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The Domestic Tethering of Lebanese and Arab Women Journalists and News Managers

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ABSTRACT

The study examined gender-based discrimination facing Arab women journalists and news managers, especially in their pursuit of leadership positions. It assessed how domestic pressures, gender norms, and corporate policies limit women journalists' prospects for advancement and career longevity. It surveyed 308 journalists and news managers, both men and women, from various news outlets and examined their attitudes toward career trajectory, workplace practices, newsroom culture, and domestic responsibilities. The findings point to manifestations of simultaneous sticky floors and glass ceilings, where women face a pay gap and are tethered to their inequitable domestic responsibilities.

KEYWORDS

Arab journalism and gender; Lebanese journalism and gender; Arab media; Lebanese media; Arab feminism; Arab News

Introduction

Rather than leverage their position to fight gender-based oppression, combat stubborn myths and inaccurate stereotypes, and raise awareness about women's rights in Lebanon and the Arab region, "Lebanese media [continues to] echo a patriarchal discourse" (Civil Society Knowledge Center 2017, para. 38), as a result of the agenda-setting influence of media created by men, for men. This reflects the notion that the news media's privileging of men's voices over women's "contribut[es] to the ongoing secondary status of women's participation as citizens" (Ross and Carter 2011, 1148).

Scholars have called for investigating segments of Arab society that indicate women's overall status in their communities, especially their representation in decision-making positions in governmental, economic and media capacities (Abu Lughod 2001; Joseph and Slyomovics 2000; Shor et al. 2015). The latter is particularly salient because if the "media form part of the apparatus through which particular gender roles and attributes are defined and assigned, it follows that the media will also be a site for negotiating changes in those definitions" (Sakr 2004, 4). Research has thoroughly examined work-centered obstacles to the advancement of women in the news industry, such as the glass-ceiling effects, sexual harassment, prejudices against women in leadership, and the income inequality. However, only recently has research highlighted the role of domestic factors in stifling women's advancement in the workplace and public life. Such research

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remains scarce outside of western contexts, particularly in the Arab world (Melki and Mallat 2019).

As such, this study aims to contribute to research on the current state of women in the news industry in Lebanon, and by extension in the Arab region, by incorporating domestic variables. The study examines local systemic practices of gender discrimination, which is crucial for women's rights activists to lobby for greater gender equality.

Although the data focuses on Lebanon, the findings may be extended to the Arab region since many participants work at multiple Arab news outlets. While Lebanon differs from many Arab countries, particularly in its pluralistic political culture, liberal employment regulations, and free press, the country's diverse demographic and cultural mix intersects with most Arab societies. In a sense, Lebanon offers a best-case scenario for women journalists in the Arab region, given its comparatively advanced state of liberties and civil rights.

Lebanon has one of the most open and diverse media landscapes in the Middle East, with a variety of local, regional, and international news outlets (El-Richani 2016; Global Media Monitoring Project 2015; Salloukh et al. 2015). This is due in large part to the complex confessional makeup of its population: 18 officially recognized sects, each with their own corresponding ethno-sectarian representation and affiliated media outlets (Al-Najjar 2011). In comparison to other Arab countries, Lebanon is also quite liberal in terms of gendered social norms. Women participate significantly in the workforce, and women's rights movements continue to flourish and combat inequalities (Salameh 2014).

Nevertheless, deep-seated patriarchal attitudes impede women from reaching high-level posts in both the public and private sector, and men outnumber women by a ratio of three-to-one in the labor force (World Economic Forum 2015). Furthermore, women's political representation has consistently remained below 5% since suffrage in 1953, and no legal framework or professional code of conduct addresses gendered practices in the workplace (Amel Association & CESTAS 2010; Khalaf 2010).

Women journalists work within this paradoxical environment and continue to struggle against a 2:1 gender gap, lack of pay parity, and other discriminatory practices in the workplace—including sexual harassment and gender discrimination—that prove hostile to their professional advancement (Melki and Mallat 2016). Because women are marginalized from the highest positions within Lebanese media, they have little influence on policymaking that could lead to greater gender equality in the news industry.

This study examines promotional practices, leadership, pay parity, and work-life balance across genders in the news industry in Lebanon. It investigates the different challenges journalists face in climbing the corporate news ladder, questioning the roles of organizational structure (Brown and Flatow 1997), institutionalized prejudice and implicit bias against women leaders (Eagly and Karau 2002) in perpetuating a "masculine" newsroom culture that reinforces the glass ceiling. Likewise, it highlights how the persistence of this "boyzone" mentality (Cassidy 2008; Ross 2001; 2005; 2017; Steiner 2014) affects the implementation of official policies on parental leave and childcare assistance within the framework of the sociocultural model of gender discrimination (Gutek and Morasch 1982; Gutek, Cohen, and Konrad 1990). Furthermore, it highlights the double-bind situation women journalists face: working in an industry that remains heavily men-dominated, while simultaneously negotiating a patriarchal culture (Walby 1990) that trivializes women's work outside of the home. In addition, it aims to illuminate how working

mothers in the news industry negotiate their “domestic tethers” (Hitti and Moreno-Walton 2017) and navigate between the socially divergent roles of wife/mother and successful career woman in a society that continues to place heightened, almost exclusive, value on the former.

Therefore, this study focuses on the most significant differences Lebanese men and women journalists face in climbing the corporate news ladder, the gendered perceptions of male and women leadership in the newsroom, perceptions of company policies on gender equality (including salary, pay raises, promotion, maternity/paternity leave, and childcare assistance), potential for advancement, and career longevity, and the gender differences in perceptions of viability of balancing professional demands and personal life.

Moving Beyond the Body Count: Politics of Gender in Newsrooms

Analyses of newsroom practices and media organizations in the west emerged in the 1950s and 1960s. In the three decades that followed, organizational studies treated the newsroom as a gender-neutral space, failing to recognize or account for gendered differences in structural hierarchies. The launch of the First UN Decade for Women in 1975 highlighted the issues of women’s underrepresentation in the news and in decision-making positions in media organizations (De Bruin and Ross 2004). Academics examined newsroom culture through a descriptive gender lens that De Bruin (2000) coined the “body count approach.”

This method was necessary to establish baseline information of gender employment patterns. However, the body count approach remained limited because it treated gender as a static variable, ruling out the “relational-quality of gender”—the interactions between gender and other variables that determine newsroom culture and behavior” (De Bruin and Ross 2004, 43). The media frenzy surrounding the landmark 1991 Hill-Thomas sexual harassment controversy in the U.S. (McAdams and Beasley 1994) sparked a flurry of research on gendered practices in the workplace (Fitzgerald and Shulman 1993; Harned et al. 2002). Since then, scholars delved deeper into gendered workplace substructures and practices in news organizations around the world, both through country-specific investigations and cross-cultural comparisons (Arayssi, Dah, and Jizi 2016; Byerly 2011; 2013; Byerly and Ross 2006; Carter 1998; Djerf-Pierre 2005; El Haddad, Karkoulian, and Nehme 2018; Hanitzsch and Hanusch 2012; Jizi and Nehme 2017; Maamari and Saheb 2018; Maamari and Shouweiry 2016; Melin-Higgins 2004; Ross 2014; Steiner 1998; 2014; Van Zoonen 1998).

While the 1980s and 1990s witnessed increasing numbers of women journalists in newsrooms, particularly in the west, this growth has plateaued and stagnated in recent decades (Elmore 2007; Women’s Media Center 2014). Despite much progress, women are not proportionally represented in the majority of newsrooms around the world. They occupy a minority in terms of organizational management and are most severely underrepresented at the levels of senior management and ownership (Byerly 2011; 2013; De Bruin 2000; Djerf-Pierre 2007; Lennon 2013). Based on research in 114 countries, including Lebanon, the Global Media Monitoring Project (2015) concluded that progress towards gender equality in the news media has effectively ground to a halt worldwide.

Lebanese and Arab news media landscapes are no exception to these global trends. While women comprise more than three-quarters of journalism and communication

students in Lebanon, women journalists account for less than one-third of the workforce, with the greatest disparity at top-level management positions (Byerly 2011; Melki 2009). A vast majority of women journalists experience gender discrimination and/or sexual harassment, and one in ten have considered quitting their jobs due to gender discrimination or sexual harassment (Melki and Mallat 2016). This is not surprising, considering that “newsroom policies on gender ... do not show strong support for gender equality” (Byerly 2011, 66). The lack of explicit stipulations on gender equality in the Lebanese Press Syndicate’s code of professional conduct, as well as their absence in Lebanese labor laws and the Constitution (Gatten 2012), compound the overall neglect of the industry in fostering gender-neutral newsrooms or empowering women journalists to climb the corporate news ladder. As such, we pose the following research questions:

RQ1: Do journalists work at companies that have policies on (a) gender equality and (b) sexual harassment?

RQ2: Do journalists perceive their companies as effective in dealing with (a) gender discrimination and (b) sexual harassment?

Glass Ceilings and Sticky Floors in the News Industry

Feminist media scholars have firmly established that despite women’s relative progress in the global news industry over the past few decades, women remain artificially prevented from moving up the corporate ladder into decision-making positions (Byerly 2011; Chambers, Steiner, and Fleming 2004; Steiner 2014). The stubborn persistence of the glass ceiling (Bryant 1984) across various industries defies country borders, political systems, and cultural contexts (Murray 2010) and is particularly salient in the news media industry (Byerly 2011; 2013; Steiner 2014).

With a few exceptions, most notably the Nordic countries (Edstrom and Molster 2014), women remain confined to low-level positions in the news industry—trapped by “sticky floors beneath glass ceilings that bar their access to higher status and higher paying positions” (Bruckmüller et al. 2013; Cohen 2001, 278).

The persistence of the glass ceiling in Lebanon mirrors the situation in the majority of western countries, and is particularly problematic in white-collar professions like medicine, law, and politics (Amel Association & CESTAS 2010) and to a lesser extent in the sectors of banking and journalism (Byerly 2013; Jamali, Safieddine, and Daouk 2006). The glass ceiling for Lebanese women journalists rests at the senior professional level (e.g., senior writers, directors, producers), where women occupy approximately 43% of positions (Byerly 2011). A token number of women occupy senior management, governance, or ownership positions, but even those are nepotistic appointments that in-effect reinforce patriarchal control by circumventing media ownership laws (Melki and Mallat 2016).

More importantly, research that focused only on women journalists in Lebanon has shown that they are predominantly young, unmarried, and childless, and the majority have worked for less than a decade in news (Melki and Mallat 2016). Anecdotal evidence shows men journalists, in contrast, to be generally older, more likely to be married with children, and have greater career longevity in news. This makes it more challenging for young women journalists to move up the corporate ladder, particularly in the face of a

macho newsroom culture and aggressive competition due to the uncertain state of the mainstream Lebanese news industry (El-Richani 2016).

Moreover, our past studies that surveyed only women hinted to the possibility that women journalists in Lebanon and the Arab world face a gender pay gap, despite most women having the impression that they have achieved pay parity with men (Melki and Mallat 2016). Our current survey that includes both women and men provides more valid evidence on this matter, since it adjusts for age, education, marital status, number of managed employees, and seniority. We predict:

H1: Men are more likely than women to (a) have lower education, (b) be married, (c) have children, and (d) have longer careers in journalism.

H2: Women (a) are more likely than men to be in the low-income category and (b) both men and women are more likely to believe that there is no gender-based income inequality.

Prejudices Against Women in Leadership

Gendered newsroom practices outlined in this review fit into a broader framework of sociocultural models of gender discrimination (Gutek and Morasch 1982; Gutek, Cohen, and Konrad 1990), organizational structure (Brown and Flatow 1997), and institutionalized prejudice against women leaders (Eagly and Karau 2002) based on implicit gender biases. Aside from the Nordic countries (Edstrom and Molster 2014), surveys of women journalists in most western countries consistently reaffirm that these gender biases and the overarching hegemonic masculine workplace culture continue to stifle promotional opportunities for women in the news industry (Melin-Higgins 2004; Ross 2014). Given the fundamentally patriarchal nature of Lebanese society in tandem with the male-dominated industry, it is no surprise that the experiences of women journalists in Lebanon and the Arab region mirror those of western journalists.

According to the International Labor Organization (2015), women cap out at the middle-management level across industries, where they are considered to be the most effective as leaders. This is largely due to prejudice against women in leadership because of the perceived incongruity between being a woman (i.e., adhering to traditional feminine gender norms) and leadership, which historically has been a predominantly men's prerogative. Eagly and Karau's (2002) role congruity theory proposes that groups receive positive evaluation when their character traits align with their traditionally accepted social roles. For men, these traits include assertiveness, dominance, and authority, attributes that fall under the *agentic* repertoire of management style and are associated with leadership. Women, in contrast, are more likely to be ascribed *communal* characteristics, such as being helpful, sympathetic, and interpersonally sensitive. In order to be an effective leader at the middle-management level, one must exhibit strong interpersonal skills, which is a hallmark of the communal repertoire of leadership style (Eagly and Karau 2002; Jogulu and Wood 2006).

In other words, the skills and traits necessary to be an effective leader at the middle-management level are congruent with perceived gender roles for women (cooperative and communal, rather than authoritative and agentic). However, occupational psychologists find that a more agentic approach is preferable and leads to greater efficacy in higher levels of management (Jogulu and Wood 2006). At that level, women are often

pressured to adopt management styles that reflect men's priorities over their own, and they may be rewarded for conforming to such preferred (i.e., *agentic*) management styles (Craft and Wanta 2004). Yet at the same time, "because women who are effective leaders tend to violate standards for their gender when they [demonstrate] male-stereotypical, agentic attributes [rather than] female-stereotypical, communal attributes, they may be unfavorably evaluated for their gender role violation" (Eagly and Karau 2002, 575), a catch-22 scenario. Therefore, we pose these hypotheses and questions:

H3: Men are more likely than women journalists to manage more employees.

RQ3: Do journalists perceive men or women to be more effective decision makers?

RQ4: Do journalists believe that it is easier for men or women to (a) advance into decision-making positions, (b) ask for promotion, and (c) ask for a raise.

RQ5: Do journalists perceive authoritativeness or cooperativeness as the most important trait in an effective manager and do they associate gender to these traits?

Domestic Tethers, Leaky Pipelines, and the Motherhood Penalty

The rallying cry that working women can "have it all" vis-à-vis work-life balance has reached a crescendo in recent years, epitomized by the call of high-powered women executives like Sheryl Sandberg for women to *lean* in to positions of leadership (Aumann, Galinsky, and Matos 2011; El Feki, Heilman, and Barker 2017; Lewis 1997; Lewis and Cooper 1999; Lewis, Gambles, and Rapoport 2007). News reports have also picked up on the public's growing interest in the subject, reflecting a shift in perception of work-life balance as solely a women's concern to a broader societal issue that questions whether gender equality at the workplace is possible without gender equality at home (Hitti and Moreno-Walton 2017; Rahhal 2019), and one which an increasing number of men also highlight as a fundamental career concern, given the rising work-family conflict for men (Aumann, Galinsky, and Matos 2011).

Past research in the fields of vocational behavior and occupational studies posit that because news has been a historically men-dominated industry, global newsroom culture has developed into a dominant "male-ordered culture [which] can be [disproportionately] hostile to women with family responsibilities" (Ross 2001, 531). Likewise, journalism scholars have long argued that journalistic values derive from masculine values and that women are socialized into accepting these values (Beam and Di Cicco 2010). The ideal journalist "is always available" (Robinson 2005, 102). Such dedication, particularly working late hours, is fundamentally at odds with the idea of work-life balance, especially when it comes to familial responsibilities.

Furthermore, Stelter (2002) argues that leaders determine workplace culture. If the leaders in a news organization are solely or majority men, workplace culture will prioritize the values and needs of men, while pushing those of women to the background—including policies on parental leave and childcare. However, it is important to note the limitations of such assertions: the assumption that men prioritize the values and needs of men ignores the fact that men also value greater work-life balance, particularly in a collective culture like Lebanon that places a high value on the central role of the family (Aumann, Galinsky, and Matos 2011). As posited earlier, this points to a growing societal

shift in perceptions of work-life balance as solely a women's issue to a broader corporate and social issue; one that has profound effects on men as well. This suggests that it is in Lebanese and Arab news outlets' best interest to adopt an organizational culture that places increased value on teamwork, collaboration, and work-life balance (Everbach 2006).

The present reality, however, is that young women entering the news industry are often prevented from advancement before they have even begun—as managers and producers assume that they will either scale back their ambitions or quit the industry as soon as they become wives and mothers. Globally, women are more likely than men to leave journalism to pursue other careers or to become primary caregivers in keeping with traditional gender norms (Chambers, Steiner, and Fleming 2004). This phenomenon, known as the “leaky pipeline” (Blickenstaff 2005; Henningsen and Højgaard 2002), is largely the result of organizational structures that make assumptions about women's priorities vis-à-vis work-life balance; namely that they will opt out of career advancement at some point to focus on their personal lives. Given the legally disenabling climate, laissez-faire corporate culture, and stubbornly patriarchal social norms, it is not surprising that women journalists in Lebanon and the Arab region experience these obstacles on a more magnified scale than their counterparts in western countries.

Previous research points to the anxiety and tensions surrounding this issue among Lebanese women journalists (Melki and Mallat 2016), especially considering the international standard of 14 weeks' maternity leave is not implemented in Lebanon—currently capped at 10 weeks (Rahhal 2019). Questions also arise about how many women make full use of the legally-mandated maternity leave, out of concern that they will be *mommy tracked* or hit the maternal wall (Swiss and Walker 1993). In fact, studies have found a correlation between taking family leave and higher rates of turnover (Lyness and Judiesch 2001) and has demonstrated that marriage and children lead to a *motherhood penalty* while simultaneously offering a *fatherhood bonus* (Kmec 2011).

Moreover, emerging research on the concept of *domestic tethers* emphasizes the role of gendered domestic duties in exacerbating inequality at work (Hitti and Moreno-Walton 2017). Although women worldwide disproportionately handle childcare and household duties, the Arab region particularly suffers from such culturally ingrained gender disparity (Gates 2016). When both spouses work full-time, conflicts between domestic duties and work disproportionately affect women negatively. Women are more likely to quit work, sacrifice advancement, or scale back professional commitments and ambitions, while men do the opposite to make up for the lost income, thereby further advancing their careers (Hitti and Moreno-Walton 2017; Melki and Mallat 2019). Even in households where men and women share domestic duties, women often still tend to organize, plan, and manage domestic work, leading to what Schulte (2014) terms “mental clutter,” the mentally taxing and time-consuming effort that women shoulder, even when their spouses help out. Therefore, we pose these questions and hypotheses.

H4: Most journalists work at companies that have no policies on (a) maternity leave, (b) paternity leave, and (c) childcare assistance.

H5: Men journalists are more likely than women journalists to view their spouse to be the primary person responsible for childcare and household duties.

H6: Journalists face motherhood penalties and fatherhood bonuses.

H7: Journalists agree that it is easier for men to (a) return to work after childbirth, (b) balance family and work, (c) and balance family and work while climbing the corporate ladder.

H8: Women are more likely than men to consider leaving or reducing work due to family duties.

Methodology

The study used a survey approach focused on gender-based comparative analysis. We conducted in 2017 a survey of 308 journalists and news managers from various news outlets across Lebanon, including television, radio, print and online media. The survey questionnaire sought perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of men and women journalists regarding career trajectory, workplace practices, newsroom culture, and work/life balance.

For the survey sample, we used publicly available emails to build a comprehensive sampling frame of journalists, and then randomly sampled up to 25 journalists from each media company, using a stratified sampling technique that ensured representation of participants from various levels of the news institution hierarchy. Using G*Power software, a sample size of 308 participants was derived from an a-priori sample power analysis for a Chi-Square test, based on the assumptions of $\alpha = .05$, an estimated population of 10,000, and a confidence interval of $[\pm 5.5]$ (Buchner et al. 2009). The estimated population of 10,000 news professionals was derived from a prior estimation of 3,000 women journalists working in Lebanon (Melki and Mallat 2016) and a ratio exceeding 2:1 male to women journalists in the Lebanese workforce (Byerly 2011). Out of the 308 sampled participants, 249 filled the questionnaire in a valid manner, yielding a 79% response rate. The survey data were analyzed through SPSS using Chi-Square, regression analysis, and cross-tabulations.

Survey participants came from 26 news organizations: 10 TV stations, 9 newspapers and magazines, 3 radio stations, 2 online-only news outlets, and 2 news agencies. The sample included 58% (143) women and 42% (105) men. Some participants worked in multiple media, especially those working in news agencies.

The majority (60%, 149) were 18–34 years old, while 19% (48) were 35–44, and 21% (51) were 45 or older. The majority 58% (142) were also never married, 40% (98) were married, 2% (6) were divorced, and one participant was widowed. The majority 65% (162) also had no children, 29% (71) had one or two children, and 6% (15) had three or more.

The vast majority (78%, 194) made \$500 to \$2,000 per month, while 21% (52) made more than \$2,000, and 1% (3) made less than \$500. The majority of participants (58%, 143) worked in journalism for 1–10 years, while 40% (100) had more than 10 years of experience, and 2% (6) had less than one year.

Most participants (52%, 129) had either a postgraduate degree or took some post graduate courses, while 35% (87) had a bachelor's degree, and 13% (32) did not finish a college degree. Participants represented all the major religious groups in Lebanon. Table 1 summarizes their primary job duties and seniority levels categories.

Results

This section is organized according to the research questions and hypotheses advanced in the previous section.

Table 1. Primary job duties and seniority level. Comparison across genders ($p = 0.197$).

Job Duties	% (n)	Seniority Level	Men % (n)	Women % (n)
Governance/Ownership	2% (4)	Senior Management	11.8% (12)	5% (7)
Top-level/Senior Management	6% (15)			
Middle Management	5% (12)	Middle Management	4.9% (5)	5% (7)
Anchor	9% (22)	Editorial Staff	58.8% (60)	69.1% (96)
Reporter	36% (90)			
Producer	4% (9)			
Editor	14% (35)			
Photojournalist/Videographer	3% (8)	Production, Technical & Support Staff	24.5% (25)	20.0% (29)
Publisher	0% (1)			
Video/Audio Editor	4% (11)			
Web Editor	8% (21)			
Editorial Content	4% (11)			
Columnist	1% (3)			
News Assistant	2% (6)			

To answer RQ1, we asked participants if their companies have policies on (a) gender equality and (b) sexual harassment: 54.6% (136) answered no to the former and 83.5% (208) answered no to the latter. For RQ2, we asked participants if their companies deal effectively with complaints about (a) gender discrimination and (b) sexual harassment: 81.9% (204) answered no for the former and 80.3% (200) answered no for the latter.

H1, which posits that men are more likely than women to (a) have lower education, (b) be married, (c) have children, and (d) have longer careers in journalism, is partially supported.

H1a is supported: 21.2% (22) of men compared to 7% (10) of women have achieved less than a bachelor's degree, while 33.7% (35) of men compared to 35.7% (51) of women hold a bachelor's degree, and 45.2% (47) of men compared to 57.3% (82) of women have achieved an education higher than bachelor's ($p = 0.004$). H1b is also supported: 47.1% (49) of men compared to 34.3% (49) of women are married ($p = 0.042$).

However, H1c shows that the difference between genders is not statistically significant, although 39% (41) of men compared to 32.2% (46) of women have children ($p = 0.262$). Similarly, H1d is not supported. Although more men (44.8%, 47) than women (37.1%, 53) have worked in the news industry for more than 10 years, and in comparison more women (39.9%, 57) than men (35.2%) have worked less than 5 years, while 23.1% (33) or women and 20% (21) of men have worked for 5-to-10 years, the differences between genders are not statistically significant ($p = 0.474$) either.

H2, which predicts that women (a) receive lower salaries than men and (b) are more likely than men to believe that they have achieved pay parity, is supported. When comparing incomes, 31.4% (33) of men compared to 47.6% (68) of women fall into the low-income category (<\$1,000/month), while 56.2% (59) of men compared to 46.9% (67) of women fall into the middle-income category (\$1,001–\$3,000/month), and 12.4% (13) of men compared to 5.6% (8) of women fall into the high-income category (>\$3,003/month) ($p = 0.017$). In addition, [Table 2](#) shows the association between income and gender while controlling for age, education, number of employees managed, experience, and seniority. Journalists in the middle-income range (\$1,001 to \$3,000) are 2.29 times more likely to be men, and journalists in the highest income category (> \$3,000) are 4.01 times more likely to be men, compared to those in the low-income range (<\$1,000). Both cases are statistically significant ($p = 0.02$ for both).

Table 2. Association between income and gender while controlling age, education, number of employees managed, experience, and seniority (Stepwise method). Imposed: Gender (reference: Female). Stepwise regression with the following covariates: Age (reference: <34); Education (reference: < Bachelor's degree); Managing employees (reference: 0); Seniority (reference: Production, Technical and Support Staff); Experience (reference: <5 years).

	Income Inequality				
	≤ \$1,000 N = 102 Reference	\$1,001 to \$3,000 N = 126		>\$3,000 N = 21	
		aOR (95% CI)	P-value	aOR (95% CI)	P-value
Gender	Reference	2.29 (1.16–4.52)	0.02	4.01 (1.21–13.26)	0.02
Age					
35–44 years	Reference	0.30 (0.07–1.21)	0.09	9.60 (1.03–89.18)	0.047
45+ years	Reference	0.48 (0.15–1.60)	0.23	7.09 (0.93–53.99)	0.06
Education					
Bachelor's degree	Reference	5.49 (1.88–16.01)	0.002	17.63 (1.69–183.60)	0.02
> Bachelor's	Reference	3.99 (1.35–11.85)	0.01	8.65 (0.77–97.73)	0.08
Managing employees					
1–5 employees	Reference	0.81 (0.31–2.13)	0.66	6.90 (1.57–30.38)	0.01
> 5 employees	Reference	3.66 (1.34–10.03)	0.01	6.59 (1.03–42.27)	0.047
Experience					
5–10 years	Reference	20.45 (5.57–75.13)	<0.0001	2.49 (0.26–24.04)	0.43
> 10 years	Reference	4.04 (1.79–9.09)	0.001	3.95 (0.55–28.34)	0.17

In addition, when asked about income inequality, a majority of men and women participants (60.1%, 149) believed that men and women journalists get equal pay, while 26.2% (66) believed that men receive higher salaries, and 13.3% believed that women receive higher salaries.

H3, which predicts that men are more likely than women journalists to manage more employees, is supported. Compared to 54.3% (57) of men, 73.4% (105) of women manage no employees. However, 21.9% (23) of men compared to 11.9% (17) of women manage 1-to-5 employees, and 23.8% of men compared to 14.7% (21) of women manage more than 5 employees ($p = 0.007$).

RQ3 asks whether journalists are more likely to perceive men or women as more effective decision makers. Overall, a majority of men and women participants (74.1%, 185) believe that men and women can be equally effective decision makers, while 19% (47) of participants believe that men are more effective decision makers, and 6.9% believe that women are more effective decision makers. When comparing genders, significantly more men (25.7%, 27) than women (14.2%, 20) believe that men are more effective decision makers, while more women (9.2%, 13) than men (3.8%, 4) believe the opposite, and more women (76.6%, 108) than men (70.5%, 74) believe that men and women can be equally effective ($p = 0.03$).

RQ4 asks if journalists believe that it is easier for men or women to (a) advance into decision-making positions, (b) ask for promotion, and (c) ask for a raise. Overall, a slight majority of participants (50.6%, 124) believe that it is easier for men to advance into decision-making positions in Lebanon, while 6.1% (15) believe the opposite, and 43.3% (106) believe that men and women have equal opportunities in this matter. As for asking for promotion, a majority of participants (58.4%, 143) believe that men and women have equal opportunities, while 28.6% (70) believe that it is easier for men to

Table 3. Perceptions of advancement, promotion and pay raise opportunities between genders.

Advancement, Promotion and Pay Raise	Men		Women	
	%	n	%	n
To advance into decision-making positions ($p = 0.05$)				
It is easier for men	41.7%	43	56.7%	80
Men and women have equal opportunities	52.4%	54	36.9%	52
It is easier for women	5.8%	6	6.4%	9
To ask for a promotion ($p = 0.002$)				
It is easier for men	19.6%	20	34.5%	49
Men and women have equal opportunities	59.8%	61	57.7%	82
It is easier for women	20.6%	21	7.7%	11
To ask for a raise ($p = 0.002$)				
It is easier for men	14.4%	15	30.5%	43
Men and women have equal opportunities	69.2%	72	63.1%	89
It is easier for women	16.3%	17	6.4%	9

do so, and 13.1% (32) believe it is easier for women. Likewise, a majority of participants (65.4%, 161) believe that men and women have equal opportunities to ask for a raise, while 24% (59) believe it is easier for men to do so, and 10.6% (26) believe it is easier for women. When comparing these three responses between genders, a significant difference emerges (Table 3). Women are more likely to believe that it is easier for men to advance into decision-making positions, to ask for promotion, and to ask for a raise, while men are more likely to believe that men and women have equal opportunity to advance into decision-making positions, and that it is easier for women to ask for promotion and a raise.

RQ5 asks what do journalists believe to be the most important trait in an effective manager: authoritative or cooperative, and do they associate gender with such traits? Overall, the majority of participants (73%, 181) believe that being authoritative and cooperative are equality important traits for an effective manager, while 19% (47) believe that being cooperative is the most important, and 8.1% (20) believe that being authoritative is the most important. In addition, the majority (62.9%, 156) believe that men and women are equally authoritative, while 28.2% (70) believe that men are more authoritative than women, and 8.9% (22) believe that women are more authoritative than men. Similarly, the majority (55.2%, 137) believe that men and women are equally cooperative, while 23.8% (59) believe that women are more cooperative than men, and 21% (52) believe that men are more cooperative than women.

When comparing between genders, only the second variable (which gender is more authoritative) exhibited a significant difference (Table 4).

H4, which predicts that most journalists work at companies that have no policies on (a) maternity leave, (b) paternity leave, and (c) childcare assistance, is supported. Indeed, 55.4% (138) say their company has no maternity leave policy, 87.6% (218) say they have no paternity leave policy, and 89.2% (222) say they have no childcare assistance policy.

H5 predicts, which predicts that men journalists are more likely than women journalists to view their spouse to be the primary person responsible for childcare and household duties, is supported. Table 5 shows significant differences in responses between genders ($p = 0.0$) for both cases. For household duties, only one man (1%) says he is primarily responsible for that, and over a quarter of men say their spouse is responsible. In contrast, over one-fifth of women say they are primarily responsible for household duties and not a single woman says her spouse is responsible. The results are almost

Table 4. Perceptions of leadership traits (authoritativeness vs cooperativeness) across genders.

Leadership Traits	Men		Women	
	%	n	%	n
Most important trait in an effective manager ($p = 0.1$)				
Being authoritative	12.4%	13	4.9%	7
Being authoritative and cooperative, equally important	68.6%	72	76.1%	108
Being cooperative	19%	20	19%	27
Which gender is more authoritative ($p = 0.031$)				
Men	37.1%	39	21.8%	31
Men and women equally	55.2%	58	68.3%	97
Women	7.6%	8	9.9%	14
Which gender is more cooperative ($p = 0.639$)				
Men	21%	22	20.4%	29
Men and women equally	58.1%	61	53.5%	76
Women	21%	22	26.1%	37

identical for childcare. In addition, almost twice as many men say they and their spouse are equally responsible for household duties, results that were also similar for childcare duties.

H6, which predicts that journalists face a motherhood penalty and a fatherhood bonus, is supported. Table 6 shows the association between income and gender and its interaction with having children, while controlling for age, education, number of employees managed, experience, and seniority. Journalists in the middle-income range (\$1,001 to \$3,000) compared to those in the low-income range (\leq \$1,000) are 1.7 times more likely to be men with (or without) children and 0.33 times (one-third less) likely to be women with children than women without children. In addition, compared to women without children, journalists in the high-income category ($>$ \$3,000) are 13.18 times more likely to be men with children, 2.27 times more likely to be men without children, and 2.44 times more likely to be women with children. Overall, this shows a significant motherhood penalty at the middle-income range and a significant fatherhood bonus at the high-income range (with $p = 0.04$ and $p = 0.01$ respectively).

H7, which predicts that journalists agree that it is easier for men to (a) return to work after childbirth, (b) balance family and work, (c) and balance family and work while climbing the corporate ladder, is supported. An overwhelming majority of participants (78.2%, 194) agree that it is easier for men to return to work after the birth of a child, while 17.3% (43) agree that it is equally easy for men and women, and 4.4% agree that it is easier for women. A slight majority (50.2%, 123) also agree that it is easier for men to balance work

Table 5. Perceptions of roles in childcare and household duties across genders.

Domestic Duties	Men		Women	
	%	n	%	n
Who is primarily responsible for household duties? ($p = 0.0$)				
I am	1%	1	20.9%	29
My spouse is	27.6%	29	0%	0
My spouse and I, equally	29.5%	31	15.8%	22
Someone else	5.7%	6	16.5%	23
Who is primarily responsible for childcare? ($p = 0.0$)				
I am	3.8%	4	16.8%	23
My spouse is	21.2%	22	2.2%	3
My spouse and I, equally	26.9%	28	16.1%	22
Someone else	1%	1	0.7%	1

Table 6. Association between income and gender, children and their interaction while controlling education, age, seniority, experience and number of employees. (Stepwise method). Imposed: Interaction of gender and children (reference: women without children). Stepwise regression with the following covariates: Age (reference: <34); Education (reference: < Bachelor's degree); Managing employees (reference: 0); Seniority (reference: Production, Technical and Support Staff); Experience (reference: <5 years).

		Motherhood Penalty, Fatherhood Bonus			
		≤ \$1,000 N = 102	\$1,001 to \$3,000 N = 126		>\$3,000 N = 21
		Reference	aOR (95% CI)	P-value	aOR (95% CI) P-value
Interaction of gender and children					
Men with children	Reference		1.70 (0.49–5.87)	0.40	13.18 (1.71–101.74) 0.01
Men without children	Reference		1.70 (0.76–3.77)	0.20	2.27 (0.27–19.19) 0.45
Women with children	Reference		0.33 (0.12–0.94)	0.04	2.44 (0.34–17.36) 0.37
Education					
Bachelor's degree	Reference		6.72 (2.20–20.48)	0.001	15.94 (1.47–173.25) 0.02
> Bachelor's degree	Reference		5.21 (1.67–16.26)	0.004	7.32 (0.62–87.25) 0.12
Managing employees					
1–5 employees	Reference		0.68 (0.26–1.80)	0.44	6.64 (1.55–28.43) 0.01
> 5 employees	Reference		4.04 (1.43–11.41)	0.01	5.77 (0.94–35.54) 0.06
Experience					
5–10 years	Reference		14.66 (5.30–40.55)	<0.0001	6.76 (0.97–47.23) 0.05
> 10 years	Reference		3.85 (1.72–8.61)	0.001	3.99 (0.58–27.29) 0.16

and family life, while 29.4% (72) agree that it is equally easy for men and women to do so, and 20.4% (50) agree that it is easier for women. Similarly, almost a majority (49.4%, 121) agree that it is easier for men to balance family life and climb the corporate ladder, while 42% (103) agree that it is equally easy for men and women to do so, and 8.6% (21) agree that it is easier for women. When comparing between genders, no significant differences emerged between the responses.

H8, which predicts that women are more likely than men to consider leaving or reducing work due to family duties, is not supported. Overall, 69.1% (170) of both men and women said they have never considered it, and only 3.7% (9) said they considered it many times. When comparing between genders, the differences were not statistically significant ($p = 0.692$).

Discussion

This study examines the differences journalists face in climbing the corporate news ladder in a gendered work environment. It assesses how domestic pressures, gender norms, and corporate policies limit women journalists' prospects for advancement and career longevity.

Income Inequality, Illusions of Pay Parity, and a Motherhood Penalty to Boot

Arab women journalists continue to face an income gap and the illusion of pay parity (Melki and Mallat 2016). The study found that journalists in the middle-income range are more than twice as likely to be men, and those in the highest income range are four times as likely to be men, compared to those in the low-income range, which are most likely to be women even when accounting for age, seniority, education, experience, and the number of employees managed. Paradoxically, most men and women journalists

believe they have achieved pay parity. This exacerbating belief discourages women from actively seeking higher salaries and fighting for equal pay, particularly women with children who face a motherhood penalty, as established by this study. Journalists in the middle-income range are 0.33 (1/3 less likely) than those in the low-income range to be women with children. In contrast, journalists in the high-income range are 13 times more likely than those in the low-income range to be men with children—a sizeable fatherhood bonus.

Not so Leaky Pipelines or Gendered Survival of the Fittest?

Studies have established that women journalists are likely to be young, not married, and have no children, compared to men (Chambers, Steiner, and Fleming 2004; Melki and Mallat 2016). This study confirms that men journalists are more likely than women journalists to be married, but it does not support the claim that more men journalists have children. In addition, the data do not support the hypothesis that women are more likely than men to consider leaving or reducing work due to family duties. Since the vast majority of both men and women say they never thought of leaving their job or reducing their commitment, it is possible that many women journalists who have already quit are disproportionately excluded from the study sample. It is also plausible that journalism attracts women (and men) who are more resilient to domestic and workplace gender discrimination than other professions, and that these women journalists have adapted to the stoic and gendered newsroom culture (North 2009) as a survival mechanism. Nevertheless, the study does not provide a clear picture on the leaky pipeline phenomenon in journalism (Blickenstaff 2005; Henningsen and Højgaard 2002). It is critical that future feminist research on women journalists is better designed to capture career longevity for women, perhaps by tracking journalism students and junior journalists over time and pinpointing the major factors and career/life junctures that led them to quit or reduce their work commitment—which in addition to being work-related factors are likely to be domestic pressures.

Domestic Tethers and A Work Environment Hostile to Family/Work Balance

Indeed, this study provides ample support for the domestic tethers phenomenon (Hitti and Moreno-Walton 2017). The data show a wide gap when comparing journalists' perceptions of their domestic duties. Almost no men journalists say they themselves are primarily responsible for childcare and domestic duties, and almost no women journalists say their spouses are primarily responsible for these domestic chores. Significantly more men say that these responsibilities are equally divided, which points to a gendered gap in perception consistent with most western countries ("Houses Divided" 2017). In addition, most journalists also agree that it is easier for men to return to work after the birth of a child and balance family and work while climbing the corporate ladder, with no significant differences in responses between genders. Add to this that almost all journalists say their companies have no paternity leave or childcare assistance policies, and a majority (55.4%) say their companies have no maternity leave policies, despite labor laws mandating them. This points to the importance of focusing more feminist research on the domestic sphere to counter the effects of unfairly distributed household duties and childcare—

the so-called second shift—that hold back women journalists from career advancement, particularly into top leadership positions, where they face stubborn gender norms in the workplace and entrenched discrimination by their (mostly men) superiors.

Further elaboration of the concept of domestic tethers is also needed in research focused on the family and home. For example, the following measures can be compared across genders: What is the time spent at home versus the time spent on domestic work? In whose favor was a home conflict resolved vis-à-vis work duties? Who takes care of the children when they are sick or have extra activities? Who is in charge of planning (not only implementing) the various domestic chores and child rearing duties? Who had to pull back from work or reduce work commitment after childbirth? Did child rearing duties prevent them from taking an advancement responsibility or development opportunity, such as training or attending meetings during odd-hours or taking work shifts outside of regular business hours? Did child rearing duties prevent them from taking on work that requires extra mobility and travel, such as stories in distant areas? Did child rearing duties prevent them from taking on work that requires risk or extensive training for risky environments? How much personal time does each spouse get? Who manages external domestic help? Have they felt that they were not spending enough time with their children? Have they felt pressure from family or peers regarding their domestic duties? Have they felt that they have been negligent of their spousal or parental duties? What is the highest leadership position each partner achieved? These questions can help pinpoint the most significant domestic tethers that negatively influence women journalists' advancement at work, and they may be compared across different countries and social strata to fathom the role of culture in this dynamic.

Leaders of Men

The study found that although women journalists have collectively achieved higher education levels compared to men, they are less likely than men journalists to manage other employees. Furthermore, when it comes to career advancement and perceptions of leadership, men's and women's perspectives significantly differ. Men are more likely to believe that men are more effective decision makers and more authoritative than women—a trait of leadership commonly associated with top management positions that contributes to the double-bind situation for women (Craft and Wanta 2004; Eagly and Karau 2002; Jogulu and Wood 2006; Walby 1990). Men are also more likely to believe that men and women have equal opportunity to advance into decision-making positions, and that it is easier for women to ask for promotions and pay increases. In contrast, women are more likely to believe that it is easier for men to achieve all three of these career advancement goals.

On one hand, these perceptions by men contribute to reinforcing the glass-ceiling, since men have historically dominated the news industry, particularly at senior manager levels, which gives them disproportionate power to grant promotions. Their perceptions reinforce an entrenched bias against promoting women into senior decision-making positions, a matter that may be ameliorated by anti-gender discrimination policies and laws. Unfortunately, most journalists in this study say they work at companies that neither have policies on gender equality and sexual harassment nor deal effectively with complaints about such matters.

On the other hand, unlike their unfounded beliefs about pay parity that may lead to complacency on that front, women's perceptions about gendered workplace discrimination when it comes to promotion into leadership positions puts additional responsibility on the few women leaders to play mentors and role models for other women and girls. It also highlights the importance for women leaders to resist the Queen Bee phenomenon, which posits that women in positions of authority—and as a reaction to discrimination they faced—treat other women subordinates more critically, which prevents women leaders from supporting, mentoring, or acting as role models for other women (Ellemers 2014).

Towards a Work-life Balance

In conclusion, these realities point to a localized manifestation of simultaneous sticky floors (Booth, Francesconi, and Frank 2003) and glass ceilings, where women face a pay gap and are tethered to their inequitable domestic responsibilities, especially those who decide to get married and have children—a goal that remains paramount for Arab women in a deeply patriarchal society (Karam and Afrouni 2016; Moghadam 2004). Although these attitudes stem from stubborn sociocultural norms, they are exacerbated by organizational structures that do not support or encourage women who attempt to engage simultaneously in both professional advancement and marriage/motherhood.

Reflecting the increase in popular media's attention to work-life balance and the growing body of research on family-friendly workplace policies, research has shown that as long as women are the only ones taking leave, gender-based discrimination will continue to make them more likely to opt out of a career (Bewley, Ebel, and Forth 2016). Based on a recent survey of over 2,000 people in Lebanon, the overwhelming majority of both men (83%) and women (84%) support parental leave for fathers (El Feki, Heilman, and Barker 2017, 172). It may seem unrealistic to ask Arab media organizations to self-impose such policies, but it is crucial to emphasize that such policies actually help companies' bottom lines by preventing employee attrition and lowering turnover rates. Studies across industries show that it can cost up to 20% more to replace an employee than it does to institute flexible and family-friendly workplace policies (Boushey and Glynn 2012). This is especially true for industries, like journalism, that require higher levels of education and specialized training.

But a family-friendly work environment must be matched with a work-friendly family culture: a drastic shift in mentality at home where men and women equally shoulder domestic duties and give equal importance each other's career advancement and work-related needs. Arab boys and girls must be educated from an early age that current gender norms harm both men and women and that fighting gender-based oppression in the workplace starts at home. Schools can address these issues through media literacy curricula, civic education, and feminist pedagogies, starting at the elementary level and extending into university (De Abreu et al. 2017).

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