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7 FRANCE: One is not born a female CEO and... won't become one!

Laetitia Biscarrat, Marlène Coulomb-Gully, Cécile Méadel

Abstract

Nowadays, focusing on women and the media turns out to be a structured field of investigation. We have recurrently monitored, among others, the number of female journalists, the role given to female experts and media representations of gendered activities. These studies rely on quantitative methods, including international comparisons (see for instance the Global Media Monitoring Project). This chapter, focusing on the French national context, deals with a different approach. It aims at studying the gendered division of media practitioners, more specifically of those occupying decision-making positions. Most of the time, the study of media practitioners and broadcasters is simply considered as an explanatory variable. Few research monographs are dedicated to the topic. On the contrary, our goal is to highlight media organizations as the very subject of this research. We build upon the French component of Women and Media Industries in Europe Project which monitored the place of women in the decision-making process and make comparisons through the sample of media organizations from 28 European countries. Not only does the study highlight the place of women in media hierarchies, but it also analyses the mechanisms and apparatus aiming at monitoring, encouraging and enhancing equality policies. This chapter lays the emphasis on three items: first, we present the French results in comparison to other countries; then we examine methodological points at the crossroads of a quantitative analysis of women at decision-making levels and of the policies developed on three levels (media industries, media area and national context); finally, we interrogate the link between the low number of women at high levels of decision-making in media industries and media contents. Indeed, media contents are characterized by both a low presence of women (from a quantitative viewpoint) and stereotypical representations (from a qualitative perspective). Though this link is implicitly assumed, it lacks a straightforward focus to clarify the connection, whose danger relies on a tendency to naturalize gender norms.

Introduction

In France, the issue of gender equality is intimately linked to what we usually designate as the foundation of our Republican ideal, in other words 'French Universalism'. Considering that all men are born naturally equal, it establishes the principle of equality between citizens. The latter are considered as 'abstract' individuals who define themselves out of any racial, ethnic or religious identity. These natural and inalienable rights of men are expressed in the first article of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789): "Men are born and remain free and equal in rights". Almost two centuries later, this milestone document has inspired the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948. The French Revolution triggered slave uprisings and gave more freedom to Jews and Protestants but it forgot women. This Revolution remained unachieved as it laid the grounds for an 'exclusive' democracy (Fraisie 1989). Women did not obtain their full citizenship until they were given the right to vote in 1944, which occurred later compared to many others European countries. Besides, though women are potentially eligible candidates, in fact they are rarely elected, even if the Parity Act (June 6, 2000) tried to rectify the situation. Analysing the debate triggered by this law is relevant to discussing the impact and ideology of gender equality in the French society.

In the 1990s, the draft Parity Bill turned into a controversial issue between the views of republican universalism and feminist claims. We can encapsulate this debate into a unique question: to what extent can we consider female citizens differently, precisely because they are women? It overcame the current issues between essentialism and universalism as feminists from both sides, as well as politicians from left to right, were highly divided between the pros and cons, hence blurring the traditional lines of controversy. The Gender Parity legislation was eventually passed in 2000. It states that all political parties should include equal numbers of men and women on party lists, in order to promote equal access by women and men to elective offices and posts. Besides, the law implies a change in the Constitution: "Though minimalist, this revision marks a symbolic rupture with the republican tradition as the abstract sovereign state is replaced by a dualistic gendered order". (Sineau 2006: 852) Eventually, the strength of the public debate around the Parity law (Julliard 2012) enabled many citizens to reflect on gender equality, a central issue which had been previously confined to specialised spheres.

We can say that France was late to enforce gender equality policies, due to the national context of republican universalism and patriarchal tradition. Its outcome was triggered on one side by international bodies such as the United Nations, Council of Europe, European Parliament, European Court of Human Rights and on the other side, by the impulse of feminist

movements. Networks and NGO such as La meute des chiennes de garde¹ are very attuned to recognising sexism in the media, especially in advertising. For example, they delivered the Prize Macho and the Prize Femino which respectively rewarded the sexiest and most positive image of women in advertising. Besides, journalists' unions such as the AFJ (Association des Femmes Journalistes) [Union of Female Journalists] or the recent initiative Prenons la Une [Let's Take the Front Page], both campaign for more equality both in media organizations and media contents.

Equality between men and women in media organizations falls under employment law and there is a broad legal apparatus in France. The first legislative measures taken in the 1970s have been reinforced by the 1983 law on professional gender equality, commonly named the Roudy Law after her initiator Yvette Roudy, which was itself strengthened by the Génisson Law of 2001. It encourages remedial efforts by means of affirmative actions for women. While other countries coordinate actions with unions and local committees, the French government takes a legislative approach to promoting gender equality. Since 2014, the Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel (CSA) [French Audiovisual Council]² has focused on the image of women in the media. The public service radio and television broadcasters had to make a commitment towards gender equality and from then on, the CSA [French Audiovisual Council] has looked at the low presence of female experts interviewed in the media as well as gender stereotypes in TV fiction. It also focused on the different representations of girls and boys in cartoons and animated series as well as raising the issue of the negative depiction of working women as failing in their personal and emotional lives. Lastly, the Haut Conseil à l'Égalité entre les Femmes et les Hommes (HCEFH) [Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men], an independent body directly linked to the Prime Minister, also tries to promote measures enforcing gender-equality in the media to the political agenda.

Because of the universalist tradition, Gender Studies has long been marginalized in France and only recently legitimised in the academic sphere (Braidotti et al. 2000; Coulomb-Gully 2009). Except for feminist pioneers' works on women's magazines (Sullerot 1966; Dardigna 1974), the gender and media field of research only started to develop in France in the 1990s. In the beginning, works dealt with media representations, mostly in the news but also in women's magazines and advertising (Darras 2004; Giet 2005). Political analysis is at the core of these studies (Bertini 2002; Desmarchelier, Rennes 2005; Fleury, Walter 2005) and very few studies focused on the audience (Debras 2003). In the second wave, some field work focused on women in media organizations, mostly in relation to journalism (Neveu 2000; Damian-

Gaillard, Frisque and Saïtta, 2010). Outside the academic sphere, committees aiming to promote gender equality and the State Secretariat for Women's Rights sponsored studies and official briefings (Secrétariat d'État aux droits des Femmes 2001; Secrétariat d'État à la Solidarité 2008).

Nowadays, in addition to the existing laws on gender equality, many individuals and committees - be they academics, activists, professional unions, state's committees, etc - are involved in the promotion of gender equality in the media. At this point, two factors should be noted. First, gender issues are now widely documented and companies with more than fifty employees must provide an annual comparative situation report (RSC) mapping female and male employment. It turns out to be an effective barometer to measure its evolution. As such, feminist networks strongly resented the Government's attempt to suppress this obligation in 2015. Moreover, the ministerial office in charge of the Rights of Women demands a bi-annual report on sexist stereotypes. Our second point is that mastering the workings of sexism reveals a lack of effectiveness from a practical viewpoint. Indeed, though some real progress has been made, both the vertical segregation (with the glass ceiling's effect) and the horizontal segregation (assigning women and men to different tasks) continue to characterize gender representations in media contents as well as to structure media organizations. To exemplify this phenomenon, we will focus in this article on the specificities of the French situation.

Survey findings

How do French women resist both vertical and horizontal segregation in media organizations? First, we want to emphasise the fact that the WIME survey is an unprecedented project in France. Indeed, most of the work that focuses on female employment deals with journalism instead of the gendered organisation of power structures. From the beginning of the twentieth century, there have been several women amongst famous journalists (Primi 2009). Nowadays, this feminisation of journalism is still working. In 2014, 46 percent of journalists were women, according to the French Committee in charge of delivering professional press cards (CCIJP January 2015). Yet, this rate remains low compared to the fact that women represent two thirds of students in journalism schools³ and is even worse as we shine a light on its evolution. The feminisation of journalism implies highly unequal treatment for women (Devillard 2006). Although they began work as journalists many years ago, women earn less money, they are less likely to sit on company boards, they occupy fewer permanent positions and they stay in the industry for less time than men: they need to be ever younger to be

considered for a job. They are also less likely to be working for the more prestigious or most lucrative media organisations. For instance, women represent 31 percent of journalists in private generalist channels whereas they constitute 56 percent working in public thematic channels (Observatoire des métiers de la presse 2013). They are also less likely than men to manage editorial boards. Across all the media we monitored, women accounted for 27 per cent of chief-editors and 33 percent of heads of departments were women. Last but not least, the gender pay gap is increasing with the rate of women in managing positions (+8 percent in ten years). According to the Observatoire des métiers de la presse [Press Career Observatory] (2013), men earned 553 euros more than women in 2013, while in 2000 the salary gap ranged around 483 euros. We are far from a situation of equal pay for equal work.

In 2006, the Gender Equality Law confirmed that the gender pay gap is illegal. Moreover, it is not specific to journalism but, on the contrary extends to the whole of the cultural industries sector as well as media organisations. In 2010, the average hourly wage for women working in the cultural sector (all areas combined: books, press, architecture, visual arts, etc.) is inferior to that of men. Sadly, this gender pay gap is extremely notable in private organisations where the discrepancy is around 20 percent compared with 8 percent in the public sector. It is also very important in the audiovisual area (-15%) (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication 2013).

The presence of women on boards of directors is even lower. In addition, France seems to have stood still since the 1995 survey directed by Margaret Gallagher, who wrote at the time that, “France is the only country in Western Europe where there are more than 20 percent of women with strategic roles in radio and television organizations”. She referred to women occupying positions in the higher spheres of organisations structures. Yet, she didn’t stop at the first obvious discrepancy and reminded us that women comprised seven percent of Trusteeship Councils positions and 16 percent of the Boards of Directors were women.

If we take a look at the current situation in relation to the findings for France from the WIME survey, we can say that women occupy less than 25 percent of senior management positions in the four organisations we surveyed, the private TV channel TF1, the public TV broadcaster France Télévisions, the public radio group Radio France and the private newspaper, *Aujourd’hui – Le Parisien*. Only the latter stands out, not least as it is a media organisation which is characterized by an equally-shared governance. It is also the only one of our sample companies which has a female head, Francine Amaury, who is the heiress of the group’s founding father. As for the public service broadcaster, it has signalled a willingness to promote

women so that in Radio France, there is strict gender equality between the direct collaborators of the (male) president. But this gender equality policy doesn't push forward further than this first level of management. Generally speaking, managers' positions remain mostly occupied by men and it is even worse at a local level: at the time of the survey, only one out of 40+ local public radio stations were managed by a woman, in that case, France Bleu Picardie. This paucity is not new. It was highlighted first by academics, then by politicians. For instance, six years before this survey, Michèle Reiser and Brigitte Grésy produced a report for the Government on gender and media which underlined the low presence and inferior status of women in the media as well as their absence in leader and manager functions.

In order to promote gender equality, public authorities mainly attempt to incentivise measures and good practice strategies. We can quote the former Observatoire de la parité [Parity Observatory], which became the Haut Conseil à l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes (HCEFH) [Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men], the Working Committee for the Rights of Women of the Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel (CSA) [French Audiovisual Council] and the mandatory reporting of gender indicators in publicly quoted companies. The media also established various initiatives to encourage gender equality. The local daily newspapers signed an agreement in 2010 to develop professional equality (Frisque 2014). While these measures blossom, well-worn issues remain for women in the media (and other mis-labeled 'minorities') such as the gender pay gap, the number of women in senior management committees and the impact of quotas.

As a matter of fact, we lack assessment of these measures once applied, be it in the private or the public sector. Statistics are uncommon, scattered and irregular. It proves difficult to measure career-paths as well as the place of women in media contents from a gender viewpoint. The Diversity Barometer of the CSA [French Audiovisual Council] epitomises this phenomenon. It was interrupted in its fourth edition after it simply proved that women were less present and less powerful than men on television and certainly much less well regarded than they are in real life. This lack of women's representation is all the more shameful because it feeds the erroneous (mis)judgments of professionals. As Margaret Gallagher highlighted twenty years ago in 1995, professionals in many industries believe that gender equality has been achieved and that in fact the balance of power has tipped the scales in favour of women, which is a recurrent, subjective over-estimation of the place of women in many sectors.

Media monitoring findings

While gender inequalities are still prevalent in French media organizations, what is at stake with media content? Media representations can be considered as objectified gender relationships (Macé 2006: 11). Indeed, their complex workings can be summarised as, “performative, constructivist and hyper-realistic”. (Coulomb-Gully and Méadel 2012: 26)

Over past years, the various monitoring projects triggered by NGOs and networks dealing with gender equality have highlighted the key problem women and men’s TV portrayal. The first Global Media Monitoring Project took place in 1995, prompted by the action required by Area J of the Beijing Platform for Action and the GMMP has been repeated every five years since then, providing an extensive analysis of news in relation to women’s presence compared to men, gender bias and stereotyping. At the national level, the CSA [French Audiovisual Council] provided an annual report about ‘diversity’, that is to say the visibility of minorities on television, from 2009 to 2013. In 2013, it launched a working committee dedicated to the Rights of Women and in 2014, the HCEFH [Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men] provided an analysis of gender in TV fiction to media organizations.

During the WIME monitoring week, we monitored two channels (TF1 and France 2) during prime-time evenings. These two generalist channels were selected on the basis of editorial and audience ratings criteria as well as being two of the oldest French TV channels. TF1 is a private commercial channel whereas France 2 is a public channel. In 2013, TF1 attracted 23 percent audience share while France 2 reached 22 percent, hence comforting their leadership in the ranking of French TV channels (Médiamétrie).

The results of the monitoring provide important insights to women and men’s representations in news stories and entertainment programmes.⁴ The methodology relies on simple women-men comparisons and provides mainly quantitative data, so we must be cautious to avoid essentialising male and female characteristics in the analysis⁵. Bearing this mind, we discuss here the results of the monitoring phase in the light of the discourses provided by these same channels in their 2013 annual reports.⁶ Indeed, both channels affirm that they promote gender equality policies and strategies. Concerning France 2, we read in the annual report of the group that, “France Télévisions commits itself to gender equality and the inclusion of disability regarding broadcasting as well as the internal social policies”. Similarly, the TF1 group declares that they are, “fully engaged, with all the actors involved in the process and out of any spirit of competition, in debunking stereotypes and not trivialising minorities in the

public sphere”. Beyond these headlines, what can we say about the population of French television actors? The annual statistics of the CSA [French Audiovisual Council] provide an indisputable verdict: people on French television are mostly white (84 percent in 2013), able-bodied (only 0.4 percent of disabled persons in 2013) and male (65 percent of men in 2011 and 2012).

The findings of the monitoring reveal that during the reference week, gendered representations are caught “between progress and stagnation”.⁷ As Sarah Macharia states, “the road to quantitative and qualitative media gender equality remains arduously long”. (GMMP 2015) We can elaborate various observations about the French TV landscape from our survey. First, it is male-dominated. Taking the example of experts and professional news sources in the very popular 8pm newscast, we found that only 8 percent of those sources were women on France 2, and 25 percent on TFI. Obviously, these percentages do not strictly reflect the entire newscast genre of these channel, but they nonetheless remind us of the 2011 report on experts used in newscasts which stated that female experts comprised 16 percent of this category of source on France 2 and 23 percent on TFI. Even more surprisingly, France 2 broadcast two news programmes without any female experts nor professional news sources at all, whereas TF1 used nine female experts or professional news sources during these two same days.⁸ Here, we are far from the average rate of 26 percent female experts (France 2 and France 3) announced in the 2013 annual report of France Télévisions.

If they are not experts, then who are the women appearing in France 2’s female expert-free newscasts? There is a weather presenter, ordinary people who talk about their daily routines such as transport when it is snowing and their family life such as the dangers of chairlifts for children, or their parents’ divorce. Yet, two women stand out in contrast. On 23 February, the politician invited to the France 2 TV studio was a woman, Ségolène Royal, a former presidential candidate, who was interviewed as the spokesperson for the Public Investment Bank. Her speech revolved around the three notions of proximity, protection and concrete help, that is to say three ‘feminine’ issues which have been regularly associated with her *political* persona (Olivesi 2012). In concluding the interview, the anchor (man), Laurent Delahousse, reminds her that she cried when she lost the election in 2012, implying a so-called feminine weakness. Thus, this newscast does not include female experts, but it does include a woman from the political sphere which is mostly associated with male power.

Another relevant woman in this newscast is a female reporter who features in an outdoor static shot, following the daily routines of local people at the frontier between Niger and Mali

where the French hostage-taking by Boko Haram took place. Yet, we must qualify this positive feminine figure. According to the hierarchy of the news items in this newscast, her report is placed just before another news report which focused on the French mine-clearing experts who were helping the Mali soldiers to clear the city of Gao. This news reporting relied on sensationalist images (corpses, walls stained with blood, weapons). A masculine voice-over provides the explanatory narrative. Besides, it is shot outdoors with a shoulder-held camera. Suddenly, as a Mali soldier grasps a grenade, the crew run away. We can hear the crew screaming as we watch the muddy ground. As for the reporter, he unblinkingly continues with his commentary as he walks among the ruins of the city, facing the camera. As we can see, we are far from the static shot with the female reporter, located at the border of the conflict, dressed in white and with the wind in her hair. Although these two packages are placed next to each other and focus on similar places and political issues (fighting the jihadists), the two journalists are framed to perform different roles which are gender-stereotypical.

From this snapshot we come to the following conclusion. The goal of equal numbers of women and men journalists is necessary but only looking at the numbers will not resolve issues of horizontal segregation or problems of gender-stereotyping. Gender reflects itself in news coverage, be it through the hierarchy of news items, discursive choices or the camera's eye. In addition, this small example underlines the strength of gendered structures in journalists' practices and habits (Frisque, Damian-Gaillard and Saitta 2010). As media organisations and content are intertwined, we will now focus on women's careers in order to better understand how gender plays a part in women's career paths.

Interviews with media professionals

We interviewed two women working in media industries. Romaine⁹ is the Editor-in-Chief of a local public radio station while Pauline is a senior manager in public service TV. Romaine has built her career in journalism whereas Pauline has worked in television management, but both share the experience of having worked in public service broadcasting. Romaine has always worked for public radio while Pauline spent the first part of her career in a private TV group. Both are 40-somethings. Though there are considerable differences in their career paths and levels of responsibility, they share a common understanding of being women in media industries. For a long time, they had not been concerned with gender issues. At the beginning of their careers, they didn't feel that their working environment discriminated against

women and neither identify as 'feminist.' Nevertheless, they have *become* more aware of gender inequalities and now believe that gender plays an important part in their jobs.

In the 1990s, at an early stage of their careers, neither were aware of gender issues: Pauline considers that her sex had nothing to do with her obtaining her first job although she also stated that "*no one wanted to go there*". She occupied a management position in Eastern Europe where, "*the remains of Communism implied a highly equalitarian culture and an important number of women worked as managers*". In this context – an early career path working as a manager and being managed by women - Pauline considered that gender-equality was possible and even that it had been achieved.

As for Romaine, she also considers that gender was irrelevant to her recruitment and yet she recalls that she was thankful for the benefits of the fairer sex: she could be charming so that men would talk to her, she could play on her femininity to obtain the technical information she needed, she created a compassionate working atmosphere and so on. She humorously credits these advantages to 'girl power' and her 'blond hair', referencing traditional stereotypes of the dumb blond mistress. For Pauline, although she said that she never intentionally used the "*feminine weapons of seduction*" she nonetheless acknowledged that, 'obviously' they played a positive role. Looking back at their career-paths, however, both women underscored an ambivalence: being a woman has been an advantage they used, it may have facilitated their hiring or a promotion and it allowed them to benefit from sorority and solidarity with other women. But it can also be a burden in terms of skills, legitimacy and involvement.

Both women recall conflicts with male chauvinist colleagues and were proud to say how they managed to resist them and eventually won out: they became gender-aware through negotiating key events in their professional lives. Thus, they realised that their world was subject to inequalities and discriminations as much as any other professional sphere. Romaine recalls that a male manager refused to hire her as a young radio journalist because he considered that she dressed in [her] grandmother's curtains. It seems that it took her a long time to be able to put into words the sexism of this remark, even as she found it offensive from the beginning. On the other hand, twenty years later, she immediately analyses another event that triggered her gender-awareness. She had been appointed as an Editor-in-Chief when she met a local political leader who made a slip of the tongue when he asked, "how can a woman be such an expert in political issues?" The third founding episode catalysed a process of reflexivity on her professional practices and habits. As a trainee explained that she wanted to perform "more

egalitarian journalism”, Romaine realized that, contrary to her own belief, she actually interviewed more men than women in her programmes.

In Pauline’s case, she progressively became gender-aware, even though she didn’t express it, during her third pregnancy. She had taken her previous two maternity leaves with confidence as she trusted her female director. However, on the third occasion, she feared that she wouldn’t be reinstated to the same job on her return and looked for a trusted friend to stand in for her during her leave. In addition, when she started to work for a large national public television group, she was greatly surprised to discover that the entire top tier of directors and managers which she had just joined, were all men. At that time, she really felt “*the violence of being a woman in a men’s world*” and was “*extremely lonely*”. It had really been a brutal eye-opener for her and she remarked that previously she, “*must have been really protected*” and in her new position, she experienced it, “*as an attack against women*”.

Both interviewees emphasised the ambiguous role of gender equality initiatives, be it gender equality policies in businesses, legislative statements or good practice recommendations. Public radio launched a ‘diversity’ policy in the 2000s but according to Romaine, it mainly focused on cultural and racial diversity and disability rather than gender equality. Pauline highlights that the organisation in which she work is the one that has the most numerous gender equality statements, has drafted a Charter for Gender Equality and produced good practices guidelines yet it is the most discriminating organisation regarding wages, hiring and access to management positions.

What, then, does it mean to be a female manager in the media industry today? Both interviewees strongly insist on their ‘professionalism’, as if, again and again, women in charge must prove their ability and competence. These interviews caused them to reflect on their management methods, leading them to reject a reading of women’s exercise of power as different to that of men but also claiming that women have specific ‘female’ characteristics. For example, Romaine states that she prefers dialogue to authority and that she cares about collective well-being while also saying that she must take care of her appearance more than a man. Pauline underlines her “*lack of ego, [her] distance from events, [her] derision*”, that she considers to be feminine characteristics. Even if they do not recognise a different form of gendered management, both remarked that they have employed more women than their predecessors. Contrary to their experiences in the early stages of their careers, nowadays Pauline and Romaine believe that gender is at stake in their professional lives, that it weighs and has weighted them in the past. Both wanted their testimonies to remain anonymous which

shows us that gender issues remain controversial in media industries. A long path is still ahead of us to achieve gender equality.

Conclusion

To conclude, we want to put an emphasis on three issues that invite us to further investigation. First, we have seen that there is an important legislative apparatus on gender equality in France. Media organisations have also engaged in good practice processes and indeed progress *has* been made. But we lack efficient tools to measure the precise impact of initiatives promoting gender equality. Consequently, we believe that France has achieved gender equality, which is entirely wrong if we take a look at the current situation. Perceived equality largely over-estimates *effective* gender equality, mostly because of the overwhelming amount of discussion on the topic. Producing regular indicators would allow us to provide a relevant snapshot of reality. But beyond these aspects, there is a debate to be had on the most effective and efficient ways to reach this goal. Some want to continue with the ‘name and shame’ strategy directed at reluctant media while others plead for more drastic measures. The HCEFH [Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men] suggest that the State should stop subsidising the most discriminating media since the Government should not support sex discrimination practices.

Secondly, there is a growing awareness of gender issues in media content. Media professionals are debating in newsrooms, even in congresses organised by media organisations themselves, about the best ways to debunk gender stereotypes, be it in fiction, entertainment or information (for example by including more female experts). Here, statistics are useful as they remind us that the French television landscape is predominantly male and white and that disabled people are almost entirely absent. Regarding women’s representation, the monitoring data we generated emphasises the limits of a quantitative approach. While the data confirm the under-representation of women on screen, simple numbers do not reveal the *differences* between men and women from a qualitative viewpoint. The construction of gender representations echoes the gender habits and norms performed by professionals and sadly, it too often remains a blind spot when debating with media practitioners, both women and men.

There also seems to be an implicit link between the under-representation of women in management positions in media industries and their low presence in media content. If these two phenomena are consequences of the same cause, that is to say, a male-dominated society, we must be cautious to avoid essentialising this link. Here, our third point is that a higher rate of

women in production or management will not lead ‘naturally’ to a fairer representation of women in media content, not least because many women have internalised the mechanisms of domination. In other words, being a woman doesn’t mean that you are a feminist. The slow and late process of gender-awareness depicted by the two interviewees is highly relevant to this argument. Yet women in media industries play a major part in the battle for gender equality. Let’s take an example. In June 2013, female journalists from the famous economic newspaper *Les Échos* went on strike and refused to sign off their names on the articles they wrote. It was an extremely rare situation in the history of the French media. Their action aimed to denounce the absence of women on the editorial and managing boards of the newspaper, despite the fact that there were similar numbers of women and men working at all other levels of the organisation. They meaningfully called this action, ‘Men: 12 – Women: 0.’ Their initiative proved effective as two years later, women’s career opportunities in the organisation have improved. From this example, we reach a conclusion: the top-down movement triggered by legislation is more effective if it is catalysed by grassroots mobilisation from the bottom-up. So to sum up, we say: ‘Women (journalists, directors, studio managers, photographers, etc.) of the world, unite!’

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¹ It can be literally translated as 'The pack of female hounds', which is a pun as female dogs 'chiennes' also means slut, whore.

² The French Audiovisual Council (CSA - Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel) is an administrative authority which works as the national broadcast media regulator.

³ According to the report *Filles et garçons sur le chemin de l'égalité, de l'école à l'enseignement supérieur*, 2014: 29.

⁴ The corpus excluded fiction, advertising, sport broadcasting and talent shows.

⁵ For a more extensive methodological discussion see Marlène Coulomb-Gully and Cécile Meadel's analysis of the Global Media Monitoring Project (2012).

⁶ We focus here on the following sources: Annual Report of France Télévisions 2013, Global Reporting Initiative 2013 of the TF1 Group, institutional websites of the channels, report and its appendix of the 2013 working committee for the Rights of Women and the diversity reports of the French Audiovisual Council (CSA).

⁷ This expression was also employed in February 26, 2015 to qualify gender-equality in politics (HCEF 2015).

⁸ Nevertheless, this gap must be qualified regarding the total number of experts and professional news sources provided during the week. Indeed, TF1 broadcasted 109 persons whereas France 2 only staged 67.

⁹ All names have been changed.