We are very pleased that that the Council of the European Union adopted the indicators we developed in June 2013[5] although what will happen next is hard to predict. Women are mostly overlooked for promotion for reasons other than their competence, including their gender (discrimination on grounds of sex) and their (in)flexibility to take on new opportunities because of their domestic and/or family responsibilities (discrimination on grounds of family or caring role). Sometimes women do choose to prioritise family over career but this is often because workplace cultures make it impossible to achieve a work-life balance which benefits both the individual and the employer. Much of the literature on gender and media makes clear, as did the senior women media professionals interviewed for this study, that the cultural context in which women (and men) work is both part of the problem but could also be a large part of the solution, so that encouraging senior managers to take gender equality seriously is good for employees and, as recent studies on boardroom performance show, good for business.[6]

1 The data presented here were collected in 2012/2013 as part of the Study on Area J of the Beijing Platform for Action: Women and the Media in the European Union carried out for the European Institute for Gender Equality under contract EIGE/2012/OPER/07. The views presented here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinion or position of the European Institute for Gender Equality.

2 See for example, EFJ, IFJ, EWL; European Commission Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, 2010. Opinion on "Breaking gender stereotypes in the media", Brussels: European Commission.; The Council of Europe's latest report, Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men, 2011. Women and Journalists First. Geneva: CDEG.

3 There are 39 public sector organisations here because some countries disaggregate TV from radio and also because Belgium has two public sector organisations who broadcast in French and Flemish respectively.

4 See Gorpe, S., Petersone, B. and Walker, G., 2012. Feminisation of the Public Relations/Communications Profession in Europe: Initial Findings: Where Are Women in Public Relations Academia and in the Professional World?. EUPRERA conference, Istanbul, Turkey September 2012.

5 See Council of the European Union Conclusions of 20-21 June 2013 on Advancing Women's Roles in Decision-making in the Media [online] Available at: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/137546.pdf>.

6 Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2011. Women on Boards. London: BiS.; Committee for Economic Development, 2012. Fulfilling the Promise: How More Women on Corporate Boards Would Make America and American Companies More Competitive. Washington DC: CED.; McKinsey & Company, 2012. Women Matter 2012: Making the Breakthrough, McKinsey & Co. Available at: <http://www.mckinsey.com/client_service/organization/latest_thinking/women_matter> [Accessed 15 November 2012]

Gender and newsroom cultures

Marjan de Bruin

Introduction

The theme of this chapter, gender and newsroom cultures, represents a field of inquiry that has been the topic of academic interrogation for several decades. Specific references to 'gender,' however, only started to occur in the 1980s. Prior to that, descriptions of newsroom practices mostly referred to 'men' or did not pay any attention to the sex and gender of newsroom workers at all.

During this time academic interests shifted from a mainly descriptive level – taking stock of women's portrayal in media (through a stream of content analyses) and recording women's newsroom presence (through a steady series of employment figures) – to a more analytical level of trying to understand the newsroom dynamics and identifying strategies for change. This process is still ongoing but seems to face the same challenges that were around decades ago: 'Disappointingly, despite women's greater presence in newsrooms, the landscape of news has changed very little over the past decade' (Ross and Carter, 2011, p. 1161). Women 'still tend to lag behind in terms of career progression and salary […] there are still very few women in senior positions within news organizations' (Ross and Carter, 2011, p. 1161).

Time to step back and raise some questions: What evidence have we collected? How have we used it? What assumptions have we been making? Which blinkers have we perhaps worn? Has our terminology been clear? Part of the answers to these questions can be found by analysing the major debates and research – which is what I will try to do in the first part of this chapter.

This chapter starts with a description of the conceptual development of studies of newsroom practices over the last 60 years as they have been demonstrated in academic publications; it excludes personal testimonies by early female pioneers. It will try to identify the assumptions, sometimes implicit, that underlie the concepts researchers have worked with.

My concluding remarks will try to spot where the challenges ahead of us lie, and whether region-specific social, cultural and political contexts may present us with such different realities and concerns that priority setting for newsrooms and gender cannot be generalised.

'Gender-neutral' newsrooms

When studies on newsrooms started to be published with some regularity, in the early 1950s and throughout the 1960s, the possible differences between men and women in newsroom production were not recognised as issues deserving any attention – if they were noticed at all. Most research was focused on individual behaviour of newsroom workers and the interpersonal or group dynamics between them, without disaggregating data with regards to sex. White's (1950) classic gatekeepers' study on 'Mr. Gates', for instance, identified the influence of personal and idiosyncratic biases in news selection, but it took more than 40 years before the female equivalent of the study – Ms. Gates – was conducted (Bleske, 1991). When Breed (1955) described how social control in the newsroom could work as a possible force in conforming to corporate norms, there was no recognition of the fact that, compared to men, pressures on women would most likely have been of a different nature and quality. Gieber's (1956) study on decision-making in news selection was based on interviewing 16 individual 'desk men' without mentioning anywhere that this one-sided sample composition may have been a limitation. Newsroom workers and professionals were treated as 'sex neutral' while 'gender' had yet to emerge in media studies – or in any other discipline for that matter – as a useful concept.

Although in the late 1950s and 1960s analyses of newsroom practices and media organisations in the USA and Europe began to include issues of power and control as influential factors (Pool and Schulman, 1959; Flegel and Chaffee, 1971), the idea that male and female experiences of power and control may be vastly different had not entered the discussion. A search for 'women and news' in JSTOR, EBSCOHOST: Academic Search Complete, EBSCOHOST: MasterFILE Premier, SagePub for the 1960-1970 period hardly leads to any substantial publication.

During these decades, the organisational context of newsroom work seemed to be perceived as 'neutral' space: power disparities between professionals were seen as a structural 'given' – the logical result of different positions in an organisational hierarchy.

The actual complexity of newsroom dynamics, however, began to be recognised in the early 1970s, when media organisation starts to be perceived as a domain in which occupational behaviour, professional beliefs and organisational values merge, opening the door to potential tensions and conflicts (Tunstall, 1971; Epstein, 1973; Sigal, 1973; Sigelman, 1973). Gender, however, is left out of the equation.

At a different level, and with a different scope, Stuart Hall's (1973) critical thinking, new to media and communication studies, was adding a new dimension by pointing out the ideological common ground of, and the institutional connections between, media organisations and structures of power – working 'under the condition of democratic capitalism' (Elliot, 1977, p.164).

Gender recognised

Feminist media criticism had already identified other 'structures of power' by pointing at the potentially negative effects of gender stereotyping in media content – especially popular culture – which would enforce and normalize male-focused cultural values. In the US, their fight against objectionable media content started to get attention in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when feminist activists and like-minded female media workers invaded the office of the editor and publisher of Ladies Home Journal, confronted the editors of other women magazines with their complaints and challenged employment barriers through legal action (Beasley and Gibbons, 1975).

In the English-speaking Caribbean media activism started a little later. Most English-speaking countries gained their independence during the 1960s and 1970s and national political priorities and energies were primarily focused on development. In addition, until the late 1980s, the Caribbean media landscape was not heavily populated. Many media were government-owned and substantial media expansion would only start to take place in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Prior to 1994, 'hardly anything was documented systematically on the position of women in Caribbean media, their influence or lack of influence, their power or lack of power' (De Bruin, 1994, p.6). The little information that was available at that time was either not known or not easily accessible from within the Caribbean – a well-known phenomenon in externally funded regions where contracts for researchers from outside the region are part and parcel of the grants package.

The 1994 study on Women and Caribbean Media was one of the first, in the Caribbean region, to spot the trends: 'Although the increasing numbers of women in media organizations is closing the numerical gap between male and female, the changes follow a well known pattern: most women are concentrated in the lower echelons. They seem to be moving gradually into leading positions, but they are still under-represented in middle management and especially in senior management' (De Bruin, 1994, p.70). After 2002 no other systematic studies on gender patterns in employment in Caribbean media were undertaken, but anecdotal evidence suggests no groundbreaking changes.

The portrayal of women in the Caribbean media, however, has since the early 1980s been a topic of attention at several regional and national meetings throughout the region – perhaps too often with promises and recommendations that did not get follow-up or implementation (De Bruin, 1994, pp.12,13).

Internationally, however, trivialisation and sex-role stereotyping in media content had been placed high on the political agenda. The 1975 Mexico Conference for the First UN Decade for Women defined this as one of its major concerns, together with women's underrepresentation in the news as well as in decision-making positions in media organisations (UNESCO, 1980).

This political and global recognition may have encouraged the productive response of academics, mostly women, many of them self-defined feminist scholars, in the more well-resourced regions of the world, turning out a stream of – usually small – studies (small scale surveys, case studies, qualitative work), published in the late 1970s and 1980s, on 'familiar' questions but now from a 'differentiated' perspective. The variation of topics, adding to basic knowledge on everyday professional life of women in media, or women in journalism, showed how much had had to be caught up with: women's positions and occupational roles in media organisations; their role as professionals in news production; whether 'sex' made a difference in the final product (Merritt and Gross, 1978); whether they would different 'gatekeepers' selecting different aspects; whether their job satisfaction would be determined by different factors (Barrett, 1984); whether they would experience specific career barriers (Ferri and Keller, 1986); whether they would respond differently to news stories of women (Scott Whitlow, 1977); whether they would, in managerial positions, set different goals and achievement orientations (Sohn, 1984); and so on.

In the early 1980s Gallagher (1981, p.106) captured the then key questions: 'What is the impact of the images of women found in the world's media on the formation of attitudes and perception in both women and men? And, what is the impact of media women themselves on the production of these images?' 'She found evidence of the impact of media imagery of women to be 'fairly well established'; for instance, 'sex-stereotyped content leads children to describe women's roles in traditional ways' (Gallagher, 1981, p.107). It was a position that, years later, would be considered to be much more controversial, when audience studies suggested that media impact on kids had everything to do with parental guidance and direction. For the proposition that an increasing number of media women would be able to change media content, Gallagher (1981, p.108) 'found little evidence'.

The major themes that emerged in the early 1990s suggested a few crucial areas in need of understanding and change: the portrayal of women in media content; women's limited share of media ownership and control, and imbalanced gender patterns in media employment. The stream of mainly descriptive 'number' studies, coming from local and regional initiatives, produced data scattered across countries and continents, making it difficult to draw comparisons. It was a strategic step forward when Gallagher and Von Euler (1995), working with not easily comparable data and with certain regions over-represented (e.g. Europe) and others totally absent, managed to put together a global standard reference book. It then became also empirically obvious that in most cases women formed only a minority in the media workforce (especially news organisations); they were a minor fraction in middle management and seriously under-represented at senior levels of decision-making.

The 'body count approach' (De Bruin, 1998) of descriptive research, used for establishing gender employment patterns (see Burks and Stone, 1993; De Bruin, 1994; Gallagher and Quindoza-Santiago, 1994; Jimenez-David, 1996; Mills, 1997; Weaver, 1997; Weaver and Wilhoit, 1996; Robinson and Saint-Jean, 1998) conceptualised – often implicitly – 'gender' in media organisations as a 'fixed attribute' within the organisation – in line with how organisational studies in general, at the time, neglected gender aspects (Alvesson and Billing, 1997; Halford et al., 1997; Martin and Collinson, 1999).

Although providing badly needed baseline information, 'the body count' had a major limitation: by treating gender as a fixed organisational attribute, the 'relational quality' of gender – constructed through interpersonal processes and wider social expectations – was ruled out. There was little or no attention to the interactions between gender and other variables that determined newsroom culture and behaviour. Van Zoonen (1994, p.55) had found only 'very few studies' that examined the interaction of gender with organisational variables and Carter et al. (1998, p.3) added that the politics of gender in media organisations, that is, 'how gender relationships shape (journalism's) forms, practices, institutions and audiences […] deserve more critical attention than they have typically received to date'.

The field, however, over the last ten, fifteen years, has tried to catch up with these gaps. Starting in the late 1990s and continuing through the first decade of the new century it has convincingly gone 'beyond the body count' by defining and exploring 'the gendered substructures in media organizations' (Allan, 1998; Carter, 1998; Kitzinger, 1998: Skidmore, 1998; Steiner, 1998; Van Zoonen, 1998; Djerf-Pierre, 2005; Ross, 2004; Melin-Higgins, 2004; Opoku-Mensah, 2004; Joseph, 2004).

The emphasis on 'gendered substructures', embedded in newsroom practices (e.g. male preferences setting the agenda for news selection; the typical male/female division of labour in the beat allocation), offered a 'mer à boire' when choosing starting points for analysis. Common agreement seemed to have been that 'male dominance in the newsroom' allowed male values and judgment to determine – and bias – professional output. Some authors pointed at the macho norms for professional news gathering (Skidmore, 1998), others suggested that journalism and femininity – read professionalism and gender – did not go together or described subtle processes 'such as the selective privileging of "masculine" over "feminine" discourses and ways of knowing' (Kitzinger, 1998, p.187). A similar mechanism, but then relating to media theories, was introduced by Rush (2011, p. 271), who referred to 'the male-implanted hypotheses such as agenda-setting or media-dependency'.

The debates on the 'gendered' substructures have not been without conceptual challenges. Publications refer to 'gender orientation in journalism' or 'gendered professionalism' (Van Zoonen, 1998, pp.35,36); 'gendered professional practices in the newsroom' (Skidmore, 1998, p.208); 'gendered substructures' (Allan, 1998; Carter, 1998; Kitzinger, 1998; Steiner, 1998); 'gendered media elites' (Djerf-Pierre, 2005); 'gendered newsrooms' (Hardin and Whiteside, 2009); 'gendered narratives' in which 'gender' is not always clearly defined and mostly used interchangeably with 'women' or 'women and men.' De Bruin (2000a, p.229) suggested that the shifting balances between organisational and journalistic interests may be leading to 'merging identities' in which what journalists present to be a unique professional ideology 'may very well be a proxy for organizational values with which they identify – organizational identity in disguise'.

Where in earlier studies the emphasis had been more on employment figures, tasks and job descriptions, this new approach recognised how 'cultural interpretations of every day work, actions and language, as feminine or masculine' contributed to structuring relations in the newsroom (De Bruin, 2004, p.1).

Where have we reached and which questions do we face?

The Global Media Monitoring Project 2010 indicates that, after fifteen years of monitoring twice each decade, 'despite a slow but overall steady increase in women's presence in the news over the past 10 years, the world depicted in the news remains predominantly male' (WACC, 2010, p.vii). Women's 'inclusion in the media agenda as news subjects, newsmakers and new producers is still significantly below that of men'(Ross and Carter, 2011, p.1149). The suggestion that new, social media may offer new opportunities for agency, away from old structures, does not find general agreement. A change of medium does not necessarily alter suppressing gender relations and still needs to be interrogated using the familiar questions (Byerly and Ross, 2006; Ross, 2010).

The Caribbean data from the Global Media Monitoring Project are not essentially different: women are still underrepresented in the news, and 'imbalanced representations of women and men in the media perpetuate stereotypes […] form the basis of gender-based discrimination in every day situations' (WACC, 2010, p.4).

These observations leave us puzzled, after decades of study and activism. How adequate have our strategies been? What was missing in our analysis? Should we have another look at the perspective or conceptual framework(s) that we are using? The complexity of the newsroom, with many determining factors shaping journalistic behaviour, does not make it easy to identify single points of entry for change.

If we focus on '"masculine" norms and values of journalistic practice' which 'masquerade as professional routine to which all journalists are expected to subscribe' (Ross and Carter, 2011, p.1149), we leave out the many other factors that determine journalistic routines. Earlier scholars pointed at a dominating organisational interest, stating that occupational ideals serve what suits the organisational structure (Elliot, 1977); professionalism serves organizational interest (Tuchman, 1978) and a certain organizational space will allow professional behaviour (Beam, 1990) – all suggesting that professional routines could be seen as organisational imperatives in disguise (De Bruin, 2000a). Organisational imperatives by themselves could be 'fed' by 'masculine' norms and values.

In addition, the descriptions of practices and discourses in research reports do not seem to have led to new coherent conceptual frameworks. Some fundamental conceptual questions are still up for debate – a debate that may have to be held at the regional level, with region-specific social, cultural and political contexts presenting specific realities and concerns determining our priorities.

A good example may be the Caribbean where in many of the English-speaking countries 'accepted' gender norms are strongly hetero-normative with a heavy emphasis on 'macho behaviour' for men and little tolerance for deviations. Jamaica, over the last few years, has seen extremes of life threatening sanctions by out of control crowds to visible variations of this standard norm for men. Those who do not fit the stereotypical – and suppressing – gender norms for male and female behaviour have become a public category: 'the gays'. Media portrayal of this group has been unacceptably rigid, sensational, offensive and dangerous; including in one broad sweep all persons that would identify, openly or not, as for instance, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Against this background, 'gender justice' in media – related to portrayal or otherwise – cannot be equated with gender justice concerning women only.

This confronts us with a major challenge – signalled in earlier literature (Creedon, 1993, Rakow, 1992; Valdivia, 1995) but still unresolved – to think 'beyond binary contradictions and Into Multicultural Spectrums' (Valdivia, 1995, p.7). Especially when 'media portrayal of gender […] should be of concern to anyone intent to see the emergence of less discriminatory, more inclusive and equitable societies' (WACC, 2010, p.x).

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Scheherezades: a thousand and one stories of women in community radio

María Eugenia Chávez

Community radios are rich with stories of women. All of these tales could fill hours and hours of broadcasts and women's voices would be the conduit for bringing these talking stories to life. Thus, it would be a radio broadcast story about women and radio. Just imagine. I am imagining it as I write this. I can hear the strong, precise words of Doreen in Nairobi, her steady voice telling us about the work of Pamoja FM with youth in the settlements of Kibera, one of the poorest places lacking services in a site considered to be Africa's New York. On the other hand, from Fiji comes Sharon's soft voice telling stories of young women who travel from one island to the next with a suitcase containing a small radio transmitter and who help island women launch their voices over the radio to share how they are participating in democratising their communities or how they address water issues.

Listening to and reading about the role that women play with radio stations would lead us to publish book after book, all of which would captivate us with the richness of their stories, the diversity of voices, the cre-ation of spoken landscapes that would help us leap from Africa to the Fiji Islands, to Kathmandu in Nepal or Matagalpa in Nicaragua, or even to the Alps in Europe. Collecting stories about community radio broad-casting in which women are the protagonists is a pending task that those of us working in this field should no longer dodge or delay further. I am absolutely sure that this will be an interesting, enjoyable way to learn about the influence women play in community-based media, 'to get to the meat of things', as we say in my country. Better yet, we could gather this information through the voices of the protagonists themselves and the sounds in their local contexts. We need to tell these stories in the way that radio broadcasters do: with the mike out and ready to produce radio. Although it may seem like a titanic task, this process will help us to take one another into account as female community radio broadcasters, to get to know one another, to identify who we are and where we are coming from and to learn about the situations and problems we face as we exercise our freedom of expression. It will also help us to take account of and have evidence of how much we help other women to have access to information.

If we start by recognising that community radios exist in 120 countries around the world and that women participate in every one of them, situating the gender and development social agenda in their program-ming, then we can begin to grasp the dimension of the efforts needed to systematise information that will help us build a stage for enacting the topic of 'women & gender in community radio'. Addressing this topic appears to be an immeasurable task but not an impossible one. Progress will depend upon the attention that governments, non-governmental organisations, researchers and international organisations decide to and are capable of dedicating to these issues. Seeking to sound out this issue and most definitely running the risk of putting many governments on the spot, international bodies like UNESCO, through the International Programme for the Development of Communication, could request available information from many different governments about the participation of women in community radio.

Some information about women's participation is very likely to be available in states in which legislation recognises a citizen's right to operate his or her own communication media, in countries where community radios exist grounded in a community's rights to exercise freedom of expression.

The information that the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) has concerning its members is not conclusive and has not been verified or updated. However, we can use the lists of voting mem-bers by continent, which include the names of the people who run each radio station or production group. We share some figures here seeking to establish a single indicator from the many that community radios should set in order to monitor gender mainstreaming. This indicator is numerical and only shows how many commu-nity broadcasting entities are run by women, according to this international network's membership roll.

AMARC states that it brings together a network of more than 4,000 community radio stations, federations and allies of community radio in over 130 countries. The following data only considers voting members. We have counted a total of 1,780, 397 of which are run by women; this means that approximately one in five radios is run by a woman.