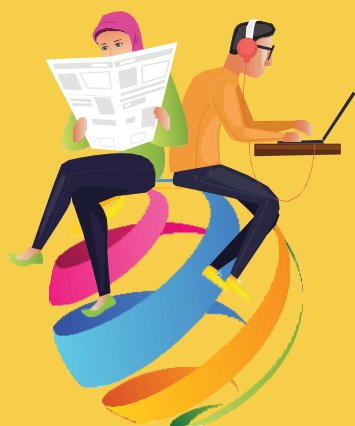


# WHO MAKES THE NEWS?



**GMMP**

Global Media  
Monitoring  
Project

**2020**

**EUROPE**

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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, mediaprofessionals, journalists associations, alternative media networks and faith groups.

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# WACC

communication for all



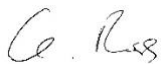
## *In Partnership with*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The success of the wider GMMP project relies on the volunteer labour of many hundreds of people who give up their time to coordinate others, organize and participate in training and monitor the media in their countries. I would therefore like to say a big thank you to everyone involved in GMMP2020 across the 32 European countries which participated, especially to the national coordinators who did such a great job during a time of considerable challenge which of course, continues into 2021 and likely beyond. Particular thanks to my colleagues who spent time translating some of their national case study examples of good and not so good journalistic practice which comprise the qualitative element of this report: Cécile Méadal, Claudia Padovani, Dawn Wheatley, Greta Grober, Jonita Siivonen, Lucie Delias, Marlène Coulomb-Gully, Monia Azzalini, Rita Basílio de Simões and Snjezana Milivojevic.

I would also like to acknowledge the considerable support provided by my colleague Marloes Jansen who supported me in undertaking the statistical data analysis and interpretation and without whom this report would have taken a lot longer to write.

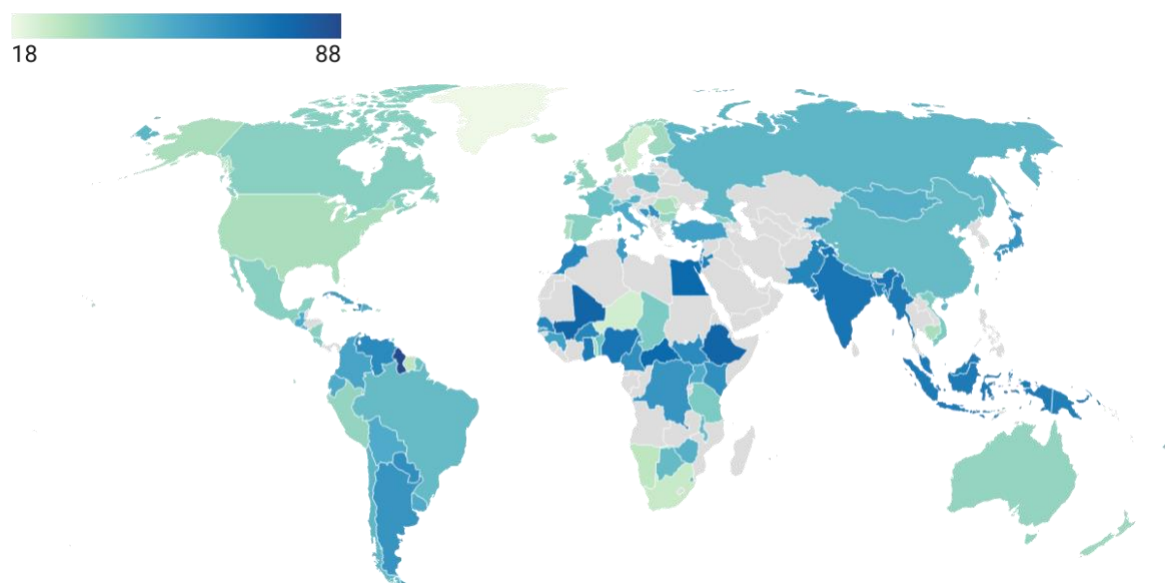


Karen Ross  
GMMP European Region Coordinator  
June 2021

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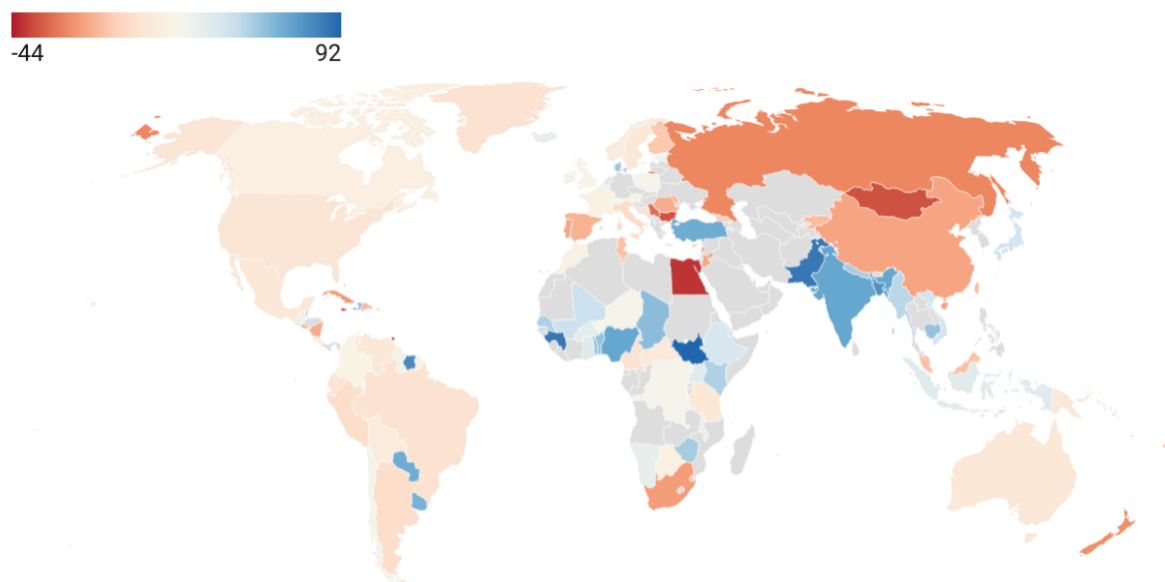
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*THE WORLD AT A GLANCE  
GENDER GAP IN SUBJECTS, SOURCES AND REPORTERS IN THE NEWS.*



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

*Data source: Global Media Monitoring Project, 2020*



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

*Data source: Global Media Monitoring Project, 2020*

## GLOBAL CONTEXT

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

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> *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> Gallagher, Margaret. *Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project*, 2005. World Association for Christian Communication.

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

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.

## REGIONAL CONTEXT

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

In 2015, 33 countries participated in GMMP 2015 and in 2020, 32 countries took part (see Annex 2). While there has been a core set of European countries which have participated in all or nearly all the GMMP monitoring days, 2020 was particularly challenging because of Covid-19. That so many people, coordinators and monitors did so, is a testament to their and our commitment to the broader GMMP project. While the impact of the pandemic continues to be felt as I write this report in June 2021, it is interesting that on 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 this report continue to serve an important comparative function in relation to previous iterations.

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

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A total of 32 European countries participated in GMMP2020, compared with 33 in 2015, although we coded around 20% more stories than in 2015. While we have seen some small improvements in women's overall visibility in the news agenda, these increases are tiny. Importantly, more countries included digital media in their sample for 2020 and yet online and Twitter news outlets are no more likely to include women than legacy media and Twitter stories are the least likely to include women sources than any other media platform.

We coded a total of 10691 news stories across five media, distributed as: print (2387), radio (2094), TV (2279), internet (2277) and Twitter (1654). Although the volume of items across the five media are varied, there is a remarkable consistency when we consider the most frequent story topic with politics/government and science/health being the largest topic categories across all media, the latter being, unexpectedly, much more important than in 2015 because of the global pandemic.

Across all five media, we coded 22613 sources of whom 28% were women in both legacy and digital media stories, constituting an increase of 3% on the 2015 data. Women were most likely to be sources or subjects in stories categorized as gender-related (comprising the smallest major topic category (81 stories, <1% ) and least likely to be included in stories focused on politics/government (22%). They were most likely to serve the purpose of providing eye witness accounts or public opinion than feature as experts, which follows the same pattern as in 2015. Fewer than 1% of stories challenged gender stereotypes or mentioned gender inequalities. Women mostly speak in the domain of the private/domestic and men in the public/professional sphere, a trend that has continued since the first GMMP in 1995, despite women's significant inclusion across all professional strata, despite women being heads of government, chiefs of police, supreme court judges and CEOs of European institutions. The question remains, why are their voices not more visible across the European news landscape? Despite the devastation of the pandemic on all our lives, Covid-19 stories only comprised 27% of all European stories and the pattern of women's voices in this sub-set of stories was broadly the same as the larger corpus.

In terms of who writes and presents the news, we coded 6427 reporters, 41% of whom were women, more or less evenly spread across TV, print, online and twitter but showing a reduced visibility in radio (33%). We also considered presenters and anchors on radio and TV shows and coded 4455 individuals, with slightly more than half (53%) of radio and TV presenters and anchors being women. When we looked at the beats that women and men occupy, women were more likely to be writing stories around gender-related topics, science/health and social/legal, with men more likely to be writing about politics, government and crime. These data are very similar to those from 2015, demonstrating that women continue to experience horizontal segregation in terms of accessing the more prestigious news beats.

For both women sources and women media professionals, we note that they start to disappear from the news landscape once they reach middle age, a trend which echoes all the literature on the topic, demonstrating that the media seem to be a sector which does not value experience.

The continuing marginalisation of women's voices both in general terms but also in relation to the news beats and genres which are regarded as both more prestigious and more important in informing the public, does little to properly serve that public nor the broader democratic project.



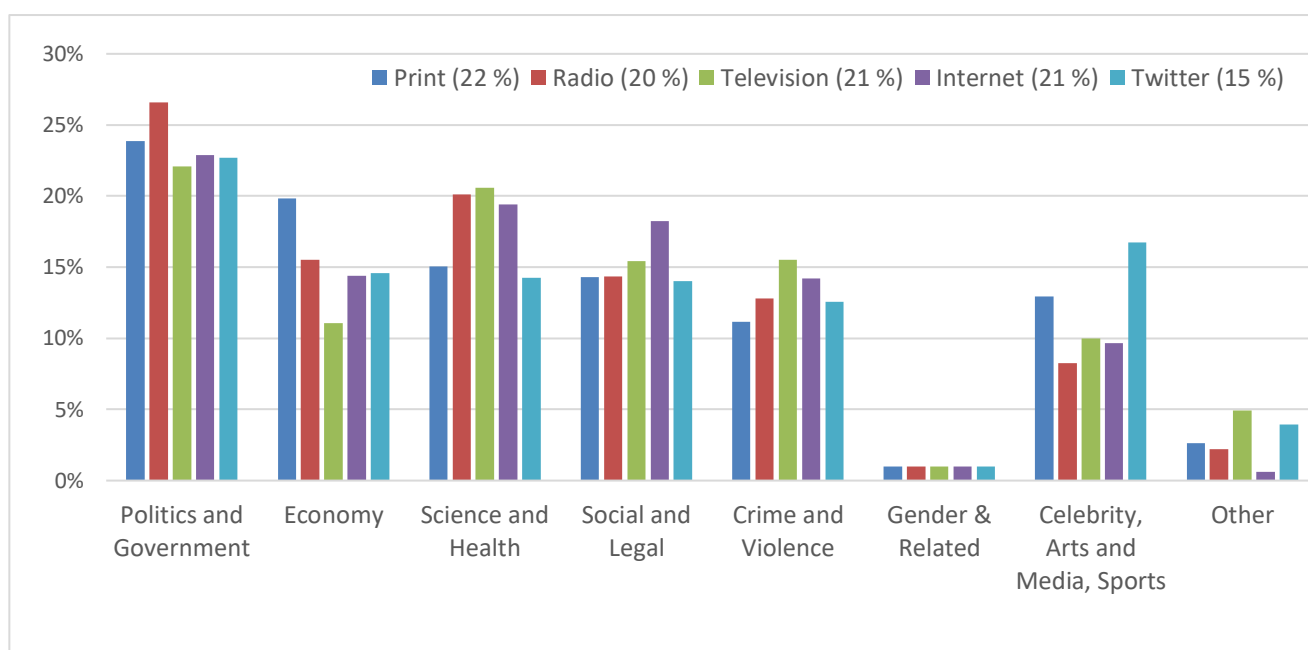
## A DAY IN THE NEWS IN EUROPE

**29 September 2020.** Across Europe and indeed the world, Covid-19 dominated the news agenda on monitoring day and during 2020 and indeed does so still. Europe is a vast region and on monitoring day, different countries were responding to the pandemic in different ways and were at different stages of the pandemic in terms of cases and strategies to combat the transmission of the virus. Having said that, Covid-19 news stories only comprised just over a quarter of news stories across the region although this obscures very significant differences between participating countries, for example the UK saw 40% of its news coverage dominated by Covid-19 associated news. Across the region, the major topic of politics/government was the most frequent across all five media monitored, as it was in 2015, suggesting that despite the devastation of the pandemic, to some extent, the European news agenda was more or less business as usual.

### A. TOPICS IN THE NEWS

We start the description of the data we collected with the focus on news content and Fig 1 provides a breakdown on topics by main categories: these 7 categories (plus 'other') aggregate a total of 10,691 stories, distributed as: print (2387), radio (2094), TV (2279), internet (2277) and Twitter (1654). However, given the pandemic, we also coded for topics which related to Covid-19 (yes/no) and coded those Covid-19 stories with their associated secondary topic focus. This means that Fig 1 includes **all** stories, both Covid-19 stories and non-Covid-19 stories, and Fig 2 shows the breakdown of the secondary topics associated with the Covid-19 stories. We provide a discussion of the Covid-19 stories later in this report.

**Fig 1 – all stories x topic**



**Fig 2 – Covid-19 stories x topic**

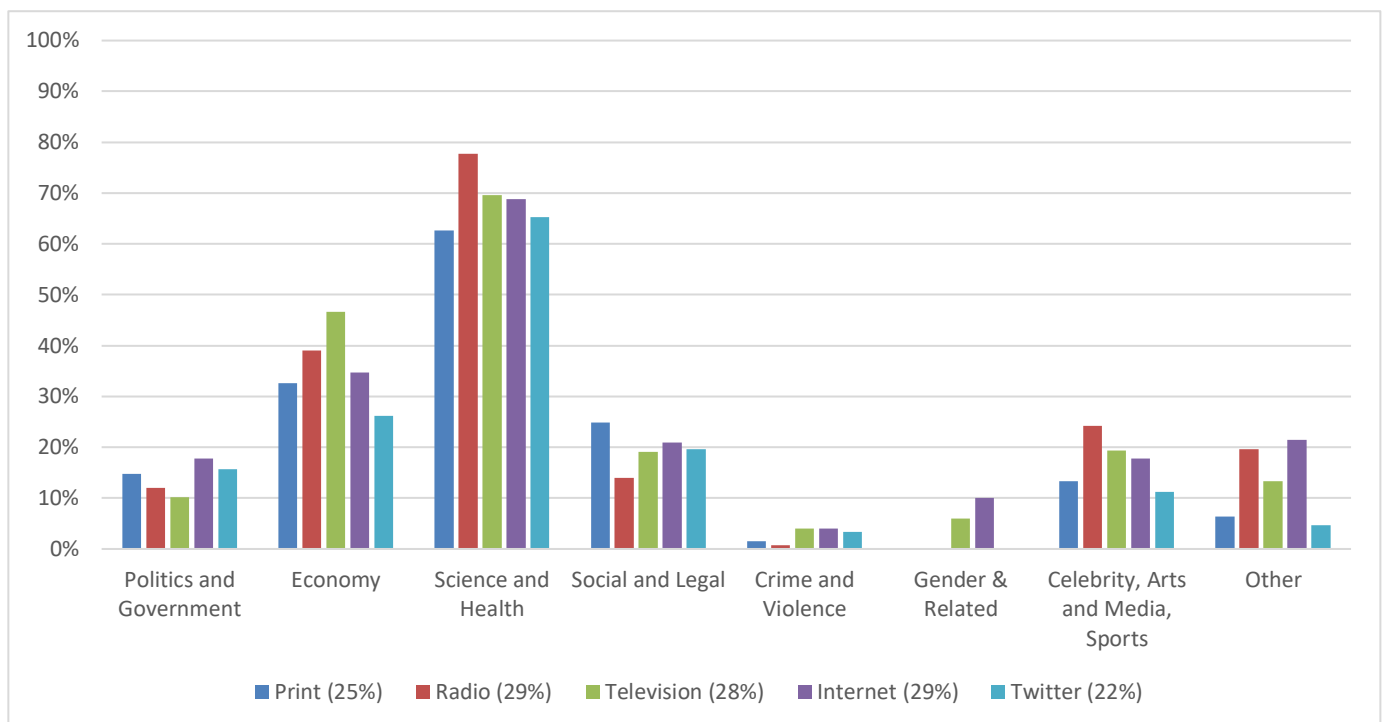


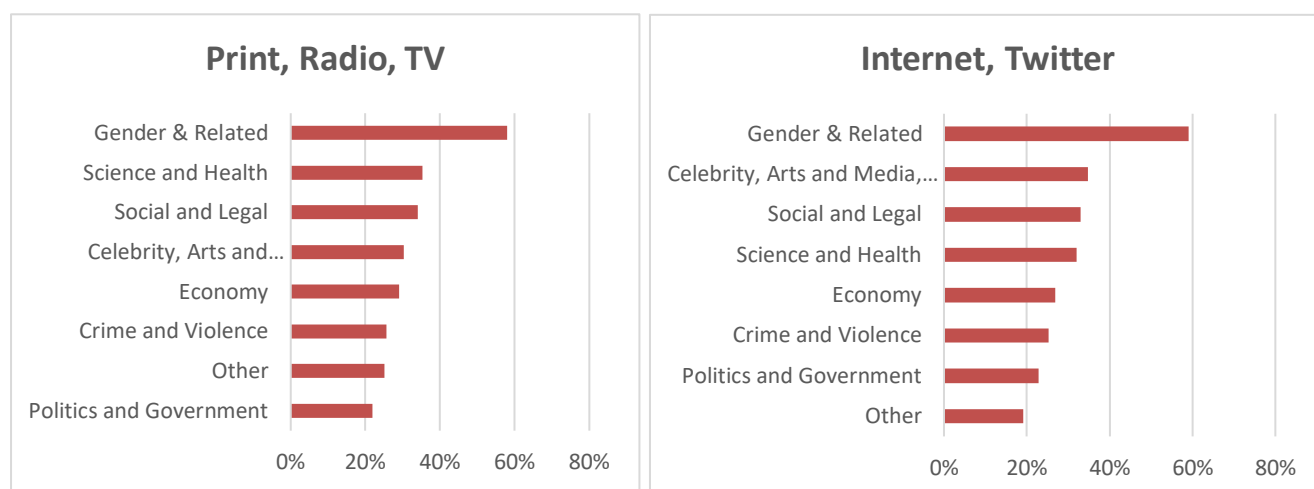
Fig. 1 shows that topics related to politics and government featured most frequently across all media, while topics related to gender were scarce, 81 stories constituting <1% of all stories. When compared with 2015, the patterns are broadly similar for most categories, though some noteworthy differences are observable for science/health, which featured more frequently in 2020 than in 2015, and social/legal, which featured less frequently in 2020. An obvious potential explanation for the rise in science/health topics is the COVID-19 pandemic. While the broad shape of topics and media are similar, radio is an interesting outlier as it seems to show a slightly different focus compared with the other media.

## **B. NEWS SUBJECTS AND SOURCES**

### ***Overall visibility***

Across all five media, we coded 22613 sources of whom 28% were women in both legacy and digital media stories. We coded three sources as ‘other’ identified. As Fig. 3 below shows, women were most likely to be sources or subjects in stories categorized as gender-related (comprising the smallest major topic category) and least likely to be included in stories focused on politics/government. We coded 81 stories under the gender-related major topic (<1%), compared with 2254 stories about politics and government (21%), so women were significantly over-represented in stories about gender (58%), albeit unsurprisingly, and the patterns of story topic and source were very similar for both legacy and digital media, suggesting that the promise of online media providing more opportunities for women’s voices has not been realized. These findings largely correspond with the 2015 data. Women reporters were no more likely to source women in the stories they wrote than men.

**Fig 3 – women sources by medium**



If we drill down a little further into the story topics in which women featured the most and the least, Table 1 shows the top 10 and the bottom 10 story topics featuring women.

**Table 1 – top and bottom topics in which women appear as sources/subjects**

TOP 10 TOPICS	% WOMEN	
	%	n
Women’s participation in economic processes (informal work, paid employment, unemployment, unpaid labour)	86%	7
Birth control, fertility, sterilization, amniocentesis, termination of pregnancy, etc.	83%	6
Beauty contests, models, fashion, beauty aids, cosmetic surgery, etc.	73%	37
Inequality between women and men such as income inequality/gender pay gap	71%	17
Family law, family codes, property law, inheritance law and rights, etc.	65%	17
HIV and AIDS: incidence, policy, treatment, people affected, etc.	60%	5
Women's movement, feminist activism, events, demonstrations, gender equality advocacy, etc.	59%	22
Other gender violence such as femicide, trafficking of girls and women, FGM, etc.	58%	36
Sexual harassment against women, rape, sexual assault, #MeToo #TimesUp	56%	91
Child abuse, sexual violence against children, neglect	53%	184

BOTTOM 10 TOPICS		
	% WOMEN	n
EBOLA, treatment, response, etc.	0%	6
War, civil war, terrorism, state-based violence	11%	581
National defence, military spending, military training, military parades, internal security, etc.	16%	174
Peace, negotiations, treaties (local, regional, national)	17%	206
Informal work, street vending, etc.	17%	6
Foreign/international politics, relations with other countries, negotiations, treaties, UN peacekeeping, etc.	17%	1146
Corruption (including political corruption/malpractice)	18%	323
Economic policies, strategies, modules, indicators, stock markets, taxes, etc.	20%	581
Media, including new media (computers, internet), portrayal of women and/or men	20%	74
Sports, events, players, facilities, training, policies, funding, etc.	20%	735

From Table 1, we see that women were principally sources in stories stereotypically held to be of interest to women, such as those concerning their place in the economy, matters relating to childbirth, involvement in beauty contests and the beauty industry more widely, and inequality between women and men. However, the total number of women in these top 10 story categories was 422, which comprised <2% of all sources. We can further see from the table, that women are least represented as sources in stories which are stereotypically perceived as ‘masculine’, such as war, terrorism, foreign and international politics and the economy. The total number of sources in these 10 story categories was 3832, or 17% of all sources. This shows that women are largely confined to speaking on topics broadly within the private and domestic sphere whereas men speak on a whole range of topics but especially on those topics seen as important within the public sphere.

### Occupation

Along with understanding which topics invite or attract women’s voices, *who* they are is also meaningful to analyse. Table 2 shows that women as sources of media content are (perhaps unsurprisingly) overrepresented in the occupation category ‘sex worker’. Women were further overrepresented in the categories of homemaker, parent, child, young person, health worker, social worker, and childcare worker, suggesting that women are being situated in the domestic sphere or aligned chiefly with feminised occupations. At the same time, women were underrepresented in almost all specialist, professional, academic, manual, governmental, finance, sports, and religious occupations. The occupation of ‘politician’ constituted the largest single occupational category across all media (34%) but women comprised only 22% of individuals coded as politician. These patterns reflect more or less the data from 2015, except that female representation seems to have increased for the category child and young person in television, radio, and print media, from 26% in 2015 to 55% in 2020. It also appears that women’s representation increased slightly for the category of science/technology professional in television, radio, and print media, from 6% in 2015 to 13% in 2020, and for the sportsperson category in television, radio, and print, from 9% in 2015 to 19% in 2020.

**Table 2 – Occupation of women sources/subjects**

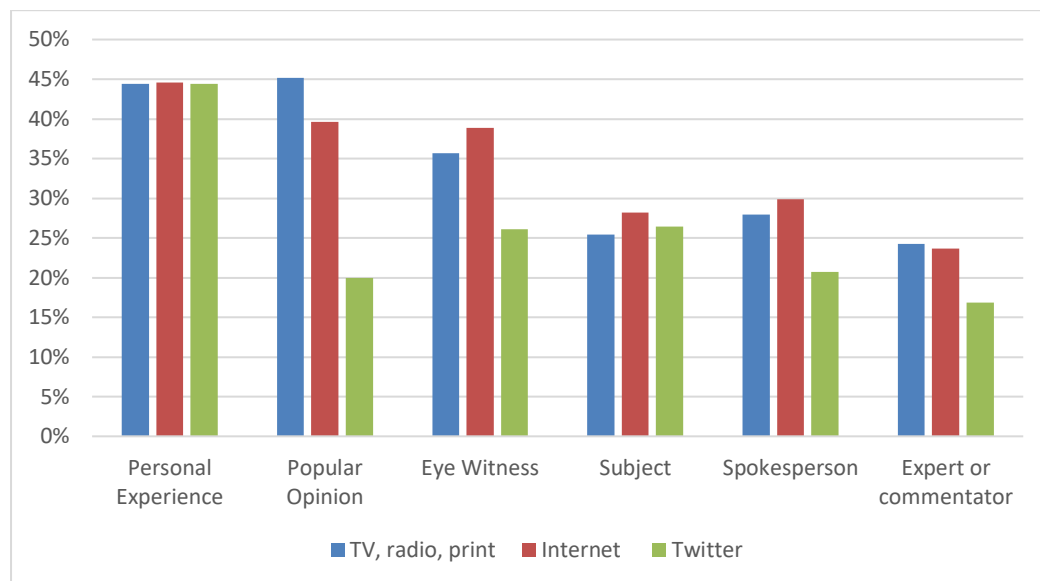
Occupation	TV, radio, print		Internet		Twitter		Total (w)
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sex worker	100%	9	100%	3	0%	0	100
Homemaker, parent (male or female) only if no other occupation is given	60%	162	61%	44	77%	17	66
Child, young person no other occupation given	55%	151	39%	30	57%	13	50
Health worker, social worker, childcare worker	52%	187	64%	30	40%	4	52
Student, pupil, schoolchild	50%	313	42%	30	50%	13	47
Retired person, pensioner no other occupation given	48%	63	74%	14	80%	4	67
Villager or resident no other occupation given	45%	271	33%	43	0%	0	26
Unemployed no other occupation given	44%	25	67%	2	0%	0	37
Office or service worker, non-management worker	43%	126	50%	16	29%	2	40
Celebrity, artist, actor, writer, singer, TV personality	42%	595	65%	107	45%	44	51
Activist or worker in civil society org., NGO, trade union	38%	515	37%	57	38%	12	38
Agriculture, mining, fishing, forestry	34%	110	7%	2	45%	5	29
Doctor, dentist, health specialist	33%	464	28%	50	25%	3	29
Media professional, journalist, film-maker, etc.	32%	413	30%	57	40%	17	34
Academic expert, lecturer, teacher	31%	546	32%	74	33%	8	32
Government employee, public servant, spokesperson, etc.	26%	1095	23%	94	19%	13	23
Lawyer, judge, magistrate, legal advocate, etc.	26%	340	30%	55	18%	4	25
Tradesperson, artisan, labourer, truck driver, etc.	24%	181	15%	8	0%	0	13
Politician/Member of Parliament, etc.	21%	5124	25%	432	20%	114	22
Businessperson, exec, manager, stockbroker, etc.	20%	814	19%	67	9%	5	16
Royalty, monarch, deposed monarch, etc.	19%	89	30%	21	17%	3	22
Sportsperson, athlete, player, coach, referee	19%	691	7%	9	9%	11	12
Science/technology professional, engineer, etc.	13%	135	20%	12	43%	6	25
Police, military, paramilitary, militia, fire officer	13%	442	6%	12	17%	4	12
Criminal, suspect no other occupation given	12%	213	16%	25	16%	8	15
Religious figure, priest, monk, rabbi, mullah, nun	5%	58	9%	2	0%	0	5

**Function**

When we look at the function that women perform in the stories in which they appear we see that across all media, women are most likely to be included in a personal/private capacity rather than as professionals or experts. Fig 4 shows that women often speak from personal experience, which seems to be consistent across the different media (44% in TV, radio, print; 45% on the internet; 44% on Twitter), or provide popular opinion (45% for TV, radio, and print, 40% on the internet; 20% on Twitter) or give eye-witness testimony (36% in TV, radio, and print; 39% on the internet; 26% on Twitter). Fewer than one in four experts or

commentators were women in most media, and on Twitter this drops to fewer than one in five (24% in TV, radio, print; 24% on the Internet; 17% on Twitter). However, the proportion of women as experts or commentators slightly increased in comparison with the data from 2015, when women made up 18% of this category in television, radio, and print media. This may be because of Covid-19, where women scientists and health professionals may have been asked to speak more often than usual. Interestingly, although there were broad similarities across most of the media, Twitter is once again something of an outlier, although it's not clear why.

**Fig 4 – function of sources**



***The age thing***

Across the media of print, TV and the internet, we coded for age where it was possible to do so, and found that as sources got older, women were less and less visible. For example, the most frequent age groups coded were 35-49 yrs and 50-64 yrs: in print media, women comprised 42% and 24% of sources in those age groups and for TV, the statistics are even more stark at 35% and 21%. In the age category 65-79 yrs, there were even fewer women: 15% (print) 19% (TV), although interestingly, their numbers increased slightly in the admittedly very infrequent (n=91) visibility of sources aged 80+ yrs, comprising 41% and 28% respectively for print and TV, likely because on average, men die younger than women once they move into their 9<sup>th</sup> decade. These findings are consistent with the many studies which show how women more or less fall off the edge of the media landscape once they reach middle-age.

***Stories about gender and in/equality***

We coded 3% of stories which had women as their central focus in legacy media and, apart from those stories coded explicitly as gender-related, the most popular other category of story topic to centre women in their story were those about celebrity/arts/media/sport (6%), politics/government (4%) and social/legal (3%). For internet news, 13% of stories about politics/government, and crime/violence, centred women in their stories, as well as 16% of celebrity/arts/media/sport stories. Across legacy media, very few stories (4%) were coded as including some reference to gender in/equality or human rights policy aspects and

of those that did, the majority were in stories which were gender-related or focused on science and health topics. For internet news, 5% of stories were coded along this dimension and, apart from the gender-related stories, these stories were spread more or less evenly across all major topic categories (around 3-4%) with the exception of social/legal stories where 10% mentioned some aspect of in/equality. Women were slightly more likely to write stories which included mention of gender in/equality or human rights, than men.

Only 2% of legacy media stories were coded as challenging gender stereotypes and the story topics which were most likely to do that, other than those explicitly coded as gender-related, were again those focused on celebrity/arts/media/sport (4%) and social/legal (3%). Women journalists were twice as likely as men to write stories which challenged gender stereotypes. On Twitter, we coded 2% of stories which challenged gender stereotypes, including 35% of celebrity/arts/media/sports stories and 16% of both politics/government and social/legal stories. Internet news media did rather better with 4% of their stories being coded along this dimension, with celebrity/arts/media/sport stories showing the highest frequency (9%) outside the gender-related category with a more or less even spread of stories across the other major topics.

### ***Victims and survivors***

We coded 931 (4%) people who were described as victims, 44% women and 56% men. The largest victim category was as a victim of an accident, natural disaster or poverty (31%) and women comprised 35% of such victims and 23% of all women victims were in this category. However, women comprised 79% of all victims of non-domestic sexual violence, rape and assault and 62% of victims of domestic violence, rape and murder. Men were more likely to victims of war and terrorism (72%), or of violations based on religion or tradition (57%). In terms of survivors, we coded 389 people (<2%), with women comprising 39% of all survivors. We see very similar patterns for survivors as for victims in terms of what people have survived, but we also see that women were 75% of survivors of discrimination based on gender, race or other forms of identity discrimination.

### ***Those extra little details***

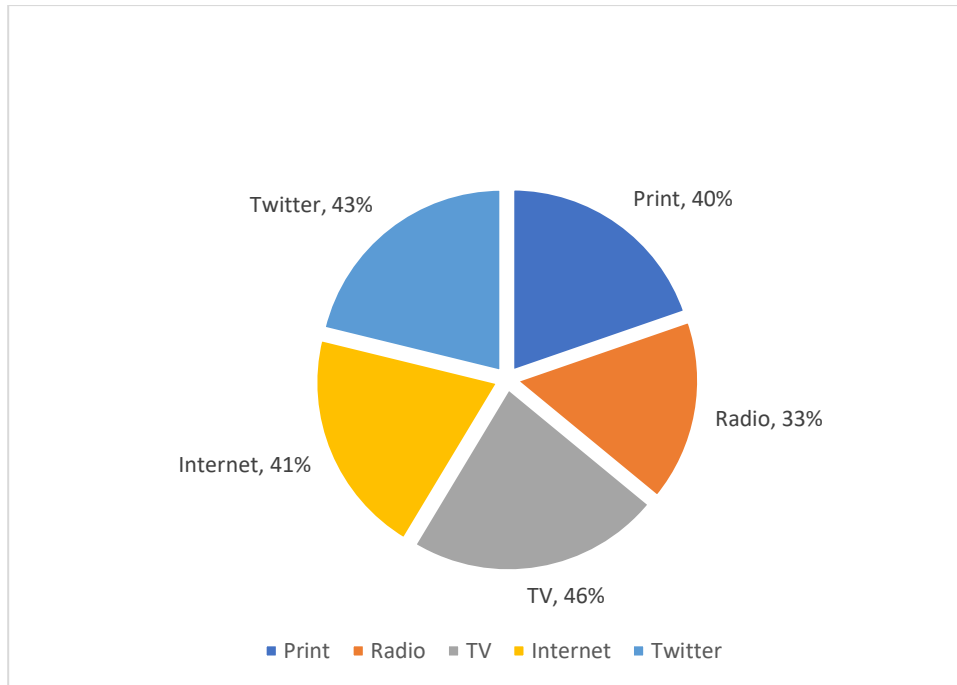
There are several other gender-based differences in story content which are useful to discuss. For example, in legacy media, 14% of women subjects compared with 5% of men had their family status mentioned and women and men journalists were just as likely to mention women's family status. Similarly, in legacy media, there were differences in the extent to which women and men are invited to speak in stories with women being slightly more likely (60%) to be quoted than men (56%) and women slightly more likely to be photographed (32%) than men (27%). In terms of stories with different geographical scope, women were more likely to feature in local news stories (35%) than national (29%) or sub-regional stories (26%). They comprised less than a quarter of sources in foreign/international news stories (22%).

## **C. JOURNALISTS AND REPORTERS**

Across all media, we coded 6427 reporters, 41% of whom were women, and Fig 5 shows their distribution across the five media types. We also looked at presenters on radio and TV and coded 4455 individuals, with slightly more than half (53%) of radio and TV presenters

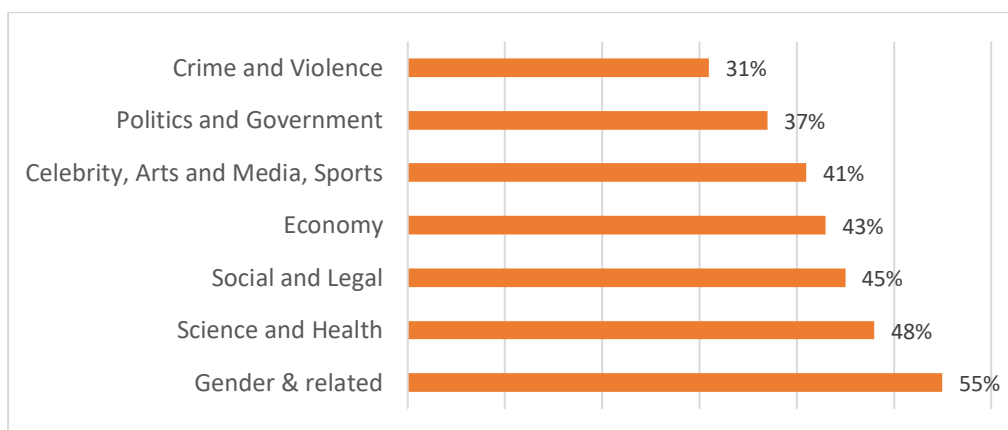
being women. That women find it easier to become presenters than reporters resonates with all the literature which shows the same proclivity.

**Fig 5 - women journalists x medium**



When we looked at the beats that women and men occupy, we see from Fig 6 that women are more likely to be writing stories around gender-related topics, science and health and social and legal, with men more likely to be writing about politics/government and crime. These data are very similar to those of 2015.

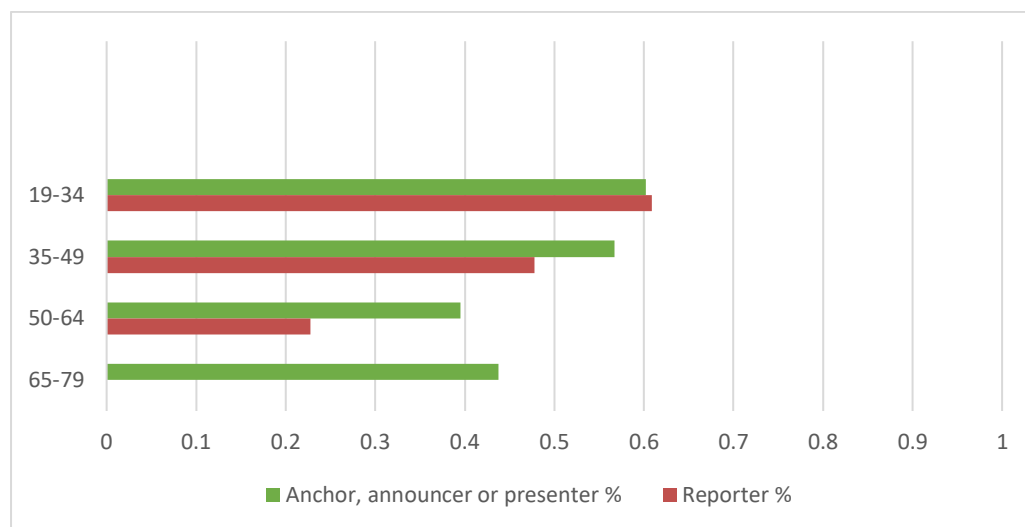
**Fig 6 – women journalists and beats**



We also coded for age where it was possible to do so, and Fig 7 shows that, as with women sources, the number of women reporters and presenters decline as they get older, especially as reporters. We didn't code any women reporters over the age of 65 and, notwithstanding the subjectivity associated with attempting to discern age by eye only, these data are still stark.



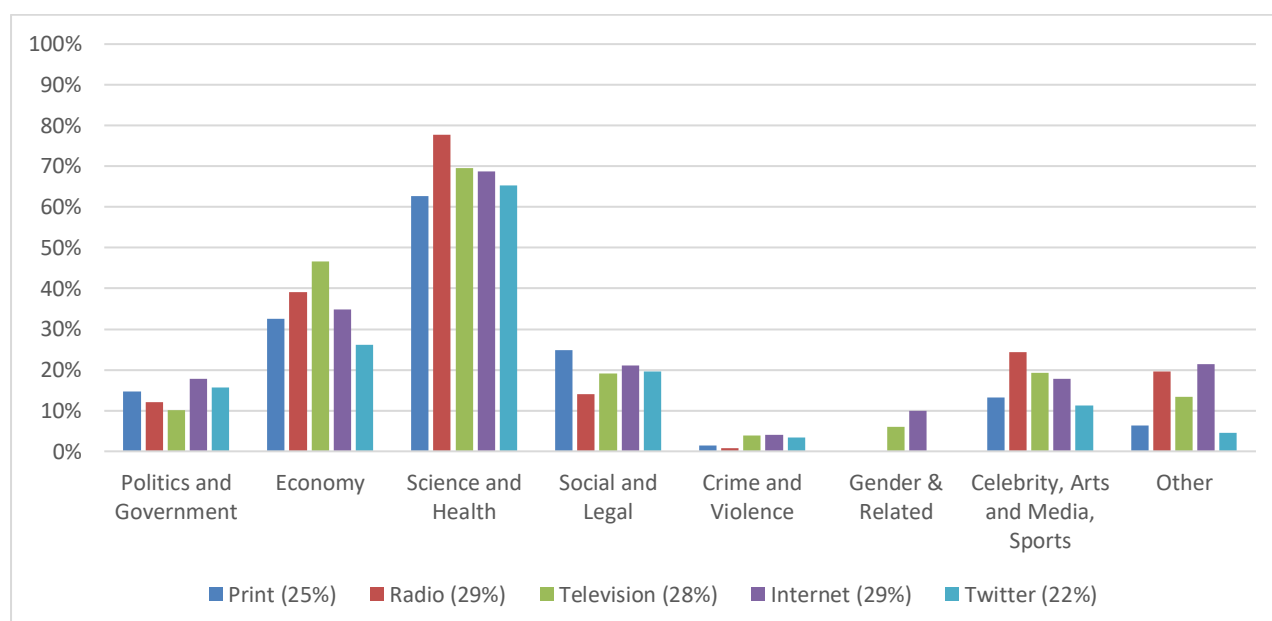
**Fig 7 – age of women anchors, presenters and reporters**



#### D. COVID-19 NEWS

As mentioned earlier, we coded all stories for their association with Covid-19 and 27% of all stories were coded as Covid-19-related. As Fig 8 shows and unsurprisingly, most Covid-19 stories were found in the major topic category science/health, followed by stories about the economy, politics/government, and social/legal matters. The least common categories for Covid-19 stories was crime/violence and gender-related.

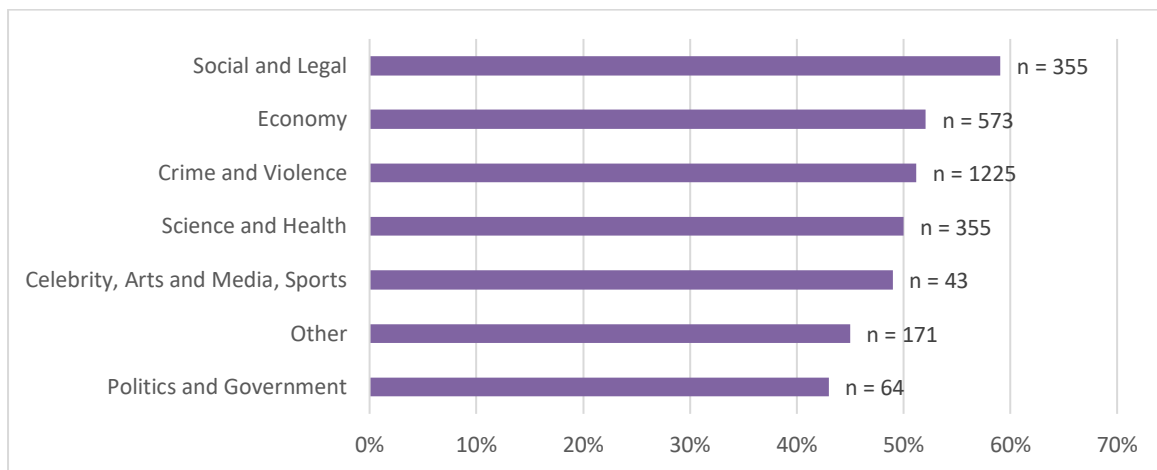
**Fig 8 – secondary topics associated with Covid-19 stories**



When we considered who wrote these Covid-19 stories, Fig 9 provides a breakdown of reporters across topics and women and men were equally likely to write Covid-19 stories,

although one journalist was coded as ‘other’ and 8 journalists did not have their sex recorded. As we see from Fig 9, although women comprised 50% of all journalists credited, there was a similar pattern of beat segregation that we saw in the discussion earlier, although the pandemic does seem to have given more women journalists the opportunity to get more of their work published at the top of the news agenda. Covid-19 stories were no more likely to include mention of gender in/equalities or challenge gender stereotypes, than all stories. The function of women sources in Covid-19 stories shows a very similar pattern as we saw in the discussion of all stories. Interestingly, of the four stories which were coded as gender-related, none were attributed to women reporters.

**Fig 9 – women reporters x major story topic**



## E. CASE STUDIES

In this section, we provide some examples of good and not-so-good journalistic practice, providing stories which variously reinforce or challenge gender stereotypes.

### Blatant stereotype #1

**Headline:** “Sin the mood”

**Medium:** newspaper - the *Irish Daily Mirror*



**Summary:** Ann Summers is an ‘adult’ brand which sells a variety of adult merchandise including lingerie. Here, the story is about their new ‘Halloween at home’ campaign which features two reality TV stars, Maura Higgins and Chloe Ross.

**Analysis:** The story takes up most of a page (3) using a very large image taken from the photoshoot for the Halloween campaign, accompanied by a small amount of text. The main focus is on Maura Higgins who is in the centre of the picture, and in the separate inset picture in the top left of the page. Although the photograph includes women from a mix of ethnic backgrounds and body shapes, which

could be seen as positive (although this is down to Ann Summers rather than the journalist), it nonetheless re-circulates the male gaze which merely consumes the female body for its own entertainment while denying women's agency, despite their provocative 'power' stance, by pouting for the camera. That the photo is on page 3 is also salient given that the UK's *Sun* newspaper routinely portrayed semi-naked young women on page 3 and indeed 'page 3' became synonymous with naked women. The play on words in the title is a typical tabloid conceit designed to be a bit 'cheeky' and to show that the article is meant to be light-hearted and fun, perhaps attempting to obscure the very obvious pornification of the women. A spokesperson (unnamed woman) for Ann Summers is quoted as saying that the brand encourages customers to stay safe and sexy.

### **Blatant stereotype #2**

**Headline:** Arrest of an Italian woman in Syria

**Medium:** radio - *Radio DeeJay*

**Country:** Italy

**Analysis:** the story is about Alice Brignoli, an Italian foreign fighter. She was living in Syria with her family, but after many years of being a terrorist she was arrested and repatriated to Italy. This topic is very stereotypical because it describes Alice Brignoli as a mother and a wife, underlining her familial role. However, not only is she the subject of the story, but she also is a terrorist and a foreign fighter, which is atypical for a woman. The article reproduces stereotypes at different levels: there is a focus on perspective, since she is presented in the role of mother and wife instead of being called a terrorist; the language reflects the idea of a woman who cannot be considered anything else except for a mother and wife.

### **Subtle stereotype #1**

**Headline:** Kariera Amy Coney Barrett powinna być wzorem realizacji postulatów feminizmu. Nie jest. Dlaczego? (Amy Coney Barrett's career should be an example of the implementation of the principles of feminism. It is not. Why?)

**Medium:** online - *Wpolarityce*

**Country:** Poland

**Analysis:** there is a provocative assumption in the headline ('Amy Coney Barrett's career should be an example of the implementation of the principles of feminism. It is not. Why?') that professionally successful women cannot be feminists. The way Coney Barrett is introduced in the lead reinforces the pattern of referring to women

in terms of their domestic role ('mother of seven') in addition to professional roles ('professor', 'judge') where the later connotes success in the public sphere as opposed to work related to domestic duties. Hence, the story becomes a typical pattern of a successful woman who is nevertheless a good wife and mother. The visual image shows Coney Barrett, Donald Trump and a young girl with the US flag in the background. Even though Coney Barrett is a lawyer, she must be accompanied by a girl (supposedly her daughter) and therefore be framed in her familial role. Coney Barrett is referred to as 'a mother of many',

'of catholic morality', 'perfectly educated woman' (as if being a woman excludes being educated) and being 'brutally rejected' by the 'new wave feminism', suggesting a negative assessment of feminism as political process. The implicit criticism of feminism is also conveyed through the use of the rhetorical question in the headline, further sustained in the concluding section which presents Kamala Harris as an example of the 'new wave' of feminism by referencing the Netflix series, *Mrs America*, which documents the rise of and challenges to, second wave feminism in 1970s America.

### Subtle stereotype #2

**Headline:** "Death of Victorine. Shock and questions"

**Medium:** TV - *France3*

**Summary:** A young girl, Victorine, is found dead, having disappeared on her way home late



at night in Isère. This tragic and classic case is treated by the opposition between the passive female victims on the one hand and the active and involved men on the other. Her friends and some bystanders are interviewed, and the camera follows what appears to be a police search of the area.

**Analysis:** This report emerged as a good candidate for further analysis as it illustrates how women are still depicted as victims in contemporary media. From the images presented on screen, Victorine seemed to be a model of femininity (she has long hair, wears earrings and makeup, carries a purse, etc.). Her devastated friends describe her as a girl who should have never encountered such a fate, a girl "who never stayed out, who would go home directly" : in other words, a *good girl*, who *did not deserve* to disappear - implying, intentionally or not, that girls who do go out deserve it. A bystander says that part

of the path she took did not have street lights. Undoubtedly, Victorine's passing is a tragedy. Besides, we can't help but be struck by how women and men are represented differently in this report. Women are ordinary citizens, relatives who are asked about the victim's personality and whereabouts; men are experts, police officers, members of the military, saviours and guardians. The elements of speech that can be heard in this report tend to reinforce the idea that women are in danger when they go out at night, that public space is not safe for them, even when they are 'good girls'. It is unfortunate that instead of addressing the very real issue of misogynistic aggression and murder, France 3 chooses to fuel the *Little Red Riding Hood* myth

### Subtle stereotype #3

**Headline:** Dad spent two days identifying dismembered body parts of daughter 'killed by her lover

**Medium:** online - the *Mirror*

**Country:** UK

**Summary:** this is about the trial of a man accused of murdering his lover. The prosecution's case is that Anastasia Yeschenko was a young woman student who was shot three times at close range, her body dismembered and then thrown in a river in St Petersburg by the man

described as her 'lover' who has also one of her university professors, Oleg Sokolov.

**Analysis:** the headline is rather misleading as Yeschenko's father is only quoted once at the beginning of the article and the rest of the content comprises quotes from neighbours who heard a row on the night she died, and a comment from her mother that Anastasia was about to end the relationship. We are told nothing about Yeschenko's character but Sokolov is described as an



“internationally-acclaimed Napoleon expert”. As part of his defence, Sokolov alleged that Yeschenko sent him ‘vile and disgusting’ text messages. The article also includes two photos of Yeschenko and Sokolov enjoying time together, with the

subtle implication that there must have been a reason why Sokolov was provoked to murder since he was not denying his action, merely justifying it as provocation. The only perspective we read is Sokolov's and a video showing him in court defending himself sits at the top of the article: he is quoted at the top, in the substance and at the end of article. The very obvious power differential between the two, both in status and age (she was 24, he was 64) is not discussed, nor are comments invited to describe Yeschenko's character, so she is left tainted by Sokolov's comments as a 'disgusting' woman and implicitly, an unworthy victim, with no one speaking on her behalf.

### **Missed opportunity #1**

**Headline:** The Pope calls Fabiola Gianotti, director of CERN, in the Pontifical Academy of Sciences

**Medium:** online - *Ifattoquotidiano*

**Country:** Italy

**Summary:** the Pope calls Fabiola Gianotti, Director of CERN, in the Pontifical Academy of Science.

**Analysis:** the language of the article is very didactic, it briefly describes Giannotti's biography and resumé, along with a short characterization of the Institution of which Fabiola Gianotti is a member. The story suggests the exceptionality of a woman's membership both in the institution and in the particular disciplinary field (natural and mathematical sciences) both of which are historically male-dominated. The article is about a woman who has achieved a prestigious position, without dwelling too much on the fact that she is a woman but rather valuing her scientific achievements. In doing so, it points out that women deserve top positions, even in STEM careers where the system always keeps them in lower positions, thus challenging sexist stereotypes. However, the exceptionality of Fabiola's success as well as the importance given to it by the journalist subtly reaffirms that she is the exception to the rule that women are absent from these places, thus implicitly hinting at the stereotypes in play without really confronting them.

### **Missed opportunity #2**

**Headline:** The Guardian talks about racism in Portugal. What two black deputies tell

**Medium:** online - *Diário de Notícias*



**Country:** Portugal

**Summary:** addresses the issue of racism in Portugal, focusing on the rise of the extreme right and draws on a news item published by the British newspaper *The Guardian* the day before (September 28). The *Guardian* news item points to the increase in racist violence and reports activists' demands for "an urgent institutional response" after some politicians and activists received death threats.



**Diário de Notícias**

## The Guardian fala de racismo em Portugal. O que contam dois deputados negros

Jornal britânico refere os casos mais recentes, desde as ameaças de morte a Mamadou Ba ao caso Marega. O DI falou com Helder Amaral e Beatriz Gomes Dias, que contam como foram discriminados pela cor da pele.

**Graça Henriques**  
29 Setembro 2020 — 00:37

**TOPICOS**  
Assembleia da República  
Racismo  
por racismo

**Relacionados**

**Manifestação antirracista depois do assassinato do ator Bruno Candé e EPAMANUEL FERNANDO ARAÚJO**

**"A** minha casa parece as Nações Unidas." As palavras ditas, em jeito de brincadeira, pelo ex-deputado do CDS referem-se às origens da sua própria família - ele nasceu em Angola, a mulher é de origem indiana e os dois filhos nasceram em Portugal. Os quatro têm pele mais escura e essa condição já foi razão para serem discriminados. Helder Amaral foi durante 16 anos deputado democrata-cristão, mas nas lides políticas foi muitas vezes confundido como motorista ou segurança de Paulo Portas. Ainda nas últimas legislativas ouviu um então dirigente do partido dizer que não devia ser cabeça de lista por Viseu, onde viveu desde os 6 anos, porque não tinha nascido lá.

**RACISMO**  
Neonazis: Ministério Público abriu inquérito sobre ameaças a deputadas e à associaç...

**CRIME**  
A morte de Bruno Candé continua a ecoar. E vai

**Analysis:** Based on the recognition, by the international press, of racism as a problem in Portugal, this story gives voice to a Black Portuguese woman politician and a Black Portuguese male former politician. They both talk about their experiences of racism in their work as members of Parliament but also in everyday life. "When I go to a party, and a well-known actor tells me, thinking it is a joke, that I spent too much time in the

oven, or in a restaurant the cook comes to tell me the same thing, this is not subtle. These are humiliating comments", says Beatriz Gomes Dias, speaking as one of three Black politicians elected to Parliament in the last elections in October 2019. The story also highlights the exceptionality of the current Portuguese Minister of Justice, Francisca Van Dunem, described as "the only black woman who has ever had a seat on the Council of Ministers in Portugal." According to the historian João Pedro Marques, she is also a political leader who, unlike others who reject the labelling of Portugal as racist, actively condemns such a *denial* of racism. Given the centrality of race *and* gender in the story, it could be expected that the journalist would explicitly address the way they compound each other to produce a double discrimination, but that does not happen. Instead, Black women's experiences of the multiple discriminations they face in the pursuit of political leadership as well as in everyday life, are neither explored nor discussed. The number of women in political life has been growing in Portugal as elsewhere, and this may explain the absence of the 'novelty' lens which has often framed news discourse about women politicians. However, by disregarding how gender intersects with race, the story misses the opportunity to bring into the public conversation, the gendered display of white privilege and the interrelations of hegemonic power which restricts Black women's equal voice in society.

### Missed opportunity #3

**Headline:** Exponerade och smittade studerande känner sig utpekade: "Evenemangen och vännerna är viktiga" (*Exposed and infected students feel targeted: "Events and friends are important"*)

**Medium:** online – *Svenska.yle*

**Country:** Finland

**Summary:** the story is a news story about how the coronavirus affects students in different universities in Finland and about students' feelings about the media blaming young people for spreading the coronavirus in Finland. Five people are interviewed in the story and all of them are quoted directly.

**Analysis:** scrolling down from the headline, the first thing in the article is a picture of the students who have been interviewed for the article, all of whom are men. Since the headline speaks of students in general, it is remarkable that they are all men, all white, seem to be in their 20s, and appear to represent a majority with names in both national languages (Finnish and Swedish). When only white male students are interviewed, the article misses many perspectives from students from other backgrounds and gender which could have been included in the story. Other people who are interviewed in the article include one male and one female head teacher who are interviewed as spokespersons for their universities. The male head teacher's comment is included in the article's introduction whereas the female head teacher's comments is at the end of the article. They are both white and appear to have a similar ethnic background and of similar age. In the story the three students are referred to only by their first name several times (Nicolas 8 times, Morris 6 times and Markus once).

### Missed opportunity #4

**Headline:** I wanted to kill myself when I was raped

**Medium:** newspaper - *Informer*

**Country:** Serbia

**Summary:** this article mostly comprises an interview with Danijela Štajnfelđ, a young woman actor who was raped by a powerful movie producer in 2015. She is the first woman

from the domestic movie industry to publicly talk about her experience as a rape survivor. She also made a documentary, "Hold me right," in which she revealed her terrifying experience.

**Analysis:** The article takes up a full page and is a reprint of selected parts of an interview given to the women's magazine *Gloria*. The layout is the same as the rest of the paper with a huge title and almost half of the text highlighted in yellow and includes one picture of Štajnfelđ. The story is focused on the period after she was raped and the psychological and physical consequences she had to deal with. She confesses that she intended to



take her life and decide to move to another continent because she was terrified. She kept silent until she realised that she needed professional help to regain her mental and physical health. It is, above all, story about the recovery process she has gone through. However, the exclusive focus on Štajnfelđ's personal story ignores the numerous important questions

about the protection of rape victims, the number of sex offenders who are charged and subsequently convicted, as well as the wider social, moral, and legal environment which prevails in the country which has resulted in only one woman having the courage to speak up about sexual assault in the entertainment industry prompting the question, why has not #metoo movement not impacted Serbia? While tabloids usually prefer to deal with personal experience rather than discuss complex issues, even just giving space to Danijela Štajnfeld to tell her story without marginalising or downplaying it, is perhaps a good first step in highlighting the problem.

### Challenging gender stereotypes/gender-aware #1

**Headline:** MP suspended as she's charged with harassing woman

**Medium:** newspaper - the *Mirror*

**Country:** UK

**Summary:** a Labour MP, Claudia Webbe, has been suspended from the Labour Party as criminal proceedings are taken out against her by the Crown Prosecution Service.



**Analysis:** the case is reported in a straightforward and factual manner, with no discussion of woman-on-woman harassment or any other stereotypical comment. While the photo reveals that Webbe is from a minority ethnic background, this is not mentioned. She is credited with her profession and some minor detail relating to when she became an MP, what she did before she became an MP and which seat she won. The story includes a direct quote from Webbe and a quote from an (unnamed) woman spokesperson from the CPS. The story challenges the stereotype that the perpetrators of harassment against women are always men and

also avoids providing any salacious detail about the circumstances of the harassment, nor the name of the survivor.

### Challenging gender stereotypes/gender-aware #2

**Headline:** Interview with Edoardo Albinati, on the murder of a couple in Lecce

**Medium:** TV - TG3

**Country:** Italy

**Summary:** the story concerns the murder of two lovers Daniele De Santis and Eleonora Manta, who were murdered by a 21 year-old student, Antonio De Marco who used to share their home.

**Analysis:** The murders, which happened in Lecce, were the topic of much public and media discussion. In particular, the story draws on the views of the writer Edoardo Albinati, who had just published his latest book and who wanted to comment on the murders from his perspective. The article thus challenges gender stereotypes since the violence of the



murders is described as being symptomatic of a toxic masculinity performed by some men and not simply as just another 'ordinary' murder.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **Overview**

In general terms, the visibility of women as both subjects of news and reporters of news, has changed hardly at all over the past five years and over the 25 years of the GMMP, the increase in women's visibility and contribution to the news agenda has increased by a handful of percentage points, but does not reflect women's contribution to the fabric of European society, culture, arts and politics. Women continue to be marginalised from the news agenda, mostly not even reaching one-third of news sources and even when they speak, they are confined to a narrow range of story topics and are more likely to function as public opinion or eye witness than expert. In general, women are seen to inhabit the private and domestic sphere, while men enjoy visibility in the public and professional sphere. The news thus remains dominated by men's voices talking about the things which other men do, even during a global pandemic which affects everyone. Slightly more positively, the traditional news stereotype of women as victim no longer holds quite so true and there were relatively few stories of sources described as victims or survivors, a trend first observed in 2015.

### **The news agenda**

We coded a total of 10691 news stories across five media, distributed as: print (2387), radio (2094), TV (2279), internet (2277) and Twitter (1654). Although the volume of items across the five media are varied, there is a remarkable consistency when we consider the most frequent story topic with politics/government and science/health being the largest topic categories across all media, the latter being, unexpectedly, much more important than in 2015. Only Twitter articles saw the more entertainment-focused category of celebrity/arts/media and sports featuring as a key major topic, in that case as the second most popular story topic after politics/government. Unsurprisingly, when we looked at the sub-set of Covid-19 stories, the secondary category of science/health was the most frequent, followed by stories about the economy, making clear the importance of the economic as well as the health impact of the pandemic.

### **News subjects and sources**

Across all five media, we coded 22613 sources of whom 28% were women in both legacy and digital media stories, constituting an increase of 3% on the 2015 data. Women were most likely to be sources or subjects in stories categorized as gender-related (comprising the smallest major topic category) and least likely to be included in stories focused on politics and government, which follows the same pattern as in 2015. However, we only coded 81 stories under the gender-related major topic, comprising less than 1% of all topics, compared with stories about politics and government (21%), so women are significantly over-represented in stories about gender, albeit unsurprisingly, and the patterns of story topic and source were very similar for both legacy and digital media, suggesting that the promise of online media providing more opportunities for women's voices has not been realized. The occupational categories which featured the largest proportion of women

sources were sex worker (100%), retired person (67%), homemaker (66%), health worker (52%), celebrity (51%), child (50%) and student (47%), demonstrating that they are over-represented in occupations or status with little prestige or importance. On the contrary, women comprised 22% of politicians (+1%) and 16% (+2%) of business people: these data show almost no difference to those recorded in 2015, although there has been an increase in the number of sources coded as academic experts and teachers, up from 23% in 2015 to 32% in 2020, a small indicator of hope.

When we look at the function that women perform in the stories in which they appear we see that across all media, women are most likely to be included in a personal/private capacity rather than as professionals or experts. Women often speak from personal experience, which seems to be consistent across the different media (44% in TV, radio, print; 45% in internet news; 44% on Twitter), or provide popular opinion (45% for TV, radio, and print, 40% on the Internet; 20% on Twitter), or give eye-witness testimony (36% in TV, radio, and print; 39% in internet news; 26% on Twitter). Fewer than one in four experts or commentators were women in most media, and on Twitter this dropped to fewer than one in five although this is an improvement on the 2015 data where women only comprised 17% of experts.

### **The news writers and announcers**

Across all media, we coded 6427 reporters, 41% of whom were women, more or less evenly spread across TV, print, online and Twitter but showing a reduced visibility in radio (33%). We also looked at presenters on radio and TV and coded 4455 individuals, with slightly more than half (53%) of radio and TV presenters being women. That women find it easier to become presenters than reporters resonates with all the literature which describes the process of 'feminisation' and 'intimisation' of news, where women's softer voice and eye appeal conform more readily to news-as-infotainment.

When we looked at the beats that women and men occupy, we noted that women were more likely to be writing stories around gender-related topics, science/health and social/legal, with men more likely to be writing about politics and crime. These data are very similar to those of 2015 demonstrating that women continue to experience horizontal segregation in terms of accessing the more prestigious beats. However, when we disaggregated the Covid-19 stories from the larger corpus, more women had by-line credits for politics/government stories, suggesting that the pandemic has offered more opportunities for women to gain visibility at the top of the news.

For both women sources and women media professionals, we note that they start to disappear from the news landscape once they reach middle age, a trend which has also been consistent since the first GMMP iteration, demonstrating that the media seem to be a sector which does not value experience.

The continuing marginalisation of women's voices both in general terms but also in relation to the news beats and genres which are regarded as both more prestigious and more important in informing the public, does little to properly serve that public nor the broader democratic project.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN 2021-2025

In 2015, we made a number of recommendations which could progress gender equality in the news and we repeat (and add to) them here as they don't seem to have been taken on board the first time.

- Redefine what and who counts as news – the so-called ‘news values’ which determines newsworthiness and have been part of traditional newsroom culture for decades without question, urgently need to be re-evaluated and made fit for purpose for the 2020s.
- Provide (more) prizes for forward-thinking media outlets which practise gender-sensitive reporting.
- Media organisations should initiate training programmes to improve media professionals’ understanding of current and emerging gender issues and their various manifestations. Raising the awareness and strengthening the capacities of media professionals through offering regular educational and vocational training programs geared to the acquisition of in-depth knowledge of gender equality and its crucial role in a democratic society. A good source of training materials is the [European Federation of Journalists](#) which has produced guidance around gender equality reportage. [The European Institute for Gender Equality](#) also includes many examples of good practice in relation to media.
- Issues of gender in/equality should be included in the syllabi of all journalism and training courses. [UNESCO](#) have supported the publication of a very useful set of syllabi.
- Debate and discussion on the GMMP as well as other research and studies should be encouraged: it is obviously useful to engage women *and men* working in the media, in universities, unions and associations of civil society with the aim of promoting a plural-vocal conversation, based on respect for different professional perspectives and competences, but focused on common objectives and concrete goals.
- A gender policy and action plan for all media companies should be established and gender quotas should be introduced for the composition of teams who produce the news. A useful first step on this road is the [BBC’s 50:50 equality project](#), which aims to include 50:50 women/men sources in their programming.
- Language and terms which misrepresent, exclude or offend women should be eliminated and instead, neutral terms that are gender-inclusive should be used. The European Institute for Gender Equality has a useful set of resources relating to language.
- The representation of women experts in the news could be increased by using the expertise and database of existing organisations such as VIDM and Zij spreek.
- The EU-funded web-based resource, the Advancing Gender Equality in Media Industries ([AGEMI](#)), is a useful source of information, training and other resources for media professionals.

## Annex 1. Methodology<sup>4</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.

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<sup>4</sup> See the global report for the extended discussion on the GMMP 2020 methodology

- **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 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**

Austria	Malta
Belgium - Flemish	Moldova
Belgium - French	Netherlands
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Northern Ireland
Bulgaria	Norway
Cyprus	Poland
Denmark	Portugal
England	Romania
Estonia	Russia
Finland	Scotland
France	Serbia
Georgia	Spain
Greenland	Sweden
Iceland	Switzerland
Ireland	Turkey
Italy	Wales
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