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The American University in Cairo
School of Global Affairs and Public Policy

**WHERE ARE ALL THE WOMEN? A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY OF THE
REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN ONLINE NEWS IN SWEDEN, THE US, AND
EGYPT**

A Thesis Submitted by
Basma Mostafa Taha Mahmoud

to the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication
under the supervision of
Professor Shahira Fahmy

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ABSTRACT

This comparative study analyzes the representation of women in online news media in three countries that rank differently along the gender equality continuum: Sweden, the United States, and Egypt. While several studies have established the unequal and stereotypical representation of women in the news, most research until now has focused on individual countries. This study, however, bridges a gap in the literature by adopting a comparative perspective to analyze gender portrayals in six news websites (*Dagens Nyheter* and *Aftonbladet* from Sweden, *CNN* and *The New York Times* from the United States, and *Youm 7* and *Sada Al Balad* from Egypt). Furthermore, this study also offers exploratory insights regarding the portrayal of women in Egypt, where there is an extreme lack of research about gender portrayals in the media in general and in the news in particular. Utilizing a content analysis methodology over a time frame of three months (October, November, and December 2019), a total of 420 news articles (140 from each country) were analyzed, resulting in a total of 2,210 male and female actors that were coded. Research from different countries around the globe demonstrates that women have not been able to rise above one-third of all news sources, even though they represent half of the world's population, and that women are often portrayed in topics and roles that are stereotypically considered more feminine (Burke & Mazzearella, 2008; Ross et al., 2016; D'Heer et al., 2019; Desmond & Danilewicz, 2010; Yun et al., 2007). Findings here reveal that women continue to be underrepresented in news media (less than one-third of all subjects) across the three countries and that stereotypical patterns continue to be dominant in news coverage of women, although important differences among countries were noted. Even though Sweden fared better in terms of female representation, the figures denote that equality is still far from achieved. The United States ranked second and Egypt ranked last.

Keywords: *Comparative research, Women in Media, Female Representation, Online News, Gender Stereotypes, Gender Framing, Content Analysis*

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Chapter One

Introduction

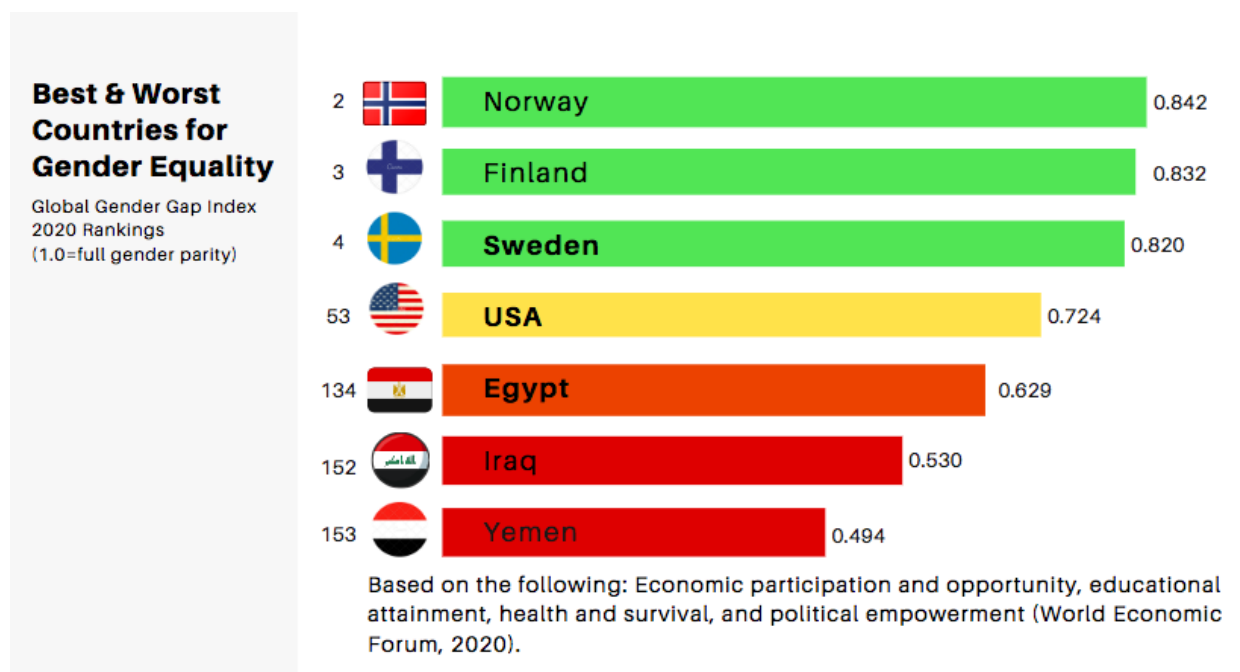
“The power of the media to make and unmake the image of women, to hasten or retard the progress of women in society, cannot be denied or underestimated.” Nigerian feminist Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie (1994, p. 55).

Women all over the world, regardless of their age, ethnicity, or religion, face one form or another of discrimination. They are often considered a minority group, not for statistical reasons, that is, not because they are outnumbered by men in society, but because they do not receive equal treatment (Hacker, 1951). In terms of participation in public life, the majority of the world’s politicians continue to be men. Women represent less than 7 percent of the world’s leaders and only 24 percent of the world’s lawmakers (Aldroubi, 2019; Lederer, 2019). Women occupy less than a third (29%) of senior business positions globally (Grant Thornton, 2019). On average, they perform double the amount of unpaid housework (Beghini et al., 2019). Moreover, gender pay gaps continue to be persistent all over the world, with women earning 16% less in average hourly wages, with large variations between countries (Catalyst, 2020). Women often face the risk of being dismissed from their jobs when they choose to become pregnant, and it is not uncommon for employers to ask prospective female hires about their marriage and pregnancy plans (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2018). Women may also have to retire earlier than men, which means they end up with a longer retirement but a smaller pension because they have worked for less years with lower pay (World Bank, 2019).

Scholars have been concerned with the representation of particular groups in the media since the media itself has existed. More specifically, the representation of women in the media became the focus of scholarly interest during the second wave of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s (D’Heer, Vergotte, Vuyst, & Leuven, 2019). Researchers, using different

methods, have generally arrived at two conclusions: women are underrepresented in the news (Brabant & Mooney, 1986; Smith, 1997; Rodgers & Thorson, 2003; Adams & Tuggle, 2004; GMMP, 2015) and women are portrayed in stereotypical roles, reflecting traditional gender roles within a society (Kahn & Goldenberg, 1991; Len-Ríos et al., 2005; Hooghe, Jacobs, & Claes, 2015). The power of the media lies in its ability to influence our attitudes, beliefs, and values, a process which often occurs at the subconscious level (Allam, 2008). Analyzing the representation of particular groups in the media is even more relevant today because we are the most “media-saturated and media-engaged” people in the history of mankind (Wood, 2008, p. 257). News is one of the most influential sources of information about the real world and is a major contributor towards opinion formation (GMMP, 2015). It is thus of utmost importance for news media to offer realistic and balanced gender representations. Strictly speaking, news media are supposed to convey objective, unaltered images of reality; however, the majority of news is reported by men, mostly about men (Byerly & Ross, 2006). This unbalanced gender representation has led to what Tuchman (2000) called the “symbolic annihilation” of women in news media.

Figure 1: *Best and Worst Countries for Gender Equality.*



This study seeks to analyze the portrayal of women in online news media both in terms of quantitative representation as well as the use of stereotypes. The study is conducted in three different cultural systems: Sweden, the United States, and Egypt. Each country ranks differently along the continuum of gender equality (Figure 1). According to the latest Global Gender Gap Index (GGI), Sweden ranked 4th, the United States ranked 53rd, and Egypt ranked 134th, out of a total of 153 countries (World Economic Forum, 2020). Research on gender portrayals in the media conducted in these three countries revealed that women were underrepresented and represented in stereotypical roles. In Sweden, a report published by Swedish non-profit foundation Rättviseförmedlingen in 2018 concluded that women represented only 32 percent of news subjects. In addition, only 27.2 percent of experts who appeared in Swedish news stories were women, whereas ordinary female citizens represented 46.1 percent. In the United States, the Pew Research Center (2005) found that men were twice as likely to be quoted as news sources in news stories and that only one-third of news stories included one female source. In Egypt, the GMMP in 2010 revealed that women represented only 27 percent of news subjects (individuals interviewed or referred to in the news), and nearly 61 percent of this content reinforced gender stereotypes

High up the gender equality ladder is Sweden, a country that is often referred to as a gender equality role model. Egypt, on the other hand, is the worst country in the Middle East to live in as a woman (Boros, 2013) and Cairo, Egypt's capital, is the world's most dangerous city for women (Thomson Reuters Foundation, 2017). Reasons for why Egypt has fared so poorly include rampant sexual harassment, female genital mutilation (FGM), and forced and early marriages (Boros, 2013). In addition, in a survey on gender responsibilities, 98 percent of Egyptian men said they believed it was the sole responsibility of the mother to change diapers and take care of other baby-related tasks (UN Women & Promundo US, 2017).

While Egypt sits at the bottom of the list and Sweden at the top, the United States stands somewhere in the middle. Women in the United States represent nearly half of the workforce (46.9%) (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019), yet they earn approximately only 80 percent of what men earn and the gap is much wider for women of color (Fins, 2020). The primary reason for gender inequality in the US comes from the gender pay gap (World Economic Forum, 2020).

From a theoretical perspective, this study uses both framing and stereotyping approaches to investigate the representation of women in the textual component of online news across three different cultural systems. Two online newspapers or news outlets were chosen from each country. From Sweden, the online versions of *Dagens Nyheter* and *Aftonbladet* were included in the analysis. *Dagens Nyheter* is Sweden's largest and most prestigious daily newspaper (Lundell & Ekström, 2008) and *Aftonbladet*, a daily tabloid, is one of the biggest Swedish newspapers (Wadbring & Ohlsson, n.d.). From the United States, the two most visited online news websites were included: *CNN* and *The New York Times* (Wadbring & Ohlsson, n.d.). From Egypt, *Youm 7* is the most visited online news website (Alexa, 2020) and was thus included for analysis in the study. *Youm 7* was also identified as the second leading news website in the MENA region, preceded only by Qatar's *Al Jazeera* (Statista, 2015). *Sada Al Balad* was identified as the second most popular news website in Egypt in the News and Media category (Similar Web, 2020) and was thus included in the analysis.

The current study applies the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) codebook to a randomly selected sample of articles from six online news outlets from the three countries. Analyzing the representation of women in online news media highlights the media's role in either exacerbating or narrowing inequalities between genders. The underrepresentation of women in the news limits the diversity of roles that they can occupy within a society

(Signorielli, 1997). There are several studies on the representation of women in the news in several countries around the globe; however, research conducted in this area has overwhelmingly focused on individual national systems and on traditional news media including newspapers, radio, and television. This comparative study bridges a gap in the literature through examining gender representation in a relatively “new” medium, namely, the Internet. Studying variations in news patterns across national environments enhances our understanding of the media's role (Tiffen et al., 2014). Moreover, there is limited research on the representation of women in online, print, or broadcast news in Egypt.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

1. Gender Inequality: An Unfair World towards Women

Although women represent almost half of the world's population, 49.58 percent to be precise (World Bank, 2019), the world we live in continues to arguably be male dominated. Politics is often represented in the media as a field belonging solely to men and, all over the world, it is the masculine qualities of being strong and aggressive enough that are valued in the field of politics (Casserly, 2016). Women are thus almost excluded from the political public sphere, their roles trivialized and considered unimportant. Furthermore, even in countries where women are more involved in the field of politics, their political inclusion develops at an extremely slow rate (Casserly, 2016). All over the world, women continue to face several disadvantages. More than 65 percent of the world's illiterate population are women and less than 30 percent of the world's researchers are women (UNESCO, 2018). Recent data reveal that women represent only 6.6 percent of the CEOs in Fortune 500 companies (Zillman, 2019); while this figure remains quite diminutive, it is an improvement from the 3% almost a decade earlier in 2009 (Catalyst, 2019). Indeed, there are slight improvements in the participation of women in public life. There has been, for instance, some progress in the representation of women in senior management positions (Ngunjiri & Madsen, 2015), but such progress occurs at an excruciatingly slow pace (Casserly, 2016). Recent data from the 2020 Global Gender Gap Index (GGI), which measures gender equality in four aspects—economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment—reveals that it would take almost a century to close the global gender gap (Salyer & Cann, 2019). The report states that men and women do not receive equal economic opportunities worldwide and that women carry most of the burden of unpaid work—namely, household chores and childcare responsibilities—in all countries

around the world (World Economic Forum, 2020). Women also face the risk of losing their jobs for getting pregnant and often allow sexual harassment by their male bosses to go unreported for fear of getting fired.

The majority of media practitioners, including media editors and journalists, in traditional media organizations continue to be men (Shor, Rijt, Miltsov, Kulkarni, & Skiena, 2015; Hinnosaar, 2019), and even the women who do make it into the profession are more likely to face physical or verbal threats or attacks (“Violence and Harassment against Women in the News Media,” 2014). The latest Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP)—the largest and longest longitudinal study on gender in the world’s media—in 2015 revealed that only 37 percent of reporters working in the journalistic field globally are women. There have been attempts by some news organizations to include females more often in the newsroom. For example, 500 BBC shows and teams have joined the 50:50 representation initiative and by April 2019, more than 70 percent of all English-language programs broadcast on the BBC had been involved in the initiative for at least a year and have reached 50 percent or more female contributors on their shows (Rattan et al., 2019). However, this attempt at equal gender representation is not common practice in media organizations. Men continue to dominate managerial jobs in the journalism sector, and women are expected to abide by the journalistic norms and standards set by their male supervisors (Rodgers & Thorson, 2003). Few women actually succeed in making it to top management positions in the news industry, and thus their contribution to a more balanced gender representation remains limited (Krijnen & Bauwel, 2015). Even when women hold managerial positions, they are expected to prioritize male perspectives over their own (Phalen, 2000). The majority of editors and decision makers in the media continue to be men, and they are more likely to consider feminine news as irrelevant or less important than other news stories (Krijnen & Bauwel, 2015). As female journalists grow older, it becomes increasingly difficult for them to keep

their jobs, as having other family responsibilities often means they have to quit their journalistic roles (Franks, 2013). Moreover, women journalists are more likely to be abused online in the comments left by readers on their organizations' websites (Gardiner et al., 2016). In an analysis of the daily Spanish newspaper *El Mundo*, the authors found that men were twice as likely to report the news than women (Matud, Rodríguez, & Espinosa, 2011).

2. The Power of the News Media

The power of the media lies in its ability to perpetuate the status quo (Mateos de Cabo et al., 2014), yet at the same time the media can also be a source of supporting societal change and eliminating stereotypes against women, which emphasizes why it is important to examine the representation of women in the media. The media can “reflect, produce, or reproduce” expectations about gendered norms and stereotypes and can thus be influential in bringing about sociocultural changes (Mannila, 2017, p. 7). News is a major source of information about the world in general and gender roles in a society in particular (Lobo & Cabecinhas, 2011). When newspapers offer representative coverage of the role of women in society and when their mention in the news is not only limited to traditional female roles, this could lead to the reduction of stereotypes against women. News media, in particular, are significant because they claim to reflect social reality. Unlike entertainment media, which is often thought of as mere fantasy, news media claims to represent a reflection of society (Byerly & Ross, 2006). However, if the news represents a version of the truth that is mainly dominated by men, it is then expected that the news would reflect a “masculine” rather than a gender-balanced society where men and women are not treated equally (Len-Ríos et al., 2005). Stereotypical gender representations in the media contribute to the formation of viewers' beliefs and attitudes about gender roles (Byerly & Ross, 2006; Signorielli, 2001). When women are underrepresented or misrepresented in the news, existing societal stereotypes against them are likely to be reinforced, possibly contributing to the preconception that

women somehow are less in status than men (Armstrong, 2004). News media are generally assumed to represent a reflection of society, and when that image conveys an imbalanced gender representation, harmful gender stereotypes are likely to be reinforced and perpetuated (Rattan et al., 2019). When news fails to dedicate equal or at least near equal space to both genders—especially that their real-life ratios is nearly equal—a distorted view of the world is likely to emerge among consumers of the news (D’Heer et al., 2019). Moreover, having one’s name published in a newspaper is a sign of status and social significance, and thus the marginalization of women in the news means they are excluded from public debate and conveys an image that they are somehow less important and lower in status than men (Len-Ríos et al., 2005). Diverse and proportionate representation of women in the media matters because young people often consider public figures represented in the media as role models (Hinnosaar, 2019). Campbell and Wolbrecht (2006) concluded that female adolescents were less likely to actively participate in the political sphere when female politicians were underrepresented in the news. Sakr (2002) argued that when women are not fairly represented in the media and when they are quite absent from managerial positions in media organizations, gender stereotypes are likely to be sustained and reproduced. Morgan and Shanahan (1997) analyzed 14 gender-role cultivation studies over two decades and found a positive association between the amount of TV viewing and perceptions of gender roles that reflect television’s view. Oppliger (2007) analyzed 31 studies and found a positive correlation between media use and gender stereotyping for experimental and non-experimental studies. Although it was published almost twenty-five years ago, the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action emphasized the role of the media in empowering women. “Everywhere the potential exists for the media to make a far greater contribution to the advancement of women” (UN Women, 1995, para. 1). The declaration emphasized the importance of eliminating “gender-based stereotyping ... in public and private local, national

and international media organizations” (UN Women, 1995, para. 2) in order to “promote the advancement of women and the equality of women and men” (UN Women, 1995, para. 33).

Newspapers editors and reporters worldwide have limited space to work with, and even in the realm of the Internet, where space seems limitless, audience attention and interest are not. Thus, journalists and editors choose “important” stories—presumably those deemed important and relevant by their audience—to focus on and drop the rest. In this sense, the media assign importance to events, as well as people, around us. When individuals belonging to a certain gender, race, religion, or some other group are kept out of the news, they are implicitly represented as less important (Shor et al., 2015). Journalists and newsmakers generally might not have absolute control over who exactly makes it to the news. In general, journalists abide by routine journalistic practices of what is newsworthy and what is not. Prominence of a specific figure usually determines how “newsworthy” anything they say or do is. Routine journalistic practices dictate that reporters cover stories about individuals of prominence and cite them as sources because the latter are generally considered more credible than the average citizen. Some scholars have proposed that this might be the reason why women and other minority groups continue to be underrepresented in the news, as they often occupy fewer real-world strategic positions of power in fields such as politics, business, and professional sports, all of which are topics that the news media tend to focus on (Shor et al., 2015). It is usually the top politicians, public officials, businesspeople, athletes, and entertainers that receive the most attention in the news (Shor et al., 2015). Consequently, women as news actors as well as quoted and cited sources are often more absent in such sections in newspapers. The 2015 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) report revealed that almost 50 percent of stories published in the print media were devoted to either politics and government or the economy. It comes as no surprise then that women’s representation in such sections becomes minimal. There exists an imbalance in gender representation in

newspapers as a result of real-life “gender imbalances in socioeconomic participation” (Shor et al., 2015, p. 962). While it might be argued that media representation cannot dramatically change as long as inequalities between the genders in socioeconomic participation persists, this is not to say that there is nothing they can do to improve the representation of women in the news. The news media can control who contributes to the reporting of the news and the experts they resort to when reporting stories (Rattan et al., 2019).

In sum, women are underrepresented in the news not because they constitute a true minority group—that is, they are statistically outnumbered by men—but because their contributions to fields significant to the press, for example, politics and economy, is limited and thus their representation in the media is limited.

3. The Representation of Women in News Media

The representation of women in the media has been studied extensively over the course of the past few decades. Scholars have concluded that there are generally two patterns in the representation of women in the news. Women are either underrepresented or represented in a way that reinforces existing stereotypes against them, reflecting traditional gender roles within a society (Brabant & Mooney, 1986; Smith, 1997; Adams & Tuggle, 2004; GMMP, 2015; Hooghe et al., 2015). Men as media professionals dominate newsrooms and as news actors dominate news stories. Shor et al. (2015) concluded that male names were three times more likely to be mentioned than female names. The authors argued that while there were differences in gender representation in various sections of newspapers, the overall male to female names ratio did not approach equality in any section. When it comes to representation in the media, women continue to be substantially underrepresented in the media all over the world (Rattan et al., 2019). The latest report published by the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) in 2015 revealed that women constitute only 19 percent of experts featured in news stories and that only 37% of reporters visible as authors in the

news (e.g., in the byline) are female. Burke and Mazzeella (2008) analyzed lead news stories in online news outlets such as *CNN* and *The New York Times* and found that men were six times more likely to be represented and quoted in leads compared to women. Similarly, Mateos de Cabo et al. (2014) conducted a content analysis on four Spanish online newspapers over a period of three months and found that mentions of female names represented only 18 percent of all names mentioned within the analysis period. The authors also found that women were more likely to be represented in soft news topics, such as leisure activities and social commitments. The research conducted by D'Heer et al. (2019) on the representation of women in online news concluded that, in online news outlets that target women, women were adequately represented and at times overrepresented. However, online news outlets that target both genders displayed a higher level of female underrepresentation both as journalists and reporters and as actors in the news content itself. The authors' findings are in line with what was previously discussed in the literature by different scholars: news outlets that provide more hard news are typically dominated by male journalists and male actors in the news content. Len-Ríos et al. (2005) concluded that the male-to-female ratio of individuals mentioned or referred to in news stories was four-to-one and about two-thirds of photos accompanying news stories featured men. The authors argued that this unbalanced representation of both genders subtly confers more power to men. In other studies, women were quoted as experts in only 20 percent of the analyzed news stories (Ross et al., 2016). The GMMP's Sarah Macharia said, following the publication of the latest report in 2015, that it would take "at least three quarters of a century" to reach gender parity in news representation (Grimley, 2015, para. 4). The underrepresentation of women in news stories means that the roles they can occupy within a society are limited (Signorielli, 1997).

Moreover, men dominate news photos as well. In 1975, Miller's study on two leading US newspapers concluded that men far outnumber women in news photos in all sections,

except for lifestyle. While the male-to-female ratio in the analyzed papers was three-to-one or two-to-one, in some sections (such as sports), it was 13-to-one. Moreover, Miller concluded that men were more likely to be represented in images as politicians, public officials, professionals, and athletes, while women were more likely to be presented as spouses or socialites. Blackwood (1983) replicated Miller's earlier study on the same US newspapers and arrived at similar findings: men outnumbered women in news photos by nearly three-to-one in one paper and four-to-one in the other. Luebke's (1989) study on four US newspapers in Connecticut also concluded that the roles of men and women in news photos are dominated by stereotypes, where men are represented as professionals and athletes and women as spouses and family members. Furthermore, the author also concluded that men outnumbered women in news photos by an average ratio of two-to-one; however, in male-dominated sections, such as sports, this ratio was 14-to-one. More recently, in their study on US newspaper *The Los Angeles Times*, Rodgers and Thorson (2000) concluded that women were more likely to appear in occupations that are stereotypically considered more feminine such as nurse, secretary, and homemaker. The overall male-to-female ratio in this study was two-to-one, and women were even more underrepresented in news photos in sections such as sports and overrepresented in the lifestyle section. In addition, the authors concluded that women in news photos were more likely to be seen smiling. Len-Ríos et al. (2005) found that the male-to-female ratio in news photos was also two-to-one and that men were also more dominant in photos in the sports section and women in the entertainment section. Stanley's (2012) longitudinal content analysis of news photos published in two widely read American newspapers over a forty-year period (from 1966 to 2006) concluded that men were persistently dominant in news photos throughout the entire study period. The author revealed that the presence of men in news photos was more pronounced in specific sections, including politics, business, and sports, while women were more likely to appear in entertainment,

fashion, and lifestyle sections. Although the contributions of women in society had expanded since the beginning of the study period in 1966 until its end in 2006, Stanley concluded that the media had failed to mirror these changes. Rodgers et al. (2007) found that women in news photos were more likely to be portrayed as happy, calm, and submissive, while men were portrayed as sad, excited, and dominant. Kwak and An's (2016) large-scale study on seven US- and UK-based online news outlets concluded that a significantly large proportion of women appear in photos in the entertainment, lifestyle, and health sections. They also found that females in photos were more likely to appear younger than males and that the intensity of their smiles was much stronger than those of males.

Women are not only underrepresented in the news, but they are also presented differently (Vandenberghe, 2019). Even inside a newsroom, there is a difference in the types of stories men and women write about. Male journalists, for instance, are more likely to cover hard news and women more likely to cover soft news, such as health and social issues (Mateos de Cabo et al., 2014). Female journalists are often assigned stories with a human-interest angle, entertainment, or culture rather than crime or politics (Van Zoonen, 1998). In addition, female actors are even more absent in hard news topics such as politics and economics and more often represented in soft news (Craft & Wanta, 2004; Ross & Carter, 2011). As women are shown in more "feminine" news sections and men in "masculine" news sections, the news media can contribute to the proliferation of gender stereotypes (Len-Ríos et al., 2005). Gender stereotypes are beliefs about the types of attitudes that set men and women apart and about the appropriate social and professional roles for each gender (Tartaglia & Rollero, 2015). Men are often cited in news to provide an "informative, authoritarian perspective," while women are often cited as eyewitnesses (D'Heer et al., 2019, p.4). The GMMP (2015) noted that a woman's family status was more likely to be mentioned than a man's (21% vs. 7%). Data from the GMMP project over the years revealed that the

representation of women in the news has went through a mere 7 percent increase over the past 20 years and has not increased at all between the years 2010 and 2015 (1995, 17%; 2000, 18%; 2005, 21%; 2010, 24%; 2015, 24%). When women are not given enough space in the news, this contributes to what Gaye Tuchman (2000) called the “symbolic annihilation” of women in the news, as the media overwhelmingly focus on men and women are thus excluded from the public sphere (p. 153). Tuchman also argued that perpetuating stereotypes about women in the media “trivialises” them. News media—unlike entertainment media—are particularly interesting to study because they claim to present an objective image of the real world (Byerly & Ross, 2006). Therefore, underrepresentation of women in the news might be problematic because instead of presenting an undistorted, unaltered, unfiltered image of reality, the news then presents a predominantly male perspective (Byerly & Ross, 2006). If the news is mostly written by men about men, how could they possibly be representative of the world at large? Scholars have argued that what can be considered news is what passes off through the lens of men as news, and when women are mentioned in the news, the emphasis is on the roles of women as spouses, mothers, or victims rather than as contributors to the political and professional world (Ross et al., 2016). A study conducted by Vandenberghe (2019) found that when women step into leadership positions, the press did highlight their real qualifications for the role, but it was also more likely to emphasize their femininity, physical appearance (such as a description of what they are wearing), and family status and how they were role models for other women. The GMMP found in its latest report (2015) that women were three times more likely to have their family status mentioned in news stories than men. Women in news stories published in British newspapers were three times more likely to have their family status mentioned (Ross & Carter, 2011). A study conducted on English language online news sites revealed that men were predominant in both text and images of news stories in almost every topic and that women were more likely to be

represented in “feminine” sections such as fashion and entertainment, while men were more likely to be mentioned in news related to business and politics. (Jia, Lansdall-Welfare, Sudhahar, Carter, & Cristianini, 2016). Women are thus marginalized or “symbolically annihilated” from the news media. Another study conducted on daily Spanish newspaper *El Mundo* also concluded that men were more likely to be represented as athletes or high-ranking professionals and that news stories dealing with fashion or beauty were dominated solely by women (Matud et al., 2011). There are also differences in how the press covers news about men and women running for political positions. Ross et al. (2012) found that male candidates were more likely to be mentioned in news stories and female candidates were more likely to be mentioned in feature articles that directly deal with gender issues. Furthermore, the “femininity” of women candidates was emphasized and became the most interesting thing about them rather than their actual qualifications and experience. Women are also more often portrayed in “soft professions” such as education and health, while men are portrayed in “hard professions,” such as business and law (Collins, 2011; Yun et al., 2007). A review of 18 empirical studies investigating gender stereotypes in the media worldwide concluded that women are not only underrepresented across a range of media and settings but that their sexuality is often emphasized and that they are often portrayed in stereotypically female roles such as homemakers and nonprofessionals (Collins, 2011). Journalists—whether male or female—also expect female leaders to be more “communal” than their male counterparts (Vu et al., 2017). Overall, the scholarly community seems to agree that women are underrepresented in the media and are portrayed in stereotypical roles and occupations.

Most studies conducted on the representation of women in the news focused on traditional media, that is, print newspapers or broadcast news. The Internet, on the other hand, was hailed as a different medium, one that was meant to revolutionize how news was

previously done and that would give voice to the previously unheard. It was thought of as the medium that would lead to a more balanced—perhaps even approaching equality—representation of men and women in the news (D’Heer et al., 2019). It was often considered the medium that would empower people, the downtrodden and the underdogs, across the globe (Curran et al., 2013). The GMMP (2015) has demonstrated that newsrooms of online news outlets are more gender diverse than traditional newsrooms. Unlike traditional media, space and time restrictions that previously faced traditional media do not apply in the realm of the Internet, and thus online news websites can publish more gender diverse content with equal or at least near equal coverage. Despite that, a study conducted by D’Heer et al. (2019) on online news websites found that female actors are underrepresented and are more often presented in soft news, following traditional gender stereotypes (such as victim and family member). The authors also concluded that male journalists were more likely to produce hard news stories. Yun et al. (2007) also concluded that while there is slight improvement in the representation of women, online news still somehow follows in the footsteps of traditional media with regard to women's visibility and that women are still portrayed as docile, meek, and fragile, in need of rescue by men. Mateos de Cabo et al. (2014) analyzed more than 34,000 online news stories and found that women represented less than one-fifth of all news subjects and were more likely to be represented in soft news topics, such as entertainment and relationships. Burke and Mazzarella’s (2008) study on leading US news websites, including *CNN* and *The New York Times*, showed that men continue to dominate the “public sphere,” where male standards and perspectives are considered the norm.

4. Egypt, the United States, and Sweden: Varying Degrees of Gender Equality

The purpose of this study is to investigate the representation of women in online news in three different countries: Sweden, the United States, and Egypt. It would be a stretch to claim that these three countries are representative of the world at large; however, they at least

straddle three continents (Africa, Europe, and America) and include both developing as well as developed societies. Furthermore, these three countries in specific were chosen because of how different they are in treating women and giving them their rights. In terms of gender equality, European countries have been the best performers, followed by North America, and then the North African region (OECD, 2019). Europe as a whole has closed 77 percent of its gender gap, North America 73 percent, and the Middle East and North Africa 60.5 percent (World Economic Forum, 2020). When it comes to gender equality, each country has a different story to tell. And while no country in the world has achieved complete gender equality, the Nordic region—including Sweden—is often placed at the top of the list (Mannila, 2017).

4.1 Egypt

Egyptian women represent 49.5 percent of the total population (World Bank, 2019). In terms of numbers, they in no way represent a minority group. However, in terms of societal treatment and public participation, they often still face discrimination. In the latest Global Gender Gap Index (GGI), which measures gender equality in four aspects—economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment, Egypt ranked 134th out of 153 countries worldwide (World Economic Forum, 2020). Illiteracy is still rampant among Egyptian women, reaching 35 percent. The 2020 GGI report revealed that there has been some improvement in the status of women as the percentage of women in ministerial positions (24%) (“Ri’asat Majlis Al Wuzara’a,” 2020) has more than doubled since 2018 (11.8%). This progress can indeed stimulate the involvement of Egyptian women in the political sphere (Samir, 2019) and the government has been celebrating such achievements (El Baradei, 2018); however, this has not been the case for the majority of Egyptian women. GGI also revealed that only 24.7 percent of Egyptian women are employed, 20 percent of whom have part-time contracts. Moreover, more than 90

percent of all managerial positions are held by men, with only 7.1 percent of managerial positions held by women. The report concluded that the average Egyptian man earns 3.8 more than an average Egyptian woman. The 2019 Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) published by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) revealed that Egyptian women face a very high level of discrimination within their families. Furthermore, women in Egypt do not have equal access to economic resources. A recent study conducted by the National Council for Women (NCW) in Egypt in cooperation with the World Bank revealed that women own only 5.2 percent of land in Egypt (“Women own only 5.2% of Egypt’s private lands,” 2019). In terms of societal treatment, Egyptian women are generally expected to stay home, complete all household chores, and take care of their children and the elderly, while men are expected to provide for their families (El Baradei, 2018). Egypt has been described as the worst country in the Middle East to live in as a woman (Boros, 2013) and Cairo, Egypt’s capital, is the world’s most dangerous city for women (Thomson Reuters Foundation, 2017). Reasons for why Egypt has fared so poorly include rampant sexual harassment, female genital mutilation (FGM), and forced and early marriages (Boros, 2013). In addition, in a survey on gender responsibilities, 98 percent of Egyptian men said they believed it was the sole responsibility of the mother to change diapers and take care of other baby-related tasks (UN Women & Promundo US, 2017). All in all, the situation in Egypt for women seems quite gloomy (El Baradei, 2018).

Out of all the countries in the Middle East and North African region, Egypt, in specific, was chosen for inclusion in this study because it is the most populous country in the Arab region and has been throughout history a “prolific media producer and exporter” (Sakr, 2002, p. 825). Egyptian media productions are also quite popular in the region, with its press being among the most influential in the Middle East (BBC, 2018). Furthermore, Egypt’s film industry is the most popular in the Middle East, so much that it has been dubbed

“Hollywood” of the Arab World (Monks, 2016). Egyptian media, in general, have also been described as a means for unifying diverse Arab audiences (Kholeif, 2011).

4.2 Women in Egyptian Media

Few scholars have investigated the representation of women in Egyptian media; furthermore, limited empirical studies that examine how women are portrayed specifically in Egyptian online news could be found. In a study on the representation of women in short stories published in an Egyptian magazine, Ramzi (2001) concluded that women were represented as incapable of making their own decisions and heavily dependent on men. The study also revealed that the women represented in the stories did not work because they believed in the importance of their careers but as a result of their dire financial situations or because they had failed in their personal relationships. Talal (1996) found that female topics in Arab press often focused on fashion and makeup, while working-class women were not represented. In addition, the women that appeared in the press often had urban origins, while rural women were not represented. In a study conducted on the representation of women in Egyptian TV commercials, Ishak (2003) found that women were more likely to advertise household products in an indoor domestic setting, while men were more likely to advertise non-domestic products in an outdoor location. The author also argued that the women represented in the sampled commercials tend to be much younger in age than their male counterparts, a finding in line with the argument that women are employed in advertising as aesthetically pleasing sex objects. Men, on the other hand, were more likely to be the “voiceovers,” which casts them in an authoritative role. Moreover, Ishak argued that the image presented in Egyptian TV commercials reflects the nature of gender roles in the Egyptian society, where men, who are often considered the main breadwinners, are expected to work outside the home to provide for their families and generally do not contribute to household tasks at all. Women, on the other hand, are expected to be fully responsible for

housework, even if they do work outside their homes. Ishak (2003) concluded that the most important role for an Egyptian woman is to be a “good” housewife and mother, a stereotypical image reflected in the analyzed commercials. In a more recent analysis of the representation of women in Egyptian TV commercials, El-Sherbini, Darwish, Bastawisi, and El-Tarabishi (2017) found that women were greatly objectified and presented as attractive “models” in the background. Men usually took center stage, while the women stood or danced in the background. Male voice-overs were more likely to be used to indicate credibility and authority.

In addition, while it is illogical to assume that Arab countries are a homogenous lump that have little differences, it stands to reason that they are somehow similar on account of the common language—Arabic—and common religion—Islam—that unites them. Due to the lack of literature on Egypt in particular, studies conducted in other Middle Eastern countries are assumed to be similar. For example, a study conducted by Halim and Meyers (2010) on the representation of violence against Muslim women in English-language newspapers published in Gulf countries revealed that the women represented in the news stories—although they are victims in one form or another—were usually mentioned briefly and were rarely given the chance to speak for themselves. Moreover, the authors found that female victims of sexual violence or harassment were often at least partly blamed for the harassment. In a content analysis of Arabic drama serials aired on transnational Arab television, Kharroub and Weaver (2014) found that women were less likely than men to occupy recognizable jobs and were more likely to be portrayed in sex-typed occupations and activities. The authors concluded that the portrayals of women in fictional Arab serials does not differ from portrayals of women in the media in other countries. A study conducted by Zaideh et al. (2018) in Jordan—a Middle Eastern country that is similar in some ways to Egypt—found that the percentage of women’s appearance in print, broadcast, and online media in Jordan

does not exceed 9%. In their sample of news stories that appeared on news websites and print media organizations over a five-day period, Zaideh et al. (2018) found that the number of women was only 287 while the number of men was 2774. Moreover, Arab media is replete with stereotypes about women, who are often represented as weak, docile, and obedient (Allam, 2008). Arab women are often represented in the media as concerned only with cooking, fashion, and idle gossip and their bodies are treated as sexual commodities (Allam, 2008).

The literature on the portrayal of women in the Arab media, in general, and Egyptian media, in particular, is quite limited. Most studies conducted on the portrayal of women in Arab media have analyzed entertainment-oriented television content, including drama (movies and soap operas), TV commercials, and music videos, while little attention has been given to gender representation in newscasts and political talk shows (Allam, 2008). Egypt has not participated in the latest GMMP in 2015, and data available a decade ago from GMMP 2010 reveal that women represented only 27 percent of news subjects (individuals interviewed or referred to in the news), and nearly 61 percent of this content reinforced gender stereotypes. Moreover, all news stories in Egypt with women as a central focus were reported by female reporters and most of those stories were about celebrities and beauty contests. Apart from GMMP 2010, there were limited accessible studies in top-tier journals concerned with analyzing gender representation in Egyptian news.

4.3 Sweden

Women in Sweden represent 49.9 percent of the country's population (World Bank, 2019). As a Nordic country, Sweden consistently ranks high in global gender parity rankings. Generally speaking, the Nordic region is the "most gender equal region" in the world, according to Sweden's former Minister of Health and Social Affairs, Annika Strandhäll (OECD, 2018, para. 7). The Nordic countries are regarded as leaders in supporting women's

rights and promoting gender equality, and they have moved faster and earlier than other countries to promote gender equality “at home, at work, and in public life” (OECD, 2018, p. 11). Improvements in gender equality have considerably contributed to the economic growth of the Nordic countries, and 75 percent of women in Nordic countries have paid jobs (OECD, 2018). In Sweden, 81 percent of women are part of the labor market, one of the highest rates in Europe as a whole (World Economic Forum, 2020). Sweden also has the highest share of all female managers in the Nordic region and is generally one of the best-performing countries in terms of narrowing down the gender gap in labor force participation and in weekly working hours (World Economic Forum, 2020). Moreover, fathers in Sweden are more likely to take paid parental leave off than in other Nordic countries (World Economic Forum, 2020).

The current Swedish government describes itself as a “feminist government,” devoted to achieving and maintaining gender equality within the Swedish society (Gender equality in Sweden, n.d., para. 18). Furthermore, 12 of the 22 government ministers in Sweden are women (around 50%) and nearly 46 percent of the current parliament members in Sweden are also women (Gender equality in Sweden, n.d.; Bohlen, 2019). Since 2006, Sweden has never ranked lower than fourth in the Global Gender Gap Index (GGI) by the World Economic Forum (Gender equality in Sweden, n.d.). Egalitarian attitudes, favoring and supporting gender equality, are also quite popular within the Swedish society itself (Kaufman et al., 2017). Sweden was also the first country to replace the world-renowned “maternity leave” with “parental leave” in 1974, so that both parents could take six months off work per child, with each parent entitled to half of this period (Gender equality in Sweden, n.d.). In addition, in 1995, the Swedish government made it possible for fathers to take a paid, 30-day leave off work when a new child arrives on a use-it-or-lose-it basis (Gender equality in Sweden, n.d.).

While the situation in Sweden may not be perfect, it can be seen as a lesson for other countries across the globe (Bohlen, 2019). Nordic countries have indeed made great strides in narrowing the gender gap, but closing it altogether remains challenging (OECD, 2018). In other words, the situation in Sweden is not completely rosy, just that in comparison to other countries, it is much better. Swedish women still face challenges both in their workplaces and at home (Bohlen, 2019). Despite the existence of generous, paid vacation days for both parents, mothers are still primarily in charge of caring for their children and doing the housework (Bohlen, 2019).

Sweden, out of all Nordic countries, was chosen for inclusion in this study because it has one of the highest female participation rates in the workforce in Europe and young women are just as highly educated as men (Oláh & Bernhardt, 2008). Historically, Sweden has always been a global powerhouse on human rights, particularly gender equality (Carlson-Rainer, 2017). It is ranked as one of the most egalitarian countries in the world, and a relatively high number of Swedish men contribute to household chores and childcare responsibilities (Gustafsson Sendén et al., 2019). It is also the largest country in Scandinavia (Jürgensen, 2019), with the biggest population among Scandinavian countries (Oláh & Bernhardt, 2008). Moreover, in the 2019 Gender Equality Index published by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), Sweden ranked first in the EU. Moreover, according to a 2019 survey by US News & World Report, Sweden was described as the best country in the world to live in as a woman (McDowell & Millington, 2019). In Sweden, working women are on equal legal standing with men across several indicators including access to jobs and protections on gender discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace (World Bank, 2019). In comparison to other countries in the Nordic region, Sweden has one of the highest figures of women in senior positions in media organizations (49%) (Byerly, 2011; Balkmar, 2016). As data from the latest GMMP (2015) shows, Sweden has the highest percentage of

female news subjects in the Nordic region (Mannila, 2017). Around half of the employees at senior professional level in the media in Sweden are women (Mannila, 2017; EIGE, 2013). Men are also no longer dominant in the media field in Sweden, as a state of gender parity among executive directors and publishers has been achieved since 2012 at the ten largest newspapers in Sweden (Edström, 2013).

4.4 Women in Swedish Media

Although the Nordic region prides itself on its gender equality initiatives, news produced in the Nordic region does not reflect this image as gender stereotypes are often prevalent in Nordic news (Mannila, 2017). Women represent only 24 percent of news subjects seen, heard, or read about around the globe (GMMP, 2015); in Sweden, this figure is slightly higher—the highest in the Nordic region—but still stands only at 31% and has remained constant since Sweden first participated in the GMMP project in 2000 (GMMP, 2000; GMMP, 2015; Mannila, 2017). Although there are more women in Swedish news than in any other country in the Nordic region, men dominate the news media in Sweden—just like almost every other country in the world. Studies conducted on news in the Nordic region conclude that the male-to-female ratio in news subjects is 2-to-1 (Mannila, 2017). Even though, compared to the rest of the world, there are more women in leadership positions in the Nordic region (EIGE, 2013; Byerly, 2011), women continue to be underrepresented in the news in the Nordic region and their portrayal continues to be based on gender stereotypes (Mannila, 2017). Women in Swedish news are also more likely to be identified by their family status, while men often represent authority and dominate all news categories (GMMP, 2015; Mannila, 2017). Balkmar (2016) explained that, in EIGE's (2013) study *Women and Media Industries in Europe (WIME)*, Swedish news had 24 percent female experts and 44 percent female politicians, while the average in Europe was 17 percent and that 32 percent of news subjects were women, while the EU average was 23 percent. Overall, several studies

support the latest GMMP findings: the quantitative representation of women in Swedish news has remained almost the same since 2000; that is, nearly one woman was mentioned for every two men (GMMP, 2010; Edström, 2014; GMMP, 2015). In her study on women in Swedish television, Edström (2006) found that women represented 30 percent of subjects seen in Swedish TV news. Sports programs and news had the lowest female representation, while fiction and children's shows had the highest. She concluded that although Sweden has one of the highest female representation in parliament (44% in 2006 but currently 46 % [Bohlen, 2019]), women represented only 30 percent of news subjects. Moreover, female leaders mentioned in business topics were more likely to have their femininity emphasized. In addition, a report published by Swedish non-profit foundation Rättviseförmedlingen in 2018 concluded that only 27.2 percent of experts who appeared in news articles in Sweden were women, whereas ordinary female citizens represented 46.1 percent (Rättviseförmedlingen, 2018; Statista, 2019). This report concluded that all in all, women represented only 32 percent of news subjects. In economy sections, 22.8 percent of news subjects were women; in politics sections, 32.1 percent were women; in sports, 20.9 percent; and in cultural topics, 47 percent.

4.5 The United States of America

Women in the United States represent approximately 50.5 percent of the total population (World Bank, 2019). In the latest Global Gender Gap Index (GGI), the United States ranked 53rd out of 153 countries (World Economic Forum, 2020). The report concluded that the primary reason for gender inequality in the United States comes from the gender pay gap. On average, an American woman is paid 82 cents for every dollar paid to a man and family caregiving is still seen as the sole responsibility of women (The National Partnership for Women and Families, 2020). It could take another forty years to close the gender wage gap and it will take more than twice as long for women of color to reach parity

(Barone, 2019). On the other hand, the 2020 GGI revealed that the percentage of adult women who are in the labor market stands at 66.8 percent, a relatively high figure. Moreover, the report also mentioned that there remains room for improvement in women's political participation as congresswomen in the US represent only 23.6 percent of available seats and female ministers only 21.7 percent of the cabinet. In the field of journalism, women in the United States were less likely to cover news related to politics (34%), economy (36%), and sports (10%) (Women's Media Center, 2019). The United States, in specific, was chosen for inclusion in the current study because it is the world's most dominant economic and military power, with a cultural influence that has spread to all corners of the world. In terms of global significance, prominent events—such as presidential elections—that occur in the United States are not only extensively covered by national media, but by news organizations all over the world (Guo & Vargo, 2017). The United States, as a political and economic powerhouse, sets the media agenda for less powerful nations and arguably even for the rest of the world. Some scholars have argued that stories about the United States are considered the most newsworthy (Segev, 2010) and that the US hegemony in setting the international news agenda might last for years to come (Segev, 2016). In addition, the United States film industry is quite dominant—and sometimes more popular than local productions—around the globe, including Europe (Crane, 2014). Not only does the United States set the global news agenda, but it also dominates the world's cultural industries (Banerjee, 2002).

4.6 Women in US Media

Mirroring the global trend, US news and entertainment media are dominated by men (Women's Media Center, 2019). Moreover, female journalists in the United States have reported receiving online rape threats and were earning substantially less than their male counterparts (Women's Media Center, 2019). In addition, a study conducted by Zoch and Turk (1998) revealed that men were quoted more than four times as often as women in

international stories published by three southern US daily newspapers; the study also found that around 70 percent of news sources quoted directly or indirectly were men. Furthermore, the authors also found that 69.2 percent of front-page sources were men, while only 17.3 percent were allocated to women. Another study conducted by Armstrong (2004) arrived at a similar finding: men were three times more likely to be mentioned in new stories in 18 US newspapers. The GMMP findings in 2010 revealed that women represented only 24 percent of experts cited in news stories in US media; in 2015, however, this figure has risen to 36 percent. More specifically, in Internet news, the GMMP (2015) concluded that female news subjects were two times more likely to be identified by their family status than their male counterparts. The Pew Research Center (2005) found that men were twice as likely to be quoted as news sources in news stories, and only one-third of news stories included one female source (Pew Research Center, 2005). Moreover, women were present in more than 50% of news stories only in the lifestyle section. Baitinger (2015) found that women were less likely to appear as guests in political news programs. In her study on the portrayal of male and female athletes in the New York Times, Lee (1992) found that men constituted the majority of news subjects and were more likely to be featured in news stories related to team sports and individual sports that emphasized “strength, endurance, and risk” (p. 197). Female athletes, on the other hand, were more likely to appear in news stories about individual sports that emphasized “grace, form, and beauty” (p. 197). Moreover, women were also more likely to have personal information unrelated to their athletic performance mentioned, such as physical appearance and description of body shape and size. In their study on gender representation in news published on Twitter, Armstrong and Gao (2011) found that men were still more likely to be mentioned than women across tweets and coverage areas. Wood (1997) suggested that the constant underrepresentation of women in the media could lead to the belief that there really are more men than women and that men are the cultural standard. She

argued that in the world constructed by American mass media, white males constituted two-thirds of the population. Moreover, less than 10 percent of women represented in the media were above the age of 35. The majority of women represented in American media, Wood (1997) argued, were young, beautiful, slim, passive, and mainly concerned with relationships. Men were often portrayed as strong and ambitious and often focused on important business deals, while female characters often focused on looking better and taking care of others.

Chapter Three

Theoretical Framework

The current study employs the theories of framing and stereotyping to analyze the representation of women in online news across three countries.

1. The Theory of Framing

In the context of day-to-day communication, we consciously and subconsciously employ specific “frames” to transmit information to other people. For instance, we avoid saying things like “this dress makes you look too fat” and may instead choose to say, “this dress does not complement your body type.” We do not tell our kids that we have decided to “kill” our dog because he was becoming too ill and we needed to put an end to his suffering, but we say something like “we put him to sleep.” We carefully choose our words, filtering out specific aspects of a problem while directing attention to other aspects of it. Just like the “frame” chosen for a painting influences how it is received by viewers, framing in communication influences how an issue is perceived by the audience. Further, beyond communication in our everyday life, the notion of framing has become more widely applied in the context of the mass media and has attracted considerable scholarly attention (e.g., Marks et al., 2007; Messer & Bell, 2008; Vicsek, 2014). The notion of framing first emerged in the 1974 work of Erving Goffman when he explained how individuals within a society interpret the world around them. Within the media and journalism field, Guzman (2015) identified framing as the cognitive process through which journalists, editors, and other news producers explain a subject and present it to the audience and how the audience, in turn, makes sense of these reports. Entman’s (1993) definition is one of the most frequently quoted in the framing literature: “To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (p. 52).

A media frame has also been described as “the central organizing idea” that provides context for news content and suggests certain interpretation of an issue “through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration” (Weaver, 2007, p. 143). In other words, within a newsroom setting, journalists and other news producers make decisions all the time about the selection/exclusion of information and its presentation.

The theory of framing evolved as scholars tried to understand the dynamics between facts in real life and facts as they are presented through the lens of journalism. In that regard, Strömbäck, Shehata, & Dimitrova (2008) suggest that news can never really be an accurate mirror of reality. They argue that the focus upon a “central organizing idea” within news may ultimately influence our perceptions of issues by emphasizing what is important and what is not and by making certain aspects of an issue more “salient” than others (Dimitrova et al., 2005). The different frames employed by the media direct the attention of the audience to varying definitions of the same problem. In other words, through framing, different media provide news consumers with different portrayals of reality.

Scholars have argued that framing of issues in the news can influence how they are interpreted by the audience (Entman, 1993; Iyengar, 1987). For instance, Iyengar and Simon (1993) argued that media frames affected audience perceptions regarding the Persian Gulf crisis and war. Respondents to their survey who reported higher rates of exposure to television news were more likely to express support for military, rather than diplomatic, response to the crisis. Their content analysis supported the role of media frames in shaping perceptions. It had shown that the dominant frame in network news coverage was heavily focused on military affairs. Similarly, Brewer (2006) suggested that employing alternative media frames when covering foreign nations influenced the opinion of US citizens. His findings demonstrated that participants were more likely to hold favorable opinions of a foreign nation following exposure to news articles that emphasized the foreign nation’s

common interests with the United States, as opposed to news articles which “framed” the foreign nation as a direct competitor to the United States. Further, Evans (2010) found that there were two dominant frames in news stories covering army sieges of two Palestinian refugee camps: “framing of proximity” and “framing of distance.” Readers exposed to either of the two frames responded differently; while the former frame elicited empathy for civilian sufferings, the latter elicited feelings of detachment from events taking place far away from the readers. The bulk of the literature seems to be in agreement about the influence of media framing on opinion formation (Entman, 2004).

As previously discussed, scholars have argued that the media bring certain aspects of reality under the spotlight and that this process influences how members of the audience interpret issues and respond to them. The media make decisions all the time about which stories are worthy of coverage and which facts to include or exclude. In this regard, communication sources, that is, news producers, are responsible for the construction and definition of social or political issues for the audience (Nelson et al., 1997). The process of framing is also apparent in the amount of coverage (for example, print space or broadcast time) the media dedicate to a specific issue and the language used to describe it (Evans, 2010). It stands to reason then that the real world is brimming with events, conflicts, stories, and people that no one will ever know anything about for the simple reason that the media did not consider them important enough for coverage. Further, even with the stories that news producers choose to pursue, there will always be alternate views that have not been adequately represented by the media or that have been left out altogether.

Consequently, the fact that journalists and other news producers have to make decisions about what becomes news and what doesn’t and have to select certain “frames” when covering news is not in dispute. Another closely related area of research that has also garnered the attention of scholars is the identification of factors or, in other words, “forces”

that influence the previously discussed decisions which journalists have to make on a day-to-day basis. There are several factors that determine how frames are shaped within the media. Gamson and Modigliani (1989), for instance, have suggested three broad determinants of frames: cultural resonance, sponsor activities, and media practices. Other scholars have identified factors such as the individual ideologies of journalists or reporters, the political and cultural environment within which the media organization operates, and journalistic norms and routines (Reese et al., 2001). Other factors include financial considerations (Hamilton, 2004) and the pressure exercised in some instances by news sources (Manning, 2001). It is also worthy to note that the media and political systems within a country influence the construction of news (Hallin et al., 2004). Frames can also be part of “a broader cultural outlook” (Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2008). Similar events can be framed differently by media organizations operating within different political and cultural environments. In terms of gender framing, Norris (1997) explained that the representation of women in the news sends significant messages to audiences about the role of women in society. She argued that the media define and shape the news agenda and can promote certain “gendered frames” (p. 164) in their coverage of public issues, and when prominent female figures within the society, such as judges and business leaders, are not given a voice in the media, it comes as no surprise that the public will fail to realize that women indeed occupy significant roles in society. The media indeed can promote particular interpretations of the world and can “preserve the male-ordered status quo” (Byerly & Ross, 2006, p. 40). Yun et al. (2007) investigated whether online news stories about women were framed using stereotypical angles. They found that about half of the analyzed news articles depicted women using stereotypical frames, such as victim, family-oriented, weak or inferior, emotional, appearance-focused, or difficult/demanding. Burke and Mazzarella (2008) found that Internet news frames were dominated by men and that men and women were framed differently in the news stories. For

example, men were much more likely to have their occupational status mentioned and women much more likely to be described in terms of their familial roles. Norris (1997) argued that when the media covered stories about female leaders, certain gendered frames were used. For example, the emphasis was often placed on how these women have achieved a breakthrough, as if women in leadership positions were the exception, rather than the norm.

2. Stereotyping

In its most basic sense, a stereotype is an oversimplified opinion (Rodgers & Thorson, 2000; Edström, 2018) or a false overgeneralization about a particular, often oppressed, subgroup in society (Gorham, 1999). Walter Lippmann (1922) identified the concept as the “pictures in our heads,” a framework that we rely on to interpret the world around us. Stereotypes represent a subset of beliefs or attitudes about our social reality (Gorham, 1999; Hayes, 2011) that emerge from our preconceptions about a specific group in society (Edström, 2018). When a stereotype is readily available, that is, accessible, inside an individual's mind, it is more likely to be used to make an evaluation (Stangor, 1988).

The formation of those “pictures” inside our heads about other social groups does not occur solely based on our personal experiences, but also on what we learn from our surrounding environments (Gorham, 1999). The media, in particular, are quite influential in helping us understand about the world around us, especially about events, places, or people that we have not had personal experiences with (Perlmutter, 1998; Gorham, 1999). The media has the ability to sustain stereotypes within a society through its representation of specific groups (Lind & Danowski, 1998). Much of what we think we know about the real world—the pictures in our heads—does not come from our own personal interactions, but from what we constantly and repeatedly see, hear, and read in the media (Gorham, 1999), which could possibly result in the formation of inaccurate “images” about the real world (Boulding, 1956). When it comes to real-life behavior, individuals normally do not draw upon every bit

of information they have about the world; in other words, they do not base their judgments and behaviors on an objective reality, but often on the images and pictures within their heads, the main contributor to which is the media (Gorham, 1999). It has been argued that stereotypes in the media can be the basis for creating mutual understanding among otherwise heterogeneous groups (Rosello, 1998); however, while stereotyping can indeed be a tool that helps the media describe and explain the world, it is often a process that occurs based on the perspectives of powerful and influential groups within society and can sometimes result in discrimination against the less powerful and the less influential (Jin et al., 2019; Edström, 2018).

Individuals in dominant social groups then have the power to define the dominant understandings within a culture so that they appear as the natural order of life (Gorham, 1999). It is often assumed that the existence of persistent stereotypes against specific groups in the media is partly responsible for how audiences think about people in these groups (Gorham, 1999). Stereotypes can be either positive or negative and often serve as security blankets for individuals against unknown facts that might threaten their life choices (Edström, 2018). A negative stereotype often emerges against an outgroup or a minority group that is “different” in one way or another and can be easily defined as “the other” (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990).

2.1 Gender Stereotypes in the Media

More specifically, gender stereotypes are beliefs about the types of attitudes that set men and women apart and about the appropriate social and professional roles for each gender (Tartaglia & Rollero, 2015). They are influenced by the actual and perceived roles that women and men “should” occupy within a society (Eagly & Wood, 2011). Men and women are indeed different; however, gender stereotypes do not solely reflect those differences, but

they also impact how men and women define themselves and are treated by others (Ellemers, 2018).

When the media perpetuate stereotypes about women, it inadvertently “trivialises” them (Tuchman, 2000). Because we live in a media-saturated world, gender representation in the media impacts how we see ourselves and our perceptions of normal and appropriate behavior for men and women (Wood, 1997). Since this study examines the portrayal of women in online news across different cultural settings, it is important to shed light on prevalent stereotypes about women in the media. Typically, in the media, men have always been represented as “active, adventurous, powerful, aggressive, and largely uninvolved in human relationships” (Wood, 1997, p. 32). Women, on the other hand, are portrayed as sex objects, who are “young, thin, beautiful, passive, dependent, and often incompetent” (Wood, 1997). Female characters across different media settings often dedicate their energy to taking care of their looks, their homes, or their families (Wood, 1997, p. 32). Women also tend to be mentioned in topics related to lifestyle, parenting, and relationship advice (Demarest & Garner, 1992). While stereotypes may allow us to make quick conclusions about how large groups of people are likely to behave (Ellemers, 2018), gender stereotypes limit the human possibilities of both men and women, especially when reproduced by the media. Stereotypes, especially gender stereotypes, exaggerate the differences between groups and oversimplify a rather complex reality (Ellemers, 2018). Norris (1997) explained that, when covering men and women in public life, journalists often resort to “gendered frames” (p. 164) in order to simplify their explanation of events. Gender stereotypes are consequently prevalent in the media, where women are often portrayed as compassionate and men as aggressive. Nacos (2005) argued that, more specifically, women in politics are seen as compassionate and honest, while men are seen as tough and ambitious. The author explained that the news media often emphasize the “softness,” indecisiveness, and emotionality of female politicians,

whereas male politicians receive more “issue-oriented coverage” (p. 437). Furthermore, female politicians are more likely to have their physical and personal traits mentioned and are more often defined by their family status than their male counterparts (Devitt, 2002). In addition to depicting women as “emotional” or “weak,” another stereotype about women in news media is that of the cold-hearted, robotic “bitch” (Nacos, 2005). Women receive even more coverage in news media when they are doing something that goes directly against their “soft” nature (Nacos, 2005). Moreover, several scholars have argued that women are often portrayed in the media in stereotypical roles (Lester & Ross, 2003; Morris, 2006; Ali & Batool, 2015) and that visual media tended to focus on the female body versus the male face (Ullah & Khan, 2014). Shoemaker and Reese (1996) concluded that men were more likely to be seen in work-related roles outside their homes, while women were more likely to appear in the media as housewives and caregivers. Bridge (1997) concluded that women were more likely to appear as victims and Collins (2011) argued that women were more likely to be portrayed in subordinate roles and as victims who need to be rescued. In their research on the portrayal of women in online news, D’Heer et al. (2019) also utilized the GMMP codebook. Their study revealed that women were less likely to be mentioned in hard news topics and that women were represented more often in news stories that occur in “the private space,” that is, news stories that discuss personal or family matters, while men appeared more often in news about politics and the government. Women were also much less represented in political occupations in comparison to men and were more likely to have their family status mentioned. Jia et al. (2016) found that men dominated all topic categories except “Fashion” in online news stories. Finally, Ross et al. (2016) used data from the latest GMMP to analyze gender portrayals in news media in England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland. The authors found that women were more likely to appear as regular citizens rather than experts and were often mentioned in stories about health rather than politics.

Chapter Four

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Based on previous framing and stereotyping research in news media, five exploratory research questions are proposed to analyze gender representation in online news websites in Egypt, the United States, and Sweden.

The researcher examines the quantitative representation of women in the analyzed news stories and looks at several variables, including the topics in which women are more likely to be mentioned, the roles they appear in, and the functions they perform within a news story (such as spokesperson or expert).

RQ1: How are women portrayed in online news websites, overall?

H1: Online news stories will feature more males than females.

H2: Women are more likely to be represented in stereotypical topics in news stories.

RQ2: How are women portrayed in online news websites in Sweden?

RQ3: How are women portrayed in online news websites in the United States?

RQ4: How are women portrayed in online news websites in Egypt?

RQ5: Will news stories in all three countries (Sweden, the United States, and Egypt) significantly differ in terms of gender portrayal?

H3: Sweden will significantly have the highest representation of women in news stories.

H4: Egypt will significantly have the least representation of women in news stories.

H5: The United States will significantly have less women in news stories than Sweden but more than Egypt.

RQ1 provides an overview of the dataset, and the entire sample is considered as a whole, without looking into each country by itself. **RQ2**, **RQ3**, and **RQ4** examine the portrayal of women in each country by itself, in order to shed more light on each culture's

media system. Finally, **RQ5** seeks to weave all the findings into a coherent whole, where similarities and differences in the portrayal of women among countries are identified.

Chapter Five

Methodology

This comparative study employs a content analysis to analyze gender representation in online news stories across different cultures. Rodgers and Thorson (2000) identified content analysis as a necessary first step before the problem of gender stereotyping can be fixed. In this comparative study, online news websites in Sweden, the United States, and Egypt are analyzed. While it cannot be claimed that these three countries are representative of the world at large, they represent different cultures in various geographic regions around the world. Moreover, each country ranks differently along the gender equality continuum. The Nordic region is among the best in the world when it comes to gender equality and advocating for women's rights. Sweden, in particular, is the largest and most populous country in Scandinavia (Oláh & Bernhardt, 2008; Jürgensen, 2019). The United States is representative of the North American continent and its media are widely exported worldwide, which means that images and gender representations in American media are transmitted to other cultures (Yun et al., 2007). Egypt is also the most populous country in the Arab region and has been throughout history a "prolific media producer and exporter" (Sakr, 2002, p. 825). Egyptian press is the most influential in the Middle East (BBC, 2018), and Egypt's film productions have been widely exported to other countries in the Middle East, so much that it has been dubbed "Hollywood" of the Arab World (Monks, 2016). Egyptian media have also been described as a means for unifying diverse Arab audiences (Kholeif, 2011).

Sampling

In order to analyze the representation of women in online news across cultures, two online news outlets were chosen from each country, amounting to a total of six. From Egypt, the online versions of *Youm 7* (the seventh day) (<https://www.youm7.com/>) and *Sada Al Balad* (<https://www.elbalad.news/>) were selected. Both websites are published in Arabic.

Youm 7 is the most visited online newspaper in Egypt (Alexa, 2020) and receives approximately one million unique visitors per day (Webchart, 2020). In 2015, *Youm 7* was also identified as the second leading news website in the MENA region, preceded only by Qatar's *Al Jazeera* (Statista, 2015). The researcher checked the Facebook page of *Youm 7*, which had 15.3 million followers in March 2020. Allam also identified *Youm 7* as one of the most popular news outlets in Egypt in 2017. There were mixed findings about the second most popular news website in Egypt. Alexa also confirmed that *Youm 7* was the most visited news website in Egypt, followed by *Al Bawabah News*, *Dostor*, and then *Sada el Balad*. The researcher checked the Facebook pages of these news outlets. In May 2020, *Al Bawabah News* had 1.29 million followers, *Dostor* 2.3 million followers, and *Sada el Balad* 4.1 million followers. Given these mixed findings, the researcher checked the ranking provided by another commercial company (Similar Web) that ranks websites by location and category. *Youm 7* was also identified as the most visited online news website in Egypt and *Sada el Balad* was identified as the second most popular news website in Egypt in the News and Media category (Similar Web, 2020). Consequently, both *Youm 7* and *Sada Al Balad* were selected. From Sweden, the online versions of two national newspapers, *Dagens Nyheter* (<https://www.dn.se/>) and *Aftonbladet* (The Evening Post) (<https://www.aftonbladet.se/>), were included in the analysis. *Dagens Nyheter* is Sweden's largest and most prestigious daily newspaper (Lundell & Ekström, 2008) and, up until 2016, has been dominating Sweden's digital-only subscription news outlets (Wadbring & Ohlsson, n.d.). It is also one of the leading papers in the nation (Sandberg, 2007). *Aftonbladet*, on the other hand, is a daily tabloid, one of the biggest Swedish newspapers (Wadbring & Ohlsson, n.d.), and a hugely popular paper in Scandinavia as a whole (Sandberg, 2007). In 2016, the tabloid *Aftonbladet* received the majority of its revenue from digital sales and could be considered the most successful newspaper in terms of online subscriptions (Wadbring & Ohlsson, n.d.). A search

conducted on Alexa.com in February 2020 revealed that *Aftonbladet* is the most visited online news outlet in Sweden, followed by *Expressen* and then *Dagens Nyheter*. However, since *Aftonbladet* and *Expressen* are both tabloids and cover somehow similar topics, including entertainment, crime, and sports (Wadbring & Ohlsson, n.d.), *Expressen* was excluded from the analysis. A tabloid and a regular newspaper were included to allow for a more representative sample of online news outlets in Sweden. Previous scholars have found some variance in the representation of women between tabloids and regular newspapers, as tabloids were more likely to reinforce gender stereotypes and underrepresent women (Stanley, 2012). Moreover, Mannila (2017) identified both *Dagens Nyheter* and *Aftonbladet* as the most popular newspapers in Sweden. Both newspapers were also previously included in several content analysis studies conducted on Swedish newspapers (e.g., Lundell & Ekström, 2008; Sandberg, 2007; Karlsson & Strömbäck, 2010; Karlsson, 2012; Reuter, 2013; Bengs et al., 2008). From the United States, *CNN* (<https://www.cnn.com/>) and *The New York Times* (*NYT*) (<https://www.nytimes.com/>) were chosen, because they ranked as the first and second top news websites in 2017, respectively (Wadbring & Ohlsson, n.d.). Moreover, in a more recent search in February 2020 on Alexa.com, *CNN* was the most popular news website in the US, followed immediately by *The New York Times*. In addition, several studies have argued about the agenda-setting role of both news organizations, which means that they are not only influential in the US but all over the world as well (Golan, 2006; Denham, 2014; Groshek, 2008). *CNN* and *The New York Times* are both major, corporate news outlets with an online presence. *The NYT*—a print news source—is generally considered a somehow “liberal” newspaper, while *CNN*—a television-based news source—has a moderate leaning (Burke & Mazzeella, 2008).

For the sake of the current analysis, two constructed weeks (14 days) were randomly chosen to cover a three-month period from October 1st, 2019 to December 31st, 2019. A

constructed week ensures that each day of the week is equally represented as certain days of the week tend to correspond to certain categories of news and that the sample is representative of the study period (Len-Ríos et al., 2005; Rodgers et al., 2007; Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2014; Kim, Jang, Kim, & Wan, 2018). All Sundays in the sampling frame were identified and two Sundays were randomly selected, followed by identifying all Mondays and randomly selecting two Mondays, identifying all Tuesdays and randomly selecting two Tuesdays and so on, as described by Lacy, Riffe, Stoddard, Martin, and Chang (2001). In daily print newspapers, Stempel (1952) concluded that two constructed weeks were enough to represent one year of content. Riffe, Aust, and Lacy (1993) arrived at a similar conclusion. One constructed week was sufficient to represent six months of content and, by extension, two constructed weeks were sufficient to represent a year's worth of daily newspaper content. However, while the Internet provides mass communication researchers with almost unrestricted access to news text and images, this overwhelming availability of data brings its own set of challenges (Hester & Dougall, 2007). Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (2014) point out certain challenges related to choosing a sample of online content. They explain that researchers should understand that people use websites differently than they use traditional media. Online content is not static and is often regularly updated, which complicates the coding process. They suggest that online content has to be "captured" in one way or another for the data collection to begin and researchers should be wary when presenting their results. McMillan (2000) conducted a meta-analysis of 19 published research articles and papers in the field of mass communication and concluded that there existed a wide variety of online sampling methods and collection periods. While some studies analyzed as little as three units of analysis, some studies analyzed more than 2000 units. Moreover, some studies covered a single day of online content, while others extended over several months. Hester and Dougall (2007) conducted a content analysis of six months of news content from news aggregator

Yahoo! News from several media organizations (e.g., *Associated Press* and *CNN*). They concluded that constructed week sampling was still more efficient than simple random sampling or consecutive day sampling. However, while daily print newspapers required one constructed week to reliably represent six months of content, the authors suggested that online editions required at least two constructed weeks and as many as five constructed weeks—depending on the variables analyzed—to more accurately represent online news gathered during a single study period. Connolly-Ahern, Ahern, and Bortree’s (2009) study for analyzing content on the Associated Press website concluded that selecting a sample of constructed weeks was more efficient. They suggested that at least eight constructed weeks (two per quarter) were needed for analyzing one year’s content on the Associated Press website. They also recommended weeks to be constructed on a quarterly basis, i.e., every three months, rather than a yearly basis to provide a more representative sample.

For the sake of the current analysis, the articles from the Swedish news outlets (*Dagens Nyheter* and *Aftonbladet*) as well as the articles from the Egyptian news outlets (*Youm7* and *Sada Al Balad*) were accessed through the news aggregator Google News, which has “established a stronghold in the news aggregation market” (Hester & Dougall, 2007, p. 811). While news aggregators produce almost no original news content, they provide access to multiple sources of news. Moreover, previous studies have used Google News, or some other news aggregator, to collect a sample (e.g., Hester & Dougall, 2007; Friedman & Merle, 2013). In her content analysis guidebook, Neuendorf (2016) identified search engines such as Google as one of the most important tools for accessing content on the web. More specifically, the author identified Google News as a valuable content aggregator for online news, a technology that harnesses “the power of interactive media for automated, and often automatic, content retrieval or collection” and is considered a “promising option for content acquisition” (Neuendorf, 2016, p.224). The articles from *The New York Times* and *CNN* were

retrieved from the Nexis Uni database (formerly Lexis-Nexis), which archives all print and online articles published by *The New York Times* as well as all articles published on CNN.com. Next, five articles were randomly selected from every sampled day (N=14) (Cui & Liu, 2017) for each online news website, resulting in a total sample of 420 articles (70 per news outlet and 140 per country). While there exists no unanimity among scholars about the “right” number of online news articles selected for a single study period, previous scholars have had similar sample size (e.g., D’Heer et al., 2019). Finally, to ensure the representativeness of the sample, no more than two days from a single week were selected.

Coding Procedure

This study investigates the representation of women in online news in different cultural contexts by means of a quantitative content analysis. News stories from six news outlets in three different countries (Sweden, the United States, and Egypt) were randomly selected. The variables and related categories were derived from the 2015 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) Internet news stories codebook, which examined variables related to the gender of the journalist and the actors in the news text (Appendix A). As per the GMMP (2015) detailed codebook, only regular news items were included in the analysis. Editorials, commentaries, users’ feedback, weather reports, cartoons, jokes, advertising, and videos were not coded. The main question that the GMMP codebook sought to answer was how women and men are represented in news media, both as news producers and as news subjects. First, the main topic of the news story was identified. The GMMP (2015) codebook identifies eight main topics (politics and government, economy, science and health, social and legal, crime and violence, gender and related, celebrity, arts, media, and sports) and 58 sub-topics for news stories. The most appropriate topic, using the sub-topics as guidance, was coded. When more than one topic could fit into a single story, the most prominent topic, that is, the one that was allocated the most space was selected. In addition, new variables were

added to the GMMP (2015) codebook. For example, each news story was identified as either belonging to the “hard news” or “soft news” category (D’Heer et al., 2019). As suggested by D’Heer and others (2019), the operationalization of “hard news” and “soft news” was based on the definition provided by Reinemann, Stanyer, Scherr, and Legnante (2012). Hard news discusses subjects related to politics, economy, technology, and finance, while soft news discusses topics related to health, social problems, education, art, sport, and entertainment. Further, hard news mainly deals with facts, while soft news with emotions. Hard news included stories of societal relevance, while soft news included stories of individual relevance. Other questions, following the GMMP (2015) codebook, included whether the news story made reference to any piece of legislation or policy that promotes gender equality or human rights, whether it was about a specific woman or group of women, whether it focused on specific areas of gender inequality (such as wage gaps), and whether it clearly challenged gender stereotypes (such as women discussing economic reform and male nurses). Then the gender of the reporter was coded. The following section of the codebook dealt with the people in the news and looked at news subjects as the unit of analysis. As per the GMMP (2015) codebook, any person whom the story is about even if they are not directly interviewed or quoted should be coded. Only individual people were coded. Groups (e.g., a group of nurses), organizations, companies, political parties, fictional characters in novels or movies (unless the story was about them), and deceased historical figures (unless the story was about them) were not coded. The gender of the news subject was then determined. Earlier studies have used the Knowledge Base Freebase, which was based on information available at Wikipedia, to determine the specific gender of a name (Vandenberghe, 2019). However, the Knowledge Base Freebase was acquired by Google and later shut down, and all data from the Knowledge Base Freebase was migrated to Wikidata.com (Tanon, Vrandečić, Schaffert, Steiner, & Pintscher, 2016). Thus, Wikidata.com was used in this study to identify

the gender of news subjects, when the researcher and the coder were not personally familiar with the name. If, at the end, the gender of the news subject could not be determined, a “cannot tell” category was selected. The news subject’s age was also coded, to find out whether women and men are equally likely to be described in terms of their age. The GMMP (2015) codebook recommends that the age of the news subject be coded only if it was specifically mentioned in the story. If the person appeared in an image accompanying the story, the age was coded. The occupation or position of the subject was then coded. One occupation or position was assigned for each subject in the news story. Occupation categories included politician, academic expert, doctor, engineer, celebrity, homemaker, and so on. Other questions in the codebook included whether the subject’s family status was mentioned, whether the subject was identified as a victim/survivor or both, and whether the news actor was directly quoted.

The researcher and an independent coder completed the coding, with each coding 50 percent ($n=210$) of the sampled news articles. The news stories from the US and the Egyptian news stories were immediately coded. The Swedish news stories were translated into English first using an automated translation software (Google Translate), since neither the researcher nor the coder are proficient in Swedish. Previous studies have relied on Google Translate to analyze news text (e.g., Srabstein, 2013). In addition, automated translation software has been described as “integral in interlingual communication” (Doherty, 2016, p. 947) and Google Translate, in particular, has been described as “a useful tool for comparative researchers” (Vries et al., 2018, p. 417). The coder received extensive training by the researcher to ensure consistent coding. In order to determine the reliability of the codebook, 10% of the articles ($n=42$), which resulted in a total of 207 coded actors, were coded twice. Scott’s pi values ranged from 0.72 to 1. More specifically, for determining the sex of the journalist, Scott’s Pi was 0.89; for the news story topic, Scott’s Pi was 0.826; for determining

whether the story could be considered hard or soft news, Scott's Pi was 0.86; for determining whether the story was about a gender equality legislation, Scott's Pi was 1; for determining whether the story was about a specific woman or group of women, Scott's Pi was 0.86; for determining whether the story highlights issues of gender inequality, Scott's Pi was 0.72; for determining whether the story challenges or reinforces gender stereotypes, Scott's Pi was 0.86; for determining the sex of the news subject, Scott's Pi was 0.95; for determining the age of the news subject, Scott's Pi was 0.94; for determining the occupation or position of the news subject, Scott's Pi was 0.88; for determining the function of the news subject, Scott's Pi was 0.83; for determining whether the family status of the news subjects was mentioned, Scott's Pi was 0.91; for determining whether the news subject was described as a victim and/or survivor, Scott's Pi was 0.95; for the variable "Victim of," Scott's Pi was 0.94; for the variable "Survivor of," Scott's Pi was 1; for determining whether the news subject was directly quoted, Scott's Pi was 0.96. Following the data collection, the analysis was carried out using SPSS 26.

Chapter Six

Results

For the purpose of this analysis, a total of 140 news articles were selected from each country (Egypt, the United States, and Sweden), amounting to a total of 420 articles. There were more male journalists in the analyzed articles, as 47.9 percent of news stories were produced by men and 38.6 percent of news stories were produced by women. The remaining news articles were either provided by news agencies or written by a group of male and female journalists (13.5%). Out of the analyzed 420 articles, 398 news stories (94.8%) included news actors. All in all, 2,310 news actors were analyzed. After excluding news actors whose gender could not be determined, the final sample size of news actors became 2,210 (1,619 males and 591 females).

RQ1 inquired about the overall representation of both men and women in the analyzed news websites in all three countries (Sweden, the United States, and Egypt). Male actors were overrepresented in the sample (73.3%) while female actors were underrepresented (26.7%). In other words, women represented less than one-third of all news subjects mentioned or quoted in the analyzed stories (**H1**). In addition, only 26.7 percent of the analyzed articles were about a specific woman or group of women. These female-centric stories were scattered across news topics, but the topic category with the highest percentage of such stories was “celebrity, arts, and media” (36.6%). Table 1 illustrates that overall female actors were most prominent in news about celebrity, arts, and the media (32%), while male actors appeared more often in news about politics and the economy (30.5%). Results of a chi-square test revealed significant differences between male and female actors in the topic where they were more likely to be mentioned ($\chi = 146.40, p < 0.01$). Thus, **H2**, which predicted that women would be more likely to be represented in stereotypical topics, was supported. Moreover, both male and female actors appeared significantly more often in soft

news stories ($\chi = 10.03$, $p < 0.01$). The majority of women were represented in soft news (61.4%) and the majority of men also appeared in soft news (53.9%); this finding, however, could be explained by the fact that the majority of the analyzed articles fell in the soft news category (57.6%).

Table 1: *Male and female actors in different news topics in online news in Sweden, the United States, and Egypt (N = 2,210).*

	Female Actors % (n)	Male Actors % (n)
Politics and Economy	22.8% (135)	30.5% (493)
Science and Health	8.3% (49)	6.3% (102)
Social and Legal	19% (112)	16.6% (268)
Crime and Violence	7.8% (46)	8.3% (135)
Celebrity, Arts, and Media	32% (189)	15.1% (245)
Sports	6.9% (41)	22.3% (361)
Other	3.2% (19)	0.9% (15)
Total	100% (591)	100% (1619)

Chi-square = 146.40, $p < 0.01$.

The following part of the analysis unraveled the roles in which men and women were represented in the news across countries, as illustrated in Table 2. The majority of news actors—both male and female—were found in the occupational category “royalty, president, politician, spokesperson, police” (30%). However, women represented only 21.4 percent of all subjects who fell into this occupational category. This finding was consistent with that of many other studies, demonstrating the media’s tendency to rely on “official” sources—the majority of whom continue to be men—a strategy which further contributes to the marginalization of women in the news (Ross et al., 2016).

Table 2: *Male and female actors in different occupations/positions in online news in Sweden, the United States, and Egypt (N = 2,210).*

	Female Actors % (n)	Male Actors % (n)
Royalty, president, politician, spokesperson, police	24.2% (143)	32.4% (525)
Academic expert, doctor, science/technology professional	6.6% (39)	5.9% (96)
Lawyer, judge, activist, etc.	5.2% (31)	6.2% (101)
Business person, exec, manager, worker...	4.7% (28)	7.4% (120)
Celebrity, artist, writer, TV personality, media professional	25.0% (148)	12.0% (195)
Sportsperson, athlete, player, coach, referee	5.8% (34)	21.7% (351)
Parent, homemaker, child, student only if no other occupation is given	13.2% (78)	4% (65)
Not Stated	11.8% (70)	4.9% (80)
Other	3.4% (20)	5.3% (86)
Total	100% (591)	100% (1,619)

Chi-square = 215.71, $p < 0.01$

The highest percentage of women (25%) could be found in the occupational category “celebrity, artist, writer, TV personality, media professional,” followed closely by the occupational category “royalty, president, politician, spokesperson, police” (24.2%). On the other hand, the highest percentage of men could be found in the occupational category “royalty, president, politician, spokesperson, police” (32.4%), followed by the occupational category “sportsperson, athlete, player, coach, referee” (21.7%). Moreover, women were more likely than men to be mentioned in the “parent, child, student” occupational category (13.2% vs. 4%, respectively) and more likely to appear in news stories without a clearly stated occupation (11.8% vs. 4.9%, respectively). In comparison to men, women were underrepresented as athletes and as business managers or executives. Results of a chi-square test revealed significant differences between male and female actors in the occupational categories where they were more likely to be mentioned ($\chi = 215.71$, $p < 0.01$).

Having identified the occupational categories of news actors, the researcher also looked at the different functions of news actors in the stories. Table 3 demonstrates more clearly how women constituted a minority in both news function categories, experts and spokespeople. Women represented 22.7 percent of experts, a figure which mirrors the findings of the latest GMMP (2015), where women constituted only 19 percent of experts featured in news stories. Female news actors were mostly relied upon to provide their personal experience and constituted 55 percent of such sources. This finding suggests that female voices are generally used in the media to provide “personal testimony” rather than “authoritative or expert perspectives” and reinforces the notion that women belong in the domestic private space and men in the professional public space (Ross & Carter, 2011; Ross et al., 2016). Results of a chi-square test revealed significant differences between male and female actors in the news functions where they were more likely to be mentioned ($\chi^2 = 27.19$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 3: *Function of News Actor in News Stories in online news in Sweden, the US, and Egypt (N = 2,210).*

	Female Actors (n)	Male Actors (n)	Total
Subject	26.2% (476)	73.8% (1,340)	100% (1,816)
Spokesperson	28.1% (38)	71.9% (97)	100% (135)
Expert or Commentator	22.7% (37)	77.3% (126)	100% (163)
Personal Experience	55% (33)	45% (27)	100% (60)
Eye witness/Popular opinion	19.4% (7)	80.6% (29)	100% (36)

(*Chi-square* = 27.19, $p < 0.01$).

In addition, 20.1 percent of women (n = 119) were described in terms of their family status (such as someone’s mother, wife, daughter, or grandmother), while only 7.7 percent (n = 124) of men received such descriptions ($\chi^2 = 68.86$, $p < 0.01$). Interestingly, the analysis also revealed that a larger portion of female news actors (40.1%) were more often directly

quoted than male news actors (32.3%) ($\chi = 11.66, p < 0.01$), a finding which could imply that women sometimes receive a prominent role in the news. However, the age of women was significantly more likely to be available in the news story (29.9%) than the age of men (15.7%) ($\chi = 56.08, p < 0.01$).

Table 4: *Male and female actors across different news topics in Sweden (n = 600).*

	Female Actors % (n)	Male Actors % (n)
Politics and Economy	17.6% (35)	18% (72)
Science and Health	6.5% (13)	6.5% (26)
Social and Legal	19.1% (38)	10.7% (43)
Crime and Violence	9% (18)	9.7% (39)
Celebrity, Arts, and Media	32.7% (65)	23.4% (94)
Sports	13.6% (27)	30.9% (124)
Other*	1.5% (3)	0.7% (3)
Total	100% (199)	100% (401)

Chi-square = 27.22, $p < 0.01$)

RQ2 inquired about the portrayal of women in online news articles published in Sweden. A total of 140 news articles were selected for analysis from Sweden. Male journalists covered 50 percent of the selected news articles, while women covered 36.4 percent. A total of 600 news actors were found in the news stories, 66.8 percent of whom were men (n = 401) and 33.2 percent of whom were women (n = 199). Moreover, 34.3 percent of the Swedish news articles were about a specific woman or group of women. Table 4 illustrates that female actors were most prominent in Swedish news about “celebrity, arts, and media” (32.7%), while male actors appeared more often in news about “sports” (30.9%). There were also almost no differences in the percentage of male and female actors who appeared in stories about politics and/or the economy (18% vs. 17.6%, respectively) ($\chi = 27.22, p < 0.01$)¹. In the news stories published in Sweden, both men and women appeared

¹ For the sake of the Chi-square analysis, one category “Other” was removed as it included cells with a total count of less than five.

more often in soft news stories (67.3% and 66.8%, respectively), probably because the majority of news stories analyzed from Sweden fell in the soft news category (57.9%).

Table 5: *Male and female news actors in different occupations/positions in online Swedish news (n = 600).*

	Female Actors % (n)	Male Actors % (n)
Royalty, president, politician, spokesperson, police	25.1% (50)	26.2% (105)
Academic expert, doctor, science/technology professional	5.0% (10)	3.2% (13)
Lawyer, judge, activist, etc.	6.5% (13)	3.7% (15)
Business person, exec, manager, worker...	2.5% (5)	3.2% (13)
Celebrity, artist, writer, TV personality, media professional	24.1% (48)	15.2% (61)
Sportsperson, athlete, player, coach, referee	10.1% (20)	32.4% (130)
Parent, homemaker, child only if no other occupation is given	12.6% (25)	4.7% (19)
Not Stated	11.1% (22)	4.2% (17)
Other	3% (6)	7% (28)
Total	100% (199)	100% (401)

Chi-square = 60.351, $p < 0.01$)

The highest percentage of women (24.1%) in Swedish news was found in the occupational category “celebrity, artist, writer, TV personality, media professional,” while the highest percentage of men was found in the occupational category “sportsperson, athlete, player, coach, referee” (32.4%), as illustrated in Table 5. Men were more likely than women to have their occupation mentioned as only 4.2 percent of men were mentioned without a clearly stated occupation, while 11.1 percent of women were mentioned without an occupation. This could possibly mean that there is greater emphasis on the occupations and professional roles of men than those of women. Furthermore, women represented the majority of subjects mentioned or quoted in only two occupational categories: “not stated” (56.4%) and “parent, homemaker, child” (56.8%). Results of a chi-square test revealed

significant differences between male and female actors in the occupations or positions where they were more likely to be mentioned ($\chi = 60.35, p < 0.01$).

As for the different functions of news actors in the stories, Table 6 clarifies the different functions of news subjects and sources in Swedish news. Women represented the minority of experts (26.2%) and the majority of individuals mentioned or quoted directly or indirectly in the news stories to provide their personal experience (57.1%).

Table 6: *Function of News Actor in News Stories in Sweden (n = 600).*

	Female Actors (n)	Male Actors (n)	Total
Subject	33.3% (168)	66.7% (336)	100% (504)
Spokesperson	35.7% (15)	64.3% (27)	100% (42)
Expert or Commentator	26.2% (11)	73.8% (31)	100% (42)
Personal Experience	57.1% (4)	42.9% (3)	100% (7)
Eye witness/Popular Opinion	20% (1)	80% (4)	100% (5)

In addition, 18.1 percent of women (n = 36) who served as subjects or news sources in Swedish news stories were described in terms of their family status (such as someone's mother, wife, daughter, or grandmother), while only 7.5 percent (n = 30) of men were described in terms of their family status ($\chi = 15.29, p < 0.01$). The analysis also revealed that a larger percentage of women (42.7%) were directly quoted in comparison to men (38.2%); however, the differences were not significant ($\chi = 1.15, p = 0.282$).

RQ3, which inquired about the portrayal of women in online news articles published in the United States, was answered through the analysis of 140 news articles. Female journalists covered the majority of the analyzed news stories from the United States (50%), while male journalists covered 35 percent of stories. A total of 1,031 news actors were found in the news stories, 72.3 percent of whom were men (n = 745) and 27.7 percent of whom were women (n = 286). Moreover, women were the central focus of 24.3 percent of the US

news articles. Table 7 illustrates that women appeared more often in US online news about politics and the economy (30.1%), followed by stories about “celebrity, arts, and the media” (23.8%). The majority of men also appeared in stories about politics and the economy (48.6%). Results of a chi-square test revealed significant differences between male and female actors in the topics where they were more likely to be mentioned ($\chi = 59.78, p < 0.01$). The majority of men appeared in hard news stories (65.1%), while the majority of women were mentioned in soft news stories (52.4%) ($\chi = 26.56, p < 0.01$). It should be noted, however, that a higher percentage of news stories in the US news websites (53.6%) belonged to the hard news category.

Table 7: *Male and female actors across different news topics in the United States (n = 1,031).*

	Female Actors % (n)	Male Actors % (n)
Politics and Economy	30.1% (86)	48.6% (362)
Science and Health	11.9% (34)	9.1% (68)
Social and Legal	18.2% (52)	18% (134)
Crime and Violence	7% (20)	6.3% (47)
Celebrity, Arts, and Media	23.8% (68)	10.5% (78)
Sports	3.5% (10)	6% (45)
Other	5.6% (16)	1.5% (11)
Total	100% (286)	100% (745)

Chi-square = 59.78, $p < 0.01$

The next part of the analysis looked at the occupations where women were more likely to be mentioned. Although the majority of women in the news stories analyzed from the United States were mentioned in the occupational category “royalty, president, politician, spokesperson, police” (25.5%), a larger percentage of men were mentioned in this occupational category (41.7%). The second largest occupational category where women were mentioned was the “celebrity, artist, writer, TV personality, media professional” category (21.7%), as illustrated in Table 8. Moreover, men were more likely than women to appear as

business individuals (11.8% vs. 7.3%, respectively), while women were more likely than men to appear in the “parent, homemaker, child” category (12.2% vs. 4.4%, respectively).

Furthermore, the only occupational category where women represented nearly half of news subjects or sources was the “parent, homemaker, child” category (51.5%). Results of a chi-square test revealed significant differences between male and female actors in the occupational categories where they were more likely to be mentioned ($\chi = 69.42, p < 0.01$).

Table 8: *Male and female news actors in different occupations/positions in online US news (n = 1,031).*

	Female Actors % (n)	Male Actors % (n)
Royalty, president, politician, spokesperson, police	25.5% (73)	41.7% (311)
Academic expert, doctor, science/technology professional	9.1% (26)	8.3% (62)
Lawyer, judge, activist, etc.	6.3% (18)	10.1% (75)
Business person, exec, manager, worker...	7.3% (21)	11.8% (88)
Celebrity, artist, writer, TV personality, media professional	21.7% (62)	10.7% (80)
Sportsperson, athlete, player, coach, referee	3.5% (10)	4.6% (34)
Parent, homemaker, child only if no other occupation is given	12.2% (35)	4.4% (33)
Not Stated	11.5% (33)	5.6% (42)
Other	2.8% (8)	2.7% (20)
Total	100% (286)	100% (745)

Chi-square = 69.42, p < 0.01

The following part of the analysis revealed the functions of the news actor in the story. Table 9 reveals that women were underrepresented in all news function categories, except for the personal experience category (54.7%). More specifically, women represented only 24.4 percent of all spokespeople and 22.8 percent of experts cited in the news.

Table 9: *Function of News Actor in News Stories in the United States (n = 1,031)*

	Female Actors (n)	Male Actors (n)	Total
Subject	27.4% (206)	72.6% (547)	100% (753)
Spokesperson	24.4% (21)	75.6% (65)	100% (86)
Expert or Commentator	22.8% (26)	77.2% (88)	100% (114)
Personal Experience	54.7% (29)	45.3% (24)	100% (53)
Eye witness/Popular opinion	16% (4)	84% (21)	100% (25)

Furthermore, women were more likely to have their family status mentioned in the news stories, as 18.5 percent of women (n = 53) were described in terms of a family relationship, such as mother, spouse, or daughter, while only 9.3 percent (n = 69) of men received such descriptions ($\chi = 17.02, p < 0.01$). In addition, although a larger percentage of women (48.3%) were directly quoted in the news stories in comparison to only 44 percent of men, the results were not statistically significant ($\chi = 1.48, p = 0.22$).

RQ4 inquired about the portrayal of women in online news articles in Egypt. A total of 140 articles were analyzed from Egypt, resulting in a total of 579 news subjects and sources, 81.7 percent of whom were men (n = 473) and 18.3 percent were women (n = 106). As to journalists writing the stories, men constituted the majority (58.6%) and women the minority (29.3%). Only 21.4 percent of the analyzed news stories were about a specific woman or group of women and 70 percent of those female-centric news stories were about “celebrity, arts, and the media.” Table 10 demonstrates that female news subjects in Egyptian online news media were more likely to appear in news about “celebrity, arts, and the media” (52.8%), while the majority of men appeared in news stories about “sports” (40.6%). There were also almost no differences in the percentage of male and female news subjects who appeared in stories about politics and/or the economy (12.5% vs. 13.2%, respectively)². In Egypt, most news actors (72.9%) appeared in the soft news stories, with slight differences

² Chi-square test was not completed for this variable, as some cells had a total count of less than five.

between male and female actors (72.3% and 75.5%, respectively). This finding could be attributed to the fact that the majority of news stories analyzed from Egypt fell in the soft news category (68.6%).

Table 10: *Male and female actors in different news topics in Egypt (n = 579).*

	Female Actors (n)	Male Actors (n)
Politics and Economy	13.2% (14)	12.5% (59)
Science and Health	1.9% (2)	1.7% (8)
Social and Legal	20.8% (22)	19.2% (91)
Crime and Violence	7.5% (8)	10.4% (49)
Celebrity, Arts, and Media	52.8% (56)	15.4% (73)
Sports	3.8% (4)	40.6% (192)
Other	0	0.2% (1)
Total	100% (106)	100% (473)

In Egyptian online news stories, women appeared most often (35.8%) in the occupational category “celebrity, artist, writer, TV personality, media professional,” while men appeared most often (39.5%) in the category “sports person, athlete, player, coach, referee.” Women were completely absent as lawyers, judges, or activists, suggesting that these are fields that belong solely to men, as illustrated in Table 11. Women were more likely than men to be mentioned in the occupational category “parent, homemaker, child” (17% vs. 2.7%, respectively). In addition, this is the only occupational category where women represented the majority of subjects (58.1%). Women were also more likely than men to appear in the news stories with an undisclosed occupation (14.2% and 4.4%, respectively).

The researcher then looked at the function of the news subject in the story. Women were underrepresented in all news functions; they represented only 28.6 percent of all spokespeople and did not appear at all as experts in the news stories. Women were also more likely to be described in terms of their familial role (mother, sister, spouse, etc.) (28.3%) in comparison to men (5.3%) ($\chi^2 = 53.36, p < 0.01$). In addition, a larger percentage of women

(13.2%) were directly quoted in the news stories in comparison to only 8.9 percent of men.

These differences, however, were not statistically significant ($\chi = 1.85, p = 0.173$).

Table 11: *Male and female news actors in different occupations/positions in online Egyptian news (n = 579).*

	Female Actors % (n)	Male Actors % (n)
Royalty, president, politician, spokesperson, police	18.9% (20)	23.0% (109)
Academic expert, doctor, science/technology professional	2.8% (3)	4.4% (21)
Lawyer, judge, activist, etc.	0% (0)	2.3% (11)
Business person, exec, manager, worker...	1.9% (2)	4% (19)
Celebrity, artist, writer, TV personality, media professional	35.8% (38)	11.4% (54)
Sportsperson, athlete, player, coach, referee	3.8% (4)	39.5% (187)
Parent, homemaker, child only if no other occupation is given	17% (18)	2.7% (13)
Not Stated	14.2% (15)	4.4% (21)
Other	5.7% (6)	8% (38)
Total	100% (106)	100% (473)

RQ5 inquired about the differences in gender portrayal among the three countries. As previously mentioned, a total of 420 news articles were selected for the analysis, out of which 398 news articles included news actors (n = 2,310) that were coded. The news websites selected from the US (*NYT* and *CNN*) featured more news actors (n = 1,093) than those published in Sweden (*Dagens Nyheter* and *Aftonbladet*) (n = 630) and Egypt (*Youm 7* and *Sada Al Balad*) (n = 587). News actors whose gender was unknown were excluded from the analysis, resulting in a total of 2,210 male and female news actors, 600 in the Swedish news websites, 1,031 in the US news websites, and 579 in the Egyptian ones. Table 12 illustrates how male and female news actors were distributed across countries. As mentioned earlier, men represented 73.3 percent of news actors, while women represented 26.7 percent. It is necessary, however, to make a distinction between the three countries included in the

analysis, as the researcher found a significant relationship between the country and the sex of the news actors ($\chi = 34.19, p < 0.01$). Swedish news websites featured the highest female representation (33.2%), but the figure still does not approach equality. Women in the analyzed news websites from the United States represented 27.7 percent, while Egyptian news websites had the lowest female representation (18.3%). This finding confirms **H3**, which predicted that Sweden would have the highest representation of women in news stories, **H4**, which predicted that Egypt will have the least representation of women in news stories, and **H5**, which predicted that news stories from the United States will have less women than Sweden but more than Egypt.

Table 12: *Female and Male News Actors by Country (N = 2,210).*

	Female Actors % (n)	Male Actors % (n)	Total
Sweden	33.2% (199)	66.8% (401)	100% (600)
US	27.7% (286)	72.3% (745)	100% (1,031)
Egypt	18.3% (106)	81.7% (473)	100% (579)

Chi-square = 34.19, $p < 0.01$

The overall percentage of stories with women as the central focus was 26.7 percent. However, Sweden had the highest share of such stories as 34.3 percent of all stories published in the Swedish news websites were about a particular woman or group of women, while the US had 24.3 percent and Egypt 21.4 percent ($\chi = 6.52, p < 0.05$). Furthermore, US news websites had the highest share of female journalists as 50 percent of the articles were produced by women and 35 percent by men. In Sweden, 36.4 percent of news stories were produced by female journalists and 50 percent by male journalists. Egypt had the least percentage of articles that were produced by female journalists (29.3%) and the highest percentage of articles that were produced by male journalists (58.6%) ($\chi = 48.78, p < 0.01$).

The following part of the analysis looked at the topics where male and female news actors were more likely to be mentioned and their roles in the news stories. All in all, female

actors were most prominent in news about celebrity, arts, and media (32%), while male actors appeared more often in news about politics and the economy (30.5%). These tendencies, however, were not consistent across all three countries. In both Sweden and Egypt, the largest portion of women were mentioned in news about celebrity, arts, and media. This figure, however, was higher in Egypt (52.8%) than in Sweden (32.7%). In the US, the topic category with the highest representation of women was the “politics and economy” category (30.1%) followed immediately by the “celebrity, arts, and media category” (23.8%).

Figure 2: *Overall presence of women and men as news sources and subjects by country (N = 2,210).*

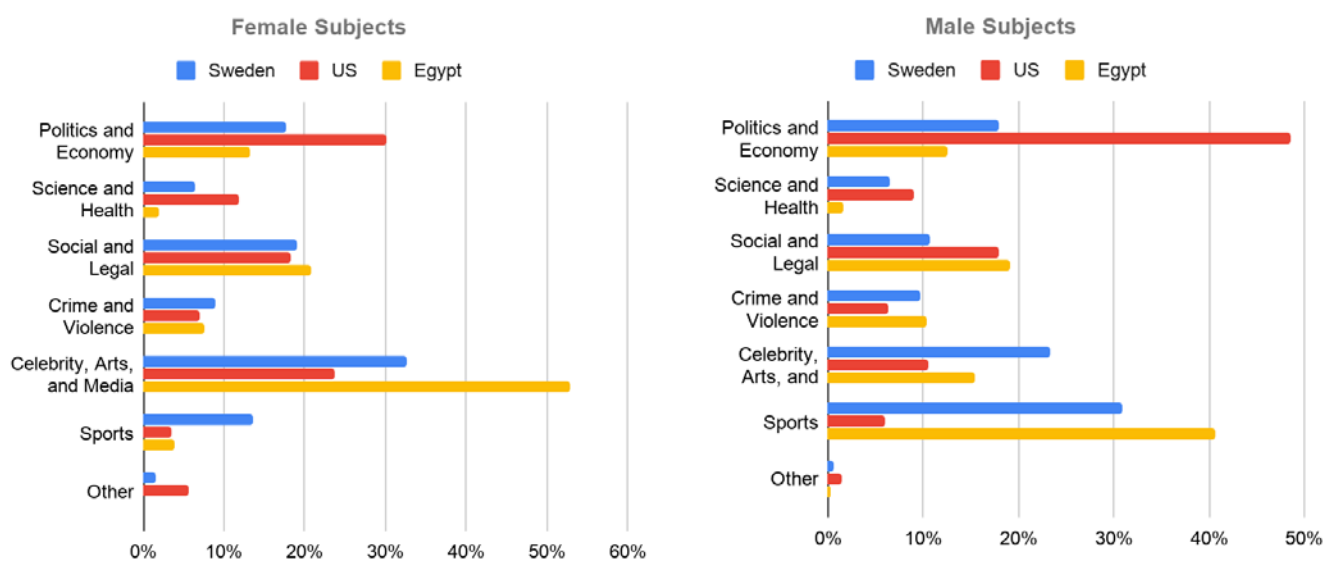


Figure 2 illustrates that, in the news stories from Sweden, women were almost just as likely as men to appear in stories in the “politics and economy” category (17.6% and 18%, respectively). This finding did not apply to news stories from the United States, where 30.1 percent of women and 48.6 percent of men appeared in stories in the “politics and economy” category. Surprisingly, women were almost as likely as men (13.2% and 12.5%, respectively)

to appear in topics about “politics and economy” in the Egyptian news stories. Moreover, in all three countries, men were more likely to be mentioned in news stories about sports.

Furthermore, all news subjects appeared more often in soft news stories (61.4% of women and 53.9% of men). While this finding could be explained by the fact that more news articles (57.6%) fell in the soft news category, this did not hold true when looking at the three countries separately. The Swedish news websites had more soft news articles (57.9%) and both men (67.3%) and women (66.8%) appeared significantly more often in soft news stories. The Egyptian news websites also had significantly more soft news articles (68.6%) and both men (72.3%) and women (75.5%) were more likely to be mentioned in soft news stories. This finding, however, did not apply to the US news websites. Unlike Swedish and Egyptian news stories, a higher portion of the US news stories (53.6%) fell into the hard news category. Men in both *CNN* and *The New York Times* appeared more often in hard news stories (65.1%) than women (47.6%). Results of a chi-square test revealed significant differences between the country and hard/soft news category ($\chi = 14.06, p < 0.01$).

All in all, women represented less than one-third (26.7%) of all news subjects and sources. They were, however, even more underrepresented in certain occupations. For instance, women represented 21.4 percent (less than one-fourth) of all news subjects in the occupational category “royalty, president, politician, spokesperson, police.” When looking at each of the countries separately, one concludes that Sweden did much better on women’s visibility in the aforementioned occupational category (+10.9%) than the average, while the US (-2.4%) and Egypt (-5.9%) both did worse than the average, as illustrated in Table 13. Women also represented 18.9 percent of all subjects in the “Businessperson, exec, manager, worker” category. However, the figures were not consistent across countries. Sweden again did much better (+8.9%), the US slightly better (0.4%), and Egypt much worse (-9.40%) than the sample average (18.9%). Women also had a higher share in the “Lawyer, judge, activist”

category in the Swedish news stories (46.4%) than in the US news stories (19.4%), while they were completely absent in this occupational category in the Egyptian news stories.

Table 13: *Women's share of occupations by country (n = 591).*

	Sweden	US	Egypt
Royalty, president, politician, spokesperson, police	32.30%	19.00%	15.50%
Academic expert, doctor, science/technology professional	43.50%	29.50%	12.50%
Lawyer, judge, activist, etc.	46.40%	19.40%	0.00%
Business person, exec, manager, worker	27.80%	19.30%	9.50%
Celebrity, artist, writer, TV personality, media professional	44.00%	43.70%	41.30%
Sportsperson, athlete, player, coach, referee	13.30%	22.70%	2.10%
Parent, homemaker, child only if no other occupation is given	56.80%	51.50%	58.10%
Not Stated	56.40%	44.00%	41.70%
Other	17.60%	28.60%	13.6%

Chi-square = 50.544, $p < 0.01$

Figure 3: *Women's share in the "Parent, homemaker, child" occupational category by country (n = 591)*

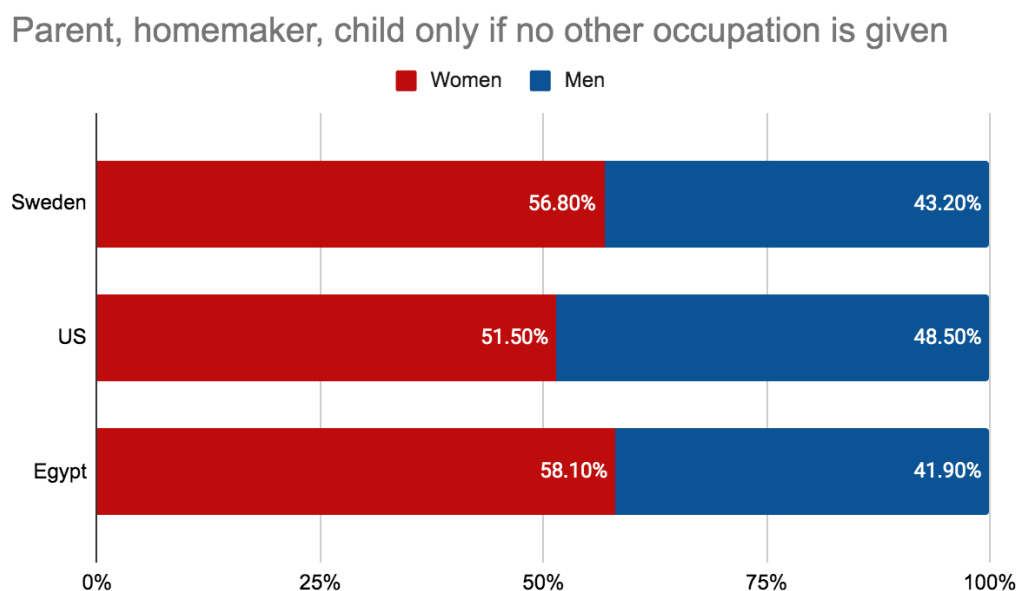
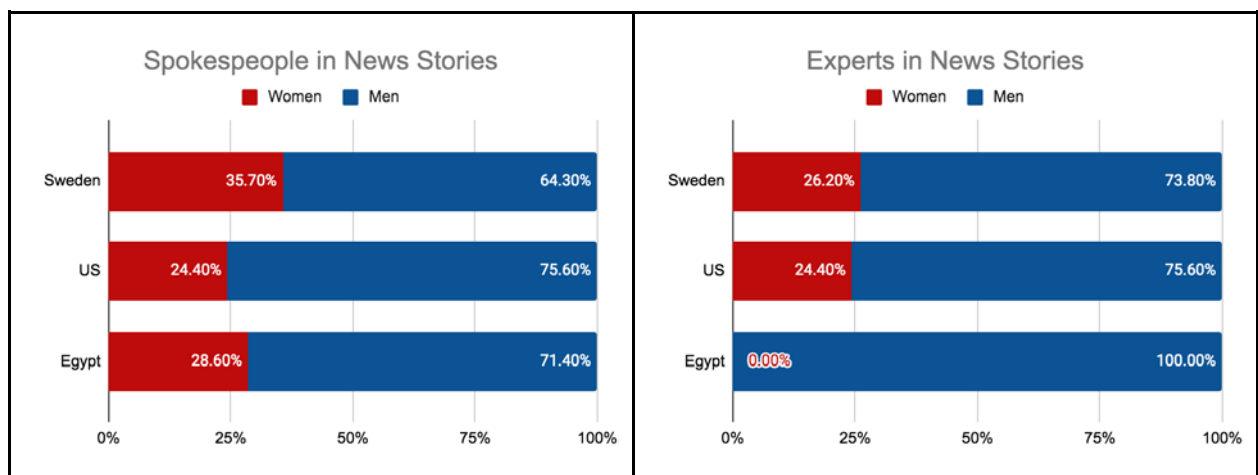


Figure 3 illustrates that the only occupation where women were overrepresented in all three countries was the "Parent, homemaker, child" category. In the US and the Egyptian news stories, this was the only occupational category where women constituted the majority

of subjects. However, in the Swedish news stories, women were also overrepresented in the “Not stated” category. In other words, in Sweden, women represented the majority of subjects (56.40%) whose occupation was not mentioned altogether.

Figure 4: Women’s share in the “Spokesperson” and “Expert” category by country (n = 591)



The following part of the analysis looked at the function of the subjects in the news stories. All in all, women represented less than one-third of all spokespeople (28.1%) and less than one-fourth of all experts (22.7%). Sweden did slightly better when it came to the representation of women as spokespeople (+7.6%) and as experts (+3.5%) than the average, while the US did slightly worse when it came to the representation of women as spokespeople (-3.7%) and as experts (-0.1%). In Egypt, women represented 28.6 percent of all spokespeople and were completely absent as experts in the news stories, as illustrated in Figure 4. Moreover, women were mostly relied upon in the news stories to provide their personal experience (55%), a finding which occurred in both Sweden (57.1%) and the United States (54.7%). However, none of the subjects in the Egyptian news websites were coded in the “personal experience” category.

Overall, women were also more likely to have their family status mentioned (20.1%) in comparison to men (7.7%). This finding was consistent across all three countries, but was

more pronounced in Egypt, where 28.3 percent of women and 5.3 percent of men were described in terms of their family status, than in Sweden (18.1% of women and 7.5% of men) and the United States (18.5% of women and 9.3% of men). Surprisingly, the analysis also revealed that women were more often directly quoted than men. This finding was consistent across all three countries, as illustrated in Table 14. Although this finding was not statistically significant when each country was considered by itself, the chi-square value for the three countries combined revealed statistical significance ($\chi = 11.66, p < 0.01$).

Table 14: *News Actors Who Were Directly Quoted in the News Story*

	Female Actors % (n)	Male Actors % (n)
Sweden	42.7% (85)	38.2% (153)
United States	48.3% (138)	44.0% (328)
Egypt	13.2% (14)	8.9% (42)

(*Chi-square* = 11.66, $p < 0.01$)

Finally, some news stories did in fact challenge gender stereotypes (11.4%). The majority of these stories were found in the Swedish news websites (43.8%), followed by the US websites (37.5%), and lastly Egyptian news websites (18.8%). Chi-square results for these two variables, however, did not reveal statistical significance ($\chi = 6.07, p = 0.194$).

Chapter Seven

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

Using a quantitative content analysis, this comparative study examined the portrayal of women in online news across three different countries, Sweden, the United States, and Egypt, in an effort to highlight how the news media operate across different cultural settings. The portrayal of women in the media has been on the scholarly agenda since the second wave of feminism in the 1960s and the 1970s (D'Heer et al., 2019). Several studies conducted on different media have consistently pointed towards the underrepresentation and the stereotypical representation of women in the news media.

The significance of this study stems from its focus on the portrayal of women in online media using a comparative perspective in three countries that rank differently along the gender equality continuum, where Sweden is one of the top countries, the US stands somewhere in the middle, and Egypt is one of the worst countries. Moreover, there is a scarcity of research on gender portrayals in Egyptian media, in general, and Egyptian news, in particular.

The Internet was thought of as the medium that would promote gender diversity and bypass traditional gatekeeping problems that affect media coverage of women. Overall, there were high hopes for the Internet's transformative potential for positive changes in media representation of women across different cultures (Yun et al., 2007). However, this study shows that the Internet has followed in the footsteps of traditional media. Women are still portrayed in stereotypical roles and men still dominate the news, even in countries where women have done quite well participating in the political sphere (in this case, Sweden).

On average, the Swedish news websites had the highest percentage of female news actors (33.2%) and the highest percentage of articles about women (34.3%). This finding

echoes the previous GMMP (2015) findings about Sweden, where women represented 31 percent of all news subjects. In other words, this study reveals that the male-to-female news subjects ratio in Swedish news is 2-to-1, a finding consistent with that of several other studies (Edström, 2006; Edström, 2014; Mannila, 2017; Rättviseförmedlingen, 2018). While in comparison to the other two countries in the study (the United States and Egypt), Sweden has a relatively better female representation, the figures still do not approach equality especially that women in Sweden represent nearly half of the population (World Bank, 2019). Furthermore, the study also reveals that Sweden fared best with regard to the representation of women in news about politics and the economy, yet they continue to be underrepresented in news stories about politics and the economy (32.7%) and underrepresented as politicians (32.30%). This finding, in particular, seemed surprising, given that women in Sweden represent around 50 percent of government ministers and 46 percent of the current parliament members (Bohlen, 2019). There have been arguments in the literature that women are underrepresented in political news as a result of their real-life underrepresentation in political positions, such as country leaders, government spokespeople, and politicians (Shor et al., 2015). In Sweden, however, this is not the case, which renders the underrepresentation of women in Swedish news about politics even more perplexing. One question arises here, if women represent more than 45 percent of politicians in Sweden (“Which European country has the most female politicians?,” 2019), why do they continue to be underrepresented as politicians in the news? This finding suggests that the news media have been lagging behind the developments in the representation of women in political positions (Ross et al., 2016).

The US news websites ranked second in the percentage of female news subjects (27.7%) and in the percentage of articles with women as the central focus (24.3%). Surprisingly, data from the latest GMMP (2015) offered a different picture; women in US online news (websites and Twitter) represented 40 percent of subjects. This study, however,

reveals that the male-to-female news subjects ratio in US news is nearly 3-to-1, a finding consistent with that of several other studies (Zoch & Turk, 1998; Armstrong, 2004; Wood, 1997). Similarly to Sweden, women in the United States represent half of the total population (World Bank, 2018), yet they continue to face persistent underrepresentation in the news media. As the news media continue to be a major influential source of information, it matters not only to analyze who makes it to the news and whose voice gets heard, but also who is left out and whose voice gets silenced. Through showing significantly more men than women, the news media create the illusion that there are more men out there than women, that men are more important, and that men represent the norm or the standard (Wood, 1997). Furthermore, this study also reveals that women in US news are underrepresented in news stories about politics and the economy (19.2%) and are underrepresented as politicians (19%). Perhaps here it stands to argue that women are underrepresented as politicians in US news because in real life, they constitute only 23.6 percent of available Congress seats and 21.7 percent of ministers (World Economic Forum, 2020).

The Egyptian news websites ranked last in the percentage of female news subjects (18.3%) and in the percentage of articles with women as the central focus (21.4%). In other words, this study reveals that the male-to-female news subjects ratio in Egyptian news is 4-to-1, although similarly to Sweden and the US, women in Egypt represent nearly half the population. While Egypt has not participated in the latest GMMP (2015), data available from a decade earlier (GMMP, 2010) revealed that women represented 27 percent of news subjects. At worst, this means that women have become even more underrepresented in Egyptian news and, at best, it means that female representation in the news is not getting any better. Furthermore, this study also reveals that women in Egyptian media are underrepresented in news stories about politics and the economy (19.2%) and are underrepresented as politicians (15.5%). Similarly to the United States, it would stand to

argue here that women represent 15 percent of parliamentary seats in Egypt (OECD, 2018) and thus their representation in the media mirrors their real-world proportions.

The finding that women in all three countries were underrepresented as politicians suggests that the media continue to rely on a handful of “official” sources, the majority of whom are men, which further contributes to the silencing of women (Ross & Carter, 2011; Ross et al., 2016). Appearance in the media is often regarded as a sign of status, and when the media continuously relies on men to provide knowledgeable perspectives and women are marginalized in significant political topics, the result is an inaccurate portrayal of reality (Armstrong, 2004). This conclusion applies particularly to Sweden, where women have made great strides in their presence in governing structures but continue to be underrepresented in political topics and as politicians.

The finding that women are less likely to be mentioned in story categories that have the most prestige and prominence, that is, stories about politics and the economy, and are underrepresented as leaders and politicians naturally gives rise to the question of where exactly women are represented. Previous studies have concluded that traditionally when women appear in the news, the emphasis is often on their appearance as celebrities or their family relationship (e.g., mother, daughter, or wife) to a newsworthy male (Geertsema, 2009; Ross, 2010; Ross & Carter, 2011; D’Heer et al., 2019). Similarly to the literature, the current study reveals that women are most prominent in story categories which are stereotypically considered more feminine such as celebrity news and are most likely to be mentioned in occupations, positions, and roles that are stereotypically associated with women, such as celebrities, parents, and homemakers. A good example of this would be a news story in the Egyptian news website *Youm 7* about the “most expensive black dresses in the world” that featured nine female subjects (14.5% of women in *Youm 7*). Another news story in *Sada el Balad* compared the wedding look of two women, the daughter-in-law of Hany Shaker (a

famous Egyptian singer) and the sister of an Egyptian actress. A story published by *CNN* was about Bella Hadid, a 23-year-old model, who according to science “is the most beautiful woman in the world.” These stories with their focus on the physical appearance of women, particularly celebrities, exemplify how women often appear in the news as “eye candy” (Ross & Carter, 2011).

Moreover, the current study also revealed that news stories with women as their central focus were mostly found in topics about “celebrity” news. This finding applied to both the United States and Egypt but was more pronounced in Egypt. In Sweden, such news stories were mainly found in “social and legal” topics, followed immediately by celebrity news.

Across all three countries, women were also significantly more likely to be described in terms of their family status, which could possibly imply that their identities and worth stem from their relationships with others, while, in contrast, men were more likely to appear in the media for their professional contributions to society (Ross et al., 2016). This finding was more pronounced in the Egyptian news websites. A possible explanation for this could be the nature of the Egyptian society itself, which places strong emphasis on a woman’s family status. An example of this would be an article in the Egyptian news website *Sada el Balad* about “Sara’s” graduation from college. Sara’s only newsworthy quality was who her father was—Ibrahim Hassan, the famous former football player. The story almost had no journalistic merit and could have been considered a practical joke if it were about any other college graduate. Even the title of the news story placed her father at the forefront “Ibrahim Hassan celebrates his daughter’s graduation...” This news story epitomizes how women often make it to the news only because of their relationship to a newsworthy man, even when they have not done something remarkable themselves. Another example was found in *CNN* in a story about a “diplomat’s wife” who was involved in a hit-and-run. Again if it had not been

for her husband's position, said woman would have never made it to the news. In many cases, women were also invited to comment on or contribute to the news stories simply because they were the main subject's mother or spouse. The trend of women being more likely to be described in terms of their family status was also evident in Sweden. Although this finding was least pronounced in the Swedish news websites, it was also quite surprising, as Sweden is one of the most egalitarian countries in the world, where men and women are expected to more or less share the same responsibilities (Kaufman et al., 2017). In addition to mainly being portrayed as celebrities and family members, women were also more likely to appear in news stories without a clearly mentioned occupation, implying that women's jobs and professional lives are less important than those of men. Another finding that is also in line with previous research is that women were underrepresented as athletes, as business managers or executives, and as lawyers, judges, or activists, once again implying that these are fields that mainly belong to men.

Furthermore, this study revealed that women were significantly less likely to appear in news stories as spokespersons (28.1%) and experts (22.7%). This finding is also consistent with that of the latest GMMP (2015) where overall women represented 20 percent of spokespersons and 19% of experts. On the other hand, women were overrepresented as news subjects or sources who appear in the news to provide their personal experience (55%). The latest GMMP (2015) findings, however, are slightly different, as women represented 38 percent of personal experience providers. Although the GMMP findings, unlike this study, do not approach equality, the percentage of women who appear in the news to provide their personal experience has increased by seven percent since 2005 (31%). It has been argued in previous research that journalists often depend "on a narrow range of sources" in the news, mostly "middle-class and middle-aged professional males" who are consulted to provide expert perspectives (Ross & Carter, 2011, p. 1150).

This finding confirms the conclusions made by previous scholars. Men often present informative, authoritative perspectives in the news and thus are more likely to appear as spokespeople and experts. Women, on the other hand, are limited to the personal space and thus are more likely to be consulted in the news to talk about their personal experiences (Gill, 2007; Collins, 2011; Ross & Carter, 2011; D’Heer et al., 2019; Desmond & Danilewicz, 2010; Jia et al., 2016). In this sense, men are given more prominence in the public sphere. As they are more likely to be consulted as experts, men are represented as being more capable of being rational and objective in presenting information, while women are pigeonholed to the sphere of the private. As they talk more about their personal experiences, women are represented as being less rational and more emotional as well as less capable of being objective in commenting about news and more subjective in their views (Ross et al., 2016). This finding was consistent across all three countries. The Swedish news websites, however, fared better than both the United States and the Egyptian news websites in terms of the representation of women as spokespeople and experts, but women were still more likely to be consulted in the news to talk about their personal experiences. The US news websites ranked second in their representation of women as spokespeople and experts, and women were nearly as likely to appear as providers of personal experience as in the Swedish news websites (54.7% and 57.1%, respectively).

Finally, this finding was most pronounced in Egypt, where women did not appear as experts whatsoever. It can be argued that this phenomenon has not changed over the past decade, as the GMMP (2010) also concluded that women did not appear as experts at all in Egyptian news. As journalists operate within a specific cultural context, a possible explanation for this finding is how the Egyptian society views women and values their contributions to society. Women in Egypt are generally not expected to be knowledgeable about and experts in any domain, except for childbearing, child rearing, and household

chores. In certain cultural contexts and social circles in Egypt, it might be even considered “an affront” to consult a woman or heed her advice.

It should also be noted that some news stories did in fact challenge gender stereotypes (11.4%), the majority of which were found in the Swedish online news outlets. An example of this would be a news story in the Swedish news website *Aftonbladet* about a female police officer who faced sexist behavior at a Christmas party from one of her co-workers. The woman decided to speak out against it on social media, defying the existing “culture of silence.” This story, in particular, represented a woman who would not remain a victim and was not “passive.” Another story also in *Aftonbladet* was about a male nurse (an occupation that is often filled by women) who was injured on the job. A story in the *NYT* was about a female private investigator who broke the “stereotype of the private detective” because she was a woman. Another story in *CNN* was about a group of deaf women who allegedly faced sexual abuse from their dorm supervisor when they were young girls at school. The angle of the story was that the women broke their silence and filed a lawsuit. In the process, they were also breaking the “women-as-passive” stereotype. Finally, stories that challenged gender stereotypes in the Egyptian news websites were often about women who committed crimes, sometimes against their own family members, including children, thus challenging the woman-as-victim stereotype.

Conclusion

News media continue to play an influential role in the formation of opinions and attitudes, particularly because—unlike fictional media—they are supposed to present objective reflections of the world. They contribute to the social construction of reality in the minds of viewers and readers, and it thus becomes imperative for news media to offer fair and balanced portrayals of reality. Most scholarly work that has been done on the portrayal of women in the news (in both traditional and online media) has focused on individual national systems. This study, on the other hand, attempts to bridge a gap in the literature by comparing the portrayal of women in three different countries: Sweden, the United States, and Egypt. Each of the countries chosen for this study views and treats women differently. While Sweden is often considered a gender equality role model, Egypt is considered one of the worst countries for women to live in. The United States stands somewhere in the middle, where women are still struggling to achieve full gender parity. Moreover, the researcher found an extreme dearth of literature about the representation of Egyptian women in the media in general. The few studies that could be found focused on the representation of women in advertising. Moreover, no studies that analyzed the portrayal of women in Egyptian news were identified. Thus, this study represents an exploratory attempt to examine how the online news media in Egypt represent women.

Although it was believed that online media would allow for more diversified representation of minority groups, the current study suggests that this was not the case for the analyzed news websites in all three of the analyzed countries. Women were more likely to appear in topics stereotypically thought of as more feminine (such as celebrity news) and in roles that are stereotypically associated with them (such as parents, homemakers, actresses, and celebrities) and were less likely to appear in the news as politicians or experts. This

finding has stood true in the analyzed news websites in Sweden, the United States, and Egypt, but has varied in intensity across countries.

The Swedish news websites had the highest representation of women in general and of women in political positions in particular, yet the figures still were not close to equality, even though female politicians in Sweden represent nearly 45 percent of governing structures. This suggests that despite the increasing number of women politicians, journalists still rely on their usual male-dominated pool of sources (Ross et al., 2016). Sweden also had the highest female representation in several occupational roles such as lawyers, judges, activists, businesspeople, and doctors, but yet again men were more likely to be represented in such occupations. The US news websites ranked second in the overall representation of women and in the representation of women as politicians, and Egypt ranked last. In all three countries, women represented the majority of parents and homemakers and were more likely to have their family status mentioned in the news stories. The results from Egypt in particular were quite disheartening, as women were even more underrepresented in almost all professional roles and were completely absent as judges, lawyers, or activists.

Looking at the combined results of this study, a conclusion naturally occurs. The portrayal of women in online news mirrors the status of women in each of the analyzed countries. While Sweden fared best in terms of the overall presence of women, there still remains room for improvement. Women continue to be overrepresented in certain stereotypical roles such as “parents and homemakers” and constitute the minority of experts consulted in the news. While the male-to-female ratio in Sweden was 2-to-1, better than the United States (3-to-1) and Egypt (4-to-1), the figure still means that women continue to be underrepresented in the news. With the exception of Sweden, the findings of this study echo the findings of previous research where women have hit a glass ceiling and have not been able to rise above one-third of all news subjects (Ross et al., 2016), which suggests that the

news media view the lives of men as three times as important as the lives of women (Ross & Carter, 2011).

There seems to be a shared understanding among news media across countries of whose voice is more important and thus requires more attention, not just in the three countries analyzed in this study, but all over the globe (GMMP, 2015). Gender stereotypes are recycled and redistributed through the media so much that they have become the “norm.” Finally, the scarcity of female experts in Sweden and the United States and their complete invisibility in the Egyptian news stories mean that news media need to be more proactive in seeking out women experts to ensure that a wide range of voices are being heard. Increasing the representation of women as experts in the news would send a strong signal that women are just as capable of providing credible and authoritative perspectives. The underrepresentation of entire groups of people in the daily narratives constructed by the news media would lead to inaccurate descriptions of reality.

Limitations

The researcher and the independent coder who coded the entire sample of articles are both proficient in English and Arabic, but not Swedish. This means that they were capable of coding articles from both the US and the Egyptian news websites without any problems. However, they had to rely on an automated translation software (Google Translate) to code articles from the Swedish news websites. While there exists evidence in the literature that using translation software is an acceptable practice (Vries et al., 2018), it remains a machine, which could possibly lead to the loss of some meaning.

In addition, this study employed a quantitative content analysis, but numbers do not tell the whole story. Simply counting the frequencies of women's appearance and/or invisibility in the news does not provide answers to several other questions about the overall tone of the articles and the point of view from which the stories were told, all of which contribute to the process of meaning construction. This does not mean that the current analysis has no merit, as several of this study's findings mirror what has been found in other studies, but to emphasize the importance of using a mixed method approach where both the quantitative as well as qualitative components of news stories are analyzed. The content analysis methodology also does not answer the question of, so what? What exactly are the consequences of not having enough women in the news? Future research should investigate the relation between female underrepresentation and stereotypical representation on one hand and the effects on audiences on the other hand.

In addition, the current content analysis examines gender portrayal in online news but does not analyze the role of newsroom cultures in the representation of women. The study also analyzed 420 articles, 140 from each country, 70 from each news organization. It can be argued that the number of news websites and the number of news articles sampled from each country are quite limited and thus are hardly representative of the news media. The study also

covered a period of three months. Future studies with a larger sample size and covering a longer period of time would be useful.

Finally, there is no definite evidence that *Sada al Balad* is the second most popular news website in Egypt. Future studies on gender portrayals in Egyptian media should explore other news websites, such as *Al Masry Al Youm* and *Masrawy*.

Recommendations and Directions for Future Research

News producers should be more proactive in seeking out female sources, especially as experts, to ensure that women are given adequate representation in the media. Having women represented as experts in the media would send the message that they are just as capable of being objective and rational and providing credible and authoritative perspectives. The researcher found limited studies about the representation of women in Egyptian news, whether broadcast, print, or online. Further research should examine the representation of women in the media in Egypt in general and in news in particular. Moreover, future comparative research should consider comparing gender portrayals in the media in countries within the same region (such as among Arab countries and among European countries). Another possible area of research could focus on comparing content produced by professional journalists with user-generated content (UGC) such as social media posts, memes, and gifs.

Future cross-cultural studies about gender representation in the news media should employ coders who are not only proficient in the language of the articles but who are also fully aware of the cultural context and the gender stereotypes prevalent within it. While some gender stereotypes are universal, it stands to reason that each country would have its own set of stereotypes that are known only to individuals deeply familiar with the local culture. In addition, future researchers should consider using a mixed method approach by conducting interviews with experts and senior editors at news organizations to enhance our understanding of how newsroom cultures and routine journalistic practices impact the portrayal of women. Just like any study which focuses on a specific time period in the news, there is always the chance that certain events might have occurred during the selected time frame that could have affected the representation of women, which necessitates a longitudinal study to monitor changes in gender portrayal over time.

In addition, while news continues to be delivered from journalists to readers, social media has enabled women to talk back. It is no longer the type of world where only journalists are in charge of what gets published, but women and other underrepresented groups have the ability to speak back to what the media writes about them. Women often resort to social media to “make their voices heard and create new forms of leadership and empowerment” (Eltantawy, 2013, p. 768). Future research should analyze how women speak back to the press and how social media has empowered women and provided them with a platform to express themselves.

Finally, future research could look at the effect of gender along with other “social constructs” in news representation. For instance, women who belong to other minority groups (such as people of color or religious minorities) might be even more prone to underrepresentation and/or stereotypical representation in the news.

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Appendix A

Codebook

Code regular news items only - not editorials, commentaries, readers' feedback.

Do not code:

- Editorials, commentaries, readers' feedback.
- Story listings. On some homepages you may find a listing of stories that appear in each of the various sections of the website. Do not code these listings.
- Cartoons and jokes.
- Weather reports (though you should code stories about the weather - a flood, heatwave, drought etc)
- Advertising.

1) News website

1. Aftonbladet
2. Dagens Nyheter
3. CNN
4. The New York Times
5. Youm 7
6. Sada Al Balad

2) Country

1. Sweden
2. US
3. Egypt

3) Day of Week

1. Sunday
2. Monday
3. Tuesday
4. Wednesday
5. Thursday
6. Friday
7. Saturday

4) Date

1. 2 Oct 19
2. 5 Oct 19
3. 17 Oct 19
4. 19 Oct 19
5. 29 Oct 19
6. 12 Nov 19
7. 15 Nov 19
8. 20 Nov 19
9. 24 Nov 19
10. 1 Dec 19
11. 5 Dec 19
12. 16 Dec 19
13. 23 Dec 19
14. 27 Dec 19

JOURNALISTS & REPORTERS:

For each story, code the journalist/reporter who wrote the story and whose name appears
Do not code: (i) Unnamed journalists (e.g. 'Staff reporter', 'Our correspondent'); (ii) News agencies.

5) **Sex**

1. Female
2. Male
3. Other (transgender, etc.)
4. Do not know
5. Both male and female (more than one journalist)

6) **Topic:** See table.

1. Politics and government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women politicians, women electoral candidates... • Peace, negotiations, treaties • Other domestic politics, government, etc. • Global partnerships • Foreign/international politics, UN, peacekeeping • National defence, military spending, internal security, • Other stories on politics 	4. Social and Legal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Post 2015 agenda, Agenda 2030 • Family relations, inter-generational conflict, parents • Migration, refugees, xenophobia, ethnic conflict... • Other development issues, sustainability, etc. • Education, childcare, nursery, university, literacy • Women's movement, feminist activism, demonstrations, • Changing gender relations (outside the home) • Family law, family codes, property law, inheritance... • Legal system, judiciary, legislation apart from family • Disaster, accident, famine, flood, plane crash, etc. • Riots, demonstrations, public disorder, etc. • Other stories on social/legal
2. Economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic policies, strategies, modules, indicators, stock markets, taxes, etc • Economic crisis, state bailouts of companies, company takeovers and mergers, etc. • Poverty, housing, social welfare, aid, etc. • Women's participation in economic processes • Employment • Informal work, street vending, etc. • Other labour issues (strikes, trade unions, etc.) • Rural economy, agriculture, farming, land rights • Consumer issues, consumer protection, fraud... • Transport, traffic, roads... • Other stories on economy 	5. Crime and violence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-violent crime, bribery, theft, drugs • Corruption, (incl. political corruption) • Violent crime, murder, abduction, assault, etc. • Child abuse, sexual violence against children, neglect • War, civil war, terrorism, other state-based violence • Other crime/violence
3. Science and health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science, technology, research, discoveries... • Medicine, health, hygiene, safety, (not EBOLA or HIV/AIDS) • EBOLA, treatment, response... • HIV and AIDS, policy, treatment, etc • Other epidemics, viruses, contagions, Influenza, BSE, SARS • Birth control, fertility, sterilization, termination... • Climate change, global warming • Environment, pollution, tourism • Other stories on science 	6. Gender and related <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual harassment against women, rape, sexual assault, #MeToo, #TimesUp... • Other gender violence such as feminicide, trafficking of girls and women, FGM... • Inequality between women and men such as income inequality/gender pay gap
	7. Celebrity, Arts, and Media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrity news, births, marriages, royalty, etc • Arts, entertainment, leisure, cinema, books, dance • Media, (including internet, social networks), portrayal of women/men • Fake news, mis-information, dis-information, mal-information... • Beauty contests, models, fashion, cosmetic surgery • Other celebrity/arts/media news (specify in 'comments')
	8. Sports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports, events, players, facilities, training, funding
	9. Other (Please explain)

7) Does the story cover hard news or soft news?

- Hard news mainly discusses subjects related to politics, economics, technology, crime, and the financial world. Soft news discusses subjects such as health, well-being, social problems, education, art, sport, and entertainment.
- Is the story of societal or individual relevance? A societal relevance is indicative of hard news, whereas an individual relevance is indicative of soft news.
- Hard news mainly discusses facts, whereas soft news mainly discusses emotions.
 1. Hard news
 2. Soft news

8) Reference to gender equality/ human rights legislation/ policy

Scan the full news story and code '1' if it quotes or makes reference to any piece of legislation or policy that promotes gender equality or human rights.

1. Yes
2. No

9) Is the story about a particular woman or group of women?

For example, a story about a women's football team or about a woman who commits a crime or a story about women's unemployment, or about the incidence of HIV-AIDS among women are all stories about particular women or groups of women.

1. Yes
2. No

10) This story clearly highlights issues of inequality between women and men

Stories that highlight issues concerning equality or inequality between women and men include those that focus directly on an area of inequality. For example, career advancement, wages and salaries, distribution of and access to resources, or discrimination in relation to rights of various kinds.

1. Yes
2. No

11) This story clearly challenges gender stereotypes

According to gender stereotypes, women are generally perceived to be unambitious, irrational, fragile, dependent; men are usually regarded as ambitious, rational, strong, independent. Stories that challenge common assumptions about women and men include stories in which women experts are discussing economic policy, or a story about male nurses.

1. Yes (The story definitely challenges stereotypes)
2. No (The story definitely does not challenge stereotypes. Use this code if the story reinforces stereotypes)
3. Neither agree nor disagree. The story neither clearly challenges nor reinforces stereotypes
4. Do not know, cannot decide

12) Does the news story have one or more subjects that can be coded?

1. Yes
2. No

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS:

Code only individual people, including:

- (i) the person(s) whom the story is about even if they are not interviewed or quoted
- (ii) Each person who is interviewed
- (iii) Each person in the story who is quoted, either directly or indirectly.

Do not code:

- (i) Groups (e.g. a group of nurses, a group of soldiers);
- (ii) Organizations, companies, collectivities (e.g. political parties);
- (iii) Characters in novels or movies (unless the story is about them)
- (iv) Deceased historical figures (unless the story is about them)
- (v) Interpreters (Code the person being interviewed as if they spoke without an interpreter).

13) Sex

- 1. Female
- 2. Male
- 3. Other (transgender, etc.)
- 4. Do not know

14) Age (the person appears)

Code the age of the person if it is specifically mentioned in the story or the person appears in an image accompanying the story. Even if you know the age of the person concerned, you must code 0 if this person's age is not explicitly stated in the story.

- 0. Do not know
- 1. 12 and under
- 2. 13-18
- 3. 19-34
- 4. 35-49
- 5. 50-64
- 6. 65 and up

15) Occupation or position: See table.

If the person is described as having two occupations, choose the occupation that seems most relevant in the context of the news item. In the case of persons who are well-known to the general public, e.g., a country's head of state, code the occupation even if it is not apparent from the content of the news item.

0 Not stated	14 Agriculture, mining, fishing, forestry
1 Royalty, monarch, deposed monarch, president, etc.	15 Religious figure, priest, monk, rabbi, mullah, nun
2 Politician/ member of parliament, ...	16 Activist or worker in civil society org., NGO, trade union
3 Government employee, public servant, spokesperson, etc.	17 Sex worker
4 Police, military, para-military, militia, fire officer	18 Celebrity, artist, actor, writer, singer, TV personality
5 Academic expert, lecturer, teacher	19 Sportsperson, athlete, player, coach, referee
6 Doctor, dentist, health specialist	20 Student, pupil, schoolchild
7 Health worker, social worker, childcare worker	21 Homemaker, parent (male or female) only if no other occupation is given e.g. doctor/mother=code 6
8 Science/ technology professional, engineer, etc.	22 Child, young person no other occupation given
9 Media professional, journalist, filmmaker, etc.	23 Villager or resident no other occupation given
10 Lawyer, judge, magistrate, legal advocate, etc.	24 Retired person, pensioner no other occupation given
11 Business person, exec, manager, stock broker...	25 Criminal, suspect no other occupation given
12 Office or service worker, non-management worker	26 Unemployed no other occupation given
13 Tradesperson, artisan, labourer, truck driver, etc.	27 Other only as last resort

16) Function in the news story:

Choose **one** code only for each person in the story. **Code 1 takes precedence over other codes.** E.g. if the person is both a subject and a spokesperson, choose code 1= Subject.

0 Do not know: the person's function is not clear.	5 Eye witness: the person gives testimony or comment, based on direct observation (e.g. being present at an event)
1 Subject: the story is <i>about</i> this person, or about something the person has done, said etc.	6 Popular opinion: the person's opinion is assumed to reflect that of the 'ordinary citizen' (e.g., in a street interview, vox populi etc); it is implied that the person's point of view is shared by a wider group of people.
2 Spokesperson: the person represents, or speaks on behalf of another person, a group or an organisation	7 Other. Use only as a last resort
3 Expert or commentator: the person provides additional information, opinion or comment, based on specialist knowledge or expertise	
4 Personal experience: the person provides opinion or comment, based on individual personal experience; the opinion is not necessarily meant to reflect the views of a wider group	

17) Family role given?

Is this person described, at any point within the story, in terms of a family relationship (e.g. wife, husband, daughter, son, aunt, uncle, grandmother, grandfather etc)?

1. Yes
2. No

18) Does the story identify the person as a victim, survivor, or both?

1. Yes
2. No ***IF YOU SELECT 2 ("NO") Choose 0 in questions 19 & 20.**

19) The story identifies the person as a victim of

Choose **one** of the codes below for each person in the news. You should code a person as a victim **either** if the word 'victim' is used to describe her/him, **or** if the story implies that the person is a victim.

- 0.** Not applicable
- 1.** Victim of domestic violence, rape, murder, etc.
- 2.** Victim of non-domestic violence, rape, assault, crime, robbery, etc.
- 3.** Other

20) The story identifies the person as a survivor of

Choose **one** of the codes below for each person in the news. You should code a person as a survivor **either** if the word 'survivor' is used to describe her/him, **or** if the story implies that the person is a survivor

- 0.** Not applicable
- 1.** Survivor of domestic violence, rape, murder, etc.
- 2.** Survivor of non-domestic violence, rape, assault, crime, robbery, etc.
- 3.** Other

21) Is the person directly quoted?

1. Yes

2. No