


# Chapter 20

## Conclusion: Fostering Gender Equality and Safety in Journalism Profession

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### ABSTRACT

*Journalism is a two-faced mirror that both generates and reflects social inequalities: Both people's experiences within news organizations and the content published by them make the gender inequality visible. We can define journalism, just like all other patriarchal institutions, as an institution that generates gender inequality. In order to get a clear understanding of this problem, we have to address the actors, means, processes and conditions that generate this inequality in journalism first, and then we may suggest solutions based on real-life cases. Indeed, knowledge building is, as always, a priority in order to make working conditions safer for women and LGBT journalists. This chapter aims to support the struggle for gender equality in journalism within this context.*

### INTRODUCTION

Journalism is a two-faced mirror that both generates and reflects social inequalities: Both people's experiences within news organizations and the content published by them make the gender inequality visible. We can define journalism, just like all other patriarchal institutions, as an institution that generates gender inequality (Ruoho & Sinikka, 2018). In order to get a clear understanding of this problem, we have to address the actors, means, processes and conditions that generate this inequality in journalism first, and then we may suggest solutions based on real-life cases. Indeed, knowledge building is, as always, a priority in order to make working conditions safer for women and LGBT journalists. This book aims to support the struggle for gender equality in journalism within this context.

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## **Conclusion**

The chapters in this book presents studies on gender inequality in countries that are disadvantaged compared to Western democracies in terms of major indicators such as economic welfare, political and social equality and justice, and it doesn't paint a hopeful picture. Cases that demonstrate the direct relationship between unequal development (Amin, 1979) and gender inequality emphasize and render the necessity of current rights-based movements throughout the world (Sweetman, 2013). In fact, these struggles are also widespread in the developed world, where the patriarchy, although a softened version, still persists. However, we must underline that the struggle is much harsher and sharper in many of the countries addressed in this book. And obviously, the media is one of the main battlefields of this fight. Particularly, media activism focused on gender equality is pretty widespread around the world, and it is highly critical in the identification and solution of problems (Minic, 2007).

All social movements struggling for rights try to make themselves heard and be the voice of the voiceless through public, commercial and alternative media channels, in addition to their own movement media. The issue of gender equality is like a litmus paper of the struggle for media democracy. The struggles and successes achieved for equal employment of women and LGBTs in the media industry, their inclusion in the decision making mechanisms and the replacement of patriarchal language with the gender-neutral language indicate to the degree the media is and can be open to change, democratic and heterogeneous. In this regard, the struggle for criticizing the patriarchal structure of media institutions and for their reorganization in terms of gender equality is one of the first steps in transforming the media to be participatory and democratic. The radical metamorphosis of the media's inner structure in terms of gender equality will also lead to the elimination of inequality-generating forms of media language and content. In a sense, the rejection and abolition of patriarchy in media ownership structure, organizational relations and contents would be the reflection of a larger scale of democratic participation on the media platform.

However, we have to reaccent that the media, and especially the field of journalism is very much gendered (Melin, 2008). All case studies suggest that it is impossible to democratize the process and media content without ending this patriarchy in media. Beyond the discussion of media democracy, the environment of male violence created and nurtured by the patriarchal governments is a very serious safety issue for women, LGBT and also male journalists who reject male domination, including their life safety. In addition, it is necessary to reveal and classify the patriarchal codes of media managers that cause direct or indirect, explicit or implicit contributions to discrimination. These discriminative acts that mainly applied in the name of professional norms and codes might easily lead to threats to safety (Torkkola & Ruoho, 2009). In this regard, the identification of safety issues caused by the media's own internal structure is one of the high-priority tasks at hand. Then, the professional safety issues experienced by women and LGBT media employees, especially by reporters, have to be made visible and categorized. It is apparent that women and LGBT journalists experience different and more intense safety risks in both offline and online media environments. The main obstacle before the solution of this problem (and many similar ones) is the fact that journalism is defined as a "male occupation" and that any and all approaches that do not perpetuate male dominance are perceived as threats in the current journalism environment.

Our actual aim when deciding to create this reader was to address gender inequality not only in terms of feminism, but within the framework of LGBT studies and critical masculinity studies as well. However, in our self-critique as editors, we can state that we could not adequately focus the researchers who contributed to this book. In the past, there was a saying: "the woman has no name." After many years of difficult struggles against male domination, this expression is no longer valid (Claudia et al., 2018). The

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