

# WHO MAKES THE NEWS?

GLOBAL MEDIA MONITORING PROJECT 2000

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of  
Erin Research

with additional analysis by  
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The World Association for Christian Communication is a global, ecumenical organisation established by communicators whose aim is to prioritise Christian values in the world's communication and development needs and to promote democratic structures of communication. The WACC Women's Programme seeks full and equal participation of women in public communication so that their distinctive needs, insights and experiences become part of the public agenda, leading to the elimination of oppressive structures and practices of discrimination. The Global Media Monitoring Project is part of its special three-year Women and Media Programme for monitoring and advocacy. Also included in this Programme is a series of regional conferences on gender and communication policy, the bi-annual newsletter, *Media and Gender Monitor*, and a book by Margaret Gallagher entitled *Gender Setting: New Agendas for Media Monitoring and Advocacy* to be published by Zed in 2001.

*Who makes the news? The Global Media Monitoring Project 2000*

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# 1

## INTRODUCTION

by Teresita Hermano and Maria del Nevo

Women's participation in the news has long been considered a critical media issue. The media after all are the main setters of public agenda - and they choose what they consider important enough to be news. So what does women's limited visibility in the news say about their importance?

A broad indication of that limited importance appeared in the first Global Media Monitoring Project, which took place in 71 countries on 18 January 1995. One of the main research results showed that women were just 17%, and men 83%, of the news subjects on radio, television and newspapers that day. Five years later, after a period spanning a myriad of women's campaigns including the massive World Conference on Women in Beijing and the post-Beijing activities, the GMMP 2000 has taken place in 70 countries, on 1 February 2000. Yet the main results have hardly changed. As this report will show, women in the world's media that day in 2000 were found to be just 18% of the news subjects, and men 82%.

According to Erin Research, these two studies conducted over a span of five years have made the Global Media Monitoring Project "the most extensive analysis of women's participation in the world's news media". Margaret Gallagher has called the GMMP "one of the most extraordinary collective enterprises yet organised within the global women's movement". Twice now, the project has been carried out by hundreds of volunteers from various countries. A project with such a broad scope and purpose had to be extraordinary anyway, even though it was supposed to study just one "ordinary" news day in the world's media. What made

GMMP work was the tremendous enthusiasm and commitment it inspired, which was not surprising in view of the fact that it came out of a broad democratic mandate of a global conference of women intent on "empowering communication" (see Project Milestones).

The Global Media Monitoring Project 2000 is a highlight of WACC's Women and Media Programme for Monitoring and Advocacy, a special three-year project that expands the work of the WACC Women's Programme. Just as MediaWatch Canada no doubt found the 1995 study an ambitious project for such a small team of people with limited resources, we faced similar challenges. Although we had the advantage of hindsight with the experiences of 1995, at the same time we wanted to revisit the monitoring materials, make the study more contextual and create a refined research instrument for future monitoring.

From the beginning, we were determined that the broad aims of the Global Media Monitoring Project 2000 would be to strengthen solidarity, media literacy and advocacy on media and gender issues. The first GMMP had already led the way in demystifying research - in providing women's networks, media activists, students and development communication groups with the opportunity and the tools to monitor gender representation in the media. The next step was to do GMMP 2000, not just to see what changes had taken place after five years, but also to research new questions and to extend the use of the research by giving the monitoring groups more contextual analysis, including country results, for their own education and advocacy work.

The networking required to put the project together over the two-year preparation period was tremendous. WACC was helped by the fact that it is an association of more than 850 members in 117 countries. It also helped that our Women's Programme has been organising or supporting workshops and conferences for more than a decade, and has built up a network of contacts with women and media groups. This networking facilitated the identification of monitoring groups in various countries, as well as the formation of a Planning Committee for the project. In some countries, there was more than one monitoring group who participated; sometimes it was a whole network of many groups. As for the Planning Committee, it drew on the expertise of MediaWatch Canada, represented by Meg Hogarth who was its director at the time of the first GMMP, and consultant Margaret Gallagher, who wrote four of the regional analysis reports on the first GMMP for WACC, and has authored a forthcoming WACC book on media monitoring and advocacy. The Planning Committee also included some staff of WACC and of Erin Research, the Canadian-based research group who had designed the first GMMP, and was now contracted to do the data analysis and main report for GMMP 2000.

The 1st of February was a real day of solidarity, with hundreds of women and men all over the world participating in the same task of monitoring the day's news. We had encouraged those groups with access to e-mail to send messages whenever they could find time during the course of the day to let us know how they were getting on and these would be fed back to all participants (by e-mail and air mail) so they could share the news.

It was Imelda Benitez of the Association of Salesian

The 1st of February was a real day of solidarity, with hundreds of women and men all over the world participating in the same task of monitoring the day's news.

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Cooperators in the Philippines who broke the silence at mid-day with her message to say that their coding had gone smoothly. By that time, of course, it was late in the evening in Manila. Then more messages poured in. Midori Suzuki of the Ritsumeikan University in Japan wrote to say that more than 30 students worked all day together in monitoring whilst in the USA Glory Dharmaraj of the United Methodist Church reported that hundreds of women and men were taking part all over the country. Bernadette van Dijck at the Netherlands Broadcasting Corporation described how a bus took a group from Hilversum to the Hague where up to 85 people, including students, journalists and members of women and ethnic minorities groups, gathered to monitor their news.

In some countries where teams consisted of smaller numbers, as in Cambodia and Benin, the messages suggested that those volunteers were determined to make a valuable contribution despite local difficulties. For instance Nana Rosine Ngangoue of the Inter Press Service in Cotonou reported that her team was taping two TV stations, four radio stations and would be coding eight newspapers. The taping was difficult because of electricity cuts but she said: "as soon as the power comes back, we will rush back to our exciting coding exercise."

In the end, groups in 70 countries took part in GMMP 2000, contributing a massive 50,853 data records, along with photo-



from left: Pradip Thomas,  
Margaret Gallagher, Teresita  
Hermano, Kasia Seydegart  
and George Spears

graphs of volunteers, newspaper clippings and media logos, many of which have been used here to illustrate those data records. Most monitoring coordinators also submitted more qualitative information in the form of news analysis sheets, with their comments on “positive” or “negative” media stories with women as central focus, on stories which they thought lacked women’s perspectives, and other significant observations. This information has been used for a more contextual analysis of the news that day, in a chapter entitled “The News That Shaped the Numbers”.

Days of such solidarity are usually associated with conferences and gatherings in one venue, so it was exciting for everyone to experience the same level of unity amongst people from all corners of the globe, thousands of miles apart, linked only by e-mail and a common purpose. This was expressed by Cai Yiping in China who wrote how pleased she was to be included in ‘this historic event’. Professor Sun Yuel Choe at the Department of Communication, Ewha Women’s University in Korea said that the six graduate students taking part there were “very excited about the solidarity of women all over the world.” One of the volunteers at the Interlink Rural Information Service in Kenya

wrote: “Thank you for involving us in GMMP 2000. I can’t believe I am having so much fun here in Kenya, knowing that people are out there doing the same thing.”

Thanks are more rightly due to all the volunteers who enthusiastically collected and submitted the data, to the groups who pre-tested the materials, to the Planning Committee, particularly Margaret Gallagher, who lent her wisdom and guidance to the project, to George Spears and Kasia Seydegart of Erin Research who efficiently devised the tools for the study and analysed the avalanche of data, and to the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Evangelisches Missionswerk, as well as WACC, who provided moral and financial support for the project.

We are all constant consumers of news and although we may occasionally question what we read and see or hear, we are rarely able to put the news media under such scrutiny and on such a wide scale. The GMMP 2000, therefore, doesn’t just revitalise the international women’s movement through its joint day of action but also allows us to reflect back to media just how the news portrays women and represents their views.

How many times have we heard the excuse that media are just a reflection of what is happening in reality? Yet how many times do we really see our views and lives reflected? GMMP 2000 has provided the means for us to answer those questions and to go on asking more questions. Use this report to challenge media producers, journalists and media educators on their ideas of what is news. Report these results in your own media. Make use of the report in your education and advocacy campaigns. Go on. Spread the news. Better yet, make the news!

# 2 PROJECT MILESTONES

## 1994

In February the plan for an international study of women's participation in the world's news media evolved at the "Women Empowering Communication" conference, which was organised in Bangkok, Thailand by WACC in collaboration with Isis International and IWTC. The global monitoring project became a resolution of that conference and was included in the Bangkok Declaration. Participants offered to organise the monitoring groups in their countries and MediaWatch Canada agreed to coordinate the project.

MediaWatch approached Erin Research to design a monitoring system which could be effectively implemented by people who were not professional researchers. MediaWatch then put together a network of volunteer participants in countries around the world. WACC cooperated in identifying groups who could do the monitoring in their countries and in helping to support the publication of the final report.

## 1995

Seventy-one countries took part in the first Global Media Monitoring Project on 18 January. Data analysis was undertaken by Erin Research and the final report, *Women's Participation in the News* was released at the NGO Forum in Beijing in September. At the official UN World Conference on Women in Beijing, "Women and the Media" was included as a separate area of concern in the Platform for Action, and media monitoring of women's roles and representation became part of the platform resolutions.

## 1996

In order to provide a more detailed

analysis of the 1995 GMMP results, WACC produced four regional reports on *Women's Participation in the News* written by Margaret Gallagher, with tables and graphs by My von Euler. The reports on Africa, Asia, Caribbean and the Pacific gave a more comprehensive and contextual analysis of the regional data. A separate report in Spanish, also supported by WACC, was prepared for the Latin American countries by Gloria Bonder of Argentina. MediaWatch and Erin Research shared with WACC the data on which the reports were based.

## 1997

WACC launched its series of regional conferences on Gender and Communication Policy, where it revived the idea of a follow-up global media monitoring study as a possible joint project. The idea was first discussed at the Asia conference in 1997, and then at the next regional conferences in Latin America, Anglophone Africa and the Caribbean in 1998.

## 1998

After consulting with various interested groups in the regions, WACC launched the Global Media Monitoring Project 2000. In February, WACC met with MediaWatch and agreed that the 1995 study could be used as a benchmark in assessing the media situation after half a decade and provide a valuable insight into the situation of women in the media at the start of the 21st century. An initial consultation meeting was held in London in September with Meg Hogarth of MediaWatch, Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi of the University of Leicester, freelance author and researcher

Margaret Gallagher, and Pradip Thomas and Teresita Hermano of WACC.

It was agreed that whilst GMMP 2000 would have the particular advantage of hindsight provided by the experiences of 1995, some additional elements would be included in the 2000 study:

- \* Monitoring groups would be asked to answer a set of open-ended questions, entitled News Analyses, which would help contextualise the results.
- \* Individual country results would be included in the final report to assist local monitoring groups in their follow-up lobbying and advocacy activities.

## 1999

In early 1999 WACC commissioned Erin Research, which had worked with MediaWatch on the original study, to be responsible for the data input and analysis of GMMP 2000. Discussions then began on the revisions to the monitoring materials that were necessary to include the new research questions.

The WACC Women's Programme began to make contact with some of the 1995 monitoring groups as well as new potential groups - over a hundred in total - to invite them to take part. A pre-test was successfully held in August involving the following groups: Association des Femmes Journalistes, France; the NOS Broadcasting Corporation, the Netherlands; All Women's Action Society, Malaysia; Centro Evangelico Latinoamericano, Guatemala; Manipal Institute of Communications, India; United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries, USA and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Nigeria. In September the GMMP Planning

Committee met in London for two days to discuss the outcome of the pre-test and the final revisions to the monitoring materials.

A final set of documents, including a comprehensive monitoring guide, coding system, coding grids and open-ended questions were produced in October which were then translated into French and Spanish. At the time that the monitoring materials were distributed, groups in 85 countries had expressed interest in participating. All of these received monitoring materials in November and December, giving them at least two months to familiarise themselves with the methodology and train their volunteers.

## International Monitoring Day 2000

February 1st turned out to be a momentous day of solidarity. The tremendous enthusiasm and commitment for the project was expressed in messages sent to the WACC secretariat from over 40 countries throughout the course of the day of monitoring and the rest of that week. These messages were shared amongst all the groups and posted on the WACC website.

The deadline for the submission of data was 28 February.

In August highlights of the GMMP 2000 results were posted by WACC to participating groups. These highlights were published in *Media and Gender Monitor* and on the WACC website.

## December

Publication of the final GMMP 2000 report in print and on the web. International release of the results.

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# 3 WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE NEWS

by George Spears and Kasia Seydegart

## Analytical framework



The images that appear in mass media not only reflect society, they play a part in directing it as well. People either see themselves, their values, and their aspirations represented in the media, or they do not. To the extent that people find themselves represented in the media, they find their goals and their activities validated.

On February 1, 2000, volunteer researchers in 70 countries documented 50,000 people who appeared in more than 16,000 news stories. This report explores two broad areas of the participation of women in the world's news media:

- Presence of women: The numbers of women and men who appear in different news media and in different countries.
- Roles of women and men: What women and men do in news pro-

grammes - the types of stories they appear in, the occupations and positions in society that they portray, and the ways that news stories present them.

The underlying assumption in presenting these results is that, in an ideal world, women and men would participate equally in the news media, both as journalists and as the subjects of news stories. A 50:50 balance is therefore taken as the starting point for the analysis of results. When results differ from this even balance, one seeks a reason. In most countries, for example, men form the majority of politicians and government spokespeople. News coverage will reflect this: because politics/government account for a considerable proportion of news, a majority of male news subjects in this category will have a large impact on the overall results.

Sweden



**1. Seventy participating countries**

	Television	Radio	Newspapers	Total
<b>Africa</b>				
Benin	72	35	258	365
Botswana*	-	24	28	52
Cameroon*	85	420	102	607
Chad	24	36	49	109
Ghana*	66	105	137	308
Kenya	51	147	40	238
Namibia	25	24	29	78
Nigeria*	84	200	375	659
South Africa*	147	95	231	473
Sudan	72	54	74	200
Zimbabwe*	-	-	80	80
<b>Asia</b>				
Cambodia	223	53	166	442
China*	446	389	335	1,170
India*	383	82	790	1,255
Indonesia*	124	403	503	1,030
Japan*	1,923	34	132	2,089
Korea*	463	332	168	963
Malaysia*	67	38	148	253
Nepal*	86	70	150	306
Pakistan*	121	54	886	1,061
Philippines*	156	192	184	532
Sri Lanka*	273	44	192	509
Taiwan*	1,600	385	118	2,103
Thailand*	624	406	467	1,497
Vietnam	75	29	20	124
<b>Caribbean</b>				
Barbados*	18	-	-	18
Cuba	128	107	97	332
Jamaica*	216	586	220	1,022
Puerto Rico	563	62	532	1,157
Suriname	76	29	77	182
Trinidad & Tobago*	326	134	260	720
<b>Europe</b>				
Belgium*	567	140	234	941
Croatia*	242	154	198	594
Czech Republic*	48	-	-	48
Estonia	71	69	186	326
Finland*	148	74	291	513
France*	234	153	692	1,079
Germany*	986	736	1,424	3,146
Hungary*	144	125	124	393
Iceland*	96	161	106	363
Italy*	55	204	268	527
Macedonia	-	-	125	125

Malta	113	111	144	368
Netherlands*	38	24	315	377
Norway	109	91	625	825
Romania*	129	195	99	423
Russia*	204	-	-	204
Slovenia*	363	417	182	962
Spain*	59	114	192	365
Sweden	258	59	250	567
Switzerland*	105	18	262	385
United Kingdom*	731	624	1,423	2,778
<b>Latin America</b>				
Bolivia*	317	579	219	1,115
Chile*	165	113	135	413
Ecuador*	22	20	93	135
El Salvador	13	37	51	101
Guatemala*	110	130	378	618
Mexico*	286	104	515	905
Peru*	352	45	596	993
Uruguay*	148	121	103	372
<b>Middle East</b>				
Egypt	13	11	21	45
Israel*	187	241	296	724
Lebanon*	82	26	156	264
Turkey*	1,793	921	297	3,011
<b>North America</b>				
Canada*	878	240	532	1,650
USA*	461	29	2,296	2,786
<b>Oceania</b>				
Australia*	400	134	312	846
Fiji*	152	198	271	621
New Zealand*	140	109	222	471
Papua New Guinea	-	-	55	55
Transnational satellite news	485	-	-	485
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,221</b>	<b>11,096</b>	<b>20,536</b>	<b>50,853</b>

\* Country participated in both 1995 and 2000 projects

Note: Table entries are the unweighted number of returns from each country

## Comparison of 1995 and 2000 results

The 1995 and 2000 projects are broadly similar in purpose and in method. Major results from the two years can be compared in order to confirm existing patterns or identify changes that occurred over the five years.

There are, however, limitations in the comparisons that are possible. There are some differences in the countries that participated, although 52 of the 70 took part in both projects. There are also wide differences in the resources that countries are able to bring to bear on such a project: some were able to analyse comprehensive samples of their country's media, while others were forced to be more selective. Also, each project presents a "snapshot" view of the world's media, describing just one day in the life of its people. While February 1, 2000 seems to be a relatively typical news day at the international level - there was no single dominant event that galvanised media attention - the day may not have been typical in individual countries. There may have been elections or scandals or athletic competitions that led to an atypical mix of stories, and so to an atypical portrayal of women and men.

Certainly, January 18, 1995 was not typical. The Kobe earth-

Certainly, January 18, 1995 was not typical. The Kobe earthquake occurred early that day and dominated news coverage around the world.

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quake occurred early that day and dominated news coverage around the world. The amount of material in the "accidents and disasters" category was unusually large, and other events that might otherwise have found their way into the day's news went unreported. These considerations dictate that results of the two projects can be compared and contrasted in broad outline, but not always in fine detail. Despite any limitations, this research is the most comprehensive overview ever compiled of gender portrayal in the world's media. It therefore stands as a reference point - it is our best international picture to date of the roles of women and men in media, and a rich source of ideas for more detailed research and further action.



## Topics in the news

The world's news coverage centres on three major topics - politics and government, crime/legal issues, and business/economy. Together, these make up almost half of the 16,000 stories in the analysis.

Overall, the three media offer a similar range of topics.

Newspapers have somewhat more coverage of politics/government and crime/legal issues, and this may result from the way that the GMMP 2000 News Monitoring Guide asked participants to select stories. Newspapers generally have much more news content than a TV or radio programme, and to make the coding task manageable, coders analysed stories on the

Indonesia



first page (or up to the first three pages) of the newspaper. It is possible that these pages emphasise politics and crime, while inside pages have more stories on other topics.

## 2. Topics in the news

Percent of stories in each topic area				
Topic	Television	Radio	Newspapers	Total %
Politics, government	16	21	24	20
Crime, legal	12	11	17	13
Economy, business	12	15	11	13
Disaster, accident	8	8	6	7
Sports	8	6	3	6
Arts, entertainment	5	2	6	4
Education, child care	3	4	4	4
War, civil war	5	3	3	4
Celebrity news	3	2	3	3
Health	4	3	3	3
Human rights	3	3	3	3
Labour	3	3	3	3
Environment	2	1	2	2
National defence	2	4	2	2
Poverty	2	3	1	2
Riots, demonstrations	2	3	1	2
International crises	1	2	1	1
Religion	1	1	2	1
Science	2	1	1	1
Other	6	4	4	5
<b>Total percent</b>	100	100	100	100
<b>Total number of stories</b>	6,811	4,596	5,048	16,455

# Overview of results

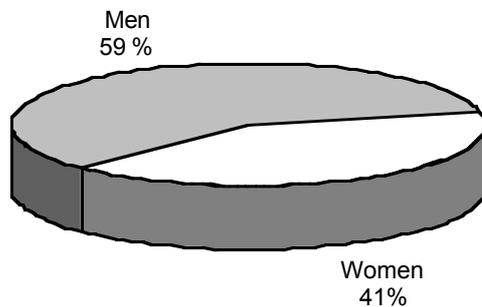
This study is about the public face of news around the world — it describes the people whom news audiences see and hear as recognisable individuals on radio, television and in newspapers. News production involves many other people who work behind the scenes who are not seen by audiences. This study provides no information on them, therefore these results should not be interpreted as a description of the employment of women in news media.

## Presence of women

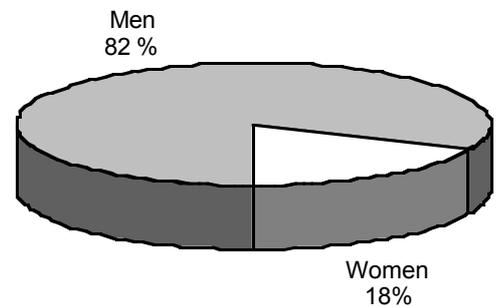
Women account for 41 percent of the people who present and report the world's news, but they are only 18 percent of news subjects. "News subjects" are the people featured in the news. On television and radio, this includes all those who speak or who are central to the story. In newspapers, it includes those who are mentioned or quoted or who appear in photographs.

### 3. Overall presence of women in television, radio and newspapers

Announcers and reporters



News subjects



Fiji





The Netherlands

## Roles of women and men

The three major groups of people present very different patterns of results:

- Among television and radio news announcers, roles of women and men are similar in many important respects, though some differences are apparent.
- Among reporters, women and men differ to some degree on all important dimensions.
- Among women and men who appear in the news (television and radio news subjects and people mentioned in newspaper stories) there are large gender differences on almost every dimension of comparison.

Vietnam



## Changes from 1995 to 2000

Over the long term, there have been immense changes in women's participation in the news media. In the 1960s and 1970s, it was a rare event to see a woman anchoring a television newscast, yet today women form a slight majority of television news announcers. There have been slower and less dramatic increases in women's participation as reporters and as people in the news.

Is change perceptible in the 5-year span from 1995 to 2000? The proportions of female announcers and reporters were 43 percent in 1995 and 41 percent in 2000. Among news subjects, 17 percent were female in 1995 compared to 18 percent in 2000. Neither of these differences are statistically significant - they could well arise from chance differences in sampling or measurement. In more narrowly focused areas, however, there is evidence that changes may have occurred. Both changes and similarities are documented in following sections of this report.



Lebanon

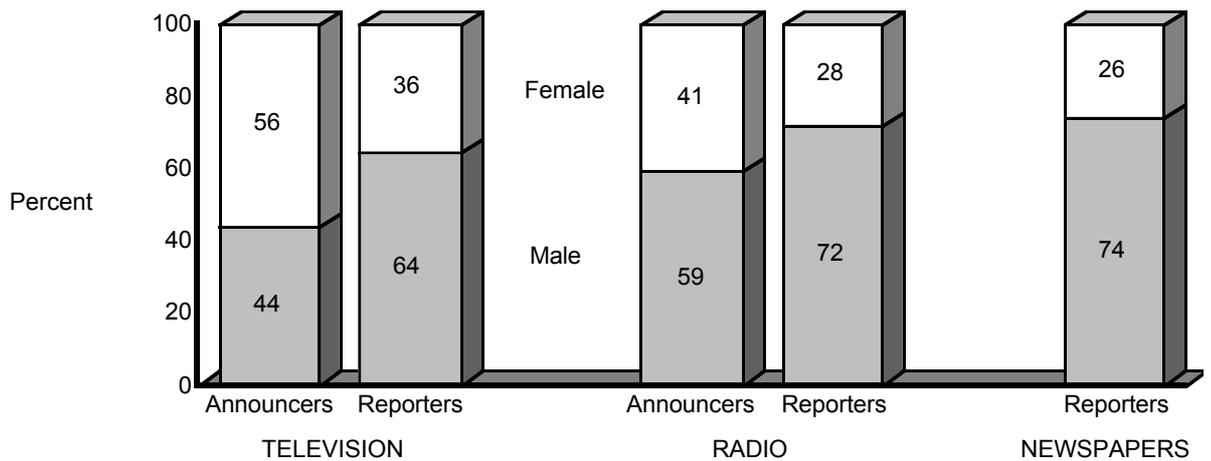


# News announcers and reporters



Female journalists have made greater inroads into television than in either radio or newspapers. Among television announcers, women form a slight majority; they account for 56 percent of announcers. On radio, women account for 41 percent of news announcers. (There are, of course, no announcers in newspapers.)

## 4. Announcers and reporters



Chad



The following sections describe announcers and reporters separately, because the gender issues in each group are quite different. In general, the gender differences among announcers are small, while those among reporters are considerably larger.

**5. Gender of television and radio announcers by region**

Region	%F	%M	Total number of announcers
Africa	48	52	1111
Asia	53	47	4390
Caribbean	43	57	246
Europe	45	55	1791
Latin America	29	71	612
Middle East	60	40	425
North America	55	45	755
Oceania	54	46	131
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>9,461</b>



Belgium



**6. Gender of television, radio and newspaper reporters by region**

Region	% F	% M	Total number of reporters
Africa	24	76	733
Asia	31	69	2019
Caribbean	39	61	184
Europe	34	66	1361
Latin America	27	73	834
Middle East	34	66	256
North America	36	64	733
Oceania	43	57	108
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>6,229</b>

## What news do women and men report?

Research conducted over past decades has shown that female journalists were often associated with local news rather than national or foreign news, and with topics such as entertainment or health more often than politics or crime. To what extent do the roles of female and male journalists differ in today's news?

The pattern differs for news announcers and for reporters. There is little reason to expect differences in the roles of female and male announcers. If a programme has one announcer, then that announcer presents all the stories, regardless of topic or geopolitical scope. If a programme has two announcers, they typically alternate stories, but without regard to story content. Announcers do not generate the stories that they present. Many do not write what they read so it would be surprising to find any link between story content and gender of announcer.

Reporters sometimes choose the stories that they report, but in most instances, the reporter is assigned to a story by an editor or producer. There are many ways in

which gender could become a factor in story assignments, and indeed it does, as the following results describe.

### Scope of story

Scope refers to the geographic area in which the story is important. Local stories include events such as the opening of a school or traffic accidents and municipal politics. National, international and foreign stories are of increasingly broader interest.

Male and female announcers fulfil the same role in reporting domestic and foreign stories. Close to half of the local stories are announced by women, half by men. The same is true of national, international and foreign stories. The differences of a few percentage points from the ideal 50:50 split are within the range of chance variation.

The pattern of similar female and male roles is evident in 1995 and repeated in 2000. Differences between the 1995 baseline and the present survey are within the range of chance variation.

### 7. Television and radio announcers in domestic and foreign stories, 1995 and 2000

	1995			2000		
	%F	%M	Total	%F	%M	Total
Local: Within city or province or region	50	50	100	47	53	100
National: Within country	52	48	100	49	51	100
International: Own country and other(s)	50	50	100	51	49	100
Foreign: Outside own country	48	52	100	51	49	100
<b>Total</b>	51	49	100	49	51	100
<b>No.</b>	4,961	4,826	9,787	4,609	4,755	9,364

The pattern of results for reporters mirrors that for announcers, with one exception: a large majority of reporters (69 percent in the 2000 sample) are male. Women are most likely to report local news and least likely to report foreign news. Again, this result has not changed appreciably from 1995 to 2000.

**8. Reporters in domestic and foreign stories, 1995 and 2000**

	1995			2000		
	%F	%M	Total	%F	%M	Total
Local: Within city or province or region	33	67	100	34	66	100
National: Within country	24	76	100	30	70	100
International: Own country and other(s)	28	72	100	33	68	100
Foreign: Outside own country	28	72	100	29	71	100
<b>Total</b>	28	72	100	31	69	100
<b>No.</b>	1,519	3,840	5,359	1,930	4,279	6,209



Philippines



South Africa



### Gender of announcers in different story topics

Women account for approximately 50 percent of all announcers. If there is no gender bias in the role of announcer, women should account for approximately 50 percent of announcers in each individual topic area of the news. “Approximately” in the context of this research is a range of about plus or minus 5 percent. If women account for between 45 and 55 percent of announcers in any topic area, then it can be considered to have gender balance.

The coding system defined the 20 topic areas listed in Table 9. The topic area with the clearest gender difference is sports, where women presented 39 percent of stories on sports and men 61 percent. Sports news is often pre-

sented in a separate segment of the newscast, and it is often read by a different announcer. Historically, sports announcers have been men, so this result is not a surprise.

With the exception of sports, gender differences are relatively small. The finding that women are more likely to present stories on entertainment, celebrity news and health is perhaps in line with the old stereotype of aligning women with softer news content. The results that women present 56 percent of stories on the topic of war, civil war and terrorism turn largely on data from two countries, Russia and Turkey. These countries carried 29 percent of the total number of the stories on war and civil war; in addition, both these countries record a large proportion of female announcers. In Russian TV and radio news, 66 percent of all announcers were female, and in Turkey, 59 percent were female. Aside from Russia and Turkey, women announced 51 percent of war stories and men 49 percent.

Across all topic areas, there is gender balance in topic areas that represent three-quarters of appearances by announcers (topics from disaster/accident through to politics in Table 9). Except for sports, areas that depart from an even balance deviate only slightly.

### 9. Gender of television and radio announcers in different story topics

Topic	%F	%M	Total appearances by announcers *
Arts, entertainment	59	41	386
Celebrity news	58	42	249
Health	58	42	337
War, civil war	56	44	385
Disaster, accident	53	47	772
Poverty	52	48	213
Religion	52	48	103
Economy, business	50	50	1,297
International crises	50	50	131
Crime, legal	49	51	1,047
Riots, demonstrations	49	51	152
Science	49	51	157
Environment	48	52	154
Human rights	48	52	238
National defence	48	52	274
Labour	47	53	303
Education, child care	46	54	344
Politics, government	45	55	1,765
Sports	39	61	570
Other	51	49	446
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>9,323</b>

\* The data record each appearance of an announcer. Generally, one news story implies one appearance by an announcer. Occasionally, two announcers may present a story together, or a story may have no announcer at all.

## Gender of reporters in different story topics

Given that 31 percent of all reporters are women, a news environment free of bias would see women making up 31 percent of the reporters in each individual topic area. Some leeway - plus or minus 5 percent is appropriate - must be allowed for chance differences<sup>1</sup>. This assumption defines an expected range of 26 percent to 36 percent for the proportion of female reporters in a given topic area. Each of the categories from economy/business to riots/demonstrations has a roughly balanced proportion of female and male reporters. These topic areas contain two-thirds of the total number of news stories. In other words, two-thirds of the world's news stories show no

strong gender bias in the use of female and male reporters.

The remaining one-third of topic areas has either more men than expected or more women than expected.

Sports, with only 15 percent of stories filed by women, is clearly dominated by male reporters. War, national defence and international crises constitute a closely related group of themes in which men also predominate.

At the other end of the scale, women report on "soft" issues such as the environment, health, education and entertainment more than would be expected. Even though more men than women report in each of these categories, the proportion of women exceeds the 31 percent that would be expected in an unbiased environment.

## 10. Gender of reporters in different story topics

Topic	%F	%M	Total number of reporters
Environment	47	53	132
Health	46	54	284
Education, child care	42	58	250
Science	41	59	51
Arts, entertainment	40	60	272
Religion	40	60	70
Economy, business	35	65	703
Labour	35	65	243
Celebrity news	33	67	115
Human rights	33	67	136
Crime, legal	31	69	843
Disaster, accident	30	70	522
Poverty	29	71	84
Politics, government	26	74	1,277
Riots, demonstrations	26	74	136
War, civil war	25	75	242
National defence	22	78	133
International crises	19	81	79
Sports	15	85	327
Other	38	62	275
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>6,174</b>

Macedonia



<sup>1</sup> The expected margin of error depends in part on the number of reporters in the topic area. A large topic such as politics has a smaller margin of chance error - here about 4 percent - than a small topic such as environment - actually about 9 percent. Where there are fewer than 100 reporters in a topic area the result may not be a reliable indicator of the world situation. Discussion of results takes these factors into account.

## Do female reporters select more women?

The question, “Do female reporters seek out more female news subjects?” is an issue of long standing. It is important because, if the answer is “Yes”, then as more women enter journalism, the striking imbalance in the numbers of male and female news subjects may improve.

The evidence to date has been mixed, with research typically finding either a small or no difference in the gender of news sub-

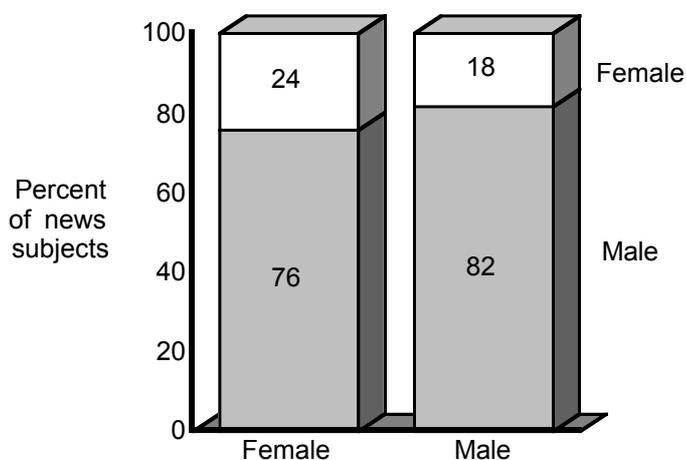
jects that female and male reporters speak about and interview.

The results from GMMP 2000, Chart 11, show a small positive relationship. In stories by female reporters, 24 percent of news subjects are women, while in stories by male reporters, 18 percent of news subjects are women. The difference is statistically significant.<sup>2</sup>

### 11. News subjects described by female and male reporters



Korea



This result requires a further check. If female reporters tend to report topics where there are more female news subjects, and male reporters tend to report topics where there are more male news subjects, then female reporters will of necessity interview more women. Table 10 seems to suggest that this is the case. Female reporters tend to report several topics including health, education, arts/entertainment and celebrity news where the proportion of female news subjects is relatively high (see Table 15). Male reporters tend to report topics such as war, politics and

sports where the proportion of female news subjects is relatively low.

The necessary test is to determine who female and male reporters select as news subjects within each of these categories. In each case, the difference between female and male reporters remains statistically significant, although the effect is slightly smaller than the 6-point spread seen in Chart 11 :

- Politics/government: Among female reporters, 15 percent of news subjects are women and among male reporters, 12 percent are women.

<sup>2</sup> The data linking news subjects and reporters are at the level of news stories. If a story has one or more female reporters, the news subjects are deemed to have been selected by that female reporter. If a story has one or more male reporters, the news subjects in it are deemed to have been selected by that male reporter. When a story has both female and male reporters, the GMMP data cannot distinguish which reporter selected which news subject. This set of stories, 5 percent of the total, were therefore omitted from the foregoing analysis.

- Arts/entertainment, Celebrity news, Education, Health, Poverty: Among female reporters, 32 percent of news subjects are women and among male reporters, 27 percent are women.

The overall result therefore appears quite solid. Stories by female reporters do have more female news subjects than do stories by male reporters. Do female reporters seek out more female

news subjects, or do editors and producers assign female reporters more stories about female news subjects? This question cannot be answered by examining news content alone.

Table 12 shows regional results. The effect is statistically significant for three regions, Asia, Europe and Oceania. In all other regions except Latin America the trend is in the expected direction, though not strong enough to be considered statistically significant.



Cambodia



## 12. Selection of news subjects by female and male reporters

Region	Subjects selected by female reporters			Subjects selected by male reporters			Total No. of news subjects
	%F	%M	Total	%F	%M	Total	
Africa	12	88	100	10	90	100	850
Asia*	20	80	100	16	84	100	2,204
Caribbean	26	74	100	23	77	100	1,029
Europe*	25	75	100	21	79	100	5,056
Latin America	15	85	100	16	84	100	1,051
Middle East	13	87	100	11	89	100	968
North America	26	74	100	23	77	100	1,933
Oceania*	31	69	100	20	80	100	721
<b>Overall*</b>	24	76	100	18	82	100	13,812

\* The number of news subjects associated with female reporters is significantly greater than that associated with male reporters.

## Age of television announcers and reporters

Television has long been characterised by an age differential between women and men. The classic pattern, which holds true for drama as well as news, is that women are younger than men. Reporters and announcers in this study follow this pattern.

For announcers, there are more women than men in the 20-34 year old group, about the same number of women and men in the 35-49 year old group, and more men over the age of 50.

The chart for reporters, reflects the smaller overall number of women: there are similar numbers of women and men in the 20-34 year age group, and fewer women than men in each older group.

These data present an interesting employment issue. In the world's population, there are similar numbers of people in each of the three age groups, 20-34, 35-49 and 50-64. Television journalists, however, are concentrated in the younger age groups. Television journalism is a young person's

profession, especially for announcers, and especially for women. Why should this be so?

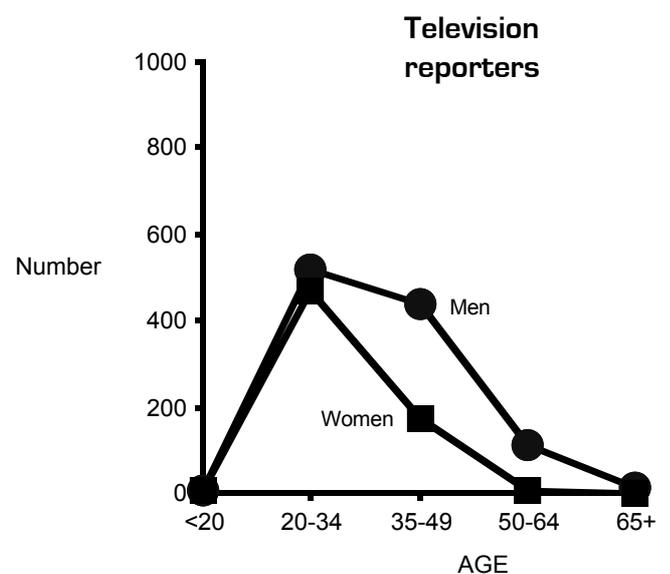
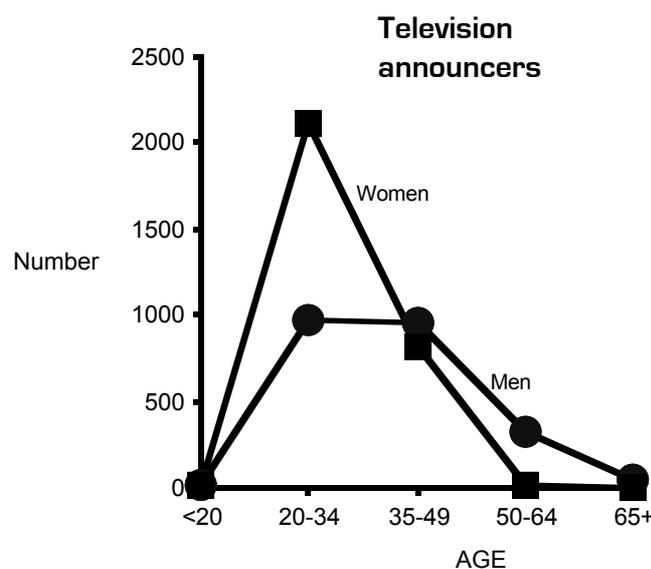
Some possible contributing factors are:

1. Television executives move women on, especially from the highly visible job of announcer, at a younger age than men.
2. Women retire or move on from the profession at a younger age than men.
3. Television journalism is opening up to an increased number of women. More women are entering the profession, and this shows up particularly in the younger age groups.

If point 3 is true, then future studies should see larger proportions of women in older age groups.

Unfortunately, the 1995 baseline GMMP study did not collect age data for journalists, so we cannot look to it for trends.

### 13. Age of television announcers and reporters



<sup>3</sup> Age cannot be recorded for radio journalists and most newspaper journalists. These results therefore apply only to television.

## Other journalistic staff

## Summary of journalistic roles



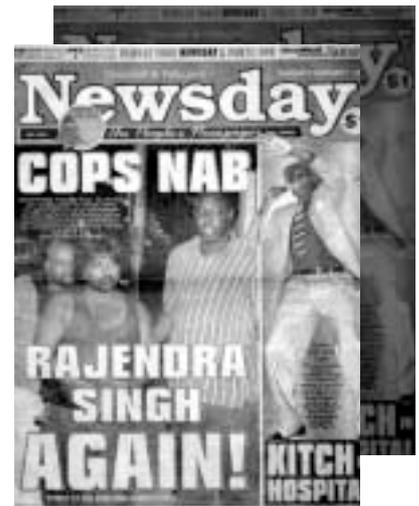
Trinidad  
and Tobago

The results earlier in this chapter have described news announcers and reporters. Television news programmes present smaller numbers of specialised journalists such as weather announcers and sportscasters. Among this group, 18 percent of individuals were female and 82 percent male. This group is not large enough for additional analyses.

Several important dimensions of the roles of journalists are firmly grounded in the 1995 and 2000 research.

**News announcers:** Of all the groups in this research, gender balance is closest among news announcers in television and radio.

- **Presence:** There are equal numbers of female and male announcers.
- **Scope:** In the presentation of local, national and foreign news, there is a balance in numbers of female and male announcers.
- **Topic:** There are relatively small differences in the news topics that female and male announcers present. Women are more closely associated with entertainment, celebrity news and health while men are more closely associated with sports. In three-quarters of all news however, the roles of female and male announcers are similar.
- **Age:** On television, female announcers are much younger than males, lending support to the idea that appearance is a stronger job prerequisite for women than for men.



**Reporters:** Among reporters in television, radio and newspapers, gender differences are somewhat more pronounced than for announcers:

- **Presence:** Women account for just under one-third of reporters, men for two-thirds.
- **Scope:** Although the differences are not large, female reporters are more likely to report local news and male reporters are more likely to report foreign news.
- **Topic:** There are strong differences in the news topics that women and men report on. Women report more frequently on environment, health, education and entertainment, while men report more often on sports, war and international crises.

Among people who are interviewed in news stories, the gender differences are larger still. These results are presented in the following sections.

# News subjects

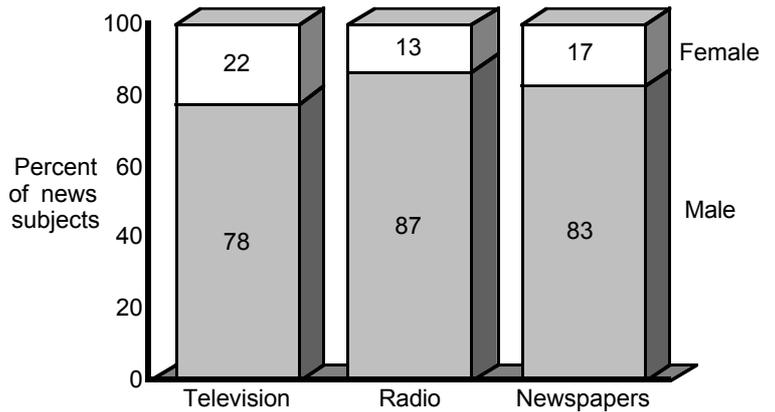
The term “news subjects” refers to all those who are the focus of news coverage. In radio and television newscasts, the term includes each person who speaks or is central to the story. In newspapers, it includes each person who is named, quoted, or shown in a photo.

The proportion of women who appear as news subjects is unchanged since 1995. The overall results - 17 percent in 1995 and

18 percent in 2000 do not differ to a statistically significant degree.

Women form half the world’s population, so all things being equal, one would expect that half the subjects in news programmes should be women. The fact that women make up just 18 percent of news subjects, not 50, raises fundamental questions about the nature of news and about the structure of society.

**14. Gender of news subjects in three media**



Cuba



Television has a greater proportion of female news subjects than either radio or newspapers. There is no ready explanation as to why this should be so. There are minor differences in the topics covered in the three media (e.g., television has the least political coverage), but these do not account for the gender difference among media.

## Gender of news subjects in different story topics

A gender balance of 18:82 defines the starting point for examining topic areas in the news. Everything being equal, women will account for about 18 percent of news subjects in each area. Some chance variation from 18 percent can be expected, again about 5 percentage points, giving a range of from 13 percent to 23 percent. On this basis, the topic areas listed in Table 15 from religion to human rights are within the expected range. There are fewer female news subjects than expected in stories on war, national defence, politics, science or sports. There are more female news subjects than expected in the top six categories, from entertainment to celebrity news.

In broad outline, these results parallel those for reporters, where women also reported more often on entertainment, health, and education, and less often on sports and wars.



New Zealand

### 15. Gender of news subjects in different story topics, 1995 and 2000

	1995			2000		
	%F	%M	Total	%F	%M	Total
Arts, entertainment	31	69	1,137	35	65	1,119
Education, child care	-	-	-	29	71	950
Health	33	67	873	29	71	856
Other	28	72	2,109	29	71	1,152
Poverty	-	-	-	27	73	480
Celebrity news	-	-	-	26	72	1,120
Religion	19	81	456	21	79	471
Crime, legal	22	78	3,354	20	80	5,337
Riots, demonstrations	18	82	192	20	80	405
Disaster, accident	24	76	3,756	18	82	1,592
Economy, business	9	91	2,274	17	83	2,439
Labour	16	84	476	15	85	693
Human rights	20	80	302	15	85	1,174
Politics, government	7	93	6,500	12	88	7,785
Science	22	78	359	12	88	267
Sports	18	82	1,455	12	88	1,451
Environment	16	84	346	11	83	450
International crises	12	88	171	11	89	494
War, civil war	10	90	918	11	89	997
National defence	13	87	522	6	94	692
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>25,200</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>29,754</b>

Several comparisons with the 1995 results are worthy of note. In politics, the proportion of female news subjects rose from 7 percent in 1995 to 12 percent in 2000. In economic news/business, the proportion of female news subjects rose from 9 percent in 1995 to 17 percent in 2000. Both these changes are large, representing a near doubling of the presence of women. It is intriguing to think that they might signal a change. However, caution is always needed in interpreting these results. The difference might only signal that February 1, 2000 and January 18, 1995 were very different news days.

February 1, 2000 was, at the level of world events, a fairly typical news day, in that the news was not dominated by any single overwhelming event. Two airline crashes, in Ivory Coast and in California, received wide coverage but otherwise audiences saw a typical balance of national and international stories. (This is not to say that every individual country experienced a typical news day. There may well have been local or regional events that dominated local news coverage.)

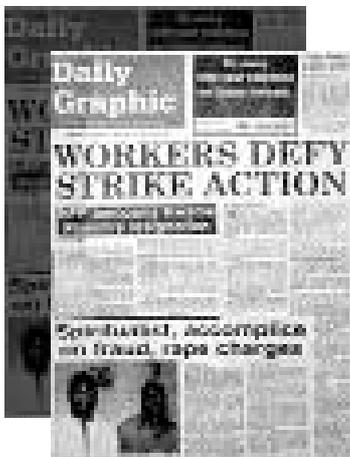
By contrast, January 18, 1995 was highly unusual, being dominated in all parts of the world by coverage of the earthquake in Kobe, Japan.

A thousand events each day contribute to the number of women who are interviewed in politics, business, and every other topic area. At a statistical level, one expects that some of these events will bring more women into the news, while other events would show fewer women. Across the world as a whole, things should balance out somewhat.



But there is no way to quantify exactly what these many news-making events were on January 18 1995, or what other events might have been carried if not for the Kobe earthquake. Even allowing for such uncontrollable differences between the samples, the changes in the proportion of women in political and business news are remarkable. It is possible that they represent a real shift in news focus.

The disaster/accident topic deserves discussion. The proportion of women in this group dropped from 24 percent in 1995 to 18 percent in 2000. Does this have anything to do with the Kobe earthquake? Coverage of the earthquake certainly meant that there was a large amount of accident/disaster news in 1995, but a difference in the amount does not call for a difference in gender balance. In fact, coverage of Kobe did feature an unusually large proportion of women - 31 percent of news subjects in coverage of the quake were female. This accounts for part but not all of the difference between the 1995 and 2000 results. If Kobe were subtracted out of the 1995 data, 22 percent of news subjects in accident/disaster items would be female.



Ghana



## Gender of news subjects in domestic and foreign stories

The 2000 results illustrate a classic pattern for news subjects, in which women are more likely to appear in local news stories, and less likely to appear in international and foreign stories. The difference is substantial: the proportion of female news subjects drops from 23 percent at the local level to 14 percent at the foreign level.

A partial explanation for this pattern is that local news carries more stories on celebrities, health, education and other “soft” topics - topics that tend to feature more female news subjects. Soft news accounts for approximately one-quarter of local news stories, but only about one-eighth of foreign news stories.

### 16. Gender of news subjects in domestic and foreign stories, 1995 and 2000

	1995			2000		
	%F	%M	Total	%F	%M	Total
Local: Within city or province or region	22	78	7,533	23	77	7,028
National: Within country	14	86	10,127	17	83	14,256
International: Own country and other(s)	17	83	3,769	15	85	4,712
Foreign: Outside own country	17	83	3,461	14	86	3,890
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>24,890</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>29,886</b>



India



A similar pattern is apparent, though slightly less pronounced, in the 1995 data. The Kobe disaster is at least part of the explanation. Women appear in coverage of disasters more frequently than in coverage of other major components of foreign news such as politics and wars (coverage of Kobe is foreign news everywhere except Japan). The extensive coverage of the earthquake, which included interviews with Japanese citizens involved in it, increased the overall proportion of women in foreign stories.

## Gender of news subjects by region

North America and the Caribbean had relatively large proportions of female news subjects in both 1995 and 2000. Oceania jumped 5 points in 2000 to join North America and the Caribbean in the lead.

Africa presents the most dramatic differences between years, and it seems unlikely that the result accurately reflects the state of journalism in Africa. The

apparent change could have resulted from any of the factors that contribute to variability in this study - differences in the news stories on the day of monitoring, differences in the countries participating, and so on. In all likelihood, the 2000 results are more accurate, given that they are based on twice as large a sample of news subjects.

Germany



Thailand



Israel

### 17. Gender of news subjects on television, radio and in newspapers, 1995 and 2000

Region	1995			2000		
	%F	%M	Total	%F	%M	Total
Africa	22	78	1,605	11	89	3,133
Asia	14	86	8,604	17	83	14,192
Caribbean	22	78	298	24	76	599
Europe	16	84	6,068	19	81	5,787
Latin America	16	84	3,397	20	80	2,142
Middle East	14	86	1,005	15	85	1,078
North America	27	73	4,138	25	75	2,863
Oceania	20	80	422	25	75	412
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>25,536</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>30,206</b>

# Position or occupation

## 18. Position or occupation of news subjects

Position or occupation	Female	Male	Total
Homemaker, parent	81	19	293
Student	46	54	559
Celebrity	45	55	1,114
Other, or not stated	37	63	4,184
Office, service sector	35	65	262
Retired	35	65	468
Unemployed, homeless	33	67	64
Educators	27	73	598
NGO, UN	24	76	907
Health and social services	20	80	622
Trades, labour	15	85	492
Farm, fishing, forestry	15	85	195
Government spokespeople	12	88	3,167
Science and technology	12	88	366
Business, law	11	89	2,713
Politician	10	90	10,050
Religious figures	9	91	492
Athlete	9	91	1,271
Criminal	7	93	684
Police, military	4	96	1,905
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>30,406</b>

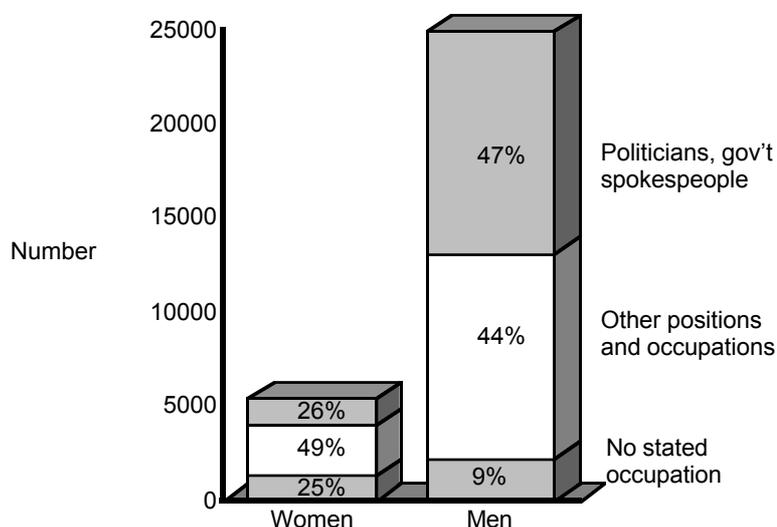
The 2000 results show a close gender balance in two areas - students and celebrities. Women are a majority in one category, homemakers/parents, while men form the majority in all other categories.



Chart 19 illustrates the preponderance of politicians and government spokespeople in news. One-quarter of female news subjects and nearly one-half of male news subjects are either politicians or government spokespeople.

The group with no stated position or occupation is of interest in that it encompasses 25 percent of all female news subjects (compared to just 9 percent of male news subjects). Fully one-third of the women in this category are victims of crime or accident - their occupation is presumably not relevant to coverage of the crime or accident that is the focus of the news coverage. Less can be said about the remaining two-thirds of the women who have no stated occupation. Many of these women presumably have no identified position because it plays a peripheral role in the story, as voices in the crowd, random street corner interviews and so on.

## 19. Female and male news subjects in three occupational groups



# Age of news subjects

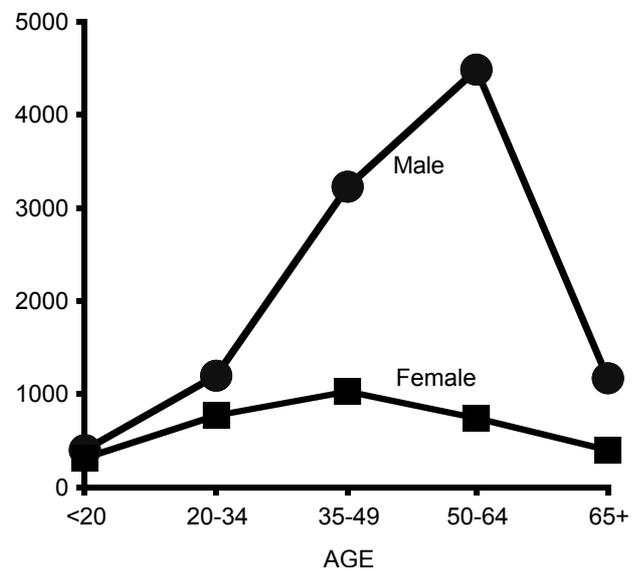
Results on age of news subjects repeat the pattern found in 1995 and also results of research around the world over many decades:

are far more male news subjects than female. In the 50-64 year old group, for example, there are more than 6 times as many men as women.

- There are similar numbers of women and men among younger news subjects.
- In the middle age groups, there
- Past the age of 65, the gap decreases, though in the present sample, there are still more than twice as many male news subjects as female.

## 20. Age of news subjects

Number of news subjects



Puerto Rico





Pakistan



Japan



Thailand

The numbers of women and men in the news varies greatly with age, and so do the positions they hold. Table 21 shows major occupations for each age group - a "major" occupation being defined as one that encompasses 10 percent or more of the people in that age group.

In the under-20 year age group, the single major occupation for both women and men is "student". In the 20-34 year age group, there is a striking contrast between the occupations of women (celebrities) and men (athletes): beauty versus brawn?

Politician is the most common occupation of both female and male news subjects between the ages of 35 and 64. Male politicians seem to last beyond age 65, while fewer female politicians manage this feat.

## 21. The dominant occupations in each age group

	Under 20	20-34	35-49	50-64	65+
<b>Women</b>					
Student	73%	Celebrity 30%	Politician 26%	Politician 46%	Retired 48%
		Student 12%	Celebrity 18%	Government spokesperson 13%	Politician 12%
<b>Men</b>					
Student	54%	Athlete 33%	Politician 32%	Politician 55%	Politician 63%
		Police, military 10%	Government spokesperson 14%	Government spokesperson 12%	
			Business, law 11%		

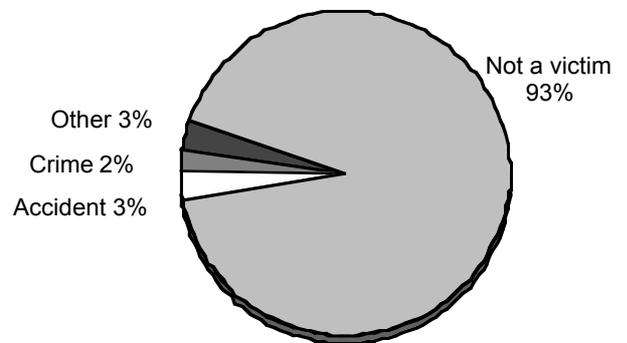
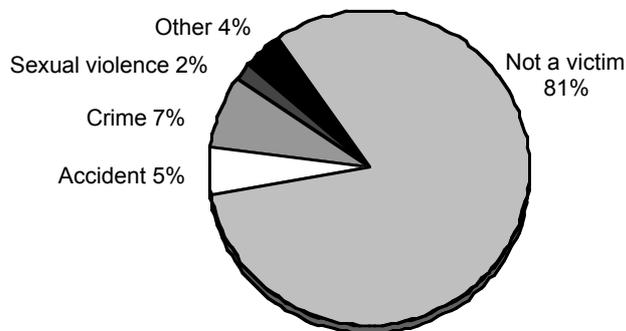
## News subjects portrayed as victims

Victims are common currency in news programmes. Nine percent of all news subjects are victims of some kind, and visuals on television and in newspapers show additional victims, who do not register as “news subjects” in this research, either because they do

not speak or because they are not identified individually.

Women appear more often as victims than do men - 19 percent of female news subjects and 7 percent of male news subjects are victims.

### 22. Proportion of female and male news subjects who are victims



### 23. News subjects who are victims

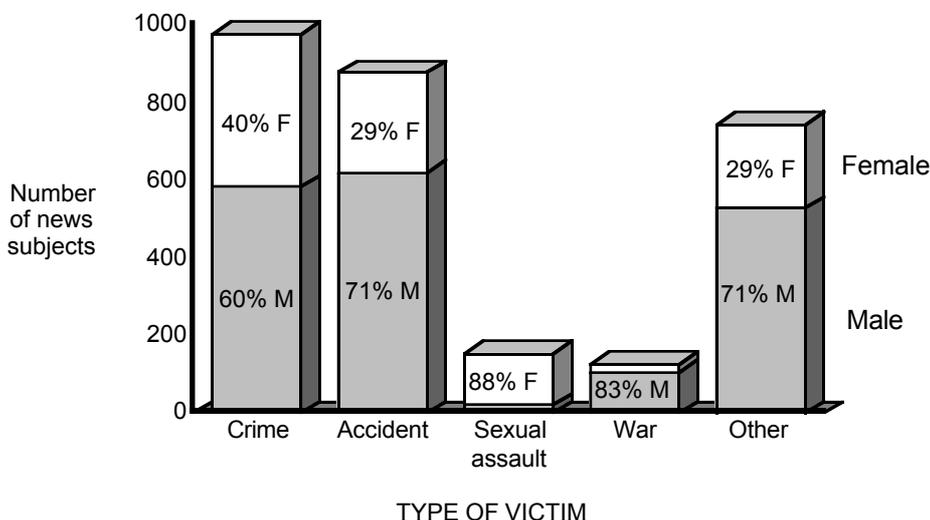


Table 23 shows the number of victims in each of five categories, in order to highlight the relative size of each category. The majority of victims appear in crime/legal stories (34 percent of all victims) and in coverage of disasters and accidents (31 percent of victims). Five percent of victims appear in stories on sexual assault (almost all of these are women) and 4 percent in coverage of wars (most of these were men). The “other” category, comprising the remaining 26 percent of victims, includes victims of political or religious oppression, disease, discrimination and various other situations.

Women account for 40 percent of crime victims, 29 percent of accident victims, 88 percent of sexual assault victims, 17 percent of war victims, and 29 percent of victims of other circumstances.

Chart 24 offers a perspective on the view that news media portray women as victims. A common charge is that media exploit the “woman as victim”. The chart describes more than 4,000 news subjects in stories on crime and legal matters, the news topic in which the largest number of victims appear. Nearly one-third of female news subjects in this group are victims, compared to just 11 percent of males. This would appear to support the charge that female victims are exploited: in relative terms, women are clearly more likely to appear as the victim than men are. But note that in absolute terms, the number of male victims (412) is twice that of female victims (207).

There are two ways to interpret these results. One is that the media select female victims, perhaps in an attempt to increase

audiences. Even if this is true in some instances, there is another side. Women make up very small percentages of major occupational groups featured in crime stories. Crime stories will inevitably feature police, and women account for only 4 percent of the police/military group (Table 24). Crime stories will also feature lawyers and judges, and women account for just 18 percent of people in the law/business group. If women accounted for, say, 50 percent of police and lawyers, crime coverage would feature many more women in these roles and the proportion of female victims would drop accordingly. In other words, the over-representation of women as victims is at least partly a consequence of the under-representation of women in the other occupations featured in crime coverage.



UK

24. News subjects in crime/legal stories



## Descriptive context

### Praise or recognition

Women and men receive praise or recognition to about the same extent; just over 20 percent of each are given recognition. The pattern is not uniform, however, across the various types of news story. Women received greater recognition than men in three news topics:

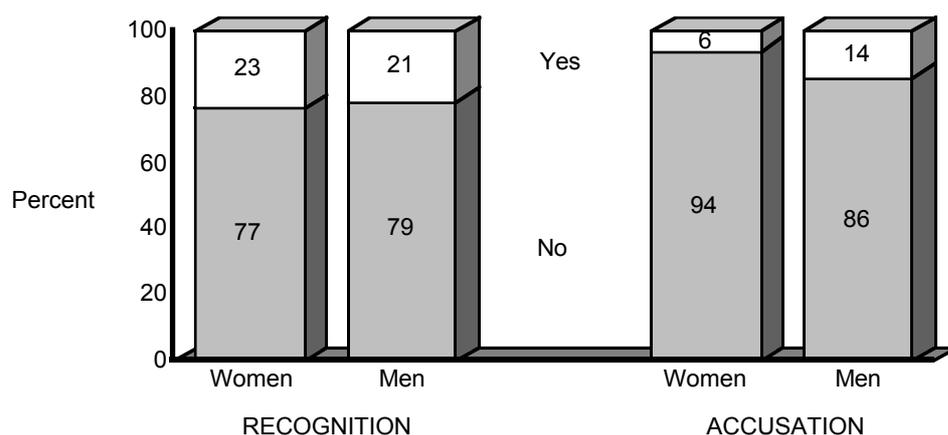
- **Sports:** 65 percent of female news subjects and 38 percent of males received positive recognition. This is an intriguing result. It may follow from the fact that so few women appear in sports coverage overall: only 9 percent of ath-

letes interviewed are women. Perhaps sports news focuses on women only when they achieve spectacular success.

- **Celebrity news:** 52 percent of female news subjects and 39 percent of males received positive recognition.
- **Human rights:** 26 percent of women and 6 percent of men received positive recognition.

Men received proportionately more recognition in just one area, business/economy. Here, 22 percent of male news subjects and 11 percent of female news subjects received positive recognition.

## 25. Recognition and accusation



### Accusation

Six percent of female news subjects were accused or blamed compared to 14 percent of men. The difference rests on news in three topic areas:

- **Crime:** 15 percent of women and 36 percent of men were accused or blamed. This difference follows from the previously discussed results: women appear proportionately more often as victims, and men appear proportionately more often as criminals.
- **Human rights:** 10 percent of

women and 40 percent of men were accused or blamed. This mirrors the results reported above, where women are more likely to receive praise in human rights stories. The reason for this dichotomy is open to speculation. Apparently, men are cast more often as violators of rights and women as supporters. This is the case in events such as the war crimes investigation in former Yugoslavia.

- **Politics and government:** 4 percent of women and 10 percent of men were accused or blamed.

## Mention of family status

It has often been noted that news media tend to identify women in terms of their marital or family status - as wife or mother or daughter. The 2000 research confirms that this is true. Twenty-one percent of women and just 4 percent of men were identified in terms of marital or family status.

The tendency to identify women by family status occurs in some news topics but not others. Topics where it does not often occur are business/economics, labour, national defence, international crises, riots and demonstrations, and coverage of religious topics. Typically, family status is mentioned for just 1 to 3 percent of news subjects in these areas.

Other topic areas present striking gender differences. In coverage of politics and government, 17 percent of women and 1 percent of men are identified by family status. In sports, the figures are 18 percent of women and 3 percent of men; in celebrity news, 34 percent of women and 11 percent of men; in crime, 40 percent of women and 11 percent of men, and in disasters/accidents, 25 percent of women and 7 percent of men.

The association of family status with female news subjects is a universal phenomenon. Table 25 provides results by region; the difference in the numbers of female and male news subjects who are identified by family status is statistically significant in each region.

Switzerland



It has often been noted that news media tend to identify women in terms of their marital or family status - as wife or mother or daughter. The 2000 research confirms that this is true.

## 26. News subjects who are identified by family status

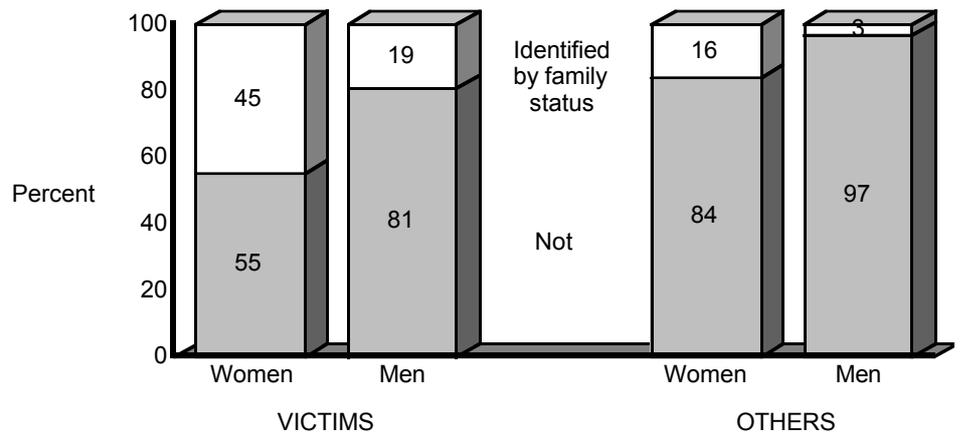
	Percent identified by family status			Total number of news subjects		
	F	M	Total	F	M	Total
Africa	15	2	4	356	2,777	3,133
Asia	22	5	8	2,417	11,776	14,192
Caribbean	21	5	9	208	602	810
Europe	18	4	6	1,112	4,674	5,787
Latin America	24	4	8	368	1,564	1,932
Middle East	30	3	7	165	913	1,078
North America	22	6	10	708	2,155	2,863
Oceania	27	7	12	102	310	412
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5,436</b>	<b>24,771</b>	<b>30,207</b>

To complete the picture on family status, it is necessary to discuss victims once again. Victims are frequently identified by family status, in fact 28 percent of victims are described in this way compared to 5 percent of non-victims.

Chart 27 illustrates how gender

and being a victim combine to increase the likelihood that a news subject will be identified by family status. The effects are dramatic: for men who are not victims, 3 percent are identified by family status. Among female victims, 45 percent are identified by family status.

**27. Mention of family status for victims and others in stories on crime and accidents/disasters**



**Newspaper quotes and photos**

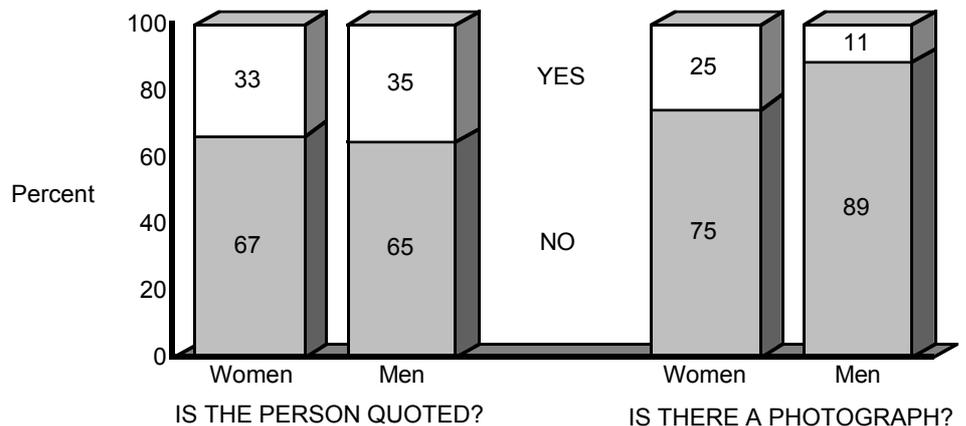
Quotes and photographs form an interesting contrast.

A quote is recorded when a reporter states the words of a news subject either directly or indirectly. For example, “The mayor said that she would not run in the next election” is considered a quote.

About one-third of the news subjects in newspapers are quoted. There is no significant difference between the proportions of women (33 percent) and men (35 percent).

With photos, the situation changes: 25 percent of female news subjects appear in photographs, compared to just 11 percent of male news subjects.

**28. News subjects who are quoted and shown in photographs**





Turkey



## 29. Gender of news subjects in newspaper photographs and overall

Using a quote and inserting a photograph are conscious decisions on the part of reporters and editors. Why is there no gender bias in the decision to use quotes, and a strong bias in the decision to use photos?

Table 29 shows the representation of women in photos across topic areas. (Several of the original topic categories are combined under "Other topics" because they contain too few photos to make individual comparisons).

- Columns 1 and 2 show the **percentage** of women and men in a given topic area who appear in photos. In riots and demonstrations, 70 percent of female news subjects and 20 percent of male news subjects appear in photos. **Proportionately**, women are over-represented in photos of riots and demonstrations.
- Columns 3 and 4 show the **numbers** of women and men in a given topic area who appear in photos. In riots and demonstrations, the numbers were very nearly equal (30 and 29). **Numerically**, there is an even balance of women and men in photos of riots and demonstrations.
- Columns 5 and 6 are for reference: In riots and demonstra-

tions, 23 percent of all news subjects are female and 77 percent are male.

The seven topic areas that begin Table 29 - riots and demonstrations down to crime - all follow this pattern, though to a lesser degree than riots and demonstrations. There are more women in photos than one would expect on the basis of their overall presence.

In two categories, disaster and politics/government, the pattern does not hold: similar proportions of women and men appear in photos.

Consider one other example. Celebrity news has similar numbers of photos of women and men (70 and 73 respectively). At the visual level, there is balance. At the textual level, there are three times as many men as women (77 percent of news subjects are male). The visual balance is achieved because 58 percent of the female news subjects appear in photos, versus only 18 percent of the male news subjects.

It seems probable that the use of women in photos is at least partly for decorative purposes. This idea fits well in topics such as celebrity news, arts/entertainment, and sports. It is interesting then, to see that women are not used as window dressing in the topics of disaster and politics.

	% appearing in photos		No. appearing in photos		% overall	
	F	M	F	M	F	M
Riots, demonstrations	70	20	30	29	23	77
Celebrity news*	58	18	70	73	23	77
Arts/entertainment*	46	19	115	80	38	62
Other topics*	41	13	727	3,227	17	83
Sports*	37	21	33	85	18	82
Business*	33	14	55	127	16	84
Crime*	19	9	105	231	18	82
Disaster	14	9	24	74	18	82
Politics, government	11	10	57	403	12	88
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1,216</b>	<b>4,329</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>83</b>

\* Significant difference between proportion of women and men in photos.

## Transnational satellite newscasts

The analysis included a set of broadcasts from transnational satellite sources including CNN, BBC, Canal Plus, RAI, RTL, SAT1, Skyplus and Starplus. In terms of gender portrayal, this set of newscasts does not differ significantly from other television news.

In the satellite newscasts:

- 59 percent of announcers were female, not different to a statistically significant degree from the 56 percent female announcers

in other television news.

- 29 percent of reporters were female, not different to a statistically significant degree from the 36 percent female reporters in other television news.
- 16 percent of news subjects were female, not different to a statistically significant degree from the 22 percent female news subjects in other television news.



Spain

## Time that news subjects speak to the audience

When women and men are interviewed on radio or television, are they given similar amounts of time to address the audience, or do women get less time than men?

Documenting the time that each interviewee is heard speaking was included as an optional exercise in the GMMP 2000 research. About half the participating countries submitted speaking time data, sometimes for all of the country's data and often for a portion of it.

The speaking time for an individual interviewee is simply the sum of the speech segments for that person within a single news

story. If the person speaks three times during the story, for 8 seconds, then 4 seconds then 10 seconds, the person's total speaking time is 22 seconds.

On television, female and male news subjects spoke for an average of 19 seconds and 20 seconds, respectively. This difference is not statistically significant.

On radio, women spoke for an average of 26 seconds and men for an average of 33 seconds. The difference between media remains an interesting question, as the results do not offer a ready explanation.

### 30. Mean speaking time

	Mean speaking time (seconds)	
	F	M
Television (based on 3,606 news subjects)	19	20
Radio (based on 931 news subjects)	26	33

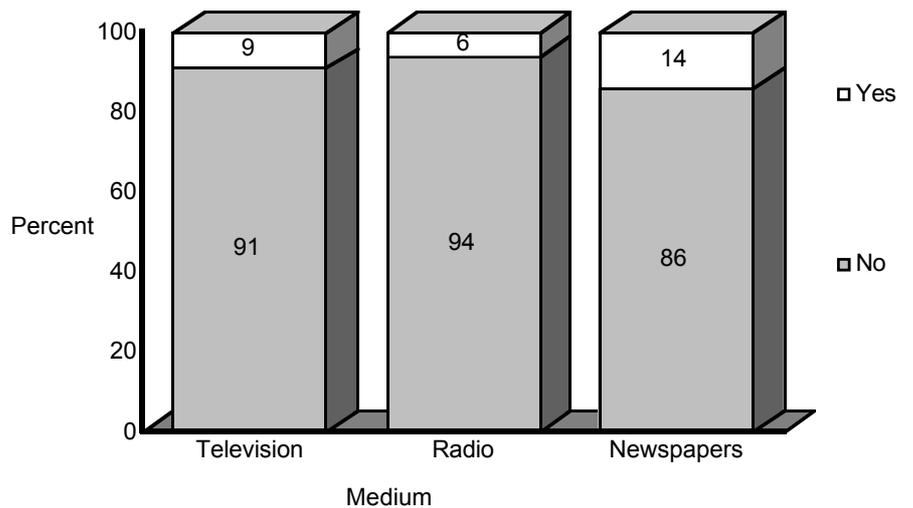
# Stories in which women are a central focus

Overall, 10 percent of news stories have women as a central focus. The proportion of such stories in newspapers, 14 percent, is greater than in radio or television.

This difference in female representation between newspapers and the electronic media raises an interesting issue. Newspapers present a similar range of news stories as the electronic media (they publish slightly more crime

and politics, but this would not account for the difference in the focus on women). It may be that the length of newspaper stories is the key: newspaper stories are considerably longer, in terms of number of words, than radio or television stories. They can therefore go into issues more deeply, and as a result may bring out a focus on women in more stories.

## 31. Stories with women as a central focus



United States



The proportion of stories in which women are a central focus varies widely across topic areas. At the high end are arts/entertainment, human rights and religious cover-

age, where one-quarter of the stories had women as a central focus. At the low end are several areas where less than 5 percent of stories focus on women.

### 32. Stories with women as a central focus



Topic	Percent of stories		Number of stories
	women are central focus	women are not central focus	
Arts, entertainment	26	74	709
Human rights	25	75	519
Religion	25	75	212
Celebrity news	20	80	448
Health	19	81	566
Crime, legal	16	84	2,146
Education, child care	11	89	591
International crises	10	90	240
Poverty	10	90	353
Riots, demonstrations	9	91	317
Politics, government	7	93	3,280
Sports	7	93	954
Disaster, accident	4	96	1,205
Labour	4	96	498
National defence	4	96	394
Science	4	96	247
War, civil war	4	96	600
Economy, business	3	97	2,082
Environment	1	99	295
Other	13	87	800
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>16,455</b>

### 33. Stories with women as a central focus by region

Region	Percent of stories		Number of stories
	Women are central focus	Women are not central focus	
Africa	8	92	1,884
Asia	10	90	7,519
Caribbean	13	87	272
Europe	7	93	2,964
Latin America	12	88	1,797
Middle East	17	83	652
North America	11	89	1,409
Oceania	11	89	217
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>16,714</b>

On a regional basis, there are relatively small differences in the proportions of stories in which women are a central focus. All regions are within 2 or 3 percent of the global average with the exception of the Middle East. The large proportion of stories with a focus on women in this region is due to one country, and may reflect an unusual news day. In other Middle-Eastern countries the proportion of stories with women as a central focus was just 5 percent.

### Issues addressed in stories with women as a central focus

The coding system defined 17 issues that might arise in stories with women as a central focus. These issues cut across the news topics used to categorise stories so far. For example, an issue such as “changing roles of women” can occur in politics, in sports, business, or many other areas.

Each story in which women were a central focus was coded as containing either one or two of these

issues. The two issues that surface most frequently are violence and power; these each account for 18 percent of the issues where women are a central focus. The issue of violence arises largely in crime/legal stories, but also in human rights stories and occasionally across a wide variety of other topic areas. The issue of power occurs largely in political coverage, also in business/economy, and occasionally across the range of other topic areas.



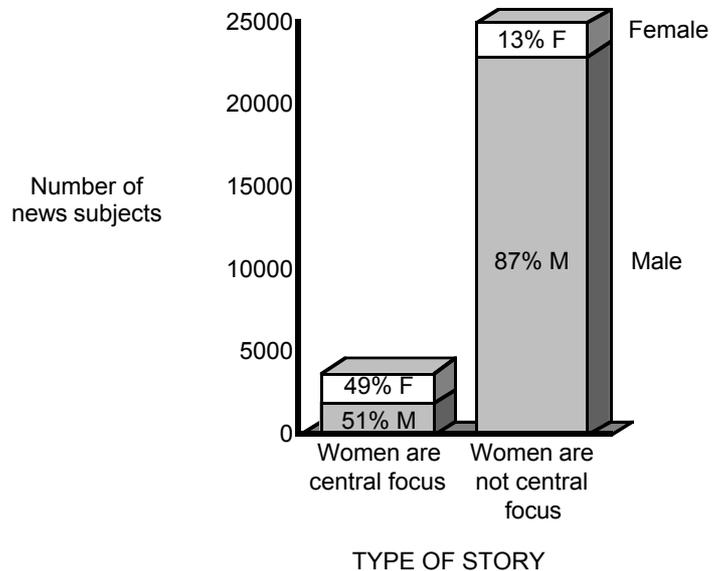
### 34. Issues addressed in stories with women as a central focus

Issue	Percent of issues			
	Television	Radio	Newspapers	Total
Violence	20	27	14	18
Power	16	22	19	18
Portrayal	10	3	16	11
Changing roles	8	9	6	7
Work	6	7	7	7
Health	9	4	4	6
Birth control	2	4	6	4
Legal	3	3	4	4
Religion	3	2	5	4
Child care	4	3	2	3
Education training	1	3	4	3
Social welfare	4	1	1	2
Minority women	2	1	1	1
Rural	1	2	0	1
Sexual orientation		1	1	1
Disabilities	1	1	0	0
Other	11	10	10	10
<b>Total percent</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total number of issues</b> (up to 2 per story)	<b>864</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>1,085</b>	<b>2,336</b>
<b>Number of stories</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>1,664</b>

Not surprisingly, stories in which women are a central focus tend to present more women than stories where women are not a central focus.

The difference is dramatic, as shown in Chart 35. One-third of all female news subjects appeared in the one-tenth of stories that feature women as a central focus.

**35. News subjects in stories with women as a central focus**



In stories where women are a central focus, news subjects are divided almost equally between women and men. In other stories, just 13 percent of news subjects are women. The negative interpretation of this is that there are two types of news story - one that focuses on women and where women are relatively well represented, and news in general,

where women make only occasional appearances.

Among reporters there is a small tendency for women to actually report stories that focus on women. Thirty-seven percent of the stories where the focus is on women were done by female reporters, compared to 30 percent of stories where the focus is not specifically on women.

# 4 THE NEWS THAT SHAPED THE NUMBERS

by Margaret Gallagher

## A typical, non-typical news day?

*'I feel a bit deflated ... as it was not a "typical" day for news - although, then, what is?'*  
(United Kingdom)

What is a typical news day? Waking up to the morning news on 1st February 2000, many who took part in the second global media monitoring project found themselves wondering if that day's news coverage could be considered 'typical'. Certainly, no single event dominated the world's news media as the Kobe earthquake in Japan had done five years earlier. Yet in individual countries and groups of countries, particular issues and events did monopolise an unexpectedly large share of news time and space on the monitoring day. In the United Kingdom, a court found the medical doctor Harold Shipman guilty of murdering at least fifteen of his patients - all of them middle-aged or elderly women - with the possibility that up to one hundred of his female patients had suffered the same fate. The extraordinary nature of the case attracted tremendous media attention. For example, one of Britain's 'quality' newspapers devoted its first six pages to various aspects of the affair. But the story generated coverage well beyond the United Kingdom itself. Dubbed 'Doctor Death' by the popular media, Shipman made headlines in many European newspapers and news bulletins. Even further afield, countries with close ties to the United Kingdom - Australia, New Zealand, South Africa - found the Shipman story high on their news agenda.

The very special characteristics of this story - featuring a large number of female victims of crime, who were often individually named and whose history, in many news reports, was described by family members (often a daughter) - gave a particular slant to the news of some countries. In the United Kingdom for instance, 37% of news subjects counted on the monitoring day were women. Over

half of these female news subjects were in the age group 65 or over (compared with just 6% of males), a proportion that confounds all expected results. More than two-thirds of them appeared in crime stories and nearly 60% had no stated occupation. In short, on almost all major dimensions measured in the study - even down to an unusually low proportion of females news subjects quoted in newspapers (for the obvious reason that many of them were not alive) - this particular story had a discernible impact on the UK results. The very large amount of data submitted by the United Kingdom makes it relatively easy to trace the Shipman effect here. In countries with smaller data bases, such as Australia and the Netherlands, the effect is less clear-cut though also detectable - for example, in a relatively high proportion of crime stories and/or of female victims. In Malta, which gave a great deal of news space to the story because one of the women murdered was of Maltese origin, more than two fifths of female news subjects were said to be victims - a higher proportion than in any country except the United Kingdom. And so one could continue.

The Shipman story and its effects illustrate several fundamental points about the global media monitoring project. The study is designed primarily to map gender patterns in the news across a large number of countries, not within them. The results in the country-by-country tables need to be examined with this in mind. Monitoring on just one day is not sufficient to provide a solid, incontestable picture of the place occupied by women and men in the news media of any individual country. That picture may be clouded by an unexpected, dramatic event

UK





Japan

or even by the fact that the monitoring took place in a particular seasonal context - an important holiday period, such as Chinese New Year (China, Taiwan), a pre- or post-election election period (for instance Chile, Croatia, Finland, Guatemala, Korea, Spain, Taiwan, USA), and so on.

Secondly, a study of this kind can only outline the general parameters of the news framework. It provides a picture that sometimes blanks out important national differences within apparently general phenomena. For example, in both Sweden and Japan, about half the television newsreaders or announcers who appeared on the monitoring day were found to be female. Yet the function is different in the two countries. Sweden's female newscasters, though on average younger than their male counterparts, are journalists who are no less serious than the men. Women who read the news in Japan are on the whole very young (almost 90% in this sample were said to be under 35) and, particularly in the morning news shows, many of them are actresses and entertainers - described in the Japanese news analysis as 'flowers to add'. In the morning news of one of the main television networks, the three female newscasters merely put questions to an older male commentator, who then explains the news - to the newscasters, and to the audience.

Thirdly, the broad brush strokes that indicate overall patterns of representation in the news inevitably miss the fine lines that give nuance to gender portrayal. The fact that a woman - or a man - appears in this or that news item may be less important than the context of the appearance. For instance, European research shows that in interviews women and men tend to be asked different kinds of question, and to be addressed in different ways - men

with more formality, women with greater familiarity. Technical devices such as camera angles may also be used to present some news subjects in more authoritative stances than others.<sup>1</sup> And so on. These are just a few of the things that lie within the basic numbers and percentages that describe women's and men's participation in the news.

Of course it is impossible in a study of this kind to consider the implications of such subtleties in gender representation. Nevertheless, it is important to try to unearth some of the more obvious factors that help to determine specific results or that bear on their significance. For example, women were the central focus of very few stories in Turkey on the monitoring day - just 3%. One that did focus on women was a television item about research into the link between heart attacks and snoring in women. So far, so good. But the video footage used to illustrate the report showed women in bikinis and tangas posing on a beach. Now, not so good. The story is still one that focuses on women, and in relation to a serious subject. But what message does it deliver about women in the news? Equally, a political story revolving round a male news subject may not be all that it seems. For instance, when President Kim of Korea publicly expressed his respect and love for his wife in one of the country's largest circulation newspapers on the monitoring day, this broke all conventions in Confucian culture, marking a shift in acceptable public discourse about women's status - and indeed about gender relations - in the country.

As in any quantitative study, therefore, all of the figures presented here - and especially those in the country tables - require interpretation and contextualisation to give them meaning. Groups within each country are of course

in the best position to do this in relation to their particular data. They know the specifics of the national news agenda on the monitoring day, and have detailed information about the situation of women in public and private life in their country. They can properly situate their results within these contexts. But, as was clear from the quantity of e-mail messages that flooded in from all parts of the world on and around 1st February 2000, a project like this creates a great sense of solidarity and belonging. People are curious not just to know how 'their' data relate to the whole, but also to see how they compare with other specific countries. To provide some basis for at least a general interpretation of the national results, we asked each country to produce a short 'news analysis', including examples of news stories and general pointers that could help us understand their data. Almost all countries - 52 out of the total 70 - did so, and the analysis in this section draws on that information and on a reading of the country tables.<sup>2</sup> Inevitably, the depth and detail supplied by individual countries varied widely and the analysis reflects this.<sup>3</sup>

But first let us revisit 1st February 2000 in terms of its 'typicality' as a news day. Again and again throughout the news analyses there emerges a despondent note of lament. Some groups believed that the events of this particular day were not typical. As a result, 'issues and news about women may have been set aside' (USA). Unforeseen news events resulted in 'a bad day', one that could not be regarded as 'the norm' (Ghana). Monitoring on other days might give 'a better view on the position of women' (Suriname). But if other events had filled the news agenda on that day, would women's place and status as news subjects have been very different? Almost certainly not. Recent

sub-regional studies carried out over longer time periods in Europe and Latin America, as well as in countries such as Tunisia and China, all confirm the same basic pattern of results.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, at least part of the sense of 'surprise over the male dominance' (Sweden) can be attributed to the sheer quantity of news that people read, heard or watched on the monitoring day. In the words of one, 'being exposed to such a concentration of news output magnified women's role as victim: our crying seemed to feature a lot' (Australia). The monitoring experience itself reveals patterns that tend to go unnoticed in 'normal' media usage. 'It's as if the news suddenly tipped on one side, as if you were reading the newspaper through 3-D spectacles' (Netherlands).

One of the great strengths of the global monitoring project is its ability to demonstrate that women's representation in the news is characterised by more similarities than differences - in countries as divergent as Canada and Cuba. The almost uncanny similarity of the main findings in 1995 and 2000 points to an underlying and relatively fixed set of structures and priorities that shape the news agenda and its protagonists. So although news events in certain countries on 1st February 2000 may well have been extraordinary, it would be unrealistic to imagine that their replacement by more 'ordinary' news would have changed deeply ingrained practices of news selection and reporting. News values intertwine with political and economic priorities to portray a particular view of what is important and whose opinion matters. For instance, in Israel the monitoring day coincided with the death of three soldiers in southern Lebanon. So the news focused on militarism. In a sense, this was unusual in that the main stories on most days tend to be more politi-

# One day in the news of the world

*As expected, women are seriously under-reported.*  
(Nigeria)



Nigeria



cal. Yet the treatment of the story was itself typical, in terms of its focus on a world of men - in this case preoccupied with issues of war and security. Thus 'it was a typical, non-typical day' (Israel).

## Africa

The monitoring day took place during the Africa Nations Cup 2000. In several countries television broadcasting was dominated by football matches, making it difficult to code news (Cameroon) and making news times unpredictable (Nigeria). The crash of a Kenya Airlines plane in the Ivory Coast almost completely monopolised the news in Kenya and was high on the media agenda of countries such as Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria (most of the passengers were actually Nigerian) and South Africa. In Ghana, strike action by the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union was major news. On the monitoring day, news about 'labour issues' accounted for the largest number of stories in the Ghanaian media (16% of the total) - making it one of the very few African countries where news on politics and government did not predominate. In Chad, two stories permeated newspaper columns, radio and television news. Former president Hissen Habré, dubbed 'Africa's Pinochet' by the international media, had just been indicted on torture charges in Senegal where he was living in exile. The other big story was the summit of the Community of Sahel Saharan States (COMESSA), hosted by Chad.

Looking at the pattern of news, one is struck by the concentration of stories in the 'politics and government' category in most African countries - well above the global average of 20% in Bénin, Botswana and Nigeria. In Sudan almost 40% of stories focused on political news. In few cases did

women account for more than 12% of news subjects in these African countries. In Nigeria, a mere 7% of news subjects was female (from a total of almost 500) - a lower percentage than in any other country except Lebanon, whose news agenda was dominated by war stories on the monitoring day. In terms of occupational groupings, both male and female news subjects in Africa were most likely to be found among politicians. This does not, of course, mean that there were a lot of female politicians in the news. On the contrary: less than 4% of all politicians in the news of these countries were women. But of those few women who did appear, one quarter were politicians - a higher average than for any other region on the monitoring day.

This political and governmental focus may partly explain the relatively small percentage of female news subjects in every African country. In most of these countries women's participation in politics is extremely low, climbing above 10% only in Namibia and Zimbabwe (both of which provided very small amounts of data in the project) and in South Africa.<sup>5</sup> Though South Africa has the highest female political participation rate in the region (women hold 30% of parliamentary seats), the South African news agenda followed a quite different pattern from that of other countries in the region on the monitoring day. Relatively little news was in the 'politics and government' category (7% of all stories) and there was an above-average amount of sports news (8%). Most news (21%) was about crime, and this is where the high-

## South Africa



est proportion of female news subjects (over two fifths) was found. Nevertheless, only 13% of all news subjects in South Africa were women. Paradoxically, if the South African media had carried more political news on the monitoring day, the percentage of female news subjects there might well have been higher.

What emerges is a news agenda that, at least on this day, in most African countries was dominated by political events and figures - most of whom were male. Very little news was in the 'arts and entertainment' or 'celebrity' categories, in which more women tend to be found. Only Bénin, with 10% of all stories, and Nigeria (8%) had significant amounts of news of this type. But even here, women were outnumbered by men in the Nigerian stories and there were no women at all in Bénin's arts, entertainment or celebrity news. Several countries carried above-average amounts of news on education and health (sometimes linked to HIV/AIDS). The global average for news of this kind was 7%. But in Ghana health and education stories accounted for 13% of the total, and in Bénin 12%. Cameroon (8%) Nigeria (7%) and South Africa (5%) also had reasonable amounts of health and education news. In each case except Cameroon a higher proportion of female than of male news subjects appeared in these stories. But women were still only one-fifth of all news subjects in health and education stories across the African countries. In other respects, the data conform to the usual pattern. In every country notably higher proportions of female than male news subjects were portrayed as victims (almost half of all females in Bénin, more than a third in South Africa) - most often as victims of crime, and to a lesser extent of accidents. But although men also featured as victims (particularly in relation to

accidents), the tiny percentage of female news subjects in the news as a whole puts their disproportionate presentation as victims into special relief.

Analysis of data from the African countries is restricted not just by the fact that women formed such a low proportion of news subjects, but by the relatively small amounts of news to which monitors had access. In a number of cases groups made it clear that they had to struggle to find an adequate number of news stories on the monitoring day itself. Apart from Nigeria and South Africa, media systems in these countries are very limited. Even a country the size of Ghana has just two daily newspapers, and a couple of non-dailies were also included in the Ghanaian monitoring. But the number of news pages in all these papers is small. Finally just 33 newspaper stories were coded in Ghana. On the monitoring day, the single state-run television network carried the same news bulletin on its two evening newscasts. Radio bulletins are also routinely repeated. As a result of very intensive efforts, the Ghanaian monitoring exercise generated some 100 stories featuring under 200 news subjects across all media. In Chad, although all national media (including some weekly publications) were monitored, only 22 coded stories emerged.<sup>6</sup>

A final point to note is that in two countries - Bénin and Sudan - relatively large amounts of news apparently did not fit within the predefined topic categories: 10% of stories in Bénin and 17% in Sudan were coded as having 'other' topics (the global average for 'other' news was 5%). Three-quarters of the Sudanese female news subjects were found in 'other' news (compared with 17% of male news subjects). It is possible that some of this news deals with 'daily life' issues or events,

## Sudan



which do not fit well within the standard topics. For instance, a story running in many Sudanese media at the time was the rise in the number of women seeking divorce from absentee husbands in the Middle East. There was no obvious slot for such news in the predefined categories. This raises the question of whether, by focusing on news categories in which men have traditionally predominated, the study may be less attuned to the kinds of story in which women are to be found in certain countries and regions.<sup>7</sup>

### Asia

No single incident, either within or outside the region, appears to have had a major impact across the Asian news media on the monitoring day. But specific events or issues did make their particular mark on national news agendas. The Indian media - newspapers, television and radio - carried many stories about Deepa Mehta's controversial feature film 'Water', which centred on the plight of widows in India. Filming in the holy city of Varanasi had been banned, following protests from local leaders who argued that the film depicted Hindu widows in an offensive way and cast India in a negative light. One of India's most successful film-makers internationally, Deepa Mehta was the subject of interviews and news features on the monitoring day - not just in India but also in Malaysia. Other headline news in Malaysia was the trial of former deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim. The story of an Indonesian maid, subjected to dreadful violence by her Malaysia employer, and unprotected by Malaysian employment law, was also widely covered.

The Japanese media were transfixed by the arrest of a man who had held a girl prisoner for nine years in his room, where he had repeatedly abused her.

Imprisoned when she was ten years old, the 19-year old was discovered tied up in a bag by the man's mother and public health officials. Stories about the Aum Cult featured in various forms, and a political crisis involving the governing and opposition parties also made headlines. In both Korea and Taiwan, forthcoming elections meant that a great deal of news was about election campaigns, political candidates and parties. The imminence of Chinese New Year, the most important annual holiday in China and Taiwan, produced a lot of holiday-related coverage. For instance, stories about the length of the holiday period, travel arrangements, traffic and road conditions may have resulted in more 'soft' news than usual.<sup>8</sup> News media in Pakistan gave coverage to harassment of the judiciary by the military government, the country's economic problems and pressure from the International Monetary Fund, political unrest in Kashmir, and the arrival of Taliban leaders from Afghanistan. A major award ceremony in Lahore, at which prizes were awarded to singers, newscasters, writers and performing artists - most of them women - was also given extensive media coverage.

In some respects this presented a very mixed news bag, and within it can be traced some of the main gender patterns that emerged from the second global media monitoring project as a whole. In eight of the fourteen countries, political and governmental news accounted for the highest proportion of stories. But in only two - Korea and Nepal, with 29% and 41% of all stories respectively - did it far exceed the global average of 20%. These countries - along with Indonesia - had the lowest percentage of female news subjects in the Asian region on the monitoring day: 9% of all people in the news. Countries with higher proportions of female

*Generally, media treatment of stories appears to be strait-jacketed. When there is a success story, the suffering and exploitation are not shown. When women are victims, their struggles and strengths are not projected. Stories tend to be one-sided.*

(India)

Malaysia



news subjects included Japan (23%) and the Philippines (22%). In each of these, crime and legal news dominated - accounting for 28% of all stories in Japan, and 30% in the Philippines. And in both countries high proportions of female news subjects appeared in such stories. In the Philippines more than two-fifths of all women in the news were in crime stories - a higher proportion than in any other category.

China, where the percentage of female news subjects was also relatively high (23%) followed a different pattern. Over half of all women in the news were in political or economic stories (the two categories that predominated in China on the monitoring day), but only a minority of these appeared in the role of politician or business expert (18% of all female news subjects, compared with 47% of males). In China, as in many Asian countries, most women in the news were apparently 'ordinary citizens': 34% had no stated occupation and a further 18% were retired<sup>9</sup> (the comparable figures for men were 10% and 2% respectively). Across all 70 countries in the study, just 6% of female news subjects were described as 'homemaker' or 'parent'. But in many of these Asian countries, the category accounted for a much higher proportion of women in the news: almost a fifth in both Cambodia and Korea, and around one tenth in Malaysia, Pakistan, Japan and Taiwan. No more than 1% of men in any of these countries was classed as a parent or homemaker (none at all in Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Thailand).

Men made the news overwhelmingly as politicians and government spokespersons. The only exception to this was Japan, which had a very low proportion of political news on the monitoring day (9%). A relatively large amount of Japanese news was devoted to

sports - at 15% of all stories, second only to crime as a news category (the global average for sports news was 7%). An extraordinary 31% of male news subjects in Japan were athletes and sportspersons - far above any other country in the project. Other Asian countries that carried relatively large amounts of sports news were Thailand (14% of all stories) and Sri Lanka (11%). But female athletes enjoyed some visibility only in the news of India (5% of all women) and Pakistan (8%).

Women's presence was, however, strongly felt in another news category. Arts, entertainment and celebrity stories were a notable feature of the news agenda in many Asian countries - accounting for 13% in Pakistan, and 11% in both India and Japan (compared with a global average of 7%). The stories on Deepa Mehta in India and the awards ceremony in Pakistan were important sources of celebrity news. China, Malaysia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam also carried a fair amount of arts, entertainment and celebrity news. In every case except China, a higher proportion of female than of male news subjects were in such stories. In several countries more than 20% of all women in the news were 'celebrities': India (28%), Japan (22%) and Pakistan (20%). Indeed, the 'celebrity' category accounted for a higher proportion of women than any other stated occupation in Japan, Pakistan and Taiwan.

The general impression given by gender patterns in the Asian news on the monitoring day is of a world in which women hold little authority or publicly acknowledged expertise. Naturally, social reality helps to determine women's overall representation. For example, in most of Asia women's share of parliamentary seats is low - exceeding 10% in only three countries that participated in the project: China (22%), Philippines



China



(12%) and Vietnam (26%). But in none of these were women were particularly visible in political reporting on the monitoring day<sup>10</sup>. Only in India and Sri Lanka did women's political role surface reasonably clearly. Here women were respectively 16% and 15% of all politicians in the news, accounting for about a third of all female news subjects in each country on the monitoring day. Stories involving Sri Lanka's president Chandrika Kumaratunge undoubtedly contributed to the results there, though for India there is no such obvious explanation. According to United Nations data, women in South-East Asia (including Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam) exercise a reasonable degree of professional responsibility in business, holding at least 24% of managerial positions.<sup>11</sup> Yet in the occupational category 'business and law', women were really visible only in the Philippines, where over a quarter of all female news subjects were in this group on the monitoring day.

Elsewhere, the overall low proportion of women as news subjects and their concentration in low status roles - with the exception of 'celebrity' - projects a fairly traditional picture of women as seen through the news media. In Thailand, for instance, three-quarters of those who reported the news on the monitoring day were women - by far the highest percentage across all 70 countries.<sup>12</sup> According to the Thai news analysis, the personality and presence of female reporters and announcers is believed to make the news more interesting for the audience. Yet only 11% of news subjects in Thailand were women - one of the lowest proportions in the study. And almost half of these female news subjects were in roles generally regarded as non-authoritative, such as office workers, students, homemakers, or with 'no

stated occupation'. Though similar contradictions were evident across the study as a whole, Thailand provides an extreme example of the pattern.

In this vast and culturally divergent region, it was almost inevitable that some countries would find it more difficult than others to make their news 'fit' within the general framework of categories used for the study. Two - Malaysia and Vietnam - coded almost a quarter of their news as 'other' in terms of subject matter. Indeed 'other' news accounted for the highest percentage of stories in each of these cases, making it impossible to compare their results with those from elsewhere. In other Asian countries the problem was also apparent, though less acute: 14% of stories in Taiwan, and about 10% in Cambodia and Sri Lanka were coded as 'other news' (the global average for 'other' news was 5%). The Taiwanese news analysis draws attention to this, pointing out that stories relating to day-to-day issues - traffic jams, food shortages, the use of cooking wine - could not be included in the existing topic categories. In general, women were more likely than men to be found in 'other' news: this was the pattern in all Asian countries except India, Malaysia and Sri Lanka. In some countries - for example Cambodia, Japan, Taiwan and Vietnam - over a tenth of female news subjects were in 'other' news. Indeed in Vietnam, some two fifths of women (and a quarter of men) were found in these stories. As with the African news, it seems that the existing categories do not fully reflect the news focus in some of these Asian countries.<sup>13</sup>

## Caribbean

The monitoring day fell within pre-Carnival period in both Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago. This did not

*We were disappointed to notice how few women were the focus of any story, and then it was usually as a victim of crime or violence.*

(Jamaica)



Trinidad & Tobago

appear to have an important effect on the overall news agenda of either country: Carnival itself was still a month away in Trinidad & Tobago and two months off in Jamaica. Nevertheless, the Trinidadian news analysis noted that women's behaviour at the many pre-Carnival parties and celebrations is a popular subject for entertainment reporting (including photographs) - much of it highly stereotypical. Trinidad & Tobago did indeed have an above average amount of news in the 'arts, entertainment and celebrity' category (13% of all stories, compared with a global average of 7%), and this was where most women were to be found - over a quarter of all female news subjects. By contrast, in Jamaica most women (23% of the total) were found in 'crime' which, with 20% of all stories, was the largest news category in the country on the monitoring day. Several sensational news items featuring violence against women - a pregnant woman shot dead in front of her two little girls, a woman attacked with a machete by her boyfriend - contributed to the high proportion of women portrayed as victims in the Jamaican media. At 24% of all female news subjects, this was considerably higher than in any other country in the region - with the rather unexpected exception of Cuba.

In the Cuban news media, however, women were seen as victims of a different kind. Here the tug-of-war story of Elián González had been high on the media agenda since November 1999, and continued to make almost daily news. The monitoring day coincided with the return to Cuba of Elián's grandmothers, following an unsuccessful attempt to secure his departure from the United States. This story attracted a great deal of coverage and contributed to the extremely large amount of news in the 'human rights' category

(which included children's rights). While human rights stories represented only 2% of news globally, in Cuba a remarkable 17% of news came into this category. In fact human rights stories - principally revolving around the Elián González case - accounted for a higher proportion of news in the Cuban media than any other category. This particular story certainly made a mark on Cuba's results, with well above average proportions of female news subjects presented as victims, with no stated occupation, in the age group 50 to 64, and described in relation to family status.

In Cuba, and indeed in all countries in the region except Suriname, female news subjects were much more likely than males to be found in arts, entertainment and celebrity stories and in news about health and education. In Puerto Rico, national controversy over a forum on sex education, at which prostitution was on the agenda, generated media coverage. In Jamaica, the settlement of a long-running struggle by nurses for better wages made news on the monitoring day. In both countries women actually outnumbered men as education and/or health professionals in these stories. But in other spheres, most news in the Caribbean region was dominated by men - in particular politicians and government spokespersons. Even in stories that provided ample opportunity for the expression of a women's viewpoint - for example, public reaction to President Clinton's statement about continued use of the nearby island of Vieques for bombing exercises by the US Navy; or a strike by prison warders in Jamaica that disrupted family visits (made mainly by women to male inmates) - precedence was given to male spokespersons and authorities. Sports news, though high on the agenda of several countries - accounting for about 10% of all



Puerto Rico

*Is there a tendency for the media to talk about women (and maybe other categories) as a group - without distinguishing them, one from another - and to talk only to the bosses, the men?*  
(France)



Estonia

stories in Jamaica and Puerto Rico, and a remarkable 24% in Trinidad & Tobago - was primarily a male domain. Only in Cuba did female athletes make any visible impact in the news, accounting for about one in every six sportspersons.

Naturally, all Caribbean media carried stories about politics and government. But this kind of news actually featured strongly in only three countries on the monitoring day: Puerto Rico (18% of all stories), Trinidad & Tobago (22%) and Suriname - where over a third of all news came into this category. The Surinamese news agenda followed an extremely traditional pattern, with politics and labour disputes accounting for more than half of all stories. Only 19% of news subjects in Suriname were women - one of the lowest proportions in the region. Of those women who did make the news there, more than half were politicians. In Trinidad & Tobago - whose news was dominated on the one hand by sport, and on the other by a political story involving a stand-off between the President and the Prime Minister - women accounted for just 16% of news subjects on this day.

In several Caribbean countries women did enjoy relatively greater prominence as news subjects than the global average of 18%. To some extent this may be due to the fact that these countries put less emphasis on politics and government than on crime (Jamaica, Puerto Rico) or on human rights (Cuba). In general, despite an above-average news presence, women were primarily portrayed in the role of 'ordinary citizens' rather than as experts or authorities. However, the case of Puerto Rico is somewhat different from the norm. Women were 28% of news subjects - one of the highest percentages across all 70 countries. Although most female news subjects (28%) were found

in crime and legal stories, they also enjoyed relatively high visibility in political news (25%). Moreover, women were not overwhelmingly portrayed as the victims of crime. In fact, roughly similar proportions of female (13%) and male (10%) news subjects were described as victims. Finally, 30% of authority figures (politicians, government spokespersons, professionals) in the Puerto Rican news were women - well above the global average of 12%. In no other Caribbean country did women account for even 20% of these roles. The Puerto Rican news media certainly reflected less gender disparity than other Caribbean countries on the monitoring day.

## Europe

One characteristic that distinguished the European media on the monitoring day was the large proportion of foreign stories. While this kind of news accounted for some 15% of news subjects globally - with relatively low percentages in Asia (11%), Latin America (9%) and the Middle East (10%) - some 23% of European news subjects were in foreign stories. Moreover, in Europe, women were particularly badly represented in such news: only 11% of news subjects in foreign stories were female (in North America, for example, the comparable figure was 19%). Just 13% of all female news subjects were found in foreign stories, compared with 25% of males. The relatively high profile given to foreign news, and the relatively low profile of women news subjects within that news, was a contributing factor in women's poor share of news making roles (19%) in Europe on the monitoring day.

Many of these stories covered 'big' political issues that affected Europe as a whole. For instance, the European Union's threatened

political isolation of Austria - because of that country's proposal to form a coalition government that would include Jörg Haider's extreme right-wing Freedom Party - was important news throughout western Europe. The war in Chechnya and continuing violence in Kosovo were major concerns in central and eastern Europe, and indeed throughout the region as whole. The faltering peace process in Northern Ireland was also widely reported.

Outside the political arena, a story that made news in many countries was the progress of a stream of cyanide, originating from a burst dam in Romania, and successively poisoning rivers in Romania, Hungary and Yugoslavia. And of course the court verdict concerning the Shipman murders in the United Kingdom attracted much media attention.

Apart from these essentially 'European' stories, other foreign news included the case of General Augusto Pinochet whose release from detention in the United Kingdom was imminent. This ongoing story got widespread coverage well beyond the UK, particularly in Belgium and Spain where legal challenges had also been mounted. The Kenya Airways and Alaska Airlines crashes of course made news, as did the New Hampshire primary - the first primary election in the 2000 United States presidential campaign.

Although - as many European monitors pointed out - most of these stories provided ample opportunity for the inclusion of women's points of view and perspectives, in fact their coverage in most media relied almost entirely on male authorities and spokespersons. Several countries (for instance Germany, Italy) commented on the dominance of male voices in the European Union/Jörg Haider story - despite the fact that both the European Commission and the European

Parliament, sources for much of the news comment, include substantial numbers of women in authoritative positions. In Northern Ireland, comment on the decommissioning/peace process story came almost exclusively from men. Monitors noted that only one television organisation (the BBC) included women even in its 'vox pop' street interviews on this issue, and that 'expert' opinion was sought solely from men - although, for example, the Women's Coalition Party plays an active role in Northern Ireland politics. Where were women's voices in coverage of the New Hampshire primary, asked Norway? Or in stories about the war in Chechnya, asked Sweden? The automatic reflex that identifies men with politics - and war - is apparently alive and well in the European news media.

Political stories also dominated most national news agendas in Europe on the monitoring day, accounting for the largest news category in twelve of the 21 countries that took part in the monitoring project.<sup>14</sup> In cases where the amount of political news was above average, women tended to make a particularly weak showing as news subjects. For example, in Croatia - just emerging from parliamentary and presidential elections - 57% of stories were about politics and governments; women were just 13% of newsmakers. In Germany a financial scandal involving the highest echelons of Christian Democrat Party had been an agenda-setting story since December 1999, and political news accounted for 39% of the total. Here only 12% of news subjects were women. In Italy, where 33% of news was coded 'politics and government', female newsmakers were 15% of the total. Romania's news media also carried an above-average number of political stories - 29% of the total. Women's share of news making roles - at 10% of

Germany





Croatia



the total - was lower than in any other European country,<sup>15</sup> and one of the lowest in the entire study. Of the small number of women who did appear in the Romanian news on the monitoring day (18), almost two-thirds (11) were in arts, entertainment and celebrity stories.

The single exception to the pattern in which an above-average amount of political news corresponded with below-average representation of women was Finland.<sup>16</sup> Here a presidential election campaign was at its height, and 27% of stories were in the politics category. But in Finland 23% of news subjects were female - an important reason being that one of the two presidential candidates was a woman (who was eventually elected, giving Finland its first female President). In neighbouring Estonia, which has close historical and economic links with Finland, the Finnish elections also attracted media attention. However, this does not seem to be a major reason for the relatively high proportion of women in Estonia's news - at 28% of the total, one of the highest in Europe. Female news subjects here enjoyed high visibility as professionals: half of health and education professionals, and almost a fifth of those in business and law, were women. Nowhere else in Europe did women's share of news space as experts or professionals in the business and legal fields approach this.

Women's representation in sports news was exceptionally high in Estonia: female athletes were over one third of the total - higher than any other country in the study. And in several other European countries women's visibility as sportspersons was well above the global average of 4%. Very large amounts of sports news were carried in Slovenia (15% of all stories) and Norway, where sports accounted for more news

than any other category (17%). In Norway women were 14% of athletes in the news. In Slovenia and in France (where sports stories accounted for 9% of the total), 8% of athletes were female. These 'best' results are hardly worthy of an Olympic medal, but everything is relative. In only one other region - Oceania - did women feature as strongly in sports news. Of course it cannot be assumed that the European results would be replicated on other news days. However Sweden, which mentioned an item on a female badminton star as an example of news where women were the central focus, judged this type of story as part of a trend to recognise women in the sports world.

Sweden was a country that, in overall terms, showed a better than average balance in gender participation in the news. Women accounted for 31% of all news subjects on the monitoring day. Swedish news had a reasonable spread of topics in general, and of women within them. Economic and business news dominated, with 22% of all stories, followed by crime and then politics (15%). Reasonable amounts of news were in the education (7%) and health (5%) categories. For example, one of the big national stories on the monitoring day was criticism of the level of fees charged for children's day care. Revision of the state retirement system was also in the news. More than half the news subjects in health and education stories in Sweden were female, and women were relatively well represented in 'authoritative' roles. Almost half of health and education professionals were women, and a quarter of all politicians and government spokespersons in the Swedish news were female - more than double the European average of 12%, and ahead of other Nordic countries including Finland (17%) and Norway (18%).<sup>17</sup> Only Iceland,

*The absence of news with a focus on women reflects an extremely conservative perception of what news is.*

(Chile)

Guatemala



where women were just under a third of politicians and government spokespersons, did better. There was an almost equal balance between women and men appearing as 'ordinary' people in the Swedish news (homemakers, retired, unemployed or with no stated occupation). Female news subjects were slightly more likely than males to be found in arts, entertainment and celebrity stories (13% and 9% respectively). But women were not over-represented in crime news or as victims in Sweden. At least on this monitoring day, the Swedish news media dealt women a relatively good hand.

Elsewhere, the pattern was much more traditional. In Russia, although 31% of news subjects were women, almost a third of these were in arts, entertainment and celebrity stories.<sup>18</sup> In the Netherlands too, female news subjects were most likely to be found in arts, entertainment and celebrity stories. The same was true of Belgium, where women accounted for only 13% of all people in the news - one of the lowest rates in Europe. In the United Kingdom, women's large share of news making roles (37%) is clearly inflated by the Shipman effect, making it difficult to assess the extent to which the extremely high proportions of women in crime stories (68% of all female news subjects, compared with 34% of men) and portrayed as victims (55% compared with 9% of male news subjects) might be attributable to that one story.<sup>19</sup> But the fact that women were just 13% of politicians and government spokespersons on the monitoring day suggests that in other respects women's participation in the British news was close to the European norm.

Women were over-represented as victims in several countries besides the United Kingdom. More than a fifth of all female news sub-

jects were portrayed as victims in Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and Switzerland. Although some of this was undoubtedly due to the Shipman story, national news items - sometimes quite sensational - also contributed. The brutal murder of a young woman - a drug addict - by her pimp and boyfriend was featured in all Maltese media. In the Netherlands the birth of a baby to a woman convicted of murder made the headlines. A prominent story in Spanish media was the rape of a two-year-old girl whose mother had exchanged her for drugs. The prurience and lack of depth in coverage of such items were sharply criticised in news analyses submitted by European groups.

### Latin America

As in Europe, national politics was high on the media agenda of most Latin American countries on the monitoring day. Chile and Guatemala had recently been through elections. Peru was already preparing for general elections to be held in April, in which President Alberto Fujimori was proposing to run for a controversial third term. Chile had dispatched a plane to England to deliver General Augusto Pinochet from detention there, although in fact because of legal challenges in Europe it would be another month before the General returned to Santiago. Ecuador was stabilising after a bloodless coup just ten days earlier, provoked by the country's worst economic recession for decades. Indeed Ecuador was one of the few countries that did not lead with political stories on the monitoring day. Here economic news was more important, accounting for a third of all stories. Crime and legal news led in Peru (17% of all stories) and Uruguay (19%). Elsewhere, political stories dominated these Latin American news agendas that in



Bolivia

general seemed to be structured around the conventional triad of politics, crime and the economy.

Overall, this opened up little space for women's perspectives or points of view. For example in Bolivia, which - in the words of the monitors - had 'quite a normal news day' - only 9% of news subjects were women, one of the lowest rates of female participation in the study. Women in the Bolivian news were most likely to be found in crime stories - an almost universal pattern across these countries and particularly marked in Mexico, where almost half of all female news subjects were in crime news (compared with 12% of males). A similar, though less dramatic, tendency was clear in Ecuador and Uruguay where more than two fifths of female news subjects appeared in crime or legal stories. These four countries - along with Chile - displayed particularly conservative patterns of gender participation in news within the region. The relatively few women who did appear were mainly seen as 'ordinary' people (about half of all female news subjects in both Ecuador and Uruguay). Women accounted for no more than a tenth of those in authoritative or expert roles.

In Mexico, a third of all women in the news were 'celebrities' - and only 15% of news subjects in this country were women. The Mexican news agenda was slightly less rigidly structured than that of the other three countries: for example, 9% of stories were in the 'education' category and 10% of news was about sports. However, women barely featured in the sports news of Mexico - or indeed of any other country in this region. Much of the education news revolved around a nine-month long students' strike over rising tuition fees at the country's largest university. Just before the monitoring day non-striking students tried to take control of the site, leading

to violent clashes and the arrest of 250 students. Again, this was a male-dominated story. Women account for 47% of university and college students in Mexico.<sup>20</sup> But only four of the 22 students, and just one out of the twelve education professionals who made the Mexican news on this day were female.

Apart from El Salvador, where the amount of data was extremely small, Chile was the only country in which women were reasonably visible in news about politics and government. Just over a quarter of female news subjects (compared with a third of males) appeared in these stories. But women's overall share of news making roles in Chile was low - only 17% of the total. And female news subjects' representation in authoritative or expert roles - at 15% of the total - was not far from the average for the region as a whole (13%). As in almost every country in Latin America on the monitoring day, women in the Chilean news were most likely to be found in crime and legal stories. In fact, as the Chilean monitors pointed out, women's lack of visibility within the overall pattern reflected 'an extremely conservative view of what news is'.

Two countries deviated from that pattern. The lead story in most Guatemalan media was the demise of a hard-fought Children's Rights Bill, which had been rejected by Congress. While in one sense this was a political story (and 20% of all news in Guatemala came into that category), it generated an above-average number of stories on human rights (5% of the total, compared with a global average of 2%). It also undoubtedly contributed to the very high proportion of female news subjects. At 44% of the total, this was much higher than for any other country in the study. Given women's prominence in the field of children's rights, news on the Bill

Chile





Peru

*A world of men - preoccupied with issues of war and the military' (Israel) and in which 'the tabloids always use women to attract readers.*

(Turkey)

Israel



was almost bound to draw on female expertise. Women accounted for more than a third of those appearing in human rights stories in the Guatemalan news. With a 32% share of all authoritative and expert roles (compared with a global average of 12%), the profile of female news subjects in this country was exceptional on the monitoring day. But other, more traditional elements also contributed to Guatemala's high proportion of female news subjects. The media ran an above-average amount of arts, entertainment and celebrity news - at 9% of all stories, the highest in the region. Over two-thirds of news subjects in these stories were women. In fact, almost 20% of all female newsmakers in Guatemala were 'celebrities'. Finally, and following the regional pattern, women accounted for a high proportion of those in crime stories: indeed 25% of female news subjects appeared in this type of news. Moreover, almost 10% of women in the Guatemalan news were depicted as victims of sexual violence - much higher than for any other country in the study except Mexico.

The news agenda of Peru was also rather unusual. Stories in the category 'poverty, housing, unemployment' accounted for 12% of the total - compared with a global average of 2%. The amount of human rights news - at 5% of all stories (global average 2%) - was also relatively large. Two major factors contributed to this. Thousands of homeless people had taken over a plot of land in a shanty town near Lima, and had begun to erect makeshift dwellings there. When police refused to evict the squatters, property-owners in the shanty town reacted with violence. Other important news was the spread of cholera in the poorest quarters of Lima. Women and children were particularly affected by the disease, caused by scarcity of water and - consequently - poor

hygiene in the preparation of food. It was in these stories that female news subjects were most likely to be found in Peru. Women were just 22% of newsmakers overall. But half of all those in health and human rights news, and more than a third in stories about poverty and homelessness, were women. More than half of these female news subjects appeared as 'ordinary people' rather than experts or authorities. Given this scenario, it is not surprising to find a very high proportion of women in the Peruvian news defined as victims. At 40% of the total, this was higher than for any other Latin American country - in a region where the overall percentage of women portrayed as victims (27%) was already above the global average.

### Middle East

News from this region on the monitoring day was dominated by war and other conflicts. The death of three Israeli soldiers in southern Lebanon was the major story in Israel, heavily covered in all media and affecting most other news. Naturally this story was also widely covered in Lebanon, in the context of the Lebanese-Israeli conflict and the wider Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In Lebanon, the monitoring day coincided with the first day of the Lebanese budget in parliament, and almost all television channels broadcast the parliamentary session live during the day. In Turkey the main story was the discovery of bodies believed to have been murdered by Hezbollah, an armed extremist group aimed at setting up an Islamic state in Turkey. The first bodies had been discovered in mid-January. By the beginning of February almost 40 tortured bodies had been found, and nearly 1000 people had been taken into custody.

So although the news media of these three countries carried the



Israel



Turkey



usual amount of political news (about 20% in each case), they were all distinguished by an unusual and extremely heavy focus on war and militarism. While stories on war (including civil war and terrorism) accounted for just 4% of news globally, in Lebanon and Turkey some 20% of news came into this category. In Israel an extraordinary 31% of all stories were about war - considerably more than any other type of news. The related category of 'national defence' was also important, accounting for 13% of news in Lebanon, 8% in Turkey and 7% in Israel. Again, this was well above the global average of 3%.

With between 30% and 40% of news focused on war and national defence, it is not surprising to find that women's share of news making roles was extremely low in each case. Women were 14% of news subjects in Turkey, 10% in Israel and just 6% in Lebanon - lower than in any other country in the study. In Israel and Lebanon about one half of these female news subjects were in stories about war, national defence or international crises - usually depicted as mothers or relatives of killed or wounded men. In Israel women accounted for just 6% of authorities and experts (politicians, government spokespersons, professionals), compared with the global average of 12%. In Lebanon the figure was 2%. In Israel, over half of all women who appeared in the news were depicted as victims - higher than any other country. The Israeli social world as seen through the news on this day was, in the words of the monitors, 'mainly a world of men, preoccupied with issues of war and the military'.

Not surprisingly perhaps, neither Israel nor Lebanon carried more than a few stories on lighter topics such as arts and entertainment. In Turkey, however, news of this kind accounted for 8% of all

stories - one of the reasons why women were more visible in the Turkish news. Turkey has a thriving tabloid press which, according to the monitors, 'uses women as sexual objects to attract readers'. Almost a third of all female news subjects appeared in arts, entertainment and celebrity news. However, women were almost completely eclipsed as authorities and experts here too, accounting for just 8% of these roles in the news. In Turkey, 11% of female news subjects were 'homemakers' or 'parents' (compared with less than 1% of males), and 26% were described in terms of their family status (compared with 3% of men). Across all four countries in the Middle East, women were more likely to be identified in relation to family status than in any other region. On average 31% of female news subjects were described in relation to their family position (compared with 21% globally), though only 4% of males were identified in this way. This was sometimes linked to a focus on women's fidelity within marriage (in Turkey) or on the question of women's right to divorce (in Egypt).

The data from Egypt paint a quite abnormal picture, in most respects completely different from that in the other three countries. But the number of stories coded was very small (just 28), and within these stories there were only 17 news subjects - of whom three-quarters (13) were female. It is true that the monitoring day coincided with a couple of big news items focusing on women. The launch of a television soap based on the life of one of Egypt's most famous singers - Om Kalthoum, who died in 1975 - generated many stories. Over a third of the news from Egypt was in the arts, entertainment and celebrity category. Another major story revolved around a new law giving women the right to file for divorce

on grounds of incompatibility, and to travel abroad without their husbands' approval. This law was approved in the week running up to the monitoring. At the end of January a woman whose husband had previously refused to give her a divorce, made history by filing for divorce under the new law. All this undoubtedly provoked much controversy and media coverage. Nevertheless, the almost complete absence of male news subjects and of 'standard' types of news - particularly on politics, given Egypt's central role in the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations at that time - makes the Egyptian results something of a curiosity.

### North America

Women's share of news making roles in North America - 27% in Canada, 23% in the USA - compared reasonably with that of other regions on the monitoring day. Yet monitors in both countries expressed consternation and disappointment with the 'lack of female points of view' (USA) and the fact that 'the stories typically involved politics and economic issues, discussed by men' (Canada). Politics was indeed the main news category - accounting for 17% of all stories in each country on the monitoring day. In the United States the primary elections in New Hampshire - a milestone event in the US presidential campaign - got a massive amount of coverage. In Canada, national and regional politics were news but of course the New Hampshire primary was also covered. The other major event that dominated news in North America was the Alaskan Airlines crash off the coast of California. While disaster and accident stories accounted for just 8% of news globally, in the USA and Canada respectively 16% and 14% of news came into this category. Crime and legal stories also featured strongly, accounting for

17% of news in Canada and 15% in the USA. Taken together, these three types of story - politics, disaster, crime - occupied about half of the North American news agenda on the monitoring day.

As in the news of almost every other region, the major area of distinction between women and men was in the political field. In Canada, women were 17% of news subjects in political stories; they were also 17% of politicians and government spokespersons. In the USA, 18% of news subjects in political stories were female, and women were 14% of politicians and government spokespersons.<sup>21</sup> As authorities and experts (politicians, government spokespersons, professionals), women fared better than in many countries, with 19% of these roles in Canada and 16% in the USA. Health stories figured relatively highly on the agendas of each country, accounting for 8% of news in Canada and 9% in the USA (compared to the global average of 4%). As expected, it was here - and in education news - that there was least disparity in gender representation. Women were 30% of news subjects in health and education stories in Canada, and 34% in the USA.

By now it should be clear that there was a remarkable similarity in the broad contours of news in these two countries. However, one area in which some difference can be found is in crime and legal news. While in the USA women were just 21% of news subjects in these stories, in Canada the figure was 29% - possibly linked to a high profile financial scandal involving the Ministry for Human Resource Development, which is headed by a woman. Most coverage would inevitably have referred to the Minister (who was not personally implicated). Women in the Canadian news were only slightly more likely to be portrayed as victims (17%) than in the USA (14%).

*The under-representation of women's issues is astounding. Child poverty, single mothers in work and school, women in business ... women are so present, yet where is the coverage?*

[Canada]



Canada

*It was business as usual,  
with the emphasis on  
men's sports-associated  
activity that is normal.*

[Australia]

In both countries female news subjects were much more likely than males to appear as 'ordinary' people than as authorities and experts. In Canada 41%, and in the

USA 42% of all women in the news were homemakers, parents, students, retired, homeless or with no stated occupation - compared with 15% of men in each country. As almost everywhere else in the world, female news subjects were more likely to be identified in terms of family status. Neither country ran a great deal of arts, entertainment or celebrity news on this particular day, but each conformed to the general pattern in that female news subjects were rather more likely to be found in those stories than males. In fact a third of all 'celebrities' in the US news were women (and just over a quarter in Canada). A fair amount of sports news was carried by both countries - 9% of all stories in Canada, 6% in the USA. But female athletes and sportspersons were almost invisible in both the Canadian and the US news.

Overall, few surprises emerge from the North American data - except perhaps for the extraordinary congruence in the results of the two countries. Once it is established that women's representation as news subjects was small - though in fact it was larger than in most other countries - the specifics of where those women were found, and the roles they played in the news, follow a very conventional pattern. It could be argued that, given the resources available to North American news media, the scarcity of female news subjects is particularly unsatisfactory when compared to regions with more reduced technical and financial means. The frustration expressed by the monitors in Canada and the United States at the 'large discrepancy between the number of male and female personages - men dominating nearly all aspects,

and white men at that' (Canada) - can be understood in the context of results for this monitoring day.

## Oceania

On the rare occasions that politics was overtaken as the lead news category, in other regions the encroaching topic was almost always crime. But in two of these four countries, it was sports news that upstaged everything else. Sports stories accounted for 18% of all news in Australia and 17% in Fiji. Even in New Zealand, where politics and crime tied for the top place with 18% of stories each, sports news came next with 11%. The fourth country, Papua New Guinea, recorded no sports news in its sample. But only nineteen stories were coded there - fewer than in any other country in the study, and not enough to permit analysis at this level.

In Fiji, women's sport was high on the news agenda on the monitoring day. A controversy was raging about the coach of the national netball team, who was not a Fijian. The Minister for Sports had suggested that she should be replaced by a local coach, provoking a great deal of public debate and media speculation. Another story concerned a young Fijian woman who had been asked to play for a New Zealand netball team. Not surprisingly then, sports accounted for an exceptionally large proportion of women in the Fijian sports news: a fifth of all female news subjects were in sports stories, and women accounted for one third of all athletes and sportspersons. A visit by tennis star Steffi Graf to New Zealand made news there, and was clearly a factor in women's appearance in sports items. In Australia, a Russian women's rugby team got television coverage, and there was also news about a women's luge (toboggan) team. However overall, as the

USA





Fiji

monitors pointed out, Australian sports news was indeed dominated by males. Although women were just under a tenth of athletes and sportspersons - above the global average of 4%, and similar to the 'best' in several European countries - the relative weight of sports items in Australia contributed to a strong male presence in the news.

New Zealand stands out in terms of women's representation in political news. With a female Prime Minister, Helen Clark (whose predecessor was also a woman), New Zealand was one of the very few countries where a larger percentage of female news subjects (38%) than of males (21%) was to be found in items about politics and government. There were several high profile political stories on the monitoring day. Public debate about expenditure in state-owned Television New Zealand, an inquiry into the police computer system, changes to the accident compensation system - all these had a political dimension. Women accounted for 40% of politicians and government spokespersons in the news - higher than in any other country in the study, and compared with 14% in Australia and 13% in Fiji. Women's political participation is relatively high in New Zealand, where they hold 29% of parliamentary seats (compared with 22% in Australia, 11% in Fiji and 2% in Papua New Guinea). But the fact that the country has a female Prime Minister must have contributed to the high visibility of women as political and governmental news subjects - a good illustration of the extent to which news media focus on top leaders and authorities.

Labour issues were in the news in Fiji, where 8% of all items came into this category. Women were central in two important labour and related human rights stories. One revolved around pos-

sible strike action by nurses, who were awaiting the outcome of a government salary review. The other was about the on-going struggle between redundant workers and a multinational company over unpaid wages. One of the main mediators in this affair was a woman, whose role in the matter was featured on the monitoring day. More than a quarter of female news subjects were in labour and human rights stories, compared with 12% of males. The disparity between women and men as authorities and experts on the one hand, and ordinary citizens on the other, followed the usual pattern in Fiji, though it was less much less marked than in Australia.

In fact the pattern of results from Australia was the most 'traditional' within this group of countries. Women's overall share of news making roles (24%) was reasonable, but 30% of all female news subjects were in crime and legal stories. Coverage of the Shipman story - which was also carried in New Zealand - undoubtedly contributed to this, but Australia had its own high profile crime news on the monitoring day. The murder trial of a young woman who had killed an even younger woman, when the latter became involved with the first woman's ex-boyfriend - a 'love triangle' par excellence - attracted plenty of media attention.

A further 11% of female news subjects were in 'disaster' stories, mostly revolving around a family missing in ancient desert land in Western Australia. The mother was heavily pregnant, and there were two girl children in the group. With such a concentration of women in this kind of human interest story, it is not surprising to find that over half of female news subjects appeared mainly in the role of 'ordinary citizen' (compared with 10% of males). It was indeed 'business as usual' in the Australian news media on this monitoring day.

New Zealand



# Women's place in the news

*The coding reinforced the impression that the media allow very little space to women, and that they depict a society in which women do not intervene in public space. ... This raises the question of what is news, what makes the news, and why.*

[France]

Across the whole study, less than 10% of news had women - or a woman - as its central focus. These items were not necessarily inspired by a concern with women's relationship to, or views about, political, economic or social matters. Many stories focused on women as the victims - and sometimes the perpetrators - of crime. Others featured celebrities and figures from the entertainment world. Some interviewed politicians on issues of the day, or presented women officiating at a public event. Some showed women's success in beauty contests, or in weight-reducing competitions. A few highlighted the more serious achievements of women, and a sprinkling actually addressed questions of women's rights or status in the political or social world. So while these stories - just 10% of the total - did give some space to women in the news, that space was not necessarily one that enhanced either the individual woman concerned or the interests of women overall.

News with women as its central focus included such a variety of messages that it is difficult to evaluate the quantitative data in this part of the study. How is a country that carried few or no stories that focused on women to be compared with one that had many? For instance, in Japan 11% of news had women as a central focus. Yet according to one of the monitors, 'I realised that (many of) these reports focus on women as objects of sexism rather than women in relation to social issues'. Naturally, some Japanese stories did feature women in other ways. The views of several well-known politicians were reported, a female election candidate was profiled, there was a short feature about three Korean women who run a restaurant in Japan. But the focus on women was often prurient or punitive - women in the sex industries, extramarital affairs, a

medical failure by a nurse. In one of the main television stations the only three stories that focused on women were: a 'candid' photograph, the winner of a beauty contest, and the victim of a stalker. While Japan is not necessarily typical, its news analysis was particularly detailed. The Japanese example therefore helps to illuminate the diverse facets of news that focused on women.

## The positive focus

All monitoring groups were asked to give examples of stories where women were a central focus in a positive or a neutral way, and examples where the focus was negative. About 80 examples of positive or neutral stories came from over 40 countries. Two types of news predominated - accounting for about half of all the examples given. The largest number of items featured women as celebrities - models, film directors, actresses, singers, authors: examples came from almost every region. The other major category was news that centred on women as politicians or in public life. In most cases these stories portrayed women in a general political context. Only a couple of items (Cambodia, Nigeria) brought specific policies for the advancement of women into the spotlight.

Other news credited women's achievements in the world of work. For instance, examples from India included an item about an office cleaner who became a college professor through diligence and application. From Indonesia came the story of an actress who had taken up a position as lecturer in an education foundation. A related theme was women's employment in traditionally male jobs - the driver of a refuse collection truck (Peru), women in the army (Israel, Korea) and the police force (Papua New Guinea). Stories about women in sport were also men-

tioned. From Korea came an item about the first woman to win the prestigious Chinese national Go championships - a game rather like chess, traditionally played by men. There was news about a women's volley ball team (Puerto Rico); about a little-known world badminton star (Sweden); about the resurrection of a famous Scottish football team, but this time with women players (United Kingdom - Scotland); about a young netball player who is building an international reputation (Fiji). Most of these items were said to focus on women in a positive and encouraging way, portraying female athletes and players in serious and interesting news reports.

A small group of stories clustered round women's 'good deeds' or social contribution - for example, three women who work with earthquake survivors in Taiwan; a widowed mother in Vietnam who has taken care of her parents and children for 20 years, and still finds time to do voluntary teaching in a rural community; a committed full-time voluntary worker with an organisation that helps to resolve conflict between neighbourhood groups in Switzerland; a Jamaican inner-city woman who has for years single-handedly helped poor children, by opening a bank account for each child into which they put their savings. From one point of view these are inspiring stories. From another, of course, they give recognition to women who are 'doing the traditional woman thing - nurturing, community development, working voluntarily, helping children' (Jamaica).

There were a couple of examples of women claiming their rights - as citizens, in relation to public transport (Netherlands) and as workers, in the context of a strike threat by nurses (Fiji). But very little news dealt with women's rights per se. A few news stories provided information

about research (Nigeria), projects (Cuba) or meetings (Chad) aimed at women's advancement. Only two of the 80 or so examples described stories that addressed women's struggles to change social structures and practices for the benefit of women themselves. An example from the USA described a television item about the efforts of South African women to combat rape by pushing for social and legal reforms. And Hungary cited a newspaper story on the rising number of children born outside marriage, noting that it reported neutrally on the fact that single motherhood is increasingly a choice - or at least a consciously accepted constraint - for women. But these were exceptional cases.

### The negative focus

Stories about women's status or rights within the family were frequently mentioned to illustrate news that focused on women in a negative way. Almost 60 examples were given, by 29 countries. Again, two types of news dominated, accounting for more than half of the examples. Stories about crime or violence were by far the most frequently cited, and usually women were the victims. The other main category was news about women's rights within the family. Many of the crime reports were criticised for their lack of context, or for their tendency to sensationalise. For example, a story about the discovery of twelve beheaded Congolese women's bodies, found with placards on them, which made no attempt to explain the murder and offered no information about what was on the placards (Nigeria). Or the story of a pregnant woman, shot and killed in front of her children, which was used as a 'selling tool'. The dramatic, front-page headline contrasted with the brief report on the inside pages, which provided no context for or analy-

USA



sis of the murder (Jamaica).

These were among the most extreme examples. When women were the perpetrators or suspects in crime stories, they were often portrayed as deviant - particularly when their children or families were involved. There was a report on the double suicide of a mother and child that blamed the mother's inadequacy, without providing any context (Japan); a mother detained for child neglect - headlined 'Mom "dumps" son' - (South Africa); a young mother who killed her newborn baby, conceived as the result of rape (Sri Lanka). Other types of news also focused on women's inadequacies as mothers. In Japan the mother of a man arrested for detaining and abusing a girl in his room for ten years was reported to have 'doted on her son' - the implication being that this might be one of the reasons for his crime. In Turkey when dead and tortured bodies were discovered in the houses of Hezbollah members, the wives of these men were criticised. They were not good mothers: they had allowed their houses to become graves.

This tendency to blame women emerges strongly in examples that centred on women's status in the family itself. Women trying to redefine the family unit in more flexible terms were described as 'radical feminists' who want to destroy the traditional family (Ghana). Women were held responsible for the rise in divorce rates (Sudan). Women were considered to be incapable of rational decisions; legislation to grant women the right to seek divorce was therefore ill-conceived (Egypt). Women who came to Turkey from other countries, having promised to marry men who had lost their wives in the 1999 earthquake, were said to have swindled the men and to have disappeared (Turkey). A mother suffering from severe depression was accused by her husband of mistreating their

10-year-old son (Chile). A mother who lost custody of her baby because of her violent husband was unsuccessful in a ten-year struggle in the courts to have the girl returned to her (Norway).

Another group of stories focused on women's inability to cope. A woman committed suicide, leaving behind six children, because she had a chronic illness (Cambodia); women were reported to be using alcohol to relieve stress (United Kingdom - Northern Ireland). A workaholic politician was characterised as troublesome because she made a disturbing amount of noise (Norway). A sports celebrity - Merlene Ottey - was pictured in distress after a positive drugs test (Jamaica). A well-known politician - Megawati Soekarnoputri - failed to win nomination as party chairperson because it was argued that she would be unable to handle two positions simultaneously, though this is never questioned in the case of men (Indonesia). The performance of a highly regarded politician - Cheryl Kernot - was under intense scrutiny following a serious illness (Australia).

The general picture that emerges from the news analyses of all countries confirms that - even when women are the central focus of news - their allotted 'space' may be circumscribed in a variety of ways. The final impression may inevitably be one of disappointment at 'seeing women presented mainly as victims or deviating from the (male) norm' (Norway)

# Missing perspectives

*Women's perspectives were simply not sought in stories - whether it was the outbreak of gastro-enteritis (and we know who looks after health care in the home, don't we?), or the wage settlement for nurses (and we know the sex of 99.5% of the nurses, don't we?)*  
[Jamaica]

What space was there for women's viewpoints in the news overall? Some stories where women were not actually the central focus nevertheless did a good job in allowing women to voice opinions. Monitoring groups in 30 countries came up with over 40 examples, ranging from stories in which female prisoners talked about the difficult conditions in which they were held (Chad); a young woman expressing her point of view on freedom of artistic expression (India); a doctor giving her opinion about the relatively low earnings of family doctors (Canada); female students on a computer literacy course describing their motivation for self-improvement (Trinidad & Tobago); two women - one a mother, the other a representative of a Single Parent Organisation - explaining the implications of changes to the state child support system (Norway). And of course there were many instances of female politicians speaking out on a wide range of matters. Women's voices were not, therefore, completely silent although - as most of the examples illustrate - they tended to be heard in the cracks and margins of the news agenda, rather than at its core.

Much more frequently, however, news media missed the opportunity to broaden the scope of their stories by including women's perspectives - even in cases where those perspectives seemed essential to the story. Of the 50 or so examples that came from monitoring groups in 36 countries, one of the most striking was a Sudanese newspaper story that centred around a female students' residence or dormitory. The item talked about the problems faced by young women when they move from home to study in another town. A male teacher was interviewed. A male student was interviewed. But no female was interviewed. Many similar instances were cited of news that seemed to

cry out for the inclusion of a female voice. Stories that covered plans to establish a Family Court (Jamaica), the high abortion rate among teenagers (United Kingdom - Scotland), women's rights to seek divorce (Egypt), the denial of health treatment to children in special education (Israel), maternity plans (United Kingdom - Northern Ireland), the punishment of women for marital infidelity (Turkey) - these were just some of the cases where exclusion of a women's point of view seemed blatantly negligent. This tendency to talk about, rather than to, women was illustrated in many stories - for instance an article about women basketball players that interviewed only their male trainer (France); a television item about the poor quality of teaching in schools with high proportions of ethnic minority students that quoted only a male researcher and male school managers (Netherlands).

The lack of a female voice in news that addressed issues affecting women so centrally emerges in a quite shocking way through the examples provided by very different countries. Of course, those involved in the preparation of some of these news items will respond in the usual ways - there was no time to find a woman, no woman could be persuaded to speak, no suitable female expert was available, and so on. However these and other examples illustrate not just the absence of women's voices in a concrete sense, but the profound lack of attention paid by the news media to women's position generally as citizens. Many cases were cited of news that failed to provide even rudimentary analysis or mention of women's particular role in, or relationship to, the issues in question: stories about a national drive to increase agricultural productivity (Cameroon), a campaign to make the public aware of the bene-



India

fits of using iodised salt (Chad), efforts to promote the use of renewable energy (Ghana), the professional skills needed in an emerging information economy (Vietnam), national unemployment rates (Japan), stress at work (Norway), the introduction of a Goods and Services Tax (Australia).

This overall lack of awareness of the distinct nature of women's social status and situation - allied with a tendency to merely skim the surface of complex issues - contributes to a news output that frequently ignores some of the more important dimensions of a story. In the process women - and indeed the public in general - are often badly served by news media. A typical example was a story in Canada about an escort/prostitution scandal involving five men. The women concerned were not seriously interviewed, and there was no consideration of the issues surrounding women in this kind of work - for instance unfavourable economic circumstances, or even the physical dangers that such a life creates for women. In limiting

itself only to the 'scandal', the news provided no illumination that might contribute to eventual change. In India, the widespread coverage given to Deepa Mehta's film 'Water' completely ignored the real story - the pathetic condition of widows - that the film actually set out to explore. By focusing on the surface aspects of the controversy surrounding the film itself - and repeatedly showing pictures of the main actress with her head shaven, a convention once expected of Hindu widows - the media merely succeeded in trivialising an issue of immense significance to women in the country.

Examples like these illustrate just how deeply embedded is the problem of women's representation in the news. The challenge is not simply to notch up a few percentage points in women's share of time on air or in print. What is at issue is not just the number of women who appear in the news, but the structures, values and routines that determine how news issues are selected and presented.

<sup>1</sup> See for example Informative Programmes: Media Portrayal of Women and Men, Hilversum: NOS Gender Portrayal Department, 1996.

<sup>2</sup>The country tables are derived from the coding sheets completed by each monitoring group. Although they contain a great deal of information about specific news items and therefore have considerable explanatory potential, for logistical reasons the individual coding sheets themselves were not re-examined as part of this analysis.

<sup>3</sup>The following countries submitted news analysis sheets: Africa - Bénin, Cameroon, Chad, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan; Asia - Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam; Caribbean - Cuba, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago; Europe - Belgium, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom (separate sheets from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland); Latin America - Chile, Guatemala, Peru; Middle East - Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Turkey; North America - Canada, USA; Oceania - Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea.

<sup>4</sup>Eie, Birgit (1998) Who Speaks on Television? A European Comparative Study of Female

Participation in Television Programmes, Oslo: NRK (Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation); Bruera, Silvana and Lilián Celiberti (2000) 'Análisis comparativo', Monitoreo de medios de comunicación realizado por el Grupo de Comunicadoras del Sur: [www.muheresdelsur.org.uy](http://www.muheresdelsur.org.uy); Hizaoui, Abdelkrim (1999) L'Image de la Femme Dans la Presse Ecrite Tunisienne, Tunis: Centre de Recherches, d'Etudes, de Documentation et d'Information sur la Femme; Yuan, Feng (1999) 'A resource for rights: women and media in China'. Paper presented at 'Women's Worlds 99', 7th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women, Tromsø, Norway, 20-26 June.

<sup>5</sup> These and all other figures on women's political participation are taken from The World's Women 2000: Trends and Statistics, New York: United Nations, 2000, pp. 171-175. No figures are available for Nigeria. Reference to national statistics on women's political participation is merely for indicative purposes. In every country except Chad, at least some news subjects occurred in 'foreign' news, and would not have involved nationals of the country in question - either female or male. However, such cases will have had little effect on the overall picture: only 14% of female news subjects in Africa (and 13% of males) were in foreign news. Moreover news flow studies show that most

'foreign' news tends to come from neighbouring countries within a geographical region, rather than from outside the region. See for example *The Globalization of News*, edited by Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Terhi Rantenen. London: Sage Publications .

<sup>6</sup> This is a methodological issue that needs to be addressed in any future global media monitoring project.

<sup>7</sup> Again, this is a methodological issue that needs further examination. In several Asian countries, up to a quarter of the stories did not fit within the predefined categories. Across the study as a whole, the most commonly mentioned problem was the difficulty of making the news 'fit' within the predefined topic - and to a lesser extent, occupational - categories.

<sup>8</sup> Chinese New Year may also have affected the news agenda of other countries with substantial Chinese populations - for example Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam. In Indonesia, celebration of Chinese New Year was permitted in 2000 for the first time after many years of prohibition.

<sup>9</sup> This very high percentage of female news subjects in China in the 'retired' category - far above that in any other country (even the UK, with the Shipman effect, had only 9%; in most other countries the percentage was negligible) - suggests some special news focus on older women in China on the monitoring day, when indeed 34% of female news subjects were aged 65 or over. However, China did not submit a news analysis sheet, so this cannot be determined further.

<sup>10</sup> See note 5 for source (no figures available for Indonesia or Taiwan) and comments on foreign news. In Asia just 9% of female news subjects (and 12% of males) were in foreign news stories. The fact that the monitoring coincided with the run-up to Chinese New Year undoubtedly resulted in some atypical news patterns in China. The amount of data from Vietnam was very small - just 26 stories, of which only three belonged in the 'politics and government' category - and thus difficult to interpret. In the Philippines, women were 8% of politicians in the news on the monitoring day.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations (2000). *The World's Women 2000: Trends and Statistics*, New York: United Nations, p. 130.

<sup>12</sup> This does not mean that three-quarters of reporters in Thailand are women, simply that in the media monitored on this particular day female reporters greatly outnumbered men. Figures suggest that approximately 30% of Thai media professionals are women. See Ubonrat Siriyuvasak and Meeta W Wattananukul 'Thailand' pp. 128-142 in *Changing Lenses: Women's Perspectives on Media*. Manila: Isis International, 1999.

<sup>13</sup> Taiwan was the only Asian country to include in its news analysis examples of stories coded as 'other', and it cannot be assumed that this was the pattern elsewhere. Before any future global media monitoring project, it would be worthwhile to exam-

ine the news coding sheets from countries with significant amounts of 'other' news so that topic categories may better reflect topics currently omitted.

<sup>14</sup> However, it should be noted that several European monitoring groups (France, Netherlands, Sweden) commented that the 'politics and government' category is extremely broad and that, in cases of doubt, it tends to take precedence over other possible categorisations. The Dutch team suggested that this category could benefit from further refinement, to better reflect the nuances in political news. Again, this could be looked at before any future global media monitoring project.

<sup>15</sup> The exception was the Czech Republic, where the number of stories coded was very small.

<sup>16</sup> In France there was a variation on the basic pattern. With a very small proportion of political news (11% of all stories), it nevertheless had a low proportion of female news subjects (17%). News on the monitoring day was dominated by labour issues (22% of stories), revolving round a nation-wide blockade by truck drivers and exacerbated by a general transport strike in Paris. Only 18% of news subjects in French labour stories were women. Almost 40% of female news subjects appeared as 'ordinary' people, compared with 7% of males.

<sup>17</sup> With 43% of parliamentary seats, Swedish women have the highest rate of participation in politics in Europe (and indeed the world). Finland comes second with 37%, and Norway has 36%. Other European countries with high rates of female political participation, and that took part in the monitoring project, are the Netherlands (36%), Iceland (35%), Germany (31%). Belgium and Spain have 23% and 22% respectively. Other countries fall well below 20%. No figures available for Estonia.

<sup>18</sup> The small amount of data from Russia makes further analysis impossible.

<sup>19</sup> Without a re-analysis of the coding sheets it is impossible to determine the precise effects of the Shipman story. For example, if women in the 65-and-over age group are excluded from the UK data, women's share of news making roles falls to 32%. Although not every woman in that age category would have belonged to the Shipman news, some of those in the age group 50-64 almost certainly would. Moreover, age data are not available for radio stories or indeed for all news subjects in television and newspapers: a third of female news subjects in the UK were not coded by age.

<sup>20</sup> Figures from *The World's Women 2000: Trends and Statistics*, New York: United Nations (2000).

<sup>21</sup> Given that women hold 21% of parliamentary seats in Canada and 13% in the United States, their representation as political figures in the news seems reasonable on the monitoring day.

# 5 MONITORING AND MEDIA CHANGE

With very few exceptions, news content reflects a relatively limited vision of the world and what is important. The deeply organic nature of this vision means that women's visibility in the news will not be significantly improved merely by increasing the number of women journalists, or the number of women in public life. What is required is a more profound transformation in which women's rights - and women's right to communicate - are better understood, respected and implemented both in society at large and by the media.

If such a goal seems grandiose, it is important to keep sight of the fact that change *is* possible - and in some respects is constantly occurring - in news agendas and the priorities they reflect. But this change does not happen of its own accord. Media monitoring and advocacy are vital - not just in bringing issues to the attention of the news media, but also in ensuring that these are treated seriously.

*I am using the GMMP 2000 results to explore possibilities for establishing a media literacy group. The intention is to contribute to the social debate on media messages in ways that go beyond simple critiques of pornography and violence, and to offer media literacy workshops for neighbourhood, feminist, labour and other organisations.*

(Puerto Rico)

## Using and extending the basic monitoring model

The first global media monitoring project in 1995 was an eye-opener for groups around the world. Since then many have continued to collect information on a regular basis, extending and refining the general monitoring instruments to fit their own needs. This has involved not simply adapting categories to reflect national news orientations, but in some cases using the basic approach to analyse content in other media genres. For instance in 2000 the Gender Media Monitor (GeMM) in Trinidad & Tobago launched a media literacy project with secondary school stu-

dents. Based on the instruments used in the 1995 global monitoring, GeMM developed its own tools for the local analysis not only of news, but also advertisements and television cartoons.

It is important that monitoring should extend beyond news analysis. While news is of course highly influential, other media genres such as talk shows, popular drama, sport and entertainment spectacles that attract huge audiences have their own stories to tell about gender roles and relationships. These genres require different monitoring categories and

interpretative approaches from those used in news. But one of the spin-offs of the 1995 global project was to introduce individuals and groups with no previous monitoring experience to an overall approach that can be developed in many directions.

The 2000 project will doubtless bring yet others into this process, and groups can learn from each others' successes and failures in applying media monitoring techniques in different contexts.<sup>1</sup> For instance one emerging area, until

now largely ignored by monitoring groups, is the Internet. In some countries, particularly in North America and Western Europe, the Internet is increasingly used as a news source alongside - sometimes even instead of - the older news media. As Internet news gradually occupies a more central position in the news production and consumption of particular countries, it is bound to provide an additional focus for media monitoring and advocacy efforts.

## The policy context

In their report on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action's recommendations on the media, WomenAction 2000 concluded that one obstacle common to all regions is the lack of adequate media policy on fair gender portrayal.<sup>2</sup>

In general, media organisations seem relatively well-disposed to the adoption of targets and guidelines for women's employment in the media. But in many countries, a strong ethos of freedom of expression means that action in the area of portrayal is left to voluntary measures on the part of media enterprises, or to ineffective complaints authorities which often lack monitoring capacity. The codes and guidelines that do exist tend to be more explicit in public than in commercial media organisations. So the growth of the commercial sector and the shrinking of the public service ethic in most parts of the media world mean that in the future it will become even more difficult to develop effective codes of conduct.

Nevertheless, many groups believe strongly that policy is important in contributing to an overall climate of opinion and in building awareness. These views were unanimously expressed at WACC's regional conferences on Gender and Communication Policy, all of which resulted in strongly worded declarations demanding policies that address not only portrayal, but training, discrimination in the workplace, access to media, the censorship of women and indigenous cultures, pornography and violence.

Of all countries, Canada stands out as having the most detailed codes of conduct on gender portrayal and the most effective mechanisms for their implementation. But women media advocates elsewhere - in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean - have been extremely active in lobbying for policy development in the past few years. Monitoring and research data can play an essential part in convincing authorities that policy guidelines are necessary.

## Creating a dialogue with media professionals

One of the great 'discoveries' of the 1990s was that relatively simple media monitoring data can be invaluable in helping advocacy groups to enter into dialogue with journalists and other media professionals. Backed up with facts and figures, groups are able to move beyond generalised complaints about the inadequacies of media content, towards constructive criticism. When this criticism is illustrated by examples from output with which they themselves are familiar, media practitioners can more easily appreciate the gender bias in media representations.

Media professionals tend to be more receptive to critical comment based on professional criteria than to arguments about discrimination, equality or women's rights. While many people working in the media are naturally sympa-

thetic to issues of social justice and the need to redress inequalities in society at large, most tend to reject the notion that the media should 'falsify reality' in any way. But reference to concepts that are commonly used to evaluate professional performance in the media - for example balance, objectivity, diversity, creativity, quality - will strike a chord, and indeed will have real meaning to journalists and programme-makers, most of whom very much want to do a good job.

## Widening women's space in the media

During the 1990s, monitoring and advocacy groups realised that one practical way to combat the widely used excuse 'we'd like to, but we can't find a woman expert on this topic' was to provide the media with names and contacts for women with expertise in every conceivable field. For instance, in direct response to the 1995 global media monitoring project which showed that only 20% of news subjects in Australia were women, the Australian National Women's Media Centre published a 'Directory of Media Spokeswomen' in 1998. In 2000 an online version of the Directory was developed, to be available as a searchable database. Like other groups that have tried this approach, the NWMC

believes it to have been illuminating to everyone involved.

Many media advocacy groups have shown that one way of getting more women's voices heard in the media is to build strong alliances with sympathetic media professionals. Commending journalists and broadcasters for gender-sensitive articles and programmes, and sending them data, sources, story ideas and names of possible speakers - all this is important. Bringing new perspectives into media content is not at all straightforward, and advocacy groups have to be as creative as media people themselves in exploring new angles on on-going issues so as to keep them on the media agenda.

## The impact of monitoring

It seems undeniable that, at the very least, the process of media monitoring has an impact on the way people 'see' or understand the media. Critical, media literate audiences can be an influential source of pressure on media institutions. Whether monitoring and advocacy initiatives have helped to bring change in media performance itself is a much more difficult question to answer unequivocally. However, media monitoring has an obvious part to play in pushing for that change. Monitoring provides inescapable evidence of continued imbalances in media representations of women and men - in terms of status and authority, and indeed



*We had 80 volunteers - students, programme makers, journalists, women's organisations - analysing in groups. This diversity added to the impact of the work. Working together, old and young, men and women, black and white, we found that there are certain structures that affect us all. (Netherlands)*

just sheer numbers. But we need to use these numbers - and indeed go beyond them - to develop interpretations and insights that can help media professionals and media audiences to recognise the subtle ways in which gender representation is constructed - through the angle from which a story is approached, the locations in which women and men are shown, the choice of questions, the type of interview style adopted, and much more besides. A detailed focus on the many decisions and choices that feed into the media production process, a constructive dialogue with media professionals, media literacy initiatives, and continued monitoring to keep track of the big picture - all these, together, can help to bring about change.

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<sup>1</sup> For an up-to-date analysis of gender monitoring and advocacy initiatives around the world, see Margaret Gallagher (2001) *Gender Setting: New Agendas for Media Monitoring and Advocacy*, London: Zed Books [in press].

<sup>2</sup> 'Alternative assessment of women and media based on NGO reviews of Section J, Beijing Platform for Action', compiled by Meena M. Shivdas and co-ordinated by Isis-International, Manila, on behalf of WomenAction 2000; see [www.womenaction.org/csw44/altrepeng.htm](http://www.womenaction.org/csw44/altrepeng.htm). WomenAction 2000 was established with the help of funding from the United Nations, with a mandate to ensure maximum NGO involvement in the Beijing review process.

# Appendix A METHOD

by George Spears and Kasia Seydegart

The News Monitoring Guide<sup>1</sup> contains detailed instructions for collecting and reporting data. It includes:

- Instructions for selecting a sample of news programs;
- Procedures for taping radio and television programs;
- Procedures for coding;
- Examples of coded news stories;
- Blank coding sheets.

## Sample selection

The goal was to select a cross-section of major newscasts in each country. Therefore participants were advised to:

- Select news programs only (not documentaries, sports programs or entertainment);
- Code up to 10 television newscasts and up to 10 radio newscasts. (Large countries such as the USA or India could code more than 10 programs.) Code the entire radio and television newscasts;
- Code up to 5 different newspapers. Select the 8 to 12 main news stories, beginning on page 1 of the paper and continuing, if necessary, to the second and third major news pages of the paper. Stories that begin on a main news page and continue elsewhere inside the paper are coded in their entirety;
- Choose major newscasts and newspapers - those with the largest audiences;
- Keep a balance that is appropriate for your country between daytime and evening programs, national and regional newscasts, and programs by private and public or government broadcasters.

## Method of coding

All radio and television programs were taped and then coded afterwards. There is a considerable amount of information to be recorded about each person and each news story, and recording the information typically requires listening to or watching the story several times. Coders were advised to work in pairs or groups to ensure accuracy, and to re-check their work when finished.

Each news story is recorded as a separate unit. Each journalist and each news subject who appears in the story is described on a separate line of the coding sheet. The numeric codes and their definitions are described in the News Monitoring Guide.

The example below shows a news story with one reporter and two news subjects. The story is about poli-

tics (topic = 13), and it is national in scope (scope = 2)

- The announcer (role = 1) is female (gender = 1) and age 20-34 (age = 3).
- The reporter (role = 2) is male (gender = 2) and age 35 - 49 (age = 3).
- The first news subject (role = 5) is a man (gender = 2) whose age appears to be 65 or more (age = 5).
- The second news subject (role = 5) is a women (gender = 1) whose age appears to be from 50 to 64 (age = 4).

The coding systems used in the project contained 18 different variables, of which five are shown here. All are coded in the manner just described.

	Information about the news story		Information about people who appear in the story		
	Topic	Scope	Role	Gender	Age
Announcer	13	2	1	2	2
Reporter			2	1	3
1st news subject			5	2	5
2nd news subject			5	1	4

## Accuracy

With so many people involved in assembling the data, the translation into many languages, etc., there is opportunity for inconsistencies in the data to arise. As well, the volunteers did not enjoy the opportunity to communicate with others and resolve problems, as most researchers do on a regular basis. Because of the unusual challenges associated with a global research project, the coding sheets were carefully examined to identify possible errors or inconsistencies. In general, the great majority of material was carefully and correctly coded.

It is apparent from examining a coding sheet whether the basic principles of coding have been followed. Each separate news story must be accompanied by topic and scope-of-story codes; a data record describing a reporter cannot include information designating a new subject, and so on. "Structural" errors such as this indicate that coding was not carried out in the intended manner; when apparent errors of this nature occurred, the data were excluded from the analysis.

Any lack of understanding of the coding system could also result in impossible or unlikely combinations of codes, for example, people in professional occupations under the age of 12 years. Data were checked for such unlikely combinations, and the incidence was well under one half of one percent of all codes.

<sup>1</sup> available at no cost from the WACC website @ [www.wacc.org.uk](http://www.wacc.org.uk) and the Erin Research website @ [www.erinresearch.com](http://www.erinresearch.com). This can be used as is or adapted by anyone wishing to do further research on social issues in media.

A positive indication that work was done correctly is that out-of range codes were minimal, i.e., participants used only the codes appropriate for the variable in question. In sum, less than one-half of one percent of the data returned was considered questionable and omitted from the analysis.

## Reporting of results

Results are described in three ways:

- For the global sample as a whole;
- By eight regions of the world (Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, North America, Oceania);
- By each of three news media, newspapers, radio, and television.

## Weighting

Imagine an opinion poll that interviewed 1,000 men and 500 women. Its findings would clearly not reflect public opinion very accurately. It is possible to improve this imaginary survey by making the sample reflect the population more closely. If the responses of each woman are multiplied by 1.5 and the responses of each man are multiplied by 0.67, the results will approximate a sample of 750 women and 750 men, giving a much more accurate reading of public opinion.

It is standard practice to “weight” research data in this way when samples differ from the populations that they represent. In the GMMP context, each country would ideally provide results in proportion to its size - larger countries more data, smaller countries less data. This did not always happen. Some large countries provided relatively little data and some smaller countries a great deal. As one example, Jamaica, population 2.6 million, returned more data than did much larger countries such as Italy, Nigeria or the Philippines. This is a credit to the Jamaican research team, but to give a true perspective of the world’s news, their results cannot be given such prominence.

Data were therefore weighted to present a more accurate picture of the global situation. A country that returned data in exact proportion to its size received a neutral weighting of 1.0. Newspaper data from Ghana, radio data from Chad and television data from Guatemala are all weighted near 1. A country that returned twice as much data as its size suggests gets a weight of 0.5, while a country that returned one-half the expected data gets a weight of 2.0

Extremely large or small weights can cause problems, large weights because they may multiply a small sample of data that is not truly representative of the country in question, small weights because they minimise the contribution of groups that have worked hard to make the project a success. Accordingly, the maximum weight assigned was 4 and the minimum 0.25. For the majority of countries participating, the calculated weights fell between 0.25 and 4.0, so that no cap was required.

The weighted data are used whenever data from different countries are combined - for example whenever data are reported for the world as a whole or for different regions. Where results of individual countries are reported, the data are not weighted, as there is no need. The country reports section carries the unweighted data for the main report for reference.

Weights were calculated separately for the newspaper, radio, and television samples. Weights are calculated so that the total weighted number of cases is equal to the original unweighted number of cases.

## Limitations of the sample

While the sample of news material represented in this survey is very large, representing more than 15,000 news stories from 70 countries, it has several limitations that should be kept in mind when considering the results. These limitations were mentioned in the 1995 report, and apply to the present report as well.

Because the sample relied on volunteer efforts, various countries produced differing amounts of data. Weighting corrects this in part, but because of the constraints mentioned earlier, weighting does not fully compensate for the exceptionally large or exceptionally small amounts of data received from some countries. Large countries that cannot be fully compensated for include Egypt, India and the People’s Republic of China.

The sample does contain similar amounts of material from newspapers, radio and television, however the balance among these media is not identical in each region of the world. The North American sample, for example, contains a relatively high proportion of television data (47 percent of stories are from television) while the South Asian sample contains an equally high proportion of radio stories, 47 percent. Because of the differences in the way women are represented in the various media (e.g., there are fewer women in newspapers than on television), certain results may differ from those obtained in an ideal sample.

Finally, an exact error of measurement cannot be readily established for the data. In content analysis, margins of error are usually calculated by means of a reliability test, in which different people code the same material. By comparing the two codings, the accuracy of the data can be estimated. Logistical constraints of time, money, language and distance prevented formal reliability testing in this project. While the data appear to be “clean” - indeed the data appear of comparable accuracy to data produced by trained and experienced researchers - there is necessarily some small error of measurement associated with the results.

Despite these limitations, this survey remains the most extensive global research of gender in news media available today. While an ideally constructed sample might produce results that depart in fine detail from the present study, it would not likely differ in its overall findings and conclusions.

# Appendix B MONITORING GROUPS

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- Dorothy Munyakho  
Interlink Rural Information Service  
Nairobi, Kenya
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Sister Namibia Magazine  
Windhoek, Namibia
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Nnamdi Azikiwe University  
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Lekan Otufodunrin  
Journalists for Christ  
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Media Works  
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- Iman Ahmed  
Ahfad University for Women  
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Kathmandu, Nepal
- Moneesa Hashmi  
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and  
Amtul Naheed, Shirkat Gah  
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Erin Research Inc's reputation is based on 20 years of recognised performance with prominent clients such as the Government of Canada, provincial and municipal governments as well as businesses in the private sector. Its President, George Spears, has designed and directed research for several landmark studies in the public sector, including Citizens First 1998 and 2000, which was awarded the 1999 Gold Award by the Institute for Public Administration of Canada (IPAC) and the 2000 Silver Award by the Commonwealth Association of Public Administration. In the media sector, Dr Spears and Ms Seydegart were responsible for conducting the largest studies on portrayal of gender and diversity in Canadian broadcasting on both radio and television, in French and English and in advertising and programming. This research has been complemented by approximately 30 content analyses projects conducted by Erin Research for public broadcasters and others in Canada.

Since founding Erin Research in 1981, Ms Seydegart, Vice-President, has gained recognition for her diagnostic and analytical skills, and for innovative solutions to service delivery and policy issues. Ms Seydegart has worked as a consultant to the federal and provincial governments, many private sector and not-for profit organizations and large media organizations such as the CBC/SRC, Canada's public broadcaster and the CRTC, regulator of Canadian mass media and telecommunications.

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