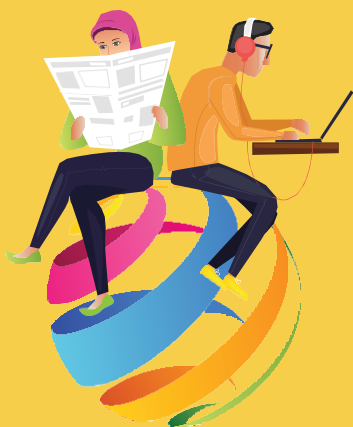


WHO MAKES THE NEWS?



GMMP

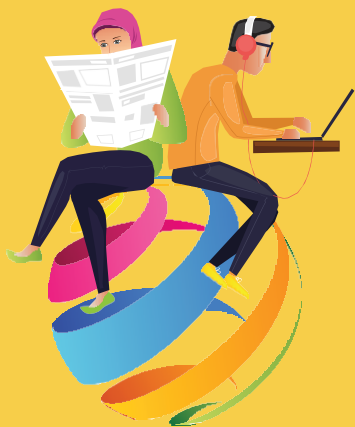
Global Media
Monitoring
Project

2020

BELGIUM

**NATIONAL
REPORT**

WHO MAKES THE NEWS?



GMMP

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Project

2020



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Project

2020



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DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION SCIENCES



LaPIJ
Laboratoire des pratiques et identités journalistiques



In Partnership with



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PREFACE

News media remain the major and most influential source of information, ideas and opinion for many people in Belgium. However, the global Covid-19 pandemic was a challenge for journalists to keep reporting the news in a safe way and to offer an anchor point to news audiences in very insecure times.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the news in Belgium was flooded with messages about the number of people in the hospitals, the intensive care and infections with the virus. There were discussions in the public debate about the overrepresentations of male experts in the news. In a time in which the vaccination campaigns are communicated to the citizens, traditional news media try to be a reliable source of information in the midst of a lot of online fake news.

This final report was produced jointly by the Department of Communication Sciences at Ghent University and LaPIJ¹ (Laboratoire des pratiques et identités journalistiques) from Université libre de Bruxelles and Université de Mons.

The Department of Communication Sciences at Ghent University already participated from 1995 onwards until the latest monitor. There is a strong tradition of research on gender and media at this department which is translated in expertise in research on gender and media and also on gender and news both in terms of production, reception and representation.

The LaPIJ (Laboratoire des pratiques et identités journalistiques), an inter-university research laboratory between Université libre de Bruxelles and Université de Mons brought together 17 researchers to carry out the 2020 study. Several LaPIJ members participated in the 2015 survey under the responsibility of the professional association of journalists in French-speaking Belgium (AJP). This association proposed to LaPIJ to continue this adventure by managing the GMMP survey in 2020 because of the research that is being carried out on gender, diversity, violence at work or media practices in general.

¹ <https://lapij.ulb.ac.be/>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Overall, we can conclude that women were still highly underrepresented as news subjects in the Belgian, French and Dutch news that was analysed. This was the case for traditional media (respectively a representation of 26%, 27% and 24%) and for digital news media (respectively 26%, 33%, 16%). The representation of women in the French analysed news was slightly higher than in the Flemish news media sample.
- The representation of women in the Flemish digital news sample (16%) was lower than the representation in traditional news sample (24%). In the French news sample, the representation of women in the digital news sample (33%) was higher than in the traditional news sample (27%). The Flemish digital news sample consisted only of news websites, while the French digital news sample consisted of news websites and Twitter.
- Gender-related topics received very little attention in all the news samples (Belgian, French, Dutch). There were also very few news stories that challenged gender stereotypes or highlighted gender issues.
- In all news samples (Belgian, French and Dutch), women news subjects have a representation that is still lower than one-third in almost all the analysed news media. The only exception was the French internet news media, where the representation of woman news subjects is 41%.
- Besides these general findings, the report includes data on the representation of female and male news subjects and the scope of the news items, occupation, function, age, portrayal as victim or survivor, family status, quotes and photographs. The findings for these cross-tabulations are mixed and are given more in detail in the section on news subjects and sources.
- For Belgium, among the journalists (n=258) who took part in the news stories, as reporter, presenter or announcer, 41% are women. While 59% are men. The percentage of women among journalists involved in news stories is lower in Belgium compared to the European average of 47% (n=8,603).
- The stories in which women are the core of the information represent only 4% of the total corpus (n=200).
- Only 1% of all the journalistic productions encoded (n=200) refer to any gender equality issue, legislation, politics.
- Men are still much more represented online: whether on news websites or Twitter, females represent 25% of the population represented, meaning that males represent 75% of the subjects of news.
- On Belgian news websites, women are less directly quoted than men. Out of 40 people being quoted, there are only 11 women for 29 men, which represents less than 30% of women. They are also more often identified under their family status: 28% of women (5/18) and only 16% of males (9/47) are identified by their family status.

- The analysis of our sample revealed a few articles that clearly or implicitly challenged gender stereotypes. These articles were the subject of a qualitative analysis presented at the end of the report.

A DAY IN THE NEWS IN BELGIUM

On September 29 2020, the news in Belgium was mostly dominated by two topics. The first topic was the corona pandemic. On this day, many news stories described the global impact of the pandemic. Furthermore, the Belgian news wrote extensively on the impact of the corona pandemic on the Belgian society and national restrictions to prevent the spread of the virus. It was discussed from the health point of view (the situation in hospitals, the risk of a second wave) but also from the political, economic and social points of view (the effectiveness of measures to combat the spread of the virus, the impact of these measures on employment and education, for example, the digitalisation of services leading to the exclusion of certain categories of the population). Some media (especially the print media) also offer a historical perspective, comparing the current pandemic with others that preceded it. It is mainly scientists, from the medical and academic fields, who are invoked and called upon in the various news reports. Testimonies collected from the French-speaking Belgian population also feed the reports.

The second topic that was very present in the Belgian news was the formation of the federal government and the negotiations of the party chairpersons to reach a consensus on specific agenda points. Belgium had not had a full government since the end of 2018. The formation of a government would be announced the day after the monitoring. These two news topics received more attention on that day than other news stories. The news covered by the Belgian media on 29 September 2020 is not out of the ordinary, however. The foreign news was dominated by the end of the American election campaign and the upcoming televised debate between Joe Biden and Donald Trump.

THE CONTEXT

The Belgian federal state structure (Dutch-speaking, French-speaking, and German-speaking communities and three regions) is translated in the country's media landscape, consisting of two large language-based markets, both characterized by increasing media concentration (De Bens and Raeymaeckers, 2007).

In 2020, three media groups are very active in the Flemish newspaper market: Het Mediahuis, DPG Media and Mediafin. DPG Media group publishes the daily newspapers, Het Laatste Nieuws and De Morgen. Mediahuis publishes the daily national newspapers De Standaard and Het Nieuwsblad and the regional newspapers Gazet van Antwerpen and Het Belang van Limburg. Mediafin publishes the daily newspaper De Tijd with a focus on financial news.

The Flemish Radio and Television Broadcasting Company (VRT) is the public service broadcaster and has the television channel één and the radio station Radio 1 and the main commercial broadcaster in Flanders is VTM, which is owned by DPG Media. Belgischer Rundfunk (BRF) dominates the Belgian public broadcasting of the German-speaking community. Traditional media companies are also active in the online news market.

The Flemish team monitored the following news channels (based on a selection of channels that are consulted the most) and the density of news media in the region: newspapers (De Standaard & Het Laatste Nieuws), television (Het Journaal 19h of the public service broadcaster of the Flemish community VRT and Het Nieuws of commercial broadcaster VTM), radio news at 8 a.m. of Radio 1 (a channel of the public service broadcaster VRT) and online news websites (HLN.be and VRTNWS.be). The monitoring team consisted of four

researchers: prof. dr. Sofie Van Bauwel, PhD researcher Joke D'Heer, postdoctoral researcher Sara De Vuyst, and intern Shawnee Somers.

On the francophone side, the list of media outlets has been constructed following the choices made for the 2010 and 2015 surveys for French-speaking Belgium on the one hand, and the current structure of the Belgian French-speaking media market on the other. This market is small, with a number of Belgian players that is significant for the size of the territory, but still small compared to the media market in other countries.

In television, the choice fell on the news programmes of RTBF, RTL-TVI and Télésambre, a local television. The Belgian French-speaking television market is structured around two large so-called national television channels: the public radio and television service (RTBF) and the private channel (RTL-TVI) which depends on the RTL-Belgium group, itself owned by RTL-group (which has interests in more than 68 television channels, 9 streaming platforms and 31 radio channels). Local and proximity televisions are also important players in French-speaking Belgium, with no less than twelve local televisions represented by a Federation of local televisions. The local television chosen is Télésambre, in line with the choices made for the 2015 edition.

In radio, the logic behind the choice is quite similar to that of television. The Belgian French-speaking audiovisual market is structured around two major radio channels: the public radio and television service (RTBF) and a private channel (Bel-RTL) which, like RTL-TVI, belongs to the same private group: RTL Belgium. Finally, while all of RTBF's local outlets are spread throughout the country, the choice fell on a private radio station for the third encoded medium. This radio station, Radio Contact, broadcasts music and news and belongs to the Radio H holding company, owned by the RTL group. Radio Contact was also in the list of the three radio stations in the panel in 2015.

In the print media, three so-called national dailies for French-speaking Belgians share the market with a set of local newspapers gathered around two main corporate brands: Sudpresse and Les éditions de l'Avenir. The choice of newspapers was first made for Le Soir, a national daily, which shares the position of reference daily with the newspaper La Libre Belgique. Le Soir belongs to the Rossel group, which is active in Belgium and France, and occupies a central position in the Belgian news world. The second choice, in line with the 2015 selection, was a popular daily, La Dernière Heure Les Sports +, which belongs to Rossel's competitor group, IPM. La Dernière Heure Les Sports + is a newspaper relatively focused on news on social issues, especially news of the day, as well as sports, as its name suggests. Its mini-tab format has contributed to its success. Finally, the third daily chosen is L'Avenir Namur, which previously belonged to the Editions de l'Avenir group, and which is being sold to the IPM group (the same group as La Dernière Heure Les Sports +), but retaining its editorial autonomy, as the newspaper's staff cooperative will be taking a stake in the company's capital.

For the web, the choice was made to strike a balance between the diversity of titles to be covered by the analysis and consistency with the organisation of the media market and with the choices made in 2015. As in 2015, the choice was made for the website of 7sur7.be, a Belgian generalist news website published by the DPG Media group. The second website analysed was the website of Vif.be, the website of the Belgian general news weekly magazine. Finally, four Twitter accounts were selected, only for the francophone study: the account of RTBf info (the news editorial office of the Belgian public radio and television service), the account of Le Soir, the account of Sudpresse (which is a portal that brings together the news produced by the group's various local dailies) and, finally, the account of BX1, a local Brussels television station. These choices are identical to the 2015 analysis, only BX1 has changed its name since then (it was then called TéléBruxelles).

The francophone monitoring team consisted of 17 researchers from LaPIJ (ULB-UMons) : Florence Le Cam, David Domingo, Manon Libert, Florian Tixier, Antoine Jacquet, Marie Fierens, Cécile Balty, Cassandre Burnier, Lorrie d’Addario, Sabri Derinöz, Carlo Gubitosa, Gabriela Guerreiro, Lucie Hainaut, Laurye Joncret, Alexander Kondratov, Lise Ménalque, and Gabrielle Romain.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this report was decided by the GMMP organisers who propose to analyse news stories in many countries on the same day, which was, for the 2020 edition, September 29th. The main focus of this analysis is gender issues related to the media: gender representation amongst media producers and sources in the media, gender stereotypes in news content, etc. These issues have been investigated in relation to, amongst others, the main topic of the stories and the importance of these stories in these media.

The GMMP organisation provided national teams with detailed guidelines for coding. This global study has been organised every 5 years since 1995 and the method has been improved from one edition to another since then.

It is important to note that the sample of stories analysed cannot be considered a reliable indicator of the global production of the media selected for the study, and neither of the production of these media companies during the selected day. Indeed, for newspapers, radio and television, only the first few stories in order of appearance were coded, considered by the GMMP organisers as the *main* stories in each media on this day. The sample is therefore dependent on the hierarchy of stories made by the media during the news production process. Furthermore, some of the contents appearing in the media were not coded, in accordance with the GMMP guidelines:

- All: advertisements and daily weather news
- Newspapers: letters to the editor, editorials, table of contents, and comments/columns
- Radio and television: introductions and titles, columns, cartoons and fun facts
- Internet: same as for newspapers + stories that are not available from the main page at the moment of the coding, news lists
- Twitter: retweets, YouTube videos, teasers, retweet content/comments below the main tweet

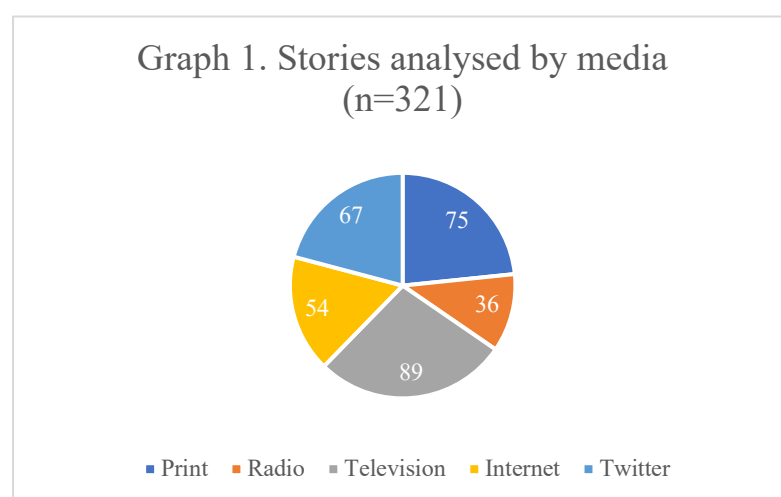
An approximate number of news contents to be coded for each media had been determined by the GMMP guidelines.

The questions for each news story concerned the story itself, specific gender issues related to the story, gender of the reporter(s), the profile of every person appearing/mentioned in the news story and its function in the news content. In this 2020 edition, given the importance of the Covid-19 pandemic, specific questions concerning the link between the story and this topic were added. For the Belgian report, three more specific questions related to gender issues in the context of the Covid-19 crisis were addressed. A comment section was proposed to the coder. Except for this comment section, every question was to be answered by preset

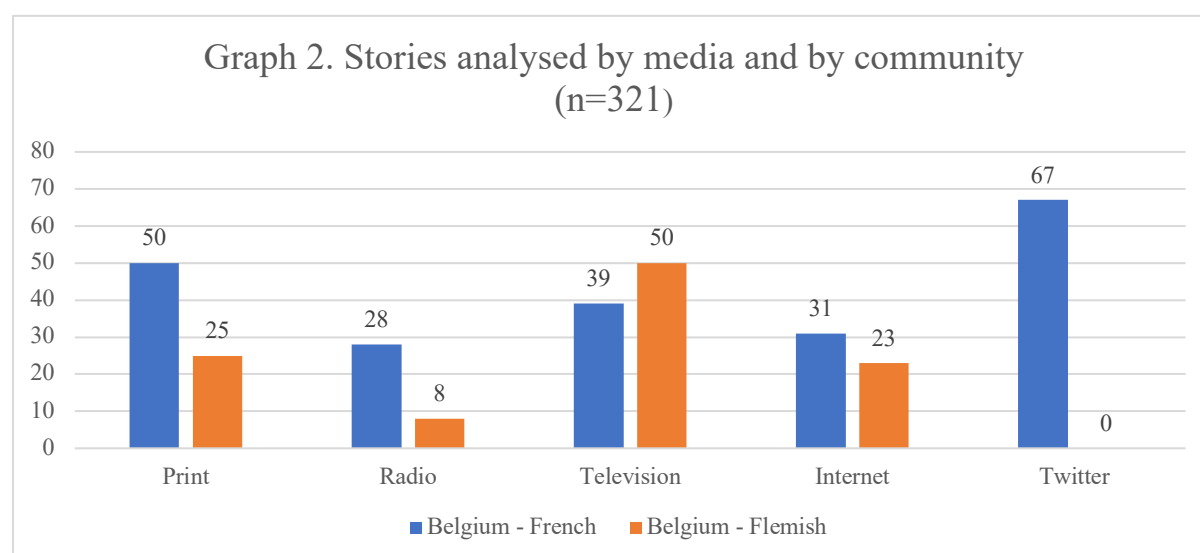
categories. Coders were invited to mention if the story could be interesting for a qualitative analysis (see below).

All the stories coded were reported in a table that was sent to the GMMP organisation, which produced sheets with detailed figures for each question by region and by country. Local teams were then invited to produce national reports.

For the Belgian part, a total of 321 stories published by selected Belgian media companies on September 29th 2020 were coded. These stories appeared in several media: print, radio, television, internet and Twitter, as shown in the following graph.



The number of stories analysed is not the same in French-speaking media and in Dutch-speaking media.



In the quantitative analysis of this national report, some of the statistical information and some comparisons (by media, by linguistic community or with previous editions of GMMP reports) have not been made because conclusions would have been too biased by a small sample of

observations. In some other cases, we considered that the number of observations could be mentioned, as this information was relevant.

Some of the stories analysed were mentioned by the coders as particularly interesting in the context of a report on gender issues. A selection of these selected stories was then analysed by a researcher with a qualitative approach. Several qualitative analyses are developed in this report and can be considered complementary to the quantitative data.

TOPICS IN THE NEWS

In the analysed Belgian media, of all the print reports that were analysed 20% focused on politics and government (n=15), 25% on economy (n=19), 25% on science and health (n=19), 17% on social and legal (n=13), 8% on crime and violence (n=6) and 4% on celebrity, arts and media, sports (n=3). For the analysed radio reports, this was 36% on politics and government (n=13), 11% on economy (n=4), 25% on science and health (n=9), 6% on social and legal (n=2), 6% on crime and violence (n=2), 14% on celebrity, arts and media, sports (n=5). For the analysed television reports, this was 18% on politics and government (n=16), 4% on economy (n=4), 18% on science and health (n=16), 13% on social and legal (n=12), 12% on crime and violence (n=11), 2% on gender and related issues (n=2) and 29% on celebrity, arts and media, sports (n=26). For the internet news, this was 43% on politics and government (n=23), 2% on economy (n=1), 20% on science and health (n=11), 9% on social and legal (n=5), 11% on crime and violence (n=6), 2% on gender and related issues (n=1), 13% on celebrity, arts and media, sports (n=7). For Twitter news, this was 21% on politics and government (n=14), 19% on economy (n=13), 15% on science and health (n=10), 10% on social and legal (n=7), 7% on crime and violence (n=5), 25% on celebrity, arts and media, sports (n=17). It is remarkable that gender and related issues were only reported in the analysed sample by television and internet and were not reported in other media analysed.

In the analysed Flemish news media, of all the print reports that were surveyed 32% (n=8) focused on politics and government, 16% on economy (n=4), 28% on science and health (n=7), 20% on social and legal information (n=5) and 4% on celebrity, arts and media, and sports (n=1). For the analysed radio reports this was 13% on politics and government (n=1), 25% on economy (n=2), 50% on science and health (n=4) and 13% on celebrity, arts and media, sports (n=1). For the analysed television reports this was 14% on politics and government (n=7), 2% on economy (n=1), 18% on science and health (n=9), 16% on social and legal (n=8), 12% on crime and violence (n=6), 36% on celebrity, arts and media (n=18). For the analysed internet news this was 43% on politics and government (n=10), 4% on economy (n=1), 17% on science and health (n=4), 9% on social and legal (n=2), 13% on crime and violence (n=3) and 13% on celebrity, arts and media, sports (n=3). It is remarkable that gender and related issues were not reported in the analysed sample.

In the analysed French news media, of all the print reports that were surveyed 14% focused on politics and government (n=7), 30% on economy (n=15), 24% on science and health (n=12), 16% on social and legal (n=8), 12% on crime and violence (n=6) and 4% on celebrity, arts and media, sports (n=2). For the radio news this was 43% on politics and government (n=12), 7% on economy (n=2), 18% on science and health (n=5), 7% on social and legal (n=2), 7% on crime and violence (n=2) and 14% on celebrity, arts and media, sports (n=4). For television news this was 23% on politics and government (n=9), 8% on economy (n=3), 18% on science and health (n=7), 10% on social and legal (n=4), 13% on crime and violence (n=5), 5% on gender and related issues (n=2), 21% on celebrity, arts and media, sports (n=8). On the internet news this was 42% on politics and government (n=13), 23% on science and health (n=7), 10% on social and legal (n=3), 10% on crime and violence (n=3), 3% on gender and related issues (n=1), 13% on celebrity, arts and media, sports (n=4). On Twitter this was 21% on politics and government (n=14), 19% on economy (n=13), 15% on science and health (n=10), 10% on social and legal (n=7), 7% on crime and violence (n=5) and 25% on celebrity, arts and media, sports (n=17). It was remarkable that news on gender and related issues only featured on television and internet in the analysed sample.

In a second step of the analysis, we looked at which of the analysed Belgian media reported on stories related to Covid-19. Among the news stories selected, 51% of the news in print, 39% of the news on the radio, 22% of the television news, 31% of the internet news and 27% of the Twitter news focused on Covid-19. Overall, 33% of the news stories that were analysed were related to Covid-19. For news on politics and government, all news media had approximately one-fifth of their coverage focusing on Covid-19. Most of the news on economy in print (68%, total number of print reports on this economy: 19), radio (75%, total number of radio reports on this economy: 4) and internet (100%, total number of internet reports on economy: 1) focused on Covid-19. Also, high percentages of the news on science and health had a focus on Covid-19 in print (79%, total number of print reports about science and health: 19), radio (78%, total number of radio reports about science and health: 9), Twitter (80%, total number of Twitter reports about science and health: 10) and internet (100%, total number of internet reports about science and health: 11). Around half of the coverage on social and legal information in print (54%, total number of reports on social and legal information in print: 13) and radio (50%, total number of reports on social and legal information in radio: 2) focused on Covid-19. Concerning news on gender and related issues, 50% of television news focused on Covid-19 (total number of television news with a focus on gender and related issues: 2). For news on celebrity, arts and media, sports, a lower percentage of the news on television (15%, total number of news on celebrity, arts and media, sports in television: 26), internet (14%, total number of news on celebrity, arts and media, sports on internet: 7) and Twitter (12%, total number of news on celebrity, arts and media, sports in Twitter: 17) focused on Covid-19.

In the Flemish sample, most of the stories on the radio (75%) and in print news (60%) were related to Covid-19, while this was less the case for stories on television (20%) and the internet (22%). Overall, 34% of the news stories in the selected sample were related to Covid-19. We also broke this down by the major topics of the stories. On radio and news websites, all the new stories on economy focused on Covid-19 (total number of news stories on economy in radio: 2 and news websites: 1). For news on politics and government, none of the news stories on radio (n=1) and internet (n=10) focused on Covid-19. In print (n=7), radio (n=4) and the internet (n=4), all stories about science and health, focused on Covid, while this was a little more than half of the news stories on television (56%, total number of news stories on television: 9). Only print (80%, total number of stories in print: 5) and television (13%, total number of stories in television: 8) gave attention to news on Covid-19 concerning social and legal information. Solely television (11%) spent attention to news on Covid-19 in relation to celebrity, arts, media and sports (total number of stories on television: 18).

In the French sample, the proportion of attention given to news on Covid-19 was lower than half for print (46%), internet (39%), radio (29%), Twitter (27%) and television (26%). Overall, 33% of the news stories focused on Covid-19, which was slightly less than in the Flemish context. When making a division for the different major news topics, the analysis shows that a third of the political and government news on print (29%, total number of print stories analysed: 7) and internet (31%, total number of internet stories analysed: 13) focused on Covid. An even more significant proportion of news on economy with print (67%, total number of print stories analysed: 15), television (67%, total number of television stories analysed: 3) and radio (50%, total number of radio stories analysed: 2) focused on this topic. When it comes to science and health news, all news on this topic on the internet (n=7) focused on Covid-19, while this was slightly less on Twitter (80%, total number of Twitter stories analysed: 7). All news reported on television on gender and related issues focused on Covid-19 (n=1).

NEWS SUBJECTS AND SOURCES

Overall presence of women and men in the news in as news subjects

The overall presence of women news subjects in Belgian news is the same in traditional media (26%) and digital media (26%). The overall presence of women in the news in Dutch-speaking print, radio and television media is 24% and on news websites 16%. The overall presence of women in the news in French print, radio and television media is 27% and in the news feed on the internet or Twitter 33%. Overall, the representation of women in the news is slightly higher in the French news sample than in the Dutch-speaking news sample.

When looking at the division of topics in which women are represented per medium, we see a couple of differences. Those are also illustrated in the table below. This table includes an overview of the total number of stories per topic analysed. In Belgian news, women are the majority of news subjects in news on gender and related issues. For most other news topics, women were underrepresented as news subjects, especially in stories on politics and government (19% in traditional media and 17% in digital media). Women were represented more in news on social and legal aspects and celebrity, arts, media and sports in digital media than in traditional media. Compared to traditional media, they were less represented in digital media in news on economy, science and health and crime and violence.

Table 1. Overall presence of female and male in Belgian news, per topic (in %)

Presence of female and male in news, per topic	Print, Radio, Television			Internet, Twitter		
	Female	Male		Female	Male	
	%	%	N	%	%	N
Politics and Government	19%	81%	153	17%	83%	52
Economy	37%	63%	38	25%	75%	4
Science and Health	28%	72%	74	22%	78%	9
Social and Legal	33%	67%	54	63%	38%	8
Crime and Violence	29%	71%	48	17%	83%	12
Gender and Related	71%	29%	7	100%	0%	1
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	21%	79%	56	35%	65%	26
Other	0%	100%	4	0%	0%	0

In the Dutch-speaking region of Belgium, most women news subjects are represented in science and health (27%), celebrity, arts and media, and sports (26%), and social and legal information (25%) in traditional news media. In digital news, this was also the case for science and health, as well as celebrity, arts and media, and sports. Politics and Government (only 14% women) is also male-dominated in digital news. The table below illustrates the percentages and total number of stories analysed per topic.

Table 2. Overall presence of female and male in Belgian Dutch-speaking news, per topic (in %)

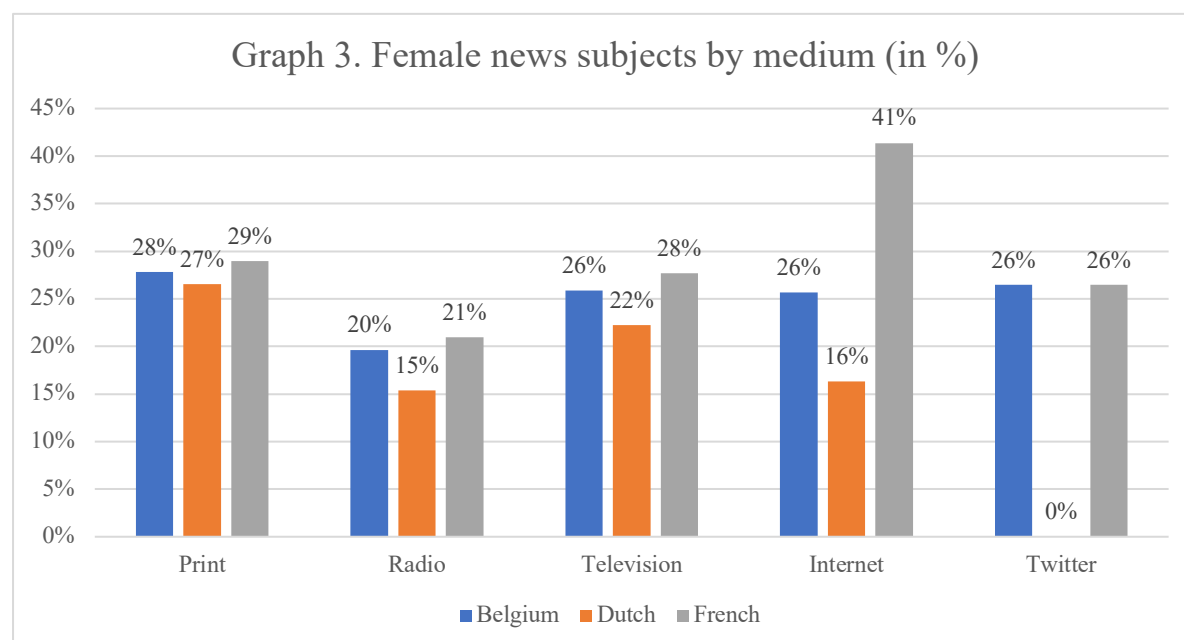
Presence of female and male in Dutch-speaking news, per topic	Print, Radio, Television			Internet, Twitter		
	Female	Male		Female	Male	
	%	%	N	%	%	N
Politics and Government	24%	76%	79	14%	86%	29
Economy	17%	83%	6	0%	100%	1
Science and Health	27%	73%	33	25%	75%	4
Social and Legal	25%	75%	20	0%	100%	1
Crime and Violence	0%	100%	4	0%	100%	6
Gender and Related	0%	0%	0	0%	0%	0
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	26%	74%	23	38%	63%	8
Other	0%	0%	0	0%	0%	0

In the French-speaking part of Belgium, in print, radio and television news, few women are represented as news subjects in news on politics (14%) and celebrity, arts, media and sports (18%) in traditional news media. In contrast, there is a large proportion of women news subjects in the news on gender and related issues (71%). When we look at the digital sphere, we see an overrepresentation of female news subjects in the news on gender and related issues (100%) and an underrepresentation of women reporting on politics and government (22%), economy (33%), crime and violence (33%) and celebrity, arts and media (33%). The table below illustrates the percentages and the total number of stories analysed per topic.

Table 3. Overall presence of female and male in Belgian French-speaking news, per topic (in %)

Presence of female and male in French-speaking news, per topic	Print, Radio, Television			Internet, Twitter		
	Female	Male		Female	Male	
	%	%	N	%	%	N
Politics and Government	14%	86%	74	22%	78%	23
Economy	41%	59%	32	33%	67%	3
Science and Health	29%	71%	41	20%	80%	5
Social and Legal	38%	62%	34	71%	29%	7
Crime and Violence	32%	68%	44	33%	67%	6
Gender and Related	71%	29%	7	100%	0%	1
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	18%	82%	33	33%	67%	18
Other	0%	100%	4	0%	0%	0

Presence by medium



The graph above gives an overview of the presence of female news subjects in the different news media in Belgium (overall) and in the Dutch-speaking and French-speaking parts of the country. In Belgian news media, women are still underrepresented as news subjects in all news media. They are least represented in radio news analysed (20%) and most represented in print

news (28%). For the analysed Dutch media, we see a similar trend, although women are underrepresented even more in the internet news (16%). For the French news sample, women are also least represented as news subjects in radio news (21%), and contrary to the Dutch-speaking news sample, they are much more represented in internet news (41%). In general, the French news media have a higher representation of female news subjects than the Dutch-speaking news media.

Scope of the news and representation of women news subjects

In the Belgian news media, female news subjects are primarily represented in sub-regional and regional news (30%, n=46) and least represented in foreign/international news (24%, n=109). The more significant representation of women in sub-regional and regional news was more pronounced in the Flemish news media, where they make up 50% of the news subjects (n=2). In Flanders, women were least represented in the national news (23%, n=126). The French news sample confirmed the strong presence of women in sub-regional and regional news (30%, n=44), and had the lowest representation of women in foreign/international news (22%, n=79).

Representation by occupation

Overall, in the Belgian sample, the occupation of female news sources was not stated in 36% of the news items. There was a clear gendered division in the occupations of news sources. This resembled a pattern in which women are covered less in occupations that are traditionally associated with high status and masculinity in the society, such as politician/member of parliament (20%), police, military, para-military or fire-officer (25%), academic expert, lecturer or teacher (9%), doctor, dentist, health specialist (14%), lawyer, judge or legal advocate (29%) and sports professions (6%). Women are even absent in science, technology, and engineering, trade, agricultural and religious professions. Women were more represented in professions typically associated with less status and femininity, such as celebrity and media figure (67%). They are also dominant in categories that are more associated with the personal than with the professional such as student, child, villager or pensioner. However, it was remarkable that there was a more balanced representation of men and women in occupations such as government employee, public servant and spokesperson (47% women), which are professions in which men are typically dominant.

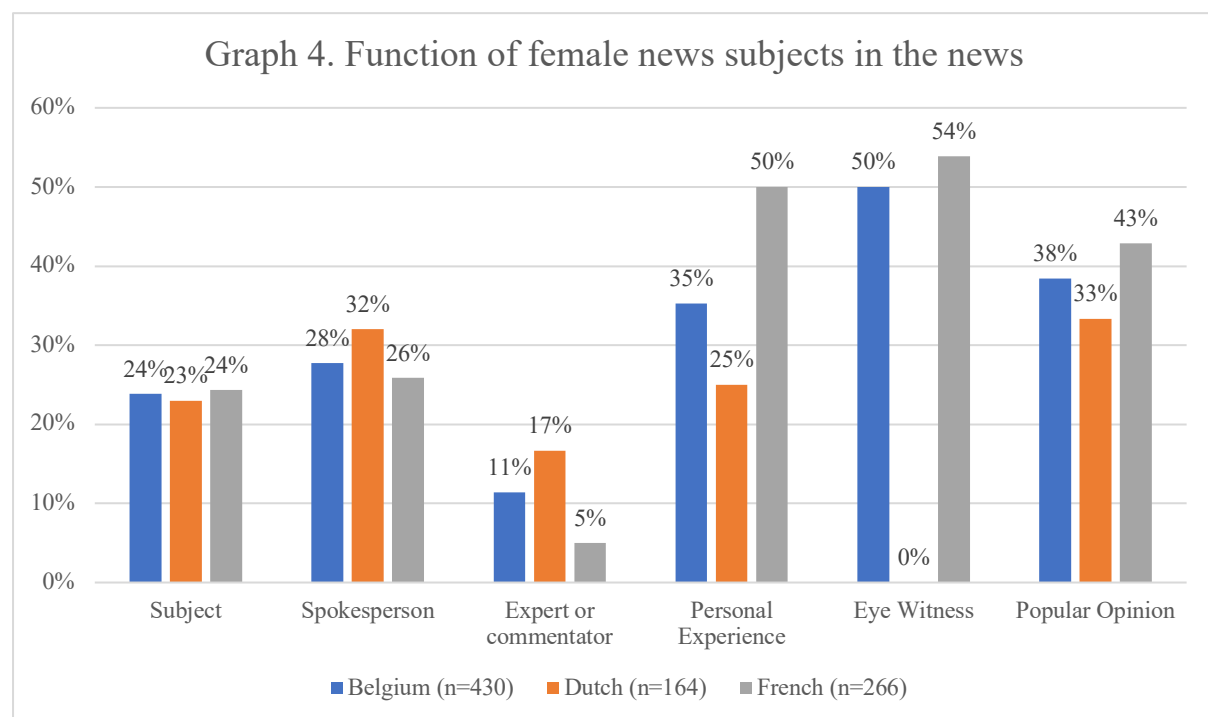
In the Flemish sample, overall, there was a similar gendered division of occupations. However, there were also some remarkable differences. Contrary to the Belgian sample, where the gender division was more balanced in the category of government employee, public servant, spokesperson, there was an overrepresentation of female news sources (71%) in the Flemish sample. We also found that women were absent in positions that are more associated with personal views and family roles such as homemaker, parent, child, villager, or pensioner, but this could be due to the overall low amount of news subjects that were represented in these occupations. When compared to the Belgian sample, in the Flemish news media, the percentage of cases in which the profession of women was not stated was even lower (15%).

In the French sample, it was remarkable that the cases in which the occupation of men and women was not stated were more balanced (48% for women, 52% for men). Contrary to the Flemish sample, women in the French news media were strongly underrepresented in the

category government employee, public servant, spokesperson (25%). They were also underrepresented in the same categories that are associated with high status in the society and masculinity as in the Flemish sample such as police, military, para-military, militia, fire officer (38%), medical professions (17%), law professions (30%) and business professions (8%). It was remarkable that they were completely absent in the category politician/member of parliament. This could suggest that the discussions about the formation of the federal government in the French region were dominated by male voices. In the French news sample, we also saw an overrepresentation of women in positions more associated with the personal than with the professional such as homemaker, parent, child, student, villager or retired person.

Functions of female and male news subjects in the stories

In the Belgian sample, women were mostly represented as eye witness (50%) in the news. They were also invited many times to talk about a personal experience (35%) or share a popular opinion (38%). However, they were less present as a spokesperson (28%), news subject (24%), or expert or commentator in the news (11%).



In the Flemish sample, women were not represented in the category of eyewitness. And there was a more equal division in terms of functions in the news that were personal versus more professional than in the overall Belgian sample. There was a similar representation in the category news subject (23%) and a higher representation in the category spokesperson (32%). Although they were still not represented much in the category of expert or commentator (17%), the percentage in this function was the highest when compared to the Belgian (11%) and French news sample (5%).

In the French sample, the underrepresentation of women in the category of expert or commentator was the most pronounced (only 5%). There was a more balanced division

between male and female news sources in the category personal experience (50%), eye witness (54%) and popular opinion (43%). The percentage of women who were the news subject was similar to the Flemish sample (24%).

Age of news subjects by sex

Print news

In the Belgian news sample, the age of male subjects was less mentioned in print media than the age of female subjects (71% not mentioned vs 29% not mentioned). Male subjects were overrepresented in the age groups 35-49 (74%) and 50-64 (100%). The gender division of age groups was more balanced in the categories 13-18 (50%) and 19-34 (50%).

Table 4. Age of print news subjects by sex in the Belgian sample (in %)

	Female	Male	
	%	%	N
Do not know	29%	71%	174
12 and under	0%	100%	2
13-18	50%	50%	2
19-34	50%	50%	2
35-49	26%	74%	19
50-64	0%	100%	12
65-79	0%	0%	0
80 years or more	0%	0%	0

In the Flemish news sample, the age of male news subjects was mentioned less in print media than the age of female news subjects (72% not mentioned vs 28%). Overall, the specific age was not mentioned in a large part of the news. There was only a mention of the age of one male news subject who was 19-34, and three male news subjects who were between 50-64.

Table 5. Age of print news subjects by sex in the Dutch-speaking sample (in %)

	Female	Male	
	%	%	N
Do not know	28%	72%	94
12 and under	0%	0%	0
13-18	0%	0%	0

19-34	0%	100%	1
35-49	0%	0%	0
50-64	0%	100%	3
65-79	0%	0%	0
80 years or more	0%	0%	0

In the French sample, in print media, the age of male news subjects was less mentioned than the age of female subjects (69% not mentioned vs 31%). Overall, women were - compared to men - more represented in the age group 19-34 (100%). The gender division is more balanced in the age group 13-18 (50% women vs 50% men). There is an overrepresentation of men in the age group 12 and under (100%), 35-49 (74%). None of the news subjects whose age was mentioned was older than 65 years.

Table 6. Age of news subjects by sex in the French-speaking sample (in %)

	Female	Male	
	%	%	N
Do not know	31%	69%	80
12 and under	0%	100%	2
13-18	50%	50%	2
19-34	100%	0%	1
35-49	26%	74%	19
50-64	0%	100%	9
65-79	0%	0%	0
80 years or more	0%	0%	0

Television news

In Belgian television, there is a trend in which women are strongly underrepresented in higher age categories such as 50-64 (16%) and 65-79 (8%). They were also underrepresented in the age group 19-34 (26%) and 35-49 (29%).

Table 7. Age of TV news subjects by sex in the Belgian sample (in %)

	Female	Male	
	%	%	N
Do not know	56%	44%	9
12 and under	100%	0%	2
13-18	100%	0%	2

19-34	26%	74%	31
35-49	29%	71%	59
50-64	16%	84%	50
65-79	8%	92%	12
80 years or more	0%	100%	1

In the Flemish television media, men were more represented in the age category 50-64 (85%), 65-79 (83%), 35-49 (79%) and 19-34 (67%). As age goes up, the share of women represented decreases.

Table 8. Age of TV news subjects by sex in the Dutch-speaking sample (in %)

	Female	Male	
	%	%	N
Do not know	0%	0%	0
12 and under	0%	0%	0
13-18	0%	0%	0
19-34	33%	67%	15
35-49	21%	79%	19
50-64	15%	85%	13
65-79	17%	83%	6
80 years or more	0%	100%	1

In the French television news media, we found a similar trend in which the percentage of women decreases as age goes up. There was an overrepresentation of men in the age groups 19-34 (81%), 35-49 (68%), 50-64 (84%) and 65-79 (100%).

Table 9. Age of TV news subjects by sex in the French-speaking sample (in %)

	Female	Male	
	%	%	N
Do not know	56%	44%	9
12 and under	100%	0%	2
13-18	100%	0%	2
19-34	19%	81%	16
35-49	33%	68%	40

50-64	16%	84%	37
65-79	0%	100%	6
80 years or more	0%	0%	0

Portrayal as victims by sex

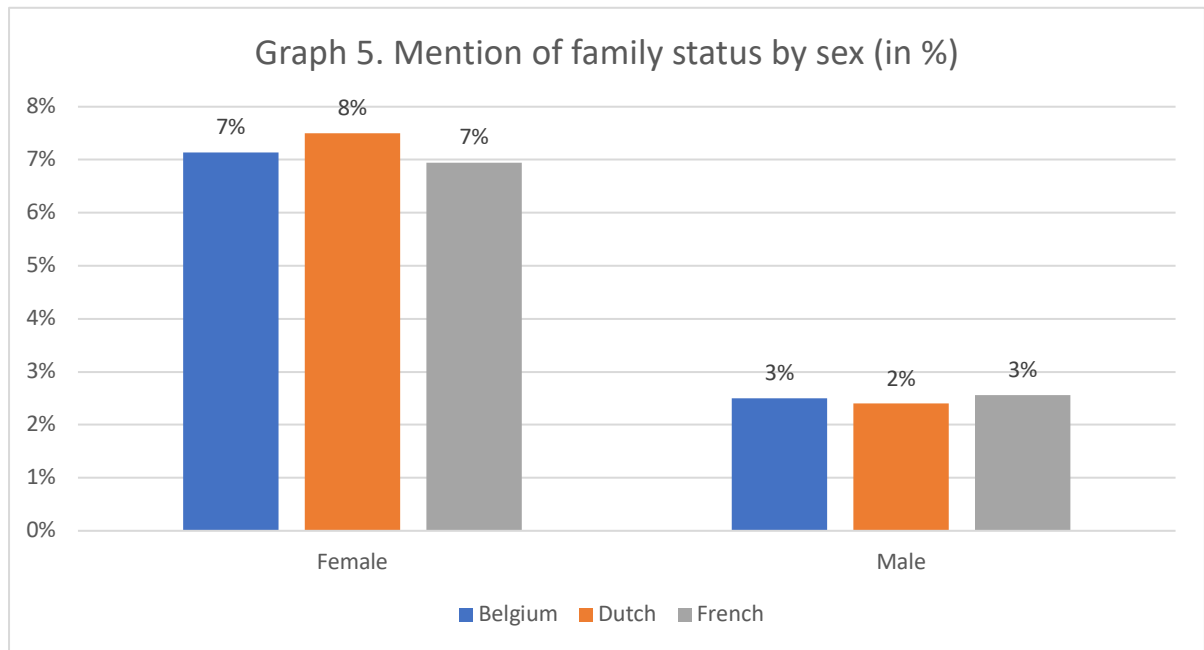
When women were portrayed as victims in the Belgian news, they were mostly represented as victims of non-domestic sexual violence (20%, n=3), non-domestic crime (20%, n=3), war, terrorism, state violence (13%, n=2) or discrimination based on identity markers such as age, gender, race (7%, n=1). When men were portrayed as victims in the news, they were mostly portrayed as victims of an accident, natural disaster, poverty (17%, n=2), domestic violence, rape or murder (17%, n=2) and war, terrorism, vigilantism, or state violence (8%, n=1) or non-domestic crime (8%, n=1).

In the Flemish sample, all women (n=3) and men (n=6) who were represented as victim in the news, were portrayed as victims of the category “other”.

In the French news sample, women were – similar to the overall Belgian sample – mostly represented as victims of domestic violence (8%, n=1), victims of an accident, natural disaster, poverty (8%, n=1), non-domestic sexual violence (25%, n=3) and other non-domestic violence (25%, n=3) and discrimination based on identity markers (8%, n=1). Men were primarily represented as victims of accidents, natural disasters or poverty (33%, n=2), domestic violence (33%, n=2) and other non-domestic violence (17%, n=1). They were not represented as victims of discrimination based on identity markers. Men (n=1) and women (n=2) were equally frequent portrayed as victims of war and terrorism (17%). It is remarkable that in this sample, men are represented more as victims of non-domestic violence than women.

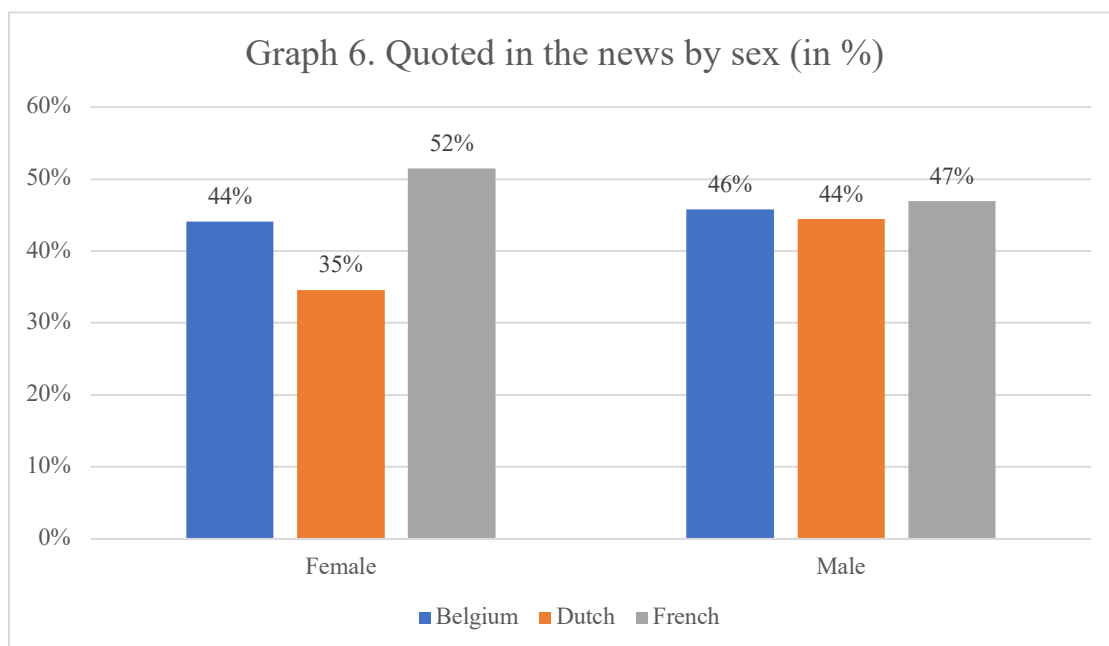
Family status identified by sex

In the Belgian media, the family status was more mentioned for female news subjects (7%) than for male news subjects (3%). This difference was slightly more pronounced in the Flemish sample (8% for women and 2% for men). The French sample showed a similar division to the overall Belgian sample (7% mentioned for women versus 3% mentioned for men).



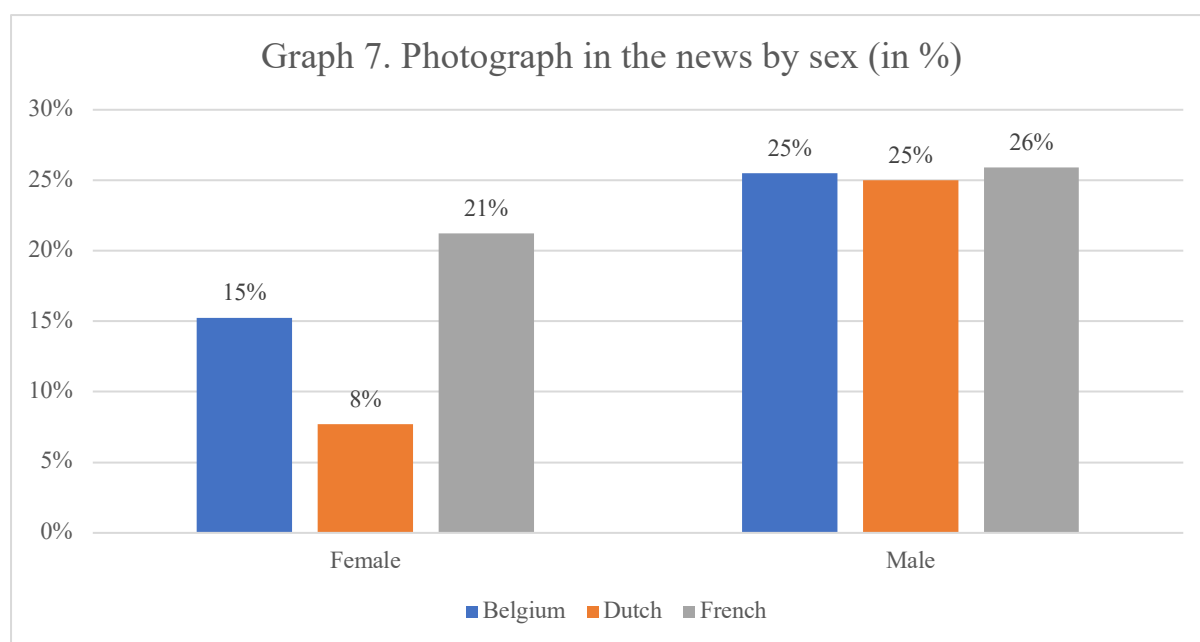
Quoted in the news by sex

The Belgian sample had quite a balanced division in the percentages of women and men quoted in the news. Women were quoted slightly less (44%) than men (46%). In the Flemish sample, this balance disappeared. In this sample, women were quoted in 35% of the cases compared to men who were quoted in 44% of the cases. The French sample showed a more equal distribution. In this sample, women were even quoted more (52%) than men (47%).



Photographed in the news by sex

In the Belgian news, men (25%) appeared more in the news photos than women (15%). In the Flemish media, this discrepancy was even more pronounced with men being represented much more in pictures (25%) than women (8%). In the French news media, there was a more equal percentage of men (26%) and women (21%) being represented in the photographs in the news.



JOURNALISTS AND REPORTERS

The GMMP survey measured the involvement of male or female journalists in all the news stories coded. For Belgium, among the journalists (n=258) who took part in the news stories, as reporter, presenter or announcer, 41% are women, while 59% are men. If only presenters are considered, women are 44% and men 56%. These figures do not measure the percentage of female and male journalists in the newsrooms, but they do give an idea of their presence in the 29 September news coverage. This day, women were more involved in Flanders (46.5%; n=101) than in French-speaking Belgium (37%; n=157).

In addition, the GMMP survey allows us to distinguish the results by media format: more than half (58%) of the journalists who participated in radio news were women (n=59). This figure drops to 37% for print media (n=41) and 35% for television (n=158).

Table 10. Female reporters, announcers and presenters in the Belgian, French-speaking, Dutch-speaking and European news reports samples by media (in %)

Female reporters, announcers and presenters in the news reports sample	GMMP Belgium 2020			GMMP Europe 2020
	Total	French-speaking	Dutch-speaking	Total
	41 % (n=258)	37 % (n=157)	46,5 % (n=101)	47 % (n=8 603)
Print	37 % (n=41)	34 % (n=29)	42 % (n=12)	40 % (n=2 010)
Radio	58 % (n=59)	54 % (n=48)	73 % (n=11)	48 % (n=2 895)
Television	35 % (n=158)	28 % (n=80)	44 % (n=78)	50 % (n=3 698)

It is interesting to note that the percentage of women among journalists involved in news stories is lower in Belgium compared to the European average of 47% (n=8 603). This difference can be linked to the feminisation rate of the profession, which is very low in Belgium compared to other countries: according to the figures of the Association of Professional Journalists (AJP) from May 2020, only one third (33.4%) of professional journalists or trainees are women. Several studies show a higher feminisation rate in many other European countries (Leteinturier, 2014; Franks, 2013; Damian-Gaillard, Frisque and Saïtta, 2010). Research on Belgian women journalists shows strong employment and work inequalities between male and female journalists in terms of horizontal and vertical segregation, as well as organisational violence (De Vuyst & Raeymaeckers, 2019; Le Cam, Libert and Ménalque, 2021).

As mentioned earlier, French-speaking journalists tend to use more male than female sources in comparison to their Flemish colleagues. The sex of the reporter does not significantly change this trend, but women journalists have a slight tendency to interview more women than men: 5% more in French-speaking news and 2% in Flemish news.

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

Only 1% of all the journalistic productions encoded (n=200) refer to any gender equality issue, legislation, politics. The number of stories related to this issue (n=2) is therefore very low. These two productions come from the French-speaking media (2% of the 117 analysed productions). None of the 83 Dutch-language productions analysed addressed this issue. For Europe as a whole, the proportion is 4%. One of these two productions is the work of a female journalist. This means that for the second relevant production, the author was not identifiable.

The stories (n=200) in which women are the core of the information represent 4% of the total corpus, i.e. eight stories. These eight productions are related to science and health, society and law, crime and violence, gender and related and the category 'celebrity, arts, media and sports'. These productions tend to be related to a wide range of topics, except politics and economics.

Of the two stories dealing with the major topic of gender and related, both have women as their main subject.

Of these eight productions, two are from Dutch-speaking media (out of a total of 83) and six are from French-speaking sources (out of a total of 117). For Europe as a whole (n=6,765 stories), the proportion is 3%, only slightly higher than that observed for the Belgian corpus. For Belgium, stories with women as the main subject represented 8% of the 239 productions analysed in 2015.

Of the two encoded stories that deal with gender equality and inequality issues, one is related to the topic of climate change and global warming; the other to education, childcare, nursery, university, literacy.

Of the 200 analysed stories, four (2%) show gender stereotypes. They are related to political or social topics. Two of these productions come from Dutch-speaking media (out of a total of 83), the two others come from French-speaking media (out of a total of 117). For Europe as a whole (6,765 productions), the proportion is the same as in the Belgian corpus: 2%. In 2015, 5% of the analysed stories showed gender stereotypes. In 2010, none of the productions analysed clearly contained gender stereotypes.

FOCUS ON COVID-19 NEWS

Covid stories: news reporters by sex

In the Belgian news, there was an overall representation of 45% female news reporters in news on Covid. Women were mostly represented in Covid-19 news on politics and government (64%) and economy (51%). They were slightly less represented in Covid-19 news on science and health (44%), social and legal info (45%) and celebrity, arts and media, and sports (29%).

Table 11. Covid-19 stories: reporters by sex and by topic in the Belgian sample (in %)

	Female		Male	
	%	N	%	N
Politics and Government	64%	14	36%	8
Economy	51%	23	49%	22
Science and Health	44%	30	56%	38
Social and Legal	45%	10	55%	12
Crime and Violence	0%	0	0%	0
Gender and Related	0%	0	100%	4
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	29%	4	71%	10
Other	25%	2	75%	6

In the Flemish news on Covid-19, there was a representation of 53% of female news reporters. There was an overrepresentation of female news reporters in the news on Covid-19 related to Politics and government (100%), economy (57%) and science and health (55%). Women were not represented in the news on Covid-19 related to sports.

Table 12. Covid-19 stories: reporters by sex and by topic in the Dutch-speaking sample (in %)

	Female		Male	
	%	N	%	N
Politics and Government	100%	5	0%	0
Economy	57%	4	43%	3
Science and Health	55%	17	45%	14
Social and Legal	33%	1	67%	2
Crime and Violence	0%	0	0%	0
Gender and Related	0%	0	0%	0
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	0%	0	100%	5
Other	0%	0	0%	0

In the French news, there was a representation of 42% women in news reporters about Covid. This was lower than in the Flemish sample (53%). Contrary to the Flemish sample, there was a more equal division of women (53%) and men (47%) in the news on politics and government, economy (50%-50%), social and legal news (47% women and 53% men) and celebrity, arts, media and sports (44% women vs 56% men). Men were overrepresented as reporters in the news about Covid related to Gender and related issues (100%) and science and health (65%).

Table 13. Covid-19 stories: reporters by sex and by topic in the French-speaking sample (in %)

	Female		Male	
	%	N	%	N
Politics and Government	53%	9	47%	8
Economy	50%	19	50%	19
Science and Health	35%	13	65%	24
Social and Legal	47%	9	53%	10
Crime and Violence	0%	0	0%	0

Gender and Related	0%	0	100%	4
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	44%	4	56%	5
Other	25%	2	75%	6

Covid news stories: gender stereotypes by major topic

In the Belgian sample, only 4% of the news stories on Covid-19 (n=107) challenged gender stereotypes. All of those were found in news on social and legal information (17%), celebrity, arts and media and sports (14%) and science and health (2%).

Table 14. News stories about the Covid-19 pandemic that challenged gender stereotypes by major topic in the Belgian sample (in %)

	Stories that challenged gender stereotypes	Stories that did not challenge gender stereotypes	
	%	%	N
Politics and Government	0%	100%	15
Economy	0%	100%	22
Science and Health	2%	98%	48
Social and Legal	17%	83%	12
Crime and Violence	0%	0%	0
Gender and Related	0%	100%	1
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	14%	86%	7
Other	0%	100%	2

In the Flemish sample, in the news about Covid-19 (n=36), gender stereotypes were challenged in only 3% of the news. All of these cases were situated in the news on social and legal information (20%).

In the French sample, the percentage of news on Covid-19 (n=71) that challenged gender stereotypes was slightly higher than in the Flemish sample (4%). Most of those stories were found in celebrity, arts and media news (20%), followed by social and legal news (14%) and science and health (4%).

Covid news stories: highlight gender inequality by major topic

In the Belgian sample, in the news about Covid, only 2% of the news stories on Covid-19 (n=107) highlighted gender inequality. All of these cases were situated in the news on social and legal info (17%) (total number of stories analysed in this topic: 12).

In the Flemish sample, none of the news stories on Covid (n=36) highlighted gender inequality. In the French news sample this was a higher percentage (3%) of the news stories on Covid-19 (n=71). And all of those stories were social and legal news (29%) (total number of stories analysed for this topic: 7).

DIGITAL NEWS ON WEBSITES AND TWITTER

Both in the French-speaking and in the Flemish part of Belgium, only a very small number of articles refers to gender equality or Human rights policies (2 out of 54 articles, or 4% of the sample). There is quite a difference between the two communities: the two articles were published in the French-speaking part of the country and none in Flanders.

Men are still much more represented online

Whether on news websites or on Twitter, females represent 25% of the population represented, meaning that males represent 75% of the subjects of news. On news websites, there are 19 females and 58 males represented. In both linguistic communities, the most represented occupation category for females and males is “politician/MP” which represent almost half of the subjects. In this category, there are 11 women out of a population of 37 people, which is to say 30% female politicians.

On Twitter, there are 9 females and 25 males represented and the most important occupation categories are “sportsperson” (n=10) and “politician/MP” (n=7) in which there are only males. Females are mostly represented as “activists/civil society” (n=3), “celebrities/artists” (n=3) and “students” (n=2). There are no data for the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium for Twitter, which means that the results only apply to the French-speaking community.

The function of news subjects on all news websites is in majority “subject” (females: n=16 ; males: n=43). The second most represented function is “expert or commentator” with an important discrepancy between males (n=14) and females (n=2).

Table 15. Functions of news subjects by sex for Belgian media (news websites and Twitter)

Functions of news subjects	News websites		Twitter	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
	N	N	N	N
Do not know	0	0	0	1
Subject	16	43	9	23
Spokesperson	1	1	0	1
Expert or commentator	2	14	0	0
Personal Experience	0	0	0	0

Eye Witness	0	0	0	0
Popular Opinion	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0
Total	19	58	9	25

The number of women and men represented as “subjects” on news websites in the French community is more balanced (11 females and 17 males) than in the Dutch-speaking part (8 females and 41 males). Regarding the differences between the two Belgian communities, in the French-speaking part, the main function category is “subject”, which is composed of 36% women (8/22), and 64% men (14/22). There are also 3 female and 2 male “experts”, and 1 female “spokesperson”. In the Dutch-speaking part, the main function category is also “subject”, which is composed of 22% women (8/37) and 78% men (29/37). All women belong to this category, whilst men have more diverse functions as “experts” (11) and “spokesperson” (1).

Table 16. Functions of news subjects by sex in French-speaking and Dutch-speaking media

Functions of news subjects	French-speaking media		Dutch-speaking media	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
	N	N	N	N
Subject	8	14	8	29
Spokesperson	1	0	0	1
Expert or commentator	2	3	0	11
Personal Experience	0	0	0	0
Eye Witness	0	0	0	0
Popular Opinion	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0
Total	11	17	8	41

On Twitter, for the French-speaking part only, women and men are almost only represented as subjects of the tweets (females = 9; males = 23). One man is represented with the function of spokesperson.

News subjects identified by family status

First, it appears important to stress that the number of females (n=18) is much lower than the number of males (n=56) of the sample. In this population, we can see that 28% of women (5/18) and only 16% of males (9/47) are identified by their family status.

Table 17. News subjects, by sex, who are identified by family status on news websites in Belgian media, French-speaking media and Dutch-speaking media

	Belgian media				French-speaking media				Dutch-speaking media			
	Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	28%	5	16%	9	18%	2	20%	3	43%	3	15%	6
No	72%	13	84%	47	82%	9	80%	12	57%	4	85%	35
Total	100%	18	100%	56	100%	11	100%	15	100%	7	100%	41

When it comes to analysing the two linguistic communities, the data retrieved from the French-speaking part of Belgium are easier to compare given that the sample is more balanced (11 females and 15 males). When it comes to being identified by family status, the percentage is around 20% with numbers being quite similar for women (n=2) and men (n=3).

The distribution between women and men is much more unequal in the data retrieved from the Flemish part of Belgium, with a sample made up of 41 males and 7 females. In this population, we can see that 43% of women (3/7) and only 15 % of men (6/41) are identified by their family status. It indicates that men tend to be much less identified by their family status than women in Flemish media. Nonetheless, we think that these numbers must be analysed with caution owing to the discrepancy between females and males' total representation.

Sex of the subject of the article according to the sex of the reporter

The data indicate that when the journalist is a woman, 17% of her news subjects are females and 87% are males. When the journalist is a man, 12% of his news subjects are females and 88 % are males. Hence, we can conclude that males are more often represented as a subject by both women and men.

When comparing the two linguistic communities, we can see that there are globally more men represented in the Flemish media than in the French ones. In the French-speaking part of Belgium, the distribution between women and men is the following: the subject of the article is a woman in 40% of the cases when the reporter is a woman; and in 33% of the cases when the reporter is a man. In Flemish online news websites, the distribution is much more unequal: the subject of the article is a woman in only around 10% of the cases, regardless of the sex of the reporter.

People represented in online media tend to be mature men

Globally, people in the news tend to be older than 35 years old (53% of the identified population of the sample), with age categories under this limit much less represented in the

news for both men and women. The main age categories are 35-49 (n = 20) and 50-64 (n = 14). In the first age range, there are 5 women and 15 men; in the second one, there are 6 women and 8 men. The last age range, which is more than 65 years old, is also quite well represented with a number of 10 people in total, and an unequal distribution of 1 woman and 9 men.

These figures show that there are more men than women in each main category, and that it is especially true for the category 65+ years, where the unbalance is particularly obvious.

Men are globally more quoted than women, but it is worse for Flemish media

On Belgian news websites, the share of women being directly quoted in the articles is much less than that of men: out of 40 people being quoted, there are only 11 women for 29 men, which represents less than 30% of women. Once again, there are fewer women in the Flemish media (7 females out of a population of 48) and even fewer are being quoted directly (2 females out of a population of 19). In the French-speaking community, the number of men (n=16) and women (n=12) is more similar, and the number of women quoted directly (n=9) is much more equal to the one for men (n=12).

Table 18. News subjects who are directly quoted, by sex, for French-speaking media and Dutch-speaking media

News subjects who are directly quoted	French-speaking media				Dutch-speaking media			
	Female		Male		Female		Male	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	29%	2	41%	17	75%	9	75%	12
No	71%	5	59%	24	25%	3	25%	4
Total	100%	7	100%	41	100%	12	100%	16

Hence, there is quite a discrepancy between the two linguistic communities: for the French-speaking part of the country, the ratio of women/men being directly quoted is 43%/57%; for the Dutch-speaking part of the country, it is 10%/90%. For the French-speaking community, the ratios not quoted/quoted are the same for women and men with a distribution of 25%/75%. For Flanders, these ratios are a bit different, with a distribution of 29%/71% for women and of 41%/59% for men.

Even if the figures are quite difficult to compare given the disparity of the samples of the two communities (28 for French-speakers and 49 for Dutch-speakers), we can observe that males are more represented news websites (57 males/19 women), and that they are more quoted directly than women (29 males/11 females), leading to a much higher importance of men in Belgian online media.

And when considering Belgium, 24% (13/54) of the articles on news websites take women as a central focus. The proportion is once again pretty unequal between the French-speaking part - where there are 13/31 or 42% of articles with women as a central focus – and Flanders – where there is no article out of 23 coded taking women as a central focus.

CASE STUDIES

EXAMPLES OF STORY TYPES IN FLANDERS

1) Het Laatste Nieuws : A story that conveys blatant stereotypes

Headline: 'Into the night, looking for billions' (De nacht in, op zoek naar miljarden')

Sub-headline: 'First the pennies, then the posts' ('Eerst de centen, dan de postjes').

Photo: Two male politicians getting out of a car while preparing for the formation of the government

Photo caption: Paul Magnette (links) en Alexander De Croo (rechts) gisteravond aan het paleis. Helemaal synchroon, maar zonder akkoord op zak.

**DE NACHT IN,
OP ZOEK NAAR
MILJARDEN**

«Zo spoedig mogelijk» moeten formateurs Paul Magnette (PS) en Alexander De Croo (Open Vld) opnieuw naar het paleis. Maar de Vivaldi-onderhandelaars moeten eerst de hakbijl zetten in hun verlanglijstjes. Die hadden een gezamenlijk kostenplaatje van zo'n 11 miljard — onbetaalbaar, dus. **• FLEUR MEES •**

**FORMATEURS
KRIJGEN
EXTRA TIJD
VAN KONING**

Voor de tweede keer op rij stond er voor de Vivaldi-onderhandelaars een nachtje doorwerken op de planning. Pas 's avonds haalden de partijvoorzitters de schaar boven om te snoeien in het verlanglijstje 'nieuw beleid' van de zeven partijen. Aan alle voorstellen samen hangt een prijskaartje van 11 miljard euro. Niet haalbaar, zeker gezien er op federaal niveau nu al een gat van 33 miljard euro in de begroting zit. Het tekort zou dus richting «maximaal 4 miljard euro» mogen gaan — dixit de liberalen. Voor andere partijen mag dat iets meer zijn. Ter illustratie: het minimumpensioen van 1.500 euro alleen al kost 2 à 3 miljard euro, afhankelijk of het bruto of netto wordt. Die keuze kan dan weer bepalen hoeveel geld er nog overblijft om bijvoorbeeld te investeren in justitie, politie of steunmaatregelen voor gezinnen en ondernemers. Pas als de begroting enigszins verteerbaar is voor alle zeven Vivaldi-partijen, kan de jacht op de ministerportefeuilles geopend worden. Ondertussen nadert de officiële deadline van 1 oktober met rasse schreden. De onderhandelaars beginnen eraan te twijfelen of ze donderdag kunnen halen. «Het hangt allemaal aan een zeer dun draadje. Een akkoord lukt hopelijk wel, maar een regeerverklaring in het parlement wordt heel krap», zegt iemand aan tafel. Als er overmorgen géén nieuwe ploeg klaarstaat om de fakkel over te nemen, zal premier Sophie Wilmès (MR) hoogstwaarschijnlijk haar ontslag indienen. De regeringsonderhandelaars zullen dan ongetwijfeld (een deel van) hun plannen uit de doeken doen. **2 & 3**

**PEPERDUUR
WENSENLIJSTJE
MOET NOG
FEL INGEKORT**

BEGROTINGSEXPERT WIM MOESEN: «NIET TE GUL, JONGENS»

Paul Magnette (links) en Alexander De Croo, gisteravond aan het paleis. Helemaal synchroon, maar zonder akkoord op zak.

This new article has two headlines: 'Into the night, looking for billions' (De nacht in, op zoek naar miljarden') and 'First the pennies, then the posts' ('Eerst de centen, dan de postjes'). It was

published in the newspaper Het Laatste Nieuws. The topic can be categorised under 'other domestic politics, government etc.'. The news story is accompanied by two large pictures that depict male politicians. The article is spread out on two different pages and the pictures take up the majority of the space. The news story is about the mandators who are under pressure to form a Belgian government. The Vivaldi-mandators face a difficult task to achieve a coalition agreement between seven different Belgian parties. In the meantime, there is intense speculation in the corridors about which politicians will become Secretaries of State. The article is an example of a blatant stereotype. Only men are represented in leader-roles. The article mentions that Secretary of State Geens of the CD&V wants to go for 'renewal and feminisation'. This statement by Geens subtly refers to the fact that political positions are mainly held by men.

In addition, the photo caption states that the two male politicians are entirely in sync in terms of clothing: 'Paul Magnette (left) and Alexander De Croo, last night at the palace. Totally in sync, but without an agreement in their pockets' ('Paul Magnette (links) en Alexander De Croo, gisteravond aan het paleis. Helemaal synchroon, maar zonder akkoord op zak'). The images support the blatant stereotypical representation as we can see that it depicts male politicians. There were only five names of female politicians mentioned. No female politicians were depicted in the news article. They were barely mentioned and were not visible.

However, the news story also contains elements that can be seen as an example of gender aware reporting, because it challenges gender stereotypes (4A). The news article contains a subtitle 'in search of a woman' ('op zoek naar een vrouw'), and challenges the stereotypical image of male politicians. With this subtitle, the journalist implies a need for women in the Belgian government because they are also capable of being part of the government.

2) VRT (Television news): A story that conveys more subtle stereotypes

The item of the television news that was selected can be categorised under 'other domestic politics, government etc.'. The news story was broadcasted by the public service broadcaster VRT in the evening news (19h Het Journaal). The news story focuses on the federal government reformation. Government negotiators must reach an agreement to form a new federal government together. The two mandators have to discuss various issues with seven party chairpersons. The budget represents the biggest stumbling block in finding an agreement. This news item is an example of a **subtle stereotype** because it depicts only men in public roles such as mandators.

The news story makes it appear that it is natural for men to hold public roles. The news reporter interviews only male politicians who tell us how the federal government negotiations are going. The news item reinforces the stereotypical image of women in non-public functions because it does not portray female politicians in the news story. Belgian female politicians were absent in the news story about political decision making. It is presented as one of the main items of the news broadcast. The topic of the news item, the visual imagery, and the fact that female politicians are invisible makes this news item an example of subtle stereotyping.

3) VRT (Radio news) : A story that is gender blind, and therefore a missed opportunity

The item of the radio news that was selected focused on the theme of economic crisis due to the coronavirus. The VRT news story tells us that Belgians are spending 8% less money in July and August compared to last year. The results were obtained through an analysis of the bank ING. Belgians will save more money because they are afraid of losing their jobs and are more worried about the future. Therefore our economy will recover slowly. The radio news broadcast is an example of **missed opportunity/gender-blind**. There is a hidden assumption that the group 'Belgians' refers to male Belgians. The radio news broadcast is about the saving behaviour of Belgians in general and the impact of the economic crisis on Belgians. In the radio news story, Belgians are seen as a homogeneous group, while there are significant gender differences within this group. In this way, the news piece highlights only one particular perspective on this news topic.

Due to the lack of a gender perspective, the news story lacks an interesting angle: how corona affects women more than men. There exist many news articles showing us that the corona crisis has a more significant impact on women, for example, the majority of women have to combine their work at home with caring for their children or are more victim to partner violence. In this way, the news story remains superficial and fails to recognise the gender dimensions of the economic crisis caused by the corona pandemic. They only refer to 'Belgians' but do not describe how men and women experience the financial crisis differently. We can also link this to the concept of intersectionality. Belgians do not only experience the corona crisis differently based on their gender but also based on their ethnicity, social class, nationality, etc. There are many different social identities that can influence the corona impact on an individual. The news story would have been richer if it paid more attention to the implications for different groups like disabled Belgian people. Therefore there is a lack of diversity balance in the sources of this news story.

4) HLN.be : A story that challenges stereotypes

Online: HLN.be Donald Trump: Een hoop gesnuif, "Ik zou je in de gevangenis gooien" en "Wat een akelige vrouw": zo verliepen de debatten tussen Trump en Clinton vier jaar geleden



Description and analysis

The article ‘HLN Donald Trump: A lot of snorting, "I'd throw you in jail"(Een hoop gesnuif, “Ik zou je in de gevangenis gooien”) and “What a nasty woman”: this is how the debates went between Trump and Clinton four years ago’ (Wat een akelige vrouw”: zo verliepen de debatten tussen Trump en Clinton vier jaar geleden’) was published on the internet news website HLN.be. The news story is an example of **gender-aware** reporting because it gives us a fair and critical picture of what was said and done during the presidential debate. The topic of this news article can be categorised as ‘women politicians, women electoral candidates...’.

The article reflects on the 2016 presidential debates between Trump and Clinton. It focuses mainly on how Donald Trump handles the presidential debate and the statements he made towards his opponent Hillary Clinton. The journalist informs the reader that four years ago, Clinton was declared the better candidate in the three debates, but despite this Trump won the presidential election. In general, female politicians are featured less in news reports on political topics. They are less often talked about and more often depicted in issues stereotypically associated with femininity. In this news article, this is not the case. The news article **challenges gender stereotypes (4A)** because it represents Clinton as a strong and capable presidential candidate. It is stressed that she remained calm during the debate while Trump often interrupted and provoked her. Both presidential candidates appear equally frequent in the article on all three debate topics: taxes, abortion and prisons. For each subject, the article depicts a statement both by Donald Trump and by Hillary Clinton. Both presidential candidates were given equal space in the news article to make their point across.

In addition, the article highlights that Trump believes that Clinton has no stamina to become president. The reaction of Clinton to this statement is also mentioned in the news article. Throughout her political career, Clinton is often portrayed negatively in the news. News

articles often wrote in a gender-stereotypical way and had a sexist undertone. The news media often focused too much on her personality and appearance compared to male presidential candidates. The news media highlighted her political views less but wrote more about her personal life and treated her more informally, for example during the 2008 election campaign, Clinton was often called by her first name by the news media while this was not the case with her opponent Barack Obama. In this news article, only the political opinions of Clinton were highlighted. The news article is written objectively and reflects all statements and sides of the presidential debate in a respectful way. It is reported correctly and does not harm anyone.

EXAMPLES OF STORY TYPES IN FRANCOPHONE BELGIUM

1) RTBF-Television: an example of gender awareness

The item of the television news focuses on the decision of Philippe Close, Mayor of Brussels, to ban sex work in the City of Brussels in order to slow down the spread of the coronavirus. The journalist presenter gives a very factual introduction. Moreover, the subject comes second in the RTBF newscast. Then, the journalist who made the news story, gives the floor to a sex worker to begin her story. She is followed by a representative of a sex workers' defence association and a brothel owner. Another speaker from an association for sex workers is also interviewed and gives her opinion on this decision, which she considers "ideological". Overall, the journalist dealt with the subject in an analytical way by addressing the human and social aspect of the problem rather than the moral aspect. On a generally stereotypical topic such as sex work, the report tends to implicitly challenge potential stereotypes rather than convey them. Only one member of the Alhambra neighbourhood committee is questioned and mentions the fact that "the girls are often homeless, drug addicts". This was very brief, lasting only a few seconds compared to the other interviews.

As for the treatment of the images, it is factual without any real emphasis on the activity of the sex workers. The few images that are used show the reality seen by all. Also, the sex worker interviewed at the beginning of the report appears in a completely "normal" setting. It should also be noted that her face does not appear on the screen, only part of her body is visible (hands). Some images in the report subtly show sex workers (few in number). When this is the case, they are framed in such a way that only a small part of their body or face is visible, the latter always being blurred.

Finally, the subject ends with an interview with the second representative of an association for sex workers who asks the question of the future of sex workers. The journalist concludes that the mayor's decision can be challenged in court by those who contest it. By concluding in this way, he emphasises the potential challenge to this decision. It should also be noted that the journalist did not interview the Mayor, an alderman or any other representative of the City. He could have done so, or, if he tried to obtain an interview with the Mayor, he could have mentioned it, as is customary, by saying: "*Mr Close, contacted by us, did not wish to react on this subject*". Finally, it should be noted that the journalist devoted most of his report to sex workers and associations for the defence of sex workers, and a small part of the report to a member of the neighbourhood committee. This choice, made by the journalist, reinforces the observation made above regarding the fact that this report implicitly contests stereotypes.

2) LeVif.be : an example of gender awareness in the text but stereotypical photography

The article "Violence against women: does the judge lack instruction?" is a *carte blanche* (opinion column) written by Béa Ercolini, the editor-in-chief of Elle Belgique. The author attacks the comments made by Anne Gruwez, an examining magistrate, about the inclusion of femicide in the Belgian penal code. The journalist criticised her for denying the gender-specific nature of domestic violence, of which women are the vast majority of victims. She then insisted on the need to rely on figures that show a certain gendered reality of this issue.



The article is illustrated with a photo that shows a man in the foreground with his back to the camera, clenching his fist and appearing to be moving towards a woman in the background on the left, cowering on the ground and covering her head with her arms. While the text of the article points to a gendered problem in violence against women, the image shows a stereotypical representation of women as victims. These visual representations and the use of words in the media coverage of violence against women have been the subject of recommendations not only by the Association of Professional Journalists, but also since June 2021 by the Council for Journalistic Ethics (Conseil de déontologie journalistique). The choice of photographs showing women in fearful, humiliating or degrading postures contributes to the perpetuation of social representations of women as victims and does not allow the responsibility of their aggressors to be highlighted.

3) RTBF radio: Journal Parlé de *La première* – RTBF (8h) : an example of gender awareness

Text of the news item (*La Première* – RTBF) :

Presenter: "And in tennis, Alison Van Uytvanck is playing her first round at Roland Garros. At 11 AM, she will face Rebecca Peterson from Sweden. "

The sports news is presented from a particular angle: only women are mentioned, whereas Radio Contact's newscast only mentions men: Nadal, Gerasimov, Medvedev, Monfils, Thiem. The particular perspective adopted by RTBF can be explained in two ways: either the Belgian public service radio station chose to mention only women; or Alison Van Uytvanck's Belgian nationality explains the particular angle adopted.

5) L'Avenir: an example of blatant stereotype

Preliminary note: in the graphic layout of L'Avenir, a double-page headline contains a main article and several sub-articles (also topped by an independent title). Here we have considered both the main article and its sub-articles.

The main information of the article (presented in the title) is that, while there are fewer and fewer priests, the profile of those active in the country's dioceses is becoming more diverse. This increasing diversification refers to a significant involvement of lay people - more of them than priests. A second important piece of information revealed by the article is that, in the diversification of the profile of "people who make the institution live", the place taken by women in the Church in Belgium is considerable.

It is of course this second piece of information that justifies the present analysis. Indeed, it should be noted that if this second piece of information constitutes a kind of 'sub-information' or a precision of the first, it nevertheless occupies an important place in the journalist's production and in the editorial choices made by the newspaper. Several findings of various kinds attest to this :

- 1) It should first be noted that this article (on pp. 2-3) and the information it contains are the subject of the largest front page article. While the illustration of the article on pp. 2-3 (an image from Stock.Adobe) shows only open hands (presumably of a priest) in front of a chalice, it should be noted that the front page photo shows a woman (in close-up) officiating a religious celebration.



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BRABANT WALLON
Masque obligatoire aux abords des écoles
 Le gouverneur annonce de nouvelles mesures temporaires, dont le port du masque obligatoire aux abords des écoles et pour toutes les activités sportives pratiquées en club. **19**

ÉGLISE CATHOLIQUE
Les femmes ont de plus en plus la « vocation »



Plus de 2 000 laïcs nommés par un évêque effectuent des tâches pastorales. Ce nombre est désormais plus élevé que les 1 940 prêtres diocésains actifs en Belgique. 57 % des « responsables de célébrations » sont des femmes. Témoignage.

2-3

VILLERS-LA-VILLE
François Bernier s'est éteint



BRABANT WALLON
Pour aider les Communes dans leur digitalisation
 L'intercommunale inBW va aider les Communes dans leur digitalisation. Une plateforme de services et d'infos se prépare à l'échelle du Brabant wallon. **15**

FOOTBALL
Un nouveau protocole Covid



33

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- 2) The title of the front page insists on the feminisation of the Church: *“Women have more and more of a 'vocation'”*.
- 3) The short appeal text (three lines) on the front page also emphasises this information: *“57% of those responsible for celebrations are women.”*
- 4) The single sentence that serves as a heading already insists on the presence of women: *“If priests are less and less numerous, lay people, especially women, occupy an ever greater place in the Church.”*
- 5) The specific information concerning the feminisation of the Belgian Church is the subject of a sub-heading (appearing in colour): *“55% women”*. Logically, after this subtitle, we find more precise information and figures on the presence of women in the dioceses, according to the different types of functions.
- 6) The contestation of the stereotypes contained in the information provided by the article is explicitly written by the journalist, in a trenchant statement: *“Another trend is emerging, perhaps going against the conventional wisdom: the Church is becoming more feminine. Of the 7,000 people with responsibilities in the church, 55% are women.”*
- 7) The focus on the issue of the feminisation of the Church is also materialised by the presence of a specific journalistic content, namely a sub-article on the same double page which presents a woman coordinator of a pastoral unit interviewed by the journalist. Two elements should be noted:
 - a. The article is illustrated with a photo portrait of the woman interviewed. This photo, after the photo of the woman on the front page, visually reinforces the presence of women on this subject. Note that a team photo (4 people) on another sub-article also shows a woman.
 - b. The first sentence of this sub-article once again insists on specific information about the feminisation of the Belgian Church: *“Anne Van Bunnens is one of the growing number of women taking on responsibilities within the Church. Since 2016, she has been coordinator of the pastoral unit Les Cerisiers [...]”*
- 8) Finally, it should be noted that the editorial choice to highlight this information so prominently (first double-page article + highlighted article on the front page) seems even less likely than the 'topicality' of the information is unclear. Indeed, the figures given in the article come (and the source is mentioned in the article) from the latest report from the Church of Belgium, published at the end of 2019, i.e. almost a year before the report. While it is not known why the newspaper suddenly became interested in this issue and this information, it should be noted that the subject, and the challenge to certain gender clichés it contains, did not impose itself on the newspaper's hierarchy of information, for example because of a hot news item or the very recent release of a study that had been publicised by various actors. We can therefore think that the theme and the way it was treated is probably the result of work, reflection, a journalistic and editorial choice.

However, in the main article, only one person is interviewed: Tommy Scholtès, spokesperson for the Belgian Bishops' Conference. Although he reacts to several aspects of the theme, none

of the statements quoted in this interview directly and explicitly concerns the specific question of the feminisation of the Church.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Belgium has two main distinct media markets by language (Dutch and French), from which data were gathered. A total of 5 newspapers, 5 television newscasts, 4 radio newscasts, 6 online news websites and 4 Twitter profiles were monitored on September 29, 2020.

Politics and government dominated the news agenda in the sample with 38% of the stories, followed by science and health (15%) and the multifaceted category celebrity, arts, media and sports (15%). Gender and related issues received almost no attention in the Belgian news coverage analysed (1%). News stories focusing on women as the main protagonist were only 4% of the total sample, a similar percentage to the European average of GMMP 2020, and smaller than the 8% recorded in the Belgian analysis of GMMP 2015.

The Covid pandemic was a transversal issue widely present in the news stories selected for analysis: 51% in print, 39% on the radio, 31% on the internet, 27% on Twitter and 22% on television. Compared to the Flemish sample, the French print, radio and internet news reported much less on Covid. Only 4% of Covid-related stories challenged gender stereotypes and 2% highlighted gender inequalities.

The overall presence of women news subjects in Belgian news is the same in the news by traditional media and digital media: 26%. Newspapers are slightly over this average (28%), and radio stories in our sample were the ones portraying fewer women (20%) as subjects. Women are specially underrepresented in news stories on politics and government (19% in traditional media, 17% on digital media). Local news tended to have more presence of women than national or international stories.

Overall, the representation of women in the news is slightly higher in the French-speaking news sample than in the Dutch-speaking news sample. For press, radio and television, the average was 24% in the Flemish media and 27% in the French-speaking media. For online media, it dropped to 16% in the Flemish sample and spiked to 33% in the French-speaking websites and Twitter accounts.

In the Flemish sample, women were quoted 35% of the times they were mentioned as a source, while men were given a voice 44% of the times. In the French-speaking media, women were quoted more than men: 52% vs 47%.

Regarding the functions of female news subjects in the Belgian sample, women were mostly represented as eye witness (50%) in the news. They were also invited many times to talk about a personal experience (35%) or share a popular opinion (38%). However, they were less present as a spokesperson (28%), news subject (24%), or expert or commentator in the news (11%).

There was a clear gendered division in the occupations of news sources. Women were covered less in occupations that are traditionally associated with high status and masculinity in the society, and their presence as sources was minoritarian among sports professionals (6%),

academic experts (9%), doctors (14%), politicians (20%). Women were more represented in professions typically associated with less status and femininity, such as celebrity and media figure (67%). However, it was remarkable that there was a more balanced representation of men and women in occupations such as government employee, public servant and spokesperson (47% women), which are professions in which men are still typically dominant.

From the perspective of age, men were overrepresented throughout the news sample, even if in print media the age of men was less often stated than for women (71% not mentioned for men vs 29% for women). The presence of women decreases with age. Family status was mentioned for 7% of women and 3% of men.

Women portrayed as victims in the sample had suffered mainly non-domestic sexual violence (20%) or non-domestic crime (20%), while male victims were mainly associated with accidents, natural disasters or poverty (17%) and domestic violence, rape or murder (17%).

If we focus on the gender of those producing the news, men journalists are more present than women in the sample: 59% of reporters, presenters or announcers were men, and 41% women. News about the Covid pandemic were slightly more balanced than the general average, with 45% being produced by female reporters.

There was a bigger presence of female journalists in the Flemish media (46,5%) than in the French-speaking media (37%). Radio was the only medium where women journalists were more present than men, with an average of 58%, clearly over the 48% average in Europe according to the GMMP 2020 results. In the press and television the presence was much lower (37% and 35%), under the European average.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN 2021-2025

Monitoring media content makes it possible to detect forms of bias. Based on this quantitative content analysis, we can conclude that female actors are strongly underrepresented in Belgian news. The share of women in the news deviates strongly from the representation of women in the Belgian population. The concept of 'symbolic annihilation', introduced by Tuchman in 1978, remains relevant to this day (De Vuyst, Vertoont & Van Bauwel, 2016). However, to keep its authority and significance, journalism will have to represent the diversity of societies and not only the voices of a male elite (De Vuyst, 2020a). Recommendations and actions taken to improve the diversity in news content and newsrooms can only be effective when intersectionality is taken into account.

Transparency is important when tracking and monitoring gender issues in journalism (De Vuyst, 2020a). Sharing good practices and exchanging knowledge among different news organisations can help build more robust and more efficient policies for equality. Open access to data on gender and media and transparency about research methodologies can make those ties even stronger. It can be a starting point for new insights and inspire feminist action. The GMMP research is a good example of such a collaboration between journalists and activists, that can be continued in other studies as well.

Furthermore, it will be essential for policymakers to take into account recent challenges that are highly harmful to gender and diversity in journalism production and news representation. Research has shown that Belgian journalists are targeted by different forms of online and offline intimidation (De Vuyst, 2020b). Just like in offline areas, women expressing their opinions online are silenced by misogynist comments, verbal and physical threats and sexual abuse. Topics related to gender issues, feminism, migration and racism, are red rag for trolls, cyberstalkers, and online harassers. This is very damaging to the progress that has been made towards equality because it pushes women and minority journalists out of the profession. In a study by De Vuyst (2020b), female journalists indicate that they write less about these topics and accept fewer invitations to talk in the media, for example, as a guest in talk shows or expert in factual television programs to avoid negative online comments. In this self-censorship, there is a clear danger to the freedom of expression. It is one of the reasons why we see fewer women as experts in the GMMP data.

Self-regulatory mechanisms and associations can play an important role in fighting gender discrimination (De Vuyst, 2021). Female and minority journalists might not experience their newsroom as a safe space to talk about harassment and discrimination. These associations can function as independent actors where cases can be reported, also by freelancers. They can also collect knowledge on the topic and support journalists/newsrooms who want to develop a policy on countering harassment and inequality.

Training dedicated to fighting violence and discrimination against female journalists and minority journalists and gender-aware reporting can also be part of the solution. But it is important that learning to deal with harassment is not seen as “just another skill” for journalists (another job requirement), because this could lead to a normalisation of the issue. Training should not only focus on journalists who are attacked or who suffer discrimination but also on how journalists/newsroom managers and law enforcement authorities can react/offer support.

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Annex 1. List of Monitors

The francophone monitoring team consisted of 17 researchers from LaPIJ (ULB-UMons) : Florence Le Cam, David Domingo, Manon Libert, Florian Tixier, Antoine Jacquet, Marie Fierens, Cécile Balty, Cassandre Burnier, Lorrie d'Addario, Sabri Derinöz, Carlo Gubitosa, Gabriela Guerreiro, Lucie Hainaut, Laurye Joncret, Alexander Kondratov, Lise Ménalque, Gabrielle Romain.

The Dutch-speaking research team consisted of four researchers connected to Ghent University: Sara De Vuyst, Sofie Van Bauwel, Joke D'Heer, Shawnee Somers. These researchers were involved in different parts of the research: Sara De Vuyst (writing the report and monitoring internet and radio news), Sofie Van Bauwel (monitoring television news), Joke D'Heer (monitoring newspaper news and proofreading of the report), Shawnee Somers (conducting the qualitative analysis and describing the media landscape of Dutch-speaking Belgium).

Annex 2. Articles qualitatives cases

NEWS ARTICLE PRINT NEWS DUTCH

Dutch

"Zo spoedig mogelijk" moeten formateurs Paul Magnette (PS) en Alexander De Croo (Open Vld) opnieuw naar het paleis. Maar de Vivaldi-onderhandelaars moeten eerst de hakbijl zetten in hun verlanglijstjes. Die hadden een gezamenlijk kostenplaatje van zo'n 11 miljard - onbetaalbaar, dus. Voor de tweede keer op rij stond er voor de Vivaldi-onderhandelaars een nachtje doorwerken op de planning. Pas 's avonds haalden de partijvoorzitters de schaar boven om te snoeien in het verlanglijstje 'nieuw beleid' van de zeven partijen. Aan alle voorstellen samen hangt een prijskaartje van 11 miljard euro. Niet haalbaar, zeker gezien er op federaal niveau nu al een gat van 33 miljard euro in de begroting zit. Het tekort zou dus richting "maximaal 4 miljard euro" mogen gaan - dixit de liberalen. Voor andere partijen mag dat iets meer zijn. Ter illustratie: het minimumpensioen van 1.500 euro alleen al kost 2 à 3 miljard euro, afhankelijk of het bruto of netto wordt. Die keuze kan dan weer bepalen hoeveel geld er nog overblijft om bijvoorbeeld te investeren in justitie, politie of steunmaatregelen voor gezinnen en ondernemers. Pas als de begroting enigszins verteerbaar is voor alle zeven Vivaldi-partijen, kan de jacht op de ministerportefeuilles geopend worden. Ondertussen nadert de officiële deadline van 1 oktober met rasse schreden. De onderhandelaars beginnen eraan te twijfelen of ze donderdag kunnen halen. "Het hangt allemaal aan een zeer dun draadje. Een akkoord lukt hopelijk wel, maar een regeerverklaring in het parlement wordt heel krap", zegt iemand aan tafel. Als er overmorgen géén nieuwe ploeg klaarstaat om de fakkel over te nemen, zal premier Sophie Wilmès (MR) hoogstwaarschijnlijk haar ontslag indienen. De regeringsonderhandelaars zullen dan ongetwijfeld (een deel van) hun plannen uit de doeken doen.

English

"As soon as possible", formateurs Paul Magnette (PS) and Alexander De Croo (Open Vld) have to return to the palace. But the Vivaldi negotiators must first put the ax in their wish lists.

They had a combined cost of about 11 billion - unaffordable, that is. For the second time in a row, the Vivaldi negotiators had planned a night of work. It was only in the evening that the party chairmen pulled out the scissors to cut the wish list of 'new policy' of the seven parties. All proposals together come with a price tag of 11 billion euros. Not feasible, especially given that there is already a gap of 33 billion euros in the budget at the federal level. The deficit should therefore go towards "a maximum of EUR 4 billion" - according to the liberals. For other parties this may be a bit more. By way of illustration: the minimum pension of 1,500 euros alone costs 2 to 3 billion euros, depending on whether it is gross or net. That choice can then determine how much money is left to invest, for example, in justice, the police or support measures for families and entrepreneurs. Only when the budget is somewhat digestible for all seven Vivaldi parties can the hunt for the minister's portfolios begin. Meanwhile, the official deadline of October 1 is rapidly approaching. The negotiators are starting to doubt whether they can make it on Thursday. "It all depends on a very fine thread. Hopefully, an agreement will succeed, but a government statement in parliament will be very tight," said someone at the table. If no new team is ready to take over the torch the day after tomorrow, Prime Minister Sophie Wilmès (MR) will most likely resign. The government negotiators will then undoubtedly reveal (part of) their plans.

Part 2:

Dutch

Eerst de centen, dan de postjes

De kans dat de naam van de nieuwe premier bekend is wanneer u dit leest, is bijzonder klein. Want vóór de Vivaldi-onderhandelaars over de ministersportefeuilles konden bikkelen, moest gisteravond en -nacht nog de schaar in de begroting gezet worden. Toch is stilaan wel duidelijk wie de grootste kanshebbers zijn om ons land straks te regeren.

Meer dan een beleefdheidsbezoekje werd het gisteren niet, de passage van coformatoren Alexander De Croo (Open Vld) en Paul Magnette (PS) op het paleis. Na 491 dagen formeren, moesten de onderhandelaars gisteravond nóg eens tijd kopen. Oorzaak? De centen. Het heikele begrotingsvraagstuk werd pas 's avonds aangesneden, onmogelijk dus om koning Filip tijdens hun bezoek om 18 uur een kant-en-klaar regeerakkoord voor te schotelen. Opnieuw stond de onderhandelaars dus een lange nacht te wachten.

Keuzes maken

Met zeven partijen aan tafel oogt het verlanglijstje lang: alle begeerde beleidsingrepen samen zouden zo'n 11 miljard kosten. Door de coronacrisis, die op federaal niveau een begrotingskrater van 33 miljard heeft geslagen en volgend jaar nog steeds een gat van 24 miljard achterlaat, is het duidelijk dat geld juist datgene is wat de Vivaldi-regering niét voorhanden zal hebben. Naast de beslissing over de uitgaven moeten de onderhandelaars dan ook een traject vastleggen om het begrotingstekort af te bouwen.

Ze dienden afgelopen nacht - en wie weet ook nog deze ochtend - de hakbijl boven te halen om het nieuwe beleid in te perken tot "maximaal 4 miljard euro", aldus de liberalen. Al houden sommige partijen niet zo strak vast aan dat budget. Illustratief is het minimumpensioen van 1.500 euro: bij het ter perse gaan van deze krant was nog steeds niet duidelijk of het om een netto- of brutobedrag zou gaan én of het zou gelden na een loopbaan van 42 of 45 jaar - een wereld van verschil op begrotingsvlak. Om te snoeien in de gezamenlijke verlanglijst moesten

er ook inhoudelijke keuzes gemaakt worden. Er lagen bijvoorbeeld plannen op tafel om meer geld te pompen in justitie, politie en maatregelen om gezinnen en ondernemers te ondersteunen, maar de vraag is wat daar uiteindelijk allemaal van overblijft.

Op zoek naar een vrouw

Als die hele inhoudelijke en budgettaire oefening afgerond is, kunnen de voorzitters de ministersportefeuilles beginnen te verdelen. Voor het premierschap wijzen bijna alle vingers naar Alexander De Croo (Open Vld), nadat Koen Geens (CD&V) en Sophie Wilmès (MR) hun kandidatuur vorige week al hadden teruggetrokken. Paul Magnette (PS) blijft officieel in de race, maar de Franstalige liberalen zouden die plannen koste wat het kost willen dwarsbomen. Hij zou ook al de vierde Franstalige eerste minister op rij zijn. Een Vlaming aan het roer zou het beeld van de Vlaamse minderheid in Vivaldi wat kunnen counteren, en ook bij de PS beseft men dat dit de stabiliteit van de regering ten goede zou komen.

Van Quickenborne

Hoewel nog niet duidelijk is hoeveel vicepremiers, ministers en staatssecretarissen de regering zal tellen, doen voor die postjes al dagenlang verscheidene namen de ronde. Open Vld-fractieleader en burgemeester van Kortrijk Vincent Van Quickenborne is een naam die vaak valt als toekomstig vicepremier, voor het geval De Croo premier wordt. Hij zou dan de liberale lijn moeten bewaken, terwijl De Croo als regeringsleider een iets neutralere rol zou moeten spelen. Wie de vrouw wordt die de Vlaamse liberalen in de regering willen, is voorlopig nog koffiedik kijken. Maggie De Block heeft mentaal al afscheid genomen en oud-voorzitster Gwendolyn Rutten kan dan weer moeilijk door één deur met De Croo. De naam van Kamerlid Goedele Liekens - nog een Vlaams-Brabantse - deed de ronde, maar dat wordt ontkend.

De Vlaamse socialisten zouden vooral willen verrassen. Zeker nu de partij zich als Vooruit wil ontpoppen tot een beweging, zou er weleens voor iemand buiten de politiek gekozen kunnen worden. Andere namen die rondgaan, zijn die van fractieleidster Meryame Kitir, Kamerlid Joris Vandenbroucke en Leuvens burgemeester Mohamed Ridouani.

CD&V wil dan weer gaan voor "vernieuwing en vervrouwelijking", dixit Geens. Oud-jongerenvoorzitter Sammy Mahdi gaat over de tongen als minister of staatssecretaris, maar hij zou ook fractieleader kunnen worden als Servais Verherstraeten het tot in de regering schopt. Daarnaast circuleert ook de naam van Vincent Van Peteghem, burgemeester van De Pinte en net als Mahdi ex-kandidaat voor het voorzitterschap. Maar ook een wit konijn, met name uit Antwerpen, is niet uitgesloten.

Groen kan al zeker twee ministersposten claimen. Kristof Calvo wordt allicht vicepremier, tenzij voorzitter en provinciegenote Meyrem Almaci toch zelf in de regering wil stappen. Daarnaast lijkt Tinne Van der Straeten - uit Brussel en gespecialiseerd in klimaat- en energierecht - een zekerheid.

Kaalslag

Als Magnette de 16 niet binnenhaalt, zal hij waarschijnlijk passen voor een regeringsdeelname. PS-ministers Pierre-Yves Dermagne en Frédéric Daerden worden dan genoemd, net als voormalig Kamerlid Karine Lalieux.

Voor MR is het Vivaldi-verhaal sowieso een kaalslag. Van de huidige zeven excellenties krijgt alleen Sophie Wilmès met zekerheid een post: voor haar mikt de partij op Buitenlandse Zaken. Een andere portefeuille is dan waarschijnlijk voor huidig begrotingsminister David Clarinval - de rechterhand van Bouchez - of Philippe Goffin, huidig minister van Buitenlandse Zaken.

Heel lang zullen de partijvoorzitters niet kunnen bikkelen over de ministerportefeuilles, want het belooft een race tegen de tijd te worden. Ten laatste vandaag moet de inhoud van hun regeerakkoord op punt staan, anders wordt het onmogelijk voor de partijleden om het lijvige document vóór hun congressen op woensdagavond helemaal door te nemen. De deadline voor de regeerverklaring blijft officieel nog steeds donderdag 1 oktober, al plaatsen heel wat stemmen daar ondertussen wel vraagtekens bij. "We hebben nog heel wat werk voor de boeg", klonk het unisono, vooraleer de onderhandelaars zich opmaakten voor een nieuw nachtje doordoen.

English

First the money, then the posts

The chance that the name of the new prime minister will be known when you read this is very small. Because before the Vivaldi negotiators could tackle the minister's portfolios, the scissors had to be put in the budget last night and night. Yet it is gradually becoming clear who the greatest contenders are to rule our country in the future.

It was not more than a courtesy visit yesterday, the passage of coformateurs Alexander De Croo (Open Vld) and Paul Magnette (PS) at the palace. After 491 days of formation, the negotiators had to buy one more time last night. Cause? The pennies. The thorny budget issue was only broached in the evening, so it was impossible to present King Philippe with a ready-made coalition agreement during their visit at 6 pm. So again the negotiators had a long night ahead.

Make choices

With seven parties at the table, the wish list looks long: all coveted policy interventions together would cost around 11 billion euros. With the corona crisis, which has hit a \$ 33 billion budget crater at the federal level and will still leave a \$ 24 billion gap next year, it is clear that money is precisely what the Vivaldi government will not have on hand. In addition to the decision on expenditure, the negotiators must therefore also establish a route to reduce the budget deficit.

Last night - and who knows even this morning - they had to take out the ax to limit the new policy to "a maximum of 4 billion euros", according to the liberals. Although some parties do not stick to that budget so tightly. An example is the minimum pension of 1,500 euros: when this newspaper went to press, it was still not clear whether it would be a net or gross amount and whether it would apply after a career of 42 or 45 years - a world of difference. budget plane. In order to cut back on the joint wish list, substantive choices also had to be made. For example, plans were on the table to pump more money into the justice system, the police and measures to support families and entrepreneurs, but the question is what will all be left of that in the end.

Looking for a woman

When this whole substantive and budgetary exercise has been completed, the chairpersons can start distributing the ministerial portfolios. Almost all fingers point to Alexander De Croo (Open Vld) for the premiership, after Koen Geens (CD&V) and Sophie Wilmès (MR) had already withdrawn their candidacy last week. Paul Magnette (PS) remains officially in the race, but the French-speaking liberals would like to thwart those plans at all costs. He would also be the fourth French-speaking prime minister in a row. A Fleming at the helm could somewhat counteract the image of the Flemish minority in Vivaldi, and the PS also realises that this would benefit the stability of the government.

Van Quickenborne

Although it is not yet clear how many Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers and State Secretaries the government will number, several names have been circulating for those posts for days. Open Vld party leader and mayor of Kortrijk Vincent Van Quickenborne is a name that often comes up as future deputy prime minister, in case De Croo becomes prime minister. He would then have to guard the liberal line, while De Croo should play a slightly more neutral role as head of government. For the time being, it remains to be seen who will become the woman the Flemish liberals want in government. Maggie De Block has already said goodbye mentally and former chairwoman Gwendolyn Rutten can hardly go through one door with De Croo. The name of Member of Parliament Goedele Liekens - another Flemish Brabant woman - was circulating, but that is denied.

Smack in the face

If Magnette doesn't get the 16, he'll likely pass for a government entry. PS ministers Pierre-Yves Dermagne and Frédéric Daerden are then mentioned, as are former MP Karine Lalieux.

For MR, the Vivaldi story is in any case a deforestation. Of the current seven Excellencies, only Sophie Wilmès will certainly receive a post: for her, the party is aiming for Foreign Affairs. Another portfolio is probably for current budget minister David Clarinval - Bouchez's right-hand man - or Philippe Goffin, current minister of Foreign Affairs.

The party chairmen will not be able to bother about the minister's portfolios for a long time, because it promises to be a race against time. Today at the latest, the content of their coalition agreement must be finalised, otherwise it will be impossible for party members to read the bulky document in full before their Wednesday evening congresses. The deadline for the government statement officially remains Thursday 1 October, although many voices have since questioned this. "We still have a lot of work to do," said the unison, before the negotiators were preparing for another night's sleep.

NEWS ARTICLE ONLINE DUTCH SAMPLE

Een hoop gesnuif, "Ik zou je in de gevangenis gooien" en "Wat een akelige vrouw": zo verliepen de debatten tussen Trump en Clinton vier jaar geleden

Vannacht om 3 uur onze tijd nemen Donald Trump en Joe Biden het voor een eerste keer tegen elkaar op in een rechtstreeks tv-duel. Vier jaar geleden boden de drie debatten tussen Trump en Hillary Clinton al heel wat spektakel. Een terugblik.

Het debat tussen Biden en Trump begint om 3 uur komende nacht en is rechtstreeks te volgen via HLN LIVE. Om 6 uur wordt er ook een extra uitzending van VTM NIEUWS aan gewijd.



Vooraf een waarschuwing. Zowat alle waarnemers waren het er in 2016 over eens dat Clinton in de drie debatten voor de verkiezingen als de betere kandidaat uit de bus was gekomen. Maar dat leverde haar bij de stembusslag uiteindelijk maar weinig op: Clinton won wel meer stemmen, maar verloor toch.

Dat Trump in de debatten met zijn Democratische tegenstrever regelmatig de pedalen verloor, zich laatdunkend over haar uitliet, zwaar naar de moderator uithaalde en de feitelijke onwaarheden niet schuwde, legde hem dus uiteindelijk geen windeieren. Integendeel, het typeerde Trump die ook tijdens zijn presidentschap de afgelopen vier jaar gewoon op dezelfde weg verder ging en er zelfs zijn populariteit uit haalt. Donald Trump is niet zoals alle andere raspolitici, en nog altijd iemand van het volk die gewoon zegt waar het op staat, is de boodschap.

Dat terwijl Clinton in de debatten vooral probeerde haar cool te bewaren, en daar meestal ook in slaagde met af en toe gevatte oneliners. Met feiten en cijfers kon ze Trump regelmatig overklassen, maar dat deerde hem niet. Het feit dát het over hem ging - hoe hard, grimmig en inhoudsloos het er soms ook aan toe ging - was het enige wat telde.

De belastingen

Waar het vannacht sowieso over zal gaan, is over de onthulling van The New York Times dat Trump de afgelopen jaren amper belastingen blijkt te hebben betaald. 750 dollar droeg de president in 2016 en 2017 telkens af aan federale inkomstenbelastingen. Maar ook vier jaar geleden kwam de krant al met soortgelijke onthullingen, die Clinton tijdens de debatten aanhaalde. En Trump repliceerde gevat met een antwoord dat hij allicht ook komende nacht zal bovenhalen.

Clinton: “Misschien is hij niet zo rijk als hij beweert. Misschien is hij niet zo liefdadig als hij beweert. Misschien wil hij niet dat het Amerikaanse volk weet dat hij geen federale belastingen betaalt.”

Trump: “Dat maakt mij slim.”

Abortus

Terwijl Clinton het recht op abortus verdedigde, ging Trump vol in de tegenaanval. “Baby’s zullen in de negende maand uit de baarmoeder van hun moeder worden gerukt, vlak voor de geboorte”, klonk het zonder enige grond van waarheid. “Je kunt zeggen dat dat oké is, Hillary kan zeggen dat dat oké is, maar ik vind dat niet oké.”

“Dat is niet wat er zal gebeuren, en dit soort angstreteriek is vreselijk ongelukkig”, repliceerde Clinton.

De gevangenis

Centraal in het betoog van Trump tegen Clinton stonden de tienduizenden e-mails die ze als minister van Buitenlandse Zaken onder Obama met een privéserver verstuurde, en niet via die van het departement. Volgens Clinton stond in die mails geen geheime of gevoelige informatie, Trump bleef volhouden dat Clinton ze niet wilde vrijgeven omdat er net wel belastende dingen over haar instonden.

En dus beloofde hij haar te laten onderzoeken als president, tot groot jolijt van zijn aanhang: “Je zou in de gevangenis zitten als ik aan de macht was.” De leuze ‘Sluit haar op’ was geboren. Er ging iets mis, probeer het later opnieuw.

Het gesnuif

Eén keer moest je het maar horen, en het bleef je achtervolgen: het gesnuif van Donald Trump tijdens het eerste debat. Terwijl hij zichzelf uitriep tot “de gezondste presidentskandidaat ooit” en zijn aanhangers op vinkenslag lagen om bij Hillary Clinton een kuchje waar te nemen, ging vooral hij met de aandacht lopen.

Zelf merkte Trump zijn gesnotter niet op, en zei hij dat Clinton “het uithoudingsvermogen niet heeft” om president te worden. “Ze heeft de look niet, ze heeft het uithoudingsvermogen niet. Ik zei dat ze het uithoudingsvermogen niet heeft, en ik geloof dat echt, dat ze niet het uithoudingsvermogen heeft”.

Waarop Clinton gevat antwoordde: “Als hij naar 112 landen reist en een vredesakkoord onderhandelt of een wapenstilstand of de bevrijding van gegijzelden of elf uur getuigt voor een Congrescommissie, dan mag hij het over mijn uithoudingsvermogen hebben”.

Het temperament

Trump trok zich niets van het antwoord aan, en haalde ook zijn ‘beter temperament’ aan. “Ik heb een beter oordeelsvermogen dan zij. Daar bestaat geen twijfel over. Ik heb ook een beter temperament. Ik heb een winnend temperament. Ik weet hoe ik moet winnen. Zij niet.” Wat Clinton de schokschouderende reactie ‘Whoo, okay’ ontlokte.

De onderbrekingen

Trump en Clinton debatteerden bij momenten op het scherpst van de snee, maar het was vooral Trump die opviel met zijn onderbrekingen. “Fout. Fout. Fout”, kwam hij regelmatig tussen wanneer Clinton een punt probeerde te maken.

Maar het bontst maakte Trump het toen hij Clinton midden in haar betoog “Zo’n akelige vrouw” noemde.

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