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# The Gender Pay Gap in the Media Industry: Socio-Economic dimensions of Inequality among Women Journalists

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## Abstract

This study analyses the interplay between socio-economic status and gender inequality in the workplace with a particular focus on women journalists in Albania. Based on the analysis of empirical data obtained from a survey with 236 journalists involved in all platforms of information production and distribution in five private media companies as well as in the public broadcasting Albanian Radio and Television (ART), conducted in the period May-June 2025 by the Department of Journalism and Communication at the University of Tirana, the study highlights the gender pay gap as one of the main forms of inequality in the media sector. Although women journalists constitute the majority in the audiovisual media, they face several obstacles to career advancement, pressures, hate speech, etc., while practicing their profession. In this context, the study findings suggest that inequalities in the workplace are multidimensional and require an integrated interdisciplinary approach to address them.

**Keywords:** economics of discrimination; critical mass theory; glass ceiling, women journalists; gender inequality; AI;

## 1. Introduction

Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) is ushering in an era of transformation of journalism and media content (Pavlik, 2023). Even in Albania, media are following the global pace of digital transformation, using automation, new forms of audience exposure, and artificial intelligence (AI) in the processes of information collection and processing. These developments have impacted the socio-economic status of journalists and

media workers. In a media environment increasingly dominated by technology and AI, journalists and traditional and digital media companies are facing the need for new skills, new business models, and new ways of organization and management. But despite the profound changes dictated by technological advancement in media and society, the issues related to gender equality remain the same. Technological advances bring productivity gains, but in order for these gains to be fulfilled, talent must be developed for all individuals, regardless of gender. The design of technologies, the gendered gaps in data, and the speed, scope, and scale enabled by AI can all contribute to making the situation for women workers worse if there is no active attention to this issue (UNESCO, OECD, IDB, 2022).

The results of the Global Gender Gap Report 2025, published by the World Economic Forum, show that there is a slight improvement of +0.3 percentage points in 2025, from 68.4% in 2024 to 68.8% in 2025. The 2025 Global Gender Gap Index shows that no economy has yet achieved full gender parity, and it will take 123 years to reach full parity globally. Despite progress across Europe, full gender equality remains at least 50 years away, according to the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) 2025 Gender Equality Index.

Gender inequality remains an intractable problem in the media sector. Women journalists are outnumbered by their male counterparts, and few women break through the glass ceiling to management positions. Pay inequality and harassment of women journalists are pervasive around the world (Macharia et al., 2024). Studies on the gender pay gap in the media industry show a persistent inequality where men are paid more on average than women, with small differences from one country to another. According to the study conducted by Press Gazette (2024), women in the UK media industry are on average paid 11% less than men. The gender pay gap is not about equal pay and whether men and women are paid the same to do the same jobs, but rather can indicate men dominating in higher-paid roles (Tobitt, 2024). The poor presence of women in high-ranking and highly paid positions seems to be one of the main reasons for wage inequality in the media sector. A Reuters Institute 2025 survey revealed that “only 27% of the 171 top editors across the 240 brands covered are women, even though, on average, 40% of journalists in the 12 markets are women. The percentage of women in top editorial positions varies significantly from market to market, from 7% in South Korea to 46% in the UK” (Ross Arguedas et al., 2025, p. 1). These statistics show a slight improvement in gender equality indicators over the last decade. In 2011, the findings of a study by the International Women’s Media Foundation (IWMF) showed that “men occupy most of the management jobs and news-gathering positions globally. Researchers found that women represent only a third (33.3%) of the full-time journalism workforce worldwide and hold just over a quarter (27%) of the top management jobs compared to (73%) occupied by men” (IWMF, 2011, p. 9).

As evidenced by studies, women face obstacles in terms of career

advancement. Glass ceilings continue to limit their access to leadership positions, editorial leadership, and management in the companies where they operate. Although women often make up the majority, they cover low-paying sectors such as culture, social, or lifestyle, while men dominate higher-paying sectors such as politics, crime, economics, etc.

While studies show inequality and the gender wage gap in the media sector in different countries, in Albania, there is a lack of studies that focus on this phenomenon. Although the media market after the 1990s has evolved rapidly, it seems that some of the problems are the same as those in developed countries. In this context, the aim of the study is to provide a more complete picture of the gender wage gap in the media industry in Albania, specifically in the audio-visual media sector, the obstacles, and opportunities to advance in careers, etc. Some of the main questions that we aim to answer in this study are: How satisfied are journalists with their salary according to gender? Are they paid for working overtime? How do they see the opportunities to advance in their career in the media where they are employed? Through an integrated socio-economic approach, the study findings aim to contribute to discussions on gender equality in the media industry.

## **2. Literature Review**

Discrimination is present in every industry, including the media. In economic theory, discrimination is defined as the unequal treatment of individuals based on certain characteristics, such as gender. Nobel laureate Gary Becker, in his book *'The Economics of Discrimination'* (1957), treats discrimination as an economic phenomenon, not just a social or moral one. He argues that discrimination in the marketplace is driven by what he calls the "taste for discrimination" of employers, colleagues/workers, or consumers/clients, who influence inefficient decision-making in the labor market. According to Becker, discrimination is also influenced by other factors such as market structure (monopoly vs. competitive markets), degree of market competition (more competition, less discrimination), relative supply of labor, etc. This means that in markets where competition is high, discrimination tends to decrease because discriminatory companies are characterized by higher costs and lower profits. However, reality shows that competition in the market does not eliminate discriminatory practices, which has led to the development of other theories such as static discrimination.

Unlike Becker's economic model that emphasizes individual preferences, Joan Acker (1990) argues through a sociological lens that gender discrimination is structural and institutional. She emphasizes that to understand gender inequality, a systematic theory of gender and organization is needed because inequalities in income and status between men and women, including divisions between paid and unpaid work, are created in part by organizational practices. In the article "Hierarchies, Jobs,

Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations", Acker (1990) explains that organizations are not neutral structures but "gendered organizations," where norms, hierarchies, and administrative practices reproduce inequality in a systematic way. The central idea of this theory is related to the concept of the "disembodied worker" or the model of the "ideal worker," which presupposes full dedication to work, implying long and uninterrupted working hours and a lack of family responsibilities. Acker argues that this model, in addition to favoring men and disadvantaging women, especially mothers with children, contributes to the reproduction of gender inequalities.

For Pierre Bourdieu (1998), gender discrimination is as much an economic phenomenon as it is a symbolic and cultural one. He argues that male dominance is maintained through "symbolic violence"—the kind of soft, invisible violence that is exercised and reproduced through social mechanisms and institutions such as schools, families, labor organizations, the state, etc., which makes gender hierarchy seem legitimate and natural.

The American sociologist Kanter (1977), in her analysis of large industrial corporations in the United States of America, introduced the concept of tokenism, according to which when a group constitutes less than 15% of an organization, it cannot exert structural influence. In the context of gender studies, this is known as the "critical mass theory," the essence of which is that the presence of women or an underrepresented group must reach a "critical mass," i.e., a minimum threshold for the influence on decision-making to be real, i.e., sensitive. Kanter argues that the low representation of women at high levels makes women perceived as the exception and not the norm. But critics of this theory argue that representation in decision-making is not simply a matter of numbers or quotas because if women have real power, even a small number is enough to make a substantial difference. Positioning in the management hierarchy as well as organizational culture are crucial factors with a real influence on decision-making.

The barriers that women journalists face are multiple. The term "glass ceiling" has been used across nations of the world for several decades to refer to an invisible but nonetheless real barrier that women encounter in the workplace. In other words, during their careers, qualified women who possess skills and experience for advancement are blocked in their upward mobility by factors such as institutionalized prejudices. Such prejudices are usually expressed implicitly rather than explicitly in the day-to-day life of the organization, including processes for hiring and promotion (IWWMF, 2011).

Meanwhile, another important concept in studies on gender inequality is the "sticky floor," which refers to the concentration of women at the lower levels of the organizational hierarchy, with few promotion opportunities and low salaries. Eagly (1987), through the social role theory, emphasizes that gender stereotypes that stem from the gender division of labor influence the perception of leadership as a masculine trait. The study conducted by

Urbániková and Čaladi (2024) identified five main barriers faced by women journalists in leadership positions: overall gender inequality in Czech society; family and household responsibilities; lower self-esteem and ambition in women; sexism and sexual harassment; and masculine newsroom culture and “old boys’ clubs.” All these factors taken together create prejudices that hinder women's career advancement.

The gender pay gap (referring to the average difference in income between men and women) is the result of structural factors such as the traditional division of family roles, career breaks due to motherhood, etc. (Goldin, 2014). While Bergmann (1974) argues that vertical or horizontal occupational segregation is a key factor in reproducing the gender pay gap, depending on the type of industry. According to her, sectors dominated by women are often not only characterized by lower wages and lower social esteem (horizontal segregation), but there is also an unequal distribution at hierarchical levels within the same sector (vertical segregation). However, regardless of the causes, the gender pay gap remains one of the main indicators of gender inequality.

Meanwhile, recent studies in the media industry show that the level of salary is an important factor influencing journalists' job satisfaction, motivation, and decision to stay in the profession, as higher salaries and regular increases are associated with more positive perceptions of their career and professional stability (Bramlett-Solomon et al., 2025; Amditis et al., 2024; Flores, 2019; Flores & Subervi, 2014). Also, perceived organizational support and social support contribute to increased job satisfaction, while work–family conflict, role overload, and high job demands are associated with increased job dissatisfaction (Reinardy, 2009). This indicates that supportive factors in the workplace are essential for journalists' well-being, while pressures and high workload can reduce their level of job satisfaction. In the meantime, for Singapore journalists, monetary reward, job security, and demographic differences are not significant factors in determining job satisfaction, while what matters most to them is how they see their institution perform in informing the public. Journalists who feel greater autonomy and believe in the adversarial role of the press are more satisfied with their job as journalists (Xiaoming et al., 2013, p. 2).

### **3. Methodology**

This study is based on the quantitative analysis of primary data collected from a survey with journalists involved in all platforms of information production and distribution in five private audiovisual companies: Focus Media Group; Media Vizion; Klan Group; Top Media, Multiscreen & Free; and Fair Media Group, as well as in Albanian Public Broadcasting (ART), conducted in the period May-June 2025 by the Department of Journalism and Communication (DJC), University of Tirana. The quantitative analysis is based on a conceptual model presented by Becker (1957), which includes

three main components: 1. discrimination by the employer; 2. discrimination by employees/colleagues; 3. Discrimination by clients/consumers, which in the case of the media industry means audiences. This theory has explained cases when decision-making is motivated by profit and audience preferences. In addition to quantitative data, the study also included data from reports and field studies conducted by international and domestic research agencies such as the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), Reuters Institute, International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF), European Women Audiovisual Network, Audiovisual Media Authority (AMA), Gender Alliance for Development Center (GADC), Albanian Women in Audiovisual (AWA), Institute of Statistics (INSTAT), etc., which served to carry out the comparative analysis.

#### *A. Research Context*

In Albania, there are several studies and scientific reports that address the dynamics and developments in the media industry over the years, which directly or indirectly affect aspects related to gender equality. Male employees dominate the media market, but when we divide by the category "journalists" in television, there are more female employees: 55% women and 45% men (AMA, 2024, p. 67-68). In this context, the aim of this study is to highlight characteristics and trends related to the socio-economic dimensions of inequality among women journalists, with an emphasis on the gender pay gap in the audiovisual media sector.

#### *B. Participants*

The study sample consists of 236 journalists, editors, editors-in-chief, information directors, etc., respondents, a representative sample referring to the Albanian media landscape. Of the total respondents, 59.3% (140) are female, 35.2% (83) are male, and 5.5% (13) did not respond. Knowing that the number of journalists working in the media industry is high and elusive at the same time, the survey was deliberately directed only at those journalists who directly produce mass information content. Regarding the selection of the companies included in the study, one of the criteria was the large weight they occupy in the Albanian media landscape (Marku & Fuga, 2025).

#### *C. Research Questions*

This paper aims to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How satisfied are journalists with their pay by gender?
- 2) Are they paid for working overtime?
- 3) How do they see the opportunities for career advancement in the media where they are employed?

#### *D. Instruments*

A questionnaire as a research instrument was created and conducted by

DJC in the framework of the collective study within the framework of the scientific project on the topic "Journalism and journalists in the era of digital technology and new media" in Albania. The questionnaire consisted of 97 open and closed questions, grouped into several subtopics, which included questions on the orientation and career advancement opportunities of journalists within the media company, positioning regarding changes in the labor market, financial treatment, etc.

#### E. Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 28, which is a useful software for quantitative data analysis for descriptive analyses. The results were interpreted in line with the research aims and questions raised in this study.

*Limitations:* The main limitation of this study is the lack of interviews with women journalists in leadership positions in the media (few or not), whose opinions would serve to create a more complete picture of the obstacles they face in their daily lives to advance in their careers.

### 4. Results and Findings

*Gender Pay Gap:* Women journalists are less satisfied with their salaries compared to men. As the data shows, only 25.7% of female journalists are satisfied with their salaries compared to 29.3% of men. Also, almost half of the female journalists surveyed, specifically 48.5%, are not at all satisfied with their salaries compared to 47.6% of men who share the same opinion (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Are you satisfied with your salary (by gender)?**

		Female	Male	Female	Male
		<i>no.</i>		%	%
1	a. Yes, completely.	35	24	25.7%	29.3%
2	b. No, not at all.	66	39	48.5%	47.6%
3	c. I accept the salary they give me because I have no other choice	35	19	25.7%	23.2%
<i>Total</i>		<i>136</i>	<i>82</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

*Source: Database obtained from the DJC scientific project, 2025, processed by the authors of the article.*

Dissatisfaction with the salary of female journalists seems to be linked to the level of salaries. The data show that women have lower salaries than men. More than half of the women surveyed, 52.3%, declare a low salary or a salary below the average, compared to men who make up 28.8%. Regarding the lowest salary level, women make up the highest percentage, 6%, compared to men, 3.8%. Meanwhile, it is observed that the higher the wage level, the greater the gap in inequality between the declared salaries of female and male journalists increases. For the highest salary level (over 2080 euros), the difference in percentage between men and women is 7.8 in favor

of men (see Table 2).

**Table 2. Current declared salary by gender, in Euro**

		Female	Male	Female	Male
		<i>no.</i>		<i>%</i>	
1	a. Up to 470 Euro	8	3	6.0%	3.8%
2	b. From 470 - 780 Euro	62	20	46.3%	25.0%
3	c. From 790 - 1 040 Euro	36	21	26.9%	26.3%
4	d. From 1 050 - 1 560 Euro	24	22	17.9%	27.5%
5	e. From 1 570 - 2 080 Euro	1	6	0.7%	7.5%
6	f. Over 2 080 Euro	3	8	2.2%	10.0%
<i>Total</i>		<i>134</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

Source: Database obtained from the DJC scientific project, 2025, processed by the authors of the article.

The inequality between women and men also appears in the payment of overtime work. A high percentage of female journalists, 57.6%, declare that they are not paid for hours outside of work compared to 49.4% of men. But even in the case where overtime work is paid, the data shows that men are more advantaged since they are in a larger percentage compared to women (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Are journalists paid for off-duty hours (by gender)?**

		Female	Male	Female	Male
		<i>no.</i>		<i>%</i>	
1	a. Yes	30	21	21.6%	25.3%
2	b. No	80	41	57.6%	49.4%
3	c. I do not work overtime	29	21	20.9%	25.3%
<i>Total</i>		<i>139</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

Source: Database obtained from the DJC scientific project, 2025, processed by the authors of the article.

*Opportunities for career advancement:* The percentage of male journalists who believe that there are opportunities for career advancement is higher at 43.2% compared to female journalists, 39.3%. For almost half of the female journalists surveyed, 49.3%, career advancement opportunities within the media company where they are employed are difficult compared to 39.5% of male journalists who share the same opinion (see Table 4).

**Table 4. Do journalists think that within the media company or media outlet where they are employed, there is room for career growth (by gender)?**

		a.		a.	
		Female	b. Male	Female	b. Male
		<i>no.</i>		<i>%</i>	
1	a. Yes. I believe there is, and it is possible	55	35	39.3%	43.2%
2	b. Maybe there is, but I find it difficult	69	32	49.3%	39.5%
3	c. There is not, only with some rare exceptions	16	14	11.4%	17.3%
<i>Totali</i>		<i>140</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

Source: Database obtained from the DJC scientific project, 2025, processed by the authors of the article.

Regarding career dynamics in the media, 28.1% of female journalists list a number of factors together, such as the quality of the work they do; the person's ability to sell the work they do as well as possible; family support and connections; being obedient to the orders of superiors; the support of audiences and public opinion; and political interference, while only 22.9% of male journalists stated that all of these factors together influence their career advancement. Meanwhile, for male journalists, the main factor influencing career advancement is the quality of the work the journalist does, at 33.7%, while for female journalists, this factor ranks second at 27.3% (see Table 5).

Meanwhile, statistics on gender equality in public audiovisual media institutions in Albania are not optimistic. A study conducted by the Gender Alliance for Development Center (2019) highlights the negative trend of representation of women and girls in the RTSH Steering Council, the highest decision-making body, starting with 30% in 1999, dropping in the years 2007-2012, and reaching the quota of 10% in the following period, 2018. Also, according to the study, none of the heads of the Public Broadcasting (ART) organizational structure (ART) general directorate, program unit, technical unit, or thematic and news broadcasting unit, as well as the local audiovisual centers, is a woman.

**Table 5. The dynamics of journalists' media careers are most influenced (by gender).**

		a. Female	b. Male	a. Female	b. Male
		<i>nr.</i>		<i>%</i>	
1	a. Personal support, family ties of the person	20	9	14.4%	10.8%
2	b. The person's ability to sell their work as best as possible and artificially embellish it	23	11	16.5%	13.3%
3	c. By being listened to, obedient to the orders of superiors, respectful of them and careful to maintain good relations with them	8	8	5.8%	9.6%
4	d. From the support provided by audiences and public opinion	3	3	2.2%	3.6%
5	e. From the interference of politics and other lobbies	5	5	3.6%	6.0%
6	f. By the quality of the work you do	38	28	27.3%	33.7%
7	g. From all these factors together	39	19	28.1%	22.9%
8	gj. Other	3	0	2.2%	0.0%
<i>Totali</i>		<i>139</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

*Source: Database obtained from the DJC scientific project, 2025, processed by the authors of the article.*

The above data are almost in line with the figures published by INSTAT (2025) regarding women in decision-making at the national level. In 2024, women owners or managers were most prevalent in small enterprises (1–4 employees), at 32.6%. For researchers Fuga & Marku (2017), the low representation of women in decision-making is not explained only by the economic dimension. Referring specifically to the management model in the television industry in Albania, they also analyze the typology of decision-making, which, according to them, is also influenced by the ownership structure of private audiovisual companies that are family-based. They argue that the dominant economic and financial model in the television industry reproduces some dominant anthropological values of Albanian culture, where the family has for centuries constituted the basis around which the local economy has been built. Family solidarity has often been a priority compared to professional solidarities. Also, the researchers continue, this is explained by the fact that the level of social trust in others in Albanian society is weak. In the financial plan, the feeling of trust is mainly summarized within family relationships, between spouses, or between parents and children. In this context, decision-making is determined by the place and status of family members, while in the Albanian family, the will of the man has traditionally prevailed over that of his wife. In the socio-cultural context, it seems that patriarchal norms are a strong barrier to achieving gender equality.

## 5. Discussions and conclusions

Gender norms continue to influence our daily lives, choices, and opportunities. Men are still widely seen as breadwinners and leaders, while women face subtle, yet pervasive, biases affecting their confidence, ambition, and safety. Although attitudes are slowly changing, dismantling gender stereotypes is fundamental for true equality (EIGE, 2025).

In Albania, journalism remains a female profession, while media management remains male. In the period 2007-2013, only 25% of women were in leadership positions in the media, compared to 75% of men (Marku, Fuga, 2020, p. 84). This trend seems to have remained unchanged over the years, as the most recent study conducted on the socio-professional status of journalists and journalism practices in the era of digital technologies and new media highlights that 'while female journalists are more numerous in number, it is observed that more male journalists are placed in leadership positions' (Marku, Fuga, 2025, p. 66).

Meanwhile, the findings of this study indicate that there is a significant level of dissatisfaction with salaries among journalists, with a slight difference by gender. Almost half of the female journalists surveyed (48.5%) express dissatisfaction with their salary, a slightly higher percentage compared to men (47.6%). At the same time, less than a third of female journalists declare that they are satisfied with the salary they receive. This dissatisfaction seems to be directly related to the level of salaries, as the data shows that female journalists tend to be paid less than their male colleagues. Furthermore, the gender pay gap becomes more evident at higher salary levels, suggesting that economic inequalities deepen as the professional hierarchy increases.

Another important dimension of inequality is related to overtime pay. The results of the study show that female journalists are more affected by unpaid work than men. Specifically, 57.6% of female journalists surveyed stated that they are not paid for overtime, while this percentage for men is 49.4%. These data show that beyond the differences in basic salary, there is also an inequality in remuneration for additional professional engagement, further deepening the gender gap in economic benefits within the media sector.

Regarding the perception of career advancement opportunities, the study evidences a clear difference between the genders. Male journalists appear more optimistic about their professional prospects, while almost half of female journalists (49.3%) consider advancement in the media company they work for difficult, compared to 39.5% of men who share the same perception. These results suggest that female journalists face greater structural and organizational barriers in developing their careers in the media.

At the same time, perceptions of the factors that influence career advancement differ by gender. About a third of female journalists emphasize

a combination of factors such as the quality of work, the ability to promote it, family support, social connections, obedience to superiors, and audience support. Meanwhile, for male journalists, the main factor is considered to be the quality of the journalist's work. This difference in perception also reflects the internal structure of the media, where although women constitute the majority in the audiovisual media, they remain under-represented in management positions. This underrepresentation at decision-making levels translates not only into more limited opportunities for advancement but also into lower salaries on average for female journalists.

Similarly, previous studies show that there are not many differences between the representation of women in public and private audiovisual media institutions. According to Kasmi (2026), 'gender equality is not yet a stable part of editorial policies, not even on national television' (p. 36). But how do we explain the fact that although women make up the majority in the journalism profession compared to men, this does not translate into their higher representation in leadership positions? This phenomenon, which is typical for the former communist countries of Central and Southeastern Europe, of which Albania is a part, is linked by various studies (Urbániková and Čaladi 2024; Worlds of Journalism Study [WJS], 2016; Culi, 2012; Funk & Mueller, 1993) to historical and political developments. These countries inherited the "emancipation of women," a policy propagated by the state in the late 1940s and during the 1950s, the results of which are still felt today. In communist countries, women's equality in society was guaranteed by law. According to the policies of the time, both men and women had equal rights in education and consequently in the labor market, where one of the main objectives was the full employment of women in paid work. In this context, "rather than being a result of a grassroots feminist movement, the high proportion of women journalists is a historical remnant of the state-sponsored women's emancipation project that began under the communist regime" (Urbániková & Čaladi 2024, p. 18).

Advancing women's economic participation is a key driver of growth and job creation. Global estimates suggest that reducing gender gaps in labor force participation would generate increases in GDP of 15 to 20 percent for many economies, with the largest gains going to regions where women's labor is most constrained (World Bank, 2026).

While more women have joined the workforce in the last 10 years, their access to managerial positions, information and communication technology, and other higher-paid positions remains limited (EIGE, 2025). Women are often excluded from leadership positions in media organizations, making it difficult for them to have their voices heard and advance in their careers (Dhiman, 2023). The lack of female leadership demonstrates the vertical gender divide: the concentration of women at the lower levels of the journalism profession, which translates into lower salaries. In Albania, according to INSTAT (2025), at the national level, the gender pay gap is 4.9%. Men earn an average gross monthly wage 4.9% higher than women.

Compared to the previous year, the gap decreased by 1.3 percentage points (INSTAT, 2025). But these figures vary from one sector of the economy to another. In the case of the media sector, the findings show that the gender pay gap remains relatively high. Women journalists have lower salaries compared to their male colleagues, are not paid for overtime, and are consequently more dissatisfied. Research shows this gap in career progression could be narrowed if childcare and flexible working policies were implemented (Kassova, 2020). Women's education and academic success often do not translate into equal job opportunities, career advancement, or equal pay.

Can technology and AI help reduce gender inequalities in the workplace? Studies show that AI can help reduce gender inequalities in the workplace, but at the same time, it can deepen existing inequalities. According to Kassova (2020), technological advancements are a double-edged sword. Technological advancements offer women journalists the opportunity to transcend existing male-dominated organizational structures. Social media has the potential to boost women's news consumption and to exponentially magnify the impact of movements for women's equality. However, social media can also entrench gender stereotypes and destroy the lives of journalists, more often women, through persistent harassment on a large scale. In newsrooms, the growth of male-dominated digital roles could exacerbate gender inequality. Meanwhile, artificial intelligence (AI) technologies will continue to affect women's opportunities for work and their position, status, and treatment in the workplace. To close gender gaps, women require equal opportunity to access the resources, training, and skills they need to thrive in the workplace of tomorrow. That means access to education, reskilling, and upskilling for the jobs of the future. Societies should continue to support women entering science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and AI jobs and strive to close the gender gaps in these fields (UNESCO, OECD & IDB, 2022).

As for the regulatory framework, in Albania, overall, the employment and gender policy-making structure has been slimmed down since 2017 in both size and capacity, and reforms are continuing in employment policies. In 2021, only a few dedicated departments within the Ministry of Finance and Economy and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection work on employment and gender policies, as compared to the previous dedicated ministry for employment policies, vocational education and training (VET), and social protection. These changes have limited the capacity to develop new strategies to achieve increased employability of women and men in the economy and enhance gender-positive policy approaches (Topi, 2022, p. 13). However, recent years have been characterized by legal improvements aimed at the representation of women in labor organizations (positive discrimination/gender quotas, etc.), while studies show that the key to success lies in the implementation of legislation, since gender equality is not simply a matter of numbers but also requires qualitative representation. In this context, the findings suggest that to achieve gender equality, media

organizations need to provide resources, support, and accountability mechanisms that enable women journalists to reach leadership positions and, consequently, narrow the gender pay gap.

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