


Work precarity and gender in Argentine journalism: A double crisis for female journalists


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Abstract. The present study examines the perception of work precarity and compares gender dynamics in this regard, drawing insights from a survey of journalists in Argentina. The analysis of the 672 response questionnaires indicates a gender disparity, particularly for women, in terms of job instability, as they are more likely to hold temporary and part-time positions. Furthermore, a discrepancy has been observed in their capacity to influence work organization, as they frequently occupy lower-level positions and prioritize family well-being. Motherhood and the care of dependent beings are significant impediments to women's professional development, as they are often compelled to postpone projects or modify their working conditions. However, this is not the only factor to be considered. A significant number of participants have articulated sentiments of underestimation, largely attributable to their gender. The prevailing sentiment among both genders is that male journalists are the beneficiaries of a greater range of opportunities, enhanced prospects for professional advancement, and more favorable working conditions. The sexism that still exists in the sector is also seen as a key constraint, as many women feel undervalued in their workplaces simply for being women, regardless of whether they have children or not. This study makes a significant contribution to a more comprehensive understanding of the gender gap in journalism on a global scale. In this context, the regulation of work-life balance and the implementation of gender quotas are ongoing processes in most regions worldwide.

Keywords. Work precarity, journalism, Argentina, gender gap, female journalists.

ES Precariedad laboral y género en el periodismo argentino: una doble crisis para las periodistas

Resumen. Este estudio analiza las percepciones sobre la precariedad laboral y compara las dinámicas de género en este ámbito, basándose en los resultados de una encuesta realizada a periodistas en Argentina. El análisis de los 672 cuestionarios completados indica una disparidad de género, especialmente para las mujeres, en términos de inestabilidad laboral, ya que son más propensas a ocupar puestos temporales y a tiempo parcial. Además, se ha observado una discrepancia en su capacidad para influir en la organización del trabajo, ya que con frecuencia ocupan puestos de menor nivel y dan prioridad al bienestar familiar. La maternidad y el cuidado de personas dependientes son obstáculos importantes para el desarrollo profesional de las mujeres, ya que a menudo se ven obligadas a posponer proyectos o modificar sus condiciones de trabajo. Sin embargo, este no es el único factor a tener en cuenta. Un número significativo de participantes ha expresado sentirse infravalorado, lo que se atribuye en gran medida a su género. La opinión predominante entre ambos sexos es que los periodistas varones se benefician de una gama más amplia de oportunidades, mejores perspectivas de promoción profesional y condiciones de trabajo más favorables. El sexismo que aún persiste en el sector también se considera una limitación fundamental, ya que muchas mujeres se sienten infravaloradas en sus lugares de trabajo simplemente por ser mujeres, independientemente de si tienen hijos o no. Este estudio supone una importante contribución a una comprensión más completa de la brecha de género en el periodismo a escala mundial. En este contexto, la regulación de la conciliación de la vida laboral y familiar y la aplicación de cuotas de género son procesos que todavía tienen recorrido en muchas regiones del mundo.

Palabras clave. Precariedad laboral, periodismo, Argentina, brecha de género, mujeres periodistas.

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1. Introduction

Work precarity has become one of the main concerns of workers around the world and an increasingly relevant object of academic study (Randolph, 2022). Although capitalism and neoliberal policies have led to precarity extending to many professional sectors today, creative workers, including journalists, are considered a clear example of precarity (Rick, 2024), especially those who work as freelancers (Cohen & Clarke, 2024; Örnebring, 2020).

The analysis of precarity is vital because it poses a threat both to the workers themselves, who become impoverished and see a decline in their quality of personal and professional life, and to the public, as quality journalism is a vital element for a well-established democracy (Ferreira, 2024; Hayes & Silke, 2021).

According to previous studies, precarity affects journalistic production and can even jeopardize the fundamental function of providing truthful and verified information that journalism must have in a democratic society (Relly & Waisbord, 2022). The professionals themselves have reported that precarity hinders their social function (González Macías & Cepeda Robledo, 2021) and makes them more submissive to power. In a current context where media are becoming increasingly affected by political polarization, which threatens journalism's objectivity and offers a new door open to bias, sensationalism and a growing division of audiences (Berrocal-Gonzalo *et al.*, 2023), many young Argentinian journalists have had to learn the profession in an environment that combines both polarization and work precarity (Rosenberg, 2022).

In the case of Argentina, professional entities such as the Argentine Journalism Forum- Fopea (2021) and unions such as Sipreba (2022, 2023) are increasingly drawing public attention on how precarious working conditions affect the work of professional journalists. In this country, although many media workers experience widespread precarity and are forced into multiple jobs to survive in the profession (Biderman *et al.*, 2022), in some respects there is a gender gap that places women in a particularly vulnerable group. The presence of women working in Argentine journalism is increasingly common, but they do so mostly in the most precarious areas and there are still few who enjoy good working conditions (Sipreba, 2022).

In this context, the main objective of this study is to analyse the work precarity affecting Argentine female journalists based on the four major dimensions of this phenomenon proposed by Guadarrama *et al.* (2012): Low wages, job instability, impact of workers on their working conditions and social protection. The aim is also to compare the situation of female journalists with their male counterparts through a semi-structured survey distributed among female and male Argentine professionals, which included 672 responses from journalists all around the country. Finally, this article makes proposals to address the situation and achieve greater equality in newsrooms in the future.

2. State of the art

Work precarity can be defined as the economic and social insecurity resulting from unstable working

conditions (Neilson & Rossiter, 2008). Although liberal perspectives have stressed that it can have positive aspects for workers, such as greater autonomy, the opportunity to carry out creative work and the adoption of new professional identities (Deuze, 2007), this celebratory vision has been criticized by authors such as Baines (1999), Neilson & Rossiter (2008) and Ross (2009), who have a more condemnatory vision of the problem, and highlight the negative consequences of precarity, such as long working hours, the reduction of prices and wages in a saturated labour market, and self-exploitation and sacrifice as a response to vocation (Neilson, 2025; Wahl-Jorgensen, 2021).

In the field of journalism, precarity has multiple roots, one of which is the change in the model of information consumption with the arrival of the Internet (Ishikawa *et al.*, 2022). Additionally, there has been a global progressive reduction in media advertising revenues which, in the case of Argentina, worsened during the Covid-19 pandemic, although it is now gradually recovering (Argentine Chamber of Media Agencies, 2023). Moreover, there is an added growing public distrust in the media, a reduction in the distribution of print media, and a decline in interest in the news (Mitchelstein & Bockzowski, 2023). Political polarization has brought more insecurity to work environments, as the professional autonomy and job stability of journalists are increasingly affected by editorial pressures and ideological alignments: in contexts of high polarization, the media usually reward journalists who are ideologically aligned to the editors, which can be translated into better salaries and greater autonomy for those, while more precarity for other ones (Ceron *et al.*, 2019). On the other hand, labour precarity has also become a crucial driver in journalistic practices that might damage democracies (Ferreira, 2024).

In recent years, numerous studies have analysed the rise of work precarity in different countries (Matthews & Onyemaobi, 2024; Sybert, 2021; Brady, 2022; Bulut & Ertuna, 2022; Sharp & Vodanovic, 2022; Torsner, 2022). Latin American countries are also affected (Rodelo *et al.*, 2024). In the case of Argentina, the most recent studies are those conducted by the Argentine Journalism Forum (Fopea, 2021) and unions such as Sipreba (2023).

Currently, the precarity of journalists extends throughout Latin America (Abad & Siranula, 2022), and Argentine journalists are no exception (Márquez *et al.*, 2021; Amado & Waisbord, 2018). Some authors consider it a form of violence against the profession (González Macías & Cepeda Robledo, 2021). Furthermore, Covid-19 worsened the situation even further. The economic reality of media companies deteriorated, and staff reductions were continuous between March and June 2020. During this period, numerous layoffs, termination of collaborations, non-renewal of professionals, and suspension of payments occurred. Additionally, there was an abusive use of telecommuting, resulting in professionals working significantly more hours than their established schedules (De Frutos & Sanjurjo, 2022; García *et al.*, 2021), as it happened in many other countries (Alcantara & Simões, 2024).

2.1. Dimensions of precarity

Precarity is a multidimensional phenomenon that must be approached from a global perspective. Although the lack of a universal set of indicators makes its measurement difficult (Mora, 2012), one of the most used models has been that of Rodgers & Rodgers (1989), later updated by Guadarrama *et al.* (2012), who propose a study of precarity based on four dimensions: low wages, instability, the journalist's ability to influence the organization of work, and the degree of social protection. Rick & Hanitzsch (2024) present a model with seven dimensions that also include these four.

Regarding the first dimension, the deterioration of wages has become one of the most common complaints among Argentine professionals, with three out of four considering it their main work concern (Biderman Núñez *et al.*, 2022). According to a wage agreement signed for the print press of the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area by the Buenos Aires Press Workers Union (UTPBA), the average salary in this sector is 43% below the poverty line, and writers experienced a drop in purchasing power of up to 48% between January 2016 and April 2022 (De Villalobos, 2022). Furthermore, almost half of press workers in the City of Buenos Aires report having salaries below the basic food basket. In response to this situation, unions and professionals have organized "information blackouts" to demand wage improvements (Sipreba, 2023). However, the issue of low wages is a global problem. Similar concerns have been expressed in other countries, including Portugal (Araújo, 2025; Thurman *et al.*, 2025).

The second dimension is job instability, identified as the main problem of the profession in countries like Spain (Rodríguez-Martínez *et al.*, 2021) and within a global context where it is increasingly difficult to develop a stable and permanent career (Ekdale *et al.*, 2014; Norbäck & Sthyre, 2021). In the case of Argentina, only a third of local media outlets have journalists on a payroll. Instead, most face high levels of instability (such as being contributors and freelancers) and are forced into multiple jobs, as six out of ten are compelled to have at least two jobs to avoid poverty (De Villalobos, 2023). In this context, the paradigm of the "entrepreneurial journalist" is emerging (Lincoln, 2024; Ashraf & Phelan, 2023), utilizing new technologies to open new market niches, especially in digital media. Other options include working extra hours, seeking opportunities in independent journalism, or organizing worker cooperatives to save media outlets and jobs, a growing trend in Argentina (Escudero, 2023).

The third dimension pertains to the journalist's ability to influence the organization of work. The job cuts experienced by many newsrooms have often forced professionals to work at a faster pace to be the first to publish in digital format (Riordan, 2014). Thus, journalists who previously had hours to work on a story now must do so in minutes and take on more tasks: from writing texts to recording and editing videos and audios or managing social networks (Birsén, 2010), which leads professionals to a heavy workload (Springer & Rick, 2025). In these circumstances, professionals are forced to spend less time working on information, have fewer resources for research, and

have to cover much larger areas (Siegelbaum & Thomas, 2015).

As a result, they are at greater risk of experiencing stress and suffering from burnout syndrome, leading some to leave the profession (Deuze & Wistchge, 2017). This trend is particularly high among younger journalists, who are extremely concerned about stress and work overload (Mombelli & Beck, 2023). Additionally, the profession typically requires high availability of work. The hours are long and often include unpaid overtime; they are also flexible, as they are tied to current events, which can occur at any time, including holidays and weekends, making it difficult to balance work and family life. These characteristics have traditionally been intrinsic to the journalistic profession, but the situation has worsened in recent years, with increased stress and competitiveness in the media (Reinardy, 2011).

Finally, the fourth dimension of precarity pertains to the social protection provided by laws and collective organizations, including both social security benefits and unemployment benefits and pensions, and protection against unfair dismissals (Guadarrama *et al.*, 2012). In the Argentine context, during the administration of Mauricio Macri (2015-2019), more than 4,500 layoffs were recorded in the journalism sector (Sipreba, 2022), while organizations such as the Association of Argentine Journalistic Entities have expressed concern about the intent to "devalue" and "stigmatize" journalism by former congressman and current president Javier Milei (Adepa, 2023).

2.2. Precarity and gender

Although precarity in journalism has become a widespread phenomenon affecting all types of workers, previous studies indicate that women, as well as young people and digital workers, represent a particularly vulnerable segment (Guo & Fang, 2023). This is a structural and global issue not only confined to Argentina. Although journalism is an increasingly feminized profession, female journalists have traditionally earned lower salaries than their male colleagues for the same work and have suffered from gender discrimination, which still exists today (Sampaio-Dias *et al.*, 2024). In Argentina, this happens more often in print than in audiovisual media.

This gap is especially evident in media management, where few women hold top positions. In Argentina, only 14% of local media outlets are led by women, although digitalization is helping to bridge this gender gap, as women predominantly assume leadership roles in digital media (Fopea, 2021). Furthermore, the percentage of women working in the press sector tends to grow, but their presence is mostly in the more precarious branches, while they remain scarce in those with better working conditions (Sipreba, 2022).

Among the main causes of this inequality of opportunities is motherhood. It is the primary reason for women abandoning their journalism careers in various countries (Okerere-Adagba, 2023), as family responsibilities predominantly fall on them, and media companies are reluctant to support work-life balance. The pandemic also worsened the situation by exacerbating the pay gap and forcing many female journalists, especially those who are mothers, to un-

dertake a “double shift” due to the imposition of remote work without an adequate organization by the companies (Quandt & Wahl -Jorgensen, 2022; De-jmanee, 2019).

Another factor contributing to the scarcity of women in management positions is the male-dominated tradition in company organization, which often features an arbitrary promotion system, reflecting a certain distrust in women's leadership abilities (Ekert & Asman, 2021). But beyond salary and the “glass ceiling” that hinders promotions, women also have to face gender-based violence and workplace harassment, sanctions and moral control through jokes and gossip, and generally have fewer opportunities to make decisions about content (Martínez-Corcuera & Faedo, 2024; Blumell *et al.*, 2023; Sbaraini *et al.*, 2023). Nevertheless, there have been some advances: Argentina has been a pioneer in introducing the role of the “gender editor”, whose mission is to combat stereotypes and gender violence, despite encountering resistance from some sectors (Spinetta, 2022).

3. Objectives and methodology

3.1. Research objectives

The main objective of the article is to analyze the job precarity affecting Argentine female journalists based on the dimensions of low wages, instability, ability to influence the company, and social protection, comparing their situation with that of male journalists. Secondary objectives:

- Identify the diverse variables of the labor situation affecting female journalists in Argentina.
- Diagnose the main conditioning generating an overall situation of precarity for Argentinian female journalists.
- Evaluate the perception of precariousness among Argentine female journalists and determine whether this corresponds to a more celebratory or condemnatory vision.

3.2. Research tool: The survey

The survey was distributed through the internal forum used by Fopea (Argentine Journalism Forum), to which all members of the institution have access. To reach the largest possible universe of journalists, the research was supported by the main national organization, which brings together around 1,000 journalists from across the country. The recruitment method was via email, which provided access to the survey, allowing each participant to submit a single response. The survey was sent to all journalists, without limiting responses based on gender.

This methodological strategy was used to detect differences between male and female journalists across various variables: employment situation, income range, professional category, type of media they work in, level of job satisfaction, stability and layoffs, perception of the influence of their gender on career progression, experience of gender discrimination, and the highest level of education attained. In the case of female journalists, the form included an expanded response section, aimed at recording

specific cases of discrimination or professional obstacles due to gender issues.

3.3. Survey coding

In the survey, participants had the opportunity to describe their employment situation comprehensively. This included everything from the salary-economic issues to various forms of contracts, professional development, work environment and main concerns. Additionally, female journalists could elaborate on and narrate situations that reflected their particular circumstances. The results were then analyzed through a cross-cutting framework, which allowed, on one hand, to account for the professional reality of practicing journalism in Argentina, and on the other, to understand the issue from a gender perspective. The questionnaire was structured into four blocks:

- a. Personal data: in this section, journalists were asked to identify themselves according to their age, gender and highest level of education attained.
- b. Employment situation: in this second section, questions were asked about the current employment condition (type of contract, single or multiple employment, full or part-time, permanent or temporary employment relationship, or self-employment), the position held if belonging to a newsroom or professional workspace, type of main media they work in (traditional print, digital media, television, radio, news agency, media manager) and type of ownership (private, public, or community)
- c. Income and job satisfaction: in this section, questions were asked about monthly income, satisfaction with the current employment situation, career progression, experiences related to layoffs, and main job concerns.
- d. Gender variable: The last section aimed to link journalists' employment situations with gender issues, by asking:
 1. To what extent do you consider gender has influenced your career progression?
 2. Perception of equality/inequality of opportunities between male and female journalists
 3. Comparative precarity between male and female journalists
 4. Experience, if any, of suffering from gender discrimination
 5. Space for proposals aimed at ensuring gender equality in professional journalism field in Argentina

3.4. Sample

The survey was disseminated to 2,980 Fopea members and institutional contacts, and 1,165 responses were documented. A total of 672 responses were obtained, which constitutes 22% of the total number of mails sent. Access to the form was available from 1 to 30 November 2023. Out of the total of 672 completed forms, the respondents were: 342 male journalists (51%); 330 female journalists (49%). Age range of responses: Between 40 and 60 years: 390 (58%); Between 26 and 39 years: 188 (28%); Over 60 years: 81 (12%); Between 18 and 25 years: 13 (2%).

71% of respondents hold an undergraduate or postgraduate degree. Regarding the type of media in which journalists primarily engage their professional activity (where they spend the most hours), the results were as follows: Digital media: 410 (61%); Traditional media (broadcast or cable television, radio, print media: 148 (22%); Media management: 20 (3%); News agency: 7 (1%); Others: 87 (13%).

3.5. Reliability and limitations

To ensure data reliability, this research received methodological advice from Demos Consulting SRL, one of the most recognized public opinion agencies with national reach in Argentina.

Statistically, a result of 672 responses from journalists across Argentina is approximate, as the number of individuals who rely on journalism as their primary source of income is unknown (Amado, 2012). In addition, when collecting information about the employment situation of journalists in Argentina, there is a structural limitation: journalists in the country are not grouped in a single professional association, federation, or union. Moreover, practicing journalism in Argentina does not require a registration or license that implies any degree of association.

From a statistical standpoint, the confidence interval of the study is +/- 3.7%, of maximum global statistical error (statistical error of the proportion calculated for $z=1.96$ (95% confidence) and $p=q=0.5$ (maximum dispersion of the results) and under the assumption of Simple Random Sample (SRS, $e = z \sqrt{(p * q)/n}$) to which a correction factor for finite population ($\sqrt{((N-n)/(N-1))}$) was applied.

4. Results

The survey was answered by 672 professionals: 342 men (51%) and 330 women (49%). Based on the analysis of this gender variable, the first section describes the situation of Argentine female journalists regarding the four previously defined dimensions of precarity. Next, and maintaining the gender perspective, the perceptions and attitudes of the participants regarding their employment situation are analyzed.

4.1. Dimensions of precarity

In this section, the four dimensions of precarity have been analyzed based on the following variables and sub-variables: instability (employment situation, temporariness), capacity to influence the organization of work (professional category, main causes of job concern), wages and social protection (number and typology of dismissals), comparing the situation of female professionals with that of their male counterparts. A methodological gender comparison is required to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the disparities in the established variables employed in the field of journalism. This type of operation has been shown to enhance the analysis and facilitate diagnosis about the potential gender gap in the perception of the journalist's working conditions.

4.1.1. Instability

4.1.1.1. Employment situation

The full-time dependent employment is more common among male than female participants, with an

eight-percentage-point difference: nearly half of the men (46.2%) work full time, while the percentage for women drops to 38.4%. Conversely, nearly 8% of women work part-time, compared to only 2.6% of men. These figures can be related to the fact that women perceive that motherhood has impacted their career and forced them to adjust their work. As will be seen later, concerns about balancing work and family life are much more prevalent among women than men. In this regard, one participant states: "As a mother, I had to postpone or change some projects to try to balance family and work life", while another one notes that "when I had young children, I could not balance work and family life".

This greater dedication to work by men is also reflected in multiple employment: nearly 8% of respondents hold two or more jobs, while only 3% of women are in this situation. Finally, regarding self-employment, there are no notable differences between genders, as 33.3% of men and 35.4% of women are self-employed.

4.1.1.2. Temporariness

The majority of journalists who have reported being employed are on permanent contracts (75%), indicating significant stability among those with contracts. However, gender breakdown reveals that, in this context, women experience greater temporariness: one-third of female respondents who are employed (30%) have a temporary contract or one tied to the duration of a project, while for men this figure is only 21.2%.

4.1.2. Capacity to influence the organization of work

4.1.2.1. Professional category

According to the results of the survey, executive positions (directors, editors-in-chief, and section heads) are predominantly occupied by men, while women represent the majority of writers and contributors, both internal and external. Specifically, nearly half of the male participants (47.65%) hold an executive position: 20% are directors, 7.6% are editors-in-chief or news editors and 20.5% section heads. In contrast, only 31.5% of women hold these same executive roles (12.42% are directors, 5.15% are editors-in-chief and 14% section heads). Conversely, women predominantly hold lower-level positions: 41.5% of female respondents work as writers and 27% are contributors, while for men, only 35.4% are writers and 17% serve as contributors.

These data correlate with the responses from open-ended questions, as several women report that their gender has affected their professional advancement and that they have been overshadowed by their male colleagues, who are perceived to have more opportunities for promotion simply because they are men. Some of the complaints are as follows:

"While I worked in print and radio media, my male colleague always got promoted and was better paid than me, just because he was a man".

"Journalism, like so many other professions, in a province as conservative as mine, always pri-

criticizes men in opportunities for progress, advancement and development”.

“When it comes to providing development opportunities, men are chosen over women”.

“Men are always elected for higher positions”.

“I have been sidelined in promotions because I am a woman”.

“Men have always been given better opportunities, even though they were not always qualified”.

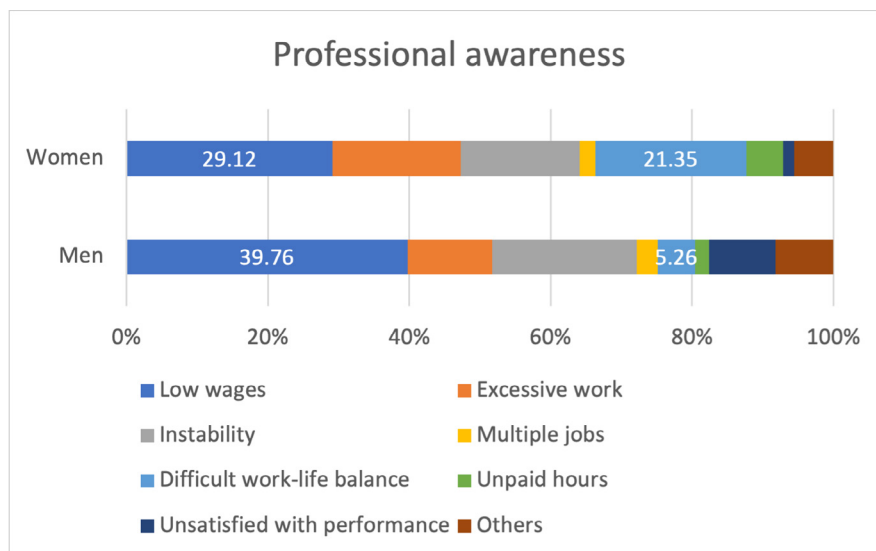
Finally, one of the participants summarizes it as a “double barrier” that women must overcome if they want to advance in their jobs:

“One must prove that, despite being a woman, one is capable of performing a particular role or function.”

4.1.2.2. Main causes of work-related concern

Although low salaries are the main cause of concern for both genders (34.7% of respondents place this issue first), 21.35% of women rank difficulties in achieving work-life balance as their top concern, compared to just 5.26% of men. In fact, work-life balance is the second biggest concern among women after salaries, while men are more concerned about other issues such as instability (20.5%) or overwork (12%). Although maternity is the primary concern in this regard, one response points out that, for older women, caring for parents also affects their ability to balance work and family life (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Main causes of work-related concern



Source: Own production.

4.1.3. Salaries

Despite the gender bias observed in stability and professional categories, the data do not show a pay gap between men and women, since the monthly amounts are very similar in both cases. Age is a more significant factor in determining salary, as younger journalists are paid lower salaries than their more experienced counterparts, regardless of gender.

The data reflect that the salaries of Argentine journalists are generally very low for both genders: 53.8% of women and 52.6% of men, that is, half of the professionals, earn less than 200,000 pesos monthly, which corresponds to the basic food basket in Buenos Aires. In both cases, the most common salary range is between 100,000 and 200,000 pesos monthly, although 9.6% of men and 6% of women earn less than 50,000 pesos. However, a certain bias is observed at the higher end of the scale: 7.6% of men receive the highest salary (more than one million pesos monthly), while only 2.72% of women reach that figure.

Although the data do not show significant salary differences between men and women, some partici-

pants do report a perceived gap, indicating that their fees are lower than their male counterparts despite performing the same work. One participant notes: “For the same job and responsibility as a man, I earn less,” while another states that as a woman, she has had to “work twice as hard to earn less than a man in the same position.”

4.1.4. Social protection

4.1.4.1. Job layoffs

Regarding social protection, men and women appear to have experienced layoffs equally. About 35.57% of men have experienced some form of dismissal in journalism, which is similar to the 39.4% of women who have faced the same situation—meaning more than one-third of professionals have encountered layoffs, with very similar percentages between genders. However, men are more likely to have been terminated multiple times (18.75%) compared to women (9.52%), who have mostly been dismissed only once. In the qualitative responses, only women mention that their termi-

nations were due to gender reasons, as they lost their jobs after becoming pregnant or becoming mothers.

4.2. Attitudes and perceptions regarding job precarity

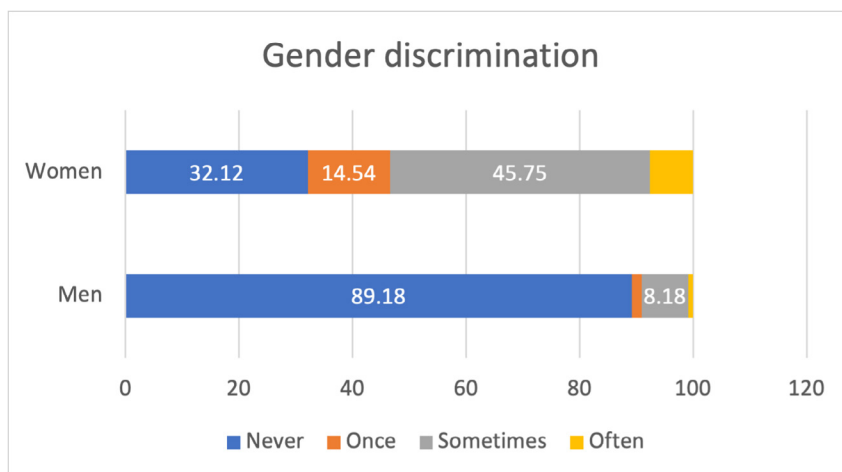
In this second section of results, the opinions and attitudes of the respondents are analyzed concerning six issues related to their work situation and career progression: gender discrimination, evolution of working conditions, gender influence on career progression, professional satisfaction, perception of

precarity, and proposed measures to ensure gender equality.

4.2.1. Gender discrimination

The survey results indicate that women experience gender-based workplace discrimination much more frequently than men. Only 10.8% of men report having experienced it (whether frequently, occasionally, or rarely), while 89.2% claim to have never suffered from it. In contrast, 67.9% of women have encountered some form of discrimination, while only 32.1% have managed to avoid it (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Incidence of perceived gender discrimination



Source: Own production.

As seen, motherhood is perceived as a significant factor affecting the professional development of female journalists, and often becomes a reason for discrimination, even if the woman has not yet become a mother. “Women are considered potential pregnancies, and that’s a risk for any employer, as we might take a leave if we become pregnant”, warns one of the respondents. In the most extreme cases, one participant reports having been dismissed from a media outlet for becoming a mother, while another was denied a promotion due to having children, as admitted by her own boss.

However, not all instances of discrimination are related to motherhood. Several responses point to an inherent sexism in the profession that has led to the discrediting—sometimes publicly—of women, with sexist comments related to their physical appearance and/or professional abilities. In some cases, these are blatant examples, such as a manager suggesting that a female reporter should clean the floor simply because she is a woman, or another who directed workplace mistreatment and insults solely at women. In other cases, the discrimination takes the form of more subtle comments from men underestimating women’s abilities.

Other participants report having been denied the opportunity to cover certain events due to their “dangerousness” or because they were not considered suitable for women, citing two specific areas: sports journalism and international journalism. “In sports journalism, I have experienced mockery from colleagues, been unable to cover major games and

faced assignments for women’s sports because they did not want to do it”, explains one participant.

4.2.2. Evolution of working conditions

Both genders show widespread pessimism, with almost 42% of respondents believing their working conditions have worsened over their careers, and only 28.7% express they have improved. The remaining 29.3% state that their situation has remained stable throughout their careers. In this context, the percentage of men who have experienced an improvement (35.9%) is higher than that of women (21.21%). This finding can be related to the earlier perception that men have more opportunities to advance professionally than women, as one respondent admits: “I am aware that being male has allowed me to find work faster. I had more and better options”, he explains.

Although the percentage of men who have seen their working conditions worsen (51.1%) is higher than that of women (32.42%), it is notable that almost half of the women (46.4%) consider their conditions to have remained stable throughout their careers. Many of them point out that this is because they have been stagnant in their positions, having had insufficient opportunities to progress.

4.2.3. Influence of gender on career progression

Among women, there is clearly a greater perception that their gender has influenced their career pro-

gression. On a scale of 1 to 10, only 24% of men believe that their gender has significantly influenced their professional development (scoring 8 or higher), while for women, this figure rises to 54.34%: more than half of the women believe their gender has greatly affected their career. In contrast, only 14.1% of women think their gender has had a low influence (4 points or less) on their professional development, compared to 50.56% of men.

Once again, the majority perception among women is that this influence has been negative. One participant indicates that, due to being a woman, she was excluded “from contests, trips, leadership roles, overtime, or paid work outside regular hours, and not being able to advance to managerial or executive positions”.

4.2.4. Gender and job satisfaction

Despite the difficulties that Argentine journalists encounter, the most common rating for job satisfaction (on a scale from 1 to 10) is 7 for both genders, indicating a notable level of satisfaction. Therefore, there is a sense of resignation in the sector, which is more pronounced among women. Although, as observed, women face more precarious situations, men exhibit more dissatisfaction with their job conditions. Up to 19.27% of men rate their situation as less than 5 out of 10, compared to 10.9% of women. Similarly, 38.9% of women show a high degree of satisfaction with their job (rating it 8 or higher), while only 28.05% of men rate their situation as more than 8.

4.2.5. Perception of precarity

Precarity affecting women is more concerning to women themselves, although both genders acknowledge this inequality. 78% of women strongly agree (8 points or more) with the statement: “Female journalists have more precarious working conditions than men in Argentina”, whereas this percentage is 60% for men. Conversely, 26.3% of men disagree with this statement (rating it 4 or less), while only 7.3% of women express disagreement.

4.2.6. Measures to guarantee gender equality

The first recommendation from respondents is the need for new work models and schedules that allow a better work-life balance for new generations of parents, to ensure a more equitable distribution of family responsibilities and greater equality of opportunities for both genders. Another important issue for participants is the need to equalize salaries; in fact, one suggests penalties for companies that do not comply and ensuring equal opportunities for both men and women in the job market. To achieve this goal, structural measures are proposed, such as increased education and awareness for companies to foster a new work culture, as well as greater awareness among workers, companies, and society in general. More concrete proposals include using gender-neutral CVs, stricter legislation, and labor agreements that ensure effective equality.

5. Discussion and conclusions

This research provides empirical evidence that the journalistic profession in Argentina is inextricably linked to the global phenomenon of precarious employment, a phenomenon that has been extensively documented in the literature (Bulut & Ertuna, 2022; Brady, 2022; Sharp & Vodanovic, 2022; Sybert, 2021). This study also confirms that precarity is a structural characteristic of the journalistic profession in Argentina, affecting both men and women. However, it also shows that there is a gender gap in two of the four analyzed dimensions, maintaining the framework of gender discrimination described by Melin and Wiik (2024) and Sampaio-Dias *et al.* (2024).

The first dimension where the gender gap has been detected is the job instability, as women have more temporary and part-time jobs, which makes it more difficult for them to access stable and long-term employment (Ekalde *et al.*, 2014; Norbäck & Sthyre, 2021). The gender gap has also been detected in the ability to influence organizational structures, as women mostly hold lower positions and show greater concern for work-life balance.

Motherhood and the care of dependent beings in general stand out as the main constraint for women in professional development, as they are often forced to postpone projects or modify their working conditions. But this is not the only factor: the sexism that still exists in the sector is also seen as a key constraint, as many women feel undervalued in their workplaces simply for being women, regardless of whether they have children or not.

Furthermore, both genders perceive that male journalists enjoy more opportunities, greater professional projection, and generally better working conditions. This perception is especially pronounced among women. Consequently, Argentine female journalists face an arbitrary promotion system and a prevailing distrust in women’s leadership capabilities, as delineated by Ekert and Asman (2021).

In the other two dimensions of precarity, which relate to salary and social protection, no notable differences are observed as both genders are affected. Although there is a broad perception among participants that women earn less than men—sometimes for doing the same work, the annual amounts are remarkably low for both genders and no significant differences has been found between men and women. Thus, low salaries become a deeply entrenched problem in Argentine journalism, as previously noted by De Villalobos (2022) and Biderman Núñez *et al.* (2022), with a significant proportion of participants perceiving a deterioration in their working conditions over the course of their careers.

While the obtained data do not confirm the perceived pay gap, it does corroborate the inequality of access to leadership positions that Sipleba (2022) and Fopea (2021) already identified: leadership positions (directors, editors, and section heads) are predominantly held by men, while women are mostly writers and contributors. Survey data show that while half of the men hold positions in the newsroom, only a third of women hold such positions, and they are generally lower-level roles. Thus, in the Argentinian context, women have fewer opportunities to make editorial decisions, such as Blumell *et al.* (2023),

Sbaraini *et al.* (2023) and Jones (2021) previously noted. Paradoxically, although the female gender is the most vulnerable to precarity, there is a certain resignation to the situation, as their job satisfaction is higher than that of men.

Due to its structural nature, reversing this inequality is neither easy nor quick. Issues such as sexism or the inequitable distribution of care for children and dependent beings correspond to deeply ingrained social trends. So, the main avenues for reversing this should be awareness-raising, especially through education from childhood, and policies and legislation that guarantee effective equality. Accordingly, it is essential to establish a more comprehensive legal framework that includes provisions concerning salaries and career advancement. From the perspective of this research, it is essential to strengthen labor protection measures within newsrooms, such as through works councils, editorial boards, or links with unions. This would facilitate the establishment of more regulatory agreements within companies. Without measures to ensure the professional development of women journalists, they may be forced to

leave the profession, as Deuze and Witschge (2017) warn.

Thus, a change in the social and political context is urgent, but media companies can also make their own contributions, with the push for a new work culture that allows for greater work-life balance for both genders. The role of the “gender editor” described by Spinetta (2022) can be useful to ensure greater equity in content, but it is insufficient to foster real change at the occupation level. The erosion of expertise and experience could potentially result in substandard reporting, thereby undermining democracy, a concern that is particularly salient in Argentina, where the incumbent president, Javier Milei, has expressed staunch criticism of journalism (Adepa, 2022). Despite some constraints, this country’s case studies contribute to the delineation of a global map of sexism in journalism, which must be confronted. Thus, future research can focus on the intersection between political polarisation, hate speech and job insecurity, especially in the context of Argentina, a country where the media divide is a key factor Becerra & Schetjman, 2023).

6. Authors’ contribution

Conceptualization	Ideas; formulation or evolution of overarching research goals and aims.	Authors 1, 2, 3
Data curation	Management activities to annotate (produce metadata), scrub data and maintain research data (including software code, where it is necessary for interpreting the data itself) for initial use and later re-use.	Author 3
Formal analysis	Application of statistical, mathematical, computational, or other formal techniques to analyse or synthesize study data.	Authors 2, 3
Funding acquisition	Acquisition of the financial support for the project leading to this publication.	Authors 1, 2
Investigation	Conducting a research and investigation process, specifically performing the experiments, or data/evidence collection.	Authors 1, 2, 3
Methodology	Development or design of methodology; creation of models.	Author 1
Project administration	Management and coordination responsibility for the research activity planning and execution.	Authors 1, 2
Resources	Provision of study materials, reagents, materials, patients, laboratory samples, animals, instrumentation, computing resources, or other analysis tools.	Authors 1, 2, 3
Software	Programming, software development; designing computer programs; implementation of the computer code and supporting algorithms; testing of existing code components.	Author 2
Supervision	Oversight and leadership responsibility for the research activity planning and execution, including mentorship external to the core team.	Author 1
Validation	Verification, whether as a part of the activity or separate, of the overall replication/reproducibility of results/experiments and other research outputs.	Author 3
Visualization	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically visualization/data presentation.	Authors 1,2, 3
Writing / original draft	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically writing the initial draft (including substantive translation).	Authors 1,2,3
Writing / review & editing	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work by those from the original research group, specifically critical review, commentary or revision – including pre- or post-publication stages.	Authors 1,2,3

7. Statement on the use of artificial intelligence

Has not been used.

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