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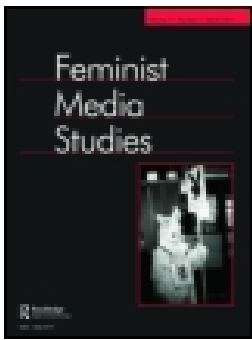
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Published online: 25 Jul 2019.

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Violators, virtuous, or victims? How global newspapers represent the female member of parliament

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ABSTRACT

Previous research finds mass media often frames female members of parliament (FMPs) as novelties, violators, or deviants intruding in a masculine domain. However, most of these studies have focused on a small number of primarily Western nations. Inspired by new research on the normalization of women in politics, intersectionality, and violence against women in politics, this study undertakes a broad examination of how global newspapers represent FMPs to the public. Taking an inductive approach and drawing on a collection of 772 articles drawn from 265 newspapers in 48 countries over thirty years (from 1985 to 2014), we assess how media framed the "female member of parliament" as being violators, virtuous, or victims and whether it made (in)visible their various intersectional identities. We found general support for the normalization thesis, but observed significant differences between Western and non-Western countries and between Asian and African media framing of FMPs as violators, virtuous, or victims.

Introduction

Although the number of women legislators has substantially increased worldwide over the past three decades, researchers have identified a number of biases in how mass media represents female members of parliament (FMPs). These biases perpetuate the idea that women in parliaments are intruding into a (previously) masculine domain by treating FMPs as *novelties* who stand out for violating traditional gender norms (e.g., Donatella Campus 2013; Kathleen Dolan 2014, 30; Danny Hayes and Jennifer L. Lawless 2016, 6–14; Karen Ross and Annabelle Sreberny 2000, 93; Linda Trimble 2014, 663–665). However, this long-standing notion has recently been challenged by studies in the United States context arguing that journalists, media outlets, and the public are now less likely to view women in politics as novel. These studies offer us a *normalization* thesis, that mass media reporting increasingly portrays women's presence in politics as "normal" (e.g., Julie Dolan, Melissa Deckman and Michele L. Swers 2011, 109; Dolan 2014; Hayes and Lawless 2016, 18).

Beyond *novelty* and *normalization*, recent feminist research has further expanded our thinking about how women in politics are perceived by the public and framed in the

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media. Notably, they have highlighted the role media plays in identifying or obscuring women's intersectional identities (e.g., Sumi Cho, Kimberlé Crenshaw and Leslie McCall 2013) and exposing various forms of violence against women in politics (e.g., Mona Lena Krook 2017). Moreover, scholars focusing on globalization and transnationalism have advocated for a "de-Westernizing" approach to media studies since much of the extant research is based on single country studies or a small number of primarily Western nations (e.g., James Curran and Myung-Jin Park 2000; Thomas Hanitzsch 2008; Herman Wasserman and Arnold S. de Beer 2008).

To avoid potential Euro-centric and intersectionality-blind biases, we use a broad scope of inquiry to examine the frames used by mass media around the world when representing FMPs to the public. Our approach is simultaneously transnational and intersectional in two ways: First, we look outside the West to consider how non-Western media covers FMPs (vis-à-vis Western media); second, we do not assume any "generic," "typical," or "standard" woman MP, but rather seek to examine how inter-sectional identities of FMPs are covered both in Western and non-Western media.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: First, we begin with a brief review of scholarly literature on how mass media represents women in politics. Next, we explain the methodology of our study, which utilizes a content analysis of 772 articles drawn from 265 English-language newspapers in 48 countries between 1985 and 2014 to inductively examine how global print media frames the "female member of parliament" (FMP). We then classify various sub-frames observed in our study into broader and widely recognized "master frames" (Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow 2000) of FMPs depicted as "violators," "virtuous," or "victims." We also examine the extent to which newspapers make FMPs' various intersectional identities visible. As discussed below, some frames are common worldwide and we found general support for the *normalization* thesis that media increasingly treats FMPs as "normal." However, we also documented significant regional differences and, since cross-national research finds higher degrees of media sexism correlated with fewer women candidates for parliament (Amanda Haraldsson and Lena Wängnerud 2018), we conclude by suggesting how FMPs and journalists might counter existing biases in media coverage.

Literature review

Research on journalism in Western countries has thoroughly documented how media framing regularly treats male parliamentarians as a normative standard against which women are judged while reinforcing gender stereotypes that women are a) "outsiders" in politics, b) that their proper roles are as mothers, and c) that women are more cooperative than men (Campus 2013). Such "gendered mediation" (Ross and Sreberny 2000) not only reinforces the "public man/private woman binary" (Trimble 2014, 665), but arguably leads the media to pay more attention to women's appearance and personal characteristics (i.e., "hair, hemlines and husbands") than to their policy-related views and actions (Regina G. Lawrence and Melody Rose 2010, 474; see also Sharon Mavin, Patricia Bryans and Rosie Cunningham 2010).

The media have also frequently "othered" and belittled FMPs by denying them honorific titles, calling them by their first name, or using unflattering gendered descriptions (Karen Ross and Margie Comrie 2012) thereby signaling to the public that politics is

ultimately "a man's game" (Karen Ross, Elizabeth Evans, Lisa Harrison, Mary Shears and Khursheed Wadia 2013). Even seemingly ungendered practices such as "the metaphoric language of aggression" serves to "rhetorically position women outside the masculine political game" (Bailey Gerrits, Linda Trimble, Angelia Wagner, Daisy Raphael and Shannon Sampert 2017, 1090; see also Elisabeth Gidengil and Joanna Everitt 2003). Relatedly, media coverage frequently focuses inordinate attention on FMPs' connections to male relatives and their family position (i.e., wife, mother, and daughter) (Campus 2013; Viorela Dan and Aurora Iorgoveanu 2013; Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi and Karen Ross 1996). As Kathleen Hall Jamieson (1995) has posited, such framing reinforces a "femininity-competence double bind" whereby women in politics face the need to disassociate themselves from stereotypically feminine traits yet—due to prevailing gender norms—cannot project too masculine an image.

Per the gendered mediation thesis, news media presents politics as "an essentially male pursuit" and therefore reporting "supports the status quo (male as norm) and regards women politicians as novelties" (Ross and Sreberny 2000, 93). It also reinforces the idea that women in politics violate standard gendered scripts of "proper" social behavior and they are consequently depicted as usurpers, rebels, and emasculators (Ingrid Bachmann, Dustin Harp and Jamie Loke 2017; Trimble 2014). Thus, it is common for news media to either ignore women in politics (Deirdre O'Neill, Heather Savigny and Victoria Cann 2016), trivialize them (Campus 2013), or focus on their appearance and style over substance (Tauna Sisco and Jennifer Lucas 2015). One common frame is "the frame of the women's 'breakthrough'" (Dolan, Deckman and Swers 2011, 89). However, a recent study in Spain suggests media representations of the "first woman to ever serve" (in high-level political offices) tend to reinforce the idea that women are "trespassing" and that politics "can never be *not* masculine" (Tània Verge and Raquel Pastor 2018, 43).

Contrasting the view that media treats women in politics as a *novelty*, recent studies have countered with a *normalization* thesis stating that women in politics today are less likely to be treated as novelties or *violators*. As Hayes and Lawless (2016, 20) have argued in the US context, there has been a normalization of women in politics whereby "covering women 'as women'—rather than just as politicians—has less news value than it once did." While acknowledging that women faced "blatantly sexist experiences" several decades ago, they contend that "the political landscape has changed" and we are now "in an era when women are no longer electoral novelties" (Hayes and Lawless 2016, 14). In fact, women politicians may now actually receive relatively sympathetic and favorable media coverage because they are perceived to be *virtuous* in dimensions such as compassion and honesty (Hayes and Lawless 2016, 16) and better motivated or capable of advancing gender equality and the representation of marginalized groups (Verge and Pastor 2018).

Aside from the *novelty* and *normalization* theses, several recent advances in the academic literature provide us with more ambivalent expectations. For instance, recent attention to the pervasive problem of violence and sexual harassment against women in politics (e.g., IPU 2018; Krook 2017) implicates media as a potential means to expose sexual injustice. In response, mass media is likely to portray the recipients of gender-based political violence as *victims*.

Similarly, scholarly attention to the role of intersectionality highlights the importance of intersectional analyses when describing female politicians' lives. However, they also suggest society tends to ignore such identities and experiences in everyday renderings, academic analysis, and public policy design (Cho, Crenshaw and McCall 2013; Nira Yuval-Davis 2006). For instance, the origins of *intersectionality* theorizing stem from critical legal analysis of how individuals can be disadvantaged and discriminated against based on both race and gender (Kimberlé Crenshaw 1991). Intersectional feminism also puts forth the idea of a "naturalizing discourse" which homogenizes social categories and treats all those belonging to the same category as sharing similar attributes. As Yuval-Davis (2006, 199) notes, "categorical attributes are often exclusionary/inclusionary" to distinguish between self and other. This can lay the foundation for what is considered "normal" and "abnormal" and thereby ostracize entire categories of people. Therefore, media reporting may ignore the relevance of intersectional identities, making them *invisible* the same way women in politics tend to get less coverage than their male counterparts (Haraldsson and Wängnerud 2018; Hayes and Lawless 2016, 16). On the other hand, media reporters may be overly attentive to such intersections as has happened with women candidates of color who have become "hypervisible" and subject to "super surveillance" in UK media coverage (Orlanda Ward 2017, 47).

To summarize, the literature discussed provides us with four master frames (see Table 1) that may be present in different forms and to varying degrees in global newspaper representations of the FMP. However, a key limitation of previous studies is their generally narrow geographic focus on a small number of Western countries. While many recent studies on this topic have examined the U.S. (e.g., Bachmann, Harp and Loke 2017; Danny Hayes and Jennifer L. Lawless 2015; Sisco and Lucas 2015), Canada (e.g., Gerrits et al. 2017), the U.K. and Ireland (Clare Walsh 2015; O'Neill, Savigny and Cann 2016), and Australia and New Zealand (e.g., Trimble 2014), studies of the non-Western world are sparse. While a few recent studies examine non-Western or non-Anglophone countries such as Argentina (e.g., Van Dembroucke 2014) and South Korea (e.g., Tiffany D. Barnes, Jinhyeok Jang and Jaehoo Park 2016; Young-Im Lee 2017), most address only a single country. However, even these few studies draw our attention to new possibilities. For instance, in some Asian countries women in politics are seen as "problem solvers" (Lee 2017) who can bring unity to a divided polity (Claudia Derichs and Mark R. Thompson 2013, 15). Two other promising steps towards globalizing our understanding of media coverage of women in politics include

Table 1. Master frames in newspaper depictions of the "female member of parliament".

FMPs depicted as	Representation Type	Framing Examples
Violators	Symbolic Representation	Attention to FMPs' appearance, clothes, marital status, personal life, etc. because they are deviants intruding into male space.
Virtuous	Descriptive & Substantive Representation	Thanks to FMP advocacy, we see positive efforts to change policies that impact the lives of girls, women, and men. Nations with more FMPs are more modern and democratic.
Victims	Safety & Sexual Harassment	FMPs are disadvantaged. As women they are victims of violence, threats, unsafe working conditions, and sexual harassment.
Invisible	Intersectional Representation	FMPs exist simply as FMPs with no mention of vital attributes such as their name nor key intersectional identities such as their age, class, race/ethnicity, sexuality, education, or religion.

Source: The Authors.

a comparative analysis of media reporting on women in high courts (Maria C. Escobar-Lemmon, Valerie Hoekstra, Alice Kang and Miki Caul Kittilson 2016) and an edited volume bringing together sixteen individual country studies of media reporting on women in politics (Maria Raicheva-Stiver and Elza Ibroscheva 2014). Our cross-national study likewise works towards addressing this gap in the literature.

Methodology

Our study of how mass media represents FMPs utilizes the concept of *framing*. As Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman (2007, 104) have argued, "the major premise of framing theory is that an issue can be viewed from a variety of perspectives and be construed as having implications for multiple values or considerations. Framing refers to the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue." As Robert M. Entman (1993, 52, 55) notes, "Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text . . . frames call attention to some aspects of reality while obscuring other elements, which might lead audiences to have different reactions."

Framing is important because it "provides contextual cues, giving order and meaning to complex problems, actions, and events. Frames guide the selection, presentation, and evaluation of information, for journalists and reader, by slotting the novel into familiar categories" (Pippa Norris 1997, 2). Moreover, since "framing changes attitudes by ostensibly altering the underlying considerations used in one's evaluation," even small "changes in the presentation of an issue or an event" can "produce (sometimes large) changes of opinion" (Chong and Druckman 2007, 110, 104).

Recognizing Charlotte Adcock's (2010, 140) critique that "there is a lack of systematic analysis tracing women's media(ted) representation—quantitatively or qualitatively—in parliamentary politics over historical time" and since researchers in this field typically examine only a small number of Western countries (Curran and Park 2000, 3; Hanitzsch 2008, 416), we aimed to achieve a more global picture of mass media framing of FMPs.

To conduct our analysis, we followed the four-step process specified by Chong and Druckman (2007, 106–108) for identifying frames in political news media: 1) select an issue, person, or event, 2) isolate specific attitudes about that issue, 3) inductively identify an initial set of frames to create a coding scheme, and 4) select sources for content analysis. In this study, we selected the issue of female members of parliament, developed a codebook identifying several possible frames that emerged from our literature review and from reading different news articles (see *Appendix A*). We then selected worldwide newspaper articles that explicitly refer to a "female member of parliament" (see *Appendix B*).[1] During the coding process, we also remained open to identifying and noting down other frames which were not originally anticipated. Ultimately, we ended up classifying various sub-frames we identified as falling under four "master frames" (Benford and Snow 2000) which we derived from research on media coverage of both Western (*novelty* and *normalization*) and non-Western (*violence* and *invisibility*) women in politics as summarized in Table 1.

Focusing on print media, we selected content from the Lexis-Nexis newspaper archive as a large publicly accessible digital collection of global newspaper articles with coverage from the 1980s to the present (Devin Joshi and Roni Kay O'Dell 2017, 351). Applying a longitudinal scope (resembling Linda Trimble, Angelia Wagner, Shannon Sampert, Daisy Raphael and Bailey Gerrits 2013), we collected all articles from 1985 to 2014 that included the search phrase "female member of parliament," which we saw as a most-likely indication for capturing media representations of women in parliament as women. In contrast to much of the previous literature which only looks at media coverage of election campaigns, we focused on the day-in, day-out coverage of FMPs as holders of a political office. In total, we obtained 772 unique English-language articles stemming from 265 different newspapers in 48 source countries as listed in *Appendix B*. The articles originate from five different world regions and were divided into two fifteen-year periods (1985–1999 and 2000–2014) for Africa (0 + 61 = 61), Asia-Pacific (4 + 114 = 118), Europe (21 + 183 = 204), North America (61 + 211 = 277), and Oceania (35 + 82 = 117). The corpus contains Western newspaper articles from Europe (UK and Ireland), North America (Canada and USA), and Oceania (Australia and New Zealand) over three decades. The non-Western news articles (which are from Africa and Asia) are almost all from the twenty-first century due to the Lexis-Nexus database only expanding to cover these non-Western sources after 2000.

To assess the presence of both explicit and implicit interpretive frames used by newspapers in reporting on FMPs, we chose content analysis as a method to uncover embedded meanings within mass media discourse (Kimberly A Neuendorf 2002; Daniel Riffe, Stephen Lacy and Frederick G. Fico 2005). Instead of using automated text analysis, all articles were carefully read and coded by at least two of the paper's authors using the codebook in *Appendix A* to allow for qualitative inductive framing analysis to be combined with quantitative content analysis. To improve inter-coder reliability and relevance, the codebook itself was developed through three rounds of trial coding by the authors on more recent articles that are not part of the dataset.[2] While some items in the coding frame are identical to those used in previous studies (e.g., Ross et al. 2013), others were developed specifically for this project. We also took precaution to observe frames appearing in mass media reporting which were not anticipated when first conceiving the study. After settling on a codebook, double coding was conducted by two of the study's authors on all 772 newspaper articles. We obtained a high percentage agreement (85–99%) across coders on most items and then, following Delia Dumitrescu (2010, 35) cases where there were initial discrepancies were coded by consensus after discussion amongst the three authors.[3] The data is available for replication purposes at Harvard Dataverse.[4]

In the analysis presented in subsequent sections of this paper, we provide a quantitative overview of sub-frame frequencies over time and across world regions, as well as a qualitative analysis of the types of sub-frames we encountered as illustrated through examples from different world regions. The various sub-frames are grouped under the four master frames of "violators," "virtuous," "victims," and "invisible."

Analysis

We begin our analysis with media representations of FMPs as *violators*. As mentioned earlier, journalists often depict FMPs as novelties who are out of place for challenging traditional gender norms because they are "intruding" into a male-dominated public space (Ross and Sreberny 2000). For instance, an early FMP in the British Columbia legislature was described as a "rebel" and "a guinea hen, scratching around the legislature" (1992, n022).[5] In a more recent case, "being the only female Member of Parliament and a very vocal warrior and champion for the hapless course of women [in Papua New Guinea], her move as the 'solitary' Leader of the Opposition" was depicted as "very intelligent, wise and heroism at its best" (2012, n541). These two passages reflect a sub-frame of the *lone deviant* FMP who as a radical/feminist or warrior/heroine is treated as an aberration from the "normal" child-bearing married woman who stays out of politics. Here serving as an FMP implies neglecting one's family and therefore acting unusually, unacceptably or immorally in societies where women are expected to be responsible for their children and families.

Another commonly found sub-frame, especially when FMPs are few, is the *appendage* (i.e., daughter, wife, or sister) of a male politician. This frame implies the unsuitability of other women for such a woman-unfriendly post. Relatedly, *motherhood* is treated as a dominant identity for FMPs while fatherhood is only a background feature for most male members of parliament (MMPs), thereby reinforcing traditional public-private norms of gender segregation.

> While the female members of [the UK] parliament obviously thought of themselves as wives, mothers and MPs, none of the men I interviewed thought fit to mention if they were fathers or husbands. They were speaking to me as MPs, and that was it (1999, n116).

> If a man runs as a [Brazilian] federal deputy, his wife stays at home. She is resigned to that. But if the opposite is true, the guy gets very upset that his wife is not there to prepare lunch and take the kids to school, even if they have a maid (2014, n695).

As *violators*, FMPs are often depicted as facing an uphill battle due to a) greater public scrutiny, b) greater difficulty getting into parliament, and c) greater difficulty accomplishing tasks within parliament. As a representative passage relays, "[Afghanistan's] female members of parliament say they are not taken seriously. Most have been dropped from high government positions" (2006, n272).

The idea that FMPs' idiosyncrasies are compelling fodder for readers' *entertainment* is another common sub-frame as observable in the following passages:

> Evasion techniques need to be ingenious, given Italy's predilection for mobile phones. A female member of parliament whose husband was away at the seaside would call him on her mobile phone a few minutes before trysts with her lover. "Darling, I'm about to go into a meeting," she told him. She was then free to switch off the phone (2004, n207).

> Where is it written that female members of parliament should at all times look like frumps who wouldn't know a pole dance from a snap poll? [Australian] Sports Minister Kate Ellis is a handsome lass, although she looked a bit tarty in a leather dress that was separated from her fetish stilettos by at least a meter of leg (2010, n442).

The appearance, looks, and clothing of FMPs have been common topics of media coverage. For example, an article relates how an FMP was expelled by the Turkish

parliament just for wearing the hijab (2000, n140). Media interest in the physical image of FMPs also appears in several countries—from coverage of a Chilean parliamentary candidate who promised to "flash her breasts to fellow MPs" after a successful election campaign (2004, n194), to male politicians selecting FMP images to bolster their own support in Canada.

> When Conservative Leader Stephen Harper posed for the cameras at his party's recent policy convention in Montreal, he did so with attractive female members of [Canada's] Parliament. It was a sign, finally, that the party understands that optics matter. The message was: 'Look, we're not all white males here' (2005, n217).

We also observed a cynical backlash and counter-frame that FMP numbers serve as a *decoy* to avoid more meaningful institutional and policy reforms, especially in the Global South.

> Instead of falling for the usual numbers game, shouldn't we be aiming for quality, not quantity? What kind of women do we want sitting in Parliament representing other women, and men? After all, there are more women in government than ever before and my life certainly hasn't improved. Has yours? (1997, n074).

> Until and unless they move in a manner that can utilize measurable, actual and hands-on activations that can have a direct impact on women in [Indian] society, having women in greater or lesser numbers in legislature really does not help as far as women are concerned (2013, n669).

As these passages illustrate, the master frame of FMPs as violators appears in many newspapers. To quantitatively assess its occurrence, we counted how frequently news articles discussed FMPs' a) appearance, b) marital/family status, and c) children. In both our cross-sectional (see Table 2) and longitudinal (see Table 3) analyses, we found that non-Western media emphasize these factors less than Western media by a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) margin. However, within the West, attention to marital and child

Table 2. Themes in Media coverage of FMPs by region of news source (2000–2014).

FMP Coverage	Western Regions				Non-Western Regions			t-tests	
	West (Total)	Europe	North America	Oceania	Non-West (Total)	Africa	Asia	East-West	Africa-Asia
Appearance	.14	.11	.17	.16	.06***	.10	.04	0.001	0.208
Family Status	.24	.27	.23	.18	.15***	.13	.16	0.008	0.630
Children	.16	.20	.16	.09	.10**	.07	.12	0.040	0.200
Democracy	.12	.07	.17	.12	.20**	.18	.21	0.022	0.631
Policy-Making	.48	.54	.46	.39	.48	.61**	.41	0.982	0.014
Gender Equality	.50	.44	.54	.51	.57*	.52	.60	0.086	0.366
Violence	.14	.15	.14	.10	.15	.07***	.20	0.622	0.007
Age	.19	.22	.19	.11	.06***	.11*	.04	0.000	0.078
Class	.15	.14	.18	.11	.03***	.03	.03	0.000	0.814
Education	.08	.10	.08	.05	.06	.11*	.04	0.345	0.078
Ethnicity/Race	.06	.04	.09	.02	.09	.16**	.05	0.182	0.036
Sexuality	.02	.02	.03	.00	.01	.00	.02	0.358	0.158
Religion	.06	.05	.07	.05	.05	.03	.05	0.494	0.525

Source: Authors' Dataset. **Note**: Numbers represent proportion of articles mentioning FMPs by news sources from that region that discussed that particular FMP attribute or association. Asterisks for Non-West and Africa mark statistical significance via a two-sample unequal variance two-tailed t-test compared to the West and Asia, respectively: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$.

Table 3. Changing emphasis of themes in western media coverage of FMPs (1985–2014).

Themes in FMP Coverage	1985–1999 (n = 117)	2000–2014 (n = 476)	t-test (2-tailed)
Appearance	.21	.14	0.098*
Family Status	.25	.24	0.815
Children	.16	.16	0.987
Democracy	.03	.12	0.000***
Policy-Making	.36	.48	0.018**
Gender Equality	.62	.50	0.012**
Violence	.10	.14	0.266
Age	.20	.19	0.895
Class	.15	.15	0.826
Education	.05	.08	0.176
Ethnicity/Race	.05	.06	0.745
Sexuality	.05	.02	0.162
Religion	.07	.06	0.712

Source: Authors' Dataset. **Note**: Numbers represent proportion of articles by time period mentioning FMPs by Western news sources that discussed that particular FMP attribute or association. Asterisks mark statistical significance via a two-sample unequal variance two-tailed t-test across the two time periods: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$.

status has remained the same over time, whereas attention to FMPs' appearance fell significantly from 21% of articles from 1985–1999 to 14% of articles from 2000–2014.

A second master frame was media portraying FMPs as *virtuous* and making politics more ethical. One finding was journalists' use of a horse-race frame to compare relative rankings of parliaments based on FMP proportions presumably to incite pride (or shame) for having more (or less) FMPs than peer countries or compared to the past.

> The British score for female Members of Parliament of 9 per cent is only half the average for industrialized countries, and compares with 16 and 17 per cent in countries like Rwanda, Uganda, Mozambique, Argentina and Nicaragua (1994, n054).

> In the last Lebanese parliamentary elections in 2005 only three MPs out of 128 were women —far fewer than politically restricted neighbors such as Syria, which had 30 women MPs out of 250; Jordan which had 13 out of 165; and Egypt which had 31 out of 718 (2008, n367).

While the media were generally silent regarding structural means to increase FMP numbers—such as electoral system reforms—FMP numbers were framed as dependable indicators of modernization or democratization, especially in the aftermath of the Arab Spring when electoral code revisions resulted in Tunisia having 68 FMPs (2014, n750).

Another virtuous depiction of FMPs was their positive contributions to policy reforms and advocacy. Whereas Margaret Thatcher was earlier criticized by feminists for not substantively representing women (2013, n615), in recent years FMPs have frequently been framed as advocating gender equality and women's empowerment. Journalists have chronicled how FMPs have worked in various countries to reduce corruption (2000, n125), lower teenage pregnancy (2013, n640), end child marriage and forced marriage (2010, n452), expand education and day-care (2005, n217), change body image (2003, n166), introduce minimum male paternity leaves (2000, n127), prevent child labor (2014, n742), subsidize breast cancer drugs (2006, n268), ease restrictions on stem cell research (2007, n329), allow women to receive an inheritance from their husbands (2009, n390), oppose dress codes for women such as bans on mini-skirts (2009, n406), release women

from jails (2006, n264), improve health care and extend compulsory education (2011, n489), support initiatives to increase women in government and politics (2010, n438), combat domestic violence and gun proliferation (2010, n451), and legalize abortion (2004, n199; 2013, n684). FMPs have also been framed as potential coalition partners by advocacy groups (2010, n451) when placing issues like women's reproductive health on the policy agenda.

> I realized that the most influential figure in a campaign to promote contraception and sexual health was a middle aged Sudanese female Member of Parliament. Young women listened to her, and their patrons, older women and the men in their families, were not alienated and thus allowed her access to their homes (2009, n413).

Nevertheless, media often framed FMP advocates for reformist causes as outnumbered and outmaneuvered. For example, a Sudanese FMP who spearheaded "law reforms which included giving women the right to work after marriage, to have a veto in their family's choice of a husband, to divorce in cases of abuse or incompatibility, and to require men to pay maintenance and child support" was imprisoned and her husband tortured and murdered after a military coup dismissed these rights (1994, n046). Meanwhile, Kuwaiti FMPs who endorsed women's participation in international sporting competitions faced "a continuous and systematic attempt by the Islamist lobby within parliament to suppress women's right to participate in the public domain" (2010, n439). This gives rise to a frame that FMPs are *not taken seriously* by their male counterparts and that FMPs may be caught in a dilemma whereby they are criticized both for speaking up and for remaining silent.

> A female member of [Afghanistan's] parliament has been suspended for criticizing her male colleagues for supporting this proposed execution (2008, n338).

> 49 women legislators have not spoken more than five times on the floor of the [Ugandan] House for the last two years (2013, n646).

In this respect, women continue to struggle to be perceived as "normal" MPs with relevance or expertise outside the domain of *women's issues*, but this frame itself has been challenged by FMPs and journalists. As one FMP counters, "I do not believe there is something called a woman's issue; the idea that we only have something interesting to say on a narrow range of issues is simply (a) not the case and (b) grossly inequitable" (1998, n104). Similarly, an article about a Cambodian FMP points out, "Asked afterward what it was like to have a woman fighting his battles, Mol Sa, 37, a fisherman, said, 'She speaks up for us, so I don't think she's any different from a man.'" (2010, n441) This excerpt reflects a sub-frame that women in politics are *more approachable* and inclusive, less corrupt, and more willing to take a moral stand (2013, n652).

> Women are kinder in their approach and they'll try to work with people, find a solution that's not quite so cruel. Men tend to see everything in black and white (1998, n102).

> 'Women are also adding a sense of morality, putting big issues like corruption on the table. Only women can do that with credibility because we're seen as not corrupt,' said Sanjaasurengin Oyun, a female member of [Mongolia's] parliament (2000, n125).

'Men are much more likely to become involved in corruption, compared with women. Females are not inclined to become involved in these things, so we voted for women,' says Ahmad Shah Saber, a local journalist in Nimruz, [Afghanistan] (2010, n474).

To quantitatively assess the *virtuous* master frame, we counted how often media articles portrayed FMPs as a) facilitating improvements in gender equality, b) advancing democracy, and c) making an active contribution to public policy-making. On the first two of these measures, non-Western media placed greater emphasis than Western media by a statistically significant margin. As for policy-making, there was no statistically significant difference between Western and non-Western media but there was a significant difference between more coverage in Africa than in Asia. Mass media also focuses more on FMP policy statements and views nowadays than in the past. In the early 1990s, FMP policy views were mentioned in a fifth of articles mentioning FMPs. Meanwhile, between 2010 and 2014, they appeared in about two fifths of such articles. We also observed statistically significant growth on all three of these indicators over time in the West which we interpret as supporting the *normalization* thesis.

A third master frame in our study was the *victim* of sexual injustice as represented by reporting of violence and harassment against FMPs. In the 1980s and 1990s, Western media reported that FMPs were regularly made to feel unwelcome in public office through verbal criticisms including: "I am of the opinion that women with certain exceptions have little to offer the House of Commons" (1990, n011). In earlier years, male MPs who offended female MPs acted with impunity including Australian male MPs who brazenly skinny dipped in front of female MPs (1987, n004). FMPs elsewhere were subjected to obscene gestures, sexual harassment, and unwanted advances.

'They jeered and whistled and did this,' she says, making a circle with the index finger and thumb of one hand while jabbing her other index finger through it, and said, 'You just want it yourself' … Many believe [New Zealand's] Dr. Waring was the brunt of such treatment largely because there were not enough other females around (1994, n053).

However, contemporary media outlets tend to frame the harassment of women in politics more as a problem occurring in the Global South or Middle-East perhaps as a pretext for (or due to) international aid programs or military interventions.

Al-Mashriq carries on the front page a 400-word report citing Parliament Speaker Mahmud al-Mashhadani accusing the US soldiers of insulting Iraqi female members of parliament by inspecting them when they enter the parliament premises in the Green zone (2007, n293).

Female parliamentarians [in Zimbabwe] actually conceded that the lack of resources was their greatest demise. They were subjected to sexual harassment because they did not have adequate resources to fund the elections, nor the means to get them (2014, n710).

Media coverage further identified some of the greatest threats to FMPs as coming from their own colleagues. In various countries, male MPs have called FMPs prostitutes (2013, n618), tried to poison them (1998, n098), labeled them as dogs (2006, n279), called for attacks on them (2014, n751), attempted to hit them (2004, n192), hit them with a cane (2014, n725), punched them in the face (1997, n078), thrown water bottles at them

(2011, n507), sent offensive text messages about them (2012, n585; 2012, f586), and splashed water on them on live television (2012, n563). In the latter case,

> The show ended in a brawl between the far-right candidate and another female politician. But Ms. [Rena] Dourou never lost her composure, a scene that thousands of Greeks watched on YouTube (2014, n744).

Newspapers have also reported on how FMPs have been subjected to physical violence, death threats and imprisonment from criminal gangs, religious extremists, and the courts.

> Toujan Faisal, Jordan's only female member of parliament, told a group of guests how, in her first election campaign, she was visited at home by three bearded fundamentalist clerics who cursed her and threatened physical intimidation if she didn't withdraw (1994, n050).

> Malalai Joya sleeps in a different bed every night and does not expect to grow old; One of the few female members of parliament in Afghanistan and a vocal critic of the warlords who dominate that strife-torn nation, she is a walking target (2007, n298).

In total, violence and sexual harassment against FMPs is a frame that appeared in about one out of every seven articles. We observed no significant change over time in Western media and no statistically significant difference between Western and non-Western media. However, there was a statistically significant difference within non-Western media: Asian news articles (20%) featured this theme at about three times the rate of Africa (7%), indicating that media seems to be particularly attentive to violence and sexual harassment against FMPs in Asia.

A fourth master frame we examined was the *invisibility* of FMPs and their various intersecting identities. In line with earlier research on the invisibility of women, almost half (340 out of 772) of the articles in our study did not mention the name of any specific female member(s) of parliament. While symbolically present, often FMPs were neither given a voice- nor named- nor distinguished as specific individuals. In these instances, FMPs' symbolic meaning was not determined by themselves, but by journalists or editors who incorporated them into certain narratives. For instance, a BBC Monitoring Report notes "A Somali female member of parliament has been elected deputy Speaker of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development" (2012, n539). Presumably, in this instance, the naming of a deputy speaker would not have been newsworthy if it was a male.

We observed such invisibility also extends to other relevant characteristics of FMPs. Although public consciousness of MPs' intersectional identities is a necessary component of being politically informed, media outlets overwhelmingly took the White (or dominant ethnicity) middle/upper-class heterosexual woman uncritically as a reference group to be treated as "normal." When intersectional identity was referenced, it usually had to do with marginalities as opposed to privileges. Thus, while challenging patriarchal norms of gender domination, reporters typically remained silent about other salient aspects of MPs' individual identities and other forms of domination they may experience. This was particularly the case in the 1980s and 1990s when there was little discussion of race and ethnicity. The following passages are exceptions:

It is, in fact, common usage in Britain to include Asian, Middle Eastern, African and Caribbean immigrants and their children under the generic 'blacks' (1989, n008).

May Yee writes about the experience of racism among Chinese-Canadian women, 'Being both non-white and women in a white and male-dominated society makes us both invisible and double silenced socially, politically and economically, and through history,' she writes (1992, n022).

Articles mentioning FMP diversity often highlight the first FMPs (or candidates) from specific racial or ethnic backgrounds as indicative of tremendous progress and worthy of celebration. Exceptional is an article about the first FMP from Alberta noting "that victory was, of course, for Caucasian women only. Asian and aboriginal women were specifically written out of the law and the latter didn't get the right to vote until 1960" (2005, n233). However, intersectional identities have recently informed certain depictions of Jean Augustine, Canada's first Black FMP, whose support for Black History Month increased awareness about slavery in Canada's past.

"You can't imagine it," said Jean Augustine, the first African-Canadian woman elected MP, in 1993. "The entire black population of Canada thought they had sent me to Ottawa. They wrote from prison. They wrote to me about racial profiling. People would call their grand-children to look at TV when I appeared with Jean Chrétien. 'See, if you stay in school, you can be there.'" (2011, n487)

Similar reportage has celebrated Florence Lubega, the "first black female member of parliament in Uganda" (2012, n590) and Jennifer Musa, a White FMP in Pakistan "widely known as the 'Queen of Baluchistan' for her beauty and charismatic personality" who "once saw Kalashnikov-wielding feudal lords meekly bow to her will" (2006, n333). What is left out of the latter story is how Whiteness likely gave Musa advantages unavailable to most Pakistani women. We also found that ethnic minority FMPs who challenge social spending, affirmative action, or the dominant language are often subtly framed as deviants in line with the *violator* master frame.

Baroness Sayeeda Warsi, chairman of the Conservative Party and arguably one of the most powerful people in the country, has been out in the press and not because she's a Muslim woman, but for defending the government's spending cuts (2010, n477).

In Turkey, a newly elected Kurdish female member of parliament was jailed for attempting to make her maiden speech in Kurdish (2013, n642).

FMPs' socio-economic class background is infrequently mentioned though occasionally appears as in the following passages:

Lady Astor was no woman's woman; she was an idiosyncratic, rich Tory . . . who took advantage of British social structures that gave more importance to class than to sex (1998, n099).

Ironically the female members of [Pakistan's] Parliament who claim to be representing and protecting the rights of the poor women of the country have no contact with the masses for they are the wives, mothers, daughters, daughters-in-law, sisters, etc. of the political leaders selected to protect one's family interests. These ladies belonging to the upper class of society are busy day and night making hollow statements to protect the rights of the poor women with whom they have nothing in common nor have any idea of their ironies and sufferings (2010, n430).

Compared to race and class, age received more attention. An example of this was the media's interest in Canada's Laurin Liu (2011, n526) and New Zealand's Marilyn Waring (1995, n060), who entered parliament at ages 20 and 22, respectively. By contrast, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, and the socio-economic class of FMPs were rarely discussed, as most articles framed FMPs as homogeneous in this regard.

Overall, among the six primary identities (class, education, race, sexuality, age, and religion) we examined using an intersectionality framework, age and class received more attention in the West than the other characteristics, but—for all six attributes—we observed no statistically significant change over time in Western media. In contrast, there was much less attention to FMPs' class and age in non-Western media and almost no attention to sexuality and religion. However, coverage on FMPs' education and ethnicity/race appeared more frequently in Africa than in Asia.

Conclusion

Our aim in this comparative study was to advance a more global perspective of dominant frames mass media uses to portray and situate the "female member of parliament." While the *violator* frame was apparent across different cultural contexts, it appeared less often than expected as newspapers tended to frame FMPs as *virtuous* with greater frequency especially in non-Western countries. We also found evidence supporting the *normalization* thesis in Western countries where discussion of FMPs' appearance has become less prevalent in the new millennium. However, increasing acceptance by journalists of FMPs as normal does not mean this is also the case for male politicians or in all cultural contexts.

When we look at the framing of FMPs in non-Western countries, we also see stories paying attention to other dimensions of representation. For example, when it comes to numeric representation, reporters tend to see FMPs as *virtuous* because they are presumably less corrupt and more morally upstanding. Simultaneously, nations with more FMPs are depicted as modern and democratic, whereas those with zero or few FMPs are treated as backwards or uncivilized. Likewise, in terms of substantive representation, media in non-Western countries often depict FMPs taking action and being pivotal to the advocacy and passage of legislation positively affecting the lives of girls, women, and society at large.

When it came to intersectional representation, newspaper depictions of the "female member of parliament" rarely discussed other intersecting aspects of the woman's identity. In this respect FMPs are treated as relatively homogeneous and interchangeable. A common overarching frame is that (all) FMPs are disadvantaged *victims* of patriarchy because they are women, but there is considerable silence on how many are from highly privileged backgrounds based on class, race/ethnicity, sexuality, ability status, family ties, etc. Last, in terms of safety and sexual harassment, FMPs were depicted as *victims* of violence against women in politics especially in Asian newspapers and in the case of Afghanistan.

The evidence here finds that while trivialization and objectification are still present, the diversity of FMPs is still generally *invisible* as the media often treats them as homogeneous. The media also fields competing frames for and against increasing numbers of FMPs in parliament although FMPs were positively linked to modernization and to democratization in parts of the Global South. Whereas FMPs started off as

deviants, they have become more accepted as "standard" in government, although they are still subjected to belittling, harassment, and in some cases, brutal physical violence. The most noticeable positive change over time in the West was that media today focuses more on FMPs' policy stances than their appearance.

To conclude, there are measures that could help current, aspirant, and potential FMPs and journalists transform negatively biased media coverage into more favorable framing of/ for women in politics. First, traditional gender stereotypes of women as less corrupt or more caring are not necessarily disadvantageous and can be purposefully leveraged as part of a FMPs' branding and comparative edge (Dolan 2014, 30). If an FMP's marketing materials emphasize this point, journalists may also follow suit. Second, journalists can "name and shame" sexism when it appears in public discourse while simultaneously informing the public that instances of particularly egregious sexism may be rare in some countries to prohibit scaring off potential female candidates from entering politics (Hayes and Lawless 2016, 133). Third, women in politics can develop skills in creating media content and learn how to strategically interact with journalists (UN Women 2018). Finally, and perhaps most importantly for the future, new and alternative media platforms can potentially offer FMPs and women candidates an alternative vehicle to influence public opinion outside "male-stream" media with recent studies suggesting that women are more successful and inter-active on social media platforms that give them an opportunity to connect more directly with their voter base (e.g., Walsh 2015, 1026; Moran Yarchi and Tal Samuel-Azran 2018). We feel if these measures are applied in tandem, they have the potential to problematize the media tropes of female members of parliament as merely violators, virtuous, or victims. In this respect, taking a global approach to feminist media theorizing can help us not only to point out deficiencies and biases in how we observe reality, but also in contributing towards equally normalizing and humanizing all women in government globally.

Notes

1. Most of the world's national legislative bodies in Africa, Asia, and Europe are referred to as "parliaments" (especially in those countries with a parliamentary as opposed to presidential form of government) whereas in the Western Hemisphere (where presidential systems are more common) many national assemblies are referred to as a "Congress" or "National Assembly" such as in the US and much of Latin America, which are therefore under-represented in our study.
2. The first author developed the initial codebook. Then the second and third authors conducted pretests and various adjustments to refine the codebook during the trial rounds. Following Dan et al. (2013), to make coding simpler we applied dichotomous coding of items as either present or absent.
3. This multi-stage procedure was effective in enhancing inter-coder reliability because most initial coding discrepancies were mistakes where one coder missed an item present in an article while the other coder spotted it. In this study, authors were coding many items on many texts, hence we applied double coding followed by collective discussions to minimize the possibility of interpretive biases or errors.
4. The dataset titled "Global Newspaper Coverage of the 'Female Member of Parliament' (1985–2014)" is accessible at: https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/JZXZ88.
5. For this and subsequent quotations we list the year of publication and article number in the dataset.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Appendix A. Codebook for Content Analysis of Newspaper Articles

I. News Source
1) Year, Month, Date and Day of the Week of Article: _____
2) Name of Newspaper: _____
3) Country of Newspaper: _____
4) Title of Article: _____
5) Author of Article: _____
6) Gender of Author: _____
7) Page number on which the Article appears: _____
8) Length of Article (words): _____
9) Includes the phrase "female member of parliament" (FMP)? (1 = yes, 0 = no)

II. Frames Explicitly Present in the Article (code as 1 = yes, 0 = no)
A. Victims
1) Violence against FMPs.
B. Virtuous
2) FMP's position or comments on a particular policy issue mentioned.
3) Gender equality or women's empowerment is mentioned in the article.
4) Democracy is mentioned (association of FMPs with democracy).
C. Violators
5) Appearance (including clothes, attractiveness, disability) of FMP.
6) Family status (mother, marital status, etc.) of FMP.
7) Children of FMP.
D. Visibility/Intersectional Identities
8) Age (or age range) of FMP.
9) Ethnicity/Race (or indigenous status) of FMP.
10) Religion of FMP.
11) Educational background/accomplishments of FMP.
12) Sexual orientation of MP.
13) Socio-economic class background of FMP.

Appendix B. Countries and Newspapers Included in the Study

Territory	Articles	Years	News Sources
Afghanistan	5	2013	Afghan Islamic Press, Khaama Press
Australia	113	1987–2014	Advertiser, Age, Australian, Australian Financial Review, Bendigo Advertiser, Border Mail, Canberra Times, Central Coast Express, Courier Mail, Daily Telegraph, Eastern Courier Messenger, Gold Coast Bulletin, Herald Sun, Hobart Mercury, Illawarra Mercury, Inner-West Weekly, MacArthur Chronicle, Morning Bulletin, Morning Herald, Newcastle Herald, North West Star, Northern Daily Leader, Northern Minder, Observer, Parramatta Advertiser, Port Douglas & Mossman Gazette, Southern Star, Sunday Age, Sunday Herald, Sunday Mail, Sunday Style, Sunday Telegraph, Sunday Territorian, Sunday Times, Sunshine Coast Daily, Sydney Morning Herald, Variety, Warrnambool Standard, Weekend Australian, West Australian
Bangladesh	5	2011–13	Financial Express, New Nation
Cameroon	2	2012–14	Cameroon Tribune
Canada	165	1980–2014	Bracebridge Examiner, Calgary Herald, Daily Mirror, East York Mirror, Edmonton Journal, Gazette, Globe and Mail, Gravenhurst Banner, Halifax Daily News, Hamilton Spectator, Huntsville Forester, Kamloops Daily News, Leader-Post, Mount Forest Confederate, Nanaimo Daily News, National Post, North Shore News, Ottawa Citizen, Parry Sound North Star, Prince George Citizen, Prince Rupert Daily News, Record, St. John's Telegram, Star Phoenix, Telegraph-Journal, Times & Transcript, Times Colonist, Toronto Star, Vancouver Province, Vancouver Sun, Window Star, Yukon News
Egypt	2	2010–12	Al-Ahram Weekly, Daily News Egypt
Ethiopia	1	2014	Addis Fortune
Fiji	5	2006–08	Fiji Times
Gambia	2	2011–12	Daily Observer, Foroyaa Newspaper
Ghana	2	2012	Ghanaian Chronicle
Hong Kong	3	2000–14	Hong Kong Government News, South China Morning Post
India	5	2011–14	Daily News & Analysis, Kashmir Monitor, Pioneer
Iran	2	2013–14	Iran Daily, Tehran Times
Ireland	18	2003–14	Irish Examiner, Irish Independent, Irish News, Irish Times, Kingdom, Metro Herald, Sunday Business Post, Sunday Tribune
Israel	3	2007–10	Jerusalem Post
Japan	4	1994–2014	Daily Yomiuri, Japan News, Japan Times
Jordan	1	2009	Star
Kenya	3	2011–14	Daily Nation, Nairobi Star
Korea	2	2004	Korea Herald
Kyrgyzstan	1	2012	Times of Central Asia
Lebanon	4	2008–12	Bikya Masr, Daily Star, Dar Al Hayat
Malaysia	6	1999–2013	New Straits Times
Namibia	2	2012–14	Namibian
Nepal	3	2012–14	My Republica, People's Review Weekly
New Zealand	4	1996–2013	New Zealand Herald, Press, Waikato Times
Nigeria	10	2010–14	Daily Independent, Daily Trust, Leadership, This Day, Vanguard
Oman	1	2014	Times of Oman
Pakistan	36	2006–14	Balochistan Times, Business Recorder, Daily the Pak Banker, Daily National Herald Tribune, Daily Times, Dawn, Financial Daily, Frontier Star, Nation, Pakistan Observer, Right Vision News
Papua New Guinea	8	2006–13	PNG Post-Courier
Philippines	1	2014	Business Mirror

(Continued).

Territory	Articles	Years	News Sources
Rwanda	1	2011–13	New Times
Saudi Arabia	2	2012	Arab News
Scotland	14	1994–2014	Daily Record, Evening News, Herald, Scotland on Sunday, Scotsman, Scottish Daily Mail, Sunday Herald
Sierra Leone	2	2010–11	Concord Times
Singapore	5	2000–10	Business Times, Straits Times
South Africa	14	2008–14	Cape Argus, Cape Times, Daily News, Mail & Guardian, Mercury, Post, Pretoria News, Star, Sunday Times, Times
Sri Lanka	6	2010–13	Daily Mirror, Daily News
Tanzania	1	2011	Citizen
Thailand	3	2007–12	Nation
Turkey	4	2013	Cihan News Agency, Today's Zaman
Uganda	11	2010–14	Daily Monitor, New Vision
UK (excluding Scotland and Wales)	159	1989–2014	Abbotsford Times, Asian Image, Bath Chronicle, BBC Monitoring, Belfast Telegraph Online, Birmingham Evening Mail, Birmingham Post, Bristol Post, Cheddar Valley Gazette, Daily Mail, Daily Telegraph, Eastern Daily Press, Eastwood Advertiser, Evening Gazette, Evening Herald, Express, Express and Echo, Farm Weekly, Gravesend Reporter, Guardian, Guardian Weekly, Herald Express, Hertfordshire Mercury, Independent, Journal, Legal Monitor Worldwide, Liverpool Daily Echo, Loughborough Echo, Ludlow Advertiser, Malvern Gazette, Mid Devon Star, Morning Star, National Edition, News Guardian, Nuneaton News, Observer, Paisley Daily Express, People, Plymouth Herald, Scunthorpe Evening Telegraph, Sevenoaks Chronicle, Shields Gazette, Star, Sun, Sunday Mail, Sunday Times, Times, UK Newsquest Regional Press, Walsall Advertiser, Western Daily Press, Western Mail, Western Morning News, Western Telegraph, Wigan Today, Wirral Globe, York Press
UAE	1	2013	National
USA	112	1981–2014	Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Blade, Charleston Gazette, Christian Science Monitor, Chronicle of Higher Education, Contra Costa Times, Daily Record, Dayton Daily News, Denver Post, Facts on File World News Digest, Herald and Review, International Herald Tribune, International New York Times, Journal of Commerce, Mcclatchy-Tribune Business News, New York Post, New York Sun, New York Times, Pantagraph, Philadelphia Inquirer, Salt Lake City Tribune, San Gabriel Valley Tribune, San Jose Mercury News, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, St. Paul Press, St. Petersburg Times, Times Educational Supplement, Tribune-Star, Tulsa World, US Official News, USA Today, Washington Post
Wales	13	2002–13	Bristol Evening Post, Daily Post, South Wales Echo, South Wales Evening Post, Western Mail
Yemen	2	2013–14	Yemen Times
Zambia	3	2014	Times of Zambia
Zimbabwe	3	2013–14	Herald