The Missing Perspectives of Women in News

A report on women's under-representation in news media;
on their continual marginalization in news coverage
and on the under-reported issue of gender inequality

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Contents

Project background, objectives and approach

To elevate the issue of gender equality in the news media and in support of the Generation Equality Forum[1], the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation commissioned Luba Kassova, director of international audience strategy consultancy AKAS Ltd, to research the performance of a set of gender equality indicators and provide benchmarks for them. These benchmarks could then be used by news providers globally **to drive gender equality within their institutions** at the level of organizational resources, newsgathering and news coverage.

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The **four key indicators** that the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation asked Luba Kassova and AKAS to examine were:

1. Gender diversity in the workplace and in leadership (organizational resources)
2. Women as sources of news expertise (newsgathering)
3. News stories leading with women protagonists (news outputs)
4. Coverage of gender equality issues (news outputs)

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Drawing on their experience gained across a wide range of sectors including news, media, communications, international development, strategy and market research, Luba Kassova and the AKAS team adopted a **multi-phase, multi-disciplinary and multi-perspective research approach** to address the business objective. AKAS drew together the four indicators into a news production, consumption, and impacts framework that can be used by any news provider. This framework incorporates **the perspectives of different stakeholder groups** such as academics, media organizations, the public in different countries, journalists, influencers and decision makers. The research and insights have been focused on **six countries**: India, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, the UK and the US.

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In order to meet the business objective, AKAS used the following **research methods**:

1. A multi-discipline literature review of 2,286 academic articles, spanning academic arguments and conclusions from recent decades, which AKAS narrowed down to the 230 most cited articles and reviewed the 30 most insightful ones in greater depth
2. News content analysis of 11,913 publications and 56.9 million stories from 2019 for the gender equality indicator, and of 80 publications for the protagonists and experts indicators, delivered by Media Ecosystems Analysis Group, a non-profit media analysis research group out of the MIT Media Lab
3. Google Trends analysis of the public's searches for 'International Women's Day' in the six analyzed countries, carried out by AKAS between 2018 and 2020
4. Analysis of 74 single-question public facing surveys commissioned by AKAS using Google Surveys during 2020
5. Analysis of multi-country surveys of the public including from the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, The Pew Research Center, Ipsos, and the World Values Survey spanning the period between 2005 and 2020
6. Analysis of survey data/reports about journalists provided by the International Center for Journalists, the Worlds of Journalism Study, American Society of News Editors, *Glass Ceiling Report*, UN Women, Women's Media Center, US Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Census, UK Census, UK Labour Force Survey, Columbia Journalism Review, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism and Journalists for Christ International Outreach from 2000 to 2020
7. Analysis of survey data from opinion leaders provided by the World Bank Group's *Country Opinion Surveys* between 2015 and 2019
8. Analysis of gender-related indices from the World Economic Forum, United Nations Development Programme, Equality Measures 2030, and International IDEA
9. Review of case studies of successes anchored in behavioral science principles

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One of the significant challenges in producing this report has been understanding the trends in gender equality in the news given the **significant gaps in longitudinal and cross-country data**. The report has had to patch together data from a large range of sources in an

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[1] A global gathering for gender equality, convened by UN Women and co-chaired by France and Mexico, with the leadership and partnership of civil society

attempt to create a coherent picture. Among these, ten multi-country data sources have been particularly important:

1. Media Ecosystems Analysis Group (2020): a content analysis of the online news output covering the whole of 2019 in the six analyzed countries, commissioned by AKAS in conjunction with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

2. Reuters Institute's *Women and Leadership in the News Media 2020*: a research report assessing the gender balance of top editors in ten countries, three of which are included in the list of analyzed countries

3. World Economic Forum's *Gender Gap Report 2020*: an index which includes a range of gender-related metrics covering the period up to 2019. All of the analyzed countries featured in this report

4. Global Media Monitoring Project Reports (2005, 2010, 2015): a content analysis carried out every five years on one day in 114 countries. It represents the most quoted data source in the academic literature on this subject

5. Various reports from the Pew Research Center covering fieldwork between 2010 and 2019, the majority of which covered all six analyzed countries

6. Two Reuters Institute's *Digital News Reports* from 2019, one surveying publics in 38 countries and the other focused on India. Four of the analyzed countries were covered in these reports

7. World Bank Group's *Country Opinion Survey* which tracks the opinions of influencers and decision makers in 140 emerging and developing countries, on an approximate three-year cycle. For this research, 77 of these reports were analyzed for the period from 2015 to 2019, focusing on media opinion leaders

8. International Center for Journalists' *State of Technology in Global Newsrooms* survey (2018, 2019): a survey of journalists covering 149 countries in 2019, although a breakdown by individual countries was not possible due to small sample sizes

9. Worlds of Journalism Study (2019): a survey of journalists in 67 countries, including five of the analyzed countries. These were carried about between 2012 and 2016

10. Carolyn M. Byerly's *Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media*, commissioned by the International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) and *The Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Journalism,* which were based on surveys carried out between 2008 and 2010 covering 522 news media organizations across 59 countries

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This report contains **50 recommendations** and is supplemented with a **news providers' gender parity checklist** as well as a **presentation** which tells the story in the report through slides.

Fieldwork dates for the 11 multi-country surveys and analyses
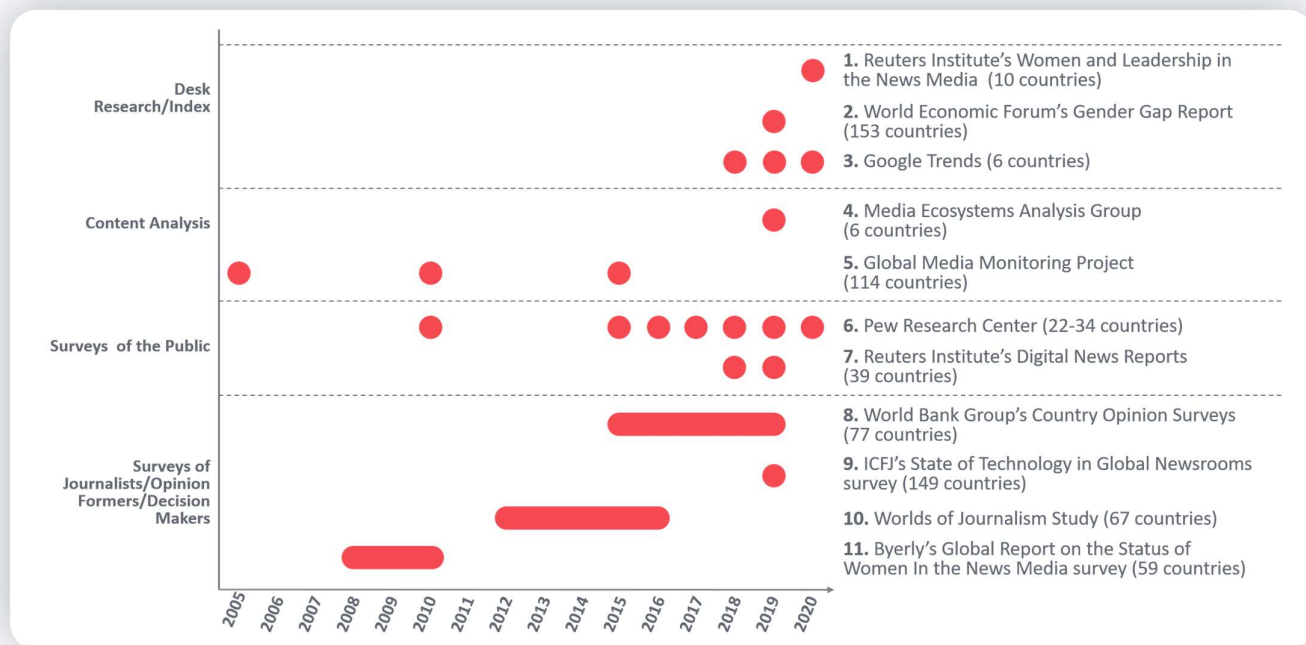
Source: AKAS (2020)

Note:

For the purposes of this report, *The Missing Perspectives of Women in News*, the term 'gender balance' is used to refer to the balance between women and men. Luba Kassova and AKAS, however, understand that gender is non-binary, but is a spectrum. While this document focuses on the balance between women and men only, elements of the findings can be applied to the news' representation and portrayal of trans people and the LGBTQIA+ community more broadly. However, the representation and portrayal of trans people and the LGBTQIA+ community has been outside the scope of this report.

The report uses the descriptor 'women' in place of the adjective 'female'. Only in cases where this would be inaccurate e.g. where both women and girls are being described have we used the term 'female'. The author recognizes this as a stylistic choice.

Due to time constraints, the report has not examined the complex intersectionality of gender with race, age, caste and class. However, the author and AKAS recognize that gender interacts in a meaningful and significant way with each of these characteristics and that understanding the intersectionality between them should be a subject of future studies.

Contributors and acknowledgements

Luba Kassova is the main author of the report. She is a director and co-founder of AKAS, an international audience strategy consultancy (www.akas.london). Throughout her 20-year career to date, Luba has concentrated on unearthing insights into people as individuals, social beings and consumers, subsequently translating these into strategic solutions for organizations. Luba headed up market research, audience insight and strategic planning teams in media (BBC Journalism), telecommunications (BT Television) and not-for-profit organizations (CRUK) prior to setting up AKAS. In her work over the last two decades she has continuously analyzed the gender differences of audiences internationally, including key differences in their media and news consumption. She has also consulted for news providers on the development of their audience strategies for women. Luba holds an MA in Sociology from Sofia University, Bulgaria and an MA in Contemporary European Studies from Sussex University in the UK. She has also completed Behavioral Science modules at Warwick University and the London School of Economics (LSE).

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Richard Addy is the primary quantitative research lead, the designer of the literature review approach, and the advisor on impact and story narratives for the report. He is also a director and co-founder of AKAS. Richard has nearly 30 years' experience working as a strategist and has advised CEOs, organizational leaders, and previously government ministers in his role as a government economist. Prior to setting up AKAS, Richard was the chief adviser on strategic and audience issues to the BBC's Deputy Director General who headed up BBC News locally, nationally and internationally. He is a Trustee at Mind, the UK's leading mental health charity. Richard has a BSc in Economics from Warwick University and an MSc in Economics from Birkbeck College, University of London.

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Claire Cogan is a key contributor to AKAS' academic literature review which underpins the report. She also researched the three behavioral science-based case studies. Claire holds an Executive MSc in Behavioral Science from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), with distinctions in research methods and in behavioral decision science. She has many years of experience in generating insights into human behavior in everyday contexts and in different countries, with an emphasis on consumer behavior. Claire is also experienced in leading successful organizational behavior change programs in corporate environments both in the UK and internationally.

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Peter Todorov has made a significant contribution to the sourcing and analysis of the freely available secondary research referenced in the report as well as the mining of multiple databases used in it. In his 20-year career Peter has held various analytical positions in telecommunications, consulting and other sectors in the USA, UK and Bulgaria. Peter holds an MBA from George Washington University and a Master's degree in Finance from London Business School.

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Judy Nagle is the proofreader and copy editor of the report. She holds an MA in Modern Languages from Cambridge University, and has a broad-based experience in cultural sponsorship, creative education and business development built up over a 20-year career across the public, private and charitable sectors. Since establishing herself as a freelance proofreader and copy editor in 2015, Judy has developed a client base among European academics at universities in Italy, Switzerland and Spain as well as in the commercial sector.

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Hannan Rais is the research and operational assistant for the project. She has been particularly instrumental in developing the literature review database and the secondary research database for the project. Hannan is an experienced and established virtual assistant and researcher with a demonstrable history of working in the broadcast media industry. At BBC News, where she worked for 10 years, Hannan was the Personal Assistant to two BBC News board members covering strategy, finance, production and change. Hannan holds a BA in History from Queen Mary, University of London.

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AKAS is also indebted to the following individuals and organizations for their project work, generously providing additional access to their surveys and databases:

- The project team from Media Ecosystems Analysis Group (MEAG) and in particular Emily Boardman Ndulue, whose content analysis has been critical to the narrative developed in this report. Media Ecosystems Analysis Group Project Team:
  - Project Lead: Emily Boardman Ndulue, MEAG's senior researcher

- Research Advisor: Fernando Bermejo, PhD., Executive Director of MEAG
- Technical Advisor: Rahul Bhargava, Researcher and technologist specializing in civic technology and data literacy
- Project Support: Aashka Dave, Researcher/community manager with MEAG.

- Jeb Bell, Vice President, Global Strategy, Pew Research Center and Audrey Powers, Executive Assistance to Vice President, Global Strategy, Pew Research Center who provided a more detailed breakdown of data in Pew Research Center's 2019 report, *A Changing World: Global Views on Diversity, Gender Equality, Family Life And The Importance Of Religion*. This and other Pew Research Center reports provided a unique window into the social norms driving gender inequality in 34 countries.

- Sharon Moshavi, Senior Vice President, News Initiatives, International Center for Journalists and Diane Owen, Professor of Political Science at Georgetown University for tirelessly re-cutting the data from the ICFJ's 2019 *State of Technology in Global Newsroom*s survey. This survey is a rare and much-needed up-to-date insight into how journalists and news managers across the world are thinking about the challenges and opportunities facing journalism. Journalists from 149 countries participated in 14 languages in the survey.

- Rasmus Kleis Nielsen (Director of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism) and Louise Allcock (Events and Administrative Officer, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism) for sharing detailed data tables for the Digital News Report 2019 and the India Digital News Report 2019. The Digital News Report is the leading global report on the news habits of audiences from across the world covering 39 countries (when the India report is included).

- Sharon Felzer, Head of the Public Opinion Research Group, External and Corporate Relations Vice Presidency, World Bank Group provided expert advice on the use of the unparalleled World Bank Group's Country Opinion Survey Program. The survey uniquely measures the attitudes and opinions of hard-to-reach decision makers and influencers in 140 emerging and developing countries.

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These data sources have been invaluable in enriching the research upon which this report has been based.

Introduction

When the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation commissioned this important piece of work on understanding women's current representation in news media, I felt excited at the prospect of writing what I thought would be a report revealing a picture of steady global progress in women's visibility in news over recent decades. I hypothesized that progress would have made greater strides in some countries than in others, but that nevertheless, there would be progress to report in every country. I posited that in some countries we might be building a picture of near gender parity in newsrooms, governance and leadership roles, in the experts and sources used in newsgathering and in the story protagonists who featured in news outputs. I theorized that news stories would reveal multiple perspectives, balancing equally the different views of women and men – the two halves of humanity. After all, this ambition had been one of the outcomes of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women a quarter of a century ago.

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As I immersed myself in the sea of evidence which the AKAS team and Media Ecosystems Analysis Group[2] were producing, I started to feel twinges of sadness, which deepened as the evidence stacked, frequently morphing into shock and disbelief. The rigorously evidence-based study of women's representation in news presented in the pages that follow tells a story of arrested progress (or indeed lack of progress); one where women are confined within high invisible walls and glass ceilings put in place by deeply gendered societies that favor men. More than that, this is a story of normalized gender blindness[3] across both the global south and, to a lesser extent, the global north. It is a story that sketches male-dominated cultures, where men are heard, seen or read about multiple times more frequently than women in the news. It is a story of women's perspectives in news stories remaining firmly niche, despite women representing half of the population in each of the six countries examined. Worryingly, analysis of the latest indicators shows that the coverage of women's perspectives in the news has collapsed in 2020 to very concerning lows[4].

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This is a story of journalism organizations reflecting back to news audiences the deeply ingrained gender inequality prevalent around the globe. In doing so, journalism worldwide perpetuates the existing biases in societies which universalize men's perspectives as the default. *"Seeing men as the human default is fundamental to the structure of human society. It's an old habit and it runs deep – as deep as theories of human evolution itself."*[5] It is a story which indirectly makes the case for a change in journalistic values, moving the profession beyond simply reporting the truth to, in addition, exposing gender inequality for the advancement of society worldwide.

This is a call to action for journalists to challenge the status quo in which women's voices remain marginalized both inside and outside newsrooms. It is a call to action to governing boards, leadership teams, and journalists in news organizations to become feminists in the broadest sense of the term i.e. to see and report the world not just from men's perspectives but also from women's perspectives, which are routinely unintentionally forgotten or deliberately disregarded. It is a call to action for journalists to produce news which empowers girls and women to believe that their voice is of value and that they have agency to change the course of their lives, just as women role models have done before them and continue to do today. After all, self-worth is socialized. The narrative about women (or absence of it) that society endorses, that news media amplifies, is a mirror that girls and women hold up close to build their self-worth. *"Who is heard and who is not defines the status quo…By redefining whose voice is valued, we redefine our society and its values."*[6]

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With the rise of populist democracies and authoritarian dictatorships worldwide, I fear that this report may become increasingly relevant in the years to come. According to Bloomberg Economics' classification[7], 68% of the G20's GDP in 2019 was under the governance of either populist leaders in democracies or non-democratic regimes. This was up from 65% in 2017 and 33% in 2016. As the renowned British-Turkish writer, academic and women's rights activist Elif Shafak observed: *"…whenever populist nationalism, political isolationism and, eventually, authoritarianism are on the rise, so is sexism. The first people to lose their rights are women and minorities."*[8]

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[2] Media Ecosystems Analysis Group, 2020
[3] European Institute for Gender Equality's definition of gender blindness: 'Failure to recognise that the roles and responsibilities of women/girls and men/boys are ascribed to, or imposed upon, them in specific social, cultural, economic and political contexts.'

[4] AKAS, 2020a
[5] Criado Perez, 2019
[6] Solnit, 2017
[7] O'Brien, 2019
[8] Shafak, 2020

While understanding that the impact of populist governments on the representation of women in the news was outside the scope of this report, it is important to note that it is likely to be substantially negative. Populist leaders typically hold traditional gender roles and patriarchal values in high regard, thus reinforcing gender stereotypes which confine women's roles primarily to those of carers and homemakers. *"A common feature can be observed in all current versions of right-wing populism: an 'obsession with gender' and sexuality in different arenas. Populist actors conjure up the heteronormative nuclear family as the model of social organization, attack reproductive rights, question sex education, criticize a so-called 'gender ideology,' reject same-sex marriage and seek to re-install biologically understood binary gender differences."*[9]

In March 2020, in advance of International Women's Day, the United Nations Development Programme released its new Gender Social Norm Index which revealed extraordinary prejudice against women globally[10]. The data revealed that 91% of men and 86% of women across 75 countries covering 80% of the world's population hold at least one bias against women[11]. Raquel Lagunas, acting director of United Nations Development Programme's gender team highlighted a global backlash against women: *"UNDP is very conscious of the backlash against women's rights. We are aware and we are concerned."*[12]

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As I was writing this report, at times I was stunned not only by the extent to which men are prioritized at the expense of women globally, but also by how normalized gender inequalities and pro-male biases are in societies among both men and women. For example, a significant proportion of men and women globally, and in the six countries which are the subject of this report, believed that it is acceptable for a man to beat his wife. In fact, more than half of men and women held this opinion in Nigeria, more than a third in South Africa and India and 14% and 12% in the US and UK[13].

AKAS recently tested the level of public acceptance of statements that expose evidence of gender inequality in news in the UK and US. For example, Media

Ecosystems Analysis Group, in their innovative content analysis of news outputs from 80 online news providers in 2019, found that only 29% of contributors to or experts featured in news in the UK and 25% in the US were women. A survey putting these results to the public revealed a high level of acceptance of this gender imbalance, exposing the social normalization of gender inequality. Only 16% of the public surveyed in the UK and 15% in the US registered dissatisfaction when presented with these facts. However, it should be noted (as set out later in Part 4, Chapter 1, Figure 4.3) that when the facts were reframed, showing men's relatively higher representation compared to women's, the dissatisfaction levels rose dramatically, especially amongst women[14].

Media Ecosystems Analysis Group's content analysis further exposed how small a share of news is taken up by gender equality issues across all six countries surveyed – less than one percent. Any polemic around gender inequality is almost non-existent in the news across all countries examined in this report.

What makes any future advancement of gender equality in the news particularly difficult is the existence of **gender blindness amongst the public in different countries**. **It is hard to fix something that is not seen as broken**. The analysis of public attitudes and biases[15] revealed that while a majority of members of the public in all six countries claim to endorse gender equality (most strongly in the UK and US), many men and women (particularly in the global south) also think that changes to enable women's rights have gone far enough in their country. Just released evidence by the Pew Research Center, based on a survey in late 2019, shows that not only are gender-biased social norms stubbornly present in the analyzed countries, but in some countries from the global south any advances made in tackling them may be slipping back.[16] **In short, the examined evidence did not reveal a strong appetite for prioritizing the advancement of gender equality amongst the public in any country in response to traditional rights-based arguments that contend that women have the right to be equal to men. This conclusion holds equally true for people in power. Analysis of a survey in the global south showed that the advancement of gender equality is not a key priority for the vast majority of decision makers, journalists and other opinion formers**[17].

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[9] Dietze & Roth, 2020
[10] United Nations Development Programme, 2020
[11] United Nations Development Programme, 2020
[12] The Guardian, 2020

[13] Inglehart et al, 2014
[14] AKAS surveys, 2020
[15] Ipsos, 2018, Newman et al., 2019, Pew Research Center, 2018
[16] Pew Research Centre, 2020
[17] World Bank Groups *Country Opinion Surveys*, 2015-2019, conclusion reported based on data for Kenya, Nigeria and India

Another survey of global sustainability experts revealed that amongst 17 Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs), Gender Equality is the 15th most urgent to address[18].

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As I started researching the topic of women's representation in news in the specific contexts of India, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, the UK and the US, I quickly understood that this was a complex multi-layered issue which could only be understood in light of the **political, economic, socio-cultural, regulatory, technological and public news consumption contexts** in each of these countries. **Part 1** of this report is dedicated to these dimensions which profoundly influence the success (or otherwise) of news organizations in achieving greater representation of women in the news. A snapshot of some of the most salient points follows.

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Women only gained the right to vote within the last 62 to 102 years in our countries of focus. They still have **limited political power** and are marginalized in political leadership in all six countries. Women's economic participation and literacy levels vary greatly across the different countries, with the UK and US leading in terms of literacy and participation in the labor force. **Women have not reached economic parity in any of the countries**. **Gender equality legislation is a catalyst for the improved representation of women in the news**, **but it can sometimes take decades for positive impact to be felt** due to a time lag between the development of gender equality policies and their implementation. South Africa leads in its regulatory provision[19] for gender equality. Nigeria and Kenya, which are classified as 'weak performing democracies'[20] lag behind other countries in this regard, arguably because progress on women's rights is also weak.

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To a lesser or greater extent, patriarchal norms and gender stereotypes exist across all countries. These norms frequently pigeonhole women as being seen primarily as carers and homemakers. This socio-cultural context influences the structure of newsrooms, with women being assigned to report on lower profile news beats such as arts, education and entertainment, while men take charge of reporting on more agenda-setting news beats such as politics and the economy. In addition, women's primary care-giving roles across the board inhibit their path to senior leadership roles and increase the attrition of women in journalism as they grow older and their care-giving responsibilities increase. Nigeria displays the strongest patriarchal values, followed by India and Kenya. Next is South Africa (its overall position greatly aided by strong gender equality legislation) while the UK and US are the least patriarchal, although sexist norms still linger.

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Younger members of the public in different countries are more likely to support gender equality[21] than older members of the public, a finding which holds great potential for advocacy efforts engaging primary and secondary schools as well as universities in general and journalism programs in particular. **We see a direct relationship between the prevalence of gender biases in a society and the acceptance of the gender status quo** among the public, decision makers and journalists (as well as other opinion formers) alike. Consequently, it is important to recognize that any advocacy efforts should aim to weaken the existing explicit and implicit societal biases (for example among journalists) against women's advancement as a fundamental step towards improving women's representation in news organizations and news production.

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News audiences globally and in our analyzed countries are more likely to be men. Women consume less news than men across all countries. This could be partly a result of news being produced mainly by men, as shown throughout the report, thus not reflecting women's perspectives or needs enough to hook them in[22]. The literature review undertaken by AKAS found that there is a gap in the understanding of women's and men's differing news consumption habits. If women are to be empowered through their news consumption, it is important to understand their news needs, news consumption and their interaction with the new digital technologies and social media.

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The review of academic papers into **the impact of technological advancements on women news consumers and women journalists uncovered a very mixed picture that requires further research**. In terms of advantages related to technological advancements, women consume more news on social media than men, the only platform where this is the case[23]. Digital

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[18] Globescan, 2019
[19] Byerly, 2016
[20] International IDEA, 2019

[21] Pew Research Center, 2018
[22] This hypothesis needs further exploration
[23] Newman et al., 2019

platforms can enable more contribution from women journalists[24] and can also enable gender stereotypes to be challenged though galvanizing movements such as the #MeToo global campaign. In terms of disadvantages, technological advancements can perpetuate gender stereotypes[25]. Contrary to some evidence that digital media offers unique opportunities for women journalists, other studies have found that similar gender biases persist in digital news media as in traditional media[26]. In addition, the ongoing growth in the role of technology in newsrooms reported by journalists in all six countries[27], could exacerbate inequality in newsrooms. The International Center for Journalists (ICFJ), in their 2019 global study, uncovered that among journalists, men were much more likely to hold technical degrees than women. Finally, and critically, the safety and mental health of journalists, particularly women, are increasingly at risk[28] due to the phenomenon known as 'platform capture', whereby organized groups use social media platforms for orchestrated campaigns of disinformation and harassment on a large scale[29].

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Part 2 of this report concentrates on examining four gender equality indicators in news:

1. Gender diversity in news organizations which reflects women's representation in organizational resources

2. The proportion of experts and sources in news who are women which reflects women's visibility in newsgathering

3. The proportion of women in news coverage who are protagonists which reflects women's visibility in news outputs/coverage

4. The proportion of stories which are dedicated to gender equality issues which reflects the prominence of gender equality in news outputs/coverage

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Due to significant data gaps which prohibit a continuous analysis of the performance of each country on each indicator (detailed in the objectives and approach section earlier), the report builds a historical picture based on the literature review and analysis of sources spanning the last few decades. The content analysis undertaken by Media Ecosystems

Analysis Group provides an invaluable snapshot of the current levels of women's representation in online news for indicators 2 to 4. For indicator 1, where there is no consistency in the metrics or measurement of diversity over time across the six countries, the report brings together 16 sources to paint a picture of the last two decades.

The under-representation of women in news organizations has persisted, especially at leadership and governance levels (as well as at ownership levels although not quantified in this report), over the last few decades. There has been no discernible improvement in this indicator in any of the examined countries in the 21st century (with marginal improvement in only two). Women form a minority of leaders, governors and top managers in news organizations in all of the countries examined.

Contrary to the expectations of great variation between the analyzed countries in terms of the representation of women as protagonists or experts/sources in the news, the evidence revealed that their proportions across all the countries examined were comparably low in comparison to men's. In 2019, between 15% and 30% of protagonists in the six countries were women and between 14% and 29% of the share of quoted voice in online news belonged to women[30]. As mentioned earlier, less than 1% of news stories cover gender equality issues across all six countries[31].

News remains decisively biased towards men's perspectives. In fact, men's ownership and governance of media and telecommunications organizations (including news) is seen by some to legitimize male-dominated professional standards for making journalism[32]. Women journalists adapt to these default male-biased professional standards and "masculine" values as the universal cultural norm[33], in order to fit in in the newsroom and to progress in organizations, or because they are unaware of an alternative way of operating.

[24] Macharia, 2015
[25] European Commission, 2010
[26] Macharia, 2015
[27] Hanitzsch et al., 2019

[28] Committee to Protect Journalists, 2019
[29] Posetti et al., 2019
[30] Media Ecosystems Analysis Group, 2020
[31] Media Ecosystems Analysis Group, 2020
[32] Byerly, 2016
[33] Hanitzsch & Hanusch, 2012

A male-dominated culture is one of the leading stated reasons why there is no observed positive correlation between the proportion of women in newsrooms/senior leadership and the portrayal of women in the news[34]. The portrayal of women has not improved in decades. This means that achieving near gender parity in newsrooms (as has happened in South Africa, the UK and the US) is not enough to improve the gender balance of news outputs. Having a third of women in top level leadership or governance positions (as is the case in South Africa, the US and Kenya) has not provided the 'critical mass' [35] previously thought necessary to improve women's visibility in the news. The relationship between the number of women in organizational resources, in newsgathering and in news outputs is not linear, despite well-established feminist change theories[36] hypothesizing so.

Figure 1 illustrates how a number of system level, organizational level and individual level factors need to be pushing in the right direction before progress in gender equality in news can happen. If any one of these factors is pushing in the wrong direction, the advancement of gender equality in news is likely to be hindered.

There is no 'winning' country among the six when it comes to improving the gender representation of women in news organizations or their visibility in the news. South Africa performs better than the other five countries in terms of gender diversity in the workplace. The UK performs slightly better relative to other countries in terms of the share of women in newsgathering (i.e. as sources and experts) and in outputs (i.e. in terms of share of women protagonists). India and Nigeria are facing significant challenges in relation to most measures compared to the other four countries.

Evidence from five of the six countries suggests that **the more biased towards men a society is in its expressed social norms, the smaller women's share of quoted voice[37] in the news is**. Here is a whistle-stop tour of the findings for each of the four gender equality indicators in the news.

1. Diversity in the workplace/in leadership

News organizations globally have made progress on this indicator in the long-term and it is the best performing indicator out of the four researched in this

Figure 1: Change cycles in gender equality progression in news

Source: AKAS (2020)

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[34] as protagonists or contributors
[35] Carll, 2003
[36] Byerly, 2016
[37] As protagonists, sources and experts

report. Progress made in the 20th century, however, has substantially slowed, and in some countries halted, in the last few decades. The research findings uncover that globally the majority of journalists and, in particular, owners and those in positions of news leadership are men, despite there being gender parity among graduates of journalism courses in many countries. Gender equality policies are an important catalyst for positive change but do not guarantee progress because their implementation has frequently been weak in some countries [38]. Progress in news reporting and presenting by women halted between 2005 and 2015 across both agenda-setting and lower profile news beats[39]. Diversity in news organizations varies across the six countries with South Africa leading the way as the most progressive, achieving near-parity, followed by the UK and US where women are relatively well-represented in newsrooms. Gender diversity in newsrooms seems to be improving slightly in Kenya and in India, albeit from a lower base, but appears to be declining in Nigeria.

South Africa again leads in terms of its proportion of women in senior leadership roles, followed by the US. The UK trails these frontrunners, while Nigeria lags significantly behind all countries, with the limited evidence available showing that women are barely present at senior levels of news organizations. Data from a decade ago has shown that the women who had entered into careers in journalism in India and Kenya, although in a minority, were able to progress to senior leadership levels[40].

2. Women as sources of news expertise

In the last two decades, the use of women as experts in news coverage has been limited in comparison to that of men and the latest evidence suggests that this still remains the case today. Between 2005 and 2015 fewer than one in five experts globally in the news were women[41]. Today men are quoted in online news[42] twice as frequently as women in the UK, three times more frequently in South Africa and in the US, four times more frequently in Kenya, five times more frequently in Nigeria and six times more frequently in India[43].

Women's share of quoted voice in news has not reached parity in any news genre in the six countries, including arts and media or health – the genres where women's voices are quoted most often. Women's expert voices remain significantly muted in high profile news genres such as politics (where men's share of voices is between three and seven times higher than that of women) and the economy (where men's share of voices is between two and 31 times higher than that of women)[44].

3. News stories leading with women protagonists

In the last few decades, women's stories have been significantly under-represented in the news compared to men's, at a ratio of approximately one to five[45].

Women protagonists in the news in all our analyzed countries are far from achieving parity today, just as they were decades ago. Men feature as story protagonists three times more frequently in the UK and Kenya compared to women, four times more frequently in India, South Africa and the US and six times more frequently in Nigeria.

Where women protagonists do play a more central role in news stories, it is in lower profile news genres such as arts and media. They feature much less frequently in the agenda-setting news stories in genres such as politics and the economy.

4. Coverage of gender equality issues

The coverage of gender equality issues is often drowned out by the sheer volume of other issues in the news space. Gender equality coverage has also received the least attention from academics compared to all the other indicators examined in this report. Awareness of gender inequality and the importance attributed to it are very low not only among academics,

[38] Byerly, 2016
[39] Macharia, 2015, GMMP, 2005
[40] Byerly, 2016
[41] Macharia, 2015; GMMP 2005

[42] As sources, experts or protagonists
[43] Media Ecosystems Analysis Group, 2020
[44] Media Ecosystems Analysis Group, 2020
[45] Macharia, 2015

but also among decision makers and opinion formers (including journalists).

> In 2019 the coverage of gender equality issues constituted less than half a percent of all news coverage in India, the UK, the US and Nigeria and less than one percent in South Africa and Kenya[46]. When reporting on gender equality issues, journalists apply limited and single angles that do not fully reflect audiences' concerns[47]. Ironically, between 56% and 84% of protagonists in these gender equality stories in different countries are men[48].

Despite coverage of gender equality issues increasing between three and seven times in different countries in 2019 on International or National Women's Days[49], there is evidence that interest in the topic was limited amongst the public even then[50].

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This report has **three key limitations stemming from the constraints of the existing research and data.**

1. **The indicators do not capture the important *qualitative* dimensions of the portrayal of women in the news, and the impacts of their portrayal on women and society**. The four indicators covered in this report measure quantitatively the proportion of: women in news organizations; women in newsgathering; women protagonists in stories; and news stories devoted to gender equality. These indicators are an important starting point for redressing women's under-representation in the news. However, they are not sufficient in themselves for us to understand the impact that news media has overall, not only on the way in which women and girls are portrayed in the news, but also on how women are perceived by society or the way in which women understand their role in society. No industry-wide research exists which answers two fundamental questions linked to the impact of news coverage on girls or women: **What drives improved portrayal of women in the news?** And more fundamentally: **Which news elements drive improved feelings of agency and self-worth among women?** Only by answering these questions will news organizations and news funders be able to truly understand the impact of news on women.

2. **There is no longitudinal data source available (at a global, country or news provider level) which has measured systematically women's representation in the news.** The Global Media Monitoring Project, which was set up in 1995 in response to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women, is the only longitudinal survey available globally. However, it reports on a five-yearly cycle and its last iteration was published in 2015, so there is no data available for the last five years. In addition, the methodology of this study is based on monitoring the content of news providers on a single day every five years, which means the results may not be representative of the whole year. As previously mentioned, in order to fill these cross-country knowledge gaps around the *current state* of the representation of women in news, AKAS, in conjunction with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, commissioned Media Ecosystems Analysis Group to conduct a content analysis for online news output for the whole of 2019[51].

3. Globally, there is **no empirical understanding of the relationship between the different parts of the news value chain**: women's representation in governance and leadership roles; the proportion of journalists who are women; the representation of women in news content as contributors or protagonists; and the consumption and impact of this content on women/society. According to AKAS' news production, consumption and impact value chain framework[52] (covered in Part 1 of the report in more detail), there are five key elements which provide touchpoints for women with the news. The first three elements, which are covered in Part 2 of our report, are organizational resources such as staff, management, governance and ownership of a news organization; newsgathering; and outputs i.e. content/news coverage. The fourth and fifth key elements of the news value chain, which have not been examined comprehensively in this report, are news consumption (including reach and engagement with content); and impact, which can be broken down into measurements on an individual, influencer and societal (decision maker) level.

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[46] Media Ecosystems Analysis Group, 2020
[47] BMGF/Brunswick Insight, 2019
[48] Media Ecosystems Analysis Group, 2020

[49] Media Ecosystems Analysis Group, 2020
[50] AKAS, 2020b
[51] Media Ecosystems Analysis Group, 2020
[52] See Part 1, Context, Figure 1.1

> **News providers can only achieve gender balance and gender-sensitive coverage if women have a powerful voice at every touchpoint in the lifecycle of a news story. Gender balance is only as strong as the weakest touchpoint in the news story's lifecycle.**

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At the beginning of this introduction I mentioned how dispiriting an experience it was to see the accumulating evidence of the limited progress made in improving women's representation in news in the 21st century. But having absorbed the hundreds of research sources and academic papers across multiple disciplines that my colleagues and I have analyzed, I am also left feeling hopeful for the future.

There are many actions that news providers can take to improve women's representation and balance in the news. This report alone presents 50 recommendations either for news providers to implement or for researchers to explore. The AKAS team unearthed case studies of success among news organizations and other institutions beyond the media space. Organizations such as BBC News [53] and T-Systems [54] have demonstrated that it is possible to achieve a wave of change in a short space of time against all odds and despite the numerous societal, cultural and systemic barriers that stand in their way.

Below is a selection of **three strategic recommendations** that, if implemented by news providers, would have a particularly positive impact on improving women's visibility in news.

1. News organizations have enormous opportunity to develop more behavioral science-based interventions to influence the behaviors of journalists and improve women's visibility and empowerment within organizations by using nudges[55] and debiasing techniques. Interventions such as these are more likely to succeed if they are driven by a persuasive framing[56] of the problem, are conveyed by a powerful messenger [57] , are championed from the top[58] and if they harness the power of existing social norms[59].

    Part 3 of this report examines three case studies from the global north (the UK and US) and the

global south (South Africa) which have applied, knowingly or not, behavioral science-based interventions in order to improve: gender representation in the workplace (T-Systems in South Africa); the representation of women as experts or sources in newsgathering (BBC News' 50:50 project); and the gender balance in journalists' reporting on Twitter (FollowBias in the US). The benefit of each of these approaches is that they aim to tackle behavior directly, rather than indirectly through changing attitudes.

2. Given that progress in increasing the visibility of women in news has stalled, it is important to reframe the case for change by introducing more persuasive narrative frames to galvanize journalists to champion gender equality in news. Powerful overarching narratives lie at the heart of what spurs humans into action on important issues because they integrate different parts of the brain and generate activating emotions. Currently news organizations and academics commonly use four narrative frames: those which focus on journalistic ethics; on human rights-based journalism; on organizational culture-based change and on change as a responsibility to women as audiences. In Part 4 of the report we identify seven additional overarching narrative frames which are under-used or do not yet feature in industry-wide conversations about gender inequality in news.

    Among all existing frames, we consider that there are three powerful narrative frames which may hold a strong universal appeal across the global north and the global south: the case for change centered around journalistic ethics, around business success, and around audience relevance.

3. There is a need to **craft news stories with an understanding of what women's needs, worries and aspirations are, as well as of how news coverage impacts their self-image.** There is a strong case to be made for news providers and funders to combine efforts in **creating an industry-wide gender news tracker** measuring organizational gender performance as well as perceptions and needs of women audiences across the whole news production, consumption and impacts value chain. Among other things, this would help to close profound gaps in the understanding of: what messages women

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[53] BBC 50:50 report, 2019:
[54] See Part 3, Case Studies
[55] Thaler & Sunstein, 2009. Nudge is a concept used in behavioral science that proposes ways of influencing people's choices and

behaviors through subtle changes in the environment/the context where decisions are made
[56] Kahneman, 2012
[57] Dolan et al, 2010
[58] Smith, 2003
[59] Kallgren, Reno & Cialdini, 2000

protagonists (or their absence) in the news send to the women of today; what proportion convey empowerment vs. victimhood or reinforce stereotypes (e.g. women being seen exclusively as mothers or beauty objects) vs. challenge stereotypes (e.g. women being shown as power agents); and what proportion of protagonists portray women as survivors vs. victims, as sources of expertise vs. providers of subjective opinions. Measuring different elements of the news value chain would help to reveal what drives increases in women's representation in the news, and improvement in their portrayal and ultimately in their self-worth. At the same time, measuring these different elements will help to fill in the existing gap in building the business case in news organizations. The benefits of investing in women are becoming increasingly recognized: *"From developing talent to reaching new markets, a growing body of evidence captures how companies benefit from investing in women as leaders, employees, entrepreneurs, customers, and community partners."* [60] . Recent research also shows that the business case for gender diversity on executive teams is stronger than ever. However, there is a gap in specific research in news media organizations.[61]

In order to understand the severe under-representation of women in COVID-19 news coverage, please read *The Missing Perspectives of Women in COVID-19 News* report which was published in September 2020[62]. This report by Luba Kassova was commissioned by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to examine women's representation in COVID-19/coronavirus news across newsgathering (as experts) and news coverage (featuring in gender equality angles or as protagonists) in India, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, the UK, and the US. The rich mix of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, including computational and manual content analyses of millions of news stories, as well as surveys and database analyses, has resulted in nuanced findings, revealing not just how few women are represented in the news about COVID-19 but also - uniquely - how they are portrayed in the story. The report contains 21 recommendations which aim to support news providers who wish to amplify the substantially muted voices of women in news coverage of the COVID-19/coronavirus story.

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The report has uncovered a substantial bias towards men's perspectives in the newsgathering and coverage of this pandemic across both the global north and the global south. This bias operates against a backdrop of women's effective political invisibility within the COVID-19-related decision-making process and the unique socioeconomic, health and psychological challenges that women face globally. Every individual woman's voice in the news on COVID-19 is drowned out by the voices of between three to five men. The women who are given a platform in the COVID-19/coronavirus story are mainly portrayed as sources of anecdotal views or as victims/people affected by the disease rather than as authoritative experts. The news coverage of COVID-19/coronavirus is mostly framed in hard factual terms, leaving little space for the human-centered journalistic approach that reflects women's news needs more closely. Given the deeply political nature of the COVID-19 crisis, women's structural marginalization in the political leadership roles established in response to the crisis locks in the suppression of women's voices in the story. This in turn is reflected in a smaller news share for women, which may be exacerbated by journalists' tendency in a time of crisis to revert back to 'established sources' who are significantly more likely to be men. The absence of women's perspectives in COVID-19-related news coverage means that women have limited influence over the framing of the crisis in the news and consequently, limited influence over policymaking directions. As a result, women are at ever greater risk of being further marginalized within different societies amid the most significant global health crisis of our lifetimes.

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If you are reading this report, you are likely to care about the existing gender inequality in news; to both want and have the agency to amplify women's voices in news; and beyond that, to want to nourish women's feelings of self-worth and empowerment. Alternatively, you may be skeptical and questioning of the problem of gender inequality in news but open to examining the evidence presented in this report. Either way, I am confident that by the time you have finished reading, you will be convinced that patriarchal norms, boxing women into the confines of invisible walls and

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[60] International Finance Corporation, World Bank Group, 2017
[61] Hunt et al, 2020

[61] https://www.iwmf.org/women-in-covid19-news/

glass ceilings are very much alive along south and north meridians, above and below the equator.

You will have understood that these norms limit the impact of gender equality legislation, perpetuate the dominance of men's perspectives in news-making, magnify them through news consumption and restrict women's presence in news stories to under a third at best, making gender parity for the time being unattainable. But you will also feel hope, knowing that you have many levers for change at your disposal.

As a change maker, you will be motivated to focus your leadership or advocacy efforts on weakening the grip of patriarchal norms by crafting critically important initiatives for journalists, news governance and leadership boards as well as for young people in schools and universities, for it is they who are the most embracing of gender equality and the least governed by the norms that their parents and grandparents were socialized into.

You will care not just about increasing the number of women in news, but also about removing the barriers that prevent them from expressing their identities beyond those of primary carers and sidekicks.

You will have realized that you can bring about change at an organizational level, through crafting and implementing policies and weakening biases through gender sensitivity training programs; and at an individual level, by nudging behaviors via designed interventions in the workplace. You will also have understood that at the same time there is a need for news media to facilitate change at a societal level by igniting national debates around gender inequality and by exposing the need for new legislation aimed at combating structurally latent or overt patriarchal norms.

But most of all, you will have realized that it is imperative to act now and that change begins with you.

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Executive summary

The objectives and essence of the report

This report was commissioned by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to examine women's representation in newsrooms, newsgathering, and news coverage in India, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, the UK, and the US. It is rooted in a literature review of 2,286 articles and three case studies; content analysis of 11,913 publications and 56.9 million stories; analysis of 74 primary surveys; analyses of Google Trends and multi-country surveys; gender-related indices; and reports undertaken by key journalistic and international organizations. These sources were used to fill the large data gaps found in measuring gender equality in the news. The report has established benchmarks for four indicators of gender equality which aim to help news providers improve their gender representation. These are: *gender diversity in the workplace and in leadership; women as sources of news expertise; news stories leading with women protagonists;* and *coverage of gender equality issues*.

The report reveals a dire picture of women's under-representation in the news. It shows that women's representation in the news has flatlined (if not reversed) in the 21st century and that women are marginalized in governance/leadership roles in news organizations. In the six analyzed countries, less than 1% of news stories cover gender equality issues. In 2019, women's share of protagonists or of quoted experts/sources in the news was between 14% and 30% in the six countries.

Patriarchal norms are at the heart of the existing invisible barriers for women in news. These norms inhibit the impact of gender equality legislation in news organizations; enable the continuing dominance of men's perspectives in news-making; amplify these perspectives through men's news consumption; and limit women's presence in news stories as news protagonists and experts, with the result that gender parity remains constantly out of reach.

However, encouragingly, news providers can use many levers for change set out in this report's 50 recommendations anchored in behavioral science and in the news providers' gender parity checklist.

Summary of Key Findings

The context

1. **Women's touchpoints with the news:** The gender balance in news is only as strong as the weakest touchpoint in a story's lifecycle, which spans newsgathering, news production, news consumption and the story's impact on women and society.

2. **The political, economic, socio-cultural and regulatory context:**

   - **Political and economic:** Gender parity is many years away in economic participation and political power in all six countries, with significant variation between the countries.

   - **Socio-cultural context:** Patriarchal norms are deeply entrenched in the analyzed countries from the global south and linger in the analyzed countries from the global north. Globally, 91% of men and 86% of women have been found to hold at least one bias against women. These patriarchal norms form the single biggest barrier to gender equality in news.

   - **Regulatory context:** Gender equality legislation assists women's representation in news organizations, but poor implementation renders it insufficient. South Africa leads in its regulatory provision for gender equality. Nigeria and Kenya lag behind.

3. **Gender equality sensitivity among the public, decision makers and opinion formers is limited.** In the six countries, the public's widely claimed support for gender equality is undermined by contrasting beliefs that gender equality has gone far enough. There is widespread gender blindness which is problematic because it is hard to fix what is not seen as broken. The more accepting the public is of the status quo for women, the less driven people in power and journalists are to prioritize gender equality issues.

   - Only 4% of opinion leaders surveyed in 77 emerging and developing countries, including Kenya, Nigeria and India, considered gender equality as a top development priority.

4. **Younger members of the public** in different countries are more likely to support gender equality than older groups.

5. **News audience consumption:** Women are lighter news consumers than men globally (64% of men vs. 54% of women are extremely or very interested in the news) and in the analyzed countries (71% vs. 60% in South Africa, 73% vs. 60% in the UK, 71% vs. 62% in the US and 68% vs. 61% in India). This could be due partly to news being produced mainly by men, and focusing mainly on men – a problem exacerbated by the data gaps in understanding women's news needs.

6. **Technological advancements are a double-edged sword.** Technological advancements offer women journalists the opportunity to transcend existing male-dominated organizational structures. Social media has the potential to boost women's news consumption and to exponentially magnify the impact of movements for women's equality. However, social media can also entrench gender stereotypes and destroy the lives of journalists, more often women, through persistent harassment on a large scale. In newsrooms, the growth of male-dominated digital roles could exacerbate gender inequality.

Diversity in the workplace/in leadership

7. **Men are still in the driving seat in news media organizations.** Women form a minority of leaders, governors and top managers in news organizations in each of the countries examined. Globally, 26% of governance roles in news organizations were held by women in 2011. The reported proportion of women in top management roles was 35% in Kenya, 30% in the UK, 25% in South Africa, 23% in the US and 14% in India. When the governing structure of a news organization is dominated by men, even a gender-balanced newsroom continues to exhibit male biases.

8. **Women lag behind men globally in terms of career progression and salary**. Research shows this gap in career progression could be narrowed if childcare and flexible working policies were implemented. In terms of editorial roles, women tend to be less well represented in the high-profile, agenda-setting beats such as politics.

9. **Diversity in the workplace in the analyzed countries: who leads and who lags.** At near parity, South Africa is a global leader in gender parity in the newsroom (49% of journalists are women), followed by the UK (47%) and the US (42-45%). Gender diversity shows some improvement in Kenya (42% in 2015 vs. 35% in 2009) and in India

(28% in 2019 vs. 19% in 2011), but may be declining in Nigeria (24% in 2015 vs. 38% in 2011). South Africa also leads in terms of the proportion of women in senior leadership roles in news organizations (42% of top editors in 2020 are women). Nigeria lags significantly behind in terms of senior leadership, as just 4% of senior editorial roles in top newspapers in Nigeria are occupied by women.

10. **The million-dollar question: Does improved gender diversity in the newsroom lead to women being more visible in the news?** Existing academic evidence is inconclusive about whether more women in newsrooms leads to a more balanced portrayal of women in the news. This report found that near gender parity in newsrooms (as in South Africa, the UK and the US) has not led to gender-balanced coverage. Having a third of women in executive or governance positions (as in South Africa, the US and Kenya) has not provided the 'critical mass' previously thought necessary to improve women's visibility in the news. Therefore, the relationship between the number of women journalists/leaders in news organizations, and news coverage which features women as experts in newsgathering and protagonists is *not linear*.

11. **The existing, essentially male culture in newsrooms prevents a balanced portrayal of women in the news.** Some academic and industry reports suggest that male-biased cultural and professional standards are prevalent in newsrooms and are adhered to by both men and women journalists. Thus, professional identity overrides gender identity. Unless newsroom cultures change, the increased representation of women in the newsroom will not be enough to achieve gender-balanced coverage.

Women as sources of news expertise

12. **The historical picture reveals that women's expertise has been undervalued and marginalized:** Globally**,** in 2015 19% of experts or commentators were women. The use of women as news sources overall had marginally decreased from 2010 (20% vs. 19%). Women's expertise was heavily skewed towards lower profile news specialisms and towards the sphere of the private, emotional and subjective vs. the public, rational and objective.

13. **The marginalization of women's voices continues today**: Women's share of quoted voice in online

news in 2019 was highest in the UK, but still only 29%, and lowest in India (14%) and Nigeria (16%). Women's expert voices remain significantly muted in high profile news genres such as politics (where men's share of voices is between three and seven times higher than that of women) and the economy (where men's share of voices is between two and 31 times higher than that of women).

News stories leading with women protagonists

14. **Building a long-term data picture is challenging** due to patchy data on a global and news provider level, and numerous differing definitions of a protagonist.

15. **Women have been substantially under-represented in news media coverage in this century, at a ratio of 5:1.** Women have played a central role in less high profile genres. Women's centrality in news is highest in crime/violence and celebrity stories, and much less prominent in political news.

16. **The imbalance in the portrayal of women protagonists persists in news today.** At 30%, the UK performed best in terms of the proportion of women protagonists headlining the news in 2019. In Kenya (23%), India (21%), the US (21%) and South Africa (20%), approximately one in five protagonists in online news headlines were women**.** Nigeria lagged significantly behind the other analyzed countries with only 15% of protagonists being women.

17. **Women are much more likely to be protagonists in lower profile news genres.** In Nigeria women were eight times more likely to appear as protagonists in news headlines about arts/media than in those about the economy in 2019. In South Africa this ratio was 5:1, in Kenya 4:1, in the US it was 3:1 and in the UK and India it was 2:1.

18. **Gender representation in political news coverage is trailing behind women's actual political representation in 2019 parliaments**: In Kenya 22% of the National Assembly were women while only 13% of protagonists in political stories were women; in the US, 24% of the House of Representatives were women vs. 18% women protagonists; in South Africa, 43% of the National Assembly were women vs. 14% women protagonists; and in the UK, 32% of members of the House of Commons were women vs. 25% women protagonists. In Nigeria the figure mirrored women's parliamentary representation (6% of the

House of Representatives were women and the same proportion were protagonists) while in India, women's representation in political news coverage was actually ahead of women's parliamentary representation (13% of the House of the People were women but 17% of protagonists were women).

Coverage of gender equality issues

19. **Gender equality issues are not front of mind for decision makers and opinion formers (including journalists).** This has contributed to news coverage of gender equality being marginalized, with less than 1% of all stories covering gender equality in 2019. Within these gender equality stories, men form the majority of story protagonists: 56% in Kenya, 60% in the UK and the US, 72% in South Africa, 80% in India and 84% in Nigeria.

20. **International or national women's days present an opportunity** to increase the salience of gender equality issues in all six countries. Although still limited, coverage of gender equality issues increased by between three and seven times on that day in 2019 in each country.

21. **When reporting on gender equality issues, journalists apply limited and single angles** that do not fully reflect audiences' concerns.

Commonalities between countries across different indicators

22. Social norms correlate strongly with the share of women's voice in news outputs: the more biased social norms are in a country, the smaller women's share of quoted voice in news (as protagonists, sources or experts) is.

23. South Africa, India and Nigeria display a similar level of male bias in social norms while the UK and US share similar socio-economic contexts. Overall, Nigeria and India perform worse than the other four countries on gender equality in news indicators.

24. Journalists in the global south are much more likely to perceive themselves as change agents than journalists in the global north. Journalists in South Africa, Kenya and India were found to be much more likely to think it extremely or very important to promote tolerance and cultural diversity, to

advocate for social change, and to influence public opinion than their colleagues in the UK and US.

Case studies of improved gender balance anchored in behavioral science

25. The case studies examine three ways of achieving behavioral change through:

- **Nudging to create a new social norm**, driven by a powerful 'change-making' messenger within an organization, as exemplified by the BBC 50:50 project (UK).
- **Using debiasing** technology-powered techniques among journalists who are open to change, demonstrated by FollowBias (US).
- **Gender balancing initiatives championed from the top** of the organization and from the ground up, as can be seen at T-Systems (South Africa).

Emerging evidence-based narratives for change

26. **The most commonly used narrative frames** for change focus on journalistic ethics, rights-based journalism, organizational culture-based change and change as a responsibility to women.

27. **Narrative gaps:** The less used narratives frames for change relate to the need to change social norms; boosting the business case; audience relevance; maintaining organizational reputations; complying with regulations; leveraging technological advancements; and audience-targeting for more ambitious growth.

28. **Three powerful narrative frames** for change hold a strong universal appeal across the global north and the global south. These are upholding journalistic ethics, and two less commonly used frames which hold some promise - boosting the business case and audience relevance. Although there is growing evidence supporting the business case for gender balance in various industries, there is a need to build the case for news media, where specific evidence is currently lacking.

29. **Wording matters**: Research commissioned for this report showed that the public's concern about gender inequality increases dramatically when the gender inequality issue is framed as a comparison between men's and women's *relative* positions,

using percentage or ratio differences (e.g. "*men are nearly 138% or two and a half times more likely to be used as experts in the news than women*") as opposed to a statement of women's *absolute* position (e.g. "*29% of experts in the news are women*"). The first framing evoked a negative reaction among 53% of the surveyed public in the UK while the second framing evoked a negative reaction amongst only 12% of the surveyed public.

Recommendations aimed at news providers at a glance

Recommendations focusing on organizational resources: Diversity in the workplace

1. Ensure that a comprehensive suite of policies addressing gender equality is in place and that its implementation is the responsibility of a nominated senior leader. Policies should specifically cover gender equality, gender bias in recruitment, parental leave, return to work, sexual harassment, childcare assistance, flexible working, and training and development.

2. Prioritize childcare policies and flexible working provision as these are particularly likely to have a significant positive impact.

3. Consider raising awareness of and tackling the gender pay gap through pay audits.

4. Include specific, time-limited goals relating to gender equality in the organization's corporate strategy, attaching targets for each element of the news production and consumption value chain. Focus initially on demonstrably achieving gender parity in organizational resources by specific dates.

5. Monitor all elements of your gender equality strategy on an ongoing basis along the entire news production, consumption and impacts value chain, using regular audits and a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators and methodologies.

6. Aspire to gender parity in the governance structure of your organization.

7. Consider gender quotas in recruitment as a tool for redressing gender balance in news.

8. Ensure that the leadership is committed to improving gender equality throughout the organization. Create a gender or women's editor.

9. Tackle gender blindness in the governance structure and senior leadership of your organization, as well as in newsrooms, through a comprehensive gender-sensitivity training program for men and women, covering all possible gender equality indicators along the whole news value chain.

Recommendations focusing on newsgathering: Women as sources of news expertise

10. Compile lists of women contributors and experts for journalists to use.

11. Measure the proportion of women experts featuring in the stories reported by your news organization to reveal how gender-balanced or otherwise your content is.

12. Make women's share of quoted voice in the news as experts match or exceed the share of women attaining master's degrees in your country.

13. Aim to increase women's share of quoted voice in agenda-setting beats such as economy and politics to achieve parity by 2025, using behavioral nudges and insights from case studies.

14. Make newsroom journalists aware of existing male biases in the choice of sources and experts and in news stories, through the use of monitoring and debiasing tools.

15. Set an expectation of gender parity for expert panels on all platforms including television and radio.

Recommendations focusing on news outputs: Women protagonists

16. Measure the proportion of women protagonists featuring in the stories reported by your news organization to reveal how gender-balanced or otherwise your content is.

17. Use the broadest possible definition of a woman protagonist to include both individuals and groups.

18. Capture the proportion of women protagonists in different news beats and work towards increasing the proportion of women protagonists in agenda-

setting news beats such as politics and the economy.

19. Specifically, set targets for women protagonists in the political and government news genre to ensure that your organization's representation of women in politics reflects their true position in society.

20. When capturing the proportion of women protagonists, apply a qualitative lens to quantifications to distinguish between e.g. victims and empowered individuals. Ensure a fair proportion of empowered women in news coverage, to act as role models for young girls and women in society.

21. Make journalists aware of research on existing gender biases in reporting crime and violence which reveal the harsher treatment of women as perpetrators of crime along with greater social tolerance of crimes against women.

22. Introduce a gender-neutral checklist of principles to follow when portraying victims and perpetrators of crime in news stories to redress the biased portrayal of women.

Recommendations focusing on news outputs: Coverage of gender equality

23. Make journalists aware of the existing bias towards featuring more men than women in gender equality stories. Redress this bias by actively looking for women protagonists to lead on gender equality coverage.

24. Across the analyzed countries, coverage of gender-equality issues averaged 0.5% of all stories or one in 200 stories in 2019. By 2021, double coverage of gender equality issues to 1% or one in 100 stories. By 2025, make the 2019 peak performance of 2.5% of overall news coverage the norm. In other words, ensure that one in 40 stories reference gender equality issues.

25. Provide education and training for journalists to facilitate multi-perspective gender equality thinking, leading to more impactful coverage that links multiple gender equality themes into an overarching narrative.

26. Support the teaching of gender equality as a compulsory module for students of news journalism.

27. When reporting on gender equality issues, link coverage with issues such as employment, education, the economy, politics or healthcare, which are more salient to decision makers and the public.

28. Encourage journalists to link different global issues together, such as the impact of gender inequality on poverty and/or climate change.

29. Promote gender equality by compiling existing guidelines and toolkits that address gender-sensitive reporting, the reporting of violence against women and gender equality activism.

30. Plan coverage on the editorial calendar to highlight gender inequality, using e.g. International or National Women's Days, to achieve highest impact.

31. Introduce 'Gender equality in journalism' awards to send out a powerful message and encourage the reporting of gender equality-based stories.

32. Frame issues of gender inequality by exposing the discrepancy in prominence between men and women, using percentage differences or highlighting the extent to which men's voices and experience are amplified over those of women.

Key strategic recommendations

33. Ensure that your organization puts in place tools to answer two burning strategic questions:

- What drives improved portrayal of women in the news?
- Which news features carry the potential to increase women's empowerment?

Introduce and measure news consumption and impact-based indicators to measure women's engagement with news, the impacts of news on women at an individual and societal level, and how these impacts change in response to a more gender-balanced news offer.

34. Incorporate more qualitative assessment when measuring all gender equality indicators to understand the messages women are decoding from their representation in news. Consider combining efforts with other news providers and funders to develop and adhere to an industry-wide gender news tracker, measuring the performance, perceptions and needs of women across the whole news production, consumption and impacts value chain.

35. Tackle the representation of women in ownership and governance structures by introducing an indicator aimed at achieving gender parity on governing boards. Measure the impact of predominantly male ownership structures on the

culture of news organizations and on the gender balance in news.

36. Disaggregate audience data by sex to develop an understanding of women's news needs and preferences. Craft news stories in response to this knowledge.

37. Redress the deep gender imbalance in political news coverage, newsrooms' most influential output, increasing the proportion of women as protagonists and contributors.

38. Ramp up advocacy efforts for gender equality in news, particularly targeting powerful opinion formers (including journalists) and making effective use of narrative frames around ethics, business success, audience relevance and reputation. Support social campaigns and education programs to combat discriminatory social and cultural norms and encourage journalists to see themselves as change agents.

39. Use more images of women in news, increasing the proportion that depict women as empowered.

40. Build awareness of gender imbalance in the news through education programs in secondary (high) schools and support the teaching of gender equality as a compulsory module in news journalism courses at tertiary level.

41. Introduce women leaders in the news industry awards to champion women role models in decision-making positions in journalism and inspire younger generations of women.

42. Focus communications and advocacy initiatives on young people, particularly in the global south where there is a youth population bulge, as this age group is most supportive of gender equality.

Further research recommendations

43. Develop understanding of the impact that changes in one element of the news value chain such as improved gender parity in organizational resources have on all other elements such as newsgathering or news outputs.

44. Build a more robust understanding of the influence of society on journalism and vice versa.

45. Conduct in-depth research into journalists' decision-making processes.

46. Research the identity factors that drive journalists' behaviors.

47. Produce a gender analysis of staff turnover data among news media professionals.

48. Undertake cross-cultural research into women's representation and portrayal in news.

49. Develop a greater understanding of the role of digital media.

50. Compile individual case studies of success or failure in driving gender equality.

PART 1: THE CONTEXT

"There is no such thing as the 'voiceless'. There is only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard."

Arundhati Roy

Background

It is now 25 years since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted at the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. One of the 12 specific aims of the Beijing Platform for Action was to increase women's participation in news media organizations and to promote a gender-balanced portrayal of women in news media across the globe. This report is dedicated to understanding the progress which has been made towards these two aims in six countries around the world: two from the global north (the UK and the US) and four from the global south (India, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa).

Women's touchpoints with the news

To gain a full understanding of how well-represented women are in news, we need to examine women's interaction with all elements of news production and consumption. **News providers can only achieve gender balance if women have a powerful voice at every touchpoint in the lifecycle of a news story**. Only then can a news provider conclude definitively that women are represented and portrayed fairly in the news, and that this has a positive impact on audiences' news consumption and self-image. The **news production, consumption and impact value chain framework** which AKAS has developed, brings together all the possible touchpoints where women interact with a news item, both within and outside an organization. It also includes three types of impact that this news item could lead to at an individual, community and societal level. Biases that favor men can (and do) occur at all of the touchpoints in the news value chain described in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Gender equality indicators mapped onto AKAS' news production, consumption and impact value chain framework

1. Organizational resources	2. Newsgathering	3. Outputs	4. News consumption	5. Individual impacts	6. Influencer-based impacts	7. Decision maker-based impacts
Organization is explicit about their gender sensitivity approach Gender diversity of the workforce: % of journalists who are women % of women in leadership/ management team % of women in high profile newsroom beats (e.g. politics)	% of women used as source of expertise % of reporters who are women % of news sources on the ground who are women	% of stories leading on protagonists who are women (e.g. women in power) Portrayal of women % of experts on screen/ online who are women Implicit or explicit coverage of gender equality issues Gender-responsive content Gender transformative content	Reach: % of women reached Engagement: % of women who are engaged with the content (e.g. commented, shared, liked)	% of all who are aware of overall gender inequality generally % of women who feel that news topics/stories/ genres are relevant to them % who feel the news' breadth, depth, tone & immediacy meet their needs % who trust the news/ think that news is balanced % who feel they are better reflected in the news % who act on inequality issues (e.g. campaigning, signing petitions)	% of influencers who rate gender inequality issues as important Number of influencers engaged in gender equality issues Number of stories featuring protagonists who are women or/and issues/topics relevant to women that have been amplified by media Gender-issue related debates triggered by news reports Recognition of media providers for gender equality efforts Journalism awards	Individual decision-maker based impacts: policy makers/officials propelled to act on a gender equality issue as a result of story coverage Debates in parliaments and other decision making bodies triggered by stories relevant to women/ advancing gender equality Positive changes in the narrative Laws/policy/ strategy changes as a result of media coverage of a gender relevant issue

Source: AKAS (2020)

Organizational resources in the form of staff, management, governance and ownership constitute women's first touchpoint with a news item in the news production, consumption and impact value chain. Measurement of these resources captures the number of women journalists at different levels of the hierarchy in a news organization who craft news items or take editorial decisions about the news. The organizational resources indicators evaluate whether the newsroom set up is geared to meeting the news needs of women. They also focus on whether the corporate narrative of the news provider (such as their mission, strategy or vision) demonstrates a gender sensitivity dimension. News organizations often assume that improved gender balance in the newsroom, among senior leaders and in top management leads to a more balanced portrayal of women in their news output.

Newsgathering is the second touchpoint for women in the value chain. Newsgathering gender indicators capture the proportion of women who appear on the news as experts, reporters, bylines, spokespeople and sources on the ground. Well-established change theories posit that the more gender-balanced newsgathering is, the more gender-sensitive and transformative news outputs are likely to be.

Outputs: **content/news coverage** is women's third touchpoint with a news item in the news production value chain. Some of the indicators which fall into this category are the use of women story protagonists and how they are portrayed in news stories (e.g. as victims, survivors, power brokers, etc.), and the existence of gender equality stories/story angles in the news coverage across different genres. Feminist theories propose that the higher the proportion of women protagonists in news coverage is, the fairer, richer and broader the perspectives of women captured in the news will be[1]. The theories posit that this in turn would lead to increased news consumption among women.

News consumption: **news reach and public engagement** is the fourth touchpoint for women in the news value chain and the first element of the consumption part of the chain. Indicators for this element capture women's consumption levels of news items via various news providers. They also measure women's depth of engagement with particular news stories.

Individual impacts represent the fifth touchpoint for women in the news value chain. Indicators for these capture **individual level impacts** which have resulted from consuming particular news items, such as a perception of improved relevance of news coverage

among women, increased interest in topics among women, increased awareness of male bias in news coverage (among both women and men), improved awareness of existing gender inequality and a change in behaviors such as increased campaigning or lobbying for gender equality.

Opinion-former/influencer-based impacts constitute the sixth touchpoint affecting women. This metric focuses on news items which have led to increases in awareness levels of gender-sensitive issues, improved attitudes towards gender equality and/or actions supporting gender equality among opinion formers/influencers. Journalists are a key opinion former/influencer group, as well as academics, NGOs and other groups who do not directly occupy the decision-making seat.

Decision maker-based impacts represent the last touchpoint affecting women in the news production and consumption value chain. These impacts lead to transformative societal changes. Indicators for these impacts measure behaviors generated by decision makers which have been facilitated by news coverage. For example: the increased likelihood of politicians to act on a gender inequality issue, debates in parliaments triggered by a news story relevant to women, or new laws advancing gender equality being passed. Decision makers include Government ministers, parliamentarians, policy makers or any other officials in power.

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Part 2 of this report will concentrate on examining gender equality indicators which cluster around organizational resources (i.e. *gender diversity in the news organization*), newsgathering (i.e. *the proportion of experts and sources who are women*) and outputs (i.e. *the proportion of women in news coverage who are protagonists* as well as *the proportion of stories which are dedicated to gender equality issues*). Understanding how changes in these three elements of the news value chain affect the remaining four elements, which center around news consumption and impacts, lies beyond the scope of this report.

It should be noted however that the literature review undertaken by AKAS, which focused in on the 230 most cited papers on gender equality in news since 2005, out of 2,286 papers, revealed a **general lack of empirical measurement of news consumption or impacts.**

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[1] Byerly, 2016

Academic articles that focused on news consumption accounted for only approximately 5% of the total canon while impacts accounted for a mere 4% of focus. This gap has been acknowledged by scholars in the last few decades [2] and is attributed to difficulty in measurement rather than a perceived lack of importance. The consensus is that a more systematic assessment of impacts and news consumption would greatly benefit the field.

Some papers describe potential impacts or news consumption based on inference or subjective opinion. Concrete examples are rare although Carll [3] lists examples from the US of how news coverage of violent incidents against women influenced public opinion, which in turn influenced law enforcement and subsequently public policy. Another example of impact is the United Nations publicizing 'honor killings' in the Middle East, which led to increased news media coverage and public discourse, ultimately leading to positive social change. These examples are compelling but rarely referenced in academic literature. More recent examples have been highlighted in a Reuters Institute report from October 2019[4], which includes innovative models of digital-born mission-driven news organizations in the global south (e.g. The Quint in India and Daily Maverick in South Africa). In these instances, news providers have been set up with the very purpose of driving impact on issues such as gender equality or corruption, using a brand of journalism that harnesses online communities and calls for social action for societal change.

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[2] Mills, 1997; Kangas et al., 2014
[3] Carll, 2003
[4] Posetti et al., 2019

A quick fast-forward to the conclusions of the report

In summary, what we will evidence in this report using multiple sources, is the stubbornly persistent under-representation of women in news organizations, especially at leadership and governance levels, over the last few decades. There has been no discernible improvement in this in any of the countries we examined. In addition, contrary to our expectations of great variation between the analyzed countries in terms of the representation of women as protagonists or experts/sources in the news, we found that their proportions across all the countries examined were comparably low in comparison to men's. Between 15% and 30% of protagonists in the six countries are women while a similar proportion of the share of quoted voice in online news belongs to women. Finally, less than 1% of news stories cover gender equality issues across all six countries.

Unfortunately then, news globally is very much still produced mainly by men, features more men, and, as shown later in this chapter, is consumed more by men. News remains decisively biased towards men's perspectives. In fact, men's ownership and governance of media and telecommunications organizations (including news), which legitimizes male-dominated professional standards for making journalism, constitutes a position of hegemony. Some academic research suggests that women embrace these male-dominated standards as the cultural norm, in order to fit in in the newsroom, progress in organizations, or because they are unaware of an alternative way of operating.

A male-dominated culture is one of the leading reasons suggested by academic research as to why we have observed no positive relationship between newsrooms which have more women and news coverage which features higher numbers of women protagonists or women having a greater share of quoted voice. This means that achieving near gender parity in newsrooms (as in e.g. South Africa, the UK and the US) is not enough to improve the gender balance of news outputs. Having a third of women in top level leadership or governance positions (as in e.g. South Africa, the US and Kenya) has not provided the 'critical mass' [5] previously thought necessary to improve women's visibility in the news. The relationship between the number of women in organizations, in newsgathering and in news outputs is clearly not linear, despite well-established change theories hypothesizing so. In order to understand why this is the case, it is important to look beyond the mere quantification of women in news organizations and examine economic, political, socio-cultural, technological, and regulatory factors which could be blocking progress[6]. The following sections touch on each of these factors.

Political and economic context

Women gained the right to vote in the last 102 years in the six analyzed democracies, but they still have limited political power

It is worth remembering that women only gained the right to vote within the last 102 years in all six analyzed countries. The UK was the first country where women gained voting rights in 1918, followed by Kenya in 1919 and the US in 1920. Women in South Africa and in India were enfranchised around a decade later – in 1930 and 1935, respectively. By contrast, suffrage was only granted to women in Nigeria in 1958.

In terms of political leadership, only two of the six countries have had women heads of state in the last 50 years [7]. In India the offices of Prime Minister and President have been held by women (Indira Gandhi and Pratibha Devisingh Patil) for a period of 19.5 years while a woman Prime Minister has held office in the UK for a total of 14.5 years (Margaret Thatcher and Theresa May). South Africa, Nigeria, the US and Kenya have only had men as heads of state in the last 50

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[5] Carll, 2003
[6] In addition, it is also key to assess the portrayal of women in the news, which is a costly qualitative exercise, not undertaken in the

last five years on a global scale by anyone. The next iteration of the Global Media Monitoring Project was due in 2020, but due to the COVID-19 crisis will be delayed.
[7] World Economic Forum, 2019

years. Globally, in 85 of 153 countries studied, there has only ever been a man in the role of head of state[8]. An analysis of women's representation in governments and parliaments continues to present a depressing picture. To date, only 21% of government ministerial positions and 25% of parliamentary seats across 149 countries are occupied by women[9]. In some countries, women are hardly represented at all. There is great disparity in the proportion of women occupying ministerial seats in the six analyzed countries, with South Africa achieving an impressive near-parity (49%), followed by 25% in Kenya, 23% in India, 22% in the UK and the US and only 8% in Nigeria[10]. Although still in a minority at 32%, women are better represented in Parliament than in the ministerial cabinet in the UK and marginally better represented in the US (24%). Their parliamentary representation is proportionally similar to their ministerial representation in Kenya (22%) and in South Africa (46%) but lower in India (14%) and Nigeria (3%).

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Although all six countries can be characterized as democracies, Nigeria and Kenya (where recent attempts at greater parliamentary gender balance have been rebuffed) are considered 'weak-performing democracies', where arguably progress on women's rights is also weak[11].

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Globally, the use of three types of political gender quotas (legislative candidate quotas, reserved seats in parliament and political party quotas) is limited and particularly so in the six analyzed democracies. Across the world, 56 countries use legislative candidate quotas in the lower houses to achieve a more balanced gender representation, but none of the six analyzed countries use this approach. In terms of reserved seats in parliaments for women, only 24 countries use this approach with Kenya being the only one of our analyzed countries. The use of political party quotas is adopted globally by 56 countries, including Kenya, South Africa and the UK.

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Given all of the above trends, at the current rate of progress it will take another 45 years to reach gender parity in parliaments globally, pointing to the continued political marginalization of women in all six analyzed democracies.

Women have not reached parity in their economic participation in any of the six countries. The economic empowerment of women varies significantly across countries and between different economic indicators

Women in the six analyzed countries enjoy very different levels of participation in the labor market. Women's labor participation rates are highest in the UK (73%), followed by US (67%), Kenya (64%), South Africa (53%) and Nigeria (51%) with India the lowest, with a mere 25% of women participating in the labor market[12].

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Literacy rates among women and girls range from 99% in the UK and US, to 87% in South Africa, 78% in Kenya, 66% in India and 53% in Nigeria (see Figure 1.2). Women are most likely to be employed part-time in Kenya (44%) and least likely to be employed part-time in South Africa (see Figure 1.2).

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According to the subjective views expressed in a survey of executives asked to rate on a scale of 1-7 how similarly paid men and women are for the same work[13], Nigeria ranked highest in terms of wage equality between men and women for similar work. It ranked 32nd, followed by the US in 47th place, Kenya in 61st place, the UK in 76th place, India in 117th and South Africa last in 121st place.

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Women are far from achieving parity with men in economic terms in all six countries. In some countries, such as India and Nigeria, this is fundamentally inhibited by the significantly lower literacy rates among women than men. In other countries, like Kenya, a large proportion of women, who are employed part-time, do not enjoy similar levels of job security and protection as their male counterparts. In India, women seem to be on the margins of economic life with only one in four being in employment. Finally, while women in the UK and US are more likely to be working than in any of the other countries, gender pay gaps remain.

[8] World Economic Forum, 2019
[9] World Economic Forum, 2019
[10] World Economic Forum, 2019

[11] International IDEA, 2019
[12] World Economic Forum, 2019
[13] World Economic Forum, Executive Opinion Survey (EOS), 2018-19

Figure 1.2: Measures of women's economic and political participation (2019)

Legend:

- **Educational attainment** — Literacy rate among women, %
- **Economic participation and opportunity** — Women's participation in labor force, %
- **Political empowerment** — % of parliamentarians who are women
- **Political empowerment** — % of ministerial positions currently held by women
- **Work participation and leadership** — Workers employed part-time, % of employed women
- **Wage equality for similar work rank** (out of 154 countries)

South Africa — 13%, 49%, 46%, 53%, 87% — Wage equality rank: 121
India — N/A, 23%, 14%, 25%, 66% — Wage equality rank: 117
UK — 37%, 22%, 32%, 73%, 99% — Wage equality rank: 76
Kenya — 44%, 25%, 22%, 64%, 78% — Wage equality rank: 61
USA — 28%, 22%, 24%, 67%, 99% — Wage equality rank: 47
Nigeria — 18%, 8%, 3%, 51%, 53% — Wage equality rank: 32

Source: World Economic Forum (2019)

Regulatory context

Gender equality legislation is a catalyst for the improved representation of women in news but it takes a few decades for the effects to be felt. It is also not a guarantee of gender equality advancement in news due to lack of enforcement

The regulatory context surrounding news organizations in the six countries will be examined in more detail in Part 2 Chapter 1 which is dedicated to understanding gender diversity in news organizations. This section provides a top-line summary of the regulatory context in each of the six countries. In some countries, discrimination on the basis of gender is unequivocally prohibited in the country's legislation. However, it is not universally constitutionally guaranteed. It is also important to mention that in some countries which protect gender equality through the constitution or legislation, this protection can remain on paper only for decades until policies guaranteeing women's equality are implemented. In fact, parliaments in Nigeria and Kenya have recently failed to pass gender equality advancement acts, despite their constitutions prohibiting discrimination based on sex. Another important factor worth noting is the need for news organizations across all the analyzed countries to improve (or improve further) their policies on parental leave, childcare and flexible working. These directly impact women journalists as they fulfil the role of primary care givers more often than men[14].

South Africa is leading in its legal provision for gender equality. Nigeria and Kenya lag behind all other countries

South Africa has a very progressive constitution, guaranteeing equality, prohibiting multiple forms of discrimination and guaranteeing press freedom. South African society has made progress on many fronts, including racial and gender equality, since the fall of apartheid in the early 1990s. However, there are still significant challenges. There are differing views, for example, on the real extent of press freedom and despite progressive policy frameworks, women face multiple societal challenges: unemployment is high, violence against women, including rape, is frequent, and HIV levels are high[15].

Nevertheless, a state institution, the Commission for Gender Equality, exists to promote women's rights. Each government department has a Gender Unit, responsible for implementing a national gender policy and reviewing new policies from a gender perspective. All organizations employing 50 people or more are legally obliged to submit an Employment Equity Plan to the Department of Labor, showing how they plan to achieve and maintain diversity. There is a political party quota system to ensure gender balance in the ANC governments, and South Africa is ranked 7th in the world in women's participation in parliaments[16]. This combination of factors explains to a great extent South Africa's leading position in terms of gender diversity in newsrooms and among senior leadership.

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Legislation **in the UK** has been in place since the 1970s to prevent discrimination and promote equal pay, and women are entitled to maternity leave. In 2010, legislation was introduced to prevent unfair treatment in the workplace based on various factors including gender. A 2011 survey[17] revealed that all participating news organizations had policies in place on gender equality and sexual harassment and offered maternity leave. However, despite legislation to promote equal pay, the gender pay gap in news has been highlighted in recent years by scandals revealing high profile women news journalists being underpaid in comparison to their male counterparts. Since 2017, large employers have been required to publish annual data on their gender pay gaps. Troublingly, figures published in 2019 showed that almost a third of media organizations had seen their gender pay gap increase[18].

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Despite the existence of legislation to prevent gender discrimination and guarantee equality, **India** faces significant barriers to achieving gender-balanced media. This is partly related to the decades-long delay in implementing non-discrimination laws. However, legislation has made a difference to women's lives in India in areas other than media. For example, there is an improved rate of women's participation in politics

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14 Byerly, 2016, White 2009; McCracken et al, 2018
15 Byerly, 2016

16 Byerly, 2016
17 Byerly, 2011
18 Press Gazette, 2019

at grassroots level due to the constitution reserving a third of seats for women. Participation levels stood at 37% at the last survey, although a delay in implementing similar legislation at national level had meant that women's participation at parliamentary level remained low[19].

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The **US** constitution does not guarantee gender equality and neo-liberal governments since the 1980s have been seen to hinder progress on gender equality policy[20]. The US news media industry has gone through a consolidation process since the 1990s with five conglomerates dominating the landscape. In this consolidating context, ownership is concentrated among white men (at 70-80%) with women and racial minorities under-represented[21]. This concentration of ownership in white men's hands represents an additional barrier to increasing women's influence within the industry.

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The introduction of **Kenya**'s 2010 Constitutional Framework proclaimed a 'second republic', ending Kenyans' 20 years of clamoring for a new constitutional order. Among other things, it enshrined for the first time recognition of women's rights as human rights[22]. However, in 2019 Kenya's parliament refused to enact the *Kenyan Gender Bill*, a refusal which is seen as having negative ramifications for progress towards gender equality and beyond[23].

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In **Nigeria**, women's lack of participation in legislative processes has had a negative impact on the promotion and enforcement of women's rights. Here, there are significant legal barriers to improving gender equality in the news: apart from section 42 which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex, the Nigerian Constitution contains no specific and substantive provisions on the protection of women's rights. The *Gender and Equal Opportunity Bill* which was presented at the Nigerian Senate for a second reading in 2016, was rejected. It was reintroduced and again rejected in March 2020. It is argued that one of the reasons the Bill was not passed is the very low number of women senators (seven out of 109) while men's efforts, if any, to promote these rights have been deemed insufficient[24].

[19] Byerly, 2016
[20] Byerly, 2016
[21] Byerly, 2016

[22] National Gender and Equality Commission Kenya, 2017
[23] Al Jazeera Media Network, 2019
[24] Frontiers in Sociology, 2018

Socio-cultural context

This section provides a quick sketch of the cultural norms which define gender roles and influence women's representation and balance in the news in each of the six countries. It is by no means exhaustive and should be seen as a starting point for further research.

In all countries where gender equality laws have been put in place, they have made a difference to women's advancement in news to various degrees but have not been sufficient on their own to achieve transformative change. This is partly a result of entrenched male-dominated patriarchal cultural norms which spill over into newsrooms and inhibit positive change from occurring. It was also found that in some countries[25] corruption and sexual harassment discourage women from staying in journalism (e.g. through their reluctance to engage in offering bribes for stories). According to the *Global Corruption Barometer*[26], in 2017 61% of Nigerians thought that *all* or *most* of their national Senators/Members of Parliament were involved in corruption, a view that was shared by 46% of South Africans, 45% of Kenyans, 41% of Americans, 33% of Indians and 28% of British respondents with regard to their respective political institutions.

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Gender stereotypes that pigeonhole women primarily as care-givers to a greater or lesser degree have influenced the assignment of reporting tasks in newsrooms across all countries, with women being entrusted with and pushed more towards reporting on lower profile and slower-paced beats such as entertainment, lifestyle and education, while men take on the agenda-setting beats such as politics and the economy, which are considered a more masculine domain, particularly in the global south.

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One window into understanding how cultural values shape societies is the Inglehart-Welzel Cultural Map which uses the *World Values Survey*[27] to map out countries based on whether they have:

- Traditional values (in relation to the importance of religion, deference to authority and traditional family roles) vs non-traditional or secular values; or

- Survival values (placing an emphasis on economic and physical security) vs self-expression values (which give a high priority to gender equality, tolerance of environmental protection and tolerance of foreigners).

Figure 1.3 shows where five of the analyzed countries are placed when these dimensions are mapped against each other, as well as identifying where the gender parity dimension is[28]. In terms of values, Nigeria is spatially furthest away from gender parity whilst the UK is closest (followed by the US) although still some way off. India and South Africa are close to the middle, exposing a more polarized value system.

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[25] Byerly, 2016
[26] Global Corruption Barometer, 2017

[27] Inglehart et al., 2014 (2011-2014) and Inglehart et al., 2014 (1981-2014)
[28] Kenya was not included in this survey

Figure 1.3: Inglehart-Welzel Cultural Map with the Gender Parity Space
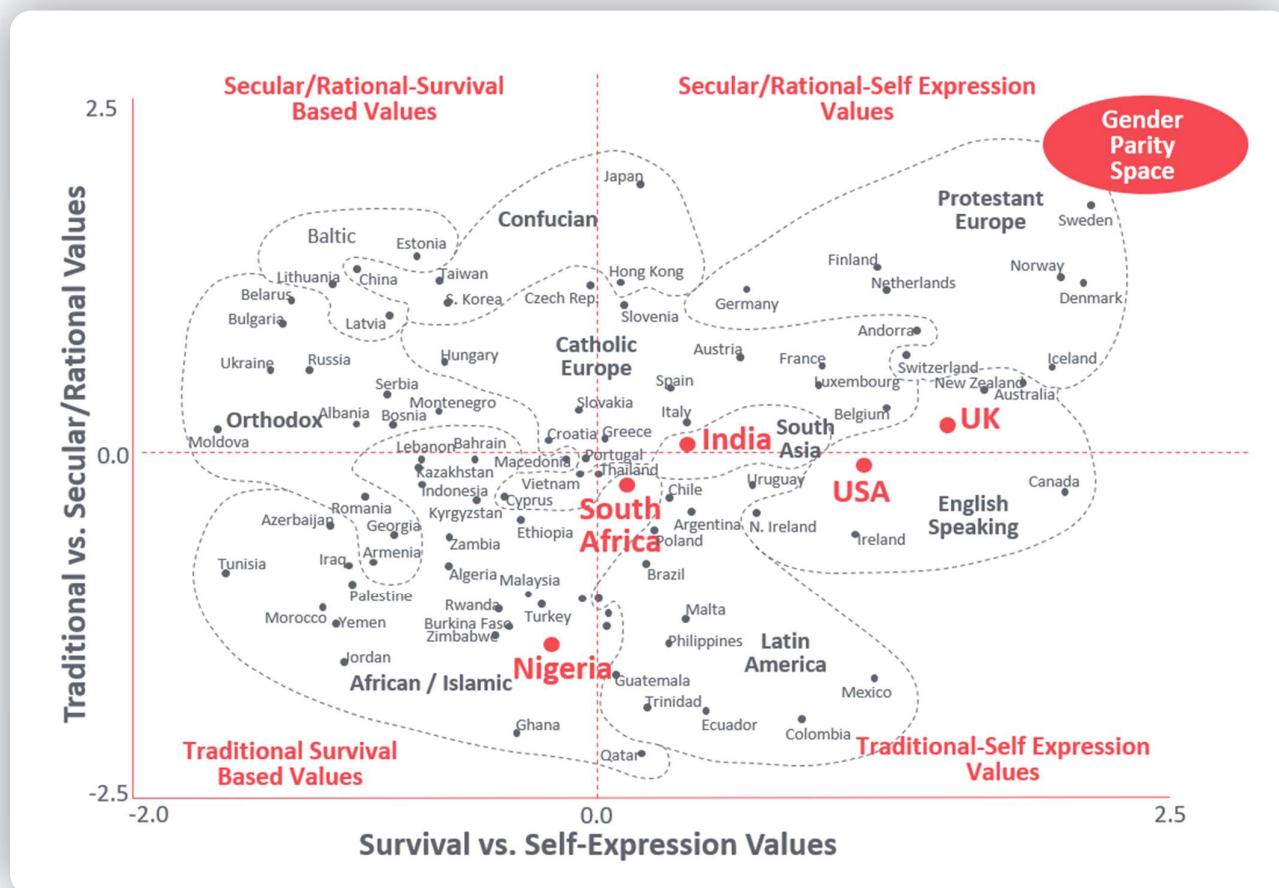
Source: Inglehart et al., 2011-2014 (2014), Gender Parity Space added by AKAS

Evidence from the US shows that although gender parity has not been attained, the representation of women in the news workforce is closer to reflecting the US workforce as a whole compared to most other minority groups. In 2018, women made up 42% of the news workforce. Relative to the 47% representation of women in the total US workforce for all occupations, women's representation in news exhibited a -11% shortfall. The shortfalls for other groups were as follows: Black or African American -43%; Hispanic or Latino -60%; American Indian and Alaskan Native -64%; and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders -65%. Only amongst Asian Americans was there no shortfall.

Whether deeply entrenched or lingering, patriarchal norms are present in all countries.

The following section examines the strength of the patriarchal norms which hold women back from careers in journalism in each analyzed country, starting from the most patriarchal societies to the least

Nigeria

According to a study[29] anchored in an ethnographic research approach, women in Nigerian news organizations experience a high level of gender inequalities including sexism and sexual harassment. They are predominantly assigned to lower profile news beats. The strongly patriarchal norms governing society are reflected in the limited number of women

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[29] Tijani-Adenle, 2019

in journalism, the limited opportunities for career progression afforded to them and the high attrition of women in journalism. Although constitutionally protected, Nigerian women are seen to have **'equal opportunities in theory but not in practice'**[30]. Nigeria displays the strongest degree of patriarchal values within the group of analyzed countries[31]. According to the *World Values Survey*[32], a staggering 53% of all Nigerians (54% of women) believed in 2012 that '*it is justifiable for a man to beat his wife*' (see Figure 1.4). 66% overall and 55% of women in Nigeria believed that '*men should have more right to a job than women*'. 77% overall (and 71% of women) believed that '*men make better political leaders than women do*'. These male-dominance-revering findings indicate an extraordinary level of socio-cultural resistance to gender equality not just in news but in Nigerian society as a whole. A woman's identity is perceived first and foremost through the lens of being 'a good wife' and a mother. The responsibilities for the husband's and children's wellbeing as well as the housework fall squarely on women's shoulders[33]. This curtails greatly their opportunities for a successful career in journalism. However, paradoxically, despite this expectation for women to be the main home carers, society also expects women to work and make a living while being full-time primary care givers. A high proportion of women in Nigeria have historically worked as farmers, producers of local food and supplies, or as retailers and providers of services. Men expect their wives to work and women contribute significantly to family finances in Nigeria (up to 50%)[34]. Journalism, however, is not a career that men endorse for their wives due to the shift work across the week, weekends and evenings.

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[30] Mendes, 2013, in Byerly, 2016.
[31] Kenya is excluded from this comparison because it was not part of the *World Values Survey*

[32] Inglehart et al., 2014
[33] Inglehart et al., 2014
[34] Inglehart et al., 2014

Figure 1.4: Strength of patriarchal values/gender bias (2005-2013)

Justifiable for a man to beat his wife
1 = never justifiable, 10 = always justifiable (% choosing 2 − 10)

	UK	USA	India	South Africa	Nigeria
Women	10%	11%	22%	33%	54%
Men	14%	15%	28%	40%	52%
	2005	2011	2012	2006	2012

Jobs scarce: Men should have more right to a job than women
% agree

	USA	UK	South Africa	India	Nigeria
Women	5%	14%	24%	43%	55%
Men	7%	18%	37%	59%	76%
	2011	2005	2013	2012	2012

Men make better political leaders than women do
% agree

	UK	USA	India	South Africa	Nigeria
Women	13%	15%	44%	47%	71%
Men	23%	24%	58%	56%	82%
	2005	2011	2012	2013	2012

Source: *World Values Survey, Inglehart et al (2014)*

India

Although the persistent discrimination against women in **India** became a point of contention in the 1970s and 1980s [35] and resulted in official initiatives planning corrective action being launched, today *'the realities of the lives of large numbers of women remain grim'*[36]. This has been evidenced by the limited participation of women in India's labor market and their marginalization in the political and economic life of the country. Although some of the best-known names in Indian journalism belong to women, according to *The Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Journalism*, as a whole, women remain on the margins of governance and top leadership structures in news organizations. This is in part related to a patriarchal culture, favoring men in all parts of society. Women in journalism suffer high attrition rates for many reasons. Significant among these are persistent systemic discrimination at organizational level, sexist attitudes of male colleagues and expectations for women to look after their families (e.g. to assume the primary childcare responsibilities)[37]. Survey figures from 2012 revealed that 25% of all Indians (22% of women) felt that *'it is justifiable for a man to beat his wife'*, and that 52% of all Indians (59% of men vs. 43% of women) thought that *'men should have more right to a job than women'* and that *'men make better political leaders than women'* (56% of men vs. 47% of women)[38] (see Figure 1.4).

Kenya

Byerly[39] reports that in **Kenya** there is a strong tradition of patriarchy. Women, who traditionally have not been educated by their families, had economic independence through farm produce until the beginning of the 20th century, which they then lost to men's more lucrative cash-crop cultivation. Despite legislation stipulating a 30% minimum gender quota in public bodies, women are still on the margins of leadership roles. Women's dreams and identities are currently confined to the domestic sphere. This is a big barrier for women embarking on careers in journalism. As shown in the economic section of this chapter, fewer women are employed as full-time journalists in Kenya. The reasons offered by Byerly for this shortage of full-time women journalists include discouraging

working conditions; a belief among male journalists that women are not up to the job; the short supply of women as trained journalists; and a shortage of women journalist role models in newsrooms. Culture puts women off staying in journalism because they are boxed into lower profile news; they are not taken seriously and are put down by male colleagues; and they have few opportunities to climb the journalism ladder[40].

South Africa

Women's participation in journalism dates from colonial times in **South Africa**. South Africa is ahead of other analyzed countries (and ahead of most countries globally) in terms of women's representation in newsrooms and among news leadership teams. However, the culture in South Africa can be described as very patriarchal, a trait which, among other things, is reflected in the way in which important and prevalent topics in South African society today, such as rape, have been presented from the perspective of the news values of drama, conflict and prominence instead of from a perspective of gender-sensitive values[41]. 30% of all South Africans (24% of women) believed in 2013[42] that *'men should have more right to a job than women'*; 52% (47% of women) believed that *'men make better political leaders than women do'*; and 37% of South Africans (33% of women) believed in 2006 that it was *'justifiable for a man to beat his wife'*[43].

United States

As highlighted earlier in this chapter, women's equality rights are not guaranteed by the constitution in the **US**. There have been two substantive feminist equality movements: from 1840 to 1920 in order to achieve suffrage and from the 1960s to the present day for a range of gender equality advances in legislation, politics and other public spheres. Although women enjoy a high standard of living and 99% literacy rates, as well as higher rates of college attendance than men, their voices are still not fully represented in political, economic and decision-making life in the US. In workplaces there are more opportunities for women than previously, but within the constraints of a glass ceiling [44] . As in other countries, there are certain

[35] Byerly, 2016
[36] Byerly, 2016
[37] Byerly, 2016
[38] Inglehart et al., 2014
[39] Byerly, 2016
[40] Byerly, 2016
[41] Byerly, 2016

[42] *World Values Survey*, Inglehart et al., 2014
[43] The reported figure for 2013 was 61% for all. However, it is unusual for a belief to shift so aggressively upwards in such a short space of time and we are therefore applying caution and reporting the 2006 figure which is more in line with the proportions of other patriarchal beliefs endorsed in South Africa.
[44] Byerly, 2016

lingering patriarchal social norms in the US that impact adversely on women. For example, they are still expected to do more work in the home than their husbands or partners, thus often shouldering unique care-giving responsibilities. 13% of Americans (11% of women) in 2011 believed that it was 'justifiable for a man to beat his wife' and 6% (5% of women) believed that 'men should have more right to a job than women' (see Figure 1.4).

Despite strong feminist movements, women are still significantly under-represented in news ownership and governance structures, as well as in senior editorial roles. 19% of all Americans (15% of women) believed in 2011 that 'men make better leaders than women do' (see Figure 1.4). Newsrooms are yet to reach gender parity, despite higher numbers of women than men graduating from journalism degrees.

UK

Despite all the right regulatory, economic and social conditions existing in the **UK**, and the country's high standards of living, women are still far from achieving parity in news decision making. Parity in news storytelling as protagonists and sources/experts also remains a remote goal. This gender inequality in news is partly related to subtle yet obstinate patriarchal stereotypes held by society, which have softened over the years, but are still present[45]. For example, 18% of British (13% of women) thought in 2005 that 'men make better political leaders than women do' (see Figure 1.4), 12% (10% of women) thought it 'justifiable for a man to beat his wife' and 16% (14% of women) thought that 'men should have more right to a job than women'.

However, it is important to highlight that the UK is ahead of other countries on some gender equality indicators in news such as women's share of quoted voice and women protagonists in news stories. In addition, although key **editorial** and **commercial** leadership roles in news operations are still dominated by men, many of the more recent appointments have been women [46]. Despite this, men still dominate in high-profile editorial roles. As of May 2020, out of 45 political editor roles identified across leading UK news providers, only seven or 18% were held by women and none by women from ethnic minorities.

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[45] Byerly, 2016 based on 'How Fair is Britain' survey conducted in 2010

[46] Examples of current women leaders in news operations in 2020 include: Annette Davis, CEO of the Guardian (in 2020); Louisa Compton, Channel 4's Head of News (in 2020); Roula Khalaf, Editor of the Financial Times (in 2020); Anna Mallet, CEO of ITN (since 2019); Fran Unsworth, Director of BBC News (since 2018); Jo Morrell, Managing Editor of The Telegraph (since 2017); Katharine Viner, Editor of the Guardian (since 2015); Zanny Minton Beddoes, Editor-in-Chief of The Economist (since 2015); and Rebekah Brooks, CEO of News UK, which includes the Sun, Sun on Sunday, Times and Sunday Times, amongst others (since 2015)

The lack of gender equality sensitivity among the public, decision makers and opinion formers

The majority of members of the public in all six countries claim to be supportive of gender equality. However, differences between countries are evident. Gender equality is supported less strongly in countries from the global south (South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya and India) than it is in countries from the global north (the US and UK)

Research evidence from the last two years exposes contradictory public attitudes[47]. Thus, while there are high claimed levels of support for gender equality in all countries, a significant minority in the surveyed countries (and in one case the majority) hold the belief that gender equality efforts '*have gone far enough in their country'.* In addition, as explored in detail later in this report[48], a significant proportion of the public in all the analyzed countries who were surveyed for gender biases display at least two of seven measured gender biases [49] (see Figure 1.5). These findings build a complex picture of public views on gender equality. They show that members of the public in different countries can claim to support gender equality while at the same time being biased against women. Gender biases can remain undetected by the individual/society experiencing them and therefore, are very hard to break without external factors bringing the bias to full public consciousness.

Gender blindness: You cannot fix what is not seen as broken

While the majority of men and women in South Africa, the UK, the US and India acknowledge that gender equality is important to them and that there are actions they could take to help promote equality between men and women[50] (see Figure 1.5), there is also evidence to suggest that the public in these countries may be suffering from a degree of *gender blindness*. India provides the starkest example of this, followed by South Africa. For example, in 2018 67% of men in India and 72% of men in South Africa defined themselves as feminists. At the same time, 62% of men in India and 40% of men in South Africa believed that '*things have gone far enough in their country when it comes to gender equality'*. This points to a majority of men in India and a significant minority of men in South Africa holding inconsistent views on gender equality. This observation of gender blindness is made even more potent by the discovery that women are subject to it too: a higher proportion of women than men in India (66% of women vs 62% of men) think that *'things have gone far enough in their country when it comes to gender equality'.* In South Africa 37% of women agreed with this statement (vs. 40% of men). Such inconsistencies also exist, although to a lesser extent, in the UK and the US, where 20% and 27% of women respectively agreed with this statement (see Figure 1.5).

The US and UK are more supportive of gender equality, followed by India. South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya are less supportive of gender equality

Although research findings demonstrated a widespread claimed support for gender equality across 28 surveyed countries [51], including the six analyzed countries (see Figures 1.6a and 1.6b), relatively sizeable minorities in Kenya (14%), Nigeria (17%) and South Africa (14%) actively opposed gender equality in their countries in 2018. This is consistent with the earlier picture in 2010[52] which showed that Nigeria and Kenya were less supportive of gender equality than the

[47] Behavioral science shows that it is common for a person to hold contradictory beliefs, one of which can become more prominent depending on the immediate context
[48] Part 2, Chapter 5: Commonalities between countries across different indicators

[49] United Nations Development Programme, 2020. Gender biases related to women's participation in education, economic life and political life as well as the autonomy of their bodies
[50] Ipsos, 2018
[51] Pew Research Center, 2019
[52] Pew Research Center, 2010

UK, US and India (South Africa was not in this survey). A higher proportion of the public in the UK and the US were found to be *in favor of gender equality,* believing that *'women should have the same rights as men'* than in Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa and India (see Figures 1.6a and 1.6b).

According to Pew Research Center[53], younger adults globally are more likely to favor increasing gender egalitarianism (see Figure 1.7). In the UK, 18-29 year olds have a 17 percentage point higher likelihood of embracing gender egalitarianism than 50+ year olds, while the difference in South Africa is 14 percentage points.

Younger members of the public in different countries are more likely to support gender equality than older members of the public

To conclude, the examined evidence indicates that the more gender biased a society is, the more accepting the public is of the existing status quo for women.

Figure 1.5: Attitudes and social norms in relation to gender equality (2018, 2020)

Source: Ipsos (2018) and United Nations Development Programme (2020)

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[53] Poushter et al., 2019

Figure 1.6a: In favor of or opposed to increasing gender equality (2018)

% who favor/oppose gender equality in their country

- 🔴 Favor
- 🟠 Oppose

	Favor	Oppose
South Africa	53%	14%
Nigeria	61%	17%
United States	71%	4%
Kenya	71%	14%
UK	72%	4%
India	77%	7%
Global (Average) Ranking	64%	7%
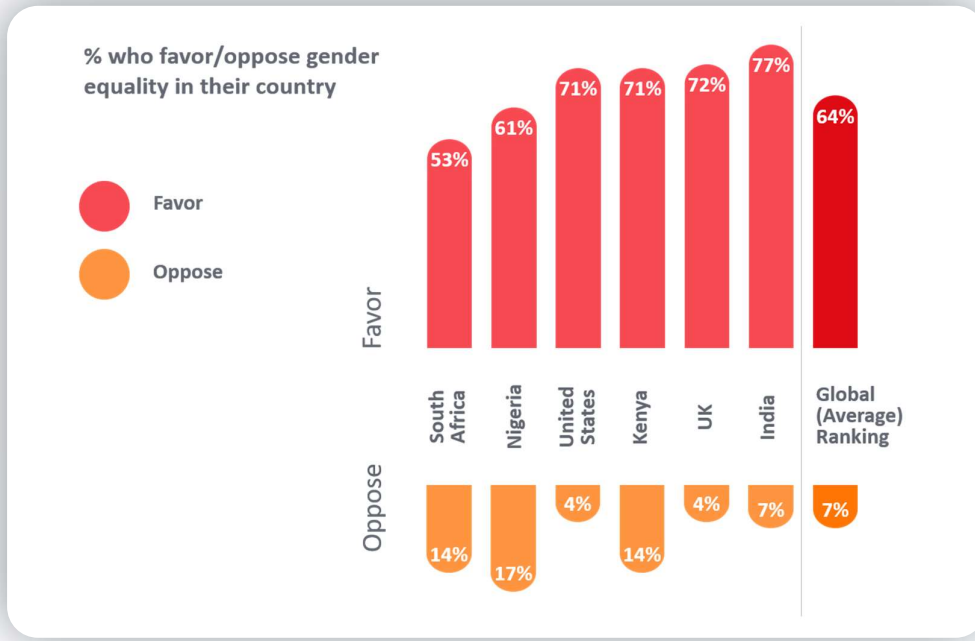
Source: Pew Research Center (2019)

Figure 1.6b: Importance of women having same rights as men (2015)

% who believe it is very important that women have the same rights as men in their country

- 🔴 Total %

Country	Total %
Kenya	45%
Nigeria	54%
South Africa	67%
India	71%
United States	91%
UK	92%
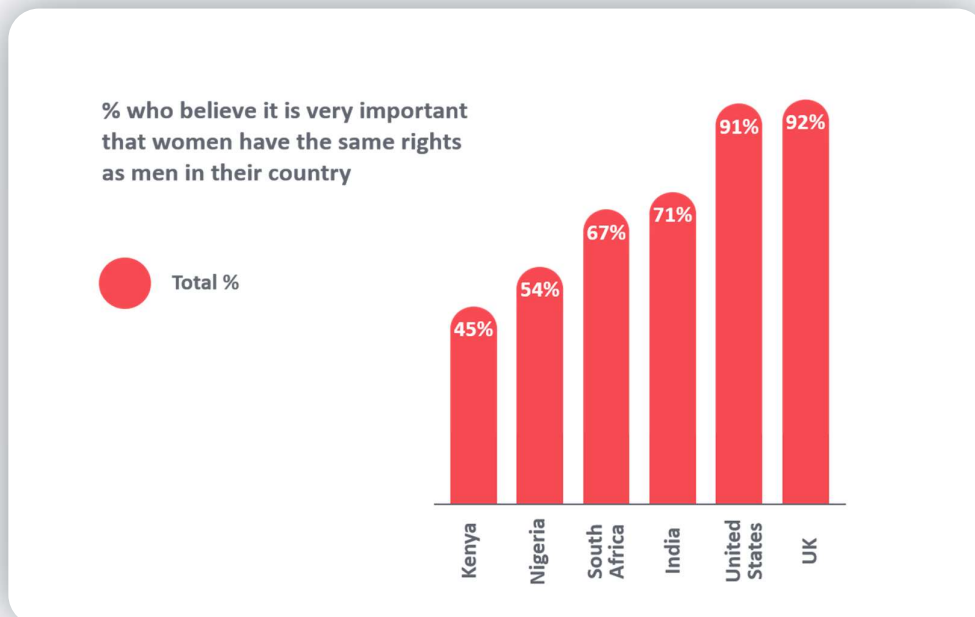
Source: Pew Research Center (2015)

Figure 1.7: In favor of or opposed to increasing gender equality (2018)
(Broken down by age groups – 2018)

% who favor increased gender equality in their country

● 50+ year olds   ● 30-49 year olds   ● 18-29 year olds

youngest - oldest gap

Country	50+	30-49	18-29	Gap
Greece	49%	58%	71%	+22
Philippines	33%	40%	53%	+20
Mexico	49%	64%	68%	+19
UK	66%	74%	83%	+17
Israel	53%	69%	70%	+17
Argentina	51%	65%	68%	+17
Australia	68%	81%	83%	+15
Italy	58%	65%	72%	+14
Tunisia	37%	45%	51%	+14
South Africa	45%	54%	59%	+14
Russia	36%	40%	48%	+12
Spain	69%	77%	80%	+11
Netherlands	67%	69%	79%	+10
South Korea	78%	74%	69%	-9

Source: Pew Research Center (2019)

Figure 1.8: The relationship between gender bias and acceptance of the gender status quo
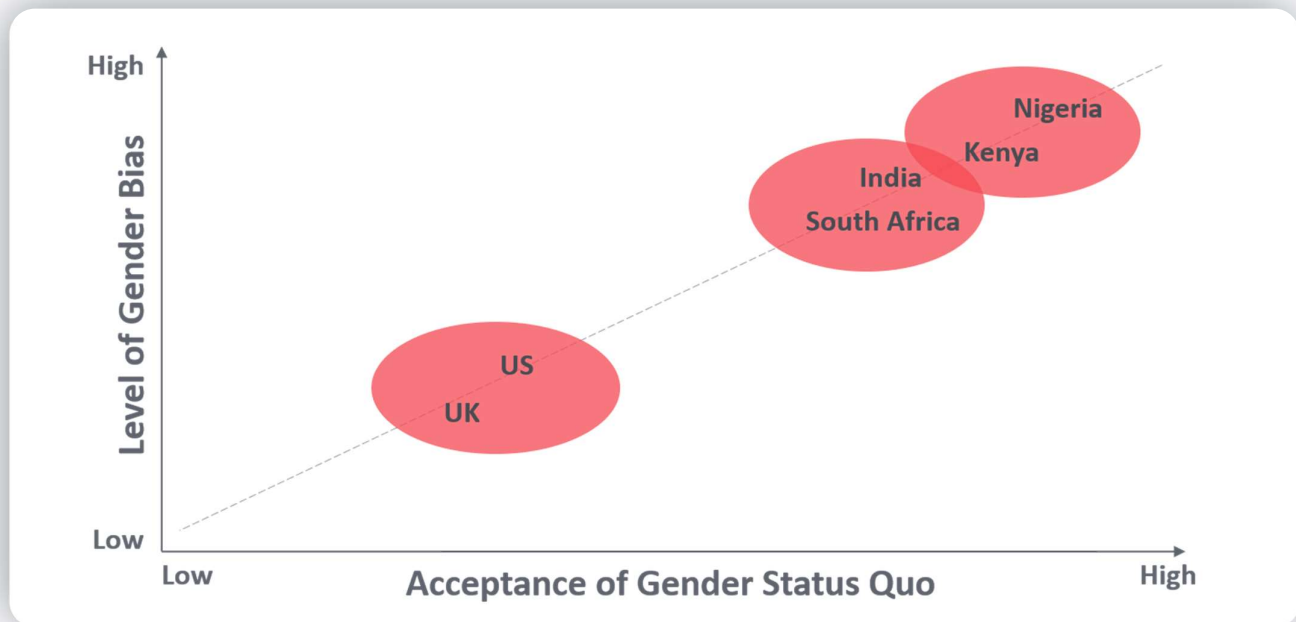
Source: *AKAS (2020)*

So, as Figure 1.8 shows, there is a direct relationship between the level of gender bias in a society and the acceptance of the gender status quo amongst our analyzed countries. The following pages will also show that the more accepting the public is of the status quo for women, the less driven people in power and journalists are to prioritize gender equality issues.

Gender equality issues are a low development priority for journalists, other opinion leaders and decision makers in emerging and developing countries, including Kenya, Nigeria and India

Data from the World Bank Group's *Country Opinion Surveys* between 2015 and 2019 exposes the low salience of gender equality issues amongst media opinion leaders (journalists), other opinion leaders and decision makers in emerging and developing countries.

Across all the 77 countries analyzed, on average only 4.4% of the 1,597 media opinion leaders chose 'gender equity' as a top three development priority (see Figure 1.9). Indeed, in 46 out of the 77 countries (60%), no media opinion leaders chose 'gender equity' as a top three development priority from a choice of 23 options. **Across all of the 8,901 opinion leaders and decision makers surveyed from six categories [54] between 2015 and 2019, only 4.9% chose gender equity as a top three priority**.

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[54] The 6 categories were: Office of a President/Prime Minister/Minister; Office of a parliamentarian;

bilateral/multilateral agencies; media; civil society organizations; academia

Figure 1.9: 'Gender Equity' as a development priority amongst opinion leaders in 77 emerging and developing countries (2015-2019)

% of countries where opinion leaders did not put gender equity in the top 3

Opinion Leader Groups   *2015-19*

Opinion Leader Group	%
Office of President/Prime Minister/Minister	70%
Bilateral/Multilateral Agency	62%
Office of Parliamentarian	62%
Media	60%
Academia	58%
CSO	22%
Opinion Leaders from these 6 groups	N/A

0 %   100 %

% of opinion leaders who put gender equity in the top 3

Opinion Leader Groups   *2015-19*

Opinion Leader Group	%
CSO	7.1%
Bilateral/Multilateral Agency	4.9%
Media	4.4%
Office of Parliament	4.2%
Academia	3.0%
Office of President/Prime Minister/Minister	2.6%
Opinion Leaders from these 6 groups	4.9%

0 %   10 %
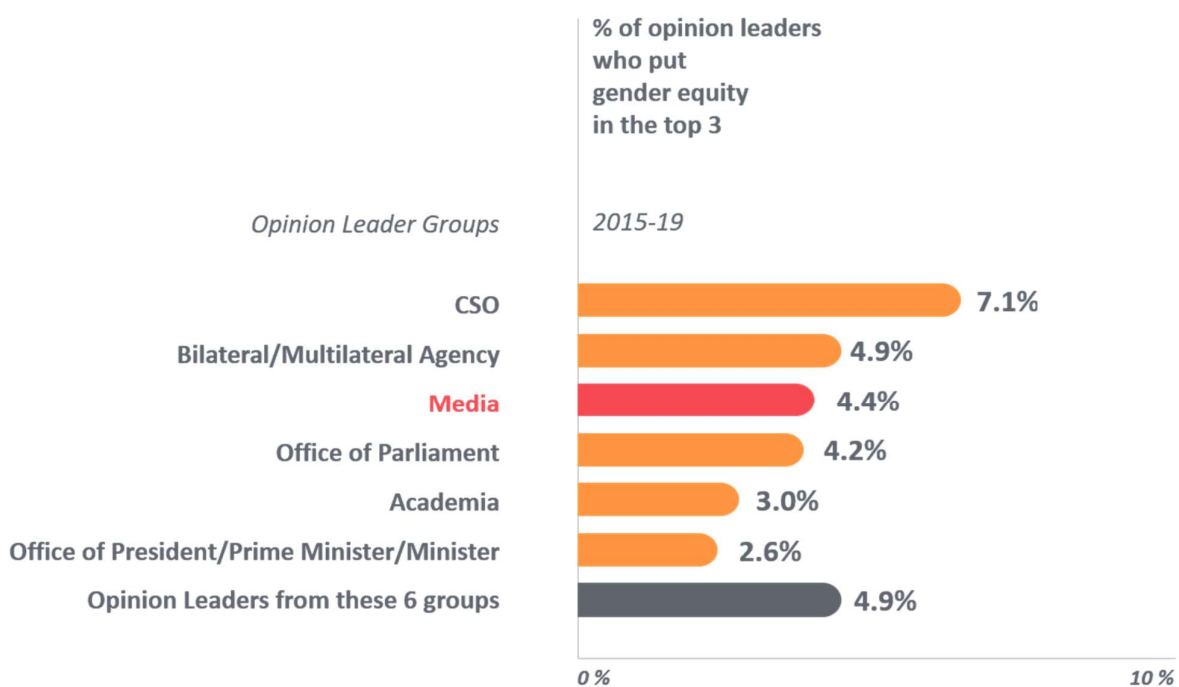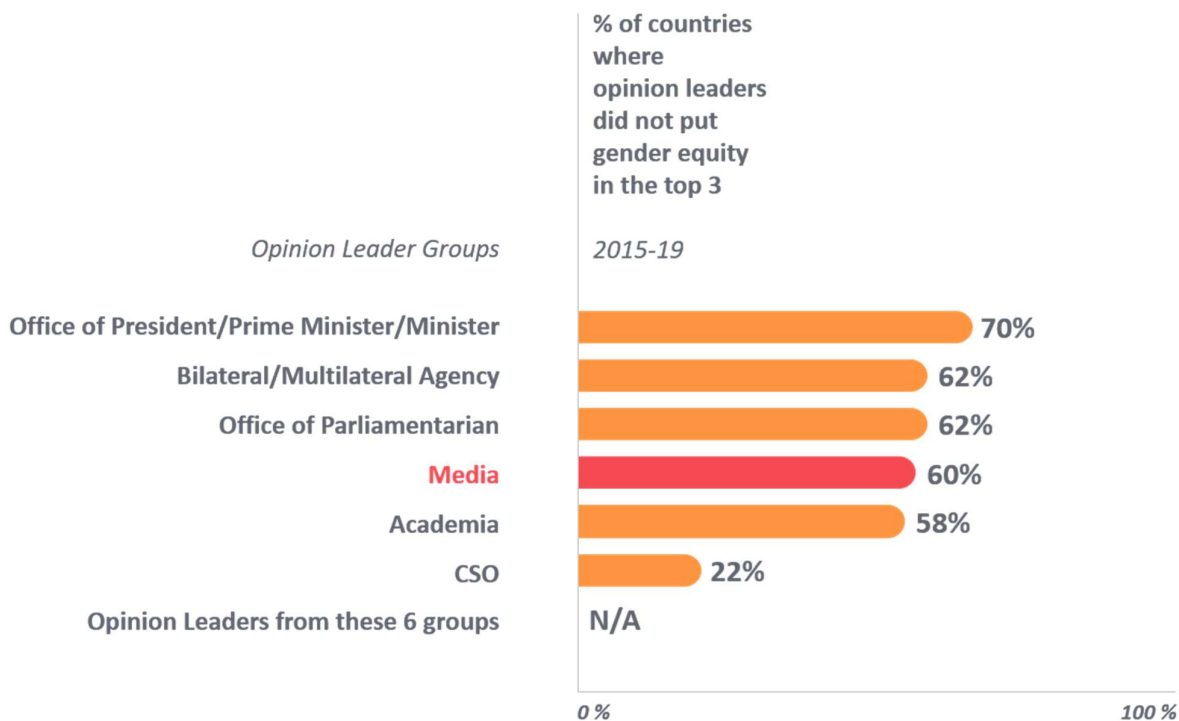
Question: Listed below are a number of development priorities in [YOURCOUNTRY]. Please identify which of the following you consider the most important development priorities in [YOUR COUNTRY]. (Choose no more than THREE) Answers relate to those who chose 'Gender Equity' as one of the top three answers out of a list of 23 options.

Source: World Bank Group Country Opinion Surveys (2015-2019)

India, Kenya and Nigeria were among the 77 countries included in this sample. For South Africa, the sample was too small to disaggregate and the other analyzed countries - the UK and US - are not part of the *Country Opinion Survey* series.
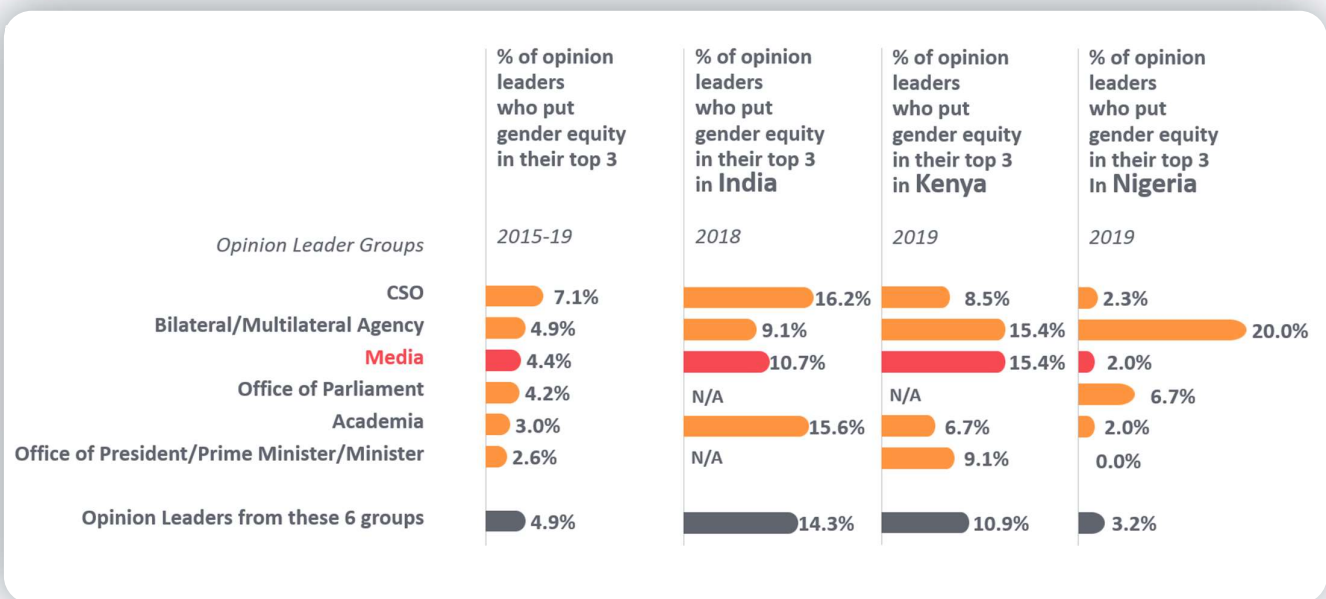
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In India and Kenya, a higher proportion of media opinion leaders than the average (amongst the 77 countries) chose 'gender equity' as a development priority (see Figure 1.10).   Although encouraging, it should still be noted that the vast majority of media opinion leaders in these countries did not select 'gender equity' as an important development priority. The picture is even starker in Nigeria where only 2% of media opinion leaders saw 'gender equity' as a development priority. As a reminder, the Nigerian public displays the highest levels of gender biases of all six analyzed countries and the *Gender and Equal Opportunity Bill* was also rejected by the Nigerian Senate in 2016 and again in March 2020, as described in the regulatory context section of this chapter.

News audience consumption: women are lighter news consumers than men

News audiences globally and in the analyzed countries are more likely to be men. Women consume less news than men across all countries[55]. This could be partly a result of news being produced mainly by men, thus not reflecting women's perspectives or needs enough to hook them in

Figure 1.10: 'Gender Equity' as a development priority amongst opinion leaders in 77 emerging and developing countries vs. India, Kenya & Nigeria (2015-2019)

Opinion Leader Groups	% of opinion leaders who put gender equity in their top 3 2015-19	% of opinion leaders who put gender equity in their top 3 in **India** 2018	% of opinion leaders who put gender equity in their top 3 in **Kenya** 2019	% of opinion leaders who put gender equity in their top 3 In **Nigeria** 2019
CSO	7.1%	16.2%	8.5%	2.3%
Bilateral/Multilateral Agency	4.9%	9.1%	15.4%	20.0%
Media	4.4%	10.7%	15.4%	2.0%
Office of Parliament	4.2%	N/A	N/A	6.7%
Academia	3.0%	15.6%	6.7%	2.0%
Office of President/Prime Minister/Minister	2.6%	N/A	9.1%	0.0%
Opinion Leaders from these 6 groups	4.9%	14.3%	10.9%	3.2%

Question: *Listed below are a number of development priorities in [YOURCOUNTRY]. Please identify which of the following you consider the most important development priorities in [YOUR COUNTRY]. (Choose no more than THREE) Answers relate to those who chose 'Gender Equity' as one of the top three answers out of a list of 23 options.*

Source: *World Bank Group Country Opinion Surveys (2015-2019)*

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[55] The target countries surveyed were India, the UK, the US and South Africa, as well as 34 other countries globally

According to Reuters Institute's *Digital News Reports,* in four out of the six analyzed countries (India, South Africa, the UK and US) as well as in the vast majority of the other 34 countries in the report, women consume less news, less often and claim to be less interested in news (see Figure 1.11).

Globally, 33% of men compared to 23% of women are categorized as 'news lovers'[56], the highest level of news enthusiasts. The gap between men's and women's interest in news is even bigger in South Africa and the UK, but smaller in the US and India, although still evident (see Figure 1.11). Men are much more likely to consume news several times a day. Globally, 70% of men consume news several times a day vs. 59% of women. The gap between men and women is visible in all four of the analyzed countries covered, although it is smaller than the global average.
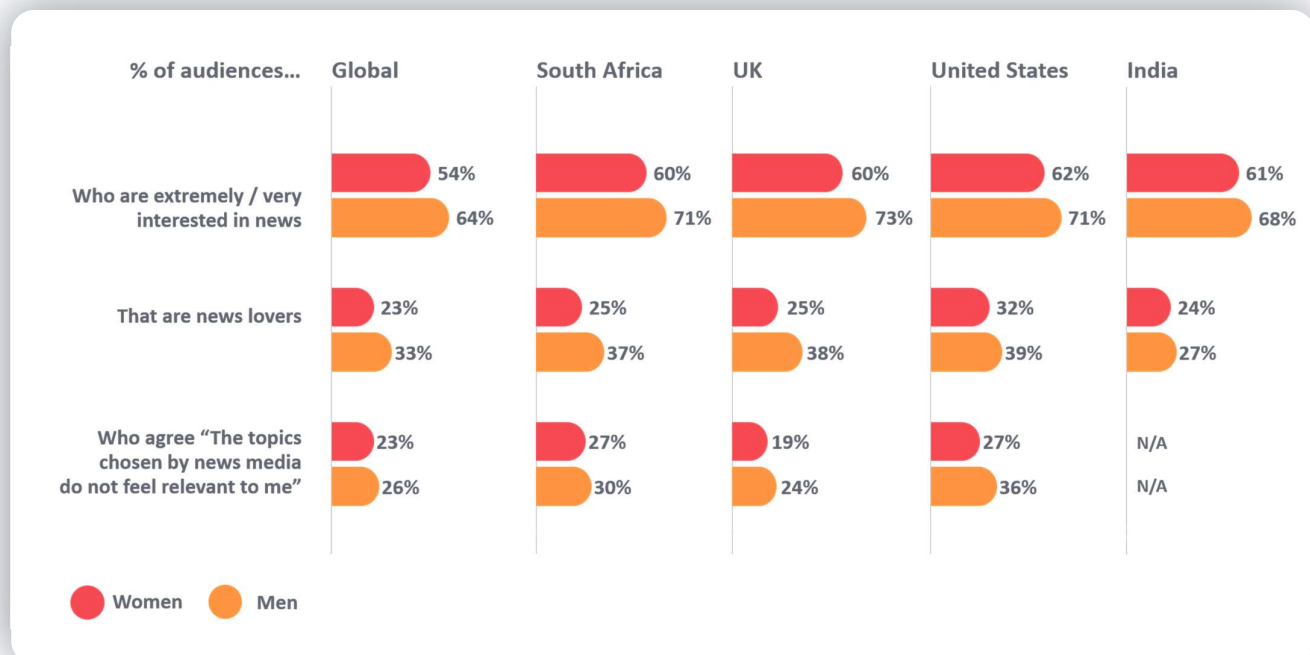
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64% of men globally are classified as 'extremely or very interested in news' vs. 54% of women. This pattern of men being more interested in news than women holds true for all four countries - it is more pronounced in South Africa and the UK and slightly less so in the US and India (see Figure 1.11). However, **what has not been researched enough to date is whether the higher interest in news among men is a result of women's socialized lower interest in news and/or a function of the global 'news offer' responding better to men's news needs than to those of women**.

Women consume more news on social media platforms than men

As Figure 1.12 shows, women are, however, more likely than men to consume news on social media across the 38 countries surveyed by the Reuters Institute. In terms of the countries analyzed in this report, women are more likely than men to consume news on social media in South Africa, the UK and the US. Across all other sources (including TV, news websites, print and radio) women are less likely to be the lead news consumers.

Figure 1.11: News lovers[57] and news interest of women vs men (2019)

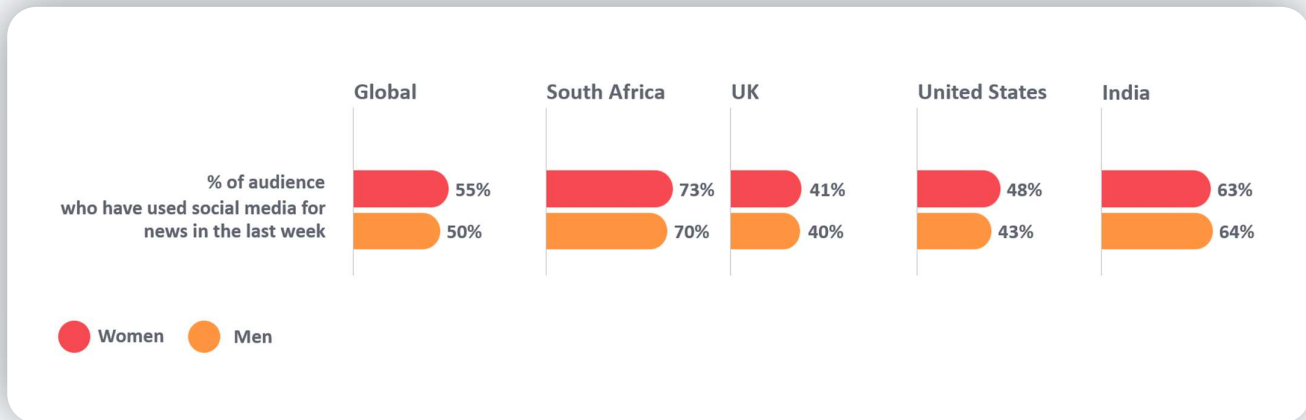| % of audiences…	Global	South Africa	UK	United States	India
Who are extremely / very interested in news (Women)	54%	60%	60%	62%	61%
Who are extremely / very interested in news (Men)	64%	71%	73%	71%	68%
That are news lovers (Women)	23%	25%	25%	32%	24%
That are news lovers (Men)	33%	37%	38%	39%	27%
Who agree "The topics chosen by news media do not feel relevant to me" (Women)	23%	27%	19%	27%	N/A
Who agree "The topics chosen by news media do not feel relevant to me" (Men)	26%	30%	24%	36%	N/A

● Women ● Men

Source: Newman et al (2019)

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56 Newman et al., 2019

57 Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism's definition of news lovers is "those who have high interest and high frequency of access to news". Newman et al., 2019

Figure 1.12: Use of social media for news (2019)

Global   South Africa   UK   United States   India

% of audience who have used social media for news in the last week

	Global	South Africa	UK	United States	India
Women	55%	73%	41%	48%	63%
Men	50%	70%	40%	43%	64%

● Women   ● Men

Source: Newman et al (2019)

There is no consensus in literature on why women consume less news than men

The literature review which AKAS undertook exposed a lack of understanding of why women are lighter news consumers. Research has focused on this phenomenon in the US and has highlighted that the gender divide in news consumption appeared in the US in the late 1980s[58]. However, gender analysis was deprioritized in research in the field over the subsequent two decades despite it being linked to certain motivations and types of news content.

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The authors concluded that the gender disparity in news consumption may be attributed to several issues: political, social, economic and educational disparities; the type of news content published or broadcast; or other influences such as socialization or a decision-making process about paying attention to news. A core premise in their study was that boys and girls may be socialized differently about why it is important to be informed about the news, and that this may influence motivation and attitudes towards news consumption into adulthood[59]. The authors posit that socio-economic background and gendered socialization are the earliest forces contributing to a difference in how men and women consume news, and that this is a relatively under-explored area in academic research.

The double-edged sword of technological advancements

Digital media, which has grown exponentially over the last two decades, is undoubtedly changing the news media industry and, in view of women's enhanced use of social media we may also posit, women's perceptions of themselves. Research has yet to establish the full details of how this operates but there is consensus that digital media is changing the nature of both news production and news consumption. Social networking sites, websites and blogs have risen as sources of news and are setting new trends in news media. Research conducted by the International Center for Journalists in 2019 [60] revealed a near-universal use of Facebook and Twitter among journalists, with these social media tools being used by 90% and 73% of newsrooms respectively. On the consumption side, recent research into the use of social media for news among adults has proved equally impressive: according to 2018 research by Pew Research Center [61], the *daily news consumption* of adults on the internet was 59% in the US, 54% in the UK, 23% in South Africa, 21% in Nigeria and 18% in Kenya and India. Their consumption specifically on social networking sites stood at 39% in the US, 36% in the UK, 31% in South Africa, 21% in Nigeria and 15% in India. The Reuters Institute's 2019 research into the

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[58] Poindexter et al., 2008
[59] Poindexter et al., 2008

[60] International Center for Journalists, 2019
[61] Mitchell et al, 2018

weekly use of social media for news among adults produced some dramatically higher rates of use in South Africa and India (at 72% and 64% respectively), and continued high use in the US (46%) and the UK (40%)[62].

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In many parts of the world, printed newspapers are in rapid decline as they lose share to digital channels. There is a shift away from information consumption to participation and journalists seek to adapt to this change and engage more with their audiences [63] . Almost all journalists in the six analyzed countries (99% of journalists in South Africa, 98% in the UK, 92% in Kenya, 91% in the US and 82% in India) believe that the influence of social media on journalism has grown progressively stronger[64]. Similarly, the vast majority of journalists believe that user-generated content such as blogs has also come to exert a greater influence on journalism, with 92% in the UK, 91% in South Africa, 83% in Kenya, 77% in India and 69% in the US agreeing with this[65].

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A consistent theme that has emerged in the literature is the need to understand more about the role of digital and social media in the news landscape, in terms of newsgathering, outputs and news consumption. The GMMP reported that 64% of the news websites monitored by them in 2015 did not have an offline presence[66]. As this figure is likely to have increased significantly since then, the report's conclusion that there needs to be a more critical investigation into how digital media is changing the nature of the news landscape undoubtedly remains valid. It is important to understand the positive and negative impact of the proliferation of digital news media on production and consumption so that news providers can innovate to amplify the opportunities that it presents while mitigating its challenges. Some of the opportunities and challenges that have come to light so far are summarized below.

The good news…

Technology can enable more contribution from women journalists and can improve the portrayal of women in digital news, especially in the global south

It is argued by some researchers that digital platforms may offer a route to redressing the gender balance in news[67]. The literature review revealed that measures of women's share of quoted voice online (on websites and Twitter) were inconsistent and not available for all countries. However, it is noteworthy that according to the GMMP's 2015 findings, while digital and traditional channels portrayed similar numbers of women in the news in the UK and US, in India and Nigeria, where women's visibility on traditional channels was notably low, this proved not to be the case: in Nigeria, women accounted for 37% of news on digital channels compared to 18% on traditional channels; and in India, the proportion of women heard, read about or seen in the news on digital channels was 36%, compared to 21% on traditional channels[68].

In terms of women's participation in news media organizations, digital media offers opportunities[69]. The GMMP report suggests that a growing number of women journalists are turning their backs on traditional news media and 'doing it for themselves' through digital media and that there is a need for research in this area[70].

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Digital media could play an important role in the promotion of gender equality both in terms of women's participation in news media and in the fairer representation of women in news. In terms of gender balance, there has been some evidence of marginal differences in behavior in digital media, such as a higher percentage of women reporters compared to traditional media (42% vs. 37%)[71]. There is, however, a clear need for further research in this area.

[62] Newman et al., 2019
[63] Macharia, 2015
[64] Hanitzsch et al., 2019
[65] Hanitzsch et al., 2019
[66] Macharia, 2015

[67] Macharia, 2015
[68] Macharia, 2015
[69] Byerly, 2016
[70] Macharia, 2015
[71] Macharia, 2015

Consensus is yet to emerge about whether digital news media entrench gender stereotypes or liberate them. There is evidence for both

The **European Commission's 2010 report on gender stereotypes in the media**[72] stated that digital media could perpetuate stereotypes and contribute to the unequal treatment of women. It highlighted the need for more research into the gender impact of digital media technologies to help public authorities define their response to the possible challenges these technologies pose. In 2016, an amendment was added to the Audio-visual Media Services Directive which applies across the EU to directly address gender issues within media content and communications.

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At the same time, the internet has become an increasingly significant space for the claiming of women's rights and has the potential to engage people in the cause of gender equality[73]. This has been clearly demonstrated by the manner in which the #MeToo movement has gone viral in recent years.

The bad news…

Gender representation research from five years ago revealed similar gender biases on and offline among news-makers

The GMMP reported that traditional newsroom norms in news production and content were being replicated in online news. Patterns observed in digital media in terms of women's presence in news overall and by topic, and the propensity for photos of featured women to be included in stories, reflected the same pattern as in traditional media[74]. Other studies have corroborated this[75].

Ongoing growth in the role of technology in newsrooms could exacerbate gender inequality in news media

The vast majority of journalists across the global south (84% in South Africa and India; 82% in Kenya) and the global north (93% in the US and 81% in the UK) believe that technical skills have increased in importance in their work as journalists[76]. At the same time, the International Center for Journalists' 2019 *The State of Technology in Global Newsrooms* survey has revealed that among journalists, fewer women than men hold a tech-related degree (3% of women vs 10% of men). At managerial level, only 5% of female news managers have a tech-related degree compared to 12% of male news managers. We can therefore safely conclude that in a world where the role of the journalist is becoming more technologically demanding, women are at a disadvantage due to their less technical academic backgrounds.

'Platform capture'[77] on social media allows the abuse of (women) journalists on a large scale, as well as threatening freedom of speech and the two-way interaction with audiences

The safety and mental health of journalists, particularly those who are women, are increasingly at risk. This worrying trend can be linked directly to new technologically-powered social phenomena. The recent Reuters Institute report "*What if Scale Breaks Community? Rebooting Audience Engagement When Journalism is Under Fire*"[78] provides a very powerful analysis of the threats facilitated by social media platforms, which have become behavior modifiers for journalists and audiences alike. The term '*platform capture*' describes the phenomenon of organized groups using social media platforms for orchestrated campaigns of disinformation and harassment, a phenomenon that has become prevalent in the global south and, more recently, in the global north. The fickle use of algorithms by social media providers can lead to

[72] European Commission Report, 2010. Advisory Committee on equal opportunities for women and men: opinion on 'Breaking gender stereotypes in the media'. *Social Europe.* This opinion paper was prepared by a working group that was part of an EU Advisory Committee on Women and Men. Its purpose was to propose measures for the promotion of a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women and men in the media and equal opportunities for men and women in media organizations, with a

focus on EU member states. It includes a review of literature and available data sources.

[73] Macharia, 2015

[74] Macharia, 2015

[75] McCracken et al., 2018; Shor et al., 2015

[76] Hanitzsch et al., 2019

[77] Posetti et al., 2019

[78] Posetti et al., 2019

the magnification of information or alternatively can cause it to disappear. Frequent changes in these algorithms can lead to a weakened relationship between news providers and their audiences.

Furthermore, social media has been seen to amplify the abuse of journalists, while the enormous level of toxicity thrown at journalists through orchestrated online harassment campaigns creates health, safety and security risks.

A 2019 Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) survey of women journalists in the US and Canada revealed that 85% believed journalists had become less safe in the last five years, with online harassment being cited as the biggest threat by 90% of respondents in the US and 71% in Canada[79]. Neither news organizations nor audiences have yet found an effective response to this new weapon which inhibits freedom of expression and aims to suppress the reporting of truths in journalism. Indeed, less than half the respondents to the CPJ survey had received any safety training. The situation represents, in the words of the Reuters Institute report, *"a global problem that poses real challenges for the model of engaged journalism, built on the social web's facilitation of interactive, collaborative, and participatory journalism."*[80]

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The CPJ survey attests to harassment being most severe and sustained in relation to those reporting on national and local politics, and extremism[81]. Reuters research directly identifies the specific threat to women journalists, quoting the chilling report from The Quint in India that *"the attacks against women were often particularly severe and accompanied by threats of physical violence, ranging from sexual assault to rape and murder. In principle and in practice."*[82] The Quint's response had been multifaceted: from changing the work routines of its journalists; to ensuring regular exchange between journalists, counselling and workshops; and allowing journalists to take time off, and to take legal action.

The key to mitigating threats lies in innovation

It is essential that news organizations show their ability to innovate in their responses to this existential crisis. News providers should focus their efforts not just on thinking about creating new business models, but also on ways of addressing the issues of *platform capture* and the *weaponization of information*. Some of the innovations described in the Reuters Institute report include correspondent memberships, personalization and correspondent newsletters[83]. Maintaining direct interaction with audiences, who are part of the solution, is also acknowledged as essential for building strong, loyal audience communities which are capable of triggering corrective action.

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Women journalist awards may equally be an unexpected way of mitigating to some degree the threats contained in the online abuse of journalists. Introducing industry awards for women journalists who have shown extraordinary bravery in producing their impactful journalism in the face of threats would not protect them from dangers, but would increase their professional stature and help them to raise funds, both of which are important in fighting the destructive forces which seek to silence journalists and attack democracy itself.

[79] Committee to Protect Journalists, 2019
[80] Posetti et al., 2019, p.25
[81] Committee to Protect Journalists, 2019

[82] Posetti et al., 2019, p.27
[83] Posetti et al., 2019

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PART 2: KEY GENDER EQUALITY INDICATORS IN NEWS

"Other men might respond by saying: "Okay, this is interesting, but I don't think like that. I don't even think about gender." Maybe not. And that is part of the problem. That many men do not actively think about gender or notice gender."

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

PART 2: KEY GENDER EQUALITY INDICATORS IN NEWS

Chapter 1

Diversity
in the workplace/in leadership

"Women belong in all places where decisions are being made. It shouldn't be that women are the exception."

Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Background on research methods

The research undertaken for this report revealed that there are significant gaps in the *ongoing measurement* both of women's representation in news organizations globally, and of women's participation in news making on a global scale.

In order to fill the existing knowledge gap around the *current state* of the representation of women in news, AKAS, in conjunction with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, commissioned Media Ecosystems Analysis Group to conduct content analysis for news output in 2019 [1] . This assessed 80 online editions of key publications in India, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, the UK and the US using advanced computational methods[2]. In their analysis, Media Ecosystems Analysis Group measured three key indicators of gender equality in news: the proportion of story protagonists who are women; women's share of quoted voices in stories (e.g. as sources, experts, protagonists); and the proportion of all news stories which focus on gender equality issues. This innovative research approach has been able to fill in significant knowledge gaps in understanding the progress that news providers have made online in representing women in the news.

Our understanding of women journalists' representation in the workplace (i.e. in newsrooms, in senior leadership roles, in top management and in governing roles) has relied on Carolyn M. Byerly's unique *Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media* survey [3] and *The Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Journalism* [4] *,* which were based on surveys covering 522 news media organizations across 59 countries*.* In order to build a picture, albeit a partial one, of the *current global situation* of women's representation in news organizations we have used the limited number of multi-country studies available. These included Reuters Institute's *Women and Leadership in the News Media 2020* (covering ten countries) [5], International Center for Journalists' *State of Technology in Global Newsrooms* survey (covering 149 countries some with small samples)[6] and the Worlds of Journalism Study (covering 67 countries)[7].

The chapter at a glance

This chapter will analyze women's representation in newsrooms, in senior leadership and in the governance of news organizations globally and in the six countries of focus in this report – India, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, the UK and the US. It will synthesize the plethora of research from the last few decades available on this topic globally and, where available, in the six analyzed countries. It will juxtapose the proportion of women working in news ten years ago vs. today based on different country-specific sources. It will explore the effect of gender equality laws and policies on the representation of women in newsrooms. It will examine the gender balance in news production as well as the nature of the relationship between gender diversity in the newsroom and the gender balance achieved in the portrayal of protagonists in the news. It will also provide evidence of the importance of tackling culture, values and professional standards in the newsroom for achieving a balanced and impartial portrayal of women in the news. Finally, it will offer recommendations for news providers who wish to pursue better representation of women in their news organization.

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This chapter shows that news organizations, particularly in South Africa, the UK and the US, have made progress on this indicator in the last 100 years and that it is the best performing indicator for the analyzed countries out of the four researched in this report. Progress, however, has substantially slowed, and in some countries halted in the last few decades. Our research has found that globally the majority of journalists and in particular those in positions of news leadership and ownership are men, despite there being gender parity among graduates of journalism courses in many countries. The news they produce is overwhelmingly about men. Gender equality policies do not guarantee progress because their implementation is frequently weak. Progress in news reporting and presenting by women halted between 2005 and 2015 across both agenda-setting and lower profile news beats. Diversity in news organizations varies across the six countries with South Africa leading the way as the most progressive, achieving near-parity, followed by the UK and US where women are relatively well-represented in newsrooms. Gender diversity in

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[1] Media Ecosystems Analysis Group, 2020
[2] For a more detailed description of methodology, see Appendix 2
[3] Byerly, 2011

[4] Byerly, 2016
[5] Newman et al., 2019
[6] International Center for Journalists, 2019
[7] Hanitzsch et al., 2019

newsrooms seems to be improving in Kenya and in India, albeit from a lower base, and declining in Nigeria. South Africa also leads in terms of its proportion of women in senior leadership roles, followed by the US. The UK trails these frontrunners, while Nigeria lags significantly behind all countries, with the limited evidence available showing that women are barely present at senior levels of news organizations. Data from a decade ago shows that the small number of women who had made it into journalism in India and Kenya, although in a minority, were able to progress to senior leadership levels. Most recent evidence (and the academic review) shows that there is no positive correlation between the proportion of women in newsrooms/senior leadership and the portrayal of women in the news in the analyzed countries. The portrayal of women has not improved in decades. The biggest identified reason for this lack of progress is the male-dominated culture, norms and 'masculine' values prevalent in news organizations. These shape the default professional standards and identity of journalists regardless of their gender.

Global overview: what we know about this indicator

Diversity in the workplace, which includes the proportion of women working in newsrooms and in senior leadership teams in news organizations, is the best performing gender equality indicator of the four this report focuses on. As this indicator relates to organizational resources, it is in principle relatively easy to measure.

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In the 20th century there was a significant improvement in the representation of women in UK and US newsrooms. However, much of this improvement took place in the inter-war and post-war years and the evidence points towards progress having stagnated in the last three or four decades. For example, according to US census reports, between 1870 and 1990 the percentage of women who were editors and reporters increased from 1% to 51%. However, the near parity recorded by the decennial censuses has not been replicated by annual surveys in the last 30 years which have shown the proportion of

women in US journalism not shifting much from the low 40s in percentage terms. The long-term profile in the UK is similar to that of the US.

Gender diversity in the news has been a subject of substantive interest in academic literature. AKAS' literature review found that diversity in the workplace in news organizations occupied 33% of the focus in academic papers, making it the second most researched indicator. The most researched was women featuring as protagonists in news, which constituted 53% of the focus. Most of the understanding we have gained from academic insight in relation to gender inequality in news was therefore generated by these two indicators.

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However, **although the issue of diversity in the workplace constitutes such a significant focus in the literature, there are very few global comparative sources which capture the proportion of women in newsrooms**. There are even fewer sources capturing the proportion of women in senior leadership roles or the proportion of women in positions of governance in news organizations. In fact, the only source we found which contained data about the proportion of women in these three areas in all six analyzed countries (i.e. India, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, the UK and the US) was the *Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media*[8], which was based on data gathered over a decade ago, between 2008 and 2010. The Worlds of Journalism survey[9] covering the period between 2012 and 2016 researched data for the proportion of women in news organizations in five of the analyzed countries (all bar Nigeria). Consequently, we have used the latest available data for 2018 or 2019 from various country-specific sources to assess the current state of gender diversity in news globally and in the six analyzed countries.

Men are still in the driving seat in news media organizations

Despite the progress made, the majority of journalists in newsrooms globally are men. It is important to note that although the majority of graduates of journalism courses globally are often women, they remain a

[8] Byerly, 2011

[9] Hanitzsch et al., 2019

minority in newsrooms globally. For example, in Kenya 61% of journalism graduates are women[10], but women only make up 42% of the journalists in newsrooms[11]. In India, half of journalism graduates are estimated to be women, yet women only constitute 20% of full-time journalists[12]. In the US, women first outnumbered men in journalism courses in the late 1970s, and the number of women among students of journalism and journalism teaching staff continued to rise during the 1970s and 1980s. In 1984 they represented 60%, and now comprise more than two-thirds of graduates with degrees in journalism or mass communications[13]. This increase has been attributed largely to the contemporary women's movement and the social changes it brought about [14]. The situation is comparable in the UK, where women have consistently outnumbered men in undergraduate journalism courses since at least 2007[15]. Despite this skew towards women among journalism degree graduates in the US and the UK, women have not reached parity in newsrooms in either country.

Women's under-representation is more pronounced in governance and decision-making roles and at senior levels globally

The academic literature review revealed that women were particularly under-represented in senior management and board level roles[16]. Studies found that top positions in media organizations (producers, executives, chief editors and publishers) were male-dominated, with this disparity being particularly evident in Africa, where there were many cultural barriers to women fulfilling the roles of journalists (e.g. travelling away from home, evening work and covering issues such as politics and sports considered to fall within the masculine domain)[17].

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In her *Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media*[18], Byerly analyzed the behavior of 522 news companies in 59 countries between 2008 and 2010 in terms of gender equality in staffing, salaries and policies. Results showed that in most countries,

women were in the minority in governance roles, top management and decision-making positions. The report further revealed that globally 73% of the top management jobs were occupied by men and only 27% by women. Men accounted for nearly two-thirds (64%) of reporting jobs and women for 36%. However, among senior professionals, women were edging closer to parity, holding 41% of the newsgathering, editing and writing jobs. Women's representation at top management level, although low at 27%, represented an increase on a similar study conducted in 1995, when women were found to occupy just 12% of these positions.

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The European Institute for Gender Equality reported in 2013 that in EU member states, across all organizational levels, 30% of women in the media workforce held decision-making positions. Levels of inequality were found to be worse in private sector organizations than in the public sector. Public service broadcasters were more likely to comply with industry guidelines and undertake initiatives to achieve gender balance at board level[19].

Men dominate the governance of news outlets in all six analyzed countries. This represents a substantial structural barrier to achieving gender equity in news

Gender parity in governance is seen as key to improving gender sensitivity in news and a balanced portrayal of women in news reporting [20]. However, **ownership and governance of news organizations has been found to be overwhelmingly dominated by men globally and in all six analyzed countries**[21]. According to Byerly's *Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media*[22], **the average proportion of women in governance roles was 26% globally** (see Figure 2.1). The report also revealed that Kenya and India performed below this global average with 21% of governance roles in news organizations being held by women. Although less than 40% of all members of governance structures (e.g. Boards of Directors) were

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[10] Byerly, 2016
[11] Hanitzsch et al., 2019
[12] Byerly, 2016
[13] York, 2017
[14] Rush et al., 2013
[15] Reid, 2015
[16] Byerly, 2011; Ross & Carter, 2011; McCracken et al., 2018

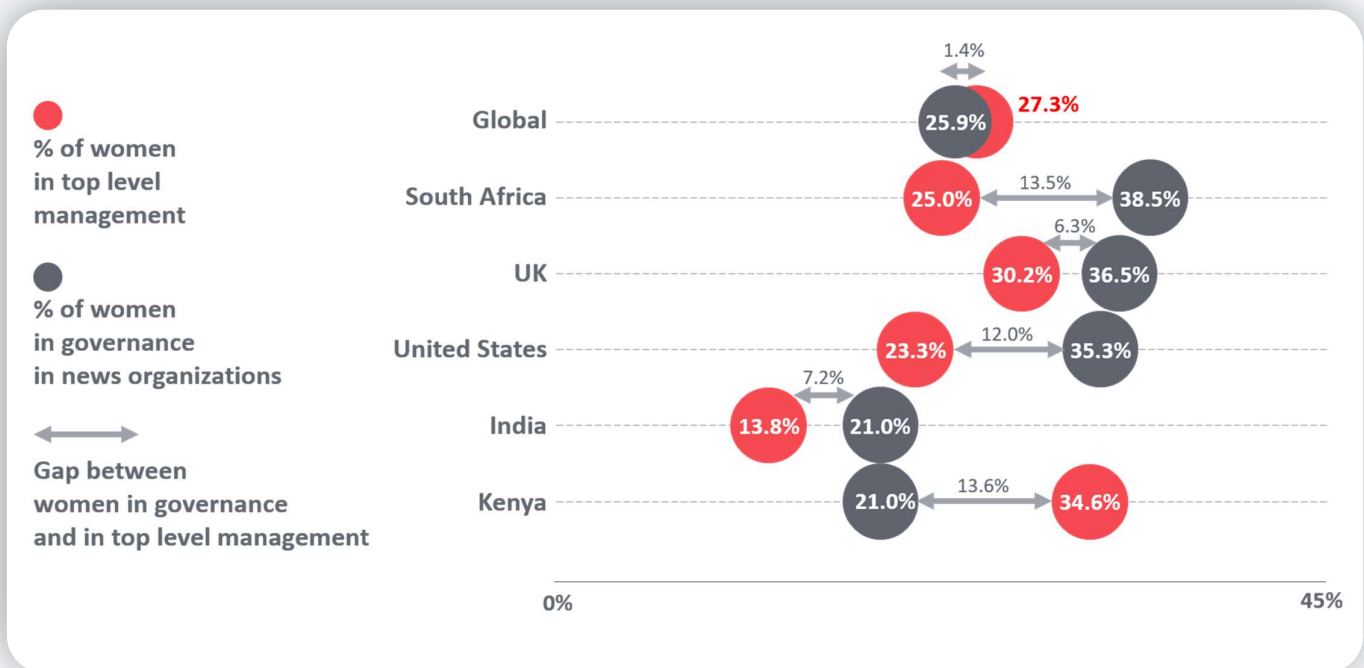[17] White, 2009; Kangas et al., 2014 citing a study by Myers in 2009
[18] Byerly, 2011
[19] McCracken et al., 2018, citing European Institute for Gender Equality (2013)
[20] Byerly, 2011
[21] Byerly, 2016
[22] Byerly, 2011

Figure 2.1: Percentage of women in governance and top management roles in news organizations (Fieldwork 2008-2010)

Legend:
- 🔴 % of women in top level management
- ⚫ % of women in governance in news organizations
- ↔ Gap between women in governance and in top level management

Region		
Global	25.9% ← 1.4% → 27.3%	
South Africa	25.0% ← 13.5% → 38.5%	
UK	30.2% ← 6.3% → 36.5%	
United States	23.3% ← 12.0% → 35.3%	
India	13.8% ← 7.2% → 21.0%	
Kenya	21.0% ← 13.6% → 34.6%	

0% — 45%

Source: Byerly (2011) and (2016)

women in South Africa (38.5%), the UK (36.5%), and the US (35.3%), these figures put all three countries ahead of the global average.

Women were even more marginalized at top management level in all six countries according to the data from 2009 (see Figure 2.1). The proportion of women in top management roles was highest in Kenya (34.6%), followed by the UK (30.2%), South Africa (25%), the US (23.3%) and India (a mere 13.8%)[23].

In *The Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Journalism*, Byerly went on to argue that globalization has impacted negatively on women in journalism because it has led to power in the media and news industry being consolidated in the hands of a small coterie of men. A key feature of globalization has been to deregulate media and other industries, which has manifested itself through horizontal (i.e. within a single platform e.g. print) and vertical (i.e. across multiple platforms) mergers and acquisitions. The state has been withdrawing from many areas of social provision through deregulation thus enabling globally owned powerful media institutions to flourish. Unfortunately for women, the vast majority of these institutions were and still are governed by ever more powerful (usually white in the UK and US) men[24].

Byerly's report indicated a state of accelerated conglomeration in India and Kenya. In the US, her analysis revealed that in 2016 conglomeration had reduced ownership to five big media corporations.

When the governing structure of a news organization is dominated by men, even a gender-balanced newsroom continues to exhibit male biases

Some research suggests that in a period of consolidation, increased pressure on news media organizations to be profitable has led to **owners becoming more directly involved in the news production process**, and that as owners are more likely to be men, **this exacerbates male bias as well as undermining autonomy in the newsroom**[25]. Men are more likely to be gender-blind and to not see the newsroom as a 'macho' environment, failing to see that they are the culture, and consequently being unlikely to see a case for change. While increasing women's participation is important, **there must also be a more comprehensive challenge to news industry**

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[23] Byerly, 2011

[24] Byerly, 2016
[25] Vavrus, 2002

norms if progress is to be made on achieving gender balance in newsrooms and in news coverage[26]. A **strong commitment by the leadership is paramount:** organizations that are the most successful in achieving gender parity in their workforce are those with strong leadership that demonstrate commitment to including women at all levels of news media production[27]. Examples of media organizations whose leadership is strongly committed to gender parity include Swedish Public Broadcasting where women Presidents/Board members constitute 53% of the board vs. the EU average of 38%[28]; and the BBC where women in leadership roles have risen from 41.3% in 2015 to 43.8% in 2019[29] although there have been significant issues concerning gender pay gaps. The good performance of these two public service entities may be because *"public service companies tend to set their idealist goals higher than do their commercial counterparts"*[30] and arguably public service media should have a greater responsibility to achieve gender parity because of their remit. In the commercial media space, TF1 Group in France was the highest-ranking media company in Equileap's 2019 *Gender Equality Global Report* and came in the top 25 out of 100 companies from all sectors[31]. Giles Pelisson, Chairman and CEO of TF1 Group is a vocal and strong advocate for diversity: in his words *"Diversity is a necessity, a driver, an opportunity. Paying lip service is not enough."*[32]

The effects of gender equality laws and (in)effectiveness of gender equality policies

Gender equality laws (along with the absence of a glass ceiling, gender representation in governance and management, newsroom policies, press freedom and women's status nationally) are a key factor that influences women's decisions about whether or not to stay in journalism and seek career progression to senior management level.

In *The Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Journalism*, Byerly found that national gender equality laws facilitated women's higher occupational status in newsrooms, particularly if they had been in place for several decades[33]. **It often took a few decades for these laws to become firmly established and effective in media organizations.**

Globally, gender equality policies do not necessarily guarantee progress because their implementation is weak

Studies found that despite legislation providing for equal pay and equal treatment in employment having been in place since the 1970s in many countries, there was widespread evidence of gender-based discrimination and inequality of opportunity in terms of pay, recruitment, allocation of work and promotion[34]. Byerly concluded that this slower than expected pace of change in newsrooms had occurred despite more than half of the 522 news media organizations surveyed across 59 countries having established gender equality policies[35]. This ranged from 16% among companies surveyed in Eastern Europe, to 69% in Western Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa. In interviews, women working in the news industry revealed a belief that structures, norms and practices in their organizations, including a lack of childcare support and a 'normalization' of sexual harassment and bullying, disadvantaged them[36]. A study by the European Commission found that women employed in news media faced similar challenges to women generally: discrimination at recruitment stage, a pay gap (averaging 18% across EU member states), less secure conditions of employment and the existence of a glass ceiling[37]. Other research has noted that although it exists in most countries, the **implementation of gender equality legislation is weak and inconsistent**[38] and has suggested **that there is a tension between freedom of expression and gender equality** that leads to a reluctance among media regulators to challenge gender bias in media organizations[39].

[26] Ross et al., 2018; Kian & Hardin, 2009
[27] McCracken et al., 2018
[28] European Institute for Gender Equality, 2017
[29] BBC annual reports, 2015, 2019
[30] Widestedt, 2008
[31] Equileap, 2019
[32] Pelisson, 2017

[33] Byerly, 2016
[34] White, 2009; McCracken et al., 2018
[35] Byerly, 2011
[36] McCracken et al., 2018
[37] European Commission, 2010
[38] Macharia, 2015
[39] McCracken et al., 2018

Globally women lag behind men in terms of career progression and salary. This gap can be narrowed if childcare and flexible working policies are put in place and implemented

The review of academic literature uncovered several research sources which indicate that while women tend to enter the profession at similar rates to men, they tend to lag behind men in terms of career progression and salary level[40]. The two most significant barriers to participation, career progression and salary equality in the news media workforce were found to be **inadequate access to childcare and lack of opportunities for flexible working**[41]. Working mothers often responded by seeking part-time, temporary or freelance positions which increased job insecurity, and reduced career advancement opportunities as well as leverage in negotiating better conditions[42]. According to Byerly, there are two types of policies which are particularly successful in promoting women's careers and career progression in journalism: generous **parental leave** that can be shared by both parents and publicly **subsidized day care** [43]. Nordic and Eastern European nations, some of which lead on women's representation in newsrooms, have been at the forefront of introducing and establishing such policies in news organizations. It has also been suggested that attention should be paid to the role of **journalism unions** in improving gender equality[44]. Gender balance should be an aspiration at all organizational levels within unions and a gender perspective should be included in collective bargaining activity. This would offer a key route in many countries to achieving improvements in salaries and working conditions.

While gender equality legislation in the six analyzed countries has led to better results in advancing gender parity in newsrooms, it has not been enough

South Africa, which is a frontrunner in terms of achieving gender parity in newsrooms, has benefited

from anti-discrimination laws that guarantee gender equality, including in political participation (a quota system for women's representation has been established in parliament). When researching six top higher education journalism and media programs in South Africa, it was found that all six had sexual harassment policies in place and four out of six had policies in place aiming to achieve gender equality[45]. Critically, however, none of the institutions had appointed a professional to be responsible for implementing the policy, which led to the policies largely remaining on paper only. This was a pattern also found to be common in other countries.

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Gender-focused policies such as gender equality, sexual harassment, maternity and paternity leave and policies outlining protocols for women returning to their jobs after a maternity leave have been employed in news media organizations in the UK. The BBC and ITV (the two leading public service broadcasters) in the **UK** have been regarded as role models in increasing gender diversity in their newsrooms [46]. However, despite the Equal Pay (1970) and Sex Discrimination (1975) acts in place, the **pay gap in the UK remains a significant barrier** to achieving gender equality in news. **Childcare provision also remains a challenge** in the UK. Ultimately, despite the UK having all these policies in place, Byerly's research concluded that *"UK news industries continuously marginalize women in newsrooms and in the decision-making hierarchies, reinforcing the old stereotype that the news industry is still largely an old boys' club."*[47]

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In the **US** the public policies aimed at greater gender equality (dating from the 1960s) have been undermined under successive neo-liberal governments since the 1980s[48]. **Gender equality does not have a constitutional guarantee in the US. It mostly falls to individual companies to develop their equality strategies.** According to research into 14 US news media companies across TV, radio and print published in 2011 in Byerly's *Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media*[49], the majority (although not all) of the companies had a written policy on gender equality, maternity leave, paternity leave and sexual harassment. Given that this research was undertaken a decade ago, we suspect that by now all companies will have sexual harassment policies in

[40] Ross & Carter, 2011; Ross et al., 2018
[41] McCracken et al., 2018; White, 2009
[42] White, 2009
[43] Byerly, 2016
[44] White, 2009

[45] Made, 2010, cited by Byerly, 2016
[46] Byerly, 2016
[47] Byerly, 2016
[48] Byerly, 2016
[49] Byerly, 2011

place. However, the research revealed that **childcare assistance policies were noticeably absent** from all bar one news media company surveyed. Despite these relatively positive findings, Byerly concludes that there is a structural barrier (stemming from the concentrated media ownership), as well as cultural and ideological barriers that lead to the marginalization of women across the whole value chain of news production[50].

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In **India and Kenya,** laws guarantee the number of seats for women in state and/or national legislative bodies, which is not the case in the other analyzed countries. **Kenya's new constitution in 2010 outlawed any form of discrimination against women.** The law stipulates that any public body should have at least 30% women. While this law is aimed at increasing the visibility and representation of women in various public spheres, the chauvinistic attitudes towards women operate as a barrier to the successful implementation of the law in practice. **Discrimination against women, who are seen as inferior to men, is deeply culturally ingrained and therefore persistent**. On a positive note, a decade ago there was strong evidence that **in Kenya there was no gender pay gap among journalists employed in similar jobs**[51]. However, far more men than women took managerial or governance roles. In addition, women were much less likely than men to be employed full-time.

In *The Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Journalism*[52], Byerly reports that despite the absence of legal restrictions on women becoming journalists and an increase in the number of women enrolled in news media and communication studies, as discussed in the socio-cultural context information in Part 1, **patriarchal beliefs and male-dominated cultural attitudes remained the greatest barrier to achieving gender parity in** news media in countries such as **Kenya and Nigeria**.

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Although the **Indian constitution prohibits discrimination on any basis including gender and guarantees equal opportunities in employment**, Byerly observes that gender balance does not seem to be of concern to the country's media regulatory bodies. The handbook further reports that most of the companies surveyed in Byerly's *Global Report*[53] claimed to have adopted specific policies on gender equality and sexual harassment. 41% affirmed that they allowed paternity leave. But paid maternity leave,

mandated by law, was limited to three months and only a minority of the organizations surveyed guaranteed the same job on return. Overall, Byerly concludes, the existing provisions for women in news in India suggest a discrepancy between their constitutional rights and how seriously they are taken by news organizations.

Losing the battle for gender balance in news production

Progress in news reporting and presenting by women journalists halted between 2005 and 2015

Overall, following steady progress in the rates of women reporting and presenting the news during the decade 1995 to 2005, the pace of change slowed and in some cases halted. The share of news stories presented by women remained static between 2010 and 2015, while those reported by women remained unchanged from 2005 to 2015. A 2018 study[54] examined data from the 2015 Global Media Monitoring Project for the UK and Ireland and also concluded that the pace of change had been slower than expected. The 15 years between 1995 and 2010 saw an increase of 7% in the proportion of women who reported or presented the news, from 17% to 24%. However, this level remained static over the following five years to 2015.

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The Global Media Monitoring Project provides an indirect measure of workplace diversity in that it measures the gender balance of those who report and present the news, albeit on one specific day. The 2015 report (which is the latest available edition) found that globally women were better represented as presenters of news than as reporters: the share of news stories presented by women was 49% (57% on television, 41% on radio) while the share of news reported by women was 37% (41% on radio, 38% on television and 35% in newspapers)[55]. Various studies have found the relatively high visibility of women presenters to be associated with what is described as the *'feminization'* of news. This is where TV news is fronted by a typically

[50] Byerly, 2016
[51] Byerly, 2016
[52] Byerly, 2016

[53] Byerly, 2011
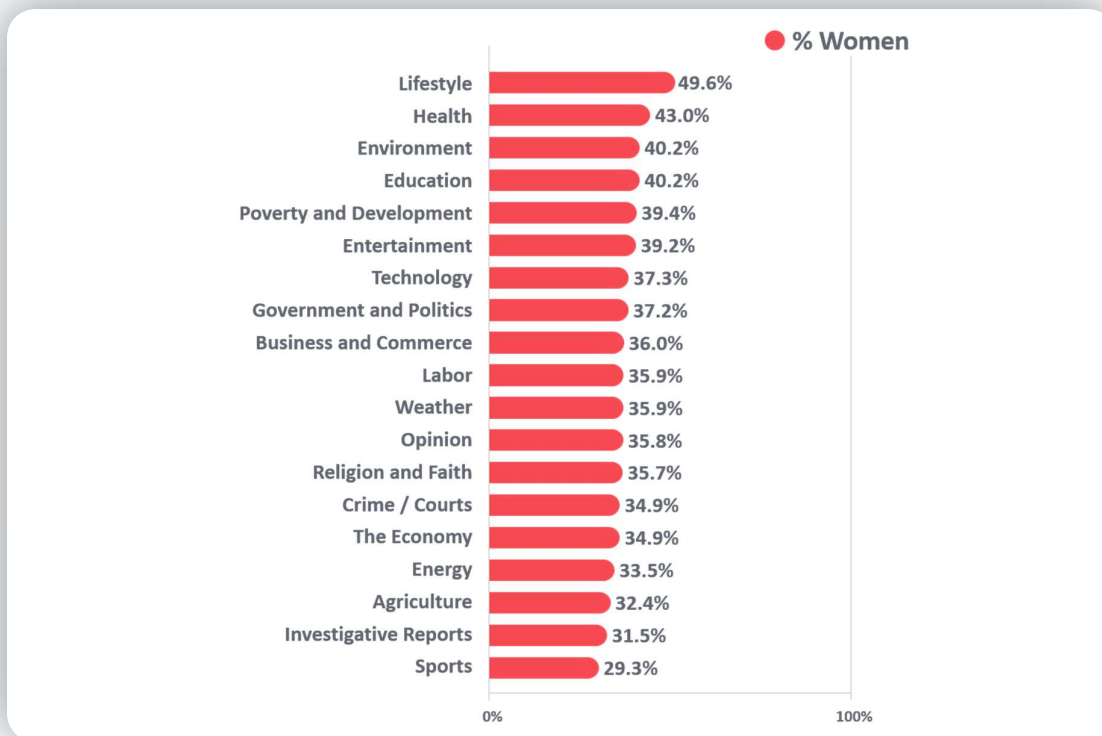[54] Ross et al., 2018
[55] Macharia, 2015

attractive young woman who is seen as more appropriate for delivering 'soft news' or 'news-as-infotainment'[56]. There is also evidence of a trend, described as the *'Ken and Barbie' effect*[57], where an attractive young woman presenter is paired with an older man. The older man tends to report the main news stories while the younger woman covers the 'softer', lower profile stories. The flipside of the relatively high visibility of young women TV presenters is the lack of older women presenters.

Today the greater proportion of journalists in all newsroom beats are men, not only in agenda-setting beats but also in lower profile ones

As we saw earlier in this report, despite gender equality laws and policies being in place in many countries, men's dominance in the newsroom persists. According to the recently published *State of Technology in Global*

Newsrooms Survey conducted by the International Center for Journalists in 2019, which covered 2,551 journalists of both genders [58] globally, 61% of newsroom journalists and managers are men and only 39% are women. (For more details on the methodology of the survey, please refer to section 5 in Appendix 2 on Methodology). If we isolate newsroom managers as a separate category, women are even less likely to occupy this role (33%). When analyzing newsroom beats, it emerged that globally women journalists have only achieved parity in one of the 19 news beats – lifestyle (49.6%) (see Figure 2.2). Women journalists' representation was highest in other lower profile beats such as environment (40.2%), education (40.2%), poverty and development (39.4%) and entertainment (39.2%). Conversely, the lowest representation of women was found to be in sports (29.3%) and hard-hitting, agenda-setting beats such as investigative reports (31.5%), energy (33.5%) and the economy (34.9%). The beat with the largest number of journalists, government and politics, had 37.2% women journalists.

Figure 2.2: Women as a percentage of news beat staff (2019)

Source: ICFJ (2019)

[56] Ross et al., 2018
[57] Macharia, 2015
[58] The sample sizes are as follows: Global (n=2551); North America (n=108), Europe (n=114); Sub-Saharan Africa (n=435), South Asia

(n=290). It should be noted that the global sample size cannot be seen as representative of how journalists think globally, as the sample is likely not to reflect the actual distribution of journalists around the world. Nevertheless, the global results can be seen as indicative.

There is also likely to be an additional structural challenge in the field of economics. In England only 27% of economics undergraduates are women [59]. Similarly, in South Africa 21% of economics PhDs are held by women [60]. In the US, a third of economics undergraduates [61] and 15% of full professors of economics are women [62]. Only two women, Elinor Ostrom in 2009 and Ester Duflo in 2019, have ever been awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics which started in 1969[63]. This suggests that news organizations will need to work even harder if they are to overcome the structural undersupply of women in economics, and move towards greater parity in economics and business beats.

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Wasnah Warah, a political journalist in Kenya, summarized poignantly and masterfully the inferior choices that women journalists in Kenya have had when it comes to news beats:

"*For the vast majority of female journalists, the only option was to work for women's magazines or the 'women's section' in the mainstream newspapers. I believe – that women journalists could only be trusted to write about beauty, relationships and the home. So after churning out endless articles about how to lose weight, how to decorate your living room, or how to mend broken relationships, many women journalists jumped ship.*"[64]

Diversity in the workplace in the analyzed countries: who leads and who lags

Diversity in the workplace varies across the six analyzed countries with South Africa leading the way and India lagging behind

The situation a decade ago….

Of the six countries studied, based on data from 2009, South Africa was found to be the most progressive in terms of workplace diversity, and the only one where women had achieved parity in news media organizations[65]. Nevertheless, women continued to be under-represented at higher governance and top-management levels.

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Women were relatively well-represented, although still not at parity, in the UK and US, where they constituted 45.4% and 42% to 45% of the workforce respectively. In both cases, women were either at or approaching parity at junior professional level but were under-represented at senior management and governance levels[66].

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Nigeria, where women made up 38% of the workforce, and Kenya where they accounted for 28%, faced challenges, particularly at senior levels [67]. In 2016, Byerly reported that the requirements to work irregular hours, travel and socialize with contacts did not fit well with what is perceived as a woman's role in ingrained, traditionally patriarchal cultures in Kenya and Nigeria. An attitude prevailed that women were unsuitable for dangerous reporting assignments, and there was a tendency to assign men to topics considered more important in news terms, which in turn provided a firmer foundation for promotion. Other inhibiting factors included a tendency in Kenya for most women in newsrooms to be employed on a part-time or freelance basis, creating job insecurity and reducing the chances of promotion. A lack of women role models for women joining the profession was also highlighted[68].

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Indian newsrooms were the least gender diverse of the countries studied, with women accounting for 19% of the workforce in news organizations and being under-represented at every level of the hierarchy[69].

[59] Crawford et al., 2018
[60] Stellenbosch University, 2018
[61] Ahlstrom, L. J., & Asarta, C. J., 2019
[62] OECD, 2018
[63] Wikipedia, 2020

[64] Warah, 2010, in Byerly, 2016
[65] Byerly, 2011; Byerly, 2016
[66] Byerly, 2011; Byerly, 2016
[67] Byerly, 2011; Byerly, 2016
[68] Byerly, 2016
[69] Byerly, 2011; Byerly, 2016

The situation today…

South Africa remains a global leader in driving parity in the newsroom, followed by the UK and US. Gender diversity seems to be improving in Kenya and in India, but may be declining in Nigeria

According to the latest available data contained in the 2018 *Glass Ceiling Report*[70], in **South Africa** 49% of journalists were women. This represented a slight decline from 2009 when the same source reported the figure of 50% for women journalists (see Figure 2.3). As reported earlier in this chapter, *The Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media* found that approximately half of journalists in 2009 were women (51%)[71].

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In the **UK** 47% of journalists are women according to the latest labor force survey in 2018[72]. The 2018 *Journalists at Work* survey[73] reported a similar proportion of 45%.

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The proportion of women journalists in the **US** resembles that of the UK. According to the 2019 *News analysts, Reporters and Correspondents* report released by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 45% of news analysts, reporters and correspondents in the US are women. The Women's Media Center in 2019 reported the figure of 42% of journalists in the US being women.
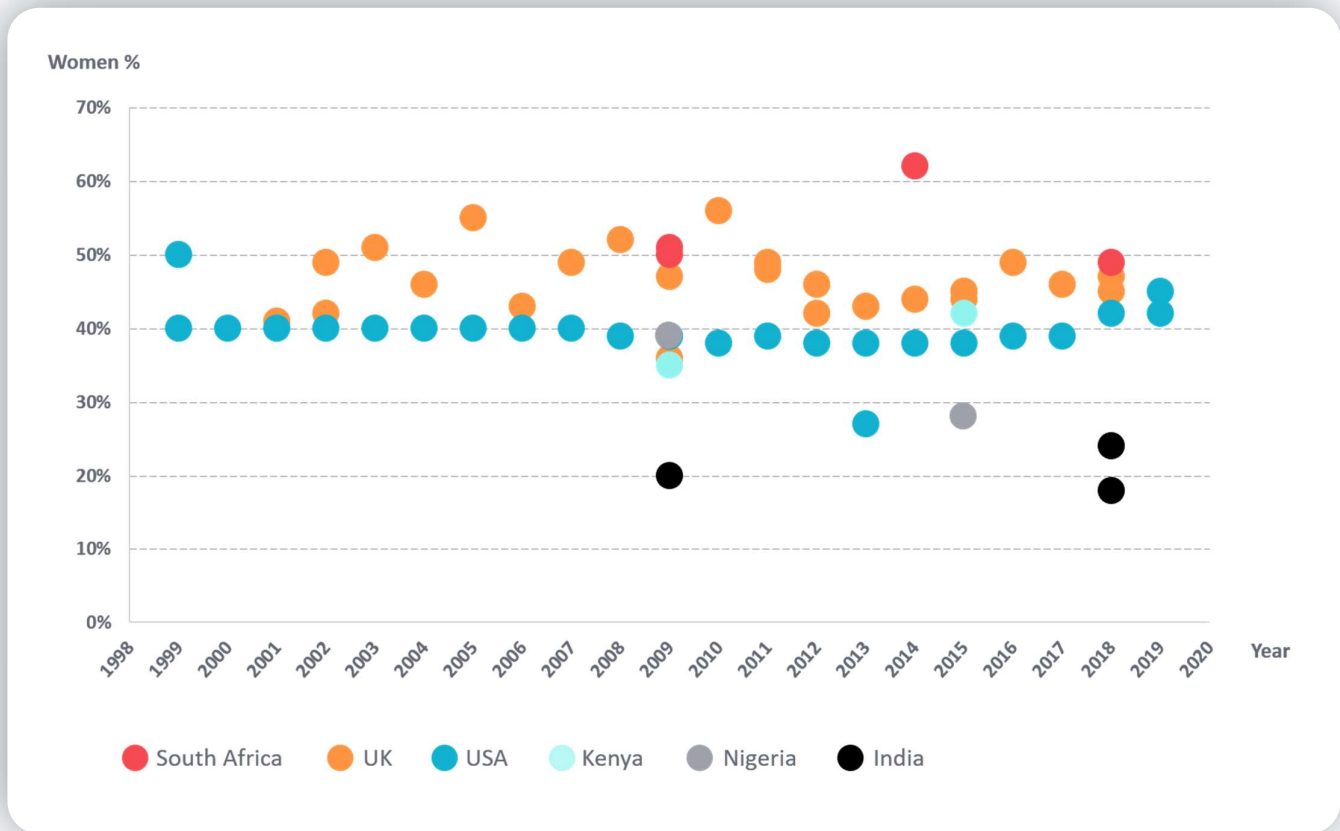
[70] Daniels et al., 2019
[71] Byerly, 2011

[72] Office for National Statistics, 2018
[73] Spilsbury, 2018

Figure 2.3: Percentage of journalists in news organizations who are women (1999 – 2019)

Sources : *Allsop et al (2018); ASNE (2018); Andi et al (2020); Byerly (2011); Daniels et al (2019); Hanitzsch et al (2019); Journalists for Christ International Outreach (2019); Morna & Rama (2009); Obateru (2017); Office for National Statistics (2011); Office for National Statistics (2018); Spilsbury (2018); Thurman et al (2016); U.S. Bureau of the Census (1999); UN Women (2019); US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019); Women's Media Center (2019)*

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According to the Worlds of Journalism report[74], 42% of journalists in **Kenya** were women in 2015, an increase on the 35% figure reported for Kenya in 2009 by the *Global Report* [75] . This uplift may indicate an improvement in the gender diversity in newsrooms in Kenya in the last decade, although we should apply caution when comparing figures from two surveys with different methodologies.

The reported proportion of women journalists in **India** is significantly lower than in other countries but is higher than it was when assessed by the *Global Report* a decade ago, when women represented 19% of the total news media workforce[76]. The proportion varies

between 24% for women journalists in top English newspapers in 2019 and 18% for women in top Hindi newspapers according to the *Gender Equality in Indian Media* report [77] . The Worlds of Journalism survey [78] reported 28% of journalists in India as being women, which points to a higher proportion of women journalists working on news platforms other than print.

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There is little recent data available for **Nigeria**. However, Obateru reports that in 2015, 24% of professional journalists in Nigeria who registered with the Nigeria Union of Journalists were women[79]. This is significantly lower than the 39% figure for women in the news media workforce reported by Byerly in the *Global Report*[80].

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[74] Hanitzsch et al., 2019
[75] Byerly, 2011
[76] Byerly, 2011

[77] UN Women, 2019
[78] Hanitzsch et al., 2019
[79] Obateru, 2017
[80] Byerly, 2011

South Africa also leads in terms of the proportion of women in senior leadership in news organizations, followed by the US. Nigeria is lagging significantly behind all others

South Africa enjoys high conversion rates from journalist to senior manager for women. According to the recent Reuters Institute's *Women and Leadership* survey[81] 47% of top editors in 2020 in South Africa are women, which is a similar proportion to the overall proportion of women in media in South Africa, as reported in the *Glass Ceiling* report[82].

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The American Society of News Editors reports that in 2018, 42% of newsroom leaders in the **US** were women compared to 35% of news supervisors a decade earlier[83]. Reuters Institute's *Women and Leadership* survey from 2020 reports a similar figure of 41% for the proportion of top news editors in the US who are women. This places the US in a leading position in terms of the high conversion rate of women journalists into leaders, as the proportion of journalists who are women is comparable to the proportion of senior leaders in news organizations. However, according to the Columbia Journalism Review report[84], in 2018 only 27% of news editors in the US were women. *The Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Journalism* similarly reports that women journalists in the US fare poorly in terms of career progression to senior roles in comparison to men[85]. This discrepancy in the reported figures and narratives calls for caution in the level of optimism applied to conclusions regarding women's representation in senior leadership in news organizations in the US.

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On the other hand, **the situation in Nigeria and to some degree in the UK is clearly less positive** in terms of women's representation in senior leadership roles. For example, according to an audit of major newspapers in Nigeria[86], only 6% of daily, Saturday, Sunday and online editors of 12 media houses are women and women occupy only 4% of all senior leadership roles (including Managing Director/General Manager, Chairman Editorial Board and Daily,

Saturday, Sunday or Online Editors). All 12 Chairman of Editorial Board roles were occupied by men. This exposes an **alarming level of discrimination against women in senior leadership roles in news in Nigeria**.

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According to the Reuters' *Women and Leadership* survey[87], in the **UK** less than a third of top editors (29%) are women in comparison with almost gender parity in newsrooms (47% or 45%, are reported above). This indicates that there is a **high level of discrimination against women at top management level in the UK**.

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There is no contemporaneous data reflecting the proportion of senior journalists in **Kenya** and **India** who are women. According to the *Global Report*[88], in 2009 20% of full-time journalists in India and 23% of senior managers were women. In Kenya 35% of full-time journalists were women, with the same percentage being senior managers. These figures suggest that a decade ago, **while women were marginalized in journalism in Kenya and India, those who did make it in full-time employment were likely to progress to senior roles**.

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81 Andi et al., 2020
82 Daniels et al., 2019
83 American Society of News Editors, 2018
84 Allsop et al., 2018

85 Byerly, 2016
86 Journalists for Christ International Outreach, 2019
87 Andi et al., 2020
88 Byerly, 2011

The million-dollar question: Does improved gender diversity in the newsroom lead to women being more visible in the news?

The existing academic evidence is inconclusive about whether more equal gender representation in the newsroom leads to an increased and fair portrayal of women in the news

Overall, there is agreement that employing more women in news media is an important step forward. However, there is a lack of consensus among academics on whether employing more women can make an actual difference to the gender balance in news coverage. White[89] describes gender balance in news coverage as presenting a fair gender portrayal, the use of neutral and non-gender specific language, and women not being pigeonholed as 'lifestyle' or 'soft' news reporters. Some academics believe that employing more women in news making can lead to news content that is likely to appeal to a wider audience[90]. However, others have pointed out that empirical evidence for this is lacking[91]. In the 1990s and early 2000s there was an anticipation that news output would become more gender-balanced and more relevant to women if women reached a '**critical mass**' as journalists or in the newsroom (estimated at 35%). Studies recommended interventions to develop and support more women reporters and presenters, suggesting this would challenge gender-based stereotypes in reporting[92].

Most recent evidence shows that only up to a third of news stories feature women protagonists, irrespective of the proportion of women journalists in the newsroom

In their hypotheses about change theories which would improve women's visibility and create a more balanced portrayal of women in the news, organizations and academics frequently assume that if newsrooms and senior management teams reached gender parity then the women journalists would tell more women's stories and put forward gender-sensitive story angles[93]. If we develop this argument further, we should conclude that the proportion of women protagonists in news stories would increase in line with the proportion of women in newsrooms and in senior management teams. In the next few paragraphs we have tested this assumption using available data for the six countries.

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Both the literature review conducted by AKAS and the recent content analysis undertaken by Media Ecosystems Analysis Group indicate that women have been and continue to be significantly under-represented as protagonists in the news. (For a more detailed analysis, please see Part 2, chapter 3). According to the Global Media Monitoring Project's 2015 report, globally in 2015 women were central to the news in traditional media in 10% of news stories (there is no equivalent figure available for men)[94]. According to the same report, only 26% of all subjects in the news globally were women (vs. 74% men). Findings across multiple academic studies and various methodologies also consistently show that women have been substantially under-represented in news media coverage, particularly in newspapers[95]. One study examined the ratio of men's to women's names across approximately 2,000 English-language newspapers and online news websites over a five-year period and found that it stood at nearly 5:1[96].

[89] White, 2009
[90] McCracken et al., 2018
[91] Steiner, 2012; Shor et al., 2015
[92] Carll, 2003

[93] Byerly, 2016
[94] Macharia, 2015
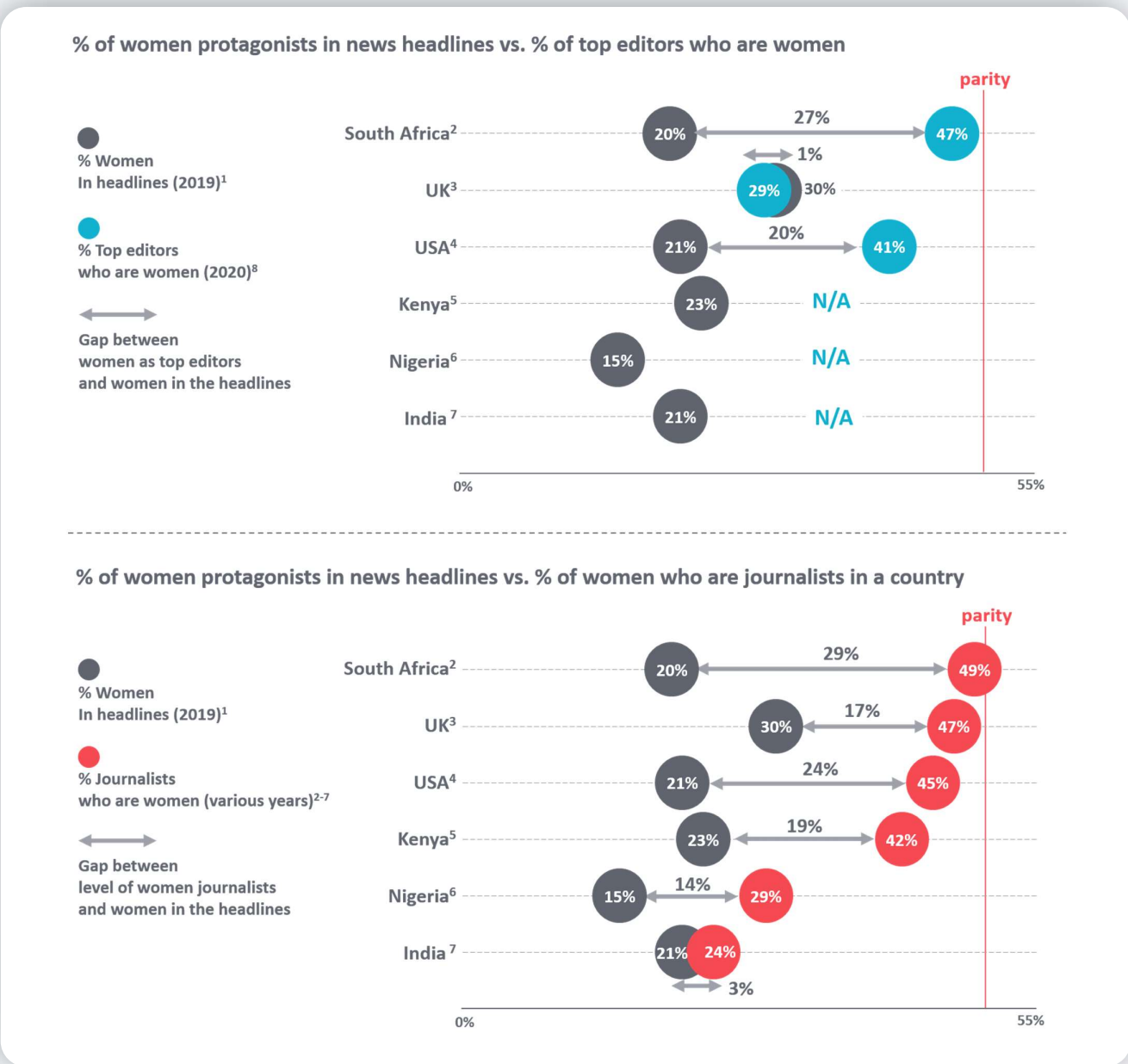[95] Shor et al., 2015; Ross & Carter, 2011; Flaounas et al., 2013
[96] Shor et al., 2015

Part of the content analysis undertaken by Media Ecosystems Analysis Group entailed capturing the proportion of women protagonists in online news in each of the six analyzed countries, using mentions of women's and/or men's names in article headlines as a way of identifying the proportion of protagonists who were women vs. men. The analysis concluded that the proportion of women protagonists in online news was between a sixth and a third of all protagonists. We asked ourselves whether higher gender diversity in newsrooms in each of the six countries positively affected the proportion of women protagonists in headlines, this being a key indicator of a balanced portrayal of women in the news (see Figure 2.4).

Our research found, however, that across the six examined countries, there was no correlation between the proportion of women producing the news and those featuring in the news. The proportion of women protagonists in headlines was low in all six countries.

Figure 2.4: Percentage of women protagonists in news headlines vs. percentage of women who are journalists in a country vs. percentage of top editors who are women

% of women protagonists in news headlines vs. % of top editors who are women

- % Women In headlines (2019)[1]
- % Top editors who are women (2020)[8]
- Gap between women as top editors and women in the headlines

Country	% Women in headlines	Gap	% Top editors
South Africa[2]	20%	27%	47%
UK[3]	29%	1%	30%
USA[4]	21%	20%	41%
Kenya[5]	23%		N/A
Nigeria[6]	15%		N/A
India [7]	21%		N/A

0% — parity — 55%

% of women protagonists in news headlines vs. % of women who are journalists in a country

- % Women In headlines (2019)[1]
- % Journalists who are women (various years)[2-7]
- Gap between level of women journalists and women in the headlines

Country	% Women in headlines	Gap	% Journalists
South Africa[2]	20%	29%	49%
UK[3]	30%	17%	47%
USA[4]	21%	24%	45%
Kenya[5]	23%	19%	42%
Nigeria[6]	15%	14%	29%
India [7]	21%	3%	24%

0% — parity — 55%

Source: [1]*Media Ecosystems Analysis Group (2020);* [2]*Daniels et al (2019);* [3]*Office for National Statistics (2018);* [4]*US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019);* [5]*Hanitzsch et al (2019);* [6]*Byerly (2011);* [7]*UN Women (2019);* [8]*Andi et al (2020)*

Even in countries where gender diversity in newsrooms is approaching parity such as the UK, US and South Africa (vs. India, Kenya and Nigeria), there is a persistent bias towards men protagonists in news coverage. For example, as evidenced in Figure 2.4, while in the US 45% of journalists are women and in India women only make up 24% of journalists, the proportion of women protagonists in the news headlines in both countries across news genres is the same at a mere 21%. This evidence suggests that the significantly higher proportion of women in newsrooms in the US compared to India does not necessarily translate into more women protagonists.

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Furthermore, the proportion of women protagonists in news headlines across all six analyzed countries is between 15% and 30% (see Figure 2.4), which is comparable with the average global figure of women constituting 26% of all subjects in the news globally, as reported by the GMMP in 2015[97]. In fact, the recorded proportion of women protagonists in news headlines in five of the six countries we examined (all bar the UK) is below the global average for 2015. Although we are comparing figures derived using different methodologies and sample sizes, it is plausible to conclude that very little progress, if any, has been made in the last few years, despite some of the analyzed countries enjoying near gender parity in their newsrooms.

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Data presented later in the report on political reporting (Chapter 3, Figure 2.14) provides evidence that the lower percentage of women in news headlines is not simply due to women carrying out low profile, low interest activities, but also because women's high-profile, high-interest activities (e.g. being a parliamentarian) are not being sufficiently reported.

Thus, although a question may remain about whether a 35% proportion of women in newsroom/governance/senior leadership constitutes a critical mass sufficient to improve women's visibility in the news, according to Byerly in *The Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Journalism*, a high proportion

of women in newsrooms is not sufficient to improve the representation of women's perspectives due to the dominant male cultural lens prevalent in societies[98]. The next few pages will be dedicated to exploring the importance and the impact of newsroom culture on the representation of women in the news.

The existing, essentially male culture in newsrooms prevents a balanced portrayal of women in the news

Some academic research and industry reports suggest that a male-biased cultural lens and professional standards driven by male values are prevalent in newsrooms and adhered to by all journalists, irrespective of gender[99]. Thus, unless newsroom culture changes too, the participation of women in the newsroom won't alone be enough to achieve balance in news outputs

The participation of women in news media is just one of several factors that influence gender balance in news, hence studies have been unable to confirm a *causal* relationship between women's increased participation alone and a more gender-balanced news output[100]. Research has found no significant relationship between newspaper coverage patterns and the sex of individual editors and publishers[101]. In the 2015 Global Media Monitoring Project, Macharia

[97] Macharia, 2015
[98] Byerly, 2016
[99] According to various research scholars cited by Shor et al (2018), there is a difference between men's and women's styles of management in news organizations, in their values and in their writing. The masculine style of news management is seen to emphasize control, strategy, analysis, and a lack of emotion. The feminine style of management is characterized by teamwork and

consensus, less hierarchy and more co-operation. Female writing is considered to focus more on positive aspects of stories while male more on negative aspects of the story. The female style of writing is also considered to incorporate emotions and opinion more while male focuses on facts and objectivity in a more detached manner. Harmony and cooperation are seen as more feminine values, while competition, domination and independence as more masculine (Shor et al, 2018).
[100] Steiner, 2012
[101] Shor et al., 2015

lists the relatively low participation of women in news media as one factor influencing the lack of gender balance in news content, the others being: how 'news' is defined, organizational constraints, the socialization of reporters, individual influences and journalistic routines.   She emphasizes that increasing the participation of women alone would be insufficient to achieve gender-balanced output; that newsroom culture also needs to change[102]. The emerging stronger view is that while **an increase in women's participation in news media may assist in promoting a more gender balanced coverage, it is unlikely on its own to eradicate the disparities that currently exist**[103]. It is posited that an increased presence of women on radio, television and in print is likely to have many beneficial effects including the provision of positive role models for women and girls, increased confidence among women to act as sources and interviewees, and the attraction of a greater audience among women[104]. However empirical evidence for this is lacking.

Professional identity may override gender identity in newsrooms

Evidence suggests that **men and women think similarly about their role as journalists**[105]. Hanitzsch & Hanusch conducted a comprehensive survey of journalists in 18 countries and found that men's and women's opinions and attitudes towards their jobs did not differ significantly by gender, either at an individual level, or in newsrooms dominated by women, or in sociocultural contexts where women had achieved a level of empowerment[106]. Any differences they did observe were either insignificant or mediated by other factors, such as the country a journalist was from. Based on these results, they challenge the assumption that more women journalists would lead to more gender-balanced output on two grounds: it assumes firstly that journalists have sufficient autonomy at individual level to perform as they wish, and secondly that femininity for a woman journalist is paramount, rather than any other dimension of her identity such as professionalism or ethnicity. They found that men and women journalists tended to think about their work in largely similar terms. They suggest that the lack of difference means that newsroom culture would not necessarily change if more women journalists were employed, as the professional (more masculine)

culture is maintained by both sexes. They note that the reason for similarities in attitude may be that **women journalists are forced to adopt men's values and are judged by men's standards.** Interestingly, there might be a methodological influence on their findings. They observed that surveys among journalists usually failed to find gender-based differences in their approach to the profession while content analysis did tend to reveal gender-based differences. Content analysis might be influenced by factors other than the gender of the journalist, such as the level of women's empowerment or participation at a societal level.   Overall, they suggest that even where differences in news coverage by gender are revealed through content analysis, the relationship appears to be correlational rather than causal.

Newsroom culture and professional standards are dominated by 'masculine' values

There is a consensus in the literature that **newsroom culture and professional journalism norms play a significant role** in the gender balance of news output. Much depends on the tension between organizational structure and individual agency and how they interact with each other[107]. The ability to change the status quo is limited by macro-level gender inequality and gendered institutional norms.   A sense of 'professionalism' may override gender differences in newsrooms, particularly where a 'critical mass' of women has not been reached[108]. Men's dominance in an organization may curtail the ability of individual women journalists to create real change. Newsroom culture influences the unconscious choices that journalists make in terms of how issues are framed, and interviewees are portrayed[109].

Some scholars believe the dominance of men in the news media industry has led to the **'masculinization' of news values**. This manifests in a tendency to use men rather than women as experts or protagonists[110]; a lesser focus on human angles (and a greater emphasis on facts); more foregrounding of professional standpoints (vs personal ones)[111]; increased focus on facts and sensation rather than background and consequences[112]; a more detached reporting approach

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[102] Macharia, 2015
[103] Macharia, 2015; Hanitzsch & Hanusch, 2012
[104] Kangas et al., 2014
[105] Hanitzsch & Hanusch, 2012; Steiner, 2012
[106] Hanitzsch & Hanusch, 2012

[107] Macharia, 2015
[108] Steiner, 2012
[109] Macharia, 2015
[110] Macharia, 2015; Chambers et al., 2004
[111] Chambers et al., 2004
[112] Steiner, 2012; Van Zoonen, 1998

in place of a more compassionate style, concerned with audience needs[113]; a greater tendency to focus more on negative story angles[114]; and a management style that places more value on assertiveness and competitiveness than collaboration, team work and work-life balance[115]. The socialization process in the newsroom further embeds this masculinization and professional standards which override any feminine values[116]. This extends beyond single organizations to encompass how the profession works at a macro level[117]. Women continue to face challenges in the news media industry even once a foothold is gained, due to what Byerly terms the entrenched nature of **patriarchal norms, values, attitudes and practices**[118]. She argues that the concentration of political and economic power in the hands of men has created institutional structures that have marginalized women.

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During the 1990s and early 2000s, studies about women in the news profession became an area of focus, with many scholars addressing gendered newsroom practices. Studies highlighted that the **newsroom, as well as journalists' socialization within it, was deeply gendered**[119]. The norms and values of journalistic practice to which all journalists were expected to subscribe were regarded as **implicitly 'masculine'**[120]. An emphasis on 'hard' news over 'soft', 'fact' vs. 'opinion', time-constrained daily news over human interest features, and public vs. private, all produce a gender-differentiated news agenda with a *masculine bias*[121]. Ethnographic studies have identified discrimination towards women journalists in the assignment of reporting tasks, the gender pay gap, sexual harassment and sexism from male colleagues, and difficulties balancing work and family life as challenges[122].

Finally… a more gender-balanced workforce leads to a more egalitarian and inclusive culture

The **positive impact on the working environment of a more gender-balanced workforce is highlighted** in the literature[123]. McCracken et al. suggest that a more gender-balanced workforce leads to a more egalitarian, inclusive culture at work which renders working life more enjoyable and allows employees to feel more confident and optimistic about their working lives[124]. Several studies in the US suggest that a greater presence of women in news media organizations leads to a more collaborative working culture and a more diverse reporting style[125]. A study of an all-women newspaper management team found that the organization placed a high value on teamwork, collaboration and work-family life balance, characteristics described as a 'feminized' organizational culture[126]. In newspapers headed by women, news topics tended not to differ much from those in papers led by men. However, newspapers led by women tended to focus more on positive story angles and to treat reporters fairly, regardless of gender[127].

[113] Van Zoonen, 1998
[114] Craft and Wanta, 2004
[115] Everbach, 2006
[116] Hanitzsch & Hanusch, 2012
[117] Macharia, 2015
[118] Byerly, 2016
[119] Ross & Carter, 2011

[120] Van Zoonen, 1998
[121] Ross & Carter, 2011; White, 2009; Van Zoonen, 1998
[122] Macharia, 2015
[123] McCracken et al., 2018; White, 2009
[124] McCracken et al., 2018
[125] Everbach, 2006; Beam & DiCicco, 2010; Craft & Wanta, 2004
[126] Everbach, 2006
[127] Everbach, 2006; Beam & DiCicco, 2010; Craft & Wanta, 2004

Recommendations for news providers

- **To improve the representation of women in your organization, ensure that the following policies are in place**:
  - An overarching gender equality policy which, critically, has a nominated senior leader associated with it who is responsible for its implementation
  - Recruitment policy outlining tactics for tackling gender bias in recruitment
  - Parental leave policy including maternity and paternity leave provisions
  - Protocols for reintegrating parents returning to their jobs after a parental leave
  - Sexual harassment policy
  - Childcare assistance policy
  - Flexible working policy
  - Training and Development policy specifically addressing the needs of women journalists

- **Consider pay audits in order to help decrease the gender pay gap**
  To address the persistent issue of the gender pay gap, pay audits should be considered. Opinion varies as to how transparent these should be, but their value in raising awareness of the issue and facilitating challenges is acknowledged[128].

- **Optimize childcare policies and flexible working provision as these are particularly likely to have a significant impact**
  Two of the most significant barriers to participation in the news media workforce and progression to senior roles are inadequate access to childcare and the opportunities for flexible working[129]. It is therefore highly recommended that news media organizations facilitate access to creches or after school childcare for women employees and support flexible working arrangements.

- **Be explicit in your corporate strategy about your organization's ambitions in relation to achieving gender equality** along each element of the news production, consumption and impact value chain. In terms of organizational resources – the first element of the value chain – include the following blocks with targets and dates attached to them:

  - Collecting data on and eliminating pay gap (if one exists) by a certain date
  - Achieving gender parity in the newsroom by a certain date, particularly in agenda-setting beats such as politics and the economy
  - Achieving gender parity among the senior leadership by a certain date
  - Ensuring that the terms of employment are the same for men and women e.g. that there is gender parity in full-time and part-time employment (rather than a prevalence of men in full-time employment and of women in less secure part-time employment).

- **Ensure ongoing monitoring:** There is a consensus among experts that ongoing monitoring is extremely important and there is a need to keep building an evidence base[130].
  - Measure the success of your organization's gender equality strategy along each of the elements of the news value chain by capturing and tracking organizational resources, newsgathering, output/coverage, news consumption and impact-related indicators. This will enable you to understand which indicators drive the improvement of representation and visibility of women in the news.
  - Consider carrying out regular audits and implement scorecards which contain concrete performance indicators to assess progress. Ideally, a mix of indicators including organizational resources, newsgathering, outputs, news consumption and impacts should be measured.
  - Combine quantitative and qualitative indicators and methodologies when tracking various indicators. While quantitative indicators can reveal what has changed (e.g. proportions of coverage of women), qualitative analyses can reveal how it has changed (e.g. how women are portrayed), help to determine why certain patterns have emerged, and provide a measure of aspects such as women's empowerment which are difficult to measure quantitatively[131].

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[128] White, 2009; McCracken et al., 2018
[129] White, 2009; McCracken et al., 2018

[130] Macharia, 2015; Byerly, 2016
[131] Kangas et al., 2014

- **Aspire for gender parity in the governance structure of the organization** because it sets the tone for how male-dominated, gender-neutral or women-championing the culture and organizational values are.

- **In a bid to redress gender imbalances in news media organizations, apply gender quotas in recruitment as a fast and effective temporary measure to achieving this goal**[132].

- **Ensure that the leadership is committed to improving gender equality** in the organization. Organizations that are the most successful in achieving gender parity in their workforce are those with strong leadership that demonstrate commitment to including women at all levels of news media production[133].

- **Tackle gender blindness within the governance structure of the organization, the senior leadership and in newsrooms** by making journalists and managers aware of the prevalence of male-dominated thinking within the organizational culture. Innovate a **comprehensive gender sensitivity training program for men and women** which should cover important gender equality indicators within organizational resources (including corporate values, culture, strategy), newsgathering (gender-sensitive expertise and reporting, gender-sensitive professional standards), outputs (gender-sensitive coverage), audience news consumption (coverage which meets the needs of women and men) and impacts (recording gender-transformative organizational behaviors and news coverage that have changed positively the narrative on gender issues).

[132] McCracken et al., 2018

[133] McCracken et al., 2018

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PART 2: KEY GENDER EQUALITY INDICATORS IN NEWS

Chapter 2

Women as sources of news expertise

The chapter at a glance

This chapter will analyze the gender balance in news through the lenses of newsgathering and news outputs/coverage by evaluating the proportion of experts and sources in the news who are women vs. those who are men. It will synthesize the limited amount of academic research into this gender equality indicator available from the last few decades. It will also assess women's share of voice (as experts, sources or protagonists) in online news today before offering recommendations for news providers who are determined to improve their gender balance in news expertise and sourcing.

• • •

This chapter shows that in the last two decades women's expertise in the news has been considerably muted in comparison to men's and the latest evidence suggests that this remains the case today. Between 2005 and 2015 fewer than one in five experts globally in the news were women. Today women's share of quoted voice in online news is less than a third in the UK, a quarter in South Africa and the US, a fifth in Kenya and only 16% and 14% in Nigeria and India. Women's share of quoted voice has not reached parity in any news genre, including arts and media or health, where women's voices are quoted most often. Women's expert voices remain significantly muted in the authoritative professional occupational spheres, as well as in more high profile news genres such as politics (where men's share of voices is between three and seven times higher than that of women) and the economy (where men's share of voices is between two and 31 times higher than that of women).
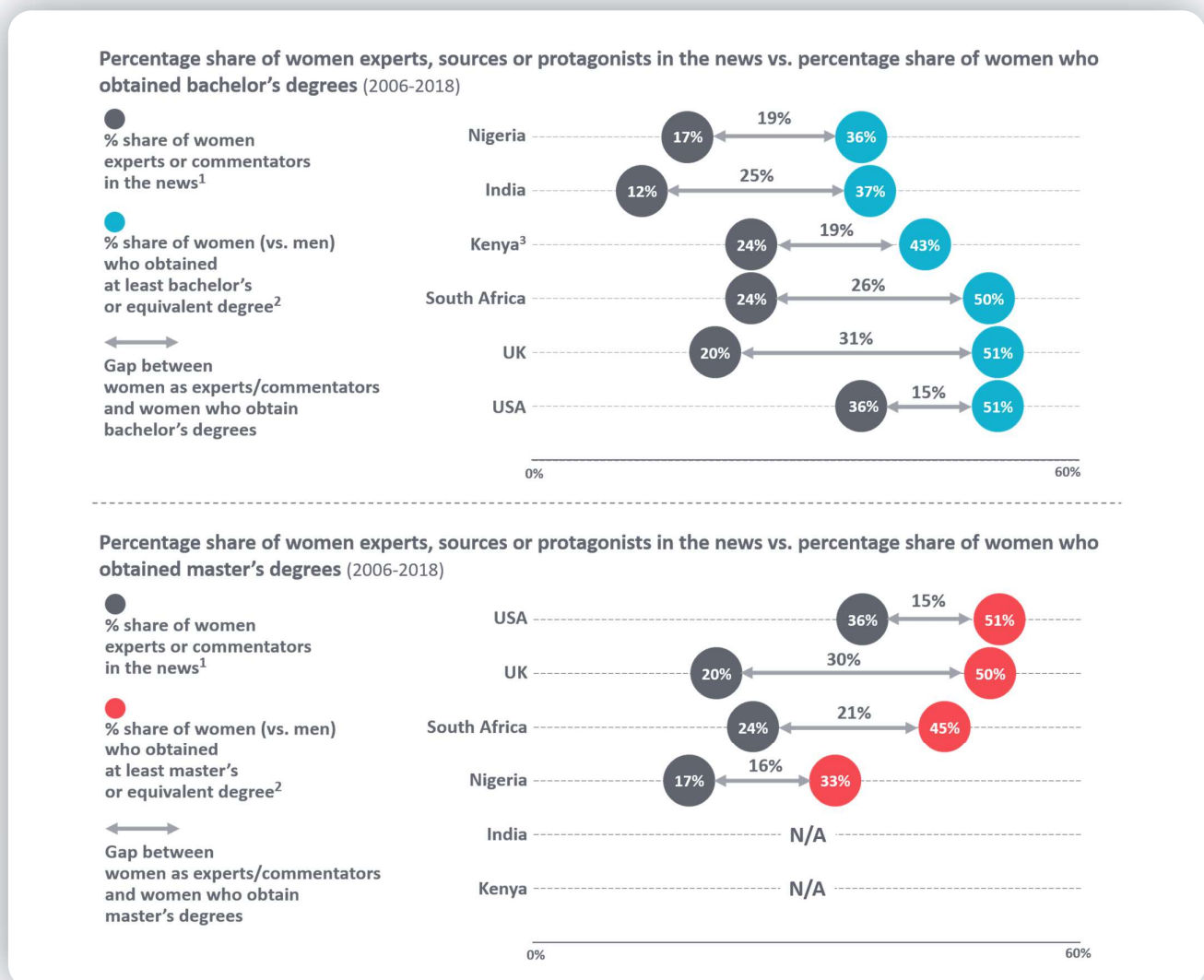
Global overview: what we know about this indicator

The use of women as sources of news expertise is an important newsgathering and outputs indicator for gender equality. Given that the proportion of women (vs. men) who graduate from tertiary education (attaining bachelor's or master's degrees) is, based on the latest available data, between a third and a half in all the analyzed countries[1], we could reasonably expect that women would form between a third and a half of the experts offering their perspective in the news. Unfortunately, this is far from the case (see Figure 2.5). Men's expertise gets amplified in the news while women's expertise is dialed down. For instance, in the UK and US half of those who have obtained master's degrees are women, but in 2015 women only made up 20% of the experts or commentators in the news in the UK and 36% in the US. Similarly, in Nigeria a third of master's degrees' graduates are women but only 17% of the experts or commentators in the news were women.

Figure 2.5: Percentage share of women experts, sources or protagonists in the news vs. percentage share of women who obtained bachelor's or master's degrees (2006-2018)

Percentage share of women experts, sources or protagonists in the news vs. percentage share of women who obtained bachelor's degrees (2006-2018)

- % share of women experts or commentators in the news[1]
- % share of women (vs. men) who obtained at least bachelor's or equivalent degree[2]
- Gap between women as experts/commentators and women who obtain bachelor's degrees

Nigeria	17% — 19% — 36%
India	12% — 25% — 37%
Kenya[3]	24% — 19% — 43%
South Africa	24% — 26% — 50%
UK	20% — 31% — 51%
USA	36% — 15% — 51%

0%　　　　60%

Percentage share of women experts, sources or protagonists in the news vs. percentage share of women who obtained master's degrees (2006-2018)

- % share of women experts or commentators in the news[1]
- % share of women (vs. men) who obtained at least master's or equivalent degree[2]
- Gap between women as experts/commentators and women who obtain master's degrees

USA	36% — 15% — 51%
UK	20% — 30% — 50%
South Africa	24% — 21% — 45%
Nigeria	17% — 16% — 33%
India	N/A
Kenya	N/A

0%　　　　60%

Source: [1] *Macharia (2015) for percentage share of women experts or commentators in the news;* [2] *World Bank Group Data Educational Attainment (2006 – 2018), Nigeria: 2006, India: 2011, South Africa and UK: 2017, USA: 2018. Only partial data available for India.* [3] *UNESCO Institute for Statistics database, Kenya: 2017*

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[1] Note: Figures relate to the following years: South Africa and UK (2017), US (2018), India (2011), Nigeria (2006); Kenya (2017)

Our academic literature review revealed that only 9% of the academic articles focused on women used as sources of expertise. As reported earlier, the majority of the articles had zoned in on women who are protagonists of news stories.

Before embarking on the journey to discover why women's voices are muted when it comes to sharing their experience or expertise in the news, we examined the possible roles women or men could play in this sphere. The Global Media Monitoring Project has identified and tracked a number of indicators associated with measuring gender representation and balance in the news[2]. These are:

- an *expert or commentator* who provides additional angles on the news story based on their specialist expertise

- a *spokesperson* who speaks on behalf of another person or group of people on a particular issue

- a *subject* who is typically the person who is the protagonist in the story

- an *eyewitness* who can provide a first-person account of the story

- a *person expressing popular opinion* who is chosen as representative of the opinion of a specific group of people (e.g. in a street interview or vox pop), and

- a *person with a personal experience* who expresses their own view of a story, but is not necessarily representative of a larger group of people.

Together these indicators can be encapsulated in the following terms: *news experts* (which includes experts or commentators), *story protagonists* (which includes subjects) and *sources of news* (which includes all the remaining categories).

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In this report the aggregated proportion of news experts, story protagonists and sources of news who are women are referred to as 'women's share of quoted voice' in the news. The Global Media Monitoring Project used the term *'women's presence in the news'* which refers to women who are heard, read about or seen in the news. This definition includes women experts, protagonists and sources, as well as women who present the news on TV or radio. Using this definition, women's presence in the news in traditional media globally in 2015 was 24%, while on digital media it was 26%. This figure had seen no real improvement in a decade (since 2005).

This chapter focuses on the progress made (or lack thereof) in improving women's share of quoted voice in the news as well as, more specifically, the proportion of women used as news experts and/or sources. It is important to state that besides the GMMP, very little else has existed until now that analyzes each of these indicators of gender equality in a systematic, robust and longitudinal manner, which makes it hard to draw definitive conclusions about trends in the last 20 years.

The historical picture reveals that women's expertise has been undervalued and marginalized: between 2005 and 2015 fewer than one in five experts or commentators were women
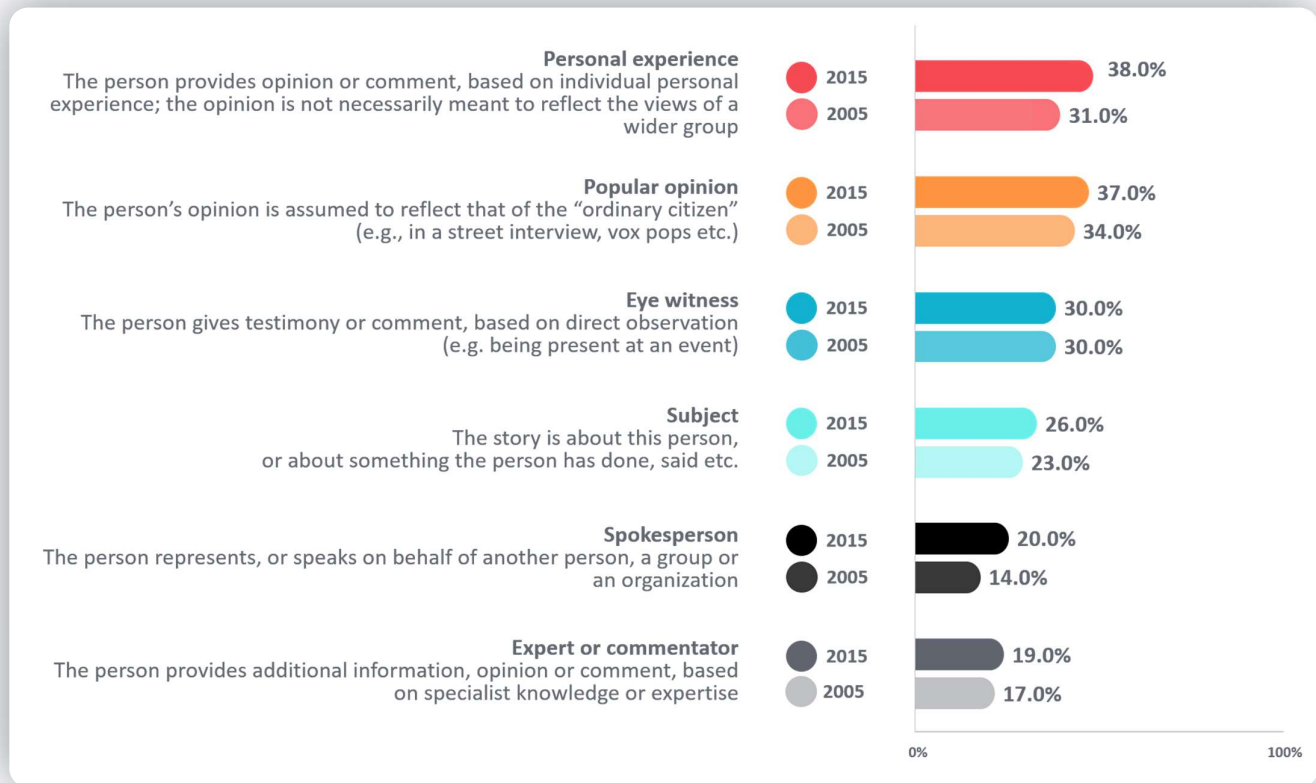
Examining GMMP's analysis of experts and commentators, we can safely conclude that the proportion of women's voices among those used to provide expert opinions in the news has been very low. Women have been much more likely to be used as sources of news (sources of personal experience, popular opinion or eyewitness accounts) than as experts, protagonists (subjects) or spokespeople (see Figure 2.6). Globally, women accounted for as much as 38% of those providing personal experience, an increase of 7% over ten years, and 30% of those giving testimony based on direct observation, static since 2005 [3]. By contrast, only 19% of news experts or contributors were women. This disparity in the use of women as sources and as experts was validated in the literature review which AKAS conducted as part of this project. Other research has also found that women were quoted as sources in 28% of stories across all platforms and news categories but were quoted less frequently as experts at 20% [4]. The under-representation of women as experts was particularly

[2] Macharia, 2015

[3] Macharia, 2015
[4] Ross et al., 2018

Figure 2.6: Functions of women news subjects (2005-2015)

Personal experience
The person provides opinion or comment, based on individual personal experience; the opinion is not necessarily meant to reflect the views of a wider group
- 2015: 38.0%
- 2005: 31.0%

Popular opinion
The person's opinion is assumed to reflect that of the "ordinary citizen" (e.g., in a street interview, vox pops etc.)
- 2015: 37.0%
- 2005: 34.0%

Eye witness
The person gives testimony or comment, based on direct observation (e.g. being present at an event)
- 2015: 30.0%
- 2005: 30.0%

Subject
The story is about this person, or about something the person has done, said etc.
- 2015: 26.0%
- 2005: 23.0%

Spokesperson
The person represents, or speaks on behalf of another person, a group or an organization
- 2015: 20.0%
- 2005: 14.0%

Expert or commentator
The person provides additional information, opinion or comment, based on specialist knowledge or expertise
- 2015: 19.0%
- 2005: 17.0%

Source: Macharia (2015)

pronounced in newspapers and TV. Women's voices tended to cluster around science/health and crime/violence; categories that occur with the lowest frequency in news. Whilst Figure 2.6 illustrates the global under-representation of women as sources of expertise in the news, there is significant variation by country[5]. The 2015 GMMP data revealed the US to have the highest level at 36%, followed by South Africa and Kenya, both at 24% and the UK at 20% (see Figure 2.5). India had the lowest level at just 12%, while Nigeria was second lowest at 17%, both below the global average (19%). The report noted that globally, there had been an increase in women quoted as sources since 1995, but that there remained significant room for improvement.

Women were not only significantly under-represented as sources of expertise in news but the use of women as news sources overall also decreased between 2010 and 2015

Globally, between 2010 and 2015, whilst the overall number of sources used in news stories increased, women's share decreased. This decrease was driven by broadcast channels and by certain news categories: social/legal, celebrity/arts and politics/government[6].

"Don't worry your pretty little head": women's expertise is heavily skewed towards lower profile news specialisms, leaving men to shed light on the more consequential spheres of public life

The academic literature review uncovered that male sources tended to dominate certain professional and functional categories in news[7]. Women's voices were found to dominate the sphere of the private, emotional and subjective, with men's voices dominating the sphere of the public, rational and objective[8]. Women tended to speak on topics traditionally regarded as of

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[5] Macharia, 2015
[6] Macharia, 2015

[7] Ross et al., 2018; Ross & Carter, 2011
[8] Ross et al., 2018

specific interest to women, such as education, consumer affairs and stories about other women (e.g. women in political power). Women were significantly **under-represented in the authoritative professional occupational categories and significantly over-represented as voices of the general public** (homemaker, parent, student, child) and of occupational groups most associated with 'women's work', such as healthcare professionals, social and child-care workers, or office/service industry workers. Men dominated as sources in politics, war, sport, the legal system, and violent crime. Exacerbating this tendency, the number of women used as sources decreased over the five years from 2010 to 2015 in stories about politics and government, where women were already significantly under-represented[9]. These findings suggest that **in terms of sources, men are associated with knowledge and authority while women are associated with personal testimony or interesting anecdote**[10].

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As discussed later in greater detail, these findings from the academic literature showing that women's voices are better represented in lower profile news specialisms can be seen to be enduringly accurate today and have been **validated by the recent content analysis** undertaken by Media Ecosystems Analysis Group[11]. The content analysis found that across all the countries surveyed, in aggregate women collectively receive the highest proportion of quotes in health news (ranked top) and arts/media news (ranked 2nd), followed by in social/legal news (ranked 3rd by women's share of quoted voices), crime/violence (ranked 4th), politics/government news (ranked 5th), and sports and economy (ranked 6th and 7th).

Sourcing is biased towards middle-aged men, thus perpetuating gender imbalance in news. Generating lists of women experts can mitigate this bias

The GMMP found that journalistic sourcing routines perpetuate gender imbalance in news portrayal by privileging men's voices[12]. Journalists tended to rely on a narrow range of sources, particularly when it came to expert opinions, and these sources tended to be middle-class, middle-aged professional men. Other research has corroborated this, suggesting that journalists needed to think more broadly and inject effort into gathering sources and contacts [13]. 'Nudging' [14] techniques have been applied to encourage this. It is noted that Denmark has the highest percentage of women experts on news among Nordic countries, which is attributed to the fact that in 1997 a database of women experts was launched to make it easier for journalists to identify and contact them[15]. Research found that journalists in Sweden and Austria also highlighted the value of having access to lists of experts from whom they could seek comments on stories[16]. These lists were created with the express intention of increasing diversity among expert commentators in news media. An advisory committee to the European Commission[17] similarly recommended that public authorities at regional, national and European level should support the creation and maintenance of themed databases of women experts to be shared with news media professionals.

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[9] Ross et al., 2018
[10] Ross & Carter, 2011
[11] Media Ecosystems Analysis Group, 2020
[12] Macharia, 2015
[13] Morris, 2016

[14] Nudge is a concept used in behavioral science that proposes ways of influencing people's choices and behaviors through subtle changes in the environment/the context where decisions are made.
[15] Haggrén, 2017
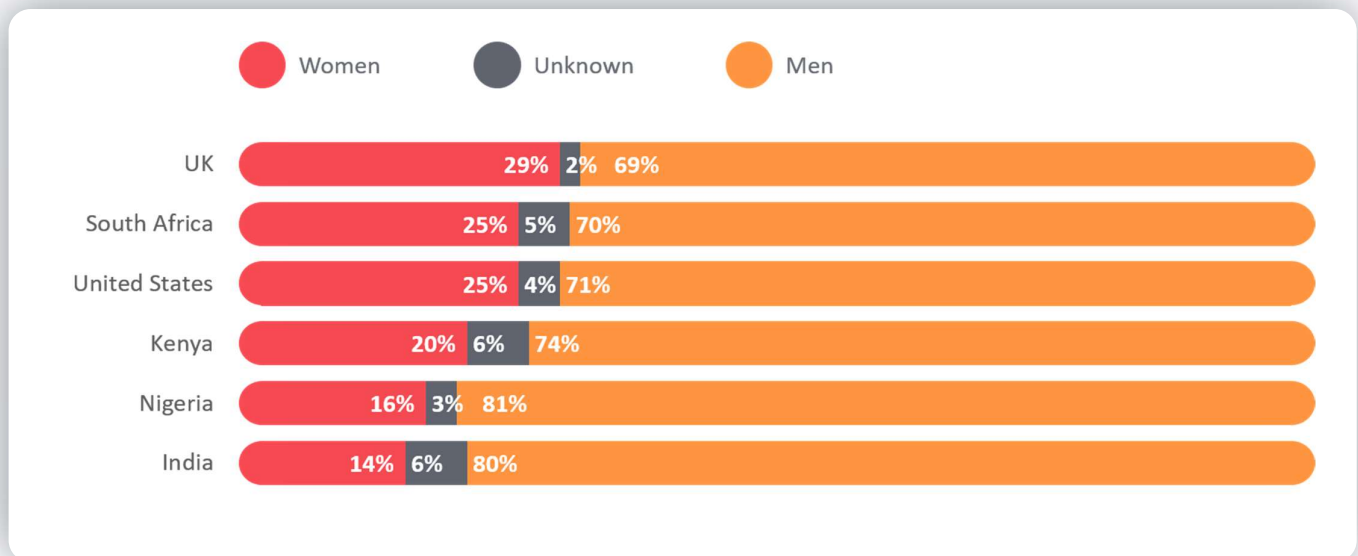[16] McCracken et al., 2018
[17] European Commission, 2010

The situation today: A snapshot of women's share of voices in online news reveals little progress

By evaluating the percentage of times that quoted speech in news articles could be attributed to a woman vs. a man, Media Ecosystems Analysis Group[18] were able to calculate **the share of quoted voice which women experts/commentators, sources and protagonists** generated out of the totality of voices quoted in online news. Their content analysis enables the findings to be broken down by news genres (referred to by them as themes), which assisted in stress-testing previous findings about existing biases in using women as sources, experts or protagonists in lower profile genres more than higher profile ones.

Women's share of quoted voice in online news is biggest in the UK, and yet, men are still quoted more than twice as frequently as women

Women's share of quoted voice in online news is much smaller than that of men in all six countries examined, both on an aggregate level and within different news genres. No news genre achieves gender parity among those quoted as sources, experts or protagonists (see Figure 2.7).

Figure 2.7: Overall gender breakdown of quoted individuals in news (as experts, sources or protagonists), (2019)

	Women	Unknown	Men
UK	29%	2%	69%
South Africa	25%	5%	70%
United States	25%	4%	71%
Kenya	20%	6%	74%
Nigeria	16%	3%	81%
India	14%	6%	80%

Source: Media Ecosystems Analysis Group (2020)

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[18] Media Ecosystems Analysis Group, 2020. Note: the analysis covered 80 key publications across the six countries which were selected on the basis of the volume of web traffic to their publication homepage as identified through SimilarWeb data and on the number of stories in the Media Cloud system. One key limitation of the computational content analysis methodology is that it does not provide qualitative assessment. It would therefore be unclear whether a female source it captured portrayed an empowered woman, a victim of crime, or a survivor.

Women are quoted in articles 29% of the time in the UK, which is higher than in any of the other five countries. This is followed by the US and South Africa where women are quoted a quarter of the time. The proportion in Kenya is a fifth, representing a middling performance within the group of six countries

Although none of the news genres in any of the countries have reached gender parity in their share of voice, news genres which are traditionally associated with higher levels of interest among women fare better. This is particularly evident in lower profile genres such as health, arts and media, as well as genres focusing on social issues. Science and health, and arts and media were the best performing genres in terms of women's share of quoted voice in the UK (46% of all quotes within these two genres were from women) and in the US (accounting for 38% and 34% respectively). This is mirrored in the findings in South Africa where the top performing news genres were social and legal (achieving a 41% women's share of quoted voice), and science and health (mainly health), which achieved 40%. In Kenya, science and health was again one of the top performing genres in terms of women's share of quoted voice (40%) along with crime and violence (33%)[19].

Women's share of quoted voice in online news is most marginalized in India and Nigeria

Indian online news performed worst in terms of women's share of quoted voice (i.e. proportion of sources, experts or protagonists). Here only 14% of the share of quoted voices was attributed to women vs. 80% to men (with 6% unknown). The situation was found to be similar in Nigeria where only 16% of the share of quoted voice belonged to women.

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In both countries, although arts and media was the best performing genre in terms of women's share of quoted voices, women's voices still only constituted
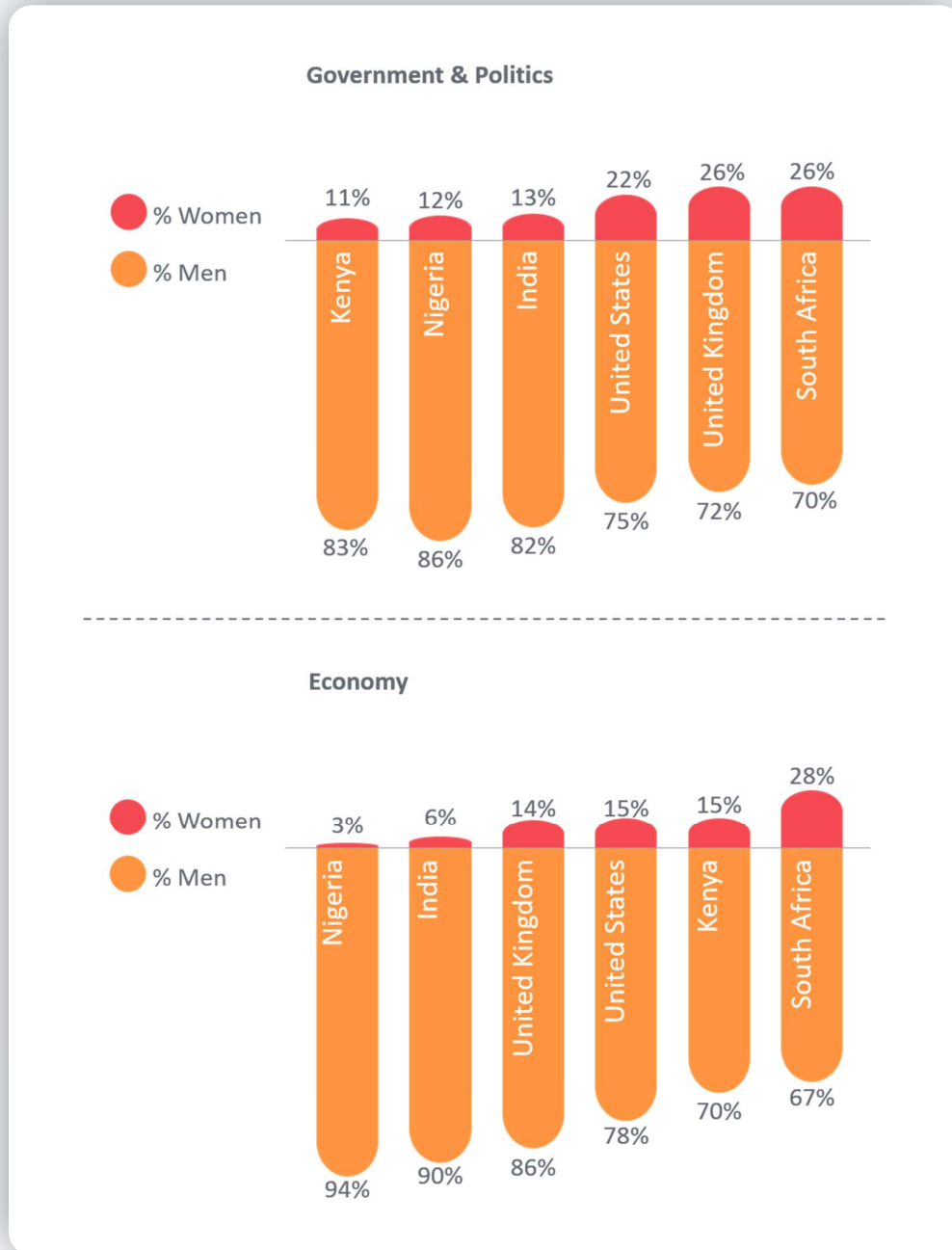
roughly a quarter of all voices quoted in articles: 27% in India and 25% in Nigeria. The second-best performing genre in India was social and legal, where women achieved less than a fifth of the total share of quoted voice (18%). In Nigeria, the second-best performing news genre was science and health (with an emphasis on health), where women's share of quoted voice was 19%.

Men's quoted voices overwhelm women's quoted voices in agenda-setting news genres with high volume in news in all six countries

Agenda-setting news genres, which have a high profile in the news and are deemed more serious, generated a much lower proportion of women's quoted voices compared to lower profile news genres across all six countries. For example, **men's share of quoted voices in government and politics news genres was between three and eight times higher than that of women** (see Figure 2.8). **Men's share of quoted voices for economy news was between two and 31 times higher than that of women across the six countries.**

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[19] Media Ecosystems Analysis Group, 2020

Figure 2.8: Worst performing genres in terms of women's share of quoted voices (i.e. experts, sources, protagonists quoted in online articles), percentage men/percentage women (2019)

Government & Politics

	Kenya	Nigeria	India	United States	United Kingdom	South Africa
% Women	11%	12%	13%	22%	26%	26%
% Men	83%	86%	82%	75%	72%	70%

Economy

	Nigeria	India	United Kingdom	United States	Kenya	South Africa
% Women	3%	6%	14%	15%	15%	28%
% Men	94%	90%	86%	78%	70%	67%

Source: *Media Ecosystems Analysis Group (2020)*

Recommendations for news providers

- **Compile lists of women contributors and experts for journalists to use:** Make a concerted effort to redress the existing bias towards using men as experts by introducing behavioral nudges such as putting together lists of women contributors/experts that journalists can access easily when searching for an expert. This nudge has shown a lot of promise and good success rates when used in newsrooms in Scandinavian countries[20].

- **Measure the proportion of women experts featuring in the stories reported by your news organization** to reveal how gender-balanced or otherwise your content is.

- **Make women's share of quoted voice in the news (i.e. as experts, sources and protagonists) match or exceed the share of women attaining master's degrees** [21] : Aim to increase the proportion of women experts in the news to match the proportion of women with master's degrees (or above) in your country. For example, news organizations in the UK and US should aim to achieve gender parity in the proportion of experts used in the news given that 51% of master's graduates in the US and 50% in the UK are women. In South Africa news organizations should aim for 45% of news experts to be women while in Nigeria they should aim for at least 33% (these being the proportion of women obtaining master's degrees).

- **Increase women's share of quoted voice in high profile beats** such as economy and politics & government in each of the analyzed countries to 35% by 2022 and 50% by 2025 (rising in politics & government from current levels of 11% in Kenya, 12% in Nigeria, 13% in India, 22% in the US, and 26% in South Africa and the UK). Use the insights from the BBC's 50:50 project, which showcased achieving gender parity in news experts in a very short space of time, to aid this process. (See Part 3: Case Studies)

- **Make journalists in newsrooms aware of the existing bias** in choosing men as sources and experts significantly more often than women. Track the proportion of women experts used in news. This should work as a debiasing tool. Embedding gender equality checks into the creative process can be a powerful tool in reducing bias, as witnessed by the '*Bechdel Filter*' currently being tested at The Guardian [22] (UK) to support analysis of the gender balance in news stories, a positive example of news self-regulation[23]. Under this system, software is used to analyze the text of stories to identify the proportion of subjects and sources who are women, the proportion of feminine pronouns used, and the gender of the journalist. Giving each of these elements a weighting of 40%, 30% and 30% respectively, the software produces a gender balance score out of a 100 both for individual stories and for all stories within a news section. This enables journalists and section editors to 'sense-check' the gender balance of their stories and sections quickly and easily, and to thereby identify and redress any inappropriate imbalances[24].

- **Set an expectation of gender parity for expert panels** on any platform including television and radio[25].

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[20] Haggrén, 2017; McCracken et al., 2018
[21] Attainment of master's degrees was chosen as a benchmark to measure whether the proportion of women quoted as news contributors such as experts is in line with the proportion of women who have a high level of expertise in each country

[22] Information on how the trial is progressing is unavailable. The gender balance score is a quantitative measure which requires journalistic judgement on whether to act on the uncovered biases and, if so, how.
[23] McCracken et al., 2018
[24] McCracken et al., 2018
[25] European Commission, 2010

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PART 2: KEY GENDER EQUALITY INDICATORS IN NEWS

Chapter 3

News stories leading with women protagonists

The chapter at a glance

This chapter will analyze the gender balance in news through the lens of news output by evaluating the proportion of protagonists in the news who are women vs. those who are men. It will synthesize the prevalent academic views as well as take a snapshot of the situation today in the six analyzed countries: India, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, the UK and the US. Finally, it will offer recommendations for news providers who wish to improve their representation and portrayal of women in the news.

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This chapter shows that women's stories globally have been significantly under-represented in the news compared to men's, at a ratio of approximately one to five. Women protagonists in the news in all the analyzed countries are far from achieving parity today, just as they were decades ago. They feature in less than a third of news stories in the UK, less than a quarter in Kenya, a fifth in the US, India and South Africa and in only 15% in Nigeria. Where women protagonists do play a more central role in news stories, it is in lower profile news genres such as arts and media but they feature much less frequently in the high profile news stories in genres such as politics and economy. The content analysis shows that women are between two and 15 times more likely to appear in arts and media news than in economy news in each of the six countries. Gender representation in political news coverage is lagging behind women's actual position in political life in Kenya, the US, South Africa and the UK; it mirrors that of women in Nigeria and, although still very marginalized, is ahead of women's actual position in politics in India.

Global overview: what we know about this indicator

One of the key indicators used for measuring gender balance in the news is the proportion of protagonists in news stories who are women, which is a news output measure. In an ideal world, given that women constitute slightly more than half of the world's population (51%), a fair representation would be for

women to represent 51% of the protagonists in news stories. However, this is far from the case: women are significantly less likely than men to feature as the main characters in news stories. The most common arguments used in discussions as to why this is the case are two-fold: on the one hand women are much less likely to hold positions of power than men; and on the other hand men are more likely to be the main perpetrators of crimes (which constitute 13% of news stories). While both arguments are valid, the current picture is much more complex and disadvantageous to women than these arguments allow for. The following chapter unveils how distorted the portrayal of women as protagonists is in the news.

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The four gender equality indicators around which this report is centered have received varying degrees of attention in academic literature. AKAS' literature review found that the majority of academic work on the subject focuses on women featuring as protagonists in news - this indicator constituted 53% of the focus, followed by diversity in the workplace/in leadership at 33%, women used as sources of expertise at 9% and finally, coverage of gender equality issues, which accounted for just 5%.

The comparative analysis by news genre of women who are subjects in the news in traditional media as reported by the GMMP, and women protagonists in headlines as reported by Media Ecosystems Analysis Group, revealed that there is a moderately strong correlation between the two measures (see Figure 2.9). Reassuringly this means that the findings from the two reports are broadly comparable, despite using different methodologies, measuring news consumption on different platforms and having been conducted five years apart.

Figure 2.9: Media Ecosystems Analysis Group's 2020 percentage of women as protagonists vs GMMP's 2015 percentage of women subjects in major news topics
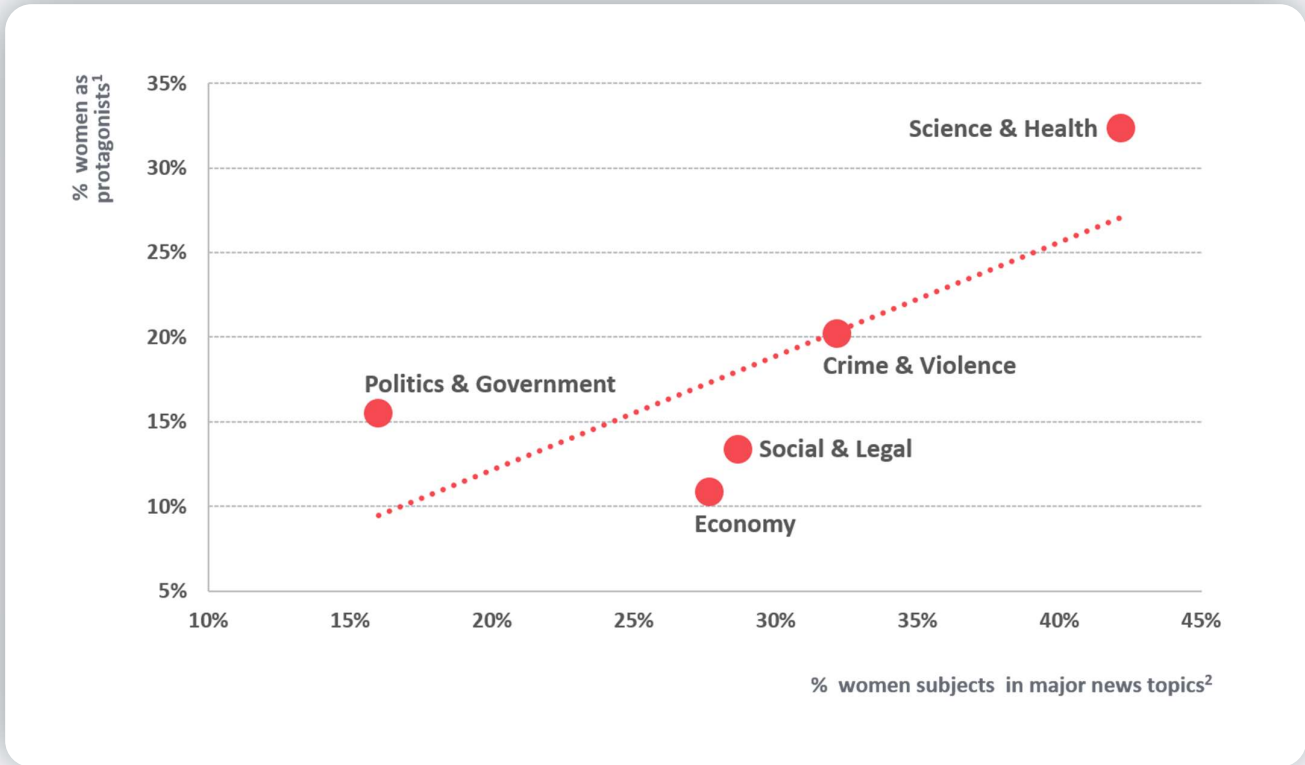
Source: [1] *Media Ecosystems Analysis Group (2020);* [2] *Macharia (2015)*

The challenge of defining a protagonist

Before proceeding with the analysis of women protagonists in the news it is necessary to consider the different definitions of protagonist used by our research sources. In their reports, the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) use two definitions for measuring protagonists[1]. The first one is based on how central a character is to a news story. It measures *women's centrality in the news* by applying a qualitative assessment of whether the story has been constructed around a woman or groups of women. Unfortunately, this type of assessment was not completed for stories which had men as central characters. Therefore, this measure, although important, does not provide a comparative benchmark of the proportion of men vs. women in stories, nor does it reveal the proportion of the stories that did not contain either a man or woman as the central character within them.

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The second definition used in the GMMP report is that of a *subject*[2]. A subject is the protagonist of a story - someone who has said or done something that the story zooms in on. The difference between the two definitions is that the former includes groups of women (e.g. women who are infected by HIV, or unemployed women) as well as individual women (e.g. Nigeria's First Lady Aisha Buhari, or South African politician Helen Zille), whereas the latter definition is centered exclusively on an individual and excludes groups. One of the benefits of the assessment of the *subject* in the GMMP report is that it has been done for both men and women and therefore has a comparative benchmarking value that the *centrality* measure does not.

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Media Ecosystems Analysis Group, in their computational analysis of 164,902 online stories from 80 carefully selected publications across six countries [3] , defined a *story protagonist* as the *individual(s) whose name appeared in the story headline*. If no name appeared in the headline, then the story was not analyzed on the protagonist dimension. For example, in India 33% of the 36,256 analyzed stories had one or more individuals named in the headline. These articles formed the basis for the analysis of the gender distribution of protagonists. The remaining 67% of stories were excluded from the protagonist analysis. Out of the 33% of stories which featured one or more names in the headline, only 21% belonged to a woman and 79% belonged to a man.

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While this definition and the analysis derived from the content analysis hold enormous value in developing an understanding of the imbalance in the existing portrayal of women protagonists in the news, it is important to highlight a limitation of the methodology used: as it relies on headlines to reveal the protagonist, it misses any protagonists that were only revealed in the body of the text or protagonists that were social groups.

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[1] Macharia, 2015

[2] Macharia, 2015
[3] For a full description of methodology, see Appendix 2

How and where women have been portrayed: the stalled revolution

Women have been substantially under-represented in news media coverage compared to men, at a ratio of 1:5. Moreover, their voices have been considered less important than men's

Despite all the highlighted differences and limitations in the various definitions outlined above, the unequivocal conclusion is that all the studies reviewed consistently point to a deeply unbalanced portrayal of women in the news, with reporting heavily skewed towards men being the main story protagonists in all the analyzed countries. Both AKAS' literature review

and the contemporaneous analysis conducted by Media Ecosystems Analysis Group indicate that women have been and continue to be significantly under-represented in the news in terms of their level of visibility.

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According to the GMMP's 2015 report, globally women occupied a position of centrality in traditional media in 10% of news stories (there is no equivalent figure for men available), showing no increase since 2010. They were central in 19% of stories in digital media [4]. Unfortunately, data is not included in the report for all our countries of focus, but is presented for the UK, US and South Africa. Of these, the US had the highest rate of women's centrality in the news at 14%, followed by South Africa at 12% and the UK at 11%. According to the same report, only 26% of all subjects in the news globally were women (vs. 74% men) which was only marginally up on the 2005 figures (a 3ppt increase). By comparison, **looking at Media Ecosystems Analysis Group's digital content analysis in 2019, the extent to which named women protagonists feature in headlines ranges from 30% (in the UK) to 15% (in Nigeria) as set out in Figure 2.10.**

Figure 2.10: Percentage of women protagonists in news headlines (2019)
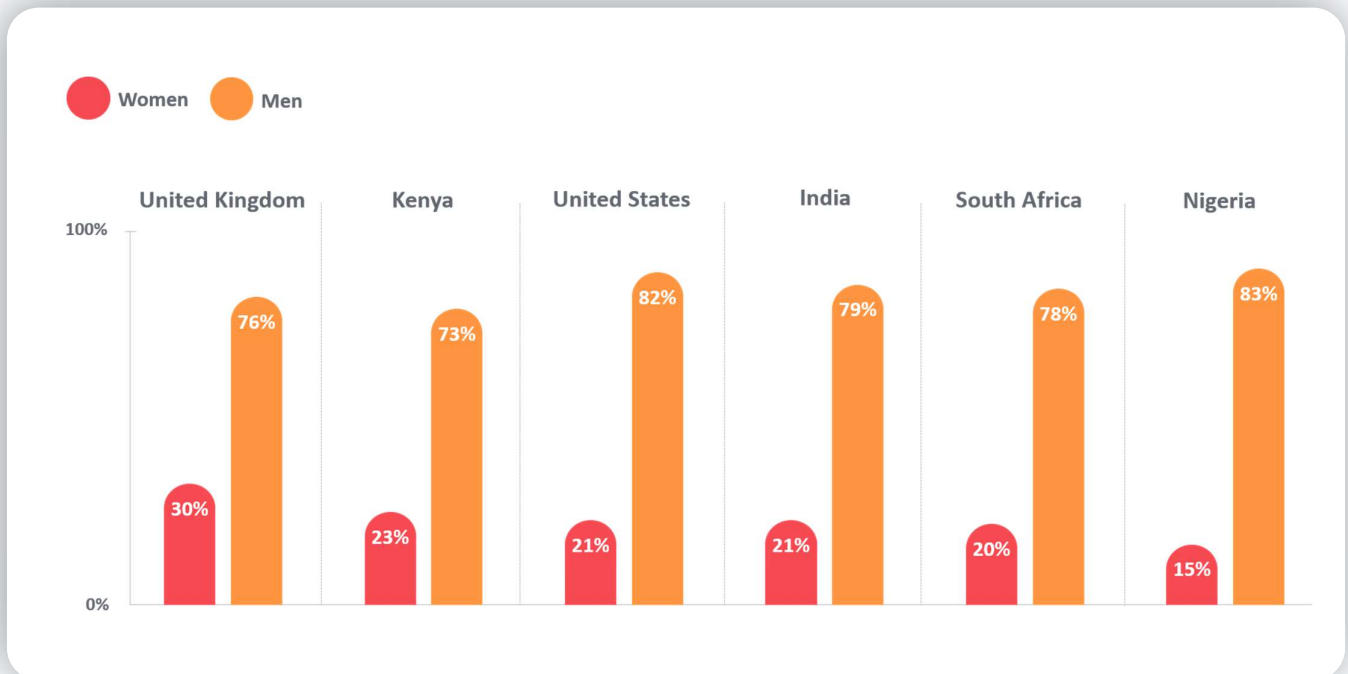
Source: Media Ecosystems Analysis Group (2020)

Note: The figures can exceed 100% because both men and women can be in a headline at the same time

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[4] Macharia, 2015

Findings across multiple academic studies and various methodologies have corroborated these results, consistently showing women to be substantially under-represented in news media coverage, particularly in newspapers[5]. A study published by Shor et al. in 2015 examined the **ratio of men's to women's names across approximately 2,000 English-language newspapers** and online news websites **over a five-year period** and found that it **stood at nearly 5:1**. They described women's visibility in news media as '**a stalled revolution'.** Women were not represented in news media in proportion to their number or their level of social involvement[6]. Scholars have pointed to several factors driving this: for example, gender imbalance in socio-economic participation. Shor et al. suggested that news tends to focus on the very top of occupational and social hierarchies, which tend to be male-dominated[7]. Women are under-represented in the upper hierarchies of politics, business, and professional sports, where news tends to focus. They found that almost all newspaper coverage focused on a relatively small number of famous individuals, mostly men, who enjoyed regular access to news media and took advantage of it. Reporters tended to recycle past high-profile subjects, sustaining this practice. Newsroom culture has exacerbated this tendency, creating a shared understanding of what constitutes news, whose voices are important and whose actions should be represented[8]. **This under-representation of women suggests that men's voices, experiences and expertise are regarded by news media as more important than those of women**[9]. It is argued that this under-reports women's contribution to social, economic and cultural life, adding to the ongoing marginalization of women's participation as citizens.

Women have played a central role in "less newsworthy", lower profile and more sensationalized stories than men. Women's centrality in news has been highest in crime and violence stories, followed by celebrity stories

As with the bias relating to women's representation in news sourcing and expertise uncovered in the previous chapter, it has been found that there is a tendency for women to play a central role in topics that occur with less frequency or that are regarded as less important or prestigious in news value terms[10]. The 2015 GMMP report showed that women were more likely to play a central role in stories relating to crime and violence, science/health or the celebrity/arts/sports category (probably driven more by celebrity and arts). As set out in Figure 2.11, women played a central role in 17% of news stories relating to crime and violence (a genre accounting for 13% of overall news), and in 14% of news stories relating to science and health (a genre accounting for 8% of total news). In contrast, women were less likely to play a central role in the most newsworthy topics: social and legal (27% share of all news stories), politics and government (24% share of all news stories) and the economy (14% share of all news stories) where they only played a central role in 8% of social and legal stories, 7% of politics and government stories and 5% of news stories on the economy[11].

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Other studies have found a similar pattern: women were least likely to play a central role in news on sports, politics or finance, and most likely to feature in news related to science, health, fashion or the arts[12]. It is interesting to note a link between women's centrality in the news and the reporter's gender. The 2015 GMMP report found that women reporters were slightly more likely to make women a central focus of an article than their male counterparts: 14% of stories by women reporters focused centrally on women, compared to 9% of stories by men reporters. In science and health news, where women were more likely to play a central role, reporters were also more likely to be women. In politics and government, where women were less likely to play a central role, reporters were more likely to be men[13].

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[5] Shor et al., 2015; Ross & Carter, 2011; Flaounas et al., 2013
[6] European Commission, 2010
[7] Shor et al., 2015
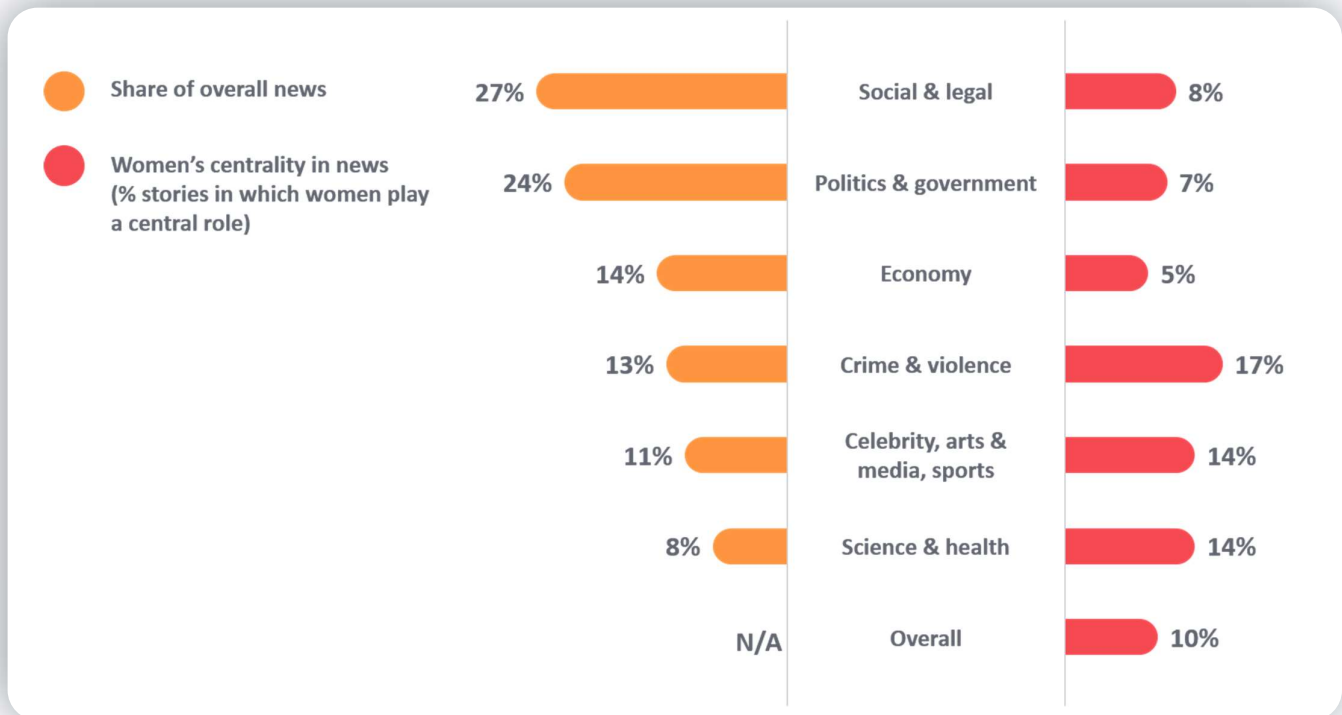[8] Ross et al., 2018; Shor et al., 2015

[9] Ross & Carter, 2011
[10] Macharia, 2015; Ross et al., 2018
[11] Macharia, 2015
[12] Ross et al., 2018; Shor et al., 2015 ; Flaounas et al., 2013
[13] Macharia, 2015

Figure 2.11: Women's centrality in news genres vs size of the news genre (2015)

	Share of overall news		Women's centrality in news (% stories in which women play a central role)
Social & legal	27%		8%
Politics & government	24%		7%
Economy	14%		5%
Crime & violence	13%		17%
Celebrity, arts & media, sports	11%		14%
Science & health	8%		14%
Overall	N/A		10%

Source: Macharia (2015)

Women have proved marginally more likely to select women as protagonists than men

There is some evidence of a difference in reporting style by gender. According to the GMMP, **women journalists were marginally more likely than their male colleagues to choose protagonists who were women:** in 2015, 29% of the news subjects in stories reported by women journalists were women, compared to 26% in stories reported by men. The percentages and differences between women and men journalists were found to be higher in digital media where 33% of subjects reported by women journalists were women compared to 23% in stories by men[16].

There are three news topics that receive particular attention in academic literature in terms of how women are portrayed: violence, politics and sport. The following paragraphs summarize key findings relating to these.

Women and violence: a story of double standards

Women in news about violence were found to be more likely to be portrayed as victims. They were treated less compassionately as victims and more harshly as perpetrators than men. The 2015 Global Media Monitoring Project report found that women were **twice as likely as men to be portrayed as victims in the news (16% of women vs. 8% of men).** This pattern had changed little over the previous ten years: in 2005 19% of women in news stories on crime and violence were portrayed as victims versus 8% of men. On a more positive note, the report found that women were four times more likely to be described as survivors of domestic violence than they had been ten years previously[17].

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Studies in the UK and US have found a disparity between the number of news reports of male and female victims of violence, and actual crime records,

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[16] Macharia, 2015

[17] Macharia, 2015

suggesting that a **bias exists in reporting women as victims of violence**[18] . A study by Carll of news portrayals of violence and women in the US revealed **biases and distortions in how women were portrayed, both as victims and perpetrators**[19]. She suggests that news media legitimizes subjective biases, such as the common impression that rape and violence against women are less significant than other forms of violence particularly when the victim knows their attacker, because news reports appear as objective and authoritative, lending credence to what is reported. News portrayals can shape public opinion, reinforce stereotypes and influence public policy. Biases discovered in reporting included an emphasis on the nature of the crime rather than the reason behind it when reporting on women perpetrators, and a tendency to report the reason for a crime and more contextual information, generally in the headline, where men were perpetrators. When a reason was provided in the case of a woman perpetrator, it tended to feature further down the article. Incidents involving women perpetrators were often front-page news and tended to get extended coverage and follow-up, making them more salient (although this could be partially attributed to rarity bias).

Rare examples of impacts on individual and societal levels have been covered in the literature

Carll points to the fact that violence against women has a long history of cultural tolerance linked to cultural myths and patriarchal assumptions about the role of women[20]. However, there is a reluctance in reporting to acknowledge that such crimes could be related to the relative positions of men and women in society. She suggests that **news producers must become aware of such biases to avoid further contributing to the problem** and suggests a set of principles to support this. She argues that how news is crafted or framed is very important. Objective, accurate and unbiased reporting can be a powerful tool in raising social consciousness about issues such as violence against women and promoting positive change. Unusually, **Carll lists examples from the US of impact on both individual and societal levels**, where she believes news coverage impacted both on public opinion and on the reaction of law enforcement in relation to violence against women, subsequently influencing public policy.

Examples relate to legislation on violence against women, date rape and stalking behavior. This reference to news consumption and impacts is rare in the literature and is welcome, even if a direct causal relationship is difficult to establish.

Where are the women in political news coverage?

Women have been under-represented in political news and their portrayal has reinforced traditional stereotypes. A study by Vavrus[21] examined how news reports in the 1990s and early 2000s in the US shaped public sentiment about women in politics. The study focused on the 1991 coverage of Anita Hill, the 1992 and 1996 national elections and Hillary Clinton's participation in the 2000 senate contest. Vavrus argues that news portrayal of these women and events reinforced traditional gender stereotypes even when they appeared to promote women's presence and power in the public sphere. She describes this pattern in news coverage of women in political life as a form of **post-feminism** and illustrates this with the example of 'soccer moms', a term used to describe white, married, middle-class women whose lives revolve around their children. Although 'soccer moms' were at the time regarded as a significant cohort of voters, they were rarely linked to policies, platforms or politicians but rather were described in a similar way to a target group for advertisers. This portrayal, she suggests, is grounded in middle-class aspirations and consumer lifestyles, and does not encourage a desire for public life or political activism among women.

The sports paradox: Women's achievements have hardly been covered in sports news despite their participation in sports exploding in the 1970s

Women's participation in sport exploded in the late 1970s following the introduction of legislation to encourage access. It has continued to increase since then, yet coverage of women's sports news has continually lagged far behind that of men's[22] . US reporting of women's sports news remained at the same low level, between 3 and 6% of overall sports

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[18] Ross & Carter, 2011; Sudhahar et al., 2011
[19] Carll, 2003

[20] Carll, 2003
[21] Vavrus, 2002
[22] Musto et al., 2017

news coverage, over the 15-year period between 1989 and 2004. This is described as *"an abdication of journalistic responsibility and has the effect of diminishing the significance of women's sport, while hindering its further growth"*[23].

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As well as reporting on the amount of coverage, researchers have drawn a distinction between the framing of women's sport and that of men's sport. On the one hand, the trivialization and sexualization of women in sports news declined over time as sexualized humor became discredited[24].

On the other hand, commentators, who are mostly men, have shifted from overtly sexist portrayals of women athletes to ambivalent depictions which are respectful but boring[25].

The imbalance in the portrayal of women protagonists persists in news today

The UK performs best in terms of the proportion of women protagonists headlining the news. And yet… women only feature in less than a third of stories in the UK

Media Ecosystems Analysis Group's analysis of protagonists featured in news headlines unveiled a significant under-representation of women in all the countries examined in 2019. The UK performed best, possibly aided by the Prime Minister for seven months of that year, Theresa May, being a woman. The proportion of women featured in news headlines in the UK was 30%. At the opposite end of the spectrum was Nigeria, where women protagonists in online news headlines accounted for only 15% of all protagonists.

Despite being the most mentioned woman in news headlines in the UK in 2019, Theresa May was mentioned multiple times less frequently than US President Donald Trump or UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson

Theresa May was the most mentioned woman in news headlines in 2019 in the UK. However, despite being the leader of the Government, her name featured in only 3% of the total headlines. Perhaps even more startlingly, Boris Johnson (who came to power five months before the end of the year) was mentioned twice as many times in headlines as Theresa May in 2019. The top three women protagonists in the news headlines (Theresa May, Meghan Markle and Angela Merkel) were mentioned four times less frequently (5% vs. 18%) than the top three men (Donald Trump, Boris Johnson and Jeremy Corbyn).

In Kenya, India, the US and South Africa, approximately one in five protagonists in online news headlines are women

Kenya is the second best-performing country in terms of the proportion of women protagonists in the headlines with 23% of all headlines which feature a name containing the name of a woman and 73% containing the name of a man.[26] Arts and media as well as health news genres drive the inclusion of women protagonists in headlines in Kenya.

The top three men protagonists in the headlines in Kenya generated seven times more mentions than the top three women. William Ruto (10%), Uhuru Kenyatta (6%) and Raila Odinga (4%) generated 20% of the overall protagonist mentions in 2019, while Aisha Jumwa (1%), Betty Kyallo and Esther Arunga generated less than 3% together.

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[23] Duncan et al., 2005
[24] Cooky et al., 2013; Duncan et al., 2005
[25] Musto et al., 2017
[26] The proportion of headlines featuring any name was 26% in Kenya.

In **India** 33% of all headlines contained a name, while in the **US** this percentage was 34%. The proportion of women protagonists featured in these headlines was 21% in both countries. Conversely, 79% and 82% of the headlines featuring names in India and the US contained the name of a man.

The top three men protagonists in the headlines in India generated four times more mentions than the top three women. In the US the ratio was 7:1 i.e. for every one mention of a woman protagonist in the headline, there were seven mentions of a man. In India Mamata Banerjee (3%), Mayawati (1%) and Sonia Gandhi (1%) made up 5% of the names mentioned in headlines, while Narendra Modi (12%), Donald Trump (5%) and Rahul Gandhi (4%) constituted 21% of all names mentioned.

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In **South Africa** 23% of the headlines contained a named protagonist. Of these 20% contained the name of a woman and 78% contained the name of a man.

The three most mentioned men protagonists in news headlines were seven times more likely to be mentioned than the top three women protagonists (21% vs. 3%). All were politicians: Cyril Ramaphosa (12%), Donald Trump (5%) and Jacob Zuma (4%) vs. Helen Zille (1%), Zandile Gumede (1%) and Busisiwe Mkhwebane (1%).

Nigeria is lagging significantly behind the other analyzed countries in terms of mentions of women protagonists in news headlines

In Nigeria, only 15% of the names in all stories which contained a name in the headline (29% of the total number of stories) belonged to a woman, while 83% belonged to a man.
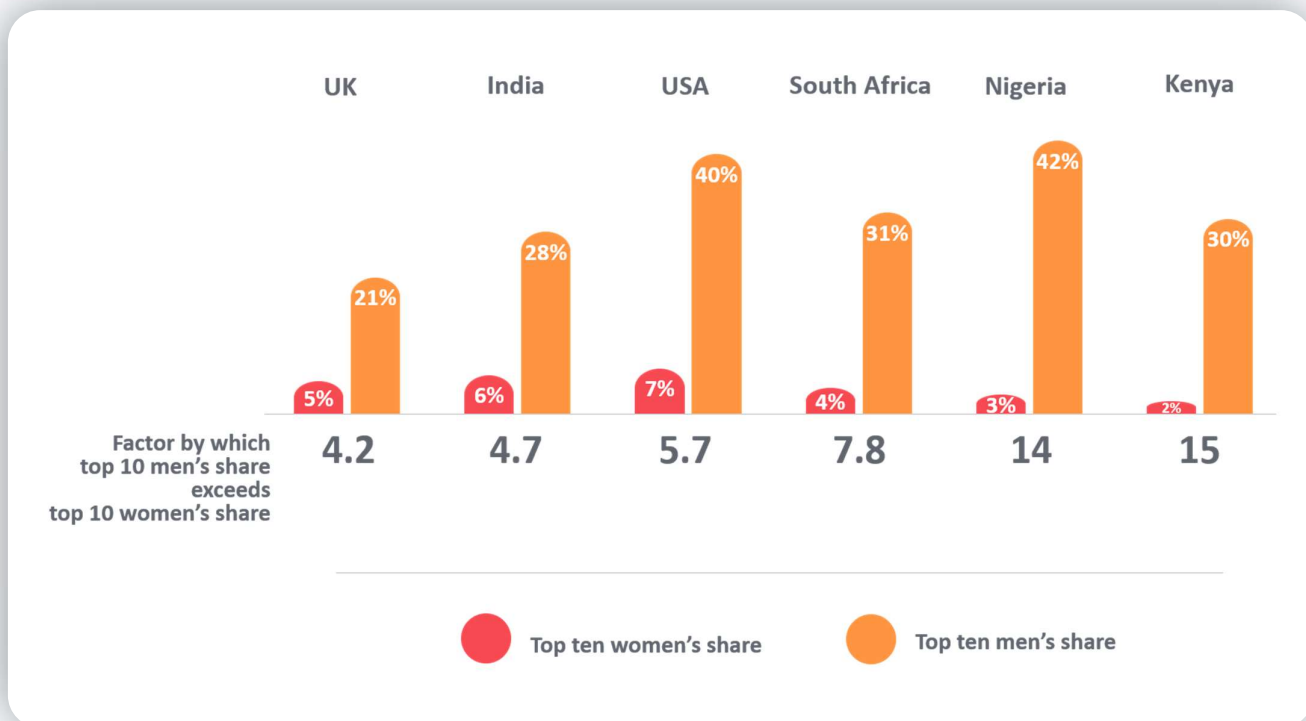
> **Across the six analyzed countries, the top ten men protagonists were mentioned between four and 15 times more frequently in the headlines than the top ten most mentioned women, as set out in Figure 2.12.**

And again… don't worry your pretty little head: Women are much more likely to feature as protagonists in lower profile news genres than in higher profile ones

In all the analyzed countries, the names of women protagonists were much more likely to feature in news headlines focusing on lower profile news genres such as arts & media (including film, TV, music, books, media, theater and culture) and health than more news-agenda-setting genres such as the economy or politics. This pattern is very similar to the one which emerged when analyzing women's share of quoted voice as sources, experts or protagonists in articles across various news genres which we described in the previous chapter.
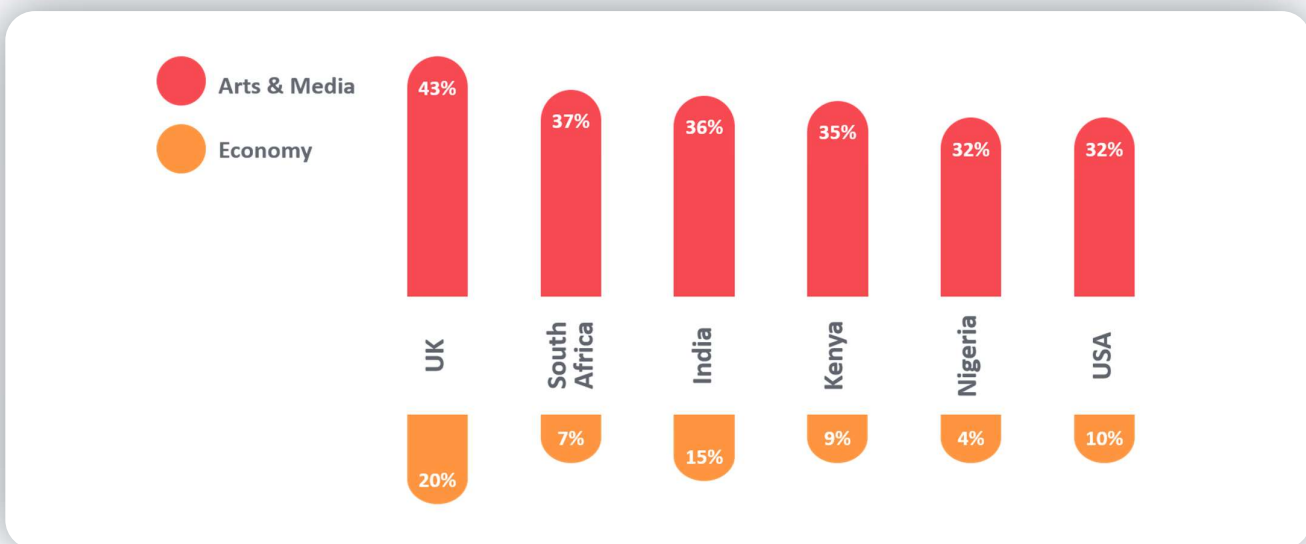
The top two best performing genres in all the analyzed countries in terms of headlines featuring women protagonists were arts & media and health. In contrast, the economy was in the two worst performing news genres in five out of the six countries. The disparity between the small proportion of women protagonists who make it into headlines about news on the economy compared to those who feature in arts and media headlines is truly staggering (see Figure 2.13). For example, when comparing the proportion of women featuring in arts and media headlines vs. economy news headlines, we find that there is a strong bias towards the former across all key countries. In fact, **in Nigeria women are eight times more likely to appear as protagonists in news headlines about arts/media than in those about the economy. In South Africa this ratio is 5:1, in Kenya 4:1, in the US it is 3:1 and in the UK and India it is 2:1**.

Figure 2.12: Share of top ten women vs top ten men in headlines as protagonists (2019, %)

	UK	India	USA	South Africa	Nigeria	Kenya
Top ten women's share	5%	6%	7%	4%	3%	2%
Top ten men's share	21%	28%	40%	31%	42%	30%
Factor by which top 10 men's share exceeds top 10 women's share	4.2	4.7	5.7	7.8	14	15

● Top ten women's share   ● Top ten men's share

Source: *Media Ecosystems Analysis Group (2020)*

Figure 2.13: Best and worst performing genres in terms of percentage of women protagonists in the headlines (2019)

● **Arts & Media**
● **Economy**

	UK	South Africa	India	Kenya	Nigeria	USA
Arts & Media	43%	37%	36%	35%	32%	32%
Economy	20%	7%	15%	9%	4%	10%

Source: *Media Ecosystems Analysis Group (2020)*

Gender representation in political news coverage is trailing behind women's actual position in political life in Kenya, the US, South Africa and the UK. In Nigeria it mirrors women's representation in Nigerian political life while in India, women's representation in political news coverage is actually ahead of women's position in political life

In order to understand the role of news media in each analyzed country in delivering gender equity in its political coverage, AKAS compared the proportion of women who feature as protagonists in political news stories' headlines with the proportion of women politicians in the lower or single house in Parliament (see Figure 2.14).

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The juxtaposition of these two indicators revealed a substantive difference in the role that news media plays in each country when it comes to reflecting and amplifying the voices of women in politics (see Figure 2.14). Three distinct groups of countries emerge:

1. **News media lagging behind society:** Countries where there is a significant gap between the smaller proportion of women protagonists featured in the political news headlines and the larger proportion of women in politics: In South Africa this gap is most pronounced (14% vs. 43%), followed by Kenya (13% vs. 22%), the UK (25% vs. 32%) and the US (18% vs. 24%).

2. **News media mirroring society:** Countries where the proportion of women protagonists featuring in political news headlines is similar to the proportion of women politicians in the real world: Nigeria falls into this category as the proportion of women protagonists in news headlines matches the proportion of women in Parliament at 6% in each case.

3. **News media ahead of society:** Countries where the proportion of women protagonists featuring in political news coverage headlines is higher than the proportion of women in Parliament/lower/single house: India falls into this category, with the former figure being 17% and the latter standing at 13%.

Figure 2.14: Percentage of women in parliament vs women protagonists in political stories (by country), (2019)
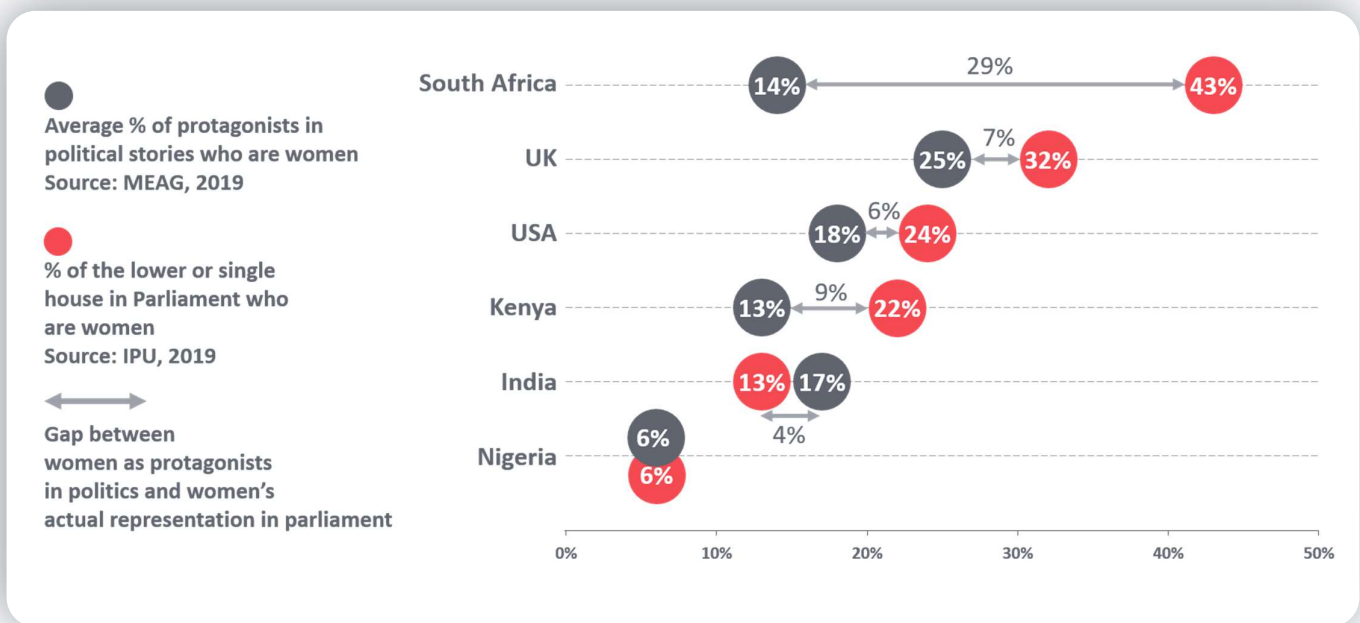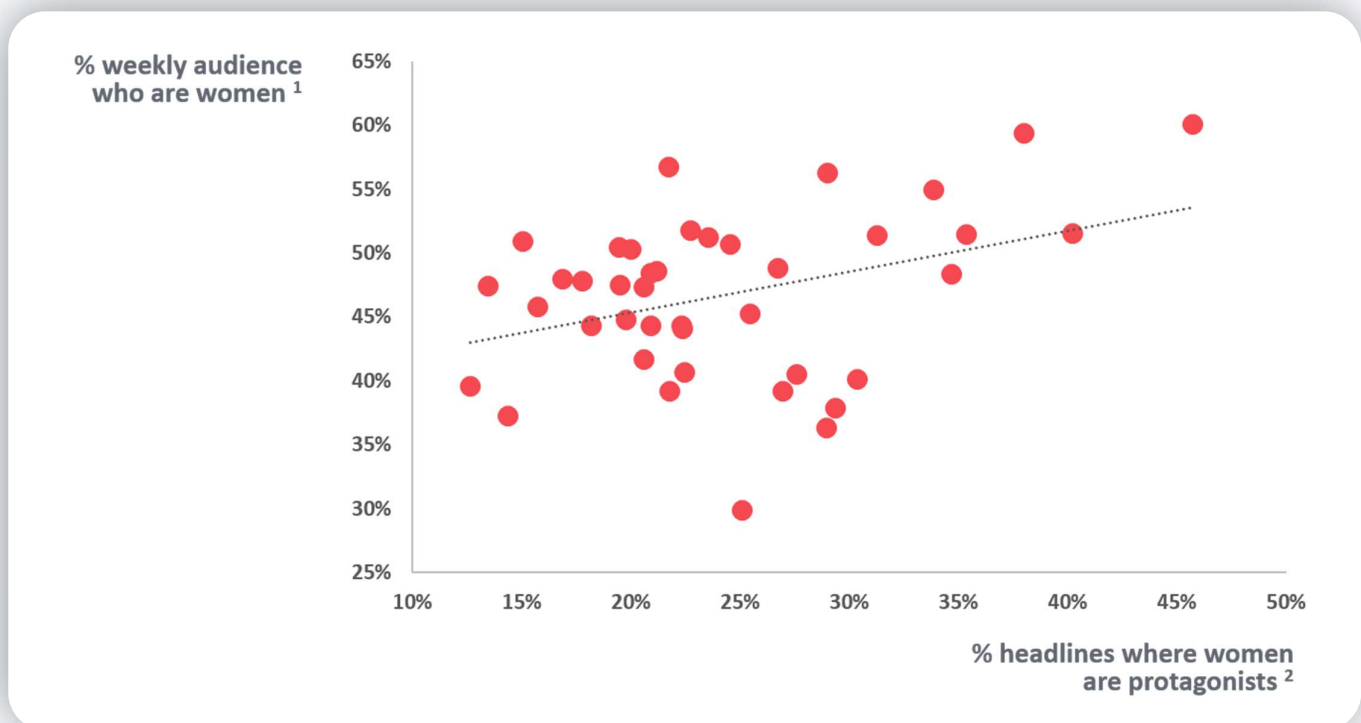

Source: Media Ecosystems Analysis Group (2020), Inter-Parliamentary Union, Women in National Parliaments

(as at 19 Feb 2019)

Finally, the proportion of women protagonists does not yet seem to impact women's consumption of online news publications

We explored whether having a higher proportion of women protagonists in the news headlines of a news provider was correlated with women's consumption of a publication. In order to answer this question, AKAS plotted the proportion of women protagonists for 43 of the 80 publications which Media Ecosystems Analysis Group analyzed against the proportion of women (vs. men) who read each publication, using 2019 data from the Global and India *Digital News Reports* from the Reuters Institute. The analysis revealed that the relationship between these two measures was very weak (see Figure 2.15). 87% of the variation in consumption among women can be explained by factors other than whether women were protagonists in the news stories. The proportion of women protagonists headlining the news is not a distinctive factor driving choice of usage of news provider among women. There will be many factors explaining this. However, very little research exists in this area. A couple of possibilities underpinned by behavioral science findings are the existence of a **status quo bias** (where women have accepted the status quo as it is and are not consciously seeking to see a higher representation of women in the news) and **gender blindness** (where women believe that the protagonists' gender mix is reflective of society when in actual fact it is not).

Figure 2.15: Popularity of a publication among women vs. percentage of women protagonists in headlines (2019)

Recommendations for news providers

- **Measure the proportion of women protagonists featuring in the stories** reported by your news organization in order to expose: the existing biases towards overuse of men as protagonists; recycling of high-profile (mainly male) protagonists; and overuse of famous individuals (mostly men)[27]. WAN-IFRA are in the process of testing a news gender index: the WIN Gender Balance Index[28] which will help news organizations understand how gender balanced their content is. The tracker is constituted of four elements: the proportion of overall mentions of women vs. men in the news; the proportion of women vs. men as main protagonists; the proportion of women vs. men as sources (which will be reported by news beats/news category); and the proportion of bylines of women vs. men. The gender tracker is in English and each organization which subscribes to it will get their results in a dashboard. They have also produced A Gender Balance Guide to support news providers who wish to improve their representation and portrayal of women in the news[29].

- **Use the broadest possible definition of a woman protagonist** including an individual subject who is a woman (e.g. a famous politician, scientist, etc.) or a group of women affected by an issue (e.g. women affected by instant divorce, unemployment among women, education among girls).

- **Capture the proportion of women protagonists in different news beats** and ensure that the proportion of women protagonists in higher profile news beats, such as economy, is higher than currently reported.

- **Specifically, set targets for women protagonists in the political and government news genre** (amongst the largest news genres in terms of share of news) which ensure that your organization's representation of women in politics (as Members of Parliaments/ Houses) reflects or surpasses their true position in society. India and Nigeria are the only countries amongst the six to have achieved this, although their level of gender representation in parliamentary politics is low.

- **When capturing the proportion of women protagonists, apply a qualitative lens to understand how they are portrayed (not just how many).** For example, distinguish between women protagonists who are portrayed as victims, as sexual objects, as primary carers, as survivors of sexual violence, as perpetrators of crime or as empowered individuals. Ensure that there is a *fair* proportion of empowered women in news coverage, who can act as role models for young girls and women in society.

- **Make journalists aware of the research on existing gender biases associated with reporting crime and violence**:
  - *Harsher treatment of women as perpetrators of crimes:* Stories about women committing crimes focus more often on the nature of the crime than on the motives behind it (the reverse is more often true for stories featuring perpetrators who are men)
  - *Social tolerance towards crimes against women*: Assessing rape and violence against women (especially when the perpetrator is known) as less significant than other forms of violence

- **Redress the biased portrayal of women in crime and violence stories** (explained in the previous recommendation) by establishing a gender-neutral checklist of key principles to follow when portraying victims and perpetrators of crime in news stories, to be applied equally to men and women who are the victims or perpetrators of crimes.

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[27] Shor et al., 2015

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PART 2: KEY GENDER EQUALITY INDICATORS IN NEWS

Chapter 4

Coverage of gender equality issues

The chapter at a glance

This chapter will examine an important output-facing indicator: the proportion of and priority that is given to gender equality issues in news coverage. It will synthesize what has been said in academic literature, which is very scarce. It will also examine the salience and importance of the issue in the minds of opinion formers (including journalists), decision makers and the public in the analyzed countries (India, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, the UK and the US). It will zone in on how journalists report gender inequality issues and size the proportion that news coverage on gender equality has in the analyzed countries vs. the proportion of coverage for two other key development issues. Finally, it will draw up recommendations for news providers who would like to ramp up and improve their reporting of gender equality issues.

This chapter reveals that the coverage of gender equality issues is just a noise lost in the abyss of news. Gender equality coverage has received the least attention from academics compared to all the other indicators examined in this report. Awareness of it and the importance attributed to it are very low among decision makers, opinion formers (including journalists) and the public alike. In 2019 the coverage of gender equality issues constituted less than half a percent of all news coverage in India, the UK, US and Nigeria and less than one percent in South Africa and Kenya. When reporting on gender equality issues, journalists apply limited and single angles that do not fully reflect audiences' concerns. Ironically, between 56% and 84% of protagonists in these gender equality stories in different countries are men. Despite coverage of gender equality issues increasing between three and seven times in 2019 on International or National Women's Days, interest in the topic was high among only a small proportion of the public in each country

Global overview: what we know about this indicator

One of the barometers of the importance different societies assign to the issue of gender inequality is how much coverage it receives in the news. Gender equality's significance can be compared to taking a person's pulse: it is easy to gauge but at the same time is a key indicator of how much healthy energy a person exudes. Similarly, the breadth and depth of coverage of gender inequality issues in the news tells us how prevalent and strongly held views on the issue of gender inequality are in different societies. Unfortunately, the evidence points to a 'weak pulse' - a general lack of interest in gender equality issues among decision makers, opinion formers (including journalists) and the public globally. This indicator, which represents the proportion of news coverage dedicated to gender equality stories both globally and in each of the analyzed countries, focuses on news outputs. As highlighted in previous chapters, AKAS' academic literature review of 2,286 academic papers on gender equality issues revealed that certain indicators receive more attention than others in academic literature, with women featuring as protagonists in news receiving the most attention (53% of the academic focus). By contrast, coverage of gender equality issues is situated at the tail end of the academic attention spectrum, accounting for a mere 5% of academic focus. It is, by far, the least researched indicator for gender equality which may be a reflection of the overall low salience of the topic.

Gender equality issues are not front of mind for journalists, other opinion formers or decision makers alike

Being high priority in the mind of decision makers or opinion formers is critical to the success of tackling any issue because these two groups have high potential to amplify and actively resolve issues. The findings from a subset of the World Bank Group's unique and comprehensive *Country Opinion Surveys* in 77 emerging and developing countries [1] between 2015 and 2019 revealed the shockingly low salience of gender equality amongst media opinion leaders (journalists), other opinion leaders (Civil Society

Organizations; bilateral/multilateral agencies; academia) and decision makers (offices of the President/Prime Minister/Ministers; office of parliamentarians). Although there is some variation in the level of priority given to gender equality across countries, **most media opinion formers, other opinion leaders and decision makers do not prioritize this issue**. **Across the 77 countries surveyed, only 4.9% considered it to be among the top three most important development priorities** (see Figure 2.16). Given the powerful position opinion leaders and decision makers occupy in society, a lot more advocacy work needs to be initiated to convince these two groups of the importance of striving towards gender equality, if there is to be a wider societal and news media industry shift in this direction.

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When asked what they would consider the most important development priorities, **gender equality was ranked 17th out of 23 options** (see Figure 2.17). On average, only 4.4% of the 1,597 media opinion leaders surveyed chose 'gender equity' as one of the top three development priorities for their country (see Figure 2.16). This figure was even lower among the office of parliamentarians (4.2%), academia (3%) and offices of the President/PM/Ministers (2.6%). Furthermore, in 46 of the 77 countries (60%), not a single media opinion leader chose 'gender equity' as one of their top three development priorities.

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There was some variation within countries: Figure 2.17 demonstrates how Kenyan, Nigerian and Indian media opinion leaders prioritized 23 development areas compared to the average across all 77 countries surveyed. It reiterates the relatively low prioritization of 'gender equity' but indicates that in India and Kenya, a higher proportion of media opinion leaders than the average chose 'gender equity' as a development priority. In **Kenya, 15%** (vs. 4.4% for the global average) placed this in their top three priorities, the 6th highest figure for this option among the 77 countries in the sample; in **India** nearly **11%** chose 'gender equity', making it the 10th highest (see Figure 2.17). Although there is some encouragement to be found in this, it should still be noted that for the vast majority of media opinion leaders in these two countries 'gender equity' was not chosen as an important development priority. Indeed, the picture is considerably starker in **Nigeria**, where only **2%** of media opinion leaders saw 'gender equity' as a top three development priority (see Figure 2.17).

[1] Including India, Kenya and Nigeria but not South Africa, the UK or the US due to low sample sizes

Figure 2.16: 'Gender Equity' as a development priority amongst opinion leaders in 77 emerging and developing countries (2015-2019)

Opinion leader groups	No of opinion leaders surveyed	No of countries where opinion leaders answered the question	No of countries where opinion leaders did not put gender equity in the top 3	% of countries where opinion leaders did not put gender equity in the top 3	% of opinion leaders who put gender equity in their top 3
	2015-19	*2015-19*	*2015-19*	*2015-19*	*2015-19*
CSO	3086	65	14	22%	7.1%
Bilateral/Multilateral Agency	957	58	36	62%	4.9%
Media	**1597**	**77**	**46**	**60%**	**4.4%**
Office of Parliamentarian	519	29	18	62%	4.2%
Academia	1709	71	41	58%	3.0%
Office of President/Prime Minister/Minister	1033	54	38	70%	2.6%
Opinion leaders from these 6 groups	8901	n/a	n/a	n/a	4.9%

Source: Felzer et al., (2015-2019)

Question: Listed below are a number of development priorities in [YOURCOUNTRY]. Please identify which of the following you consider the most important development priorities in [YOUR COUNTRY]. (Choose no more than THREE) Answers relate to those who chose 'Gender Equity' as one of the top three answers out of a list of 23 options

Figure 2.17: 'Gender Equity' as a development priority amongst media opinion leaders in 77 emerging and developing countries (2015-2019)

Rank	Issues	77 Country Average % chosen in top 3	Kenya % chosen in top 3	India % chosen in top 3	Nigeria % chosen in top 3
1	Education	36%	39%	41%	34%
2	Public sector governance / reform	29%	23%	9%	10%
3	Job creation / employment	25%	39%	34%	62%
4	Anti-corruption	21%	15%	16%	10%
5	Health	17%	31%	16%	26%
6	Poverty reduction	16%	15%	16%	18%
7	Economic growth	15%	31%	21%	18%
8	Agriculture and rural development	14%	15%	25%	20%
9	Private sector development	14%	0%	2%	12%
10	Food security	12%	46%	25%	10%
11	Energy	10%	8%	n/a	16%
12	Social protection	9%	8%	7%	4%
13	Transport	7%	0%	n/a	10%
14	Equality of opportunity	6%	0%	7%	4%
15	Natural resource management	5%	0%	4%	0%
16	Water and sanitation	5%	15%	n/a	0%
17	Gender equity	4%	15%	11%	2%
18	Urban development	4%	0%	9%	2%
19	ICT	3%	0%	n/a	2%
20	Climate change	3%	0%	5%	2%
21	Trade competitiveness and exports	3%	0%	0%	2%
22	Financial markets	2%	2%	2%	6%
23	Disaster risk management	1%	0%	2%	4%

Source: Felzer et al., (2015-2019). Question: Listed below are a number of development priorities in [YOURCOUNTRY]. Please identify which of the following you consider the most important development priorities in [YOUR COUNTRY]. (Choose no more than THREE) - Answers relate to those who chose 'Gender Equity' as one of the top three answers out of a list of 23 options

Journalists do not understand the gender equality topic well and therefore report on it in a fragmented manner with limited impact

According to a recent content analysis commissioned by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation with Brunswick Insight, different gender inequality issues tend to be reported in isolation of each other, rather than as part of a tapestry of interconnected issues. There is no overarching narrative framework used when reporting gender equality in the news. **Journalists look at gender equality through a single-issue, rather than a multiple-issue lens.**

Brunswick Insight completed their global content analysis work by focusing on 25% of the mentions of gender equality issues published in English in leading print and online global publications between October 2018 and October 2019, along with 25% of publicly available Twitter content during the same period. The objective was to identify key emerging themes within the gender equality topic.

Brunswick Insight found that there were ten key themes relating to coverage within the gender equality discussion in traditional media: workplace issues (20%), events such as International Women's Day (17%), policy and initiatives (14%), violence (11%), health (9%), reports and rankings (9%), gender roles (9%), political participation (6%), education (3%) and religion (2%). The researchers found that **journalists tended to focus most on the top four themes i.e. on workplace issues, women's events, policy and initiatives, and violence**.

However, even more interestingly, as stated above, Brunswick Insight found that journalists tended to write about these topics **in isolation of each other** with little overarching narrative or common references between them. **Journalists wrote particularly sparsely about themes such as gender roles and health**

inequality which have high potential for bridging multiple themes. On the other hand, the research found that journalists wrote more about workplace issues or events, hypothesizing that this was because these topics are less complex, and less controversial for writers and readers. By contrast, Twitter users focused comparatively more on more polarizing themes such as violence (19%), health (15%), gender roles (12%) and education (8%) than journalists in news media outlets.

Given the low salience and lack of comprehension of gender equality issues among journalists, decision makers and academics, it is no surprise that the news coverage of the topic has been thin and hugely marginalized in the last two decades

In the last two decades gender equality issues have received very little news coverage globally. Although the 2015 Global Media Monitoring Project found a steady increase in news stories covering gender equality or inequality issues between 2005 and 2015, the proportion of total news stories these represent remained low at 9%[2]. It is important to clarify that in the GMMP, this measure included stories about human rights issues and policy as well as gender equality stories [3] . Therefore, if the focus were on gender equality stories alone, the percentage would be much smaller than 9%. Gender equality stories typically featured in science and health news. Equivalent data is not available for all countries, and where available, definitions are not always consistent.

The proportion of news stories that challenged gender stereotypes [4] **globally in 2015 was 4%, unchanged since 2005**[5]. The US recorded the highest incidence of such stories at 7%, followed by the UK and India at 6% in each case, and Nigeria at 5%. South Africa and Kenya recorded the lowest rates at 3% and 1% respectively.

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[2] Macharia, 2015

[3] The 2020 GMMP content analysis guide shows the underlying question to gather this data is: "Reference to gender equality/ human rights legislation/ policy: Yes=1, No=2".

[4] GMMP 2020 Methodology Guide's definition: "Stories that challenge stereotypes include those that overturn common assumptions about women and men in relation to their attributes, their expertise of competence, their interests, etc. For example, a

story in which women experts are discussing economic policy, or a story about male nurses. Some stories may challenge stereotypes in more complex ways. For example a story on voting preferences may dispel the perception that women are politically uninformed. Stories that challenge stereotypes will often introduce new ways of thinking about an issue, new angles and fresh perspectives" https://cdn.agilitycms.com/who-makes-the-news/gmmp6/GMMP%202020%20Methodology%20Guide.pdf

[5] Macharia, 2015

The lacking gender equality coverage in the six analyzed countries today

Today the online news coverage of gender equality issues constitutes less than 1% of all news coverage in each of the six analyzed countries. None of the countries can be seen as leading on this indicator

As outlined previously, AKAS commissioned Media Ecosystems Analysis Group to analyze the news content of 11,913 news sources across the six selected countries, covering 56.9 million stories published in 2019 (see Appendix 2 for more details on methodology). Their computer-generated analysis revealed that the news coverage dedicated to gender equality issues accounted for less than 1% in all of the analyzed countries (see Figure 2.18). In fact, the

coverage level achieved was under half a percent in India (0.18%), the UK (0.48%), the US (0.37%) and Nigeria (0.46%). South Africa (0.65%) and Kenya (0.68%) achieved comparatively higher coverage than the other four countries. However, they can hardly be seen as leaders given the overall marginalized level of coverage that gender equality issues generated.

The issue of gender equality generates less coverage than climate change and poverty

As well as analyzing the coverage of gender equality stories, Media Ecosystems Analysis Group also analyzed the comparative coverage of two other global issues which are linked with gender inequality: poverty and climate change. Two important insights emerged from this comparative analysis. Firstly, none of these three issues reached even 2% of the total story coverage in 2019 (see Figure 2.18). Secondly, as illustrated in Figure 2.18, of the three issues, gender equality generated the lowest proportion of coverage in all six countries. Climate change led the ranking of these issues in the UK, US and India, while poverty achieved the highest ranking in Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa.

Figure 2.18: Comparative levels of coverage on gender equality, poverty and climate change (2019)
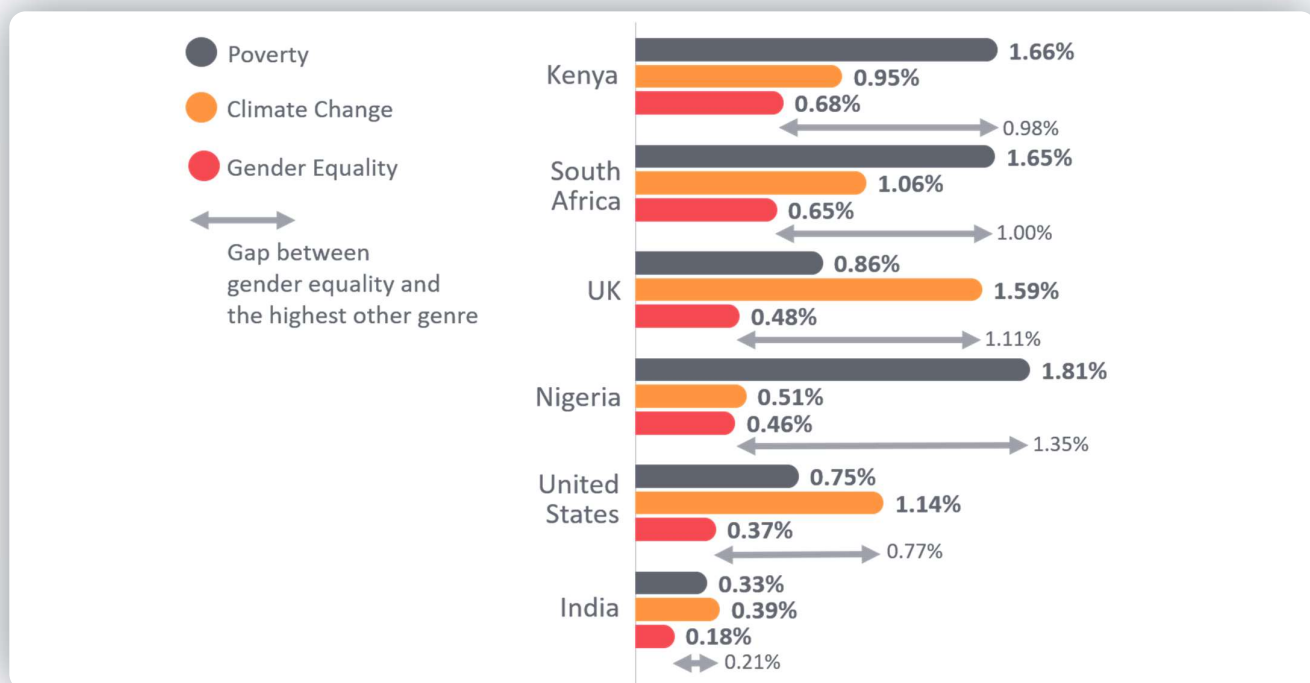
Source: Media Ecosystems Analysis Group (2020)

Despite evidence showing that men are the face of most stories, it is still ironic that they are the face of gender equality stories too: the majority of mentions in gender equality news stories relate to them

Media Ecosystems Analysis Group's content analysis of news story coverage in 2019 identified the 25 most frequently mentioned individuals in gender equality stories. Most of these were decision makers such as political leaders or government officials, with some famous individuals from other areas such as entertainment. Sadly, but perhaps unsurprisingly, in all of the six countries surveyed, the majority of these 'lead protagonists' in gender equality stories were men. The news coverage in Kenya achieved the highest number of mentions of women (44%), followed by the UK and US (both at 40%), South Africa (28%), India (20%) and Nigeria (16%).

International or national women's days present an opportunity to increase the salience of gender equality issues in all six countries. Coverage of these issues increased by between three and seven times on that day in 2019 in each country.

In 2019 coverage of gender equality issues peaked on International Women's Day on 8th March in five out of the six countries. In South Africa in 2019, coverage peaked on National Women's Day on 9th August instead (at 4.33%), with International Women's Day ranking as the second highest day for coverage of gender equality issues that year (with 3.85%). In Kenya, International Women's Day saw coverage of gender equality issues reach 3.35% of the total story coverage on that day, while in the UK they achieved 2.81%, in Nigeria 1.94%, in the US 1.19% and in India 0.84%.

Despite coverage of gender equality issues spiking by between three and seven times on International Women's Day, an online survey conducted in March 2020 in the US and UK by AKAS using Google Surveys revealed that just 13% of adults in the UK and 12% in the US said that they followed International Women's Day very or fairly closely, indicating that it only holds salience for a small minority. The full results are set out in Figure 2.19.

Figure 2.19: How closely news coverage of International Women's Day 2020 was followed (UK and USA), percentage (2020)
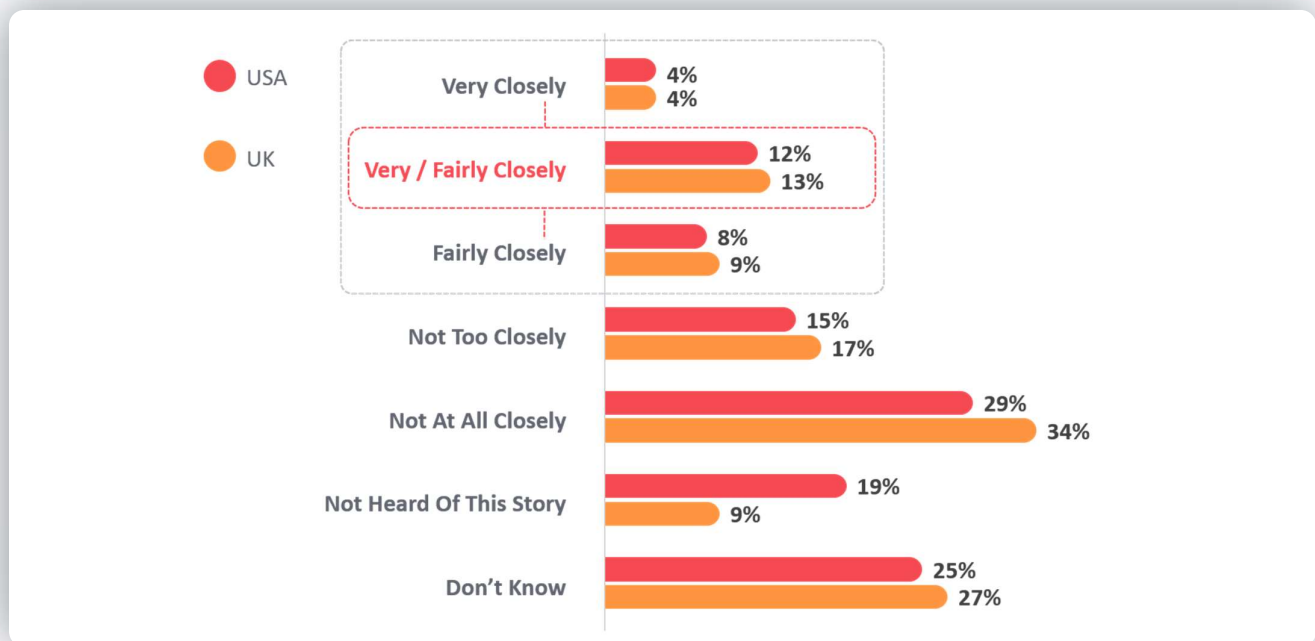
Source: *AKAS commissioned Google Survey, UK Sample = 827; UK Fieldwork = 13-15 March 2020; US Sample = 803; US Fieldwork = 13-15 March 2020*

Evidence from Google Trends, set out in Figure 2.20, shows the searches for 'International Women's Day' in the six analyzed countries between 2018 and 2020. It shows that in the UK and US, interest declined in 2020 (possibly due to the coronavirus story dominating the news), whilst in South Africa, Kenya and India interest levels remained similar to previous years. Only in Nigeria was there a significant increase of interest in 2020 compared to previous years.

Gender equality coverage is focused around four key themes in all six countries: Women, Politics and Government, Finances and Labor. These themes present an opportunity for cross-country global campaigning efforts

Media Ecosystems Analysis Group's content analysis included machine learning-derived theme detection within the pool of gender equality stories in 2019. This theme detection analysis revealed that four of the top five themes emerging from gender equality stories in all six countries were similar. These were: women, politics and government, finances and labor. The emphasis on women as a theme was highest in South Africa where 35% of gender equality stories were dedicated to this (e.g. women's rights, women's day, women's health); and in Kenya and India where 33% of the stories were dedicated to women (e.g. women's world cup, women's rights, women's day and women's empowerment in Kenya; and women's day, women's football and women's representation in India). Emphasis on the theme of politics and government was strongest in Nigeria (where 38% of stories featured this theme), the US (29%) and India (32%). The focus on finances as a theme was also greatest in Nigeria at 29%, while the focus on labor was greatest in the UK and US (at 24% and 23% respectively). Health/medicine was the fifth most commonly recurring theme within gender equality stories in the UK and US, featuring in 14% of these stories in the UK and in 11% in the US. Economic conditions and trends emerged as the fifth theme in India, South Africa and Nigeria, featuring in 18%, 19% and 20% respectively of gender equality stories in those countries.

Figure 2.20: Interest in International Women's Day, IWD (2018 to 2020) using Google Trends in the six analyzed countries
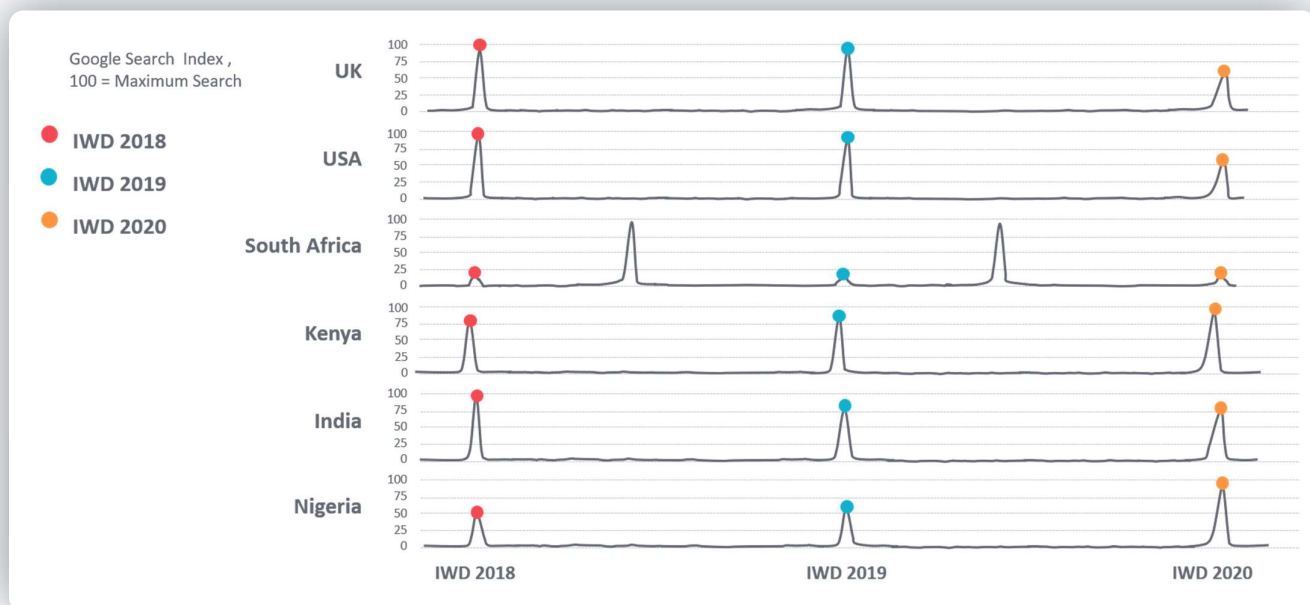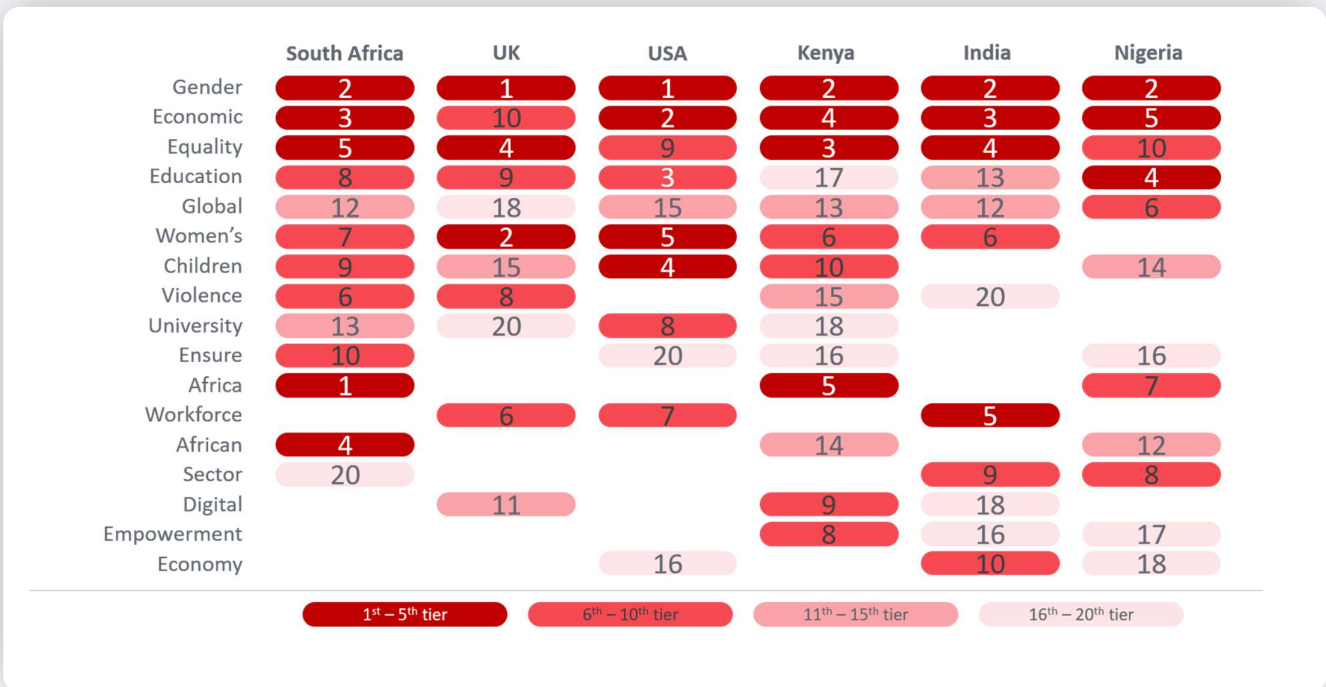

Source: Google Trends search results for International Women's Day between 01 Jan 2018 and 31 Mar 2020 for the UK, US, South Africa, Kenya, India & Nigeria

Journalists don't connect gender equality issues to key issues of public concern in each of the analyzed countries

Figure 2.21 sets out Media Ecosystems Analysis Group's analysis of the most frequently used words in gender equality stories. Unsurprisingly, 'Gender' and 'Equality' are amongst the most frequently used words, whilst 'Economic' and 'Education' also often feature in the top five words used across the six countries. It is interesting to note that words relating to many of the issues that are of concern to the public in some of the analyzed countries, such as unemployment, jobs, corruption and healthcare (see Figure 2.22), did not come up as featuring in gender equality articles. This points to journalists not connecting gender equality to key issues of concern to the public in the various countries.

Figure 2.21: Ranking of the top ten most frequently used words in gender equality stories across the six countries (2019)

	South Africa	UK	USA	Kenya	India	Nigeria
Gender	2	1	1	2	2	2
Economic	3	10	2	4	3	5
Equality	5	4	9	3	4	10
Education	8	9	3	17	13	4
Global	12	18	15	13	12	6
Women's	7	2	5	6	6	
Children	9	15	4	10		14
Violence	6	8		15	20	
University	13	20	8	18		
Ensure	10		20	16		16
Africa	1			5		7
Workforce		6	7		5	
African	4			14		12
Sector	20				9	8
Digital		11		9	18	
Empowerment				8	16	17
Economy			16		10	18

Legend: 1st – 5th tier · 6th – 10th tier · 11th – 15th tier · 16th – 20th tier

Source: Media Ecosystems Analysis Group (2020)

Figure 2.22: World Worries (November 2019)

Issues	4 Country Average	Great Britain	India	South Africa	US
Crime and violence	40%	41%	30%	62%	28%
Unemployment and jobs	35%	16%	46%	62%	16%
Financial/Political corruption	35%	14%	36%	59%	29%
Poverty and social inclusion	28%	34%	26%	33%	18%
Health care	27%	41%	18%	14%	35%
Climate change	18%	22%	22%	5%	24%
Education	16%	12%	21%	20%	10%
Immigration control	15%	23%	5%	8%	25%
Terrorism	14%	15%	21%	1%	18%
Moral decline	13%	16%	7%	5%	24%
Taxes	12%	10%	14%	8%	16%
Threats against the environment	11%	12%	15%	1%	14%
Rise of extremism	10%	15%	7%	1%	15%
Inflation	8%	5%	11%	10%	6%
Maintaining social programs	6%	13%	4%	1%	7%
Childhood obesity	4%	3%	6%	1%	4%
Access to credit	2%	1%	4%	1%	1%

Source: Ipsos (2019)

Question: Which three of the following topics do you find the most worrying in your country?

Recommendations for news providers

- **Make journalists aware of the existing bias towards using more men than women protagonists** in gender equality stories. Redress this bias by actively looking for women protagonists to lead on gender equality coverage.

- **Double coverage of gender equality issues.** Across the analyzed countries, coverage of gender-equality issues averaged 0.5% of all stories or one in 200 stories in 2019. By 2021, double coverage of gender equality issues to 1% or one in 100 stories. By 2025, make the 2019 peak performance of 2.5% of overall news coverage the norm. In other words, ensure that one in 40 stories reference gender equality issues.

- **Provide education and training for journalists to facilitate multi-perspective gender equality thinking. This will result in more impactful coverage that links multiple gender equality themes into an overarching narrative**

  News media organizations should consider providing gender equality sensitivity training and mentoring in their newsrooms[6].

  - Training programs should cover: understanding the numerous issues arising from lack of gender equality; the impact of gender inequality on different sections of society; women's rights; anti-discrimination; gender stereotypes; and gender-sensitive language. This will help journalists understand the benefits of gender-sensitive journalism.

  - Incorporate gender-sensitive language as part of a code of ethics[7].

- **Support the teaching of gender equality as a compulsory module for students of news journalism**

- **When reporting on gender inequality issues, link coverage with issues that are more salient to decision-makers and the public** e.g. jobs, education, healthcare, crime and the economy.

- **Encourage journalists to link different global issues together,** such as the impact of gender inequality on poverty and/or climate change.

  - Use guidelines and toolkits which address the issue of gender-sensitive reporting, the reporting of violence against women and activism in order to promote gender equality [8] . Compiling existing texts and promoting their use as toolkits for news media professionals [9] could reap benefits. These could include:

  - *GMMP 'Mission Possible: A Gender and Media Advocacy Toolkit'*

  - *UNESCO Grizzle, A. (2012). Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media: Framework of indicators to gauge gender sensitivity in media operations and content.* This provides a set of indicators for fostering gender equality within media organizations, and gendered portrayals in media. It is currently used in 11 countries and provides some case studies of self-assessment.

  - *UN Women: 'Election Coverage from a Gender Perspective: A Media Monitoring Manual'.* This publication aims to be a useful tool for promoting fair media coverage during election campaigns.

  - Where different forms of inequality intersect, such as age, race and gender, the *UNHCR's Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming Strategy* is considered an example of international best practice[10].

- **Plan coverage dedicated to gender inequality on the editorial calendar** including preparing special pieces in advance of International or National Women's Days, to achieve highest impact.

- **Introduce 'Gender equality in journalism' awards to send out a powerful message and encourage the reporting of gender equality-based stories**

  Professionals in news organizations who create a positive gender equality impact and give visibility to the issue[11] could be further incentivized through an awards celebration.

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[6] McCracken et al., 2018; European Commission, 2010
[7] European Commission, 2010
[8] White, 2009

[9] Kangas et al., 2014
[10] Kangas et al., 2014
[11] European Commission, 2010

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PART 2: KEY GENDER EQUALITY INDICATORS IN NEWS

Chapter 5

Commonalities between countries across different indicators

The chapter at a glance

This chapter will examine a raft of data sources that have been used in the report with a view to identifying countries that exhibit similar trends either in their representation of women in news organizations and in the news or in the socio-economic and political context which forms the ecosystem within which news organizations operate in each of the analyzed countries. It will examine available evidence for two target audiences, both of which are key protagonists in this report: the public in each of the six analyzed countries and journalists.

● ● ●

This chapter shows that there are no 'winner' countries when it comes to improving the gender representation of women in news organizations or their visibility in the news. Women form a minority of leaders, governors and top managers in news organizations in all of the countries examined; their portrayal in the news remains narrow and their voices in newsgathering and news outputs remain marginalized across all these countries. South Africa performs better than the other five countries in terms of gender diversity in the workplace. The UK performs slightly better relative to other countries in terms of the share of women in newsgathering and outputs indicators. India and Nigeria are facing significant challenges in relation to most measures compared to the other four countries. There is a clear delineation of differences between the global north and the global south in terms of socio-economic and political context, with the contexts in the global north being more supportive of advancing gender equality in news than those in the global south. Evidence from five of the six countries suggests that the more biased towards men a society is in its expressed social norms, the smaller women's share of quoted voice[1] in the news is. Finally, journalists in the global south are much more likely to perceive themselves as change agents than journalists in the global north, while both groups are driven by strong journalistic ethical standards for reporting the truth objectively.

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[1] As protagonists, sources and experts

1. There are no overall winners when it comes to achieving gender parity in news today

Before diving into the comparison between different countries with a view to identifying the commonalities between them, it is important to state that, according to all the evidence gathered in this report, none of the six analyzed countries can be deemed to be excelling in terms of their gender balance of voices in the news.

● ● ●

In previous chapters it was shown that while some countries are ahead of others in their representation of women in news organizations, progress has slowed down in recent decades across all countries. No country is even close to reaching gender parity in governance, leadership teams or top management. News media ownership remains mainly concentrated in the hands of a small number of men, who legitimize male-dominated newsroom cultures regardless of how high the proportion of women journalists in newsrooms is. In the last two decades, women's expertise in the news has remained consistently dialed down compared to men's with not much progress in sight in any of the countries examined. Women who are protagonists in the news in all key countries are far from achieving parity today, just as they were decades ago. The coverage of gender equality issues in the news

today gets lost in the ocean of news in all countries. It is in this context that we have concluded that to put forward 'winner' countries would be inaccurate and misleading.

● ● ●

On the basis of the evidence analyzed in this report, the performance of each of the six analyzed countries has been assessed on different indicators for gender equality, being classified as either 'very strong', 'strong', 'medium', 'weak or 'very weak (see Figure 2.23). The same evaluation has been given in relation to how accepting and enabling of gender equality the socio-economic and political context is in each of the six countries.

● ● ●

The evidence on the current performance of all countries in terms of **newsgathering and outputs indicators** (based on Media Ecosystems Analysis Group's content analysis of women's share of quoted voice, the proportion of women protagonists in the news and the proportion of all news stories devoted to gender equality stories) suggests that no country has achieved a *very strong* or *strong* performance on these indicators (see Figure 2.23). The **UK's** performance has been assessed as *medium*, the **US', South Africa's and Kenya's** as *weak* while **India's and Nigeria's** have been designated *very weak* on these indicators.

Figure 2.23: Assessment of current country positions on gender equality in newsgathering and outputs and on degree to which socio-economic and political contexts in each country accept and enable gender equality.
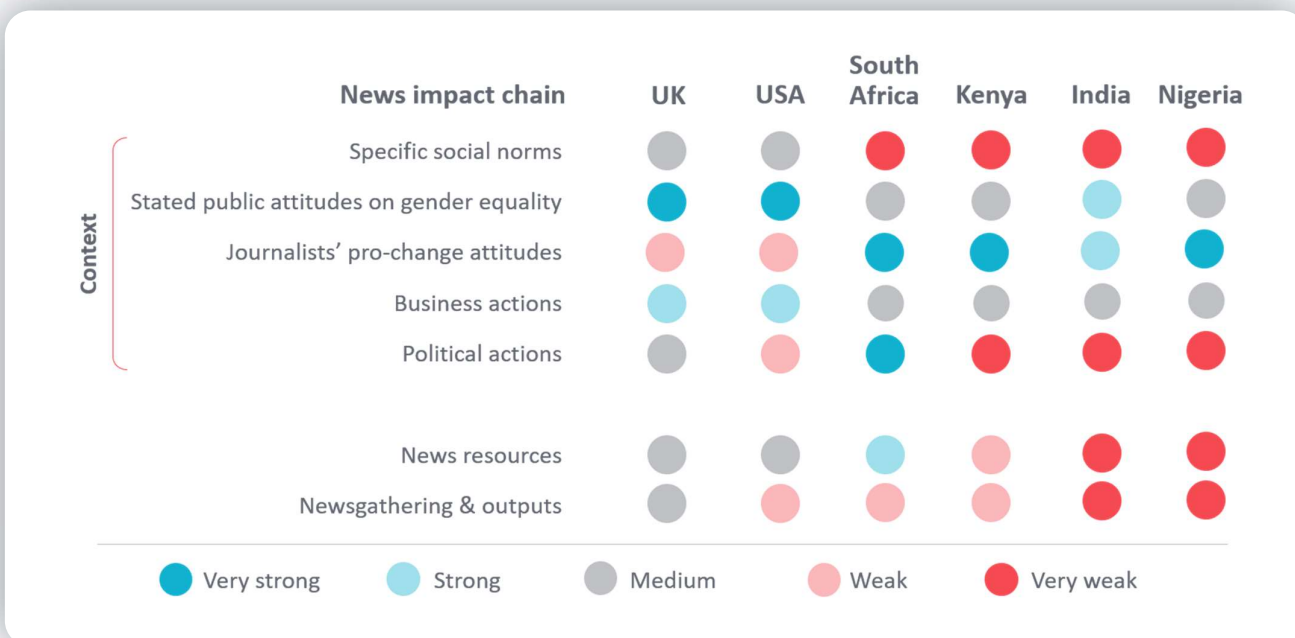
When assessing how well organizations perform in terms of **news resources in organizations** (i.e. the proportion of women who are journalists today vs. a decade ago, and the proportion of women in governance structures and in top level management), South Africa stands out as the only country which achieves a *strong* performance on this indicator (see Figure 2.23). The **UK and US** are clustered similarly, both performing at the *medium* level on this indicator. **Kenya** is performing *weakly* while **India and Nigeria** are again assessed as performing *very weakly*.

● ● ●

According to the classification developed by Caroline Byerly in *The Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Journalism*[2] which was based on data from 2008-2010, four groups of countries were identified in terms of their status and progress in women's representation in news organizations. These were classified as: *Taking the lead*; *Making substantial progress*; *Negotiating the constraints* and *Challenging the barriers.* According to this classification **South Africa** was the only country ranked among the countries 'taking the lead'. The **US and UK** were assessed as 'making substantial progress', **Kenya** was assessed as 'negotiating the constraints', while **India and Nigeria** were seen to be lagging behind the other four countries by 'challenging the barriers'. It is reasonable to conclude that the six countries perform similarly according to both classifications, revealing performances that are consistent to each other in the last decade and today.

2. Social norms seem to correlate strongly with the share of women's voice in news outputs

Perhaps unsurprising, but noteworthy nonetheless, is the observed relationship between exhibited biases against women and the share of women's quoted voice in five of the six countries (see Figure 2.24). The evidence, available for all analyzed countries bar Kenya, showed that the more biased social norms are in a country, the smaller women's share of quoted voice in news (as protagonists, sources or experts) is. For example, 95% of the public in Nigeria display at least two of the seven researched biases against women, while in the UK this proportion is 26%. Women's share of quoted voice is significantly lower in Nigeria than it is in the UK (16% vs. 29%). The

relationship between the higher level of bias against women in social norms and women's share of quoted voice in the news is similarly inverse for all five countries. However, the conclusion about this relationship is tentative due to the limited number of countries which have been plotted on these two dimensions.

3. South Africa, India and Nigeria display a similar strength of male bias in social norms

Gender equality-enabling social norms have been assessed as very weak in South Africa, India, Kenya and Nigeria and medium strength in the UK and the US (see Figure 2.23). There is a clear delineation observed between the global south and the global north in terms of the strength of biases displayed against women. According to the Gender Social Norms Index reported in the *2020 Human Development Perspectives Tackling Social Norms: A Game Changer for Gender Inequalities* report[3], 95% of the public in Nigeria, 83% of the public in India and 81% of the public in South Africa display at least two of seven possible gender biases (see Figure 2.24). Although still substantial, the proportion of the public who display gender biases in the UK and the US is much lower at 26% and 30% respectively. Another example shows that 46% in Nigeria, 35% in India and 39% in South Africa display an economic bias towards men[4] vs. only 7% in the UK and the US. The discrepancy between the two groups of countries is similar for other biases such as political and educational biases and those relating to women's physical integrity. It is worth noting however that the Gender Social Norms Index is based on past answers to *World Values Survey*[5] questions asked between 2005 and 2014.

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[2] Byerly, 2016
[3] United Nations Development Programme, 2020

[4] The majority strongly agree/agree that "*Men should have more right to a job than women*" and "*Men make better business executives than women*"
[5] Inglehart et al., 2014

Figure 2.24: Women's share of quoted voice compared to gender equality biases

Women's share of quoted voice in the news (%) [1]

% of population that have at least 2 of 7 possible gender equality biases [2]
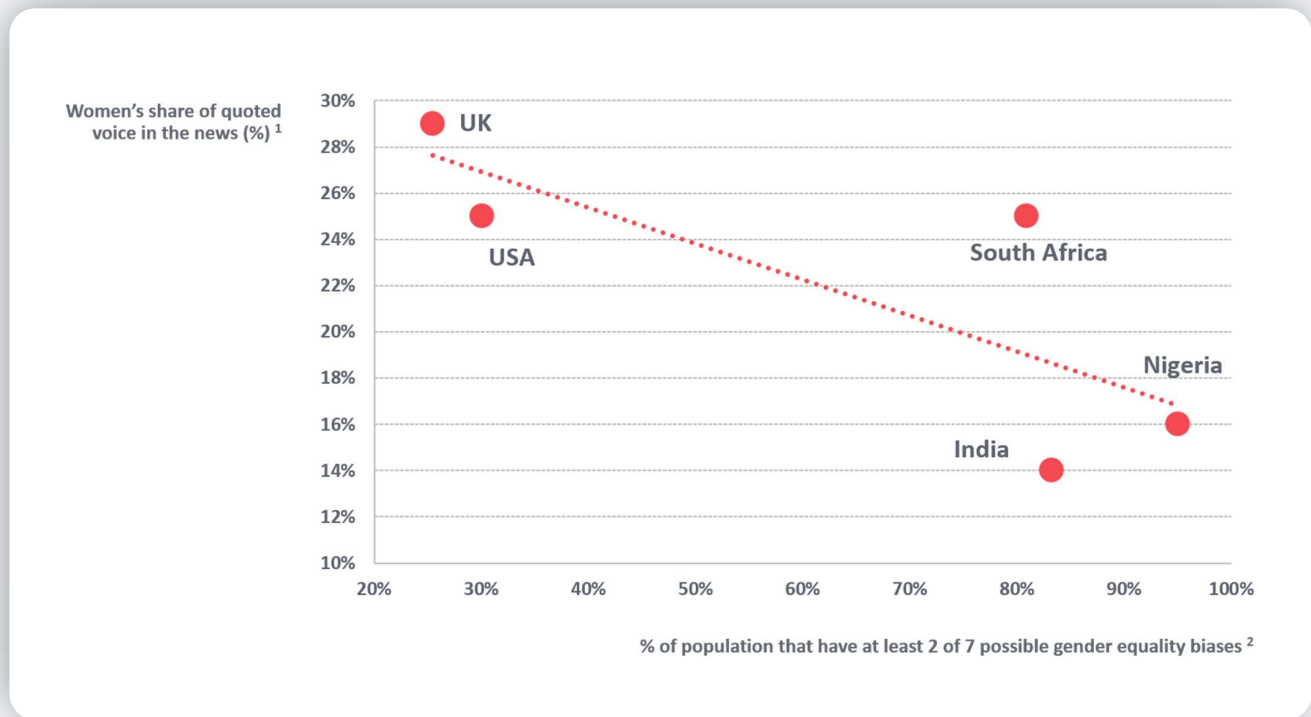
Source: [1]*Media Ecosystems Analysis Group (2020);* [2]*United Nations Development Programme (2020)*

4. The UK and US share similar socio-economic contexts

Upon examination of various research sources, it becomes apparent that the public in the UK and the US share similar gender specific social norms, public attitudes towards gender equality and economic contexts which differentiate them as a cluster vs. the remaining four countries. For example, the World Economic Forum's *Global Gender Gap 2020 Report*[6] assigned both countries the same rating (5 out of 7) on Work Participation and Leadership[7]. The remaining four countries were assessed as a 4 out of 7.

• • •

A similar proportion of the public in the UK and the US exhibit biases against women in their expressed social norms. 55% of the UK public and 57% of the US public display at least one of seven biases against women and 26% vs. 30% display at least two (see Figure 2.25). According to Pew's *Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey*[8], 92% and 91% of adults in the UK and the US

respectively believe that it is very important that women have the same rights as men in their country (vs. between 45% and 71% in the remaining four countries).

5. Overall, Nigeria and India perform worse than the other four countries

Upon interrogation of various current data sources, it emerges that India and Nigeria share many similarities in their current positioning on gender equality - not only in news organizations, but also more widely in their social, economic and political contexts. Both countries are facing major challenges in their significant under-representation of women in news organizations. The portrayal of women in the news[9], as well as women's share of voice, as reflected in newsgathering and outputs[10], are most marginalized in Nigeria and India. This state of gender inequality in news correlates closely with similarly displayed biases against women and similar levels of political and economic participation by women in society.

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[6] World Economic Forum, 2019
[7] "Advancement of women to leadership roles" in business
[8] Wike & Simmons, 2015

[9] The proportion of women protagonists as reported in Media Ecosystems Analysis Group's content analysis
[10] Women's share of quoted voices as sources, experts or protagonists from Media Ecosystems Analysis Group's analysis

Figure 2.25: Assessment of each country's public attitudes towards gender equality, political & business contexts, social norms and news media's position on gender equality in organizational resources, newsgathering and outputs.

Value Chain	Sources	Metric	Metric-Detail	UK	USA	South Africa	Kenya	India	Nigeria
Context (Public Attitudes)	Poushter Et al (2019)	% who favor/oppose gender equality in our country	% Favor less Oppose	68%	67%	39%	57%	70%	44%
	Wike & Simons (2015)	Very important that women have the same rights as men in our country	% Total	92%	91%	67%	45%	71%	54%
Context (Actions)	World Economic Forum (2019)	Women in parliament, %	% Women	32%	24%	46%	22%	14%	3%
		Advancement of women to leadership roles, 1-7	Value	4.8	5.3	4.1	4.2	3.9	4.1
Context (Social Norms)	UNDP (2020)	Gender social norms index (share of people with at least 2 biases)	% of population that have at least 2 out of 7 possible biases	26%	30%	81%	n/a	83%	95%
		Share of people with no bias	% of population that have none of the 7 possible biases	45%	43%	4%	n/a	2%	0%
News Resources	AKAS	Qualitative assessment of progress towards gender equality in news organizations	1 – Low, 10 – High	8	6	10	4	2	4
	Byerly (2016)	Governance	% Women	30%	35%	39%	21%	21%	17%
		Top-level management	% Women	26%	23%	25%	35%	14%	17%
News Gathering & Outputs	MEAG (2020)	Indicator 2: % of quotes attributed to women (experts)	% women of quotes	29%	25%	25%	20%	14%	16%
		Indicator 3: % of headlines with a female name (protagonists)	% women in headlines	30%	21%	20%	23%	21%	15%
		Indicator 4: % of news stories on women's equality issues	% gender equality stories	0.5%	0.4%	0.7%	0.7%	0.2%	0.5%

Sources: AKAS, Byerly (2016), Media Ecosystems Analysis Group (2020), Poushter et al (2019), UNDP (2020), Wike & Simmons (2015), World Economic Forum (2019)

86% of the public in Nigeria and 64% in India exhibit strong political bias favoring men[11]. Moreover, only 3% and 14% of parliamentarians in Nigeria and India respectively are women. Separately, 83% of Nigerians and 70% of Indians exhibit a strong educational bias toward men[12].

Finally, 46% of Nigerians and 35% of Indians exhibit a moderate economic bias favoring men[13]. This bias is manifested in business behaviors: according to the World Economic Forum's *Global Gender Gap 2020 Report*[14], Nigeria and India achieve a score of 4.1 and 3.9 out of 7 on the 'Advancement of women to leadership roles' business measure (see Figure 2.25).

There is a noticeable difference between India and Nigeria that is worth highlighting in relation to the gender equality context surrounding news organizations. The Indian public is much more positive in their claimed support for gender equality than the Nigerian public (or the public in the other analyzed countries).

According to *A Changing World: Global Views on Diversity, Gender Equality, Family Life and the Importance of Religion* 2019 report [15], the net proportion of those who favor gender equality vs. those who oppose it in India is 70% while in Nigeria it is 44%. In fact, surprisingly, India enjoys the biggest positive net difference out of all six countries surveyed (see Figure 2.25).

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[11] The majority strongly agree/agree that "*Men make better political leaders than women*" and a minority agree that "*Women have the same rights as men*"

[12] The majority strongly agree/agree that "*University is more important for a man than for a woman*"

[13] The majority strongly agree/agree that "*Men should have more right to a job than women*" and "*Men make better business executives than women do*"

[14] World Economic Forum, 2019

[15] Poushter et al, 2019

6. Journalists in the global north are much less likely to perceive themselves as change agents than journalists in the global south

Analysis of the *Worlds of Journalism 2012-2016 Study*[16] revealed a remarkable distinction between journalists in the global north (the UK and the US) and the global south (Kenya, South Africa and India). According to a battery of questions aimed at understanding to what extent journalists saw their role as to reflect society as it is vs. to improve society by promoting tolerance and activating civic participation, it emerged that the vast majority of journalists in the surveyed countries[17] perceive their role as to reflect society: '*reporting things as they are*' (see Figure 2.26).

Between 88% and 98% in all countries thought that '*reporting things as they are*' was extremely or very important. Interestingly, a significantly higher proportion of journalists in South Africa, Kenya and India than in the UK or US also believed that their role was to improve and effect change in society. They were much more likely to think that it was extremely or very important to *promote tolerance and cultural diversity*, *to advocate for social change*, and *to influence public opinion* than their colleagues in the UK and US (see Figure 2.26). These two emerging country clusters in the six countries in terms of journalists' attitudes call for different approaches when advocating for improving reporting on gender inequality issues. Given that journalists in the global south are much more likely to see their role as change agents, it might be easier to use this argument in advocacy efforts in the global south. By contrast, this argument is less likely to convince journalists in the global north to act. They are more likely to respond to arguments appealing to their ethical standards. (For more details, see Part 4 on emerging evidence-based narratives for change).

Figure 2.26: Worlds of Journalism Study (2012-2016)

Metric	Metric-Detail	UK	USA	South Africa	Kenya	India
% of journalists saying "extremely" and "very important" that journalists:	**Report things as they are**	**93%**	**98%**	**93%**	**93%**	**88%**
	Promote tolerance and cultural diversity	47%	51%	73%	85%	78%
	Advocate for social change	29%	30%	56%	79%	75%
	Influence public opinion	24%	19%	44%	68%	61%
	Motivate people to participate in political activity	18%	46%	30%	52%	53%
	Set the political agenda	15%	11%	17%	48%	38%

Source: Hanitzsch et al (2019)

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[16] Hanitzsch et al, 2019

[17] All analyzed countries bar Nigeria

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PART 3: CASE STUDIES OF IMPROVED GENDER BALANCE ANCHORED IN BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE

"Gender stereotypes are notoriously sticky, in part because we're often unaware that we hold them."

Dr Tiina Likki

The chapter at a glance

This chapter will examine three case studies from the global north (the UK and US) and the global south (South Africa) which have applied, knowingly or not, behavioral science-based interventions in order to improve: gender representation in the workplace (T-Systems in South Africa); the representation of women in newsgathering as experts or sources (BBC News); and the gender balance in journalists' reporting on Twitter (FollowBias in the US).

It will demonstrate that applying insights from behavioral science can provide news organizations with a variety of ways in which they can improve their representation of women at every touchpoint in the news value chain. Three methods of achieving this behavioral change will be examined:

1. The use of 'nudging' to create a new social norm, driven by a powerful 'change-making' messenger within an organization

2. The use of debiasing technology-powered techniques among journalists who are open to change, and

3. The drive for change through gender balancing initiatives championed from the top of an organization.

Finally, this chapter reaches the conclusion that news organizations have enormous opportunity to develop more behavioral science-based interventions to influence individual behaviors and improve women's visibility and empowerment within organizations. To that effect ten recommendations to maximize the impact of these interventions are presented.

Background

There are many insights about improving women's representation in organizations which could be extracted from the relatively new but very potent discipline of behavioral science. Behavioral science examines the drivers of human behavior based on multi-disciplinary findings from psychology, economics and neuroscience with a view to influencing *individual*

behavior for better outcomes (for example being healthier, stopping smoking, adhering to commitments). What makes this discipline particularly exciting is that it acknowledges the previously neglected importance of *immediate situational context* on human decisions. Behavioral science also challenges traditional 'theories of change' which assume that values drive beliefs and beliefs drive behaviors, by positing that each of these drivers can influence all others, including behavior preceding the change in beliefs, not just vice versa. For example, a change in company policy driven by the CEO or a news organization ensuring equal opportunities for women could lead to a change in behaviors whereby leaders who are men hire more women in leadership roles, which in turn leads to change in some beliefs (e.g. some male leaders starting to believe that 'women are as good leaders as men' rather than believing that 'men make better leaders than women'). One of the key outcomes from behavioral science is the use of **nudges**. These create the right triggers within the immediate context to encourage change in the behaviors of individuals. News organizations could benefit significantly from designing nudges for journalists and leaders which would facilitate an improvement in women's representation and portrayal in news. The following three case studies showcase interventions which have led to such success.

Detailed case studies[1]

AKAS has identified three case studies which illustrate how different organizations, including prominent news media organizations, have responded to the challenge of improving gender equality. These were selected according to four criteria: geographic balance between the global north and south; examples from both traditional and digital media; demonstrable results in particular indicators, such as gender balance in news or gender diversity in the workplace; and focus on various elements of the news value chain (i.e. organizational resources, newsgathering/outputs, news consumption or impacts).

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The first case study identified was the **BBC's 50:50 Project,** an initiative to achieve parity in men and women contributors to BBC News programming which started from the *Outside Source* news program. This case study focuses primarily on the newsgathering

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[1] For more case studies in news please review A Gender Balance Guide (Women in News/WAN-IFRA, 2020), http://www.womeninnews.org/resource/46

element of the news value chain, but also incorporates organizational resources in the digital context as well as outputs and audience impacts unearthed through research among television, radio and digital audiences.

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The second focus was on FollowBias, a tool designed in the US to assist journalists in achieving gender balance in the accounts they follow and amplify on Twitter. This case study relates to a mix of indicators – women as sources of news expertise and as protagonists in news stories – and focuses on outputs in the news value chain.

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Finally, a case study from outside the news media sector was selected: T-Systems South Africa, part of Deutsche Telekom group, which has been recognized for best practice in its commitment and contribution to workplace diversity. This case is relevant to organizational resources in the news value chain.

Shifting behavior through behavioral science

Each of these case studies was grounded in the principles of behavioral science. The benefit of the behavioral science approach is that, rather than simply critiquing behavior, it focuses on what it takes to change behavior in the real world, seeking to explain it and to shift behavior and/or attitudes.

From the ground up: Nudging towards a new social norm

The BBC's 50:50 Project grew out of a self-monitoring system, introduced by lead presenter Ros Atkins in January 2017, to track the ratio of men to women contributors on *Outside Source*, the BBC news program he fronted. Frustrated by slow progress on achieving gender balance, he opted to become a 'confronter' on the issue[2] and within four months had succeeded in increasing women's representation as contributors on his program from 39% to 50%. In so doing, he sparked a revolution across the organization: by the time the BBC officially launched its 50:50 Project in April 2018, challenging teams to achieve parity in women's representation in programs and content within a year,

84 BBC teams had already committed to the initiative. By May 2019, the number of participating teams across the organization had mushroomed to 500, with a further 20 media partners across the world. By March 2020, 600 teams across all content divisions of the BBC had signed up to the project – including news, entertainment, sports and science. The global network of partnerships had extended to 60 organizations across 20 countries. Today, Project 50:50 makes a significant contribution to the BBC's overall aim of women holding 50% of on screen, on air, online and lead roles across all program genres. In the context of well-publicized criticism of the BBC for its gender pay gap and age-related discrimination against women presenters, program makers have responded to the 'nudge' administered by one of their peers, embracing this voluntary initiative in a spirit of collaboration and friendly competition.

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Results reported in May 2019 showed that after twelve months the proportion of participating teams who were achieving gender parity in representation had increased from 27% to 74%. By contrast, those achieving less than 40% in women's representation had dropped from 41% at the outset to just 8% a year later. Once the project had been in place for over two years, it became evident that the longer teams were involved, the more likely they were to increase the proportion of women contributing to their content. By March 2020, 68% of teams participating in the project for twelve months were achieving gender parity in representation. This proportion increased to 73% for those involved for 18 months, and to 78% for those involved for two years. Feedback highlighted challenges in increasing women's contributions in traditionally male-dominated topic areas such as politics, business and sport. This led to the **creation of a database of women experts which was shared between teams via the 50:50 hub**, encouraging a redress of the balance. Similarly, the project impacted on external organizations who provide spokespeople to the BBC, prompting or 'nudging' them to consider sourcing women contributors more frequently.

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Research suggests that targeted actions, such as the nudges this project applies, help to drive the establishment of gender-balanced contributions as a new social norm[3].

[2] Rattan et al, 2019

[3] Kallgren, Reno & Cialdini, 2000

The impacts on BBC audiences of the program were measured through a nationally representative survey of audiences in April 2019, revealing a significant year on year increase among women audience members who felt that the representation of women on television had improved. One in three claimed to have noticed an increase in women featuring in BBC programs compared to a year previously, while over 50% of those surveyed claimed that the BBC portrayed women in a positive way, a figure which is higher than for television generally [4]. A year later, the BBC conducted a nationally representative survey of people who consume any BBC online service, including BBC websites, iPlayer and BBC Sounds[5]. Of 2,000 people surveyed, 39% said they had noticed a shift in gender balance over the last two years towards more women in BBC online content. Younger people, particularly women, said that they enjoyed BBC online content more as a result: 40% among 16 to 34 years old, rising to 66% among women aged 16 to 24.

Debiasing the journalist

A comparable bottom-up approach was seen to operate in the case of **FollowBias**, an online personalized tool for so-called 'networked gatekeepers': journalists working in the digital arena with the power to influence large audiences. Using a self-administered survey, journalists can compare the values they profess to hold about gender balance with actual behavioral data on the Twitter accounts they follow and amplify and the gender of those account holders. This system therefore enables them to confront their own unconscious gender biases, bringing to light any discrepancies between their beliefs and their behavior in the real, or virtual, world. Users are then given the opportunity to review suggestions from other users on women to follow on Twitter or to make their own suggestions in order to achieve a gender balance.

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Qualitative research among users indicated that most men and women displayed bias, over-estimating the percentage of women they followed on Twitter, and that most appreciated the ability to make corrections, reporting that it prompted them to reflect on the reasons behind their choices. Faced with their own bias therefore, users (admittedly a self-selecting group

supportive of gender balance) self-administered behavioral nudges in the interests of achieving a social goal they had identified.

From the top down: when social change is a matter of national appeal

As indicated by our research into diversity in leadership in six analyzed countries, women's under-representation at governance, top management and decision-making levels represents to varying degrees an issue worldwide. South Africa has attempted to address this through their National Development Plan, challenging the nation to build a more diverse South Africa. Responding to the call for greater gender equality, **T-Systems South Africa** produced a Nation Building Diversity Strategy which featured coordinated internal and external elements, demonstrating best practice and achieving striking results. The company was recognized by the International Labour Organisation as one of 11 worldwide exemplars of best practice in its 2017 report[6] *Gender Diversity Journey Company Good Practices*.

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T-Systems' internal *Fair Share Policy* was multi-stranded but at its heart was the commitment to achieve a minimum of 30% women in the workforce, with regular reporting of gender indicators, membership of the 30% Club to promote 30% representation of women at board level, and the introduction of various forums and working groups to support women. In their efforts to address the wider community, skills development and internship programs targeted women and disadvantaged groups through, among other things, a rural skills development center and an Information and Communication Technology Academy which provided internationally recognized qualifications.

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Within the organization, results showed a high level of women's participation at all levels of the organization with 35% of all employees being women and most remarkably, 60% of the board being women. This high level is very significant in a context where 73% of companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange

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[4] Full details of the 2019 report are available at:
http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/reports/reports/5050-may-2019.pdf
[5] Full details of the 2020 report are available at:

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/reports/reports/5050-april-2020.pdf
[6] Full details are available here:
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---act_emp/documents/publication/wcms_578768.pdf

aim for no higher than 39% women's representation on their boards.

Externally, with 1,800 graduates from their Academy, half of them women, and women making up 80% of those supported through the rural skills development center, the company has achieved major social impact with beneficial 'spillover' effects[7] on wider society. The comprehensiveness of their approach testifies to the company's and its leadership's genuine commitment to the principles of diversity and equality. The degree to which these are embedded throughout the company makes it a model for other organizations, irrespective of sector.

Top 10 learnings based on behavioral science for news providers

These three case studies have enabled us to point to the following key learnings for news providers based on findings from behavioral science:

1. **Make change a personal choice:** Voluntary participation is usually more effective at driving behavior change than mandated participation. Whether 'bottom up' or 'top down', none of these interventions were mandatory, but were a matter of individual or organizational choice. Research shows that mandated approaches tend not to be effective at delivering sustained behavioral change[8].

2. **'Nudging' works:** Nudges anchored in findings from behavioral science are an effective way to increase gender equality in news coverage and should be made more use of by news media organizations. They help people to achieve their own behavioral goals and reduce any disparity between intended and actual behavior[9]. Simple tools that lay bare the discrepancy between journalists' intentions and actual behaviors can often provide the first step on the road to behavioral change.

3. **Personalize it:** Personalizing behavior change support tools is a highly effective way to help journalists confront and address their unconscious biases. The results of the 50:50 Project and FollowBias support the observation that personalized behavioral science-based approaches are a powerful way to encourage behavior change[10].

4. **Focus on one thing at a time:** Concentrating on just one dimension of behavior change at a time clarifies purpose and drives success. Having a clear objective – whether increasing the proportion of women contributors in news programs or the number of women amplified on Twitter – contributed to the success of the initiatives examined.

5. **Let journalists own it:** Involving those whose behavior one is trying to change in the design of behavioral intervention drives buy-in, ownership and accountability. In all three case studies, those taking part were involved in designing or modifying the interventions. The monitoring involved in the 50:50 Project was designed in the newsroom to fit in with workflows; the FollowBias system learns as users interact with it; at T-Systems the local South African team aligned gender indicators developed by the parent company to their local context.

6. **The messenger is key:** Find the right person to lead the change - make sure they are respected, connected and authentic. Credibility at every level is paramount. The messenger [11] who can most effectively champion behavioral change is not necessarily at the top of the hierarchy. An initiative that comes from highly respected journalists on the ground such as Ros Atkins can be highly effective in engaging peers.

7. **Champion from the top:** Behavior change requires committed and vocal leadership at the top of the news organization which champions women's improved visibility in the news/news organization. While senior leaders may not always be the messenger for change, their public and unequivocal support through words and deeds is essential. Particularly in large organizations such as the BBC and T-Systems, sustained behavior change could only happen because the leadership was committed[12].

8. **Get into a feedback loop**: Monitoring ongoing progress is key to building an evidence base and sustaining motivation. Building in a feedback loop

[7] Dolan & Galizzi, 2015
[8] Deci & Ryan, 2010; Deci & Ryan, 2008
[9] Thaler & Sunstein, 2009
[10] Alcott, 2011
[11] Dolan et al, 2010
[12] Smith, 2003

maximizes effectiveness. While measuring and monitoring do not have to be complex, they are vital in establishing evidence of what does and does not work and consequently in sustaining or even sharpening the initiative. Including a feedback mechanism in the design of interventions [13] encourages a cycle of continuous improvement and is particularly valuable in large, geographically dispersed organizations. In the case of news organizations, it would be critical to measure the changes in indicators triggered by any intervention across the whole news value chain. In this way, the organization will gain the best understanding of which indicators drive an improvement in women's visibility in the news.

9. **Let it 'spill over':** Interventions that promote gender equality can deliver benefits in terms of bridging other disparities such as race and class, known as 'promoting spillovers'. T-Systems' Nation Building Diversity Strategy introduced initiatives that simultaneously benefited women and disadvantaged groups such as black youth. The positive spillover effect [14] of gender balance initiatives into other aspects of diversity enhances the overall benefit they provide.

10. **Harness the power of social norms:** When behavioral interventions work, they can have a powerful accelerating effect in strengthening emerging gender equality-favoring social norms in news organizations. The 50:50 Project grew from one self-starting team of journalists to 600 BBC teams and 60 international media partners in the space of little more than three years. The more that newsrooms succeed in achieving gender balance in their contributors, the more others, news consumers and fellow content producers alike, will see this as the norm. Research shows that social norms are a powerful force in motivating behavioral change[15].

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[13] Dolan et al, 2010
[14] Dolan & Galizzi, 2015

[15] Kallgren, Reno & Cialdini, 2000

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PART 4:
EMERGING NARRATIVE FRAMES FOR PURSUING GENDER EQUALITY IN NEWS, STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS, AND FURTHER RESEARCH

"Liberation is always in part a storytelling process: breaking stories, breaking silences, making news stories"

Rebecca Solnit

PART 4:
EMERGING NARRATIVE FRAMES FOR PURSUING GENDER EQUALITY IN NEWS, STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS, AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Chapter 1

Emerging evidence-based narratives for change

Written by Luba Kassova and Richard Addy

The chapter at a glance

In this chapter we will examine 11 possible narrative frames which build the case for the much-needed change to redress gender imbalance and improve women's representation in news media. We will cluster these narrative frames into two groups: those which are most frequently used by academics and organizations; and those which are under-used despite containing strong potential for change, along with new narrative frames which fill existing gaps. Finally, we will share insights gained from eight recently conducted surveys with members of the public in the UK and the US which uncover convincing ways of framing existing male-skewed biases in news production.

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In this chapter we show that powerful narratives lie at the heart of what galvanizes us into action on important issues because they integrate different parts of the brain and generate activating emotions. We demonstrate that academics or organizations principally use four narrative frames. These focus on journalistic ethics; on rights-based journalism; on organizational culture-based change and on change as a responsibility to women audiences. We identify seven additional narratives which are under-used or do not yet feature in the conversations about gender inequality in news. These center around: challenging social norms; facilitating business success; ensuring audience relevance; safeguarding organizational reputation; legal compliance; taking advantage of technological advancements; and audience-targeting growth ambitions. Finally in this chapter, we show that when exposing the gender imbalance in news, the most successful framing should quantify in numerical or percentage terms the extent to which men are given prominence over women, rather than just state in isolation the lower proportion of women (or higher proportion of men) in news.

An introduction to the importance of telling powerful stories

We know from psychology and more recently from neuroscience that powerful stories or narratives (i.e. meta-stories) lie at the heart of what galvanizes us into action on issues which are important to us as human beings. There are good and bad stories. Bad stories at best only engage one part of the human brain – usually the rational brain. Powerful stories, on the other hand, integrate different parts of our brains. They align the emotional and rational/logical, the conscious and unconscious, the abstract and linguistic, the contextual and literal parts of the human brain[1].

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Humans are hardwired to recognize story structures[2]. Good stories are defined by the clarity of the *situation* they unfold, by the intensity of the *jeopardy* they expose and by the plausibility of the *resolution* they offer. They are characterized by a crisp *narrative structure* and by the activating *emotions* they evoke. The narrative of powerful stories is told by story *protagonists* who remain consistent throughout the whole story and by *supporting actors* who are there to clarify and amplify the jeopardy as well as to punctuate its resolution.

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Everything we notice, analyze and share are selected stories. According to Rebecca Solnit there is no such thing as telling facts in an objective way. There are only stories. **"*It would take your entire life to try to tell your entire story, and even then, the task would be impossible. Everything connects to everything else. The number of details is infinite. So you select* [the story]…"**[3]. The stories we select can be defined as frames i.e. a perspective that we impose on reality. Ultimately, human beings use words and images to create mental frames which, in a business context, contain the potential to galvanize or dampen action. Indeed, as Somers has argued, *"stories guide action"*[4].

With all the above in mind, in this chapter we have applied a framing/narrative perspective to the academic and other sources which have built the case for improving women's under-representation across the news value chain. In doing this, we have isolated the four narrative frames for change most commonly used by academics and/or news organizations (see Figure 4.1). We also fill in narrative gaps, highlighting seven further possible narrative frames for change which have been under-used or not used at all when making the case for improving gender equality in news media (see Figure 4.2). In addition, we have made suggestions about the most potent narrative frames for change that news providers can use.

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In order to provide sufficient information for news providers who wish to use any of these narrative frames when making the case for change in their own organizations, we have included eight building blocks under three categories (see Figures 4.1 and 4.2):

1. A summary of the *narrative frame* and *narrative statement.* We have identified 11 possible frames focusing on: journalistic ethics; human rights; organizational culture biases; responsibility towards women audiences; social change through challenging social norms; business success; audience relevance; news organizations' brand reputation; technological advances; audience-targeting growth ambitions; and legal obligations

2. A clear 3-part narrative structure including description of the *situation* (in each case *women being under-represented across the whole news value chain*); the *problem;* and the offered *solution(s)*

3. Three key elements needed in the narrative including the *central character(s)*, the *supporting character(s)* and the *challenges* that need to be overcome. We have identified ten possible central or supporting characters: journalists; women; women journalists; women as a metric; the society at large; news organizations; corporate leadership teams; women audiences; campaigners or activists; and technology.

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[1] Siegel & Payne Bryson (2011)
[2] Zak (2014)

[3] Solnit (2013)
[4] Somers (1994)

Figure 4.1: Frequently used narratives in building the case for improving gender equality in news

Narrative No	Building Block 1: Narrative Frame	Building Block 2: Narrative Frame	3-Part Narrative Structure			"Characters" & "Elements" in the Narrative		
			Building Block 3: Situation	Building Block 4: Problem	Building Block 5: Solution	Building Block 6: Central Character(s)	Building Block 7: Supporting Character(s)	Building Block 8: Challenges
1	Journalistic ethics	*"We have a journalistic duty to represent all our audience fairly"*	Women are under-represented across the whole news value chain...	... because journalists have not seen gender-sensitive reporting as an ethical issue.	Debate what's included in journalism ethics. Engage journalism schools about this. Use debiasing tools.	Journalists	Women	Some journalists arguing that this is not an ethical issue.
2	Rights-based	*"Women have a right to be seen, heard and read about enough in the news media"*		... because women's rights have not been sufficiently valued.	More campaigning	Women	Activists/ Campaigners	News organizations not listening as they see activists as another lobby group. News organizations prioritizing other audiences (e.g. young adults) over women.
3	Culture-based	*"If we don't address institutional male dominance and institutional sexism in news organizations, nothing will change"*		... because news leaders are gender-blind and do not fully understand the entrenched sexism in their organization.	Expose institutional sexism. Debias. Nudge. Encourage new strategies. Introduce gender sensitivity training. Adopt gender sensitive policies.	Women (as journalists)	News institutions	Recognizing male-dominated culture and overcoming cultural values built up over many decades.
4	Responsibility to audiences	*"We need to be open, transparent and accountable to our audiences"*		... because news organizations have failed to be accountable to their audiences, of whom women are a key one.	Open up news organizations to scrutiny.	Journalists	Women (as audience members)	A belief that journalism should be independent and not answerable to any one group.

Source: AKAS (2020)

The most commonly used narrative frames for change focus on journalistic ethics, rights-based journalism, organizational culture-based change and change as a responsibility to women

Many academic authors and organizations articulate the case for change in terms of **journalistic ethics**. White argued that a fair and balanced portrayal of women in news should be a professional and ethical aspiration for journalists, as is respect for accuracy, fairness and honesty [5] . Macharia argued that a journalistic ethics that respects truth and accuracy, independence, fairness and impartiality, humanity, and accountability, the five journalistic principles espoused by the Ethical Journalism Network (EJN), cannot be sexist[6]. The following statement by UNESCO in 2011 at the launch of the *'Women Make the News'* initiative remains relevant today**: *"There are only two kinds of journalism – good and bad. Good journalism involves fair and accurate representation and a search for diversity and balanced reporting on subject matter, perspectives and points of view.… Women constitute half of the world population […] Yet, women still do not constitute half of the media images and voices, nor media messages address half of women's interests and concerns."***

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In this narrative the central characters are journalists who until now have not seen achieving gender equality in news as a manifestation of their journalistic ethics (which constitutes the main challenge). The supporting characters are women, who are the beneficiaries of the success of this narrative for change. If this narrative is successful (using education, training and debiasing tools) journalists would perceive representing women fairly and fully as their journalistic duty (see narrative no. 1 in Figure 4.1).

The case for change can also be expressed in terms of **rights-based journalism**. A rights-based perspective prioritizes *upholding human rights standards* and giving a voice to marginalized groups who have a right to freedom of expression. This suggests that news media organizations have an obligation to give voice to those who are on the margins of society whether because of their gender, class, race or any other aspect of their identity. Framing the challenge of achieving gender balance in news media as an issue of women's rights brings into focus three intersecting concerns: women's freedom of expression, professional ethics and rights-based journalism[7].

In this narrative the central characters are women whose human right to be seen, heard or read about in the news is not being sufficiently met. They are not visible because news organizations are not listening to activists calling for change (the supporting actors in this narrative), seeing them as mere lobbyists. If successful, the impact of this narrative would be improved visibility of women in the news, with journalists having acknowledged this as a fundamental right of women (see narrative no. 2 in Figure 4.1).

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A common narrative that has emerged from academic literature is the **news organization culture-based** call for change. It is argued that there should be an emphasis on transforming systems or organizations to become more gender equality-focused, rather than simply focusing on increasing the numbers of women in existing patriarchal systems[8]. Macharia suggested there must be an ambition to create a gender-sensitive journalistic culture[9].

The central characters in this narrative are women journalists who are not sufficiently empowered in the news organizations they operate in due to the existing institutional sexism, the gender-blindness of the leadership and the prevalent masculine values in the newsroom, which override gender identity. The solution is to debias and nudge journalists and senior leadership teams, to provide gender-sensitive training and to adopt child-care and flexible policies which will benefit women journalists as they are more likely to be primary carers than men. If successful, this narrative would lead to a change in culture which would embrace equally women's and men's gender values, and their differing leadership approaches and

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[5] White, 2009
[6] Macharia, 2015

[7] Macharia, 2015
[8] Kangas et al., 2014
[9] Macharia, 2015

journalism reporting styles (see narrative no. 3 in Figure 4.1).

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Another narrative which has emerged in the academic literature is the case for change based on the argument that journalists are accountable to their audiences and therefore have a **responsibility to their audiences** to report their perspectives. This argument is built on the frame that journalists need to be open and transparent with their audiences and assumes that they do not see their independence as being in conflict with their accountability to their audiences (which is the key challenge in this narrative). The central characters in this narrative are journalists and the supporting actors are women audiences, who are the ultimate beneficiaries of journalists' accountability to audiences. (see narrative no. 4 in Figure 4.1). If successful, this narrative would lead to improved consumption/engagement of women audiences with the news, based on improved visibility and broader portrayal of women as news protagonists.
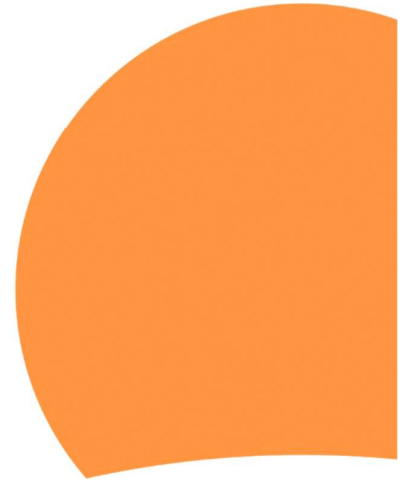
Narrative Gaps: The less common or unused narratives for change are frames around social norms, business success, audience relevance, organizational reputation, legal compliance, technological advancements and audience-targeting growth ambitions

There is an argument for taking a more holistic approach to gender balance by not placing the change emphasis solely on women, even if women are the intended beneficiaries. Kangas, Haider & Fraser argued that focusing on women as the sole agents of change can add undue pressure, particularly in countries or environments where women are facing many other challenges. They pointed out that men are often framed as the problem rather than part of the solution and are themselves often subject to news media stereotyping which contributes to an unbalanced vision of the roles of men and women in society. When men are included in gender-balanced initiatives they can be powerful advocates for equality and increase the impact of such interventions[10].

The seven frames and narratives presented in Figure 4.2 are gender-balanced in their framing and aim to galvanize representatives of both gender groups. The central characters in focus are news leaders, corporate leadership, women audiences, technological advances and women as a metric. The supporting actors are society, women, women audiences, women journalists, news organizations and journalists. More than half of these central and supporting characters include men as well as women.

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The **change agents of social norms** frame develops a narrative which takes a confident stance on the debate around the role of journalists in society, positioning them as agents of change for bettering society rather than simply as agents of truth reflecting society as it is. This narrative lends itself particularly well to news organizations operating in the four countries under review in the global south, where, as we have identified, journalists see themselves much more readily as agents of change. As shown in the *Commonalities between countries across different indicators* chapter of the report (Part 2, Chapter 5), there is a clear delineation between the roles assumed by the journalists surveyed in the global north and the global south in relation to society [11] . The chapter revealed that although almost all journalists from both hemispheres see themselves as reporters of truth, those from the UK and US were much less likely than those from the global south to also see themselves as agents of change. The central characters of this narrative are gender-sensitive news leaders and journalists who are keen to improve gender representation and balance in news by challenging existing social norms (see narrative no. 5 in Figure 4.2). The supporting character is society, which is held back by centuries-old patriarchal and sexist social norms and which profoundly influences the existing gender inequality in news and beyond. If successful, journalists will see changing social norms to be more inclusive of women as their mission. They would expose the gender-blindness of existing social norms, engage journalism schools with this perspective and offer training in gender-sensitive, or even gender-transformative, news making.

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[10] Kangas et al, 2014

[11] Hanitzsch et al, 2019

Figure 4.2: Under-used or new narratives framing the case for change

| Narrative No | Building Block 1: Narrative Frame | Building Block 2: Narrative Frame | 3-Part Narrative Structure | | | "Characters" & "Elements" in the Narrative | | |
			Building Block 3: Situation	Building Block 4: Problem	Building Block 5: Solution	Building Block 6: Central Character(s)	Building Block 7: Supporting Character(s)	Building Block 8: Challenges
5	Change agents of social norms	*"We believe journalists have a responsibility to help change society (social norms) for the better"*	Women are under-represented across the whole news value chain...	... because journalists are not actively engaged in the social change needed in society and in news organizations by challenging male dominated/ sexist social norms.	Debate journalists' role. Expose social norms. Engage journalism schools about this. Introduce gender sensitivity training.	Gender sensitive news leaders/ journalists	Society	Social norms built up over centuries. Belief amongst journalists (especially in the UK & US) that social change is not an important objective for journalism.
6	Business success	*"The news model is broken. Targeting women is one of our survival solutions"*		... because news organizations have failed to see the opportunity in the women's market.	Have a clear business strategy that is explicit about plans to grow in the women's market.	Corporates (owners/ top editors / CEOs of news organizations)	Women (as audience members)	Skepticism about appealing to women making a difference to the bottom line.
7	Audience relevance	*"We need to be relevant to our audiences"*		... because news organizations do not understand their women audiences.	Collect more insights into women's news needs, worries and perceptions. Link news production with the needs of women audiences.	Women (as news audience members)	Journalists	A belief that journalism should be "producer-led" and not overly influenced by audiences.
8	Reputational	*"We need to be seen as a modern organization, moving with the times. Our reputation is at risk"*		... because news organizations have failed to understand the reputational risk associated with institutional sexism.	Case studies of organizations that have responded successfully and badly to the challenge (in light of #MeToo). Adopt gender sensitive policies.	Corporates (owners/ top editors / CEOs of news organizations)	Women	Not truly believing that change is needed and therefore not coming across as authentic.

Source: AKAS (2020)

Narrative No	Building Block 1: Narrative Frame	Building Block 2: Narrative Frame	3-Part Narrative Structure			"Characters" & "Elements" in the Narrative		
			Building Block 3: Situation	Building Block 4: Problem	Building Block 5: Solution	Building Block 6: Central Character(s)	Building Block 7: Supporting Character(s)	Building Block 8: Challenges
9	Legal compliance	*"We have to represent and treat women fairly, otherwise we are breaking the law"*		… because laws and rules are weakly enforced or non existent	Assign senior champions to push change through. Encourage news organizations to comply with the letter and spirit of the rules and regulations. Adopt gender sensitive policies.	Corporates (owners/ top editors / CEOs of news organizations)	Women (as journalists)	Laws/ rules are often not enforced for decades after being passed.
10	Techno-logical advances	*"We should use technology to improve gender equality and prevent it from amplifying the threats to gender equality"*	Women are under-represented across the whole news value chain…	… and news organizations have failed to understand the Implications of technology for their approach to gender equality.	Ensure that women journalists are encouraged/ mentored/ trained to be tech savvy and that technology amplifies the voice and needs of women audiences.	Interchangeable between women/women journalists & technological advances		Lack of detailed understanding especially amongst owners/ leaders about the positive and negative role technology can play (in part due to minimal research).
11	Audience-targeting growth ambitions	*"Just hit these targets and the problem will be solved"*		… because news organizations are unaware of how they perform on gender equality.	Measure and set targets (but understand the limitations).	Women (as a metric)	News organizations	Quantification does not capture the qualitative dimension of gender equality.

Source: AKAS (2020)

Mills argued that **economics (business success)** rather than altruism drives news media organizations, and that articulating the case for change in terms of business performance indicators such as audience growth is likely to be more impactful than rights-based or other arguments[13]. If news media organizations believe that more gender-balanced outputs will help them attract and retain more women news consumers, then they will be more likely to promote gender-balanced behaviors. For this case for change to gain legitimacy, it is important that news organizations collect empirical evidence that demonstrates the link between more gender-balanced news and the impact this has on women's consumption of news. This can be achieved by measuring an organization's performance among women across the whole news value chain. Studies covering media and other industries have made this business case for gender equality[14]. There is a growing body of evidence showing the benefit of investing in women in all parts of the business value

[13] Mills, 1997

[13] Huang et al, 2019

chain, and recent research has shown that the business case for gender diversity on executive teams is stronger than ever [15]. However, there is a gap in specific research in news media organizations. *"Our 2019 analysis finds that companies in the top quartile of gender diversity on executive teams were 25 percent more likely to experience above-average profitability than peer companies in the fourth quartile. This is up from 21 percent in 2017 and 15 percent in 2014. Moreover, we found that the higher the representation, the higher the likelihood of outperformance. Companies with more than 30 percent women on their executive teams are significantly more likely to outperform those with between 10 and 30 percent women, and these companies in turn are more likely to outperform those with fewer or no women executives."*[16]

The business success frame develops the narrative with corporate leadership teams as the main character and women audiences as the supporting actors (see narrative no. 6 in Figure 4.2) and relies on the argument that attracting more women is a key solution to the problem of malfunctioning news business models. If successful, this narrative would have a clear and measurable business strategy for growing its women audiences that is both explicit and endorsed by the leaders at the top of the organization. The outcome would be increased reach and engagement of women audiences. The main barrier to success is skepticism on the part of the leadership and journalists as to whether appealing to women could make a difference to revenues.

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The **audience relevance** frame develops a narrative which is centered around the news needs of audiences, of whom women form half (see narrative no. 7 in Figure 4.2). It assumes there is an advantage in producing news which is anchored in women's and men's needs as audiences, and that these needs are not necessarily the same. The central characters in this narrative therefore are women news audiences, while the supporting characters are journalists who produce content relevant to them. If successful, this narrative would lead not only to improved and increased representation and portrayal of women in the news, but also to an increase in women audiences. As in the business success narrative, the success of this narrative is dependent on robust measurement of the impact on news consumption of audience-centric content and on

other elements of the news value chain.

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Organizational leadership teams (e.g. CEOs, owners, top editors, senior leadership teams) are the central characters for the narratives framed around **reputational** and **legal-compliance** organizational needs, while women and women journalists take on the role of the supporting characters (see narratives no. 8 and no. 9 in Figure 4.2). The narratives are framed around the needs of news organizations to either protect/build up their reputation through improving gender equality or to adhere to imposed legal requirements. In both of these narratives, (as well as to some degree in the **audience-targeting growth ambitions narrative,** narrative no. 11 in Figure 4.2), the biggest challenge is the **extrinsic, rather than intrinsic**, **motivation for change** which risks sabotaging success and backfiring through a perceived lack of authenticity on the part of the central character at the top of the organization. These two narratives are likely to succeed in countries which have unfavorable gender-related social norms and where change is consequently most likely to happen through extrinsic rather than intrinsic motivation.

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The frame around **technological advances** (see narrative no. 10 in Figure 4.2) is a newly emerging narrative which holds potential for success but is still in its infancy. There is very limited existing research into the positive amplifying effect that technological advances have on women journalists' voices and on women audiences, or indeed on the chilling effect that abuse on social media platforms can have on freedom of expression and the damage done to journalists (particularly women) by the weaponization of digital platforms (as covered earlier in the Context chapter). If successful, the outcome of this narrative would be more empowered women/women journalists whose voices have been amplified through technological advances.

To conclude, there are three powerful narrative frames which may hold a strong universal appeal across the global north and the global south: those centered around journalism ethics, business success and audience relevance. The last two narratives are substantially under-used by news providers currently and should be given more prominence in the future when building the case for change.

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[15] International Finance Corporation, World Bank Group, 2017; Hunt et al., 2020

[16] Hunt et al, 2020. Note: the report included research from India, Nigeria, South Africa, the UK & the US

Wording matters: Exposing the degree to which men's voices and experiences are amplified over women's provides an impactful way of framing the problem of gender inequality in the news

Behavioral science has uncovered that the way humans frame reality influences the decisions they make. For example, behavioral scientists have identified a cognitive bias called the *framing effect* whereby a person makes a different decision based on whether the options are presented with positive or negative semantics: as a gain or as a loss. Humans are also subject to another important limitation called *anchoring*, whereby an individual relies too heavily on an initial piece of information offered (the 'anchor') when making decisions rather than on a full suite of information. Given the slowdown in the progress made towards a balanced representation of women across the news value chain, we have tested different ways of framing *the problem* for better impact with audiences in the UK and US[17]. This identified clear framing and anchoring 'winners' with audiences which, if used by journalists reporting on gender inequality or by external communication teams targeting various stakeholders, could have potential for galvanizing the public.

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AKAS took findings from Media Ecosystems Analysis Group's recent content analysis of gender equality in the news [18] and asked nationally representative samples of adults in the UK and the US how satisfied, neutral or dissatisfied they were with these findings. The problem of women's under-representation as experts in the news was framed in four different ways and tested with different audience samples of c1,000 randomly selected adults using Google Surveys (see Figure 4.3). All four ways of framing the problem contained elements of the same findings but presented them in a different way.

1. The first way of framing the problem was to state the proportion of experts in the news in the UK/US who are men (Frame 1).

2. The second was to state the proportion of experts in the news in the UK/US who are women (Frame 2).

3. The third exposed the degree to which men were prioritized as experts over women, expressed in percentage terms (Frame 3).

4. The fourth emphasized how many more times men were used as experts in the news than women (Frame 4).

The results from the surveys showed unequivocal winning frames: Frames 3 and 4, which explicitly compared men and women, generated significantly higher dissatisfaction among a large minority of men and a majority of women in both countries than either Frame 1 or 2 (see Figure 4.3). For example, Frame 3 generated 4.8 times more dissatisfaction among men and 3.3 times more dissatisfaction among women in the UK than Frame 1. Similarly, in the US Frame 3 generated 2.5 times more dissatisfaction among men and 2.4 times more dissatisfaction among women than Frame 1 (15%). The results for Frame 4 were similar. Both Frames 3 and 4 created dissatisfaction among a majority of women, unlike Frames 1 and 2 which did so only for a small minority (see Figure 4.3).

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[17] AKAS, 2020

[18] Media Ecosystems Analysis Group, 2020

Figure 4.3: Results from surveys conducted to test different framing of the problem of male bias in the use of experts in the UK/US (2020)

Question	UK (Slightly & Very Unsatisfied)		USA (Slightly & Very Unsatisfied)	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Frame 1: Recent evidence shows that in 2019 [69% (UK)/ 71% (USA)] of experts commenting in the news in the [UK/USA] were men. Do you feel satisfied, neutral or unsatisfied by this?	9%	19%	16%	26%
Frame 2: Recent evidence shows that in 2019 [29% (UK)/ 25% (USA)] of experts commenting in the news in the [UK/USA} were women. Do you feel satisfied, neutral or unsatisfied by this?	10%	14%	15%	15%
Frame 3: Men are nearly [138% (UK) /184% (USA)] more likely to be used as experts in the news than women. Do you feel satisfied, neutral or unsatisfied by this?	43%	62%	40%	62%
Frame 4: Men are nearly [2 and a half (UK)/ 3 (USA] times more likely to be used as experts in the news than women. Do you feel satisfied, neutral or unsatisfied by this?	41%	65%	42%	58%

Source: AKAS (2020)

A framing recommendation for news providers and external communications teams:

Based on this research, we conclude that when presenting information designed to build the case for change among different stakeholders or the public, news providers and news funder organizations should frame the gender inequality problem by exposing the discrepancy between men's and women's performance, either using percentage differences or highlighting the number of times men are prioritized as experts over women. See Figure 4.4 for examples of more and less impactful framing of gender inequality in news based on three of the four indicators.

Figure 4.4: Less or more impactful wording of the existing gender inequality in news (2020)

Gender equality indicators for 6 analyzed countries	Less Impactful framing	More Impactful framing
Gender Diversity in Leadership		
Proportion of governance roles taken by women/men (Source: *Global Report on Status of Women in the News Media*. Fieldwork: 2008-2010. Publication year: 2011)	Between 64% and 93% of the news governance boards in the six countries are made up of men / Between 17% and 39% of the news governance boards in the six countries are made up of women	Men are between 60% and 399% more likely to be on news governance boards then women in the six countries / Men are between 1.6 and 5 times more likely to be on news governance boards in the six countries
Proportion of top-level management roles taken by women/men (Source: *Global Report on Status of Women in the News Media*. Fieldwork: 2008-2010. Publication year: 2011)	Between 65% and 86% of the top-level management roles in news organizations in the six countries are taken by men / Between 14% and 35% of the top-level management roles are taken by women	Men are between 89% and 525% more likely to be in the top-level management tier than women in the six countries/ Men are between 2 and 6 times more likely to be in the top management tier in the six countries than women
Newsgathering: women as experts in the news		
Quoted share of women's/ men's voices as experts/sources/ protagonists (Source: Media Ecosystems Analysis Group analysis of 2019 content. Publication year: 2020)	Between 69% and 81% of the quoted share of voice in news in the six countries belongs to men / Between 14% and 29% of the quoted share of voice in news in the six countries belongs to women	Men are between 138% and 471% more likely to be quoted as experts, sources or protagonists in news as women in the six analyzed countries / Men are between 2 and 6 times more likely to be quoted as experts, sources or protagonists in news than women in the six analyzed countries
News output: women protagonists in the news		
Share of headlines with women's or men's name as protagonists (Source: Media Ecosystems Analysis Group analysis of 2019 content. Publication year: 2020)	Between 73% and 83% of the protagonists in news in the six countries are men / Between 15% and 30% of the protagonists in news in the six countries are women	Men are between 153% and 453% more likely to appear as protagonists in news stories than women in the six analyzed countries / Men are between 3 and 6 times more likely to appear as protagonists in news stories than women in the six analyzed countries

Source: AKAS (2020)

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PART 4:
EMERGING NARRATIVE FRAMES FOR PURSUING GENDER EQUALITY IN NEWS, STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS, AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Chapter 2

Strategic recommendations

The chapter at a glance

Whereas the earlier chapters dedicated to the individual gender equality indicators generated recommendations related to improving each specific indicator, this chapter will generate more overarching strategic recommendations that have emerged from the analysis of all the sources used in this report. Each recommendation tackles one or more elements of the news value chain and has been crafted with a view to supporting the efforts not only of news providers but also of news funders[1] to achieve gender parity in news.

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[1] For example, not-for-profit organizations such as NGOs and Foundations

Ensure that your organization is able to answer two important strategic questions:

- **What drives improved portrayal of women in the news?** And perhaps even more importantly:

- **Which news features carry the potential to increase women's empowerment?**

These are crucial questions that no organization has yet been able to answer robustly because, as shown in previous chapters, no organization systematically measures gender performance across the whole news value chain. This has resulted in an inability to understand what drives gender parity in news and more broadly what drives women's improved sense of agency.

The four indicators covered in this report, which measure quantitatively the proportion of women in news organizations, in newsgathering, the women protagonists in stories, and the proportion of stories devoted to gender equality, are an important starting point for redressing women's under-representation in the news. However, they *are not sufficient to understand the impact that news media has on the way in which women and girls are fundamentally represented in the media, how they are perceived by society or the way they understand their role in society*. There are three initiatives which would breach this gap in understanding:

1. **Introducing and measuring consumption and impact-based indicators:** It is critical for news organizations to introduce indicators that measure women's level of consumption and engagement with news, the relevance of news to women, their perception of how empowered news makes them or their female communities feel (the *impacts* on individual and community levels) and the impact news stories have on advancing gender equality in society (the *impact* on a societal level). These types of indicators, notably missing from academic and business thinking today, would help news providers to understand what women think and feel about the news outputs they consume; how their perceptions change when news outputs change; how empowered women feel when they consume the news; and how their self-perceptions and awareness change as a result of more gender-balanced news.

2. **Incorporating more qualitative assessment when measuring all gender equality indicators**: In the past and at present a strong emphasis has been placed on measuring *quantitative* improvements in the representation of women in the news (e.g. their proportion in the news). The available data tells us *what the past or present picture* of a given indicator looks like. For example, what the universe of women as reporters, sources, experts or protagonists is and how it has changed from the past. However, what we are largely missing in this analysis is the story explaining these numbers. *Why is the status quo the way it is*? Why has the improvement in gender balance in the news come to a standstill in the last few decades? What is driving this stagnation? In addition, an important question to address is: **how are women presented in the news?**

3. A profound gap is the lack of understanding of what unconscious messages women protagonists in the news send to the women of today. What proportion of women protagonists in the news convey empowerment vs. victimhood or reinforce stereotypes (e.g. women being seen exclusively as care givers) vs. challenge stereotypes (e.g. women being shown as successful business people); what proportion of protagonists portray women as survivors vs. victims, as sources of expertise vs. sexual or beauty objects. We are yet to unearth a source that has focused on the qualitative assessment of women in the news at a global level in the last five years[2]. Invariably, one of the key barriers that has prevented this gap from being filled will be the high cost associated with overlaying a qualitative analysis (delivered by human expertise) onto automated content analysis (delivered by AI and therefore much less costly). With that in mind, **there is a strong case to be made for news providers and funders to combine efforts in creating an industry-wide gender news tracker measuring performance, perceptions and needs of women across the whole news production, consumption and impacts value chain: from organizational resources, to newsgathering, outputs, news consumption and impacts.**

[2] GMMP reports, the last of which was published in 2015, are the only global source which has provided some qualitative assessments of women's portrayal in the news.

Tackle the representation of women in ownership and governance structures when tracking the improvement of gender equality at organizational resources level (i.e. when measuring gender diversity in the workplace)

This report has revealed the progress-inhibiting hegemony of men in news ownership and their governance of gender equality in news. Therefore, when defining indicators measuring diversity in the workplace, news organizations should include an indicator that aims to achieve gender parity on Governing Boards. They should also make a concerted effort to measure the impact of predominantly male ownership structures on the cultures of news organizations and on the gender balance of news.

Craft news stories with an understanding of what women's needs, worries and aspirations are. Disaggregate data by sex

In order to improve the portrayal of women in the news it is critical that news stories are relevant to women news audiences. In her highly acclaimed recent book *Invisible Women: Exposing data bias in a world designed for men*, Caroline Criado Perez calls out '*the default male*' bias resulting from the absence of women in data. **"*Failing to include the perspective of women is a huge driver of an unintended male bias that attempts (often in good faith) to pass itself off as 'gender neutral*',"** she writes. In our experience, gender differences frequently remain undetected by news organizations because they focus their audience performance analysis across different platforms on *all adults*, rather than on data disaggregated by sex. This precludes them from understanding the differences between men's and women's news needs and preferences, which in turn leads to news production decision makers projecting their own (predominantly male) preference lenses - often referred to as '*news-making instincts*' - onto what all audiences want, regardless of their gender.

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We know of no **longitudinal global survey** that assesses women's news needs and preferences or the degree to which various news providers meet those needs. **Developing such a tracker would benefit the news industry tremendously in its efforts to advance women's visibility in news**. **Furthermore, tracking preferences of women (and men) as news consumers would create a feedback loop which would be beneficial for the audience growth of news organizations.** Duncan, Messner, Willms and Wilson[3] recommended that organizations create a feedback loop which allows both men and women consumers of news to provide feedback on the extent to which their needs are being met.

Redress the deep gender imbalance in political news coverage. This will make a discernible difference to the progress of women's portrayal in the news

The report revealed that political coverage dominates news headlines and news media, often accounting for more stories than any other news genre. In this context, increasing the proportion of women in politics news beats/desks should be a focus of gender equality targets because this area produces newsrooms' most influential output. In addition, increasing the proportion of women who are story protagonists, experts, sources and contributors in political news stories will achieve a disproportionately positive impact on women's visibility in news.

Ramp up advocacy efforts for gender equality in news. Target opinion formers (including journalists) over the public

Given the powerful position opinion leaders hold in society, and their lack of prioritization of gender equality issues in favor of other priorities in all the analyzed countries for which data is available, more work needs to be done to convince this group of the importance of advancing gender equality in the news, if there is to be a significant shift in the news media industry and wider society. There needs to be an exploration of the narrative frames most likely to be effective in engaging these opinion leaders: **those centered around journalism ethics, business success**

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[3] Duncan, Messner, Willms & Wilson, 2005

and audience relevance, as well as narrative frames centered around organizational reputation.

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In addition, advocacy efforts should **build a relevance bridge between gender equality issues and issues that opinion formers care about more** such as education, job creation/employment, public sector governance, anti-corruption and health.

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A key advocacy goal must be to counteract the discriminatory cultural norms and attitudes, including unconscious biases, that drive the ongoing failure to address gender inequality effectively. News media organizations should support social campaigns and education programs designed to combat these [4]. Additionally, it is recommended that civil society advocacy should be supported as a tool to challenge the misrepresentation or trivialization of women, sexism, etc.[5], in tandem with facilitating networking to provide space for discussion and debate.

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Advocacy efforts should **make the case for journalists to see themselves as change agents**, rather than simply truth-tellers. In order to change existing entrenched patriarchal and sexist norms, news media should lead in challenging them. This can only be done if journalists see their role as challengers of the status quo.

Have a definitive policy on gender image parity in news

News providers should aim to drive the gender equality narrative covertly through increasing the proportion of empowering images of women used in the news. It is however imperative that news providers also drive the gender equality narrative overtly through covering gender equality stories as well as through ramping up their use of images of women in the news to ensure that images do not reinforce patriarchal gender stereotypes, but challenge them. AKAS' limited-scale image content analysis completed in 2018 showed that

on average between 20% and 40% of images in the news globally feature women[6]. Moreover, a proportion of these images portrayed women as victims or sexual objects. Very few images depicted women as empowered agency brokers.

Educate and train different generations

Support the teaching of gender equality as a compulsory module for **students of news journalism**, as well as training on media literacy and gender equality issues**.** Support the launch of **programs in secondary (high) schools**, aimed at educating future news audiences and news makers in gender sensitivity. Build their awareness of existing gender imbalance in the news and the need to redress it.

Introduce gender equality news industry awards

There is a real need to champion women role models in decision-making positions in journalism, particularly in environments or countries where such role models are not in evidence[7]. These role models should be championed by both the industry and by funders. In countries such as Kenya for example, where women role models are lacking, younger women find it harder to envision themselves in such positions. Women journalists are concerned by the invisibility and misrepresentation of women in media coverage and are motivated to advocate for women and to tell women's stories. Creating prestigious awards for journalists who have excelled at doing this would amplify their voices additionally.

Focus on youth

In view of the finding that young people across all countries are more likely to favor gender equality, focus communications and advocacy initiatives particularly on this audience. This is likely to enjoy the highest success rates across Africa and India which have a population bulge in this age group.

[4] McCracken et al, 2018
[5] Macharia, 2015
[6] Source: AKAS analysis of website images of 18 news providers.
UK (38% of images were of women): BBC News, The Guardian, Telegraph, Daily Mail; USA (29% of images were of women: CNN, Fox News, New York Times, Washington Post) France: Le Figaro, Le

Monde, France 24; Germany: ARD Tagesschau, Sueddeutsche Zeitung, Die Welt; Scandinavia: Dagens Nytheter, Spain: El Pais, Mena: Al Jazeera, Pan-Euro: Euronews;
Time period: 30/01/2018-05/02/18. Total no. of images: 11,220 (not including Daily Mail)
[7] Byerly, 2016

PART 4:
EMERGING NARRATIVE FRAMES FOR PURSUING GENDER EQUALITY IN NEWS, STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS, AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Chapter 3

Recommendations for further research and explorations

The chapter at a glance

The following short chapter will summarize eight areas which academic scholars, whose work formed part of the literature review used in this report, have identified as knowledge gaps and which would benefit from further academic research.

Understanding the impact that changes in one element of the news value chain have on all the others is sorely needed but notably lacking

Measurement of the correlation between the proportion of women in the newsroom and the coverage of women in the news should be a key area of focus (Macharia, 2015) as empirical evidence is lacking.

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The portrayal of women and men in the news and the effect this has on audiences in terms of news consumption and impacts should also be explored (European Commission, 2010).

A more robust understanding of the influence of society on journalism is needed

Societal influences on the gendered nature of journalism cultures is an interesting area to explore. Hanitzsch & Hanusch (2012) found that society had a significant influence on journalist values in different countries (e.g. on levels of masculinity, levels of gender empowerment) and that journalists' professional views were shaped by the societies in which they lived.

An in-depth understanding of journalists' decision-making processes is currently lacking

A deeper, qualitative understanding of the decision-making processes of editors and journalists is needed (Kian & Hardin, 2009). Targeted ethnographic research into reporting behavior would be very useful (case studies from Russia & Scandinavia have revealed how male journalists socialized with male politicians and how this excluded women).

The identity factors that drive journalists' behaviors are still opaque

A deeper understanding of intersectionality, where

gender inequality intersects with other aspects of identity such as race, religion, class or age, could lead to the development of more tailored responses to inequality (Kangas, Haider & Fraser, 2014). GMMP tools have been adapted to enable intersectional analyses (Macharia, 2015).

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An investigation into the relationship between attitudes and actual behavior in journalistic practice would be useful. Hanitzsch & Hanusch (2012) suggest there is a disparity between journalist survey responses and actual news content analysis, suggesting the existence of unconscious bias.

A gender analysis of staff turnover data among news media professionals would be instructive

While there is anecdotal evidence that there is higher staff turnover among women working in news compared to men, there is little empirical data available on this. Both quantitative and qualitative research would be useful to shed light on how true this is and what drives it. Macharia (2015) recommends carrying out research with union members to learn more about experiences of workplace environments and career progression.

Cross-cultural research into women's representation and portrayal in news is needed

AKAS' literature review identified that topics in news of concern to women, such as violence against women, women in politics or women in sport, tend to be researched within but not across countries. Multi-country research would be useful. For example, Carll (2003) highlights a gap in research into cross-cultural news coverage of violence and women.

Further understanding of the role of digital media is required

An in-depth understanding of the evolving role of digital media (especially social media) in news production and consumption, and its influence on gender balance in news would be highly valuable. Research on gender representation in social media is

noticeably missing from the academic focus in favor of traditional media such as TV, radio and newspapers. McCracken et al. (2018) believe that digital media has major implications for a younger generation of women who are more likely to actively engage with news online and will be influenced by gender inequalities portrayed there.

Compiling individual case studies of success or failure would be valuable

Detailed case studies on gender equality journeys at an individual news organization level (which have both a qualitative and quantitative dimension) are much needed.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THIS REPORT

Bias

A systematic (rather than random) distortion of reality which results in prejudice, unfair norms or behaviors and/or partiality

Framing

Adoption of a particular point of view e.g. positive or negative in relation to a specific narrative

Gender Awareness/Gender Sensitivity

Ability to view how society assigns gender roles and relationships and the ability to understand the effects this has

Gender Balance in News

A fair representation of women and men which is manifested both:

- quantitatively - the share of voice of women vs. men in the news is proportional to their percentage in the population
- qualitatively - the portrayal of women and men in the news reflects their different and many perspectives

Gender Bias

Prejudiced actions or thoughts that affect a person or a group of people based on their perceived gender

Gender Blindness

Failure to recognize that the roles and responsibilities of women/girls and men/boys are ascribed to, or imposed upon, them in specific social, cultural, economic and political contexts

Gender Equality

The state of being equal in status, rights and opportunities, and of being valued equally, regardless of sex or gender identity and/or expression

Gender Equity

Fairness in treatment of all people regardless of sex or gender identity and/or expression

Gender Norms

The collectively held expectations and beliefs about how people should behave and interact in specific social settings and during different stages of their lives based on their sex or gender identity

Gender Stereotype

Preconceived ideas of what women and men's attributes, characteristics and roles should be based on their gender

Narratives

A structured account of events, occurrences or developments that tends to include a number of elements such as setting, protagonist, antagonist, plot, conflict, frames and resolution

News Value Chain

The journey of a news story from production (including newsgathering and news coverage) to news consumption by audiences (across different platforms and properties) and finally, the impact of the news story on individuals, communities and the society at large

Nudge

A concept used in behavioral science that proposes ways of influencing people's choices and behaviors through subtle changes in the environment/the context where decisions are made

Higher and Lower Profile News Genres

Higher profile news genres are those which are allocated a bigger share of the overall volume of all news stories by a news provider (e.g. politics and the economy)

Lower profile news genres are those which are allocated a smaller share of the overall volume of all news stories by a news provider (e.g. arts and entertainment, education)

APPENDIX 1: NEWS PROVIDERS' GENDER PARITY IN NEWS CHECKLIST

Gender Parity in News Checklist

Organizational Resources:

Gender diversity in the workplace

1. Put in place a comprehensive suite of policies addressing gender equality. Ensure that its implementation is the responsibility of a nominated senior leader. Policies should cover: ☐

   - gender equality including equal pay ☐

   - parental leave & childcare assistance (proven high impact) ☐

   - flexible working (proven high impact) ☐

   - addressing gender bias in recruitment ☐

   - return to work after career break ☐

   - sexual harassment ☐

   - career development and training ☐

2. Set explicit, measurable goals relating to gender equality in the organization's corporate strategy including a clearly articulated business case for change. ☐

3. Aspire to take steps to achieve gender parity in the governance and leadership structures of your organization. Track progress in attracting, retaining and developing women journalists. ☐

4. Tackle gender blindness through a comprehensive gender sensitivity training program for men and women at all organizational levels (governance structure, senior leadership and journalists) ☐

   - Increase awareness of existing social norms that represent an obstacle ☐

   - Encourage journalists to see themselves as change agents for the advancement of gender parity in news ☐

5. Clearly articulate the business case for gender parity along the whole news value chain. Frame the need for change around ☐

   - upholding journalistic ethics ☐

   - boosting business success ☐

   - guaranteeing audience relevance ☐

   - maintaining a high organizational reputation ☐

Newsgathering:

Women as sources of news expertise

6. Track the gender balance of experts featuring in news stories reported by your organization. Aim for gender parity. ☐

7. Audit your current contributor lists. Compile lists of women contributors and experts for journalists to use in their stories. Use other nudges. ☐

8. Increase women's share of expert voice in agenda-setting beats such as economy and politics to achieve parity. ☐

9. Set an expectation of gender parity for expert panels on all platforms (e.g. TV, radio). ☐

News outputs:

News stories leading with women protagonists

10. Track and periodically review the gender balance of protagonists featuring in news stories. Aim for parity. ☐

11. Increase the proportion of women protagonists in agenda-setting news beats. Set targets for women protagonists in the political and government news genre. ☐

12. Ensure fair portrayal of women. Track portrayal of women and men in the news as: ☐

- Power brokers ☐

- Sources of knowledge ☐

- Victims ☐

- Perpetrators ☐

- Sexual objects ☐

- Primary care givers ☐

- Key family members ☐

13. Increase the proportion of women protagonists portrayed as empowered. ☐

14. Use more images of women in news, increasing the proportion that depict women as empowered. ☐

15. Introduce a gender-neutral portrayal checklist for how to cover victims and perpetrators of crime in news stories to debias coverage of women. ☐

News coverage of gender equality

16. Measure coverage of gender equality issues and attach targets for increasing the proportion it represents. ☐

17. Use women as protagonists in gender equality stories. ☐

18. Provide education and development for journalists to facilitate multi-perspective gender equality thinking that links:

- multiple gender equality themes into an overarching narrative ☐

- coverage with issues such as employment, politics, economics, education or healthcare, that are more salient to decision-makers and the public ☐

- different global issues together, such as the impact of gender inequality on poverty and/or climate change ☐

19. Plan gender equality coverage on the editorial calendar, using International or National Women's Days as anchor moments to achieve high impact. ☐

News consumption:

20. Disaggregate audience news consumption data by sex to develop an understanding of women's news needs and preferences. Craft news stories in response to this intelligence. Analyze long-term trends. ☐

News impacts:

21. Regularly track the impact that your organization's gender equality news coverage has on: ☐

- women who consume it ☐

- decision makers/opinion formers (e.g. other journalists, politicians) ☐

- society at large (e.g. through changes in legislation) ☐

APPENDIX 2: METHODOLOGY AND BACKGROUND OF KEY SOURCES

Introduction

This appendix covers in more detail the methodology and background of seven sources used in this report

1. Literature Review, AKAS (2020)
2. *Women in The News: Content Analysis for 2019*, Media Ecosystems Analysis Group (2020)
3. *Digital News Reports*, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism/YouGov (2019)
4. *Global Attitudes & Trends*, Pew Research Center (2010-2018)
5. *State of Technology in Global Newsroom Survey*, International Center for Journalists (2019)
6. *Country Opinion Surveys*, World Bank Group (2015-2019)
7. Google Survey, AKAS (2020)

Table 1 below sets out where in the report these seven sources have been referenced, whilst Table 2 summarizes the details of each source including the limitations

Table 1: How each research element addresses the issues in the main report

No	Part Name	Sub-part	1. Lit. Review	2. Media Ecosystems Analysis Group Content Analysis	3. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism Digital News Report	4. Pew Global Attitudes & Trends	5. World Bank Group Country Opinion Surveys	6. ICFJ 2019 State of Tech. in Global News-rooms Survey	7. Google Surveys
1	Context	Gender bias in news landscape in each country	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes
		Gender equality in news and key stakeholders	Yes				Yes		
		Gender equality in societies	Yes			Yes			Yes
2	Key Indicators of Gender Equality	1. Diversity in the workplace/ leadership	Yes					Yes	
		2. Women as sources of expertise	Yes	Yes					
		3. Stories leading with women protagonists	Yes	Yes					
		4. Coverage of gender equality issues	Yes	Yes					
3	Case Studies								
4	Recommendations and further research	For news providers	Yes						Yes
		For further research and explorations	Yes						

Table 2: Details of each of the seven sources covered in this appendix

Area	Literature Review	Women in the News: Content Analysis for 2019	Study of Journalism Digital News Report	Global Attitudes & Trends	2019 State of Technology in Global Newsrooms Survey	Country Opinion Surveys	Google Surveys
Source Author	AKAS	Media Ecosystems Analysis Group	Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism / YouGov	Pew Research Center	ICFJ	World Bank Group	AKAS / Google Surveys
Year	2005-2019	2019	2019	2011-2018	2019	2015-2019	2020
Methodology	Desk-based literature review	Mainly automated content analysis	Online Survey	Face-to-Face and online Surveys	Online Survey	Face-to-Face, Via Courier, Mail, Online Surveys	Online Survey
Sample Description	Academic Papers	Online newspaper publications	Adults online aged 18+ who had consumed news in the last month	Adults aged 18+	Journalists and news managers	Decision makers and influencers	Adults aged 18+ (who are online)
Sample Size	2,286 academic papers for wider literature review; 230 papers for deeper literature review	For Indicator 2: 16 publications, 1000 quotes sampled and 775 attributed to speaker for India; Kenya (10, 1000, 732); Nigeria (10, 1000, 666); South Africa (10, 1000, 772); UK (14, 1000, 745); USA (20, 1000, 810); For Indicator 3: 16 publications and 36,256 stories sampled for India; Kenya (10 & 18,789); Nigeria (10 & 1212,495); South Africa (10 & 18,353); UK (14 & 27,076); USA (20 & 42,933); For Indicator 4: 350 publications for India; Kenya (69); Nigeria (246); South Africa (136); UK (444); USA (10, 668)	c2000 per country	c1300 to c1500 per country	4111 (c2551 for regional comparisons)	c1300 across all surveys	800-1000 per country

Table 2 (continued): Details of each of the seven sources covered in this appendix

Area		Literature Review	Women in the News: Content Analysis for 2019	Study of Journalism Digital News Report	Global Attitudes & Trends	2019 State of Technology in Global Newsrooms Survey	Country Opinion Surveys	Google Surveys
Geography Covered	All 6	yes			yes	yes		yes
	Less than 6			Yes(4) – UK, USA, South Africa, India		Yes, reporting is done by region: Sub-Saharan Africa (incl. Nigeria, Kenya, SA), South Asia (India), Europe (Germany, France, UK) and North America (USA). 149 countries total	Yes (3) – Nigeria, Kenya, India (Plus 74 other countries)	
Area of News Value Chain	Context	Context	Context	Context	Context	Context	Context	Context
	Resources	Resources				Resources		
	Newsgathering	Newsgathering				Newsgathering		
	Consumption	Consumption	Consumption			Consumption		
	Outcomes	Outcomes		Outcomes	Outcomes			
	Individual Impact	Individual Impact		Individual Impact	Individual Impact			Individual Impact
	Influencer-based Impact						Influencer-based Impact	
	Decision maker-based impact						Decision maker-based impact	
Limitations		Due to the focus on the most cited papers there was a bias towards older academic papers which had more time to build up citation numbers. The academic literature was also heavily skewed towards papers covering the US and UK	Automated nature of the approach means more qualitative dimensions of gender analysis such as portrayal are not currently possible to assess	Does not cover Nigeria & Kenya. Online surveys tend to under-represent the consumption habits of people who are not online (typically older, less affluent, and with limited formal education). In this sense it is better to think of results as representative of online populations who use news at least once a month. For the USA – 96%, UK – 95%, SA – 54%. In India the sample was reflective of the English-speaking population with internet access	No news brand level data across all countries	Unable to break down into individual countries	Only covers Global South countries, Sample for South Africa is small and from 2015 so excluded	Online sample, and only in English. Only for the Global South countries so did not cover non-English speaking populations. Surveys in India, South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya are not representative

1. Literature Review, AKAS (2020)

The methodology behind this literature review consisted of three stages.

Stage 1: Creating a database of nearly 2,300 academic papers and articles

- AKAS compiled a database of 2,286 academic papers or research articles relating to the topic of gender imbalance in news media using Google Scholar
- The academic papers were sourced on the basis of the following terms appearing in their title ("Gender" OR "Women" OR "Female") AND ("News" OR "Media" OR "Journalism" OR "Journalist" OR "Journalists")
- Papers that pre-dated 2010 were included only if they were cited at least 50 times in other academic papers, as a proxy of lasting influence
- Each paper entry in the database included: the paper title; author; date of publication; the abstract/summary; and 'cited by' numbers
- The database was reviewed to eliminate any papers that occurred more than once
- As part of this stage, AKAS assessed the 54 links in the original AKAS proposal to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and reduced this down to 28 based on the relevance of the articles

Stage 2: High-level literature review of the 230 most influential papers

- AKAS highlighted the 230 most influential academic papers in the database, based on the number of citations. This was necessary to make the literature review manageable within the time constraints agreed for the review
- Each of these 230 academic papers was categorized using the abstracts/summaries based on the following four dimensions:
  - Geographic relevance, i.e. whether they were relevant to the countries under investigation (India, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, the UK and the US)
  - Reference to the agreed gender-based indicators i.e. diversity in the workplace/in leadership, women as sources of news expertise, news stories leading with women protagonists and coverage of gender equality issues
  - Where the gender-based indicators clustered around the news value chain: i.e. organizational resources, newsgathering, outputs, news consumption or impacts
  - The central theme of the paper: i.e. politics and government, economy, social and legal, crime and violence, arts and media, science and health, sports, celebrity or other

Stage 3: Detailed literature review of the top 30 most influential and relevant articles/papers

- Stage 3 involved a deeper focus on 26 key papers (four more were subsequently added during the literature review process, bringing the total reviewed to 30)
- These papers were selected based on a combination of their level of influence and relevance
- Care was taken to ensure that a balance was struck between large scale, quantitative surveys (such as the *Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media* (2011) and the *Global Media Monitoring Report* (2015), and small-scale, multi-dimensional research papers
- Papers based on theoretical perspectives and expert opinion were also included
- The resulting literature review summarized key findings in terms of the gender balance of the news media landscape and under each of the gender equality indicators: diversity in the workplace/in leadership, women as sources of news expertise, news stories leading with women protagonists and coverage of gender equality issues
- It also outlined important themes that had emerged including the need for a better understanding of the impact of digital media on the news landscape
- Recommendations for news providers and areas for future research were highlighted

2. Women in The News: Content Analysis for 2019, Media Ecosystems Analysis Group (2020)

Media Cloud, an open source database and analysis platform containing over 60,000 news media publications and over 1 billion news stories from around the globe, was the core research tool for this project. The platform allows for large-scale evaluation of news media coverage and ecosystems. Documentation on the various computational and analytical models contained within Media Cloud can be found on GitHub. Automated methods through Media Cloud were the primary data collection and analysis approach, supplemented with manual coding and researcher insight.

Analytical approaches varied based on gender equality indicators:

1. The analysis approach for **Indicator 2: Use of women as sources of news expertise**, was to evaluate the percentage of times that quoted speech in news articles could be attributed to a woman speaker; notably, while a quote represents having a voice in a news story, it may not be the same as being denoted an expert. This indicator required more significant manual coding than other indicators.

2. To evaluate **Indicator 3: News stories leading with women protagonists,** researchers analyzed the percentage of headlines that featured women's names.

3. To evaluate **Indicator 4: Coverage of gender equality issues**, a complex keyword-based query was developed to capture coverage that touched on gender equality issues. Various descriptive analyses were then run on the resulting coverage corpus.

Analysis of all indicators took into consideration the themes of coverage. The Media Cloud system processes all English-language stories using a set of trained models to predict what themes the stories focus on; these machine learning modules were built based on the New York Times annotated corpus. In order to compare these findings with previous work on this subject, the themes used by the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) were selected. Researchers then determined which themes from the New York Times corpus (NYT) best corresponded to the GMMP themes.

Table 3. GMMP themes and corresponding NYT themes selected for analysis

GMMP Theme	NYT Theme(s)
Politics and Government	"politics and government"
Economy	"economic conditions and trends"
Social and Legal	"law and legislation"
Crime and Violence	"crime and criminals", "violence"
Arts and Media[1]	"media", "music", "motion pictures", "theater", "books and literature", "television", "culture"
Science and Health	"science and technology", "medicine and health" *(Note: "medicine and health" was present far more often in the corpus than "science and technology.")*
Sports[1]	"athletics and sports"
Celebrity	*Omitted, no corresponding NYT theme*

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[1] The GMMP had grouped "Arts and Media" with "Sports," which researchers separated for this analysis.

The corpus of analysis for Indicators 2 and 3 was comprised of 80 total key publications from the six countries of focus, as set out in Table 4. These publications were selected based on inclusion in Foundation 'key media' lists, web traffic to publication homepage from SimilarWeb data, and number of stories in the Media Cloud system. This approach meant that some news sources that appear high in other top media lists, such as the Reuters Institute's Digital News Reports, may not have been included as they may: (1) Not have appeared on the Foundation's "key media' list; (2) Not have ranked highly on SimilarWeb; (3) Not have appeared on the Media Cloud system; or (4) Have been subject to technical problems in accessing their stories. For these reasons, the report was unable to include, for example, News24.com in South Africa in the analysis. In this instance however, a Google search enquiry using the terms "he said"/ "she said" as a proxy for sources (enabling analysis of the number of times "he said" appeared compared to "she said") confirmed a bias towards sources that were men. The corpus of analysis for Indicator 4 was comprised of all news publications contained in Media Cloud for each of the six countries of focus; this totaled 350 publications from India, 69 publications from Kenya, 246 publications from Nigeria, 136 publications from South Africa, 444 publications from the United Kingdom, and 10,668 publications from the United States. Table 5 sets this out as well as the number of stories covered. The 2019 calendar year was the timeframe of analysis across all indicators.

Table 4. Number of key publications for each country

Country	Indicator 2 & 3: Number of Key Publications	Indicator 2: Quotes Sampled and Coded	Indicator 2: Quotes Attributed to a Speaker	Indicator 3: Total Stories Sampled
India	16	1,000	775	36,256
Kenya	10	1,000	732	18,789
Nigeria	10	1,000	666	21,495
South Africa	10	1,000	772	18,353
United Kingdom	14	1,000	745	27,076
United States	20	1,000	810	42,933
Total	**80**	**6,000**	**4,500**	**164,902**

Table 5. Publications and stories analyzed

Country	Indicator 4: Number of Publications	Indicator 4: Number of Stories (2019)
India	350	8,347,385
Kenya	69	364,513
Nigeria	246	2,374,457
South Africa	136	1,597,193
United Kingdom	444	3,386,701
United States	10,668	40,812,709
Total	**11,913**	**56,882,958**

3. Digital News Reports, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism/ YouGov (2019)

The 2019 Reuters Institute *Digital News Report* covered 38 countries including three of the analyzed countries: the UK, US and South Africa. In addition, a stand-alone report in 2019 on India provided AKAS with access to data for one more analyzed country. In addition, AKAS used Reuters Institute's data to assess the gender profile of over 900 news providers with weekly reach of over 10% across all countries.

AKAS took the data from the spreadsheets of the 38 Reuters *Digital News Country Reports* plus the one-off India Report in 2019 and reviewed the numerous questions to focus down on the following 15 broken down by gender.

1. Segmentation_A2. Segment A2 - News loving

2. Q1b_NEW. Typically, how often do you access news?>>By news we mean national, international, regional/local news and other topical events accessed via any platform (radio, TV, newspaper or online).

3. Q1c. How interested, if at all, would you say you are in news?

4. Q2_new2018. How interested, if at all, would you say you are in politics?

5. Q1e_2019. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement. "I am worn out by the amount of news there is these days."

6. Q2_2019_1. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. "The people should be asked whenever important decisions are taken."

7. Q2_2019_2. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. "Most elected officials don't care what people like me think."

8. Q2_2019_3. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. "Immigration threatens our national culture."

9. Q3. Which, if any, of the following have you used in the last week as a source of news? Please select all that apply.

10. Q4. You say you've used these sources of news in the last week, which would you say is your MAIN source of news?

11. Q6_2016_1. We are now going to ask you about trust in the news. First, we will ask you about how much you trust the news as a whole within your country. Then we will ask you about how much you trust the news that you choose to consume. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: "I think you can trust most news most of the time."

12. Q6_2016_6. We are now going to ask you about trust in the news. First, we will ask you about how much you trust the news as a whole within your country. Then we will ask you about how much you trust the news that you choose to consume. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: "I think I can trust most of the news I consume most of the time."

13. Q10. Thinking about how you got news online (via computer, mobile or any device) in the last week, which were the ways in which you came across news stories? Please select all that apply.

14. Q15_2019_2. We are now going to ask you whether you think the news media in your country is doing a good job or not. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: "The topics chosen by the news media do not feel relevant to me": relevance of subjects

15. Q15_2019_3. We are now going to ask you whether you think the news media in your country is doing a good job or not. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: "The news media often takes too negative view of events": tone

For more details on the methodology used by the *Digital News Reports*, see Methodology section of the 2019 report:

https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/inline-files/DNR_2019_FINAL.pdf

4. Global Attitudes & Trends, Pew Research Center (2010-2018)

Pew Research Center's *Global Attitudes Survey 2018* was carried out in 27 countries and asked a range of questions on a variety of issues. All the analyzed countries are included in Pew's sample of countries. AKAS focused on analyzing the three questions relating to gender equality:

- Pew Q9: Over the past 20 years, do you think equality between men and women in (survey country) has increased, decreased, or do you think there has been no change?

- Pew Q10: Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing for (survey country)?

- Pew Q9/Q10: In favor of or oppose gender equality (This is the combined answer of Pew Q9 and Pew Q10)

Other questions from previous Pew Research Center reports have also been used:

- Pew - *Gender Equality Universally Embraced, But Inequalities Acknowledged (2010)* - Q80 On a different subject, do you think women should have equal rights with men, or shouldn't they?

- Pew - *Global Support for Principle of Free Expression, but Opposition to Some Forms of Speech (2017)* - Q56c. How important is it to have _____ in our country? Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important or not important at all? c. women have the same rights as men

For more details on *Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey* see: https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/03/04/u-s-german-relations-methodology-spring-2018-global-attitudes-survey/

5. State of Technology in Global Newsrooms Survey, International Center for Journalists (2019)

The ICFJ's *The State of Technology in Global Newsrooms Survey 2019* covers 4,111 journalists about various aspects of their experience in newsrooms with the emphasis on technology developments. Such global journalist surveys are rare, given the specificity and distribution of the target group. For the purposes of this survey, AKAS analyzed this data by region and gender with the aid of Georgetown University. Once this was done, the global sample size was reduced to 2,551, meaning that it was not advisable to report on some regions because of relatively low sample sizes. The relevant sample sizes are as follows for each region.

- Global (n=2551)

- North America (n=108)

- Latin America /Caribbean (n=566)

- Europe (n=114)

- Eurasia/Former USSR (n=182)

- Middle East/ North Africa (n=451)

- Sub-Saharan Africa (n=435)

- South Asia (n=290)

- East and Southeast Asia (n=375)

More details of the methodology are provided in Section 16, pages 79 to 82 of the full report: https://www.icfj.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/2019%20Final%20Report.pdf

6. Country Opinion Surveys, World Bank Group (2015-2019)

The World Bank Group's *Country Opinion Survey*, managed by the Public Opinion Research Group of the External and Corporate Relations Vice Presidency, is a comprehensive and unique survey of opinion leaders in over 140 emerging and developing countries. Each country is surveyed in approximately three-year cycles. For this research report AKAS focused on the 77 countries where opinion leaders from the media were asked the following question:

- Listed below are a number of development priorities in [YOURCOUNTRY]. Please identify which of the following you consider the most important development priorities in [YOUR COUNTRY]. (Choose no more than THREE). One of the answers amongst 23 options (the answers varies by country) is "gender equity".

AKAS' analysis focused on the answers to this question.

More details of the methodology used in the individual *Country Opinion Surveys* are available from the World Bank Group's Country Opinion Survey Data site at: https://countrysurveys.worldbank.org

7. Google Surveys, AKAS (2020)

AKAS used the Google Surveys platform to ask a number of single questions in the six analyzed countries. The majority of the 14 questions listed below were asked in all the analyzed countries. The results for India, South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya have not been reported in this report due to the samples not being representative. However, the results were used to provide 'qualitative pointers'. The results in the US and UK were representative so have been used in this report.

1. How far do you agree, or disagree, with the following statement "I often feel powerless after I have seen, heard or watched the news"?

2. How far do you agree, or disagree, with the following statement "I often feel empowered after I have seen, heard or watched the news"?

3. Which of these emotions, if any, do you typically feel after you have watched, heard or listened to the news? (You can choose up to six emotions): Angry; Frustrated; Alarmed; Happy; Surprised; Inspired

4. Which of these emotions, if any, do you typically feel after you have watched, heard or listened to the news? (You can choose up to six emotions): Fearful; Sad; Worried; Hopeful; Calm; Content

5. How far do you agree, or disagree, with the following statement "I believe the challenges women face in [YOUR COUNTRY] are fully reflected in the news"?

6. How far do you agree, or disagree, with the following statement "My news needs are met fully by the news media in [YOUR COUNTRY] "?

7. Recent evidence shows that in 2019 X% of experts commenting in the news in [YOUR COUNTRY] were women. Do you feel satisfied, neutral or unsatisfied by this?

8. Recent evidence shows that in 2019 X% of experts commenting in the news in [YOUR COUNTRY] were men. Do you feel satisfied, neutral or unsatisfied by this?

9. Men are nearly X% more likely to be used as experts in the news than women. Do you feel satisfied, neutral or unsatisfied by this?

10. Men are nearly X times more likely to be used as experts in the news than women. Do you feel satisfied, neutral or unsatisfied by this?

11. Recent evidence shows that in 2019 X% of the main people talked about in the news were women. Do you feel satisfied, neutral or unsatisfied by this?

12. How well do news providers in [YOUR COUNTRY] report on issues of concern to women?

13. How well do news providers in [YOUR COUNTRY] report on issues in relation to women's position in society?

14. How closely, if at all, have you followed news coverage about the International Women's Day which was on Sunday 08 March 2020?

For more details of the methodology used to conduct Google Surveys see:

https://support.google.com/surveys/answer/6189786?hl=en