

KOSOVO'S DEVELOPING FREE PRESS:

HOW DO NEWSPAPERS IN A TRANSITIONING SOCIETY BEHAVE UNDER
INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISION AND WHAT ROLE DO THEY PLAY DURING
LOCAL ELECTIONS?

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UNDER INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISION AND WHAT ROLE DO THEY
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
LIST OF CHARTS AND TABLES.....	vi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	vii
ABSTRACT	ix
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Historical background of former Yugoslavia	
The specific case of Kosovo	
Governance in Kosovo	
Background on Kosovo’s party politics	
Media Environment in Kosovo	
Importance of the topic	
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	25
A definition of accountability	
Framing theory	
3. METHODOLOGY	36
Textual analysis	
Application	
Interviewing	
Application	
4. ANALYSIS RESULTS.....	47
Table A - List of abbreviations used in the analysis results section	

Table B - Timeline of events referred to in the analysis results section

Bota Sot

Epoka e Re

Koha Ditore

Kosova Sot

Zëri

Express

5. CONCLUSION	84
6. LIMITATIONS AND WEAKNESSES.....	88
BIBLIOGRAPHY	90

LISTS OF CHARTS AND TABLES

Chart	Page
1. Chart A: 2001 Kosovo Assembly Elections.....	14
2. Chart B: 2004 Kosovo Assembly Elections.....	15
3. Chart C: 2007 Kosovo Assembly Elections.....	16

Table	Page
1. Table A - List of abbreviations used in the analysis results section.....	47
2. Table B - Timeline of events referred to in the analysis results section.....	48

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AAK** – The Alliance for the Future of Kosovo
- AER** – European Agency for Reconstruction
- AKR** – The New Alliance of Kosovo
- AMIA** - Israelite Argentinean Mutual Aid Association
- BSPK** - The Association of Independent Union of Kosovo
- CCNY** - The City College of New York
- EU** - The European Union
- EULEX** - The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
- IMC** - Independent Media Commission
- IREX** - The International Research and Exchanges Board
- KLA** - The Kosovo Liberation Army
- KFOR** - NATO-led Kosovo Force
- KEK** – The Kosovo Electricity Company
- LDD** – The Democratic League of Dardania
- LDK** – The Democratic League of Kosovo
- NATO**- North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- NED** - National Endowment for Democracy
- OHR** - Office of the High Representative
- ORA**- The Reformist Group ORA
- OSCE** - Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
- OTI** - Office of Transition Initiatives

PCK - Press Council of Kosovo

PDK- The Democratic Party of Kosovo

PISG - Provisional Institutions of Self-Government

SLKM - Serb List for Kosovo and Metohija

SFRY - Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

TMC - Temporary Media Commissioner

TMK - Kosovo Protection Corps

UNDP – United Nations Development Program

UNMIK- The United Nations Mission in Kosovo

UNHCR - UN High Commissioner for Refugees

USAID - United States Agency for International Development

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the extent to which political party affiliations affect the news coverage of six daily Kosovar newspapers. The study was conducted following the declaration of independence on February 17, 2008 by the Kosovo Assembly. The study sought to examine the coverage of policies that were dependant on domestic institutions. Through the application of textual analysis, media framing was discerned based on a comparison between two time periods when different government structures were in power, 2004 and 2007. Moreover, the study expanded on the results based on semi-structured interviews with the editors in chief of the daily newspapers.

Overall, the study's results show that the Kosovar daily newspapers fail to keep government fractions to a high degree of accountability. The general tendency was to merely replicate party members' rhetoric during their election campaigns. Rarely did the newspaper challenge such claims or reference to the political party's performance during their mandate. Accountability was generally sought through party attacks on one another, and depending on the daily, such frames tended to be were subject to the newspaper's political affiliation. The study holds that opportunities for more thorough and informative coverage did exist.

Introduction

When the socialist and totalitarian bloc in Eastern Europe began to disintegrate in the early 1990s, the establishment of democratic processes and rule of law commenced, also offering hope to transform the political landscape of Europe and unite the half-a-century divided continent. But as nationalistic aspirations replaced socialism in the southeast federation of Yugoslavia, political elites of Western Europe and the United States were caught off balance by the violent disintegration that began to unravel (Glenny 2000, p.635). They failed to grasp the historical and political preconditions that intensified the conflict, and initial Western policy focused merely on attempts to preserve a unified federation. Therefore, the understanding of any former Yugoslav constituent and its process toward democratization requires some understanding of the historical background of the federation itself and the developments that eventually triggered its breakdown.

Historical Background of former Yugoslavia

The complexity of power relations and nation-state formation in the Balkans is best understood through careful historical contextualization of both nation-building projects of the late 19th century and early 20th century, and solutions offered by the socialist state to the “national issue.” It would be misleading to place analysis, as has often been the case, under a framework which predominately casts the Balkans, and Yugoslavia in particular, as a political geography of ethnic conflict. Although space does not permit such an analysis here, a brief overview of it is offered.

The first Yugoslav state was created after World War I, known as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. It created a unity of Southern Slavs, who had prior been under Ottoman and Austrian domination (Silber and Little 1996, p.25). Following World War II, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) was established under the slogan “Brotherhood and Unity.” The federation was led by Communist leader Josip Broz Tito, who belonged to the Partisans communist resistance military formation that fought against the Axis forces.

Yugoslavia functioned as a socialist federation of six equal republics—Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia. Kosovo and Vojvodina had autonomous status as provinces of Serbia, which came through the 1974 constitutional amendment. Yugoslavia had a federal parliament, six republican parliaments and two provincial parliaments.

During the Cold-War, Yugoslavia was seen as anti-Soviet, which brought it substantial financial backing from the West. In order to use such a position and maintain

the federation compact, Tito adopted a mixture of self-managing socialism and Soviet-style communism.

Tito had managed to suppress nationalistic aspirations that were embedded within each of the republics by exiling nationalists. History was recalled only through the scope of the Partisans resistance toward Nazi oppression. Under such measures, Yugoslavia had also managed to exist and function as a federation for it rejected concepts of majorities and minorities, and it did not recognize ethnic or religious minorities (Stokes, 1999).

The first signs of trouble in Yugoslavia appeared during the 1980s. The debts from western loans began to grow, and Yugoslavia was unable to repay. Another sign of trouble in 1980 was Tito's death. Tito had developed a powerful charismatic figure and while "[he] was alive there were no illusions about who held the reigns of power. It was a one-party state under one man's control" (Silber and Little 1996, p.26). His approach of centralizing power succeeded for some time, but the nationalism that had destroyed Yugoslavia in the interwar period replaced communism as a dominant force after his death.

Important to note is that the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia began about the same time that the Soviet bloc collapsed in 1989. While the majority of the Central Eastern European countries began transitions to democracy, in Yugoslavia socialism was merely replaced but a different state ideology—nationalism.

The Specific Case of Kosovo

Within the Socialist Federation of Yugoslavia, Kosovo was an autonomous province, a status given by the 1974 constitutional amendment. The amended Yugoslav constitution of 1974 gave Kosovo the status of an autonomous province, giving power to Kosovo's residents, principally ethnic Albanians, and "Kosovo has its own assembly, police force, national bank and all the other accoutrements of republican status (Judah 2000, p.38). However, throughout the decade, Kosovo experienced continuous unrest as groups of local Albanians "objected to the de facto compromise between Kosovo's Albanian leadership and the authorities in Belgrade" (Judah 2000, p.40). Kosovo's population was comprised of nearly 90 percent ethnic Albanians, and the other 10 percent included Serbian, Turks and other minorities.

Historian and journalist Tim Judah defined Kosovo as a Yugoslav republic in all but name (Judah 2000, p.38). But Kosovo marks the commencement of Milosevic's nationalism, as well as the region's last violent battleground.

On April 24th, 1987, Slobodan Milosevic—who at the time was merely a member of the Serbian Communist party— was sent to Kosovo by the Party leadership to speak to members of the Serbian minority there. His visit was a response to complaints of members of the Serbian community in Kosovo. Milosevic's speech, "No one should dare to beat you [...] this is your land [...]" ignited tensions between the Albanian and Serb citizens. It also gained Milosevic support from Serbs all around Yugoslavia, and he was elected Serbian President in 1989 (Silber and Little 1996, p.75). Milosevic's next visit to Kosovo was June 28th, this time as President of Serbia. He delivered a speech at

Gazimestan to commemorate the 600-anniversary of the 1389 Battle of Kosovo.

Gazimestan, a historic part of the battlefield, marked Serbia's defeat by the Turks, but the day was praised because Serbian Tzar Lazar chose death over surrendering to the Ottomans. His legendary words that he will choose "the kingdom of heaven over worldly wealth and betrayal of his nation to a foreign oppressor" turned Kosovo into a centerpiece myth of Serbia's tradition (Silber and Little 1996, p.75).

With Milosevic in power, Serbia abolished the autonomous status of Kosovo and Vojvodina. This increased dissatisfaction in the republics of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia, who saw Serbia's act as a sign for expansion. Slovenia, followed by Croatia, gained international recognition and left the federation in 1991 and 1992, respectively. Their independence came at the expense of Bosnia and Kosovo because the West still attempted to retain a Yugoslav federation even without Croatia and Slovenia. As such, "[t]he conflict erupted out of the failure of the Yugoslav idea, a failure in which cultural, political, economic and other types of factors were far more prominent than religious ones. Yugoslavia dissolved in 1991 into a war over competing and mostly incompatible claims of self-determination" (Powers 1996, p.222).

Throughout the 1990s, Kosovo was run through an apartheid system imposed by Serbia. Kosovo's Albanian majority was turned into second-class citizenry and a parallel system, especially in the areas of education and health care, was created. Albanians workers were forced to resign and

“the police moved in to take over television and radio buildings and 1,3000 Albanian journalists and others lost their jobs, plus another 250 *Rilindja*, Kosovo’s main Albanian-language daily was shut down. All cultural and other institutions were also closed or merged with their Serbian counterparts” (Judah 2000, p.62).

Throughout the parallel establishments of the 1990s, the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) dominated Albanian political life. The LDK was established on December 1989, and the “driving force behind the creation of the LDK were the professional association presenting Kosovo’s writers and philosophers” (Judah 2000, p.66). The LDK was led by Ibrahim Rugova, and the party exercised a strategy of passive resistance to Serbia’s regime. As part of the parallel establishment, the LDK held local elections in May 1992, which were held secretly with polling stations in private houses (Judah 2000, p.68). In the elections, 99.5 percent of Kosovo Albanians who voted chose Rugova and the LDK as the leader of Kosovo, which gave legitimacy and authority to the party among the Kosovar Albanians. Albanian political analyst and intellectual, Shkelzen Maliqi, stated that such passive resistance was seen as

“‘the key to the solution of the Kosova problem and the Albanian national question lay in democracy.’ The formula, he argued, appeared ‘simple,’ that is to say, ‘pluralism, market-economy, parliament and democratic institutions.’ If you had these, then there was ‘no need for war.’ It would be enough to know that all Albanians favored independence and once that was clear then its achievement would ‘not be far away’” (Judah 2000, p.67).

However, Serbia still remained much in control. The parallel society and state that the Kosovar Albanians had established remained a “phantom state” throughout the ‘90s (Judah 2000, p.69), even though the Kosovars boycotted Serbian and Yugoslav

institutions wherever possible. Throughout this time period, Serbian police conducted occasional attacks against the Kosovar Albanians (Judah 2000, p.102). Full-scale war did not break out until spring of 1998, when talk of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) began to disseminate. The KLA were an ethnic Albanian paramilitary group that advocated that the “only way to freedom [was] through a liberation war” (Judah 2000, p. 132).

The KLA began conducting attacks on Serbian policemen from 1995, but it wasn't until July 1998 that the KLA went into full uprising and the fighting between Serbian paramilitary forces and the KLA increased. The group had now managed to attract attention not only domestically, but Kosovo took a place in the international agenda. As the fighting between KLA and Yugoslav paramilitary increased, so did the number of casualties. By August 3, 1998, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that 200,000 Kosovars had been displaced during the fighting. The deteriorating conditions put pressure on Western powers to intervene. The January 1999 killing of 45 residents in the village of Racak drew even more attention to the ethnic cleansing occurring in Kosovo (Judah 2000, p.193).

On February 6, 1999, peace-seeking talks in Rambouillet, France led by then NATO Secretary General Javier Solana began. On March 18, 1999, the Albanian, American and British delegations signed the Rambouillet Accords, and the Serbian and Russian delegations refused to do so. Some of the accords' points included that NATO would have deployed a force of some 30,000 men NATO troops would maintain order in Kosovo, KLA would demilitarize, and Kosovo would have been a highly autonomous

province of Serbia. “The Kosovars believed that the interim deal would have led to independence, but this was not a foregone conclusion” (Judah 2000, p.221). Rambouillet marked that last failed diplomacy, and on March 24, 1999, NATO began its air-strike military campaign against Serbian forces. The campaign lasted until June 10, 1999, when Milosevic agreed to end the war. NATO suspended its bombing and UN Security Council passed Resolution 1244 which sanctioned the entry of NATO troops into Kosovo. Under UN Resolution 1244, Kosovo became an international protectorate under the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK, n.d.).

Its role was:

“to establish an international civil presence in Kosovo in order to provide an interim administration for Kosovo under which the people of Kosovo can enjoy substantial autonomy within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and which will provide transitional administration while establishing and overseeing the development of provisional democratic self-governing institutions to ensure conditions for a peaceful and normal life for all inhabitants of Kosovo” (UNMIK, n.d.).

UNMIK’s role also included to “organize, before a ‘final settlement,’ elections to ‘provisional institutions for democratic and autonomous self-government pending a political settlement’” (Judah 2000, p.298). As such, during the past eight years, Kosovo has undergone capacity building of its political, economic and social sphere. These efforts have been undertaken on the local levels with international assistance and supervision so as to establish the adequate platforms for eventual self-governance. A campaign to develop free and independent media became a part of this process.

Although Kosovo has been a major UN mission and the country has continually

received foreign investments since the end of 1999, it is still characterized with great daily challenges for establishing better standards of living. With a population of approximately 2.1 million, Kosovo is below poverty level with 37 percent and rising. The country has one of the youngest populations in Europe, but unemployment rate is 40 percent, which has encouraged immigration.

“Most of Kosovo's population lives in rural towns outside of the capital, Pristina. Inefficient, near-subsistence farming is common - the result of small plots, limited mechanization, and lack of technical expertise. Economic growth is largely driven by the private sector - mostly small-scale retail businesses” (CIA, n.d.).

Other problems include continuous electricity cuts. Kosovo's electricity is managed by The Kosovo Electricity Company (KEK), which has

“major engineering and management problems. Its two thermal generators are old and prone to failure. About one-third of total electricity generated by the company is lost due to technical problems or theft, and less than half of the remaining output is paid by the consumers [...]. As a result, KEK has been a drain on the budget. Emergency repairs and stricter oversight by UNMIK have improved performance somewhat. However, KEK is still not able to generate enough electricity to meet domestic needs, and blackouts are frequent” (Dimitri and Herderschee 2000, p.13).

Another daily problem is lack of water resources and drinkable water throughout Kosovo's municipalities as the “relatively high population density and the traditionally irrigated agriculture have to cope with warm and dry summers and lacking waste water treatment (EMWIS, n.d.). Such difficult water resource management is also attributed to political instability, which “during the past few years, leading to a poor state regarding planning and economical use of resources” (EMWIS, n.d.).

These are just some of the prevailing everyday problems that the Kosovo citizenry faces. They have come to characterize the daily rhetoric of the citizenry, political parties, and the media, which attempts to address such issues regularly.

Governance in Kosovo

The United Nations Mission in Kosovo was authorized by the Secretary-General with the aim of establishing “an interim civilian administration led by the United Nations under which its people could progressively enjoy substantial autonomy” (UNMIK, n.d.). UNMIK established four pillars of governance in order to implement its mandate. The pillars include:

Pillar I: Police and Justice, under the direct leadership of the United Nations;

Pillar II: Civil Administration, under the direct leadership of the United Nations;

Pillar III: Democratization and Institution Building, led by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE);

Pillar IV: Reconstruction and Economic Development, led by the European Union (EU).

The press system fell under the third pillar.

In 2000, UNMIK worked with political fractions to develop the Constitutional Framework for the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG). The PISG provided substantial autonomy, defining the powers of UNMIK and Kosovar institutions. Since 2000, Kosovar institutions have taken on more and more responsibilities.

Kosovo has also established municipal governments and an internationally-supervised Kosovo Police Service. According to the Constitutional Framework, Kosovo

has a 120-member Kosovo Assembly, which includes ten reserved seats for Kosovo Serbs and ten for non-Serb minorities (e.g., Bosniak, Roma, etc.). The Kosovo Assembly is responsible for electing a President and Prime Minister of Kosovo. The provisional institutions include the Assembly of Kosovo, which elects a President, and the Government of Kosovo, with a Prime Minister nominated by the President and endorsed by the Assembly (Assembly of Kosovo, n.d.). The Prime Minister and Ministers, exercises the executive authority of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG), and implements Assembly laws and other laws within the scope of responsibilities of the PISG. Upon nomination by the President, the Prime Minister presents a list of proposed Ministers to the Assembly to be elected, and there are 15 ministries in total (UNMIK, n.d.).

However, regardless of the fact that UNMIK has slowly transferred competencies to domestic institutions, the issue of Kosovo's final status remained a high priority among Kosovo's society at large, and it dominated the platform of the political parties and media coverage. In 2005, the international community embarked in more serious and specific steps for finalizing the status. In 2006, the Vienna negotiations commenced between Pristina and Belgrade officials, which included six rounds of meetings from the period February-May. The direct Pristina-Belgrade dialogue, held at the Vienna Auersperg Palace, was led by Martti Ahtisaari (former Finish President), the UN Envoy for Kosovo's future status talks, and Albert Rohan, UN Deputy Special Envoy.

In February 2007, Martti Ahtisaari presented his proposal to the UN Security Council, advocating internationally supervised independence. Another set of negotiations

occurred in November-December 2007, which also ended with no consensus between the Kosovar Albanians and Serbian leaders. On February 17, 2008, Kosovo's Assembly declared independence and the Republic of Kosovo was recognized formally by 37 UN countries and 18 European Union member states. As this is written, UNMIK power is being transferred to the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, EULEX. EULEX is a deployment of the European Union police and civilian resources to the Republic of Kosovo as intended by the Ahtisaari plan. The aim of EULEX is to continue a form of international presence in the country as foreseen by the UN Security Council Resolution 1244. The EULEX mission includes 2,000 police and judicial personnel and the deployment process began February 18, 2008 (EULEX, n.d.).

Background on Kosovo's party politics

Party politics in Kosovo are a relatively new phenomenon. Throughout Milosevic's authoritarian ruling during the 1990s, the only political party in Kosovo was the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), which functioned more as a non-violent resistance movement to Milosevic's rule. Led by Ibrahim Rugova, the party continued to receive great support in the post-1999 scene as many people believed they owed it support due to LDK's existence during the years of Serbian governance.

In 1999, two new parties emerged, both with roots in the Kosovo Liberation Army, the ethnic Albanian guerilla group created during the '90s. One was the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) led by former KLA leader Hashim Thaci and the other the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) led by former KLA commander

Ramush Haradinaj. This background is highly important since the parties that stemmed from the KLA have initially been in great political rivalry with the LDK, and much of the political attack was done on party leaders rather than party platforms.

In 2004, a new reformist party called Ora was started by Veton Surroi, who had established the largest Kosovo Albanian daily newspapers *Koha Ditore* during the 1990s and was the editor in chief for a number of years before deciding to enter politics.

Kosovo Serbs formed the Serb List for Kosovo and Metohija (SLKM) in 2004, but have boycotted Kosovo's institutions and never taken their seats in the Kosovo Assembly (Cocozzelli, 2004). For the 2007 elections, two other parties entered the campaign. One was the Democratic Alliance of Dardania (LDD), which stemmed from LDK and was created in 2006 as a result of inner party disagreements. Many of the long devoted members of LDK moved over to LDD, and both parties continued an ideology based on the appraisal of Ibrahim Rugova. The other party was the New Kosovo Alliance, AKR, created by Behgjet Pacolli, a Kosovar Albanian who had previously lived in the Diaspora and was known for his grand philanthropist donations prior to entering politics in 2007.

Kosovo's electoral system for the 2001 and 2004 elections was a closed list Proportional Representation system. As such, the electorate could vote only for the party, which would then elect its representatives. The 2007 elections were the first ones with open lists.

The first Kosovo-wide elections to the Assembly were in 2001, after UNMIK created the Constitutional Framework. The elections were organized and supervised by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and yielded in

Kosovo's political parties forming an all-party unity coalition. They elected Ibrahim Rugova (LDK) as President and Bajram Rexhepi (PDK) as Prime Minister. The LDK seized 47 seats, PDK 26 seats, AAK 8 seats, and Coalition Return 12 (with 10 predetermined seats as it was a minority party).

Chart A: 2001 Kosovo Assembly elections (Assembly of Kosovo, n.d.)

Parties and coalitions	Votes	%	Seats	Minority
LDK – Democratic League of Kosovo	359,851	45.65	47	-
PDK – Democratic Party of Kosovo	202,622	25.7	26	-
Coalition "Return"	89,388	11.34	12	+10
AAK – Alliance for the Future of Kosovo	61,688	7.83	8	-
Coalition Vakaf	9,030	1.15	2	+2

The following elections were in October 23, 2004, and yielded the first position-opposition government, comprised of LDK and AAK. LDK seized 47 seats, PDK 30 seats, AAK 9 seats and ORA 7 seats.

Chart B: 2004 Kosovo Assembly Elections (Assembly of Kosovo, n.d.)

Parties and coalitions	Votes	%	Seats		
			Main	Serbs	Minority
LDK- Democratic League of Kosovo	313,437	45.42	47	—	—
PDK- Democratic Party of Kosovo	199,112	28.85	30	—	—
AAK- Alliance for the Future of Kosovo	57,931	8.39	9	—	—
Reformist Party ORA	43,017	6.23	7	—	—

This coalition agreement resulted in Ramush Haradinaj (AAK) becoming Prime Minister, while Ibrahim Rugova retained the position of President. PDK and Ora were critical of the coalition agreement and have since frequently accused the current government of corruption. Ramush Haradinaj resigned the post of Prime Minister after he was indicted for war crimes by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in March 2005. He was replaced by Bajram Kosumi (AAK). But in a political shake-up after the death of President Rugova in January 2006, Kosumi was replaced by former Kosovo Protection Corps commander Agim Ceku. The Kosovo Assembly elected Fatmir Sejdiu, a former LDK parliamentarian, president after Rugova's death (Freedom House Report, 2006).

In the November 2007, PDK won 34 percent of the votes with 37 seats. LDK

seized 25 seats, AKR 13, LDD 11, AAK 10 and ORA did not pass the 5 percent threshold. PDK and LDK formed the position coalition.

Chart C: 2007 Kosovo Assembly Elections (Assembly of Kosovo, n.d.)

Parties and coalitions	Votes	%	Seats		
			Main	Serbs	Minority
PDK- Democratic Party of Kosovo	196,207	34.3	37	—	—
LDD- Democratic League of Kosovo	129,410	22.6	25	—	—
AKR- New Kosovo Alliance	70,165	12.3	13	—	—
LDD- Democratic League of Dardania	57,002	10.0	11	—	—
AAK- Alliance for the Future of Kosovo	54,611	9.6	10	—	—
Reformist Part ORA	23,722	4.1	0	—	—

Important to note is that there other smaller parties did make the threshold in the 2001, 2004 and 2007 elections and secured one or two seats. However, this study will only focus on the major parties running in elections.

Media Environment in Kosovo

The history of independent media in Kosovo is relatively new, considering that they were once controlled by the socialist state, followed by nationalistic policies of Milosevic's authoritarian rule. However, with the end of the war in 1999, there has been great international attention given to the media, particularly since the international community wanted to avoid mistakes done with the mission in Bosnia, where lack of coordination between Office of the High Representative (OHR), OSCE and the EU slowed and often paralyzed decision-making processes and media development (Karloqicz, 2003, p.116). For that reason, UNMIK established its four pillars so that there could a direct link of responsibility of the institutions.

In Kosovo, international assistance has come in the form of regulation, training and capital donations, aiming to help improve the state of the media. International aid has predominantly come through U.S. assistance which started in 1998 by the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), with approximately \$2.25 million in media assistance for the time period of 1998-2001. Other assistance came form United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), National Endowment for Democracy (NED), Canada, European Agency for Reconstruction, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Internews, Japan, The NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR), Norway, Medienhilfe, OSCE, Press now, Soros Open Society Institute, Sweden, Switzerland, UNDP (Kosovo Media Assessment, p. 10, 11, 12).

UNMIK's fourth pillar coordinator, the OSCE, took up media responsibility and steps have been taken to set up international and local media agencies that monitor and

supervise the media's conduct and practice. The OSCE established the Temporary Media Commissioner (TMC) in June 2000, who had a regulatory role for print media and also licensed and regulated radio and television broadcasters (OSCE Mission in Kosovo, n.d.).

In principle, all UN declarations on press freedom apply to Kosovo, since it is under UN administration. As such, the TMC's role was to affirm Articles 19 and 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as the five provisions on press freedom in the European Convention of Human Rights (Independent Media Commission Report, 2006).

According to Article 19:

"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

and Article 29

1. "Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible; 2. In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society."

In 2006, the TMC's role was handed over to the newly created Independent Media Commission (IMC), which now regulates broadcast media. In addition, in 2005 the Kosovo Press Council was created, which is the self-regulatory system for print media, prioritized with the Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan. They include:

A range of private, independent print and broadcast media

exists, providing access to information for all communities throughout Kosovo. There is an independent and effective media regulatory authority, aspiring to European standards, recruited without discrimination and according to merit. Hate speech in any form of incitement is condemned by political leaders, the media regulatory authority, and media commentators. Publicly funded media devotes a full and proportional share of its resources and output to all ethnic communities (Kosovo Media Assessment Report, 2004 p. 4).

The Press Council of Kosovo (PCK) includes the editors in chief of all the local newspapers, regardless of language. It serves as a complaints board to which residents may bring complaints of breaches of the Press Code of Conduct. The press council's role is to protect press freedom, with the aim that if press freedom is regulated by the industry, it will be free of political influence. Such funds and creations of media regulatory agencies are deemed as important in a place in transition, particularly since the role of free and independent media is seen as vital in relation to the democratic processes (OSCE Mission in Kosovo, n.d.).

When the democratization processes in Kosovo began, the number of media outlets in Kosovo experienced a rapid growth. "Approximately one year after the war there were seven Kosovo-wide daily newspapers and about 38 regularly printed newspapers" (Karloqicz 2003, p.119). While this number is usually seen as a promising development for a country's road to democracy, their plurality in number does not necessarily equate with free media. A 2002 Annual Report by Temporary Media Commissioner's (TMC) Annual Report noted that in Kosovo "the press violates the public trust [...] Kosovo press is extremely politicized, and does not hesitate to target individuals with violent campaigns, oblivious of their rights to privacy and safety" (TMC

Annual Report 2002, p.6). The tendency of the Kosovar daily newspapers to function in accordance with the political parties they endorse has become such a widespread practice, that the public openly accepts it as a “*status quo of the media.*”

The latter practice is also attributed to the fact that the majority of journalists are not professionally trained, there is a lack of knowledge in media ethics and un-democratic editorial politics persist. As Karlowicz points out, journalistic practice is developed through experience and knowledge passed through generations.

“However, for this to work a pool of older professionals to serve as models needs to exist [...] The exaggerated number of media outlets stretched thin the small pool of experienced senior editors who could teach ethical journalism to a new generation of reporters” (2003, p.121).

Nevertheless, it should be noted that a similar pattern of media development took place in other countries, such as Bosnia and other Central and Eastern European countries due to the new opportunities for freedom of speech. Associated with this enthusiasm, though, were unethical and irresponsible media practices (Karlowicz 2003, p.120).

As such, one of the biggest challenges for Kosovo’s media sector remains professionalism among journalists. According to the Kosovo Media Assessment Report,

“[a]lthough the TMC has attempted to regulate professional standards among both broadcast and print media, journalists have not taken self-regulation to the development of standards for journalism as a requirement for their own improvement. The free media environment has led to abuse in terms of referencing unchecked sources in stories and freely reporting on individuals’ alleged actions of statement without offering a chance to comment in advance of release of a story” (Kosovo Media Assessment Report 2004, p.17).

The above-mentioned practice was particularly visible during the March 2004

riots, when the media attributed the drowning of three ethnic Albanians in the ethnically separated town of Mitrovica to reports that they were being chased by a group of local Serbs with a dog. The stories were based on the testimony of a surviving child, the only eye-witness. The reporting led to riots of 18,000 protestors and clashes between ethnic Albanians and Serbs.

The unverified news reports ignited riots on March 16 and 17 because “media, specifically the broadcasting sector, displayed unacceptable levels of emotion, bias, carelessness, and falsely applied ‘patriotic’ zeal.” The print media were less sensational, and the reporting of the dailies *Koha Ditore* and *Zëri* “helped to decrease tensions” (Haraszti 2004, p.3). However, the incident demonstrates how irresponsible media practice in a fragile democracy such as Kosovo can lead to wide-scale detrimental consequences.

It is important to note, though, that the following year, 2005, the code of journalistic conduct set by the TMC in 2000 to end incitements to ethnic hatred and violence in the press and broadcast media was largely respected. But while “there is higher awareness than ever before that inflammatory language should not be used in ethnic contexts, this does not apply to political rival groups, where there has been a rise in public accusations, complaints, and libel lawsuits” (Freedom House Report, 2006).

The Freedom House analysis of Kosovo’s media defined the overall media practices as “protocol journalism,” meaning that press conferences and press releases are the stories. The organization advocated that there is a lack of stories on issue stories, such as on health, education, technology, the environment, although there have been

improvements in the coverage of business, and sport is always popular” (Freedom House Report, 2006).

Again, considering that Kosovo emerged from half a century of socialist rule, it also brings a certain mentality and attitude among the older generation, which constitute many news editors and journalists. As such, the media tend to be the mouthpiece of power as “[m]edia report news from the top down, not from the bottom up. Old attitudes prevail about the relationship between media and society/institutions” (Kosovo Media Assessment 2004, p.15). There is still no clear understating of the concept of public media, which is confused with state-controlled media. In their practice, the media show the tendency of behaving like a state broadcaster, “reporting in a positive way on the activities of state institutions, although no one accused the channel of displaying any party political bias” (Kosovo Media Assessment 2004, p.15). Moreover, “[t]he free media environment has led to abuse in terms of referencing unchecked sources in stories and freely reporting on individuals’ alleged actions” (Kosovo Media Assessment 2004, p.16).

This study acknowledges that while the media can be successful in exposing issues, there is a need for a developed, efficient legal system that upholds laws and has the willingness to enforce such issues fairly in order for the government to be fully accountable. As is the case with the continual evolution of party politics and the media, the development of the legal system in Kosovo, as part of UNMIK’s Pillar I, was also monitored by the OSCE. The mission was responsible for reporting on proceedings of the administrative, civil and criminal justice systems. Such reports were regularly conducted and they covered different law areas and focused on their compliance with domestic law

and international standards and regularly suggesting “concrete remedial actions for observed shortcomings” (OSCE, n.d.). However, for the purpose of this study, only the extent to which the media is successful in exposing such issues will be examined.

Importance of the topic

Democracy-building processes similar to Kosovo have characterized much of Eastern and Central Europe with the fall of communism. Important to note is that one prevailing argument within academia is that in the process of nation building, democracy as a Western concept cannot be imposed from above. David Chandler, the author of *Western Intervention and the Disintegration of Yugoslavia*, argues that “Any solution has to come from, and be accountable to, the people that live in that country” (Chandler, 2004, p.23). Bearing this in mind and the fact that Kosovo’s population has largely endorsed the establishment of democratic mechanisms that would provide it with the platform to join Western treaties and organization, this study approaches such a concept through an analysis of how media in Kosovo have advocated for democratic accountability.

This study also takes under consideration that media partisanship can be encountered in Western media that have existed for much longer. However, this study seeks to examine the nature of the partisanship prevailing in Kosovo’s daily newspapers, whether they are merely serving as a mouthpiece to government fractions in terms of “protocol journalism”—the extent to which unverified information and sources in forms of press releases are being promoted as facts according to party lines—and how such a

practice affects the citizenry's ability to be an informed fraction of democracy. Therefore, the study will examine whether the dailies provided accounts of the achievements and failures of the mechanisms and institutions responsible for the democratic process, and whether they are serving as the means for creating the necessary public awareness. This time period was chosen so as to assess the dailies' performance on summarizing and reporting government's successes and failures at time when the political parties were subject to assessment by the electorate as well. As such, an analysis of stories from this time period would allow an assessment of the dailies' successes and failures on informing the public and keeping public officials accountable to their promises and performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A definition of accountability

The concept of the media as a watchdog stems from 20th century American journalism. It has come to be representative of the functioning of a democratic society as it provides the basis for the media to hold the government accountable to the electorate and the people it represents. According to the notion of media as the “fourth estate” the media achieves the latter by “monitoring power, by giving voice to a diversity of views and opinions, by providing information to the public to enable it to understand and critically assess state action, including through the presentation of alternative viewpoints and policy options, and by fostering public debate on issues of public concern (Caparini 2004, p.16).

The need to adopt such a practice has particularly been emphasized in the development of new democracies, undergoing the transitions and processes of establishing functional institutions. A common practice with new democracies is that the transitional media are usually funded and trained by international agencies. This applies to the media in Kosovo as well, where the majority of media funding and media building has come from European agencies. Therefore, important to note is that in Europe the media’s tendency toward political party affiliation is a more openly practiced and accepted phenomenon than in the U.S. However, the reason such a concept can be applied to Kosovo’s daily newspapers is because not only is it promoted as a needed role by the Media Commissioner, but the majority of Kosovo’s daily newspapers editorial staff advocate that their editorial practice are free and independent, and that they are not

influenced by any party affiliations.

Previous research on accountability provides insight on how accountability plays out among the various segments in society, as well as the specifics on the role of the media in requesting government accountability. The research that examines the practicality of accountability in new democracies makes a distinction between vertical accountability and horizontal accountability.

O'Donnell argues that in new democracies, vertical accountability implies the presence of democracy achieved through free and fair elections, "along with freedoms of speech, the press, and associations, which permit citizens to voice social demands to public officials (elected or not) and to denounce these same officials for wrongful acts that they may commit" (O'Donnell 1998, p.112).

He argues that horizontal accountability "depends on the existence of state agencies that are legally empowered--and factually willing and able--to take actions ranging from routine oversight to criminal sanctions or impeachment in relation to possibly unlawful actions or omissions by other agents or agencies of the state" (O'Donnell 1998, p.112).

An important argument that O'Donnell raises is that even though transitioning democracies might satisfy the criteria of free and fair and political competition (O'Donnell 1998, p.111), the media's role for both types of accountability are of great significance as "[...] there is also the need for independent agencies of the government that gather and publicly circulate data on a broad range of indicators, economic and otherwise" (O'Donnell 1998, p.123).

Grant's research on accountability narrows the distinction between horizontal and vertical accountability to decentralized governments and how it translates into the role

between local governance and the poor segment of the constituents. Grant finds that horizontal accountability through elections is unsatisfactory since elections are held only every four years. Moreover, she acknowledges that in order for citizens to keep government accountable it depends on the information they are provided, and argues that “only when people know what is going on can they hold their government to account” (Grant 2002, p.19).

In a similar approach to O’Donnell’s, Grant also discusses the role of the media in relation to accountability – though in both articles the media is treated peripherally and not as the main subject of study. This study of the correlation between decentralization and accountability is relevant because the eight-year process of democratization in Kosovo has included the process of decentralizing governance. As such, it opens the gateway for accountability to be upheld, which should be achieved through independent media.

Malena, Forster and Singh (2004) use the term “social accountability” achieved from the bottom-up through citizens, communities, civil society organizations and independent media. Though they provide a more conceptual and application-oriented framework for accountability and how it can be achieved, their consideration of the role of the media is important to note. While they acknowledge the overall critical role of the media in contributing to the accountability of a political system, they also state that “[t]he extent to which media are independent and ownership is pluralistic (versus concentrated in a few hands) are important factors that can contribute to the accountability of the political system” (Malena, Forster and Singh 2004, p.13). The study argues that for

successful social accountability initiatives, there is the need for “[...] the strategic use of both traditional and modern forms of media to raise awareness around public issues, disseminate findings and create a platform for public debate” (Malena, Forster and Singh 2004, p.13). Such a claim is significant to the application of accountability in Kosovo, because considering that the majority of media funding has come international agencies, it could be argued that the premises for more independent practices exist.

There is still the need to review more focused accountability research from within the field of journalism and mass communications. Entman has coined the concept of “accountable news,” applicable to a journalism that keeps “ordinary citizens apprised by what government is doing, and how it affects them both individually and with respect to the groups and values that they care about. Journalism thereby fosters in the public, rational opinions about politics and candidates” (Entman 1999, p.48).

Entman in his explication offers six key standards for evaluating the media’s level of commitment: accuracy, balance, checks on pure profit maximization, democratic accountability, highest priority and editorial separation. While the detailed description of the six standards will be further elaborated in the methods section, previous research on holding institutions “accountable” is important to briefly touch upon.

For example, Skolnick and McCoy (1984) specifically examine the role media play in keeping in institutions accountable. They examine First Amendment theory and the role of the media in keeping police accountability through public understanding of police organizations. Although their study is specific to the police institution, their approach is effective and can be applicable to other institutions of a country, including

the government, because they define the police's role in a democratic society as serving the public and not their own interests. They argue that "[t]he media, in their daily scrutiny of public agencies, can be a powerful force for police accountability" (Skolnick and McCoy 1984, p. 522). The authors raise the question of how the public can best grasp the complexities of institutions and argue that it is the role of the media to provide that explanation, and their study continues to examine as to how well the media report on the police. Skolnick and McCoy conclude that

“were the media to report more carefully about policing as process and institution and less about disjointed and sensational events, citizens' ability to hold police accountable would be more consistent with the values justifying freedom of expression as projected by First Amendment theorists” (Skolnick and McCoy 1984, p. 530).

As such, a combination of Entman's six standards of “accountable news” and Skolnick and McCoy latter recommendation on how to seek institutional accountability offers an effective framework of examining how newspapers' political affiliations might influence how government news is presented.

For this study, important to note is Schudson's explication on the role the media can take as political institutions. He looks at “newswork” as a social organization and how that translates in the daily news' content patterns in the interaction between reporters and their sources. He argues that the significance of studying the interaction between a reporter and the source is that it allows examining the power of media as political institutions. Furthermore, Schudson argues that how reporters represent society around them is a result of the preferences and perceptions of publishers and editors. As such, news is a form of culture that often unconsciously incorporates general belief systems,

assumptions and values into news writing (Schudson, 2002).

Framing Theory

In journalism and mass communications, a vast amount of research has been conducted on how media messages are conveyed and how those messages are perceived and interpreted. Whether in qualitative or quantitative research, such an approach has typically been studied through frame analysis and framing theory.

The term frame is usually used in two ways. Firstly, a frame in communication or a media frame “refers to the words, images, phrases, and presentation styles that a speaker (e.g., a politician, a media outlet) uses when relaying information about an issue or event to an audience” (Chong, Druckman 2002, p.100). Second, a “frame in thought or an individual frame refers to an individual’s cognitive understanding of a given situation” (Chong, Druckman 2002, p.101). For example, Chong and Druckman studied how frames in competitive environments—in which individuals receive multiple frames representing alternative positions on an issue—affect not only the audience’s understanding of the event, but also their attitudes. In their study, the authors examine which of the many competing frames will have the most effect on public opinion.

There are many studies that prove the consequences of framing on the public and audience. Such research demonstrates that frames shape citizens’ policy support and related political perceptions (e.g. ed. by Chong and Druckman, Callaghan & Schnell, 2000; Iyengar, 1991; Kahneman & Tversky, 1984; Kinder & Nelson, 1990; Kinder & Sanders, 1990, 1996; Nelson & Kinder, 1996; Nelson et al., 1997; Zaller, 1990).

However, the literature reviewed here is that that deals with more conscious and purposeful framing of news articles where outlets seek to promote one particular angle.

This type of framing has been further narrowed within the field of communications. Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman and Ghanem define a media frame as "the central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration" (Sparks, 2002, p.156). Along the same lines, Entman argues that

"to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entman 1993, p. 52, n.d. *ital.*).

Such definitions provide insight for examining how newspapers "promote a particular problem definition" and how that coincides with the newspaper's approach of presenting and justifying the "problem." The "moral evaluation" can be a part examining the editorializing of policy coverage.

Specific research demonstrates how such practices are applied and achieved. Dickerson examined the framing of political correctness surrounding a controversy involving two professors' speeches in NYC. The event was when Prof. Leonard Jeffries, the chair of the City College of New York (CCNY) Black Studies Department, stated in a speech that "Jews and Italians were responsible for the demeaning way Blacks were depicted in American Film, that Jews had financed the slave trade, and that American history books do not correctly depict African American history" (Dickerson 2003, p.165). Prof. Michael Levin a philosophy professor at CCNY stated "that among other things

Blacks were mentally deficient and less intelligent than Whites, that Whites had good reason to be afraid of Black men, that the police are morally justified in basing searches on skin color, and that homosexuals are abnormal” (Dickerson 2003, p.165). Dickenson examines how the two controversial speeches were framed differently, even though both comments were racial remarks.

While Dickenson examines clashing frames within one outlet’s coverage, another study of Entman’s shows how several U.S. outlets promoted the same frame of two different international events due to political power relations. He studies the contrasting frames that emerged between the stories for the shooting down of the Korean Air Lines flight by the Soviets over the Sea of Japan and the shooting down of the Iran Air flight by the United States over the Persian Gulf. He notes that although the details were different in each case, the principal theme—the killing of more than 300 civilian passengers when an unarmed passenger airliner was shot down by military forces—was the same. His analysis included coverage of *Time*, *Newsweek* and “CBS Evening News” for the same two-week period, and he also cites data from an analysis of all the articles on the event from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*.

His approach includes examining the essence of framing in sizing, magnifying or shrinking elements of the depicted reality to make them more or less salient. He also takes into account the space provided to both events and how many stories on the subject were published, and also the language in the headlines. He also finds that the KAL report provided a moralizing frame, which was not the case in the Iran Air coverage, demonstrating the degree of generalization from the attacks to the nature of the two

political systems. In conclusion, Entman's study shows that the U.S. downing of an Iranian plane was labeled a technical problem while the Soviet downing of a Korean jet was portrayed as a moral outrage (Entman, 1991).

An important point that Entman study raises is that:

“Comparing media narratives of events that could have been reported similarly helps to reveal the critical textual choices that framed the story but would otherwise remain submerged in an undifferentiated text. Unless texts are compared, frames are difficult to detect fully and reliably, because many of the framing devices can appear as “natural,” unremarkable choices of words or images [...] news slant becomes visible when we compare news stories to each other-not to reality” (Entman 1991, p. 6).

For that reason, in order to study the political frames that Kosovar newspapers promote, this study will compare news stories from two different time periods when different coalition parties were in position and opposition. That way, the approach of the newspapers in seeking government accountability and how much that is influenced by their own political leanings can be examined.

Callaghan and Schnell narrow their study to the news media's framing of public policy issues and how it is influenced by political players, such as interest groups, politicians etc. They focused on a specific policy, gun control, and compared the “the rhetoric generated by interest groups and public officials on the Brady Bill and Assault Weapons Ban with actual network news coverage of this legislation from 1988 to 1996” (Callaghan and Schnell 2001, p. 183). The authors conducted multiple content analyses with interest groups' and politicians' rhetoric (inputs) and media discourse (outputs) (Callaghan and Schnell 2001, p.189). They tested “the dynamic interplay between the media, elected officials, and interest groups by comparing media outputs (i.e., the

national broadcast media's coverage of the gun control issue) with interest groups' and politicians' initial inputs (i.e., their actual statements on the subject)" (Callaghan and Schnell 2001, p.189). The authors found that both sets of political players used several interpretative issue frames and worked to deliberately put their preferred themes on the agenda. However, the media also played a role in this process of framing. The author found that the news media

“(a) structured the overall tone of the gun control debate, (b) adopted a distribution of framing perspectives different from that of politicians and interest groups, and (c) packaged policy discourse more often than not in terms of the ‘culture of violence’ theme” (Callaghan and Schnell 2001, p.183).

The authors' findings demonstrate how the media can act as “gatekeepers, advocates, and interpreters of political themes and information,” through selectively and consciously covering their selected side of an issue, providing their own interpretation or merely deciding to give one aspect of the issue more salience than another one (Callaghan and Schnell 2001, p.187). As they point out, “[j]ournalists and editors draw maps or internal story patterns for their readers, and these maps or frames cognitively serve to structure the public debate, influence readers' level of information, and attribute policy responsibility” (see Gamson, 1992; Iyengar, 1991; Kinder & Sanders, 1990, among others).

As the review of literature on accountability and framing shows, journalism is a powerful field indisputably shapes not only global events, but also the everyday lives of people. But journalism also has the ability to seek for accountability and hold the government accountable to its role. If that power and ability is used in a way that

promotes the news outlets' own agenda, not only does it influence the public understanding of the news, but it fails the norm of "watchdog" that the media is intended to uphold. The greatest risk remains in the media's purposeful neglect of such a role. Therefore, this study aims to study how the framing of government success and failure by Kosovar newspapers differ according to the papers' party affiliations, and how that might have overall consequences on the government fulfilling its duties and might hinder the citizens' opportunity to be participants in a democracy.

The study's research question is the following:

Does the framing of government success and failure by Kosovar newspapers differ according to the papers' party affiliations?

Methodology

In order to examine the extent to which Kosovar daily newspapers' coverage is subject to their party affiliations, textual analysis will be applied as a methodology. The study will also include interviews with the newspaper editors, hoping that it will add to the results of the study. The reason these two methods have been chosen is because textual analysis will provide the basis for examining the specific language newspapers use to promote their frames, and it will also allow for patterns to be detected. Interviewing, on the other hand, will help elaborate on the newspapers' decision of how they cover the news.

Textual analysis

The study will rely on textual analysis to examine the frames that the newspapers construct when reporting on the government's successes and failures. Textual analysis refers to the examination of the text's meaning and seeks to explain what interpretations will most likely be made from the particular text, while not seeking to make one interpretation truer than the other (McKee 2003, p.64).

Textual analysis, grounded in critical cultural studies, offers the grounds for the researcher to introduce and discuss contextual factors that might affect the issue being studied, and as such offer meaning to the material. So "the researcher remains cognizant of the circuit of culture within which the text exists," and can take under consideration political and social factors from the time of the study when attributing interpretative meaning to the text (Lester-Roushanzamir and Raman 1999, p.703).

This methodology largely depends on the researcher's constructed framework for the analysis. And it is especially this aspect that makes for potential drawbacks to the methodology. Since textual analysis remains largely an interpretative approach from the researcher, results from two different researches might yield different conclusions (McKee p.64). But the methodology does not ignore the fact that multiple readings are possible. "The method is post-structural because it does not suggest that structure is absolutely determining, but rather that structures exist in relationships with history and human agency" (1999, Feldstein and Acosta-Alzuru, p.704).

As such, textual analysis differs from content analysis since "it allows the researcher to take account of all aspects of content (including omissions) or, as Hall puts it, "every significant stylistic, visual, linguistic, presentational and rhetorical feature." Latent meanings and discursive strategies emerge as the evidence to be considered" (1999, Feldstein and Acosta-Alzuru, p.702). Another fact is that this methodology doesn't make the study repeatable. While content analysis would offer such an opportunity, textual analysis has been chosen because of the desire to decipher how the text transmits meaning.

Textual analysis is a frequent method used for examining how the media construct certain representations and images of events or specific groups within society. Lester-Roushanzamir and Raman (1999) applied textual analysis to study how the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution's* "News for Kids" section created representations of the international "other" when reporting on the Olympic Games. Feldstein and Acosta-Alzuru (2003) use the concept of news as "myth" in their textual analysis of the coverage

of the 1994 bombing of the Israelite Argentinean Mutual Aid Association (AMIA) building. The authors examine the representation of "the Jews" in two major Argentinean newspapers: *La Nación* and *Clarín*, and how the dailies distanced Jews and non-Jews, presenting Argentinean Jews in the role of scapegoat, and adding to the perception that the AMIA attack was a Jewish problem and a Jewish burden.

Berkowitz (2005) used textual analysis when studying the creation of news on terrorism, specifically the coverage of seven Palestinian suicide bombers and how differently they were portrayed from male suicide bombers. Their findings argue that journalists create frames and images to suit their story purpose. Brookes (1999) used textual analysis to study the relation between news and national identity, and he argues that the news media's role in the everyday reproduction of national identity is often overlooked in the coverage of less obvious issues. So, he looks at a specific case of the representations of the nation in British press coverage of the crisis over "mad cow disease" in March 1996, and how the media encouraged a commonsense identification with the nation through images and symbols of explicit nationalism.

Zhao (1994) also used textual analysis in examining the frames from the press coverage of the antiwar protests during the first two weeks of the Gulf War. He also paid attention to how the voices from the movement were treated by the media, and the findings were put into the context of America's "master narrative" of war, a narrative which had been threatened by the Vietnam experience. Textual analysis is also applied by Merskin (2004) in analyzing the use of rhetoric based on stereotypical words and images in examining the speeches by U.S. President, George W. Bush, following 9/11.

Dickerson in examining the framing of political correctness surrounding the controversy of the two New York City professors' speeches examined news articles in *The New York Times* over a three year period, 1990-1993, which encapsulates the period of greatest overlap between the two stories, but excludes editorials and photographs. Through textual analysis of the structural aspect of the articles and analysis of the rhetorical elements, Dickenson found that the Jeffries story was given more importance—there were eight times more stories about him, and they generally had more space devoted. Through textual analysis, Dickenson found two contrasting frames presented, a “legitimizing” and a “delegitimizing” frame (Dickerson 2003, p.168). Levin was “legitimized” by being upgraded, and references to his academic status, research and writing were frequently quoted. Jeffries was labeled through the coverage as racist and anti-Semitic.

Application

In order to apply textual analysis to how the Kosovar daily newspapers cover government success and failure and whether that is influenced by party affiliations, the following daily newspapers will be examined: *Bota*, *Sot*, *Epoka e Re*, *Koha Ditore*, *Express*, *Zëri*, *Kosova Sot*, *Bota Sot*, *Epoka e Re*. Not only are these six most widely read dailies in Kosovo, but their variety will allow for the analysis to reach better results. The study will also include *Express* daily in the study, even though this newspaper was created in 2005. The reason for including *Express* is that the newspaper has frequently done successful investigative stories, and it holds a great degree of respect among

Kosovan society at large.

Stories will be chosen from two different time periods, when different government structures existed. Therefore, in order to evaluate whether the dailies' coverage is shaped by their political affiliations, textual analysis will be conducted of news articles from the 2004 and 2007 electoral campaigns. As such, when conducting textual analysis of the 2004 coverage, this study will take under consideration that the dailies could assess the all-party unity coalition government's performance that governed through the 2001-2004 time period. Subsequently, the textual analysis of the 2007 elections will allow the study to apply textual analysis of the daily's coverage of the first position-coalition government structured that governed through the 2004-2007 period. As such, in both 2004 and 2007, both political parties and the media would have an available point of reference for their work.

The time period examined included the two weeks of coverage before the elections and a week of coverage after the elections; both 2004 and 2007. As such, the analysis included seven weeks total of coverage. The stories were collected from Kosovo's National Library in Pristina, Kosovo.

The researcher will predominantly focus on cover stories that appear on the front page for selection. However, policy-oriented stories that appear on the front page will also be selected and read.

The 2004 media assessment by USAID/Kosovo defined the newspapers that this study will employ in the analysis in the following was: *Koha Ditore* is considered independent; *Zëri* independent; *Bota Sota* associated with the LDK political party; *Epoka*

e Re associated with political party PDK; *Kosova Sot* as independent (Kosovo Media Assessment 2004, p.4). *Daily Express* was still not around at the time of the assessment.

Frames that are created in the text will be evaluated by relying on Entman's standards of what accounts to "accountable news." The textual analysis will mainly be conducted in such a way that the researcher will select front-page stories so as to see what issues are given greater importance in the newspapers and higher priority. Those stories will then be read several times, and the researcher will seek to draw out emerging patterns. The main aspects evaluated will be accuracy, balance and editorial separation.

These concepts will be drawn from Entman's definitions – accuracy is "news organizations devote great resources and energy to the factual basis of factual claims in news columns. In practice this usually means reliance on legitimate sources: those persons affiliated with, and documents produced by, prestigious, credible, powerful institutions;" balance refers to "journalists attempt to provide roughly equivalent treatment to contending sides in disputes (most often, spokespersons of both major parties) and keep personal views of issues and persons involved in news from coloring reports;" democratic accountability refers to the "traditional news organizations attempt to hold the government to account by maintaining a high level of surveillance of public officials and promoting monitorial citizenship;" highest priority examines "page-one placement, most prestigious/skilled journalists assigned" and is "accorded to major policy issues and decisions by executive (especially), legislative, and judicial branches of government;" and editorial separation, which means that "news and editorial staffs are largely separate and positions endorsed on editorial pages do not consciously influence

balance on news pages. Story selections, placement, and follow-ups are determined by news judgment, not by editorial positions” (Entman 1999, p.54).

Another set of standards that can be applied when conducting the textual analysis is Mindich and his suggestion on the most practical approach in achieving objective news. Mindich’s “objective” reporting is made out of five components, and his explications of those five components coincide directly with the explication of government accountability in the research question. The definitions are in the following way,

“The first of these components is *detachment*, ‘to make sure the facts are doing the talking, not the reporter’s own preconceived notions.’ The ethic of *nonpartisanship* is the second; reporters must offer ‘both sides’ of each story. The third is a style of writing called the *inverted pyramid*, which gives readers the most important fact in the lead paragraph. *Naïve empiricism*, or reliance on ‘facts’ to ‘report accurately the truth or reality of the event,’ is the fourth quality. The fifth and final component is *balance*, the impossible yet all-important goal that leads to ‘undistorted reporting’” (Mindich 1998, p.10).

The more thorough interpretation of the frames will also depend on the researcher. Therefore, after applying the abovementioned definitions set forth by Entman and Mindich, the researcher anticipates that the frames and their pattern will differ from 2004 and 2007 for the individual newspaper as well as among the six newspapers. With regard to “accuracy,” the researcher anticipates that the same facts will be presented differently so as to fit the newspaper’s affiliation and preferred structure. The majority of the stories are expected to be single-source oriented, where a particular leader’s opinion on a public issue will not be challenged. The researcher also anticipates that a pattern as

to which leader is given higher priority will emerge for each specific newspaper. The researcher anticipates that the same practice will apply to policy-oriented stories, thus depending on which political party leads which ministry, the stories from different newspapers will have different and opposing angles. When examining the extent of editorial separation, the researcher will be particular about linguistic applications, and the extent to which literary voice—such as usage of descriptive and elaborative verbs and adjectives—is used in hard news coverage. All of these anticipated frames will be justified and elaborated on by using Mindich’s definition of objectivity as support.

As mentioned in the Media Environment section, the Freedom House analysis of Kosovo’s media defined the overall media practices as “protocol journalism,” meaning that press conferences and press releases sometimes tend to be the stories themselves. As such, the study will pay close attention to such practice and their selection. Regarding other stories, the researcher anticipates that the frames could be generalized as either “positive frames” or “negative or missing frames.” Positive frames will refer to the application of the above-mentioned anticipated results so as to promote the political party or policy upheld by the newspapers itself. Positive frames might emerge in the newspaper’s frame to present a political party or leader as the most capable during governance or as presenting the best election aims and program. “Negative frames” will refer to the attempt to criticize opposing political parties or merely report on sign of failure while no sufficient background or basis for such attacks are provided. Such frames will also refer to when a public official, leader or issue will be missing from the coverage all together.

Interviewing

Since this study seeks to examine the factors that affect the practice of journalism in Kosovo, it is also important to include insight from the people involved in the decision-making processes, such as the editors in chief. For that reason, interviewing will be used as an additional methodology so that the results can also be merged into meaning from both methodologies.

For this study, semi-structured, open-ended questions will be applied, which constitutes for the interviewer setting up a general structure in advance of what ground will be covered and the main questions to be asked. The detailed structure is carried out during the interview, and the person being interviewed has a fair degree of freedom in what to talk about, how much to say, and how to express it. Semi-structured is usually used for small-scale research when it doesn't involve as many interviewee participants in the process (Wengraf 2001, p.62).

A disadvantage to interviewing as a methodology, particularly those that endorse open-ended questions, is the fact of how accurate of the information provided by the participants. While there is no real way to test the credibility, the methodology upholds that the answers are still relevant because "it assumes that there is invariable some basic underlying attitude or opinion that a person is firmly committed to, i.e., his *real* belief. And it implies that if we can just develop shrewd enough interviewing techniques, we can make him 'spill the beans' and reveal what this basic attitude really is" (Dexter 2006, p.199).

Cooper and Fairburn (1987), for example, used a semi-structured interview to

assess the full range of the specific psychopathology of eating disorders, including these patients' extreme concerns about their shape and weight.

Aberbach and Rockman (2002) used semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions in order to examine the political thinking of American administrators and members of Congress. Since their aim was to learn about political attitudes, values, and beliefs, not in particular events or individuals, they recommend this methodology since it allows for the opportunity to continue with follow-up questions in order.

Application

This study will take a similar approach to semi-structured interviewing. The participants will include one editor from each newspaper who is in charge of assigning stories that are covered and is involved in the gatekeeping process. Participants will be asked to describe in detail their decision-making process, justify their decisions and elaborate on “objective” their decisions are.

The following questions will serve as the foundation for the interview, although follow-up questions will be determined by the participants answer:

1. What is the role of journalism in a democratic society?
2. What is the current role of journalism in Kosovo?
3. To what extent do the Kosovar newspapers fulfill that role?
4. What kind of improvements have there been in journalism in the past eight years?
5. What requires further improvement?

6. What is your role as an editor?
7. How would you define the role of your newspaper in the Kosovar society?
8. What role do you think your newspapers plays with regard to keeping domestic institutions accountable?
9. Does your newspaper have any political leanings?
10. If yes, how does that influence your coverage? If no, how do you decide the importance of news stories?
11. How much do your political preferences influence your decision-making of what news to cover?

Analysis Results

Table A - List of abbreviations used in the analysis results section:

AAK – The Alliance for the Future of Kosovo

AER – European Agency for Reconstruction

AKR – The New Alliance of Kosovo

BSPK - The Association of Independent Union of Kosovo

EU - The European Union

LDD – The Democratic League of Dardania

LDK – The Democratic League of Kosovo

PDK- The Democratic Party of Kosovo

ORA- The Reformist Group ORA

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

UNMIK- The United Nations Mission in Kosovo

Table B - Timeline of events referred to in the analysis results section

June 10, 1999 - NATO ended its 78-day military campaign against former-Yugoslavia

June 10, 1999 – UNMIK is established under United Nations Security Council 1244

October 23, 2001 – Kosovo’s first Assembly elections occur. The results yield in all-unity coalition government between the LDK-AAK-PDK.

October 2004 – Political parties campaign for elections.

October 5, 2004 – PDK experienced electricity cuts in its election rally in three municipalities led by the LDK.

October 23, 2004 – Election Day, resulting in a coalition between the LDK and AAK.

November 2007 - Political parties campaign for elections.

October 31, 2007 – The Kosovo government approved a law on increasing pensions by 90 percent to 75 euros, based on approval by the he Ministry of Economy and Finances. The law to be effective January 1, 2008.

November 6, 2007 – Pensioners in Mitrovica revolt against AAK.

November 6, 2007 – Pensioners in Pristina seek LDK’s explanation on the late policy of increasing pensions.

November 17, 2007 – Election Day. PDK and LDK create the government’s position.

Analysis Results

Kosovo's first, free parliamentary elections on October 23, 2001, were largely embraced as a commemoration of the practice of democracy. The young Kosovar media faced the task of covering elections for the first time, and to a large extent, Kosovar newspapers were still discovering their own strengths and weaknesses. The same can be said for the political parties, which were discovering their role in society and their relationship with the citizenry. Considering that the first elections took place two years after NATO had ended its military air-strike against former Yugoslavia, the case of an independent Kosovo remained the highest priority for all sectors in Kosovo. This was also reflected in the 2001 elections coverage, where party politics centered on claims of a free, independent Kosovo, and that reflected in the media's representations of such an outcome being the only viable one.

Therefore, this study examined and compared the media coverage of the October 2004 and November 2007 elections. As such, in the 2004 elections, both political parties and the media would have an available point of reference for their work. The same applies to the 2007 elections, which offered the media the opportunity to examine the performance of the first position-opposition construction of government. Due to the nature of the political party formations in Kosovo, this study examined the extent to which their media coverage was influenced by political party affiliations.

During the analysis, this study took under consideration that the 2001 elections yielded in an all-party unity coalition, under which government LDK seized 47 seats, PDK 26 seats, AAK 8 seats, and Coalition Return 12 (with 10 predetermined seats as it

was a minority party). LDK leader Ibrahim Rugova was appointed President and PDK's member, Bajram Rexhepi, was appointed Prime Minister. The latter information was considered throughout the application of textual analysis of the 2004 electoral campaigns. The October 23, 2004 elections yielded the first position-opposition government, comprised of LDK and AAK. LDK seized 47 seats, PDK 30 seats, AAK 9 seats and ORA 7 seats. This study considered the government arrangement when applying textual analysis to the 2007 coverage of the electoral campaigns.

This study discerned the common patterns manifested in the stories from all six daily newspapers, the predominant frames in each newspaper during both years and compared the coverage among the different newspapers by focusing on the issues that all dailies covered. Attention was also paid to stories that were deemed of higher importance in some dailies and neglected by others.

Overall, the Kosovar dailies dedicated separate sections pertaining mainly to the flow of election campaigns. Therefore, this study paid close attention to the stories stemming from the election section of the daily.

As determined in the methodology section, this study applied Entman's standard of "accountable news" (Entman 1999, p.48) and Mindich's five components of "objective reporting" (Mindich 1998, p.10). Entman's "highest priority" standard was beneficial in determining the newspaper's position on the salience of issues and examining its approach to the political party campaigns. All of the Kosovar daily newspapers placed election-related stories on their front page; the difference emerged in the importance the story was given through layout.

Bota Sot most frequently ran an election story as its main front-page story, and they were always concerning the LDK. While *Epoka e Re* ran election stories as main-front page stories to a lesser degree, when it did, they pertained to the PDK. The remaining four dailies, *Express*, *Kosova Sot*, *Koha Ditore* and *Zëri*, gave highest priority placement to stories related to international supervised negotiations on Kosovo's final status negotiations. However, these four dailies also included sidebar boxes with headlines that pertained to the political parties' election campaigns. For these sidebar boxes, political parties used a rotating method of having different parties on the front page appear on different days.

The most commonly shared pattern that emerged was in regard to the dailies' headline structure. In both 2004 and 2007, headlines were typically pullout quotes from party leaders during a particular election rally, which comprised of a particular promise put forth by the political party. The only exception was *Koha Ditore* in 2004, when its headlines related to a policy put forth by a political party. Due to the nature of rhetoric that the leaders expressed, when a particular party appeared on the front page more frequently, such headlines framed the party as the most efficient and offering the most compatible programs.

Another common shared pattern was in regard to story structure and the newspapers' application of Entman's "accuracy" standard. Overall, the Kosovar daily newspapers failed to provide an overview of the government's performance during its mandate. The majority of stories failed to place the political party in the context of policy achievements or failures, and there was no clear indication as to which party led which

ministry. The latter also came across through the overall tendency of the daily newspapers to assume that the electorate was already knowledgeable in such areas, and on occasions the dailies did not even provide background information to party candidates.

Moreover, there was a lack of stories that outlined the objectives and aims of the ministries, thus consequently, a lack of stories that assessed the performance of the ministries. The majority of the stories did not provide sufficient or comprehensive information on the specific policies undertaken by the Kosovar government. Rarely did any of the newspapers provide detailed accounts of the political platforms that the political parties included as part of the election programs or on the debate of whether political parties had complied such a program at all. Therefore, no clear comparisons could be drawn upon party policies and the party's intended implementation methods.

A regular pattern was to merely replicate the political parties' oratory applied during their electoral campaigns. Therefore, to some extent, the story's thoroughness was largely dependable and determined by the political parties' success to promote their entity. As such, any form of watchdog role or accountability sought from government officials tends to come through political party attacks on one another.

The frame of replication led the media to serve as the means for the political parties to promote their own agendas rather than the dailies serving as a monitorial agent for the citizenry. As the political parties continually emphasized and reiterated certain aspects of their party program, the dailies reflected the same practice in their coverage—coming usually in the form of promises for a better developed economy, agriculture, changes in the health and education systems, and improvements in infrastructure, arts and

sports. Such practice promoted the notion that all of the political parties had designed attainable and feasible election programs, and rarely were officials challenged as to why some of the same promises from 2004 were being repeated in 2007.

In this context, the newspapers predominantly failed to fulfill Entman's standard of "democratic accountability." Along the same lines, the newspapers failed to fulfill the standard of "balance" because on a daily basis, each political party story stood on its own. Rarely were there attempts to verify the accuracy of a certain disagreement or dispute between contesting parties. The leaders were merely offered to opportunity to express their opinion no matter its content. And, rarely did the Kosovar newspapers perform the practice of extracting one issue or policy, placing it in the context of prevailing circumstances, and providing equivalent opportunity for contending sides to explain their stance.

Important to note is that throughout the majority of stories, opportunities for seeking direct response from party election candidates and officials did exist, as many stories were reported from press meetings. The stories that covered the parties' election campaign rallies often indicate that a platform for discussion was offered. Moreover, the majority of the dailies conducted interviews with the candidates on the eve of elections.

Nonetheless, in the context of the research question put forth in this study, the selection of information and their presentation to the reader allowed to discern differences among the different newspapers' practice. Moreover, this study paid close attention to the use of language in the presentation of such information, which was either neutral or used as the means to criticize a political party or to further enhance and

promote the political party's point view. It is in this regard that Mindich's standards were taken into account, and where positive and negative frames, as the study has set out to discern, can be further explicated.

In the following section, this study offers observations for each newspaper separately. Once again, the above-mentioned frames and patterns pertain to the most common and general practices manifested in the overall coverage of the dailies. In terms of examining whether the newspapers coverage was politically affiliated, the study will state each daily's common framing of the political parties.

However, there are two particular issues that drew wide-scale media attention and coverage for which this study will present the results. One relates to electricity cuts that the PDK experienced during three of its electoral campaigns in 2004. The incident led to back and forth attacks from PDK and LDK. The other issue is related to the LDK-AAK coalition government's decision to double pensions during the election campaign and present the policy as part of their successful governing mandate. This issue in particular provided a good opportunity to assess the constructed frames within the dailies as pensioners had organized protests against both parties in two different cities, and the frames emerging from the coverage differed in the dailies.

Also important to note is that the observations explained below are all cases on their own—meaning that the particular explanation is valid only to the particular story being discussed. Some of these stories and their analysis demonstrate instances of thorough, informative coverage where the daily took its typical approach a step further and placed the issue in context. Even though these examples stand alone, they

demonstrate that opportunities for such types of journalism do exist.

Bota Sot

Summary of interview with editor in chief, Bajrush Morina – 01. 24. 2007

Bota Sot is a daily that began operation after 1999. Besides daily distribution in Kosovo, the paper has a readership in the Diaspora as well. Its editor in chief, Bajrush Morina, has practiced journalism since before the 1990s, and defines the restricted journalism of Kosovar media of the time as a handkerchief, which due to Serbian oppression, “saw everything black in the Serbian media and everything white in ours.” He relates this definition to journalism practices he notices in post-1999 journalism practice.

“The post-war media has started to change the way it plays its role of a handkerchief; political handkerchief for a leader of a political group. Now we do not have only one medium and we do not have only one system as it had been before. But all the media have become a type of rag. And I say this with regret, that the written media in Kosovo, don’t have large influence on society. There have been many affairs talked about lately, and nothing has changed in our society.”

Morina believes that Kosovo’s post-1999 media are “orchestrated from private bosses” and he further defines journalism in Kosovo as one of “different interests” and one that “is not always affective or determinative in our society’s physiognomy.”

Nonetheless, from all the Kosovar dailies, it is the only one to openly declare affiliation with the LDK. Morina stated that *Bota Sot* is in accord with the policies and programs set forth by LDK, which according to its editorial staff does not necessarily hinder the outlets independence. Morina defines an outlet’s independence only in terms

of economic sustainability. He stated the following in terms of media independence and the newspapers that he runs:

“*Bota Sot* is economically independent because no political party leader finances it; no NGO donation, and we are not financed from any prestigious company. But media independence does not depend on the political positioning of the medium. For me, the media are independent if they exist exclusively from their work and endeavor. The economic criterion is the basis that determines the entire philosophy of the medium’s positioning. We exist on our money. This is independence. On the other hand, the newspaper’s content is entirely on an editorial politics that the editor in chief decides on or the editorial staff. I cannot say that I cannot be independent if I am critical to a political party that for the moment is in the position. Or if in our preferences we tend to agree with a political leader of a political movement. We cannot say that *Bota Sot* is entirely biased because it supports LDK.”

Morina acknowledged the impact of political affiliations on seeking government accountability. “Naturally, while having political preferences for a subject, the stepping over off freedom of the press begins. When having preferences, one is going to be more reserved for the issues that might appear for a subject, minister or institutions that he/she leads.”

***Bota Sot* Analysis Results**

The application of textual analysis to *Bota Sot* deserved a slightly different framework as the newspaper’s editorial candidly claimed political affiliation toward the LDK. Nevertheless, in the context of this study, the mere fact that a newspaper’s editorial stance coincides with a particular political party should not prevent the newspaper from providing accurate information. Thus, bearing in mind its editorial stance, this study sought to examine whether the text content was based on facts and the extent to which the

daily was successful in demonstrating to the electorate LDK's successes while in power.

In 2004, the first predominant and obvious frame that emerged from *Bota Sot* is one that promoted the LDK as if it were the only party in the political spectrum. *Bota Sot* continually had headlines such as, "Rugova: the results of LDK are known, they are evident and we celebrate and commemorate them" (2004, October 15, p.1); "Dr. Rugova: LDK began the first steps for the freedom and independence of Kosovo" (2004, October 15, p.1) ; "Rugova: LDK has clear objectives for Kosovo's future" (2004, October 21, p.1); "President Rugova: Vote for LDK, for the bright future of Kosovo" (2004, October 22, p.1). On frequent occasions, such headlines were published without attribution, which would further reinforce the latter frame. Example include: "A vote for the LDK is a guarantee for the youth's right to participate in government institutions" (2004, October 2, p.1); "With LDK's leadership, the citizen's life has approached European standards" (2004, October 6, p.1); "Everyone should participate in elections and vote for Kosovo, vote for Ibrahim Rugova" (2004, October 9, p.1).

In 2004 and 2007, *Bota Sot* framed LDK as successful throughout its mandate. The party's position was augmented through consistent reminders that it had been operating since the early 1990s. The only coverage of rivalry political parties came in the form of negative frames, specifically in attacking the party leaders. Examples include, "Once again, PDK ruins the electoral image in Kosovo," (2007, October 18, p.6), or the editorializing on "Veton 'The millionaire' that illegally deals with trade of wine, coffee, tea, coco...!" (2004, October 18, p.7).

Bota Sot's frames were impartial in its coverage of discussions and debates

organized from apolitical institutions. For example, the story “Construction law needs to be approved” provided an informative account of the Advising Forum of the Directory Inspection of the Municipalities of Kosovo meeting (2004, October 1, p.1). The discussion focused on the issue of legalizing the up to date constructions without permission. This topic is of extreme importance throughout Kosovo since in the post 1999 period, apartment residencies throughout cities had additional floors built in, and the majority was done without municipal permission and changed the physiognomy of entire neighborhoods.

Many of the same patterns from 2004 appear in *Bota Sot*'s coverage of the 2007 elections. LDK continued to seize front-page placement and remained as the newspaper's highest priority. However, in 2007, *Bota Sot* divided this priority between LDK and LDD, a party that stemmed from LDK. The stories' language continued to be determined by the rhetoric of political leaders, which were constructed on the party's endorsement of its governing ability and such rhetoric were always presented as facts.

In 2007, there is an evident increase in *Bota Sot*'s coverage of AAK, which was part of the coalition government in the 2004-2007 period. AAK was also framed as a successful party while no specific policies or projects implemented were mentioned.

In rare occasions when *Bota Sot* referred to poor-managed policies of the coalition government, the story was framed from the perspective of the LDK that the particular policy was the result of party members that now belonged to the LDD. As such, the daily refrains from framing LDK's policy as a failure (“Gjilan's earth will produce enough food.” 2007, November 10, p.6).

Important to note is that *Bota Sot* in 2007 did cover some of PDK's and ORA's policies and program, though such stories were limited only to short briefs containing information to rally location and the corresponding candidate.

Epoka e Re

Summary of interview with deputy editor, Blerim Etemaj, 01.25.2007

Epoka e Re is another daily that began operation after 1999. The daily is largely perceived as an endorser of the PDK, which did come across its editorial pages. Its editor, Blerim Etemaj, recognized that the media have an “uncontestable role. Through news and means of information you can have a great impact, whether positive or negative. Through news that you put out in a newspaper, you inform first of all the reader directly, but on the other side, you also inform them on scandals, whether be it corruption or other malfunctions. So through newspapers you bring news to the reader but always bearing in mind that the news needs to be thorough, to be in the service of journalism and in the service of the public.”

Etemaj said that being that Kosovo is a country in transition, the media are also in need of improvement; however, he points out that professional advances are noticeable. “For example, right after the war, there was an euphoria of papers who were dealing mostly with unsupported attacks, but I think that papers have realized that they cannot stand strong if that is all they are based on and that they need to be independent and without political leaning.”

For him, the media's success of keeping public officials has not yet achieved a

desired level, but they do attempt to do so to the best of the ability. “The media do try. Maybe not all the time, but they do pressure local and central institutions to be accountable. And leaders do pay attention to what the media say.”

Etemaj views his daily as completely independent of political leaning. He said that while they recognize the fact that scandal-relates stories receive more attention, it is the role of the editor to decide what deserves attention and what not. “On more sensitive cases, we take under consideration the stakeholders and people affected by the news [...] In the past years, the status has been the number one story because everything depends on it, economic development, developments in culture and other spectrums. All these fields are blocked by the status.”

***Epoka e Re* Analysis Results**

In 2004, *Epoka e Re*'s front page stories were predominantly on the process of the final status and information regarding the electoral process. As previously noted, when placing an election-oriented story on the front page, it tended to be PDK related. There was also a tendency to provide more coverage and space to PDK. The language used to describe PDK's rallies framed the party and its members as grandiose—resembling *Bota Sot*'s frames of LDK.

Different from the other newspapers, *Epoka e Re* emphasized Bajram Rexhepi's 2001-2004 Prime Minister post, which was framed as a sign of leadership experience for PDK. For example, such headlines ran along the lines of, “Rexhepi in Prizren: on October 23, vote for those that proved themselves at hard times” (2004, October 2, p.1);

“Rexhepi: We proved that we keep promises” (2004, October 5, p.1), and “Thaci: Bajram Rexhepi was respected all over Kosovo, and he needs to be respected in Mitrovica as well” (2004, October 1, p.13). These stories were mainly descriptions on the flow of the campaign, and they highly resembled *Bota Sot*'s elaborative portrayals of the LDK, where the crowd shouting in support of the party is grandly augmented.

Epoka e Re's coverage of the electricity cuts framed LDK as the catalyst behind the action. The story ran under the headline “Darkness, arrest, ...they start warming the campaigns” (2004, October 5, p.1). The follow up to the story ran under the headline “PDK accuses LDK: In Gjilan, students in the rally; in Fushe-Kosove you cut the electricity” (2004, October 6, p.12). No response from LDK officials was published, which did exist as other dailies published it. In terms of language usage toward the LDK, *Epoka e Re* sometimes applied language such as “LDK manipulated students” and referred to its campaign as “LDK's unfair pre-electoral campaign games” (“LDK manipulated students.” 2004, October 2, p.7).

Epoka e Re also ran stories treating all political parties with the same critical assessment. One was “Rexhepi, Kosumi, Surroi, Tahiri, Zeneli, don't know how much a liter of oil costs” reporting on a discussion organized by an youth alternative radio station Urban FM, during which the leaders were asked questions on their specific plans for the Kosovar youth (2004, October 18, p.13). Another story “Does anyone in Kosovo know the act of resignation?” summarized the redundant promises from independence, EU integration, unified Mitrovica, economic wellbeing, prosperity to fighting corruption (2004, October 19, p.1). The story summarized the authority of UNMIK and that of local

institutions and challenged the parties on why they deliver promises in areas where they lack authority.

In comparison to the 2004 coverage, *Epoka e Re* in 2007 did provide more detail in the stories themselves. In 2007, some specific program measures were presented, which might also be a result of the political parties having more detailed programs themselves.

Moreover, in 2007, *Epoka e Re*'s "negative frames" of the LDK were not overpowering, and there were no day-to-day attempts to portray LDK as inferior to PDK. Even when the daily summarized the first phase of the electoral campaigns in an attempt to draw the similarities and differences between the running parties, PDK, AAK, ORA and LDK were all covered with a detached approach.

However, by not using previous elections as a reference point, the stories' content was determined by the political party's rhetoric. This outcome was largely evident in PDK's 2007 electoral campaign. PDK's main slogan had been "Time for Change" and as *Epoka e Re* mainly reported on the PDK's rhetoric, such practice created a frame that PDK was offering the most practical program. Examples include: "Thaci, the address for Pristina is Fatmir Limaj" (2007, November 5, p.1), "Limaj: Government players are tired, they should leave" (2007, November 6, p1) and "The majority of the citizens for changes" (2007, November 7, p.1). In all of the three latter stories, Limaj was presented as the catalyst of change.

Overall, though, in the coverage of the coalition government, *Epoka e Re* fell short of offering to the electorate background assessment of the ministries during their

mandate. Phrases such as, “the candidate listed all their achievements” (November 5, 2007) without actually explicating such actions are common.

An interesting approach in the pension’s issue was that *Epoka e Re* took a more lenient approach toward LDK than toward AAK. *Epoka e Re* covered LDK’s promises to increase pensions as any other promise of their electoral campaign. However, this might be a result of the fact that in its electoral rally in Mitrovica, AAK was greeted by an angry group of pensioners who complained to the Minister for Work and Social Wellbeing that the decision was long overdue.

Koha Ditore

Summary of interview with editor in chief Agron Bajrami, 01.27.2008

Koha Ditore is the only newspaper published throughout the 1990s. It was created by Veton Surroi, who detached himself from the paper once he entered politics. However, its current owner is Surroi’s sister, Flaka Surroi. The current editor in chief is Agron Bajrami. *Koha Ditore* also has a readership in the Diaspora, and the paper is generally viewed as a more elite newspaper, targeting a more educated readership, which Bajrami also defines as their target audience.

For Bajrami, the primary role of journalism is “to inform people on developments relevant for the society it serves. Within this information, various analysis and commentary, which clarify complex developments to society are also included [...] In Kosovo, besides information, there is a need for explanation of information and analysis of developments that occur as often there are contradictions, misunderstanding and

ambiguity in the events and process themselves.”

For Bajrami, the media have to be professional and act on behalf of the public in their approach to seeking transparency and accountability from institutions. He notices an improvement in such approaches, particularly with the younger generation of journalists who are more assertive in their approach to public officials. In terms of political affiliations, he acknowledges that journalists are entitled to their political preferences. “But there is the line where the regulations of professionalism should not conform to the dictatorship of that idea. So if the truth becomes a victim of supporting the political idea, then it [the outlet] fails as journalism or a medium.”

Bajrami acknowledges the fact that his daily is often linked to Veton Surroi and his previous relationship with the paper. “But I have told people that I do not ignore the fact and do not want to ignore the fact that he is the man who created this newspaper, and established its foundation and was the one who made it develop in a professional, credible newspaper. And so the moment that he enters politics, I have to play the role of someone that does not even know him? No. Most surely, we share the same thoughts on journalism and democracy as we have worked together and we have created this together, and this was a form of cooperative idea, the creation of this newspaper. Therefore, that is a fact that I live very comfortably with. But the fact that he is in a political party does not mean that I have to support everything that his party does and thinks. It’s not my burden or obligation to do so.”

Bajrami pointed out that an important factor in regard to the efficiency of journalism practices in Kosovo was that often times the lack of information is due to the hesitancy and refusal by responsible actors to cooperate with the media and offer information.

***Koha Ditore* Analysis Results**

Koha Ditore's coverage of the political parties tended to be more policy and issue-oriented. Although some of the general patterns and frames previously explained do emerge, the daily achieved to inform the readers on specific party approaches, draw some comparisons among them and provided more thorough stories beyond the mere account of replicating rally speeches. Such practice came across immediately through the newspaper's headlines which seldom were constructed of leader quotes as was the common tendency of the other daily newspapers. As such, readers that only scan headlines would obtain information from this daily.

Koha Ditore provided a more comprehensive account of the election process and monitored the political parties as one entity. For example, as early as October 3, 2004, *Koha Ditore* ran a story on how "The majority of political parties haven't handed over the financial report for the campaigns," which presented electoral processes that the parties had to abide by (2004, October 3, p.2). However, the story failed to include reactions from the political parties that breached such processes, which would have made any claims to accountability more powerful.

The "positive frames" that did occur in *Koha Ditore*'s campaign rally coverage were in relation to the reformist group ORA. In 2004, it was not completely clear whether such practice was due to a bias in the paper's coverage or the party itself being more articulate in its oratory. However, one particular story where *Koha Ditore* seized a supporting stance to ORA was in reaction to *Bota Sot*'s direct attack on ORA's leader Veton Surroi. ("Surroi: If LDK's main argument is that [no] my marriage, then LDK has

lost its way a long time ago.” 2004, October 22, p.7). This practice raises the questions of whether such a reaction should have been covered by all the dailies or whether it is an indicator of *Koha Ditore*'s leaning toward ORA. *Koha Ditore*'s editorial leaning toward ORA emerged in other stories where government actions are explained and the daily reported on the policy only through ORA's criticism of the policy. For example, when the Ministry of Environment and Planning released its Strategy for Action, *Koha Ditore* covered the story only through ORA's criticism of the strategy. The story "Ora offers 10 points for the center, they assess the strategy of the Ministry of Environment as not based on law" is based on ORA's stance that the presented strategy resembles more a report, while the story itself did not summarize the points the strategy raised, what it contained or what specifically it was that ORA members were critical of (October 1, 2004, p.6).

There is specific language usage that deserves mentioning in terms of *Koha Ditore*'s coverage of the coalition government, particularly toward the LDK. While all parties engaged in repetitive rhetoric, the daily points out this practice only for LDK members. Examples include: "Without any novelty, Rugova is welcomed by the LDK women" (2004, October 10, p.6) and "Termkolli: The campaign is successful, the media for the most part are right." The latter story calls Termkolli "a meteorologist...assuming" that their program had been "supported by the large majority" (2004, October 12, p.7).

Koha Ditore made reference to party promises from the 2001 elections, as in "In this stadium in 2001, in the electoral campaign for the first parliamentary elections, Rugova had asked from the head of the municipal assembly, Lutfi Haziri, to tell those from the tobacco enterprises to start with the production of "Independenca" cigarettes,

but not only has it not produced such cigarettes, but it has completely closed down, while in Shurdhan, where rice cultivation was promised, nothing has been done” (“The holy grass of Gjilan’s stadium is bringing LDK’s victories, says Rugova.” 2004, October 19, p.7).

Koha Ditore embraced a more neutral approach and tone in its coverage of the AAK. The same is encountered in its coverage of opposition party PDK. When the daily published summaries for each party on the flow of the election campaign, there was no evident political leaning demonstrated in this coverage.

Koha Ditore was also one of the few dailies to depict how government policies were affecting the citizenry. It covered the government’s failure to manage Kosovo’s Pension Savings Trust by detailing failure of policy initiatives and presenting the experience of pensioners. It also ran a story on how illegal constructions were affecting the capital’s infrastructure and particularly apartment residencies. Examples include: “Who are the first beneficiaries of the new pensions scheme” (2004, October 10, p. 5) and “Buildings foundations demolish, the inspectorate awaits the regulator” (2004, October 11, p. 4).

Along somewhat the same limes, *Koha Ditore* ran a feature on a neglected neighborhood in Pristina, where residents felt abandoned by the political parties that hadn’t lived up to their promises. *Koha Ditore* placed ORA in a positive frame, though, by structuring the story around a citizen’s quote on how the LDK, PDK and AAK don’t deserve anymore votes while ORA does since it is not liable to previous failures. (“Politicians’ cars stop here only when the street lights aren’t working.” 2004, October 5,

p.4). Nonetheless, these stories are examples of the daily fulfilling its role of a watchdog.

Koha Ditore continued extensive coverage of the 2007 election campaigns by dedicating a thorough section called *Time for Elections*. From all the dailies, *Koha Ditore* made the most reference to the government's three-year mandate by referring to their initiated policies and providing information as to how political parties intended to carry out their political platforms. The daily also put in context projects presented as successes by outlining the due date of implementation and when the project was actually implemented ("LDK campaigns with AER's budget." 2004, November 5, p.29).

Koha Ditore was the only newspaper to report that the authorities of the Pristina municipality did not achieve to implement some of their 2007 promised projects, which as a result would be postponed for 2008. The story outlined the approved budget for 2008 and how the intended money for the 2007 projects would be relocated while also describing the projects. ("This year's unfinished projects will be transferred to the next year." 2007, November 6, p.4). The daily also monitored when political parties promised projects that had already been accomplished. When the Minister of Education promised free text books for school students with economic hardship, the daily verified that such a law already exists ("Veliu promises 35 million of Kosovo's budget for education." 2007, November 9, p.55). The above-mentioned stories are clear examples of fulfilling Entmans' "accuracy" and "democratic accountability" standards.

Although the daily was successful in keeping LDK accountable to the citizenry, it continued to use editorializing language in stories that did not necessarily mention government policies. An example includes: "LDK has continued with its electoral

activities on Wednesday in Gjilan, where ‘the explanations’ for the LDK’s next mission and the accusations toward other parties, LDK didn’t forget this time either and neither did President Sejdiu.” (2007, November 1, p.27). Another example of language usage was frequently referring to the LDK with phrases such as “[the party] attempted to convince the electorate” (“LDK: it is not true that we don’t love Adem Jashari. 2007, November 2, p.3).

In 2007, the government’s decision on increasing pensions received attention by *Koha Ditore* as well. It framed both the LDK and AAK as failing to deliver such a policy earlier on in their mandate and included the responses by the pensioners. These stories ran under headlines: “LDK: the government has saved to increase pensions,” (2007, November 1, p.50) and “Pensioners revolt, they are no longer interested in AAK’s promises,” (2007, November 1, p. 53).

The most objective elections coverage from all the dailies was *Koha Ditore*’s interviews with candidates from the major political parties. *Koha Ditore* conducted interviews with candidates for Pristina’s municipality and the candidate for Prime Minister. While the general tendency for the Kosovar daily newspapers is to merely publish such interviews in Q&A format, for the candidates for the Pristina municipality president, *Koha Ditore* actually comprised the answers in an explanatory piece and detailed the most specific programs and implementation means. The daily also provided background information to the candidate’s political career. In form of service journalism, the story included a sidebar that highlighted the candidate’s stance on the issues of water, trash, sewerage, telephone and Internet, public transportation, road maintenance, public

lighting, parking, overbuilding, basements, construction without permission, usurpers, and illegal sellers.

In the interviews with the candidates for Kosovo Prime Minister, *Koha Ditore* retreated to the Q&A format. However, the daily made direct references to the promises delivered during the campaign and pushed the candidates to provide as specific accounts as possible; it emphasized prevailing problems and compelled them to provide their party's specific platform for all the fields.

Kosova Sot

Summary of interview with deputy editor, Ardian Kastrati, 01.26.2007

Kosova Sot began operation after 1999, and it is privately owned. In Kosovo, the daily tends to be perceived more as one that practices tabloid journalism, which derives from its front-page layout design and the fact that the daily publishes news wire stories more often than the rest of the dailies and includes celebrity-related stories on its front page.

The daily's deputy editor, Ardian Kastrati, defines the role of journalism in the following way:

“journalism [...] is the fourth estate, which provides the opportunity for better communication between public opinion, the people and the mechanisms that lead a society, institutions, organizations, subjects, whether be it public or non public organizations [...] A free and professional journalism helps a society's progress and you cannot imagine a developed society without advanced journalism.”

Kastrati also pointed out the fact the economic dependability affects the overall practice of journalism and the limits it puts on independent coverage.

“This is a very sensitive element because the majority of the media rely on tenders from the government, ministries, different organizations. [...] And the media cannot survive based on their sales. So it is an imposition of lowering the critical voice of the media. This is a great defect. If an organization or public company finances with lost of euros during the year, you will automatically be in a position of not criticizing. There might be some criticism, but not at the required level.”

Kastrati believes that being financially sustainable on their own is what sets *Kosova Sot* apart from the other dailies and makes it the only nonpartisan daily in Kosovo. Nevertheless, he points out to overall improved practices in the country, partly due to the increase in journalism schools and the slow accumulation of experience. “Covering election is not something that our newspapers have experience in. We have only been doing it since the end of the war. And what has become evident is that newspapers are becoming more critical during election campaigns, because the one from 2004 has influenced it[the coverage] and you know where to focus and what and how to cover, in order to be more critical.”

***Kosova Sot* Analysis Results**

A clear tendency in *Kosova Sot*'s coverage was to give great importance to LDK and PDK as the two major parties at the time, and this is manifested through more coverage space provided to these parties. However, the content of the stories themselves

are the same.

In 2004, *Kosova Sot* summarized, compared and contrasted the stance of each parties' economic development, social wellbeing and education. In "The challenge called hard social condition," the story provided the program platform of seven political parties program and implementation approach for social wellbeing (2004, October 12, p.8). Important to note is that the story mentioned how LDK spokesperson Lulzim Zeneli, was the only political subject that had not yet provided his political program for the second parliamentary elections. With regard to economic development, the daily took a harsher approach which was immediately evident from the headlines ("Only presentations of visions." 2004, October 15, p.8). The story on the parties' plans for education reforms greatly captured the problems within the education system and the story then clearly outlined what the education priority was for each party ("Yes reforms, but how?" 2004, October 15, p.9). In instances when the daily did not practice the latter, it at least placed stories on the same issue next to one another.

Kosova Sot also paid attention to the electricity cuts that PDK faced during some of electoral rallies, though it included only PDK's press statement reaction to the issue. ("PDK guarantees building a modern country." 2004, October 5, p.8). The press statement was published as a sidebar to the story "PDK guarantees building a modern country" (2004, October 5, p.8). Three days later, *Kosova Sot* ran a story "The Prime Minister knows who has the energy," which summarized LDK's dismissal of responsibility on electricity cuts, calling PDK's statement as "biased accusations," and stated that LDK at the municipal level did not possess authority over energy (2004,

November 8, p.10). Such an approach by *Kosova Sot*—manifested also in some of the other dailies—was balanced since the stance of both sides was presented. However, due to the fact that they were not comprised and placed in context in one story, as well as the fact that the press releases ran on different days, a reader’s understanding of the issue is subject to the day one reads the story.

Kosova Sot also conducted interviews with the main candidates, though it used the same questions for all leaders. However, an analysis of the type of questions it put forth still allowed to discern the daily’s stand on the role of government and political parties during election time. In this context, *Kosova Sot*’s questions were constructed more around the specific elections and the relationship between the party and citizens. For example, some of the questions included “Why do voters have to vote LDK/PDK” and “What is the basis of your program which guarantees the voters trust in your party” (2004, October 5, p. 3-4). While the daily did not seek responses for government policies, the reader was given the opportunity to compare the party’s rhetoric as the stories were placed next to one another.

In 2007, *Kosova Sot* continued to regard LDK and PDK as the two major parties and more space and in-depth analysis was provided to them. However, the daily embraced a slightly more lenient approach toward PDK. The party’s electoral slogan “door to door, house to house” was embraced in all the stories. While AAK’s member for municipal president of Pristina had adopted the same electoral approach of visiting all of Pristina’s neighborhoods, *Kosova Sot*’s coverage framed only PDK’s Fatmir Limaj in such a role.

Kosova Sot's positive frame of PDK also came across its coverage of the party's program for roads infrastructure. The daily published an interview with PDK's political and advisor expert on the plan for road infrastructure, while it did not do so for any other issue or with any other political party. The interview "Thaci's projects, modern infrastructure" included a special sidebar with information on Halim Peci that informed the reader that he is a lecturer in the Mechanical Engineering Faculty, Department of Communications. The story gave Peci a great degree of credibility (2007, November 5, p.16).

Nonetheless, *Kosova Sot* repeated its practice of placing next to one another explanatory pieces on issues from different political parties-such as comparing AAK's and AKR's education programs ("Promises that are difficult to implement." 2007, November 12, p.16). Moreover, *Kosova Sot* also included regular sidebar boxes called, Top Promises, summarizing a particular promise offered by leaders at all levels.

As noted throughout the analysis, an efficient analysis approach is to also examine the daily's approach to seeking government accountability was through the interviewing with party candidates. *Kosova Sot* was the only daily to pose the same questions to members running for the same position. The interviews with municipal assembly candidates were more party general, such as: "What is the greatest achievement of the party you are running with?; What is the greatest mistake that you party has made?; Do you think there are secret agreements between the parties [on potential coalitions]?; What is the greatest promise you have for the voter?" Nonetheless, the questions put forth do seek out a form of answering by the political parties on their opinion of their role in

society.

Zëri

Summary of interview with deputy editor, Zenun Celaj, 01.26.2008

Zëri is a successor of the *Rilindja* daily from the 70s and 80s, and the majority of its initial staff was composed of *Rilindja*'s journalists. The prevailing belief in Kosovo is that *Zëri* is detached and free of political leaning, and in some cases, it has been criticized for not taking more of a stance on issues, an issue also raised by its deputy editor, Zenun Celaj.

“In reality, it has also damaged the paper financially. It’s been some time now that we cannot secure ads [government ads on job postings], so financing has been poorer because it was in the hands of political group interest and they ask for their interests to be fulfilled through the newspaper so that they give you the ad. So for some time we were damaged, we’ve been helped with donations through organizations, non governmental, but from other countries like the Scandinavians.”

In the post-war period, which Celaj defines as a time when concepts of democracy erupted in all aspects of society, “journalism proved to be an irreplaceable factor without which democracy cannot breathe.” He believes that journalism has had an impact “in all of these processes regardless of some letdowns due to lack of professionalism, and it has practiced its influence and has changed the political practice of Kosovo.” Celaj summarizes the flaws of the current practice of journalism in the country as:

“the mistaken approach to an issue or information, wrong use of terminology, the use of jargon, importing foreign phrases and words, to the lack of sense on what to place in the front page as a main story and what as secondary. And headlines often have no relation with story content.”

Celaj acknowledges that political party leanings prevail in journalism practices and are generally recognized for all the newspapers. However, he does not necessarily view such practice as hindering the establishment of democratic processes and the accountability that the government is expected to give to the citizenry. On the contrary, he believes such practice is healthy for democracy because what one newspaper fails to cover, another one will. “So they fill in for one another and create a kind of table of journalism, which influences them [public officials] to be more on the service of the public. It has an impact as much as it can. But it doesn’t let them rest, and this is important.”

***Zëri* Analysis Results**

Zëri framed LDK and PDK as the main political parties by providing more space to them in their coverage. However, the tone remained relatively constant for both parties.

One thing that set *Zëri* apart from the other dailies is its thorough and informative pieces on election procedures and the transfer of competencies. *Zëri* also informed readers on the circumstances that characterized the 2001 government creation. The latter was particularly achieved in its exclusive published interview with leaders from the political spectrum on the flow of the 2001 elections.

Zëri also published interviews with some of the main political party leaders, which offered the opportunity to examine the newspaper’s stance toward the political parties. The content of the questions mostly related to the flow of their campaigns.

However, *Zëri* also took a harsher stance with AAK in regard to the party's promise and "ambitious plan" of having Kosovo join the EU by 2009.

Zëri took a different approach to covering the electricity cuts that PDK faced during their rallies. *Zëri* retreated from taking a side and merely published the press releases consecutively. However, such an approach with no attempt to verification leaves the reader uninformed as to the truth. The same practice is manifested to an incident in the municipality of Fushe-Kosove, where a PDK supporter at the rally was attacked by a group of people. As PDK labeled the group as LDK supporters, the daily merely published consecutive press release from both parties.

Zëri continued placing LDK and PDK at the two main parties in 2007. In this year, several rally reports were comprised in one story and the reports were written by different journalists. As such, each subhead within a story signaled a different rally, but the construct remained the same. This created greater redundancy to the stories as after each sub, running candidates were presented, their promises were included but no extensive explication was provided.

Zëri ran some interesting responses from political parties on behalf of their rally promises. For example, after PDK's candidate for president of the Pristina municipality promised to build a school in the Lagje e Spitalit neighborhood in Pristina, *Zëri* published the back and forth reaction between PDK and LDK since LDK officials from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology claimed that such a project was already underway through their mandate. The following reaction by PDK was on how it was unfortunate for the students that could not enter a building which was promised four

years ago, the construction of which began two years ago and it was not yet clear when it would be finished (“The current government did not have assigned priorities, Limaj has said.” 2007, November 13, p.6). This is yet another example where such information could have been comprised in one story, the authorities could have been held accountable and political parties would have been constrained from the opportunity to run their political campaigns on artificial promises. The same was encountered in *Zëri*'s coverage of the pension issue, where the daily merely covered LDK's response that the pensioners concerns are legit and there is no mentioning of the time of the policy. The daily framed the story as LDK's main concern and priority.

A story particular to *Zëri* is its coverage of The Association of Independent Union of Kosovo, in which it outlines their concerns and needs. In a sidebar, the daily includes BSPK's reaction against the ratification of the law on protecting deputies (“To take part in elections but think who you're voting,' BSPK says to workers.” 2007, November 7, p.6). The story detailed the union's requests, such as increasing salaries for workers based on inflation, implementing the laws and agreements that had been signed with social partners.

Zëri published one of the most researched and reported stories, “The big parties spend hundreds and thousands euros for electoral campaign” (2007, November 10, p.8). The story explained the regulations and laws that pertain to the amount political parties can spend in their electoral campaigns. It details the procedure that political parties have to abide by, and monitors and asks parties to report and respond to their actions. It reported that only LDK, AKR and ORA had provided all their financial reports. But it

also contacted the press offices of the parties that had not yet provided such reports. As such, not only does the daily offer a detailed account of the process, but it also reports on the transparency of the parties by holding them accountable to the public.

Express

Summary of interview with editor in chief, Berat Buzhala, 01.26.2008

Express is published by MediaWorks, a new media company founded in 2005 by a group of senior editors and journalists. Its current editor is Berat Buzhala. Although the newspaper's layout resembles a tabloid, the daily has been known of publishing strong investigative pieces from time to time.

Buzhala defines journalism as “society's institution [monitoring] the management of public money, of public resources, covering human drama [while] their primary responsibility is to deal with the citizen and the citizen's right that might be violated from institutions in a direct or indirect way.” Buzhala defines *Express*' mission as covering human drama, monitoring public funds, taxes paid by the citizen and the functioning of Kosovo's public institutions.

Buzhala believes that the biggest threat to Kosovo's daily newspapers is financial sustainability, “which sometimes forces newspapers to wave the white flag in front of the local institutions, which are the only sources of income in Kosovo because of ads. This then makes it impossible for total independence.” He says that the financial component does not affect the political editorial of *Express*. “We have the newspaper's owner that deals with the management of the newspapers as a business, how to sell it in the market,

but he doesn't affect the political editorial of the newspaper.”

In terms of their election coverage, he said that the daily's approach was the following:

“The government and coalition parties need to be punished, the citizen needs to punish them for their bag management and work in the past three years. I have said this on TV and in a softer way in the newspaper as well. And now the compromise you have to make is not affiliate with any other political subject. Those ministers that didn't care for the citizen's vote were also pointed out in the newspaper [...] We have made calls through commentaries to vote for different people, even be it from the same political party--only to stay away from those that have stolen their money and badly managed them.”

Buzhala separates this practice from activism because their main priority is not to educate citizens or the government—though that is a consequence. However, he said that their aim is “is to make public and reveal to the people what we know.”

***Express* Analysis Results**

Express is the newest daily newspaper in the sample chosen for this study as it began operation in 2005. The 2007 elections were *Express*' first elections to cover, and it showed an effective approach in conducting some checks and balances in its government performance coverage.

Overall, *Express* provided some context by including more often attributions to officials and their ministry position. As such, it placed the candidates not only in the context of their party but also in their current position in the political spectrum. As early as November 4, 2007, *Express* published an explanatory piece on elections guidelines and procedures. In one regard, *Express*' coverage is unique in comparison to the other dailies

because there are no clear repeating patterns in its approach to the political parties. *Express*' coverage of issues and parties is determined more by the issue being covered and the circumstances characterizing that particular issue. *Express* tends to be more aggressive in coverage, language and stance, which sometimes placed it in the borderline between assertive and yellow journalism.

In order to assess whether *Express*' coverage was influenced by any political leaning, the pensions issue provided a good platform for identifying frames. *Express*' coverage was mainly constructed around the fact that such a policy is being implemented during the election campaign. The story "LDK's surprises—what LDK hasn't done in seven years of governance – it is doing during the most heated days of the electoral campaign" provides LDK's account on the decision-making process (2007, November 1, *Express*, p. 6). The follow-up story ran under the headline "Decisions before departure -- Less than two weeks before elections, the government takes important decisions. Those knowledgeable with government practices call this unjustifiable and a tendency for wining votes" (2007, November 2, *Express*, p. 6). This story included remarks by local political science experts on the implication of such government decisions during election campaigns. Moreover, *Express* sought direct respond by the government as to why such decision making processes occurred in the midst of electoral campaigning through including the response of the government spokesperson in the issue—which is a practice used more rarely in the Kosovar media. *Express* framed the issue only as LDK's manipulation of the electorate and AAK was missing from the frame. As such, the story can be interpreted that LDK was the only decision-making actor.

On another account, *Express* pointed out failed policies by the AAK in the city of Decan as part of its report of the party's electoral campaign there. The story stated how, "The Municipal Assembly is lead by this party, while the problems of this municipality remain great. In the year 2007, the city of Decan still doesn't have sewerage" ("We will declare it [independence] after December 10." 2007, November 5, p. 8).

A day before the elections, *Express* also published interviews with some of the main political leaders in the country, such as Vice Prime Minister, Lutfi Haziri from LDK; PDK leader and candidate for Prime Minister, Hashim Thaci; ORA's leader Veton Surroi and AAK's party member Daut Hajradinaj. These interviews provided a good opportunity for textual analysis application so as to asses the newspaper's approach to seeking accountability and whether that was influenced by any party affiliation.

The general's approach of the daily pertained to the flow of election campaigns. LDK's Lutfi Haziri was asked to detail more specifically LDK's intended implementations of their promises. The daily also reminded Haziri of the prevailing problems with limited electricity and water, and irregular distribution of pensions—though no thorough explanation by Haziri was provided.

Even with regard to AAK, *Express* had no questions relating to the policies implemented in municipalities or ministries under AAK's authority. The questions focused predominantly on the release date of Ramush Hajradinaj's from the Hague and predicted coalitions stemming from elections. AAK was not asked to rationalize any of its policies as part of the coalition government. *Express* did manifest a more lenient approach toward PDK, as Thaci was asked to comment on other party attacks during the

campaign, which endorsed a frame that PDK was the best-behaved party in the electoral campaigns and that it practiced calm electoral rhetoric. *Express*' interview with leader of political party ORA, Veton Surroi, who was also one of the members of the Unity Team for status negotiations, was more confrontational since the newspaper questioned Surroi on the Team's work, thus seeking accountability in areas where his party had high involvement and decision-making authority. However, none of the interviews questioned party leaders on specific electoral program plans.

One evident difference in *Express*' coverage of political leader attacks was that the daily refrained from merely publishing such information as verified facts, but rather pointed out to the nature of such statements ("Campaign of attacks." 2007, November 2, p.6).

CONCLUSION

The practice of journalism in a free society is new in Kosovo, as it has only been developed after 1999. As such, the dailies are without doubt continually improving. In the first couple of years, derogatory attacks on party members and hate speech were frequently present in the language used in the coverage. In this regard, the dailies have greatly advanced as hate speech no longer prevails and party attacks can generally be discerned only through the examining language frames.

The Kosovar media are also slowly getting a better grasp on their role as a monitorial agent and realizing that it is their responsibility to inform the citizenry on the government's performance. But sense of responsibility in a new democracy tends to be perceived differently. The first form of journalism practiced in Kosovo was under the communist rule of Yugoslavia. That was followed by 10-years of Serbian rule, and due to Serbian oppression in Kosovo, the only daily in Pristina practiced more of advocacy journalism. Thus, in the past eight years, Kosovar media have been characterized by a mixture of an older pool of journalists, who have had to adjust their life long experience to new expectations and a younger one that is better equipped with knowledge on western concepts of the media. These staffs of journalists are continuously attaining more experience, which is evident in the more improved overall coverage from 2004 to 2007.

Nevertheless, the media still need to understand that they are entitled to challenge and confront public officials. Practicing journalists are still in the midst of developing a culture of their profession that allows them to understand and practice their role as the

link between the government and the citizenry. While the advancement in journalism skills did emerge, to some extent, it came at the expense of other elements in the dailies' reporting techniques. The dailies' attempts to cover all of the rallies and provide information on the flow of such events, as if restricted them from providing necessary and relevant information to the party's policies. Such performance resulted in political parties that mainly deem important how they linguistically present their party promises and whether their behavior during election campaigns will come across as one of being concerned for the citizenry. As such, it is as if the parties are exempt from offering planned out policies.

However, through the textual analysis of the Kosovar daily newspapers' coverage of elections, what became evident is that there is a lack of incentive on the part of the journalists to report on stories more thoroughly. The majority of the stories stemming from the election campaign could have been better researched; more thorough information and better presentation of the information could have been provided. There was no great difference in the everyday coverage of the parties' campaigns as the stories structure was continually repeated, which was generally subject to the political parties' oratory.

Such practice then resulted in the frame of merely replicating the events flows. Moreover, the dailies could have practiced more reference to the parties' promises from previous years, which were along the same lines. A mere indication of party's political rhetoric from previous campaigns would have allowed for the dailies to point out the party's redundancy of promises as well as prevent the party members from continually

expressing the same promises.

For a transitioning country such as Kosovo—where everyday problems revolve around whether there will be electricity and water to those of unemployment, lack of sufficient health care or basic resources in education—the media need to better understand that by dissecting such issues into smaller issue stories on more regular reporting patterns, they can better draw attention to issues that Kosovo’s citizenry deems important for healthier living conditions. Such accounts are generally perceived as well-known facts that do not require further explication. Therefore, the thorough coverage of such issues tends to be missing from the coverage. The dailies report on them as concepts and issues that need improvement, which the parties promise to resolve if elected.

The results of this study also showed that each newspaper had different affiliated frames of the political parties. However the electricity cuts showed the extent to which party attacks can frame a story. In this issue, the reader could not even come out informed as to where the line of responsibility fell and if such responsibility could in fact be placed on someone. It also showed the extent to which parties can use newspapers to promote their claims, despite their veracity. The pension issue was one case where the dailies’ did actually seize a monitoring role, however, the fact that it might come as a result of the pensioners own heated reaction remains open.

However, the possibility could remain that even though investigative techniques do develop with experience, the dailies could have provided more extensive summaries and reviews of the ministries’ work. Such good, professional practice was attainable if only the dailies had grasped their role more firmly. By engaging in such practice, the

media could facilitate a higher degree of professionalism in the political parties approach to the citizenry as well. The Kosovar media to embrace more aggressive and ethical media practices. Only then will local actors feel pressured to fulfill their claims and gain the support of society.

Limitations and Weaknesses

The first limitation of this study is that news articles were selected only from the election period and from the dailies' election coverage. The study acknowledges that the dailies could have had stories assessing the government's performance at other time periods. Moreover, there could have been stories in the newspapers' other sections pertaining to the topic of this study. The analysis of the dailies' election campaign coverage, though, was extensive and great attention was paid to the stories selected.

Another fact is that the Kosovar media are relatively young, and western concepts of democracy have been developing in the country only in the past eight years. A pool of younger journalists who have received journalism education based on western concepts does exist, and they could have had a greater overall influence on the presentation of information to the public. But considering that an improvement in the 2007 election coverage is evident and that journalism does develop through experience, an interesting expansion to the study would be to return to such an analysis and examine their coverage of future elections. Also, this study did not take under consideration the representation of minorities in the dailies' coverage, which could deserve a separate analysis altogether.

Considering that Kosovo's political arena is also in constant evolution, a more thorough study could include the party officials' stance on their responsibility to the media and the electorate, and the degree of accountability and transparency they owe to both fractions. This study acknowledges that Kosovo's provisional institutions did have somewhat restricted capacities throughout the past years. However, PISG did have its own generated budget for public policies and better monitoring of the ministries

performance could have been assessed.

The issue of the final status put in limbo any other development that Kosovo could have undergone, and the political parties were given too much freeway on justifying their lack of action either on lack of competencies or on promises how better condition will be brought upon with the declaration of independence. Therefore, an interesting further study could be one that assesses the dailies' election coverage after three years, assessing the performance of the governing coalition in the first term of Kosovo as an independent country, evaluating the progress the dailies have made in summarizing the government's successes and failures, and also taking under consideration the stance of party members on the degree of transparency and accountability they owe to the media and the electorate.

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