

WHO MAKES THE NEWS?



GMMP

Global Media
Monitoring
Project

2020

Iceland

NATIONAL REPORT

Valgerður Jóhannsdóttir 2021



GMMP

Global Media
Monitoring
Project

2020



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Global context

- The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) is the world’s longest-running and most extensive research on gender in the news media. The research was designed to capture a snapshot of gender on one ‘ordinary’ news day in the world news media. An ordinary news day is defined as one in which the news agenda contains the run-of-the-mill mix of stories, everyday articles on politics, economy, social issues, crime and other issues.
- It began in 1995 when volunteers in 71 countries around the world monitored women’s presence in their national radio, television and print news. The media monitoring has been repeated every five years since then, taking stock of change in the gender dimensions of news media content and collecting statistical data on new indicators.
- The 1995 research revealed that only 17% of news subjects – the people who are interviewed or whom the news are about – were women. It found that gender parity was ‘a distant prospect in any region of the world. News [were] more often being presented by women but [they were] still rarely about women.’¹
- The first noteworthy change in women’s overall presence in the news was registered in 2005 in the third iteration of the research.² Women comprised 21% of news subjects, a three-percentage point increase over the period 2000 to 2005. Their near invisibility continued however, with only 10% of stories focusing centrally on women, underrepresentation in the major news topics and as voices in the news.
- By the fifth GMMP in 2015, it was clear that “ordinary” news days could not be predicted or planned in advance: unexpected events take place that dominate the news, from the Kobe earthquake in 1995, to the Germanwings plane crash in the Alps in 2015.
- The 2015 research in 114 countries revealed continued severe gender disparities in news media content. Findings on key indicators suggested that progress towards gender equality had lost traction; women remained only 24% of the persons heard, read about or seen in newspaper, television and radio news, exactly the same level found in the fourth wave of the research in 2010. Three editions of the research – in 2005, 2010 and 2015 – found no change on the indicator measuring women’s participation in the news as reporters; only 37% of stories in legacy media were reported by women.
- Women’s relative invisibility in traditional news media had also crossed over into the digital news delivery platforms included in the GMMP monitoring for the first time. Only 26% of the people in stories on mainstream news websites and media news Tweets combined were women. The challenges of news media sexism, gender stereotyping and gender bias were apparently intractable across time, space and content delivery platforms.

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

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

- UN Under-Secretary-General and UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka underlined that the ways in which women are depicted in the media “have a profound effect on societal attitudes and reinforce traditional gender roles. Women and girls are half of humanity. Giving equal time and weight to their stories, featuring them as positive models not victims, plays an under-appreciated part in creating a better, freer world for all of us.”³
- Events during the 2020 GMMP year were even more extraordinary; beginning in late 2019 and intensifying during the year, the world was ravaged by the novel coronavirus Covid-19. This sixth wave of the research offered an opportunity to scrutinize gender in media coverage during a global catastrophe, a time marked by a worldwide health crisis, and the intensified inequalities accompanying the crisis.
- GMMP teams in 116 countries monitored 30172 stories published in newspapers, broadcast on radio and television, and disseminated on news websites and via news media tweets in 2251 outlets. The stories contained 58,499 news subjects and sources, and were reported and presented by 28,595 journalists. The number of participating nations increased by 63% since 1995 as baseline data were collected for eight countries joining the study for the first time. The number of news items monitored has doubled over the past 25 years and risen by over 8,000 since the 2015 edition.
- Findings from the sixth GMMP reveal a mixed picture of progress, stagnation and regression. While some glass ceilings are clearly being edged upwards, others are setting in on certain important news media gender equality indicators. The past five years have seen small incremental changes towards parity, at the same time, the overall pace of change remains glacial.

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

Regional Context

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

In 2015, 33 countries in Europe participated in GMMP 2015 and in 2020, 32 countries took part.⁴ While there has been a core set of European countries which have participated in all or nearly all the GMMP monitoring days, 2020 was particularly challenging because of Covid-19. That so many people, coordinators and monitors did so, is a testament to their and our commitment to the broader GMMP project. While the impact of the pandemic continues to be felt today, it is interesting that on the 2020 monitoring day, only 27% of stories were coded as associated with Covid-19. This gives us confidence to suggest that the data discussed in the regional as well as the current country report continue to serve an important comparative function in relation to previous iterations.

⁴ For list of countries see Annex 2 in GMMP 2020. Europe: Regional report. <https://whomakesthenews.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Europe-Region.-GMMP-report.pdf>

National Context

Iceland is a very small country with a population of just over 360,000 people.⁵ Politically, the country is considered a mature liberal democracy, and ranked only second after Norway on the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2020.⁶

Iceland has for years been ranked very high on most, if not all, international measurements of gender equality. In the latest World Economic Forum Gender Gap index, Iceland is the most gender equal country in the world, for the 12th time.⁷ There is a political consensus in the country that women and men should enjoy the same rights, obligations and possibilities in society. In 2020 there was an equally number of women and men as ministers, the prime minister was a woman, and women were 40% of MP's.⁸ The number of women experts and in top public position has also grown considerably in recent years, but women are, however, still grossly underrepresented in top positions in the business sector.⁹

Research on gender and media in Iceland is rather limited and fragmented. The first on gender representation was presented in 1990. The findings showed that in the first five years of Icelandic TV news, no women were ever interviewed. They slowly started to appear in 1970, and in 1986 women accounted for 13% of those interviewed in the TV news. In 2001 the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture published a report on the gender situation in Icelandic media and the main findings were that that women were grossly underrepresented in all kinds of media content, or 32%. In TV news women were 27% of those interviewed. The Ministry of Culture published another report in 2005 and it showed that little had changed. Around 19% of interviewees in the private TV station Channel 2 were women and 25% in the Public Broadcasting Media.¹⁰

Iceland has taken part in the Global Media Monitoring Project since 1995, with the exception of the 2005 study.¹¹ It is important to monitor the way women and men are portrayed in the news and not least to be able to track changes over time and to compare the situation in Iceland to the wider world. That is the reason why we take part in the Global Media Monitoring Project, as well as wanting to be a part of a global network committed to researching and sharing knowledge about gender in the media.

⁵ Statistics Iceland. (n.d.). *Inhabitants*. Retrived June 24, 2021 from <https://statice.is/statistics/population/inhabitants/>

⁶ The Economist Intelligence Unit's, (n.d.). Retrived June 24, 2021 from <https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2020/>.

⁷ World Economic Forum Gender Cap Index, (n.d). Retrived June 24, 2021 from <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2021/digest>

⁸ Alþingi/The Icelandic Parliament (nd). Retrived June 24, 2021 from <https://www.althingi.is/thingmenn/althingismenn/>

⁹ Axelsdóttir, L., Diðriksdóttir, S., Einarsdóttir, Þ. and Rafnsdóttir, G. L. (2015). *Konur og Karlar í forystu atvinnulífs á Íslandi*. Retrieved from <http://jafnretti.is/D10/Files/HI-LOKASKYRSLA.pdf#life>

¹⁰ Jóhannsdóttir, V., & Einarsdóttir, Þ. (2015). Gender bias in the media: the Case of Iceland. *Icelandic Review of Politics and Administration*, 11 (2)(2), 207-230.

¹¹ In *Who makes the news? The Global Media Monitoring Project report*, 1995, 2000, 2010, 2015.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Covid-19 pandemic dominated the news agenda the entire year. On the monitoring day the government of Iceland introduced measures to tackle the economic and social consequences of the pandemic and that was the main story in all the media coded. Foreign news were focused on the USA presidential elections, and a debate between the candidates scheduled the following night. The trial of an Icelandic man that was prosecuted for murdering his brother in Norway was also big news, especially on the Internet.

- **Who is in the news?** This research, as well as previous ones, shows that the news in Icelandic news media consists largely of men. Of those interviewed, spoken of or written about, one in three were women. In traditional media such as print, radio and television women are 34% of news subjects and 43% in Internet news.
- Our findings do not indicate that women are less likely than men to appear in traditional “hard news” topics, such as economic news, where they now account for 47% of the news subjects.
- Matters of gender equality were not on the news media’s agenda in Iceland on the day of monitoring.
- Women reported 33% of the news and men 67%. Female reporters were more likely to have women news subjects in their stories than their male colleagues.
- Almost half (46%) of the news stories were Covid-19 related, and they were almost all in the Science and Health, or Economy category.
- 171 stories were monitored, of which 179 news subjects were identified. Due to the small sample size the analysis is somewhat limited and only allows for noticeable findings in the largest categories. As in the GMMP study 2015, there were not sufficient enough Twitter news to code, so the findings are therefore entirely based on news from traditional media and online news sites.

A DAY IN THE NEWS IN ICELAND

On the monitoring day, September 29, 2020, the Government of Iceland introduced new measures to tackle the economic and social consequences of Covid-19 pandemic. That was the main story of the day, but there were also other pandemic related news, both domestic and foreign. The biggest foreign news story was however on the USA presidential elections and its imminent candidate debate the following night. A story about the trial of an Icelandic man prosecuted for murder in Norway, was also big news, especially on the internet.

THE CONTEXT

In an international comparison all media companies in Iceland are small. The media market has been in turmoil in recent years, and most private news media companies have been run at a loss or with very meagre returns.¹²

National media dominate the landscape. There are several regional and local newspapers published in the country, but local media is weak in Iceland. Nationally, there are published two daily newspapers, and a couple of weekly newspapers. Traditional media, print, radio and television, have all established themselves firmly online but online only news sites also play a prominent part in daily news provision. There are several television and radio stations, but only two with news desks. Iceland is a technologically advanced country and Internet access and use is almost universal.¹³ The public broadcasting Media, *RÚV*, has two radio channels and one TV. Other media companies are privately owned. One company, *Sýn*, is by far the biggest and runs several radio (*Bylgjan*) and TV stations (*Stöð 2*), as well as an online news site, *visir.is*. The country's most read newspaper, *Fréttablaðið*, a free paper, delivered to people's home, is owned by *Torg* that also runs three online news sites, *frettabladid.is*, *dv.is* and *hringbraut.frettabladid.is*. The other national, daily newspaper is *Morgunblaðið*, Iceland's oldest surviving newspaper, and the same company also runs the most read online news site in the country, *mbl.is*.

In Iceland there are two journalist unions, one for those working at the Public Broadcasting Media and another for those in private media. According to the latest statistics from Statistics Iceland, there now 579 journalists in those two unions combined, and thereof 230 women or around 40%.¹⁴

Media monitored

Newspapers: *Morgunblaðið* and *Fréttablaðið*. Neither of the two weekly/by-weekly national newspapers (*DV* and *Stundin*), were published on the monitoring day.

TV: *RÚV*, the Public Broadcasting Media, news at 19:00 and 22:00 and *Stöð 2*, news at 18:30.

¹² Ólafsson, J. G., & Jóhannsdóttir, V. (2021). Media and politics in Iceland. In E. Skogerbø, Ø. Ihlen, N. N. Kristensen, & L. Nord (Eds.), *Power, communication, and politics in the Nordic countries* (pp. 51–68). Gothenburg Nordicom, University of Gothenburg.

¹³ Jóhannsdóttir, V., Ólafsson, J. G., & Guðmundsson, F. P. (2021). Iceland: A small media system facing increasing challenges. In J. Trappel, & T. Tomaz (Eds.), *The Media for Democracy Monitor 2021: How leading news media survive digital transformation* (Vol. 2) (pp. 275–314). Nordicom, University of Gothenburg.
<https://doi.org/10.48335/9789188855428-7>

¹⁴ Statistics Iceland (n.d). Retrived July 1, 2020 from <https://doi.org/10.48335/9789188855428-7>

Radio: *Bylgjan*, main news 12:00, *RÚV* main news at 12:20 and *Spegilinn* at *RÚV* also, an in depth news program at 18:00. These are the only TV and radio outlets with news desks.

Internet news: *ruv.is* (the Public Broadcasting Media), *mbl.is* (affiliate of *Morgunblaðið*), *frettabladid.is* (affiliate of *Fréttablaðið*), *visir.is* (*Sýn*), *dv.is* (affiliate of the tabloid paper *DV*), *stundin.is* (affiliate of *Stundin*), and the online only news site, *kjarninn.is*, independent of traditional media. The following Internet sites were chosen because they are the most read news sites in the country.

The monitors: Five women took part on the monitoring day. One monitor worked on coding television, two the radio, two newspapers and everyone worked on the internet coding. The average amount of time spent coding was around five hours.

TOPICS IN THE NEWS

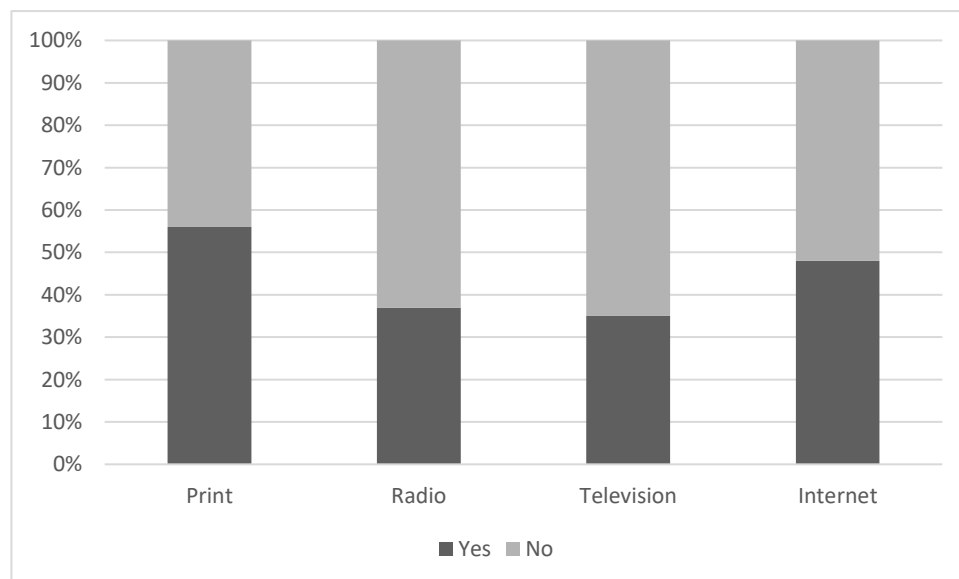
Economy news were the most common topic in all media combined, as was the case in 2015 (table 1). That was also the case in the 2010 study, but internet news were not monitored then and the 2010 results therefore not included in the table below. The most notable change is the increase in science and health news, which comes as no surprise given the prominence of Covid-19 related news. Almost half (46%) of the news in all medium combined were Covid-19 related. There are also significantly fewer stories in the Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports category, compared to the 2010 results. Almost all the stories in that category are about sport, and it's possible that the focus on Covid-19 had the effect that there were less resources (time, journalists, space), available for celebrity and art news. Figure 1 shows that the proportion of Covid-19 related stories is highest in print and lowest in radio, which is also the only medium where sport stories are a part of the main news cast (more discussion about Covid-19 and the news is on page 14).

Table 1: Major topics in the news, all medium. Iceland GMMP 2020 and 2015

	2020	2015
Politics and Government	12%	16%
Economy	37%	33%
Science and Health	19%	11%
Social and Legal	11%	12%
Crime and Violence	9%	5%
Gender & Related	1%	0%
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	11%	23%
Other	1%	0%

Source: GMMP2020, 2015

Figure 1: News stories related to Covid-19, by medium



Source: GMMP 2020

NEWS SUBJECTS AND SOURCES

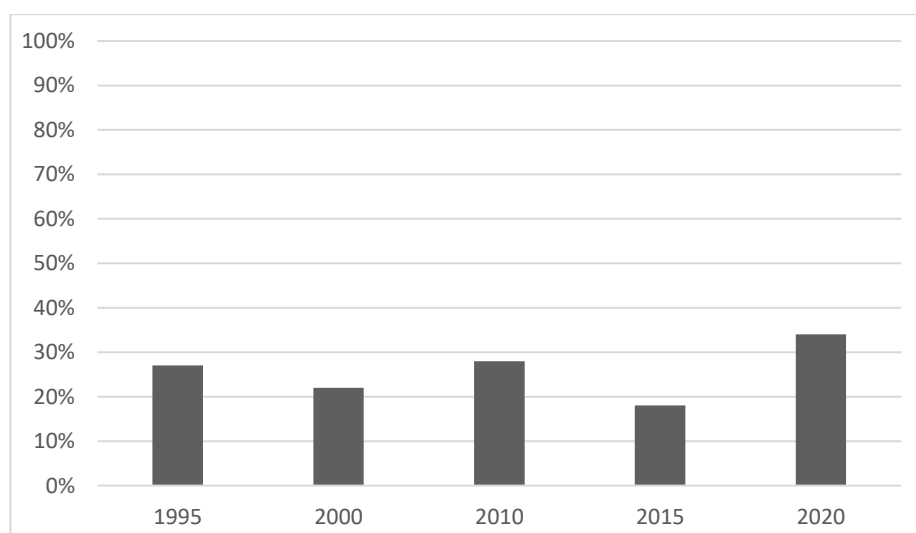
People in the news are to a large extent men. In all medium in Iceland combined one in three of those interviewed, spoken of or written about are women. The overall proportion of women in traditional media is 34% and 43% in online news outlets, as seen in table 2. This is a significant improvement from the GMMP 2015 results, when the proportion was of women as news subjects was only 18% in traditional media and 21% on the internet. In the 2010 study 28% of news subjects were women. The crash of the Germanwings plane in the Alps on the monitoring day in 2015, was believed to explain the poor results, at least to some extent, as the aviation industry is a very much a man’s industry.¹⁵ Figure X shows that overall presence of women as news subjects in Iceland since the first GMMP study (with the exception of the 2005 study, when Iceland didn’t take part). It demonstrates that progress has been painstakingly slow and far from one way. Figure 3 shows the Iceland in comparison with the other Nordic countries, in the last three GMMP studies.

Table 2: Overall presence of women and men as news subjects by medium. Iceland GMMP 2020

	Print	Radio	Television	Internet
	%	%	%	%
Female	40%	22%	39%	43%
Male	60%	78%	61%	57%

Source: GMMP2020

Figure 2. Overall presence of women news subjects in print, radio and television, GMMP 1995-2020

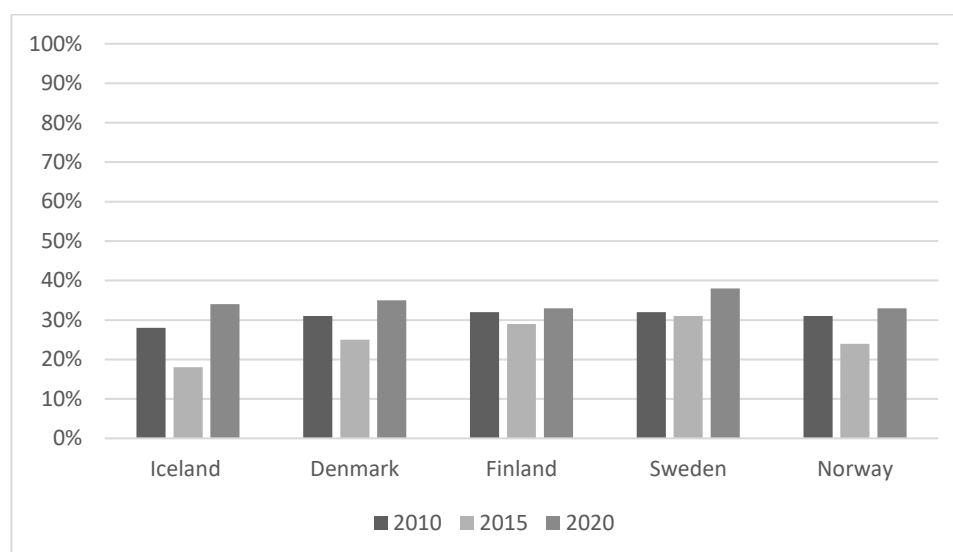


Source: GMMP 2010,2015, 2020. Data for 1995–2015 are from GEM-dataset.¹⁶

¹⁵ Bridges, D., Neal-Smith, J., and Mills, A.J. (eds.) (2014). *Absent Aviators. Gender Issues in Aviation*. Surrey, Burlington: Ashgate

¹⁶ Färdigh, Mathias A., Monika Djerf-Pierre, Maria Edström, with Carolyn M. Byerly, Sarah Macharia, Claudia Padovani, & Karen Ross (2020). “The GEM Dataset, version 1.” Comparing Gender and Media Equality (GEM) Project, University of Gothenburg. <https://www.gu.se/en/research/gemdataset>

Figure 3. Percentage of women as news subjects in traditional media in GMMP 2010, 2015 and 2020, by Nordic countries.



Source: GMMP 2010, 2015, 2020

Women do not seem to be less likely than men to appear in traditional “hard news” topics, such as economic news, where they now account for 47% of the news subjects. That corresponds with the findings in the 2015 GMMP study.¹⁷ Table 3 shows the overall presence of men and women by topics in traditional media and online news sites.

Table 3: Overall presence of women and men as news subjects by topic, and medium. Iceland GMMP 2020

	Print, Radio, Television			Internet		
	Female %	Male %	N	Female %	Male %	N
Politics and Government	11%	89%	18	0%	100%	12
Economy	47%	53%	36	56%	44%	25
Science and Health	41%	59%	17	20%	80%	5
Social and Legal	53%	47%	15	83%	17%	12
Crime and Violence	0%	100%	8	17%	83%	6
Gender & Related	0%	0%	0	0%	0%	0
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	15%	85%	13	38%	63%	8
Other	0%	0%	0	0%	0%	0
Overall female subjects	34%			43%		

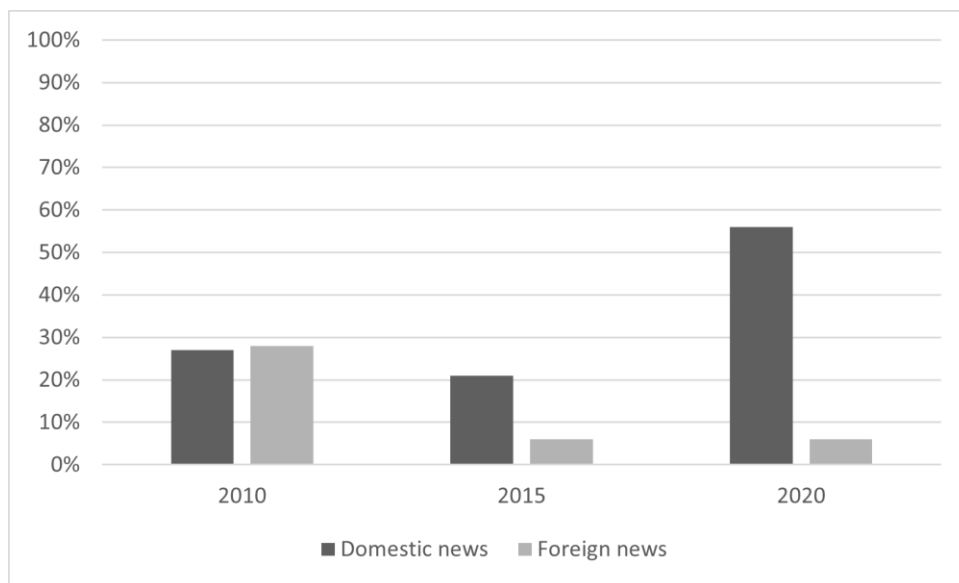
Source: GMMP2020

¹⁷ Jóhannsdóttir, V., & Einarisdóttir, Þ. (2015). Gender bias in the media: the Case of Iceland. *Icelandic Review of Politics and Administration*, 11 (2)(2), 207-230.

Interestingly, the improvement of women’s presence is foremost in domestic news, as seen in figure 4. As internet news were not monitored in 2010, only result for traditional news (print, radio, TV) are shown.

Icelandic news companies rely heavily on foreign news agencies and media outlets for their foreign news reporting and therefore do not have the same control over selection of news sources, as they do in domestic news. This might therefore indicate that the selection of news sources in Icelandic news desk has become more gender equal in the past decade.

Figure 4: Overall presence of women news subjects in print, radio and TV, by domestic and foreign news, Iceland GMMP 2020, 2015, 2010



Source: GMMP 2010, 2015, 2020

Previous studies have suggested that women are much less likely than men to be news subjects in news about politics, economy and crime or so called *hard news*.¹⁸ That does not seem to be the case in Iceland, or at least the result are inconclusive. Women are news subjects in 47% of economic news in traditional media, and 56% in economy news on the internet, but only 11% of political news subjects in print, radio and TV are women, and no women were interviewed or written about in politics news on the internet. In the 2015 study, it was the other way around and in traditional media 35% of news subject in political news were women but only 16% in economy news.¹⁹ Women are almost non-existent in crime news in 2020, just like in the 2015 study, but they are very few.

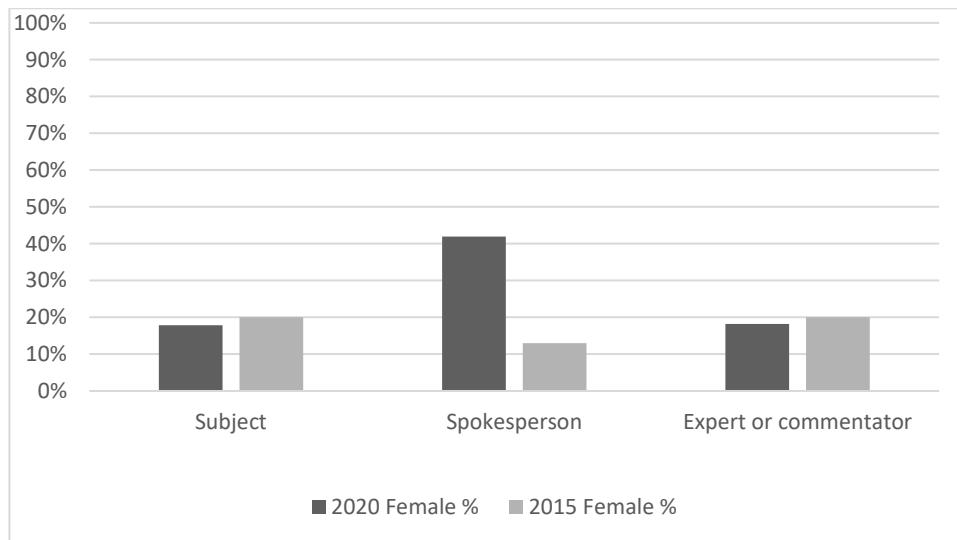
Well over half of the 107 news subjects in print, radio and TV, or 62, had the function of a spokesperson in the news stories. The proportion of women as spokespersons is significantly higher in the traditional media now than in GMMP 2015, or 42% compared to 13%, as seen in figure 3. In news online stories without a news subject are more common than in traditional media. Online 30 of the 67 news subjects were spokespersons and 57% of them were women. However, women are still seldom functioning as experts or commentators in

¹⁸ Macharia, Sarah, Dermot O’Connor and Lilian Ndangam, World Association for Christian Communication. *Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project*. 2010

¹⁹ Jóhannsdóttir, V., & Einarsdóttir, Þ. (2015). Gender bias in the media: the Case of Iceland. *Icelandic Review of Politics and Administration*, 11 (2)(2), 207-230.

the news, as shown in figure 3. Online stories are not included as the n was so low, eight of the nine experts were men. None of the stories had eye witness account or public opinion, and only a couple personal experience (not included in the figure).

Figure 5. News subject's function in news story in traditional media, by sex. Iceland GMMP 2020 and 2015



Source: GMMP 2020, 2015

The most common occupation of those interviewed, spoken to or written about in traditional news media are politicians, or 33 of the 107 news subjects in traditional media, 17 were activists, 10 were government officials and 9 business persons. Of those women accounted for 30% of politicians, 71% of activists, 50% of government officials and 11% of business people. There were 11 sportspersons news subjects and all of them were men. In internet news 21 of 68 news subjects were politicians, 9 government officials, 5 activists and 5 sportspersons. The occupation of the remaining news sources in all medium varied and it is not possible to draw any conclusions from so few numbers.

JOURNALISTS AND REPORTERS

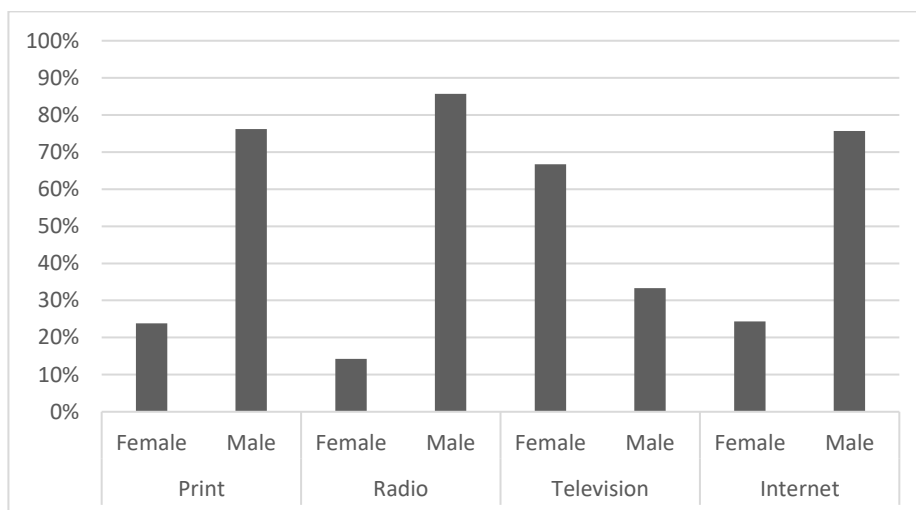
As noted earlier around 40% of Icelandic journalists are women²⁰, but previous research has indicated that women are proportionally more numerous in other kinds of media, like magazines and periodicals, rather than the news media²¹. On the monitoring day 2020 women reported 33% of the stories published that day, compared to 31% in 2015 and 33% in 2010. These findings are in tune with findings in the Worlds of Journalism Study survey among Icelandic journalists in 2021, were 35% percent of news journalist were women.²² As seen in figure 6, there is a great difference between different medium, with proportionally most women reporters in TV.

²⁰ Statistics Iceland (n.d). Retrived July 1, 2020 from <https://doi.org/10.48335/9789188855428-7>

²¹ Savolainen T., and Zilliacus-Tikkanen, H. (2015). "The gender division and hierarchies of the Finnish news organisations", *Nordicom Information* 37(2), 19-31.

²² Authors own data.

Figure 6: Breakdown of reporters by sex and by medium. Iceland GMMP 2020

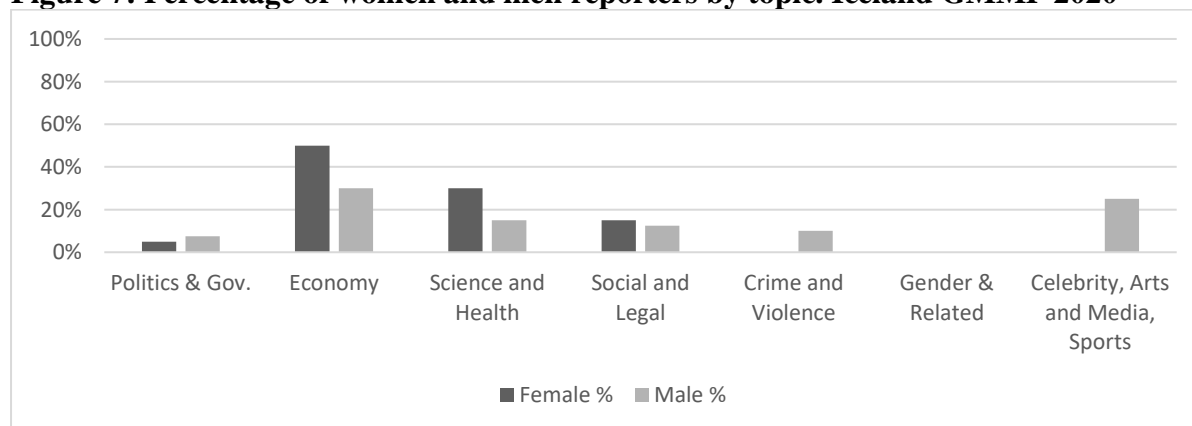


Source: GMMP 2020

As we can see in figure 7, women report only 5% of news about politics and government in 2020, compared to 26% of the stories in 2015. There were however so few political stories in 2020, that one needs to treat the change with caution.

Women report half of all news about economy, which is considerably higher than in 2015 where the ratio was 35%. Likewise, women reporting on the topic of science and health have increased dramatically since 2015, or 30% compared to only 4% in the previous study. However, just as in the politics category, its not possible to draw definite conclusions from this change, as there were very few science and health stories in the 2015 study. The increase of news in this category is of course related to the Covid-19 pandemic, as an overwhelming portion of Covid-19 related news stories have evolved around science and health-related topics. We can also see that women are much more likely than their male colleagues to report about the economy and science and health. Men are however more likely to report news on crime and violence. No stories were published on the monitoring day in the category gender or related topics.

Figure 7: Percentage of women and men reporters by topic. Iceland GMMP 2020



Source: GMMP 2020.

Women were more likely than their male colleagues to have female news subjects in their stories. In traditional media male reporters included women as news subjects in 33% of the

stories they reported, while female reporters included them in 47% of their stories. This is substantially different from the GMMP 2015 results, where male reporters had women news subjects in only 8% of their stories and female reporters had them in 33%. In online news male reporters had female news subjects in 40% of their stories, and in stories by female reporters, 53% of the news subjects were women.

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

Gender equality/inequality was not on the news media's agenda in Iceland on September 29, 2020 and very few stories had references to it. Overall, around 8% of the news stories made any sort of reference to issues of gender equality or human rights in general and stories with women as a central focus were virtually non-existing. Furthermore, no stories at all were found in which gender stereotypes were challenged or supported.

FOCUS ON COVID-19 NEWS

The first case of Covid-19 in the Iceland was confirmed on February 28 and a month later over a thousand cases were confirmed. In 2020 Covid-19 there were in total 5.754 and the pandemic caused the death of 29 people.²³ As shown in table 2 on page 7, nearly half (46%) of the news stories monitored on all mediums were related to the Covid-19 pandemic, from 35% in radio to 56% of news stories in print (see figure 1, page 7).

The Covid-19 related news stories were almost entirely reported in the topics of Economy and Science & Health, or 74 of 78 stories in total. There is no indication of a gender difference in who reports the Covid-19 news. Women report 33% of the overall news stories analysed, and 32% of the Covid-19 related stories.

Very few (3%) Covid-related stories were found that highlighted gender inequalities and none were found challenging or confirming gender stereotypes.

²³ Ohlsson, J., Blach-Ørsten, M., & Willig, I. (Eds.). (2020). *Covid-19 och de nordiska nyhetsmedierna*. Gothenburg: Nordicom, <https://www.nordicom.gu.se/en/publications/covid-19-och-de-nordiska-nyhetsmedierna>.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

GMMP 2020 indicates that women have become more prominent in Icelandic news over the years, but the progress has been slow. One of three news subjects are women and one in three of those that deliver the news are women. Iceland can hardly be said to live up its reputation as the most gender equal country in the world, when it comes to news.²⁴ It was also clear from the study that gender issues, or equality in general is not on the news media agenda. The findings do however show that there is greater gender balance in domestic news than in foreign news, which might indicate that Icelandic newsrooms are making an effort to reach a better balance. The proportion of women as spokespersons in the news has also increased, but the proportionally few women experts in the news is of concern and does not reflect Icelandic society. There is still work to be done to further gender equality in Icelandic news.

²⁴ World Economic Forum Gender Cap Index, (n.d). Retrived June 24, 2021 from <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2021/digest>

Annex 1. Methodology²⁵

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

Process

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

²⁵ See the global report for the extended discussion on the GMMP 2020 methodology

To enable comparability of data gathered from a pandemic-heavy news agenda with the historical results, an additional question was included which asked whether the story was related to Covid-19. For such stories, monitors were requested to select the most relevant secondary topic. While global news stories had diversified to pre-pandemic levels by the global monitoring day in September 2020, the regional analysis demonstrated the significance of this question, particularly for North America and the Middle East, which recorded 37% and 36% of Covid-19-related stories respectively.

Media bands

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

Weighting

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

Accuracy

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

Limitations

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

About Code for Africa

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

Annex 2. List of Monitors

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