

"PENNSKAFTEN"  
Female Journalists in Sweden  
Monica Löfgren Nilsson  
Arbetsrapport nr 51  
1995

The 1995 Convention of the  
Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication  
Washington, August, 9-12, 1995

ISSN 1101-4679



## Introduction

Women today constitute about 45 percent of the journalistic workforce in Sweden. They can be found working in various kinds of positions throughout the media, but it cannot be said that journalism has reached a stage of total equality with regard to gender.

This rather high percentage of women, one that places Sweden above the international average<sup>1</sup>, has of course not always been the case. For a long time, journalism was a profession dominated by men, and it was not until the 1960s that women started to participate on a larger scale. The tradition of female publicists and journalists dates back to the 17th and 18th centuries, however, with the birth of the 'modern' female journalist taking place in the beginning of this century.

In this paper a brief description of the predecessors will be given, followed by a group portrait of female journalists in the workforce today: Who are they? Where and with what do they work? Why did they choose journalism as profession? And what are their opinions about journalistic ideals and news values? The paper will conclude with a brief discussion of the current working situation of female journalists.

The basic data on today's Swedish journalist comes from three large surveys conducted in Sweden over the past six years. A description of the surveys can be found in the Appendix, along with tables.

## The Predecessors

The first known female publicist in Sweden has no name. She is referred to as the "widow of the printer Niclas Wankijf". In the last years of the 17th century, she edited *Ordinarie Stockholmske Posttidener*, the first newspaper in Sweden, established in 1645. Several 'printer's widows' followed in her footsteps during the 18th century. These women inherited printing works and newspapers from their husbands. They took over the publishing rights and occasionally became chief editors.

The first female journalist in Sweden is probably Margareta Momma. During the winter of 1738-39, Momma wrote for and edited the periodical *Conversations between the Shadow of Argi and the Shadow of an Unknown Woman*. She too, was married to a printer, and a few years later their daughter, Elsa, also started to write and edit periodicals. Elsa worked during the middle and late 18th century<sup>2</sup>.

It was in the 18th century that the first women's periodicals appeared in Sweden. The women who edited and wrote for these periodicals were experienced letterwriters,

---

<sup>1</sup> World Communication Report.

<sup>2</sup> Margareta Momma also did the layout on the newspaper *Stockholm Gazette*, and her daughter Elsa, who, like her mother, married a bookprinter, did the layout for *Stockholm Weeklies 1774-79* (Berger 1977).

and they sometimes delivered rather feministic attacks<sup>3</sup>. This is probably the first time that the words and beliefs of women went into print without being censored.

During the 19th century the appearance of women in newspaper production was sporadic. They tended to work for larger newspapers as literary and theatrical critics and serial story writers. Wendela Hebbe is probably the best-known female journalist of this period. Her articles about poverty in Stockholm had a great impact on public opinion, spurring some readers to begin helping families in distress. In addition to this, there are also examples of women working with foreign news and as chief editors at this time<sup>4</sup>.

In the late 19th century the increasing need for translators of foreign news articles and other material made it possible for women to enter journalism in a new way. Women from the bourgeoisie, well-educated in languages, were placed at the foreign newsdesks and sometimes worked as proof-readers. These women provided cheap labor, and there were very few other job opportunities for them at the time. Quite soon, however, they started to write and get both credit and attention for their work. For example, the union paper, *Journalisten* (The Journalist), wrote articles about them when they became union members. However, most of them only worked for a few years and left the newspapers once they got married<sup>5</sup>.

### The Birth of the 'Pennskaft'

In October 1910, the Swedish author Elin Wägner published her novel *Pennskaftet* (The Penholder). The novel is about a young female journalist, the penholder, who fought for women's right to vote. Elin Wägner worked as a journalist herself, and the book might be considered the starting-point for a new breed of female journalists. Wägner and her female journalist friends were suffragettes and were involved in peace issues. Many of them became famous for their journalism. One of the first to break with the conventions of the time was Ester Blenda Nordström, who published a controversial article series entitled *En piga bland pigor* (A Maid among Maids) in 1914. At the age of 23, she had gone 'under cover' to work as a maid at a farm, where she wrote about daily-life on the countryside. This was something quite new in Swedish journalism, both in terms of presentation and working method<sup>6</sup>.

---

<sup>3</sup> There are nine known periodicals from this early period, four of them edited by women, five by men. A close reading of the articles shows that the periodicals edited by men recommended mildness and modesty as an ideal for women. The female editors, on the other hand, sometimes delivered rather feministic attacks and wrote in a drastic and biting style (Berger, 1977).

<sup>4</sup> Wendela Hebbe wrote her stories about people in distress in the middle of the 17th century. Hebbe was the mistress of Lars Hierta, chief editor of *Aftonbladet*, where she worked. During this period she had quite an influence on the newspaper (Berger, 1977). Eva Braag was employed at *Göteborgs Handels och Sjöfartstidning* in 1866 as a literary critic. She worked for 30 years and often wrote with a social perspective in her serial novels and reviews. Braag also covered international issues. One example is her coverage and analysis of the situation in the Balkans, in which she strongly favored the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Braag also worked on a temporary basis as chief editor of *Göteborgs Handels och Sjöfartstidning*. She was offered a permanent job as chief editor of *Wenersborgs-Posten*, an offer she for some unknown reason turned down (Erba-Odescalchi and Pilborg, 1993).

<sup>5</sup> Berger, 1977.

<sup>6</sup> Stål, 1995. Ester Blenda Nordström carefully planned her mission and cover together with some friends. When the articles were published, an ethical debate was triggered. The farmer, who was accused of exploitation, strongly resented to the journalistic method, which became the focus of the debate.

Elin Wägner, Ester Blenda Nordström and many of the other well-known 'penholders' worked during the period 1910-1930. They became important role models for a young generation of girls to follow. These women clearly demonstrated that journalistic skills were not gender-related, but journalism was still a male profession, and the 'penholders' were considered to be glimmering exceptions to their gender<sup>7</sup>.

### The Second Generation of 'Penholders'

During the period 1930-1960 a second generation of 'penholders' took over. Most of these women remained in the field after they got married, in spite of the burden of double labor and in spite of the long working hours. In the 1930's, women's pages and columns existed in almost every newspaper, and women were of course considered well-suited to fill them. This meant that they had little time for other types of assignments. Women became excluded from the foreign desk. The reaction came in the 1940's, when women criticized the patronizing male attitude toward their work and the fact that only certain issues were considered appropriate for women (such as school and health care)<sup>8</sup>. Eventually things started to change, but the number of female journalists did not increase significantly. By the late 1950's, only one out of ten journalists were women.

### The Onslaught

The 'real' onslaught of women started in the 1960's, when the proportion of women nearly doubled<sup>9</sup>. There are several explanations for this. First of all, the establishment of journalistic education in 1959 played an important role. The schools offered a new way for women to enter journalism, and women have often constituted a majority among applicants<sup>10</sup>. A second factor is the expansion of the media sector which took place during the 1960's and 1970's, most notably in regard to radio and television. The number of journalists grew rapidly, and this development also opened doors for women. Finally, the debate about gender discrimination gathered speed in the 1960's, which resulted in a greater awareness of existing inequalities.

Many of the best-known Swedish female journalists from the 1960's and 1970's were deeply involved in social welfare issues and contributed to the development of journalism in this area. Consumers issues, earlier classified under the rather patronizing name of 'saucepan journalism', also became an important, well-established field. But women also started to enter other areas of journalism, and the proportion of women has been rising steadily ever since. Taken together, this group might be viewed as the third generation of 'penholders', and some of them can still be found in today's female workforce.

---

<sup>7</sup> Furhoff et al, 1970.

<sup>8</sup> Berger, 1977.

<sup>9</sup> Furhoff et al, 1970; Berger, 1977.

<sup>10</sup> In the fall of 1959 the *Journalistinstitut* was established in Stockholm, with different media organizations as financiers. In 1962 the second *Journalistinstitut* was established in Göteborg and both schools were nationalized. In 1967 the program was extended to two-years and was named *Journalisthögskolan* (College of Journalism). In 1977 the program was integrated into the university system and in 1989 it was extended to three-years.

## Female Journalists in the 1990's

As the above discussion has shown, female journalists were rare exceptions in a male-dominated world until the 1960's. The predecessors of today's female journalists mostly came from wealthy families, were well-educated (especially in languages), often worked in connection with a range of social issues, and performed rather qualified tasks.

So the questions remains - what is the situation of female journalists in the 1990's? Were do they come from, what do they do, and why did they chose to become journalists in the first place? The present section will provide some answers to these questions.

### Where Do They Come From? Social Background

Today's female journalists are, like their predecessors, well educated. Nine out of ten have some kind of higher education, as compared to seven out of ten male journalists. Fifty six percent of the women working today have an education in journalism, compared to only 38 percent of their male colleagues. Women are also more likely to have combined an education in journalism with other university studies. The figures clearly show that while men seem to be able to enter journalism through channels other than education, this is hardly the case for women.

-----  
Figure 1 around here  
-----

Female journalists are mainly recruited among today's 'bourgeoisie'. Two thirds of them come from upper middle or middle class families. While four out of ten men had their roots in the working class in 1989, only two out of ten women had this background. However, the differences in this respect seem to decrease over time. Women are also more likely than men to come from the three metropolitan areas in Sweden<sup>11</sup>.

Most of the female journalists in Sweden display considerable cultural interests. They read fiction, attend theater, draw, and write (diaries and poetry) more often than their male counterparts. They also view more cultural programs on television and read more cultural articles in the newspaper<sup>12</sup>.

To summarize, female journalists in Sweden appear to possess, in the words of French sociologist Bourdieu, a large cultural capital. And in this respect they differ from their male colleagues, who have less education, are more likely to come from the working class, and do not display as much interest in cultural activities<sup>13</sup>.

---

<sup>11</sup> Table 2 and 3 in the Appendix.

<sup>12</sup> Table 4 and 5 in the Appendix.

<sup>13</sup> One possible conclusion from this description is that while the onslaught of women in journalism is certainly a success in terms of equality between sexes, it has not been quite such a success in terms of social equality. The perspective of working class women, as media critics often point out, continues to appear relatively seldom.

## What Do They Do? Medium and Conditions of Employment

When women began to fill the desks inside the media in the 1960's, many found themselves working in the capital city of Stockholm. This is still the case, as almost half of the country's female journalists work in Stockholm, compared to only one third of the male journalists. Consequently, women are slightly underrepresented in local and provincial newspapers<sup>14</sup>.

-----  
Figure 2 around here  
-----

There are three street-purchase tabloids in Sweden, and in these only three out of ten journalists are women. The tabloids have long been considered to be 'guy turf', but in early 1995 the female tabloid journalists collectively revolted against the conditions in their papers. As a result, they managed to get some women into leading positions<sup>15</sup>.

Looking at news journalists only, the highest percent of women are found in radio and television, while the lowest percentage is again found among the local and provincial newspapers. In general, however, it appears that women do not enter the newsrooms to the same degree as men<sup>16</sup>.

While 91 percent of all male journalists are employed on a permanent basis, the figure for women is 84 percent. In television and radio, as many as 25 percent of the women are temporarily employed. This partly reflects the fact that many young women have recently graduated and have not yet been able to establish themselves in the job market. Also, there is a tendency to fill temporary positions with women in order to balance the gender scales. This, however, is not a full explanation, since 45 percent of the women working in provincial television news hold temporary positions, while there are no such differences in the provincial newspapers, for example<sup>17</sup>.

Twenty three percent of all female journalists work part-time, mostly in the newspapers, as compared to 9 percent of the men<sup>18</sup>. The Swedish childcare system is an important factor since it provides the possibility for women to work full-time if they want to.

There has been an increase of women in leadership positions during the last few years. In 1989, two out of ten journalists in management positions were women, while today this figure has risen to four out of ten. The increase is partly a result of

---

<sup>14</sup> Table 6 and 7 in the Appendix.

<sup>15</sup> This revolt was unique in the sense that the women in Sweden's three tabloids acted *together* this time. But the conditions had been discussed before, for example in *Dokumentet* (The Document), which was written by the female journalists at *Aftonbladet*. The Document describes the journalism and working conditions at *Aftonbladet*.

<sup>16</sup> Table 8 in the Appendix. The 'over-representation' of women in radio and television might partly be the result of the work with equality questions that have been going on at the public-owned radio and broadcasting company, SR, in organized forms since 1980.

<sup>17</sup> Table 10 and 11 in the Appendix.

<sup>18</sup> Table 12 in the Appendix.

deliberate efforts to increase the amount of women. However, the effects are mainly seen in lower and in middle management positions.

-----  
Figure 3 around here  
-----

About a third of Sweden's news reporters are specialized, having their own responsibilities for a certain subject matter. Women and men are specialized to the same degree, though in somewhat different areas. The former so-called 'female' topics located in women's pages (education, childcare, medical/health care, consumers affairs, domestic affairs) have now been integrated into ordinary news. Women, however, continue to specialize in these areas to a much greater extent than men. The same pattern appears in assignments associated with daily news coverage<sup>19</sup>. However, more women are entering 'hard news' (men entering 'soft news' is not as prevalent), and today some of Sweden's most respected and important political reporters are women. The situation has certainly improved compared to 25 years ago, when 42 percent of the women specialized in 'housing and school'<sup>20</sup>.

### **Why Journalism? Motives, Ideals and News Values**

As we have seen, the 'onslaught' of female journalists started in the 1960's, with important role models dating back to the beginning of this century. But why did today's female journalists choose to enter the media arena? According to the data, the most common motive for women to become journalists is the belief that journalism offers opportunities for self-expression. In addition, they are attracted to the profession's relative independence and creativity (job 'freedom'), as well as the opportunity to illuminate injustices in society (especially important for the women with an education in journalism). While men also rate self-expression (though not nearly to the same extent as women) and 'job freedom' as important reasons, working with the news itself seems to be a more important aspect for them than it is for women.

-----  
Figure 4 around here  
-----

Writing and expression seem to be much more connected with expressing news, facts and events for male journalists, while for women these dimensions are more closely tied to personal expression. Many of the female journalists chose their profession as a means to develop as individuals and/or as an outgrowth of their involvement in social issues<sup>21</sup>. This is certainly also true for some of the male journalists, particularly younger males with a journalism education.

---

<sup>19</sup> Table 13 and table 14 in the Appendix

<sup>20</sup> Furhoff et al, 1970. The figure reflects all specialized reporters, not only news reporters. There are, however, explanations for the decreasing specialization in this area. This kind of coverage - school, childcare, and domestic issues - are today considered general topics and are no longer hidden in special women's pages.

<sup>21</sup> Palme, 1990.



The high motivational value that female journalists place on influencing public opinion is further reinforced by their reflections on journalistic ideals and news values. Starting with ideals, the Swedish journalists believe that a journalist should see him/herself as a scrutinizer of the power elite and as someone who can explain complex phenomena in a comprehensive manner<sup>22</sup>.

-----  
Figure 5 around here  
-----

Men and women agree upon these ideals, but women are more likely than men to stress that a journalist should *stimulate new thoughts and ideas*, should be a *critic of injustices in society* and should be able to *convey a sense of experience and identification*. Furthermore, while many journalists in Sweden start out with the attempt to change the world, or at least to have some kind of impact on the audience, the figure above shows that this is especially true in the case of female journalists<sup>23</sup>.

The same tendency appears with regard to journalists' judgements about news values. News that have *consequences in people's everyday life*, that *highlight injustices in society* and that *broaden people's insights and knowledge about society* are preferred. This is the kind of news that all journalists would like to see more of, but since they are not, according to the journalists themselves, given very much importance in daily practice, it goes without saying that the perceived gap between ideal and actual (operational) news values is enormous in this respect. Similarly, Swedish journalists think that news which is dramatic, sensational, and focussed on the elite are given far too much attention in the daily news<sup>24</sup>.

-----  
Figure 6 around here  
-----

While both men and women see the news values shown above as very important, women stress them more, which again might be seen as a manifestation of the importance of influencing of the public. Furthermore, the fact that the gap between ideal and perceived reality in this respect is larger among women than among men might offer one explanation as to why women show less interest in working with news<sup>25</sup>.

Even though female and male journalists differ in terms of their motives for becoming journalists as well as journalistic ideals and news values, it is important at this point to stress that they also share the same values to a large extent. The differences are interesting to point out, however, when the historical context has been taken in to account.

---

<sup>22</sup> Statistics from Melin, 1991.

<sup>23</sup> For further analysis of role conception see Melin, 1995

<sup>24</sup> Table 17 in the Appendix.

<sup>25</sup> Löfgren Nilsson, 1992.

Female journalists want to achieve something with the help of journalism, they see journalism as a tool to influence the public opinion. They became journalists because of this, because of their engagement in social issues and because they wanted to express themselves. And, like their predecessors, they are well-educated women.

It appears that journalism has always been a cultural strategy for women who were not allowed to speak elsewhere. Even though no surveys were conducted in the beginning of this century when the modern female journalist was born, biographies and letters from the early 'penholders' suggest that they would have responded in much the same way as today's female journalists.

## The Gender Debate

As mentioned above, the debate about gender discrimination in journalism gathered speed in the 1960's. It began officially in 1961 with an article written by Sven Sandstedt in *Svenska Dagbladet*. He pointed out that women had constituted only 12-15 percent of working journalists for a long time, and he saw conventional thinking among men as the reason. According to Sandstedt, the fact that women had constituted a clear majority among the applicants to the first Institute for Journalism, which started in 1959, proved that there could be no shortage of qualified women.

The debate continued with varying intensity while the proportion of women started to grow. Working conditions, discrimination and structural issues were discussed, and it was pointed out that male journalists advanced more quickly and more easily, even if they had both less experience and education. In 1976, one angry young woman examined what had happened to a group of students ten years after graduating from journalism school. The picture was rather depressing. Out of thirteen male students, eight were in management positions (three in advertising agencies), one worked as a foreign correspondent, and two were journalistic ambassadors. Out of twenty one female students, seventeen were working as reporters, two were in lower management positions, one worked as a research assistant and one as a proof-reader<sup>26</sup>. Although the situation has certainly improved since then, this overall tendency persists and women are still under-represented in middle and top management positions in the media.

Female journalists today *are* nonetheless in a better situation than their sisters of the 1960's and 1970's, and recent study of news reporters shows that most of them experience a greater sense of community than their male counterparts. They do, however, feel more controlled than men, experiencing more problems getting support for their ideas and experiencing greater control from management<sup>27</sup>. Thus far their calls for organizational reform and rotated leadership have gained no sympathy, despite the fact that the working culture and climate are still felt to be somewhat male-dominated<sup>28</sup>.

---

<sup>26</sup> Berger, 1977.

<sup>27</sup> Table 18 in the Appendix, Löfgren Nilsson, 1993.

<sup>28</sup> The term used to describe this working culture is the Swedish word 'grabbigt', which, loosely translated, means 'guy-ish' and conveys a sense of an old boy's club. Interestingly, women and men define this word somewhat differently. While men describe it in terms of workplace and professional language and jargon,

Other items on the 'gender agenda' concern news values, one manifestation being the issue of subject matter specialization. For example, the relative priority and status of a specialization in 'police and law' over 'social issues' and 'education' has been criticized. While nearly every paper has at least one reporter specializing in 'police and law', this is rarely the case for the two other areas, despite the fact that readership is equal if not greater in the latter areas and, as the newsday study suggests, there tends to be more actual coverage of the latter as well. Within media organization, police and law reporters tend to possess greater autonomy relative to those specializing in 'social issues' and 'education', who are sometimes forced to cover a multitude of other issues.

Taking a brief look at the actual content of the media, studies show that men appear more frequently than women, particularly in the news sections. When women do appear, they are more likely to do so as private persons, whereas men more often speak as professionals. Comparisons with statistics from the labor market clearly show that there is no structural reason for this under-representation of women. Unfortunately, the stereotype of the hard-working, determined man and the beautiful, beckoning woman still meets the eyes of the Swedish audience<sup>29</sup>. It appears that the awareness of equality issues is greater inside the media's *institutions* than it is inside the media's *output*.

In conclusion, despite considerable improvement in matters of equality, most notably in quantitative terms, the debate in Sweden continues with perhaps more intensity now than even five years ago. The earlier-mentioned discussion of the tabloid journalists' revolt is one example<sup>30</sup>. Another important example, with wider socio-political ramifications, is the 'threat' posed by a group of prominent feminists (key members of whom were journalists and writers) to start a women's party and run candidates in the 1994 national elections<sup>31</sup>. The constant threat of a women's party resulted in rotated voting lists for all other parties, and today women occupy nearly half the seats of parliament. Obviously, a great deal of progress has been made in establishing gender equality in Sweden, but as this brief account has hopefully pointed out, the debate and the issues are complex and multi-dimensional, thus the story is far from over.

---

women tend to add the dimension of power and structural relations. Thus for women the term 'grabbigt' reflects not only 'guy talk' but also the 'good old boy network' and its implications.

<sup>29</sup> Edström and Jacobsson, 1994.

<sup>30</sup> Today the evening tabloid *Expressen* has a female chief editor and a female news editor. The evening tabloid *Aftonbladet* placed two women in leading positions after the revolt. The third evening tabloid, *GT/Idag*, is undergoing a reorganisation and it remains to be seen whether there will be any results.

<sup>31</sup> Maria Pia Boethius, journalist and author, Ebba Bratt Wittström, literature researcher, and Agneta Stark, economist, together with friends formed a network called the *support stockings* (a pun referring to feminists of the 1970's who were called the 'red stockings'). Their aim was to put women's issues on the political agenda during the 1994 election campaign. Initially there was no intention to form a party, but some journalists introduced the idea and an opinion poll was taken by a television show. The results showed considerable support for the non-existing, hypothetical party, and later on Boethius and her friends threatened that if nothing happened with women's representation in other parties, that they would in fact form a women's party. The existing parties then rotated their election slate candidates, one woman for every man.



## References

- Berger, M (1977) Pennskaft - Kvinnliga journalister i svensk dagspress 1690-1975 (The Penholders - Female Journalists in Swedish Newspapers 1690-1975) P A Nordstedt & Söners förlag, Stockholm
- Brinkmo, B-M and Taws, A (1991) Manliga och kvinnliga bevakningsområden - Finns de? (Male and Female Topics - Do they exist?) Projektarbete i Informationsteknik, Institutionen för journalistik och masskommunikation, Göteborgs Universitet
- Edström, M and Jacobsson, M (1994) Massmediernas enfaldiga typer (The Foolish Stereotypes of Mass Media) Arbetsrapport nr 38, Institutionen för journalistik och masskommunikation, Göteborgs universitet
- Erba-Odescalchi, M and Pilborg, L (1993) Signaturen A (Signature A) Journalisthögskolan, Institutionen för journalistik och masskommunikation, Göteborgs Universitet
- Furhoff et al (1970) Journalistkåren i Sverige (Journalists in Sweden) Almqvist & Wiksell Förlag, Stockholm
- Larsson, L-Å (1994) 'Mediernas bevakning av lokal offentlig verksamhet' (Media Coverage of the Local Public Sector) Norhstedt (red) En nyhetsdag - Svenska nyhetsredaktioners organisation, reportrar och uppdrag (A Newsday) Projektet Journalistikens normer, Högskolan Örebro
- Lorentzon, U-C and Staxäng, E (1992) Vad skriver kvinnliga journalister om? (What do Female Journalists Write About?) Projektarbetet i Informationsteknik, Institutionen för Journalistik och Masskommunikation, Göteborgs Universitet
- Löfgren, M (1991) 'Kvinnor i journalistiken' (Women in Journalism) in Kvinnoperspektiv på masskommunikationsforskningen (Women's Perspectives on Mass Communication Research) Rapport 22, JÄMFO, Stockholm
- Löfgren Nilsson, M (1992) Kvinnligt, manligt, journalistiskt -journalisters syn på nyhetsvärdering (Female, Male, Journalistic - Journalistic Opinions on News Values) Arbetsrapport nr 22, Institutionen för journalistik och masskommunikation, Göteborgs universitet
- Löfgren Nilsson, M (1993) Klimat och kön (Climate and Gender) Arbetsrapport nr 30, Institutionen för journalistik och masskommunikation, Göteborgs universitet
- Löfgren Nilsson, M (1994) 'En dag på redaktionen - mäns och kvinnors arbete' (A Day in the Newsroom - Men and Women at Work) in Norhstedt (red) En nyhetsdag - Svenska nyhetsredaktioners organisation, reportrar och uppdrag (A Newsday) Projektet Journalistikens normer, Högskolan Örebro
- Melin, M (1991) 'Journalisternas syn på sin yrkesroll' (Role Conception among Journalists) in Weibull et al Svenska journalister-ett grupporträtt (Swedish Journalists - A Groupportrait) Tidens förlag, Stockholm
- Melin, M (1995) Female Educators and Male Craftsmen? The Professional Ideals Among Swedish Journalists, Arbetsrapport nr 44, Institutionen för journalistik och masskommunikation, Göteborgs universitet
- Norhstedt, S-A (1994) En nyhetsdag - Svenska nyhetsredaktioners organisation, reportrar och uppdrag (A Newsday) Projektet Journalistikens normer, Högskolan Örebro

Palme, M (1990) 'Personlighetsutveckling som social strategi - den kulturella medelklassens reproduktionsstrategier' (Personality development as a Social Strategy - the Reproduction Strategies of the Cultural Middle Class) in Dahlén and Rönnerberg (eds) Spelrum - en antologi om ungdoms- och populärkultur (Playroom - an Anthology of Youth and Popular Culture), Filmförlaget, Uppsala

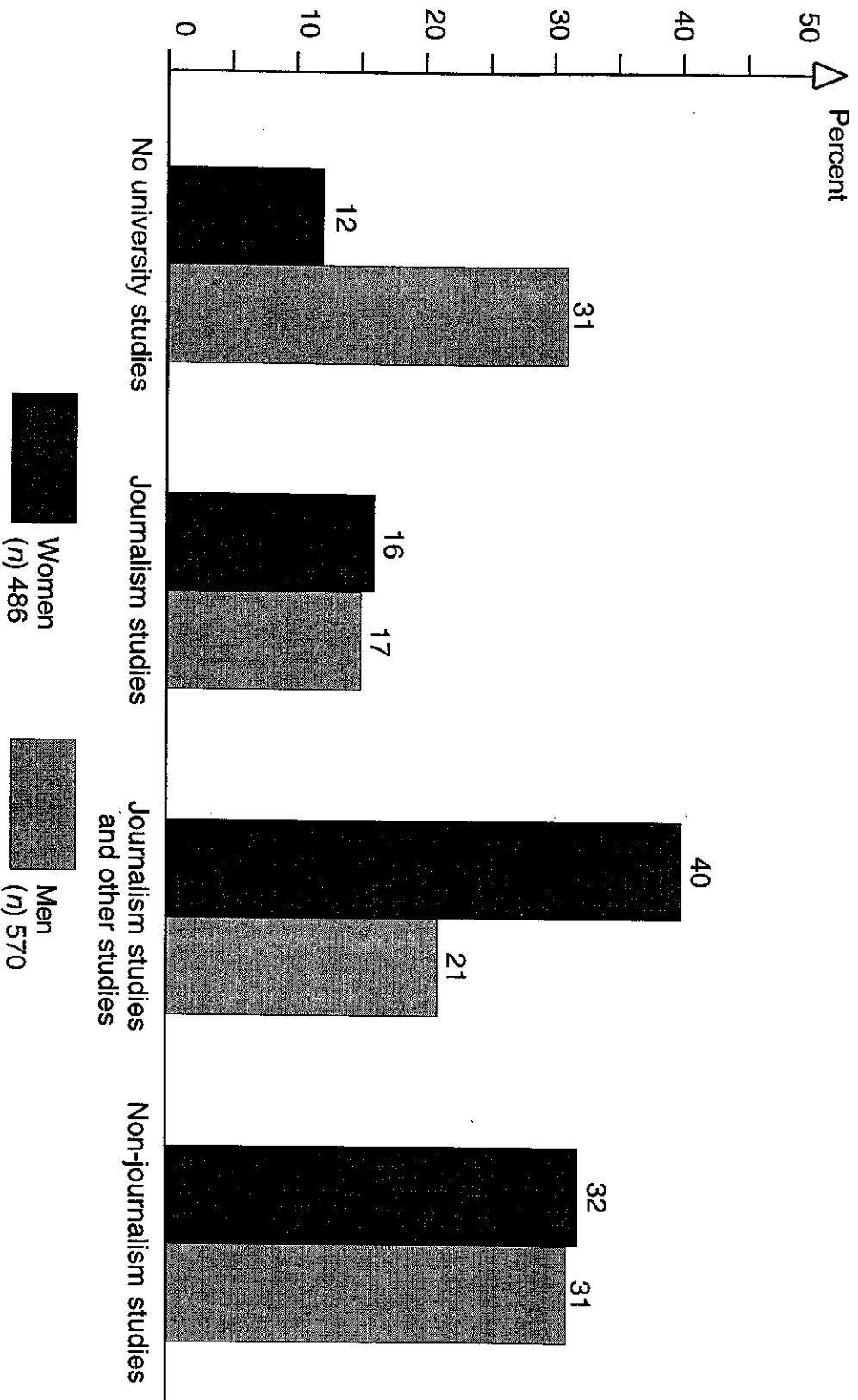
Stål, M (1995) Ett pennskaft som piga (A Penholder as a Maid) Institutionen för journalistik och masskommunikation, Göteborgs universitet

Weibull, L (ed) (1991) Svenska journalister - ett grupporträtt (Swedish Journalists - a Groupportrait) Tidens förlag, Stockholm

Weibull, L (1991a) 'Journalistisk rekrytering till svenska massmedier' (The Recruitment of Journalists into the Swedish Mass Media) In Weibull, L (ed) Svenska journalister - ett grupporträtt Tidens förlag, Stockholm

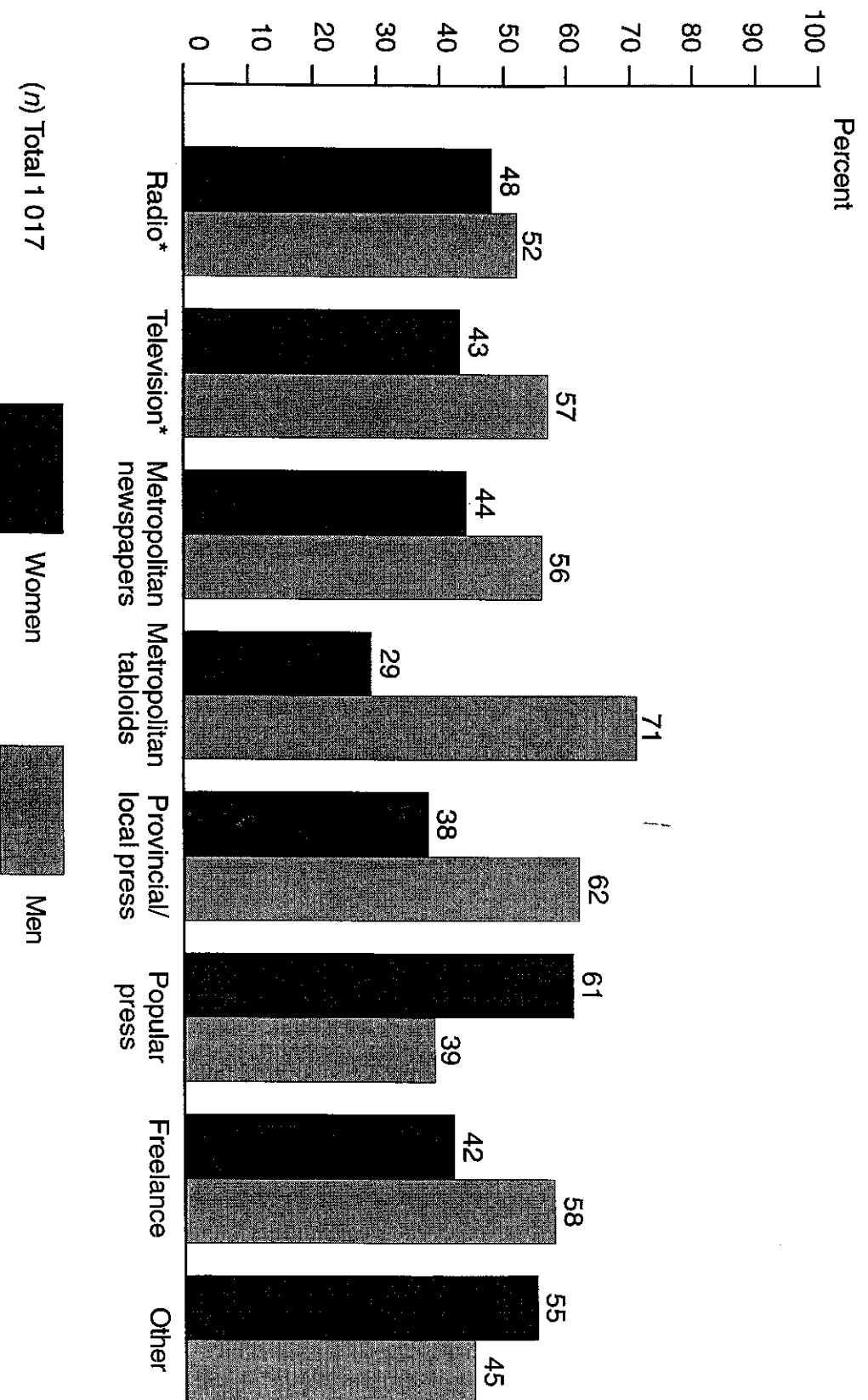
World Communication Report, UNESCO, Paris

**Figure 1 University studies among Swedish journalists according to gender, 1994 (percent)**



Comment: Statistics from *Journalist'94*.

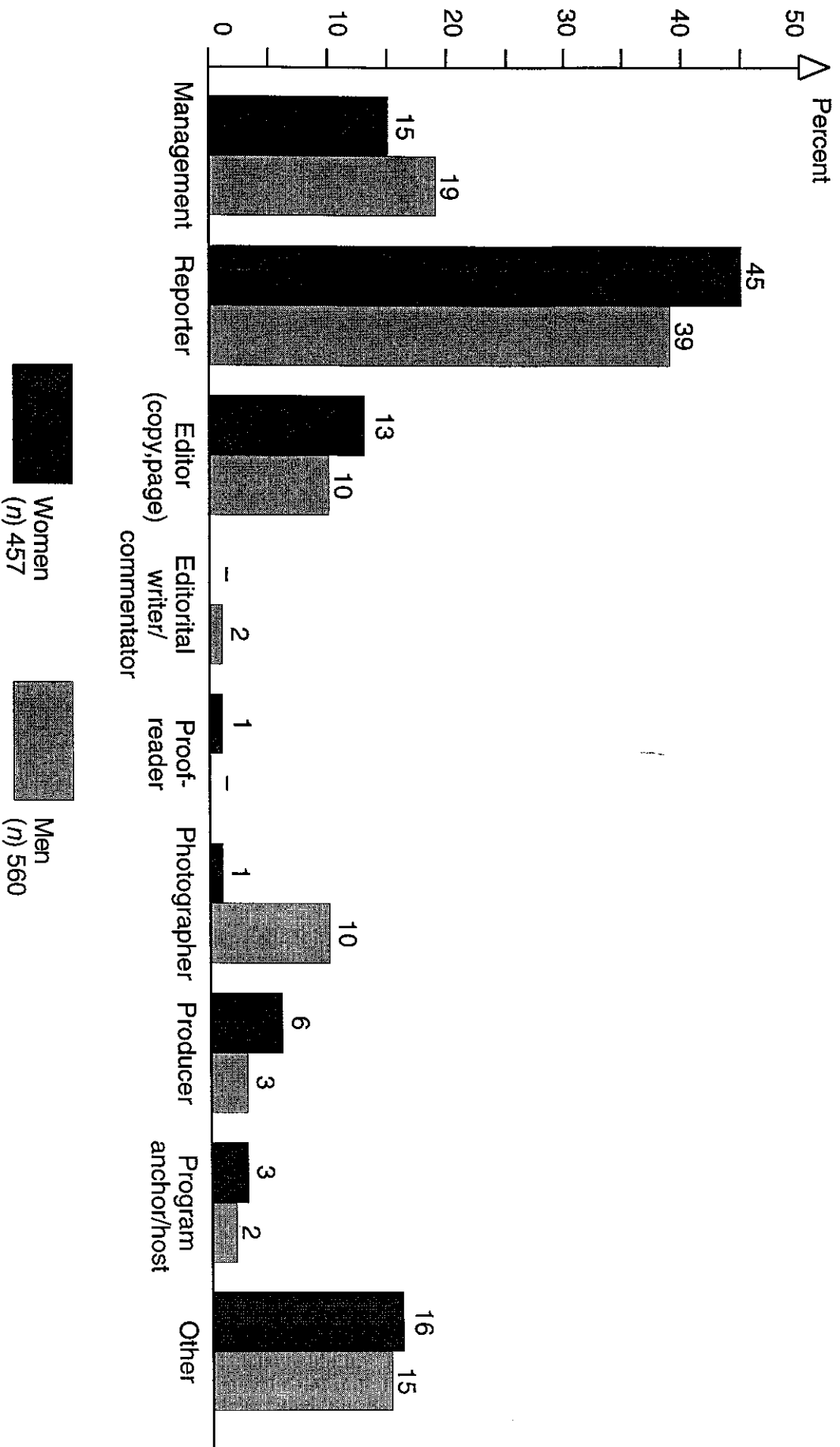
**Figure 2 Medium of employment according to gender, Swedish journalists, 1994 (percent)**



Comments: Radio and television figures refer only to public service channels. Statistics from *Journalist'94*.

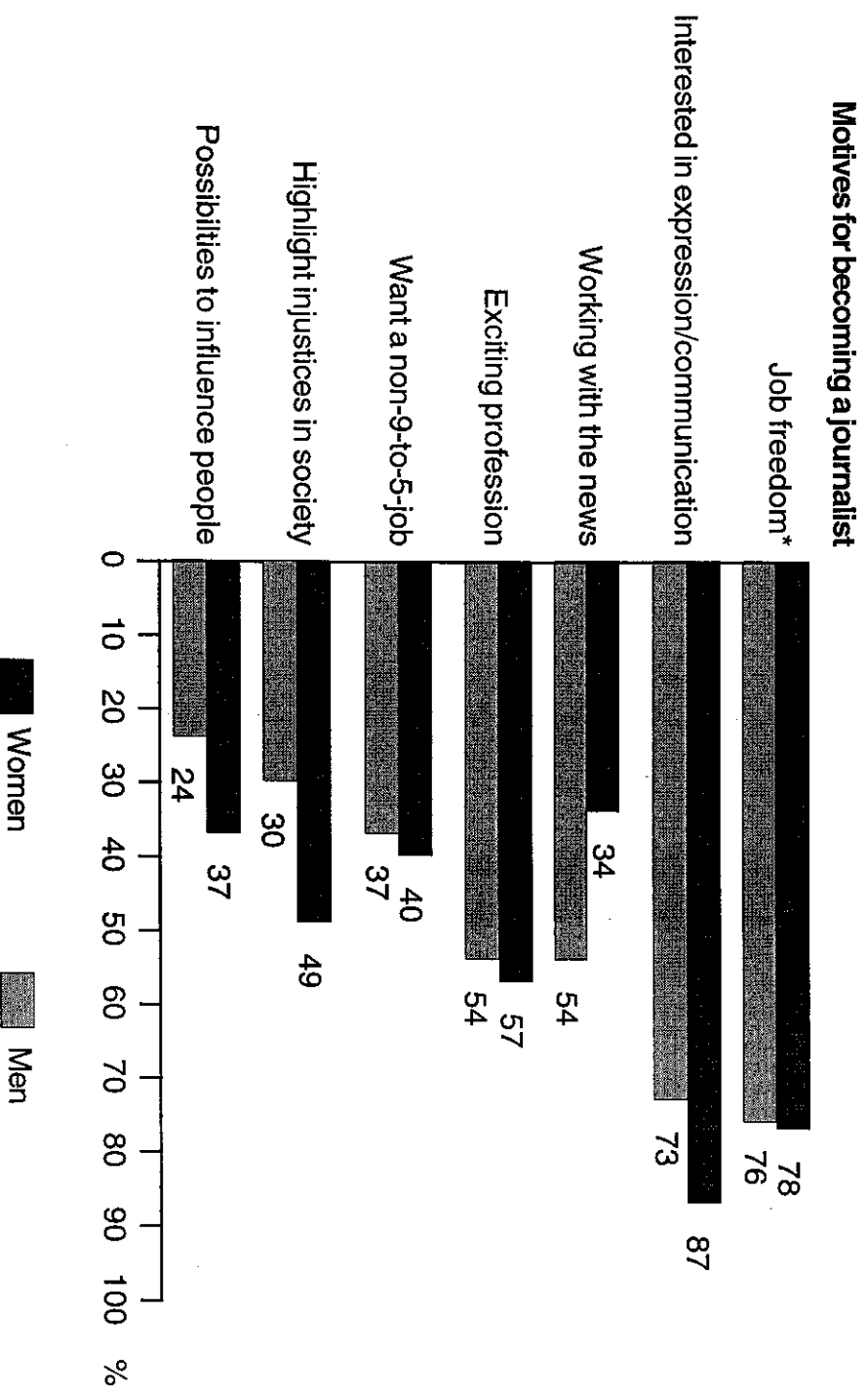


**Figure 3 Professional duties/functions according to gender, Swedish journalists, 1994 (percent)**



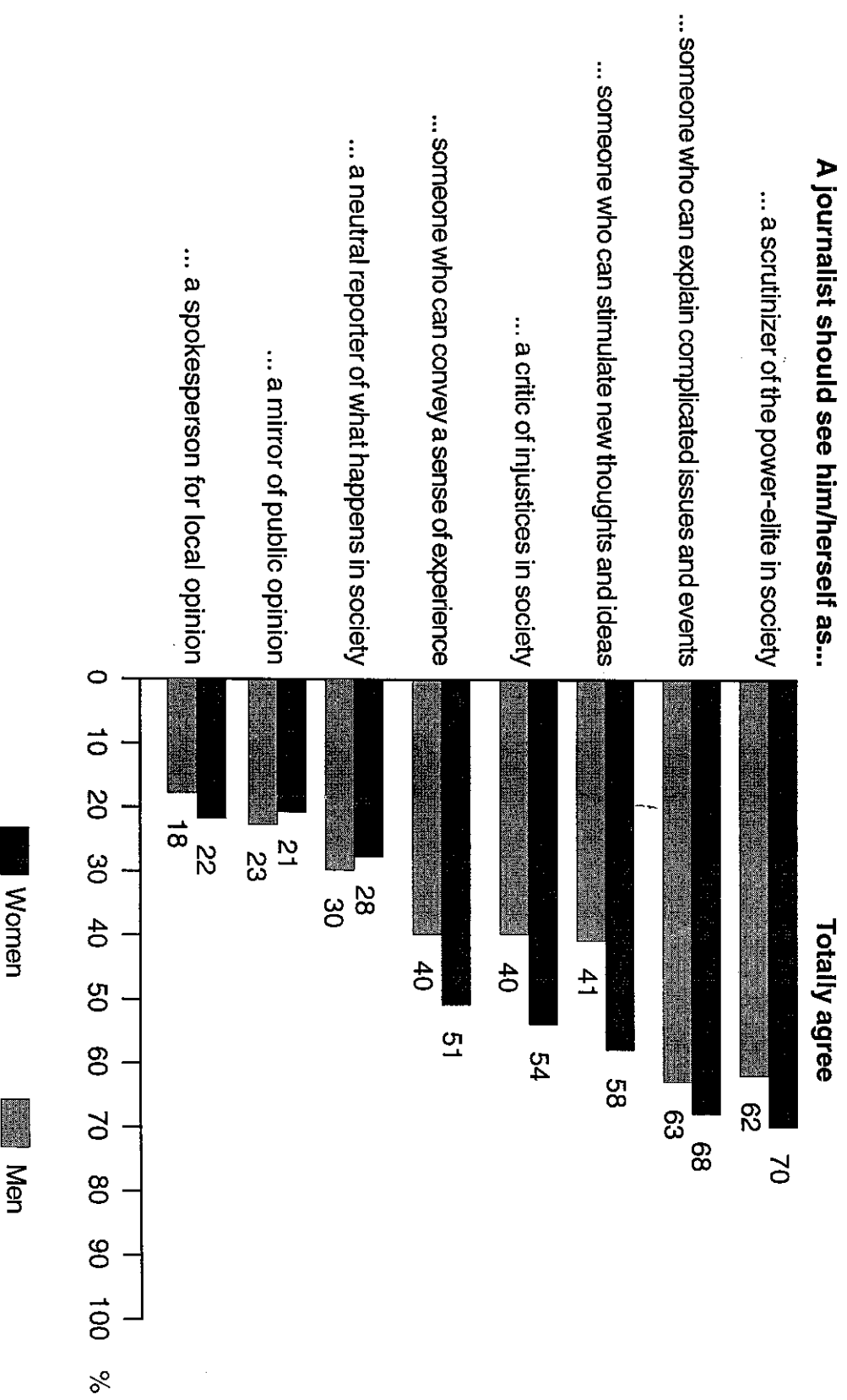
Comments: Statistics from *Journalist'94*.

**Figure 4 Journalists' motives for their choice of profession according to gender, Swedish journalists, 1994**  
(balanced percentages)



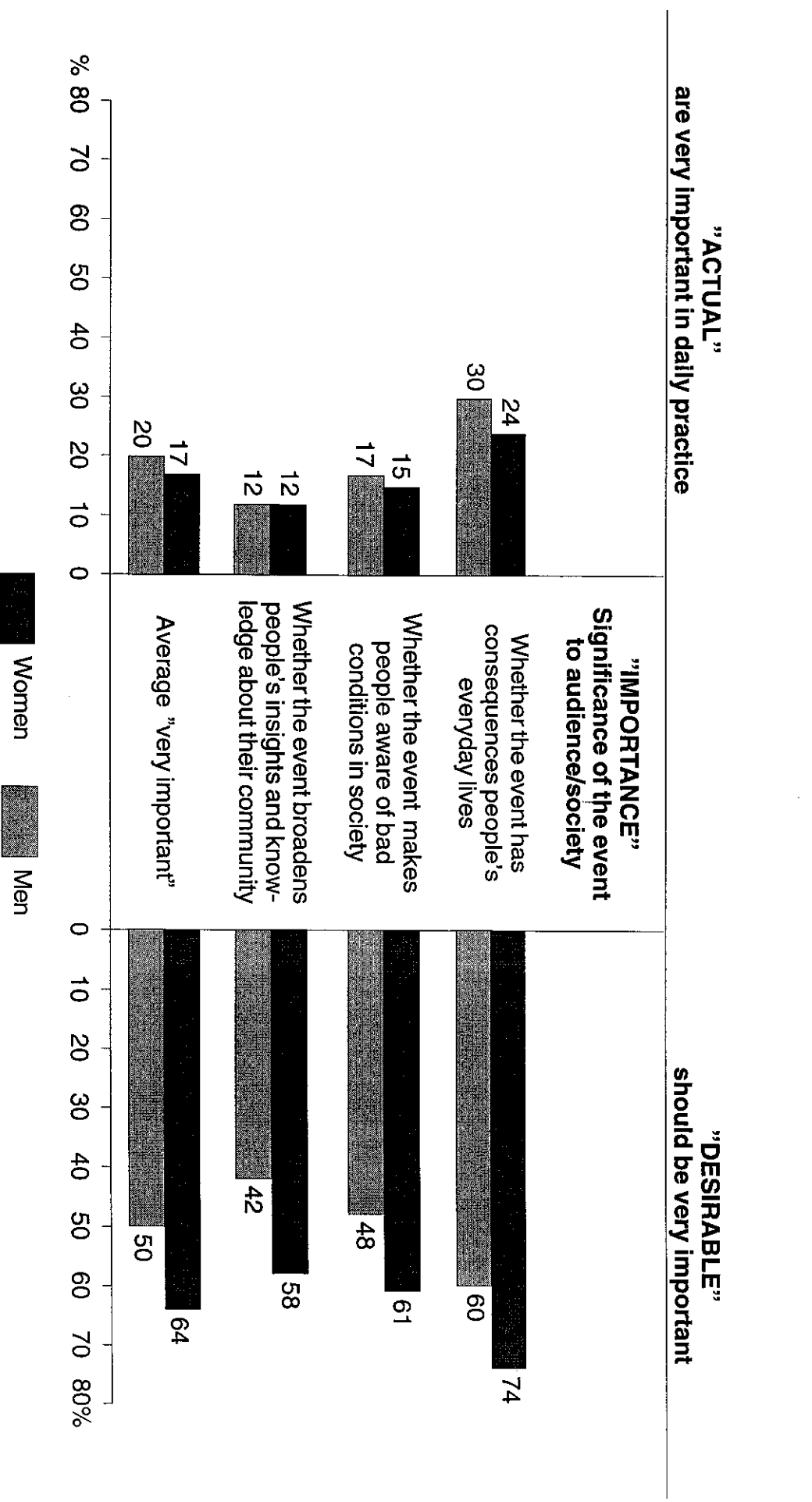
Comments: \* Meaning opportunities for independence and creativity. Statistics from *Journalist'94*.

**Figure 5 Journalists' role perceptions according to gender, Swedish journalists, 1989 (percent)**



Comment: Statistics from *Journalist'89*, published in Melin, 1991.

**Figure 6 "Desirable" versus "actual" news practice according to gender, Swedish journalists, 1989 (percent)**



Comment: The question was: *There are a many circumstances which affect whether an event is to be published in news media. What actual importance, according to Your experience, do the following things have? And what importance do You personally think they should have?* Answers were given on a five-point scale from *None at all* to *Great importance*. The percentage used in the table indicates those who answered *great importance*. Statistics from *Journalist'89* published in Lötfgren Nilsson, 1993.

## Appendix

The statistics in this appendix come from three large surveys: *Journalist'89*; *A Newsday 1992*, and; *Journalist'94*. What follows is a brief description of this material.

*Journalist '89* was carried out at the Department of Mass Communication, Göteborg University, during the autumn of 1989. A long questionnaire (62 questions) was sent out to 1,500 Swedish journalists. The respondent list was a random sample taken from the membership register of the Swedish Journalist Union (SJF). Since a vast majority of journalists are union members, the sample is representative of Swedish journalists. The response rate was 59 percent, which is a few percent lower than surveys involving the Swedish public at the time, *i.e.* an acceptable response rate. Given that the amount of people who actively refused to answer was low, and that those who replied were not particularly skewed relative to the membership register, the representativity of the sample is good. The results from *Journalist'89* have been published in *Svenska Journalister - ett grupporträtt* (Swedish Journalists - a group portrait), Weibull, L. (ed), 1991.

*A Newsday* was carried out in the winter of 1992 by the research project *Journalistikens normer* (Journalistic Norms), Högskolan i Örebro, in collaboration with the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Göteborg University and the Högskolan in Sundsvall. The aim was to obtain some basic structural facts about the daily practice of news journalists. In the study, several areas had to be excluded for practical reasons. Reporters working at foreign desks were not included, nor were reporters working with sports, traffic, family, culture or features. The data was collected in two steps. First, each news outfit was contacted and asked questions about their staff. Second, telephone interviews were carried out during one day, the 5th of February, 1992. Questions were asked both about the reporters working that day (gender, terms of employment, degree of specialization, etc.) as well as the assignments that were carried out that day (what were they about, who was working with them, for how long, etc.). The first questionnaire was answered by 88 percent of the editors. The one-day survey covers about 78 percent of the reporters working that day. The rate varies between different kinds of media - metropolitan papers (63 percent), national radio and broadcasting (77 percent), and regional/provincial media (85 percent). The 5th of February, 1992, was considered, by reporters and editors, to be a rather *normal* day. The results from this study have been published in *En nyhetsdag* (A Newsday), Nohrstedt (ed.), Högskolan i Örebro, 1994.

*Journalist'94* was carried out at the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Göteborg University, as a follow-up of *Journalist'89*. A questionnaire was sent to 1,700 randomly selected Swedish journalists. As in *Journalist'89*, the membership register of SJF was used. The response rate was 67 percent, which is a response rate at the same level as surveys involving the Swedish public at the time and a bit higher than *Journalist'89*, *i.e.* quite a good response rate. Given that the amount of people actively refusing to answer was low, and that those that replied were not skewed relative to the membership register (*i.e.* regarding workplace, residential district, age and gender) the representativeness of the sample is quite good. Nothing has yet been published from this survey.

## Tables

**Table 1 University studies among Swedish journalists according to gender, 1989 and 1994 (percent)**

	1994			1989		
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
No university studies	12	31	22	14	35	28
Journalism studies	16	17	16	16	17	16
Journalism studies and other studies	40	21	30	37	20	26
Non-journalism studies	32	31	32	33	28	30
Percent total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	486	570	1056	290	553	843

Comment: Statistics from Journalist'89, published in Löfgren Nilsson, 1991 and from Journalist'94.

**Table 2 Social background among Swedish journalists according to gender, 1989 and 1994 (percent)**

	1994			1989		
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
Working class	23	34	28	21	40	34
Farming	5	5	5	7	5	6
Middle class	36	34	35	31	32	31
Upper middle class/academic	26	16	21	32	15	21
Entrepreneurs	10	11	10	9	8	8
Percent total	100	100	99	100	100	100
(n)	485	572	1058	287	546	833

Comment: The question was: If You look back on Your childhood and were to describe your family, to which of the following categories would You say it belonged? Statistics from Journalist'89, published in Löfgren Nilsson, 1991 and from Journalist'94.

**Table 3 Location of childhood among Swedish journalists according to gender, 1994 (percent)**

Childhood spent in	Women	Men	Total
Stockholm	29	20	25
Göteborg	9	4	6
Malmö	3	6	5
City in southern or mid-Sweden	25	30	28
City in northern Sweden	7	11	10
Town in southern or mid-Sweden	12	13	12
Town in northern Sweden	4	3	3
Rural area	10	12	11
Percent total	99	99	100
(n)	478	567	1045

Comment: The question was: In which part of Sweden did You grow up? (If You moved around, check the location where You spent the most time before the age of 15). Statistics from Journalist'94.

**Table 4 Leisure activities among Swedish journalists according to gender, 1994 (percent)**

<i>Reading fiction</i>	Women	Men	Total
Several times a week	49	30	38
Once a week	22	21	21
Once a month	16	19	18
Less often	13	30	23
Percent total	100	100	100
(n)	480	568	1048

<i>Drawing, painting, writing poetry or in diary</i>	Women	Men	Total
Several times a week	12	6	9
Once a week	16	6	10
Once a month	16	10	13
Less often	56	78	68
Percent total	100	100	100
(n)	478	566	1044

<i>Attending theater</i>	Women	Men	Total
Once a week	4	1	2
Once a month	11	10	10
Once every three months	23	19	21
Once every six months	22	15	18
Once a year	24	24	24
Never	16	31	24
Percent total	100	100	100
(n)	479	571	1050

<i>Going to the movies</i>	Women	Men	Total
Several times a week	1	1	1
Once a week	7	3	5
Once a month	27	23	25
Once every three months	28	22	25
Once every six months	13	15	14
Once a year	12	18	16
Never	12	17	15
Percent total	100	99	101
(n)	482	570	1052

Comment: The question was: How often have You performed the following activities during the last 12 months? Statistics from Journalist'94.

**Table 5 Media consumption among Swedish journalists according to gender, 1994 (percent)**

Watch/read	Cultural programs on television			Cultural articles in local newspaper		
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
All/Almost all	6	3	4	26	11	18
Several	42	32	37	43	41	42
Few	45	51	48	26	38	32
None/Almost none	7	14	11	5	10	8
Percent total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	488	570	1058	482	566	1048

Comment: The questions were: How often do You usually watch the following kinds of television programs? and How often do You usually read the following kinds of articles in Your local morning paper? Statistics from Journalist' 94.

**Table 6 Location of workplace according to gender, Swedish journalists, 1994 (percent)**

Location	Women	Men	Total
Stockholm	47	34	40
Göteborg	8	7	7
Malmö	6	9	8
Southern Sweden	18	20	19
Mid-Sweden	11	17	14
Northern Sweden	10	12	12
Abroad	1	1	1
Percent total	101	100	101
(n)	478	567	1045

Comment: Statistics from Journalist'94.

**Table 7 Medium of employment according to gender, Swedish journalists, 1994 (percent)**

	Women	Men	Sum	n
Radio*	48	52	100	83
Television*	43	57	100	63
Metropolitan newspapers	44	56	100	96
Metropolitan tabloids	29	71	100	56
Provincial/local papers	38	62	100	296
Popular press	61	39	100	36
Freelance	42	58	100	118
Other	55	45	100	269
Percent total	45	55	100	1017

Comments: Radio and television figures refer only to public service channels. Statistics from Journalist'94.



**Table 8 Medium of employment according to gender, Swedish news journalists, 1992 (percent)**

	Women	Men	Sum	<i>n</i>
Metropolitan newspapers (morning and tabloid)	37	63	100	159
Provincial/local papers	34	66	100	790
Local radio	42	58	100	157
Regional TV	41	59	100	49
National TV	42	58	100	31
Percent total	36	64	100	1197

Comment: Statistics from A Newsday 1992, published in Löfgren Nilsson, 1994.

**Table 9 Professional duties/functions according to gender, Swedish journalists, 1989 and 1994 (percent)**

Duties/functions	1994			1989		
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
Management	15	19	17	9	16	14
Reporter	45	39	42	50	44	46
Editor (copy,page)	13	10	11	12	12	12
Editorial writer/commentator	—	2	2	1	2	2
Proof-reader	1	—	1	7	2	4
Photographer	1	10	6	2	9	6
Producer	6	3	4	2	3	2
Program anchor/host	3	2	2	2	3	3
Other	16	15	16	15	9	11
Percent total	100	100	101	100	100	100
( <i>n</i> )	457	560	1017	289	549	846

Comments: Statistics from Journalist'89 and Journalist'94.

**Table 10 Terms of employment according to gender and medium, Swedish journalists, 1994, excluding freelancers (percent)**

Terms of employment	Radio/TV		Provincial/local paper		Metropolitan morning paper		Metropolitan tabloid		Other	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Permanent	76	84	90	92	86	100	88	98	85	91
Temporary	12	8	8	6	14	—	6	2	6	4
Other non-permanent	13	8	2	3	—	—	6	—	9	5
Percent total	101	100	100	101	100	100	100	100	100	100
( <i>n</i> )	86	106	110	182	42	54	16	40	137	105

Comments: Statistics from Journalist'94.

**Table 11 Terms of employment according to gender and medium, Swedish news journalists, 1992 (percent)**

Terms of employment	Radio/TV		Provincial/ local paper		Metropolitan newspaper (morning and tabloid)		Total	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Permanent	55	83	84	92	91	91	77	90
Temporary	45	17	16	8	9	9	23	10
Percent total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	93	133	261	510	53	92	407	735

Comments: Statistics from A Newsday'92, published in Löfgren Nilsson, 1994.

**Table 12 Full-time employment according to gender and medium, Swedish journalists, 1994 (percent)**

	Radio/TV		Provincial/ local paper		Metropolitan newspaper		Metropolitan tabloids		Other	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Full-time	87	94	68	90	74	94	73	92	76	88
Part-time	13	6	32	10	26	6	27	7	24	12
Percent total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	99	100	100
(n)	86	104	108	182	42	53	15	39	191	174

Comment: Freelancers are included in the category "other". Statistics from Journalist'94.

**Table 13 Subject matter of specialist reporters according to gender, Swedish news journalists, 1992 (percent)**

Subject matter	Women	Men	Total
Politics, public affairs	27	27	27
Business/finance, labour market	13	21	18
Police and law	11	23	18
Medicine and health care	10	6	8
Children and education	8	3	5
Consumer affairs	8	1	4
General societal issues*	18	14	15
Other	5	5	5
Percent total	100	100	100
(n=journalists)	135	248	384

Comments: \* In Sweden this category refers to housing, transportation and communication, agriculture and forestry, and environmental issues, among other things. Statistics from A Newsday'92, published in Löfgren Nilsson, 1994.

**Table 14 Subject matter among domestic news assignments according to gender, Swedish news journalists, 1992 (percent)**

Subject matter	Women	Men	Total
Politics, defence, public affairs	15	17	16
Business and industry, union issues	19	24	23
Crime, justice, accidents	8	13	12
Social welfare, education, health care	37	25	29
Culture, religion, media, leisure	5	6	5
General societal issues*	10	11	10
Other	6	5	5
Percent total	100	100	100
(n= assignments)	788	1600	2392

Comments: \* See table 13. Sports excluded. Statistics from A Newsday'92, published in Löfgren Nilsson, 1994.

**Table 15 Journalists' motives for their choice of profession according to gender, Swedish journalists, 1989 and 1994 (balanced percentages)**

Motives for becoming a journalist	1994			1989		
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
Job freedom*	78	76	77	76	78	77
Interested in expression/communication	87	73	80	81	63	68
Working with the news	34	54	45	29	57	48
Exciting profession	57	54	56	44	41	43
Want a non-9-to-5-job	40	37	38	39	41	40
Highlight injustices in society	49	30	39	37	29	30
Possibilities to influence people	37	24	30	32	19	23
Personal connections to journalists	-51	-42	-46	-45	-32	-37

Comments: \* Meaning opportunities for independence and creativity. The question was: Was there any particular reason as to why you wanted to become a journalist? and the response alternatives were Agree totally, Agree partly, Hardly agree and Don't agree at all. The statistics used in this table are balanced percentages, which are the percentage of agreements to a statement minus the percentage of disagreements. For example, if 70 percent answered Agree totally/Agree partly and 30 percent answered Hardly agree/Don't agree at all the balanced percentage would be 40. The higher the score, the greater the overall agreement. Statistics from Journalist'89, published in Weibull, 1991a, and from Journalist'94.

**Table 16 Journalists' role perceptions according to gender, Swedish journalists, 1989 (percent)**

A journalist should see him/herself as...	Women	Totally agree		Total
		Men	Total	
... a scrutinizer of the power elite in society	70	62	69	
... someone who can explain complicated issues and events	68	63	64	
... someone who can stimulate new thoughts and ideas	58	41	46	
... a critic of injustices in society	54	40	44	
... someone who can convey a sense of experience				
... a neutral reporter of what happens in society	28	30	29	
... a mirror of public opinion	21	23	22	
... a spokesperson for local opinion	22	18	19	

Comment: The question was: Following are a number of statements about the professional role of journalists. What is Your opinion about each of them? A journalist should see him/herself as.... Statistics from Journalist'89, published in Melin, 1991.

**Table 17 'Desirable' versus 'actual' news practice according to gender, Swedish journalists, 1989 (percent)**

"MEDIA LOGIC"	"ACTUAL" are very important in daily practice		"DESIRABLE" should be very important		DIFFERENCE	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Event factors related to news production						
Whether the management is interested in the event	34	30	3	3	+31	+27
Whether the news item is on the scheduled coverage list	35	27	6	5	+29	+22
Whether there is a journalist who is knowledgeable and comitted to the issue	34	27	16	14	+18	+13
Whether a good photo exists	33	25	13	15	+20	+10
Whether an appropriate journalist is available	27	21	11	9	+16	+12
Whether a good press release exists	18	10	4	4	+14	+6
Average "very important"	30	23	9	8	+21	+15

**"IMPORTANCE"**

Perceived significance of the event to audience/society

Whether the event has consequences for people's everyday lives	24	30	74	60	-50	-30
Whether the event makes people aware of bad conditions in society	15	17	61	48	-46	-31
Whether the event broadens people's insights and knowledge about their community	12	12	58	42	-46	-30
Average "very important"	17	20	64	50	-47	-30

**"INTEREST"**

Intrinsic interest of the event itself

Whether the event is sensational/unexpected	76	71	45	45	+31	+26
Whether the event is dramatic/exciting	71	64	20	25	+51	+39
Whether the event is of interest to many people	43	51	55	52	-12	-1
Whether the event concerns important people	53	39	11	8	+42	+31
Average "very important"	61	56	33	32	+28	+24

Comment: The question was: There are a many circumstances which affect whether an event is to be published in news media. What actual importance, according to Your experience, do the following things have? And what importance do You personally think they should have? Answers were given on a five-point scale from None at all to Great importance. The percentage used in the table indicates those who answered great importance. A high plus score indicates that the 'actual' practice is too strong, whereas a high minus score indicates that 'actual' practice is too weak. Regardless of direction (plus/minus), however, the higher the figure the greater the 'dream-reality' gap. Statistics from Journalist'89, published in Löfgren Nilsson, 1993.

**Table 18 Perceptions of work climate according to gender, Swedish news journalists, 1989 (percent)**

		WOMEN Control		
		SOME	NO	
Community	YES	30	42	72
	NO	15	13	28
		45	55	100 <i>n</i> =132

		MEN Control		
		SOME	NO	
Community	YES	18	54	72
	NO	14	15	29
		32	69	101 <i>n</i> =332

Comment: The dimension Community (group feeling) is based on two questions concerning harmony among colleagues and agreement on essential professional values. The dimension Control is based on two questions concerning being kept on a 'tight reign' and having difficulties mustering support for ideas. The statistics come from a secondary analysis of news journalists in Journalist'89, published in Löfgren Nilsson 1994.

