



COMPARING GENDER AND MEDIA EQUALITY ACROSS THE GLOBE

A Cross-National Study of the Qualities,
Causes, and Consequences of Gender Equality
in and through the News Media

Edited by: Monika Djerf-Pierre & Maria Edström

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NORDICOM

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Monika Djerf-Pierre & Maria Edström (Eds.)

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Foreword

Can we achieve gender equality and human rights for all if we fail to address the gender gaps in the news media? Probably not. Expanding freedom of speech and freedom of expression to include both women and men is a key human rights issue. If we are to attain sustainable societies, more women from all parts of the world need to be part of the public conversation that the news media represent. Still, the global journey towards gender equality seems to move at glacial speed. Gender equality will not be attained for another 99.5 years if we continue in the current pace, according to the 2020 Global Gender Gap Report, published by the World Economic Forum.

When we began writing the foreword to this book, we were confident that 2020 would be a year when the world again focused on gender equality – celebrating and reviewing the 25 years that have passed since the United Nations adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a document where Women and the Media is one of twelve areas that call for action. We wanted to do our part with the project Comparing Gender and Media Equality Across the Globe, and contribute to the wider understanding of the importance of news media for gender equality. We wanted to champion the greater use of existing comparative data made available through the GEM dataset we created, and stress the need for more gender-related data on the media.

Then came Corona. 2020 will now forever be the year of a global pandemic that locked down many countries, and so far, as of October 2020, Covid-19 has killed more than one million people. As the United Nations and many others have noted, the pandemic both illuminates and amplifies all existing inequalities – including gender inequalities. In many societies, we have seen an escalation of gender-based violence during the lock-down, as for some women and children the home is not a safe place. The pandemic has also led to financial insecurity striking many workers, especially in service work and in the informal sector

Djerf-Pierre, Monika, & Maria Edström. (2020). Foreword. In Monika Djerf-Pierre, & Maria Edström (Eds.), *Comparing gender and media equality across the globe: A cross-national study of the qualities, causes, and consequences of gender equality in and through the news media* (pp. 7–9). Gothenburg: Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. <https://doi.org/10.48335/9789188855329-f>

where many women make their living. More women are also putting their health at risk, working on the front lines of the pandemic in care homes and hospitals, and they are less likely to get the health care they need due to the pandemic. Future research will reveal how well the news media covered these stories. The first preliminary studies indicate a dominance of male experts in the news, with three men appearing for every woman expert (Operation 50/50, 2020). News matters. To learn more about the factors that encourage gender equality in the news media and the consequences a lack of gender equality in the news media has for social and political life, we need research that monitors and critically examines the news media from a gender perspective.

This is why we are proud to present this book. The chapters have different starting points and invite the reader to consider different theoretical and empirical understandings of gender and media, but they are united in the clear vision that gender equality in society will not be achieved if we fail to keep track of and address gender disparities in the news media. Hopefully, this book, the GEM dataset, and the GEM-Index will find their way to researchers, students, civil society, newsrooms, and decision-makers around the world.

A project like this is both a great privilege and an endeavour to pursue and complete, and it relies heavily on the collective efforts and generosity of many people. We would especially like to thank the organisations and individuals who made it possible compile and curate the data in the pooled GEM dataset. The data come from the following studies: Advancing gender equality in decision-making in media organisations (by EIGE, the European Institute for Gender Equality); Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media (by IWMF, the International Women's Media Foundation); and the Global Media Monitoring Project (by WACC, the World Association of Christian Communication). Our gratitude goes to Carlien Scheele, Virginija Langbakk, and the EIGE team, Philip Lee and the WACC team, and Elisa Lees Muñoz and Nadine Hoffmann at IWMF for sharing their data. The principal investigator (PI) of these studies has given generously of their time and expertise in order for us to build the GEM dataset, to test and analyse data for this book. Thanks for everything, international research team: Carolyn M. Byerly (PI for the Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media), Sarah Macharia (PI for the Global Media Monitoring Project), Claudia Padovani and Karen Ross (PIs for Advancing gender equality in decision-making in media organisations).

In the initial phase of the project, William Bird from Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) contributed with his expertise, and we also thank the co-authors of the book chapters – Rossella Bozzon, Tobias Bürger, Marloes Jansen, and Katherine A. McGraw – for taking the time to explore the GEM dataset.

A special thanks also go to our team colleague Mathias Färdigh at the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication (JMG) at the University of Gothenburg, who has relentlessly worked to put together the dataset. But

this is not the end – rather the beginning! Hopefully, you will be able to update and curate the dataset with new data for future research to explore.

Thanks also to Todd Nesbitt, at the Department of Communication and Mass Media Studies at the University of New York in Prague, for giving us the possibility to have a workshop in conjunction with the Interantional Communication Aassociation in Prague 2018. Thanks also to the Interantional Association for Media and Communication Research for letting us host a pre-conference, The Future of Media Monitoring: Comparing Gender and Media Equality Across the Globe, in Madrid 2019.

Karin Enberg, at Vidform, who provided us with the logo and colour palette for the book, namasté. Last, but certainly not least, our gratitude goes to the Swedish Research Council for funding this research project.

Gothenburg, 11 October 2020

Monika Djerf Pierre & Maria Edström

The project Comparing Gender and Media Equality across the Globe has been funded by the Swedish Research Council (2016–2020) and is based at the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication (JMG) at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. The GEM dataset and its codebook are free to use and can be downloaded in various formats. For access, contact JMG. Please ensure that proper attribution is given when citing the dataset.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Comparing gender and media equality across the globe

Understanding the qualities, causes, and consequences

Monika Djerf-Pierre & Maria Edström



How people and groups of people are represented in the media goes a long way to determining how they are treated in the real world.

Helen Pankhurst (2019: 296)

Gender equality in the media is emphasised by the United Nations as one of the critical issues for the future, specifically through the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action from 1995, where women and the media is one of twelve areas where actions are to be taken. Yet we know surprisingly little about the factors that encourage gender equality in the media, and even less about the consequences that the lack of gender equality may have for social and political life.

The aim of the Comparing Gender and Media Equality Across the Globe project – and of this book – is to examine the qualities, causes, and consequences of gender equality in and through the news media by employing a cross-national, comparative methodology. The project examines equality in news media content, as well as in news media organisations, and conducts empirical analyses of both the causes and consequences of media and gender equality in countries across the globe. Furthermore, a unique dataset is developed within the project: the GEM dataset, which pools together existing comparative data on gender equality in the media, making them available for use by the global research community. This book presents the results from the project, and it is the product of collaborative work by a group of international scholars aiming to elevate the global discussion about gender equality and the crucial role and responsibilities of the news media, both as an actor and an arena for societal debate.

This introductory chapter outlines the project rationale and clarifies the normative theories supporting the striving for gender equality in and through the news media. We give context for this study by highlighting previous re-

Djerf-Pierre, Monika, & Maria Edström. (2020). Comparing gender and media equality across the globe: Understanding the qualities, causes, and consequences. In Monika Djerf-Pierre, & Maria Edström (Eds.), *Comparing gender and media equality across the globe: A cross-national study of the qualities, causes, and consequences of gender equality in and through the news media* (pp. 11–56). Gothenburg: Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. <https://doi.org/10.48335/9789188855329-1>

search, discussing the key methodological considerations, explaining the value of the various datasets used in the project, and providing an overview of the global commitments to improve gender equality in the media. Finally, we give an overview of the whole book and a summary of the main insights from the project. The chapters in this book provide not only interesting results, but also exemplify how the GEM dataset can be used to advance academic research on gender and journalism. Hopefully, it will inspire more scholars to explore opportunities for comparative research.

1.1 The GEM project's rationale: Gender equality in and through the news media

The gender data gap isn't just about silence. These silences, these gaps, have consequences. The impact on women's lives every day.

Criado Perez (2019: XI)

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for people of all genders. It is a human rights issue as well as a precondition for, and indicator of, “sustainable people-centered development” (UN Women, 2020a).

In order to track the progress of gender equality in different countries and regions in the world, reliable monitoring instruments, as well as country-level data disaggregated by gender, are required. Whereas many nations report such data on mortality and labour markets, only 15 per cent of countries collect gender related media data on a regular basis (Seager, 2015). According to UN Women (2020b: 9), the “absence of vital statistics reflecting the lives of women and girls” is a global concern that renders many inequalities invisible.

Gender equality statistics usually operationalise gender based on binary categorisations: male/female or women/men. In recent years, a third category for gender is at times added to account for the plurality of gender identities. Still, the premise for the present study, as for most cross-national studies of gender equality, is that a binary categorisation of men and women are relevant to use in comparative analyses. Women and men exist in the world, and the repertoire of life choices, opportunities, and resources available to women as a group differ from what is available to men as a group in most national contexts (WEF, 2020). Yet, we recognise that the meanings and categorisations of gender are continuously evolving; they are culturally and historically situated and often intersect (combine and interact) with other social categories such as race and ethnicity, age, class, and sexuality (Cho et al, 2013; Crenshaw, 1989, 1993; Edström, 2018; Lykke, 2010; Verloo, 2006). In the future, other ways of categorising gender may be available when analysing comparative gender data.

The aim and virtue of the present project is to provide the large-scale structural analyses deeply needed to uncover the presence – but also the causes and consequences – of gender equality in the news media across the globe. In the quantitative analyses of news media conducted by the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), gender is coded based on performance and presentation (name, visual appearance, voice, and gender pronoun) rather than the news subjects' sex at birth or gender identity (which the journalists, the audience – and the coders – cannot know for certain): a person who is presented or appears as a woman is categorised as a woman. A third category, or code, for gender is also available to coders, but the actual numbers have so far been too small to include in statistical analyses. Qualitative analyses of, for instance, specific newsrooms or news outlets could provide more in-depth and nuanced understandings of how gender plays out and intersects with other identity categories in particular media contexts. This particular project focuses on charting the global structures of women and men in the news. At present, for such an analysis to be feasible, a binary categorisation of gender is required.

Although gender equality is progressing in most societies in the world, many inequalities persist (United Nations, 2019; UN Women, 2020b; WEF, 2020). Even in countries where gender-equality laws have been put in place, substantial differences in life conditions for women and men remain. There are gender gaps to various degrees in health, education, economic participation and opportunities, material resources, and political empowerment in most parts of the world. No country in the world has yet fully closed the gender gap and, with current trends, the World Economic Forum (WEF) projects that it will take another 99.5 years to achieve full gender parity in the world (WEF, 2020). Formal equality clearly does not guarantee *substantive* equality for women (UN Women, 2015, 2020b).

In a similar manner, this project examines and compares various aspects of substantive gender equality in the news and in news media organisations in different countries. In a mediatised society, voice and visibility in the news media constitute valuable resources that can be converted into societal influence and legitimacy (Couldry, 2010). Substantive gender equality in the media thus goes beyond sheer numbers. Gender equality in the news media is defined as a state where women and men are afforded equal status (presence, importance, and respect) in media organisations and in news media content. Gender equality in news content entails a balanced presence of women and men “reflecting the composition of society, and human experiences, actions, views, and concerns” and a fair portrayal of women and men through the elimination of stereotypes and the promotion of multidimensional representation (UNESCO, 2012; see also Chapters 2, 4, 6, & 8). Gender equality in media organisations and professions entails gender balance in the journalist profession, balance at decision-making

levels, and gender equality in work and working conditions (UNESCO, 2012; see also Chapters 3, 5 & 7).

Women's voices matter, in the media and elsewhere. Still, it is mostly men's voices that are heard in the news around the world. The GMMP's examination of the portrayal of women and men in the news on television, radio, and newspapers in 114 countries shows that only 24 per cent of the news subjects and sources were women in 2015 (Macharia, 2015). The expansion of digital media and news online has so far not altered the picture – the under-representation of women in news on Twitter and online in the GMMP is just as evident as in traditional news media (Macharia, 2015). Women have, on the other hand, made significant strides into the journalist profession – in some countries, women even outnumber men as reporters (Byerly, 2011, 2013; Djerf-Pierre, 2007; Hanitzsch & Hanusch, 2012; Hanitzsch et al, 2019). Yet, women are scarcer in top-level management and nearly invisible at the governance level of media organisations (Byerly, 2011, 2013; Ross & Padovani, 2017; Edström & Facht, 2018). Sexual harassment and gender-based threats and violence, both off- and online, are also growing concerns for women journalists across the world (IFJ, 2014; IMS, 2019; Löfgren-Nilsson & Örnebring, 2016; OHCHR, 2020); other studies emphasise that women journalists face specific challenges, especially in digital environments (Antunovic, 2019; De Vuyst, 2020; OSCE, 2019; Posetti, 2017; Reporters without Borders, 2018; Vickery & Everbach 2018).

Media research often suggests that the media simultaneously reflects and reshapes the social world. In a mediatised society, where media permeate most aspects of social and political life, the news media are not only influential vehicles for circulating and negotiating gender conceptions; the media in general, and the news media in particular, are essential for political participation and freedom of expression for women and men. Despite this, we know very little about the factors that promote or oppress gender equality in the news media in different countries. We know even less about how gender equality in the media is related to social development and outcomes in other areas. How does gender equality in the media matter for the development of a “good society” – a society that provides quality of life for its citizens and quality of government with regard to political and social institutions (Djerf-Pierre, 2011; Holmberg, 2007; Rothstein, 2011)?

The basic argument pursued in this book is that in order to understand if and why gender equality in the media progresses and whether gender equality contributes to other positive outcomes in society, we must conduct systematic, comparative analyses of gender and news media. Large-scale comparative studies are required to explain variations in gender equality in the news media as well as understanding the role of the media in shaping social outcomes. This book thus addresses three key questions:

- How has gender equality in news media content and in media organisations developed over time and across different countries and how are the different aspects related?
- How can differences in gender equality in the media be explained from variations in media systems and in economic, political, social, and cultural factors in society?
- How is gender equality in the media related to the status of women in society in general and to other aspects of social development, such as democracy, media freedom, economic development, and freedom from corruption?

Bringing research to a new level with key datasets

Gender equality in the media is certainly an important and timely topic in societal debate, but global attention to media issues has waxed and waned since the 1990s (see Appendix 1.1 for a detailed account). The year 2020 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women that was held in Beijing in 1995 and where the media was seen as crucial for advancing gender equality in society. The conference and adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action set the goals for women and media that have since guided global efforts to promote increased equality in the world. The platform was also reaffirmed in 2015 by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2015: 8). The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action clearly established gender equality in and through the media as a basic human rights issue, emphasising its broad implications that involve gender equality in media content (the media representation of women and men), in media organisations (access to and status in media professions), and in media access and use.

The academic research on gender equality in the media tracks at least all the way back to the 1970s, when Gaye Tuchman (1978, 1979) conducted the first benchmark studies on the “symbolic annihilation” of women in the news. The burgeoning feminist media criticism was often also directed at the allegedly “male” positivistic approach to research and at quantitative research methods in general, and quantitative gender studies were often criticised for just “counting heads”. Inevitably – and partially as a reaction to the criticism for just “counting” (Cappeci, 2014; de Bruin, 2000; van Zoonen, 1994) – feminist media studies came to lean heavily on qualitative methods. Scholars have since produced excellent research in the vein of contextualised, in-depth analyses of media discourses and news production. Clearly, we are not “just counting” anymore, as the allegation was in the 1980s and early 1990s (de Bruin & Ross, 2004; Steiner, 2012; see also McLaughlin & Carter, 2018). Today, there is a

large and diverse global research community – and the resources found in *The International Encyclopaedia of Gender, Media, and Communication*, published in 2020, contains 260 entries from more than 300 contributors (Ross, 2020). Still, the focus on qualitative analyses also caused the field to lag behind with regard to cross-national comparative approaches and the use of advanced statistical methods. In many ways, quantitative studies even today often remain equivalent to frequency tables and cross-tabular analyses.

Even so, the premise for the present project is the conviction that “simple counting” is indeed neither simple nor atheoretical, and that quantitative studies are both important and necessary to advance gender research. Counting is required in revealing structural horizontal and vertical segregation. Counting also helps to put gender on the agenda in media organisations as well as in public debate, and is an indispensable tool in media monitoring and advocacy (Gallagher 2001a, 2004). On the other hand, counting must, as Gallagher (2001b: 12) pointed out in the first issue of *Feminist Media Studies* in 2001, be combined with an analysis of the underlying forces that condition media content. In this area, research is still wanting.

This lack can now be remedied. The accumulation of descriptive gender-related media data collected over the years has created entirely new opportunities for innovative comparative research in the field. With regard to media content, the GMMP provides a vein of ground-breaking research that has come to serve as benchmark for examining and comparing gender equality in news content across countries. GMMP presented their first finding at the UN conference in 1995, but grew to become an ongoing monitoring programme conducted every five years (1995–2015). GMMP monitors how women and men are portrayed in the news, and at the time of writing this chapter, a new study is being carried out for 2020. The GMMP was and still is the only empirical study that continuously charts the gendered aspects of news media content on a global, comparative scale. The GMMP studies demonstrate that women, despite some progress since the 1990s, are under-represented globally both as actors and as reporters in the news (Macharia, 2015; Chapters 2, 4, 6, & 8 in this book draw mainly from GMMP).

Regarding gender equality in media organisations, Margaret Gallagher – who was involved in founding the GMMP studies and pioneered several other studies (Gallaher, 1981) including the one presented at the Beijing conference in 1995 on behalf of UNESCO – long served as the (in fact, as the only) baseline for comparative analyses of gender in media organisations (Gallagher, 1995). More recently, a few other comparative studies on gender in media organisations have been conducted. One is from the International Women’s Media Foundation (IWMF) with Carolyn Byerly as principal investigator (Byerly, 2011, 2013), which examined women’s status in news media organisations in 59 countries from all regions of the world (Chapters 3 and 5 draw mainly from IWMF).

The IMWF study (Byerly, 2011) identifies three distinct patterns of gender representation – under-representation, glass ceilings, and relative parity – but each category contains countries from several different regions of the world. A related study initiated by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) with Karen Ross and Claudia Padovani as the principal investigators (EIGE, 2013; Ross & Padovani, 2017) examined the level of gender equality in media organisations in 28 European countries, showing an under-representation of women in decision-making, institutional barriers to women’s career advancement, and a gender pay gap embedded in the media sector.

Another vein of comparative research that to some extent addresses gender is found in comparative surveys of journalists in different countries in the world (see Hanitzsch et al., 2019, for an overview). The Worlds of Journalism (WoJ) project (Hanitzsch & Hanusch, 2012; Hanitzsch et al, 2019), in particular, provides a valuable source of data on journalist cultures and professional outlooks in various parts of the world. The dataset is now freely available for research (and is used in Chapter 4 of this book). The overall results from WoJ showed limited gender differences in journalists’ role conceptions and epistemological beliefs. Men and women journalists around the world mostly think about their work in relatively similar terms, and this homogeneous pattern was evident regardless of the level of analysis – individual, newsroom, or sociocultural (Hanitzsch & Hanusch, 2012).

Thanks to the pioneering work and combined efforts of scholars and activists in many parts of the world, there is now a prominent amount of descriptive data available for the comparative study of gender equality both in media content and media organisations, across countries and over time. The actual analyses of the existing data have, however, so far mainly been descriptive, and the statistical methods restricted to basic statistics such as frequency distributions and cross tabulations, mostly at the level of single countries or regions. Advanced quantitative analyses of the kind that is now prevalent in gender studies in political science and sociology – such as Inglehart and Norris’s (2003) seminal comparative study on gender equality in the world – have often been missing from the research agenda of current research on media and gender.

This project builds on the data collected by GMMP, IWMF, and EIGE, but aims for more systematic, comparative research on gender equality in and through the news media in order to advance empirical research on gender and media to the next level. We do this in three ways:

- First, we bring together, complement, and re-analyse existing data on media and gender equality – in media content and in media organisations. Key datasets for these analyses are the GMMP, the Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media (IMWF), and Advancing gender equality in decision-making in media organisations (EIGE). The project has pooled

these sources of data together in one dataset – the GEM dataset – and by making the GEM dataset freely available, we strive to encourage further research on gender equality and the news media.

- Second, we combine the datasets on media gender equality with existing sources of empirical data on the essential structural and cultural factors in society and in the media systems that can explain differences in gender equality in the news media between countries. We also collect and include measures of the potential societal outcomes of media gender equality, such as levels of corruption and democracy. Key sets of data are provided by the Quality of Government Institute (QoG) and the Varieties of Democracy Institute (V-dem), both at University of Gothenburg, Sweden (Teorell et al, 2017; Coppedge et al, 2017). Indeed, the present project's research agenda and the organisation of its datasets are largely inspired by the research conducted by QoG, both in the analytic focus on qualities, causes, and consequences and the pooling of various data sources to make them freely available for further use. The chapters in the book provide examples of how to use the GEM dataset with other sources of data such as World Values Survey (WVS), WEF, International Labour Organisation (ILO), WoJ, and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- Third, we employ more advanced quantitative methods for analysing data and testing statistical relationships, such as regression analyses. This methodological approach provides new insights into how various factors contribute to increase equality, as well as understanding the societal consequences of a lack of gender equality in the media. How is gender equality in the media really related to the quality of democracy and the general status of women in society?

1.2 The normative arguments for gender equality in the news: A bi-focal vision for a journalism of presence

If you say to an audience: Close your eyes and think of a professor, what almost everybody will see a relatively elderly male, white, in a white coat. I see that image and, I am a bloody professor. When your own imagination does not see you, even that is what you are. That I think is an indication of a sort of gap that there is between us and equality.

Mary Beard in Davos, 22 January 2020

The normative arguments for gender equality in and through the news media can be traced to several strands of political and social theory. The first is the

obvious link between freedom of expression and gender equality. Freedom of expression is enshrined as a fundamental human right in Article 19 of the Universal Declarations of Human Rights:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. (United Nations, 1948: 4)

As per Article 2, this right pertains to everyone “without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status” (United Nations, 1948: 2). Freedom of expression is invariably regarded as a cornerstone in democracy by political theorists, often seen as an individual right but also considered as a common good that needs to be jointly safeguarded and protected in society (Petäjä, 2006). That women and men have equal opportunities and resources to form opinions and to participate in the public sphere are thus essential to ensure freedom of expression as a common good.

Yet, active measures to promote gender equality in news content and production are often seen as infringing on publishers’ rights to publish freely, or they are considered a form of censorship or a violation of the freedom of speech (Svensson & Edström, 2014). This is partially explained by the politically sensitive nature of media freedom and information rights, with longstanding debates on “free flow of information” versus “state control” (Carlsson, 2003).

Freedom of expression and opinion is also one of the core elements in the capabilities approach, first developed by Nobel laureate and economist Amartya Sen, and expanded on by philosopher Martha Nussbaum (1997, 1999, 2000). Nussbaum presents a feminism that is humanist, liberal, and universalist, emphasising the rights for women (and men) to develop certain capabilities, such as the right to life, health, bodily integrity, thought, literacy, freedom of expression, and property rights (Nussbaum, 1999). According to Nussbaum, each nation has the obligation to secure the basic and fundamental functions of a human life for its citizens, but also to protect and promote human rights on a global level.

The capabilities approach recognises that desires and preferences are often socially shaped, and individual aspirations invariably responding to social norms and biases. Unequal social, economic, and political circumstances provide women with unequal capabilities, often being instruments for the ends of others (Nussbaum, 1999, 2000). Capabilities are required for women to be able to freely develop individual preferences and desires and “fashion their life in accordance with their own view of what is deepest and most important” (Nussbaum, 1999: 5) – they are prerequisites for human autonomy and choice.

While Nussbaum has been subjected to feminist criticism for focusing too much on the individual, and on autonomy per se (McLaren, 2019; Phillips, 2001), the capability approach is gaining ground in media research in order to connect media to the broader questions of social equality and justice (Couldry, 2010, 2019; Moss, 2018). The exclusion of voices is indeed a key feature of discursive discrimination, when groups of people are “excluded from taking part in debates of importance to them” (Boréus, 2006: 413).

A third vein of normative arguments for gender equality in the news media is connected to the idea of representation. The political scientist Anne Phillips makes the distinction between “politics of ideas” (the representation of different political views and ideas) and “politics of presence” (social representation) and argues that both are important (Phillips, 1995/2003). Above all, a politics of presence is seen as essential to ensure the substantive representation of women in politics (Phillips, 1995/2003; Wängnerud, 2009; Wängnerud & Sundell, 2012). Descriptive representation refers to the actual share of women politicians in elected assemblies. Substantive representation, on the other hand, focuses on the political outcomes of the descriptive representation. It highlights what women and men actually do in politics but also – and more importantly – to what degree women’s interests are better served by women politicians (see Wängnerud, 2009 for an overview; see also Celis, 2006; Kokkonen & Wängnerud, 2017; Mansbridge, 1999, 2005; Wängnerud & Sundell, 2012). Still, the definitions – and thus potential actualisations – of women’s interests are connected to how societies are currently constituted and therefore vary in time and space (Celis & Mügge, 2018; Wängnerud & Sundell, 2012).

Numbers matter, both in politics and media. Women in minority positions risk marginalisation or being treated as “tokens” (Kanter, 1977a, 1977b). On the other hand, when there are few women in political and economic leadership positions, they can be over-represented in news coverage in relation to their actual numbers, being newsworthy because of their uniqueness (see Chapter 6 on the representation of women politicians; Nordberg & Edström, 2006). Critical mass is a concept used both in organisation studies and in political science to conceptualise the numbers required for women to be treated as individuals in a given social setting (Kanter, 1977a, 1977b; Dahlerup, 2006; see also Chapter 5 for a further discussion). Researchers have yet found it difficult to pin down a definite threshold for a critical mass that works across social contexts (Childs & Krook, 2006; Grey, 2006; Dahlerup, 2006; Steiner, 2012). Suffice it to say that numbers are necessary, but not sufficient, for gender equality, and that a large enough number ascertains that women and men can be perceived of and act as individuals in the media and not as representatives for their gender. As such, equality is a prerequisite for autonomy and choice (Phillips, 2001).

All of this also means that gender discrepancies that favour women are equally undesirable from a normative point of view. This is important to

consider, as women journalists may soon outnumber men in many countries (Hanitzsch et al, 2019). About 50 per cent of the population are women, and a 50/50 distribution between women and men is often used as a benchmark for gender equality in terms of numbers. To allow some latitude around the absolute parity mark, a normative target for substantive gender equality in the news media could be set to a 40/60 distribution in all relevant roles and positions (see Chapter 2 for further discussion); in all circumstances, the news media should not misrepresent the actual presence of women and men in different spheres in society. The odd relationship between the representation of women and men in the media world and their actual presence in the “real world” is explored in several chapters of this book (specifically Chapters 4, 6, & 8).

Despite the evident differences between social representation in politics and the representation of social groups in the media, the normative arguments sustaining the politics of presence translate quite easily to the media field. That women and men are represented on equal terms in the news media defines to what extent the news provides symbolic recognition, voice, and relevance of and for women:

- Symbolic recognition emanates from the opportunity to see, listen to, and read about women in a broad range of societal roles, including as experts and political leaders. Women in prominent roles in the news function as role models and inspire to broaden the repertoire of what women and men can do and be in society. Stereotypical presentations of women and men instead limits human agency and contributes to narrowing the range of choices.
- Voice entails that women be heard and have a say in issues that affect them. The inclusion of women in political and economic discourse is essential for their empowerment. To have a voice and to be included in media discourse is thus a premise for social justice.
- Relevance entails broadening the range of news topics and perspectives in the news by including issues and views that resonate with and emanate from women’s lives and experiences. More women sources in the news contributes to expanding the interests, experiences, and outlooks reported in the news.

Symbolic recognition, voice, and relevance can be regarded as cornerstones supporting the recognised political and democratic functions of news and journalism for the public. Similar arguments are, however, also raised in global policy-making, from activists and civil society organisations, and from a business and media industry perspective (see Appendix 1.1). A 2020 report from the global news publisher’s organisation WAN-IFRA (2020: 5–6) stresses that the media have a responsibility to “promote equality and diversity”, and that in failing to represent women as equals and “stereotyp[ing] them in their jobs,

societal roles and attributes, they perpetuate and reinforce gender inequalities”. There is evidently strong and broad support for improving gender equality in and through the media in different sectors of society across the globe.

Even so, the call for a “politics of presence” clearly rejects essentialist claims as well as the notion that women must make a difference *because* they are women (Dahlerup, 2006; Mansbridge, 2005). Freedom of expression and opinion for women and men has an intrinsic value, regardless of outcomes. The presence of women in the public sphere is an aspect of media quality that is important in and of itself. The normative foundation for the present project is therefore a bi-focal vision (cf. Fraser, 2013): A “journalism of presence” is important to ensure that a broad range of ideas, perspectives, and topics are reported in the news, but the legitimate place for women in the news must not be predicated on them “making a difference”. Women have a right to participate in the news on equal terms with men, but women are not determined or required to speak for women, nor is being a woman a requirement to address women’s (or any other) issues. To be sure, the ability to tell stories about other people’s lives and concerns from a professional stance is really what journalism is all about.

1.3 The study: Finding patterns in a cloud of data

More information is needed to get a better picture of gender biases specific to a region, country or community, as with information on the impact of media and social networks in reinforcing traditional norms and stereotypes.

(UNDP, 2019: 165)

All chapters in this book use a comparative cross-national approach to study different aspects of gender equality in and through the news media. The basis for comparison is consequently data collected at the national level. Questions can be raised about the validity of using nations (or countries) as units of analysis in media studies, considering the ongoing globalisation and transnationalisation of the media culture paired with the emergence of diasporic, multicultural traits within nations (Rantanen, 2013). There is, however, a strong case to be made for analysing data at the national level even today (Livingstone, 2003; Flew & Waisbord, 2015; Hanitzsch et al, 2019). News media audiences are still largely national, and the institutional framework – that is, the political, welfare, and legal systems that contextualise (and thus, explain) the conditions for women in society – are still largely defined by national borders.

This does not mean that we are unaware of the impact of globalisation, or that media outlets and ownerships increasingly transcend borders. Globalisation

notwithstanding, when examining large international media corporations, the observed gender disparities remain or are even exacerbated. In 2018, Nordicom mapped the presence of men and women in CEO positions, positions in top management generally, and seats on boards of directors in the top 100 international media corporations published by the Institute of Media and Communications Policy in Germany. The result shows a significant lack of women in the leadership of these corporations. Only 6 of the 100 corporations had women CEOs, and 30 of the corporations had “men only” top managements (Edström & Facht, 2018). A subsequent study from the Reuters Institute, looking at 200 major online and offline news outlets in ten different markets across four continents, revealed that 77 per cent of the top editors were men despite the fact that 40 per cent of the journalists were women (Anji et al., 2020). On top of that, the tech industry, which the news media much relies on, seems to suffer from the same uniform strategy of promoting men and bypassing women, a situation described in the book *Brotopia: Breaking Up the Boys Club of Silicon Valley* (Chang, 2018).

Three key datasets: GMMP, IWMF, EIGE

Three datasets provide the empirical backbone of the project:

- The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) is the largest and longest longitudinal research on gender in the world’s news media. The project collects empirical evidence of gender in news content and monitors changes over time through one-day snapshots taken every five years, since 1995. The number of countries participating in GMMP has increased over time, from 71 in 1995 to 114 in 2015. Depending on a country’s population and the characteristics of the media system, the number of news outlets and news stories sampled by each participating country varies. GMMP’s aim is to include a sample of news outlets that is representative of each country’s news media sector, and it measures the share of men and women that appear in the news – in print, radio, and television – and in various topics and roles. Recent studies also include a sample of digital news (online and Twitter) sources (but not for all participating countries).
- The Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media is the first international study of women in the news media from the International Women’s Media Foundation (IWMF), a Washington-based organisation dedicated to strengthening the role of women journalists worldwide. The data, collected from 2009–2010 and published in 2011 (Byerly, 2011, 2013), include detailed information on news operations with respect to men’s and women’s occupational standing, hiring and promotional policies, and other workplace practices. It also provides information about recruitment, training, policies related to advancement, news assignments, and a range of other

issues that affect gender status in news organisations. The report includes 59 countries representing all regions of the world: the Middle East and North Africa (5), Sub-Saharan Africa (15), the Americas (13), Asia and Oceania (10), Eastern Europe (8), Nordic Europe (4), and Western Europe (4).

- The Women in Media in Europe, from EIGE, focuses specifically on women in decision-making in media organisations across 27+1 European Union member states, and data were collected in 2012 (EIGE, 2013; Ross & Padovani, 2017).

The three datasets have many important virtues other than being comparative. First and foremost, they are all collected specifically to measure concrete outcomes of organisational practices and news production. Most large-scale comparative data on media draw from official sources of national statistics (and data disaggregated by sex or gender is quite uncommon). Other means of collecting data is through expert surveys, where country experts are asked to gauge the specific development or issue in question (e.g., corruption or media freedom), or studies relying on surveys to capture journalistic cultures (e.g., WoJ). GMMP in particular has a huge advantage in that it engages with the real practice of journalism by examining gender in actual news media content, and the EIGE and IWMF studies target the actual conditions for women and men in the news media industry.

Secondly, both the GMMP and IWMF cover countries in all parts of the world. GMMP is especially comprehensive, with 114 countries included in 2015. It is truly global in scope and not dominated by countries from the Global North; the latter should somewhat contribute to the much required “de-Westernisation” of gender and media research, at least in terms of the subject of study and the body of evidence (Waisbord & Mellado, 2014). All three datasets build on extensive collaborations with locally situated coordinators and coders. The GMMP coders consist of scholars and activists from the respective country, to ensure familiarity with both the media context and the conditions for gender equality in each country. Similar local anchoring also pertains to the IWMF and EIGE studies.

The overarching goal for the inclusion of countries is to establish the widest achievable basis for empirical analysis. The ambition has obviously been to comprise data from as many countries in the world as possible. Altogether, the GEM dataset covers 155 nations with data collected from 1995–2015. Still, there are significant gaps in the dataset; most variables are only available for a sample of countries and not for every year. The GMMP is conducted only every fifth year, and the IWMF and the EIGE studies have only been conducted once, in 2010 and 2012, respectively.

At the end of the day, the quality of a pooled dataset is never better than the quality of the original data. We have thus gone to great length to ensure that the

data we received from the various sources are correctly replicated in the GEM dataset, and to correct errors in the original data when detected.

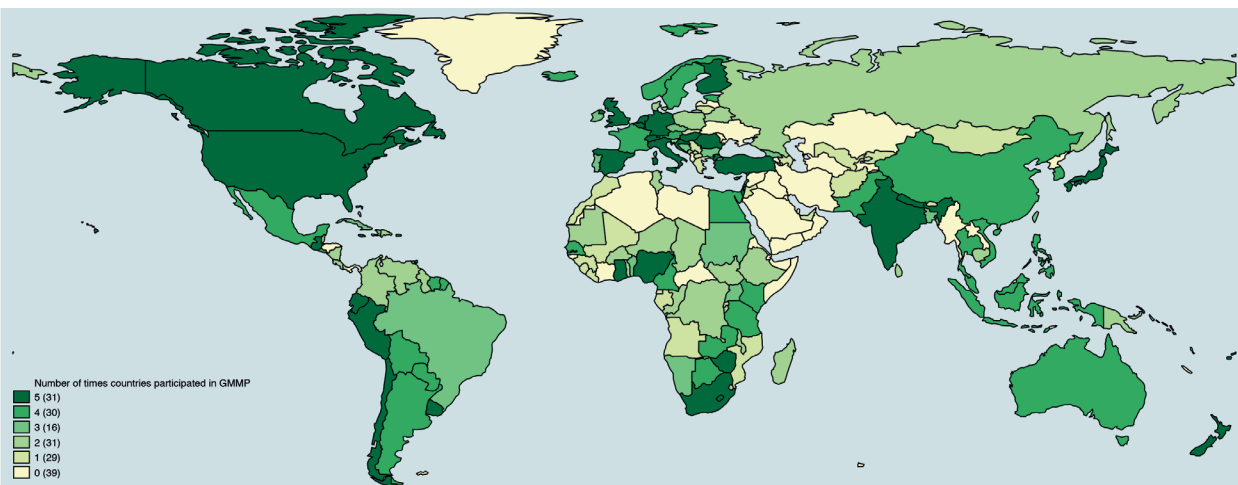
Since GMMP only surveys one day of news in each country, we suspected the measures to be quite volatile and susceptible to chance, swayed by the specific circumstances happening in the world or in the country on that particular day. On the other hand, the gender representation observed in the GMMP data usually resonates with other country-level studies based on larger samples. Some countries also only provide limited data based on few news outlets, small samples of news stories, or both. As we write in Chapter 2, the main purpose of the GMMP is to give a global snapshot of the state of equality in the news, and it was never meant to be used for comparisons at the level of individual countries. To alleviate these limitations, we made sure to conduct extensive robustness tests of all the measures and results presented in each chapter. The GEM-I, a composite index that comprises six essential gender-sensitive variables from the GMMP, was constructed as means to reduce randomness. We also spent many weeks testing various principles for removing cases with weak data (small samples or odd values) from the analyses and comparing the results. In the end, however, the GMMP variables used in this book turned out to be more robust than we initially suspected. Even after tough robustness tests and strict removals of outliers and cases with weak data, the results turned out approximately the same. Still, future users should consider the conditions for the GMMP data collection, in particular when analysing data based on limited samples of news stories.

Blank spots: Missing countries, missing data

Sophisticated statistical analyses require access to high quality data for all countries, preferably collected over time, to allow for more advanced statistical modelling. A main caveat for the project, as for every other comparative study, is certainly the lack of comparative data. The 2019 Human Development Report emphasises that data on gender inequalities in general are severely lacking, and the media is no exception. As mentioned earlier, only 15 per cent of the UN member states regularly collect gender-related media data (Seager, 2015).

This is one of the reasons why the GMMP is so important; it is the only consistent, comparable mapping of gender-related news content in the world. An increasing number of countries contribute to the GMMP, with 2015 the best year so far with 114 participating countries (145 countries are reportedly taking part in the 2020 round). However, this also means that approximately 40 per cent of the 193 UN member states were *not* part of the media monitoring in 2015. Different countries have participated different years, and even when we pool the latest available data from the GMMP from each country, 25 per cent of the UN members states are still missing from the map (see Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1. Country participation in the GMMP studies, 1995–2015



Comments: The darker the colour, the more often a country has participated. 31 countries have participated in all 5 rounds. Light yellow areas have never participated. Due to limitations in the SPMAP program, 13 countries are not displayed on the map.

Source: GMMP 1995–2015 (retrieved from Färdigh et al, 2020)

A clear pattern is revealed by examining the countries where data are missing (see Figure 1.1). Among the countries not participating in the GMMP, we find several in the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq, and Libya. These are countries that are all in the bottom 20 of the Press Freedom Index (RSF, 2017) as well as the Global Gender Gap Index, (WEF, 2017). Countries like Eritrea and North Korea also do not participate. Taking part in GMMP can thus in itself also be seen as an indicator of a country's interest in gender equality. Among the top 50 countries in the 2017 Global Gender Gap Report, all took part in the GMMP studies. Latvia (ranked 20) joined GMMP in 2015. For future research, these “blank spot” countries surely deserve to be investigated, in terms of freedom of expression, gender equality, and gender representation in the news.

Exploring patterns, finding relationships

All authors were committed to use at least one of the three datasets included in the GEM dataset (GMMP, IWMMF, EIGE). Apart from this, each researcher decided independently which research question to address, and also selected the additional data needed to examine the problem in focus. This explains the broad range of sources the different chapters draw from: QoG, V-dem, WoJ, ILO, WEF, UNDP and a few others (each described and referenced in the chapter they are used).

The methodological approach for the project as a whole is to use statistical methods, predominantly correlation and regression analyses. The empirical

focus in all of the chapters has been to establish relationships, between gender-related media variables on the one hand, and on the other, variables measuring political, economic, social, cultural, and media system factors and structures at the national level. The variables measuring gender equality in the media are used both as dependent and independent factors (variables), depending on the aim of the specific study.

All statistical analyses build on the measurement of associations between variables. Since this project and book is a first attempt at examining the *relationship* of media gender equality and gender equality in other spheres of society, all chapters have concentrated on describing the basic associations. Is there a relationship between gender equality in the media and gender equality in society? What is the association between the presence of women reporters and the number of women in top-level management and governance? All project participants have spent considerable time looking at scatterplots and correlation matrices to discern possible connections and patterns.

Correlations thus play a key role in this project; however, we are also interested in discussing causal relationships, although they are much harder to pin down. A critical issue for this project, as it is for every project with a similar comparative approach, is indeed the question of causality. As conventional wisdom tells us, correlations are not the same as causation. Correlations can, however, indicate the potential existence of causal link between factors – and vice versa: if there is no correlation, there is less need to discuss causation.

The conducted statistical analyses vary in complexity, mostly depending on the available data at hand. We know that many of the potential readers of this book will have limited experiences with quantitative methods. We have thus – when possible – also opted for the least complex statistical approach and tried to explain the results in a way that is accessible to a broader audience. Some of the chapters (3, 5, & 6) employ a cross-sectional version of the GEM dataset and examine the relationships between variables collected in a single year, for instance, the IWWMF data on the status of women in media organisations from 2010. Chapters that mainly draw from GMMP data (2, 4, & 8) have the potential to analyse developments over time, which opens up for more advanced regression methods. Still, since only about one-third of the countries have participated in all rounds and different years include different sets of variables, advanced statistical modelling was tried but, in the end, often deemed unfeasible. Chapter 7 was in a better position to employ autoregressive modelling, since it mainly draws from data retrieved from V-dem, which includes yearly measures for a large number of countries. Still, even with the less sophisticated methods applied in most of the chapters, we have certainly identified more interesting and important patterns in the cloud of data than we hoped for when we started the project.

1.4 Book outline: Qualities, causes, and consequences

Women and girls are half of humanity. Giving equal time and weight to their stories is an important part of creating a better, freer world for all of us.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women (cited in Macharia, 2015: 3)

The chapters are organised into three sections – qualities, causes, and consequences – based on the specific topic and theoretical focus of the study, although all three aspects are to some extent relevant for every chapter in the book.

- Qualities focuses on how gender equality in news media content and in media organisations have developed over time and across different countries.
- Causes examines how differences in gender equality in the news media can be explained from variations in media systems and in economic, political, social, and cultural factors in society.
- Consequences deals with how equality in the news media relates to the status of women in the political and economic spheres of society and to other aspects of social development, such as media freedom and freedom from corruption.

The authors share a common interest in and concern for gender equality and the media. They also represent a plurality of perspectives on gender equality and have independently chosen their topics, based on their current research agendas. Each chapter can be read independently, and together they present a rich spectrum of ideas on how to approach and use comparative data on gender equality in the media.

Qualities

In Chapter 2, “The GEM-Index: Constructing a unitary measure of gender equality in the news”, Monika Djerf-Pierre and Maria Edström develop a unitary measure of gender equality in news media content. Although gender and journalism has been a prolific area of research since the 1970s, we still lack a robust and easy-to-use measure to quantify, assess, and track the magnitude and persistence of gender inequalities in the news. By drawing from data collected by the GMMP, Djerf-Pierre and Edström devise the Gender Equality in the news Media Index (GEM-I) – a composite index that estimates the gender gap between women and men regarding their status in the news. The GEM-I

confirms a male bias in the news; most countries in the world display news cultures that to various degrees marginalises women. Women have a regular but unequal presence in the news and more seldom appear in roles and topics that are gender-typed as masculine, such as politics and economy.

In Chapter 3, “Media gender-equality regimes: Exploring media organisations’ policy adoption across nations”, Claudia Padovani and Rossella Bozzon explore possible correlations between the socioeconomic and cultural environments within which the media operate across the world, and the policies that have been adopted by media organisations to promote gender equality, in the attempt to explain the wide variation in the (limited) adoption of such policies in different countries and regions. They investigate if, within such variation, it is possible to identify patterns of policy adoption that may indicate the existence of different “media gender-equality regimes” in the media sector worldwide. Padovani and Bozzon suggest that, on the basis of available data, countries can be grouped in five clusters showing similar patterns in policy adoption, from gender-blind to gender-transformative.

Causes

In Chapter 4, “Explaining gender equality in news content: Modernisation and a gendered media field”, Monika Djerf-Pierre examines the possible explanations to the variations in gender equality in news media content across the globe by drawing from two different approaches: the modernisation approach and the gendered media fields approach. The modernisation approach links the level of gender equality in the media to broader processes of socioeconomic development and to the standing of women in society at large. The gendered field approach instead puts focus on how conditions in the media field influence the status of women in the news media in different societies. The results show that the media world of news is considerably less “gender equal” than the “real world”, but also that both approaches are important to consider; the extent to which gender inequalities in the news have been alleviated depends on a combination of societal and media field factors. Countries where women have a higher standing in society, more women in the journalism field, and more autonomy for journalists, also have more gender equality in the news.

In chapter 5, “Axes of Power: Examining women’s access to leadership positions in the news media”, Carolyn M. Byerly and Katherine A. McGraw turn the attention to the status of women in media organisations and the news industry. Byerly and McGraw examine how and to what extent women have made their way into the reporting and management levels within the profession of journalism, and whether their presence in the higher ranks of the newsroom hierarchy is associated with a larger amount of women-oriented news content.

Although women have made significant strides as reporters and news presenters, the advancement to management and governance roles – the positions of power – has been significantly slower. Looking cross-nationally, Byerly and McGraw test the critical mass theory while also considering the extent to which national development, indicators of women's status, and the numbers of women practicing journalism might affect women journalists' place in newsroom hierarchies in the 59 nations they examine. The research is based on the largest global-level study to date on women's occupational standing within the news industry, the Global Report on the Status of Women in News Media, led by Byerly (2011) for the IWMF.

Chapter 6, "The media world versus the real world of women and political representation: Questioning differences and struggling for answers", Karen Ross, Marloes Jansen, and Tobias Bürger address the long-standing question of women's voice in political news. Ross, Jansen, and Bürger test the relationship between women, politics, and news in two ways. First, they consider the extent to which women politicians are visible across the broad news landscape, and second, they consider the visibility of women in news stories that are explicitly political in orientation. What Ross, Jansen, and Bürger find is a global and systematic pattern of under-representation of women politicians in the news compared with their actual numbers in legislatures across the world. Their analysis suggests that the "real world" of politics seems to be more gender-equal than the "media world" of mainstream news. In the chapter, Ross, Jansen, and Bürger consider possible reasons for this difference, including the role played by sociocultural factors such as a nation's broad equality commitment and the extent to which the gender balance in newsrooms, including in senior editorial positions, has an impact on the visibility of women politicians in news content.

Consequences

The principal question in chapter 7, "Fairer sex or fairer system? Exploring the relationship between gender equality in the media and media corruption", by Mathias Färdigh, is whether results from previous research on higher shares of women in parliament and lower levels of corruption also pertain to the relationship between the share of women journalists and lower levels of corruption in the media. Previous research points out two plausible assumptions. The first is that women possess certain characteristics and therefore do not descend to corruption to the same extent as men (the fairer sex hypothesis). The second assumption is instead that it is the system in which women live and operate that affects the level of media corruption (the fairer system hypothesis). Based on these two alternative assumptions, Färdigh examines which of the two is the most appropriate when it comes to understanding the mechanisms behind

media corruption: Is it the share of women journalists in the media, or is it the system where women journalists live and operate, that affects the level of media corruption, or both? Färdigh's results suggest that the level of gender equality in a society has a larger impact on reducing media corruption than the share of women journalists.

Finally, in chapter 8, "Gender in economic journalism: Impeccably accurate or smoke and mirrors?", Sarah Macharia examines the relationship between the gender gaps in economic and business news content and the gender gaps in the lived economic experience. Macharia's analyses suggest that women are marginalised as subjects and sources in economic news content across the globe, that there is some association between the variations and women's economic rights and freedoms, but largely, there are patterns of a disconnect between media content and women's equal participation in economic life. The analysis confirms that gender inequality is much more acute in the news media than in the version of reality presented in institutional data. Severe under-representation of women is a structural feature of business and economic journalism worldwide. Business and economic news journalism calls for high journalistic standards in view of the personal, immediate relevance of the topics to ordinary people for everyday decision-making on issues such as jobs, medical costs, housing, food, and wages. Rather than the impeccable accuracy and impartiality prescribed for this genre of news journalism, what appears instead is a relative erasure, under-valuing, and trivialisation of women.

1.5 Conclusions: The media as blowtorch or break block to gender equality

Improving gender balance in content can be challenging, however. It takes conscious, thoughtful measures to recognise and dismantle unconscious bias. It takes a concerted effort to begin identifying and including new voices and opinions in our content on a consistent basis.

(WAN-IFRA, 2020: 3)

The aim of this book is to examine the qualities, causes, and consequences of gender equality in and through the news media in countries across the globe. The eight chapters in the book engage with different aspects of media gender equality and each provides new and important knowledge about the specific topic in focus. Taken together, they also offer new insights into the qualities, causes, and consequences of gender equality in the news media on a general level. This section summarises these overarching conclusions and insights from the project as a whole.

GENDER EQUALITY IN THE NEWS MEDIA IS LACKING IN MOST COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD. The combined analyses across countries and over time reveal a persistent global gender gap in the representation of women and men in the news media. Women are, to various degrees, marginalised in news content in almost every country in the world. Although the size of the gender gap varies, only a few countries have yet attained gender equality in the way women and men are represented in the news. The news organisations are faring somewhat better, with women reaching parity in reporting roles in many countries. There are, however, fewer women in positions of power – top-level management and governance roles – in the news media industry. Although these observations are not new or unique and have been stated numerous times before, not the least by the researchers participating in this book, they still deserve to be restated.

GENDER EQUALITY IN THE NEWS MEDIA REFLECTS THAT JOURNALISM IS A SEMI-AUTONOMOUS FIELD. Within the global setting of systemic underrepresentation of women in the news, there are still variations in gender equality, both between countries and over time. These variations are related both to the societies in which news journalism operates and the specific conditions and structures of the media fields in different countries. Several chapters in the book observe the link between gender equality in the media and the general status of women in society, both in terms of women's substantive social, economic, and political rights and attainments, and the prevalence of gender-egalitarian values in the population. The progress for women in society is thus positively connected to the status of women in the news. Furthermore, there are positive connections between gender equality in the news media and media freedom, democracy, and freedom from corruption. Having more women journalists and editors in the profession is also associated with greater equality in the news, a pattern observed in several chapters of the book. The connection underscores the relevance of the concept of critical mass for studies that move beyond the organisational level to the macro-level of a social field. The causal direction is still harder to establish with the data at hand; most likely, there are reciprocal relationships. Yet, most of the associations found in the book were only moderately strong at best, and a substantial part of the country-level variations in gender equality in the news media remains to be explained.

THE NEWS MEDIA MISREPRESENTS REALITY WHEN IT COMES THE ACTUAL PROGRESS OF GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WORLD. Evidently, gender equality in the news media is lagging behind the rest of society, making the media world less gender equal than the “real world”. The gender gap in status in the news is larger than the gender gap in society, as measured by established gender gap indices such as the Global Gender Gap Index or the Gender Inequality Index. Women politicians are under-represented in relation to their actual numbers,

and a persistent under- and misrepresentation of women is a structural feature of business and economic journalism worldwide.

THE NEWS MEDIA LOGIC OPERATES AS A GLOBAL HOMOGENISER. The variations in gender equality between countries also appear to be smaller in the media world than in the “real world”. The way the news media operate thus contributes to a homogenisation of the representation of women and men across news cultures. While some countries perform better than others and some appear to be catching up, there seems to be an “attention ceiling” at one-third of the space or voice allotted to women in the news in most countries in the world. This also means that once a country has hit the attention ceiling, further development seems to be harder to achieve. This is true at least for the 20-year period studied in this book.

PROGRESS IS BOTH FAST AND SLOW. The slow progress manifests itself in the meagre increase of women as subjects or sources in the news, from 17 to 24 per cent in 20 years. Other indicators of gender equality in news content display similar sluggish trends. Greatest progress is seen in Latin America, followed by North America and the Caribbean. In other regions, progress is slower or stagnating. Indeed, the tracking of the GEM-I over time shows that with the current rate of change, it will take 70 years to reach full gender equality in the news on a global level. On the other hand, gender equality in the news is actually progressing slightly *faster* than gender equality in many other spheres of society. The latest Global Gender Gap Report from the WEF (2020) states that – at the current rate of change – gender equality will not be attained for another 99.5 years; full equality in economic participation and opportunity will take 257 years to achieve. In that comparison, gender equality in the news is actually progressing rather quickly, at least in some parts of the world.

THE GENDER GAP IN NEWS CONTENT IS MOST LIKELY GREATER THAN THE GENDER GAP IN NEWS MEDIA ACCESS AND USE. This is more of a tentative observation than a conclusion from the analyses in the book – an insight to inspire further research. What we can observe in this study is that when we compare the size of the gender gap in news content (GEM-I) to the actual gender gap in news media use, we find the news consumption gap to be much smaller (see Appendix 1.2). The lesser gap implies, on the one hand, that a male bias in the news is largely accepted also by women news consumers; it is so pervasive that it is normalised. There are, on the other hand, also moderately strong associations between the two; a smaller gender gap in news content relates to smaller gaps between women’s and men’s news media use (see Appendix 1.2). To what extent this is a causal relationship is impossible to say with the limited data at hand. Improving gender equality in the news in countries where it is lacking could possibly help to encourage more women to engage with the news, thus

contributing to closing the gender gap in media access and use. The latter is, at least, the basic message from the global news publisher's organisation WAN-IFRA (2020). Women are seen as an "untapped audience" and that producing a more inclusive product makes sense from a business point of view: "diversity of views makes for better content and products" and sexism is indeed "bad for business" (WAN-IFRA, 2020: 5–6). The audience is, in any case, the ultimate cause and consequence of gender equality in the news, and an insight from this project is that more research is needed to untangle the connection.

MONITORING INSTRUMENTS AND RELIABLE DATA ARE NEEDED TO KNOW IF PROGRESS OCCURS. Without data and reliable monitoring instruments it is impossible to keep track of and compare the status of women in the news media in different countries. This is a major insight from this project, and to make existing comparable data on gender and news media more accessible we created the GEM dataset with key variables from the three major data sources about gender equality in media: GMMP, IWMF, and EIGE. The pooled GEM dataset contains hundreds of indicators relating to various aspects of gender equality and is freely available from the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication at University of Gothenburg, Sweden. The richness and complexity of data can make it rather daunting to use, and to offer a more accessible way to monitor gender equality in news media content, we developed the GEM-I, a composite measure that taps into key aspects of gender equality in the news: presence, topics, and roles. It is proved to be statistically reliable and robust and is constructed to be easy to use and apply to all forms of news media – in television, radio, newspapers, and online.

GENDER DATA ON THE MEDIA ARE STILL LACKING. The construction of the pooled GEM dataset was essential to reveal the trends, structures, and associations shown in different chapters of the book, but it also made us aware of blank spots. The GEM dataset currently contains entries for 155 countries in the world. Still, few of the indicators are available for all 155 countries, and even fewer are trackable over time. There are many countries in the world where there is little or no comparative data about women's status in the news media – often countries ranking the lowest in gender equality and media freedom. Few areas of society have such a lack of gender-related data as the media sector. A final insight from the project is thus that more systematic and comparable data about gender and the media are certainly needed.

Everything is happening – nothing changes?

The basic premises for this project are that gender equality is a basic and fundamental value for all societies, and that women and men are relevant cat-

egories to use in an analysis of disparities connected to gender. By examining the global nexus of gender and news, we seek to further our understanding of the connection between news media and gender equality in the world. Do the media mirror, exacerbate, or mitigate gender inequalities? Are the news media a blowtorch or a break block to gender equality in society?

The results presented in this book present a complex picture that, from a normative point of view, is both disconcerting and encouraging. On the negative side, we show that gender equality is still lacking in almost every country in the world, and that the news media to a large extent fail to fully reflect the actual progress and attainments for women in societies across the globe. The relative disconnect between media and reality is pervasive, but seem to be most acute in economic news. The media world is less gender equal than the “real world”. In this regard, the news media seem to be more of a break block than a blowtorch for gender equality in the world, at least for the twenty-year period studied in this book (1995–2015).

There are, however, also more encouraging stories to tell. We find evidence of a positive link between gender equality in the media and social, cultural, and political developments in other areas. In particular, there is a reasonably strong relationship between women’s status in society and their status in the news. Although the global news culture has an inbuilt bias towards men, the level of gender equality in the news media has continued to improve with the expansion of women’s social, economic, and political opportunities and attainments. Gender equality in the news media is also progressing somewhat faster than gender equality in many other areas, and change seems to move quite quickly in some regions in the world. Still, it is more the media that are catching up, rather than them taking the lead.

With the global commitments connected to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1979, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995, and the Sustainable Development Goals from 2015, we could perhaps expect more to have happened by now. In spite of all these grand declarations, there is a persistent gender gap in the news and women’s voices are missing in large parts of the world. In the 20-year period examined in this book, the largest advancement in women’s status in the news on a global level occurred between 2005 and 2010, with progress stalling in 2015. It remains to be seen if this standstill is perpetuated in future studies. The connection between, on the one hand, the declining progress for gender equality and, on the other hand, digitalisation and crisis in the business models of global news media industries, is something for further research to explore.

An absence of women is a lesser problem in the news industry, at least in the parts of the world where women outnumber men as reporters and as students in journalism schools. In those countries, the influx of women is currently discussed

as a “problem”; there are just “too many women” (Borchardt et al., 2019: 20). Still, even when equal in numbers, gender disparities in power, status, and work conditions continue to affect the news media industry. As women’s attainments grow, there are immanent risks of a backlash. In many countries, for instance in Latin America, where women have largely expanded their presence in the public sphere, there are severe levels of sexual threats and violence directed at women journalists. Clearly, there is a gap between what is considered a “good enough” equality in the media field and the goal of substantive gender equality proposed in normative theory.

The actions and measures taken to promote and improve equality in the news media are beyond the scope of the present study. We have engaged with the issue as academics, working to establish the structures and patterns of gender equality in the news media, as well as describing the association with women’s standing in society and other social developments. We have nonetheless noticed the troubling decline in attention to media issues on the global agenda in recent decades (see Appendix 1.1).

Conversations about sex and gender often become contentious, as they concern the most basic fabric of human life. Gender equality as a universal and globally traversing goal is currently at the nexus of political debate, disputed by activists that question the universalist claims and validity of binary sex or gender categories, resisted by religious and conservative groups attacking what they perceive as violations of the natural roles of the sexes, and dismissed by some liberals maintaining that all gender inequalities can be traced to differential choices made by free and self-governing individuals.

When push comes to shove, active measures to promote gender equality are politically and ideologically charged. In liberal democracies, they are often seen as infringing on freedom of speech, and even voluntary initiatives from the publishers themselves can be dismissed by critics as a form of censorship. A key example is the computer-based tracking of women and men in media content, used by some newsrooms to monitor how they perform on an everyday basis. In other countries where the governments are keener to enlist the media in the promotion of social development, gender equality is rarely prioritised among the development goals. Instead, the main driver for change has often been the joint effort by non-governmental organisations, academics, journalists’ unions, as well as the media industry, working independently or in collaboration to increase awareness and to promote best practices.

This book aims to be a contribution to the ongoing conversation about gender and media, hopefully inspiring a critical discussion about how the news media “represents” reality. The central focus of the democratic critic will, as Martha Nussbaum (1999: 152) writes, be on “persuasion rather than coercion”. News is a product of both structural conditions and active choices made by editors and journalists. It is always possible to tell other stories, choose different angles,

and include other voices. Silencing women and neglecting their experiences is not sustainable in the long run, as evidenced not the least by the 2017 #metoo movement and its aftermath. Our conviction is that news media that manage to ensure the symbolic recognition, voice, and relevance of and for women are *expanding* the freedom of expression and opinion to include women rather than excluding them.

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Appendix 1.1 Global commitments to gender equality and the media with excerpts from some key documents

Freedom of expression and gender equality are two fundamental and interconnected values (Svensson & Edström, 2014), and both may be seen as equally important in global policy-making. This section describes the development of the global actions and agreements on gender and media equality, from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to Agenda 2030. It also describes key initiatives from the media industry and civil society to improve gender equality in the news media.

Although freedom of the press and freedom of speech has a long tradition and has been safeguarded in some national legislation since the late 1700s, it was not until 1948 it became elevated to a global fundamental right. The principle was acknowledged in Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and was later safeguarded in 1966 by the human rights instrument of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Article 19 is the most important human rights principle for journalism and news media (United Nations 1948, 1966).

United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. (Article 19)

The representation of women in the media and the problem with inhibiting gender stereotypes have also been of key concern in global policy discourse. A breakthrough for addressing stereotypes as an obstacle for gender equality came in 1979 within the United Nations. After a long struggle, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, often referred to as CEDAW, was adopted and is now one of the most ratified trea-

ties of all United Nations conventions (United Nations, 1979). CEDAW calls for state parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women. Civil rights, legal measures, and the importance of culture are three themes within the convention texts. Stereotypes are seen as limiting, and Article 5 calls for elimination of prejudices “and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women”.

1979 the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Recalling that discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity, is an obstacle to the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries, hampers the growth of the prosperity of society and the family and makes more difficult the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity. (preamble)

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures: (a) To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women. (Article 5)

The next important step came in 1995 with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which has since been the roadmap for the promotion of gender equality and women’s human rights across the globe. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is an agenda for women’s empowerment, aiming to accelerate earlier documents on gender equality and remove all obstacles for women’s participation. Following through and expanding on the responsibilities of society to achieve gender equality, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is of vital importance since it is the first United Nation document to specifically address media in its own right as a hindrance for gender equality. The global framework of the declaration states, that “until women participate equally in both the technical and decision-making areas of communications and the mass media, including the arts, they will continue to be misrepresented and awareness of the reality of women’s lives will continue to be lacking” (United Nations, 1995: 13). Media are addressed in ten of the twelve action areas; only the areas of women and poverty and women and environment fail to address media as part of the problem. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action holds strong demands for action from governments and institutions on all

levels. The state parties who signed the document agreed to act on all areas. For Section J, women and the media, the target is twofold:

1. Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication.
2. Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.

1995 The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

The Platform for Action requires immediate and concerted action by all to create a peaceful, just and humane world based on human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the principle of equality for all people of all ages and from all walks of life, and to this end, recognizes that broad-based and sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development is necessary to sustain social development and social justice. (Mission statement, point 4)

The 12 critical areas of concern are as follows:

- A. Women and poverty
- B. Education and training of women
- C. Women and health
- D. Violence against women
- E. Women and armed conflict
- F. Women and the economy
- G. Women in power and decision-making
- H. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
- I. Human rights of women
- J. Women and the media
- K. Women and the environment.
- L. The girl child

As the Internet grew and become predominant for all media and communication, the UN Commission on the Status of Women also began to act in the areas of information and communication technology (ICT). Already at the 47th Session in 2003, the agreed conclusions declared that State parties should take a lead advocacy role with respect to media and ICT and gender equality and make sure that women participate in, and have access to, media and ICTs (United Nations, 2010). Furthermore, on regional levels, several guiding documents have been developed by different actors, especially by the Council of Europe which has been very clear on addressing the role of the media for hindering or

hastening structural change towards gender equality (Council of Europe, 2013; see also Council of Europe, 2017, 2019a, 2019b, 2020).

In the 2010s, sexualised online harassments became considered a growing threat to women journalists all over the world (Edström, 2016; IAWRT, 2017; IFJ, 2014; IMS, 2019; IWMF & Troll-Busters, 2018; OSCE, 2019; Petersen, 2018). In 2015, the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media for the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe initiated a discussion on how to tackle gender-based online harassment and abuse of journalists and initiated the Safety of Female Journalists Online project, or #SOFJO – a platform for raising awareness, collective strategies, and sharing tools and resources for female journalists who have been targeted. In 2018, when women and media was a sub-theme at the United Nations 62nd Commission on the Status of Women, some additional clarifications were added that addressed the importance of countering cyber violence and sexual harassments (United Nations, 2018). The report, *Setting the Gender Agenda for Communication Policy: New Proposals from the Global Alliance on Media and Gender*, provides an overview of media and violence against women, where especially the situation for women journalists in Latin America is highlighted (UNESCO, 2019a: 53–101; see also UNESCO, 2019b: 49–55). In 2020, the Santiago Commitment was adopted by the Economic Commission for Latin America. The document takes it one step further; it urges these sectors to eliminate violence against women and girls and calls on member states to guarantee the safety of women human rights defenders and women journalists and to ensure women's and girls' access to #STEM and gender equality in the digital ecosystem (ECLAC, 2020).

Gender and media lost in the global agenda?

Quite paradoxically, recent decades have also displayed a decline in the global agenda to directly address gender equality and media, especially regarding the news media. This is manifested in the Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2030, which calls for major transformations of society. The Agenda 2030 reaffirms the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (United Nations, 2015: para. 11). Gender equality is a cross-cutting theme throughout the 17 goals; it is both an individual goal and seen as a prerequisite for all sustainable development. Goal 5 focuses specifically on gender equality: “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”. The second subgoal could indirectly connect to the news media: “enhance the use of enabling technologies, in particular ICT, to promote women's empowerment”. However, the *one* indicator for measuring development is the proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex (United Nations, 2017: indicator 5.b.1; see also United Nations, 2019: 10). Apart from the fact that mobile phones also can be a device of control, it is not quite the measure needed to monitor if gender equality is indeed progress-

ing within the news media. In fact, the word “media” is not mentioned in the Agenda 2030, nor is freedom of expression or press freedom (Edström, 2019). But again, the Sustainable Development Goals reaffirms the Convention for Human Rights and freedom of information may be safeguarded through Goal 16 – “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels” – and specially through the subgoal (16.10) about ensuring public access to information.

Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

We envisage a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination; of respect for race, ethnicity and cultural diversity; and of equal opportunity permitting the full realization of human potential and contributing to shared prosperity. A world which invests in its children and in which every child grows up free from violence and exploitation. A world in which every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality and all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment have been removed. A just, equitable, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met. (preamble, para. 9)

Realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Goals and targets. The achievement of full human potential and of sustainable development is not possible if one half of humanity continues to be denied its full human rights and opportunities. Women and girls must enjoy equal access to quality education, economic resources and political participation as well as equal opportunities with men and boys for employment, leadership and decision-making at all levels. We will work for a significant increase in investments to close the gender gap and strengthen support for institutions in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women at the global, regional and national levels. All forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls will be eliminated, including through the engagement of men and boys. The systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the Agenda is crucial. (preamble, para. 20)

Sustainable Development Goal 5

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

- Subgoal 5b: Enhance the use of enabling technologies, in particular ICT, to promote women's empowerment.

(Agreed Indicator 5.b.1: Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex)

Sustainable Development Goal 16

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

- Subgoal 16.10: Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.

(Agreed Indicator 16.10.2: Number of countries that adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information)

- Subgoal 16.b: Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.

(Agreed Indicator 16.b.1: Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law)

In March 2020, at the United Nations sixty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW64), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was again reaffirmed (United Nations, 2020a, 2020b). Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 25-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted as a brief six-page document, without the broader national delegations present and without the thousands of civil society participants that had planned to take part in the conversation. The political declaration from CSW64 expressed a concern that, overall, progress has not been fast or deep enough, that in some areas progress has been uneven, that major gaps remain and that obstacles, including structural barriers, discriminatory practices and the feminisation of poverty, persist (United Nations, 2020a). Important to note is that all twelve areas were addressed, recognising that new challenges have emerged and that the media has a role in the elimination of the structural barriers, social norms, and gender stereotypes).

Report of the United Nations Secretary-General on Beijing+25

Among other factors, stereotypes and the significant underrepresentation of women in the media play a significant role in shaping harmful attitudes of disrespect and violence towards women. (United Nations, 2020b: point 150)

Ensuring the equal participation of women in the media is critical for properly reflecting their perspectives, shaping public debate and holding decision makers to account. Twenty-three per cent of States reported that they had provided support to women's media networks and organizations. Ensuring the rights of women journalists and press freedom is critical to the implementation of the Platform for Action. These forms of media are crucial to amplify the voices of different groups of women, including those belonging to vulnerable or excluded groups. A worrying trend is the growing frequency of threats, intimidation and harassment directed at women journalists in traditional and social media. (United Nations, 2020b: point 214)

The UN Women (2019) expert group that reported to CSW64 raised the concern of the backsliding of democracy and of a backlash against gender and women's rights in particular; however, news media was not mentioned, nor was Section J mentioned in the various expert contributions.

The decline in interest in media issues can also be found in the work of UN Women (2018) in their +25 follow up of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, where the twelve areas from Beijing were condensed into a list of six – excluding women and the media – that UN Member states were expected to report on:

- inclusive development, shared prosperity, and decent work
- poverty eradication, social protection, and social services
- freedom from violence, stigma, and stereotypes
- participation, accountability, and gender-responsive institutions
- peaceful and inclusive societies
- environmental conservation, protection, and rehabilitation

These six areas were modified further when UN Women launched six “Action coalitions” and two “Generation Equality Forums” to be held in Mexico and Paris during 2020, but due to Covid-19 were postponed to 2021. The six themes were, according to UN Women, based on data-driven analysis and selected in consultation with international feminist groups, grassroots activist organisations, governments, and other partners. The news media and gender and media issues are yet to be found in that process.

UN Women 2020 Action Coalition Themes launched in 2020

- gender-based violence
- economic justice and rights
- bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights
- feminist action for climate justice
- technology and innovation for gender equality
- feminist movements and leadership

Since legislations and regulations that infringe on publishers' rights to publish freely can be considered a form of censorship or a violation of the freedom of speech, governments are generally reluctant to impose active measures to promote gender equality in the media. A mapping by the Council of Europe in 2020 indicates that only a limited number of European media-related legislation includes gender-equality provisions. In other parts of the world, some regulators have incorporated gender-equality measures, for example the Moroccan High Authority of Audiovisual Communication (Lemrini Elouahabi, 2019).

Industry and civil society response

While governments and global institutions largely have been less equipped to actively address gender equality in the news media, there are several initiatives taken by other actors. In fact, the main driver for change seems to be conducted by the joint forces of non-governmental organisations, scientists, journalist unions, and industry organisations. There are numerous examples of important collaborations and initiatives.

One important milestone was the first Global Forum on Media and Gender, with UNESCO as partner, which was held in Bangkok in December 2013. The conference's final statement reaffirmed the outcomes of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, supporting gender equality in and through media as a fundamental human right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. At the same meeting in Bangkok, the Global Alliance on Gender and Media (GAMAG) was launched by UNESCO and more than 500 organisations. GAMAG is a network of individuals and organisations working together to increase gender equality in and through the media and ICTs, and it also contributes to the knowledge on how to counter gender-based violence against women journalists.

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has a special focus on gender issues and regularly publishes reports on gender-related themes. Online harassment has emerged as an urgent topic. According to IFJ (2017), at least one in every two journalists have suffered sexual harassment, psychological abuse, online trolling, and other forms of human rights abuses, based on survey

of almost 400 women journalists in 50 countries. Therefore, the IFJ has been lobbying in support for the ILO Convention and Recommendation on violence and harassment in the world of work. IFJ (2020) has also adopted their own policy on sexual harassment.

The global organisation for newspapers and news publishers, WAN-IFRA, is also engaged in gender equality through the initiative, Women in the News (WIN), a project aiming to increase women's leadership and voices in the news. In 2020, they published "Amplifying Women's Voices: A gender balance guide for media", which provides several examples of newsrooms that have systematically managed to improve their gender balance, through better editorial routines and using data harvesting for internal evaluation. The report declares that sexism is bad for business and provides both checklists and practical ways to keep track of the gender balance in the news, through knowledge, digital tools, and better editorial routines (WAN- IFRA, 2020).

The International Association for Women in Radio and Television also produces reports and handbooks, lately especially focusing on safety for women journalists (IAWRT, 2017). IWMF monitors the safety of women journalists and what they see as increased dangerous situations: "This hostile environment is a direct attack on freedom of expression worldwide with the intent to silence women's voices and the stories they tell" (IWMF & Troll-Busters, 2018: 6).

Many national women's organisations also are mapping the situation for women in the media. Women's Media Center in the US delivers annual reports on the status of women in the media (WMC, 2020). In some areas of the world, women journalists are especially at risk, and even murdered. In Mexico, the organisation Comunicación e Información de la Mujer [Communication and Information for Women] has, since 2002, mapped the attacks and murders of women journalists (CIMAC, 2015, 2019), and they work closely with the international feminist journalist network, La red internacional de periodistas con visión de género [The international network of journalists with a gender perspective], founded in 2005 and reaching active journalists in 25 countries working for gender equality in and through the media.

Another important regional civil society organisation for gender equality in the media is Gender Links that operates in 15 Southern African countries with gender and media as one of their core issues. Throughout the years, since the start in 2001, Gender Links has produced numerous reports on gender equality in the newsrooms and in news media content, as well as providing training for journalists. One of the latest reports indicates that parity is achieved in many newsrooms in South Africa, but sexism remains, and cyber misogyny is reported as an increased threat (Gender Links, 2018).

On a European level, there are several initiatives worth mentioning. The Swedish Fojo Media Institute provides journalist training and support processes for freedom of expression and gender equality in developing countries and in

Eastern Europe. As a part of their work, they produce country reports in collaboration with local researchers and journalists (see, e.g., Fojo Media Institute, 2016, 2018, 2020). Fojo also collaborates with International Media Support, a Danish funded international non-profit organisation that works in conflict areas.

The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) published in 2019 the report, “All things being equal: Gender equality guidelines from public service media”. It contains a strong commitment to gender equality and several examples of good practices on how to keep track of media content; for example, the French audiovisual archive service, INA, used artificial intelligence to analyse 700,000 hours of audio from radio and television and found that women only had 30 per cent of the speaking time – their speaking time was also always shorter than men’s (EBU, 2019: 8). Most public service broadcasters have an obligation to consider gender equality measures through regulatory frameworks, but media output has not always mirrored the goals, and monitoring has been lacking. Therefore, the BBC 50/50 initiative is interesting. It is a voluntary project aiming to reach 50 per cent women in news, current affairs, and topical shows. It attracted over 500 teams across the BBC and drastically increased women’s participation (BBC, 2019; Rattan et al, 2019; for long-term initiatives in local media, see Edström & Mølster, 2014).

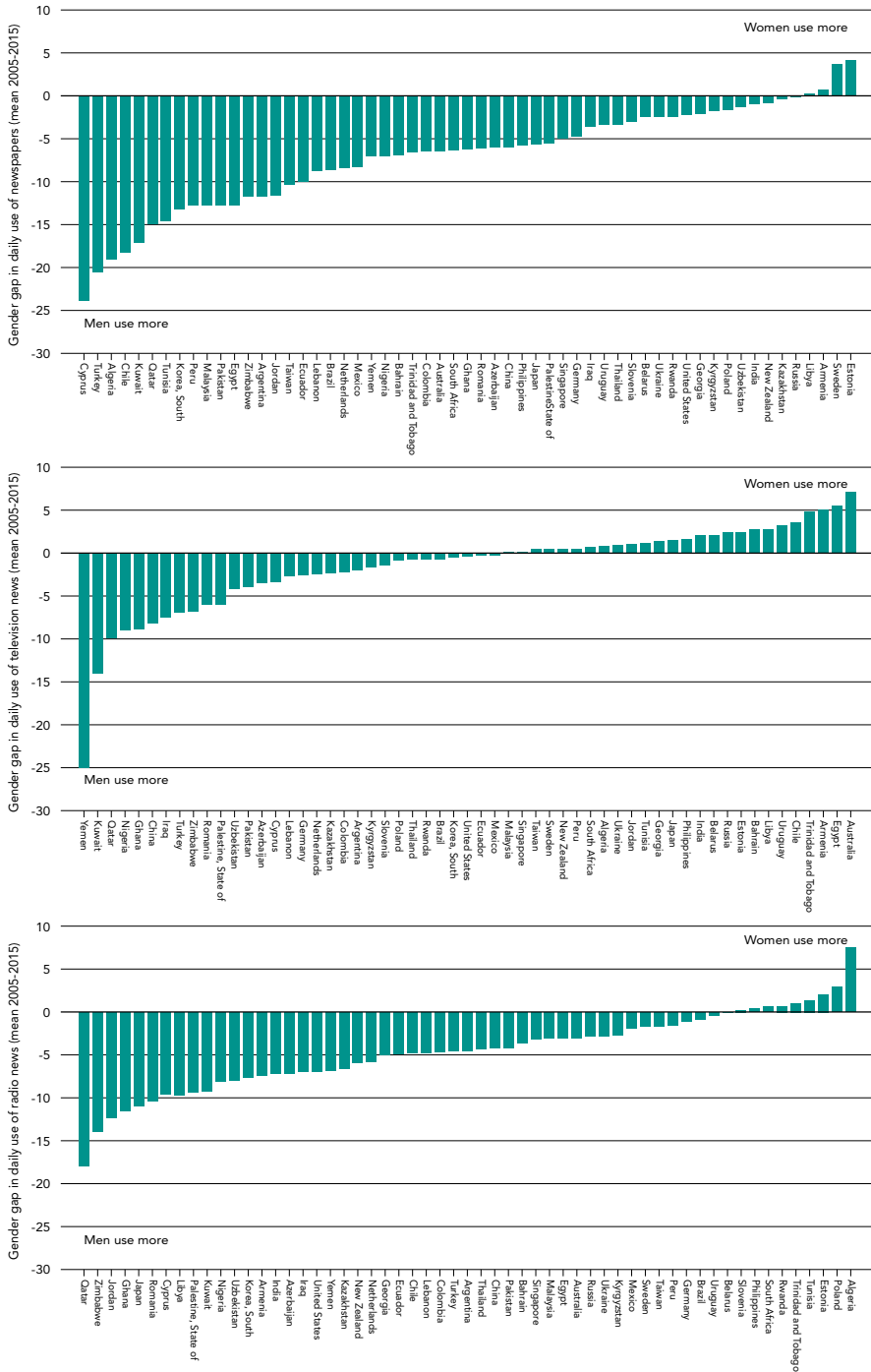
The EBU also makes annual gender equality reports keeping track of their “off-screen” gender representation. Public service media has, in general, a larger share of women on all levels compared with private audiovisual media companies. In 2020, EBU reported that the proportion of women chairing public service media boards was 27 per cent, compared with 8 per cent in the private sector, a doubling from 2014 to 2019 (EBU, 2020: 12). Another resource is the EU-funded innovation project, Advancing gender equality in the media industries (2016–2019), that has a global scope in bridging the knowledge gap between academia, media industry, and students, a task the Network of Gender, Media and ICTs (a UNESCO University Twinning and Networking Programme) is also addressing (UNESCO 2019c). In general, sharing good practices seem to be an overall theme among organisations and industry (European Commission, 2019; Tepper, 2020; WAN-IFRA, 2020).

Appendix 1.2 Gender equality in media access and use

The audience is, in many ways, the ultimate cause and consequence of gender equality in the news. To date, gender disparities in news media access and use have been given surprisingly little attention in research and very few comparative studies focus specifically on gender differences in relation to access to news media outlets or news media use (e.g., Benesch, 2012; Poindexter, 2008; Sarkkinen, 1997). Instead, gender differences in news consumption are often noticed as a “by-product” in studies that focus on something else, or where “gender” is used as a control variable. Gender is also included in many general studies of access to media and digital technologies per se, such as having a mobile phone or Internet access (e.g., Ragnedda & Muschert, 2013). The lack of research on the causes and consequences of the gender gap in news media use is evidently chronic, noted already by Gallagher in 1981. Comparative gender research on news media audiences from a gender equality perspective is largely lacking. One exception is a study by Benesch (2012), who did a cross-national comparison based on WVS and European Social Survey data, showing that the size of the gender gap in news consumption is highly correlated with the gender equality index as measured by the WEF’s Global Gender Gap Report. Although the present project does not focus on gender equality in news media use, we can add to this vein of research by examining the relationship between the gender gap in news media content (as measured by the GEM-I; see also Chapter 2) and the gender gap in news media consumption, the latter drawing from data collected by the WVS.

Figure 1.2 shows the magnitude of the gender gaps in the use of newspapers, television, and radio in the WVS data. There is a male bias in news media consumption for all three media categories, although a surplus for women is noted for a few countries, in particular for television. The largest gender gaps are found for newspapers, and the smallest for television. In terms of taking part of information about current events, television is thus the most egalitarian medium; both women and men use television to learn about what is going on in the country and in the world. Even so, a large gender gap is present in Yemen and Qatar, two countries that also rank very low on gender equality in society. A case in point is that neither of the two has participated in the GMMP.

Figure 1.2. Gender gap in daily usage of newspapers, television, and radio to learn about current events (% daily users among women – % daily users among men)



Source: WVS. See comments in Table 1.1 for additional information about the variables.

When examining the correlations between the gender gap in news media content (GEM-I) and the size of the gender gap in news media consumption for the 44 countries where we have access to matching GMMP and WVS data, we clearly see a positive and significant association (see Table 1.1). The higher the level of gender equality in the news, the smaller the gender gap in the use of newspapers, television, and radio to learn about current events. For mobile phones and Internet, the relationship is not as evident.

Table 1.1. *The relationship between gender equality in news media content (GEM-I) and the gender gap in the use of different sources of news (Pearson's r)*

	Gender gap in "daily use" (women – men)	Gender gap in "never use" (women – men)
Newspapers	.277 [#]	-.362 [*]
Television news	.424 ^{**}	-.320 [*]
Radio news	.394 ^{**}	-.258 [#]
Internet	-.004	-.225
Mobile phone	.225	-.244
<i>n</i>	44	44

Comments: *n* = number of countries. [#]*p* < .10, ^{*}*p* < .05, ^{**}*p* < .01. Gender equality in news media content is measured by the GEM-I, a composite index of six gender-sensitive news indicators, and varies between -100 (all men for all six indicators) and +100 (all women for all six indicators). A score of zero (0) equals full gender parity across the indicators. News media use is measured in the WVS with the following question: "People learn what is going on in this country and the world from various sources. For each of the following sources, please indicate whether you use it to obtain information daily, weekly, monthly, less than monthly or never" (response alternatives: daily, weekly, monthly, less than monthly, and never). The gender gap in news consumption is calculated as the proportion of women using a specific source minus the proportion of men using the same source, for each information source and response alternative. Each variable uses the mean of available measures for each country, 2005–2015.

Source: GMMP; WVS

The project Comparing Gender and Media Equality across the Globe has been funded by the Swedish Research Council (2016–2020) and is based at the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication (JMG) at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. The GEM dataset and its codebook are free to use and can be downloaded in various formats. For access, contact JMG. Please ensure that proper attribution is given when citing the dataset.

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QUALITIES

The GEM-Index

Constructing a unitary measure of gender equality in the news

Monika Djerf-Pierre & Maria Edström



2.1 The status of women in the news: A global issue

The issue in focus in this book is the lack of gender equality in the news media, and in Chapter 1 we explained why it is important to explore the causes and consequences of this problem. A key question is how to measure progress in the news media. Composite indices are frequently used to monitor the status or progress of global developments. An index is a unitary measure that encapsulates key aspects of a phenomenon. Some of the most prominent examples from the media world include the World Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders and the Media Freedom indicators published by Freedom House. Indices are also common when assessing the advancement of gender equality in general, such as the Global Gender Gap Index (GGI) by the World Economic Forum (WEF) and the Gender Inequality Index (GII) from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The aim of this chapter is to develop such a unitary measure of gender equality in news media content. Although gender and journalism has been on the agenda at least since the 1970s, we still lack a robust and easy-to-use measure to quantify, assess, and track the magnitude and persistence of gender inequalities in the news. By drawing from data collected by the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), we devise the Gender Equality in the News Media Index (GEM-I) – a composite index that estimates the gender gap between women and men regarding their status in the news.

An indicator is an instrument that provides information about the status and progress of a specific process or condition in society (UNESCO, 2012). Indicators have previously been constructed and used to assess the development of gender equality in the media, not the least in media organisations (Byerly,

Djerf-Pierre, Monika, & Maria Edström. (2020). The GEM-Index: Constructing a unitary measure of gender equality in the news. In Monika Djerf-Pierre, & Maria Edström (Eds.), *Comparing gender and media equality across the globe: A cross-national study of the qualities, causes, and consequences of gender equality in and through the news media* (pp. 59–98). Gothenburg: Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. <https://doi.org/10.48335/9789188855329-2>

2013; Gallagher, 1981; Gender Links, 2015; IFJ, 2009; Padovani et al., 2017). However, the GMMP is to date the only available global data on gender and news *content*, and it constitutes the obvious data source to take as a point of departure for the present study. The GEM-I developed in this chapter builds on the data collected by the GMMP, and it is composed of six indicators available in the GMMP reports that consider the overall presence of women and men as news subjects and as reporters, as well as the representation in gender-sensitive roles and topics.

In this chapter, the GEM-I is methodically tested to be broadly applicable to all forms of news media, easy to apply and rate, and statistically robust and reliable. We also show how the GEM-I can be used to gauge the development of gender equality in news content across time and countries. The empirical analysis presented in this chapter shows persistent gender inequalities in the news media across the globe and predicts that it will take over 70 years to reach full gender equality in news content across the globe at the current rate of change.

The chapter first presents a research review providing the theoretical foundation for identifying and selecting indicators to be included in the GEM-I (§2.2). This is followed by a section presenting the five guiding principles and empirical evidence for the construction of the composite index (§2.3). Finally, we put the GEM-I to practical use by utilising the index in a concrete analysis of how gender equality in the news media has developed across time and between regions (§2.4).

2.2 Measuring gender representation and equality in the news

An often-used contemporary slogan from those who call for better representation in the media is: “You can’t be what you can’t see”.¹ This summarises the growing understanding of the importance of media representations, as it reminds us that the presence of women and men in the media is indeed a matter of social recognition, status, and power.

The normative arguments for gender equality in media representations are anchored in universal values of human rights and freedom of expression and opinion. Gender equality in news content is important because it offers “symbolic recognition”, “voice”, and “relevance” of and for women in the news (discussed at length in Chapter 1). Symbolic recognition originates from the opportunity to see, listen to, and read about women in a broad range of societal roles. This is essential to counter gender stereotypes that narrow the repertoire of life choices for both women and men. Voice entails women being heard and having a say in issues that affect them and others in society. Relevance emanates from a broadening of the range of news topics and perspectives in the news

by including issues and views that resonate with and emanate from women's lives and experiences.

But how can representation be reliably assessed and quantified to reveal the scale and persistence of gender inequalities in the news? The mere presence of women in news stories is certainly not always a sign of gender equality, but linked to other features and conditions of news production. Tabloid and popularised news may stage women as tokens or attractions when they employ young and visibly attractive women to host television news shows. Women are often cast as victims in crime stories or as "ordinary people" in the news. To be sure, no one would argue that the dominance of half-naked women as "Page 3" girls in British tabloids is a sign of women's status in the newspaper. There are certainly also news beats that are dominated by men, such as sports, without being accorded high status in the field of journalism – or in society. This means that plain "body counting" is not sufficient to reveal inequalities; the type of topics and roles in the news – and the social value attached to them in society and in journalism – must also be considered when evaluating gender equality in news content.

The issue of women's (in)visibility and lack of status in the media has been a prolific area of theorising and empirical research since the 1970s, when Gaye Tuchman (1978, 1979) published the seminal studies in feminist media criticism, accusing the media of conducting a "symbolic annihilation" of women by excluding them from news content. This chapter aligns with this strand of research in defining gender equality in the news media as a state where men and women are represented with equal status in the news. In defining gender equality as equality in status, we underscore the ubiquitous link between representation, social recognition, and power. Status is a multifaceted concept, referring both to the recognition of women as human agents equally worthy of respect (Couldry, 2010; Fraser, 2000)² and to status as a primary organising mechanism of social fields, including politics and the media (Bourdieu, 1990, 1998, 2001; Djerf-Pierre, 2007; Melin, 2008).³ News reporting is gendered in various ways, but there are certainly topics and roles that are particularly "sensitive" to gender-based disparities (UNESCO, 2012), in particular those essential for the empowerment of women both in society (as citizens) and in the field of journalism (as professionals). An assessment of status in the news must thus consider the overall visibility and voice given to men and women, as well as their representation in status-sensitive roles and news topics.

The most ambitious attempt to date to define and assemble a large set of gender-sensitive indicators comes from the pioneering studies from the GMMP, although they do not explicitly use the term. The first study, *Global Media Monitoring: Women's Participation in the News*, analysed one day of radio, television, and newspapers in 71 countries in 1995 (GMMP, 1995). Since 1995,

the GMMP has measured the pace of change in women's and men's media representation at five-year intervals. In 2015, 114 countries from all regions of the world participated in the data collection (Macharia, 2015) and at the time of writing this chapter, a new analysis is scheduled for 2020.

The GMMP contains the only available data that allow for cross-country comparisons of gender equality in news media *content* with a global scope. The latest version from 2015 presents hundreds of measures of the presence of men and women in various media in stories about various news topics; as news subjects or sources ("people in the news") and in different roles in the news stories; as news reporters and presenters; and women's centrality in news stories, including the extent to which the story focused explicitly on women, gender issues or inequality, and if it challenged gender stereotypes.

UNESCO (2012) has also published a set of "gender-sensitive indicators for media" to be used as a "non-prescriptive" tool for conducting independent evaluations of gender equality in the media as well as an instrument for media organisation to use for evaluation and self-assessment. UNESCO's set of indicators has, to our knowledge, not been put to practice in large scale empirical studies. It is also very extensive, including 27 categories for news content only and stressing both quantitative and complex qualitative aspects, such as the presence of gender-based stereotypes and the inclusion of news topics and perspectives relevant to the lived experiences of women. The similarities with GMMP are still obvious, with a clear focus on plurality and diversity in media discourse:

Balanced presence of women and men – reflecting the composition of society, and human experiences, actions, views and concerns, in media coverage of news and current affairs. (UNESCO, 2012: 41)

The ambitious scope and extensive number of indicators used by both GMMP and UNESCO make them quite complex to apply in practice. Each provides a piece of the puzzle to the overall gender pattern in the news, but they are also very time consuming to collect and require significant work to analyse. The large number of indicators makes it difficult to determine which are the most important. To aid in the overall assessment, we see a need for a simpler, composite measure that can be used to track the progress of individual countries (and media) across time, as well as provide a basis for comparison of the status of women and men in the news between different contexts – from the level of single media to national samples. Indeed, we concur with Padovani and colleagues (2017) that to be useful, the indicators used in media monitoring of gender equality should be SMART – simple, measurable, achievable, relevant, and trackable.

The starting point for the measure we propose is a definition where gender equality in the media (GEM) is defined as the state where women and men

are represented with equal status in the news.⁴ This is operationalised as an absence of gender-based segregation regarding visibility, news beats, roles, and topics. Put in plain language, it is a situation where women and men are equally represented in all roles and topics in the news, including those accorded greatest value, prestige, and importance in society and in the field of journalism. There are, we argue, three categories of gender-sensitive indicators that are particularly important to include when assessing status in the news: presence, topics, and roles.

Presence

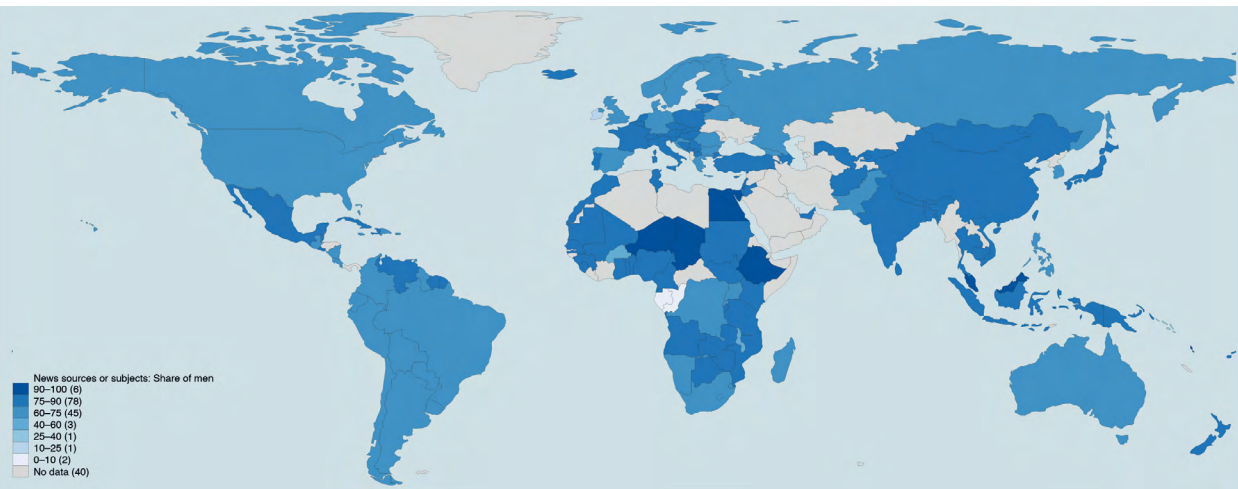
The overall presence of women in the news is fundamental in all empirical research on gender equality in the news. Counting men and women in the news creates a baseline for discussion, and it contributes to answering questions about women's presence and voice and whether they have an equal share of the mediated public sphere (Gallagher, 2001, 2004). Women should have an equal presence in the news as sources or subjects – that is, the news must include women as people worth reporting about and listening to. Without a presence or voice for women, all other aspects of gender equality in the news become void.

The presence of women as “people in the news” (those who speak or are quoted in the news or whom the news is about) has indeed been measured by the GMMP since 1995. The evidence shows a global male dominance (see Figure 2.1), but a small increase in women as news subjects over time, from 17 per cent in 1995 to 24 per cent in 2015 (Macharia, 2015). The largest rise is seen in Latin America (+13% 1995–2015), while Africa saw no increase in women news subjects at all during the same period. Countries in the Middle East started and remained at the bottom of the ladder with over 82 per cent men news subjects in 2015.

The presence of women reporters is also a central aspect of women's overall presence in the news. There are clearly more women as producers of news than news subjects, which reflects the gradual influx of women in the journalist profession across the globe (see also Chapter 5). The GMMP reports show that the share of women reporters in stories increased from 28 to 37 per cent between 1995 and 2015. The largest rise was, again, seen in Latin America (+14%) followed by Africa (+11%). Despite the increase of women, men still dominate as reporters in 2015 in almost all countries of the world (see Figure 2.2). In 2015, 63 per cent of the reporters in news stories in press, radio, and television were men.

Still, the mere presence of women is not always a sign of equality, as emphasised in the introduction. Equality is also a matter of *where* and *how* women and men appear in the news.

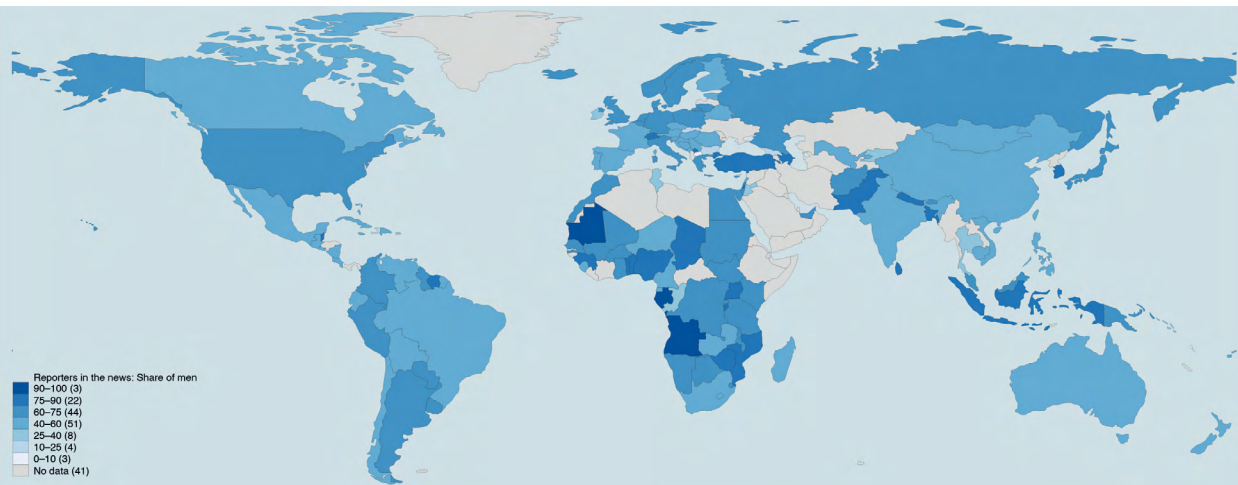
Figure 2.1 Men as news subjects or sources in the news (per cent)



Comments: The map shows the percentages of news subjects or sources in the news that are men (grey areas lack data) and includes the latest available observation for each country from GMMP (predominantly from 2015). 150 countries are included. Due to limitations in the SPMAP program, 13 countries are not displayed on the map.

Source: GMMP

Figure 2.2 Men as reporters in the news (per cent)



Comments: The map shows the percentages of news stories where men are reporters (grey areas lack data) and includes the latest available observation for each country from GMMP (predominantly from 2015). 149 countries are included. Due to limitations in the SPMAP program, 13 countries are not displayed on the map.

Source: GMMP

Topics

Previous research has demonstrated the pervasive gender-typing of topics in the news, where men dominate the “hard” news and women mostly appear in “soft” news (Djerf-Pierre & Löfgren-Nilsson, 2004; North, 2016; van Zoonen, 1998). This division is firmly rooted in the historical separation of men and women into the public and private sphere, respectively, as well as in traditional role conceptions of women’s and men’s places in society. The news’ political significance is recognised and supported by journalists across the globe, even in countries lacking in democracy (Hanitzsch et al., 2019). The masculine dominance in the “field of power” (Bourdieu, 2001), the semi-autonomous status of the journalism fields, and the news’ proximity to political and economic decision-making (Bourdieu 1990, 1998; Benson, 2006, 2015) are reflected in the status hierarchy of news beats. Politics, world affairs, and business news are often seen as a “man’s world” whereas social and consumer issues, human interest stories, lifestyle, health, and education are regarded as feminine and accorded lower status. Again, it is the GMMP that provides large-scale empirical comparisons (Macharia, 2015), although there is a plethora of studies on the gender-typing of news based on one country or region (recent examples from various parts of the world include Gender Links, 2015; Mañoso Pacheco, 2018, North, 2016; NWMIndia, 2019; Oladapo, 2019; Ross, 2017; Voronova, 2014; Zuiderveld, 2017). A second dimension of gender equality is thus if women and men have equal opportunity to speak in news topics of importance to citizens in a society, including the hard news of politics and economy.

Roles

Although the inclusion of women in political news is important in and of itself, it conveys nothing about what news subjects actually *do* in the news – in which capacity women and men are included in, for example, a political story. We know from previous studies that women tend to be cast in the role of ordinary people, speaking from and of their personal experience, and more seldom engaged to speak from positions of authority as spokespersons or experts (Macharia, 2015; Franks & Howells, 2019; Niemi & Pitkänen, 2017). The symbolic recognition of women’s competences and expertise and granting them a position to represent, act, and speak on behalf of others as spokespersons for political parties, non-governmental organisations, corporations, or agencies, are thus a third criteria of status in the news.

2.3 Constructing a unitary measure of gender equality in the news

Presence, topics, and roles are the three key dimensions to consider when we search for available empirical indicators to include in the GEM-I. The composite measure we propose is based on five guiding principles:

1. It should be theoretically informed and depart from the general definition of gender equality as men and women being represented with equal status in the news. It should consider the importance of the general presence of women in the news, as well as women's presence in key topics and roles.
2. It should be easy to apply and rate. It must be straightforward to measure and code. It should thus include as few and distinct indicators as possible (parsimoniousness) and require analyses of as few sources as possible. This entails that we should focus on the most "important" gender-sensitive indicators – those that tap into the most crucial aspects of gender and status in the news. It also means that we should, if possible, focus on topics and roles that appear frequently in the news, so the estimate does not require very large samples of news stories to assess. For example, news about politics and government as well as economy are regular aspects of news across the globe, and they are also prestigious news beats accorded great societal relevance.
3. It should be broadly applicable, or in other words, be relevant as well as applicable to all forms of news media – radio, television, online, and print – and if possible, also to a broad range of current affairs and documentary genres. This means that we should avoid indicators that are only applicable to certain media, such as women and men as news presenters on television.
4. It should be unidimensional and reliable in statistical terms. This means that it should hold up to established statistical methods and standards for internal reliability of composite indices. From this follows that the constituting indicators should overlap empirically (they should correlate). There are still researchers who argue against the need for such internal coherence when constructing composite measures of social development. Welzel (2013), who is the main architect behind many of the values indices used in the well-known World Values Survey (WVS), instead proposes a "compository logic", which summarises single elements that complement each other conceptually but not necessarily empirically. This principle is, for instance, used to measure presence of equality and choice values in world populations, which in turn are part of the emancipative values composite in the WVS.⁵ Hagerty and colleagues (2001) also emphasise the necessity of a theoretical foundation of the individual domains included in an index, but stress the need for parsimoniousness – to reduce the number

of indicators to the minimum required to cover the theoretically motivated domains of the measure. It is thus important that indicators do not overlap so much as to create redundancies. For our GEM-I measure, we aim to select indicators that are both theoretically and empirically valid. If and to what degree the different theoretically relevant gender-sensitive indicators *de facto* *are* highly correlated is indeed an empirical question, and something we explore further in this chapter.

5. It should consider gender discrepancies in both directions. About 50 per cent of the population are women, and a reasonable target for gender equality in the news is that 50 per cent of all news subjects or sources in all roles and topics be women. The *actual* presence of women and men in various roles and spheres of society, be it politics or care work, must be regarded as potential *causes* of gender disparities in the news, not part of the measure as such. Indeed, the odd relationship between gender equality in the media-world (GEM-I) and the “real world” is evaluated and discussed in several chapters in this book (specifically chapters 4, 6, & 8).

The fifth principle also requires that an *overrepresentation* of women regarding presence, topics, and roles be regarded as a sign of inequality. From a normative point of view, a far-reaching feminisation of the news is as undesirable as the historically pervasive male dominance. Women already dominate as reporters in some newsrooms, and it is possible that women will soon outnumber men in key reporting areas. Interestingly, most contemporary gender gap indices, such as the GGI, are based on calculating the “female-to-male ratio” in attainments in different areas, and the ratio is truncated at an equality benchmark (WEF, 2018: 5). For the GGI, the equality benchmark is set to 1: A score of 1 means that women have the same attainment as men, whereas a score of 0.5 entails women having 50 per cent of the attainment (be it access to education or ministerial positions). A country that has reached parity between women and men and a country where women have surpassed men are thus given the same score. The index we propose does not put a cap on women’s attainment. It is calculated in a way that highlights gender discrepancies in both directions; it gauges a potential surplus of both men and women.

Method

The methodology guiding the construction of the GEM-I is described in great detail in Appendix 2.1, with a step-by-step description of the process of selection and testing. The sequence of statistical tests of frequencies, correlations, dimensionality (principal component analysis), and reliability (Cronbach’s alpha tests), plus several robustness tests, resulted in a selection

of six gender-sensitive indicators from the GMMP studies for inclusion in the GEM-I. Each category – presence, topics, and roles – has two indicators, and each indicator includes the percentages of women and men:

Presence

- news subjects or sources (all people in the news)
- reporters (in all stories)

Topics

- news subjects or sources in economy and business news
- news subjects or sources in news about politics and government

Roles

- spokespersons
- experts

The descriptive statistics for the six indicators for women are provided in Table 2.1. The percentage of men mirrors the percentage of women – if 10 per cent of the news subjects are women, 90 per cent are men.

Table 2.1 Gender-sensitive indicators for women, 1995–2015 (per cent)

	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	Total
Presence						
women news subjects or sources	17	19	20	24	24	21
women reporters	38	34	36	38	39	37
Topics						
women news subjects or sources in business & economy news	13	17	17	21	21	18
women news subjects or sources in politics & government news	9	12	13	18	17	15
Role						
women experts as news subjects or sources	–	–	15	21	20	19
women spokespersons as news subjects or sources	–	–	15	20	20	19
<i>n</i> (range)	59–62	63–65	70–75	100–104	102–104	276–410

Comments: *n* = country-year observations (outliers with limited data are excluded – six country-year observations). The number of country observations in each cell varies between 59 and 104. All variables are from the GMMP study (1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, & 2015) and the values range between 0 (no women) and 100 (all women). Role indicators are unavailable for 1995 and 2000, and the GEM-I can thus only be calculated for 2005, 2010, and 2015. See Appendix 2.1 for full references to the original variable sources.

Source: GMMP

The actual computation of the GEM-I is the simplest possible. It calculates the average gender gap (percentage of women – percentage of men) for all six indicators for each country: (sum of all six indicators for women / 6) – (sum of all six indicators for men / 6). The index can thus vary between -100 (all six indicators have 100% men) and +100 (all six indicators have 100% women). Zero (0) represents full gender equality – or a 50/50 balance – for all six indicators. Appendix 2.2 contains a practical guide for how to code and calculate the GEM-I.

2.4 Results: Men dominate the global news culture

In the following section, we put the GEM-I to practice to learn what it can reveal about the status of women in the news globally. First, we describe the overall global pattern, followed by an analysis of the changes of the GEM-I across time and regions from 2005 to 2015.

We begin by looking at the index scores for individual countries. Figure 2.3 shows the GEM-I for all countries in the study, using the latest available data from each (predominantly from 2015). The index can vary between -100 (only men in the news) to +100 (only women in the news), with zero (0) as the equality mark.

The most obvious result is that all bars are located to the left of the equality mark (0). This means that men are accorded higher status than women in the news everywhere in the world. Only one country, Bulgaria, boasts a GEM-I with a small surplus of women, and this result aligns with other studies where Bulgaria repeatedly displays a high representation of women in both news content and news production (see Chapter 5 for a discussion on this).

The dominance of men in the news is, indeed, striking. A score of -20 means that the analysed news stories from a given country on average have 60 per cent men and 40 per cent women for the six indicators in the index, which arguably could be seen as the lowest limit for gender equality if we allow some leeway for variation around the absolute equality mark. Only 3 (Bulgaria, Barbados, and Malawi) of the 123 countries had reached or surpassed this threshold for gender equality in the news in 2015 (see Figure 2.3).

Only 18 countries, or about 15 per cent, reached or surpassed what in previous research has been seen as a “critical mass” of women (represented in light blue and white in Figure 2.3). A critical mass constitutes the number required for women to be seen and act as individuals, and not defined as “the Other” or as “tokens” in a social setting (Kanter, 1977a, 1977b; see also Chapter 5 for further discussion). Although the idea of a critical mass has been heavily debated and contested on both theoretical and empirical grounds – “there is little evidence that 30 per cent is a magical cure-all for ensuring the represen-

tation of women” (Grey, 2006: 494; see also Childs & Krook, 2008; Steiner, 2012) – 30 per cent has been suggested as a lowest threshold (Kanter, 1977a, 1977b; Dahlerup, 2006). A GEM-I score between -40 and -20 means having at least an average of 30 per cent women, and can thus be seen as having a critical mass of women in the news.

Most countries (64) in the study fall in the -40 to -60 span of the GEM-I, indicating a male bias largely marginalising women in the news (represented in medium blue in Figure 2.3). Women have a place in the news but are represented with less status – in presence, topics, and roles – than men.

A score below -60 means a near-total male domination in the news, where the six indicators average 80 per cent men or more (represented in dark blue in Figure 2.3). A score of -80 entails complete male hegemony and a de facto annihilation of women in the news; however, only three countries (Benin, State of Palestine, and Angola) score this low, though another six are fairly close to this mark.

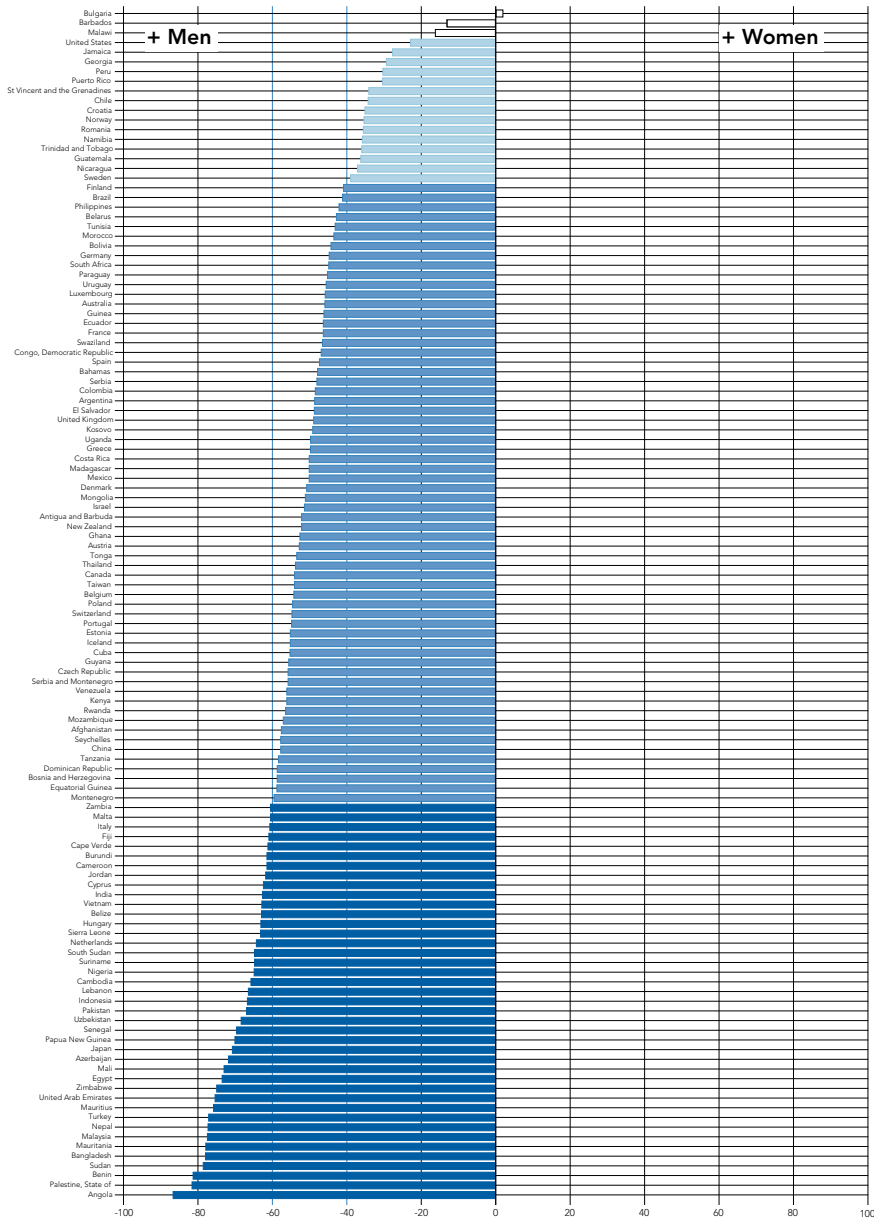
So far, we have focused on the present situation using the most recent available data from 2015. Looking at the development over time, we see that change has been rather slow (see Figure 2.4). Between 2005 and 2015, the gender gap in the news shrank from -61 to -53 – an improvement, but still a hefty male dominance.

Unfortunately, the GEM-I cannot be calculated for 1995 and 2000, since role indicators were not included in the earliest GMMP studies. An extrapolation of the scores using the four available indicators yields a GEM-I for 1995 at about -67, and for 2000, -63. This means that since 1995, the rate of change has been about 0.7 scale units per year. Used to predict future developments, it tells us that it will take more than 70 years to reach full gender equality.⁶ The GEM-I for 2005–2015 lends itself to more precise and accurate calculations of the rate of change. Based on the average progress for the period 2005–2015, to move from -53 (global mean score 2015) to 0 on the GEM-I will take exactly 72.2 years if the rate of change is 0.734 scale units per year (see also Table 2.7 in Appendix 2.3 for a calculation of the change rate with different sets of controls).

Change is thus still happening, albeit at a fairly slow pace. More importantly, the development of the global GEM-I is clearly not continuous. Between 2005 and 2010, the GEM-I increased by 7 scale units (the average share of women increased from 19.3% to 23.7%), but only a miniscule increase can be seen between 2010 and 2015 (see Figure 2.4). Indeed, even if we include 1995 and 2000 in the calculations, it is evident that the greatest (and only) leap in gender equality in the news media happened between 2005 and 2010. For all the other periods, change has been small or negligible.

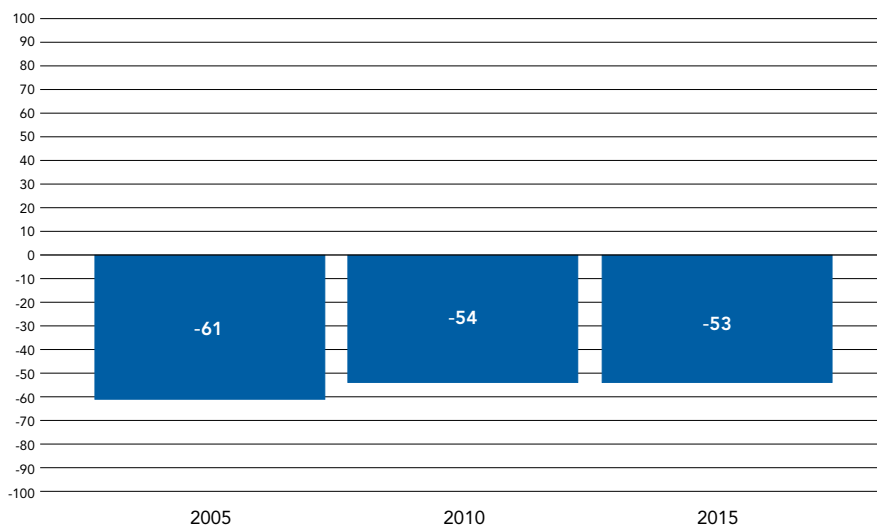
The GEM-Index

Figure 2.3 Level of gender equality in the news, by country (GEM-I score)



Comments: $n = 123$ country observations (outliers with limited data are excluded – four country observations). The figure includes the latest available observation for each country from the cross-sectional (CS-GEM) dataset (Färdigh et al., 2020), predominantly from 2015. The GEM-I is based on the mean of six gender-sensitive news indicators for each country and year and varies between -100 (all men for all six indicators) and +100 (all women for all six indicators). A score of zero (0) equals full gender parity across the indicators. White bars indicate equality, light blue bars indicate that at least 30 per cent women have been reached, medium blue bars indicate a marginalisation of women, and dark blue bars indicate male dominance in the news. The global mean for all countries is -54.

Source: GMMP

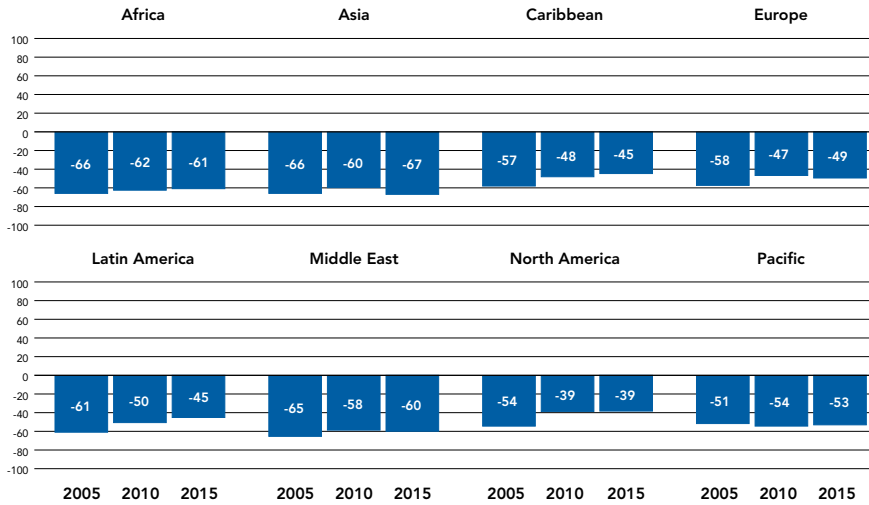
Figure 2.4 Level of gender equality in the news globally, 2005–2015 (GEM-I score)

Comments: $n = 268$ country-year observations (68 from 2005; 99 from 2010; 101 from 2015; outliers with limited data are excluded – six country-year observations) from the TS-GEM dataset (Färdigh et al., 2020). The GEM-I is based on the mean of six gender-sensitive news indicators for each country and year and varies between -100 (all men for all six indicators) and +100 (all women for all six indicators). A score of zero (0) equals full gender parity across the indicators. The global mean for all countries and years is -55.3.

Source: GMMP

The pattern of persistent gender gaps in the news also seems to be a global phenomenon. Figure 2.5 tracks the development in eight regions of the world. There is evidence of change, but it is rather uneven. Greatest progress is seen in Latin America, followed by North America and the Caribbean. In Africa, Europe, and the Middle East, progress has been slow and stagnating in 2015. In countries in Asia and the Pacific, there is even less equality in the news in 2015 than in 2005. More countries have participated in the GMMP in each wave, which means that the figures are not fully comparable since the sample of countries differs. Still, a robustness check looking at the regional averages for the 30 countries that have participated in all rounds of GMMP shows a similar regional pattern.

What is most striking in Figure 2.5 is, instead, the similarities that appear across time and regions. The regional averages for all years are located well below the equality mark, ranging from -66 (Africa and Asia 2005) and -39 (North America in 2015). If anything, the GEM-I in different regions has moved from a state of male hegemony to a state of differential marginalisation of women. Gender equality is not achieved in any region, and the global news culture was, and remains, a world dominated by men.

Figure 2.5 Level of gender equality in the news by region, 2005–2015 (GEM-I mean score)

Comments: n = number of countries included (2005-2010-2015) from the TS-GEM dataset (Färdigh et al., 2020): North America (2-2-2); Middle East (2-6-6); Pacific (2-5-3); Caribbean (4-8-12); Asia (12-14-10); Latin America (10-13-14); Africa (14-21-24); Europe (22-30-30). Outliers with limited data are excluded (six country-year observations). The GEM-I is based on the mean of six gender-sensitive news indicators for each country and year and varies between -100 (all men for all six indicators) and +100 (all women for all six indicators). A score of zero (0) equals full gender parity across the indicators. The global mean for all countries and years is -55.3.

Source: GMMP

2.5 Conclusion and discussion

Gender equality in the news media (GEM) is defined in this study as a state where men and women are represented with equal status in the news. In this chapter, we devised a unitary measure that can serve as a tool to gauge the development of gender equality in news content across time and countries. By drawing from previous research on gender and media, and after comprehensive statistical testing, the index is constructed to be theoretically informed, easy to apply and rate, broadly applicable to all forms of news media, and unidimensional and reliable in statistical terms.

By utilising previously collected data from the GMMP, the GEM-I considers the overall presence of women and men in the news, as well as their visibility and voice in specific gender-sensitive roles and topics.

The GEM-I calculates the average gender gap in the news (percentage of women – percentage of men) for the following six indicators available in the GMMP reports:

Presence

- news subjects or sources (all people in the news)
- reporters (in all stories)

Topics

- news subjects or sources in economy and business news
- news subjects or sources in news about politics and government

Roles

- spokespersons
- experts

The GEM-I can vary between -100 (only men in the news) and +100 (only women in the news). Zero (0) represents full gender equality – a 50/50 distribution of men and women for all six indicators.

The analysis of the GEM-I across time and space shows that the status of women in the media-world of news varies between different countries and regions. We discern three categories of news cultures deriving from the variations of women's status in the news:

1. Invisibilisation is a news culture where women are generally invisible in the news, both as reporters and news subjects, and only have an occasional presence in peripheral roles and topics. This type represents the symbolic annihilation of women, as described by Tuchman (1978). In 2015, quite a few countries in the world remain at this bottom stage of gender equality.
2. Marginalisation is a news culture that to various degrees marginalises women. Women have a regular, but unequal, presence in the news and more seldom appear in roles and topics gender-typed as masculine, such as politics and economy. This is where most countries in the world are located. The level of marginalisation varies, however, and only in about 15 per cent of the countries in the study have women reached a critical mass in presence, topics, and roles – which could be assumed necessary for women to be seen and act as individuals in the news.
3. Equality requires that women be represented equally to men in all roles and topics in the news, including those that are accorded highest status in society and the journalism field. This is when women may cease to be recognised as “women experts” or “women spokespersons” and attain full humanhood in the media-world. This egalitarian news culture may also entail that actual news values, news practices, and status hierarchies are redefined; this is, however, not at all guaranteed, and in 2015, only a few countries have attained this level of equality in status in the news.

The results from this study thus shows that hardly any past or present news cultures have de facto attained the level of equality. Indeed, the main takeaway from the study across countries and over time is the systematic and persistent *inequality* in news content. If the current rate of change remains, it will take over 70 years to reach full gender equality in the global media-world of news. The news culture around the globe was, and remains, male, despite the feminisation of the profession in many countries in the world.

It is also important to remember that the GEM-I does not claim to measure all possible expressions of gender inequalities in the media. Some persistent facets of media sexism are difficult to measure in simple terms and may be revealed either by conducting more advanced and extensive quantitative studies or in qualitative analyses of how men and women are treated and discursively constructed in the news.

The focus of this chapter was to construct and describe the GEM-I as an easy-to-use tool for gauging the state and changes of gender equality in the news – the *causes* of the lack of gender equality are dealt with in other chapters of this anthology. It is still obvious that the level of gender equality in society only partially relates to regional and cross-country differences in GEM-I (see also Chapter 4). The countries and regions ranking the lowest in GEM-I often place low in rankings of gender equality in society, such as the Global Gender Gap Index (GGI). This is expected, but more peculiar is the large variation in societal gender equality among countries and regions at the upper half of the GEM-I ranking. Here, we find a selection of countries from all regions of the world, and nations that consistently rank the highest in the GGI, such as the Nordic countries, do not top the GEM-I chart. Bulgaria, the leader of the GEM-I ranking, is a country that consistently performs well in studies of gender representation, but where historical and cultural prejudices against women still remain (Nastasia & Nastasia, 2013).

What we see is rather a relative disconnect – and in some cases complete disjunction – between gender equality in the media and gender equality in society at large. This is indeed yet an indication that journalism is, as Bourdieu and others claim, a semi-autonomous social field. The media in some countries have reached further than the rest of society; in other countries, the media are lagging behind. Bulgaria took the lead in the GEM-I in 2015 but ranks 41 in the GGI. Malawi ranks 67 on the GGI but third on the GEM-I. Rwanda exemplifies the opposite pattern, placing fifth on the GGI but far down the list at rank 74 on the GEM-I.

Suffice it to say that gender equality in society is only partially reflected in the gender equality of the news. To provide a context for understanding the origins of gender inequalities in the news, we instead want to put focus on the global news culture. Journalists in different countries tend to practice their professional work in very similar ways. Indeed, the Worlds of Journalism com-

parative study of the professional attitudes of journalists in the world found few gender differences in professional outlook between women and men in the 67 countries studied (Hanitzsch & Hanusch, 2012; Hanitzsch et al., 2019; see also Reich, 2013). Women and men are socialised into the same professional norms, practices, and values. And as this chapter clearly shows, these are all parts of a global masculine news culture – what men do, think, and are, are generally deemed more interesting and important than the thinkings and doings of women.

Although the study sustains the longstanding male dominance in the news, there are still changes to be noticed. The largest influx of women in the news occurred between 2005 and 2010, and in 2015, the development seemed to stall or even decline. Indeed, the proportion of people in the news that are women seems to cap at one-third, not only for the indicators used in the GEM-I, but for most news topics.⁷ The only indicator with a prevalent surplus of women is the share of women reporters, but the global average for this indicator was still 39 per cent in 2015. There are also many blank spots – countries that rarely or have never contributed with data, and where the status of women and men in the news remains unexplored (see Chapter 1). When collecting the data for this chapter, the latest available GMMP study was from 2015. At the time of writing, a new GMMP round is in preparation for 2020, and it should reveal if 2015 only represents a temporary setback for the development of gender equality in the news. It remains to be seen if the world picks up the pace towards greater equality or if the news media world stays dominated by men.

The GMMP is a formidable undertaking largely driven by and leaning on the voluntary – and often unpaid – work of scholars and activists. The main purpose of the GMMP was, and still is, to give a snapshot of the state of equality in the news at the global and regional level. It was never meant to be used for comparisons at the level of individual countries. The present study has yet provided evidence for its broader usability, demonstrating that country-level data from the GMMP house great potential for academic research. There are certainly limitations, and larger samples of news should make the measures more precise and less volatile. Still, the utilisation of multiple indicators to measure a common domain is a well-known scheme to reduce measurement errors in statistical analyses. The composite index we developed in the present study will provide an easily applicable, statistically validated, and robust measure of gender equality in the news, to be used across time and space.

Notes

1. The quote is used by many; it is mentioned by, among others, Marie Wilson, founding president of the White House project in the 2011 documentary *Miss Representation* by Jennifer Siebel Newsom. (It could also originate from Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund.)
2. Couldry (2010: 96–107) states that the “capability of voice” is one of the essential human capabilities and roots his argument in critical theorist Axel Honneth's concept of recognition and the concept of freedom in Nobel laureate Amartya Sen's capabilities approach. Nussbaum (1999, 2003) argues that the capabilities approach to social justice differs from the human rights approach (although closely related) in that it focuses from the start on “what people are actually able to do and be” (2003: 39) and that the capabilities approach is particularly useful for the critical discussion on the development of gender equality:
It is well placed to foreground and address inequalities that women suffer inside the family: inequalities in resources and opportunities, educational deprivations, the failure of work to be recognised as work, insults to bodily integrity. Traditional rights talk has neglected these issues, and this is no accident, I would argue: for rights language is strongly linked with the traditional distinction between a public sphere, which the state regulates, and a private sphere, which it must leave alone. (Nussbaum, 2003: 39)
3. Research in psychology has furthermore shown that the strive for status is, indeed, a universal and fundamental human motive, and it is distinct from related constructs such as power, financial success, and belongingness (Anderson et al., 2015).
4. The GEM acronym also stands for Gender Equality Marker, but it is used for other purposes within the OECD and United Nations systems and does not address the media (United Nations, 2018).
5. Choice values emphasise the support for sexual and reproductive choice and is measured by three indicators: how acceptable respondents find 1) divorce, 2) abortion, and 3) homosexuality. Equality values focuses on gender equality by measuring how strongly respondents disagree with the statements that 1) “education is more important for a boy than a girl”, 2) “when jobs are scarce, men should have priority over women to get a job”, and 3) “men make better political leaders than women” (Welzel, 2013).
6. To move from -67 to -53 (a decrease of 14 scale units) in twenty years corresponds to a rate of change at -0.7 per year. To move from -53 (mean for 2015) to 0 will thus take 75.7 years. To move from -53 to -20 (lowest threshold for equality) will take 47 years.
7. The global means of women news subjects in GMMP are: science and health (27%); social and legal (28%); crime and violence (23%); and celebrity/art/sport (24%) (TS-GEM dataset).

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Appendix 2.1 Constructing the GEM-I

Step 1: Defining a core indicator and listing possible candidates

The process of selecting indicators for the index started by listing the most relevant gender-sensitive indicators highlighted in previous studies, as described earlier in the main text of the chapter. While determined to test a broad range of indicators, we deemed the general presence or absence of women in the news as a core indicator that is necessary to include. It is quite evident that if there are no women news subjects or sources in the news, the issue of the status accorded to different roles and topics becomes void. We also wanted to make sure to include indicators of the visibility of women journalists in the news reports (or in bylines) for similar reasons.

Step 2: Searching for patterns by testing frequencies and correlations

The second step was to explore the data from the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) to scrutinise the indicators available in the GMMP reports. All variables from the GMMP were pooled together in one dataset: the GEM dataset (Färdigh et al., 2020). The GMMP comprises hundreds of measures, each tapping into different aspects of news content that are relevant to gender equality. In line with the basic principles for constructing a composite index described earlier, we focused on indicators that are 1) available across time and not just for a single year; 2) present in all forms of news media, and not just for an individual medium such as radio, television, or the press; and 3) appearing frequently enough in the news so that it can be reliably examined and gauged without having to study many weeks of news reports.

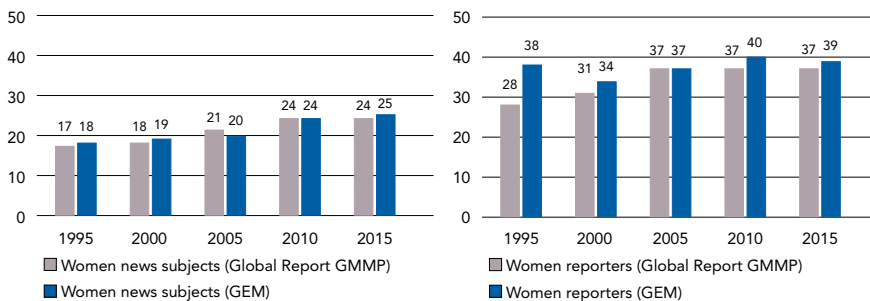
Data collection for the GMMP is conducted by coders in each participating country analysing one day of news output in press, radio, and television from that country; the results are aggregated into national averages. The number of media in the sample varies depending on the size of the country and charac-

teristics of the media sector. To devise an index, we need a large enough set of observations for each country. Some news topics and roles appear more seldomly, which may result in a too small (or missing) sample of those indicators.

All GMMP variables are coded dichotomously (binary), by differentiating the shares of men and women in news content. For each news story, the coder registers whether each individual news subject or reporter is a man or woman, based on how they are presented in the news (name, pronoun, appearance, byline). In recent studies, GMMP also includes a third option for coding gender; this is an important choice, but the third option only appears in miniscule numbers in the news stories, leading GMMP to exclude it in their reports. This means that in the coding of gender in GMMP, the categories of man and woman are mutually exclusive, both regarding reporting roles and news subjects or sources. A detailed description of the coding principles and variable definitions used by GMMP is presented in Appendix 2.2.

The GMMP reports focus on estimating global and regional averages, and the data from each country is weighted to reflect the population size and media density in different countries. For our study, we use the unweighted data, and each participating country, large or small, is given the same weight. However, the difference in results is small, as shown in a comparison of the measures in the GMMP reports and the present study in Figure 2.6.

Figure 2.6 Women news subjects and women reporters, GMMP and GEM-TS compared, 1995–2015 (per cent)



Comments: The GMMP global report figures are retrieved from the 2015 report (Macharia, 2015) and use country-weights. The figures for the TS-GEM dataset use unweighted data. All countries that participated and contributed with data in the GMMP each year are included in the figures (no observations excluded).

Source: GMMP

To coordinate and collect data from 114+ countries is a massive undertaking, and though GMMP only monitors one day of news in five-year intervals, the data provided from some countries are still quite limited. Despite participating in the global survey, some countries lack data for all or some of the indicators tested in this study. This means that they will be “missing” in the statistical procedures. Although the results from GMMP’s one-day survey have been validated in sev-

eral countries with more extensive data, there is always a risk that special events or circumstances happening in a country in a specific year will bias the data, a problem that is exacerbated when combined with small samples of news stories. To partly alleviate the problem, we decided to exclude countries with very limited data (less than 15 stories analysed) and extreme outliers based on limited data (odd values based on small samples) from the statistical analysis. From the outset, 15 country-year observations were excluded (2005: Suriname. 2010: Ireland, St Lucia, St Vincent, Togo. 2015: Chad, Haiti, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Niger, Solomon Islands, Saint Lucia, Gabon, Congo, Burkina Faso). However, due to the limitations of a one-day sample, only six were excluded, despite having data for all indicators in the final GEM-I (Burkina Faso, Congo, Lesotho, Solomon Islands, and Saint Lucia from 2015, and Togo from 2010). We also conducted several robustness tests to ensure that the measures are consistent and reliable, with and without the excluded observations (see further discussion later in this appendix).

The statistical analyses began by testing the frequencies and relationships of potential indicators available in the GMMP dataset. First, a larger set of indicators was included, looking at frequencies and correlations between them. To facilitate comparisons between years and countries, we primarily used the pooled TS-GEM dataset (Färdigh et al., 2020), which contains all the data from all GMMP studies conducted in 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2015. Data from the cross-sectional CS-GEM dataset, which includes the latest observation for each country with 2015 as the target year, was also used to compare the latest figures for each country. The following indicators of presence, topics, and roles in the news from the GMMP were identified as potential candidates for inclusion in the index:

Presence: Women's overall presence in the news.

- women news subjects or sources (all people in the news)
- women reporters (in all stories)

Topics: Women's presence in different news stories about different topics.

- women news subjects or sources in stories about economy and business
- women news subjects or sources in stories about politics and government
- women news subjects or sources in stories about crime and violence
- women news subjects or sources in stories about social and legal issues
- women news subjects or sources in stories about science and health
- women news subjects or sources in stories about celebrity, art, and sport
- women reporters in stories about politics and government
- women reporters in stories about business and economy
- women reporters in stories about social and legal issues
- women reporters in stories about crime and violence
- women reporters in stories about science and health

- women reporters in stories about celebrity, art, and sport

Roles: The function or capacity in which women appear in the news.

- spokespersons (speaks on behalf of another person, a group, or an organisation)
- experts (provides information, opinion, or comment based on specialist knowledge)
- personal experience (provides opinion or comment based on individual, personal experience)
- popular opinion (provides opinion of the “ordinary citizen”, e.g., in a street interview, vox-pop)
- victim (portrayed as a victim of crime, disaster, war, violence, accident, discrimination, etc.)

The correlations between the indicators, including all roles and topics, are mostly positive, which means that countries that have many women in one role in the news tend to have more women overall. Still, the correlations between the reporter variables and news subject or sources variables are weak and sometimes not significant. This means that the presence of women as news subjects and reporters do not necessarily overlap empirically, despite being conceptually related.

This pattern is clear when we test the correlations with our core indicator, women news subjects or sources (see Table 2.2). The strongest correlations emerge with women news subjects or sources in business and economy, and politics and government, and with the roles of spokespersons and experts. The correlations with the various reporting roles are much weaker, but strongest for women reporters in all news stories. Departing from the correlational pattern, we identify five indicators (plus the core indicator) that are the most promising candidates for the index (cells shaded in medium blue in Table 2.2).

Step 3: Testing dimensionality with principal component analysis and Cronbach’s alpha

The third step was to test how the indicators work together as an index, using standard statistical methods for estimating the quality of composite measures. A key purpose is to identify potentials for reduction of the number of indicators, to achieve the best and most parsimonious measure with as few indicators as possible. We used principal component analysis (PCA) to analyse whether our set of potential indicators contains one or several underlying dimensions (components), and we also applied a Cronbach’s alpha test to evaluate the scale reliability (a way to gauge how closely related a set of items are as a group, or the internal consistency of a composite measure). First, we did the test with all potential indicators (see Table 2.3).

Table 2.2 Correlations between women news subjects or sources (in all news stories) and other indicators (Pearson's r)

	Women news subjects or sources (%)
Topics: Women news subjects or sources in different topics (%)	
business & economy	.688*** (400)
politics & government	.576*** (403)
crime & violence	.527*** (398)
social & legal	.518*** (399)
science & health	.451*** (387)
celebrity, art, & sport	.357*** (376)
Role: Women in different roles in the news (%)	
spokespersons	.715*** (279)
experts	.458*** (275)
personal experience	.398*** (255)
popular opinion	.339*** (208)
Reporters: Women reporters, total and in different topics (%)	
women reporters (all stories)	.207*** (408)
politics & government	.166** (398)
science & health	.132* (368)
business & economy	.115* (394)
social & legal	.077 (387)
crime & violence	.096# (386)

Comments: n = number of country-year observations (in parentheses; outliers with limited data are excluded – six country-year observations). # $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. The cells shaded in medium blue represent the indicators we included in the final GEM-I. All variables are from the GMMP study (1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, & 2015), and the variables range between 0 (no women) and 100 (all women). Women reporters in celebrity, art, and sport only had 32 country-year observations in the dataset and is not presented. The role indicators are only available in 2005, 2010, and 2015, which entails fewer observations (n -values) for these correlations overall.

Source: GMMP

Table 2.3 *Women in different roles and topics in the news (per cent), PCA analysis of eleven potential indicators*

	Component		
	1	2	3
News subjects or sources (all news & topics)	.816	.468	.170
Spokespersons	.801	.195	.328
Subjects or sources in business & economy news	.711	.008	.126
Subjects or sources in politics & government news	.652	.165	-.338
Subjects or sources in social & legal news	.540	.106	.196
Experts	.430	.159	.328
Subjects or sources in science & health news	.429	.285	.256
Subjects or sources in crime & violence news	.244	.757	.098
Personal experience role	.113	.761	.022
Subjects or sources in celebrity, art, & sport news	-.001	.187	.781
Reporters (all news & topics)	.390	-.259	.470
Per cent variance (extraction sums of squared loadings)	34.88	9.98	9.47
Per cent variance (rotation sums of squared loadings)	28.30	15.01	11.01

Comments: The medium blue shaded cells show the indicators finally selected for the GEM-I. The figures in bold show which of the three components the indicator associates most strongly with. Extraction method: PCA. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalisation. $n = 228$ country-year observations (outliers with limited data are excluded – six country-year observations). Cronbach's alpha = .726 (.789 with standardised items). All variables are from the GMMP study (2005, 2010, & 2015), and the variables range between 0 (no women) and 100 (all women).

Source: GMMP

Ideally, the PCA should only identify one dimension (component) among the included indicators to be used in a composite measure. The first PCA (Table 2.3), however, showed that there is indeed potential for reduction. First and foremost, the PCA identified three components in the data, not one. When we examine the strength of the association between each indicator and the three components, we find, as expected, the first component to be headed by our core indicator: women as news subjects or sources in all news stories. The spokesperson and expert role and most of the news topics (business and economy; politics and government; social and legal; and science and health) also display strongest associations with the first component. Women as news sources in crime and violence news and in the role of expressing personal experi-

ences form a second component. The third component is mainly composed by women as news sources in celebrity, art, and sport, and women reporters. The reporter indicator, however, is also associated with the first component (.390). A Cronbach's alpha test showed that the internal consistency of the measure is fairly good (.726), but also that a removal of women as subjects or sources in celebrity, art, and sport would improve the scale (index) significantly.

The results from the first PCA, in combination with the previous correlational analysis, support the overall theoretical and conceptual premises for the study. Together, they lead us to conclude that 1) women in crime and violence news and in the personal experience role measures something other than gender equality (possibly tabloidisation) and should not be included in the index, along with women in celebrity, art, and sports news; 2) the spokesperson and expert roles are the key role indicators to include; 3) business and economy, and politics and government, are more important news topics to include than social and legal, or science and health; and 4) the general presence of women reporters in the news is the best of all reporter variables to include in the index.

Altogether, we conclude that six indicators should be sufficient to capture the core dimension of gender equality in news content. Indeed, a second PCA with these six indicators resulted in a one-component, unidimensional solution (see Table 2.4). Here, women reporters have the weakest association (.355), as expected. The Cronbach's alpha is .681 (if the women reporters variable is removed from the index, Cronbach's alpha increases to .733), which is a bit low if the primary aim of a scale is internal consistency – but as discussed earlier, this is not the most important goal.

Table 2.4 *Women in different roles and topics in the news (per cent), PCA analysis with selected six indicators*

	Component 1
People in the news (all subjects or sources)	.905
Spokespersons	.782
Subjects or sources in economy & business news	.741
Subjects or sources in politics & government news	.726
Experts	.515
Reporters (all news)	.355
Per cent variance (extraction sums of squared loadings)	46.07
Per cent variance (rotation sums of squared loadings)	46.07

Comments: Extraction method: PCA. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalisation. $n = 268$ country-year observations. Cronbach's alpha = .681 (.742 with standardised items). All variables are from the GMMP study (2005, 2010, & 2015), and the variables range between 0 (no women) and 100 (all women). Outliers with limited data are excluded (six country-year observations).

Source: GMMP

Step 4: Robustness tests

The final step was to conduct several robustness tests and assessments of alternative versions of the index, to ensure that the six-indicator index is consistent and reliable (see Table 2.5).

The robustness tests included comparing the results of the original GEM-I with the following results: 1) when only countries with large samples (more than 50 news stories analysed) are included; 2) when a cross-sectional dataset (CS-GEM) that only contains the latest available observation for each country is used instead of the time-series dataset (TS-GEM); and 3) when we include the six outliers (countries excluded from the analysis due to having odd measures based on limited samples). In all tests, we got very similar results and very small differences with the original GEM-I. If anything, including the outliers accentuates the observed pattern rather than weakening the results.

Since the relationship between all the presence, topic, and role indicators is positive overall – meaning that a country that has many women in the news tends to have more women across the board – it is also worthwhile to test alternative versions of the index. Besides the core indicator (women as news subjects or sources), the spokespersons indicator is important since it also displays strong correlations with women news subjects in business and economy, and women news subjects in politics and government. Spokespersons thus seems to tap into the same dimension as the latter, which is logical since spokespersons for businesses, corporations, governments, and political parties are the main sources the news media turn to for interviews.

The statistical outcomes and the prominence of the spokespersons indicator encouraged us to test a version of the index with only four indicators, and one version with three (see Table 2.5). Of the alternatives tested, only the four-indicator version (GEM-I-4) was deemed sufficiently similar to the original GEM-I (Pearson's $r = .937$), although it yields somewhat higher scores. It follows the same process for calculation but uses a different formula (see Appendix 2.2 for further details on calculations).

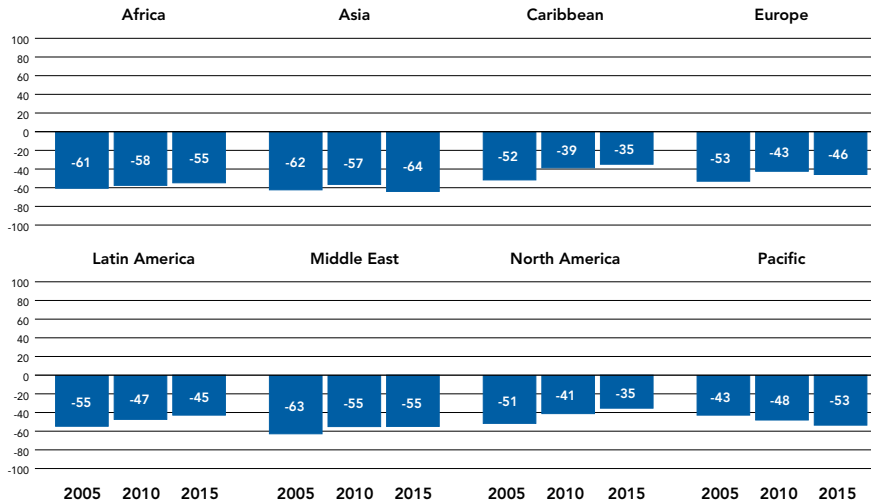
The base GEM-I with six indicators is broadly applicable to all general news in newspapers, radio, and television – off- or online. The use of the GEM-I-4 could be relevant in situations where one wants to monitor other types of current affairs or specialised news, such as culture, entertainment, or sports, where politics and economy are not always part of the content. The GEM-I-4 thus has a broader applicability than the base index, but it does not account for topics, and it produces higher scores than the base GEM-I (see Table 2.5 and Figure 2.7).

Table 2.5 Three robustness tests (mean score and Pearson's *r*)

	2005	2010	2015	TOT	Correlation with GEM-I-6
Robustness test 1: Alternative versions of the index (time series data)					
GEM-I-6	-61.1 (68)	-53.6 (99)	-53.2 (101)	-55.3 (268)	1.0 (268)
GEM-I-3	-66.2 (72)	-57.4 (100)	-57.7 (103)	-59.9 (275)	.855*** (268)
GEM-I-4	-56.6 (72)	-49.2 (99)	-48.8 (103)	-51.0 (274)	.937*** (268)
Robustness test 2: Countries with 50+ news stories analysed (time series data)					
GEM-I-6	-60.5 (61)	-53.8 (88)	-53.0 (93)	-55.2 (242)	1.0 (242)
GEM-I-3	-65.8 (64)	-57.7 (89)	-57.7 (93)	-59.8 (246)	.878*** (242)
GEM-I-4	-56.7 (64)	-49.8 (88)	-48.9 (93)	-51.2 (245)	.943*** (242)
Robustness test 3: Cross-sectional data (2015 target year)					
GEM-I-6				-54.0 (123)	1.0 (123)
GEM-I-3				-59.1 (128)	.854*** (123)
GEM-I-4				-49.7 (128)	.901*** (123)

Comments: *n* = country-year observations (in parentheses; outliers with limited data are excluded – six country-year observations). GEM-I-6 is the original GEM-I with six indicators. GEM-I-3 includes three indicators (news subjects or sources; spokespersons; experts). GEM-I-4 includes four indicators (news subjects or sources; reporters; spokespersons; experts). The TS-GEM dataset (Färdigh et al., 2020) was used for all statistics, except for robustness test 3, which used the cross-sectional CS-GEM dataset. The GEM-I is based on the mean of six gender-sensitive news indicators for each country and year and varies between -100 (all men for all six indicators) and +100 (all women for all six indicators). A score of zero (0) equals full gender parity across the indicators. All variables are from the GMMP study (2005, 2010, & 2015). Correlations = Pearson's *r*. The cross-sectional data (CS-GEM) uses the latest available measure for each country, with 2015 as the target year. This means that most data are from 2015. If 2015 is unavailable, the next available year is included (2010 for GMMP).

Source: GMMP

Figure 2.7 GEM-I-4 by region, 2005–2015 (mean score)

Comments: n = number of country-year observations for each year (64 from 2005; 88 from 2010; 93 from 2015; outliers with limited data are excluded – six country-year observations). The GEM-I-4 is based on the mean of four gender-sensitive news indicators (news subjects or sources; reporters; spokespersons; experts) for each country and year and varies between -100 (all men for all four indicators) and +100 (all women for all four indicators). A score of zero (0) equals full gender parity across the indicators. The global mean for all countries and years is -51.0. All variables are from the GMMP study (2005, 2010, & 2015).

Source: GMMP

A final test was to examine the relationship of the different potential indicators with gender equality in society (see Table 2.6). Whether gender equality in the news is de facto related to the level of gender equality in society is an empirical question and explored in great detail in Chapter 4. Still, if we, in the process of selecting the indicators for the GEM-I, find that one potential candidate is unrelated or even negatively associated with gender equality in society, it will give us a sign of a potentially problematic choice. As emphasised earlier, a parade of women in the news is not always a sign of equality. The comparison corroborates the choice of the six indicators for the GEM-I, as the excluded indicators in the broader set are unrelated or only weakly correlated with the Global Gender Gap Index (GGI). GGI is published by World Economic Forum (WEF) and is a widely used measure of gender parity across countries in the world.

Table 2.6 *Correlations between the gender-sensitive news indicators and the Global Gender Gap Index (Pearson's r)*

	GGI
Presence: Women (%)	
news subjects or sources	.388*** (243)
reporters	.203** (243)
Topics: Women news subjects or sources in different topics (%)	
politics & government	.404*** (240)
business & economy	.311*** (239)
science & health	.235*** (235)
social & legal	.184** (240)
crime & violence	.158* (236)
celebrity, art, & sport	-.005 (227)
Role: Women news subjects or sources in different roles (%)	
spokespersons	.417*** (241)
experts	.207** (238)
personal experience	.255*** (225)
popular opinion	.041 (184)
Reporting: Women reporters in different topics (%)	
crime & violence	.175** (231)
politics & government	.147* (239)
business & economy	.137* (238)
social & legal	.076 (236)

Comments: n = number of country-year observations (in parentheses; outliers with limited data are excluded – six country-year observations). * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Pearson's r . The medium blue shaded cells represent the indicators included in the GEM-I. All variables are from the GMMP study (2005, 2010, & 2015), and the variables range between 0 (no women) and 100 (all women). The GGI variable ranges between 0 (no equality) and 1 (full equality between women and men). Since the GGI was first published in 2006, the measures for GEM-I/GMMP 2005 are matched to GGI for 2006 when computing the correlations.

Source: GMMP

Appendix 2.2 A practical guide to measuring the GEM-I

The GEM-I is a composite index of six indicators measuring how women and men appear in the news regarding presence, topics, and roles. This section presents a practical guide on how to code and calculate the GEM-I, based on the coding scheme (available from the GMMP website) compiled by the GMMP (see summary below).

Women			Men	
Count	%	Gender-sensitive indicator	%	Count
		Presence		
		1. People in the news: News subjects or sources		
		2. Reporters		
		Topics		
		3. News subjects or sources in business & economy		
		4. News subjects or sources in politics & government		
		Roles		
		5. Spokespersons		
		6. Experts		
	Sum %		Sum %	
	Mean %	GEM-I (mean % women – mean % men)	Mean %	

- Step 1 (count): Count the number of women and men appearing in all the new stories as 1) news subjects or sources, 2) reporters, 3) news subjects or sources in news about politics and government, 4) news subjects or sources in news about business and economy, 5) spokespersons, and 6) experts.

- Step 2 (%): Calculate the percentage of women and men for each indicator.
- Step 3 (sum %): Calculate the sum of the percentages for women and men, respectively, for all six indicators.
- Step 4 (mean %): Calculate the mean percentages for women and men, respectively, by dividing the sum by 6.
- Step 5 (GEM-I): Calculate the GEM-I score by subtracting the men's mean from the women's mean: (mean % women – mean % men). The final GEM-I can range between -100 (all men) and +100 (all women). Zero (0) equals full gender parity across the indicators.

Remember, the GEM-I is broadly applicable to all general news in newspapers, radio, and television – off- or online. It is also possible to calculate the GEM-I by using only four of the indicators (people in the news, reporters, experts, and spokespersons). Follow the same process but use the following formula:

$$((\% \text{ women news subjects or sources} + \% \text{ women reporters} + \% \text{ women experts} + \% \text{ women spokespersons}) / 4) - ((\% \text{ men news subjects or sources} + \% \text{ men reporters} + \% \text{ men experts} + \% \text{ men spokespersons}) / 4).$$

The GEM-I-4 is particularly relevant if you want to apply the index to other types of current affairs or specialised news – such as culture, entertainment, or sports – where politics and economy are not always part of the content. The GEM-I-4 thus has a broader applicability than the base index GEM-I, but it yields somewhat higher scores. If you want to calculate an index derived from the gender ratio (GEM-GGI) instead of the gender balance (GEM-I) in the news use the following formula: (mean % women / mean % men). The GEM-GGI ranges between 0 (no gender parity) and 1 (full gender parity) and is measured on the same scale as the well-known Global Gender Gap Index and Gender Inequality Index (however, the GII is reversed so that 0 = no inequality and 1 = inequality).

Summary of coding principles and definitions from the 2015 GMMP coding guide

First, you need to decide on the sample: which types of news media and outlets to include and which period to study. The GMMP monitors a range of news media in each country published on a single day, but you could decide to monitor a longer period or study only one news outlet.

1. What to code

- Newspapers: Code 12–14 stories on the main news pages of each newspaper. Begin with the main news page (usually page 1); code all the news

stories on this page. Then, go to the next major news page; code regular news stories only. If a story begins on one page and continues elsewhere, code the entire story. Some news items consist of a photograph with a headline, caption, or short text; code these just like longer stories.

Do not code: editorials, commentaries, or letters to the editor; story listings (a listing on the front page of some newspapers that shows the stories that will appear on the inside pages); or cartoons and jokes.

- Radio and television: Code all the stories in the newscasts that you selected, including: all types of news (politics, local stories, international stories, reports on education, medicine, business, entertainment, etc.); sports reports (code *only* if they are part of the newscast; do *not* code a programme if it is entirely about sports); and weather forecasts and reports (code *only* if they are part of the newscast).

Do not code: introductions or “headlines” (some programmes begin with brief clips from stories that will appear later in the newscast); news features that follow the newscast; scrolling news text on television; or advertising. Do not code weather reports or programmes that are completely separate from the newscast.

- Online news: Code 12–14 stories or online news content items with links on the home page. The home page usually has “teasers”, that is, descriptions or short excerpts of news stories with hyperlinked text. The home page is the “first layer” of the website. The hyperlinks, when clicked, open up a second page with the entire story – this is the “second layer” of the website. Sometimes, next to the story in the second layer there are accompanying features such as audio or video clips. Clicking on the features leads you to the “third layer” of the website. Do not code beyond the third layer of the website.

Do not code: editorials, commentaries, or readers’ feedback; story listings; cartoons and jokes; weather reports (though you *should* code stories *about* the weather); advertising; or YouTube videos.

2. Coding presence

The overall presence of women and men in the news is measured by two indicators: people in the news and reporters.

- People in the news (news subjects or sources): Code *any* person whom the story is about, even if they are not interviewed or quoted, as well as each person in the story who is interviewed. For newspapers, include each person in the story who is quoted, either directly or indirectly. (A person is

quoted directly if their own words are printed in the story, and a person is quoted indirectly if their words are paraphrased or summarised.) For radio and television, code each person in the story who speaks and any person whom the story is about, even if they do not speak. Persons may be inside or outside the studio. Code only *individual* people.

Do not code: groups (e.g., a group of nurses or a group of soldiers); organisations, companies, or collectives (e.g., political parties); characters in novels or movies (unless the story is *about* them); deceased historical figures (unless the story is *about* them); people who are simply mentioned or listed in the story (unless the story is *about* them); or interpreters in radio or television (code the person being interviewed as if they spoke without an interpreter).

- Reporters: For each newspaper story, code each journalist or reporter who wrote the story and whose name appears. Do not code unnamed journalists (e.g., “staff reporter” or “our correspondent”) or news agencies. For radio and television, code each reporter. Include reporters who do not appear on screen, but whose voice is heard (e.g., as voice-over). Do not code news anchors or presenters.

3. Coding topics

How women’s and men’s voices are represented in the news about politics and government, and economy and business, respectively, is measured by looking specifically at the people in the news in these two topics.

- News subjects or sources in politics and government: Code all people in the news (see above) in stories about politics and government, including: peace, negotiations, treaties, and so forth (local, regional, national); other domestic politics and government (local, regional, national), elections, speeches, and the political process; women politicians and women electoral candidates; global partnerships (international trade and finance systems, e.g., WTO, IMF, World Bank, debt); foreign and international politics, relations with other countries, negotiations, treaties, UN peacekeeping, national defence, military spending, military training, military parades, and internal security; and other stories on politics and government.
- News subjects or sources in economy and business: Code all people in the news (see above) in stories about economy and business, including: economic policies, strategies, modules, indicators, stock markets, and taxes; economic crisis, state bailouts of companies, and company takeovers and mergers, poverty, housing, social welfare, and aid to those in need; women’s participation in economic processes (informal work, paid employment, unemployment, unpaid labour); employment; informal work

and street vending; other labour issues, strikes, trade unions, negotiations, and other employment and unemployment; rural economy, agriculture, farming practices, agricultural policy, and land rights; consumer issues, consumer protection, regulation, prices, and consumer fraud; transport, traffic, and roads; and other stories on the economy.

4. Coding roles

Role refers to which capacity or function women and men are included in the news stories, and it is measured by two indicators: spokespersons and experts.

- Spokespersons: This indicator focuses on the function or capacity in which a person is included in the story. Code all individuals in the story that function as spokesperson. A spokesperson represents, or speaks on behalf of, another person, a group, or an organisation. Code all spokespersons, even if there are several in the same story.
- Experts: This indicator focuses on the function or capacity in which a person is included in the story. Code all individuals in the story that function as commentator or expert. The person functions as expert or commentator if he or she provides additional information, opinion, or comment based on specialist knowledge or expertise. Code all experts, even if there are several in the same story.

Appendix 2.3 Additional table

Table 2.7 Gender equality in the news (GEM-I), predicted by time and region

	Model 1 time	Model 2 time & region	Model 3 time & country
Time (2005 = 0)	0.734*** (0.176)	0.697*** (0.167)	0.772*** (0.182)
Region (reference category = Africa)			
Asia		-0.783 (2.673)	
Middle East		2.010 (3.919)	
Pacific		9.584** (3.006)	
Latin America		11.794*** (2.491)	
Europe		11.968*** (2.775)	
Caribbean		13.650*** (3.250)	
North America		19.301*** (4.838)	
Country-dummies	no	no	yes
Constant	-59.464*** (1.200)	-66.560*** (1.950)	-65.504*** (10.123)
n	268	268	268
R²	.042***	.238***	.497***

Comments: $n = 268$ country-year observations (outliers with limited data are excluded – six country-year observations). $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$. OLS regression, unstandardised b -coefficients, standard errors in parentheses. Models 1 and 2 use clustered robust standard errors (cluster = country, 133 clusters). Model 3 uses country-dummies. The variables included in the GEM-I are from the GMMP study (2005, 2010, & 2015), and the variables range between -100 (all men) and +100 (all women). 0 = full gender parity. Time = year (2005 = 0; 2010 = 5; 2015 = 10). Based on the average progress 2005–2015, it will take more than 70 years to reach full gender equality; to move from -53 (global mean score, 2015) to 0 on the GEM-I will take 72.2 years if the rate of change is 0.734 per year.

Source: GMMP

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Media gender-equality regimes

Exploring media organisations' policy adoption across nations

Claudia Padovani & Rossella Bozzon



3.1 Media and gender-equality regimes

This chapter contributes to our understanding of gender and media concerns by focusing on an under-researched aspect: the policy dimension. It addresses the nexus between the socioeconomic and cultural environments within which the media operate across the world, and the policies that have been adopted by media organisations to promote gender equality. In so doing, the chapter addresses the following questions: do contextual variables favour or hinder media organisations' commitment to gender equality through the adoption of specific measures such as gender-sensitive policies? And, is it possible to identify patterns of policy adoption that may indicate different understandings of gender equality and gender mainstreaming, and signal the existence of different gender-equality regimes in the media sector worldwide?

Throughout the chapter, “gender-sensitive” and “gender-aware” are used to indicate, in general terms, any formal policy provision or mechanisms adopted by media organisations that reflect an understanding of gender inequality issues to be addressed. Different labels – gender-blind, gender-responsive, and gender-transformative – are used in the chapter to indicate different degrees of organisational awareness and commitment that emerge from the analysis.

We first acknowledge existing international frameworks that have recognised gender equality and gender mainstreaming as globally agreed upon norms, including for the media and communication sector, and we reflect on the extent to which those frameworks have influenced both policy and research interventions over the last 25 years. Making an effort for conceptual clarification, the nexus between equality norms and policy developments in the gender and media environment is discussed, and a case is made for more research in this

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area, suggesting elements for a research agenda based on media gender-equality regimes as an analytical proposal (§3.2).

Building on previous findings from international studies that have investigated gender-equality policies adopted by media organisations (§3.3), we then work through data from the Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media (Byerly, 2011) as a starting point for empirical investigation. The analysis focuses on 59 countries – representative of all world regions – and explores, through a cluster analysis, patterns of gender-related policy adoption by media organisations, as well as possible correlations between general socioeconomic, political, and cultural conditions and policy developments (§3.4).

The concluding remarks critically discuss the main findings concerning the interplay of contextual factors and the adoption of different types of gender-sensitive policy by media organisations. We reflect on how different patterns of policy adoption may signal different understandings of gender equality and resulting strategies to address them, and we suggest directions for future investigations to further explore the GEM dataset and further operationalise the media gender-equality regimes approach (§3.5).

This chapter is innovative in different ways: it focuses on an under-researched aspect of gender (in)equalities in the media – gender-sensitive policies – and it does so by establishing an unprecedented dialogue between gender-political analyses and gender and media scholarship. Furthermore, the empirical analysis conducted, drawing on the GEM dataset, offers a first-ever opportunity to test media gender-equality regimes as an analytical proposal. Finally, an attempt is made to present a forward-looking policy-focused research agenda, in view of making scholarly knowledge in this area more meaningful to policy actors and to the media themselves.

3.2 Mainstreaming gender in media policy: Towards a research agenda

A crucial problem facing worldwide attempts to foster gender equality in and through the media has been, over the past 25 years, the lack of policies that could provide adequate frameworks for the media to operate in society, while contributing to transforming unequal gender relations, at the national level as well as at the level of media organisations.

Given the variety of measures and mechanisms through which gender equality as a global norm is translated in national contexts, clarification of terms is required. On the one side are “legal provisions”, such as laws, that compel or prohibit behaviours; on the other side are “policies”, generally understood as “sets of ideas or plans of what to do in particular situations that has been agreed to officially by a group of people, a business organization,

a government, or a political party”.¹ Policies therefore operate as guides toward actions that are most likely to achieve a desired outcome² and can be adopted by governmental as well as non-governmental actors, including the media.

Media organisations often formulate and adopt self-regulatory measures. This results from the belief that, given the role of media institutions in democratic contexts, governments should secure a balance between the media freedom of expression, publication, private ownership, and enterprise, and the positive freedom of citizens to access information. Governments have, in fact, historically avoided regulating aspects of the sector’s functioning, particularly in relation to media content.³

Since the mid 1970s, with the International Decade for Women and the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979, gender equality has been recognised as a prerequisite to achieving human and sustainable development (Kardam, 2004). State parties to the Convention have committed to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination so that women could enjoy the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms and adequate living conditions in all domains, including communications (United Nations, 1979, article 1, article 14/h).

The UN Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) held in Beijing almost 20 years after the adoption of CEDAW, and the resulting Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (United Nations, 1995), are globally recognised as cornerstones in the normative developments that pertain to gender inequalities in the media (Gallagher, 2011; Padovani & Pavan, 2017). Participants in the Beijing Conference also indicated gender mainstreaming as a fundamental principle towards the implementation of women’s rights. Conceived as the process of integrating a gender perspective in all activities carried by an organisation – including its policies, programmes, training, recruitment, and evaluations – gender mainstreaming has since been considered a policy frame (Pollack & Hafner-Burton, 2000) and promoted as a means to achieve gender equality across policy areas (Krook & True, 2012).

Consistently, the Beijing Platform for Action (United Nations, 1995) identified the adoption of gender-aware media policies as a step to be taken in order to meet the goals of Section J – “Women and Media Diagnosis”: promoting equal access to the media and decision-making (J1) – and eliminating gender stereotypes in media content (J2). Section J of the Platform clearly stated that governments and other actors are called upon to promote “an active policy of mainstreaming of a gender perspective in (media) policies and programs” (para. 237); furthermore, it called for media organisations to “elaborate and strengthen self-regulatory mechanisms and codes of conduct” to comply with the objectives of the Section (para. 236 & para. 244.a/b).⁴ These calls have been restated over again in regional and international agreements,⁵ up until

the 2018 session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) – a signal of the limited extent to which gender mainstreaming in the media has become a priority for policy actors and media organisations alike.⁶

Similarly, policy concerns have not been central to most scholarly work dealing with gender inequalities in the media sector. While in-depth analyses have exposed the shortcomings of gender mainstreaming in various arenas and domains,⁷ no comprehensive international research has been conducted to date to evaluate the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in national media policies.⁸ In the European Union, recent studies have highlighted the lack of attention to gender (in)equalities in national policy-making related to audio-visual industries, and stressed the sometimes contrasting positions adopted by the European Commission, the Council, and the European Parliament on the matter (Padovani, 2016; Ross & Padovani, 2017; Sarikakis & Nguyen, 2009). In the Latin American region, non-homogeneous histories marked communication systems and policies in relation to gender equality (Vega Montiel, 2014a), and it has been observed that placing the Beijing Platform for Action in the public debate has been a strategy adopted by feminists advocates, and not by policy-makers (Chaher, 2014, 2016, 2018) – a situation that resembles that of the Southern African region where regulatory mechanisms have been put in place, but mostly as the result of advocacy groups' capacity to bridge media professional associations, civic organisations, and policy actors (Byerly, 2011; Gender Links, 2017).

Overall, scholarly contributions concerning gender-aware policies for the media sector have been sparse and mainly descriptive,⁹ looking at different levels and types of regulatory arrangements, but failing to elaborate comprehensive analytical and methodological frameworks. Furthermore, those studies missed the opportunity to engage in a potentially productive dialogue with extensive scholarship on gender-political analysis and related theoretical frameworks.¹⁰ In the present chapter, by moving from a purely descriptive approach, to policy adoption, to testing how different socioeconomic and cultural conditions correlate to measures for gender equality in and through the media, we hope to contribute to strengthening this emerging strand of academic research.

Persistence of inequality patterns in the media expose our partial understanding of the causes, consequences, and complexities that characterise gendered relations in the sector, and invites theoretically sound and innovative research on underexplored aspects. In this context, we argue that an in-depth exploration of how gender is mainstreamed in media policies is necessary to fully understand, address, and overcome inequalities, for a number of reasons:

- The existence of a policy suggests acknowledgement of gender inequalities and political will to address them; on the contrary, the low level of policy adoption often reflects either a gender-neutral approach – where the me-

dia intend to operate on the basis of merit and do not feel it necessary to do anything which advantages women – or, more often, a gender-blind approach – where media outlets argue they do not have a problem with discrimination and fail to understand the barriers facing women in the sector (EIGE, 2013). Alternatively, in some cases, absence of self-regulatory measures adopted by media companies may derive from the fact that gender-equality support mechanisms are already mandated by national laws (Byerly, 2011, 2013).

- The formulation and adoption of regulatory measures – at organisational, national, or supranational level – can be seen as a reflection of processes through which awareness of inequalities grows and explicit commitment to overcome them is made; but they can also anticipate and foster change. It has been highlighted that formally adopted policies and support mechanisms are core to define principles and goals for media operations, but they also provide frameworks to assess progress and change over time (Gallagher, 2011, 2014, 2017). Furthermore, they can contribute to foster the cultural transformation needed to achieve a redistribution of material as well as symbolic resources, including those that contribute to structuring gender inequalities (Chaher, 2014).
- In a situation where it is clear that progress is not a linear process and setbacks are always a possibility (Macharia, 2015; Ross & Padovani, 2017), by establishing sanctioning elements, policy measures can contribute to guarantee sustainability of positive achievements and more equal gender relations over time (Gallagher, 2011, 2017).¹¹ International normative frameworks that articulate gender equality for both traditional and digital media are thus key to mainstreaming gender in communication governing arrangements (Padovani, 2014).

For all these reasons, though it is clear that formal adoption of gender-sensitive provisions is not enough to make change happen, we contend that policies are a necessary condition to foster change and to make it sustainable over time. More research – focused, transnational, and comparative – is therefore needed to gain a comprehensive understanding of how policies relate to gender equality in practice, in different geocultural and socioeconomic contexts. In the following paragraphs, two relevant aspects are discussed towards developing a research agenda: first, we articulate the different components of an *in fieri* research domain focused on mainstreaming gender across the media and clarify how policies for gender equality should be understood; then, we advance an analytical proposal on how to conceive policy developments in relation to the multiple dimensions of media gender inequality, in view of investigating media gender-(in)equality regimes.

Charting and conceptualising gender-aware media policies

In the gender and media discourse, “policy” is often referred to in general terms, without any attempt to specify the plurality of regulatory mechanisms involved. The domain under investigation is broad and complex, multi-level and multi-actor in nature (Padovani & Pavan, 2016; Padovani, 2018). Clarification and boundary definition is therefore needed, as well as the identification of entry points for the analysis that would help make sense of the overall picture while shedding light on specific aspects. A broad understanding of policy – conceived as a norm-based system of principles and goals that guide decisions to achieve outcomes – underpins the following paragraph in the attempt to chart a field that involves different actors, at different levels.

In order to map out the variety of gender-aware regulatory arrangements for the media, we can start from frameworks adopted at the supranational level, such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the documents produced by the World Summit on the Information Society,¹² but also regional frameworks elaborated by the European Union,¹³ the Southern African Development Community¹⁴ (SADC), or the Organization of the American States.¹⁵ According to a constructivist perspective of international relations that focuses on actor preferences, principled beliefs, and worldviews (Onuf, 1989; Wendt, 1992), actors such as states, international organisations, and other stakeholders interact to frame issues, elaborate normative frameworks, and consolidate them into formal provisions and norms, understood as “shared standards of behaviour for actors with a given identity” (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998).¹⁶ Formal documents that result from actors’ discursive interactions enjoy the validity deriving from the “details written down on paper in the form of treaties, conventions and agreements” (Wiener, 2007: 4). In this light, the above-mentioned international documents are of interest to gender-political analysis of the media in as much as they constitute normative frameworks for all interested actors while establishing gender equality and gender mainstreaming as internationally agreed upon norms (Krook & True, 2012), also for the media sector.

But we are also reminded that norms are always confronted with the challenge of actual implementation (Wiener, 2007; Krook & True, 2012) – this is about norms’ social recognition and their translation, negotiation, and contestation in different contexts and concrete situations. In fact, “norms that spread across the international system tend to be vague, enabling their content to be filled in many ways and thereby to be appropriated for a variety of different purposes” (Krook & True, 2012: 104). As such, norms are a work in progress. They diffuse because they encompass different meanings, and those meanings are negotiated at the national level where and when such norms are translated into legal frameworks and policies, as well as social practices (Finnemore, 1996; Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998).

Moving from the supranational to the national context, a gender-political analysis for the media would therefore include a focus on how gender is mainstreamed in national media laws and policies¹⁷ as measures through which different actors contribute to enact meanings and promote internationally agreed upon norms implementation in national contexts (Krook & True, 2012). At the same time, such analysis may consider how far national strategies for gender equality go in acknowledging the centrality of the media in achieving their goals,¹⁸ while attention should also be paid to gender-relevant initiatives promoted by independent media regulatory authorities.¹⁹ Furthermore, the role of civic and professional associations should be acknowledged, as these non-state actors contribute to translating global gender-equality norms into context-relevant social practices, through advocacy, the elaboration of policy-oriented position papers, and public information activities, often conducive to calls for the adoption of standards by the media.

Finally, policies internally adopted by media organisations – such as gender-equality plans, policies for maternal and paternal leave, policies to prevent and address sexual harassment, but also codes of conduct and support mechanisms²⁰ – can also be seen as ways in which gender-equality norms are adapted for, and adopted by, the media sector.

Moving beyond a descriptive approach, we should acknowledge that crucial to any effort to set boundaries for a policy domain is the recognition that how we define “policy” always affects the nature and outcome of our analysis: it conditions our research questions, the data we collect, and how we interpret them (Guba, 1984).

Consistent with the constructivist approach adopted in this chapter, we develop our investigation building on the feminist conceptualisation of policy proposed by Carol Bacchi since the late 1990s. Bacchi (1999, 2009, 2012) is concerned with how problems are articulated, not addressed, by policy-makers, since problematisation reflects implicit assumptions about equality issues, as well as knowledge practices and power relations amongst actors. In her “what’s the problem represented to be” (WPR) approach, the author suggests:

Prescriptive texts provide entry-points for identifying problem representation [because] what we say we want to do about something indicates what we think needs to change and hence *how we constitute “the problem”* [emphasis added]. (Bacchi, 2012: 4)

Furthermore, the possibility to compare problematisation across time, cultures, and geographical spaces, paying attention to how issues are understood and framed in policies, “highlight[s] the specific combination of factors and relations that allow something to become a ‘problem’ in one situation or another” (Bacchi, 2012: 6). Finally, the WPR approach considers that “it is possible to

detect patterns in problematization, revealing modes or styles of governing that shape lives” (Bacchi, 2012: 5). Bacchi’s approach, in fact, is not just about how issues are conceptualised, but also about how rules take place through one or another of those conceptualisations in different locales.

According to this reading, the frames through which gender equality is embedded in media policies are crucial to understanding how global norms are interpreted and how gender-inequality issues are problematised in different contexts. In this light, international provisions, national media policies, gender-equality strategies, and media organisations’ self-regulatory measures can all be analysed exploring how different policy actors – international organisations, governments, parliaments, regulatory authorities, and media companies – understand gender inequalities in and through the media.

For instance, organisational policies for paternal leave may signal a problematisation of inequality in relation to family commitments, and therefore call for work-life-balance response measures, while policies to prevent sexual harassment may reflect an understanding of gender-based abuse as a situation that prevents equal conditions for female workers to perform their tasks in a secure environment.

In the end, the identification of “patterns of problematisation” in gender-sensitive media policies may be conducive to a better understanding of gender-aware governing styles across the media sector, and of the level of commitment to overcoming inequalities. It is therefore important to investigate if one or more inequality issues are addressed through the adoption of what type of policies and support mechanisms.

All this may be investigated through discursive approaches, frame and content analyses of policy provisions, or through the analysis of policy processes.²¹ But it can also be explored – as we do in the following paragraphs – by taking advantage of the GEM dataset, focusing on the different types of gender-sensitive policies that media organisations adopt in different countries.

A regime approach to gender (in)equality in the media

As stated above, policy actors play an active role in giving meaning to problems, while translating internationally agreed upon norms into specific measures and procedures that are then institutionalised in a given locale. This invites the adoption of adequate analytical frameworks to explore media gender policies: frameworks that stress the nexus between norms and meanings, and between actors’ knowledge and interests, as they are played out in regulatory arrangements. The frameworks also ought to embody a comprehensive understanding of media gender inequalities that persist, across the world’s regions, in areas of representation and recognition, access and inclusion, working conditions, and decision-making.

In consideration of the complex interplay of global norms, actors' understanding, and multiple gender-inequality issues, we propose investigating gender-aware media policies by adopting a media gender-equality regimes approach.

Feminist scholarship has adopted a regime approach to expose patterns of gendered power relations in societies and institutions (Connell, 1987; Connell, 2009), and to render the complexities of interlocking practices that result in continuing multiple inequalities (Acker, 1989; Walby, 2005, 2009). Taking a slightly different perspective, gendered analyses in international relations have provided a definition of gender-equality regimes that resonate with the approach of this chapter, stressing the role of both norms and decision-making. According to this perspective, gender-equality regimes are the "sum of principles, norms and decision-making mechanisms that need to be deconstructed and analysed to reveal how global norms get interpreted, reinterpreted, filled in and contested [...] in different locales and contexts" (Kardam, 2004: 86).²² Principles are beliefs of fact; norms are standards of behaviour; rules are prescriptions that translate general norms to make them meaningful in specific contexts; and decision-making procedures are the practices for implementing collective choices concerning the ways in which inequality issues are problematised.

Media gender-equality regimes can therefore be conceived as the sum of interrelated meanings, practices, and decision-making processes that characterise, produce, reproduce, or challenge gender and intersecting disparities – like age, ethnicity, and physical ability – in the media sector. At the same time, media gender-equality regimes are grounded in, and bound together by, principles and norms that often translate into standards and formal policies,²³ which constitute the principled frameworks that both constrain and shape gender relations in the media sector. Adopting a media gender-equality regimes approach therefore offers a threefold opportunity:

- On the one hand, as highlighted above and consistently by the contributions included in this anthology, gender inequalities in the media take many different forms, and yet they are rarely investigated and addressed in their intersection (Djerf-Pierre, 2011). A regime approach allows a focus not on single, specific forms of inequality, but on the interplay and intersection of multiple forms of privilege and disadvantage (Connell, 2009), in due consideration of the meanings assigned by interested actors.
- On the other hand, the centrality of rules and decision-making practices in gender-equality regimes makes explicit how principles – of gender inclusion, respect, dignity, equal opportunities, and access to means of expression, knowledge, and resources – may be (in fact, ought to be, but seldom are) embedded in the design, development, and implementation of governing arrangements for the media, thus realising gender mainstreaming.

- Finally, media gender-equality regimes can be operationalised and empirically explored, at any one level of the media policies identified above, from the international to the local. Indeed, the practices and processes that reproduce gender disparities in the media sector can be investigated at all levels where gender-sensitive policy provisions are formulated by national parliaments, regulatory agencies, as well as media organisations.

In the following sections, after summarising the main findings from previous studies, for the first time we operationalise this analytical proposal, focusing on policies adopted at the organisational level of media companies. We chose this unit of analysis for three reasons: first, since the Beijing Conference in 1995, there have been calls to media organisations to mainstream gender in their operations – it is therefore time to assess progress in this area; second, an unprecedented cross-national empirical analysis on this specific aspect is now possible through the data organised in the GEM dataset; third, we see such policies as an entry point towards future exploration of media gender-equality regimes through a multi-level perspective.

Considering the economic, political, and sociocultural factors that may foster or hinder the adoption of policies by media organisations in different countries (independent variables), the study focuses on a set of policy measures adopted by media organisations (dependent variables derived from Byerly, 2011): general gender-equality policies, policies against harassment, maternal and paternal leaves, and policies that secure women getting their jobs back after giving birth. These policies are conceived as translations of gender-equality norms in specific locales, as well as ways in which different gender-inequality issues are problematised within media organisations.

It is therefore interesting to explore if and how different socioeconomic and political conditions may influence norm translation and issue problematisation; and if they foster or constrain gender mainstreaming in the media. Furthermore, gender-equality policies can be combined (i.e., more than one policy is adopted by any media organisation), which makes it possible to trace patterns of policy adoption and address what Bacchi would call patterns of problematisation, by exploring different principled frameworks that support media gender-equality regimes across the world's regions.

3.3 Media organisations' gender-related policy adoption: Findings from previous studies

Building on the few international studies that have included a systematic focus on media organisations' internal policies and support mechanisms, it is possible to delineate where the world's media stand in respect to gender mainstream-

ing. Such international projects have looked at voluntary measures that define the basic principles and goals according to which gender-aware media should operate: these may be general policies on gender equality to establish principled frameworks for media operations, as well as specific measures to guarantee safe and healthy working environments for women, such as policies to prevent and impose sanctions for sexual harassment and abuse. In some cases, these organisational policies reflect legal obligations established at the national level, which is often the case when national obligations guarantee gender equality by supporting female professionals in their maternal roles (policies regarding maternity or policies that guarantee women can get the same job back after giving birth). Other times, policies may foster equality by focusing on family management and shared tasks (policies for paternity leave and providing access to childcare structures).

As it has been highlighted, without adequate mechanisms to support and monitor media organisations' performance against their own equality commitment, policies are unlikely to produce any real transformation (Ross & Padovani, 2017). Hence, once a policy is in place, it may (should) be accompanied by mechanisms that guarantee its effective implementation. These may be codes of conduct that provide specific guidelines to foster dignified representation of women and men in media content or to eliminate gender-based discrimination in the workplace. They may also be support mechanisms to monitor and promote the realisation of gender equality, such as the establishment of ad hoc committees, equality departments, or equality officers. Finally, training opportunities specifically targeted at women professionals and managers may also be activated. In the following paragraphs, we summarise the main findings from international investigations and highlight some open issues that are relevant for the subsequent analysis.

Focusing on the European context, the study *Advancing gender equality in decision-making in media organisations*, conducted by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) in 2013 (see also Ross & Padovani, 2017), explored the extent to which women occupy decision-making positions across a sample of 99 major media organisations in the 28 member states of the European Union, including all public service broadcasters. It also explored the "extent to which these media organisations have developed gender-equality policies, the mechanisms in place to monitor such policies and the kinds of specific initiatives which exist to further support the career development of women within the sector" (EIGE, 2013: 11). The study showed that only one quarter (26) of the surveyed media organisations had a gender-equality policy, and 21 had equality of opportunities or diversity policies. Clear differences were reported in the study between public- and private-sector organisations: the former were much more likely to have policies in place, with more than one-third of public media (38) having

adopted a gender-equality policy or code of conduct, while only 17 private organisations had some kind of equality measure, and 19 had a policy for equal opportunities in place. Moreover, wide differences could be found between situations where media organisations had adopted different types of policies for the promotion of gender equality – as in Belgium, the UK, Spain, Sweden, and Germany – and 13 countries across the region where no policy or mechanism existed.

A study conducted in the context of the Media Pluralism Monitor²⁴ and focused on the gender-equality commitment of public service media in the European Union, plus Montenegro and Turkey, also highlighted the diverse situations across the region (Ostling & Nenadich, 2017) and reported that no significant improvement had been made in relation to policy adoption and implementation in more recent years. Almost half of the European public media still lacked gender-equality policies of any kind; in some countries, including Denmark, Italy, and Germany, policies were in place but they either addressed inequality in content or in media structures and functioning. Only public broadcasters in France, Finland, Spain, Sweden, and the UK are reported to have adopted comprehensive policies.

Central to the present analysis is the study sponsored by the International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF), conducted between 2009 and 2010, and resulting in the Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media (Byerly, 2011; see also Byerly, 2013). Looking at a mix of print and electronic news companies from across the world, researchers in 59 countries have collected data interviewing representatives from 522 companies. The project examined news companies' behaviour in staffing, salaries, and policies; one of the research goals was, in fact, to assess the extent to which "news companies provide the internal support mechanisms that enable women and men to find equal organizational support for gaining skills necessary for succeeding and advancing, and for managing their carriers with childbearing and other family circumstances" (Byerly, 2011: 34).²⁵

The IWMF report showed that, at the time of the study, slightly more than half of the surveyed companies had some kind of established company-wide policy on gender equity; but wide variations were highlighted, from a limited percentage of policy adoption in Eastern Europe (16%) to a much higher rate in Sub Saharan Africa and Europe (69%). The study also showed that more than half of the surveyed companies had a policy on sexual harassment. Policies on maternal leave were widely diffused, but disparities were found in the adoption of paternity leave policies. Variations also marked the adoption of policies that guarantee women can get their job back after maternity. Table 3.1 shows regional differences that emerged from the 2011 IWMF study.

Table 3.1 *Adoption of gender-related policies in media companies across seven regions (composite percentage)*

	Middle East & North Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	Americas	Asia & Oceania	Eastern Europe	Nordic Europe	Western Europe
Has a policy on gender equality	27	69	38	51	16	57	69
Has a policy on sexual harassment	44	67	48	67	9	49	47
Has a policy on maternity leave	95	89	93	89	88	100	98
Has a policy on paternity leave	47	37	57	57	68	100	96
Women can get same jobs back	100	24	68	55	69	100	96

Source: IWMF (Byerly, 2011)

Having adopted a geographical approach to the analysis, the IWMF study – though focused on national-level findings – highlighted differences in policy adoption between regions as well as internal variability within regions.

In Eastern Europe, where national-level laws regulating equality are in place, it was hard to find gender-equality policies in media organisations, and only 9 per cent of such companies had adopted a policy on sexual harassment. In Nordic and Western Europe, in spite of European Union normative requirements on gender equality, the situation was mixed: most companies had maternity and paternity leaves and return policies; 78 per cent offered educational training, with 100 per cent in France; and yet, the adoption of policies on sexual harassment varied from 8 per cent in Germany to 100 per cent in the UK. In the Americas, where most nations did not appear to have a national law on gender equality in the workplace, 38 per cent of the surveyed companies had a general gender-equality policy; media companies in Canada, Costa Rica, Chile, and Venezuela had introduced somewhat extended policy frameworks, while Argentina, Ecuador, and the Dominican Republic showed poor policy adoption. In Asia and Oceania, no gender-aware organisational policies had been adopted in countries like Bangladesh and China, where no national law existed, nor in the Philippines where, on the contrary, a national gender-equality law was in place. Differently, Australia, India, Japan, and New Zealand had national gender-equality laws, and all media organisations had also adopted some kind of policy.

What these analyses show is that, in spite of recommendations made since the mid 1990s, gender equality policies are not a widespread practice amongst media organisations, proving that compliance with gender mainstreaming

as a global norm remains a widespread challenge. Moreover, across regions, the existence of national gender-equality laws – which may be considered as instances of recognition of global norms – appears to be both an enabling and constraining factor towards internal policy adoption by media organisations.

The IWMF report concluded: “Variations in gender-related policies among the 59 nations and regions were too numerous to allow tests of significance to be performed on the findings” (Byerly, 2011: 34). The report suggested that further analysis is needed because “the nature and impact of gender-related policies in news companies requires interpreting them in relation to a number of factors” (Byerly, 2011: 38), including historical legacies and cultural factors, gender roles, and women’s status in society, and of the existence of national legal frameworks that require equality in the workplace and in the larger environment. We contend that the GEM dataset allows the empirical exploration of some of those factors. In particular, it allows us to address the following research questions:

- How can the wide variation in the adoption of gender-related internal policies by media organisations in different countries and regions be explained?
- Is it possible, within such variation, to identify patterns of policy adoption that may indicate the existence of different equality regimes in the media sector worldwide?

3.4 Exploring media organisations’ policy adoption across nations

In order to investigate if and to what extent the environment within which the media operate favours or hinders the implementation of gender mainstreaming by media organisations, in this section we explore socioeconomic and cultural contextual factors that may help explain highly diversified gender-sensitive policy adoption around the world. Furthermore, the possible relation between the problematisation of gender inequality issues and patterns of policy adoption in different contexts is investigated. The section is divided in two parts: first, we present an initial exploration of possible relations between contextual factors and media self-regulatory behaviour and offer a world picture based on countries’ different patterns of adoption of gender-related policies. We then conduct a more focused investigation of how contextual elements relate to those different patterns of policy adoption.

As we proceed, a few important caveats should be mentioned concerning both the available data and the chosen methodological approach. The analysis is based on data collected for the IWMF Global Report on the Status of Women in the

News Media (Byerly, 2011) available from the GEM dataset, and it provides a picture of media organisations' gender-related policy adoption at country level in 59 countries²⁶ from all world regions in 2010.²⁷ Changes may have occurred in the meantime, which cannot be considered in the present analysis. The following paragraphs provide a world picture and comments on the situation around the turn of the decade. It should also be mentioned that the IWMF methodology implied a selection of media companies to be included in the analysis for each individual country.²⁸ A sampled number of few media outlets – ranging from seven to seventeen in each country – hardly reflects the plurality of voices and multiplicity of situations that characterise media environments across the world. This is particularly true if the countries involved range from populations above one hundred million people, with hundreds of media outlets constituting national multicultural media ecosystems (like India or Mexico), to countries with a population below ten million and possibly more homogeneous media environments (like the Nordic countries). Moreover, although the original IWMF data were collected at the level of individual media organisations, in the GEM dataset they have been reorganised to represent means of the value recorded for each variable for all organisations at the country level. Hence, countries – not individual organisations – are the units of analysis in the following paragraphs.

In relation to the methodological approach adopted in this chapter, we highlight that we have identified five different patterns of gender-relevant policy adoption (regimes) by media organisations using a bottom-up approach, and we have explored possible correlations between macro-contextual conditions and different configurations of policy adoption. This empirical exercise has important methodological limitations that restrict the proposed interpretations to a descriptive plan. First, the analyses are based on a single year for which data were available; there is, therefore, no information about when policies and different provisions were introduced or concerning instances of change over time. The main consequence is that it is not possible to test causal relations using the available data. Second, the choice to use cluster analysis is in line with a descriptive and exploratory intent; in fact, unlike other approaches, cluster analysis does not require an *a priori* interpretive model. Finally, different cluster solutions have been tested, and while the five identified and proposed patterns of policy adoption are substantially stable among the different solutions, the attribution of single countries to each cluster is not univocal: some countries are on the edge between one group and another, and their allocation could reflect the assignment criterion (the way similarities between cases are identified).

In light of the above, cautious interpretation of the findings is required. No causal relation is expected to emerge from the analysis, which is exploratory and focuses on country-level similarities and differences in the adoption of different

gender-relevant policies by media organisations.²⁹ Nevertheless, the present investigation – in addition to building on the only available data concerning gender-related policy adoption at the level of media organisations across the globe – provides an unprecedented entry point towards a better understanding of the challenges to gender mainstreaming in the media sector and to how gender-equality issues are problematised across the world. Furthermore, it applies an innovative analytical framework – that of media gender-equality regimes – to identify general trends and possible patterns of policy adoption.

A detailed description of all the original data sources, datasets, and variables used in this chapter is provided in Appendix 3.2. The following sections narratively present the rationale for the variable selection, analyses, and main findings.

Gender-related policy adoption by media organisations: A world picture

In order to address open issues concerning high variability in policy adoption between and within regions, we first look for correlations between contextual elements and policy adoption in individual countries. Contextual factors have, in fact, been indicated as relevant to women's empowerment across nations (Ingelhart & Norris, 2003; Ingelhart et al., 2004; Welzel, 2003).

Better economic conditions in a country may indicate a situation where basic societal needs have been met; hence, there is space to engage with other aspects of inequality, including gender-related ones, in response to calls for social justice. Moreover, according to classical development theory, increased economic development associates with broader distribution of educational and occupational resources (Alexander & Welzel, 2007). Accordingly, economic sectors – including the media – may view the adoption of gender-sensitive policy measures more favourably when the overall level of wealth is higher. In this case, the media may also value economic opportunities deriving from more gender-equal conditions.

Higher degrees of women's political participation may indicate that women have gained recognition and meaningful degrees of power in society (Ingelhart & Norris, 2003; Lovenduski & Norris, 2003), thus becoming vocal and better able to express their needs and to ask for specific equality commitment, both at the national and organisational level.

As per cultural orientation, it has been shown (Norris & Ingelhart, 2001; Ingelhart & Norris, 2003) that traditions, attitudes, and histories do play an important role in slowing down – or, on the contrary, in fostering – women's advancement in society. This may also be the case when it comes to making formal commitments in specific sectors, like the media. These cultural elements are difficult to trace and measure; hence, in the context of the present study,

we consider social rights – including the rights to equal inheritance, to enter into marriage on a basis of equality with men, to travel, divorce, and confer citizenship to children – as indirect indicators of societal cultural orientation towards gender equality.

In order to account for these contextual factors, three different groups of macro-variables are considered in the analyses: 1) measures of the overall economic and social development conditions, 2) the degree of gender equality or inequality, and 3) measures of women's empowerment.

The first set of variables includes the index of democracy,³⁰ GDP per capita,³¹ and the Human Development Index (HDI)³² as proxies, respectively, for democratisation, economic wealth, and human development.

The second set of variables, measuring gender equality, includes the Gender Inequality Index (GII) and the Global Gender Gap Index (GGI).³³

The third set of variables, measuring women's empowerment in society, includes: women's political participation index; women's civil society organisation participation; women's civil liberties index;³⁴ women's economic rights; women's political rights; and women's social rights. These measures reflect different forms of participation, political empowerment, and civil liberties, as well as women's enjoyment of economic, political, and social rights.

The selected variables are sometimes highly correlated, and they cover similar dimensions. It is the case, for example, in the correlation between the women's political participation index and women's political rights, or in the correlations between women's civil society organisation participation, the women's civil liberties index, and women's social rights. However, since the analyses rely on a limited number of observations, and for some variables some cases are missing, we decided to keep all the selected variables in the analyses as sensitivity checks of the stability of the main results beyond possible outliers and variations measurement scales.

Finally, five types of policies that can be adopted by media organisations are considered as dependent variables:³⁵

- general policies on gender equality
- policies concerning sexual harassment and abuse
- policies regarding maternity leave
- policies regarding paternity leave
- policies that guarantee women can get the same job back after giving birth

Table 3.2 shows correlation between each of the contextual dimensions and the five gender-related policies adopted by media organisations across the 59 countries.

Table 3.2 Correlations between five gender-related policies and contextual dimensions (Pearson's *r*)

	Has a policy on gender equality	Has a policy on sexual harassment	Has a policy on maternity leave	Has a policy on paternity leave	Women can get same jobs back	<i>n</i>
General indicators						
Index of democracy	0.070	0.171	0.190	0.551***	0.404**	58
GDP per capita	0.121	0.149	0.247	0.633***	0.576***	53
Human Development Index	-0.156	-0.079	0.229	0.568***	0.611***	58
Gender-equality indicators						
Gender Inequality Index	0.097	0.050	-0.207	-0.649***	-0.612***	58
Global Gender Gap Index	0.131	0.197	0.236 [#]	0.482***	0.252 [#]	56
Dimensions of women's empowerment in society						
women's political participation index	0.055	0.101	-0.010	0.302*	0.130	57
women's civil society organisation participation	-0.065	-0.005	0.239 [#]	0.562***	0.455***	58
women's civil liberties index	-0.077	0.028	0.188	0.520***	0.464***	58
women's economic rights	0.175	0.166	0.234 [#]	0.486***	0.450***	58
women's political rights	0.203	0.131	0.004	0.199	0.216	58
women's social rights	0.215	0.181	0.271*	0.522***	0.422**	55

Comments: [#] $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. n = countries. Data is not available for all countries, which means that the number of countries included in the analyses varies between different measures. Data reference year is 2010, with the exception of the indicator of women's social rights, which refers to 2007 (see Appendix 3.2 for full references to the original variable sources).

Source: IWMF (Byerly, 2011); QoG (Teorell et al., 2017); V-dem (Coppedge et al., 2017); CIRI (Cingranelli et al., 2014)

According to this initial exploration, most of the considered contextual variables show no significant relation with general gender-equality policies and sexual harassment policies. Differently, the considered independent variables are positively correlated with policies adopted to foster paternity leave and to support women in getting their job back after giving birth.

What this analysis does not allow is the exploration of any meaningful combination of policies adopted by the media in any given country, nor the nexus between patterns of contextual factors and policy adoption. This is a relevant aspect since, as discussed above, gender policies can address different dimensions of inequality, and it is always possible for media organisations to adopt more than one policy. Moreover, patterns of policy adoption may indicate

different degrees of organisational commitment to gender equality and suggest different orientations in translating gender equality as a global norm into specific provisions and contexts. Finally, the adoption of different measures by media organisations may reflect different ways in which gender-inequality issues are problematised and addressed.

In relation to how gender-inequality issues are understood, and related problems “represented to be” (Bacchi, 2009) in policy measures, we may consider that the adoption of general gender-equality policies, and of policies against sexual harassment, address unequal gendered relations in the media environment in broad terms: they reflect an understanding of gender inequality as an issue of discrimination and persisting unequal opportunities in the workplace and in media content, accompanied by women’s exposure to different forms of abuse. The underlying goal of policy adoption is one of fostering cultural and structural change in the sector, by affirming equality and non-discriminatory principles and adopting measures to make working spaces more secure.

Differently, policies concerning maternity leave – and, more particularly, paternity leave – and the possibility to reintegrate women in their jobs after the birth of a child, speak to concerns of work-life balance: the represented problem here is the need to support individual professionals in their family roles and working commitments so they can enjoy equal conditions in their professional lives. The policy goal is to overcome inequalities by fostering a shared division of family labour and more sustainable working conditions for women.

We argue that by investigating patterns of policy adoption across countries, we can explore the possibility for different media gender-equality regimes to emerge from the data, as systems of meanings (issue problematisation) and practices (adoption of policy measures) that reflect, while also shaping, gender relations in the sector. We therefore perform a cluster analysis on the five indicators of gender-related policies, available in the GEM dataset, adopted by media organisations, in order to see if and how countries come to compose coherent groups on the basis of (dis)similar behaviours in their (media organisations) adoption of internal policies.³⁶

We use a *K*-means cluster algorithm, opting for a 5-clusters solution. This solution guarantees internal consistency from an empirical point of view. At the same time, while partly confirming the findings of previous studies (Byerly, 2011, 2013), it highlights unexpected similarities and differences between countries, thus raising new questions and inviting further explorations. Table 3.3 shows how the level of adoption of the five considered policies characterises each different cluster.

Labels for clusters 1, 4, and 5 are inspired by the terminology adopted by UNESCO (2014) in its Gender Equality Action Plan 2014–2021. In that context, the gender-equality marker is proposed as a mechanism to track developments

in the promotion of gender equality worldwide; it is a mechanism that is based on a four-point scale to assess activities.³⁷ The marker codes as gender-sensitive activities that identify and acknowledge inequalities; as gender-responsive activities that include evidence-based gender analysis and specific actions to address inequalities; and as gender-transforming activities that – beside stressing the causes of inequalities based on gender analyses – challenge a multiplicity of discriminatory practices in view of influencing radical change while supporting transformative policies. Following this rationale, the labels adopted for clusters 1, 4, and 5 indicate a growing degree of support for gender equality, as can be inferred by the adoption of plural formal commitments. Different labels are used for clusters 2 and 3: structural-change oriented (cluster 2) refers to countries where mostly general equality policies are adopted by media organisations, indicating a problematisation of inequality that focuses on the structural conditions that prevent equal opportunities for female workers to perform their tasks in a fair and safe environment; while work-life balance (cluster 3) indicates situations where inequality issues are problematised in consideration of the unequal burden experienced by women between family care and job requirements, and the policy response mostly includes arrangements that favour better sharing of family commitments.

Overall, according to the available data from 2010, the only policy that was widely adopted across all clusters was that on maternal leave – a finding that can be partly explained by the widespread existence of national legal frameworks that require organisations to put in place measures to support maternity. Also, it is a finding that suggests how a specific interpretation of gender equality as a global norm – that is, the nexus between equality and women’s maternal role – is considered as “appropriate” across cultural contexts. Yet, its translation at the national level varies, since policies that support women going back to work after giving birth were only meaningfully adopted in some countries. All other organisational policies showed differing levels of adoption, and various combinations, thus marking differences among groups.

Countries in cluster 1 present a low level of adoption of gender-related policies of any kind. These are countries from different geocultural contexts, all showing minimal commitment to gender equality, including in relation to maternal leave if compared with all others – hence the label gender-blind. This cluster comprises fourteen countries, spanning from Russia to Jordan, from Pakistan to Nigeria, and from China to Egypt and Jamaica. It also includes Argentina, discussed in the section above titled “Charting and conceptualising gender-aware media policies” in consideration of the gender-responsive national legislation adopted in 2009 (Chaher, 2014). The discrepancy between national-level legislation and policy commitment at organisational level may be explained by the fact that 1) the national legislation was adopted just before or while the IWMF data were collected, but also 2) the legislation did not specifically require

Table 3.3 Levels of gender-related policy adoption in media organisations (mean, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum values), list of countries by cluster

	Cluster 1 (n = 14)				Cluster 2 (n = 13)				Cluster 3 (n = 14)				Cluster 4 (n = 8)				Cluster 5 (n = 10)			
	mean	sd	min	max	mean	sd	min	max	mean	sd	min	max	mean	sd	min	max	mean	sd	min	max
Has a policy on gender equality	8.7	13.8	0	40	81.6	20.3	38	100	26.0	26.0	0	80	66.8	15.5	44	88	74.6	34.1	0	100
Has a policy on sexual harassment	12.1	15.1	0	50	82.6	17.4	50	100	18.8	23.2	0	83	69.4	20.0	33	93	94.6	11.9	66	100
Has a policy on maternity leave	81.6	16.1	44	100	90.2	12.8	57	100	94.8	14.9	44	100	96.3	7.6	79	100	98.3	5.4	83	100
Has a policy on paternity leave	28.6	26.8	0	86	25.4	30.0	0	89	93.7	8.2	80	100	58.6	25.0	22	91	95.4	10.1	71	100
Do women get same jobs back	45.1	35.1	0	100	2.2	8.0	0	29	92.8	11.7	67	100	79.8	21.8	40	100	98.3	5.4	83	100
	Gender-blind				Structural-change oriented				Work-life balance				Gender-sensitive				Gender-transformative			
	Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Cameroon, Argentina, Ecuador, Jamaica, China				South Africa, Namibia, Congo (Dem Rep.), Ghana, Zambia, Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Mauritius, India, Fiji, Peru				Denmark, Norway, France, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Lithuania, Estonia, Chile, Dominique Republic, Venezuela, Brazil, Philippines				Spain, Canada, United States, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Morocco, Uganda, Ethiopia				Sweden, Finland, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, Kenya, Israel, Costa Rica			

Comments: n = number of countries. Clusters are based on K-means clustering algorithm (Mooi & Sarstedt, 2011; Makles, 2012) applied to the five indicators of gender-related policies available for 59 countries. Data reference year is 2010 (see Appendix 3.2 for full references to the original variable sources).

Source: IWMF (Byerly, 2011)

media organisations to adopt gender-related policies. Indeed, the Argentinian country report in the IWFM report highlighted that “company policies do not support women, greater access to the profession or the advancement for those already employed” (Byerly, 2011: 152) and described a context where the overall situation for women professionals was highly problematic, with less than 20 per cent women in governance and top-level managerial positions. This is a very different situation from that of Bulgaria, which is also included in this cluster. In this case, women’s presence appeared, at the time of data collection, as dominant in terms of overall numbers and occupational status. At the same time, the surveyed Bulgarian newsrooms showed very low adoption of any kind of policy apart from full support (100%) for women getting their jobs back after maternity leave (Byerly, 2011). The Bulgarian case, suggesting non-policy-related factors as explanations for unequal newsrooms, such as historical developments (see Nastasia & Nastasia, 2013), seems to question the actual need for, and effectiveness of, policies. But the realities in other clusters invite more nuanced considerations.

Clusters 2 and 3 show different patterns of policy adoption, each cluster indicating that priority is given to a specific set of policies. Cluster 2 is characterised by a high level of general gender-equality and sexual-harassment policy adoption and very minor focus on solutions that support women and men in balancing their professional lives and family commitments. Considering the adopted policies as aimed at providing overall principled frameworks for media operations in view of transforming gender relations within the sector, this group is labelled structural-change oriented. It includes 13 countries, most of which are from the Southern African region, plus India and Peru. South Africa is representative of the African countries in this cluster: with a population of over 50 million and eleven official languages, it presents a rich and plural mediascape, hardly reflected in the sample of the eight media companies surveyed. The overall picture that emerged from the IWFM report was mixed. Parity was almost reached in the media sector occupation, and women were granted opportunities to progress to top-level positions; at the same time, women earned less and worked in more precarious positions. In this context: “Most South African news companies have policies favorable to women’s advancement” and “the lack of glass ceiling reflects progressive gender policies in the nations’ news companies surveyed” (Byerly, 2011: 128). Looking beyond the African context, both India and Peru presented much more gender-unequal situations, with women underrepresented across categories and experiencing strong limitations in access to top managerial positions. In India, companies showed mixed tendencies to adopt newsroom policies favourable to gender equality; but, it should also be recalled that a Supreme Court mandate for employers to adopt workplace policies for sexual harassment (adopted not long before the IWFM data collection) may explain media organisations’ commitment on this aspect,

with 82 per cent of the media having adopted anti-harassment measures (Byerly, 2011). In Peru, media organisations had put very few policies in place to address women's advancement (Byerly, 2011), but the areas where they had taken some action were those of general gender-equality policies and measures to contrast sexual harassment. In this cluster, the nexus between existing national legal frameworks and organisational self-regulatory mechanisms is less clear than in the previous cluster; hence, other variables may better explain the pattern of gender-related policy adoption.

In cluster 3, we find an opposite orientation when compared with cluster 2. In this case, we have high adoption of paternal policies and of policies for guaranteeing women can get their job back after maternity leave, while general gender-equality policies and policies for sexual harassment are considered much less. A work-life-balance vision seems to inspire these countries' problematisation of inequality issues and efforts to overcome them. Again, this is a diverse group, comprising Northern and Eastern Europe, but also Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, and the Philippines. Denmark and Norway, which are commonly associated with the Nordic tradition of high levels of gender equality, occupy a slightly different position in this analysis. In Denmark, policies at media level were adopted only where there was an explicit requirement according to national laws (as for paternity leave), or when there was no specific national provisions on the matter (as in the case of reintegrating women after giving birth). Similarly, in Norway, "national laws on gender equality help to explain Norwegian news companies' mixed showing on their own gender policies. [...] Some companies have adopted their own policies within these guidelines, but others follow national laws" (Byerly, 2011: 328). In both cases, the IWWMF report also stressed the fact that the realities of newsrooms were unequal, with men outnumbering women 2:1 – at the same time, women seemed to have better chances of accessing higher occupational positions. The resulting mixed picture parallels that of policy adoption at media level. Of interest is the fact that most Eastern European countries fall in this cluster, having transitioned from totalitarianism – when gender inequalities were "hidden", but at the same time women were encouraged to work outside the household – to democracy, with dramatic changes in the media structures, with both men and women journalists striving to reshape the profession (Byerly, 2011). Furthermore, integration into the European Union may have affected not only national legal frameworks towards enacting gender-equality measures, but also influenced media companies' adoption of specific policies. Also of interest is the case of the Philippines, with a Magna Charta of Women adopted in 2009 to provide comprehensive prohibitions against sex discrimination. In this context, general gender-equality policies may have been considered unnecessary, and in fact were not adopted by media organisations, while paternity leave and return-to-job policies were fully adopted (Byerly, 2011). What seems to cluster these countries together is, therefore, the presence of national legal frameworks for

gender equality, with media companies feeling compelled to elaborate provisions only for areas that are not specifically covered at the national level.

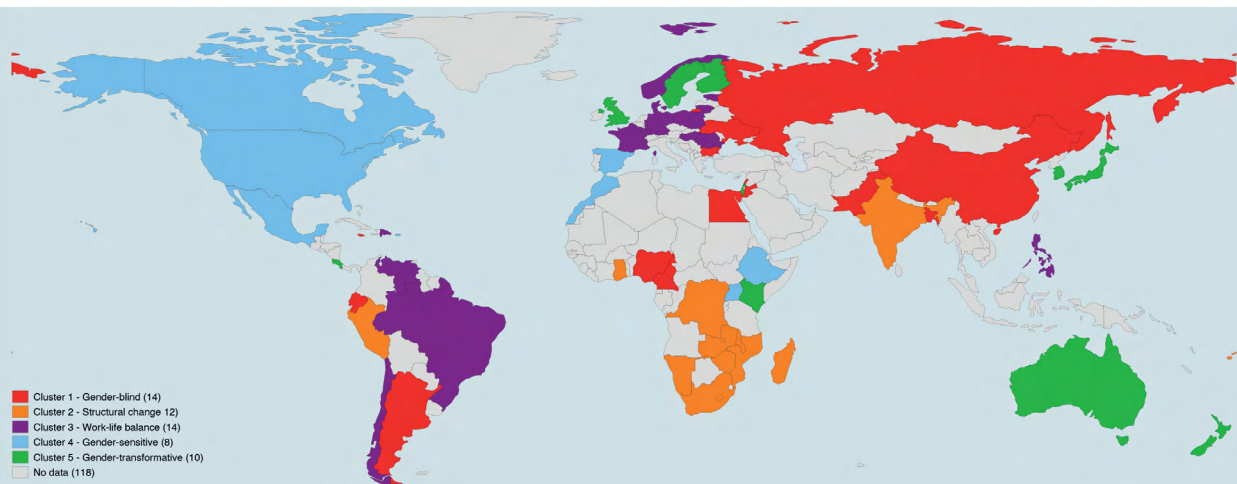
Cluster 4 is characterised by a medium level of policy adoption, where no specific type of policy is prioritised. According to the IWFMF data, countries in this group demonstrate some degree of concern for gender equality and are thus labelled gender-sensitive to indicate that they acknowledge inequalities and adopt some mechanisms to address them. At the same time, this is possibly the most internally diverse group in our analysis, including countries like Canada, Mexico, Morocco, and Ethiopia. In Mexico, “newsrooms have been slow to adopt gender policies” (Byerly 2011: 189) and experience longstanding gender inequalities and discrimination, as reported by other studies (see Vega Montiel 2013, 2017); yet, amongst the limited number (ten) of media outlets included in the GEM dataset, all had maternity and return policies in place. On the other side, Canadian companies, though guaranteeing better conditions for women in the profession, presented meaningful glass-ceiling issues and varied in their adoption of gender policies, with just over half (55%) having issues-specific provisions (Byerly, 2011), thus presenting a “paradox of women in the news” (see Young & Beale, 2013). Since it comprises countries that do not show specific patterns of gender-aware policy adoption, we consider this a “residual cluster”, with limited explanatory potential for our analysis.

Finally, cluster 5 is a group of ten countries where most policies are adopted in high percentages, hence the label gender-transformative. These countries not only acknowledge and address inequalities, they also signal a more holistic understanding of (in)equality issues, challenge different discriminatory practices, and foster structural change towards more equal gender-equality regimes. At the same time, the cluster comprises very different realities: from Sweden and Finland – world-known for highly gender-equal national systems – to Costa Rica, Kenya, and Japan – all countries that do not rank high in gender-equality indices. According to the IWFMF report, both Sweden and Finland showed equal numbers of men and women occupied in the media sector, with a meaningful status of women also in governance and senior positions. Furthermore, both had longstanding national legal frameworks in place to prevent gender discrimination and foster equality. Swedish media organisations were characterised by “uniformity in their pro-equality progress” (Byerly, 2011: 333), with all gender policies adopted; though, for instance, no childcare provisions were in place, since this is commonly provided by local communities. Finnish media were also marked by a full adoption of different policies, including 66 per cent of media outlets committed to countering harassment, which, given the existence of a national legislation on the issues, would not be a requirement. Different are the cases of Costa Rica and Kenya. In Costa Rica, “companies demonstrate[d] a commitment to gender equality through their company policies which comport well with national laws passed to advance women economically” (Byerly, 2011:

172) in an overall situation where women were underrepresented, but they also enjoyed moderate access to all levels in the media structure; in this case, the national legal framework seems to have made a difference in organisational policy adoption. In Kenya, efforts were made to “address some of the barriers that limit women’s participation and mobility in the newsroom” (Byerly, 2011: 100) – possibly in response to the objectives of the national constitution and as a result of women’s professional associations’ lobbying efforts – but the overall situation of women professionals was highly unequal and mostly marked by traditional beliefs and cultural values that strongly influence their opportunities (Kareithi, 2013). Given the diversity of countries in the cluster, further exploration of the contextual conditions that may play a role in supporting organisational policy adoption is needed.

By visualising the 59 countries on a world map, using a different colour for each cluster, the variability across, as well as within, geographical regions clearly appears. Countries that show a gender-transformative orientation (green) can be found in Northern Europe, Australia, and Central America, while gender-sensitive approaches (blue) can be found in North America, Spain, and Kenya. Gender-blind countries (red) span from China to Latin America, while adoption of general equality policies characterise the Southern African region and few other countries (orange). Northern-Central-Eastern Europe resembles the efforts made in Brazil and Venezuela in promoting work-life balance (purple).

Figure 3.1 *The variability of global adoption of media gender-related policies (clustering countries according to similar patterns of policy adoption)*



Comments: The map includes 59 countries from the IWMF study that are part of the GEM dataset. The grey areas lack data; red = cluster 1, gender-blind; orange = cluster 2, structural-change oriented; purple = cluster 3, work-life balance; blue = cluster 4, gender-sensitive; green = cluster 5, gender-transformative. Data reference year is 2010. Due to limitations in the SPMAP program, 13 countries are not displayed on the map, including Mauritius, which is in cluster 2.

Source: IWMF (Byerly, 2011)

Exploring contextual factors influencing gender-sensitive policy adoption

Varying patterns of policy adoption in the different countries, as identified through the cluster analysis, invite further investigations of contextual variables that may help explain what encourages or prevents media organisations in each country from making specific commitments to gender equality – adopting one or more policy measure that reflects different normative interpretations of gender equality and mainstreaming in the media sector.

In line with scholarly analyses on gender mainstreaming (Hafner-Burton & Pollack, 2008; True, 2003; Walby, 2004; 2005), the IWMF report suggests a number of possible explanatory factors for media organisations' propensity towards policy adoption (Byerly, 2011), including: the relevance of cultural norms, values, and traditions that operate in each context; the existence of national laws that promote gender equality; women's status in the larger societal environment; as well as women's engagement with equality and rights movements, particularly when organised around professional organisations. Through a cluster-focused analysis of the GEM dataset, we can empirically explore some of those factors and test their significance and possible correlations.

It should be mentioned that one factor we have not been able to include in the analysis relates to the existence of gender-equality legal frameworks at the country level, since the relevant variable in our dataset does not include data for the countries considered in this study.³⁸ This constitutes a limit to our study since in many cases, as we have seen in the previous section, the existence of national gender-equality laws, alongside constitutional provisions and high courts' decisions, seems to be related to policy adoption by media organisations (Byerly, 2011). Future investigations and media gender-equality regimes should therefore pay specific attention to how gender issues are mainstreamed and institutionalised at national level.

The three sets of macro-variables considered above (Table 3.2) to measure societal conditions, the degree of gender equality, and women's empowerment are now employed to account for possible explanations of different patterns of media organisations' policy adoption in the five clusters.

General societal conditions are investigated by relating degrees of democratisation, economic wealth, and human development, respectively, to each of the five clusters. This analysis addresses the following questions:

- Is it possible to identify any relation between the level of democratic development that countries in each cluster enjoy and patterns of policy adoption, assuming that democracy “opens possibilities for people to mobilize and press for change” (Wängnerud & Samanni, 2009: 7)?

- Does economic wealth help explain a cluster's characterising features, or would a composite indicator, such as the HDI – which includes three basic dimensions of human development, such as health, knowledge, and standard of living, and accounts for emancipative attitudes – better contribute to understanding patterns of policy adoption?

Similar questions can be asked in relation to different degrees of gender equality or inequality (Alexander et al., 2016): Would these – captured by composite indicators that reflect gender equality in societies in relation to the diverse domains of health, educational attainment, and political and economic empowerment – relate to patterns of policy adoption by the media?

And what about the relation between specific dimensions of women's empowerment in society – explored through a series of variables that reflect different forms of participation, political empowerment, and civil liberties, as well as through women's enjoyment of economic, political, and social rights and patterns of media organisations' policy adoption?

Cluster distribution according to the different variables that reflect overall contextual features is reported in Table 3.4. In the following paragraphs, we discuss the main findings.

What the analysis shows is that gender-transformative countries (cluster 5), as well as those oriented towards work-life balance (cluster 3), share high levels of democratisation, GDP, and human development; while gender-blind countries (cluster 1) and countries concerned with structural change within the media sector (cluster 2) rank similarly low on all such variables, though the former performs slightly better in relation to GDP and the HDI.

This polarisation between clusters 5 and 3 (gender-transformative and work-life balance) on one side, and clusters 1 and 2 (gender-blind and structural-change oriented) on the other, is visible throughout the analysis. Similar patterns of cluster distribution are in fact found in relation to the overall degree of gender equality in society, but only for the GII, and not for the GGI. Interestingly, countries labelled as gender-blind rank slightly higher than structural-change oriented ones on the GII – a situation that suggests more favourable conditions in the countries included in the first cluster towards gender-sensitive policy adoptions by media organisations as means to support women in the workplace. On the contrary, the analysis clearly indicates that this is not the case: in spite of having lower levels of gender equality, as expressed by the GII, countries in cluster 2 are much more likely to adopt gender-sensitive policies and show a specific interpretation of gender equality in the media, presenting what could be considered as a media gender-equality regime oriented towards structural change.

When looking at different measures of women's empowerment, the pattern is confirmed: again, clusters 3 and 5 rank higher on all indicators, while

Table 3.4 General indicators, gender-equality indicators, and dimensions of women's empowerment in society by media gender-equality clusters (means)

	Cluster 1 Gender-blind (n = 14)	Cluster 2 Structural-change oriented (n = 13)	Cluster 3 Work-life balance (n = 14)	Cluster 4 Gender-sensitive (n = 7)	Cluster 5 Gender-trans- formative (n = 10)	Test F Signifi- cance
General indicators						
Index of democracy	5.02	5.42	7.40	6.41	8.18	(***)
GDP per capita	5,063.4 (n = 13)	2,197.0 (n = 10)	13,320.1	14,188.49 (n = 6)	18,878.9	(***)
Human Development Index	0.67	0.55	0.81	0.70	0.84	(***)
Gender-equality indicators						
Gender Inequality Index	0.67	0.55	0.81	0.70	0.84	(***)
Global Gender Gap Index	0.65	0.68 (n = 11)	0.71	0.68	0.72	ns
Dimensions of women's empowerment in society						
women's political participation index	0.75	0.81 (n = 12)	0.92	0.89	0.90	(*)
women's civil society organisation participation	0.72	0.70	0.91	0.79	0.87	(***)
women's civil liberties index	0.67	0.66	0.89	0.76	0.91	(***)
women's economic rights	0.92	1.00	2.07	1.57	2.40	(*)
women's political rights	2.07	2.15	2.21	2.14	2.50	ns
women's social rights	0.64	1.00	2.00 (n = 13)	1.67 (n = 6)	2.22 (n = 9)	(***)

Comments: n = country observations. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .5$. Data is not available for all countries, which means that the number of countries included in the analyses varies between different studies and measures. Data reference year is 2010, with the exception of the indicator of women's social rights, which refers to 2007 (see Appendix 3.2 for full references to the original variable sources).

Source: IWMF (Byerly, 2011); Teorell et al., 2017; Coppedge et al, 2017; CS-GEM dataset (Färdegh et al., 2020)

clusters 1 and 2 always rank low. In general terms, indices related to women's involvement in civil society organisations and countries' level of support for social rights and civil liberties point out significant differences across clusters, whereas indices on women's political participation and women's political and economic rights endowment do not account for significant differences across clusters. It is worth noting that gender-transformative countries perform much better than all others, including those oriented towards work-life balance, particularly in relation to women's social rights, assumed here to indicate a country's cultural orientation towards women and their rights. At the same time, structural-change oriented countries implement women's social rights more than countries in the gender-blind cluster.

As discussed in the earlier section of this chapter, the cluster labelled gender-sensitive (cluster 4) is the most heterogeneous one: policy adoption is present but moderate for all types of policies and the cluster's internal variability is the highest in relation to all indicators, from GDP per capita to women's empowerment. This looks like a residual and diverse group, for which more qualitative, country-based investigation is needed.

These analyses suggest that in some cases, contextual factors may play a role; at the same time, the findings do not allow a full explanation of the relations between variables.

Countries in clusters 5 and 3 share high levels of democracy, wealth, and gender equality, and yet they have different patterns of policy adoption. The former shows a clear commitment towards gender equality and mainstreaming as global norms and seems to translate those norms according to a holistic perspective that considers different dimensions of inequality and, possibly, their interplay. The latter translates those norms in media self-regulatory measures that focus on a specific aspect of unequal relations in the sector, that is, the need to facilitate a balance between family roles and working commitments. In some cases, this may depend on the existence of national gender-equality legislations, but the different approaches adopted, for instance by media outlets in Sweden and Finland if compared with Norway and Denmark – all countries with progressive national frameworks in place – suggests other elements intervene in orientating media self-regulatory provisions.

Similarly, countries in clusters 1 and 2 share low levels of democracy, wealth, and gender equality and yet cluster 2 shows a consistent pattern of policies that reflect an orientation towards structural change through principled self-regulation; whereas gender-blind countries, in spite of performing better on indicators such as the HDI and GII, show total disregard for the translation of gender-equality principles and norms into formal measures at the level of media organisations.

3.5 Conclusion and discussion

In addressing our research questions, concerning variations in the adoption of gender-related policies by media organisations in different countries and the possibility to identify patterns of policy adoption across the world, we opted for an analysis that clustered countries on the basis of their approach to gender mainstreaming. By exploring variability amongst clusters of countries, we were able to move beyond a regional focus – which may be misleading in assuming similarities based on cultural, political, and economic conditions – and to gain a better understanding of how global gender-equality norms travel and are negotiated worldwide.

The study indicates that the relation between contextual factors and policy adoption at the cluster level is not linear. We have explored how different contextual variables may account for different patterns of gender-related self-regulatory measures, to find out that gender equality can be progressed despite a potentially unfavourable economic and sociopolitical environment. At the same time, more favourable contextual conditions, which are generally conducive to the adoption of gender-equality policies, do not always translate into higher and more articulated formal commitment to equality by media organisations.

The analysis shows that, in general, contextual variables do play a role, but they do not have the same relevance for all clusters, nor do they have the same relation to the different types of policies included in the study. In some cases, economic wealth is positively correlated to the adoption of policies (as in the gender-transformative cluster), but in other cases it is not (structural-change oriented countries show a high degree of general equality policy adoption in spite of ranking the lowest on the GDP per capita indicator). A higher level of GDP per capita also relates to a strong commitment by media companies to fight against sexual harassment in some contexts (again, the gender-transformative cluster), but not in others (work-life balance cluster). Also, women's political and civic participation seems to relate to the adoption of specific measures, such as general equality policies and those to prevent and sanction sexual harassment, in some contexts (the gender-transformative and structural change clusters), but the opposite holds true in other contexts (the work-life balance cluster). Finally, the seemingly positive relation between a higher level of enjoyment of women's social rights (a proxy variable for cultural orientation) and patterns of policy adoption is highlighted (clusters 3, 4, & 5), as it may indicate that sociocultural contextual factors matter to media gender equality more than other elements.

In the study, we also aimed to operationalise the media gender-equality regime approach, and we did so by identifying five clusters of countries sharing similar patterns of policy adoption. The analysis reveals the complicated interplay between globally agreed upon norms of gender equality and gender

mainstreaming on the one side, and societal norms and political-economic-cultural contexts on the other.

Gender-transformative countries – from Sweden to Australia and the UK – mostly rank high on all indicators and enjoy high levels of democracy, wealth, and social rights. The high level of adoption of all types of policies, also complementing existing national policies, indicates a strong commitment to gender equality by media companies. This also suggests an understanding of gender (in)equality as a system of interrelated issues including personal safety, gendered roles, and challenges in balancing personal and professional lives. These countries express a regime of high compliance with gender mainstreaming as a global norm and a policy frame.³⁹

Countries in the cluster oriented towards work-life balance – most of which are located in Central, Northern, and Eastern Europe – enjoy adequate levels of wealth and democracy, but seem not to be interested in supplementing existing national equality plans (which are in place in all EU countries) with self-regulatory provisions. Interestingly, in this cluster, women's political participation in society – the highest value across all clusters – does not seem to foster a comprehensive understanding of intersecting gender-inequality issues in media organisations, as these mainly intervene to support the professional life of working mothers. At the same time, high levels of GDP per capita and enjoyment of women's social rights do not translate into adequate problematisation of sexual harassment issues. We may be facing a regime whereby gender-equality norms are translated into nation-level legal provisions, but not consistently renegotiated across the media sector.

The structural-change oriented cluster is the most consistent in geographical terms, as it mainly includes members of the Southern Africa Development Community. Characterised by high adoption of general equality provisions and sexual harassment policies, it also shows low levels of income, which do not prevent their media organisations from putting in place measures for gender equality. At the same time, these countries show meaningful levels of women's participation, as well as a certain degree of cultural orientation towards gender equality. This finding suggests a positive dynamic is in place – possibly an interplay between institutions and nongovernmental feminist or grassroots groups⁴⁰ – that contributes to the definition of media gender-equality regimes.

Countries in the gender-blind cluster are characterised by low performance on most contextual aspects. Even though in some cases wealth and gender equality indicators suggest there may be conditions to support more gender-equal media environments, the low levels of democratic development and women's participation in society may account for their inconsistent commitment to gender mainstreaming in the sector, resulting in a media gender-unequal regimes.

The cluster labelled gender-sensitive, being the most diverse group in our analysis, also in relation to their approach towards policy adoption, can hardly

be considered a coherent cluster. This invites country-case specific analyses to better understand media commitment towards equality and resulting regimes.

As Ingelhart and Norris remind us, “a pattern of causation cannot be determined from any simple correlation” (2003: 134). Our study shows that the correlation between contextual elements and policy adoption is hardly straightforward. It suggests that contextual conditions – including specific legislation, civic mobilisations, and political will at different levels – do play a role in fostering different media gender-equality regimes, but their influence is not the same in all countries. The study also indicates that the combination of different types of policies may reflect varying orientations towards gender equality as a global norm, different interpretations of gender mainstreaming as a policy frame, and various ways in which the multiple inequalities that characterise the media sector are understood, problematised, and addressed. By highlighting similarities and differences between groups of countries in the IWMF data, the study partly confirms previous findings, but it also makes new questions emerge and indicates directions for future analyses, in due recognition of the complexities of gender equality regimes and their multi-level governance.

In general terms, more comparative research is needed to account for the nexus between national frameworks for gender equality, national media laws, the role of independent communication authorities, and media organisations’ own commitment towards the implementation of gender mainstreaming, as highlighted in international and regional recommendations over the past decades (Padovani, 2018). Future studies would therefore need to integrate the set of contextual variables taken into consideration in the present work with existing national gender-equality legislations, strategies, and programmes, which constitute the normative frameworks within which the media operate. National media policies should also be taken into consideration,⁴¹ with a focus on their sensitivity (or insensitivity) to gender (in)equality issues. Moreover, the influence exerted by internationally agreed upon norms and frameworks – such as the Beijing Platform for Action or the United Nations Agenda 2030 – on the adoption of national and organisational gender-sensitive policies for the media should be considered. This would allow a comprehensive multi-level analysis with regard to gender-sensitive policy developments in the media sector.

Our analysis – integrated with observations from the IWMF report and contributions by Byerly (2011, 2013) – also suggests that, even when national gender-equality frameworks are in place, media organisations may behave differently in formalising their commitment to equality and diversity. Further research may therefore explore how cultural orientations, as well as media organisational cultures, interact with such frameworks. Qualitative investigations may contribute to highlighting the extent to which cultural and context-specific variables support the adoption of gender-related provisions by media

organisations, even in the absence of supportive national frameworks. This would include an appreciation of the local histories of communication systems, and a focus on the contributions to policy formulation, adoption, monitoring, and implementation by policy networks that may involve media regulators, but also equality champions acting as allies within national institutions, and civil society organisations advocating for media gender equality.

At the level of media organisations, a quantitative follow-up to the present analysis could reveal what factors account for different approaches to gender mainstreaming when contextual situations are similar but the resulting gender-equality regimes are different – as we have seen with gender-transformative and work-life-balance oriented countries on the one hand, and the gender-blind and structural-change oriented on the other. This could be done by focusing on couples of clusters, further exploring the correlation between patterns of policy adoption and specific contextual variables, thus “unpacking” clusters and gaining a more fine-tuned understanding of individual countries’ positions on a global map of media gender-equality regimes.

Policy adoption at the level of media organisations could also be further investigated through qualitative analyses of “endogenous” variables that characterise organisational structures, such as the existence of supportive management and leadership, the presence and status of female and male professionals in decision-making positions, and the professional culture within which they operate. Also, focusing on organisational instead of country level, comparing, for instance, public and private media organisations, may contribute to a better understanding of internal dynamics that lead to self-regulatory measures in due consideration of plural media environments. All this would allow the exploration of how different equality regimes may result from the interplay of media’s internal dynamics.

Finally, future research should address the core issue of media policies’ relevance: Do policies, once adopted, make a difference on media performance? Does policy adoption impact cognitive, behavioural, and professional orientation towards equality inside the media? Further research in this respect may consider policies adopted by media organisations as independent variables, to test organisational gender-equality performance. It would mean looking at correlations between the adoption of (different types of) policies and the multiple dimensions of gender inequality, including in media content, access to material, financial and symbolic resources, access to managerial positions and leadership roles, and issues of safety both off- and online. This investigation would also allow the full operationalisation of the media gender-equality regime approach by exploring the intersection of multiple forms of inequality while, at the same time, acknowledging the centrality of regulatory practices towards making gender equality a reality.

Notes

1. From the *Cambridge English Dictionary*, 2018. The literature on policy making, policy processes, and policy analysis is vast, and approaches are plural. For the purpose of the analysis presented in this chapter, we adopt a specific understanding of “policy” (as discussed in §3.2).
2. Policies may differ from – but sometimes are identified with – “strategies”, or high-level overall plans embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures that are usually elaborated by a governmental body to involve different actors and stakeholders.
3. On the “apparent” contradiction between the principles of freedom of expression and gender equality in the media – and how this is played out in policy debates, reflecting different interests and priorities – see Gallagher (2011); see also Svensson & Edström (2014).
4. A more detailed account of the policy focus that characterised Section J in the Beijing Platform for Action, also inspiring civic and professional initiatives after 1995, is offered by Padovani and Pavan (2017). Attempts to update Section J in the digital context have been carried out, for instance, by the Association for Progressive Communication (2015).
5. For an overview of international and regional formal provisions indicating gender-sensitive media policy as core towards the elimination of gender inequalities, see Padovani (2020). See also the series of video lectures included in the Learning Resources of the Advancing Gender Equality in Media Industries (AGEMI project, Unit 9, Sections 1.1 and 1.2, titled “Searching for gender-sensitive media policies”, accessible on the project platform: www.agemi-eu.org).
6. Similar concerns are expressed in a recent Report on Gender Equality in the Media Sector in the EU by the European Parliament (2017/2210(INI)). The report calls for a motion for a European Parliament resolution; calls on member states to fully implement existing legislation addressing gender equality; encourages media regulatory bodies to monitor the presence and advancement of women in the media sector; and urges public and private media organisations to adopt internal policies, such as equal-opportunities and diversity policies, to address persisting inequalities.
7. Several scholarly works have highlighted the challenges and shortcomings of gender mainstreaming in the global arena and in the European context, but with no specific focus on the media: Squires (2005) has criticised the transformative potential of mainstreaming; Rees (2005) has highlighted the uneven development of gender mainstreaming in the European Union; Hafner-Burton and Pollack (2008) have stressed the strong resistance to gender mainstreaming; Schmidt (2005) talked about “decoupling” to indicate that gender mainstreaming is widely embraced in theory but denied in practice.
8. Preliminary findings of a Global Survey on Gender and Media (UNESCO, 2016) showed that only 35 per cent of world governments have integrated media and gender in their national policies and programmes, and a similar situation has been observed in relation to independent media regulatory bodies’ activities.
9. Padovani (2018, 2020) offers an overview of scholarly interventions in the field, which include Gallagher (2008, 2011, 2017); Byerly and Ross (2006); Jensen (2008, 2010); Drossou and Jensen (2005); McLaughlin and Pickard (2005); Beale (2002); Shade (2014); Sarikakis and Nguyen (2009); Vega Montiel (2014b); Padovani and Pavan (2016); Padovani and Shade (2016); and Gurumurthy and Chami (2016).
10. We refer to the limited effort made by gender and media scholars to enter a potentially productive dialogue with a vast feminist literature on policy making and gender political analysis elaborated over the course of the past decades (for a recent overview on this scholarship, see Kantola & Lombardo, 2016).
11. For a lively account of the relevance of policy adoption for gender equality in and through the media, and of the challenges to policy implementation, see the interviews with experts and media representatives conducted in the context of the Advancing Gender Equality in Media Industries (AGEMI) project: GEMTalks in the AGEMI youtube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y131WHmbNw&list=PLYkH1-dO6vIRiC4So1B8DtgebpAcPsfA8>).
12. See para. 12 of the WSIS Geneva Declaration of Principles “Building the Information Society: a global challenge in the new Millennium” adopted in 2003 (WSIS, 2003).

13. For an overview of the several interventions by the European Union, see Ross & Padovani, 2017; see also the “Gender and media in Europe” section of the Mapping Global Media Policy platform (organisational documents) (<http://www.globalmediapolicy.net/node/6305>)
14. In Southern Africa, sustained collaboration among a network of over 40 organisations led to the adoption of a Protocol on Gender and Development by the SADC in 2008. Articles 29–31 deal specifically with media information and communication, and are regularly monitored through the Gender Protocol Barometer coordinated by the non-governmental organisation Gender Links (2017).
15. The 1995 Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women encourages “the communications media to develop appropriate media guidelines in order to contribute to the eradication of violence against women in all its forms” (OAS, 1995: Article 8). More recently, the Declaration of Pachuca on Strengthening Efforts to Prevent Violence against Women acknowledges the responsibility of the media in eliminating gender stereotypes, fostering freedom of expression, as well as promoting public awareness of the Beijing Platform for Action and the SDGs (OAS, 2014).
16. According to Wiener and Puetter, norms are “ideas of varying degrees of abstraction and specification with respect to fundamental *values*, organizing *principles* or standardized *procedures* that resonate across many states and global actors, having gained support in multiple forms including official policies, laws, treaties or agreements [emphasis added]” (2009: 183).
17. A positive example is the Argentinian Ley de los medios [Law of the media] adopted in 2009, which acknowledged gender equality as one of its guiding principles and established specific mechanisms for citizens to redress violations of their communication rights. On the Argentinian case and developments in the region, see Chaheer (2014, 2016, 2018). A meaningful case is also the Spanish legislation against sexist advertising, described by Martin Llaguno (2016).
18. An interesting example of media-aware equality strategy is the National Plan for Gender Equality, Citizenship and Non-discrimination adopted by Portugal for the period 2014–2017. The plan included an explicit focus on media and communication as one of the seven strategic areas in which to operate to achieve gender equality (Council of Ministers, Portugal, 2013). In this respect, we could also mention the Council of Europe’s Gender Equality Strategy 2018–2023: Strategic objective 1 of the overall strategy is about the prevention and combat of gender stereotypes and sexism, and explicit reference is made to the role of the media – traditional and digital.
19. The role of independent regulatory authorities in fostering gender equality has been stressed by the French Speaking Media Regulatory Authorities Network (REFRAM). In 2011, the network adopted a Declaration on Equality between Men and Women in Audiovisual Media and then published a vade mecum titled Plans for Action for an Integrated Approach to Gender Equality, reporting good practices for equality developed by independent authorities.
20. These are the policies investigated in the following paragraphs: Section 3 provides an overview of organisational policies from previous studies, while Section 4 introduced an innovative analysis based on data from the GEM dataset.
21. Future analyses in this direction may be inspired by the approach and methodology developed by Verloo (2007) and Lombardo and Meier (2009) in the context of European projects where gender equality policies have been investigated through critical frame analysis.
22. Kardam’s work sits within international relations scholarship, according to which regimes are “implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge” (Krasner, 1992).
23. According to Kardam (2004: 89), “regimes would be incomplete without the rules and decision-making procedures that reflect their norms and principles”.
24. The Media Pluralism Monitor is a tool designed to encompass components of risk to media pluralism (see <http://cmpf.eui.eu/media-pluralism-monitor/>).
25. In the case of the EIGE study (2013: 73) a similar concern was also included, looking at the European context and related policies explored to “determine the extent to which these major media organizations have developed gender-equality plans, equality or diversity codes and other forms of self-regulation to avoid discrimination on the ground of sex”.

26. The list of countries and their geographic distribution can be found in Appendix 3.1.
27. 2010 is the single year for which most of the relevant data in the GEM dataset are available, including the IWMF data, which were collected in 2009–2010. When no data is available for relevant variables for that same year, the closest year for which data are available is considered (this is the case with the women's social rights variable in the QoG dataset; in this case, the year for data collection was 2007).
28. As stated in the IWMF report (Byerly, 2011), purposive sampling was used to assure an intended mix of print and electronic news companies per nation, and only traditional news companies were considered for inclusion. A sample range was developed for each nation based on the overall number of companies for a given nation; this range was a guide for local researchers in selecting the number and kind of media to be surveyed. Final approval of the selected media came from the principal investigator. In some cases, smaller-than-intended samples actually surveyed resulted from media companies not agreeing to be involved.
29. More articulated reflections on individual country cases included in the IWMF report, including qualitative analysis and references to broader and deeper studies conducted in each country, are provided by Byerly (2013).
30. In this case, the considered variable is the Economist's Intelligence Unit's Index of Democracy (variable in GEM dataset: *qog_eiu_iod*) based on rating 60 indicators in five categories: electoral process, civil liberties, the functioning of government, political participation, and political culture.
31. This is reflected by the GDP per capita (variable in GEM dataset: *vdem_mad_gdppc*).
32. Human Development Index (variable in GEM dataset: *qog_unod_hdi*), a composite index that measures achievements in three domains: life expectancy, adult literacy, and GDP.
33. Gender Inequality Index by UNDP (*undp_hdi_gii*) and Global Gender Gap Index by the World Economic Forum (*wef_ggi_score*). Both composite indicators have been included, as they partly capture different data but work through different logic: the GII measures (in)equality between women and men in achievements in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and the labour market; the GGI is a more articulated index that examines the gap between men and women in four fundamental categories: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment.
34. The considered variables are: the women's political participation index (*vdem_genpp*), focusing on women's representation in formal positions; women's civil society participation (*vdem_gencs*), indicating women's ability to express themselves and participate in groups; and the women's civil liberties index (*vdem_cli*) indicating women's ability to make meaningful decisions in life. Also, women's political rights (*qog_ciri_wopol*), women's economic rights (*qog_ciri_wecon*), and women's social rights (*qog_ciri_wosoc*).
35. In the GEM dataset, the country is the unit of analysis – all variables measure the share of news companies that have gender-related policies or measures in each country. Variables cover 59 countries and vary between 0–100. In consideration of data reliability, the variables originally included in the Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media and related to media organisations' adoption of policies to provide childcare and to provide gender training have not been considered in this analysis.
36. A preliminary inspection of the correlation matrix of the five indicators points out a strong positive correlation between indicators of policies that aim to address unequal gendered relations (i.e., between gender-equality policies and policies against sexual harassment) and a slightly positive correlation between indicators of work-life-balance policies concerning maternity, paternity, and the possibility to reintegrate women in their jobs after the birth of a child. All the other parameters are not significant, suggesting the lack of a linear relation between couples of indicators. *K*-means cluster analysis allows us to identify combinations in the adoption of the five policies that overcome linear relations between indicators, segmenting the data in a way that the within-cluster variation is minimised (Mooi & Sarstedt, 2011).
37. The gender-equality marker system was developed by OECD and is now a tool within the UN and UNESCO system (see <https://en.unesco.org/genderequality/tools>).

38. Our analysis is based on the GEM dataset. One variable through which we could have explored the correlation between policy adoption and the existence of national legal provisions for gender equality – gender equality from the QoG dataset (Teorell et al., 2017; data from 2010, coded as: *qog_irai_ge*) – does not include enough data for the countries considered in this study; hence, it was not possible to include the variable in the analysis (for the relevance of national gender-sensitive legislation in relation to gender equality in society in general, see also Wängnerud & Samanni, 2009).
39. Further in-depth and qualitative investigation is required to understand the presence, in this group, of countries – such as Kenya or Costa Rica – that do not enjoy high levels of GDP or HDI, nor rank high on most other contextual factors that characterise other countries in this cluster.
40. For an account of the Southern African experience in promoting media gender equality through monitoring, professional training and policy adoption, see Padovani (2018) (see also <http://genderlinks.org.za/what-we-do/media/>).
41. No variable concerning these aspects was available for the present study. Future research would need to collect such data and to integrate them in the GEM dataset.

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Appendix 3.1 List of 59 countries included in the analysis and their regional distribution

Countries		Regional distribution
Argentina	Madagascar	MENA Region Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco
Australia	Malawi	
Bangladesh	Mauritius	Sub-Saharan Africa Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe
Brazil	Mexico	
Bulgaria	Morocco	Americas Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Peru, United States, Venezuela
Cameroon	Mozambique	
Canada	New Zealand	Asia and Oceania Australia, Bangladesh, China, Fiji, India, Japan, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, South Korea
Chile	Namibia	
China	Nigeria	Eastern Europe Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia, Ukraine
Democratic Republic of Congo	Norway	
Costa Rica	Pakistan	Nordic Europe Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden
Denmark	Peru	
Dominican Republic	Philippines	Western Europe France, Germany, Spain, United Kingdom (including England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales)
Ecuador	Poland	
Egypt	Puerto Rico	
Estonia	Romania	
Ethiopia	Russia	
Fiji	South Africa	
Finland	South Korea	
France	Spain	
Germany	Sweden	
Ghana	Uganda	
Hungary	Ukraine	
India	United Kingdom	
Israel	United States	
Jamaica	Venezuela	
Japan	Zambia	
Jordan	Zimbabwe	
Kenya		
Lebanon		
Lithuania		

Appendix 3.2 Variables and data sources

The GEM dataset

The pooled GEM dataset is compiled within the project, Comparing Gender and Media Equality Across the Globe (Färdigh et al., 2020). The GEM datasets include variables from a number of different sources. In order to allow for proper identification across studies and to link each variable to its original source, each variable name has been assigned a prefix that contains a reference to the original dataset, followed by the original variable name.

Variables considered in this chapter

The starting point for our analysis is data derived from the Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media (IWWMF in the GEM dataset; Byerly, 2011).

The International Women's Media Foundation (IWWMF) is a Washington-based organisation that is dedicated to strengthening the role of women journalists worldwide. The Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media, published in 2011, is their first international study of women in the news media. The data were collected between 2009–2010, when more than 150 researchers interviewed executives from 522 major media companies from across the world. The dataset includes detailed information on news operations with respect to men's and women's occupational standing, hiring and promotional policies, and other workplace practices. It also provides information about recruitment, training, policies related to advancement, news assignments, and a range of other issues that affect gender status in news organisations.

Dependent variables

Below, the variables from the IWWMF study that have been included in the analysis as dependent variables are presented, along with the questions used in the IWWMF questionnaire to collect the data:

- Policy on gender equality (iwmf_gendpol): Does your organisation have a stated policy with respect to gender equality in employment?
- Policy on sexual harassment (iwmf_sexpol): Does your organisation have a sexual harassment policy?
- Policy on maternity leave (iwmf_matpol): Does your organisation have a maternity leave policy?

- Policy on paternity leave (*iwmf_patpol*): Does your organisation have a paternity leave policy?
- Do women get same jobs back (*iwmf_sjb*): Do women get their same jobs when they return from maternity leave?

The variables measure the share of news companies which have adopted the above policies. The variable covers 59 country observations (2010) and the scale ranges between 0–100.

Independent variables

The contextual (independent) variables were retrieved from several different sources.

The Gender Gap Index (GGI) score (*wef_ggi_score*) is developed by the World Economic Forum (WEF) and examines the gap between men and women in four fundamental categories (sub-indexes). All indicators are measured as ratios – that is, outcomes for females in relation to outcomes for men. The four sub-indexes include: economic participation and opportunity (female labour force participation, wage equality between women and men for similar work, female estimated earned income, female legislators, senior officials and managers, female professional and technical workers); educational attainment (literacy, net primary enrolment, net secondary enrolment, gross tertiary enrolment); health and survival (sex ratio at birth, healthy life expectancy); and political empowerment (seats in parliament, ministerial level, number of years with female head of state over male value). The scale ranges between 1 (equality) and 0 (inequality).

The Gender Inequality Index (GII) score (*undp_hdi_gii*) is developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and measures gender inequalities in achievements in three dimensions of inequality between women and men: reproductive health (maternal mortality and adolescent birth rate); empowerment (population with at least secondary education and share of parliamentary seats); and the labour market (labour force participation rates). The scale ranges between 0 (equality) and 1 (inequality). In the analysis, the scores have been reversed to provide a measure of equality instead of inequality.

A range of variables are retrieved from the Quality of Government (QoG) dataset (Teorell et al., 2017), which is published by the QoG Institute at the University of Gothenburg. The QoG Institute offers a range of datasets on indicators for quality of government and all things related. For this particular study, we used the following variables from QoG:

- The democracy index (*qog_fh_ipolity2*) is originally retrieved from Freedom House/Polity. This version includes imputed values. The scale ranges from 0 (least democratic) to 10 (most democratic).

- The Human Development Index (HDI) (`qog_undp_hdi`) is originally produced by the UNDP, and it is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: 1) a long and healthy life, 2) being knowledgeable, and 3) having a decent standard of living. The HDI is the geometric mean of normalised indices for each of the three dimensions. The health dimension is assessed by life expectancy at birth. The education dimension is measured by mean of years of schooling for adults aged 25 years and over, and expected years of schooling for children of school-entering age. The standard of living dimension is measured by gross national income (GNI) per capita. The HDI uses the logarithm of income to reflect the diminishing importance of income with increasing GNI. The scores for the three HDI dimension indices are then aggregated into a composite index using geometric mean.
- The indicators for women's economic rights (`qog_ciri_wecon`), women's political rights (`qog_ciri_wopol`), and women's social rights (`qog_ciri_wosoc`) are originally retrieved from the Human Rights Dataset (Cingranelli et al., 2014). In the present study, all 59 IWMF countries are included, and data refers to 2010 for economic rights and political rights and 2007 for social rights. The indicators set out to measure the extensiveness of flaws pertaining to women's rights and government practices towards women, or how effectively the government enforces the laws. The scale varies from 0–3 where 0 indicates that there are no economic or political rights for women under law, and systematic discrimination based on sex may be built into the law, and 3 indicates that all or nearly all of women's economic and political rights are guaranteed by law.

Finally, we referred to a set of variables from the Varieties of Democracy (V-dem) dataset (Coppedge et al., 2017). V-dem covers 177 countries on a broad range of indicators of democracy; political systems as well as elections, women's political empowerment (Sundström et al., 2015), and civil society participation. Approximately half of the indicators in the V-dem dataset are based on factual information obtainable from official documents. The other half consists of more subjective assessments on topics like political practices and compliance with *de jure* rules; on such issues, typically five experts provide ratings. Country experts provide data on country, variable, and year. V-dem's methodology assumes that they have a minimum of five country experts for every country-variable-year. Most variables are measured on an ordinal scale, but are converted to an interval scale by the specific measurement model used by V-dem. For this particular study, we used the following variables from V-dem:

- GDP per capita, logged base 10 (`vdem_mad_gdppc1n`) ranges from 5.32–10.36.

- Women's political participation index (*vdem_genpp*) (Sundström et al., 2015): This index measures the extent to which women are represented in formal political positions. Coders have been asked to include both women's descriptive representation in the legislature and equal share in the overall distribution of power. The index is formed by taking the average of the indicators for lower chamber female legislators (*v2lgfemleg*, standardised) and power distributed by gender (*v2pepwrngen*).
- Women's civil society organisation participation (*vdem_csgender*): This variable measures the extent to which women can freely participate in civil society organisations (CSOs). The expert coders were asked to pay attention to 1) whether women are prevented from participating in CSOs because of their gender, and 2) whether CSOs pursuing women's interests are prevented from taking part in associational life. The scale is ordinal (0 = almost always; 1 = frequently; 2 = about half the time; 3 = rarely; 4 = almost never) but converted to interval by the measurement model applied by V-dem (the V-dem name is *v2csgender*).
- Women's civil liberties index (*vdem_gencl*): This index measures to which extent women have the ability to make meaningful decisions in key areas of their lives. Women's civil liberties are understood to include freedom of domestic movement, the right to private property, freedom from forced labour, and access to justice. The index is formed by taking the point estimates from a Bayesian factor analysis model of the V-dem indicators for freedom of domestic movement for women (*v2cldmovew*), freedom from forced labour for women (*v2clslavef*), property rights for women (*v2clprptyw*), and access to justice for women (*v2clacjstw*). The original variables included in the index are measured on an ordinal scale, but are converted to interval by the measurement model by V-dem.

The project Comparing Gender and Media Equality across the Globe has been funded by the Swedish Research Council (2016–2020) and is based at the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication (JMG) at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. The GEM dataset and its codebook are free to use and can be downloaded in various formats. For access, contact JMG. Please ensure that proper attribution is given when citing the dataset.

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CAUSES

Explaining gender equality in news content

Modernisation and a gendered media field

Monika Djerf-Pierre



4.1 The news media reflect society – or do they?

The idea that journalism should be a mirror of society is widely embraced by both journalists and audiences. One of the longstanding justifications for the lack of gender equality in the news media is indeed that the news “merely reflects society”. It is the usual answer to the question of why men’s voices outnumber those of women in the news. Men dominate on positions of power, and this is mirrored in the media output.

Feminist scholars often dismiss such claims and offer other explanations to the obvious persistence of gender inequalities in the news (Djerf-Pierre, 2007, 2011; Ross & Padovani, 2017; Steiner, 2012). Even so, the state of play is not the same everywhere in the world; despite the male dominance in the news in almost every country, the scale varies quite substantially (see Chapter 2; Macharia, 2015). Research on gender and media has still been short of empirical testing of possible explanations to the variations in gender equality in media content between countries. To what extent is gender (in)equality in the news a reflection, or extension, of existing social inequalities? And how can we understand the origins of cross-country differences? These are the main questions addressed in this chapter.

In comparative studies of gender equality in the news to date, the explanatory framework often revolves around regional differences, comparing countries in Europe, North America, the Middle East, and so forth. On closer inspection, though, there often seem to be larger variations *within* regions than between them.¹ The region is implicitly seen as embodying a composite of economic, political, social, and cultural factors that supposedly influence equality. To unravel the mechanisms at work, *what it is*, in the regional composites that

Djerf-Pierre, Monika. (2020). Explaining gender equality in news content: Modernisation and a gendered media field. In Monika Djerf-Pierre, & Maria Edström (Eds.), *Comparing gender and media equality across the globe: A cross-national study of the qualities, causes, and consequences of gender equality in and through the news media* (pp. 147–189). Gothenburg: Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. <https://doi.org/10.48335/9789188855329-4>

sustains the global patterns, the constitutive parts must be identified: the factors in society and in the media systems that are associated with the level of gender equality in the news media in countries across the globe.

Gender disparities in the media obviously emerge on several and mutually constitutive levels. As van Zoonen (2003: 62) points out, the “gendered structure of media production extends from micro and meso to macro levels”. News stories are produced by individual journalists, working in media organisations in societies with diverse media systems and different setups of political, social, and economic institutions which in turn are also part of the global political economy. Gender is at work on all these levels, intersecting with other categories of power and identity, and to disentangle all mechanisms at once is nearly impossible.

The present study opts for a bird’s-eye view and concentrates on exposing some of the macro structures that influence how women and men (as groups) are represented in the news – factors that can be identified, measured, and compared at the country level. Cross-country comparisons are – globalisation notwithstanding – critical to the understanding of the causes and consequences of gender disparities. The actualisation of gender equality in society is still largely predicated on welfare arrangements, policies, and legislations decided at the national level. News production is also *de facto* still geared mainly towards national or local audiences, elite actors, and interests (Hanitzsch et al., 2019a).

This chapter examines how cross-country differences in gender equality in news media content can be explained, drawing from two different approaches: the modernisation approach and the gendered media field approach. The modernisation approach links the level of gender equality in the media to broader processes of socioeconomic development and to the standing of women in society at large. The gendered field approach instead puts focus on how conditions in the media field influence the status of women in the news media in different societies.

The two approaches are not mutually exclusive, but identify and put dissimilar weight on structural, cultural, and agency factors in society and in the media. Neither has, to date, been empirically tested in a systematic, comparative analysis. This research gap provides the background and context for the empirical aim of the present study: to examine the relationship of, on the one hand, gender equality in the news media, and on the other hand, a set of modernisation indicators and media field indicators. Gender equality in the news media is defined in this study as a state where men and women are represented with equal status in the news. The level of gender equality in the news is measured by the Gender Equality in the Media Index (GEM-I), a composite index of six news indicators retrieved from the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP, 1995–2015). The construction of the GEM-I is described as length in Chapter 2 of this book.

This chapter proceeds as follows: Section 4.2 describes the two approaches in greater detail and identifies the main factors from both approaches to be

included in further correlation and regression analyses. Section 4.3 explains the methodology. Section 4.4 puts the modernisation and gendered field approaches to the test by examining the relationship between gender equality in the news media (GEM-I) and different sets of modernisation and media field indicators. It culminates with a multivariate analysis to discern how modernisation and media-field factors combine to explain cross-country differences in gender equality in the news media. Section 4.5 closes the chapter with a conclusion and discussion.

4.2 Two approaches: Modernisation and/or a gendered media field

This section outlines the modernisation and gendered media field approaches to identify the most important factors for inclusion in further empirical analyses.

Gender equality as an (inevitable) outcome of modernisation

The core argument in modernisation theory is that gender equality simultaneously is an outcome of modernisation and part of a broader cultural change that is ultimately transforming industrial societies (Alexander, 2007; Alexander et al., 2015; Alexander & Welzel, 2007, 2011, 2015; Inglehart et al., 2002; Inglehart & Norris, 2003; Norris & Inglehart, 2001; Welzel, 2013, 2014). Proponents of this perspective thus relate differences in gender equality between countries to the level of modernisation. The transition from a traditional to an industrial – and further on to a post-industrial – society involves cultural changes that to a large degree underpin the structural and institutional changes that support gender equality.

While older versions of modernisation theory focused solely on economic development, contemporary research embraces a more multifaceted and nuanced conception of human development and includes economic as well as social (education, health), political (democratisation), and cultural (value change) aspects. Welzel (2013, 2014; see also Alexander & Welzel, 2007; Alexander et al., 2015) fits the evolution of gender-egalitarian values into a broader framework of human empowerment and proposes a general “evolutionary theory of emancipation”. In the book *Freedom Rising*, Welzel (2013) recognises value change as integral to the achievement of human empowerment and, as a result, the empowerment of women. Human empowerment is defined as the “extent to which people are capable, motivated, and entitled to exercise universal freedoms” (Welzel, 2014: 35). Economic development leads to the diminishing of existential constraints such as scarcity of material resources and poverty. Objective changes in life circumstances produce a shift in subjective values

that gives rise to emancipatory orientations that support universal freedoms (Alexander et al., 2015). These emancipative cultural changes include a rise in gender-egalitarian attitudes.

While cultural change is necessary for gender equality, it is still not sufficient by itself. Values and practices co-evolve in an interactive process; concrete changes in women's and men's lives affect attitudes and values in a recursive manner. The pace of change is furthermore conditioned by the cultural legacy and institutional structure in different countries, such as the Islamic heritage in the Middle East, the legacy of communism in Central Europe, and the egalitarian tradition in Scandinavia (Inglehart & Norris, 2003).

The primacy of value change

In the modernisation framework, gender-egalitarian attitudes are seen as part of a broader set of *values*. Drawing from the World Values Survey (WVS) for empirical evidence, Welzel (2013) makes a distinction between values that indicate people's dissociation from external authority, called secular values, and values that show how strongly people claim authority over their lives for themselves, identified as emancipative values.² The rejection of religious ideas and practices, or disbelief values, is a key component in the secular values. Equality (gender equality between women and men) and choice (the tolerance for divorce, abortion, and homosexuality) values are in turn included in the larger cluster of emancipative values. Alexander and colleagues (2015) argue that self-determination regarding sexuality and sexual freedoms represent the youngest domain in which a rising emancipatory spirit can be noticed.

Cultural modernisation does thus not only pertain to gender equality. It involves secularisation, as well as a turn to sexual and reproductive choice values – the latter supposedly also connected to the rejection of religious beliefs. When investigating the relationship with gender equality in the news, it is therefore reasonable to include both equality and choice values as well as disbelief values and examine how each correlate with indicators of gender equality in the news media.

In applying the modernisation framework to the study of gender equality in the news media, we must consequently recognise that modernisation is multidimensional and comprises economic (economic development), social (education, health), political (level of democracy), and cultural (egalitarian and secular values) features as well as different measures of women's standing in society. It also means examining individual aspects of modernisation as well as gender gaps in societal development and egalitarian values to discern if they relate differently to gender equality in the news media. Positive relationships with gender equality in the news are expected across the board.

The media field: The pervasiveness of masculine domination

Whereas the modernisation approach relates the evolution of gender equality to socioeconomic and cultural developments in society at large, the field approach instead targets the media systems and the institutional settings of the news media.³ This approach draws mainly from feminist applications of Bourdieu's field theory and puts focus on how professional, political, and economic forces in and around the media field combine to shape both the different conditions for women and men working in journalism and the "logic" according to which the news media operate (Djerf-Pierre, 2007; see also De Vuyst, 2020; Melin, 2008). This entails examining the professional norms, news values, principles for selecting news sources, the status of different news beats, and other elements of news production that affect the visibility and status of women in the news (see also Chapter 2).

According to Bourdieu (1998, 2001), a social field consists of a system of competitive social relations where actors compete for the same stakes. What is at stake in a field is, ultimately, the power to decide the "rules of the game"; who is recognised as a legitimate actor (who is regarded as a journalist and who is granted positions and awards), and what is recognised as high quality, valuable, and prestigious in the field (professional norms and standards for what is deemed as "good" journalism). Such status hierarchies structure the journalism fields everywhere on the globe, but access to infrastructure, resources, and material security also differentiate journalism fields in different countries (Örnebring et al., 2018; see also Benson, 2006, 2015).

The journalism fields have their own *modus operandi*, or "logic", and the field approach strongly stresses the importance of informal rules and norms that the actors in the field abide by. A pervasive feature of the field logic of journalism is that the professional rules and norms are considered gender neutral and normalised in professional practice, but have an inbuilt and obscure gender bias. Positions, news beats, and topics are often gender coded, and those regarded as feminine afforded lower value and status (Djerf-Pierre, 2007; Melin, 2008; North, 2016). This is a key mechanism leading to a relative, but persistent, subordination of women in the news.

Comparative research sustains that, from journalists' point of view, journalism practice is invariably perceived as gender neutral. The Worlds of Journalism (WoJ) project (Hanitzsch et al., 2019a, 2019b) identifies clusters of journalistic cultures in and across different regions of the world, based on journalists' professional orientations, perceptions of the internal and external influences on their work, and the sociocultural and political contexts in which journalism operates. Despite finding distinct cultural contrasts, the gender differences in professional outlooks are indeed small to non-existent. Men and women in different countries clearly perceive their respective journalistic cultures in a

similar manner and adhere to the same professional norms (Hanitzsch & Hanusch, 2012). To the extent that masculine values dominate the profession, it is normalised in newsroom and editorial practices (Lobo et al., 2017; Melin, 2008; Steiner, 2012).

The perils of feminisation

The gendered field approach generally disputes the idea of sustained progress and natural evolution of gender equality in journalism. Rather, the *persistence* and *normalisation* of gender inequalities in all spheres of society, including the media, are asserted. Despite the focus on persistence, there are still cross-country variations to be noted and explained from a field-logic perspective. The degree of “masculine domination” (Bourdieu, 2001) clearly varies between journalism fields in different countries.

Drawing from field theory, these variations of (in)equality should be related to 1) the relative autonomy of the media vis-à-vis the political (state) and economic (market) fields, and 2) the degree of feminisation of the journalism fields in different countries.

Bourdieu and his followers clearly conceptualise the media as a semi-autonomous field, situated in the nexus of professional, political, and economic forces. The strength of external influences – economic and political – varies across both time and cultures (see also Hanitzsch et al., 2019a). The *integrity* of journalism therefore varies across the globe. Integrity here refers to journalists’ capacity to pursue their work independently and in accordance with their chosen professional norms and values while fending off improper political and economic pressures and restrictions.

The precaritisation and casualisation of journalistic work, the ongoing concentration and conglomeration of the media, and the increasing competition and financial pressures in many media markets are often depicted as particularly detrimental to women (Byerly, 2013b; North, 2009; Örnebring & Möller, 2018).

Economic influences aside, journalists in many parts of the world are also subject to political pressures, corruption, threats of physical violence, and harassments. Gender is also at play in these situations; a case in point is that women journalists are particularly vulnerable to sexual threats and harassments in their work, not least in social media (Chen et al., 2018; Löfgren-Nilsson & Örnebring, 2016; Vickery & Everbach, 2018). Another is the link between male dominance in a field and higher levels of corruption (see Chapter 7 for a discussion on this).

The field approach thus posits that, in journalism as in all competitive social fields, the most vulnerable actors (in this case, women) always suffer worse from strains and infringements due to their relative subordination. Consequently, gender inequalities should be more evident and persistent in countries with lower levels of journalistic integrity.

The feminisation of journalism is a second factor that – in a field analysis – may influence the level of gender equality in the news, although more difficult to pinpoint. The concept of feminisation is not always clearly defined and sometimes merely used descriptively to illustrate the large influx of women into the profession (Gudipaty et al., 2017). In the gendered field approach, the notion of feminisation links the status of the profession (and journalism in general) to the level of male dominance. In general, low status fields tend to be occupied by women, implying that either the influx of women in journalism leads to a loss of status, or a loss of status opens up the field for women – or a combination of both. The feminisation hypothesis has been used to grasp how the increasing numbers of women journalists in some countries can be combined with low status, low salaries, and precarious work conditions for journalists in the same contexts; for example, in post-communist Eastern Europe, but also in other regions of the world (Byerly, 2013a; Ross & Padovani, 2017; Zuiderveld, 2017; see also Chapter 5 for a discussion on this). The numbers of women at lower (junior) levels in media organisations grow while male dominance at the governance and top-level management levels is maintained (Byerly, 2013a; Gender Links, 2018; Gudipaty et al, 2017; Ross & Padovani, 2017).

Both the perils of feminisation and the restrictions posed by a lack of journalistic integrity can thus be understood in terms of a field logic – a lack of political or economic autonomy in the journalism field is connected to low status of the professionals in the field, and low status positions in any field tend to be occupied by women. A field approach does therefore not perceive of change as evolutionary and ultimately linked to socioeconomic advancements. Instead, gender inequality in the media is the result of an ongoing struggle for power, status, and legitimacy that repeatedly places women in more vulnerable positions in the field. Thus, the variations in the status of women in the news are directly connected to the level of autonomy of the field, and to the degree of feminisation of the profession.

The question still remains as how to put these broad assumptions to the test in comparative empirical analyses. A first way forward is to examine if a relationship exists between the integrity of journalism – vis-à-vis economic influences, political pressures, and biases as well as other violations (harassments) – and gender equality in news.

A second scheme is to examine if and how the degree of feminisation of the profession is related to gender equality in the news. The relationship between the number of women journalists in the field and gender equality in the news cannot, however, be assumed as linear. Research drawing from critical mass theory (see Chapter 5) maintains that the composition of women and men in a social setting is important, but there are certain thresholds when the group composition alters the outcomes (Dahlerup, 2006; Kanter, 1977a, 1977b). The most likely pattern is that the highest levels of gender equality in the news are

found in journalism fields that have achieved gender parity (40–60% of each gender). The fields dominated by men and the most extensively feminised fields where the share of women in the field significantly *exceeds* gender parity should both display lower levels of gender equality in the news.

4.3 Method

The basic methodology in this study is to conduct correlation and regression analyses of the relationship of measures of gender equality in the news with sets of modernisation and media field indicators. The main (and only) dependent variable is the GEM-I, a composite index that comprises six gender-sensitive indicators of gender equality in the news media (cf. UNESCO, 2012). The indicators included in the index are originally retrieved from the GMMP studies from 2005, 2010, and 2015, and are pooled together in the GEM dataset (Färdigh et al., 2020).

Datasets and data sources

Data have been collected from various sources and pooled for use in the present study. The GMMP, the Quality of Government (QoG) Institute, the Varieties of Democracy (V-dem), the World Values Survey (WVS), and Worlds of Journalism (WoJ) provided most of the variables. A detailed and referenced description of all the original data sources and variables used in this chapter is provided in Appendix 4.1.

The pooled dataset comes in two versions. The time series dataset (TS-GEM) uses country-year as the unit of analysis. By including yearly measures for all countries, it provides the largest number of observations (n = country-year). Still, the dataset is what statisticians call “unbalanced”, meaning that there are many gaps in the available time series data. For instance, variables from the GMMP, which is the source of our main dependent variable (the GEM-I), is only collected every fifth year, and not all countries participate in the study. To conduct a correlational analysis, variables from one source must be matched with variables from a corresponding year and country from another source. The problem with data gaps is then exacerbated when pooling data from many different sources, since different datasets include different samples of countries and years.

The cross-sectional dataset (CS-GEM) includes the latest available observation for each country, with 2015 as the target year (n = countries).⁴ This dataset thus allows for analyses with the largest number of countries, but there are other weaknesses. It only includes measures from one point in time and consequently cannot be used to analyse change.

The TS-GEM dataset is used for all analyses except the examination of values (WVS) and journalism cultures (WoJ), where the CS-GEM dataset is used

to maximise the number of countries included. Due to the limited number of country-year observations in the WVS that correspond with the GMMP country-years, the CS-GEM dataset provides a more comprehensive basis for analysis. The same applies to the variables retrieved from the WoJ survey, which has cross-sectional data collected between 2012–2016.

Although the GMMP is comprehensive and comprises as many as 114 countries (in 2015), it only surveys the news media on a single day. Some countries, particularly small nations that lack resources, submit data based on only a few news stories. This makes the sample less reliable and increases the risk that some odd or extreme values may have occurred by chance. To partly alleviate this problem, observations that constitute odd outliers in the analyses, and those that are based on very weak data in GMMP (few news stories are examined – a sample size of less than 15), are excluded (filtered out) from the analyses.⁵ The final analyses include 268 country-year observations from 133 countries in the TS-GEM dataset (68 from 2005, 99 from 2010, and 101 from 2015). The analyses with the CS-GEM dataset include 123 countries. Still, many of the pooled variables from other sources lack measures for the countries or years included in the GMMP, and as a result, there will sometimes be fewer observations in the correlations.

Selection of variables

The next section gives an overview of the variable selection and presents the rationale for the choice of independent variables – that is, variables whose relationship with the GEM-I is to be examined.

The GEM-I is the dependent variable in all analyses. This index calculates the average gender gap in the news (percentage of women – percentage of men) for the following six indicators available in the GMMP reports:

Presence

- women and men as news subjects or sources (all people in the news)
- women and men as reporters (in all stories)

Topics

- women and men as news subjects or sources in economy and business news
- women and men as news subjects or sources in politics and government news

Roles

- women and men as spokespersons
- women and men as experts

The GEM-I can vary between -100 (only men for all six indicators) and +100 (only women for all six indicators). Zero (0) represents full gender equality and a 50/50 distribution of men and women for all six indicators. The construction of the GEM-I is described at length in Chapter 2 of the book, and an inspection of the distribution of the index across countries and time shows that although the index has potential to range between -100 and +100, the actual range is much narrower: from -87.7 to +11.3 in the TS-GEM dataset (six country-year observations with limited data excluded). Almost all countries in the sample are located below the parity mark (0) with the global mean being -55, increasing somewhat between 2005 and 2010, but stalling in 2015 (mean for 2005 = -61; 2010 = -54; 2015 = -53).

The choice of independent variables to measure aspects of modernisation departs from two principles. The first is to include both composite measures of the standing of women in society and separate indicators for each aspect of modernisation (economic, social, political, and cultural). The second is to include indicators of the absolute levels of development as well as measures of the gender gap in outcomes.

Below are the modernisation variables used in the study:

- Economic modernisation: GDP per capita (logged, base 10; Coppedge et al., 2017) is used to measure general economic development and wealth.
- Social modernisation: Education level (mean schooling years in the population aged 25+; Teorell et al., 2017); and Human Development Index (HDI), a composite index developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that includes health and education as well as standards of living, thus serving as a general measure of social development.
- Political modernisation: Democracy index (Teorell et al., 2017; original data from Freedom House/Polity) measures the level of democracy in a country.
- Cultural modernisation: Irreligion (share of population with no religious affiliation; Teorell et al., 2017; original data from PEW), disbelief values, gender equality values, and choice values (all retrieved from WVS). These variables measure two main dimensions of cultural modernisation: secularism on the one hand, and egalitarian values on the other.
- Composite gender gap indices: The Global Gender Gap Index (GGI) (retrieved from Teorell et al., 2017) developed by the World Economic Forum (WEF), and The Gender Inequality Index (GII) developed by the UNDP are well-known composite measures of the overall gender gaps in opportunities for women and men in society. The GGI is the most comprehensive and has a relatively stronger focus on women's economic and workforce opportunities and participation.

- Indicators of development for women: These variables measure the absolute level of women's attainments in a range of areas essential for women's empowerment. Education for women (mean schooling years for women aged 25+; Teorell et al., 2017), women's political rights and women's economic rights (retrieved from Teorell et al., 2017; original data from CIRI, Cingranelli et al., 2014), and women in parliament (percentages of women in the lower or single house; Teorell et al., 2017; original data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union, or IPU).

The media field variables are selected to tap into the two main field dimensions: autonomy and feminisation.

Autonomy indicators:

- Freedom of the press index (retrieved from Teorell et al., 2017; original data from Freedom House) assesses the degree of print, broadcast, and digital media freedom in different countries and territories. The measure includes three sub-indices: freedom from legal restrictions, freedom from political pressures that influence reporting, and freedom from economic influences that affect access to news and information.
- The media integrity index (retrieved from V-dem, Coppedge et al., 2017) is a measure constructed specifically for this study and it assesses to what extent the media are able to maintain their integrity and resist political biases, government pressures, censorship, corruption, and harassment.
- Editorial autonomy from WoJ (Hanitzsch et al., 2019) measures how much freedom journalists' say they have in selecting stories and choosing which aspects to emphasise.
- Five indices from WoJ (Hanitzsch et al., 2019) estimate the various sources of influences on journalists' work: political influences, organisational influences, procedural influences, economic influences, and personal networks.

Feminisation indicator:

- Women journalists indicates the level of feminisation of the journalism field and is measured by the share of women amongst the country's journalists (as estimated by V-dem experts; Coppedge et al., 2017).

Descriptives for all variables are found in Table 4.1 below.

Analytical procedures

The emphasis in this chapter is to establish relationships without focusing on the causal direction of the influences between variables. Although the ambition is to collect yearly data for as many countries in the world as possible, there

Table 4.1 Variable descriptives

	Mean	Std Dev	<i>n</i>	Source	Dataset
GEM-I	-55.3	14.0	268	GMMP	TS & CS
Economic modernisation					
GDP per capita (logged, base 10)	0.547	0.234	1490	V-dem	TS
Social modernisation					
education level (mean schooling years, age 25+)	0.562	0.257	239	QoG	TS
Human Development Index	0.599	0.249	1021	QoG/UNDP	TS
Political modernisation					
democracy index	0.704	0.286	1652	QoG/FH	TS
Cultural modernisation					
irreligion (share of population unaffiliated with a religion)	0.121	0.175	152	QoG/Pew	CS
disbelief values	0.392	0.242	79	WVS	CS
gender equality values	0.489	0.244	79	WVS	CS
choice values	0.388	0.231	79	WVS	CS
Gender equality					
Global Gender Gap Index, score	0.453	0.160	1220	QoG/WEF	TS
Gender Inequality Index, score (reversed)	0.536	0.273	869	QoG/UNDP	TS
women's education level (mean schooling years, women age 25+)	0.548	0.260	325	QoG	TS
women's economic rights	0.455	0.279	1042	QoG/CIRI	TS
women's political rights	0.697	0.163	1039	QoG/CIRI	TS
women in parliament (% women in lower or single house)	0.296	0.172	1616	QoG/IPU	TS
Freedom of the press					
freedom of the press index	0.593	0.257	1642	QoG/FH	TS
Media integrity					
media integrity index	0.637	0.184	1542	V-dem	TS
Editorial autonomy					
editorial autonomy: selecting stories, aspects emphasised	0.730	0.176	63	WoJ	CS
Editorial influences					
political influences	0.359	0.231	63	WoJ	CS
organisational influences	0.530	0.267	63	WoJ	CS
procedural influences	0.541	0.209	63	WoJ	CS
economic influences	0.489	0.225	63	WoJ	CS
personal networks	0.383	0.168	63	WoJ	CS
Feminisation					
women journalists (% women)	0.487	0.173	1542	V-dem	TS

Comments: All variables (except GEM-I) are rescaled to range from 0–1 (GII reversed so higher values mean more equality). The TS-GEM dataset includes data from 2005–2015 (n = country-year observations), and the GEM-I ranges from -87.7 to +11.3 (observations with limited data excluded). The CS-GEM dataset includes the latest available observation for each country (target year = 2015; n = countries), and the GEM-I ranges between -87.0 and +1.9 (mean = -54.2; standard deviation = 14.8; n = 123; four observations with limited data excluded). The GGI was first published in 2006, and the scores for 2006 are matched with GMMP for 2005. See Appendix 4.1 for more information about the variables.

Source: GMMP; QoG (Teorell et al., 2017); V-dem (Coppedge et al., 2017); PEW; WVS; WEF; Freedom House; CIRI (Cingranelli et al., 2014); UNDP

are several gaps. This makes it difficult to apply advanced statistical methods (e.g., auto-regressive models or fixed effects models) that might give a more accurate inference of causal relationships. Still, a multiple regression analysis to examine the combined influences of different societal and media factors over time is offered at the end of the chapter.

The *strength* of the association between gender equality in the news media and other variables is measured by correlations. The correlation coefficient (Pearson's r) indicates the strength and direction of a linear relationship. It ranges between +1 and -1, where a positive correlation means that they increase in parallel, and a negative correlation means that when one variable increases, the other decreases. What is considered a strong relationship depends on the field of study and what is being measured, but as a general rule, we consider an r below 0.39 weak, 0.40–0.59 moderate, and above 0.60 strong.

The *magnitude* of the association of the independent variables on the dependent variable (GEM-I) are indicated by the unstandardised regression coefficients (b -coefficients). This measure is included to provide a substantial interpretation of the association between the variables in the analyses. Since all independent variables are measured on different scales, they have been rescaled to range between 0 and 1. Rescaling keeps the original variation of the variables, but the results are easier to compare and understand. By rescaling, the unstandardised b -coefficient in a regression analysis now shows how much the estimated value of GEM-I increases when we move from the lowest value of the independent variable to the highest. If, for instance, the lowest GGI score of any country in the study is 0.5 and the highest 0.9, and the b -coefficient is 40, the interpretation is that the country with highest GGI is estimated to score 40 units higher on the GEM-I than the country with lowest GGI. The b -coefficients are derived from OLS regression models with robust clustered standard errors (cluster = countries).

The explanative power of the independent variables is indicated by the R -square (R^2) measure (adjusted R^2 is used in the multiple regressions). It measures how much of the cross-country variations (differences between countries) in gender equality in the news media (GEM-I) can be linearly attributed to, or accounted for, by one or several of the independent variables. This measure can vary between 0 and 1, but is multiplied by 100 to be expressed as a percentage (0 = the other variable does not explain any of the variation in GEM-I; 100 = the independent variable fully explains the variation in GEM-I).

The next section presents the results of the study, starting with separate analyses of the relationship of the GEM-I with the modernisation and field indicators, respectively. This is followed by a multivariate analysis where the most influential indicators from the two approaches are tested simultaneously.

4.4 Analysis: Testing the modernisation and gendered field approach

That GEM-I is related to social developments is hardly surprising. Table 4.2 shows the relationships between the GEM-I and the indicators of economic,

Table 4.2 *The relationship between indicators of modernisation and gender equality in the news media (GEM-I) (Pearson's r , unstandardised b -coefficients, adjusted R^2)*

	Correlation	Max effect	Variation explained (%)	n
Economic modernisation				
GDP per capita (logged, base 10)	.309***	19.1***	9.6***	248
Social modernisation				
education level (mean schooling years, age 25+)	.421***	22.6***	17.7***	146
HDI	.394***	21.1***	15.6***	164
Political modernisation				
democracy index	.287***	15.1***	8.2***	264
Cultural modernisation – secularism				
disbelief values (population mean)	.138	8.4	1.9	68
irreligion (share of population unaffiliated with a religion)	.072	5.9	0.5	121
Cultural modernisation – egalitarian values				
gender equality values (population mean)	.542***	32.1***	29.4***	68
choice values (population mean)	.376**	23.3**	14.2**	68

Comments: * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, **** $p < .001$. Data are not available for all countries and years, which means that the number of country-year observations included in the analyses varies between different measures. Indicators of gender equality in the news media (GEM-I) are from the GMMP study (2005, 2010, & 2015). Analyses of economic modernisation, social modernisation and political modernisation are done with the TS-GEM dataset (n = country-year observations, 2005–2015). Analyses of secularism and egalitarian values are done with the CS-GEM dataset (including the latest available observation for each country with 2015 as the target year, n = countries). All independent variables have been rescaled to range between 0 and 1. The correlation is Pearson's r . The max effect is the unstandardised regression coefficient (b -coefficient) of the rescaled, independent variable in a bivariate regression on the GEM-I (OLS regression with clustered standard errors, cluster = country). Variation explained is measured by the R^2 (multiplied by 100 to be expressed as a percentage) and is the proportion of the variation in GEM-I that can be linearly attributed to the independent variable in the bivariate regression (OLS regression with clustered standard errors, cluster = country). Observations with limited data are excluded. See Appendix 4.1 for more information about the variables.

Source: GMMP; QoG; V-dem; Freedom House; WVS; Pew; UNDP

social, political, and cultural modernisation, drawing from data for all available countries and years. As surmised, we find significant and positive correlations between the GEM-I and the modernisation measures across the board. The strongest correlation and the largest magnitude are found with the education level in the population, but the HDI measure (which includes both education and health) comes quite close. Still, the correlations are moderately strong at best, and the explained variance is quite low overall.

Cultural modernisation: Strong relationship with values

The relationship between the cultural modernisation indicators and the GEM-I reveals a more interesting and diverse pattern.⁶ Irreligion (the proportion of individuals that define themselves as unaffiliated with major religions) has no relationship at all with the GEM-I, and disbelief values in the population has a very weak positive correlation, but it is not significant.

The key feature of the modernisation approach is the strong emphasis on the secular aspects of modernisation. Religious legacies supposedly have a strong imprint on values, and the society's religious tradition clearly impacts on women's political empowerment (Alexander & Welzel, 2011; Inglehart & Norris, 2003; Reynolds, 1999). The lack of association between secularism and gender equality in the news is thus interesting to note in this context. It is true that all world religions have patriarchal roots and that the link between religion and women's emancipation is rather a "matter of the degree of discrimination and the pace of religious liberalization in gender matters" (Reynolds, 1999: 551; cf. Aune et al., 2017). In any case, there is little evidence in this study to support gender equality in the news being related to secularism – or the rejection of religious practices – per se.

The relationships between GEM-I and gender equality and sexual and reproductive choice values in the WVS are, on the other hand, both significant and positive; the correlation with gender equality values is also among the strongest in the study. The interpretation is pleasantly straightforward: the more prevalent egalitarian values are in society, the higher the level of gender equality in the news media. The correlation with choice values is weaker and the variation explained is also much larger for gender equality values than for choice values. Looking more closely at the spread and variation of the two types of values across the globe, we understand better why this could be the case (see Figures 4.1a and 4.1b).

Figures 4.1a and 4.1b map the variations of gender equality and choice values in the WVS for the countries included in the present analysis. The maps visualise both the substantial country differences (in gender equality values in particular) and that the prevalence of gender equality values widely surpasses the support for choice values. This is an indication of the pattern suggested by

Figure 4.1a Support for gender equality values globally (country mean)

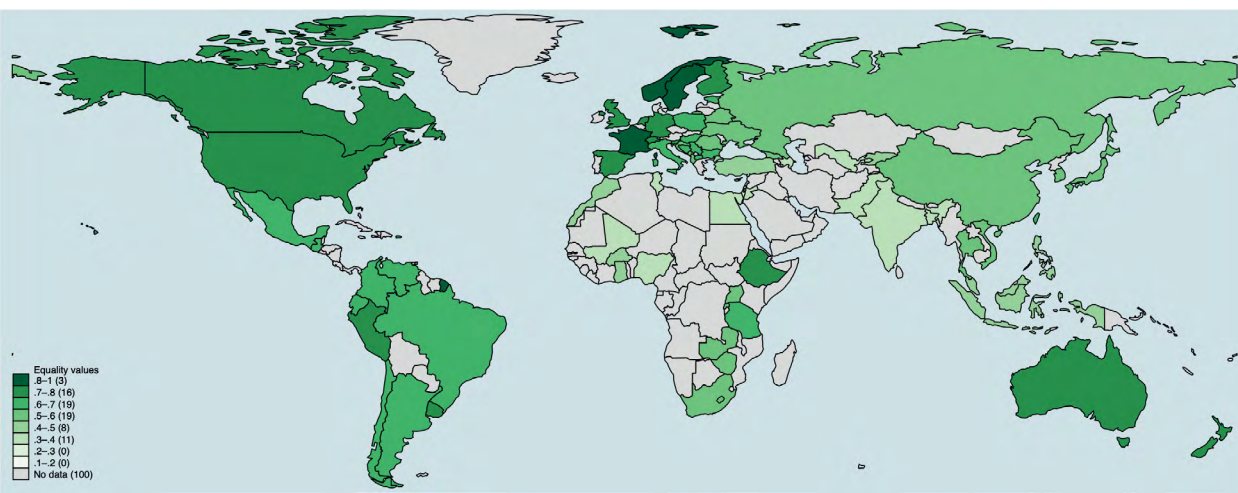
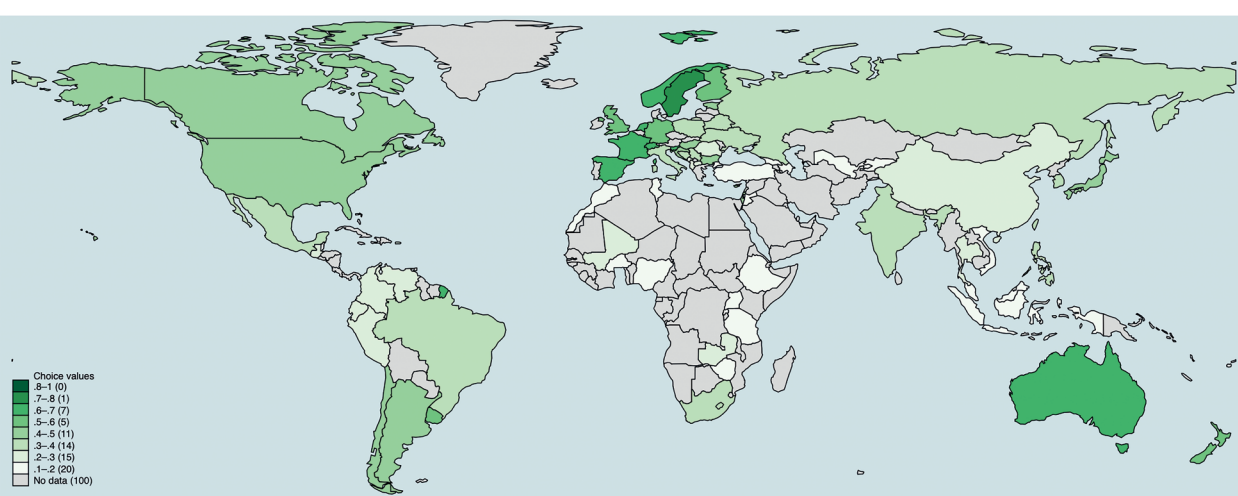


Figure 4.1b Support for reproductive and sexual choice values globally (country mean)



Comments: The maps include the latest available observation for each country, most being from 2011–2014. Grey areas lack data. Welzel (2013) constructed the values scales. To measure a respondent’s emphasis on gender equality, Welzel used three items indicating how strongly respondents disagree with the statements that 1) “education is more important for a boy than a girl”, 2) “when jobs are scarce, men should have priority over women to get a job”, and 3) “men make better political leaders than women”. Choice values measures how strongly people value freedom in reproductive and sexual choices, using three items indicating how acceptable respondents find 1) divorce, 2) abortion, and 3) homosexuality. The values scale is constructed as an index that scale from 0 (no support) to 1 (full support). See Appendix 4.1 for more information about the variables.

Source: WVS; Welzel (2013)

Alexander and Welzel (2015): the spread of gender equality values precedes the expansion of support for sexual and reproductive choices.

Gender gaps in the media world and in the “real world”

Just as expected, the various measures of the general standing of women in society also display positive relationships with the GEM-I (see Table 4.3). The development and gap measures estimate gender disparities in different ways. The development indicators evaluate outcomes in absolute levels of resources and possibilities; the achievements for men and women are therefore not mutually exclusive. The gender gap approach, on the other hand, is per definition a relation, quantifying the outcomes for women relative to the outcomes for men. It is consequently possible to find a small gender gap in education in combination with low levels of education among the population, if neither girls nor boys go to school. Modernisation research, however, maintains that the gender gap in outcomes closes with increasing levels of development. In any case, the results from this study shows that both the gap and the development measures yield similar results. The associations with GEM-I are also generally stronger than with the modernisation indicators in Table 4.2.

All the indicators of development for women demonstrate positive and significant relationships with GEM-I, and some even come close to being considered “strong”. Interestingly, women’s education level and economic rights are clearly better predictors of gender equality in the news; the correlations between GEM-I and the political development indicators are consistently weaker, that is, with women in parliament and women’s political rights. This means that women’s status and opportunities in the economic sphere of society is more important for attaining gender equality in the news than are achievements in the political realm.

Of the gender gap measures, the Global Gender Gap Index (GGI) has the strongest association with the GEM-I – much more so than the GII. This is most likely due to GGI having (relative to the GII) stronger emphasis on women’s achievements in the economic sphere.

The GGI and the prevalence of gender equality values are, as a result, the most important modernisation factors to consider for further multivariate analyses. That they are deeply entwined is apparent; the correlation between them is .662 ($r, p < .000$) for the countries in our sample (using the CS-GEM dataset). With the limited data at hand, we are unable to probe deeper into the causal connection between them. The values indicator is only available as a cross-sectional measure for 68 countries in our dataset (and less when more variables are included in the regressions). Such tests should be conducted over time with larger and better samples. Still, if the effects of the GGI and gender

Table 4.3. *The relationship between gender equality in the news media (GEM-I) and indicators of gender equality in society (Pearson's r , unstandardised b -coefficients, R^2)*

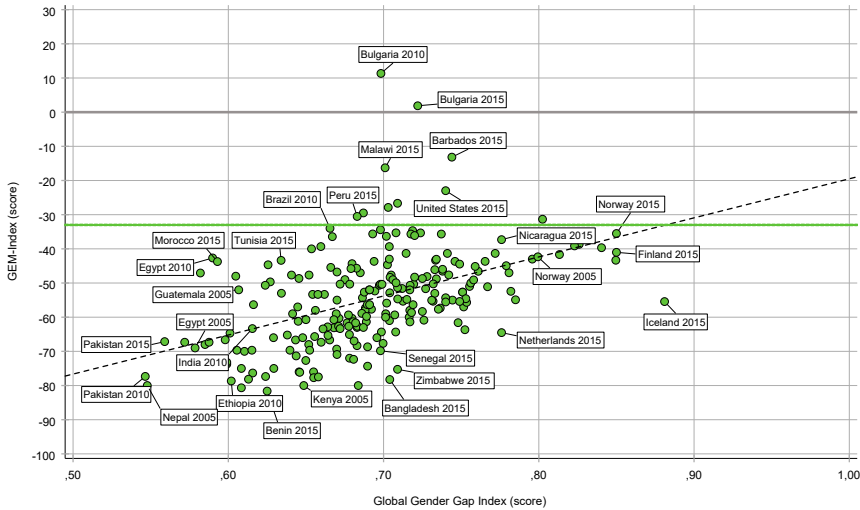
	Correlation	Max effect	Variation explained (%)	n
Composite gender gap indicators				
Global Gender Gap Index (score)	.467***	40.7***	21.8***	233
Gender Inequality Index (score, reversed)	.310***	16.1***	9.6***	240
Development indicators for women				
education for women (mean schooling years, women, age 25+)	.438***	24.7***	19.2***	207
women's economic rights	.432***	19.8***	18.6***	166
women in parliament (share of women in lower or single house)	.259***	20.3***	6.7***	259
women's political rights	.225**	19.6***	5.0***	166

Comments: # $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. All analyses use the TS-GEM dataset, n = country-year observations (2005–2015). Data are not available for all countries and years, which means that the number of country-years included in the analyses varies. Indicators in the GEM-I are from the GMMP study (2005, 2010, & 2015). Country-year observations with limited data are excluded. All independent variables have been rescaled to range between 0 and 1. The correlation is Pearson's r . The max effect is the unstandardised regression coefficient (b coefficient) of the rescaled, independent variable in a bivariate regression on the GEM-I (OLS regression with clustered standard errors; cluster = country). Variation explained is measured by the R^2 (multiplied by 100 to be expressed as a percentage) and is the proportion of the variation in GEM-I that can be linearly attributed to the independent variable in the bivariate regression (OLS regression with clustered standard errors; cluster = country). The GGI was first published in 2006, and to match the GGI with the GMMP, the scores for 2006 are matched with GMMP for 2005. The GII has been reversed so that higher values mean more equality. See Appendix 4.1 for more information about the variables.

Source: GMMP; QoG; WEF; CIRI; IPU; UNDP; V-Dem

equality values are tested simultaneously in a multivariate regression model (not in table; using CS-GEM, OLS regression), the GGI turns insignificant. This is at least some indication that gender equality values can be seen as a mediator between women's standing in society and gender equality in the news.

All things considered, of the variables in the modernisation cluster, the GGI is deemed to be the best and most useful predictor of gender equality in the news. To better understand the relationship between the GEM-I and GGI, it is helpful to visualise both the overall pattern and the location of different countries on the GEM-I chart. Figure 4.2 shows a scatterplot of the GEM-I and the original GGI scores, and it provides a graphic illustration of the relationship between the two variables.

Figure 4.2 The relationship between the Global Gender Gap Index and the GEM-I

Comments: Number of country-year observations = 233 (from 2005, 2010, & 2015; observations with limited data are excluded). The GEM-I indicators are from the GMMP, and the GEM-I can vary between -100 (all men in the news) to +100 (all women in the news, with zero (0) indicating full gender parity). The green line indicates the threshold for a 33/67 proportion of women and men in the news, or women receiving at least 50 per cent of the media attention devoted to men. The GGI was first published by the WEF in 2006, and to match the GGI with the GMMP, the GGI scores for 2006 are matched with GMMP for 2005. The GGI ranges between 0 (women have 0% of men's attainment and resources in all areas) and 1 (women have 100% of men's attainment and resources in all areas), with 0.5 indicating that women having 50 per cent of men's attainments and resources. Pearson's $r = .467$ ($p < .001$), $b = 114.3$ ($p < .001$), $R^2 = .218$ ($p < .001$). Equation for the fitted regression line (dotted line): $GEM-I = -133.8 + 114.3 \times GGI$. See Appendix 4.1 for more information about the variables.

Source: GMMP; QoG (original data from WEF)

Each dot in Figure 4.2 represents a country-year observation placed in the diagram relative to its position on two axes: The GGI at the horizontal axis and GEM-I along the vertical axis. The GGI can vary between 0 and 1, and 1 indicates full gender parity in society. The GEM-I can vary between -100 (only men in the news) and +100 (only women in the news), and zero (0) represents full gender parity in the news. Looking at Figure 4.2, three main conclusions can be drawn:

- *Gender equality is generally lacking both in society and in the news.* All dots are located below the equality marks for both measures. The only exception for the GEM-I is Bulgaria, with a small surplus of women in the news. As regards the GGI, no country in the world has yet fully closed the gender gap, although the Scandinavian countries have reached furthest towards parity.
- *Gender equality in society is generally higher than in the media.* In all countries in our sample, women's attainment in society has reached 50 per cent or more of that of men (0.5 or higher on the GGI). For the GEM-I, only

a small number of countries have reached or surpassed such a level of equality. In terms of comparability, a score of 0.5 on the GGI corresponds with a GEM-I score of -33 or higher. This threshold is visualised by the green line in Figure 4.2, and as we can see, most countries are located below this line.⁷

- *Countries with smaller gender gaps in society generally have more gender equality in the news.* The dots clearly form a rising pattern. This means that countries that score high on the GGI in a certain year tend to have higher levels of equality in the news the same year; Sweden, Finland, and Norway appear closer to the upper right corner. Countries with low scores for both indicators, such as Pakistan (2015), Nepal (2005), and Ethiopia (2010), appear in the bottom left corner. Figure 4.2 also illustrates that the country scores indeed vary over time, as evidenced by the small increase in GEM-I in Pakistan between 2010 and 2015.

The media field and gender equality in the news

Moving on to examine the correlations resulting from the analyses of the media field indicators, we find the associations with the various measures of the autonomy of the media field to be quite weak overall (see Table 4.4).

The measures of media freedom – both the freedom of the press index with the three sub-indices and the media integrity index – display positive and significant associations with the GEM-I, but they are feeble at best and the explanative power low. The main press freedom index still performs best of them all. A country with the highest press freedom in the world ranks about 16 scale units higher on the GEM-I than countries with the lowest press freedom.

The indicators of editorial influences retrieved from the Worlds of Journalism (WoJ) study only have 53 country observations that can be matched with the GMMP data. Despite the limited data, the direction of the relationship is as expected: editorial autonomy, political influences, and economic influences are negatively related to gender equality in the news, whereas no association can be seen with the other sources of influence (also expected). Still, the associations are rather small and weak, and economic influences just about reach statistical significance. The positive relationship with the level of editorial autonomy is somewhat stronger, but not much better in terms of explanative power.

We subsequently find that the influence of restrictions on journalistic autonomy is somewhat weaker than could be expected from field theory. The feminisation indicator (percentages of women journalists), however, tells a very different story. Here, we find correlations that exceed .500 and an explanative power of over 25 per cent. The result is both clear and easy to interpret: the more women in the journalism field, the more gender equality in the news.

We hypothesised earlier that gender equality in the news should be the highest in countries that have reached gender parity in the profession and lower

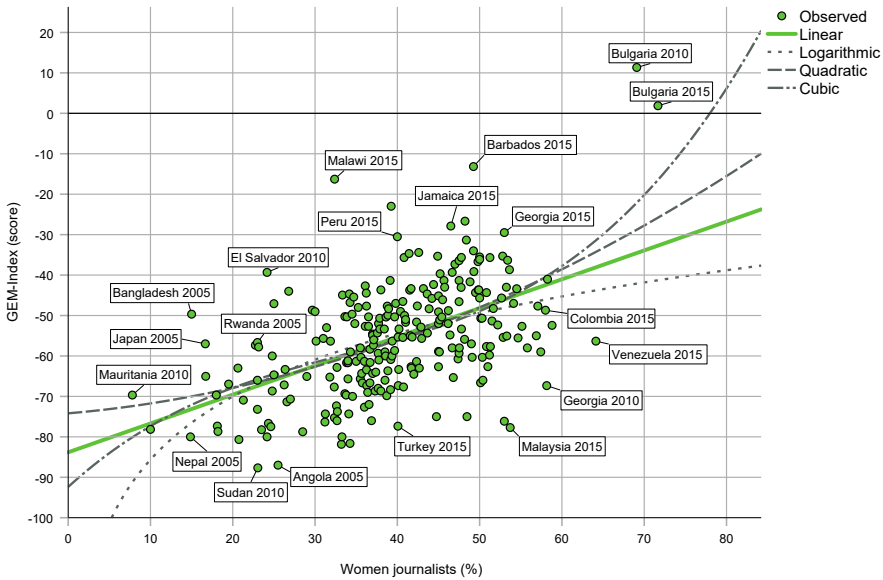
in fields with either extensive male dominance or extensive feminisation (over 60% women journalists). This posits a curvilinear relationship (not linear) with a ceiling, or peak, located at gender parity in the field. However, a closer look at the pattern of the relationship reveals it to be – above all – linear and not very susceptible to thresholds or ceiling effects.

Table 4.4 *The relationship between media field indicators and GEM-I (Pearson's r ; unstandardised b -coefficients; R^2)*

	Correlation	Max effect	Variation explained (%)	n
Autonomy – media freedom				
freedom of the press index	.288***	16.2***	8.3***	265
freedom of legal restrictions (sub-index)	.291***	15.8***	8.5***	264
freedom of economic influences (sub-index)	.265***	14.8***	7.0***	264
freedom of political pressures (sub-index)	.257***	14.8***	6.7***	264
media integrity index	.257***	20.4***	6.6***	253
Autonomy – editorial autonomy				
editorial autonomy in selecting stories and aspects emphasised	.291*	22.3*	8.4*	53
Editorial influences				
political influences	-.261 [#]	-15.4 [#]	6.8 [#]	53
economic influences	-.213	-12.0	4.6	53
procedural influences	.135	9.3	1.8	53
organisational influences	-.075	-3.6	0.6	53
personal networks	-.004	-0.3	0.0	53
Feminisation				
women journalists (%)	.519***	45.7***	26.9***	253

Comments: [#] $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Data is not available for all countries and years, which means that the number of observations included in the analyses varies. The GEM-I indicators are from the GMMP study (2005, 2010, & 2015). The analyses of freedom of the press, media integrity, and feminisation use the TS-GEM dataset; n = country-year observations (observations with limited data are excluded). Analyses of editorial autonomy and editorial influences use the GEM-CS dataset; n = countries (no observations excluded). The correlation is Pearson's r . The max effect is the unstandardised regression coefficient (b -coefficient) of the rescaled, independent variable in a bivariate regression on the GEM-I (OLS regression with clustered standard errors in the TS-GEM analyses, cluster = country). Variation explained is measured by the R^2 (multiplied by 100 to be expressed as a percentage) and is the proportion of the variation in GEM-I that can be linearly attributed to the independent variable in the bivariate regression (OLS regression with clustered standard errors when using the TS-GEM dataset, cluster = country). Influences variables are derived from the means of the following indicators in WoJ: Political influences (politicians; government officials; pressure groups; business representatives); Organisational influences (managers of news organisation; supervisors and higher editors; owners of news organisation; editorial policy); Procedural influences (information access; journalism ethics; media laws and regulation; available news-gathering resources; time limits); Economic influences (profit expectations; advertising considerations; audience research and data); Personal networks (friends, acquaintances, family; colleagues in other media; peers on the staff). See Appendix 4.1 for more information about the variables.

Source: GMMP; QoG/Freedom House; V-dem; WoJ

Figure 4.3 The relationship between women journalists and the GEM-I

Comments: Number of country-year observations = 265 (observations with limited data are excluded). The data for the GEM-I indicators are from the GMMP study (2005, 2010, & 2015). The percentages of women journalists are from V-dem. Pearson's $r = .519$ ($p < .001$), $b = .713$ ($p < .001$), $R^2 = .269$ ($p < .001$). Equation for the fitted linear regression line (green straight line): $\text{GEM-I} = -83.8 + 0.71 \times \text{women journalists}$. The dotted and broken grey lines show the results of alternative methods to fit a regression line to the dots in the scatterplot (logarithmic, quadratic, and cubic). R^2 for the logarithmic = .236 ($p < .001$), quadratic = .275 ($p < .001$), and cubic = .282 ($p < .001$). See Appendix 4.1 for more information about the variables.

Source: GMMP; V-dem

The scatterplot in Figure 4.3 visualises the pattern and also tests different ways of fitting a line to the data at hand. Although the cubic and quadratic methods perform marginally better than the linear (higher R^2), none of them display a peak or cap at gender parity in the field. If anything, gender equality in the news accelerates after gender parity in the journalism field is reached (however, the outlier Bulgaria might be responsible for this result). A big caveat is indeed that there are very few countries in the sample that can be classified as “extensively feminised” (instances where the share of women journalists exceeds 60%). This means that our results reveal nothing about the effect of vast feminisation on the level of gender equality in the news, a relationship we hypothesised earlier to be negative. What we can say is that gender equality in the news increases with the share of women working in journalism, up and until gender parity is reached in the profession.

Towards a multi-perspectival approach

The results so far show that both the individual modernisation indicators and most of the media field indicators correlate positively with GEM-I, but also that the associations with the autonomy indicators are weaker overall.

Still, we should not be too hasty to dismiss the role of journalistic autonomy. In the field approach inspired by Bourdieu (1998), the media are seen as only *partially* autonomous vis-à-vis the political and economic fields. Economic and political influences clearly condition the professional practices of journalism, directly or indirectly. Bourdieu also never considers gender as a field in its own right (Moi, 1999) but sees it as a part of the “general social field”; gender is a combinatory category that infiltrates and influences every other social category.

Media sexism and the lack of visibility and voice of women in the public sphere are thus also expressions of – in Bourdieu’s own terminology – the masculine dominance in the “general social field”. This dominance is replicated and reproduced in every other field:

The relation of domination between men and women [...] establishes itself in the whole set of social spaces and subspaces, that is, not only in the family but also in the educational world and the world of work, in the bureaucratic universe and in the field of the media. (Bourdieu, 2001: 102)

The field approach does certainly not disregard the general material and cultural conditions for women in society – factors that constitute the cornerstone of the modernisation approach. Rather, journalism is seen as nested with other fields, and the general status of women in society always conditions the prospects for women in all areas of society, including the news media. This also entails that society and media factors are entwined; they need to be considered together.

The correlation analyses conducted so far have only considered one independent variable at the time. As a final analytical step, we test if a combination of societal (modernisation) and media field factors can increase the explanatory power and improve our understanding of the mechanisms at work.

This is done through a multiple regression analysis, with controls. Due to data being retrieved from many different sources, the number of country-year observations decreases considerably when several variables are tested simultaneously. Sadly, the countries and years covered by GMMP only partially match the countries and years included in the other datasets. There are also fairly strong correlations among the modernisation indicators, not the least with the GGI, and if we include all of them, they all tend to turn insignificant. This is

not surprising, since it is a well-known fact (not the least from modernisation research), that most things that shape a “good society” with widespread welfare for its citizens tend to go together: economic development, democracy, health, education, human rights and freedoms – and gender equality.

We thus limit the analysis to include the modernisation and field indicators that displayed the strongest associations with the GEM-I in the previous analyses – the GGI, women journalists, and the press freedom index. We also include “year” to measure the development over time, while accounting for that change is not continuous. The GEM-I increases over time, but the leap in gender equality in the news happened between 2005 and 2010, with no apparent progress in 2015 (see Chapter 2). Finally, we include GDP per capita to control for the general level of economic development in a country which we suspect may influence many other factors in the model.

We choose the OLS regression method (with robust clustered standard errors; cluster = country) as it is geared towards explaining differences across countries, which is what we are most interested in discovering in this study (see note 8 for tests with alternative methods).⁸ It also provides the most easy to understand, straightforward estimates. The results (see Table 4.5 in Appendix 4.2) show that both gender equality in society and the level of feminisation have substantial and significant effects, even after the inclusion of controls. More precisely: 1) the higher the women’s standing in society (the GGI) and the higher the level of feminisation of the journalistic field, the higher the level of gender equality in the news; 2) journalistic autonomy (press freedom) also contributes positively to gender equality; and 3) when region is added to the analysis, the pattern is amplified rather than weakened, and the explanative power increases to 43 per cent. The effect of GDP per capita is now negative, meaning that more affluent countries have lower levels of gender equality when women’s standing in society, time, and freedom of the press are accounted for. The region dummies are significant, showing a higher level of gender equality in North America and Latin America and lower in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. The significant country dummies indicate that there are still unobserved factors (additional influences on gender equality in the news) in the regions not accounted for by observing the standing of women in society, economic development, feminisation of the journalistic field, and the press freedom in the respective country. These could also not be accounted for by including other independent variables, such as level of democracy or women’s education (not in table). What these unobserved factors are remains to be examined in future research.

4.5 Conclusion and discussion

This chapter examines the possible explanations for the variations in gender equality in the news media between different countries across the globe. The relevance of and empirical support for the modernisation and gendered media field approach are tested by means of correlation and regression analyses.

The modernisation approach to gender equality posits the rise in gender equality – in the media and elsewhere – as primarily linked to socioeconomic development. Socioeconomic progress brings about cultural change which – eventually – leads to increasing gender equality in different spheres of society. Thus, institutional frameworks that promote women's participation in political and economic life, such as women's access to education, political representation, and participation in the work force, should be important prerequisites for gender equality in the media. The modernisation approach accords much importance to the general evolution of cultural norms, and values regarding gender and traditional and patriarchal values in society should have a key role in suppressing gender equality in the news.

The modernisation approach yields strong support in this study. Most aspects of modernisation, including the general level of gender equality in society, are positively related to gender equality in the news media. Of all the modernisation factors examined, the spread of gender equality values, as measured in the World Values Survey, and the general standing of women in society, assessed by the Global Gender Gap Index, proved to be the best single predictors of gender equality in the news media in the study.

The strength of the associations between gender equality in the news and single societal factors – both gender gaps and degrees of economic, social, political, and cultural modernisation – ranges from weak to moderate. Still, the measures of women's standing in society were better predictors of gender equality in the news than the general political and economic development indicators. Modernisation of different spheres of society are therefore important for media gender equality, but only to the extent that they translate into improving women's overall status in society.

The gendered media field approach primarily posits gender disparities as the outcome of an ongoing, constant struggle for power and status within the semi-autonomous media fields in different countries. The professional rules and norms that govern the *modus operandi* of the journalism field are considered gender-neutral and normalised in professional practice, but still have an inbuilt and pervasive gender bias. This approach directs attention to how professional, political, and economic forces conjoin in positioning women in relative subordination in the media field. Political interferences and economic pressures, corruption and harassment of journalists, rampant marketisation, and the ongoing concentration and conglomeration of media markets are believed

to lead to a loss of autonomy and integrity for the professionals working in the media. These influences are particularly detrimental to women due to their vulnerable (subordinate) positions.

One of the media field indicators proved to be an exceptionally good predictor of gender equality in the news: the level of feminisation. The percentages of women journalists displayed the largest magnitude of association of all measures in the study. Importantly, this effect remained even when controlling for other factors, such as the general standing of women in society. Recruiting more women to the journalism field is evidently important for achieving gender equality in the news. Still, we do not know if this is because women journalists are better at recognising and recruiting women as news sources (research in this area is rather conflicting) or if more women in the field creates a more egalitarian news culture that stimulates all journalists – both men and women – to become more gender aware and inclusive in their reporting.

The autonomy indicators were less successful in explaining the significant variations in equality that exist between countries. Yet, both the level of press freedom and media integrity were significantly related to gender equality in the news and the direction of influence was as expected: more autonomy and integrity vis-à-vis external influences is associated with higher levels of gender equality in the news.

Even so, since very few countries have reached equality in the news, what our study *de facto* examines is the explanations for the various degrees of gender inequality in the news. From a field-theoretical point of view, women's lower status in society (and their subordination in the general social field) is believed to also permeate and condition their status in the media field. Societal and field factors are thus seen as interrelated and should be considered simultaneously. The results of this study clearly sustain the virtues of such a multi-perspectival approach. While the improvement of women's standing in society is essential for reducing gender inequalities in the news media, the level of feminisation and the journalistic autonomy in the media field also have unique influences on the levels of gender equality in the news in different countries. Countries where women have a higher standing in society, more women in the journalism field, and more autonomy for journalists, have less inequality in the news. The extent to which gender inequalities in the news have been alleviated is evidently an outcome of a combination of societal and media-field factors.

Modernisation theory – both older and more recent versions – is frequently accused of being ethnocentric and having a Western bias, and feminist scholars have also raised criticism concerning gender bias. Amongst others, Scott (1996: 5) argues that both the (liberal) modernisation approach and the (Marxist) dependency theory “are grounded in somewhat similar masculinist notions of what it means to be modern”. Even the global World Values Survey has been accused of Western bias; ethnocentrism, selective choices of variables, and

built-in biases that “confirm the superiority of the Western world” (Lundgren, 2015: 51; McLaren, 2019).

The same criticism can certainly be raised against the application of modernisation theory in this study. Still, modernisation research also emphasises universal, individual rights that pertain to both men and women, including equal opportunities for making reasoned life choices. These individual rights constitute the normative foundation of the globally acknowledged, and largely celebrated, conception of human rights (Malhotra et al., 2002; Nussbaum, 1999).

The widely used global indices assessing women’s empowerment and the status of women in different countries (the GGI from the World Economic Forum, and the GII and the Gender Development Index, developed by the UNDP) are, above all, composite indices of gender gaps in a range of outcomes that have been established *both* as human rights and as indicators of modernisation, such as access to education, standard of living and work opportunities, health, and political empowerment.

The stance taken in this study is therefore that it is perfectly plausible to be interested in the influence of societal development and women’s standing in society on the level of equality in the news media without abiding by the notion of continuous evolution of human freedoms or the primacy of values change. To identify and estimate gender gaps is essential for all policy work aiming to improve the life-choices and empowerment of women. In an often-cited definition by Mosedale (2005: 252), the relational component is clearly emphasised: “women’s empowerment [is] the process by which women redefine and extend what is possible for them to be and do in situations where they have been restricted, compared to men, from being and doing”.

What is evident from the present study, as from every other study of gender and journalism, is that formal policies and legislations do not guarantee equality (Byerly, 2013a; Ross & Padovani, 2017; see also Chapter 3). Even in the most gender egalitarian Nordic countries, gender equality in the news is worse than in the “real world”. Women and men may have different aspirations and make different choices, but the choices they make are always conditioned by material and cultural circumstances.

Still, the connection between culture, media, and society is envisioned quite differently in the two approaches. In the modernisation approach, culture is regarded as a set of values, norms, and attitudes shared by a collective. Much emphasis is placed on cultural change, and the media are understood as part of the cultural sphere; in media-saturated societies, the news media are important, if not the most important, vehicles for circulating cultural values. Media can thus both foster sexism through the proliferation of gender stereotypes in media content and serve as conduits for positive cultural change, depending on the social context in which they operate. Values are thus implicitly seen as preceding action; “thinkings” of gender incites and guides “doings”.

In the gendered field approach, culture is rather conceptualised as shared practices; it is doings as well as thinkings. The relationship between media and culture is consequently much more amorphous and difficult to pin down. The troubled relationship between the doings and thinkings of gender in the media field (Löfgren-Nilsson, 2010) is obvious, and there are ample indications of a mismatch between publicly stated values and concrete practices, not the least as evidenced by the global revelations of widespread sexual abuse and harassment by the #metoo movement in 2017. The complex relationship between norms and ideals, and actions, is a pervasive feature of journalism practice, everywhere in the world (Mellado, 2020). This mismatch is, on the other hand, not unique to the media field. Corruption is broadly recognised as wrong, but the actual practice of bribery is widespread across the world (Rothstein, 2018). Lundgren (2015) also notes that the support for democracy in the Arab states is among the highest in the world, but these values are not recognised in the actual level of democratic rule.

Although values, in most instances, can be a good-enough predictor of behaviour, they are clearly not identical or substitutable. While the present study (and GMMP, which it draws from) has an invaluable advantage in that it exposes the actual practice of journalism (real news content is measured instead of conducting interviews or relying on country experts to gauge the status of women in the news), the results, above all, show that norms and values in the general social field and the journalism field may vary, but the actual practice of making news seems – so far – to favour men’s voices over women’s voices in most countries in the world.

This leads us back to the question posed in the introduction to this chapter: do the media serve as mirrors of society with regard to gender equality? Here, the results indicate that the media world of news is considerably less gender equal than the “real world”, at least when measured by established gender gap indices such as the GGI. Suffice it to say that the mirror postulate – the presumption that the news media merely reflects existing power structures and that media sexism is but a derivative of the general standing of women in society – finds faint support in the present analysis.

Notes

1. The GMMP’s cross-national study of the representation of women and men in news media content reveals substantial intra-regional differences regarding gender representation (Macharia, 2015). Even in the supposedly egalitarian Nordic countries, the 2015 GMMP study shows significant variations: the share of women as news subjects in Sweden was 31 per cent and in Iceland only 18 per cent. Similarly, in the IWMF 59-nation study of the status of women in the news media industry (Byerly, 2013a; see also Chapter 5), the five participating African countries rank very differently in equality: South Africa (leaders); Kenya, Namibia, and Uganda (middle group); and Ghana (least progress). The group of countries “taking the lead” in advancing women’s status in the newsrooms included the Eastern European countries Bulgaria

- and Estonia, Russia, but also Sweden and South Africa. What empirical evidence suggests is thus that region may be a crude predictor of national differences.
2. According to Welzel (2013), from the viewpoint of human empowerment, “secularisation is the demystification of sacrosanct sources of authority over people”. He identifies four domains of such authority: 1) religious, 2) patrimonial, 3) state, and 4) conformity norms. Secular values in the domain of religious authority is called agnosticism, but in the WVS dataset, it is labelled disbelief values. In the present study, we only focus on the first domain – religious authority – but use the term secularism. Emancipative values also include two additional categories: autonomy (individual independence) and voice (valuing people as a source of influence in society). However, only equality and choice are included in the present study.
 3. There is a plethora of comparative research on media systems and the media fields in different countries, not the least the several studies spawned by Hallin and Mancini’s seminal book *Comparing Media Systems* (2004) and studies applying new institutional theory to the study of the media. Gender is still largely invisible in most of this research.
 4. If data for 2015 is absent, the closest available observation is included instead, starting with 2014 and going backwards. For our dependent variable (the GEM-I), most of the observations in the CS-GEM dataset are from 2015, followed by 2010.
 5. The following 15 observations are excluded: Suriname 2005, Ireland 2010, St. Lucia 2010, St. Vincent 2010, Togo 2010, Chad 2015, Haiti 2015, Ethiopia 2015, Lesotho 2015, Niger 2015, Solomon Island 2015, St. Lucia 2015, Gabon 2015, Congo 2015, Burkina Faso 2015. However, since many of these also lack data for one or many of the indicators in the GEM-I, the de facto exclusion of observations – the filtering of observations with a valid measure for the GEM-I – is much smaller: between 2–6 country-year observations for analyses with the TS-GEM dataset, and 0–2 observations with the CS-GEM dataset. It is also important to note that we also ran, as a robustness test, all correlations and regressions with the filtered variables included, and we achieved very similar results. Thus, the conclusions would have been the same even if we included the countries with weaker data.
 6. Modernisation research shows that 1) gender-egalitarian values are stronger among women than men, 2) in the younger generation, and 3) that the gap that exist between traditional agrarian societies and egalitarian post-industrial societies is far greater than differences between women and men within each type of society (Inglehart & Norris, 2003). Further, 4) the society’s religious tradition also has a strong imprint on values (Inglehart & Norris, 2003, 2013), and the Christian religious heritage is linked to a stronger emphasis on gender-equality values (i.e., further religious modernisation), whereas the Islamic heritage is associated with a stronger emphasis on patriarchal values (Reynolds, 1999; Alexander & Welzel, 2011). These results hold across time, between generations, and – interestingly – irrespective of the level of religiousness (Alexander & Welzel, 2011).
 7. A further illustration of the distorted relationship between the media world and the “real world” can be found in Figure 4.4 in Appendix 4.2, where we have recalculated the GEM-I to correspond with the measurement model applied by the GGI (indicators are measured as ratios, i.e., outcomes for women and outcomes for men). The green line in Figure 4.4 represents the hypothetical situation where the gender gap in the news perfectly reflects (mirrors) the gender gap in the “real world”. As we can see, there is a linear relationship (the dotted line) but most of the dots are located below the green line at the lower right-hand side of the chart.
 8. There are certainly other regression methods that could have been used in the study, but the OLS method is by far the easiest to interpret. Still, to make sure the results are reliable, the models have also been tested with random effects, mixed effects, and fixed effects (fixed effects regression and country dummies) methods. The random and mixed models yield almost identical results as the OLS models presented in the chapter (with robust clustered standard errors, cluster= country). In the fixed effects model, on the other hand, all coefficients except time (year) turn insignificant. There are clearly methodological problems with using a fixed effects method with the data at hand. Although GMMP measures real outcomes in terms of actual media representation, it only surveys one day every fifth year, and many countries have only participated once (which means that the GEM-I cannot vary in a fixed effect model).

The timespan covered by the GMMP variables is also quite small, and when examining the development over time, we only have data for the years 2005, 2010, and 2015. Over this period, there may be too little variation in the independent variables, which results in little variation to “work with” when relating GEM-I outcomes to societal factors. To be sure, the explained variance is also very low in the fixed effects model (0.092 overall). Some countries furthermore only sample a limited number of news media and news stories. This is less reliable than larger samples collected over longer periods, and parts of the variation that can be observed over time is probably due to random “errors” that cannot be attributed to any incremental changes in societal or media factors.

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Appendix 4.1 Variables and data sources

The pooled GEM dataset is compiled in the project Comparing Gender and Media Equality Across the Globe (Färdigh et al, 2020). The GEM datasets include variables from several different sources. To allow for proper identification across studies and to link each variable to its original source, each variable name has been assigned a prefix that contains a reference to the original data set followed by the original variable name. All independent variables in the analyses have been rescaled to range between 0 and 1.

Variables from the Global Media Monitoring Project

The indicators used in this chapter to measure the gender representation in the news are retrieved from the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) 2005, 2010, and 2015. GMMP collects empirical evidence of gender in news content and changes over time through one-day snapshots taken every five years. The media monitoring has been carried out every five years since 1995, expanding from 71 to 114 participating countries in 2015. The number of news outlets and news stories sampled by each participating country, depending on its population and the number of available news media outlets. The aim is to include a sample news outlet that is representative of each country's news media sector. The Gender Equality in the News Media Index (GEM-I) calculates the average gender gap in the news (percentage of women – percentage of men) for the following six indicators retrieved from the GMMP reports:

- women and men as news subjects or sources (all people in the news) (gmmp_gons_f, gmmp_gons_m)
- women and men as reporters (in all types of stories) (gmmp_gor_f, gmmp_gor_m)
- women and men as news subjects or sources in economy and business news (gmmp_gonseb_f, gmmp_gonseb_m)
- women and men news subjects or sources in politics and government news (gmmp_gonspg_f, gmmp_gonspg_m)

- women and men as spokespersons (speaks on behalf of another person, a group, or an organisation) (gmmp_fonssp_f, gmmp_fonssp_m)
- women and men as experts (provides information, opinion, or comment, based on specialist knowledge) (gmmp_fonse_f, gmmp_fonse_m)

Variables from the United Nations Development Programme

The Gender Inequality Index (GII) score (undp_hdi_gii) measures gender inequalities in achievements in three dimensions of inequality between women and men: reproductive health (maternal mortality and adolescent birth rate); empowerment (population with at least secondary education and share of parliamentary seats); and the labour market (labour force participation rates). The scale ranges between 0 (equality) and 1 (inequality).

Variables from the Pew Research Center

The religious composition by country is based on survey data conducted by the Pew Research Center. The measures are based on religious self-identification. For survey questions, data are reported for different religious groups. Religious affiliation is determined based on a respondent's answer to the following question:

- “What is your present religion, if any? Are you [response options are modified by survey country]?”

Data was collected in 2010. The unaffiliated score is termed irreligion and used as an indicator of secularism:

- irreligion (share of population with no religious affiliation 2010) (pew_rel_unaff)

Variables from the Quality of Government Institute

A range of variables are retrieved from The Quality of Government (QoG) dataset (Teorell et al., 2017) published by the QoG Institute, which offers a range of datasets on indicators of quality of government and all things related.

The Global Gender Gap Index (GGI) score (qog_wef_ggi_score) is developed by the World Economic Forum (WEF) and included in the QoG dataset. The GGI measures the gap between men and women in four fundamental categories (sub-indexes). All indicators are measured as ratios, that is, outcomes for females in relation to outcomes for men. The four sub-indexes include:

- economic participation and opportunity (female labour force participation, wage equality between women and men for similar work, female estimated earned income, female legislators, senior officials and managers,

female professional and technical workers)

- educational attainment (literacy, net primary enrolment, net secondary enrolment, gross tertiary enrolment)
- health and survival (sex ratio at birth, healthy life expectancy)
- political empowerment (seats in parliament, ministerial level, number of years with female head of state over male value)

The indicators for women's economic rights (qog_ciri_wecon) and women's political rights (qog_ciri_wopol) were originally retrieved from Cingranelli and colleagues' (2014) Human Rights Dataset. The indicators set out to measure 1) the extensiveness of flaws pertaining to women's rights and 2) government practices towards women, or how effectively the government enforces the laws. The scale varies from 0, which indicates there are no economic or political rights for women under law, and systematic discrimination based on sex may be built into the law, to 3, which indicates that all, or nearly all, of women's economic and political rights are guaranteed by law.

Education for women is measured with the following indicators:

- Education for women, average schooling years for population aged 25+ (qog_bl_asy25fm) measures the mean schooling years for the population, aged 25 or older.
- Education for women, average schooling years for women aged 25+ (qog_bl_asy25f) measures the mean schooling years for women, aged 25 or older.

Women in parliament, the share of women in the lower house (qog_ipu_l_sw) is originally compiled by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) on the basis of information provided by national parliaments. It measures the share of women in lower or single houses of parliament (in percentages).

The democracy index (qog_fh_ipolity2) measures the level of democracy in a country and is originally retrieved from Freedom House/Polity. This version includes imputed values. The scale ranges from 0–10, where 0 is least democratic and 10 most democratic.

The Human Development Index (HDI) (qog_undp_hdi) is originally produced by the UNDP and it is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: 1) having a long and healthy life, 2) being knowledgeable, and 3) having a decent standard of living. The HDI is the geometric mean of normalised indices for each of the three dimensions. The health dimension is assessed by life expectancy at birth. The education dimension is measured by mean of years of schooling for adults aged 25 years and more, and expected years of schooling for children of school entering age. The standard of living dimension is measured by gross national income (GNI) per capita. The HDI uses the logarithm of income to reflect the diminishing importance

of income with increasing GNI. The scores for the three HDI dimension indices are then aggregated into a composite index using geometric mean.

The freedom of the press score (qog_fh_fotpsc) is published and provided to QoG by Freedom House. This index assesses the degree of print, broadcast, and digital media freedom in different countries and territories. The index score can range from 0 (most free) to 100 (least free). However, in the analyses in Chapter 4, the scale is reversed so that higher numbers equal more freedom. The measure includes three sub-indices (also reversed in the analysis):

- Freedom from legal restrictions measures the legal environment for the media, both the laws and regulations that could influence media content and the government's inclination to use these laws and legal institutions to restrict the media's ability to operate. The scale is 0–30 (0 indicates more freedom).
- Freedom from political pressures that influence reporting measures the degree of political control over the content of news media, including the editorial independence of both state-owned and privately owned media; access to information and sources; official censorship and self-censorship; the vibrancy of the media; the ability of both foreign and local reporters to cover the news freely and without harassment; and the intimidation of journalists by the state or other actors, including arbitrary detention and imprisonment, violent assaults, and other threats. The scale is 0–40 (0 indicates more freedom).
- Freedom from economic influences that affect access to news and information, including the structure of media ownership, measures the transparency and concentration of ownership; the costs of establishing media as well as of production and distribution; the selective withholding of advertising or subsidies by the state or other actors; the impact of corruption and bribery on content; and the extent to which the economic situation in a country impacts the development of the media. The scale is 0–20 (0 indicates more freedom).

Variables from the World Values Survey

All the values variables were retrieved from the World Values Survey (WVS, 1981–2014). The individual level WVS data have been aggregated to the country level, thus constructing new country-level aggregate variables (applying the country-weights supplied with the WVS dataset). The values scales are indices and can range between 0 and 1. The different values scales are developed by Christian Welzel (2013) for the WVS (also drawing from Inglehart & Norris, 2003):

- Gender equality values (wvs_EQUALITYmean_t) is measured as the country-level mean of the equality scale.

- Choice values (wvs_CHOICEmean_t) is measured as the country-level mean of the choice scale.
- Disbelief values (wvs_DISBELIEFmean_t) is measured as the country-level mean of the disbelief scale.

Gender equality values is measured by three items, indicating how strongly respondents disagree with the following statements:

- “Education is more important for a boy than a girl”.
- “When jobs are scarce, men should have priority over women to get a job”.
- “Men make better political leaders than women”.

Choice values measures how strongly people value freedom in their reproductive and sexual choices, using three items indicating how acceptable respondents find 1) divorce, 2) abortion, and 3) homosexuality.

Disbelief values – called agnosticism by Welzel (2013) and labelled disbelief in the WVS dataset – measures the extent to which an individual distances themselves from religious authority, using three items: 1) whether a person describes themselves as a “religious person”, 2) whether a respondent mentions “faith” as an important child quality, and 3) how frequently a respondent attends religious services. Refusal to describe oneself as a religious person, not mentioning faith, and abstention from religious services are defined as secular positions in the domain of religious authority.

Variables from the Varieties of Democracy Project

The Varieties of Democracy (V-dem) dataset (Coppedge et al., 2017) covers 177 countries from 1900–2016 on a broad range of indicators of democracy, political systems as well as elections, women’s political empowerment (Sundström et al., 2015; Stockemer & Sundström, 2016), and civil society participation. The indicators in the V-dem dataset are based on factual information obtainable from official documents as well as subjective assessments by country experts. A minimum of five country experts is used for each country-variable-year. Most variables are measured on an ordinal scale, but are converted to an interval scale by the specific measurement model used by V-dem.

- GDP per capita, logged base 10 (vdem_mad_gdppcln) is a measure of the country’s economic prosperity and development.
- Media integrity is an index constructed by the present author specifically for this study, to obtain a unitary measure of the integrity of the media field in different countries; it gauges to what extent the media are able to maintain their autonomy and face off government pressures,

censorship, corruption, harassment, and political biases. It consists of the mean of eight variables from the V-dem dataset (Cronbach's alpha for the variables included in the index is .964):

1. Media bias (vdem_mebias) measures if there is media bias against opposition parties or candidates.
 2. Internet censorship effort (vdem_mecenefi) gauges if there are government attempts to censor information (text, audio, or visuals) on the Internet.
 3. Media censorship effort (vdem_mecenefm) measures if the government directly or indirectly attempts to censor the print or broadcast media.
 4. Media corruption (vdem_mecorrpt) estimates to what extent corrupt acts or behaviours are prevalent in the media.
 5. Critical print/broadcast media (vdem_mecrit) measures if the major print and broadcast outlets routinely criticise the government.
 6. Harassment of journalists (vdem_meharjrn) measures if journalists are threatened with libel, arrested, imprisoned, beaten, or killed.
 7. Print/broadcast media perspectives (vdem_merange) estimates if major print and broadcast media represent a wide range of political perspectives.
 8. Media self-censorship (vdem_meslfcen) measures if there is self-censorship among journalists when reporting on issues that the government considers politically sensitive. The variable is rescaled to range from 0 (least integrity) to 1 (most integrity).
- Women journalists (vdem_mefemjrn) estimates the percentage of journalists in the print and broadcast media who are women. A caveat with this measure is that many countries lack reliable data on the gender composition of the country's journalists. However, this is the best estimate given by V-dem's country experts.

Variables from Worlds of Journalism

The Worlds of Journalism (WoJ) study (Hanitzsch et al., 2019) is a survey of 27,500 journalists in 67 countries, collected between 2012–2016.

- Editorial autonomy (woj_AUTONOMY) measures how much freedom journalists say they have in selecting stories and choosing which aspects to emphasise (5 = complete freedom; 4 = a great deal of freedom; 3 = some freedom; 2 = little freedom; 1 = no freedom at all).

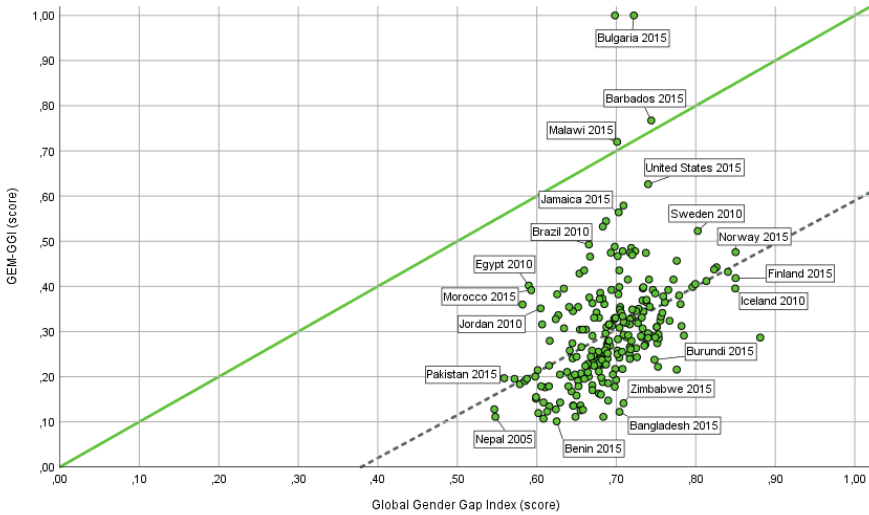
The various influences on journalists' work were also measured, and the answers encapsulated in indices. From a list of potential sources of influence, journalists

were asked to state how much influence each of them has on their work (5 = extremely influential; 4 = very influential; 3 = somewhat influential; 2 = little influential; 1 = not influential):

- Political influences (woj_INFL_POL): means of politicians; government officials; pressure groups; and business representatives.
- Organisational influences (woj_INFL_ORG): means of managers of news organisation; supervisors and higher editors; owners of news organisation; and editorial policy.
- Procedural influences (woj_INFL_PRO): means of information access; journalism ethics; media laws and regulation; available news-gathering resources; and time limits.
- Economic influences (woj_INFL_ECO): means of profit expectations; advertising considerations; and audience research and data.
- Personal networks (woj_INFL_PER): means of friends, acquaintances, and family; colleagues in other media; and peers on the staff.

Appendix 4.2 Additional figure and table

Figure 4.4 *Global Gender Gap Index and GEM-GAP*



Comments: Number of country-year observations = 233 (observations with limited data for the GEM-I are excluded – two country-year observations). The data for the GEM-I indicators are from the GMMP study (2005, 2010, & 2015). In the graph, the GEM-I is recalculated to form the GEM-GGI to measure the gender gap in the same way and on the same scale as the Global Gender Gap Index (GGI) (share of women / share of men). A 50/50 distribution between men and women would thus result in a GEM-GGI of 1. The GEM-GGI thus ranges between 0 (women have 0% of men's attainment and resources in all areas) and 1 (women have 100% of men's attainment and resources in all areas), with 0.5 indicating that women have 50 per cent of the attainment and resources men have access to. Pearson's $r = .424$ ($p < .001$), $b = .95$ ($p < .001$), $R^2 = .179$ ($p < .001$). Equation for the fitted regression line (dotted line): $\text{GEM-GAP} = -0.36 + 0.95 \times \text{GGI}$. The green line shows the relationship if the GEM-GGI would fully correspond with the GGI. See Appendix 4.1 for more information about the variables.

Source: GMMP; QoG (original data from WEF)

Table 4.5 Gender equality in the news media (GEM-I score) regressed on the Global Gender Gap Index, GDP per capita, women journalists, freedom of the press, year, and region

	Model 4.1 OLS	Model 4.2 OLS (with region dummies)
Global Gender Gap Index (score)	21.5** (7.7)	22.8** (7.7)
GDP per capita (logged, base 10)	-4.8 (6.5)	-19.8* (9.3)
Women journalists	33.6** (11.1)	30.9* (12.0)
Freedom of the press	8.4 (5.3)	11.4# (5.8)
Year (reference category = 2005)		
2010	6.4*** (1.6)	7.2*** (1.7)
2015	5.5** (1.9)	6.5** (2.0)
Region (reference category = Africa)		
Asia		3.5 (2.8)
Pacific		4.0 (5.1)
Europe		8.8* (3.8)
Middle East		9.3# (4.9)
Caribbean		9.8* (4.7)
Latin America		11.5*** (2.8)
North America		19.2** (6.4)
Constant	-89.2*** (4.4)	-89.1*** (4.9)
<i>n</i>	218	218
Std errors	Clustered robust cluster = country	Clustered robust cluster = country
Number of clusters (countries)	103	103
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	.366***	.430***

Comments: TS-GEM dataset. *n* = country-year observations (country-year observations with limited data are excluded). #*p* < .10, **p* < .05, ***p* < .01, ****p* < .001. OLS regression, robust clustered standard errors (cluster = country), unstandardised regression coefficients. All independent variables have been rescaled to range between 0 and 1. The GEM-I can vary between -100 (only men in the news) and +100 (only women in the news). Indicators in the GEM-I are retrieved from the GMMP study (2005, 2010, & 2015). Year = 2005 (reference category). The GGI was first published by the WEF in 2006, and to match the GGI with the GMMP, the GGI scores for 2006 are matched with GMMP for 2005. See Appendix 4.1 for more information about the variables. See also Note 8 for a further methodological discussion.

Source: GMMP; QoG (original data from Freedom House & WEF); V-dem

The project Comparing Gender and Media Equality across the Globe has been funded by the Swedish Research Council (2016–2020) and is based at the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication (JMG) at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. The GEM dataset and its codebook are free to use and can be downloaded in various formats. For access, contact JMG. Please ensure that proper attribution is given when citing the dataset.

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Axes of power

Examining women's access to leadership positions in the news media

Carolyn M. Byerly & Katherine A. McGraw



5.1 Comparing women's standing in the news industry across the world

This chapter examines factors associated with women's occupational advancement within news organisations, as well as the relationship between their newsroom status and representation in news content. It seeks to expand what is known about women's place in a profession that is essential in providing women greater visibility, a public voice, and expanded participation in civic and political life. Women across the globe have advocated for greater access to jobs in journalism, as well as for mobility within the profession, for more than a century. Their struggle and slow gains are reflected in feminist media studies that reveal the low extent to which women remain represented in the profession as well as in local, national, and international news stories (Byerly, 1995, 2011; Gallagher, 1987; Macharia, 2015). Although women have made significant strides as reporters and news presenters, the advancement to management and governance roles – the positions of power – has been significantly slower.

Tuchman (1978a, 1978b), who called women's absence in the news a problem of "symbolic annihilation" four decades ago, would also reveal the relationship between news invisibility, misrepresentation, and public perceptions of women's roles in society. Tuchman was part of an early international chorus of feminist scholars and leaders pointing out that as long as newsrooms were men's domain, and news practices privileged men's priorities, there would be little change in women's professional standing within the field or in the amount or content of news that circulated. Women have waged a long struggle to gain equality in journalism and other media professions, particularly to attain policy- and decision-making roles where news is typically defined and stories are assigned.

Byerly, Carolyn M., & Katherine A. McGraw. (2020). Axes of power: Examining women's access to leadership positions in the news media. In Monika Djerf-Pierre, & Maria Edström (Eds.), *Comparing gender and media equality across the globe: A cross-national study of the qualities, causes, and consequences of gender equality in and through the news media* (pp. 191–232). Gothenburg: Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. <https://doi.org/10.48335/9789188855329-5>

The present study complements Monika Djerf-Pierre's preceding Chapter 4 in its concerns to 1) identify and theorise the factors that contribute to women's standing in newsrooms across the world and, additionally, 2) gain greater insight about the possible relationship between women's position within the newsroom hierarchy and their representation in news content. Where Djerf-Pierre takes a societal approach by applying modernisation theory, we draw from organisation-focused approaches, applying critical mass theory to explore factors affecting women's advancement within the profession in different countries. By the same token, the study does not set out to establish cause-effect relationships between women's newsroom roles and the amount or kind of news about women. Rather, the study lays the foundation for such research by examining relationships among a range of factors within news organisations as well as the broader social contexts within which those organisations operate.

5.2 Women's position in the news industry – and in society

Journalism is a profession widely construed to be essential in the democratic process and nation building. Feminists instilled the necessity of expanding women's role in journalism and media in various documents produced during the UN Decade for Women (1976–1985) and in subsequent global-level documents. One of the most important was Strategic Objective J of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted during the 1995 fourth global women's conference, which set forth two specific goals. The first called for an increase in the “participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication”, while the second promoted “a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media” (Strategic Objective J, 1995). The challenge in this chapter will be to identify what we call the axes of power, that is, the factors that allow women to gain influence within the newsmaking industry in the nations studied, and to theorise these findings in relation to the global objectives of the Strategic Objective J (1995), contained in the Beijing Platform for Action. In the context of this study, axes are considered to be the factors which, in coordination with each other, determine women's status in news organisations.

Women's location within organisations is affected by a variety of social factors. In spite of a global feminist movement that has advanced women's opportunities and status in society in areas such as education, longevity, political leadership, and professional success, current data show that gender equality still varies from nation to nation, and that the most industrialised nations have not necessarily made the greatest gains (WEF, 2017). While the World Economic Forum's (WEF) annual Global Gender Gap Index (GGI) shows that women have generally advanced over these years, other research shows that

these advances are not always stable, especially within the corporate sector. One recent report shows that women slipped 2 per cent in standing between 2015 and 2016, now representing only 27.8 per cent of corporate boards of directors (McGregor, 2016). More relevant to the media-world, corporate websites show men decidedly in control in the 100 largest media corporations, where women occupy only 6 per cent of the chief executive officer positions, 17 per cent of the positions in top management, and 20 per cent of the seats on boards of directors (Edström & Facht, 2018).

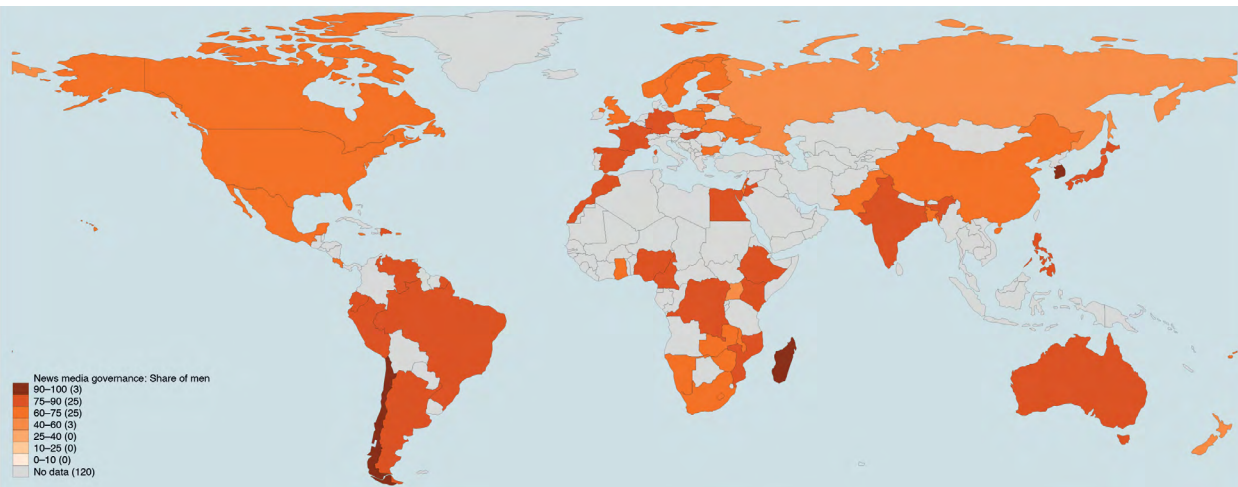
The present study focuses on women in traditional news organisations – radio, television, and newspapers – and including the present-day online versions. Even though other online news sites have become popular, it is traditional news organisations which still employ the greatest numbers of news professionals and which reach the largest audiences with their news. It bears mentioning that traditional news organisations have also been the focus of feminist scholarship on gender equality in employment as well as news content for several decades, and, thus, the present study fits within this longer trajectory of feminist journalism research.

In earlier studies, feminist scholars documented persistent gender inequality in news content, where journalism still speaks mainly in a male voice and focuses disproportionately on men's ideas, achievements, and analyses of current events. The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), which has conducted global-level research on gender in news content every five years since 1995, shows that progress has been slow. In 2015, the aggregated data for the 114 participating nations revealed that women still constitute only 24 per cent of the people in the news (as sources or subjects) published, broadcast, or posted online – a figure that has been relatively stable since 2005 (Gallagher, 2015). The figure for content on women in online news was only marginally better at 26 per cent. How is such longstanding neglect of women's lives, concerns, and contributions related to the numbers of women news professionals?

The largest global-level study to date on women's occupational standing within the news industry is the Global Report on the Status of Women in News Media, led by Byerly (2011) for the International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF). Researchers in that study of 59 nations interviewed executives at 522 companies to learn the numbers of women and men in reporting, production, management, and governance roles, as well as whether company policies and practices incorporated gender equality. Aggregated data showed men occupying three-fourths of the positions in top management and on boards of directors, as well as two-thirds of the reporting positions. The findings digressed from that pattern in a number of nations, where women were near parity with – or even surpassed – men in several occupational ranks within their news companies. Such important exceptions of greater participation by women were found in some of the Nordic and Eastern European nations; however, the explanations

for women's greater ascendancy in journalism differ in these two regions. The map in Figure 5.1 illustrates the ubiquity – but also some variation – of male dominance in governance roles in the news industry in the countries participating in the global report. Some countries have few or no women in governance (e.g., South Korea, 0%; Chile, 9%; Hungary, 13%; and Japan, 16%), whereas others reach a higher share of women in governance (e.g., Zimbabwe, 37.5%; New Zealand 41%; and Finland, 46%). The large grey areas, where we have no data, illustrate the information gap researchers and policy-makers are still facing due to lack of sex-disaggregated data on news media organisations.

Figure 5.1 Male dominance in governance roles in the news industry (per cent)



Comments: $n = 57$ countries and 1,857 individuals. Grey areas lack data.

Source: IWMF (Byerly, 2011)

The Nordic nations have experienced a long history of social consensus on gender equality, as well as the legal and political structures to support equality, over the last 50 years (Edström, 2013; Øvrebø, 2013; Savolainen & Zilliacus-Tikkanen, 2013). By contrast, in the nations of Eastern Europe, the field of journalism went through a process of feminisation under Soviet occupation, when pay was relatively low and news workers were subject to “news management” and censorship by communist authorities. Under these conditions, men were less likely to be attracted to the profession, and women filled the professional gap, remaining to the present time (Byerly, 2011, 2013; Nastasia & Nastasia, 2013; Nastasia et al., 2013; Nastasia & Bondarenko, 2013; Ross & Padovani, 2017). The Nordic nations of note in the IWMF report include Sweden, Finland, and Norway, and the Eastern European nations include Latvia, Estonia, Bulgaria, and Russia.

A number of the other nations surveyed for the IWMF report also showed something close to gender parity, among them South Africa, Canada, and

Israel. Contrast these encouraging cases of advancement with the figures on women journalists in Asia and the Middle East, where the share of women in the decision-making levels of the profession remains in very low percentages – in the case of Japan, less than 5 per cent (Byerly, 2011; Ishiyama, 2013).

Taking up the challenge posed by Djerf-Pierre (2011), this chapter examines the extent to which indicators of gender equality in various social realms – economics, politics, education, and so forth – contribute to the likelihood of women advancing in occupational settings like newsrooms. Djerf-Pierre (2011: 44) argues that large-scale quantitative analyses within a feminist theoretical framework “are necessary both in explaining the variations in gender representations in the media, and in understanding the role of the media in creating the Good Society”. Her reference to the good society draws on global-level research by Wilkinson and Pickett, who set out to show statistically what has been part of the common wisdom for years – that is, that equal societies are better places to live in terms of lower crime and violence, fewer social problems, better health, lower incidence of mental illness and drug use, and higher levels of social trust, happiness and satisfaction with life in general (cited in Djerf-Pierre, 2011). The present chapter asks whether indicators of a gender egalitarian society might also predict whether more women are likely to advance in the journalism profession generally, or, more specifically, into positions where they can contribute to reshaping the androcentric newsrooms where journalism practice might incorporate gender equality at every level: employment, supervision, and content.

5.3 Women’s standing and agency in the newsrooms: The issue of critical mass

How many women does it take to create change? Critical mass theory provides an analytical framework to interpret this study’s findings on women’s standing in newsrooms and to explore possible relationships between women’s standing in the newsrooms and the amount of news content about women. There has been renewed interest in critical mass theory, a feminist theory often attributed to sociologist Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977a, 1977b) more than four decades ago. Robin J. Ely (2018: para. 1) has called Kanter’s (1977a) groundbreaking study, *Men and Women of the Corporation*, a “[cornerstone] in our understanding of [...] how organizational roles and structures shape unequal access to opportunities, resources, and advancement”.

Kanter’s study, conducted at a Fortune 500 corporate workplace, took place over a five-year period during the height of the American feminist movement that had successfully promoted passage of national gender-equality laws and policies in employment and education. Her study investigated what happens to

women who gain employment but occupy only token status and are alone or nearly alone in a peer group of men within organisations with highly skewed gender ratios. She defined tokens as those who share certain characteristics (e.g., gender or race) that are outwardly visible, and who together constitute a visible minority (i.e., a skewed group) within an organisation. Skewed groups include those (in this case women) who are given the burden of representing their category, not just themselves. She observed, among other things, that “in the presence of token women, men exaggerated displays of aggression and potency, instances of sexual innuendo, aggressive sexual teasing, and prowess-oriented ‘war stories’” (Kanter, 1977b: 45). Men incorporated token women into the professional setting but continued to place them in familiar female stereotypes associated with mother or seductress (e.g., cooking for men, listening to their problems, or responding to men’s sexual desires). Kanter asked how many women were necessary to change a person’s standing from token to full group membership. Her search for this tipping point – that is, the number of women necessary to effect change within an organisation – was on a sliding scale from tokens to minority to potential subgroup, where the ratio 65:35 seemed to be when things could potentially start changing. She argued that “investigation of the effects of proportions on group life and social interaction appears to be fruitful both for social psychological theory and for understanding male-female interaction” (Kanter, 1977b: 53). She believed that ferreting out proportions would lead to understanding gendered structural relations.

Kanter’s concern about the proportion – or critical mass, as Dahlerup (1988, 2006) would later call it – originated in nuclear physics, where it referred to the smallest amount of fissile material needed for a sustained nuclear chain reaction. This is also a useful way to describe women’s collective potential for making change in organisations (i.e., starting a chain reaction) if they reached sufficient numbers. In her introduction of critical mass theory to the political science discipline a few years later, Dahlerup (1988) set the necessary proportion of the tipping point at around 30 per cent, a figure that has more or less held in scholarly and civic discourse, even though its validity has been challenged in subsequent empirical research. Dahlerup (2006: 514) herself calls the endurance of a belief in critical mass the “story of critical mass theory [which,] when feminist movements and female politicians themselves make use of this ‘theory,’ it becomes important in itself, in spite of all scholarly reservations”. Indeed, the continued reference to and debates around the critical mass theory demonstrates the theory’s endurance.

The journal *Politics and Gender*, for example, dedicated an entire issue to the theory in 2006, with contributing scholars answering the question: “Do women represent women? Rethinking the ‘Critical Mass’ debate”. One contributor, Sandra Grey (2006: 492), argues:

Critical mass is only useful if we discard the belief that a single proportion holds the key to all representation needs of women and if we discard notions that numbers alone bring about substantive changes in policy processes and outcomes.

Grey's study suggests that not numbers alone, but factors such as female politicians' time in office, their own (and their party's) ideology, and others' reactions to women politicians also contribute to women's ability to lead and change. Dahlerup's (2006) own contribution to that special issue revisits critical mass theory's foundations and underlying assumptions. She considered her original (1988) research that established 30 per cent as the approximate number when women might create organisational change, by observing that in fact, research on the Nordic experience had concluded that "no turning point can be identified" (Dahlerup, 2006: 513). She believed that "the critical mass perspective should be replaced by a focus on *critical acts* that will empower women in general", and she posed a number of changes that this might entail (Dahlerup, 2006: 513). This same thinking is advanced by Childs and Krook (2006, 2008) in their emphasis on shifting the question from when women make a difference to what women *do* to make a difference (in their occupational roles).

Later, feminist media scholar Linda Steiner (2012: 213) reviewed the literature on critical mass theory, concluding:

The concept of critical mass is probably both conceptually and empirically weak [in that it] endorses a kind of double bind for women in politics, business and journalism, requiring women both to bring something distinctive to the table and to be "professional".

Steiner advocates refocusing attention on actors rather than collectivities in empirical research on women in media professions, also noting that in nations where the media are censored, no number of women in journalism would make a difference.

In spite of its critics, feminist scholars continue to draw on the theory's basic proposition that more women in an organisation have a better chance of effecting change than a token few. Torchia and colleagues (2011) used critical mass theory, complicating it by taking into consideration activities and conditions, that is, board strategies that might assist small numbers of women to assert themselves within organisations. Joecks and colleagues (2013) reviewed 18 published studies that used critical mass theory and noted that eight of them had found a positive link. These authors' own research on women holding board positions of German companies found evidence of the critical mass of women in boards to be reached around 30 per cent (thus confirming Dahlerup's

original work), but they also noted that factors such as women's experience levels would need to be taken into consideration.

It is instructive to note that the manner of women's interaction among themselves may also contribute to organisational change. Research over time and in multiple nations has shown the important ways that women help each other, both indirectly and directly, in professional contexts. For example, in their study of nearly 20,000 business organisations in Brazil, de Castro and colleagues (2018) found that "women at the helm" can have a positive influence on organisational culture and practice; for example, encouraging the adoption of family-friendly policies that improve the environment for other women's participation. Bajdo and Dickson's (2002) cross-cultural examination of the relationship between organisational culture and women's advancement to management found that gender-equality practices were the most important predictor of the percentage of women in management. Their findings were based on regression analysis using data from 3,544 individuals from 114 organisations (including telecommunications) in 32 nations, with data examined along two scales – one for organisational values, the other for organisational practices – and four dimensions (performance orientation, humane orientation, gender equity, and power distance). Among their conclusions were that the percentage of women in management contributed to stronger gender-equity cultural values and practices in organisations.

Another study by Yang and colleagues (2019) examined the relationship between women's professional and social networks in graduate programmes and their placement in workplace leadership as they entered the job market. They found, among other things, that women students with an inner circle of predominantly female contacts are stronger in their potential to achieve higher early status in their jobs than women without such contacts. The takeaway from this study is that women support each other in their shared achievement goals. Another study by the Pew Research Center (2018) indicates that women in the general public believe other women in leadership will improve life for all. The Pew report, based on 4,587 individuals surveyed, found that 77 per cent of the women in their study believed having more women in top positions in business and government would improve the quality of life for all Americans.

In feminist media research, there are few empirical studies testing the effects of critical mass in the newsrooms, and leading scholars have dismissed it as just one of the "failed theories" that has not been useful in explaining male dominance in the news industry (Steiner, 2012; van Zoonen, 1998). As far as we know, no studies have looked at the presence or relevance of a critical mass of women in journalism organisations. Large-scale, cross-country comparisons of gender and news production in general are hard to find. One exception is Hanitzsch and Hanusch's (2012), cross-national comparison of gender differ-

ences with regard to professional values. As they reviewed the literature on whether or not gender plays a deciding factor in the production of news when there is a critical mass of women within the newsroom, they noted that numerous researchers (e.g., Chambers et al., 2004; de Bruin, 2004; van Zoonen, 1998) had concluded that gender alone cannot be held responsible for either newsroom cultures or the news these newsrooms produce. Hanitzsch and Hanusch then explored whether the gender of journalists created a particular predisposition toward the professional values they held about things such as the audience, subjectivity toward their topics, and other professional issues. Interviews with 1,800 journalists (100 journalists in each country – women and men) in 18 nations revealed no significant differences in professional views between women and men, irrespective of whether the level of analysis was the individual, newsroom, or society. They surmised, as others had before them, that the fundamental masculine structure of both news organisations and news content were greater causative factors in the gendering of newsrooms than the individuals who populated them.

Still, the question remains whether a critical mass of women at various positions within newsrooms is related to the content of news when examined comparatively and cross-nationally. Thus, in this chapter, we examine the relationship between the presence of women in different roles in the news industry and women in news content. Previous studies of the critical mass have focused on specific organisations (such as a corporation) – in this study we are looking at gender compositions across the entire (national) field of journalism. In our attempt to discern potential critical mass effects at the country level, we first discuss to what extent women have reached a critical mass at various positions in the news industry in different countries – from junior reporting roles to positions of power, such as top-level management and governance. Secondly, we pay specific attention to *patterns* when looking at the relationship between women journalists and women in news content across countries. We believe that a possible indication of a critical mass effect might be that the frequency of women in the news begins to increase after a certain threshold (i.e., a statistical “breakpoint”) has been reached with regard to the number of women journalists; for example, if there are very few women news subjects up until the percentage of women journalists reaches about 30 per cent, and then there is a significant increase in women news subjects past this threshold. We refer to the 30 per cent figure because that is what other researchers have cited as the point at which critical mass occurs. However, we entered our own investigation allowing for the possibility that the point at which a critical mass and a measurable change in an organisation intersect might occur at a point other than 30 per cent.

Drawing on the analytical framework presented, this chapter’s central concern about the influence of gendered axes of power within newsrooms poses three main research questions:

- How are the locations of women in various positions in news production in different countries related to each other? For example, does the number of women in junior levels predict their presence at management and governance levels?
- To what extent is the location of women in various positions in news production in different countries related to the general status of women in society?
- How is the presence of women in various positions in news production associated with the percentage of women sources and subjects in the news?

5.4 Research design and methodology

The study takes a critical empirical approach, answering research questions using quantitative procedures within a critical framework that has the goal of telling us more about gendered relations of power in the global news industry. The study adopts the basic assumptions of critical mass theory, as originally posed by Kanter (1977a, 1977b) and expanded by subsequent researchers who argued in favour of considering additional factors (i.e., women's social standing and the presence of gender equality laws) to explain women's advancement and effectiveness within organisations. In the absence of other established measures, we applied the 30 per cent threshold, as well as some others, to broaden the understanding of how critical mass might be used in feminist research. Our analysis will hopefully further elucidate its validity in application to feminist journalism research.

The goal of critical scholarship is to reveal or enable the path toward social change. The present research seeks not only to contribute to the academic literature, but also to provide a useful baseline of data for those in trade unions, women's journalism organisations, and other progressive organisations to use in advocating for equality policies in the profession.

Overview of data

Data for this chapter come from a number of different sources and are compiled for use in the project, Comparing Gender and Media Equality Across the Globe (Färdigh et al., 2020). In order to allow for proper identification across studies and to link each variable to its original source, each variable name has been assigned a prefix that contains a reference to the original dataset followed by the original variable name (e.g., the variable "proportion of women news subjects or sources in the news" is retrieved from the GMMP dataset and the original variable name is `gons_f`; therefore, it is named `gmmp_gons_f`).

The sources of data and variables used in this chapter are as follows:

- the Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media, sponsored by the IWFM (Byerly, 2011);
- the Global Gender Gap Index (GGI), developed by the World Economic Forum (WEF);
- the Varieties of Democracy (V-dem) dataset (Coppedge et al., 2017);
- and the GMMP (Macharia et al., 2010).

Further descriptions of the original data sources, datasets, and variables used in this chapter are provided in Appendix 5.1. The following section gives an overview of the variable selection and presents the rationale for the choice of variables.

Analytical procedures

The basic methodological approach is to conduct a correlational analysis of a series of relationships between women in reporting and decision-making levels of news organisations, in relation to their standing in journalism as a profession, in society, and in the content of news in different countries. The analysis consequently puts the emphasis on establishing relationships without inferring the causal direction of the relationship between variables. Because the datasets used are not available for all years, we used the IWFM data to establish the timeframe for selection of variables from the other datasets. The IWFM report collected data from 522 companies in 59 nations, mainly in 2010, and thus, the other datasets were also chosen for the same year. In addition, only those countries in the IWFM report with corresponding data for the other variables were included in the correlation analyses. Hence, the number of nations and limited amount of data the study produced make it difficult to apply advanced statistical methods that might give a more accurate inference of causal relationships. Drawing on a broad range of indicators, we aim to ensure that the results are reliable, but we make no certain claims about causality. However, on a general level, we acknowledge the potential relationships among variables where possible.

The quantitative procedures involved using correlation¹ and regression analyses of several variables, or indicators, from the data sources indicated above. These allow us to examine the relationship between women's position within news organisations (IWFM data) and the output of women-related news (GMMP data), in relation to the numbers of women in the profession in nations (V-dem data), as well as women's overall standing in the nations where those companies are located (WEF data).

All data used are from 2010 (to correspond with IWFM data collection) and all correlations were done with pair-wise deletion of missing data, which

maximises all data available and increases the “power” of the analyses. Although correlations and regression analyses may indicate strong relationships in some instances, a causal relationship may be difficult to discern, and none is implied for the data presented. However, establishing the strength of these relationships can be the basis for forming hypotheses for further research. It bears noting that we also take care to contextualise findings within other available and relevant information about a given nation, in order to further interrogate the possible meaning of the statistics beyond the numbers themselves.

The following variables were selected in order to explore relationships posed in the research questions above. A full description of all variables used can be found in Appendix 5.1.

Dependent variables

These are indicators of gender equality in various levels of production in the news media that may be influenced by, or “depend on”, different factors. In regression graphs, the dependent variable is on the y-axis (vertical axis). The dependent variables used in this study include:

1. The percentages of women in the following categories (retrieved from Byerly, 2011):
 - Governance level: Percentage of women in governance-level occupational status. These are members of the governing board who vote on the most important decisions about policy and finances for the specific news media company.
 - Top-level management: Percentage of women in top-level management occupational status. Men and women at this level report to board of directors and include the very top administrators (e.g., publisher, chief executive officer, director general, and chief financial officer).
 - Senior-level management: Percentage of women in senior-management occupational status. These are men and women in senior-level management and report to top-level managers (e.g., director of news, president of news, editor-in-chief, managing editor, executive editor, director of human resources, director of administration, bureau chiefs, and similar titles).
 - Senior-level professional (reporters): Percentage of women in senior-level professional occupational status. These are professionally qualified men and women who report to senior-level management (e.g., senior writers, editors, anchors, directors, producers, researchers, reporters, correspondents, and production assistants).

- Junior-level professional (reporters): Percentage of women in junior-level professional occupational status. These are professionally qualified men and women who report to middle-level managers (e.g., junior or assistant writers, producers, directors, anchors, reporters, sub-editors, correspondents, and production assistants).
2. The percentage of women news subjects or sources in in all news stories in newspapers, radio, and television (retrieved from GMMP, 2010; Färdigh et al., 2020).

Independent variables

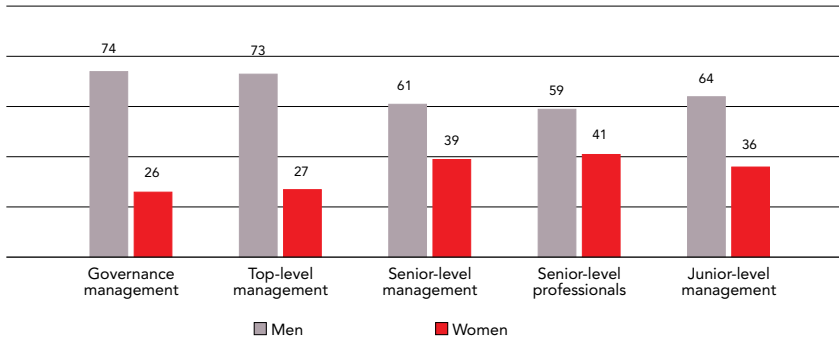
These are variables whose relationships with the IWMF indicators are examined to see possible trends showing some kind of positive (or negative) relationship with gender equality in different levels of production in news media. The independent variables used are:

- The percentage of women journalists (retrieved from Coppedge et al., 2017).
- The Global Gender Gap Index score (retrieved from WEF, 2010, 2017, 2018) is the most comprehensive and widely used indicator of the general status of women in a given society.
- In some cases, IWMF variables were used as independent variables to examine how they might be related to one another; for example, whether the number of junior-level professional women is positively related to the number of senior-level professional women in news production.

5.5 Do more women professionals yield more women at the top?

The first research question concerns how women's various positions in news production in different countries are related to each other.²

We start by looking at the global averages from the IWMF study (Byerly, 2011). The aggregated global figures for each of the five positions, by gender, are displayed in Figure 5.2 (see also Table 5.4 in Appendix 5.2). In all cases, the average percentage of women in the various positions is less than 50 per cent. Governance and top-level management have the lowest share of women. However, women exceeded the putative critical mass of 30 per cent in junior- and senior-level professional, and senior-level management, positions.

Figure 5.2 Men and women in five news production positions (aggregated percentages)

Comments: n = number of employees in different categories, and varies from 1,811 for top-level management to 37,407 for senior-level professionals (see Table 5.4 in Appendix 5.2). Not all countries (e.g., China, Norway, and Sweden) distinguished between junior-level and senior-level professionals; instead, all reporters were assigned to either the junior- or senior-level professional category.

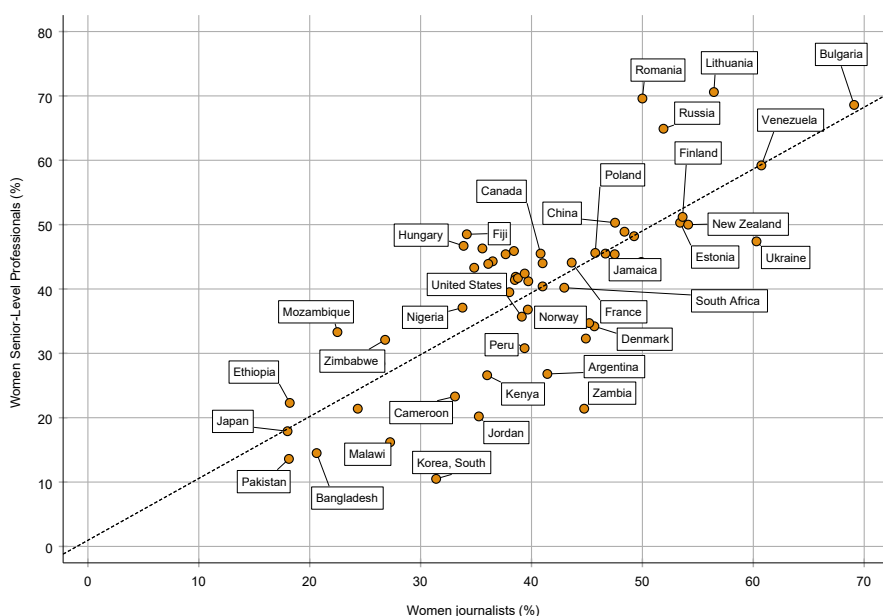
Source: IWMF (Byerly, 2011)

In taking a closer look at relationships, we first examine how the status of women in senior- and junior-level professional (reporting) positions within news organisations is related to the overall percentage of women in the journalism profession in various countries across the world (see Figure 5.3). This provides an estimate of the extent to which women journalists are able to find employment in news organisations in different countries. The assumption here is that the greater the pool of women in the journalism profession, the greater the possibilities that women will apply for and be hired into newsroom positions. The results indicate, unsurprisingly, that this is the case. There is a strong linear relationship between the per cent of women in the “pool” of journalists globally and the per cent that actually make it into news reporting.

The majority of the 58 nations analysed in Figure 5.3 show women possessing a critical mass in the news industry, that is, they represented 30 per cent or more of the number of journalists at the senior level in reporting. The regression analysis also suggests that as the number of women increase globally, the greater the likelihood that they will fill reporting ranks in news organisations. A scatterplot of junior-level professional women and women journalists shows an almost identical pattern.

Indeed, the linear regression line in Figure 5.3 shows that the relationship is almost perfectly symmetrical. At the aggregate level, a 1 per cent increase in women journalists corresponds with a 0.96 per cent increase in the percentage of women among senior professionals. However, it should be noted that the V-dem variable (women journalists) represents an estimate provided by country experts and published statistics, and for many countries, exact and reliable statistics of the corpus of journalists working in different media do not exist.

Figure 5.3 *The relationship between women journalists in different countries and women senior-level professionals in the news industry*



Comments: Number of country observations = 58. The dotted black line is the regression that best fits the data. Regression equation: $y = 0.95 + 0.96 \times x$ (Pearson's $r = .766$, $R^2 = .586$, $p = .000$).

Source: IWMM (Byerly, 2011); V-dem (Coppedge et al., 2017)

Nevertheless, the data presented provide an indication of how easy or difficult it is for women journalists to be able to find employment in the news industry. The feminisation of newsrooms in Eastern Europe is evident: Romania, Russia, and Lithuania stand out as countries where the number of female journalists in the news industry transcends the number in the profession. The opposite seems true for South Korea and Zambia, where there are fewer women in the ranks of professionals in the news industry than are available by their presence among journalists at large. Although women's status has risen, and Korean women have entered the workforce in increasing numbers since WWII through industrialisation, they have been slower to enter journalism and to advance within that still male-dominated profession (Byerly, 2011). In Zambia, where the literacy rate for women is only 60 per cent, and where lawmakers have been slow to enact women's equality laws, women in journalism have found it difficult to advance much above technical and support roles, thereby remaining seriously underrepresented in reporting and management levels (Byerly, 2011).

Nations with large percentages of women in the journalistic profession thus have the largest percentages of women in the higher ranks of reporting (i.e.,

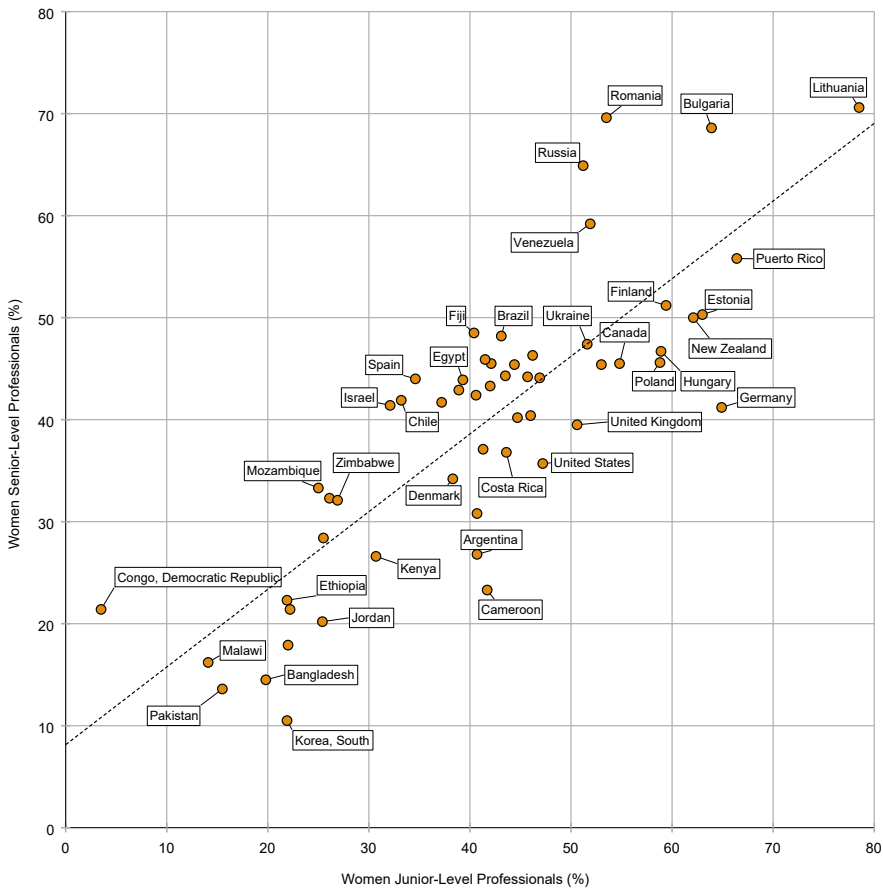
senior-level and junior-level). This occurred, for example, in Bulgaria, Lithuania, Romania, and Russia, which carried forward a dominance of women in journalism from the years of Soviet occupation when (as explained earlier) the profession had become feminised through lower pay and greater control by the State over the production of news – factors that attracted few men, resulting in a situation of gender imbalance within the profession. Nastasia and Nastasia (2013) emphasise that the feminisation of the news profession (and some other professions) continues into the present in the post-Soviet nations, where levels of democracy still vary greatly, and where women may reach or surpass parity with men in number within a news organisation – or even attain positions of authority – but still face discrimination. They note, for example, that pay is often lower for women than men, women are often the first to lose their jobs when the job market shifts, and working conditions often favour men.

This observation is further substantiated by the IWMF report, which found that most news companies surveyed in Bulgaria and Romania had no policies on gender equality, no provisions for either maternity or paternity leave, no policy assuring women could return to their same jobs if they did take such leave, and few had policies on sexual harassment. The report also found the situation much better for women in Lithuanian companies surveyed, where the numbers of women exceeded those of men overall, and where nearly all news companies surveyed possessed policies on gender equality and sexual harassment. However, few of these companies had adopted policies on maternity or paternity leave, or on women returning to the same jobs after taking such leave. Also important to note was that for women in Lithuanian newsrooms, these two occupational levels (junior- and senior-level reporting) with the largest percentages of women found few in higher-level decision-making roles. In other words, the reporting levels represented the glass ceiling (Byerly, 2011).

Sweden and New Zealand, by comparison, have longer histories of democracy and gender equality, the latter evidenced in their current relative standings globally in terms of gender equality. Seen together, these nations are ranked as follows: Sweden (3rd), New Zealand (7th), Bulgaria (18th), Lithuania (24th), and Romania (63rd) (WEF, 2018). Edström (2013) reports that gender equality has been a hallmark for women in Sweden and the other Nordic nations and identifies some of the ways that national-level policies on gender equality have benefited women in journalism. However, she observes that the data collected for the IWMF report in her nation found women's greatest representation in the senior-level professional and middle-management levels – the glass ceiling for women in Swedish newsrooms. Similarly, in New Zealand, women were found to be clustered in the junior- and senior-level professional levels, with few attaining higher positions – another instance of the glass ceiling. Altogether, this indicates that women's advancement in the profession is not always accompanied by a similar increase in professional status.

The next step is to analyse the relationship between the percentage of junior- and senior-level professional women (reporters) positions. Figure 5.4 shows that most countries have more data points above the 30 per cent critical mass level; only 10 of the 56 countries had less than 30 per cent women in *both* junior- and senior-level professional positions. The strong relationship shown in the graph suggests that the more women who occupy junior-level positions, the greater the potential for more women to move into senior-level professional positions as reporters. The equation indicates that a 1 percentage point increase of junior-level professionals corresponds to a 0.76 percentage point increase in senior-level professionals.

Figure 5.4 *The relationship between women in junior-level and senior-level professional roles*



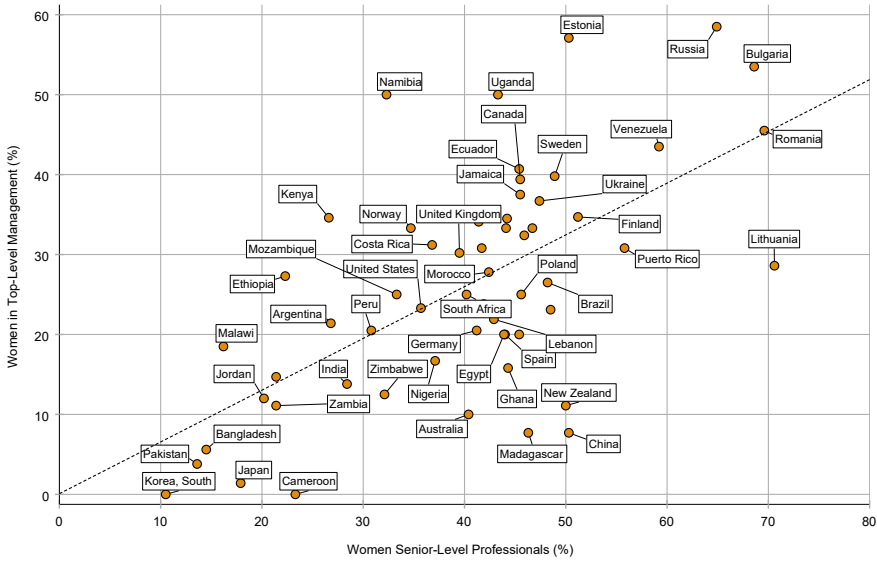
The last step is to examine if the percentage of women in junior- and senior-level reporting positions is related to the percentage of women in senior- and top-level management and governance positions within news organisations. These are the most elite roles within any news organisation, and the goal of this question is to ascertain whether and to what extent the pool of women in reporting positions is a predictor of women's advancement into these management levels within news organisations.

In this analysis, we found no significant correlation between the percentage of women in junior and senior reporting roles and the percentage of women at the governance level. However, the correlations between the percentages of women in top- and senior-level professional positions were found to be highly significant. Figure 5.5 provides a graphical illustration of the positive relationship between the percentage of women senior professionals and the percentage of women in top-level management. At the country level, more women in senior reporting corresponds with more women in top-level management.

There is a strong degree of logic in these findings. In the case of the first finding, there is the suggestion that the individuals who assume roles at the governance level do not necessarily belong to the journalism profession. Governance roles are those occupied by either the owners or the board members of news corporations, and duties typically include overseeing investment and other financial decisions, overall company policy-making, and so forth. Governance roles are filled in different ways; for example, family-owned news organisations tend to fill these roles with family members, while non-family commercial corporations may look for individuals with specific business expertise. News organisations supported by state (public) funds may have altogether different governance structures, for example, state-appointed advisory boards filled by those more closely tied to government or to citizens' groups.

By contrast, the second finding suggests that women who advance into roles associated with the management or production of news within the organisation may rise from within the profession of journalism. These would be roles requiring experience and demonstrated skills in managing personnel and news production processes. However, there is a significant "drop-off" of women at each level. For instance, an increase in women senior professionals by 1 percentage point only corresponds to an increase in women in top-level management by 0.65 percentage points (see Figure 5.5). However, the cross-sectional data we have access to here do not allow us to take time-lag into account: an increase of women in junior positions will possibly result in more women at top-level positions 5 or 10 years later.

Figure 5.5 *The relationship between women in senior-level professional (reporting) roles and women in top-level management*



Comments: Number of country observations = 58. The black dotted line is the regression line that best fits the data. The regression equation is: $y = 0.08 + 0.65 \times x$ (Pearson's $r = .628$, $R^2 = .394$, $p = .000$).

Source: IWMMF (Byerly, 2011)

5.6 Women's status in the news industry and their status in society

The second research question is whether the general status of women in society is related to the status of women in various levels of news production. We use the Global Gender Gap Index (GGI) score – as it is commonly used – which includes gender gaps for a broad range of resources and opportunities for women, including economic participation and opportunity; educational attainment; health and survival; and political empowerment. Correlation analyses were performed between the GGI scores and the IWMMF percentages of women in various professional roles in the news industry (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Correlations of women in different positions in the news industry and the Global Gender Gap Index (Pearson's r)

Women in the news industry (%)	GGI (score)
Decision-making roles	
governance level	.372** (54)
top-level management	.376** (55)
senior-level management	.342** (56)
Reporting roles	
senior-level professionals	.337** (56)
junior-level professionals	.488*** (53)

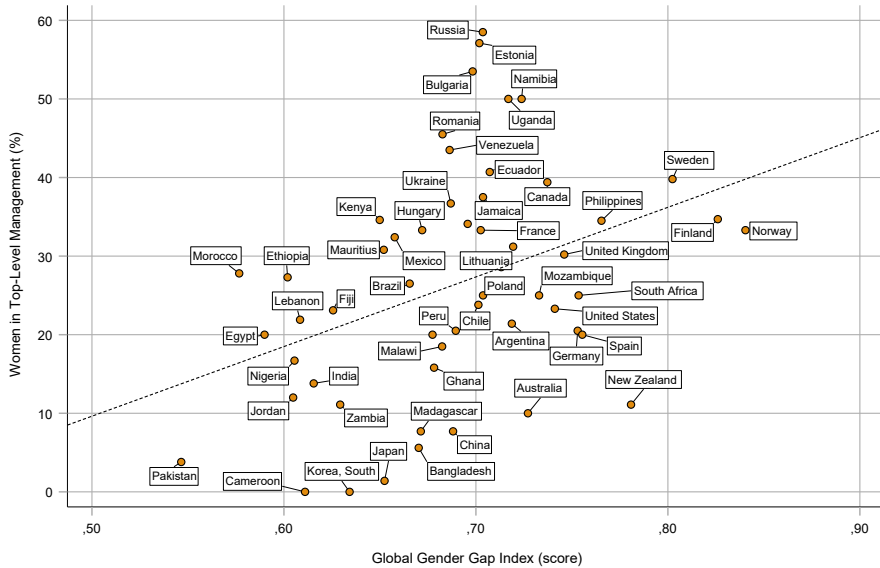
Comments: n = number of country observations, within parentheses. * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$. Correlation analysis was done with pair-wise deletion of countries with missing data. The variables for the different positions of women in the news industry are from the IWMF study (Byerly, 2011, found in Färdigh et al., 2020). The GGI scores are retrieved from WEF (2010) and vary from 0 (inequality) to 1 (equality). See Appendix 5.1 for full references to the original variable sources.

Source: IWMF (Byerly, 2011); WEF (2010)

The correlation analysis results show weak to moderately strong positive relationships between the percentage of women at different professional levels and the GGI scores. A scatterplot exemplifying the relationship between the GGI and women's position in management level in the news industry is given in Figure 5.6, which shows the relationship between women in top-level management and GGI scores.

Although the data points are widely distributed, the correlation analysis and scatterplots indicate that the greater the overall opportunities and the higher standing women have in their societies, the greater likelihood they will advance into the elite ranks of decision-making in journalism enterprises. This trend aligns with the fact that individuals advance within hierarchies in accordance with their level of education and other markers of privilege that typically come in the most developed nations. Key examples are the Nordic countries Sweden, Norway, and Finland, where women have had the advantages of highly developed economies, democratic institutions, accessible education systems, and access to professions, among other benefits. However, we emphasise that in these same nations, women have also struggled for these rights of access over two centuries in organised feminist movements in order to gain gender equality through legislation, other policies, and institutional practice. Russia, Estonia, and Bulgaria have more women at the top than is predicted by their GGI score, for historical reasons discussed earlier.

Figure 5.6 The relationship between the Global Gender Gap Index and women in top-level management positions



Comments: Number of country observations = 55. The black dotted line is the linear regression line that best fits the data. Regression equation: $y = -34.68 + 88.61 \times x$ (Pearson's $r = .376$, $R^2 = .141$, $p = .005$).

Source: IWMF (Byerly, 2011); WEF (2010)

Several industrialised countries in which women have high GGI scores were found to have fewer women top-level managers in newsrooms than predicted by their gender-equality level. South Korea, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand represent a cluster of such nations in which women represent substantially less than 10 per cent in top-level management, and yet within that cluster, each nation has factors that help to explain women's low level of advancement within journalism. For example, Japan, which has a highly educated citizenry as well as a highly developed economy and political system, does not have a correspondingly high percentage of women in journalism decision-making positions, as the correlations in Figure 5.6 show. Japan has a fairly short history of democracy and advanced economic development, as well as a still-rigid system of gender roles based on male superiority. Ishiyama (2013) notes that few women have made their way into the journalism profession, in large part because men prefer hiring other men to populate the androcentric workplaces and because companies opt to not adopt recruitment strategies that would encourage women to apply. She observes that extremely long and irregular work hours also make it difficult for women who want to have children to remain in journalism. The lesson to take from nations like Japan is that cultural factors that reinforce gender inequality may explain women's inability

to advance into decision-making roles in news organisations more than laws or other structural factors associated with the “good society”.

5.7 Are more women in leadership roles in the news industry associated with an increase in women as subjects in the news?

The final part of the analysis focuses on the relationship between women in various professional decision-making roles in news organisations – that is, percentage of women at governance level (top- and senior-level management) and news reporting roles (junior- and senior-level professionals) – and the inclusion of women as news subjects or sources in the stories that news organisations in those same nations publish. Table 5.2 shows that there are positive and weak- to moderately-strong correlations between the percentage of women in the news industry and the percentage of women as subjects or sources in news stories for all professional roles, except for governance. The strongest relationship is seen between junior-level professional women and women as news subjects. A corresponding linear regression of this relationship is shown in Figure 5.7.

Table 5.2 Correlations of percentage of women in different roles in the news industry and percentage of women as news subjects or sources in the news (Pearson’s r)

Decision-making roles	
governance level	.259 (50)
top-level management	.494*** (51)
senior-level management	.284* (52)
Reporting roles	
senior-level professionals	.514*** (52)
junior-level professionals	.534*** (49)

Comments: n = number of country observations, in parentheses. * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$. Correlation analysis was done with pair-wise deletion of countries with missing data. The variables for women in different roles in the news industry are from the IWMF study (Byerly, 2011). The percentage of women as news subjects or sources is from GMMP. See Appendix 5.1 for full references to the original variable sources.

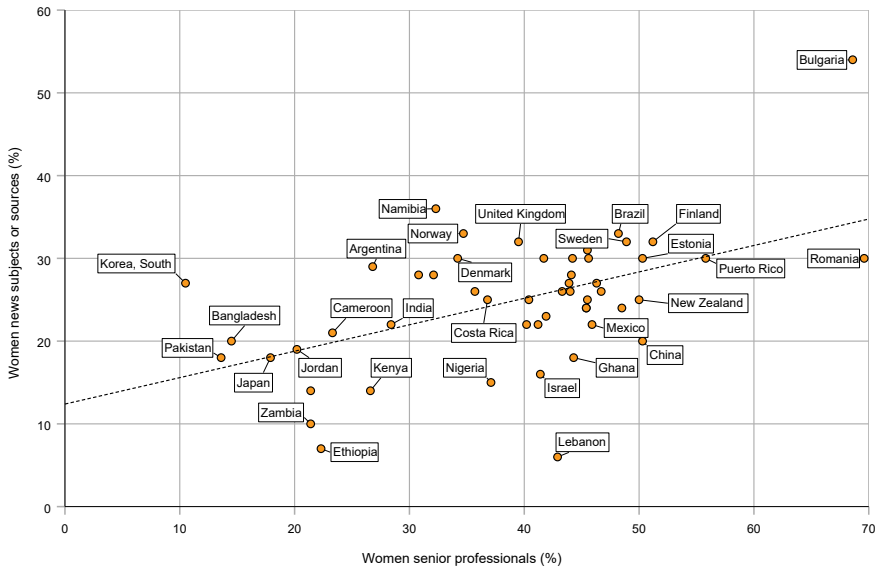
Data Source: IWMF (Byerly, 2011); GMMP (Macharia et al., 2010)

The finding of no significance between women at the governance level and women in news stories is logical in that those in ownership and board levels tend to have little or no direct influence on the content of news, except perhaps in nations with a state-managed press system. However, the other two findings are contradictory and require care in explaining. The longstanding feminist assumption that women's advancement into decision-making positions, such as senior- and top-level management, would bring with it a noticeable increase in news content about women (and, we should add, content with a pro-feminist orientation) has motivated earlier studies, for example, the five-nation comparative study, *Women and Media Decision-making: The Invisible Barriers* (UNESCO, 1987). That earlier study found that women were held back from advancement by stereotypes of women's inferiority to men operating within organisations. This same assumption is embedded in the recent research by the GMMP (2010, 2015), which found statistically higher percentages of women-oriented news in stories written by women reporters in both the 2010 and 2015 rounds of research.

There remains a dearth of women in newsrooms at decision-making levels – only about a fourth in both governance and top management (Byerly, 2011). Even so, the present correlation analysis shows a positive relationship between women at top-level management and women as news subjects or sources. By contrast, the finding of a very weak correlation between women at the senior level of management suggests an anomaly. This finding, which possibly would be expected to lie between that of senior professionals and top-level managers, may result from more scattered data points, including outliers.

The strongest correlations are found between women in reporting roles at junior and senior levels and women as news subjects or sources (see Table 5.2). Though the number of nations in the correlation analysis is fairly small, the findings are important, as they suggest that women journalists in both junior and senior reporting levels are related to the representation of women as subjects in the news. This could mean that women reporters who are on the front lines of news gathering would have a greater ability to determine the gendered focus of the stories they report. It could also be the case that both the number of women reporters and women news subjects or sources are outcomes of a more women-inclusive society (see §5.6 and Chapter 4, where this relationship is examined in more detail). In any case, the finding of a positive relationship between women journalists and women news subjects or sources at the aggregate level corroborates those found at the individual level by the GMMP. However, the effect is not that large (see Figure 5.7): a 1 percentage point increase in women senior professionals corresponds with only a 0.32 percentage point increase in women news subjects or sources.

Figure 5.7 *The relationship between women senior professionals and women as news subjects or sources*



Comments: Number of country observations = 52. The black dotted line is the regression line that best fits the data (linear regression). Regression equation: $y = 12.39 + 0.32 \times x$ (Pearson's $r = .514$, $R^2 = .264$, $p = .001$).

Source: Data on women news subjects from GMMP (Macharia et al., 2010) and women senior professionals from IWMF (Byerly, 2011)

5.8 Critical mass or ceiling effects?

The final question is whether we find any evidence to support critical mass theory, which is concerned with what happens once the percentage of women surpasses a certain threshold in a given organisational context. As stated earlier, we began our investigation aware of earlier scholars' identification of 30 per cent as the threshold for determining the critical mass required for potential change within an organisation. However, we did not assume that our own study, which involved a comparison among 58 nations and more than 500 news organisations, would necessarily come to the same conclusion. Another consideration is what kind of statistical analysis might be used to determine whether a critical mass or threshold exists for a given set of data or different variables and, if so, where the threshold may lie. So far, correlation and linear regression analyses have been used to show relationships between several independent variables and dependent variables. Most of these show a positive and moderate or strong linear relationship. However, it is quite possible that the nature of the relationship between an independent and dependent variable may change over the range of the independent variable. Thus, in some situa-

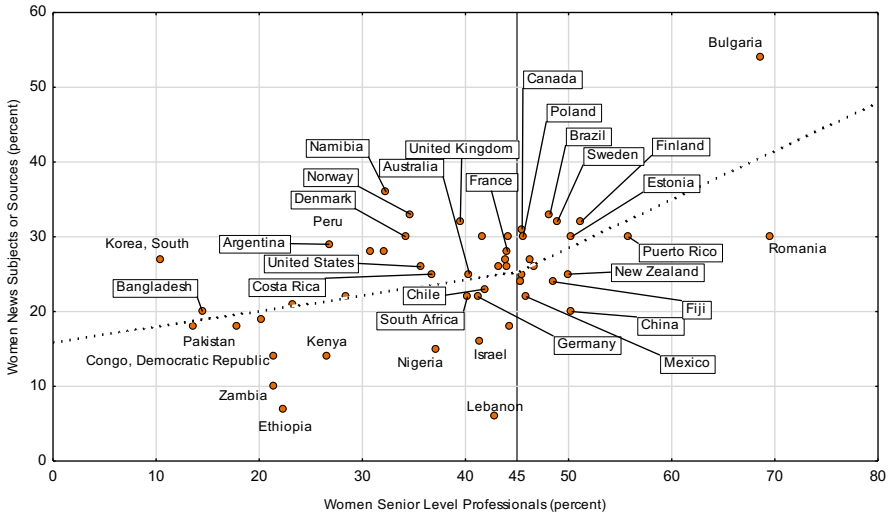
tions, the regression line can be discontinuous (segmented) or “broken” into intervals, or separate line segments in different places, indicating a different relationship before and after the breakpoints. One approach to determine such discontinuous intervals is piece-wise, or breakpoint, regression analysis, where different slopes are defined for the segments or groups of points. For example, with critical mass theory, we might expect a change (e.g., marked increase) in the percentage of women news subjects (*y*-variable) after a certain critical, or threshold, level is reached in the percentage of women in senior-level professional (reporter) positions (*x*-variable).

To examine this phenomenon, we conducted a number of piece-wise regressions, where we tested whether the slopes of the regression lines before and after a certain threshold point differed significantly (see Appendix 5.3 for details about these analyses). The breakpoints were initially estimated by the software and then various others were substituted in the equation to determine where a significant difference in the slopes of the two lines was found. We did not arbitrarily use the 30 per cent mark in each analysis unless there was an indication that it was a likely breakpoint. The results varied depending on the breakpoints used for calculations and were indeed quite disparate, partly because the further segmentation of the relatively small number of countries in the dataset made the results statistically less reliable and susceptible to the effects of outliers.

Although 30 per cent of women is often touted as the critical mass after which changes occur in an organisation, in examining women’s status in news production across many nations, we found different breakpoints with regard to the relationship between women professionals in the news industry and the visibility of women in the news. In a few analyses, we found no breakpoints and, in general, the relationships were linear. When looking more closely at the patterns, many scatterplots displayed a ceiling pattern – that is, the slope of the first segment increased up to the threshold or breakpoint, but the slope of the next segment decreased somewhat. However, it is important to note that the upward trend was maintained in most breakpoint analyses, even with a decreased slope in the second segment.

One of the few instances of significant critical mass effect for the relationship between women reporters and women in the news was found at 45 per cent. Using data from Figure 5.7, we saw a marked and significantly different change ($p \leq .035$) in the slopes of the lines using a threshold or breakpoint of $x = 45$ per cent women senior-level professionals (see Figure 5.8). A similar, but less visually distinct, breakpoint of 45 per cent was evident for the breakpoint analysis of percentage of women journalists (V-dem data) and senior-level professional women (dependent variable; $p \leq .00$). This indicates that, for these data, there may be a threshold or critical mass for these particular variables, after which there are significantly more women news subjects or sources in the news.

Figure 5.8 *The relationship of senior-level professional women and women news subjects or sources*



Comments: Number of country observations = 52. The piece-wise regression equation is: $y = (15.8837) + (0.208289) \times x + (0.440461) \times (x - 45) \times (x > 45)$. Slope 1 is significantly different from slope 2 ($p = .035$). The breakpoint (45%) is indicated by the vertical line.

Source: IWMF (Byerly, 2011); GMMP (Macharia et al., 2010)

Our tentative conclusion is thus that the relationship between women reporters and women in the news – and for the percentage of women journalists and women in some news production roles – is mostly linear, and that if a critical mass threshold exists, it is likely higher than 30 per cent. The relationship evidently needs to be tested further with larger samples. However, there is no reason to think the breakpoints would be the same for any other datasets, or that there would be a steeper (upward) slope for the second line of any other breakpoint or piece-wise analysis.

So the critical mass or breakpoint in different analyses can vary, and the slopes of the different line segments can increase or decrease, depending on the variables involved, the number of observations in the calculations, and the variability of the data. Also, regression lines can sometimes have several breakpoints, and results must be carefully examined to see which breakpoints are most significant. Still, breakpoint analysis may be a valuable tool for determining critical mass effects in different datasets and variables. The present breakpoint endeavor is just an example of how piece-wise analysis can be used to find ceiling and critical mass effects for other datasets. As noted elsewhere, we found indications of a ceiling effect in some analyses (see Figure 5.9 in Appendix 5.3).

5.9 Conclusion and discussion

The present study has sought to move beyond the established fact of men's domination within what Djerf-Pierre (2005) has called the "media elite" by exploring how and to what extent women have made their way into the reporting and management levels within the profession of journalism, and whether their presence in the higher ranks of the newsroom hierarchy is associated with a larger amount of women-oriented news content. Looking cross-nationally, we also recognised that the level of national development, indicators of women's status, and the numbers of women practicing journalism might affect women journalists' place in newsroom hierarchies of any given nation. Using available data, we asked to what extent, and we applied the critical mass theory to interpret our statistical findings. Thus, we are able to draw several tentative conclusions. In doing so, we emphasise that these are tentative because the limited data available (i.e., between 47 and 58 nations for the various correlations) prevented our ability to pose and test hypotheses that might have established more explicit causal relations or allow us to generalise findings. These conclusions are nonetheless important for several reasons, not the least of which is that they tell us what is possible to know from the paucity of existing data on gender relations in newsmaking at the global level.

One important general observation that can be made is that the larger the pool of women journalists, the greater the likelihood they will secure positions in the news hierarchy of companies in their respective nations. Our findings from linear regression analyses showed that the nations with the largest number of trained women journalists also had the largest numbers of women in both news reporting and decision-making positions. While this relationship is somewhat unsurprising, we must temper its application in this instance by recognising the countervailing force of feminisation of the journalism profession in nations like Bulgaria and Romania (where women are dominant in the profession). Complementary research to the present study (Nastasia & Nastasia, 2013) shows that the number of women in these nations (and some others in Eastern Europe) came to exceed that of men in journalism during the Soviet occupation (prior to 1990), and this trend remains today, along with the persistence of lower pay and other forms of gender inequality. Though they have risen to hold top-level positions within the profession, these women journalists still have not achieved all the benefits they are due. Critical mass theory suggests that there is the potential for women in these and all other nations' newsrooms to collectively exert their agency in newsrooms if they reach a certain threshold. Using breakpoint analysis, we identified 45 per cent as the threshold at which that happened in determining the relationship between women in the senior professional level and the number of women as news subjects or sources. While there is need for further investigation on the

subject, we should recognise additional evidence that supports the claim that women's numbers in the newsroom matter to news content about women. The former Soviet states of Bulgaria, Romania, and Estonia are among the nations with both significant numbers of women in senior reporting ranks, as well as the largest amount of news content about women. Future research with larger samples of nations can further test the reliability of this finding, and can also shed further light on the extent to which critical mass thresholds may vary from study to study.

A related finding is that there is an apparently strong relationship between women in junior and senior levels of reporting. However, the exact nature of that relationship is not clear and offers the potential for future research. In other words, who helps whom? We are unable to state from this finding whether having more women at the junior level provides a pool of women who can be mentored and supported toward advancement by women in senior-level roles, or conversely, whether having more women at the senior professional level enables them to advocate for the hiring of more women as junior reporters – or, whether both of these interactions happen somewhat simultaneously. Neither are we able to state whether a more gender-egalitarian professional culture encourages both men and women to be more gender aware and produce more inclusive reporting. Future comparative research that utilises case studies of individual companies with women at both decision-making and junior levels will be useful to understanding the meaning of our finding. It bears noting as well that these questions lie beyond Kanter's (1977a) original concerns about gender and organisational dynamics in (what came to be called) critical mass theory, and move closer to the adaptations suggested by Childs and Krook (2008: 734), namely to shift the central question from “when” women make a difference, to “what specific actors do” in relation to form and content when acting for women.

Another important finding is the positive relationship between the presence of women in the news industry and women in the news in different countries. We clearly identified a linear pattern – more women in the news industry is associated with more women in the news. Critical mass theory, however, suggests that there is potential for women in these and all other nations' newsrooms to collectively exert their agency in the newsrooms if they reach a certain threshold, and we used a series of piece-wise regressions to test if such a critical mass effect could be detected.

Some might argue that our study found little evidence of a critical mass effect in the data we analysed. Indeed, most of our tests indicated a possible ceiling effect rather than a critical mass effect, thus providing statistical evidence of what has previously and metaphorically been called the glass ceiling in the news industry (and other organisations). For instance, the number of women in top-level positions increases more slowly after the number

of women in junior and senior reporting roles have reached a threshold or breakpoint. The ceiling effects found in the analyses are consistent with findings in other chapters and show that a higher proportion of women in news production is associated with more women in the news, but only to a certain extent. Also, other studies (e.g., GMMP) indicate that there is hardly ever more than a third of the news subjects that are women, anywhere in the world – not even in Nordic countries. This shows a “visibility ceiling” for women in the news.

However, we would argue that the study breaks new ground in its application of critical mass theory within a global context and in the study of women in journalism. By applying the breakpoint analysis of the percentage of women senior-level professionals versus the percentage of women as news subjects or sources, we found a distinct and significant breakpoint at 45 per cent of senior women reporters, after which the line increased with a steeper slope. The results indicate that, for these data, after senior-level women reporters reaches 45 per cent, there might be a marked increase in the number of women in news stories or as sources. This also shows that breakpoint (piece-wise regression) analysis may be a useful tool in determining the critical mass of women needed to have a statistically significant influence on some newsroom concerns, including, for example, hiring, promotion, salaries, content of news stories, and so forth.

The present study did not begin with the goal of showing causality or the ways in which different variables influence or interact with others. Even so, we found clear evidence of a positive and significant relationship between the presence of women in reporting roles in the news industry and the visibility of women in the news. The piecewise regressions indicated a steeper increase in women news subjects after senior-level women reporters had reached a level of 45 per cent; a similar effect was evident in the piece-wise regression with junior-level professional women and women as news subjects, but not as pronounced.

Though tentative, our findings still suggest there may be validity to the theoretical assumption that having more women in the news industry could result in more women-inclusive news reporting – even in a profession that has been documented as being androcentric in its structures for gathering news and in the very definitions of who and what constitute news. We did find a clear and positive link – a linear relationship – between the presence of women in the news industry and women in the news. However, this observation should not preclude further testing in a study where the varied forms of women’s agency in the journalistic enterprise is studied to gain clearer insight as to how they exert influence when they have a critical mass within the organisation. Such research should of course also be contextualised within cultural and historical contexts, taking into account, for example, the slow emergence of women in

journalism professions in some nations due to culturally defined social roles and women's participation in the paid workforce.

Finally, and with respect to the points just made, we considered the broader social framework within which journalism is practiced in the nations examined in order to better understand the relationship between indicators of women's status generally and their status as journalism professionals specifically. The GGI, updated by the WEF each year, takes multiple factors into consideration in its scoring of women's status from nation to nation. When those indexes for the included nations were correlated with all of the decision-making roles of women in newsrooms of those same nations, the positive correlations were only weak to moderately strong. We emphasise here, as we did in the earlier discussion, that there is logic in the fact that the greater access women have to the opportunities afforded by a good education, health care, economic wellbeing, and political process, the greater the likelihood they will find their way into the decision-making roles of news organisations. Or, conversely, those who advance into these roles do so because they have already assumed elite status by virtue of their access to good education, health care, economic wellbeing, and political processes within their nations.

Buried within this statistical relationship is women's own agency in advocating for gender equality in economic and other institutions. Women's advancement has generally come through feminist movements that gained them the benefits of a good society through years of struggle for economic and political equality. A second factor is that culture plays a role in the extent to which women have entered journalism and the degree to which they are able to negotiate positions for themselves once within a newsroom environment. A third factor is really more of a reality check, as well as something of a paradox: Even in nations where women enjoy parity in terms of numbers within news organisations, and where they are able to exert influence in terms of larger amounts of information about women in the news, they still may occupy only token status in terms of achieving full equality with respect to salary, advancement, news assignments, and other benefits. This persistent gender discrimination has been commented on earlier in this chapter, as well as by numerous authors from those nations (see, e.g., Edström, 2013; Nastasia & Nastasia, 2013; Øvrebø, 2013; Savolainen & Zilliacus-Tikkanen, 2013).

The findings of our study, situated within the critical mass theoretical framework – including its refinements by theorists who came after Kanter – make an important start toward understanding the axes of power in the world's newsrooms, in most of which women still struggle for equality with men.

The foregoing study suggests a number of paths for further exploration if we are to have a more complete set of explanations and a clearer picture of how societal factors influence women's advancement in the journalism field, what influences women's mobility in news organisations, and what the

relationship of that mobility might be to news about women. The study also lays the foundation to pursue Dahlerup's suggestion for research to move beyond proportions alone and do more to interrogate "critical acts" by women in order to gain greater insight into the gendered dynamics within hierarchical organisations (quoted in Childs & Krook, 2008: 732). Future studies that extend our own organisational-focused findings will depend on the availability of data for such analysis. The study presented here relied on data for 2010, nearly a decade earlier than when the present work began, because there were no more recent data at the organisational or national level globally on women's occupational status in news media. Our hope is that more current studies will come forth to provide the basis for an updated meta-analysis to extend our own work.

Notes

1. Correlation is a measure of association (i.e., strength) of the relationship between two variables or indicators. A correlation varies from 0 (random relationship) to 1 (perfect linear relationship) or -1 (perfect negative relationship). A positive correlation means that a high score on one variable is associated with a high score on the other. The measure of the strength of the relationship between two variables is called Pearson's r . For example, in Table 5.5 in Appendix 5.2, there is a strong correlation (Pearson's $r = .766$) between the percentage of senior-level professional women for a given country and the percentage of female journalists in countries. The relationships between some of the variables were further examined using regression analyses and portrayed using scatterplot graphs with a fitted regression line to visualise the linear relationship. A p -value is the level of significance, and it tells us whether an observation is a result of a change that was made or of random occurrences.
2. A full correlation matrix of the relationships discussed in this section is available in Table 5.5 in Appendix 5.2.

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Appendix 5.1 Variables and data sources

Data for this chapter are compiled within the project Comparing Gender and Media Equality Across the Globe (Färdigh et al., 2020). The Gender Equality in the News Media (GEM) dataset includes variables from a number of different sources. In order to allow for proper identification across studies and to link each variable to its original source, each variable name has been assigned a prefix that contains a reference to the original data set followed by the original variable name. For example, the original variable “proportion of female news subjects or sources” is retrieved from the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) dataset and the original variable name is *gons_f*; therefore, it is named *gmmp_gons_f*. The data sources and indicators used in this chapter to measure the gender representation in the news are retrieved from the following sources:

The Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media (Byerly, 2011) sponsored by the International Women’s Media Foundation (IWMF). The IWMF is a Washington-based organisation that is dedicated to strengthening the role of women journalists worldwide. The report is the organisation’s first international study of women in the news media, and the data were collected in 2009–2010 and published in 2011. The following 59 countries were included:

Argentina	Lebanon
Australia	Lithuania
Bangladesh	Madagascar
Brazil	Malawi
Bulgaria	Mauritius
Cameroon	Mexico
Canada	Morocco
Chile	Mozambique
China	Namibia
Congo, Democratic Republic	New Zealand
Costa Rica	Nigeria
Denmark	Norway

Dominican Republic	Pakistan
Ecuador	Peru
Egypt	Philippines
Estonia	Poland
Ethiopia	Puerto Rico
Fiji	Romania
Finland	Russia
France	South Africa
Germany	Spain
Ghana	Sweden
Hungary	Uganda
India	Ukraine
Israel	United Kingdom
Jamaica	United States
Japan	Venezuela
Jordan	Zambia
Kenya	Zimbabwe
Korea, South	

The dataset includes detailed information on news operations with respect to men's and women's occupational standing, hiring and promotional policies, and other workplace practices. It also provides information about recruitment, training, policies related to advancement, news assignments, and a range of other issues that affect gender status in news organisations.

The Global Gender Gap Index (GGI) score (`wef_ggi_score`) is retrieved from the World Economic Forum (WEF). The GGI examines the gap between men and women in four fundamental categories (sub-indices). All indicators are measured as ratios, that is, as outcomes for women in relation to outcomes for men. The four sub-indices, with scales ranging from 1 (equality) to 0 (inequality), include:

- economic participation and opportunity (female labor force participation, wage equality between women and men for similar work, female estimated earned income, female legislators, senior officials and managers, and female professional and technical workers);
- educational attainment (literacy, net primary enrolment, net secondary enrolment, and gross tertiary enrolment);
- health and survival (sex ratio at birth and healthy life expectancy);

- and political empowerment (sets in parliament, ministerial level, and number of years with female head of state over male value).

Women journalists (per cent) (*vdem_mefemjrn*) is called per cent female reporters in the Varieties of Democracy (V-dem) dataset (Coppedge et al., 2017; Sundström et al., 2015), and is one measure of gender equality that is particularly relevant to this chapter. The data in V-dem are collected through an expert survey, where the country experts base their coding on the available country-level statistics and extant scholarly knowledge of the situation in each country. A key problem is that exact, yearly measures of the share of female reporters is unavailable in many countries.

Women's share as news subjects or sources is from the 2010 GMMP study (Macharia et al., 2010). The GMMP collects empirical evidence of gender in news content and changes over time through one-day snapshots taken every five years. The media monitoring has been carried out every five years since 1995, expanding from 71 to 114 participating countries in 2015. The number of news outlets and news stories sampled by each participating country depends on its population and the number of available news media outlets. The aim is to include sample news outlets that are representative of each country's news media sector. The original variable name is female news subjects, share of all news subjects or sources in newspaper, radio, and television stories that are female (*gmmp_gons_f*). The GMMP variables use a scale that indicates the share of men and women who appear in the news – in radio, television, and press, and more recently, in online sites – and in various topics and positions. The variables range from 0 (no women) to 100 (all women).

Table 5.3 *Descriptive statistics*

	<i>N</i>	Min	Max	Mean	Std Dev	Source
Governance (% women)	57	0	48.4	24.9	10.8	IWMF
Top-level management (% women)	58	0	58.5	25.9	14.1	IWMF
Senior-level management (% women)	59	0	79.5	29.4	14.3	IWMF
Senior-level professionals (% women)	59	10.5	70.6	39.9	13.6	IWMF
Junior-level professionals (% women)	56	3.5	78.5	41.4	14.9	IWMF
Women journalists (%)	140	7.8	69.1	38.8	11.0	V-dem
GGI (score)	108	6.0	75	24.2	9.8	WEF
Women's share as news subjects or sources (%)	110	0.533	0.850	0.686	0.058	GMMP

Appendix 5.2 Additional tables

Table 5.4 Gender representation in media organisations in 59 countries

	Men (%)	Women (%)	N	Levels of significance from paired sample t-test ($p = 0.05$)
Governance	74	26	1,857	.001 ***
Top-level management	73	27	1,811	.004 ***
Senior-level management	61	39	5,777	.05 *
Senior-level professional	59	41	37,407	.02 *
Junior-level professional	64	36	30,406	.11

Comments: N = number of individuals (men and women). A *t*-test is a simple statistical test to see if the means of two or more variables are significantly different. In this case, mean percentages of men and women in different positions were compared. Means were significantly different for the percentages of men and women in senior-level professional and management positions. Differences between mean percentages of men and women in top-level and governance levels were highly significant ($p = .004$ and $.001$, respectively).

Source: IWMF (Byerly, 2011: 23)

Table 5.5 Correlations between the percentages of women in various positions in news organisations in different countries (Pearson's *r*).

	Governance-level	Top-level management	Senior-level management	Senior-level professionals	Junior-level professionals	Women journalists
Decision-making roles						
top-level management	.369** (57)	X	X	X	X	X
senior-level management	.455*** (57)	.577*** (58)	X	X	X	X
Reporting roles						
Senior-level professionals	.280* (57)	.628*** (58)	.538*** (59)	X	X	X
Junior-level professionals	.238 (54)	.478*** (55)	.469*** (56)	.823*** (56)	X	X
Women journalists	.248 (56)	.567*** (57)	.475*** (58)	.766*** (58)	.732*** (55)	X

Comments: *n* = number of country observations, in parentheses. * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$. Correlation analysis was done with pair-wise deletion of countries with missing data.

Source: The variables for governance-level, top-level management, senior-level management, senior-level professional, and junior-level professional retrieved from the 2010 IWMF study (Byerly, 2011); percentage women journalists retrieved from V-dem (data for the year 2010)

Appendix 5.3 Piece-wise regressions

We used non-linear regression models provided by Statistica ® (least squares estimation and/or loss function estimation) to determine if breakpoints were found in some of the linear regressions (Statistica for Windows, 1995: 3035–3038). We used various breakpoints (independent variable) for different analyses. An example is provided in Figure 5.8 in Chapter 5. We began by using the Statistica software to obtain an estimated breakpoint, then systematically substituted additional user-defined breakpoints ranging between 10–50 per cent in the formula until a significant difference in slopes was obtained (per the example provided in Statistica and based on a dataset reported by Neter, 1985: 348). Some other user-defined breakpoints were chosen by visually examining the spread of the data points and experimenting with these breakpoints to see if a significant difference was found in the slopes of the two lines. We tested four groups of relationships:

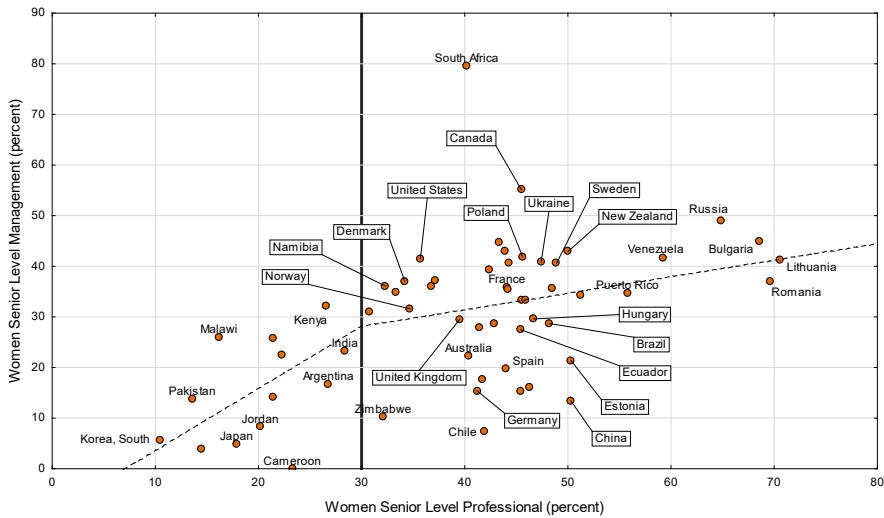
- the relationship between the percentages of women in various positions in the news industry and the percentage of women as sources or subjects in the news (GMMP);
- the relationship between the percentages of women at lower and higher positions in the news industry;
- the relationship between the percentages of women in various positions in the news industry and percentages of women journalists globally;
- and the relationship between the percentages of women in various positions in the news industry and GGI scores.

The results from these tests can be summarised as follows:

1. The main pattern of the data tends to be linear; however, significant breakpoints were found in most analyses, and a few significant breakpoints ($p \leq .05$) showed an increase in the slope of the second (right-hand) slope after the breakpoint. However, the second lines in all analyses still trended upward.
2. For the instances where we found identifiable, significant breakpoints, the second lines and slopes (to the right of the breakpoints) were mostly slightly lower than the pre-breakpoint lines. As an example, the analysis of the percentage of senior professional women versus the percentage of women in senior-level management had a significant breakpoint of 30 per cent ($\leq .002$), after which the slope of the second line decreased, indicating a ceiling effect (see Figure 5.9). While this pattern can be described as a

ceiling effect rather than a critical mass effect, it is important to observe that the second line continues at an upward trend.

Figure 5.9 *The relationship of senior-level professional women and women in senior-level management, using piece-wise regression analysis and a breakpoint of $x = 30$*



Comments: Number of country observations = 59. The piece-wise regression equation is $y = (-8.63172) + (1.22557) \times x + (-0.898649) \times (x - 30) \times (x > 30)$. Slope 1 is significantly different from slope 2 ($p = .002$). The breakpoint (30%) is indicated by the vertical line.

Source: IWMMF (Byerly, 2011)

We found several breakpoints where the second line and slope were steeper than the pre-breakpoint line – that is, a critical mass effect. In Figure 5.8 in Chapter 5, which plots the relationship between percentages of women reporters and women in the news, there is a marked and statistically significant breakpoint at $x = 45$. The slope of the second line (to the right of the breakpoint) is steeper than the first line (to the left of the breakpoint) and is significantly different than slope 1 ($p = .035$). The segmented lines and breakpoint in Figure 5.8 may thus indicate a threshold or critical mass effect – in other words, the right-hand slope increases steeply past the threshold or breakpoint, suggesting that after the 45 per cent level of senior professional women (reporters), there are more women in news stories or as sources. Bulgaria, Romania, and a few other points appear to be outliers in Figure 5.8; however, we could find no statistical or other reason for removing them. We explained in Chapter 5 why Bulgaria and other former Eastern Bloc Soviet countries have more women reporters and, therefore, why it makes sense that they would also have more women news subjects. Also, we note that Romania is about as equidistant below the regression line as Bulgaria is above it in Figure 5.8. We did a Mahalanobis analysis (Statistica for Windows, 1995: 3074 & 3089) and found that Bulgaria and Romania are about the same

distance from the centroid – 5.57 and 5.95, respectively – meaning that Romania is actually more of an outlier than Bulgaria. Also, a normal probability plot of residuals showed that the relationship among points is approximately linear and there were no points either less than -2.5 or greater than +2.5 (usually cut-off points for considering removing outliers), and the points all adhere closely to the line. Just to experiment, we did a breakpoint analysis without Bulgaria and Romania (still using a breakpoint of $x = 45$), and the right-hand slope remained very similar to that in Figure 5.8. In other words, the points for Bulgaria and Romania appear to balance each other out.

These findings using breakpoint analysis suggest the need for further research. We cannot definitively say there is a cause-and-effect relationship from these data, only that we have found a significant relationship between variables and a possible way to establish a critical mass effect. It is worth mentioning that no outliers were removed in these analyses, which may have influenced the results, some perhaps significantly. Also, the IWMF report contains data with a lot of variability from a relatively small number of countries, which also affects the outcome of the analyses. Still, overall, the second lines and slopes (to the right of the breakpoints) still showed an upward, albeit in some cases slightly lower, slope than the pre-breakpoint lines. Although only news companies in 59 countries were surveyed in the IWMF report, it employed more than 150 researchers who conducted interviews in 522 participating organisations and remains the only report of its kind. Future research on the status of women in news production should include more countries to ensure more current and reliable data. Breakpoint analysis might be a useful tool to apply to existing data, as well as that gathered in future efforts, to help determine the points at which women gain or exceed parity with men in the news industry, and also some of the factors that favour women's advancement or deter them from progressing into higher positions.

The project Comparing Gender and Media Equality across the Globe has been funded by the Swedish Research Council (2016–2020) and is based at the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication (JMG) at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. The GEM dataset and its codebook are free to use and can be downloaded in various formats. For access, contact JMG. Please ensure that proper attribution is given when citing the dataset.

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The media world versus the real world of women and political representation

Questioning differences and struggling for answers

Karen Ross, Marloes Jansen, & Tobias Bürger



6.1 Women, media, and politics

Research studies over at least the last three decades have consistently demonstrated that women are under-represented in news, both as sources and subjects, and as reporters and presenters, in relation to their presence in any given population. If we focus more explicitly on a particular category of women, namely politicians, we observe precisely the same problem, despite their potentially greater newsworthiness as elite actors. Many women politicians, including women who hold the top political job of prime minister or president, are not only under-reported, but when they *do* feature in news discourse, they are often trivialised, sexualised, or commodified, their sex seeming to be the most interesting thing about them from the perspective of journalists.

In this chapter, we look at the relationship of women, politics, and news and explore some of the reasons why the representation of political women seems so problematic. Media professionals will often suggest that fewer women than men politicians appear in the news because there are relatively few women in any given parliament or because most senior politicians – who are inherently more newsworthy than other categories of political commentator, according to traditional notions of news value (see Gans, 1979) – are men. While both explanations are plausible, and likely to explain some of women's under-representation, they are rarely accompanied with any data to show the extent to which they actually *do* explain the presence – or in this case, relative absence – of women politicians in the news. It is precisely this lack of testing such explanations which we set out to address in this chapter.

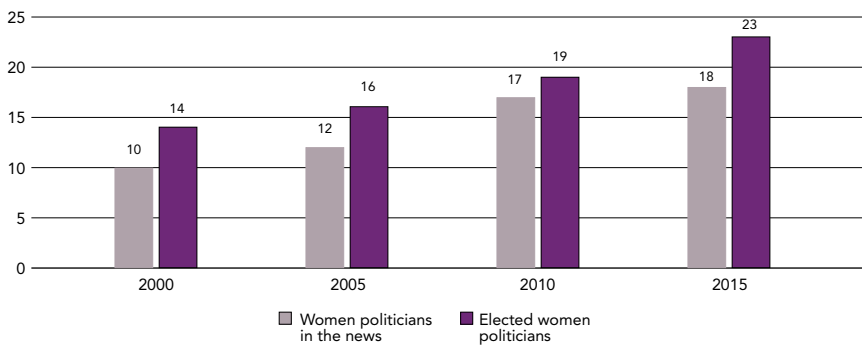
Although there is ample evidence of the under-representation of women politicians in relation to their actual numbers in politics, studies to date have

mostly been conducted in single countries. What those studies show is that there are substantial variations in women’s representation – both in news content and in their presence in legislatures – in different countries and regions of the world. This chapter seeks to describe and explore these cross-country variations. We first discuss the extant literature which has considered the tricky relations between women, politics, and news before turning to the empirical heart of the chapter, which looks at the data drawn from several different studies in order to model possible interpretations for women politicians’ (in)visibility in the news.

6.2 Women politicians and the media: A case to answer?

The relationship between women, politics, and the media has been the focus of many research endeavours over at least the past three decades. Over that time, despite the significant increases in women’s representation in national parliaments (the percentage of women has doubled over the past 20 years, from 12% in 1997 to 24% in 2017), their presence in the strange landscape that is the media world is oddly underwhelming. If we compare the global presence of women politicians in the news and the actual representation of women in the national parliaments, it is clear that there is a substantial gap (see Figure 6.1). Furthermore, the gap in under-representation of women politicians in the news remains largely the same over time.

Figure 6.1 *Women politicians in the real world and their representation as subjects or sources in the news, 2000–2015 (global averages, per cent)*



Comments: While the countries covered by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and those covered by the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) over the 15-year time period identified in Figure 6.1 do not match exactly, there is sufficient overlap to suggest a pattern. Data on women politicians in the real world is taken from IPU and refers to the percentage of women elected to the national parliaments (in lower or single house); data on women politicians (government, politician, minister, spokesperson) in the news are taken from the 2015 GMMP (Macharia, 2015: 25)

Source: GMMP; IPU

Most studies on the topic consider that the problem is two-fold: one issue is women's news media marginalisation in relation to their *actual* presence as political actors on the national and international stage; the other is *how* they are reported when they do receive airtime and column inches. Khan's (1991, 1994), Braden's (1996), and Norris's (1997) ground-breaking work on the representation of candidates in successive American elections in the 1990s re-asserted Tuchman and colleagues' (1978) much earlier statement that women were being "symbolically annihilated" in the news – women politicians as much as any other women. Studies of the European scene in the same decade, including work on the European Elections in 1994, demonstrated similarly depressing findings (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Ross, 1996). What these studies describe are exclusions and trivialisations: comparisons with male politicians reveal not simply issues of absence of women, but issues of more negative tone and story focus when women are covered in the news. The news frames identified when women politicians made the news are very different from those associated with men – often more negative and focusing more on style than substance and on the personal rather than the political. What was important about these early studies was their interest in showing both quantitative differences in terms of volume and frequency of mentions, but also the more qualitative aspects of language, tone, and content.

This dual focus was also adopted by the next wave of research in the 2000s, demonstrating the endurance and ubiquity of gender stereotypes in political reportage (Adcock, 2010; Banwart et al., 2003; Bystrom et al., 2001; Gallagher, 2001; Gidengil & Everitt, 2005; Heldman et al., 2005). In her interview-based work with women politicians from diverse parliamentary contexts, from Westminster to South Africa to New Zealand, Ross (2002) argued that women themselves were very conscious of the journalistic impulse to treat them as aberrations, which led them to devise strategies to both cultivate positive relationships between themselves and their respective political lobbies, but also to find ways to subvert the interpretive journalistic lens. However, it was not always a bad-news story, and some researchers have argued that women actually have an advantage over their male colleagues because of their novelty value (see, e.g., Smith, 1997; Devitt, 2002; Banwart et al., 2003).

While these particular studies stressed the importance of visibility, they were rather less concerned with content, but if novelty is the primary focus rather than competence, then it's arguable that such representations can actually be regarded as positive or progressive. A media focus on personal attributes rather than political ones does not help the public understand more about candidates' perspectives on policy and thus inform their voting decisions. On the other hand, and rather more positively, Lachover (2014) took a slightly different approach, focusing explicitly on the narratives adopted by popular women's magazines in Israel when they feature women politicians, and argued that they promote

a more gender-neutral frame than mainstream media and avoid suggesting a tension between being a woman and being a politician. By doing so, this genre of current-affairs media offers an alternative version of women politicians to their audience, which challenges the status quo and potentially enhances the credibility of women to be seen as legitimate political actors.

Over the past ten years, interest in the relationship between women, politics, and news has continued apace, not least because of the significant increase in the number of women who are contesting ordinary seats as well as those competing for the top job – in both instances with varying levels of success. What remains a depressing finding, however, is that despite the upward trend in the number of women politicians as a proportion of elected representatives, especially over the past decade, they still struggle to achieve a significant media presence and are often ignored as potential sources in news stories unless their position demands their inclusion.

In her study of Belgian television news, Vos (2013) aimed to determine if a *political* bias (women are too junior to be of interest to the media) worked with a *media* bias (male journalists like talking to male politicians) to produce a *gender* bias which proscribed women's visibility. She argued that "gender bias is not an illusion due to political gender differences but rather an inconvenient truth" (Vos, 2013: 391), since women were routinely less visible than men, regardless of their seniority and despite their relevance to a particular story. Raicheva-Stover and Ibroscheva (2014) focused on the discursive frames employed by mainstream Bulgarian media to describe women politicians, comparing the pre- and post-Communist era, and suggested that regardless of the prevailing political ideology, news portrayal is heavily stereotyped and draws on normative frames of gendered performance. Similar under-representation persists even in the presumed gender-egalitarian Nordic countries. For example, a study from Norway showed that only 29 per cent of politicians in the news are women, about 10 percentage points lower than their actual numbers as elected county representatives, mayors, and parliamentary representatives (Sjøvaag & Pedersen, 2018).

In other studies, the wives of political men were found to have been invited as sources in news stories more frequently than women politicians (Harmer et al., 2017). Even when political women *are* allowed some media airtime, especially in television panel discussions, they are often passed over in favour of male colleagues speaking, or talked over by male panellists. O'Brien's (2014) study of women's engagement with politics on the flagship current affairs show, *Prime Time*, broadcast by the Irish public service broadcaster RTÉ during the 2011 elections, showed that women constituted around one-third of appearances on the show but were only given 10 per cent of the airtime, demonstrating a double-silencing. The first show she monitored during the campaign featured no women at all, instead comprising six male panellists, a male reporter, and a male presenter. Other contemporary studies show exactly the same proclivity,

be it the proportion of column inches or minutes of television airtime, as much in studies focused on routine politics as those looking at election campaigns (Howell & Singer, 2017). Interestingly, in the UK's 2015 and 2017 general elections, when women took part in the televised leaders' debates (three out of the seven major parties who were given a platform had a woman leader), the public and indeed the media response was favourable, not least because, in order to become party leader, these women had to be good politicians *and* good speakers (Ross, 2015, 2017).

Studies undertaken in non-Western contexts display the same issues of invisibility and trivialisation. In sub-Saharan Africa, both Donkor (2016) in Ghana, and Agbalajobi (2010) and Ette (2017) in Nigeria, found that women politicians in those countries also struggled to achieve media traction, and when they did, their achievements were often yoked to their familial "benefactor". In Donkor's work, for example, she found that when women competed for elected office – and particularly for senior posts – the news media would invariably describe them as the wife or daughter of a prominent man, with the implication that they were either being manipulated or else leveraging their personal relationship. Ette suggests that journalists reinforce a patriarchal understanding of the political process and that the relative absence of women in news discourse reflects the public's perception of women's (poor) political competence. Not only do the media undermine women's agency as political actors, women themselves are sometimes complicit in their own marginalisation. Devasahayam's (2013) study of women politicians in Singapore suggests that women there make a conscious decision to operate like their male counterparts as a survival tactic, with the result that no one is championing the cause of women or equality.

What most contemporary studies show is that, across the globe, the gendered frames observed in earlier studies have been found to be remarkably stable across time. It is perhaps understandable, in a media-saturated environment which regularly threatens to overwhelm us with the sheer volume of text and images, that journalists reach for some catch-all identikit woman-politician frames. However, in doing so, they reinforce and recycle a set of gendered scripts which collapse difference and provoke (often unfavourable) comparisons with the man-politician "norm". The kinds of contemporary frames which routinely describe women politicians and women candidates include a lack of relevant experience, naiveté, incompetence, being overly emotional, inadequate leadership skills or experience, and, most importantly, *not* being men. A very good example is the current prime minister of New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern, whose media coverage of her first 100 days in office (she became prime minister on 26 October 2017) focused on the novelty of being pregnant in office and her alleged inexperience, despite her having been a member of parliament since 2008 and a member of the shadow cabinet since 2011. The over-determined nature of this journalistic preoccupation with gendered trait allocation means

that women politicians' alleged lack of those (implicitly *male*) attributes, which are deemed desirable or appropriate for a politician, become important ways through which to undermine women's credibility as political actors – even for women who have already successfully served as prime ministers and presidents, such as New Zealand's Helen Clark (Lawrence & Rose, 2010). In addition to including entirely irrelevant aspects of a woman politician's candidacy – such as her wardrobe, her family, and her domestic arrangements (Kaur & Shaari, 2012) – journalists will often imply that a woman's sex is directly related to her (in)competence and that her personal characteristics should be considered alongside her track record on policy, as much for prime ministers as backbenchers.

As well as the use of gendered frames when reporting on politicians, three other important aspects of the journalistic insistence in using gendered political scripts are the language and tone of their copy and story topic. Analyses of news discourse reveals explicit and strategic differences in the words used to describe women and men politicians, which replicate the kinds of gender-normative behaviours routinely attributed to women and men. More generally – including but not exclusive to the political sphere – there are several popular semantic differentials that have a clear gender orientation: men are assertive, women are aggressive; women are emotional, men are in touch with their feminine side; men are rational, women are unfeeling; and so on. Acknowledging how these unhelpful couplings work, some women attempt to subvert these normative characteristics by playing against their feminine “disadvantage”, but because of the particularities of the media's gendered political logic, women can be viewed positively as credible political actors if they perform well against a male-ordered script, but will often be simultaneously criticised for being too assertive for a woman, but also too aggressive for a politician. Working in the opposite direction, men who lose political authority are described as weak or “upset”, their loss tied inextricably to their dwindling masculinity and the “female” traits of weakness and vulnerability repurposed as symbols of men's defeat (Lünenborg & Maier, 2015).

The casual trivialisation and sexualisation of women politicians is perfectly exemplified by the news media's response to the outcome of the 1997 British general election, which saw the number of women elected to parliament double overnight. Several news outlets greeted this historic outcome by describing the 101 newly-elected Labour women as “Blair's babes”, a strategy which has been used to similar effect in other parts of the world (Cowley & Childs, 2003; Mavin et al., 2010). During the 2008 American presidential elections, Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin were often pictured as warrior figures, but more in the mould of Lara Croft than Boadicea, clad in what Perks and Johnson (2014) rather lyrically describe as “burlesque binds”. In the more recent elections in 2016, Clinton styled herself as the wise grandmother, arguably in the hope of heading off claims that she was past her “sell-by date”, although at 68, she was

still two years younger than Donald Trump, who has never felt it necessary to excuse his age, secure in the knowledge that age is only a negative talking point for women, since men are deemed to improve with the passing of time.

Kasoma's (2014) study of coverage of women politicians in the two most important newspapers in Zambia – the *Post* and *Zambia Daily Mail* – found that women politicians were mostly invisible, but when they *were* featured, the stories tended to be framed around corruption, women's issues, or development. Their marginalisation is in line with so much of the literature that finds the same trend of sourcing women politicians in stories regarded as soft – and thus “appropriate” – topics on which to seek women's views (see, e.g., Ben Salem & Mejbri's 2014 work on the Tunisian press).

Of course, it's not only journalists who marginalise political women, but other politicians as well, some of whom, like journalists, have become adept at using more subtle strategies of critique. Fracchiolla (2011) argues that in media debates during the French presidential elections in 2007, Nicholas Sarkozy's use of extreme politeness – often considered to be a female trait – was used to very good effect, as it provoked an angry and emotional response from his opponent, Ségolène Royal, giving Sarkozy grounds for arguing that Royal was too emotional to be a competent leader. He also paid her numerous compliments, proactively asserting his right to do so and thus putting her in the position of passively “receiving” his attention. These kinds of strategies are clever and sly, their steady accretion building to undermine the potency of women as political actors.

These more qualitative findings from research studies demonstrating the very different discourses adopted for women and men – and which are considerably disadvantageous for women – are important to understand as contributors to the complex problem of women politicians' representation in news. This is because they show that numerical correspondence is only *one* aspect of the problem of gendered media portrayal. If the frequency of women's media visibility corresponds to their frequency in the overall numbers of politicians in parliament, then that could be seen as fair representation by the news media. However, if a closer discursive analysis shows that the tone, language, and focus of stories featuring women and men are different, and that stories about women focus on their sex and style and stories about men focus on their politics and presence, then the overall result for women is not at all fair or even-handed (see also Semetko & Boomgaarden, 2007; Lünenborg & Maier, 2015). Indeed, Haraldsson and Wängnerud (2018) suggest that the ways in which the news media frame women politicians have a negative impact on women's likelihood to even consider a career in politics, which is extremely problematic for a well-functioning democracy. Although we don't look at the qualitative elements of news discourse in our analysis, it is useful to bear them in mind when considering the findings we present below.

6.3 Exploring women's (in)visibility in the news: Political representation and the gender-equality landscape

The first and most obvious explanation for women politicians' visibility in the news is, arguably, tied to their representation in their national legislatures. A major flaw of many studies that focus on the presence of women politicians in the media on the one hand, and research on gender and media on the other, is their failure to explore exogenous factors such as the political and sociopolitical environment in which news media operate (Djerf-Pierre, 2007). This has therefore limited the explanatory power of potential interpretations generated on the basis of relatively small-scale national case studies with limited foci. Thus, although studies will often suggest that women politicians are under-represented compared with men, scholars rarely quantify that assertion by including a note of the percentage of women politicians in the relevant legislature. Women's under-representation is therefore mostly described in relation to men, not in relation to their proportion of elected members, with some notable exceptions, such as Lünenborg & Maier's (2015) study of news media coverage of senior women politicians in Germany, which did do precisely that.

In Sweden, the first self-defined "feminist" government was formed in 2015 and included an explicit pledge to be the strongest voice for gender equality and full employment of human rights for all women and girls (Aggestam & Bergman-Rosamond, 2016). It could therefore be argued that the general level of gender equality in a country could relate to how the news media portrays women in politics – and so we ask, could such societal factors be associated with women politicians' media visibility?

6.4 Women in the political newsroom: A sisterly conspiracy?

The second possible explanation for women politicians' visibility relates to intra-media factors. While other chapters explore aspects of production versus representation in broad terms, an additional issue associated with the news presence of women politicians is the character of political news and the cachet that surrounds this particular genre of journalism, which is dominated by men. Studies that have looked at gender and news beats show clearly that horizontal segregation is a visible feature of newsroom cultures, with relatively few women working in hard news sections and ever fewer women getting their copy onto the front page (Bawdon, 2012; Harp et al., 2014; Women's Media Centre, 2017). This is an important issue, since some researchers who have focused on intra-media factors as explanations for how reality is represented in the news suggest that who works (and leads) in the newsroom *could* have an impact on

news content. In other words, more women journalists and more women in top-level positions in media organisations *could* lead to a different kind of news or, at the very least, news with and from a different perspective (Armstrong, 2004; Zoch & VanSlyke Turk, 1998). A key factor to consider, therefore, is whether there is any association between women political news reporters and editors, and the visibility of women politicians in news discourse.

The results from the 2015 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) – a global study that examines the gender representation in the news on a single day – showed that women had a byline in 31 per cent of political news stories, compared with 50 per cent of science and health news, 39 per cent of finance and economy stories, and 39 per cent of social and legal news stories (see also North, 2016). As Figure 6.2 demonstrates, not only is political journalism the least likely to recruit women reporters, but their relative absence has shown very little change over time, despite the fact that more women are entering the journalism profession than ever before. In fact, Figure 6.2 actually shows that if anything, there has been a slight decline in political stories written by women over the past five years, from 33 per cent in 2010 down to 31 per cent in 2015.

Figure 6.2 *Women and men with journalism credits for political news stories in television, radio, and press, 2000–2015 (per cent)*



Source: GMMP (Macharia, 2015: 24)

Lastly, based on the literature to date, we would expect structural patterns in both media and politics to have an impact on the visibility of women politicians in the news, so we also test that assumption in this chapter.

6.5 Method

The analysis is a cross-sectional secondary analysis of data from a number of sources with different foci – gender and media, but also politics and society. The variables are drawn from four different datasets (see Table 1): the GMMP, the International Women’s Media Foundation (IWMF), the Quality of Gov-

ernment (QoG) Institute, and the World Economic Forum (WEF). We draw on the dataset which comprises the most recent data available from each of the constituent databases, mainly from 2010–2015. The construction of such a cross-sectional dataset allows us to make use of latest available data for the largest number of countries.

The cross-sectional approach was chosen mainly due to large gaps in the available data. Although GMMP is conducted every fifth year since 1995, only 31 countries have participated in all rounds. Also, not all participating countries have political news or politicians in the data collected (no political stories, no politicians, or both). Additionally, there are also quite large gaps in the data available for the independent variables, which makes it difficult to construct a dataset where all variables are matched by year. To pool the available data into a cross-sectional dataset allows us to include 129 of the world's countries in the analysis (see also Chapter 1 for a discussion on methodological issues).

The two main dependent variables for our analysis are retrieved from the GMMP, which is part of the GEM dataset (Färdigh et al., 2020). GMMP is the largest study of gender and news in relation to the number of countries and range of media it monitors. Although the latest data from the project (2015) includes online as well as offline news stories, for this chapter, we focus exclusively on the traditional media of television, radio, and the press, since there is significantly less data available on Twitter and online news stories. The two dependent variables are therefore 1) the visibility of women politicians as subjects or sources in *any* news story across television, radio, and the press (DV1), and 2) the visibility of women in stories coded as politics and government across television, radio, and the press (DV2):

- DV1 – women politicians as subjects or sources – draws on the GMMP variable, gender of news subjects in major occupational group, politician, female (gmmp_gonsp_f),¹ and measures the share of women news subjects in the major occupational group (of politicians) in newspapers, television, and radio on a scale ranging from 0 (no women) to 100 (all women).
- DV2 – women as news subjects or sources in political stories – draws on the GMMP variable, gender of news subjects in major topic areas – politics and government, female (gmmp_gonspg_f), which measures the share of women news subjects in topics about politics and government in television, radio, and the press on a scale ranging from 0 (no women) to 100 (all women).

We chose these two different ways of understanding the relationship between women, politics, and media since the literature suggests that when women politicians do appear in news stories, they often appear in soft news items on a

range of topics, and that the spouses of political leaders appear more frequently in hard news stories about politics than women politicians.

The GMMP reports employ country-weights in their analyses to account for differences in population and the size of the media sector in different countries when calculating global averages, but in this study, we use unweighted data: each country is given the same weight. Since the GMMP only surveys the news output on a single day, data collected for individual countries may be biased because of specific events or circumstances on that particular day. However, there is no reason to believe that, even where this is the case, such bias operates differently for women or men. Also, some countries only provide analyses of a limited number of news outlets. Extreme outliers (i.e., country observations with extreme values) based on small sample sizes (few news stories analysed) are thus excluded from the analyses: Vanuatu, Samoa, Macedonia, Ireland, Chad, Haiti, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Niger, Solomon Islands, St. Lucia, Congo, Gabon, and Burkina Faso.²

As for independent variables, we consider what factors could be in play in determining the visibility of women politicians in the media. The literature review suggests that there are three areas of potential influence: 1) the political environment, specifically the proportion of women who are elected representatives in any given parliament or legislature; 2) the broader sociopolitical landscape that supports or inhibits gender equality; and 3) women's presence in the news industry in reporting and decision-making roles. To test the potential influence of each of these factors, we chose three indicators.

The proportion of women as elected representatives is indicated by the variable, share of women in lower house, and has been retrieved from QoG (Teorell et al., 2017; data originally from the IPU, or Inter-Parliamentary Union). It measures the percentage of women elected representatives in lower- or single-house national parliaments.

The broader gender equality landscape is measured with the Global Gender Gap Index (GGI) score, produced by the World Economic Forum (WEF) and retrieved from QoG. This is the most extensive and widely used measure of the gender gap in society and examines the gap between women and men in economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment.

Women in the news industry is measured by two variables: women political reporters (the share of political news stories produced by women reporters in TV, radio, press) has been retrieved from GMMP; top-level women media managers was retrieved from IWMF (Byerly, 2011) and measures the percentage of women who report to boards of directors and comprises the most senior staff, including publisher, chief executive officer, director general, and chief financial officer.

The original sources and statistics for each included variable is presented in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Variable statistics

	Mean	Min	Max	Std Dev	N	Source
Women politicians as subjects or sources	17	0	47	9.5	129	GMMP
Women as news subjects or sources in political stories	16	0	55	10.5	134	GMMP
Share of women in lower house	22	0	64	12.0	136	QoG/IPU
Global Gender Gap Index	0.702	0.56	0.88	0.056	122	QoG/WEF
Women political reporters – TV, radio, press	36	0	100	22	132	GMMP
Top-level news media managers	26	0	58	14.3	57	IWMF

Comments: N = number of country observations. Cross-sectional data comprising the most recent data available from each of the constituent datasets, using 2015 as the target year. The share of women in the lower house variable (*qog_ipu_l_sw*) is taken from the QoG Institute (Teorell et. al., 2017) dataset and was originally retrieved from the IPU, and measures the share of women in the lower or single house parliaments in per cent. The GGI variable (*wef_ggi_score*) is taken from QoG but is originally from WEF and examines the gap between women and men in four fundamental categories (sub-indices): economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. The variable ranges from 1 (equality) to 0 (inequality). The women political reporters – TV, radio, press variable (*gender of reporters in major topic areas – politics and government, female, gmmp_gorpg_f*) is taken from the GMMP and measures the share of women (and men) reporters in topics about politics and government published or broadcast in newspapers, television, and radio; it varies between 0 and 1. The top-level news media managers variable (*top-level women, share of women-variable, iwmf_tlms_f*) is taken from the IWMF dataset (Byerly, 2011) and counts the percentage of women who report to boards of directors and comprises the most senior staff including publisher, chief executive officer, director general, and chief financial officer: the scale ranges from 0–100, with 0 indicating no top-level women. Outliers with small sample size (few stories analysed in GMMP) are excluded: Vanuatu, Samoa, Macedonia, Ireland, Chad, Haiti, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Niger, Solomon Islands, St Lucia, Congo, Gabon, and Burkina Faso.

Source: GMMP (1995–2015); QoG/IPU; QoG/WEF; IWMF (Byerly, 2011)

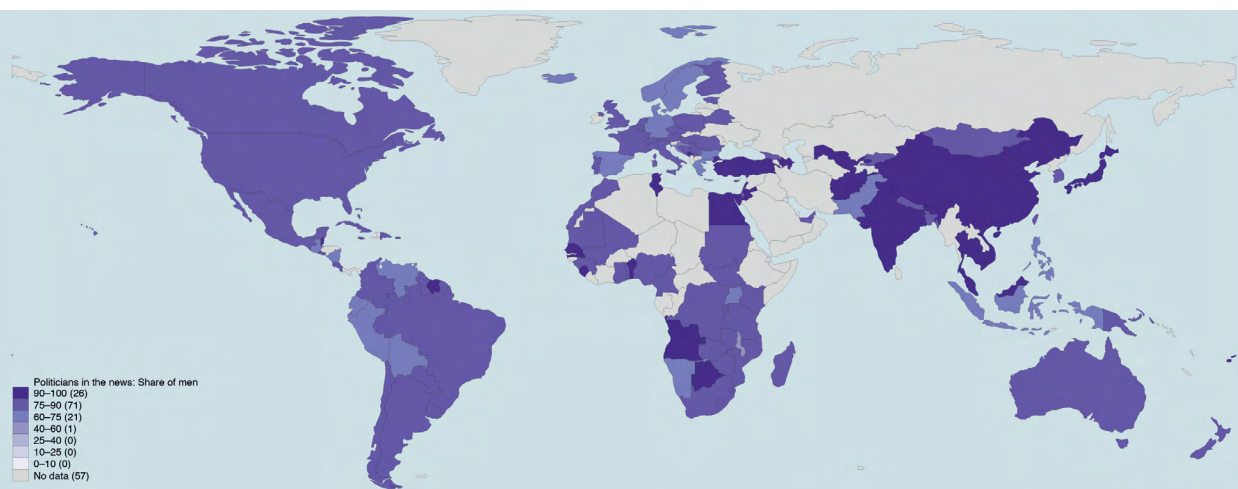
6.6 Testing our assumptions:

The relationship between political representation and the visibility of women in political news

We begin the results section by showing a snapshot in the form of a map displaying the dominance of men politicians in the news across the globe (see Figure 6.3). The cross-sectional dataset includes 129 countries, and there are a few countries from where we lack data.³ As Chapter 1 argues, there is a relationship between gender equality in society and participating actively in GMMP, which means that the grey fields in the map (where data are unavailable) most likely represent countries with lower levels of gender equality, both in the news and in society.

Still, the global map provides an interesting picture of national differences. In 81 per cent of the countries studied by GMMP, men received 75 per cent or more of the visibility given to politicians. Eight countries had no women politicians at all in the news. Only two of 129 countries in the analysis showed that the visibility of women politicians reached at least 40 per cent.

Figure 6.3 *Men politicians' visibility as news subjects or sources across the world's news media*



Comments: $n = 119$. The map displays the latest available data on men politicians' visibility in the news from each country, mostly from 2015. The scale varies from 0 (no men) to 100 (all men). Outliers with small sample size (few stories analysed in GMMP) are excluded. Antigua and Barbuda (100% men), Barbados (68%), Cape Verde (69%), Grenada (100%), Malta (80%), Mauritius (94%), St. Vincent and the Grenadines (83%), Seychelles (89%), Tonga (100%), and Serbia and Montenegro (92%) are missing due to the design of the statistical package used to construct the map.

Source: GMMP (1995–2015)

This means that although women politicians are much less visible than men in the news in most countries, there are still significant cross-national variations. In explaining these cross-national differences, we were interested in exploring the relative influence of different factors on the visibility of women politicians in news stories: political representation, the broader gender equality landscape, and women in the news industry. We considered each of these factors in turn. First, we produced bivariate correlations between the independent variables and the visibility of women politicians in the news expressed as two dependent variables. We used Pearson's correlation coefficients, and the correlations are indicated by the symbol r (see Table 6.2). Secondly, we performed a linear regression analysis to examine which of our independent variables had the most power in predicting our main dependent variable, women politicians' visibility in the news (see Table 6.3).

Table 6.2 *Bivariate correlations between women's visibility in political news and their actual representation in the legislature, the Global Gender Gap Index, Women political reporters, and top-level women media managers (Pearson's r)*

	Women politicians share of subjects or sources in all news stories	Women's share of subjects or sources in politics and government news
Share of women in lower house	.436*** (125)	.307** (129)
Global Gender Gap Index	.528*** (112)	.374*** (117)
Women political reporters – TV, radio, press	.112 (125)	.101 (132)
Top-level women media managers	.315* (54)	.142 (56)

Comments: n = number of country observations (in parentheses). * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. The correlation between women politicians' share of subjects or sources in all news stories and women's share of subjects or sources in news stories on politics and government is .676***. Outliers with small sample size (few stories analysed in GMMP) excluded. See Table 6.1 for details of the variables included in the table.

Source: QoG/IPU; GMMP

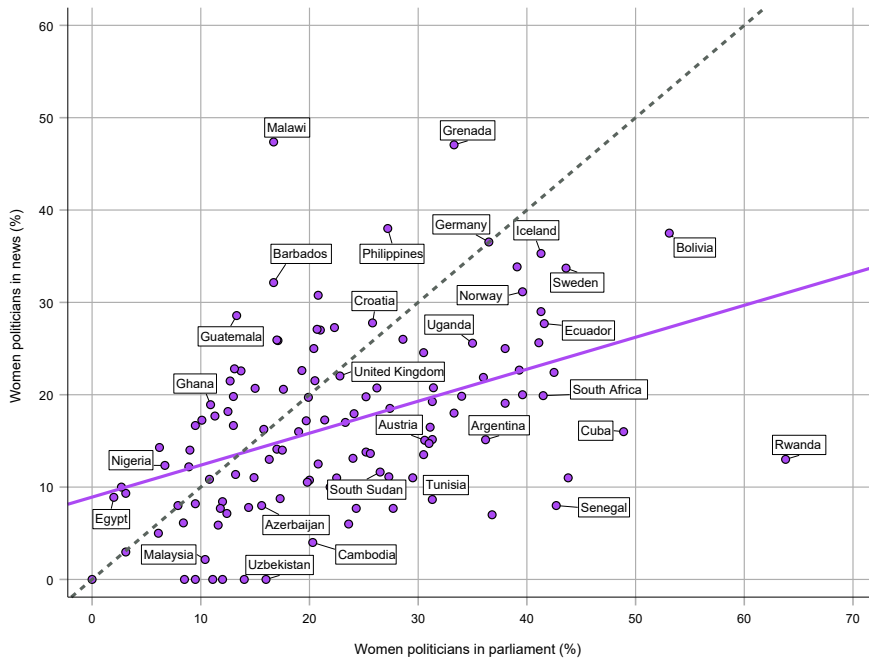
Political representation

The most obvious predictor of women politicians' visibility in the news is, arguably, their representation in their national legislature, so we conducted a simple bivariate correlation analysis, measuring the strength of the relationship between the share of women in the lower house (SWLH) and our two indicators of women politicians' visibility in the news. Firstly, we assessed the relationship between SWLH and women politicians as news subjects or sources in *all* news categories across television, radio, and press. We found a positive significant relationship between the two variables ($r = .436$, $p < .001$), suggesting that the proportion of women politicians in the real world was associated with their share of media visibility as news sources or subjects relative to men.

Figure 6.4 visualises this relationship in a scatterplot. We can further see in this scatterplot that in most of the countries included in our study, the proportion of women politicians is relatively small, with the exception of a few countries and regions such as Scandinavia. The scatterplot also shows that few countries have high numbers of women politicians *and* high visibility in the media. The dashed line shows what the relationship would be if the number of women politicians predict perfectly their representation in the news. In less than one-third of the analysed countries, women politicians are over-represented in the news in relation to their actual presence in parliament; in more than two-thirds of the cases, women are under-represented in relation to their actual numbers. In 36 per cent of the countries, women's under-representation exceeded 10 percentage

points, whereas the opposite was true (women being over-represented by 10 percentage points or more) in only 4 per cent of the countries.

Figure 6.4 *The relationship between the number of women politicians in the lower (or single) house in national parliaments and women as subjects or sources in the news*



Comments: $n = 125$ (number of countries). The purple line shows the linear relationship between the share of women in the lower house and women politicians as subjects or sources. The grey dotted line shows the fiction that the number of women politicians predict perfectly their representation in the news. Regression for fitted regressions line ($y = 8.91 + 0.35x$), Pearson's $r = .436$ ($p < .000$), $R^2 = .190$. Outliers with a small sample size (few stories analysed in GMMP) are excluded.

Looking deeper into the data, the under-representation is often larger in countries with higher levels of gender equality; countries where women politicians are over-represented are, in several instances, countries where women lack status and freedoms. This seemingly surprising result suggests that a legislative underpinning of gender equality is no guarantee that women's political voice will be given equal visibility with men or, in fact, vice versa. It also shows the importance of understanding global trends and patterns in relation to individual country differences, mirroring a key finding from European research focused on senior women in media industries, which found significant differences between the EU27+ which could *not* be explained by looking at the gender equality landscape, nor by the existence (or otherwise) of in-house gender equality policies (EIGE, 2013). The purple line in Figure 6.4 is the one that best fits the actual distribution of the observations. It illustrates that even though the vis-

ibility of women in the news increases as their actual representation improves, the increase is not proportional. Indeed, an increase of women politicians by 1 per cent in the real world is only associated with an increase in their visibility in the news by 0.3 per cent (see also Table 6.3).

We then tested the relationship between SWLH and *all* women as subjects or sources in news stories about politics and government and found a similar, but somewhat weaker, relationship between the two in relation to stories published in newspapers or broadcast on television or radio ($r = .307, p < .001$). This suggests that the number of elected women politicians also predicts women's overall visibility in political news, but to a lesser extent than for the first independent variable.

The gender equality landscape

The literature, including previous reports from the GMMP, suggests that countries – and indeed regions – that perform well against social, economic, and cultural indices of gender equality are more likely to include women's views and voices in news media. In this part of the discussion, therefore, we consider the predictive power of the Global Gender Gap Index, which showed a moderately strong, positive relationship with the visibility of women politicians as news subjects ($r = .528, p < .001$) and a significant but weaker relationship with women as news subjects or sources in stories about politics and government ($r = .374, p < .001$).

Women in the news industry

As discussed previously, there is some support for the idea that more women as producers of news (as journalists and editors) could make a difference to news content. For this third factor, then, we looked at two independent variables: women political reporters on television, radio, and press, and senior women media managers. We found no significant correlation with women political reporters, but a moderately strong positive correlation with women media managers. This may suggest that cultural shifts in relation to gender, and indeed any other forms of equality, are unlikely to take place unless there is direction and commitment from the top, regardless of the overall number of women journalists in an organisation.

Predicting women politicians' visibility in the news – a multivariate analysis

The final step of our analysis was to examine if and how well our chosen independent variables can predict women politicians' visibility in the news. Table 6.3 consists of three regression models which test the relationship between the

visibility of women politicians in the news and the two independent variables previously shown to be significantly correlated with women's visibility.

Only about 18 per cent of the cross-country variations in women politicians' visibility in the news can be attributed to their actual presence in legislatures around the world (model 1: $R^2 = .184$, $p < .001$). The broader gender-equality landscape, as measured by the GGI, turns out to be a somewhat better predictor and "explains" almost twice as much of the variation (about 27% in model 2). On the other hand, since the global gender gap in political representation is part of the GGI, the results tell us that gender gaps in other areas of society seem to be just as (or more) influential as gender gaps in political representation for the representation of women politicians in the media landscape.⁴ If we include both the share of women in the lower house and the GGI in a multivariate analysis (model 3), the share of women in the lower house becomes insignificant, and the explained variance is not much better than in model 2. The fact that the GGI includes the share of women in the legislature as part of the index could explain this result.

Table 6.3 *Women politicians as subjects or sources in the news predicted by the share of women in the lower house and the Global Gender Gap Index*

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Share of women in lower house	0.3*** (0.1)		0.1 (0.1)
Global Gender Gap Index		84.5*** (13.0)	70.7*** (18.3)
Constant	8.9*** (1.7)	-41.8*** (9.1)	-34.5** (10.9)
N	125	112	111
Adjusted R^2	.184***	.272***	.275***

Comments: N = number of countries in the analysis. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$, **** $p < 0.001$. OLS regression, standard errors in parentheses, unweighted b -coefficients. The variable scales are: women politicians as news subjects or sources in per cent (0–100); share of women (lower or single house) in per cent (0–100); GGI (0–1). Collinearity statistics for model 3: highest VIF = 1.769. Outliers with small sample size (few stories analysed in GMMP) are excluded.

Source: GMMP; QoG/WEF

6.7 Conclusion and discussion

The first and perhaps most important contribution of the study is to provide global *evidence* for what has previously only been *suggested* in studies of single countries: women politicians are systematically under-represented in the news in relation to their actual numbers in legislatures across the world. Although there is a positive relationship between women's actual political representation

and the visibility of women politicians in the news, the association is fairly weak and disproportional. An increase in the number of women parliamentarians by 1 per cent in the real world is only associated with 0.3 percentage points increase in their visibility in the media world.

In terms of explanations, our analysis shows some interesting results with some potentially contradictory findings. If we consider the three aspects which we believe *could* have an influence on the visibility of women politicians in the news – political representation, the gender equality landscape, and women in the media industry – some had some predictive power at the level of individual variables and others did not. For example, there was a positive relationship between the proportion of women politicians in the real world (or at least in lower houses or single-house parliaments) and their frequency as subjects or sources of news in *any* genre, as well as the visibility of women in general in political news, although the latter was slightly weaker than the former. When we looked at the GMMP data to determine trends in the visibility of women politicians in the news across time, we found that while their actual numbers are rising across the world, their visibility in the media world remains low in many countries. One possible explanation is that they become less newsworthy as they become more “ordinary”, and this resonates well with the “novelty-value” thesis (Garcia-Blanco & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2012). Or, that they remain on the backbenches and are thus too unimportant to use as sources, or that they *are* promoted to senior posts but are given less prestigious portfolios and are therefore less interesting and newsworthy for journalists, both of which echo the “news values” thesis.

The GGI was also positively related both to women politicians’ visibility in *all* news genres, and women’s visibility in *political* news. Given that the GGI is a composite variable which includes a number of sociopolitical dimensions, this suggests that environments which enjoy multiple gender-equality elements are the ones which are most likely to enable women’s political voice in the media. However, as we mentioned earlier, this finding obscures significant differences between countries, so there is not an entirely straightforward or inevitable link between the broader gender-equality landscape and the visibility of women’s political voice.

When we consider the other possible explanations for women politicians’ lack of media visibility, research suggests that the sex of political journalists and editors *could* make a difference, but our analysis only partially bears this out, as only one of the variables (women media managers) showed any predictive power, and the few studies which *have* explored the relationship between journalists and their sources have produced mixed results. Although it’s not possible to determine exactly why these studies have produced results that are so starkly opposed, reasons could include sample size, geographical scope, media type, and time period. Interestingly, the GMMP 2015 report suggests that the

sex of journalists is significantly correlated with the presence of women across all genres and formats of news content (Macharia, 2015). However, when we focus in on political news stories written by women journalists and the visibility of women in that particular genre of news, the correlation between the two is not significant. How might we account for the apparent difference in gender salience between all news genres and explicitly political news? One explanation is that so-called hard news beats have more rigid routines in relation to newsworthiness, so journalists are less likely or able to exercise discretion about who is considered a “legitimate” source, and therefore, they seek out sources who are routinely asked to comment, such as senior political figures, most of whom are men (see Minić, 2013). Another possible reason is that the women who do manage to penetrate this prestigious beat are unwilling to move against the orthodoxies of the political newsroom or their colleagues, fearing either rejection or harassment, both of which experiences have been amply documented in research on the gendered newsroom (see North, 2016). Yet another reason could be that women (and indeed men) quickly become acculturated to the working norms in which they find themselves and come to believe that their practice is in fact “natural” and neutral and simply follows (normative) journalism conventions, rather than recognising such “norms” as the outcome of a set of prescribed and male-defined assumptions about whose voice is important and whose is not.

When we think about these “gendered journalism” factors, perhaps it is not so surprising that the correlation here is not significant, since there is some evidence to suggest that when women do achieve senior editorial positions, they do not necessarily initiate changes resulting in different content (Beam & Di Cicco, 2010; Everbach, 2006). A large-scale survey of journalists in 18 countries showed no significant gender differences in their professional role conception (Hanitzsch & Hanusch, 2012). In addition, many women journalists do not believe that their sex has any influence on how they “do” journalism (see Joshi et al., 2006). When Rebekah Wade became the *Sun*’s first female editor in 2003, her first editorial intervention on the day she took up her appointment was to superimpose her head onto the body of the Page 3 model of the day, captioned as “Rebekah of Wapping” (Ross, 2017). On being appointed the first female editor of the *New York Times* in 2011, Jill Abramson broke a run of more than 160 years of male domination, but said that readers would not see the difference, because a good story is always a good story whoever writes it. Sandra Mims Rowe, on the other hand, who became editor at Portland’s *Oregonian* in 1993, suggests that in her own early days, she promoted the same kind of sex-denying rhetoric, but as she got more involved in the job, she realised that gender was *always* an issue: “Of course there is a gender component. We are a combination of our life experiences, and that is a factor in news judgment” (cited in Ricchiardi, 2011: 32). It is an unfortunate irony that the post-feminist

clamour which surrounded Abramson's ground-breaking appointment was re-animated three years later when she was dismissed for, allegedly, being "difficult" – a phrase which is only ever used about a woman – although asking questions about pay parity may well have been seen by some board members as being rather awkward (Kitch, 2015). There are indeed two fundamental flaws in the otherwise rather attractive argument that more women reporting on politics should result in a more accurate coverage of women politicians. One is the assumption that all women journalists are the same and share the same values, and the other is that individual women can make change happen on their own. Sex alone is an insufficient predictor of change: what is necessary is the will and commitment to understand why gender equality is important and to then promote it in news organisations.

In conclusion, what our analysis shows is that the aspects of the relationship between gender, politics, and news that many researchers, including the authors, believe *could* be influential are found not to have quite the predictive power as expected. There seems to be no obvious relationship between the presence of women political reporters and the visibility of women politicians in news discourse, although women in senior management positions in media organisations did seem to have some explanatory power in predicting their presence. The proportion of women politicians in national parliaments was related to their media visibility to some extent, but was uneven across different countries, and increases in the numbers of women politicians were not always reflected by similar increases in their media visibility – and in any case, was never proportional. The broader gender-equality landscape appears to have greater predictive power, but again, there was no neat link between the two in all cases. The contradictory findings, and the relatively low level of "explicable" variation, could be partly attributed to the limitations of the GMMP data. Although it is a formidable undertaking to do a content analysis of the news media in over a hundred countries, it only covers the news during a single day and is therefore vulnerable to extraordinary events taking place which can skew the data. For example, on the monitoring day in 2015, a major news story across Europe was the crash of a Germanwings aircraft, which killed 150 passengers and crew; consequently, German Chancellor Angela Merkel featured heavily in many news reports. To overcome the problem of "extraordinariness", studies undertaken over a more extensive period could produce more consistent and reliable results. However, it is also the case that where such extended studies *have* been undertaken – albeit looking at the broader gender-media landscape rather than focusing on the political aspects – they have produced findings very similar to the GMMP (see, e.g., Ross & Azzalini, 2017).

There are no easy fixes or solutions for improving the visibility of women politicians across the news-media landscape, but our results prompt the consideration of a medium to long-term, two-pronged approach which *could* start to

effect a shift. Firstly, more women must stand as candidates in winnable seats, for them to first win and to then to take up the political portfolios which journalists are more inclined to cover, given the journalistic proclivity to privilege senior and powerful politicians. Of course, in making such a suggestion, we are conscious that the ways in which women politicians are (often negatively) reported in news media can impact women's willingness to even consider a political career (see Haraldsson & Wängnerud, 2018). While we didn't look at causal direction in our analysis, it would seem unlikely that positive reportage would discourage women from entering politics. So, second, and simultaneously, we need to raise awareness of gender (in)equality amongst the next generation of journalists so that they start their professional careers with more open, inclusive, and critical minds. Women journalists are not all the same, nor are women editors, nor are women necessarily more inclined to include more stories about women or source more women in their stories simply because they share the same sex. As O'Brien (2017) argues, being a female editor does not simultaneously mean that she is also a feminist one. What *does* make a difference is an ideological belief in diversity and equity: that all voices matter and that diverse content serves a diverse audience. What is crucial for change, therefore, is not only a generation of journalists who believe that gender diversity is good in its own right, as well as supporting the aims of a democratic society, but that at the executive level of news-media management, senior staff show a willingness to progress equality and diversity from the top down.

Notes

1. In order to allow for proper identification across studies and to link each variable to its original source, each variable name in the GEM dataset has been assigned a prefix that contains a reference to the original dataset followed by the original variable name. The variable is retrieved from the GMMP and the original variable name is `gonsp_f`, therefore it is named `gmmp_gonsp_f`.
2. It should be noted that the results remain similar when all countries are included, with the exception that the positive correlation between women politicians as news subjects or sources and the share of women in the lower house becomes weaker and insignificant.
3. GMMP included 114 countries in 2015.
4. We also conducted tests where we added a series of control variables that indicate the general level of development in a country: GDP per capita, the Human Development Index (retrieved from United Nations Development Programme [UNDP]), and educational levels (mean years of schooling, retrieved from UNDP). All these tests yielded the same overall results as in model 3, with a significant *b*-coefficient for the GGI (varying between 70.8 and 75.0, $p < .01$) and an insignificant *b*-coefficient for women in the lower house (varying between 0.06 and 0.10, $p = ns$). None of the control variables yielded significant coefficients ($p > .05$). However, no multicollinearity problems were detected (highest VIF = 2.536).

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CONSEQUENCES

Fairer sex or fairer system?

Exploring the relationship between gender equality in the media and media corruption

Mathias A. Färdigh



7.1 Gender and media corruption

Media and journalists are not immune to corruption. Indeed, most media and journalists do an honest job, but in times of falling revenues, a saturated media market, and a contraction of the media business model, there is also a risk of turning to “creative solutions” in what should or should not be published or covered. Still, the research on corruption *in* the media is largely absent, even more so when it comes to the possible gendered dimension of corruption in media and who performs or is subjected to corrupt acts. Additionally, the literature on corruption and media primarily focuses on the role of the media in fighting corruption and emphasises the importance of free media as a guarantor for improving accessibility to information, which in turn will make it more difficult for those in power to cover up, or get away with, corrupt behaviour (Brunetti & Weder, 2003; Freille et al., 2007; Lessmann & Markwardt, 2010; Färdigh, 2013). Other studies focus on the importance of looking beyond the simple models of direct effects of media freedom on the level of corruption (Färdigh et al., 2012; Lindstedt & Naurin, 2010).

While the bulk of the research shows that free media are important in combating corruption, the possibility and results of corruption *within* media have been scarcely examined and perceived predominantly as an area of concern for non-Western democracies (Harro-Loit & Saks, 2006; Li, 2013; McKinley, 2008; Price Trifonova, 2019; Tsetsura & Grynko, 2009; Tsetsura & Kruckeberg, 2017; Tsetsura & Zuo, 2009; Wang, et al., 2018; Yang, 2012). One of the main arguments is that media in non-Western democracies are often confronted by a combination of factors that create fertile grounds for corruption – if there is corruption in society, it would be unrealistic to expect the media to be free of corruption (see, e.g., Mungiu-Pippidi, 2013). But even though there is a likely

Färdigh, Mathias A. (2020). Fairer sex or fairer system? Exploring the relationship between gender equality in the media and media corruption. In Monika Djerf-Pierre, & Maria Edström (Eds.), *Comparing gender and media equality across the globe: A cross-national study of the qualities, causes, and consequences of gender equality in and through the news media* (pp. 261–291). Gothenburg: Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. <https://doi.org/10.48335/9789188855329-7>

correlation between the level of media corruption and the level of democracy across countries, the digitalisation and commercialisation of the media has exacerbated the conditions driving irregularities. Corruption is indeed also flourishing in many Western democracies (Transparency International, 2019).

Previous research on corruption has offered a set of propositions to explain the causes and determinants of the cross-national variation in corruption (see, e.g., Treisman, 2007 for an overview). One such explanation is the straight-forward and general relationship between the presence of women in a field of society and lower levels of corruption (Dollar et al., 2001), and the suggestion of different contexts arbitrating the relationship between gender and corruption in different ways (Esarey & Chirillo, 2013; Esarey & Schwindt-Bayer, 2017; Stensöta et al., 2015). Scholars make assumptions regarding anticipated connections between numbers and outcomes and argue that recruiting more women to office is an effective way to curb corruption. Hence, women themselves, compared with men, tend to be less involved in corrupt transactions, and once women reach a “critical mass”, irregularities and corruption will decrease (cf. Dahlerup, 1988).

The pioneering studies in the field demonstrated a correlation between higher levels of women in government and lower levels of political corruption (Dollar et al., 2001). In some studies, the explanation has been that women are less “selfish” than men and that women may follow laws to a greater extent (see, e.g., Swamy et al., 2001). Other scholars suggest that gender matters to corruption in relation to risk-taking in that women, on average, are less likely to take risks than men are (Frank et al., 2011). A third interpretation is to see it as a question of reversed causality in that women are excluded from arenas where corrupt transactions normally take place – corruption prevents women from entering office (Bjarnegård, 2012; Goetz, 2007). More recent studies have demonstrated that the relationship between more women and lower levels of corruption may be conditioned by different settings, such as whether a country is democratic or not (Esarey & Chirillo, 2013).

This chapter departs from three assumptions: first, that corruption and the abuse of entrusted power for private gain is a major obstacle to democracy and impacts societies in a multitude of destructive ways; second, that corruption also exists within the structure of media organisations and in the way journalists carry out their work; and third, that there are anticipated connections between numbers and outcomes in that more women in the media is associated with lower levels of media corruption.

This study is a first attempt to investigate if – and, in that case, how – the gender representation in the news media is connected to corruption, by examining the relationship between the share of women journalists and the level of perceived media corruption in a sample of more than 2,900 country-year observations covering 138 countries between 1995 and 2015, retrieved from

the Varieties of Democracy (V-dem) dataset (Coppedge et al., 2017). Drawing on literature stating a relationship between more women and lower levels of corruption, the basic argument pursued in this chapter is that the share of women likely affects media corruption levels in at least two possible ways: 1) the incidence of media corruption will be lower where a larger share of working journalists are women, and vice versa, or 2) the prevalence of media corruption is associated with the general level of gender equality in society. Drawing from previous research on gender and corruption, the first hypothesis will be referred to as “the fairer sex hypothesis”; the second as the “fairer system hypothesis”.

The chapter will proceed by giving a brief summary of the extant knowledge about media and corruption, gender and corruption, gender and journalism, and how these three areas of research relate to gender in the media and media corruption. Then I will outline the design, data, and variables, and present the basic results from the correlational analysis between gender equality in the media, media corruption, and the most important explanatory factors previously identified by scholars within this area of research (e.g., Dollar et al., 2001; Stensöta et al., 2015; Sung, 2003; Swamy et al., 2001). I then employ several tests and specifications to investigate if and how more women in the media leads to less-corrupt media, and to what extent gender equality in the media can explain media corruption over time. Finally, I discuss the results and my conclusions.

7.2 Gender equality in the media and media corruption: Mapping the terrain

Media and corruption

To be able to understand media corruption, we first need to examine what we know about the media’s role in the fight against corruption. If we take a look at previous empirical studies on media and corruption, the main picture is reasonably clear – there is a strong and robust negative direct effect of media freedom on levels of corruption (Brunetti & Weder, 2003; Freille et al., 2007; Lessmann & Markwardt, 2010). Brunetti and Weder (2003) showed significant effects of media freedom on three different corruption control indices and concluded that corruption levels are likely to be low in countries where media are reasonably free from any kind of restrictions. In addition to investigating the relationship between aggregate media freedom and corruption, Freille and colleagues (2007) elaborated different forms of restrictions on media freedom. The results from their study suggest that it is the absence of, or freedom from, *political* and *economic* restrictions that drive the strong relationship between media freedom and corruption. Hence, reducing political and economic influence on the media may be the most efficient way to reduce corruption. Färdigh

and colleagues (2012) replicated Freille and colleagues' study with an expanded number of observations. Instead of a robust direct effect of media freedom on corruption, they showed that the relationship between media freedom and corruption is best modelled with an interaction between the level of democracy and the level of media freedom, in that media freedom predominantly reduces corruption in well-established democracies.

Theoretically, the role of free media in the fight against corruption is straightforward. The media serve as watchdogs, monitoring those in power, and provide citizens with the information they need in order to be free, self-governing, and to hold those in power accountable for their actions. Thus, accountability is a principal component of democracy, and in the case of corruption, the ability to hold those in power accountable for misconduct is of crucial importance. However, evidence suggests several aggravating circumstances that may impede the media's capacity to curb corruption. Lack of transparency allows powerful hidden interests to influence journalism. Hence, journalists may receive benefits to purposefully avoid reporting or to produce biased or misleading content (see, e.g., Márquez Ramírez, 2012; Tsetsura, 2005; Yang, 2012). Moreover, allegations of corruption in the media do not necessarily always lead to more than quite modest outcomes (see, e.g., Chang et al., 2010; Costas-Perez et al., 2012), and this is where media corruption comes into play. While the media can serve as the main drivers of accountability, they are not immune to corruption themselves. Instead, there is a risk that media are as corrupt as some of the public and private institutions they are watching over.

Ideally, and at the core of what we think of journalism in a democratic society, we expect journalists to be unbiased, transparent, and independent from any sources of influence. This is, however, not necessarily always the case.

Gender and corruption

Much of the previous research conducted within the area of gender and corruption has shown that there is an association between gender and corruption, but when it comes to the question of causality, the results are more ambiguous. Similar to the research conducted within the field of media freedom and corruption, where media freedom is perceived as a "quick fix" in combating corruption, the results from previous research on gender and corruption show that countries with a greater number of elected women also have lower levels of corruption. This has led to somewhat hasty conclusions about direct and immediate effects of the proportion of women in government on the variation in corruption across countries. In one of the two most influential large cross-country studies within this field of research, Dollar and colleagues (2001) launched the fairer sex hypothesis and demonstrated that higher rates of women participation in government are associated with lower levels of corruption (see

also Swamy et al., 2001). Moreover, Dollar and colleagues also established that the significant effect of women's participation in government on corruption remained after accounted-for explanatory factors, such as average year of schooling, economic development, ethnic fractionalisation, and political rights. Other studies similarly demonstrate a relationship between the proportions of women in government and levels of corruption, but instead argue for a reversed causality and corruption as an obstacle to the recruitment of women, which means that corruption is more likely to cause gender inequality than the other way around (see, e.g., Bjarnegård 2012; Goetz, 2007). For example, Sung (2003) showed a spurious relationship between gender and corruption in that an increase in women's participation is not causally linked to the level of corruption. Instead, Sung launched the fairer system hypothesis and argued that an increase of women participation in government should rather be seen as a natural outcome caused by other aspects of liberal democracy, and that these together cooperate to restrain corruption. Esarey and Chirillo (2013) instead showed that the context is decisive for the importance of the proportion of women in government on the level of corruption across countries, in that a higher share of elected women is associated with lower levels of corruption in democratic countries where the tolerance of corruption among the general public are lower, but not associated with less corruption in authoritarian countries where the tolerance of corruption is higher. They argued that women will be less tolerant and less likely to engage in corrupt acts compared with men in contexts where corruption is stigmatised, but that there will be no corruption gender gap in contexts where a corrupt behaviour is an ordinary part of governance and political life. Similarly, Esarey and Schwindt-Bayer (2017) showed significant gender differences in corruption levels in contexts with high accountability and no gender differences in corruption levels between women and men in contexts where the risk of being caught and punished is lower.

Consequently, previous research conducted on gender and corruption show that gender and corruption are highly associated, but lack consistent empirical evidence of what it is exactly that creates the right conditions for gender to actually have causal influence on the variation in corruption across countries.

Gender and journalism

Research on gender and journalism can predominantly be divided into two main categories or issues: the first category – which is also the independent variable and focus of this chapter – is gender “at work” in newsrooms; the second category is representations of women in news media content. If – and, in that case, how – gender influences journalism is one of the most central problem areas in this research field. In contrast to the relationship between gender and corruption, previous research has found somewhat contradictory evidence regarding

the extent to which gender matters and influences journalism.

In theory, the basic assumption on gender differences is relatively straightforward. Media companies and newsrooms dominated by women are distinguished from media companies and newsrooms dominated by men in a number of different ways. For example, van Zoonen (1998) described what she calls “the gendered nature of journalism” as four major areas, including 1) the selection of topics, 2) story angles, 3) the use of sources, and 4) ethics. The point of departure is the assumption that once women journalists reach a large enough number, or a critical mass, the newsroom culture and the coverage of women will change (see also Chapter 5). Hence, gendered differences, which, in addition to the gendered nature of journalism stipulated earlier, also includes the journalistic work and newsroom culture in a broader sense (such as improved pay equity, less gender discrimination, and more women in executive positions). However, while virtually all scholars agree that journalism has undergone major changes (e.g., commercialisation, popularisation, intimisation, tabloidisation, and personification) – which have taken place in conjunction with growth in the number of women journalists – it is debated whether the critical mass and increasing number of women in fact has led to a “feminisation” of journalism and changed the journalistic work and newsroom culture (see, e.g., Chambers et al., 2004; van Zoonen, 1998). The result from Ross (2001: 542) demonstrates a deep ambivalence about gender as a driver for change, and Ross concludes that “gender alone will not make a difference in changing the culture of newsrooms or in the type of news produced”. Moreover, Djerf-Pierre and Löfgren-Nilsson (2004: 101) concluded that it is problematic to describe changes in journalism in terms of a feminisation when it is evident that “different gender orders and journalistic cultures produce and support different femininities and masculinities in different newsrooms at different times”. Correspondingly, Hanitzsch and Hanusch (2012) found no significant gender differences in professional views between men and women in their comparative study of 1,800 journalists in 18 countries. Instead, their results show that the gender of journalists had no or very little effect on professional journalistic values and newsroom culture, and this regardless of whether on individual, organisational, or national level of analysis.

The inconsistent results in trying to capture when and how more women in journalism makes a difference seems much like shooting at a moving target. Some results show that gender matters, while others show no gender differences. It is also clear that gender differences are difficult to capture empirically, in that most surveys of journalists have not been able to present substantial differences, while content analyses do point to gender related patterns (see, e.g., Chambers et al., 2004; Macharia, 2015; see also Chapters 2, 6, & 8).

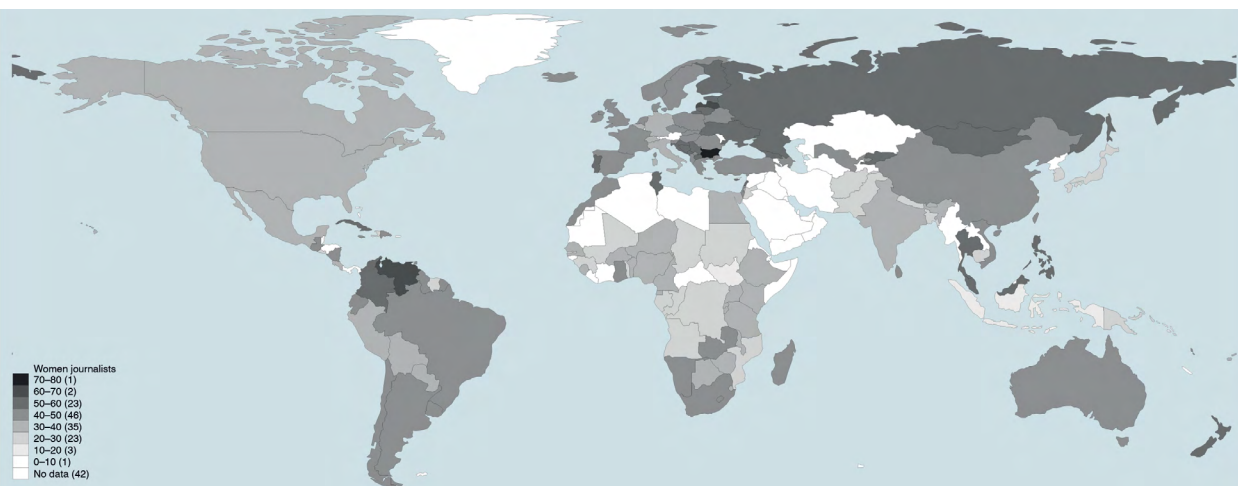
National surveys do not show gender to reliably predict differences in professional practices of journalism, but instead that men and women seem to make the same journalistic considerations (see, e.g., Hanitzsch & Hanusch, 2012;

Weaver et al., 2007). One plausible explanation could be that gender does not matter since journalists, regardless of gender, simply work within the stipulated framework of the journalistic culture and profession. The journalistic culture is basically masculine, which also means that women must adapt to it in order to “fit”. Some researchers address this line of reasoning. Djerf-Pierre (2007) argued that journalism retains its predominantly masculine gender logic. Moreover, social capital such as status, prestige, and power remain associated with masculinity, in that masculinity is linked to core beliefs about journalism’s “mission”. Thus, where femininity has negative symbolic value, a woman may compensate for it by acquiring other forms of capital – professional, cultural, economic, or social.

Consequently, in theory, the supposition of critical mass and the increasing number of women journalists both make sense, and are a pleasant assumption of how it is supposed to be. Empirically, however, there is substantial proof of gender-related patterns in the journalistic content (see GMMP, 1995–2015 and most chapters in this anthology), but no clear evidence of a universal feminisation of journalism or changes of the newsroom culture, which largely depend on the journalistic culture being basically masculine. Women journalists must adapt to this culture in order to fit in.

It is well known that men dominate the ranks of journalists in most countries in the world (see Figure 7.1). However, if we take a look at the estimated percentages of women journalists across the globe, it shows that the majority of the countries for which we have data actually meet the often used criteria

Figure 7.1 Women journalists around the world, 2015 (per cent)



Comments: $n = 140$. V-dem is a new approach to conceptualising and measuring democracy and the figures are provided by country experts who were asked to estimate the percentage of journalists in the print and broadcast media who are women (based on available statistics for each country). Question in V-dem: “Please estimate the percentage (%) of journalists in the print and broadcast media who are women”.

Source: V-dem (Coppedge et al., 2017)

for a critical mass. Out of a total of 140 countries, there are no less than 114 countries estimated to have 30 per cent or more women journalists.

The five countries with the highest percentages of women journalists in 2015 are Bulgaria (72%), Venezuela (64%), Latvia (64%), New Zealand (59%), and Finland (58%). At the bottom, with the lowest percentages of women journalists, is Mauritania (10%), Solomon Islands (16%), South Sudan (17%), Indonesia (20%), and Chad (21%). However, a country's percentage of women journalists does not always predict, nor is always reflected in, the actual news content. Instead, countries like Bulgaria (35% women news subjects), Venezuela (23%), and New Zealand (18%) confirm the gap and the inconsistent results from previous results with high percentages of women journalists and low percentages of women news subjects (Macharia, 2015; see also Chapters 2 & 5).

Corruption in the media

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate if – and, in that case, how – more women in the media leads to less-corrupt media and affects what is here called media corruption. But for this to be possible, it is necessary to first clarify what the term media corruption refers to and how it manifests itself in journalism. Corruption is both previously and currently a term with different meanings in different contexts. This means that what is perceived and classified as corruption also affects how corruption is measured and what is encountered in studies of corruption.

The standard definition of corruption, frequently used by researchers in this field, is the abuse of public power for private gain. Applied directly to the media field, this would mean that media and journalists in one way or another abuse their role or position as media and journalists for their own gain. Ideally, journalists should remain independent and transparent on any source of influence (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). However, sometimes journalism practitioners may end up in situations where they receive benefits to avoid producing certain media content or purposefully produce biased or misleading media content. This phenomenon is called by many different names – bribery-for-news-coverage (Yang, 2012), brown envelope journalism (Skjerdal, 2010), red envelope journalism (Li, 2013), AC-DC (Attack-Collect-Defend-Collect) journalism, ATM journalism (Quintos de Jesus, 2015), and media non-transparency (Tsetsura & Kruckeberg, 2017) – but all refer to what is defined as media corruption in this chapter and imply that journalists, publishers, or broadcasters in one way or another may be influenced or pressured to either report about certain events in a certain way or not report other events, and that this is not clearly indicated in the finished journalistic outcome or the media (cf. Tsetsura, 2005; Yang, 2012).

Media corruption is manifested in a variety of ways and takes place in relation to decisions made in the context of the news evaluation process and

ultimately deals with editorial decisions about what should or should not be published or covered, as well as perspectives and how stories are framed. Moreover, the news evaluation process can also be divided into three levels of direct and indirect pressures, which also interact with each other: 1) interpersonal, 2) intraorganisational, and 3) interorganisational. At the interpersonal level, the cash is handed directly to the journalists by a news source, it is done with some degree of confidentiality, and it denotes an informal contract between the news source and the journalist (Lo et al., 2005). At the intraorganisational level, the editor, the media advertising department, or the publisher tells the journalist what to write or not write, due to internal pressure (Tsetsura, 2005). At the interorganisational level, the journalists, editors, or broadcasters are part of more or less formal arrangements, with or without a legal contract under which, for example, a company pays a monthly amount of money in exchange for having a certain number of articles published about that company (Klyueva, 2008). Thus, the factors that influence media corruption in any country can be classified as direct or indirect and as interpersonal, intraorganisational, and interorganisational.

Trying to measure media corruption is both difficult and challenging work. The challenge lies first and foremost in the fact that when asked, journalists will basically never acknowledge that they are corrupt or be willing to estimate the level of their own corruption (this applies not only to journalists and media corruption). Instead, another possible way could be to collect data on the causes and factors that we know affect the likelihood of media corruption. This is something Kruckeberg and Tsetsura (2003) have done for 66 countries. They have built an index (CFNC) which, they argue, measures the likelihood of whether or not “cash for news coverage” likely exists among a country’s major newspaper media, using eight different factors:

- long-time tradition of self-determination by citizens
- perception of comprehensive corruption laws with effective enforcement
- accountability of government to citizens at all levels
- high adult literacy
- high liberal and professional education of practicing journalists
- well-established, publicised, and enforceable journalism codes of professional ethics
- free press, free speech, and free flow of information
- high media competition (multiple and competing media)

One could have different thoughts about the indicators Kruckeberg and Tsetsura have chosen to use for their index. One important indicator missing

is, for example, whether journalists are paid at a professional level. This is, however, something they are well aware of and was excluded due to the circumstance that reliable data comparing journalists' pay to that of other professions in each country were not consistently available. Unfortunately, they only managed to collect data in 66 countries for one period in time (2003). This, of course, also has consequences for the possibilities to do robust analyses across countries and over time.

Another measure of media corruption is one of the five objectives that together form the established Media Sustainability Index (MSI) developed by the International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX) and collected through another design than the CFNC index. The MSI is based on five objectives and the scoring is completed in two parts. First, panel participants are provided with a questionnaire and explanations of the indicators and scoring system. Second, the panelists' scores are reviewed by the IREX editorial staff members, who then provide a set of scores for the country, independently of the panel. The overall country score is an average of all five objectives: 1) legal and social norms protect and promote free speech and access to public information, 2) journalism meets professional standards of quality, 3) multiple news sources provide citizens with reliable, objective news, 4) media are well-managed enterprises, allowing editorial independence, and 5) supporting institutions function in the professional interests of independent media (IREX, 2017).

The second objective – whether journalism meets professional standards of quality – is of most interest for measuring the likelihood of whether or not media corruption likely exists among a country's media. This objective contains eight indicators:

- reporting is fair, objective, and well sourced
- journalists follow recognised and accepted ethical standards
- journalists and editors do not practice self-censorship
- journalists cover key events and issues
- pay levels for journalists and other media professionals are sufficiently high to discourage corruption and retain qualified personnel within the media profession
- entertainment programming does not eclipse news and information programming
- technical facilities and equipment for gathering, producing, and distributing news are modern and efficient
- quality niche reporting and programming exist (investigative, economics & business, local, political)

In a similar way as with the CFNC Index by Kruckenberg and Tsetsura (2003), which only captures the level of media corruption in 66 countries on one single occasion, the limitation of the MSI by IREX is that it only covers 27 countries over a nine-year period. The measurement points are too few, and this makes it difficult to use any of the two indicators in order to reliably do robust analyses across countries and over time and answer the question of if – and, in that case, how – more women in the media leads to less-corrupt media.

More recently, new attempts have been made to collect data on media corruption. In the data regularly released from the V-dem Institute in an effort to conceptualise and measure various aspects of democracy across the globe, there is a media corruption measure covering no less than 2,935 country-year observations between 1995–2015 (Coppedge et al., 2017). The V-dem variable consists of significantly more measurement points than the other two media corruption measures and is based on country-expert estimations of the extent of media corruption by answering the question: “Do journalists, publishers, or broadcasters accept payments in exchange for altering news coverage?” The original responses range from 0–4:

0. The media are so closely directed by the government that any such payments would be either unnecessary to ensure pro-government coverage or ineffective in producing anti-government coverage
1. Journalists, publishers, and broadcasters routinely alter news coverage in exchange for payments
2. It is common, but not routine, for journalists, publishers, and broadcasters to alter news coverage in exchange for payments
3. It is not normal for journalists, publishers, and broadcasters to alter news coverage in exchange for payments, but it happens occasionally, without anyone being punished
4. Journalists, publishers, and broadcasters rarely alter news coverage in exchange for payments, and if it becomes known, someone is punished for it.

The variable is originally measured on an ordinal scale, but converted to an interval scale by the specific measurement model used by V-dem (see §7.3 and Table 7.4 in Appendix 7.1 for more information about how the indicators are constructed).

One way to estimate how well the V-dem variable succeeds in capturing the level of media corruption is to compare it with the other two more established measures in a correlation analysis, where the value goes from -1.000 (a perfect negative match between the media corruption measures), via 0 (the media corruption measures capture completely different dimensions) to +1.000 (a perfect positive match between the media corruption measures).

The result from the correlation analysis shows that the media corruption measure from V-dem is positively correlated with both of the other two media corruption measures, but the strongest correlation is with the CFNC Index (see Table 7.1).

Table 7.1 *Correlations between the V-dem media corruption measure and alternative media corruption measures*

	Pearson's <i>r</i>	<i>n</i>
Cash for news coverage index (raw score)	.827***	
Cash for news coverage index (mean score)	.829***	(60)
Media sustainability index (score)	.656***	
Legal and social norms (objective 1)	.615***	
Professional standards (objective 2)	.637***	
Multiple news source (objective 3)	.590***	
Editorial independence (objective 4)	.555***	
Supporting institutions (objective 5)	.627***	(463)

Comment: ***Significant at the .001 level.

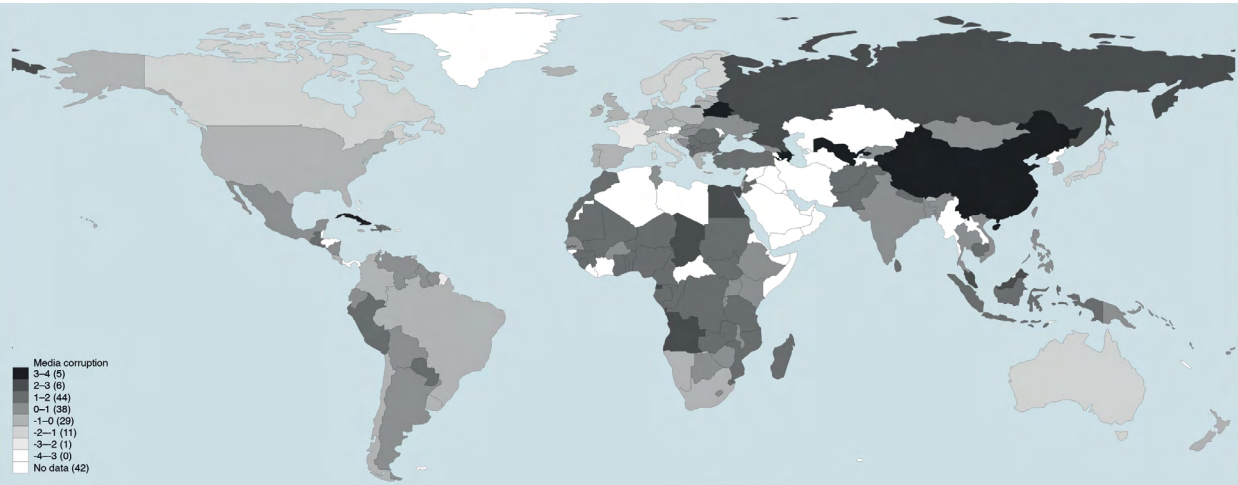
If we take a look at the estimated level of media corruption across the globe, the data from V-dem shows that about a half of the countries for which we have data have lower levels of media corruption (see Figure 7.2). Out of a total of 140 countries, there are at the same time no less than 79 countries estimated to have a higher level of media corruption than the average for all countries (-0.304).

The top five countries with lowest level of media corruption are France (-3.019), Sweden (-2.282), Denmark (-2.163), Norway (-2.101), and Canada (-2.085). At the bottom, with the highest level of media corruption, is Uzbekistan (+2.689), Azerbaijan (+2.493), Belarus (+2.332), China (+2.159), and Cuba (+2.128).

The media corruption measure is, on average, very similar to the general level of corruption in a country (Pearson's $r = 0.77$), which is also measured by V-dem. For countries with low levels of general corruption, the media corruption measure is about the same. For countries with high levels of corruption, however, the level of media corruption displays more variation. This means that, apart from France, the measure does not differ that much from what could be seen in terms of countries with low levels of corruption. Among countries with high levels of media corruption, there is a greater variation.

To summarise this section, the results from previous empirical studies on media and corruption, on the one hand, show a strong and robust negative direct effect of media freedom on levels of corruption. On the other hand, evidence also suggests circumstances making this more complicated and less

Figure 7.2 The level of corruption in the media around the world, 2015



Comments: $n = 140$. Question in V-dem: “Do journalists, publishers, or broadcasters accept payments in exchange for altering news coverage?” Answers: (0) The media are so closely directed by the government that any such payments would be either unnecessary to ensure pro-government coverage or ineffective in producing anti-government coverage; (1) Journalists, publishers, and broadcasters routinely alter news coverage in exchange for payments; (2) It is common, but not routine, for journalists, publishers, and broadcasters to alter news coverage in exchange for payments; (3) It is not normal for journalists, publishers, and broadcasters to alter news coverage in exchange for payments, but it happens occasionally, without anyone being punished; (4) Journalists, publishers, and broadcasters rarely alter news coverage in exchange for payments, and if it becomes known, someone is punished for it. V-dem has rescaled the variable to a uniform distribution. For the ease of interpretation, the variable has been reversed and rescaled to range between -4 (low levels of media corruption) and +4 (high levels of media corruption).

Source: V-dem (Coppedge et al., 2017)

straightforward. One such circumstance is media corruption. While media, in the best of worlds, can serve as the main drivers for accountability, they are at the same time not immune to corruption themselves. Instead, there is an obvious risk of media being a part of the corrupt system they are expected to reveal.

The central question in this chapter is whether results from previous research on the share of women in parliament and lower levels of corruption also pertain to the relationship between the share of women journalists and lower levels of corruption in the media. Previous research points out two plausible assumptions. The first assumption is that women possess certain characteristics and therefore do not descend to corruption to the same extent as men (the fairer sex hypothesis). Although it is not possible to know if it is the men or women who are responsible for the media corruption per se (corrupt behaviour at the individual level), the hypothesis is that countries with many women journalists would be plagued by media corruption to a lesser extent. The second assumption is, instead, that it is the system in which women live and operate that affects the level of media corruption (the fairer system hypothesis). A fair

system has a high level of democracy, free and fair elections, gender equality, civil liberties, and so forth. In these systems, women are both more noticed and play a greater role in society, and the hypothesis is thus that it is the system as a whole, rather than a specific outcome of the system, that makes it difficult for and counteracts corruption.

Thus, based on these two alternative assumptions, the purpose of this chapter is to examine which of the two is the most appropriate when it comes to understanding the mechanisms behind media corruption: Is it the share of women journalists in the media or the system where women journalists live and operate – or both – that affects the level of media corruption?

7.3 Design, data, and variables

Design

To investigate the relationships in this chapter, time-series cross-sectional (TSCS) data is used. Compared to cross-sectional analysis, the advantages of the TSCS approach are numerous: 1) the models capture values of the dependent variable in this sample that vary over time, along with a number of control variables – moreover, some countries in the sample made significant changes in their level of media corruption and gender equality in the media over time; 2) the results from selecting one year or an average in a cross-sectional analysis only shows correlation and not causality, with an obvious risk of misleading results and misrepresentation of the larger picture; and 3) the sample sizes increase significantly with TSCS data, leading to greater degrees of freedom and lower standard errors in each model.

Several specifications are employed to investigate the two alternative assumptions in this chapter. At the same time, there are several reasons to suspect that the observations of the dependent variable are not that independent of one another from one year to another (autocorrelation), meaning that if, for example, Sweden has low media corruption in a certain year (t), it also most likely had low media corruption the year before ($t - 1$). In this chapter, I account for autocorrelation in two ways. First, all models are tested using panel corrected standard errors (PCSE) and second, I have included a lagged dependent variable by one year in the models.¹ In addition, there are also reasons to suspect individual country differences (heterogeneity), meaning that, for example, Sweden includes unobserved characteristics that differ from, for example, France and Mexico. Unobserved characteristics within each country are controlled for by running fixed-effects (FE) models with country dummies included, so as to estimate the effect of the independent variables only within countries over time.

Data and variables

Another challenge is to find precise, valid, and quantifiable indicators that capture exactly the aspects they are intended to capture. As mentioned earlier, there is a lack of comprehensive media corruption measures. At the same time, high correlations between the established measures that exist for a smaller number of countries and the more extensive measure developed by V-dem indicates high equivalence of measuring the same thing. Therefore, the principal measure of corruption in the media sector I use in this chapter is the media corruption index (*vdem_mecorrpt*) from V-dem (Coppedge et al., 2017); this is a pioneering measure and the variable is meant to capture the likelihood of journalists, publishers, or broadcasters accepting payments in exchange for altering news coverage. Originally, the variable takes on values ranging from -4 (most corrupt) to +4 (least corrupt), but is rescaled and reversed in the regressions for the ease of interpretation and ranging from 0 (least corrupt) to 1 (most corrupt). From the results in the previous section where V-dem's media corruption measure was compared with the MSI (IREX) and CFNC (Kruckenberg & Tsetsura, 2003) indices, the conclusion is that the three measures match each other and that the V-dem media corruption measure therefore works well as an operational indicator for measuring corruption in the media sector.

In order to test the fairer sex hypothesis, I use an indicator for the share of women journalists in different countries. The indicator (*vdem_femjrn*) is also retrieved from the V-dem dataset and the variable is meant to capture the percentage of journalists in the print and broadcast media sector who are women. The variable originally takes on values ranging from 0–100, but is rescaled in the regression analyses and ranges from 0–1. The basic assumption of the fairer sex hypothesis would, in this case, be that it is the share of women journalists that has a negative impact on the level of media corruption: the more women journalists, the less media corruption. At the same time, it is important to have in mind that both the media corruption measure and the indicator for the share of women in the media are subjective assessments, in that a minimum of five country experts provide data on each country, variable, and year. Originally, the V-dem dataset covers 177 countries from 1900 to 2016. However, in this chapter, the data does not go further back in time than 1995, both with regard to accessibility to the other indicators used in this chapter and not least the difficulty of reliably estimating the share of women journalists more than a hundred years back in time.

Based on a number of recent studies, I also control for additional significant determinants of corruption. There is reason to believe that both media corruption and gender equality in the media are likely to be affected by the overall level of socioeconomic development (see, e.g., Dollar et al., 2001). Wealthier countries exhibit less corruption on average, and when it comes to restraining

media corruption specifically, this could more likely be a costly activity more easily undertaken by richer media in richer countries. In line with this reasoning, it is also more likely that media corruption flourish in poor or less socioeconomically developed countries. Consequently, I include logged GDP per capita (base 10) ($\text{vdem_mad_gdppcln}/\text{vdem_mad_migdppln}$), also retrieved from the V-dem dataset, as a control (Coppedge et al. 2017, 2019).

Next, it stands to reason that media corruption is intimately associated with quality of government, and that reduced media corruption and increased gender equality in the media are both likely consequences from increased democratisation and political freedom. To control for this possibility, quality of government (qog_icrg_qog) and level of democracy (qog_fh_ipolity2) are included as controls. Quality of government and level of democracy are retrieved from The Quality of Government (QoG) time-series dataset (Teorell et al., 2017). The quality of government variable ranges from 0–1, where a higher value indicates higher quality of government; the level of democracy includes imputed values and the variable takes on values ranging from 0 (least democratic) to 10 (most democratic).

Several empirical studies have also found media quality to be an important predictor of corruption (see, e.g., Färdigh et al., 2012; Freille et al., 2007). High-quality media that can operate freely are more likely to find and reveal corruption, and also likely to be less corrupt. As an indicator of the quality of the media system, I have included the commonly used freedom of the press measure (qog_fh_fotpsc), originally retrieved from Freedom House (2017a). The variable originally takes on values ranging from 0 (most free) to 100 (not free), but it has been reversed – following common practice and for the ease of interpretation – in both the correlational and the regression analyses so that higher values indicate more press freedom.

Existing literature also suggests that corruption is higher in more ethnically divided societies (see, e.g., Dollar et al., 2001; Mauro, 1995). The main argument is that civil servants and politicians would exploit their positions to favour members of their own ethnic group in ethnically divided societies. In this chapter, this applies to journalistic work and the possibility for journalists to favour members of their own ethnic group (see, e.g., Rwanda and the radio station Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines). Moreover, previous research has also shown that the level of ethnic fractionalisation is important to reduce the likelihood of omitted variable bias. Consequently, ethnic heterogeneity (qog_al_ethnic) is reversed for the ease of interpretation and included as control where higher values indicate more ethnic heterogeneity.

Finally, in order to test the fairer system hypothesis, the general level of gender equality is an important indicator that can provide information and help determine whether it is the general gender equality, or gender equality

in the media specifically, that drives the relationship. To measure this, the women's political participation index (*vdem_genpp*), retrieved from the V-dem dataset, is included as control. The variable ranges between 1 (equality) and 0 (inequality) and examines whether women are descriptively represented in formal political positions and where women's political participation is understood to include women's descriptive representation in the legislature and an equal share in the overall distribution of power.

One could always discuss whether the variables used in this chapter are precise, valid, and quantifiable indicators capturing exactly the aspects they are intended to capture. As mentioned earlier, the data from V-dem is based on subjective assessments; however, it is the most valid and reliable data available. Similarly, the control variables included in this study are based on what we know from previous studies and are currently the most common and widely used measures within this area of research (see Table 7.4 and Table 7.5 in Appendix 7.1 for full variable descriptions, original sources, and summary statistics).

7.4 Testing the relationships: Fairer sex or fairer system?

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate if – and, in that case, how – more women in the media leads to less-corrupt media, by examining two possible relationships: 1) between the share of women journalists and the level of media corruption, and 2) between gender equality in society (women's political participation) and the level of media corruption.

Both the correlational analysis in Table 7.2 and Table 7.6 in Appendix 7.1 provide results of a significant negative relationship between the share of women journalists and media corruption (the fairer sex hypothesis), meaning that countries with more women in journalism also have less corruption. The correlation between media corruption and women's political participation (the fairer system hypothesis) is also negative and much stronger. However, it is also noticeable that the bivariate relationship between the two main independent variables and media corruption is significantly weaker than the correlation between media corruption and the control variables. Of the controls included in the explanatory model, it is the quality of media systems or the level of press freedom that evidently has the greatest impact on the level of media corruption, followed by the level of democracy and quality of government (See Figures 7.3 and 7.4 in Appendix 7.2 for a more detailed description of how the share of women journalists and women's political participation vary over time in countries with low, medium, and high media corruption).

Table 7.2 *Bivariate correlations of media corruption and the independent variables (Pearson's r)*

	Pearson's r	n
Women journalists	-.185***	2,935
Women's political participation	-.395***	2,841
Logged GDP per capita	-.555***	2,750
Level of democracy	-.742***	2,877
Quality of government	-.714***	2,305
Freedom of the press	-.791***	2,876
Ethnic heterogeneity	-.321***	2,849

Comments: ***Significant at the .001 level. n = number of country-year observations. Media corruption, freedom of the press, and ethnic heterogeneity have been reversed so that higher numbers equal more corruption, more press freedom, and more ethnic heterogeneity.

The results from the test of the fairer sex and the fairer system hypotheses are reported in Table 7.3, using several different model specifications accounting for autocorrelation and country effects. The core of the hypothesised fairer sex relationship is that more women journalists will lead to less media corruption, whereas the fairer system hypothesis posits a relationship between higher levels of gender equality in society and less media corruption. In both cases, the coefficient will have to be negative and significant. In Table 7.3, the primary relationships are put to a series of increasingly tougher tests by using different sets of control variables and employing different regression methods. OLS is used to measure the factors that contribute to cross-country differences in media corruption. It points us to what distinguishes countries marked by different levels of corruption. Fixed effects estimations (models 8 and 9) are used to control for unobserved characteristics within each country (heterogeneity) which is deemed to provide more accurate tests of causal relationships.

Models 1 and 2 are simple, baseline regressions testing for how much the share of women journalists and women's political participation explains the variation in media corruption across countries. With no controls, we can observe that both the share of women journalists and women's political participation have significant negative effects on media corruption, which means that both more woman journalists and women in politics will decrease media corruption.

In model 3, both women journalists and women's political participation are tested simultaneously along with country dummies to estimate the effect of the share of women journalists and women's political participation on media corruption *within countries* over time. Here, we can see that the effect from the share of women journalists is still significant, but changes direction. This indicates higher levels of media corruption in countries with more women journalists, which is contrary to the fairer sex hypothesis. However, the effect of women's

Table 7.3 Women journalists and women's political participation as predictors of media corruption, 1995–2015

	Baseline		OLS + PCSE			Lagged DV + PCSE		Fixed effects	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Women journalists	-0.127*** (0.007)		0.062** (0.022)	0.155*** (0.007)	0.055** (0.017)	0.029*** (0.007)	0.024*** (0.006)	0.029* (0.013)	0.024 (0.013)
Women's political participation		-0.420*** (0.015)	-0.118*** (0.007)	-0.068*** (0.010)	-0.128*** (0.011)	-0.020*** (0.004)	-0.030*** (0.006)	-0.020** (0.008)	-0.030*** (0.009)
Logged GDP per capita				-0.122*** (0.011)	0.097*** (0.012)		0.036*** (0.008)		0.036* (0.016)
Level of democracy				-0.127*** (0.016)	-0.127*** (0.014)		-0.017*** (0.004)		-0.017 (0.010)
Quality of government				-0.175*** (0.007)	0.007 (0.007)		0.006* (0.003)		0.006 (0.011)
Freedom of the press				-0.333*** (0.022)	-0.061*** (0.014)		-0.028*** (0.005)		-0.028* (0.012)
Ethnic heterogeneity				0.020*** (0.004)	0.002 (0.007)		-0.005 (0.012)		Omitted
Media corruption ($t - 1$)						0.802*** (0.027)	0.784*** (0.028)	0.802*** (0.014)	0.784*** (0.015)
Constant	0.454*** (0.004)	0.717*** (0.011)	0.573*** (0.012)	0.807*** (0.007)	0.654*** (0.009)	0.100*** (0.019)	0.130*** (0.018)	0.078*** (0.009)	0.103*** (0.015)
Country dummies	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Country-year observations	2,176	2,176	2,176	2,176	2,176	2,061	2,061	2,061	2,061
R ² (within)								.641	.645
R ² (between)								.998	.994
R ² (overall)	.014	.224	.943	.760	.948	.979	.979	.976	.973
Number of groups	107		107	107	107	107	107	107	107

Comments: * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$. Panel corrected standard errors within parentheses. Media corruption, freedom of the press, and ethnic heterogeneity have been reversed so that higher numbers equal more media corruption, more press freedom, and more ethnic heterogeneity. All variables are rescaled and range between 0–1.

political participation remains negative and significant, albeit weakened. This result corroborates the fairer system hypothesis.

Models 4 and 5 continue the estimation of how much the share of women journalists and women's political participation explain the variation in media corruption, yet with controls added. In model 5, control variables are introduced, and in model 6, control variables and country dummies. In model 4, the regression coefficient of the share of women journalists has doubled, while the negative effect of woman's political participation is halved. All control variables, with exception for ethnic heterogeneity, show significant negative effects on media corruption. As an indicator of the quality of the media system, the freedom of the press variable has the strongest negative relationship with media corruption.

When the country dummies are included for estimating the effect of the share of women journalists and women's political participation on media corruption within countries over time in model 5, the positive effect of women journalists has been reduced to a third of the effect we could see in model 4. Instead, it is the general level of gender equality – here in terms of women's political participation – that shows the strongest negative relationship with media corruption. The negative effect from the freedom of the press variable on the dependent variable is still there, but weaker, thus the explanation with smallest negative effect. Model 6 returns to a simple baseline, yet also includes a lagged media corruption variable and with control for country dummies. A lagged variable is used to correct for temporal autocorrelation. If we compare the results in model 6 with basic variables in model 3, we find indications of autocorrelations in that the effects from both the share of women journalists and women's political participation has weakened further. It is instead the media corruption level at $t - 1$ that explains a country's media corruption at t . This means that the level of media corruption in a country remains fairly stable over time and that the corruption in one year is similar to the next.

In model 7, the effect of the lagged media corruption variable remains strong, but there are still significant effects from the majority of the included controls, even with the country dummies included so as to estimate the effect of the share of women journalists and women's political participation on media corruption within countries over time. The share of women journalists shows significant positive effect on media corruption together with GDP per capita and quality of government, while women's political participation, level of democracy, and freedom of the press indicators show significant negative effects on media corruption. However, the latter are noticeably smaller and much weaker compared with the coefficient of the lagged media corruption variable.

Models 8 and 9 employ fixed effects to account for country-specific effects outside of models 1–7. This means that changes in individual country differences over time are used to better estimate the effect of the share of women journalists and women's political participation on media corruption. When

controlling for fixed country effects, the effect of the share of women journalists on media corruption becomes insignificant. However, more notably, the effect of women's political participation remains unchanged. Since all between-country variation in the data is absorbed by the country-specific dummies in the fixed effect models (8–9), the effects in final model 9 could be interpreted as follows: for a given country, as the general level of gender equality increases by one unit, media corruption decreases by -0.030 units on a scale ranging from 0–1. This means that in the final and toughest test of the causal relationship between media corruption and our independent variables, the results mainly support the fairer system hypothesis. If the general level of equality increases in society, the level of media corruption decreases.

7.5 Conclusion and discussion

The ambition with this chapter was to investigate if – and, if so, how – more women in the media leads to less-corrupt media. Based on the conclusions from previous research, the purpose of this chapter has been to examine if there a direct effect of the share of women in the media on the level of media corruption (fairer sex hypothesis) or if it is the system where women and men journalists live and operate affects the level of media corruption (fairer system hypothesis). This was tested in three different ways, but the results show large similarities for all three tests: higher levels of press freedom, democracy, and women's political participation seem to curb the level of media corruption in a country. Therefore, the short answer to these two questions is that, of all controls, it is the fairer system – or the general level of gender equality of society, here measured as women's political participation – together with a country's general media freedom and socioeconomic development, that tells us something about the variation in media corruption across countries.

However, in some models, we also could see a positive effect of women journalists on media corruption, which is contrary to the fairer sex hypothesis. Previous scholars point in the direction of anticipated connections between number and outcomes and argue that recruiting more women to office is an effective way of curbing corruption. In line with this reasoning, the argument from previous research applied in this chapter would be that journalistic work dominated by women distinguishes from journalistic work dominated by men. Instead, the results from this chapter show that gender equality and the presence of women journalists in the news media do not just happen in a vacuum. Consequently, gender equality outside the media sphere and on a more general level are most important for the level of media corruption across countries. At the same time, it is important not to turn a blind eye to the problem of ecological fallacies when using aggregated data. Since the measures used in this chapter are

at the media system and societal level – not at the individual level – the results are probably not so much about what individual women (or men) do (or don't do). Thus, the results do not give any indication of who is responsible for the corruption in media systems with many women, or vice versa.

This leads inexorably back to, on the one hand, Hanitzsch and Hanusch's (2011) cross-national comparison of gender differences mentioned earlier and the conclusion that gender alone cannot be held responsible for newsroom cultures or professional journalistic values. It also, on the other hand, connects to the term "pink ghetto" and the consequences of an extensive feminisation of the journalism profession, particularly in nations where women are already dominant in the profession but where journalistic work is associated with lower pay, precarious work conditions, and other forms of gender inequality (see Chapter 4).

Finally, the task of determining causality and deciding what is cause and effect is both complex and difficult. At the same time, it is not possible to ignore the fact that there is an inherent path dependency in that the media corruption levels in a country over time are by far the strongest predictor of the level of media corruption within a country from one year to another, and that these media corruption patterns are not easy to break and get rid of. But also, despite this negative relationship of media corruption from one year to another, the fairer system – here in terms of the general level of gender equality in society, media freedom, and socioeconomic development – nevertheless has proven to have a significant negative effect on media corruption.

Note

1. One strategy to handle continuous dependent variables is to use OLS regression with lagged dependent variables in order to correct for temporal autocorrelation. Although the general methodological advice with time-series cross-sectional data is to also correct for panel heteroskedasticity and spatial autocorrelation through panel-corrected standard errors (Beck & Katz, 1995, 2011); therefore, my strategy is to do both.

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Appendix 7.1 Variables and data sources

Table 7.4 Variable descriptions

Dependent variable	Description
Media corruption (vdem_mecorrupt)	Question: Do journalists, publishers, or broadcasters accept payments in exchange for altering news coverage? 0 = The media are so closely directed by the government that any such payments would be either unnecessary to ensure pro-government coverage or ineffective in producing anti-government coverage. 1 = Journalists, publishers, and broadcasters routinely alter news coverage in exchange for payments. 2 = It is common, but not routine, for journalists, publishers, and broadcasters to alter news coverage in exchange for payments. 3 = It is not normal for journalists, publishers, and broadcasters to alter news coverage in exchange for payments, but it happens occasionally, without anyone being punished. 4 = Journalists, publishers, and broadcasters rarely alter news coverage in exchange for payments, and if it becomes known, someone is punished for it. The variable is originally measured on an ordinal scale, but converted to an interval scale by the specific measurement model used by V-dem ranging from -4 (most corrupt) to +4 (least corrupt). The variable is reversed and rescaled in the regression analysis for the ease of interpretation and ranging from 0 (least corrupt) to 1 (most corrupt). In the GEM dataset, the variable covers 135–137 countries and 2,872 country-year observations (1995–2015). Source: Coppedge et al., 2017

Table 7.4 (Cont.)

Independent variable	Description
Women journalists (vdem_mefemjrn)	Question: Please estimate the percentage (%) of journalists in the print and broadcast media who are women. In the GEM dataset, the variable covers 135–137 countries and 2,872 country-year observations (1995–2015). Source: Coppedge et al., 2017
Logged GPD per capita (vdem_mad_gdppcln /vdem_mad_migdppcln)	Question: What is the GDP per capita, transformed by the natural logarithm? In the GEM dataset, the variable covers 134–136 countries and 2,837 country-year observations (1995–2015). Source: Coppedge et al., 2019 (original data is from The Maddison-Project; Bolt & Van Zanden, 2014; Bolt et al., 2018)
Level of democracy (qog_fh_ipolity2)	The average of the Freedom House/Polity's political rights and civil liberties indicators (fh_pr and fh_cl), transformed to a 0–10 scale where 0 = least democratic and 10 = most democratic. The variable includes imputed values. In the GEM dataset, the variable covers 148–149 countries and 3,122 country-year observations (1995–2015). Source: Teorell et al., 2017 (original data is from Freedom House, 2017b)
Independent variable	Description
Quality of government (qog_icrg_qog)	The mean value of the ICRG variables corruption, law and order, and bureaucracy quality. The variable is scaled 0–1, where higher values indicate higher quality of government. In the GEM dataset, the variable covers 108–116 countries and 2,403 country-year observations (1995–2015). Source: Teorell et al., 2017 (original data from the International Country Risk Guide, PRS Group, 2019)
Freedom of the press (qog_fh_fotpsc)	The freedom of the press index is computed by adding the three sub-component ratings: laws and regulations, political pressures and controls, and economic influences. The variable originally ranges from 0 (most free) to 100 (least free), but it is reversed and rescaled in the regression analysis for the ease of interpretation and ranging from 0 (least free) to 1 (most free). In the GEM dataset, the variable covers 148–149 countries and 3,121 country-year observations (1995–2014). Source: Teorell et al., 2017 (original data from Freedom House, 2017a)

Table 7.4 (Cont.)

Independent variable	Description
Ethnic heterogeneity (qog_al_ethnic)	The variable reflects the probability that two randomly selected people from a given country will not share a certain characteristic. The variable is originally scaled 0–1, where higher values indicate less probability of the two sharing that characteristic. The variable is reversed in the regression analysis for the ease of interpretation and ranging from 0 (low ethnic heterogeneity) to 1 (high ethnic heterogeneity). In the GEM dataset, the variable covers 143–144 countries and 3,020 country-year observations (1995–2015). <i>Source:</i> Teorell et al., 2017 (original data from Alesina et al., 2003)
Women's political participation (vdem_genpp)	Question: Are women descriptively represented in formal political positions? In this variable, women's political participation is understood to include women's descriptive representation in the legislature and an equal share in the overall distribution of power. The variable ranges from 0 (low participation) to 1 (high participation). In the GEM dataset, the variable covers 129–136 countries and 2,781 country-year observations (1995–2015). <i>Source:</i> Coppedge et al., 2017

Table 7.5 Variable statistics

	N	Mean	Std	Min	Max
Media corruption	2,935	-0.30	1.21	-3.02	3.58
Women journalists	2,935	37.16	11.93	5.2	71.67
Logged GDP per capita	2,837	8.95	1.23	6.07	11.56
Level of democracy	3,122	6.91	2.91	0	10
Quality of government	2,403	0.57	0.21	0.11	1
Freedom of the press	3,121	61.47	22.78	5	100
Ethnic heterogeneity	3,104	0.51	0.26	0	0.93
Women's political participation	2,844	0.78	0.19	0.10	0.99

Comment: Media corruption, freedom of the press, and ethnic heterogeneity have been reversed so that higher numbers equal more corruption, more press freedom, and more ethnic heterogeneity.

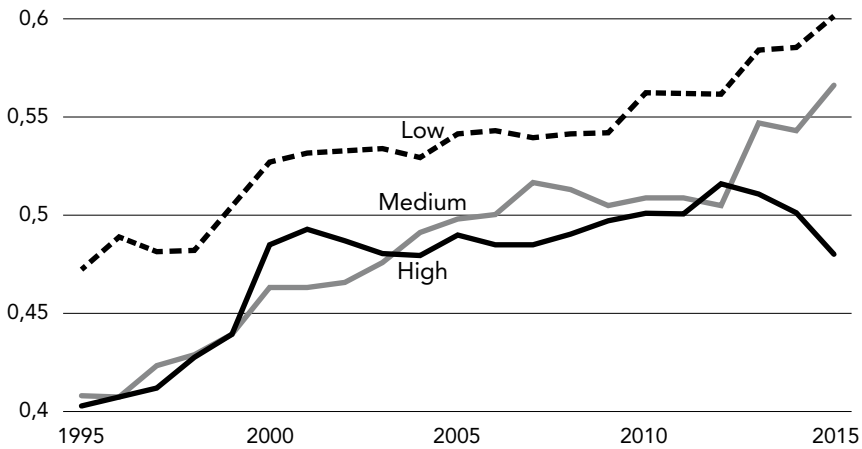
Table 7.6 Correlations of variables (Pearson's r)

	Media corrup- tion	Women journa- lists	Logged GDP per capita	Level of demo- cracy	Quality of govern- ment	Freedom of the press	Ethnic hetero- geneity
Women journalists	-.185*** (2935)						
Logged GDP per capita	-.555*** (2750)	.506*** (2750)					
Level of democracy	-.742*** (2877)	.356*** (2877)	.545*** (2775)				
Quality of government	-.714*** (2305)	.236*** (2305)	.742*** (2287)	.573*** (2403)			
Freedom of the press	-.791*** (2876)	.257*** (2876)	.555*** (2774)	.895*** (3121)	.670*** (2403)		
Ethnic heterogeneity	-.321*** (2849)	.229*** (2849)	.531*** (2751)	.351*** (3093)	.506*** (2389)	.340*** (3092)	
Women's political participation	-.395*** (2841)	.376*** (2841)	.432*** (2681)	.455*** (2816)	.426*** (2273)	.402*** (2816)	.154*** (2788)

Comments: ***Significant at the .001 level. Media corruption, freedom of the press, and ethnic heterogeneity have been reversed so that higher numbers equal more corruption, more press freedom, and more ethnic heterogeneity.

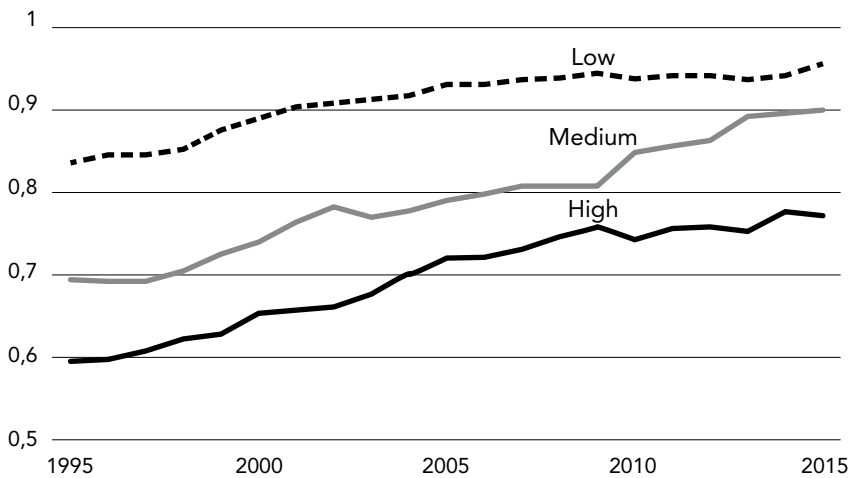
Appendix 7.2 Additional figures

Figure 7.3 *Women journalists in countries with low, medium, and high media corruption (1995–2015)*



Comments: The women journalist variable is rescaled for the ease of interpretation and ranging from 0 (low share of women journalists) to 1 (high share of women journalists). 2,176 country-year observations.

Figure 7.4 *Women's political participation in countries with low, medium, and high media corruption (1995–2015)*



Comments: The women's political participation variable ranges from 0 (low participation) to 1 (high participation). 2,176 country-year observations.

The project Comparing Gender and Media Equality across the Globe has been funded by the Swedish Research Council (2016–2020) and is based at the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication (JMG) at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. The GEM dataset and its codebook are free to use and can be downloaded in various formats. For access, contact JMG. Please ensure that proper attribution is given when citing the dataset.

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Gender in economic journalism

Impeccably accurate or smoke and mirrors?

Sarah Macharia



8.1 The news media and the material lives of women and men

Economic issues historically occupy a prominent place on the daily news agenda. On average, one out of every six articles in print, broadcast, and digital news concerns a topic related to the economy.¹ The issues have implications for women and men in similar and different ways, whether tides in the stock market, company mergers, inflation, employment, or food price trends. Bailouts by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), structural adjustment conditionalities, and rising debt to GDP ratios are just as important for women as economic actors as they are for men. Women participate equally with men in the economy – if not more – as the majority of workers at the periphery of the system working in the informal sector, in part-time and less lucrative jobs, as well as in unpaid social reproductive work caring for children, the sick, and the elderly. News media narratives on the economy are important to the extent that they enter into the economic discourses that people engage in, following Vujnovic (2009), to make sense of their everyday lives; gender angles in the stories inform and influence interpretations of gender difference in the lived experience.

The extent to which news content reflects women's equal engagement in the economic system is still unknown. This chapter explores the veracity of the symbolic annihilation thesis – defined in Gaye Tuchman's seminal essay as the under-representation and trivialisation of women in media content (Tuchman et al., 1978) – at a global level, examining business and economic news specifically and corresponding indicators in the physical, material world. Applying the comparative method, this chapter contributes insights derived through a cor-

Macharia, Sarah. (2020). Gender in economic journalism: Impeccably accurate or smoke and mirrors? In Monika Djerf-Pierre, & Maria Edström (Eds.), *Comparing gender and media equality across the globe: A cross-national study of the qualities, causes, and consequences of gender equality in and through the news media* (pp. 293–334). Gothenburg: Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. <https://doi.org/10.48335/9789188855329-8>

relation analysis of longitudinal media data from the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) and socioeconomic statistical data gathered in 134 countries across the period 2005–2015.

My interest in this theme comes from a preoccupation with questions about women's lives as workers. Women's economic activity has been found to be a significant determinant of their agency and achievements, performing "far more consistently than education in predicting outcomes that are positive by both welfare and empowerment criteria" (Kabeer, 1999: 48). How is women's economic participation reflected in the news media? Beyond the principles of fair, balanced, and accurate reporting required in journalistic professional practice, this question is also important to the extent that media discourses have implications for lived experience. Are the gender gaps in various dimensions of workers' lives similarly represented in media content? An exploration of the relationship between gender-disaggregated data on employment, wages, occupations, and informal sector activity and gender indicators in news reporting on business and economy is a necessary starting point for a deeper exploration of media's place in gender equality struggles on economic concerns such as gender pay equity, job segregation, or women's over-representation in precarious work. Insights on news media treatment of those most marginalised in the economic system would unearth the ways in which the mainstream news media industry contributes to the mission of maintaining, producing, and reproducing the relationship between women (and feminised others) and patriarchal capitalism.

In this chapter, I explore if gender inequality is more acute in the media than in the version of reality presented in institutional data – that is, if media extend the underreporting of women's economic participation seen in data published in mainstream statistical databases. A key question is whether the invisibilisation of women's participation in the system of production is not just carried over but exaggerated in the symbolic realm, rooting even more firmly women's subordination to capital and reinforcing their material oppression. Do media present women as equally or less active, less numerous, less authoritative, and less involved in business and economy than the extent acknowledged in real-world data?

In the first section, I review the literature on economic journalism, followed by a description of the key variables, methods, and the sample. Findings and discussion on the correlation and linear mixed models analyses are then discussed. The final section concludes with suggestions of directions for further study.

8.2 Communication research, gender, and economic reporting

There seems to be a dearth in gender-focused academic research on business and economic journalism, with the handful of published works retrievable being based on American studies. One explanation offered by Baker and colleagues (1997) is scholars' disinterest in women's business – considered small and inconsequential – and few documented differences between women and men business owners. Beyond business news, the androcentric bias pervades the broader body of scholarship on economic journalism, with research interests spanning the relationship between reporting and consumer behaviour and expectations (Boomgaarden et al., 2011; Doms & Morin, 2004; Goidel et al., 2010; Goidel & Langley, 1995; Hester & Gibson, 2003; Ju, 2008), to reporting and public evaluation of corporations (Carroll & McCombs, 2003), gendered language (Koller, 2008), and whether economic news reporting reflects or shapes reality (Goidel & Langley, 1995; Scheufele et al., 2011; Thompson, 2009). Other studies explore the links between economic reporting and politics, for instance, on the effect of economic journalism on voter behaviour (Shah et al., 1999) and media tendency to focus less on bad news in election years (Harrington, 1989).

The androcentric bias mirrors patterns in most policy-oriented economic research as exemplified by the paucity of data on women as economic agents. While some progress has been made towards recognising feminised occupations and workers through the International Labour Organization's (ILO) key indicators of the labour market database, for instance, gender biases in the UN System of National Accounts (Waring, 1988) have historically excluded the work that women do from assessments of national economic performance. In fact, women's position in the economic circuit is clear; several researchers discuss women's significant economic activity, as traders and producers across sub-Saharan Africa (Brenton et al., 2013), and as informal sector workers in much of the Global South (WIEGO, 2010–2018).

Turning to the scant gender-focused academic literature, almost three decades ago, Greenwald (1990) analysed content of the business sections of two American newspapers and discovered little attention paid to women as subjects, stereotypical representation or portrayal in useless roles, severe underrepresentation as experts despite their strong presence in the workforce, as well as an overwhelming presence of female business reporters in the newsroom. Possible explanations for these findings, she posits, may be an assumption of a male readership of the business section that has conscious or unconscious bias towards women as business news subjects or experts, or, that ignoring women is simply a structural feature of business coverage. Closer scrutiny of North American business magazines found little change in a 20-year period (1991/1992 to 2011/2012) in the gap between women sources in the articles and the real

occupational presence reported in labour force data (Grandy, 2014). A study on economic news in two influential American newspapers – the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* – during the country’s 2008 election period found a general lack of interest in covering women’s relationship to the economy (Byerly, 2009). According to Byerly (2009: 401), the papers “shut women’s voices out of such participation in their pages with respect to the issue” women had expressed to be their topmost concern in opinion polls that year.

The GMMP study of news gender patterns in five-year cycles since 1995 reveals large gender gaps in economic news reporting that have persisted across time and world regions. The 2015 edition found that women constituted only 21 per cent of sources and subjects in economic news stories, being most visible in North American news at 41 per cent of sources, and least in Asia at 15 per cent. Progress towards news representation that acknowledges women’s participation in economic life had remained elusive: Despite being 40 per cent of workers in paid employment globally, and the majority of informal sector workers in Global South contexts especially, women were only 20 per cent of sources identified as participants in the formal labour force, and almost 70 per cent of those depicted as unemployed and stay-at-home parents. Further, out of all major topics, economic news items were least likely to focus on women, at only 5 per cent of the stories (Macharia, 2015).

8.3 Method and data

The analysis draws from data gathered across 134 countries and three time points: 2005, 2010, and 2015. The media data are retrieved from the GMMP in the GEM dataset (Färdigh et al., 2020). The choice of comparative years is guided by the GMMP method that captures snapshots of media performance on gender equality and by the years in which data for the specific variables under consideration are available. Data availability for countries differs across the years, depending on whether or not a media monitoring team was in place in the specific country during the GMMP year.

Teams of GMMP media monitors apply a uniform methodology and coding instruments to record the people appearing in their local print, broadcast, and digital news. Applying standard coding protocols, the teams capture gender disaggregated data on the journalists as well as the people (subjects and sources) in news content, recording the roles in which they appear, how they are portrayed, and other characteristics of representation. The sample reflects the diversity of print, radio, and television news media present in participating countries – private and state-controlled, leftist, right-leaning, and centrist, tabloid and professional, of national scope, and publishing or broadcasting in various languages.

The GMMP's sampling method is informed by the research objective to provide a one-day snapshot of the representation and portrayal of women and men in the world news media and to ensure an adequate and representative sample for global-level analysis. By purpose and design, data collection is limited to a single day, and boundaries for country sample sizes are set according to media densities, which vary by country and by medium. Use of GMMP data for secondary country-level analysis must carefully review the individual constituent country datasets for adequate sample sizes, here defined as 30 or more news items coded. The country-level analyses in this chapter use unweighted data from print, radio, and television sources, while the regional analyses apply weighted data with calculations based on population and media density adjusted for sample size (see the methodological notes section, Annex 1 in Macharia, 2015 for a detailed explanation of the weighting system).

The dependent variables are four GMMP measures specific to business and economic news: 1) women's share as subjects or sources in this major topic, 2) women's share as experts and spokespersons, 3) as persons directly quoted in this topic, and 4) as subjects and sources in the labour, employment, and poverty sub-topics. I use all the data collected across countries and years between 2005 and 2015 while excluding cases (country-year) with small samples (defined as those with less than 30 news items coded) and outliers whose results lie beyond three standard deviations from the mean. The final sample contains 284 cases (defined as country-year) from 134 countries in Africa (35), Asia (19), the Caribbean (13), Europe (36), Latin America (15), the Middle East (8), North America (2), and the Pacific (6).

In order to allow for proper identification across studies and to link each variable to its original source, each variable name has been assigned a prefix that contains a reference to the original dataset followed by the original variable name (for further information, see Appendix 8.1). The dependent variables are listed below:

- Women's share as subjects or sources in business and economic news (gmmp_gonseb_f): The proportion of women as people who the news are about – those who are seen, read about, or interviewed in stories on business and the economy.
- Women's share as experts and spokespersons in business and economic news (gmmp_fonsespeb_f): In stories on business and the economy, women's share as 1) experts – persons who provide additional information, opinion, or comment, based on specialist knowledge or expertise – and 2) spokespersons – persons appearing in the news as representatives speaking on behalf of another person, a group, or an organisation.

- Women's share as subjects or sources quoted in business and economic news (gmmp_nsqeb_f): Women as the persons who are directly quoted in business and economic news.
- Women's share as subjects or sources in labour, work, employment, and poverty stories within the business and economic news major topic (gmmp_gonsebsub_f): Women as persons seen, read about, or interviewed in stories on poverty, housing, social welfare, labour issues, unemployment, employment, informal economy, rural economy, agriculture, land rights, and similar topics or sub-topics under the broad topic of economy.

The main independent variables selected are those that measure key dimensions of women's economic participation, namely, factors relevant to participation in the labour market. These variables are collated from the ILO's key indicators of the labour market (1996–2018) and the World Bank's world development indicators (2016). Three- to five-year mean values closest to each GMMP year are applied to overcome data gaps for some countries and years. The data are subsequently matched to each GMMP year. The independent variables are as follows:

- Women's share of labour force participation: Retrieved from the ILO variable, labour force participation, female as a percentage of total labour force. This refers to "the extent to which women are active in the labour force, where 'labour force' comprises people ages 15 and older who meet the ILO's definition of the economically active population" (ILO, 1996–2018), using World Bank population estimates.
- Women's labour force participation rate: Retrieved from the variable, labour force participation rate, female (% of female population ages 15+) (modelled estimate). Defined as "the proportion of a country's working-age population that engages actively in the labour market, either by working or looking for work" (World Bank, 2016), using data from ILO's key indicators of the labour market.
- Women in wage employment: Retrieved from the ILO variable, share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector (% of total non-agricultural employment). This is the share of women in wage employment in industry and services, expressed as a percentage of total employment in the sector (ILO, 1996–2018), using data from ILO's key indicators of the labour market.
- Women's employment in middle and senior management: Retrieved from the ILO variable, female share of employment in middle and senior management. This is the "proportion of women who are employed in decision-making and management roles in government, large enterprises

and institutions” (ILO, 1996–2018). Data on this variable are available for the years 2003–2015 and primarily for countries in the Global North. The mean values matched to the closest GMMP years yield 93 country-years for this variable, which, while low, is included in order to test whether the gender gaps in news coverage may in fact be linked to the gaps in tenure of management positions.

- Women’s employment in professional, technical, and managerial occupations: This is based on ILO data for female and male employment by occupation according to “broad skill levels aggregate categories of occupation ISCO-08 ISCO-88 skill levels 3 and 4 (high) managers, professionals, and technicians” (ILO, 1996–2018; variable, female per cent, employees in professional, technical, and managerial occupations).
- Gender difference in vulnerable employment: Retrieved from the World Bank (2016) and computed from data on vulnerable employment, female (per cent of female employment) less vulnerable employment, male (per cent of male employment). The mean values matched to the closest GMMP years yield a dataset covering 68 countries largely in the Global South and 123 country-years. Despite the data paucity, the variable is retained in view of the important role informal sector work plays in the economic lives of women in the Global South.

The countries are diverse in terms of performance on gender equality, from countries with significant achievements in bridging equality gaps, to those in which gross disparities remain intact. Drawing from the Gender Inequality Index (GII) (UNDP, 2015), the sample ranges from the consistently high performing Scandinavian countries up to the African and Asian countries on the tail end of the GII ranking. Countries rated as either high or very high on United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI) are over-represented (59%) in the sample. I take into account these variations in economic development and conduct a country cluster comparison based on the level of human development following the 2016 HDI results to examine whether the results differ for high/very high human development and low/medium human development nations, located largely in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Hence, the variable:

- Human Development Index (HDI) (`undp_hdi`) that measures the average achievements in a country in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, knowledge, and a decent standard of living (UNDP, 2016).

The final set of variables measure economy-related rights and liberties for women which I include as possible alternative explanatory factors to gender media disparities.

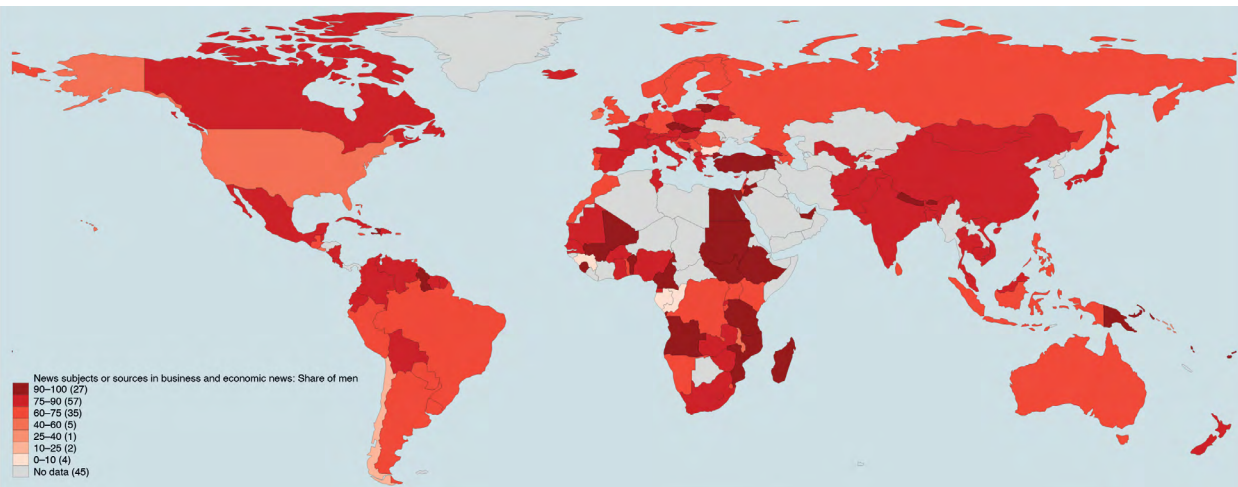
- Women's civil liberties index (*vdem_genc1*) measures to which extent women have the ability to make meaningful decisions in key areas of their lives and includes freedom of domestic movement, the right to private property, freedom from forced labour, and access to justice (retrieved from V-dem, Coppedge et al., 2017).
- Women's property rights (*vdem_clprptyw*) captures responses to the question of whether women enjoy the right to private property, including the right to acquire, possess, inherit, and sell private property (retrieved from V-dem, Coppedge et al., 2017).
- Women's economic rights (*qog_ciri_wecon*) include rights such as equal pay for equal work, free choice of profession or employment, the right to gainful employment, equality in hiring and promotion practices, job security, non-discrimination by employers, the right to be free from sexual harassment in the workplace, the right to work at night, and the right to work in occupations classified as dangerous (CIRI data retrieved from QoG, Cingranelli et al., 2014; Teorell et al., 2017).

I begin with a description of the data followed by bivariate correlation analysis to understand the relationship between the gender dimensions of economic news and gender in economic participation. Finally, I test the relationship between gender in media content and gender gaps in economic participation as well as economy-related rights and liberties for women. I apply linear mixed models to explore to what extent the realities of women's economic participation could explain the variability in gender equality in business and economic news across countries and time.

8.3 Women and men in economic news across the world

To compare women's presence in the media world with indicators from the physical world, I select labour force participation as the broadest indicator of women's economic activity, and gender parity in subjects or sources in business and economic news as a general measure of gender inequality in news on this topic. Men dominate heavily as subjects or sources in business and economic news, and women generally lack visibility, but there are substantial variations across countries and regions (see Figure 8.1). Women are at least 40 per cent of the counted economically active population in all world regions, with the exception of the Middle East, but they are present in economic news content as only 20 per cent of subjects or sources (see Figure 8.2).

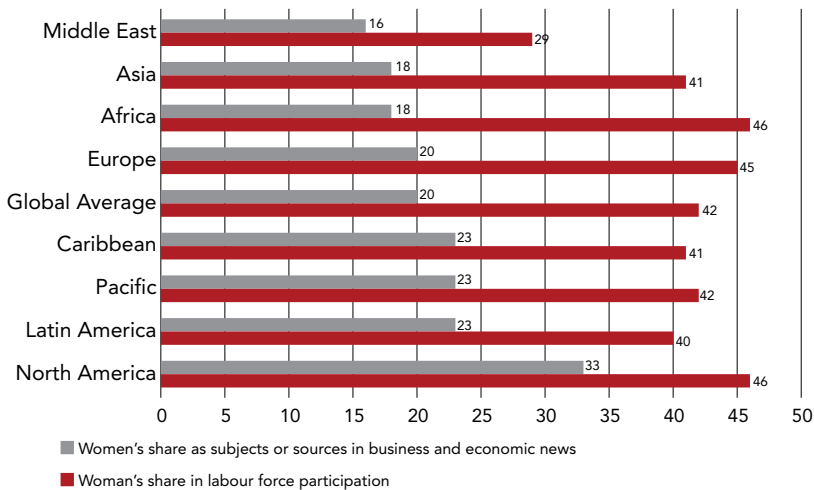
Figure 8.1 Men's share as subjects or sources in business and economic news, 2005, 2010, 2015 (average per cent)



Comments: The scale of the share of men varies from 0 (no men) – 100 (all men).

Source: GMMP (1995–2015)

Figure 8.2 Women's share of labour force participation, 2005–2015, and their share as subjects or sources in business and economic news, 2005, 2010, 2015 (average per cent)



Comments: Number of country-year observations = 267. Women's share as subjects or sources in business and economic news is retrieved from the GMMP and measured on a scale ranging from 0 (no women) to 100 (all women). The regional aggregates are weighted using a double square root weighting method based on a country's population and media density (see the methodological notes, Annex 1 in Macharia, 2015 for an explanation of the weighting system). Women's share of labour force participation is retrieved from the ILO dataset and measured on a scale from 0 (no women in the labour force) to 100 (all labour force participants are women).

Source: GMMP; ILO (1996–2018)

The patterns of under-representation are repeated in varying degrees across geo-political zones and media systems. There is a substantial gap between women's real-world economic activity and their presence in news about the economy in all regions of the world. The global average gap is 21 points, smallest in the Middle East and North America (difference = 13 percentage points for both regions) and largest in Africa (difference = 29 percentage points).

A detailed country comparison uncovers a pattern of under-representation of women as part of the economically active population as measured by the labour force participation metric (see Figure 8.3). Women's presence as news subjects or sources lags between 10 to 48 percentage points behind their labour force participation in 84 per cent of the countries.

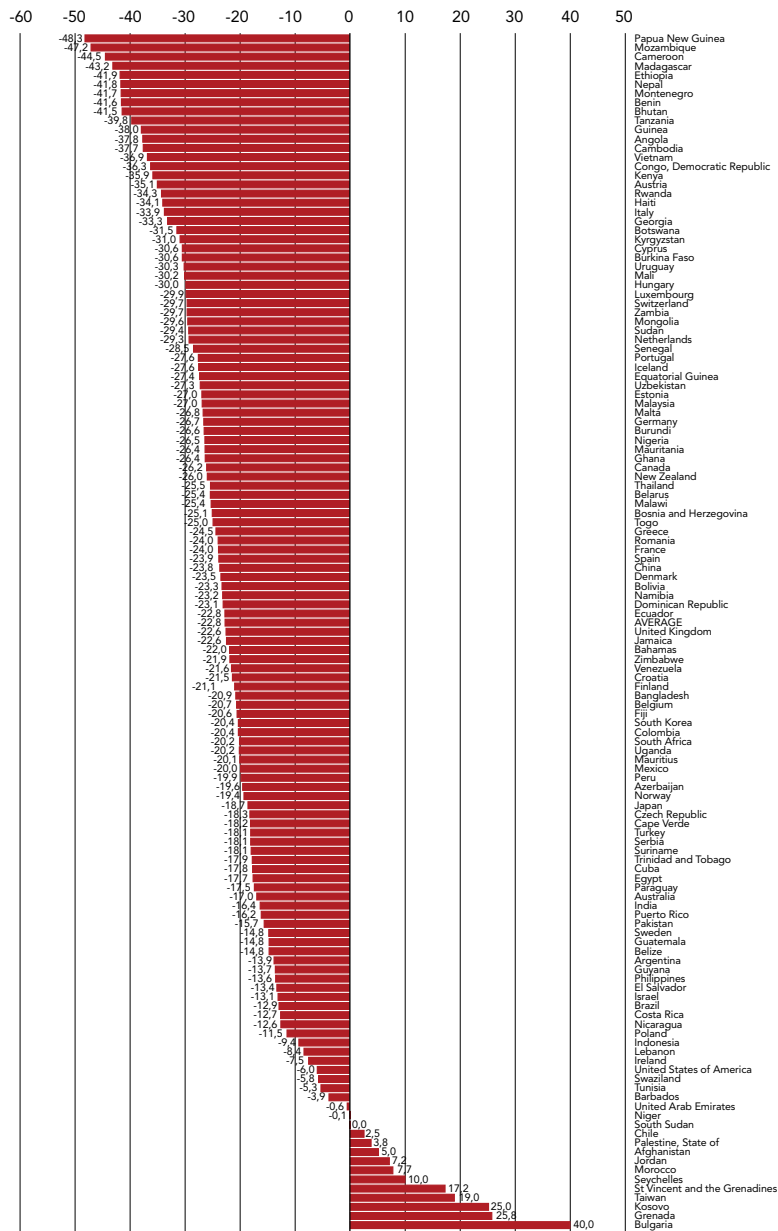
We observe a global phenomenon of large gender gaps in sources providing authority opinion as experts and spokespersons in business and economic news (see Figure 8.4). Contrasting the proportion of female expert voices (as a percentage of total expert sources) with women's share of professional, technical, and managerial employees – the segment of the workforce ordinarily interviewed for expert opinion – we find a pattern of media under-representation: women's expert voices fall 10 to 55 percentage points below their share of skilled employment in 67 per cent of the countries. Further, the female voice has not been heard in expert capacity on economic news stories in ten years in 14 per cent of the countries in the sample.²

Globally, across the period 2005–2015, change in women's visibility in economic news appears to match that of their labour market participation rate (see Figure 8.5), a broader measure that includes all women aged 15 years and older who are working or looking for work. As labour force participation rates have risen in the Pacific, Latin America, Europe, and the Caribbean, so has women's visibility in economic news content. In North America, women's presence in the news rose dramatically, even as their labour force participation rate seemed to slightly decline, with similar patterns in the Middle East and Africa. In Asia, women's presence in economic news has declined in tandem with the female labour force participation rate. Overall, the link between women's active economic participation as workers or jobseekers, and their presence in business and economic news, is inconsistent.

Media representations and women's actual economic participation: Examining relationships

In this section, I apply correlational analyses to examine the relationship between key economic participation indicators and women's visibility in business and economic news, as measured by the variable, women's share as subjects and sources.

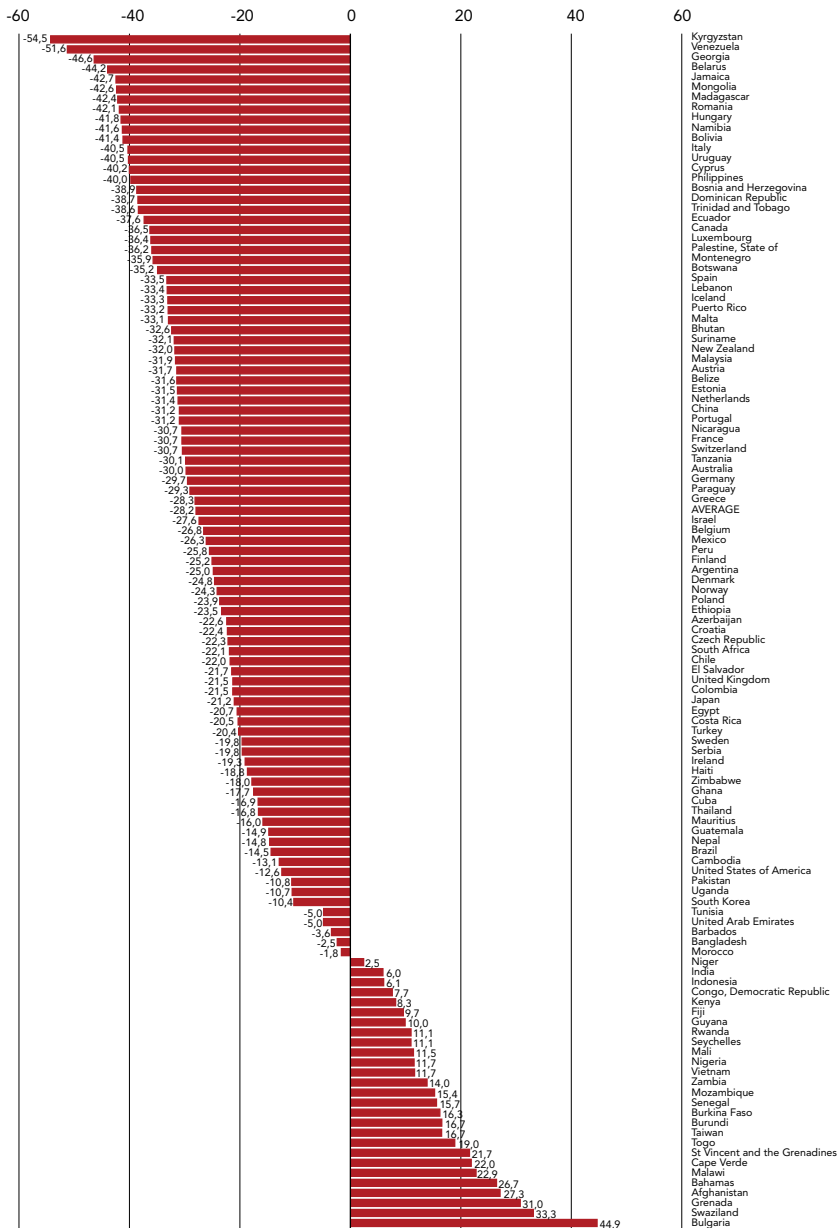
Figure 8.3 *The difference between women's share of labour force participation and their share as subjects or sources in business and economic news, 2005–2015 (average per cent)*



Comments: Negative bars indicate the extent of under-representation of women in economic news relative to their participation in the labour force. This graph excludes countries with small samples (≤ 30) in more than one GMMP year and outliers whose results are likely due to problematic coding, namely, Antigua and Barbuda, Chad, Gabon, Lesotho, Saint Lucia, Solomon Islands, and Tonga. Data tables are provided in Appendix 8.8.

Source: ILOSTAT; GMMP

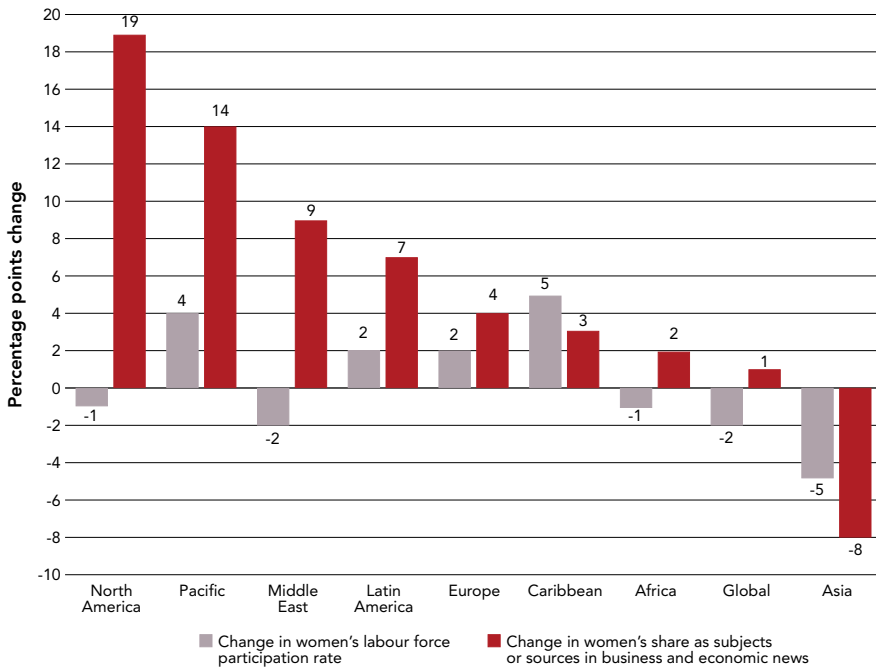
Figure 8.4 *The difference between women's share of employment in professional, technical, and managerial occupations and their share as authority sources (experts and spokespersons) in business and economic news, 2005–2015 (average per cent)*



Comments: Negative bars indicate the extent of under-representation of women as experts and spokespersons relative to their share in professional, technical, and managerial occupations. This graph excludes: countries with small samples (≤ 30) in more than one GMMP year; outliers whose results are likely due to problematic coding, namely, Antigua and Barbuda, Chad, Gabon, Lesotho, Saint Lucia, Solomon Islands, and Tonga; and countries for which data on women's employment in professional, technical, and managerial occupations are not available. Data tables are provided in Appendix 8.9.

Source: ILOSTAT; GMMP

Figure 8.5 *The change in women's labour force participation rate and the share of women as subjects or sources in business and economic news, 2005–2015*



Comments: Number of country-year observations = 293. Women's share as subjects or sources in business and economic news retrieved from the GMMP and measured on a scale ranging from 0 (no women) – 100 (all women). The regional aggregates are weighted using a double square root weighting method based on a country's population and media density (see the methodological notes, Annex 1 in Macharia, 2015 for an explanation of the weighting system). Women's labour force participation rate is measured on a scale from 0 (no women aged 15 and older are economically active) to 100 (all women aged 15 and older are economically active). It is retrieved from the World Bank's (2016) world development indicators, modelled estimate using the ILO's key indicators of the labour market (1990–2014).

Source: GMMP; World Bank (2016)

The relationship between the key economic participation indicator on women's share of labour force participation and women's share of people (subjects or sources) in economic and business news is positive but fairly weak (see Table 8.1). This means that women's visibility in business and economic news is somewhat higher in countries where women's actual participation in the wage economy is higher, particularly with regard to women's employment in middle- and senior-management positions. However, the relationship is not very strong. The result remains stable when the media variable is substituted with women's share of people in the subset of economic news stories concerning labour, employment, and poverty.

Table 8.1 Correlations between gender equality in economic participation and gender equality indicators in economic news content (Pearson's r)

	Women's share as news sub- jects or sources in business & economic news	Women's share as experts and spokespersons in business & economic news	Women's share as news sub- jects or sources in labour, employment, & poverty news	Women's share as news sub- jects quoted in business & economic news
Women's share of labour force participation (% women)	.151* (267)	0.095 (260)	.151* (254)	-.001 (250)
Women's employment in professional, technical, & managerial occupations (% women)	.321** (181)	.284** (178)	.356** (174)	.204** (168)
Women's employment in middle & senior management (% women)	.392** (91)	.378** (90)	.215* (86)	.244* (85)
Wage employment (% women)	.299** (175)	.291** (172)	.267** (167)	.131 (163)
Gender difference in vulnerable employ- ment difference (women – men)	-.180* (121)	-.201* (120)	-0.087 (114)	.072 (109)

Comments: n = number of country-year observations (in parentheses). * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$. Cases with small GMMP data samples (< 30 news items) are excluded (2005: Georgia, Indonesia, Lesotho, Suriname, Swaziland. 2010: Egypt, Ireland, Lesotho, Montenegro, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Togo. 2015: Antigua, Chad, Ethiopia, Haiti, Lesotho, Mauritania, Niger, St. Lucia). Outliers whose results are likely due to problematic coding are excluded (Gabon 2015, Solomon Islands 2015, and Tonga 2015). The correlation procedure is run on aggregated data for the 2005–2015 period because of the by-year grouping results in small country-year subsets. Correlation and a robustness test on by-year groups yield results that are not significant for 2005, but almost all significant and stronger for 2010 and 2015.

Source: Measures on gender in business and economic news from GMMP; economic participation variables from Varieties of Democracy dataset (Coppedge et al., 2017), ILO (1996–2018), and the world development indicators (World Bank, 2016)

The lack of difference between high/very high human development and low/medium human development nations – largely in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East (country cluster comparison based on the level of human development following UNDP's HDI 2016 ranking) – implies that a country's wealth is inconsequential for the strength of the relationship between women's labour force participation and media gender (in)equality patterns.³ Women's relative erasure from the faces and voices in business and economic news reports is structural and more acute than their underrepresentation in the labour market captured in institutional data. Women's increased insertion in the counted workforce and declining male participation rates have partially closed the gender gap on average (World Bank, 2011), albeit the cross-regional differences of high gaps in the Middle East and North Africa and narrower disparities in OECD countries, and Eastern and Central Africa (Elborgh-Woytek et al.,

2013). This tendency towards narrowing the gender gap is not reflected in corresponding journalistic content as far as the representation of economic actors is concerned. As was shown earlier in Figure 8.5, almost no increase in the global share of women as subjects or sources in business and economic news was documented between 2005 and 2015.

Do the people in the news reflect, then, perhaps those in waged employment only, considering the possibility that workers in informal, vulnerable, or precarious labour may be as invisible to the news media as they are to the mainstream economic system? The analysis reveals a positive though weak correlation between the women's share in wage employment and as subjects or sources in business and economic news (see Figure 8.6). The similarity in slopes between low/medium HDI and high/very high HDI country clusters when only those stories specific to poverty, employment, labour issues, and rural economy are considered is a surprising finding, given the stark disparities in labour market characteristics between both groups; a markedly higher proportion of waged labour in high/very high HDI countries is female (46%) compared to low/medium HDI countries, where women are only 33 per cent of formally employed workers.⁴

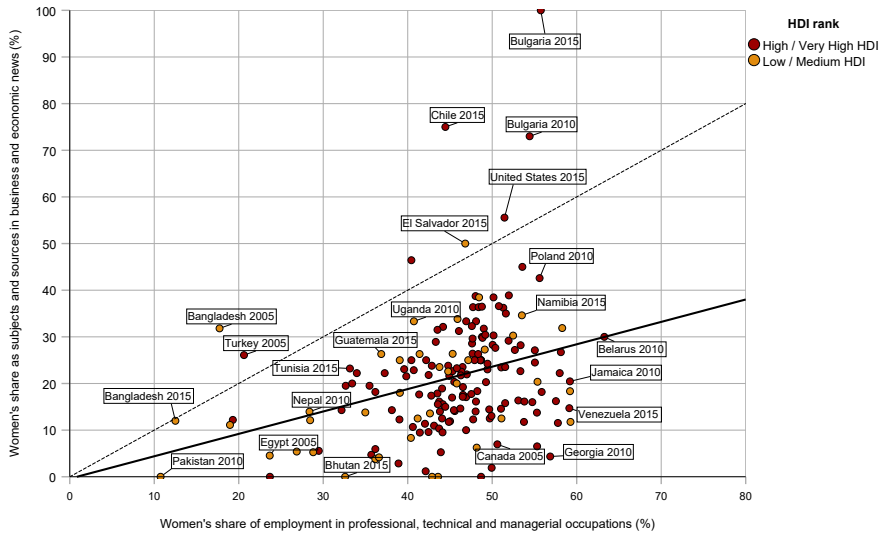
The correlation between the women's share as people (subjects or sources) in business and economic news and the gender difference in vulnerable employment is negative and weak. Again, there is no significant difference when the lens zooms in to only those people in the news appearing in authoritative roles as experts and spokespersons. The scatterplots are similar for low/medium HDI countries on the one hand, and high/very high HDI countries on the other hand. This result is interesting, given that the gender difference (women – men) in vulnerable employment (as a percentage of total employment by sex) is much lower for high/very high HDI countries (mean = -2.214, men being slightly over-represented) than for low/medium HDI countries (mean = 8.311) where women are relatively more numerous than men. The patterns of women's relative under-representation in the stories remain, despite context.

Perhaps the distribution of news subjects by gender reflects the gender distribution in senior and middle management. The test shows a positive and weak correlation between women's share as people (subjects or sources) in business and economic news and their share of senior- and middle-level managerial positions, as well as between women's share as experts and spokespersons in economic news and their tenure of senior- and middle-management jobs. The number of observations on the managerial role variable for low/medium HDI countries is too small here for meaningful comparison on the basis of human development level clusters.

Does the distribution of news subjects by gender then reflect the disparities in skilled work? All four media gender equality indicators are positively correlated with women's share of employment in professional, technical, and

managerial jobs; Figure 8.6 shows a scatterplot of the relationship. In all the cases, the relationship is similar when low/medium HDI countries and high/very high HDI countries are compared.

Figure 8.6 *The relationship between women's share of skilled jobs and their share as subjects or sources in business and economic news, comparing high/very high HDI countries to low/medium HDI countries*



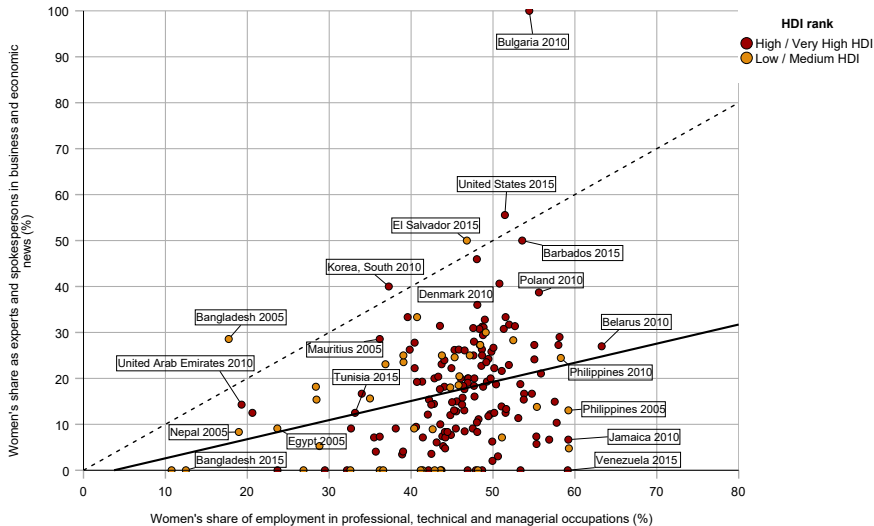
Comments: $n = 276$ country-year observations. Women's share as sources or subjects in business and economic news is from the GMMP. The scale ranges from 0 (no women) to 100 (all subjects and sources are women). Women's share of employment in professional, technical, and managerial occupations is from ILO (1996–2018). The scale ranges from 0 (no women) to 100 (all women). The HDI data are from the UNDP (2016), recoded here into two clusters: low/medium HDI and high/very high HDI. Cases with small GMMP data samples (< 30 news items) are excluded (2005: Georgia, Indonesia, Lesotho, Suriname, Swaziland. 2010: Egypt, Ireland, Lesotho, Montenegro, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Togo. 2015: Antigua, Chad, Ethiopia, Haiti, Lesotho, Mauritania, Niger, St. Lucia). Outliers whose results are likely due to problematic coding are excluded (Gabon 2015, Solomon Islands 2015, Tonga 2015). Regression equation for the fitted line: $y = 0.41 + 0.48 \times x$; $R^2 = .103$; $p < .000$. The red dotted line shows what the relationship would be if women's share of persons seen, interviewed, or read about in business and economic news matched perfectly their share of employment in the specialised occupations.

Source: GMMP; ILO (1996–2018); UNDP (2016)

Overall, the relationship between the degree of gender equality in economic news and women's actual participation in economic life is either weak or non-existent. And even if there is a positive relationship, it is hardly proportional. On a global level, an increase in women's share in professional occupations by 1 per cent only corresponds to an increase in women's visibility in business and economic news by 0.48 percentage points (see Figure 8.6) and by even less (0.42 percentage points) in the case of their presence as experts and spokespersons in this topic (see Figure 8.7). Figures 8.6 and 8.7 also show the limited explanative power of the real-world indicators: Only 10 and 8 per cent of the variation in women's visibility in economic and business news are explained by

the corresponding indicators of women's participation in real-world economic life (see also Appendix 8.2).

Figure 8.7 *The relationship between women's share of skilled jobs and their share as experts and spokespersons in business and economic news, comparing high/very high HDI countries to low/medium HDI countries*



Comments: $n = 269$ country-years. Women's share as experts and spokespersons in business and economic news is from the GMMP. The scale ranges from 0 (no women) to 100 (all experts and spokespersons are women). Women's share of employment in professional, technical, and managerial occupations is from the ILO (1996–2018). The scale ranges from 0 (no women) to 100 (all women). The HDI data are from the UNDP (2016), recoded here into two clusters: low/medium HDI and high/very high HDI. Cases with small GMMP data samples (< 30 news items) are excluded (2005: Georgia, Indonesia, Lesotho, Suriname, Swaziland. 2010: Egypt, Ireland, Lesotho, Montenegro, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Togo. 2015: Antigua, Chad, Ethiopia, Haiti, Lesotho, Mauritania, Niger, St. Lucia). Outliers whose results are likely due to problematic coding are excluded (Gabon 2015, Solomon Islands 2015, and Tonga 2015). Regression for the fitted line: $y = -1.55 + 0.42 \times x$; $R^2 = .081$; $p < .000$. The red dotted line shows what the relationship would be if women's share of experts and spokespersons in business and economic news matched perfectly their share of employment in the specialised occupations.

Source: GMMP; ILO (1996–2018); UNDP (2016)

So far, the analyses have focused on the (weak) relationship between gender representation in economic news and women's participation the labour market. In the next step, I examine if their visibility in business and economic news relates to women's rights and freedoms in economic life, taken as indicators of the legal framework that sustains opportunities for women's economic participation. Three key factors are considered: women's civil liberties, women's property rights, and women's economic rights.

The women's civil liberties measure is a composite measure that includes women's freedom of movement, right to property, freedom from forced labour, and access to justice. It correlates significantly and positively with three of the gender-media variables (see Table 8.2), suggesting a reliable albeit still weak

relationship between gender equality in presence and voice in economic news content. Likewise, women's property rights and women's economic rights are positively correlated with the four gender-media variables at low levels. Further investigation of the relationship between rights and economic participation finds moderate correlations,⁵ underlining a faint thread connecting legal guarantees, actual experience, and media output. Overall, the relationships between women's economic rights is even weaker than the relationships with women's economic participation examined previously. The results beg the question of the extent to which variations in media gender equality are due to gender equality policies in the national context.

Table 8.2 *Correlating women's economy-related rights and gender indicators in business and economic news content (Spearman's r)*

	Women's share as news subjects or sources in business & economic news	Women's share as experts and spokespersons in business & economic news	Women's share as news subjects or sources in labour, employment, & poverty news	Women's share as news subjects quoted in business & economic news
Women's civil liberties index	.255** (194)	.211** (193)	.209** (189)	0.116 (183)
Women's economic rights	.308** (166)	.298** (163)	.217** (161)	.209** (154)
Women's property rights	.245** (259)	.237** (255)	.259** (250)	0.113 (246)

Comments: n = country-years (in parentheses). **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Nonparametric test applied due to the levels of measurement used for the economic and property rights variables: the economic rights variable ranges between 0–3, where 0 = no economic rights for women in law, and 3 = all or nearly all of women's economic rights are guaranteed by law; the property rights variable is measured on a scale of 0–5, where 0 = virtually no women enjoy private property rights of any kind, and 5 = virtually all women enjoy all, or almost all, property rights. Cases with small GMMP data samples (< 30 news items) are excluded (2005: Georgia, Indonesia, Lesotho, Suriname, Swaziland. 2010: Egypt, Ireland, Lesotho, Montenegro, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Togo. 2015: Antigua, Chad, Ethiopia, Haiti, Lesotho, Mauritania, Niger, St. Lucia). Outliers whose results are likely due to problematic coding are also omitted (Gabon 2015, Solomon Islands 2015, and Tonga 2015). The correlation procedure is run on aggregated data for the 2005–2015 period because the by-year grouping results in small country-year subsets. Correlation and a robustness test on by-year groups yield results that are not significant for 2005, almost all significant and stronger for 2010, and one (source in poverty news/women's property rights) significant for 2015.

Source: Indicators of gender equality in the news from GMMP; women's civil liberties index and women's property rights from the Varieties of Democracy dataset (Coppedge et al., 2017); women's economic rights from CIRI, retrieved from the QoG dataset (Cingranelli et al., 2014; Teorell et al., 2017)

8.4 Conclusion and discussion

This chapter has examined the relationship between the gender gaps in economic and business news content and the gender gaps in the lived economic experience. The analyses suggest that women are marginalised as subjects or sources in economic news content across the globe, that there is some association between the variations and women's economic rights and freedoms, but largely, there are patterns of a disconnect between media content and women's equal participation in economic life.

Clearly, the gender (in)equality indicators in news media content reflect something other than gender inequality in broad labour force participation, tenure of waged jobs, skilled employment, or management positions. The analysis confirms that gender inequality is much more acute in the news media than in the version of reality presented in institutional data, extending the conclusions reached in US-based studies reviewed earlier to the global level; severe under-representation of women is a structural feature of business and economic journalism worldwide. The world captured in the stories diverges sharply from the physical world; the gender gaps in subjects, sources, or authoritative voices match neither the gender gap in labour force participation, nor in waged occupations, nor even in professional and skilled jobs.

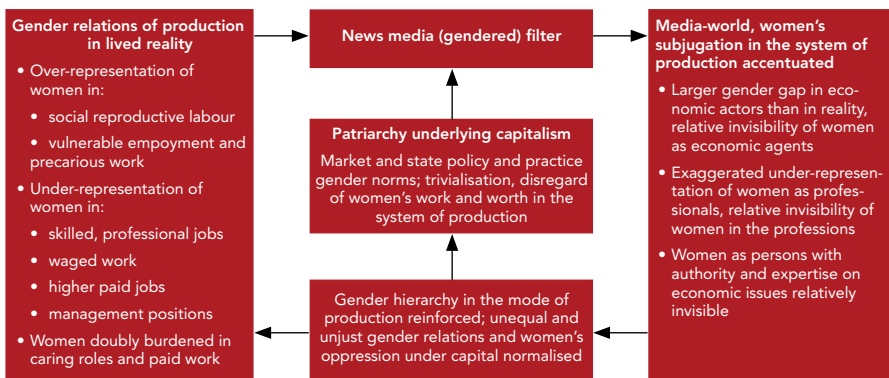
The temporal and spatial character of the data explored in this chapter reveals a symbolic annihilation of women in business and economic news that is systemic and unconstrained by state boundaries or human development levels. The patterns of nil or feeble correlations point to dissonance between the symbolic and the real; the linear mixed models are unable to explain the gaps between media presence and presence in the economy.

Marxist media theory suggests some explanations for the dissonance between the symbolic and the real. According to the theory, media institutions are locked into the power structure and consequently act largely in tandem with the dominant institutions in society. The media reproduce the viewpoints of dominant institutions, not as one among a number of alternative perspectives, but as the central and "obvious" or "natural" perspective. (Gurevitch et al., 1982: 21). The mass media conceal the economic basis of class struggle, rendering ideology the route through which struggle is obliterated rather than the site of struggle' (Gurevitch et al., 1982). Taking into account the gendered nature of mediated ideology, following Lee (2011), the mass media stabilise and legitimise skewed gender power relations not only through ownership and economic control (Murdock, 1982; Murdock & Golding, 1977), but also through messaging and selection of sources.

Following this logic, we may conclude that the "something else" interacting with women's real participation in the economy to accentuate under-representation of their presence and voice in news content is a product of the

patriarchy underlying capitalism that infuses with media to produce a gendered filter through which to present the economic world. Hartmann (1979) defines patriarchy as a set of social relations between men, which have a material base and which, though hierarchical, establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women. Though patriarchy is hierarchical and men of different classes, races, or ethnic groups have different places in the patriarchy, they also are united in their shared relationship of dominance over women.

Figure 8.8 *Circuit of gender inequalities in business and economic news and in the lived economic experience*



The gendered news media filter stabilises unequal gender relations and annihilates struggles of workers at the periphery of the mainstream economic system, complicating the oppressions that women and feminised others face. Workers here refers to most women as participants in waged production and as providers of the unwaged social reproductive labour needed to sustain the system of capitalist production. The empirical evidence points to media's participation in reinforcing a gender ideology of work and workers and the gender hierarchy in the mode of production. The oppression of feminised labour, most of who are women, is thus informed and firmly rooted, illustrative of Barrett's (1988) argument on the reproduction of gender ideology to sustain capital. This argument echoes an earlier one by Hartmann (1979: 12), that central to the process of reproducing patriarchal social relations essential for maintaining the gender power hierarchy in the system of production are the areas "where patriarchal behaviours are taught and the inferior position of women enforced and reinforced: churches, schools, sports, clubs, unions, armies, factories, offices, health centers, the media, etc".

Gender ideology shapes newsroom cultures that subordinate women in the news-making process and enters into journalistic routines, informing the values of editorial staff, reporters, and other journalists responsible for developing content. This ideology mediates the relationship between media and audiences, journalists, and economic actors. Data insufficiency⁶ hinders analysis of the interaction effects of gendered newsroom cultures and would be a direction for further exploration.

Patterns of media under- and mis-representation of women contribute to stereotypes about the gender division of labour and economic effort, presenting most women as less productive and less engaged in the economic system than they really are, in contrast to most men. Kelly and colleagues (2015: 46) discuss how stereotyping is a “pernicious means by which gender hierarchies, whether in the labour market or in day-to-day life, are held in place and reinforced”. The narratives enter into public discourse that in turn props up unequal gender relations of production and normalises discrimination against women in the economic sphere. The result is a subversion of struggles for the recognition of women’s economic engagement and for equal treatment of women workers. Future analysis could explore the contribution of gendered media representation to discrimination or to patriarchal media culture, a concept that still needs statistical unpacking.

Business and economic news journalism calls for high journalistic standards in view of the personal, immediate relevance of the topics to ordinary people for everyday decision-making on issues such as jobs, medical costs, housing, food, and wages. Rather than the impeccable accuracy and impartiality prescribed for this genre of news journalism (Hayes, 2014), what appears instead is a relative erasure, undervaluing, and trivialisation of women.

Investigating news media depiction, and invariably the construction, of women’s relation to men in the economic sphere and women’s relation to the economy, enables understanding of the links between gendered media discourse and gendered lived experience. Ultimately, analyses that integrate multiple measures of gender and media including ownership, control, decision-making, content, culture, and audience would shed light on the causes of gender inequality in media more comprehensively, and the linkages and feedbacks with women’s subordination in the economic sphere. While there are obviously other influences on gender inequality in the lived experience that are more important than the news, future analysis could help understand the capacity of media to produce change, illuminate openings for worker agency, and reveal under what conditions gendered media treatment may be disrupted to open up productive space to advance gender equality objectives.

Notes

1. Findings from the GMMP, 10-year average 2005, 2010, 2015 (see Macharia, 2015: 28–29).
2. The GMMP sampling methodology is designed to collect data that is sufficient for global and regional level analyses. The constituent country datasets analysed separately may not produce exact results but are indicative of the general patterns.
3. A *t*-test reveals the slopes not to be significantly different from each other.
4. My calculation based on the ILO dataset variable, share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector (% of total non-agricultural employment).
5. Correlations significant at the .01 level between women's economic rights and women's share in wage employment ($rs = .554, n = 118$); gender difference in vulnerable employment ($rs = -.501, n = 96$). Also significant, ($p < .01$) between women's property rights and women's share in wage employment ($rs = .628, n = 177$); women's share in professional, technical, and managerial occupations ($rs = .332, n = 181$); gender difference in vulnerable employment ($rs = -.499, n = 121$).
6. The glass ceilings survey (Byerly, 2011) collected data indicative of gender in newsroom culture in responses to the question: On a scale of 1–5, to what extent does gender matter when story assignments are made? (iwmf_gend) in the GEM dataset (Färdigh et al., 2020); however, it is a single wave study and covers only 44 nations of the sample in this chapter.

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Appendix 8.1 Variables and data sources

The variables used in this chapter are retrieved from several different sources. The summary table following the descriptions shows the count of countries and country-year observations.

Dependent variables

The dependent variables are retrieved from the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) 2005, 2010, and 2015. The GMMP measures selected indicators on gender equality in news media content in five-year intervals. The below variables measure the share of women in the news and vary between 0 (no women) and 100 (all women):

- Women's share as subjects or sources in business and economic news: This variable reflects the proportion of women as people who the news is about – those who are seen, read about, or interviewed in stories on business and the economy. Business and economic stories are those regarding economic policies, trade, stock markets, poverty, housing, social welfare, labour issues, employment, the informal sector, the rural economy, consumer issues, transport, and other stories specific to the economy. Data are available for 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2015; however, the analysis omits 1995 and 2000 due to either lack or thinness of data on the key independent variables for comparable years.
- Women's share as experts and spokespersons in business and economic news: This measure is computed from two GMMP variables: 1) the female portion of experts – persons who provide additional information, opinion, or comment, based on specialist knowledge or expertise, and 2) the female portion of spokespersons – persons appearing in the news as representatives speaking on behalf of another person, a group, or an organisation. Both indicators were first introduced into the GMMP in 2005. This chapter focuses only on those experts and spokespersons coded under the business and economic news major topic.

- Women's share, subjects/sources quoted in business and economic news: This variable pertains to the female portion of people who are directly quoted in business and economic news, in their own words. It excludes people whose opinions are paraphrased. Data are available for 2005, 2010, and 2015.
- Women's share, subjects/sources in labour, work, employment, and poverty stories: This is the proportion of women as persons seen, read about, or interviewed in stories on poverty, housing, social welfare, labour issues, unemployment, employment, informal economy, rural economy, agriculture, land rights, and similar sub-topics under the major topic of economy. Excluded from this cluster are stories classified under sub-topics such as economic policies, economic statistics, trade, economic crises, stock markets, consumer issues, and transport. This variable covers the years 2005, 2010, and 2015.

Independent variables

- Labour force participation, female as a percentage of total labour force (retrieved from ILO): This indicator measures "the extent to which women are active in the labour force, where 'labour force' comprises people ages 15 and older who meet the ILO's definition of the economically active population" (ILO, 1996–2018). This population is limited to people who furnish the supply of labour for the production of economic goods and services. The data exclude workers located outside the transactional economic circuit (in caring and volunteer work) and the uncounted invisible (informal) economy.
- Labour force participation rate, female (% of female population ages 15+) (modelled ILO estimate): This is defined as "the proportion of a country's working-age population that engages actively in the labour market, either by working or looking for work" (World Bank, 2016), with data from ILO's key indicators of the labour market database. The variable covers the years 1990–2014.
- Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector (% of total non-agricultural employment) (retrieved from ILO): This variable pertains to the "share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector (industry and services), expressed as a percentage of total employment in the non-agricultural sector" (World Bank, 2016). The variable covers the years 2001–2013.
- Female share of employment in middle and senior management (retrieved from ILO): This indicator is defined as "the proportion of women who are employed in decision-making and management roles in government, large enterprises and institutions (World Bank, 2016). It covers the years 2003–2015.

- Female per cent, employees in professional, technical, and managerial occupations (retrieved from ILO): This variable is calculated based on ILO data for female and male employment by occupation according to broad skill levels aggregate categories of occupation ISCO-08 ISCO-88 skill levels 3 and 4 (high) managers, professionals, and technicians. These categories cover managers, legislators, senior officials, professionals, technicians, and associate professionals (World Bank, 2016). It covers the years 2000–2015.
- Gender difference in vulnerable employment: This variable is computed from the World Bank's (2016) world development indicators database (vulnerable employment, female [% of female employment] minus vulnerable employment, male [% of male employment]). Vulnerable employment is defined as “contributing family workers and own-account workers as a percentage of total employment” (World Bank, 2016).
- Human Development Index (qog_undp_hdi): A composite index that measures the average achievements in a country in three basic dimensions of human development: 1) a long and healthy life, as measured by life expectancy at birth; 2) knowledge, as measured by the adult literacy rate and the combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary, and tertiary schools; and 3) a decent standard of living, as measured by GDP per capita in purchasing power parity USD. The variable covers observations from 2000–2014 (UNDP, 2016).
- Women civil liberties index (vdem_gencl) is retrieved from the Varieties of Democracy (V-dem) data (Coppedge et al., 2017; Sundström et al., 2017). The index measures to which extent women have the ability to make meaningful decisions in key areas of their lives. Women's civil liberties are understood to include freedom of domestic movement, the right to private property, freedom from forced labour, and access to justice. The variable is available for the years 2005–2015.
- Women's property rights (vdem_clprptyw) is also retrieved from V-dem (Coppedge et al., 2017; Pemstein et al., 2018). This variable captures responses to the question of whether women enjoy the right to private property, including the right to acquire, possess, inherit, and sell private property. It does not concern actual ownership of property. Responses: 0 = virtually no men/women enjoy private property rights of any kind; 1 = Some men/women enjoy some private property rights, but most have none; 2 = Many men/women enjoy many private property rights, but a smaller proportion enjoys few or none; 3 = More than half of men/women enjoy most private property rights, yet a smaller share of men/women have much more restricted rights; 4 = Most men/women enjoy most private property rights but a small minority does not; 5 = Virtually

all men/women enjoy all, or almost all, property rights. It is available for the years 2005–2015.

- Women's economic rights (qog_ciri_wecon) is retrieved from the Quality of Government dataset (Teorell et al., 2016) and originally collected from the human rights dataset (Cingranelli et al., 2014). These include rights such as equal pay for equal work, free choice of profession or employment, the right to gainful employment, equality in hiring and promotion practices, job security, non-discrimination by employers, the right to be free from sexual harassment in the workplace, the right to work at night, and the right to work in occupations classified as dangerous. The variable is available for the years 2005–2011 and ranges from 0–3: 0 = there were no economic rights for women in law and that systematic discrimination based on sex may have been built into law; 1 = women had some economic rights under law, but these rights were not effectively enforced; 2 = women had some economic rights under law, and the government effectively enforced these rights in practice while still allowing a low level of discrimination against women in economic matters; and 3 = all or nearly all of women's economic rights were guaranteed by law and the government fully and vigorously enforces these laws in practice.

Table 8.3 *Gender in economic journalism – variables and sample size*

	Country valid <i>n</i>	Country- year valid <i>n</i>	Min	Max	Mean	Std Dev
Women's share as subjects or sources in business & economic news	131	275	0	100	19.93	12.704
Women's share as experts and spokespersons in business & economic news	132	271	0	100	16.5	13.633
Women's share as subjects or sources in labour, work, employment, & poverty stories	130	263	0	75	22.55	18.896
Women's share as subjects or sources quoted in business & economic news	129	260	0	80	20.93	21.896
Wage employment (% women)	88	179	16	55	42.58	8.555
Middle and senior management (% women)	48	93	14	53	30.6	7.211
Professional, technical, & managerial occupations (% women)	94	185	11	63	45.06	8.918
Labour force participation rate (% women)	132	283	16	89	53.94	14.751
Labour force participation (% women)	127	275	13	54	42.58	6.9
Vulnerable employment as percentage of employment by sex (difference women–men)	68	123	-26.6	27	-0.026	7.44074
Women's economic rights	114	172	0	3	1.5	0.869
Women's property rights	125	268	-2	3.06	1.416	1.00653
Women's civil liberties index	113	202	0.199	0.976	0.75467	0.184853

Appendix 8.2 Predicting gender inequality in business and economic news content: Linear mixed models

I apply linear mixed modelling to further examine the relationship between gender equality in business and economic news, and gender inequality in economic realities. The analysis excludes country-year cases with small samples (≤ 30): for 2005, Georgia, Indonesia, Lesotho, Suriname, and Swaziland; for 2010, Egypt, Ireland, Lesotho, Montenegro, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Togo; and for 2015, Antigua, Chad, Ethiopia, Haiti, Lesotho, Mauritania, Niger, and St. Lucia. It also excludes outliers whose results are likely due to problematic coding: Gabon 2015, Solomon Islands 2015, and Tonga 2015.

The model (Table 8.4) explores the contribution of the gender gap in labour force participation to the gender gap in business and economic news, specifically, whether women's share of the labour force (IV) explains their share as sources and subjects in economic news (DV). A one percentage point change in women's share of participation in the labour force corresponds to a fractional increase ($b = 0.266$, $p < .05$) in women's presence as subjects or sources in business and economic news.

Table 8.4 *Estimate of fixed effects for women's share as sources or subjects in business and economic news when labour force participation is entered in the model*

	Estimate
Women's participation in the labour force (% women)	0.266* (0.129)
Intercept	8.481 (5.535)
<i>n</i>	267

Comments: Dependent variable: women's share as subjects or sources in business and economic news (%). $n = 267$ country-year observations. $*p < .05$. Linear mixed model procedure run in SPSS ver.25. Repeated measure: year. Covariance type: scaled identity. Maximum likelihood estimation method applied to address missing data, a method generally applied to obtain estimates of unknown parameters by optimising a likelihood function given the distributional assumptions (SPSS, 2005). The maximum likelihood method does not reject cases where one or more data items are missing, as is the case across the variables and years analysed here (see Schafer, 1997; Seltman, 2018 for further discussion on the ML estimation). Women's share as subjects or sources in business and economic news from GMMP. The scale ranges from 0 (no women) to 100 (all sources and subjects are women). Women's participation in the labour force is from the ILO (1996–2018) using World Bank population estimates. The scale ranges from 0 (no women) to 100 (all women). This variable measures the extent to which women are active in the labour force, where "labour force" comprises people aged 15 and older who meet the ILO's definition of the economically active population. Cases with small GMMP data samples (< 30 news items) are excluded (2005: Georgia, Indonesia, Lesotho, Suriname, Swaziland. 2010: Egypt, Ireland, Lesotho, Montenegro, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Togo. 2015: Antigua, Chad, Ethiopia, Haiti, Lesotho, Mauritania, Niger, and St. Lucia). Outliers whose results are likely due to problematic coding are excluded (Gabon 2015, Solomon Islands 2015, and Tonga 2015).

Source: GMMP; ILO

Labour force participation loses importance when women's share of professional, technical, and managerial jobs is introduced into the model (see Table 8.5). A one-point change in women's share of specialised employment corresponds to almost half a point change ($b = 0.429$, $p < .01$) in their share as sources or subjects in economic and business news.

Table 8.5 *Estimates of fixed effects for women's share as subjects or sources in business and economic news when labour force participation and employment in professional, technical, and managerial jobs are entered in the model*

	Estimate
Employees in professional, technical, & managerial occupations (% women)	0.423** (.136)
Labour force participation (women as a percentage of total labour force)	0.124 (0.205)
Intercept	-3.18 (7.832)
<i>n</i>	180

Comments: Dependent variable: women's share as subjects or sources in business and economic news (%). $n = 180$ country-year observations. $**p < .01$. Linear mixed model procedure run in SPSS ver.25. Repeated measure: year. Covariance type: scaled identity. Maximum likelihood estimation method applied to address missing data, a method generally applied to obtain estimates of unknown parameters by optimising a likelihood function given the distributional assumptions (SPSS, 2005; see Schafer, 1997; Seltman, 2018 for further discussion on the ML estimation). Women's share as subjects or sources in business and economic news is from the GMMP. The scale ranges from 0 (no women) to 100 (all sources and subjects are women). Employees in professional, technical, and managerial occupations (% women) is from the ILO (1996–2018). The scale ranges from 0 (no women) to 100 (all women) expressed as a decimal. This indicator is based on ILO data for female and male employment by occupation according to broad skill levels aggregate categories of occupation ISCO-08 ISCO-88 skill levels 3 and 4 (high) managers, professionals, and technicians. Labour force participation, women as a percentage of total labour force is from the ILO (1996–2018), using World Bank population estimates. The scale ranges from 0 (no women) to 100 (all women) expressed as a decimal. This variable measures the extent to which women are active in the labour force, where "labour force" comprises people aged 15 and older who meet the ILO's definition of the economically active population. Cases with small GMMP data samples (< 30 news items) are excluded (2005: Georgia, Indonesia, Lesotho, Suriname, Swaziland. 2010: Egypt, Ireland, Lesotho, Montenegro, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Togo. 2015: Antigua, Chad, Ethiopia, Haiti, Lesotho, Mauritania, Niger, St. Lucia). Outliers whose results are likely due to problematic coding are also omitted (Gabon 2015, Solomon Islands 2015, and Tonga 2015).

Source: GMMP; ILO

The third model (see Table 8.6) explores the contribution of gender disparities in specialised occupations to gender disparities in expert sources in business and economic news. This model employs women's share as experts and spokespersons in economic news as the dependent variable, their share in professional, technical, and managerial jobs as the predictor, and the year as the repeated measure.

Table 8.6 *Estimates of fixed effects for women's share as experts and spokespersons in business and economic news when their share in professional, technical, and managerial jobs is entered in the model*

	Estimate
Employees in professional, technical, & managerial occupations (% women)	0.427*** (.116)
Intercept	-1.974 (5.317)
<i>n</i>	178

Comments: Dependent variable: women's share as experts and spokespersons in business and economic news (%). $n = 178$ country-year observations. *** $p < .001$. Linear mixed model procedure run in SPSS ver.25. Repeated measure: year. Covariance type: scaled identity. Maximum likelihood estimation method applied to address missing data, a method generally applied to obtain estimates of unknown parameters by optimising a likelihood function given the distributional assumptions (SPSS, 2005) (see Schafer, 1997; Seltman, 2018 for further discussion on the ML estimation). Women's share as experts and spokespersons in business and economic news is from the GMMP. The scale ranges from 0 (no women) to 100 (all experts and spokespersons are women). Employees in professional, technical, and managerial occupations (% women) is from the ILO (1996–2018). The scale ranges from 0 (no women) to 100 (all women) expressed as a decimal. This indicator is based on ILO data for female and male employment by occupation according to broad skill levels aggregate categories of occupation ISCO-08 ISCO-88 skill levels 3 and 4 (high) managers, professionals, and technicians. Cases with small GMMP data samples (< 30 news items) are excluded (2005: Georgia, Indonesia, Lesotho, Suriname, Swaziland. 2010: Egypt, Ireland, Lesotho, Montenegro, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Togo. 2015: Antigua, Chad, Ethiopia, Haiti, Lesotho, Mauritania, Niger, St. Lucia). Outliers whose results are likely due to problematic coding are excluded (Gabon 2015, Solomon Islands 2015, Tonga 2015).

Source: GMMP; ILO

A one-point rise in women's share of specialised occupations predicts almost half a percentage point increase ($b = 0.427$, $p < .001$) in their share as authority voices in economic and business news. This analysis would need to be repeated in a larger sample collected over a longer period of time.

The final model (see Table 8.7) explores the contribution of women's share of specialised occupations to their comparative presence in labour-related news stories. Women's share as subjects or sources in labour, work, employment, and poverty sub-topics under the business and economy major topic is the dependent variable, their share in professional, technical, and managerial jobs is the predictor, and year is included as the repeated measure. Scaled identity is selected as the covariance type and maximum likelihood as the estimation method.

Table 8.7 Estimates of fixed effects for women's share as subjects or sources in labour, employment, and poverty stories when their share in professional, technical, and managerial jobs is entered in the model

	Estimate
Employees in professional, technical, & managerial occupations (% women)	0.729*** (.145)
Intercept	-9.752 (6.65)
<i>n</i>	172

Comments: Dependent variable: women's share as subjects or sources in labour, work, employment, and poverty stories within the business and economic news major topic (%). $n = 172$ country-year observations *** $p < .001$. Linear mixed model procedure run in SPSS ver.25. Repeated measure: year. Covariance type: scaled identity. Maximum likelihood estimation method applied to address missing data, a method generally applied to obtain estimates of unknown parameters by optimising a likelihood function given the distributional assumptions (SPSS, 2005; see Schafer, 1997; Seltman, 2018 for further discussion on the ML estimation). Women's share as subjects or sources in labour, work, employment, and poverty stories within the business and economic news major topic is from the GMMP. The scale ranges from 0 (no women) to 100 (all subjects and sources are women). Employees in professional, technical, and managerial occupations (% women) is from the ILO (1996–2018). The scale ranges from 0 (no women) to 100 (all women). This indicator is based on ILO data for female and male employment by occupation according to broad skill levels aggregate categories of occupation ISCO-08 ISCO-88 skill levels 3 and 4 (high) managers, professionals, and technicians. Cases with small GMMP data samples (< 30 news items) are excluded (2005: Georgia, Indonesia, Lesotho, Suriname, Swaziland. 2010: Egypt, Ireland, Lesotho, Montenegro, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Togo. 2015: Antigua, Chad, Ethiopia, Haiti, Lesotho, Mauritania, Niger, St. Lucia). Outliers whose results are likely due to problematic coding are excluded (Gabon 2015, Solomon Islands 2015, and Tonga 2015).

Source: GMMP; ILO

Women's share of employment in skilled occupations is strongly associated with their share as subjects or sources in stories on labour, work, and poverty ($b = 0.729$, $p < .001$). This is an interesting finding in itself; that this sub-set of stories constitutes only a quarter of the volume of the stories classified under business and economy suggests that the gender gap in skilled work is important in explaining gender disparities in stories located at the periphery of the economic news agenda, indicated by the variable, women's share as subjects and sources in stories on labour, work, and poverty. When the variables for female per cent of waged employment and female per cent of labour force participation are introduced into the model, no association of the additional measures to women's share in the labour-related topics emerges, while the skilled occupations indicator remains significant.

Appendix 8.3 Additional tables

Table 8.8 *Women's share of labour force participation and their share as subjects or sources in business and economic news, by country (average 2005–2015, per cent)*

Country	Women's share of labour force participation	Women as subjects or sources in business & economic news	Difference between women's share of labour force participation and women as subjects or sources in business & economic news
Bulgaria	46.4	86.4	40.0
Grenada	–	25.8	–
Kosovo	–	25.0	–
Taiwan	–	19.0	–
St Vincent and the Grenadines	17.2	–	–
Seychelles	–	10.0	–
Morocco	27.3	35.0	7.7
Jordan	17.8	25.0	7.2
Afghanistan	16.1	21.1	5.0
Palestine, State of	0.0	3.8	3.8
Chile	38.6	41.1	2.5
South Sudan	0.0	0.0	0.0
Niger	30.9	30.8	-0.1
United Arab Emirates	12.8	12.2	-0.6
Barbados	48.9	45.0	-3.9
Tunisia	26.9	21.6	-5.3
Swaziland	39.1	33.3	-5.8
United States of America	45.9	39.9	-6.0
Ireland	43.3	35.7	-7.5
Lebanon	23.7	15.3	-8.4
Indonesia	38.0	28.6	-9.4
Poland	45.1	33.5	-11.5
Nicaragua	38.4	25.8	-12.6
Costa Rica	37.1	24.4	-12.7
Brazil	43.3	30.3	-12.9

Table 8.8 Cont.

Country	Women's share of labour force participation	Women as subjects or sources in business & economic news	Difference between women's share of labour force participation and women as subjects or sources in business & economic news
Israel	46.8	33.7	-13.1
El Salvador	41.3	27.9	-13.4
Philippines	38.7	25.1	-13.6
Guyana	34.5	20.8	-13.7
Argentina	40.4	26.5	-13.9
Belize	37.7	22.9	-14.8
Guatemala	37.5	22.7	-14.8
Sweden	47.2	32.4	-14.8
Pakistan	21.9	6.3	-15.7
Puerto Rico	42.0	25.8	-16.2
India	26.2	9.8	-16.4
Australia	45.2	28.2	-17.0
Paraguay	38.8	21.3	-17.5
Egypt	22.7	5.0	-17.7
Cuba	37.4	19.6	-17.8
Trinidad and Tobago	42.0	24.2	-17.9
Suriname	37.2	19.1	-18.1
Serbia	43.5	25.4	-18.1
Turkey	28.7	10.5	-18.1
Cape Verde	39.2	21.1	-18.2
Czech Republic	43.3	25.0	-18.3
Japan	42.2	23.5	-18.7
Norway	47.0	27.7	-19.4
Azerbaijan	48.2	28.6	-19.6
Peru	44.3	24.4	-19.9
Mexico	36.8	16.8	-20.0
Mauritius	37.0	16.9	-20.1
Uganda	49.3	29.2	-20.2
South Africa	44.4	24.2	-20.2
Colombia	41.7	21.3	-20.4

Table 8.8 Cont.

Country	Women's share of labour force participation	Women as subjects or sources in business & economic news	Difference between women's share of labour force participation and women as subjects or sources in business & economic news
South Korea	41.3	20.9	-20.4
Fiji	33.5	12.9	-20.6
Belgium	45.1	24.4	-20.7
Bangladesh	39.6	18.8	-20.9
Finland	47.8	26.8	-21.1
Croatia	45.7	24.2	-21.5
Venezuela	39.5	17.9	-21.6
Zimbabwe	49.2	27.2	-21.9
Bahamas	48.3	26.3	-22.0
Jamaica	44.6	22.0	-22.6
United Kingdom	45.9	23.3	-22.6
AVERAGE	42.1	19.3	-22.8
Ecuador	40.0	17.2	-22.8
Dominican Republic	39.9	16.8	-23.1
Namibia	48.0	24.8	-23.2
Bolivia	44.5	21.2	-23.3
Denmark	47.4	23.9	-23.5
China	44.2	20.5	-23.8
Spain	43.7	19.8	-23.9
France	47.0	23.0	-24.0
Romania	44.9	20.9	-24.0
Greece	41.9	17.4	-24.5
Togo	50.9	25.9	-25.0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	37.6	12.5	-25.1
Malawi	50.5	25.2	-25.4
Belarus	48.8	23.3	-25.4
Thailand	45.7	20.2	-25.5
New Zealand	46.8	20.7	-26.0
Canada	46.9	20.7	-26.2
Ghana	49.7	23.3	-26.4
Mauritania	26.4	0.0	-26.4

Table 8.8 Cont.

Country	Women's share of labour force participation	Women as subjects or sources in business & economic news	Difference between women's share of labour force participation and women as subjects or sources in business & economic news
Nigeria	42.6	16.2	-26.5
Burundi	51.5	24.8	-26.6
Germany	45.4	18.7	-26.7
Malta	34.1	7.3	-26.8
Malaysia	36.1	9.1	-27.0
Estonia	49.4	22.4	-27.0
Uzbekistan	41.0	13.6	-27.3
Equatorial Guinea	44.8	17.4	-27.4
Iceland	47.4	19.8	-27.6
Portugal	47.6	20.0	-27.6
Senegal	44.8	16.3	-28.5
Netherlands	45.6	16.2	-29.3
Sudan	29.4	0.0	-29.4
Mongolia	45.8	16.2	-29.6
Zambia	46.5	16.9	-29.7
Switzerland	45.9	16.2	-29.7
Luxembourg	44.2	14.3	-29.9
Hungary	45.8	15.8	-30.0
Mali	38.5	8.3	-30.2
Uruguay	44.4	14.1	-30.3
Burkina Faso	47.4	16.9	-30.6
Cyprus	43.4	12.8	-30.6
Kyrgyzstan	42.7	11.8	-31.0
Botswana	47.2	15.6	-31.5
Georgia	46.5	13.2	-33.3
Italy	40.9	7.0	-33.9
Haiti	47.2	13.1	-34.1
Rwanda	54.3	20.0	-34.3
Austria	45.7	10.6	-35.1
Kenya	46.5	10.6	-35.9
Congo, Democratic Republic	49.8	13.5	-36.3

Table 8.8 Cont.

Country	Women's share of labour force participation	Women as subjects or sources in business & economic news	Difference between women's share of labour force participation and women as subjects or sources in business & economic news
Vietnam	48.4	11.5	-36.9
Cambodia	49.8	12.1	-37.7
Angola	46.9	9.1	-37.8
Guinea	45.7	7.7	-38.0
Tanzania	50.1	10.3	-39.8
Bhutan	41.5	0.0	-41.5
Benin	47.0	5.3	-41.6
Montenegro	43.6	1.9	-41.7
Nepal	50.1	8.4	-41.8
Ethiopia	47.2	5.3	-41.9
Madagascar	49.4	6.3	-43.2
Cameroon	45.6	1.1	-44.5
Mozambique	54.3	7.1	-47.2
Papua New Guinea	48.3	0.0	-48.3

Table 8.9 *Women's share as authority voices (experts and spokespersons) in business and economic news and their share of employment in professional, technical, and managerial occupations, by country (average 2005–2015, per cent)*

Country	Women's share as authority voices (experts & spokespersons) in business & economic news	Women's employment in professional, technical, & managerial occupations	Difference between women's share as authority voices (experts & spokespersons) in business & economic news and their share of employment in professional, technical, & managerial occupations
Jordan	50.0	–	–
Bulgaria	100.0	55.1	44.9
Swaziland	33.3	–	–
Grenada	31.0	–	–
Afghanistan	27.3	–	–
Bahamas	26.7	–	–
Malawi	22.9	–	–
Cape Verde	22.0	–	–
St Vincent and the Grenadines	21.7	–	–
Togo	19.0	–	–
Burundi	16.7	–	–
Taiwan	16.7	–	–
Burkina Faso	16.3	–	–
Senegal	15.7	–	–
Mozambique	15.4	–	–
Zambia	14.0	–	–
Vietnam	11.7	–	–
Nigeria	11.7	–	–
Mali	11.5	–	–
Rwanda	11.1	–	–
Seychelles	11.1	–	–
Guyana	10.0	–	–
Fiji	9.7	–	–
Kenya	8.3	–	–
Congo, Democratic Republic	7.7	–	–
Indonesia	50.0	43.9	6.1

Table 8.9 Cont.

Country	Women's share as authority voices (experts & spokespersons) in business & economic news	Women's employment in professional, technical, & managerial occupations	Difference between women's share as authority voices (experts & spokespersons) in business & economic news and their share of employment in professional, technical, & managerial occupations
India	6.0	–	–
Niger	2.5	–	–
Angola	0.0	–	–
Benin	0.0	–	–
Cameroon	0.0	–	–
Equatorial Guinea	0.0	–	–
Guinea	0.0	–	–
Kosovo	0.0	–	–
Papua New Guinea	0.0	–	–
Sierra Leone	0.0	–	–
South Sudan	0.0	–	–
Sudan	0.0	–	–
Uzbekistan	0.0	–	–
Morocco	30.0	31.8	-1.8
Bangladesh	12.6	15.1	-2.5
Barbados	50.0	53.6	-3.6
United Arab Emirates	14.3	19.3	-5.0
Tunisia	28.1	33.2	-5.0
South Korea	24.5	35.0	-10.4
Uganda	29.2	39.9	-10.7
Pakistan	0.0	10.8	-10.8
United States of America	38.3	50.9	-12.6
Cambodia	15.4	28.5	-13.1
Brazil	33.0	47.5	-14.5
Nepal	8.8	23.7	-14.8
Guatemala	21.9	36.9	-14.9
Mauritius	23.0	39.1	-16.0
Thailand	25.1	41.9	-16.8

Table 8.9 Cont.

Country	Women's share as authority voices (experts & spokespersons) in business & economic news	Women's employment in professional, technical, & managerial occupations	Difference between women's share as authority voices (experts & spokespersons) in business & economic news and their share of employment in professional, technical, & managerial occupations
Cuba	21.2	38.1	-16.9
Ghana	21.3	39.1	-17.7
Zimbabwe	24.6	42.6	-18.0
Haiti	16.1	35.0	-18.8
Ireland	25.3	44.5	-19.3
Serbia	32.4	52.1	-19.8
Sweden	29.0	48.8	-19.8
Turkey	4.2	24.6	-20.4
Costa Rica	21.1	41.6	-20.5
Egypt	4.5	25.3	-20.7
Japan	13.5	34.7	-21.2
Colombia	23.8	45.3	-21.5
United Kingdom	22.0	43.5	-21.5
El Salvador	23.5	45.2	-21.7
Chile	22.0	44.0	-22.0
South Africa	22.5	44.6	-22.1
Czech Republic	26.3	48.6	-22.3
Croatia	24.9	47.3	-22.4
Azerbaijan	25.0	47.6	-22.6
Ethiopia	5.3	28.8	-23.5
Poland	31.4	55.3	-23.9
Norway	22.8	47.1	-24.3
Denmark	24.1	48.9	-24.8
Argentina	24.4	49.4	-25.0
Finland	24.2	49.4	-25.2
Peru	17.6	43.4	-25.8
Mexico	14.3	40.7	-26.3
Belgium	18.4	45.1	-26.8

Table 8.9 Cont.

Country	Women's share as authority voices (experts & spokespersons) in business & economic news	Women's employment in professional, technical, & managerial occupations	Difference between women's share as authority voices (experts & spokespersons) in business & economic news and their share of employment in professional, technical, & managerial occupations
Israel	21.1	48.7	-27.6
AVERAGE	16.3	44.5	-28.2
Greece	14.4	42.8	-28.3
Paraguay	17.8	47.1	-29.3
Germany	18.2	47.9	-29.7
Australia	18.3	48.2	-30.0
Tanzania	8.4	38.5	-30.1
Switzerland	13.0	43.7	-30.7
France	15.7	46.4	-30.7
Nicaragua	18.4	49.1	-30.7
Portugal	15.4	46.6	-31.2
China	12.6	43.8	-31.2
Netherlands	12.6	44.0	-31.4
Estonia	25.8	57.3	-31.5
Belize	16.9	48.5	-31.6
Austria	12.8	44.5	-31.7
Malaysia	5.7	37.6	-31.9
New Zealand	16.7	48.8	-32.0
Suriname	22.6	54.7	-32.1
Bhutan	0.0	32.6	-32.6
Malta	2.5	35.6	-33.1
Puerto Rico	20.7	53.9	-33.2
Iceland	19.1	52.4	-33.3
Lebanon	0.0	33.4	-33.4
Spain	11.3	44.8	-33.5
Botswana	12.5	47.7	-35.2
Montenegro	13.9	49.9	-35.9
Palestine, State of	0.0	36.2	-36.2

Table 8.9 Cont.

Country	Women's share as authority voices (experts & spokespersons) in business & economic news	Women's employment in professional, technical, & managerial occupations	Difference between women's share as authority voices (experts & spokespersons) in business & economic news and their share of employment in professional, technical, & managerial occupations
Luxembourg	9.1	45.5	-36.4
Canada	15.4	51.9	-36.5
Ecuador	8.8	46.4	-37.6
Trinidad and Tobago	11.1	49.7	-38.6
Dominican Republic	10.8	49.5	-38.7
Bosnia and Herzegovina	8.8	47.7	-38.9
Philippines	18.7	58.7	-40.0
Cyprus	5.0	45.2	-40.2
Uruguay	9.7	50.2	-40.5
Italy	2.8	43.3	-40.5
Bolivia	0.0	41.4	-41.4
Namibia	10.7	52.3	-41.6
Hungary	13.4	55.2	-41.8
Romania	11.4	53.5	-42.1
Madagascar	0.0	42.4	-42.4
Mongolia	14.9	57.5	-42.6
Jamaica	15.8	58.5	-42.7
Belarus	19.0	63.3	-44.2
Georgia	10.2	56.9	-46.6
Venezuela	7.6	59.1	-51.6
Kyrgyzstan	4.8	59.3	-54.5

The project Comparing Gender and Media Equality across the Globe has been funded by the Swedish Research Council (2016–2020) and is based at the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication (JMG) at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. The GEM dataset and its codebook are free to use and can be downloaded in various formats. For access, contact JMG. Please ensure that proper attribution is given when citing the dataset.

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The lack of women's voices, status, and recognition in the news media is a challenge to both human rights and a sustainable future. *Comparing Gender and Media Equality across the Globe* addresses longstanding questions in the study of gender equality in media content and media organisations across countries and over time. Drawing on data from the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), and the International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF), this book offers new insights into the qualities, causes, and consequences of gender equality in and through the news media. The book contributes to the critical discussion on gender and journalism, showing that the news media do not reflect reality when it comes to the actual progress of gender equality in societies across the globe. The study aims to inspire future research by making existing data on gender and news media equality available to the global research community. The book presents the GEM-dataset, comprising hundreds of indicators on media and gender equality, and the GEM-Index, an easy to use measure to keep track of key aspects of gender equality in television, radio, newspapers, and online.

"A trailblazing collection of high-quality studies from leading researchers all around the world. This splendidly edited book meets the great need for a comparative analysis of gender equality in and through news media in different regions. It is unique, full of useful empirical evidence, new insights, and reflections. This should without a doubt be required reading for anyone dealing with this issue – not least from the perspective of Agenda 2030".

Professor **Ulla Carlsson**, UNESCO Chair on Freedom of Expression, Media Development and Global Policy at the University of Gothenburg



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