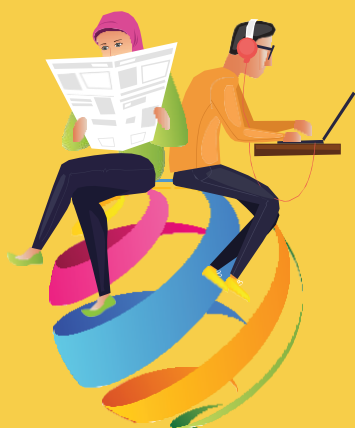


# WHO MAKES THE NEWS?



**GMMP**

Global Media  
Monitoring  
Project

**2020**

**NORTH  
AMERICA**

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**REGIONAL REPORT**



# GMMP

Global Media  
Monitoring  
Project

# 2020



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



Data for GMMP 2020 were collected through the collective voluntary effort of hundreds of organizations including gender and media activists, grassroots communication groups, university researchers, students, media professionals, journalists associations, alternative media networks and faith groups. Noncommercial. You may not use this work for commercial purposes. No derivative Works. You may not alter, transform, or build upon this work. For any use or distribution, you must make clear to others the license terms of this work. Your fair use and other rights are in no way affected by the above



## *In Partnership with*



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



Photo courtesy: Amaya Walker

online trainings, and gathered, analysed, and checked monitoring data, among other things. Marites Sison, served as the GMMP-Twitter team leader. She analysed the results of all gathered data, created infographics, and wrote the 2020 GMMP-Canada report. Amita Asthana served as GMMP-Television team leader and helped conduct tests and gathered materials on monitoring day.

Rebecca Dyck served as GMMP-website news team leader, while Sarah Shepard, Sajanika Sivanu, Sanjam Kohli, Stella Tingyu, Oksana Maskulka, Katie Wotherspoon, Zaina Telawi, Lindsay White, Erin Stephenson, Danielle Bohonos, Carol Scott, Gabriella Teixeira, Rob, and Mathuri Sivanesan gathered and analysed news samples.

In USA, Dr. Tuija Parikka of St. John's University, New York City who worked with 7 of her students: Koda Blue, Lauren Florence, Katie Flynn, Ryan Leno, Xavier Lugo, Corey Schwach, and Tatum Punzo to monitor internet newspapers.

The 2020 monitoring project in North America would not have been possible without a resilient team of volunteer journalists, university researchers, students, and women's rights advocates.

In Canada, GMMP national co-ordinator, Veronica Silva-Cusi recruited and organized volunteers into various teams, drew up the news media sample to be analysed, coordinated, and conducted

Dr. Karri Whipple of New York University also delivered coded sheets. Yvette Moore, of United Women in Faith (formerly the United Methodist Women), along with United Women in Faith volunteers also supported the 2020 Global Media Monitoring Project. Victoria Stern offered her expertise as an independent monitor.

Of course, the longitudinal perspective in this report would not have been possible without the GMMP 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015 teams.

Thank you all for donating your time, skills, and expertise to the 2020 Global Media Monitoring Project.

*Glory E. Dharmaraj, Ph.D.*

*GMMP U.S. Coordinator  
President, World Association for Christian  
Communication-North America*

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# PREFACE

## 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.'<sup>1</sup>
- The first noteworthy change in women's overall presence in the news was registered in 2005 in the third iteration of the research.<sup>2</sup> 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.
- 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."<sup>3</sup>

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

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

<sup>3</sup> See *Who makes the news? The Global Media Monitoring Project report*, 2015

- 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 news outlets. The number of participating nations increased by 63% since 1995 as baseline data was collected for eight countries joining the study for the first time. The number of news items monitored has doubled over the past 25 years and risen by over 8,000 since the 2015 edition.
- Findings from the sixth GMMP reveal a mixed picture of progress, stagnation and regression. While some glass ceilings are clearly being edged upwards, others are setting in on certain important news media gender equality indicators, The past five years have seen small incremental changes towards parity, at the same time, the overall pace of change remains glacial.

## Regional Context

News media remain the major and most influential source of information, ideas, and opinions for most people around the world. Who and what appears in the news, as well as how people and events are portrayed matters. Equally important is who is left out and what is not covered. Since media play a vital role in shaping information, ideas, and opinions, it is important to hold media houses to account.

The North American Regional Report of the Global Media Monitoring Project is an analysis of news content produced by American and Canadian media houses.

In Canada, ownership of media and telecommunications networks is governed by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC). According to a 2022 Harvard study on media ownership in Canada<sup>4</sup>, the top 5 owners of Canadian media houses were: government-owned Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), Bell Media Inc., Pelmorex, Corus Entertainment and Postmedia Network.

**Table 1.** Canadian News Media Ownership Index, Top 5. 2022<sup>5</sup>

Media House	Owner/Top Investor/Donor	Other Major Media Holdings	Medium(s)	Estimated Monthly Reach
CBC/Radio Canada	Canadian Broadcast Corporation	CBC News, CBC.ca, CBC Sports, Radio-Canada	Radio, TV, Digital	25,273,000
CTV	Bell Media Inc. Bell Media Inc. is the mass media subsidiary of BCE Inc.	35 local television stations, Noovo network in Quebec, and 27 specialty channels	Radio, TV, Digital	21,009,000
The Weather Network and MétéoMédia	Pelmorex	Alert Ready	Digital and Cable	16,525,000
Global News	Corus Entertainment	33 specialty television networks, 15 television stations, 39 radio stations	Radio, TV, Digital	16,045,000
PostMedia Network	Chatham Asset Management	120+ newspaper brands including: The National Post, The Financial Post	Print and Digital	15,190,000

<sup>4</sup> See [Canadian Media Ownership Index](#), 2021. Harvard University.

<sup>5</sup> See [Canadian Media Ownership Index](#), 2021. Harvard University.

The news media landscape in the USA is also dominated by telecommunications giants<sup>6</sup>.

Media House	Owner/Top Investor/Donor	Other Major Media Holdings	Medium(s)	Estimated Monthly Reach
Wikipedia	Wikipedia is a non-profit media house. Some of its top donors are: Arcadia, Google, Facebook, Amazon, Musk Foundation, and George Soros	N/A	Digital Only	1,700,000,000
FOX	Fox News is owned by Fox Corporation.  Rupert Murdoch and his family have controlling shares of News Corp.	The Murdoch family also have controlling shares in News Corp. News Corp. owns New York Post, HarperCollins, and the Wall Street Journal.	TV & Digital	833,000,000
CNN	Discovery Media and Warner Media LLC.	Warner Media LLC also owns HBO, Otter Media, Warner Brothers, and Turner Broadcasting System. Discovery Media owns Discovery+, Eurosport Player and Food Network Kitchen.	TV & Digital	482,000,000
E.W. Scripps Local TV (160 Local Cable TV)	E.W. Scripps Company	60 TV stations in 41 markets	TV & Digital	330,000,000

<sup>6</sup> See [US Mainstream Media Index](#), 2021. Harvard University.



ABC News	<p>The Walt Disney Company.</p> <p>ABC News is a branch of ABC, which is a branch of Walt Disney Television. World Disney Television is a branch of Disney Media Networks, which is part of The Walt Disney Company.</p>	<p>ESPN, ABC, Lifetime, History, A&amp;E, and FX, Marvel Studios and Lucasfilm.</p>	TV & Digital	300,000,000
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**Table 2.** American News Media Ownership Index, Top 5. 2021<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See [US Mainstream Media Index](#), 2021. Harvard University.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2020 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) took place on Tuesday, Sept. 29, attracting thousands of volunteers from 116 countries worldwide.

This monitoring project was the sixth in a series of extensive gender and media monitoring studies that have been conducted every five years since 1995 by WACC Global - an international NGO that advocates communication rights in order to achieve social justice.

The GMMP's findings are drawn from 30,172 stories published last September in newspapers, broadcast on radio and television, and disseminated on news websites and via news media tweets.

This regional report is based on data gathered from news stories in North American print, radio, television, internet media outlets and Twitter news feeds.

Here are some key findings in the report:

- **Men continue to have a larger presence on traditional and digital news media compared to women.** According to the 2020 GMMP data, men were two to three times more likely than women to be news subjects on print, radio and television news platforms in the topics of: 'Politics and Government', 'Economy', 'Science and Health', 'Crime and Violence' and 'Celebrity, Arts and Media'. Women primarily feature on traditional news media as news subjects in the topics of 'Social and Legal' and 'Gender and Related'.

It is additionally concerning to see a drastic decline in the overall presence of women (on both traditional and digital news media) in the major news topic of 'Science and Health' (2015: Print, Radio and Television – 43%, Internet, Twitter – 71% | 2020: Print, Radio and Television – 36%, Internet, Twitter – 39%).

However, it is worth acknowledging that in both 2020 and 2015, women's overall presence in the news in North America has remained above the critical 30% threshold on traditional news media (2020: 33%, 2015:36%).

- **The greatest function of women in the news in North America was as sources of 'Personal Experience'.** This role has been steadily growing since 2005 (2005: 31%, 2010: 37%, 2015: 40%, 2020: 46%). The second largest function of women in the news was as 'Expert or Commentator'. This function has also been steadily growing since 2005 (2005: 17%, 2010: 26%, 2015: 32%, 2020: 38%). On the other hand, the 2020 data reflects a decline in the functions of women in the news as 'Subject' and 'Spokesperson'. This downturn marks the end of a recorded period of steady growth in these two functions of women in North American news since 2005.
- **There has been a gradual increase in the number of female reporters in traditional and digital news media in the North American region.** A 7% increase in the number of female reporters has been noted between 2005 and 2020. Television platforms have taken the greatest strides in increasing its female reporters. However, little progress has been made in the number of female reporters on print and radio platforms.
- **As newsmakers, women remain under-represented in traditionally male dominated news topics such as "Economy" and "Crime and Violence".** In both the 2020 and 2015 monitoring periods, female reporters were commonly assigned to the "Science and Health" and "Social and Legal" news topics. The "Gender and Gender Related" news topic was introduced in 2020, and the data collected indicates that only female reporters were assigned to this beat.

- **There is a gendered difference in news reporting.** The Global Media Monitoring Project has discovered that female reporters are likelier than male reporters to highlight issues of gender equality or inequality. In 2015, 25% of stories by female reporters raised gender (in)equality issues compared to 10% of stories by their male counterparts. The 2020 data shows that 22% of stories by women reporters raised gender (in)equality issues, compared to 14% of stories by male reporters. Therefore, increasing the number of female reporters in North American newsrooms will lead to more news stories that highlight matters of gender equality and inequality.
- **Gender inequality in the news persists.** However, on a global level, the North American and African regions lead in the number of news stories that refer to gender equality, women's rights and/or human rights policy at 14%.

## A DAY IN THE NEWS IN NORTH AMERICA

September 29, 2020 was not a typical news day in the U.S. or Canada. Both countries were reeling from the social, political, and economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In Canada, the top news stories were pandemic related and included:

- the passing of a legislation that would authorize new benefits for workers that had been left jobless or underemployed by the pandemic
- the federal government's plan to buy millions of Covid-19 rapid test kits
- an anti-lockdown rally in Toronto
- high demand for food at drop-in centers
- Covid-19 burnout

In the USA, news cycles were monopolized by the upcoming presidential debate between President Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden. The nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court was also a significant news item.



**The New York Times** @... · Sep 29 ···

In response to a question about the coronavirus, Joe Biden took aim at President Trump's response to the pandemic. Watch the debate live here: [nyti.ms/3ifV8mr](https://nyti.ms/3ifV8mr)



**ABC**

"This is the same man that told you by Easter this would be gone away. By the warm weather it would be gone, like a miracle. And maybe you could inject bleach in your arm and that would take care of it."

— Joe Biden



**The New York Times** @... · Sep 29 ···

Judge Amy Coney Barrett began meeting privately on Tuesday with top Republican senators including Mitch McConnell and Lindsey Graham as Republicans seek to speed her confirmation to the Supreme Court before the November 3 election.



Amy Coney Barrett meets with Senator Mitch McConnell, who hopes to speed ...

[nytimes.com](https://nytimes.com)

POLITICS | News

### Liberals revive efforts to make Sept. 30 holiday for Indigenous reconciliation

The Canadian Press Staff  
Contact

Published Tuesday, September 29, 2020 5:25PM EDT

## Ontario reports 554 new coronavirus cases, most in Toronto, Ottawa and Peel Region



By **Gabby Rodrigues** · Global News

Posted September 29, 2020 10:29 am · Updated September 29, 2020 1:47 pm



**Coronavirus: Ontario restricts visitors to some long-term care homes, ann...**

Watch later Share

Toronto

Seven Oaks Long-Term Care Home



Hotspots help push NYC's daily coronavirus infection rate to highest mark in months

## THE CONTEXT

MEDIUM					
	TRADITIONAL MEDIA			DIGITAL MEDIA	
	Print	Radio	Television	Website Name	Media & Twitter Handle
<b>USA</b>	New York Post The Philadelphia Tribune The Baltimore Sun The Philadelphia Inquirer The Arizona Republic The New York Times Daily News The Journal News The Washington Post Scoop USA Media	Bloomberg Daybreak 1130 NY GBH 89.7 Boston Coast Radio/ KCST-KCFM/ Florence Oregon KPCC Local (Southern California) NPR CA NPR/KJCC	Helena, Montana KTVH NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt 6:30 pm ABC 15 Fox News PBS CBS evening news CBS evening news Channel 8 San Diego, California CBS-news 8	<a href="#">New York Times</a> <a href="#">USA Today</a> <a href="#">NBC</a> <a href="#">NY Post</a> <a href="#">The Washington Post</a> <a href="#">Wall Street Journal</a>	Los Angeles Times - @latimes New York Times - @nytimes CNN - @cnnbrk
<b>CANADA</b>	Toronto Star Calgary Herald National Post Toronto Globe and Mail Toronto Sun Vancouver Sun Montreal Gazette The Ottawa Citizen	VOCM - St. John's Newfoundland Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) Toronto CFTR A.M. 680 News Toronto CKOM News1130	CityNews Toronto CBC CP24 CTV News Global National APTN	<a href="#">The Chronicle Herald</a> <a href="#">Times Colonist</a> <a href="#">Winnipeg Free Press</a> <a href="#">CTV News</a>	Hamilton Spectator - @TheSpec Toronto Star - @TorontoStar Huffington Post Canada - @HuffPost Canada CBC News - @CBC News

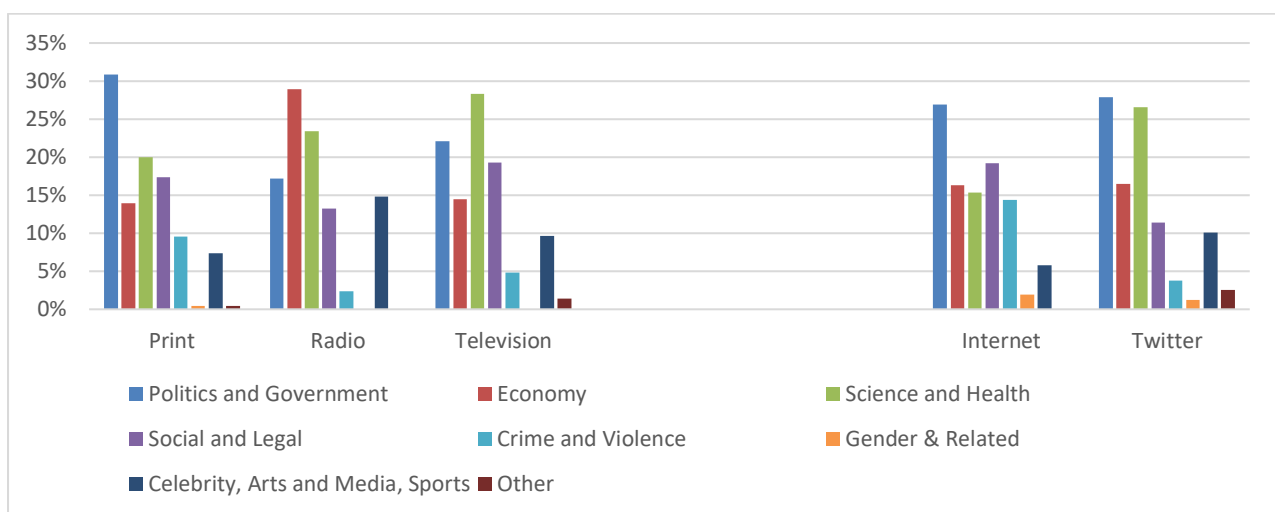
**Table 3.** Media outlets monitored

## TOPICS IN THE NEWS

The GMMP categorizes news stories into 7 major topics: politics and government, social and legal, celebrity, arts and media, economy, crime and violence, science and health, and gender and gender related topics.

For the 2020 monitoring project, a total of 686 stories across 5 mediums were assessed: print (230), radio (128), TV (145), internet (104) and Twitter (79).

Figure 1 shows that the four major topics across all mediums were: politics and government, science and health, economy, and social and legal.



**Figure 1.** Breakdown of major news topics across mediums

These findings are not surprising and depict the realities of living through a global pandemic. Nations across the world - including Canada and the United States of America - have had to adapt to the political, economic and social effects of the Covid - 19 global pandemic, and the laws, policies and regulations that they have had to implement have dominated news cycles.

### Spotlight on gender focused news

The media have acquired a power to shape political, social, and cultural norms and beliefs out of all proportion to their function as bearers of information.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore in 2020, the GMMP monitoring team carved out a seventh major topic ‘gender & related’, to cluster stories specific to: sexual harassment against women, rape, sexual assault, #MeToo, #TimesUp; other gender-based violence such as feminicide, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM); and inequality between women and men in areas such as gender pay gap.

As shown in Figure 1 above, less than 1% of stories were categorized under the ‘gender & related’ news topic in North America.

<sup>8</sup> See [Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project](#), 2020, p.1. World Association for Christian Communication.

## NEWS SUBJECTS AND SOURCES

According to the Global Media Monitoring Project, a subject is the individual that a news story is about (the protagonist of a news story), while a source is a person interviewed for the story such as: an eyewitness, an expert or commentator, spokesperson, or personal experience provider.

It could be argued that the capacities in which people speak or have voice in the news symbolize the value placed on their opinion. Gender disparities in these roles or functions suggest the worth accorded to people's voices on the basis of gender identity.<sup>9</sup>

A total of 1,531 news subjects across print, radio and television mediums, and 434 news subjects on digital media were coded in the 2020 GMMP in North America. These numbers are lower than in the 2015 study which had a total of 1,712 news subjects across print, radio and television mediums, and 543 news subjects on digital media.

**Table 4.** Percentage of men and women in the news (sources) by medium and GMMP year

	2015			2020				
	Print	Radio	Television	Print	Radio	Television	Internet	Twitter
<b>Female</b>	36%	50%	32%	33%	21%	39%	37%	36%
<b>Male</b>	64%	50%	68%	67%	79%	61%	63%	64%

### Overall Presence of Women in News

The 2020 data in Table 5 shows that men are two to three times more likely than women to be in traditional and digital news in the topics of: 'Politics and Government', 'Economy', 'Science and Health' and 'Crime and Violence'. Women are primarily visible in the topics of 'Social and Legal' and 'Gender and Related'. Compared to 2015's monitoring data, the prevalence of women in traditional mediums has marginally increased in the topics of: 'Politics and Government' (2020: 26%, 2015: 23%) and 'Social and Legal' (2020: 45%, 2015: 39%).

On the other hand, the presence of women on traditional news mediums has notably decreased in the topics of: 'Economy' (2020: 36%, 2015: 41%), 'Science and Health' (2020: 36%, 2015: 43%), and 'Crime and Violence' (2020: 29%, 2015: 38%). It is particularly concerning to note a drastic decline in the overall presence of women (on both traditional and digital news media) in the major news topic of 'Science and Health' (2015: Print, Radio and Television – 43%, Internet, Twitter – 71% | 2020: Print, Radio and Television – 36%, Internet, Twitter – 39%).

MAJOR TOPIC	Print, Radio & Television		Internet, Twitter		Print, Radio & Television		Internet, Twitter	
	2015				2020			
	%F	%M	%F	%M	%F	%M	%F	%M
<b>Politics &amp; Government</b>	23	77	17	83	26	74	29	71
<b>Economy</b>	41	59	40	60	36	64	32	68
<b>Science &amp; Health</b>	43	57	71	29	36	64	39	61
<b>Social &amp; Legal</b>	39	61	42	58	45	55	50	50

<sup>9</sup> See [Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project](#), 2020, p.32. World Association for Christian Communication.

<b>Crime &amp; Violence</b>	38	62	48	52	29	71	31	69
<b>Celebrity, Arts and Sports Media,</b>	29	71	31	69	26	74	40	60
<b>Gender &amp; Related</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	50	50	54	46

**Table 5.** Presence of men and women in the news, by medium, major topic and by GMMP year

## Functions of women in the news

Communication scholars have frequently critiqued news media for not being inclusive spaces. The GMMP strives to highlight these inequities through longitudinal studies of the world’s news media.

Equal enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression remains elusive and historically disadvantaged groups – including women, minorities, refugees, indigenous peoples and sexual minorities – continue to struggle to have their voices heard and to access information of relevance to them.<sup>10</sup>

Since the Global Media Monitoring Project began in 1995, the overall presence of women as subjects and sources in traditional media in North America, has increased year by year, and has consistently been above the global average statistics. According to the GMMP’s *6th Global Media Monitoring Project Report*, women’s overall presence in the news in North America and Pacific has surpassed the critical 30% threshold in both digital and legacy media.<sup>11</sup>

Region	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	Δ 25 yrs
Africa	22%	11%	19%	19%	22%	<b>22%</b>	0%
Asia	14%	17%	19%	20%	20%	<b>21%</b>	+7%
Caribbean	22%	24%	25%	25%	29%	<b>27%</b>	+5%
Europe	16%	19%	21%	26%	25%	<b>28%</b>	+12%
Latin America	16%	20%	23%	29%	29%	<b>26%</b>	+10%
Middle East	14%	15%	15%	16%	18%	<b>17%</b>	+3%
North America	27%	25%	26%	28%	36%	<b>33%</b>	+6%
Pacific*	20%	25%	26%	25%	26%	<b>31%</b>	+11%
<b>GLOBAL AVERAGE</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>+8%</b>

**Table 6.** Overall presence of women as subjects and sources on newspapers, radio, and television news. 1995-2020<sup>12</sup>

The research study clusters and analyzes the presence of women in news stories according to the following functions:

- Subject: the story is about this person, or about something the person has done, said etc.

<sup>10</sup> See [Tenth anniversary joint declaration: Ten key challenges to freedom of expression in the next decade](#), 2010. UN, OSCE, OAS and ACHPR Special Rapporteurs for Freedom of Expression.

<sup>11</sup> See [Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project](#), 2020, p. 22. World Association for Christian Communication.

<sup>12</sup> See [Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project](#), 2020, p.21. World Association for Christian Communication.



- Spokesperson: the person represents, or speaks on behalf of another person, a group, or an organisation
- Expert or Commentator: the person provides additional information, opinion, or comment, based on specialist knowledge or expertise
- Personal Experience: the person provides opinion or comment, based on individual personal experience; the opinion is not necessarily meant to reflect the views of a wider group
- Popular Opinion: the person's opinion is assumed to reflect that of the 'ordinary citizen' (e.g., in a street interview, vox populi etc); it is implied that the person's point of view is shared by a wider group of people.

In the North American 2020 monitoring period, the top 3 functions of women in news stories (as listed in table 7) were: personal experience providers (46%), experts (38%) and news subjects (29%). It is encouraging to see that over the last 15 years, the function of women as 'Expert or Commentator' and 'Personal Experience' providers has been steadily growing.

FUNCTION SOURCE	OF 2005	2010	2015	2020
Eye Witness	30%	33%	20%	23%
Popular Opinion	34%	29%	78%	25%
Spokesperson	14%	27%	31%	28%
Subject	23%	25%	39%	29%
Expert or Commentator	17%	26%	32%	38%
Personal Experience	31%	37%	40%	46%

Table 7. Breakdown of the functions of women in news stories.

On the other hand, there is a noted decline in the function of women as 'Spokesperson', 'Subject' and source of "Popular Opinion" between the 2015 and 2020 monitoring periods.

### Women as news subjects

As illustrated in Table 7, the prevalence of women as news subjects has decreased from 39% (2015) to 29% (2020).

Table 8 further illustrates the presence of women and men by major news topics in North America between 2015 and 2020.

	2015				2020			
	PRINT, RADIO & TELEVISION		INTERNET, TWITTER		PRINT, RADIO & TELEVISION		INTERNET, TWITTER	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Politics & Government	23	77	17	83	26	74	29	71
Economy	41	59	40	60	36	64	32	68
Science & Health	43	57	71	29	36	64	39	61
Social & Legal	39	61	42	58	45	55	50	50
Crime & Violence	38	62	48	52	29	71	31	69
Celebrity, Arts and	29	71	31	69	26	74	40	60

<b>Media, Sports</b>									
<b>Gender Related</b>	<b>&amp;</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	50	50	54	46

**Table 8.** Gender in the news by major topic, medium and GMMP year

In traditional media, female subjects were most prominent in “Gender & Related” topics (50%), as well as “Social & Legal” topics (45%). They were least prominent in the topics of “Crime & Violence” (29%), “Politics & Government” (26%), and “Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports” (26%).

In digital media, women were also highly featured on “Gender & Related” topics (54%), “Social & Legal” topics (50%), as well as “Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports” (40%). They were least present in the news topics of “Economy” (32%), “Politics and Government” (29%) and “Crime and Violence” (31%).

Compared to the 2015 regional findings, the presence of women increased by 3% in the news topics of “Politics & Government” and 6% in “Social and Legal” on traditional media. However, it is troubling to note that in traditional media the presence of women decreased by 5% in the topics of “Economy”, 7% in “Science and Health” and 9% in “Crime and Violence”.

Digital media had a notable rise in the presence of women in the topics of “Politics and Government” (29% in 2020, compared to 17% in 2015). However, there was also a sharp decline in the prominence of women on digital media in the news topics of “Science and Health” (71% in 2015, compared to 39% in 2020); “Economy” (40% in 2015, compared to 32% in 2020); and “Crime and Violence” (48% in 2015, compared to 31% in 2020).

### Women’s visibility according to news topics

Although women appear in all news topics in both traditional and digital news media, they are more visible in certain types of stories than in others.

**Table 9.** Top 3 topics in which women are most likely to be news subjects, % of women

Rank	Topic
<b>1</b>	Human rights, women's rights, children's rights, gay & lesbian rights, rights of minorities (60%)
<b>2</b>	Poverty, housing, social welfare, aid to those in need (52%)
<b>3</b>	HIV and AIDS, incidence, policy, treatment, people affected (52%)

As Table 9 and 9.1 highlight, women feature most prominently in stories about human rights, poverty, and HIV/AIDS. They are least likely to be seen, heard, or read about in stories about sports, international politics, and economic policies.

**Table 9.1.** Bottom 3 topics in which women are most likely to be news subjects, % of women

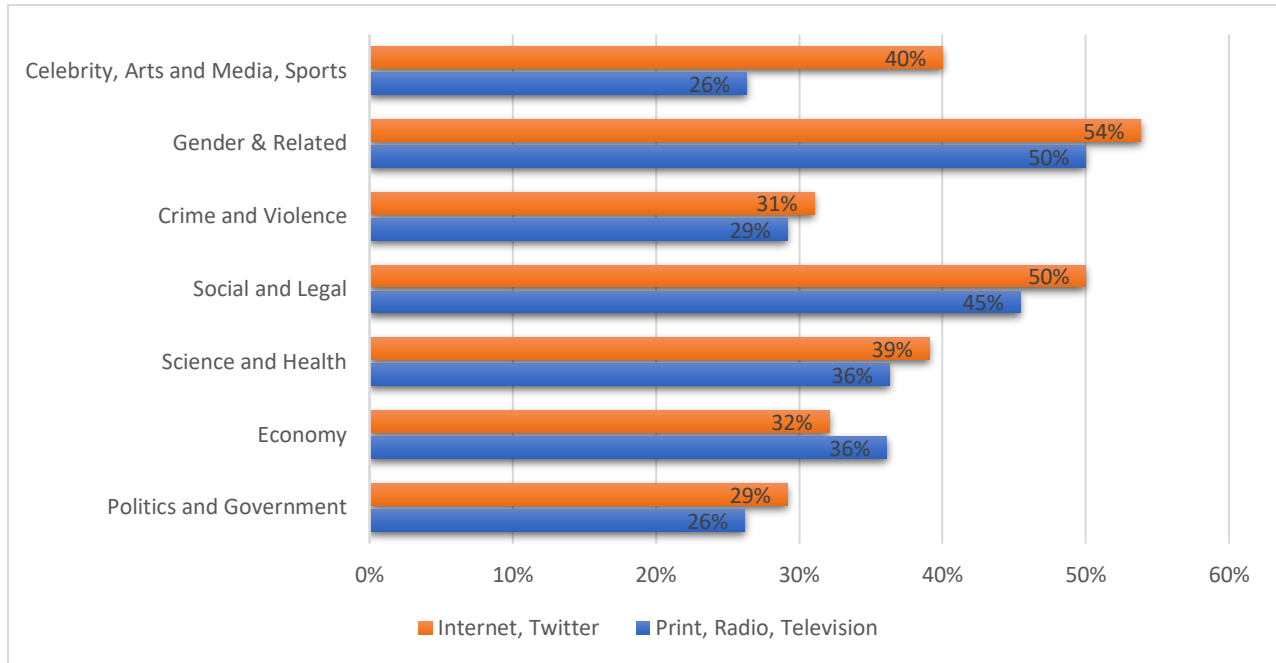
Rank	Topic
<b>1</b>	Sports, events, players, facilities, training, policies, funding (9%)
<b>2</b>	Foreign/international politics, relations with other countries, negotiations, treaties, UN peacekeeping (15%)

---

**3** Economic policies, strategies, modules, indicators, stock markets, taxes (22%)

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Figure 2 below adds to this finding. In both digital and traditional news media, women are most prominent in “Social & Legal” and “gender & related” news topics. They are visibly underrepresented in stories about politics and the economy.



**Figure 2.** Women as news subjects and sources, by major topics, by medium

## Occupation of subjects and sources in the news

	Spokesperson		Expert or commentator		Personal Experience		Eye Witness		Popular Opinion	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Not stated	3	1	1	1	46	35	67	30	33	44
Politician/ member of parliament, ...	30	38	8	10	0	2	0	0	0	44
Government employee, public servant, spokesperson, etc.	23	26	10	13	4	11	33	20	0	0
Police, military, paramilitary, militia, fire officer	9	7	0	3	0	1	0	30	0	0
Academic expert, lecturer, teacher	0	2	17	25	6	0	0	0	0	0
Doctor, dentist, health specialist	3	3	21	10	0	7	0	0	0	0
Health worker, social worker, childcare worker	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Science/ technology professional, engineer, etc.	1	1	1	5	0	1	0	0	33	0
Media professional, journalist, filmmaker, etc.	4	1	5	6	0	1	0	0	0	11
Lawyer, judge, magistrate, legal advocate, etc.	4	8	9	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
Business person, exec, manager, stock broker...	0	6	2	2	7	10	0	10	0	0
Tradesperson, artisan, labourer, truck driver, etc.	0	0	1	0	0	5	0	0	0	0
Agriculture, mining, fishing, forestry	1	0	0	1	6	1	0	0	0	0
Activist or worker in civil society org., NGO, trade union	16	8	23	9	6	5	0	0	33	0
Celebrity, artist, actor, writer, singer, TV personality	1	0	0	2	4	0	0	10	0	0
Sportsperson, athlete, player, coach, referee	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student, pupil, schoolchild	0	0	1	0	11	10	0	0	0	0
Homemaker, parent (male or female)) only if no other occupation is given e.g. doctor/mother=code 6	1	0	1	0	4	2	0	0	0	0

**Table 10.** Breakdown of news subjects/sources by gender, by occupation (%)

# JOURNALISTS AND REPORTERS

## Analysis of reporters by region, by medium by sex

The GMMP documents the sex of news personnel to the extent that they are visible through bylines, heard and seen in broadcast and digital content.<sup>13</sup>

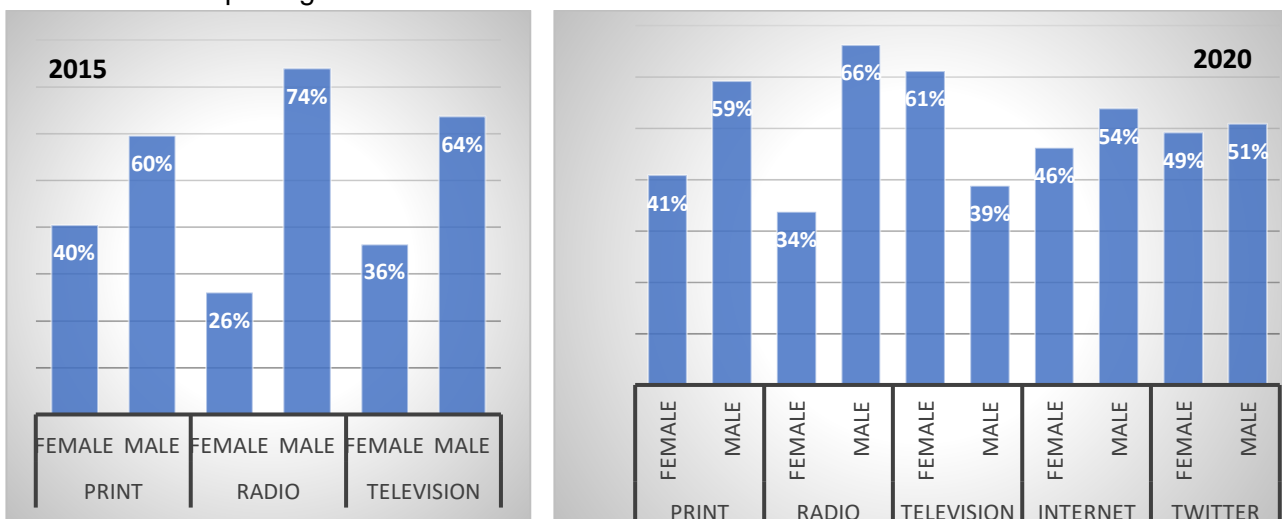
Table 11 highlights that on a global scale, the greatest advancement in female reporters in traditional media has been made in Latin America (+14%) and the Middle East (+12%).

While the North American region saw a relative stagnation in the overall presence of female reporters in traditional media between 2000 and 2015, over a 20 year period, there has been a notable 7% increase in the visibility of female reporters.

**Table 11.** Overall presence of female reporters on newspapers, radio and television news, by region. 2000-2020<sup>14</sup>

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	Δ 20 years
Africa	24%	28%	30%	35%	32%	+8%
Asia	31%	37%	37%	31%	41%	+10%
Caribbean	39%	41%	45%	44%	50%	+11%
Europe	34%	34%	35%	37%	41%	+7%
Latin America	27%	44%	43%	41%	41%	+14%
Middle East	34%	35%	34%	38%	46%	+12%
North America	36%	35%	38%	40%	43%	+7%
Pacific	43%	44%	38%	45%	48%	+5%

In the 2020 monitoring period, 586 reporters in print, radio, television, internet and twitter were coded in the North American region. Figure 4 below shows that in the 2020 monitoring period, print and radio news platforms were dominated by male reporters while female reporters were most represented in television news reporting.



**Figure 3.** Breakdown of reporters in North America by medium and gender

<sup>13</sup> See [Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project](#), 2020, p.44. World Association for Christian Communication.

<sup>14</sup> See [Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project](#), 2020, p.46. World Association for Christian Communication.

Furthermore, Figure 3 suggests that digital media newsrooms are significantly closer to achieving gender balance in reporters, compared to traditional media newsrooms.

In *Women, Men and News*, Ross et al (2018)<sup>15</sup> state the following:

That women find it easier to find work as presenters and announcers, than reporters and journalists is a pattern of employment which has been documented for decades, arguably as a consequence of an increasing intimisation of journalism for which women are seen as particularly suitable. However, young, attractive women are often paired with older, indifferently attractive men, speaking the soft, human interest news while more authoritative male voice gives viewers the important headlines.

### Stories assigned to female reporters by major topic

Scrutinizing the gender of reporters across major story topics tells us whether - and to what extent - gendered practices in story assignments exist in North American newsrooms.

Table 12 shows the distribution of reporters by gender, across GMMP’s 7 major topics, for the monitoring periods of 2015 and 2020.

**Table 12.** Distribution of story assignments, by gender

	2015		2020	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Politics and Government	17%	29%	29%	29%
Economy	13%	13%	11%	20%
Science and Health	20%	10%	29%	22%
Social and Legal	31%	22%	15%	14%
Crime and Violence	14%	17%	5%	9%
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	5%	6%	9%	6%
Other	0%	2%	1%	1%

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Between the 2020 and 2015 monitoring periods, there was a notable increase in the number of female reporters that were assigned to the “Science and Health” (2015: 20% female, 10% male; 2020: 29% female, 22% male) and “Politics and Government” news topics (2015: 17% female, 29% male; 2020: 29% female, 29% male). The “Gender and Gender Related” news topic was introduced in 2020, and the data collected indicates that only female reporters were assigned to this beat.

It is positive to note that in the traditionally male dominated topic of “Politics and Government”, there was an almost equal number of female and male reporters assigned to the beat in 2020. This is a significant progression from 2015 in which the number of male reporters was almost double that of women (29% male, 17% female). It is additionally interesting to note that between the 2015 and 2020 monitoring periods, the number of male reporters assigned to “Politics and government” remained the same.

<sup>15</sup> See Ross, Karen, Karen Boyle, Cynthia Carter, and Debbie Ging.2018. “Women, Men and News.” *Journalism Studies* 19 (6):824–45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2016.1222884>

On the other hand, it is concerning to see a 2% decrease in the number of female reporters assigned to the “Economy” beat (2015: 13%, 2020: 11%) while the number of male reporters assigned to this news topic increased by 7% (2015: 13%, 2020: 20%).

A sharp decline was also noted in the number of female reporters that were assigned to the news topics of “Social and legal” (2020: 15% female, 14% male, 2015: 31% female, 22% male) and “Crime & Violence” (2020: 5% female, 9% male, 2015: 14% female, 17% male).

At the global average level, the gender gap in reporters remains narrowest in the science & health major topic.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See [Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project](#), 2020, p.47. World Association for Christian Communication.

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

The GMMP collects data on the extent to which news journalists are likely to refer to gender equality, as well as women's and general human rights policy frameworks.

Stories that highlight issues concerning equality or inequality between women and men include those that focus directly on an area of inequality. For example, career advancement, wages and salaries, access to resources, or discrimination in relation to rights of various kinds.<sup>17</sup>

Between 2005 and 2015, all regions worldwide (except Pacific) made significant leaps in increasing the number of news stories that highlight gender equality or inequality. Over the last 15 years, the number of news stories coded that raise gender (in)equality has almost doubled between each monitoring period. Therefore, it is disappointing to see a 7% decline in North American in 2020.

**Table 13.** Stories where issues of gender equality or inequality are raised on newspapers, radio and television news, 2005-2020<sup>18</sup>

Region	2005	2010	2015	2020
Africa	4%	5%	20%	7%
Asia	3%	3%	8%	4%
Caribbean	5%	9%	18%	6%
Europe	3%	3%	5%	2%
Latin America	4%	12%	7%	4%
Middle East	1%	4%	6%	3%
North America	5%	10%	17%	7%
Pacific	3%	1%	1%	5%
<b>GLOBAL AVERAGE</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>7%</b>

### On gender & intersectionality

Columbia University Prof. Kimberle Crenshaw first laid out the theory of intersectionality in her 1989 paper, [Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex](#), published by the University of Chicago Legal Forum, and later, in [Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color](#), published by the Stanford Law Review. She used it to describe how one's individual characteristics such as race, gender and class "intersect" and overlap one another.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> See [Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project](#), 2020, p.59. World Association for Christian Communication.

<sup>18</sup> See [Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project](#), 2020, p.59. World Association for Christian Communication.

<sup>19</sup> See [Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project, Canada National Report, 2020](#), p.34. World Association for Christian Communication.



Indicators such as race, ethnicity, immigration status allow results to be studied using intersectional lenses; they allow us to study how news media treats subjects and sources on the basis of identities other than gender.<sup>20</sup>

In this 6th GMMP, each country (Canada and U.S.A.) was given an opportunity to add three questions to their monitoring questionnaires.

The 3 questions that were added to the U.S. questionnaire to expand the social markers for gender were:

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

The Canadian team asked the following 3 questions:

- Is an Indigenous person mentioned in the text or visible in the images? Yes/No
- Is a person's race or ethnicity mentioned in the text or visible in the images? Yes/No
- Is the person's immigration or migrant or refugee status mentioned in the text or visible in the images? Yes/No

In Canada, Indigenous persons constituted 6.4% of news stories analysed for this question using long-form monitoring, or 10 out of 156 stories. In the physical world, First Nations, Metis, and Inuit represent 4.9% or 1,673, 785 million of Canada's population of 35,151,728, according to the 2016 Statistics Canada census. ... Indigenous people mostly appeared in stories about politics and government, where they constituted 3 out of 24 stories, or 12.5% (Graphic 13) and in stories about social and legal issues, where they comprised 6 out of 15 or 40% of Internet news. They were absent in stories about the economy, science and health, crime and violence, gender and related issues, and celebrity, arts, media, and sports.<sup>21</sup>

In the U.S., 22% of news stories mention race or ethnicity, of which 4 out of 10 are women. A key story covered was the shooting of Breonna Taylor, an African American woman, and the process undertaken by the prosecutor of Kentucky for the jury. Another news coverage is the story of Misty Copeland being the first African American to become a principal dancer in the American ballet. Persons living with disability referred to in the text or made visible in the image is 1%. Six out of 10 are women. Sexual orientation, migrant, or immigrant status is mentioned is 3% and 3 out of 10 are women. In Latin America, indigenous peoples constitute only 1% of news subjects. Only 3 out of 10 are women.<sup>22</sup>

Prior to the inclusion of these 3 questions, the only social marker in the questionnaires was age.

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<sup>20</sup> See [Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project, Canada National Report, 2020](#), p.34. World Association for Christian Communication.

<sup>21</sup> See [Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project, Canada National Report, 2020](#), p.36. World Association for Christian Communication.

<sup>22</sup> See [Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project, United States of America National Report, 2020](#), p.17. World Association for Christian Communication.

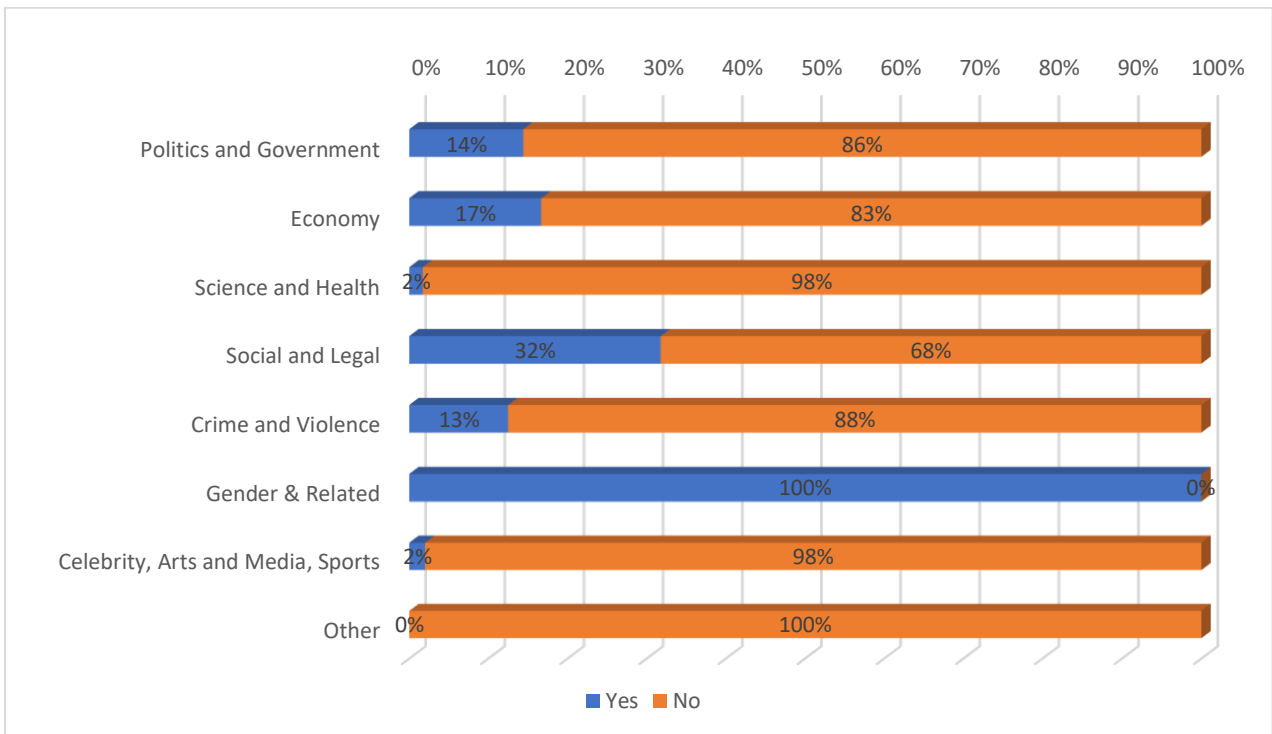
## Gender (in)equality in the news

The *Tenth Anniversary Joint Declaration: Ten Key Challenges To Freedom of Expression In The Next Decade*, recognized that women, minorities, refugees, indigenous peoples and sexual minorities continue to struggle to have their voices heard and to access information of relevance to them.<sup>23</sup>

Figure 4 demonstrates that this problem persists. As highlighted in the chart, the news topics that refer to gender (in)equality are those that address “gender related” and “social and legal” matters.

Figure 4 additionally suggests that there remains a degree of segregation in including gender equity in beats such as “Politics and Government”, “Economy”, “Crime and Violence” and “Science and Health”. This is concerning because considerable documentation shows that women were significantly impacted in the above areas during the 2020 monitoring period (by the Covid-19 pandemic) - but the data shows that their voices were largely absent from the conversations.

**Figure 4.** Reference to gender equality or inequality by major news topic, 2020



<sup>23</sup> See [Tenth anniversary joint declaration: Ten key challenges to freedom of expression in the next decade](#), 2010. UN, OSCE, OAS and ACHPR Special Rapporteurs for Freedom of Expression.

## News quality from a gender perspective

Is there a correlation between the reporter's gender and the gender (in)equality lens in a news story? According to the historical GMMP findings outlined in Table 14 and Table 15 - yes!

**Table 14.** Percentage of stories that raise issues of gender (in)equality by sex of reporter in North America

	2015				2020			
	FEMALE		MALE		FEMALE		MALE	
	%Y	% N	%Y	% N	% Y	%N	% Y	%N
Percentage of stories in which issues of gender (in)equality are raised according to reporter's gender.	25	75	10	90	22	78	14	86

**Table 15.** Breakdown of stories that refer to gender (in)equality, by major topic, sex of reporter, GMMP year

MAJOR TOPIC	2015				2020			
	FEMALE		MALE		FEMALE		MALE	
	%F	% M	%F	% M	% F	%M	% F	%M
Politics & Government	33	67	12	88	11	89	14	86
Economy	21	79	10	90	18	83	10	90
Science & Health	14	86	5	95	0	100	3	97
Social & Legal	25	75	26	74	42	58	23	77
Crime & Violence	20	80	4	96	27	73	9	91
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	3	97	11	89	4	96	0	100
Gender & Related	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100	0	0	0

Table 14 shows that female reporters are more likely to produce stories that make reference to gender equality or inequality issues. As illustrated in Table 15, this is particularly notable in the topics of "Economy", "Social and Legal", and "Crime and Violence." It is significant that 42% of "Social and Legal" stories by women contain a gender (in)equality lens – almost double the proportion of that covered by male reporters (23%). This large disparity in the gender (in)equality lens in news stories is also noted in the topics of "Crime and Violence" (female: 27%, male: 9%) and "Economy" (female: 18%, male: 10%).

At the global level, Table 16 shows that the North American region ties with Africa in the number of news stories that refer to gender equality, women's rights and/or human rights policy.

**Table 16.** Reference to gender equality, women's rights and/or human rights policy, by region. 2010-2020<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> See [Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project](#), 2020, p.55. World Association for Christian Communication.

<b>Region</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>
Africa	13%	20%	14%
Asia	8%	8%	7%
Caribbean	9%	19%	12%
Europe	9%	5%	4%
Latin America	5%	7%	7%
Middle East	22%	6%	5%
North America	21%	17%	14%
Pacific	2%	1%	9%
<b>GLOBAL AVERAGE</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>7%</b>

Overall, the rise in the proportion of stories by women are promising for gender equality as far as numerical counts are concerned.

**Table 17.** Stories where issues of gender equality/inequality are raised by sex of reporter by percentage

	Female		Male	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Peace, negotiations, treaties...(local, regional, national),	0	100	40	60
Other domestic politics/government (local, regional, national), elections, speeches, the political process ...	15	85	18	82
Global partnerships (international trade and finance systems, e.g. WTO, IMF, World Bank, debt) ...	0	0	0	0
Foreign/international politics, relations with other countries, negotiations, treaties, UN peacekeeping ...	0	100	18	82
National defence, military spending, military training, military parades, internal security ...	0	100	0	100
Other stories on politics and government (specify the topic in 'Comments' section of coding sheet)	33	67	25	75
Economic policies, strategies, modules, indicators, stock markets, taxes,...	75	25	27	73
Economic crisis, state bailouts of companies, company takeovers and mergers ...	0	100	0	100
Poverty, housing, social welfare, aid to those in need ...	44	56	75	25
Science, technology, research, funding, discoveries, developments ...	0	100	0	100
Medicine, health, hygiene, safety, disability, medical research, funding (not EBOLA or HIV- AIDS)...	0	100	3	97
HIV and AIDS, incidence, policy, treatment, people affected ...	0	100	0	100
Environment, pollution, tourism ...	0	100	0	100
Human rights, women's rights, children's rights, gay & lesbian rights, rights of minorities ..	80	20	40	60
Education, childcare, nursery, university, literacy	0	100	13	88
Legal system, judicial system, legislation (apart from family, property & inheritance law) ...	83	17	57	43
Disaster, accident, famine, flood, plane crash, etc	0	100	0	100
Violent crime, murder, abduction, kidnapping, assault, drug-related violence ...	57	43	20	80
Arts, entertainment, leisure, cinema, theatre, books, dance ...	0	100	0	100

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## FOCUS ON COVID-19 NEWS

Most of the global news coverage has been dominated by Covid-19 since the World Health Organization declared the outbreak to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January 2020, and a pandemic on 11 March 2020.

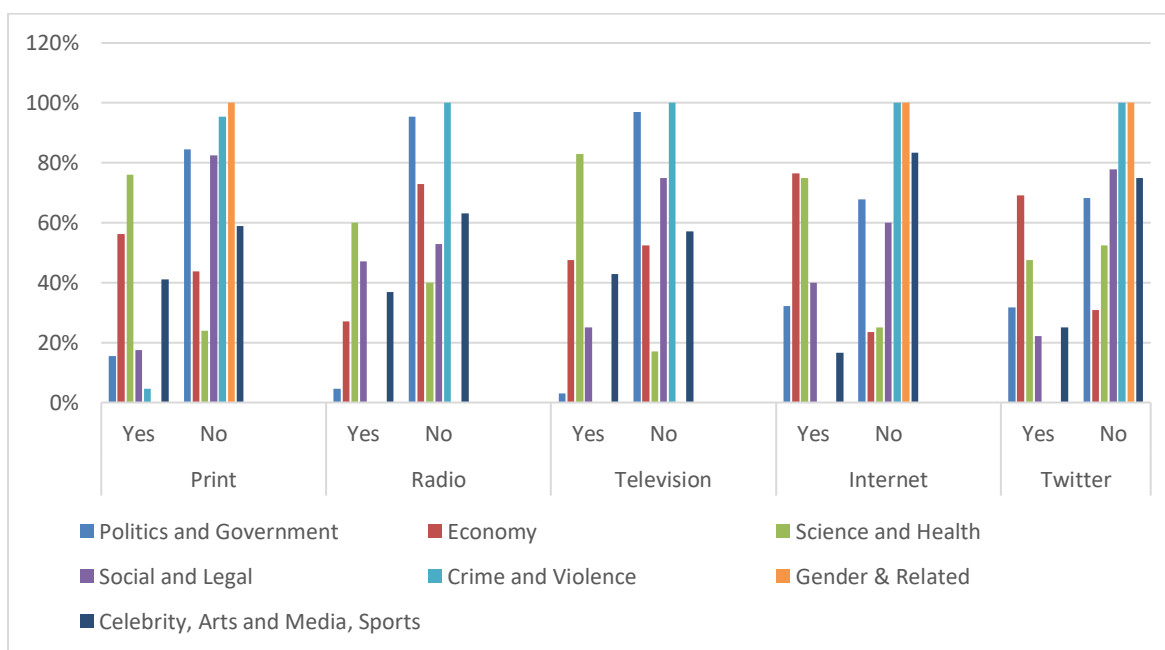
The sixth GMMP thus offered an opportunity to scrutinize gender in media coverage during a global catastrophe, a time marked by an unprecedented health crisis, and the intensifying gender and socio-economic inequalities accompanying the crisis.<sup>25</sup>

### On Covid-19 news content

Media are crucial for spreading awareness on crises and promoting as well as directing public and state response. Assessment of media content during such times zooms in on two issues: media framing, and treatment of marginalized and vulnerable groups.<sup>26</sup>

Figure 5 shows that science & health stories on all mediums except for Twitter, and economic news in newspapers, on news websites and on Twitter were related to the Covid-19 pandemic. This is not surprising. Efforts to curb the rapid spread of the Covid-19 virus such as closing land borders, workplaces, and restricting trade and travel, had led to economic slowdowns and recessions.

In addition to health and economic tolls, the pandemic has also disrupted society. This is observed from the high number of Covid-19 related news content that was coded under the “social and legal” topic - particularly on radio and internet mediums.



**Figure 5.** Stories related to Covid-19, by topic, by medium

Table 18 on the next page illustrates the percentage of North American news stories that were related to Covid-19 by major topic and by medium.

<sup>25</sup> See [Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project](#), 2020, p.8. World Association for Christian Communication.

<sup>26</sup> See [Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project](#), 2020, p.34. World Association for Christian Communication.

Not surprisingly, the top news topics that were related to Covid-19, across all mediums, were: “science and health”, “economy”, and “social and legal”.

	Print		Radio		Television		Internet		Twitter	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Politics and Government	15%	85%	5%	95%	3%	97%	32%	68%	32%	68%
Economy	56%	44%	27%	73%	48%	52%	76%	24%	69%	31%
Science and Health	76%	24%	60%	40%	83%	17%	75%	25%	48%	52%
Social and Legal	18%	83%	47%	53%	25%	75%	40%	60%	22%	78%
Crime and Violence	5%	95%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%
Gender & Related	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	41%	59%	37%	63%	43%	57%	17%	83%	25%	75%

**Table 18.** Stories related to Covid-19, by topic, by medium.

Unfortunately, scholarly research also shows that media coverage during disasters and pandemics tends to be gender blind. For instance, Hines’ (2007) analysis of Indian media coverage of the 2004 Tsunami concluded that overlooking and ignoring gender concerns led to greater marginalization and impact on women.<sup>27</sup>

The ‘Gender & Related’ row in Table 18, points to a continuation of this worrisome trend. Of the 686 news stories monitored in 2020, there were zero ‘Gender & Related’ stories across all mediums.

The underrepresentation of girls and women in stories about sexual harassment, rape and sexual assault particularly now, during Covid-19 times when such acts have reached pandemic proportions<sup>28</sup>, signals the news media’s lack of accountability to and respect for women.<sup>29</sup>

### On functions of subjects or sources in Covid-19 news stories

GMMP 2020 data additionally found a striking gender disparity in the functions of news subjects and sources in Covid- 19 related news stories.

The data in Table 19 shows that men were two to three times more likely to be portrayed as ‘Subject’, ‘Spokesperson’ and ‘Expert or Commentator’ in news stories on ‘Politics and Government’, ‘Economy’, and ‘Science and Health’. In ‘Social and Legal’ news stories, men were more likely to be the ‘Spokesperson’.

Furthermore, according to Table 19, women were more likely to appear in Covid - 19 related stories as ‘Personal Experience’ sources in the ‘Social and Legal’, ‘Politics and Government’ and ‘Economy’ topics.

<sup>27</sup> See [Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project](#), 2020, p.34. World Association for Christian Communication.

<sup>28</sup> See Mittal, Shalini, and Tushar Singh. 2020. “Gender-Based Violence During COVID-19 Pandemic: A Mini-Review” *Frontiers in Global Women’s Health* . <https://www.frontier-sin.org/article/10.3389/fgwh.2020.0000>

<sup>29</sup> See [Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project](#), 2020, p.26. World Association for Christian Communication.

## Covid - 19 news subjects and sources: by function in the news, by sex

Major Topic	-	Subject	Spokesperson	Expert or commentator	Personal Experience	Eye Witness	Popular Opinion
Politics and Government	Female	21	19	24	57	25	0
	Male	77	81	74	43	0	0
Economy	Female	28	31	28	56	100	0
	Male	67	69	64	44	0	67
Science and Health	Female	39	38	37	44	0	0
	Male	61	59	63	56	50	100
Social and Legal	Female	32	31	59	89	0	0
	Male	59	69	41	11	0	0
Crime and Violence	Female	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Male	100	0	0	0	0	0
Gender & Related	Female	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Male	0	0	0	0	0	0
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	Female	18	42	44	53	0	0
	Male	83	58	56	47	50	100

Created with Datawrapper

**Table 19.** Covid-19 news subjects and sources by major topic and gender.

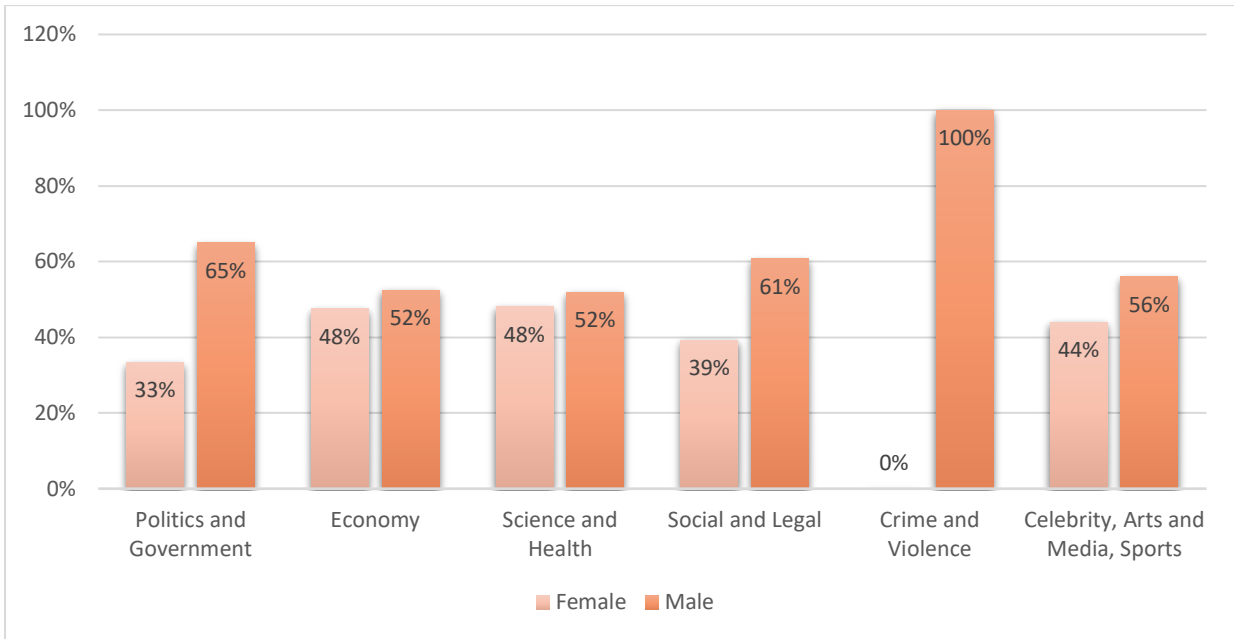
### On story assignments by gender

The pandemic has created an opportunity for female reporters to grow professionally, as news content has been critical in disseminating government response measures to the masses. Was there a difference in the angles of news stories that female reporters were assigned to - compared to their male counterparts?

According to Figure 6 on the next page, it is encouraging to see that female reporters almost had similar opportunities as male reporters in writing Covid - 19 related news stories on topics about the economy and science and health. However, the topics of “politics and government” and “crime and violence” were primarily written by their male counterparts.

This finding remains consistent with the earlier noted trends that show that the news topics of “politics and government” and “crime and violence” are male dominated.





**Figure 6.** Illustration of how Covid-19 stories were assigned to reporters, by sex, by major topic

# RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLANS 2021-2025

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## 1 KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION ACTION PLAN

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- i. The 2020 GMMP global and regional results will be shared with denominational communication representatives. As a first step, WACC-NA offered a plenary on Global Media Monitoring in the Religion Communicators Convention on April 7, 2020. The convention was organized by the Religion Communicators Council, the Associated Church Press, and the Canadian Christian Communicators Association.
- ii. The GMMP global and regional results will also be circulated within the academic community. The team leaders of St. John's University, NYC and New York City University are some of the key academic scholars that will share the GMMP results within their academic circles.
- iii. The GMMP global and regional findings will also be shared with Women's Media Center and other groups interested in advancing equitable roles for women in the media.

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## 2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEDIA HOUSES

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- i. Media houses should strengthen equality dimensions in policy, codes, and guidelines, with action plans and clear targets for implementation<sup>30</sup>
- ii. Media houses should perform their own audits on how their stories take up and represent gender, as well as the makeup of their own institutions. Actions must result from findings, including setting targets and goals<sup>31</sup>
- iii. Establish gender quotas for senior posts and board positions and monitor progress against targets

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## 3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEDIA TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

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### Capacity building:<sup>32</sup>

- i. Engage with community media organisations and citizens' media networks to demonstrate and use the GMMP results in training;
- ii. Incorporate gender training in journalism education and professional development;
- iii. Build capacity of news journalists about gender sensitive reporting; Increase journalists' understanding of the impacts of biased reporting; and
- iv. Build journalists' skills to navigate the structural barriers that impede gender responsive reporting.

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<sup>30</sup> See [Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project](#), 2020, p.65. World Association for Christian Communication.

<sup>31</sup> See [Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project](#), 2020, p.65. World Association for Christian Communication.

<sup>32</sup> See [Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project](#), 2020, p.65. World Association for Christian Communication.

## Annex 1. Methodology<sup>33</sup>

A key characteristic of longitudinal research is the assessment of change over time in the observed variables. In the case of the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) that studies gender equality dimensions of news media content, the methods of data collection and analysis remain consistent over time in order to accurately capture change. Similar to previous years, the methodology and indicators studied have remained relatively stable to enable the 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 editions 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, 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, the number of media to code and how to select each country's contextual information.

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 wish to take part but might be constrained from implementing the full monitoring.

To ensure accuracy in the coding process, radio and television bulletin were recorded, and copies of digital and print media pieces were collected. Across the different media types- both for 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

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<sup>33</sup> See the global report for the extended discussion on the GMMP 2020 methodology

purposes, as well as the multilingual nature of this study, all responses were numerically coded from fixed lists.

To enable comparability of data gathered from a pandemic-heavy news agenda with the historical results, an additional question was included which asked whether the story was related to Covid-19. For such stories, monitors were requested to code the most relevant secondary topic. While global news stories had diversified to pre-pandemic levels by the global monitoring day, 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 developed 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 mechanisms 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 Participating Countries**

- Canada
- United States of America

**Report Writer:** Alice Namu - Secretary, World Association for Christian Communication – North America

**GMMP Coordinators:**

**Canada:** Veronica Silva-Cusi, MA, MJ., News Correspondent, Video Journalist/News Researcher

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