

# It's a men's world - even more in the media

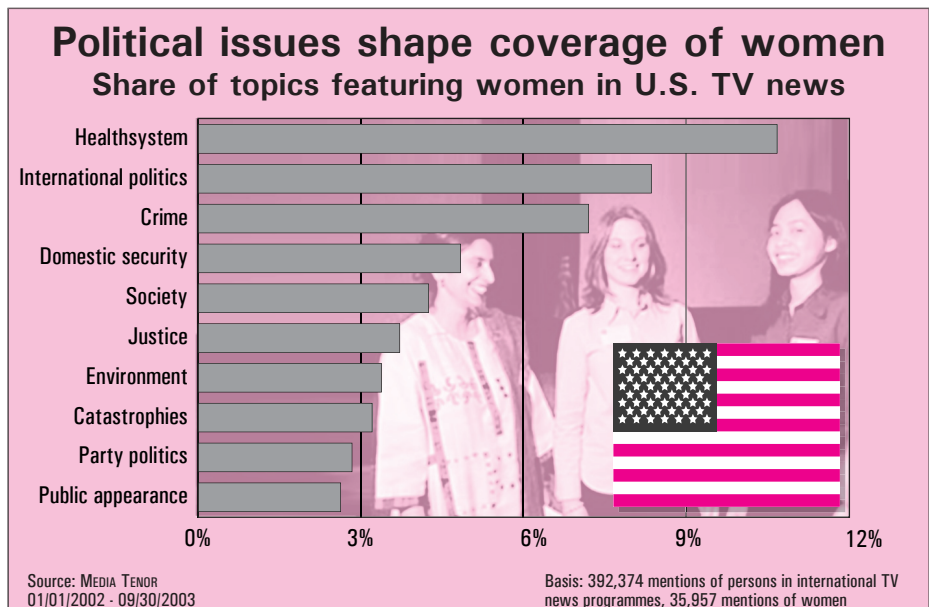
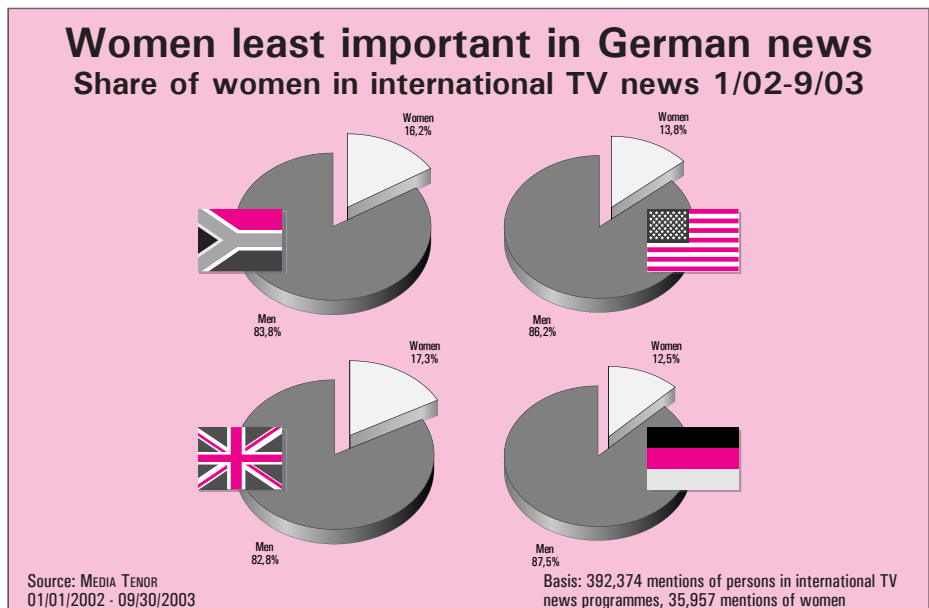
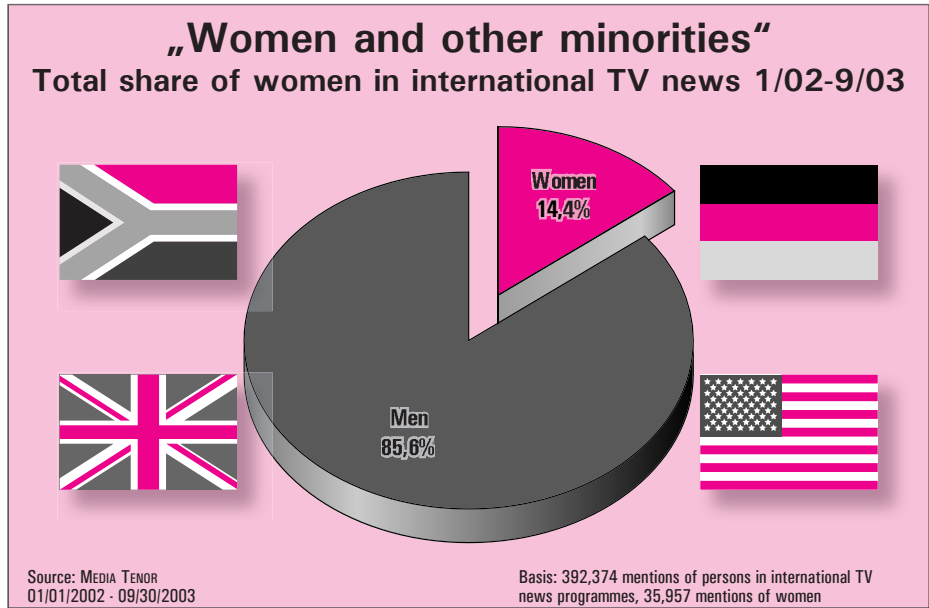
The share of women in international TV news 6/2002-5/2003

The situation of women in TV media coverage continues to be problematic: Female politicians, scientists, entrepreneurs and bishops only appear in one out of six news stories. Thus US, British, German and South African news formats do not even remotely reflect the real power distribution in their respective parliaments, governments and universities; let alone the question of the effects that this type of news selection has on the perception of the development inside and outside of these countries.

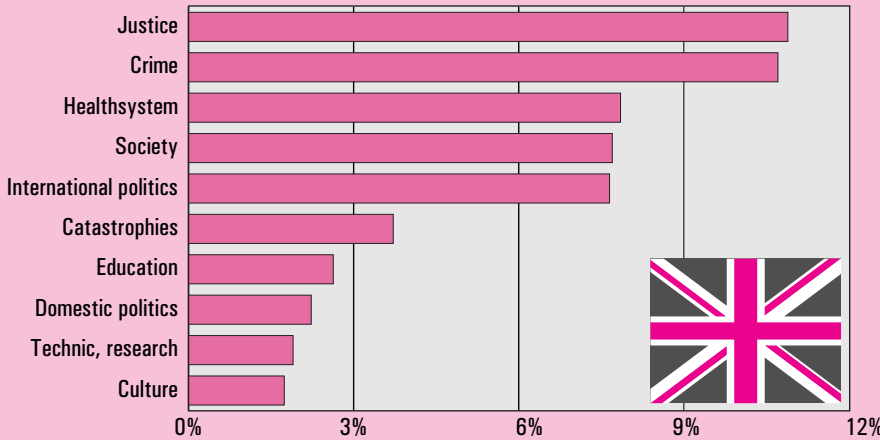
The graph above reflects the real structure of coverage in 19 TV news formats over the period of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2002 until September 30th 2003. All 392,374 named references to women and men throughout the 12 months were analyzed. The middle graph disappoints all potential US and German claims of serving as a model. At the time of analysis, half of the heads of political parties were female, women's rights advocates had no grounds to complain about the lack of female presence in government cabinets, and men had long lost their position as the only authorities at universities. Despite all of this, the share of coverage on women is only 12 percent, even lower than in other countries. Hillary Clinton would probably not be amused by these results. The BBC and ITN in England, on the other side, where not only the government team but also all heads of parties are male, at least fare better in the comparison than their colleagues across the Atlantic or the Channel.

### Political mandate shapes coverage

Looking at the topical structure, however, the basic dilemma becomes obvious: with the exception of sports, the image of women in the news is exclusively determined by the political mandates, which the respective head of government grants to female members of his cabinet. Condoleeza Rice, for example, is the reason why foreign policy is an important topic in coverage on women. Thus England can only hope that the Queen will drag out the hand-over of the crown to Prince Charles for much longer – because without reporting on the royal family, female presence in British news programs would be even more dramati-



**Issues relate to personalities and positions**  
Share of topics featuring women in U.K. TV news



Source: MEDIA TENOR  
01/01/2002 - 09/30/2003

Basis: 392,374 mentions of persons in international TV news programmes, 35,957 mentions of women

cally reduced to sports, entertainment and criminality.

**No new faces**

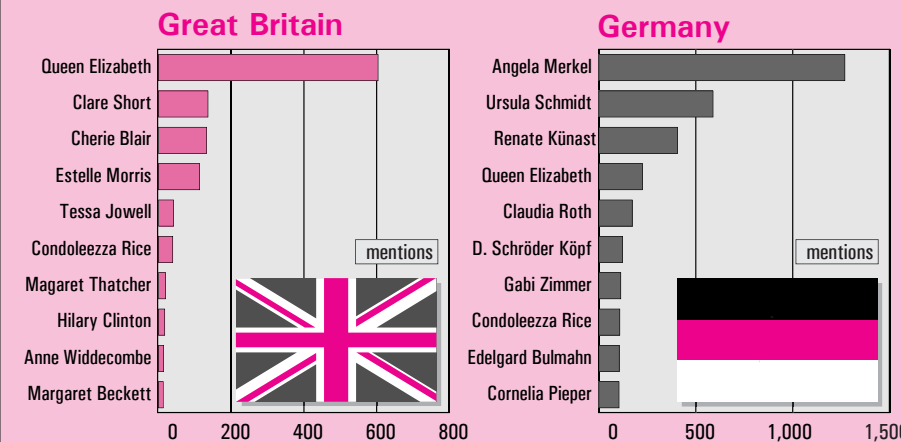
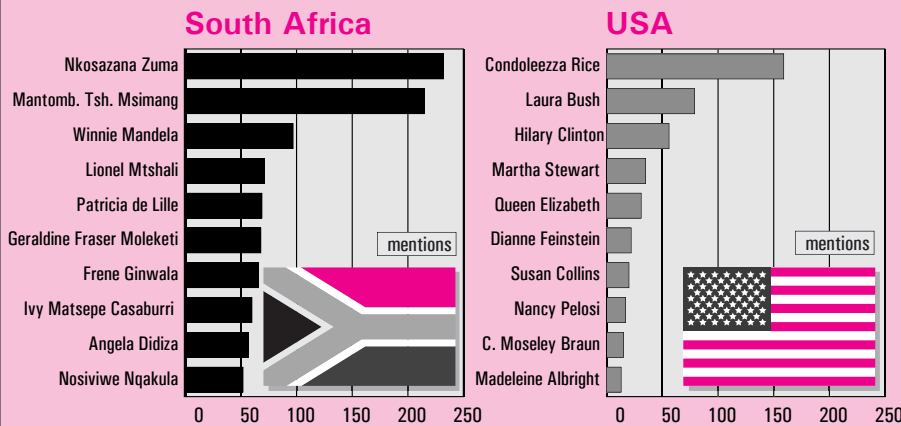
A look at the large graph on this page shows the flip side of the coin: Women and their day-to-day life alone do not seem to be worth the news, with most of the coverage focusing on the respective official positions women occupy.

If the US defense minister was a woman, the top scores in the US ranking would be significantly higher than what was the case with the President's special security adviser or the former President's wife. The same dilemma applies to female presence in other national television prime time news: Who would be able to name a handful of important women? Most of them are not even familiar to their audiences, let alone that most people could associate their names with the right party affiliation or even with the position they are responsible for. The fact that Queen Elizabeth II. figures in the top 10 list of the most covered women, not only in TV news in the U.K., but also in the U.S. and in Germany shows how few women are able to generate a significant degree of media attention.

Some editors would argue the media coverage only reflects the significance of women within society. Of course, introducing affirmative action into news reports would be ridiculous. But similar to the practice of checking the quoting of financial analysts, news editors could regularly verify whether or not topics such as education, healthcare or judiciary were covered. This would automatically increase the share of women on prime time news. Only then the media would stop to cement the status quo of male dominated societies.

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**The Queen reigns in Germany, U.S. and U.K.**  
Top 10 most covered women in TV news 2003



Source: MEDIA TENOR  
01/01/2002 - 09/30/2003

Basis: 392,374 mentions of persons in international TV news programmes, 35,957 mentions of women

**Basis**

Media: BBC NEWS AT SIX, BBC NEWS AT TEN, ITV NEWS, ITV NEWS AT TEN; NBC NIGHTLY NEWS, ABC WORLD NEWS TONIGHT, CBS EVENING NEWS; SABC AFRICAANS NEWS, ENGLISH NEWS, SOTHO NEWS AND ZULU/XHOSA NEWS, E-TV NEWS; ARD TAGESCHAU and TAGES THEMEN, ZDF HEUTE, HEUTE JOURNAL, RTL AKTUELL, SAT.1 18:30, PROSIEBEN Nachrichten;

Time: 01/01/2002 - 09/30/2003

Analysis: 392,374 mentions of persons in international TV news, 35,957 mentions of women