

**WHO
MAKES THE
NEWS?**



**England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of
Ireland**

Global Media Monitoring Project 2015
Four-Nation Report



GMMP
Global Media
Monitoring Project
WACC

GMMP Acknowledgements



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GMMP 2015 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 2015 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.



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Global Context

- As newsroom staff around the world went about their day on 25 March 2015, hundreds of volunteers located in over 100 countries gathered to monitor their news media as part of the Fifth Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP).
- 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.'¹
- 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.²
- The fourth GMMP in 2010 attracted the participation of 108 countries. Some progress in women's presence in the news was evident.³ Women made up 24% of the people in the news. While this 3% increase in the preceding five years was statistically significant, the overwhelming results showed women's continued near invisibility in the news. Only 13% of all stories – focussed specifically on women. Women were rarely central in stories that comprised the bulk of the news agenda such as politics, government and the economy. Women were outnumbered by men as newsmakers in every major news topic. 44% of people providing popular opinion in the news were women – a 10% increase from 2005. As newsmakers, women were under-represented in professional categories. The fourth 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 (28%) than in stories reported by male journalists (22%). In a pilot monitoring of news online, 76 news websites in 16 countries and 8 international news websites were also monitored as part of the GMMP in 2010. The results showed only 23% of news subjects were women – indicating that women's invisibility in traditional media was mirrored in news presented online.
- The First GMMP and, as will be seen, the Fifth GMMP reveal that the world reported in the news is mostly male. Twenty years since the first GMMP, the challenges of news media sexism, gender stereotyping and gender bias are proving to be intractable across time, space and content delivery platforms. At the same time, there exist a few examples of successes towards gender-just, gender-fair media.

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

² Spears, George and Kasia Seydegart, Erin Research. With additional analysis by Margaret Gallagher (2000) *Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project*.

³ Macharia, Sarah, Dermot O'Connor and Lilian Ndangam (2010) *Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project 2010*. WACC.

National context – UK and the Republic of Ireland

- In 2014, the House of Lords Select Committee on Communications Committee launched an inquiry into women in news and current affairs broadcasting, looking both at issues of representation and employment. After taking both written and oral evidence, the Committee published its report in 2015.⁴ In that report, they made a large number of recommendations, key amongst which were the need for the media industry to improve women's access to news and current affairs media (and we could add, all media for that matter), both behind and in front of the camera. Professional associations of women journalists such as Women in Journalism,⁵ have undertaken their own research into the visibility of women media professionals, especially in relation to front page news, and EU-funded research has looked at the position of women across Europe in senior decision-making positions and as board members, as well as their portrayal in fact-based programmes.⁶ In other words, there is no shortage of research which evidences women's marginal relationship to the news agenda and it is within this larger landscape that the UK GMMP 2015 findings are situated. As will be clear from the analysis which follows, the 2015 findings do not make for positive reading since they show at best, steady state from the 2010 findings and at worse, on several key indicators, a step back in terms of women's visibility.
- 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 through the media.
- Monitoring the media remains one of the most powerful ways in which to evidence the continuing discrimination and marginalisation of women across the news media landscape.
- There is always a danger with a methodology which samples a single news day, that for completely unforeseen reasons, the news day turns out to be atypical. Of the five iterations of the GMMP (1995, 2000, 2005, 2010 and now 2015), we suggest that three of the monitoring days were atypical for UK coverage, in two cases (1995 and 2015) because of a globally-reported disaster – the Kobe earthquake in 1995 and the Germanwings Airbus 320 plane crash in 2015 – and in one case (2000) because of the sentencing of Dr Harold Shipman for the murder of a large number of elderly women in his care. However, these events aside, there are sufficient other stories reported in the news to give us confidence that, despite 25 March 2015 being a day which saw a catastrophic plane crash – since then, there have sadly been several more plane crashes – that story probably comprised around 16 per cent of all news stories we coded, which means that the vast majority of new items we discuss below are rather more 'typical', assuming of course, that we believe that there *is* such a thing as a typical news day.

⁴ House of Lords Select Committee on Communications (2015) *Women in News and Current Affairs Broadcasting*. London: HMSO.

⁵ Women in Journalism (2013) *Seen But Not Heard: How Women Make Front Page News*. London: Women in Journalism. http://womeninjournalism.co.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2012/10/Seen_but_not_heard.pdf

⁶ European Institute for Gender Equality (2013) *Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States: Women and the Media: Advancing Gender Equality in Decision-Making in Media Organisations*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In the 15-year time period from 1995 to 2010, there was a slow but steady improvement in the visibility of women as producers and subjects of news in the UK and the Republic of Ireland. In the past five years, however, there are some worrying indications that progress has slowed down and, in some regards, there is evidence of regression.
- We looked at 75 different media including 15 TV and 12 radio programmes, 22 newspapers, 12 twitter news sites and 14 online news sites. We coded a total of 979 stories (672 stories across TV/radio/newspapers), coded 1960 sources and 431 announcers and reporters.
- Looking at the overall presence of women as sources in 2015, of the 1960 sources we coded across the five media and 28% were women (31% across newspapers, 24% on radio, 29% on TV and 25% for internet and twitter combined).⁷ For the rest of the discussion in the executive summary, all statistics relate to TV, radio and print **only**.
- Women's visibility is highly differentiated in terms of main topic type across *all* media formats, clustering around the categories of science/health (42%) and crime/violence (42%), the categories of news which had the lowest frequency amongst legacy media. Conversely, only 20% of sources and subjects of political news were women, as were 23% of sources and subjects in the broad category of celebrity/arts/medi/sport and 31% of sources in social/legal news items. Comparing the 2015 data with those we collected in 2010 data, the number of women sources as a proportion of all sources, has decreased by 3 per cent (even though the total number of sources has increased by around 50 per cent because of the inclusion of online and Twitter stories). The most significant decrease being across broadcast media - radio is down 7% and TV is down 6%.
- There are also significant shifts in the *frequency* with which women appear across the *range* of stories. In two summary categories (social/legal and celebrity/arts), there has been a significant increase in the number of sources in TV, radio and print overall from 2010, but a reduction in the number of women who speak in those stories in 2015.
- At the very least, the data suggest a rather troubling narrowing of the news agenda and what passes for newsworthy stories, so that the experiences and voices of women are given less attention. Women are significantly under-represented in hard news stories and in all the authoritative, professional and elite source occupational categories and are, instead, significantly over-represented as voices of the general, public (homemaker, parent, student, child) and in the occupational groups most associated with 'women's work', such as health and social and childcare worker, office or service industry worker.
- If we look at the *function* women perform in stories, their contribution as experts (20%) and spokespeople (25%) are considerably under-valued and instead, they are mostly called upon to voice popular opinion (54%) or speak from their personal experience including as eye-witnesses or speak from their own subject position.
- Findings show that there is an inverse relationship between sex and age, so as women's age increases, so their incidence in the news decreases: 20% of sources/subjects who were coded as over the age of 50 are women.
- In terms of women writing and speaking the news, we recorded 431 (individual) announcers and reporters, of whom 32% (136) were women, although there were wide variations between both role and medium with radio being the least inclusive of women media professionals (23% of announcers and 21% of reporters) and TV being the most inclusive (50% of announcers and 34%

⁷ For England, Scotland and Wales, the percentage was 28 and for Ireland, the percentage was 33, producing an average across the four countries of 28%.

of reporters) and newspapers being between both (32% of reporters). When we compare the findings with those of 2010, we see that women's overall visibility as media professionals has decreased for both radio and the press and increased for TV, but there is an overall *decrease* across the three media.

- As with news subjects, women announcers and presenters were mostly coded within the age category 35-49 years (89 per cent), with 11% being coded as 50 years+. Older women reporters fared even worse with the relevant percentages being 19-34 years (21%), 35-49 years (75%) and 50-64 years (4%).
- Women reporters were nearly twice as likely as men to write stories which had a central female focus (11% of all stories) and women were twice as likely to write stories which challenged gender stereotypes than men.
- In summary, women continue to be under-represented as much as subjects and sources in news media, as media professionals. They remain largely confined to the sphere of the private, emotional and subjective, while men still dominate the sphere of the public, rational and objective. Given that more women than men are graduating from university journalism courses, our findings suggest that women might be entering the profession but are not progressing into the more prestigious beats at the same rate as men and are not being considered as equal stakeholders in the professional structures that produce news content. The silencing of women's voices as subjects, creators and narrators of news is not a good news story, not for women, not for men, not for society.

THE CONTEXT

Background: the media landscape in the UK comprises regional, national and international outlets and many UK-based news providers have a global audience through their online presence. Whilst a diminishing market, a number of newspapers continue to enjoy a level of hard copy circulation, especially amongst the tabloid press and even some of the broadsheets still have circulation figures in the hundreds of thousands.

Table 1 - media monitored

MEDIUM	COUNTRY			
TV (15)	England/UK	Wales	Scotland	Ireland
	BBC1 – early evening	BBC Wales Today – morning	STV News - evening	RTE 1 - evening
	BBC1 – late evening			
	BBC2 – Newsnight - late evening	ITV Wales – evening	BBC1 Scotland - evening	UTV Ireland – late evening
	Channel 4 – evening	S4C – evening (Welsh language)	BBC2 Scotland – late evening	TV3 – late afternoon
	ITV – afternoon			
	Channel 5 – evening			
MEDIUM	COUNTRY			
Newspapers (22)	England/UK	Wales	Scotland	Ireland
	Express	Western Mail	Herald	The Irish Times
	Sun	South Wales Echo	Scotsman	The Irish Independent
	Guardian	Golwg (Welsh language)	The National	The Irish Sun
	Times		The Scottish Daily Mail	The Irish Daily Mail
	Independent		The Scottish Sun	The Examiner
	Telegraph		The Daily Record	
	Mirror			
	Mail			

MEDIUM	COUNTRY			
Radio (12)	England/UK	Wales	Scotland	Ireland
	R1Xtra – morning	BBC Radio Wales – afternoon	BBC Radio Scotland - Good Morning Scotland	RTE 1 - morning; RTE1, afternoon
	R5 Live – Drive – afternoon	Radio Cymru – morning	BBC Radio Scotland – Newsdrive - afternoon	Newstalk – morning Newstalk - afternoon
	Radio 4 – Today - morning			Today FM – afternoon
MEDIUM	COUNTRY			
Twitter (12)	England/UK	Wales	Scotland	Ireland
	BBC	BBC Wales	The Daily Record	Irish Times
	Times			RTE
	Independent			The Irish Independent
	Guardian			The Journal
				Breaking News
				Irish Times
MEDIUM	COUNTRY			
Websites (14)	England/UK	Wales	Scotland	Ireland
	BBC	Wales Online		Journal
	Guardian	BBC News Wales		Irish Times
	Mail	BBC Radio Wales		Irish Independent
	Times	BBC Cymry fyw (Welsh language)		RTE
		Golwyg 360 (Welsh language)		Breaking News

The monitors: a total of 34 people comprised the monitoring team in each of the four countries. We coded a total of 979 news items over five media and coded 1960 sources and 431 (individual) announcers and reporters.

TOPICS IN THE NEWS

We coded a total of 979 news stories across the five media of newspapers, radio, TV, online and Twitter. Although there are some variations in terms of story topic across the five media, there is also a large degree of consistency, suggesting that there is shared understanding of what counts as news, not to mention the same major stories being covered by all the media. However, with the exception of Tables 2 and 4, the following analysis focuses on the legacy media of newspapers, TV and radio and we only include details of the online and Twitter stories to show the broad similarities across the media landscape. All the internet and Twitter sites we included were the digital platforms of the traditional media we monitored, so we have excluded them from the analysis in order to avoid double-counting and thus skewing the analysis.

Table 2 – news category by medium

Summary news category	Newspapers	Radio	TV	Internet	Twitter
Politics and Government	23%	6%	21%	32%	12%
Economy	11%	24%	10%	14%	5%
Science and Health	11%	5%	13%	8%	6%
Summary news category	Newspapers	Radio	TV	Internet	Twitter
Social and Legal	32%	26%	20%	19%	22%
Crime and Violence	10%	3%	11%	14%	15%
Celebrity, Arts, Media, Sport	13%	25%	17%	11%	36%
Other	0%	11%	8%	2%	4%
TOTAL number of news stories	278	266	128	145	162

Breakdown of news story focus

The six news categories which appear in Table 2 above are aggregates of a much more extensive and detailed set of topic categories which comprise a menu of 55 separate items and Table 3 below shows the top 10 most frequent story topics by medium (newspapers, TV and radio only).

Table 3 – top 10 news sub-theme by medium (n)

News sub-theme	newspapers	radio	TV	TOTAL
Disaster, accident, famine, flood, plane crash, etc.	54	42	13	109*
Other domestic politics, government, etc.	54	13	26	93
Sports, events, players, facilities, training, funding	2	37	10	49
Economic policies, strategies, modules, indicators, stock markets, etc	10	28	8	46
Celebrity news, births, marriages, royalty, etc.	19	19	7	45
Medicine, health, hygiene, safety	17	6	11	34
Violent crime, murder, abduction, assault, etc.	19	4	8	31
Other stories on economy	2	21		23
Education, childcare, nursery, university, literacy	11	5	4	20
Arts, entertainment, leisure, cinema, books, dance	6	7	5	18
Total (ALL sub-themes)	278	266	128	672

**mostly stories on Germanwings plane crash*

When compared with findings from the 2010 monitoring, politics and government was also the top news category for radio (27%) and print (24%) but crime and violence (27%) was the most popular category on TV. In some ways, the 2015 findings are therefore quite contradictory since on the one hand, an increase in social/legal stories could be seen as part of the slide towards a more intimatised, human interest agenda, but on the other, the reduction in stories about crime and violence goes against the trend of sensationalised reporting. Assuming that there has not been any decrease in the incidence of actual crime, perhaps its lesser visibility in the news signals some kind of battle fatigue and a turning away from the mundane nature of burglary and assault towards the celebrity-focused crimes of fashion gaffes and wardrobe malfunctions.

There were no differences between type of journalism women and men write in terms of local, national, sub-regional or foreign/international news although there were differences in terms of story focus and beat, but that was largely related to the relative numbers of women and men we coded. For example, within the group of women journalists (125), the stories they covered were more or less evenly spread across the primary topic groups of science/health (15%), politics/government (13%), economy (13%), crime and violence (12%), with a larger proportion of stories on celebrity, arts, media and sport (20%) and social and legal issues (23%).

The spread of stories was largely similar for men, but because women comprise less than one-third of all journalists we coded, they were disproportionately by-lined on stories about science and health (58%) and crime/violence (52%), so we could say that they are both conforming and confounding gender stereotypes around soft and hard news stories. This finding could be interesting to explore further by analysing the stories themselves and one of the weaknesses of quantitative analyses such as this one is their inability to make more nuanced connections between volume and content.

WHO FEATURES IN THE NEWS ?

If we look at the overall presence of women as sources in 2015, we coded 1960 sources across the five media and 28% were women (31% across newspapers, 24% on radio, 29% on TV and 25% for

internet and twitter combined).⁸ Half the sources were included in stories of national significance, 25% of whom were women although they comprised around one-third of sources in local and international news. We can see from Table 4 that their visibility is highly differentiated in terms of main topic type across all media formats, clustering around the summary categories of science/health and crime/violence, the categories of news which had the lowest frequency amongst legacy media.

Table 4 – summary news category by sex of source (2015 and 2010 comparisons) and medium

Summary news category	TV, radio, newspapers				Twitter, Internet		
	% women 2010	% women 2015	total sources 2015*	total sources 2010**	% women 2015	% men 2015	total sources
Politics and Government	25%	20%	251	293	15%	85%	96
Economy	27%	24%	133	83	32%	68%	34
Science and Health	31%	42%	142	61	29%	71%	38
Social and Legal	43%	31%	542	143	31%	69%	130
Crime and Violence	34%	42%	124	223	32%	68%	87
Celebrity, Arts, Media, Sports	31%	23%	271	150	10%	90%	83
Other	45%	42%	24	60	80%	20%	5
GRAND TOTAL	32%	29%	1487	1013	25%	75%	473

**sample included England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland*

***sample included England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland*

Comparing the 2015 data with those we collected in 2010 data, we see from Table 4 that the number of women sources as a proportion of all, has decreased by 3 per cent, even though the total number of sources has increased by around 50 per cent. The most significant decrease is across broadcast media - radio is down 7% and TV is down 6%. There are also significant shifts in frequency with which women appear across the *range* of stories. In two summary categories (social/legal and celebrity/arts), there has been a significant increase in the number of sources overall but a reduction in the number of women sourced in those stories.

Conversely, the number of sources in the crime/violence category has decreased considerably whereas women's visibility has gone up, unlike their frequency as sources in politics/government stories which has gone down over the past five years. How can we account for these shifts? We could argue that the differences are merely coincidental since, on the monitoring day, the stories were focused more on men in politics and women in health stories, but that argument is less persuasive in the categories of social/legal and celebrity/arts where the nearly doubling of the number of sources resulted in a significant decrease in women's contributions. Do women really have so little to say about any of these topics or, rather, do journalists covering these subjects reach more readily for the usual suspects to provide a quote, a propensity already noted in any number of studies and made worse by the routine recycling of the same newsfeed stories. We can only speculate on what circumstances produce these data but it is hard to believe that women's worsening visibility is the result of random or chance journalistic practices. At the very least, the data

⁸ For England, Scotland and Wales, the percentage was 28 and for Ireland, the percentage was 33, producing an average across the four countries of 28%.

suggest a rather troubling narrowing of the news agenda and what passes for newsworthy stories, so that the experiences and voices of women are given less attention. What we need to consider, then, is whose interests are served by an overwhelmingly male-ordered news focus, certainly not the 51% of the population who struggle to see themselves and their lives reflected in news output.

So far, we have looked at the summary news topics, but we can also drill down to the individual story topics which were composited to produce the summary categories shown in Table 4 above.

Table 5 –women sources by most (>50 %) and least (<20%) popular occupation

Occupation	women % sources	total n
Royalty, monarch, deposed monarch, etc.	67%	6
Police, military, para-military, militia, fire officer	14%	29
Academic expert, lecturer, teacher	15%	65
Health worker, social worker, childcare worker	85%	20
Science/ technology professional, engineer, etc.	10%	29
Media professional, journalist, film-maker, etc.	12%	68
Lawyer, judge, magistrate, legal advocate, etc.	18%	49
Business person, exec, manager, stock broker	13%	102
Office or service worker, non-management worker	67%	12
Tradesperson, artisan, labourer, truck driver, etc.	16%	19
Agriculture, mining, fishing, forestry	11%	9
Sportsperson, athlete, player, coach, referee	3%	92
Student, pupil, schoolchild	84%	38
Homemaker, parent (male or female)) only if no other occupation is given	58%	24

A total of 26 occupations and broad occupational groups were developed by the GMMP team including the miscellaneous category of 'other'. There were very few differences in women's occupation as sources in and subjects of news, suggesting that the majority of sources were also the subjects of the stories in which they spoke. There were five categories in which women comprised more than 50% of particular occupational groups as shown in Table 5.

In addition, women comprised 22% of the combined occupational group 'government, politician, minister, spokesperson' (totalling 404 individual sources), the largest occupational group identified, comprising 27% of all sources. This finding echoes that of many other studies which demonstrate the media's propensity to using 'official' sources, a strategy which compounds women's marginalisation.

The other two most popular source occupations were 'celebrity/artist/actor' which constituted 8% of all source occupations where women comprised 32% of that category, followed by 'business person/exec, manager/stockbroker' (6%) where women constituted 13% of such source occupations.

Both Tables demonstrate that women are significantly under-represented in hard news stories (Table 4) and in all the authoritative, professional and elite source occupational categories (Table 5) and are, instead, significantly over-represented as voices of the general, public (homemaker, parent, student, child) and in the occupational groups most associated with 'women's work', such as health and social and childcare worker, office or service industry worker. Once again, these findings are entirely consonant with other studies which note the same tendencies towards stereotyping women's inclusion in the news agenda.

Having noted the occupation of news sources, we also looked at the *function* they perform in stories and Table 6 shows even more clearly the ways in which women's voices as experts or spokespeople are considerably under-valued and instead, they are mostly called upon to voice popular opinion or speak from their personal experience including as eye-witnesses or speak from their own subject position. There were some interesting differences in terms of medium, however, with radio and internet news including expert women at nearly three times the rate of TV and print. Men were also much more likely to be quoted (72%) in stories where they were the subject, than women (59%), further adding to women's silencing.

In general terms, given both the frequency of and credence given to expert sources and spokespeople, once again we see that women's views on stories in which they are not in some way involved is negligible, further confining them to the sphere of the private, emotional and subjective, with men continuing to dominate the sphere of the public, rational and objective. On the other hand, stories about women were more likely to feature an accompanying photograph (34%) than men (23%) which is interesting but in the absence of any in-depth analysis of photographic content, we cannot interpret the significance of such a finding.

When we compare the findings with the data collected in 2010, although there are more sources quoted, women's visibility has decreased, although the spread of women's voices is broadly similar, within +/- 6%.

Table 6 – function of source in story by % women

Function	% women 2010	total 2010	% women 2015	total 2015
Subject	31%	503	29%	635
Spokesperson	25%	150	25%	361
Expert or commentator	25%	205	20%	239
Personal Experience	48%	91	42%	117
Eye Witness	46%	15	40%	60
Popular Opinion	56%	34	54%	54
Other	no data	no data	43%	14
TOTALS	31%	998*	29%	1487

* 15 sources were not given an occupation

Most research which has looked at women and news suggests that they most frequently appear in the news as victims (often of male violence), as eye candy and in a familial role as wife, daughter or mother, often in relation to high-status men. The data from this study confirms this broad tendency: women were far more likely to be sources because of the familial position (see Table 4 above, homemaker/parent category), women were more likely to have their family status included as part of their description (38%) than men (28%) and women were more than three times more likely to be described as a victim (23%) than men (7%).

A total of 173 sources (11%) of all sources were described as victims, which is a significant decrease on this source category from 2010 (19%). This finding is partly explained because of the content of one of the key stories of the 2010 monitoring day which was the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall, where a number of anti-war campaigners were quoted as sources, most of whom were men.

Around half of both the women and men sourced as victims were identified as victims of 'accident, natural disaster and poverty' (43 per cent), while domestic violence was much more associated with women victims (78%, 21 out of 27 individuals) which comprised the second largest category of victim. Given the dominance of the Germanwings plane crash across the news agenda, part of the

reason why women feature so significantly in this category is because many of the stories of that disaster featured young women mourning the loss of their friends. Although very few sources in stories of ‘non-domestic’ crimes were included (13) in the sample, similar numbers of women (7) and men (6) were quoted which is entirely contrary to the reality of the victims of such crimes who are predominantly men. Very few people were described as ‘survivors’ (36 individuals), most of whom were women (26) and most of whom were described as survivors of some form of domestic violence (18).

We also looked at the age of sources and coded for age where it was either explicitly mentioned in newspaper or TV stories or where the coders were able to ascertain age through online searches and in this way, we coded around 38% of all sources (563). Findings show that there is an inverse relationship between sex and age, so as women’s age increases, so their incidence in the news decreases: 20% of sources/subjects over the age of 50 are women. This again echoes much recent scholarship which shows the gradual disappearance of women from the news agenda, as if the lives of older woman are simply not worth bothering about.

Given that the world’s population continues to be an ageing one, and that women live longer than men, one irresistible conclusion to draw from this otherwise counter-intuitive result is to suggest that although their stories might well be interesting for a large segment of the people who consume the news, they seem explicitly uninteresting to the people who write the news, most of whom are men.

WHO REPORTS AND DELIVERS THE NEWS?

When we look at who announces and reports the news, we see that as with news sources, women struggle to comprise even a third of media professionals. This finding again reflects much of the research already undertaken on women’s employment in news media.

Table 7 – media professionals by sex and medium

	TV		Radio		Newspapers	
Role	% women	n	% women	n	% women	n
Announcer	50	16	23	13	n/a	n/a
Reporter	34	82	21	56	32	264
TOTALS	37	98	22	69	32	264

In terms of women writing and speaking the news, we recorded 431 individual announcers and reporters, of whom 32% (136) were women, although there were wide variations between both role and medium as we show in Table 7, with radio being the least inclusive of women media professionals. That women are more visible as announcers on TV than in any other category (although their presence has gone down by 3% since 2010) reflects the findings of many other studies and is likely to be associated with what has been termed the ‘feminisation’ or ‘intimisation’ of news, where news is fronted by an attractive, often young, woman whose friendly persona is regarded as more appropriate for delivering news-as-infotainment. Their ‘success’ in this role is somewhat offset by women’s continuing struggle to achieve visibility as reporters across all media.

There were no differences between type of journalism women and men write in terms of local, national, sub-regional or foreign/international news although there were differences in terms of story focus and beat, but that was largely related to the relative numbers of women and men we coded. For example, *within* the group of women journalists (125), the stories they covered were more or less evenly spread across the primary topic groups of science/health (15%),

politics/government (13%), economy (13%), crime and violence (12%), with a larger proportion of stories on celebrity, arts, media and sport (20%) and social and legal issues (23%).

The spread of stories was largely similar for men, but because women comprise less than one-third of all journalists we coded, they were disproportionately by-lined on stories about science and health (58%) and crime/violence (52%), so we could say that they are both conforming and confounding gender stereotypes around soft and hard news stories. This finding could be interesting to explore further by analysing the stories themselves and one of the weaknesses of quantitative analyses such as this one is their inability to make more nuanced connections between volume and content.

On the other hand, gender stereotypes were much in evidence in relation to age, so that women announcers and presenters were mostly coded within the age category 35-49 years (89 per cent), with 11% being coded as 50 years+. Older women reporters fared even worse with the relevant percentages being 19-34 years (21%), 35-49 years (75%) and 50-64 years (4%). Men were more evenly spread across the age groups in terms of announcers and anchors (none in the youngest age category but more less similar numbers across the other two; for male reporters, around one-third (33%) were in the oldest age group, with the majority coded as 35-49 years.

This finding mirrors other research which has noted the popular pairing of attractive younger presenter with the avuncular older male, the latter reporting the main news stories with the female side-kick rounding off the human interest stories, as well as the considerable volume of research which has looked at the disappearance of the older women from TV screens. There have been a number of high profile cases of women journalists and presenters taking their erstwhile employer to an industrial tribunal on grounds of both sex and age discrimination.

When we compare the findings for 2015 with those of 2010, we see that five years ago, 31% of stories in the press were written by women, 36% of reporters on radio and 30% of reporters on TV were women. Given that in 2010, women were more visible in radio than the other two media, it is interesting to question why they are so much less visible now although the number of stories with an identified reporter on radio has more than halved, from 115 to 56. Even more dramatically, the percentage of women working as announcers on radio has gone down over the same period from 53 per cent to 23 percent.

It would seem from women's *visibility* in the media as reporters, that their employment seems to have stayed at more or less the same levels over the past five years which, given that the rate of women graduating from media and journalism programmes has been increasing for at least the past ten years, suggests that either many do not actually enter newsrooms or that few are in beats which result in their copy reaching the top of the news agenda. Recent studies of news media content entirely corroborate this view – see below.

GENDER AND THE NEWS

There were a few stories with a specific gender-focus (27 stories, 4%) with the largest number being stories around the portrayal of women and men (9) and gender-based violence including rape and sexual assault (7). Other types of stories included women's rights as part of human rights (4), women politicians (4) and birth control or fertility treatment (2). Women reporters were no more likely to write stories on women's rights or equality than male colleagues. There were rather more stories which had women as primary subject (11%), and of these, the story types most likely to have this focus were crime and violence (32%), science and health (25%) and celebrity/arts/media/sport (16%).

There were two significant stories featuring women which were carried by most of the UK media. One was a celebrity/health story featuring the decision by actor Angelina Jolie to have her ovaries

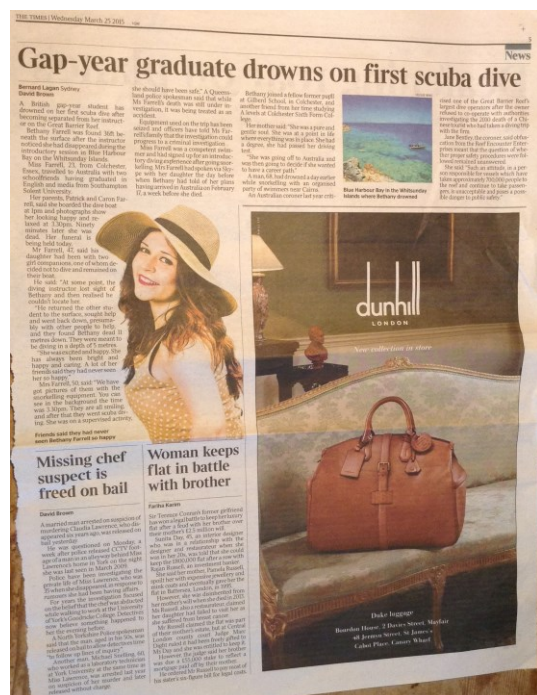
removed as she carries a mutant gene (BRCA1) which predisposes her towards ovarian cancer. Most stories on this topic also featured her mother Marcheline Bertrand who was routinely described as a victim of cancer. The other was the brutal, sadistic murder of childcare worker Elaine O'Hara by Graham Dwyer (widely reported in the Irish news media), which had coverage across a number of news items, all of which identified her as a victim of sexual violence, with numerous quotes from friends and family, many of whom were also described as victims of the same crime.

Women reporters were nearly twice as likely as men to write stories which had a central female focus and newspapers were much more likely than either TV or radio to feature such stories. We also coded those stories where gender stereotypes were challenged and 6% of all stories were regarded as challenging and twice as many such stories were written by women as men. Whilst these stories are to be applauded, it does mean that the vast majority of news items which featured a female subject did not engage with content in a critical way, often perpetuating a normative framing of women.

GENDER AND JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE

Illustrative case study: three stories from the *Times*, p5

There were three stories published in *The Times*, on p5, all of which had a female focus but each of which had a very different topic: story #1 – *Gap year graduate drowns on first scuba dive* (dead victim-accident); story #2 – *Missing chef suspect is freed on bail* (dead victim-murder); story #3 – *Woman keeps flat in battle with brother* (subject-survivor).




The first story takes up half a page and includes two colour photographs (one of the victim and one of the dive site) and reports the death of a recent graduate, Bethany Farrell, who died in a diving accident in Australia. It is a factual report, detailing what is known about the accident (not very much) and includes quotes from her parents in which she is described by her mother as a "pure and gentle soul" and "bright, happy and caring" by her father. The report says that the dive equipment has since been seized and in the latter part of the article, a local (female, atypical occupation) coroner suggests that the dive company is being investigated. While Bethany is certainly framed as a victim (gender stereotype), she is also described as a "competent swimmer", implying that the dive was not a silly or dangerous thing for her to undertake.

The second story focuses on the case of chef Claudia Lawrence who 'disappeared' in March 2009, where a man suspected of murdering her had just been released on bail. The suspect is described as a "married man" and police officers had been investigating her "private life" because of "rumours she [Claudia] had been having affairs." The source of the rumours remained anonymous and evidence of any such affairs unforthcoming, in which case, why were they mentioned at all? Indeed, why is this even a news story (there is no evidence, yet, of a crime having been committed) still less considered to be important enough to be on page 5?

The third story concerns Sunita Day, former girlfriend of Sir Terence Conran who had been involved in a legal battle with her brother over the details of their inheritance. Sunita's age is identified but

not that of her brother. She is accused of deserting her mother when she had breast cancer and being disinherited, implying that the brother, on the other hand was the dutiful son. That the case makes it onto the news agenda at all is presumably because of Sunita's ex-girlfriend status, despite it being twenty years since she was in a relationship with Conran.

The point about briefly discussing these three articles is that they exemplify the broader problem of gender stereotypes in the news, where even if reported on in a relatively unbiased way, women are at their most interesting when they are lovers or cadavers or both. As will also be observed, the advert for a very expensive briefcase takes up nearly as much space as the three news items put together, an interesting comment on the importance of women's lives in relation to advertising revenue.



SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the 15-year time period from 1995 to 2010, there was a slow but steady improvement in the visibility of women as producers and subjects of news in the UK. In the past five years, however, there are some worrying indications that progress has slowed down and, in some regards, there is evidence of regression. For example, the 2015 data demonstrates that 28% of sources were women, which represents a decrease of 3% on the 2010 findings. Moreover, as women age, their under-representation in the news becomes even more pronounced. This also holds for women media professionals, especially presenters, who disappear from our screens once they reach an age deemed 'unattractive' to the viewing public. The decrease in women's voices as sources is most likely attributable to journalists relying on the 'usual suspects' as they are expected to work under ever increasing time pressures, as well as a lack of commitment by news organisations to either use existing databases of women experts or compile their own. The result is that women remain significantly under-represented in 'hard' news stories and over-represented as parents, homemakers and low-paid employees, thus perpetuating a normative framing of women which marginalises their contribution as experts, business people, politicians and professional people in general.

Considering the widespread attention that gender inequality in television, cinema and theatre is currently receiving, particularly on social media, it is surprising that so few of the stories coded (27 out of 672 or 4%) had a specific gender focus. Equally alarming is that only 6% of stories were coded as challenging gender stereotypes, with twice as many such stories written by women as men. Although women reporters were no more likely to write stories on women's rights or equality than their male colleagues, they were nearly twice as likely to write stories which had a central female focus. This serves as an important reminder that gender balance in the workforce is crucial for encouraging balanced representation, and that we are no closer to achieving this than we were in 2010.

Women are now struggling to comprise even a third of media professionals, with radio being the least inclusive, indicating a significant decline since 2010. A separate study conducted this year on radio in Ireland shows that between 78% and 85% of on-air experts are male.⁹ Similar research looking at British newspapers in 2013 demonstrated very similar proportions of women writing front page stories.¹⁰

In brief, women in the UK continue to be under-represented as subjects and sources within news media, as well as amongst media professionals. They remain confined to the sphere of the private, emotional and subjective, while men still dominate the sphere of the public, rational and objective. Women are marginalised from many areas of political and economic life (decision-making) because their voices and views are mainly invited to contribute to the less important areas of the social and the cultural (infotainment). These gender-based differentiations are reinforced by the frequency with which women speak as the voice of popular opinion while men speak as experts and professionals: women are mostly interesting in their familial or relationship role (wives, mothers and girlfriends), as victims and eye witnesses.

Since more women than men graduate from university journalism courses, and enter the profession in slightly higher numbers than men,¹¹ we have to wonder why they don't get to work on the beats

⁹ Walsh, K., Suiter, J. and O'Connor, O. (2015) *Hearing Women's Voices? Exploring women's underrepresentation in current affairs radio programming at peak listening times in Ireland*. Dublin: National Women's Council of Ireland and Dublin City University.

¹⁰ Women in Journalism (2013) *Seen But Not Heard: How Women Make Front Page News*. London: Women in Journalism. http://womeninjournalism.co.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2012/10/Seen_but_not_heard.pdf

¹¹ Marshall, S. (2011) Why are there so few women in today's newsrooms? *Online Journalism News*. Available at: <http://www.journalism.co.uk/news-features/why-are-there-so-few-women-in-today-s-newsrooms-/s5/a543086/>

which put their copy at the top of the news agenda. There seems to be a reluctance on the part of news organisations to consider women as equal stakeholders, either in news content or in the professional structures that produce it. The media are not reflecting the reality of women and men's lives in the real world. Given the painfully slow rate of progress towards gender inclusivity in news which we have seen over the past 20 years, it is hard to imagine how the industry will begin to more authentically reflect the lived reality of its citizens without a concerted effort on the industry's part to change the picture. We offer a few thoughts on how that change could be promoted.

ACTIONS IN THE POST-2015 ERA: SOME THOUGHTS

Media houses: publish gender-disaggregated data on job applications/shortlisting/appointment by level; do the same for promotions; produce Gender Equality Plans and mechanisms for monitoring progress; make the development of Gender Equality Plans a prerequisite for all companies tendering for programme commission; establish gender quotas for senior posts and board positions and monitor progress against targets.

Civil society: make more complaints about gender stereotyping in the media; mount campaigns on specific issues (e.g. gender and disability, age, sexuality, class); boycott newspapers and their online sites which regularly denigrate women by, for example, the gratuitous inclusion of semi-naked women in newspapers and news sites.

Researchers: undertake longer periods of media monitoring using GMMP methodology; work with unions to undertake surveys of women and men journalists and other media workers about their experiences of workplace environments and career progression.

Government Departments: impose meaningful fines on media houses where employees take out claims on grounds of sex discrimination; give media regulators more power.

ANNEX 1. METHODOLOGY

Each participating country was assigned a specific number of newspapers, radio and television newscasts, online news sites and twitter feeds to monitor based on the national media density. This was done to ensure global results represented 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 was practiced 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. Country teams could opt into the online and twitter news monitoring based on their knowledge of the importance of these channels for news delivery to local audiences.

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 managing and processing the monitoring data.

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 2015*.

ANNEX 2. LIST OF MONITORS

England/UK

Alison Shaw
Amy Robson
Ashton Atkinson
Caroline Bell
Cat Mahoney
Edita Petrylaite
Elena Teso
Emily Rowson
Fiona Smailes
Gaby Smith
Jannine Williams
Jenny Kean
Joy Allen

Karen Ross (Coordinator)

Liz Crolley
Megan Sormus
Melissa Hair

Ireland

Aileen O'Driscoll
Brenda McNally
Debbie Ging (Coordinator)
Grace McDermott
John Moran
Marie Boran
Niamh Kirk

Scotland

Claire Heuchan
Clare Rafferty
Donna Moore
Hannah Gallagher-Lyall
Karen Boyle (Coordinator)
Margot Buchanan

Wales

Catherine Hopkins
Cindy Carter (Coordinator)
Eleanor Prescott

Additional technical support was provided by Tobias Bürger and Jane Wynn

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