

Jordanian Media Coverage of Honor Crimes: Content and Implications

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Abstract

Objectives: The study identifies the values demonstrated by Jordanian media in dealing with the issue of honour crimes in Jordanian society.

Methods: This study adopts a qualitative methodology using discourse analysis. The discourse analysis focuses on the verbal-visual relationship, voice hierarchy, and intertextuality. The data was gathered from 49 articles published by two Jordanian news websites, Khaberni and Hiber, between 2009 and 2021 (sample includes 7 news items from Hiber and 8 news items from Khaberni), as well as (2) video clips shown on the privately-owned Jordanian "Roya TV".

Results: The results show that the Jordanian media's coverage of honour crime issues is lacking and assumes a formal character. This may be attributed to the "tribal" nature of the Jordanian society and the fear of "shame" and scandal. Jordanian media exhibits scant compassion towards the victims of rape or victims of so-called "honor killings". As for intertextuality, Roya TV quotes literary and legal texts to confirm that Jordanian media remains sympathetic to the "patriarchal system" and reproduces "patriarchal discourse".

Conclusions: Jordanian media discourse does not delve into the common assumption of the underlying relationship between honor and virginity, but rather focuses on other topics, such as legal aspects and the rule of law, and that both sides of the felony must receive punishment, while failing to criticize the basic principle behind honor killings.

Keywords: Honor Killings; Jordanian Media; Khaberni; Hiber; Roya TV.

تغطية الإعلام الأردني لقضايا جرائم الشرف: المضامين والدلالات

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ملخص

الأهداف: هدف المقال التعريف بالقيم التي أبرزها الإعلام الأردني في التعامل مع قضية جرائم الشرف في المجتمع الأردني **المنهجية:** اعتمدت هذه الدراسة المنهج النوعي باستخدام تحليل الخطاب والذي يركز على العلاقة اللفظية والبصرية، والتسلسل الهرمي الصوتي، والتناسل. تم جمع البيانات بين عامي 2009 و 2021 من 49 مقالاً نشرها موقعان إخباريان أردنيان، خبرني وحبر (تم أخذ عينة منهم؛ 7 أخبار من حبر، و 8 من خبرني) و (2) مقطع فيديو تلفزيوني معروض على فضائية "رؤيا" الأردنية الخاصة.

النتائج: أظهرت النتائج أن تغطية وسائل الإعلام الأردنية لقضايا جرائم الشرف لم تكن كافية، بل كانت محدودة بشكل رسمي، وقد يعزى ذلك إلى طبيعة المجتمع "القبلية" والخوف من "العار" والفضيحة. وظهر عدم تعاطف وسائل الإعلام الأردنية مع ضحايا الاغتصاب أو ضحايا ما يسمى "جرائم الشرف". وفي مجال التناسل، تستشهد قناة رؤيا بنصوص أدبية وقانونية لتؤكد أن الإعلام الأردني ما يزال متعاطفاً مع "النظام الأبوي" ويعيد إنتاج "الخطاب الأبوي".

الخلاصة: إن الخطاب الإعلامي الأردني لا يخوض في الفرضية السائدة التي تنص على علاقة الشرف بالعذرية، بل يركز على مواضيع أخرى، كالجوانب القانونية وسيادة القانون، وإن طرقي الجنائية يجب أن ينالوا العقاب، دون انتقاد المبدأ الأساسي وراء جرائم الشرف.

الكلمات الدالة: جرائم الشرف؛ الإعلام الأردني؛ خبرني؛ حبر؛ تلفزيون رؤيا.



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Introduction

“Honor” killings are a severe and sensitive issue in Arab society and have been increasing in number, particularly in recent years. Various people treat them as a justifiable act, not a crime, viewing the killing of women, even if they have been abused, as an act to remove the shame and defend the honor and dignity of the family. Adultery is considered in Arab societies to be an issue that affects the customs entrenched in traditional society about cultural, tribal, customary, or even religious dimensions. Within the community, people believe that such crimes can only be solved using eradicating the victim, whether the act of adultery was committed or merely a rumor. Accordingly, such a phenomenon has become common, and it works by emphasizing the status of the murderer as a hero. At the same time, the victim, the woman, is regarded as a disgrace that must be eliminated.

Jordan is an Arab society in which tribal customs and inherited traditions continue to have influence and authority in dealing with mistakes and acts, such as assault and rape, that occur in society. Cases of honor crimes in the country increased in the late 1900s and early 2000s. Furthermore, some studies have indicated that many honor crimes have occurred and been documented over the last three decades. In this regard, several years ago, the Khaberni website examined a study that the Thomson Reuters Foundation had undertaken, which considered the thoughts of 336 social professionals about women and maintained that Jordan is the second-worst Arab country in terms of the prevalence of honor crimes. According to the study, the Jordan Family Protection Department reported 681 rapes and sexual assaults in 2012, in addition to 10 honor crimes in the judicial system in 2012, whilst 24 women were placed in protective custody for fear of their lives. Conversely, the study suggested that Jordan, the UAE, and Kuwait are among the best Arab countries for women.

On 25 November 2020, the writer Husseini (2020) published a blog post for the Middle East Women’s Initiative entitled “Rising against so-called honor killings in Jordan”. She emphasized that, in the mid-2000s, some changes had occurred around so-called honor killings due to the efforts of civil society, officials, activists, a women’s group, senior decision-makers, and representatives of the royal family. This forced the government first to acknowledge that there was a problem and then to be accountable for the welfare and security of these women.

Furthermore, considerable effort has been being made to tackle abusive behavior perpetrated against women, particularly concerning honor crimes, being the scourge of society and human relations, and flagrant abuse of women’s rights. Such efforts have resulted in an elitist culture denouncing this disgraceful phenomenon. Many have appeared in the media, describing it as abhorrent, harmful, and unjust given that it punishes the individual who had been mistreated using killing even if the offense was against her will. At the same time, the offender survives and emerges as a hero and occasionally gains more honor when marrying his victim if she is not murdered.

As a consequence of public opinion and how educated people view honor crimes, the problem appeared on the political and media agenda until it became a significant issue that is difficult to disregard, covered by press columns, news space, and talk shows in addition to the websites and social media that discuss them in more detail. Thus, this topic entered media discourse and became the number one item in the news, specifically in Jordan, where two societal characteristics are found: tribal nature on the one hand and civic life and freedom on the other.

The Problem

The entrance of “honor” crimes into the Jordanian media, for example, newspapers, TV, and radio, and their translation into public conversation signify an incredible transformation that necessitates further research. This is because they are a significant issue in an immensely prominent Arab society categorized by its traditional nature and overseen by a range of beliefs and traditions with a democratic lifestyle that is the most prominent across the region. Accordingly, the Jordanian media has developed a positive perspective on tackling this sensitive subject.

One report presented some data on “honor killings” in the context of Jordan – acts of violence (the habit of killing) are committed mainly by men against women who bring shame to their families. In 2013, the Jordanian National Commission for Women ascertained that the Jordanian Criminal Court had recorded 66 cases of honor killings of women between 2000 and 2010 and that a brother committed 69% of these. Most cases involved young women: 56% of the victims were aged between 18 and 28, and 45% of the offenders were in the same age group (Global, 2016).

This situation inspired the researcher to tackle the subject and its news processors in the media, principally after assessing previous studies that have focused on the topic, notably those completed by Mahadeen (2017), titled “The Martyr of Dawn: Femicide in Jordanian Media” and Vatandoost (2012), undertook an evaluation of the coverage of honor crime cases in Canadian newspapers. So, I could ask this main question: How do the Jordanian media report honor crimes?

The aims

The article's primary aim is to ascertain the extent to which the Jordanian media has reported on the issue of honor killings throughout Jordanian society. Considering this, the following objectives have been developed: Determine how “honor”, as an ambiguous phrase, has been described in the reporting by the Jordanian media, and show how law and morality correlate in Jordan.

The importance

The article is distinctive not only because it will be one of only a few investigations concerning media treatment of honor crimes in Jordan but also because it will be an expansion of the sexual morality framework using relating it to the media and Jordanian case studies. No previous academic research has highlighted the role of the Jordanian press in reporting issues of honor killings and how audiences relate to the news in the media. Hence, this investigative study will enable us to recognize how the Jordanian media tackle the issue of honor killings. Similarly, my sampled content will involve several platforms, including TV, newspapers, broadcasters, and news websites.

Literature Review

Honor killings

Family honor killings might be interpreted as an indicator of a moral decline that necessitates obedient behavior via the use of force. Not just in Arab Muslim civilization but in places like Sardinia and Sicily, drastic steps are employed to restore family honor through the death of family members. As a show of sacrifice and generosity, violence can be considered a sacrifice. Of course, the risk of disclosing a woman's sexual permissiveness to a stranger is too significant for such information to be shared carelessly. This kind of behavior only becomes a public scandal when it is widely known; therefore, it is kept under wraps by the closest friends and family members. Many premarital or extramarital affairs are resolved amicably, and although many are made public, only a small percentage results in a murder.

A substantial number of professionals within the diverse spheres associated with criminal justice in the country have claimed that aggression perpetrated against women can be ascribed to tradition, social values, customs, and variations in Islam. They have also asserted that it can be attributed to gender discrimination and women's physical weakness. In Jordan, both men and women think that an immoral woman not only harms her status but is also responsible for damaging the reputation of both her family unit and tribe and that these are, in effect, economic offenses that are perpetrated against females by family members because of inheritance disputes or to cover up sexual abuse perpetrated by relatives (male family members) (Faqir, 2001).

In Jordan, an early study of the prevalence of domestic violence was carried out by Clark in 2011 among students at the University of Jordan. In the study, 86% of the participants admitted that there is violence in their families. “Intimidation” was the most common form (75%), followed by “emotional abuse” (40%) and “physical abuse” (33%). Furthermore, 50% of the students reported that their mother had undergone some violence, and 21% had encountered physical violence. From 2000 onwards, further studies were conducted concerning the many violent experiences and injuries – severe beatings, cuts, bruises, fractures, sexual assault, kidnapping, and robbery – that approximately 25% of women admitted to receiving, primarily at the hands of male family members. More recently, studies on domestic violence have investigated many forms of abuse, including physical abuse. The most widespread type of physical violence was “hand hitting”, including slapping, holding, shoving, kicking, hitting with fists, throwing harmful objects, or strangling by the husband (Clark, 2011).

In Jordan, honor killings prevail owing to the patriarchal cultures that allow (if not fully support) many discriminatory practices. Families escape punishment because the laws prohibiting this practice are not strictly enforced. The sentences also do not correspond to the perpetrators' actions, as they range from two months to 15 years. This situation transmits contradictory messages to the offenders, who could be released from prison feeling extremely confident after only a few

months. The societal practice of honor killings is supported by several groups, which include judges, women, and perpetrators. For example, reduced sentences support and motivate perpetrators on the one side. Conversely, reduced sentences are clear signals for women to obey men and follow the code even if it is not fair to them. Lenient judgments also strongly message offenders that they are supported by the community and the law (Al-Nasser et al., 2019).

Although Islam is against “honor” killings, religious groups or institutions may fail to enforce this stance. For example, when a proposal to repeal Article 340 was presented to Parliament in 1998, the Islamist coalition rejected it to calm the conservative social society. Therefore, Islamic scholars and groups are responsible for de-Islamising social practices concerning “honor” crimes (Mansour et al., 2010). However, in 2016, Jordan’s General Iftaa Department, which is responsible for issuing religious rulings, published the first Jordanian fatwa prohibiting the slaying of women in the name of family honor. However, the hard work must continue in Jordan, both at the legal level and in the local communities, in which men are considered heroes for killing female relatives to preserve their family’s “honor”.

Furthermore, this statute mandates the reduction of a penalty for a perpetrator (of either gender) who commits a crime in a “state of great fury [or “fit of fury”] resulting from an unlawful and dangerous act on the part of the victim.

Honor Killings in the Media

Most of the research on honor killings has demonstrated that they occur among all sorts of people: non-Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, and so on. Likewise, there are a few Muslim countries that have not reported honor killings, such as Indonesia, which is a heavily populated Muslim country. Conversely, various studies have presented cases of honor killings in non-Muslim countries, for instance, Sweden, highlighting the role of the media in framing culture-related conversations (Hellgren & Hobson, 2008). Nevertheless, Terman (2010) studied the validity and usefulness of the term “honor killings” through two cases, specifically Aqsa Parvez and Aasiya Hassan in the North American and European diaspora.

Media reports of aggression against women have been biased concerning event-based reporting or “episodic framing”, such as news reports that principally relate to isolated episodes situated in specific places and at times overlook the underlying social setting as regards violent behavior against women. The social setting indicates how to report social aspects related to crime, for instance, that violence against women is gender-based and an integral part of the social phenomenon of gender inequality. How articles are structured can influence how news audiences are held accountable. Occasional framing tends to cause responsibility to be assigned to individuals rather than society. Objective framing – which includes aspects of social factors related to crime – is counterproductive (Scheufele, 1999).

Jackson (2013) studied national television news reports of the kidnapping and sexual assault of Megan Williams, a 20-year-old African American woman in West Virginia, in 2007 and her rescue in 2009. Jackson stated that many female criminals triggered a “worthy of publication” report. Moreover, Jackson criticized Fox News for reporting the story. He stated that the news channel’s explanations of both race and gender during its broadcasts were deeply engrained in the prevailing white patriarchal ideologies. Nevertheless, he maintained that the monetary and professional pressures connected with newsrooms encourage journalists to concentrate on situations to which they are unaccustomed.

It is noteworthy that the Jordanian media, according to Mahadeen (2017), categorize all unmarried victims of supposed honor killings as blameworthy and responsible for their murder, and transfer the blame from the killers to the victims during their coverage of the events. This is achieved by focusing on the state of the hymen and comparing the intact hymen to the presence of virginity and, thus, honor, as the Jordanian public believes. This comparison fails in cases in which the victims were either married or divorced.

Methodology

Method

This study adopts a discourse analysis as a qualitative methodology regularly employed to display causal relationships. Qualitative research is classified as long-term first-hand observation of the phenomenon under study. Participant observation: Contemporary qualitative research draws many fundamental concepts from fields like sociology and anthropology, and several authorities have recently blended these trends in consolidated reference works. Fairclough (2013)

asserted that discourse is “the language used to represent a particular social practice from a particular point of view” and is the construction of a social structure. Thus, discourse relates to the language used in social practice and the variety of language applied in a particular sphere, such as political or scientific discourse. In addition, discourse, in its more specific use, refers to a manner of speaking that creates meaning concerning experiences from different perspectives. Conversely, certain researchers have limited the word discourse to semiotic systems, such as language and imageries. Hence, we can refer to discourse as an approach that is an element in creating social identities and social relations as well as systems of knowledge and significance (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2012). Further, Goodman (2017) suggested the following eight phases concerning discourse analysis (DA): determining an appropriate question, selecting applicable data sources for analysis, generating a corpus, Recording the data, Introductory reading of the data, generating results exhibiting the interpretative and ideological positions, building a case to corroborate the findings, Report writing.

Sample

The data will be collected from the following media:

- *Khaberni*: An electronic news website established in 2018, licensed under the provisions of the Jordanian Press and Publication on behalf of Khaberni for electronic information and advertising. Recently, in partnership with ArabiaCell – Jordan, it launched a special application for mobiles (Khaberni).¹
- *Hiber*: A media institute and electronic magazine launched in Jordan in 2007 as a voluntary information center called Media of the Citizen. In 2012, it became a professional magazine that produces in-depth multimedia journalism, critical analyses, and public debates on political, economic, social, cultural, and intellectual issues. It conducts various media projects and provides training, consulting, web development, and multimedia services.²
- *Roya TV*: A private Jordanian satellite channel unveiled on 1 January 2011 by a media vision employing modern and digital media, characterized by high media content and professional quality, and satisfies the interests and ambitions of the Arab and Jordanian society both within the country and overseas. Roya TV broadcasts numerous programs, series, films, concerts, and cartoons for children. The news focuses primarily on local affairs via a network of correspondents in most of the Kingdom’s governorates, official state news, and political and popular events.
- *Nabdul Balad* program: A political program broadcast by Roya TV (from Saturday to Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. in Jordan) that deals with many local, Arab, and international issues, hosted by specialized people. It is a program that conveys the concerns of the nation and the citizens and discusses the most important Arab and local events at its table.

Data Collection

Discourse analysis has been adopted as a tool in processing and analyzing samples of (17) media products (talk shows, news, and articles) related to honor killings that have been presented and published by the “Roya TV”, “Hiber” and “Khaberni” news websites over the last 12 years. Moreover, I analyzed the *Nabdul Balad* program presented by Roya TV. We analyzed the hierarchy of voices (men and women) in each product and their sources and intertextuality to analyze the interrelationship between texts that affect the public interpretation of journalistic material related to honor killings.

It is essential first to show the journalistic genres applied by the Jordanian media in addressing the issue of honor killings in Jordan. These genres are explained in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Journalistic Genres

Media	Journalistic Genres	Total	sample	Period*
Roya TV	TV talk show	2	2	2009–2021
<i>Hiber</i>	article	27	7	2009–2021
<i>Khaberni</i>	News item	22	8	2009–2021
*Note: The period begins with the first news reported by the media on the issue of honor killings.				

¹ <https://www.khaberni.com/news>

² <https://www.7iber.com/about-arabic/>

As mentioned in the Methodology, the discourse analysis of the news and reports concerning honor killings will focus on several tropes, which I assess as being critical to this analysis. These are:

- 1) the verbal-visual relationship, how news/reports are presented in visuals and text, and whether the visuals support the text.
- 2) The hierarchy of voices in each news item/report is used to unravel the sources/voices cited in honor killing reports and examine whether women's voices are present.
- 3) intertextuality, which refers to the interconnection between different texts (e.g., religious, legal, and journalistic), to influence the audience's interpretation of the journalistic piece.

Results and discussion

I begin by discussing the discursive features of implementing visual/textual markers to shape the theme of empathy toward the victims. In the next chapter, I elaborate on the discursive feature of intertextuality or the mix of genres/texts from the legal, religious, and social discourses.

Visuals and Verbal Usage

It is also worth noting that the visuals used in online news sites can influence readers' identification with the victims. For instance, Hiber used generic images to accompany their (short) news items about honor killings. Such images included a generic picture of a courtroom, a knife covered in blood, and the hand of a man behind bars, as shown below (Figure 4.1). Such symbols are used as a metonymy or an attribute as a substitution for the main referent, for instance, a scale as a substitute for the justice system or a knife as a substitute for the male killer.



Fig. 0.1: Picture of a courtroom taken from Hiber 3 news website (5 March 2020)

Khaberni sought to highlight the enormity of murder committed in the name of honor by a father and brother by attaching an expressive image of "a knife or a spear" that was dripping blood to express the idea of an instrument that is used to kill. This image has been published more than once. This context in the media is probably merely to mention what must be mentioned, which simultaneously means a lack of sympathy for the victim. Undoubtedly, any genuine image indicating the tragedy that the woman was exposed to, even if she was subjected to injustice and deceit by being killed by her brother with a knife in public after pledges to preserve her life, besides forgetting to mention significant details about the crime, has been lacking in all media materials (Figure 4.2).



Fig. 0.2: Picture of a knife covered with blood from Khaberni 1 news website (13 Nov. 2013)

I argue that the use of metonymy here reduces the reader's identification with the victims. Most of the images attached to the news from Khaberni are metaphorical and expressive images whose meanings were limited to the content of the news, such as the court ruling (Figure 4.3)



Fig. 0.3: Picture of a judge's hammer from Khaberni 2 news website (8 Jan. 2014)



Fig. 0.4: Picture of a pistol from Khaberni 6 news website (11 Aug. 2017)



Fig. 0.5: Picture of a knife from Khaberni 5 news website (17 Nov. 2016)



Fig. 0.6: Picture of a bullet from Khaberni 3 news website (18 Oct. 2015)

Khaberni News also included expressive images that referred to the crime weapons that the perpetrator used in committing his crime against his relative (the victim). These tools were a knife, a pistol, bullets (to indicate that the tool used may be a pistol or a rifle), and fire (such as a man who burned his sister and then claimed that she burned herself). See the following figures:

I was drawn to the news (Khaberni7) that referred to a Jordanian citizen “surviving” from the gallows after the High Criminal Court issued a ruling against the murderer of his married sister on the pretext of purifying the family's honor and decided to sentence him to temporary labor for seven and a half years instead of sentencing him to death by hanging. The court reduced the killer's punishment because the victim's family has dropped their right, in addition to the inclusion of the offender in the general amnesty law after being criminalized for the felony of premeditated murder. The word "naja", i.e., “survived”, may be an indicator of the degree of sympathy or the attitude towards the offender and victim. It seems at least that it is a neutral "word" in terms of news, but it is not in terms of supporting the victim, and perhaps the words “get away from the death penalty” would have been more appropriate to support the victim.

Khaberni published news indicating that Jordan witnessed the occurrence of five murders against women and a young man in a week. The photo accompanied by this news expressed the limited choices of women in society and the complex silence that restricts them, whether by themselves or forcibly or out of fear (Figure. 0.7):



Fig. 0.7: Picture of a woman shocked and silenced from Khaberni 4 news website (9 Oct. 2016)

Moreover, in the (Hiber6), an image of a young girl who covered half her face with her palm and wrote “Please stop” (Figure 4.8) included many emotional signs: a little girl, sadness in her eyes, crying features, and black-and-white colors, indicating that she has not been good or lost the taste of life, as she has lost her colors because of her feeling of injustice and threat.



Fig. 0.8: Picture of a girl raising her palm with the words “please stop” from Hiber 6 news website (26 April 2012)

The well-known singer Umm Kulthum's image below includes an indicator of one of the tools of the crime, a knife held by the singer, with the text: There are limits to patience (Figure 4.9). Here, it has been emphasized once again that Hiber supports women's rights socially and humanly.



Fig. 0.9: Picture of the singer Umm Kulthum from Hiber 7 news website (24 Dec. 2013)

It is evident that there is scant compassion towards the victims of rape or victims of so-called “honor killings”. The researcher has not noticed on any website or other media the effects or consequences of these crimes on the victims themselves or on the whole society.

Sources/Voices

The researcher Ebtihal Mahadeenn emphasized that the subject of “honor killing” has penetrated the political and media

agenda and has become a national issue that has never been ignored. Among the most prominent topics that the article focused on were "parental authority", "Jordanian media," and "the killer" (Hiber 2):

The efforts of the Jordanian people as regards opposing violence against women since the 1990s have resulted in highlighting so-called "honor killings" on the local scene as a menace that should be eradicated. Over 20 years or more, the efforts have resulted in achievements that should not be underestimated. Thus, a positive shift can be observed in this case, as honor killings entered the political and media agenda with urgency and have become a patriotic issue that cannot be ignored. Moreover, the Jordanian media has abandoned its previous role as a silent party on violence against women and taken a new role as a platform that is used to discover this violence.

Honor killings (against women) in Jordan continue to be committed by their family members; the crime is announced as breaking news that is condemned in line with the interpretations of the articles of the Jordanian Penal Code, and then it sometimes disappears from the news without knowing whether the perpetrators have been held accountable or not, and without the crime leaving controversy in public opinion. One example is Fadwa's case, where the father was identified as the killer, as mentioned by the journalist Remaz Musa (Hiber 4):

"Fadwa" is a girl who got married, divorced, and was murdered before she was 16 years old. Fadwa divorced months after her early marriage to her cousin and returned to her family's home. A month after her return, she left the house at night when her father reported to the police that she had gone out to an unknown destination. On the same day, while he was driving his car, Fadwa's father passed her as she was walking on a street in a nearby area. He stopped his car and followed her, grabbed her by the hair, pulled her to the car, picked her up, put her in the boot, and drove to an empty area. There, he stopped his car, pulled out a knife, then opened the trunk of his car, pulled his daughter by the hair, and stabbed her 11 times in the chest, neck, and abdomen. When he was sure she was dead, he left her and left the scene to turn himself into a security center.

In "Fadwa's" case, the High Criminal Court charged the offender with premeditated murder consistent with Article 326 of the Penal Code and decided to punish him by sentencing him to hard labor for 20 years. Moreover, because the family forfeited their personal right, which the court considered one of the discretionary reasons according to Article 99, it reduced his sentence by half, i.e., 10 years of hard labor. In the Court of Cassation, the offender's attorney demanded that he be given a mitigating excuse according to Article 98. However, the court rejected this request, citing that the victim "did not, at the moment of her murder, show any wrongful act" towards the offender. The offender was not under "extreme anger" now of her killing after putting her in his car and driving to an area free of people. Hence, the court upheld the decision of the High Criminal Court and sentenced the offender to 10 years of hard labor.

In an opinion article (Hiber 5) by Al-Nimry entitled "On a Society that Makes Criminals," she suggested that we often have preconceptions about people—good and bad. According to Al Nimri, the honor killer was evil, but after several interviews she conducted with some killers, she reconsidered her views. She added that society also classified humans and imposed its classifications on others to push them into becoming criminals and murderers through crimes whose causes they are not convinced of.

Relating to Roya TV, the coverage of honor killings differs from that of the above news sites. This is due to the different genres and technical requirements in producing television news and shows, in contrast to the limited requirements for news websites. For instance, television depends on visuals and dialogue among participants on talk shows. A notable example is a show on Roya dedicated to discussing honor killings.

First, Roya TV attempted to present more information about the extent of these crimes. Moreover, the most prominent characters whose views were cited in the TV show *Nabdul Balad* on Roya TV were women: lawyers, officials of women's advocacy associations, and study center officials (Roya 1, 2). There were also several distinguished legal characters comparing the characters of both the tribal and political sides. For example, the program relied on hosting two female lawyers, called a lawyer on the phone, used a recorded interview with a lawyer, and included a social counselor, a social worker, a tribal sheikh, and a female member of parliament (at that time).

However, despite the legal and social presence of women (more than 70% of the total attendance of both sexes as guests, or by phone contact, or direct via the SNG (Roya 1), the presenter talked to his guests as if he did not believe that making the victim marry her rapist was another crime. He had asked his guests a very controversial question, which implies his lack of understanding of the impact of these crimes on women's standing in Jordan: "Where is the problem with the legal article (308) permitting this?" This question alone at the social level – notwithstanding the media rationalization – is a real problem, as it presents an initial image that the overall tendency of the mass media is to justify honoring the rapist instead of his victim.

Below is part of the dialogue taken from one of the episodes of the *Nabdul Balad* program broadcast by Roya TV on November 17, 2013:

Jurist – Hadeel Abdel Aziz: First, I object to the words "honor killing", as the basic principle is that the term is discriminatory because most of these crimes are not related to the concept of honor as it is socially recognized. Honor killings – as they are referred to now socially – are every crime that takes place by a man against a woman under social justifications related to her violation of socially accepted traditions, especially those related to illegal relationships with men.

Lawyer – Taghreed Al-Daghmi: Before 2009, the rate of so-called "honor killing" ranged from 20 to 25 annually. However, after 2009, this number decreased to approximately 10 to 15 crimes annually. This goes back to the Jordanian judiciary that applies the "mitigating excuse" in the narrowest cases. Therefore, not every murder is considered an honor crime. This has led to a reduction in crime in Jordan. Consequently, there has been an intensification of punishments, and the murderer is punished as a killer and not as a killer with so-called "honor".

Lawyer – Nour Al-Imam: The decision made by the Court of Cassation regarding Article 308 talks about suspending the execution of the punishment in the case of marriage taking place between the rapist and the raped girl. Article 308 addresses the conscience of a society that does not do justice to the girl who is assaulted.

In this case, the lawful text gives the perpetrator the right to escape punishment. However, it also affects the woman's natural right to choose her husband, as she is forced to marry someone who assaulted her – the perpetrator – to erase society's view of her.

Journalist and social activist – Rana Al-Husseini: Concerning so-called "honor killings", they are a global crime and are not limited to Jordan only. In terms of laws, virtually every Arab country gives a mitigating excuse. However, in Jordan, we have taken great steps to fight this lawful article at the level of civil society, activists, lawyers, the government, the family, the judiciary, the police, prosecutors, and others. In the past, those who had committed killing crimes would be released from prison after between three and six months, but after 2009, a special commission in the Grand Criminal Court was assigned to deal with these crimes.

Sheikh Hammad Al-Maaytah: We hear about honor killings in Jordan, meaning whenever someone disagrees with his sister for one reason or another, he kills her under the pretext of "honor". This is not true because our society has values, traditions, and a constitution representing the essential laws. Therefore, in Jordan, Islam is the religion of the state. Islam prohibits killing and gives women all their rights to participate in building society.:

Parliamentarian – Hind Al-Fayez: It is unacceptable to reward the rapist with a gift and a prize by marrying him to the victim whom he had wronged. This means we are encouraging it from another side; that the one who cannot marry a girl, there is an easy way to marry her when he rapes her. I mean it is as if we are encouraging this crime; a person who rapes must go behind bars and be punished.

In 2021, Roya TV showed another episode of the program *Nabdul Balad*, hosted by Dr Reem Abu Hassan, a former minister, and the lawyer Hala Ahed. When the program presenter asked, "Did we make a mistake in canceling Article 308?" each guest presented a different point of view, one supportive and the other opposed.

Dr. Reem Abu Hassan: Yes, we, as a state, made a mistake in repealing Article 308. Uh, work was being done to amend it. So that we can guarantee the rights of vulnerable groups, she needed to use the marriage option found in Article 308, which was repealed. Certainly, while we are talking about this matter, we are not talking about crimes of rape and

sexual crimes in which there is reparation and coercion, but rather about crimes in which there is an element of consent. In the end, it has now become what we were warned of, that there are victims of repealing. We call them the victims of annulment, and they are the children who result from an illicit relationship: the girl and even the young man (the rapist) who was sent to prison because of the repealing.

Lawyer – Hala Ahed: Of course, we did not make a mistake in repealing. On the contrary, this is one of the few times when something like this has been done and achieved in an integrated way. We are used to piecemeal amendments in which we do not achieve everything: we want to achieve justice for the victims, achieve equality, or protect women and children from violence. This article was a victory for justice. In the interest of the victims... it did not constitute any form of protection, but rather it was considered an entry point for impunity for the perpetrators.

The presence of representatives from both the tribal and political sides on a show that discussed the topic of honor killings on Roya TV was very limited in comparison to the attendance of lawyers and social workers. Two other debates were aired from November 17, 2013, to October 19, 2016. There was scarcely any political attendance, while in one of these debates, 10 legal personalities and civil society activists were present (Roya 1). All of them expressed their disgust at murders in the name of honor. The entire dialogue was based on a legal style, as the subject of the program was related to the legal aspect. Furthermore, the channel's correspondent submitted an integrated report on the subject, including texts, meetings, and statements denouncing crime in the name of honor.

Intertextuality

Intertextuality is a mechanism that is employed in the formulation of all sorts of discourse. It often appears in preaching, both social and political, as well as media discourse through various media. It is based on employing "another text" within the general context of the discourse, such as a religious or legal text or a text that overlaps with the existing text to form a state of intertextuality by inserting a new meaning or supporting it. As regards the Jordanian media, when they deal with the subject of murder in the name of honor, they have been reluctant to employ intertextuality in their articles, given that "Khaberni" and "Hiber" present the news or articles without linguistic support and textual citations that may enhance the direction of the text in the article.

Khaberni 1 used certain vocabulary within the framework of criminalizing the perpetrator and defending the "girl" victim. For example, the words "in the name of honor" were mentioned to frame the heinous act with the murderer's claim that it is for the sake of honor. Consequently, this style of wording carries with it "sarcasm". It also limits the entire story "due to her absence from her home", leaving the reader to guess the reasons for leaving the house. "Khaberni" was limited to dealing with the topic and its events from 2013–2020 in just 20 short news items. It did not employ other journalistic genres, such as articles or reports. This is a general indication that the Jordanian media differed in dealing with the topic and its treatment.

Furthermore, Hiber's news included textual quotes that showed the cultural and social trends and the legal and legislative ones. Some of them had been presented through images and banners. The image attached with an article titled "Raped and Married: Systematic Discrimination against Women in Jordanian Laws and Customs" included an influential text written on the girl's palm, which said, "Please stop", to express a request for protection because girls are at risk of threat, danger, and death. Just two words were written by hand, but they carried significant connotations and many emotional signs, which had great connotations and many emotional indications of a woman's right to receive justice, fairness, and respect.

Intertextuality is reflected in the entwinement of legal, religious, and social codes in making important content available to the viewer and in explaining the problematic points in it, or in proving its insufficiency in deterring the killer in the name of honor, as the lawyer Nour Al-Imam and member of the Jordanian Parliament Hind Al-Fayez indicated:

Lawyer – Nour Al-Imam: The Court of Cassation's decision regarding Article 308 highlights suspending the execution of the punishment if a valid marriage takes place between the rapist and the raped girl. Article 308 came to address the conscience of society that does not do justice to the girl who is assaulted... In this case, the text gives the perpetrator the right to escape punishment. Still, it affects the woman's natural right to choose her husband, as it forces her to marry someone who assaulted her and who is the perpetrator to erase society's view of her.

Parliamentarian – Hind Al-Fayez: It is unacceptable that we reward the rapist with a gift and a prize by marrying him to the victim whom he wronged. That suggests it is as if we believe the person cannot marry and that there is an easy way to marry by raping a girl. I mean, it is as if we are encouraging this crime; however, whoever rapes should go behind bars and serve his sentence.

The news broadcast by Roya regards what the Jordanian government proposed to parliament concerning abolishing Article 308 in the Penal Code that stipulates the prosecution of all cases of assault on women, which was mentioned in a complete chapter of the law demanding that the prosecutions be limited to the aggressor against a female in only three cases.

The Conclusion

The results of the analysis of media materials published and broadcast by the Jordanian media; Khaberni, Hiber, and Roya TV. for the period 2013–2021 on honor killing issues in Jordanian society showed that there is a clear shortcoming in coverage, which does not keep pace with the real problem, it does not show sympathy befitting the amount of injustice inflicted on girls, and it does not give proper attention to addressing a real crime that occurs dozens of times during a single year. Poor coverage included aspects of discourse analysis that were studied in media materials: visual-verbal relationships, hierarchy of sounds, and intertextuality. As for the presence of sources/voices in “Hiber,” it distinguished itself in that most of the article writers are women, which is a good space provided by the website for women’s pens to express their perceptions and opinions on the cases of honor killings committed against girls. It should be noted that the Hiber website relied on articles. Most of the news on the “Khaberni” website was limited to short news that dealt with honor briefly killing incidents and did not refer to any details. Also, its news did not include a reference to the source or writer. In the few programs they have broadcast, Roya has shown a certain (limited) level of sympathy for honor killing cases. Regarding intertextuality, when addressing the issue of honor killings, the Jordanian media; Hiber, Khaberni, and Roya, were reluctant to use intertextuality in their articles and news appropriately and comprehensively. There were specific linguistic quotations that had more societal than linguistic connotations. The dialogue on Roya included examples of intertextuality, whether religious, legal, or legislative, in addition to the guests mentioning society’s customs and ethics, such as famous proverbs and sayings. As a result, the Jordanian media discourse does not delve into the common assumption that states the relationship of honor to virginity but rather focuses on other topics, such as legal aspects and the rule of law, and that both sides of the felony must receive punishment, without criticizing the basic principle behind honor killings, or the principle of male dominance, and ignoring that the offender is the only party deserving of punishment. Some women writers even hinted that media professionals sympathize with the killer, implicitly or openly.

Recommendations

The author recommends that media organizations undertake appropriate coverage of the issue of honor killings, investigate the important facts behind their commission, and study appropriate solutions and proposals.

Concerning the proposed remedies, the Jordanian media can significantly raise awareness about honor killings by providing consistent in-depth programmatic coverage and press sessions featuring legal and educational experts. These coverages must emphasize that honor killings are crimes regardless of justification. In addition to the role of journalism, particularly investigative, in crafting news stories and penning impactful articles, I believe that the Jordanian media can produce not only a program but even a drama (perhaps a joint Arab one) to contribute, along with other, to put an end to the spread and exacerbation of these dangerous behaviors.

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Appendix: media materials

Hiber 1. Free Jordanian Voices: "Honor Crimes", 1 April 2010, <https://www.7iber.com/2010/04/>

Hiber 2. Honor killings in the Jordanian media, Ebtihal Mahadeen, 2 April 2015, <https://www.7iber.com/2015/04/>

Hiber 3. In the name of honor, violations of women's rights, 24 February 2015, <https://www.7iber.com/2015/02/5>

Hiber 4. Under the pretext of "honor": after the crime, Rimaz Musaa, 9 December 2014, <https://www.7iber.com/2014/12/9>

Hiber 5. About a society that makes criminals, Nadin Alnamrii, 19 May 2016, <https://www.7iber.com/society14>

Hiber 6. Rape and Marry: Systematic Discrimination against Women in Jordanian Laws and Customs, Ebtihal Mahadeen, 26 April 2012,

Hiber 7. Why drop the personal right in particular? 24 December 2013, <https://www.7iber.com/2013/12/23>

Khaberni 1. He killed his sister because she was absent from home, 13 November 2013, <https://www.khaberni.com/news/2>.

Khaberni 2. Attribution of charges to the killer of Noor Al-Awad, 8 January 2014, <https://www.khaberni.com/news/5>.

Khaberni 3. Juvenile kills his sister in Al-Muwaqqar, 18 October 2015, <https://www.khaberni.com/news/10>.

- Khaberni 4. 4 Murders against women in a week in Jordan, 9 October 2016, <https://www.khaberni.com/news/13>.
- Khaberni 5. A young man stabs his sister in Juwaideh, 17 November 2016, <https://www.khaberni.com/news/16>.
- Khaberni 6. A young man kills his sister in Al-Balqa, 11 August 2017, <https://www.khaberni.com/news/18>.
- Khaberni 7. Jordanian escapes from the gallows, 29 December 2019, <https://www.khaberni.com/news/18>.
- Khaberni 8. Death penalty for his sister's killer in Amman, 28 May 2019, <https://www.khaberni.com/news/22>.
- Roya Tv. 1, Nabdul Balad, Honour killings and Article 308 of the Jordanian Penal Code, 16 November 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFfHjg5q_0s.
- Roya Tv. 2, Dr. Hussein Mahadin and Anaam Al-Ashi - Honour killings, Nabdul Balad, 19 October 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_XZQQvDZcdQ.