

**WHO  
MAKES THE  
NEWS?**



# United Kingdom\* & Northern Ireland

---

## Global Media Monitoring Project 2010 National Report



\*excluding Ireland, as a separate report has been produced for that country

## Acknowledgements



GMMP 2010 is licensed under creative commons using an Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs.

GMMP 2010 is co-ordinated by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), an international NGO which promotes communication for social change, in collaboration with data analyst, Media Monitoring Africa (MMA), South Africa.

The data for GMMP 2010 was collected through the collective voluntary effort of hundreds of organizations including gender and media activists, grassroots communication groups, academics and students of communication, media professionals, journalists associations, alternative media networks and church 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 now way affected by the above.



### Global Context

- 10 November 2009 was an ordinary day at work for newsroom staff around the world. It was however a special day for groups in over 100 countries who gathered to monitor their news media. After months of planning, preparations and training, they brought the Fourth Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) to life.
- The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) is the world's longest-running and most extensive research on gender in the news media. 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 research revealed that only 17% of news subjects – the people who are interviewed or whom the news is about – were women. It found that gender parity was 'a distant prospect in any region of the world. News [was] more often being presented by women but it [was] still rarely about women.'<sup>1</sup>
- Seventy countries participated in the Second GMMP in 2000. This and all subsequent GMMPs were coordinated by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC). The research found a relatively static picture: only 18% of news subject were women, a statistically insignificant change over the 5-year period.<sup>2</sup>
- The Third GMMP in 2005 attracted the participation of 76 countries. Some progress in women's presence in the news was evident. 21% of news subjects were female. This 3% increase in the preceding five years was statistically significant. However, the overwhelming finding was women's continued near invisibility in the news. Very little news – just under 10% of all stories – focussed specifically on women. Women were rarely central in stories that comprised the bulk of the news agenda. Women were outnumbered by men as newsmakers in every major news topic. Expert opinion was overwhelmingly male with women comprising only 17% of experts who appeared in news stories. As newsmakers, women were under-represented in professional categories. The third GMMP found that the sex of the journalist made a difference in whether or not women made the news: there were more female news subjects in stories reported by female journalists (25%) than in stories reported by male journalists (20%).
- The First GMMP, and as will be seen, the Fourth GMMP reveal that the world reported in the news is mostly male. Overall, news stories were twice as likely to reinforce gender stereotypes rather than challenging them. News stories on gender (in)equality were almost non-existent.

---

<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> Spears, George and Kasia Seydegart, Erin Research. with additional analysis by Margaret Gallagher. *Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project*. 2000

## National context

- The ways in which women and men are represented in news media says something profound about the ways in which power is exercised, whose voices are deemed important, which groups are given authority to speak.
- News media remain the major and most influential source of information, ideas and opinion for most people around the world. They are 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 both consciously and unconsciously through via a variety of media forms.
- Researchers in the UK and Northern Ireland have been involved in the GMMP since the very beginning, in 1995 and part of the reason for our continued participation is being part of a global network of researchers who are committed to sharing knowledge and producing evidence which shows how women are represented in news media in ways which are qualitatively and quantitatively different to men, not just in the UK but across the globe.

## Executive Summary

Over the time period across which the GMMP has been taking place, the visibility of women as producers and subjects of news across the British news media landscape has seen a steady improvement, but the ratio of women to men seems stuck at 1:3, both in terms of women as media professionals and women as subjects of mainstream news discourse. The question, then, is, are men really twice as important as women? From the snapshot of news journalism taken in November 2009, it would appear that women working in journalism are more likely to be working in broadcast news than print, are more likely to be announcers than reporters, are very much more likely to be working in the broadsheet rather than tabloid press.. As sources, women were over-represented in categories such as health workers, office staff and homemakers and their function in stories was more likely to be providing popular opinion and experience than expert commentary, in all cases, compared with men. Whilst in the great majority of categories, these findings suggest that there are clear improvements in terms of women's contribution to and involvement in news discourse compared with the first study in 1995, given that women comprise more than 50% of the population, it continues to be disappointing that their actual visibility is still so poor.

## A Day In The News In the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland

- **10 November 2009.** One of the major stories was the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall and other top stories which featured in a number of news media reports was the Euro lottery win of a English syndicate, a story about a grieving mother's complaint about PM Gordon Brown's letter of condolence and an ex-financier who was suing her previous employer for £4m compensation.

## The Context

### Country background

The United Kingdom and Northern Ireland is a relatively media-rich and media-dense region with media which reach all five constituent countries and national media which are only available in the nations themselves. In some cases, such media are produced in national languages such as Gaelic.

### Media monitored

#### **England (all with a regional (UK-wide) reach)**

Newspapers: Times, Telegraph, Guardian, Independent (4 most popular broadsheets); Mirror, Mail, Sun, Express (4 most popular tabloids)

TV: Channel 4 news; ITV news: BBC1 news (1pm and 10pm); BBC2 Newsnight (most popular TV news shows) – intended to also monitor Channel 5 news but the CD was found to be corrupted on playback (most popular TV news shows)

Radio: Radio 4 (midnight news and the Today Show); Radio 3 The Late Show with Ian Collins; Radio 5 Morning Report; Radio 1 Newsbeat; Radio 2 Jeremy Vine (only radio shows which are specifically concerned with news)

#### **Scotland**

Newspapers: The Herald, The Scotsman (2 most popular broadsheets, one that circulates chiefly in the west coast, the other in the east); Daily Record (Scotland's only national tabloid)

TV: STV evening bulletin; BBC Scotland evening bulletin (main regional news – NB STV does not cover all of Scotland, just the central belt, but shares resources with Grampian in the north)

Radio: BBC Radio Scotland (8am bulletin in Good Morning Scotland – Scottish equivalent of the Today programme, political agenda-setter); Real Radio (only popular commercial station that covers the whole of the central belt of Scotland)

#### **Wales**

Newspapers: *Western Mail* (English language broadsheet that covers all of Wales, daily); *Y Cymro* (only Welsh language newspaper, weekly)

TV:

S4C Newyddion- 7.30pm (Welsh)

BBC1 Wales news - 6.30pm (English)

Radio:

Radio Wales - 4.00pm (English)  
Radio Cymru - 5.00pm (Welsh)

### **Northern Ireland**

Newspapers: Irish News (biggest nationalist paper in NI); Newsletter (biggest unionist paper); Belfast Telegraph (v conservative); Mirror (regional version of UK tabloid)

TV: UTV (regional independent and the evening news show has highest audience viewing, representative of mainstream 'attitudes' in NI)

Radio: BBC Radio Ulster (evening show is v popular); CodFM (most popular commercial station in NI, well-developed news service that is franchised out); Citybeat, U105 and Downtown (these three are all popular commercial shows)

### **The monitors**

A total of 19 monitors took part in the study.

### **Summary numbers**

A total of 218 newspaper articles were coded, together with 147 radio items and 115 TV items.

A total of 493 sources were coded, and 450 had an identifiable sex: 138 (30%) women and 312 (70%) men.

A total of 127 anchors/announcers were coded for radio, of whom 67 (53%) were women.

A total of 98 anchors/announcers were coded for TV, of whom 47 (48%) were women

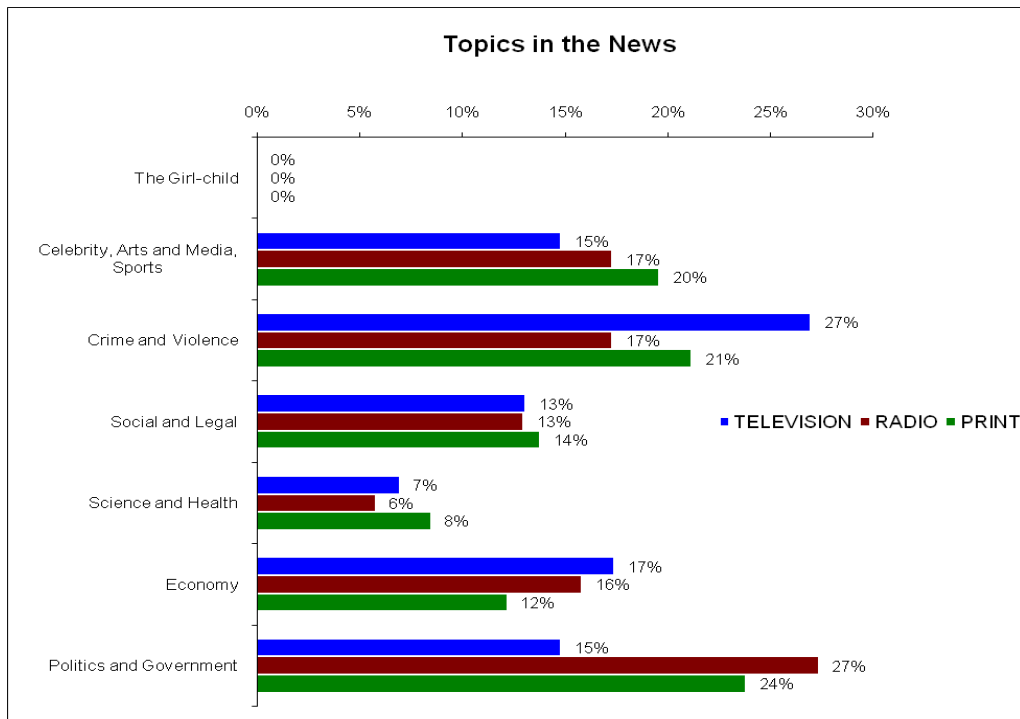
A total of 115 reporters were coded for radio, of whom 42 (36%) were women

A total of 79 reporters were coded for TV, of whom 24 (30%) were women

A total of 174 newspaper stories had a clearly identifiable author, of whom 31% were women, 62% were men and 7% were authored by more than one journalist in a variety of combinations.

## Topics In The News

fig 1 – topics in the news x medium



As will be clear from fig. 1, for radio and print media, the ‘politics and government’ topic was the most popular, whereas it is the more sensational ‘crime and violence’ which achieves the top rating for television. However, for most categories, there were only a few percentage points difference, suggesting that there is a high degree of agreement amongst journalists in terms of what is a newsworthy story.

When we look at the relationship between story topic and the sex of the reporter, we see some very clear differences in the newspaper sample, with the more frequent and, arguably, ‘serious’ news stories written or presented by men and the more trivial stories, for example, celebrity news, being covered by women.

**Table 1 – story topic x sex of (newspaper) reporter**

TOPIC	% women	% men
Politics and Government	22%	78%
Economy	31%	69%
Science and Health	49%	51%
Social and Legal	47%	53%
Crime and Violence	37%	63%
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	52%	48%
Misc. other	40%	60%

Where women feature in news stories is one of the most important aspects of the GMMP, both as snapshot events but also longitudinally. Table 2 shows the same composited topics as above, identifying where women and men appear in those stories.

*Table 2 – story topic x sex of subject*

TOPIC	women		men	
	%	n	%	n
Politics and Government	24%	69	76%	224
Economy	27%	24	73%	59
Science and Health	31%	20	69%	41
Social and Legal	43%	64	57%	79
Crime and Violence	34%	72	66%	151
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	31%	45	69%	105
The Girl-child	0%	0	0%	0
Other	45%	28	55%	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>691</b>

As we see, overall, men are more than twice as likely as women to feature across the news agenda more generally, 69% compared to 31%. Where women do appear, they are most frequently found in the ‘social/legal’ category, often appearing in stories coded ‘legal’ because they are victims of crime and/or discrimination. When we unpack the data a little more, we find that where women predominate are in stories about consumer issues (63% of all subjects of such stories are women) and all the story categories which have a specific gender inflection such as women in political power (62%), women’s rights/human rights/minority rights (69%), gender-based violence (69%) and fashion/beauty/cosmetic surgery (66%).

If we consider any differences between the three different media monitored, Table 3 shows that there are some slight differences but overall, there is remarkable consistency, despite the unevenness in terms of individual items coded across newspapers and TV.

*Table 3 – medium x sex of subject*

SEX	PRINT		RADIO		TELEVISION	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
women	31%	134	30%	81	35%	107
men	69%	304	70%	187	65%	200

As well as noting the frequency of appearance and the kinds of stories which are more likely to include women as subjects and/or sources, it is also relevant to ask who are those women and men who speak in the news, in terms of their occupation and status?



**Table 4 – sex of source x occupation**

Occupation (top 10)	Sources					
	print		radio		TV	
	women %	men %	women %	men %	women %	men %
Government, politician, minister, spokesperson	23	37	18	43	9	25
Government employee, public servant	4	4				
Police, military	3	10	3	48	2	37
Academic expert, teacher, childcare	7	2	2	1	6	4
Health worker	8	9	1	5	12	8
Business person, manager	3	7	1	4	3	7
Office worker	8	1	3	2	10	5
Activist, worker in civil society	11	3	4	4	4	3
Tradesperson			1	1	3	16
Celebrity, artist, actor, writer	9	6	4	12		
Athlete, player, coach	0	3	2	1	1	16
Homemaker, parent	9	<1	7	3	6	5
Criminal			1	7	2	7
Child, young person	6	<1	5	0	6	5
Total (number of sources with a clear 'occupation')	114	310	80	186	107	199

Given that individuals appear in news stories for different reasons and perform different functions, we were also interested to find out if women and men are asked to speak from different levels of authority or competence and Table 5 demonstrates that, as with all other aspects of the study so far, women and men do indeed perform different functions within news discourse.

**Table 5 – function in story x sex**

Function	women		men	
	%	n	%	n
Subject: the story is about this person, or about something the person has done, said etc.	31%	150	69%	353
Spokesperson: the person represents, or speaks on behalf of another person, a group or an organisation	25%	39	75%	111
Expert or commentator: the person provides additional information, opinion or comment, based on specialist knowledge or expertise	25%	54	75%	151
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	48%	44	52%	47
Eye witness: the person gives testimony or comment, based on direct observation (e.g. being present at an event)	46%	7	54%	8
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.	56%	19	44%	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>689</b>

What Table 5 shows is that men were more likely to feature as subjects, spokespeople and expert commentators than women, whereas women were more likely to feature as eye witnesses, to bring personal experience or provide public opinion. As with other studies, these findings also suggest that women's voices are invited to provide personal testimony and impressionistic anecdote rather than authoritative and informed perspectives, further consolidating traditional gendered binaries of male/public/professional vs. female/private/personal which undermine the value of women's voices.

Previous studies suggest that one of the most popular gender-based tropes is that of women-as-victim, so we were interested to see if such images were again evident in this study.

**Table 6 – victims x category x sex**

Victim Type	% women		% men	
	2010	n	2010	n
Victim of an accident, natural disaster, poverty, disease, illness	67%	10	33%	4
Victim of domestic violence (by husband/wife/partner/other family member), psychological violence, physical assault, marital rape, murder	55%	9	45%	9
Victim of non-domestic sexual violence or abuse, sexual harassment, rape, trafficking	100%	2	0%	0
Victim of other crime, robbery, assault, murder	50%	10	50%	9
Victim of violation based on religion, tradition, cultural belief, genital mutilation, bride-burning	25%	1	75%	2
Victim of war, terrorism, vigilantism, state-based violence ...	14%	8	86%	73
Victim of discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion, ability	60%	8	40%	7
Other victim	62%	27	38%	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>121</b>

As Table 6 suggests, around 19% of all subjects were described as some kind of victim and slightly more women (22%) than men (17%) were coded as victim overall. It is clear that the kinds of stories which are about victims are different depending on whether the victim is female or male, although the numbers are really too small to be able to make anything but the most general inference. However, despite the numbers, there are still some quite stark differences which are not altogether unsurprising, for example, the number of men who are seen as victims of war bit others do demand further thought. Why should women be more frequently coded as victims of natural disasters than men, when often the anguish and despair is felt by entire communities and not just the female half. Is it because women are simply seen as more vulnerable and therefore more worthy of our pity? We also looked at where stories showed women and men as survivors, and Table 7 demonstrates that very few subjects were coded in this way (9%) but when they were, there were very clear gender demarcations.

*Table 7 – survivor category and sex*

Survivor categories	Sex of subject		
	% women	% men	n
Survivor of an accident, natural disaster, poverty, disease, illness	0%	100%	7
Survivor of domestic violence (by husband/wife/partner/other family member), psychological violence, physical assault, marital rape, murder	100%	0%	3
Survivor of non-domestic sexual violence or abuse, sexual harassment, rape, trafficking	100%	0%	2
Survivor of other crime, robbery, assault, murder ...	0%	100%	3
Survivor of violation based on religion, tradition, cultural belief, genital mutilation, bride-burning	0%	100%	1
Survivor of war, terrorism, vigilantism, state-based violence	14%	86%	17
Survivor of discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion	100%	0%	2
Other survivor: describe in 'Comments' section of coding sheet	30%	70%	7
Total	28%	72%	42

As a final question to ask of news content, we explored the extent to which women and men story subjects generated a photograph and found that 37% of stories about women compared with 20% of stories which featured men included a photograph.

## Who Delivers The News?

As well as looking at how women and men feature in news contents, the GMMP is also interested in the ways in which women function as producers of news, including as reporters, journalists, presenters and announcers. Most studies which look at gender in relation to newsroom cultures and the production of news, have suggested that although women have successfully penetrated the hitherto closed world of news journalism, they often get stuck on the bottom rungs of the career ladder and allocated to the more mundane beats or those which allegedly respond to a women's agenda, such as health and education. In this study, women journalists again fail to break free from the 1:3 ratio which characterises the proportion of women as subjects of news. In the newspaper sample, of the 216 articles monitored, 174 (82%) had a clearly defined author and of these, 31% were identified as women, 62% as men and a small

number showed a joint effort between two women, two men and female-male pairings. The vast majority of articles written by women journalists were found in the broadsheet press (84%), which suggests that even now, women struggle to achieve the ‘hard news’ beats in the tabloid sector.

**Table 7 - sex of journalist (of coded news item) x newspaper genre**

Sex	Broadsheet	Tabloid	Total
Female journalist	46 (84%)	9 (16%)	55
Male journalist	72 (66%)	36 (34%)	108
Two men	2	2	4
Two women	0	1	1
Female/male pair	3	3	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>174</b>

The picture is a little more optimistic when we consider the broadcast media, so that in radio, women actually outnumber men as anchors and announcers and the numbers are very similar in TV, as Table 8 shows.

**Table 8 – professional role x gender**

Role	Radio			TV		
	Woman	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
Anchor/announcer	67	60	127	47	51	98
Reporter	42	73	115	24	55	79
Other journalist	0	1	1	0	7	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>184</b>

When we consider the kinds of stories which women and men write, we begin to see familiar patterns emerging in relation to the beat which are given to journalists, which continue to be gender-inflected. For example, looking at the newspaper sample, women were nearly twice (42%) as likely to be writing on local rather than national (28%) stories, and only 22% of international stories were written by women. In terms of further exploring story topic and sex of journalist, Table 9 shows that women are twice as likely to write on celebrity items than men and men dominate the ‘hard’ news agenda in terms of coverage of politics and government and the economy. Interestingly, the other hard news category, crime and violence, saw a surprising number of articles written by women which is a positive move forward.

**Table 9 – story topic x sex of journalist**

Story topic	Sex of journalist	
	% female	% male
Politics and Government	37%	63%
Economy	41%	59%
Science and Health	46%	54%

Social and Legal	61%	39%
Crime and Violence	54%	46%
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	69%	31%

## Gender And The News

Turning now to considerations of where gender was explicitly present in the news agenda, we find that 29 stories (6%) of the total number of articles coded (460) highlighted issues of gender equality of broad equality issues, and these included stories about women politicians, sex discrimination cases or items concerning human, women and children's rights which comprised the largest category, 11 stories. As well as looking at whether or not stories deal overtly with gender issues, we also coded stories which explicitly (or not) challenged gender stereotypes and here, only 8 stories actively did challenge such stereotypes and again, the stories which were predominantly about human and other rights were the ones mostly likely to be coded in this way, mostly falling into the broad category of 'social/legal' story type.

## Gender And Journalistic Practice

As well as the quantitative analysis, we also undertook a qualitative analysis of several news items which treated issues of gender in different ways, taking a positive, negative or neutral stance, and we set out below four in-depth case studies which highlight some of the issues involved when exploring the ways in gender inflect journalistic practice.

### *Story #1 – “Forced out: woman claims boss brought prostitutes in hot pants to meetings”*

This story appeared in four of the eight national newspapers sampled (*The Sun, Express, Mail and Telegraph*), all of which could be broadly described as 'conservative' in tone. Perhaps unsurprisingly, therefore, the treatment of the complainant is not especially sympathetic in any of the articles largely, we suggest, because she was not framed as a victim but rather as an opportunistic high-flyer who was claiming a small fortune for what appeared to be very minor infringements of professional conduct. For the purposes of this analysis, we are looking at the way in which the *Daily Telegraph* covered the story, which appeared on page 1 and page 7, although the front page coverage comprised a quarter-page photo of the complainant, Jordan Wimmer with no text. The actual story appeared on p7 and was accompanied by a smaller, full-length photograph of Wimmer shown with her arm linked in with an unidentified woman, possibly her lawyer, together with a small head-and-shoulders photograph of the defendant, Mark Lower, Wimmer's former employer. The primary reported allegations are that Lowe invited prostitutes to his business meetings when Wimmer was also present, that he insisted that Wimmer and another female colleague attend a strip club during a business trip, that he referred to women colleagues as "Mark's angels" and that he called Wimmer a "bimbo". In her action, Wimmer claimed that Lowe attempted to intimidate her by name-calling and insults as described above. Given that harassment claims are not usually headline news stories, it is likely that this one made it onto the front page because of the size of the claim (£4m), justified on the grounds that when employed by Lowe, Wimmer was earning £500,000 per annum so that the compensation she was seeking related to the loss of earnings prompted by her decision to resign from her job because of her 'alleged' harassment. Whilst the article does not use obviously sexist language and appears to be factual in its reporting of the case, the (male) reporter's use of very particular parts of

Wimmer's testimony frames her as undeserving of our sympathy because her allegations appear petty and certainly not worth £4m in compensation. Interestingly, different aspects of both Wimmer's and Lowe's biographies appear in the piece, so that we are told that Wimmer is 29 and a Canadian, whereas we are informed that Lowe is a self-made millionaire father of two who allegedly had a penchant for "high class escorts". Following up the story later, the case was settled out of court for an undisclosed amount, finding in Wimmer's favour.

*Story #2 – "Male doctors earn £15000 a year more than women"*

This is a good example of one of the small number of stories which consciously addressed gender inequality and which also attempted to provide some kind of explanatory analysis, although it fell short of contextualising the story within the broader historical landscape of the gender pay gap. It was one of the *Guardian's* front page stories, continued on page 2, and focused on the findings of a study commissioned by the British Medical Association, the Higher Education Funding Council for England, Imperial College and the Medical Women's Federation, which showed that male health workers earn more than women with the same training and experience. The report's authors suggest that some of the overall discrepancy (around 40%) could be accounted for in terms of differences in age and experience but most could *only* be understood as a consequence of sex-based discrimination. One of the report's authors suggested that male managers exploit the vulnerability of women workers who have childcare responsibilities, whose lives might be less flexible than male colleagues and who consequently believe that they have a poorer bargaining position, and will therefore agree more readily to terms and conditions which are less advantageous than those of male colleagues. The way in which the article is written is factual and straightforward, and the journalist uses sources well to provide a richer context for the story and the hard facts included in the article. A named spokesperson for the Medical Women's Federation pulls no punches in insisting that discrimination is "endemic" in the NHS. Usefully, the article concludes with the point that under existing Sex Discrimination legislation, the Gender Duty (enacted in 2007) compels organisations to seek to redress sex-based pay differences where they have been identified, and that the NHS should immediately undertake a gender pay audit and/or a salary review.

*Story #3 – headline 1: "We can't get train after 10.45pm...we'll be mugged"; headline 2: "women MPs in new expenses outrage"*

Unlike the first two items, story #3 is a double-hander, one part being a 'straight' report of a cross-party campaign being waged by 5 women MPs against the possible fallout of the new austerity climate of expenses which is following the MPs' expenses scandal, and the other being a much more critical op-ed piece written to accompany the main article. It was published in the *Daily Mirror* on p10, with the 'straight' report written by a male journalist and the op-ed piece written by a woman. In the former, the headline text includes a very obvious value judgement, capitalising on the ongoing 'outrage' of the MPs' expenses scandal by annexing an apparently new example of financial profligacy (if not necessarily wrongdoing), to the generalised lament of bankrupt political morals. The main story is focused on one aspect of the new restrictions on allowances relating to travel and domicile, where women MPs argue that if second homes in London are no longer an allowable expense for MPs who live within a 60-minute commute from Parliament, then they will have to travel back to their homes late at night using public transport which could be dangerous. Whilst the *Mirror's* readers are not provided with further details about the broader scope of the MPs' campaign, the perspective of the piece is clearly critical, suggesting that women parliamentarians are trying to make a special (and spurious) case for themselves, since many women (and men) in other occupations use public transport late at night, either through

choice or necessity. Both articles are illustrated with a series of head-shots of the 5 campaigning MPs, all of whom are smiling, encouraging a sly suggestion that they are smugly pleased with their own audacity and/or the public's gullibility. The (then) Minister for Work and Pensions, Helen Goodman, is quoted as saying that "Women members cannot be expected to walk around alone in London after 11am", which prompts journalist Sue Carroll to exclaim, "How do they suppose nurses travel home after a long shift? What seems to mainly concern these Westminster wimps is having to get off trains at unstaffed stations." Whist Carroll does accept that this behaviour is potentially dangerous, her concern is crushed beneath the weight of her indignation but on the other hand, the women MPs also miss an important opportunity to highlight the problem of violence against women by framing the problem as a loss of privilege (to claim their London homes) rather than women's safety more generally.

*Story #4 – "Sorry about my letter full of blunders", says Brown"*

In terms of coverage, this story was by far the most important story about a woman, in this case also a mother, and was covered by all eight newspapers, although the headline here is taken from the *Daily Mail* (p4). The story concerned the mother of a young soldier who died in Afghanistan who was so disgusted with what she considered to be a disrespectful letter of condolence written to her by the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, that she took her story to the Sun. That newspaper broke the story on Monday 9 November but by Tuesday, it had been picked up by all the national news media and became a different kind of 'scandal'. Sometimes, it's hard to understand quite why some stories capture the journalistic imagination and others sink without trace but in this case, the story ticked a number of 'newsworthiness' boxes. Perhaps most importantly, it showed the then Prime Minister in an extremely unfavourable light, outed as a poor speller, with almost illegible handwriting, who paid insufficient attention to detail and was apparently almost blind in one eye. Demonstrating prime ministerial incompetence is almost as good as revealing craven mendacity and at a time of continuing unpopularity, with a number of gaffes behind him, another example of Brown's ineptitude, coupled with the pathos of a bereaved mother of a fallen hero, the story was a prime cut. The primary complaint of the grieving mother, was that the PM had misspelt her son's name, but she also stated there were numerous typos and spelling mistakes in the handwritten letter, providing further evidence of the PM's laissez-fair attitude towards the very serious task of writing such letters of condolence. What was interesting was that in most of the news reports, the mother, Jacquie Janes, was clearly framed as 'victim', with terms such as 'heartbroken' and 'grieving' and although she would have experienced both these emotions, she is also quoted as saying that her son was "fifth generation infantry" which suggests a certain knowledge and resignation of the life and death realities of war. After the offending letter was made public, first by the Sun but then by other newspapers, Brown then telephoned Mrs Janes to apologise for his mistakes and some news items on the monitoring day included extracts of that telephone conversation, which Mrs Janes secretly tape-recorded. Subsequently, a number of journalists questioned why Mrs Janes had taped the conversation and when she was asked this question outright, she said it was because she was "on medication" which did not seem to be a relevant answer. As she was unlikely to have routinely had a telephone recorder to hand, the implication of her action was that someone, probably a journalist, had suggested that the PM might call, and that she should tape the conversation, presumably for financial gain via an 'exclusive' media deal. Mrs Janes thus transitioned from a grieving mother with a legitimate complaint, to a grasping mother who wanted to exploit her son's death or, at the very least, is framed as an unwitting media stooge. Leaving aside the provenance of the tape recorder, it is clear in the transcript of the conversation that Janes is confident and assertive, possibly emboldened by the knowledge

of the hidden tape recorder, but nonetheless she is definitely not a victim in her exchange with the PM. However, because the media are generally poor at dealing with complexity, Janes mostly continued to be framed as the mother who was insulted by the Prime Minister (victim) rather than the woman who took on the Prime Minister and won.

## Summary and conclusions

Over the time period across which the GMMP has been taking place, the visibility of women as producers and subjects of news across the British news media landscape has seen a steady improvement, but the ratio of women to men seems stuck at 1:2. The question, then, is, are men really twice as important as women? In terms of media production, more women than men register for university-based journalism courses and enter the profession in slightly higher numbers than men, but they still lag behind in terms of career progression and salary and there are still relatively few women in senior positions within news organisations in the UK, with some notable exceptions. In this study, across print, radio and TV, women wrote 31%, 45% and 47% respectively, of all news items we coded which had an obvious author. Compared with previous monitoring data, 2010 saw an improvement in the variety of beats within which women were working, so that they wrote on a greater diversity of topics than in previous studies. However, although women journalists are more visible across a broader range of topics, they are more likely to be working in broadcast than print media, and in the latter, they are more likely to be working in the broadsheet than tabloid press, regardless of the politico-ideological orientation of the press. In broadcasting, women are more likely to be working as anchors and announcers than reporters.

As far as women in the news is concerned, although women's voices appear more often in now than has been reported in previous research studies, including previously monitored days, their status and function in stories is often very different to men. Whilst the most frequent occupation attributed to both women and men was 'government, politician or spokesperson', men were more likely to have this status than women and more likely to be coded as business people and police officers. No women were coded as members of royal families, as lawyers, priests, scientists, unemployed people or athletes but were more likely than men to be included in stories if they were teachers, officer workers, celebrities, activists, or homemakers (housewives). As well as the occupation of sources, we also considered their function in the story in terms of whether they were the primary or secondary subject, if they were invited to speak as experts, eye witnesses or as vox pops. Again, there were subtle differences between their status as sources, the most obvious of which are gender-based differences in terms of expertise (men) vs. personal experience (women). Thus, men are more likely to feature as subjects, spokespeople and expert commentators than women, whereas women were more likely to feature as eye witnesses, to bring personal experience or provide public opinion. As with other studies, these findings also suggest that women's voices are invited to provide personal testimony and impressionistic anecdote rather than authoritative and informed perspectives, further consolidating traditional gendered binaries of male/public/professional vs. female/private/personal, which undermine women's value in and to society. This trend is reflected in the global data which show exactly the same skews and in fact shows that women's role as popular opinion-giver has increased over the past 5 years, from 34% to 44%. This suggests that journalists are now routinely asking almost equal numbers of women and men to speak as members of the public which is undoubtedly a 'good' thing, but not if this is almost the only way in which women's voices are heard.



Encourage mainstream news media to undertake gender-awareness training which focuses on the bottom-line impact of improving diversity, not simply re-articulates an equity argument which has failed to produce much in the way of concrete outcomes for women in the news in the 30+ years that the UK has had Sex Equality legislation.

Find ways to demonstrate that increasing the diversity of sources (although GMMP only focuses on gender, most academic work on sources suggests that people from minority ethnic communities rarely feature as sources unless they are being interviewed about famine and disaster) makes news both more interesting but also more accessible to a wider consuming public.

Look at the ways in which the internet does or does not constitute a more democratic forum for the dissemination of news and if it appears to be more inclusive and/or 'publishes' a more diverse news agenda, then encourage more traditional media to follow suit.

## **Annex 1. Methodology**

Each participating country was assigned a specific number of newspapers, and radio and television newscasts to monitor based on the national media density. This was done to ensure that global results would reliably reflect the distribution of the world's news media, while respecting the need to balance results from smaller countries with those of larger countries. The number and selection of media outlets monitored in each country reflects the density and diversity – audience, ownership, language – of media in each country.

Efforts were made to ensure a uniform understanding and application of the methodology across the world. Clear instructions on how to code were provided. Some regional and national coordinators benefited from face-to-face or virtual training while others and the broader global teams of volunteers developed skills in monitoring through online self-administered tutorials. In one region, national coordinators were trained by the regional coordinator via teleconference. In some countries, national coordinators provided advance training to volunteer monitoring groups.

In each country monitors coded the most important television and radio newscasts of the day in their entirety. For newspapers, 12 to 14 stories appearing on the main news pages – defined as the pages devoted to national, international and, in some cases, regional news – were coded. Internet news was included for the first time in the global monitoring on a pilot basis in a few countries selected on the basis of the importance of the Internet as a news source for local news consumers.

The quantitative research captured statistical data on news topics, women and men in the news, the types of news stories in which they appeared, and their function in the news. Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) in South Africa was responsible for the quantitative analysis.

An in-depth and more nuanced analysis of selected news stories examined the means, themes and patterns of gender in the news. This qualitative analysis took into account the role of story angle, language and visual representations in constructing and sustaining or challenging gender stereotypes.

A full discussion of the methodology, including considerations on reliability, accuracy and limitations, is contained in the global report *Who Makes the News? The Global Media Monitoring Project 2010*.

## **Annex 2. List of Monitors**

England: Karen Ross (coordinator – England and UK/NI region), Verity Mulkeen, Andrew Clarke

Ireland: Annette Carter (coordinator), Peter Rowley and Brian Connor

Northern Ireland: Kellie Turtle (coordinator), Sarah Williamson, Amy Hatch and Shirley McMillan

Scotland: Jen Birks

Wales: Cynthia Carter (coordinator), Rachel Lucas



WACC  
308 Main Street  
Toronto  
ON M4C 4X7  
Canada

**Tel:** +1 416 691 1999

**Fax:** +1 416 691 1997

**Email:** [info@waccglobal.org](mailto:info@waccglobal.org)

**Web:** [www.waccglobal.org](http://www.waccglobal.org)

[www.whomakesthenews.org](http://www.whomakesthenews.org)

UK Coordinator: **Prof Karen Ross**

Department of Communication & Media

University of Liverpool

Chatham Street

Liverpool L69 9XL

**Tel:** +44 (0)7798 884110

**Email:** [rossk@liv.ac.uk](mailto:rossk@liv.ac.uk)