



CRIME AND COURT COVERAGE

Monitoring daily newspapers on crime and court coverage

(March 2009)

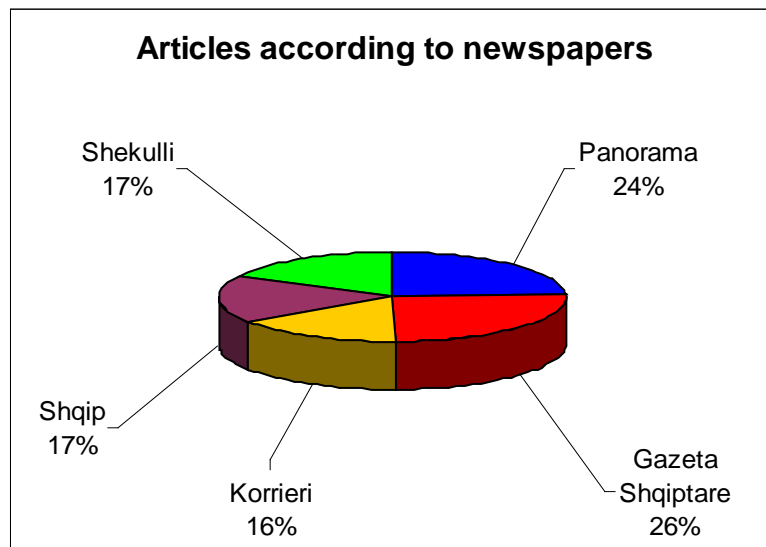
This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of the Albanian Media Institute and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.

Introduction

Coverage of crime stories constitutes among the most significant sections in terms of space in Albanian media, both print and electronic media. While it is certainly important to cover this topic, analyzing the way it is covered can be also very telling of the professional level of Albanian journalists. In order to have a better understanding of the way media covers crime and court reporting, a monitoring report of the main five daily newspapers was carried out in March 2009. The daily newspapers were from mainstream media and the ones considered having the largest number of sales, or papers that have had a certain sensitivity in the overall debate on crime coverage in the media. Since there are no official data on the sales of newspapers and their overall circulation, the selection of newspapers to monitor was made on the basis of private consulting with the editors-in-chief of the daily publications. The daily publications included in the monitoring report were: *Shekulli*, *Panorama*, *Gazeta Shqiptare*, *Korrieri*, and *Shqip*. During this time all the articles related to crimes, accidents, court, and other related events, were monitored in terms of quantity and space devoted to the topic, ethical aspects, quality of information presented in the framework of public interest, etc. The following is a more detailed analysis of the main trends noticed in the course of the monitoring.

Quantitative monitoring

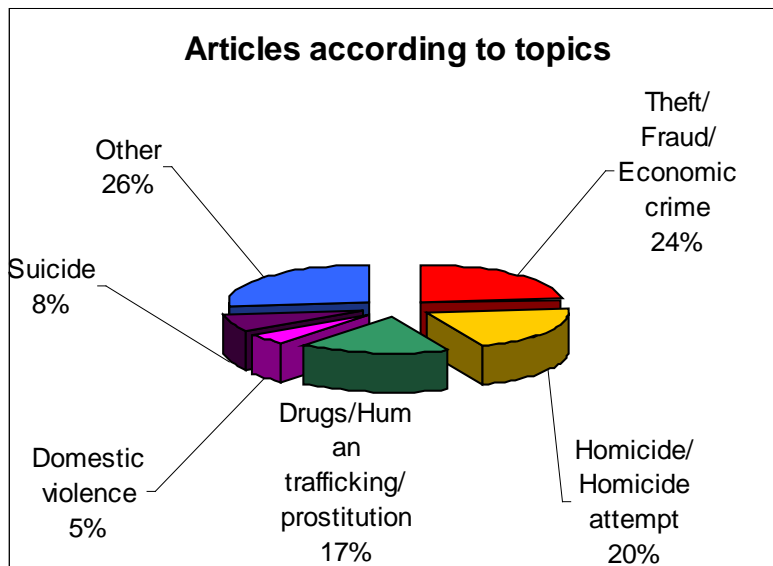
The analysis of the monitored articles was both quantitative and qualitative. The total number of articles monitored was 1,068 articles for all five newspapers. Articles monitored did not include only news stories, but also editorials, features, brief news, etc. The articles' length varied from two paragraphs to two tabloid pages, depending on the news. The following chart represents the division of articles in percentages for each newspaper according to the monitoring:



The main topics addressed in the article included domestic violence, suicides, murder and attempted murder, trafficking of drugs and human beings, prostitution, burglary, theft, and economic fraud, as well as other articles not qualified in one specific category. Based on the topics encountered during the monitoring, the following table represents the number of articles each newspaper has devoted to each topic identified during the monitoring:

Newspaper	Theft/ fraud/ economic crime	Murder/ Attempted murder	Drugs/ Human trafficking/ Prostitution	Domestic violence	Suicide	Other	Total
Panorama	73	45	39	10	22	72	261
Gazeta shqiptare	62	48	41	7	20	91	269
Korrieri	44	37	32	13	11	34	171
Shqip	33	44	32	9	14	51	183
Shekulli	43	37	41	12	14	37	184
Total	255	211	185	51	81	285	1068

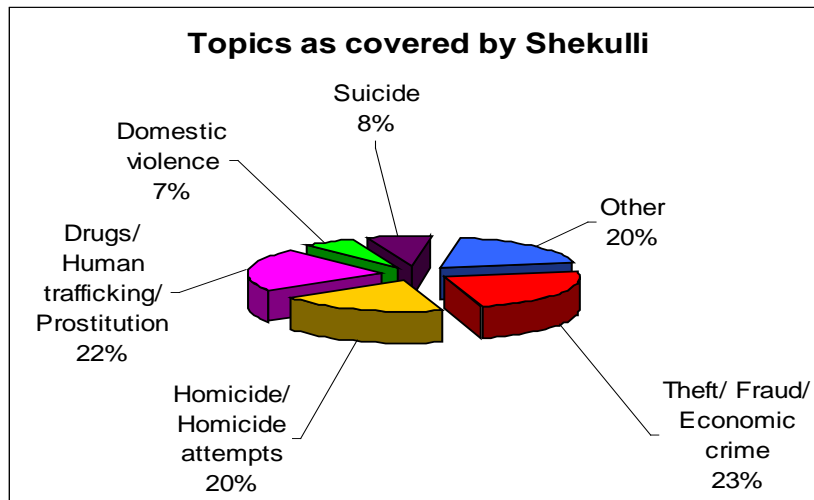
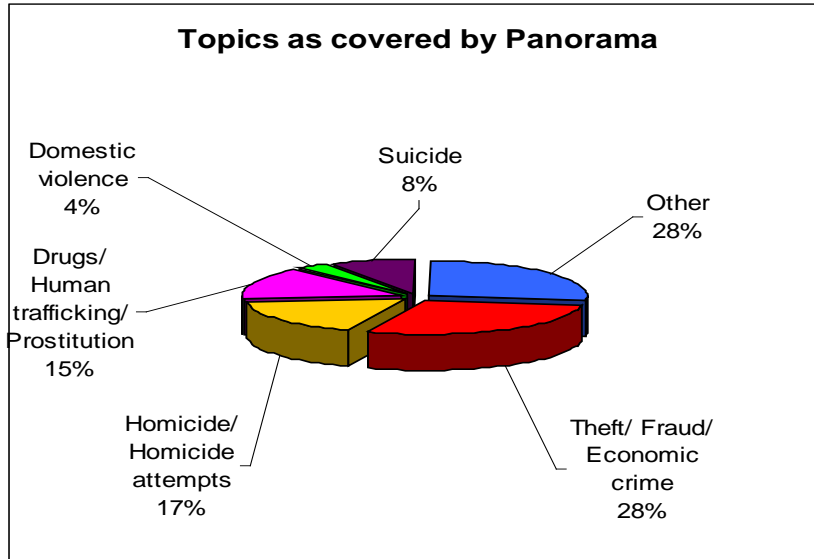
The same data is represented in percentages divided by each topic for the whole monitoring period, in all newspapers:



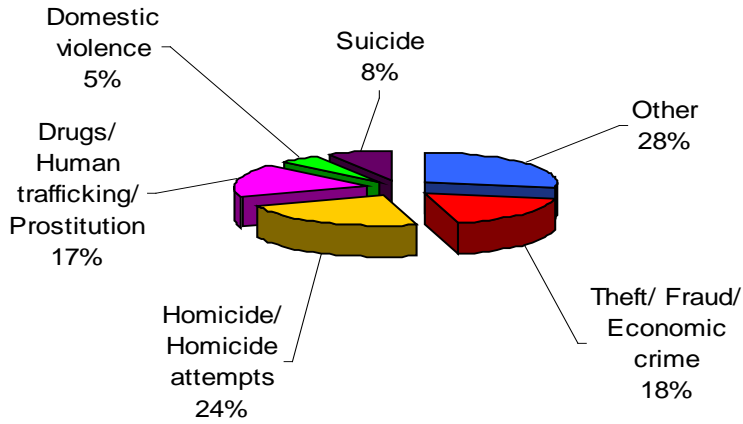
As it can be seen, the topic most covered in this period is that of theft, fraud, and economic crime, with 24% of the total articles, followed by coverage of homicide and homicide attempts and trafficking of drugs, human beings, and prostitution, followed by 17%. Most other articles, 26% of the total number, are related to coverage of road accidents, work accidents, and other topics that cannot be put in just one category. It should be noted that suicide has 8% of the total number, as compared to domestic

violence, which only has 5%, indicating the importance that should be given to this topic in the monitoring.

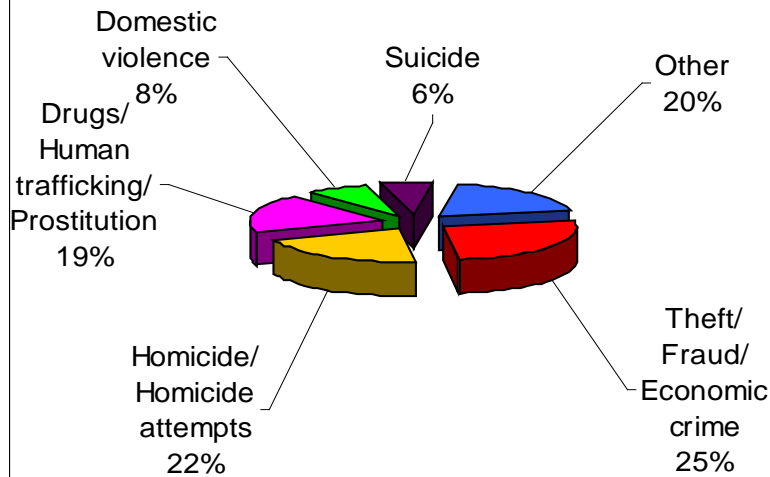
The following graphs depict the division of topics for each newspaper during the period monitored in percentages. This would enable a more detailed picture of the coverage of each topic by every newspaper.



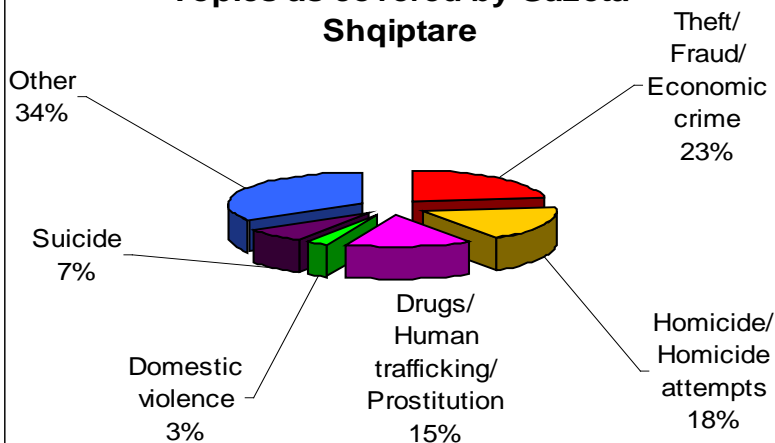
Topics as covered by Shqip



Topics as covered by Korrieri



Topics as covered by Gazeta Shqiptare



As it can be seen, the division of percentages in each newspaper for each topic reflects to a certain extent the overall division of total articles monitored, with slight changes from one newspaper to the next. The changes in percentages are also related to the priorities that each newsroom assigns to specific events, as well as influenced by the ability of the newsroom to cover certain events, especially the one in the districts. In addition, in terms of layout and space, the way a newspaper covers an event is different from the way another one covers it: one may carry side-bars, boxes with figures, separate statements, etc, and these are counted as separate articles, albeit on the same topic, as compared to another newspaper, which dedicates one long article to the event or topic in question. In general, it can be said that when looking at the topic and events covered, there is a certain uniformity in the selection of topics covered in the newspapers.

Qualitative monitoring

In general, the newspapers continue to be mostly coherent with regard to the range of topics on children covered. However, as it will be shown later, there are distinctions among the newspapers regarding the manner of coverage on these issues. In this context, the main issues that were addressed during the monitoring include the ethical aspects of covering crime in Albanian media, such as identification of victims or witnesses, identification of minors, juvenile crime, description of details, photos used, sources of information, etc. Intrusion into privacy of victims or their relatives, respect for grief, interviewing circumstances and information released were also weighed against public interest, in order to achieve conclusions on media ethical conduct in this field.

❖ Identification of minors

One of the most sensitive aspects of combing through media coverage of crime reporting is finding the articles that deal with children or minors, the way they are identified, presented, and dealt with, especially in times of distress and cases dealing with juvenile crime or juvenile victims of crime. Naturally, these are delicate cases even when reporting on adults; however, from the ethical point of view they assume a special importance when talking about children, given the different care and method that takes addressing minors.

Compared to several years ago, when identification and coverage of minors was a major problem in Albanian media, there has been significant improvement in this area. The most widespread practice is that of identifying them with initials, and no photos, which would seem reasonable. However, when looking closer at this practice, it does not always seem appropriate: most of the cases mentioned are in small villages or towns, where people know each other well and it is not difficult to understand who is the victim or the perpetrator if you have the initials and the age.

In order to emphasize the violations, although rare, of this aspect of dealing with minors involved in crime, this analysis will shed light only on the negative examples of the rule of identifying minors. Since crime reporting is one of the topics with grave consequences,

not only for children, but for all, it is a significant ethical test to see how children are dealt with in these sensitive cases.

It should be said right from the beginning that there have been no grave violations regarding the aspect of identification of minors. In general the newspapers seem to have a more or less consolidated practice regarding identification of minors involved in crime or not: the general rule is that they are identified by age and initials. For example, the most common way of mentioning minors in crime reporting is the following: “the police have followed the car for several kilometers, until they arrested 17-year-old Klement P. and his 14-year-old sister A.P.”¹ Even more importantly, the same practice is followed for more serious situations and crimes: “He has tied up and then has raped A.K., age 14...”²

As it can be seen, this practice, used in most cases by most mainstream media, rarely allows for identification of minors. Even rarer is the publication of photos at this point, except for in cases of tragedies, which will be analyzed further. There were two minor exceptions in the course of this monitoring: one case is related to the report from a robbery committed by an adult and a minor, where both persons have been identified by full name and by photo.³ The other is related to the stabbing of a thirteen-year-old pupil in a school in Fier by his peer: “The fight between two 13-year-old pupils Endri Nushi and Ervis Manaj has ended up in the grave wounding of one of them and the other being escorted to the pre-detention cell.”⁴ However, these are perhaps the only cases of such violation related to crime reporting during this monitoring.

What is less rare in relation to crime and court reporting is the publication of photos in cases of grave tragedies. Due to the nature of these photos, it is clear that usually they are taken from family of the victims. While this indicates a kind of consent from the family on publishing these photos, the very act of asking for these photos raises ethical questions on intrusion of journalists on the family’s right to grief or family’s distress. So, such a case encountered during this monitoring was that of a mother and two children, whose house burnt down and they all died. Almost all newspapers carried photos of the victims, as well as photos of the family home, or even grieving grandmother. While it is arguable whether these people wanted to make their grief public to this scale, what is less arguable is the justification for publishing these photos in the absence of a clear public interest.

❖ *Coverage of suicides*

Another particularly sensitive aspect of crime and court reporting is that of reporting on suicides, which can perhaps be considered as the last straw in terms of how much people affected can take: those left behind suffer a terrible loss and also put up with their own questions on the misfortune, as well as those from the media, or public in general. Hence, reporting on these events, which also have been quite frequent recently in the country, is a major trial for the ethical level of journalists and the media.

¹ “Femijet e gardianit grabisin makinen luksoze te biznesmenit,” Panorama, 29.03.2009, p.9.

² “Perdhunoi ne kasolle fqinjen minorene, pranga 23-vjecarit,” Gazeta Shqiptare, 03.03.2009, p 14.

³ “Pranga autoreve te grabitjes me maska,” Korrieri, 13.03.2009, p.12.

⁴ “Pergjaket shkolla, plagoset me thike nxenesi 13-vjecar,” Gazeta Shqiptare, 10.03.2009, p. 22.

This and other monitoring exercises have revealed a rather steady practice even in this regard: except for particular cases (usually minors) the victims are identified by full name and age, or even address in some isolated cases. “24-year-old Miklovan Pazaj, married and with one child, was found hang at 8 o’clock yesterday, inside the furniture production department, where he worked.”⁵ While this is the kind of basic information found in almost all newspapers, some publications also describe in detail the manner and process of suicide: “After he got an electric cable and fixed it in some peg near the WC, he hung himself and that is where his colleagues found him.”⁶ Or, in another, more complicated case:

“Under the influence of alcohol, after hitting his wife with a lever on the head, he attempted to blow himself up with two grenades, but they did not explode. Then he has chosen phostoxin as the most efficient way to leave this world. Aristotel Gjoni, 45, was dead after having three pills of phostoxin, while his wife is in hospital in grave conditions.”⁷

These details, which are more or less common in Albanian newspapers, constitute a questionable practice from the newspapers. Suicides have become a grave social problem in the last years. While it is certainly important to raise awareness on this issue and analyze the problem, given the widespread nature of this problem, publication of details should not be done gratuitously, since that might lead to imitation. For example, almost all suicide cases or attempts via some poison or pills, are reported along with the name of the poison or pill, making it very easy for the persons reading the newspapers to locate this poison. This is true for any other method. In this manner, there is always the risk of providing precedents for those disturbed or desperate persons that might contemplate suicide, something that the media is clearly not worried to address at the moment.

In fact, given the widespread scale of suicides in the country in recent years, the coverage of suicides in the media has been a case for debate, although it has not received the due prominence. As a guide for journalists covering suicide stresses: “There is a problem with the extreme banal coverage of suicides, which can lead to the establishment of a culture of suicide, where suicide is viewed as an acceptable way to abandon the suffering of this world.”⁸

In particular, especially relevant aspects that the professional debate has pointed out which are related to the characteristics noticed during this monitoring of the coverage of suicides in the media are the following: description of details used to kill one’s self, the causes given for suicide, and focusing on positive aspects of the dead person. The same guide on coverage of suicides states:

“Sensational description of suicides can be minimized, by avoiding the gory details. Description of every detail and method used for suicide should be avoided. Saying that

⁵ “Humbet miliona leke ne kumar, veteflijohet i riu,” Gazeta Shqiptare, 03.03.2009, f. 16.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ “Qelloi ish-gruan me leve, vetehelmohet,” Korrieri, 20.03.2009, f. 15.

⁸ Instituti i Shendetit Publik, “Media dhe vetevrasja: Guide per gazetaret.”

somebody was killed due to overdose is sufficient, without mentioning the drug, pill, or poison, not even the dose taken.”

As it was showed above, this is an aspect that the media in Albania has yet to improve, given that most of the media provide details on the manner of suicide, drugs and tools used, etc. In an attempt to present what they claim complete facts and news, the public interest in avoiding health concerns is neglected. The real weight of these decisions of course cannot be measured accurately. However, prevention and constraint from the media is easy to achieve, without any cost to relevant information in this case.

“The presentation of suicides as an appropriate manner of facing the problems (e.g. separation from the partner or reaction against parental discipline methods, bankruptcy, failure in exams, or sexual abuse) can lead to suicide being perceived as a confrontation mechanism for the groups in risk. If suicide is presented in the media as an efficient way of solving difficult problems, it can be perceived as the right solution when other people at suicide risk face similar problems.”

Again, even at this point, the monitoring revealed that to a certain extent the media did not consider this warning when reporting on suicides. When making the decision on what information to include on the suicide case, all reports provided details related to the cause of the suicide. In this discussion journalists often claim that editors always want to have all facts or hypothesis, due to what they consider accomplished professional behavior and information that public should know in order to have reliable news. Hence, the considerations on the impact these details or manner of presentation can have on persons at risk of suicide are rarely considered.

“Focusing on the positive aspects of the dead person. When reporting suicide the focus is often on the positive characteristics of the dead person. Emphasizing these aspects and avoiding the problems that led to suicide lend some charm to suicide itself; especially among those persons that think they are not esteemed as much as they deserve.”

In fact, this is a tendency that is often found in coverage of these cases in the daily newspapers: almost always there are quotes from family members, friends, or relatives of the victim, expressing of course their loving feelings for the dead person. As pointed out in the guide, this trend is one to avoid if we consider the suffering of other similar people, at suicide risk. However, again, providing more details, quotes, and information seems to have the priority as compared to the impact of publishing this information might have on persons at risk of suicide.

❖ ***“Graphic” coverage in Albanian media***

While content of articles covering crime and court reporting is usually quite matter-of-fact and only occasionally sentimental, the same is not true with headlines and images, at least most of them. There is a “vivid” coverage of crime and court reporting when it comes to headlines. Although this might not always be the case with the text itself. Bombastic headlines scream form the pages of the newspaper every day and open the TV

news editions every evening; although the actual content that follows is rather factual and it is not always described colorfully, the headlines certainly attract attention, and occasionally might also cause tension. Just to mention a few: “The tragedy in Gril, three graves are erected instead of the house,”⁹ “The thieves cut the saleswoman’s throat,”¹⁰ “Put my brother into prison, because he is torturing me,”¹¹ “The interrupted dream of Gjonaj family,”¹² “Lever to the head of the mother-in-law,”¹³ “Horror, the minor cuts the throat to the saleswoman,”¹⁴ etc.

In addition, although the media recently have shown greater care with the use of images, there are still cases of concern in this area, especially when it comes to crime reporting or accidents. These photos rarely show the victims; however there are cases when unburied skeletons or similar images appear. In addition, most of the time the newspapers almost indiscriminately use illustrative photos. These photos in a way do not affect the people covered, as they have faces nobody knows, and faces are also at times blurred; however, they are rather graphic images, conveying different acts, such as rape, murder, assault, etc. Some of the photos used to illustrate various crimes are the following:



Apart from these illustrating photos the newspapers also use drawings, which are not indifferent, either: in the case of a person that was alleged to assault young women with a knife, the newspapers always accompanied the text with a drawing of a big dagger that dripped blood. Other cases like this are also rather present in the papers, pointing to the need of these newspapers to attract attention to the text, perhaps even treading on the line of good taste at times. Although there are cases when these graphic choices attract attention, this can sometimes be disturbing and can come at the expense of the text content, which might be quite accurate, with no ghastly details, or other excesses.

Other, perhaps greater concerns in relation to images arise from the way the photos are furnished, especially in the aspect of intrusion into privacy of families or victims. The photos used in these cases originate from three sources: illustrative, by the archive of the newsrooms, provided by the police, or taken from the victims or their families. While

⁹ Shekulli, 03.03.2009, p. 5.

¹⁰ Korrieri, 09.03.2009, p. 8.

¹¹ Korrieri, 09.03.2009, p. 8.

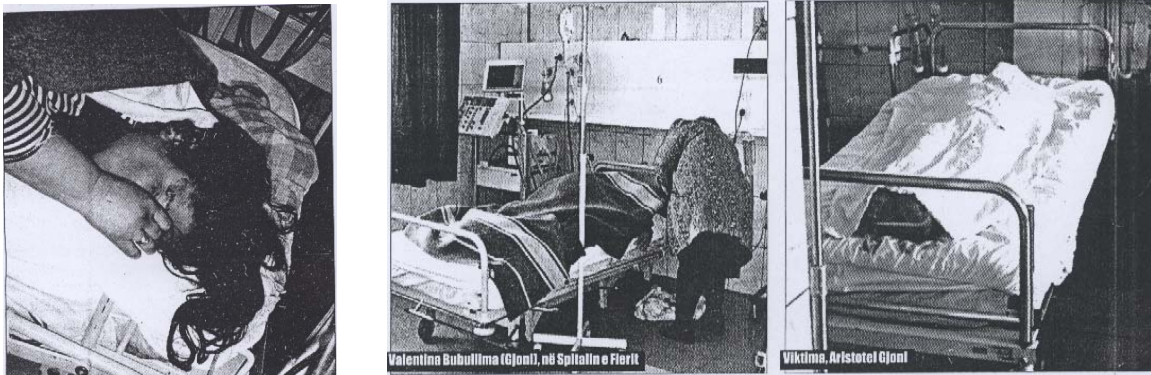
¹² Korrieri, 02.03.2009, p. 3.

¹³ Panorama, 29.03.2009, p. 9.

¹⁴ Gazeta Shqiptare, 09.03.2009, p. 12.

there seem to be no problems in general with the first two sources, the photos taken from victims or families are more controversial and as such they deserve closer attention.

For example, this monitoring revealed several cases of hurt people or victims that were in the hospital at the moment of reporting. Many such reports also featured photos of the victims in the hospitals, while the victims were in coma or clearly in no condition to speak or in no mood to appear in a publication or in public for that matter. For example, in the matter of the wife that was hit in the head by the husband, who then killed himself, several photos appear, where she is lying in the hospital bed, bruised, covering her face in one case, and covered by blanket in the other photo, with relatives staying by her side. The following is a selection of the photos published in this grave event:



One of the papers also had published a photo of the covered corpse of the husband in the city morgue. Apart from the immediate reaction publication of these photos cause among the readers, the ensuing question is what is the purpose of publishing these photos and how is it related to public interest? And even if there is some remote public interest, is it worthy the pain that the hurt woman and her relatives are going through? Is it justifiable in the end?

❖ *Covering grief*

A similar issue as with the photos, but not only, remains in relation to coverage of grief and tragedies. The way people are addressed by the media in cases of grief, mourning, accidents, or general distress and how this is reported to the public, are very revealing of the ethical level of the media and journalists. In general, Albanian journalists seem to have no problems getting interviews from victims, witnesses, or relatives of the victims or perpetrators, sometimes even the perpetrators themselves. This is an aspect that adds to the complexity of covering crime and court reporting; however, this is not necessarily done in a manner that is ethical to the interviewees and the information is not necessarily vital to the public.

There were three major cases of grief and death in the course of the monitoring: the drowning of two fishermen, the death of a baby in the fire, and the death of a mother and her two children in the burning house. In the first case, it was obvious that the journalists had gone to the houses of the victims and had interviewed the brother-in-law of one of

the victims, describing the situation of the grief. Also, all newspapers had published photos of the two houses and of the persons that were waiting in line for consoling the families of the victims, as well as photos of the two dead men. The question that arises after reading these articles and seeing these images is: what is so crucial about these images that should be published in the newspaper? Could the public have done without seeing these images, at a time when people in grief were disturbed to provide information and photos? What is so special about a bunch of people waiting to enter the house of the victim to console the family that should be published in the newspaper? Some newsrooms obviously thought this was an image that the public should have. There is certainly no right explanation or answer on whether they did well or not; however, it is difficult to see a shred of public interest in this case that would justify the publication of the images.

The second case is that of the death of a baby in the fire that swept the house while the parents were gone. In this case, one of the newspapers published a full interview with the father of the child, as well as photos of the father, of grieving women, and of the house that was still fuming. There was even a vivid description of the whole event:

“Only hours after the tragedy, the head of the family, Aleksander Bega, Declared for ‘Gazeta Shqiptare’ how he witnessed the flames that tragically took away the life of his son. With his beard shivering from crying, he said that he was not able to go through the flames and save his son’s life.”¹⁵

In this case, it is obvious that the journalists thought that the intrusion into the grief of a family and of a father was more than justifiable and that having this interview from him was very important. Of course, it is clear that the man very well could have not agreed to the interview and keep it private. However, it is also clear that the journalists are interviewing a grieving father, a father who is still crying for his loss while talking to them and it is also clear that to the newspaper this was not the most important aspect and it was not a private moment; rather it should be one that the man should share with all the public. So much so that the paper emphasizes the fact and also takes pride that the man decided to talk to the paper just hours after the tragedy, while the focus was something much more painful than who got the first interview from a family in pain. In this case it is clear to see why some people could be curious and read about this story and read the man’s words and see his pain; however, this only remains in the boundaries of interesting stuff to read, and not something that should be made known for the public sake at any cost.

Another clear case of intrusion into grief is another piece that covers a murder in the capital, which happened after a banal quarrel. After providing the main facts and details, the piece focuses mainly on the grief of the mother, detailing her pain, gestures, and so on:

“The bullets took my son away. A golden boy he was, poor me.” The mother could not make it to his funeral. All her thoughts seem to be focused on the murder of her youngest

¹⁵ “Digjet i gjalle foshnja, i mbijeton zjarrit e motra,” Gazeta Shqiptare, 20.03.2009, p. 20.

son. The woman is sitting in an old chair in a corner of the room. She trembles and points to something, while the muscles of her cheeks move quickly. Pain cannot be described. While tears roll down her cheeks, she can only whisper: "Poor me, my soul is not leaving me. What do I make of life without my son?!" Her short story is not less painful: "Shkelqimi went out yesterday for some coffee in the neighbourhood. He said he would not be late," she says. Then we heard the news on TV, saying that he had been killed.¹⁶

Even in this case, it is obvious that the journalists have gone to interview a mother in grief, possibly in the most difficult and painful moment of her life. While there is no doubt that the description of her situation, the details, and her quotes make the pain more real and touchable to the reader, there is another question: was this all necessary? In terms of information for the story, none of what the mother said sheds more light on the story and the reasons why it happened. True, the article gains a more human side to it rather than detailing the police statement, but it is also true that a woman in extreme pain was disturbed in order to provide information that is readily assumed by the public, i.e. the mother is in grief for her son. Hence, the dilemma of whether these intrusions into grief are justifiable or not remains.

A similar line was followed also on the coverage of the triple death of a mother and her two children due to an explosion in the house. They were emigrants in Italy, while their relatives lived in Albania. This event was widely covered by almost all main daily newspapers monitored and all of them had gone to the house of relatives that expected the corpses for the funeral. There were pictures of the two children published, as well as of the mother, pictures that could clearly be provided only by their relatives. There were also pictures of the house and pictures of grieving women dressed in black, as well as the picture of the grandmother that was expecting them. It was clear that journalists had gone to the house, taken pictures to be published, and also had interviewed the persons in grief that were at the house. For example, the grandmother was interviewed by journalists, expressing her pain: "'How can I live when I think that while my boy was burning, his friends waited for him in the bus to go and play. My son had promised me that this summer he would bring them to Albania and they would stay till September,' says the grandma while her chin shivers."¹⁷

So, again, the dilemma of intrusion is clear: should journalists go and disturb the family of the victims in such moments in order to provide their side of the story, while their side is only emotional, and does not bring any real, needed, or unknown information to the public?

❖ *Coverage of phenomena*

When monitoring the way that crime is reported in the media, apart from the ethical aspect, another very important prism is considering the general impact of this reporting in the public information domain. More specifically, it is crucial to see how the media

¹⁶ "Xhelollari, vrasja pas sherrit te femijeve," Shekulli, 12.03.2009, p. 7.

¹⁷ "Nusja e femijet shkuan me gomone, u dogjen te gjalle," Gazeta Shqiptare, 03.03.2009, p. 15.

views, investigates, and reports on the phenomena related to crime; whether the media follows only separate events or it has the ability to weave all events and put them in a context that would inform the public on current situation and potential future. This would be a major test for the media regarding its mission to inform the public in general, and in this specific case to provide thorough and regular information related to crime and court.

What can be noticed in this regard during this monitoring period in the newspapers involved is that there are certainly attempts to provide an angle on the phenomena related to crime and analyze them beyond the news or event of the day. In these attempts, the newspapers cover topics such as increase in number of burglaries and thefts¹⁸, prostitution trends and the causes that underlie these developments¹⁹, increase in juvenile crime²⁰, etc.

However, when looking closely, what emerges as a common trend for the coverage of all these cases is the fact that journalists wrote the article based on some official statement, research, or annual report from a state institution or other organization that deals with these topics. So, the article on prostitution trends is based on USAID annual report on Albania, the juvenile crime trends are based on annual report and analysis of the police department, while the article on thefts is a mixture of statements from police and prosecution bodies. Quoting these sources and including the information they provide certainly improves the quality and reliability of the articles and indeed is a 'must' in most cases. However, it also points to the fact that there is no initiative from the newspapers themselves to investigate and analyze the events as part of the phenomena. Covering the events on a day-by-day basis is a job fairly well-done by the papers, but when it comes to analyzing them, they leave the matter to other persons, in the best case.

An exception here can be made for a regular section in daily "Shqip," called "Beyond the news." As the title is self-explanatory, the section tries to analyze the roots, causes, and to identify potential solutions for the greater context against which these events on crime take place. For example, one article²¹ in this section was devoted to depression, domestic violence and their relation to grave crimes that had taken place recently. The author not only provides his own analysis of the situation, but he also provides data from the police, statistics on domestic violence and divorces, and surveys of public opinion on matters related to this "epidemic" as he calls it. For example, the author mentions that "compared to last year there is an increase of 466 cases of reported domestic violence from persons that seek police protection. Only during 2008, according to official data, the police has been notified of and has taken under protection 740 persons violated."²² Or: "according to surveys, only 5% of women that are regularly violated report the violence at the police or at special treatment centers."²³ In sum, these kind of articles, apart from the overall information, provide a much-needed angle, view, and opinion of the situation for the

¹⁸ "Policia ne alarm, 70 vjedhje per 48 ore," Korrieri, 23.03.2009, f.6.

¹⁹ "Varferia, rritet numri i femrave qe prostituojne," Shekulli, 08.03.2009, f.8.

²⁰ "Rritet numri i te miturve te perfshire ne krime," Gazeta Shqiptare, 18.03.2009, f.14.

²¹ Poli Hoxha, "Tentative per te zbardhur kronikat e zeza," Shqip, 10.03.2009, f. 6.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

public, placing the due importance and relevance on such grave happenings, and analyzing the impact this will have on the future of the society, going hence beyond the mere reporting of the event itself.

Main findings and conclusions

Overall, it can be said that crime and court reporting constitutes a significant amount of space in the daily newspapers. In general, the ethical aspect of reporting on crime and grave cases has significantly improved compared to the recent past and elementary ethical violations are missing in most cases.

What seems to be more disturbing in terms of ethical aspect of covering crime and court reporting is rather the trend of intruding into the privacy and especially grief of the people. Almost all newspapers show no particular delicacy or compassion in this matter, always racing who will interview the mourning people or the victims first, although there is no clear public interest involved. In this case it is clear that priority is given to obtaining information that is obviously interesting to the public, with no careful reflection on the impact on the victims and with a public interest that is hard to detect often.

Regarding the follow-up of events and coverage of crime as a social phenomenon, newspapers do not show a clear trend of understanding, planning, and following events in this area as parts of a whole, rather than as news of the day. This may be for different reasons, such as shortage of staff, lack of specialized reporters, lack of vision or interest, etc. However, in order for media to fully serve its public mission in the future, more thought should be given to this aspect, given the importance it has in proper informing of the public, rather than reporting of events in a banal and casual way, downplaying their significance for the society. The attempts of certain newspapers to analyze the events in terms of causes, effects and solutions for the society are certainly an important step in this direction, but these attempts are yet in their infancy and not a clear trend of the media landscape.