

PEN South Africa newsletter / Issue 22, 2018 / Sexism alive and well in SA media; Contribute to a survey on journalists' health and safety; CFSes, news and more!

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## Contribute to the State of the Newsroom's Survey on the Health and Safety Risks of Journalists

Do you suffer secondary trauma from the work you do? Do you feel protected by your employers when you go on assignment? Are you the victim of online harassment?

Please help researchers understand the health and safety risks journalists face in South Africa by taking 5-10 minutes to complete **this online survey**. We would like to get a sense of the kinds of physical and psychological stresses journalists face in the field and in the newsroom in South Africa. As one will see from the survey, no information is provided that can identify you, or the newsroom that you work in.

Journalists in South Africa face all sorts of stresses, dangers and risks in performing their everyday duties. Those working in newsrooms are also subject to stresses and secondary traumas – even if they are not out in the field covering violent or unsettling stories first-hand.

At the same time, constant pressure and stress in the workplace can mean that everyday workplace challenges such as sexual harassment or bullying can be magnified.

The results will be published in *State of the Newsroom*, an annual publication by the Wits Journalism Programme.

**The survey may be accessed on SurveyMonkey by clicking here.** For more information, please contact Alan Finlay, at [alanfinlay33@gmail.com](mailto:alanfinlay33@gmail.com).

*(Image by Kim Nowacki, taken at Rhodes University School of Journalism and Media Studies)*

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## **Glass Ceilings 2018: With sexism still alive and well in SA media, cyber bullying is the new issue to watch**

***This piece has been reproduced for our newsletter with the permission of the author and its original publisher, the [Daily Maverick](#). The full Glass Ceilings report may be purchased [here](#).***

***By PEN SA member Glenda Daniels and Colleen Lowe Morna***

An increasing salary gap between male and female journalists, subtle and overt sexism, being undermined and ignored for promotion, bullying (in the newsroom and on social media), exclusion from “the boys club” and decision making, “paying the family penalty” (i.e. having children), are just some of the challenges women journalists reveal in the biggest *Glass Ceilings* research undertaken in South Africa to date.

But numbers between women and men in the media have equalled out for the first time. Also, for the first time there was a percentage of people who identified themselves as gender non-conforming and for the first time there is a chapter on cyber misogyny in the study which was undertaken jointly by Sanef and Gender Links after about a year of research, interviews and analysis. The Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) sponsored the research.

In the countrywide research a total of 203 journalists/editors filled out the perceptions survey, 41 companies collaborated with HR information in the institutional survey, 18 more on perception questionnaires (totalling 59 companies) providing data for over 10,054 staff, while 10 senior women journalists told their stories about their particular experiences of sexism in the newsroom in the book: *Glass Ceilings: Women in South African media houses, 2018*.

Women make up more than half South Africa's population and on this Black Wednesday/Media Freedom Day – as we commemorate and condemn the actions on 19 October 1977, when the the National Party banned newspapers and jailed editors for exposing the atrocities of apartheid – we shine a spotlight on gender discrimination in the media. This Glass Ceiling research is done in the context of media freedom all over the world being under threat. Violence and deaths against journalists are increasing, and women are the most vulnerable.

The Glass Ceilings 2018 findings show the challenge today is not about the numbers game, with almost equal numbers of women and men in the media, but sexism is alive and well in South African newsrooms, and taking ugly forms in the digital era. While there have been dramatic shifts in the race and gender composition of the media since the first Glass Ceiling study twelve years ago, black women are still not fairly represented in media decision-making; the pay gap is widening, especially in the age of digitisation; and the old boys' network is alive and well.

In the #MeToo and #TotalShutDown era, the conversation is moving beyond numbers, to the underlying patriarchal norms that fuel sexist attitudes, harassment and its newest ugly form – cyber misogyny. One of the key messages is that #TimesUp for the South African media and #TimeisNow to walk the talk of gender equality.

Black men now comprise half of top media managers. The proportion of black women in *top* media management has increased fivefold but is still 20 percentage points lower than black men. Black women, who comprise 46% of the population, constitute 40% of *senior* managers in the media, suggesting that change is on the way.

The findings comes at a turbulent time. With new media forms sweeping across the landscape, South Africa fits into the global media pattern of traumatic job losses, messy digitisation processes, a huge downturn in advertising revenue and a decline in sales and circulation.

While only three out of the 59 media houses that participated in the study gave data on wages, this and general perceptions suggest a growing gender wage gap as a result of fewer senior and top managers and a growing throng of junior cadets

running the social media platforms of media houses. Many women in the survey say: “We know we earn less than men of the same experience.”

A new threat against women is cyber misogyny that includes some of the ugliest forms of sexism being used to try and silence media women. But the media is also operating in a climate of the #MeToo movement globally and the #Totalshutdown movement nationally, which has seen an increased assertiveness from women about sexism and patriarchal domination.

## **Key trends and recommendations**

### **Gender parity is a reality in the overall composition South African media**

**houses:** At 49% there are nearly equal proportions of women and men in South African media houses compared to the SADC region which recorded 41% women in the media in 2015.

**Some respondents identified themselves as “other” for the first time:** The other 2% comprises staff who identified themselves as others (gender non-conforming persons). This is the first time that this parameter has been measured in the Glass Ceiling Study. The fact that 2% of staff are not identified as male or female is itself an indicator of progress over the last decade.

**The bigger media houses have all achieved the 50% mark overall:** A total of 24 of the media houses surveyed have between 50%-85% women: Media 24 has 57% women, Tiso Black Star (54%); Mail & Guardian (52%) and the SABC (50%).

**Increase but still no parity at management level:** Between 2009 and 2018, there has been an increase in women in senior management from 35% to 46% and in top management from 25% to 36%. Women (47%) and men (41%) attributed the gender gap to men being taken more seriously than women. Women (39%) and men (26%) felt that women are by-passed in promotion processes. Women (35%) and men (28%) attributed this to the old boys’ network.

**The proportion of white men in top management has dropped but is still more than double that of white women:** White men, who constituted 46% of top media managers in 2006, have dropped to 14% in 2018. White women in top management have dropped from 23% to 6% over the same period. But there are still more than double the proportion of white men (14%) to white women (6%) in top management in the media.

**Black men are moving up the ranks at a much faster pace than black women:** The proportion of black men in top management in the media has more than doubled from 22% in 2006 to 50% in 2018. The proportion of black women in top management has gone up five fold, from 6% in 2006 to 30% in 2018, but this is

still twenty percentage points lower than for black men. Black women (30% in top management compared to 46% of the population) are grossly under-represented. The gap is beginning to narrow for black women at senior management level, where they comprise 40% of the total.

**There has been an increase in women middle managers, but decline in skilled professionals:** Women middle managers such as assistant editors, news presenters/ anchors, correspondents, designers and producers) have increased from 47% to 52%. However, there has been a decline in women skilled technical and academically qualified workers (such as reporters and sub-editors) from 51% to 38%. This may reflect the general decimation of these core foot soldiers as new media takes over the mainstream media.

**The gender pay gap appears to be widening:** In the three media houses that provided data, the pay gap between women and men in 2018 at 23% is higher than in 2009 (17%). This may in part reflect the “eroded middle” in which women tend to predominate in the new media era, with the structure of media increasingly dominated by a few top executives, and a large number of junior staff responsible for social media.

**Policies do not promote equal sharing of responsibilities in the home:** 81% of the media houses said they have maternity leave, compared to only 31% with paternity leave policies.

**Sexual harassment is a daily reality for women in the media, but is not prioritised:** In 2018, 87% of media houses said they had sexual harassment policies, compared to 82% in 2009. Almost all media houses (91%) reported dealing with sexual harassment cases. Countless first-hand accounts in the report attest to sexist attitudes and practices at work and in the field. The SABC has set up a commission of inquiry into sexual harassment.

**Cyber misogyny is a growing threat:** While only 6% of official respondents felt cyber misogyny is an issue in South Africa, 30% women and 9% men agreed that women journalists experience cyber violence. The first-hand account by Ferial Haffajee, a former chair of Sanef, and one of South Africa’s most senior women editors, is chilling testimony to gender violence in the media. Cyber misogyny may just be emerging, but like the speed of the social media that spawned it, is guaranteed to spiral out of control if not addressed seriously.

**A new breed of young media women are asserting their rights:** The *Glass Ceilings 2018* reflects both a feminist backlash, and an increased anger and assertiveness by women in the media against sexism, which may be the result of the general *zeitgeist* of the times globally and nationally.

Key recommendations include greater ownership and control of the media by women, especially black women; all media adopting gender and diversity policies; setting targets for achieving parity at all levels; banning sexism; calling out “mansplaining”; revealing and closing the gender wage gap; opening spaces for women to speak out; family friendly practices; self-monitoring and reporting.

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## MEMBERS' NEWS

Congratulations to PEN SA member Megan Ross, who has been nominated for the second year running in the *Brittle Paper Awards*.

PEN SA Board Member Sisonke Msimang will deliver the 2019 Nelson Mandela Lecture in Amsterdam on 10 February 2019 at the city's International Theatre.

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## MEMBERS' NEW TITLES



New and upcoming releases from PEN SA members include *Let the Sunshine In: The 2018 Zapiro Annual* by Zapiro.

Please send us your new releases to [newslettereditor@pensouthafrica.co.za](mailto:newslettereditor@pensouthafrica.co.za).

## CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

**NEW!** The 2019 Brunel International African Poetry Prize Open for Entries (Deadline 12 December)

Playwrights: Apply for the Berliner Festspiele's Worldwide Call for Texts and Performances (Deadline 11 November)

Publishers: Apply to the 2019 Istanbul Fellowship Program (Deadline 30 November)

Apply to Pro Helvetia's 2019 ANT Mobility Fund for Artists (Deadline 30 November)

[Click here to view all calls for submissions](#)

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## Send us your news

Had a book published recently? Attended or participated in a festival? Won an award? Achieved a personal milestone of note? We welcome any news of your activities for future issues of the PEN SA newsletter. Please let us know if your email changes so we can update our mailing list.

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