

WHO MAKES THE NEWS?



GMMP

Global Media
Monitoring
Project

2020

Pacific

REGIONAL REPORT



GMMP

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



Data for GMMP 2020 were collected through the collective voluntary effort of hundreds of organizations including gender and media activists, grassroots communication groups, university researchers, students, mediaprofessionals, journalists associations, alternative media networks and faith groups.

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BACKGROUND

Global Context

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

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

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

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

Regional Context

News media remain the major and most influential source of information, ideas and 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.

Teams in Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea coded 979 news items published or broadcast in 72 print, radio, television, news websites and news twitter feeds were monitored. The stories contained 2344 persons as sources and subjects, and 1094 reporters.

Media Freedom and media regulations vary in the Pacific Island region. For example, while Freedom of Expression is enshrined in the PNG Constitution (Section 46) in Fiji since April 2009, state instituted media censorship through a Public Emergency Decree put in place following the abrogation of the 1997 Constitution resulted in greater control of news media and the promulgation of a Media Decree was considered to further limit news media content and the range of viewpoints presented through the news media.

The Fiji Government’s National Gender Policy (February 2014) includes specific strategies linked to ‘increasing the participation and access of women to the expression of their

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

opinions and to decision-making in and through the media including their involvement in new technologies of communication; promoting a balanced and nonstereotyped portrayal of women in the media through training.’

In 2013, the Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PACMAS) adopted a gender policy to strengthen its approach to gender, with many of the recommendations taken up. The Triennial Conferences of Pacific Women have consistently highlighted the need to challenge the existing roles and responsibilities of the mainstream media to improve the portrayal of women in Pacific society, and to counter the existing factors that inhibit women’s engagement with mainstream media.

GMMP is about more than just collecting data; it provides both the quantitative and qualitative basis for collective advocacy on enhancing the implementation of gender equality commitments in the region.

The most important global commitment remains the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) for the Advancement of Women adopted in 1995. In Section J, the BPfA makes several recommendations for States, the private sector and civil society organisations to enhance the role and participation of women in the media.

The GMMP provides global, regional and country data to hold duty bearers to account.

Sample

Economy and social/legal news were most prominent on the print and broadcast news agenda, each with 19% of the stories in the total sample. Politics/government and celebrity/arts/sports followed closely, each with 17% of the stories. In the digital news space, politics dominated with 24% of the stories followed by economy and science/health news, both with 17% of the stories in the digital news sample.

In Australia and New Zealand more print than radio or television stories were monitored, in Papua New Guinea, television stories contributed 55% of the sample while in Fiji, one out of two stories was from radio newscasts. (Figure 1) Of the digital stories sample, only news websites were monitored in Fiji and PNG only while in Australia and New Zealand both websites and news tweets were covered. (Figure 2)

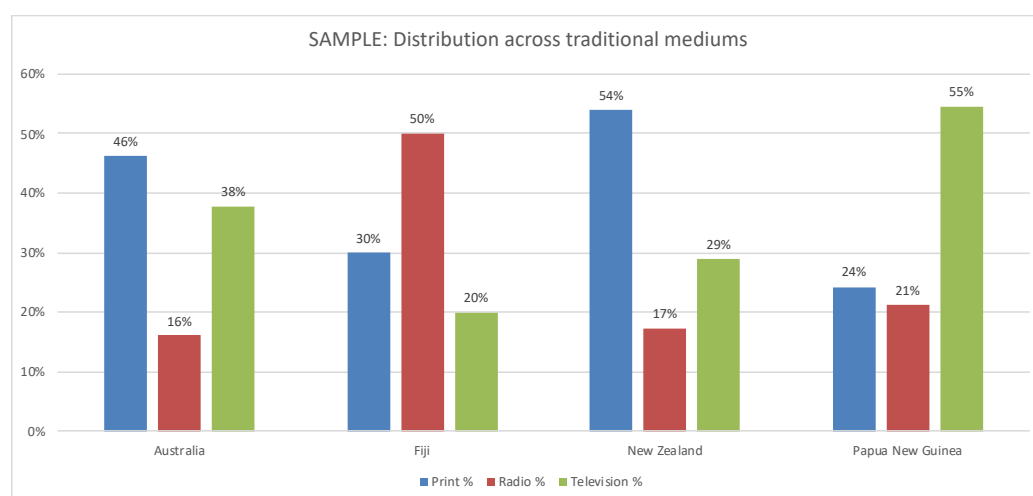


Figure 1. Sample distribution across traditional mediums

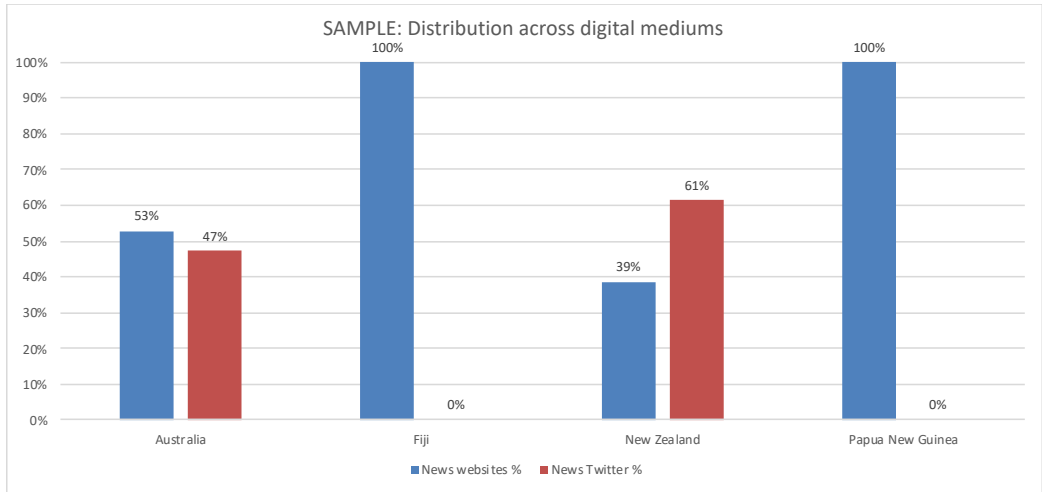
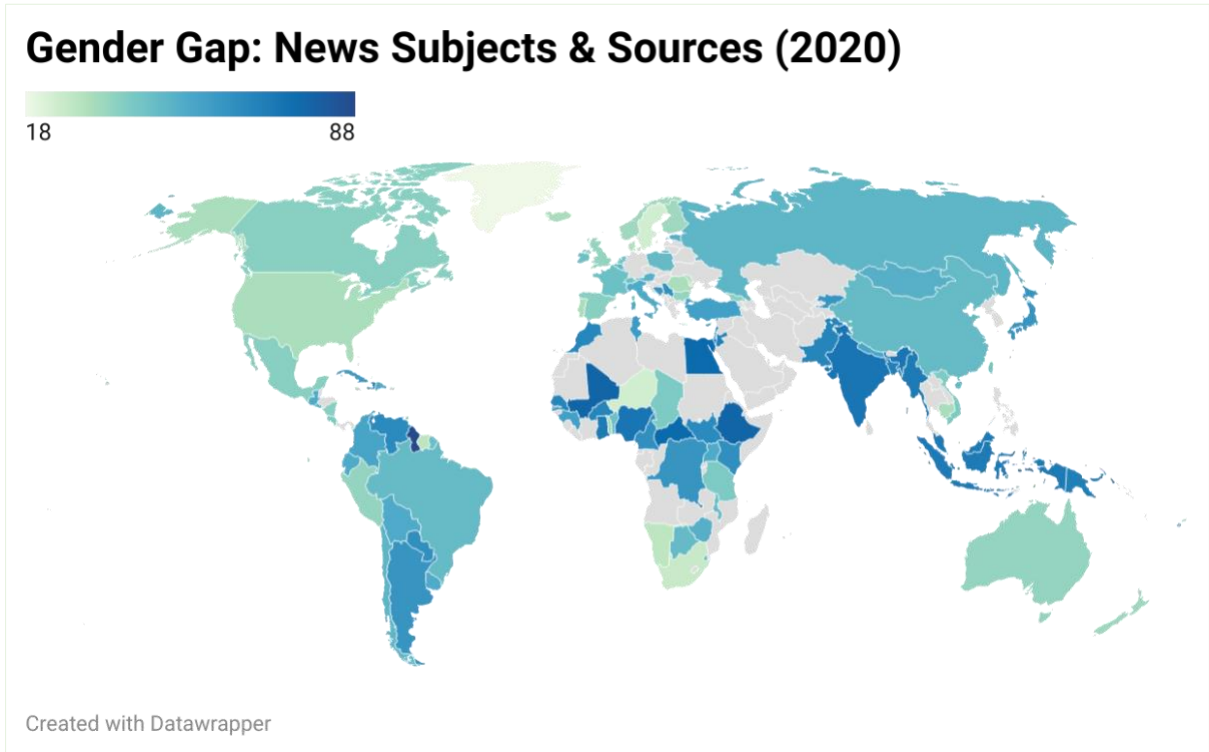


Figure 2. Sample distribution across digital mediums

FINDINGS

News subjects and sources



In the Pacific region, the sample average of subjects and sources who are women is 31% in traditional mediums and 33% in digital news. This is a major improvement from 2015 when women were 26% of subjects/sources in print/radio/television news and 24% on news websites/ tweets.

Apart from the 'gender & related' topic under which only 1% of print stories were coded (none on radio and television, 3% on news websites and 1% of tweets), in traditional

mediums women are most present in social & legal news where they are 4 out of 10 of subjects/sources, and in a similar proportion of science/health stories in the digital news space. (Figure 3 and Figure 4)

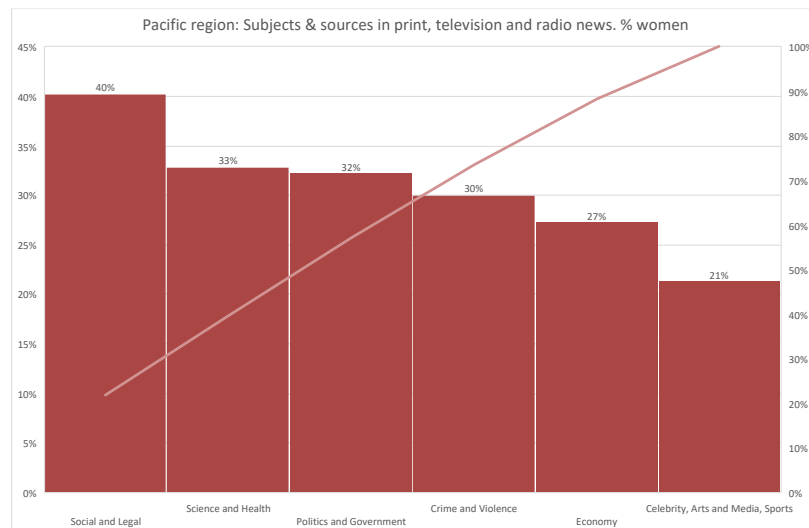


Figure 3. Subjects and sources in traditional news, % women

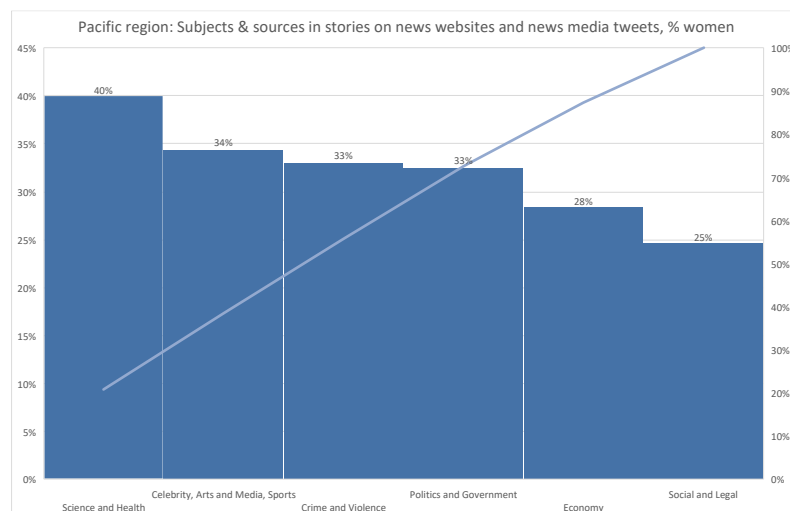


Figure 4. Subjects and sources in stories on news websites and news media tweets, % women

Of the five mediums studied, women have visibility and voice most in newspapers and least on radio; in print, 37% of subjects/sources are women and only 19% on radio. On television one in four persons seen, heard or spoken of is a woman. In minor topics with at least 30 persons coded, the top three topics in which women are most present are celebrity (57% of subjects/sources), environment/pollution/tourism (43%) and disaster/accident... (42%). Women are least likely to be subjects and sources in news on labour issues (no women), sports (13%) and violent crime (27%).

Of all people portrayed as homemakers, almost four out of five are women. In the world depicted in the region's news, women are three out of ten of health, social and childcare workers, 28% of politicians and 18% of business persons/ business executives.

Women are 33% of persons interviewed as experts and 27% of spokespersons in traditional mediums (34% and 28% respectively in stories on news websites). This is a dramatic improvement from 2015 when women were 14% of experts and 24% of spokespersons in print and broadcast news (16% and 24% respectively in 2010).

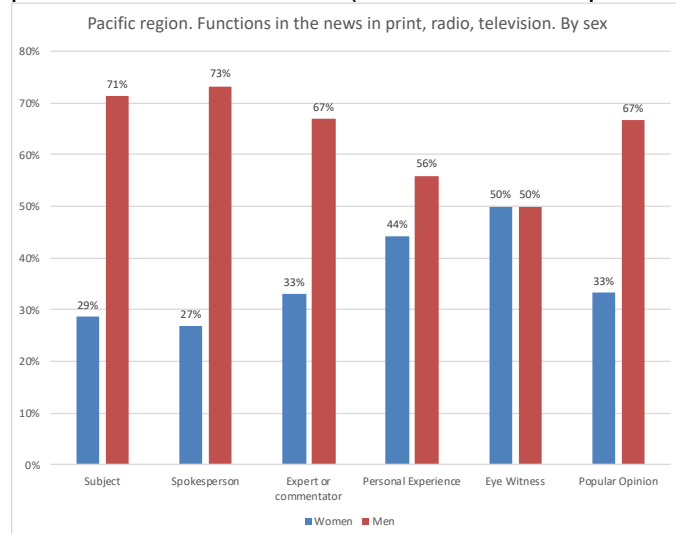


Figure 5. Functions in print, radio and television news, by sex.

The age pyramid is evident in the persons who appear in television news: when women do appear, they are most likely to be younger while men's visibility rises with age. 60% of the women are between 19 and 49 years old, while 53% of men are 50 and older. The most populous age bracket for men is 50-64 years (39%) while for women, it is 34-49 years old (35%).

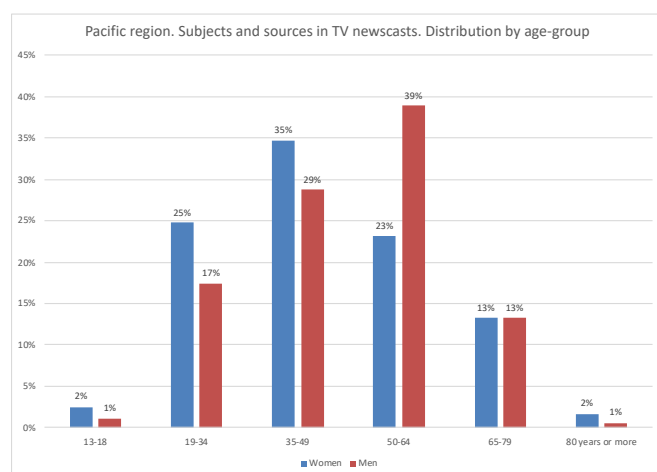


Figure 6. Subjects & sources in TV newscasts, distribution by sex and age-group

One out of six women, and one out of five men depicted as victims are victims of accidents, natural disaster and poverty. Survivors of accidents, natural disaster and poverty are also the most prevalent survivor 'type' category for women and men; for 28% of women and 16% of men portrayed as survivors.

Women are still more likely to be described by their family status than men are, these are 24% of women and only 9% of men. But women and men reporters alike are similar in terms of how likely they are to describe their female subjects and sources by their family status.

23% of women in stories by women reporters and the same proportion in stories by men reporters are presented as wives/spouses, daughters, mothers, and similar identity markers on status in the household.

Reporters

Overall in the region, 48% of reporters in stories published or aired in traditional mediums are women and 51% in digital news stories. Radio and Twitter news are overwhelmingly reported by women (Figure 7). The Pacific region’s news media performance on this indicator is above the world average and an improvement from 2015 when women were 45% of reporters in traditional mediums.

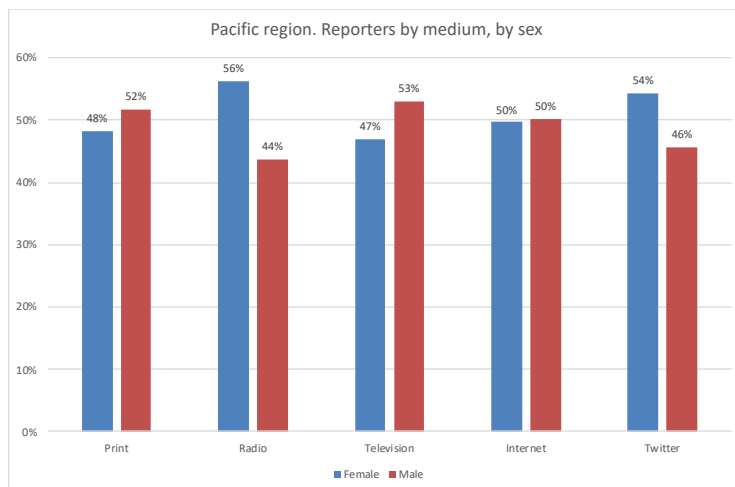


Figure 7. Reporters by medium, by sex

33% of subjects and sources in stories by women reporters are female, compared to 27% in stories by men reporters. This pattern of source/subject selection is consistent with most world regions and the global level, where currently and over time, women reporters have remained more likely to feature girls and women as the subjects of the stories or as interviewees, than men reporters.

News quality from gender perspective

9% of the region’s traditional news make reference to issues of gender equality and/or human rights legislation or policy, performance that is better than the world average. Stories by female reporters (8% of stories) are two points more likely than those by male reporters (6% of stories) to highlight these policies or legislation. Social /legal reporting is most likely to refer to gender equality/human rights frameworks (16% of stories) and celebrity news the least likely, at only 4% of stories.

Women are central in 3% of stories in print and broadcast news overall, 9% of stories highlight issues of gender equality or inequality (5% on news websites), and 5% clearly challenge gender stereotypes (7% on news websites, 2% of tweets).

In 2015 and 2010 only 1% of stories highlighted gender (in)equality concerns and 2% and 1% respectively clearly challenged gender stereotypes. The results show remarkable

improvement across time on both indicators and are better than the world average.

Unlike other findings on comparisons of story quality from a gender perspective by sex of reporter, stories by men reporters (7%) were found to be more likely to challenge gender stereotypes than those by women reporters (4%).

News related to Covid-19

27% of the stories in total were related to Covid-19, 31% of the newspaper stories, 16% radio, 25% television, 25% of those on news websites and 36% of tweets.

Women dominate Covid-19 news reporting; 6 out of 10 coronavirus story reporters are women. Of this number, women are most likely to report stories that have politics & government as a secondary theme (35%), compared to an economic sub-theme in the case of men reporters (38%) (Figure 8)

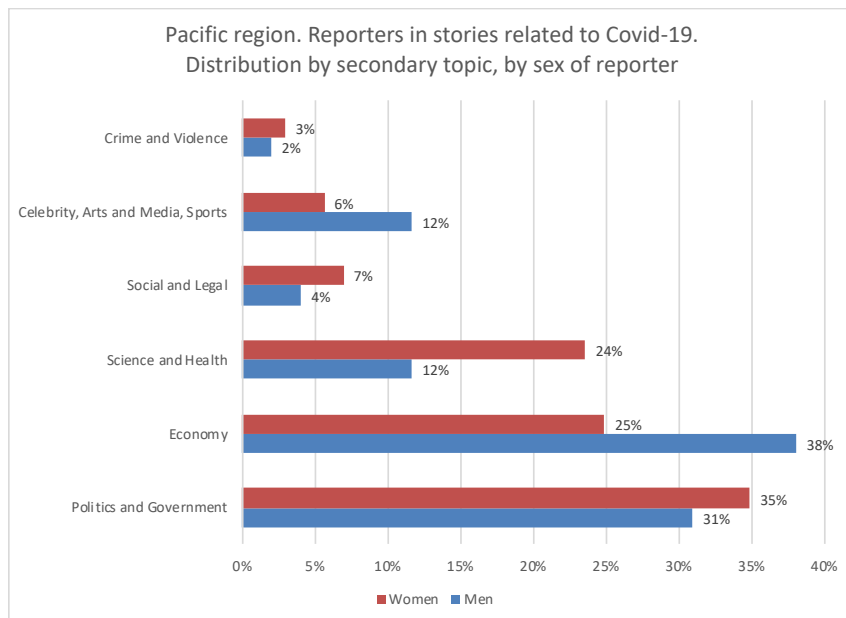


Figure 8. Reporters in Covid-19 news. Distribution by secondary topic and sex of reporter

4% of Covid-19 stories clearly challenge gender stereotypes, particularly those stories that are also about social/legal issues. This is one point lower than all stories, Covid-19 and non-coronavirus news combined.

4% of Covid-19-related stories highlight issues of gender equality or inequality, which is five points below the total sample.

Annex 1. Methodology⁴

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

Process

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

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

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

In the period leading up to the monitoring day, regional and national training sessions were organised to build a uniform understanding of the teams on the methodology and approach to coding. The teams received training on media selection, newscast and article selection, the number of media to code and how to select each country's contextual information.

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

- **Full monitoring**, whose results provide a comprehensive picture of the status of gender equality dimensions in news media.
- **Short monitoring**, a shorter version which focuses on the key GMMP indicators, for teams who wish to take part but might be constrained from implementing the full monitoring.

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

⁴ See the global report for the extended discussion on the GMMP 2020 methodology

both for full and short monitoring-monitors captured information about the story, its main themes and the people in the story, as journalists, as story subjects and sources. Additionally, three optional special questions, unique to each country, allowed individual countries to analyse issues of national interest. For standardisation purposes, as well as the multilingual nature of this study, all responses were numerically coded from fixed lists.

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

Media bands

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

Weighting

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

Accuracy

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

Limitations

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

About Code for Africa

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

Annex 2. Participating Countries

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