

Comparing gender and media equality across the globe

Understanding the qualities, causes, and consequences

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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-

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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.

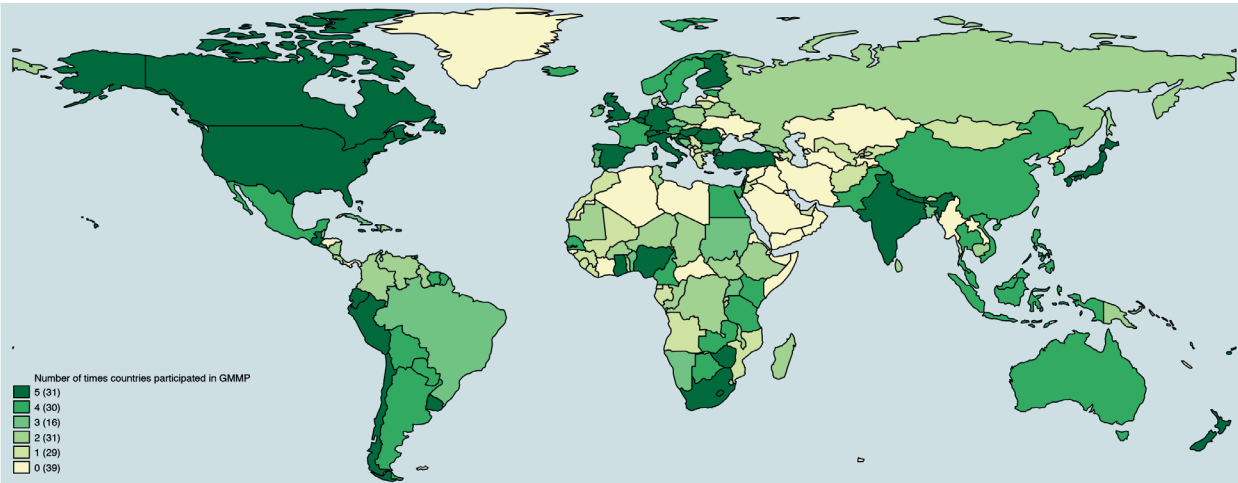
Since GMMP only surveys one day of news in each country, we suspected the measures to be quite volatile and susceptible to chance, swayed by the specific circumstances happening in the world or in the country on that particular day. On the other hand, the gender representation observed in the GMMP data 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, IWMF, 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, IWMP, 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).

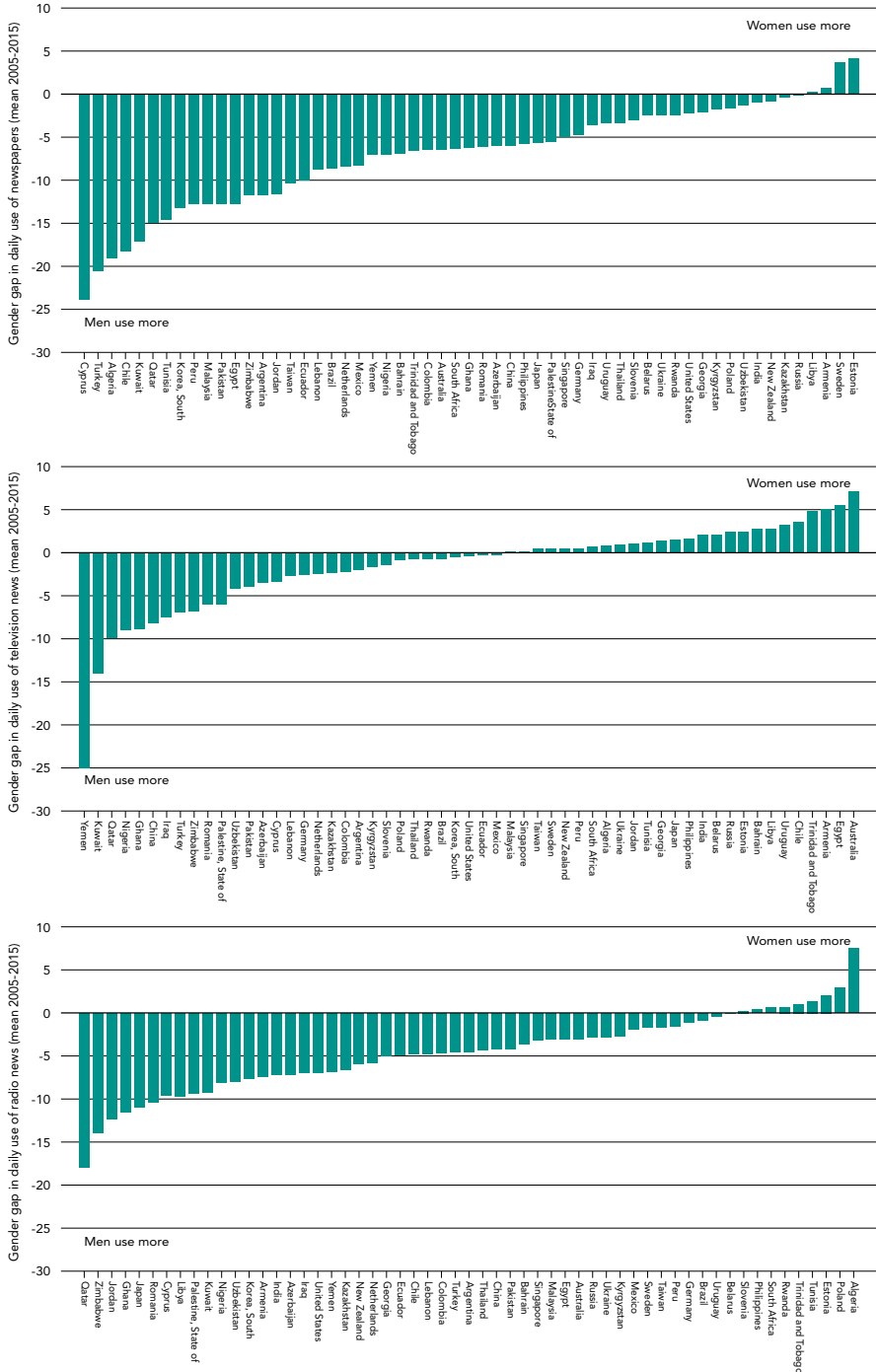
Appendix 1.2 Gender equality in media access and use

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.

Comparing gender and media equality across the globe: Appendix

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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