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2020

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UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PADOVA

CENTRO DI ATENEO
Elena Cornaro
saperi, culture e politiche di genere

OSSERVATORIO di Pavia

aGEmi ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY IN MEDIA INDUSTRIES

In Partnership with

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United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

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We would like to thank all the friends and colleagues who have contributed to make the 2020 edition of the Global Media Monitoring Project possible and supported the initiative with dedication; as well as those who, by expressing interest in the results now published in this Report, confirm the relevance of the GMMP project in our common struggle to make the media more gender equal.

We thank the Italian seven monitoring teams and their members, most of whom are students at different universities, who volunteered with enthusiasm and devoted time and energy to master the GMMP methodology, respect deadlines and carry out the monitoring on September 29, 2020 (see Annex 2 for the List of participants).

We thank each team coordinator – all researchers with expertise in gender and media issues who had previous experience with GMMP – for providing ongoing support and feedback during the training phase that preceded the actual monitoring, as well as during the analysis of news data.

We thank colleagues from academia, the media professions and civic associations, who have been supportive of the monitoring initiative for a long time, and have already committed to sharing the GMMP 2020 results, and disseminate this Report across their respective networks.

We thank our institutions for their support: by making available spaces and infrastructures, they have facilitated our coordinating role in the complex situation generated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

We finally thank all those, people and organizations, who will read this report, discuss it in their circles, use it in their educational and training activities, and who possibly will send us comments, as well as proposals to get involved in this on-going project beyond the publication of results, through advocacy and awareness raising activities over the next years.

GMMP is not just one day in the news: it has become a community of like-minded people, women and men, acting towards a more balanced, respectful and gender-sensitive world of communication.

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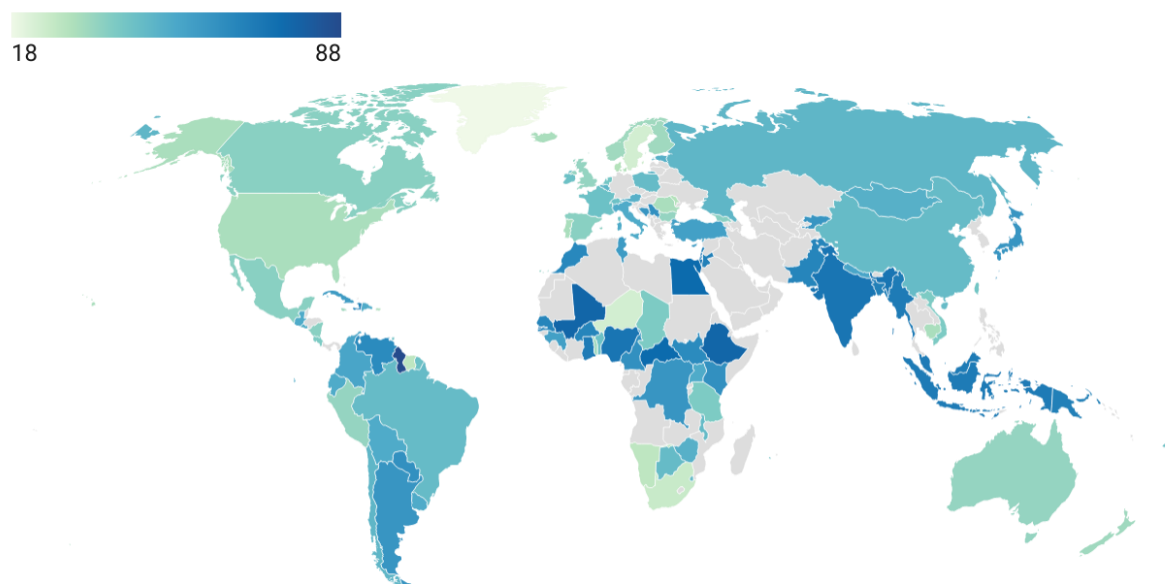
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Data source: Global Media Monitoring Project, 2020
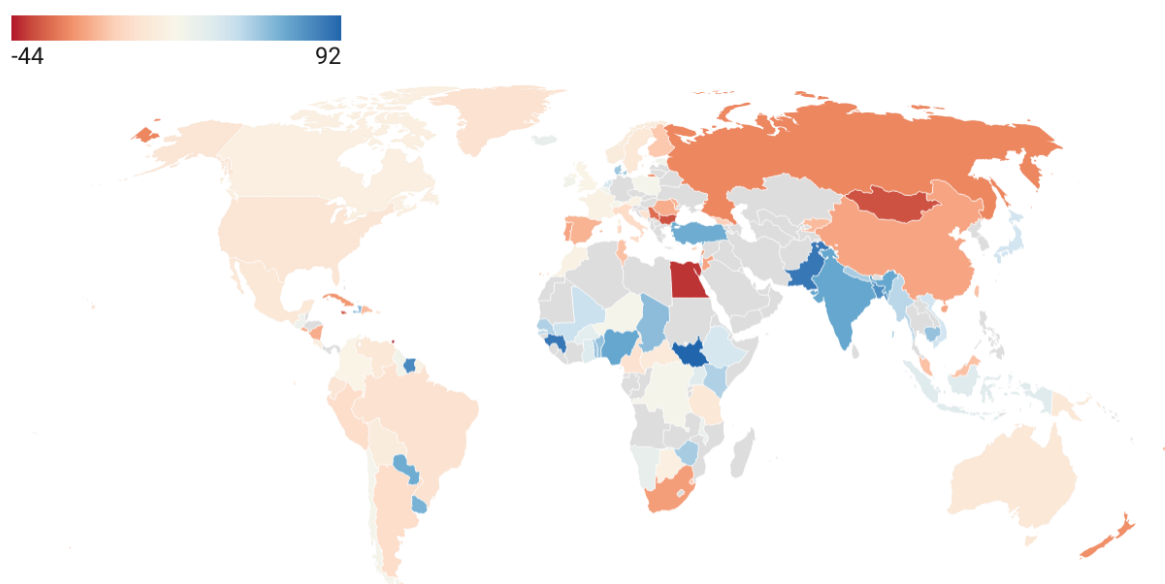
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Data source: Global Media Monitoring Project, 2020

PREFACE

Global Context

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

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

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

The first noteworthy change in women's overall presence in the news was registered in 2005 in the third iteration of the research (Gallagher 2005). Women comprised 21% of news subjects, a three-percentage point increase over the period 2000 to 2005. Their near invisibility continued however, with only 10% of stories focusing centrally on women, underrepresentation in the major news topics and as voices in the news.

By the fifth GMMP in 2015, it was clear that "ordinary" news days could not be predicted or planned in advance: unexpected events take place that dominate the news, from the Kobe earthquake in 1995, to the Germanwings plane crash in the Alps in 2015.

The 2015 research in 114 countries revealed continued severe gender disparities in news media content. Findings on key indicators suggested that progress towards gender equality had lost traction; women remained only 24% of the persons heard, read about or seen in newspaper, television and radio news, exactly the same level found in the fourth wave of the research in 2010. Three editions of the research – in 2005, 2010 and 2015 – found no change on the indicator measuring women's participation in the news as reporters; only 37% of stories in legacy media were reported by women.

Women's relative invisibility in traditional news media had also crossed over into the digital news delivery platforms included in the GMMP monitoring for the first time. Only 26% of the people in stories on mainstream news websites and media news Tweets combined were women. The challenges of news media sexism, gender stereotyping and gender bias were apparently intractable across time, space and content delivery platforms.

UN Under-Secretary-General and UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka underlined that the ways in which women are depicted in the media "have a profound effect on societal attitudes and reinforce traditional gender roles. Women and girls are half of humanity. Giving equal time and weight to their stories, featuring them as positive models not victims, plays an under-appreciated part in creating a better, freer world for all of us."[1]

Events during the 2020 GMMP year were even more extraordinary; beginning in late 2019 and intensifying during the year, the world was ravaged by the novel coronavirus Covid-19. This sixth wave of the research offered an opportunity to scrutinize gender in media coverage during a global catastrophe, a time marked by a worldwide health crisis, and the intensified inequalities accompanying the crisis.

GMMP teams in 116 countries monitored 30,172 stories published in newspapers, broadcast on radio and television, and disseminated on news websites and via news media tweets in 2251 outlets. The stories contained 58,499 news subjects and sources, and were reported and presented by 28,595 journalists. The number of participating nations increased by 63% since 1995 as baseline data were collected for eight countries joining the study for the first time. The number of news items monitored has doubled over the past 25 years and risen by over 8,000 since the 2015 edition.

Findings from the sixth GMMP reveal a mixed picture of progress, stagnation and regression. While some glass ceilings are clearly being edged upwards, others are setting in on certain important news media gender equality indicators. The past five years have seen small incremental changes towards parity, at the same time the overall pace of change remains glacial.

Regional Context

In 2015, 33 countries participated in GMMP 2015 and in 2020, 32 countries took part (see GMMP Europe Regional Report). While there has been a core set of European countries which have participated in all or nearly all the GMMP monitoring days, 2020 was particularly challenging because of Covid-19. That so many people, coordinators and monitors did so, is a testament to their and our commitment to the broader GMMP project. While the impact of the pandemic continues to be felt in June 2021, it is interesting that on 2020 monitoring day, only 27% of European news stories were coded as associated with Covid-19 (25% in Italy). This gives us confidence to suggest that the data discussed in the Regional as well as national reports continue to serve an important comparative function in relation to previous iterations.

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[1] In *Who makes the news? The Global Media Monitoring Project report*, 2015.

National Context

News media remain the major and most influential source of information, ideas and opinion for most people around the world. It is a key element of the public and private space in which people, nations and societies live. A nation or society that does not fully know itself cannot respond to its citizens' aspirations. Who and what appears in the news and how people and events are portrayed matters. Who is left out and what is not covered are equally important. Across the world, the cultural underpinnings of gender inequality and discrimination against women are all too often reinforced through the media.

Against this background, it was therefore important for Italy to participate in the GMMP from the very beginning, in 1995: the opportunity to be part of a global network of activists in the ongoing struggle to promote gender equality in and through the media has translated over the years in local and national collaborations, within and beyond academic, including partnership with women professional associations like Gi.U.Li.A. Giornaliste, and focused exchanges with the national regulator, AGCOM, and its regional sections, CO.RE.COM. At the same time we've witnessed - and were able to support through GMMP data - mobilizations that have engaged the media, news and public debate in the country. In the GMMP 2015 Report we were pleased to refer of meaningful developments, such as gender equality provisions adopted in the Contract of Service of the national public broadcaster RAI; the constitution of the '27esima ora', a blog by one of the major newspapers, *Il Corriere della Sera*; and the strengthening of collaborations amongst women professionals. In 2021 we can confirm the debate about media gender inequalities is alive in some circles, and further initiatives have been taken, for instance in relation to fostering the use of inclusive Italian language in news-making and news titles (we can mention here the "Manifesto di Venezia" adopted in 2017, for fair reporting of gender based violence). Also, in 2017 for the first time a women was elected vice-president of the Order of Journalists and in 2019 an Equal Opportunity Committee was established by the same Order. Yet an overall situation of gender inequalities in media content and media operation persists, as highlighted in the recent Italian Report for the Media for Democracy Monitor (Padovani et al. 2021).

This situation is a reflection of broader inequalities that still affect the country across all sectors: Italy shows worrisome shortcomings as far as equal opportunities for women across sectors, from the economy to the socio-cultural, especially in comparison to many European countries; and the Covid-19 pandemic has made the situation worse, as the highest price for the ongoing crisis has been paid by women.

According to the European statistics bureau EUROSTAT (2020), at the end of 2020 Italy featured at the very bottom amongst the 27 European countries considered in the analysis, with a 53% female employment rate (just above Greece with 49%), compared to a European employment rate of 67%. The rate dropped to 49% for women and 67% for men in Italy by the end of 2020, reflecting the pandemic's impact on the economy. From December 2019 to December 2020, employment fell by 444,000, of which 312,000 are women (ISTAT 2021). The strong impact of the pandemic on women's work is related to the sectors where women are employed, which are among those most affected by the emergency. In addition the

pandemic, with the lockdown and school closures, has also increased the burden of domestic work and care for the families, which in most of the cases impacted on women's lives (Cerniglia, Profeta 2020).

The impact on women was clear from the beginning of the pandemic. For this reason, in April 2020 the Minister for Equal Opportunities, Paola Bonetti, set up a task force of expert women, named *Women for a new Renaissance* to elaborate "effective and feasible proposals, corresponding to the purpose for which the group was created…to increase the percentage of women in every working sector, to overcome barriers that prevent the advancement of career paths… to address gender stereotypes that prevent women to participate in leadership positions, to enable new energies and opportunities for all" (Presidenza del Consiglio dei ministri, Dipartimento Pari opportunità 2020, 4).

Among the proposals put forward by the task force, one thematic cluster (number 5) relates to "Communication: words and images to generate change". Among other things, a claim is made for "a narrative approach about the crisis we went through, offering considerations and renewed meanings due to the pandemic as for the new cultural paradigm we are facing, leading to highlighting women's role in the management of the Covid-19 crisis." (Presidenza del Consiglio dei ministri, Dipartimento Pari opportunità 2020, 4).

As we will see in this Report, it doesn't seem that such a narrative approach was developed by the Italian news media, at least until September 2020, when the GMMP monitoring took place. Rather, it seems that the pandemic has exacerbated certain gender imbalances typical of the Italian news media, such as the gender gap between experts. The situation in Italy has changed very little since the last GMMP in 2015: women have grown in terms of overall visibility, arguably more thanks to their greater presence and participation in institutions and businesses, than as the result of greater news media commitment towards equality.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overall presence of women as news subjects and sources across five news media is 26% out of a total of 980 people in the news: 24% in legacy media - print, radio, TV - out of a total of 526 people, and 28% in digital media - Internet, Twitter - out of a total of 454 people.

Legacy media

Legacy media, which have been monitored since 1995, show a progressive growth of the female presence, albeit an extremely slow one. Over the last 5 years, radio appears as the legacy media where most progress has been made: from 21% of women subjects (2015) to 32% (2020). Television shows a minimal increase by 1 percentage point (from 20 to 21%), and print media by 2 percentage points (from 22 to 24%).

As for the news topics where women are more represented, Social and Legal, Crime and Violence, Politics and Government appear as more gender-inclusive than Celebrity, Arts, Media and Sports news, Economy, and Science and Health.

When we look at the scope of news stories, women are included more in Sub-Regional/Regional and Foreign/International stories than in Local or National ones. This is probably due to the role of European women leaders in the international geopolitical framework - particularly at the European level - that during the Covid-19 pandemic played an important role.

Looking at occupation/position, women reach 63% among people with a "not stated" occupation or position, due to a lack of sufficient information to establish their social role, obviously because it is considered as irrelevant to the purpose of the news; and they are only 22% in the category of politicians, which is the most frequent. Although they have gained in visibility from 2015 (15%), Italian women politicians – who compose 35% of the elected members in Italian parliament – continue to be under-represented in the Italian media, both traditional and digital.

As for their function in the news, women are 24% of news subjects, which is the most frequent function and continues to be a men's domain, exactly as in 2015 (24%). Compared to five years ago, women appear more often as spokespersons, from 13% to 30%, but their presence as experts has decreased meaningfully, from 18% to 12%.

If we look at the distribution of women spokespersons by occupational category, in 59% of cases these are politicians or members of parliament or government, and in 12% of cases are businesswomen, managers or entrepreneurs. It is worth mentioning that the 2018 general elections marked a turning point in bringing female representation in Italian political institutions above the 30% threshold for the first time (vs. 19.5% in the previous legislature, in force since 2015); while the 'Golfo-Mosca law' on gender parity in the boards of directors of listed companies was adopted in 2011 (alongside the Presidential Decree 251/2012 on representation in public subsidiaries), leading to a progressive increase of women representation in companies, from 7.4% in the pre-law period to 36.3% in 2020 for listed

companies, and from 11.2% to 28.4% for public subsidiaries, with a turning point in 2017, when the 30% threshold was exceeded for the first time. In this context, perhaps the growth of women's visibility as spokespersons in the news is to be attributed to their actual advancement in society (both as politicians and in the economic domain).

With regard to female experts in the news, the decrease detected by the GMMP 2020 edition can perhaps be ascribed to the impact of the Covid-19 agenda on the monitored media. All 173 news items related to Covid-19 attest to a decrease in the visibility of women in the most frequent news functions (as news subjects, spokespersons and experts). This finding is particularly problematic if we consider the relevance of experts in news content and reports during the pandemic, and the multi-faceted consequences of not implementing a more gender-sensitive approach - by including expert women as doctors, scientists, medical personnel - in the news-making in critical times.

Data by age show that there is an inverse relationship between sex and age of the people reported in the news; hence as women subjects' age increases, their incidence in the news decreases: only 20% of subjects in print news and 18% in TV news coded above the age of 50 are women.

As on previous GMMP editions, one woman in five (25%) appears in the news as a victim, versus 4% of men. Similarly, as in previous GMMP findings, one woman in five is identified by family status, and therefore appears/is mentioned in the news as the wife, mother, or daughter of somebody, versus 4% of men subjects.

In this 2020 GMMP edition, a set of (three) "special questions" have been introduced in the monitoring framework, which could be elaborated by each national team to reflect specific concerns of the national context. In the Italian case it was decided to focus on the use of gender-un/fair language, so as to assess the extent to which in speaking about female and male subjects equal recognition, respect and authority are attributed by the media. In this case the findings show that:

● women are introduced by both first name and surname less than men (76% vs. 82%) with some differences amongst different media: in the print media the proportions are similar, but the percentages are higher (84% vs. 90%), on TV the proportions are similar, but the percentages are lower (61% vs. 73%), while for the radio the proportions are reversed, with 62% of women presented by name and surname vs. 52% of men.

● Women are less often than men presented with a professional or institutional title (54% vs. 72%), with significant differences depending on the type of media: the press registers a lower gender gap, with 64% of women subjects presented with a professional or institutional title vs. 72% of men; while both the radio and TV register a higher gap (respectively: 30% women vs. 73% men and 39% women vs. 72% men).

● The grammatical gender of the title or job name appear as gender-consistent in 79% of the cases, with some differences between the type of media: the radio shows full consistency (100%), while print reaches 77% and TV 75%.

Looking at women writing or presenting the news, we recorded a total of 270 news presented or reported, of which 47% by women journalists, a value that indicates a growth of 11 percentage points since 2015 (36%).

Comparing female and male journalists by the scope of the news they report, women appear to cover more than men national news, but less news concerning regional and international events.

As far as the topic of the reported news is concerned, female journalists deal with Science and Health stories more than male journalists, while male journalists cover Crime and violence stories more than female colleagues. Otherwise, there are no remarkable differences.

Differently from the findings of 2015, male journalists, proportionally, select female sources slightly more than female journalists (52% versus 48%), who, conversely, choose male sources slightly more than men.

Overall there are only 2 news stories referring to issues of gender equality/inequality or human rights in the entire sample (1% of the total), and only 2 stories where stereotypes are challenged (also 1% of the total). Finally, the stories with a central focus on women are 11% out of a total of 220: plus 3% compared to 2015 (8%).

Not surprisingly, women appear as central subjects especially in Crime and Violence news (28%), which is consistent with their status as victims (or survivors) in about a quarter of the news stories.

Digital media

The overall presence of women as news subjects and sources across digital media is 28%, with some difference between Internet and Twitter: women reach 29% in Internet news, as in 2015, and 25% in Twitter, which represent an 8 percentage point increase from 2015 (17%).

As far as the news topics, women are less than half of the news subjects or sources across all the topics, except for the Gender & Related where they reach 50%, but the topic concerns only 5 stories. Otherwise, as for the legacy media, women reach visibility above the average (28%) in stories about Politics and Government (34%), Social and Legal (33%), and Crime and Violence (29%), and remain largely underrepresented in stories about Celebrity, Arts, Media and Sports (24%), Economy (22%), and Science and Health (18%).

When we look at the occupation/position of subjects in the news, our findings show a picture partially different from that observed in legacy media. As in the latter, also in digital media women reach a high percentage among people with a "not stated" occupation or position, but they also feature above the average (of 28%) as politicians or members of parliament or

government, as well as professionals in the legal sector (lawyer, judge, magistrate and so on). Interestingly, they also reach a high value as criminals, which is a frequent category.

As far as the function in the news, findings show a picture similar to that found for traditional media. In general, subject, spokesperson and expert are the three most frequent functions. Women reach a value in line with the overall average (28%) as subjects, and overcome this average as spokespersons (31%), whilst they remain under-represented as experts (14%).

Compared to legacy media, the Internet gives more visibility to victims of both genders, but overall data seem consistent across media types: women make the news as victims (and more rarely, as survivors) more than men. In the first case, one woman in five appears as a victim; in the second case, one woman in four features as survivor (vs. 10% of men).

When it comes to the 'special questions' concerning gender-un/fair language in presenting female and male subjects, compared to legacy media the Internet most often presents news subjects making reference to family status, both for women and men, but the gender gap remains: women are identified by their family status twice as much as men (34% vs. 15%). More specifically:

● women subjects are presented with the first and last name in 80% out of cases vs. 70% of men, with relevant variation between Internet and Twitter: Internet identifies fewer women than men with the first and last name (83% vs. 89%); on the contrary, Twitter identifies more women than men with the first and last name (69% vs. 31%).

● As far as reference to professional role or job title, digital media show an overall gender equal approach, by recording the same percentage for women and for men, 45%, with a difference between Internet and Twitter: the first refers to job titles for men more than for women (54% vs. 49%); whilst the second uses the titles more for women than for men (31% vs. 22%).

● Twitter attests the maximum level of correspondence between the gender title and the female gender of the news subject or source, attested in 100% of cases; Internet also shows a high level of consistency (97%).

In almost half of the cases (49%) the online news does not provide enough information to identify the gender of media professionals who've produced the post/reported the news. Considering the remaining cases, the overall presence of female journalists is 32% (out of a total of 130), with no relevant difference between Internet and Twitter.

Comparing data with those of 2015, both Internet and Twitter present increased visibility of female journalists, respectively plus 17 (from 13% to 30%) for Internet and plus 25 percentage points (from 13% and 8%) for Twitter.

Unlike traditional news media, female journalists select female news subjects or sources more than their male colleagues (33% vs. 24%), who prefer male news subjects or sources (76% vs. 67%).

But similarly to traditional media, there are few stories making explicit reference to issues pertaining to gender equality/inequality or human/women's rights (N=8; 3% out of a total of 252). Also few stories are found in digital media that challenge stereotypes (N=10; 4% out of a total of 252).

Stories presenting women as a central focus are 21% out of a total of 252 (Internet news plus Twitter posts). Women are central in 4 of a total 5 Gender & Related Stories. Like in traditional media, women appear in Crime and Violence stories; at the same time they are central in 1/3 of the news about Politics and Government (vs. 12% in legacy media).

Focus on Covid-19 news

The 2020 GMMP monitoring took place in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the monitoring day was indeed postponed from March to September 2020 to allow coordinators and monitors to adjust to the exceptional situation. A specific variable was thus included in the monitoring framework, to assess the extent to which the news content was affected/influenced/driven by Covid-19-related issues.

Covid-19 stories comprise 25% out of a total of 472 news; and half of the Covid-19-related news is reported by female journalists (51% out of a total of 131 reporters).

Female journalists report more stories pertaining to Economy as well as Social and Legal issues than their male colleagues, who cover more stories of Politics and Government. As for Science and Health and Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports, which are the two most reported topics, we see a balance between male and female journalists.

As far as the subjects/sources of Covid-19 news, women are only 11%. Comparing this value with the average of female news subjects and sources across the five media (26%), we argue that the Covid-19 agenda has contributed to an overall decrease in women visibility (from 26% to 11%).

When we look at the most frequent functions of the news subjects and sources in Covid-19 stories, we can see that women are marginalized across all functions, especially as experts or commentators (only 6%).

The top 5 occupations of the news subjects and sources in Covid-19-related stories are politician/member of parliament, doctor, academic expert, government employee, sportsperson: again women are marginalized across all these five professions, especially as doctors and academic experts.

A DAY IN THE NEWS IN ITALY

The agenda of the 29 September 2020 was dominated by news concerning the Covid-19 pandemic: the number of cases; the trend in contagion, both in Italy and in Europe; the problem of the overlap between flu symptoms and Covid-19 symptoms; Covid-19-related economic crisis and the political debate on the instruments to deal with the consequences of the crisis, the European Recovery Fund in the first place.

Beside this general focus on the pandemic, here is a list of non-strictly-Covid-19-related news that appeared on almost all the monitored media:

- Giorgia Meloni, leader of the Italian party Fratelli d'Italia, elected president of the European Conservatives and Reformists party;
- USA, waiting for the face-to-face electoral debate between Joe Biden and Donald Trump;
- Pope Francis encounter with Cardinal George Pell to talk about the situation involving former cardinal Angelo Becciu, who was under investigation for diverting money from humanitarian causes to the benefit of his brother and offshore businesses;
- The Pope's appointment of Fabiola Gianotti, director of Swiss CERN, to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences;
- International terrorism: Italian foreign fighter Alice Brignoli arrested (she had gone to Syria with her husband and children);
- Suspect confesses to the brutal murder of a couple in Lecce.

THE CONTEXT

Italian media system: an overview[2]

As reported by the Reuters Digital News Report (2019), after the 2018 general election that lead to 'Five stars movement' major electoral success, minor changes in the Italian media environment took place to reflect the new balance of power within Italian politics; while a continuing weakening of the newspaper sector can be observed. The Italian news press has always been linked to a political-cultural elite; and its mass diffusion has never matched that of television, which has been the core of Italians' media consumption for many years, providing the weaker social groups, in particular, a 'mono-medial culture'. The consequences of the historical absence of "pure publishers", and more recent trends to editorial concentration, characterize the current ownership structure of both the major print publishers and major radio and television companies.

The most read newspapers are: *Corriere della Sera*[3], *La Repubblica* and *La Stampa*[4]. In the television sector, the historic "duopoly" between the Radio and Television Public Service RAI[5] and the main private group Fininvest[6] has been challenged over the past years by the emergence of new players. These include La7[7] and Sky Italia[8].

A Communications Independent Authority – AGCOM – was established in 1997, mandated to monitor radio and television broadcasting, protect political and social pluralism and oversee media compliance with the "*par condicio*" principle (equality of access to the media) for all political parties and movements.

The Reuters Digital News Report also provides a general overview of recent developments in the Italian media system: while broadcasters' revenues have been relatively stable from 2013 to 2017, newspapers' and magazines' revenues have witnessed a reduction of 21% in the same period. In terms of overall revenue share, the main players are the international broadcaster Comcast Corporation/Sky (15%), Berlusconi's broadcasting group Fininvest/Mediaset (15%), and the public service broadcaster RAI (14%). Other relevant players are international platforms like Google (4%) and Facebook (3%), together with domestic players: the above-mentioned Cairo Communication, and GEDI.

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[2] This section builds on the work conducted by the Italian team that participated in the Media for Democracy Monitor project, which included eighteen countries and was conducted between 2020 and 2021. The project website and all findings are accessible at: http://euromediagroup.org/mdm/; while the national reports, including the Italian one, have been published by Nordicom and are available open access at: http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1557246&dswid=6528.

[3] The publisher, Rcs - MediaGroup S.p.a., is a 60% subsidiary of the entrepreneur Urbano Cairo.

[4] Published by the same publisher, GEDI, who also owns three of the major national radio stations - Radio Deejay, Radio Capital and Radio m2o - and whose majority shareholder, CIR, is a holding company active in the automotive and health sectors.

[5] RAI is a licenced agency whose board of directors consists of seven members, four of whom are appointed by the Chamber and Senate of the Italian parliament, two by the government and one by the employees' assembly.

[6] Fininvest was founded in 1978 by tycoon Silvio Berlusconi; today 44% of shares are controlled by the holding company of the Berlusconi family.

[7] La7 is a television channel owned by the Cairo Communication group.

[8] The pay-TV platform published by the English company Sky.

The online news market is dominated by legacy players. The most popular news websites are those of established commercial TV broadcasters (Mediaset's *TgCom24* and *SkyTg24*), the main newspapers (*La Repubblica*, *Corriere della Sera*, and *Il Fatto Quotidiano*), and the main Italian news agency (ANSA). In 2018 digital-born outlet *Fanpage* was established characterized by effective use of social media, a focus on online videos, and the establishment of large teams of multimedia experts and social media managers. Worth mentioning is also *CityNews*, a local information publishing group based on the logic of participatory journalism that operates at the regional level with 50 local editions. A third digital news outlet, established in 2018, is Open.

Italian ranking according to international indexes on media freedom and consumption

The World Press Freedom Index[9] (2020) published by Reporters Without Borders (RWB) ranks Italy 41 out of 180 countries (+2 since 2019). The Report underlines obstacles to full freedom of the press in Italy, including the mafia and criminal acts of intimidations against journalists (20 professionals are currently under full protection by the police because of threats), as well as verbal and physical attacks journalists undergo from members of fascists and far-right extremist groups. RWB also warns about some political decisions that could harm the profession, such as the reduction of state subsidies for the media approved during the current legislature.

The Article 19's Expression Agenda[10] (2017) has evaluated Italy on five criteria: civic space (place, physical and legal, where individuals realize their rights), transparency (right of individuals to obtain information from both public and private bodies), digital (freedom of expression and information must be respected and put into legal documents), media (media pluralism and media freedom) and protection (of those defending freedom of information and expression, such as journalists). The country picture is positive in civic space and transparency; while critical is situation in the digital sphere (Freedom of Expression 2019). In fact, as highlighted also by the Freedom House in its comprehensive study of internet freedom around the globe - Freedom on the Net - Italy, with a score of 75 out of 100, lags behind other European countries in terms of overall connectivity, despite several attempts have been made to close the digital divide.

Finally, according to the already mentioned Digital News Report 2019[11] commissioned by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism to understand how news is consumed, Italian citizens appear to inform themselves mainly through traditional media. Newspaper readership continues to fall steadily while television news viewership has been more stable than in many other countries. Furthermore, trust in news is particularly low amongst the Italian public (news overall 40%). This long standing trend is explained as mainly due to the partisan nature of Italian journalism and to the strong influence of political and business interests on news organisation. One trend that is rapidly growing is the use of social media to get information.

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[9] https://rsf.org/en/ranking.
[10] https://www.article19.org/xpa-17/.
[11] https://www.digitalnewsreport.org/survey/2019/.

Similarly, the most recent CENSIS data[12] (2020) confirm the crisis of the print media (50.4% of the total population, mainly in the age group 65 years and over), a substantial stability of television use (94.2% of the total population, with a rather homogeneous distribution by age), and a significant increase in internet use (79.3% of the population, mainly in the age groups between 14-29 and 30-44 years). A data of great interest, reported by the Economic-Statistical Service of AGCOM[13], concerns the access to information through algorithmic sources (social network sites, search engines, news aggregators and information portals: 54.5% of the population) and editorial sources (websites/apps of newspapers, periodicals, national and local radio and TV, digital native newspapers: 39.4% of the national population).

Italian media and the Covid-19 Pandemic

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit Europe in early 2020, Italy was the first country in the region to be severely affected, and therefore the first one to impose several restrictions on the free circulation of people, the functioning of schools and universities opening and on most economic and commercial activities.

During the "first lockdown" (which in some areas of the country started at the end of February 2020 and was partially lifted only at the beginning of June of the same year), the TV total audience has considerably increased, both during the day (about +2 million users) and in prime time (about +4 million users). According to the Italian Institute of Statistics[14] (ISTAT), in March and April 2020 53% of people aged 18-34 years and 50% of people aged 35-54 years have watched TV to a greater extent than in the previous period.

According to ComScore[15], even if the news-stand sales were allowed to remain open during lockdown, the sales of newspaper have decreased, while Italian Internet users have considerably increased their visits to newspapers apps and websites[16].

Only radio listeners have decreased during this period, due the considerable number of Italians who listen to the radio while driving their cars during daily commuting to work, which was completely cleared during the "lockdown" period.

The average daily time spent online by every Internet user has remarkably increased (+3% from February to March 2020, by tablet and smartphone, +16% by computer), even because of the online shift of any classroom (schools and universities) or working activity (smart work and 'lavoro agile').

The Independent regulator AGCOM has been very active during the pandemics. Following Law Decree n. 18/2020, the AGCOM established four Working Groups (WP) involving main stakeholders, aimed at sharing proposals and initiatives for managing priorities arising from

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[12] https://www.censis.it/comunicazione/i-media-e-la-costruzione-dell'identità-0.
[13] Osservatorio sul Giornalismo III edizione: https://www.agcom.it/osservatorio-sul-giornalismo-iii-edizione.
[14] https://www.istat.it/storage/rapporto-annuale/2020/Rapportoannuale2020.pdf.
[15] https://www.adnkronos.com/gli-italiani-online-come-cambiano-le-abitudini-con-la-pandemia_3FegUyawgGXuhMbtR89RNN.
[16] During the first lockdown week +140% compared to a normal week before COVID-19; during the Easter week in April +90% compared to a normal week before COVID-19.

the current emergency: a) Electronic Communication Services and Consumers; b) Postal Services; c) Media Services; d) Online Platforms and Big Data.

At the same time, AGCOM has approved a series of provisions addressing the responsibilities of service provides: a first package of measures addressed to electronic communications networks and services providers aimed at coping with increases in the consumption of electronic communications services/ traffic on the network, as well as at meeting the needs of different sectors, in particular the health sector; and a resolution containing provisions regarding the correctness of information about the coronavirus/Covid-19 topic. With this provision, AGCOM has invited all audiovisual and radio media services to ensure correct and adequate information on the medical emergency, and to provide verified information coming from authoritative sources. At the same time, video sharing platforms were asked to adopt measures to counter the spreading of incorrect or not fact-checked news about the Covid-19 issues. In late 2020 AGCOM published an issue of its 'Observatory on journalism' focused on 'The profession and Covid -19 challenges', to be followed by a second issue in 2021.

With regard to Governmental initiatives, the Under-Secretary of State for Press and Publishing has launched a special Covid-19 Fake News Task Force, involving journalists, fact-checkers, scholars and scientists. Furthermore, following the journalists and (online) publishers' requests, Law Decree n. 34/2020 extended the possibility to get a tax credit for advertisers' spending in press, radio and tv advertising spaces; it also introduced a specific tax credit for online publishers IT (information technology) expenses, and other measures affecting press distribution and newsstands

More relevant to the GMMP project, the National Federation of Print Media (FNSI) has worked on a survey to collect evidence and reflections about women media professionals' experience with Covid-19. As of today we can report that Italian women journalists have experienced, since March 2020, many of the problems evidenced by recent IFJ surveys[17] concerning gender inequalities in times of pandemic: increased inequalities, increase in the level of personal stress increase, due to multiple tasking and further difficulties in balancing personal and professional lives; low level of support and protection provided by media houses; lack of specific strategies developed by unions and media companies.

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[17] https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/covid-19-has-increased-gender-inequalities-in-the-media-ifj-survey-finds.html.

Media monitored for GMMP 2020

For the GMMP 2020 edition, Italian monitors have looked at traditional mainstream media – newspapers (8), radio (6) and television channels (8) – as well as Internet news sites (8) and media houses' Twitter feeds (8).

Consistently with GMMP project guidelines, two general criteria have been adopted in the selection of the mainstream media to be monitored:

- daily newspapers/radio and TV channels' relevance in terms of geographic diffusion and audience reach; and

- balanced representation of the different orientations in daily newspapers/radio and TV channels in the country.

Criteria for the selection of Internet and Twitter news sources also reflected the GMMP instruction.

The lists of monitored media and specific selection criteria for each media type are provided below.

For the daily press, newspapers with different features in terms of circulation, number of readers, target audience, geographical diffusion both national and regional[18] and ownership, were monitored and analyzed. The selected newspapers were[19]:

1) The *Corriere della sera* (RCS Media Group, Cairo communication) as "generalist newspapers" with the widest national circulation and highest number of readers, (together with *la Repubblica)*;
2) *la Repubblica* (GEDI Gruppo Editoriale), as "generalist newspapers" with the widest national circulation and highest number of readers;
3) *La Stampa* (GEDI Gruppo Editoriale), as "generalist newspaper" with a high number of readers, mainly circulated in the North-West area of the country;
4) *Il Messaggero* (Il Messaggero S.p.a., Caltagirone editore), as "generalist newspaper" with a high number of readers, mainly circulated in Centre and Southern Italy;
5) *Il Gazzettino* (Caltagirone Editore), as a popular daily with a significant number of readers, mainly circulated in the North-East region;
6) *QN Il Resto del Carlino* (Monrif), as a popular daily with a significant number of readers, mainly circulated in the regions in Central Italy;
7) *Avvenire* (Avvenire Nuova Editoriale S.p.a.), as a religion-inspired opinion newspaper, which is affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church;
8) *Il Sole 24 ore* (Gruppo 24 ORE), as an economy and finance-focused newspaper, with a high number of readers – mostly "elite" - and nationwide circulation.

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[18] The sources for circulation data was http://www.adsnotizie.it/_dati_DMS.asp
[19] In brackets the editorial group.

As far as radio channels, the most popular channels were monitored and analyzed with national diffusion, higher numbers of listeners and different ownership (following the ranking provided by "Radio Ter 2019" survey[20]). Except for Radio Rai 1, which is the first radio channel of the national public broadcasting company of Italy (RAI) and which provides informative coverage, all other radios are commercial and focus on entertainment, but they also provide daily information by broadcasting frequent bulletins. The channels selected also reflect the proprietary radio assets in Italy.

1) Radio RTL 102.5 (RTL 102.5 Hit Radio S.r.l.)
2) RDS 100% Grandi successi (Radio Dimensione Suono S.p.a.)
3) Radio Deejay (GEDI Gruppo Editoriale)
4) Radio Italia (Radio Italia S.p.a.)
5) Radio 105 (Radio Mediaset, Mediaset)
6) Radio RAI 1 (RAI)

For the TV channels, all the national generalist TV channels have been included, plus a network that carries Roman Catholic-themed programming. All TV channels have nationwide diffusion in analog digital terrestrial system since this is where most of the audience share is concentrated. The selected channels also reflect the proprietary assets of digital terrestrial television in Italy: *Rai Uno*, *Rai Due* and *Rai Tre* are part of the public service broadcasting system (RAI); *Rete 4*, *Canale 5* and *Italia 1* are owned by the main private competitor to RAI, Mediaset; *La7* is a private channel, transmitting across the nation, and proposing itself as a competitor to the other two assets; TV2000 is owned by the Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI) thus completing the map of Italian broadcasting:

1) Rai Uno (RAI)
2) Rai Due (RAI)
3) Rai Tre (RAI)
4) Rete 4 (RTI, Mediaset)
5) Canale 5 (RTI, Mediaset)
6) Italia 1 (RTI, Mediaset)
7) La7 (La7 S.p.a., Cairo communication)
8) TV 2000 (Rete Blu S.p.a., CEI)

Internet-based news have been selected following GMMP instructions: only country-specific news sources were selected, and only major news websites (no gossip, advertising, or quiz sites; no blogs nor aggregation sites), on the assumption that they are viewed regularly by a high number of Internet users (though not necessarily on a daily basis, depending on media habits in the country and considering variability among different class, age, gender groups). Selection has been made mainly on the basis of access and readership[21]: the first 8 online outlets with the highest number of 'unique users' were selected since all 8 have national orientation and are written in Italian. Also, the diversity of the Italian media system is reflected

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[20] https://www.tavoloeditoriradio.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/TER-Dati-anno-15-gennaio-16-dicembre-2019.pdf
[21] According to the rankings provided by http://www.audiweb.it/news/comunicati-stampa/total-digital-audience-Dicembre-2019.html.

in the list. Most Internet news websites are the online version of printed newspapers (Corriere.it; repubblica.it; ilmessaggero.it; ilfattoquotidiano.it, liberoquotidiano.it and Leggo, the first free daily newspaper published in Italy) whereas Fanpage is an Internet-based news outlet and has been chosen to reflect 'native digital news making':

1) corriere.it (RCS Mediagroup, Cairo Communication)
2) repubblica.it (GEDI Gruppo Editoriale)
3) ilmessaggero.it (Il Messaggero S.p.a., Caltagirone editore)
4) TGCOM24 (RTI, Mediaset)
5) Fanpage (Ciaopeople S.r.l.)
6) ilfattoquotidiano.it (Editoriale Il Fatto S.p.a.)
7) liberoquotidiano.it (Editoriale Libero S.r.l.)
8) Leggo (Caltagirone editore)

Twitter news sources were also selected according to GMMP instructions: only national media house Twitter feeds were included; only major media outlets (their daily activity, as well as their popularity in terms of users, were checked). To this end, we searched for several rankings on the Italian Twitter use to identify accounts with the highest numbers of followers, and crossed the information retrieved[22]; we then isolated Twitter accounts of media outlets with a high number of followers; and included outlets that: are only focused on news; reflect the diversity of the media landscape in terms of both the type of media they are associated with (printed newspapers, television news services, digital native information portals) and in term of ownership and related interests (all private, but with different political orientations from left to right); publish tweets in Italian:

1) @corriere.it (RCS Mediagroup, Cairo Communication)
2) @fattoquotidiano (Editoriale Il Fatto S.p.a.)
3) @ilpost (Il Post)
4) @ilsole24ore (Gruppo 24 ore)
5) @Gazzetta.it (RCS Mediagroup, Cairo Communication)
6) @repubblica.it (GEDI Gruppo Editoriale)
7) @HuffPostItalia (GEDI Gruppo Editoriale)
8) @Fanpage.it (Ciaopeople S.r.l.)

Monitoring team

The Italian team was organized into 7 groups from different regions in the country. They were coordinated, as in four previous editions, by Monia Azzalini (Osservatorio di Pavia Ca' Foscari University of Venice) and Claudia Padovani (University of Padova). Each group, comprising students and researchers, was hosted at an academic institution and coordinated by an experienced researcher in the project theme. A total of 44 people participated, from the following higher education institutions: Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Osservatorio di Pavia, University of Calabria, University of Milano-Bicocca, University of Roma La Sapienza,

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[22] In particular see: https://www.socialbakers.com/statistics/twitter/profiles/italy/media.

University of Turin. The list of Monitors is available in the Appendix 2.

TOPICS IN THE NEWS

On September 29, 2020 we coded a total of 472 news stories across the five media of print, radio, TV, Internet and Twitter: 220 from the legacy media (print, radio and TV), 252 from the digital media (Internet and Twitter).

Table 1 shows some relevant differences. Print news focuses mainly on the hard news of Politics and Government and Economy, and on Science and Health, which in the aftermath of the Covid-19 has become a 'hard' topic in the news agenda. Radio news focuses mostly on Social and Legal News and Science and Health. Television news focuses mainly on Crime and Violence and Celebrities, Arts and Media, Sports. Internet on Crime and Violence. Twitter, finally, focuses on Economy, and on Celebrities, Arts and Media, Sports. As far as Gender & Related topic, we found only 5 stories, all of which in the digital media: 3 in Internet news and 2 on Twitter.

Table 1. Main news topic by medium

	PRINT		RADIO		TELEVISION		INTERNET		TWITTER	
TOPIC	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Politics and Government	24%	26	14%	8	14%	8	17%	18	18%	27
Economy	19%	20	9%	5	14%	8	8%	8	21%	30
Science and Health	21%	22	21%	12	16%	9	14%	15	10%	14
Social and Legal	12%	13	23%	13	9%	5	12%	13	9%	13
Crime and Violence	13%	14	16%	9	23%	13	27%	29	16%	24
Gender & Related	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	3%	3	1%	2
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	10%	11	18%	10	23%	13	19%	20	25%	36
Other	1%	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
TOTAL	100%	107	100%	57	100%	56	100%	106	100%	146

25% of all the coded stories are somehow correlated to Covid-19, with some variation across the five media: 28% for print (out of a total of 107), 32% for radio (out a total of 57), 29% for TV (56), 25% for the Internet (out a total of 106), 18% for Twitter (out a total of 146).

Although the Covid-19-related stories are largely connected to the Science and Health topic, they feature in all news categories, from Politics and Government to Celebrity, Arts, and Media, Sports; whereas the pandemic did not relate to the very few items about Gender & Related.

Table 2. Stories correlated to Covid-19 by major topic by medium

	PRINT		RADIO		TELEVISION		INTERNET		TWITTER	
TOPIC	% Yes	Total (N)	% Yes	Total (N)	% Yes	Total (N)	% Yes	Total (N)	% Yes	Total (N)
Politics and Government	4%	26	13%	8	0%	8	22%	18	19%	27
Economy	10%	20	60%	5	38%	8	13%	8	10%	30
Science and Health	95%	22	58%	12	78%	9	73%	15	71%	14
Social and Legal	23%	13	23%	13	20%	5	8%	13	23%	13
Crime and Violence	0%	14	0%	9	0%	13	3%	29	4%	24
Gender & Related	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	0%	2
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	27%	11	40%	10	38%	13	40%	20	14%	36
Other	0%	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
TOTAL	28%	107	32%	57	29%	56	25%	106	18%	146

NEWS SUBJECTS AND SOURCES

The overall presence of women as news subjects and sources across five news media is 26% out of a total of 980 people in the news, with slight distinction between legacy and digital media: 24% for print, radio and TV - out of a total of 526 people; and 28% for Internet and Twitter - out of a total of 454 people.

Below are the relevant results for legacy media. The findings for digital media are presented in the following section.

Graph 1. Legacy media. News subjects and sources by sex and medium*
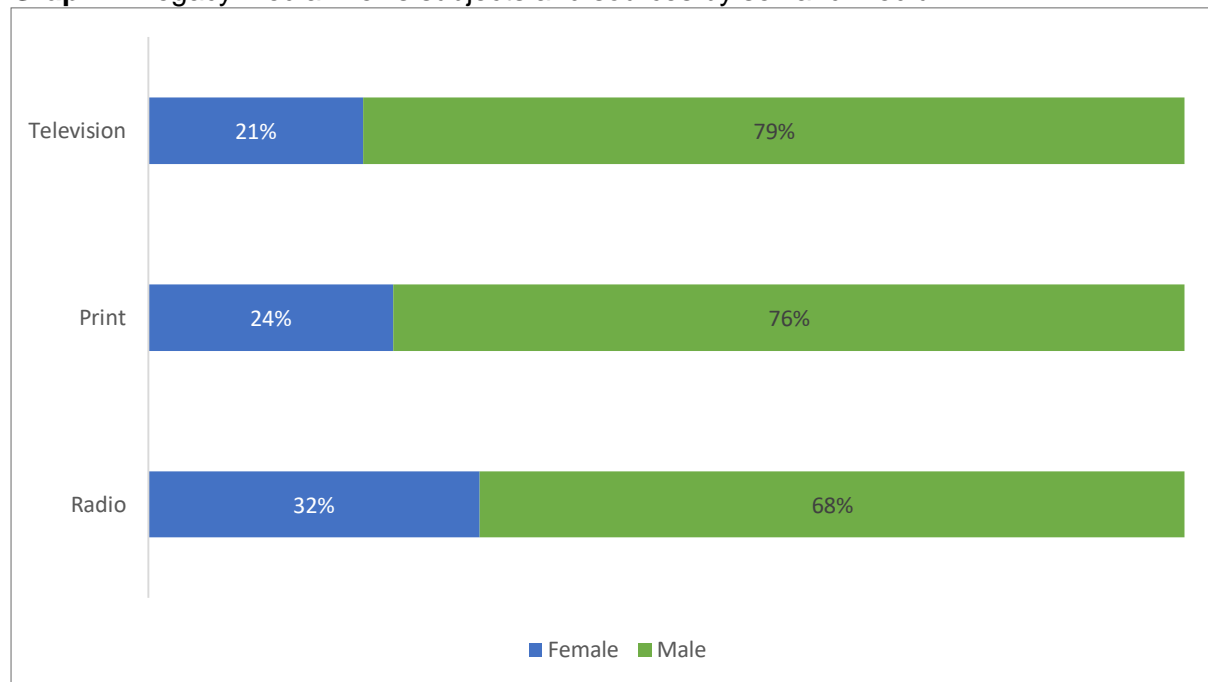
*Total N: Television 111, Print 357, Radio 75.

When we look at the presence of women as news subjects or sources by medium, we can see that radio in this last edition is the most inclusive medium, followed by print and television. Over the last 5 years, radio has shown the biggest increase of women subjects amongst the legacy media: from 21% (2015) to 32% (2020), with television increasing by only 1 percentage point (from 20 to 21%), and print media by 2 points (from 22 to 24%). Overall traditional media, which have been monitored since 1995, have shown a steady growth of the female presence in the news, albeit extremely slow, as shown in the graph below.

Graph 2. Legacy media. Women as news subjects and sources across the years
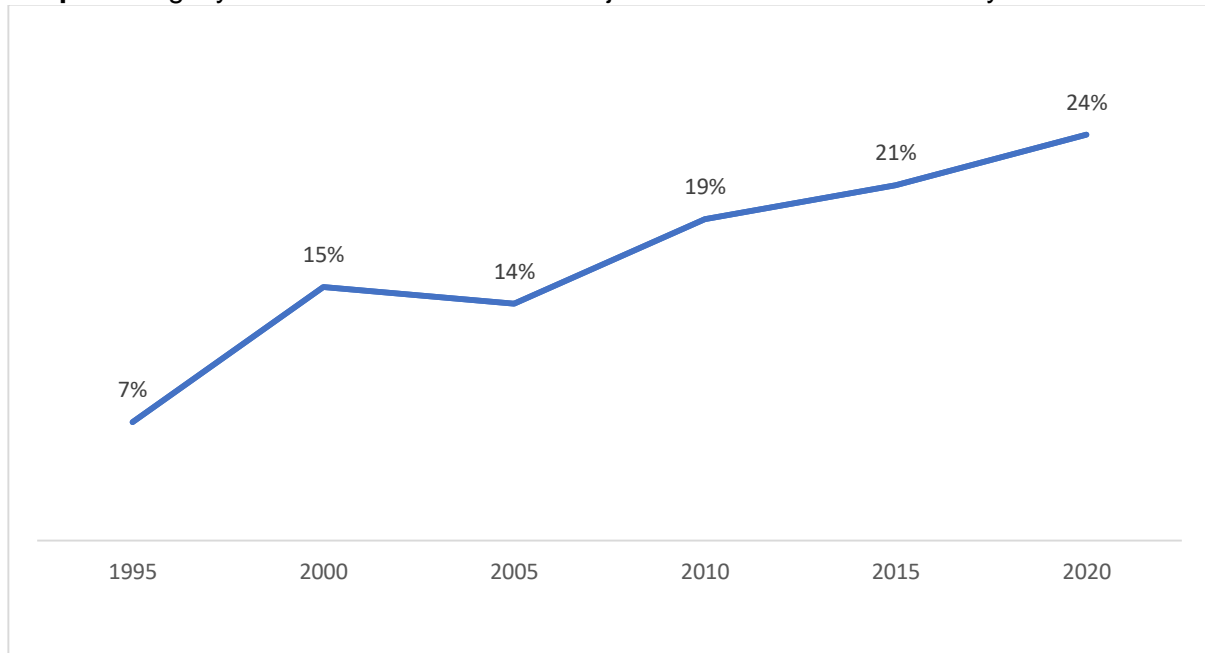

In relation to news topics (Graph 3), women are less than half of the news subjects, or sources, across all topics. Nevertheless, there are some differences in terms of the percentage of their presence.

We can identify two groups. On the one hand, three topics show a percentage of women presence above the 24% average, these are: Social and Legal, Crime and Violence, Politics and Government; on the other hand, there are three topics with a percentage of female presence below average: Celebrity, Arts, Media and Sports, Economy, and Science and Health.

If we compare these data with those of GMMP 2015, we can observe a positive increase of women in Politics and Government (from 15 to 25%), while Science and Health, which in GMMP 2015 had shown great women visibility (65%), in 2020 marks a drop down to 11%. We must remember how five years ago the story about Angelina Jolie's decision to remove her breast to prevent cancer (which made the news all over made world's media) hugely affected the findings; but we also observe that in the previous editions of GMMP, Science and Health never recorded such low percentages as in 2020. This is probably due to the impact of the Covid-19 agenda on women visibility, as we discuss below.

Graph 3. Legacy media. News subjects and sources by sex and news major topic*
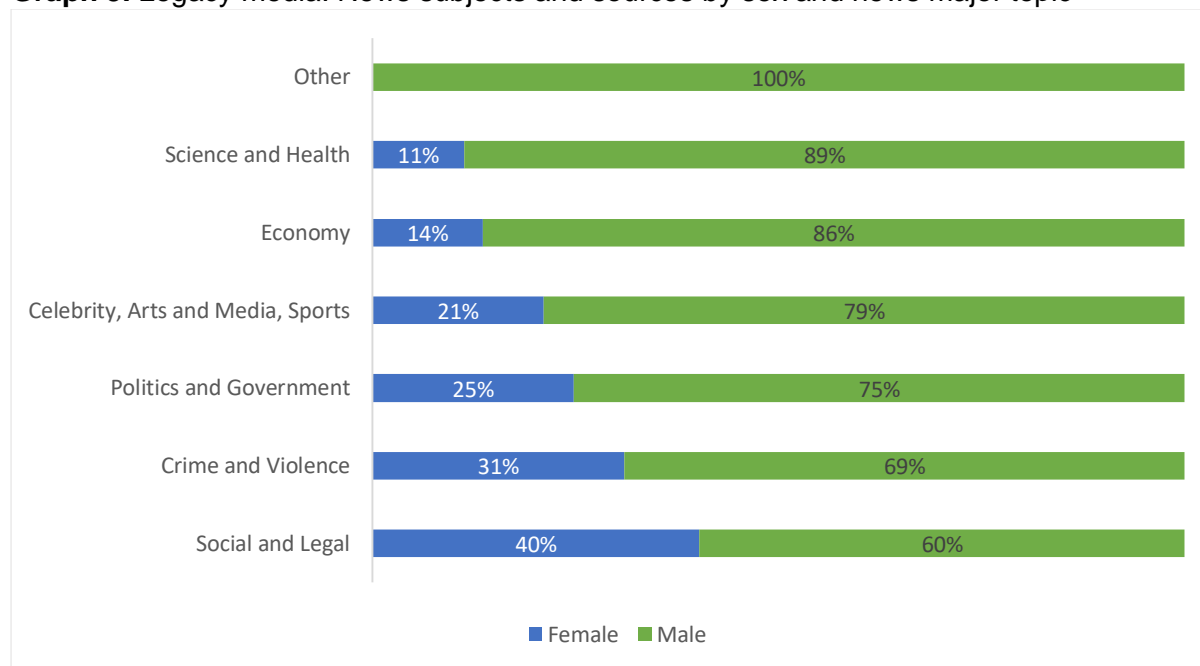
*Total N: Science and Health 71; Economy 96; Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports 57; Politics and Government 105; Crime and Violence 113; Social and Legal 82; Other 2.

If we then look at the scope of the stories (Graph 4), women are included more in Sub-Regional/Regional (which for us means European and/or related to the European Union and its institutions) and Foreign/International stories than in Local or National ones. This is probably due to the presence of European women leaders - such as Ursula Von der Leyen and Christine Lagarde - in the international geopolitical framework, who were highly mediated during the Covid-19 pandemic; but it also shows the relative invisibility of women at the national level, including those involved in decision-making positions and/or in the public debate related to the pandemic.

Graph 4. Legacy media. News subjects and sources by sex and news scope*
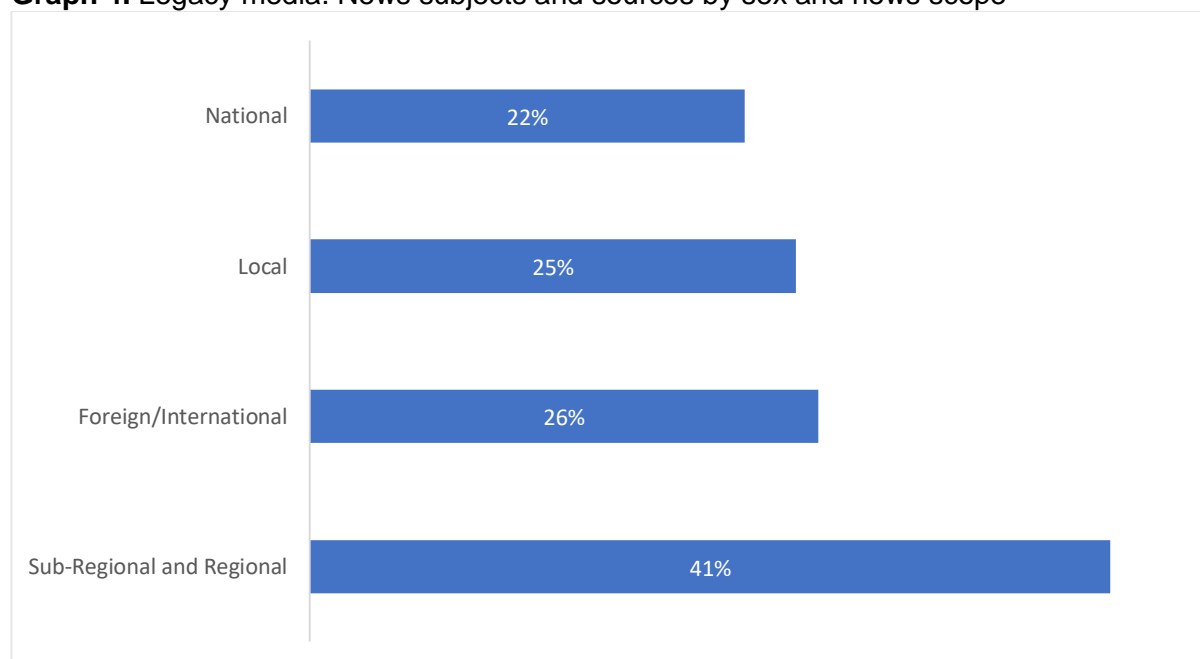
Looking at occupation/position, women overcome the average (24%) almost only in the least frequent categories. In particular, they reach 63% among people with a "not stated" occupation or position, due to a lack of sufficient information to establish the women's social role, obviously because it is irrelevant to the purpose of the news. This has been the case in all GMMP editions, and appears as a worrying result because it indicates the persistence of trend that makes visible mostly anonymous women, whose social or professional role is not considered relevant. It is also worth pointing out that women are only 22% in the most frequent category, that of the politicians: although we witness an increase from 2015 (15%), Italian women politicians – who currently constitute 35% of the elected members of the Italian parliament – continue to be under-represented in the Italian legacy news media. Also problematic in terms of non-representation of the social and professional conditions of women, are data concerning academic experts, scientists as well as health workers: in all these sphere - crucial to the pandemic context - women do participate, particularly in the medical profession and as health workers, and they have played a fundamental scientific as well as caring role through the last months. Yet their voices do not seem to be worth listening to.

Table 3. Legacy media. News subjects and sources by sex and occupation/ position

OCCUPATION/ POSITION	% Women	% Men	Total N
Homemaker, parent	100%	0%	3
Not stated	63%	37%	52
Royalty, monarch, deposed monarch, etc.	50%	50%	2
Office or service worker, non-management worker	50%	50%	2
Child, young person no other occupation given	50%	50%	4
Other	50%	50%	2
Criminal, suspect no other occupation given	43%	57%	7
Celebrity, artist, actor, writer, singer, TV personality	38%	62%	13
Agriculture, mining, fishing, forestry	33%	67%	3
Lawyer, judge, magistrate, legal advocate, etc.	29%	71%	14
Activist or worker in civil society org., NGO, trade union	29%	71%	7
Media professional, journalist, film-maker, etc.	25%	75%	4
Politician/ member of parliament, ...	22%	78%	207
Government employee, public servant, spokesperson, etc.	21%	79%	28
Academic expert, lecturer, teacher	21%	79%	24
Business person, exec, manager, stock broker...	17%	83%	47
Science/ technology professional, engineer, etc.	14%	86%	7
Sportsperson, athlete, player, coach, referee	9%	91%	22
Doctor, dentist, health specialist	7%	93%	30
Police, military, para-military, militia, fire officer	0%	100%	16
Health worker, social worker, childcare worker	0%	100%	2
Tradesperson, artisan, labourer, truck driver, etc.	0%	100%	3
Religious figure, priest, monk, rabbi, mullah, nun	0%	100%	13
Sex worker	0%	100%	0
Student, pupil, schoolchild	0%	100%	9
Villager or resident no other occupation given	0%	100%	3

| Retired person, pensioner no other occupation given | 0% | 100% | 0 |
| Unemployed no other occupation given | 0% | 100% | 2 |

As far as the function in the news, we notice that, in general, subjects/voices are concentrated in three main categories: they are people who make the news as subject/object of the news (58% out of a total of 526 people), people interviewed as spokespersons for associations, companies, institutions, organizations, parties, etc., and, to a lower degree, people interviewed as experts. Other functions, i.e. popular opinion, personal experience, eye-witness, have lower visibility, and role, with percentages not exceeding 2%. This general finding leads to a first general reflection on the relevance of the people interviewed as spokesperson or expert. They are not only a valuable source of information from a qualitative point of view, playing a key role in explaining the nature of the topics or facts covered by the news (on behalf of an entity they represent, or based on an expertise they are recognized for), but also from a quantitative point of view. Apart from people who make the news as objects/topics, i.e. protagonists of events that exceed the threshold of newsworthiness, spokespersons and experts remain the most visible people in Italian daily information.

Table 4. Legacy media. News subjects and sources by sex and function

FUNCTION	% Women	% Men	Total N	Total %
Popular Opinion	63%	38%	8	2%
Personal Experience	33%	67%	9	2%
Spokesperson	30%	70%	115	22%
Do not know	29%	71%	7	1%
Subject	24%	76%	305	58%
Expert or commentator	12%	88%	76	14%
Eye Witness	0%	100%	4	1%
Other	50%	50%	2	0%

If we look at these data by gender, the findings concerning the functions of people in the news confirm a percentage of female news subjects following the general average (24%): as spokespersons they exceed the average of 24%, reaching 30%, that is twice as much as the findings from the 2015 edition (13%). Experts, on the other hand, stand at much lower values, recording a share of 12% vs. 18% in 2015.

If we look at the distribution of spokespersons by occupational category, in 59% of cases they are politicians or members of parliament or government, 12% are businesswomen, managers or entrepreneurs, 9% are government employees or civil servants, 6% are activists or workers in civil society organizations, 3% are doctors, 3% are academics and 3% are lawyers, magistrates or other legal professionals. Considering that the most represented categories are those of women politicians and businesswomen, this growth in their media visibility could be a reflection of their actual increased presence in the world of politics and business respectively. Indeed, the 2018 general elections marked a turning point by bringing female representation in Italian political institutions (Chamber and Senate) above the 30% threshold for the first time, vs. 19.5% in the previous legislature, in force in 2015. As regards the business sector, the Golfo-Mosca law on gender parity in the boards of directors of listed companies (L.

120/2011) and the Presidential Decree 251/2012 on representation in public subsidiaries led to a progressive increase in women representation in companies, from values of 7.4% in the pre-law period to 36.3% in 2020 for listed companies and from 11.2% to 28.4% for public subsidiaries, with a turning point in 2017, when the 30% threshold was exceeded for the first time.

As far as female experts are concerned, the decrease detected in 2020 can perhaps be ascribed to an impact of the Covid-19 agenda on the monitored information. All 173 news items related to Covid-19 (constituting 25% of the total 472 news items recorded for all the 5 types of monitored media) show a much lower visibility of women in all the three most frequent functions, both in legacy and digital media: women news subjects/topics go from an overall presence of 27% (all data, across the five media) to 12%, spokeswomen from 30% to 15% and female experts from 13% to 6%. Considering that almost half of all experts (41%) are interviewed in Covid-19-related news, it seems reasonable to assume that the overall decrease of female experts from 2015 to 2020 is due to the impact of the Covid-19 agenda, as well as to how media have organized their operations in this context (see also Padovani et al. 2021). These findings suggest that little effort was made across the media to diversify their sources so as to help the public gaining a better understanding of the uncertainties imposed by Covi-19 and its management; and that clearly no interest was expressed for women's perspectives and understanding, notwithstanding a media narrative that - at least during the first wave of the pandemic - highlighted to role of women doctors, researchers, and health care workers, It is interesting to consider if and to what extent this phenomenon has also occurred globally and/or in other project countries.

We also looked at the age of subjects/sources and coded for age when it was explicitly mentioned in print or TV stories or where the monitors were able to detect the age, and in this way, we coded around 30% of print sources and 81% of TV sources. As Table 5 shows there is an inverse relationship between gender and age: as women's age increase, their presence in the news decreases.

Table 5. Legacy media. News subjects and sources by sex, age and medium

AGE	PRINT			TELEVISION		
	% Women	% Men	Total N	% Women	% Men	Total N
12 and under	50%	50%	2	0%	0%	0
13-18	67%	33%	6	100%	0%	1
19-34	29%	71%	21	38%	63%	16
35-49	29%	71%	24	32%	68%	22
50-64	20%	80%	20	13%	87%	38
65-79	0%	100%	13	5%	95%	20
80 years or more	0%	100%	3	20%	80%	5

Previous GMMP editions indicated that women in Italian media made the news as victims in a much higher proportion than men; and that their family role is more often made explicit. The data from GMMP 2020 confirm this trend: one woman in five appears in the news like a victim vs. 4% of men, and one woman in five is presented in the news as wife, mother, daughter of somebody, whereas for men the percentage is much lower.

Graph 5. Legacy media. Women and men portrayed as victims or survivor*
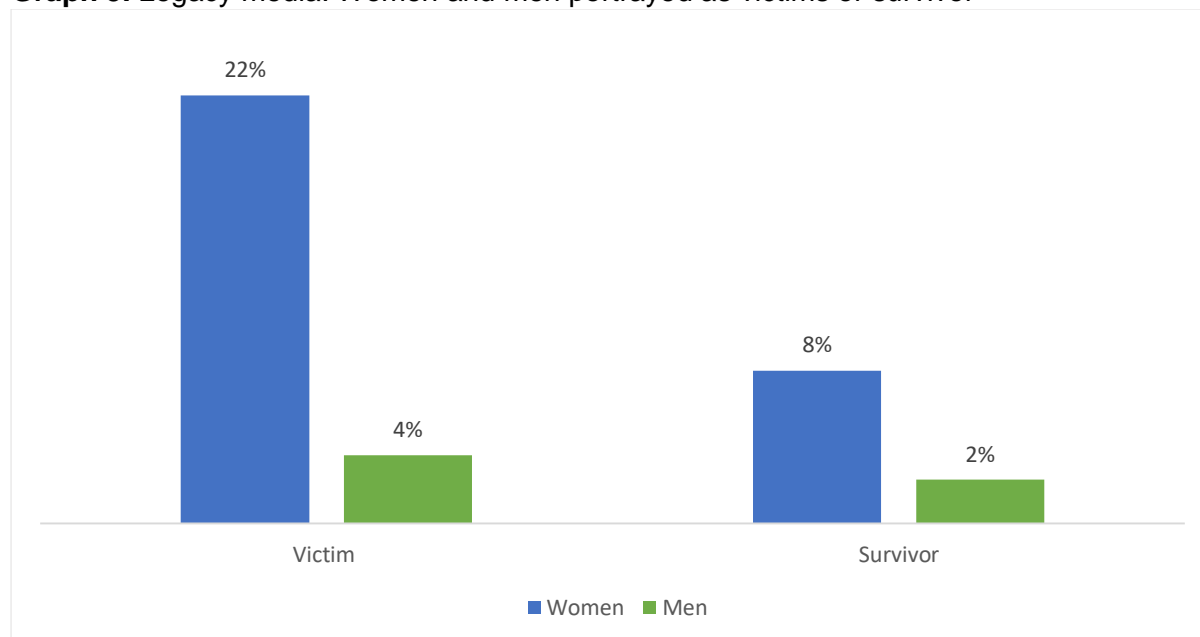
*Total N: Women 127; Men 399

Graph 6. Legacy media. Women and men identified by family status*
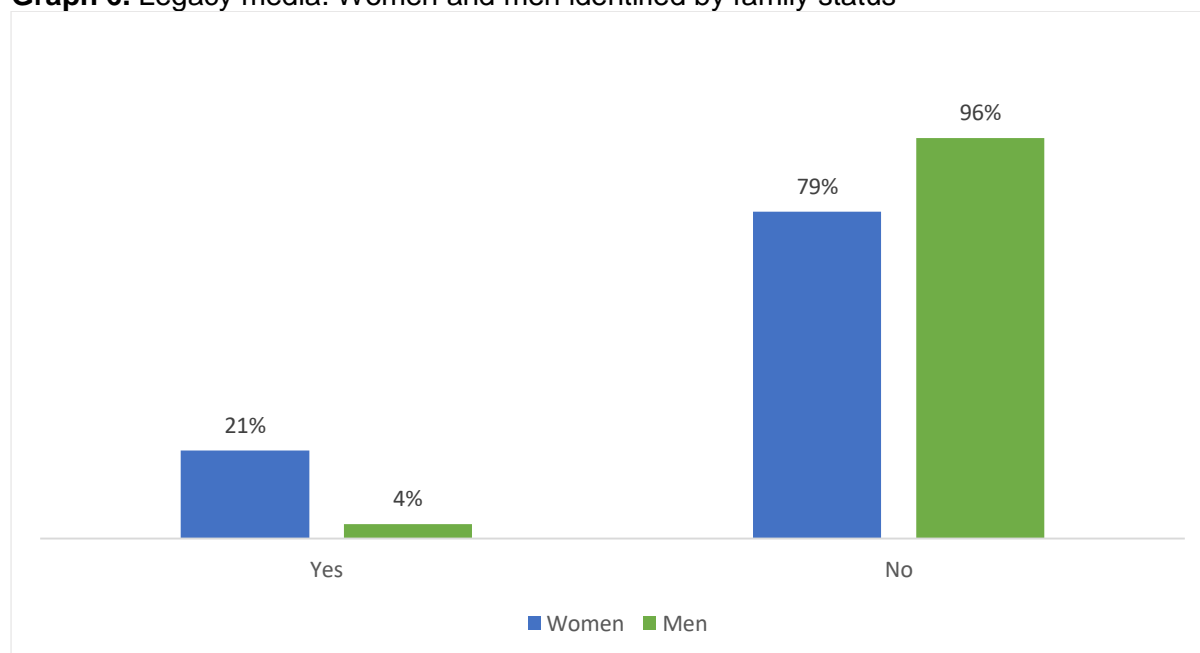
Special questions

The GMMP 2020 included three "special questions", identified and framed by national coordinators as relevant to each national context. The Italian team decided to focus on the use of language in news media, and in particular on its gender-sensitivity.

One of the topics that is still widely debated in the Italian public sphere, and in the mass media, concerns the fairness and inclusivity of the language used in news stories. This is because of a still limited capacity of news media to commit to, and to perform gender-sensitive practices when it comes to reflecting gendered realities through the use of language. A growing

awareness on this specific issue is reflected by the frequent calls for fairer use of language by civic and feminist associations; and it should be mentioned that some media institutions, such as the Ordine dei Giornalisti, have taken initiatives in recent years to promote a more inclusive use of the language in news-making. The special questions considered by the Italian 2020 monitors aimed at assessing the extent to which Italian media recognize the identity, autonomy and societal status of women and men in a fair manner:

- Special question 1: Is the person presented with first name and last name?
- Special question 2: Is the person presented with professional/institutional title? (eg. engineer, doctor, minister, president)?
- Special question 3: If (the answers to the SQ 1 and SQ 2 are) yes, is the grammatical gender of the title consistent with the semantic, i.e. the gender of the referent?

Regarding this last question, it is worth specifying that in Italian often the professional/institutional title is used in its masculine form, even when referred to a woman. This is a violation of the grammatical system, which requires the grammatical gender of a noun always be consistent with the semantic gender, i.e. the gender of the referent, due to a cultural resistance to recognize the advancement of women in professions and institutions.

All special questions concern people in the news.

As far as special question 1, the findings show that women are introduced by first and last name in 76% of the cases vs. 82% of the male cases, with some differences between types of media: for print media the proportion is similar, but the percentages are higher (84% vs. 90%), for TV the proportion is similar, but the percentages are lower (61% vs. 73%), while for radio the proportion is reversed, with 62% of women presented by name and surname vs. 52% of men.

For what concerns special question 2, women are less often than men presented with a professional or institutional title, in average 54% vs. 72%. Again, significant differences are found across the media: the press registers a lower gender gap, with 64% of women presented with a professional or institutional title vs. 72% of men, whereas radio and TV register higher gaps (respectively: 30% women vs. 73% men for radio, 39% women vs. 72% men in TV).

Finally, regarding special question 3, our findings show that grammatical gender of the title or job name is consistent with the gender of the female referent in 79% of the cases, with some differences between the type of media: radio presents full consistency, print reaches 77% and TV 75%.

JOURNALISTS AND REPORTERS

The overall presence of female journalists across legacy media is 47% out of a total of 270 news (presented or reported), a value that indicates a growth of 11 percentage points from 2015 (36%).

If we look at the role of journalists by medium (Table 6), women are over-represented as TV presenters (60%) and under-represented as radio presenters (21%). They are nevertheless also over-represented as radio reporters (67%) but this appears as an infrequent role.

Table 6. Legacy media. Journalists by sex, role and media

	PRINT			RADIO			TELEVISION			TOTAL		
ROLE	% Female	% Male	Total N	% Female	% Male	Total N	% Female	% Male	Total N	% Female	% Male	Total N
Presenter	n/a	n/a	n/a	21%	79%	42	60%	40%	55	43%	57%	97
Reporter	45%	55%	108	67%	33%	15	50%	50%	50	49%	51%	173

Comparing female and male journalists by scope of the news, the first appear to cover more than the latter national news, but they report less international news.

Table 7. Legacy media. Reporters by sex and scope of the news

SCOPE	% Female	% Male	Total N
National	65%	57%	106
Local	17%	18%	30
Foreign/International	14%	21%	31
Sub-Regional and Regional	4%	3%	6
TOTAL	100%	100%	173

As far as the topic, it is worth pointing out that, proportionally, female journalists deal with Science and Health stories more than male journalists, and male journalists cover Crime and violence stories more than female colleagues. Otherwise, there are no remarkable differences.

Table 8. Reporters by sex and major topic of the news

TOPIC	% Female	% Male	Total N
Science and Health	23%	15%	32
Politics and Government	20%	21%	36
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	15%	15%	26
Economy	18%	19%	32
Social and Legal	13%	10%	20
Crime and Violence	11%	19%	26
Other	0%	1%	1
TOTAL	100%	100%	173

Finally, male journalists, proportionally, select female sources slightly more than female journalists, who, conversely, choose male sources slightly more than men. Female journalists select female sources in 48% of the cases, male journalists in 52% of the cases.

JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE: ON WOMEN'S CENTRALITY, GENDER STEREOTYPES AND RIGHTS-BASED REPORTING

Only 2 stories in our sample make explicit reference to issues of gender equality/inequality or human rights. Both of these news are found in the economics realm: one is reported by a woman and one by a man. In percentage, they represent 1% out of a total of 220 news, which is 5 percentage points less than 2015.

Overall stories presenting women as a central focus are 11% out of a total of 220 (+ 3% with respect to 8% in 2015).

Not surprisingly, women are central especially in news about Crime and Violence (28%), in line with their status as victims or survivors in about a quarter of the stories.

Table 9. Legacy media. Stories with women as a central focus by major topic

TOPIC	% Yes	% No	Total N
Crime and Violence	28%	72%	36
Social and Legal	16%	84%	31
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	15%	85%	34
Politics and Government	12%	88%	42
Economy	0%	100%	33
Science and Health	0%	100%	43
Other	0%	100%	1
TOTAL	11%	89%	220

There are only 2 news stories where stereotypes are challenged: one about Politics and Government and the other about Crime and Violence. In percentage terms, they cover 1% out of a total of 220 news, that is 5 points less than in 2015 when we found 6% of stories that challenged stereotypes.

Of interest is a television story, which deserves mentioning as good practice. The story concerns the murder of the two lovers Daniele De Santis and Eleonora Manta, who have been murdered by the 21 years old student Antonio De Marco. The murder which took place in the city Lecce was highly debated across the country. In particular, this news focuses on writer Edoardo Albinati's reflections who commented the murder by referring to his recent book *Cuori fanatici. Amore e ragione* (Fanatic hearts. Love and reasons). This story challenges stereotypes since the act of violence is not presented according to mainstream standards, rather it is considered as an answer to the toxic masculinity performed by some men. This type of violence can arise between men because one of them appears to be more vulnerable and, as a consequence, the other one takes advantage of the situation and attacks. Referring to his book, Edoardo Albinati proposes an uncommon reading about gender violence.

DIGITAL NEWS ON WEBSITES AND TWITTER

People in the news

As reported above, the overall presence of women as news subjects and sources across digital media is 28%, with some differences between the Internet and Twitter.

**Graph. 7** Digital media. News subjects and sources by sex and medium*
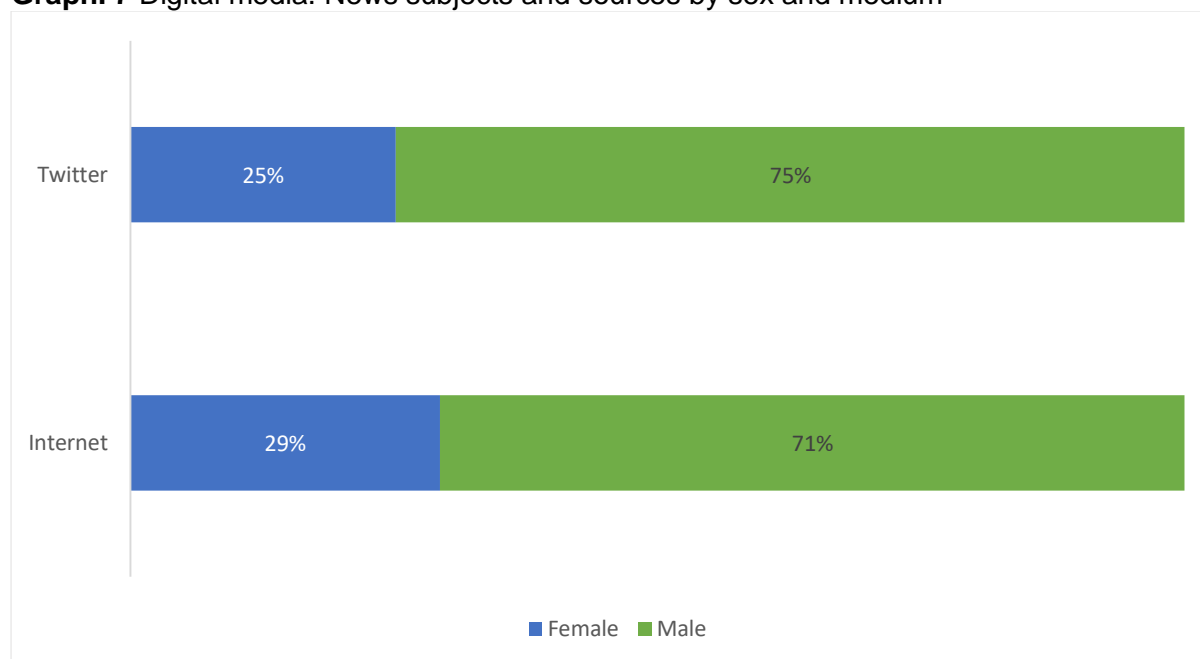
*Total N: Twitter 134; Internet 328

Comparing the 2020 data with those we collected in 2015, the visibility of women as news subject and sources on the Internet remains the same (29%), whereas on Twitter we see an increase by 8% (from 17% in 2015 to 25% in 2020).

As far as the topics, women are less than half of the news subjects or sources across all the topics, except for Gender & Related, which covers, however, only 5 stories. Otherwise, as for the legacy media, we can identify two groups: there are three topics with a percentage of female presence above average 28%, and they are the same as for the print, radio and TV - Politics and Government, Social and Legal, and Crime and Violence - although with different values and ranking; and then there are three topics with a percentage of female presence below average, the same as for legacy media, and with the same ranking: Celebrity, Arts, Media and Sports, Economy, and Science and Health.

Graph 8. Digital media. News subjects and sources by sex and news major topic*
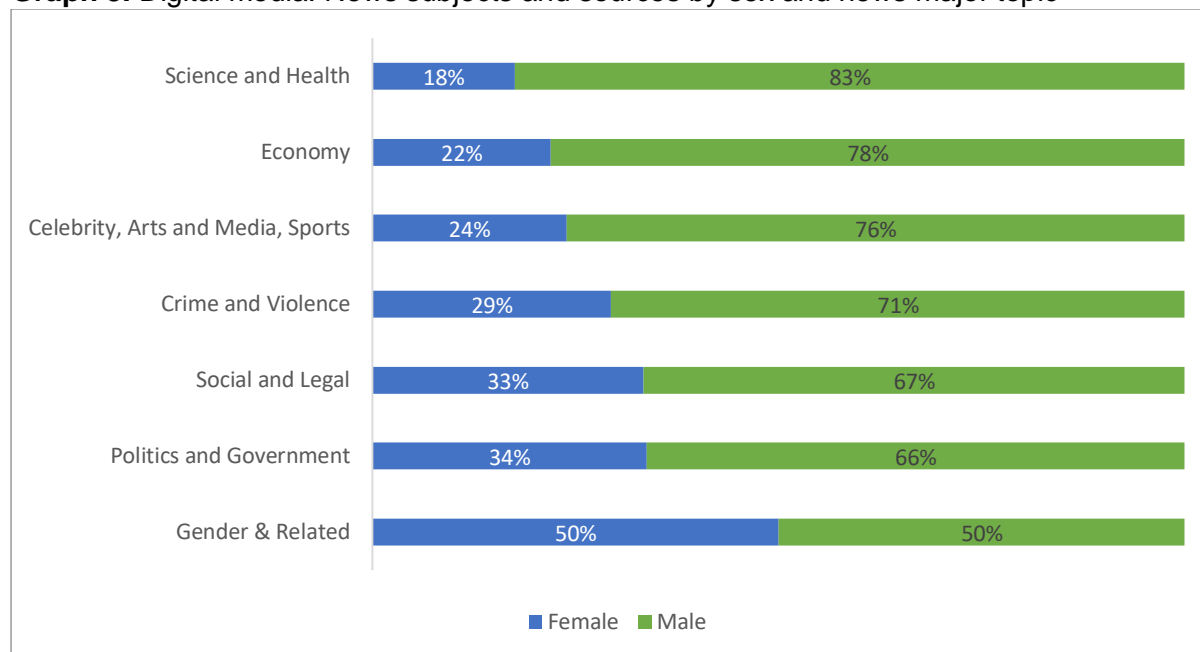
*Total N: Science and Health 40; Economy 41; Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports 88; Crime and Violence 160; Politics and Government 83; Social and Legal 42.

When we look at occupation/position, findings show a picture that is partially different from that observed for TV, radio and print media. In digital media women reach a high percentage among people with a "not stated" occupation or position, but they also overcome the average of 28% as politicians or members of parliament or government, and as professionals in the legal sector (lawyer, judge, magistrate and so on). Interestingly, they reach a high value as criminals, which is a frequent category.

Table 10. Digital media. News subjects and sources by sex and occupation/ position

OCCUPATION/ POSITION	% Women	% Men	Total N
Homemaker, parent	75%	25%	8
Celebrity, artist, actor, writer, singer, TV personality	71%	29%	21
Other only as last resort & explain	50%	50%	2
Not stated	46%	54%	61
Academic expert, lecturer, teacher	44%	56%	9
Activist or worker in civil society org., NGO, trade union	40%	60%	5
Politician/ member of parliament, ...	35%	65%	107
Office or service worker, non-management worker	33%	67%	3
Media professional, journalist, film-maker, etc.	30%	70%	10
Lawyer, judge, magistrate, legal advocate, etc.	28%	72%	29
Science/ technology professional, engineer, etc.	25%	75%	8
Criminal, suspect	24%	76%	42
Doctor, dentist, health specialist	20%	80%	10
Student, pupil, schoolchild	15%	85%	13
Business person, exec, manager, stock broker...	11%	89%	28
Police, military, para-military, militia, fire officer	10%	90%	10
Child, young person no other occupation given	8%	92%	12
Government employee, public servant, spokesperson, etc.	8%	92%	26

OCCUPATION/ POSITION	% Women	% Men	Total N
Royalty, monarch, deposed monarch, etc.	0%	100%	2
Tradesperson, artisan, laborer, truck driver, etc.	0%	100%	1
Agriculture, mining, fishing, forestry	0%	100%	1
Religious figure, priest, monk, rabbi, mullah, nun	0%	100%	4
Sportsperson, athlete, player, coach, referee	0%	100%	39
Villager or resident no other occupation given	0%	100%	3

As far as the function in the news, the picture is similar to that found in the legacy media. In general, subject, spokesperson, and expert are the three most frequent functions; and women reach a value in line with their overall average presence (28%) as subjects of the news and overcome this average as spokespersons, whilst they are under-represented as experts.

Table 11. Digital media. News subjects and sources by sex and function

FUNCTION	% Women	% Men	Total N	Total %
Personal Experience	50%	50%	12	3%
Spokesperson	31%	69%	42	10%
Subject	29%	71%	309	71%
Eye Witness	25%	75%	4	1%
Expert or commentator	14%	86%	65	15%
Do not know	0%	100%	4	1%

As far as news subjects or sources portrayed as victims or survivor, and identified on the basis of their family status, data are available only for the Internet.

Internet gives more visibility to victims of both genders, but the overall data seem congruent with those of the legacy media: women make the news as victims (and more rarely, as survivors) more than men; one woman in five makes the news as a victim, one woman in four appears as survivor (vs. 10% of men).

Graph 9. Internet. Women and men portrayed as victims or survivor*
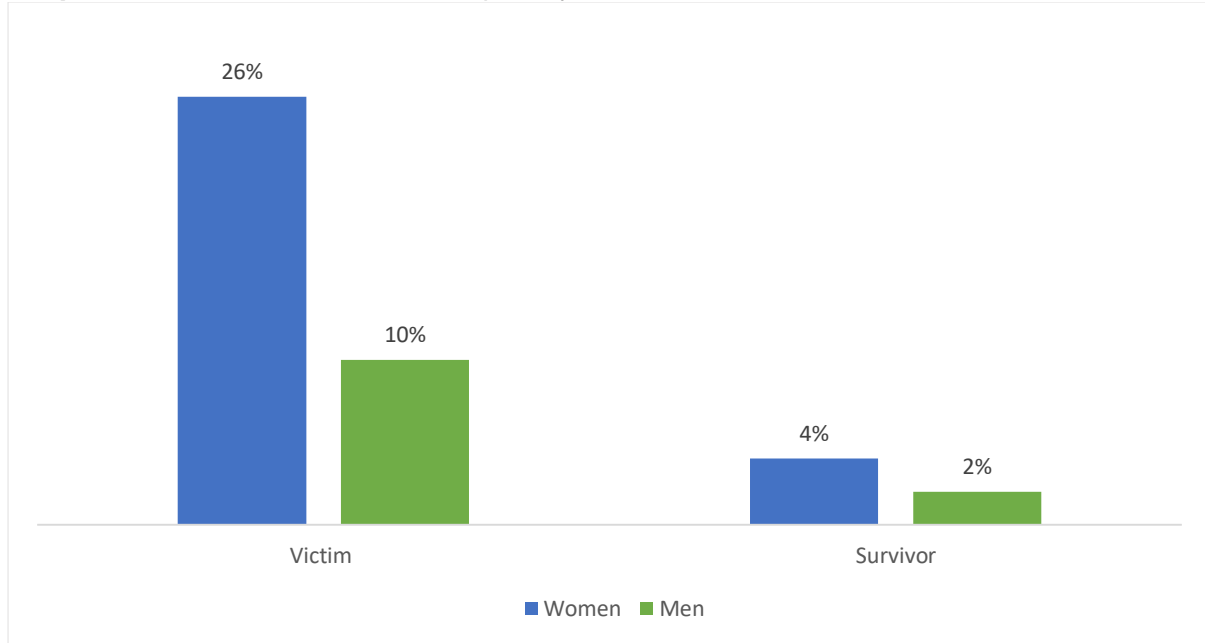
A similar picture is portrayed by findings on identification by family status. Compared to legacy media, the Internet most often uses this kind of identification, both for women and men, but the gender gap remains: women are identified by their family status twice as much as men.

Graph 10. Internet. Women and men identified by family status*
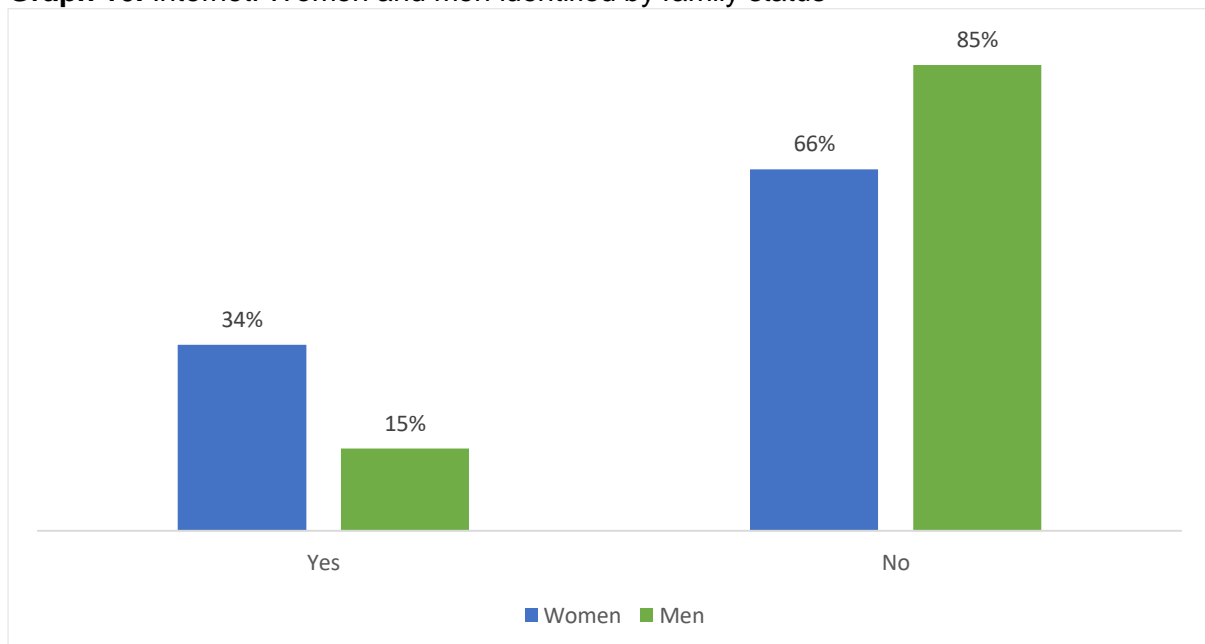
Special questions

Women are presented with the first and last name in 80% out of cases vs. 70% of men, with relevant variation between the Internet and Twitter: Internet identifies fewer women than men with the first and last name (83% vs. 89%); on the contrary, Twitter identifies more women than men with both, first and last name (69% vs. 31%).

As for the person's job title, digital media show overall gender equity, by recording the same percentage for women and for men: 45%. Even in this case, the Internet, like traditional media, refers to job titles for men more than for women (54% vs. 49%); whilst Twitter uses the titles more for women than for men (31% vs. 22%).

Finally, Twitter attests shows the highest level of consistency between the gender title and the female gender of the news subject or source, 100% of the cases; Internet also performs well (97%).

Journalists

In most cases (49%) digital news do not provide information that allows identification of journalists the gender. In the remaining cases, the overall presence of female journalists is 32% (out of a total of 130), with no relevant difference between the Internet and Twitter, as the Table 12 shows.

Table 12. Digital media. Journalist by sex by medium

	INTERNET	TWITTER
Female	30%	33%
Male	70%	67%
TOTAL N	47	83

Comparing data with those of 2015, both Internet and Twitter show an increased visibility of female journalists, respectively plus 17 (from 13% to 30%) and plus 25 percentage points (from 13% and 8%).

Finally, as far the selection of Internet news subjects or sources, female journalists select female news subjects or sources more than their male colleagues (33% vs. 24%), who prefer male news subjects or sources (76% vs. 67%).

Journalistic practice: on women's centrality, gender stereotypes, and right-based reporting

Like for the legacy media, very few stories make reference to issues of gender equality/inequality or human rights: 8 (3%) out of a total of 252, 3 of which focusing on Politics and Government, and 5 looking at Social and Legal issues. All of these are Internet stories.

Stories with women as a central focus are 21% out of a total of 252 (Internet news plus Twitter posts). Women are central in 4 of a total 5 Gender & Related Stories, then, like for traditional media, they emerge in Crime and Violence stories; but unlike TV radio and print, they are central in 1/3 of the news about Politics and Government (vs. 12% in legacy media).

Table 13. Digital media. Stories with women as a central focus by major topic

TOPIC	% Yes	% No	Total N
Gender & Related	80%	20%	5
Crime and Violence	32%	68%	53
Politics and Government	27%	73%	45
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	21%	79%	56
Social and Legal	19%	81%	26
Science and Health	3%	97%	29
Economy	3%	97%	38
TOTAL	21%	79%	252

The stories that challenge stereotypes are only 10 (4%), more than those found in traditional media, but less than those found in 2015.

FOCUS ON Covid-19 NEWS

Covid-19-related stories cover 25% out of a total of 472 news, with some variations across the five media.

These stories are reported in 51% of the cases by female journalists out of a total of 131 reporters. Table 14 shows some differences in terms of the topic by sex of the journalist. Female journalists report more stories of Economy and Social and Legal than male journalists, who cover more stories of Politics and Government. As for Science and Health and Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports, which are the two most reported topics, we see a balance between male and female journalists.

Table 14. Covid-19 stories: reporters by topic and by sex

TOPIC	% Female	% Male	Total N
Politics and Government	33%	67%	6
Economy	67%	33%	24
Science and Health	50%	50%	56
Social and Legal	67%	33%	12
Crime and Violence	0%	100%	1
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	41%	59%	32
Other	33%	67%	6
TOTAL	51%	49%	173

As for the subjects of Covid-19 news, women are only 11%. Comparing this value with the average of the news subjects and sources across the five media (26%), we argue that the Covid-19 agenda has contributed to reduce the overall visibility of women (from 26% across all stories to 11%).

When we look at the most frequent functions of the news subjects and sources in Covid-19 stories (Table 15), we realize that women are marginalized across all functions, especially as experts or commentators.

Table 15. Covid-19 stories: news subjects and sources by function in the news and by sex

FUNCTION	% Women	% Men	Total N
Spokesperson	15%	85%	46
Subject	12%	88%	76
Expert or commentator	6%	94%	58
Eye witness	0%	100%	1
TOTAL	11%	89%	100%

Looking at the top 5 occupations of the news subjects and sources in Covid-19 stories these findings are confirmed: women are marginalized across all five professional areas, especially as doctors and academic experts.

Table 16. Covid-19 stories: news subjects and sources by occupation and by sex

OCCUPATION	% Women	% Men	Total N
Politician/ member of parliament, ...	15%	85%	67
Doctor, dentist, health specialist	6%	94%	35
Academic expert, lecturer, teacher	5%	95%	19
Government employee, public servant, spokesperson, etc.	12%	88%	17
Sportsperson, athlete, player, coach, referee	0%	100%	16

CASE STUDIES

Stories that are blatantly stereotyped

Case Study 1.

Title of article: Arrest of an Italian woman in Syria

Media: Radio DeeJay **(Radio Channel)**

The radio story is about Alice Brignoli, an Italian "foreign fighter". She was living in Syria with her family, but after several years spent amongst ISIS terrorists, she was arrested and repatriated to Italy. This topic is highly stereotypical because it describes Alice Brignoli as a mother and a wife, underlining her social role of being the typical woman who is expected to live following the canonical standards of society. On the contrary, she also participates in a terrorist group and acts as a foreign fighter, which is presented as typical for men. The very language adopted in the story reflects the idea of a woman who cannot be considered anything else except in her role of mother and wife.

Case Study 2.

Title of article: Introduction of Maria Ludovica Campana

Media: Radio Italia **(Radio Channel)**

The radio story concerns Maria Ludovica Campana, a 24 years old showgirl, who is presented in the news only by referring to her body. She is presented as the likely new girlfriend of Flavio Briatore, a well known Italian businessman. This topic is highly stereotypical because the protagonist of the news, Maria Ludovica Campana, is only presented in relation to her appearance, and the (male) journalist only describes her body and her body shapes. Moreover, at the end of the article, the journalist directly links her to Flavio Briatore, who appears to be a fundamental figure in her life. Indeed, the journalist makes some unfounded innuendoes to her sexual life with Briatore. The stereotypes are reproduced also at a linguistic level, because the words used to refer to Maria Ludovica Campana indicate her as an object since she was mostly described for her appearance, but there is also the underpinning idea that she has become famous only thanks to her connection to Flavio Briatore. This is an ambiguous item in the news agenda, since we cannot clearly understand its role in the radio service ... what is the news?

Case Study 3.

Title of article: "Striscia la notizia"*, Minister Azzolina in a (minuscule) bra: Angelica Massera, racy stuff in prime time

*Stricia la notizia (The news strip) is the name of a TV satirical program

Media: www.liberoquotidiano.it **(Internet)**

The article is about an actress performing a sexist comical imitation of the Italian minister of education, Lucia Azzolina. The article features a big picture of the actress impersonating the minister as she's showing off her (quoted from the title) "minuscule" bra. The picture doesn't show her face, only her chest, which can be connected to the idea that women are bodies and not people. Both the picture and the language of the article reinforce gender stereotypes: the news is about the Italian minister of education and the woman comedian who impersonates her, but the entire article is centered around hyper sexualizing the concept of education and the role of minister. The news does not adopt a critical approach; rather it describes the actress as a "beautiful and hot comedian from the web, with a Sicilian accent and well-visible breasts just beneath the jacket". This ties together multiple, stereotypical images of womanhood: the teacher, the one who seduces, the woman who should leave politics and power to men because she is not apt to govern and hold positions of authority. Instead of criticizing the minister's decisions with satire, the comedic factor lies in the sexualization of the woman and of her institutional role. The comedian's artistry is also reduced to simply being "a beautiful and hot comedian," without mentioning anything about her character and abilities as a professional.

Stories that convey more subtle stereotypes

Case Study 4.

Title of article: The weapons to prevent a second wave

Media: QN Il Resto del Carlino **(Newspaper)**

The newspaper shows a photo with some girls wearing a mask while they are taking a selfie. This photo is attached to an article about how to ward off Covid-19. In fact, the message of the photo associated to this type of article underlines the fact that these are the moments in which we can risk contracting the virus. This news presents subtle stereotypes since women are depicted as vain, even in relation to grave issues, The photograph of the two girls suggests that women are always dedicated to showing off, even in a situation of crisis. According to the commonplace, women are selfish and superficial people who want to be in the spotlight, and this article seems to convey the message that nothing can stop a woman from behaving like this.

Case Study 5.

Title of article: The couple from Lecce, arrested the killer, there was a plan of torturing them

Media: Il Messaggero **(Newspaper)**

This news concerns the murder that happened in Lecce, Southern Italy, where a 21 years old student killed two young lovers. The murderer confessed that in his eyes the couple were too happy together and he could not stand this, so he decided to kill them to put an end to his own suffering. This article is discriminatory in the language used to talk about the two lovers, because when the journalist presents the male victim, he refers to his occupation, while the female victim is only included as his girlfriend, as if she did not count as an individual, but only in relation with him. In fact, the language used gives the idea that the social role of women is undervalued and they are important only in relation to the male figures of their lives.

Case Study 6.

Title of article: He killed Gaia and Camilla and did not ask for forgiveness

Media: La Stampa **(Newspaper)**

The story concerns a car accident that happened in Rome, whereby two young girls were killed, Gaia and Camilla. This article presents subtle stereotypes since the language used shows no respect for the full personality and life of the victims. The two girls are only presented with their first name, and this can indicate the fact that women's social identity is more and more diminished. Calling the two victims only by their names indicates that they are not important as individuals, and that anyone else could have been in their place. Language is very important in this article because it is obvious that women's social role is not considered.

Case Study 7.

Title of article: The Pope calls Fabiola Gianotti, director of CERN, in the Pontifical Academy of Sciences

Media: www.ilfattoquotidiano.it (**Internet**)

Pope Francis has appointed Fabiola Gianotti, director of CERN, to the Pontifical Academy of Science. The language of the article is very plain: it briefly describes Giannotti's biography, along with a short characterization of the Institution of which Fabiola Gianotti becomes a member. The story also suggests the exceptionality of a female membership both in an institution (the Pontifical Academy) and in a disciplinary field (natural and mathematical sciences) that are historically male-dominated. The article concerns a woman who has achieved a prestigious position, without dwelling too much on the fact that she is a woman but rather valuing her scientific achievements. In doing so, it points out that women deserve top positions, even in STEM careers, whereas we know women are rare, thus challenging sexist stereotypes. However, the exceptionality of the fact as well as the resonance given to it by the

journalist subtly reaffirm that it is an exception to the rule that women are absent from these places, thus implicitly hinting at the stereotypes at stake.

Case Study 8.

Title of article: She moved from Lecco to Syria with her Isis militant husband: Alice Brignoli was arrested. Repatriated with her 4 children

Media: www.ilfattoquotidiano.it (**Internet**)

The article reports the case of Alice Brignoli, who was arrested in Syria for conspiracy and terrorism and was repatriated with her 4 children. She was on the list of Italian foreign fighters with her husband Mohamed Koraichi (dead in Syria). According to the investigations, Koraichi directly participated in ISIS military operations while Brignoli raised her children by teaching them the cause of jihad. The article contextualizes the case of Alice Brignoli within the broader international legal context. It is quite ambivalent in describing Alice both as a woman who follows the husband's ideology and raises her children (thus using stereotypical traits), and as a key actor in the Isis' organization aimed at educating children to the jihad (thus challenging stereotypical narratives). The article is worthy further analsisd because the ambivalence clearly exemplifies the limits of gender neutrality and the difficulties journalism faces in freeing a female character from stereotypical social roles, even when telling a story based on facts that can be equally enacted by a male character. The very choice of almost all news outlets to emphasize the fighter's gender as an element of newsworthiness hints at this contradiction.

Stories that are a missed opportunity or gender-blind

Case Study 9.

Title of article: Italian's mental health

Media: Canale 5 **(TV channel)**

This television story concerns the Italian people's mental health during the period of the pandemic of Covid-19. In fact, there has been an increase of the number of people suffering from depression, insomnia and stress as a consequence of the lockdown and the sanitary crisis. The missed opportunity resides in not having highlighted the fact that this pandemic had a major impact on women, more than on men. In general, women suffered more than men, for many reasons: for instance, many women had to leave their job to take care of the house and their children. Moreover, a great number of women have been victims of domestic violence, since they were obliged to stay home with their aggressor day and night. As a consequence, women suffered more, but the news does not mention the different experiences of suffering between men and women.

Stories that are gender-aware

Case Study 10.

Title of article: The former director of Elite (and ex[-husband] of Linda Evangelista) accused of rape: «Among the victims also Carré Otis»

Media: www.ilmessaggero.it **(Internet)**

This internet story concerns Gerald Marie, the manager of a supermodel agency who is now under investigation for rape and sexual assault, including against a minor, for events occurring between the 1980s and 1990s. The article focuses on several women: the lawyer who is prosecuting the case; the journalist named Brinkworth, who at the time infiltrated to gather evidence of sexual abuse and harassment, thus suffering the same herself; and the three supermodels who were victims of those crimes. A photo depicts him with his supermodel ex-wife: he is evidently caught up in a conversation while the model looks at the camera. It is clear that the journalist writing this story is a woman who is able to imagine and represent the scenarios (in which the events took place) and the emotions involved. In this, the article is representative of how the gender of the newsmaker can contribute to shape the content and narrative style. In a case of physical violence against women like this one, the emotional connotation of events makes all the difference. The chosen image apparently clashes with the "character" of the article: it seems to convey that the supermodel ex-wife of Gerald Marie was only his female good-looking companion on that occasion (sexist cliche). In doing so, though, this very choice highlights the link between sexist cultural practices and gender violence (that is, the former create the fertile ground on which the latter is grafted and cultivated).

Case Study 11.

Title of article: Terrorism, foreign fighter Alice Brignoli was arrested: she had gone to Syria with her husband and children

Media: www.fanpage.it **(Internet)**

The article reports the arrest of the Italian foreign fighter Alice Brignoli. She was arrested in Syria thanks to international police cooperation after five years of searches. She escaped her hometown in Northern Italy to join Isis forces with her husband and three children; and she is now under investigation by international terrorism association. The tone of the article mostly reads like a typical arrest of a master criminal. In the article the woman is depicted as the active subject and repeatedly described as a "foreign fighter", stressing her role of volunteer combatant, while other journalistic sources preferred to point out her being a mother first, and an ISIS soldier secondly. The whole matter revolves around Alice's choice to convert to Islam, travel to Syria, and train her children to Jihad; she is not just the (passive and manipulated) Italian wife of an Islamic terrorist - who would have forced her to convert and join the Caliphate, as the common narrative often suggests. Actually, her husband is treated as a minor character in the story. Her role of mother is underlined only when it's pointed out that she has been in charge of her children's training and education to jihadi terrorism: this is certainly not a

(stereo)typical story of motherhood, neither the protagonist embodies a maternal, feminine figure that falls within and confirms stereotypes.

Case Study 12.

Title of article: Rome, fetuses buried with the name of the mothers without their consent. The anger of a mother.

Media: www.leggo.it **(Internet)**

The article denounces the procedures adopted by Italian hospitals to bury aborted fetus following the Catholic rite, affixing a cross on top of the grave and adding the mother's name. All of this regardless of the mother's consent or actual religion (or lack thereof) and without her being notified. This happened to the woman speaking in the story: she is upset by this happening to her and her aborted fetus, and by the lack of respect that conservative institutions show for mothers who, for whatever reason, undergo an abortion. The article reports the story and cites some of the victim's words, framing the episode as a violation of privacy and personal beliefs, since the woman in question isn't even catholic. The article reports the woman's point of view in an objective way without letting out any judgment against her choice to have an abortion, but challenging widespread conservative opinions about gender roles. It sympathizes with the woman even if it does not cite specific sources nor goes into much detail about the reality of women being denied basic rights or being forced into the role of nurturing mothers. All in all, the article presents the woman as upset, angry, but determined to denounce the fact and, possibly, to solve the problem. In doing so, the article challenges stereotypes about women as nurturing mothers.

Case Study 13.

Title of article: The Pope calls the director of CERN, Fabiola Gianotti to the Pontifical Academy of Science

Media: https://twitter.com/fattoquotidiano **(Twitter)**

This tweet concerns the first woman director of CERN, Fabiola Gianotti, who has been appointed as a member of the Pontifical Academy of Science, by the Pope himself. This tweet refers to the commonalities between the religious and the scientific domains, that generally are not very inclusive towards women. Here the subject of the tweet is Fabiola Gianotti, who acquired a prestigious position since she is a brilliant woman and thanks to her abilities. The fact that she is a woman is relevant, because this tweet underlines that also women deserve top positions even in STEM jobs, differently from what actually happens, namely giving women lower positions. However, the exceptionality of the fact as well as the resonance given to it by the journalist subtly reaffirm that it is an exception to the rule that women are absent from these places, thus implicitly hinting at the stereotypes at stake.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the twenty-five years between 1995 and 2020, there has been a steady, although extremely slow improvement in the visibility of women as both sources/subjects of news and as journalists in Italy. In the case of women professionals, their visibility has reached a percentage equal to their actual participation in the profession (about 40%); while women as sources/subjects of news, are still widely under- and mis-represented, as demonstrated by the fact that women still are only one out of four subjects across all media types (compared to 7% in 1995 and 21% in 2015).

Women today compose 51,7% of the Italian population, but they are only 26% of the people seen or heard about in the news. In the last 5 years their visibility has grown, but this increase is very minor and not consistent across media types; while most of the problematic aspects of gendered news representation remain - such as those concerning women subjects' role in the news, occupation and the news topic where they appear. This result interrogates the world of journalism in terms of its gender sensitivity, as well as of its capacity to reflect diversity in a society that is actually undergoing meaningful changes, for instance with respect to better opportunities for the inclusion of women in sectors that have been historically dominated by men, such as politics and economics, and science.

In comparison to the 2015 edition of GMMP, some improvements are found, in both legacy and particularly digital media, for what concerns women subjects in political news (respectively 22% and 34%). Also, a bigger number of women appear in the news as spokespersons (30% in traditional media and 31% on Internet and Twitter). Across traditional media, the radio presents the most meaningful improvements since 2015; while in digital news Twitter performs better today than five years ago. Interestingly, digital media perform slightly better than press, radio and TV in relation to the language used to speak about women, as noticed by making reference to a set of "special questions" included in the project framework: in online news professional titles are used for both women and men, and their grammatical articulation is gender-sensitive in almost all cases. On the contrary, legacy media perform worse than newer media in terms of the language and ways in which women and men are spoken of and a wide gap remains as far as of introducing subjects by both name and surname, and making explicit reference to their title, and professional affiliation.

A part from these few positive highlights, the picture that emerges from the GMMP in 2020 remains highly problematic, even more so if we consider the inability of news media to report/reflect/respect gender diversity across exceptional times of multiple crises, in spite of institutional rhetoric and the many calls for more inclusive narratives, strategies and policies.

Women experts appear today significantly less than five years ago. Gender related stories occupy minimal space in the news agenda; while stories addressing inequalities and human/women's rights and stories challenging stereotypes have become very hard to find (in legacy media they comprise only 1% out of a total of 220 news items; in digital media respectively 3% and 4% out of 252 stories).

What needs to be highlighted is the fact that the Covid-19 pandemic has affected gender representation in a strong manner, if we consider that, in a context where one out of four news items related to Covid-19, women subjects and sources in these news are only 11% in legacy media and 11% in online news (compared to 24% across all news); and that both women as spokespersons, and particularly women as experts are much less likely to make the news about the pandemic (respectively: 15% vs. 30% across the news, and 6% vs. 12% overall). This finding emerges from a situation where, at least in the early months of the health crisis, women have been acknowledged for their contribution to face the unprecedented situation, as medical and sanitary personnel, researchers who managed to identify the DNA sequence of the virus but most of all, as care-givers, as well as those who suffered the most from the lockdown, in relation to their occupational situation and due to their exposure to domestic violence. Moreover it should be mentioned that as the pandemic continued, growing calls have emerged from societal sectors (feminist associations and networks) as well as within the institutions (the Ministry for Equal Opportunities), to consider and plan for emergency and post-emergency strategies in due consideration of the gendered impact of the crisis.

The above-mentioned findings leave little space to argue that the Italian news sector shows increased gender awareness when compared to previous periods, or that has undergone any meaningful cultural transformation with respect to gender equality over the past years. The GMMP 2020 edition once more portrays a problematic situation, in spite of the positive developments in the country since the early 2010s. These include a more explicit commitment to gender equality by the public broadcaster RAI through its Contract of service and regular gender-based monitoring of TV content; the adoption of standards and codes by journalists' associations (such as guidelines for the use of gender-fairs language adopted by the Order of Journalists in 2016, and the Manifesto for reporting about gender-based violence, promoted since 2017); and the creation of a dataset of women experts from different disciplinary fields - including STEM, economics, international relations - thanks to a joint effort by the Osservatorio di Pavia and GiULiA Giornaliste. Having followed these developments closely, and having participated in some of these initiatives - which have been explicitly informed by previous GMMP results - we would have expected to report a more positive picture in contemporary Italian news-making.

We can only restate what has been highlighted on previous occasions, and confirm a long tradition of scholarly writings in the field: that gender equality progress, once achieved, cannot be assumed as consolidated, rather it constantly requires attention and focused efforts to make the progress sustainable. Most of all, the findings make clear that in times of societal crisis - and the Covid-19 pandemic has been described as not only a health and economic crisis, but a 'crisis of care' across all societal domains - women remain at high risk of being marginalized and made invisible, right when their diverse voices and perspectives would be most precious to be heard.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN 2021-2025

In the context of a global crisis, where inequalities increase and the capacity to acknowledge the roles and contributions of all members of society is crucial, access to news media and information technologies is a core issue; the competences that are needed to live, work and develop human relations in information and knowledge societies should be widespread and adequately supported; offline and online intersecting forms of violence should be recognized and properly addressed, in particular when they impact on women who make their voices public, such as professional journalists. The media have a crucial role to play in all this, and we expect them to play that role in a gender-transformative manner.

In light of the GMMMP 2020 findings, we re-state the importance of the Beijing Platform for Action adopted in 1995 - and of Section J on 'Gender and Media' therein - as a pillar to any commitment for gender equality, and a standard against which media practices must be assessed.

Furthermore, we argue that the plurality of recommendations, studies and collection of good practices that have been elaborated over the past years by European institutions, the Council of Europe and EU-funded projects like Advancing Gender Equality in Media Industries (AGEMI, www.agemi-eu.org) should become resources and tools to support any future action to transform the world of news media into a gender-equal space; one that should be capable to play its democratic role – to inform citizens, monitor and control the powers to be, and provide a forum for public discussions - in a comprehensive and gender-equal manner.

The 2020 edition of GMMP confirms once more that it is crucial that we keep counting, because only by being aware of the nature and degree of persisting inequalities it is possible to identify paths for change. It also indicates that sparse and fragmented projects and interventions, though relevant, are not enough to address problems that are both structurally implicated in the news-making world, and nurtured by the lack of gender-aware professional perspectives. Finally, the findings from this last monitoring suggest that on the one side we need, once again, to join forces amongst committed actors and agencies and to network across and beyond the media domain to overcome women inequalities, invisibility and marginalization in and through the media; on the other side it is maybe time to concentrate specifically on the education and training of a new generation of media professionals, in due recognition of the younger generations' sensitivity and willingness to fully recognize those inequalities, in order to make change happen.

In light of the above we plan to make use of the GMMP 2020 findings in different ways, in the national context and in dialogue with other contexts and multi-level realities, from the local to the global. Amongst the planned activities are the following:

§ **To foster a national debate on GMMP 2020 findings**, by planning for the organization of, and participation in public events – both offline and online - bringing together interested and relevant stakeholders who've been looking at GMMP over the years as

a source of data, as well as a source of inspiration for their own action. These include: the GMMP participating universities, professional associations at national and sub-national level, the Italian independent media regulator (AGCOM) and its regional branches, the public broadcaster.

§ To promote, across media companies and with Italian institutions, the idea that consistent and sustainable commitment to gender equality in and through the media should start with the **adoption of adequate codes of conducts, gender equality policies and focused strategies**, which, as we know from previous studies, are seldom adopted in Italy and rarely known even when they are in place. In this light the GMMP Report will inform and support concrete proposals to be elaborated in the course of 2021 and beyond.

§ To promoted and **engage in comparative dialogues other national coordinators and monitoring teams**, through academic initiatives (for instance the European Communication Research and Education Association ECREA, where a public event is planned for September 2021 where European coordinators will be able to share their findings) as well as in professional contexts (by liaising with the European chapter of the Global Alliance for Gender and Media GAMAG, through online events where GMMP data from various countries will be critically analyzed with journalists from across the region).

§ Possibly the most strategic action will be to **strengthen, enrich and expand educational and training activities**. This will certainly involve the universities who have taken part in the monitoring, where researchers and teachers are eager to act as multipliers of the reflections stemming from the present report. But we also think more strategically, and could develop a plan that directly engages the twelve schools of journalism that operate in the country, so as to have access to future professionals: the idea is to develop a teaching module that starts from the present Report to include and network many available resources - such as those elaborated in Italy by researchers and teachers as well as media professional association such as Gi.U.L.iA, as well as those available internationally, including the AGEMI Platform, the Gender and Media dataset composed by the GEM project in Sweden[23], the Gender and Media Resource Guide developed by Free Press Unlimited[24], or the Syllabus developed by the UniTWIN Network for Gender Media and ICT titled *Gender, media & ICTs: new approaches for research, education & training*[25], to name a few. This would allow to provide future professionals a comprehensive understanding of gender and intersecting inequalities in their domain, as well as guidelines for action that we trust could inspire the personal and professional development of an upcoming generation of journalists.

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[23] https://www.gu.se/en/research/gemdataset.
[24] https://kq.freepressunlimited.org/themes/gender-equality/.
[25] https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000368963.

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Annex 1. Methodology

A key characteristic of longitudinal research is the assessment of change over time on the observed indicators.   In the case of the 2020 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), the methodology, indicators, approach to data collection and analysis are consistent with past editions of the research in order to allow for the usual historical comparisons.

Process

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

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

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

In the period leading up to the monitoring day, a series of regional and national training sessions were organized to build a uniform understanding of the teams on the methodology and approach to coding. The teams received training on media selection, newscast and article selection, and the number of media to code.

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

- **Full monitoring**, whose results provide a comprehensive picture of the status of gender equality dimensions in news media.

- **Short monitoring**, a shorter version which focuses on the key GMMP indicators, for teams who wished to participate but for various reasons could not implement the full monitoring.

To ensure accuracy in the coding process, radio and television bulletin were recorded, and copies of digital and print media items were collected. Across the different media types- both for the full and short monitoring-monitors captured information about the story, its main themes and the people in the story, as journalists, as story subjects and sources. Additionally, three optional special questions, unique to each country, allowed individual countries to analyze issues of national interest. For standardization purposes, as well as the multilingual nature of this study, all responses were numerically coded from fixed lists.

To enable comparability of data gathered from a pandemic-heavy news agenda with the historical results, an additional question was included which asked whether the story was related to Covid-19. For such stories, monitors were requested to select the most relevant secondary topic. While global news stories had diversified to pre-pandemic levels by the global monitoring day in September 2020, the regional analysis demonstrated the significance of this question, particularly for North America and the Middle East, which recorded 37% and 36% of Covid-19-related stories respectively.

Media bands

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

Weighting

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

Accuracy

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

Limitations

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

About Code for Africa

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

Annex 2. List of monitors

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