



**GMMP+30**

Global Media Monitoring Project 2025

# National Report: Ireland

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Global Media  
Monitoring  
Project



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## Acknowledgements

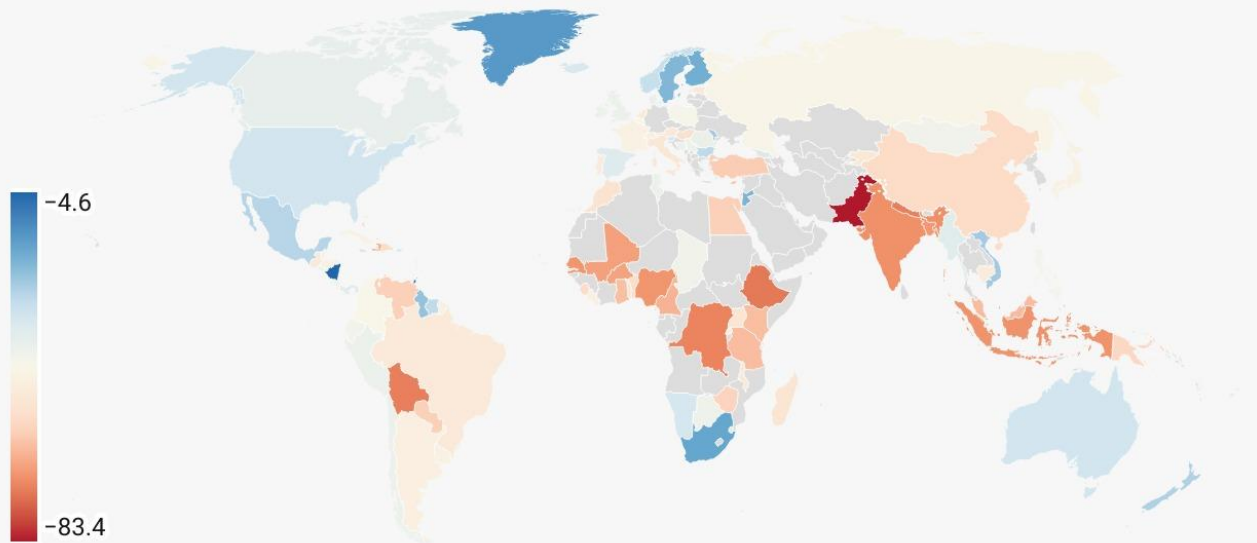
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# Table of contents

Acknowledgements .....	i
Table of contents .....	ii
Gender Equality in the News Media Index (GEM-I).....	iii
PREFACE: Global Context .....	1
National Context: Ireland .....	6
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	8
A DAY IN THE NEWS IN IRELAND .....	10
THE CONTEXT .....	11
Irish media landscape: .....	11
Media monitored: .....	11
Monitoring team: .....	13
TOPICS IN THE NEWS .....	14
NEWS SUBJECTS AND SOURCES .....	15
Overall visibility .....	15
Women's presence in different types of news .....	16
Occupation and function in the story .....	19
Are women seen and heard? Family status, quotes and photographs .....	21
JOURNALISTS AND REPORTERS .....	24
JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE: ON WOMEN'S CENTRALITY, GENDER STEREOTYPES AND	
RIGHTS-BASED REPORTING .....	26
QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS: CASE STUDIES .....	29
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS .....	46
RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN 2026-2030 .....	48
Annex 1. Methodology .....	49

## Gender Equality in the News Media Index (GEM-I) 2025



1. The GEM-Index calculates the average gender gap in the news based on 6 GMMP indicators. A score of +100 means that all persons in the news (subjects, sources and reporters) are women. A score of -100 indicates that all persons in the news are men. 0 indicates gender equality. 2. The map is based on the latest GEM-I values for each country. GMMP 2020 values are applied for those that did not participate in the 2025 edition. 3. See the report for details on the calculation.

Map: GMMP • Source: Global Media Monitoring Project • Created with Datawrapper

Following the 2015 GMMP, the GEM-Index was developed as a unitary measure of the level of gender equality in news media content. It is constructed to be theoretically informed, easy to apply and rate, broadly applicable to all forms of news media, unidimensional, and reliable in statistical terms. (Djerf-Pierre & Edström, 2020) The index includes six indicators from the GMMP and considers the overall presence of women and men in the news, as well as their visibility and voice in specific roles and topics. The GEM-Index calculates the average gender gap in the news (percentage of women – percentage of men) for the following six indicators:

- (1) all news subjects or sources (“people in the news”),
- (2) reporters,
- (3) news subjects or sources in economy and business news,
- (4) news subjects or sources in news about politics and government,
- (5) spokespersons
- (6) experts.

The GEM-I can vary between -100 (only men in the news) and + 100 (only women in the news). Zero (0) represents full gender equality and a 50/50 distribution of men and women for all six indicators.

Ireland ranked -47.764 in 2020 and -40.003 in 2025, indicating in improvement in this metric in 2025.

## PREFACE: Global Context

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action premised that “Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace” (United Nations, 1995). Specifically, the Declaration in its Section “J” established the following objectives related to women and media: Strategic objective J1. “Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication. Strategic Objective J2. Promote a balanced and nonstereotyped portrayal of women in the media” (United Nations, 1995). The first global monitoring was sparked by a need for empirical evidence on women's place, role and participation in the news.

*“In the lead up to Beijing, feminist media activists, scholars and communicators meeting in Bangkok in 1994 resolved to organize one day at the start of 1995 for the monitoring of all media and to use the data as the basis for analysis of where women were and were not, a decision born from frustration with the widespread lack of respect for the dignity of women in the mainstream news media. Media monitoring was identified as one among several strategies with potential to democratize and decentralize media, as well as assist in promoting communication forms that could challenge the patriarchal nature of media.”(Macharia, 2023)<sup>1</sup>*

The Beijing Platform for Action thereafter enshrined media monitoring as a strategy to achieve strategic objective J1. Non-governmental organizations and media professional associations were encouraged to establish “media watch groups that can monitor the media and consult with the media to ensure that women's needs and concerns are properly reflected” (para 242a)

The GMMP evolved into the largest and longest-running research and advocacy initiative for gender equality in and through the news media. In five-year spurts since 1995, the GMMP takes a snapshot of key gender equality dimensions in the news. Across thirty years to date, the GMMP has built the data from over 160 countries, with at least one observation for each variable and country.

### On parallel tracks

The global news media landscape has changed profoundly, yet women's place within it has not. Technological advancements, shifts in audience behavior, and evolving business models have driven change in how news are produced, disseminated, and consumed. Legacy media dominant in 1995 have ceded ground to digital forms, while professional production in media houses has no option but to compete with alternative and social media for audience attention. In 2025, the increased massification of artificial intelligence (AI) finds the news industry in a particularly fragile moment, as legacy media faces a sustainability crisis along with professional journalism. The expanded analytical capacity of computers, the expansion of digital platforms,

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<sup>1</sup> Read more in the full text of the Bangkok Declaration, outcome of the 1994 “Women Empowering Communication” conference at which the idea of a GMMP was birthed. <https://whomakesthenews.org/wp-content/uploads/who-makes-the-news/Imported/documents/bangkok%20declaration.pdf>

and AI have introduced a new breed of news analysts that work at the meeting point of software development, analytics and storytelling (Kosterich, 2020).

Three decades ago, governments regulated the sector with some minimal international oversight, unlike the current considerably more complex regulatory environment. Data privacy laws, content moderation, and government reach are stricter. Audiences are transnational and international collaborations on content production are the norm, unlike three decades ago.

The evolution of women's encounters with the sector across the period has not been as dramatic. The GMMP reveals that, in many ways, the status quo of gross underrepresentation and misrepresentation in content has persisted.

This report presents the findings of the seventh iteration of the GMMP global snapshot, based on 29,935 news articles containing 58,321 people and 26,560 news personnel in 94 countries on the 7<sup>th</sup> global monitoring day, May 6, 2025.

## **Key Findings**

**Thirty years ago, the report of the first GMMP called for a shift in coverage beyond the male-dominated realms of political and economic power. Not only has the hierarchy of “hard news” in legacy media persisted across time, it has also crossed over into digital outlets.**

Digitalisation did not bring a radical break from the patriarchal norms of traditional journalism. Instead, it continues to reinforce and amplify a news hierarchy that privileges spheres and issues centred on power, namely, those dominated by men. The challenge is threefold. First, to dismantle the “hard news” bias, second, to integrate more intentionally spaces and issues of greater concern to women, and third, to enable visibility and voice to women present in traditionally male-dominated spaces.

**After a period of slow but steady improvement, progress toward gender parity in the news has flatlined since around 2010, failing to reach 50% in any media type.**

Thirty years after Beijing, women are 26% of those seen, heard, or spoken about in legacy news (29% on news websites). The needle has shifted 9 points in legacy media since 1995, and 4 points in online news during the past 10 years.

Minority groups are five points more likely to be present in digital news than in legacy media. The probability of minority women being featured in the news as the main protagonists or as interviewees is two in a hundred in traditional media (3% for men) and 4% on news websites (5% for men).

**Women’s visibility in political and economic news has increased significantly – by 15 points each – over the past three decades.**

The severe underrepresentation noted in 1995 (7% in political news, 10% in economic news) has improved. Women’s presence in sports news is abysmal, at only 15% of news subjects and sources.

**The proportion of women providing expert testimony has grown remarkably over the decades, showing the highest increase (+7 points) in digital news since 2015.**

In legacy media, the gender gap in authoritative roles as experts and spokespersons has closed at a slower pace than for persons providing testimony based on popular opinion and personal experience – ordinary roles that require no specialized knowledge.

**Patterns of gender-biased portrayal endure despite decades of change in women’s roles in the physical world**

Women have remained about twice as likely as men to be portrayed as victims since 2010. Historically, women were most often portrayed as victims of accidents or poverty. This pattern was overturned in 2025, with “other crime” and “domestic violence” (by intimate partners and family members) becoming the top victim categories.

Women depicted as survivors in legacy media were most likely to have survived “accidents, natural disasters, poverty, and disease” in previous GMMP studies. In 2025, they are most frequently portrayed as domestic violence survivors in equal proportion to accident/disaster survivors.

The over-representation of women as homemakers/parents decreased from 81% in 2000 to 73% in 2025, indicating progress although a persistent journalistic bias toward defining women by domestic roles, despite women’s current unprecedented engagement in work outside the home. Underrepresentation in occupations and in positions of power has remained consistent. The tendency to describe women by their age and physical attributes has also persisted. They have been photographed more often than men (a 7–9-point difference) over the past two decades, with qualitative analysis continuing to show patterns of sexualized portrayal.

**Gender inequality in the news is much more acute than in the lived experience.**

Gender equality in the news, measured by the GEM Index, is moderately correlated with gender indices in other development sectors such as the Gender Social Norms Index. Between 65% to 75% of media gender inequality cannot be explained by reality, indicating the presence of other confounding factors at play that co-mingle to produce the prevailing gendered news narratives.



**Women's share as reporters in stories published in newspapers and aired on television and radio has risen and stagnated in spurts since 1995.**

Globally, the proportion of women as reporters in legacy media rose 6 points from 2000 to 2005, stalling at 37% for 10 years until 2015, rising 3 points again between 2015 to 2020, and gaining just two points in the past five years. The regions approach and consistently fail to achieve parity, except for the Pacific and the Caribbean, exactly at equality, and North America just a single point below. The findings suggest most news systems are willing to absorb a certain proportion of female labour in the reporter role, but not to cede to full numerical gender equality.

In legacy news media, the gender gap in political reporting has narrowed the fastest (+13 points in 25 years) – outside the sports beat – yet it remains the topic least reported by women. For the first time in 25 years, women now constitute a majority (52%) of science and health reporters. The new tracking of sports news reveals a severely low proportion of female reporters (17%). Women's share as reporters in national and international stories has seen significant long-term growth (+18 and +16 points, respectively).

### **The sex of the journalist influences the gender lens in stories**

The gender lens has historically been found to be sharper in articles by women reporters. Across three decades, a consistent 5–6-point gender gap has existed in source selection, where female reporters feature more female sources than their male colleagues. This gap is even wider (9 points) in digital news. The gender-lens gap between female and male journalists is largest on the indicator regarding women's centrality in the news. The difference is just 1-2 points on other indicators measuring news quality from a gender perspective, but that it exists is an important finding.

**Gender-based violence is a blind spot in the news. When GBV makes the news, however, the gender lens in reporting is sharper than in stories on all other topics.**

Less than 2% of stories cover gender-based violence. This low count is at odds with the serious nature of GBV affecting one in three women and girls worldwide. Stories on gender-based violence produced by female journalists are more likely to raise gender (in)equality issues than those by men.

While the gender lens is sharper in GBV stories compared to other major topics, there remains enormous room for improvement if news media are to participate in creating a society in which GBV is understood as deviant, criminal, and a violation of fundamental human rights.

## **The bulk of news stories remains deficient in the GMMP dimensions of quality from a gender perspective**

The proportion of news stories that clearly challenge gender stereotypes rose from 3% (2005) to 6% (2010) but declined and has remained stagnant at 3-4% since 2015. This indicates an entrenchment of stereotypes in reporting and a consistent journalistic failure to produce content that disrupts stereotypical narratives.

The regional comparisons show significant variations. North American news is exceptional, clearly challenging gender stereotypes in 19% of stories, in sharp contrast to Middle Eastern news, where only 1% overturn simplistic narratives about the roles, attributes, and capabilities of people based on gender.

Gender stereotypes are most prevalent in stories about politics and the economy, both spheres where men are the majority power holders. Over time, challenging stereotypes remains largely confined to topics in which it is safer to challenge the skewed gender power relations status quo. These are celebrity/arts/media, and social/legal news. GBV stories challenge gender stereotypes more than any other news, at 17%. While commendable, this level is insufficient to transform the harmful norms that perpetuate such violence.

The likelihood of news stories to cite human rights or gender equality frameworks has fluctuated modestly, hovering between 7% and 11% over the 15 years that this indicator has been measured. A human rights lens is absent in approximately 9 out of 10 stories. Online stories are less likely to integrate a human rights lens than those published in legacy media, but the probability of women being the central protagonists in a news story is higher in digital news (15%, compared to 10% in traditional news).

In all story topics except for GBV news, the sex of the reporter matters slightly for the integration of a gender lens. 3% of stories by women clearly challenge gender stereotypes, compared to 2% of those by men. 12% of stories by women highlight gender (in)equality issues, compared to 10% for men. 8% of articles by women adopt a human rights framing, compared to 7% of those by men. In the case of GBV stories, for instance, female reporters are more than 10 points more likely to call attention to gender inequality than those by men.

## **The GMMP message in 2025, thirty years post-Beijing, is a global news industry whose progress towards gender equality has reached a crossroads.**

The almost standstill pace of change in the past 15 years points to a need for a radical shift in strategies by all actors in the news ecosystem to break the inertia. Under the current conditions and with the current tools, remarkable change towards gender equality is unlikely.

The negative impacts of digitalisation on the news industry and gender relations online as a whole will undoubtedly make the task of securing women's rights in and through digital news more complex.

# National Context: Ireland

## Ireland and the Gender Inequality Index

Ireland performs strongly overall in the Gender Inequality Index, ranking 11<sup>th</sup> out of 193 countries examined<sup>2</sup>. In reproductive health, Ireland reports a very low maternal mortality ratio and a low adolescent birth rate (4.1 per 1,000 for women aged 15-19), the latter being less than half the rate (8.4) of its nearest neighbour, the United Kingdom. These reproductive figures place Ireland alongside other high-performing European nations, reflecting strong healthcare access and effective reproductive health policies. Of course, it is worth noting that it is only in recent years, following a referendum in 2018, that Irish women and girls have had legal access to abortion. Regarding education, the proportion of women aged 25 and older with at least secondary education is extremely high (90.4%), marginally higher than men (89.9%). In terms of labour force participation, 70.8% of men participate compared with 60.4%, a gender gap that is mirrored in all countries, although it is slightly higher in Ireland than in many other highly ranked countries. While Ireland follows wider trends, caregiving norms and other socioeconomic factors continue to influence women's engagement in paid employment. Ireland's share of parliamentary seats held by women remains modest. The level of 25% of parliamentary seats held by women following the 2024 general election has seen the Irish parliament described as the "worst for gender diversity in western Europe"<sup>3</sup>). Gender quotas were introduced in 2012, and 40% of candidates must now be women.

## Ireland's National Strategy for Women and Girls 2025-2030

In November 2025, Ireland's Department of Children, Disability & Equality launched the 2025-2030 National Strategy for Women and Girls.<sup>4</sup> It claims to have a single vision: "An Ireland where women and girls can thrive in a gender-equal society, built upon seven objectives:

1. Being Counted: The people who design our policies and laws take me into account
2. Being Me: I can live free of harmful gender norms and stereotypes
3. Being a Leader: I can pursue my ambition and achieve my potential in any field
4. Being Safe: I can live free of violence and harassment
5. Having a Fair Share: I have a fair share of economic and financial power
6. Being Well: I am enabled to enjoy wellbeing throughout my life
7. Being Supported: I am supported when I give care and when I need care

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<sup>2</sup> [https://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2025\\_HDR/HDR25\\_Statistical\\_Annex\\_GII\\_Table.pdf](https://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2025_HDR/HDR25_Statistical_Annex_GII_Table.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/dec/06/irish-parliament-has-worst-gender-diversity-in-western-europe-study-finds>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-children-disability-and-equality/campaigns/national-strategy-for-women-and-girls-2025-2030/>

Details on #3, “Being a leader”, specifically mentions media in two points:

*“Address the imbalance of visibility between men and women in the arts and in media.*

*...*

*Remove barriers to women’s equal participation in sport as participants, sports club members, coaches, managers, and spectators; in the governance of sporting organisations; and in sports media representation and coverage.”*

### Ireland’s history with the Global Media Monitoring Project

Ireland has participated with the GMMP since 2005 but data collection has been inconsistent in terms of the number of stories coded. Joint “five-nation” reports were published with the team in the United Kingdom following the 2015 and 2020 projects, with the following academic publications produced:

#### 2020 data:

Wheatley, D., Ross, K., Carter, C. and Boyle, K., 2025. Gender in/and the News in the UK and Republic of Ireland: Slow But (un) Steady Progress?. *Journalism*, 26(10), pp.2047-2066.

#### 2015 data:

Ross, K., Boyle, K., Carter, C. and Ging, D., 2018. Women, Men and News: It’s life, Jim, but not as we know it. *Journalism Studies*, 19(6), pp.824-845.

Not all the data is fully available since 2005 but selected results are presented in this report.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Monitoring took place on Tuesday May 6<sup>th</sup> 2025, with 221 stories analysed from six newspapers, six news websites, seven radio programmes/bulletins and four television programmes.
- No single story dominated the news agenda. The most common topics of the day were 'social and legal', 'crime and violence' and 'economy', while the amount of 'politics' was down on 2020. There was what intuitively felt like a higher-than-usual attention to gender/women-related issues: skorts in camogie, the Molly Malone statue, the proposed anti-sex-for-rent legislation and changing rules around the use of counselling notes in sex assault trials, the appearance of court of a GAA player on sexual assault charges, and the ongoing Richard Satchwell case, on trial for the murder of his wife Tina.
- A total of 563 subjects/sources were recorded across all four media formats, of which 31% of legacy media sources (print, radio, TV) were women and 26% of internet sources were women. There was an increase on 2020's figures for all formats apart from radio, which fell.
- National stories – such as those about domestic policies and events – were the most frequent place in which women appeared, with 43% of subjects/sources recorded being women. However, this dipped to just 20% of sources/subjects being women in foreign/international stories.
- The politics category has a stark gender gap: just 13% of sources/subjects in politics stories were women. In terms of specific occupations recorded, just 19% of politicians were women in this sample. This has fallen from the 24% in 2020, and is closer to the 17% recorded in 2005.
- In terms of function in the story, just 24% of subjects were women (62/254). Similarly, the 45 female spokespersons (27%) were overshadowed by the 118 male spokespersons. Female contributors only dominate the function category of 'personal experience', whereby they speak about their personal circumstances and lives, often framed within the domestic rather than the professional capacity.
- 28% of women are identified by family status compared with 11% of men, reinforcing how women are more frequently present in the news in a somewhat domestic framework.
- Female sources are more likely to be quoted when they are present in the news (55% are quoted, compared with 41% of male sources), an inverse of the 2020 results. However, it is important to remember that male sources are appearing at a much higher rate than female sources, so it does not equate to hearing women's voices more.
- Similarly, women were more likely than men to be photographed: 31% of women sources/subjects were photographed, compared with just 16% of men. Again, this is a

positive in terms of women's visibility but should be taken in the context of women being less present overall.

- Women are more present, proportionally, as presenters (on TV and radio) than they are as reporters (across all formats). They comprised 40% of presenters on the radio segments coded, and 71% of presenters on the TV segments recorded. (The relatively small sample size is important to note, however). For reporters, radio had the lowest number of female reporters (29%), followed by print at 39% female. The figures are closer to parity for internet (47%) and television (48%).
- In the GMMP this year in Ireland, there was effectively no difference on whether male or female journalists use women sources more: 30% of the sources used by female reporters were female, compared with an effectively identical 29.56% sources used by male journalists.
- 10% of stories made referenced to issues of gender (in)equality, compared with just 3% in 2020. The 2025 increase is perhaps unusually high due to the nature of some of the topics covered on May 6th, eg. the proposed anti sex-for-rent Bill, or the coverage of the Molly Malone statue and Dublin City Council's attempts to limit the number of tourists touching her breasts. The ongoing story about female camogie players having to wear skorts rather than shorts was also present on the news agenda.
- There were 15 stories about gender-based violence, written by 8 female and 9 male reporters (some had multiple by-lines). In terms of the individuals featured in these stories, there were 34 sources/subjects: 18 in stories of sexual harassment (4 female, 14 male); 6 in intimate partner violence against women (0 female, 6 male); 0 other gender violence (3 female, 7 male)

## A DAY IN THE NEWS IN IRELAND

There was no single news story dominating Irish news on May 6<sup>th</sup> 2025 which led to a sample of stories that were relatively diverse. For example, all six newspapers monitored had different front-page lead 'splash' stories:

- Irish Daily Mail: "McDonagh in line to keep his €430,000 Nama salary", regarding the outgoing CEO of the National Assets Management Bureau's salary
- Irish Times: "Extra €1bn for Uisce Éireann was already fully allocated", regarding the funding for the national water utility service
- Irish Independent: "Thousands of farm families face Fair Deal 'time bombs'", regarding funding structures for nursing home care fees
- Irish Examiner: "We won't let the State silence Fran", regarding state failings in the care of those with intellectual disabilities
- Irish Sun: "Lauren was a beautiful girl, inside and out", regarding a 13-year-old girl who died in a motorsport race accident
- Irish Daily Star: "Wing and a scare: gang thug sends pipe bomb by drone to attack rival", regarding a drone attack made by criminals on another crime group

One of those stories, about the 13-year-old girl Lauren O'Brien who died in the motorsport accident, was widely covered, with photographs appearing in all publications.

In terms of international news, the conflict in Gaza was in the news and comments by the Taoiseach in Ireland on May 6<sup>th</sup> would appear on broadcast bulletins throughout the day. There was some attention granted to the calls for Ireland to boycott the Eurovision Song Contest if Israel was to participate. Coverage of who would be the new Pope, following the death of Pope Francis, was also in the news as monitoring day fell the day before the papal conclave began.

Given the central emphasis of the GMMP, it is worth highlighting that the news in Ireland on May 6<sup>th</sup> 2025 potentially had higher-than-normal attention granted to issues that are particularly relevant to gender equality and sexual violence. These stories included:

- Coverage of the famous Molly Malone statue in Dublin, and how Dublin City Council planned to tackle tourists continuously touching/"groping" the statue's breasts
- The court appearance of Irish GAA (Gaelic sports) footballer Aidan Nugent who was in court charged with multiple counts of sexual assault against a woman. He denied the charges (the trial is due to take place in early 2026)
- The ongoing trial of Richard Satchwell, who would go on to be charged and sentenced to life in prison for the murder of his wife Tina eight years' previously. Richard Satchwell had hidden Tina's body under the stairs of their home and made various public appeals for help with her disappearance in the intervening years
- A piece of legislation in development by the Irish government which has two elements of note: (i) The development of an anti "sex-for-rent" law which would make it an offence for a landlord to seek sex in lieu of rent. (ii) A restriction on access to counselling notes of victims in sexual offences trials. As of mid-November 2025, both proposals continue

to make their way through the legislative process but are not yet enacted.<sup>5</sup>

- The camogie “skorts” issue, regarding whether or not female camogie players could wear shorts. Camogie is an Irish field sport game

## THE CONTEXT

### *Irish media landscape:*

In 2025, the Republic of Ireland remains a stable parliamentary democracy, with successive centre-right coalition governments shaping the political landscape after the 2020 and 2024 general elections. Debates around housing supply, migration, and post-Brexit relations with both the UK and the EU continue to shape public discourse, even as the economy grows on the back of sustained foreign investment, particularly from technology firms.

Irish journalism is rooted in traditional Western “fourth estate” ideals, emphasising professionalism, objectivity, and scrutiny of power. Industry codes of practice for publishers and broadcasters are broadly respected, though long-delayed defamation reforms remain a persistent concern. Public service broadcasting – primarily via RTÉ – has deep cultural roots, and the media environment is notably less partisan than in many comparable democracies.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, Irish audiences are exposed to, and heavily consume, English-language media content produced in the United Kingdom and the US. Irish-language content is a minority product in Ireland in terms of consumption, but is culturally significant and is included in the GMMP sample.

### *Media monitored:*

The Irish team followed the GMMP guidelines in terms of the number of outlets to monitor and what types of content to include/exclude. Table 1 shows the 2025 sample.

To avoid excessive duplication across titles, any websites of newspapers were captured later in the day to include stories that appeared throughout the day of May 6<sup>th</sup>: the Irish Times and Irish Independent websites were both captured at 7.30pm. Other websites were captured at midday, while RTÉ was captured at 9am, to try to ensure different content than what appears on their broadcast channels later in the day is recorded. A news programme targeting schoolchildren is included (RTÉ 2, News2Day), while Irish-language media is recorded on radio (Raidió na Gaeltachta 1pm news programme) and television (TG4 7pm news programme). Given the importance of public service broadcaster RTÉ, it is captured on television (main news bulletin at 6pm); radio (main 1pm news bulletin), and via RTÉ2 and Raidió na Gaeltachta. Radio bulletins from two other commercial radio stations, Today FM and Newstalk, are both captured twice. There are no other national radio stations in Ireland. Virgin Media and TG4 are the only other television channels, both of which are included.

The complete programmes/bulletins were analysed for all the radio/television outlets included. The newspapers and websites followed the GMMP guidelines around focusing on the news pages and selecting the first 12-14 news reports, starting on pg1/the top of the homepage.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.thejournal.ie/counselling-notes-should-be-unconditionally-banned-in-sexual-offence-trials-says-justice-committee-6873316-Nov2025/>

<sup>6</sup> Fletcher, R., Cornia, A. and Nielsen, R.K., 2020. How polarized are online and offline news audiences? A comparative analysis of twelve countries. *The international journal of press/politics*, 25(2), pp.169-195.)



Further detail on the GMMP Methodology is included in the Appendix of this report. Table 1 lists the outlets, and Table 2 summarises the number of stories and sources/subjects gathered for each of the four media formats.

<b>Newspapers</b>	
	The Irish Times
	The Irish Independent
	The Irish Examiner
	The Irish Daily Mail
	The Irish Sun
	The Irish Daily Star
<b>Radio</b>	
	RTÉ Radio One – News at One (1pm news programme)
	RnaG - Nuacht a hAon (1pm, Irish language)
	RTÉ 2fm (10am bulletin)
	TodayFM (12pm bulletin, 7pm bulletin)
	Newstalk (9am bulletin, 7pm bulletin)
<b>TV</b>	
	RTÉ One – 6.1 News (6pm news programme)
	RTÉ2 - News2Day (programme for teenagers)
	Virgin Media – News at 5.30pm
	TG4 - Nuacht 7pm (Irish language)
<b>Websites</b>	
	RTE.ie - 9am
	TheJournal.ie - 12pm
	IrishMirror.ie - 12pm
	BreakingNews.ie - 12pm
	Independent.ie - 7.30pm
	IrishTimes.com - 7.30pm

*Table 1: The outlets monitored on May 6th 2025.*

The total number of stories analysed in 2025 (n=221) is broadly in line with the 2020 data (n=265). However, the 2020 sample included stories published on Twitter (n=60), a format which GMMP excluded for 2025.

	Print	Radio	TV	Internet	Total 2025
<b>Total stories analysed</b>	80	34	42	65	221
<b>Total sources/subjects analysed</b>	271	42	91	159	563

*Table 2: The total number of stories and sources/subjects, by format.*

### *Monitoring team:*

The news material was all gathered by Dr Dawn Wheatley on May 6<sup>th</sup> 2025.

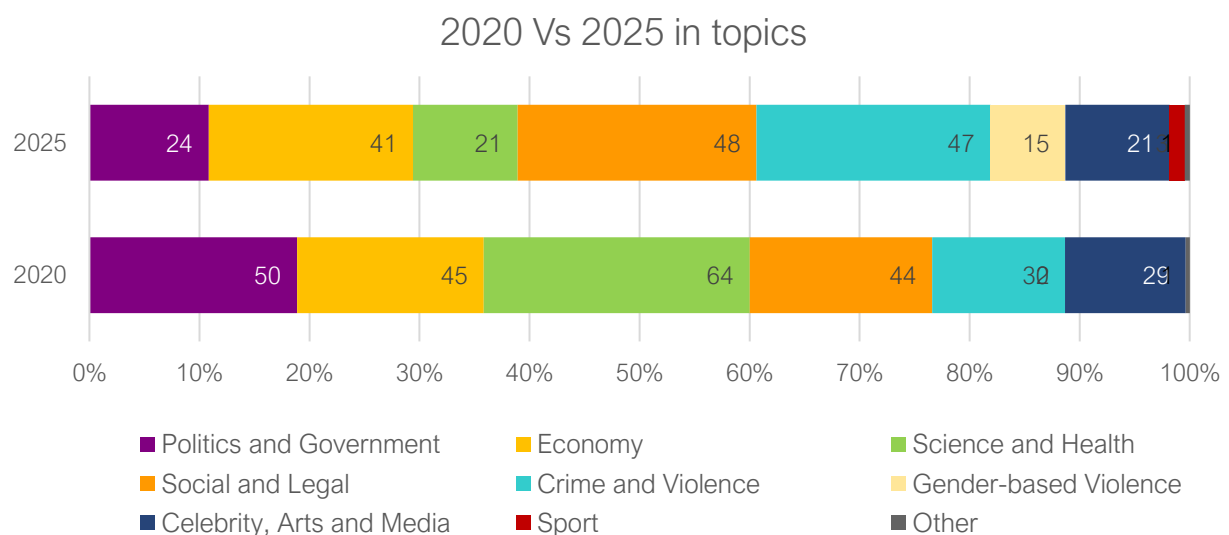
An in-person coding day took place on May 14<sup>th</sup>.

Coding was completed by:

- Dr Dawn Wheatley, Assistant professor, School of Communications, DCU
- Dr Saumava Mitra, Assistant professor, School of Communications, DCU
- Jessica Braganza, PhD student, School of Communications, DCU
- Ana Jovanovic-Harrington, PhD student, School of Communications, DCU
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- Michael Otieno, PhD student, School of Communications, DCU
- Ioan Suhov, PhD student, School of Communications, DCU

## TOPICS IN THE NEWS

The first set of results provides a breakdown of the major topic<sup>7</sup>: GMMP has eight overarching topics. Fig. 1 shows the overall proportion of stories, by topic, in comparison with 2020. In 2020, ‘Politics and Government’ was dominant with almost 1 in 5 stories in that category, but that has declined in 2025, down to 11%, with growth instead evident in the ‘economy’ (19%), ‘social and legal’ (22%) and ‘crime and violence’ (21%) categories. The celebrity, arts and media category – plus sports – has remained relatively consistent across both samples (10%). Among the most notable drops is the ‘science and health’ category, indicative of the Covid-19 pandemic’s presence and influence on the news agenda during the 2020 monitoring.



*Fig. 1: The stories in the sample broken down by major topic, compared with 2020.  
The numbers on each colour show the number of stories in each category.*

Fig. 2 shows the number of stories across all four formats, by major category. Certain figures stand out: the 23 ‘social and legal’ stories present in print, such as the Irish Examiner’s story about care standards for those with intellectual disabilities (see qualitative analysis), or various court reports. Overall, as radio had the fewest number of stories altogether, this is reflected in the lower number per topic, such as just one science and health story appearing. The small number of sports stories (3) all appearing on the internet is perhaps unsurprising as print, radio and television all have more clearly segregated sports segments, while news websites may have more fluid boundaries between topics, and homepages may cover a wider range of topics.

<sup>7</sup> GMMP uses eight categories: ‘sport’ is a new addition for 2025 as in 2020 was previously in the ‘celebrity, arts and media’ category. It is important to note, however, that specific sports reporting is not included in the GMMP sample, only sports material that appears in the general news pages. Gender-based violence is also new: it replaces 2020’s “gender & related” (which had 0 stories in the Irish sample in 2020).

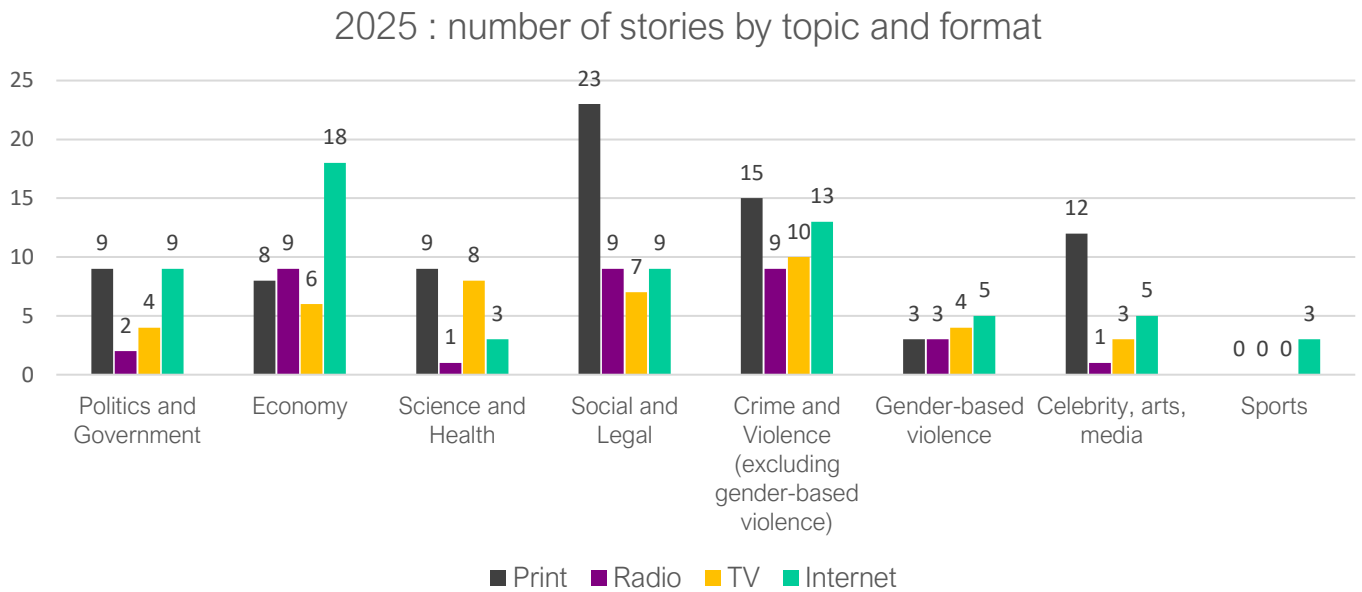


Fig. 2: The composition of the 2025 sample in terms of major topic and media format. The numbers on the chart show the number of stories.

## NEWS SUBJECTS AND SOURCES

### Overall visibility

A total of 563 subjects/sources were recorded across all four formats, of which 31% of legacy media sources were women and 26% of internet sources were women. The breakdown of formats is presented in Table 3.

	Print	Radio	Television	Internet
Female	32%	17%	34%	26%
Male	68%	83%	66%	74%

Table 3: The % of male and female subjects/sources in news stories across all four formats.

Fig. 3 shows how this has changed since 2005 and 2020. Not all data is available for all, but it is interesting to note a steady increase in women's presence in print stories – although they still comprise fewer than one-third of sources/subjects (32%). There has been an unfortunate decrease in the radio material analysed: in 2020, radio and TV were aligned at 26%, but radio fell to 17% in 2025, while TV increased to 34% in 2025.

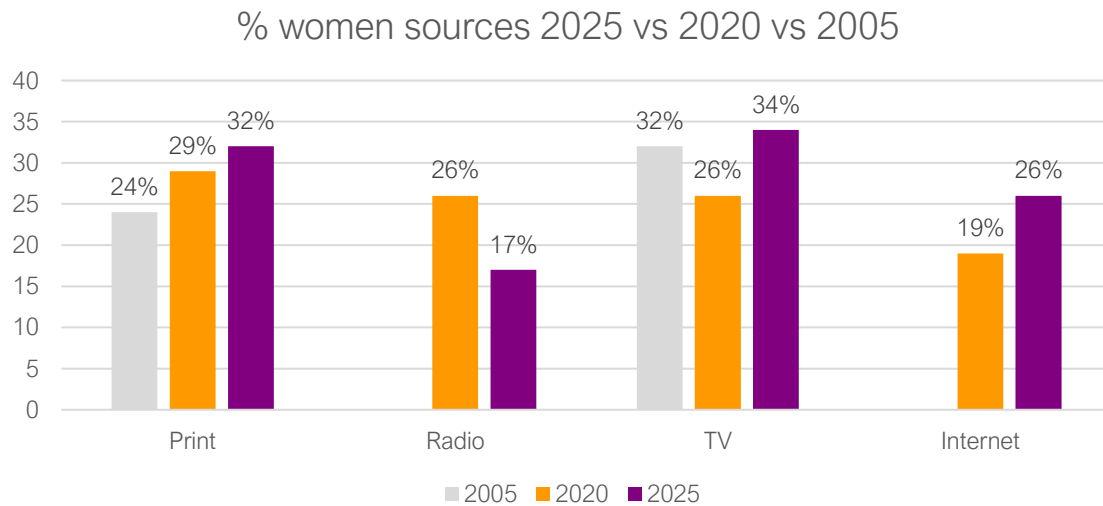


Fig. 3: The % of male and female subjects/sources since 2005.

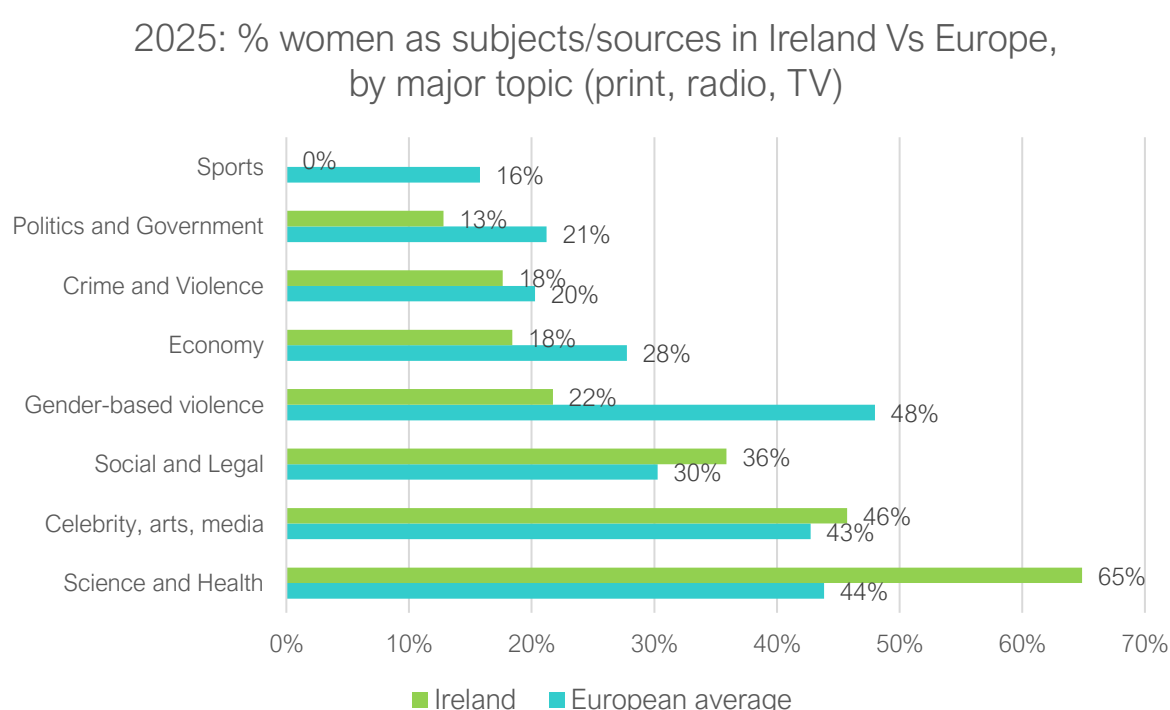
### Women's presence in different types of news

Firstly, looking at the **regional composition** of stories can demonstrate the geographic stages upon which women are more or less present. Table 4 shows how national stories – such as those about domestic policies – were the most frequent place in which women appeared, with 43% of subjects/sources recorded being women. However, this dipped to just 20% of sources/subjects being women in stories that were recorded as foreign/international, the second-highest category. This suggests that, domestically, women are establishing a presence in news, but this is weakened when international news flows come into focus. Of course, the results depend on the stories in question and the stories relating to the death of Pope Francis, and the imminent papal conclave, was an international story which inevitably saw a lot of attention granted to male subjects.

Sex of news subjects/sources by geographic scope	%	N
National stories	43%	192
Foreign/International stories	20%	157
Sub-Regional and Regional stories	13%	8
Local stories	7%	14

Table 4: The % of male and female subjects/sources, by geographic scope of the stories.  
The N column shows the number of stories in question.

Fig. 4 shows the percentage of **women as subjects/sources broken down by major topic** in Ireland and compares it with the Europe-wide results. We can see how the politics category has a stark gender gap: just 13% of sources/subjects in politics stories were women (below the European average of 21%) and 87% were men, while this increases just marginally to 18% women and 82% men in both ‘economy’ and ‘crime and violence’. The social and legal category – the category with the highest number of stories – has just over one in three sources/subjects being female, and almost two-thirds being male. In Ireland, ‘science and health’ is the only category in which more than 50% of the sources/subjects were female, and this was higher than the European average; however, it should be noted that this is only 21 stories in total. The second-most prevalent category for female sources/subjects were ‘celebrity, arts and media’ (46%), which closely aligns with the European average.



*Fig. 4: The percentage of women as subjects/sources across the eight major topics, comparing Irish Vs European news. The data focuses on print/radio/TV and does not include internet news.*

When the **specific sub-topics** are looked at, the sample sizes get even smaller; Table 5 shows all the sub-topics for those with 5 or more contributors, and it is useful to see some of the starkest disparities. For example, just 3/39 people contributing to stories about war in the Middle East, including Gaza, were women. Of the 36 contributors about economic politics, strategies, etc, just 1 was a woman, while 0/14 sources/subjects in stories about global partnerships (eg. transnational trade and finance systems) were female. Women exceed half the contributors in stories on celebrity news, transport/traffic/roads, women’s movements, and poverty.

Specific sub-topics	Total people	Total female	Female as %
Religion, culture, tradition, controversies ...	59	12	20%
Disaster, accident, famine, flood, plane crash, etc.	54	26	48%
War in the Middle East including Gaza...	39	3	8%
Economic policies, strategies, modules, indicators, stock markets, taxes, etc	36	1	3%
Foreign/international politics, UN, peacekeeping	32	8	25%
Violent crime, murder, abduction, assault, etc. (not gender-related)	30	6	20%
Celebrity news, births, marriages, royalty, etc.	26	14	54%
Medicine, health, hygiene, safety, (not Cancer, Polio, or HIV/AIDS)	26	19	73%
Non-violent crime, bribery, theft, drugs, corruption	20	4	20%
Legal system, judiciary, legislation, family law, family codes, property law, inheritance...	18	7	39%
Sexual harassment against women, rape, sexual assault.	18	4	22%
Other domestic politics/government (local, regional, national), elections, speeches...	17	2	12%
Arts, entertainment, leisure, cinema, books, dance	14	5	36%
Global partnerships (transnational trade and finance systems e.g. WTO. IMF, World Bank, EU, etc.)	14	0	0
Transport, traffic, roads...	12	7	58%
Other gender violence such as feminicide, trafficking of girls and women, FGM...	10	3	30%
Women's movement, gender-related demonstrations, feminist activism offline and online incl. #MeToo ...	8	6	75%
Poverty, housing, social welfare, aid, etc.	7	5	71%
Intimate partner violence against women	6	0	0
Other development issues, sustainability, etc.	6	1	17%
Team sports (soccer, football, basketball, handball, hockey, etc): events, players, facilities, training, funding	6	1	17%
Environment, pollution, tourism	5	2	40%
War, civil war, terrorism, other state-based violence (except in the Middle East)	5	0	0

*Table 5: The specific subtopics (with 5 or more contributors) and the percentage women present in each, from all four media formats, in 2025.*

## Occupation and function in the story

The previous tables and charts focused on topics, and related patterns appear when individual occupations/professions are examined. Table 6 shows the percentage of selected occupations that were women, and the number of occurrences (only subjects/sources with 10 or more appearances are shown in the table). The dominance of politicians as sources warrants particular attention, particularly given the low proportion – just 19% - of whom are women. This has fallen from the 24% in 2020, and is closer to the 17% recorded in 2005. It also falls below the national parliamentary representation of 25%.

Occupation	N = total sources in 2025	% female in 2025	% female in 2020
Politician/ member of parliament, ...	108	19%	24%
Religious figure, priest, monk, rabbi, mullah, nun	31	0%	0%
Criminal, suspect no other occupation given	23	4%	0%
Celebrity, artist, actor, writer, singer, TV personality	24	54%	53%
Government employee, public servant, spokesperson, etc.	19	21%	6%
Child, young person no other occupation given	15	80%	75%
Student, pupil, schoolchild	12	67%	33%
Royalty, monarch, deposed monarch, etc.	12	42%	33%
Sportsperson, athlete, player, coach, referee	12	25%	0%
Academic expert, lecturer, teacher	11	64%	42%
Homemaker, parent	11	55%	100%
Police, military, para-military, militia, fire officer	11	27%	0%
Activist or worker in civil society org., NGO, trade union	10	60%	33%

*Table 6: The % women by occupation in print, radio and TV stories in 2025, compared with 2020. The table shows occupations with 10 or more occurrences.*

The GMMP identifies **five key functions of sources/subjects** in news reports: the subject (eg, a story about someone who has done/said something); acting as a spokesperson on an issue (eg on behalf of a company); being an expert/commentator contributing insight (eg, an academic researcher), personal experience (eg, someone talking about something that has happened in their own lives), and popular opinion (eg, a vox pop). Fig. 5 shows the male:female ratio of these five categories (the “other” category is excluded).

Subjects are the most common grouping across all four media formats, just 24% of subjects were women (62/254), resulting in three in every four subjects being male. Similarly, the 45 female spokespersons (27%) were overshadowed by the 118 male spokespersons. Most notably, perhaps, female contributors only dominate the category of ‘personal experience’, whereby they speak about their personal circumstances and lives, often framed within the domestic rather than the professional capacity.



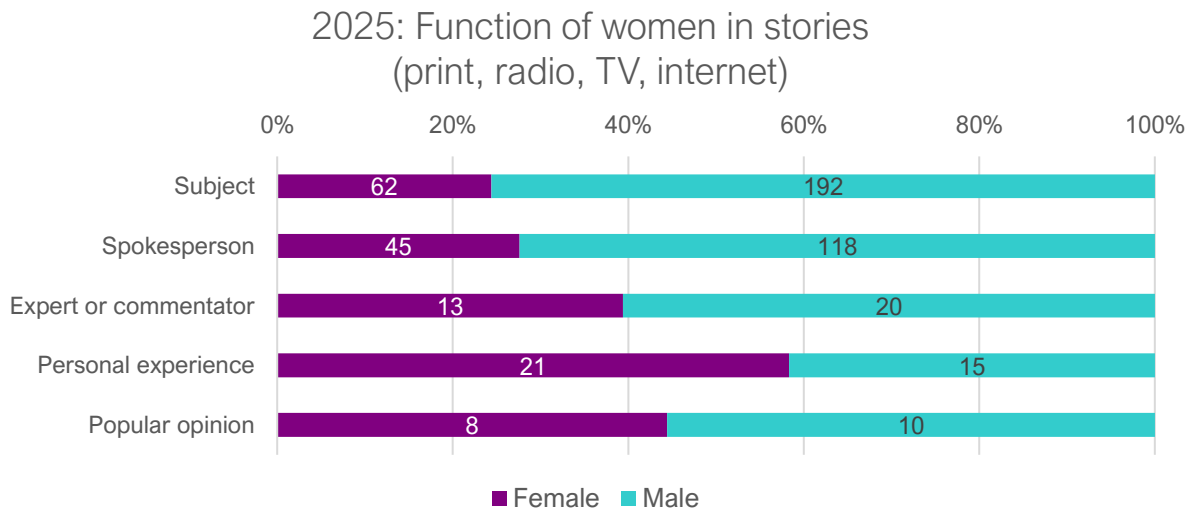


Fig. 5: The gender breakdown of function, across the four media formats.

An example of this personal experience is pictured here, from IrishMirror.ie: a story about a woman waiting for an organ transplant, talking about her experience. This dominance of women in personal experience narratives has been a long-standing observation in both GMMP and beyond: Figure 6 shows the Irish data from 2005, 2020 and 2025 for print/radio/TV and the contrast between categories has remained broadly consistent, with 2025 showing a decline in women as subjects. One positive increase is in the spokesperson category, where the proportion of women has almost doubled since 2020, while there has been a steady increase in female expert/commentators since 2005.

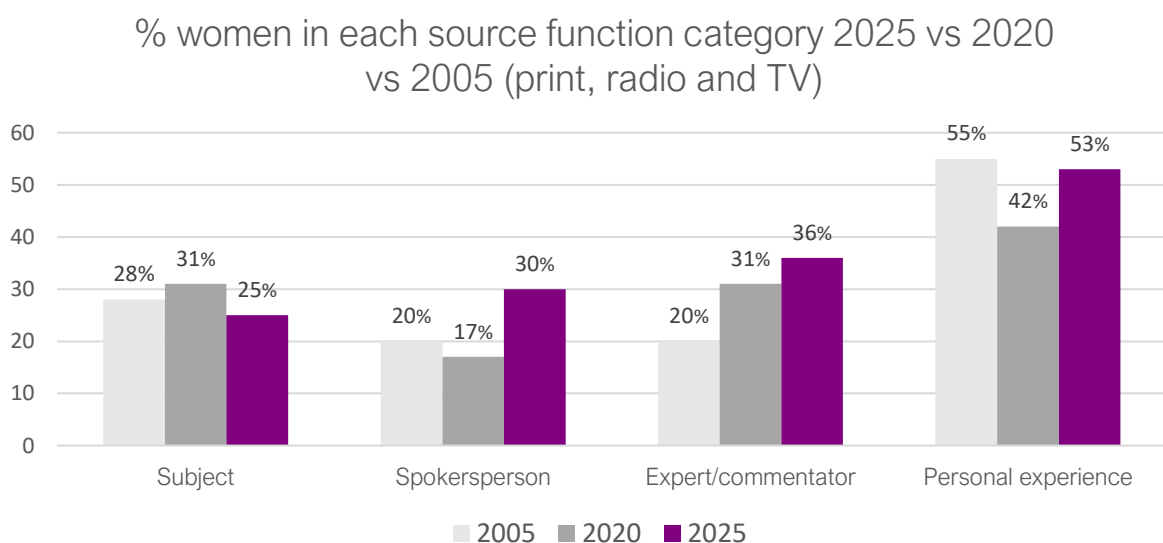
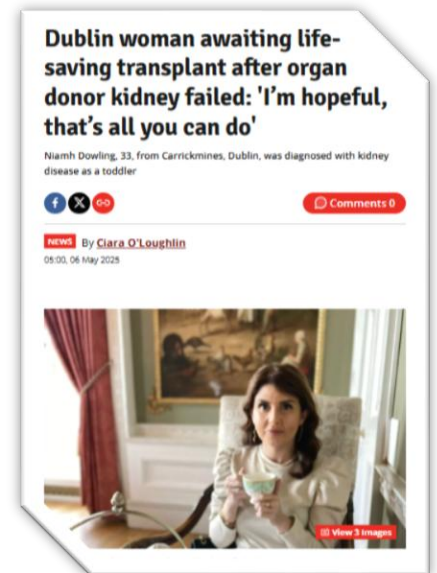


Fig. 6: The 2005-2020-2025 gender breakdown of women's functions in the news.

## *Are women seen and heard? Family status, quotes and photographs*

Another indicator of presence and visibility in the news is the extent to which women sources/subjects are photographed, quoted, and whether or not their family status is incorporated into the narrative (ie, reference to partners, children, etc). Figure 7 show these three indicators for print/radio/TV. It compares the proportion of women who are **identified by family status** (28%) with the proportion of men (11%) identified by family status, reinforcing how women are more frequently present in the news in a somewhat domestic framework. This male/female disparity has been present, to various degrees, since 2005 in the Irish data. Of course, women's personal/domestic lives and the complexities around them are important and warrant attention and exploration, but the rate at which they are domesticised relative to men is nevertheless worth noting.

The gender-based comparison for whether or not male/female subjects/sources are **quoted** or not is an interesting one to consider. The 2025 results show that, proportionately, female sources are more likely to be quoted when they are present in the news (55% are quoted, compared with 41% of male sources), an inverse of the 2020 results. However, it is important to remember that male sources are appearing at a much higher rate than female sources, so it does not equate to hearing women's voices more. Regardless, it suggests that female sources' contributions are deemed important in the stories they appear in, in the sense that their voice/quotations are included, which is a positive.

The visual presence of women relative to men was measured for print and internet stories, and compared with 2020 and 2005. Much like being quoted, the women were more likely than men to be **photographed**: 31% of women sources/subjects were photographed, compared with just 16% of men. Again, this is a positive in terms of women's visibility but should be taken in the context of women being less present overall.

Remaining with images, in 2025, the Irish team asked some special questions which focused on the presence of women in visual images (in print, online and TV news). Of the sample analysed, 84% of stories included some kind of visual images. Of that 84%, a woman featured prominently (ie, is the focus of the image or a key subject) in 30% of those images. Within that subset of images, we asked if something negative had happened to them: 29% were 'yes', suggesting the women/girls were victims of something negative, while 71% were no. For example, this front page from the Irish Sun shows the schoolgirl Lauren O'Brien (13) who died in a motorsport accident, but it is paired with a quote about her beauty, suggesting the chosen picture serves an aesthetic function for editors. This data is useful to try to understand what proportion of visible women are not victims, and instead, for example, are in positions of expertise or authority.



% subjects/sources who are (i) identified by family status,  
(ii) quoted; (iii) photographed: 2025 Vs 2020 Vs 2005

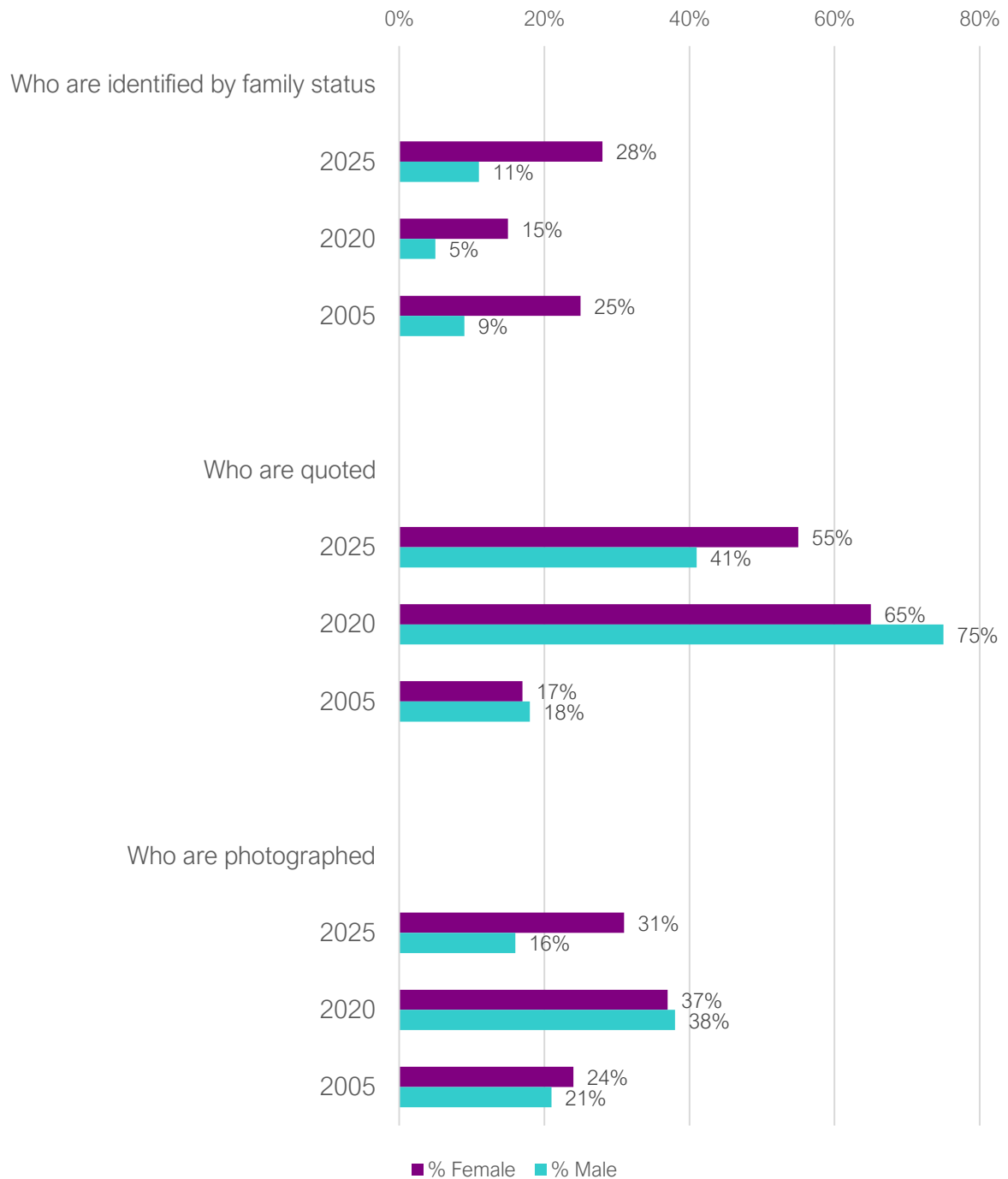


Fig. 7: The percentage of female/male sources and subjects that had their family status mentioned; were quoted; and were photographed. The graph shows the data from 2005, 2020 and 2025.

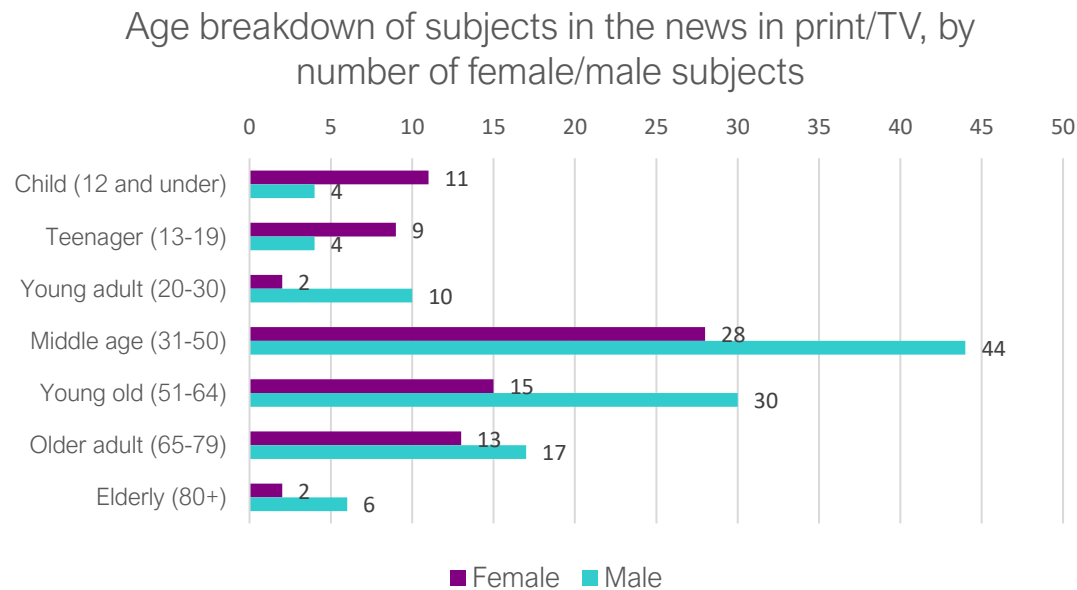
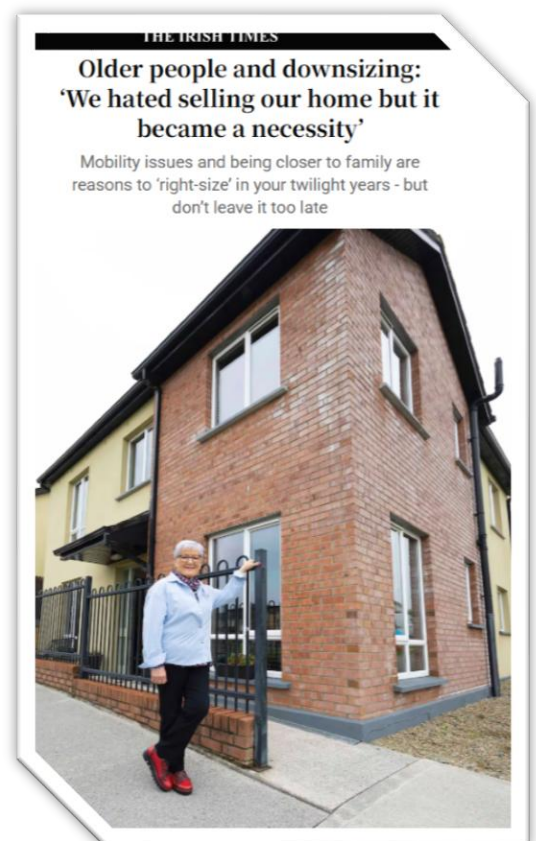


Fig. 8: The 2025 breakdown of female/male sources by age in print/TV. The numbers are the number of individuals recorded (based on estimates if age not given) in each age group.

In terms of visibility, the appearance of sources in print/TV was also recorded by age. Younger girls/teenage girls are more common than boys aged under 19 (20/28 of those aged 19 and under were female), but the pattern inverts in what could be considered the peak professional years of 20-64 when male appearances outnumber for each of those three age categories. One positive, however, is the relatively equal gender distribution of those older adults aged 65-79. Older women have often been somewhat invisible in the news, but one example of this more positive potential coverage is the Irish Times story, pictured, which features a 79-year-old woman talking about downsizing her home.

The woman is photographed and speaks confidently about her decision: although writing about a domestic context, and caring for her husband with dementia, she is presented in an authoritative manner rather than a victim: “Now in ‘a great location’, Anna said she can walk to the shops, their children are nearby, and she has a new doctor. “Moving house when you are older is a huge upheaval, but it was the best thing we could have done, and we are delighted with it now.” Regardless of gender, it is positive to see older people in narratives that showcase their agency and control over their own lives and decision-making even if their age and decline are central to the story.



## JOURNALISTS AND REPORTERS

Gaining an insight into who is responsible for reporting the news, and who is presenting it to audiences, is the other key dimension of the GMMP. Figure 9 shows the breakdown of reporters across all four formats, with radio the lowest at 29% female reporters, followed by print at 39% female. The figures are closer to parity for internet and television reporting.

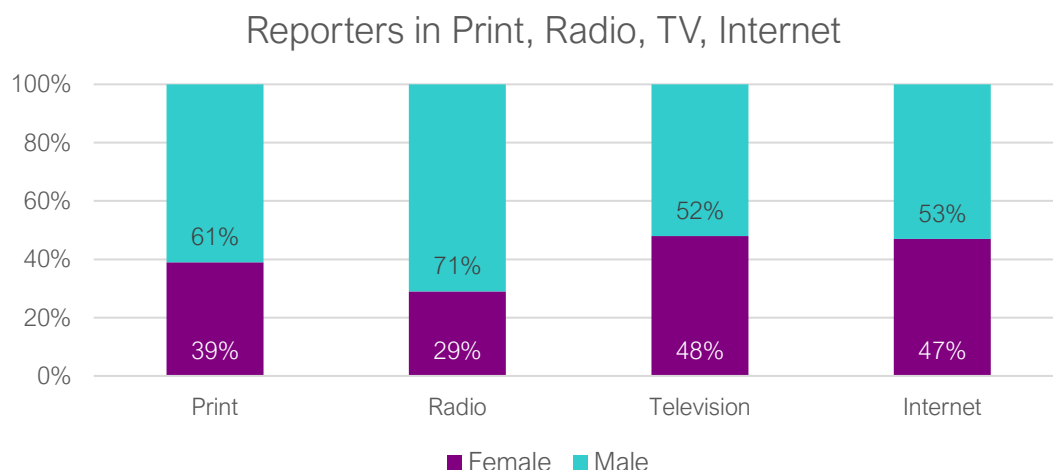


Fig. 9: The gender breakdown of reporters across all four formats in 2025.

Separately, the studio presenters on radio and television are also recorded for each news item. It should be noted that there were four television news programmes recorded so the results, shown in Figure 10, hinge on who the assigned presenters were that day (pictured below for TV). Nevertheless, women presenters dominated on TV, while there were slightly more male presenter voices appearing on radio.

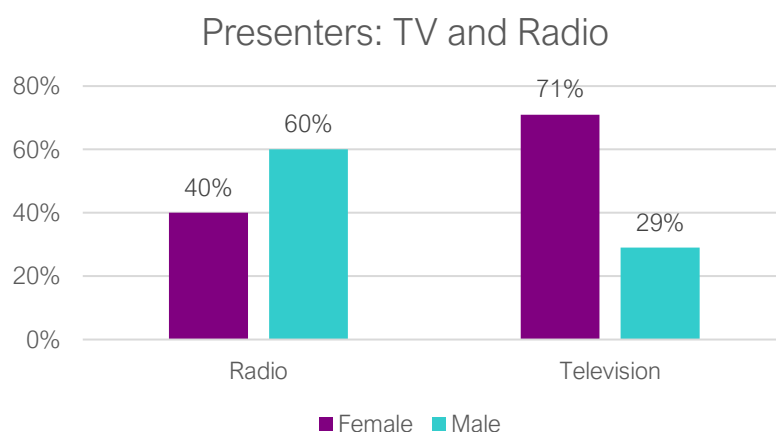
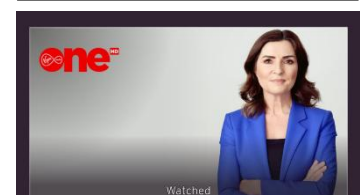


Fig. 10: The gender breakdown of presenters across radio and TV in 2025 and the TV presenters on TG4, News2Day, RTE and Virgin



Women being more likely to appear as presenters rather than reporters is an established pattern in journalism and media production, and Figure 11 shows how this has been the case in the Irish GMMP data since 2005. It may be considered potentially problematic if gender balance is seemingly achieved overall in the programming in terms of journalists, but that balance is underpinned by the presenting rather than the reporting.

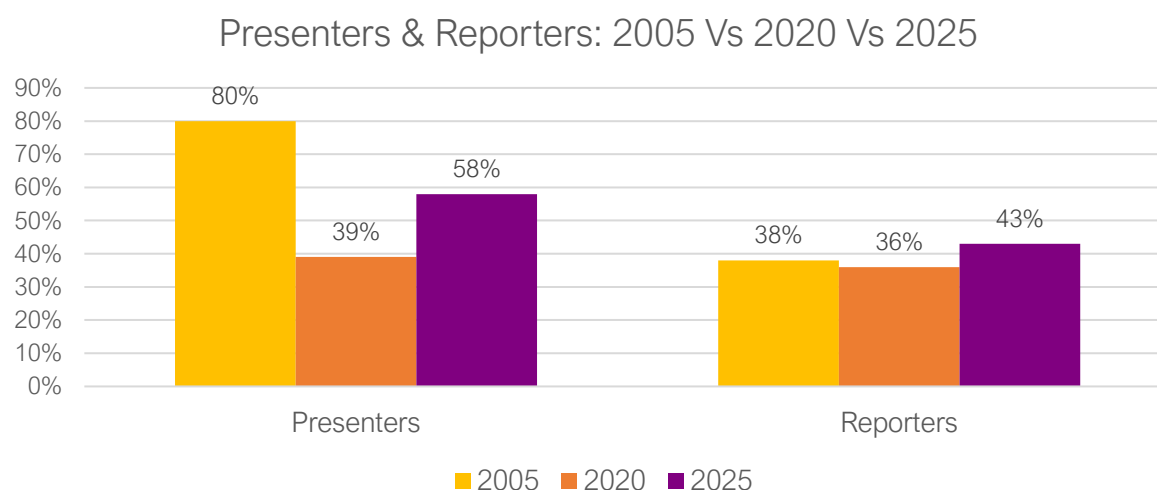


Fig. 11: The gender breakdown of presenters and reporters (print, TV, radio) for 2005, 2020, 2025

Looking into the major overarching topics that are reported, and the gender breakdown for each (Figure 12), female journalists exceed male journalists in covering gender-based violence, science and health, and are matched on the economy. However, male journalists far exceed female journalists on the politics beat: just 6/42 journalists recorded were women.

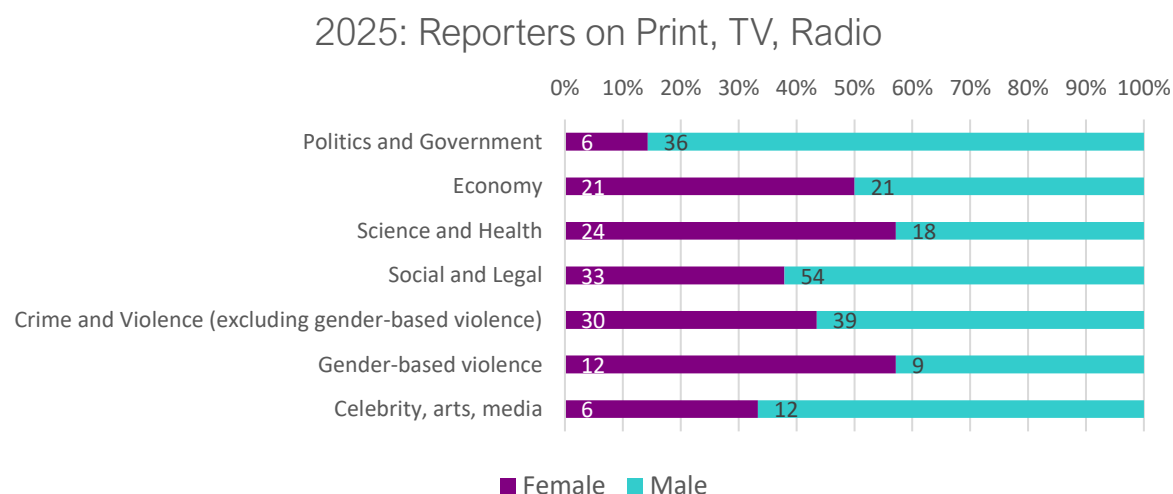


Fig. 12: The gender breakdown of presenters and reporters (print, TV, radio) for 2005, 2020, 2025



The question of whether or not female journalists are more likely than male journalists to include female sources is one of the enduring questions in feminist scholarship on news production. It is often too simplistic to suggest that, but results from previous studies have been mixed. In the GMMP this year in Ireland, there was effectively no difference: 30% of the sources used by female reporters were female, compared with an effectively identical 29.56% sources used by male journalists being female.

	Female reporters	Male reporters
Female sources	57	68
Male sources	133	162
	30% female sources	29.56% female sources

Table 7: The use of female/male sources by female/male journalists

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

The extent to which women and women's activities are central to the reporting is outlined, by medium, in Figure 13. Radio was the lowest – just 3% – while print performs the strongest, with a quarter of stories having women as a central focus. This is likely impacted by the visibility of stories such as the death of 13-year-old girl, Lauren O'Brien, pictured here in the Irish Daily Mail, above a story about the trial of an Australian woman – identified as a 'mother' in the headline – who poisoned her in-laws at a family lunch. Another more positive example, focusing on women's professional lives, is the story on IrishMirror.ie about a young female air-traffic controller working in Dublin Airport. This is the kind of reporting which may challenge many people's perceptions of the kind of people working in that role.

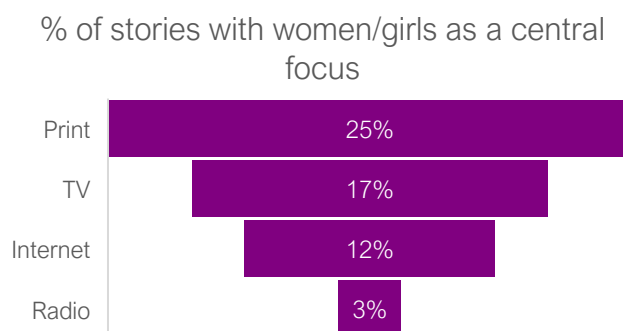


Fig. 13: The % of women/girls as a central focus in stories in 2025

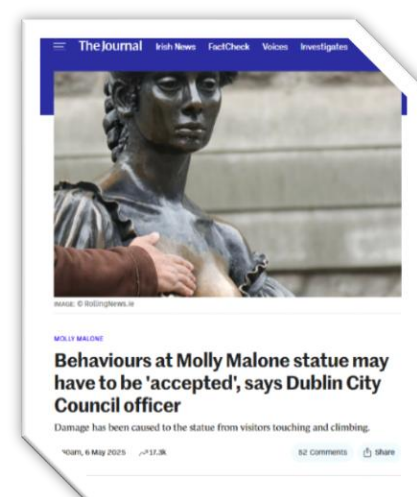


Specific sub-topics where women are the central focus are outlined in Table 8 (showing any sub-topic with more than 5 stories, for print/radio/TV). Although these are often small sample sizes, they nevertheless indicate where women are appearing as the central focus. For example, in the 11 stories categorised as “Celebrity news, births, marriages, royalty”, 8 of them focused on women. Conversely, of the 22 stories categorised as “Economic politics, strategies, etc”, 0 stories had women as the central focus.

Specific sub-topic	N	% with women as central focus
Economic policies, strategies, modules, indicators, stock markets, taxes, etc	22	0%
Disaster, accident, famine, flood, plane crash, etc.	20	30%
War in the Middle East including Gaza...	19	0%
Violent crime, murder, abduction, assault, etc. (not gender-related)	14	14%
Foreign/international politics, UN, peacekeeping	11	0%
Celebrity news, births, marriages, royalty, etc.	11	73%
Medicine, health, hygiene, safety, (not Cancer, Polio, or HIV/AIDS)	9	33%
Sexual harassment against women, rape, sexual assault.	9	33%
Transport, traffic, roads...	8	13%
Religion, culture, tradition, controversies ...	8	0%
Non-violent crime, bribery, theft, drugs, corruption	8	0%
Other domestic politics/government (local, regional, national), elections, speeches...	7	0%
Environment, pollution, tourism	7	14%
Legal system, judiciary, legislation, family law, family codes, property law, inheritance...	7	29%
Arts, entertainment, leisure, cinema, books, dance	6	33%

Table 8: Sub-topics of stories where women are the central focus in 2025, for print/radio/TV.

Overall, 10% of stories made referenced to issues of gender (in)equality, compared with just 3% in 2020. The 2025 increase is perhaps unusually high due to the nature of some of the topics covered on May 6<sup>th</sup>, eg. the proposed anti sex-for-rent Bill, or the coverage of the Molly Malone statue and Dublin City Council's attempts to limit the number of tourists touching her breasts. The ongoing story about female camogie players having to wear skorts rather than shorts was also present on the news agenda.



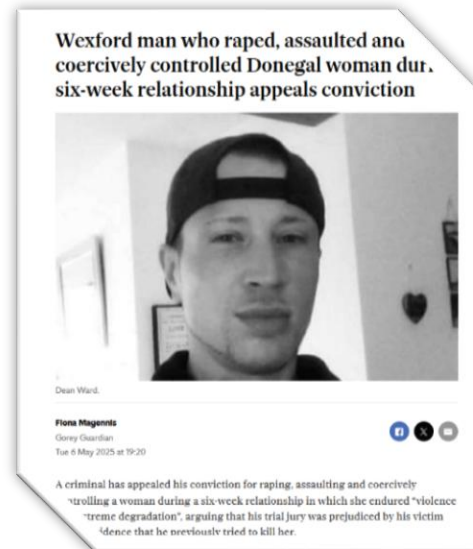
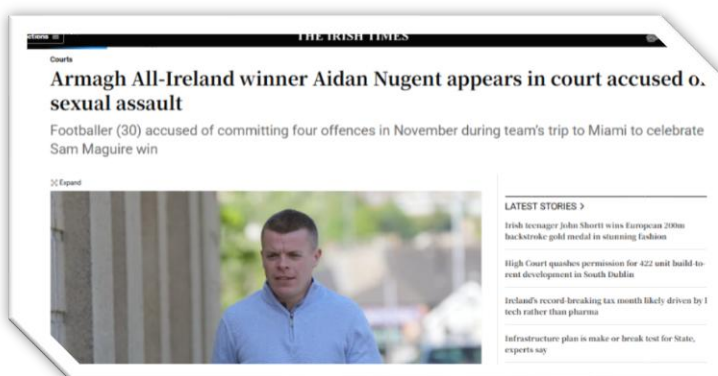


GMMP gives special attention to gender-based violence (GBV) and, as mentioned earlier, it is one of the major topics: 15 stories in 2025 were recorded in this category. Although a small sample size, it is worth noting some traits associated with them. The 15 stories were written by 8 female and 9 male reporters (some had multiple by-lines). In terms of the individuals featured in these stories, there were 34 sources/subjects:

- 18 in stories of sexual harassment (4 female, 14 male)
- 6 in intimate partner violence against women (0 female, 6 male)
- 10 other gender violence (3 female, 7 male)

There were 0 stories about the GBV subcategories of intimate partner violence against men; intimate partner violence against gender diverse persons, or technology-facilitated GBV including revenge porn, online stalking, online misogyny, online harassment, trolling.

The dominance of male subjects/sources in these stories is due to reporting on legal/court proceedings, such as those illustrated below, eg. accusations against Sean 'Diddy' Combs and All-Ireland footballer Aidan Nugent. On the one hand, the occurrence of these events is concerning, but the prominence of them in the news – as part of legal processes – is a positive in terms of visibility and judicial processes.



## QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS: CASE STUDIES

GMMP uses the four types of categories for analysing stories, as outlined below.

### Gender and Media (GEM) Classification<sup>8</sup>

<p><b>Type 1. Blatant stereotype</b></p> <p>Articles or images in which women are presented in stereotypical roles such as victims or sex objects.</p> <p>Articles or images in which men are presented in stereotypical roles such as strong entrepreneurs or leaders.</p>	<p><b>Type 2. Subtle stereotype</b></p> <p>Articles or images that reinforce notions of women's domestic and men's more public roles in ways that make this seem normal, e.g. a mother's agony, rather than parents' agony over a child.</p> <p>Articles in which women are referred to according to personal relationships that have no relevance to the story; e.g. a woman minister is referred to as the wife of someone.</p>
<p><b>Type 3. Missed opportunities / Gender-blind</b></p> <p>Articles in which there is a lack of gender balance (and therefore of diversity) in sources, resulting in only one perspective being given on an issue.</p> <p>Articles that lack a gender perspective in every day issues such as elections or the budget, depriving these stories of new and interesting angles, such as how cuts in grants affect poor women.</p>	<p><b>Type 4. Gender-aware</b></p> <p><i>Sub-Type 4A.</i> Articles and images that <u>challenge stereotypes</u> and prompt debate on topical gender issues from a human rights perspective, such as women pilots or men care givers.</p> <p><i>Sub-Type 4B.</i> Articles that have a <u>gender balance of sources</u>; demonstrating different perspectives/impact on women and men including through use of gender disaggregated data; for example how many women and men receive certain types of grants; what they use them for and why cuts may have different kinds of impact.</p> <p><i>Sub-Type 4C.</i> <u>Gender specific</u>: Articles that concern inequality between women and men; structures, processes; campaigns to advance gender equality such as glass ceilings in certain types of occupation.</p>

<sup>8</sup> This is adapted from the Gender Links GEM classification system developed for the Southern African Gender and Media Baseline Study.

## 1) BLATANT STEREOTYPE

### 1A) Has Page 3 turned?

A positive from this year's sample is that there were no examples of stories that are blatant stereotypes that warrant criticism. Interestingly, in tabloids, page 3 is typically a heavy showbusiness/entertainment page where trivialisation – often of female celebrities – is apparent. However, this year, the three tabloid/mid-market titles did have celebrity stories on page 3 but they were more heavily gender balanced and did not overly sexualise or trivialise the subjects. Although there are some elements to note – such as the somewhat suggestive/revealing image of actress Nicola Coughlan – none warrant in-depth analysis. This should be considered a positive takeaway from this year's sample.



*Page 3 of The Irish Daily Star, Irish Daily Sun, and Irish Daily Mail*

## 1B) Reporting on court/trial activity of male domestic violence

An example of a story from May 6<sup>th</sup> which warrants some attention in this section of blatant stereotype – but which should come with important caveats in terms of critique and analysis – is a story relating to the ongoing (at the time) trial of Richard Satchwell, who would later that month be convicted for the murder of his wife Tina. Tina's body was discovered, buried under the stairs in the home she shared with Richard Satchwell, more than six years after he had reported her disappearance. Richard Satchwell made various media appearances during that period, making pleas for information about her whereabouts..

*Title of article:* "Latest: Richard Satchwell told gardaí [police] he tried to self-harm over domestic abuse from wife Tina, murder trial hears"

*Publication:* Independent.ie. Online.

<https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/courts/richard-satchwell-told-gardai-he-tried-to-self-harm-over-domestic-abuse-from-wife-tina-murder-trial-hears/a379484123.html>

*Date:* Tuesday May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Included in main sample.

Text of story [selected passages in bold]:

Murder accused Richard Satchwell told gardaí he once tried to self-harm because he could not take any more domestic abuse from his wife Tina.

The English truck driver (58) claimed he was left "destroyed" by Ms Satchwell's domestic abuse and was at times left with scratches, cuts and bites to his face and body.

He also told gardaí he once "broke the law" because he could not afford to buy the things his Cork-born wife wanted.

Mr Satchwell has pleaded not guilty before the Central Criminal Court to the murder of his wife (45) at a time unknown on March 19/20, 2017, at their home at No 3 Grattan Street in Youghal, Co Cork.

Ms Satchwell's skeletal remains were discovered following a garda search of the Satchwells' home from October 10, 2023.

Her body was temporarily stored in a chest freezer before being buried in a shallow grave underneath the stairs and topped with concrete, the court heard.

Judge Paul McDermott and a jury of seven women and five men listened to the transcript of a lengthy garda-interview conducted with Mr Satchwell in June 2021.

Gardaí said the enhanced cognitive interview (ECI) lasted for over three hours and the transcript ran to 124 pages.



Mr Satchwell appeared for the fifth day of his murder trial, wearing navy slacks and a red and blue check shirt.

Detective Sergeant David Noonan led the ECI interview on June 20, 2021, at a special meeting suite four years into the garda search for Ms Satchwell.

The interview was conducted away from a garda station in a special room to allow for a relaxed environment for the witness-led discussion.

"It is forensic – you are getting a lot more detail when you go down this route," Det Sgt Noonan, who is a -trainer in the ECI technique, told the trial. "It is accepted as one of the gold standard of interviews."

'I broke the law trying to buy stuff for her that I could not afford,' he said, with this comment referring to a fraud involving a stolen chequebook

Unlike a normal statement interview with gardaí, questions and answers are not written down at the time – and the format is more conversational. An ECI is also led by the witness rather than the garda.

"I wanted Mr Satchwell to go into great detail when he was describing anything to me," Det Sgt Noonan said.

Key elements of the interview revolved around the relationship between Mr Satchwell and his wife, their daily routine and the exact events of March 20, 2017, when he claimed she went missing.

Mr Satchwell's ECI interview with gardaí was conducted over four years after he made his first statement about the disappearance of his wife.

It was heard previously that at the urging of gardaí, he made a formal missing-person statement on May 11, 2017.

Mr Satchwell's home was -subjected to a 12-hour search by a team of 10 gardaí on June 7, 2017, but nothing was found.

However, a new wall underneath the stairwell was noted and photographed.

Ms Satchwell's body was found six-and-a-half years later, buried underneath the stairwell, during a second, more intensive garda search of the house on October 10, 2023.

The trial already heard Mr Satchwell claimed to gardaí in October 2023, just hours after human remains were found in his home, that his wife attacked him with a chisel on March 20, 2017.

He told detectives she "went limp" after he tried to protect himself by holding her away from him with a belt.

The enhanced cognitive interview was recorded. Det Sgt Noonan did not write out the answers, and the recordings were transcribed, then gone over with Mr Satchwell on January 23, 2022.

"I broke the law trying to buy stuff for her that I could not afford," he said, with this comment referring to a fraud involving a stolen chequebook.

"All I wanted to do was to make her happy... [but I found myself] not being able to make ends meet... not being able to buy her stuff," he said.

"I bought her a shitload of jewellery – I had no shame going into boutiques, into underwear shops to buy her [clothing]."

Mr Satchwell said his wife could, on occasions, be quite "nasty" with a flash temper.

"Have I been destroyed at times? Yeah. Did I take a box of tablets once? Yeah," he said. "She had a loose temper. She could be mean, angry and nasty. I was brought up to respect women and not to abuse them."

Mr Satchwell said that on one occasion his face was "destroyed" following an attack by his wife. He went to a doctor in Fermoy and showed the facial damage to her.

"You have to either stick or go," he said he was advised. "I decided to stick."

"I took a box of sleeping tablets back in 1995. There was nothing to tell, really. Tina was in one of her really bad spells and I couldn't take any more."

Mr Satchwell said he fully recovered from the incident. But, he said, following the various attacks by his wife over the years, he suffered black eyes, scratches to his face and stomach, bruises, swelling as well as cuts and bite marks to his arms.

The trial previously heard he claimed to gardaí that his wife had knocked him unconscious on two occasions.

He said during the interview that he did not tell anyone precisely how he sustained his visible injuries.

"You just make excuses. You don't turn around [to workmates] and say, 'The missus gave me one'. You make your bed and you lie in it."

He added that the violent incidents had to be measured against 28 years of his relationship with Ms Satchwell.

"Sometimes she would just go up to bed [with depression]," he said.

Mr Satchwell stressed repeatedly to gardaí that he was "besotted" with his wife and had fallen in love with her at first sight in Rochdale, England, in March 1989. He said he worked various jobs to provide for her, and the couple had moved from Fermoy to Youghal "because it was somewhere she always wanted to live".

"I always say kindness costs nothing. I am a soft touch... I never said 'no' to that woman," he said.

He said his wife had confided to him that, as a young child, she woke up in a field with no idea of what had happened to her

Mr Satchwell said the couple adored their pets, or Tina's "children", which included dogs Heidi and Ruby, their pet parrot Pearl.



He said he would help his wife bathe each evening and would then carefully rub oil into her back and feet.

"I used to massage the oil on to her. The next thing that happened after the oil, I put Ruby into a mobile kennel. Heidi would sleep downstairs," he said. "Tina put her head on my shoulder, but no words were spoken. She spent a lot of time crying at night – I put it down to depression."

Mr Satchwell claimed his wife was left very upset by the suicide of her brother, Tom, and a violent incident involving a female relative's ex-husband.

He also said his wife had confided to him that, as a young child, she woke up in a field off the Fermoy-Glanworth road with no idea of what had happened to her. However, he said, she had a recollection of later being taken to a doctor and was bleeding "down there".

Mr Satchwell notified officers at Fermoy garda station on March 24, 2017, that his wife was missing from their home when he returned from an errand in Waterford four days earlier.

He said he initially thought she was with her relatives in Fermoy, but was shocked on March 24 to realise she was not there. He claimed his wife had left her dogs behind, but had taken two suitcases and €26,000 of their life savings, which had been stored in a tin in the attic. He said he later discovered his wife had left a €4,000-plus bill with Littlewoods that he had to pay.

Mr Satchwell said he did not believe rumours that his wife was having an affair with a Polish man.

The trial in Dublin continues

## Analysis

This was a high-profile murder trial and received much public interest given Richard Satchwell's appearances in the media over the six years his wife was missing. Crucially, the main caveat in the analysis of this piece is that it is only one story as part of the ongoing coverage of this murder trial, and for that reason, it is arguably problematic to take it out of context and discuss it as a standalone piece. Furthermore, court reporters are constrained in what they can report when a case is before the courts and a trial ongoing. Nevertheless, this is a story and headline which appeared on May 6<sup>th</sup> and, although an accurate account of the events in the court that day, it runs the risk of perpetuating familiar narratives regarding male violence towards women.

The headline suggests that Tina Satchwell herself was aggressive in the relationship, and she was the one abusing her husband. Richard Satchwell presents himself as a victim in his interview with gardaí (Irish police), the transcript of which is the basis for this news report as it was presented in court. Richard Satchwell describes how much he loved his wife but says at one point he "couldn't take it" anymore because of her demeanour and physical behaviour towards him.

The headline and introductory paragraph – so important in news reporting – focuses in on Richard Satchwell's claim that he was even driven to self-harm because of the way his wife treated him. *"The English truck driver (58) claimed he was left 'destroyed' by Ms Satchwell's domestic abuse and was at times left with scratches, cuts and bites to his face and body."* The news report goes on to say how Richard Satchwell said "his wife could, on occasions, be quite 'nasty' with a flash temper". Blame is placed on the victim, drawing on ideas around condemnation towards women being a common trait of their appearance in the news, while also hinting at the stereotypical notion that men are sometimes driven to snap – and to justifiable violent outbursts themselves – because of their partner's conduct.

The editorial decision to run with so much of the transcript and claims from the accused is a complex one to consider. There is no question about its accuracy and relevance to the case overall, therefore it undoubtedly has public-interest merit. Conversely, giving such prominence to the perspective of a man who murdered his wife – with the potential consequence of tarnishing her reputation – and leading with the reference to the supposed domestic abuse from Tina Satchwell in the headline is an editorial decision that immediately frames the relationship between the victim and accused in a certain way. This becomes particularly important given

that a deceased victim like Tina Satchwell cannot defend herself or challenge the claims put forward by her husband in his police interview.

The constraints around court reporting, alongside the daily, episodic nature of how trials develop and what evidence is presented each day, are crucial to acknowledge and it would be remiss to be too forthright in any criticism. It is also important to make clear that, after the trial finished and Richard Satchwell was convicted of his wife's murder (later in May 2025), the coverage of his conduct was far more critical. This is understandable at this point because of the laws around reporting ongoing trials and avoiding contempt of court until a conviction.

After the conviction, one story, published by the same journalist/outlet after Satchwell's conviction, is headlined: "The six brazen lies that sealed Richard Satchwell's fate", one of which relates to his claims of domestic abuse; detail in this later story included input from a GP who refuted the assertions made by Richard Satchwell that he had told this GP about the supposed abuse from his wife. This calls into question the factual accuracy of Satchwell's police interview and claims about his wife's behaviour, which was widely reproduced by journalists as per this May 6<sup>th</sup> story. The accuracy of the transcript details being part of the court activity is not in question, but the potential damage to Tina Satchwell's reputation may never be remedied. In a victim-impact statement after the trial, her family referred to how "during this trial Tina was portrayed in a way that is not true to who she was"<sup>9</sup>. That version of Tina Satchwell, evident in the May 6<sup>th</sup> story, continues to exist online and in archives. It is too complex to suggest that is a bad thing, given the importance of journalists documenting court activities, but it nevertheless warrants some reflection in a forum such as this.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/courts/we-finally-have-justice-family-of-tina-satchwell-speak-out-as-husband-richard-convicted-of-her-brutal-murder/a1409058384.html>

## 2) SUBTLE STEREOTYPE

Title of article: "We won't let the State silence Fran" (pg1); "Fran deserves a real and honest apology" (pg 4/5)

Publication: Irish Examiner, Ireland. Print edition.

Date: Tuesday May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Included in main sample.





### Context & Analysis:

This is a lengthy, prominent and in-depth interview focusing on a woman, Nuala, speaking about her concerns around the care that her 40-year-old daughter Fran – who has a profound intellectual disability – experienced while she was younger and with a foster family. It is a complex case and many of the specific details are beyond the scope of this particular analysis. Ultimately, the bigger issue related to the State's alleged failure to properly care for its vulnerable citizens; the foster family that Nuala is talking about was already the subject of an inquiry and in April 2025, the month before monitoring day, a report found “fundamental failures” by the state organisations to protect vulnerable citizens. This is a follow-up piece highlighting Nuala's concerns about how Fran was treated while with that foster family, and Nuala's experience of giving testimony to the inquiry. In particular, Nuala has concerns that Fran was sexually assaulted when she was a child (but which the inquiry refuted).

The reason this is presented here as a “subtle stereotype” is not to do with the subject matter or its importance: there is no doubt that the concerns raised by the mother Nuala are incredibly important and it is essential public-service reporting work like this is given prominence in journalistic output. However, the issue in this context relates to the gender dynamics presented here and the contributors. It is notable that the sources and images presented in the story are all women. Firstly, the journalist, with a picture byline, is female. Then Fran, her sister Molly and her mother Nuala are the subjects we see and hear from. Fran is photographed, and Fran's mother Nuala and sister Molly – also photographed – are the voices heard in the piece. Crucially, though, there are male figures in the family: but they are mentioned only in passing.

*“However, when Nuala begins to tell Fran's story, it clear that, despite her profound needs and the fact that she cannot speak, she knows her mother is upset.*

*She calls out to her several times and Nuala and Molly decide to take her to see her dad Michael and brother Tony while they tell Fran's story.”*

The contributions being based around Nuala and Molly present this issue of care as a female concern, with the men – father and brother – are not present as part of the media discourse of advocating for Fran. This does not suggest any general lack of concern or engagement from them with Fran's care, but from a media representation perspective, their absence is noteworthy. The visibility of women in media within their domestic, caring contexts is one of the long-standing trends in feminist scholarship on media representations, and stories such as this potentially reiterate women's role – and men's absence – from domestic and care responsibilities.

### 3) MISSED OPPORTUNITY OR GENDER-BLIND

*Title of article:* "TD says mandatory wearing of skorts in camogie is 'absolutely ridiculous'"

*Publication:* BreakingNews.ie, online publication

*Date:* Tuesday May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Included in main sample.



#### *Text of story*

The chair of the Oireachtas Sports Committee, Labour TD Alan Kelly has described the mandatory wearing of skorts in camogie games as "completely archaic" and "absolutely ridiculous."

If the issue is not sorted out by the Camogie Association then he will call on them to come before the Sports Committee to explain their position, he told Newstalk Breakfast.

"I hope this gets sorted out immediately. They are uncomfortable and impractical", he said he had been told by his 15 year old daughter who plays camogie.

His daughter had demonstrated to him how the skorts had an impact on play and could be a health and safety issue.

It was common sense to allow players the right to choose if they wish to wear shorts. "The risk of injury should supersede this."

There should be scope for a decision by the Camogie Association because of the safety issue, he said, when it was pointed out that there had been a vote on the wearing of skorts at Congress and the issue could not be voted on again until 2027.

Mr Kelly added that if one player left the game because of the skort issue "it would be one too many."

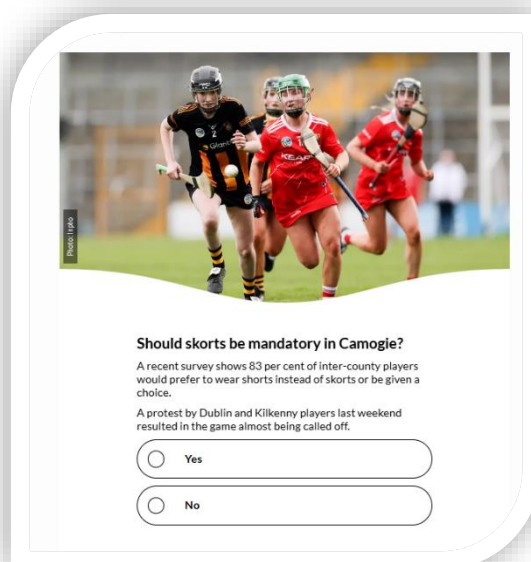
### Context & Analysis

Camogie is a culturally and historically important Irish sports game played by women and girls (there is a male equivalent, hurling). As per the governing rules of camogie, players had to wear “skorts” (a combination of a skirt/pair of shorts) rather than standard shorts, despite many arguing that skorts were impractical, uncomfortable, and impacted their confidence on the field. Following complaints from female players who wanted to wear standard shorts, the issue came to a head in terms of public/media attention earlier this year after two camogie teams turned up in shorts to play a match on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, but were forced to change into skorts otherwise the referee was going to abandon the match. Ultimately in late May 2025 after a special meeting and vote, the rules were changed allowing women and girls to wear shorts if they wanted.

The issue had been in the news in the run-up to monitoring day with different perspectives included elsewhere, but the example here from BreakingNews.ie is indicative of a type of coverage of a women’s issue which centres an elite male perspective and is classified as gender-blind/a missed opportunity. Although Alan Kelly, the TD (member of parliament) at the centre of the story here is supportive of a change in rules, the story itself nevertheless lacks any female input. We heard about the perspective of a teenage girl – Kelly’s 15-year-old daughter – but only through the channel of her father.

The main image in the story is a headshot of Kelly. At the bottom of the story, pictured, there is a general image of camogie players playing which accompanies a poll to gauge public opinion on the skorts issue. It is positive to see this “action shot” of female athletes included, but the story’s dominant frame and voice and main image is nevertheless that of a male politician and he is the only source quoted.

Finally, the story is short – approx. 200 words – indicative of brief, surface-level reporting often associated with breaking news. The quotes are attributed to a morning radio programme, *Newstalk Breakfast*. This is also an illustration of recycled media content whereby contributions that appear in one outlet are often quickly and cheaply repurposed by other outlets online. From a gender perspective, this kind of “recycled” reporting is often built on the voices that appear on broadcast media programming which, for many complex reasons, often skews towards male contributors.



## 4: GENDER-AWARE

### 4a: Challenges stereotypes: Young girls in STEM

Outlet: RTÉ News2Day – TV

Segment on 10-year-old girls conducting research about how exercise impacts mood

Available at: <https://www.rte.ie/kids/news2day/2025/0506/1511395-news2day-6-may-2025/>



News2Day is a new programme targeting children aged 6-12, and runs for 10-15 minutes on weekdays. This segment is about girls in a primary school in Ireland who were doing research into the psychological and physical benefits of taking “movement breaks” during the day. It was part of a nationwide project for senior primary school pupils around Ireland.

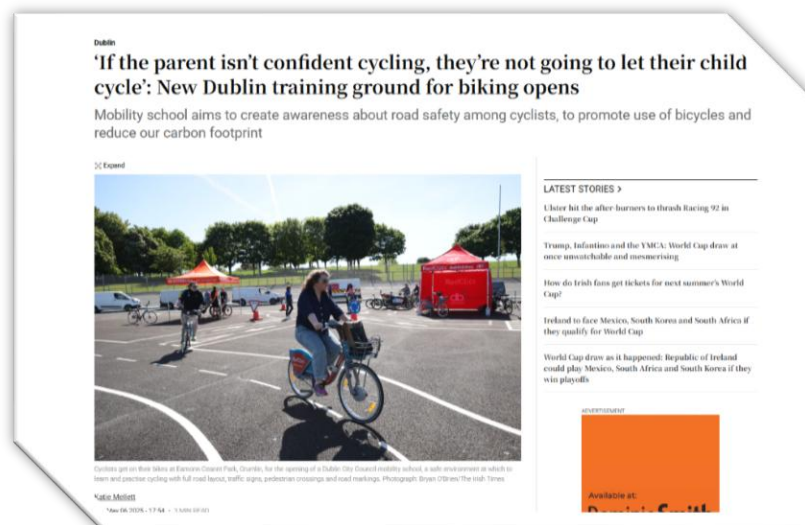
The young contributors to the segment talked about what a clinical trial was, what their central research question was, their methodology to investigate it, how they recorded all the data and analysed it. They gathered 450 pages of data over 14 weeks, based on how they felt and the speeds they ran. Eight different girls speak to the (male) reporter about their motivation and involvement with the project.

The news package is considered to be gender aware and specifically challenging stereotypes as it ultimately centres on the potential contribution of women and girls to STEM, an area which suffers from female underrepresentation. The girls are discussing the intricacies of a clinical trial and are enthused by the process and their findings, potentially sparking and showcasing a genuine interest in the process of scientific research.

Furthermore, young girls are rarely presented as authoritative, pro-active contributors to complex topics, so this further challenges stereotypes around their interests, abilities and interests. The fact it is also based around sport and activity further enhances this dimension of challenging the often-presumed interests of young girls.

Finally, it is given prominence: it is the opening/main item on the news programme.

#### 4B: Gender-aware: demonstrates a balance of sources. Cycling training.



*Title of article:* "If the parent isn't confident cycling, they're not going to let their child cycle': New Dublin training ground for biking opens"

*Publication:* IrishTimes.com, online publication of Irish Times

*Date:* Tuesday May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Included in main sample.

Story text:

"There is definitely a lot of fear," said Labour councillor Fiona Connelly, when asked about children cycling on the roads.

"When our children are on the back of the bike, we can navigate the road and we have more control, but when the time comes for them to cycle, it's really stressful and they have so much to learn."

She was speaking on a sunny Tuesday morning at the opening of a "mobility school" located at Eamonn Ceannt Park in Crumlin, Dublin.

As a teacher, parent and local resident, she praised Dublin City Council for the initiative, which aims to create awareness about road safety among cyclists, to promote the use of bicycles and reduce our carbon footprint.

With the help of street markings painted in an exercise yard, the facility allows people to re-enact the rules of the road, navigate right- and left-hand turns, roundabouts, stop signs and pedestrian crossings, and to familiarise themselves with road signs and signals, before they hit the roads proper.

"It's a really great asset, as it's off the road completely. It's a brilliant way to introduce people to cycling," said Cllr Connelly, who was deputising for the Lord Mayor at the event.

She said the unpredictability of drivers and the competition for road space makes for stressful navigation, particularly during commuting times.



Carmel O'Callaghan, active cities officer at the council, was one of the people behind the idea. "People focus on kids cycling, but if the parent isn't confident cycling, they're not going to let their child cycle. So, we will focus here a lot on cycling with confidence, programmes for adults, and cycling in traffic."

Eamonn Ceannt Park was chosen as the location for the mobility school because of the velodrome there, the bike hub located in the park, and an interest in cycling in the local community.

This is only Dublin's second mobility school, with another located in Blanchardstown, and a third in Dungarvan, Co Waterford, according to O'Callaghan.

"There was a traffic school in Clontarf up until the early 2000s. At the time, it needed a lot of investment so there was a move, rather than bringing schools to a particular location, to bring the trainers out to the schoolchildren. Over the years, we have missed having a location like this," said Brendan O'Brien, executive manager at the council's traffic department.

"It provides a good template for an area like this to bring kids to help with the cycle training and help to encourage people to get back on bikes and to do that safely," he said.

"We spend a lot of time trying to come up with cycle tracks and make the roads better, but we also know that people need some encouragement, some training, a safe place just to get back on a bike. They might be a bit wobbly at the start if they haven't been on it for a few years, and having a safe place like this is huge to us.

"Whenever we're trying to think of climate change and how we respond to it - it's a multitude of small items linking together to form something bigger rather than one big item. To us, it's a big thing, but in the overall context it's a small link in a chain for how we encourage people to make those changes," said Mr O'Brien.

Ms O'Callaghan said "The feedback so far from the community has been amazing". The council will monitor the mobility school's use with a view to considering opening other such facilities in Dublin. The facility is free to use but advance booking is required.

This piece is about a new cycling training centre which opened in Dublin. It is relatively straightforward in terms of its sources used and the relatively routine event it is covering. A (female) councillor is quoted and photographed, while another female officer from the city council is also included. A longer set of quotes from a male source, also from the council, are included in the story. Some contributions from "ordinary" users would have enhanced the report but perhaps more interestingly, there is a mix of images – with the lead image showing a woman cycling. This is important to note as women tend to cycle around the city less than men<sup>10</sup> so this main image is a notable choice, albeit in the context of a training centre/as a learner. The other images, shown below, are well balanced in terms of gender.



Luke Flann (10), a pupil of mobility school, and his friends are seen for a spin by Mark Hughes, Dublin City Council sports inclusion and recreation officer, at the new mobility school at Eamonn Ceannt Park, Leixlip. (Photograph: Brendan O'Brien/The Irish Times)



Good weather gets more kids and adults to the new mobility school. (Photograph: Brendan O'Brien/The Irish Times)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.redclick.ie/content-hub/redclick-research-over-half-adults-ireland-avoid-cycling-due-safety-concerns>

[illegible]

Publication: Irish Independent (Pg5)

### Story text

Her deepest, most vulnerable thoughts were laid bare in what her therapist wrote during those weekly sessions.

inconsistencies in Ms Grace's story.

It was six months into her therapy sessions when she got word that the notes were to be requested.

"The Family Liaison Officer rang to tell me this was going to happen. I just remember it was the disbelief of like, 'No, no, no. I'm a lawyer. You can't pull that one over on me. This can't be right?' And he said, 'No, it is, and this is a common practice'," she said.

Even the man who attacked her would have access to the details of Ms Grace working to heal after the harrowing experience

Ms Grace is telling her story as Justice Minister Jim O'Callaghan is set to "imminently" seek cabinet support for a new law that would raise the threshold for when counselling notes could be used in rape trials.

Judges will be asked to agree to release them only when there is a "real risk" of an unfair trial without them. The "routine" use of survivors' counselling notes in rape trials would end under these new reforms being brought forward by Mr O'Callaghan.

A number of survivors of sexual violence have described how "traumatising," "violating" and "horrifying" it is to go through a court process that gave their now convicted rapists access to their private counselling notes.

On a Tuesday night in July 2019, Ms Grace was violently attacked in her home after a burglar broke into her apartment in Grand Canal Dock in Dublin while she slept. She described how she woke up that night to find Ibrahim Elghynaoui on top of her.

Though Ms Grace did manage to fight off her attacker and escape the apartment, it was not before he sexually assaulted her in her home. In 2021, Elghynaoui was jailed for 10 years for the attack.

"There is a note in there that said, 'My life has completely done a 180. I will never be the same person again and I hope he is not given the satisfaction of knowing how much of an impact he's had'," Ms Grace said.

"He got to read that and other people got to read that," she added.

There are many difficulties that survivors have highlighted in the justice system, such as the length of time it takes to go to trial, and the retraumatising nature of that process.

In what was already an extremely challenging experience, Ms Grace said the use of counselling notes in court was the worst aspect of the many issues she has seen in Ireland's justice system.

"This is by far the crowning jewel because everything else can sort of be explained away by something more or less rational," she said.

"Delays, we've got backlogs. We don't have enough judges, we don't have enough courtrooms.

"It's not acceptable, but there's some logic there."

While Ms Grace said her case was open and shut – she was asleep when her attacker broke in – she still had a lot to cope with.

"You're dealing with all of that and that's hard enough. And then this inexcusable, illogical, historical anomaly comes in and takes away your last shred of dignity," Ms Grace said. "At that point you are like, that all-time low, you're looking up at it. It is beyond degrading. There is no excuse for it. I genuinely believe there's no need for it."

Even now, Ms Grace said the disclosure of her notes was something from which she hasn't recovered.

"It was again, this loss of power, this loss of dignity. My body had been violated and I was trying to deal with what that means as a woman," Ms Grace said.

"Then, on the order of the court system – and I'm a lawyer, so it's within my profession – ordered the violation of my mind. I'm still not over that."

Ms Grace has worked closely with People Before Profit-Solidarity TD Ruth Coppinger, who last week introduced the Criminal Law (Prohibition of the Disclosure of Counselling Records) Bill.

Ms Grace said the change needed to happen, not just to protect the dignity of survivors but to ensure a just process.

"It is necessary for the administration of justice in Ireland," Ms Grace said. "There are so many survivors that are already being turned away and put off by the idea of going to court, and this is yet another obstacle for a court case to be heard by a judge and for a judge and jury to administer justice.

"It is wholly disproportionate and an infringement of the human rights of the victim.

"There is widespread support for changing the rules around the use of counselling notes," she added.

In recent months, even the DPP welcomed a recent Supreme Court judgment that rejected the idea that the disclosure of counselling notes in sexual offence cases is required.

What has been lacking up to this point, according to Ms Grace, is the political willpower to implement change.

"That's my fundamental belief after five years of pushing this," she said.

"By all means, if the Government wants to say, what is the blocker, let's hear it. But I have not heard one credible shred of anything to explain why this is taking so long."

Had she known her notes would be disclosed in court, it would not have stopped Ms Grace seeking help, she said. However, that's not the same for everyone.

Knowledge of the potential disclosure can result in some survivors either choosing to prioritise getting



through the trial before going to therapy or deciding not to go through the justice system at all.

Survivors are allowed to refuse the use of the notes, but if the defence fights that, it could lead to significant delays in trial proceedings.

Until things change, Ms Grace has worked to arm other survivors with the information they need to get through the justice system.

She has written a book entitled *Ash + Salt, From Survival to Empowerment after Sexual Assault*.

She explained that there were guardrails survivors could use around counselling notes.

This includes agreeing to certain protocols around note-taking.

"I would heavily encourage that they do take some

notes, because it actually protects you to say she needed or he needed therapy," Ms Grace said.

"But if I talk about dating someone, that's not in the notes. If I'm second-guessing myself as part of my healing process, either a summary that she is doing her healing process and trying to make sense of what happened, or no notes at all."

Despite what she has gone through and the length of time it is taking to achieve change, Ms Grace remains hopeful.

"I dare to hope. I hope the minister will hear us out and actually do something, as opposed to more snippets for the good of the TV and empty promises," she said.

"I really hope we're going to achieve meaningful reform, but either way, I will keep fighting the good fight until we get there."

### Context/Analysis:

This piece is a human-interest piece that focuses on a woman who was sexually assaulted and whose counselling notes were used in court. The topic was on the news agenda during monitoring day due to proposed changes by Minister for Justice regarding the use of counselling notes in sexual assault trials.

The woman who is the centrepiece of this article, Sarah Grace, powerfully describes the effect that knowing everyone on the defence – including her assaulter – had access to what she had discussed with her counsellor in the period following the assault:

*"You're dealing with all of that [trauma of the attack] and that's hard enough. And then this inexcusable, illogical, historical anomaly comes in and takes away your last shred of dignity," Ms Grace said. "At that point you are like, that all-time low, you're looking up at it. It is beyond degrading. There is no excuse for it. I genuinely believe there's no need for it."*

*Even now, Ms Grace said the disclosure of her notes was something from which she hasn't recovered. "It was again, this loss of power, this loss of dignity. My body had been violated and I was trying to deal with what that means as a woman," Ms Grace said.*

The article has a clear female focus, with the pictured byline of a female journalist, and a large photograph of Sarah Grace. The proposed legislation is not sex-specific, but will of course have more of an impact on women given the higher rate of sexual assault being perpetrated on women: the most recent statistics show that in Ireland in 2024, there were 2,419 female victims of sexual offences compared with 869 male victims.<sup>11</sup>

The piece is very prominently positioned on a full page (pg 5) and Sarah Grace is the

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<sup>11</sup> This is an above average figure for male victims and is due to what the Central Statistics Office call a "a near doubling of male victims reporting historic crime incidents". Data available at the "Recorded Crime Victims 2024 and Suspected Offenders 2023". <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-rcvo/recordedcrimevictims2024andsuspectedoffenders2023/keyfindings/>

only interviewee meaning her experiences are granted ample space. The headline on the piece is highly personal rather than a matter-of-fact report about legislation. Instead, the negative experience – both physical and mental – which Sarah Grace has had to navigate makes clear that the challenges and suffering did not end with the sexual assault incident itself.

The article points to some of the complexities around women's appearances discussing their personal experiences, particularly as victims or survivors of sexual crime. Ideally women appear in the news in a variety of roles, not primarily limited to personal or domestic contexts. Yet that aspiration should not take away from the importance of affording a platform for women who have experienced sexual and judicial trauma, and allowing them to articulate their experiences. This is particularly valuable when the intricacies of legislative changes – such as rules around counselling notes in court – are able to be brought to life by individual's first-hand accounts of how they have been affected by the current situation.

The terminology of "survivor" is more common in this article – it appears in the subheading, for example, and at various points throughout – but Sarah Grace herself at one point refers to "victims" ("It is wholly disproportionate and an infringement of the human rights of the victim.") It is not possible to tell whether such terminology is deliberate or not but is nevertheless worth noting as it may impact how the individual is presented and perceived by the reader. Similarly, it is not possible to determine the extent to which having a female journalist writing this story and dealing with Ms Grace affected her willingness to speak. It should be noted that she has a book about her experiences, so is perhaps experienced/confident with media and articulating his experiences.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The nature of the GMMP project design is that it relies on the news on just one day but has nevertheless provided remarkably consistent findings over time and geographic region. Women continue to be under-represented relative to men and that should remain an important – albeit frustratingly familiar – headline finding.

The 2025 data in Ireland did not have the same reliance on one or two major news events as sometimes previously observed, eg. The Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 or the Germanwings Airbus crash in 2015. This is a positive as it helps to grasp a picture of a more diverse range of events and topics which was the case in the Irish data in 2025. It was arguably an interesting day for the GMMP study to be taking place on given the higher-than-usual attention to stories with women and gender-related issues at the centre: for example, the debate of female athletes wearing camogie skorts, “groping” of the Molly Malone statue, the use of counselling notes in rape trials.

Sexual and gender-based violence was also on the agenda: multiple stories of court cases of men in court for sexual assault or violence were highly visible on May 6<sup>th</sup>. While hearing testimonies and details of the alleged crimes is difficult, the fact these cases are reaching the courts – and being reported on – is important. Violence against women should not be hidden away and there should be no fear or reluctance to report on such crimes.

Radio has the lowest proportion of women across all four formats, and as reporters/presenters. The numbers have regressed from 2020 which is disappointing, and more comprehensive attention is warranted as it may be a consequence of the single day that was studied.

The function of women in stories is always one of the most valuable insights from GMMP and the patterns in the Irish data in 2025 are familiar and resonate both historically and internationally: women appear less as subjects and experts than men, but are more likely to be the ones providing personal testimony, often about their own lives and experiences. These are important stories to be told, of course: however, it becomes concerning if women are not regularly visible as powerful actors and authorities in areas such as politics or economics, and are instead sidelined in the domestic sphere.

Women continue to appear at a higher rate than men as news anchors/presenters, but the reverse is true in terms of reporting roles. It is important to note that women’s roles as reporters is steadily on an upward trajectory which is a positive, suggesting women are increasingly embedded in newsrooms and are contributing to the most important stories of the day. Women were very well represented as reporters in the categories of ‘science and health’ and ‘economy’, as well as ‘gender-based violence’, but were poorly present in ‘politics’. This may be a quirk of picking just one day to monitor as there are many visible female reporters covering politics in Ireland so, although striking – just 6/42 politics stories were written by women – it cannot necessarily be a conclusive finding about political reporting in Ireland.

Male and female journalists incorporating female sources at a similar rate in Ireland is an

interesting but important finding, and one which always warrants attention and is complex. It has fluctuated over the years and suggests it may depend somewhat on the topics being covered. For now, the similarity in male/female journalists using female sources is a positive in some ways – that there is no major disparity – but the ultimate figure remains lower than the use of male sources. The oft-quoted defence is that there is a lack of women in positions of political power, but that suggests political spheres are the dominant space from which to find sources and voices for stories. For example, the story about camogie players' skorts having a male politician as the sole source is indicative of that trend of politicians' voices being unnecessarily amplified.

Finally, the qualitative analysis affords the opportunity to explore some of the nuances in coverage beyond the summary statistics. From the stories selected, it is a real positive that there were scant examples for the 'blatant stereotype' suggesting Irish news has broadly moved on from some of the most extreme examples of sexist or superficial coverage of women. Instead, it is more interesting to explore some of the complexities around court coverage and what happens if/when a woman's reputation is called into question by a man who would later be charged with her murder. The other examples also provide points for consideration around the lens, framing and inclusion of women's voices and images.

Overall, the GMMP 2025 in Ireland had familiar patterns in terms of statistics and women's marginalisation in the news: yet there were glimmers of hope and some trends to feel positive about. Keeping the issue in the public domain, building awareness of the problematic patterns, and continuing to gather data on who and what appears in the news remains an important pillar of feminist media research.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN 2026-2030

- News organisations should be aware of the patterns in coverage and build awareness among editors and producers regarding women's appearances and functions in the news. This may involve actions such as:
  - Conducting gender audits on stories/content. Publishing these results would aid with transparency but even internal awareness is valuable
  - Ensure that editorial policies have attention granted to gender-awareness: this would include elements such as language, use of images, inclusion of diverse voices, database of diverse expert sources.
  - Ensure training for new and existing staff around pitfalls and problems in gender-balanced reporting, such as avoiding an overreliance on male political sources for stories where other contributors may be of more value
  - Ensure all beats have gender diversity in who is reporting them, and try to avoid women journalists being pigeonholed into education/health/family/social affairs issues
- Tie diversity reports, specifically on gender metrics in production and coverage, into any public media funding schemes. It is not sufficient to focus on staffing: analysis of content and data on media representation is essential.
- Researchers and others working in the area should continue to carry out empirical analysis into news coverage using elements of the GMMP methodology/categories as a framework. This will help widen the breadth of material that is recorded and facilitate further comparative data.
- Finally, funders should acknowledge the importance of media monitoring and support these initiatives through ringfenced funding schemes. The findings on women's representation in the news often feel familiar and established, but it is only through repeated data collection and analysis that a body of evidence can be gathered. This should be multi-format, longitudinal and ensure as rigorous an approach as possible to ensure results and conclusions have as much impact and credibility as possible.

## Annex 1. Methodology

Over a full 24-hour cycle, thousands of volunteers from the Pacific to the Caribbean monitored their news media, adding their countries' voices to this important pulse-check on gender representation in the news media. The seventh edition of the GMMP was marked by many firsts, highlighting the enhancements introduced to this study over the years. Marking a first for the GMMP, 2025 relied entirely on electronic data capture, with no handwritten forms used; coding sheets were submitted to the technical team either directly through the platform or using the spreadsheet version of the familiar coding template. This was also the first time that the majority of the online data capture was done by in-country teams, who were responsible for over 12,000 entries. Another first was the prominence of internet news items, which surpassed radio entries at the global level and in six of the eight regions, reflecting the ongoing shift toward digital news sources.

Despite these evolutions, the fundamental GMMP methodology has remained consistent over the decades, preserving the comparability of findings across survey rounds.

### How the monitoring took place

The GMMP monitoring day brought together a vast global network of volunteers, all committed to answering the question, *how is gender portrayed on an ordinary news day?* The GMMP country networks, ranging from university research teams to media advocacy groups, brought with them deep expertise in local media ecosystems, ensuring that the data captured was contextually grounded, accurately capturing the nuances of news coverage across the world. In some regions, collaboration crossed borders; teams in Latin America and Asia supported neighbouring countries with data entry, ensuring that knowledge and effort were shared wherever needed.

In the lead-up to the monitoring day, the WACC team and regional coordinators ran a series of training sessions on the GMMP methodology. Country teams received refresher training on the sampling methodology and monitoring procedures, along with an introduction to the updated topic breakdowns. Teams had a choice of two monitoring options: full monitoring, which provided a detailed view of gender representation across news media, or short monitoring, which captured only the key GMMP indicators.

The training sessions also covered the use of the GMMP's custom data capture platform, which has been used since 2015. Available in English, French, and Spanish, the platform serves as the central system for consolidating responses from country teams after the monitoring day. On the monitoring day itself, teams carry out the initial data capture offline, as discussion and reflection are a key part of the monitoring process. These collaborative sessions allow teams to review findings, compare interpretations and ensure consistency. To maintain accuracy, radio and television bulletins were recorded, and copies of digital and print media were collected for reference.

The GMMP questions capture quantitative data on four key dimensions of each news item: i) About the story: the topic, story placement and scope; ii) About the people in the story - subjects and sources; iii) About the news personnel - announcers, presenters and reporters - in the story; and, iv) The quality of the story from a gender perspectives -gender stereotypes, women's centrality, rights- and gender equality angles. Country teams can also include up to three additional questions about the people in the story, to explore concerns of specific national interest. Additionally, teams provide qualitative context to aid interpretation, describing the news agenda on the monitoring day, their reasons for selecting particular media outlets, and key features of their national media system. Teams also conduct a structured qualitative analysis following the GMMP's standard framework, complementing the quantitative data with insights that help explain patterns and trends in gender representation in the media.

While teams were not limited in the number of outlets they could monitor, guidance was provided on the recommended minimum through the GMMP media bands chart. The media bands system, first introduced in 2005, was designed to promote a more balanced distribution of data and to provide each country with guidance on the minimum number of media outlets to monitor. The bands were determined by the overall number of each type of media in each country. Over the years, desktop research has formed the basis for compiling these numbers, which were then validated with country teams. For this edition, many of the media research databases previously relied upon were outdated, prompting us to turn inward and draw on historical GMMP databases as a reference for nationally relevant outlets. This list was reviewed and confirmed by country and regional coordinators.

In several countries, the number of media outlets relevant to this study has declined since 2020, reflecting shifts in the media landscape. Subsequently, the number of media bands was reduced; for instance, broadcast media bands were scaled down from five to three. For internet news, countries were ranked according to internet usage rates published by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and grouped into corresponding media bands.

## **Conclusion**

From classrooms and offices to shared virtual spaces, the GMMP network turned a single ordinary news day into a globally representative snapshot of gender in the media. This achievement would not have been possible without the dedication of thousands of volunteers, whose careful and diligent monitoring of media outlets worldwide sustains this important tradition of media monitoring.

## **References**

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## Annex 2. List of Monitors

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