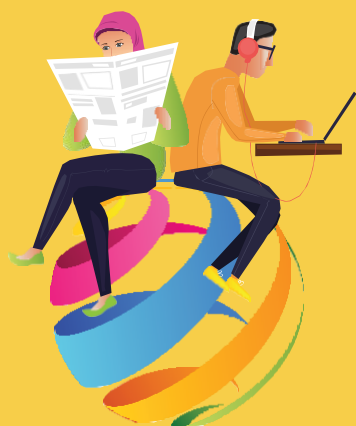


WHO MAKES THE NEWS?

SWEDEN

NATIONAL REPORT



GMMP

Global Media
Monitoring
Project

2020



GMMP

Global Media
Monitoring
Project

2020



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GMMP 2020 is co-ordinated by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), an international NGO which promotes communication for social change,.



Data for GMMP 2020 were collected through the collective voluntary effort of hundreds of organizations including gender and media activists, grassroots communication groups, university researchers, students, mediaprofessionals, journalists associations, alternative media networks and faith groups.

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PREFACE

This is the fifth time Sweden takes part in the Global Media Monitoring Project. The report is based on voluntary work and done by many people. Since the start, University of Gothenburg has been a core partner. Thanks to the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication (JMG) for the support, since the year 2000, when the Swedish Media Watch group Everything is Possible initiated a collaboration with JMG to collect data for the Global Media Monitoring Project.

This year, Fojo Media Institute has partnered with JMG. Thanks Kersti Forsberg and Agneta Söderberg Jacobson! We are very grateful for your support, not only in Sweden, but for the support you have given to our partners countries who took part in the GMMP for the first time.

National coordinator for GMMP Sweden is Maria Edström, Associate Professor at the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication, University of Gothenburg. The national GMMP-report about Sweden in Swedish, *Räkna med kvinnor 2020*, is a more elaborated report, edited by Maria Edström & Josefine Jacobsson. This summary report in English is made by Sara Persson in collaboration with Maria Edström.

The report in Swedish has been able to printed and edited through the support of the Swedish Gender equality Agency. A pdf of the report in Swedish, *Räkna med Kvinnor 2020*, can be found at gu.se/jmg or whomakesnenews.org



THE WORLD AT A GLANCE
GENDER GAP IN SUBJECTS, SOURCES AND REPORTERS IN THE NEWS.

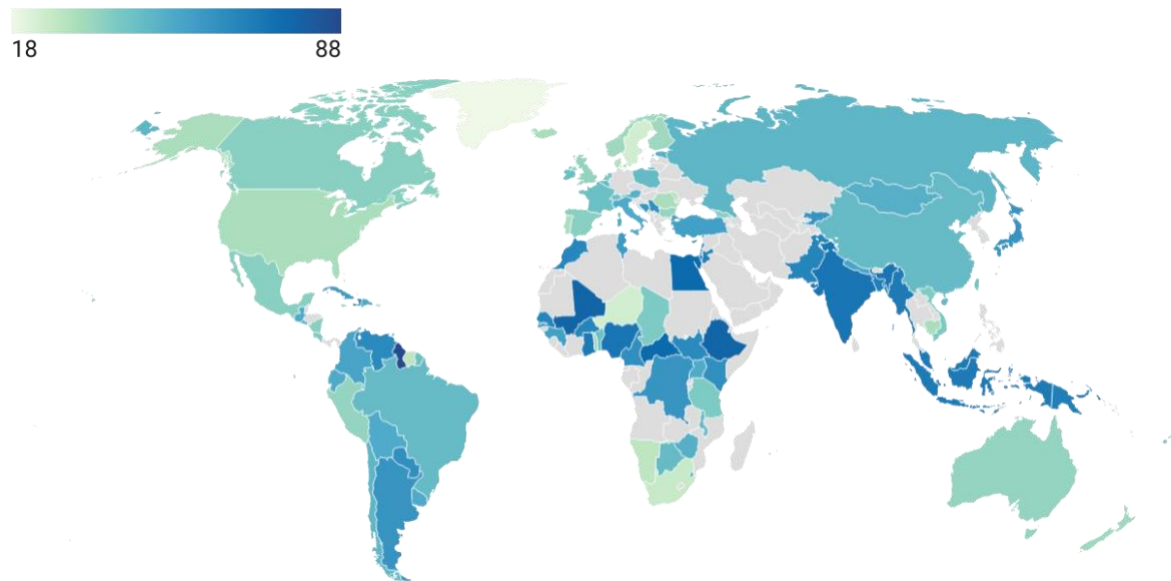


Figure 1. Gender Gap: News Subjects & Sources. Newspaper, radio and television news.

Data source: Global Media Monitoring Project, 2020

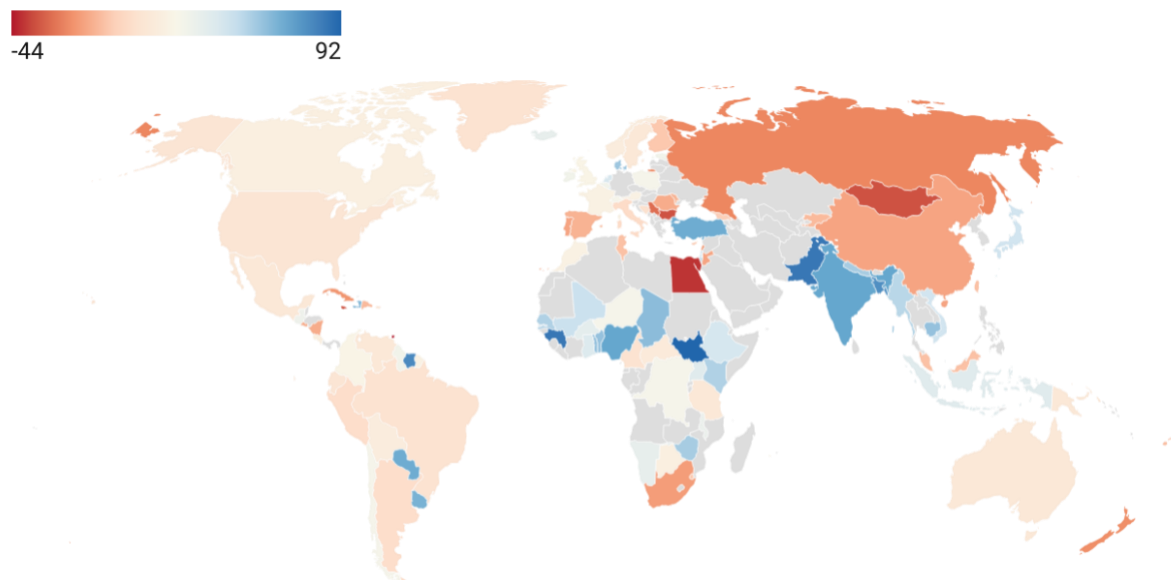


Figure 2. Gender gap: Reporters in the stories. Newspaper, radio and television news.

Data source: Global Media Monitoring Project, 2020

Global Context

The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) is the world's longest-running and most extensive research on gender in the news media. The research was designed to capture a snapshot of gender on one 'ordinary' news day in the world news media. An ordinary news day is defined as one in which the news agenda contains the run-of-the-mill mix of stories, everyday articles on politics, economy, social issues, crime and other issues.

It began in 1995 when volunteers in 71 countries around the world monitored women's presence in their national radio, television and print news. The media monitoring has been repeated every five years since then, taking stock of change in the gender dimensions of news media content and collecting statistical data on new indicators.

The 1995 research revealed that only 17 percent of news subjects – the people who are interviewed or whom the news are about – were women. It found that gender parity was a distant prospect in any region of the world. News [were] more often being presented by women but [they were] still rarely about women.¹

The first noteworthy change in women's overall presence in the news was registered in 2005, in the third iteration of the research.² Women comprised 21 percent of the news subjects, a three-percentage point increase over the period 2000 to 2005. Their near invisibility continued however, with only 10 percent of stories focusing centrally on women, underrepresentation in the major news topics and as voices in the news.

By the fifth GMMP in 2015, it was clear that "ordinary" news days could not be predicted or planned in advance: unexpected events take place that dominate the news, from the Kobe earthquake in 1995, to the Germanwings plane crash in the Alps in 2015.

The 2015 research in 114 countries revealed continued severe gender disparities in news media content. Findings on key indicators suggested that progress towards gender equality had lost traction; women remained only 24 percent of the persons heard, read about or seen in newspaper, television and radio news, exactly the same level found in the fourth wave of the research in 2010. Three editions of the research – in 2005, 2010 and 2015 – found no change on the indicator measuring women's participation in the news as reporters; only 37 percent of stories in legacy media were reported by women.

Women's relative invisibility in traditional news media had also crossed over into the digital news delivery platforms included in the GMMP monitoring for the first time. Only 26 percent of the people in stories on mainstream news websites and media news tweets combined were women. The challenges of news media sexism, gender stereotyping and gender bias were apparently intractable across time, space and content delivery platforms.

UN Under-Secretary-General and UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka underlined that the ways in which women are depicted in the media "have a profound effect on societal attitudes and reinforce traditional gender roles. Women and girls are half of humanity. Giving equal time and weight to their stories, featuring them as positive

¹ *Global Media Monitoring Project, Women's participation in the news*. National Watch on Images of Women in the Media (MediaWatch) Inc. 1995

² Gallagher, Margaret. *Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project*, 2005. World Association for Christian Communication.

models not victims, plays an under-appreciated part in creating a better, freer world for all of us.”³

Events during the 2020 GMMP year were even more extraordinary; beginning in late 2019 and intensifying during the year, the world was ravaged by the novel coronavirus Covid-19. This sixth wave of the research offered an opportunity to scrutinize gender in media coverage during a global catastrophe, a time marked by a worldwide health crisis, and the intensified inequalities accompanying the crisis.

GMMP teams in 116 countries monitored 30172 stories published in newspapers, broadcast on radio and television, and disseminated on news websites and via news media tweets in 2251 outlets. The stories contained 58,499 news subjects and sources, and were reported and presented by 28,595 journalists. The number of participating nations has increased by 63 percent since 1995, as baseline data were collected for eight countries joining the study for the first time. The number of news items monitored has doubled over the past 25 years and risen by over 8,000 since the 2015 edition.

Findings from the sixth GMMP reveal a mixed picture of progress, stagnation and regression. While some glass ceilings are clearly being edged upwards, others are setting in on certain important news media gender equality indicators. The past five years have seen small incremental changes towards parity, at the same time, the overall pace of change remains glacial.

Regional Context

News media remain the major and most influential source of information, ideas and opinion for most people around the world. It is a key element of the public and private space in which people, nations and societies live. A nation or society that does not fully know itself, cannot respond to its citizens’ aspirations. Who and what appears in the news and how people and events are portrayed matters. Who is left out and what is not covered are equally important. Across the world, the cultural underpinnings of gender inequality and discrimination against women are reinforced and sometimes challenged by the media. Who is behind the camera, who sits in the newsroom and who controls the news desk have an influence on what the public get to read, hear and watch about the world’s events and GMMP calls attention to the extent to which news media continue to discharge their responsibilities as the fourth estate.

In 2015, 33 countries participated in GMMP 2015 and in 2020, 32 countries took part (see Annex 2). While there has been a core set of European countries which have participated in all or nearly all the GMMP monitoring days, 2020 was particularly challenging because of Covid-19. That so many people, coordinators and monitors did so, is a testament to their and our commitment to the broader GMMP project. While the impact of the pandemic continues to be felt today, it is interesting that on the 2020 monitoring day, only 27% of stories were coded as associated with Covid-19. This gives us confidence to suggest that the data discussed in the regional as well as the current country report continue to serve an important comparative function in relation to previous iterations

³ In *Who makes the news? The Global Media Monitoring Project report*, 2015

National Context SWEDEN

Sweden is part of the Nordic countries, where gender equality has been a hallmark for a long time, at least since the 1970s. In the media the progress has been slow, even though there has been many initiatives taken by various newsrooms. Sweden joined the GMMP in 2000 and has been part of the team since then. The journalist work force consist of 53 percent women, but the higher you get in the organizations, the fewer women you will find.

Some basic facts about Sweden from Sweden.se & Statistics Sweden

Population: 10,379,295 people, 0.13 percent of the world's population

Total area: 528,447 sq km, the fifth largest country in Europe and roughly the same size as California

Life expectancy: Men 80.6 years, women 84.29 years

Language: Swedish (main language); and five official minority languages: Sami, Finnish, Meänkieli (Tornedalen Finnish), Yiddish and Romani Chib

Religion: The Church of Sweden is Evangelical Lutheran, but there are also many other religions and faiths in the country

Form of government: Constitutional monarchy, with parliamentary democracy – political power lies with the parliament and government; the monarch has ceremonial functions

Parliament: Called 'riksdag' – 349 members of parliament in a single chamber, of which 46 percent are women (2020).

Education: Ten years of compulsory schooling, but most students continue to the three-year upper secondary school. Around one-third go on to higher education at universities and colleges

Employment rate (20–64 years): Men: 69.8 percent; women: 64.5 percent; total: 67.2 percent.

Sweden's government has declared itself a feminist government, and the country has a law against gender discrimination. But board rooms remain male-dominated. The Swedish government has commissioned the [Swedish Gender Equality Agency](#) to support government agencies with the work of integrating a gender perspective in all of their operations.

The overarching Swedish principle is that everyone, regardless of gender, has the right to work and support themselves, to balance career and family life, and to live without the fear of abuse or violence.

A few notable years in Sweden to advance gender equality:

1971 - Individual taxation is introduced.

1974 - Through the introduction of parents' insurance, parents are entitled to share parental leaves when their children are born.

1976 - Statute on gender equality in government sectors.

1979 - Parents with small children acquire the right to six-hour workdays.

1979 - Law on gender equality in working life is accepted by the parliament.

1995 - The so-called paternity month is included in the parental insurance, implying that 30 days of the parental leave must be used by the father (a similar arrangement for the mother is included).

1998 - The Act, concerning prohibition against the purchase of sexual services, is introduced.

Based on a long list compiled by KvinnSam - National Resource Library for Gender Studies
<http://www2.ub.gu.se/kvinn/artal/>

THE CONTEXT Changes in the media landscape

Freedom of the press in Sweden dates back to 1766 and Sweden has a large number on news media outlets. There are about 71 daily newspapers and another 63 non-daily newspapers. Apart from commercial broadcasters, there is a strong public service radio and television, with national, regional and local newsrooms (for more information, see <https://www.nordicom.gu.se/en/statistics-facts/media-statistics>). Sweden has a system of press subsidies for print and distribution of newspapers as well as digital distribution. There are also press subsidies for cultural magazines and many large organizations have their own magazines.

As in many countries, the consumption of Swedish news is shifting away from traditional media to digital platforms, and the advertising revenue is gradually moving to the owners of the media platforms. The number of people who subscribe to printed newspapers also continue to decline, at the same time as digital subscriptions are increasing. The Swedish TV and Radio market has since long been dominated by a few owners. Access to local news continues to decline since smaller newspapers are shut down or acquired by larger media companies to survive the growing competition. Hence, the crisis in the industry has led to a democratic deficit, and currently, there is no local coverage in 44 out of 290 municipalities in Sweden (Facht & Ohlsson, Nordicom 2021).

There is a big difference between the generations regarding the choice of media platform for news consumption. The younger generation mainly uses Instagram (42 percent) and Facebook (34 percent), when getting access to news. The older generation mainly uses the Swedish public service television company Sveriges Television, SVT (88 percent) and the Swedish public service radio channel, Sveriges Radio (64 percent).

A more polarized society

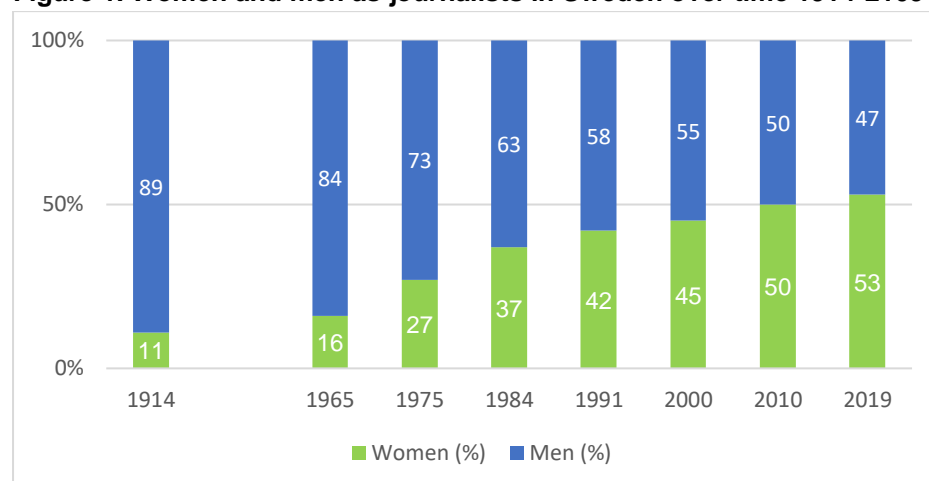
The political situation in Sweden has become more polarized during the last decade, which is reflected in the media market. In recent times, more and more alternative nationalist media have emerged. Several of them receive press subsidies (as many news media in Sweden do) and many are, since 2020, connected to the Swedish Code of Ethics System for Press, Radio and Television. The foundation Expo writes in their annual report from 2020, that these media sites are spreading right-wing propaganda as well as support racial-ideological organisations. Expo has earlier pointed out that nationalist ideologies in Europe are built on traditional gender roles (Expo & Kvinna till kvinna, 2014 <https://expo.se/fakta/resurser/patriotism-and-patriarchy>). Therefore, these alternative media sites can be expected to reinforce inequitable structures. It is also worth noting that the nationalist party Sverigedemokraterna, currently the third largest political party in Sweden, has a newly launched a YouTube channel called *Riks*, where they fronting their programmes with young women as news presenters. The above-mentioned media sites are not part of the sample GMMP is built on and, therefore, not in the material.

Also not part in the investigated GMMP-sample, are the two feminist newspapers in Sweden (*Feminist Perspective* / *FemPers Nyheter* and *Dagens ETC.*), but in the GMMP-report in Swedish there is an update on their situation and strategies.

Journalism - a profession in numerical gender balance

Currently, there are more women than men working as journalists in Sweden. In the top level management there is still a male dominance, with 18 percent women as CEO:s, 11 percent as chair of the board, and 29 percent women as board members in the Swedish press (based on data from 2018, complied by Ulrika Facht, Nordicom.)

Figure 1. Women and men as journalists in Sweden over time 1914-2109 (percent)



Source: Djerf-Pierre, Journalistikens kön (2003) and statistics from The Swedish Union of Journalists.

Selection of Swedish media in GMMP

The qualities of GMMP lies in the global patterns of gender equality in the news media. On a national level, a one-day study can be more difficult to draw conclusions from. However, in the case of Sweden, the number of cases only permits a limited possibility to do advanced analysis.

Table 1: Selected media in Sweden GMMP 2020

Daily newspapers (11)	Radio (5)	TV (6)	News sites (7)
Aftonbladet	SR P1 Morgonköt 07.00	SVT Rapport 19.30	aftonbladet.se
Barometern	SR P1 Dagens Eko 16.45	SVT Aktuellt 21.00	dn.se
Dagens Industri	SR P4 Stockholm 16.30	TV4 Nyheterna 22.00	expressen.se
Dagens Nyheter	SR P4 Malmö 16.30	SVT Nyheter Väst 19.15	gp.se
Expressen	SR P4 Göteborg 16.30	SVT Nyheter Skåne 19.15	svd.se
Göteborgs-Posten		SVT Nyheter Stockholm 19.15	svt.se
Nerikes Allehanda			sydsvenskan.se
Svenska Dagbladet			
Sydsvenskan			
Upsala Nya Tidning			
Västerbottens-Kuriren			

Comments: selection based om the GMMP criterias on national media structure, and statistics on reach from TU, MMS and Kantar Sifo. Internet statistics from Alexa.

Eleven newspapers, five radio news, six television news and seven online news sites were investigated, containing a total of 861 news subjects, of which 627 came from press, radio and tv, and 234 from online news. 395 reporters and presenters were part of the Swedish material.

Due to the low n-numbers, we do not present results for separate news outlets in the national report for Sweden, or results for categories with too few items. However, it is possible to validate the results by comparing them to other studies of Swedish media. The company Prognosis has shared their data on Swedish news sites in September 2020. The manual coding for GMMP indicate 34 percent women, based on seven news sites. Prognosis report 32 percent women during September in Sweden, and 33 percent women for the year 2020. *Rättvisaren*, a report from 2019 by Mediekompaniet/Kantar Sifo based on 3000 random news online, indicated 33 percent women in online news in Sweden. Even though the methodology is different, the results are similar and seems to be stable over time. The overall increase of the share of women in Swedish news that GMMP 2020 report is also confirmed by the content analysis of 26 news media that the Swedish Institute for Media Studies (Institutet för Mediestudier) perform on a regular basis.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - Swedish news has leveled up

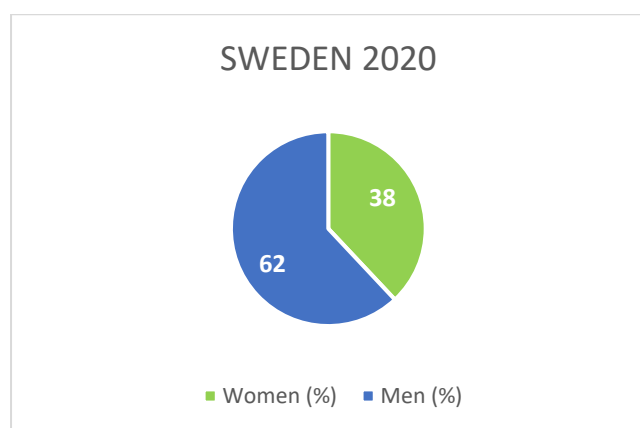
Sweden continues to be among the better countries when it comes to the representation of women in the news. In GMMP 2020, 38 percent of people represented in the news are women, compared with 32 percent in 2015. But gender balance is still not met.

Summary

- Swedish media has for the first time in 20 years substantially increased the number of women in the news. Within press, radio and TV the amount is now at 38 percent.
- It is mainly the daily press that has contributed to the increase of women.
- Online news also contains a higher number of women than before but a bit less in comparison to traditional news media. The proportion of women in the seven Swedish, online news sites that were explored is 34 percent.
- The proportion of female experts in the news media (21 percent) is unchanged.
- More women than men are news presenters (77 percent), and a few more men than women are news reporters (54 percent).
- Swedish news related to the Covid-19 pandemic had a slightly higher proportion of women than other news (40 percent).
- All Nordic countries have seen an increase in women in the news.

An explanation for the increase of women in Swedish news media 2020 is that more newsrooms have systematized their gender and equality work. Many also use data processing tools that measure representation.

Figure 2. The proportion of women and men in the news in Sweden (percent)



Comment: N=627. Source: GMMP2020

A DAY IN THE NEWS IN SWEDEN

The news on the selected day of Tuesday 29th of September 2020, was a rather typical news day in Sweden. Some news made an impact in all media and a few major events dominated, mainly in the national news. Here are some examples:

- The demand for a new investigation of the sunken ship Estonia (25 years ago), following information on previously unknown holes in the hull.
- The Preem oil refinery in Lysekil's decision to drop their expansion plans.
- The declaration that thoracic surgeon Paulo Macchiarini was going to be prosecuted for aggravated assault.

The foreign news was dominated by reports on fierce battles in Nagorno-Karabach and the forthcoming election in the United States. Several domestic news media focused on that Nooshi Dagostar was expected to become the new party leader for the Swedish Left Party, Vänsterpartiet, and that Märta Stenevi was a strong candidate for the Green Party, Miljöpartiet.

Several news reports were characterised by coverage of the Covid-19 pandemic. Here are some examples:

- The Public Health Agency of Sweden held their recurrent press conference, announcing that another ten people had died and that the spreading of the virus was increasing in the capital, Stockholm.
- The Minister of Culture, Amanda Lind, and the Minister of Energy and Digital Development, Anders Ygeman, announced that the government was planning to ease some of the national Covid restrictions.
- Another participant in the TV program *Idol* had gotten infected and it was reported that Swedish bands playing music live for people dancing, *dansband*, was experiencing their biggest crises ever due to cancelled gigs.

Other news on the selected day that got attention were:

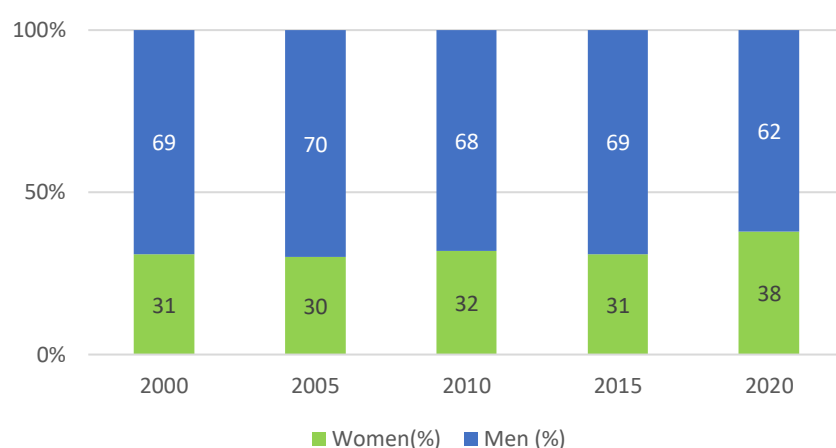
- News related to an in-depth documentary on men's violence against women (SVT).
- A look back on the landslide in Surte 70 years ago (Göteborgs-Posten).
- A focus piece on the fact that there are eight female hotel directors in Umeå (Västerbotten-Kuriren).

Five out of 11 printed newspapers had women featured in the largest images on the front page of the newspaper.

TOPICS IN THE NEWS

The big change in the 2020 GMMP results for Sweden is, as mentioned, that the proportion of women has increased in the news, from 31 percent to 38 percent in five years. Swedish newsrooms have broken the stalemate on about 30 percent women in the news media since the start of GMMP's measurements at the turn of the century. Globally, the change has been marginal with an increase from 24 percent in 2015 to 25 percent in 2020.

Figure 3. The development of women and men in the Swedish news 2000-2020 (percent)



Comment: Number of news subjects in press, radio and television. 2000: n=331; 2005: n= 374; 2010: n=418, 2015; n=620, 2020; n=627. Source: www.whomakesthenews.org

No media type stands out

A majority of the material of the Swedish GMMP study comes from the daily newspapers. In previous years, broadcasting media have had higher proportions of women but this difference has more or less disappeared in 2020. Like earlier years, Swedish online news seems to favor men, though the proportion of women has increased there as well, from 28 percent in 2015 to 34 percent in 2020.

Table 2. The proportion of women and men in different media types, GMMP 2020 (percent)

	Press	Radio	Television	Online
Women	37	38	39	34
Men	63	62	61	66
Total percent	100	100	100	100
N	505	39	83	234

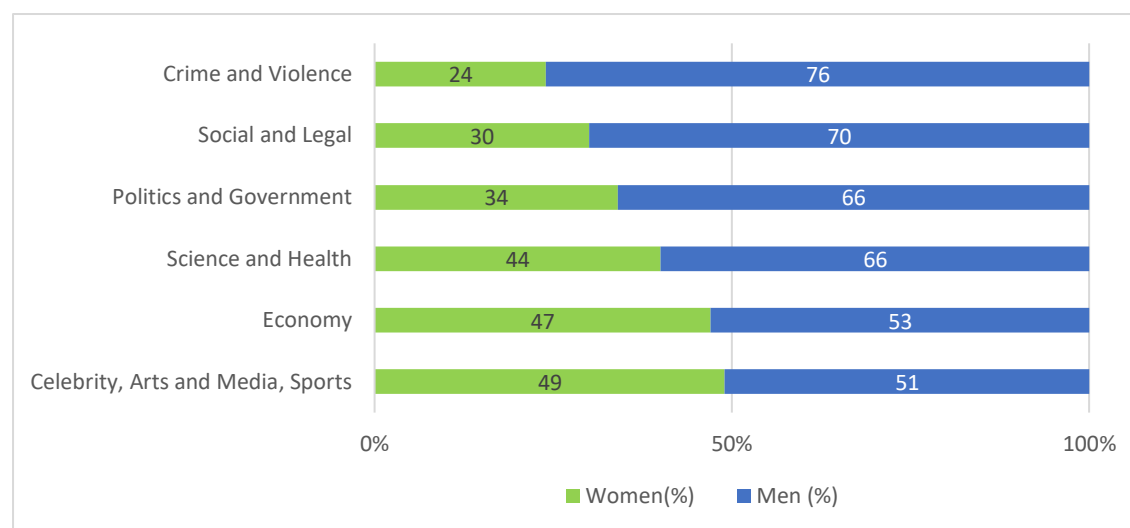
Källa: www.whomakesthenews.org

Men dominate in crime and violence

The subject areas where most people have a say in Sweden are related to social and legal issues as well as the economy. Thereafter, with approximately the same amount of media space are politics, science & health and celebrities, culture & sports. News on celebrities, culture and sports had the highest proportion of women, and men dominated subjects

related to crime and violence.

Figure 4. The proportion of women and men in major topics in Swedish news 2020



Comments: Topics in press, radio and television: N=614. Source: GMMP 2020

NEWS SUBJECTS AND SOURCES

Men are experts and the spokespersons

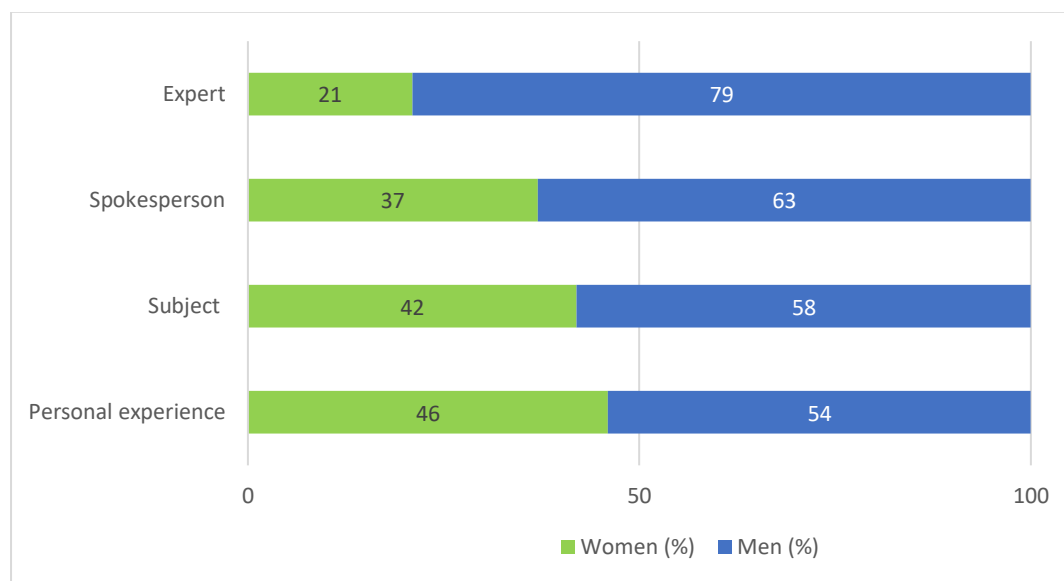
More women are now taking place in the newsrooms. However, men dominate as experts and spokespersons, which are the positions with most visibility in Swedish media. Hence, both topics and functions are marked by gender and women are structurally underrepresented.

Four out of five experts are men in Swedish news (79 percent), which is more than the European average of 76 percent. The low proportion of female experts in the Swedish news media is unaltered since 2010.

The proportion of female spokespersons in Sweden is 37 percent, which is higher than the European average of 28 percent.

When journalists are looking for personal experiences, they look for women, this is a general pattern globally. The news logic tend to focus on people in power and on experts. In Sweden there is an abundance of women in both categories, but this is not visible in the news.

Figure 5. Women and men in major functions in Swedish news 2020 (percent)



Comments: Results from **press, radio and tv**. Functions with less than 30 items not included. N=583.
Source: GMMP 2020

Women are more often visible in photos

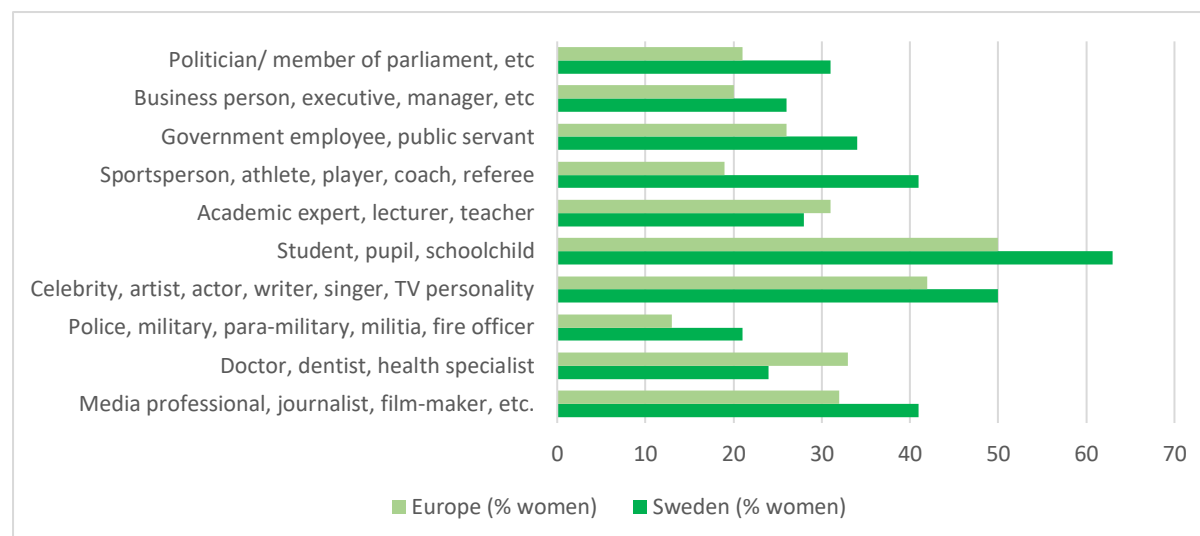
Women in the press are more often caught on camera, with their image in **the** news, even though fewer women are in the news in general. Almost half of all women present in Swedish press are on display, whereas men are on display in one-third of the cases. These results follow a global trend and can be understood as compensation by the newsrooms for the male dominance in the news in general.

Men as politicians are more visible

The most common profession amongst news subjects in Sweden is as a politician. Of all politicians represented in the news, 31 percent are women. This is quite a low, compared to the “real” share of elected female politicians in Sweden; Swedish parliament has 46 percent women and 43 percent of the elected representatives in Swedish municipalities are women (Statistics Sweden, 2020).

There are strong similarities with the European GMMP results on the 10 most common professions within the news. Throughout, Sweden has higher proportions of women except when it comes to academics and doctors/dentists, where the numbers are higher than in the rest of Europe. The biggest difference can be seen in the category Sports, where Swedish news media on the selected day could report 41 percent women in comparison to the European standard of 19 percent.

Figure 6. The proportion of women in the ten most common professions in the news in Sweden and in Europe (percent).



Comment: Nine out of the ten most common professions in Swedish news were also the most common professions in European news. Sweden n= 458, Europe n= 10 947.

Older women continue to be invisible

The youngest and the oldest people continue to be marginalised in the news, Sweden is no exception. The majority of people who are part of the news, 60 percent, are between 35 and 65 years old. Sweden has slightly higher numbers than the average. The highest proportions of men are in the age group over 35 and the highest proportions of women are under 35. The connection between gender and age is even clearer in the global material. It is only in the category Children, age 0-12, where women are dominating. However, only three percent of the subjects in the news are children. Globally, children and people above 80 years old are invisible. Girls and older men are more visible within these age groups (for more information on global patterns see the Global report from GMMP 2020).

FOCUS ON COVID-19 NEWS

Slightly more women in Covid-19 related news

The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated global inequalities. A media study from 2020 on Covid-19 related news in six countries (India, Kenya, Nigeria, United Kingdom, South Africa and the United States) demonstrated that women are underrepresented in the news, and that perspectives on gender and equality were missing in the coverage (Kassova, 2020).

Approximately one-fourth of all Swedish news, part of the GMMP sample, related to the pandemic and the proportion of women was about 40 percent, which is slightly higher than the European average of 38 percent. Experts and spokespersons dominated the news related to the pandemic and few “regular” people had a say. Politics was the main topic,

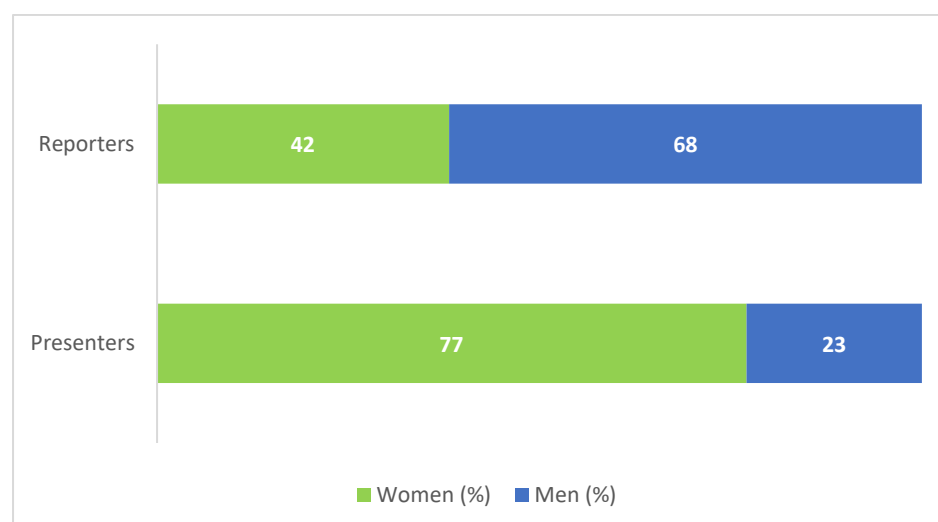
which may be explained by the fact that the restrictions regarding Covid-19 were a hot topic that day.

JOURNALISTS AND REPORTERS

Female journalists are more often presenters

The global trend of women presenting the news on radio and TV also applies to Sweden. Three out of four news presenters were female (77 percent) on the selected day of Tuesday 29th 2020. Female news reporters are generally also younger than their male colleagues. The proportion was more balanced when it came to news reporters, where women in press, radio and TV was 44 percent in comparison to 56 percent men.

Figure 7. The proportion of women and men as reporters and presenters (percent).



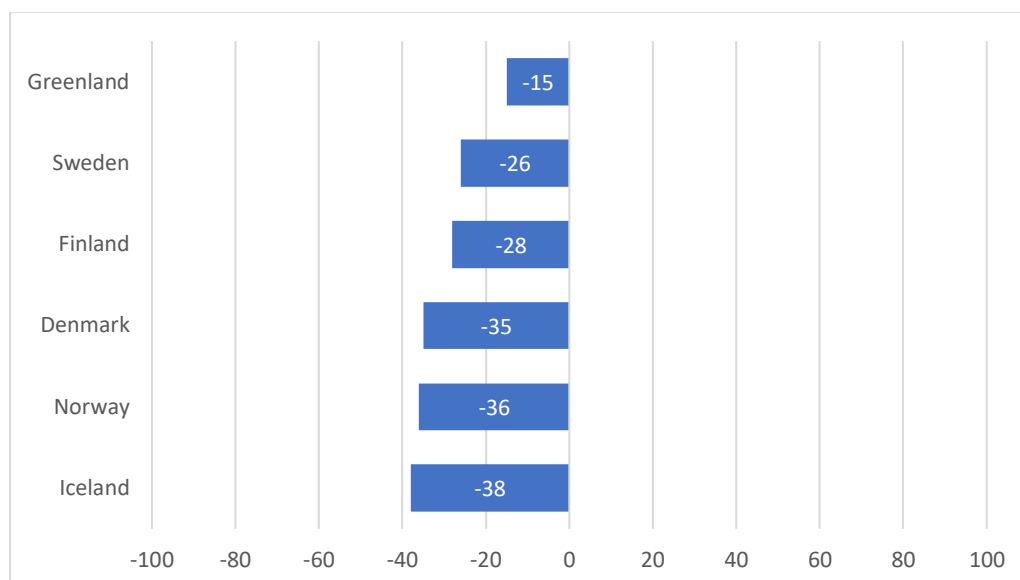
Source: whomakesthenews.org

THE GEM INDEX: SWEDEN AND THE NORDIC COUNTRIES STILL HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO

In Sweden, at the Department of Journalism, Media & Communication at the University of Gothenburg, secondary data on gender and news have been compiled and curated in order to make it more accessible to the world through the GEM dataset (Mathias Färdigh et al, 2020). This work has been done within the project *Comparing Gender and Media Equality across the Globe*. Based on GMMP data an index for gender equality in the news media has also been created. The index spans between -100 and +100, where 0 equals balance. GMMP 2020 demonstrates that all countries part of the study end up on the minus-side in the index. Sweden is amongst the better ones but is still on -25. The Figure 8 shows the index for the Nordic countries, calculated on the GMMP 2020 data. All Nordic countries have

male dominance and the differences amongst the Nordic countries are clearly visible, even though all countries are closer to balance (0) than in 2015.

Figure 8 – Gender Equality in the news - Nordic countries in the GEM-Index 2020



Comments: The GEM-index is based on six GMMP Indicators, the share of women and men as news subjects, reporters, experts, spokespersons and the share of women in the topics Politics and Business/Economy. For an elaborated explanation and how to calculate the index, see Djerf-Pierre & Edström (2020). 'The GEM-Index: Constructing a unitary measure of gender equality in the news'. In Djerf-Pierre, M. & Edström, M. (Eds) *Comparing Gender and Media Equality Across the Globe: A Cross-National Study of the Qualities, Causes, and Consequences of Gender Equality in and through the News Media*. Gothenburg: Nordicom.

BETTER PERFORMANCE IN THE SWEDISH NEWSROOMS WITH STRATEGIES AND AI

For the first time in 20 years, the proportion of women in Swedish news media has increased. One explanation for this is that the daily press has taken action on implementing more systematic routines on measuring representation.

Already in 2015, individual newsrooms started to use data processing tools. Today, sex-disaggregated data is part of many editorial offices' everyday practice.

Several newsrooms now use the data processing tool Prognosis, developed by Max Berggren in 2015. Berggren has also created bots on Twitter, which examines news media in different countries automatically.

In 2016, Sweden's largest daily newspaper Dagens Nyheter (DN) decided to focus more on gender equality and monitoring, which led to several improvements. The proportion of managers is now 50/50, and salary differences based on gender has decreased. Through

Prognosis, gender balance is measured in online news. DN measures this during the production as well as gives the reporters monthly reports on their work. According to DN's reports, the amount of women in the news has increased from 32 percent in 2017 to 38 percent in 2021. Today, several newspapers working with *Bonnier News* use similar methods.

Räkna med Kvinnor, the national GMMP-report in Swedish, has previously reported on individual newsrooms that systematically measure gender equality. However, the company Mediekompaniet, owned by a numbers local newspapers and media houses has taken this to a new level. In 2019, Mediekompaniet took over the gender equality and representation-report *Rättvisaren*, from the foundation Rättviseförmedlingen/Equalisters. The new version of the report focused on representation in the news 2019, representation in advertising 2020 and on the audiences in 2021.

According to Ricki Rebecka Petrini, Marketing and Communications Manager at Mediekompaniet, the company strives for sustainable media coverage in advertising and in the news. They believe that there is a greater chance of attracting more customers if they reflect the population. Hence, the decision of taking over the operations of *Rättvisaren* was the first step. Developing a new data processing tool was the second step. In March 2020, the tool Media Watch was introduced, measuring sex-disaggregated data based on name statistics. Internally, the office also gets data on age and non-Nordic origin. The third step centred on education and in 2020, Mediekompaniet arranged workshops for editorial staff and managing bodies around Sweden.

According to Martin Jönsson, Head of Editorial Development at DN and Bonnier News, Sweden is at the forefront when developing data processing tools and services that focus on gender equality. However, there is still a long way until there is gender-balanced media content and more work is needed in regards to other forms of representation as well, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

(In the Swedish report there is an extensive section on how various Swedish newsrooms work with gender equality in media content.)

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

GMMP 2020 indicates that the proportion of women in Swedish news has increased. It is also clear that the newsrooms are making an effort to reach a better balance by, for example, letting women be in the pictures. However, the amount and presence of women in Swedish news still need to improve.

The visibility of different groups is of importance. It matters if you are part of a minority or majority group when it comes to the freedom of being able to act. Already in the 1970s, the organisation researcher Rosabeth Moss Kanter made visible that a person part of a group with less than 35 percent of the total had to count on being seen as a “token” (a symbol representing their category instead of being seen as an individual, see Moss Kanter: *Men and Women in the Corporation* 1977). Hence, several gender equality plans request at least a 40 percent gender balance.

In Swedish media, with 38 percent presence, women are now so visible that they may be seen as individuals instead of as tokens for their group. At the same time, news media topics and roles are continuing to be affected by gender norms. Still, an expert in the media is usually a man. Also, 21 percent female experts do not reflect Swedish society.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN 2021-2025

Where the change is needed

Gender equal and inclusive media content is not only about counting heads, but it is a first step closer to enhanced consciousness about whom is heard and seen in the news. In GMMP 2020, Swedish news media have taken a big leap forward regarding the share of women in the news. However, it is still a long way to go until a 50/50 balance is reached. The GMMP 2020 also indicate that Swedish news media is lagging behind the “real” world in terms of giving voice to female politicians and experts, they are significantly fewer in the newsfeeds compared to the actual situation in Swedish society.---Therefore, more actions are needed by several actors:

The news media industry – Equality is a management issue

Gender equality in the news is about accountability and professionalism. Several editors suggest (interviewed in the GMMP national report in Swedish) that gender-conscious leadership is key to improvement. The responsibility of the management can't be underestimated.

- Continue to gather sex-disaggregated data, set goals, strategies and follow up.
- Make an inventory of your lists of experts and improve the diversity amongst your sources.
- Keep in mind that it is rarely *just* about gender.
- The elite positions of the media sector in Sweden (company boards, CEOs etc.) are as male-dominated as other businesses. Hence, the management needs to examine themselves and not only keep track of the media content and editorial staff.

Media Industry Associations and Journalism Unions – Comparable statistics provides development opportunities

Umbrella organisations in Swedish media can ensure that international commitments are complied with and support newsrooms with knowledge intelligence on strategies for gender-balanced media content.

- Gather sex-disaggregated data that is comparable over time, both on an organizational level and in the media content.
- Offer courses on gender awareness for directors and employees in the news media industry.

Decision Makers – Follow the global commitments

Increasing gender equality in the media content can be seen as a way of expanding freedom of expression.

- Act upon global commitments regarding media and gender equality that have been ratified by Sweden.

- Create conditions for gathering sex-disaggregated data also within the media sector, both in Sweden and globally.
- Support/finance research on the role of media for gender equality.

Journalism Educations – Take advantage of research

Journalistic educators have a responsibility to give their students analytical tools, which helps them understand the connection between freedom of expression and gender equality. As a prospective journalist, it is important to become aware of the position of power that the profession entails as well as the responsibility that follows.

- Use the research, literature and industry knowledge on media, gender and gender equality that is available

Annex 1. Methodology⁴

A key characteristic of longitudinal research is the assessment of change over time on the observed indicators. In the case of the 2020 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), the methodology, indicators, approach to data collection and analysis are consistent with past editions of the research in order to allow for the usual historical comparisons.

Process

The global monitoring day scheduled initially for the first quarter of 2020 was postponed to later in the year due to the upheavals caused by the first coronavirus (Covid-19) wave worldwide. As the April monitoring day approached, it quickly became clear that proceeding as planned would result in a news sample that would be almost entirely focused on coronavirus stories. A new need emerged to address the practicalities of monitoring during the lockdowns and curfews imposed to contain the spread of the virus, as the regular sit-down communal coding sessions were now out of the question for most teams. The risks to health and livelihoods and the need to find ways of coping with everyday life, would shift the GMMP down on the ladder of priorities for the volunteers, potentially increasing the drop-out rate. These new challenges called for a pause on the plans to search for solutions and put in place the tools and resources necessary before monitoring could proceed.

The GMMP technical advisory group and the database development team, Code for Africa, worked to systematically address the issues. A new monitoring date was set for September, the coding tools were tweaked to capture Covid-19 stories without compromising on the ability to compare results across time based on story topics, exhaustive audio-visual training resources on how to code in a pandemic were put in place, electronic coding instruments were developed and the teams were re-trained in numerous webinars.

As with previous waves of the GMMP, the initial data capture was conducted offline by volunteer teams across the 116 participating countries. For the 2020 GMMP, a spreadsheet version of the coding sheets was provided, to allow for electronic recording of the observations.

In the period leading up to the monitoring day, a series of regional and national training sessions were organised to build a uniform understanding of the teams on the methodology and approach to coding. The teams received training on media selection, newscast and article selection, and the number of media to code.

For the 2020 GMMP, teams could choose from two possible options for the monitoring:

- **Full monitoring**, whose results provide a comprehensive picture of the status of gender equality dimensions in news media.
- **Short monitoring**, a shorter version which focuses on the key GMMP indicators, for teams who wished to participate but for various reasons could not implement the full monitoring.

To ensure accuracy in the coding process, radio and television bulletines were recorded, and copies of digital and print media items were collected. Across the different media types, both for the full and short monitoring, monitors captured information about the story, its main themes and the people in the story, as journalists, as story subjects and as sources. Additionally, three optional special questions, unique to each country, allowed individual countries to analyse issues of national interest. For standardisation purposes, as well as the multilingual nature of this study, all responses were numerically coded from fixed lists.

To enable comparability of data gathered from a pandemic-heavy news agenda with the historical results, an additional question was included which asked whether the story was related to Covid-19. For such stories, monitors were requested to select the most relevant secondary topic. While global

⁴ See the global report for the extended discussion on the GMMP 2020 methodology

news stories had diversified to pre-pandemic levels by the global monitoring day in September 2020, the regional analysis demonstrated the significance of this question, particularly for North America and the Middle East, which recorded 37% and 36% of Covid-19-related stories respectively.

Media bands

The media bands system was introduced in 2005 to ensure a more even spread of data and also to serve as each country's reference point on the minimum number of media to monitor. This system was retained for the 2020 GMMP and was updated with the input of the country coordinators.

Weighting

While the GMMP seeks to understand how gender is represented in media across the world, differences in media access and impact across the participating countries mean that a simple aggregation of the data would lead to biased results. For example, if a country like France submitted data from 100 media, the entries from a smaller country like Fiji would have little, if any, impact on the results. Additionally, while two countries may have similar numbers of newspapers, their impact, in terms of the number of people who read them, may be significantly different. To address these challenges, GMMP 2020 updated, re-tested and applied the weighting system first developed for the 2005 edition.

Accuracy

The GMMP involved several thousand people across 116 countries from diverse gender and media stakeholder groups, with different research abilities and working in a wide range of languages. For a study of this scale, it was crucial that accuracy was considered at each stage, to maintain the high levels achieved in previous years. Data entry and processing errors can have severe biasing effects on the data analysis, resulting in misrepresentation of the observed variables. To minimise this risk, we leveraged on a variety of automated processes, as well as the extensive media monitoring experience of the country coordinators.

Limitations

As with any study, great effort was made to ensure accuracy of the data. As observed in previous GMMPs, an exact error of measurement cannot be determined due to the study's magnitude. Conventional error measurement would involve different researchers coding the same story and then calculating a level of error from the differences between the results. Although this was not possible for GMMP, we followed best practice to make sure that there were minimal errors in the data capture and analysis generation process.

About Code for Africa

[*Code for Africa*](#) (CfA) is the continent's largest network of indigenous African civic technology and investigative data journalism laboratories. With over 70 staff in 19 countries, they build digital democracy solutions intended to give citizens unfettered access to actionable information, which empowers them to make informed decisions and strengthen the civic engagement for improved public governance and accountability.

Annex 2. List of Monitors

As in many countries, GMMP 2020 was performed with Covid-19 limitations since many volunteers could not take part. The data collection was made in September 29, and the coding started that day and continued during the weekend, on Zoom and when possible in physical spaces.

The coders were students, colleagues, family and friends, Agneta Jacobson Söderberg was responsible for the coders with Fojo Media Institute in Kalmar and Stockholm, and Maria Edström (also national coordinator) was responsible for the coding at the department of Journalism, Media and Communication at the University of Gothenburg.

Coders with Fojo in Kalmar and Stockholm:

Anders Behrmann
Annicka Flovin
Kersti Forsberg
Annelie Frank,
Caroline Fredholm
Helena Gailani
Caroline Hammargren
Rebecka Jacobson
Janett Khador
Johanna Mannergren Selimovic
Jenny Rönngren
Agneta Söderberg Jacobson

Coders with JMG, University of Gothenburg:

Lovisa Andersson
Nils Arnell
Monika Djerf-Pierre
Maria Edström
Victoria Graf
Amanda Haraldsson
Gunilla Ivarsson
Josefine Jacobsson
Teo Kristjansson
Simone Lindsten
Nike Lundahl
Fredrik Löfgren
Karin Zwinkels

WACC



JMG

FOJO:
MEDIA INSTITUTE
■ ■ Linnæus University

WACC
308 Main Street
Toronto
ON M4C 4X7
Canada

Tel: +1 416 691 1999
gmmp@waccglobal.org
[@whomakesthenews](http://www.whomakesthenews.org)

SWEDEN contact Info:

Maria Edström, National Coordinator GMMP

Department of Journalism, Media &
Communication (JMG)

University of Gothenburg

PO Box 710

SE-405 30 Gothenburg

SWEDEN

e-mail: maria.edstrom@gu.se

www.gu.se/jmg