

REPORT



INFORMAL LABOUR PRACTICES IN *ALBANIAN MEDIA*



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Organization for Security and
Co-operation in Europe
Presence in Albania

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INFORMAL LABOUR PRACTICES IN ALBANIAN MEDIA

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FOREWORD

First of all I would like to thank all the journalists who participated in the survey that gives us a very good overview of the recent situation in the Albanian media. It was a great initiative of the Albanian Union of Journalists to organize the survey and to elaborate the results.

These results mainly show the individual opinion of media makers in TV-, print- and radio-media. But with more than 300 submitted answers, we also have a respectable inside view into Albanian media system. This is a system with plenty of different media stations and companies – more per capita than in most other countries. But there are two sides of the medal: pluralism of media on one side, unstable workplaces and sometimes more superficial reports than further researches. And it also seems that pluralism is not the same like independence of media, which is a very important condition for media as a strong “watchdog” in difficult times of transformation.

Independence from political or economic influence on the one side and qualification as well as stability and job security on the other side are needed for a media sector which should give fair information and sufficient background so that people can build a qualified and non-manipulated opinion.

Thanks to this survey, we got new information to support journalists to improve their media for more and better information of their readers, listeners and viewers.

Frank Hantke

Director

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

Tirana Office

PREFACE

This is the first report on the state of labour force and employment practices in the Albanian media market. The study presented in this report is unique in the type of analysis and the indicators selected as well as its geographical coverage. Through this report, the Union of Albanian Journalists has aimed to provide a statistical and qualitative analysis related to the informality of employment practices and the observance of journalists' rights in the media sector. The goal of this report is to document the phenomenon of informality in the Albanian media market and to analyse its depth and scope through the key indicators developed.

The Union of the Albanian Journalists (UAJ) hopes that the publication of this report will constitute a basis for politicians, media outlet operators, interested journalists and other interested actors to help reduce deviant employment practices and strengthen the protection of the rights of the Albanian journalists and their stature at the work place.

The indicators analysed for this report are as follows:

Duration and stability at work factors are analysed in the context of political changes (before and after 1992) and according to the type of media outlet (electronic, print and online media or information agency). In addition to the facts and figures, the analysis of this indicator measures the perception of journalists regarding their continuity in the current workplace. Among other things, a perception is created by the history of each respondent, including cases of dismissal, how they were let go and the duration of unemployment. A combination of variables is synthesized in a quantitative and qualitative analysis in the first chapter of the report.

The contract and job security - this indicator is focused only on contracts signed after 1992, considering changes that were brought about as a result of political developments. While analysing the early problems of journalists with their contracts, this indicator looks into details in the 2008-2011 period in order to identify the trajectory that characterizes the evolution of this phenomenon. The analysis is expanded to emphasize the involvement and the active role of the employee during the process of drafting the employment contract, and cases in which the contracts are not certified.

Cases brought to court- this section analyses the access of journalists to courts in cases of violation of their rights, based on factual evidence and personal experiences as well as perceptions created over time. Under this indicator, also analysed is the nature of issues accepted or refused by the courts which were, initiated within the context of human rights violations that journalists have faced.

Changes in the media market section assesses the opinion of journalists on transformations they have encountered in the media market due to the changes in the system as well as their attitude and sensitivity towards these changes.

The Union of Albanian Journalists takes this opportunity to, first of all, thank the two organizations that made possible the realization of this project, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Presence in Albania. Special thanks go to all the coordinators of UAJ in the cities of Albania for their serious commitment to complete the questionnaires among journalists.

The technical staff that took care of the coordination of the process, collection and compilation of data played an important and decisive role in the realization of this initiative.

Last but not the least, the Union of Albanian Journalists thanks all the Albanian journalists who were involved in the process of completing this survey for offering their contribution and sharing their experiences in each questionnaire. Without them, this initiative would be impossible.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach used for the production of the report is based on both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the available data. 500 forms designed as questionnaire, divided into five chapters, were distributed to many journalists in 12 cities of Albania. In order to maintain privacy, each reporter answered the questions independently and anonymously. Only 334 forms were submitted to the coordinators of the Union of Albanian Journalists in the localities. This is the sampling on which the statistical data of this study are calculated.

Of the surveyed journalists, 49.9% work for the print media, 45.4% work in the visual media, and only 5.5% of the surveyed work for the radio.

For the distribution of forms to the Albanian journalists, a casual, stratified method has been used targeting 12 Albanian cities, reflecting the field presence of the Union of the Albanian journalists in those areas.

Layers in which random sampling were used are:

- Gender balance;

- Fields of specialization (economy, culture, politics);

- The diversity of medium (TV, radio);

- The age spectrum.

Data regarding age, place of birth, residence, place of work, level of education and journalism specialisation serves as additional variables for the detailed study of the abovementioned indicators.

CHAPTER I

DURATION AND STABILITY AT WORK

Working years and the years recorded in employment record book (social and health insurance)

The fall of the communist system and democratization process of the Albanian economic and political life brought along, inter alia, a wide range of phenomena which contributed to the significant increase of informality in different spheres of life. The media market was among those which were rapidly affected. As a result, from 1992 onwards, informality was embedded within the standards and forms of employment that were implemented by the majority of media entities. Thus, widespread cases have emerged whereby a journalist's working experience does not correspond to the years documented in his/her employment record book, years for which he/she was supposed to have been insured according to the legislation. Looking at cases that have taken into consideration these two indicators, one would easily notice that there is a high discrepancy between them in a large number of occurrences. Data from the survey show that, at the national level, only six out of 35 journalists who have reported 16-20 years of working experience in the media sector have all of their work experience registered in their employment record book. Therefore, one can say that their employment records have been formalised as per legal regulations. This group accounts for only 17.5% or less than one fifth of the total number of respondents who have worked in the media sector for a period of 16-20 years.

On the other hand, only eight out of 77 journalists who have reported 11-15 years of employment history in the media sector said they had their complete employment history written down in their employment record. In terms of percentage, they make up 12.5% of those who have been working for 11-15 years in the media sector. As for those employed for a period of between six to 10 years, only 25 out of the 123 journalists said their full history were in their employment record.

Signs of Possible Improvement

The situation, however, with those who have been employed for between less than one and five years in the media sector appears to show a drastically different pattern as compared to those journalists employed for longer periods. 70 out of 72 journalists falling in this group, 97.2 %, have reported having their full employment history registered in their record books. This state of affairs with regard to this particular category of journalists appear to

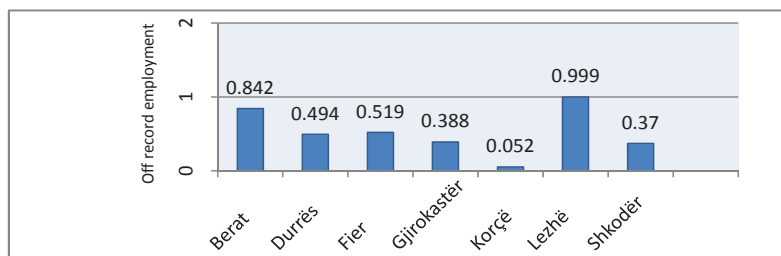
be distinctly different with a positive connotation in that records do appear to be corresponding to reality, indicating a more serious approach to formal requirements of employment practices.

It is important to bear in mind, though, that due to the nature of the questions used in the survey, this analysis cannot be considered fully sufficient to provide a clear picture on the years of working experience that a journalist has built up in Albanian media as a function of the duration of employment put down in the record book. It has been possible to compare and draw complete conclusions, only for the time periods from 0 to 5, 6 to 10, 11 to 15 and 16 to 20 years. Thus, it has been possible to compare the concrete data of corresponding years of real work experience that an Albanian journalist has in the media market with the employment period recorded in their official document, the so called "employment record book". What we can be said with certainty is that the analysis and comparison of the actual years of work of a journalist with the duration of employment that appears to be officially recognized as such in the employment record book show that they do not correspond in most of the cases.

Statistical analysis shows that there is a clear relationship between the age of a journalist and the accurate reflection of the number of years worked in the media sector in employment records. In real numbers, the chances of having all the employment period of a journalist over the age of 33 properly documented in the employment records is 55 % less than a younger journalist when the variables of location and media type are constant.

On the other hand, when analysing the actual years of work with the documented period in the employment record book in terms of location, the city of Korca is the only one that provides high compatibility between the two variables, the highest when compared with the other cities. Data show that a journalist working in Korca has 3.36 times more chances to have the same corresponding working years with those listed in the employment record book, when compared to the journalists working in other cities. Meanwhile, a journalist in Gjirokastra has a 166% and one in Shkodra has a 150% higher chance than the national average to have recorded his years of work completely in the employment record book. Corresponding values of working years with those recorded in the employment record book are only at 1.09 for journalists working in the city of Berat. Regarding other cities, this indicator cannot be taken into consideration due to the extremely low values. This means that for journalists working in Berat, Durrës, Fier or Lezha, the chances to have their full employment record put down in official registry are very low.

Concurrence between actual years of work and the period documented in the records in main cities



The conclusion is that work culture in the media sector varies in different cities in terms of fairness in recognizing journalists' actual period of work in their employment record books, and in implementing all the legal obligations towards formal and fair employment.

Media outlet and work stability

Referring to data derived from the analysis, one can say that most Albanian journalists, in general, consider their working place "stable". Such statement is supported by 186 journalists who claim a sense of "stability" at their workplace.

Meanwhile, the number of journalists who have stated that they feel "very stable" at their work place is only 60. Expressed as a percentage, the number of journalists who feel safe at work is 30% higher than the number of those who feel "very safe" at work.

Positioned next down the scale are journalists who consider their workplace in Albanian media sector as "not stable", with 52 responses.

Finally, those journalists who consider their working place as "not at all stable" are numbered 18, in other words, the smallest group of respondents in this category.

This analysis clearly states that journalists who feel strongly insecure about their place of work are very few in number compared to those who are more confident in the stability of their work.

This study originally also aimed to demonstrate among other things, through statistical analysis, if there is a correlation between the media outlet (television, print, radio, etc.) and the perceptions of journalists regarding

the employment stability and security at the workplace. But such analysis leads to a conclusion that there is no significant correlation between the employing media outlet and a journalist's perception of security for his/her job. Therefore, the ratio between these two variables is not strong enough to be considered in the analysis.

However, a correlation between the perception of journalists in terms of employment stability and the type of media produces an interesting picture, as discussed below:

a) Work stability in print media

Work stability is assessed as slightly higher by journalists working in print media with 92 respondents describing their workplace as *"stable"*, but only 27 characterizing theirs as *"very stable"*. 23 respondents said their workplace was *"not stable"* and only 10 described their environment as *"not stable at all"*.

Therefore, it can be concluded that among journalists working for print media, a higher degree of job stability is perceived as compared to workers in other types of media.

b) Work stability in TV

Looking in detail at survey data, one can notice that journalists employed by TV stations have almost the same level of perception regarding stability in their current place of work as print media journalists. Put in figures, 84 journalists of this medium have given an evaluation of *"stable"* and 28 said their workplace was *"very stable"*. 28 respondents scored their TV operation as *"not stable"* with *"not stable at all"* responses coming down to six.

As a result, it is concluded that among journalists working in visual media, those who feel *"stable"* at their working place are larger in number, compared to those who perceive the workplace as *"not stable"*.

c) Work stability in radio

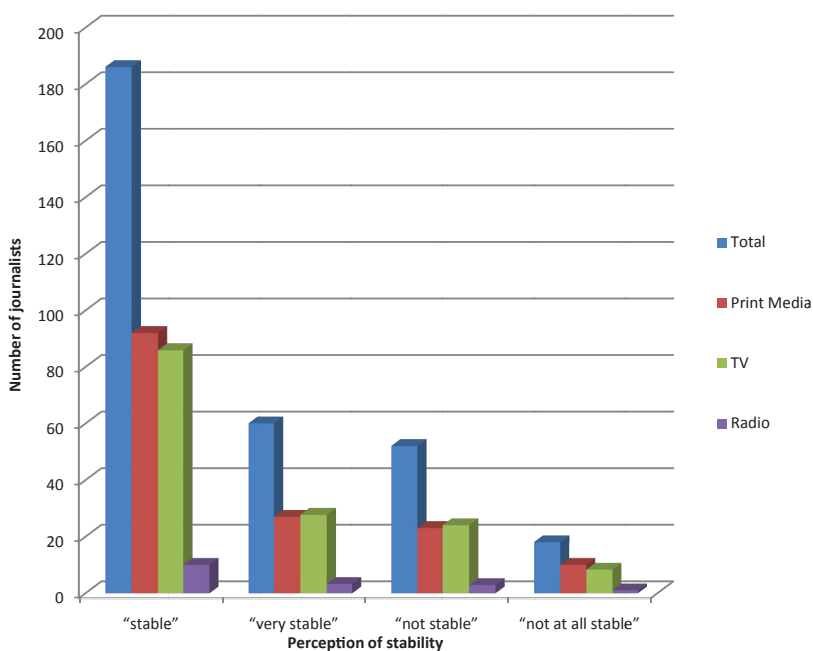
Journalists working for Albanian radio stations have a different perception of work stability when compared to their peers in TV and print media, as analysed above.

Journalists of this medium have reflected a higher level of instability of their working place. Of the only 17 responses given to this question, nine described the radio workplace as *"stable"* and five *"very stable"*. Interestingly enough, there was only one *"not very stable"* response as opposed to two *"not stable at all"* evaluations.

Level of work stability according to type of media

		Very stable	Stable	Not very stable	Not stable at all	Total Answers
Level	Print Media	27	93	23	10	153
	TV	28	84	28	6	146
	Radio	5	9	1	2	17
						316

The sense of security at the journalist job, expressed in sustainability levels according to the media outlet



Journalists’ level of education and impact on the perception of work stability

Analysis of collected data in the framework of this survey clearly indicates that journalists who have earned a Master’s degree are more likely to find a job in print media than at a TV station, as compared to those with a Bachelor’s degree, while journalists who have only completed high school are more likely to find a job in the TV than in print media. These findings suggest that print media outlets in Albania, on average, employ journalists with higher educational qualifications as compared to electronic media.

Results of collected data on these indicators show that there is a positive correlation between the level of education of journalists and the impact on the perception of work stability. This could be an indication that the higher the level of journalists’ education, the more secure they feel at the workplace. The approach of journalists to the issue of job security, when analysed from a standpoint of educational qualifications, can be described as follows:

a) Master's degree

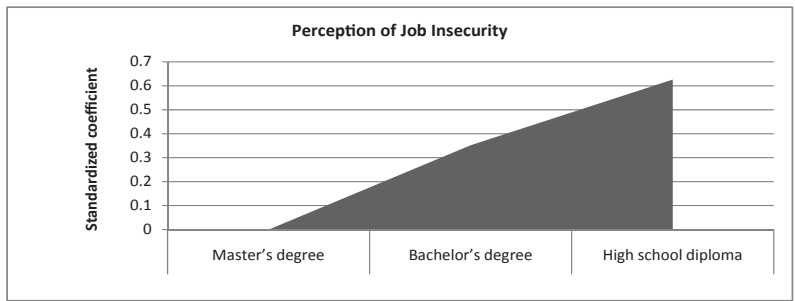
Analysis of the information provided by respondents clearly indicates that Albanian journalists who have earned a Master’s degree are more confident in terms of their work stability.

b) Bachelor’s degree

The survey data show that having a university degree is important in the Albanian media market to feel secure in the work place, although to a lesser degree than in the case of graduate degree owners. .

c) High school diploma

Respondents suggest that, even in cases of advanced specialization in their fields, journalists who have not continued education after high school feel considerably insecure in their employment.



Work stability as perceived in cities

There appears to be noticeable differences among various cities in Albania in terms of employment stability in media sector, with Tirana, predictably, featuring highest level of volatility in the media job market. A brief analysis for other urban centres is given below:

a) Shkodra and Durres

Compared to Tirana, journalists working in the cities of Shkodra and Durres reflect higher levels of security and stability in their workplace. This positively correlates with the advanced level that media development has reached in these two urban areas of the country.

b) Berat

Journalists working in the city of Berat have a perception of employment sustainability several times lower than journalists working in Tirana.

c) Korca, Gjirokastra, Fier

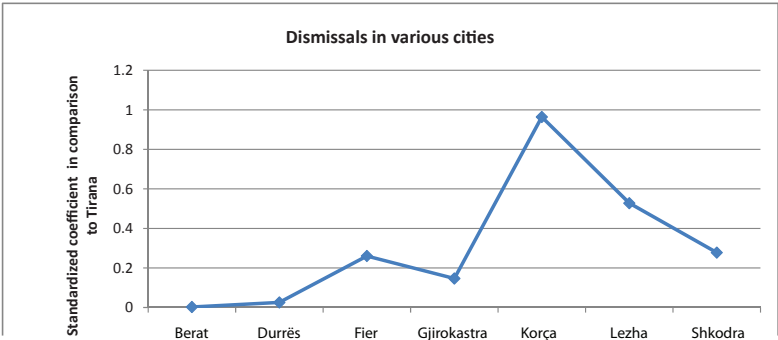
Journalists working in Korca and Gjirokastra show similar characteristics in terms of workplace stability and job security, with indicators pointing to a relatively positive level of the sustainability of the media market in the two cities.

Work stability as perceived by age of journalist

The survey data show a correlation with the overall perception that a journalist with many years of experience might feel more secure in his/her work when compared to a colleague with fewer years of experience in the field of journalism. As such, journalists with over 20 years of work experience, regardless of the type of media outlet, reflect a more stable perception of job security as compared to those with less than 20 years working experience in the profession.

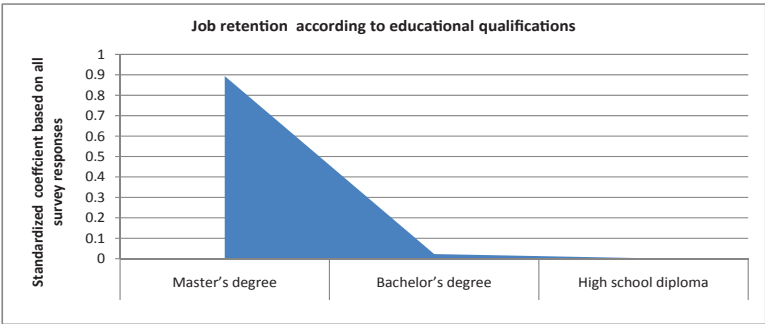
The relationship between dismissals and location of work

It appears that communities living in various cities in Albania are not equally sensitive to the phenomena of layoffs. The data show a pattern of relationship between the location where a journalist practices the profession and the possibility of that journalist losing his/her job. In specific terms, as shown by the below graph, journalists working in Korca face the highest possibility of being laid off followed by those in Lezha, Shkodra, Fier and Gjirokastra. Berat and Durres appear to witness fewer dismissals of journalists.



The relationship between dismissals and educational qualifications

Parallel to the previously stated higher chance of being contracted, a journalist with a postgraduate degree has a much lower chance of being laid off by employers in media businesses. The pattern is also applicable to the holders of undergraduate degrees and high school graduates, with lower formal educational qualifications proportionally increasing the possibility of dismissals from positions in various media outlets.



Dismissals in various types of media

Statistical data gathered to analyse this correlation was found to be rather weak to establish a definitive pattern, but is enough only to create an overall impression of the link between the number of dismissals and media type. From available figures, it is understood that journalists who work in print media face a higher risk of losing their job, compared to their peers working for TV. It is important to note that this conclusion appears to contradict the perception reflected by print media journalists noted earlier in this report where more than 90 of the 153 print media workers were reported as feeling safe in terms of employment security. Interestingly, the risk appears to be even higher for radio journalists than for print media reporters.

Dismissals and employment contracts

From the analysis of the information provided by journalists responding to the questionnaire, no systematic pattern of a relationship between dismissals and the contractual status of media employees can be deduced. The lack of such relationship might be interpreted as indicating that the contractual status of a media employee does not constitute a factor to be weighed in any decision to lay off that employee.

Duration of employment in media

The length of work experience in media appears to favourably influence the chances of a media employee to keep his/her job.

The analysis of the responses provided by journalists for this category of questions reveals a pattern whereby a journalist with a total of two year's work experience in media may spend up to a full year without employment while those with a total of five years of work experience with a media outlet may remain unemployed for a period ranging from two years to three years.

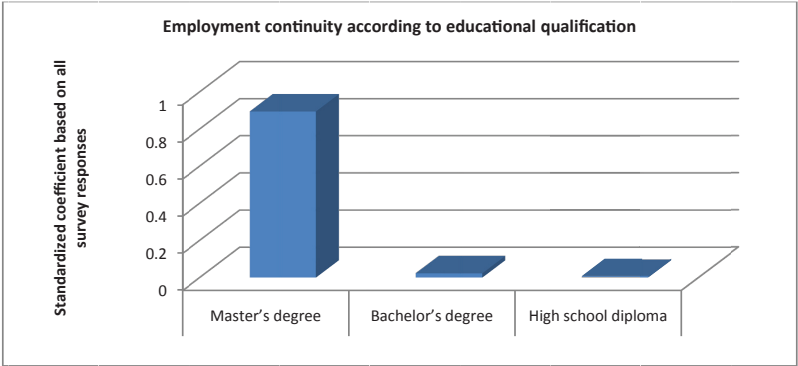
From a general analysis of periods of unemployment of journalists as collated against periods of employment, there is enough evidence to conclude that, on average, until having accumulated a total of 20 years of work experience, a journalist remains unemployed for about half of the time he is employed at a media outlet in the course of his professional career; in other words, one year of unemployment for every two years of employment seems to be a common pattern among journalists with fewer than 20 years of experience. This conclusion appears to be valid for various media types, although no analysis has been made with this particular variable taken as a basis for comparison. Expressed from another perspective, it is evident from the data that journalists who have more than two decades of work experience in media sector have markedly shorter periods of unemployment compared to those who have fewer years of work experience in media.

Educational qualifications and periods of unemployment

The analysis of this indicator with the variables of unemployment and educational qualifications confirms the previously stated pattern of higher educational qualifications leading to stronger job security and safer employment environment.

From the analysis of the available data, it can be concluded that a higher level of educational qualifications leads to more sustained and stable employment for a journalist in the Albanian media job market, with declining educational status respectively pointing to a shorter stints with media outlets. This situation is particularly obvious in cases of journalists with postgraduate degrees who tend to have much longer tenures in their positions as compared

to their peers with lower educational qualifications. Yet, there is also evidence suggesting that those who receive their postgraduate qualifications in journalism tend to keep their jobs in media longer than those who have postgraduate degrees in other disciplines with the same correlation applying to holders of undergraduate degrees.



CHAPTER II

CONTRACT AND WORK STABILITY

From the general analysis of the collected data for this study, most journalists declare that there is an obvious distinction between the actual number of years that they have worked as journalists for a media outlet and the period of that employment covered by a contract.

a) The ideal arrangement nowhere to be found

It would be ideal if a journalist would be in a position to declare that he/she had a notarized job contract throughout the period of employment, but this seems to be an elusive case among the respondents who participated in the survey. There was not a single media worker within the sample who reported a complete employment period being covered by a notarized contract, meaning all contractual arrangements were potentially subject to arbitrary interpretations by each of the parties at one time or another.

b) 65% of journalists in the study claim discrepancies

The statistical data shows that 65% of the surveyed journalists have stated that their years of work as a journalist do not match the period they were employed under a contract. Specifically, 180 journalists taking part in the survey made a statement to that effect.

c) 35% have the same years with contracts

In contrast, 97 journalists, a little over half of the previous category, said their complete employment period as journalists was covered by a contract. Statistically, this category of journalists make up some 35 % of the sample surveyed for this study. It is important to note that almost one third of the journalists filling in the survey questionnaire failed to answer this question.

A comparison: journalists working with and without contracts

Based on the collected data, a systematic analysis of the comparison between journalists working with and without an employment contract can only be made for a period between 2008 and 2011 given the practice of signing employment contracts for journalists has become somewhat an accepted norm only during this period.

The chart below shows the numbers and percentages of journalists whose employment periods have been partially or completely covered by contracts:

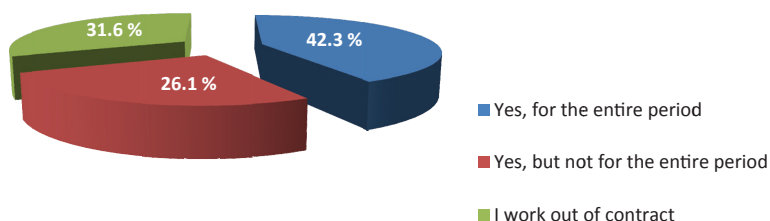
Employment Contracts 2008-2011

		No. of responses	Percentage of all responses	Percentage of analysed responses	Cumulative Per cent
Valid answer	Yes, for the entire period	123	36.7	42.3	42.3
	Yes, but not for the entire period	76	22.7	26.1	68.4
	No, I work out of contract	92	27.5	31.6	100.0
	Total	291	86.9	100.0	
No answer		44	13.1		
Total		335	100.0		

Of the 291 participants who responded to this question, 123 journalists reported that they had an employment contract for the entire period of 2008-2011. This corresponds to less than half of the valid responses provided to the question, meaning that even at the time of wider acceptability of employment contracts as a routine practice, only less than half of the journalists had their employment periods completely covered by a contract.

Journalists who said their employment periods were partly covered by a contract during this period numbered 76, making up more than a quarter of the respondents, with those saying they worked totally out of contract during the period reaching 92, making up almost one third of the respondents.

Availability of an employment contract for the 2008-2011 period, expressed as a percentage (%)



To preserve data transparency, it has to be noted that 44 journalists, a little over 15 per cent of the sample, did not answer this question. It is fair to assume that, unless all the non-respondents had their answers concentrated in one particular category, the picture would not have changed radically.

Paid leave of absence for health reasons

Leave of absence for health reason

		Number of responses	Percentage of all responses	Percentage of analysed responses	Cumulative Per cent
Valid answer	Yes	51	15.2	19.1	19.1
	No	216	64.5	80.9	100.0
	Total	267	79.7	100.0	
No answer	System	68	20.3		
Total		335	100.0		

Financial compensation from employers

		Number of responses	Percentage of all responses	Percentage of analysed responses	Cumulative Per cent
Valid answer	Yes	33	9.9	67.3	67.3
	No	16	4.8	32.7	100.0
	Total	49	14.6	100.0	
No answer	System	286	85.4		
Total		335	100.0		

Of the 267 journalists who answered this question, only 51 of them had ever taken a leave of absence from work for health reasons. This constitutes only 15% of the respondents and less than 20 per cent of the sample. Of the 51 who had taken leave of absence on health grounds, only 33 journalists declared having received payment during their absence from work. This number constitutes only 9.9% of the total number of journalists who answered this question.

Drafting of notarized and non-notarized contracts

		Writing of final contract			Total
		Employer	Together	Employee	
Notarization of Contract	Yes	56	19	2	77
	No	83	13	2	98
Total		139	32	4	175

The answers provided to questions regarding the official status and the composition of the employment contracts reveal that notarized employment contracts of journalists are almost half the number of non-notarized ones. A question as to how the employment contracts of the journalists are drafted has generated a predictable set of responses with a substantial majority of journalists, more than 80 %, saying that they signed work contracts drafted by the employers while about 10% reported having negotiated the terms of the contract before drafting it, and only about 3% said they, as employees, drafted the contracts as they wished.

CHAPTER III

CASES BROUGHT TO COURT

The survey data have shown that it is not totally uncommon for employers or employees to refer their labour disputes to Albanian courts. A total of 26 journalists have reported having their disagreements with media employers being taken up by courts.

The reasons for court cases

According to the data, one of the main reasons that led Albanian journalists to refer their complaints to courts seems to be “unjustified dismissal”, apparently due to the inability of the parties to resolve these issues through negotiations. Specifically, the data show that eight journalists have made the decision to take their cases to court for this particular reason following receipt of notification of the redundancy. This constitutes some 20% of all court cases brought by journalists involving disagreements with their employers.

Another common reason mentioned by journalists for feeling themselves forced to seek the solution through the judiciary is the irregularity in payment of remuneration by certain media employers. five journalists have reported taking their complaints over payment arrears to courts. This constitutes some 13% of all court cases involving journalists and their employers.

Interestingly, four journalists cited their reason for taking their employers to court as “being used by the employer”.

Among the journalists who reported having gone to court in their disputes with employers, four of them have stated that they resorted to litigation because of “being used by the employer or having conflicts with employer over politics.” In terms of percentage, this category accounts for 10.4% of total court cases brought by journalists.

Two journalists cited “use of copyright” as the main reason who forced them to seek a court verdict to prove their case to their employers.

The remaining cases, involving six journalists and their employers, have been brought to courts for a variety of other reasons.

An interesting correlation exists between the average age of the journalists and the number of court cases referred to judiciary: A journalist older than 32 has a 2.5 times higher probability to take his complaint against his/her employer to court as compared to a journalist younger than that age.

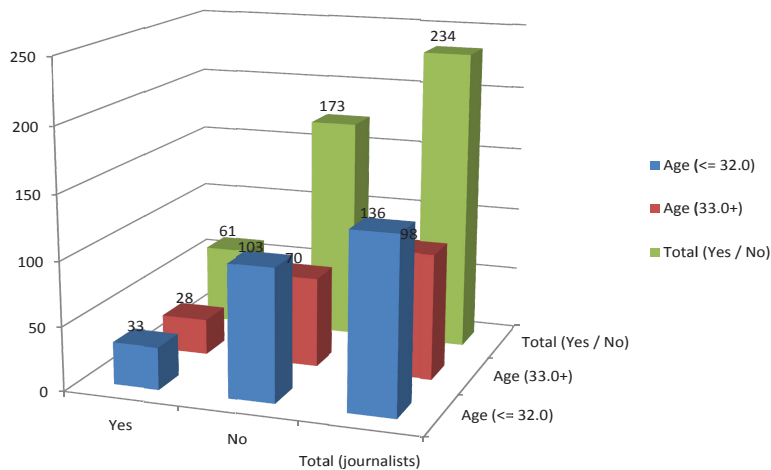
		Age		Total
		<= 32.0	33.0+	
Probability of litigation	Yes	33	28	61
	No	103	70	173
Total		136	98	234

Pondering on the possibility of litigation

Analysis of the responses of the sample group in this study shows that in media job market, there are some cases whereby journalists may address an issue to courts, but for various reasons don't do so.

According to answers provided, 61 journalists said although they had not so far resorted to litigation to have their employment disputes resolved, they could do so in the future. On the other hand, almost three times bigger a majority, 173 journalists said they had never addressed any employment dispute to courts and would never think of doing so in the future. It is fair to conclude from these figures that a sizeable majority of journalists, almost three fourths of the respondents, do not have enough trust in or don't have means to address their issues to judiciary to have their employment issues resolved.

Possibility of future litigation



Reasons for avoiding litigation

Despite the considerably high proportion of journalists stating their reticence to seek resolutions of their problems through judicial processes, there does not seem to be a common reason for this kind of attitude. The biggest group citing the same reason for their unwillingness to seek litigation numbered only 38, less than a quarter of the total of 173 respondents. This and other reasons for avoiding court process are listed as below:

High court fees

There are 18 journalists who stated that they would never think of litigation because they found the court expenses unaffordably high.

Fear of reputation destruction

Only three journalists said they feared their reputation would be harmed if they sought litigation and that, therefore, they would not think of carrying their complaints to courts.

Distrust to the impartiality of justice

Distrust in the impartiality of judicial proceedings in Albanian courts seems to be the biggest reason by far as to why journalists avoid courts. Survey data show that 38 journalists, biggest group among the respondents to this question, said they have not filed lawsuits to seek solutions to their problems because of their lack of trust in the judicial process.

Fear of owner's threats

Some respondents said threats by their employers constituted the main reason for their decision to avoid litigation. Six journalists said they were intimidated by such threats to the extent of giving up any thought of applying to courts.

Other reasons

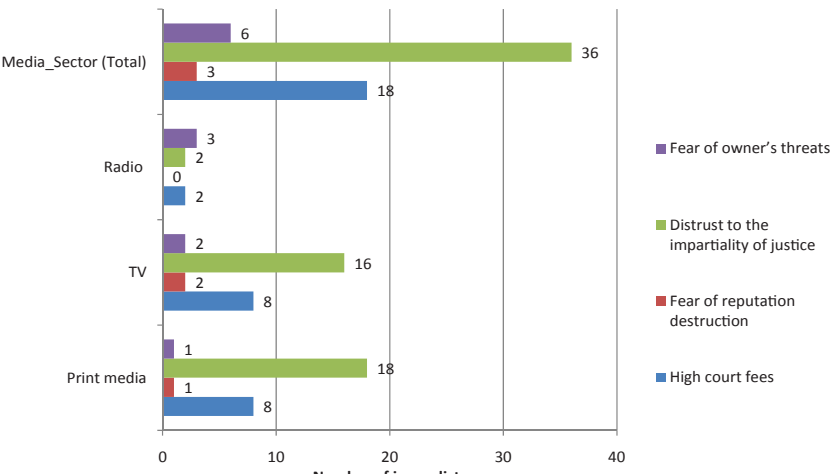
Several other reasons were also cited by respondents as grounds for ruling out judiciary as an avenue of seeking solutions to their employment problems, with eight journalists citing miscellaneous motives to drop litigation plans.

The following table shows a breakdown of respondents' attitudes in terms of litigation as distributed among the types of media.

Reasons for avoiding litigation

		High court fees	Fear of reputation destruction	Distrust to the impartiality of justice	Fear of owner's threats	Other	Total
Media Sector	Print Media	8	1	18	1	5	33
	TV	8	2	16	2	3	31
	Radio	2	0	2	3	0	7
Total		18	3	36	6	8	71

Reasons for not bringing the case to the court



Execution of Court Decisions

Finally, although statistical data is too small to draw comprehensive conclusions, it is interesting to mention the fact that from nine journalists who have won their court cases, only seven of them actually had the court verdict executed. This indicator might be seen as an important factor as the basis of the lack of trust in the judicial process on the part of journalists.

CHAPTER IV

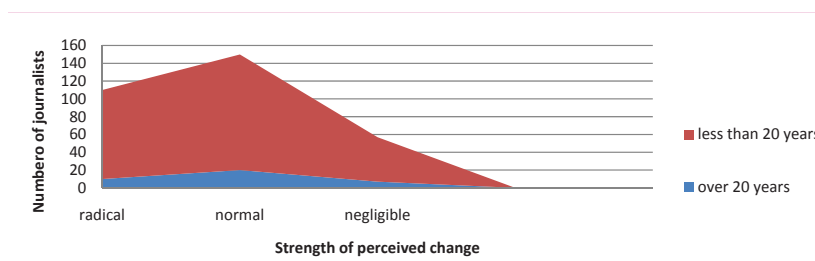
CHANGES IN THE MEDIA SECTOR

The following paragraphs look into perception of the development of the general state of media and the position of journalists in the context of changes since 1992, the year of first free elections in Albania.

The analysis of the responses from the survey participants suggests that there is a positive correlation between how a journalist assesses the general state of the media and the profile of journalist as a professional and an employee: Those who believe that media have evolved in a positive direction since 1992 also believe that the position of journalists have improved while those who believe the media have regressed since the early years of freedom also think that journalists are now in a worse situation.

		Years in media		Total
		Over20	Less than 20	
Evaluation of changes in the labour market	Radical	10	100	110
	Normal	20	130	150
	Negligible	7	50	57
Total		37	280	317

Perception of fundamental changes in the media labour market as assessed by period of work in the media sector



Of the 317 journalists who answered this questionnaire, 110 of them describe changes in the media labour market as radical, and in this group, 100 are journalists with less than 20 years of employment experience in the media sector, and only 10 of them have over 20 years work experience.

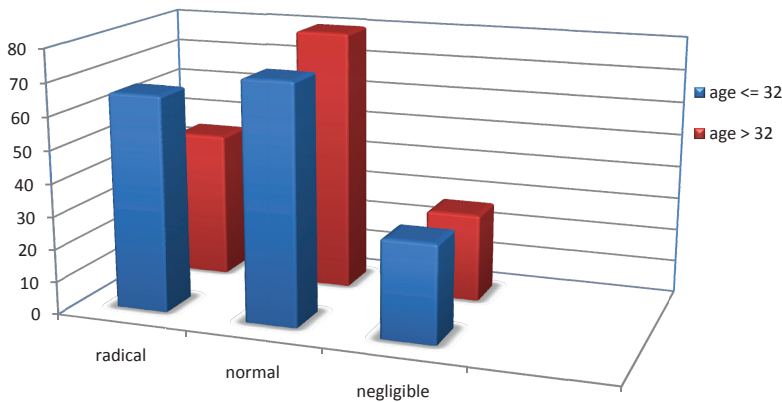
A bigger group of 150 respondents considered the changes in the labour market as normal, among them 130 journalists have a work experience of less than 20 years, and only 20 of them exceed this period. Changes in the labour market are valued as negligible only by 57 of the journalists who answered this question, of which only seven have a considerable experience in working with over 20 years of employment, while 50 journalists from this category have an experience of less than 20 years of work.

In terms of percentage, 34.7% of respondents, roughly one third, consider the change in the media sector as radical, a bigger group, 47.3%, regards these changes as normal while 18% see this difference as negligible. These results suggest that a majority of the respondents attribute some level of significance to the changes witnessed in the media labour market so far, leading to a general conclusion that employees of the media sector are generally satisfied with the direction of change.

Correlation between changes in media market and the age of a journalist

As can be seen from the chart below, it seems there is no significant correlation between age (over 32 years versus less than 32 years) variable and the direction of the assessment of the changes in the media labour market.

Assessment of changes in the labour market collated against age



In percentage terms, 17.8% of journalists believe that the transformations in the media sector since 1992 are not significant compared to 34.6% who see them as radical. The assessment of radical change is more expressed by younger journalists: Among all those who said their assessment confirmed that changes were radical, those younger than 32 years of age was 29% more than those older than 32.

Those who said the changes were just normal constituted 47.6% of the respondents, almost half of all.

The correlation between the assessment and employment termination

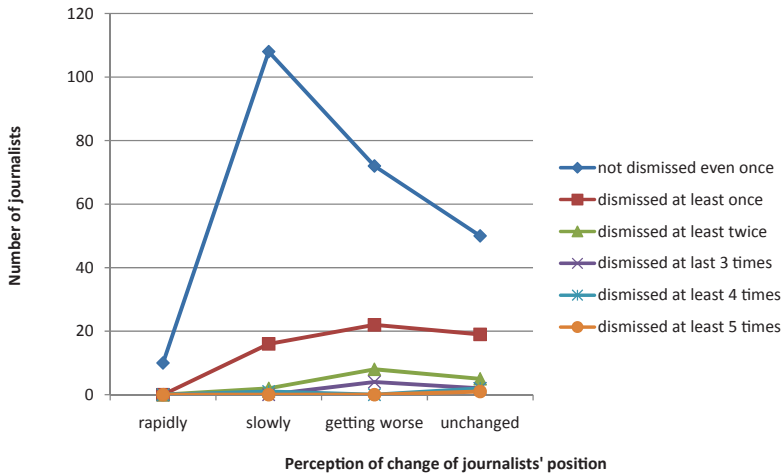
It is clearly demonstrated by the data that a significant factor in the assessment of journalists regarding the state of media market and the position of journalist in that market is the reality of dismissals. The assumption that the assessment of a journalist of the state of media market is not affected by a dismissal in the work history is not true.

From the data, it is understood that many journalists who have never been dismissed from their positions have described the position of journalist in the media market and in society as rapidly improving. On the other hand, none of the journalists who have been dismissed at least once in their careers see journalists' position in society as improving rapidly.

Moreover, the data suggests that more journalists than would be reasonably expected perceive journalists' position in society getting worse or remaining neutral.

		Dismissed_from_work						Total
		.0	1.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	
Change of position of journalist	Rapidly	10	0	0	0	0	0	10
	Slowly	108	16	2	0	1	0	127
	Getting worse	72	22	8	4	0	0	106
	Unchanged	50	19	5	2	2	1	79
Total		240	57	15	6	3	1	322

Perception of position of journalists in society –as a function of dismissal from job



“The position of the journalist in society can only slowly improve.” This appears to be a widely accepted view among the journalists surveyed, with 39.4% of them stating their opinion on this issue with such an assessment. One should note that this evaluation comes mostly from journalists who have not experienced a situation of dismissal at any time, and therefore should not be connected to any feeling of frustration on the part of the respondents. Of the 39.4% giving this assessment, 85% have never experienced a layoff. Of the remaining 15%, 12.6% have been dismissed at least once, 1.6% have been dismissed at least twice and 0.8% four times.

Overall, 33% of all journalists surveyed said the position of journalists in the society was getting worse. In this group of respondents, 68%, have never been dismissed even once, 20.8% of laid off at least once, 7.5% twice, and 3.7% have been fired at least three times.

Some 24.5% of journalists surveyed said they see no change in the position of journalists in Albanian society, with about half of them having never been dismissed and 24% being dismissed at least once.

It remains a very small number of journalists, (3.1%) who maintain the opinion that the position of the journalist in the Albanian society is improving rapidly. No journalist in this group has ever been the subject of a dismissal.

In specific figures, of the 322 journalists who responded, only 10 of them think that the journalist's position in society is improving rapidly. 79 of them said that there is no improvement, 127 journalists share the opinion that the position in society has improved slowly and 106 are of the opinion that the position of the journalists in society is getting worse.

Assessment of position status in relation to court cases

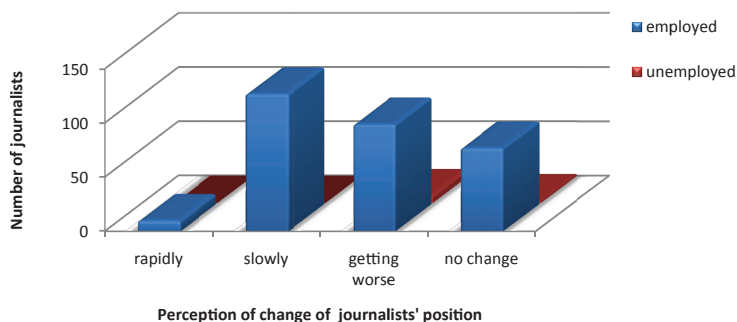
While there are very few cases to constitute a statistical variable to collate against the assessment of journalists' position, some conclusions can nevertheless be drawn as to whether the evaluation of the position of journalists in relation to the experience of litigation in employment disputes a journalist is involved. Among the journalists surveyed, of those who have reported having taken the option of litigation, 47% per cent said they felt the position of journalists was deteriorating. Within this group, more than half, 57% had one case in the court, 28.6% had two cases and 14.4% had three cases. Journalists who said their position in society was improving slowly make up 33% of respondents and all of them have had at least one experience in the offices of the court. Of this group, 20% say they see no improvement in the position of the journalists in society.

Position status and state of employment

There is a significant statistical correlation between the two variables of state of employment and the status-in-society assessment of journalists. It should be stressed, however, that unemployed journalists have stronger expressions of negative statements regarding the position of journalists in society.

		Unemployed		Total
		.00	1.00	
Change of position of journalist	Rapidly	0	10	10
	Slowly	0	127	127
	Getting worse	7	99	106
	No change	2	77	79
Total		9	313	322

Journalists' position in society – In relation to state of employment



It should be noted that within the framework of the overall survey, only a small number of unemployed journalists completed the questionnaire. They constitute only 2.8% of respondents. From the survey results, it appears that this category does not see the position of the journalist in the Albanian society improving either rapidly or slowly, but they are of the opinion that their position is getting worse.

The number of participating journalists who do not see any change in the position of journalists in Albanian society is 79 or 24.5% of all journalists surveyed, of which 2.5% fall in the category of unemployed. Only 3.1% of the respondents have reflected positive impressions regarding a speedy improvement of the position of journalists.

Do journalists feel appreciated?

The assessment of the figures on how journalists feel themselves positioned in the society leads to a predictable conclusion that there is a strong link between how journalists feel about being appreciated by the society and the position they believe they occupy as a professional community. The feeling of being appreciated is proportionally reflected on the perception of the position in the society, in other words, the more a journalist feels appreciated, and the higher he/she thinks the status of the profession.

The feeling of being appreciated also reflects on journalists' perception of job security, with those feeling more appreciated having more positive feelings about the strength of their position at the work place and the continuity of their employment.

The assessment of 1992-1997 period in media

As one could see in the table, journalists attribute a special significance to the period between 1992, the year of first free elections in Albania and 1997, the year of widespread domestic turbulence in the country as a result of the failed financial pyramid schemes that deprived many people of their savings and assets.

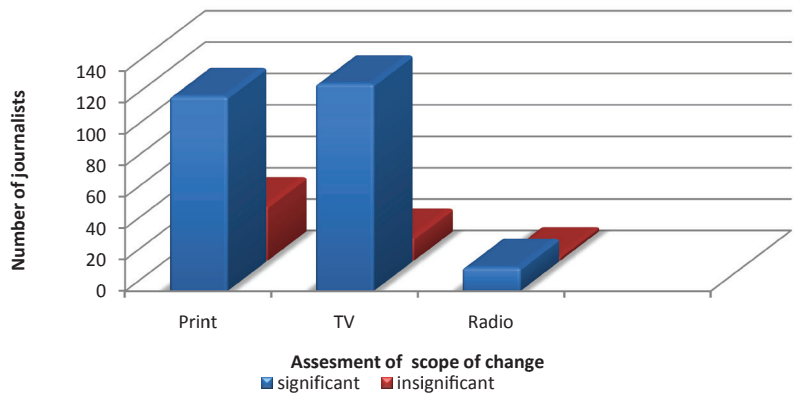
1997 was also the year when the decline of the print media has begun in contrast to the simultaneous and phenomenal rise of the electronic media, which currently serves as the main source of information for more than 90% of Albanian population.

As a result, a significant number of respondents assessed the period of 1992-1997 as very important from the standpoint of affecting the status of media and journalism in the Albanian society.

While the responses from radio journalists surveyed seem to make up too little a group to be statistically assessed, they nevertheless confirm the importance attached to the period by journalists working for radio as well.

				Total
		Insignificant	Significant	
Media_Sector	Print Media	35	124	159
	TV	15	132	147
	Radio	3	15	18
Total		53	271	324

Assessment 92-97 period changes, depending on the media outlet where the journalist worked



As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the majority of the currently working journalists have less than 20 years of work experience in the media market, and accordingly, a conclusion can be drawn that not all of them have really experienced the changes of 1992-1997 period in the media sector.

SUMMARY

Those who persevered in the media labour market and remained active in this field for more than 20 years constitute only 11.7% of journalists surveyed for this study, with remaining being considered as “new” in the field of journalism. This picture is also related to the radical changes that the media have experienced, considering the years 1992-1997, a period described by an overwhelming majority of the journalists surveyed (83.6%) as the most important period in the history of modern Albanian media, in particular with regard to the shift of dominance from print to electronic media. Among the several general conclusions that can be drawn from the results is the fact that the sweeping changes in the Albanian media landscape were not geographically balanced. As a result of these transformations, Tirana has seen a more intense concentration of media within its boundaries: Currently some 55.9% of all working journalists in Albania are employed in the capital city Tirana.

Among the journalists surveyed, print media employees take the first place in terms of size of their group with 49.4 %, followed by TV journalists 45% and the remaining fraction of 5.6% being made up of radio journalists.

At the time of the survey, the majority of the respondents were employed at least by one media outlet, with print media journalists being more concentrated in the capital city and the TV journalists forming the majority of journalists surveyed outside the capital.

Regardless of their field of specialization, print media and TV are the main employers for journalists with either graduate or postgraduate degrees. According to the survey, only one third, 33% of the respondents actually had undergraduate degrees in journalism, followed by 29.6% with degrees in literature and the rest in other disciplines. In terms of postgraduate degree holders, they make up a little over one fifth (20.8%) of the surveyed group with 11.2 of the respondents declaring having completed secondary education only.

1- Perception of stability

In terms of employment stability and duration, 77.8% of the respondents say they feel secure at their workplace while 22.2% express feelings of uncertainty about keeping their jobs.

2- Employment Contract and job security

A sizeable majority of journalists report a big difference between the years they have worked in media and the years that they have worked without a regular contract. Over the last three years, only 42.3% of the surveyed have had a regular contract during the whole period of employment, 26.1% have had their employment partially covered by a contract whereas 31.6% have worked without proper registration of employment. The majority of the contracts signed are drafted by the employer only, and 59.7% of them are not certified. Of the journalists who had to take leave of absence for health reasons (19.1% of the total sample), 67.3% have received financial support from their employers, which shows insecurity for the continuity at work in case of temporary health problems.

3- Cases addressed in court

A small number of journalists (11.1% of the sample group) took their complaints to courts to seek solutions (including unfair/unjustified dismissal, arrears in wage payments, political and rights disputes), whereas 26% of them contemplated the possibility of litigation but they held back either because of lack of trust in the justice system or the high cost of legal fees or the threats by the employer, among other reasons. The analytical results lead one to assume that it is the rather the relatively young journalists with lower levels of qualification who refuse to use the option of litigation in their disputes with their employers while those with graduate or postgraduate degrees demonstrate a stronger confidence in the judiciary to seek solutions.

4- Changes in the media market

Recent changes in the media sector are clear and evident, according to the responses provided by the participants in the survey. But respondents had different perceptions of what those changes meant in the context of the transformation process in Albanian media. The biggest majority, 47.3 % of the sample group described these changes as routine/normal, 34.7% gave a nod of approval finding these changes essential and 18% said the changes were unacceptable.

That the period of 1992-1997 was the most important time frame in terms of the radical transformations in the Albanian media scene was a conclusion shared by an overwhelming majority of respondents, 83.6%.

5- Suggestions for changes

An overall evaluation of the labour relations in the Albanian media market by the respondents shows that there is much room for improvement in terms of employment practices in media outlets: Only 47.1% of all the sample group, less than half of the journalists surveyed for this project, said the current level of labour practices is acceptable while the rest said they were either unacceptable or unstable.

