

Men and Women in Armenian media 2014

Media monitoring

“Promoting Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities in Armenia: Women in Local Democracy” A project funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP Armenia



Yerevan, 2014

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Introduction

The goal of media monitoring was to assess to what extent and in which ways Armenian media and journalists cover men and women, gender roles and relations.

The project envisaged two rounds of media monitoring conducted a year apart in order to enable tracking of changes and assessment of tendencies. The first round of monitoring was conducted in autumn 2012¹. The present report presents the results of the second round of media monitoring, conducted in October-November 2013, and also comparative data from both rounds.

Media selection

The selection of media was made during the first round of monitoring in 2012. In 2013, a number of minor changes and adjustments were made to the selection and methodology, in order to secure productivity while ensuring that the results of the two rounds are mutually compatible and comparable.

The original selection was made in 2012 amongst professional media, which are the target of the monitoring (and of the project of which it is a component). Citizen [non-professional] journalism platforms such as blogs and social media were therefore excluded from the selection.

Due to limited resources, we restricted the selection to types of professional media with the largest audiences in Armenia. Consequently, the selection was limited to television and online media as the types of media from which Armenians get most of their information (television 91%, Internet 37%)². In accordance with the project goal (assessing the professional work of journalists), we included only news and current affairs in the sample, and excluded entertainment, advertising and feature films. We did, however, include talk shows, which are part of current affairs programming on television and discuss societal issues and politics.

The selection of specific media content was made in 2012 based on a combination of relevance and user ratings. First, we selected 8 online media and online versions of 6 printed media with the largest number of visitors per day. We also selected all the 5 talk shows that ran on national TV stations, and weekday and weekend news on all six national TV stations that cover over 1% of the nationwide audience³. Second, we conducted a 3-day test run during which we monitored all these media. The goal was to identify media which were rich in the type of content that this monitoring is focused on. The test run showed that some media were more relevant to the monitoring, containing more gender attitudes and gender-relevant statements. The reports of these media were longer, more detailed and more analytical, and they cover topics, such as social issues, in which gender roles and relations are more prominent (compared to, for example, international relations or economics). Based on the test run, we selected online versions of 6

¹ Men and Women in Armenian Media. Monitoring Report. 2013.

² A Snapshot Ahead of Armenia's Presidential Elections. Main Findings, pp.8-9. 25 January 2013. European Friends of Armenia, TNS Opinion, IPSC. <http://www.eufoa.org/uploads/POLL20130125EN.pdf>

³ Weekly reports of Telemediacontrol, an agency licensed GFK to research TV audiences in Armenia.

printed media, weekend news on 6 TV stations, and 5 televised talk shows. We excluded all online media and all weekday TV news, in which no or almost no gender-relevant content was found during the test-run.

In 2013, a new test run was conducted, with the goals of (1) increasing relevance, (2) adjusting the selection to any changes in the media environment that happened during the year. In contrast to 2012, we ignored user ratings and focused entirely on relevance, on the grounds that, first, the presence of relevant content was low even in the most relevant media in the original sample, and second, the monitoring does not aim for representativeness. The sample in the test run was therefore larger than in 2012, including 11 online news websites instead of 8 in 2012.

Based on the new test run, the following changes were made:

- two newspapers were excluded from the sample;
- six online media were added to the sample;
- the number of weekend news was reduced from 6 to 4.
- two of the five talk shows on national TV stations had been shut down since 2012 and one new show went on air. The resulting sample contained 4 talk shows.
- a newly established specialized website was added to the sample, ladynews.am, news website addressing a predominantly female audience. The site is quite popular: according to Circle.am, it has about 4000 unique daily visits from Armenia, on a par with other websites from our sample like 7or, Civilnet.am or Hetq.am. It prides itself on being designed for women. Since quantitative data from this website strongly differs from the rest of the sample, it was excluded from general statistics and comparison.

Figure 1 shows the 2012 and 2013 samples side by side.

Figure 1. Media samples in 2013 and 2012

<u>2013</u>	<u>2012</u>
Online versions of newspapers	
1. <i>Aravot</i> [Արավոտ], www.aravot.am 2. <i>Hraparak</i> [Հրապարակ], www.hraparak.am 3. <i>Yerkir</i> [Երկիր], www.yerkir.am 4. <i>Iravunk</i> [Իրավունք], www.iravunk.com	1. <i>Aravot</i> [Արավոտ], www.aravot.am 2. <i>Hraparak</i> [Հրապարակ], www.hraparak.am 3. <i>Yerkir</i> [Երկիր], www.yerkir.am 4. <i>Iravunk</i> [Իրավունք], www.iravunk.com 5. <i>Haykakan Zhamanak</i> [Հայկական ժամանակ], www.armtimes.com 6. <i>Golos Armenii</i> [Голос Армении], www.golosarmenii.am
Online media	
1. <i>Panorama</i> [Պանորամա], www.panorama.am 2. <i>A1+</i> [Ա1+], www.a1plus.am	

3. *Ladynews* [Ladynews], www.ladynews.am
4. *Lragir* [Լրագիր], www.lragir.am
5. *Hetq* [Հետք], www.hetq.am
6. *7or* [7օր], www.7or.am
7. *Civilnet* [Սիվիլնեթ], www.civilnet.am

Weekend news on national TV stations

1. <i>Shant</i> [Շանթ], www.shanttv.com	1. <i>Shant</i> [Շանթ], www.shanttv.com
2. <i>Yerkir Media</i> [Երկիր Մեդիա], www.yerkirmedia.am	2. <i>Yerkir Media</i> [Երկիր Մեդիա], www.yerkirmedia.am
3. <i>Armenia TV</i> [Արմենիա], www.armeniatv.am	3. <i>Armenia TV</i> [Արմենիա], www.armeniatv.am
4. <i>Kentron</i> [Կենտրոն], www.kentron.tv	4. <i>Kentron</i> [Կենտրոն], www.kentron.tv
	5. <i>Public TV</i> [Հ1], www.1tv.am
	6. <i>H2</i> [Հ2], www.tv.am

Talk shows on national TV stations

1. Free Zone [Ազատ գոտի] on <i>Public TV</i>	1. Free Zone [Ազատ գոտի] on <i>Public TV</i>
2. What a Woman Wants [Ինչ է ուզում կինը] on <i>H2</i>	2. What a Woman Wants [Ինչ է ուզում կինը] on <i>H2</i>
3. The Human Factor [Մարդկային գործոն] on <i>Armenia TV</i>	3. Women's Cocktail [Կանանց կոկտեյլ] on <i>Armenia TV</i>
4. Armenian Friday [Հայկական Որբաթ] on <i>Kentron</i>	4. Armenian Friday [Հայկական Որբաթ] on <i>Kentron</i>
	5. Live Journal [Կենդանի մատյան] on <i>Armenia TV</i>

Methodology

As in 2012, we used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods.

The quantitative methodology relied on the concepts of *actor* and *source*. For each story in a newspaper or on TV news, we input the following information in our database:

- ❖ *the number of male and female actors*, i.e. of people that the story is about;
- ❖ *the number of male and female sources*, i.e. of people whose words or opinions are quoted in the story;
- ❖ *the number of 'first-hand sources'*, i.e. the number of people that the story is about whose words are also quoted in the story. For example, a news report describes a session in the Parliament. It has seven actors, all of them MPs, and four sources. However, only two of the sources are MPs mentioned in the story, i.e. *first-hand sources*. The other two sources are experts who didn't participate in the session. Thus, only two MPs were given the floor; the other five MPs were discussed but not quoted. The goal of this measurement was to see if journalists treat women's

and men's opinions differently. The hypothesis was that if men's opinions were considered more 'trustworthy' or 'important' than women's, the percentage of female 'first-hand sources' out of overall number of actors would be lower than that of 'male first-hand sources'.

- ❖ *the topic of the story*: In 2012, we monitored all stories in the target media, in which we identified the following 11 topics: Army, Culture, Crime, Domestic Policy, Economics, Foreign Policy, Incident, International Politics, Religion, Society, and Sport. In the 2013 monitoring, in order to include a broader spectrum of media, we decided to exclude reports on 7 of the topics, namely, Army, Crime, Incident, International Politics, Foreign Policy, Religion and Sport. This was done on the grounds that, in the baseline 2012 monitoring, stories on these topics contained no or almost no gender attitudes. In 2013 we only monitored stories on 4 topics: Culture, Economics, Domestic Policy and Society. As a result, in 2013 we monitored more online media. Data on a total of 13,983 stories were entered in the database, compared to 13,000 in 2012. Plus, in 2013 another approximately 10,000 stories were read but skipped using the new methodology.

The qualitative methodology relied on the concept of a *gender attitude*, i.e. an attitude to men's and women's roles, relations and characteristics (e.g. 'men are dominant', 'women need to focus on family values', 'women are creative' etc.). Whenever a gender attitude was expressed, the quote containing it was added into the database, alongside the gender and (when known) the professional occupation of the person who expressed the attitude.

An important methodological issue is that, since men are the majority of senior politicians, businesspeople and top professionals in real life⁴, it is hard to assess to which extent the prevalence of male actors in the media is dictated by the external reality and to which, by the attitude of journalists. Only some disaggregation is possible; in this monitoring, we made an adjustment for President Serzh Sargsyan, who was frequently mentioned in newspapers and TV news. Sargsyan was a source in about 1.5% of all stories and an actor in about 13% (the president is discussed very often but quoted approximately 9 times less often); prior to analysis, these figures were subtracted from the overall figures for male actors and sources.

Limitations

As with any type of research, there are limitations on how the products of this monitoring can be used to describe reality. These limitations stem from the sample and the methodology.

Objects of monitoring included professional news and current affairs produced in Armenia. We did not monitor *foreign media* consumed in Armenia, such as Russian, European or U.S. TV stations or websites. Foreign media are quite popular and have their own impact on the society and on domestic media in Armenia. They may convey a different image of men and women than the media in our sample.

The results of monitoring do not apply to *social media, blogs or citizen journalism*. These rapidly growing realms often display trends which differ from mainstream media.

⁴ In Armenia, women are only 24% of legislators, senior officials and senior managers but the majority of professional and technical workers. WEF Gender Gap Report 2013, p. 118.

We did not monitor *entertainment or advertizing*, two media industries which heavily rely on gender images and gender stereotypes to attract audiences. The messages and images conveyed by these industries may differ strongly from the results of this monitoring, and the audiences of some entertainment products, such as TV series, are the highest for any media product in Armenia. Although products in our sample reach larger audiences in Armenia than other products of the same type, our results cannot be used to describe *professional Armenian news media* in general. One can expect there to be more variety in approaches and techniques across Armenian media than we found in our sample.

The *size of the sample* puts its limitations on the validity of quantitative data presented in this report. Validity is highest for newspaper and online news reports, 13 983 in total, but even these data are dependent on random factors, media bubbles and general trends.

Online versions of newspapers and online media

Quantitative results. Gender representation by media

As can be seen from Figure 2 below, in the newspaper sample, just 15% of all actors and 16% of all sources were women. Online media, with the exception of Ladynews.am, had fewer female actors - 12% - but more female sources: 19%.

The fact that purely news-driven media have more female sources than actors was also observed in the 2012 monitoring. A possible explanation is that women are easier to reach. The *most frequent actors* of news – and also the most difficult to reach for comments – are the top people in government, business and politics. The percentage of women amongst them is low in Armenia. In comparison, women are more present amongst medium-level government employees, civil society actors, researchers, educators, PR officers and journalists. These groups are also the *most common sources of news* who are the easiest for a journalist to reach⁵. Only one newspaper, *Iravunk*, has more female actors than female sources. In all other newspapers and online media, women are more often sources than actors. Figures for newspapers appear more balanced; a possible explanation is that newspaper reports contain more background information than reports by online media, and are therefore less driven by the gender imbalance in real life.

To test our concept of ‘actor’, we made a disaggregation by the number of actors per story. Approximately 3.5% of all stories had 7 or more actors. In most cases this meant that the story mentioned a list of people, sometimes a long one. The listed people, according to the methodology, were considered actors, although one can argue that this type of actor is ‘weak’. Notably, women appear in such stories more frequently than in other stories. By excluding articles with multiple actors, we obtained a decrease in the ratio of female actors by approx. 0.6%.

As in 2012, women became first-hand sources more often than men. 18.5% of all male actors were also quoted in the stories, compared to 21.1% of female actors. This means that once a woman became an actor, she had more chance than a man to be quoted by the media (and overall, the image of female actors was more humanized and more personal than that of males). Again, this can be explained the same way as above: women hold less senior positions and are easier to reach. Another explanation may have to do with the ‘glass ceiling’: since women need to make more efforts than men in order to enter the public space, only outstanding, charismatic and active women succeed enough to become actors in the news (especially since we excluded topics like Crime and Events, in which actors are more random). Such women are more likely to be quoted⁶. Nevertheless, we cannot answer this question decisively within this monitoring.

⁵ For comparison: 22% of judges and 40% of lawyers are women; 11% of parliament members are women; 11% of ministers and deputy ministers are women; 5% of the ambassadors are women, while women consist in average 53% of ministries staff and 40.4% of President and Government staff.

Source: Women and Men in Armenia 2013, pp. 146-155. Statistical Booklet by the National Statistical Service of Armenia, Issued at 25 October, 2013.

⁶ For example, the speaker for ‘Prosperous Armenia’ Party is Ms Naira Zohrabyan, for Heritage Party, Ms Zaruhi Postanjyan, and for Dashnaksutyun Party, one of the main speakers is Ms Lilit Galstyan.

We can also state that the number of first-hand sources, both male and female, slightly increased between 2012 and 2013. Based on our original assumption that the number of first-hand sources indicates more in- depth reporting, this trend implies possible improvement of the quality of news reporting by online and print media of Armenia in 2012-2013.

Figure 2. Per cent of females among actors, sources and first-hand sources in online versions of newspapers and online media.

	Female actors, %	Female sources, %	Female first- hand sources,%
Aravot	15.3	18.2	17.4
Hraparak	12.7	15.2	14.4
Yerkir	12.9	15.0	16.1
Iravunk	18.7	16.3	19.6
Average Newspapers	14.9	16.2	16.9
A1+	12.7	15.9	17.3
Panorama	13.2	16.0	14.1
Civil.net	10.6	18.9	12.2
7or	11.7	21.8	11.0
Hetq	14.2	18.6	15.8
Lragir	10.1	17.0	15.6
Average online media except Ladynews	11.7	19.1	14.3
Total print and online average except Ladynews	13.2	17.3	15.4
Ladynews	67.5	70.8	83.6

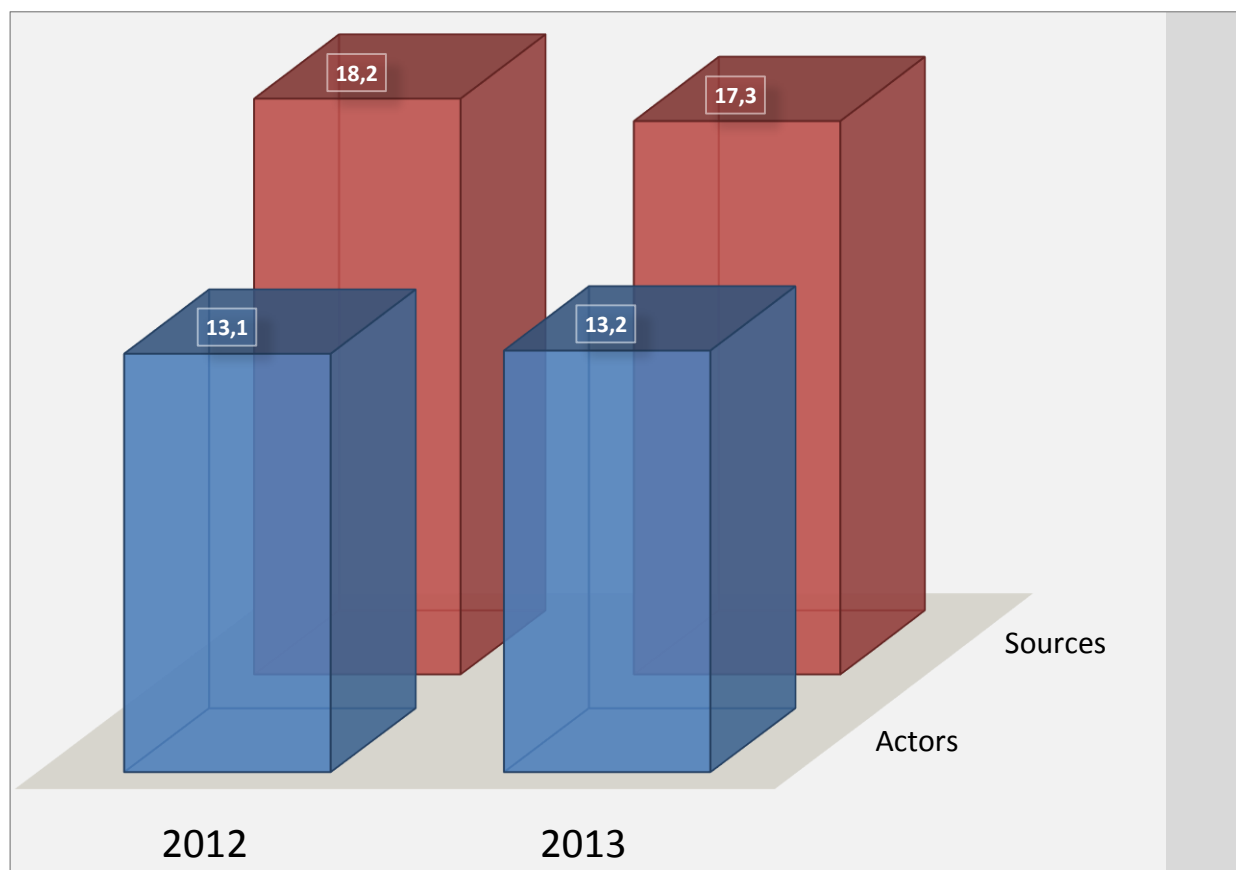
Dynamics and international comparison

A similar monitoring was conducted in Armenia by the ProMedia – Gender NGO in 2011. According to their data, 14% of actors in their sample were women⁷. This is quite similar to the current research results.

⁷ See ‘Woman’s Image in Armenian Media’ report, Yerevan, 2011. <http://unfpa.am/en/publications-women-image-in-media> (in Armenian). The methodology of the study was similar to the one used here.

Statistical differences between 2012 and 2013 data for the online sample are not significant and remain below the standard error margin. Comparison between results requires adjustments because the sample was different – some media were excluded, some added, and some topics were excluded. After disaggregation we obtain almost identical results, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Per cent of females among actors and sources in 2012 compared to 2013



It should be noted that the data of this monitoring indicates smaller female representation than the world average, closer to the lowest figures. In 2010, women accounted for 24% of all news subjects (both actors and sources) worldwide, with the highest average obtained in Latin America (29%), and the lowest (16%) in the Middle East⁸.

Gender representation by topic

As previously, female representation varied across topics: while women are better represented in media coverage of 'Culture' and 'Society', they are less present in reports on 'Economics'. In 2013 as compared to 2012, the number of female actors in media coverage of 'Politics' increased whereas their number in reports on 'Society' decreased.

Figure 4. Female representation by topics (excluding Ladynews.am).

⁸ See Global Media Monitoring Project 2010, p. 7 (22), by WhoMakesTheNews.org. This monitoring covered print, online and broadcast media.

	Female actors, %	Female sources, %
Culture	18.7	25.4
Economics	3.3	8.3
Politics	12.2	17.2
Society	14.0	19.9
Average across all media	13.2	17.3

It is difficult to assess to how these figures correlate with women’s participation in a particular segment of the society. Although exact data from all sectors are not available for comparison, even existing data is sufficient to suggest that this correlation is weak, and that overall, women are underrepresented in Armenian media coverage as compared to their societal position.

For example, culture is a sphere in which women are highly present in Armenia: the Minister of Culture is a woman, 67% of ministerial staff⁹ are female. A significant number of show business representatives are women. Nevertheless, only 19% of actors and 25% of sources in media reports on ‘Culture’ are female. In the coverage of ‘Economics’, women are even more strongly underrepresented: just 3% of actors are female. Even though all leading business operators are male, it is also a fact that the staff of the Ministry of Economics is mostly female except at the very top, and formally, 32% of Armenian firms have female participation in ownership¹⁰.

Magnifier, or media bubble effect

Media researchers have long been aware of the ‘magnifier’ or ‘media bubble’ effect, especially typical for new media. It consists in a situation when, amongst all the varied information regarding an issue, media find the most eye-catching (not necessarily the most valuable or important) and cover it the most.

For example, President Sargsyan is an actor in 13% of all stories in the online sample, i.e. more than all women put together. The distortion is greatest in the sphere of ‘Politics’, where the president is mentioned in more than 25% of all stories. Meanwhile, Serzh Sargsyan is not media-friendly and does not appear in public very frequently. He is a source in only 1.3% of all reports, which means that he is very rarely quoted: his rate for being a first-hand source is over two times lower than average. This is a vivid example of a media bubble. Statistically, it means that data on the person in the center of the bubble significantly affects the entire statistics. Based on this data, we excluded the president from the statistics in this report.

Some ‘media persons’ such as President Sargsyan are in the center of permanent media bubbles, i.e. every bit of information about them becomes a topic for discussion and gossip, and

⁹ Women and Men in Armenia 2013, p. 154. Statistical Booklet by the National Statistical Service of Armenia, Issued at 25 October, 2013.

¹⁰ WEF Gender Gap Report 2013, p. 118

even if nothing happens, they are still discussed. There is constant background noise in the media regarding these 'media persons'. The media bubble can exist in one particular media or in many simultaneously.

As we also observed in 2012, there are several dozen people who regularly appear in the shows as guests on any topic. This is also true for print and online media: there are over a hundred persons who regularly appear on the pages of media. It is very probable that these 'media persons' do not represent society, leading to misrepresentation of society's concerns and opinions.

The more senior the position, the higher the chance that it is held by a man. As a result, men are much more likely to find themselves in the center of a media bubble than women. During the monitoring, only one woman was in the center of a media bubble in Armenia, and this fact affected our statistics. Statistical analysis of the database shows us that female representation in 'Politics' was affected by numerous reports on a scandal which took place after the October 2, 2013 PACE session in Strasbourg, when Heritage Party representative Ms Zaruhi Postanjan blamed Armenia's President Sargsyan of losing €70 mln in a casino and faking presidential election results.

To assess this effect, we made a re-calculation by decades in two media: *Lragir* news website and *Aravot* newspaper. *Lragir* had average 10% of female actors during October-November, but in the first decade of October, this indicator jumped to 18.1%, and in the second decade, it decreased to 7.3%. The effect was less visible but still noticeable in *Aravot*, where 21.5% of all actors were females on 1-10 October and 15%, on 11-20 Oct. Another aspect of this effect was that in the first decade of October, President Sargsyan was also mentioned more frequently than in the second decade¹¹.

However, while the scandal also caused a small increment of the number of female sources (mostly due to quotes from Ms Postanjan), the quotation rate of President Sargsyan remained unchanged. The next huge media bubble began in mid-October around a male actor, Zory Balayan, obliterating the effects of the previous one on the gender ratio of sources and actors.

Balanced journalism: a key?

Two newspapers have the highest rate of female actors and sources in their news reports: *Aravot* and *Iravunk*. These two newspapers also contain significantly more sources per article in general: *Aravot* has 1.12 src./article, *Iravunk* – 1.08 src./article, while other media have less than 0.9. Although we cannot say that these two newspapers have gender-balanced coverage, or that they do not contain media bubbles, however, they do better than other media in terms of gender representation. In the case of *Iravunk*, a possible reason is the relatively larger size of its articles. In the case of *Aravot*, we can hypothesize that the reason is quality, not size: this paper has the highest rate of sources per actor, 0.82, followed by *Hetq* with 0.55, and the largest number of first-hand sources, 22.2%.

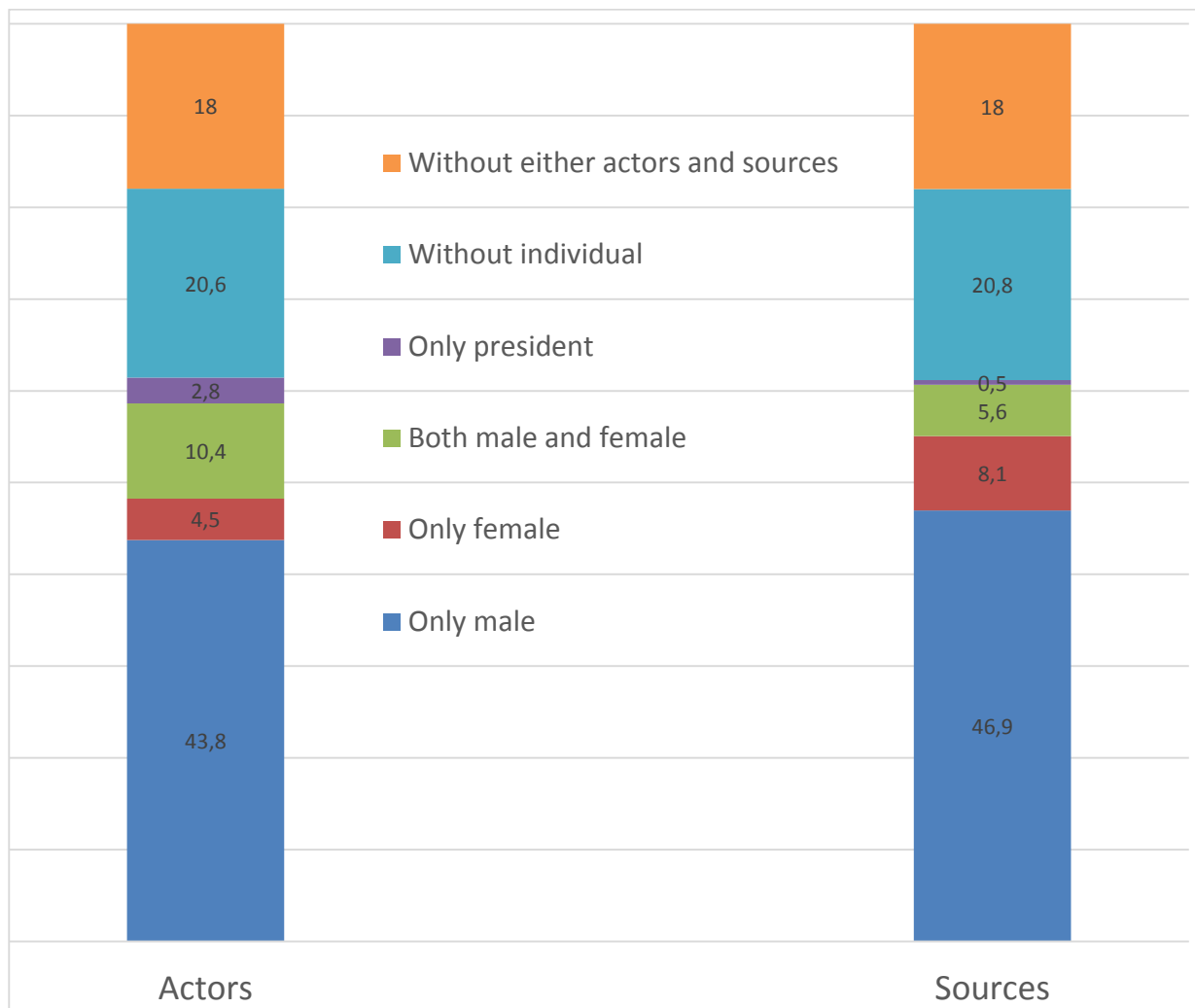
Based on these data, one can make the assumption that *higher quality journalism leads to more balanced gender representation*. Of course, the result is still limited by female participation in social life and by the fact no media can completely avoid being involved in media bubbles or

¹¹ In 'Lragir', mentioning rate has decreased in second decade by 40%, while in 'Aravot' – by 50%, i.e. twice

media campaigns. I.e. good reporting is necessary but not sufficient to achieve gender-balanced coverage.

Meanwhile, Figure 6 shows that journalism in Armenia has a lot of room for growth. Many media stories do not have any individual actors or sources. Every fifth story has zero actors *and* zero sources, which is a sign of unoriginal, copy-paste journalism and a very low threshold for what is news and what is not.

Figure 5. Gender of actors and sources, by story (average for newspapers and online media excluding Ladynews.am).

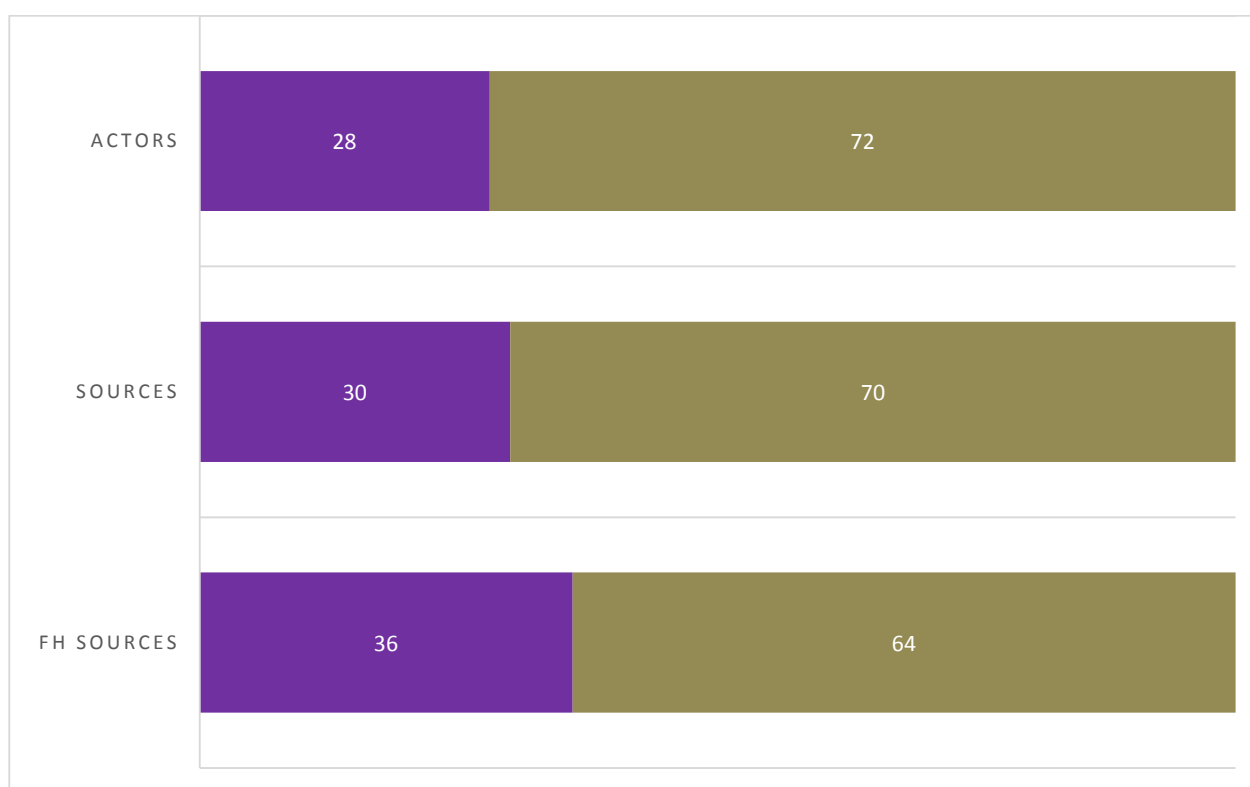


Television

Weekend TV news

The sample included 97 newsreels. The TV news were more gender-balanced than online newspapers and online media. Only one news report in the two months of monitoring had 'Gender' as its topic and contained a gender attitude. It ran on October 20 on *Armenia TV* and concerned the discussion of the Law on Gender Equality.

Figure 6. Average percentage of female and male actors, sources and first-hand sources in weekend TV news



The figures are more balanced than in 2012, when weekend TV news only had 20% female actors (compared to 28% in 2013) and 28% female sources (compared to 30% in 2013). However, since the size of the TV news sample is small, one needs to exercise caution before identifying a trend.

A trend that continued from 2012 is that women actors were quoted more often: 68% of the female actors were also quoted as sources, compared to 50% of the male actors.

Talk shows

The sample contained 82 issues of talk shows aired on national TV stations. The sample changed from 2012 because two shows closed down in 2013, including one dedicated women's

show, “Women’s cocktail”. The only new show launched in 2013, “Human Factor”, is gender-neutral in its choice of issues. Consequently, while two of the five shows that ran in 2012 were dedicated women’s shows (40%), only one of the four that ran in 2013 were women’s shows (25%). In the 2013 sample, 45.1% of the guests were female and almost 55% were male, whereas in 2012 the ratio was the opposite: 55.5% of guests were women.

Figure 7. Talk show guests by gender

		N. of Issues	Guests		
			Male	Fem	% Fem
Ազատ գոտի [<i>Free Zone</i>]	H1	14	46	38	49.2
Հայկական Որբաթ [<i>Armenian Friday</i>]	Kentron	7	25	3	10.7
Մարդկային գործոն [<i>The Human Factor</i>]	Armenia TV	44	189	123	39.4
Ինչ է ուզում կինը [<i>What a Woman Wants</i>]	H2	17	3	52	94.5
Total		82	263	216	45.1

The talk shows are not conducted as focused debates but rather, as chats, in the sense that hosts and guests diverge a lot from the original topic, which is often vague.

There were significant differences across the four talk shows. “What a woman wants” invited almost exclusively women (94.5%), mostly to discuss beauty, relationships and housekeeping. Topics included “Flowers” (October 22), “Plastic surgery” (Oct 24), “Relationship between daughters- and mothers-in-law” (Oct 30), “The Armenian family model” (November 6), “Kitchen matters” (November 13), “Resuming work after maternity leave” (Nov 14), “The wedding” (Nov 22).

Contrastingly, “Free Zone” and “Armenian Friday” barely ever mentioned gender relations or gender roles. Of the two, “Free zone” had a balanced gender ratio of guests and the vaguest topics of all. Some were extremely wide or even rhetorical, such as “To be or not to be” (Nov 27). As to “Armenian Friday”, it was chiefly focused on current politics and most of its guests (89%) were men.

The new show, “Human Factor”, discussed a wide variety of topics ranging from politics, science and history to family issues. One program, “Double standards” (October 8) discussed gender equality. Gender relations and roles were also discussed or mentioned in three other programs: “Explosive Wedding” (Oct 17), “Innovative Self-Expression” (Oct 22) and “Passion or premeditation” (Oct 23).

Qualitative results

In 2013 as in 2012, gender attitudes were very few in TV news and newspapers. On TV news, one gender attitude was found in 2013 and none, in 2012. In the sample of newspapers and online media, 34 out of the 24,000 stories read by the monitoring team in 2013 contained a gender attitude.¹² Notably, 28 out of those 34 were published by two newspapers with the greatest number of female actors and sources, *Iravunk* and *Aravot*. In 2013, gender attitudes were found in 0.14% of the sample. In 2012, the figure was surprisingly close, 0.15%, and most gender attitudes were also found in *Aravot* and *Iravunk*. This implies that there is no clearly visible change in this sphere.

All other online media and newspapers barely ever expressed gender attitudes. *Civilnet.am*, *Lragir.am*, *7or.am* and *Hetq.am* each contained one or two gender attitudes in the two months of monitoring. *A1+*, *Panorama*, *Yerkir* and *Hraparak* contained none.

Similarly to 2012, of all types of media products in the sample, talk shows were the main source of gender attitudes. As expected, the biggest number of gender attitudes was found in the only 'women's show' in the sample, "What a Woman Wants". Similarly to 2012, this show also contained stereotypes with regard to women and relations between women and men, in every sphere from appearance to behavior and moral standards. However, in comparison with 2012 we found fewer examples of negative gender stereotyping, whether quoted or expressed by a journalist. Stereotypical generalizations concerning gender matters were significantly fewer, with the exception of the discussions around the 'Gender Law'.

Discussions of the 'Gender Law'

In the 2013 sample, 1 news report on television and 33 stories in newspapers and online media discussed the 2013 Law on Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities of Women and Men (known as "the Gender Law").

The 'Gender Law' prescribes measures to ensure equal rights of women and men as stipulated by the Constitution. The first legal document in Armenia to use 'gender' as a legal term, the 'Gender Law' contains definitions of 'gender', 'gender equality', 'gender discrimination' and relevant concepts. It is in connection with these concepts that a controversy arose in Armenia in mid-2013. Specifically, item 3.1.1. of the Law defines 'gender' as 'the acquired social roles of individuals belonging to different sexes...'.¹³ A small group of activists announced that the word 'acquired' implies that gender roles can be changed, and that the law thereby propagandizes LGBT relationships, sex-change surgery and even incest. Any discussions of the content of the law, i.e.

¹² 13,983 stories were included in the database and about 10,000 were read but skipped according to the topic. Articles containing gender attitudes were not skipped regardless of topic. E.g. a sport-related gender scandal was included in the database, although 'Sport' as topic was excluded from the monitoring.

¹³ The full text of the law is available at [parliament.am/legislation.php?sel=show&ID=4761]

equality between men and women (generally accepted by the Armenian society¹⁴) were substituted with discussions of LGBT rights (which face negative sentiment in the Armenian society¹⁵).

Human rights activists said that the frenzy around the law had been created artificially and on purpose:

"This fuss is quite unnecessary ...some people simply lack knowledge on the matter... others deliberately try to confuse the notion of incest with homosexuality, and discrimination with tolerance..."¹⁶

Legislators admitted that the law *"simply prescribes equal rights of women and men, however, the use of the word «gender» causes misunderstanding in the society."*¹⁷

Legislators tried to handle the misunderstanding within the society by proposing to replace the term 'gender' with 'sex'¹⁸. However, this suggestion was declined, and the bill was sent back to the legislators for editing and careful re-wording (still under way).

The campaign against the 'Gender Law' was covered in a positive light by *Iravunk*. *Aravot* also covered it but in a balanced style, offering the floor to all sides of the argument. Other newspapers and online media covered it very little.

Some opponents used hate speech, e.g. by labeling the use of the term 'gender' as *"Nazi ideology"*¹⁹. One of the journalists blamed CSOs of being the main drivers behind the 'Gender Law':

*"...while we are fighting against it [the law], it has already invaded our schools due to the work of some grant-laundering organizations, and is doing its dirty work"*²⁰

Critics used the authority of the church and Christianity to explain why the 'Gender Law' is contrary to traditional Armenian values. Their arguments were often speculative:

*"If we are Christians, we should not even discuss this question. It is nonsense; it is against God, mankind and Armenian people... It is a different matter if we are not Christians. In this case we can discuss anything: the rights of murderers, the rights of pedophiles"*²¹

It was only in discussions of the 'Gender Law' that the monitoring team identified subjectivism on the part of journalists. Although the majority of stories on this topic were based on the opinions of

¹⁴ In 2010, according to CRRC Caucasus Barometer survey, 76% of all men said that they would feel absolutely or partially comfortable with being accountable to a woman at work. The same numbers for Georgia and Azerbaijan consisted 60% and 58% respectively

¹⁵ According to 2011 CRRC Caucasus Barometer, 97% in Armenia consider that homosexuality 'can never be justified.'

¹⁶ Aravot.am, "Մարդու իրավունքների պաշտպանը՝ Հայաստանում միասեռ ամուսնությունների մասին", [Human Rights Defender on Homosexual Marriages in Armenia], 22.10.2013

¹⁷ Iravunk.com, "Պետք է լուծումներ գտնենք, այլ ոչ թե պիտակներ կպցնենք իրար", [We Must Find Solutions, Not Put Label Each Other], 12.11.2013

¹⁸ Iravunk.com, "Մնաց Կառավարությունը ձեռք քաշի "գենդերից"", [The Only Thing Left Is For The Government To Wash Its Hands Of "Gender"], 11.11.2013

¹⁹ Aravot.am, "Արման Բոշյան. «Զգուշացեք ժողովուրդ, զգուշացեք գենդերից»", [Arman Boshyan. Beware People, Beware of Gender], 09.10.2013

²⁰ Iravunk.com, "Երբ դպրոցում դասավանդվում է, որ սեռը պայմանական կարծրատիպ է", [When It Is Taught in Schools That Sex Is A Conditional Stereotype], 22.11.2013

²¹ Panorama.am, "...Այլ հարց, եթե քրիստոնյա չենք", [It is a different matter if we are not Christians], 14.14.2013

interviewees, in two cases a journalist expressed their own negative attitude to the subject matter. One of the two, by a male journalist, goes as follows:

“All that is left for us to do is to protect family values, so that your son grows up to be a man, and your daughter becomes a woman with moral values, otherwise, with all this “gender” background, if we give in to European “values”, Armenians will stop having children, which is a planned project financed by Europe and the USA”²²

Gender stereotypes, roles and issues

Apart from the ‘Gender Law’ and its consequences, media in our sample also discussed gender violence and gender stereotypes. A relatively small media bubble arose in connection with the following statement by the Head of the Football Federation of Armenia: *“An Armenian man will not have his daughter play football”²³*. This caused several harsh responses, including a demand for his resignation. Several public figures spoke up, insisting that there is no such thing as a sport that does not suit women or is contrary to national mentality²⁴.

When women’s issues and gender stereotypes were discussed online or on television, we found two types of statements. In the first type, authors or speakers made the point that women’s potential should not be limited by the traditional understanding of their role in the society:

“I do not expect a woman to stay at home, cook meals and perform the duties of a maid”²⁵

‘Armenian women can make their own choices, including the right ones’²⁶

“Men shouldn’t limit women”²⁷

In the second type, various actors expressed stereotypical perceptions of gender roles. For example, the following stereotypes about women were found in the sample:

‘A woman must be able to cook and know her place...’²⁸

‘A woman must be modest.’²⁹

‘A woman must be attractive / caring / kind / clever.’³⁰

‘A woman must have a beautiful smile’³¹

²² Iravunk.com, “Ամերիկյան և Եվրագրասենյակները սատարելու են գենդերապաշտպան կառույցները”, [European and American Offices Will Support Gender Protection Structures], 26.11.2013

²³ Hetq.am, “Պահանջում են Ռուբեն Հայրապետյանի հրաժարականը”, [We Demand Ruben Hayrapetyan’s Resignation], 04.11.2013

²⁴ Aravot.am, Հայ կինը սպորտով զբաղվի՞, թե՞ ոչ, [Shall the Armenian Woman Engage in Sports or Not], 03.11.2013

²⁵ Aravor.am, Հայ կինը սպորտով զբաղվի՞, թե՞ ոչ, [Shall the Armenian Woman Engage in Sports or Not], 03.11.2013

²⁶ Armenia TV, Weekend news, 20.10.2013

²⁷ Ինչ է ուզում կինը, [What a Woman Wants], Ծաղիկ, [Flowers], H2, 22.10.2013

²⁸ Ազատ գոտի, [Free Zone], Ջավակը պարտավոր է, [The Child Has To], H1, 15.11.2013

²⁹ Մարդկային Գործոն, [Human Factor], Կրակոտ Հարսանիք, [Hot Wedding], ArmeniaTV, 17.10.2013

³⁰ Ինչ է ուզում կինը, [What a Woman Wants], Պլաստիկ վիրաբուժություն, [Plastic Surgery], H2, 24.10.2013

'The wife belongs to her husband' ³²

As in 2012, many of the stereotypical statements about women were made by women.

Some of the stereotypes concerned men, depicting them as natural leaders, bread-winners and decision-makers.

'The man is the head [of the family]' ³³

'The man makes all the decisions' ³⁴

Similarly to the results of the 2012 Media Monitoring, men were sometimes blamed for the fact that women feel unfulfilled, restricted and unable to succeed in their careers.

Not every man can make a woman happy... Armenian men must not limit women... Armenian men do not allow women to be beautiful ³⁵

This type of statement also relies on the assumption that men hold the power and are therefore responsible for women's failures. Only once did a journalist blame women for failing to change their situation in society:

In our days, women often complain about their husbands, saying that they do not make enough and do not help women around the house... However, surprisingly, for years on end, such women keep doing everything to make sure their husbands remain insecure and grumbling. ³⁶

In one statement by a man, women were described as superior to men:

'A woman stands above a man... A woman is sacred in the Armenian value system' ³⁷

Women were also mentioned several times to possess qualities that men lack:

"This job is not for a man, it requires strong nerves." ³⁸

"Every woman is artistically gifted" ³⁹

Civilnet published a story dedicated to the International Day of Rural Women (October 15), mentioning that rural women in Armenia have little opportunity for personal or professional growth:

"Women in villages are often unable to stand up for their rights and gain access to basic services such as education, healthcare and bank loans" ⁴⁰

³¹ Ինչ է ուզում կինը, [What a Woman Wants], Ատամնաբուժություն, [Stomatology], H2, 25.10.2013

³² Ինչ է ուզում կինը, [What a Woman Wants], Ծաղիկ, [Flowers], H2, 22.10.2013

³³ Ինչ է ուզում կինը, [What a Woman Wants], Ծաղիկ, [Flowers], H2, 22.10.2013

³⁴ Մարդկային Գործոն, [Human Factor], Մեղք թե պլանավորում, [Fault or Planning], ArmeniaTV, 23.10.2013

³⁵ Ինչ է ուզում կինը, [What a Woman Wants], Ծաղիկ, [Flowers], H2, 22.10.2013

³⁶ Ladynews.am, "Ինչպես «փչացնել» տղամարդուն", [How to spoil a man], 28.10.2013

³⁷ Armenia TV, Weekend news, 20.10.2013

³⁸ Ինչ է ուզում կինը, [What a Woman Wants], Դեկուպաժ, [], H2, 23.10.2013

³⁹ Ինչ է ուզում կինը, [What a Woman Wants], Դեկուպաժ, [], H2, 23.10.2013

⁴⁰ Civilnet.am, "Հոկտեմբերի 15-ը Գյուղացի կանանց միջազգային օրն է", [October 15 is an International Day of Rural Women], 15.10.2013

Family violence was mentioned several times. There were reports on a rally in which civic activists carried the following slogans: *"Silence will not protect you," "Violence is not a tradition," "A good family is built on love and respect," "If we do nothing, violence will not stop,"*⁴¹, *"A real man must never hit a woman"*⁴². CSO activists were quoted by the media when they drew the attention of the public to gender stereotypes, e.g. *"Women are still pictured as weak and frightened"*⁴³.

⁴¹ Hetq.am, "Բռնությունը ավանդույթ չէ, ամուր ընտանիքի հիմքը սերն ու հարգանքն է", [Violence is not a tradition, the basis of a strong family is love and respect], 01.10.2013

⁴² Aravot.am, "Տիգրան Սարգսյանից պահանջում են ԱԺ ներկայացնել ընտանեկան բռնությունը կանխարգելող օրենք", [Tigran Sargsyan Is Demanded To Present A Legislation On Domestic Violence Prevention To the National Assembly], 01.10.2013

⁴³ Civilnet.am, "Ակցիա կառավարության շենքի դիմաց՝ ընդդեմ ընտանեկան բռնության", [Protest Against Domestic Violence In Front Of The Governmetn Building], 01.10.2013

Recommendations to the media

1. Media should avoid focusing on every detail in the lives of a handful of newsmakers including top politicians and stars of show business. More variety in actors will make women more prominent in the coverage.
2. For the sake of quality as well as gender balance, media need to look outside the circle of 'usual suspects' when interviewing experts and stakeholders.
3. It is not constructive to believe a small handful of men at the top make all the decisions. Looking at a wider scope of actors in business and politics will enable media to give more prominence to actors of change, many of whom are women.
4. Media need to avoid news without actors or sources whenever possible. Such stories are seldom newsworthy. Most stories benefit from quoting the opinion of at least two stakeholders.
5. Women need to be depicted in the media as decision makers, not just as objects of decision-making.
6. It is not constructive to depict the movement for women's rights as a movement against men. More rights for women does not mean less rights for men.