

Original scientific paper

## (MIS)USE OF FOOTBALL: ANALYSIS OF MEDIA REPORTS ABOUT MATCHES BETWEEN SERBIA AND CROATIA IN 2013<sup>1</sup>

UDK 070.446  
796/799:316.77  
32.019.5:323.1

**Nikola Mijatov**<sup>2</sup>

Institute for Contemporary History, Belgrade, Serbia

**Sandra Radenović**

University of Belgrade, Faculty of Sport and Physical Education, Serbia

---

**Abstract:** Within the qualifications for the FIFA World Cup in Brazil in 2014, two football matches were played between Serbia and Croatia. Due to complex international relations between Serbia and Croatia, there were many controversies about the matches. Through the analysis of the articles from Kurir and Večernji list (as an example of yellow and tabloid press of both countries) and articles from Politika and Index.hr (as an example of more professional approach to journalism) the article critically regards the nature of press reports about those two matches. Exceeding the phenomenon of football, hostile, nationalistic, chauvinistic and sensationalistic implications were present in the press alongside numerous historical connotations. Such method of journalism has profound consequences, firstly for the progress of the entire sports culture in Serbia as well as in Croatia, and secondly it affects the decrease of long-lasting international tensions and hostilities.

**Key words:** *football, media, Serbia, Croatia, sports journalism*

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper is a part of the project 47030 “Conflicts and Crises - Cooperation and Development in Serbia and the Region in the XIX and XX Century” financed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of Republic of Serbia in which Nikola Mijatov is engaged

<sup>2</sup> ✉ nikolamijatov@gmail.com

## INTRODUCTION

With the global implosion of socialism, Yugoslavia found itself isolated geo-strategically as well as ideologically. Insisting on its own way of self-management (“Tito after Tito”) and turning the blind eye to the increasingly pronounced aspirations of republics for independence, the crisis of the Yugoslav Socialism but also the Yugoslav statehood as such, were more and more troublesome.

In the eve of the breakdown in 1990, stadium Maksimir in Zagreb hosted two matches between football clubs “Dinamo” and “Red Star”. On the surface both clubs were primarily representing the general ideology – self-management Socialism. The names as well as sports associations were in fact pale copies of soviet originals: sports association “Dinamo” that was relying on police forces and „Red Star“ that was formed by a textile workers union (Riordan, 2010). At the end of the 20th century, in Yugoslav conditions, the fan ranks of these two clubs mostly consisted of Croatian and Serbian nationalists respectively, thus becoming a medium for expressing the nationalistic tendencies of the two nations.

The match was far from a sports competition. A conflict between the fans overwhelmed the stadium, involving the police as well as players. Shocking images of the clearly confronted Serbs and Croats, covered with jerseys of their clubs, overwhelmed the media in the state that was on the edge. Still, contrary to the general belief, the war did not start at Maksimir (Đorđević, 2015). Unlike the football war between Salvador and Honduras, the war between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Croatia had different causes, ones that will emerge a year later and whose origins can be found in the complex issue of the nations’ right to self-determination (Guskova, 2003). Despite this, the image remained, the conflict recorded and remembered, and the football hostility between these two teams preceded the hostility between the two nations. Almost symbolically, in the general turmoil, the flag of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was burnt.

During the turbulent 1990s, in Croatia and FR Yugoslavia two elite football players made successful careers – Igor Štimac and Siniša Mihajlović. They did not manage to keep their positions as elite athletes safe from politics; they had not even tried. Thus, Mihajlović supported Željko Ražnatović Arkan with whom he was personally acquainted. On the other hand, Štimac supported Franjo Tuđman. Differences were not only political, they were evident at the football pitch: in 1991, Štimac and Mihajlović had a conflict during a game and they both got red cards. A chance for a new beginning emerged in 1999 when the two national football teams played a game. However, the tensions were far from over, and on the occasion Štimac said: “Mihajlović is not worthy talking to. I prayed to God to punish him for his cursed life, because he is half-Croat” (Index.hr 20/23.03.2013, 26.09.2013; Đorđević 2015).

For almost a decade and a half, the two countries were following a clearly paved European path. Croatia had passed a far bigger part, becoming a member of the European Union in 2013. Serbia, still in the process of accession, but with

dominantly European policy and a pro-European government. Brussels underlined interstate cooperation and reconciliation of former Yugoslav countries as a clear requirement. In such a situation, two, former Yugoslav republics, found themselves in 2013 in the same group in the qualifications for the FIFA World Cup. They were tasked with organizing two matches, in Zagreb and Belgrade, where two old acquaintances – Igor Štimac and Siniša Mihajlović – met again, now as head coaches of the national teams.

Briefly, let us mention that every sports event, speaking in terms of sports sociology as a special sociological discipline, consists of the following elements: participants (players), mediators (coaches, judges, sponsors, sports journalists) and audience (fans and fan groups). Minding the fact that sport is a very complex social-historical phenomenon, and that the relationship between sport and politics is ever-present, the emergence of polarization (negative and positive) of sports events is one of the significant topics for both sports sociology and the history of sport. While the negative polarization of sport is a synonym for sport in function of conflicts and disintegration (a tool for disassembling nations, classes, layers, races, regions...) – the most common stated example is one from the aforementioned “football war” between Honduras and Salvador in Latin America in 1969, the positive politicization of sport and sport events relates to the function of strengthening the social cohesion and the stability of the social system, i.e. the function of strengthening the social consensus. The most important mediators in modern sports events are considered to be sports journalists. Sports journalism as a means of communication is very important because it can broaden or reduce the dimension of sports success, as well as failure, and consequently have an effect on the public opinion and the overall relations in sport (Koković, 2004; Radenović 2017). Sports journalist can affirm social values and their reporting can fundamentally affect the popularity of certain sports and different way of conducting sports (mass sport, elite sport, competitive sport etc.), and they can create idols, cults and sports stars, be the critics of the current state in certain sports and clubs, report affirmatively only about certain sports and clubs and even write promotional articles for certain clubs, promote them, but also increase the tension among fans with sensationalistic reports, or on the other hand, decrease those tensions with solid, professional reports (Radenović, 2017). Consequently, sports journalists can participate in the process of politicisation (positive or negative) of sport and sport events, and in the end their non-objective, biased and hateful way of reporting can misuse sport and sports events as a manifestation which should actually connect nations, countries and promote peace, tolerance, coexistence, friendship, fair-play, etc.

Finally, a particular accent should be put on the significance of journalist ethic and the Code of Sports Journalists which sports journalist and commentators should always bear in mind. Firstly, a reminder that ethics is a philosophical discipline concerning moral. Therefore, it can be perceived as a personal implementation of a certain set of values which an individual had freely adopted so that he/she

would attain their own goal that they consider just. When it comes to (sports) journalism, ethics is defined as a branch of philosophy that helps a journalist to determine what is appropriate to do in journalism; it is a discipline that sets behavioural norms (Koković 2004). As it is stated in the Code of Sports Journalists of Serbia (Pantović, 2015), “while reporting, especially in live broadcasts of sports events, a sports journalist is to maintain professional distance and impartiality, in accordance with the “Code of Journalists of Serbia”, but also, “a sports journalist must not manipulate information, they must not use the media in a planned and controlled way, in psycho-social conditions they find adequate, to emit certain information and messages, that will affect opinions, attitudes and behaviour of a vast majority of people, so that they, in aspects where there is no general consent, and in which they are highly interested – form an opinion in line with the opinions, attitudes and values of a manipulator, without being aware of it at all”, etc.

## **METHOD**

The method of content analysis and classic historical method were used in this paper..

## **RESULTS**

### **Domination of sensations**

Two countries, the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Croatia, found themselves in the same group in the 2013 qualifications for the FIFA World Cup. They were tasked with organizing two games, first in Zagreb, on the 22nd March 2013 and then in Belgrade on the 6th of September 2013. This sports manifestation, profoundly politically coloured, was greeted with excitement by the press. From the Croatian side, this paper analysed Index.hr and Večernji list. From the Serbian side, Politika was analysed as the oldest and most respected daily newspaper in the country, and Kurir as one of the pioneers of the tabloidization of the Serbian media and certainly one of the most influential tabloids today. Regarding the texts related to the first game, the authors conducted a content analysis, covering seventeen (17) articles from Večernji List in the period between 18/03 and 23/03/2013, forty (40) articles from Index.hr in the period from 15/03 to 23/03/2013, eleven (11) articles from daily newspaper Politika in the period from 17/03 to 23/03/2013, and twenty-three (23) articles from Kurir in the period from 17/03. to 23/03/2013. When the second game was in question, the content analysis covered thirteen (13) articles from Večernji list in the period between 04/09 and 07/09/2013, thirteen

(13) articles from the Index.hr portal in the period from 29/08 to 07/09/2013, eight (8) articles from daily newspaper Politika in the period between 03/09 and 06/09/2013, and twelve (12) articles from Kurir in the period from 01/09/ to 07/09/2013.

The content analysis of the mentioned articles points to the following observations:

1. The headlines in Večernji list are primarily sensationalistic, with a terminology that emphasizes belonging to a collective: "Serbs are gathering", "Vukovar's Serbs", "Croatia Crashes Serbia"; the only term from the so-called military terminology was the word "duel", but despite these sensationalistic titles, Večernji list boasts high quality interviews without warmongering characteristics, in the spirit of fair play with various sports legends, such as famous football player Dragan Džajić, sports journalist and commentator Miloško Pantić, and sports psychologist Amir Zulić;

2. The headlines published by Index.hr were sensationalistic and they heated up the atmosphere of the conflict, using phrases like "a duel with the Eagles", collective nouns: "Serbs", "Croats", "Serbia", "Croatia", "Serbs are mocking", etc. as well as military terminology: "a qualifications duel"; "a match of all matches", "a duel with Croatia", "Marakana slaughterhouse ambience", "Serbian national being". As examples of objective writing, we underline a quality interview with Dragan Džajić, which reflects the spirit of fair play and in which Džajić analyses the quality of both national teams. The articles include a very objective analysis of the quality of both teams – there are statements of the players of both the Serbian national team and the national team of Croatia. Despite the sensationalistic titles, texts are fairly objective, especially those containing the above-mentioned statements/analyses of the players. Finally, we also need to mention an article titled "And the Nobel Peace Prize Goes to ... Štiko and Miha" which reminds the readers of the political views of both national team coaches during the 90s war, but primarily in provocative mode. One has to wonder about the goal of this and similar texts. Such texts remind the readers of the war and can stimulate the reproduction of long-standing nationalist tensions and hatred, so the question of the responsibility of authors and editors can be raised, as well as the question of their intents;

3. The headlines in the daily newspaper Politika contain the names from politics and sports and they are not so sensationalistic, but they also contain phrases from the so-called military terminology such as "attack against Serbia", "honourable and heroic struggle". Regarding the second football match, the headlines in the spirit of fair play were predominant, putting emphasis on the hint of sporting success. The contents of the articles make fairly objective analyses of the quality of both teams through statements by both Croatian and Serbian players, as well as politicians calling for fair play and sportsmanship,

peace, tolerance, without warmongering elements. We underline the excellent texts written by journalist Ivan Cvetković as a valid analysis of both matches: "Mihajlović Not Guilty", "Merited Defeat in Zagreb, "Serbian Team Far from Brazil", and "Football Was Meant to Bring Together Serbs and Croats";

4. The headlines in the tabloid Kurir are expectedly sensationalistic, producing an atmosphere of conflict: "World Trembling for Croatia and Serbia," and these headlines involved not only people from sports and politics, but also showbiz: Stanija, Thompson. There were also headlines: "WAR FOR TICKETS: Croatian Football Association Distributes Tickets to Extreme Political Parties", "To Battle, Heroes!", "ŠTIMAC A BIT NERVOUS: Štimac Attacks Serbian Journalist for Asking a Question," "TENSIONS ARE GROWING: All Croats on Friday in National Jersey!", "ŠTIMAC: No Applause for Serbian Anthem in Belgrade!", "Croats to Miha: Siniša, Ustasha!" – these headlines produce the atmosphere of conflict and long-standing inter-ethnic tensions. In one of the articles, a hug between Mihajlović and Štimac is mentioned as an indicator of the atmosphere that differed significantly from the atmosphere in the stands among the fans. In this case, despite the warmongering and sensationalistic headline, the content can be characterized as objective because it involved facts. Sensationalistic headlines that inspire the atmosphere of conflict and which contain collective nouns: "Serbs", "Croats", "Serbia", "Croatia", were dominant in reports about the second game. The names of players in the headlines and their statements embedded in a context that inspires the atmosphere of conflict are frequent, as in the following examples: "Panic in Croatia: Mandžukić Not to Play against Serbia?", "Štimac Fears Serbia is Stronger than in Zagreb", "Darijo Srna: Serbs are Nervous ", etc. Regarding the content of articles about the second game, many texts are taken from Tanjug, so they have a form of reports, with no warmongering elements, the statements of the players were mentioned, so despite the sensationalistic titles, the content does not encourage the atmosphere of conflict. The text titled "Hellish Plan of Croatian Extremists: Chaos on Marakana!" stands out because it inspires conflicts and the spreads panic. In this case, the responsibility of the author and the newspaper editor can be put into spotlight.

The mentioned observations will be explained in more detail through the characteristic examples of sensationalism as well as objective reporting by the analysed media.

## DISCUSSION

The atmosphere at the matches was generally calm. There was no hooliganism, which is not surprising concerning the fact that visiting fans (both Serbs in Zagreb and Croats in Belgrade) were forbidden to attend matches.

From the very political top came a tone of reconciliation: the mayor of Zagreb Bandić received a bottle of brandy and a Serbian national team jersey while Tomislav Karadžić, the president of the Football Association of Serbia, received a Monograph of the City of Zagreb and a coat of arms for a gift. Also, in Belgrade, the then Serbian President Tomislav Nikolić received delegates from the Football Association of Croatia, where they also exchanged gifts. The two spotlight protagonists, Štimac and Mihajlović, insisted on reconciliation. They publicly greeted on a few occasions extremely friendly, exchanged gifts (ajvar) and wished each other a happy birthday (Index.hr 23/03/2013; Večernji list 05/09/2013).

However, even when Štimac and Mihajlović reconciled, the press did not. The matches were a perfect opportunity for numerous sensationalistic texts, certainly aimed at boosting the sale. In general, the "hunt for sensation" was endless. The calm and mellow statements of athletes or coaches were reported and transformed in a desired way. Additionally, the same statements were placed in a wider context. Thus, an individual does not speak on behalf of themselves, or the national team, but on behalf of all Serbs or Croats. For example, in an interview Mihajlović states that he forbade sexual activities to players before the game, which is not a rare practice in sport (Galić, 2003), and Index.hr reports that "Sex is Serbian Enemy Number 1" (Index.hr 18/03/2013). Also, the statements were interrupted in the middle of the sentence. For example, when Serbian football player Vladimir Stojković said: "We shall see if Croats will succeed in proving their point, that they are better than us. Regarding the atmosphere at Maksimir ... I am so concerned I cannot sleep; just kidding, we are not afraid". Index.hr uses this statement to formulate it in the following way: "Serbs are mocking:" We are so afraid of the atmosphere at Maksimir we cannot sleep"(Index.hr 18/03/2013). On the other hand, Kurir reports that Štimac "LIGHTS THE FIRE: Štimac and Thompson Waiting for Serbia". Beyond the sensationalistic headline, in the text itself, it can be read that Štimac actually put the song of Marko Perković Thompson on his Facebook profile and did not even have contacts with the author himself (Kurir, 19/03/2013). Just like its Croatian counterparts, Kurir attaches certain moves of individuals to the entire nation. Thus, when the fans booed Mihajlović at the Zagreb game, this was characterized as "Croats to Miha: Siniša Ustasha" (Kurir March 23, 2013). Večernji list went the furthest, quoting a statement from a single Serb, ("one Serb from Vukovar"), but the headline includes everything: "Tense Game Ahead: Vukovar Serbs to Cheer on Serbia" (Večernji list 21/03/2013).

Besides the national, the press also focused on an individual dimension, which again, concerning its biography, position and operation, was projected back to the national one. Thus, Siniša Mihajlović was the target of 7 articles in connection with the first match in Zagreb, which had a form of direct attack on his personality. A photo of Mihajlović from the 1990s with Željko Ražna-

tović Arkan, who was dressed in a military uniform, was an integral part of two articles (Index.hr 23/03/2013). True, Mihajlović did not hide that he supported Arkan, but he stated many times that he had come to Croatia as a friend and that he wants the matches to be played in a friendly atmosphere. The press reports had a far reach, so the Croatian Party of Law requested to forbid Mihajlović to enter the country, which the Serbian tabloid characterized as a matter of "FEAR" (Kurir 20/03/2013; Večernji list 20/03/2013). Finally, in the attacks, Večernji list went too far, interpreting the actions of Mihajlović as the current coach in a headline that states: "Mihajlović Plays a Big Shot but He Could Turn out to Be Fake". In the text they write that "he is feisty", "plays a big shot" and "only wants to be in the spotlight" (Večernji list 22/03/2013). The attacks were very likely directed towards a practical goal – provoking the reaction of Mihajlović himself. Namely, as a player known for hasty reactions to provocations, his potential angry behaviour as a coach would be a real sensation for the Croatian press. However, even when everything went smoothly in Zagreb, when both Mihajlović and Štimac showed that they were capable of fulfilling their task, Index.hr writes the article "And the Nobel Peace Prize is awarded to ... Štiko and Miha!", where they did not miss the opportunity to once again point out Mihajlović's past, stating that he was "Arkan's close friend and the financier of the defence of the battalion of Serbian prisoners from Lora" (Index.rs 23/03/2013).

Besides the direct and concrete articles in the press, terminology with a dominant military tone was evident. Thus, in seemingly more objective articles, we can find constructions like "Croatia Crashes Serbia" or "Turn Blue" (referring to blue jerseys) (Večernji list, 22/03/2013, Kurir, 18/03/2013). Also, official statements were filled with the same discourse. Štimac states: "We are going to fight Serbia" and the Minister of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Serbia addressing players tells them to "fight honourably and heroically", which the press reported to the word (Politika 20-21/03/2013). The significance of qualifying matches was clearly exaggerated, so the matches were characterized as the "Biggest Match in Recent Serbian History" as well as "Match of All Matches" (Indeks.hr, 18-20/03/2013). The exaggeration also shifted to the sphere of mythology, which should certainly be considered within the context of the basis of the national myth (Smith, 2010), so the decision that Croatian footballers in the first match should play in blue jerseys was interpreted as a lucky sign because when wearing those jerseys, the Croatian team beat France and Turkey. The article explicitly states that "the myth originated back in 1998" (Index.hr 18/03/2013).

### **Vicious circle of tabloid communication**

In the absence of adequate statements that could be sensationalistic, the press had other sources. So regarding the defeat of Serbia in Zagreb, a rock



musician Milić Vukašinović was asked for a statement, obviously because the press expected a feisty response. Vukašinović's opinion was quoted in a headline: "We Serbs are a brave nation, but we played as p\*\*\*ies at Maksimir" (Index.hr 23/03/2013). In that way, we are not talking just about the significance of the statement of one musician, but this musician was put into the position of the ambassador of a whole nation. The fact that the significance of the source is not important in comparison with the sensation it carries is reflected in the example of a Serbian tabloid Alo. Namely, like Paul the octopus, which predicted the results of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, the journalists of this tabloid did something similar, but with a llama. In the Belgrade Zoo they stood in front of a llama and showed them the pictures of Croatian players and coaches. The llama turned to the photograph of the national team coach, sniffed it, and "spit on Štimac's face. Essentially, this act of the small Serbian tabloid Alo could go almost completely unnoticed. However, in their hunt for sensations, Večernji list delivers a detailed performance report with a title that marks the whole nation: "Serbs Are Mocking: Llama Spits at Štimac and Marks Him as Danger" (Večernji list 20/03/2013). Along the same line, an article of a small US electronic medium Bleacher Report was taken as relevant to the entire world, with the title: "Risky: The World Trembling for Croatia and Serbia" (Kurir 19/03/2013). Kurir went the furthest, where regarding the start of Šimunić in the second match and his red card, they wrote: "THE ENGLISH ON ŠIMUNIĆ'S START: The Most Brutal Foul Ever." According to the article, "journalists from the Island" are quoted as the source. Certainly incomplete and unsatisfactory, but for Kurir, it was enough to construct a headline that involves practically the entire English nation (Kurir 07/09/2013).

Also, tensions were found and constructed around the phenomena which essentially contained no tensions. An invitation to the citizens of Croatia by the Croatian Football Association to watch the match, if not at the stadium itself, then at home in the Croatian national team jersey, and to come in the same jersey to school or work, Kurir interprets as a tension, reporting: "All Croats on Friday in National Jersey!". What poses a specific problem in this, how does a child from Osijek wearing a national team jersey that Friday raise international tensions, Kurir does not explain, it only remains at extremely sensationalistic and intentionally spun headline (Kurir 21/03/2013).

The tabloid actions do not remain only in the sphere of the media, they were also projected outside the articles. Večernji list hung a 30m national team jersey on the Vjesnik building. The jersey fell due to the wind, which the Serbian Kurir simply could not let go unnoticed, by making a mocking headline: "BLOWING, BLOWING: Wind Takes Croatian Jersey down from Večernji list HQ" (Index.hr 19/03/2013, Kurir 19/03/2013). Likewise, on the occasion of the second match in Belgrade, Večernji list reports completely

unfounded Kurir's writing that Croatian extremists "intend to make chaos in Belgrade" (Večernji list 06/09/2013, Kurir 05-06/09/2009).

The problem went far from the sphere of football, it was projected in the sphere of politics and from that sphere back to music. Always controversial Marko Perović Thompson was in the spotlight during these matches. As we have seen, it was sufficient to have a "share" of a Thompson song on Facebook by Štimac and the whole sensation was constructed. In the serious search for events, or at least reactions across the border, Večernji list proposes songs for the support of the Croatian national team. Among others, Thompson's song "You Are Beautiful" was also there, and it could have been easily excluded, as its inclusion on the list puts into question the ultimate intention of the entire article (Večernji list 06.09.2013.). On the other hand, music was also connecting people. In Belgrade, guests are welcomed with two illustrative songs at the stadium. The first, though only as part of an advertisement, was the melody of a pop star Severina Vučković who is equally popular in both countries. However, since the Serbian audience recognized the melody, it was booed. Then, a song that was chosen to warm up the atmosphere in the stadium was "Gangnam style", a global phenomenon, and the most watched video on YouTube at the time. This song was certainly well-received around the world, not only in the Balkans. But the organizers of the match in Belgrade, as one of the songs, also played "March on Drina". The song originated during the First World War, in a different context, though in 2013. it could have been interpreted as a provocation, taking into account the boundary of Serbia towards Bosnia and Herzegovina and the war that took place in that area. Večernji list did not miss the opportunity, but said that this song was played and left the readers to make their own conclusions (Večernji list, 07/09/2013).

### **It could be more objective**

Finally, there were numerous examples of objective reporting. Index.hr published three articles on topics that could be very sensationalistic (problems with Savićević and Mirković, Karadžić's gift for Bandić and problems with Ante Gotovina's presence at the stadium), where it is evident that it is possible to objectively write about topics that are controversial (Index.hr 20-21/03/2013). Večernji list was notably more objective regarding the second match, where two articles were released in a friendly tone: Mihajlović's birthday wishes to Štimac and the walk of the Croatian national team through Belgrade, where they were "warmly welcomed" (Večernji list 05-06/09/2013). However, only Politika and its dominantly objective articles, deserve complete praise. Thus, instead of a "match of all matches", "a big derby" was played in Zagreb (Politika 21/03/2013). By analysing the articles in Politika, it is clear that they were written in such a manner that would contribute to the reduction

of tension in the matches. The message of the police of Zagreb that in the case of "hate speech" the match will be stopped, *Politika* publishes without mentioning what the content of hate speech might be using Ustasha connotations, which could only provoke the readers (*Politika* 20/03/2013). When the national team of Serbia was defeated, the article plainly states: "Deserved Defeat in Zagreb, Serbian Team Far from Brazil" (*Politika* 22/03/2013). Regarding the second match, all the reports in tabloids, constructions and sensations were ignored by *Politika*, which objectively wrote about the event in a series of articles (*Politika* 03-04-05-06/09/2013).

## CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that headlines generally had sensationalist character, which comes as no surprise bearing in mind the fact the "tabloidization" of the media that produce such headlines – and in case of reporting about these two sports events – also headlines with hostile character.

On the other hand, the very content of the articles was not so sensationalistic because a vast number of articles reported statements of athletes, coaches and politicians that call for peace or provide an in-depth analysis of characteristics of the players of both teams. Zagreb's *Večernji list* and Belgrade's *Politika* maintain a professional level, especially *Politika* which in this case did not participate in the trend of "tabloidization". *Večernji list* had a number of sensationalistic headlines, but to a much smaller extent than *Index.hr* and *Kurir*.

Back to the question of responsibility of authors and editors, and the ethical question of the purpose of journalism and especially sports journalism. Concretely, what is the purpose of articles that reminisce conflicts? Is it a search for some kind of truth? Facts had been recorded, today on YouTube, videos are easily accessible (for example, a recording of Dejan Savičević that is mentioned in the analysed texts), but will this reminiscence of the conflicts from the wartime 90s decrease the long-lasting international tensions? These tensions can only be increased and renewed with articles that bring back old traumas, because of the ethical question of the good intentions of authors and editors an ongoing and significant question bearing in mind the existence of the Code of Journalist Ethics, and the mentioned Code of Sports Journalists of Serbia. Furthermore, we can bring to mind the Galen question: "Does a good doctor also have to be a good person?" and transfer it to area of (sports) journalism: "Does a good journalist have to be a good person?" Surely, the distinctions and an attempt to answer this question overcomes the boundaries of this paper, but we can notice that every (sports) journalist, as well as editor of a paper, portal or tabloid should ask him/herself which values are in the

essence of his/her actions, especially when writing a concrete article and/or report about sports events that are being held in the context of long-lasting international and ethnic tensions. Surely the question of values also assumes the question of responsibility and consequences of concrete actions of each individual. We suggest that every (sports) journalist and editor ask themselves this question, try to be honest to themselves, and consider well their own responsibility and possible consequences of reporting about sports events that is irresponsible, biased and lacking good intentions.

#### NOTES

The paper is an edited version of an oral presentation under the same title that was presented at an international interdisciplinary symposium “Philosophy of Media” (Zagreb, Croatia, 21-23/09/2017).

#### REFERENCES

1. Đorđević, I. (2015). *Antropolog među navijačima*. Beograd: Biblioteka XX vek.
2. Galić, M. (2003). *Pedagogija sporta*. Beograd: M. Galić.
3. Guskova, J. (2003). *Istorija jugoslovenske krize (1990 – 2000)*. Beograd: IGAM.
4. James, R. (2010). *Sport in Soviet Society: Development of sport and physical education in Russia and the USSR*. London: Cambridge University Press.
5. Koković, D. (2004). . Beograd: Sportska akademija.
6. Pantović, S. (2015). *Kodeks sportskih novinara Srbije*: <http://sportnovinar.blogspot.rs/2015/07/kodeks-sportskih-novinara-srbije.html>.
7. Radenović, S. (2017). *Sport i društvo – Sociologija sa sociologijom sporta. Sociologija sporta*. Beograd: Fakultet sporta i fizičkog vaspitanja Univerziteta u Beogradu.
8. Smit, A. (2010). *Nacionalni identitet*. Beograd: Biblioteka XX vek.
9. Turza K., Radenović, S. (2014). *Pojmovnici za izborne predmete*. Beograd: CIBID, Libri Medicorum, Medicinski fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu.

#### Sources

1. Index.hr
2. Kurir
3. Politika
4. Večernji list