

**How to cite this article in bibliographies / References**



D Rivero Santamarina, K Meso Ayerdi, S Peña Fernandez (2015): “The feminisation of journalism studies: an analysis of the Spanish case”. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 70, pp. 566 to 583.

<http://www.revistalatinacs.org/070/paper/1060/30en.html>

DOI: [10.4185/RLCS-2015-1060en](https://doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-2015-1060en)

# The feminisation of journalism studies: an analysis of the Spanish case

**Diana Rivero Santamarina** [] [] Department of Journalism II - University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) / [diana.rivero@ehu.es](mailto:diana.rivero@ehu.es)

**Koldobika Meso Ayerdi** [[CV](#)] [] [] Department of Journalism II - University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) / [koldo.meso@ehu.es](mailto:koldo.meso@ehu.es)

**Simón Peña Fernandes** [[CV](#)] [] [] Department of Journalism II - University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) / [simon.pena@ehu.es](mailto:simon.pena@ehu.es)

## Abstract

**Introduction:** In recent years, the hypothesis of the feminisation of the profession of journalism has spread across Spain due to the gradual incorporation of women into the country’s media job market and, above all, due to the increasing proportion of women among journalism graduates each year. For this reason, this research study aims to establish the real extent of the feminisation of journalism studies.

**Methods:** the study is based, firstly, on a review of the theories that explain the basis of the feminisation of journalism in order to understand the implications of the increasing number of women journalists for the journalistic profession, news content and the private and family spheres. Subsequently, the study involves a quantitative and comparative analysis of the feminisation of journalism in public and private universities. **Conclusions:** The analysis of the presence and performance of women among journalism graduates in Spanish universities reveals that the feminisation of the profession is a well-established reality.

## Keywords

[EN] Journalism; university studies; feminisation; Spain; women.

## Contents

1. Introduction. 2. The illusion of the feminisation of the journalistic profession. 3. The imbalance between the university and the labour market. 4. Methods. 5. Overall results. 6. Academic performance.

The case of the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU). 7. Conclusions. 8. Notes. 9. List of references.

Translation by **CA Martínez-Arcos** (Ph.D. in Communication from the University of London)

## 1. Introduction

In 1904 the University of Illinois set a milestone when it established the first four-year curriculum for journalism studies. During that time, the Board of Columbia University opposed the presence of women in the classroom, but this rule was revised shortly afterwards to allow the registration of a small number of women, a 10% share until 1968 to be precise. As Chambers *et al.* (2004: 65) have pointed out, “up until this point masculine pronouns described better than ever the reality of journalism students beyond the grammatical habit of generic masculine terms”. In addition to restricting the access of women to university, the academic manuals developed to train male journalists were written by men, while the manuals to train female journalists were written by women, which marked a clear difference in the education of each sex.

Joseph Pulitzer was the first person to highlight the growing economic power of women and their importance for advertisers. Accordingly, his *World* newspaper was the first one to include a page dedicated to women. In the United Kingdom, Alfred Harmsworth launched in 1896 the *Daily Mail* to cater the female audience, with the slogan “get me a murder a day”. The newspaper’s focus on crime, adventure, and human interest made it the first mass medium, with 989,000 male and female readers.

“Women’s journalism” brought about three changes: first, it facilitated women’s access to the journalistic profession; second, it allowed women to become the news’ protagonists; and third, it constituted a political advance for women, because despite targeting women through sensationalist formulas, it allowed the incorporation of important issues such as women’s right to vote. In short, the real purpose of the new journalism exercised by women was to “transform newspapers into agents of social change” (Chambers *et al.*, 2004: 21).

Since then, the situation of women has experienced remarkable progress in different areas of the political and social spheres. However, the most striking changes have occurred in the academic field:

“Girls and young women of the last generations are growing up accompanied by better academic training opportunities, and they are taking very good advantage of these opportunities. This is demonstrated through their majority presence in a diversified range of studies and university degrees, with above-average grades in different levels of education, with their more positive attitude in the areas of knowledge they approach, with their motivation to keep on studying, and with the meaning they give to journalism studies in view of the future”. (Flecha, 2008: 85)

The Press Association of Aragón (*Asociación de la Prensa de Aragón*, 2008), which produces the most comprehensive gender-based report about the journalistic profession, confirms that women working in the media are academically more prepared than their male counterparts. However, women do not occupy

the managerial positions. 70% of women have faced obstacles in their career development and suffered greater job insecurity than men have: 30% have temporary contracts and 40% face wage discrimination.

According to a study on job placement conducted by the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) in 2008, women who opt for the so-called “social” studies, which include journalism, face higher unemployment rates and lower salaries. According to this study, even though statistics show that women get a better education and make better use of it in their jobs, the employment data indicate that men enjoy better employment conditions. Carlota Garrido (2008: 121) explains the reality of women who have graduated in journalism in the following manner:

“After a woman graduates in journalism and leaves university, she faces a difficult situation that includes job insecurity and difficulties to climb to a position of responsibility, despite the fact that the percentage of women journalists coming out of universities is higher than that of their male counterparts. The number of female graduates with good grades is increasing, but this is not reflected in the positions of power they occupy in the media”

For its part, the white paper on the journalistic profession in Catalonia, produced by the *Collegi de periodistas de Catalunya* (2006), offers a different approach to the relationship between job precariousness and women. Through interviews, the study concludes that journalism is a profession that has been historically dominated by job insecurity, which is presented as an inherent characteristic of the profession. And it is precisely this characteristic what has favoured the incorporation of women into the journalism workplace “mainly because men seek better options, while it is assumed that women are less ambitious and settle for less” (p. 101).

It is precisely this debate which has generated our interest in the reality of the number of female journalism graduates in Spain. This number can be compared with data on the job placement of journalists to establish the relationship that exists between the number of female journalism graduates and the percentage of active female journalists.

## **2. The illusion of the feminisation of the journalistic profession**

According to the 2010 report on the journalistic profession in Spain, produced by the Press Association of Madrid (*Asociación de la Prensa de Madrid*, 2010), women represent 70.1% of journalism graduates, which means only 29.9% of journalism graduates are men. According to Costa and Tunisia (2009: 777), these figures suggest that journalism is an “eminently feminine” profession. This phenomenon increases every academic year: women represented 64% of journalism graduates in 1994; 65% in 2006; and about 70% in recent years (*Asociación de la Prensa de Madrid*, 2010: 91). This figure has been confirmed by the Association of Women Media Professionals (Ameco Press, 2014 [1]), which indicates that women constitute 65% of all journalism students. This is an accepted fact, because as the Press Association of Madrid points out, from 1998 to 2007 women dominated the classrooms and, since then, their presence has always been higher than that of men.

If we take as an example the case of the School of Information Sciences of the Complutense University of Madrid, two of every three students are women (Garrido, 2005: 122). At the University of Malaga, on the other hand, in 2002 there were 87 male journalism graduates against 132 female graduates, and this

figure has gradually increased: in 2005 there were only 38 male graduates against 90 female graduates (Ufarte, 2007: 411).

However, with regards to active journalists, worldwide the number of active women journalists went from 28% in 1995 to 37% in 2009. In Europe the percentage is 47% (Hanitzch and Hanusch, 2012: 257). In other words, these percentages show an increase in the incorporation of women to the journalistic profession, but also indicate that the quotas of active women in journalism are far lower than those achieved in the classrooms.

This is a false idea of feminisation based on the fact that the proportion of women in the newsrooms has increased remarkably over the past ten years. However, data provided by Soriano and Mercé (2005, 39) indicate that only 34% of the active journalists in Spain are women. The proportion of women journalists is the same in the USA (34%), and lower in the United Kingdom (25%), but much better balanced in Finland (49%). Still, the idea of the feminisation of the profession of journalism is still an illusion. As Soriano and Mercé point out, “the magnitudes of the social phenomenon that we have described are more characteristic of a false feminisation or pseudo-feminisation, a more appropriate term to describe the appearance of a change that is not occurring” (2005: 50).

However, some authors such as León (2012) insist on talking about the feminisation of the journalistic profession when, according to the results of the Global media monitoring project conducted in 70 countries by the World Association for Christian Communication (2000), women journalists make up 41% of the people who report and produce news in the world. In this case, the error is to talk about feminisation when what is happening is the slow and progressive entry of women into the journalism job market.

As Mellado *et al.* (2007: 141) point out, the change in the labour market and the evolution of the supply and demand chain in the generation of communication professionals and their incorporation into the job market should reflect the relationship between the university and its surroundings, where the decisions of educators are intertwined with the expectations of employers and professionals to ultimately configure social reality of journalists.

However, as Soriano (2005) explains, the arguments that support the hypothesis of the feminisation of the profession are limited to the situation of the universities offering journalism degrees in which there is a gender imbalance in favour of women. In the words of Ufarte, “the product of the constant feminisation of the journalistic profession are the continuous waves of enrolled female students and therefore, of female journalism graduates coming out each year from different schools of information sciences across Spain” (2007: 410).

As Soriano explains, a detailed review of more recent data and the correlation with other variables contradict the idea that the journalistic profession is undergoing a demographic transformation. For example, in 2006 in Catalonia, the number of active female journalists was 37%. “The source of future journalists has continued awarding degrees to many more women than men each year. This circumstance should have already had an effect in the group profile of journalists, at least in Catalonia” (Soriano and Mercé, 2005: 2).

The large presence of women among journalism students has been a powerful argument to defend the hypothesis of the feminisation of the profession, but the analysis of other data contradicts this hypothesis. One of the most relevant indicators on the participation of women in public life are the unemployment rates by sex (Rodríguez López, 2003: 161). In Spain, according to data from the Survey of the Active Population, in the last quarter of 2012, the difference in the unemployment rates between men and women was almost 12 points to the detriment of women. With regards to the employment rate, the difference is of 11 points in favour of men. In the case of journalism, according to the 2012 report on the journalistic profession produced by the Press Association of Madrid (2012), unemployment affects women more than men: with an unemployment rate of 64.3% among women and of just 35.7% among men. Therefore, there is a disproportion in the journalism job market in terms of the employment of men and women, with a difference of 29 points in favour of the latter group. This figure is almost triple the national average unemployment rate between men and women in Spain. According to the Press Association of Madrid (2010), female unemployment has increased by 2.3 points on average in the past two years. In other words, the trend, instead of declining, has worsened slightly.

One of the main arguments put forward by the Journalists Association of Catalonia, for example, to explain this paradox is that women leave the profession when they are still young. Soriano and Mercé believe, however, that this does not suffice to explain the disproportion between men and women in the newsrooms. It is, therefore, necessary to take into account other facts, like the concentration of women in the sector mostly in low positions, and the greater presence of women in areas defined as the “other press”. In fact, Mellado *et al.* (2007: 152) point out that 65% of women journalists are not working in media, being the emerging areas related to organisational communication and education the ones that generate greater employment. In particular, 44% of active journalists in Spain perform functions related to organisational communication, with a higher proportion of women in this area. The areas of institutional content production and education have the highest proportion of journalism graduates (45% and 36%, respectively).

According to the Press Association of Madrid (2007: 3) the perception of the main problems of the journalistic profession vary according to sex. Thus, women criticise, to a greater extent than men, the low salary and intrusiveness. Meanwhile, the politicisation of contents and unemployment seem to worry more male than female journalists. Perhaps this situation explains the greater presence of women in the less visible areas of journalism.

The social and labour conditions which women have so far faced in their incorporation to the profession require us to be cautious when talking about the feminisation of the profession which also involves changes in media content.

### **3. The imbalance between the university and the labour market**

Already in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the pioneering women of journalism who overcome restrictions and wrote about “non-feminine” issues were criticised as deviant, while those women who accepted the imposed limitations were professionally ostracised. As Chambers *et al.* (2004: 24) indicate, an effective barrier for the professional promotion of women was created, based on the perception of women as the strange gender and men as the neutral gender, and as a result a greater presence of women in the profession of journalism does not necessarily imply its empowerment within the media structures.

Karen Ross (2001) describes this reality with the term “professional journalism ethos” and establishes three ways in which women journalists face this predominance of male values in the newsroom: by adopting male values and behaviours in search of the “objectivity” perceived as inherent to their male counterparts; by adopting the feminist alternative; and by distancing themselves away from the “male culture” of the newsrooms and opting for freelancing.

In fact, in the 1990’s research focused on establishing the percentage of women in the media. However, in the new century research is focusing on inter-relational studies, because sex may not be the only or more decisive factor because otherwise we should have already witnessed more profound changes. As Bromley et al. (2014: 225) rightly point out, rather than establishing sex distribution in the newsrooms, we should begin to observe the social specificities and traditions that guide the work of people in the media.

In this sense, authors such as Karen Ross (2013) and Bastin Gilles (2012), believe that women’s career management style is today one of the best mechanisms to start eliminating the operation of media that is based on gender roles and power.

For Ross, the men-women ratio in the newsrooms has a direct impact in the tone and style of news. Women offer news from a perspective different, above all, because they tend select alternative sources of information. These new narrative forms highlight the dominant male culture in the newsroom, which so far had been masked as neutrality. Therefore, Ross considers that “insofar as women are incorporated to the media industry, they will provoke changes in the ways in which women are represented in the newsroom culture” (2013: 111).

Bastin Gilles, on the other hand, after studying the journalistic profession in France, determined that women tend to create more robust and long-lasting careers while men tend to abandon the profession when the working conditions are precarious. In short, he found out that 30% of male journalists leave the profession in the first three years. Women who leave the profession do so in the first year, but once they cross the seven-year barrier they consolidate their careers to a greater extent. In addition, women journalists maintain freelance works for longer periods than their male counterparts. Thus there is “a strong indication that women take the commitments required by the journalism job market more seriously” (Gilles, 2012: 28).

Perhaps it is this feature of female journalists what has reinforced Creedon’s theory of the “velvet ghetto” (1993), which proposes that an increasing number of women in the media has led to a decline in the status of the profession. This idea is shared by Rosalind Gill (2007: 148), who relate the gradual access of women to the profession with the decreasing value of the latter, especially in terms of status and remuneration, which has contributed to the growing number of freelance women journalists.

Probably, as Ross (2001) points out, journalism’s professional identity, which has been traditionally linked to male values, has made media companies’ construction of organisational identity to privilege male values, which do not contribute, for example, to the reconciliation of work and family life. This may explain why more women than men opt for freelance journalism, which distances them from the typical forms of work in journalism, which do not involve flexible working hours nor takes into account the time journalists need to take care of children, for example.

This point has been confirmed by the study cited by Bromley *et al.* (2014: 532), based on the interviews to members of the group *Women in Journalism* about the difficulties related to conciliation due to the journalistic culture of long working hours. For the authors, “domesticated feminism”, which denies job discrimination based on the options of those who have not experienced it, is “reductionist and naive” and downplays the importance of the talented women who, unfortunately, have suffered from it. As Gill (2007: 121) points out that, new forms of discrimination are emerging and they are reflected in the fact that marriage is less frequent among women journalists, that relationships are less durable among women journalists, and that many women journalists do not have children, “which suggests that this is the price they have to pay”.

However, even if there are women willing to sacrifice their personal lives for their profession “in the North of Europe and the United States, although the media have experienced a steady access of women, the equal incorporation of women in decision-making positions has not been achieved” (Ross, 2001: 531). The glass ceiling, a term coined by a column of *The Wall Street Journal*, is a global phenomenon which means, according to the *International Federation of Journalists*, which meet in 2001 in Seoul, that just 1% of the executive jobs in the global media are occupied by women. In addition, according to the study titled *The Great Divide: Female Leadership in US Newsrooms*, carried out by the *American Press Institute* in 2002, 78% of male journalists had career development as central objective, while this percentage was 15% in the case of women, “due to the assumption that women do not sacrifice career development for family” (Bromley *et al.*: 2014: 84).

For Sue Thormham (2007: 78), one of the signs that reveal the existence of post-machismo in society is that after the economic emancipation of women, the so-called rupture with traditional roles and freedom in their lifestyle, there are hidden forms of discrimination that are more difficult to detect, but are equally effective.

One of the hidden mechanisms for the discrimination of women is determined by the principle of objectivity proposed journalist Scott, which says that “comment is free but facts are sacred”. This distinction between facts and comments has prevailed in the teaching of journalism in communication schools during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Objectivity was perceived as a characteristic of male journalists but, as Canel and Sádaba (1999: 28) point out, the access of women coincided with the emergence of the assumption that “journalists are not aseptic persons that collect data to transfer them as they are to their audience; on the contrary, they are persons that narrate and, in doing so, intervenes with all their circumstances”.

According to Ryan and Chaves (2010, 100), in a comparative study between the production team of late-night news programmes, which have more men, and the morning and weekend news programmes, where women predominate, “hard” and quality journalism is associated with male values, which receive time slots that are more informative and less sensationalist. According to these authors, the large audiences of “soft news” open the doors of the journalistic profession to women, while a greater number of women also causes a greater number of entertainment programmes. However, the proliferation of sensationalistic content in the digital editions of newspapers, where most editors are still men, seems to falsify this hypothesis.

#### 4. Methods

As mentioned, an increasing number of studies carried out by press associations or communication researchers speak of the feminisation of journalism studies. In this research, we want to verify in general terms whether the degrees in journalism offered by Spanish universities are indeed being taken mainly by women.

To this end, this study firstly identified the Spanish universities that currently offer journalism studies, obtaining a total of 39 universities, including both public and private institutions (Table 1): Universitat Abat Oliva CEU, Centro de Enseñanza Superior Alberta Giménez, Universidad Antonio de Nebrija, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Universidad Camilo José Cela, Universidad Cardenal Herrera CEU, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Universidad de Castilla La Mancha, Universidad Católica San Antonio, Universidad Complutense, Universidad Europea de Madrid, Universidad Europea del Atlántico, Universidad Europea Miguel de Cervantes, Centro Universitario Eusa, Universidad Francisco de Vitoria, Universitat Internacional de Catalunya, Universidad Jaume I de Castellón, Universidad de La Laguna, Universitat de Lleida, Universidad de Málaga, Universidad Miguel Hernández, Universidad de Murcia, Universidad de Navarra, Universidad del País Vasco, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, Universitat Ramon Llull, Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Universidad San Jorge, Universidad San Pablo CEU, Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, Universidad de Sevilla, UDIMA-Universidad a Distancia de Madrid, Universitat de València, Universidad de Valladolid, Universidad de Vic, Centro Universitario Villanueva and Universidad de Zaragoza.

After the identification of the universities, and using the data provided by the directories of the corporate pages of these universities, we contacted via telephone the secretaries of the schools in which journalism degrees are offered. In this way, we carried out a quantitative work that has allowed to know the exact number of women and men that have graduated in journalism in Spain in the 2012-2013 academic year.

The data obtained from 24 universities (Table 2) allow us to draw a map that is very representative of the reality of the current percentage of men and women who have graduated in journalism in Spain.

In the case of the University of the Basque Country (*Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea*), we examined the fifteen best Grade Point Averages (GPA) obtained in the past thirteen years, from 1999 to 2013. These data were used to evaluate the academic performance of journalism students across sex groups.

#### 5. Overall results

Before analysing the data concerning the feminisation of journalism studies in Spain, and after identifying the universities that offer these degrees in the country, we will examine the universities according to their public or private ownership.



**Table 1: Public and private universities that offer degrees in journalism in Spain**

University	Public	Private
<i>Universitat Abat Oliva CEU</i>		√
<i>Centro de Enseñanza Sup. Alberta Giménez</i>		√
<i>Universidad Antonio de Nebrija</i>		√
<i>Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona</i>	√	
<i>Universidad Camilo José Cela</i>		√
<i>Universidad Cardenal Herrera CEU</i>		√
<i>Universidad Carlos III de Madrid</i>	√	
<i>Universidad de Castilla La Mancha</i>	√	
<i>Universidad Católica San Antonio</i>		√
<i>Universidad Complutense</i>	√	
<i>Universidad Europea de Madrid</i>		√
<i>Universidad Europea del Atlántico</i>		√
<i>Universidad Europea Miguel de Cervantes</i>		√
<i>Centro Universitario Eusa</i>		√
<i>Universidad Francisco de Vitoria</i>		√
<i>Universitat Internacional de Catalunya</i>		√
<i>Universidad Jaume I de Castellón</i>	√	
<i>Universidad de La Laguna</i>	√	
<i>Universitat de Lleida</i>	√	
<i>Universidad de Málaga</i>	√	
<i>Universidad Miguel Hernández</i>	√	
<i>Universidad de Murcia</i>	√	
<i>Universidad de Navarra</i>		√
<i>Universidad del País Vasco</i>	√	
<i>Universitat Pompeu Fabra</i>	√	
<i>Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca</i>		√
<i>Universitat Ramón Llul</i>		√
<i>Universidad Rey Juan Carlos</i>	√	
<i>Universitat Rovira i Virgili</i>	√	
<i>Universidad San Jorge</i>		√
<i>Universidad San Pablo CEU</i>		√
<i>Universidad de Santiago de Compostela</i>	√	
<i>Universidad de Sevilla</i>	√	
<i>UDIMA - Universidad a Distancia de Madrid</i>		√
<i>Universitat de València</i>	√	
<i>Universidad de Valladolid</i>	√	
<i>Universidad de Vic</i>		√
<i>Centro Universitario Villanueva</i>		√
<i>Universidad de Zaragoza</i>	√	

Source: Authors' own creation

As we can see in table 1, there are currently in Spain a total of 39 universities that offer studies in journalism. Of them, 19 are public (48.7%) and 20 private (51.3%).

In terms of differences between autonomous communities, an interesting finding is the high number of centres that offer the degree of journalism in Madrid and Catalonia, which together concentrate almost half of the total offer. In the case of Madrid, the offer is composed of three public universities (*Carlos III, Complutense* and *Rey Juan Carlos*) and seven private universities (*Antonio de Nebrija, Camilo José Cela, Universidad Europea de Madrid, Francisco de Vitoria, San Pablo CEU, UDIMA* and *Centro Universitario Villanueva*). Meanwhile in the case of Catalonia the offer is composed of four public centres (*Autónoma de Barcelona, Lleida, Pompeu Fabra* and *Rovira i Virgili*) and four private (*Abat Oliva CEU, Internacional de Catalunya, Ramón Llul* and *Vic*).

The next communities in terms of number of universities are the Community of Valencia, with three public schools (*Jaume I, Miguel Hernández* and *Valencia*) and one private (*Cardenal Herrera CEU*), and Castilla León, with one public university (*Valladolid*) and two more private (*Pontificia de Salamanca* and *Europea Miguel de Cervantes*). The distribution is identical in Andalusia, which boasts two public centres (*Málaga* and *Sevilla*) and a private one (*Centro Universitario EUSA*). The Region of Murcia and Aragón has each one university of each type (*Murcia* and *Católica San Antonio*, and *Zaragoza* and *San Jorge*, respectively). Finally, *Centro de Enseñanza Superior Alberta Giménez* (Balearic Islands), *Universidad de Castilla La Mancha, Universidad Europea del Atlántico* (Cantabria), *Universidad de La Laguna* (Tenerife, Canary Islands), *Universidad de Navarra, Universidad del País Vasco* and *Universidad de Santiago de Compostela* (Galicia) are the only institutions that offer journalism degrees in their respective communities.

Once we identified the universities offering journalism degrees in Spain, we contacted the management of the schools offering those degrees to request the total number of male and female journalism graduates produced by them in the 2012-2013 academic year.

The following table shows the total number of journalism graduates from the 25 universities that provided data distributed by sex:

**Table 2: Male and female journalism graduates in Spain in 2013**

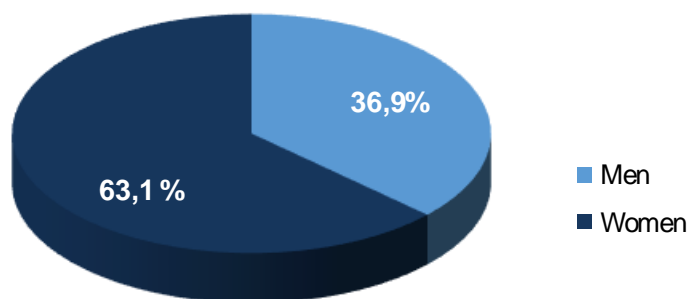
University	Women	Men	Total
<i>Universidad Cardenal Herrera CEU</i>	62	20	<b>82</b>
<i>Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona</i>	197	110	<b>307</b>
<i>Universitat Pompeu Fabra</i>	50	29	<b>79</b>
<i>Universitat Ramón Llul</i>	37	24	<b>61</b>
<i>Universidad de Vic</i>	25	18	<b>43</b>
<i>Universitat Internacional de Catalunya</i>	20	12	<b>32</b>
<i>Universidad del País Vasco</i>	100	52	<b>152</b>
<i>Universidad Complutense</i>	305	168	<b>473</b>
<i>Universidad Camilo José Cela</i>	9	6	<b>15</b>
<i>Universidad Carlos III de Madrid</i>	39	22	<b>61</b>
<i>Universidad Rey Juan Carlos</i>	122	79	<b>201</b>

<i>Universidad San Pablo CEU</i>	48	39	<b>87</b>
<i>Universidad de Málaga</i>	69	46	<b>115</b>
<i>Universidad Católica San Antonio</i>	9	16	<b>25</b>
<i>Universidad de Murcia</i>	51	33	<b>84</b>
<i>Universidad de Navarra</i>	46	33	<b>79</b>
<i>Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca</i>	7	12	<b>19</b>
<i>Universidad de La Laguna</i>	26	12	<b>38</b>
<i>Universidad de Santiago de Compostela</i>	81	25	<b>106</b>
<i>Universidad de Sevilla</i>	158	80	<b>238</b>
<i>Universitat Rovira i Virgili</i>	20	16	<b>36</b>
<i>Universidad Jaume I de Castellón</i>	43	8	<b>51</b>
<i>Universitat de València</i>	30	18	<b>48</b>
<i>Universidad de Valladolid</i>	66	39	<b>105</b>
<i>Universidad de Zaragoza</i>	12	7	<b>19</b>

Source: Authors' own creation

Based on these data we calculated the total of journalism graduates in Spain in the 2012-2013 academic year: 2,336 graduates, of which 36.9% (936 graduates) are men and 63.1% (1600 graduates) are women. In other words, the number of women who obtained the degree in journalism almost doubles that of men.

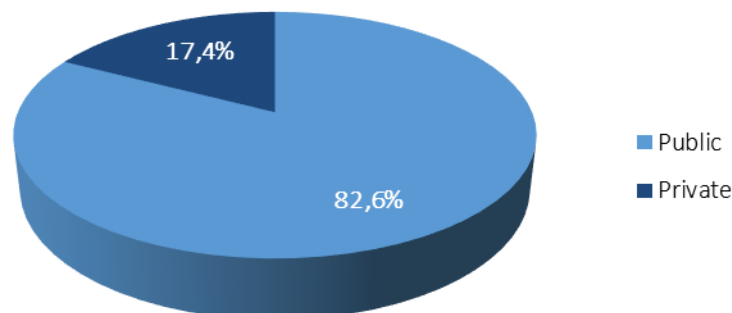
**Figure 1: Women and men graduated in journalism in Spain in 2013**



Source: Authors' own creation

Regarding the distribution of journalism graduates based on the public or private ownership of universities, only 400, or 17.4%, of the total of journalism graduates in Spain have obtained their degree from private universities. *Universidad San Pablo CEU* and *Universidad de Navarra* are the private universities that awarded journalism degrees to a greater number of students: 87 and 79, respectively. The remaining 1,936 graduates, 82.6% of the total, obtained their degrees from public universities.

**Figure 2: Distribution of journalism graduates by public and private universities**



Source: Authors' own creation

Examining the data from the point of view of the feminisation of journalism studies, which is the subject under study in this article, we confirmed that there are important differences between the percentages of male and female graduates coming out from the 25 public and private universities under analysis. In the case of the private universities women represent 59.5% (238) of all journalism graduates, while the remaining 40.5% (162) are men. In fact, the only university that awards journalism degrees to more men than women in Spain is the *Pontifical University of Salamanca (Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca)*, although this occurs with a very small sample of students. In the case of public universities, the percentage of female journalism graduates amounts to 72% (1,394), while the remaining 28% (542) corresponds obviously to men. As we will see in the following table, the two universities with the higher rates of feminisation are the *Universidad Jaume I de Castellón* and the *Universidad de Santiago de Compostela*, both of which are public.

The following table shows the percentage of feminisation of each of the Spanish universities that offered journalism studies in the 2012-2013 academic year:

**Table 3: Feminisation of journalism studies in Spain**

University	Women	Men	Percentage of feminisation
<i>Universidad Jaume I de Castellón</i>	43	8	<b>84.3%</b>
<i>Universidad de Santiago de Compostela</i>	81	25	<b>76.4%</b>
<i>Universidad Cardenal Herrera CEU</i>	62	20	<b>75.6%</b>
<i>Universidad de La Laguna</i>	26	12	<b>68.4%</b>
<i>Universidad de Sevilla</i>	158	80	<b>66.3%</b>
<i>Universidad del País Vasco</i>	100	52	<b>65.7%</b>
<i>Universidad Complutense</i>	305	168	<b>64.4%</b>
<i>Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona</i>	197	110	<b>64.1%</b>
<i>Universidad Carlos III de Madrid</i>	39	22	<b>63.9%</b>
<i>Universitat Pompeu Fabra</i>	50	29	<b>63.2%</b>

<i>Universidad de Zaragoza</i>	12	7	<b>63.1%</b>
<i>Universidad de Valladolid</i>	66	39	<b>62.8%</b>
<i>Universitat Internacional de Catalunya</i>	20	12	<b>62.5%</b>
<i>Universitat de València</i>	30	18	<b>62.5%</b>
<i>Universidad de Murcia</i>	51	33	<b>60.7%</b>
<i>Universidad Rey Juan Carlos</i>	122	79	<b>60.6%</b>
<i>Universitat Ramón Llull</i>	37	24	<b>60.6%</b>
<i>Universidad Camilo José Cela</i>	9	6	<b>60%</b>
<i>Universidad de Málaga</i>	69	46	<b>60%</b>
<i>Universidad de Navarra</i>	46	33	<b>58.2%</b>
<i>Universidad de Vic</i>	25	18	<b>58.1%</b>
<i>Universitat Rovira i Virgili</i>	20	16	<b>55.5%</b>
<i>Universidad San Pablo CEU</i>	48	39	<b>55.1%</b>
<i>Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca</i>	7	12	<b>36.8%</b>

Source: Authors' own creation

As we can see in the previous table, the university that has awarded journalism degrees to a higher percentage of women is the *Universidad Jaume I de Castellón*, with a feminisation rate of 84.3%. However, in total numbers, the *Complutense University of Madrid* has awarded journalism degrees to a larger number of women (305), followed by the *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona* (197) and the *Universidad de Sevilla* (158).

Public universities, therefore, have higher rates of feminisation. With the exception of *Universidad Cardenal Herrera CEU* (with 75.6%), which occupies the third place, and *Universitat Internacional de Catalunya* (62.5%), the fifteen universities with highest rate of feminisation are publicly owned.

## 6. Academic performance. The case of the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU)

In addition to the general data on the number of journalism graduates nationwide, we selected the University of the Basque Country to analyse in greater depth the indicators related to the feminisation of journalism studies. To do this, we collected the data related to the B.A. degrees in journalism awarded from the following academic years: 1999-2000 to 2012-2013.

**Table 4: Journalism graduates from the University of the Basque Country**

	Women	Men	Total	Percentage of feminisation
1999/2000	142	85	227	<b>62.56%</b>
2000/2001	111	63	174	<b>63.79%</b>
2001/2002	113	70	183	<b>61.75%</b>
2002/2003	146	61	207	<b>70.53%</b>
2003/2004	121	68	189	<b>64.02%</b>

2004/2005	154	61	215	<b>71.63%</b>
2005/2006	149	71	220	<b>67.73%</b>
2006/2007	131	51	183	<b>71.58%</b>
2007/2008	131	53	186	<b>70.43%</b>
2008/2009	125	69	194	<b>64.43%</b>
2009/2010	118	52	170	<b>69.41%</b>
2010/2011	117	66	183	<b>63.93%</b>
2011/2012	100	52	152	<b>65.79%</b>
2012/2013	109	63	172	<b>63.37%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,767</b>	<b>885</b>	<b>2,655</b>	<b>66.55%</b>

Source: Authors' own creation

The total number of journalism graduates from the University of the Basque Country in the 14 academic years under study amounts to 2,655. In this group of graduates, the number of women (1,787) doubles that of men (885). In terms of percentages this means that, of all the people who graduated in journalism in the 14 years under study in the University of the Basque Country, 66.55% are women and only 33.45% are men.

As we can see in the distribution of graduates by academic year, the feminisation of journalism studies is a sustained phenomenon, with a very regular distribution over the years. These data are also very similar to the national data (66.55% vs. 65.7%, respectively).

Likewise, with the aim of establishing the distribution of qualifications and academic performance by gender, we analysed the fifteen highest Grade Point Averages (GPA) obtained in the B.A. degree in journalism of the University of the Basque Country during the academic years included in the study. This analysis aims to establish whether women, in addition to doubling men in terms of university graduation, also outperform men in terms of GPA. This may allow, in subsequent analyses on the distribution by gender in the newsrooms in the Basque Country, to determine whether there is a correspondence between the number of female graduates, their academic performance and their job and/or professional position.

**Table 5: 15 top GPA among journalism graduates from the UPV/EHU by gender (1999-2013)**

15 top GPA 1999 / 2000		15 top GPA 2000 / 2001		15 top GPA 2001/02		15 top GPA 2002/03		15 top GPA 2003/04		15 top GPA 2004/05		15 top GPA 2005/06	
GPA	SEX	GPA	SEX	GPA	SEX	GPA	SEX	GPA	SEX	GPA	SEX	GPA	SEX
9.30	F	8.42	F	8.69	F	8.60	F	8.76	M	8.70	F	8.75	M
9.00	F	8.35	F	7.92	F	8.33	F	8.49	F	8.29	F	8.37	M
8.93	F	8.24	F	7.91	M	8.29	F	8.44	F	8.06	F	8.29	F
8.84	F	8.19	M	7.90	F	8.21	F	8.37	M	8.04	F	8.25	M
8.76	F	8.19	M	7.90	F	8.07	F	8.27	F	8.03	M	8.02	M
8.70	F	8.14	M	7.86	F	8.07	F	8.10	F	7.97	F	7.98	M
8.63	F	8.13	F	7.83	M	8.01	F	8.08	F	7.95	F	7.95	F

8.61	F	8.10	M	7.81	F	8.01	M	8.06	F	7.94	F	7.94	F
8.60	F	8.09	F	7.81	F	7.94	F	7.95	F	7.86	F	7.89	F
8.55	F	8.04	M	7.73	F	7.94	M	7.95	F	7.85	M	7.85	F
8.50	F	7.98	F	7.71	F	7.77	M	7.90	F	7.83	F	7.81	M
8.50	F	7.96	F	7.70	M	7.67	M	7.84	M	7.79	M	7.77	M
8.50	F	7.95	F	7.67	F	7.66	F	7.77	F	7.74	M	7.75	F
8.47	F	7.87	F	7.66	F	7.65	M	7.76	F	7.73	F	7.72	F
8.46	F	7.87	F	7.66	M	7.65	F	7.75	F	7.71	F	7.69	F

15 top GPA 2006/07		15 top GPA 2007/08		15 top GPA 2008/09		15 top GPA 2009/10		15 top GPA 2010/11		15 top GPA 2011/12		15 top GPA 2012/13	
GPA	SEX	GPA	SEX	GPA	SEX	GPA	SEX	GPA	SEX	GPA	SEX	GPA	SEX
8.76	M	9.06	F	9.15	M	9.17	F	8.71	F	8.45	M	8.92	M
8.47	M	8.73	F	8.91	F	9.09	M	8.61	M	8.41	F	8.64	M
8.46	M	8.71	F	8.61	F	8.40	F	8.47	F	8.40	F	8.61	M
8.41	F	8.57	M	8.31	F	8.38	M	8.36	M	8.38	M	8.55	M
8.29	F	8.53	M	8.26	F	8.37	M	8.27	F	8.27	F	8.53	M
8.29	F	8.22	F	8.24	F	8.34	F	8.23	F	8.12	M	8.51	F
8.28	F	8.10	F	8.22	F	8.19	F	8.11	F	8.03	M	8.49	F
8.27	F	8.08	F	8.07	M	7.82	F	8.05	F	7.89	F	8.45	F
8.19	F	8.07	M	8.04	F	7.81	F	8.05	F	7.89	F	8.39	F
8.17	M	8.05	F	7.96	F	7.78	F	8.02	M	7.69	F	8.35	M
8.13	M	8.03	M	7.95	F	7.76	F	7.92	M	7.63	F	8.32	F
8.10	F	7.97	F	7.93	F	7.76	F	7.91	F	7.62	F	8.26	F
7.96	F	7.89	F	7.92	F	7.71	F	7.80	F	7.62	F	8.17	F
7.95	F	7.73	M	7.91	F	7.67	F	7.77	M	7.62	F	8.15	M
7.86	M	7.63	M	7.88	F	7.65	M	7.72	F	7.55	F	8.09	F

Source: Authors' own creation

Based on the data on academic performance by gender, it can be concluded that there is a slight deviation in terms of academic performance in favour of women. Of the 210 best GPA identified within the sample of graduates from 14 academic years, 148 belong to women, representing 70.5% of the total, which is four percentage points above the total number of women who have obtained the B.A. degree in journalism. If instead of the fifteen best GPA, we focused on the top three, of the 42 graduates with the highest GPA, 28 are women (66.7) and 14 are men (33.3%).

## 7. Conclusions

The analysis of journalism graduates in Spain confirms that the feminisation of these studies is a well-established reality, which shows very constant values and has been consolidated over the past two decades in a uniform manner across all of the Spanish autonomous communities.

The proportion of women who graduated in journalism is twice as large as that of men (65.7%), as evidenced by the data collected from 25 Spanish universities. This finding has been corroborated by the

studies carried out by different journalist associations. Data, however, indicate that there is greater feminisation of journalism students in public universities (72%) than in private universities (59.5%).

On the other hand, the analysis of the best fifteen GPA among journalism graduates from the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), in fourteen academic years, shows that the academic performance of female graduates is slightly higher than that of men, of approximately four percentage points in the period under analysis.

However, despite the already consolidated and proven tendency to feminisation in journalism studies, whose figures have remained steady for at least two decades in Spanish Universities, the studies carried out by professional associations show that the incorporation of women into the media is being much slower than it has been in its incorporation into the university classrooms.

While the data show that women's academic performance in the journalism degree is comparable to that of men, if not slightly superior, the analysis of their presence in the job market clearly shows that there is greater job insecurity among women, accompanied by a very small presence in managerial positions in the media.

In short, despite the fact that the analysis of the reality of the Spanish universities allows us to say that journalism studies have undergone a process of feminisation since almost a generation ago, the social and labour conditions of women journalists rather support the existence of a false feminisation or pseudo-feminisation, in which the changes that have already occurred in other areas of society are being introduced at a very slow pace in the professional reality of the media.

\*Funded research. This article is the product of a project funded by the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness and directed by Professor Koldobika Meso Ayerdi of the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU): titled "Active audiences and journalism: analysis of the quality and regulation of user generated content" ([reference CSO2012-39518-C04-03](#)).

## 8. Notes

[1] Available at: [amecopress.net/slip.php?article791](http://amecopress.net/slip.php?article791) (visited on 27/04/2014)

## 9. List of references

Asociación de la Prensa de Aragón (2008): *Diagnóstico de la profesión periodística en Aragón*, APA: Zaragoza.

Asociación de la Prensa de Madrid (2007): *Informe anual de la Profesión Periodística*, editado por la APM, Madrid.

Asociación de la Prensa de Madrid (2010): *Informe Anual de la Profesión Periodística 2010*. Madrid: APM, Madrid.



Asociación de la Prensa de Madrid (2012): *Informe Anual de la Profesión Periodística 2010*. Madrid: APM, Madrid.

Bastin, Gilles (2001): “Newsworkers and their engendered careers. Findings of a longitudinal analysis of 1.171 LinkedIn profiles of French journalists”. *Textual and Visual Media. Revista de la Sociedad Española de Periodística*, nº5, pp. 17-30.

Bromley, Michael; Tumber, Howard; Zelizer, Barbie (2014): “Journalism. Theory, practice and criticism”. In TUMBER, Howard; ZELIZER, Barbie, *Journalism*, vol. 15, nº14, pp. 217-238.

Canel, María José; Sádaba, Teresa (1999): “La investigación académica sobre las actitudes profesionales de los periodistas. Una descripción del estado de la cuestión”. In *Comunicación y Sociedad*, vol. XII, nº 2, pp. 9-32.

Chambers, Deborah; Steiner, Linda; Fleming, Carole (2004): *Women and journalism*. New York: Routledge.

Collegi de periodistes de Catalunya (2006): *Llibre blanc de la professió periodística a Catalunya*. Barcelona: Col·lecció Lexikon:

Costa, Carmen; Túnuez, Miguel (2009): “La mujer en los gabinetes de la administración pública gallega”. In Pérez Amat, R.; Nuñez, S.; García, A. (Coords.). *Identidad, género y comunicación corporativa*. Madrid: Fragua, 2, pp. 777-787.

Flecha, Consuelo (2008): “La educación, a favor de las mujeres”. In *25 años Instituto de la Mujer (1938-2008): una historia abierta*. Madrid: Instituto de la Mujer, pp. 84-92.

Garrido, Carlota (2008): “La dura realidad profesional de las mujeres periodistas”, in Isabel MENÉNDEZ (ed.), *Agencias de género: Comunicadoras en el mundo*. Madrid: AMECO, pp. 121-134.

Gill, Rosalind (2007): *Gender and the media*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hanitzsch, Thomas; Hanusch, Folker (2012): “Does gender determine journalists’ professional views? A reassessment based on cross-national evidence”. *European Journal of Communication*, nº 27, pp. 257-277.

León, Jesús (2012): “La situación actual de la mujer en el ejercicio periodístico. Retrieved from [www.slideshare.net/infoudch/situacin-actual-de-la-mujer-en-el-ejercicio-periodistico](http://www.slideshare.net/infoudch/situacin-actual-de-la-mujer-en-el-ejercicio-periodistico) (10/07/2014)

Mellado, Claudia; Simon, Jeanne; Barría, Sergio; Enríquez, Jorge (2007): “Investigación de perfiles profesionales en periodismo y comunicación para una actualización curricular permanente”. *Zer*, nº 23, pp. 139-164.

Rodríguez López, Gloria (2003): “Indicadores de conciliación y políticas públicas”. In *1er encuentro sobre la iniciativa europea equal. Conciliación de la vida laboral y familiar en España*. Madrid: Agrupación de Desarrollo del Proyecto Equal, pp. 158-176.

Ross, Karen (2001): “Women at work: journalism as engendered practice”. *Journalism Studies*, vol. 2, nº4, pp. 531-544.

Ross, Karen (2013): *Gendered media. Women, men and identity politics*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

Ryan, Kathleen; Chavez, Joy (2010): “Beyond Anchorman: A comparative analysis of Race, Gender and Correspondent Roles in Network News”. *Electronic News*, vol. 4, nº 6, pp. 97-117.

Soriano, Jaume (2005): “La incorporación de la mujer a la profesión periodística en España. Crítica a la hipótesis de la feminización”. *Revista Faro*, nº 2, pp. 1-5.

Soriano, Jaume; Cantón, María José; Díez, Mercé (2005): “La pseudofeminización de la profesión periodística en España. *Zer*, nº 19, pp. 35-52.

Thormham, Sue (2007): *Women, feminism and media*, Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh.

Ufarte Ruiz, María José (2007): “Las mujeres en el seno de la profesión periodística: de la discriminación a la inserción”. *Ámbitos*, nº 16, pp. 409-421.

---

#### How to cite this article in bibliographies / References

D Rivero Santamarina, K Meso Ayerdi, S Peña Fernandez (2015): “The feminisation of journalism studies: an analysis of the Spanish case”. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 70, pp. 566 to 583.

<http://www.revistalatinacs.org/070/paper/1060/30en.html>

DOI: [10.4185/RLCS-2015-1060en](https://doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-2015-1060en)

Article received on 30 July 2015. Accepted on 25 September.

Published on 8 October 2015.