

**INTERNATIONAL**  
**INFLUENCERS ON**  
**MEDIA HABITS,**  
**GENDER + UNPAID**  
**WORK**

# Table of Contents

About	3
<b>PART ONE: QUANTITATIVE</b>	<b>4</b>
Demographics	5
Political behaviors	7
News platform and device preferences	8
News source + content preferences	11
Social media habits	14
<b>PART TWO: QUALITATIVE</b>	<b>15</b>
Participants at a glance	16
The spectrum of understanding	17
Behavioral insights	18
<b>PART THREE: PERCEPTION</b>	<b>23</b>
Results	24
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS + OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>25</b>
Recommendations	26

# About the research

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New America and POLITICO Focus partnered to conduct research among an international influencer set. The goal of the three-pronged study was to reveal media habits, perceptions around gender equality and awareness of unpaid work as a policy issue.

## Part One

An email survey — fielded by POLITICO Focus from February 15 to February 22, 2016 — was distributed to a select group of influencers across POLITICO's U.S. and European audiences via email. The survey had a total of 705 completions, 32% of which came from POLITICO's proprietary email list of U.S.-based political influencers, 46% from promotion in two of POLITICO Europe's newsletters (Brussels Playbook and Morning Exchange) and 21% from POLITICO's U.S. newsletters (Morning Money and Financial Services Pro).

## Part Two

A qualitative study of influencers working in economic development sought to better understand media habits of those working in the space as well as perceptions around gender equality and barriers to unpaid work policies.

POLITICO Focus conducted one-on-one, hour-long interviews with 15 economic development influencers, including employees of the World Bank, IMF, ILO as well as academics, economists, policy experts and influencers at private organizations (familiarity with POLITICO not a requirement).

## Part Three

A brief perception study was conducted on [POLITICO.com](https://www.politico.com), targeted at users who consume content around the following tags: budget, business, compensation, economy, employment, GDP, IMF, investment, international policy, monetary policy, World Bank and wages. The survey was fielded from March 2 to March 28, 2016 and received 271 completions.

# PART ONE

# Demographics

POLITICO's international influencer audience is largely of American and European descent. It consists of slightly more males than females, with 68% older than 35 years of age. It's a highly educated segment, with 57% having post-grad degrees.

## GENDER



52%



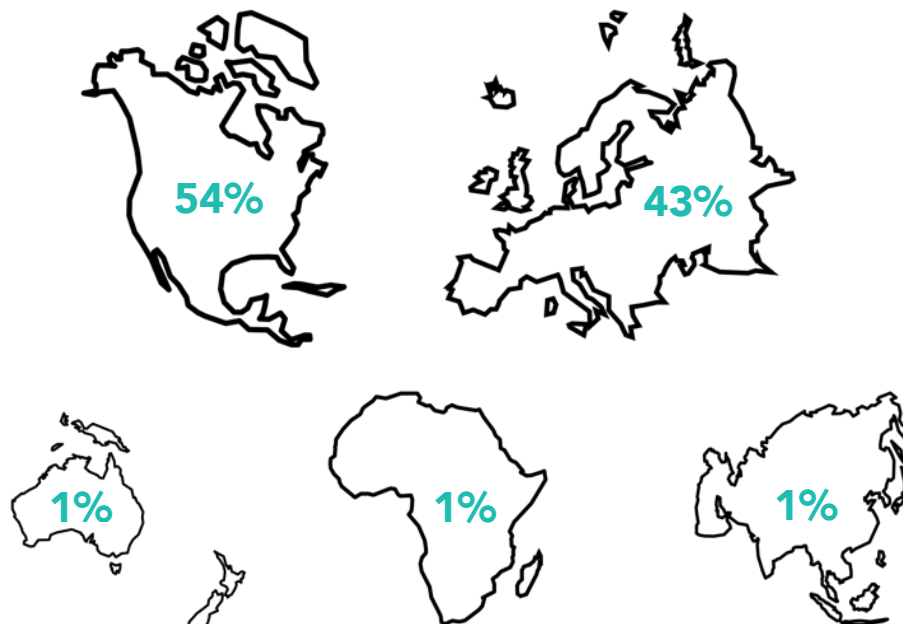
47%

1% gender non-conforming

## AGE



## COUNTRY OF BIRTH

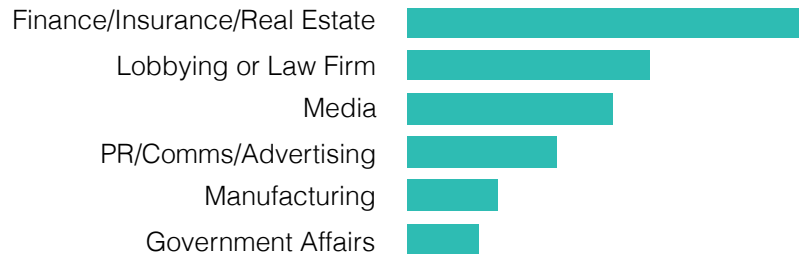


## INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCE PRIMARILY PRIVATE SECTOR, GOVERNMENT

The private sector and government is most represented in the group of influencers surveyed. Non-profit represents the smallest sector of those surveyed.

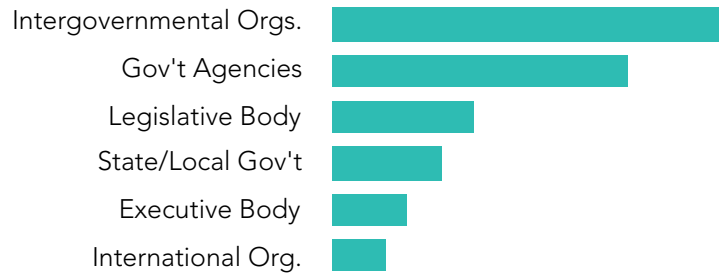
### For Profit/Private Sector

28%



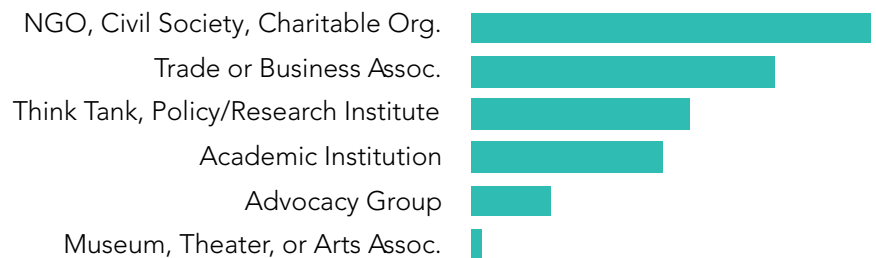
### Government/Intergovernmental Organizations

26%



### Non-Profit

13%



Question: Please select your type of employer.

# Political behaviors

## SURVEY RESPONDENTS ARE HIGHLY ENGAGED POLITICALLY

POLITICO’s international influencer audience is more politically engaged than the average consumer. When asked to select behaviors that describe them, 47% of respondents said they share political content on social media, 31% attend political rallies or speeches, 30% are members of advocacy organizations with an aim of influencing policy and 28% write white papers to inform policy.



	Total	Male	Female	18-34	34-54	55+	For profit	Non profit	Gov't org.
<b>Make speeches on political topics</b>	13%	13%	14%	12%	15%	13%	10%	17%	18%
<b>Attend political rallies or speeches</b>	31%	28%	35%	33%	27%	32%	30%	35%	24%
<b>Share political content on social media</b>	47%	45%	50%	56%	54%	36%	49%	59%	44%
<b>Early adopter of technology</b>	34%	37%	29%	35%	39%	29%	41%	30%	30%
<b>Write op-eds</b>	17%	18%	16%	15%	19%	17%	17%	30%	10%
<b>Membership in an advocacy group trying to influence gov't or policy</b>	30%	29%	31%	24%	33%	31%	33%	48%	14%
<b>Write articles for publication on political topics</b>	21%	22%	19%	22%	23%	18%	24%	34%	12%
<b>Call into live radio or TV shows to express political opinions</b>	5%	5%	3%	0%	5%	7%	5%	1%	1%
<b>Write letters/emails to editors</b>	23%	26%	20%	12%	17%	37%	19%	27%	8%
<b>Write white papers to inform policy</b>	28%	27%	29%	36%	32%	19%	25%	41%	39%

Question: Which of the following behaviors describes you?

\*Compared to 2007 study "Poli-fluentials: The New Political Kingmakers" from the Institute for Politics, Democracy and the Internet at George Washington University

# News platform and device preferences

## LAPTOP/DESKTOP DOMINATES NEWS PLATFORMS

Laptop or desktop computers are the preferred platforms used for news consumption among influencers. Women prefer mobile phones more than men, and those in government roles prefer tablets over the other professional segments.



	Laptop/desktop	Mobile phone	Tablet	Print	Radio	TV
<b>Male</b>	53%	22%	11%	6%	6%	1%
<b>Female</b>	48%	30%	10%	5%	2%	5%
<b>For Profit</b>	56%	31%	5%	4%	2%	2%
<b>Non Profit</b>	53%	30%	5%	1%	7%	3%
<b>Gov't</b>	46%	29%	15%	3%	2%	6%

Question: Which of the following platforms do you use most frequently to consume news?

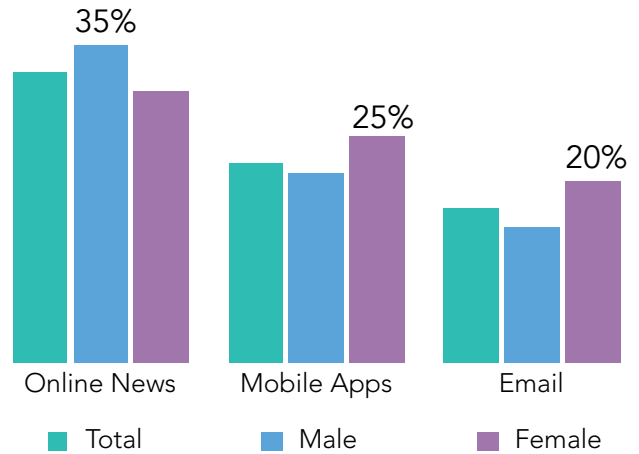


## INFLUENCERS PRIMARILY GET NEWS ONLINE OR ON MOBILE WEB

When asked which platforms they use to consume news, the majority of respondents prefer to receive news via online platforms over apps and email.

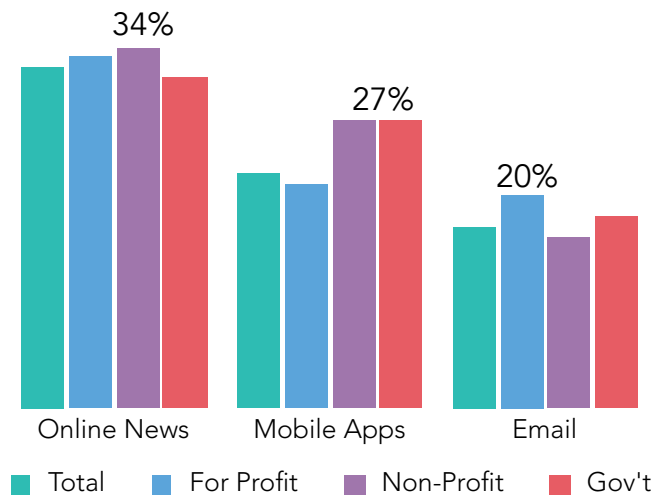
### BY GENDER

Males prefer online news more than women, while women prefer mobile apps and email more than men.



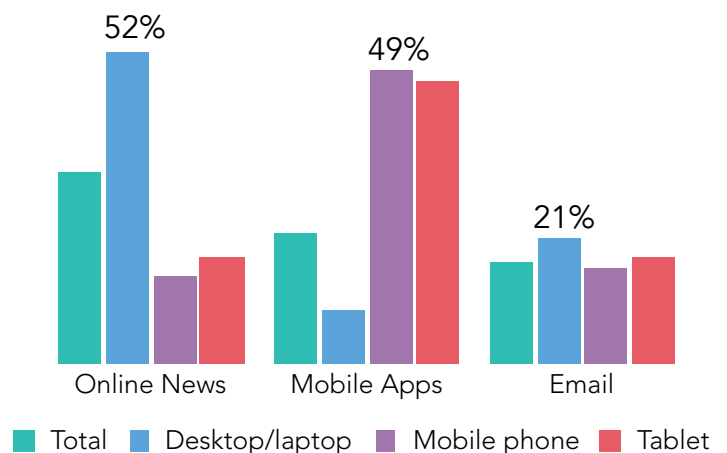
### BY PROFESSION

Non-profits and gov't professionals prefer mobile apps more than for profit professionals.



### BY DEVICE PREFERENCE

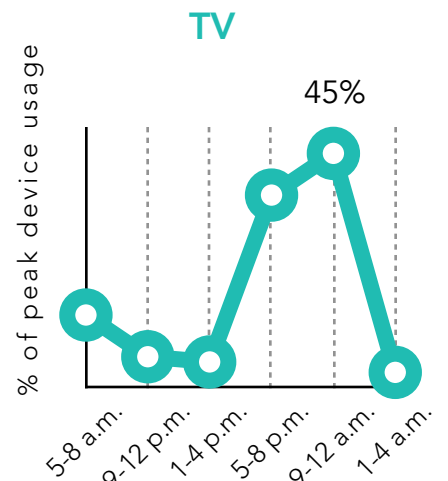
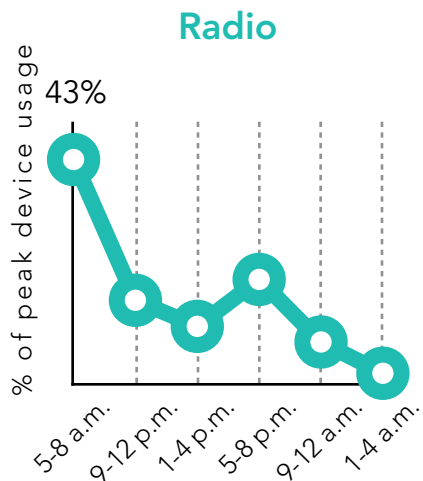
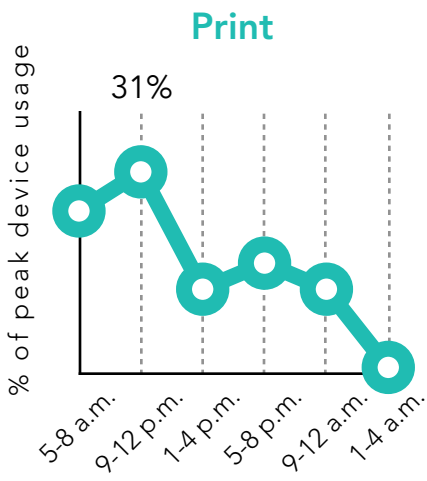
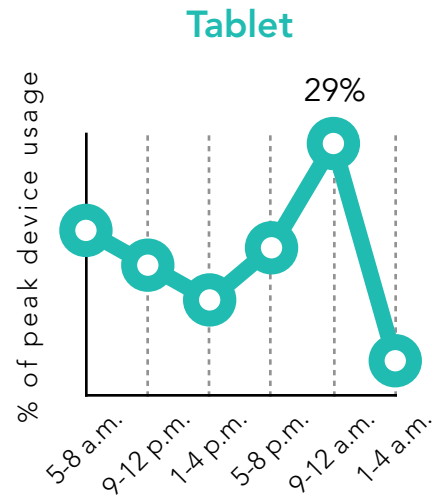
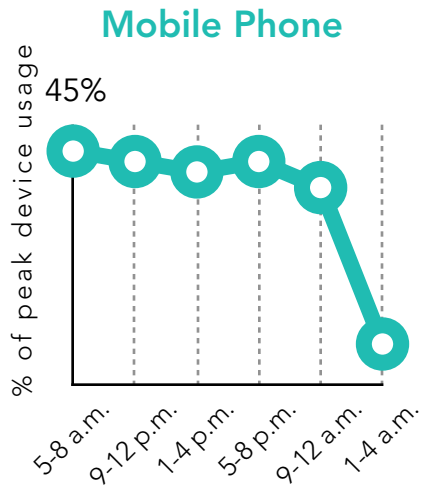
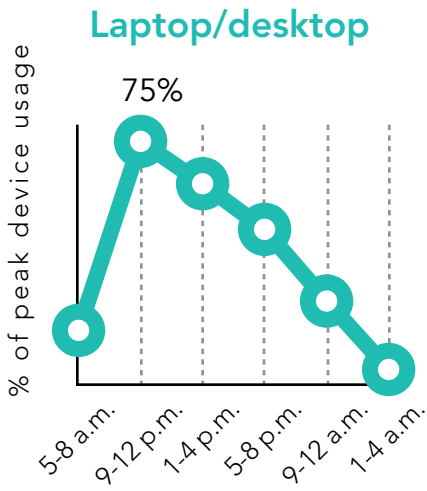
Desktop/laptop users prefer online platforms, and are the least likely to lean on mobile apps for news. Mobile power-users drastically prefer apps.



Question: Which of the following platforms do you use most frequently to consume news?

## INFLUENCERS SPEND 2.62 HOURS A DAY CONSUMING NEWS ONLINE

Device usage changes throughout the day, with laptops peaking between 9 a.m.-12 p.m., and TV peaking 12 hours later. Mobile phone usage remains consistent most of the day, while tablet peaks in the evening.



Question: What time of day do you primarily use each of the following?

# News source + content preferences

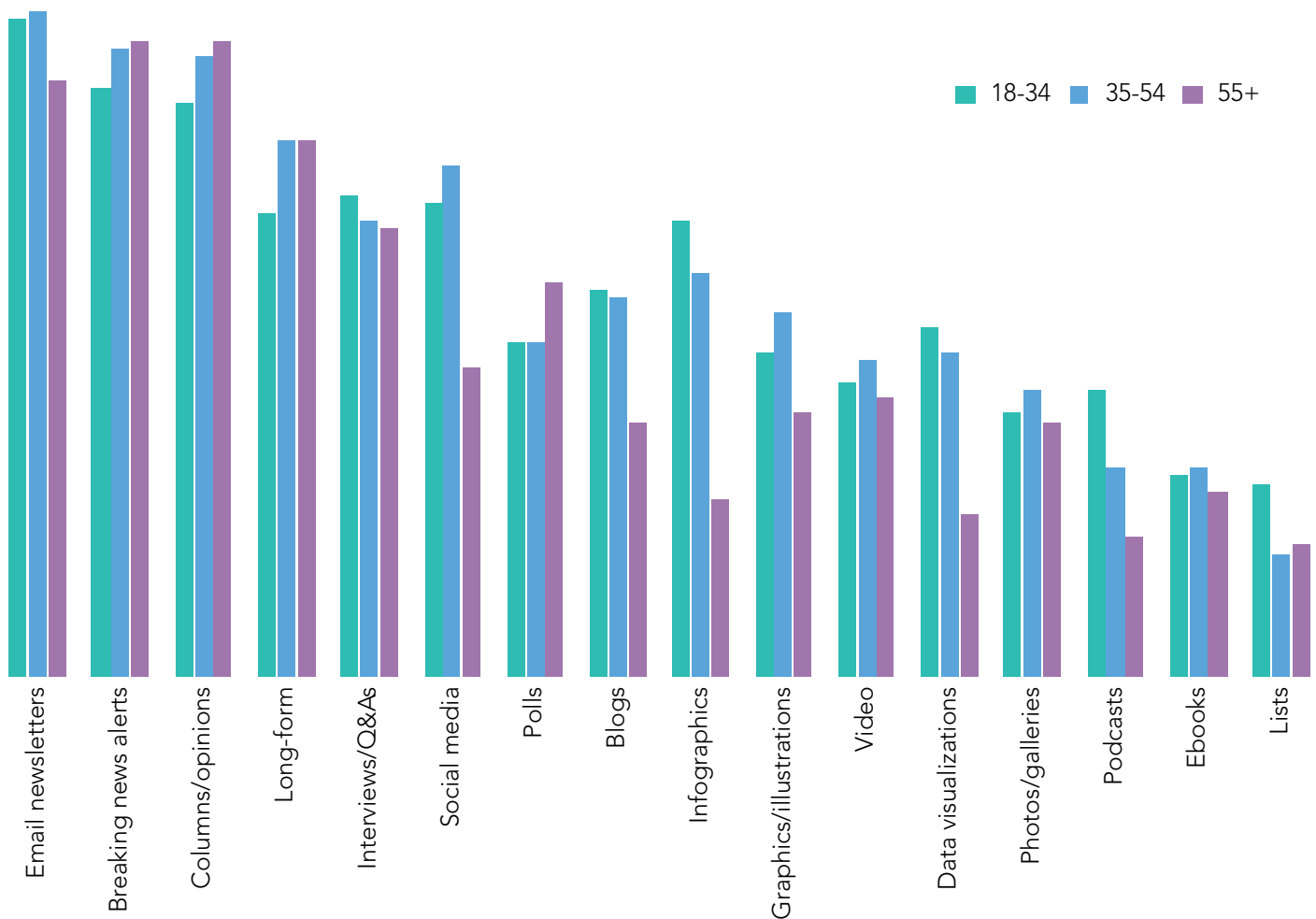
## INFLUENCERS PREFER LONG-FORM TO VISUAL CONTENT

Respondents want content pushed to them, but as a whole they favor long-form journalism over more snackable, visual content. Their time is valuable, but they're not sacrificing the quality for the sake of saving time.

	Total	Male	Female	18-34	34-54	55+	For profit	Non profit	Gov't org.
Email newsletters	82%	82%	83%	85%	86%	77%	86%	80%	82%
Breaking news alerts	80%	78%	82%	76%	81%	82%	83%	80%	77%
Columns/opinions	79%	82%	75%	74%	80%	82%	77%	73%	76%
Long-form journalism	66%	68%	64%	60%	69%	69%	68%	55%	67%
Interviews/Q&As	60%	60%	60%	62%	59%	58%	67%	51%	54%
Social media posts	54%	49%	60%	61%	66%	40%	54%	66%	59%
Polls	47%	50%	42%	43%	43%	51%	44%	48%	38%
Blog posts	43%	42%	44%	50%	49%	33%	48%	44%	44%
Infographics	43%	41%	46%	59%	52%	23%	44%	53%	52%
Graphics/illustrations	40%	40%	40%	42%	47%	34%	40%	45%	39%
Video	38%	36%	41%	38%	41%	36%	39%	42%	35%
Data visualizations	35%	36%	33%	45%	42%	21%	40%	44%	32%
Photography/photo galleries	34%	30%	40%	34%	37%	33%	35%	34%	33%
Podcasts	27%	26%	27%	37%	27%	18%	27%	31%	30%
Ebooks	26%	25%	26%	26%	27%	24%	27%	20%	28%
Lists	20%	17%	23%	25%	18%	17%	19%	24%	17%

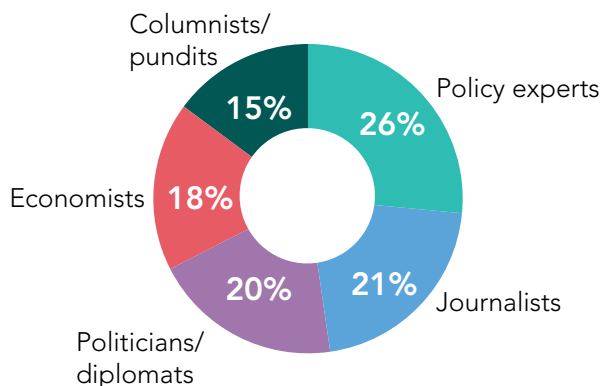
## YOUNGER AUDIENCES PREFER SNACKABLE CONTENT

Older political influencers like their content straight up, hold the color. Visual content ranks among the least preferred types, with breaking news alerts, long-form journalism and columns and opinions having the most value. However, younger influencers are more drawn to the more bite-size and visual content types.



Question: Which of the following, if any, are types of content you regularly consume?

## INFLUENCERS TURN TO POLICY EXPERTS, JOURNALISTS FOR INFORMATION



Policy experts and journalists influence respondents' work the most, while columnists are the least influential.

This is vastly different from the author preferences of those in the qualitative study. Influencers in the economic development space rely on economists over all other authors types. Politicians and diplomats ranked least influential for them.

Sources other than POLITICO*:	Total	Male	Female	18-34	34-54	55+	For profit	Non profit	Gov't org.
Financial Times	34%	34%	33%	43%	42%	21%	47%	28%	37%
Economist	33%	35%	32%	44%	43%	19%	33%	36%	44%
New York Times	32%	31%	34%	32%	33%	31%	34%	38%	23%
BBC	29%	26%	33%	32%	29%	26%	22%	37%	33%
Wall Street Journal	29%	30%	28%	36%	30%	22%	43%	28%	18%
Bloomberg	26%	28%	24%	29%	32%	20%	40%	34%	16%
The Guardian	19%	18%	21%	25%	24%	12%	19%	27%	22%
CNN	19%	17%	24%	21%	16%	20%	19%	20%	18%
Local News	17%	14%	22%	16%	18%	18%	16%	23%	20%
NPR	17%	15%	20%	13%	12%	25%	15%	22%	11%
Foreign Policy	9%	7%	11%	14%	8%	5%	9%	15%	9%
The Atlantic	8%	8%	8%	12%	5%	6%	9%	15%	4%
USA TODAY	7%	6%	7%	9%	4%	6%	6%	12%	6%
Al Jazeera	5%	5%	5%	8%	3%	4%	4%	8%	3%
International NYT	4%	3%	4%	3%	4%	4%	3%	5%	3%
VICE	3%	3%	3%	6%	2%	2%	4%	7%	2%

\*Survey was administered to POLITICO's audience, not the general population, resulting in high favorability for POLITICO.

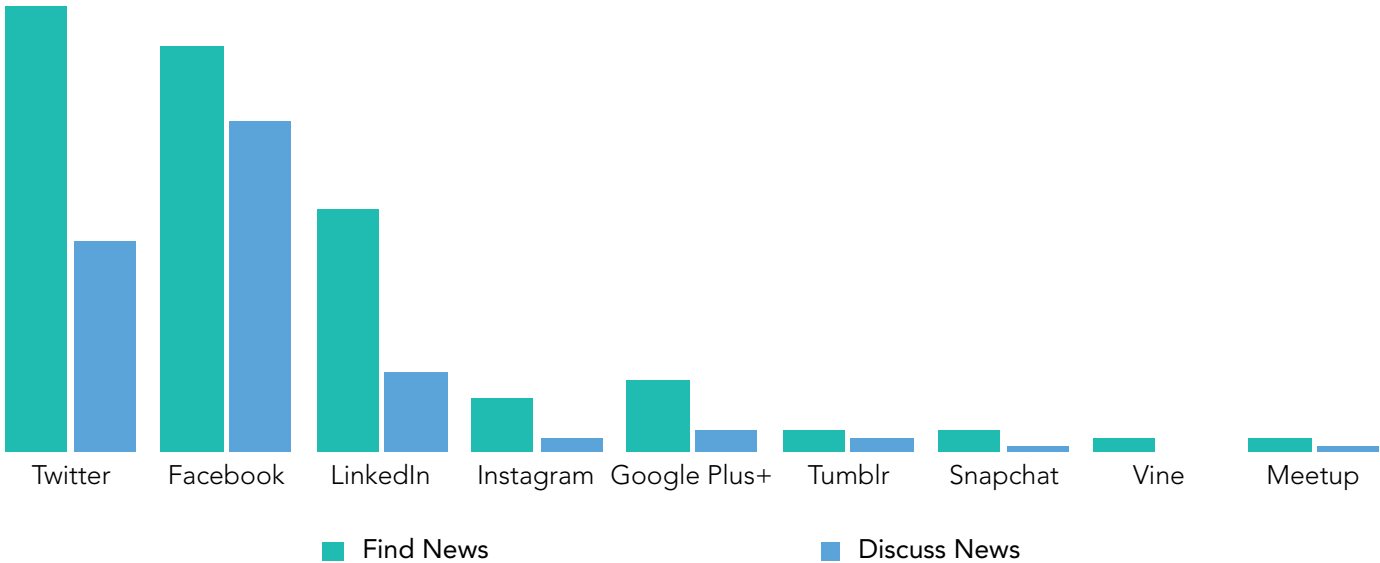
Question: Which type of author influences your work the most?

Question: Which of the following sources do you rely on to inform your work?

# Social media habits

## INFLUENCERS LEVERAGE SOCIAL MEDIA FOR DISCOVERY, NOT DISCUSSION

More than two times as many respondents use social media to find news as opposed to discuss it. Twitter is the most popular place to find news, while Facebook is the most popular place to discuss news.



Question: How often do you use social media to find and discuss news?

# PART TWO

# Research participants: At a glance

## ABOUT THE STUDY AND ITS PARTICIPANTS

We leveraged a design-thinking approach to better understand how influencers in international economic development consume media and how they perceive unpaid work policy. This methodology allows us to reveal subjects' behaviors, motivations and unmet needs. We conducted 15 one-hour, one-on-one, in-person interviews with a diverse set of global economic development influencers.

Economics professor	Economist at World Bank	Economist at IMF
Gender specialist at World Bank	Executive at ILO	Policy advisor to World Bank Executive Director
African women's entrepreneurship advocate	Women and care advocate	Policy advisor to women's advocacy organization
U.S. business liaison to Africa	Former USAID African bureau chief	Former African Development Bank executive
McKinsey analyst, former WB + IMF analyst	Women's empowerment NGO director	Senior fellow, Center for Global Development

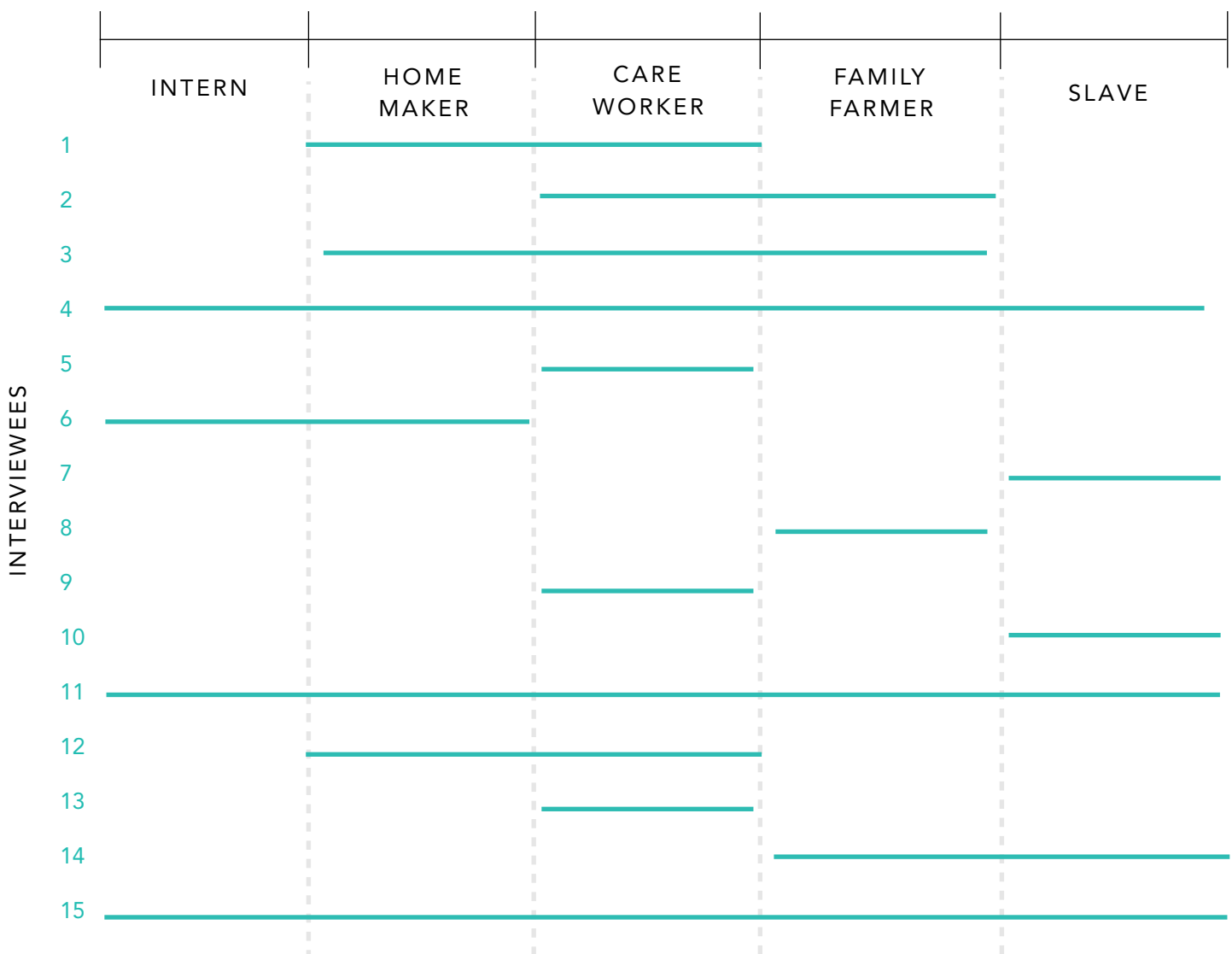


# The spectrum of understanding

## 'UNPAID WORK' HAS A BRANDING PROBLEM

Definitions of the concept of unpaid work varied greatly across each of the 15 interviews conducted, with five key phrases surfacing as the most common descriptors for unpaid work. The chart below highlights these vast differences in definition provided by research subjects.

DEFINITIONS OF 'UNPAID WORK' SHARED BY INTERVIEWEES



# Unpaid work needs a publicist

## Take notes from successful social movements

Policy influencers expressed a need to take notes from other social movements' success stories. The LGBT and HIV movements were mentioned as examples of movements that didn't rely solely on policy shifts. The leaders of these movements leveraged media to generate interest and incite action.

Fixing the issues surrounding unpaid work and gender equality go beyond shifting policies by using media more broadly to get the message into people's homes.

## The 'reliability gap' is growing

At its core, unpaid work impacts everyone in some facet. People agreed this is an issue, regardless of the definition of unpaid work, that they could easily relate to if it was more readily put into the context of their own lives.

There are subcategories within the umbrella concept of unpaid work and the implied need is to make the conversation a more universal one to gain global traction, instead of fractioning it off. For example, mothers may relate to other mothers, but they may not relate to subsistence farmers.

Those with a full understanding of unpaid work made the connection between a subsistence farmer in Africa and the balance of unpaid work in their own homes more easily and often than non-experts. Whether or not they were cognizant of this behavior, it helped them to explain the impact.

“

**LOOK AT HOW THE LGBT COMMUNITY CHANGED OVER THE LAST 50 YEARS. WHAT WERE THE METHODS AND TOOLS USED TO SHIFT THE PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION?**

”

Journalism can connect those dots to bring the issues of unpaid work and gender inequality home.

Elder care was cited as an opportunity space for journalists to help shed light on a growing subcategory of unpaid work to help people better understand and better relate to the concept universally. While not everyone has children or farms, everyone has aging parents or family.

A related commonality was the need to broaden the problem framing to women's economic empowerment.

This research uncovered a dichotomy here. There's a struggle to get the spotlight on the micro issue of unpaid work. While at the same time, many claim you cannot look at unpaid work without weighing cultural issues as a whole as it's all intertwined.

One example shared looked at how global efforts to improve education for girls in developing countries have proven successful on some levels. That said, now there are more educated women sans paying jobs, which increases their marriage potential, leading to having a lot of children, and thus increasing unpaid work.

# The Big Three: Unpaid work's top challenges

## 1. Data collection methods and techniques are inherently flawed

The problems with data collection around unpaid work is well-documented. Policy influencers in this space feel trapped by this. Time-use surveys are fantastic for one country at the micro level, most agreed. The problem is each country's survey is different and there's no way to extrapolate the data.

## 2. Time allocation is complicated

As one influencer said, "Look at childcare; ten parents would all have different styles and it'd be difficult to compare when they're parenting versus multi-tasking." The time allocation issue is one that is up for debate.

Asking individuals to determine how their time is spent is complicated and messy, as most people are often multitasking.

“  
THE CURRENT  
MEASUREMENTS WE HAVE  
LIMIT OUR UNDERSTANDING  
OF WHAT THE REAL IMPACT  
OF ECONOMIC  
EMPOWERMENT IS. THE  
IMPACT INDICATORS NEED  
TO BE BROADENED.  
”

“

UNPAID WORK IS VERY  
DIFFICULT TO MEASURE.  
GLOBALLY, COUNTRIES ARE  
NOT GOING TO HAVE THE  
CAPACITY TO MEASURE  
UNPAID WORK. AND IF IT'S NOT  
DONE GLOBALLY, IT MAKES  
LITTLE SENSE.

”

## 3. Valuation of opportunity costs is hotly debated

Everyone we spoke with agreed there's a connection between reducing unpaid work and improving gender equality. Everyone also agreed the global economy needs a mechanism to track the value or impact of unpaid work.

Everyone felt it should be GDP-esque in nature but needs to be tracked and reported separately. The agreement ends there.

We heard pros and cons of including it in GDP. Some fear by including it, developing countries will have very high extended GDP. As a result, the metric will be deemed meaningless. Others claim in some ways it is already factored in (i.e. farming work and consumption values).

Others strongly stated their desire to have it included in the GDP, to send a message, as it's part of the effort that keeps economies going.

# Journalism's solution gap

## Journalists need to diagnose the problem while others find the cure

While policy influencers admit they don't lean on journalists often for their work — more on economists, researchers and academics — they do rely on journalism in two ways: one, to understand what the public is talking about around their issues; and two, to create interest and spark action around their issues.

Journalists can, and should, influencers said, expose the situation of unpaid work, but a different entity has to solve its larger data problem. Journalism's role in the struggle is to provide reach and awareness.

Everyone we spoke with acknowledged the power of journalism in agenda setting. This power lies not in influencing the policy makers, but the public. Issues are prioritized within international organizations by popularity far too often, people said. The key to shifting the priorities is raising an issue's profile to hot-topic status — and therein lies journalism's opportunity.

“**AT THE WORLD BANK, WHEN YOU TALK OF UNPAID WORK THERE'S A BIG MEETING, YOU GET BUY IN, THEN DONORS AND EXECUTIVES SAY, 'THIS IS GREAT BUT WE'RE BUSY ON EBOLA AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING.' THESE ARE HOT TOPICS IN PUBLIC OPINION, WHICH YOU CAN TIE TO JOURNALISM.**”

“

**TELLING PEOPLE THE PROBLEM WHEN IT'S SOMETHING SO BIG IS NOT PRODUCTIVE, PEOPLE BECOME MORE FATALISTIC. COUPLING THE PROBLEM STATEMENT WITH DATA AND THREE THINGS WE NEED TO DO TO WOULD BE MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE.**

”

## Frustrated by the “solution gap”

Influencers spoke about their frustrations with the media covering only the extreme stories or “click-bait coverage of a larger issue.” People expressed a strong desire to put the attention on solutions instead of only the problems.

We heard examples of success stories or pieces about what works and who's innovating in this space globally, but the common complaint was that the solutions and problems weren't connected through journalism, and many felt there is a massive opportunity to do that.

When the storytelling takes a dark tone, as opposed to a more optimistic one, the problem becomes too large and unattainable for consumers.

# Policy influencers as editors

## Media on my terms

There's no shortage of information and research being done in the global economic development space. That said, there's no clear cut path to accessing that information, particularly when it comes to gender issues. When asked how they keep up with news and information related to economic development and/or gender issues, people spoke of visiting dozens of websites a day to stay up to date.

As a coping mechanism, influencers are acting as their own editors, without even realizing the great lengths to which they are going to collect, curate and share news. There's no one, go-to news source so people are creating workarounds such as Google alerts to stay on top of news and personal distribution lists to share what they learn.

These workarounds have their flaws, though. We heard tales of inboxes filling with soccer scores for those with Google alerts around sub-Saharan African countries. We heard of the tedious work required to customize content alerts shared with others. People want to share relevant information with their peers, but there's a fear around wasting others' time. There's an awareness of the repercussions associated with doing so: by overloading someone with news or failing to share a story of great importance, they have the power to affect others' perceptions of unpaid work and other gender-related topics.

This audience is collecting content, curating it and sharing it — all on their own terms. There are massive opportunities to tap into those behaviors and motivations.

“ I GET MOST OF MY NEWS ON TWITTER AND APPLE NEWS — A LOT OF SOURCES IN ONE PLACE. I’M CREATING MY OWN TICKER THERE. THEN I SHARE WHAT I THINK OTHERS WOULD BE INTERESTED IN. I AM MY OWN EDITOR, IT’S TEDIOUS. IT’S MY UNPAID WORK. ”

## The power of control

The people we spoke with are extremely busy, so their time is valuable. They don't want to spend the couple of free hours a day they have to consume news. It's already taxing enough to be their own editor.

The root of their frustrations with media is being in control of what they consume. To fill the void of not having a centralized news and information source, they're creating their own. Not coincidentally, this audience is primarily made up of cord-cutters and never-corders. Even their radio consumption is minimal. This is because those mediums provide no means for controlling what they consume, whereas the internet does.

There's enormous potential here to create a new product, such as developing an application that aggregates news and research in the space allowing users customize their "home page" or push/email alerts (they still crave the control, after all).

# The magic number conundrum

## An imperfect flow of information

Most interviewees expressed a desire to learn more about unpaid work and its overall impact on gender equality. Even those considered experts within the economic development space or on unpaid work specifically felt they knew what there was to know, but wished there was more data and knowledge available to soak in.

The field of research is a sharing economy, and the policy influencers studying this space are no different. It's a constant give and take of knowledge. When researchers and economists gain insight or knowledge, they share it as widely as possible, then engage with others to build on the knowledge, and the cycle begins again.

The primary struggle is the imperfect flow of information between institutions which further complicates matters.

## Need to know what we don't know

Influencers across the board recognized a need for more honesty across organizations around knowing what isn't known about the relationship between gender and economic development, particularly with unpaid work.

There's a resigned acceptance of the slow speed with which international organizations move and a desire for innovation in the space. "We can't wait on the data, that can take years, decades even. We must innovate now," one person said.

“

**A LOT OF PEOPLE WANT THE BIG NUMBER: IF WE HAVE GENDER EQUALITY, HOW MUCH WILL MY ECONOMY GROW? BUT YOU CAN'T MAKE POLICY FROM THE BIG NUMBERS.**

”

## Searching for the magic number

On top of the imperfect flow of information both inside international organizations and between them, everyone seems to be searching for that magic number, or a punchy statistic that can be rattled off to sum up gender issues. No such figure exists — at least not that can be agreed upon unequivocally.

The influencers we spoke to who do not work on gender wanted to know this number to help them understand.

Those who focus on gender are frustrated by the pressure on them to quantify gender inequality by boiling it down to one number.

Those working on gender within international organizations are on the hook by leadership to find that number. Meanwhile, private institutions, some said, are coming up with big numbers that are "dangerous and make crazy assumptions."

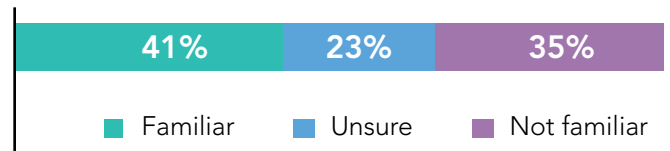
# PART THREE

# Online perception study

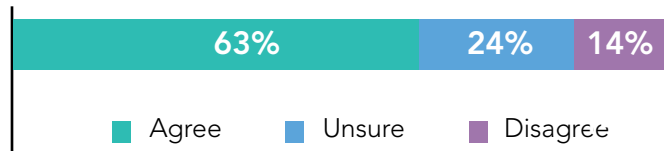
POLITICO’s audience — digital users consuming content specific to international economic development — agrees that unpaid work is as essential to economic productivity as paid work. That said, more than half are either not familiar with or unsure about the concept of placing value on unpaid work.

## THERE’S A LOT OF ROOM FOR PERCEPTION IMPROVEMENT

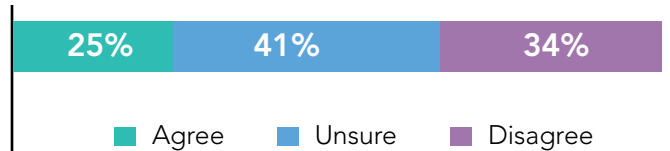
How familiar are you with the concept of measuring and/or placing economic value on non-market or unpaid work (i.e. caring for children, the elderly, or cooking and cleaning for one’s own household)?



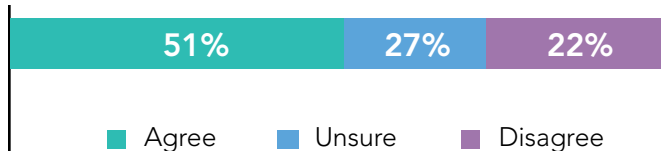
To what degree do you agree with the following statement? Unpaid work is as essential to economic productivity as paid work.



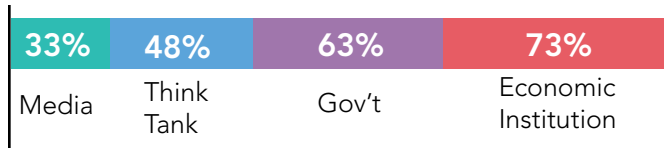
To what degree do you agree with the following statement? Unpaid work should NOT be factored into economic output measurements, such as GDP.



To what degree do you agree with the following statement? Measuring unpaid work would go a long way to help boost women’s labor force participation.



What sources do you trust to educate you about the concept of measuring unpaid work (select all that apply)?



The survey was administered to a custom audience based on content consumption via a 300x250 ad unit on [POLITICO.com](https://www.politico.com) and had 271 completions.



**RECOMMENDATIONS +**

**OPPORTUNITIES**

# Recommendations

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOURNALISTS AND ADVOCATES WRITING AND SPEAKING ABOUT UNPAID WORK AND GENDER EQUALITY

- Many Washington insiders (those working outside of economic development) do not have strong associations with, understand, or oftentimes even recognize, the term or concept of 'unpaid work.' In addition to the general public, they are the audience for explainer journalism on this subject.
- Focus on producing opinion pieces and long-form content. Don't overuse videos and tread lightly with infographics and data visualizations.
- Publish journalism on a web platform that is responsive to different viewing formats (phone, tablet, desktop) and that can be easily accessed on desktop/laptop and mobile/tablet devices.
- Aim to publish and heavily promote new content between 9 a.m. and 12 p.m. for greater reach.
- The opportunity for journalists isn't to change the data problem, but to raise awareness of the issue among the public. Journalists can highlight stories of people creating data workarounds and innovative measurement and valuation programs, driving public interest in the subject that could motivate international organizations to prioritize these issues.
- To tackle the "solution gap" problem, add calls to action within every piece of journalism. Help people understand the issue isn't too big for them to touch. Be transparent and honest about what isn't known in the space. But don't stop there — provide a roadmap of how to get to that information or provide alternatives to the missing information.
- Beware of shining too much spotlight on the big numbers many seem to crave. Readers are more likely to spring into action if they find the issue relatable to their lives. While the big numbers do set off alarms, they can also oversimplify or make people think that solving the problem is out of their reach.
- Explore ways to target and make the issue more relatable for men. Many recognize there's a problem, but don't fully understand the implications or understand what they can do. That said, unsurprisingly, men working on gender issues more easily relate to the realities and implications of unpaid work than those working in different fields.

