Gender in the news, revisited. Tackling global and Austrian/German findings from the 1970s to the 2000s

El gènere en la notícia, revisitat. Els descobriments alemanys/austríacs i globals dels anys setanta a la primera dècada del segle XXI

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ABSTRACT:

The news media are still contributing to gender inequality despite the fact that from the 1970s onwards, together with the second wave of the women's movement, gender equality has been on the news media agenda as a result of a series of directives and recommendations for news media from UNESCO in 1979, the Council of Europe in 1985, and the United Nations 4th Women's World Conference at Beijing in 1995. The news media participate in "doing gender" through recognition or misrecognition of a realistic image of women in news reportage. In addition, under-representation of women in the media should be seen as a form of symbolic violence. The present article traces the (under-) representation of women in news coverage from the 1970s through the first decade of the 21st century both on a global level, discussing the four monitoring results of the Global Media Monitoring Project (1995, 2000, 2005 and 2010) and, on a more regional level, those in Germany and Austria.

KEY WORDS:

media, gender, news reportage, gender representation, (under-)representation of women, symbolic violence.

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RESUM:

Els mitjans de comunicació contribueixen a la desigualtat de gènere, malgrat que ja des de la dècada de 1970, coincidint amb la segona onada del moviment de dones, s'exigeix la igualtat de gènere en l'agenda dels mitjans de comunicació a través d'una sèrie de directives i recomanacions de la UNESCO (1979), el Consell d'Europa (1985) i la Quarta Conferència de les Nacions Unides sobre la Dona a Pequín el 1995. Els mitjans de comunicació participen a *doing gender* reconeixent o desconeixent una imatge realista de la dona en el reportatge, a més a més, la subrepresentació de la dona als mitjans de comunicació ha de ser vista com una forma de violència simbòlica. Per tant, les línies de la trajectòria de la (sub)representació de la dona en la cobertura de notícies des dels anys setanta del segle XX fins a la primera dècada del segle XXI es reflectiran a escala mundial, amb els resultats dels quatre projectes de Seguiment Global de Mitjans de 1995, 2000, 2005 i 2010, així com en un àmbit més regional, amb la presència de la dona en les notícies a Alemanya i Àustria.

PARAULES CLAU:

mitjans de comunicació, gènere, notícia, representació de gènere, (sub)representació de la dona, violència simbòlica.

According to the 2010 results of the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP 2010), the global average of representation of women as subjects of main news on television, radio and in newspapers was 24 %. This increase of seven percentage points over the first monitoring in 1995 of 17 % still did not sufficiently change the fact that women were underrepresented in the news media and that gender encoding in the news media contributed to maintaining and reproducing gender inequality and discrimination.

The position and importance of the media in the representation and construction of gender,[1] especially in journalism and news reportage, have been critically discussed for years (UNESCO, 1979; Europarat, 1985 [Council of Europe]; Konrad, 1996), beginning with the rise of the second wave of the women's movement in the 1970s. The concept "women and the media" was developed during the United Nations' Decade for Women, from 1975 to 1985, with the collaboration of the Council of Europe as well (Europarat, 1985). The goals laid out during those years for gender equality in the media still lack satisfactory implementation unless governments have been asked to implement media policies integrating the gender perspective to increase the number of contributions by and about women and to take into consideration the requests of the United Nations 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 (Konrad, 1996). The goal of promoting "a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media" was expressed in strategic objective J2 of the report "Women and Media"—Section J—of the Beijing Platform for Action (UN Women Watch, 1995). In the UN's Beijing +5 Session, the Women-Action report "Alternative Assessment of Women and Media" recommended:

> The media need to refrain from presenting women as inferior and exploiting them as sex objects. On the contrary, the media could be a useful tool to promote a positive and realistic image of women. All media presentations should be in line with the demographic context of the community. (WomenAction, 2000)[2]

From the 1970s to the 2000s, the percentage of women in news reports accounted for about one fifth of all persons mentioned. Stuart Hall (1989: 135) concluded that, given the gap between gender representation and demography, a gender bias constructed and transmitted by media was evident. He explained that, whether it is reality or fiction, content transmitted by the media forms part of the construction of reality, that information is selected, structured and embedded in an interpretive framework for news reporting. Or, as Judith Butler (2004: 10) remarked, it depends on "who is imaging whom, and for what purpose". Carter and Weaver (2003: 41) observed, "where less powerful groups are concerned, (ethnic minorities, young people and women), coverage tends to reinforce and reproduce their marginalization". These observations reveal media gender dualism and must be taken into account when allocating meaning and signification though coding processes in communications practice. Whether or not action is taken regarding the observed phenomena will either foster a break with or a reinforcement of existing

stereotypes, discrimination and marginalisation regarding gender, class, ethnicity, etc. Media, therefore, act as powerful agencies in the process of 'doing gender'.

Tracing these very mechanisms of gender encoding, with its consequent mis-representation and under-representation of women in the media, is very difficult. Feminist theory seeks adequate linguistic representation of subjects designated as female,[3] and the feminist movement calls for political visibility and equality for this category, *women*: the subject of feminism (Butler, 1999)—as shown above in context of the 4th World Conference on Women. For Butler (1999: 3), *representation* is an operative term within a political process and serves a normative function in language. Assuming that the juridical areas of language and politics constitute the contemporary field of power and that there is no position outside, i.e., the category of *women* "is produced and restrained by the very structures of power through which emancipation is sought" (Butler, 1999: 5), then one must concede that *woman* is a term of linguistic and political representation that assumes a subject engendered, naturalised and immobilized by juridical structures (Butler, 1999: 8). Consequently, if we recognize *representation* as an operative term within political processes, we must examine the news media and their active role of doing gender, i.e., engendering processes by misrepresenting and under-representing women.

The marginalisation of women within this patriarchally constituted framework can also be seen in the context of representational violence or symbolic violence. Bourdieu (2001: 1, 2) stated that symbolic violence is "a gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible, even to its victims, exerted for the most part through the purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition (more precisely, mis-cognition), recognition, or even feeling". Symbolic violence refers to the violence of representation based on sub-ordination of the 'Other' in an en-gendered, en-classed, en-raced society of male, white, West, Christian domination. Jan Larbalestier (1996: 21) explained:

> To be non-subordinated is to become the same. Women must become the same as Man; 'Others' must become the same as 'the West'. Knowledge of 'the other' is thus constituted within a logic of domination and subordination. Such processes of representation then are embedded in relations of power and constitute forms of symbolic violence.

The obstacle to adequate representation of women in the media, or more specifically in the news, is that both cultural violence and symbolic violence are inherent in society—their violent, dominant character invisible and naturalised: "The dominant apply categories constructed from the point of view of the dominant, thus making them appear as natural" (Bourdieu, 2001: 35). Accordingly, the mis-cognition of inadequate representation of women by the media is to be seen as a form of symbolic violence and will be considered in the present article by revisiting empirical studies on the international and the regional or country level, which will be Germany and Austria.[4]

The present article summarises tendencies reflected by results of international media monitoring on gender as well as findings of research on gender in national media carried out in Germany and Austria. Special attention will be given to (1) the realistic image of women in their role in society, i.e., the recognition/misrecognition of media representation compared to the demographic context; (2) the "doing gender" of the news media and their active role in gender encoding processes by opting for either the breaking with or reinforcing gender stereotypes and unbalanced, marginalizing representation. The development of trajectories in the representation of women as news subjects from the 1970s to the 2000s, by no means exhaustive, will be explored on the international level, mainly referring to the GMMP, and on the country level, through studies on Austria and Germany.[5]

From the mid 1970s to the 1990s: a call for gender equality

Since the 1970s the second wave of the women's movement has emphasised the importance of the media regarding representation and thus the construction of gender through journalism and news reportage. The first feminist studies on the international level (Tuchman et al., 1978; UNESCO, 1979; Media Watch, 1995) critically considered the influence of media in the context of female identity, focusing on representations of women in the media and demonstrating the under-/misrepresentation, marginalisation and discrimination of women in media coverage.

Tuchman (et al., 1978) carried out a large-scale study on the image of women in the US media. They observed a one-sided representation of female news subjects as women in their domestic role and in their relationships to husbands and other male family members. These authors concluded that women were symbolically annihilated by the mass media and trivialised in their manifold life plans and actual social role. The first global study undertaken by the UNESCO revealed an emerging picture of women who were vastly outnumbered by men; "who are defined primarily in terms of their relationship with men; who are […] confined to the home, where housework is their obsession; who are economically and psychologically dependent, incompetent [...]; who rarely occupy positions of authority" (UNESCO, 1979: 12).

Applying the indicators defined for the UNESCO study, symbolic annihilation of women was understood as symbolic violence, all the more since women were primarily shown in relation to men and not as autonomous persons. As a consequence, international organisations made a call for gender equality and the recognition of women in media practice. The United Nations Decade for Women, from 1975 to 1985, gave voice to criticism of traditional gender role representations as lacking recognition of women's role in society and expressed the need for

non-stereotype representation of women in the media. Overcoming this lack of recognition became a goal on the international political agenda. The Council of Europe in their seminar on this issue (Europarat, 1985) recognized the crucial role of the media in contributing to a construction of equality between women and men.

The idea of global media monitoring was conceived of prior to the 1995 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing, at the 1994 international conference 'Women Empowering Communication' held in Bangkok.[6] In Beijing, the international community proposed the implementation of gender-sensitive media monitoring as being essential and dedicated a separate section to the issue—'Women and Media'. One of the strategic objectives was to promote a balanced, non-stereotype representation of women in the media (Konrad, 1996: 35). Statements of the relevant requirements for such representation were addressed to governments and aimed at implementation of measures to integrate gender issues in media policy and encourage the media to increase the number of articles about and by women to ensure adequate coverage of the concerns of women (ibid.).

The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), a consequence of Beijing, is the most extensive global research project on gender in news media ever undertaken. Based on worldwide media monitoring, the GMMP examines quantitative and qualitative aspects of representation of women in the main news. The first GMMP monitoring took place on January 18, 1995, in more than 70 countries round the world, observing the news media from the gender perspective. Another monitoring day was held in February 2000 and again in February 2005. The fourth monitoring (GMMP 2010) was conducted on November 10, 2009, with 127 participating countries.[7] All monitoring results were based on data gathered solely on the monitoring days. Up- and downturns may reflect methodological inadequacies, i.e., the relativity of data liability owing to the monitoring method of using a single record date,[8] as exemplified in GMMP 1995 and in the GMMP 2005 in Austria (see below). These exceptions, however, could be seen as outlier 'best' or 'worst' cases contrasting with the average. The first global monitoring report described "a steady increase in the number of female journalists and a slow uncertain increase in the proportion of women who are interviewed in news stories" (Media Watch, 1995: 10). The figures for 1995 showed that women accounted for 17 % of the news subjects[9] in radio, television and print news reporting. But the news coverage on that day, January 18, was atypical as an earthquake had dominated the news around the world (Media Watch, 1995: 10; Gallagher, 2005: 10, 16).

In 2005 the UN WomenWatch (2005: 4) reported at the 'Beijing at Ten and Beyond' conference that the overall situation did not differ greatly from reports in previous years. Their findings showed that "women remain under-represented as subjects of news stories, as sources for them, as experts commenting on them, and as reporters of the stories". So we can say that symbolic violence and misrecognition of women continued on a global level, although international organisations had been urging the media to contribute to gender equality. As these international directives and recommendations had already been set, we can conclude

that the media were playing an active role and had opted for reinforcement of inequality.

On the regional level, from 1976 to 1996 the German researcher, Christine Schmerl, studied gender representation in five selected West German newspapers[10] in the tradition of the media monitoring described above but applying a different evaluation system, so that the results of both types of study cannot be compared directly.[11] Schmerl analyzed the editorial sections of the respective print editions from January to June 1976, as well as in June 1983, 1986, 1993 and 1996 (Schmerl, 2002: 392). Her evaluation focused on the preferred substantive contents when reporting on women and on a comparison to the portrayal of men but not on the modality of representation of women within the reports.

Dailies	1976[12]	1986[13]	1996
Der Stern	1 : 2	1 : 3	1 : 2,2
Der Spiegel	1 : 3	1 : 4	1 : 3,3
Neue Westfälische	1 : 4	1 : 4	1 : 2,9
Frankfurter Rundschau	1 : 4	1 : 4	1 : 3,2
Die Welt	1 : 5	1 : 6	1 : 4,2

Table 1. Ratio of women : men in reporting, 1976-1996
Source: Schmerl, 2002: 399.

Regarding types of news content, Schmerl's analysis revealed a trend similar to the GMMP analyses. In each time period in 1976, 1983, 1986, 1993, and 1996, Schmerl found that the most common area of news reporting on women was culture and entertainment,[14] followed by celebrities and gossip (in 1976, 1996), crime (in 1983) and politics (in 1986, 1993). Politics, with nominations of women, usually ranked third (in 1983, 1996) or fourth (in 1976). In each monitoring period, women mentioned in the area of economy was lower than rank 6, whereas for men it was rank 4 (in 1976, 1983) or rank 5 (in 1986, 1993, 1996). In 1976, 1983, 1986, and 1993, men appeared most frequently in politics (rank 1), followed by culture and entertainment (rank 2).

As expected, the reporting on men in the areas of politics, culture and economy maintained the same ranking over the 20-year period, whereas women were rated in those same areas as follows: culture, rank 1; politics, between ranks 2 and 4; and in the area of economy, women remained neglected (Schmerl, 2002: 400 ff). For those 20 years of news reporting, Schmerl (2002: 409) recorded a significant under-representation of women—from 16 % to 27 % of the total—in the five West-German print media products.

For more than 20 years, Schmerl (2002: 408) identified both a 'continuity' of suppression of women's concerns in the area of economy and a connotation of women with entertainment. This consistent imbalance stagnated at a roughly con-

stant degree, although with different manifestations in the different print media. Despite the overall under-representation of women, the various print media did show differentiation in various results (Schmerl, 2002: 409). In her conclusions, the author described a 'homogeneity' (Schmerl, 2002: 407) of consistent selection mechanisms, whereby some topics occurred 'inevitably', or more 'naturally', such as in the areas of politics and economy since, compared with other contents, they appear more important or threatening for social life. In other frequently occurring news areas, such as culture and entertainment or celebrity and gossip, Schmerl noted a lack of 'inevitability' and identified the preferred coverage of women in these areas as the "artificiality" of the news world.

So, from the 1970s to the 1990s, the reporting on women in Germany did not represent the social realities of the female population but reproduced an image of women through traditional gender codes and gender construction, misrecognising an adequate representation. The longitudinal study by Schmerl provides a quantifiable indication of patterns of selection and interpretation determined by gender codes that fail to depict the life concepts and social realities of women. Again, the active role of media and their doing gender by following patterns of symbolic violence is evident.

More details on these patterns are provided in the longitudinal study by Brigitta Huhnke (1996) on the representation of relevant contributions on women's affairs in the German media between 1980 and 1995.[2] Huhnke observed that male gatekeepers in the German press agency 'dpa' still judged the newsworthiness of women's issues by using their own gender perspective. Regarding the daily *The Taz*, Huhnke (1996: 102, 103) valued the implementing of a women's page during the research period as particularly important for women's political scene but criticised the newspaper's patriarchal structures with its backlog of male-dominated representation, particularly in leadership positions, and its non-compliance with corporate charter demands for quota targets. As to *Die Zeit*, Huhnke (1996: 105) revealed male dominance in reporting on politics and that, while sexist remarks were not common in political news stories, they probably were in the feuilleton. The author characterised *Der Spiegel* as misogynistic and mentioned the blocking of women's affairs as well as discrimination against female journalists (Huhnke 1996: 108, 109).

Concerning 'political equality', Huhnke (1996: 150) observed encouraging agenda setting processes implicit in the high-status and elite membership of the protagonists of issues such as the federal election in 1980, the UN World Conference on Women, or the quota system—analogue to the standards of the news value system. Likewise, Brigitte Geiger (2002) characterised the indicators for the successful media coverage on the women's referendum in 1997 in Austria. Despite this media success, it produced no long-term, widespread impact on media voices, which clearly demonstrated the limits of public acceptance for feminist action (Geiger, 2002: 119). As to the topic 'feminism', Huhnke (1996: 161) found a clear decrease in interest in reporting on this theme from the mid-1980s onwards, mainly because the discourse did not match up with the established rules of media atten-

tion. An exception can be observed in the area of feminist theology, which received continuous intermediate coverage.

The reporting in *Der Spiegel*, according to Huhnke (1996: 242, 243), was characterised by continuous degrading of women and a sexist discourse over the entire research period. Despite social changes from the 1970s to the 1990s, women were excluded predominantly as "the other", "the inferior" by this news magazine. Huhnke (1996, 251) explained that whereas the dpa, *The Taz*, and *Die Zeit* did not deny the existence of the "asymmetrical gender conflict", their news practice still lacked an "institutionalisation" of women's affairs. As the author stated, the power of male bonding was still functioning and defined the public sphere. Huhnke's research complements Schmerl's monitoring results for a comparable time period.

The news reporting of the Austrian broadcasting service on the daily radio news of Radio Burgenland, analyzed by Andrea Prenner,[16] evidenced sexism or, as defined here, extreme misrecognition of women and therefore symbolic violence. In her qualitative study Prenner (1992: 181) reported a rate of 7.7 % for women mentioned in the news reportage. The highest rankings of between 21 % and 24 % of women represented were in the areas of 'non-organisational everyday people', 'leisure/sport/health' and 'education'. Prenner explained the existence of this gender gap as resulting from common practices of reporting mainly on high-echelon executives, political parties, and organisations of employers and trade unions (57 % of all protagonists within the news). For the most part, women figured only marginally in such groups. So, here we find evidence for the symbolic violence that constituted the violence of representation based on sub-ordination of the 'Other' (Larbalestier, 1996: 21).

These results from the 1970s to the 1990s stressed the strong impact of the media as players in the arena of gender encoding processes, players that apply selection criteria based on relations of power and elitism within a mindset of domination and subordination, thus entailing misrecognition of women in news reportage and, even worse, explicit misogyny and sexism. Only did the selection criteria tend to become useful tools for promoting positive recognition of women's concerns and emancipation when gender equality was set on the agenda for high-status and elite protagonists. A positive effect can be achieved by the media with the implementation of gender policies like the women's page in the daily *The Taz*. Apart from these exceptions, we rather observe an ongoing, accelerating reproduction of male dominated representation based on gender dualism. Despite the official call for equality of women and men in the media, the gender bias remained evident.

The 2000s globally: slow but constant progress

In 2005, the global average rate of female news subjects reported on the radio, television and newspapers was 21 % (Gallagher, 2005). This average rose 3 per-

centage points to 24 % in 2010 (Macharia et al., 2010: 7): "In the past 15-year period, Europe and Latin America have achieved the most dramatic increases, between 10 and 13 percentage point rises." Nevertheless, the results were far from the quota targeted by the coalition network WomenAction2000 in the UN Beijing +5 special session in 2000: "All media presentations should be in line with the demographic context of the community." On the contrary, 76 %—more than 3 out of 4—of the people mentioned as news subjects were male (Macharia et al., 2010: vii).

A particularly marked under-representation of women can be found in radio news, according to GMMP 2000, with only 13 % of female news subjects passing the 20 % mark for the first time, with an overall of 22 % in 2010. The highest representation of women in the news from 1995 to 2010 was in television news, and the largest increase of women as news subjects occurred in the press: from 16 % in 1995 to 24 % in 2010.

Women in the news	GMMP 1995	GMMP 2000	GMMP 2005	GMMP 2010
Television	21 %	22 %	22 %	24 %
Radio	15 %	13 %	17 %	22 %
Newspapers	16 %	17 %	21 %	24 %
Total of female news subjects	17 %	18 %	21 %	24 %

Table 2. Women as news subjects – global average
Sources: Gallagher, 2005: 120; Macharia et al., 2010: xi; Spears et al., 2000: 27. (The present author's own compilation.)

Looking at regional changes round the world, overall progress between 10 % and 13 %, as in Europe and Latin America, can be observed from 1995 to 2010. Latin America was noteworthy in 2010 as the region with the highest percentage point ranking of 29 % for female news subjects. All the other regions primarily showed stagnation or minimal gains. The Middle East had the lowest representation rates for women in the news and stagnated at 14 % to 16 % within the 15 years from 1995 to 2010.

Apart from these general results, the distribution of gender representations within content categories showed that the lowest rates of women's presence were in news on politics and business. In the so-called 'hard' news on politics and government affairs, females made up 7 % of representation in 1995; 12 % in 2000; and 14 % in 2005. In the area of economy the figures rose from 9 % in 1995, to 17 % in 2000, and to 20 % in 2005 (Gallagher, 2005: 17; Spears et al., 2000: 30). The persistence of these low percentage points is even more dramatic as these two main desks constitute the largest portion of all media news reporting. In 2010, the presence of women in stories on politics and government increased from 14 % to 19 %

Women in the news	GMMP 1995	GMMP 2000	GMMP 2005	GMMP 2010
Africa	22 %	11 %	19 %	19 %
Asia	14 %	17 %	19 %	20 %
Caribbean	22 %	24 %	25 %	25 %
Europe	16 %	19 %	21 %	26 %
Latin America	16 %	20 %	23 %	29 %
Middle East	14 %	15 %	15 %	16 %
North America	27 %	25 %	26 %	28 %
Pacific	20 %	25 %	26 %	25 %
Overall	17 %	18 %	21 %	24 %

Table 3. Women as news subjects – tendencies by region, 1995-2010

Sources: Macharia et al., 2010: 7.

while in stories on the economy nothing had changed: the percentage points remained stagnated at 20 % (Macharia et al., 2010: vii). In contrast, the GMMP 2010 percentages for women in international, national and local news revealed a change in the traditional trend of most visibility of women in local stories: women's visibility in foreign stories had increased to match their visibility in local stories (Macharia et al., 2010), but this new tendency still needed to be improved as a continuing transformation.[17] The highest proportion of women's representation in 2005 was found in the so-called 'soft' news, such as gossip and art, where females as news subjects reached 28 % of persons mentioned (Gallagher, 2005: 18). Similarly, women were more likely to be represented when personal views (31 %) and voices from the public (34 %) were cited (Gallagher, 2005: 17). For example, in 2010, out of 25 occupational categories women outnumbered men as news subjects in only two: homemakers (72 %) and students (54 %) (Macharia et al., 2010: viii).

The central role in news content continued to be dominated worldwide by men, and representation of expert knowledge and personal views followed suit. Here, men dominated with 86 % of people who were quoted in the news and with 83 % of those who were reported as experts. In 2000 and 2005 women took a central role in only 10 % of the news stories. This figure rose to 13 % in 2010, an increase which Macharia (et al., 2010: 28) described as "a statistically significant improvement". In 2010, the top five news issues in which women held a central role were women in political power and decision-making, rank 1 (19 %); gender-based violence,[18] rank 2 (9 %); violent crime, rank 3 (8 %); followed by domestic politics (8 %) and disaster (6 %). (Macharia et al., 2010: 17). However, the increase from 2000 to 2010 of only 3 % for women being central in a news story did not really indicate notable progress.

In addition, the active role of media in reinforcing inequality and gender stereotypes occurred in news reporting on family status (mother/father; daughter/son;

wife/husband, etc.), which was mentioned more than three times more often if the news subject was a women (17 %) than if it was a men (5 %) (Gallagher, 2005: 18). Precisely these practices of connotations by media illustrate how subtly the engendering processes work through hegemonic masculinity. The very same practice promoted the trivialisation of women in news reporting and favored the male dominated culture.

Reporting victimisation of women is misrepresentation as well. Nevertheless, despite the broadly expanded GMMP dataset from 76 to 108 countries, the percentage points for female news subjects portrayed as victims decreased from 19 % in 2005 to only 18 % in 2010, compared with a stagnating 8 % for male victims (Macharia et al., 2010: 15). Yet prevalence showed that men were most likely to be the victims—and perpetrators—of violence. Male-on-male violence remained less newsworthy than male violence against women (Boyle 2005). Moreover, as Gallagher (2005: 18) rightly pointed out, news disproportionately focused on female victims in events that actually affected both sexes—accidents, crime, war—whereas gender-based topics, such as sexual violence, domestic violence, and cultural practice specifically involving women, were given little coverage. Consequently, representing women more than twice as much as men as a passive, vulnerable persons produced a gender bias transmitted by the media. Gender images and stereotypes of women as the weak and passive sex were reproduced; the media failed to represent an adequate image of women.

As to gender issues in the main news, Gallagher (2005: 19, 20) stated, "Stories with a gender equality angle are almost completely absent from the major news topics of politics (3 %) and the economy (1 %)." In 2010, almost half (46 %) of all news items reinforced gender stereotypes, while only 8 % challenged gender stereotypes, i.e., news stories were 6 times more likely to reinforce gender stereotypes than to challenge them. (Macharia et al., 2010: 33). Gender encoding and gender stereotyping in news reportage was naturalised. The gender factor remained discriminatory regarding identity and family; for example, mention of female news subjects by family status occurred 4 times more often than for male subjects, thus disassociating men from familial responsibilities. Thus, although gender mainstreaming has been on the political agenda of the United Nations and the European Union since the mid-1990s, we still have to agree with Macharia, when she remarked:

> Identifying women by their family status and at the same time playing down their roles and authority in their communities masks women's other identities as independent, autonomous beings, active participants in the wider society beyond the home. Evidently, taken-for-granted cultural norms are responsible for shaping our view of the world. (Macharia et al., 2010: 16)

In brief, global tendencies in general can be seen as moving at a "persistently slow but constant pace of progress" (Macharia et al., 2010: vii). According to the GMMP, the proportion of women in news coverage tended to pass stagnation at

around one fifth (~ 20 %) until 2000 and in the following 10 years held at 24 % of female news subjects mentioned, while the proportion of women in the world population was 52 %. The overall 15-year increase of seven percent, from 17 % to 24 %, of female news subjects did not respond to the call for gender equality and adequate representation in line with the demographic context. On the contrary, the results demonstrated the active role of media in reinforcing gender dualism by failing to give a realistic image of women in their role in society. As a consequence, we observe a stereotype gender construction related to the selection of newsworthy people, evidenced by domination of male representation in politics, economy, and professional life, and by subordination of women through representation predominantly in the context of issues concerning home and gossip. Consensual gender hegemony owing to ideological domination reflected in news reportage can also be seen as symbolic violence and a cultural common denominator.

The 2000s regionally: signs of marginal transformation

For Austria the GMMP reported 12 % female news subjects in 2005 and 19 % in 2010; for Germany, 22 % in 2005 and 26 % in 2010 (Gallagher, 2005: 120; Macharia et al., 2010: 69). The global average rose from 21 % in 2005 to 24 % in 2010.

In 2005, the results in Austria seem worse, with percentages of zero women mentioned in radio news, 11 % in newspapers, and 22 % in television news. However, evidence also points to a certain relativity of data liability owing to the method of recording on one single day. To avoid such methodological artifacts, Jutta Röser analysed German press journalism "as a designer of male dominance" during a time period of twelve weeks in 2006, the so-called Lüneburg Analysis [orig. 'Lüneburger Analyse'], selecting a different weekday each week.[19] A more precise and reliable study to complement the results in Austria was conducted by Ettl-Huber and Wolf.

The results of the Lüneburg Analysis (Röser, 2006) differed by as much as 4 % from the single-record data of GMMP2005: In the main news of the eleven daily German newspapers, representation of women as news subjects was 18 % and

Women in the news	GMMP 2005	GMMP 2010
Austria	12 %	19 %
Germany	22 %	26 %
GMMP global average	18 %	21 %

Table 4. Women in the news in Austria, Germany, and the GMMP global average. GMMP 2005 and 2010

Sources: Gallagher, 2005: 120, 121; Macharia et al., 2010: 69, 70. (The present author's own compilation.)

women in front-page news was 16 %, whereas the GMMP2005 result for Germany was 22 %. The table below differs considerably from the GMMP2005 one-day analysis, which did not include single-topic categories and which reflected a higher ranking for women as news subjects than for men (Gallagher, 2005). Here, however, representation of women dominated in 'family law' (65 % women) and matched the same percentage for men in 'education' (50 % women, 50 % men). Gender representation according to topic is shown as follows:

Ratio of women : men by topic	Women	Men
Family law	**64** %	36 %
Education	50 %	50 %
Celebrities/Nobles	36 %	64 %
Domestic policy	20 %	80 %
Foreign policy	12 %	88 %
Policy, defense	9 %	91 %
Economic Indicators	7 %	93 %
Sports	5 %	**95** %

Table 5. Gender distribution by topic, Lüneburg Analysis 2006
Source: Röser, 2006: 33.

Generally, naming persons in the main news section of the press was in the area of politics, with naming 62 % of the total. In this case the gender ratio for women politicians was 18 %, which decreased to 13 % when only front page coverage of female news subjects was considered. The Lüneburg Analysis found positive examples in local press titles which, due to their more varied and diverse perspective, reflected a more realistic approach to gender representations in news reporting compared to national titles. The representation of women in the main news of the local press showed a variety of functions, roles and topics. Jutta Röser suggested that a possible obstacle to a more balanced gender representation was the lack of supply from the news agencies. Her exemplary analysis of the German Press Agency, "the dpa", on February 15, 2005, revealed an alarming 4 % for women mentioned. Thus Röser (2006: 35) concluded that if newspaper editors wanted to report on women, they had to find information through their own research.

In 2007 a gender monitoring of representation of women in the mass media in the state of Lower Austria was conducted by Ettl-Huber and Wolf (2007*a* and 2007*b*).[20] Their study results regarding the proportion of women in the news to women in the population varied little from international results, which corresponded for both regional and national media and for the 10-year span. The study revealed that women were mentioned on an average of 19 % in the text of articles, 17 % in quotations, 22 % in headlines, and 27 % in photos, whereas the ac-

tual proportion of female population in Austria was about 51.3 %. Moreover, the average of 19 % female news subjects resulted 10 percentage points lower than the 29 % of women in leadership positions (Ettl-Huber and Wolf, 2007*a*: 59). Lower Austrian media representation of women was male-dominated, made women invisible in the news representation, and followed a conservative transmission of gender roles. The reasons for Austria's lagging behind the global average for women's representation in the news need further research.[21]

In 2010 evidence of transformation resulted in part from a larger joint research project on media representation of politicians in Germany. Margreth Lünenborg (et al., 2011: 60) stated that women were still in a minority in terms of portrayal in the German media, with only 17 % of all representation of politicians, managers and scholars: "With 21 per cent of the coverage, the percentage of women in top-level positions referred to is slightly higher", but female leaders remained under-represented in comparison to their male colleagues. A comparison of the proportion of women politicians represented in the German media in 2005 and 2008 revealed a small increase in the number of women—from 18 % to 20 %—out of all politicians featured in German newspapers (Lünenborg et al., 2011: 64), whereas economy remained male-dominated (ibid.: 61). Moreover, Macharia (et al., 2010: 69) found that the proportion of women mentioned in television news reached 30 % on the GMMP record day. Significant changes can be observed regarding women holding top political positions, with 30 percentage points when Angela Merkel became chancellor, i.e., the proportion of top-level female politicians featured in the media rose twelve points compared to when Gerhard Schroeder was chancellor (Lünenborg et al., 2011: 64). Obviously, "in the field of media coverage, Chancellor Merkel outshines all other female politicians" and "is represented [...] far more often than other female political leaders" (ibid.: 70). However, the authors also explained:

> [T]he media coverage of female politicians in top-level positions is strongly shaped by inconsistencies since two different social roles need to be merged in the mediated representation: on the one hand, these women are portrayed as the keepers of power and influence in professional contexts, while on the other their social role is coded in terms of traditional femininity. (Lünenborg et al., 2011: 58)

The German researchers Tanja Maier and Magreth Lünenborg (2010) compared the media representation of six leading German politicians in 2008,[22] as the number of women in top-level positions (such as ministers, chairpersons of parties, and parliamentary groups) had increased and Angela Merkel had been elected chancellor in 2005.[23] According to Maier and Lünenborg (2010: 5), the marginalisation and trivialisation of top-level female politicians had been present in both the German media and internationally over the previous 20 years, but the image of women in the leading position seemed to be transforming:

> [O]ur analysis moves beyond simple descriptions of mediated gender inequalities—such as devalued femininity and valorised masculinity—as the focus of the examined

coverage is on women and men in key positions within the political sphere. Not in every instance do we find performative acts of gendering and sexualization when female politicians are represented by the media. (Maier and Lünenborg, 2010: 3)

The authors stated that media coverage showed women and men in politics "as active, competent and powerful individuals. Discrimination, sexist devaluations or belittlements today are a rare exception" (ibid.). They concluded that a change was taking place in the media image of women in leading positions, with a significant shift in how media coverage described female politicians in top-level positions—as powerful individuals. So far, we can observe a transformation towards a more realistic and positive image of women covered by the news, except on one count: the coexistence of power and femininity still remains unacceptable (Lünenborg et al., 2011: 71), which irritates and challenges long approved traditions of gender contributions and encoding for equality.

Summing up decades of misrecognition: a call for making a break and a change

As a result, we can affirm the existence on the news agenda of a rather stagnant under-representation of women as subjects in contrast to a rapidly changing gender order in individual and social contexts for the period from the 1970s to the 2000s: the social change of increasing participation of women in politics and economy has not resulted in a corresponding change of gender representation in the news coverage.

What remains evident is the persistence of gender bias in news reporting through the processes and effects of doing gender by media and media agents, by selection and interpretation along traditional patterns of gender codes; news are 6 times more likely to reinforce gender stereotypes than to challenge them. (Macharia et al., 2010: 7 ff). Jutta Röser (2006: 36) considered that the evidence proved a preference for male players with regard to the news factor 'gender'; she challenged the argument of the lack of top women as an explanation for the under-representation of women in the main news coverage in the press. In the same way, this contribution by the media to gender hierarchy can be observed from the study by Ettl-Huber and Wolf (2007*a* and 2007*b*), as well as by the absence of news reportage with a gender-equality angle, although the institutionalisation of women's and equality politics has been consolidated since the 1990s. The misrecognition of women by and in the media is often justified by women's factual under-representation in society, but once again examination of the related data has revealed that "the media do not simply reflect the status quo, but also construct a traditional world in which hierarchical gender relationships are implied, particularly in certain professional contexts" (Lünenborg et al., 2011: 63).

Furthermore, a wide range of options exist to report on the life contexts of women according to their real proportion of the population. Positive examples and activities to that effect may be found in Röser (2006), in Gallagher (2005), and in Spears, Seydegart and Gallagher (2000). Indications for a change, besides the GMMP's showing slow but constant pace of progress, have been revealed by recent research results on a more local level, where we can find a changing image of women as top-level female politicians, as demonstrated by the news coverage in Germany in relation to Angela Merkel as chancellor (Maier and Lünenborg, 2010)—with the caveat that the contradiction of femininity and power remains an ambiguous and irritating terrain for the media to overcome. These patterns require a decoding of gender constructions and a disclosing of androcentrism in news reporting practice and its selection criteria.

According to poststructuralist and postmodernist theories, 'feminine' and 'masculine' are not fixed or determinable gender identities but refer to underlying semantic fields. The allocation of meaning through gender coding within the symbolic order occurs in a continuous process of doing gender, i.e., it is not given a priori. The recalcitrant under-representation of women as news subjects by failing to mention them adequately in their real responsibilities and roles in present society is seen as symbolic violence carried out by the media as active players in the construction processes of gender hierarchy. Women-misrecognizing media representation is real. And, in the context of news reportage on women, we agree with Pierre Bourdieu (2001: 35) when he says: "The dominant apply categories constructed from the point of view of the dominant, thus making them appear as natural." Thus, in this decade, 15 years beyond Beijing, we urge news media as active contributors to gender inequality to change their attitudes towards gender representation and to assume their responsibility in making a break with the past and doing away with symbolic violence. ◖

Notes

[1 Following Judith Butler (1999), the author of the present article acknowledges both *sex* and *gender* as discursively constructed, with the consequence that sexed bodies cannot convey meaning without gender; that there is no existence of sex prior to discourse; that gender, sex and sexuality are created by being performed within existing power regulations and the normative matrix of heterosexuality—through which the category of *women* is produced. Thus, the terms *woman, female, man* and *male* are fully recognized in this article as discursive cultural constructions, related with certain social and political conditions and power relations.

[2 WomenAction 2000, a global coalition network of regional and sub-regional focal points, contributed to the work of the review process of the Beijing Platform For Action, Section J "Women and Media" of the UN Bejing +5 Session (WomenAction 2000, *http://www.womenaction.org/about.html*, accessed 17.1.2011).

[3 Subjects designated as female: gendered subjects culturally represented in language, juridical systems (Butler, 1999).

[4 The selection of Germany and Austria as cases for the regional or country perspective was based on the following arguments: (1) Germany and Austria are mainly united in one community of German communication science; (2) both countries give examples for ranks above or below the global average. Although Austria does not carry out continuous research on media and gender representation, it is comparable to Germany in scientific tradition; (3) Germany's female key political leaders and Chancellor Angela Merkel.

[5 Recognized, but not proposed for discussion in the present article, are the following subjects: academic discourse and research patterns as a pre-condition; the change of modalities of research from the 'sex roles' approach to the 'gender identity' approach (Zoonen, 2011) as well as from the sexual equality/difference approaches to the performativity of sex and gender approach (Butler, 1999); and acknowledgement of situated knowledge, subjectivity, and the intersection of gender with other categories such as class, ethnicity, religion, and different sexual practices.

[6 The 1994 Bangkok conference was organised by the World Association for Christian Communication, in association with the International Women's Tribune Centre (New York), and Isis-Manila (Gallagher, 2005: 10).

[7 For further information see the GMMP portal at *http://www.whomakesthenews.org/gmmp-background.html*.

[8 Although the new weighting system introduced for GMMP 2005 has addressed the limitations of sample and data size using information for the weightings drawn from a number of sources, such as World Press Trends 2004, the World Radio TV Handbook 2004, the European Marketing Pocket Book 2004, and the Yearbook of the European Audiovisual Observatory 2002 (Bird, 2005: 112), the results of the GMMP should always be read with the awareness that they reflect tendencies for only one single day; no proved, reliable data are available for longer periods.

[9 News subjects as defined by the GMMP—the people who are interviewed, or whom the news is about.

[10 Two supra-regional daily newspapers (*Frankfurter Rundschau*, *Die Welt*), two weekly magazines (*Der Stern*, *Der Spiegel*) and a regional newspaper (*Neue Westfälische*).

[11 A comparison of Schmerl's results with those of the GMMP analysis or with those of Jutta Röser's study (note 19) is not possible for reasons of methodological differences. Schmerl applied an evaluation system that categorized the representation of persons as key player, minor role, or stereotype—assigning different weights to each category. Basically, she analyzed 5 entire editorial sections for one-month periods; this led in part to results reflecting higher proportions of female representation.

[12 Decimal numbers rounded down.

[13 Decimal numbers rounded down.

[14 Averaged ranks of all 5 print products.

[15 Huhnke's study was based on the German press products *die tageszeitung* (*taz*), *Die Zeit*, *Der Spiegel* and Die Deutsche Presse Agentur (dpa), attributing to them a "trendsetter" function within the German media system. During the research period, 6946 media texts were chosen according to the defined sample. The choice of content areas was limited to employment, political questions of gender equality/equal rights, and emancipation/feminism. Stories involving § 218 (the abortion paragraph), social policy, health, and sexual violence against women were excluded from the sample.

[16 Prenner surveyed the daily morning and afternoon radio news from April 1987 to March 1988 (total contributions, 2020 reports).

[17 An interesting study would be to analyse more profoundly and in greater detail how the increase in number of female top political leaders effects women's representation on the global news agenda.

[18 The topic 'gender-based violence' includes stories on femicide, harassment, rape, trafficking, and female genital mutilation (Macharia et al., 2010: 22).

[19 Röser analysed a total of 66 editions of 11 German press titles from November 29, 2004 to February 19, 2005. The empirical material included 692 items (news articles) naming 1977 persons.

[20 The sample consisted of local TV and radio news of the Austrian public broadcasting system, the local sections of the dailies *Kronenzeitung* and *Kurier*, and three regional editions of the Lower Austrian news magazines. All news items were selected on three dates: 22 June 2006, 11 September 2006, and 15 December 2006. The quantitative survey focused on the presence of women in text and images from a total of 1689 articles, 666 photos and 929 citations.

[21 One factor could be related to the "Global Gender Gap Report 2010", where we find Germany ranking 13, and Austria—with a continuous lag in recent years—ranking 37 on the Global Gender Gap index (Hausmann et al., 2010). For the early 2000s, without further scientific evidence, we can presume that the domination of news by Jörg Haider's extreme right-wing Freedom Party may have been a factor. The effect of domination of a male right-wing movement on gender representation in the news would be an interesting study in the Austrian case. Furthermore, according to Spears (et al., 2000: 56), Austrian political isolation with the proposed inclusion of Haider in the new government was predominating the news throughout western Europe on the record day in 2000.

[22 The Maier and Lünenborg study was based on 75 articles about persons (portraits, features, and interviews) as opposed to political events or topics. The examined media content was selected from leading newspapers with various political orientations and high-circulation magazines with diverse target audiences during a research period from April 1st to September 30th, 2008 (Maier and Lünenborg, 2010: 2).

[23 Maier and Lünenborg's paper forms part of the ongoing larger joint research project by Margreth Lünenborg and Jutta Röser (cited in the text of the present article).

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