



Commissariaat
voor de Media

Monitor

Representation 2023



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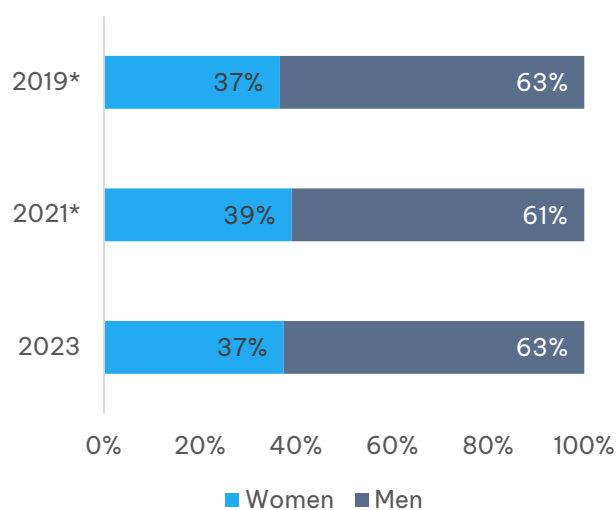
Main findings

The Dutch Media Authority carried out its third study into representation in non-fiction television programmes. The aim of the study is to generate data that make an important contribution to the public debate on representation and diversity. The research was commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the data collection was carried out by the University of Amsterdam. In the study, 1,009 programmes with good viewership ratings were analysed from both the public service broadcaster (NPO), and commercial television channels of RTL Netherlands and Talpa Network. The programmes were broadcast in 2023. The results were weighted by viewing density, so the best-watched programmes carry more weight in the results.

Representation of women on television

The survey shows that in 2023, women make up more than a third of people on television, 37%. In 2019 and 2021, a comparable proportion was found (37% and 39%). So the representation of women on television does not seem to evolve over time.

Representation of women on television does not seem to evolve over time



**In 2019 and 2021, the research was performed in a different, but similar, way. We cannot test whether differences are statistically significant.*

In general, women are more present in entertainment programmes (44%) than in news and current affairs programmes (35%). In reality shows, the ratio of men to women is almost 50/50 (48%). In game and quiz programmes (including talent shows), the proportion of women is also high (44%). Women feature little in sports programmes (17%). This was also the case in 2019 and 2021.

More women than men are newsreaders (51%). Among presenters and reporters, the ratio is similar to the average (35% and 36% respectively). Women are well represented among (game) candidates (48%) and people being portrayed (47%). 36% of interviewees are women.

Professional experts (such as a judge, politician, expert or director) are mostly male. 31% of those with professional expertise are women. Women are more common as victims, or 'vox populi', people asked for an opinion on the street. Women make up 41% of persons without any expertise.

Women are more likely to appear on television in a private role, i.e. in the context of personal development or the family (42%). On the other hand, women are seen less in a public role, i.e. in a professional setting (34%).

When women appear on television as experts, they mainly speak about topics related to 'people and work', such as health and education. They speak less about sports, energy, transportation or the military.

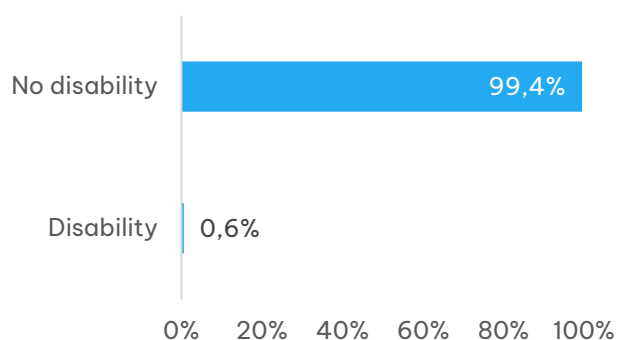
Women on television are generally younger. Below the age of 30, the ratio of men/women is 50/50. However, between the ages of 50 and 64, women make up a third of people on screen (32%). There are particularly few women presenters aged 50 years and older. This was also the case in 2019 and 2021.

Overall, there are no differences between public and commercial broadcasters when it comes to the representation of women.

Representation of people with a (perceivable) disability

According to the Human Rights Board, about 12% of Dutch people have a (non)perceivable disability. Our research shows that very few people with disabilities appear on television. 0.6% of all people on television in 2023 had a perceivable disability, such as a physical, sensory, intellectual, mental health or other disability or impairment. Since we are taking the television viewers' perspective in our study, we only analysed how many people have a perceivable disability. However, many disabilities are invisible. And yet it is very important to do this kind of study. Because it provides us with objective data on representation of people with disabilities on television for the first time. This forms a good basis for a discussion on the subject.

0.6% of all people on television in 2023 had a perceivable disability



The vast majority of people with perceivable disabilities talk about their disabilities in television programmes. People with disabilities are therefore usually portrayed, for example, as victims or patients. Also, people with disabilities mostly appear in programmes in which having a disability plays a central role. We are aware that this is partially due to the fact that non-perceivable disabilities only become perceivable to the viewer by letting it be the subject of conversation.

In this study, no presenters, newscasters, reporters or weathermen (or women) appeared with perceivable disabilities. Also, no people with an perceivable disability appeared in sports programmes.

In a few cases, people with disabilities appear on screen in which the disability does not play a role. Such as a participant or candidate on a game show in a wheelchair, or an expert at a talk show table with a physical disability.

Online representation

The delivery and interpretation of news is happening for an increasing share of viewers on social media, YouTube and streaming services rather than on television channels. For this reason, we plan to eventually extend this research to online and on-demand video. In preparation for this, we conducted a pilot study on representation in online and on demand videos of broadcasters NPO and RTL.

Based on the sample we used for this pilot study, it appears that the share of women in online non-fiction video is at the same level as the share of women in non-fiction television programmes. Just over two-thirds (37%) are women. Again, women are more often featured in a private role.

Only 1.5% of people in online video have a (perceivable) disability. On television, this is only 0.6%. The number of people with a disability in this online video sample is higher than on television, but there is still underrepresentation.

Conclusions

With this study, we highlight that women and people with disabilities are underrepresented on linear television. Overall, the representation of women on television has not improved since 2019. Also the online video content of broadcasters shows an underrepresentation of women and people with disabilities. Together with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, we want to use this study to fuel the conversation on this topic among media professionals, with the aim of exploring causes and thus effecting change. Based on our mission to safeguard media diversity, we call on broadcasters to reach viable agreements on better representation.