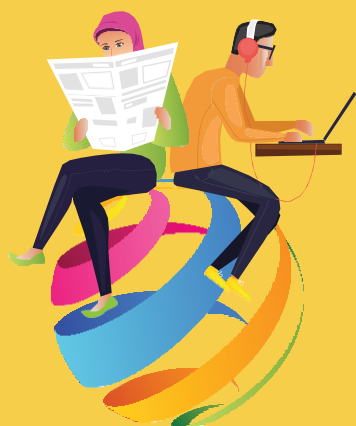


WHO MAKES THE NEWS?



GMMP

Global Media
Monitoring
Project

2020

The United States of America

NATIONAL REPORT



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

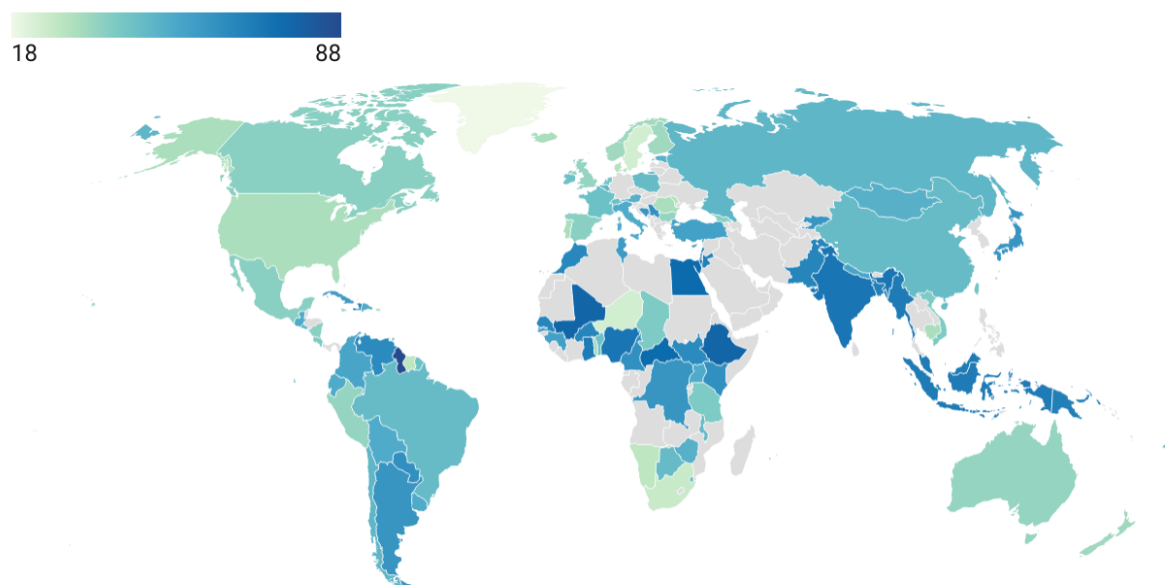


Figure 1. Gender Gap: News Subjects & Sources. Newspaper, radio and television news.

Data source: Global Media Monitoring Project, 2020

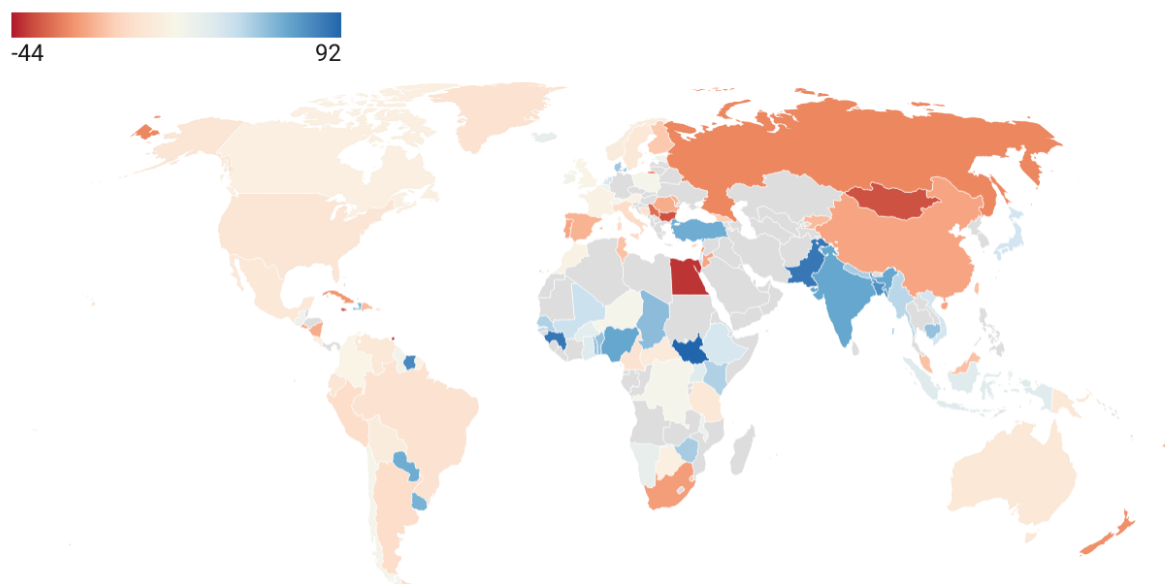


Figure 2. Gender gap: Reporters in the stories. Newspaper, radio and television news.

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% 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% of news subjects, a three-percentage point increase over the period 2000 to 2005. Their near invisibility continued however, with only 10% 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: 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% 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% 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% of the people in stories on mainstream news websites and media news Tweets combined were women. The challenges of news

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.

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 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 increased by 63% 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.

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

National Context

The dual shadow cast by Covid-19 pandemic and the killing of George Floyd, an unarmed black man, by police brutality has made many in the United States of America “see” things which often go unreported or underreported in the media landscape. The dual pandemic unveiled social inequities as never before. News media were relentlessly capturing evolving impact stories of Covid-19 as well as systemic racism.

The medical pandemic, coupled with the pandemic of racial injustice, was exploited for spreading misinformation and fake news. The World Health Organization names the spreading of medical disinformation as “infodemic.” Certain websites use social media as a platform for contagious misinformation, medical myths, and health-related false stories for political and corporate gains. Combating the spreading of false narratives and misinformation involves fact-checking on the part of the users of the media, and removal of misinformation and fixing the complex algorithms involved in the rapid proliferation of such news, on the part of the social media entrepreneurs.

The political narratives around Covid-19 are intense and fall along deep divisive party lines.

Gender & Intersectionality in the U.S. Mediascape

A cursory look at the headlines in news media in 2020 just prior to the monitoring day throws light on the impact of the layered crisis of Covid-19 on vulnerable communities. “Women caregivers at the front of the crisis,” “Work-from-home model does not work for this group,” “Families in the Lower Income Brackets Hit the Hardest by Covid- 19,” “CDC (Center for Disease Control) Hospital Data Point to Racial Disparity in Covid -19 Cases,” “Black and Latino Communities Hardest Hit By Covid-19,” “Covid-19 incidence more than triple among Native Americans,” “The erasure of Indigenous people in U.S. Covid-19 data,” “Young People of Color with pre-existing Conditions face elevated Covid-19 risk,” “Covid-19 is a ‘crisis within a crisis’ for homeless people,” “Small rural counties struggle with Covid-19 in ways big counties don’t,” and “Parking Lots Have become a Digital Lifeline.” The issues identified are humanized with compelling stories.

The voice of local newspapers, much needed for the communities at the crucial moment, has been on steady decline due to loss of funds. News headlines summed up the crisis and articles offered analyses:

- “Newspaper Revenue Drops As Local News Interest Rises Amid Coronavirus.”
- “Local newspapers are facing Coronavirus crisis”
- “The Coronavirus is killing the local news.”
- “Why ‘withering’ of local news landscape is dangerous for democracy.”

For a fuller mediascape of the U.S., please see Glory Dharmaraj’s article, “Intersectionality, Community, and Memory of a Just Future,” for the mediascape in

2020 prior to the monitoring day in *Media Development* Winter Issue 2020 at <https://waccglobal.org/intersectionality-community-and-memory-of-a-just-future/>

U.S. and GMMP

In the U.S., we have a long history of actively participating in the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP).

The groundbreaking idea of a worldwide media monitoring on a single day came out of “Women Empowering Communication,” in Bangkok, Thailand in 1994. The conference was sponsored by the World Association for Christian Communication. I, Glory E. Dharmaraj, the coordinator of GMMP for the U.S., happened to attend that conference, more specifically in that workshop led by Sylvia Spring on behalf of Media Watch, Canada. The Conference came up with what is known as *The Bangkok Declaration*, and one of its stated purposes was to “organize one day at the start of 1995 for the monitoring of all media and use the data as the basis for an analysis of where women are.” Since the inception of the Global Media Monitoring Project, interested volunteers, church groups, and academic institutions in the U.S., have played a key role in monitoring gender in news media every five years in this world’s longest-running and most extensive research project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) is a quinquennial event taking place every five years. From 1995-2020, six GMMP events have been coordinated.

On September 29, 2020, volunteers from St. John’s University New York City, United Methodist Women, New York City University, World Association for Christian Communication-North America, and an independent scholar participated in the monitoring project.

A distinctive feature of this 6th GMMP is the inclusion of three special questions in the U.S. questionnaire that offers a nuanced understanding of gender in its “intersectionality.” The only social marker present in the questionnaire since 1995 has been “age.” The following 3 special questions were added to expand the social markers for gender, as seen below:

- Is the person’s race, ethnicity mentioned in the text or made visible in the images? Yes/No?
- Is the person in the text living with disability or made visible in the images? Yes/No?
- Is the person’s sexual orientation, or immigrant, or migrant status mentioned in the text or made visible in the images? Yes/No?

This is part of an incremental effort at making the results of GMMP a conscientizing tool in assessing the fair and accurate representation of women in media news. The analytical space has been expanded in prior GMMPs incrementally:

- 2005: Qualitative Analysis
- 2010: Addition of Internet news
- 2015: Addition of Twitter news

The results of GMMP 2020 offer a practical and focused tool to monitor gender justice policies.

A glaring disparity in GMMP 2020 is the role of women subjects as “experts,” especially in Covid-19-related news stories. In 2015, women were 56% experts in “Science and Health.” In 2020, women experts make 18%. Female reporters in “Science and Health” make 33%. In celebrity news stories, however, women reporters make 75%!

The impact of Covid-19 on women has been severe, and women health workers have been adversely affected. Women, as experts, have not fared well in the news. Do media mirror reality in this or do they present a distorted reality? It is for interested communicators to pursue research and advocacy efforts in this area.

Women as subjects appear more due to their personal experiences (48%). The preponderance of women’s personal experience may have been the result of who delivered news on September 29. However, serendipitously, a deeper feminist insight is unveiled in the coverage of a national health crisis. That is, women’s experiences are a key to a hermeneutic of what can be called a quotidian communication. Women’s everyday personal experiences as part of a theory of interpretation, especially under the weight of a national health crisis, heretofore unseen in a century.

A DAY IN THE NEWS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

September 29, 2020, was not a typical day for the U.S. For many, shuttered in homes, the sound of emergency alerts and public safety alerts communicated the contextual reality: “Covid in our area worsens”

On that day at 9:00 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time), the first Presidential debate was taking place. News media were covering how the Presidential debate would turn out, and what key issues would be discussed, and how President Trump and former Vice President Biden would approach the debate.

Covid-19 and its impact on economy and education was a dominating news also.

The nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court by President Trump had happened barely 36 hours ago. The White House set in motion a fast-moving process with a flurry of paperwork for the Senate, with its majority of Republicans, to formally nominate her to the Supreme Court.

Another story is about a Black female wrongfully shot dead by the police in Kentucky: Breonna Taylor. Due to pressure on behalf of the victim from activists and the public, the attorney general of Kentucky had agreed to release the recordings of the secret grand jury proceedings that charged considered charge against 3 police

officers involved in the fatal shootings of Breonna Taylor earlier.

On the west coast, in California, wildfires were ranging. Hence the local and regional coverage included those stories of natural disaster, evacuees, and firefighters.

It was the National Day of Coffee but there was no significant coverage of the celebration of coffee!

THE CONTEXT

Initially, two universities, two denominational groups, an independent monitor, and I, a representative from the World Association for Christian Communication-North America, were part of the team to do the monitoring.

Out of these, Dr. Tuija Parikka of St. John's University, New York City worked with 7 of her students in her class on Mass Communication: Koda Blue, Lauren Florence, Katie Flynn, Ryan Leno, Xavier Lugo, Corey Schwach, and Tatum Punzo. They did the monitoring in class in person with these students living on campus. According to Parikka, the students did not have access to anything in print, since the campus library was closed, and they did the monitoring of internet newspapers via electronic library resources.

Dr. Karri Whipple of New York University came down with Covid-19, and could not coordinate the monitoring in her class, but was able to deliver her own coded sheets after her recovery.

United Methodist Women volunteers, a traditional stronghold for U.S. monitoring, could come up with only a minimal participation, though prior to the shutdown, an online Zoom training was given to potential participants. Yvette Moore, Director of Public Relations and Marketing of the United Methodist Women organized the GMMP training event on February 27, 2020. Also, a podcast on GMMP was made possible on March 12, 2020, in the United Methodist Women FaithTalk series, as part of the preparatory process for participating in the GMMP.

Another denominational team leader with a group of 12 potential monitors could not deliver due to "exhaustion and overwhelm," and tensions relating to pandemic and other "stressors."

Veronica Stern, an independent monitor, and I, Glory Dharmaraj, President of the World Association for Christian Communication-North America, took part in the monitoring.

Overall, in the U.S.A, the GMMP has not been a feasible exercise for us in 2020 due to Covid-19. In my coordination since 1995, this is the first time I have experienced this kind of adverse impact on the GMMP monitoring in the U.S.

Print:

Arizona Republic
Washington Post

Philadelphia Inquirer
Philadelphia Tribune
New York Times
The Journal News
Daily News
New York Post
Baltimore Sun
The Scoop USA Media

Television

ABC
CBS
NBC
San Diego, California CBS-8 (8:00 am)
Helena, Montana KTVH
Fox News
PBS Public Channel

Radio

Bloomberg Daybreak
GBH 88.7 Boston
NPR (California)
NPRK/ KJCC
KPCA (Southern California, local)
Coast Radio/ KCST-KCFM (Florence, Oregon)

Internet

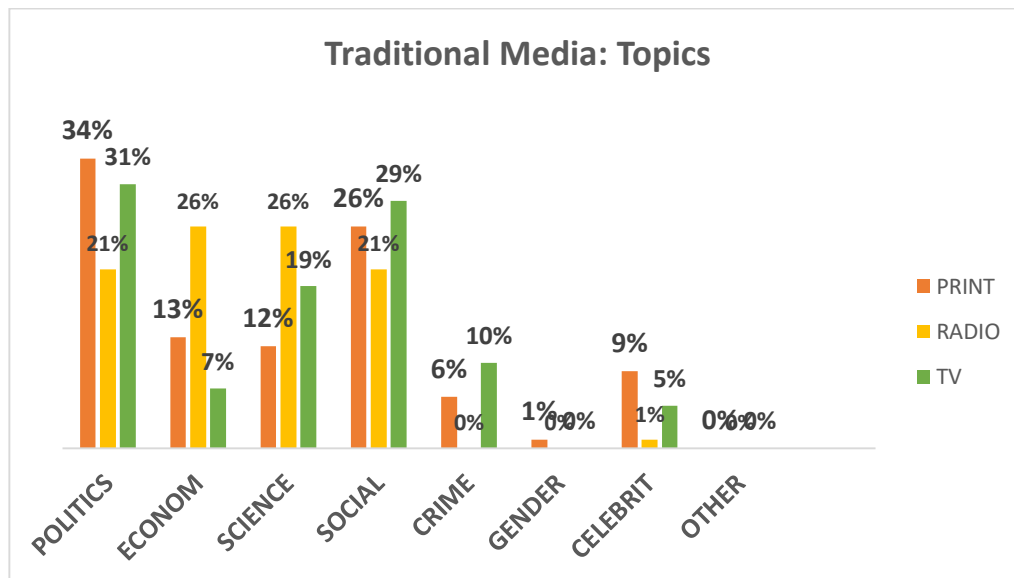
NBC
New York Times
USA Today
New York Post
Wall Street
Washington Post

Twitter

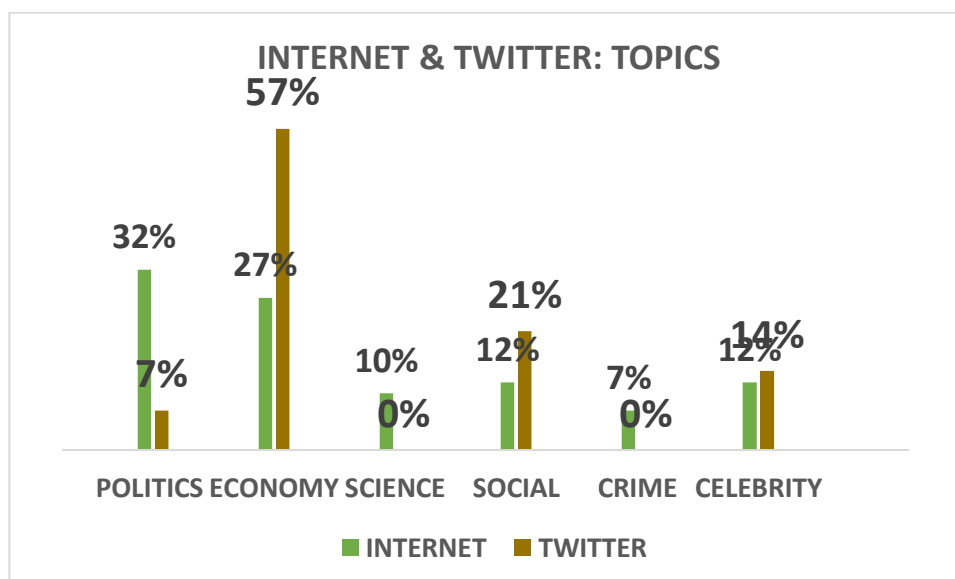
LATimes (@latimes)
NYTimes (@nytimes)

TOPICS IN THE NEWS

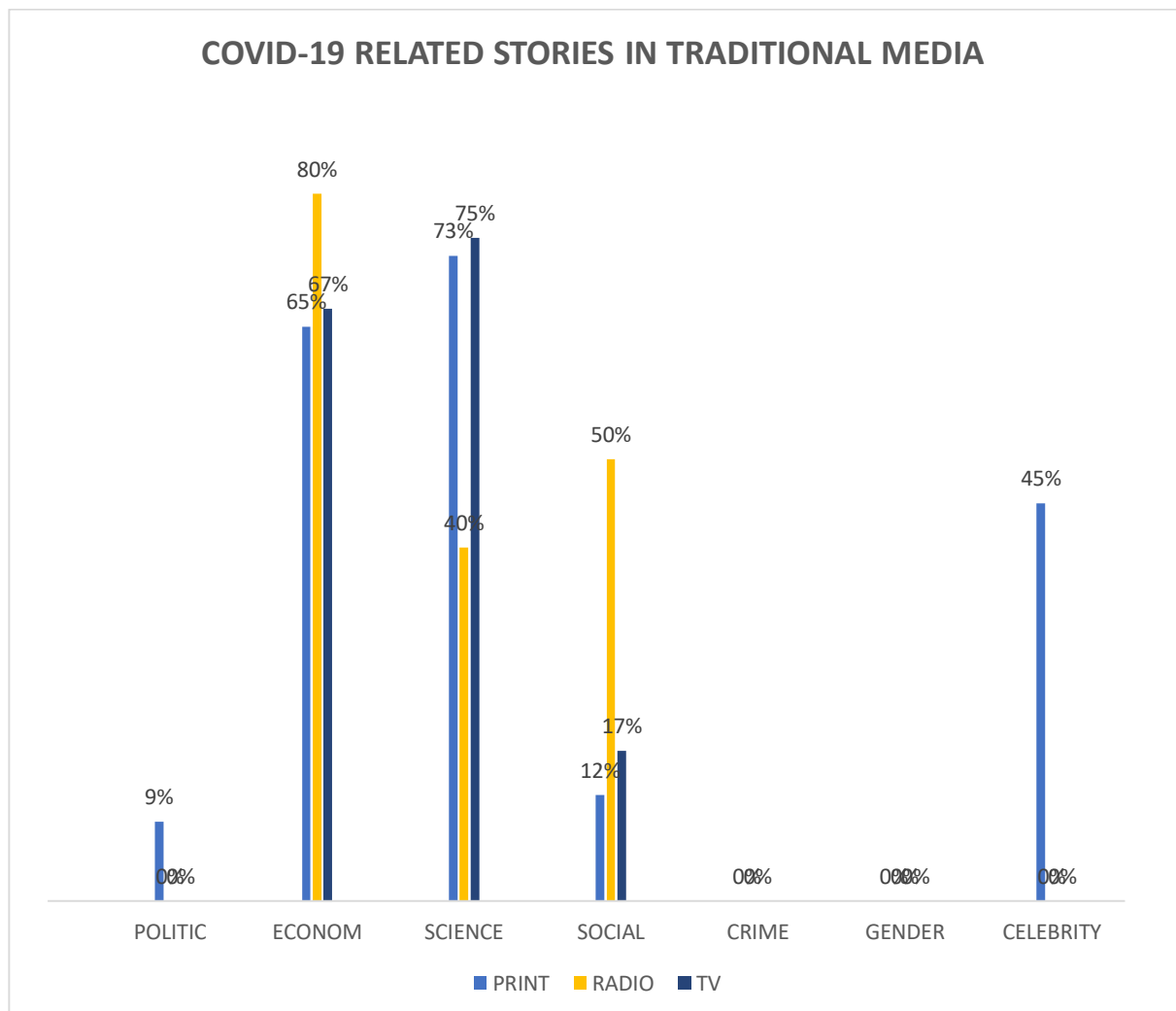
A survey of the topics covered by traditional media shows “Politics and government” as a lead topic in print with 34%, radio 21% and television 31%, respectively. It is followed by “Social and legal” news in print 26%, radio 21%, and television 29% respectively. “Science and Health” is in the third lead with radio news coverage at 26%, television 19%, and print 12%.



In Internet and Twitter news stories, the lead topic is “Economy” with 57% in Twitter and 27% in Internet respectively. Stories in “Politics and government” make up 32% in internet and a mere 7% in Twitter, and those in “Social and Legal” make up 21% in Twitter and 12% in Internet. A significant lack is stories on Science and Health. A possible reason is that Covid-19-related stories are coded separately in this pandemic year.

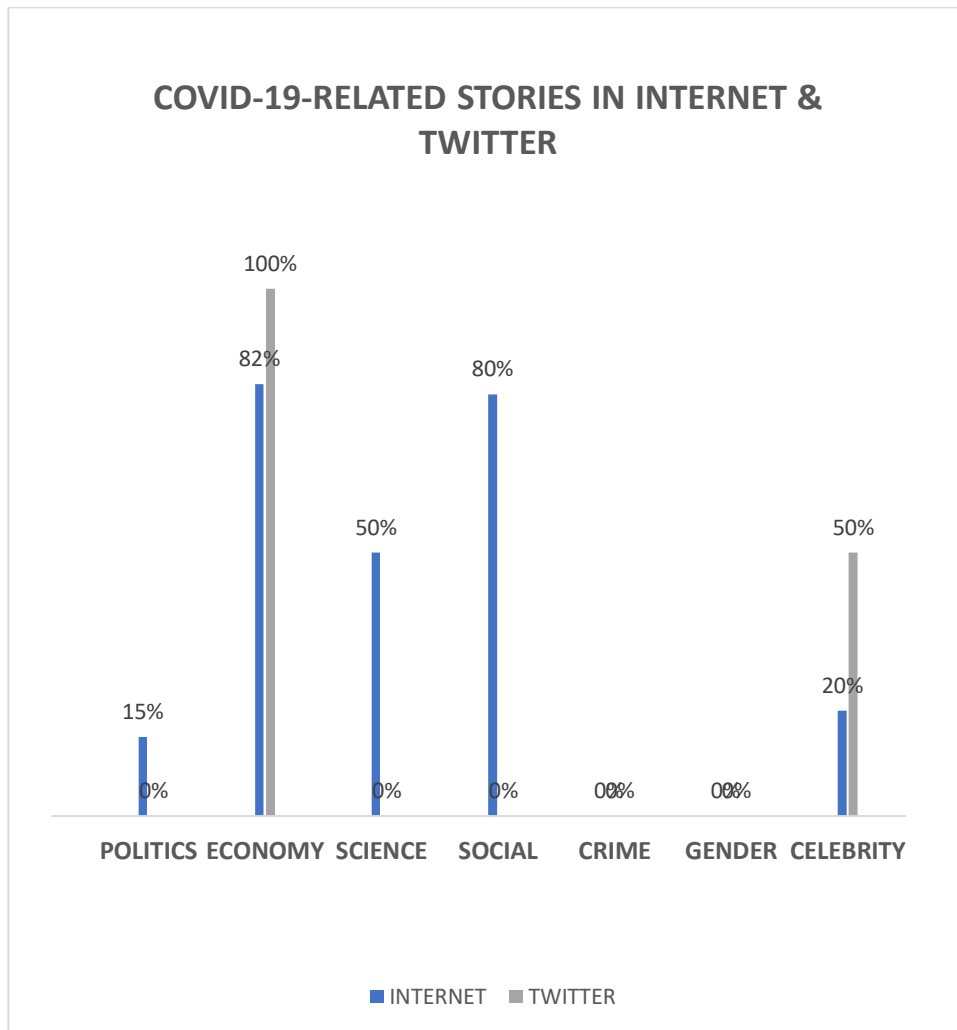


In Covid-19-related stories, topics such as “Economy,” “Science and Health,” and “Social and Legal” are the most reported topics in the traditional media.



Overall, Covid-19-related stories in print are 28%, Radio 42%, and television 24%. Break-up percentage for each topic is given in the graph above. It matters what is selected.

Overall, Covid-19-related stories are 44% in Internet and 64% in Twitter, and break-up percentage for each of the topics is given below:

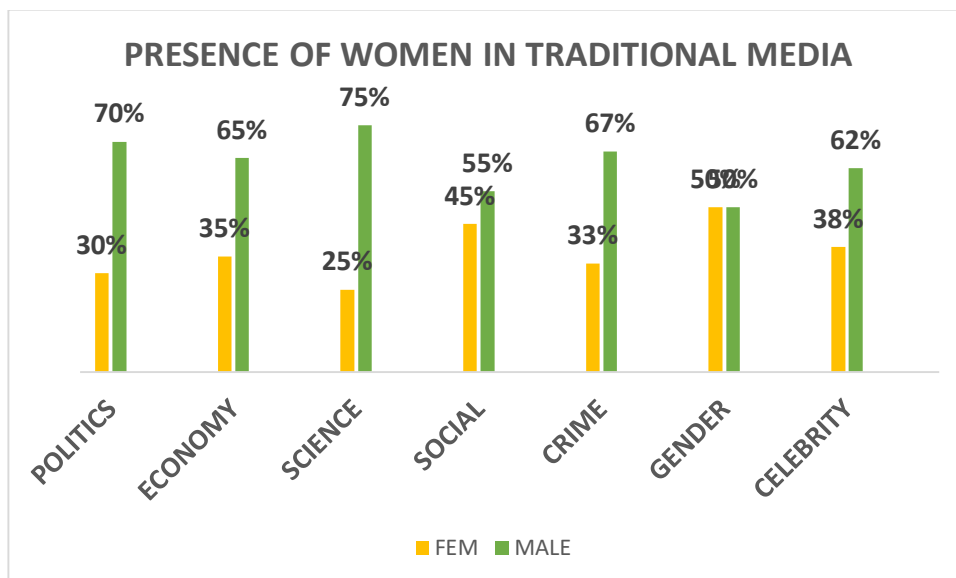


Covid-19-related coverage will be discussed in detail in pages 17-19.

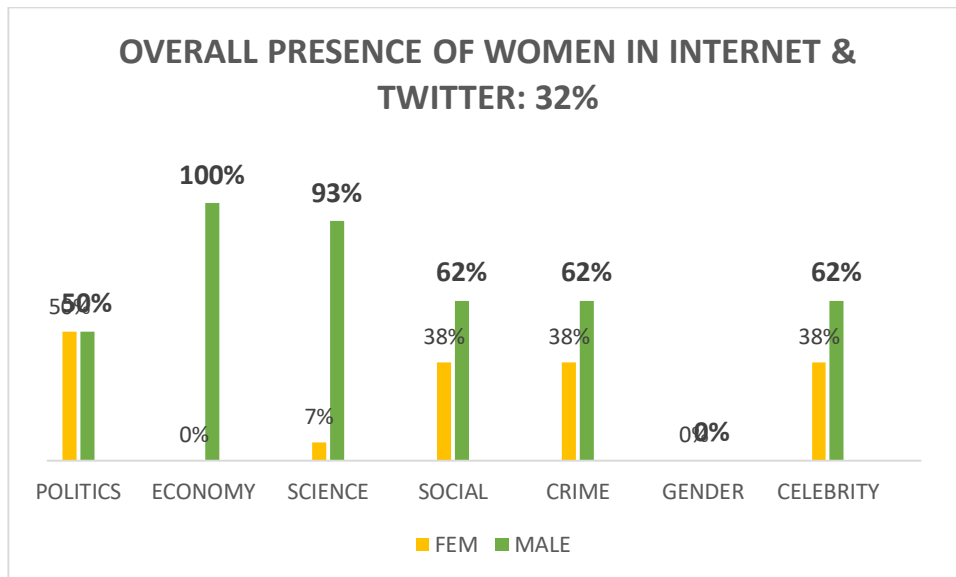
NEWS SUBJECTS AND SOURCES

A survey of findings in the U.S. since 1995 shows some increase in the presence of women as news subjects in traditional media, though a slight drop in the recent monitoring: 1995: 28%, 2000: 23%, 2005: 27%, 2010: 27%, 2015: 38%, and 2020: 34%. Overall presence of women in news in North America is 33% in traditional media, and 37% in Internet & Twitter.

OVERALL PRESENCE OF WOMEN IN PRINT, RADIO, AND TELEVISION: 34%

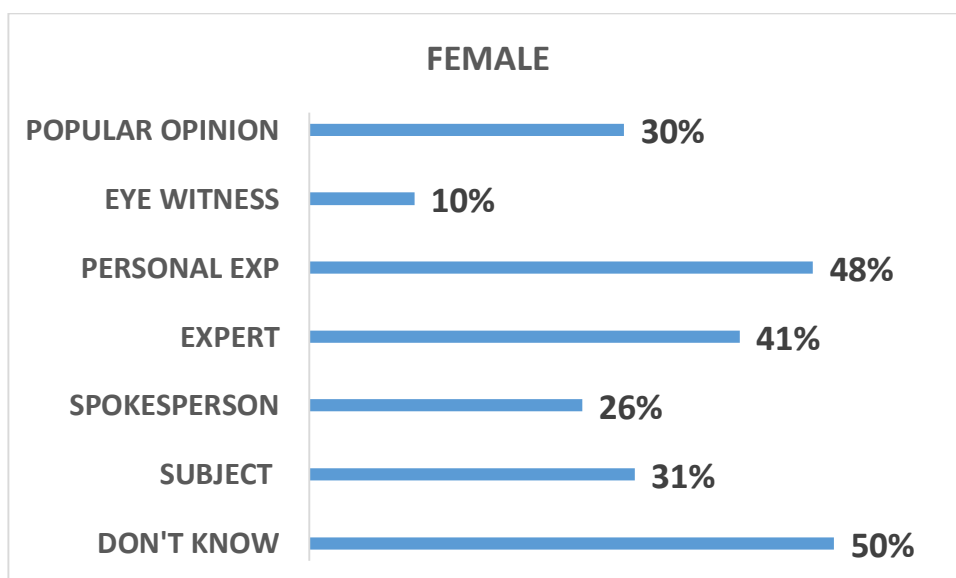


The overall presence of women as subjects and sources in Internet and Twitter news shows an 8% decline since 2015. Women subjects are 40% in 2015 and in 2020, only 32%. In the North American region, the presence of women in Internet and Twitter is 37%.



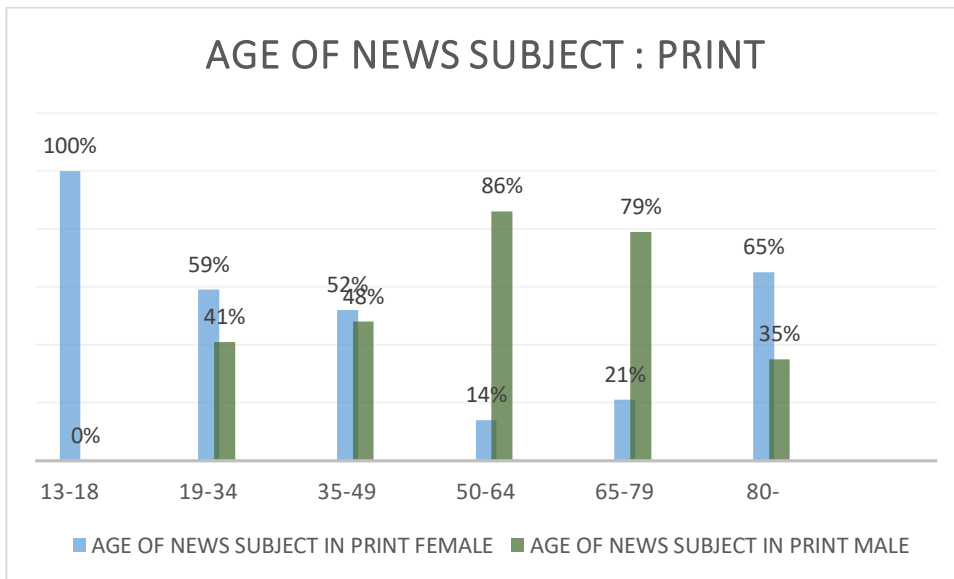
In the news subject's function in the news story, the percentage of women as "experts" shows a significant increase from 2005 to 2020. Female experts are 22% in 2005, 24% in 2010, 36% in 2015, and 41% in 2020. Women subjects appear more due to their personal experience (48%) than in any other category of function. In North America, as a whole, women appear in this capacity giving personal views (46%). It makes one wonder whether analysis should focus more on the old dictum that for women "personal is political."

FUNCTION OF WOMEN AS NEWS SUBJECTS

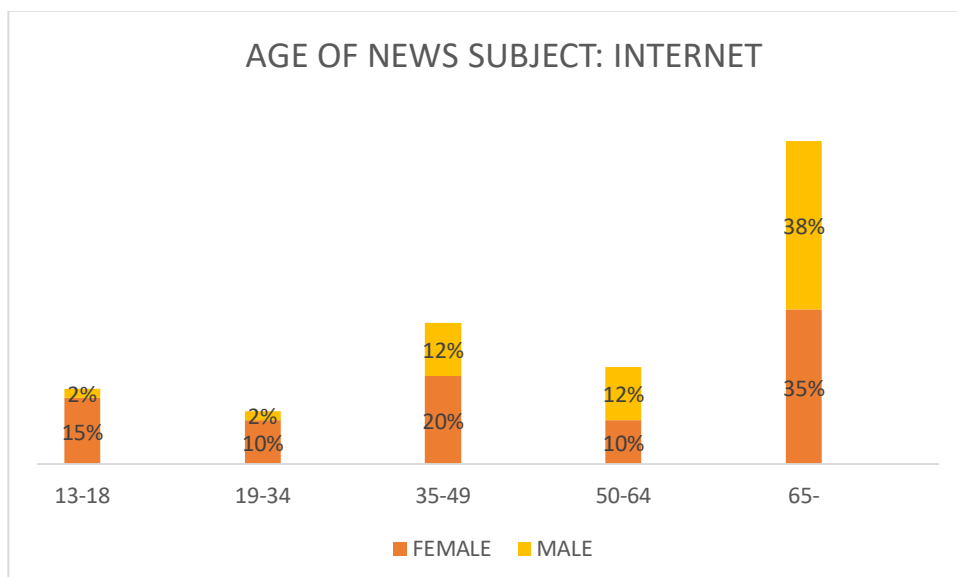


The age of women as news subjects in print is strikingly high in the age group of 13-18 and 80 years and above at 100% and 65% respectively, whereas

men as news subjects in the age groups 50-64 and 65-79 are remarkably high at 86% and 79% respectively.



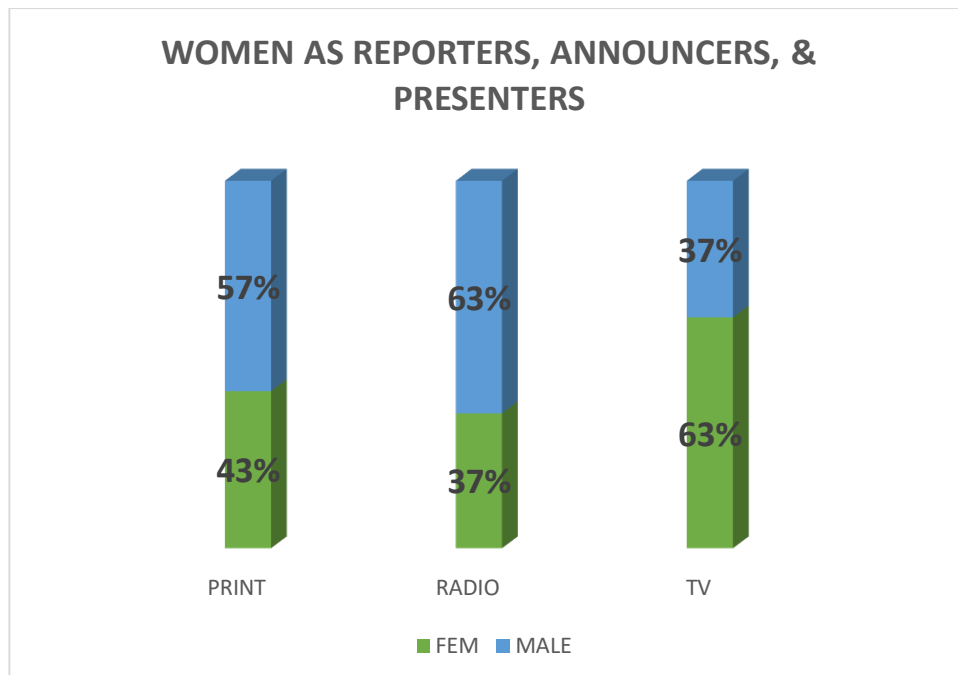
Age of news subject in internet news offers an interesting variation, as seen below: Men are 38% of subjects and sources in the age group 65 plus, whereas women are 35% in the same age group, but the latter's presence is slightly more in the age group 35-49: female 20% and male 12%.



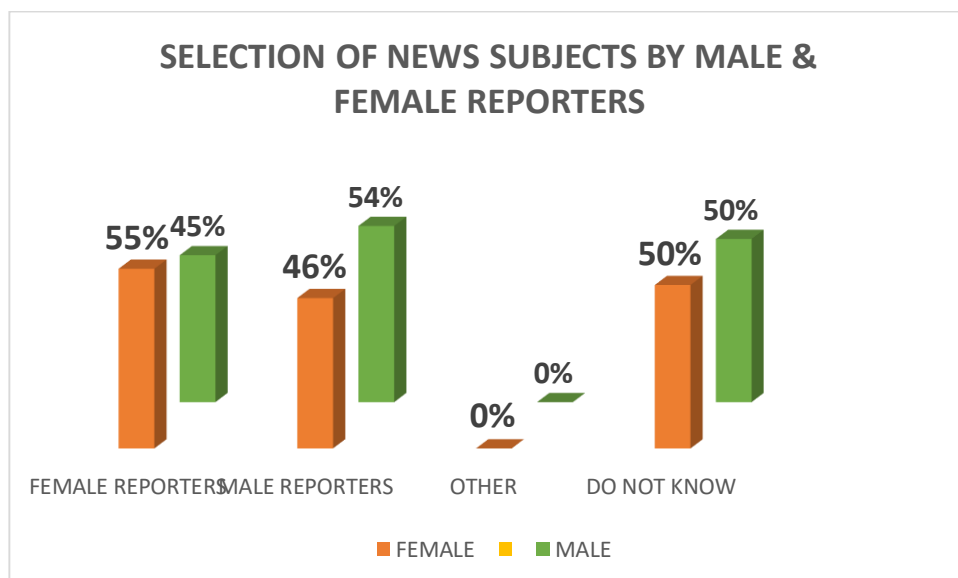
JOURNALISTS AND REPORTERS:

Women as Reporters, Announcers, and Presenters

Who delivers news is fundamental to achieving gender equity. Overall, the presence of women who deliver news is 43% in print, radio 37%, and television 63%. In North America, overall, the presence of women who deliver news in print is 41%, radio 34%, and television 67%.

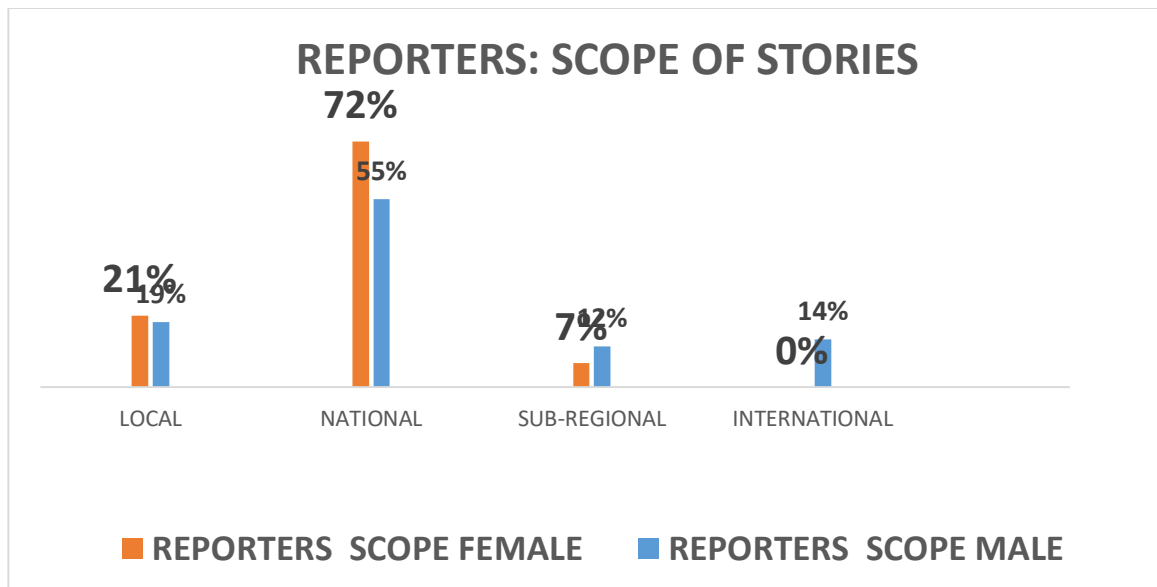


Interestingly enough, women reporters in the U.S. cover 55% of stories with women as subjects. Male reporters cover 54% of stories with men as news subjects.



Despite a steep decline in print newspapers in the recent years, there has been a steady

increase in stories reported by women in print news since 1995, from 38% to 43%, with an occasional drop to 31% in 2010.



A break-down of reporters in domestic and international stories shows female reporters mostly covering national and local news at 72% and 21%. Male reporters whose stories featured national news are 55%, local 19% and international 14% respectively. In North America, the national and local news coverage is 44% and 26% respectively by female reporters. Male reporters cover 35% national and 26% local news.

MAKING GENDER INTERSECTIONAL: SPECIAL QUESTIONS

In this latest Global Media Monitoring of Gender, each country was asked to add three special questions to the questionnaire. In this optional exercise, the three special questions added for the U.S. monitors are:

- Is the person's race, ethnicity mentioned in the text or made visible in the images? Yes/no?
- Is the person in the text living with disability or made visible in the images? Yes/no?
- Is the person's sexual orientation, or immigrant, or migrant status mentioned in the text or made visible in the images? Yes/No?

The rationale to include these special questions is to deepen the analysis of gender. In particular, how social markers such as race, class, sexual orientation, disability, migrant, immigrant status intersect gender as a category. This is an analytical move in the questionnaire itself towards eliciting an understanding of gender as a nuanced category beyond a narrow concept of gender as a monolithic category. The coinage of the word "intersectionality" is by Kimberlé Crenshaw, an African American law professor, in 1989 in her article, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," in *Stanford Law Review*, 1989, vol.

43. No. 6. Intersectionality for Crenshaw is the notion of women embodying the intersection of multiple categories of social identities. In the recent Covid-19 context in the U.S., she coined the phrase, “intersectional vulnerabilities” to describe the impact of the pandemic on people of color.

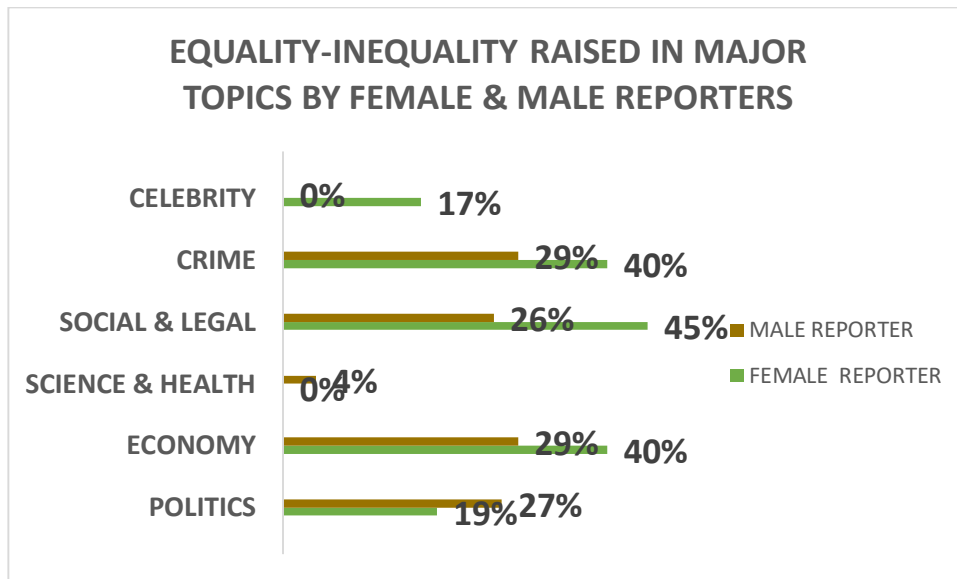
In the U.S., 22% of news stories mention race or ethnicity, of which 4 out of 10 are women. A key story covered was the shooting of Breonna Taylor, an African American woman, and the process undertaken by the prosecutor of Kentucky for the jury. Another news coverage is the story of Misty Copeland being the first African American to become a principal dancer in the American ballet.

Persons living with disability referred to in the text or made visible in the image is 1%. Six out of 10 are women. Sexual orientation, migrant, or immigrant status is mentioned is 3% and 3 out of 10 are women. In Latin America, indigenous peoples constitute only 1% of news subjects. Only 3 out of 10 are women.

JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE: ON WOMEN’S CENTRALITY, GENDER STEREOTYPES AND RIGHTS-BASED REPORTING

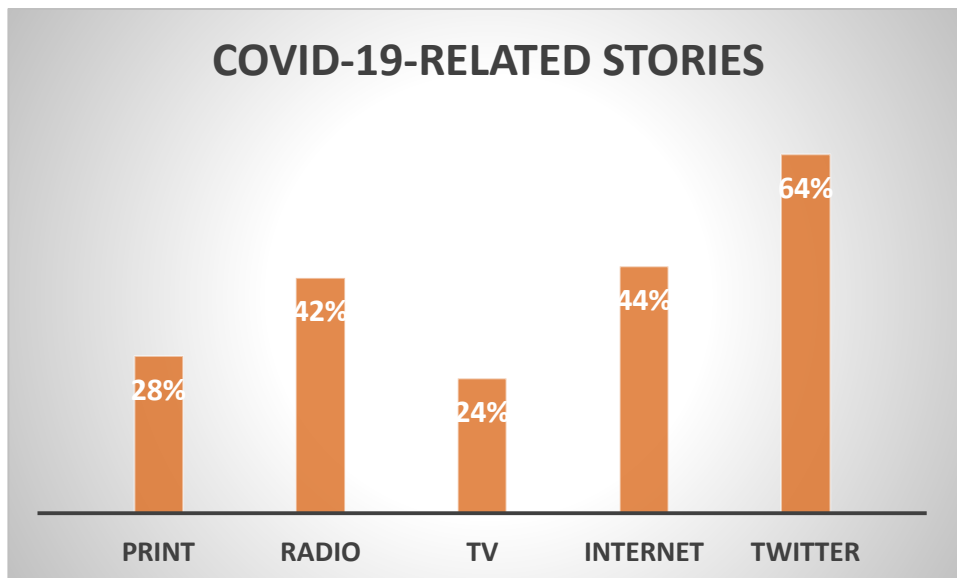
In breakdown of major topics, a survey of reporting shows that female reporters tend to feature stories showing gender equality or inequality, human rights, and policies. Women reporters tend to include stories with reference to gender equality or inequality, human rights, and policies in topics such as “Social & Legal” (45%), “Economy” (40%), and “Crime” (40%). Male reporters feature stories with reference to gender equality, human rights, and policies under the topic, “Politics & Government” (27%). Overall, women reporters are 28% and men reporters 19% in this category of analysis. In the North American region, overall, female and male reporters are 14% and 10% respectively in this group.

A deeper analysis into topics covered show that female reporters have focused on stories of “Economic policies & strategies,” “Women politicians & women electoral candidates,” “Women’s Movements & advocacy,” and “Poverty.” Male reporters on “Peace and Negotiations,” “Poverty,” “Economy,” and “Education.”



ON COVID-19 NEWS

The coverage of Covid-19-related stories in print, radio, television, internet, and Twitter is 33%. As the chart below shows, the overall news coverage in print is 28%, radio 42%, television 24%, internet 44%, and Twitter 64%.

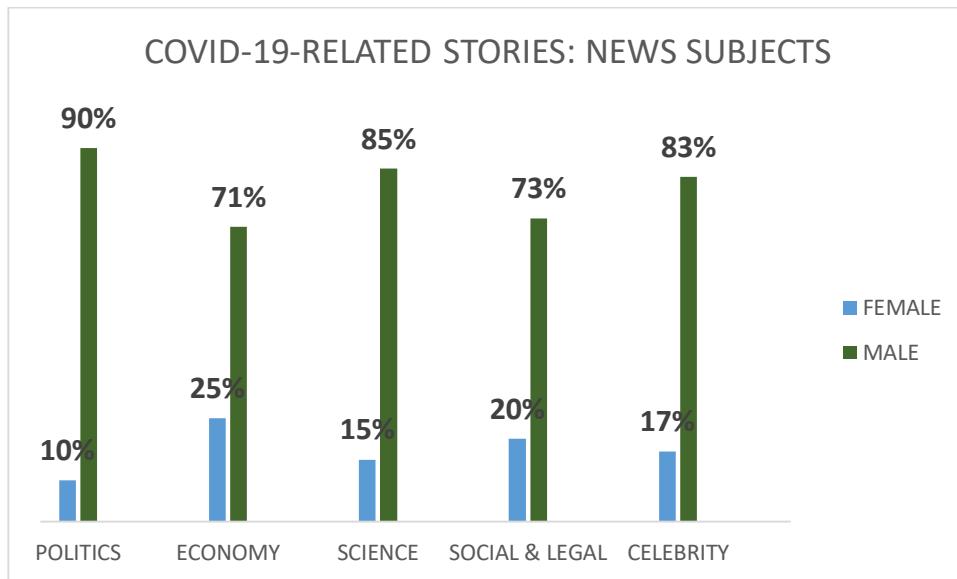


In North America, the overall news coverage of Covid-19 in print media is 34%, radio 34%, television 40%, internet 41%, and Twitter 38%. In total, Covid-19 news coverage is 37%, slightly above the U.S. average.

Gender in news subjects and sources

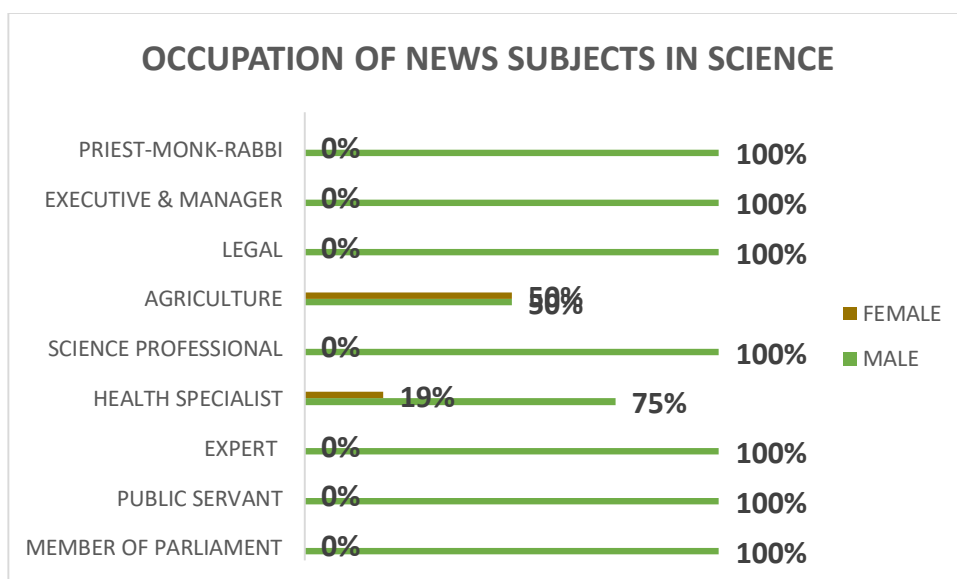
The gender disparity is striking in the news subjects and sources category for Covid-

19-related stories. Women fall far below as subjects and sources in all the major topics covered, as seen below:



Men make up disproportionate news subjects and sources in Covid-19-related news coverage, both in hard and soft news. Men are news subjects in hard core topics such as “Politics” (90%), “Economy” (71%), “Science” (85%), “Social & Legal” (73%), and they make up 83% in “Celebrity” news as well.

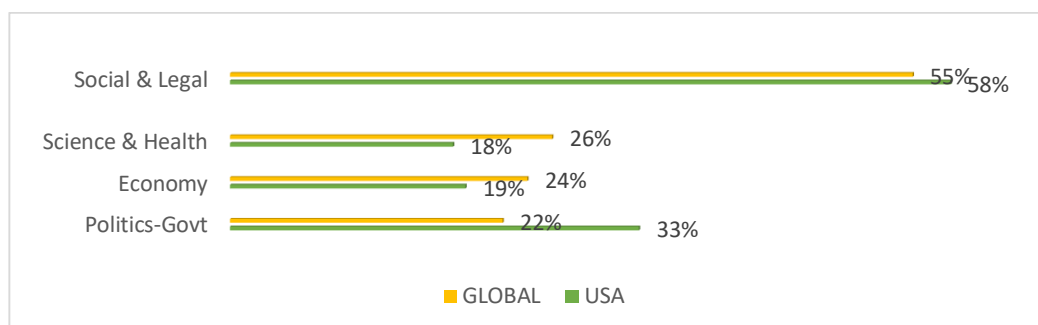
Further, a deeper analysis into the occupation of news subjects under the specific topic, “Science,” is startlingly gender-biased. Men figure disproportionately as doctors, legal experts, members of parliament, and health specialists. Women make up 19% of health specialists and 50% of agriculture workers.



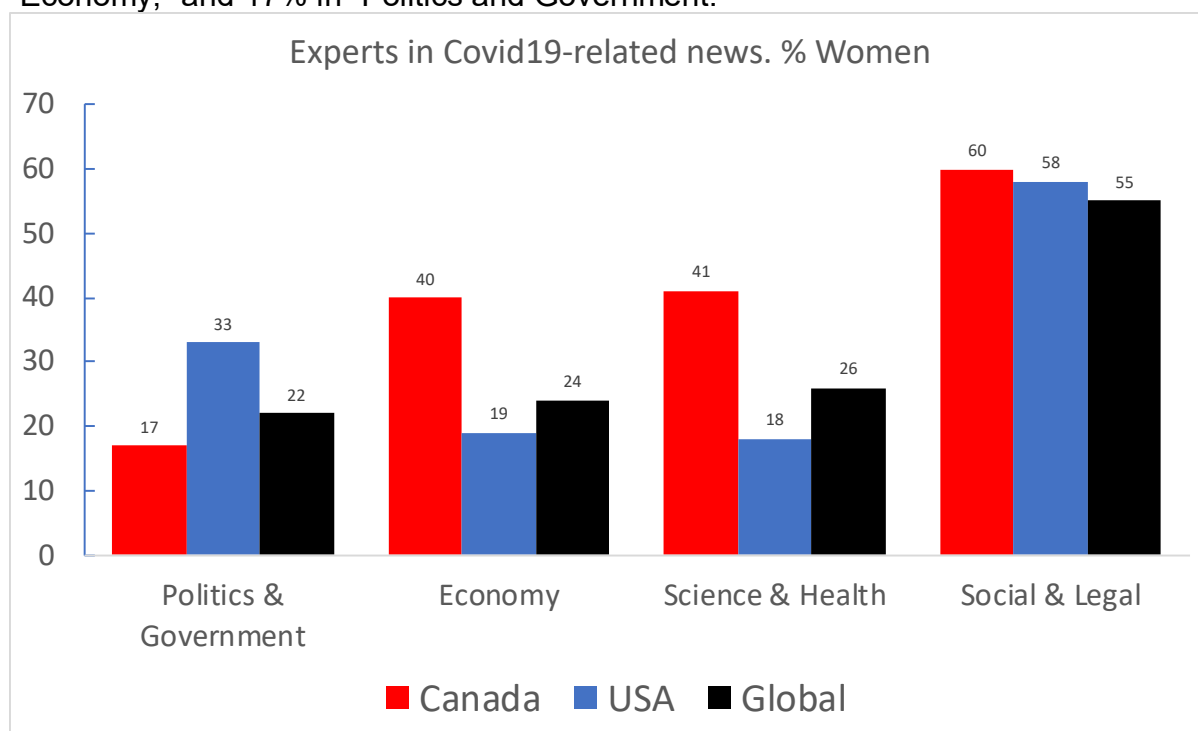
As for women who were interviewed as experts in science and health, the percentage is startlingly low at 26%. In 2015, the story of Angelina Jolie’s “high-

profile strike against ovarian cancer” and the use of experts, both male and female, provided a factual information about how women might want to glean insights of experts in this area. Women as experts figure 36% in 2015.

Women as experts in Covid-19-related Stories



In Canada, our North American regional partner, women as experts in Covid-19-Related stories are 60% in “Social and Legal,” 41% in “Science and Health,” 40% in “Economy,” and 17% in “Politics and Government.”



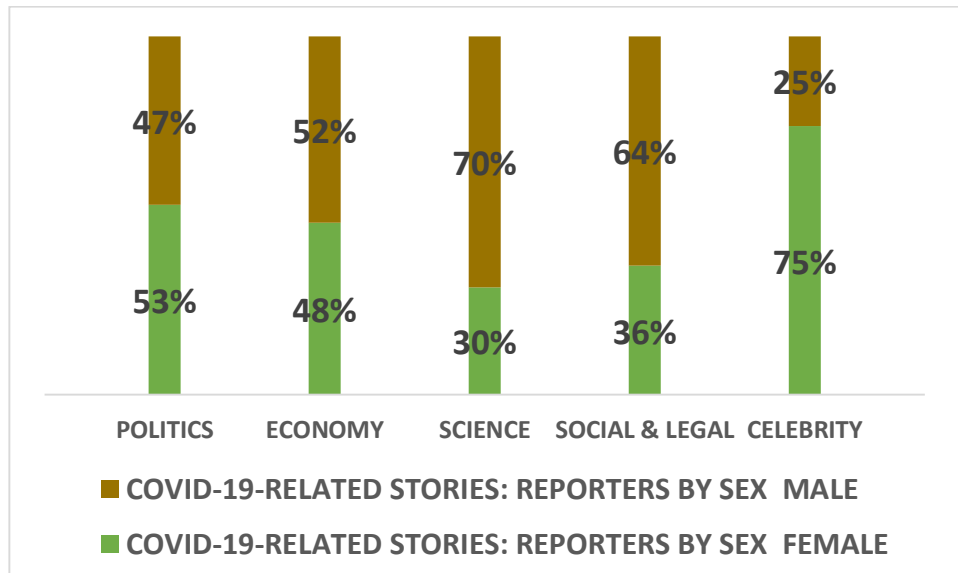
Courtesy: Sarah Macharia

Reporters and journalists

In Covid-19-related stories, female reporters make up an overall 40%.

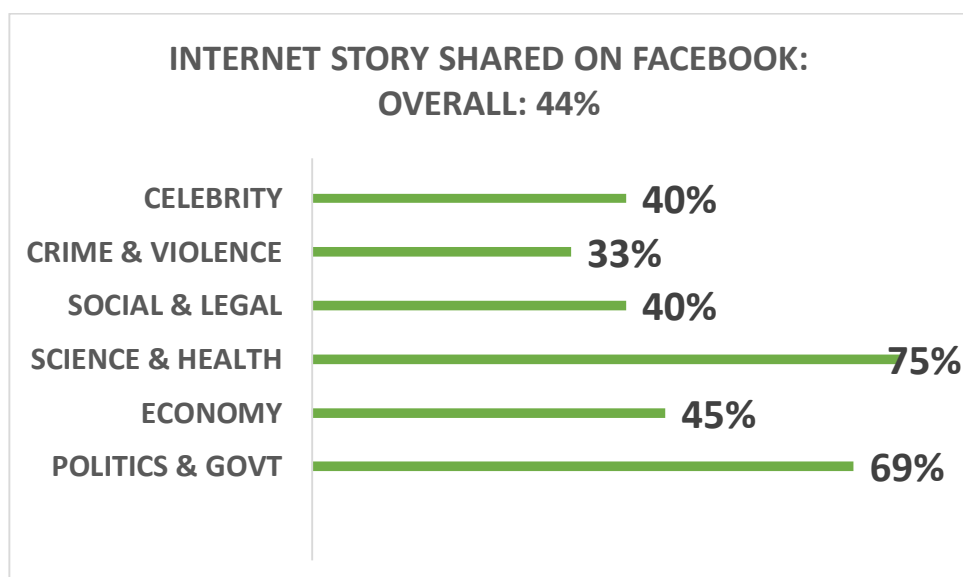
In stories related to science, female reporters make up only 30%, whereas male

reporters are 70%: a striking gender inequity. Women reporters make up 53% in covering a hard news topic such as politics & government showing a slight lead. They show a stereotypical lead at 75% in covering a soft news topic such as celebrity, arts, media, and sports.



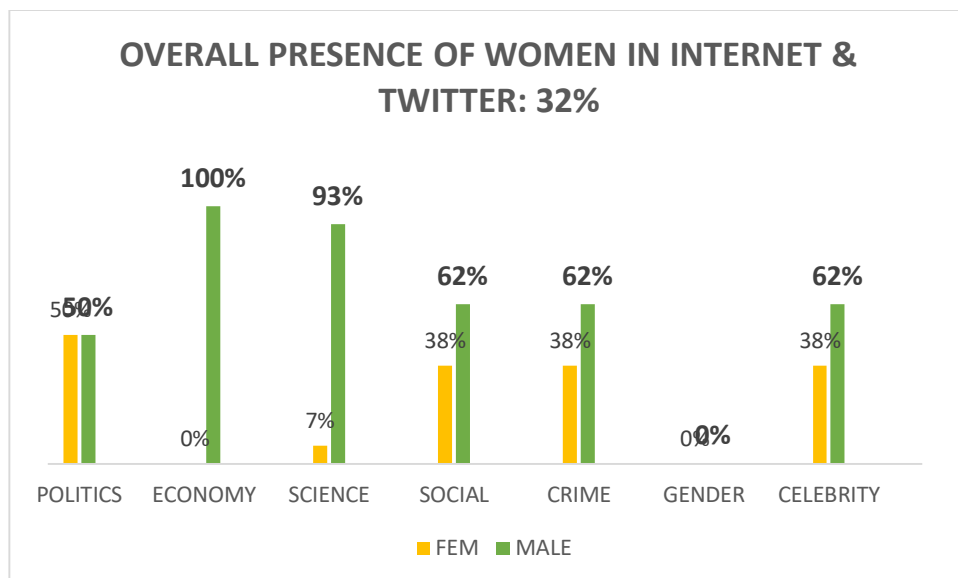
NEWS WEBSITES AND TWITTER

Internet stories shared on Facebook constitute 44%.

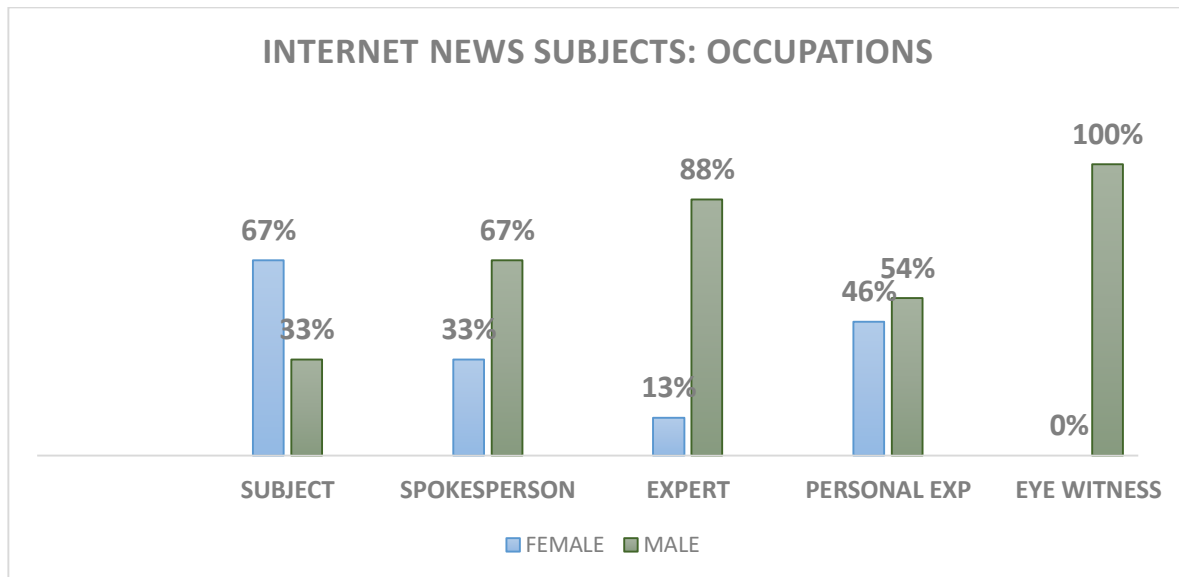


The overall presence of women in Internet and Twitter news is 32%. In 2015, the overall presence of women is 40%. The recent one in 2020 shows a significant

decline in women's presence.



Women appear 75% as internet news subjects in multimedia web components and photographs, whereas the percentage of men is 57%. The physical presence of women as news subjects may not be significant, if their perspectives are not mainstreamed in the news. In Internet news, there are pictures of Kamala Harris before she became the Vice President and the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg (RBG) whom the former, by mistake, referred to as the “Notorious B.I.G.,” instead of “RBG”! “B.I.G.” is an American rapper and song writer. Another picture is Danica Patrick’s, a celebrity over her split with Aaron Rogers. Judge Amy Barrett, the presidential nominee for the Supreme Court, also appears in several pictures both in Internet and Twitter news.



In the internet news, in female reporters' news coverage, 35% women appear as subjects and 18% men as subjects. In male reporters' coverage, male news subjects are 82% and women news subjects 65%.

A case study on measuring success

“Barrett’s Life Inspires Conservative Women” by Ruth Graham in *New York Times* page A 21 offers an interesting case study on how success is measured in the case of a high-profile female lawyer.

The story is clearly about the appeal of Judge Amy Barrett to religiously conservative women. The appeal is personal as well as partisan and/or political.

This gender-specific story positions an angle that lifts up the ideal of womanhood depicted as one of a large family, in this case 7 children (2 among them adopted), with a high professional achievement of a woman in law.

If it were a male nominee, the number of children or the combination of a large family and professional achievement would not be a gender indicator for success. Usually, the question posed is whether the male nominee would stand for planned parenthood or pro-life when it comes to taking a legal stance on woman’s reproductive rights.

While this story lifts up the model of a woman who has defied the saying, “biology is destiny,” such a narrative leaves out other categories that intersect with gender such as health care, medical access, affordable health care, education, childcare, and economic security. None of the women interviewed are from a lower socio-economic status. All the interviewees have had access to higher education. Seen only through the prism of religion, reproduction, and

profession, the image and representation of women tend to lack nuanced understandings of gender.

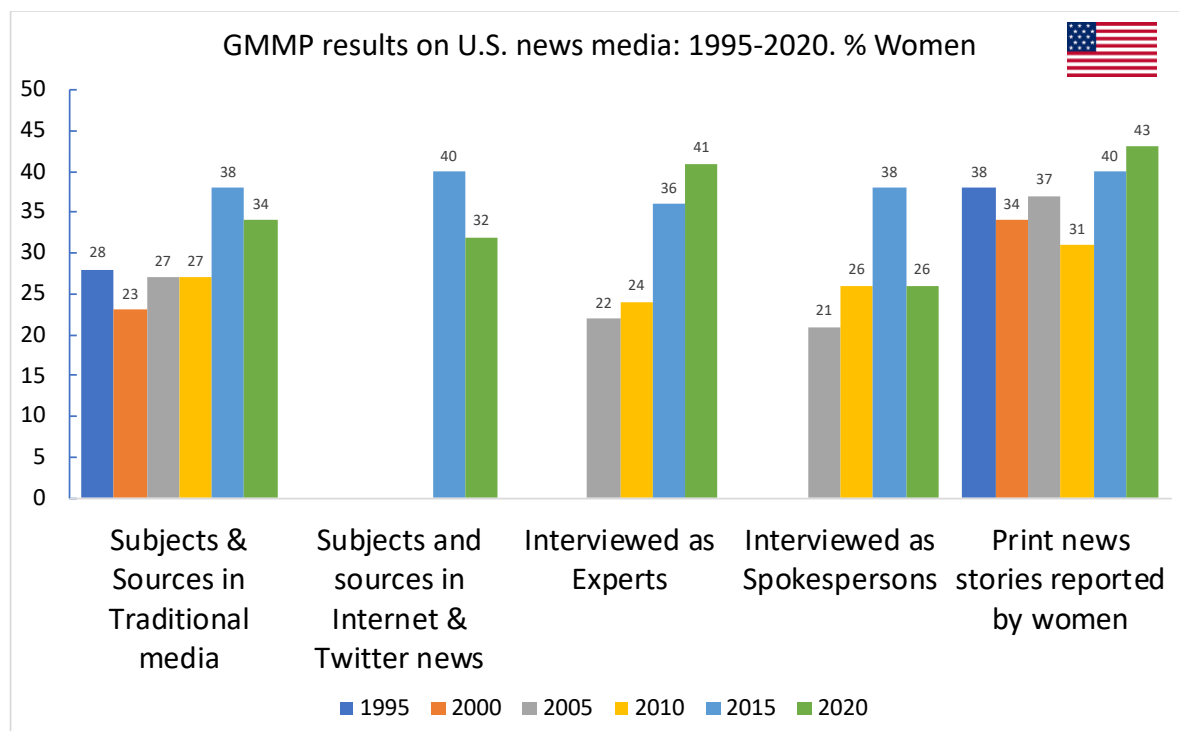
What would it be to have a news-media world where the portrayal of female success and that of male success were measured by the same metrics! Gender-just metrics!

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

As shared earlier, a distinct feature added in 2020 questionnaire is the inclusion of three special questions that “intersectionalize” gender with social markers such as race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, migrant, and immigrant status. Persons living with disability referred to in the text or made visible in images is 1%. Six out of 10 are women. Sexual orientation, migrant, or immigrant status mentioned is 3%. Only 3 out of 10 are women. Intersectionality matters in restoring the voices of those who are impacted to address the systemic inequities already existing in the communities.

Women as subjects appear more due to their personal experiences (48%). The preponderance of women’s personal experience may have been the result of who delivered news on September 29. However, serendipitously, a deeper feminist insight may have been unveiled in the coverage of a national health crisis. That is, women’s experiences are a key to a hermeneutic of what can be called a quotidian communication. Women’s everyday personal experiences as part of a theory of interpretation, especially under the weight of a national health crisis, heretofore unseen in a century.

The cumulative graph chart below captures the representation and role of women in news media from 1995-2020 in the United States.



Courtesy: Sarah Macharia

In order to ensure fair and equitable representation of women in media vigilant advocacy is an imperative. The GMMP 2020 results again reinforce the need for it.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

In the recent Strategic Planning for World Association for Christian Communication-North America, one of the three priority strategies is to advocate for better communication roles for women. The strategic initiatives connected with this are sharing the GMMP results in key conventions in their plenaries and workshops.

As a first step, WACC-NA offered a plenary on Global Media Monitoring in the Religion Communicators Convention on April 7, 2020. It was a Convention organized by the Religion Communicators Council, the Associated Church Press, and the Canadian Christian Communicators Association. Philip Lee, General Secretary of the World Association of Christian Communication, Sarah Macharia, the Global Coordinator for the Global Media Monitoring Project, Veronica Cusi, Coordinator of GMMP for Canada, and myself were the presenters sharing the preliminary results.

Through the WACC-North America digital newsletter, the preliminary results will be shared with all the members of WACC-NA and interested members of the Associated Church Press.

The results will be shared with denominational communication representatives and some of them are represented on the executive committee of WACC-North America, and have been informed about this. The GMMP results are to be used as an advocacy tool for gender analysis in their respective work. Available media literacy tools will be promoted.

We will be working with the denominational communication leadership about possible meetings where these results can be shared.

Also, the team leaders of St. John's University, NYC and New York City University will be a couple of key academic scholars who will share the results with their respective academic communities.

The results will also be shared with Women's Media Center and other groups interested in advancing equitable roles for women in the media.

In the fall of 2021, WACC-NA is undertaking a project for monitoring migrants on the south of the U.S. border.

In 2022, a series of webinars are being planned for addressing migrant, immigrant, and racial minorities' issues, and gender equity will be a key element in all these.

In addition, the annual UN Commission on the Status of Women is another venue we will be looking at, especially in the NGO parallel events.

SELECTED PICTURES OF MONITORS

This project would not have been possible without the dedicated volunteers some of whose pictures are below: St. John's University New York City, Mass
Communication class:



Courtesy of Amaya Walker

Independent monitor, Victoria Stern



Courtesy: Victoria Stern

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 became quickly 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, 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 bulletin 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 sources. Additionally, three optional special questions, unique to each country, allowed individual

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

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 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 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, who build digital democracy solutions that are intended to give citizens unfettered access to actionable information that empowers them to make informed decisions and that strengthen civic engagement for improved public governance and accountability.

Annex 2. List of Monitors

St. John's University, New York City, Mass Communication Class with Professor Tuija Parikka in NYC.

New York City University, NY, Dr. Karri Whipple

United Methodist Women, Beth Cadman

Victoria Stern, independent monitor

WACC-North America, Glory Dharmaraj



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