

A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Some Countries of the Mediterranean

'Women's Media in the Euromed' Project



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AHDR	- Arab Human Development Report
Arte	- Association Relative à la Télévision Européenne
AMWC	- Arab Media Women's Centre
AWA	- Arab Women's Alliance
AWO	- Arab Women's Organization
CAWTAR	- Centre for Arab Women Training and Research
CEDAW	- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CMF MENA	- Centre for Media Freedom – Middle East and North Africa
CREDIF	- Centre for Research, Documentation, and Information on Women
CSCA	- Conseil Supérieur de la Communication Audiovisuelle
CSO	- Civil Society Organization
DAW	- United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women
DTP	- Desktop Publishing
ERTU	- Egyptian Radio and Television Union
EU	- European Union
GMMP	- Global Media Monitoring Project
ICT	- Information Communication Technology
ILO	- International Labour Organization
ISIC	- Institut Supérieur de l'Information et de la Communication
IT	- Information Technology
ITRC	- International Tunisian Radio Channel
IWNF	- International Women's Media Foundation
IWSAW	- Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World
JMI	- Jordan Media Institute
JMTC	- Jordan's Media Training Centre
LBC	- Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation
NAWD	- Network of Arab Women in the Diaspora
NGO	- Non-Governmental Organization

NRJ	- Radio station in France
PSB	- Public Service Broadcasting
RTL	- Radio station in France
TF1	- Télé France 1
UN	- United Nations
UNESCO	- United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDP	- United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	- United Nations Development Fund for Women
UN-INSTRAW	- United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
WACC	- World Association for Christian Communication
WB	- World Bank

Introduction

Because positive social change is influenced by the success or failure of policies and organizations, and vice versa, this study attempted to work towards positive change by shedding light on the issue of women in the media in an attempt to eradicate gender disparity in the media through the empowerment of women. As such, this study explored the state of women in the media in 15 countries of the Mediterranean, Arab and European, and provided findings that inform the practice, policies, and programs of stakeholders dealing with the issue of women's rights. The goal was to bring about gender balance in the institution of the media as well as in its editorial content; a change that carries benefits for women and their respective societies at large.

The scope of this report fell into two intertwined categories: how women were portrayed in the media, in contrast to men, and to what extent women, again in contrast to men, participated as actors in media organizations. Each category clearly impacted the other, and both necessitated improvements.

Part I of this report explored the relationship between women and media. It discussed how media, including ICTs, may act as an instrument for the empowerment and advancement of women through their portrayal in and access to media organizations. It also provided an overview of the situation of media in the Mediterranean region.

Part II focused on the portrayal of women in the media. It provided an overview of the main issues and themes through a discussion of the situation of women in advertising, songs and video clips, cinema and television programs, religious programming, novels, sports, and photographs. This part also discussed the extent to which ordinary female citizens' voices were heard in the news and the nature of their presence in this news. In parallel, close consideration was paid to the importance of the physical appearance of female media practitioners.

Part III looked at the gendered reporting of the media in the countries of the Mediterranean. It also explored the situation of women as media practitioners holding different roles within media organizations, including presenters, reporters, and decision-makers in top media positions.

Part IV identified a number of obstacles found in the Arab and European regions in terms of the situation of women in the media. And although there were differences in the types of

obstacles encountered in each region and each country, many common impediments based on gender bias and discrimination were found and highlighted.

In the end of this report, Part V proposed a number of recommendations that address the obstacles faced by women in terms of a gender-balanced portrayal in the media, as well as equal access and participation of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and ICTs. Specific recommendations were made to the different stakeholders including governments, media systems, NGOs and CSOs, educational institutions, the private commercial sector, the female populace, and media consumers.

The interpretation of the findings provided in this report should be accompanied by a careful consideration of the specificities of each of the Arab and European countries explored in the context of this study because each region was one of differences and, at times, extremes.

Methodology of Research

This exploratory study attempted to provide an overview of the state and nature of media in some countries of the Mediterranean. The purpose behind this research task was to provide an account of specific issues facing women in media and lay the groundwork for the planification of projects and the undertaking of future research addressing the issue of women in media in order to help reduce or eliminate an existing gender gap in this field. As such, this study provided an assessment of the major obstacles that women face in media organizations found in the participating countries and proposed a number of recommendations that stakeholders may choose to adopt as a way of dealing with existing gender-related obstacles.

A total of 15 countries were explored in this study, some more in depth than others due to time restraints and the availability of resources. For the purpose of this report, the participating countries were categorized as follows:

1. Arab Region
 - Middle East (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria)
 - Maghreb (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia)
2. Europe (Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Turkey)

The research data gathered in this report were based on a broad range of sources including field research conducted through the administration of surveys to local media practitioners in some countries of the Mediterranean, as well as literary and statistical analyses of various studies and reports touching upon the issue of women in media. The sources scrutinized for information featured both qualitative and quantitative data. These sources include mainly, but are not limited to:

1. Country-specific studies that were prepared by organizations/partners located in different countries of the Mediterranean. The data provided in these studies were compiled, analyzed, and included in this report. The contributing organizations/partners were the following:
 - *IRIS Provincia Di Pescara* in Italy – The report prepared by IRIS explored the situation of women in media in Italy and Turkey

- *Safadi Foundation (SF)* in Lebanon – The report prepared by SF explored the situation of women in media in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria
 - *Aini Bennai* in Morocco – The report prepared by Aini Bennai explored the situation of women in media in Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco, Libya, and Tunisia
 - *Groupement Régional pour l'Action et l'Information des Femmes (GRAIF)* in France – The report prepared by GRAIF explored the situation of women in media in France
 - *Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (FWE)* in Malta – The report prepared by FWE explored the situation of women in media in Cyprus, Greece, and Malta
2. Surveys consisting of a structured list of questions were conducted among local media practitioners, both females and males, to complement the findings of the country-specific reports (Appendix A). They were administered in only some of the countries explored in this report: Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Morocco, and Malta (4 to 20 surveys were administered in each of these participating countries).
 3. The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), a project conducted every five years and which, in 2010, foresaw the participation of 108 countries from around the world including six European and four Arab countries explored in the context of this report. The Project represented the first extensive international study of women's portrayal in media. It monitored newspaper, radio, and television news on a selected day of the year. Although the statistics provided in this report may not be generalizable to an entire year, they nonetheless provide a structured outlook into various aspects of media and lay the groundwork for further research.
 4. Reports disseminated by governmental and non-governmental organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and affiliated agencies, the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, the Centre for Media Freedom – Middle East and North Africa (CMF-MENA), and the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC).

5. Statistical data collected by various entities such as Eurostat European Commission, the World Bank (WB), International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), and Reporters Sans Frontières.
6. Declarations and conference materials from events such as the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) Expert Group Meeting, UNESCO Seminar on Promoting Independent and Pluralistic Arab Media, and Abu Dhabi Arab Women Forum.
7. Articles from a variety of sources including journals and newspapers.

The data collected from the above-mentioned sources of information were compared and analyzed, and the findings outlined in this report.

PART I - Media and Gender

Discriminatory attitudes about women create barriers for their evolution and limit them from proving their professional capacities and competences in all fields.¹ The reason is that stereotypes portrayed of women reflect a mental block in terms of what society may expect from women and what the latter may expect of themselves as well.² Nevertheless, despite the negative consequences associated with a stereotyped portrayal and treatment of women, many societies around the world remain loaded with such stereotypes although a positive image of women is absolutely important as it extends to their mental capacities, behaviour, and role in society;³ thus rendering an egalitarian culture a crucial human and social requirement.⁴

Part I-A: Media as an Instrument for the Empowerment of Women

Media are a major player in the promotion and strengthening of an egalitarian society. They represent a communication system, both natural and technical, that allows the transmission of messages.⁵ Considering that the collection, editing, and choice of what is news is not purely objective and may be subjected to a number of factors discussed later in this report, media may play a number of roles, some of them key, in any society. These roles are:

- Shape public opinion and attitudes
- Determine the public discourse and thereby shape our political, cultural and economic priorities
- Influence public policy through the news agenda
- Reinforce or challenge gender, racial and other stereotypes and norms

¹ Ben Nablia, S. (2009) *Femme et Télévision au Maghreb: Amélioration de l'Image de la Femme dans les Télévisions du Maghreb Francophone*.

² International Federation of Journalists (2009) *Getting the Balance Right: Gender Equality in Journalism*.

³ UNIFEM (2006) *المرأة العربية والاعلام، دراسة تحليلية للبحوث الصادرة بين 1995-2005*
(*Arab Women and the Media – An Analytical Study of Research Conducted Between 1995-2005*).

⁴ Ben Nablia, S. (2009) *Femme et Télévision au Maghreb: Amélioration de l'Image de la Femme dans les Télévisions du Maghreb Francophone*.

⁵ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

- Serve as the channel through which the public communicates to policy makers and through which policy makers communicate to the public
- Media can act as catalysts for social change through coverage of injustices and the marginalization of populations in society which often have little access to expression in the public sphere. In other words, media can give a voice to those who often find their voices marginalized.¹

As such, media are an important constituent of democracy and have a particular responsibility in the promotion of human dignity, the fight against discrimination, and the promotion of gender equality.² Through campaigns of exposure, media instigate negative or positive publicity and provide an enhanced awareness about specific issues as well as an opportunity for dialogue.³ Public opinion and reactions may be shaped by tactics adopted by media repetitively portraying certain images or discourses; thus mobilizing people according to specific themes or agendas for action. Policy may also be shaped by media tactics as people react to the labels associated with an event, rather than to the nature of the event itself.⁴

Media tactics are strongly linked to the social status of women in a given society as they enforce the ideology and mythology surrounding the representation of women by adopting images that are consistent with the impact of globalization and international advertising: women abiding by the rules of consumerism, materialism, individualism, and the capitalist way of life.⁵ Nevertheless, an accurate and informative representation of women in media is important because it is linked to women's status, which in turn is determined by national laws,⁶ and media possess numerous characteristics that allow them to influence this status of women. Firstly, media are constructivist because they interpret the world and provide their own perception of it.

¹ WACC (2005) *'Mission Possible': A Gender and Media Advocacy Toolkit*.

² Lucianetti, L. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Italy*.

³ Cohn, I. and Goodwin-Gill, G. (2003) *Child Soldiers: The Role of Children in Armed Conflicts*.

⁴ Karam, A. and El Hajal, C. (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Lebanon and Some Arab Countries (Egypt, Syria, and Jordan)*.

⁵ Kirat, M. (2005) "Women and the Media in the Arab World: A Critical Appraisal".

⁶ Sakr, N. (2002) "Seen and Starting to Be Heard: Women and the Arab Media in a Decade of Change".

Secondly, they are hyper-realistic because they allocate less attention to disadvantaged groups and more to those who hold social power. Thirdly, media are performative because they strengthen the reality that they broadcast to the public and weaken that that they do not show. For example, women's presence in media, in addition to being quantitatively weaker than that of men, is weakened further by the treatment given to them in terms of identification and social roles. And finally, when media use women, they do so to ease their conscience regarding politically correct gender equality.¹ As such, media are an enormously powerful force in the processes that produce sexist stereotypes which come to be thought of as true for all women. In turn, sexist stereotypes about women in media have a significant impact on the formation of public opinion. The simplistic and at times caricatured image that they project of women legitimizes everyday sexism and discriminatory practices. Therefore, media, through its treatment of women contributes to prejudice and inequality in society.²

Some analysts of the relationship between media and society provide a different outlook through which the portrayal of women in media is determined by the status of women in society, how society views women, the level of women's emancipation in society, and their role in the economic and political lives, in addition to the impact of alienation and dependency of some media outlets³ on others (i.e., the dependence of Arab media outlets on Western ones). As such, media play a significant role in confirming and making natural the division between women and men.⁴ In all cases, whether media merely reflect a social reality that already exists or manufacture society's values, they have a direct impact on daily social practices, in general, and

¹ Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*, p. 22.

² Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (2005) *The Gender & Media Handbook – Promoting Equality, Diversity & Empowerment*; and Kirat, M. (2005) "Women and the Media in the Arab World: A Critical Appraisal"; and Lucianetti, L. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Italy*.

³ The term 'media outlets' is used in this report in reference to all media forms including radio, television, written press, and the Internet.

⁴ Kirat, M. (2005) "Women and the Media in the Arab World: A Critical Appraisal".

the lives of women, in particular.¹ They are in a situation of power because they have the capability to shift the portrayal of women in a more positive and realistic manner.² Media may project implicit and explicit messages about women's status and their equal participation in all fields of life through their representation of women, their lives, their stories, and all matters related to them. Media may also play an important role in the involvement of women in all fields of life, including decision-making processes. As such, media may represent an instrument for the development and strengthening of the feminine condition³ because media portrayals of women are a mode of knowledge that enables the development of attitudes.⁴ This is why the interconnections between women, media organizations, and media content come to occupy an important place in our societies today.

Just like media are capable of promoting positive change for women in society, they can contribute negatively to the image of women. In political life, for example, media reproduce the quantitative male domination and contribute to a weak representation of women through the allocation of little space in their programs to the political activities of women.⁵ Nevertheless, although media represent part of the problem of the sexist and negative stereotyping of women, they can also represent part of the solution through the provision of a large number of diverse sources that can be used to challenge gender inequality issues in a given society. Campaigns may start through the contribution of female experts to discussions and debates about gender equality. Information and support can be made public through alternative media output.⁶ As such, media

¹ CMF MENA (2000) *Women's Rights and the Arab Media*.

² Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (2005) *The Gender & Media Handbook – Promoting Equality, Diversity & Empowerment*; and Gallagher, M. (1995) *An Unfinished Story: Gender Patterns in Media Employment*.

³ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

⁴ Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

⁵ El Bour, H. (2009) *Médiatisation de la Participation Politique de la Femme en Algérie, au Maroc et en Tunisie (Rapport de Synthèse de l'Exercice Media)*.

⁶ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

can however choose to project a positive discourse that highlights the competences of women, rather than their weaknesses. Nevertheless, media preferences depend on a number of factors including the orientation of editorial lines, the profile of the woman covered in media, and the gender of the producer.¹

Instigating positive change for women in media requires an understanding of the forces to which media practitioners as well as media consumers are subjected to.² Media resources for the projection of stereotypes may take different forms that include mainly, but are not limited to: information, ideas, images, forms, ways of thinking, assumptions, narratives, and values that can be found in different kinds of media output such as news reports, editorials in newspapers, films, debates on radio and television, television drama serials and situation comedies, advertising, interviews, documentaries, web pages, and even children's programming. These forms of media content and resources are not a simple reflection of societal reality, but the product of decisions and choices made by authorities within the field of media. These decisions and choices may be based on multiple and at times contradictory factors that include media technology, rules and regulations about media content, media financing, broadcasting goals, professional codes and practices, education and training of media practitioners, political and ideological stands of media owners, as well as historical, economical, political, cultural, and geographical content that shape media, and so on. Since these factors shape the range and nature of media production and content, any changes in this production and content would require changes in one or more of these factors.³

In attempts to instigate positive (or negative) change, radio and television represent main opening organs and opportunities for exchange with the outside world.⁴ The Internet may also be

¹ El Bour, H. (2009) *Médiatisation de la Participation Politique de la Femme en Algérie, au Maroc et en Tunisie (Rapport de Synthèse de l'Exercice Media)*.

² Kirat, M. (2005) "Women and the Media in the Arab World: A Critical Appraisal".

³ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (2005) *The Gender & Media Handbook – Promoting Equality, Diversity & Empowerment*.

⁴ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

used to provide different tools that allow women to share or search for information (i.e., forums, social networks). As such, media would be helping disseminate information about gender equality throughout the world¹ through messages that sculpt popular masses by pushing them to adopt certain behaviours and the stereotyped images that impact people's daily lives. In countries such as Morocco where a large number of citizens are illiterate, media messages are rarely questioned, but rather taken as they are. For example, in the Maghreb region, radio caused the first turmoil towards independence in the 1940s as it represented the first opening of Arab and Maghrebi women to the world. It gave them a different dimension to life, that outside the house, at a time when all of them were illiterate. Through radio, they were introduced to new forms of language as they learned songs and music. Then television followed with the shock of image, in addition to the weight of words, especially among women who were less exposed to the outside world.² The capacity of media to shed light on issues of concern to women, as well as their influence on ideas and behaviours at all levels, has grown as a result of the spread of satellite communication.³ Today, a growing audience of female viewers, particularly in the Arab region, is turning to satellite broadcasting as a forum for the exchange of thoughts and ideas, as a means to gain a public forum for development and empowerment, as a medium for education that overcomes barriers of distance and time, and as a tool to advance progress and the development of communities.⁴ Given the scope of media and their impact on daily social practices, there are new vested interests in their impact on women; interests seen in a number of initiatives undertaken to address the issue of women in media (Appendix B).⁵ Nevertheless, the needs of women are not accurately depicted in media where a greater focus is allocated to issues such as

¹ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

² El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

³ Gallagher, M. (2002) *Women, Media and Democratic Society: In Pursuit of Rights and Freedoms*.

⁴ Obeidat, R. (2002) *Content and Representation of Women in the Arab Media*.

⁵ CMF MENA (2000) *Women's Rights and the Arab Media*.

beauty and cooking, while issues of concern such as divorce lie dormant, especially in Arab countries where they are considered taboo.¹

Internet as IT Media

The Internet as a medium for communication arose and experienced a surprising evolution to become a worldwide tool that is difficult to control. It allows the spreading of different points of view of women and even militant feminist speeches, as it allows for more freedom concerning the content.² The Internet is also an opportunity for sociability as it represents an interactive medium through which everyone can broadcast and receive.³ As such, it provides visibility to voices and opinions, even those considered subversive or prohibited under certain political or religious regimes. For the Arab world, this means that the conditions of Arab and Muslim women “will have to evolve notwithstanding the barriers created by male domination, dictatorship and the mental bias regarding women and womanhood”.⁴

Recognition of the explosive increase of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and their implications for women moved them centre stage in many countries around the world. The review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action which was adopted five years earlier, Beijing +5, acknowledged the importance of the effective use of ICTs in promoting women’s advancement.⁵ In France for example, the Internet allowed female users to handle their lives differently through renewed access to services and information (i.e., managing life needs, shopping online) and interpersonal exchanges (i.e.,

¹ Mehanna, T. (2010) *Interview with Tania Mehanna on Women and the Media*.

² El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

³ Groupement Régional pour l’Action et L’information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

⁴ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*, p. 80.

⁵ United Nations General Assembly (2000) *Five-Year Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing +5)*.

discussion forums, social networks, instant messaging).¹ In the Maghreb, the Internet represented the last media that was introduced in the region almost 10 years ago² and was an addition to traditional media.³

Around the world, the Internet penetration rate (e.g., users per 100 persons) is 25.6%.⁴ In 2008, the World Bank (WB) Development Indicators showed that Internet users⁵ consisted of 45% of the populations of the European countries and 18% of those of the Arab countries explored in this report. The highest proportion of Internet users was found in France (68%) and the lowest in Mauritania (2%):⁶

¹ Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

² El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

³ Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

⁴ UNESCO (2009) *Information Society Policies. Annual World Report 2009*.

⁵ The percentage of Internet users in each country was calculated based on the 'Number of Internet Users' and 'Total Population' provided for each country by the World Bank, website at <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER>

⁶ World Bank (2008) *World Bank Development Indicators*, website at <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER>

	Internet Users (by percentage)	Internet Users (by number of users)	Total Population
Algeria:	12%	4.100.000	34.825.470
Cyprus:	38%	334.428	871.036
Egypt:	16%	13.572.995	82.999.393
France:	68%	42.315.424	62.616.488
Greece:	43%	4.844.610	11.283.293
Italy:	41%	24.991.542	60.221.211
Jordan:	27%	1.595.250	5.951.000
Lebanon:	22%	945.000	4.223.553
Libya:	5%	323.000	6.419.925
Malta:	48%	198.800	414.971
Mauritania:	2%	60.000	3.290.630
Morocco:	33%	10.442.496	31.992.592
Syria:	17%	3.565.000	21.092.262
Tunisia:	27%	2.800.000	10.432.500
Turkey:	34%	25.405.350	74.815.703

Table 1: Numbers of Internet Users in Some Countries of the Mediterranean

The period between 1999 and 2000 saw rapid increases in Internet subscriptions in the majority of Arab countries, and in some countries such as Morocco, Egypt, and Jordan the number of users increased significantly in a single year. The increase was partly due to regulatory changes that affected Internet availability and the cost of connections.¹ Nevertheless, the Internet is a source of prejudice for women who are illiterate and scarcely open to new technologies as it requires literacy and the capacity to use a computer.² In addition to language

¹ Sakr, N. (2001) *International and Regional Support Systems for Arab Media Women*.

² El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

skills and computer literacy, accessibility which is a fundamental issue is also limited by such issues as technical infrastructure and connection costs. The accessibility of women is therefore influenced by gender roles and relationships that “affect not simply women’s technical skills, financial resources, mobility and availability of time. They also help to determine users’ needs and preferences, the design of hardware and software, the location and staffing of telecentres and other community access points”.¹ Women’s capacity to exploit the potential of ICTs as tools of empowerment is therefore constrained in different ways in different regions as a result of socio-cultural (i.e., censor of speech and behaviour, exclusion from activities not intended for women) and institutional barriers. Some factors affect both females and males in a generalized way: technical infrastructure, connection costs, computer literacy, language skills, and the growing incidence of surveillance on the Internet. Other factors are “filtered through specific gender-based determinants that cause women to be particularly disadvantaged”. Such disincentives include the fact that, despite the vast amount of content on the Internet, little content is of relevance or use to women, the way that women use ICT (i.e., for office work, not communication or information sharing), fewer women produce IT or ICT products and services, as well as a fear of technology as man’s domain.²

Although differences between women and men are common and striking in some countries of the world, for example Arab countries where women represent a mere 6% of Arab Internet subscribers,³ in France, little difference has been noted in terms of media consumption, purchase of equipment, or Internet access. The number of female users is continuously increasing and it is believed that 54% of bloggers are women. Nevertheless, even in France, media capital remains almost exclusively male-owned.⁴ The marginalization of women from ICTs means that they will benefit less from learning and employment opportunities that are available through ICT, thus perpetuating and deepening gender inequalities. If women are going

¹ Gallagher, M. (2002) *Women, Media and Democratic Society: In Pursuit of Rights and Freedoms*, p. 18.

² Primo, N. (2003) *Gender Issues in the Information Society*, p. 18.

³ Sakr, N. (2001) *International and Regional Support Systems for Arab Media Women*.

⁴ Groupement Régional pour l’Action et L’information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

to take full advantage of ICTs, their concern should not be limited with the sole use of the communication tools, but also with the finding, management, production, and dissemination of information, as well as with the development of policies and strategies for effectively shaping ICTs.¹

The potential of the Internet to be used as a medium for debate and solidarity among women in media was demonstrated in 1999 when an open and international six-week online discussion was arranged to provide the UN with information on achievements and problems relating to the media component of the Beijing Platform for Action. By the end of the exercise, 114 participants from 42 countries had participated in the discussion with, unfortunately, no participants from Arab countries. Since then, Internet use by Arab women has increased as a result of “educational improvements, an increase in Arabic-language software and websites, and a growing recognition of the benefits of e-mail communication on the part of an increasing number of Arab women’s non-governmental organizations”.² YouTube, for example, represents one of the most credible media outlets for many Arab women.³

In a 2001 study of female Internet users around the world, the findings showed that women represented less than half of the Internet users in Morocco, Turkey, France, and Italy. Although the numbers have increased since that year, detailed and more recent statistics were unavailable for inclusion in this report. As such, in 2001, the proportion of women as Internet users in some countries was the following:⁴

¹ Primo, N. (2003) *Gender Issues in the Information Society*.

² Sakr, N. (2001) *International and Regional Support Systems for Arab Media Women*, para. 18.

³ Safadi Foundation (2010) *Safadi Foundation Statistics 2010 – Women Working in the Media in Lebanon*.

⁴ Primo, N. (2003) *Gender Issues in the Information Society*.

Country	Internet Users as Percent of Total Population	Women as Percentage of All Internet Users
Morocco:	1.30%	25%
Turkey:	3.80%	29%
France:	26.40%	38%
Italy:	27.60%	40%

Table 2: Female Internet Users in 2001

In a comparison between Western European and Arab countries, the findings showed that, in 2002, women were spending on average seven hours online per month, compared to ten hours for men. Women were more task-oriented and spent their time shopping (i.e., food items), organizing travel, and banking. Men, in addition to these tasks, used additional time to browse, read entertainment news, and download computer software. These gender-based disparities are due to the fact that women have less free time and assume greater responsibility for family and household work. In Arab countries where one in every two Arab women can neither read nor write, new computer technologies offered new fields for them to participate in the workforce and play a role in developing the technologically-based Arab economies. To allow women to benefit from these developments, some projects and initiatives are underway in the Arab region to help connect Arab women through the use of ICTs and the Internet.¹

In France, six standard profiles were identified for female Internet users based on their different expectations with regard to the Internet:² 1) the utilitarian user (26%) who searches for information and uses the Internet for functional reasons; 2) the social user (25%) whose relation with the Internet is based on sharing and communicating; 3) the dreamer (17%) who logs to websites of travel and luxury goods as a way of escaping or relaxing; 4) the sceptical user (12%) who does not trust the Internet and has limited use of it; 5) the pragmatic user (11%) who spends little time surfing but nonetheless believes that the Internet is useful; and 6) the extravert user

¹ Primo, N. (2003) *Gender Issues in the Information Society*.

² The standard profiles found in France are not limited to that specific country, but rather widespread in different countries around the world, although the proportions for each profile may differ from one country to another.

(8%) who exhibits her work, shares pictures, and comments on blogs to feel valued.¹ In addition to individual uses of the Internet, the latter provided the opportunity for many female groups to develop sites or portals that deal with various issues of concern to women. For example, in Morocco, the website www.femmesdumaroc.com emerged in 2010 and offered an online archive of *Femmes du Maroc* magazine issues of the past two years, and will soon offer an online subscription to the magazine through the site.²

Although sites or networks for women represent a source of promising practices and possibilities that can resist, transform, or invent new alternatives, their effectiveness depends on the combination of people and technology that they bring together.³ Nevertheless, the activist aspect of some women's sites is daunting to some women themselves who, although they wish to be addressed intelligently, are not ready to join a militant or feminist speech, and would prefer to find a middle course between the approach of traditional media on women and the discourses found on these feminist sites.⁴ Furthermore, "women's access to ICTs is not a simple question of whether there is a computer connected to the Internet that women can use". Access in one part of the problem; the other is how to harness the technology for their own goals and to make an impact on ICT.⁵

Unfortunately, the underrepresentation of women in the traditional media was carried over into cyberspace.⁶ A considerable amount of pornographic material that reduces women to

¹ Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

² El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

³ Primo, N. (2003) *Gender Issues in the Information Society*.

⁴ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

⁵ Primo, N. (2003) *Gender Issues in the Information Society*, p. 37.

⁶ GMMP (2005) *Who Makes the News?;* and Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

sexual objects can be found on the Internet¹ where the constant projection of negative and degrading images, especially in the case of younger women and children, harms efforts working towards a balanced representation of women's contributions.² Nevertheless, the regulation of the negative images circulating about women is difficult for a number of reasons that include mainly the international dimension of users and producers spread all over the world, the Internet's rapidly evolving character where numerous new sites get created every day, the central role of the users in producing content (i.e., 4 million blogs in France), as well as the highly scattered government plans and the lack of coherent policies that deal with this issue.³

Part I-B: Media in the Mediterranean

Since the last decade of the 20th century, media sector has witnessed significant changes and developments. In the Arab region, considerable innovation was characterized by developments in satellite television, the repackaging of existing material on government-run terrestrial channels for satellite transmission, the support by government figures of channels nominally run by private entrepreneurs, and the adoption of new program formats under the old censorship constraints they were supposed to replace.⁴

In the Arab world, contrary to the Western world, there is no tradition of public service broadcasting (PSB). There is only government-controlled media that is mainly concerned with political propaganda and social control.⁵ The wave of deregulation and satellite proliferation that reached the Arab world instigated a transition from government-controlled media to private-owned media. Unlike the situation in the Western world where PSB is disappearing, although

¹ Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

² Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

³ Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

⁴ Sakr, N. (2002) "Seen and Starting to Be Heard: Women and the Arab Media in a Decade of Change".

⁵ Dabbous-Sensenig, D. (2002) *The Arab World and the Challenge of Introducing Gender-Sensitive Communication Policies*.

crucial for the exercise of citizenship in a pluralistic democracy, no defence has been undertaken in the Arab world. In Europe for instance, PSB was traditionally relied upon to include and give a voice to all segments of the population.¹ In addition to PSB, competition among media outlets is important because an increasing number of media channels or sources increase the importance of credibility which is a prerequisite for media to exercise power. A greater variety should therefore exist in terms of who owns and controls media outlets, as well as the range of topics as resources made public.² However, public sector media, compared to private sector media, are more concerned with the application of governmental agendas and priorities. They take into consideration the government's commitments towards the United Nations (UN) mechanisms and structures that incite the promotion of the participation of women in political life, and reproduce a discourse that brings out the feminine competences and incite women to participate in political life.³

Concurrent with the absence of PSB in the Arab world is the absence of independent regulatory bodies which can be resorted to to check abuses and unfair representations. Most infringements in the Arab media are processed by the State. In Europe, independent bodies and councils were set up to keep the public media organizations at a distance from the government. It was believed that PSB allowed a sense of common national identity, the inclusion of all citizens in a democratic State, and the provision of a common forum for debate. This inclusion could also be provided by media organizations that act independently of market pressures and address the segments of the population that are sidelined by private media which is mainly commercial in nature.⁴ In the Arab region and to this day, the continued governmental control is accompanied

¹ Dabbous-Sensenig, D. (2002) *The Arab World and the Challenge of Introducing Gender-Sensitive Communication Policies*.

² Sakr, N. (2002) "Seen and Starting to Be Heard: Women and the Arab Media in a Decade of Change"; and Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (2005) *The Gender & Media Handbook – Promoting Equality, Diversity & Empowerment*.

³ El Bour, H. (2009) *Médiatisation de la Participation Politique de la Femme en Algérie, au Maroc et en Tunisie (Rapport de Synthèse de l'Exercice Media)*.

⁴ Dabbous-Sensenig, D. (2002) *The Arab World and the Challenge of Introducing Gender-Sensitive Communication Policies*.

by clampdowns on the print media. Meanwhile, controls over the Internet in some Arab countries occurred indirectly as a result of failures to expand or upgrade telephone networks, or reduce telephone costs. Other Arab countries experienced direct controls through cyber censorship systems that block access to selected sites.¹

In the Arab region as a whole, information is controlled by the government. For example, information for daily newspapers and periodicals is provided by national news agencies; the difference between newspapers lies in the way that they process their information. Not to mention that certain domains of information (i.e., politics) are monopolized by men. In the Maghreb for instance, press freedom is a right in theory; in practice, reality differs. In countries such as Libya and Mauritania, governmental control is grotesque, while other countries seem more prone to democratic governance principles and information liberalization.²

Reporters Sans Frontières (Reporters Without Borders), an organization that promotes and defends the rights to inform and be informed, confirmed in its 2010 Press Freedom Index that the defence of media freedom continues to be a challenge. The Index showed downward trends in most countries including Cyprus and Cyprus (North), France, Greece, Malta, Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, and Tunisia. The findings were the following:³

¹ Sakr, N. (2002) "Seen and Starting to Be Heard: Women and the Arab Media in a Decade of Change".

² El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

³ Reporters Sans Frontières (2010) *Europe Falls From Its Pedestal, No Respite in the Dictatorships*.

Country	Rank	Note	Trend
Malta:	16	4.00	↓
France:	44	13.38	↓
Cyprus:	45	13.40	↓
Italy:	48	15.00	=
Cyprus (North):	61	17.25	↓
Greece:	73	19.00	↓
Lebanon:	78	20.50	↓
Mauritania:	95	25.38	↑
Jordan:	120	37.00	↓
Egypt:	127	43.33	↑
Algeria:	133	47.33	↑
Morocco:	135	47.40	↓
Turkey:	138	49.25	↓
Libya:	160	63.50	↓
Tunisia:	164	72.50	↓
Syria:	173	91.50	↓

Table 3: 2010 Country Rankings of the World Press Freedom Index

The downward trend was more significant in some countries than in others. In the Arab countries, a significant fall (between 8 to 10 ranks in the Index) occurred for Morocco, Tunisia, and Syria. This fall was related to authorities' increasing tension over issues relating to press freedom, systematic repression enforced by government leaders, and/or arbitrary detention and even torture as a routine. Italy is the only country that held the same rank, in comparison with the previous year. Few countries experienced a relative improvement and they are Algeria, Egypt, and Mauritania. For example, in Algeria the improvement was seen in the decline in the number of legal proceedings instituted against journalists. Consequently, the country gained eight ranks in the Index. In European Union countries, the press freedom situation deteriorated and the gaps between the good and bad performing European countries widened. In general, the decline was due to the persecution of media, as well as a lack of news and information. The sharp decline that occurred in Greece, the country holding the worst position held by an EU member country, was due to political unrest and physical attacks on journalists. Meanwhile, Turkey is experiencing

historically low ranking as a result of a proliferation of lawsuits, incarcerations, and court sentencing that target journalists.¹

Around the world in general, and in the Arab region more specifically, media has not fully fulfilled its role on all issues of concern to women because the public is generally suspicious of women's rights advocacy and complacent about the negative stereotyping of women in media. When a campaign for women's rights takes place, it is crucial for it to gain the support of media in order to orient public debate to the idea that women's rights are an integral component of the country's development.²

In the Maghreb for example, the opening of the audiovisual sector to privatization did not fulfil the aspirations of Maghrebi politicians who copied the model of Western television. During the 1980s, the refusal of Maghrebi leaders to renew public television stemmed from fears that fundamentalism would swamp television as the re-Islamization of the Arab world expanded. This situation obliged political regimes to integrate different models of television, private and communitarian. Therefore, Maghrebi television started to resemble Western television, which explained the broadcasting of foreign productions as of the early 1980s. Through this development emerged a television model that is, at the same time, public, private, and communitarian while being under the control of political power. The communication sector in the Maghreb was redefined in the past decade with the logic of globalization and the emergence of the information society.

The Internet represented the last media that was introduced in the Maghreb since almost ten years ago. The evolution of this medium for communication carried a surprise resulting from its worldwide nature. Nevertheless, it required literacy from users, as well as the capacity to access and use a computer. This is what prejudices Maghrebi women who are less literate and scarcely open to modern technologies. Arab women are the most illiterate in the world. In Morocco, illiterate women are in the order to 60 to 67% of Moroccan women. As such, they will not benefit from the Internet or other types of media such as the press, books, and so on, and

¹ Reporters Sans Frontières (2010) *Europe Falls From Its Pedestal, No Respite in the Dictatorships*.

² Obeidat, R. (2002) *Content and Representation of Women in the Arab Media*.

these mediums will not represent for them an opening to the world, or a source of information and culture. In addition to the barrier of illiteracy, very few Arab women read the press as the latter is perceived as a non-feminine culture. In the Maghreb, women are not used to buying newspapers for example.¹

The media scene differed from one region to the other and from country to the other within the same region (Appendices C, D & E). For example, in the Maghreb, Moroccan television was more diversified than that in Algeria or Tunisia.² In the Maghreb, women's participation was highest in Morocco and Tunisia. This may be due to the fact that these two countries granted women the most advanced juridical status; thus allowing them to exist in the media field.³ In addition to differences between the different Maghrebi countries, a distinction existed between Arab and French media in the Maghreb. Women were more present in French media, and men in Arab media. Nevertheless, the presence of female journalists and presenters in public and private television channels increased over the past few years. This distinction was also found in Maghrebi and Pan-Arab satellite television which reflected different ideas and orientations. On Arab satellite television, women occupied an important place in information programs and television serials. This type of television allowed women to discuss issues of concern to them (i.e., violence against women, sexual relationship, adultery), while most programs broadcast on Arab and Maghrebi public sector channels were produced at the Arab regional level and responded to the market's logic.⁴

In the Arab region in general, regional coordination among local groups working for women's rights is still in the early stages and has much to learn from Western societies around the world. Nevertheless, regional machinery is already in place to promote the empowerment of

¹ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

² El Bour, H. (2009) *Médiatisation de la Participation Politique de la Femme en Algérie, au Maroc et en Tunisie (Rapport de Synthèse de l'Exercice Media)*.

³ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

⁴ Ben Nablia, S. (2009) *Femme et Télévision au Maghreb: Amélioration de l'Image de la Femme dans les Télévisions du Maghreb Francophone*.

women, and through media more specifically. Several organizations aspire to play a regional role including the Centre for Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) in Tunisia, the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) in Beirut, the Arab Women's Alliance (AWA) in Cairo, and the Arab Media Women's Centre (AMWC). In addition to these organizations are a number of networks including Collectif 95 Maghreb Egalité, an alliance of Algerian, Moroccan, and Tunisian associations and individuals, the network Aisha with coordinators in Tunisia and Palestine, and a regional network of 30 journalists focusing on women's reproductive health based in Damascus. On the national level, individual Arab countries have made some arrangements to ensure that national policies take women's concerns into consideration. In Jordan, for example, national women's committees existed before the Beijing Conference of 1995 and have been structured to include NGOs. In Lebanon, there is a National Lebanese Women's Commission and an NGO Committee for post-Beijing follow-up. The follow-up on the implementation of the Beijing Platform in Algeria and Tunisia was allocated to a government body. In Egypt, government and NGO bodies act independently of one another. Despite the presence of this machinery for the promotion of women's rights, and despite some limited efforts and achievements, the majority of Arab media organizations still fail to portray realistic images of women in their diverse roles and of their contributions to society.¹ In Egypt, for example, where the government passed laws to limit NGOs freedom of action, NGO activism focusing on women and media could only succeed if conducted in direct collaboration with the State, which is the chief player in Egyptian media. The latter however did not reciprocate when NGOs tried to share their research and policy advice with government representatives on various issues of concern to women. Meanwhile, government-controlled media went as far as portraying human rights NGOs as traitors to the national interest.²

¹ CMF MENA (2000) *Women's Rights and the Arab Media*.

² Sakr, N. (2004) "Friend or Foe? Dependency Theory and Women's Media Activism in the Arab Middle East".

PART II - Media's Portrayal of Women

The image of women in society is unclear largely due to an inaccurate and sometimes contradictory portrayal of them in media. This conflicting portrayal nourished stereotypes and was mainly due to media's decision to cater to popular tastes to make more profit, rather than to promote social welfare.¹ Gender stereotyping is problematic for men as well. Young boys are swamped with media images of aggressive and violent males, as a result of media's construction of masculinity. Boys do not receive an adequate definition of what it means to be a man, thus causing confusion for them.² This report however focuses on the impact of gender stereotyping on women only. Future research may want to explore this other important dimension of gender stereotyping in media.

In general, media representation, particularly of women, is "deeply embedded in political and economic contexts."³ As a result, the representation of women differs from one country to another, and even within the borders of the same country. To understand the portrayal of women in media, it is important to study the construction of femininity, as well as the psycho-social factors that underlie the dichotomy between the sacred and the shameful as they are applied to women.⁴ Despite that, common points remain. For example, the large majority of Arab societies are patriarchal in nature and view women as inferior to men and incapable of handling leadership roles. So far, Arab media outlets have reflected the objectification of women in real life, the domination of men in all aspects of life, as well as the simplification and marginalization of women. Images of women have been used in conflicting ways: sometimes as symbols of progress; other times as symbols of continuity with the cultural past. This conflicting representation is influenced by the representation that Western media imposes of women.¹ As

¹ Karam, A. and El Hajal, C. (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Lebanon and Some Arab Countries (Egypt, Syria, and Jordan)*.

² Lowe Morna, C. (2002) *Promoting Gender Equality In and Through the Media – A Southern African Case Study*.

³ Gallagher, M. (2002) *Women, Media and Democratic Society: In Pursuit of Rights and Freedoms*, p. 11

⁴ CMF MENA (2000) *Women's Rights and the Arab Media*.

such, a discrepancy exists between the image of women and their place in society because the images that are promoted of women do not correspond to their true place in society.²

In European media, a misleading representation of women exists, especially in the field of popular entertainment which is a major source of revenue and a powerful instrument of influence over audiences. Stereotyped images of women and images of female bodies are found everywhere as they are used to sell everything from food to cars. Actresses for instance keep on getting younger, taller, and thinner. Women are: 1) sexualized and presented as an object of desire; 2) treated as potential consumers through the project of images of beautiful and young women; or 3) presented as objects of conflict where middle-aged women are lacking interest politics and refrain from engaging in cultural or social life. These images are a misleading representation of women. In turn, audiences are now accustomed to not expect more; which ultimately has a negative impact on young girls whose only role models are actresses and showgirls. The most disturbing thing is that the projected images of beauty are unattainable for most women. Even in countries with traditions of women in public positions of authority (i.e., Finland, Sweden), media continue to portray a stereotyped image of women by, for example, emphasizing their family situation or appearance, as is the case for female politicians.³ In France specifically, the discrepancy is noticed between the stereotypes that continue to be applied to women and the roles that they play both at home and in society.⁴ In the portrayal of women and the discourses about women, media's emphasis is either on the traditional women or on the stereotype. In other words, media tends to focus on women's bodies in terms of their reproductive capabilities to bear children (e.g., mothers) and their physical attributes in terms of

¹ Kirat, M. (2005) "Women and the Media in the Arab World: A Critical Appraisal".

² Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

³ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

⁴ Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

sexual attractiveness and vulnerability to crime and disease (e.g., beautiful, attractive).¹ This image is fostered by Italian media that relegates women to either a sexual object or a mother and housekeeper.² In Maltese society, the responsibility for the reproduction and confirmation of gender stereotypes in media were related to a complicated process consisting of media language and images, news values and priorities, and journalistic approaches that all help produce a gendered representation of women.³

In Arab media, the portrayals of women reflect an appreciation of women solely for their physical capabilities and attributes. The result is an overwhelming focus mainly on motherhood as the most significant contribution to society and the woman herself, and to some extent on the physical health and beauty of women.⁴ The dominance of the concept of motherhood is found in both the public and private spheres. Mothers benefit from a positive portrayal as women who are heroic, generous, self-sacrificing, and loving. In contrast, women with careers but who are not mothers find themselves associated with the opposite of these positive traits, and also considered to be at high risk of health problems if they have postponed or avoided childbirth.⁵ In general, television programmes and women's magazines are frequently urging women to take care of their appearance and beautify their homes but, although they are required to take care of their looks, they are also asked to stick to customs and traditions, while rarely being represented as human beings who suffer from psychological and social pressures. Meanwhile, they are repeatedly asked to make sacrifices for others.⁶

¹ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (2005) *The Gender & Media Handbook – Promoting Equality, Diversity & Empowerment*.

² Lucianetti, L. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Italy*.

³ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

⁴ CMF MENA (2000) *Women's Rights and the Arab Media*.

⁵ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (2005) *The Gender & Media Handbook – Promoting Equality, Diversity & Empowerment*.

⁶ CMF MENA (2000) *Women's Rights and the Arab Media*.

Little difference was found between Middle Eastern and Maghrebi media in this regard, as the latter represented an extension of the former. The portrayal of women in the Arab region was stereotyped and negative to differing extents depending on the type of media outlet and the specific society within the Arab region. The deterioration of the image of women was due to the difficult socio-political conditions in the Arab region and the deeply traditional societies eroded by Islamic discourses. Maghrebi women live and evolve in a generally Muslim environment. The Islamic discourse placed women at the centre of the duality between good and bad; and veiled women guaranteed the political visibility of Islamic currents. The image of women in television serials, for example, was a reflection of this environment. Nevertheless, the collective imagination in the Maghreb refers to rigid models and cultural codes that do not correspond to the contemporary social reality of women. As a result, the image of women is stalling between a referential that is fixed in time and an evolving social reality. Maghrebi television viewers are faced with two different images of women: a stereotyped image and an image projected by public media that provides for market demands but does not reflect the principles of equality between women and men.¹

Research showed that 78% of the images of women that are transmitted by the various Arab media outlets did not provide an adequate reflection of reality.² The negative stereotyping of Arab women however was not only a product of Arab media, but a reality in both Arab and Western media. Western media showed women as veiled, conservative, dominated by men, a sex object, or entertaining men with pornographic oriental dances. The dominant picture of Arab women in Western media was one of a woman that was homebound and uneducated and, although these types of women undoubtedly exist in the Arab world, there are also women who are highly educated, accomplished, professional, and struggling against restricting social values.³

In Lebanon, unlike other Arab countries, concerns about the portrayal of women in media were characterized by a strong degree of openness to Western products. For example, Lebanese

¹ Ben Nablia, S. (2009) *Femme et Télévision au Maghreb: Amélioration de l'Image de la Femme dans les Télévisions du Maghreb Francophone*.

² Centre for Arab Women Training and Research (CAWTAR), website at www.cawtar.org

³ Rahbani, L. (2010) *Women in Arab Media: Present But Not Heard*.

terrestrial media supplied a large amount of uncensored Western programming, in addition to either Arab or Lebanese productions that emulated values and themes found in Mexican television serials. As a result of this mix, Lebanese audiences were regularly exposed to conflicting images of women, from the completely liberated model of Western women to the ultra-conservative, submissive, and dependent ideal of the Arab women. This schizophrenic situation was due to the global images of 'liberated' women who are economically and socially independent from their male counterparts, thus clashing with the conservative and patriarchal realities found in Arab societies that receive these images and try to imitate them.¹ The schizophrenic situation is therefore problematic, especially when considering an entire generation of young Arab media consumers who are exposed to the conflicting media messages that address the identity of women. Meanwhile, the Arab cultures and the legal systems in Arab countries are set up in a way that prevents Arab women from fulfilling their equal rights and from being independent of men.² In Egypt however, and although the image portrayed of women was predominantly negative, Egyptian women themselves were unaware of the degree of stereotyping presented of them, which was due to their internalization of discriminatory perceptions and/or lack of awareness.³

In France, an original identity was assigned to both women and men based on their biology. Men were portrayed as strong, powerful, violent, and intelligent. When portrayed as fathers, it was as proof of their virility. In contrast, women were portrayed as weak, submitted, responsible for others, gentle, and understanding. When portrayed as mothers, it was because they were meant to be as such. Social roles for women represented a secondary identity that was worn by them over their original identity. These social roles were divided into a private identity and a professional one: the first portrayed women as mothers, idiots, housewives, or whores; the second portrayed them as an ambitious courtesan who adopted male behaviour to integrate a

¹ Dabbous-Sensenig, D. (2000) "Media vs. Society in Lebanon: Schizophrenia in an Age of Globalisation".

² Ibid.

³ CMF MENA (2000) *Women's Rights and the Arab Media*.

male-dominated environment. In addition to these portrayals, there was the commitment to slenderness repeatedly promoted by different media outlets.¹

In Cyprus, a distinction was made between the Greek Cypriot region and the Turkish Cypriot one where negative stereotypes about women were recurrent. In general, media in the Turkish Cypriot region suggested that all women should have the same characteristics, including beauty, skills in cooking, and knowledge of health issues. This should be achieved along with the most important characteristics of all: wives and mothers. Mothers were considered newsworthy, while the presence of women as experts was rare. The women's section of newspapers in this region of Cyprus featured food recipes, thus holding women responsible for the kitchen. In news articles, women's health problems were presented as embarrassing and shameful. In contrast, in Greek Cypriot society, the portrayal of women was in better status but focused as well on women's reproductive capabilities and physical attributes. Media depicted women in three different ways: the attractive celebrity used as an object of pleasure; the images that accompany articles related to such events as golf, clothing, or demonstrations; and the images that accompany events of war. Apart from these portrayals, media were largely absent from any other gender-related issues except for coverage of women's health issues in terms of reproductive health, nutrition, and weight. A lack of coverage of women's sexuality issues was noted. In Cyprus more generally, media portrayed mothers as heroic, thereby reflecting the perception that all women should become caring mothers. In parallel, women with careers were presented as facing health risks in their attempt to delay pregnancy and motherhood.²

A distinction in the portrayal of women was made in terms of their portrayal in women's magazines and that in magazines targeting both women and men. In France, some women's magazines such as *Elle* or *Femme Actuelle* regularly showed women of all ethnic backgrounds and ages, and with different physical appearances; thus reducing stereotypes. They offered a variety of topics and a more elaborate form of social recognition through an increasing number

¹ Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

² Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

of female experts, for example. Nevertheless, many women's magazines such as *Glamour* continued to provide a marginal representation of women who were young, beautiful, and slim. The target of these magazines was female consumers of fashion and beauty products.¹ In Morocco as well, the portrayal of women in women's magazines was distinguished from their portrayal in other types of magazines. Although the feminist movement gave the impression of losing momentum as a result of media's disinterest in their work, rather than difficulties in the movement, women's magazines were still equated by some as feminist press. Despite the discussion of trivial issues in women's magazines in Morocco, the discussion of some serious issues such as violence against women and guardianship situated these magazines on territory halfway between entertaining and informative magazines. Some feminists even considered that these magazines illustrated the general guidelines for the feminist struggle in Morocco.²

In addition to distinctions made in the depictions of women in women's magazines and their depictions in magazines for both women and men, a distinction was made between women's perception of their portrayal in media, and their actual portrayal by different media outlets. For example, in Morocco, women reported that media drew an inaccurate and distorted portrait of them, meaning that media did not reflect the reality of Moroccan women. Although this may be true for their portrayal in some media outlets, it is not necessarily true for all media outlets. For instance, advertising and fiction were more remote from reality, compared to other types of media. Advertising which is mainly chore-focused projected an image of a low-skilled and obedient-to-her-husband woman. Fiction portrayed a woman with an attitude that was manipulative, promiscuous, and dumb. In contrast, other types of media presented a well-regarded woman who is educated, smart, and responsible. Nevertheless, the positive image of women presented the reality of a minority of elite women, while the image projected in advertisements and fiction represented an extreme case of a minority of Moroccan women.³

¹ Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

² El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

³ Ibid.

Part II-A: The Images of Women through Different Media Outlets

Despite enormous changes and developments in the roles of women around the world over the last four decades, the representation of women in media remained almost constant.¹ Some improvements to the image of women have been noted across films and television series which now include diverse and credible female characters that represent positive and contemporary models of women. But it is inevitable that, despite the progress made, there is still a long way to go to achieve a fair and balanced portrayal of women in media.² To this day, in the minds of the majority of Arabs, there is the common representation of Arab women as inferior to men and incapable of handling leadership roles. This image is portrayed across the media spectrum including newspapers, films, song clips, advertisements, and all other types of media outlets.³

a) Women and Advertising

Advertising represents an important source of influence as it sends subliminal messages to youth and children.⁴ Throughout the years and around the world, advertisements have accompanied the evolution of women in all its stages, from the housewives of the 1950s and 1960s, to the activists of the 1970s, to the superwomen asserting equality with men of the 1980s, to the normal women of the 1990s, and finally to today's women seeking to manage their own lives despite all challenges.⁵ An exploration of the portrayal of women in advertising may be

¹ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

² El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

³ Karam, A. and El Hajal, C. (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Lebanon and Some Arab Countries (Egypt, Syria, and Jordan)*.

⁴ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

⁵ Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

based on (1) the images or models projected of women through advertisements, or (2) on their role in these advertisements.

The images or models projected of women in advertisements are divided into four categories: traditional, seductive, object model, and superficial. The first model, the traditional women model, focuses on the domestic role of women with concern for household chores, the kitchen, child rearing practices, maternity responsibilities, and other classical homemaker roles. The second model, the seductive model, focuses on beauty, sex, and the woman's body. Women are portrayed as beings primarily concerned with their physical appearance and continuously seeking to be attractive and fresh. Their beauty is also related to success and quality, and reflects an interest among women for wealth and luxury items. This image of the seductive woman is a Western value that has dominated some of what is being broadcast about women in the Arab world, whether in Western ads that are presented to the Arab audience or in local ads that are created to reflect this seductive image without close consideration of the cultural, social, and religious differences that dominate Arab societies, in comparison to Western societies. The third model, the object model, reflects an objectification of women who are presented as objects stripped of any human values or feminine peculiarities. In this portrayal, it is difficult to distinguish between the woman and the issue or product presented. Feminist groups are furious with this objectification of women deemed humiliating and lacking respect to their human values, ethics, and intelligence. The fourth and last model, the superficial model, portrays women as shallow beings mainly interested in material objects and showing exclusive interest for external appearances. In this model, the happiness of women is portrayed as directly related to the possession of these objects and the achievement of valued appearances.¹

In the Maghreb, all types of advertising (i.e., television commercials, flyers, light signs) portray women as either a feminine or a house product. Women are portrayed as charming, seductive, and obeying. They are presented as proper and likeable persons. For example, advertising aimed at young girls confines them to the female roles. In Morocco, girls are "portrayed while they learn how to cook with their mother for products such as stock cubes, at

¹ Al Murri (2002) *Women in Advertising*.

the same time dreaming of their wedding day with the groom standing next to them”.¹ The domestic roles follow women during all their stages: as girls, they are portrayed as brides; as women, they are mothers taking care of their children; and as grandmothers, they are teaching their granddaughters kitchen skills such as cooking. As such, in the Maghreb, “the image of women in advertising is never shocking, clearly not disturbing, rather smooth and righteous”.² These respectable stereotypes and reassuring images are also found in the Middle East, while there is at the same time an abundance of negative images associated with women through advertisements. The provocative images of women are more commonly found in some Middle Eastern countries than in others. For example, in Lebanon women were featured in lingerie ads (i.e., Marie France) on main roads in the country,³ and in Greece there was prevalence in advertising of women partly clothed or naked to grab the viewer’s attention. Women are therefore portrayed as sexual objects as their bodies and sexuality are linked to products that are marketed in the Greece.⁴ In France, a distinction is made between billboard advertising and advertising on the Internet. The old fashioned and provocative portrayal of women in billboard advertising does not sell well anymore because women are responsible for 85% of purchases in the country, including the purchase of heavy equipment. Nevertheless, despite remaining problems with billboard advertising in France, the more worrying problem is related to advertisements on the Internet. This is due to the fact that a large quantity of information is posted on the Internet and exchanged in a scattered and decentralised manner, and it can spread from one user to the other in very little time.⁵

¹ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*, p. 15.

² *Ibid.*, p. 81.

³ Karam, A. and El Hajal, C. (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Lebanon and Some Arab Countries (Egypt, Syria, and Jordan)*.

⁴ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

⁵ Groupement Régional pour l’Action et L’information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

Along with the images or models projected of women in advertisements, an exploration of their portrayal in advertising should account for the role that women play in these advertisements. This role of women is divided into two categories: women as (1) a consumer and (2) a commodity. In the Arab region, on one hand, advertisements treat women as a commodity when their physique (i.e., body, shape) is exploited to market products and provide decorations for the beautification of pictures.¹ This hypersexualization of women for the purpose of boosting sales is a worrisome practice as girls and women often only have these stereotypes as their image through media.² On another hand, the representation of women in advertising in the Arab region fosters consumerism where a woman is perceived as a consumer who can be urged to buy whatever products are being marketed because she is weak and easily influenced.³ Women represent the ideal consumer willing to buy products regardless of the need for them. This image is related to existing common prejudices of women as spendthrifts.⁴ The objectification of women through this representation turns them into tools of consumption, marketing, and seduction. Consequently, they are pictured as empty of intelligence, logic, and honour. Their value is rather assessed by their body and beauty; consequently leading to a negative impact on women's image and, over time:

...the systematic and extensive use and exploitation of women by the advertising industry has created a social consciousness and a set of stereotypes and images that look down at women and portray them as dependant and incapable human beings whose worth and value lie only in beauty and seduction of men.⁵

¹ CMF MENA (2000) *Women's Rights and the Arab Media*.

² El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

³ CMF MENA (2000) *Women's Rights and the Arab Media*; and Kirat, M. (2005) "Women and the Media in the Arab World: A Critical Appraisal".

⁴ CMF MENA (2000) *Women's Rights and the Arab Media*.

⁵ Kirat, M. (2005) "Women and the Media in the Arab World: A Critical Appraisal", p. 25.

Today, the worldwide trend towards consumerism created a climate where advertisements and marketing techniques focus mostly on women as consumers.¹ In the Arab world, an escalating presence of women in advertising is a result of the proliferation of media and the increase in the space allocated to advertising in the media landscape.² As such, depending on each country, media may be limiting or strengthening the importance of women in society.³

A 2008 European Parliament report on the impact of marketing and advertising on gender equality showed that stereotypes were contributing to discrimination based on gender and “thus are an echo of an unequal power struggle”.⁴ Women’s magazines in Europe are loaded with articles on weight loss. Women who are insecure about their physical appearance are more likely to buy beauty products, new clothes, and so on. In Greece for example, women’s magazines contain ten and a half times more ads promoting weight loss than men’s magazines do. In turn, television reinforces the importance of a thin body as a measure of women’s worth. The Greek Consumers Institute identified a number of problematic practices in advertising where women were continuously portrayed as objects of desire, housewives, or intellectually inferior to men.⁵ The sexualized representations of women were also found in Egypt where an estimated 80% of women wear the veil, while it is rare to see a veiled woman in advertisements, even if the latter were created to target the Egyptian market.⁶

Not all advertisements targeting specific groups are the product of the society in question. For example, in Maghreb, there are no magazines or journals for young women. Those who have

¹ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

² CMF MENA (2000) *Women’s Rights and the Arab Media*.

³ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

⁴ Groupement Régional pour l’Action et L’information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*, p. 3.

⁵ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

⁶ Rahbani, L. (2010) *Women in Arab Media: Present But Not Heard*.

the financial means consume magazines that are imported from France, if they are able to read in French. At the early signs of puberty however, young girls become a project for marriage through formation and information provided to them in their surrounding as to being good wives and mothers. Early marriage helps avoid the revolt of the adolescent and despite a legal evolution in Morocco, specifically concerning the legal age for marriage, the cultural evolution is still tagging behind, especially in rural areas and among illiterate women.¹

b) *Women in Songs and Video Clips*

Women appearing in songs and video clips are usually looked at by women, and especially teenage girls, as role models who set the norms for clothes, makeup, and even behaviour.² Lebanese pop stars such as Elissa, Haifa, and Nancy, among many more, represented a “charming attack against the Egyptian and Arab public” with their Western look. In the Maghreb, they are considered idols and are increasingly imitated by women of all ages in terms of fashion and language.³

Unfortunately, in Arab songs and video clips, just as in advertisements, women are once more pictured almost exclusively as beautiful. With their beautiful faces and attractive bodies, they “serve as a trap for the young and the weak”.⁴ Research revealed that a beautiful image of women is portrayed in approximately 98% of song clips that broadcast on Arab television stations, where approximately 69% of these clips show exposed and immodest women who are generally young and barefaced. From a personality point of view, women in Arab song and video clips are often pictured as moody creatures that are rapidly changing from quiet to stormy. As for the content of some Arab songs, old and new, it is consistently portraying Arab women as

¹ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

² Karam, A. and El Hajal, C. (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Lebanon and Some Arab Countries (Egypt, Syria, and Jordan)*.

³ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*, p. 81.

⁴ CMF MENA (2000) *Women’s Rights and the Arab Media*, p. 77.

seductive, irresistibly tempting, and sometimes flirtatious. The content of songs commonly presents women as those who cause suffering to their lovers, and who are ungrateful and capricious.¹

c) Women in Cinema, Television Serials, and other Television Programs

Cinema, television serials (also known as *soaps*), and other television programs play an important role in raising public awareness about women's issues and the injustices from which they suffer as a result of harsh traditions or unfair laws.²

In the Arab region, it was Egypt that opened the cinema industry to women, followed by the Maghreb. At the beginning of the 20th century in Egypt, a number of stars (i.e., Asmahane, Shadia, Sabah)³ appeared with no veil; showing signs of liberation and emancipation of women through all arts. However, in the 1960s, this trend was replaced by poor production in terms of resources and repetitive films showing women that are vulgar, lacking talent, and wearing excessive makeup.⁴ The "most representative model" of Arab women may be found in Egyptian films during Egypt's cinema decades of output. During the 1960s, an analysis of the representation of women in films showed that over 40% of female characters had no given profession; 20% of them were represented as housewives, divorcees, or widows; 20% as working women; 10% as students; and 9% as artists. At that time, the most significant representation of women was that of women with no profession (e.g., women who are simply females). This representation accounts for more than 80% of women's roles in commercial Arab films.⁵

Almost five decades later, the representation of women in television serials, which consists of 71% of content, is not very encouraging. In 2008, it was found that approximately

¹ CMF MENA (2000) *Women's Rights and the Arab Media*.

² UNDP (2006) *The Arab Human Development Report 2005 – Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World*.

³ Egyptian cinema opened the door for female actresses from all over the Arab world. The above-mentioned actresses are from Syrian, Egyptian, and Lebanese origins respectively.

⁴ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

⁵ Rahbani, L. (2010) *Women in Arab Media: Present But Not Heard*, p. 10.

57% of the time women were portrayed as housewives/homemakers; 25% as students; 15% as employees; and only 2% as participants in political and public life. As such, Egyptian serials which broadcast in numerous countries in the Arab region rotate mainly around the role of women at home and focus on the woman whose role is to show her beauty; while the relationship of women with political work, for example, remains superficial and unclear.¹ In the Arab region more generally, television serials are often portraying women in the following roles: a housewife or on the lookout for a husband, a dancer, or an office worker at a low level job. When portrayed as a housewife, the woman is pictured as dependent on others, mainly her husband, and unable to take care of her own affairs. Mostly, she is presented as talkative, stirring trouble with her neighbours, spendthrift, and unappreciative of her husband's life circumstances, in particular the financial circumstances.² When a woman is handling more than one role at the same time, for example a housewife who is also an employee, she is pictured as a failed wife and mother whose relationship with her husband and children is unsettled, disorganized, and full of problems.³

An analysis of media's representation of women on Arab television revealed that the portrayal of women laid in a socio-cultural reality and a collective imagination, not in an egalitarian perspective. The logic and strategies of production do not allow a fair treatment of the image of women in television serials. In the Maghreb for example, this is due to poor quality productions of the public sector television channels. Elsewhere in the Arab world, satellite television channels are producing programs that standardize the reality of women in the Arab world. In drama, Egyptian and Syrian products dominate. Syrian products project the image of a traditional woman, prisoner of her husband's will; while Egyptian products project the image of

¹ UNIFEM (2008) *التمكين السياسي للمرأة العربية ، دراسة لدور البرلمان ووسائل الاعلام في مصر والاردن والبحرين* (*The Political Empowerment of Arab Women – The Role of Parliament and Media in Egypt, Jordan and Bahrain*).

² CMF MENA (2000) *Women's Rights and the Arab Media*.

³ UNIFEM (2008) *التمكين السياسي للمرأة العربية ، دراسة لدور البرلمان ووسائل الاعلام في مصر والاردن والبحرين* (*The Political Empowerment of Arab Women – The Role of Parliament and Media in Egypt, Jordan and Bahrain*); and CMF MENA (2000) *Women's Rights and the Arab Media*.

an idealistic woman, disconnected from reality, a mother or wife that sacrifices herself entirely for others, or an opportunistic woman that is willing to do anything to achieve her goals.¹

Arab cinema today plays a dual role that stems from its commercial nature: on one hand, it employs moving images that generalize values of sexual discrimination; on the other hand, new emerging cinemas in Arab countries send progressive messages that are reflective of the wishes of a new generation of Arab women that seek completeness and independence. As such, “Among the most important contributions of Arab cinema to challenging society’s sexual hierarchy is its visual exposure of the mechanics of women’s submission”.²

In France, an evolution has been taking place for the past 20 years and it concerns women’s on-screen roles. This evolution has inspired screenwriters; thus rendering fiction a feminine genre. According to 2007 figures, women represented 70% of the recurrent heroes on TF1. And although female characters were often portrayed as consensual, they were nonetheless also very valued. Serials are nowadays showing women as successfully balancing their professional and family commitments. By the end of the 1990s in France, television serials consisted of a team of recurrent heroes that were equally distributed between women and men.³

Importing Foreign Media Broadcasts: Foreign television productions such as television serials experienced a growing popularity in many Arab countries in the past few years. In the Maghreb, Maghrebi channels are importing Turkish and Mexican soaps and translating them into Arabic. According to some, the different influences in cinema are a “remarkable cultural exchange” that offers different images of women, freedom, philosophy and quality of life, and aesthetics; thus turning the Maghreb into a “fully cultivated world” that is at the same time characterized by disorder.⁴ This importation of foreign broadcasts is a prevalent

¹ Ben Nablia, S. (2009) *Femme et Télévision au Maghreb: Amélioration de l’Image de la Femme dans les Télévisions du Maghreb Francophone*.

² UNDP (2006) *The Arab Human Development Report 2005 – Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World*, p. 15.

³ Groupement Régional pour l’Action et L’information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

⁴ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*, p. 85.

phenomenon in many Arab countries as well and tends at times to overshadow local productions and benefit from a greater popularity.¹

That mix turned the Maghreb into a fully cultivated world; the loss of its dialects changed its nature completely, the imposition of the classic Arab language made it subject to a culture derived from the culture of the Arab Middle East; the global Islamic movement after the revolution in Iran has forced women to wear a veil again [...]; Maghreb migrants added the finishing touch to that cultural disorder by mixing several stylistic traits.²

This importation is at times problematic as imported scenarios need to be examined to eliminate stereotypes that are harmful to the image of women, and to ensure that the images portrayed of women are related to those of women in the Maghreb.³ This importation of foreign broadcasts leaves women and society at large puzzled by the images that are derived from a variety of very different influences; thus leading to evolutions that are single-value, not homogeneous. Despite efforts by Souissi studios in Morocco to make the country a platform for production, the situation is getting worse whereby “Egyptian, Lebanese, Turkish, Mexican or Brazilian films and TV series acculturate Morocco and the Maghreb countries which are still unable to produce enough to cater for the needs of their peoples, to fill in the broadcasting slots and to respond to the local demand for cinema production”.⁴

In addition to soaps, sitcoms increasingly gained popularity and, for the past decade, Maghrebi producers have been interested in producing their own 100% Maghrebi sitcoms as they would be more closely related to the daily lives of their viewers. This local production has shown to be successful and has mobilized entire families around television screens. As for television films, the image of women was reduced to that of a character with limited skills and little ambition, if any at all. Women are mostly represented as mothers or as the objects of desire of

¹ Ben Nablia, S. (2009) *Femme et Télévision au Maghreb: Amélioration de l'Image de la Femme dans les Télévisions du Maghreb Francophone*.

² El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*, p. 85.

³ Ben Nablia, S. (2009) *Femme et Télévision au Maghreb: Amélioration de l'Image de la Femme dans les Télévisions du Maghreb Francophone*.

⁴ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*, p. 55.

men. Finally, talk shows focus on women's beauty, wealth, and celebrity. In the Maghreb region, and since the 1980s, singers and actresses on Maghrebi television wear excessive makeup and are very well dressed, even for programs that are meant to be informal and that take place in a relaxed atmosphere. The image of Barbie or that of a princess is omnipresent in these shows.¹

The lack of professionalization of the careers of women in cinema and other media outlets contributed negatively to their image. At the beginning, women wanting to become actresses received little or no education, and did not attend theatre school. Most joined for obscure reasons. Today, the professionalization of this career is still underway as professional casting is becoming a key element of selection. Actresses are acquiring professional skills and enhancing their credibility by attaching a greater importance to education. They are transforming the way that women are represented in a media that dedicates more and more space to women.² In the Maghreb for example, there are important cinema and audiovisual schools where the percentage of women is remarkable and their number exceeds that of men in certain domains such as photography, computer graphics, and editing.³

Reality Television: The past few years also witnessed the emergence and growing popularity of reality television that captivated both women and men, particularly youths between the age of 12 and 25, and even their parents, in the Arab region as well as in the rest of the world.⁴ Some believe that reality television programs are depicting sexual stereotypes;⁵ others allocate a positive value to these programs. In the Maghreb specifically, the public covets these programs that show a liberated image of Maghrebi women compared to the image of other

¹ Ben Nablia, S. (2009) *Femme et Télévision au Maghreb: Amélioration de l'Image de la Femme dans les Télévisions du Maghreb Francophone*.

² El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

³ Among the most important institutions are: *Centre Euro Méditerranéen de l'Audio-Visuel et du Cinéma*, *Ecole supérieure des arts visuels de Marrakech*, and *Institut Supérieur d'Art Dramatique et d'Animation Culturelle*.

⁴ Ben Nablia, S. (2009) *Femme et Télévision au Maghreb: Amélioration de l'Image de la Femme dans les Télévisions du Maghreb Francophone*.

⁵ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

women in the Arab region. The mixing of the sexes and cohabitation allowed Arab viewers to get to know each other better and to note the relationship of equality between the sexes (i.e., Star Academy). Nevertheless, this dimension of Star Academy, for example, stirred much controversy among some in the Arab countries where the masculine and sexist Middle Eastern vision was confronted by the feminist Maghrebi one; thus causing much resentment and attack in discussion forums over the Internet between supporters of participants from the Maghreb and others for those from the Middle East. Even the masculine Maghrebi vision still requires much work to attain an egalitarian culture in the different television productions. The youths participating in or viewing reality shows are referred to by Islamists and conservatives as a generation with no value or one that has been sold to the Western world. The image of women in these shows is also perceived in different ways by the Arab public at large where the Maghrebi public perceives the Maghrebi women as liberated in comparison to her Arab colleague; while those from the Middle East consider her as an object stripped of any social or religious value, in addition to being westernized. This image reaches its climax in reality television programs as it is tightly linked to the cultural values of the viewers.¹

The representation of women in the Arab region deteriorated with the growing number of satellite television networks; a growth that led to an explosive increase in the volume of negative stereotypes about women on television screens.² Arab families are presented with images and attitudes that contain more disparities than similarities. The contradictory portrayals of women reflect the transitional period that Arab societies are going through; a transition with varying degrees of tolerance and where the dynamics of social reality support some images and challenge others. In the Maghrebi countries of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, films produced locally have been increasingly concerned with matters that may be considered taboo (i.e., sexual violence, unfair laws, marginalization, and exclusion). The new types of films do not treat women as inferior, but rather oppose male dominance.³ In Arab countries more generally, the female body

¹ Ben Nablia, S. (2009) *Femme et Télévision au Maghreb: Amélioration de l'Image de la Femme dans les Télévisions du Maghreb Francophone*.

² Crossette (2002) *Access, Employment and Decision-Making*.

³ UNDP (2006) *The Arab Human Development Report 2005 – Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World*.

remains an essential component of programming and advertising, although focus on the female body differs from one Arab country to the other depending on the country's degree of openness and the freedom given to women in each society.¹

d) *Women in Religious Programming*

Around the world, the increasing number of women as active partners in all kinds of media outlets did not necessarily provide them in the Arab region with the freedom of tone, of intention, and of choice of subjects, as in Western countries. As a result, Arab countries received at the same time religious and pornographic channels that deeply influenced the Muslim countries.² Religion satellite channels or religious programming through all media outlets have an important role to play in the portrayal of women, particularly in the Arab region.

In 2009, the number of satellite channels specialized exclusively in religion matters reached 56 out of 696 channels in Arabic, thus representing 8% of all satellite channels in Arabic.³ The success of these satellite channels in the Arab world lead to the establishment of more channels, for example in the Maghreb where there are two such channels of public order, one in Morocco and another in Algeria that was launched as recently as in 2009. For many years prior to that, religious programming was the product of State television, under political control, and targeting men. The messages conveyed through these programs did not concern women. Nevertheless, the emergence of specialized channels in the Arab world (i.e., Iqraa, Ennas) allowed for an in depth look into this format as religious programming was a product that touched women and addressed issues of concern to them.⁴

¹ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

² Ibid.

³ Methnani, R. (2010) من أجل اتصال أكثر فاعلية بين الاعلاميين والفاعلات السياسيات (*For a More Effective Communication Between Media Practitioners and Female Political Players*).

⁴ Ben Nablia, S. (2009) *Femme et Télévision au Maghreb: Amélioration de l'Image de la Femme dans les Télévisions du Maghreb Francophone*.

During the 1990s, Egyptian celebrities (i.e., actresses, singers) decided to wear the veil and ultimately withdrew from public life as they got banned from television. These celebrities felt the need for a secure Islam that would allow them to enjoy the benefits of stardom without being associated with radical Islam. During that period in Egypt, emerging missionaries (e.g., da'iyah) found themselves stuck between a radical Islam preaching for a return to fundamental values and religious institutions preaching for a traditional Islam. The discourse projected by these missionaries was in harmony with the aspirations of the veiled celebrities who contributed strongly to the reformulation and moderation of the discourse because the missionaries lacked experience in the televisual domain. Since then, some noted that religious programs have addressed such issues as marriage and targeted an audience from both sexes.¹ Others argued that discussions about women on these channels, instead of emphasizing their rights to ontological equality with their male counterparts, chained them, made them look sinful, and limited their movement through restrictions and forbidden acts that the other party, men, exaggerated.² In the religious approach in media, it is very rare to find a woman being addressed in a balanced way, or a man being addressed as a husband, brother, father, or son. Women are called upon to make sacrifices for their husband and children. In the case of problems between the couple, 9 out of 10 times the woman is blamed and expected to make concessions, whether the husband deserves it or not, and even if it is at the expense of her life.³ Therefore, religion satellite channels became an industry that spread fear from torture and an intentional portrayal of women as sinful.⁴

¹ Ben Nablia, S. (2009) *Femme et Télévision au Maghreb: Amélioration de l'Image de la Femme dans les Télévisions du Maghreb Francophone*.

² Methnani, R. (2010) من أجل اتّصال أكثر فاعليّة بين الاعلاميين والفاعلات السياسيات (*For a More Effective Communication Between Media Practitioners and Female Political Players*).

³ CMF MENA (2000) *Women's Rights and the Arab Media*.

⁴ Methnani, R. (2010) من أجل اتّصال أكثر فاعليّة بين الاعلاميين والفاعلات السياسيات (*For a More Effective Communication Between Media Practitioners and Female Political Players*).

e) *Women in Novels*

In the Arab region, most novels reflected an expansion of the image of women into a world that was once loaded with uniform stereotypes that did not correspond to the social transformations predicted by novels. The new sensibilities built by novels, aesthetic and linguistic, support values that are capable of breaking previously dominant stereotypes.

Four main images of women were found in novels: the woman stripped of her rights and freedoms, the militant woman, the rebellious woman, and the multiple woman whose identity is split or fragmented into multiple identities. Overall, the images that were created in Arab novels, particularly by Arab female novelists, provided readers with a vocabulary for approaching assumptions about women's inferiority and the ways to overcome such thinking. Novels demonstrated sensitivity to social issues and the presentation of these issues in all their diversity and richness. They also revealed many contradictions that may be interpreted in light of the transitional historical state through which some Arab societies are passing. In many instances, Arab novels have been able to destroy stereotypes about women in Arab societies. They have done so through an attack on female stereotypes, as well as by shedding light on women's oppression and on male dominance.¹ Nevertheless, the opportunity for Arab women to benefit from the enlightening dimension provided by these novels is strongly dependent on their literacy skills which, in the Arab region, remain the lowest in the world.²

f) *Women in Sports*

In sports, women athletes were inadequately represented, especially in the Arab region and even in the more modernized Arab countries like Lebanon. These athletes lacked promotion and presence in media where only a small percentage of airtime was devoted to them. On the international level, the unbalanced allocation of airtime for women and men athletes was striking: 9% for women compared to 88% for men on three network affiliates in Los Angeles, and the gap worsened on ESPN's national sports show centre where women occupied only 2% of

¹ UNDP (2006) *The Arab Human Development Report 2005 – Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World*.

² El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

airtime.¹ In Turkey, the gendered nature of sports coverage was evident. An analysis of the content of Turkish newspapers on sportswomen and gender stereotypes showed that approximately 6% of sports articles were devoted to female athletes, 87% to male athletes, and 7% to articles combining both female and male athletes. A difference also existed in both the visual and written texts in different newspapers.² Nevertheless, it is important to take into consideration that, in the Arab region, the number of women involved in sports was lower than that of men. To this day, only a small number of women have risen to high levels of accomplishments at the international level, for example. In all Olympic Games between the years 1984 and 2004, only six women in the Arab world were medal winners – five from the Maghreb and one from Syria. Despite their small number, it is noted that two thirds of them were gold-medal winners, compared to a quarter of male Arab Olympic medal winners who were gold medallists.³

Aside from the difference in space allocated to female and male athletes, sports commentators (97% of them being men) use different language when they talk about women and men. Men may be referred to as strong or courageous, and women as vulnerable or tired, thus reducing the image of female athletes to children. For example, during the International Championship of Women's Tennis in 2000, the *Gazette des Femmes* magazine awarded the journalists who covered the event the prize Demerit for the sexist character of their comments concerning the charming dress of some female players and the excessive interest they paid to Anna Kournikova who is known for her beauty.⁴ This sexist language reflected the idea that one sex is superior to the other. It therefore contributed to the oppression of the latter, exploited an unfair distinction between the sexes, and imposed stereotypes. In Cyprus, and more specifically in Turkish Cypriot society, sexist language was used in all newspapers and magazines, and was

¹ Rahbani, L. (2010) *Women in Arab Media: Present But Not Heard*.

² Lucianetti, L. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Italy*.

³ UNDP (2006) *The Arab Human Development Report 2005 – Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World*.

⁴ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

not restricted to specific topics such as sports. Media addressed only men and did not take into consideration the female audience. This way of reporting news appeared to be custom in this society, even in newspapers that characterized themselves as progressive, democratic, or egalitarian. In addition to the use of a language resembling that of men's dialogues, some items referred negatively to women; thus lacking any sort of non-sexist approach.¹

The difference in the use of language also extended to the manner in which female athletes were represented in sports reportages: female athletes were often photographed in sexy poses, while male athletes were captured in action. More and more, female athletes themselves are trying to display a sexy or beautiful look to attract media interest in their performance and possibly transform their athletic achievements into cash.²

g) *Women in Photographs*

Differences in who is heard in newspaper stories around the world extend to who is seen in these stories. In 2010, an analysis of people who are shown in photographs showed that women are much more likely than men to be shown in photographs; a pattern found in the past decade and more. Globally, 26% of female news subjects in newspapers appear in photographs, in contrast to 17% of males (compared to 22% and 16% respectively in 2005); thus revealing a gendered use of images³. In the Arab region in 2005, the percentages were 32% for females and 26% for males; while in Europe, they were 28% for females and 20% for males. Both in the Arab region and Europe, the percentages are higher for women than for men, and higher than the world average.⁴

The global trend of the dominance of female news subjects in newspaper photographs was only true for one country explored in this report in 2010, Egypt. All remaining countries

¹ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

² El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

³ GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

⁴ GMMP (2005) *Who Makes the News?*.

broke with this trend where a predominance of male subjects in photographs existed. In countries such as Malta, Tunisia, Jordan, Lebanon, and France the difference is striking. A country breakdown of news subjects in newspaper photographs showed the following proportions:¹

	Women in Photographs	Men in Photographs
<u>Europe:</u>		
Cyprus	43%	57%
France	10%	90%
Greece	40%	60%
Italy	20%	80%
Malta	0%	100%
Turkey	42%	58%
<u>Arab region:</u>		
Egypt	67%	33%
Jordan	0%	100%
Lebanon	7%	93%
Mauritania	17%	83%
Tunisia	0%	100%

Table 4: News Subjects in Newspaper Photographs, by Country

A global approach to women and men in photographs masked different situations according to the country and the sections being considered. In France, although women stimulated sales, there were some differences with regard to their presence in advertising in general as some magazines had a preference for photographs that showed men instead of women (i.e., advertisements in *Express* showed men in approximately 23.5% of their advertisements, women in 4% of them, both women and men in 23.5% of them, while 49% of them showed no human presence). The economy section, for example, was characterized by the biggest difference in the photographs chosen to illustrate the contents of the related articles, whereby 53% of photographs were men and 17% were women. In this section, men were therefore three times more likely than women to be the subject of a photograph. Furthermore, a news item that

¹ GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

concerned a woman was less likely to contain a photograph than a news item that concerned a man, which reinforces the invisibility of women.¹

In addition to the disproportional representation of women and men as news subjects in photographs, a difference also existed in the way that they were featured in these photographs: “while men are usually pictured either from the head up or fully clothed, the comparative frequency with which bodies are pictured in various state of undress is much higher”. As such, the images of women were used to excite and may serve to reinforce stereotypes to different extents. Furthermore, it was often younger women that were portrayed.² In Turkish Cypriot society for example, women received thousands of media images suggesting that women should be thin and pretty. In newspapers specifically, women’s pictures were used as visual material within the pages, and whether they were related to the story subject or not.³

Part II-B: The Place Occupied by Ordinary Female Citizens in News Media

The newsroom failed to a large extent to tackle the real problems of women.⁴ Gender inequalities, biases, and prejudices against women in media show themselves in the selection of issues considered newsworthy, the function of female news subjects,⁵ the centrality and portrayal of women in the news, as well as the opportunities allocated to women to appear in media and to make themselves heard. European and Arab countries are no strangers to this form of discrimination against women in the newsroom, but they experience it to differing extents whereby the situation is most severe in the Arab countries, in addition to the Turkish Cypriot region in Cyprus.

¹ Groupement Régional pour l’Action et L’information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

² GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*, p. 17.

³ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (2005) *The Gender & Media Handbook – Promoting Equality, Diversity & Empowerment*.

⁴ Kirat, M. (2005) “Women and the Media in the Arab World: A Critical Appraisal”

⁵ The term ‘news subject’ is used in reference to persons heard or read about in the news of press, radio, and television.

In the Arab region, the coverage of women has been distorted and characterized by bias, partiality, and marginalization, in addition to the proliferation of negative images and stereotypes that left women behind. Even what was presented by media as objective and unbiased was fabricated, inaccurate, or false.¹ The portrayal of women in the news, as discussed earlier, was focused mainly on their role as sex or beauty objects, homemakers, and victims of events such as violence, poverty, natural disasters, and war. Women became headline news if they engaged in activities that were not in line with society's mainstream norms and values (i.e., abusive mothers), while news on issues of concern to women (i.e., violation of women's rights, discrimination against women) were relatively rare. Furthermore, when issues of concern to women were covered by media, the news articles were usually confined to special pages or segments that were reserved for 'women's issues' rather than being placed in news pages as issues of concern for society at large.²

a) Women's Presence in the News

In 2010, women's views and voices were still largely marginalized in the world because only 24% of news subjects around the world were women. This meant that, globally, for every woman who appeared in the news, there were four men. The following is a breakdown of news subjects by country:³

¹ Kirat, M. (2005) "Women and the Media in the Arab World: A Critical Appraisal".

² WACC (2005) *'Mission Possible': A Gender and Media Advocacy Toolkit*.

³ GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

	Female News Subjects	Male News Subjects
<u>Europe:</u>		
Cyprus	20%	80%
France	26%	74%
Greece	32%	68%
Italy	18%	82%
Malta	16%	84%
Turkey	24%	76%
<u>Arab region:</u>		
Egypt	38%	62%
Jordan	13%	87%
Lebanon	5%	95%
Mauritania	19%	81%
Tunisia	22%	78%

Table 5: Gender of News Subjects, by Country

Despite progress made in some countries, women remain remarkably underrepresented in the total population of persons that are seen or read about in the news, and the world, as depicted in the news, was predominantly male in a world where at least one half of the world's population is female.¹ This trend was evident in all the countries of the Mediterranean explored in this report. In the Arab region, women represented 16% only of news subjects (compared to 15% in 2005, 15% in 2000, and 14% in 1995); while in Europe they represented 26% of news subjects (compared to 21% in 2005, 19% in 2000, and 16% in 1995). These findings show progress in Europe and stagnation in the Arab region where the percentages increased minimally over the past 15 years, leaving the region below the world average of 24% and at the bottom of the list of world regions. Among the countries explored in this report, women's representation as news subjects was highest in Egypt at 38% and strikingly lowest in Lebanon at 5%.²

¹ Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

² GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

News sources from around the world showed that females as news subjects were four times more likely than males to be identified by family status and sex (18% to 5%).¹ In the Arab region in 2005, 12% of women, compared to 3% of men, were identified by family status. This meant that women were four times more likely than men to be identified by their family status; an improvement from the year 2000 where 30% of women, compared to 3% of men, were identified by family status. In Europe, 16% of women, compared to 5% of men, were identified by family status, which meant that women were three times more likely than men to be identified by their family status. This proportion represented a small improvement from the year 2000 where 18% of women, compared to 4% of men, were identified by family status.² The finding that women were almost four times more likely than men to be identified by family status “goes against efforts to assert women’s autonomy as individuals with roles, rights and responsibilities in the broader society beyond the home and household. It also discursively re-draws a gender divide in familial responsibilities that in reality is being eroded by men’s increasing childcare roles, as women work in paid labour outside the home.”³ This findings also highlighted the role that cultural norms played in shaping our view of the world and tended to dissociate men from familial responsibilities; thus the need for a more gender-critical approach to journalistic practices.⁴

The representation of women as news subjects differed from one media medium to the other, sometimes within the same country. In France for example, the *Paris Match* magazine fulfils gender diversity to a large extent because women feature in all its sections and constitute the subject of the article in 36% of cases, compared to 30% of articles around men and 34% of mixed articles. However, in the *Express* magazine, only 9% of the articles are centred on women and 47% on men.⁵ In Jordan, an evaluation of newspaper content showed that only 5% of news

¹ GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

² GMMP (2005) *Who Makes the News?*.

³ GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*, p. 16.

⁴ GMMP (2005) *Who Makes the News?*.

⁵ Groupement Régional pour l’Action et L’information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

pages were allocated to women's issues, while all other public issues, excluding matters related to women, made up 95% of news pages, and were most of the time written by men; thus furthering the marginalization of women. In Egypt, women represented 71% of the content of radio programming, but the content focused almost entirely on their traditional role as wives, females, and mothers.¹

The uneven representation of women in media extended to their uneven distribution across major news topics. The main topic areas where women appeared as news subjects in 2010 were the following:²

¹ UNIFEM (2008) التمكين السياسي للمرأة العربية ، دراسة لدور البرلمان ووسائل الاعلام في مصر والاردن والبحرين

² GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

	Politics/ Government	Economy	Science/ Health	Social/ Legal	Crime/ Violence	Celebrity/ Arts/Sports	Total
<u>Europe:</u>							
Cyprus	F: 12% M: 88%	F: 0% M: 100%	F: 20% M: 80%	F: 38% M: 62%	F: 14% M: 86%	F: 50% M: 50%	F: 20% M: 80%
France	F: 20% M: 80%	F: 27% M: 73%	F: 45% M: 55%	F: 69% M: 31%	F: 13% M: 87%	F: 24% M: 76%	F: 25% M: 75%
Greece	F: 27% M: 73%	F: 12% M: 88%	F: 56% M: 44%	F: 33% M: 67%	F: 44% M: 56%	F: 41% M: 59%	F: 32% M: 68%
Italy	F: 14% M: 86%	F: 11% M: 89%	F: 25% M: 75%	F: 15% M: 85%	F: 25% M: 75%	F: 17% M: 83%	F: 18% M: 82%
Malta	F: 25% M: 75%	F: 33% M: 67%	-	F: 40% M: 60%	F: 11% M: 89%	F: 5% M: 95%	F: 16% M: 84%
Turkey	F: 17% M: 83%	F: 0% M: 100%	F: 50% M: 50%	F: 14% M: 86%	F: 37% M: 63%	F: 24% M: 76%	F: 25% M: 75%
<u>Arab region:</u>							
Egypt	F: 50% M: 50%	F: 20% M: 80%	F: 100% M: 0%	F: 25% M: 75%	-	F: 67% M: 33%	F: 40% M: 60%
Jordan	F: 0% M: 100%	F: 0% M: 100%	F: 0% M: 100%	F: 50% M: 50%	-	F: 100% M: 0%	F: 13% M: 87%
Lebanon	F: 5% M: 95%	F: 20% M: 80%	F: 0% M: 100%	F: 5% M: 95%	F: 0% M: 100%	F: 0% M: 100%	F: 5% M: 95%
Mauritania	F: 10% M: 90%	F: 0% M: 100%	F: 67% M: 33%	F: 0% M: 100%	F: 50% M: 50%	F: 14% M: 86%	F: 19% M: 81%
Tunisia	F: 16% M: 84%	F: 0% M: 100%	F: 0% M: 100%	F: 53% M: 47%	F: 0% M: 100%	F: 49% M: 51%	F: 23% M: 77%

Table 6: Gender of News Subjects in Major Topic Areas

In general, men were highly more likely than women to appear in all the categories of major news topics, especially 'Politics and Government' and 'Economy' where the invisibility of women is at its peak. In their actual lived experiences, women have historically been

marginalized under these topics. The results in 2010 meant that “no challenge is offered as to the status quo”.¹ An equal appearance in major topic areas between women and men occurred only in some rare instances: ‘Politics and Government’ in Egypt; ‘Science and Health’ in Turkey; ‘Social and Legal’ in Jordan; ‘Crime and Violence’ in Mauritania; and ‘Celebrity, Arts, and Sports’ in Cyprus. The main topic areas where the number of women exceeded that of men is ‘Science and Health’ in Greece, Egypt, and Mauritania; ‘Social and Legal’ in France and Tunisia; and ‘Celebrity, Arts, and Sports’ in Egypt and Jordan. Lebanon experienced the lowest representation of women as news subjects in almost all major topic areas as well as in its total average, in comparison with the other countries explored, while Egypt experienced the highest total average (40%) of the representation of women as news subjects across the major topic areas in general.

The mere presence of women as news subjects across any major topic area did not suffice for them to be identified as legitimate citizens. Media and television in particular were deemed responsible for maintaining inequality in the exchanges between women and men: women continued to be under-portrayed in employment, for example, because their work remained a marginal phenomenon for television programmes. Even when women were portrayed in the professional world, they were often portrayed as holding positions that were hierarchically inferior or less prestigious than those of men.² Globally, the position/occupation in which women were featured in media was as follows: homemaker, parent (72%); student (54%); child (46%); celebrity (41%); office, service worker (45%); sex worker, prostitute (39%); resident, villager (39%); retired, pensioner (35%); unemployed (35%); activist or worker in a civil society organization (34%); royalty, monarchy (31%); academic expert, education professional (31%); health or social service professional (31%); media professional (29%); tradesperson, artisan, labourer (22%); government official (17%); government employee (17%); lawyer, judge, legal expert (17%); business person, executive (14%); agriculture, miner (13%); religious figure (13%); sportsperson (11%); science or technology professional (10%); criminal or suspect (8%);

¹ GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*, p. 30.

² Groupement Régional pour l’Action et L’information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

and police, military, security (7%). These findings showed that men outnumber women in almost all occupations, with the highest disparity in professions, particularly as legal professionals, public and/or civil servants, and scientists.¹ However, the proportion of female news subjects identified and portrayed as professionals has risen in some occupational categories over the last decade.²

An analysis of news subjects in major occupational groups (i.e., politician, government employee, education and health, business and law, celebrity, activist) showed that the highest representation of women in major occupational groups was found in Egypt at 38% and the most disappointing representation in Lebanon at 5%. The breakdown per country was the following:³

	Women in Major Occupational Groups	Men in Major Occupational Groups
<u>Europe:</u>		
Cyprus	20%	80%
France	26%	74%
Greece	32%	68%
Italy	18%	82%
Malta	16%	84%
Turkey	24%	76%
<u>Arab region:</u>		
Egypt	38%	63%
Jordan	13%	87%
Lebanon	5%	95%
Mauritania	19%	87%
Tunisia	22%	78%

Table 7: Gender of Persons in Major Occupational Groups

In addition to women's portrayal in major occupational groups or across major topic areas, the centrality of women to the news represents another indicator of their visibility or

¹ GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

² Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

³ GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

invisibility in media. In 2010, research showed that women were central in only 13% of stories around the world; an increase from 2005 where women were central to only 10% of stories. Yet, this improvement concerns only certain topic areas.¹ In 2005, in the Arab region, the results were disappointing as women were only central to the news in 6% of stories (a decrease from 17% in 2000). The results were disappointing in Europe as well, although more promising than in the Arab region as women were central to 10% of stories in 2005 (an increase from 7% in 2000). When compared with women's centrality in stories on the global level, the Arab region found itself below the world average of 10%, while Europe surpassed this average.²

A significant difference in reporting patterns can be seen in the relationship between the centrality of women in the news and the gender of the reporter behind the stories. Research showed that globally women were central in 13% of stories by female reporters, in contrast to 10% of stories by male reporters.³ In Malta, gendered reporting was perceived as an approach that is in favour of women as female reporters are able to express themselves differently than their male colleagues and have the right to choose subjects that they are interested in. Nevertheless, some female reporters choose to adopt a male pattern in their reporting to avoid appearing too soft, or because they find themselves following avenues that were set by male colleagues, or because they risk being assigned to soft news (i.e. celebrity, arts). In Turkish Cypriot media for example, "only women writers are bringing up [...] issues concerning the disadvantageous positions of women and the inequality between women and men in the public sphere, and in disputes in politics, peace, and democracy".⁴ The presence of female journalists does not however in itself guarantee the centrality of female news subjects in the news, although it may contribute to an enhanced attention to issues pertaining to women. In Italy for example, a promising 55% of news are reported by women; thus confirming that 'the journalistic profession is undergoing a process of feminization' (e.g., higher percentage of women presenters and

¹ GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

² GMMP (2005) *Who Makes the News?*.

³ GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

⁴ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*, p.4.

reporters) although women continue to report mostly soft news. Nevertheless, there is a huge gap in the centrality of women to the news in Italy compared to the global average: only 3% of all news stories in Italy address specifically issues relevant to women, while the global average rests at 13%. Despite this, more attention was posed to the feminine universe by female journalists than by male journalists.¹ Nevertheless, women's rights may still be tackled successfully by male media practitioners (i.e., Al Jazeera reporting on changes in Egypt's divorce law in 2000).² However, even when women's issues are addressed in media, and even if they are addressed by women, some women remain dissatisfied as they feel that the images portrayed of them are generalized and no distinctions are made concerning the needs of those from different backgrounds, ages and specializations.³ Furthermore, media tends to ignore certain groups of women such as older women, women from minority ethnicities and religious groups, the working class, and women with different sexual orientations; thus furthering their invisibility.⁴

Globally, in 2010, women in news stories were twice more likely than men to be portrayed as victims, 18% of women compared to 8% of men. A country analysis of this portrayal in 2010 showed that men were most likely to be portrayed as victims in Tunisia, followed by Lebanon, while women were most likely to be labelled as such in Egypt, followed by Greece. The country breakdown was the following:⁵

¹ Lucianetti, L. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Italy*, p. 9.

² Sakr, N. (2002) "Seen and Starting to Be Heard: Women and the Arab Media in a Decade of Change".

³ UNIFEM (2006) *المرأة العربية والاعلام، دراسة تحليلية للبحوث الصادرة بين 1995-2005*

⁴ WACC (2005) *'Mission Possible': A Gender and Media Advocacy Toolkit*; Wright, L. (2002) *Roundtable and Recommendations on Women in Media*; and Lowe Morna, C. (2002) *Promoting Gender Equality In and Through the Media – A Southern African Case Study*.

⁵ GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

	Women as Victims	Men as Victims
<u>Europe:</u>		
Cyprus	19%	81%
France	52%	48%
Greece	73%	27%
Italy	46%	54%
Malta	36%	64%
Turkey	55%	45%
<u>Arab region:</u>		
Egypt	100%	0%
Lebanon	13%	88%
Mauritania	50%	50%
Tunisia	0%	100%

Table 8: Gender of News Subjects Portrayed as Victims

In 2005, the victim portrayal in the Arab region was 10% for females and 14% for males; while in Europe the victim portrayal is 19% for females and 8% for males. As such, in Europe, as well as in all other regions in the world except the Arab region, a higher proportion of female than male news subjects was portrayed as victims.¹

The victim portrayal of women and men is more prevalent in some topics than in others. In Cyprus for instance, women were always portrayed as victims in news items relating to trafficking for sexual exploitation, while men in cases of robbery, crime, and murder in 88% of the time, and in accidents, disasters, poverty, and illness in 78% of the time. In general, women only appeared as news subjects when they are needy, victims, or making sacrifices as wives or mothers. The premise of motherhood is used to address the conscience and because priority is given to the role of women as mothers. Women who do not fit this frame but still want media coverage should have some sort of political background.² Although globally female news

¹ GMMP (2005) *Who Makes the News?*.

² Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

subjects were more likely than men to be portrayed as victims, it is important to point out that they were also twice more likely than men to be portrayed as survivors, 6% of women compared to 3% of men.¹

b) *Women's Voice in the News*

The majority of those speaking in media are men; while the invisibility of women is furthered by media that omits their voices and images.² Since media are closely related to ideas about social success and social status, and since women are perceived as having less social status, their views are deemed less important.³ Women are less frequently interviewed than men and their points of views are often neglected, for example in documentaries.⁴ In 2010, the functions held by women in stories were the following:⁵

¹ GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

² WACC (2005) *'Mission Possible': A Gender and Media Advocacy Toolkit*.

³ Van Dijck, B. (2002) *Screening Gender: Gender Portrayal and Programme Making Routines*.

⁴ Centre for Arab Women Training and Research (CAWTAR), website at www.cawtar.org

⁵ GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

	Do not know	Subject	Spokesperson	Expert/ Commentator	Personal Experience	Eye Witness	Popular Opinion	Total
Europe:								
Cyprus	F: 25% M: 75%	F: 20% M: 80%	F: 5% M: 95%	F: 14% M: 86%	F: 25% M: 75%	-	F: 25% M: 75%	F: 15% M: 85%
France	-	F: 26% M: 74%	F: 24% M: 76%	F: 23% M: 77%	F: 33% M: 67%	F: 32% M: 68%	F: 52% M: 48%	F: 28% M: 72%
Greece	F: 0% M: 100%	F: 32% M: 68%	F: 17% M: 83%	F: 28% M: 72%	F: 26% M: 74%	F: 14% M: 86%	F: 38% M: 62%	F: 26% M: 74%
Italy	F: 0% M: 100%	F: 18% M: 82%	F: 17% M: 83%	F: 12% M: 88%	F: 44% M: 56%	F: 31% M: 69%	F: 67% M: 33%	F: 19% M: 81%
Malta	F: 33% M: 67%	F: 16% M: 84%	F: 12% M: 88%	F: 31% M: 69%	F: 20% M: 80%	F: 50% M: 50%	F: 50% M: 50%	F: 15% M: 85%
Turkey	F: 0% M: 100%	F: 24% M: 76%	F: 13% M: 88%	F: 21% M: 79%	F: 14% M: 86%	F: 6% M: 94%	F: 67% M: 33%	F: 26% M: 74%
Arab region:								
Egypt	-	F: 38% M: 63%	F: 20% M: 80%	F: 0% M: 100%	-	-	-	F: 32% M: 68%
Jordan	F: 0% M: 100%	F: 13% M: 88%	F: 10% M: 90%	F: 30% M: 70%	F: 0% M: 100%	-	-	F: 16% M: 84%
Lebanon	F: 0% M: 100%	F: 5% M: 95%	F: 0% M: 100%	F: 0% M: 100%	F: 0% M: 100%	-	F: 30% M: 70%	F: 6% M: 94%
Mauritania	F: 20% M: 80%	F: 19% M: 81%	F: 0% M: 100%	F: 50% M: 50%	-	F: 0% M: 100%	-	F: 14% M: 86%
Tunisia	F: 44% M: 56%	F: 22% M: 78%	F: 9% M: 91%	F: 52% M: 48%	F: 50% M: 50%	F: 71% M: 29%	-	F: 27% M: 73%

Table 9: Function of News Subjects, by Gender and by Country

These findings showed that women remained lodged in the categories of ordinary people, while men continued to dominate in those of ‘Spokesperson’ and ‘Expert/Commentator’. When journalists were challenged about the low numbers of women in these categories, the explanations that they offered included: “no time to find a woman”, “no woman could be persuaded to speak”, “no suitable female expert could be found”, “a story highlighting the gender dimensions of a particular news topic was deemed unnewsworthy by the editor”. These

responses are part of the reality of news production. However, they represent a surface expression of tangled gender-based priorities.¹

Women were often simply missing from the news: they were less likely than men to be featured in news stories, and less likely to be interviewed or asked for an opinion.² As interviewees, a Cyprus study showed that “men appear in several important occupations with a high social status in stereotypically male fields, such as medicine, law, sports, agriculture and politics. On the other hand, women were only portrayed in news related to prostitution, trafficking and education”.³ And although women have broken into non-traditional roles that were previously dominated by men, they are seldom portrayed as politicians, newsmakers, experts, business leaders, and other leading roles in which men regularly feature.⁴

Part of the problem why women are not portrayed and interviewed as often as men is that sometimes women do not see themselves as important or as having high status. A programme maker may sometimes ask a woman to appear as an expert or spokesperson on a particular show, but she defers to a male colleague whom she believes has more important views on the subject.⁵ Therefore, personality traits such as feelings of vulnerability and inferiority among some women create obstacles for them and their empowerment in media.⁶ Even when media propose contents favourable of women (i.e., enhanced political role of women), few female experts are invited on television programs to take part in debates and the broadcasting time reserved to women is negligible compared to that of men.⁷ In Cyprus for example, women were quoted as news

¹ GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*, p. iii.

² Lowe Morna, C. (2002) *Promoting Gender Equality In and Through the Media – A Southern African Case Study*.

³ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*, p. 7.

⁴ Lowe Morna, C. (2002) *Promoting Gender Equality In and Through the Media – A Southern African Case Study*.

⁵ Van Dijck, B. (2002) *Screening Gender: Gender Portrayal and Programme Making Routines*.

⁶ Karam, A. and El Hajal, C. (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Lebanon and Some Arab Countries (Egypt, Syria, and Jordan)*.

⁷ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

sources only from Cypriot newspapers in the local news sections, while television and radio news always cited men as the news sources for both local and international news. This under-representation of women reflected the little value placed on women's opinions and judgements as was the case recently with the international financial crisis where men dominated 93% of sections dedicated to this topic. Globally, women were slightly more likely to be quoted (52%) than men (50%). However, given that the number of female subjects was far less than that of male subjects (24%), women's direct voice in the news remained quite minimal.¹

On television and radio, the rate of the presence of women (e.g., number of appearances, speaking time) also has an impact. In France for example, the presence of female-male on television news programmes in terms of the number of appearances differed remarkably among the different channels: on TF1, women were present in 38% of news programmes and men in 42% of them; on M6, the percentages were 44% and 34% respectively; while on Arte, they were 61% and 18% respectively. An analysis of speaking times (e.g., number of times someone speaks, length of speeches, average speaking time per speech) also showed uneven results as men, in general, tended to speak more frequently and for a longer time on television. Nevertheless, on France's first three channels, TF1, F2, and F3, the rate of presence and expression of women contributed to a "satisfactory visibility of women". Remarkable differences were evident on radio where men tended to speak more (except for the presenter) on all stations, but on some more than others: RTL showed the smallest gap as women's speaking time was 41% and men's 59%; while Skyrock and NRJ showed the most remarkable gap where women's speaking times was 7% and men's 93% for both stations.²

A more in depth analysis of the speaking times of women and men as experts casting their beliefs on radio showed that RTL radio station, which seems more egalitarian, allocated 25 minutes for male experts compared to 1 minute 35 seconds for female experts, with two female experts being called upon for every 10 male experts. However, women as non expert witnesses

¹ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

² Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*, p. 19.

benefited from more speaking times (14 minutes) than men in that same category (5 minutes). Nevertheless, radio is an extremely important communication medium that “enables a fairer image of women to be put across in real time and without being blurred by the actual image itself. Indeed voice makes desire less intrusive and the message is thus less distorted”.¹ It is worth noting that, in France, the proportion of female and male presenters and reporters on radio is almost equal.² In Lebanon, many gaps exist in terms of the allocation of media resources to the causes of CSOs such as the promotion of women’s rights. Research revealed that media outlets in Lebanon did not transmit the main message of CSOs in 19% of stories, allocated too little time to CSO messages in 23% of stories, focused only on officials in 24% of stories, the reporter covering the story lacked professional skills in 19% of stories, and many more gaps. The main concern however was the lack of attention allocated by the media to the work of CSOs in Lebanon.³

¹ Groupement Régional pour l’Action et L’information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*, p. 14.

² GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

³ Specialized Media & Advertising Research & Training Center (2010) *المؤسسات الاعلامية والمنظمات الاجتماعية في لبنان: اي علاقة؟ - دراسة ميدانية (Media Institutions and Civil Society Organizations in Lebanon: What Relationship? – Field Study)*.

PART III - Women as Media Practitioners

The interconnections between women, media organizations, and media content occupy an important place because the portrayal of women in the news is not only the result of media practices, but also that of the journalists and editors who decide what should be covered and how. The gender composition of the media workforce is therefore important because gender may be a factor in determining what makes the news and how.¹ Therefore, concern with the content of news should be extended to those who report it (e.g., news reporters), those who present it (i.e., news presenters), and those who make decisions about it (i.e., media practitioners in top positions).² Nevertheless, women seeking to enter the media field face numerous obstacles including the patriarchal attitudes in society, pay inequalities for similar types of work, discrimination in the assignment of tasks and promotions, inflexible work environments, lack of support systems and mechanisms, male ownership of media organizations, media's pursuit of profit, workplace discrimination, lack of gender-related policies by governments and media organizations, among many more.³ These obstacles are discussed in greater detail in Part IV of this report.

When women are absent from media organizations or are disempowered within these organizations, media policies and programs are more likely to lack gender sensitivity, and there would be an increased promotion of consumerism which relies on the sexualized image of women. Also, when women in media organizations are not found in large numbers, as is the case in written media, the lack of critical mass would promote a resistance among female media

¹ Karam, A. and El Hajal, C. (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Lebanon and Some Arab Countries (Egypt, Syria, and Jordan)*; and Lucianetti, L. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Italy*.

² GMMP (2005) *Who Makes the News?*.

³ Karam, A. and El Hajal, C. (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Lebanon and Some Arab Countries (Egypt, Syria, and Jordan)*.

practitioners to handle stories from a female perspective for fear of being typecast or marginalized within the organization.¹

Part III-A: The Gendered Reporting of News in the Mediterranean

Around the world, women are increasingly active partners in all kinds of media outlets. They are clearly visible, more numerous, and more influential. They have numerous profiles, especially in Western countries. Some, such as Oprah Winfrey, impose strong and striking personalities to the point of creating emulators in Europe and the Arab region. However, the freedom of tone, of intention, of choice of subjects, and so on, is not always possible,² and more so in the Arab region than in Europe.

In France, female media practitioners were strongly represented in programming and editorial teams in the various media outlets. They were television and radio presenters, as well as foreign correspondents; thus influencing the content of news.³ And although the distribution of roles between female and male media practitioners did not correspond to the current era, the situation in French media was not all that bad.⁴ This optimism was inexistent in Italian media where an under-representation of women, particularly in mainstream media, was noted. The shortcomings in Italy were more worrisome than those in other European countries in terms of equal opportunities for women in different media sectors. Female media practitioners in Italy were marginalized. Their growing engagement in different sectors of society was not reflected in media, and they did not contribute to the making of news, even if they possessed the necessary competence and expertise. The under-representation of women in media “on the one side reflects a society that still has not yet been able to fully include women, particularly in the public life

¹ Rahbani, L. (2010) *Women in Arab Media: Present But Not Heard*.

² El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

³ Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

⁴ Reiser, M. (2010, April) *Le danger d'un retour à un certain archaïsme existe*.

(which is obviously the most visible in media); on the other side contributes to a cultural attitude that does not promote a balanced approach and understanding of gender-specific issues.”¹

A 2010 analysis of the content of news stories showed that the Arab region led as the region with the highest percentage of news stories that clearly reinforced gender stereotypes² (81%), almost 20 times higher than stories that challenged them (4%). In Europe, the percentages were more promising with 46% of stories reinforcing stereotypes, almost 10 times higher than stories that challenged them (4%). As for stories that highlighted issues of inequality, it was found that 4% of stories in the Arab region (compared to 1% in 2005) and 3% of stories in Europe (compared to 3% in 2005) highlighted inequality issues. As such, in the Arab region, a seeming progress in reportage was highlighted where the percentage of stories highlighting issues of inequality increased to 4%; thus representing a possible change taking place in the region. The analysis of the content of news stories by country revealed the following proportions:³

¹ Lucianetti, L. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Italy*, p.6-7.

² Stories that reinforce stereotypes reinscribe the generalized, simplified and/or exaggerated assumptions of masculinity and femininity in a specific cultural context; those that challenge stereotypes attempt to overturn assumptions made about women and men concerning their attributes, traits, roles, and/or occupations.

³ GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

	Stories that reinforce stereotypes	Stories that challenge stereotypes	Stories that do not highlight issues of inequality	Stories that highlight issues of inequality
<u>Europe</u>				
Cyprus:	46%	1%	99%	1%
France:	70%	4%	87%	7%
Greece:	69%	6%	94%	4%
Italy:	14%	6%	96%	4%
Malta:	78%	2%	99%	1%
Turkey:	58%	5%	91%	5%
<u>Arab region</u>				
Egypt:	46%	38%	73%	27%
Jordan:	44%	52%	77%	18%
Lebanon:	100%	0%	99%	1%
Mauritania:	53%	13%	84%	16%
Tunisia:	62%	3%	82%	4%

Table 10: Stereotypes and Inequality Issues Addressed in News Stories, by Country

These findings showed that, in the countries explored in this report, news stories were highly unlikely to challenge stereotypes or to highlight issues in inequality, while commonly reinforcing stereotypes and omitting to highlight issues of inequality. Of all these countries, the most promising situation was found in Jordan and Egypt, while most countries revealed a disappointing trend including Lebanon, followed by Cyprus, Malta, and Tunisia.

The reinforcement of stereotypes in news stories differed depending on whether the stories were handled by a female or male reporter. Around the world, when stories reinforced social stereotypes, 35% of them were covered by female reporters, compared to 42% by male reporters. As for stories that clearly challenged stereotypes, 7% of them were covered by female reporters, compared to 4% by male reporters. “The dearth of stories that challenge stereotypes

implies a continued propagation of inequalities as well as lost opportunities to raise public awareness and encourage debate on these issues”.¹

The highlighting of issues of inequality in news stories also differed depending on the gender of the reporter. Around the world, when stories highlighted gender inequality, 46% of the time they were handled by female reporters, compared to 54% by male reporters. In Europe, stories with female reporters were more likely to raise issues of gender inequality than stories by male reporters: 7% of stories handled by women and 3% of stories handled by men. In the Arab region, there was no statistical difference as only 2% of stories handled by either female and male reporters raised issues of gender inequality. As for the stories that did not highlight gender inequality, 36% of the time they were handled by female reporters, compared to 64% by male reporters.²

A more in depth analysis of the content of news stories around the world revealed that stories raising gender inequality issues featured 44% of the time female news subjects and 56% of the time male news subjects. In the Arab region, female news subjects were featured in 71% of these stories and males in 29% of them. As for Europe, female news subjects were featured in 47% of these stories and males in 53% of them. When looking at the female-male ratio in stories that raise gender inequality issues, the Arab region ratio is enormous whereby only 3 in 10 individuals in stories highlighting inequality are male; while the gap in Europe is much narrower at 5 to 6 individuals.³

Can we assume that when there are more female reporters handling the news, there are more female subjects in the news? The answer is yes, but to a limited extent.⁴ A higher percentage of female news subjects featured in stories covered by female reporters (28%), than stories covered by male reporters (22%).⁵ In the Arab region, in 2005, 24% of stories covered by

¹ GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*, p. 30.

² GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Karam, A. and El Hajal, C. (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Lebanon and Some Arab Countries (Egypt, Syria, and Jordan)*.

⁵ GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

women featured female subjects, compared to 12% of stories covered by men.¹ In Europe, in 2010, 26% of stories covered by women featured female subjects, compared to 20% of stories covered by men. A country breakdown revealed the following proportions:²

	<u>Female Reporter</u>		<u>Male Reporter</u>	
	Female news subject	Male news subject	Female news subject	Male news subject
<u>Europe</u>				
Cyprus:	12%	88%	21%	79%
France:	37%	63%	28%	72%
Greece:	34%	66%	33%	67%
Italy:	19%	81%	17%	83%
Malta:	13%	88%	10%	90%
Turkey:	31%	69%	17%	83%
<u>Arab region</u>				
Egypt:	67%	33%	20%	80%
Jordan:	18%	82%	0%	100%
Lebanon:	4%	96%	7%	93%
Mauritania:	33%	67%	13%	88%
Tunisia:	25%	75%	21%	79%

Table 11: Gender of Reporter in Stories with Female and Male News Subjects

These findings showed that, in all of the countries explored in this report, women were slightly more likely than men to appear as news subjects when news stories were covered by female reporters, except for Lebanon where this trend was reversed as stories handled by a male reporter were slightly more likely to feature female news subjects than those handled by female reporters. Nevertheless, men were remarkably more likely than women to appear as news subjects, regardless of the gender of the reporter covering the news story, except for Egypt where women were twice more likely than men to appear as news subjects in stories handled by female reporters.

¹ GMMP (2005) *Who Makes the News?*.

² GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

In Cyprus, there are few by-lines to women in the Turkish Cypriot Media. Only days that are special to women (i.e., International women’s day) raise issues of concern to women and explore policies for improvement. Women’s points of view and/or voices are rarely heard in media, except in some rare instances where female journalists touch upon issues related to the existence of women. Therefore, only female media practitioners bring attention to themes on the disadvantageous position of women and their state of inequality in the public sphere.¹

An analysis of the relationship between the presence of women as reporters and their presence as news subjects showed that women were more likely to appear as news subjects in stories that addressed topics handled more frequently by women than by men. In other words, news topics that were more likely to be covered by females were more likely to feature female news subjects. The table below illustrates these findings:²

Topics with a high female presence	Female news subject	Female reporter
1. Poverty, housing, welfare	33%	51%
2. Celebrity news	34%	50%
3. Consumer news	32%	50%
4. Arts, entertainment	33%	48%
Topics with a high male presence	Female news subject	Male reporter
1. Economic policies, strategies	12%	30%
2. Foreign politics	13%	29%
3. Science, technology	12%	29%
4. Rural economy, agriculture	11%	28%
5. National defence	10%	27%

Table 12: Topics with a High Female Media Presence

Nevertheless, a woman who is a reporter is not automatically a gender-sensitive professional and any ally in trying to change media. There are instances where female reporters

¹ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (2005) *The Gender & Media Handbook – Promoting Equality, Diversity & Empowerment*.

² GMMP (2005) *Who Makes the News?*.

reproduce as many gender stereotypes and their male counterparts.¹ However, “the absence of women from the news [...] is the most powerful and pervasive stereotype of all”.² Positive media exposure is central to paving the way for the empowerment of women as it contributes to the elimination of the roots of discrimination against women and the stereotypes in cultural constructs.³ The persistence of stereotypes would ensure the persistence of the traditional stereotypes that negatively characterize women and limit their role to marginal activities.⁴

In the Maghreb, media content remained a masculine disposition through which men kept the grip on society, politics, business, economic, and finance. This was common in patriarchal societies that denied women some freedoms and opportunities. In Morocco specifically, although female media practitioners were often found in significant quantities, they were never in top positions except for one woman who is editor-in-chief.⁵ Furthermore, they are often confined to specific subjects such as culture, society, entertainment, and fashion. The assignment of male media practitioners to the more serious news programmes was also a reality in Algeria where media remained dominated by men. An increasing number of women in media were found in Syria, but this increase did not signify the end of their marginalization because it did not succeed in correcting the false impressions about women in media in terms of the equal treatment of women. Some were more optimistic about the presence of women as actors in media. Egyptian media specialist Zina Sharaf Eddine spoke about Arab women overcoming challenges and winning in the Arab Media, while Moroccan journalist Samira Zghider talked about a passage from beauty to competences. Nevertheless, this declared perception may only represent a common politically-correct stand being projected in public events. In general, and despite acknowledgement of achievements made by Arab women in Arab media, male hegemony persists and often impedes in media field. The consequence of the under-representation of

¹ WACC (2005) *'Mission Possible': A Gender and Media Advocacy Toolkit*.

² GMMP (2005) *Who Makes the News?*, p. 77.

³ Sakr, N. (2004) “Friend or Foe? Dependency Theory and Women’s Media Activism in the Arab Middle East”.

⁴ Wright, L. (2002) *Roundtable and Recommendations on Women in Media*.

⁵ It is noteworthy that the only women in a top post in media are a foreigner; a common phenomenon in Morocco.

women at all the different levels of media, despite their quantitative increase, was a loss of time in terms of evolution and promotion concerning the progress of women.¹ Can we assume that women make the news when media women make the editorial decisions? The role and impact of female media practitioners as decision-makers was discussed later in this report.

Part III-B: Current State of the Participation of Women in Different Media Outlets

Women are increasingly present in all media outlets and all countries. As journalists, they risked their lives to cover wars and conflicts at the risk of becoming the targets of terrorists. In Jordan and Algeria, women claimed positions of editor-in-chief. In France, more and more women are joining the ranks of journalists and other media jobs. In Lebanon, women occupy different positions in both local and Arab media.²

The sizeable increase in the female workforce in media has not been replicated uniformly across all countries. In the Arab world, broadcast media, notably satellite channels, and print media are employing more women. The increase in Arab satellite channels has been accompanied by an explosive increase in the number of women working as television presenters, producers, and reporters.³ The roles of women in these channels have not been confined to women's and children's programmes, but were also noticeable in serious genres of news and current affairs. Even women from the most conservative Arab societies gained access to these channels and their presence has been enforced by the establishment of such channels as Al-Jazeera, MBC, Rotana, Dubai, and many more.⁴ However, the privatization of State-owned companies in Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, and Tunisia resulted in the reduction of the number of jobs for all and the reduction or removal of safeguards that were introduced by previous governments for female employees. The female media practitioners that were most affected by

¹ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

² Fatany, S. (2006) *Women Journalists Share Experiences Around Med*.

³ UNDP (2006) *The Arab Human Development Report 2005 – Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World*.

⁴ "Arab Women and the Media – Call for Papers" (2009) *Special Issue Journal of Arab & Muslim Media Research*.

this change were part-time or temporary contractors. Nevertheless and in parallel with the privatization of media organizations, Arab countries witnessed an increase in non-government media outlets that increased employment for women.¹ This increase was noted by many.² However, the roles played by female media practitioners within their respective organizations was debatable as they rarely enjoyed the same status as their male counterparts in terms of access to news sources, representation on official bodies, or other requirements for success and security. This trend is felt heavily across all the countries explored in this report.³ Women remain at a distance from decision-making positions in all countries including in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia,⁴ and Lebanon.⁵

a) Women in Journalism

Women account for at least half of all graduates of professional journalism and communications training. In some countries around the world, women have even outnumbered men.⁶ However, in the journalistic profession in the Arab world, for example, men still dominate and women do not exceed 25% of the workforce and do not hold leadership positions, except for a select number of women who hold key positions in family-owned media organizations.⁷

¹ Sakr, N. (2001) *International and Regional Support Systems for Arab Media Women*.

² Rahbani, L. (2010) *Women in Arab Media: Present But Not Heard*; UNDP (2006) *The Arab Human Development Report 2005 – Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World*; and Dabbous-Sensenig (2000) “Media vs. Society in Lebanon: Schizophrenia in an Age of Globalisation”.

³ Sakr, N. (2001) *International and Regional Support Systems for Arab Media Women*.

⁴ El Bour, H. (2009) *Médiatisation de la Participation Politique de la Femme en Algérie, au Maroc et en Tunisie (Rapport de Synthèse de l’Exercice Media)*.

⁵ Mehanna, T. (2010) *Interview with Tania Mehanna on Women and the Media*; and Baroud, R. (2010) *Interview with Rania Baroud on Women and the Media*.

⁶ United Nations (2000) *The World’s Women 2000: Trends and Statistics*.

⁷ Kirat, M. (2005) “Women and the Media in the Arab World: A Critical Appraisal”.

In Lebanon, although women consisted of approximately 80% of media students, they represented only 28% of those working in media,¹ and were mostly found in positions related to public relations, archiving, secretarial duties, advertising, and programme presentation.² In 2002, in Egypt, women in journalism accounted for 28% of those in this profession, compared to less than 10% of accredited journalists in Jordan, less than 15% of those in Morocco, and 21% of those in Tunisia.³ Almost seven years later, in Tunisia, the number of female journalists reached 35% according to some studies⁴ and 45% of registered professional journalists according to other studies (while women consisted of 54% of all media practitioners in public media organizations).⁵ In Morocco, women represented 11% of journalists working for daily newspapers and 9% of those working in television.⁶ In the Maghreb in general, women are increasingly attending journalism and communication schools. Second year students in Morocco and Tunisia represented 75% of all students. As editors, women represented 35% in all Maghreb countries, except Mauritania.⁷ In French media in 2009, female journalists represented 44% of journalists who were allocated identification cards by the Commission for Professional

¹ Safadi Foundation (2010) *Safadi Foundation Statistics 2010 – Women Working in the Media in Lebanon*; and UNDP (2010) *Lebanon 2008-2009 – The National Human Development Report: Toward a Citizen's State*.

² Safadi Foundation (2010) *Safadi Foundation Statistics 2010 – Women Working in the Media in Lebanon*.

³ Crossette, B. (2002) *Access, Employment and Decision-Making*.

⁴ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

⁵ Methnani, R. (2010) من أجل اتّصال أكثر فاعليّة بين الاعلاميين والفاعلات السياسيات (*For a More Effective Communication Between Media Practitioners and Female Political Players*).

⁶ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

⁷ Ben Nablia, S. (2009) *Femme et Télévision au Maghreb: Amélioration de l'Image de la Femme dans les Télévisions du Maghreb Francophone*.

Journalists, while 60% of journalism students in France were female.¹ In Cyprus in 2005, only 20% of print journalists were women.²

The feminization of the journalistic profession in terms of an increase in the number of female presenters and reporters led to an increase of women membership in journalists' unions and associations. Despite that, women only represented about 29% of union memberships and 17% of members in union governing bodies in 2001. In 2008, in the Middle East and North Africa more specifically, women only occupied 12% of positions in union decision-making bodies; thus the need to increase the membership of women in journalists' unions and associations in order to improve the prospects of gender equality in media profession. In 2008, the numbers of female journalists in unions' governing bodies in some Arab countries was as follows:³

Country	Union	Total Board Members	Female Board Members	Percentage
Algeria	SNJ	9	0	0%
Egypt	EJS	13	1	7.7%
Lebanon	LPO	12	0	0%
Morocco	SNPM	19	5	26.3%
Tunisia	SNJT	9	3	33.3%

Table 13: Female Journalists in Unions' Governing Bodies

An improvement in the situation of female journalists, either as presenters or as reporters, could benefit for an increased participation of women in union memberships, and particularly in union governing bodies.

¹ Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

² Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*; and Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (2005) *The Gender & Media Handbook – Promoting Equality, Diversity & Empowerment*.

³ International Federation of Journalists (2009) *Getting the Balance Right: Gender Equality in Journalism*.

b) *Women as Presenters and Reporters*

A picture of gender balance in newsrooms can be drawn by analyzing the percentage of stories that are reported and presented by women.¹ A global analysis of the presence of women as presenters² and reporters in television, radio, and newspapers in 2005 showed that the only field in which women outnumbered men was as television presenters. Women represented 57% of television presenters, followed by 48% of radio presenters, 45% of radio reporters, 43% of television reporters, and 29% of newspaper reporters.³

As presenters, the world pattern showed that women represented 49% of presenters in 2010. The breakdown of the proportions of presenters in 2010 per country was as follows:⁴

	Female Presenters	Male Presenters
<u>Europe:</u>		
Cyprus	47%	53%
France	50%	50%
Greece	55%	45%
Italy	69%	31%
Malta	75%	25%
Turkey	0%	100%
<u>Arab region:</u>		
Egypt	54%	46%
Jordan	93%	7%
Lebanon	60%	40%
Mauritania	43%	57%
Tunisia	62%	38%

Table 14: Proportion of Female and Male Presenters, by Country

In general, female presenters gained more ground in television than in radio. In 2010, they represented 52% of television presenters and 45% of radio presenters around the world.

¹ GMMP (2005) *Who Makes the News?*.

² Presenters are sometimes called news anchors, news casters, announcers.

³ GMMP (2005) *Who Makes the News?*.

⁴ GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

Therefore, women outnumbered men as presenters on television screens (52% to 48% respectively). In the Arab region and Europe, the dominance of women as presenters was found in radio where they consisted of 50% of radio presenters, not in television where they consisted of 45% of television presenters.¹ However, despite the growing number of women as presenters in both television and radio, it is important to point out that presenters do not make the news or do so only partially: female presenters are not decision-makers as to what makes the news, nor managers of the information. In the Maghreb, female presenters are helpless as they face work inequality, are paid less than their male colleagues, tend to be obedient, and are not organized in trade unions. Furthermore, they do not receive proper professional training. Nevertheless, female presenters in all media outlets are very numerous and stand up as models for their audiences.² The high proportion of women working in this area is most likely due to the selection criteria that focus on appearance, with little regard for journalistic training.³

As reporters of news items, the presence of women has been increasing gradually around the world. Globally, it stood at 37% in 2010. In the Arab region specifically, 33% of reporters were women (a decrease of 1% from the year 2000), compared to 35% in Europe (an increase of 1% from the year 2000). In both regions, change has been so slow that it cannot be considered significant and it would take decades before parity is reached. The breakdown of the numbers of presenters per country was the following:⁴

¹ GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

² El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

³ GMMP (2005) *Who Makes the News?*.

⁴ GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

	Female Reporters	Male Reporters
<u>Europe:</u>		
Cyprus	39%	61%
France	47%	53%
Greece	34%	66%
Italy	43%	57%
Malta	37%	63%
Turkey	19%	81%
<u>Arab region:</u>		
Egypt	67%	33%
Jordan	61%	39%
Lebanon	43%	57%
Mauritania	13%	87%
Tunisia	29%	71%

Table 15: Proportion of Female and Male Reporters, by Country

In 2010, women reporters gained more ground in some media outlets than in others: they can be found in larger number in television (44%), followed by radio (37%), then newspapers (33%). The disproportionate representation of women in the visual as opposed to the written media which continues to be more ‘masculine’ may be linked to views that television is superficial and appearance-conscious.¹ In 2010, this trend was found in Europe where female reporters handled 31% of newspaper stories, 40% of stories on radio, and 42% of stories on television. In the Arab region however, female reporters were more present in the written than the visual media as they handled 38% of newspaper stories, 29% of stories on radio, and 29% of stories on television. On a media monitoring day in November 2009, the gender of presenters and reporters, and their presence in television, radio, and newspaper, was the following:²

¹ CMF MENA (2000) *Women’s Rights and the Arab Media*.

² GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

	<u>Television</u>				<u>Radio</u>				<u>Newspaper</u>	
	Presenter		Reporter		Presenter		Reporter		Reporter	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
<u>Europe:</u>										
Cyprus	36%	64%	35%	65%	73%	27%	67%	33%	50%	50%
France	37%	63%	37%	63%	55%	45%	53%	47%	48%	52%
Greece	49%	51%	41%	59%	76%	24%	18%	82%	30%	70%
Italy	57%	43%	52%	48%	100%	0%	34%	66%	33%	67%
Malta	83%	17%	37%	63%	61%	39%	62%	39%	6%	94%
Turkey ¹	33%	67%	75%	25%	33%	67%	-	-	18%	82%
<u>Arab region:</u>										
Egypt	54%	46%	100%	0%	-	-	-	-	50%	50%
Jordan	0%	100%	56%	44%	100%	0%	100%	0%	47%	53%
Lebanon	30%	70%	46%	54%	86%	14%	67%	33%	23%	77%
Mauritania	100%	0%	25%	75%	0%	100%	0%	100%	11%	89%
Tunisia	61%	39%	16%	84%	63%	38%	10%	90%	67%	33%

Table 16: Presenters and Reporters in Television, Radio, and Newspapers, by Gender and by Country

Around the world, the percentage of female presenters and reporters in 2010 in the Arab region and Europe was 46% and 41% respectively. Overall, written press was the most masculine media, and radio the least masculine. As presenters, women were more dominant than men in radio followed by television, and to a bigger extent in the Arab region than in Europe.² The feminine dominance as presenters in radio rather than in television may imply that being a television presenter is considered a better status position than a radio announcer and is therefore dominated by men, as is the case in Cyprus, although women dominate as radio announcers.³ As

¹ The data for Turkey has not been extracted from the GMMP (2010) as was the data for the other countries, although the GMMP confirms some of these data. Nevertheless, the data for Turkey was mainly extracted from: Lucianetti, L. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Italy*.

² GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

³ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

reporters, this likeliness decreased in the first two media outlets, television and radio, while the representation of women as reporters in newspapers did not exceed that of male reporters, except in Tunisia. Out of the countries explored in this report, Italy showed the most proportional representation between female and male presenters and reporters in television, France in radio, and Cyprus, Egypt, Jordan, and France in newspapers.¹ In another study focusing on Italy, the findings showed that most presenters in the Italian news environment were women. Although the results are not surprising for television where women have dominated the newscast for some time, the results showed an opening for the radio scene to female announcers. As reporters, the presence of females remained shy compared to their presence as presenters: they represented 38% of reporters in television, radio, and newspapers; and 77% of presenters. Television specifically showed more balance between female and male reporters than radio and print media (52% compared to 33% and 34% respectively). In Turkey, men were dominant as broadcasters in radio, reporters in newspapers, and announcers in television. Women were significantly dominant as television reporters where there is one man for every three women.² In Cyprus, while the proportion of newspaper reporters was equally divided between women and men, there is a shortage between the presence of women and men on television and radio, both as presenters and reporters: men were remarkably more dominant as in television, and women in radio. In Greece, women were only dominant as presenters on radio, while the imbalance was very evident as reporters in both radio and newspaper.³

In addition to the disproportionate representation of women and men in different media outlets, women and men reported different types of news as well. Women were more likely to report local, than national, international, or foreign news. In many countries, local stories are perceived as less important than national or international stories; while the latter are seen as more

¹ GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

² Lucianetti, L. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Italy*.

³ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

prestigious and can increase career prospects.¹ In 2010, women's visibility in foreign news increased to match their visibility in local news: 40% of all local stories were reported by women, compared to 38% of national stories, 32% of international stories, and 37% of foreign stories.² There is concern for the weak presence of women reporters in some fields. In situations of war for example, approximately 90% of those affected are women and children, but female war correspondents represent less than a third of all correspondents. The absence of women from war situations means that the information and reporting remain largely within the control of the military that can spin stories, or control reporting and public opinion.³ In the field of war correspondents however, women have made significant progress. Nevertheless, media organizations must consider the additional risks that women face such as threats of additional sexual violence, intimidation, and gender discrimination. For example, over 82% of women reporting war in 2005 reported physical attack or intimidation as they were covering conflict.⁴ In Lebanon, the year 2009 saw an increase in the number of female field correspondents as a result of an increase in live programming. Nonetheless, women remained underrepresented in management positions in all media outlets; more for some than for others.⁵ According to some analysts, we are seeing more women as special correspondents because, although this position was considered prestigious by the general public, it was no longer a well-paid position and did not represent the best way to access responsibility positions.⁶

The proportion of women reporters in main story topics also differed whereby some topics were more likely to be covered by women than by men. The main story topics in 2010 were categorized as follows:

¹ GMMP (2005) *Who Makes the News?*.

² GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

³ Wright, L. (2002) *Roundtable and Recommendations on Women in Media*.

⁴ International Federation of Journalists (2009) *Getting the Balance Right: Gender Equality in Journalism*.

⁵ Safadi Foundation (2010) *Safadi Foundation Statistics 2010 – Women Working in the Media in Lebanon*.

⁶ Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

- Science and health: 44%
- Social and legal: 43%
- The girl-child: 43%
- Economy: 40%
- Celebrity, arts and sport: 38%
- Crime and violence: 35%
- Politics and government: 33%

Women were most likely to report stories focusing on ‘Science and Health’ and least likely to report those focusing on ‘Politics and Government’. Yet, the latter topic placed highest on the hierarchy of news media agenda priorities and this can be seen in the percentage of stories that addressed it in all media outlets. Globally, the largest number of stories in media focused on issues related to politics and government (28% of stories), while issues of science and health were addressed the least (9% of stories). Stories in Europe supported this global trend as the largest number of stories in the news media focused on politics and government (31%), while the smallest number focused on science and health (11%). In the Arab region as well, stories covering the topics of politics and government were by far the most important priority for media as they were addressed in 48% of stories, while stories covering science and health issues represented only 11% of all stories; followed only by stories addressing topics of celebrity, arts, and sports which represented 7% of all news stories. A country analysis of the numbers of female and male reporters in major topic areas revealed the following proportions:¹

¹ GMMP (2010) *Who Makes the News?*.

	Politics/ Government		Economy		Science/ Health		Social/Legal		Crime/ Violence		Celebrity/ Arts/Sports	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
<u>Europe:</u>												
Cyprus	40%	60%	25%	75%	58%	42%	50%	50%	33%	67%	38%	62%
France	38%	62%	54%	46%	69%	31%	59%	41%	35%	65%	40%	60%
Greece	29%	71%	28%	72%	38%	62%	43%	57%	46%	54%	37%	63%
Italy	27%	73%	50%	50%	68%	32%	32%	68%	43%	57%	75%	25%
Malta	24%	76%	41%	59%	50%	50%	33%	67%	50%	50%	35%	65%
Turkey	29%	71%	33%	67%	9%	91%	26%	74%	6%	94%	33%	67%
<u>Arab region:</u>												
Egypt	-	-	50%	50%	-	-	-	-	-	-	100%	0%
Jordan	61%	39%	100%	0%	50%	50%	40%	60%	-	-	100%	0%
Lebanon	48%	52%	50%	50%	0%	100%	25%	75%	-	-	0	100%
Mauritania	8%	92%	0%	100%	50%	50%	33%	67%	0%	100%	0	100%
Tunisia	7%	93%	22%	78%	100%	0%	33%	67%	33%	67%	20%	80%

Table 17: Reporters in Major Topic Areas, by Gender and by Country

These findings show that, in Europe and the Arab region, women dominate mostly in stories addressing the topic of ‘Science and Health’, followed by ‘Social and Legal’ in Europe and ‘Celebrity, Arts, and Sports’ in the Arab region. In all other topics, male reporters and presenters represent a majority.

c) *Women as Decision-Makers in the Media*

Although the numbers of female media practitioners are edging towards a balance with those of their male counterparts, a shockingly low number of them advance to top positions in media (i.e., producers, executives, chief editors, publishers); thus gaining limited control over the defining of news, or over hiring and promotion practices.¹

¹ Lowe Morna, C. (2002) *Promoting Gender Equality In and Through the Media – A Southern African Case Study*; and International Federation of Journalists (2009) *Getting the Balance Right: Gender Equality in Journalism*.

Around the world, women consist of more than half of journalism students.¹ As actors in media, some explain that women are, on average, more qualified than men.² They are described as fair and engaged, possessing special skills such as an enhanced attention to detail and an ability to sympathize with others on humanitarian grounds, and inspiring a great sense of trust through their sensitivity to what happens around them.³ Female media practitioners can also capitalize on their gender to gain easier access to places where mostly women and children may be found.⁴ Some go as far as stating that women tend to be more disciplined and put a lot of effort and dedication into their work, in comparison with men, as a result of different personality traits among women and men, and different working habits.⁵ Women are also among the reporters who are not afraid to travel and to work in war zones. They are even more available to go abroad.⁶

The need for a more balanced, gender-sensitive approach to decision-making was emphasized by many who believed that there were too few women in decision-making areas, and that gender-sensitive strategies were not evident in media. Some critics believed that more men were in control of the decisions than were women; others disagreed and felt that no distinctions were made between women and men at decision-making levels because the selection of persons to these posts was based solely on competences.⁷ Research showed that, despite the fact that women have outnumbered men among mass communication and journalism students, and

¹ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

² Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

³ Karam, A. and El Hajal, C. (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Lebanon and Some Arab Countries (Egypt, Syria, and Jordan)*.

⁴ Rahbani, L. (2010) *Women in Arab Media: Present But Not Heard*.

⁵ Trad, G. (2010) *Interview with George Trad on Women and the Media*.

⁶ Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

⁷ Karam, A. and El Hajal, C. (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Lebanon and Some Arab Countries (Egypt, Syria, and Jordan)*.

although the percentage of female journalists has risen, the absence of women from senior decision-making posts was obvious.¹ In some countries and within some media organizations, women reached high positions, as is the case in some radio and television services in Egypt and Morocco.² Women reached relatively senior positions in the Jordan radio and in several departments within the Egyptian Radio and Television Union (ERTU) and the Radio Télévision Marocaine (RTM).³ However, as we go up the job ladder in different media organizations around the world, career prospects and opportunities for female media practitioners decrease.⁴ Consequently, women are underrepresented and, at times invisible, in some sectors of media.⁵ Overall, only 21% of women are at decision-making levels in media organizations.⁶

In an opinion poll conducted in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Morocco, about women's performance in leadership roles compared to the performance of men, 15% of respondents believed that women perform better than men in leadership roles, 52% spoke of a close performance, and 30% believe that women would perform worse than men (3% did not comment). However, the contribution of women to social development through media are incapacitated by their assignment to second grade tasks, mainly as a result of the male dominance of media environment where women are rarely involved in the decision-making process.⁷ In the Arab region more specifically, an added obstacle would be the burden of women's social responsibilities.⁸ In Cyprus for example, the poor representation of women in

¹ Gallagher, M. (2002) *Women, Media and Democratic Society: In Pursuit of Rights and Freedoms*.

² Crossette, B. (2002) *Access, Employment and Decision-Making*.

³ CMF MENA (2000) *Women's Rights and the Arab Media*.

⁴ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

⁵ Rahbani, L. (2010) *Women in Arab Media: Present But Not Heard*.

⁶ International Women's Media Foundation, website at www.iwmf.org

⁷ UNDP (2006) *The Arab Human Development Report 2005 – Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World*.

⁸ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

high positions of authority is partly due to a lack of infrastructure to support working mothers.¹ The obstacles limiting female media practitioners from attaining decision-making positions within media organizations are therefore numerous and are discussed in greater detail in part IV of this report.

The absence of women from leadership positions has a negative impact on women's access to information, the dissemination of information, and the sharing of women's viewpoints on issues of concern to women because specific concerns to women would remain a low priority for media organizations, the coverage of public policy issues that affect women would not be given adequate attention, and the voices of women would be stifled and restricted from reaching wider audiences.² In contrast, the importance of decision-making positions for media practitioners is that such positions allow them to have control over the type of media resources that are made public to media users and the type of public debates that take place in society. In other words, "they have the power to set agendas, to decide what is important enough to be discussed, how it should be discussed, which opinions should be heard and not heard, who will participate and who will be excluded".³ This soft power allows media to alter perceptions of self-interest and convince others of certain opinions and directions.⁴ The presence of women specifically in policy-making positions within media organizations would help the media industry decide what the true image of women should be, and consequently influence the general direction of programming and help counter the stereotyped images of women.⁵

Despite the increase in the number of women journalists in many Arab countries, the real power remains in the hands of men because conceptions and mentalities have not changed, and

¹ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (2005) *The Gender & Media Handbook – Promoting Equality, Diversity & Empowerment*.

² Henley Jensen, R. (2002) *A Call for a Global Grassroots Campaign to Enhance Women's Access, Employment and Image in the Media through Creating Additional Standards for Paid Legal Notices*.

³ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (2005) *The Gender & Media Handbook – Promoting Equality, Diversity & Empowerment*, p. 65.

⁴ Sakr, N. (2002) "Seen and Starting to Be Heard: Women and the Arab Media in a Decade of Change".

⁵ UNDP (2006) *The Arab Human Development Report 2005 – Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World*.

neither has the power structure of news organizations. And as far as the power structure in society remains unchanged, the dominant forces will keep on excluding women from the circle of power and decision-making.¹ Deciding who makes the news is partly influenced by the ownership of news organizations which is found in the hands of men with only a few exceptions. This is more so for the ownership of political and hard news media, than for social media or children programming. It is more common to see women as owners of companies that produce social publications, but even then, women represent a minority of owners.²

In Lebanon for example, only 12% of news agencies were owned by women.³ The Lebanese experience was flagrant because, with around 85% of journalism and communication students being females (a percentage higher than in many European countries), top ranking positions continued to be monopolized by men as women hold roughly 18% of these positions.⁴ In France, female media practitioners were scarce in responsibility positions and their proportion was less than 10% in strategic management positions in media (i.e., General Managing Director, Chair of the Managing Board). They held on average 9% of management positions in all types of French media (10% in non-specialized television channels, 7% in non-specialized radios, 4% in national daily newspapers for general news, 15% in national news magazines). They represented 27% of directors, 37% of press office directors, and 22% of chief editors in all types of media. Female media practitioners represented only 17% of former journalists who became directors, but were more present in intermediate positions.⁵ The trend was similar in Morocco where male media practitioners accounted for 75% of positions of higher positions in important media companies. In contrast, female media practitioners represented about 90% of some positions such as secretarial and director assistant. Therefore, women were very numerous in less prestigious

¹ Kirat, M. (2005) "Women and the Media in the Arab World: A Critical Appraisal".

² UNDP (2006) *The Arab Human Development Report 2005 – Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World*.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Dabbous-Sensenig, D. (2000) "Media vs. Society in Lebanon: Schizophrenia in an Age of Globalisation".

⁵ Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

positions, and were becoming increasingly absent at the executive, managerial, or presidential levels. However, female media practitioners held a revolutionary position in the Moroccan radio: out of 11 radio stations in the country, there were five female directors of information in an area that was formerly the preserve of men. Yet, even women who reached positions of authority in media have not been able to instigate much change and did not have the ability to create a new image of themselves and of other women, and remained not as important as men, thus becoming “marginalized being in power”.¹ In Cyprus, less than 1% of female journalists were in high positions of authority “thus making the outnumbering of female journalism students irrelevant as women are failing to reach top positions in the industry”. A worrying factor among Cypriot women was that they rarely felt the need to participate actively in public posts as a result of their reluctance to become visible, which would invite further social pressure towards them. As such, decision-making was left to men because women, through their attitude towards decision-making, showed that they cannot cope with the pressures of spotlight.² Women represented only 2 out of 23 chief editors of national newspapers in Cyprus, while representing 44% of journalists in the country.³

Despite common beliefs that gender balance in media would shift in time as more female students entered the profession, the predominance of female students which stretched back to the 1980s has yet to achieve this balance.⁴ Unfortunately, jobs in the administrative categories do not offer reasonable career prospects in media. In some countries, female university graduates accept this type of work in the belief that, once inside the organization, they would move on to more creative work. In reality, this rarely happens. Over time, women tend to lose their self-esteem and come to believe that, regardless of their ambitions, they do not deserve more than their

¹ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*, p. 106.

² Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*, p. 8.

³ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (2005) *The Gender & Media Handbook – Promoting Equality, Diversity & Empowerment*.

⁴ Gallagher, M. (2002) *Women, Media and Democratic Society: In Pursuit of Rights and Freedoms*.

current jobs. Moreover, if administrative jobs are excluded from the statistical analysis of women's work in media, women's overall share of media employment would fall substantially.¹

In any case, there is a need for more than one woman in an influential position within a single media organization to begin to influence editorial approaches. At the same time, the ability of the critical mass to initiate change would still depend on the strength of the demand made by women in the workforce as a whole.²

While it is heartening to see that some women can and do succeed in reaching the summit of media management, it is nonetheless salutary to recognise that these women represent a tiny proportion of all women working in media. Of course, only a minority of men reaches the top. But proportionately, men are much more likely to succeed than women are. Analysis of European broadcasting data shows that, at the top level of the management hierarchy can be found:

- 1 in every 1000 female employees
- 1 in every 140 male employees³

The seniority and high visibility of women in media does not always signify authority over program content.⁴ In Lebanon, program or editorial content in relation to gender is not necessarily censored or restricted as a result of the agendas held by media organizations, but rather as a result of restrictions imposed by the Lebanese legal system on what is deemed sensitive or unacceptable content.⁵ In Egypt, women are strongly present in television and radio but ERTU operates within a strict code of ethics which prohibits the ability of staff to criticize religion, traditions, beliefs, or the national system. Those who do not follow these guidelines have been known to get jailed, or have had their story ideas blocked and scripts cut by State censors. In the Egyptian print media, women have neither seniority nor editorial freedom. Here, the mechanisms of government censorship operate at the level of licensing and enforcement of the press-related penal code amendments. The only senior positions that women occupy in the

¹ Gallagher, M. (1995) *An Unfinished Story: Gender Patterns in Media Employment*.

² Sakr, N. (2002) "Seen and Starting to Be Heard: Women and the Arab Media in a Decade of Change".

³ Gallagher, M. (1995) *An Unfinished Story: Gender Patterns in Media Employment*, p.52.

⁴ Sakr, N. (2002) "Seen and Starting to Be Heard: Women and the Arab Media in a Decade of Change".

⁵ Mehanna, T. (2010) *Interview with Tania Mehanna on Women and the Media*.

Egyptian press are in women's or children's magazines, and in one literary journal. "The explanation for this seems to lie in a combination of censorship and personal loyalties [whereby] media professionals in any situation draw on friendship networks to gather news and background information". As for the senior appointments in the leading national newspapers, they are a presidential prerogative and are rewarded to select media practitioners.¹

d) *Women in the Face of Employment (In)Equity*

There is an international trend in of women outnumbering men in journalism schools.² However, in the Arab region, for example, the prevailing male culture contributed strongly to the weak economic participation of Arab women that remained the lowest in the world. This was reflected in employers' preference to employ men, wage discrimination between the sexes, and high reproductive rates. It was also reflected in laws that hinder women (i.e., personal status and labour legislation which restrict a woman's freedom by requiring a man's permission for a woman to be able to work, travel, or borrow from financial institutions).³ In the Maghreb, efforts made by governments, organizations, and companies to create job opportunities for women provided the latter with as many opportunities as their European counterparts. However, some men, and they are not a minority, continue to think that "women's access to the labor market reduces the chances for men to find an employment".⁴ Furthermore, women are held back from participating fully in the economy partially due to the work they carry out raising children, looking after other persons, or housework.⁵ Even when women work, the man is considered the

¹ Sakr, N. (2002) "Seen and Starting to Be Heard: Women and the Arab Media in a Decade of Change", p. 842.

² Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

³ UNDP (2006) *The Arab Human Development Report 2005 – Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World*.

⁴ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*, p. 28.

⁵ Eurostat European Commission (2010) *Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion: A Statistical Portrait of the European Union 2010*.

main breadwinner of the family, while the woman's labour is perceived as supplemental.¹ As a result of this state, women are still being doubted and belittled by their male colleagues.² A public opinion poll conducted in 2005 in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Morocco, to explore certain aspects of the rise of Arab women revealed that 91% of those polled agreed that women should have an equal right to work, 78% agreed that women should have the right to equal work conditions, and 89% agreed that women should have the right to equal employment benefits.

In Lebanon, media practitioners claimed that remuneration in media was applied equally to both women and men, and based solely on qualifications and job description regardless of gender.³ This trend was similar in Egypt,⁴ Greece, Malta, and Cyprus.⁵ In contrast, the situation in France differed as female media practitioners received lower wages than their male colleagues for the same work.⁶ In French media, gender disparity was found as far as wages and promotions were concerned. Female journalists were generally less well paid than their male colleagues; a difference in wages that can reach up to 25% for equal responsibilities and qualifications. Some argued that equality in wages was enforced in principle, but inequalities were created and enforced with the responsibility-linked bonuses that were often awarded to men.⁷ In addition, the pay gap suffered as a result of family-unfriendly working practices such as inflexible working hours or the penalization of women for taking time off to raise children.⁸ A 2010 Eurostat report

¹ UNDP (2010) *Lebanon 2008-2009 – The National Human Development Report: Toward a Citizen's State*.

² Obeidat, R. (2002) *Content and Representation of Women in the Arab Media*.

³ Karam, A. and El Hajal, C. (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Lebanon and Some Arab Countries (Egypt, Syria, and Jordan)*.

⁴ Fatany, S. (2006) *Women Journalists Share Experiences Around Med*.

⁵ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

⁶ Fatany, S. (2006) *Women Journalists Share Experiences Around Med*; and Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

⁷ Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

⁸ International Federation of Journalists (2009) *Getting the Balance Right: Gender Equality in Journalism*.

on income by gender showed a gender pay gap, whereby males earned more than females in Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, and Malta. The pay gap ranged from 23% for Cyprus, to 21% for Greece, 17% for France, 5% for Malta, and 4% for Italy. Overall, the average employment rate for women in the 27 European Union countries was 59%, which remains well below the 73% rate for men.¹

In Italy, issues of gender representation and women's presence in the news were of much concern because, in comparison to other European countries, the shortcomings were worrisome concerning women's equal opportunities in different sectors.² Employment data showed that Italy featured at the bottom amongst 27 European countries with a female employment rate of approximately 46%, just before Malta at 38% (compared to a European employment rate for women at 65%).³ The shortcomings in Italy were also in terms of equal employment opportunities for women in radio, television, and the press. In Europe, Greece stood out as a country in which women accounted for a relatively high proportion of media employees in comparison with their overall participation in the labour force.⁴ In a 2010 Eurostat report on employment rates for women and men in Europe, the findings showed a significantly higher employment rate for men in Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, and Turkey. The same tendency was found in the unemployment rates of women which were higher than those of men in all the above-mentioned countries.⁵

Gender disparity between female and male media practitioners was not only limited to remuneration. A study of the employment status of women around the world showed that women were often in relatively precarious positions. Their share in the broadcast media varied according to the type of employment contract: women represented only 26% of permanent, full-time

¹ Eurostat European Commission (2010) *Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion: A Statistical Portrait of the European Union 2010*.

² Lucianetti, L. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Italy*.

³ Eurostat European Commission, website at <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/>

⁴ Gallagher, M. (1995) *An Unfinished Story: Gender Patterns in Media Employment*.

⁵ Eurostat European Commission (2010a) *Europe in Figures: Eurostat Yearbook 2010*.

workforce; 79% of the permanent, part-time workforce; and 44% of the temporary workforce. An identical pattern of the precarious situation of women can be found in the print media. This tendency was the case in all regions of the world as women were more likely to be found in part-time rather than full-time permanent work.¹ In France specifically, this tendency was on the rise and women were more likely to work on a part-time basis (although this type of work was less common in journalism). Women represented 42% of permanent journalists paid monthly, but 51% of free-lance journalists. Overall, the professional situation of women in media in France was more non-egalitarian than in other activity sectors and the progress was slow.² Part-time, temporary or free-lance positions for female media practitioners put the latter in “more vulnerable positions in terms of job security, promotions, legal status and ability to share the same rights as contracted colleagues”.³

Discrimination against women in media may also be found in the assignment of tasks to media practitioners. In the Arab region, the assignment of tasks takes into consideration the issue of gender, among other factors, because a woman’s availability differs from that of a man (i.e., working late, travelling), and so did her attitude, competences (e.g., men are more knowledgeable of certain topics), and security needs (i.e., threat of sexual harassment). The perceived difference between female and male media practitioners was largely due to the nature of society which was often still dominated by taboos and traditions.⁴ Discrimination can also be found in the underrepresentation of women when it comes to covering political, economic, and social issues that are considered as being most important. Women are commonly assigned to lunch hour or weekend news, whereas the position of newsreader at the 10pm news was reserved

¹ Gallagher, M. (1995) *An Unfinished Story: Gender Patterns in Media Employment*.

² Groupement Régional pour l’Action et L’information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

³ International Federation of Journalists (2009) *Getting the Balance Right: Gender Equality in Journalism*, p. 6.

⁴ Trad, G. (2010) *Interview with George Trad on Women and the Media*.

for men for a long time. In Italy for example, only 1% of women are allowed to publish on the front page of the main Italian newspapers.¹

e) *The Appearance of Female Media Practitioners in Television*

An ever increasing importance of the appearance of female media practitioners is prevalent, but more for some roles (i.e., broadcasters, reporters) than for others (i.e., writers). The focus on physical appearance has become more and more evident over the past few years in the selection of female broadcasters in Arab television stations.² Female broadcasters must satisfy beauty and elegance requirements in order to be hired. The physical appearance of these broadcasters is taken into consideration even before considering their pronunciation and reading capabilities.³ Many television channels rely to some extent on the beauty of the broadcaster to gain popularity, which has led to an increase in the demand for beautiful and attractive women. For example, half the presenters on MBC television channel, either female or male, are Lebanese because they are renowned for their ability to attract and entertain.⁴ In France, women journalists, particularly on television, have been appointed because their physical appearance. Nevertheless, focus on the appearance of women is an obstacle to their attainment of high level positions in media. At a time when 46% of presenters are women, only 17.5% of chief editors are women because “young and pretty women appear to be used as a foil for a team of male directors”.⁵ In the Maghreb, networks such as Iqraa, a channel dealing with religion, or Al Jazeera, dealing with politics, are strongly influential, and five female journalists were dismissed

¹ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

² Karam, A. and El Hajal, C. (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Lebanon and Some Arab Countries (Egypt, Syria, and Jordan)*.

³ CMF MENA (2000) *Women's Rights and the Arab Media*.

⁴ UNIFEM (2006) *المرأة العربية والاعلام، دراسة تحليلية للبحوث الصادرة بين 1995-2005*.

⁵ Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*, p. 27.

from their work because they refused to wear the veil and long dresses, which affected public opinion because it reflected a rejection of a repressive male order.¹

The importance allocated to the on-screen appearance of women can be measured by charting their ages. Female reporters, and in particular female presenters, “disappear from the television screen once they reach 50”. Up to the age of 34, women are seen more frequently than men on television, as both presenters and reporters. By the age of 50, women presenters and reporters are dramatically underrepresented and consist of only 17% of reporters and 7% of presenters. These findings suppose that, once they reach a certain age, women are cast aside either to an off-screen role or outside television completely.² Furthermore, the greater tendency to see older men than older women as presenters or reporters on television screens is due to the common perception that, as they age, women get older while men become more mature. In turn, media organizations are simply providing for popular taste and preferences. When there is a certain trend in society, media organizations react to them, and the reaction creates a trend. Consequently, we find ourselves in a challenging vicious circle.³ In Algeria, the trend is the same. Although wrinkles are usually synonymous with experience and maturity, a woman disappears from the screen as soon as she starts to feel the impact of age. Therefore, there is a tight relationship between a women’s age and beauty, and her presence in media. This trend is characteristic of the Arab countries more generally as television antennas are entrusted almost exclusively to young women “encouraging in this way that only young women have a social, aesthetic, commercial and therefore selling interest, to the detriment of older women, when they could be better journalists and opinion leaders”.⁴ An improvement was noted in Malta where more stories on television are presented by older women. Five years ago, only 7% of stories were

¹ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

² GMMP (2005) *Who Makes the News?*, p. 62.

³ Mehanna, T. (2010) *Interview with Tania Mehanna on Women and the Media*.

⁴ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*, p. 37.

presented by women between the ages of 50 and 64, compared to 51% in 2010; a remarkable rise and a possible achievement of numerical parity of male colleagues in the same age range.¹

There is plenty of room for frustration as a result of workplace discrimination that female media practitioners face within their respective organizations.² In the journalistic profession, female practitioners face discrimination because the leadership positions in news organizations are dominated by men; an event that may be partially due to discrimination between women and men with regard to training, job advancement, responsibilities, and assignments abroad. In Jordan, it was found that many women entering the field of journalism end up leaving it in the absence of training which result in a lack of technical or managerial skills, or a lack of promotion to senior positions. As a result, some women choose to switch to other careers while most media organizations continue to privilege the dominant discourses about women and shed little light on the issues of importance to women;³ others leave the profession because they see no future for themselves in a male-dominated field.⁴

¹ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

² CMF MENA (2000) *Women's Rights and the Arab Media*, p. 78.

³ Kirat, M. (2005) "Women and the Media in the Arab World: A Critical Appraisal".

⁴ Crossette, B. (2002) *Access, Employment and Decision-Making*.

PART IV – Obstacles to the Empowerment of Women in Media

The disempowerment of women in media, both through a negative portrayal or a limited access to and participation in media organizations, hinders women's full participation in society and conceals the positive developments that they attain in the spheres of life. Despite much improvement over the past couple of decades, and the diminishing cultural barriers for the entry of women into the field of media, particularly in Arab societies, obstacles remain, but to a lesser extent in some countries or societies than in others. These obstacles are numerous, and although there are differences in the types of obstacles encountered from one region to the other, Europe and the Arab region, and between different societies within a single country, there are many common impediments based on gender bias and discrimination. These impediments emanate from the systems and practices of stakeholders in the media field:

A) Governments in power:

- Lack of willingness to establish and/or implement gender-related policies;
- Lack of or inefficient adherence to international gender-related laws and instruments;
- Inability to include PSB and independent regulatory bodies for media as part of a comprehensive plan of action; and
- Control and censorship of media, and control of the freedom of expression and association.

B) Media organizations' structures and working procedures:

- Lack of a gender perspective in media policies;
- Absence of women's voices in media and lack of coverage of women's issues;
- Prioritization of political or business agendas;
- Ownership of media enterprises by men;
- Media organizations' pursuit of profit;
- Importation of foreign media products such as television programs and magazines;
- Negative portrayal of women in religious programming; and
- Lack of professionalization of some careers in media.

C) The patriarchal nature of Arab societies and stereotyped attitudes.

D) Women's personalities and place in society:

- Limited access to and growth in media organizations;
- Lack of access to ICT;
- Lack of a support structure;
- Presence of unskilled women in media;
- Reluctance to make use of laws:
- Lack of role models or mentors;
- Feelings of inferiority and vulnerability;
- Internalization of discriminatory perceptions or lack of awareness of them.

E) Lack of studies on women in media.

These obstacles created barriers to the achievement of a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in media, as well as to women's equal access and advancement within media organizations.

Part IV-A: Governments in Power

Governments may play a dual role in the (dis)empowerment of women in media. The first role is a positive one that consists of the establishment, implementation, and adherence to gender-related laws; while the other is a negative one manifested through controls and censorship of media, the freedom of expression, and that of association.

Lack of willingness to establish and implement gender related policies: Governments in some of the countries explored in this report have undertaken a number of initiatives and projects to reduce or put an end to discriminatory practices in media on the basis of gender.¹ These efforts were not encompassing and therefore unsuccessful in closing the gender gap and empowering women in media in a balanced manner. Generally, and in the Arab region more specifically, a lack of governmental willingness to establish and implement gender-related policies was apparent and detrimental to the situation of women in media as it, on one hand,

¹ Examples of initiatives and projects undertaken by the governments of the countries explored in this report are outlined in Appendix B.

allowed a biased and negative reporting of women and, on the other hand, contributed to women's limited access and participation in media organizations.¹

In the Arab world, gender sensitive policies are almost inexistent. The problem of gender-sensitive media policies lies within an Arab context where the human rights of women and men are not the same. This issue has been mainly documented with respect to labour laws, personal status laws, and civil laws. The absence of gender-sensitive policies was largely attributed to government decisions, traditional values, and patriarchal interpretations of Islam which persist despite a growing awareness in Arab countries of the unfair treatment of Arab women. Even in Lebanon which is considered the most westernized country in the Arab world and one that is best placed to reflect some gender sensitivity, the Union of Journalists' code of ethics dates back to the pre-civil war period and does not include gender provisions concerning the fair portrayal of women. The 1994 Lebanese Broadcasting Act, the first law on private broadcasting in the Arab world, avoided dealing with gender in media policies. The same applied with respect to labour laws in the Arab world which lacked policies on sexual harassment in the workplace and were characterized by unequal health insurance and retirement plans, among other inequalities. As such, the Arab region remained predominantly a culture of religious patriarchy and conservatism, and governments avoided challenging the status-quo and redefining gender roles and policies.² In Malta, when journalists try to bring gender awareness to the news, they are faced with the justification that the sexist images of women appearing in the news "sell" and in the end "news is news".³

Responsibility for this state of affairs can be allocated to the political decisions made by authoritarian political systems in most Arab countries, inexperience, underdevelopment, traditional values found within each society, and the dominant patriarchal interpretations of

¹ Karam, A. and El Hajal, C. (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Lebanon and Some Arab Countries (Egypt, Syria, and Jordan)*.

² Dabbous-Sensenig (2002) *The Arab World and the Challenge of Introducing Gender-Sensitive Communication Policies*.

³ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*, p. 20.

Islamic religion. The weakness or absence of civil society organizations in Arab countries may account for the slow change in the status of women as CSOs have little room for manoeuvre and can face persecution from governmental authorities or radical religious groups wanting to maintain the status-quo. For example in Lebanon, racist portrayals of female domestic workers do not seem problematic to the authorities or existing regulatory bodies such as the National Audio-Visual Council. Yet criticisms of Islam or heads of State instigate serious sanctions. Another example in Turkey is that of Konca Kuris, a Muslim feminist and scholar who was kidnapped and killed by a Muslim fundamentalist group for arguing against the segregation of the sexes in Muslim societies from a Muslim perspective.

As far as Arab governments fail to address the role, power, and impact of these components of Arab countries, it would be difficult for them to affect change in the area of gender equality.¹

Lack of or inefficient adherence to international gender-related laws and instruments: On the international level, a number of gender-related instruments exist, such as the core United Nations human rights instruments and the core International Labour Organization conventions, among others (Appendix F). The countries explored in this report have signed and ratified to differing extents a large number of these instruments. Nevertheless, even when countries sign these legal texts, they often do so with reservations, sometimes on the most basic clauses; thus negating the spirit and purpose of these laws and instruments.

If we take a close look at the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), a major international law instrument regarding the status of women and the only human rights convention that is gender-specific, the weak adherence to this instrument is evident, especially in the Arab region, and creates an obstacle to a gender-fair portrayal of women in media. The weak adherence to these instruments is at times related to a State's incapacity, despite its willingness, to implement the instrument in question. At other times, States introduce certain laws as a result of external or internal pressures, but have

¹ Dabbous-Sensenig (2002) *The Arab World and the Challenge of Introducing Gender-Sensitive Communication Policies*.

no intention of implementing them.¹ In the case of the CEDAW, the reservations placed by signatory States on their accession to some provisions found in the Convention were related to basic clauses (with the exception of Greece, Italy, and Mauritania); thus negating the spirit and purpose of the Convention. Reservations were however more numerous among Arab State parties than among European ones as shown in this table:²

¹ Dabbous-Sensenig (2002) *The Arab World and the Challenge of Introducing Gender-Sensitive Communication Policies*.

² United Nations Treaty Collection, website at <http://treaties.un.org/>

State	Date of Signature	Date of Ratification/ Accession	Art. 2	Art. 9	Art. 11	Art. 13	Art. 14	Art. 15	Art. 16	Art. 29
<u>Europe</u>										
Cyprus:		1985								
France:	1980	1983					X		X	X
Greece:	1982	1983								
Malta:		1991			X	X		X	X	
Italy: ¹	1980	1985								
Turkey:		1985		X						X
<u>Arab region</u>										
Algeria:	1996	1996	X	X				X	X	X
Egypt: ²	1980	1981	X	X					X	X
Jordan:	1980	1992		X				X	X	
Lebanon:	1997	1997		X					X	X
Libya:		1989	X						X	
Mauritania: ³	2001	2001								
Morocco:	1993	1993		X					X	X
Syria:	2003	2003	X	X				X	X	X
Tunisia:	1980	1985		X					X	X

Article 2: Policy measures
 Article 9: Nationality
 Article 11: Employment
 Article 13: Economic and social benefits
 Article 14: Rural women
 Article 15: Law
 Article 16: Marriage and family life
 Article 29: Administration of the Convention

Table 188: States Parties to the CEDAW and the Reservations Placed on their Accession

¹ Italy reserves the right to exercise, when depositing the instrument of ratification, the option provided for in article 19 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties of 23 May 1969.

² Egypt placed a general reservation to the CEDAW: All that contradicts Islamic Sharia.

³ Mauritania placed a general reservation to the CEDAW: All that contradicts Islamic Sharia or the Constitution.

The reservations placed by these countries raise doubt as to their commitment to the object and purpose of the Convention: the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. For example, the reservations placed by Arab governments, in particular, appear to be contrary to the principle of equality in relation to the issue of nationality, family, personal status, and the provisions of Islamic Sharia.¹ A public opinion poll conducted in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Morocco on various aspects of the CEDAW showed that a striking majority of those surveyed were not aware of the CEDAW (89%). When asked about the full implementation of the CEDAW in each person's respective country, the majority of those surveyed (59%) stated that they would approve of this implementation, while a significant percentage (26%) would not approve.² From another perspective, blame for the lack of jurisprudence was allocated to either the high costs of legal action or the impression of uselessness of jurisprudence.³ Reservations have also been placed by many countries to provisions or paragraphs of the Beijing Platform for Action⁴ and to various gender-related instruments. In the Arab region, responses to the Beijing stimulus also came slow and the driving force for these responses was not always clear. International help was often needed.⁵

The sole signature of international legal instruments would not suffice in the absence of a serious commitment and a clear action plan towards change as it would not guarantee its application. The signature represents one step in the legislative process, and sometimes countries introduce progressive laws but have no intention to implement them.⁶ A promising step was the establishment of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to deal

¹ Karam, A. and El Hajal, C. (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Lebanon and Some Arab Countries (Egypt, Syria, and Jordan)*.

² UNDP (2006) *The Arab Human Development Report 2005 – Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World*.

³ Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

⁴ UNIFEM (2004) *Progress of Arab Women: One Paradigm, Four Arenas, and More Than 140 Million Women*.

⁵ Sakr, N. (2004) "Friend or Foe? Dependency Theory and Women's Media Activism in the Arab Middle East".

⁶ Dabbous-Sensenig (2002) *The Arab World and the Challenge of Introducing Gender-Sensitive Communication Policies*.

with Convention oversight. It is one of eight UN-related human rights treaty bodies and it is composed of 23 experts on women's issues from different UN member States, including a 1st Vice-Chairperson from Egypt, a 2nd Vice-Chairperson from France, and a member from each of Algeria and Italy.¹

Inability to include PSB and independent regulatory bodies for media as part of a comprehensive plan of action: PSB gives a voice to all segments of the population and provides a common forum for debate. In Europe, reliance on this service was accompanied by the establishment of independent bodies and councils to keep PSB institutions at a distance from the government. The objective was to allow media organizations to act independently of market pressures and to address the segments of the population that were neglected by private commercial media. The experience in the Arab world has been different as efforts to lobby “the public broadcaster and related (and basically non-independent) regulatory authorities to implement gender equality regarding access to employment, fair representation and so on can be a quite futile experience and largely a waste of resources” because no tradition of public broadcasting exists in this region where mostly government-controlled media operate and are mainly interested in political propaganda and social control.² The rare existence of some provisions against racial segregation in broadcast laws exists only in theory. For example, the Lebanese Broadcasting Act of 1994 which represented a landmark law that was introduced for the first time in the Arab world and regulated broadcasting,³ ignored the role played by a State-controlled broadcaster and deferred this discussion to a later time.

The absence of PSB in the Arab world was concurrent with the absence of independent regulatory bodies in media and the absence of a civil awareness of the important role that can be played by both entities. The importance of regulatory bodies in media was that they may be resorted to to check abuses and unfair representations in media. As such, most media concerns or

¹ United Nations Treaty Collection, website at <http://treaties.un.org/>

² Dabbous-Sensenig, D. (2002) *The Arab World and the Challenge of Introducing Gender-Sensitive Communication Policies*, p. 2.

³ Arab broadcast media are still generally regulated by press laws, according to Dabbous-Sensenig, D. (2002) *The Arab World and the Challenge of Introducing Gender-Sensitive Communication Policies*.

infringements are processed by the State. Even when regulatory bodies exist, they have limited powers. For example, the Lebanese National Audio-Visual Council set up in 1996 to licence and monitor private broadcast media still does not have the budget, facilities, or necessary staff to carry out its work. Furthermore, most decision-making concerning the regulation of media content remains within the ambit of the Minister of Information and/or Council of Ministers. In addition, even through their rulings, regulatory bodies in the Arab world often provide a cover-up for a politically-based decision.¹

Control and censorship of media, and control of the freedom of expression and association: Control and censorship of media as well as the freedom of expression and association are in stark contrast with the liberal ideas behind the laws that safeguard women's rights.

Government control and censorship of media create an obstacle whereas the existing sources of information become monopolized and the means of expressing women's viewpoints are diminished as media gets used as a tool for the advancement of political and business agendas that are controlled by men; thus influencing media content.² Lebanon's former Minister of Information, Ghazi Aridi, warned against the one-sided reporting of events and attempts to exploit the plight of women for political reasons.³ This control and censorship practiced by the government sometimes led to coercive measures being taken, mostly in the Arab countries, against those perceived as perpetrators. For example in Morocco, the *Comité pour la protection des journalistes* (Committee for the Protection of Journalists) claimed that Moroccan journalists were subjected to various forms of pressure by Moroccan authorities. These forms of pressure included disproportionately high fines imposed on journalists, suspended prison sentences, the seizing of magazines and journalists, and even banning from the exercise of the profession.

¹ Dabbous-Sensenig, D. (2002) *The Arab World and the Challenge of Introducing Gender-Sensitive Communication Policies*.

² Shivdas, M. (2000) *Alternative Assessment of Women and Media Based on NGO Reviews of Section J, Beijing Platform for Action*.

³ UNESCO (2002) *The Participation and Access of Women to the Media and their impact on and their use as an Instrument for the Advancement and Empowerment of Women – Report of the Expert Group Meeting*.

Consequently, an increasing number of Moroccan journalists have opted for self-censorship to avoid similar coercion and sanctions.¹ Another example is that of Tunisia where the government enjoyed tight controls over the freedom of expression and association. In the promotion of women's rights in Tunisian media, and although several women's groups existed and were active within Tunisian trade unions and the human rights movement, they did not receive media attention accorded to the government-sponsored institutions that were charged with the implementation of the policies in favour of women (i.e., Ministry of Women and the Family, National Observatory for Women, National Council for Women and the Family, CREDIF – Centre for Research, Documentation, and Information on Women). Despite the setting up of three commissions within the National Council for Women and the Family to prepare annual reports dealing with the image of women in media, human rights and pro-democracy campaigners argued that “these initiatives are part and parcel of a government ploy to turn women into the alibis of a policy that stifles and suppresses Tunisian Islamists”.²

In 2010, the EU Resolution 1751, Combating Sexist Stereotypes in the Media, addressed the fact that women were victimized in media. Through this resolution, the Parliamentary Assembly recognized that women were underrepresented in media. Sexist stereotypes continued to confine them to the roles that are traditionally assigned to them by society; thus creating barriers to gender equality. Despite this, it remained difficult to take court action against negative stereotypes or to penalize them by regulatory and non-regulatory authorities, except in cases of extreme violations of human dignity. Frequently, sexist stereotypes remained trivialized and tolerated under the banner of the freedom of expression. Nevertheless, the Assembly “reasserts its commitment to upholding the principles of human dignity and non-discrimination guaranteed in the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5). It further highlights the positive role that media can play in promoting gender equality; referring in this connection to Recommendation No. R (84) 17 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on equality between women and men in media.” The Assembly called on national parliaments to promote

¹ International Programme for the Development of Communication (2008) *New Projects Submitted to the IPDC – Part IV: Arab Region and Europe*.

² CMF MENA (2000) *Women's Rights and the Arab Media*, p. 41.

the necessary education and training in schools, and to combat sexist stereotypes in media by adopting the necessary legal measures to penalize infringements. The Assembly also called on national parliaments to raise journalists' awareness and train them to include a gender equality dimension in media work.¹

Part IV-B: Media Organizations' Systems and Working Procedures

Gender-fair practices are not only the responsibility of governments but also that of media organizations. The lack of effective well-thought practices may harm the status of both female media practitioners and that of women portrayed in media.

Lack of a gender perspective in media policies: The importance of media gender-related policies is that not only do they guide the work of media practitioners in their portrayal of women, but they also provide norms and self-regulatory mechanisms that focus on the elimination of gender discrimination in the workplace, and provide employment equity procedures to be adopted within media organizations and among colleagues.² In addition, media policies limit the impact of the perception of some media management that women's productivity decreases when they take on reproductive roles, and would restrict the management's reluctance to provide benefits such as extended maternity leave and flexible time arrangements.³ For example, women remain disproportionately represented in part-time or temporary media work,⁴ discriminated against in the assignment of tasks (i.e., men are more

¹ Lucianetti, L. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Italy*, p. 3.

² Shivdas, M. (2000) *Alternative Assessment of Women and Media Based on NGO Reviews of Section J, Beijing Platform for Action*.

³ Cabrera-Balleza (2002) *Report from the Online Discussion on "The Participation and Access of Women to the Media and their impact on and their use as an Instrument for the Advancement and Empowerment of Women"*.

⁴ Gallagher, M. (1995) *An Unfinished Story: Gender Patterns in Media Employment*; Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media.*; Fatany, S. (2006) *Women Journalists Share Experiences Around Med*; and Sakr, N. (2001) *International and Regional Support Systems for Arab Media Women*.

likely to report ‘high priority’ news),¹ and even benefit from lesser pay than male counterparts for similar responsibilities and qualifications.² Furthermore, many media organizations, as is at times the case in Cypriot media, have accepted the traditional gender and sexist stereotypes, and do not show the changes or developments in the lives and duties of both genders, but continue to depict women in their traditional roles (i.e., mothers, homemakers). As such, media organizations contribute to the persistence of gender stereotypes.³

Codes of conduct or complaint mechanisms have been developed by many media organizations around the world as part of their self-regulatory efforts to balance media’s freedom of expression and responsibilities to the public. Some codes however omit, or do not adequately address, issues related to the portrayal of women.⁴ The negative portrayal of women in media in terms of sexist or stereotyped coverage is rarely covered in media policies, both in Europe and in the Arab region. If media codes or guidelines exist, they are often too general to allow unambiguous interpretation. The concepts may not be clearly defined and the guidelines too vague. As such, they can be easily evaded or interpreted differently by different parties.⁵ Existing codes or guidelines have limited concerns that focus on morality and include the indecent exposure of human bodies, immoral sexual relations, sexually provocative material, and pornographic content.⁶ This may be due to the fact that “media organizations are often not well

¹ Karam, A. and El Hajal, C. (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Lebanon and Some Arab Countries (Egypt, Syria, and Jordan)*; and Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

² Groupement Régional pour l’Action et L’information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

³ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Gallagher, M. (2002) *Women, Media and Democratic Society: In Pursuit of Rights and Freedoms*.

⁶ Shivdas, M. (2000) *Alternative Assessment of Women and Media Based on NGO Reviews of Section J, Beijing Platform for Action*.

equipped to formulate the gender equality aspects of codes, nor do they have the capacity to monitor implementation and compliance”.¹

Concerns about women’s portrayal in media are prominent in Arab States² where governments usually take little responsibility for the regulation of media industries with regard to gender bias and stereotyping, as they focus on political and religious content. Complaint mechanisms, if existent, are generally ineffective and lack monitoring, and their legal frameworks often lack gender-fair policies. Furthermore, within Arab media organizations, there is a lack of effective sanctions against the violators of women’s human rights in media.³ In Europe, a survey of 60 broadcasting organizations across 20 countries showed that only 9 organizations had a written policy on gender portrayal and most were too vague to be made operational. Only four organizations had truly specific policies on gender portrayal that were sufficiently operational and they were in Finland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, while none were found in the countries explored in this report.⁴ Furthermore, many journalism schools have yet to incorporate gender issues in their curriculum. This has an impact on the type of education that journalism students receive within their institution; thus creating obstacles to the introduction of gender focus in the work of journalists and impacting on the quality of coverage of stories.⁵

¹ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*, p. 17.

² Shivdas, M. (2000) *Alternative Assessment of Women and Media Based on NGO Reviews of Section J, Beijing Platform for Action*; and Gallagher, M. (2002) *Women, Media and Democratic Society: In Pursuit of Rights and Freedoms*.

³ Shivdas, M. (2000) *Alternative Assessment of Women and Media Based on NGO Reviews of Section J, Beijing Platform for Action*.

⁴ Gallagher, M. (2002) *Women, Media and Democratic Society: In Pursuit of Rights and Freedoms*; and Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

⁵ Lowe Morna, C. (2002) *Promoting Gender Equality In and Through the Media – A Southern African Case Study*; and Shivdas, M. (2000) *Alternative Assessment of Women and Media Based on NGO Reviews of Section J, Beijing Platform for Action*.

Absence of women's voices in media and lack of coverage of gender issues: The extent to which women's voices are heard or gender issues are covered in media is problematic due to the breadth and depth of coverage of gender issues, as well as the angle or approach adopted to cover gender-related issues. The breadth of coverage is mainly concerned with violence against women and domestic issues, but many missing stories remain. The depth of coverage is not necessarily provided with the same persistence and thoroughness of inquiry when it comes to women's issues. Finally, the angle from which a story is told tends to provide a sexualized image of women by defining them in terms of their physical appearance, rather than abilities.¹ Female media practitioners entering the media industry find themselves under considerable pressure to adopt traditional methods of operation. For example, female journalists attempting to introduce a gender focus in their work may face resistance or ridicule from their counterparts or media leaders for attempting to do so.² Bringing sensitive issues into the public arena may also subject them to harsh criticism, and they may even be discredited by resort to religious or cultural values. Sometimes, female journalists, as a result of the high level of competition in contemporary media organizations, need to fight for attention and therefore adopt male professional patterns under the pressure to succeed.³ At other times, female journalists may avoid gender-sensitive reporting and adopt a male pattern of reporting to avoid appearing too soft, out of fear of being assigned to soft news, or because they find themselves following avenues that were previously set by male colleagues. Furthermore, women working in media often experience pressure from powerful interests, both inside and outside the media organization, to highlight some stories or ignore others, and to shape news content in certain ways.⁴ In Morocco, for example, where female media practitioners were not as important as men

¹ Lowe Morna, C. (2002) *Promoting Gender Equality In and Through the Media – A Southern African Case Study*.

² Ibid.; and Shivdas, M. (2000) *Alternative Assessment of Women and Media Based on NGO Reviews of Section J, Beijing Platform for Action*.

³ DAW (2002) *Participation and Access of Women to the Media, and the Impact of Media on and its Use as an Instrument for the Advancement and Empowerment of Women: Report of the Expert Group Meeting*.

⁴ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

and were disadvantaged in some areas of information (i.e., politics), they try to perform the functions for which they arrived in order to preserve their privileges. As such, “women become masculinized being in power” in a media world that is predominantly masculine.¹

The control exercised by media leaders restricts Arab media from placing the requirements of Arab women on top of media priorities, and media establishments in the Arab world keep on shying away from the controversial issues and giving a biased, impartial, and incomplete portrayal of Arab women.² The result is a distortion of reality by media where focus is only on selected factors that underlie a woman’s attitude and behaviour. The selective images provided are consequently incomplete and charged with bias against women.³ Religion satellite channels or religious programming are a good example of the negative portrayal of women, particularly in the Arab region, as they convey images of women as sinful.⁴ The lack of a gender perspective also makes it more difficult to open public debate on the social responsibility of media towards gender equality, and media executives or media practitioners may refuse to take responsibility for stereotypes and gender discrimination, or even be unwilling to air some gender-related issues publicly.⁵

Prioritization of political or business interests: The likelihood that all voices would be heard in media, even in the current climate of media pluralism, is reduced because media are subjected to political or business agendas.⁶ The control exercised by media leaders, in addition to governmental control, restricts media, Arab media more particularly, from reflecting the real

¹ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*, p. 106

² Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak (2002) *Opening Speech of Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak*.

³ UNESCO (2002) *The Participation and Access of Women to the Media and their impact on and their use as an Instrument for the Advancement and Empowerment of Women – Report of the Expert Group Meeting*.

⁴ Methnani, R. (2010) من أجل اتّصال أكثر فاعليّة بين الاعلاميين والفاعلات السياسيات (*For a More Effective Communication Between Media Practitioners and Female Political Players*).

⁵ Lowe Morna, C. (2002) *Promoting Gender Equality In and Through the Media – A Southern African Case Study*; and Shivdas, M. (2000) *Alternative Assessment of Women and Media Based on NGO Reviews of Section J, Beijing Platform for Action*.

⁶ Sakr, N. (2002) “Seen and Starting to Be Heard: Women and the Arab Media in a Decade of Change”.

status of Arab women.¹ Media may choose to support efforts that aim to end the legalized discrimination of women by providing those who have been discriminated against with platforms that allow them to get heard, or they may choose to ignore such efforts or even to trivialize them. The three scenarios may also co-exist and stifle unwanted voices. In some developed countries, the impact of this obstacle on the image of women is lessened because PSB contributes to sexual equality in their programming. In the Arab region however, PSB is lacking and censorship is a common occurrence. Furthermore, with the shift of television viewers towards satellite channels, the obstacles to detailed coverage of national legal battles and other national issues of social concern have been exacerbated. This is partially due to the fact that most of satellite channels were created by Arab governments and politicians wanting to stress internal cohesion, and celebrate Arabic and Islamic traditions, rather than expose hardship or dissent. In addition, the targeted transnational audiences for these channels tend to have little interest in legal issues arising in a country other than theirs.² Unless leaders soften their control over the industry and set aside their intellectual and cultural affiliations, it would be difficult to place the requirements of Arab women on top of media priorities.³

Ownership of media enterprises by men: The prioritization of women's concerns in media is also faced by the ownership of media enterprises which remains largely in the hands of men. This ownership monopoly is reflected in the control of media by men and the cross-cutting corporate interests that would influence media policy. The possibility of female media practitioners reaching influential positions and influencing mainstream media becomes all the more complicated when the leadership centres are less in touch or less concerned with gender issues.⁴ The rare presence of women in management positions is not only dependent on the media organization itself, or women themselves. Management posts within media organizations usually serve a political agenda and whoever is appointed to such posts should continuously refer

¹ Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak (2002) *Opening Speech of Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak*.

² Sakr, N. (2002) "Seen and Starting to Be Heard: Women and the Arab Media in a Decade of Change".

³ Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak (2002) *Opening Speech of Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak*.

⁴ Shivdas, M. (2000) *Alternative Assessment of Women and Media Based on NGO Reviews of Section J, Beijing Platform for Action*.

to the appointing party for their approval on editorial content.¹ Another obstacle to women's recruitment and promotion in management posts is the fact that posts at senior levels are never advertised. As a result, men in many European countries were more likely than women to get appointed due to their "old boy's network" which they developed after work hours and which played an important role in "strengthening professional relationships" and "opening up doors to promotion". As a result of these obstacles, men in Europe were seven times more likely than women to reach top positions in media.² Young women entering the media field and believing that competence and hard work would be rewarded, quickly realized that advancement in media organizations depended on power alliances and networks. And not all women enjoyed the political power games that are typical especially in higher echelons of media organizations.³ In France, a peculiarity that created an obstacle for women's advancement to top positions in media was that, in the press for example, most editors-in-chief have experience as political journalists, while in the Anglo-Saxon press, their experience is more likely to have been in the economy or international affairs. Nevertheless, "women are often confined to specializations that are less prestigious than those of men" and therefore face difficulty reaching top positions.⁴ In the Maghreb, women have difficulty accessing prestigious positions in media due to the fact that 60 to 70% of women are veiled and it is common for them to stop work to pray.⁵

Media organizations' pursuit of profit: Media organizations are often interested in profit margins, rather than the contribution to social welfare. As a result of this interest, the current state of Arab media remains one of consumerism, commodification, and

¹ UNIFEM (2006) المرأة العربية والاعلام، دراسة تحليلية للبحوث الصادرة بين 1995-2005

² Gallagher, M. (1995) *An Unfinished Story: Gender Patterns in Media Employment*, p. 53.

³ DAW (2002) *Participation and Access of Women to the Media, and the Impact of Media on and its Use as an Instrument for the Advancement and Empowerment of Women: Report of the Expert Group Meeting*.

⁴ Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*, p. 26.

⁵ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

commercialization,¹ which represents an obstacle to a balanced portrayal of women. Furthermore, the opportunities for women within media organizations are and shall remain limited as long as gender issues are not considered important or profitable by these organizations.² Also, the increasingly profit-oriented focus of media promotes dropout among female media practitioners. When profit gets prioritized, content becomes less important. Women who perceive a career in media as a route to stardom or celebrity may find a place for themselves. In contrast, those who enter the media profession with high ideals find it difficult to privilege entertainment at the expense of substantive content.³ In turn, the lack of women's access to and growth in media organizations diminishes the possibility for them to contribute positively to media programming and policies.⁴

Importation of foreign media products such as television programs and magazines:

The growing popularity of foreign media products imported into the Arab region and translated into local languages or dialects had a negative impact on the portrayed image of women.⁵ Some women's publications sold in the Arab region replicate Western publications (i.e., *Elle*, *Femmes d'Aujourd'hui*, *Marie Claire*, *Cosmopolitan*, *People*). The content of these publications is literally translated.⁶ Such media approaches tend to spread and foster alien values that have nothing to do with the local way of life but that nonetheless set confusing norms for media consumers, particularly young girls.⁷ Foreign products imported into the Arab region in specific

¹ Rahbani, L. (2010) *Women in Arab Media: Present But Not Heard*; and Shivdas, M. (2000) *Alternative Assessment of Women and Media Based on NGO Reviews of Section J, Beijing Platform for Action*.

² Shivdas, M. (2000) *Alternative Assessment of Women and Media Based on NGO Reviews of Section J, Beijing Platform for Action*.

³ DAW (2002) *Participation and Access of Women to the Media, and the Impact of Media on and its Use as an Instrument for the Advancement and Empowerment of Women: Report of the Expert Group Meeting*.

⁴ Karam, A. and El Hajal, C. (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Lebanon and Some Arab Countries (Egypt, Syria, and Jordan)*.

⁵ Ben Nablia, S. (2009) *Femme et Télévision au Maghreb: Amélioration de l'Image de la Femme dans les Télévisions du Maghreb Francophone*.

⁶ Kirat, M. (2005) "Women and the Media in the Arab World: A Critical Appraisal".

⁷ CMF MENA (2000) *Women's Rights and the Arab Media*.

project different cultural values and themes, and different degrees of openness that viewers are regularly exposed to. The wide range of programming projects images of women that range from the completely liberated (model of Western womanhood) to the ultra-conservative, dependent, and chaste ideal of the Arab women. The schizophrenic and disorderly image that imported media products nourish in the Arab countries is out of sync with Arab societies and the laws that govern them. For example, Arab countries in general remain traditional and conservative, and promiscuous behaviour is punishable by law.¹

The same conflicting impact may be found as a result of the importation of magazines into the Arab countries. For example, the Maghreb which does not have magazines or journals for young women fills this gap with the importation of such products from France. Nevertheless, the images and values circulated through these products are not reflective of the Maghrebi society.²

Lack of professionalization of some careers in media: The lack of professionalization of some careers in media, for example acting careers for women in the Maghreb, has a negative impact on the portrayal of women, as well as on their access and advancement in media organizations. This is due to the requirements and selection criteria, or lack of, for entry into specific careers in media. Many enter with no or limited professional skills, thus affecting the quality of their work and credibility.³ The absence of unions in some countries, or the absence of women from union memberships, especially in union governing bodies, also represents a an obstacle to this lack of professionalization, and vice versa.⁴

¹ Dabbous-Sensenig, D. (2000) "Media vs. Society in Lebanon: Schizophrenia in an Age of Globalisation".

² El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

³ Ibid.

⁴ International Federation of Journalists (2009) *Getting the Balance Right: Gender Equality in Journalism*.

Part IV-C: The Patriarchal Nature of Arab Societies and Stereotyped Attitudes

The type and nature of society has an impact on the experiences and accomplishments of women as it relates to the type and number of obstacles that they may encounter in that particular society. In Arab countries, the predominant culture of religious patriarchy and conservatism are detrimental to the state of women in media as they nourish gender bias and create obstacles to the balanced inclusion of a gender perspective on issues. Differences among Arab societies exist to differing extents. Nevertheless, human rights, both in practice and in theory, are not the same for men and women in the Arab region. This is true with respect to labour laws, personal status laws, and civil laws.¹

In Arab patriarchal societies, cultural barriers and traditional beliefs play an important role. When someone tries to introduce a gender perspective in their work, they are likely to be met with resistance or ridicule. In this climate, it is difficult to open debate on issues of gender equality, and few media sources would be willing to air these issues publicly.² For example, female media practitioners who attempt to shape gender-fair media content risk being marginalized within their organizations, which contributes to the persistence of a stereotyped portrayal of women.³ Patriarchal attitudes are still held by governments and media organizations which remain predominantly male-dominated institutions. They are also held by the public and private sectors and by society at large; thus furthering the obstacles to a balanced portrayal and fair treatment of women in Arab societies. These attitudes result in the viewing of women as subordinates and low status in society, and also result in sexual harassment, employment inequity, discriminatory treatment in assignments and promotions, traditional gender hierarchies,

¹ Dabbous-Sensenig, D. (2002) *The Arab World and the Challenge of Introducing Gender-Sensitive Communication Policies*.

² Shivdas, M. (2000) *Alternative Assessment of Women and Media Based on NGO Reviews of Section J, Beijing Platform for Action*, WomenAction 2000.

³ Rahbani, L. (2010) *Women in Arab Media: Present But Not Heard*; and Shivdas, M. (2000) *Alternative Assessment of Women and Media Based on NGO Reviews of Section J, Beijing Platform for Action*.

lack of support mechanisms for female media practitioners, as well as a poor education and training that deters women from joining media or reaching decision-making positions.¹

In Arab countries, media has not fully fulfilled its role on all issues because the public is generally suspicious of women's rights advocacy and complacent about the negative stereotyping of women in media. When a campaign for women's rights takes place, it is crucial for it to gain the support of media in order to orient public debate to the idea that women's rights are an integral component of the country's development. The media may also help internationalize Arab women's rights by shedding light on related issues and bringing them to the attention of the international community.²

The patriarchal attitudes and religious convictions that continue to dominate in Arab countries exclude women from the public sphere and commit them to the home.³ Women are deprived of some of their civil and human rights; a deprivation that leads to their marginalization or isolation from certain aspects of social life (i.e., equitable employment).⁴ A non-egalitarian culture dominates Arab-Muslim societies, in particular, as a Muslim society is governed by men. Meanwhile, women are considered immature and incapable of handling their own destiny. In order to prove herself on the social level, a woman should marry.⁵

In Cyprus, the national crisis had a negative impact on women as it kept the issue of gender inequality unsolved or untackled. Therefore, Cypriot women find their career put on the last scale and their education dependent upon their socially constructed roles (e.g., home, family). What is considered a national problem in Cyprus are the power relationships between women and men, and the reflection of this relationship in the Turkish Cypriot agenda, more

¹ Shivdas, M. (2000) *Alternative Assessment of Women and Media Based on NGO Reviews of Section J, Beijing Platform for Action*.

² Obeidat, R. (2002) *Content and Representation of Women in the Arab Media*.

³ Dabbous-Sensenig, D. (2002) *The Arab World and the Challenge of Introducing Gender-Sensitive Communication Policies*.

⁴ UNDP (2006) *The Arab Human Development Report 2005 – Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World*.

⁵ Ben Nablia, S. (2009) *Femme et Télévision au Maghreb: Amélioration de l'Image de la Femme dans les Télévisions du Maghreb Francophone*.

specifically, as it talks about silencing women's voices. The situation is further worsened by the perception that women pursuing a higher level of education would be neglecting their socially attributed or acceptable roles. Family members are sometimes discouraging young women from pursuing higher education as they "will never need it once they get married".¹

The patriarchal nature of society found in the Arab region and in many other countries around the world makes it very difficult to affect change in this area because women have fewer opportunities to acquire capacities (i.e., education, mobility, time, skills, resources) and to utilize them efficiently.² In the Maghreb, boys and girls are educated in different ways, and the girls' freedom, especially that of movement, is restricted in order to prevent them from falling prey to men. The cultural poverty in that society sets boys and girls further apart as males benefit from greater room for development. In Maghrebi media, certain professional activities such as photography are still reserved for men, as is the case for many other sectors considered technical before artistic. As photographers for example, women face technical challenges in terms of economic difficulties that weaken their access to this field. The absence of women is also felt as illustrators of comic strips and illustrators of images of texts and books, especially of children's books. In general, no women work in the publishing industry although resort to foreign designers for example, both female and male, is common in Morocco.³

The inadequate training or a lack of professional education for many women in patriarchal societies leads in turn to a lack of confidence on the part of women themselves to take leadership positions in some organizations.⁴ Here, the challenge of improving the status of female media practitioners is complementary to the challenge of improving media portrayal of

¹ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*, p. 1.

² Dabbous-Sensenig, D. (2002) *The Arab World and the Challenge of Introducing Gender-Sensitive Communication Policies*; and DAW (2002) *Participation and Access of Women to the Media, and the Impact of Media on and its Use as an Instrument for the Advancement and Empowerment of Women: Report of the Expert Group Meeting*.

³ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

⁴ Cabrera-Balleza (2002) *Report from the Online Discussion on "The Participation and Access of Women to the Media and their impact on and their use as an Instrument for the Advancement and Empowerment of Women"*.

women¹ because the prevailing masculine culture, in Arab societies more specifically, sees women as dependent of men.² In turn, some men doubt women's working abilities and feel that they should always be testing them.³

Part IV-D: Women's Attitudes and Place in Society

The emphasis on the importance of the role of women in changing their portrayal is reflected in the Abu Dhabi Declaration that called for the formation of an "Arab media strategy" to address media portrayal of women.⁴ Nevertheless, this role is faced with numerous obstacles, some of which related to the opportunities available to women and others to their skills and capacities. The obstacles are more prevalent in some sectors of media than in others (e.g., political, business, and sports journalism), and for certain categories of women more than for others (e.g., older women, women of visible minorities).⁵

Limited access to and growth in media organizations: The lack of women's access to and growth in media organizations represents a considerable obstacle to their portrayal because their absence from media organizations reduces the means available to them to communicate their viewpoints in media and to impact media policy. Even when these means exist, and if women are aware of them, they often need to operate within patriarchal systems of management and are consequently directed to follow the interest of profit margins as discussed above.⁶ Consequently, the increased number of women working in media has not translated into an

¹ Sakr, N. (2001) *International and Regional Support Systems for Arab Media Women*.

² UNDP (2010) *Lebanon 2008-2009 – The National Human Development Report: Toward a Citizen's State*.

³ Abou Nader, R. (2010) *Interview with Rebecca Abou Nader on Women and the Media*.

⁴ Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak (2002) *Opening Speech of Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak*.

⁵ DAW (2002) *Participation and Access of Women to the Media, and the Impact of Media on and its Use as an Instrument for the Advancement and Empowerment of Women: Report of the Expert Group Meeting*.

⁶ Shivdas, M. (2000) *Alternative Assessment of Women and Media Based on NGO Reviews of Section J, Beijing Platform for Action*.

ability to influence media policies. To this day, gender sensitivity in media policies and programs is still lacking.¹

Lack of access to ICT: Women's poor access to ICT limits their means of communication and expression of their views. This lack is due to a number of factors including illiteracy or mediocre education, economic restrictions, gender biases in the development of these technologies, and a women-unfriendly view of ICT in general.² It is however important to provide women with access to these technologies that represent an information outlet for them and an outlet through which they can express themselves freely.³

Lack of a support structure: A support system is crucial for female media practitioners to be able to balance life and work obligations. It consists of emotional and financial support from one's close societal circle, and time. Sometimes women do not have the support of their families for their selected careers in media, as is often the case in Arab countries. Those who do not benefit from such a system would be limited in their achievements.⁴

The establishment of gender-sensitive policies would not suffice for the attainment of gender equality in society. In Malta for example, the support of gender equality at the legislative level and the increasing public awareness about this matter allowed women to participate more in all spheres of life. Nevertheless, although more and more women were seeking a university education, many women in Maltese society still need to choose between work and family life. This means that they remain financially dependent on men and the sharing of household tasks and family responsibilities remains unequally divided among Maltese women and men.⁵

¹ Rahbani, L. (2010) *Women in Arab Media: Present But Not Heard*.

² Shivdas, M. (2000) *Alternative Assessment of Women and Media Based on NGO Reviews of Section J, Beijing Platform for Action*.

³ Obeidat, R. (2002) *Content and Representation of Women in the Arab Media*.

⁴ Karam, A. and El Hajal, C. (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Lebanon and Some Arab Countries (Egypt, Syria, and Jordan)*.

⁵ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

In the Arab region, if Arab husbands and fathers do not allow women to work at night (i.e., when newspapers are at the height of production), Arab women would not succeed as journalists. Members of a woman's family should also be able to fend for themselves if she needs to work late; otherwise, a media career will be difficult for Arab women to handle.¹ In these societies, and due to the nature of the media profession where breaking news dictate work schedules, men have been traditionally better able than women to manage the deadlines.² In parallel, women who hold high posts in media are usually unsuccessful in their personal lives.³ Support is not however limited to one's societal circle but may also be provided to some extent by media organizations through, for example, the provision of female media practitioners with childcare facilities.⁴

Presence of unskilled women in media: Some Arab women's interest in media is mostly limited to traditional concerns (i.e., cooking, housekeeping, cosmetics).⁵ In some specializations such as the economy or the military, men are simply more knowledgeable than women and thus more likely to be assigned to stories that address them.⁶ In Lebanon, for example, men are more knowledgeable than women about security issues because, until a few years ago, women were restricted from joining security institutions such as the Internal Security Forces (ISF), the equivalent of the police force in other countries, and remain to the day concentrated in administrative posts within such institutions.⁷

Nevertheless, among female media practitioners some are more qualified than others. Those that are less qualified contribute negatively to the image of female media practitioners in

¹ Hanley, D. (2002) "Arab Women Journalists Seek Ways to Improve their Image at Home and in the West – Special Report", p. 52-55.

² Sakr, N. (2001) *International and Regional Support Systems for Arab Media Women*.

³ Trad, G. (2010) *Interview with George Trad on Women and the Media*.

⁴ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (2005) *The Gender & Media Handbook – Promoting Equality, Diversity & Empowerment*.

⁵ UNDP (2006) *The Arab Human Development Report 2005 – Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World*.

⁶ Trad, G. (2010) *Interview with George Trad on Women and the Media*.

⁷ Mehanna, T. (2010) *Interview with Tania Mehanna on Women and the Media*.

specific and to that of women more generally. The high presence of unskilled female media practitioners, especially in radio and television, is due to the fact that many of these women join media organizations for the wrong reasons: rather than wanting to contribute to real social concerns, many of them are infatuated with the spotlight and solely interested in gaining popularity and becoming celebrities, rapidly.¹ This focus on stardom or celebrity encourages some young people to pursue a career in media.² In Morocco, for example, many female media practitioners who entered the media field since the 1950s belonged to the lower-middle or middle classes, which was evident by their clothing and the language they spoke. Nevertheless, there was a huge disparity between rural and urban cultures that arose in this country, and in the rest of the Arab world.³ For their part, media organizations often prioritize a pretty face to content, and therefore hire women based on their physical attractiveness, especially in the case of television.⁴ This practice is referred to as celebrity or personality journalism and is associated with the heavy commercialization of the media at the expense of quality news.⁵ However, improving the image of women requires dedicated and responsible reporters as well as administrations of media organizations that function on the basis of goal-based media, rather than scandalous media mainly interested in scoops.⁶

Reluctance to make use of laws: Women's reluctance to make use of existing laws addressing concerns of gender equality are related to a number of reasons, both personal and professional. This reluctance however limits women from safeguarding their rights and interests

¹ Karam, A. and El Hajal, C. (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Lebanon and Some Arab Countries (Egypt, Syria, and Jordan)*.

² DAW (2002) *Participation and Access of Women to the Media, and the Impact of Media on and its Use as an Instrument for the Advancement and Empowerment of Women: Report of the Expert Group Meeting*.

³ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

⁴ Baroud, R. (2010) *Interview with Rania Baroud on Women and the Media*.

⁵ DAW (2002) *Participation and Access of Women to the Media, and the Impact of Media on and its Use as an Instrument for the Advancement and Empowerment of Women: Report of the Expert Group Meeting*.

⁶ Baroud, R. (2010) *Interview with Rania Baroud on Women and the Media*.

when faced with discrimination. In Cyprus for instance, women thought that their entry into the European Union would help their situation and make their voices more evenly heard. However, women remain reluctant to make use of EU laws and, for example, the difference in wage levels between the two gender remains significant as men are paid 25% more than women, 10% more than the EU's average.¹

Lack of role models or mentors: The lack of role models or mentors represents an obstacle, especially to female newcomers to the field of media. The scarcity of women in top positions leaves many newcomers feeling isolated and discouraged.² Furthermore, the success of a small number of highly visible female media practitioners should not be allowed to obscure the fact that opportunities for the majority of women in media remain limited.³

Feelings of inferiority and vulnerability: Female media practitioners manifest at times feelings of vulnerability and inferiority to their male counterparts whom they believe have more important contributions to make. This is either due to obstacles that women face in media fields or to other personal reasons.⁴ As a result, many women avoid accessing senior positions in media, for example, and if sometimes requested to fulfil a particular 'prestigious' task (i.e., appear as an expert on a program), they defer to a male colleague whom they believe would have something more important to say.⁵ In Lebanon, female media practitioners' limited access to decision-making positions within media organizations was, at times, blamed on a lack of ambition on their behalf and, at other times, on a lack of interest in certain types of work.⁶

In other fields such as graphic designers and artists in media, the unconscious psychological restraints constrain women's creative abilities. Consequently, the outcome of their

¹ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

² Sakr, N. (2001) *International and Regional Support Systems for Arab Media Women*.

³ DAW (2002) *Participation and Access of Women to the Media, and the Impact of Media on and its Use as an Instrument for the Advancement and Empowerment of Women: Report of the Expert Group Meeting*.

⁴ Baroud, R. (2010) *Interview with Rania Baroud on Women and the Media*.

⁵ Van Dijck, B. (2002) *Screening Gender: Gender Portrayal and Programme Making Routines*.

⁶ Mehanna, T. (2010) *Interview with Tania Mehanna on Women and the Media*.

work is “characterized by a limited aesthetic and emotional drive, repetitive motives, naive contents, rather awkward forms and inadequate backgrounds”. Overall in the Maghrebi media, in addition to the archaic mentality and prejudice, an obstacle to women’s advancement and balanced portrayal is the traditionalist reactions of women themselves as they tend to be more conservative than men.¹ Such character traits are detrimental to the empowerment of women in media. Therefore, the negative images projected of women were due to the attitudes of women and to the images that they projected of themselves because a woman has full control over the image that is reflected of her: if she projects a decent and respectable image, media will reflect the same.² Female media practitioners, more specifically, are responsible for the representation of women as an image needs work to get projected in a certain manner.³ If women want to improve their image, they should cease to act as victims, be self confident, and seek the respect of others by improving themselves and contributing positively to their field.⁴

Internalization of discriminatory perceptions or lack of awareness of them: Even when women are the victims of discrimination through media’s projection of inaccurate, stereotyped, or unbalanced images of them, they are, at times, unaware of this degrading reality or unaware of the degree of stereotyping presented of them. At other times, women internalize discriminatory perceptions of them, either as a result of being continuously identified in particular manner or as a result of their socialization and/or education.⁵

It is important to note however that the negative portrayal of women and their lack of equal access in media are not only the responsibility of women and their attitudes toward themselves. As noted above, responsibility for the negative portrayal of women is also shared by the administration and management of media organizations through their choice of

¹ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*, p. 60.

² Baroud, R. (2010) *Interview with Rania Baroud on Women and the Media*.

³ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

⁴ Trad, G. (2010) *Interview with George Trad on Women and the Media*.

⁵ CMF MENA (2000) *Women’s Rights and the Arab Media*.

programming, program publicity, and the time at which a program is broadcast (i.e., Prime time broadcasting attracts a larger number of audiences).¹ Governments also share the responsibility of the negative portrayal of women because concerned governmental authorities should monitor programming with the aim of improving the image of women.²

Part IV-E: Lack of Studies on Women in the Media

A lack of studies about the concerns related to the situation of women in media exists and creates an obstacle as information gaps about gender-fair portrayal and the treatment of women in media remain unaddressed, as well as their impact on the situation of women.³ As for existing studies, they often omit to identify specific measures that need to be taken, but rather focus almost exclusively on analyzing actual text. The studies also omit to take into consideration the audience of readers when drafting the study.⁴

¹ Baroud, R. (2010) *Interview with Rania Baroud on Women and the Media*.

² Trad, G. (2010) *Interview with George Trad on Women and the Media*.

³ Karam, A. and El Hajal, C. (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Lebanon and Some Arab Countries (Egypt, Syria, and Jordan)*.

⁴ UNIFEM (2006) *المرأة العربية والاعلام، دراسة تحليلية للبحوث الصادرة بين 1995–2005*

PART V - Recommendations

Gender balance in the institution of media as well as in its editorial content is an important step towards the elimination of the roots of discrimination against women in cultural constructs. Affecting positive change in the sensitive area of gender and that of media needs to take into consideration the cultural, political, and economic specificities of the countries in question. Nevertheless, there are common impediments in the countries explored in this report. In general, the achievement of a gender balance in media requires the adoption of a number of recommendations¹ by governments; media organizations; international organizations; CSOs and NGOs; educational institutions; the general female populace; the private sector; and media consumers.

There is no easy way of dismantling the obstacles faced by women media professionals. Mentoring systems, networking, improved recruitment procedures, management and skills training, family-friendly working conditions, setting numerical targets to redress gender imbalance in creative and decision-making posts, regular monitoring, performance assessments – all these can help. But the hardest task is to change the attitudes which foster inequalities, and the organizational culture that supports these attitudes.²

To pursue these goals, a number of recommendations³ are listed below to help develop gender-sensitive media practices and content that would be suited to the cultural, religious, and economic specificities of each country in question. The goal is to nourish a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in media, and increase their participation and access to expression and decision-making in and through media and the new ICTs. Although none of the recommendations listed below is mutually exclusive, each has a distinct role to play, and

¹ It is important to take into consideration that any actions taken should be to the extent consistent with the freedom of expression of all parties.

² Gallagher, M. (2002) *Women, Media and Democratic Society: In Pursuit of Rights and Freedoms*.

³ Unless indicated otherwise, the recommendations provided in this part of the report have been inspired by Karam, A. and El Hajal, C. (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Lebanon and Some Arab Countries (Egypt, Syria, and Jordan)*.

recommendations may be adopted by one or more players at the same time.¹ For example, cooperation between stakeholders would help reduce barriers and maximize benefits.

It is important to point out that the efficacy of the below recommendations may only be successfully accomplished when undertaken in consultation and/or partnership with the women in media and the stakeholders. Furthermore, the recommendations provided may not be generalized for the entire Arab or European region. The concerned countries, although they may share a common language, cultural characteristics, and challenges, remain actually quite diverse. At times, diversity lay within the borders of a single country, such as Cyprus which requires that recommendations be customized to the needs of the different regions or populations found within the same country.

Part V-A: Promoting a Balanced and Non-Stereotyped Portrayal of Women in Media

a) Recommendations for Governments

In terms of policy and enabling frameworks:

- Institute policies and laws that protect and promote the freedom of expression and information, ensure that gender is mainstreamed into these policies and laws, and periodically assess their relevance and effectiveness in terms of the promotion of women's rights.
- Analyze existing communication policies from a gender perspective and make the necessary amendments where and when necessary.
- Establish mechanisms to ensure the enforcement of existing policies, laws, codes, or guidelines.
- Formulate ethical standards (i.e., code of conduct, advertising standards) based on equality between the sexes and reflect the standards in all communication productions, including programming and media portrayal.

¹ The recommendations specified in this section of the report would be most efficiently accomplished if completed in collaboration with all stakeholders (i.e., governments, international organizations, CSOs and NGOs, educational institutions...), and with the use of appropriate national machinery for the advancement of women.

- Implement existing relevant international instruments (i.e., Sana'a Declaration, Beijing Platform for Action, Beijing +5 outcome document, deliberations of the CEDAW). The sole signature of international instruments does not suffice in the absence of commitment and a clear action plan that guarantees application and implementation.
- Support the self-regulatory initiatives of media organizations, and encourage them to conduct public discussions on gender equality issues, incorporate gender perspectives in journalism courses and training programs, and take an active role in promoting action on discrimination against women.¹
- Decentralize and democratize State-controlled or State-run media monopolies where they exist.
- Loosen the grip over media organizations in terms of censorship, monopoly, and control over their practices and content by guaranteeing the freedom of media and its subsequent protection within the framework of national law.
- Keep media regulatory bodies independent of State control.
- Ensure that publicly-funded media fulfil their public interest obligations by achieving gender sensitivity and parity in their content, and require that media be guided by the values of gender justice, human rights, respect for cultural diversity and expression, sexuality, and lifestyle.
- Regulate and reverse the growing concentration of private power in giant media conglomerates. Instead, encourage small, decentralized, and democratic media.
- Discourage commercialization and limit advertising in electronic and print media as a way for improving quality, diversity, and fairness in communications.
- Acknowledge the importance of public and community media as one of the most accessible forms of media to women, and institute legal and policy frameworks that take gender into consideration and that enable these types of media to establish and to flourish (i.e., scaled licensing fees, reservation of a portion of the broadcast and

¹ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

telecommunications spectrum for gendered rural access or that of deprived female populations, cross-subsidization from the private sector).

- Train experts to apply gender analysis with regard to media content.
- Address the issue of media content that is harmful or degrading to women, with special attention to ICTs and the Internet by developing Internet regulations to control unwanted messages, pornography, and other illegal issues harming women.
- Enhance coordination among ministries responsible for ICT, national machineries for the advancement of women, the private sector, and gender equality advocates, and strengthen the capacity of national machineries for advocacy in this area.¹

In terms of the empowerment of women:

- Create an enabling environment for women in media by affirming women's rights to the freedoms of expression and information, and ensuring women's access to communication as an increasingly recognized right.
- Allow women to benefit from ICTs through the development of legal and policy frameworks that take gender into consideration and address the challenges presented by language, cost, connectivity, infrastructure, and censorship.
- Examine the content and portrayal of women by media (i.e., women as inferior beings, sexual objects, commodities), and use the sources emanating from national and international organizations to influence change through the use of regulatory bodies and mechanisms.
- Support and if possible fund the development of women media outlets (i.e., women's magazines, women's programming).

In terms of networking, advocacy, and cooperation:

- Interlink effectively grassroots workers and volunteers, media researchers, NGOs, advocacy groups, alternative media networks, and policymakers concerning women and media to promote dialogue and cooperation.

¹ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

- Foster the networking of existing structures, such as repositories, observatories, and research structures as an added value from which all such structures could derive benefit.¹
- Provide appropriate and sustained levels of resource support to all stakeholders by providing the necessary financial and technical resources, and general practical tools for gender and media policy development, training, monitoring, and consumer awareness.
- Enable stakeholders to undertake activities necessary to influence policy, as well as to document and disseminate the growing number of best practices in this area.

In terms of research and information:

- Facilitate and/or fund studies in relation to policy-making, education, and communication aimed at promoting a balanced portrayal of women in media and an equal access and participation of women in media organizations.
- Collect detailed official statistics on the presence of women in media organizations, particularly in top management posts.²
- Undertake joint research efforts to develop a complete in depth understanding of the cultural, economic, and political constraints that affect news-making in relation to gender by taking advantage of the interdisciplinary competences available and the social capital activated.³

b) Recommendations for National, Regional, and International Media Systems

In terms of policy approaches and enabling frameworks:

- Promote an egalitarian culture by presenting an egalitarian image of women, particularly in Muslim societies, by addressing all media messages to both genders, and by approaching all subjects from an egalitarian perspective.

¹ Lucianetti, L. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Italy*.

² El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

³ Lucianetti, L. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Italy*.

- Guide all media institutions' goals by the principles of gender justice and balance.
- Adopt gender-sensitive policies that are put into place through specific guidelines for media content (i.e., ethical codes, editorial and style guidelines).
- Adopt a participatory process for the development of media codes and guidelines to include dialogues with stakeholders and media specialists. This process can support media organizations and practitioners who possess limited awareness of gender equality to develop their understanding and commitment to implementation. National governments can play a supportive role by facilitating linkages among stakeholders and access to information about experiences and practices occurring in other countries.¹
- Review existing editorial policies with a view to ending the ghettoisation of women's concerns and ensuring that women's voices are heard across the full range of public debates.
- Create awareness among employees about existing gender-sensitive policies, guidelines, and codes.
- Establish and implement sound journalistic practices as the most effective safeguard against governmental restrictions and pressures by special interest groups.
- Request that broadcasters promote recognition of tasks usually associated with women and portray them as equally important as traditional male tasks that may be carried out by both genders. Direct all subjects to both women and men including family planning, welfare, health of the mother and child, education, and the upbringing of children.²
- Create gender-sensitising programmes for media managers and train them to be vigilant decision-makers against the discriminatory and stereotyped portrayal of women in media.

In terms of the empowerment of women:

¹ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

² Ibid.

- Increase coverage of women's points of view, especially in political, economic, business, and scientific news, and give equal prominence to the achievements of both genders across all fields of life (i.e., family life, professional development).
- Provide regular spaces for women within news and entertainment programs to allow a diverse presentation of women's experiences and gender issues from different points of view through the provision of new, non-sexist information and ways of thinking about women, their expertise, and potential. This step should include all types of women, from all ages and backgrounds, so that no issues are left marginalized.¹
- Provide gender-sensitive on-the-job training for all media practitioners, including media owners and managers, to encourage the creation and use of non-stereotyped, balanced, and diverse images of women in media. The gender perspective should be included into all levels and forms of training in media, ICT, research, and monitoring:
 - Include a women's perspective in the development of modules
 - Include women as trainers and as trainees
 - Provide examples during the training on women or women's issues
 - Use gender-fair language
- Set up mechanisms for media practitioners to critique their work in terms of gender balance. The tools may be used when writing and reviewing stories so that women's perspectives are included in all topics, and the violent and degrading materials touching upon women are addressed, including in advertising.
- In religious programs, avoid the adoption of a patriarchal discourse and the presentation of women as weak creatures who need male protection. Avoid social clichés and prejudices. Avoid the presentation of veiled women, in particular those who wear the veil in a stylish and colorful manner, as women who redefined style.

In terms of networking, advocacy, and cooperation:

- Lobby for the establishment of gender-sensitive journalism schools.

¹ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

- Establish mechanisms that allow media practitioners within the Arab and European media to network with each other to ensure that significant news items about women gain the highest profile possible through circulation across borders, and in all media outlets.

In terms of research and information:

- Recognize women as authoritative news sources, experts, opinion makers, and news subjects, and give an equal voice to women and men in research and information.
- Ensure gender balance in the selection of sources of information, topics, and approaches.

c) Recommendations for International Organizations, Governmental and/or Non-Governmental

In terms of policy approaches and enabling frameworks:

- Establish a clear international policy about access to communication and freedom of speech by addressing the problems of diversity, human rights, and gender.
- Promote the formulation and adoption of global ethical frameworks, based on gender equality, in all communicational products, programmes, and representations.
- Provide appropriate and sustained levels of resource support to CSOs and NGOs to enable them to undertake activities necessary to influence policy.
- Ensure that media cultural products are protected in free trade agreements because of the potential negative impact of these agreements on PSB and local content requirements.
- Encourage media organizations to adopt a gender perspective through various approaches that include special incentives (i.e., exclusive interviews, invitations to training, field visits, international conferences), the development of press kits containing information that facilitates the journalists' coverage of gender issues, training programs on relevant issues (i.e., in-house training which reaches a large number of staff within a media organization including media practitioners in top positions), and gender-sensitive media awards as a reward for gender-fair and gender-balanced reporting.

In terms of the empowerment of women:

- Include the right of women to communicate as a priority that can contribute to the present and future goal of building democracies based on pluralism, representation, and cooperation.

In terms of networking, advocacy, and cooperation:

- Promote the concept that sexist stereotypes displayed in media are gender discriminatory, degrading in nature, and offensive, and encourage media to refrain from presenting women as inferior beings and exploiting them as sexual objects and commodities.
- Condemn all types of extremism, in particular religious extremism and pornography, which jeopardize the rights of women.
- Encourage women's press, as well as press in general, to express women's points of view in a fair and balanced manner, including those of women from deprived populations.
- Consider a two-pronged approach when pressing for change with pressure exerted from within and without, knowing that civil society is weak, particularly in the Arab region. Pressure exerted from within may be accomplished by local NGOs and CSOs with the support of their international counterparts, while pressure exerted from without may come from international organizations and bodies possessing leverage to instigate change.

In terms of research and information:

- Undertake research to assess the potential business benefits of greater gender awareness and sensitivity so that the business plans of media enterprises, in relation to both programming and advertising, can be adapted as a result of such research.
- Develop a strategy for providing information about women's issues on a strategic basis (i.e., international on-line network for the exchange of information).
- Promote several films and contests around the world that tackle issues of gender in order to disseminate gender-related information and introduce gender inequality as a national, regional, and even global problem that needs to be addressed through government campaigning.¹

d) Recommendations for CSOs and NGOs, including Research Bodies

In terms of policy approaches and enabling frameworks:

¹ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

- Include a gender-perspective and gender-specific measurable targets in all programmes and projects.
- Monitor media organizations in terms of their compliance with existing internal or national gender-related codes and guidelines, and use the results for dialogue with these organizations with the aim of improving the policies related to women. When necessary, encourage and support the adoption of codes and guidelines.
- Ensure and monitor the implementation of international laws and instruments by playing a dual role: on the national level, pressure governments into delivering a report concerning adherence to international laws and instruments (i.e., CEDAW) to which the country is signatory; and on the international level, brief the responsible committees on possible shortcomings in government reports. Alternative or parallel reports by NGOs are crucial to the monitoring process.
- Analyse and periodically review national communications policies and brief policy-makers on the findings and their implications in terms of gender equality.
- Serve as focus points, spaces, and institutions that procure funding, help, and research, and structure services for women.
- Assist media in the adoption of strategic and professional approaches by analyzing the structure and operation of media organizations in order to transform media content, especially in the creation of advertising standards and regulations against the use of sexist language.
- Set up an agency that would constantly intervene among media broadcasters and the parties responsible for media advertising to contrast sex-based depictions of women.¹
- Conduct nationwide monitoring to raise awareness of media and bring to public attention misrepresentations, inaccuracies, and demeaning portrayal of women by media, particularly on broadcast and Web-based media, and use the results to initiate dialogue to promote change. The monitoring of media patterns may be quantitative and qualitative:

¹ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

- Quantitative monitoring (i.e., how often women are quoted or appear as news subjects).
- Qualitative monitoring would be based on the interpretation of the images portrayed (i.e., gender of subject, age, ethnic background, socio-economic group, location, physical appearance, psychological features, activity, occupation, situation/context, family role/family status, personality traits) and the messages transmitted (i.e., analysis of gender biases, stereotypes, the change of value judgement, perceptions, attitudes). This content analysis can be done on advertisements, television/print/radio news, films, videos, magazines, soap operas, music lyrics, music videos, television series, and ICT media products.
- Encourage and assist in the establishment of procedures for the consideration of consumer complaints lodged with media enterprises, or advertisers against media content, or advertisements that portray women in a discriminatory manner.
- Support the development of and finance alternative media and the use of all means of communication to disseminate information to and about women and their concerns.

In terms of the empowerment of women:

- Set up efforts to familiarize national and regional media with the provisions of relevant international conventions and action programmes in favour of women's rights.
- Provide funding and technical sustained support for women's media productions such as television serials, theatre, documentaries, storytelling, drama, conferences, and roundtables that would be broadcast on radio and/or television. The purpose is to shed light on women's issues and highlight their positive contributions to mobilize public support for them and change the stereotyped image of women.
- Encourage and assist in the creation of women's media networks, including electronic networks and other new ICTs, as a means for the dissemination of information and the exchange of views, and support women's groups active in all media work and systems of communications to that end.
- Promote campaigns that make use of public and private educational programmes to disseminate information about and increase awareness of the rights of women.

In terms of networking, advocacy, and cooperation:

- Promote public debate on the social responsibility of media.
- Form local, national, regional, and global networked coalitions to create common strategies at the policy level to address issues relating to women's image and voices in media (i.e., joint approach to journalists' ethics concerning gender portrayal).
- Examine how media, when dealing with topics that marginalize or degrade women (i.e., domestic violence) can do so in an educative, non-exploitative manner.
- Encourage the positive involvement of media in development and social issues by increasing the number of programmes for and by women to see to it that women's needs and concerns are properly addressed.
- Use cross-border networks to ensure that significant news items about women's rights gain the highest possible profile in all types of media outlets prepared to report on them.

In terms of research and information:

- Document the findings of media monitoring in reports and/or informative brochures that can be publicized and used to challenge media to change practices violating women's rights or fostering gender disparities and discrimination.
- Support and/or fund the publication of studies relating to women's images in media; audience studies; listening, viewing, and reading patterns; media policies; and patterns of media ownership - all these as an investment in building up a base for evaluation and planning.
- Periodically issue and publicize user-friendly reports that highlight best and worst practices that counter gender stereotyping, negative portrayals, and exploitation of women, and hold dialogues with media to discuss such reports and their implications for change. Disseminate the information to women all over the world through different media measures (i.e., newsletters, magazines, mailing lists, advertisements).

e) Recommendations for Educational Institutions, including Technical and Journalism Schools

In terms of policy approaches and enabling frameworks:

- Include gender-sensitization in the development of educational curriculums from an early age, beginning with schools.
- Include ethical reporting guidelines and gender guidelines in media courses and programmes.
- Facilitate girls' and women's enrolment in journalism schools and, once they become media practitioners, their continuous training on professional skills and ICTs of benefit to them as actors in the media field.
- Launch educational and awareness-raising programs in media devoted to secondary schools, universities, and community bodies to fight stereotypes. Image decoding workshops, for example, are helpful in enhancing students' awareness of sexist and stereotypical images in media (i.e., PowerPoint presentation, a sexist and stereotypical video, survey on the opinions of women on sexist advertising, bibliography on 'women and media', press cuttings on 'women and ads').¹

In terms of the empowerment of women:

- Provide continuous training to female journalism students and female media practitioners to better understand issues of concern to women, as well as issues related to gender and media.
- Encourage and support the participation of women in ICTs through electronic discussion groups, computer bulletin boards, electronic newsletters, fax newsletters, and other alternative media.

In terms of networking, advocacy, and cooperation:

- Promote media literacy programmes for the public at large, in particular children, in order to develop critical faculties among society for the reception of messages disseminated in media, as well as awareness of discriminatory and stereotyped images that feed inequalities between the genders, and to prevent prejudices that may be caused by media's depiction of stereotypes about women.

In terms of research and information:

¹ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

- Conduct research to understand the mechanisms that lead to patterns of gender stereotyping in media messages and output.

f) Recommendations for the Private (Commercial) Sector

- Take into consideration the impact of private media's programming and advertising on the social welfare of women.
- Undertake research to assess the potential business benefits of greater gender awareness and sensitivity so that the business plans of media enterprises, in relation to both programming and advertising, can be adapted as a result of such research.

g) Recommendations for Media Consumers (Audiences, Viewers, Readers)

- Become media-aware or media-literate to be able to understand media content from a gender perspective: that the degrading portrayal of women in media reinforces a culture of violence against women.
- Be outspoken and challenge media that promotes, incites, glorifies, glamorizes, eroticizes, and/or trivializes the degrading and stereotyping of women by criticizing openly what media consumers do not like in both traditional media and ICTs, and by refraining from consuming products that cause concern in terms of the well-being of women.

h) Recommendations for the General Female Populace

- Seek to improve one's own skills and qualifications by pursuing educational achievements and continuous training.
- Cease acting as victims or inferiors, but rather be self confident to change the distorted image of women portrayed in media, and give a new image of themselves as mothers, wives, and active participants in society.
- Seek the assistance of national, regional, and international press freedom and media professional organizations, as well as other relevant CSOs and NGOs, to establish

networks aimed at monitoring and acting against violations of free expression, to create data banks, and to provide advice and technical assistance in new ICTs.

Part V-B: Increase the Participation and Access of Women to Expression and Decision-Making
in and through the Media and ICTs

a) Recommendations for Governments

In terms of policy approaches and enabling frameworks:

- Implement gender-sensitive communication policies to address and stop blatant sexism found in the social politics and laws of some countries.
- Establish mechanisms to ensure the enforcement of gender-sensitive policies, codes, or guidelines, including media policies and guidelines formulated by the government and other institutions.
- Empower CSOs, particularly local feminist organizations, by providing them with room for manoeuvring, and loosen the grip of control that results in physical or legal persecution when these organizations attempt to challenge the status quo.
- Provide appropriate and sustained levels of resource support to CSOs and NGOs by providing the necessary financial and technical resources to general practical tools for gender and media policy development, training, monitoring and consumer awareness, and to enable them to undertake activities necessary to influence policy, as well as to document and disseminate the growing number of best practices in this area.

In terms of the empowerment of women:

- Enhance women's participation through electronic connectivity by supporting the development and use of ICT as a resource for the empowerment of women and the development of a wide range of ICT-based programmes in local languages and with content relevant to different groups of women.
- Build the capacity of women to develop ICT content and run ICT-based tools (i.e., literacy programmes, business planning courses, ICT training, access to market and trading information services and e-commerce initiatives).

- Support and/or fund the development of women media outlets (i.e., women's magazines, women's programming).
- Provide and/or cover partially or fully childcare services for the children of female media practitioners until school age.

In terms of networking, advocacy, and cooperation:

- Cooperate with the UN and other governmental and non-governmental development agencies, organizations, and professional associations to achieve an equitable treatment of women.
- Support community media including community radio, alternative video and access to television, public-calling stations, and community Internet, computer networking and alternative print media, as it represents one of the most accessible forms of media to women.
- Enhance coordination among ministries responsible for ICT, national machineries for the advancement of women, the private sector, and gender advocacy NGOs within countries.

In terms of research and information:

- Conduct and/or fund studies in relation to policy-making, education, and communication aimed at promoting a balanced participation of women in media.
- Conduct and/or fund studies identifying and promoting good practices and lessons learned on the ways women are using ICTs.

b) Recommendations for National, Regional, and International Media Systems

In terms of policy approaches and enabling frameworks:

- Establish equal opportunity legislation to ensure that female media practitioners get the same access to jobs, promotion, and training opportunities as men.
- Establish truly independent, representative associations, syndicates, or trade unions of journalists, and associations of editors and publishers, as a matter of priority in many Arab States where such bodies do not exist.

- Recognize the existence of negative gender-based attitudes and behaviours within media enterprises and organizations, and institute measures and mechanisms to create a gender-friendly work environment.
- Set goals for the achievement of gender balance among media personnel in different categories (i.e., news sources, experts, authorities, commentators in all news including hard news) and levels of media employment, including technical areas of media operations.
- Establish policies and transparent procedures for recruitment, equal remuneration for similar work, promotion, equal access to training, work assignment, action against sexual harassment, and other matters that affect professional access, employment, and advancement so that women can reach their full potential as media professionals.
- Advertise all jobs in media, particularly those at senior levels, rather than fill the jobs internally or externally to promote women's recruitment and promotion, and lessen the chances that women get overlooked.
- Print in recruitment advertisements and personnel materials the fact that media organizations are equal opportunity employers, and avoid the requirement of facts such as gender and marital status in job applications.
- Set criteria for excellence in media work for both females and males.
- Establish more flexible work schedules, not as a special concession to women, but in recognition of the need for all human beings to achieve a healthy balance between professional and personal life, which would in turn enhance both productivity and creativity.

In terms of the empowerment of women:

- Provide female media practitioners with a regular opportunity for open discussion and debate, identifying the problems that they face in the workplace, exchange ideas and concerns, share information, explore strategies to deal with gender disparity issues, and provide support for each other, all in a working atmosphere free of intimidation.
- Increase women's membership in journalists' unions and associations as a crucial step to improving the prospects of gender equality in the profession.

- Promote women's leadership in media by including media women in media self-regulatory committees and other executive committees that draft programme guidelines, budgets, contracts, and personnel documents.
- Allow and encourage women to break into non-traditional roles that were originally the preserve of men (i.e., war correspondents, camerawomen, technicians).
- Consider additional risks faced by female media practitioners, particularly in conflict zones (i.e., sexual violence, intimidation, gender discrimination).
- Consider additional and needs faced by female media practitioners in their daily media work (i.e., fitting safety equipment designed for male shapes and sizes).
- Provide female media practitioners with equal access to training and re-training, and the development of training modules.
- Organize and encourage the training of women in journalism, radio, film video making, mechanical and technical media skills, and in specialised subject areas such as culture, education, science, technology, environment economics, politics, business, and sports.
- Enhance women's capabilities and potential for advancement in media and ICT sectors by providing training on:
 - Management and leadership
 - Negotiation
 - Mentoring systems and other support strategies and programmes
 - Non-traditional duties
 - Monitoring and analytic skills
 - Development of self-confidence
- Provide female media practitioners with access to part-time work and establish measures to ensure equal treatment for part-time and comparable full-time work including participation in the workplace, occupational health and safety, discrimination in employment and occupation, hourly basic wage rates, statutory social security schemes, maternity leave, termination of employment, paid annual leave, public holidays, and sick leave.

- Provide new mothers with flexible work within the working hours through job-sharing where two or more people cover the tasks of a full-time job (i.e., splitting the tasks so that each person does their own part, or by both being responsible for completing the same sort of tasks).
- Provide child-care services or subsidized after-school childcare for young children until school age, and allow new mothers to claim breaks to breast feed their baby.
- Provide female media practitioners with transport home after late-night shift assignments.

In terms of networking, advocacy, and cooperation:

- Lobby for the establishment of gender-sensitive journalism schools.
- Encourage female media practitioners to network with each other to put new female media practitioners in touch with female mentors and role models, and to ensure that significant news items about women's rights gain the highest profile and circulate across borders through the different media outlets.

In terms of research and information:

- Include women as authoritative information sources, experts, opinion makers, and news sources on any issue.
- Conduct research into all aspects of the impact of media and ICT on women and girls, in particular into their information needs and interests, in order to overcome barriers and to support women's empowerment.

c) Recommendations for International Organizations, Governmental and/or Non-Governmental

In terms of policy approaches and enabling frameworks:

- Develop long-term strategies for supporting greater connectivity for women, networking, and economic opportunities, with media as an important tool at the basis of this work.
- Provide appropriate and sustained levels of resource support to CSOs and NGOs to enable them to undertake activities necessary to influence gender-related policies.

In terms of networking, advocacy, and cooperation:

- Condemn all types of extremism, in particular religious extremism, which jeopardizes the rights of women.

- Intensify contact and collaboration with relevant national and regional institutions such as women's studies centres and women's NGOs.
- Support efforts by CSOs and NGOs to provide assistance and training in communication methods and technologies to local and national groups.

In terms of research and information:

- Conduct internationally comparative, reliable research into gender employment patterns in media and the obstacles to women's advancement.

d) Recommendations for CSOs and NGOs, including Research Bodies

In terms of policy approaches and enabling frameworks:

- Set up efforts to familiarize national media organizations with the provisions of relevant international conventions and action programmes in favour of women's rights.
- Serve as focus points, spaces, and institutions that procure the funding, provide the advice and help, conduct the research, and structure services for women who need it.
- Analyse the gender impact of laws and instruments on women's access, employment, and decision-making in media, and publish the findings to challenge media to change practices that violate women's rights.
- Ensure and monitor the implementation of international laws and instruments by playing a dual role: on the national level, pressure government into delivering a report concerning adherence to international laws and instruments (i.e., CEDAW) to which the country is signatory; and on the international level, brief the responsible committees on possible shortcomings in government reports. Alternative or parallel reports by NGOs are crucial to the monitoring process.
- Establish strategies and develop checklists and indicators to monitor the access and participation of women in media.
- Lobby for the establishment of the ILO Maternity Convention 183 entitling women to a minimum of 14 weeks paid maternity leave. If the country in question has ratified this Convention, lobby for national legislation to be put into place to provide for this provision and guarantee women's right to return to the same or equivalent position.

- Include gender perspectives and gender-specific measurable targets, as well as a communication dimension, in all programmes and projects.
- Review existing media and ICT policies, and find ways to adapt ICT to the needs of poor and especially illiterate women, in order to overcome barriers and to support women's empowerment.
- Support and/or fund efforts that further the professional ability of women's rights' activists to communicate with media.
- Capitalize on and incorporate religion in the feminist struggle, particularly in the Arab region which is still mired in a predominant culture of religious patriarchy and conservatism, and where any challenge to the hegemonic politico-religious patriarchal elite can only be successful if it includes religion by searching for an indigenous, Muslim- and international- based concept of human rights.
- Lobby the government to request a statement of non-discrimination to be filed annually by each news media outlet and to be updated annually.

In terms of the empowerment of women:

- Develop educational and training methodologies to enable women's organisations and community groups to effectively communicate their own messages and concerns, and access to existing media.
- Provide women with equal access to initial and further training to overcome the obstacles that prevent them from reaching their full potential in the profession. Training should provide the following:
 - skills development
 - management training, including power structures of media organizations and the expertise needed to negotiate and work within these structures
 - building alliances and networks
 - confidence-building approaches that reduce women's vulnerability to sexual harassment or the pressure to engage in unethical professional practices

- other successful approaches to the promotion of women advancement including mentoring, networking, sensitization of media managements to gender concerns, and the adoption of policies and transparent procedures.
- Promote, develop, and enhance access to ICT including the internet infrastructure by facilitating access to and transfer of knowledge and technology on concessional, preferential, and favourable terms to the country in question.
- Train women to make greater use of ICTs.
- Provide increased and sustained support for women's media products.
- Introduce, support, and extend community media outlets as a way of increasing women's participation and contribution to media and local economic development, especially in areas of high illiteracy rates, as is the case in the Arab region.

In terms of networking, advocacy, and cooperation:

- Nurture networks to share good practices by rallying women together around common issues, and allow women to run these networks.
- Network with concerned stakeholders at local, regional, and international levels. At the local level, start by better advertising women's presence to increase their popular base and to mount concerted action against discriminatory practices. At the regional level, shed light on shared problems to capitalize on similarities for the achievement of goals (i.e., in Muslim Arab countries, there is a pressing common goal to defend women's rights while reconciling Islamic law with international human rights principles). This would allow female media practitioners to actively exchange and disseminate ideas and advice, feminist studies, translations, and stories of success or failure. On the international level, global connections need to be established where local or regional alliances remain ineffective, especially when dealing with government callousness. The expertise, legal advice, and organization skills of Western activist groups may be invaluable.
- Nourish and support regional coordination among locally-based groups working for women's rights in the Arab and/or European regions but that are still at the early stages because several organizations play, or aspire to play, a regional role. In the Arab region

for example, there is the Tunisia-based CAWTAR, Beirut-based IWSAW, and Cairo-based AMWC.

- Encourage women to fulfil their aspirations with the same determination as men, without abandoning their natural role to bear and raise children.
- Promote and support equity in the participation of women in programmes and projects, wages and career advancement opportunities.
- Form networked coalitions to recognize the specific needs of women in media, facilitate the increased participation of women in communication, and create common strategies at the policy level to address issues relating to women's voices in media.
- Launch a women's resource exchange facility as an Internet-based women's information service and network made up of women's information, media, and communication organizations in the region.
- Promote active cooperation between women's professional media associations, women's legal groups, and women's political associations to allow them to build on their priorities and on women's rights.
- Interlink more effectively grassroots workers and volunteers, media researchers, NGOs, advocacy groups, alternative media networks, and policymakers concerning women and media to promote dialogue and cooperation.
- Promote campaigns that make use of public and private educational programmes to disseminate information about and increase awareness of the rights of women.
- Sensitize the under-privileged sectors of society so that they do not seek to limit the role of women and deprive them of their right to higher learning, and accentuate the role of women in media.

In terms of research and information:

- Pool resources (i.e., compilation of a directory of female media experts).
- Gather data on the government's compliance with its own international treaty obligations and issue reports about the findings.

- Support research into all aspects of the impact of media and ICT on women, in particular into their information needs and interests, and identify measures that may be taken to overcome barriers and to support women's empowerment in terms of ICT use.
- Produce and disseminate media materials on female leaders who bring to their positions of leadership different life experiences and who balance work and family responsibilities.
- Translate relevant materials and make them available to women's groups everywhere.

e) Recommendations for Educational Institutions, including Technical and Journalism Schools

In terms of policy approaches and enabling frameworks:

- Strengthen and encourage the use of existing traditional media (i.e., radio, television, press).
- Include ICT education for girls and women in the curricula of all educational levels to promote and ensure women's full participation in the information society because they are potentially large consumers, users, and producers of ICT and media.
- Provide training to journalism students and journalists to better understand issues of concern to women, as well as issues related to gender and media.

In terms of the empowerment of women:

- Increase the number of female students in media- and ICT-related subjects.
- Train female media students and professionals in management and related subjects, such as interpersonal communication and decision-making skills, with a view to promoting women's media enterprises.
- Sponsor short- or long-term professional internships or exchanges to expand the professional skills of female media practitioners.

f) Recommendations for the General Female Populace

- Move beyond the victim mentality.
- Aim to become well-schooled, both intellectually and professionally, and gain good qualifications that equip media women to discharge their responsibilities to the best level possible. Educated media women will enhance their chances of participating successfully

as media practitioners, and will succeed in presenting a better picture of women than the one we see at present.

- Work hard to reach the same position as men, including in areas traditionally the preserve of men (i.e., politics, economy).
- Shoulder the responsibility of serious programmes.
- Seek continuous training to remain competitive in the field of media, and particularly in the new field of ICTs, and to use these technologies for professional and social development.
- Act as mentors and/or role models for younger women and men, both in the field of media and outside that field.

Conclusion

Although news are said to provide a mirror of the world, this study showed that the world projected by media in both the Arab and European regions was overwhelmingly masculine as women, which represent at least half of the world's population, remained virtually absent and powerless.

The progress made by women in the past few decades meant that there were nowadays more women in media than ever before. The achievements of these women were heartening but have yet to translate into gender-balanced journalism or a balanced and equal access for women to media organizations. Overall, the rate of progress has been slow and, and if it persists at the current pace, it will take decades to achieve gender parity in media. This dilemma of gender bias and discrimination was not exclusive to specific regions or media outlets, but represented a widespread phenomenon extending to both Arab and European regions and to the different types of media outlets, radio, television, and written press. This dismal prospect showed that women were not as empowered as their numbers in media suggest.

On one hand, a promising, although slow progress has taken place whereby women's presence in the news increased steadily, evidencing a constant state of progress in both the Arab and European regions. On the other hand, the rise in women's visibility was only reflected in some fields of media and in an unbalanced manner. The absence or invisibility of women in media, either as actors or as ordinary citizens, differed from one region to the other and among different countries within the same region, depending on each society's degree of openness and the freedom given to women. Gender disparities were also found in different types of media outlets within a single society. For example, in the Maghreb, a difference existed between Arab and French media products found in the country; while in France the difference was between women's magazines and magazines for both men and women. Nevertheless, common impediments remained across all media outlets, countries, and regions.

Overall, the presence of women in media was more promising in countries that granted women the most advanced juridical status; thus allowing them to exist in the media field. These countries included France, Malta, Greece, Egypt, and Tunisia, although there remained much

room for improvement. The situation of women was less promising in countries such as Italy, Turkey, and the Turkish Cypriot region of Cyprus, and even less so in the more conservative societies of Libya and Mauritania where women's rights are stifled, or in Lebanon where the female sexualized body remained an essential component of programming and advertising.

As actors in media and in comparison with their male colleagues, female media practitioners' increased presence was dominant in lower-level media positions, the reporting of soft news that are lower priority on media organizations' agendas, and in temporary and part-time employment, or in positions which offered limited access to training and promotions. Female media practitioners were much less visible as decision-makers, and as journalists in stories of high priority which remained primarily in the hands of men. For example, women were largely found as presenters in television and radio, but their numbers dwindled remarkably as decision-makers in media, or as reporters, especially in newspapers. Even on television screens where women's presence was highest due to the focus on their physical appearance, their numbers dwindled significantly as they became older and 'less attractive' to media consumers. Overall, female media practitioners were marginalized in media, both in terms of the content of the work that they do and in the opportunities available to them to attain higher status positions within their media organizations. They were even marginalized in the unions that were supposed to represent them. However, these factors are not unrelated to the absence of a critical mass in the number of female media practitioners within media organizations.

As for the portrayal of women in Arab and European media, the dominant image was one of stereotypes and unbalance; although to differing extents in different societies. European countries were swamped with images of motherhood or sexualized images of women. This trend was also found in the Arab region, but to differing extents due to the conservative nature of some Arab countries. Overall, the presence and voice of ordinary female citizens in the news were either missing or limited in terms of the roles that they were assigned, the speaking times that they were allocated, and the topics that they discussed. In the Arab region however, media consumers faced an additional burden; that of the conflicting images of women, from the ultra-conservative and submissive Arab woman to the completely liberated model of the Western woman, which created confusing images of women. Meanwhile, the latter model was

unattainable for Arab female viewers as a result of the conservative and patriarchal realities of Arab societies which restricted women from imitating these images. As such, the world of women as depicted in the news was incongruent with reality.

European media, compared to Arab media, benefited from enhanced media freedom and an important tradition of PSB which, although disappearing, gives a voice to all segments of the population and provides a common forum for debate; practices that are crucial to the exercise of citizenship in a pluralistic democracy. The importance of PSB is also related to the fact that public sector media takes into consideration the application of governmental agendas and priorities by allocating attention to the government's commitments towards international principles and instruments. In the Arab region, there is no tradition of PSB as only government-controlled media dominates and are mainly interested with political propaganda and social control.

In addition to PSB, the competition among media outlets increases credibility through the presence of a larger number of information outlets made available to media consumers. Nevertheless, this competitive aspect was rare in the Arab region and more strongly present in Europe. In the Arab region, even in the more liberal countries such as Lebanon where a pluralistic state of media existed, the high numbers of private broadcast media were owned by government officials or their affiliations thereby limiting the diversity of information broadcast.

Concurrent with absence of PSB and competition among media outlets in the Arab region was the absence of independent regulatory bodies that may be resorted to to check abuses and unfair representations. Meanwhile, continued governmental control was accompanied by intimidation, threats, and even clampdowns on some media practitioners. This trend, although found in some European countries but to a lesser extent than in the Arab countries, was challenged by the presence of some independent regulatory bodies and an enhanced freedom of expression found in the European countries.

The findings outlined in this report in terms of obstacles and recommendations identified areas where media stakeholders can focus their efforts and existing resources to address issues of gender disparity. For example, stakeholders may choose to address literacy and ICT skills for women, in general, and female media practitioners, more specifically, to allow them to project a

better image of themselves in the media and to utilize new ICTs that allow them to access a broad range of services and information, as well as benefit from interpersonal exchanges. Stakeholders may also choose to raise awareness about existing legal instruments that can be sought to deal with gender discrimination in the media, or advocate and mobilize public opinion for the establishment of needed gender-related instruments. Therefore, the findings provided in this report help inform practice in terms of tangible improvements to women who are facing gender-discriminatory practices in the media, both as consumers or as actors. Failure to bring about well-thought improvements would have a significant negative social impact in both the short- and long-term, both on women who were subjected to discriminatory media practices and to society as a whole.

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World Association for Christian Communication – <http://waccglobal.org>

World Bank Development Indicators - <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/>

Appendix A: Research Survey

1- What is the percentage of women working in your organization?

----- Less than 5% ----- Between 5% and 20% ----- More than 20%

2- What is the number of women working in the field of media at different levels within your organization?

----- Top management ----- Mid-management ----- Lower level positions

3- Does your organization offer similar remuneration packages to women and men who possess similar qualifications and hold similar positions?

----- Yes ----- No

4- Does your organization have an internal gender policy?

----- Yes ----- No

If yes, please identify the type of internal gender policy available:

-----Salary equity -----Sexual harassment policy-----Maternity/paternity policy -----Other

If not, does it adopt a gender policy established by the country's national legal system?

----- Yes ----- No

If yes, what type of national legal policy does it adopt?

-----Salary equity -----Sexual harassment policy-----Maternity/paternity policy -----Other

5- On what basis are the female employees in your organization selected?

-----Seniority -----Competence/skills -----Family owned business -----Other

6- Does your organization ensure a minimum quota for women in the selection process?

----- Yes ----- No

7- Does your organization have child-care facilities?

----- Yes ----- No

8- Do women have equal access to non-traditional areas of media?

-----Camera operator -----Reporter -----News presenter -----Foreign correspondent

9- Do all employees have equal access to development/training programmes?

----- Yes ----- No

10- Does your organization offer training or awareness sessions on gender equality?

----- Yes ----- No

11- Are women and men given fair and equal opportunities to express their points of view?

----- Yes ----- No

12- Who decides on media content?

----- The director ----- A gender-based committee ----- A non gender-based committee

13- Are women most frequently portrayed as:

-----Survivors -----Victims -----Objects -----Actors -----Protagonists

14- Do media images portray women in all their diversity (Age, Class, Disability, Ethnic origin, Religion and Occupation)?

----- Yes ----- No

15- Does the range of images degrade the dignity of women?

----- Yes ----- No

If yes, please identify in which media outlet degrading images of women may be found:

-----In the news -----In documentaries -----In advertisements -----In TV programs

16- Does your organization have an internal system that assesses media content on gender issues?

----- Yes

----- No

17- Are best practices on gender mainstreaming in media communicated to the public?

----- Yes

----- No

18- Do you think that women and men in media should have equal access to all work opportunities at all levels within media organizations?

----- Yes

----- No

19- In your opinion, what are some of the important issues in relation to gender and media?

20- If you have the opportunity to encourage gender equality in your organizations, what would you do?

Thank you.

Appendix B: Recent Projects and Initiatives for Women in the Media

Given the scope of media and its impact on daily social practices, there are new vested interests in media effects on women. These interests can be seen in some initiatives undertaken by various entities to address the issue of women, particularly Arab women, in media through forums, expert groups meetings, training sessions for female journalists, and capacity-building initiatives. Support mechanisms for groups campaigning in media for the empowerment of women are inherent in the terms of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership that was launched in 1995.¹ Prior to the 1990s, media were barely mentioned in the strategy documents of the UN conferences on women. In 1995, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women identified media as one of twelve critical areas of concern.² As such, the past decade witnessed some changes and improvements that affected women's place in media. In the Arab countries, "the rather bleak picture of Arab media women being conspicuous by their absence from a crucial international debate no longer holds true" due to a number of initiatives that have taken in the Arab world.³ Among these initiatives, there are:

Radio Mauritanie Training Centre: Radio Mauritanie, the only radio station in Mauritania, established its own training centre to fill a handicap in media development as there is no journalism school or tuition at the University of Nouakchott. The established Centre complements the journalism courses offered abroad; offers basic training in journalism, radio production, archive management and language training among other services; and facilitates the transfer of information between senior and junior media practitioners.⁴

La Meute des Chiennes de Garde (Pack of Female Watchdogs) in France: In 2008, *La Meute* network and *Les Chiennes de Garde* got together to form *La Meute des Chiennes de Garde* as a

¹ CMF MENA (2000) *Women's Rights and the Arab Media*.

² United Nations (1995) *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*.

³ Sakr, N. (2001) *International and Regional Support Systems for Arab Media Women*, para. 15.

⁴ International Programme for the Development of Communication (2010) *PART IV – National Projects Submitted to the IPDC – Arab Region and Europe*.

way for civil society to react to media problems through targeted initiatives or legal action. This association fights against sexist advertising. It launched a website outlining its initiatives to raise awareness among the public concerning the harm inflicted upon women through a negative portrayal of them. The website enables visitors to react and share thoughts.¹

Charte nationale pour l'amélioration de l'image de la femme dans les médias (National Charter to Improve the Image of Women in the Media) and Déclaration de Rabat sur l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes journalistes (Rabat Declaration on the Equality between Male and Female Journalists): In Morocco, the adoption of the National Charter in 2005 followed by the adoption, in Maghreb, of the Rabat Declaration represented an important step, and a leading step in the Arab world. The Moroccan National Charter denounced the stereotyped representation of women in media which presents women as traditional, guided, superficial, and as a victim and object. In the Maghreb, this Charter represented an important step towards a balanced representation of women in media.²

Strengthening the teaching capacity at ISIC in Morocco: The Institut Supérieur de l'Information et de la Communication, the leading journalism institute in Morocco and the only public higher-establishment in this field, improved and expanded its course offering to meet the newly-emerging challenges in an evolving media sector (i.e., online press, the opening up of media landscape to the private sector). The objective was for ISIC to reinforce its position as the country's leading establishment for media and communication training.³

Project for supporting Jordan's Media Training Centre: In 2003, the Higher Media Council established Jordan's Media Training Centre to respond to the needs of media and to improve the professional media environment. The project focused on human resource development and on the upgrading of the skills of journalists and media specialists. The JMTC's plans includes

¹ Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

² Ben Nablia, S. (2009) *Femme et Télévision au Maghreb: Amélioration de l'Image de la Femme dans les Télévisions du Maghreb Francophone*.

³ International Programme for the Development of Communication (2010) *PART IV – National Projects Submitted to the IPDC – Arab Region and Europe*.

“professional media environment. JMTC’s training plan includes training courses on professional journalistic practices, investigative reporting, reporting on human interest stories, specialised reporting (such as women issues, environment, health, education, business), and reporting about local government affairs. It also includes media ethics, media laws, and ICTs for media”.¹

Jordan Media Institute (JMI): The JMI was established to close the gap between the country’s real needs in terms of human resources in media field and what is actually available. The Institute focuses on journalistic competences and skills through the provision of a Master’s degree and other certification addressing specific skills. The objective is to raise the level of objectivity in media practices and reporting.²

Morocco Inter-Professional Syndicate of Independent Radio and Television Broadcasters:

In Morocco, three main networks co-exist (Soread 2M, Médi 1, and Sawa) alongside the public operator (SNRT - Société Nationale de Radio et de Télévision). Since 2006, seven private operators have been authorized to broadcast 10 radio programmes. None of the operators have been granted a licence for national coverage. Access to independent information is limited by restrictions on freedom of media. A structured professional organization was needed to heighten awareness of these issues among public authorities. Therefore, the objective of this initiative was to “enable the syndicate and its members to lay the foundations for the establishment of a professional organisation, and to acquire enough expertise to be able to defend its interests and promote media freedom”.³

Literary Prize 2M: Since 2006, the 2M chain led an initiative that rewards the first works of potential writers aged 20 to 30 years and who have never been published. A total of nine rewards are allocated each year to works selected by a jury. The works may include novels, short stories,

¹ International Programme for the Development of Communication (2008) *New Projects Submitted to the IPDC – Part IV: Arab Region and Europe*, p. 6.

² International Programme for the Development of Communication (2008) *New Projects Submitted to the IPDC – Part IV: Arab Region and Europe*.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

and poetry, written in Arabic, Amazigh, or French. In 2006 in Morocco, the rate of female participation was 38% out of nearly 8000 manuscripts.¹

Gender Units in Egyptian Ministries: In Egypt, the government established what is referred to as ‘gender units’ in each of its ministries and government agencies to ensure equal opportunities in the workplace, including in media.²

Mauritania Training for Professional Journalists: The Mauritanian media, despite the freedom it enjoys, suffers from the low level of qualification of its personnel and lack of equipment. And no institution exists in the country providing training in media professions. This initiative involves Mauritanian radio, television, and print media. It provides support for media-related training and promotes gender equality within media. The training of female journalists is especially addressed since these journalists act as relays between the society and media. The training programme consists of theoretical casework and field visits in the specific areas of specialisation for each beneficiary. Following the training, in an attempt to apply the knowledge acquired, the beneficiaries are called upon to produce programmes, articles, and/or surveys for the print media on the topic of women in Mauritania.³

Commissions within the National Council for Women and the Family: In Tunisia, three commissions were set up within the National Council for Women and the Family to prepare annual report, one of which deals specifically with the image of women in media.⁴

Salé International Women’s Film Festival: This film festival devoted to women represented a significant step. The festival is organized by the Association Bouregreg in Morocco. It is renowned because it is an event devoted specifically to women’s film. In addition to the film contest, the festival includes meetings and round tables on topics related to women and cinema.

¹ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

² Cabrera-Balleza (2002) *Report from the Online Discussion on “The Participation and Access of Women to the Media and their impact on and their use as an Instrument for the Advancement and Empowerment of Women”*.

³ International Programme for the Development of Communication (2008) *New Projects Submitted to the IPDC – Part IV: Arab Region and Europe*.

⁴ CMF MENA (2000) *Women’s Rights and the Arab Media*.

Foreign guests and national operators in the cinema sector are among the participants. The jury consists of women from all over the world.¹

Establishment of Arab Media Women's Centre: In 1999, the Arab Media Women's Centre was launched and moved quickly to honour Jordanian female journalists on International Women's Day in 2000.² The Centre's work ranges from media training to media and non-media awareness on human rights and democracy through the organization of conferences, dissemination of reports, training, and the production of films.³

Report on media's perpetration of symbolic violence against women: In 1999, the Collectif Maghreb Egalité, a network of groups and individuals from Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco issued a report highlighting the role of media in perpetrating "symbolic violence against women through demeaning images and programmes full of prejudice". The Collectif provided evidence that the boundary between symbolic and physical violence was porous, with one type of violence feeding on the other. The report also listed steps that could be taken to improve the existing situation such as incentives to encourage good journalistic coverage of women, and steps for the recruitment of women to top positions in media.⁴

Regional Conference on Gender and Communication Policy: In 1999, a regional conference on Gender and Communication Policy was organized by the Institute of Women's Studies in the Arab World, in collaboration with WACC, and was held in Beirut. An audience of female journalists and academics from different Arab countries produced the Beirut Declaration which contains recommendations on training, advocacy, and networking in order to improve the status of female journalists through capacity-building, training, equal opportunity policies, information sharing and the promotion of communication.⁵

¹ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

² Sakr, N. (2001) *International and Regional Support Systems for Arab Media Women*.

³ Arab Media Women's Centre, website at www.ayamm.org

⁴ Sakr, N. (2001) *International and Regional Support Systems for Arab Media Women*, para. 15.

⁵ World Association for Christian Communication, website at <http://waccglobal.org>

A number of workshops and training sessions have been organized to address the topic of women in media. They include, but are not limited to:

1. Tunisia – A training and awareness workshop for media professionals and female politicians was held in 2010 within the UN-INSTRAW/CAWTAR project on *Women, Politics, Media and Communication*.¹
2. Maghreb – A series of training-the-trainers sessions was initiated in 2010 by UNESCO for media practitioners, especially public service broadcasters, to produce gender-sensitive media content and reduce stereotyping. The sessions aimed at capitalizing on media as a powerful tool for transformation of societal practices. The first session held reflected on the means to create audiovisual products that respond to market needs, while spreading balanced images of Maghreb women. A guide entitled *Femme et télévision au Maghreb* (Woman and Television in Maghreb) was published by the UNESCO Office in Rabat to serve as a reference material for the training.²
3. Arab Region – A training workshop was organized by UNESCO's Office in Beirut, in cooperation with the Arab Women Organization for Arab women media professionals. The workshop that was held in Tunisia focused on writing and television and covered such topics as creative thinking, elements of writing, content of radio and television programmes, and production of programmes.³
4. Algeria – A training and awareness workshop for media professionals and elected women was held in 2009 within the UN-INSTRAW/CAWTAR project on *Strengthening women's leadership and participation in politics and decision making process in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia*.⁴
5. Jordan – In 2003, UNESCO organized a workshop with Arab women journalists on advanced desktop publishing techniques. The workshop was organized within the context

¹ Centre for Arab Women Training and Research, website at www.cawtar.org

² UNESCO, website at <http://portal.unesco.org>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Centre for Arab Women Training and Research, website at www.cawtar.org

of the UNESCO-EU project on *The Promotion of Independent and Pluralist Arab Media*. Participants included female journalists from a number of Arab countries. The workshop aimed to help female journalists understand the publishing process, develop original publications, and develop knowledge about desktop publishing (DTP) software applications.¹

6. Tunisia – The UNESCO office in Beirut organized, in collaboration with the Organization of Arab Women, a training seminar in Tunisia for Arab women journalists. The seminar was devoted to audiovisual publishing techniques, with a focus on drafting techniques of audiovisual scripts addressing women. The training sessions were divided into two parts: one devoted to television, the other to radio. They dealt with creative reflection, publishing elements, audiovisual contents, and production.²

A number of important publications addressing the issue of balanced coverage in media have also been drafted. Among these publications are:

1. Editorial Guidelines (4th edition), by Mary Raine, 2010, was translated and published into many languages. The document focuses on social media and citizen journalism, and how incoming material can be handled responsibly by broadcasters in terms of accuracy and objectivity.
2. Media Management Manual: A Handbook for Television and Radio Practitioners in Countries-in-Transition, by John Prescott Thomas, 2009, UNESCO.
3. Getting the Balance Right: Gender Equality in Journalism, 2009, International Federation of Journalists.
4. Civic Education for Media Professionals: A Training Manual, 2009, Fackson Banda, UNESCO series on journalism education.
5. Model Curricula for Journalism Education, 2007, UNESCO series on journalism education.

¹ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

² Ibid.

Appendix C: State of Media in Some Countries in the Middle East

Lebanon:

Lebanon enjoys one of the freest presses in the Arab world and there is a wide implementation of the right of freedom for the press. Most of the visual, audio, and written media are privately owned.¹ Lebanon can be seen as representative but at the same time non-representative of other Arab countries. When looking at the Lebanese media landscape, considering that Lebanon is the only Arab country that allowed the existence of private/commercial broadcast stations alongside the State-controlled broadcast media, the large number of media outlets may be equated with pluralism and a freedom of expression. The Lebanese government aiming to accommodate the different religious communities found in the country gave each its share of power; thus giving an appearance of democracy and pluralism, especially in comparison to the authoritarian regimes of the other Arab countries.²

With the arrival of the Lebanese Broadcasting Channel (LBC) and Future TV international, two Lebanese satellite channels, dish and cable access suddenly soared, even among people who already had access to the terrestrial version of the two channels. Satellite television thus became the more accessible medium for the masses; given that Internet access in the region was still relatively low, although growing.³ Nevertheless, a close examination of media ownership and control in Lebanon reveals a less democratic and pluralistic image: despite the high numbers of private broadcast media, they are almost exclusively owned by government officials or persons with whom they are involved. The dividing of media ownership and control also reflected power divisions along confessional lines whereby each licensed broadcast media served a powerful faction within the country and disseminated its views and interests. Only

¹ UNDP (2010) *Lebanon 2008-2009 – The National Human Development Report: Toward a Citizen's State*.

² Dabbous-Sensenig, D. (2002) *The Arab World and the Challenge of Introducing Gender-Sensitive Communication Policies*.

³ Sakr, N. (2002) "Seen and Starting to Be Heard: Women and the Arab Media in a Decade of Change".

powerful economic or confessional factions were granted licensing; weaker groups were denied licensing, thus excluding them from public debate. As a result, it is a misconception to equate the existence of a large number of broadcast media in Lebanon with pluralism and freedom of expression.¹ Since 2005, media has become even more polarized, particularly in the television sector that became a fundamental tool in the political struggle. In some instances, media played a negative role in spreading sectarian incitement. Despite that, activists flocked to Lebanon from neighbouring Arab countries to escape the restraints they faced at home.²

Lebanese media in numbers: As of 2004, there were 15 daily political newspapers in Lebanon with a total circulation of 215000. Men were slightly more likely than women to read newspapers and magazines on a weekly basis (31.8% and 27%). In television, there were nine terrestrial stations operating in Lebanon, seven of which broadcast on satellite. There were also 13 Category One (political) radio stations which broadcast news bulletins and programs, and just about as many Category Two (non-political) stations. In radio, 91% of institutions were private compared to 9% public. The percentage was almost similar in television where 90% of institutions were private compared to 10% public.³

Female presence in Lebanese media: Over the years, Lebanese women became an integral part of the media scene in the Arab world at large. They played central roles in local and Arab media, in different positions (i.e., columnists, presenters, reporters, hosts of political and non-political programs).⁴ A survey conducted among local media practitioners in the context of this report showed that the majority of female media practitioners within media organizations in Lebanon held lower level positions (almost 90%), while only about 7% held mid-management positions, and a maximum of 3% were found in top management positions. Equal remuneration packages were offered to both women and men who possessed similar qualifications and held

¹ Dabbous-Sensenig, D. (2002) *The Arab World and the Challenge of Introducing Gender-Sensitive Communication Policies*; and UNDP (2010) *Lebanon 2008-2009 – The National Human Development Report: Toward a Citizen's State*.

² UNDP (2010) *Lebanon 2008-2009 – The National Human Development Report: Toward a Citizen's State*.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Fatany, S. (2006) *Women Journalists Share Experiences Around Med*.

similar positions. Female media practitioners were selected based on their competences and skills, except for some positions within family-owned media enterprises. Women also had equal access to some non-traditional areas of media; areas traditionally the preserve of men. Nevertheless, none of the media organizations to which the surveyed media practitioners belonged ensured a minimum quota for women in the selection process, and female media practitioners did not always have equal access to development and training programmes nor were they given fair and equal opportunities to express their points of view.

As for the portrayal of women in media, it was not always a diversified portrayal, but was often focused on the sexualized image of women, particularly in advertisements, news, and television programs. Nevertheless, the survey findings showed that none of the media organizations had an internal system for the assessment of media content in terms of gender issues, and none offered training or awareness sessions on gender equality.

Regulatory authorities in Lebanon: In Lebanon, legal provisions were vague concerning the protection against gender discrimination. Therefore, those in the media field had little recourse to ensure the protection of their rights to equal gender status. The freedom of expression and media were consecrated for all in the Lebanese Constitution. However, only media outlets owned by powerful confessional or economic groups in Lebanon were actually granted licensing and thus guaranteed freedom of speech. Weaker groups were denied a license.¹ The Lebanese Labour Law enacted in 1946 and amended in the following years discriminated against compensations awarded to women through the National Social Security Fund and employees laws. The Union of Journalists' code of ethics which dated from the pre-civil war period (before 1975) did not include gender provisions concerning the fair portrayal of women. The same trend was found in the 1994 Lebanese Broadcasting Act, the first law on private broadcasting introduced in the Arab world, which recognized the importance of the respect of human dignity, freedom of expression, and pluralism of opinion, but did not address gender issues specifically.

¹ Dabbous-Sensenig, D. (2002) *The Arab World and the Challenge of Introducing Gender-Sensitive Communication Policies*.

Lebanon signed a number of international agreements such as the ILO Convention Number 100 (Equal Remuneration) and Number 111 (Discrimination in Employment and Occupation). Nevertheless, the benefits that these conventions granted were unattainable due to their weak enforcement in Lebanon. The obstacles were accentuated by discrimination against women under family laws.¹ As for the gender policies found within media organizations in Lebanon, the surveys conducted among local media practitioners in the context of this report showed that media organizations usually adopted the gender policy established by the country's national legal system and did not possess an internal policy of their own, except when dealing with the issue of maternity/paternity leave for which many organizations set their own internal policies. As for sexual harassment policies, none of the media organizations seemed to have one, but a small number of these organizations provided child-care facilities.

Regulatory bodies in Lebanon enjoyed limited powers and “act[ed] more like lapdogs of the government” or provided cover in their rulings for what was essentially a politically-based decision.²

Egypt:

In Egypt, in 1990, the Arab region saw the debut of satellite television when the first Arabic language satellite channel was created from within Egypt's State broadcasting monopoly, the ERTU. The monopoly eased a little in 2000 when a free zone was designated near Cairo and from which non-ERTU broadcasting was permitted to transmit programming by satellite. However, ERTU, a 50% owner of the free zone, reserved the right to censor material transmitted into Egyptian homes. These developments were accompanied by a limited penetration of satellite in Egypt, and strict governmental controls over the ownership and content of Egyptian magazines and newspapers.³ In the Arab world more generally, the developments in the field of satellite channels stimulated debates about the role of women working in television as more

¹ UNDP (2010) *Lebanon 2008-2009 – The National Human Development Report: Toward a Citizen's State*.

² Dabbous-Sensenig, D. (2002) *The Arab World and the Challenge of Introducing Gender-Sensitive Communication Policies*, p. 3.

³ Sakr, N. (2002) “Seen and Starting to Be Heard: Women and the Arab Media in a Decade of Change”.

people began to question whether female presenters and reporters had a decorative purpose only, or whether these channels will eventually allow the presentation of a full range of women and their experiences.¹

Female presence in Egyptian media: In Egypt, women were under-represented in the management of State-owned newspapers. In television, they held top posts. Overall, no distinctions were made between women and men concerning wages.²

¹ Sakr, N. (2001) *International and Regional Support Systems for Arab Media Women*.

² Fatany, S. (2006) *Women Journalists Share Experiences Around Med*.

Appendix D: State of Media in Some Countries in the Maghreb

Morocco:

In Morocco, an omnipresent and all-powerful public operator existed, the *Société Nationale de Radio et de Télévision (SNRT, formerly known as RTM)*.¹ Its mission was to ensure the PSB within the context of the State monopoly in matters of telecommunications, in accordance with the laws and regulations in place.² Alongside, three main networks co-existed: *Soread, 2M, and Médi 1*, and the radio station *Sawa*.³ The first two national companies, *SNRT* and *Soread*, numbered more than 10 television channels and 6 radio stations broadcasting using different technologies (e.g., analogue, satellite).⁴ In addition to about 10 public television channels, there were a regional and two satellite channels. *Médi 1* was the only private television channel.⁵ The first private and commercial channel in Morocco, 2M, was launched in 1989. Today, the deputy general director of this channel is a woman who is most likely the highest Maghrebi woman in the hierarchy of audiovisual media and the only one at this level of responsibility in the political field of information. As of 1993, Moroccan radio entered satellite broadcasting through the European satellite *Eutelsat*.⁶

¹ International Programme for the Development of Communication (2008) *New Projects Submitted to the IPDC – Part IV: Arab Region and Europe*.

² El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

³ International Programme for the Development of Communication (2008) *New Projects Submitted to the IPDC – Part IV: Arab Region and Europe*.

⁴ International Programme for the Development of Communication (2010) PART IV – National Projects Submitted to the IPDC – Arab Region and Europe.

⁵ El Bour, H. (2009) *Médiatisation de la Participation Politique de la Femme en Algérie, au Maroc et en Tunisie (Rapport de Synthèse de l'Exercice Media)*.

⁶ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

Since 2006 and in a timid move towards the liberalization of the airwaves, the audiovisual landscape evolved to a certain extent through a timid reorganization of this landscape where seven private operators have been authorized to broadcast 10 local or regional radio programmes. None of these operators were granted a licence for national coverage and access to independent information remained limited by restrictions on the freedom of media.¹ The private sector consisted of one television channel, *Medil Sat*, and 12 radio stations operating throughout the country. In 2009, the Conseil Supérieur de la Communication Audiovisuelle (CSCA) granted four radio licences authorizing multiregional coverage. Online radio however, developed at a much slower pace than other media outlets in Morocco. With the exception of private radio stations that broadcast on the net, no other online radios existed.² As for newspapers in Morocco, they were provided with most of their news from the *Maghreb Arabe Presse*, a national news agency that was founded in 1959. The democratic progress that took place in Morocco, together with the economic and social reform process, granted media a growing role at the national level and allowed women to work in all sectors, including media. The magazines in Morocco, including women's magazines, were in many respects copies of Western magazines published in French or Middle Eastern magazines published in Arabic. Furthermore, women's magazines and newspapers in Morocco were controlled by male presidents or general managers. The messages of these magazines were very similar, conventional, and consensual. Nevertheless, these magazines led some feminist campaigns, but it was mainly their fashion, cuisine, and beauty columns that made them attractive sales items. A strong presence of foreign female journalists working for these magazines was found as they

¹ International Programme for the Development of Communication (2008) *New Projects Submitted to the IPDC – Part IV: Arab Region and Europe*.

² International Programme for the Development of Communication (2010) PART IV – National Projects Submitted to the IPDC – Arab Region and Europe.

were wanted for their knowledge of French.¹ Today, almost 65% of media in Morocco is private.²

Moroccan media in numbers: There were 398 newspapers and magazines (up to December 2006) published in three languages: Arabic (71%), Amazigh (2%), and French (27%). The 398 titles were divided between daily publications, weekly, fortnightly, six-monthly, and yearly. Some of these publications were irregular. The electronic media, and despite the increasing number of Internet users, had not experienced a significant growth. Today, the number of regular electronic newspapers does not exceed six.³

Female presence in Moroccan media: In Morocco, female journalists hold high positions and collaborate well with men.⁴ In radio, the female presence ranges from 0% of engineers to 45% of technicians and 40% of journalists, while the number of producers is unknown.⁵

Regulatory authorities in Morocco: A structured professional organization is needed in Morocco to heighten awareness among public authorities.⁶ At present, the media sector is linked to the Minister of Communication under which there is also the Moroccan Cinematographic Centre. This Centre is State-owned. It controls the cinema industry, approves censor cuts, provides financial help, and sponsors productions.⁷

¹ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

² El Bour, H. (2009) *Médiatisation de la Participation Politique de la Femme en Algérie, au Maroc et en Tunisie (Rapport de Synthèse de l'Exercice Media)*.

³ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

⁴ Fatany, S. (2006) *Women Journalists Share Experiences Around Med*.

⁵ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

⁶ International Programme for the Development of Communication (2008) *New Projects Submitted to the IPDC – Part IV: Arab Region and Europe*.

⁷ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

Algeria:

Algeria did not experience the opening of media to the private initiative, neither for television nor for radio.¹ There are no private television channels. The *Entreprise Nationale de Télévision* is the only player and operates five television channels.² In 2008, Algeria had one national channel and two satellite channels, *Canal Algérie* and *Algérie 3*.³ In 2009, two channels were launched, one in Amazigh and the other dedicated to the Coran in an attempt to preserve the religious authority of the State.⁴ The liberalization of the press was reflected in an increase in the number of newspapers that began to be published and the number of women working for them. Like Morocco, the country was strongly influenced by Western and Middle Eastern sources of information. Nevertheless, the political tension between Algeria and Morocco restricted the two countries from creating a strong Maghrebi identity and exchanging information; thus resulting in a substantial delay in the development of some sectors requiring cooperation.⁵ The experience of electronic media is recent in Algeria where, in 2007, the journal *Eshourouk Online* was created and has gained much popularity since.

Algerian media in numbers: There were 289 newspapers and magazines in Algeria, in addition to 38 radio stations, of which six were national and 32 local.⁶

¹ El Bour, H. (2009) *Médiatisation de la Participation Politique de la Femme en Algérie, au Maroc et en Tunisie (Rapport de Synthèse de l'Exercice Media)*.

² Ben Nablia, S. (2009) *Femme et Télévision au Maghreb: Amélioration de l'Image de la Femme dans les Télévisions du Maghreb Francophone*.

³ El Bour, H. (2009) *Médiatisation de la Participation Politique de la Femme en Algérie, au Maroc et en Tunisie (Rapport de Synthèse de l'Exercice Media)*.

⁴ Ben Nablia, S. (2009) *Femme et Télévision au Maghreb: Amélioration de l'Image de la Femme dans les Télévisions du Maghreb Francophone*.

⁵ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

⁶ El Bour, H. (2009) *Médiatisation de la Participation Politique de la Femme en Algérie, au Maroc et en Tunisie (Rapport de Synthèse de l'Exercice Media)*.

Female presence in Algerian media: In Algeria, women retain a highly traditional status and only hold depoliticized positions in all sectors of activity. Their presence in media lags behind that of other Arab countries.¹

Mauritania:

In Mauritania, media enjoyed more freedom than in many other Arabic countries. The problem however was the low-level of qualification of its media personnel and the lack of equipment. Nevertheless, the situation is evolving with the draft bill on audiovisual activities which provided for the liberalisation of the sector. The national radio service operated a network of local radio stations. In the print media sector, the country has some 30 newspapers. Nevertheless, access to these publications is difficult, especially for the population inside the country.

Mauritania media in numbers: There were about 30 newspapers, more than one third of which were published in French and the remainder in Arabic.²

Female presence in Mauritanian media: The presence of women in media organizations was weak, particularly in the private press.³

Regulatory authorities in Mauritania: The transformation in 2006 of Mauritanian television into a public service channel and the creation of the *Haute Autorité de la Presse de l'Audiovisuel* aimed to limit direct control of national television by the Ministry of Communication and allowed the creation of a private television channel.⁴

¹ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

² International Programme for the Development of Communication (2008) *New Projects Submitted to the IPDC – Part IV: Arab Region and Europe*.

³ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

⁴ Ben Nablia, S. (2009) *Femme et Télévision au Maghreb: Amélioration de l'Image de la Femme dans les Télévisions du Maghreb Francophone*.

Tunisia:

In Tunisia, more than 90% of media were private.¹ In 1997, the restructuring of Tunisian television created the *Agence Nationale de la Promotion de l'Audiovisuel* which allowed the private sector to produce television programs. In 2005, the first private television channel, *Hannibal*, was born.² The press was free and limited only by the respect of the Constitution banning all forms of discrimination and the law prohibiting incitement of hatred and terrorism. In 2006, the duty to register all press organs was cancelled. All Tunisian newspapers and magazines benefit from public advertising. Private advertising is free and represents 75% of media advertising income. The State covers a significant share of the costs incurred by the distribution of these products abroad. In 2003, the first private radio, *Radio Mosaique*, started broadcasting followed by a second one, *Radio El Jawhara*, in 2005. In 2007, a religious station, the Coran radio *Ezzitouna* started transmitting in an attempt to encourage the practice of the Islamic religion. The first e-magazine, *Afkar on Line*, became a forum for debate and exchange of ideas for thinkers and intellectuals from Tunisia and the Arab world. Multilingualism is evident in all Tunisian media outlets. For example, the *International Tunisian Radio Channel* (ITRC) broadcasts in five languages.

Tunisian media in numbers: There were 265 newspapers of which 90% were private and free to decide their editorial content. They were published in Arabic, and four in French. In addition, there were about 1100 foreign publications and newspapers that circulated in the country. Hundreds of foreign correspondents visited the country each year, and about 100 of them were permanently accredited in Tunis. Nearly all Tunisian households had radio and television, and the majority had satellite dishes allowing them to view international programming.³ In the audiovisual sector, there were two public channels, *Tunis 7* and *Tunisie 21*,

¹ El Bour, H. (2009) *Médiatisation de la Participation Politique de la Femme en Algérie, au Maroc et en Tunisie (Rapport de Synthèse de l'Exercice Media)*.

² Ben Nablia, S. (2009) *Femme et Télévision au Maghreb: Amélioration de l'Image de la Femme dans les Télévisions du Maghreb Francophone*.

³ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

and two private channels, *Hannibal TV* and *Nessma TV*. In radio, there were eight public radio stations and three private ones, one of which was a religious station. As for electronic media, Tunisia undertook in 2002 the first experience of all Maghreb countries by creating the private journal *Webmanager Center*. Other electronic journals followed, especially in the economy field.¹

Female presence in Tunisian media: As journalists, women represented 35% of the workforce, half of which under the age of 40.

Regulatory authorities in Tunisia: The presidential power controls the information systems, which restricts women from significantly changing their status and existing in media through their capacities. Since 1987, several measures were adopted to promote pluralism of information, protect journalists' rights, and allow them to work freely. The Code of Press has been amended many times since and decriminalized press offences (i.e., defamation of public order was no longer an offence). Since 1987, no newspaper or magazine has been suspended, and no journalist has been arrested due to professional activity.²

Libya:

In Libya, the situation of women in media was worrisome.

Female presence in Libyan media: The position and image of women in Libyan media were archaic and comparable to those of Morocco decades ago. This was due to the strongly patriarchal nature of Libyan society where a respectable woman was not allowed to work or appear in media. The only exception was Aicha Kadhafi, daughter of President Mouammar Kadhafi, who was the only Libyan woman prominently appearing in the news, in addition to the female bodyguards of Libyan presidential guard who accompany President Kadhafi in his

¹ El Bour, H. (2009) *Médiatisation de la Participation Politique de la Femme en Algérie, au Maroc et en Tunisie (Rapport de Synthèse de l'Exercice Media)*.

² El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

journeys. Nevertheless, images of Aicha Kadhafi may only be found in Western magazines, not in Arab media.¹

¹ El Khayat, R. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Arab Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Morocco and Maghrebi Countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya)*.

Appendix E: State of Media in Some Countries in Europe

Cyprus:

In Cyprus, the considerable increase in the presence of women in the public sphere and the changes in media-political dynamics occurred together with the tabloidization of media. A distinction was made between two societies found within the same country as a result of conflict: the Turkish Cypriot region and the Greek Cypriot region.

A major problem found in the Turkish Cypriot region where a degrading image of women existed in media was that of female participation in several areas of media, their participation as actors in media which affected how the gender issue was reported, and the extent to which women's voices were heard in media. The use of language in Turkish Cypriot media was described as sexist.

In the Greek Cypriot region, the situation of women in media appeared more promising although many improvements still needed to be made. The need was for a media that provided new ways of thinking and non-sexist information about women, as well as regular spaces for women's experiences and points of view in both news and entertainment.¹

Female presence in Cypriot media: Surveys administered to local media practitioners in Cyprus revealed that, as actors in media, only a very small number of women (up to 3%) held top management positions in their respective organizations. Nevertheless, media organizations offered similar remuneration packages to both women and men possessing similar qualifications and holding similar positions. In some organizations, women were appointed due to family ownerships of media organizations; and sometimes based on their competences and skills, or seniority. In general, female media practitioners benefited from equal access to development and training programs, and an equal opportunity to express their points of view. However, only a small number of media organizations offered awareness or training sessions on gender equality, and none offered child-care facilities.

¹ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

As for the portrayal of women in media, the surveys showed that most media organizations portrayed women in their diversity (e.g., age, class, ethnic background), and most of the time, the images portrayed were not degrading to women. When present, degrading images of women were most likely to appear in the news, followed by advertisements, television programs, and even documentaries. Meanwhile, most media organizations did not possess an internal system that assesses media content on gender issues.

Regulatory authorities in Cyprus: Surveys administered to local media practitioners revealed that most Cypriot media organizations had internal gender policies that dealt with salary equity and maternity/paternity leave. Some organizations however adopted gender policies established by the country's national legal system, particularly in terms of salary equity.¹

Italy:

In Italy, despite gaps and unbalances in the reporting of news on gender, media attention to issues pertaining to women was growing, as well as attempts to address stereotypes.

Italian media in numbers: There were 64 daily newspapers published in Italy. The most influential of them were owned and controlled by a few financial trusts. As for radio, the public broadcasting company controlled three national AM/FM channels. Public service had a dominant share in media market. In television, there were three television poles in Italy: the first was *Radiotelevisione Italiana* and represented the public share of broadcasting; the second was *Mediaset*, a commercial broadcasting group controlled by *Fininvest*, Berlusconi's personal financial holding; and finally the *LA7* and *Odeon*, in addition to some 700 small to medium independent, private and local television stations.²

Female presence in Italian media: Many women work in media but they are mostly found in lower positions in the media hierarchy and commonly take part-time contracts.³ Surveys

¹ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

² Lucianetti, L. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Italy*.

³ Fatany, S. (2006) *Women Journalists Share Experiences Around Med*.

administered to local media practitioners in Italy showed that 65% of media organizations encouraged women to apply for positions and 57% had initiatives that promoted a gender-friendly work environment. Women were encouraged to take on non-traditional roles in media in 28% of cases (i.e., photojournalist, camerawoman). A promising finding was that the majority of media staff in Italy (85%) was trained to probe gender issues that underlie journalism stories.

Regulatory authorities in Italy: Italy adopted European provisions that invite a more balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in media, and transposed them into the *Testo Unico Della Radiotelevisione* in 2005. Surveys completed by local media staff showed that only 25% of media organizations covered gender considerations in their policies and only 40% of organizations encouraged sexist complaints in the workplace. However, 50% of organizations had their own internal maternity/paternity policy in place.¹

Turkey:

In Turkey, there existed a large diversity of media outlets with different backgrounds.

Female presence in Turkish media: The representation of women in Turkish media revealed a great need for media monitoring.

Regulatory authorities in Turkey: Turkish governments have been stressing the importance of positive discrimination for women.²

Greece:

In Greece, private television assumed the dominant position in the country and radio represented an important source of information and entertainment. Both the public and private operators in Greece maintained satellite channels targeting the Greeks abroad. Radio stations

¹ Lucianetti, L. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Italy*.

² Ibid.

broadcasted locally, nationally, and/or regionally. Out of 1145 radio stations, only 35 were granted permission to operate and 138 were considered eligible to be awarded a licence.¹

Greek media in numbers: There were 87 newspapers, daily and specialized, in national circulation in the country, and 1450 newspapers in local and regional circulation. In television, there were four public channels and more than 150 private channels, most of them being local or regional. As for radio, there were about 1156 radio stations broadcasting on a regular basis in Greece; the vast majority of them were private and only 24 were public. These stations also transmitted locally or regionally.²

Female presence in Greek media: Surveys administered to local media practitioners in Greece revealed that, as actors in media, only a very small number of women (up to 2%) held top management positions in their respective organizations. Nevertheless, media organizations offered similar remuneration packages to both men and women with similar qualifications and similar positions. Female media practitioners were selected based on their competences and skills. They had equal access to development and training programs, and an equal opportunity to express their points of view. Nevertheless, no media organizations appeared to offer awareness or training sessions on gender equality, and none provided child-care facilities.

As for the portrayal of women in media, the surveys showed that, in media, women are not necessarily portrayed in all their diversity (e.g., age, class, ethnic background), and sometimes the images portrayed were degrading to women. In general, media organizations did not have an internal system that assesses media content on gender issues.³

Regulatory authorities in Greece: Media monitoring was considered extremely important. The Greek Constitution guaranteed the freedom of expression and declared the independence of the press from the State, but did not mention the independence of broadcast

¹ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

² Lucianetti, L. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Italy*.

³ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

media. The Constitution stated that the protective provisions for the press were not applicable to films, sound recordings, radio, television, or any similar medium for the transmission of speeches and images. This leaves radio and television under the direct control of the State. The public and private broadcast media are subject to a number of provisions set in specific laws (i.e., Law 1092/1938, Law 1730/1987, Law 1866/1989, Law 2328/1995).¹ Surveys administered to local media practitioners revealed that Greek media organizations do not have their own internal gender policy; rather they tend to adopt gender policies established by the country's national legal system, particularly in terms of salary equity.²

Malta:

In Malta, the situation of women in media appeared promising.

Female presence in Maltese media: Surveys administered to local media practitioners revealed that, as actors in media, only a small number of women (up to 3%) held top management positions in their respective media organizations. Nevertheless, all media organizations offered similar remuneration packages to both women and men possessing similar qualifications and holding similar positions. Female media practitioners were selected based on their competences and skills, and benefited from equal access to non-traditional areas of media. They had equal access to development and training programs, and an equal opportunity to express their points of view. The majority of media organizations offered awareness or training sessions on gender equality, but none provided child-care facilities.

As for the portrayal of women in Maltese media, the surveys showed that media organizations portrayed women in all their diversity (e.g., age, class, ethnic background), and most of the time, the images portrayed were not degrading to women. Some degrading images of women were likely to appear in advertisements and in some television programs. However, unlike the situation of all the other countries explored in this report, either European or Arab

¹ Lucianetti, L. (2010) *A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Italy*.

² Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

countries, about half of Malta's media organizations had an internal system that assessed media content on gender issues and communicated to the public best practices on gender mainstreaming in media.

Regulatory authorities in Malta: Surveys administered to local media practitioners revealed that most Maltese media organizations possessed internal gender policies that deal with salary equity, maternity/paternity leave, and harassment. A few of them adopted gender policies established by the country's national legal system in terms of salary equity and maternity/paternity leave.¹

France:

In France, a difference was found between private and public channels, both for television and radio: private channels carry stereotypes as they attempt to search for high audience ratings, while public channels claim to have greater freedom of choice and creation.²

Female presence in French media: More and more women were joining the ranks of journalists. They took up 43% of all media jobs. Nevertheless, they remained disproportionately represented in top posts and received lower wages than their male counterparts in the same job.³ Problems such as shocking and degrading advertisements, as well as stereotypical portrayals of women existed in France. An association of female journalists was founded to defend the role of women in media and award prizes for women's journalistic work. In 2008, a *Commission on the Media Portrayal of Women* was set up to fight the stereotypes against women. The Commission was composed of advertising, press, audiovisual, Internet professionals, specialists from the National Ministry of Education, law and showbusiness specialists, and members of associations. It was the continuation of a report published by the *Senatorial Delegation of Women's Rights* and which condemned the exploitation of the image of women and their under-representation.

¹ Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta) (2010) *Women and Media – A Study of the Portrayal of Women by the Media and their Presence in Media Organizations in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*.

² Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

³ Fatany, S. (2006) *Women Journalists Share Experiences Around Med*.

Regulatory authorities in France: Three acts provided the legal framework for media in France. Firstly, there was the Act of 29 July 1881 on the freedom of the press and its modification by the Act of 30 December 2004 creating the *Haute Autorité de Lutte contre les Discriminations et pour l'Égalité* that sanctioned sexist remarks made in the press and advertising. Secondly, there was the Act of 30 September 1986 on the freedom of communication in the audiovisual field and, thirdly, the Act of 21 June 2004 dealing with Internet service provider's responsibility for content accessible to the public. Nevertheless, this legal framework was poorly used and few decisions invoked it. Existing jurisprudence dealt with matters of violence and discrimination; no jurisprudence existed to deal with sexist remarks or the production of degrading stereotypes for women. As such, there was no serious prevention policy in France. A promising avenue appeared in 2007 when the board of directors and the unions of Radio France signed an agreement on professional equality between women and men. In the daily newspaper *Le Monde*, the board of directors established a committee with a right of inspection on the matter.

The Higher Audiovisual Council generally forbade discriminatory remarks and behaviour. It required television channels to have a system for the classification of programmes through ratings. Among the classification criteria was the image of women. So far, the Council intervened far more on diversity issues than on gender equality issues, meaning that other initiatives overshadowed those of gender equality.

Although the image of women was not dealt with specifically, there were nonetheless groups that included regulation tools as part of their internal control tools. For example, *France Télévisions* makes several mentions of respect for human dignity in its Charter. There is a viewer's club and forums, as well as an auto-regulatory organization in Sky Rock's blogs with a charter and icon enabling Internet users to report offensive posts. An advertising self-regulatory organization existed and has drawn up a code of standards and practice to guide the production of advertisements in France. In 2003, the organization signed a charter with the Minister of State for Gender Issues and Professional Equality.¹

¹ Groupement Régional pour l'Action et L'information des Femmes (2010) *The Portrayal of French Women by the Media and their Presence in the Media*.

Appendix F: International Gender-Related Laws and Instruments

A number of gender-related laws and instruments have been established by the international community and adopted, to different extents, by the countries explored in this report. These laws and instruments include, but are not limited to, the following:

Core UN Human Rights Instruments:

1. Universal Declaration of Human Rights
(Adopted in 1948).
2. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
(Adopted in 1966; Entered into force in 1976).
3. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
(Adopted in 1966; Entered into force in 1976).
4. Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
(Entered into force in 1976).
5. Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
aiming at the Abolition of the Death Penalty
(Adopted in 1989).
6. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
(Adopted in 1965; Entered into force in 1969).
7. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
(Adopted in 1979; Entered into force in 1981).
8. Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or
Punishment
(Adopted in 1984; Entered into force in 1987).

9. Convention on the Rights of the Child

(Adopted in 1989; Entered into force in 1990).

Core ILO Conventions:

1. Forced Labour Convention 29

(Adopted in 1930).

2. Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention 87

(Adopted in 1948).

3. Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention 98

(Adopted in 1949).

4. Equal Remuneration Convention 100

(Adopted in 1951).

5. Abolition of Forced Labour Convention 105

(Adopted in 1957).

6. Discrimination – Employment and Occupation, Convention 111

(Adopted in 1958).

7. Minimum Age Convention 138

(Adopted in 1973).

Other Tools and Instruments:

1. 2000 Beijing +5, Five Year Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

2. 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

3. United Nations Millennium Development Goals

4. European Convention on Human Rights