

# Is gender bias a myth? Looking for explanations for the limited presence of female politicians in the Flemish television news

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This study analyses the news coverage of female politicians in Flanders (Belgium). It investigates whether the deficiency of media attention for female politicians is due to structural factors or whether the news media themselves create a gender bias. For this purpose, in the study, eleven possible explanations for the gender bias are examined. On the one hand the characteristics of the politicians, such as their function, can influence their news exposure and on the other hand the features of the news media, such as the broadcasting station, can be of importance. Overall, the evidence suggests that mainly the function determines the news exposure of female politicians and not their gender. Nevertheless, female politicians still get less speaking time, even when controlling for all other variables. The authors concludes that a real gender bias exists in the Flemish television news: journalists and editors give significantly less attention to female politicians compared to their male colleagues.

## **Key information on trends and challenges on women and the media:**

journalists and editors give significantly less attention to female politicians compared to their male colleagues.

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