The text constitutes discourses of ethnocentrism on several levels as it emphasizes the position that “We” can never be the ones that are responsible for destroying something. The Others are always the destructive forces. Here one can also talk about random negative stereotyping because the Others are generalized and put in a context of negative historical narrative. This reproduces several narratives – the narrative of the “offended nation or religion” the narrative of “the fascist Other” etc.

Similar rhetorical practice can be seen in an article in the daily Zurnal from 3<sup>rd</sup> of February titled “Auschwitz for Albanians.” This title reflects a transmission from a YouTube channel with the changes made on the derogatory name of the group. Besides the allusion to the Nazi genocide the text makes the following narrative strategy – the creators of the group are marked as “the young Macedonians” – they thereby become agents (representatives) of the whole group of Macedonians. The discriminatory activities thus are extended to the whole group and described as a regular practice of the youth in general.

At times the construction of this ‘defensive discourse’ is made primarily because of the ‘implied audience’ – in some of the texts the ‘expectations of the implied audience’ creates a homogenizing and an ethnocentric effect. This practice can be noticed in several texts. For instance - a text published in Koha informs about the burning of the Macedonian flag on the outskirts of Struga on January 23. The article’s headline is: “The national flag burned in Struga” (Në Strugë digjet flamuri shtetëror). The text is in fact brief information about the incident in which Minir Ismaili burned a Macedonian flag.

Two types of sources are cited – precise sources from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and unspecified sources i.e. “The citizens of Struga”. The information provided by the precise sources explains what happened - namely that the flag was burned. But it is indicative to see how the unspecified sources actually are used to explain *why* this happened? The text says: “In the meantime, although the motives of the perpetrator are not known, the citizens of Struga speculate that this is due to the act of anti-Albanian chanting of the Macedonian fans at sporting events”.<sup>[16]</sup>

16 (Ndërkohë, edhe pse nuk dihen motivet që e shtynë të dyshuarin kryesor për të bërë këtë vepër, nga qytetarët struganë spekulohet se ky akt ka ardhur si pasojë e thirrjeve antishqiptare të tifozëve maqedonas në ndeshjet sportive).



The unspecified sources are constructed as monolithic, which brings in a wider political quality of the act of burning the flag. There was no statement of the suspect in the media on that day which would indicate the motive for the flag burning. On the contrary, the 'motive' was constructed by the media in Albanian language based on the supposed reason for the implied audience who believes that the real reason for the burning of the flag is the offenses towards Albanians. In this case "citizens" are used as source that "makes rumors" obscuring the possibility that the suspect may have had other motives or reasons for the act.

Another discursive practice that is encountered in the media reports is the identification of individual participants in events with the whole group. This practice is more common in cases when the text aims to identify the Other and is used to reinforce a sense of threat for the group in whose the name something is spoken. Similarly to the Macedonian language media, in the Albanian language media individual perpetrators of incidents in some articles were labeled in common religious or ethnic terms.

The story titled "Mehmeti: The ethnic, linguistic and religious coexistence must be preserved" (Mehmeti: Të ruhet bashkëjetesa etnike, gjuhësore dhe fetare) published in Zurnal on January 31st, reports about the appeals for calm by the Commission for Interethnic Relations of Macedonia. Still, despite this appeal the journalist states that the incident at the Vevchani Carnival has been done by Macedonians – a complete opposite message from the calls for calm which are the main subject of the article. Moreover, the author uses specific grammatical forms (definite article) which 'translates' the participants into "Macedonians", and once they are defined in these ethnic terms than they are completely replaced by that ethnic group taken as a whole. Thus, the beginning of the story constructs ethnically unbalanced reporting in which individual participants are regarded representatives of monolithic groups. Also, the text in order to strengthen the image of the nationalist character of the event, 'recycles' the information that the Vevchani Carnival caused a charged diplomatic exchange between Macedonia and Greece. At the same time, the information about the vandalized church in Struga reported in the same article is consistent with the official reports in which the actors are not known, and there is no information on the ethnic or religious identity of the perpetrators. These double standards and a dichotomy between the constructed 'negative Other' and the 'implied superior quality of Self' makes a corrosive effect because it leaves little room for tolerance.

In some media outlets different rhetorical forms were detected. For example, two articles published in Zurnal are titled: "Tomorrow Struga will protest against the insults on Islam" (26<sup>th</sup> January), and "Veleshta seeks resignation from the 'head' of Vevchani" (25<sup>th</sup> January). In both cases the activities of some groups are placed behind a broader common denominator, in this case, localities such as cities and villages. It is characteristic that in neither of these cases this connection does not follow from the content of the text which the titles refer to. The first article refers to an announcement made by the Struga mufti about organizing protests on 27 January - so the protests organized by one organization are rhetorically translated into a broader-scale event.

The text in Lajm released on January 31st, briefly and without illustration frames the protest in Struga as a political conspiracy of those who hold the monopoly on violence: the title of the text "Islamophobia in Vevchani sponsored by the Government"

(Qeveria ka sponsoruar islamofobinë në Vevçan) produces such a discursive effect. It makes a symbolic split and it is mapping the “Government” as a monolithic unit which is in service to others. The implicit Other in this case is designed as a construct of a strictly Orthodox quality, which is opposed to the Muslim.

The report published in Zurnal on 1<sup>st</sup> February “Bejta: Vevchani Mayor responsible for the tension” (Bejta: Kryetari i Vevçanit, fajtor për tensionet) uncritically quotes the Government minister Bejta in which he frames the events of the carnival as not only an insult on Islam but also on the ethnic groups with large Muslim populations, demanding an apology from Mayor Ilievski. The medium thus participates in the reproduction strategy of transformation of group identities of the actors from religious to ethnic.

In some texts the motif of the threat of the “Other” is being reproduced. For example, in the text “Mehmeti: Gruevski de-Albanizies Macedonia” from 31 January (Mehmeti: Gruevski deshqihtarizon Maqedoninë) the analyst suggests that there is a threat to “the Albanians in Macedonia” and that argument is not challenged by other discourses. Also, the article: “Bejta accused the Mayor of Vevchani for the tensions” (Bejta fajëson kryetarin e Vevçanit për tensionet) transfers the position of the Minister for Local Government who suggests that “What is going on in Struga is a normal reaction” – this is neither contextualized nor it is challenged by other opinions.

## 2. TV STATIONS

Eight television stations were selected for the qualitative analysis. Six stations that broadcast in (MTV 1, Sitel, Kanal 5, Alfa, Telma, Alsat M - Macedonian language) and two that publish content in Albanian language (MTV 2 - Albanian language, Alsat M - in Albanian).

### General conclusions for the TV stations

From the analysis of TV coverage of the Vevchani Carnival and Struga events the following can be concluded:

- The TV reporting on the events after the Vevçani Carnival and the demonstrations in Struga contained forms of ethnocentric and negative stereotyping discourse which was gradually reinforced with the TV coverage of the three key events in this cycle of events: 23<sup>rd</sup> of January when the state flag was burned in front of the Municipality; 27<sup>th</sup> of January when the demonstrations in Struga were organized as a reaction to the Vevçani Carnival and 31<sup>st</sup> of January with the escalation of the religious buildings burning.
- The reporting on the events from January 23<sup>rd</sup> (and the consequent days) discloses discursive strategies which construct a narrative of a threat, but the contents which localizes the guilt in these discourses it is not explicitly stereotyping, neither explicitly ethnocentric, but they are more subtle both in visual and in language sense.

- In the second cycle of reporting (27<sup>th</sup> of January) discourses are evident which produce more disintegrative narratives for the ethno/religious relations between the communities. Another discursive strategy is visible here and that is the strategy of “retouching” or “forgetting”.
- The TV coverage of the demonstrations in Struga shows several stereotyping narratives which emphasize the effect of a threat. One way of such media construction of the events is when the information is shared without contextualization. Additional problem to this one is the non-critical transfer of inflammatory statements and statements of potential hate speech (such as “Die Kauri”), thus becoming a central denominator of the demonstrations, which emphasizes the effect of a threat.
- In the third time point to which the analysis is focused (from January 30<sup>th</sup> until February 3<sup>rd</sup>) there is an evident “escalation” of the discourses which frame the Struga demonstrations in the following manner: (1) they make a direct connection with the events from 2001 (the radicals in the implicit internal “Other” who wants to destroy “Our” country); (2) contextualize the events in the party-political domain (the party-political “Other” is to be blamed for the escalation); (3) contextualize the events as a threat from the external enemy; (4) introduce the narrative of a “global fundamentalism” which is “infiltrated among Us”.
- There is a tendency to “forget” the incidents, i.e. to present them only from the ethno-particular angle of our own audience. The attempt to discursively “normalize” the single act of flag burning is specific in this sense, by explaining it as a reaction to the previous provocative acts made by the “Other side”.
- In terms of the journalistic professionalism the practice of stating the national background of the participants in some events is particularly controversial (those who burned the flag, who set fire in the religious buildings, etc.). Another type of a violation of the professional standards is the use of graphics (especially with inflammatory effect) from another context and without marking them properly. A third example of a violation of the standards is the repetition of footages or photographs that are viewed as a violation or an insult to a group or its member. The re-publication of the act is actually a repetition of the act of violation.

### TV stations broadcasting in Macedonian language

The analysis of TV stations revealed three main points that correspond to three key dates about regarding the Struga events and Vevchani carnival: the first date is January 23<sup>rd</sup>, day when the national flag was burned in front of the municipality of Struga; secondly January 27<sup>th</sup>, when protests occurred in the town of Struga and finally 31<sup>st</sup> January, when media discourse on the acts of vandalism escalated. It can be noticed that the ethnocentric and xenophobic discourses in the television coverage harden between these three time points.

The first analytical point (23 January and subsequent days) reveals a discursive strategies that constructs ‘narrative of threat’ of something. In this context, the content that in which the ‘guilt’ has been projected are not explicitly stereotyping nor they are explic-

itly ethnocentric - they are subtle. For example, an interesting approach can be seen in the story on broadcast on Kanal 5, the day of the burning of the Macedonian flag in front of the municipal building in Struga. The report says: “when Minisir desecrated the state symbol he left the scene and “this is not the first time the Macedonian flag to be desecrated...”. The use of the word ‘desecrate’ here aims to construct the object (a flag) into “holy artifact” - the word desecration is originally used in the context of the destruction or mockery of relics. Thus, the ‘sacralization’ of the flag makes the act of burning a threat to the sanctity of the symbol and also a threat to the community which identifies with it. Interestingly, the use of the word desecration is repeated on January 24<sup>th</sup>. The report adds that “the Macedonian flag burned on the day of the Albanian flag”. This sentence brings into contrast the general and the sacred objects. Flag Day here a metaphor for the ‘rise’ and the burning flag is metaphor of ‘decline’. This ‘metaphorisation’ leaves a very clear mental effect that enhances the construction of the conflict story transcending the concrete event and playing with the narrative of threat. Thus, the symbol of ‘decay’ confronts the threat of the Other.

A report broadcast on Telma on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January leaves a certain ethnocentric and stereotyping effect. The report contains no footage of aggressive behavior and the journalist’s voice says: “People of Struga condemned the incident of burning of the Macedonian flag”. However, as the story progresses the mode has been switched: “The suspect was charged with inciting national, racial and religious hatred, discord and intolerance, by burning the national flag, but his behavior was not condemned by the Albanian community. Rather, yesterday they staged a peaceful protest outside Struga Court, demanding the release of the arrested”. Stereotyping constructs of the Albanians as a ‘monolithic structure’ can be traced here, and this structure is expected to condemn the burning of the Macedonian flag. The use of the expression “the members of the Albanian ethnic community” rather than the expression “the Albanians” does not mitigate the effect which extends a certain quality to an entire ethnic group. Although a small group of people have gathered in front of the Court this group has been marked in the report as ‘All the Others’, who instead of condemning the act, appeared in court to protest. This construction is the foundation which enables the multiplication of discourses which replace the characteristics of a small group of people or individuals with the characteristics of an entire ethnic group or nation. It is interesting also that this construction brings into contrast ‘the Police’ on the one hand and ‘the Albanian ethnic community’ on the other – a positive meaning is attached here to the signifier ‘Police’ (because the Police *arrested the perpetrator*) and the Albanian community is mentioned in a negative connotation (for they *did not condemn* the act).

A higher level of negativity attached to the Other can be seen in the report broadcast on Sital on 24<sup>th</sup> January. The cue of the report says: “The Albanian who lit the Macedonian flag yesterday was very drunk, but that will not spare him from the criminal responsibility”. The fact that the person who burned the Macedonian flag was Albanian is highlighted here, also definite article in ‘*The Albanian*’ and ‘*The Macedonian flag*’ confronts these two concepts on a symbolic level. The issue of journalistic professionalism is also important here because the validity of using the nationality of the man who burned the flag is questionable. According to professional standards, ethnic or religious affiliation of those par-



ticipating in an event is to be mentioned only in circumstances where that information is relevant for the background of the event. However on the day of the incident the reason for the burning of the Macedonian flag was not known, so it could have been explicitly known if the ethnicity of the man is relevant to mention in the news. In other words, the text here presupposed an outcome and politically charged the event without offering any argument. In the cue and on the screen it has been mentioned/written that ‘the Albanian’ was drunk – and this allows for a different interpretation namely his drunkenness might have been the cause in which case there would be no political statement and no need to mention the ethnic background. It is also important to mention that the setting of the phrase “drunk Albanian” is potentially offensive for the entire group.

The report creates an additional *effect of immediate threat*, which this time is misleading and it violates two professional standards – as the reporter says: “... inciting national, racial and religious hatred, discord and intolerance” on the screen there is footage of a sports fan that “torches” the Macedonian flag. This photograph is taken from another context and it is recycled whenever one hears information about a burned flag. The photograph is not attributed and it is not marked when it had been taken. This also produces a visual fixation for the symbol of the burning flag that we all identify with, although the actual burning in this case was not recorded. The first violation is the absence of an attribution to the image that has social inflammatory effect – the unattributed photo occurs twice in the same article.

The second problem is that when the media broadcast footage or a photograph that shows how someone did insult a whole group or an individual, re-publication of the act is actually repeating the act of violation. This position is explained otherwise and elsewhere in the analysis and applies not only to burning the flag, but to the Vevchani masks as well.

At the second analytical point (27 January, when protests took place in Struga as a reaction Vevchani Carnival) more corrosive discourses became increasingly visible in terms of the production of corrosive ethnic-cum-religious specific narratives and in terms of professional standards violations. But another discursive strategy is visible here - it is the strategy of *retouching*.

Television stations broadcasted part of the protests in Struga. An exception was the first service of the MTV (Macedonian language). The main news edition had no broadcast on the Struga protests. This gives the impression that the editorial strategy of the medium was to keep silent about the event that happened that day. It is interesting how this discursive retouching, (or a strategy of forgetting) entails a production of a discourse to replace absent. On that day MRT covered protocol events concerning the Government.

Media reporting on the protests in Struga shows several stereotypical narratives, especially those that support sentiments of threat. One dimension of this construct is the practice of simple transferring of the information without it being contextualized. Such examples are found in the reports of most televisions. None of TV stations that broadcasted the information on that day (Alpha, Kanal5, Thelma and Alsat) had any contextualization of the event none of them involved the position of the individuals that think differently about the causes of the events. This was coupled with the video reporting which transmits images that suggest that there is a harsh conflict situation. Especially the inflammatory statements made by Ramiz Merko and Ferhat Polisi become a central



symbol of the protests, which underlines the effect of threat. In addition the unchallenged transmission of hate speech like “die, Kauri” adds to the ease of mobilization (Kanal 5). Another dimension in the reporting on this event is the re-actualization of footage of the carnival that sparked the protests in the first place. Regardless of whether this was a practical decision of the technical staff in the newsroom this practice is corrosive as it reaffirms the offense it ritualizes it.

The only report that stands out a bit from this practice is the broadcast evening news on Alsat-M in Macedonian language, which does not transmit inflammatory messages from the protest, but it includes a live interview with Struga Mayor Ramiz measures. At the same time, because of program schedule (23 hrs.), the news report incorporate the subsequent incidents of the flag burning and the demolition of the bus. This pairing of incidents protests has a dual function. First it allows for the re-contextualization of protests in relation to the incidents, i.e it labels these under a common denominator. On the other hand, it enables the creation of a causal connection between the protests and incidents where protests (caused by carnival masks) can serve as a tool to ‘normalize’ incidents.

It is interesting to see how the reports on Struga events broadcasted in Thelma and Kanal 5 are positioned in relation to other reports in the same edition in these two media. The re-orts are grouped immediately after the information about the Chair events, in which city councilors changed the names of existing schools with names that are associated with Albanian heritage. These news items broadcasted on Kanal 5 are framed with the caption: “Is there a state in Chair?” Telma concluded that the decision was made as a result of the practice of the so called ‘majorization’.

This cognitive ‘mapping’ of the news suggests that there is a primarily ethnic logic in the agenda setting an priority of grouping the content under the ethnic denominator. That is the first additional layer of meaning that is added to the reporting on Struga events. In this sense, religiously motivated protests receive an ethnic ‘banner’. However the second context, which, so it seems, is arbitrarily added to the report is the *narrative of threat of Albanization*. This narrative is strengthened by its cognitive relation with a previous article and it highlights the institutional or numerical supremacy of politicians in Chair.

The third analytical point (attachments between 30 January and 3 February) is clearly recognizable with the escalation of discourses that frame the Struga protests in four main frames: firstly, some of the reports are making unobvious reminiscence of the 2001 events (these narratives are implicit in the story of the “radical internal Other” who aims to destroy Our country); secondly, by consequence events were contextualized in a party-political domain (these narratives claim that the party-political Other is responsible for the escalation); thirdly, the reaction of the internal Other (Albanian Muslims in Macedonia) from the Vevchani Carnival is re-contextualized in the external Other (Greeks and Greece ); and Fourthly, the discourse is internalizing the global fundamentalism, which is *infiltrated* from (Kosovo, Sandzak, Bosnia).

These narratives (or part of them) can be found in several television news programs, but they are clearly visible in several articles on Sitel TV. The headlines on January 31 raise three issues that clearly set the stage in which new events are interpreted through the prism of narrative of the “radical structures” that are suppose to *destroy Us*. The headline poses these questions which as it is suggested by the presenter, are based



on “Sitel’s information from Struga, Labunishta and Vevchani”: whether the incidents are an “attempt of the radicals to create a crisis?”, Why are the protests organized days after Greek political parties took advantage of the Vevchani carnival for their own political goals?”, “Is there an increased presence of wahhabists from Kosovo and Sandzak in Struga? “.

The questions set out in the headlines serve as scene setters they present the pre-established conclusions that the audience should recognize. Although it is presented in an interrogative form, the content of the headlines is constructed as an affirmative thesis. This is how the thesis is being gradually constructed and enhanced:

The presenter opens the program, as he says, with “his personal view of the events”, but he uses as he says the “credibility of an editor in chief of the most influential Macedonian TV station”, and the position of “ a man who has credibility drawn from his 25 year experience”. This setting (biggest TV station, editor in chief and credibility) creates a self-mapping in which the position of authority is suppose to substantiate the content which is to follow in the commentary – revoking of the authority is suppose to create the truth in itself without the need for argumentation. The commentary explains that there is a reason why the Muslims feel offended by the masks in Vevchani – he claims that they offend “an entire ethnic group or religion”. Immediately this discursive construction is being built – the questions are transformed into an affirmative form:

“It was a few days after the Greeks reacted why their flag is placed on a coffin during the carnival suggesting that Greece is dead after the economic crisis, it was right after the Greeks reacted about the carnival, it was then when the Islamic radicals in Macedonia realized that this could be used for political purposes”.

This paragraph specifies the implied narrative of collaboration between on the one hand the *internal radical Other* (“Islamic radicals in the country”) and the external Other (Greeks or the Greek government) –this proposition is presented in the headline in an interrogative form. This sets “Macedonia” within the narrative of a victim of internal and external enemies, who cooperate against the state. Additionally, the strategy of victimization, explicitly evident here equates “those who reacted to the Vevchani masks” and the “Islamic radicals”.

In the following interpretative circle the “problem with the wahhabis” is not being constructed only as a problem for *Us* but for *Them* as well and it is set in the party-political domain: “These events pose the greatest challenge, they are the greatest threat to Albanian political parties. Why? - Because they are expected to show political maturity and calm the situation, because their potential voters and political supporters are the ones protesting. The Albanian political parties and the IRC already have problems with the wahhabis”.

The last sentence suggests that the Albanian political parties and IRC have to settle things between their own- in their own yard. What does that sentence reproduces is the “sub-narrative of intra-Albanian and intra-Muslim conflict “, which they need to solve and We are not involved in that. This construction of the intra- conflict was common motif during the 2001 conflict. And it generally conveys in other news broadcasts.”

Finally, after “posing the questions” and “giving personal views on them” – an argumentative proof is being expected. But arguments are not given: The interviewed Mayor

of Struga does not get into the reasons why the protest was organized weeks after the carnival was held, he did not get into the reasons of the Greek formal protest, and finally denied that there were any ‘wahhabis’ at the protests.

The discursive strategies that constitute the narrative of intra-Albanian conflict is perpetuated in different ways and for different reasons. One of the ways is by making a reminiscence of the conflict of 2001 – it however localizes the conflict in the Albanian party-political bloc that their attempt to score political points.

### TV stations that broadcast in Albanian language

The analysis noted several discursive practices that create a cognitive framework through which one should interpret the content in the broadcasts in Albanian language. Through examples in the text that follows we will highlight those strategies that are associated with the dichotomy “Self-Other”.

Basic discursive aspect that appears in some of the media coverage on TV stations in the Albanian language is the one that defines, in different contexts, Albanians and Muslims as *victims* on the one hand and Christians and Macedonians as *usurpers* on the other. One dimension of this discursive strategy is the construction of the pre-determination of events, through which all subsequent events (including incidents) are interpreted as a direct consequence of Vevchani Carnival (and / or nationalist cheering of the handball supporters). In this sense, the initial position of the victim narrative is transmitted through the subsequent chronology of events, which inherit that position and all subsequent factors.

For example, Alsat-M on 23 January in the package about the burning of the Macedonian flag it is suggested that “the irritation of Albanians is becoming obvious”. Without stating who or what is the source of information to indicate the motives for the incident, the reporting uses constructions which suggest that the citizens as witnesses are those who thought that the reason for burning the flag is a reaction to past events. This rhetoric creates two dimensions. The first is that in which the act of flag burning is awarded to the pre-determination - as a reaction to an earlier event or provocations from the other side (primarily nationalist chants of handball matches). At the same time, the introduction of a narrative that the individual act is a reaction to provocation, the ownership (and the responsibility) of that act is transferred to the wider group – Minir’s irritation translates into irritation of Albanians. This means that Minir is the common denominator of the ethnic group, and his act of burning the flag becomes the act of all Albanians.

The reporting of Alsat-M from that day is also interesting - the emphasis is placed on three topics: Minir is reported to be ‘freed’, not as ‘released from custody’ and the cue of the report is putting less emphasis on the criminal charges filed against him. This has been reinforced by the Caption in which there is no information about the charges but only that he was ‘freed’. Mitigating circumstances for the release of Ismail are also brought to the fore, unlike the news of Alsat-M in Macedonian, where the focus is the act itself. In this fashion of reporting creates an impression of institutional rehabilitation of the incident, with the formulation of the act of burning as a ‘reaction’”.



The third motive for this fashion of reporting represents the antipode of this formulation of the situation - this is information that the government sends new fans to cheer for the handball team. This information is not directly related to the actual event and is used only in the cue as a context for events in Struga. This pairing of two distinct news events allows constructing a story where the Other triumphs by the offense towards Albanians.

In TV stations in Albanian there was also a strategy of forgetting. For example, in the package of MTV2 on the 30 January there was no report on the array of incidents, although the package (in general) refers to political condemnation of the incidents by institutions and other political factors. Rather, it is only the incidents caused by the other party that are transmitted. This discursive practice only reinforces the dichotomy “good-bad” and “we-they”. Audience largely gets new information according to ethnically pre-defined stories. Thus, the story of “positive-I” enables for the easier remembrance of events that affirm this narrative, and to forget those who deny it or destabilize it. The logic of remembering and forgetting works to describe the Others, especially if the two collective identities are in a tensed situation. Thus, the narratives of “I-positive” and “negative-other” persist, and are transformed into fixing or enhancing the image of the religious and ethnic identities.

Perhaps the most widespread discursive strategy is the translation of events and incidents from the area of religious groups towards to the field of ethnic realm and vice versa. Thus, offenses based on religious affiliation become insults on the Albanian ethnic group incidents are translated into the known language of ethnic intolerance and discrimination. What should be said is that in Macedonia, the narratives of ethnic identity are closely connected with religious narratives.

One such example is the uncritical transfer of the statement of Ramiz Merko which he reinterprets messages from the controversial Vevchani carnival as an insult not only on the basis of religion but on the basis of nationality. Without this statement being challenged it is reproduced by the media and it builds on previous incidents and the context of implicit ethnic intolerance. At the same time, such an interpretation of religious tensions in ethnic terms allows for a firmer establishment of political authorities - in this context the ethnic groups are regarded as constituents of all political institutions of the country. Thus, in reporting of Alsat-M 1 February the report translates the term Muslim into Albanians, taking uncritically the statement of a representative of political power. In the equalization between these two groups we can identify two dimensions: one is the emphasis on the ethnic identity as a monolithic structure, the second dimension consists of strengthening and expanding the message of incidents as a result of previous provocations of the Others.

Beyond the textuality of media messages, it is necessary to point to a negative media practice – the re-contextualization of the controversial events or the visual repetition of some of the incidents. Because these are pictures of sensitive content, such as carnival masks from Vevchani or lit church, they inevitably frame the January textual content and reinforce the message when it comes to reporting the incident or weaken the content of calls that are transferred from institutions to calm tensions.

### 3. ONLINE MEDIA

The qualitative analysis included four online media that publish content in Macedonian: Plus info ([www.plusinfo.com.mk](http://www.plusinfo.com.mk)), MKD.mk ([www.mkd.mk](http://www.mkd.mk)), Sky ([www.sky.com.mk](http://www.sky.com.mk)) and Courier ([www.kurir.com.mk](http://www.kurir.com.mk)).

#### General conclusions on the compliance with the professional standards and the discursive practice

- There was a particular strategy of a stereotyping or discriminatory reporting noticed in the contents of the online media. The analysis of the examples showed that there are cases of reporting which can be interpreted in a stereotyping frame. The main finding is that there are “generalization strategies” noticed in the online media, which identify the behavior of an individual or a small group of members of a particular ethnic or religious community with the characteristics of the whole community.
- There is a dominant extensive practice in the analyzed reporting to directly quote the “institutional” sources of information without any critics and a contextualization (for example, non-contextualized, “plain” publishing of press releases, statements or interviews) and not to offer or open a spectrum of different narratives which refer to the event reported. This has consequences to the stereotyping social effect which is produced by some of the texts. It leads to a non-critical informing and there is no journalistic challenging of the uniform narrative which is imposed by the elites who have access to the media. In cases when this “discourse of the elite” creates a stereotyped image for the “other”, the media participates in the reproduction of this stereotype,
- There is an inconsistency noticed in part of the analyzed packages in regard to the respect of the standard for an accurate and a precise informing. The online media do not use precise sources and do not sign the authors at the top or the bottom of the text all the time. This can create an impression among the readers of an informing which is not based on facts and the truth.

#### Analysis of the practice

The analysis of the packages - subject to this analysis, detected certain explicit ethnocentric, stereotypic and even strategies of instigation of open collective hatred.

The main problem detected in through the analysis is the uncritical transfer of information that were issued by various institutions and the reports that do not offer a different angle of interpretation of the incidents. Also the problem was the absence of a critical distance of the journalist from the source of information. This practice strategically enables the penetration of the dominant discourse produced by the institutions through the media regardless of the level of corrosiveness it contains. Because of this strategic position of media the arguments used by political or religious actors are being read as arguments of the whole group these actors are suppose to represent.

The reporting practice demonstrated elements that have implication for the inter-ethnic and inter – religious relations even though this is not visible at first glance. These discursive elements construct a position of unification of the denominator for the groups at hand. They also enable top-down discursive institutional arrangements in relation to citizens. That in turn, constructs the way in which groups imagine themselves as homogenous in relations to their own institutions and in relation to the institutions of the others.

This is how this can be practically explained: the reports of online media on the events that occurred in response to Vevchani Carnival emphasized the institutional rhetoric. Most packages were simple messages or calls ‘from above’:

(1) The state or municipal authorities called for ‘calm’ or ‘reducing tensions’ - “Xhaferi: We will take measures to calm the tensions in Struga” (Kurir, Jan. 31.), “Xhaferi: The tensions will not be allowed to deteriorate” (MKD.mk, Jan 31.) “Merko called for calm” (Kurir, Jan. 31.)” MOI is solving the incidents in Struga, several people called for questioning” (Kurir, Feb. 9.), “Gruevski and Ahmeti together called for interfaith respect” (MKD.mk Feb. 1), “SDSM strongly condemns events in Struga” (Sky, Jan 29.) “DUI calls for calm in Struga” (Plus info, Jan. 30.)

(2) from the religious a call for interfaith respect - “Religious leaders to calm the situation in Struga” (MKD.mk, Jan 30.) “Religious leaders will promote coexistence”, (MKD. mk, Feb. 9.) “MOC condemned events in Struga “(Kurir, Jan. 31.), “Bishop Timothy: There might be infiltrated elements behind the fire” (Plus info Jan 31.)” “IRC: the Struga developments are government’s fault “ (Sky, Feb. 3.)

(3) or metastases of party ideological claims to the Other as ‘a guilty party for the ethnic intolerance’ – “Bicikliski: Georgiev and Crvenkovski have to explain who contacted Grubi “ (MKD.mk, Feb. 7.), “LDP: DUI condemned the actions of Mayor Merko” (Sky, Jan 31.)” DUI and DPA brawled in Struga” (Plus info, Jan 30.)”, “Grubi: SDSM seeks cooperation for protests “(Kurir Feb. 5.)”, “The Macedonian flag missing in Struga?” (Sky, Jan. 30.)

In total, in this colonization of the media discourse by the institutions – produces ‘the carriers’ of these institutions as sole bearers of ‘guilt’ or carriers of the ‘solution’ to the ethnic or religious problem. Thus they discursively become unique markers for the whole homogenous group. Therefore, in colloquial speech, when one says “interethnic dialogue” one actually refers to dialogue “between party actors” who have different ethnic backgrounds, and when it comes to inter-religious dialogue, refers to the conversation between the leaders of the MPC and the heads of the IRC. These discourses favor a ‘top-down’ social structure, in which groups are regarded as a passive mob that can be directed by the political actors.

For example in the package “Dimovski: Georgiev should ask his boss which SDSM member ordered the tensions” (Kurir, Feb. 6.), the party-political discourse through the medium spills over in the public without it being put in context or without being challenged. The party discourse locates the blame for the ‘ethnic problems’ locate the ideological other. “Next time Gordan Georgiev calls VMRO-DPMNE for responsibility he has to turn around and put into question his party bosses - who are the people who ordered the SDSM ethnic tensions?” (Kurir, Feb. 6.). This plays a relatively stable historical narrative and its derivative thereof: the super- narrative is the narrative of the traitors among us. The sub-narrative of this story is constructed after the 2001 conflict and represents a

ritualized version of the 'motif of the involvement of the ideological other in the destabilization of the country and his cooperation with the internal and the external enemies. Uncritical reporting of this kind, in which reporters only transmit naked party-political discourse, to recreate these narratives and opens the tray that is easily transferred from locating the fault in the other ideological fault locating it in the ethnic and religious Other.

In an article on Plus info (Jan. 31.), "Bishop Timothy: Infiltrated structures may lie behind the arson" passes a lengthy statement from the bishop about the fire in the part of the village church in Labunishta without contextualizing the event with information from another angle that are carried in the same medium in other packages. The medium thus participates in the retransmission of stereotyping messages because the statement is suggestive and it serves as an accusation from a public personality against a wider group without any evidence. The main dimension of these messages is the construction of a reportedly imported *Islamic radicalism*, which causes the incidents, and in this particular case - trying to put the church in the village on fire. This discourse establishes the narrative of threat from external enemies - in this case it is the threat of *global fundamentalism*. Such a structure can easily resonate because the *Islamic threat* as a hegemonic narrative is very easily "readable" by the public - it exists in domestic political mythology, and is reproduced in a broader international media sphere (eg, popular culture). In this sense, the image of global terrorism *sticks well* with the domestic imagination that this region has always been a kind of wall with the Eastern threats. Thus, the dubious *infiltrated element* in the uncritically transmitted statement becomes a frame that can be filled with phobias that vary across time and political context, but also with ideas that require mobilization to defend local traditions of the foreign threat. However, the suggestion does not stop here. The source refers to the relationship between IRC and the "infiltrated elements" because it is called upon as responsible to explain their existence. The Islamic Religious Community and *the radical element* are in this way brought under the same denominator by which IRC itself receives properties associated with foreign elements. The consequence is that such a strategy of identification is being transferred to the Muslims in Macedonia in general.

The analysis of the reporting of the online media revealed some instances where by negative framing the discursive construction creates an open and clear tendency to equate a small part of a group with a group in total. For example the title of the package "Albanians from Struga supported the man who lit the Macedonian flag" (MKD.mk, Jan. 25.) creates a discursive effect that 'homogenizes' *the Albanians* (the phrase "Albanians from Struga" here extends its labeling to all Albanians living in Struga). The article additionally suggests that the headline did an imprecise replacement of one group of "several hundred" with all the people of the ethnic Albanian population in Struga: "Several hundred Albanians gathered yesterday afternoon in court in Struga to give support to Minisr Ismaili, the man who two days ago burned the Macedonian flag in front of the municipal building of the city."

It should also be noted that the syntactic structure, both of the title and of the selected part of the text, contrasts "the Albanians" with "the Macedonian flag". The mental impression left here is that the "homogeneous Albanians" in total by supporting the ritual of flag burning are a threat to the Macedonian state. In addition the construction "the Macedonian flag" (as opposed to a 'flag of Macedonia') here gets dual semantic



charge - phrasal structure suggests that it is not just a state symbol, but a symbol of a particular ethnic group (characteristic of the ethnic Macedonians in the ethnic sense of the word). In this context, the discourse concludes a picture in which the Albanians (in whole) would be perceived as supporters of someone who is a threat to the state and a threat to ethnic Macedonians.

Moreover, the photo with which the text illustrated depicts a group of young people - only men who chanted waving the Albanian flag. The frame of the photograph does not reveal the full size of the group, but having in mind the context of the Macedonian flag burning as it is mentioned, it further enhances the effect of imaginary Albanian-triumphalism. The exclusive presence of men on the picture implies that men (in patriarchal gender sense) are those who are a direct physical threat to others.

In the article titled "Shock in Struga: Macedonia flag taken down – an Islamic flag put in its place" (Skaj.mk Jan. 27.) The word "shocking" creates dimension of euphoria in communicating news of incidents in Struga and reinforces the impression of uncertainty in the symbolic conflict between us and ethnic or religious Other.

There are texts were noted in where potentially divergent events are brought into association in one same article. This produces an arbitrary mapping of events which can create an impression of threat in situations in which there is no threat at all. An example of this is the article of Skaj.mk on the January 27<sup>th</sup>: "The Macedonian flag was burned, a bus was attacked, Struga is brewing'. The package in facts reports on several events – two of those events may be designated as violent and the third one is a potentially non-violent protest. The headline of this article emphasizes the violent nature of the first two events and brings the third one in the same category.

An example of a clear discursive generalization is the article: 'People of Vevcani should publicly apologize to the Muslims' (MKD.mk 31 January) – the article transfers the discourse of the religious leaders which demand a collective apology and look for a collective guilt for the events. Additionally the photograph embedded in the text is not attributed or explained in any way – it does not contain a content which would imply that the photo of a burned church has been taken during the conflict in 2001 and that is not the condition of the object now. This practice enables a re-contextualization of the actual event into a mold that is more violent than the actual one.



#### 4. CONCLUSIONS FOR THE JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE ON THE REPORTING OF THE CARNIVAL IN VEVCANI 2012

In the reporting of the media related to the Vevcani Carnival and the Struga events which followed after the events in Vevcani there were examples of a strong ethnocentrism, negative stereotyping, as well as symptoms of a xenophobia and an intolerance to the religion of the “Other” cultural groups. At the beginning, in the reporting on the events in the Vevcani Carnival the media used more subtle forms of ethnocentric, stereotyping or xenophobic discourse. Later on, as the events progressed (23<sup>th</sup> of January – burning of the flag, 27<sup>th</sup> of January – demonstrations in Struga and 31<sup>st</sup> of January – setting fire in the religious buildings) there was an inflammatory rhetoric noticed in the media reporting which produced an ambient of intolerance and a feeling of a threat and distrust.

In general, all media reported the Vevcani and Struga events from an ethno-particular position, i.e. through the prism of “their” ethnic group. This has directly influenced the manner of discursive contextualization of the events and determined their rhetorical strategy. The media in Macedonian language mainly constituted narratives in which the “threat from the Other” was localized in the homogenous and the stereotypically understood concepts for the “Muslims” and the “Albanians”. The main narrative which was subsequently produced is the one for the “Global radical Islam” which is a threat for “Us – the moderate Macedonia”. Beside this, the narratives also introduced a symbolic and a factual reminiscence of the “lost peace in 2001”, but they also put the ethnically, religiously and ideologically internal “Other” in the role of a collaborator with the external Other.

On the other hand, the media in Albanian language created relatively stable narratives for the “defensive patriotism” which is conflicting to the corrosive nationalism of the “Other”. Another big narrative which was reproduced by the media in Albanian language is the “narrative for the honor of the insulted nation” which is mixed with the “narrative of the insulted religion” that needs recognition and an excuse for the damage made. At the same time, these concepts are collectively and stereotypically constructed.

As it was a case with the previous analysis in the reporting on the European Championship in Handball, there were two conflicting discursive strategies noticed in this analysis and they were simultaneously promoted: the strategy for “disclosure or excessive emphasizing” and the strategy of “ignoring, forgetting or silencing” of some of the aspects and for the events that took place in Struga. The media in Albanian language emphasized the insult at the Vevcani Carnival and at the European Championship and the Macedonian language media emphasized the events in Struga.

Thus, the public was simultaneously “served” with two conflicting stories. Beside this, there was an a priori charging of the events with a political contents, without facts and information from and by the perpetrators.

The professional frames in which the journalism operates in general require rules from a substantive and a formal nature that should be respected by the media, in order to ensure a social credibility which, among other values, means promotion of the principle of tolerance. This is particularly true for the multicultural societies such as the Macedonian, in which the social sensibility in the reporting is always more emphasized, espe-



cially for topics which are related with the ethnic and religious relations. However these principles were neglected during the events in Struga and in the consequences from the Vevcani Carnival. On the contrary, they have been reinforced in the media discourses.

Seen from the professional aspect, there were several violations of the journalistic principles and standards located. The most serious violation that could be noticed is the confronting of the basic standards for unbiased, accurate and a balanced reporting. The impartiality as a principle means that the journalistic texts should be treated in a way which “gives a proper weight to the events, the opinions and the main positions of the arguments”<sup>[17]</sup>, where the journalist should include and present a spectrum of attitudes for the topic covered. However, due to the ethnic and the political polarization of the media in Macedonia, the impartiality as a principle was confronted.

What was specifically shown through the analysis in regard to the professionalism in the reporting and which is almost applicable to all the media is the practice of a direct and non-critical use of the “institutional” sources of information, without their contextualization. This is particularly a case with the statements of the different representatives of the institutions, in which there were elements of discrimination towards the members of the other groups. This leads to a non-critical informing and there is no “challenging” of the uniform narrative which was pushed by the elites that have access to the media. In cases when this “discourse of the elite” creates a stereotyped image for the “other”, the media participates in its reproduction and, by its transfer, reinforces its effect even more in the public sphere. Without critical contextualization of these statements, the media reproduce and become a frame in which the “carnivalization” of the religious issues builds on the previous incidents with the handball fan forums and is being translated from the religious into the context of an implicit interethnic intolerance.

<sup>17</sup> BBC Editorial Guidelines available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/editorialguidelines/guidelines/>





## 3

## MEDIA AND THE NARRATIVES OF THREAT – THE CASE OF THE SMILKOVCI MURDER

*Misa Popovic and Igor Micevski*

Late in the evening on April 12<sup>th</sup> 2012, the police found five murdered people besides Zelezarsko Lake near the Skopje village of Smiljkovci. Of the five killed, four were young residents of Radisani and the fifth one was a resident of Cresovo – both villages situated near Skopje. The murder sparked a strong reaction among part of the citizens, mainly residents from the areas the killed originated from. In a sign of revolt, part of the residents of these areas protested by blocking the roads leading to their places. Smaller incidents were caused during the protests that destroyed part of the assets of the local citizens. Major protests were held downtown Skopje on April 16<sup>th</sup>, and one of them turned violent, resulting in injuries and several detained people who were suspected of participating in the violence. Nationalistic slogans were used against the ethnic Albanians in part of the protests that turned violent.

The security forces detained 20 people suspected of links with the fivefold murder on May 1<sup>st</sup>. According to the police, the suspected allegedly belonged to a “radical Islamist group”. Three of them were held in custody and they will be prosecuted. The rest of them were released. The services reported that they are looking for the other two suspects who escaped, тие беа уапсени една година подоцна на Косово. The arrest sparked outrage among part of the citizens in Skopje, who organized protests on May 4<sup>th</sup>. The reason for this revolt, according to most of the resources, was the protest against the manner in which the procedure is being led and the manner in which the suspects were convicted as killers in advance. Additionally, the revolt was provoked by



the charges of involvement of suspects in “radical Islamic” groups. Smaller incidents were caused during the protests, which resulted with a minor damage of the municipal building in Cair.

The items and the texts analyzed were published in four time points and the selection was made based on the importance of the event and its potential influence to the interethnic and interreligious relations in the state:

- (1) April 13 – the day of the fivefold murder near the Smiljkovsko Lake
- (2) April 16 – protests as an expression of revolt against the murder
- (3) May 1 – arrest of the murder suspects
- (4) May 4 – protests against the manner of leading the process against the suspects.

In the analysis of the TV reporting only the items broadcasted in the dates mentioned were selected, while the sample for the newspapers and the online informative media was expanded also to the texts covering these events published in the days that followed. The first analytical point refers to the murder, the gatherings of the Radisani citizens and the blockades at the bypass, which includes the days from April 13 to April 15<sup>th</sup>. The second point refers to the protests organized as a revolt against the murder and it includes the texts from April 16 to April 19<sup>th</sup>. The third analytical point includes the period from May 1<sup>st</sup> to May 3<sup>rd</sup>, i.e. all texts related to the arrest of suspects. The fourth analytical point, both in the print and in the online media, refers to the protests that occurred on May 4<sup>th</sup>.

## 1. PRINT MEDIA

The qualitative analysis included six dailies that publish in Macedonian language (Dnevnik, *Nova Makedonija*, *Utrinski vesnik*, *Vecer*, *Vest* and Fokus) and three dailies that publish in Albanian language (Koha, Lajm and Zurnal).

### General conclusions on the professional standards and the discourse practice

#### April 13 -15 (the killing and protests)

- Part of the daily newspapers emphasized ethnicity of victims, hence giving the killing an ethnic background, i.e. *the blame is located at the implicit 'Other'*. Some media recklessly transmit statements that refer to a group from which the perpetrators of murder come, thus making a generalization with a stereotyping social impact.
- In more articles the killing is associated with the Easter holiday period; therefore this event is positioned in the narrative of *Christian sacrifice and betrayal*, i.e. it is implicitly placed in the context of possible inter-religious and inter-ethnic tensions.
- The event is reflected as a broader security problem in part of the texts, which stems from the previous inter-ethnic tensions in the society, because it is connected with the incidents on buses. Through the parallel with the narratives of the 2001 conflict, there are even warnings on the possibility of a new conflict.

- The contrasting ways of framing the murder are reflected in two trends in the reporting: *victimization and reverse victimization*. In the first case, the Macedonian language media insist on the ethnicity of victims and imply that the murderer is the *ethnic Other*, and in the second case the media in Albanian language place the dominant focus to the *Albanians as victims of stigmatization regarding the murder*.

#### **April 16 - 19 (protests and anger in response to the murders)**

- Some articles in several newspapers in Macedonian language, frame the murder and subsequent events in the thesis of conspiratorial network in which Macedonia is trapped and the influence of the “foreign services” on the radical structures in the Balkans.
- Negative examples of reporting and violation of professional principles are identified in this time point, in the transfer of statements with inflammatory tone and obvious hate speech; certain media mark participants in the protests with extreme negative qualifications, which may further fuel the already tapered interethnic relations.
- The newspapers in Albanian language applied a priori model of media framing of *the situation of Albanians* in Macedonia as *victims* of “Macedonian” institutions.

#### **May 1 - 3 (detention of suspects)**

- In the print media, as well as in television, the most serious violation of professional standards was the violation of the right to presumption of innocence. Most newspapers in Macedonian language have used the terms “perpetrators”, “executors”, “murderers”, basing the blame to the detainees and denying their right to a fair trial.
- In this segment also, the dominant framing of the murder and the suspected in the Macedonian language media reproduce the narrative of “radical Islam”, for an “attack on the Christian community” and a “security threat for Macedonia” from radical and terrorist structures that operate across the region. In combination with the previously pronounced sentence for the suspects, this framing creates negative stereotypes and directs interpretation of events to a possible ethnic and inter-religious conflict.
- In some articles, in which the main focus is on the security aspect, elements of xenophobic view towards asylum seekers in the state as “uninvited guests” and a threat to state security can be found.
- It needs to be emphasized that there is a perceived practice of publishing speculative information and imprecise sources of information, which in the reporting of such sensitive issues can have security implications that may suggest “chaos in the country” and cause an effect of uncertainty and fear among citizens.
- Positive examples of professional reporting were observed in this segment, which open a range of information for the suspects and their families that readers who read newspapers in Macedonian language would not have access. It opens a new dimension of the events and redefines the relationship of the readers towards the detainees.

- Unlike most newspapers in Macedonian language that accept the narrative of “radical Islam” and make violation of the principle of presumption of innocence, the Albanian language media adopt the opposite strategy. Most of them put in question the statements of institutions and use the terms “suspected” and “alleged radical Islamists” for the detainees and their describing as “Islamic radicals” is actually “constructed from institutions to achieve political goals.”

#### May 4 (protests against Mol action)

- Some newspapers in Macedonian language emphasized the ethnic character of the protests and generalization strategies were used, hence the protests expanded to the entire ethnic group.
- Some newspapers selectively exaggerated certain statements or facts in order to present the protests as part of the radical Islamist movement structures that threaten the country of Macedonia. There was also a stereotyped linking of certain religious or ethnic groups with radical Islamic structures.
- The newspapers in Albanian language framed the protests in a completely different context: there is an emphasis to their legitimacy as protests against “mounted cases” as “Albanian”, protests against “human rights violations” of detainees, etc.
- Characteristic is the use of the interview as a journalistic genre, as a basis to frame all these events in an ethnocentric narrative in which “Albanians” are generalized and stereotyped as *victims* of the “State”, which is a usurper, but only for the “Albanians”, and not for its other citizens. This implicitly constructs the narratives about the state as an instrument of the ethnically Other (dominant) for usurpation of Us, *Albanians in general*.

### Analysis of specific texts

#### April 13 - 15 - the murder and the protests

The ethnicity of victims was emphasized in the articles of some printed media that opened the story on April 14<sup>th</sup>. The discursive effect of this practice is *pinpointing an automatic blame in the implicit ‘Other’*. In some of the texts the ethnicity of the *Other* is even more implied in a specific way, or the ethnicity of the group to which the perpetrators of the murder are supposed to belong - a generalization that leaves a stereotyping social effect.

Here are a few examples analyzed: *Utrinski vesnik* of that date opens the topic with the text “Horror in Skopje.” The title is emphasized, but the ethno-religious context cannot be located into it. On the other hand, the body of the text reveals “ethnicizing strategy” which is graded according to the degree of explicitness and manifests itself in two ways - through the *journalistic* discourse produced and through the discourse of the *sources* transmitted. The text emphasizes the nationality of those killed, presenting this information as relevant and it implies the ethnic motive for the murder in advance as follows: “Macedonia is in shock after the bloody Easter in Skopje. Four 20-year-old boys and one 45-year-old man of Macedonian nationality are killed in a cold-blooded murder



near the small lake close to the village of Smilkovci. Who killed them and why – it is unknown. About thirty people are on interrogation in the police.”

At the first interpretative level, the text sets the murder in a religious context, “at Easter”, which has a symbolic meaning here with potential religious-confrontational component. Furthermore, the terms people of “Macedonian ethnicity”, who were “killed in a cold-blooded way” gives an ethnic background to the killings, despite the continuation of the text which states that the killers are unknown and the ethnicity of those detained is not mentioned. But up to here, in the journalistic discourse, the ‘Otherness’ of murderers is only *implied*. The following sentence localizes this blame in a more specific way, through the discourse of sources accepted in the journalistic text by paraphrasing: “Immediately after the crime, as not being witnessed in Macedonia, angry citizens took to the streets. Some lit candles for the killed, while others have blocked highways and accused ethnic Albanians that they are to be blamed for the massacre. The last part of this paraphrase, or that “others accused ethnic Albanians that they are to be blamed for the massacre,” constructs spreading of blame to an entire ethnic group. This corrosive connection of the murder with the ethnic Albanians produces a stereotyping social impact especially that the adjective “ethnic” contains a definite article and it allows direct association with Albanians in general.

This message is further reinforced with citizen’s statements quoted: “This can no longer be tolerated. They constantly attack us, harass, but something like this has never happened. The family of one of the children sold the house from Ljubotenski Pat just to have some peace, and now their child is killed”, the aunt of one of the dead persons grieved or “we have constant problems on the buses with the ethnic Albanians, but this is a tragedy which leaves us speechless.” The function of dichotomy Us/Them is clearly visible here, as well as its potential harm in creating stereotyping narratives.

The fact that this speech is put in quotes provides a small degree of distance from the cited information. However, the media outlet is not released from the responsibility it has when transferring quotes from some particular source, i.e. with the transfer itself it accepts the other person’s discourse as its own. Interestingly, the text makes this stereotyping even though it has this information: “The police came up with very little information about the massacre, and the identity of those killed was not even announced.” This means that at this instance the text does not rely to an institutional discourse - but it constructs the effect itself.

A little more subtle, but essentially similar strategy can be found in the article “Bloody Easter in Skopje,” published in *Nova Makedonija* (April 14 to 16), which brings factual information about the murders, as well as evidence of unauthorized persons present at the location (the brother of Borce Stefkovski). At the end of the text, there is a quote by a participant in the blockade near Smilkovci that implicitly links the event with the recent fights among juveniles on the buses. This frames the preceding part of the text in the context of inter-ethnic tensions, although based on speculation and opinions of citizens who do not have access to specific indicators of the investigation. Thus, the text can act corrosively because it offers an opportunity for categorization of the murders as ethnically motivated, without having a basis for such a claim. At the same time, such a narrative connection is not challenged with counter-arguments and in only paragraph below



the author conveys the appeal by Mol to the media to refrain from transferring of such speculations. The latter remark can be found in many different texts of several media. The author did not resist to titled the text as “Bloody Easter”. In this way, by mentioning the Christian holiday there is a narrative connection produced between the murders and Christianity, thus moving the murders to the sensitive field of inter-religious relations.

Dnevnik opened the story for the five – fold murder in the article titled “Cruel execution in Skopje: bloody Holy Thursday” (April 14 to 16), which shows both good and bad practice of reporting. The ethnicity of the victims is not stated, only the place of residence. This reduces the possibility of an interpretation of the incident as ethnically motivated. Reactions of villagers in protests and blockades also not described as ethnically motivated. However, there is a construction used in the same text which behind the generalized *voice* of the five villagers the five-fold murder is narratively associated with the fights on buses. It did not clarify which who brings the allegations, and there is an impression that it comes from the group. But the most serious drawback of this text is that, implicitly, the Albanians are marked as potential perpetrators, again by transferring statement hidden behind the *voice of the people*, in this case the villagers of Cresevo: “We had problems with ethnic Albanians on the buses etc, but something like this ...”. Although there is a particular distance, still this rhetorical structure suggests a possible perpetrator. Thus, on the basis of speculations, a narrative structure begins to be built for the perpetrator based on existing stereotypes or the tensions that already exist between ethnic groups, especially between Macedonians and Albanians. This narrative is then weakened with the transmission of calls from various stakeholders to calm tensions and against arbitrary interpretation of events. However, the conclusion remains that the journalistic text transmits exactly such arbitrary interpretations. The reporter did not resist to mark the incident as religious i.e. he associated it with the Easter holidays. In that sense, this event is implicitly contextualised within the frames of the interreligious tensions, as an attack with repercussions to the Christianity.

This strategy is also visible in some editorials in *Nova Makedonija*, Dnevnik and Utrinski vesnik. For example, in the editorial “Crime and cool heads” published in the *Nova Makedonija* (April 14 to 16), in which the murder of five people is linked to the 2001 conflict, the author locates the most important message that murder occurs on Holy Thursday, “the day when Christ was betrayed and sentenced to death.” According to the text, the broader conclusion is that the “Orthodox Christians, i.e. Macedonians are chosen for shooting” deliberately on this Christian holiday. Such framing of the event positions the murder in the narrative of *Christian sacrifice and betrayal*, which highlights the human tragedy and spreads it to wider groups - in this case Christians and Macedonians. The implicit background of the murdered to ethnic or religious group becomes explicit, even when it is not mentioned. This reinforces the image of the event as broader security problem arising from interfaith and inter-ethnic tensions in society. Such a position is built through contextualization of the event with the previous incidents on the buses that took place on “inter-ethnic basis,” thus associating the murder with the previous tensions. In the last part, the whole scenario that the author identifies as a valid explanation for the murder is connected with the possibility of causing a new conflict like that one of 2001. By taking two dominant narratives of the conflict in 2001

as a parallel - the first one the conflict between the state and the NLA and the second one the conflict between Macedonians and Albanians, the possibility of recurrence of conflict and the actors involved is implied. Thus, the assumed terrorist act in the text discursively maps its actors as well. If “Macedonians are selected for shooting,” then the text alone implicitly raises the actor on the other side.

The editorial in *Utrinski vesnik* on April 14 is titled as “Bloody Easter”. The text refers to many different aspects of the fragile situation in Macedonia. But what is relevant for this analysis is the first part of the text, which uses metaphors and comparisons that firstly place the event in the Easter “sacred” domain and then, by construction of approximation, they displace it into another historic moment. Here is how this is done: “Easter eggs really appeared red. For the first time, during a great religious holiday mass and heinous murder occurs, instead of celebrating life, and violence overshadowed the positive spiritual feelings and the soul cleansing. Even during the Iraq-Iran war, when there were holidays for one or the other side, guns were silenced, but not here at home.” Iran-Iraq war is completely arbitrary comparison in the context of the killings in Smilkovci. But this is not a benign arbitrariness because it constructs an implicit contrast of two warring sides, who, according to sacred unwritten rules, *should not kill their members at a holy day*. In this way, a re-contextualization of “Smilkovci” is made possible in the domain of a brutal war, which lasted throughout the 80s of last century. Moreover, this sentence even maps the killing as worse than the war, because, as explicitly pointed out, *the refrain from killing at a holy day is not respected*. Given subsequent developments, the narrative connection between Easter and the murders in all these articles emphasizes the effect of the incident, by highlighting the predestined conflict orientation between two groups - Christians and Muslims.

The rhetorical chain of equivalence is located in a commentary published in *Dnevnik* on April 17, titled as “Moments that leave no marks.” In this text the author compares the event with other security threats, such as the assassination of President Kiro Gligorov and the death of President Boris Trajkovski. With such a chain of equivalence, the five-fold murder is framed in the context of events that could seriously destabilize the country. However, similarly to the uncensored transfer of speculations by citizens on the relationship of this event with previous inter-ethnic tensions, the author of this column reproduces the same narrative. In this narrative, the murder of five people near Smilkovci becomes a link in the chain of consecutive interethnic incidents. By setting of a causal connection between the previous inter-ethnic tensions and this event, the ethnic “anonymous” victims become part of the wider ethnic community. The corrosive dimension of this construction is the production of the assumed perpetrator. Thus the actors from the previous interethnic incidents are also transferred in the last event, therefore the “ethnically Other” stands opposite the “Macedonian victims” in symbolic way. The interpretation and the narratives used in the reporting on the “inter-ethnic” incidents on the buses in Skopje become a tool for interpreting the context of the murder as well.

The analysis of print editions showed a practice of *victimization* and *reverse victimization*. If in the first case the Macedonian language media insist on the ethnicity of victims and imply that the killer is the *ethnic Other*, part of the media in Albanian language produce the reverse image - clearly dominant focus on *Albanians as victims of stigmatization in relation to the murder*.



For example, *Koha* in its print edition makes this type of *reverse victimization* in the early reporting on these events. The text of 14 April concerning the killings is entirely a consistent factual report on the events, the investigation and the reactions for calming of the tensions. Information is placed at the end on the reactions of residents of Radisani, but they are not explicitly confronted with the ethnic Other. The text of the report has not many contentious moments, although the explicit emphasis of the ethnicity of those killed can be marked as problematic – a point when the reverse victimization is made possible. However, the most important point here is the fact that the angle of the report is not defined by the content of the text (which is precisely factual), but by the title and subtitle. There is a stereotyped idea with the title itself. The title of the text says: “Macedonians have prejudices against Albanians” (Maqedonasit i paragjykojnë shqiptarët). This generalized form that marks these two ethno-identities stereotypes them both - it implies that all Macedonians have prejudices towards Albanians. It also replies to the constructed collective guilt of the implied Other (in this case *Macedonians*), by locating a collective guilt on *His* side. This title is featured at the front page, thus making an even stronger impression. The ratio between the title and subtitle is still interesting. The subtitle says: “Immediately after the murder of five people near the village of Smilkovci and before the completion of the police investigation, certain media and Macedonian people began to believe that the killer could be Albanian.”<sup>[18]</sup> There is a use of the construction “certain Macedonian people”, which means that the subtitle locates the origin of the particular prejudice, but the title takes out this concretization and expands the meaning to the whole group.

It should be noted that part of the Albanian language media reported more on attacks to local residents in several neighborhoods in Skopje. There is a grounded suspicion that these attacks were ethnically motivated. This means that the analysis here does not talk about the reliability of the information, but for the generalization strategies that result from the reporting – the inability of the text to distinguish a *prejudice from a small group of thugs* from the position that there is a *prejudice in an entire ethnic group*.

An ‘ethnicization’ of the event can be also identified in *Lajm*’s edition, where the ethnicity of the victims is emphasized. The text which publishes the news in the printed edition of the newspaper: *Jankulovska* calls for calm. The “Alfas” cause tensions? (“*Jankulovska* apelon per qetes. ‘Alfa’-t shkaktojne tenseone?”) begins with this sentence: “Five people of Macedonian ethnicity were killed on Thursday near the Lake [...]. (“*Pese persona te perkatesise etnike maqedonase jane vrare te enjten te liqeni [...]*”). If this practice in the Albanian language media allows “victimization” of Our ethnic group, then this practice of the media in Albanian language allows “reverse victimization” because it constructs a discourse of anticipated negative stereotyping of the Other towards Us. But there is another problem in this text in *Lajm* and that is the argument to the question posed whether the special police unit Alfa has a stake in the mobilization of local people to the protests. The thesis enters into a verbal circulation despite the fact that it is set in the interrogative form. There is no serious argumentation set for a doubt into this thesis, because it is based on an alleged conversation with a group of people protesting and to a photograph that shows a car that has a siren - suggesting that it was a cop’s car. There is a suggestion below in the

18 “Menjëherë pas vrasjes së pesëfishitë në afërsi të fshatit Smilkovci të Shkupit dhe akoma pa përfunduar hetimet e policisë, media të caktuara dhe banorë maqedonas kanë filluar të paragjykojnë se vrasësi mund të jetë shqiptar”.

text that it is possible that the police encourages protests, which is a situation of latent crisis is an information that can have a negative impact. This does not mean that journalists should not express a reasonable doubt, but in this case they had no concrete evidence that the police encouraged the *Macedonians* to be aggressive towards *Albanians*. Such allegations are serious and must be supported by very strong evidence, and then it is necessary to assess whether they will be published in a potentially crisis moment.

In an article published in *Zurnal* on April 13 with a title “Tensions in Radisani, the situation in Ljuboten is calm,”<sup>[19]</sup> it is reported about the blockades in Radisani, due to which the residents of Ljuboten cannot return home. There are ethnic markers for the groups in the reporting, such as “Albanian neighborhoods”<sup>[20]</sup> and “groups of young Macedonians”.<sup>[21]</sup> Such a description of the groups positions the reporting in an implicitly interethnic conflict, because the ethnicity is used as a main marker and not the vandalism, for instance. The use of ethnic markers is not problematic itself if there are indicators that the incidents in Radisani are ethnically motivated. However, the argumentation of the story in *Zurnal* relies solely on the testimony of an anonymous resident Radisani and not on other sources, and especially not on official police sources. Thus, similar to the transmission of the statements of citizens in the Macedonian language media, the voices of individuals become the only sources of reporting on a content that may adversely affect the interethnic relations. There are efforts for neutral mapping of the event in some of the texts, outside the ethnic and the religious context. For instance, *Vecer* with its article dating from April 14 titled as “Five-fold murder in Skopje” uses a strategy of “de-ethnicizing” of the event. Although names of victims are mentioned in the text, still they are identified as “boys from Radisani”, “resident of Skopje village of Cresevo” or “four friends dead”. The practice to avoid the ethnic background of victims in the reporting is followed throughout the entire text and it takes the text outside the ethnic frame. A clear strategy of calming can be identified here. The article “Murder” published in *Vecer* on April 14 is paradigmatic for the early reporting – to call for defusing of the situation and avoidance of a negative stereotyping and ethno-religious hatred in the context of the murders. The author of the text has emphasized the moral and the security moral and security harmfulness of the practice to judge about the perpetrators in advance and to construct a discourse of hatred towards entire ethnic groups.

Although chronologically published later, the feature from *Dnevnik* titled as “Milan won for Alexander the last time” (18 April) can be placed in this analytical point. This story breaks the narrative about the group identification of the potential perpetrators. It is an example of professional reporting in which, beside statements of representatives of institutions and expert opinions, there are opinions introduced of citizens, testimonials of close peers of one of the murdered boys about the school life. One of these testimonies is the one of an ethnic-Albanian boy who claims he was a friend of the murdered boy. In this way, the audience gets more viewing angles of the murder itself and the identity of those killed, so this good journalistic practice weakens the possibilities for one-sided narration and a tendency to use the ethnic or religious aspect as unique angles for interpretation of events.

19 Në Radishan tensione, në Lubeten situatë e qetë

20 mëhallët shqiptare

21 Grupe të rinjsh maqedonas



### April 16 – 19 – protests and anger because of the murder

The second analytical point includes the articles about the protests of several fan groups that occurred on April 16, as well as the articles until the arrest of suspects for the murder (April 17-May 1). Examples of good journalistic practice were identified in this period, but also violations of some journalistic standards.

Some texts in various printed media set the event in the mold of a “conspiratorial network whose hostage is Macedonia”. For example, the text in *Nova Makedonija* from April 19 titled as “Albanian extremists ‘stick’ to the Macedonian tragedy: foreign services play with the radicals in the Balkans”, analyzes the influence of radical groups in the Balkans and it puts that in the context of the murder in Smilkovci. The author of the text does not deal with the display of such a relationship, but only in the introduction with a chronological position of the case and its correlation with radical groups in the Balkans, which mostly operate in Kosovo. Thus, the so-called chain of equivalence the two unrelated events are possibly associated. This is further reinforced with the front page, which published a photograph of red cloth on which a regiment in black is painted as marching. This allusion to the Albanian flag underscores the implicit security threat from the ethnic Other again, in the context of murder near Smilkovci.

There are examples observed of neutral reporting from an ethno-religious aspect in this phase. For example, as opposed to the reporting at the day after the murder, *Utrinski vesnik* from April 17 uses a strategy of de-ethnicization and stresses the need for calmness – the reports are made in an ethno-religiously neutral context. The editorial “Macedonia awaiting justice,” released that day, sets several theses that aim to reduce the pressure created in the public, by attributing credit for calmness to the citizens most of all. The text says: “The first exam after the cruel five-fold murder was passed by the citizens of Macedonia with the highest grades possible.” This practice of legitimizing the peaceful forces promotes the idea for the *responsibility of every individual in the society* to maintain peace. The text also calls on the Government to quickly resolve the case to prevent speculative constructions, and also asks the question “whether journalists will pass the exam?”. The text also constructs a discourse of tolerance, but it also critically evaluates and seriously warns about the possible consequences of the slow resolution of the case.

In the reporting of the daily *Fokus* the de-ethnicization of the event is clearly visible in the rhetoric of the texts. The paper insists to use the terms “death of five people from Skopje”, “five citizens of Skopje”, “young boys”, which is a strategy of resistance to the ethno-particular position. The expressions constructed in this way make the primary identification of the victims along geographical and age lines, thus contributing to the discharge of the imposed ethno-political content of this event.

Highly visible in time point is the manner in which different media map the role of Government and the other political actors in the events. There is a whole range of positions here, starting from the stance that the opposition parties protest are organizers of the protest (something that could be found in televisions), up to the point that the Government is to be blamed for this. These strategies, which are not supported with strong evidence, can have a negative impact on the public. This strategy of framing is mostly visible if the editions of *Fokus* and *Vecer* from April 18 are compared.

In Fokus, parallel to the strategy of de-ethnicization there is a creation of narratives identified that put the Government in the framework of a “chaotic and predatory political structure.” Such a narrative can be seen in the Fokus article “The Government acts as if there is a law and order”, published on 18 April. The title sets an explicit thesis in an affirmative form - that *the Macedonian government mounts as if there is an order in the country*. The subtitle reveals a more specific dimension of the story, namely the thesis that the protests of the cheering group “Komiti” of 17 April are, in fact, a *staged attempt, by implication, of the ruling ‘Macedonian’ political class to send a political message to the ‘Albanians’ in Macedonia*. The Macedonian-Albanian dichotomy projected over the motives of the Government is suggested in the subtitle, which suggests the question “Who asked for a death of the Albanians in front of the Government?”, but also in the body of the text. The subtitle says: “The Government has a control over protesters and in downtown Skopje we saw a theatrical performance with a political message, a source of Fokus claims.” At this instance the strong claim is reinforced for the position of power in relation to the protesters, while the source that claims this is labeled only as “a source of Fokus.”

Furthermore, it is expected from the body of the text to demonstrate the credibility of the source and its relevance, but this is not done. Although the text transfers positions of the parties that are challenged by the source, still the source that has the original claim is not mentioned. The text continues: “A source of Fokus argues that it is possible that the incident is directed by the Government which wants to prove the ways in which Macedonians can revenge on the murders in the future.” Most problematic in this context is the repetition and the emphasis on the inflammatory statement that contains a hate speech and introduces further harassment, especially because it brings the construction “how can Macedonians in the future revenge for the murders.” The use of the modal word “can” should be noted here. The modal words point out to the personal opinion of the source, therefore the vocabulary chosen here suggests that the source *gives an opinion for the potential scenario*, which at the beginning of the text is taken as an attitude based on empirical data.<sup>[22]</sup>

Vecer, which has chosen to use a de-ethnicizing strategy as well, constructed the narrative for the “opposition that destroys the state.” The title which refers to the SDSM’s decision to boycott the parliamentary coordination meetings says: “Aren’t you ashamed to behave against the state!”. This title is a quote by the President of the Assembly and is not marked by quotes. However, even if it stated that it is a quotation or paraphrase, this does not reduce the impact of the “ideologically - confronting discourse”. But the text goes beyond the construction of the political opposition as an anti-state element - the headline reads: “They say one thing and do another one: SDSM wants political crisis and unrest.”

The discourse strategy of Vecer constructs a whole narrative here on the basis of only one indirect proof. This is done in the following way: a blurred photography is published of five people which is allegedly taken at the location of protests. Vecer claims that it refers to Senad Smailovik, member of the Executive Board of the Social Democratic Youth, and based on that it states that the party “wants crisis and unrest.” But the discourse hides that there are several points that arise from the text and the image. First, it is unclear how the presence of a person near the protest makes him automatically part

<sup>22</sup> It is important to notice that some other media on April 17 implied that the event is “organized by SDSM” and this thesis was supported with a photo of the party member that was allegedly seen at the event.



of the crowd that protests – it is equally possible that he only passes by. Second, it is not clear why the people pictured are separated and static, and they are not in a crowd – so there are no arguments for the information that this man protested. Third, it is not marked where the photos were taken from – whether they are journalistic shots or taken from somewhere. Fourth, it is unclear why the newsroom did not call the man who was allegedly present at the protests so that he can tell his part of the story. Fifth, even if the information was accurate and reliable, it is not clear how a member of an organization (not its main leader or member) can indicate the attitude of the entire organization.

A different strategy for reporting on protests is identified in Dnevnik. In an article focused on the protests of groups of fans in front of the Government, titled as “Young people are manipulated: spontaneous or stated protests?” from April 18, the reporter quotes a statement by an expert which contextualizes and further explains the practice of violence among fan groups. At the same time, the reporter conveys statements by members of fan groups, according to which the violence has been caused by provocateurs. With this the text avoids ethnic stereotyping through which fans would be potentially identified with all Macedonians.

It is interesting here to see the way in which some Albanian language media frame the protest of the fans groups, where nationalist outbursts were noticed as well as a demonstrated aggression. Koha published an article on April 18 which mostly refers to the investigation of the murder, but the protests are at first place here – with the subtitle saying that the situation in Skopje is tensed and photography is published from the protests. The tone of reporting is objective one, but the text presents the main concern that occupies the author – the problem with “prejudices among the population in Macedonia”.

Zurnal in the text of 16 April titled as “Beaten at least three Albanians during the protests in Skopje”<sup>[23]</sup> reports of an unconfirmed statements from witnesses who claim that they saw how participants beat Albanians. Although this was later officially confirmed as news, still the transfer of such information without prior confirmation can be considered as inflammatory from the aspect of interethnic tensions. In another text of April 17, titled as “Protests of Macedonian Nazis, ten arrested”<sup>[24]</sup>, the media itself used extremely negative qualification for participants in the protests, which may further fuel the inter-ethnic tensions. It also causes an expansion of the protests with the adjective “Macedonian”, thus giving the hate speech expressed during the protests a marker for the ethnic group. The text thus contributes to the stereotyping of a wider group, because symbolically the acts of the participants in the protests are contextualized ethnically and the group that participates in the protests is put in the position of a representative of the entire group. It continues as a rhetorical strategy in several other articles, where participants in the protests of 16 April are marked as “Macedonian youth”<sup>[25]</sup> or “Macedonian hooligans”.<sup>[26]</sup> In a similar way this is done in the article titled “They march by chanting anti-Albanian songs”, where the group is labeled as “young Macedonians”.<sup>[27]</sup>

The apriori victimization with the violation of the journalistic standards of fairness, accuracy and precision can be identified in Lajm in the text “100 Albanians fled

23 Rrihen së paku 3 shqiptarë nga protestuesit në Shkup

24 Protesta e nazistëve maqedonas, dhjetë të arrestuar

25 të rinjve maqedonas: „Ja çfarë e gjeti Samiun e shkretë“ 17.април

26 huliganë maqedonas: „Ju flet i rrahuri Sami Ramadani“ 17.април

27 të rinjsh maqedonas: „Marshojnë duke kënduar këngë antishqiptare“ 16. април



Radisani”<sup>[28]</sup>. The text is indicative of an a priori model of media framing of the *situation of Albanians* in Macedonia, but also by the fact that it constructs a comprehensive and a corrosive narrative only on the basis of the statement by the source which is not demonstrated as a credible one. The lead of the news published on April 17 is fully transferred here, i.e. the day after the protests of the group of fans<sup>[29]</sup>:

“Although it is not a war state, the Albanians from Radisani face the fate of refugees. Hundreds of Albanian, residents of this neighborhood, mostly, women, children and elderly people have fled their homes and sought refuge in other parts of Skopje, Vaid Saliu, a resident of the settlement said for Lajm. In his opinion, most of the Albanians have left Radisani, went to their families in Cair, Gazi Baba, Vizbegovo, Butel, etc. They had left because of the constant pressure from residents Macedonians and the reluctance of the police to prevent pressure. Valid Saliu alleged that the pressure is mainly made by Macedonians from the village of Ljubancit.”

First, the text constructs a “military landscape” of the location that is reported from – the discursive value of the expression “although it is not in a state of war” is just the opposite – to associate of war.

This effect is further on strengthened with the information that there is an exodus of refugees from the place of the event – information that is not supported with relevant evidence.

Third, and most important, this information is based on a statement of only one resident of Radisani. The text does not try to locate other sources of information and does not call any institution to support or deny the information. On the contrary, the entire text follows one line that is positioned to only one side. It simply transfers unprocessed and unchecked thesis. Fourth, the lead of the text constructs a generalizing discourse that creates a negatively stereotyping effect, such as, for example: “They have left due to the constant pressure by the residents Macedonians and the reluctance of the police to prevent the pressure”. The use of the construction “pressure by the residents Macedonians” is very indicative here and it suggests a collective pressure towards the ethnically Other. There are other contentious places in the text with statements from the same resident, which are potentially inflammatory: “If I didn’t have a gun, they would burn my house”.<sup>[30]</sup>

A similar strategy of reporting can be found in the article of Zurnal titled as “Protesters intimidate Albanians in Bitola”<sup>[31]</sup> which violates the journalistic standard for accurate reporting. In an article dedicated to protests the fans’ group “Ckembari” the journalist uses the following formulation: “The participants in the protest did not cause some damage, but it was found out that few Albanians living in this city felt fear.”<sup>[32]</sup> Although in the text below it is explained that the protesters tried to damage the museum of the Congress of (Albanian) alphabet, still the initial conclusion that Albanians in Bitola are afraid is not seriously supported and it is unclear on what basis it is derived. In that sense, this type of reporting creates fear and anxiety, especially among the Albanians in Bitola and

28 This analysis does not check the accuracy of the claim, but it analyzes the structure of sentences that construct it and especially the evidence provided in the text.

29 Edhe pse nuk ka gjendje lufte, shqiptarët e Radishanit po përjetojnë fatin e refugjatëve. Rreth njëqind banorë shqiptarë të kësaj lagje, kryesisht fëmijë, gra dhe pleq kanë lëshuar shtëpitë e tyre dhe janë strehuar në pjesë tjera të Shkupit, ka deklaruar për “Lajm” banori i kësaj lagje Vaid Saliu. Sipas tij, shumica e banorëve shqiptarë që kanë lëshuar Radishanin janë vendosur te familjarë të tyre në Çair, Gazi Babë, Vizbeg, Butel, e kështu me radhë. Shkak për ikjen e tyre është presioni vazhdueshëm nga banorët maqedonas dhe mosinteresimi i policisë për të penguar këtë presion. Vaid Saliu akuzon se presion ushtrojnë kryesisht maqedonasit nga fshati Lubancë.

30 Po të mos e kisha revolven do të ma kishin djegur shtëpinë.

31 Protestuesit frikësojnë shqiptarët e Manastirit.

32 Protestuesit nuk kishin shkakuar ndonjë dëm, por mësohet se shqiptarët e paktë që jetojnë në këtë qytet kishin ndjerë frikë.



also among the local population, without a solid basis for such a claim. This is reinforced at the end of the text by recalling the incidents of 2001, when homes of ethnic Albanians suffered in several acts of vandalism. This practically rounds up the picture of the event and reinforces the impression about the ethnic division as a basis of the events related to murder of five people.

### May 1 - 3 - detention of suspects

In the third chronological point - which came after the arrest of 20 suspected for connections with the case most violations of professional standards were identified – violation of the presumption of innocence of those arrested, bringing speculations based on imprecise sources, construction of corrosive narratives that stigmatize members of religious movements and ethnic groups, uncritical transfer of part of statements and information from institutions etc.. However, there were examples of professional reporting identified in this selected period.

As with most media, there are several violations of professional journalistic standards identified in the reporting of Dnevnik on the arrest of the suspects. Such an example is the text of May 2 titled as “Radical Islamists fired in Macedonia: Ministry of Interior to detain the perpetrators of the five-fold murder near Smilkovci”. Above all, there is a violation of the right to presumption of innocence, because even with the subtitle the detainees are designated as “perpetrators of the murder of five people.” Moreover, the text neither in the subtitle nor in the editorial does not set a distance and it uncritically carries the allegations that the detainees are also the offenders. Such a labeling relativises the further use of the syntagms “suspects” and weakens their importance, because the perception of the suspects as “perpetrators” is narratively set in advance. A continuation of this previously accepted identity of “perpetrators” is the framing of the narrative for a radical Islam. For the beginning, the title itself moves the importance, so the dead are replaced with “Macedonia” (“Radical Islamists fired in Macedonia”). Such a “blow over Macedonia” is reinforced with the use of the signifier “Easter” for the murders, which draws on a narrative for a religious conflict. In this way, the reporting is related to the corrosive narratives for religious opposition between Islam and Christianity. Behind the terms “Wahhabi” or “Islamists” almost exclusively the message of unconditional capacity for violence prevails, hence the belonging to these groups becomes a sufficient condition for its members to become killers. It follows the accompanying texts to this central article, which constitutes the image of a threat from the “radical Islam.” The first article is titled “Future actions of Al Qaeda discovered in a pornographic material”, which is not connected to the case in Macedonia by its contents, but it is probably released because of the facts in the narrative of Al Qaeda as an international terrorist organization in the mapping of the murder near Smilkovci. The other article is titled “Population of Wahhabism world: the radical Islam pits in Macedonia.” Thus, the reporting on the action to disclose the murder is placed in the broader context of the fight against international terrorism or dealing with its alleged domestic incarnation.

At the front page of the edition of Vecer on May 2 the text “The killers arrested” is published, which is another example of the identified violations. The title of the main page violates the standard for presumption of innocence and this is additionally done in

the header and the title of the text on the third page. The header of the inside says: “The monsters of Smilkovsko Lake caught”. This sentence locates the evil among the suspects although the court has yet to confirm that they are perpetrators of murder. The title of the internal text says: “Radical Islamists behind the five-fold murder!”. This syntagm is definitely “judges” who was behind the killing, although it is an official statement quoted. The negative aspect of the transfer of institutional discourse refers to the uncritical adoption of the *vocabulary and rhetoric* of the institution that publishes the information - especially the use of the terms “radical Islam” and “radical Islamism”.

The same edition of Vecer publishes a full text titled “The Balkans has 5,000 radical Islamists.” The discursive value of this framing can be identified elsewhere in the analysis, but it is important to note here that the photo of this text shows four people with headscarves over the faces and firearms in their hands. The photography reproduces the stereotype of the “mujahideen” and it is relevant here that it frames all events related to the murder with the narrative about security threat to the country and the region.

The text titled as “Radical Islamists carried out the massacre near Smilkovci: Ministry of Interior arrested 20 terrorists in the action ‘Monster’ (May 20) in *Nova Makedonija* constructs a similar narrative for the entire action and its suspects.

The text conveys information from the report of the security services after the arrest of 20 suspects. The news is published that the offenders are “radical Islamists,” but there are no details about the suspects, especially not for their ethnicity. In the text, at few places, the significance of the statements presented at a press conference is weakened by emphasizing that there are no sufficient details provided. It is arguable that, from a professional point of view, there is a violation of the presumption of innocence because the arrested are referred to as “terrorists” in the subtitle and not as terror suspects. In this way the frame about the ways in which a five-fold murder can be interpreted is strengthened. The label “radical Islamists” is uncritically used here, which fits in the *expected* picture of the events. The thesis for a *terrorist orientation* of suspects is not questioned at all, even rhetorically by creating a distance between the claim and the transfer of the claim in the text. In the introductory part of the text (which begins at the front page) it is stated that “... radical Islamists ... are arrested ... for involvement in the murder of five people that happened on Holy Thursday...”. Thus, the image of the tragic five-fold murder is summarized with the phrase coined by the media “Easter Massacre”, which frames the event entirely in the context of potential interreligious and not just inter-ethnic conflict.

As with the other newspapers, Vest also violated the standard for presumption of innocence by publishing the news of the arrest of suspects. It is made in the editorial text by sharing the information that the Ministry of Interior “found the killers.” The text is titled “Twenty arrested for the murder of five people near Smilkovsko Lake”, which itself does not suggest a definite blame. However, despite this, the text is placed in a frame which previously determines that the detainees are guilty. Moreover, as done in most media, this text highlights that the murder was done on “Holy Thursday”, which discursively reinforces the effect of the information that “perpetrators” are a group of “followers of the radical Islam.” Thus, the narrative is highlighted about the *Christianization of the murder of five people*, i.e. its placement in a possible conflict of inter-religious nature.

In the context of the narrative construction for the “radical Islamists” it is worth mentioning the three texts in *Nova Makedonija* from May 3. A picture of “radical Islam” is constructed in them, from three different perspectives. The first text is titled “Mol came across the Macedonian Al Qaeda: the police accused five people for terrorism.” Even in the title itself the group arrested is labeled as “Macedonian Al Qaeda”, thus bringing the murder near Smilkovci in relation to broader terrorist actions in the global terrorism network. The security threat arising from this narrative for the “radical Islam” is further reinforced with an opinion of an expert, who claims that the murder “is certainly done by a well functioning radical Islamist group.” Thus the presumption of innocence, contained in the subtitle, is significantly weakened.

The second text is implicit continuation of the first and it is titled “The state is capable to deal with uninvited guests: Does Macedonia know anything about who enters home?” The previous expanding of the associations of the group with “Al Qaeda” frames the article about the situation with the asylum in Macedonia in an interesting way. On conversely, the treatment of this topic about asylum seekers additionally reinforces the impression of *external* (despite internal) threat to the security in Macedonia. In the first case, starting with the murder near Smilkovci, the text frames the situation and the politics about asylum seekers as a potential security threat. The expert opinion presented in the text weakens the initial thesis, but the title and subtitle are strengthening it.

The title, probably starting from the last events, generalizes the “uninvited guests” to all asylum seekers and the subtitle maps them as a security threat, referring to fear of the unknown. In this sense, Macedonia has been described as a country where the situation is out of control and it cannot follow what is going on at home. Such representation of asylum seekers as a threat to the security contains a component of a xenophobic opinion, with events like the murder near Smilkovci serving to confirm the fear of foreigners in general.

The framing of the second text that *strikes* back to the previous one reinforces the claim that there is an external threat to security, but at the same time there is an assurance that the state is able to deal with that threat through a control over who enters the country. However, what this article does is a connection of the narrative “radical Islam” constructed in the previous texts with an extensive analysis in the same edition preceded by the two texts, and is focused at “(the) Islamic terrorists (who) cruise through the Balkans”. Thus, through the story of the asylum seekers an interpretation is constructed for the *import* of terrorism through the Balkans from other remote areas.

The third article is titled “Six thousand Islamic terrorists roamed the Balkans: the green transversal is still active in the region.” In this comprehensive analysis, drawing on the expert panel held in Skopje before the incidents and by presenting illustrations of Belgrade’s “Politika”, as well as opinions from experts, an overview is made of the development of “Islamic terrorism” in the Balkans throughout the last three decades. In the context of Macedonia, the article claims that “Macedonia is the base of al-Qaeda”, which is placed as a title of one of the sections in the text. However, an expert’s interpretation is quoted in the section that discusses the career of Ajman (later referred to as Mohammed) al-Zawahiri (who is claimed to be a possible successor to Osama bin Laden). The text itself practically denies the claim in the title because it says that attempts to establish such a base were hampered by the security services. Referring to the

claim for the existence of a Balkan network of “Islamic terrorists” and the narrative for a “green transversal” as linking the Muslim territories in the region, this text serves as a framework for interpretation of the murder near Smilkovsko Lake, with the act previously determined as a terrorist one, and suspects as part of a wider network of Balkan terrorists passing through the region.

It is also worth mentioning that on two occasions the editorials in *Nova Makedonija* became a counterweight of part of the problematic practice in the informative parts of its editions. Thus, the editorial of May 3 titled “Murderers and all others” is important, because in one part it serves to weaken the narrative of “radical Islamists” which quickly integrated into the media discourse, and is transmitted in previous text of *Nova Makedonija*. In one part of the text the author disputes the notion, deconstructing its seemingly religious component, by linking the highlighted with other types of terrorist groups without necessary religious notion. In that sense, the title itself serves for a discursive mapping, which does not assume belonging to broader groups, but categorizes them on the basis of participation or non-participation in the act of murder of five people. A second similar example is the editorial of 4 May titled “Islamism and Smilkovci”. The author of this editorial opinion calls into question the use of “radical Islamists” and the accompanying strategy to use the term “Islamism”. By defining it as a set of political movements, which includes both peaceful and violent groups, the validity of its use is challenged to mark some small part of the movement. At the same time, by urging the need to assume the innocence of suspects, the author calls for adherence to official data, i.e. that there are no “Islamic radicals” in organized form until probably proven otherwise. Moreover, the author challenges the association with al-Qaeda, which according to him is used as a stereotype to indicate the terrorist act conducted.

In the reporting of the daily Fokus examples are evident that violate the professional standards of sources accuracy, which calls into question the truthfulness of information presented. The manner of transferring and marking the sources is most of all problematic. This practice may have security implications, because the information presented that is based on imprecise and unmarked sources often suggests that there is “chaos in the country.” By combining it with the security aspect in the moment and the numerous speculative information contaminating the general media space, it could have the effect of insecurity and fear among citizens. Several texts that suggest the state is disorganized refer to *anonymous sources of the services* while they are not marked in a way that their credibility would be unquestioned.

One such example is the text “Does Mijalkov isolate services from the investigation of the murder near Smilkovci?” - published on April 30/May 1. The title is set in the interrogative form, which reveals a legitimate journalistic strategy - to raise an issue of a problem that the reporter has a *reasonable suspicion* about, and the text must demonstrate *reasonableness of the suspicion* with relatively strong indications that justify the issue. However, this text adopts a different strategy in its continuation – the interrogative is replaced with an affirmative position and it relies on an ambiguous source, which is identified as “a group of employees in the security services”, “the source” or “the authors of the letter.” The text does not specify the source closely, nor demonstrates a credibility of the “group of employees” so that it may bring information that would be



considered relevant in the investigation of Smilkovci case. Still the positions of “the authors of the letter,” to the newsroom are taken as *correct* and not treated as problematic, which is suggested in the affirmative header that says “Chaos in the security forces.” The text has two complementary claims – the first one supported by a letter of “a group of employees in the security services” suggests “isolation of the Administration for Security and Counter Intelligence from other segments of the security system – the military intelligence at the Ministry of Defense, the G2 in the Army of the Republic of Macedonia and the Intelligence Agency.” There is a problem in this section with the origin of the information, which is not demonstrated to be provided by a relevant and credible source. The other claim, supported by the same source, but also with a statement by the “Chief of staff of the Serbian BIA” who “recently stated for a Macedonian media that nobody contacted them with an inquiry for information” suggests that the Macedonian authorities are isolated from the services in the region. The additional argument given in the second statement - *a statement of foreign intelligence service* - is problematic, because of the adverb used *recently*, which suggests that the information is not fresh – so that when the organization has *recently* made such a statement does not mean that by the time when this article is published there was no request by the Macedonian authorities to cooperate with them on this issue. This article in the newspaper is also not signed by a particular author, as opposed to the overall practice of the media to designate the identity of the author or with a full name or initials. The texts based on sources whose identity must be protected due to some particular reason must in some way justify the hiding of identity, but also provide additional indicators that the claim is true or reasonable. That is the way for the media to protect against potential manipulation.

It is notable that in a series of articles in Fokus after the arrest of the suspects there is a dominant practice of adherence to the principle of presumption of innocence, since the terms such as “suspected for the murder of five people”, “group of arrested”, “suspected to be associated with the murder of five people” are used<sup>[33]</sup>. Also, the faces of those who are detained are hidden, with an exception of those who are on the run.<sup>[34]</sup>

Noticeable are the examples of professional reporting on this event in Fokus. These texts, in the form of feature – stories for the suspects and their families open a range of information that readers who only read newspapers in Macedonian language would not have access to. Such are, for example, the texts “I have not seen nor Afghanistan, nor Pakistan, nor Smilkovsko Lake” (May 3) and “My brother is not a killer, nor is religious” (May 2). A more detailed discourse analysis of these texts reveals a strategy that *gives a voice* to the freed, and the families of part of the people who are arrested. It opens a new dimension of the events and redefines the relationship of the readers audience towards the detainees. If the dominant media discourse produces the arrested as “guilty”, “killers” and the like in advance, the text “I have not seen nor Afghanistan, nor Pakistan, nor Smilkovsko Lake” through the story of one of those arrested, and then released, indicates that not everything so simple. The narrative approach in which the author narrates in the first person plural makes a picture of intimacy and family peace. For example, the

33 These are the following articles: „Half of the detainees released“, „I have not seen neither Afghanistan, nor Pakistan, nor the Smilkovsko Lake“, „My brother is not a killer and he is not religious as well“.

34 However, opposite to this clear practice, in the article „Mol: We have captured the killers“, the newsroom adopts the stance which judges in advance that the detained are guilty, beside the quotes from the Ministry of Interior.

sentence “Once we were told to take off the shoes, we were received in the room where the uncles of Mervin were already gathered, who had come to see him.” The discursive effect of this structure and the lexical choice do not only function to locate the narrator in the space, but also to convey a message that this is an environment that respects the family (“uncles are here to support”), where tradition is respected (“we were asked to take off our shoes”), in which guests are respected (“received us in the room”). This is reinforced by the statement of Mervin, who said himself he had “three small children and may assume how it is to have a child lost.” The discursive effect of this text is that it gives a resistance to the strategy to stigmatize the arrested as *guilty* immediately.

On May 3, there are several articles recorded in Dnevnik where positive examples of reporting prevail. Thus, in this issue Dnevnik provides a space for the voice of the suspects. Therefore, the article “Aracinovo residents do not believe there was a radical group” leaves a room for relatives of suspects and there is an appearance of a narrative that weakens the institutional position for the “radical Islamists.”

Unlike most newspapers in Macedonian language that accept the narrative of a “radical Islam” and violate the principle of presumption of innocence, the Albanian language media mainly adopt the opposite strategy. The text in Lajm of May 2 is titled as “Jankulovska – the killing at Smilkovci is conducted by Islamic radicals.” The newspaper distances from the sentence by saying that this is a quote, but it still transfers the statement. There is a greater distance in Koha which uses the word *alleged* in the title: “The killers are allegedly radical Islamists.”

But Koha further makes an a priori victimization with emphasis on the ethnicity of those detained, and with the emphasis on their age and gender. The subtitle of the news of May 2 says “20 Albanians were arrested, including pensioners and a 60-year-old woman, in an action that was carried out Monday morning by the police special forces in Macedonia”.

From this subtitle, as well as from parts of the text, it can be concluded that the newspaper chose a strategy of emphasizing the ethnicity of the dead, which makes an association that the arrests of *Albanians* were ethnically motivated, which is a priori reasoning. This is reinforced by the emphasis that women and seniors are among those arrested - a feature that tries to leave the effect of a *priori proof of innocence* of suspects.

This a priori position exists through the entire text, but most illustrative is the snippet titled as “Smilkovci and Rastak” that explicitly frames the event in advance with the arrest of suspects in an episode which involved two former ministers of interior – Ljube Boskovski and Hari Kostov. The text says<sup>[35]</sup>: “The police observed the persons suspected of links to al Qaeda and the ethnic Albanian rebels to prevent them to launch attacks against the British, American and German Embassy ...”; Boskovski said in an attempt to win sympathy of the international community. However, more than two years later, the successor of Boskovski, Hari Kostov, accused that the Pakistanis were actually immigrants, and not terrorists, he alleged that the unit ‘Lions’ made a crime to claim to be fighting against Islamic terrorism in the country.” This text directly contextualizes the ar-

35 “Policia kishte vëzhguar njerëzit, që dyshoheshin për lidhje me Al Qaeda dhe rebelët etnikë shqiptarë, për t’i parandaluar ata nga kryerja e sulmeve kundër Ambasadave Britanike, Amerikane dhe Gjermane...”, pati thënë Boshkovski, duke u munduar të fitonte simpatinë e ndërkombëtareve. Megjithatë, më shumë se dy vite më vonë, pasardhësi i Boshkovskit, Hari Kostov, para deputetëve në Parlament akuzoi se në fakt, pakistanezët ishin emigrantë dhe jo terroristë, ndërkaq që akuzoi se njëjiti “Luanët”, kishte kryer krimin vetëm për të pretenduar se po luftojnë terrorizmin islamik në vend”.



rest in Smilkovci with the event near Rastanski Lozja in 2002, when five foreign nationals were killed, and the event was framed by the official institutions as a *struggle against radical Islamism*. Thus the institution has followed up its discourse and framing of the conflict in 2001 with the global events - primarily the destruction of the towers of the World Trade Center in New York. But then, the next Minister of Interior suggested that the event is set and the victims are innocent, to demonstrate unity with the West. The framing of this event suggests the same for the arrest as well – that the framing of those arrested as “Islamic radicals” is actually a play by the Ministry to demonstrate unity with the West in order to achieve political goals.

In the reporting of Zurnal a relatively consistent adherence to the principle of presumption of innocence is noticed. In several central texts which report on the activities of the Mol the detainees are designated as “suspects”, hence the media set a distance from the institutional narrative.

#### May 4 – protests against the Mol action

The last point in the analysis of print media refers to the protest held on May 4, in response to the action of the Ministry of Interior, to the use of the term “radical Islam” as an indication of the possible perpetrators of the murder and the manner of proceedings against some of the detainees.

In part of the texts there are narrative constructions of generalization recorded. For example, in the text of Dnevnik of May 5, titled “The detainees were supported with the cries of ‘Allah is great’: protest of the ethnic Albanians” the context of the protest is expanded to the entire ethnic group.

Thus, the subtitle of the text frames the protest in advance as specifically Albanian and maps the participants at the protest as unique (i.e. full) markers for the whole group. Furthermore, the title selects one of the slogans at the protest (Allah is great) as an unifier of the messages and, additionally, marks exactly that message in support of the detainees. The text itself does not appear to explain why that message prevails as a marker of the support in the conclusion (or title) of the text. Despite the existence of other messages, the choice of this one constructs the protest in the article as only Islamic, neglecting its other dimensions. Continuation of this is the transfer of the T-shirt slogan of one or few participants (Islam wins) as the slogan of the protest, which multiplies a meaning that may be marginal to the protest. Utrinski vesnik published information about the protests at the front page, where the title is “Already seen. The search for the killers provoked protests”. This title is not supported with a text at the front page, but there is a picture with a group of young demonstrators that is euphorically chanting and waving a green and a black flag with Arabic inscription. The photograph suggests framing of the event in the picture that “escalated” from the announcement of the arrest of suspects, which said that they are followers of “radical Islam.” But the textual information about the protest seems to make a different rhetorical strategy of the photography at the front page. The text is a classic report of the event that captures the heterogeneous structure of the group, emphasizing facts for the context and conveying chanting that do not frame the event in just one frame, but reflect its many meanings: “With state symbols of Albania and the characteristic green Islamic flags, the group chanted “UCK”, “Albanians



are not terrorists’, ‘We want justice’, they insulted the Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski and DUI leader Ali Ahmeti and the police officers guarding the protesters were called “murderers, murderers.” A similar strategy is adopted by Fokus, with the difference that the green and black flag were placed on a less visible position in the cover photo.

This event in Vest and in Nova Makedonija is, on the contrary, poorly painted by transmitting only the basic information of the protests. The focus in the reporting is whether there were incidents or not, with the texts not penetrating deeper into the strategies of identifying and selecting the slogans of the protest, as it is done in other media, in order to contextualize the motives for its organizing. This makes to avoid possible ethnic and religious perspective of the event.

On the other hand, Vecer in the text of May 5 “Unprecedented: there are protests only here against the police that arrests for the five-fold murder!” shows a clear newsroom’s tendency for an entire negative framing of the group’s protest. The photograph at the front page shows a man with a beard and a specific hat on his head, as showing a forefinger with a raised hand. In the background the Albanian flag can be seen. Within the main text at the third page there is a photograph of a group of demonstrators that hold the green flag that has been a subject of analyses and speculations the previous day – the photographs reproduce the stereotypical narrative for the “radical Islamist.” The selection of these and not some other messages to come to the forefront in the reporting reveals a strategy of monolitization of the protest, which was heterogeneous by its nature. The head of the text reinforces this attitude because it says that a group of young people protests against the arrest of suspects, “disguised under the slogan ‘Stop the show trials.’” This section of the text appoints the arrested as “suspected” and it is a good practice. However the information that they are “disguised under the slogan ‘Stop the show trials.’” maps the protesters as a crowd that does not tell the real reason for the revolt and it makes this without any serious argument or reasonable suspicion.

In unity with the institutional discourse, rather than impartial reporting about the protest, the text reinforces nonverbal frames set in photographs with the following sentence: “[...] it is an open secret that the mosque (Jaja Pasha mosque), and a few others in Skopje, are controlled by radical currents. The image for those attending who become more aggressive “Islamic radicals” is reproduced in this way without giving information that prove this assertion, just by stating the term “open secret”.

The reporting of Zurnal for the protests of May 4 is specific in that the central thread in the article is the claim that there were no incidents or they were small, as well as the repeated marking of the protests as Albanian.<sup>[36]</sup> This generalization of the protests with the editorial “Albanian protesters”<sup>[37]</sup> centralizes the narrative of the story, thus the protest is mapped and it is suggested as a protest of all Albanians. It is further strengthened with an accompanying photo, where a group of people with Albanian flags is noticed.<sup>[38]</sup> This makes the transfer of meanings, so the motives of the participants of the protest are interpreted as significant for the entire ethnic group.

Beyond the reporting on the protest, Lajm published an interview with the political analyst Kim Mehmeti, which can be taken as an example of how this genre allows the

36 Protests finished, no incidents (Përfundon protesta, asnjë incident)

37 Protestuesit shqiptarë

38 In accordance with the review of the analysis this is probably an archival photo that is not marked.



media to adopt and produce a corrosive discourse, with the author of the interview did not questioning the way the interlocutor frames the events related to the arrests and did not attempt to construct a counter-discourse of the ‘implied Other’. The entire interview takes an emphasized ethnocentric and an ethno-specific position which juxtaposes “Albanians” who are generalized here and stereotyped as victims and the “State”, which is portrayed as an *usurper*, but only towards the “Albanians” and not the others, thus implicitly constructing a discourse of the state which is an instrument of the ethnic Other (dominant) for usurpation of *Us Albanians in general*<sup>[39]</sup> (“You have got the impression that this police has only one purpose: to protect the state from the Albanians”). This is the discursive impression of the first response by the interviewee: “According to the police actions it turns out that all Albanians - except the Albanian representatives in the Government - are potential criminals and it depend only of one point when we will become part of some police plan”.<sup>[40]</sup> But this in itself is not deniable from a journalistic aspect - because it is the attitude of the interviewee. However, it is extremely problematic in terms of the professional standards there is an absence of challenging the interviewee (a basic rule for the genre interview), especially if it spreads discourses that negatively stereotype or make a background for an interethnic intolerance. Instead, there is a question in the interview that only confirms and does not challenge the ethno-particular thesis of the interviewee: “During the Monster action, the Macedonian authorities arrested dozens of Albanians, including women, elders, farmers and pensioners. How do you see the arrests?”<sup>[41]</sup>

The interview has many points that reproduce stereotypes and ethnocentric positions for the *Albanians and Macedonians*. But particularly indicative is the position of a priori rejection of the possibility, even only as an opportunity, to accept that members of “Our Group” can do harm equally as the members of “Their group”. This is characteristic of all nationalist discourses, including the Macedonian and Albanian. The journalist that conducts an interview which serves such a thesis must challenge and deconstruct the interlocutor; otherwise he participates in the creation of corrosive discursive construction by adopting it into the text.

39 Ke përshlypjen se kjo polici ka vetëm një qëllim: ta mbrojë shtetin nga shqiptarët.

40 “Sipas veprimeve të policisë del se të gjithë shqiptarët - përpos qeveritarëve shqiptarë – jemi kriminelë potencialë dhe varet vetëm nga momenti kur do jemi të përshatshëm për ndonjë ‘skemë policore’”, thotë Mehmeti.

41 LAJM: Gjatë operacionit “Monstra” autoritetet maqedonase arrestuan dhjetëra shqiptarë, në mesin e të cilëve edhe gra, pleq, bujq e pensionistë...Si i shihni Ju këto arrestime?

## 2. TELEVISION STATIONS

The qualitative analysis included eight television stations. Out of the TV stations six publish contents in Macedonian language (Macedonian Television – first programme service, Sitel, Kanal 5, Alfa, Telma, Alsat M – Macedonian language) and two publish contents in Albanian language (Macedonian Television – programme in Albanian language, Alsat M – Programme in Albanian language).

### General conclusions on the professional standards and the discursive practice

#### April 13 -15 (the murder and the protests)

- In reporting about the murder there was no widespread practice of ethnic framing of the event observed. TV stations generally refrained from ethnic identification of victims and avoided explicit construction of guilt in the *ethnic Other*. However, discursive framing of TV coverage for certain media implicitly indicated the possible ethnicity of perpetrators.
- However, the discursive framing of the TV news items in certain media implicitly indicated to the possible ethnicity of perpetrators.
- Televisions, in general, played a positive role in calming tensions and in the reduction of potentially negative effects of the event on the already fragile inter-ethnic relations and, without exception, they shared calls to calm down and refrain from prejudices about the event.
- In separate televisions an uncritical transmission of inflammatory statements of citizens were transferred which linked the murder with previous incidents and interethnic tensions. This has made a narrative “harmonization” of various real events, which prompted the framing of the murder in an interethnic perspective.
- In reporting on the reactions of citizens of Radishani, the blockades near the roundabout and the local incidents, the television stations were prominently positioned on the “Macedonian” and the “Albanian” side. This was most obvious in the single-sided use of sources of information, which is a serious violation of the standards for a comprehensive and balanced reporting.
- The news in Macedonian and Albanian language on MTV reported on these events from an entirely different angle. While MTV 1 minimized the blockades and almost completely went silent about the attacks on people and property, MTV2 did not report at all about the reactions and protests by locals. The absence of a single editorial policy contributes to a creation of a completely conflicting stories in MTV’s news, which seriously undermines its role of a leading media which should promote cohesion in society.

#### April 16 - 19 (protests and anger because of the murder)

- In the reporting for this event there has been less sensitivity to inter-ethnic and interreligious aspects identified, compared to the reporting for the murder itself. Some media used the ethnic identification of social actors, thus positioning the protests in a clear interethnic context.

- The TV stations dominantly analyzed the importance of this event through the ethnic prism, by providing a different place for it at the daily agenda and by emphasizing different aspects of the real events.
- In regard to the professional principles, it is particularly problematic that in this time point there were statements of citizens with inflammatory tone covered, even with an explicit hate speech that could have serious consequences to the interethnic relations.
- There were examples of speculative placement of information related to the escape of the potential perpetrators of the murder.
- Although rarely, there were positive examples of professional reporting identified, which tried to rise above ethnic or religious boundaries to include more angles in the reporting

### **May 1 - 3 (detention of suspects)**

- The most serious problem in television reporting of these events was the violation of presumption of innocence. In the reporting of the Mol action, the media seriously violated professional standards by publishing footage or photographs of several people who were detained, forgetting their right to a fair trial and the protection of privacy.
- Another serious problem in the reporting at this point was the overemphasized framing of this event in the narrative of “radical Islam” and “security threat to Macedonia” of Islamic fundamentalism and global terrorism. With such a framing the Islam as a religion was a priori associated with radical structures and global terrorism.

### **May 4 (protests against the Mol action)**

- In most television stations in Macedonian the narrative of “radical Islam” escalated, which frames the protests in sensitive interreligious context, developments in the region and the global threat of terrorism and radical structures.
- In this reporting also television newsrooms were divided along ethnic lines. Some of them tried to present the protests as illegitimate and threatening to the security of the state, others gave them a full legitimacy, emphasizing completely different aspects and motivations for their organizing.

## **Analysis of particular texts**

### **April 13 - 15 - the murder and the protests**

In the reporting for this event there were three narrative lines identified: (1) the murder of five people, (2) the reactions of local residents, including blockades of the roundabout, and (3) the reactions of political actors and appeals for calmness. This structure of the news was present in almost all analyzed televisions stations.

The analysis of the reporting on the murder showed that most of the media behaved in accordance with professional standards of reporting in such situations. The ethnicity of the killed was not mentioned, only the place of their origin: “Four boys and the fisherman

from Cresevo" (Alpha), "four boys and adult man" (Sitel), "the graduates from Radisani" (Kanal 5), etc. At the same time, all televisions used details of the investigation, carefully separating rumors from the information provided by official sources up to that moment.

The second narrative line in the reporting was the reaction of fellow citizens and the families of the victims. The reporting of Telma TV diverges from this line, with an uncritical coverage of inflammatory statements of citizens that could influence the creation of interethnic tensions. Some of the statements transferred referred to the connection of the murder with the fights on buses or with the interethnic tensions in that part of town in general. In this way there is a narrative connection of the events, which does not mean that they are realistically related. The next frame inserted through the transmission of these statements is the one for the "possible retaliation", especially with the statement in which the five-fold murder is interpreted as a kind of revenge for an incident in Gostivar. This statement reinforces the interpretation that the murder of five people is mapped into a spiral of ethnic-based violence. A different way of framing comes from the statement: "How many of our young children should be sacrificed?". This statement, besides being identified in Telma, is also found in a flash cadre in Kanal 5. The use of the pronoun "our" has undoubtedly ethnic context, arising from the content of other statements where the divide refers to the Macedonians and Albanians as groups. Hence, in this round of framing, the killed near Smilkovsko Lake are presented as Macedonian victims of interethnic tensions, which reinforces the image of a murder as a consequence of interethnic conflict.

The other televisions covered reactions of citizens more carefully and filtered the stereotyping statements of individuals that could have negatively affected the interethnic and interreligious relations in the country. Alsat M that is the only TV that referred to the potential danger of such reporting. Although all televisions analyzed shared the calls of institutions and political actors to stop with speculations, Alsat M contextualized these calls as a result of the media coverage in which the blame for the killings was located in (the) ethnic Albanians.

In the reporting on the blockade, some media were clearly positioned on the "Macedonian" and part of them on the "Albanian" side. This observation stems from the way of consulting sources of information. Most of the Macedonian language media found themselves only among the protesters who blocked roads and expressed their anger over the killing - the largest number of statements were taken from those people. The image of the incidents presenting homes and shops of local residents of other ethnic backgrounds attacked was either suppressed or absent. Part of the television stations only consulted the Mayor of Butel Petre Latinovski as a politician from the field. On the other hand, in the media in Albanian language there were no statements often of people from Radisani, but there were many statements and testimonials of people who were afraid of attacks on them and their property. Baki Alimi - Advisor in Butel and resident of Ljuboten was consulted as a local politician on the field. This shows that the principles of ethical journalism are not respected, which require to give a comprehensive picture, with multiple sources of information from different ethnic backgrounds used.

In this context, the manner of reporting in the news on MTV in Macedonian and Albanian should be emphasized. Both newsrooms of the public service news began the



current affairs programmes with news about the murder, by giving information about the location and the time of the murder, the beginning of the investigation, the first reactions etc. But in the follow up reporting on the protests of locals there were different ways of framing identified, both from a rhetorical aspect and in terms of the importance given to these events in the news. The news in Macedonian language informed in one sentence only that a group of residents in the neighborhood of Radisani and the village of Cresevo blocked part of the Skopje roundabout passing through this settlement. The speech of the journalist does not leave an impression that something problematic occurred. The footages that go in the background do not have dynamics that could be seen in other televisions in Macedonian language, neither statements were taken from people who stand near the barricades. On the other hand, the news in Albanian applied a completely different approach in reporting of this event. The roadblocks were drawn in the main cue of the news, which is not the case with the news in Macedonian language. One of the main news items (3 min. and 7 sec.) contains a full range of information, including the following: “Upon information for the murder, Radisani residents blocked the road - as a result, houses and cars of residents Albanians suffered”. Furthermore, the news item states that “...residents of Ljuboten that previously travelled to Skopje were stopped on the way back.” In addition, the news was reporting about other dramatic incidents: “Some youth with stones attacked the houses of Albanians ... one resident (Albanian) from Radisani, who asked not to be named, said his house was stoned.” The testimony of a resident was published as saying: “We are isolated in the house with the family - my windows were stoned.” This information was apparently left out in the news in Macedonian language.

The third narrative line in the reporting on April 13 was the transfer of institutional calls for calmness and refrain from prejudices about the event. The appeals of the institutions, political parties and representatives of the international community were published by all televisions, without exception.

In this sense, televisions were trying to meet the risks of framing the murder in an interethnic context that emerged through some media. Thus, it can be said that televisions, in general, played a positive role in calming of tensions and reducing the potentially negative effects of the event on the already fragile interethnic relations.

### **April 16 – 19- protests and anger after the murder**

At this point the analysis reveals a different journalistic practice. There was less sensitivity observed to ethnic and religious aspects, using of ethnic identification of social actors, speculative reporting and framing of the events in stereotyping narratives. Most symptomatic for this period is the way televisions create public agenda, i.e. the different meaning given to these events in the news. This statement can be illustrated by comparing a few of the major news stories of Sitel and Alsat M in Macedonian language.

Alsat M began the news with the information that several hundred people protested outside the Government, the Parliament and the streets of Skopje. In the general cue it was said: “Violent protests in front of the Government against the murder of five Macedonians near Smilkovsko Lake. Albanians are charged. Special police forces intervened”. In addition to the entire main news item, there was the following content under the foot-

age: “Protests over the murder. Albanians charged”. The choice of words that communicated this information and announced the main topic in the news, clearly, transfers and overstates the ethno-nationalistic discourse that was produced by the group of protesters. The terms “the killing of five Macedonians” and “Albanians accused” created a strong impression of an offense to an ethnic group and a need for revenge against another. Furthermore, the focus in the announcement is placed to the following “The police used force to disperse protesters who tried to head to the Bit Pazar to face the Albanians [...]”

It should be noted that the information that the crowd intended “to face with the Albanians” produces a social effect here that puts all Albanians under the threat of the implied Macedonians: The Albanians in this case is comprised of a noun with a definite article that has a generalized meaning and it generates this ethnic group into a monolithic object of threat. Furthermore, the footages and the tone that goes in background of the reporter’s speech are recklessly used. The chanting of protesters can be explicitly heard at some places, which is offensive on ethnic line – the media still publishes the offensive chanting, thus participating in the offense spread by the group. Moreover, it is emphasized repeatedly that it is a “violent group”, “aggressive group,” which is supported by a visual argumentation - part of protesters were filmed as ruining the protective fence and throwing objects at police. The reporter notes that it is a group of “about a thousand protesters.”

The next news item in Alsat M talks about the police investigation and in this framework the reporter announces that the MoI rejects the information in some Serbian media for the alleged evidence in the investigation as speculations, but it repeats the contents of speculations. By echoing disputed information the media serves as a platform for further expansion, regardless of the fact that it marks them as speculations.

The news, then, make a follow up to the incidents that occurred the previous night, when unknown persons burned, as they say, “shop of a local Albanian” in Radisani. The news item begins with elements of inclusive reporting as it shows two characters, one of which is Macedonian, and another man whose shop is said to have been burned, an Albanian. Both of them say there is a co-existence in the neighborhood and incidents are made by individuals who are “vicious people” and “hooligans”. The man whose shop was burned testifies that they “wanted to ignite the shop, spilled it with gasoline and left.” This is a case of imprecise reporting.

However, something that may have biggest implications on ethnic relations is the statement of a local resident who says that a resident of Radisani “evacuated the family yesterday after eight Macedonians entered his backyard and tried to set the house to fire.” The statement of the man who says he was attacked is fully covered: “We do not have small, we have large incidents. I caught eight Macedonians in my backyard, all neighbors were beginning me to let them go, which I did, but then they went down there and set fire to a shop owned by an Albanian”. Furthermore, the article states that an incident is prevented among residents of Radisani – Macedonians from Radisani and Albanian residents of Butel.

One of the residents of said to Alsat M: “If it was not the police, we would become rubble; they thought we were not ready, but they wanted to attack, someone is stirring to cause accidents, we have no connection with what happened near the lake”. It is par-



ticularly problematic here in terms of professional principles is the inflammatory tone of the statements transferred, one of which even contains an explicit hate speech. Another controversial aspect is the emphasized framing of the event in the context of the inter-ethnic tensions. Namely, the two sources in this news item, the first one explicitly and the second one implicitly, map the *Macedonians* as usurpers and aggressors, and *Albanians* are the ones who defend themselves from them. That is the clear implication of such construction: “They thought we were not ready” and “I caught eight Macedonians in my yard [...] I was thinking of killing them.” Something similar happened in the next news item of Alsat M, which reports that residents of Dracevo blocked the road for the Albanian residents of Studenicani.

If we make a contrast between the narrative in the news of Alsat M with the one of Sitel, the same day (April 16), we get a picture which is different in many aspects. In the main cue of the news in Sitel it is not published that there were demonstrations in the center of Skopje that were aggressive at times. The only information is the announcement that the car was found connected to the murder. The order of the news reveals an interesting set up of the media agenda. The news did not start with the protests, which at the time of the news programme broadcast have already been completed, but with the story of the “Sun of Vergina which appeared on an Easter egg.” The statements in the article say that it is the “miracle of God” and the “egg was crying”. The choice of this news item as the first one in the current affairs programme, on a day when a serious event occurs associated with interethnic relations, serves as the replacement of social reality in the narrative of *God’s providence*. The information for the “miracle” in this case should create a narrative for a *supreme environment*, which is an extension of the narratives constructed a few days earlier with the “miracle” of “St. Dimitrija”. The aggressive protests are deleted from the events of the day in the news – their meaning is decreased, while the empty space on the agenda is filled with religious discourse. Right after that a news item is broadcasted on the murder of ethnic Macedonian in Australia, then the news item on a murder in Kocani and then an item is released about the car that was found and the calls by foreign political actors for defusing of the situation. This is followed with reactions by the national political actors. Seventh in the row of news is the news item for the peaceful protest of the cheering group “Gemidzii” in Veles and finally, the eighth is the protest in Skopje. What in the other media is the first article in Sitel is the eighth one. This shows the reporting strategy of the media in which the event should be discursively *buried*.

The analysis of the two last news items reveals an interesting reporting and discursive strategy. The emphasis in the news item is on the “calmness”, “civilized behavior” during the event of the cheering group “Gemidzii”, and at the gathering in which a group of citizens light candles for the dead. The article that follows the Veles gathering said: “Unlike adult fans in Veles, the fans of all clubs and sports in Skopje, children under 18 years, caused an incident, which lasted about ten minutes in the center of Skopje, late in the afternoon.” It is noticeable here that there is a comparison between the *adults* who are attributed reasonable behavior and calmness, while the *minors* are carriers of chaos. At the same time, *immaturity* is a reflection of unpredicted behavior and decreased responsibility when it comes to incidents. The emphasis placed on “all clubs and sports”



re-frames the event from other events in which the specific fan group was involved - the information about fans of different clubs and sports is repeated twice in the extended news. However, the information that the incident lasted 10 minutes and 200-300 protesters took part into it has important implications on the manner of reporting. This emphasis on the small number of participants in the group and the brevity of the incidents, as well as the place for the news item in the programme, has the function of reducing the importance of this event. As a reminder, Alsat M provided a different dimension of this event, by announcing that it is a group of 1,000 protesters.

The information on Alfa TV for the event can be pointed out as an example of professional reporting. The cue of the news item separates two moments about the protests, which is an important distinction, and which is not explicitly made by any other TV. The cue says that “while relatives of those killed gather tonight to pray at the Church of St.Clement of Ohrid, and a large group of young people violently protest in the center of the city despite the efforts of the police to calm them.” The reporter explains in live that hundreds of people, mostly friends and relatives of those killed, were part of a larger group of demonstrators, but when they saw that “incidents by people they do not know” started they left. This is followed by a news item reporting on the protests that became violent which at the time of reporting were going on in front of the Assembly. This way of reporting, first of all, identifies two distinct movements - a peaceful one and a violent one. The reporting is set in a way that it does not withhold information, yet it does not participate in spreading of intolerance. An important point is the emphasis on the information for the group of people that are away of the group of violent protesters – with this the media sends a message for avoidance of violence, isolation of anger and adherence to a culture of tolerance and patience which is located among hundreds of people gathered outside the Church.

Interestingly, immediately after Alfa reported this, there is a news item that talks about the investigation of the vehicle found, while the journalist in her stand up says: “If it is assumed that after the murder the killers fled to Kosovo, then this interchange which leads from the village of Cresovo to the murder scene is most likely the route of perpetrators.” The journalist tries to reconstruct the escape, but she constructs a story in which Kosovo is produced as a source of threat i.e. a refuge for the perpetrators. Based on the assumption which is not supported by any argument except for an implicit speculation of foreign media, the journalist assumes that the killers fled to Kosovo. This sentence fits into the narrative of Kosovo as a source of instability for Macedonia.

### May 1 – 3 detention of suspects

The most common and most serious violation of professional principles in the reporting in this segment was the disobeying of presumption of innocence of the suspects. Most of the TV stations have covered the statement that the perpetrators are caught, as an indisputable fact, without being careful about the wording of the reporting and by publishing the photographs entirely and the full names of most of the detainees. For example, according to Sitel and MTV<sup>[42]</sup>, Mol “caught the offenders”, and according to Kanal 5 “in the action ‘Monster’ the monsters from Smilkovsko Lake fell down”. In this

42 Both in the news in Macedonian and news in Albanian language



way the detainees were previously presented as perpetrators without the right to a fair trial in which their guilt would be proved. A television that has made an exception of this type reporting was Alsat M, which used the term “suspected” rather than “offenders”. This refers to the news in Albanian and news in Macedonian language.

Combined with the narrative produced on the “radical Islam”, the premature condemnation of suspects, which was taken and presented in a large part of the media coverage, produced negative effects on interethnic relations, which a few days later, with the protests organized on May 4, got wider inter-religious dimension. The problem was that television as well as the other media often conveyed statements related to the “Monster” uncritically, without even trying to contextualize them, to challenge them or set a distance. Relying on the statement that the suspects are members of “radical Islam”, the Macedonian language television stations reinforced the story of the murder by almost exclusively marking it as an “Easter”, mostly in the variant “Easter massacre”. Although the statement of the Minister Jankulovska was covered that “radical Islamists” are equally dangerous for Muslims and Christians, in describing the murder as “Easter” or as “Christian victim” they implied a possible conflict between the two religions.

This narrative line was particularly strengthened by transferring the coverage of the media in the region, in which the context of the events was extended out from Macedonia. A typical example is the quoting of the RTS news (in all analyzed media) in which it was claimed that “Macedonia is embroiled in a religious war.” Exceptions of this reporting were Alsat M and the news in Albanian language on MTV2, which did not cover these reactions of the regional media.

As the “Christianization” of the murder defined the event in advance as an attack on the wider Christian community, by analogy the suspects identified as perpetrators were presented as part of a wider group of “Islamic radicals” or “terrorists”. Thus, their alleged participation in Taliban forces had to narratively support their relation to the local context, i.e. to the country in which they live. Sitel, for example, upgraded the claim of Mol that the suspects fought against NATO with the assumption that they were “probably” in conflict with the Macedonian troops in Afghanistan. Such a contextualization serves to intensify the narrative of *threat for Macedonia from Islamic fundamentalists*. Or, more simply, even if the detainees did not commit the murder of five people, they are a threat, because directly or not they fought against Macedonian soldiers.

#### **May 4 - protests against Mol action**

In the fourth time point, the analysis identified the following aspects of television reporting on the protests of May 4: ethno-specific division of the media in the way of framing the protests as “legitimate” or “illegitimate”, reproduction and escalating of the narrative for the “radical Islam” as a background of the protests and enhancing the narrative line for “security threat for Macedonia” and the “Islamic fundamentalism” as a global threat.

Sitel, for example, in its news items aired on May 4 frames the event in a way that it completely de-legitimizes the protest as a gathering that “supports the killers.” The content of the news items about the protest shows the following: the cue for the first news item in the news concerning the protests begins with a paraphrase of a statement

by the public prosecutor Svrgovski, stating that the evidence against the suspects is irrefutable. Further, the cue says that “Macedonia is probably the only country in Europe with protests against the arrest of suspected killers of children.” The emphasis in the cue is placed on the “killing of children” and the symbolic significance of the protest is dislocated from “protest against mounted cases against Albanians” in a “protest in support of suspected for the murder.” The parallel placement of Svrgovski’s statement that “the evidence for ‘Monster’ is irrefutable” with the information about protests against the “arrest of suspected for the murder” is in function of de-legitimization of the protest.

The news items says: “About a thousand people today, after the prayer in Jaja Pasha mosque, head off in front of the Government. Worthless were the calls from the imams of the Islamic religious community in Macedonia (IRC), which were stubbornly convincing believers from yesterday not to involve in the protest, most probably because this mosque is considered as one of those which, according to a statement by the IRC, is controlled by radical Islamic structures.” In this way, the frame in which the protest is placed goes in line with the thesis for the *radicals* who rebelled from the moderates. Although the reporting transmits chantins of party-political nature (chanting against the Government and DUI and chanting for DPA), still the text of the journalist suggests undoubted radicalism in the group. The news item covers a statement of a source that expresses sympathy for the victims, but it frames it as an isolated event, by saying that “only one protester expressed condolences.” Interestingly, part of an interview with the leader of the Serbian Socialist Party Ivica Dacic is broadcasted in the news - who is asked the question “how much aware are we on the dangers of radical Islamist groups trained in Pakistan and Afghanistan.”

This framing is contrary to the strategy of Alsat M. The news of this TV make a parallel placement of stories, not with Svrgovski’s statement, but with the information that one of the detainees, whose name is not released, did not appear in front of the investigating judge and that his family does not know his whereabouts. This information is absent from the media that publish in Macedonian language and in this case it acts as a *legitimization of the protests* in a similar way as it is done with the *de-legitimization* in the news of Sitel. The strengthening of this position is made in the article that begins with the information that there is no new evidence against the suspects. The effect that is created with the use of the auxiliary verb “*there are no*” strengthens the position that the investigation is not the most efficient. Furthermore, the article insists that the motive for the protest is the *dissatisfaction because of the mounted cases*, that the demonstrators *peacefully protested*, that there was a *small incident* at the end, that there is no connection between the Friday prayer with *radical structures* etc. The article also enhances the effect of ethnic divisions in society, with the uncritical transfer of the statement: “Let the justice win, let them search for the guilty, and stop the harassment of our sisters, mothers and brothers.” This statement makes an implicit division between Our family and your Ministry of Interior, which harasses the members of one community.

In terms of production of the *radical Islam* narrative, the news item of Kanal 5 on May 4 is a specific one, which is broadcasted immediately after the news item on the protests where this specific event is reported about. The news item is broadcasted under the title: “What kind of message was sent with the symbols at the protest?”. Moreover, although



its content clearly indicates that it is information on the event, it is not labeled as editorial comment. The presenter of the news item says: “At the protest against the ‘Monster’ action, despite T-shirts with messages ‘Islam will rule the world’, two types of flags were swinging, with green and black color, but with the same message. Interestingly, despite that all of the arrested were Albanians, there were only several Albanian flags. The message of the green and black Islamic flag is the same, and the organizers of the protest that did not appear publicly today to lead the crowd probably know that the emphasis of these flags actually means an indirect placement of political and religious requirements. The message of the flags is actually a call for establishing of an Islamic Caliphate that will rule according to Sharia law. The dream of a single state for all Muslims, is present among part of the Muslims since the death of Muhammad. The Sunni-Shiite divisions in Islam are based on the idea of establishing of a Muslim state - Caliphate, such as Turkey, which was transformed by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, when he established a secular Turkey in 1924. According to the Islamic science, one of the goals of the Caliphate is forming of a strong army, which should lead a holy war against countries that govern non-Muslims.”

What is the discursive effect of this news? The news item bases its story on some particular insufficient evidences from the protests. One green and one black flag with an Arabic inscription on them are seen at the footage, while one of the protesters has a t-shirt where it is written “Islam will rule the World” (Islam will rule the world). However there is a strategic choice to not emphasize that there is one black and one green flag, but to highlight the fact that there are “only a few Albanian flags” at the protest. Hence, while in some of the other televisions this is primarily framed in political terms, here it is framed in a religious framework. This strategy is also clear with the choice to produce a special news item/analysis for the religious messages of the protest. This practice is not controversial in itself, but problematic is the way in which the news item isolates one angle and monolithically generalizes the message of the crowds as there are thousands of protesters and a lot of messages that are of religious and ethnic and party-political nature. It can be argued that such messages also resulted from the protest, but it is problematic that in this news item **only** those messages are drawn. Furthermore, the placement of the historical story of the Islamic Caliphate in the context of protests inevitably reinforces the thesis of their radicalization in religious basis. Such is the effect of this sentence: “According to the Islamic science, one of the goals of the Caliphate is forming of a strong army that should lead a holy war against countries where non-Muslims rule.”

It could be perceived that there is a different approach to the event in various televisions, and it mostly depends on the dominant ethno-religious affiliation of the newsroom. For example, in the news of MTV2 in Albanian language there is an absence of framing the protests in religious context, which is present in several other media. The perception that arises from the reporting of MTV2 is that the event has no religious symbols.

The analysis noted inappropriate visual framing of one of the stories about the reactions on the murder in MTV2. When transferring the reactions of women associations that a Muslim woman in custody is treated contrary to Muslim tradition, symptomatic are the archival footages used. Women with veils and with a more conservative tradition of dressing than the one of the Muslim women in the local context are shown at the footages that are not domestic, but borrowed.

### 3. ONLINE MEDIA

The qualitative analysis included the packages of four online media that publish contents in Macedonian language – Kurir, Skaj, Plus Info and MKD.mk. Given the large number of media in Macedonia, the complexity of this research effort and due to the limited sources, the analysis could not include the online media that publish in Albanian language.

#### General conclusions on the professional standards and the discursive practice

##### April 13 -15 (the murder and the protests)

- Part of the online media identified the ethnic background of the murdered, thus giving an interethnic context of the event and leaving a space for interpretations according to which the violence is ethnically motivated.
- In cases when the ethnic background of the victims is stated and is supported with the frequent use of the syntagms *heinous murder*, *brutally shot and killed*, *bloody crimes*, *mass murder*, the reporting gains even more strengthened ethnic context; in some of the texts there is a narrative connection of the murder with the Easter holidays, which further enhances this effect.
- This practice is potentially inflammatory as it leaves a social effect of a national threat from the *implicit Other* and constructs narratives of collective victimization of the ethnic group of the killed, as well as a potential collective guilt of the ethnic or religious Other in the society.
- However, in some online media there is an opposite strategy in the reporting – the ethnic background of the victims and of those involved in the murder is not mentioned.
- The “transmission” and “reactive” journalism is a problem, particularly in the online media, whose reporting is often exclusively consisted of statements transfer or coverage of other articles served by a third party. Some of the statements transferred contained claims that frame the murder in the narrative of a collective victim and a collective perpetrator, which is easily translated into an inter-ethnic and interreligious context.

##### April 16 - 19 (protests and anger after the murder)

- In the coverage of the protests there are negative examples identified and violation of the professional standards, with the direct transfer of the offensive slogans from the protests aimed for the ethnic Albanians. In this way, the media adopted and transferred the offense to the ethnic community themselves.
- In this time point there is a frequent use of speculative contents identified on the murder, through the transfer of the media reporting in the region and abroad.
- Part of the media do not challenge this transfer, especially when the incident is related with the 2001 conflict and with the possibility for new interethnic conflicts.

**May 1 - 3 (detention of suspects)**

- As with the other media, it was identified that the most serious violation of the professional standards in the online media was the disrespect of the right to the presumption of innocence. There was a reporting identified in most of the media in which terms were used that identify the detainees as the perpetrators of the murder.
- The online media repeated the framing of the murder and the arrest of suspects in the story of “radical Islam” and Christianity as “sacrificial model” on which the evil is projected (which comes from radical Islam).
- Some online media carelessly and uncritically transferred statements from institutional sources reproducing an extremely dangerous thesis that Islam (regardless that the marker “radical” stands before the noun) is characterized with violence. Such careless constructions in the present context are inflammatory and dangerous for the interethnic and interreligious relations in the country.

**May 4 (protests against the Mol action)**

- At this time point there is an absence of respect for the presumption of innocence in the reporting for the detained in the Mol action. In conditions when the names were already known, this practice increases the injury because the detainees in the period analyzed (the period after arrest) receive personal identity as well.
- There was a single-sided reporting about the protests and statements were not included of participants at the protests. There were cases identified of selective presentation of the slogans at the protest, thus framing the protest in one of the three contexts: religious, ethnic or party – political.
- Some media selectively presented and overemphasized specific statements or facts in order to present the protests as part of the radical Islamist movement structures that are a threat to the country, the region and beyond.
- There was also a stereotyped connection of particular religious or ethnic groups with the radical Islamic structures.
- Particular media explained the motives for organizing of the protests through unchecked information and selective statements of participants at the event, by choosing generalizations about the motives and the attitudes of all participants.

**Analysis of concrete articles****April 13 - 15 - the murder and the protests**

At the first research point, texts concerning the event are taken into account, published on April 13 and 14. The analysis of individual texts that refer to this period reveals violation of some of the basic professional standards and ‘ethnicized’ framing of the murder.

In the reporting of MKD.mk there is an *identification of the ethnic background of the victims*. This marking is made on several occasions and it is evident at the beginning of the reporting of several texts.<sup>[43]</sup> The emphasis placed to the ethnic background of the murder immediately implies that this may be an ethnically motivated event, filling out

43 „Angry citizens demolished vehicles after the murder of five Macedonians“ (13.4.), „Five residents from Skopje riddled to death near Zelezarsko Lake“ (13.4.), „Wake up son, daddy will lie down... wake up son, please!“ (14.4.), „Instead of joy, Macedonia in great sorrow on Holy Saturday“ (14.4.).

the reporting in advance with a contents that places the event in an interethnic context. MKD.mk opened the story on April 13 with the article “Five residents of Skopje riddled to death near Zelezarsko Lake”. The title suggests an explicit ethno-political meaning and the angle seems to be neutral. Still the lead of the article says: “Five persons of Macedonian nationality are brutally shot and killed by unknown persons yesterday night at the shore of Zelezarsko Lake near the Skopje village of Smilkovci”. It should be noted that the moment this article was published on April 13, despite that it was not clear how the murder was committed, it could not be speculated neither for the ethnic nor for the religious background of the perpetrators, nor for their motivation and profile. Therefore, it was unclear why it was relevant to announce the ethnic background.

This effect is strengthened by the articles in which on lexical level words are used whose repetition reproduces the effect of pain, which when placed in interethnic context gets potentially inflammatory character. The use of the notions of *heinous murder*, *brutally shot and killed*, *bloody crime*, *mass murder* and so is widespread in online media, but brought in the context of the ethnicity of the victims or the perpetrators, it has a far stronger social impact. This practice is potentially inflammatory since it leaves a social effect of a national social threat by the *implicit Other* and constructs a narrative of collective victimization of the ethnic group to which the killed belong, and also a potential collective guilt of the ethnic or religious Other in the society.

As an example of this we can take the text “Angry citizens demolished vehicles after the murder of five Macedonians” of MKD.mk (April 13). The title highlights the ethnicity of the victims. In the head of the text the word “Macedonian” is replaced with “citizens of Macedonian nationality”, but it does not mitigate the ethno-prism of their identification - they could be identified as “five young people” or “five citizens of Skopje” and the like. It further says: “After the heinous murder of five citizens of Macedonian nationality near Zelezarsko Lake close to the village of Smilkovci angry citizens from the settlement of Radisani demolished a bus of JSP today as well as several passenger vehicles.” The effect that the phrase “heinous murder of five citizens of Macedonian nationality” leaves should be considered here, as well as the information that a group of citizens made an aggressive demonstration of their revolt from the event. The first part of the sentence places the event in an ethnic framework in advance – the ethnic prism is enhanced with the use of the word “heinous”. Furthermore, the reaction of the group of citizens is placed under the same ethnic signifier which constructs an impression that they respond not only because young people are killed, but also because those who are killed are Macedonians. This effect can easily be translated into a discourse of conflict of the ethnic group of Macedonians with the implied ethnic Other in the story.

The practice of identifying the ethnicity of those killed was recorded in the reporting of Skaj.mk as well. In the early hours of May 13, when the news was still in its creation, in the introductory part of the text titled “The five killed were young boys?” the murdered are labeled as “boys of Macedonian nationality”. With the explicit reference to the ethnic identity of those killed an ethnicizing of the incident is allowed i.e. the ethnicity becomes relevant to the interpretation of the murder. The further analysis shows that in the following texts from the same period the media have not used such a practice of reporting.



However, in the early days of reporting an opposite strategy is visible. For example, Kurir names the victims as “four boys from Radisani”, “the murder of five people,” etc., although the texts of this online media used an emotional language.

The same could be applied to the Plus Info portal. In the reporting about the five-fold murder near Smilkovsko Lake this media does not use ethnic references for the murdered, but they are identified according to their place of living. Beside this, in the analysis of the first point, there is no description of the murder in the context of the religious holidays identified, as it was a case in some televisions and newspapers in Macedonian language. In this way, the reporting of this media does not contribute to the strengthening of the narrative that dominated in other media that a target of the attack were Christians, which could be emphasized as a positive practice. Third, Plus info did not transfer the statements of citizens gathered in Radisani and Cresevo, which constructed a collective guilt for the possible perpetrators through the implicit connection of the five-fold murder with the interethnic incidents on the buses in the previous months.

An exception of this is the uncritical transfer of the press release by the World Macedonian Congress (WMC), which requires the killers to be reported” “...their people, they should condemn them and hand them over to the police” (April 13, “WMC expects quick resolution of the case”). In this way, through the adoption of the narrative served by WMC, the media participates in the transfer of a message for the possible group identity of the killers – a group that is also responsible to clear its lines. A mitigating circumstance is the absence of names for groups or some stronger associations, but generally speaking, the text still suggests belonging of the killers to the group – affiliation that is relevant to the act of murder. It should be also added that in this text, by transferring portions of the press release, there is an exception of the lack of association of Easter with the murder.

In the reporting on the protests and blockades of citizens of Radisani texts are found where the “Albanians” are produced in a group that is afraid of the implicitly suggested Macedonians. It is a text titled as “Radisani at the barricades, Albanians scared to the bone” (MKD.mk, 13.4). The text does not only emphasize ethnicity of the whole group (reinforced by the definite article The Albanians), but it also suggest a state of “collective fear” because of the collective guilt implied. At the lexical level, text uses colloquial expressions (“scared to the bone”), which can be particularly corrosive because they are placed in the title. The use of the exclamation mark in the title with this emotional expression suggests urgency and panic - which emphasizes the effect of “euphoria” in the reporting. The text contains seven photographs, the first of which illustrates the heavy police presence and movement of a small group of citizens that took to the protests - the photographs visually enhance the title and additionally suggest the origin of the fear.

### April 16 – 19- protests and anger after the murder

The online media reported about the protests of anger after the murder in details. The reporting offers an objective overview of the events at particular points. However, there are reports that although objective still demonstrate insufficient sensitivity for the problem of offense towards the *collective Other*. These texts are published in different media.

For example, the head of the text: “Angry crowd threw stones at police officers” (MKD.mk, 16.4) is composed of the following sentence: “Killers, Sh....., Sh...ian<sup>[44]</sup> police,

44

The name for the ethnic group of Albanians is used here in a pejorative connotation. This research sets a distance from the use of this expression, therefore the words are modified.



the gathered people at the protest shouted in front of the Government, among which young people were the most dominant”. What is the cognitive effect of these formulations? First, although the intention of the author to not disclose the contents of these statements at the protest is clear, the direct quote of offensive names for ethnic groups, the manner in which this was shouted at the protest, repeats the offense – the text itself adopts the discourse of the crowd. In these cases, the journalistic practice should use euphemisms that would capture the information without (auto) censoring it and avoiding the repetition of the offense towards the collective Other. Secondly, the pejorative names of the ethnic group are not put under quotes, therefore there is no indicator that the newsroom set a distance of the use – the punctuation still carries information.

Plus info reports about the protests in a similar way. In the article titled as “Juveniles and teenagers shout abusive words for the Albanians in front of the Government” (April 16), the participants in the protest are identified as juveniles, thus the protest and the effects acquire a dimension of infantilism. At the same, the use of offensive names for the ethnic Albanians through the transfer of part of the slogans repeats in this text as well. The slogans are separated here in quotes, thus, to some extent, the text sets a distance despite the direct transfer of the message. However, it should again be emphasized that the act of transmission and repetition of the contents, despite the distance set, reiterates the offense to the collective Other.

A problem identified in the online media in this time point is the uncritical transfer of information and statements both from the institutions and other (sometimes unchecked) sources of information – primarily from foreign media. The challenging of this information from other sources is not done sufficiently strong sometimes.

In MKD.mk this is done with the text: “Is there a witness who survived the murder close to Zelezarsko Lake?”. The question mark at the end of the title challenges the information by leaving room for doubt. However, the reference to only one source (in this case the First Serbian television), which did not demonstrate the relevance of the initial information (it is not stated how this source acquired the information) is problematic in terms of professional standards.

This information structure in a similar title construction was transferred by Plus Info on April 16 in the following form: “Is there a witness of the murder of five people close to Smilkovsko Lake?” There are no other sources in the article of Plus Info that confirm the speculations originating from the media “First Serbian television.”

The same information is scarcely covered by Skaj.mk (“VIDEO: There is a witness of the murder near Smilkovsko Lake?”, from April 16) but the portal also publishes the video – material which repeats several speculations that narratively link the case of Smilkovci with previous cases like the one from Gostivar. In this way the media also participates in repeating of the speculations, which through the chain of equivalence builds a causal link between the events, and there is not enough valid information for that.

Some online texts placed the protest into a party-political framework. For example, Kurir published a text titled: “Was there a party background in the protest yesterday?” The newsroom published a statement into it allegedly from a member of SDSM to explain why he attended the protest “I took part at the protest as a citizen of Butel. One of the dead boys was my friend; we were members of the youth club of Vardar. So I went to the protest to give respect, Smailovik said”. But although the content of the state-



ment does not refer in this regard, still the title of the text suggests the message that the protest had a party background. This implicitly presents the *political Other* as possible negative element in the society.

A similar strategy, but in the opposite direction, is noticed in the Skaj.mk portal (April 16) in the text titled as “Citizens on protests, VMRO – DPMNE with counter – protests”. The article claims that one of the ruling parties organizes counter-protests as a reaction to the initiative for demonstrations in front of the Government. Moreover, the reporting is largely based on imprecise sources of information. But, these imprecise sources of information interpret the connection of the Facebook groups with the media in Macedonia and their relations with some ruling parties. This interpretation of the text is based on a quote from “citizen of the social networks”. The connection among the social groups on Internet and one of the ruling parties is due to a source whose credibility is unknown. Therefore, without many information, an image for the *political Other* is created as one who undermines the citizen initiatives.

### May 1 - 3 - detention of suspects

At this time point there are texts published which in unanimity with state institutions immediately and without questioning frame the group of suspects in the narrative of the so-called “radical Islam.” The article in Kurir of May 1 “Video: Action” Monster” for the murder near Smilkovsko Lake”, although a short one makes the construction by entirely adopting the institutional discourse: “They are members of the radical Islam and, in Jankuloska’s opinion, the main motive was probably their idea of killing in the radical Islam, and the goal is to create a sense of fear among the general public.” Without relevant evidence the media takes the narrative, and in the part of the sentence “their *idea of killing* in radical Islam,” despite putting Islam in the equation with radicalism, it constructs the “murder” as an ideological-philosophical concept inherent in this “movement”. This choice of words in the text hides in itself the possibility of creating or reproducing a very dangerous stereotyping of Islam (regardless of the expression ‘radical’ before the noun) as a religion for which the violence is inherent. It is also surprising that this formulation is associated with a statement by Jankuloska. The media extremely recklessly and wrongly “transferred” the statement and made a construction in the current context that is inflammatory and dangerous for the interethnic and inter-religious relations.

In the following text of Kurir titled as “Radical Islamists taken to court,” this thesis is summarized in the narrative for the Islam as a “sacrificial model” on which the evil is projected (which comes from radical Islam) and which is also used as a basis for justifying violation of the principle of presumption of innocence. The title specifies the identity of the detainees as “radical” and “Islamist” - terms that have exceptionally negative meaning here. This is reinforced by the following sentence: “However, in yesterday’s action, in which 800 members of several police and special units too part, 20 radical Islamists were arrested, including some persons connected with the murder of five people.” At the end of the text the following presentation is made: “On April 12, Holy Thursday, on the shore of the lake near the village of Smilkovci brutally were killed [...]” “Holy Thursday” here serves as a symbolic contrast to the term “radical Islamists.” This contrast discursively emphasizes the “confrontational position” of the two *concepts*.

This line of discursive “mythologization of the evil” is present in the title of MKD.mk: “Macedonia is faced with a serious threat of radical Islam”. The text makes displacement of the thesis of one source of information, who is an expert in the area. The title skips the conditional from the head of the sentence and only repeats the thesis without it. The head of the text says: “Kire Naumov, former head of the Intelligence Agency, told Deutsche Welle that if the information is accurate that behind the murder of five Macedonians near Zelezarsko Lake stands an organized terrorist cell, then Macedonia is facing a big and serious problem”. The key word here is *if*. The effect is reinforced with the photograph, which shows people that respond to the stereotype of “radical Islamist” as fervently protesting.

The Plus Info analysis on the reporting about the arrest of 20 suspects shows an interesting position. The two articles that separately report for this event transfer the initial information indicated by the Ministry of Interior, but it is noted that the claims are contextualized and identified, thus the media sets some distance. Both articles are from May 1, titled “Moi: Perpetrators revealed of the murder of five people” and “The police arrested 20 radical Islamists, some connected to the murder in Smilkovci”. In the first case this fence is clearly made by labeling the claim in the headline. In the latter case, the headline serves framing of the institutional narrative, as a priori correct, although hereinafter the same statement is clearly labeled as a claim of the institution.

However, Plus Info published a new the same day marked as “aggregate”, which, according to the analysis, is intended to summarize the arrest previously transferred in three texts. But it seems like that this summary text is dependent on the institutional narrative more than the original reports that it summarizes, because they show a higher dose of criticism towards the source.

Thus, in the article titled as “Perpetrators of the massacre near Smilkovsko Lake revealed,” (May 1), the presumption of innocence is violated even in the title, as well as in the head of the text through the uncritical adoption of a statement by the official institutions and its transfer to the public as voice of the journalist.

Similarly to Kurir, this text of Plus Info covers the statement (which had not been previously transferred) that the “motive is probably their idea, belief, conviction and following of radical Islam.” In this case also the uncritical transfer of statement opens the possibility to reproduce generalizations and stereotypes about the Islam as a religion, since the continued use of this phrase in the context of the murder and violence creates a negative social effect to all its members. This section is a continuation of the third article published earlier in the day, titled “Moi: The victims were in no connection with the perpetrators, the radical Islam is a motive.”

As with most media, same in Skaj.mk there are violations observed of the professional standards associated with the principle of presumption of innocence. Thus, in the article from May 1 titled “Video: the murder in Smilkovski is resolved” still in the title, but also in the editorial, it is suggested that the Ministry of Interior “has revealed the killers.” At the same time, in Skaj.mk also the transfer of institutional narratives is noticed without the reporter trying to capture other angles or to clearly separate this text from the one which is transferred from the source. It is worthwhile emphasizing the large number of texts with videos released by the Ministry of Interior, hence the media becomes an extension of the institutional information in a way.

### May 4- protests against the Mol action

The violations of the professional standards detected in the previous reporting of the online media also repeat in the fourth time point, and at several places there are even emphasized.

In the edition of Kurir on May 4 the presumption of innocence is seriously violated and this is only done through the tendentious remark in the headline which says: “The murderers will defend themselves that they were not around Smilkovsko Lake”. This headline suggests that those who should defend themselves in the court are “killers”, which at this stage of the procedure is still not confirmed. With the fact that the media, before the court announced any judgment, published that the “murderers will defend themselves” determines the outcome and it inevitably locates the fault of the suspects in advance. Interestingly, the text is actually transferring information from a newspaper. The head of the news is a paraphrase of the news in Dnevnik that says: “The brothers Afrim and Agim Ismailovic, who are directly suspected of the killings near Smilkovsko Lake on April 12, will defend themselves with the assertion that they were in their Internet cafe in the village, and not close to the Smilkovsko Lake at the time of the murder, members of their family claim for Dnevnik. “This article in no way implies that the suspects were previously declared as killers, and this is not suggested also in the rest of the otherwise short text. A similar effect is achieved with the article titled “Executioners detained”, which was published the day before (May 3).

At this point a reporting was noticed in which there is no relevant evidence for some claim or suggestion. The title of the text: “Is this the message sent at yesterday’s protest” (Kurir, May 5) is accompanied by a large photograph showing five people at the protest - one of them wears a T-shirt with English text “Islam will dominate the world. “This is used as a reason to ask this question: “One of the protesters wore a t-shirts with the message Islam will rule the world. Did the thousands of protesters want to send this message?”, so here based on the message a question is posed for a group of “thousands of protesters “. Although there is no positive thesis given here, but only a question is asked, still the question should have thorough indications of some message. Thus the question promotes a thesis based on an article which is attributed to the thousands of people who chanted very different slogans - some ethnic, some party-political, some religious etc. The heterogeneity of these messages is neglected here.

In the reporting of Plus info it can be noticed that there are several reporting strategies. In a concluding article on May 4 by the title “The protest in front of the Government finished with stones and insults to police and politicians” the protest is framed through the incidents that were caused. Thus the direction that is given the audience with the title is to interpret the text hereafter in this context. The same is observed in another article in Info Plus titled with a rhetorical question “The protest in front of the Government out of control, with stones at the police?”. The overemphasizing of incidents with violence in the protests implies their invalidity, i.e. the existence of incidents makes these protests as problematic in advance.

Plus Info makes an ethnic identification of the participants in the protests, who stated their demands for the release of suspects. Although the reporting is relatively neutral and careful, one part of the text referred to above appears with the following

construction: “Several thousand participants spontaneously gathered carrying Albanian flags demanded the release of those arrested for the murder close to Smilkovsko Lake.” This implicitly suggests that the rioters are Albanians by mentioning the “Albanian flags.” Their identification along ethnic lines operates on two levels. First, it identifies the group demanding the release of suspects, and this framing suggests the overall importance of the protests and their labeling as Albanian and as protests in support of the suspects, despite the existence of other different voices and motives for organizing of the protests.

Neither one reporting at the day of the protests in Plus Info does not include statements of participants. This practice makes it impossible to see several angles in the description and understanding of the protests and slogans. As with other media, centrally transferred are the slogans like “Allah is one, Allah is great”, as well as the party-political chanting with offensive contents. These are slogans that are described in the summary text titled as “The protest in front of the Government ended up with stones and insults at the police and politicians”, while in the previous articles the same day other slogans were transferred that give ethnicizing note of the protests, such as “We have given children for Kosovo, we do not give up life” and “UCK, we seek justice.”

MKD.mk with the text of May 4 “Ali is a chetnik, Gruevski is a terrorist” makes a different framing of the protest. The title suggests primarily ethnopolitical - political and secondarily religious message of the protest. This is an opposite framing of the religious framework suggests to with other texts. Unlike some other Macedonian language media that frame the protests in the narrative of “radical Islam”, this text emphasizes the political message that protesters want to send across against the “mounted trials”. MKD.mk used this sentence: “Ali is chetnik, Gruevski is a terrorist’ and ‘We will see each other in the woods’ were the main slogans as thousands of Albanians were chanting at today’s protests in front of Government building and the Court, and in support of those arrested for the murder of five Macedonians”. Thus, the perception for the cover message of the protest become party - political. In this way, the identity of the protests is changing, and the audience gets a different and almost always an incomplete image of the events.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE REPORTING PRACTICE FOR THE MURDER NEAR SMILKOVSKO LAKE

It is important to emphasize that there are multiple examples of positive practice in the reporting of the media observed, in favor of defusing tensions and reducing the potential negative effects of the event. It is made especially by transferring calls for calmness and restraint from prejudices about the event. Positive examples of professional reporting are all articles and stories involving multiple angles in the reporting and a wide range of information is presented in addition to a comprehensive understanding of the events by the audience. It is worth emphasizing the media that were careful not to emphasize the ethnicity of those involved in the events in the reporting.

But the analysis has also shown a series of examples of professional standards violation, among the most serious one the offense of the principle of presumption of innocence, when suspects for the murder were identified as killers in advance. In this way



the human rights of the arrested persons were violated and a basis was created for a possible media influence over the expected court decisions. The principle 8 of the Code of Journalists of Macedonia states that “in the court proceedings the principle of presumption of innocence shall be respected and all involved sides in the conflict shall be reported about and not suggest a judgment”.

Part of the media emphasized the ethnic background of the victims and some of them were not careful in transferring of statements that point out to some group to which the perpetrators of the murder belong. These information position the person in particular group defined by its national background, where he is lost and he is not seen as an individual any longer, but as a member of the group. The journalists shall not use stereotyping images in his reporting which relate the ethnic group with some event. In reporting on suspects or convicted criminals journalists should try to avoid unnecessary introduction of ethnicity in the story, and especially unnecessary use of labels. When information for such events is posted, the background of the perpetrators of the criminal act, witnesses and victims may be mentioned only if it contributes to a better understanding of the events described.

There is also a widespread practice of direct transferring of information from institutions without a critical distance to their content, which is a basic role of the media as critics of the Government. The uncritical transfer allows an easy transfer of messages from the institutions regardless of their justification. The absence of a critical attitude towards political institutions creates a culture of passivity in the newsrooms and it does not enable a democratic environment for a quality of the public debate.

The constant use of the words “radical” and “Islam” side by side constitutes an inextricably semantic unity between them, which may results with an interpretation that Islam as a religion is radical in itself; the use of this phrase adopts the global narrative for the so-called “Radical Islam”, framing the internal social movements in a global framework set up in advance and creates a narrative of “new radical Other” in the Macedonian society, which is a potential source of “evil”. This practice is converted in an open negative stereotyping in some texts.

There is a practice of uncritical transfer of statements by citizens that contain inflammatory tone and an obvious hate speech, as well as statements that link the murder to previous incidents and interethnic tensions. There is also a practice of transferring speculative information and imprecise indication of sources. The incomplete check of the information and speculations by journalists besides being considered as violation of professional work can cause considerable damage to the public and its perception and understanding of problems. The audience of journalists should know as much as possible about the source of information and its motivation, so that it could assess the accuracy of the information.

There is also a practice of using violent, emotional language, which in combination with the ethnic background stated in part of the texts may cause additional tensions and division among the public. Journalists should avoid imprecise use or transfer of emotional words and labels in the description of events (such as, for example, heinous murder, brutally shot and killed, bloody crime, mass murder, etc.), as well as to be careful when selecting the words and phrases used. They should be always precise around the infor-

mation they cover and avoid using or transferring of expressive words that “demonize” some party in the story covered.

Part of the media selectively emphasize particular statements or information, as well as coverage of foreign media, in order to present the protests as part of a movement of radical Islamic structures that are a threat for the state or as a wide security problem that results from previous interethnic tensions in the society. Journalists should avoid bringing of assumption for potential spread of violence, crime or frame the events in the image for the global action of radical movements and structures. Beside this, they should avoid presenting an opinion or a claim as already established fact in their reporting.

There are two developments identified in the framing of the murder: victimization and reverse victimization. In the first case the media in Macedonian language insist on the ethnic background of the victims and imply that the murderer is the *ethnic Other*, while in the second case part of the media in Albanian language place the dominant focus to the *Albanians as a victim of stigmatization* regarding the murder. Journalists should avoid making sharp distinctions between “Us” and “Them” in their reporting as well as to avoid portraying the event as a conflict between “their” and “our” side.

There is also one-sided use of sources of information and especially in the reporting about the protests, as well as selective presentation of the slogans, without using statements by the participants. It is a serious violation of the standards for comprehensive and balanced reporting. The professional integrity of the journalistic profession involves using a wide variety of information sources, representing of all parties concerned, verifying of the accuracy of statements and the possible interests that stand behind a statement.

The analysis showed that in the news in Macedonian and Albanian language in public service these events are reported from a completely different angle. While MTV 1 minimized the blockades and almost completely went silent about the attacks on people and property, MTV2 did not report at all about the reactions and protests by locals. The absence of a single editorial policy contributes to a creation of completely conflicting stories in the news of MTV, which seriously undermines its role as the leading media in the promotion of cohesion in the society. The article 121 of the Law on Broadcasting of the Republic of Macedonia says that “for the public interest, Macedonian Radio and Television shall develop and plan the program schedule in the interest of the public and produce and broadcast programs for all segments of society without discrimination, by taking into account specific social groups.”





## NOTE FOR THE PUBLISHERS

**The School of Journalism and Public Relations** was founded in 2008 by the Macedonian Institute for Media as a not-for-profit high education institution, with a mission to advance the quality of education for journalists and specialists in public relations in the Republic of Macedonia. As part of its bachelor's studies, the School offers a vocational education in journalism and corporate communications, by providing modern and applied study programs. The degree program in journalism is the only one in the country and in the region that it is aligned with the UNESCO model Study program for education of journalists from 2007 and the Declaration of Tartu, adopted in 2006 by members of the European Journalism Training Association (EJTA). The study program in Corporate Communications and Public Relations has been developed in compliance with the highest standards of high education and the Code of Ethics of the International Public Relations Association in Great Britain. Since June 2011, upon decision of UNESCO in Paris, the School of Journalism and Public Relations became a UNESCO Chair in Media, Dialogue and Mutual Understanding. The basic objective of the Chair is to contribute to the strengthening of social cohesion, multicultural understanding and intercultural communication in the Macedonian society. This objective has been accomplished by various activities, implemented by the School of Journalism and Public Relations and the Institute for Communication Studies:

- Development of contents related to intercultural communication and diversity reporting in the study programs of first cycle at the School and in the postgraduate studies organized by the Institute for Communication Studies;
- Development of research activities that focus at the role of media and communications in the society: academic or applied researches implemented by the Institute for Communication Studies;
- Development of knowledge, skills and professional values of the journalistic community and the specialists in public relations on intercultural communication and diversity;
- Awareness raising on the importance of diversity reporting and on intercultural values through: debates, conferences, programs, media products and campaigns;
- Publishing of research studies, handbooks, textbooks and Internet based learning resources;
- Development of programs for informal education and for stimulation of creativity among youth in high education related to cultural diversity, understanding, tolerance and social cohesion.

**The Institute for Communication Studies (ICS)** was established in July 2012 by the School of Journalism and Public Relations, with a primary objective to advance the fundamental and applied research in two key areas: (1) journalism and media and (2) public relations, corporate communications and integrate marketing communications. In December 2012 the Institute was accredited to offer postgraduate studies in two areas: Management of Strategic Communications and Media Management and Multimedia. The connection between the teaching and learning process with the scientific and research work enables the Institute to encourage involvement of young people in research activities and to advance the process of development and spreading of knowledge.







SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND  
PUBLIC RELATIONS



I N S T I T U T E  
OF COMMUNICATIONS STUDIES