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# Community media networks in Latin America

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*Media Development* is published quarterly by the World Association for Christian Communication  
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Toronto, Ontario M4C 4X7, Canada.  
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**Cover design:** Brad Collicott

Published in Canada  
ISSN 0143-5558

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## In the Next Issue

The theme of the 2/2018 issue of *Media Development* will be "Journalism Today".

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The 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will take place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, 12-23 March 2018.

The CSW's priority theme will be "Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls." In addition, there will be a review theme titled "Participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communications technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women."

The Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) underlined the urgency of advancing gender equality in the two strategic objectives of Platform J: to increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication; and to promote a balanced and non-stereotypical portrayal of women in the media.

The 47th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (2003) stressed the need for media and telecommunications companies to address gender-based discrimination. In 2005, the Outcome Documents of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) noted the need to "promote balanced and diverse portrayals of women and men by the media" and stated:

"We recognize that a gender divide exists as part of the digital divide in society and we reaffirm our commitment to women's empowerment and to a gender equality perspective, so that we can overcome this divide... We encourage all stakeholders to support women's participation in decision-making processes and to contribute to shaping all spheres of the Information Society at international, regional and national levels."

Even so, in its paper "Rights Should Be Central To Post-2015 Development Agenda", Human Rights Watch (HRW) identified "Strengthening the rights of women and girls" as

one of five specific areas requiring more robust commitments by governments. Specifically, HRW proposed that:

"The post-2015 agenda should promote gender equality and women's rights, including a requirement on governments to work to end gender discrimination and promote equality in their laws, policies, and practices."

Recently, the centrality of this agenda was reaffirmed in debates and initiatives at the international level. These included the Global Alliance for Media and Gender (GAMAG); the United Nations Women Global Compact "Step it up for gender equality in the media", UNESCO's Gender Sensitive Indicators for Media, the UNESCO University Network on Gender Media and ICT, and a number of advocacy and scholarly contributions to the debate.

WACC's own *Strategic Plan 2017-2021* includes the goal "To support civil society in the Global South to combat sexism in the media." In part, WACC does so through its acclaimed Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) and other initiatives that generate evidence on the gender dimensions of news reporting. Monitoring findings are applied to awareness creation, critical media literacy training, advocacy, and engagement with media professionals on media policy and practice.

The articles in this issue of *Media Development* are shortened versions of some of the position papers prepared by the Global Alliance on Media and Gender (GAMAG) to be presented to the 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (2018). However, while gender equality and equitable participation in - and access of women to - the media and to information and communications technologies can undoubtedly be achieved by women alone, it will happen much more quickly and effectively if gender equality were recognized by men as a task for them as well.

As the American feminist and political activist Gloria Steinem has affirmed, "A gender-equal society would be one where the word 'gender' does not exist: where everyone can be themselves." ■

# Addressing gender issues in media content

**Sarah Macharia**

*In 1995, Governments participating in the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing reached consensus on specific strategic objectives and related actions to advance equality, development and peace for all women. One objective – to “promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media” (Section J on “women and the media”, Beijing Platform for Action, 2015) – listed several actions, inter alia, promoting research and implementing an information, education and communication strategy, encouraging the media to refrain from exploitation, sexualisation and commodification of women, and promoting the idea that sexist stereotypes in media are gender discriminatory, degrading and offensive.*

**E**ight years later in 2003, the Commission on the Status of Women recognized “the potential of the media and of information and communication technologies to contribute to the advancement and empowerment of women” (Agreed conclusions CSW47, 2003). The CSW proposed 24 actions for Governments, the UN system, international financial institutions, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders. The Commission underlined the need to prioritize gender perspectives in ICT and media policy and regulations, to support research, education and training, to strengthen inter-stakeholder partnerships, to tackle media-based violence against women and to allocate adequate resources.

The recommendations and commitments

reappear in various global, regional and national gender equality and women’s rights frameworks adopted over time (see Table 1).

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals “seek to realize the human rights of all and achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls (Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UN General Assembly, 2015). The role of media in advancing gender equality is mentioned specifically in the Post-2015 development blueprint under Goal 5 on enhancing the use of “information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women”.

At the same time, it is clear that media are implicated in the achievement of gender equality aspirations in all the 17 SDGs, in as far as their role in maintaining social and cultural norms underpinning discrimination and inequality across all thematic areas is concerned. For instance, how could removal of social barriers to the empowerment of girls and women (Agenda 2030 Declaration, para 8), or eliminating gender violence (para 20) be possible if media content that channels negative gender stereotypes, belittle, degrade and sexualize women, and normalize gender violence, are not addressed? Media output that clearly challenges gender stereotypes provides the exposure needed to eliminate the prejudices, attitudes, norms and practices that sustain gender-based discrimination, marginalization and inequality.

The Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) recognizes the role of stereotypes in “giv[ing] rise to the multitude of legal, political and economic constraints on the advancement of women (Introduction, CEDAW, UN General Assembly, 1979). Article 5 of the Convention obliges States parties to take measures to “modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for women and men”. Combating sexist stereotypes in the media is a necessary part of the process.

*Table 1: Policy instruments containing explicit gender & media indicators*

Instrument	Indicators
Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003)	<p>3.3: States Parties shall adopt and implement appropriate measures to prohibit any exploitation or degradation of women</p> <p>12.1(b): States Parties shall take all appropriate measure to eliminate all stereotypes in textbooks, syllabuses and the media, that perpetuate such discrimination.</p>
South African Development Community Protocol on Gender and Development (2008)	<p>29.1 – States Parties shall ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all information, communication and media policies, programmes, laws and training in accordance with the Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport and other regional and international commitments by member States on issues relating to media, information and communication,</p> <p>29.2 – States parties shall encourage the media and media-related bodies to mainstream gender in their codes of conduct, policies and procedures, and adopt and implement gender aware ethical principles, codes of practice and policies in accordance with the Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport;</p> <p>30.1a - States Parties shall take measures to discourage the media from: promoting pornography and violence against all persons, especially women and children, b) depicting women as helpless victims of violence and abuse, c) degrading or exploiting women, especially in the area of entertainment and advertising, and undermining their role and position in society; and, d) reinforcing gender oppression and stereotypes;</p> <p>30.2 – States Parties shall encourage the media to give equal voice to women and men in all areas of coverage, including increasing the number of programmes for, by and about women on gender specific topics and that challenge gender stereotypes;</p> <p>30.3 – States Parties shall take appropriate measures to encourage the media to play a constructive role in the eradication of gender based violence by adopting guidelines which ensure gender sensitive coverage.</p>
European Union: Roadmap for Equality Between Women and Men (2006)	<p>V. (Elimination of Gender Stereotypes in Society).</p> <p>Key Actions – the Commission will support actions to eliminate gender stereotyping in education, culture and on the labour market by promoting gender mainstreaming and specific actions in the European Social Fund, ICT programmes and in EU education and culture programmes, the Commission will support awareness-raising campaigns and exchange of good practices in schools and enterprises on non-stereotyped gender roles and develop dialogue with media to encourage a non-stereotyped portrayal of women and men.</p>
Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Treaty No. 210) (2014)	<p>III.17.1: Parties shall encourage the private sector, the information and communication technology sector and the media, with due respect for freedom of expression and their independence, to participate in the elaboration and implementation of policies and to set guidelines and self-regulatory standards to prevent violence against women and to enhance respect for their dignity.</p>
Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women “Convention of Belem Do Para” (1994)	<p>Chapter III (Duties of the States)</p> <p>8) (g) encourage the communications media to develop appropriate media guidelines in order to contribute to the eradication of violence against women in all its forms, and to enhance respect for the dignity of women.</p>
Secretariat of the Pacific Community: Recommendations and Outcomes of 12th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women (2013)	<p>(74) to recognise that community media and women’s media networks are important for collaboration and partnerships; (75) Ensure that government communication and media strategies effectively promote their gender equality commitments; (76) to recognise and fully respect the knowledge held by women; (77) research with gender analysis, on the impact of inappropriate uses of ICTs, and called for the development of national regulatory infrastructure and policy.</p>



## The evidence

While State media regulators, media industry bodies and media organizations have to varying extents made efforts to translate the global, regional and national commitments into implementable policies, codes and guidelines for the media, the results remain uninspiring. The evidence below is confined to the news media due to the availability of a volume of data gathered over time and across multiple nation states.

Results from Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) 20-year research on gender in news media content reveal that the rate of progress towards media gender parity has been very slow.

News is a genre governed by professional codes and can be held to a higher standard than fictional media. The critique, however, cuts across all media forms that are just as and oftentimes more complicit in the sexualisation, trivialization and objectification of women, as well as the normalization of violence against girls and women.

## Recommendations

The research evidence suggests that more than two decades since Beijing, gender issues in media content remain pertinent. The power to change lies with governments, the media and ordinary audiences.

Governments need to acknowledge the important place of media and communication within the broader objective of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. Professional media in particular have a fundamental obligation, following industry ethics, to present balanced, fair and accurate content. Media organizations need to be accountable to the societies in which they operate and the audiences they serve.

Gender equality is embraced as a global goal and media have a significant role in promoting or in sabotaging its achievement. Weak and inconsistent implementation of gender policies needs to be addressed. Institutionalization of a gender-sensitive journalistic culture remains paramount.

The following recommendations are minimal requirements.

### *State media regulatory agencies*

1. Require media houses to adopt and enforce a gender policy and guidelines for gender-sensitive reporting;
2. Include, in media evaluation criteria, issues of gender balance and demonstrated adherence to the gender policy;
3. Impose meaningful fines on media houses found liable for sex discrimination, sexist content or other actions of non-compliance with the gender policy; and,
4. Build capacity of staff responsible for hearing cases on media non-compliance with the gender policy.

### *Media*

1. Develop a gender policy and gender aware ethics and practice codes, with action plans and targets for implementation;
2. Engage with community media organisations and citizens' media networks to advance gender equality in content production;

### *Civil society*

1. Advocate for fair and equal representation of women and men in news media. Lobby for gender policy adoption and implementation for and by media.
2. Establish gender-focussed media watch and apply the results as evidence for public and media awareness, for actions to hold media accountable through State, industry and media house complaints mechanisms, and to support media houses committed to gender equality.

### *Funding agencies*

1. Support the strengthening or establishment of media watch networks.
2. Support media development work that emphasizes gender equality in content production, media in-house policies and practices

*Source: Who makes the news? 2015. ■*

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- African Union, Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, 11 July 2003
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# Media gender equality regimes

Claudia Padovani

*Developing gender-empowering media policies and normative frameworks for the media has been flagged since the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) as one of the steps to be taken in order to meet the goals of Section J of the Beijing Platform for Action (PfA): those of promoting equal access to the media and decision-making (J1), and eliminating gender stereotypes in media content (J2).*

On the occasion of CSW47, in 2003, participants called for policies and adequate regulatory frameworks to address gender-based discrimination, while highlighting that the lack of, or insufficient attention to, gender perspectives in media and communication policies also needed to be addressed.

More recently, the centrality of normative components – such as codes, policies, strategies and governing arrangements – in combating persisting inequalities, has been reaffirmed in debates and initiatives at the international level, including in the contexts of the Global Alliance for Media and Gender and its Research and Policy Committee; the Un Women Global Compact “Step it up for gender equality in the media”; the Untwin University Network for Gender Media and ICT as well as by a number of advocacy and scholarly contributions to the debate (UNESCO/IAMCR 2014).

At the same time, attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 5 – Gender Equality – but more broadly the comprehensive set of SDGs, requires serious consideration of the normative frameworks to be put in place, at all levels, from the local to the global.

Evidence shows that, as of today, *past recommendations have been widely disregarded* by govern-

ments, international and regional organizations, and media companies as well. Therefore, *scrutiny of the interplay between gender, politics, and media policies remains crucial* a) to develop necessary knowledge on the contradictions that prevent gender equality from becoming a reality in the media and ICT sector and b) to elaborate sound policy proposals that are needed to support and foster actions aimed at redressing persisting inequalities.

The GAMAG aims at contributing to a better articulation of how to think, approach and foster gender-aware media and ICT policies and normative frameworks at organizational, national and international level. We do so in due consideration of the multiple gaps and shortcomings that emerge from investigations in the field, and of the need to promote a policy-focused multi-stakeholder engagement in the definition of theoretically-sound, evidence-based and effective normative frameworks for ‘Media Gender Equality Regimes’ at all levels.

## Background

*Area J of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA)* clearly stated that governments and other actors are called upon to promote “an active policy of mainstreaming of a gender perspective in (media) policies and programs”(par. 237) and should support research which reviews existing media policies (par. 239.b). The document also encouraged “the participation of women in the development of professional guidelines and codes of conduct or other appropriate self-regulatory mechanisms to promote a balanced and non stereotypical portrayals of women by the media” (par. 241.d) while calling for media organizations themselves to “elaborate and strengthen self-regulatory mechanisms and codes of conduct” to comply with the objectives in Section J (par. 236 and 244.a/b).

At its 47th meeting, in March 2003, the Commission on the Status of Women, highlighted the risk that gender “differences (in representation, access and use of media and information technologies) have important implications for policy development at national, regional and international levels (CSW47 2003\_Final, par. 2).



Moreover, being held while preparations for the UN World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) were in progress, the Commission made an explicit call to integrate gender perspectives in every facet of the Summit and of information societies' future normative developments. To this end, the Commission indicated, as a very first Recommendation for action, that of ensuring "women's early and full participation in the development and implementation of national policies, legislation, ... strategies and regulatory and technical instruments in the field of information and communication technologies (ICT) and media and communications" while creating adequate "monitoring and accountability mechanisms to ensure implementation of gender-sensitive policies and regulations as well as to analyze the gender impact of such policies" (par. 4a).

It also encouraged "regulatory bodies ... to promote full participation of women in the ownership, control and management in the ICT and media sectors (par. 4b). Furthermore, the Commission recommended the constitution of partnerships, to develop "self-regulatory gender-sensitive guidelines for media coverage and representation, for public and community media to work in support of gender equality" with a specific reference to need to provide financial resources and other support measures to this end (par. 4e), including resources to support research to "review existing media and ICT policies" (par. 4f).

It should be noted that, in spite of such an explicit recognition of the relevance of regulatory arrangements to promote and sustain gender equality in the media and ICTs, the recommendations made in the above mentioned documents have been widely disregarded and policy-related aspects of media gender unequal relations have been amongst the least considered, not to say ignored, by policy actors, and by media and ICT industries, at different levels.

### **Evidence from research**

It should also be acknowledged that, while there have been decades of research looking at the broader gender and media agenda, media and gender-related policies and regulatory mechanisms have not

been widely investigated: few focused analyses have been conducted, which have not yet translated into a consistent strand of reflection.

Few researchers have engaged with *supra-national fora* – such as the Unesco and the WSIS, the Internet Governance Forum and others – exposing the low level of awareness and attention for gender inequalities in media and digital contexts, and related international debates, and providing insights on how such gaps could be addressed (Gallagher, 2008, 2011; Jensen, 2008, 2010; Droussu and Jensen 2005; McLaghlin and Pickard 2005).

Sparse interventions have discussed policy-related aspects of media gender inequalities with a *regional* focus – from North America (Beale, 2002; Shade, 2014) to Europe (Sarikakis and Nguyen, 2009; Ostling and Nenadich, 2017) and Latin America (Chaher, 2014) – and only recently attempts have been made to collect perspectives on gendered media policies from across the world regions (Padovani 2015; Padovani and Pavan 2017). Most research lamented very limited commitment towards the Beijing PfA policy recommendations.

Moreover, looking at regional-level policy interventions, particularly in the European Union, it has been highlighted that policy-making related to the media and audio-visual industries has been characterized over time by a lack of attention to gender equality issues and a seeming lack of commitment in pursuing gender-sensitive outcomes (EIGE 2013; Ross and Padovani 2017); while where regulatory mechanisms have been put in place in a consistent manner, as in the Southern Africa region, this has been the result of sustained advocacy commitment (GenderLinks 2017).

The general situation is highly problematic as far as the actual inclusion of gender inequality concerns in *national media policies*. No comprehensive international research has been conducted to provide evidence on the existence and/or implementation of gender and media relevant policies at the national level. What emerges from the Preliminary findings of a recent UNESCO Global Survey on Gender and Media (2016) is that only 35% of world governments have mainstreamed media and gender issues by integrating media and

gender in national cultural policies and programs; in 37% of cases gender strategies do not include references to media; and a similar percentage characterize media regulation for regulatory bodies that relate to gender equality in content, staffing or ownership.

Contributions to Ross and Padovani (2017) shed a similar light on the European context, also characterized by minor efforts to elaborate gender-aware national media policies. Small signs of growing awareness emerge from Latin America, particularly Argentina (Chaher 2014; Justo 2017) and Mexico (Vega Montiel, 2014); both cases, again, where the role of civil society organization and professional female associations have been crucial to have gender concerns included in media policy framing, arranging for monitoring and redress mechanisms. And yet sustainability of such mechanisms over time is identified as a major issue.

Recently, two major international projects have included a systematic focus on media organizations' internal policies and support mechanisms in their framework of investigation (IWWMF, 2011; EIGE, 2013). What these projects show is that in spite of recommendations made since the mid '90s, gender equality policies, codes of conduct and support mechanisms in media organizations are not a widespread practice.

The IWWMF report showed that slightly more than half of the (500) companies surveyed have an established company-wide policy on gender equity. These ranged from 16% in Eastern European to 69% in both Sub-Saharan Africa and Western Europe (IWWMF 2011, 34). While according to the EIGE report only one quarter of selected (99) media organizations across 28 EU countries (26 %) have a Gender Equality Policy or code of conduct, and 21 % have equality of opportunities or diversity policies (EIGE 2013, 37). Nor there has been any significant improvement regarding the availability of gender equality policies in recent years (Ostling and Nenadich 2017).

Moreover, wide variations in the adoption of gender-related policies can be found both between and within the different regions: according to IWWMF only around a fourth of the 38 compan-

ies surveyed in Middle East and North Africa had adopted a company policy on gender equity; while, as indicated above, more than two-thirds of the surveyed media companies are reported having a specific policy in Southern Africa. And yet, the "relationship of national laws to workplace policies on gender equality was unclear in many cases" (IWWMF 2012, 36).

These studies have also highlighted examples of good practices, such as the adoption of gender equality policies and support mechanisms in public service television in countries like Sweden, the UK, Spain and Austria and South Africa; or measures to enforce gender-equality in the media adopted by independent regulatory authorities in countries like France and Morocco. But even when internal policies are in place, this does not seem to be a sufficient condition to produce better gender-responsive media outputs in terms of content, access, participation.

According to IWWMF in some cases policies, codes and mechanisms adopted by media organizations have the potential to make a difference, but no clear correlation amongst different situations could be found. Differently, according to the EIGE Report, when European media companies have adopted policies, codes and mechanisms (which is more likely for public organizations), a higher probability to have a higher percentage of women in decision-making positions could be found (EIGE 2013: 46). Scholars and advocates have also reflected on the nexus between gender and policy developments in relation to digital technologies, the Internet and its governance.

Critical feminist analyses of regional developments pertaining to "digital agendas" have been recently collected by Padovani and Shade (2016). Contributions on digital strategies adopted in Canada, India, the MENA region, Europe and Australia all showed the marginality of gender concerns in digital policy development; the material and discursive shifts in social and digital policy that contribute to the adoption of narrow/neoliberal frames for gender equality; and the need to unpack the meta-narrative of technology, gender, and development that characterizes policy narratives from the national to the regional level

(Gurumurthy 2016; see also APC 2012).

Gurumurthy and Chami (2010, 2014) have argued for the need to move beyond the assumption that digital technologies are empowering “per se”, stressing the fact that socio-technical practices reproduce gender power differences. Hence, beside looking at institutional policy making, they invite to critically engage with gender-unequal norms that are privileged in structuring the Internet and ICTs, their design and architecture.

While looking at internet governance as a space of policy discourse – from the Internet Governance Forum to the technical community – Avri Doria (2015) has highlighted the rhetorical nature of gender-relevant statements in formal documents and provisions, the limited degree of women participation and the marginality of substantive women’s issues discussed. Worth mentioning, in this context, are the contributions made by feminist advocates and organizations, like the Association for Progressive Communication (APC), that has a longstanding commitment in fostering gender equality in digital policies, including by articulating feminist principles for the Internet (APC 2015).

Not only is the Internet a gendered space that does not provide equal access to women and girls, but also “the policies necessary to make ICT accessible to girls and women everywhere have not been dealt with – in Internet governance – as a serious manner” (Doria 2015, p. 6)

Overall, the lack of awareness of how important comprehensive normative frameworks and policy provisions would be in addressing media and ICTs gender inequalities, has been widely identified as a major constraint to the implementation of gender mainstreaming standards (Ross and Padovani 2017). In this context, scrutiny of the interplay between gender, media and ICTs policies remains crucial to develop necessary knowledge on the contradictions that prevent gender equality from becoming a reality in this sector; while structural and cultural barriers, from the local to the supranational level, need to be fully appreciated in their interaction with communication and ICT policy developments.

More research – focused, transnational, and

comparative – is needed to gain a comprehensive understanding of how normative frameworks relate to gender equality in practice, in different geo-cultural and socio-economic contexts; to integrate reflections conducted on traditional and on digital media; to collect, make visible and share existing good practices; and to promote policy awareness as central to gender equality in media and ICTs future developments, in order to elaborate, implement and monitor policy measures and normative developments.

### **Media gender equality regimes**

To inform and support policy developments and related research, we argue that a comprehensive understanding of media gender inequalities is needed, also through the adoption of adequate analytical frameworks. Though efforts have recently been made to elaborate indicators (Unesco, 2012) and fostering good practices (CoE, 2013) with a multi-dimensional perspective, what still seems to be missing is a comprehensive framework that would support research, monitoring and policy practice.

We hereby propose to address the multiplicity of issues under discussion elaborating and adopting such a multidimensional approach: that of “media gender equality regimes” (iMaGERs) understood as “interrelated practices, meanings and processes, aimed at transforming systematic gender disparities that characterize the media sector” (Padovani and Pavan, 2017): practices, meanings and processes that are, or rather should be grounded in agreed upon principles and norms, and carried out through systems of empowering regulatory mechanisms (Padovani, forthcoming).

Working through a “media gender equality regimes” approach offers a twofold opportunity. On the one side gender inequalities in the media take many different forms and persist, across the world’s regions, in areas of representation and recognition, access and inclusion, working conditions and decision-making, education and power relations in general; and yet rarely are these issues discussed in their intersection and their interrelated nature (Dierf-Pierre 2011). The iMaGERs as an analytic approach invites focusing not on sin-



gle, specific forms of inequality, but on the interplay and intersection of multiple forms of privilege and disadvantage, that come to constitute the media and ICTs as gendered orders (Connell 2009); and to render the complexities of interlocking practices and processes that result in continuing inequalities (Acker, 1989).

As highlighted by Walby (2004, 22) when gender relations are understood not as a series of disperse and separate phenomena, but as part of a regime, or a system, “then it is possible to see how such a wide range of inequalities may be addressed”. And this calls for normative frameworks and regulatory arrangements capable of addressing systems of interconnected unequal relations.

On the other side, the iMaGERs can be adopted as a *normative proposal*, highlighting the principled and normative component of media and ICTs sectors’ operations. Thinking of regimes as “implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a given area” (Krasner 1982) highlights the need for normative and regulatory arrangements that should support coordination of interested stakeholders’ behaviour in addressing gender inequalities in the media and ICTs. Media gender equality regimes (should) result from a plurality of practices and processes grounded in, and bound together by principles and beliefs that – in response to the Beijing PfA and CSW47 calls for gender-aware policy developments – should also translate into norms, regulatory provisions and formal policies.

In this perspective, principles of inclusion, respect, dignity, equal opportunities, equal access to means of expression, knowledge and resources; as well as explicit reference to women’s communication rights should be embedded in articulated sets of regulatory measures to be ideated, designed, developed, and implemented. Also in this case measures are not to be conceived and adopted as separate and disconnected, but rather as inter-connected components of normative frameworks for media and ICTs gender equality.

In consideration of the multi-actor, multi-level and multi-dimensional character of gender-empowering media policies, these meas-

ures include:

- \* media internal policies, as well as self-regulatory measures, codes of conduct and mechanisms;
- \* national media and ICTs policies and strategies, that should include gender concerns;
- \* national strategies for gender equality, that should acknowledge the centrality of the media and digital technologies;
- \* actions to be adopted and initiatives promoted by independent media regulatory authorities;
- \* consideration for the ways in which civic organizations and professional associations contribute to frame and articulate normative standards and framework for media and ICTs operation and content;
- \* inclusion of gender equality concerns and goals in the design of digital technologies, software, hardware and infrastructures;
- \* existing supranational – transnational, regional and international – normative frameworks addressing gender concerns in relation to media and ICTs.

### **Policies and normative frameworks are crucial**

The “media gender equality regime” approach could thus orientate and support the development and implementation of normative frameworks, and the adoption of policy measures, which are crucial to expose and address inequalities in a number of ways. In fact, as it has been highlighted:

- \* the construction of formal, publicly promoted and integrated equality strategies and/or policy frameworks, constitutes the clearest evidence of an organization’s commitment to gender equality (Ross and Padovani, 2018);
- \* formally adopted policies and mechanisms are core to define principles and goals, reflect normative orientations while providing a framework to assess progress and change (Gallagher 2011, 2014, 2017);
- \* public policies and regulations can contribute to implementing profound cultural transformation that is needed to achieve a needed redistribution of symbolic resources, particularly those related to the maintenance of gender

inequalities (Chaher 2014)

- \* by establishing sanctioning elements, such measures can also contribute to guarantee sustainability over time of positive changes towards gender equality (Gallagher 2011, 2017) when it is clear that progress in this area is not a linear process and step-backs are always a possibility (GMMP 2015; Ross & Padovani 2017);
- \* national and international normative frameworks that articulate media gender equality for both traditional and digital media, are key to support media operations, while contributing to mainstreaming gender in communication governing arrangements (Padovani 2014; Padovani and Pavan 2017)
- \* a better understanding of the policy dimension in media operations may lead to producing evidence-based, sound and consistent policy recommendations for gender equality in and through the media;
- \* policy-oriented investigations may foster a productive dialogue between gender and media scholars and communication governance analyses and practices (Sarikakis & Shade 2008; Padovani 2014), the outcome of which may inform future normative and policy developments.

## Recommendations

Recalling Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goal – “Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large” – we highlight the centrality of media gender equality regimes to the attainment of such goal; as well as its relevance to all other SDGs.

We argue it is not enough to mainstream gender issues. It is also necessary to recognize the intersection of various forms of inequality and oppression, and to address the main power structures that contribute to maintain and reproduce gender and other inequalities, within, across and beyond the media and ICTs. Such structures certainly include interconnected norms, values, in-

stitutions, and regimes that contribute to reproducing gender inequalities, as well as other forms of exclusion and discrimination in contemporary knowledge societies.

In this light, gender-empowering normative frameworks for media and ICTs operations could do more than just promote gender equality in the specific media and ICTs sectors. By making the media and ICTs more gender equal, they would also impact on all other sectors in society, since the media are not just reflection of societal trends but also represent, anticipate and embody desired societal transformations. Furthermore, they may provide a model for the development of comprehensive and intersectional normative frameworks in and across other sectors where gender equality is to be realized. Finally, they would mainstream gender across policy arrangements related to every single SDG, while contributing in reconfiguring power structures that perpetuate societal unequal developments.

Building on the above mentioned studies, reports and policy documents, consistently with the media gender equality regime approach, and with the aim of responding to on-going calls to foster gender equality in and through the media by developing and implementing adequate normative frameworks, the following Recommendations are made:

- \* At the level of media and ICT industries, steps should be taken to address the lack of gender awareness on the part of both women and men working in such environment - particularly those occupying senior and managerial positions - and to address the lack of formal provisions which define media and ICT industries' normative standards in relation to gender inequality issues.
- \* We call for the adoption, at the level of media organizations, of formal and integrated equality strategies and policy frameworks, including support mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and action. These measures should be a requirement for media and ICTs operation. This is important in structural terms, so that an equality ethos is firmly embedded in the organization; it also provides a clear signal to

all employees that equality issues are taken seriously and that behavioural change needs to follow policy change, thus fostering sustainability of gender-equal changes over time.

- \* At the same time, national and international normative frameworks that restate and articulate media gender equality as a priority for both traditional and digital media, and for knowledge societies in general, should be elaborated to engage media operators and all interested stakeholder in efforts to realize gender equality.
- \* We call for specific references to the role and relevance of media and communications to be made within general gender equality national strategies; as well as for a specific commitment to gender equality in national media policies and digital strategies, and in international communication governance provisions. These developments may result from collaborations between different institutional actors: including UN agencies, national Governments, Parliamentary Committees and Communication Independent Authorities, with the participation of professional and civic organizations, gender expert and researchers, and of the media themselves.
- \* We also invite a better understanding of the gendered policy dimension of the media sector and its governance through the elaboration of regular monitoring and research activities. Adequate resources should be made available to research, in order to produce evidence-based, sound and consistent policy recommendations for gender equality in and through the media, traditional and digital, from the local level to the national and international;
- \* In particular we call for a commitment towards a global research plan, focused on governance structures and governing arrangements to better understand to what extent and under what conditions public policy and regulatory interventions may produce/facilitate/support the necessary change towards gender equality in and through the media and ICTs.
- \* We also call for efforts to be made, trans-

nationally, to develop awareness and knowledge, across IT industries and educational institutions, of gender concerns in relation to ICTs design, and to elaborate normative frameworks that would support and inform gender-aware technological development.

- \* Finally, we call for the arrangement of interdisciplinary and inter-sectorial multi-stakeholder exchanges of information, knowledge and good practices.<sup>2</sup> These should be organized on a regular basis and institutionally supported, to create the conditions for an on-going dialogue between gender and media scholars and professionals and other actors involved in the governance of communications, so as to develop the capacity to address the challenges deriving from future media and ICTs developments also through adequate policy interventions, with a forward looking gender mainstreaming perspective. ■

#### Notes

1. This position paper has been elaborated by Claudia Padovani, Director of the Center for Gender Studies @ SPGI Department, University of Padova (Italy); Member of IAMCR Task Force for Gamag and of the Gamag Research and Policy Committee; University of Padova Focal point to the Unitwin University Network on Gender Media and ICT.
2. A collection of good practices in relation to media policies and normative frameworks for gender equality in the media is currently being curated as part of an EU-funded project: Advancing Gender Equality in Media Industries (AGEMI), co-funded by the “Rights, Equality and Citizenship/Justice” programme of the European Union and coordinated by Prof. Karen Ross (University of Newcastle, UK) and Prof. Claudia Padovani (University of Padova, Italy) and will be online in late 2018. For further information, contact: [agemi.eu@gmail.com](mailto:agemi.eu@gmail.com)

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# A hard ladder to climb: women and power in media industries

Karen Ross

*When women media professionals attain very senior editorial positions, their achievement continues to make front page news, such is its rare occurrence.*

When Jill Abramson became the first woman editor at the *New York Times* in 2011, she broke a run of 160 years of male editors and when Katherine Viner did the same thing at the *Guardian* in 2015, she punctured an even longer reign of exclusively male editing history. Arguably one of the world's most respected media institutions, the BBC has never appointed a woman Director-General since it began life under John Reith in 1922 and its publication of top earner salaries in summer 2017 revealed startling differences, in some cases as much as 300% between women and men doing the same job.

Media and journalism courses are dominated by women students – a trend which has been rising over the past two decades – who graduate and enter the industry in higher numbers than men. It seems odd, then, if we assume that women and men are equally competent when entering the industry, to find men advancing more quickly than women, earning a higher salary for work of equal value and routinely achieving very senior positions, leaving their female colleagues languishing in the less prestigious media jobs and rarely getting beyond junior management posts. How can we account for this phenomenon and the problem of gender in/equality which, we argue, lies at its heart?

## The evidence

While we have had decades of research looking

at the broader gender and media agenda, especially looking at issues of representation and consumption, there has been rather less research on working practices, careers and promotion within media industries themselves. One of the first efforts to document and analyse the specific issue of women and decision-making was commissioned by UNESCO and reported on as *Women and Media Decision-making: The Invisible Barriers* (1987).

In her introduction to the book, Margaret Gallagher (1987: 14) commented that “men’s attitudes, beliefs and even organizational procedures [showed a] surprising degree of consistency across the studies.” Successive studies over the following two decades showed more or less the same kinds of patterns (Gallagher, 1995: Robinson, 2005), finding that despite the numbers entering the industry, women advanced unevenly into decision-making roles compared to men, often doing better in larger organisations.

In 2011, the International Women’s Media Foundation published the findings from its study of women’s employment in news companies (conducted and managed by Carolyn Byerly) covering 59 nations and 522 organisations, finding that men held 75% of both top management and board positions: women’s presence was strongest in routine news gathering roles and weakest in technical roles (e.g. camera work, creative direction).

In 2013, the European Institute for Gender Equality published the findings from a study of all the (then) EU Member States plus Croatia (28 countries) into gender and decision-making in 99 large-scale European media houses. That study, conducted and managed by Karen Ross and Claudia Padovani, found that, of 3,376 senior posts they coded, 30% were held by women. When we looked a little closer, we found that 16% of CEOs were women as were 21% of Chief Operating Officers, demonstrating that although a proportion of women are in positions of authority, they are much less likely to be in positions of power.

These studies are important not only because of their findings but because of their comparative scope and geographical reach. National studies are often dismissed because of the specificity of the socio-cultural context but where cross-cultur-

al studies show similar trends and patterns, they command more credibility for the suggestion that “something” is happening which is structural rather than situational and requires explaining. We suggest that there are any number of factors in play at any one time in any one media organisation, but the point is that while these factors are universal they exert more or less influence in different ways at different times.

Factors such as routine gender-based discrimination, workplace harassment, poorly implemented (sometimes non-existent) gender equality policies and informal promotion processes, serve to produce a working environment that does not support women or their career aspirations. While some studies have provided slightly more optimistic findings, the general trend shows little significant progress over time and even in studies where improvements *have* been noted, they have tended to occur in individual countries or individual media organisations (see Djerf-Pierre, 2007) or genres such as digital media (De-Miguel et. al., 2017). The most recent scholarship shows that progress for women into decision-making positions remains painfully slow, for all the reasons we have sketched out (Löfgren Nilsson and Örnebring 2016; North 2016; Melki and Mallat, 2017).

So far, we have looked at academic studies but other stakeholders have also been involved in exploring the issues which women face in developing their media careers, most notably professional associations such as the International Federation of Journalists, the European Women’s Lobby and various working groups of the European Commission and Council of Europe (see, for example, European Commission, 2010; EWL, 2010). These studies produce the same conclusions as the rest.

Importantly, the structural and cultural barriers which prevent women’s advancement into managerial and editorial positions also operate to prevent women’s occupation of boardroom seats. In the EIGE (2013) study mentioned above, the percentage of board members who were women was 27% but women occupied few (22%) deputy positions. In October 2012, European Commissioner Viviane Reding formally proposed that the

European Parliament should enact legislation to accelerate the number of women in the boardrooms of public companies. The proposal aimed to achieve a 40% presence of the “under-represented” sex (for which we should read “women”) among non-executive directors of the top 5,000 publicly-listed companies by 2020, and by 2018 for publicly-funded organisations.

The proposal was more or less immediately rejected by her fellow Commissioners on the grounds that it contravened the Commission’s own regulations. The proposed legislation was subsequently reframed as an “objective” and thus has no prospect of achieving the change required.

### **Possible responses**

A number of the studies discussed above have made recommendations and suggested actions which could be taken to address the long-standing problems, both structural and cultural, which impede women’s efforts to pursue their career aspirations and fulfil their potential. It really does not make sense at any level, ethical or business-wise, to deliberately under-utilise the talents of 50% of the media workforce, and one significant problem in working for change has been a lack of knowledge by media managers, about the scale of the issue and potential solutions.

#### *a) Actions for media organisations*

- \* Undertake a Gender Audit of the workforce to identify women and men’s presence at all levels of the organisation. Where there is an under-representation of women or men at a particular level, review recruitment and promotion policies to ensure they are fair and transparent. The audit should be undertaken on a regular basis in order to identify patterns and trends and to enable progress to be measured year-on-year. The findings from such an audit should be analysed and interpreted and a plan of action developed to monitor and act upon persistent gender imbalances. Such audits could be required as part of continuing funding arrangements for organisations which are wholly or partly publicly or Government-funded.



- \* Organise a staff survey on equality and diversity to better understand workplace culture and act on the findings if they suggest that staff believe that gender-based or any other forms of discrimination are taking place.
- \* Ensure that there are policies in place for reporting discrimination and clear sanctions where behaviour of staff is found to be in breach of such policies.
- \* Take positive actions to redress gender imbalances at senior levels by appointing the woman when deciding between a female and male candidate of equal merit.
- \* Members of shortlisting, recruitment and promotion panels should participate in equality-awareness training to ensure that they are not introducing unconscious bias into their decision-making processes.

*b) Actions for media unions and women-focused NGOs*

- \* Develop partnerships at global, regional and national level, to recommend and assess the implementation of women-friendly working practices developed by media organisations.
- \* Share best practice between each other and liaise with the academic research community to disseminate good practice.

*c) Actions for the academic research community*

- \* Promote further and larger-scale research projects to measure women's inclusion in decision-making positions in both large and small organisations, including the digital media sector, in order to identify patterns but also good practices where they exist.
- \* Devise action and dissemination projects, including online repositories, which share research findings and good practices amongst the wider practitioner and stakeholder community. ■

## Note

1. Co-funded by the "Rights, Equality and Citizenship/Justice" programme of the European Union.

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# Les Régulateurs des médias audiovisuels: Acteurs pour l'égalité de genre

Amina Lemrini Elouahabi

*Cette contribution au dossier que prépare L'Alliance mondiale genre et médias (GAMAG) en vue de prendre part activement à la 62ème session de la CSW en mars 2018 ne porte pas sur un thème en relation avec la « participation et accès des femmes aux médias » mais plutôt sur un acteur du paysage médiatique, généralement peu connu alors que son rôle est primordial dans la promotion de l'égalité de genre. Il s'agit du Régulateur de l'audiovisuel, composante d'une nouvelle génération d'institutions de bonne gouvernance dans les Etats modernes, post-monopolistiques.*

Qui sont les Régulateurs des médias audiovisuels ? Issues de processus de démocratisation et de consécration des libertés fondamentales, dont la liberté d'opinion, d'expression, les instances sont créées et régies par la loi pour accompagner la libéralisation du secteur. Majoritairement indépendantes vis-à-vis du pouvoir exécutif et à l'abri des lobbys économiques, ces instances autonomes dans leur fonctionnement, agissent dans l'intérêt public via le prisme des médias, publics et privés. Elles sont redevables auprès des parlements et des juridictions de contrôle financier, et leurs décisions peuvent être cassées par les tribunaux administratifs.

De par leur raison d'être, les régulateurs veillent à l'équilibre entre la libre concurrence et les

principes d'intérêt public tels que le pluralisme des médias et la diversité des contenus. Parallèlement, ils consacrent la liberté de communication tout en veillant à ce que les médias respectent et promeuvent le pluralisme politique, la diversité culturelle, les Droits de l'Homme, y compris l'égalité entre les sexes.

Bien évidemment, la réalité et l'étendue des prérogatives et pouvoirs d'un régulateur et ses champs d'intervention diffèrent d'un pays à un autre. Néanmoins, la majorité de ces instances sont dotées, outre l'octroi des autorisations et l'attribution des fréquences aux radios et télévisions, de prérogatives décisionnelles en termes de réglementation, suivi et sanction, le cas échéant, et ce parallèlement à leur force de proposition.

## Que peuvent faire les régulateurs en faveur de l'égalité de genre ?

De prime abord, et en vertu des spécificités du secteur audiovisuel et du rôle des régulateurs, ces derniers sont investis d'une mission stratégique par rapport aux opérateurs : veiller à la consécration de leur liberté de communication en tant que droit fondamental, dans le respect des droits fondamentaux des autres, dont le droit des femmes à ne pas être discriminées.

C'est dans le cadre de ce paradigme de base que les régulateurs peuvent et doivent :<sup>1</sup>

- \* Contribuer à la consécration juridique de l'égalité dans les médias par le biais des avis argumentés qu'ils rendent obligatoirement au Gouvernement et au Parlement sur tout projet de loi concernant le secteur ;
- \* Décliner les obligations juridiques des opérateurs, en matière d'égalité de genre, dans les cahiers des charges de ces derniers. Les cahiers des charges constituant la base contractuelle entre le régulateur et l'opérateur.
- \* Veiller au *mainstreaming* du genre dans la production de normes dans différents domaines autorisés par la loi, tel que les normes spécifiques au traitement médiatique au pluralisme politique ;
- \* Contrôler l'état d'application des opérateurs de leurs cahiers des charges, conformément à la loi, dont la vigilance par rapport aux

stéréotypes sexistes et l'effort de promotion de l'égalité. Les manquements observés lors du monitoring des programmes peuvent être sanctionnés.

- \* Produire des données *genderisées* relatives à la représentation des hommes et des femmes et des relations entre eux à travers l'ensemble des programmes et services audiovisuels du fait du potentiel, quasi- exclusif, de réception, archivage, visionnage et traitement (sur la base d'indicateurs) de l'ensemble de programmes.
- \* L'établissement de partenariats ciblant la promotion de l'égalité :
  - Au niveau national (outre les opérateurs): avec d'autres acteurs tels que les annonceurs, les producteurs, les instituts de formation de journalistes, institution académiques, société civile etc.
  - Au niveau international : relations intra et inter-réseaux, ainsi qu'avec d'autres acteurs du secteur.

### Quelle est leur présence au niveau mondial ?

La majorité des instances de régulation de l'audiovisuel est apparue à partir des années 1980-1990. Leur nombre global dépasse à ce jour la centaine.<sup>2</sup> Elles ont organisées de façon plus ou moins formelle dans le cadre d'une dizaine de réseaux mis en place sur des bases géographiques (Afrique, Europe, Méditerranée...), linguistiques (francophone, ibéro-américain, lusophone...) ou encore culturelle (Monde islamique).

Ces réseaux qui se réunissent selon une fréquence annuelle ou biannuelle pour faire le bilan et établir de nouvelles feuilles de routes, constituent des espaces de réflexion commune, d'échanges d'expériences, d'expertise et bonnes pratiques.

La question de l'égalité de genre est une des thématiques principales et dont les échanges ont donné lieu à l'adoption de Déclaration solennelle d'engagement ainsi que la constitution de groupes de travail pour en faire le suivi. Il s'agit notamment du :

- \* REFRAM : Déclaration du **REFRAM** sur l'égalité entre *hommes et femmes* dans les médias audiovisuels (Bruxelles, 2011)
- \* RIRM : Déclaration du **RIRM** relative à la lutte contre les stéréotypes fondés sur le genre dans les médias audiovisuels (Lisbonne, 2012)
- \* RIARC : Déclaration du **RIARC** relative à la promotion de l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes dans et à travers les médias (Cotonou, 2016).

Les trois déclarations mettent l'accent directement ou indirectement sur :

- \* Le déséquilibre de la représentativité quantitative et qualitative en défaveur des femmes tant au niveau des contenus médiatiques que de la gouvernance interne des entreprises qui les diffusent ;
- \* L'importance de la sensibilisation et de l'accompagnement des opérateurs audiovisuels en vue d'une implication privilégiant la co-régulation.

Appellation		Membres	Présidence actuelle (pays)
RIRM	Réseau des Instances de Régulation Méditerranéennes	26	CNMC-Espagne
REFRAM	Réseau Francophone des Régulateurs des Médias	29	HACA-Côte d'Ivoire
RIARC	Réseau des Instances Africaines de Régulation de la Communication	35	NMC-Ghana
IBRAF	Forum des Autorités de Régulation de l'Audiovisuel des Etats-membres de l'OCI	32	KPI-Indonésie
PRAI	Plataforma de Reguladores del sector Audiovisual de Iberoamérica	12	CNTV-Chili
PER	Plateforme des Entités de Régulation des pays et territoires de langue portugaise	11	CNCS-Guinée Bissau
EPRA	European Platform of Regulatory Authorities (CdE)	52	BAI-Irlande
ERGA	Régulateurs Européens des services de médias audiovisuels (UE)	27	Commissariaat voor de Media -Pays Bas



lation afin de lutter efficacement et durablement contre les stéréotypes sexistes et susciter de bonnes pratiques en la matière ;

- \* L'importance du partage d'expertises et d'expériences entre les instances de régulation et autres parties prenantes.

Ainsi la Déclaration du REFRAM insiste sur le caractère inclusif de cet enjeu sociétal, en incitant à une étroite collaboration entre régulateurs et représentants de la société civile. Elle encourage également, dans ce sens, à la formation des professionnels et des non-professionnels des médias sur la question de l'égalité hommes/femmes.

La Déclaration du RIRM se veut plus technique et concentrée sur la collaboration intra-réseau. Aussi, elle appuie la réalisation commune de recherches et d'études entre membres du réseau, principalement via l'affinement concerté d'indicateurs et d'outils d'évaluation sensibles au genre et intégrés aux différents dispositifs de monitoring mis en place par les régulateurs.

Enfin, la Déclaration du RIARC, tout en s'inquiétant explicitement des impacts sur la société africaine des messages, images ou programmes délibérément sexistes et fondés sur des stéréotypes de genre, appelle le régulateur à appuyer les opérateurs audiovisuels dans leur rôle de socialisation, particulièrement vital dans cette région du monde.

Motivés par un *objectif commun* explicité dans les intitulés des trois déclarations, les régulateurs membres des trois réseaux s'engagent, ainsi, à défendre un principe structurant de la culture des Droits de l'Homme, à savoir, la non-discrimination et l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes

### **Que devrait retenir la CSW dans ses résolutions et recommandations à propos de l'apport des régulateurs à l'objectif « égalité » ?**

L'objectif de promotion de l'égalité de genre dans et à travers les médias audiovisuels est généralement partagé par les régulateurs. Afin que ces derniers puissent jouer davantage un rôle significatif, trois types de recommandations peuvent être pris en considération dans le plaidoyer de GAMAG auprès de la CSW :

### **Recommandation d'ordre général :**

- \* Reconnaître de façon explicite les Régulateurs comme partie prenante pouvant avoir une valeur ajoutée en faveur de l'égalité de genre dans et à travers les médias (un paragraphe qu'on peut proposer).

### **Recommandations pour les Etats pour renforcer le rôle des régulateurs :**

- \* Intégrer de façon explicite et transversale le principe de « l'égalité hommes-femmes » dans les textes de lois qui régissent les instances de régulation et tout autre texte en relation avec le secteur ;
- \* Intégrer le principe de parité aux conditions d'élection/désignation des organes délibérants des instances de régulation ;
- \* Doter les instances de régulation d'une prérogative explicite de lutte contre les stéréotypes sexistes et de promotion de la parité et de l'égalité dans et à travers les médias audiovisuels ;
- \* Charger les régulateurs de l'élaboration de rapports annuels destinés aux Parlements sur l'état de l'égalité dans et à travers les médias dans un objectif d'évaluation et d'analyse des avancées, contraintes et recommandations. ■

### **Notes**

1. Les exemples cités sont basés sur l'expérience de la HACA du Maroc.
2. Certaines instances appartiennent à plus d'un Réseau.

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WACC's Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) is a research and advocacy project implemented collaboratively with women's rights organizations, grassroots groups, media associations, faith-based organizations, university students and researchers around the world. Volunteers take part in a one-day survey of news media. The photos here show participants in GMMP 2015: above left Albania; above right Guyana; left Mongolia; below right Tunisia; below left Vietnam. The importance of media monitoring as a tool for change was officially recognized by the United Nations for the first time in Section J of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. The results of monitoring provide a picture of media content that allows discussion about representation in media based on "hard" evidence.



For GMMP 2015, participation increased from 71 countries in 1995 to 114 countries in 2015, evidence of a growing interest, willingness to engage on issues of gender in the media, and commitment to propel change towards media that affirms women's rights and gender equality objectives. GMMP 2015 revealed persistent and emerging gaps in gender portrayal and representation in not only traditional (print and broadcast) media, but in new electronic media forms.



# Technology and women's empowerment

Carolyn M. Byerly

*If the monitoring of media content over the last 40 years has shown anything, it is that women's ability to be seen and heard have not progressed at the same rate as their real-life roles.*

Since the 1970s, women have benefited from women's liberation movements and taken ever greater leads in business, education, politics, and public life. Yet, they are still unable to speak in their own self-interest in the news media of most nations – either as expert sources, or to articulate pro-feminist opinions (*Who Makes the News*, 2015). Women are similarly under-represented in Hollywood films, which are viewed all over the world (Hunt et al., 2017). Regional studies show that women's voices and images are similarly marginalized in traditional as well as new digital media formats of both developed and developing nations (Byerly, forthcoming).

This paper responds to Goal Number 5 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2015–2030. That goal is to Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls, and proposed target “5.b” specifically concerns the use of information communication technologies (ICTs) to promote women's empowerment. The convergence of traditional print, broadcast and cable with digital (computer) formats require that we understand ICTs to include the wide array of media used today for personal, interpersonal, and mass communication in today's world.

Much of the focus in both research and human rights groups has been on women's access to ICTs, with particular concern with the digital divide between men and women. A moderate share of the concern has also been with gaps

in infrastructure (i.e., availability) and with user issues, such as the dominance of English in web-based information (Annan, 2005). Therefore, this paper seeks to broaden attention on women's relationship to the *structures* of the industries that still thwart them from exercising their right to communicate. Structural relations take formation in the macro-level of the media landscape and include finance policy, and governance.

## Women's right to communicate

The right to communicate was recognized as a human right by Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Adopted by the United Nations' General Assembly, Article 19 states:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.” (Article 19)

Yet current research shows women's difficulty in exercising that right within the industries. In media professions, they remain prevented from entering roles with any level of decision-making control both within news and entertainment sectors (Ross & Padovani, 2017; Byerly, 2011; Hunt et al., 2017; Lauzen, 2017).

As the table on the following page illustrates, only a few women are allowed to accede to the prestigious role of policy-making exercised by boards of directors in large digital media conglomerates (Byerly, forthcoming). These companies provide both the infrastructure and content of the vast majority of all communication the world over. They also control an enormous amount of wealth, wealth that their mostly male governors use to elect pro-corporate legislators and to shape media policy in their favour.

## Situating women in media conglomeration

Media conglomeration characterizes the great majority of the world's communication systems today where women are marginalized at every



Table: Ownership, Worth and Gender Representation on Boards of Digital Media Companies				
Digital Media Company	What is owned (example of brands)	Also owns stake in	Market value (in billions)	No. of women on board
Alphabet Google (USA)	YouTube, Android, Chrome, Nexus, Pixel, Blogger, Zagat, Google Search (& Gmail, Hangouts & other apps), Chrome, Nest, Verily, Waze		\$553	1 (of 13), 8%
Amazon.com, Inc. (USA)	Amazon Prime (& Cloud Drive, Web Services, Marketplace, Echo, Fire TV), Kindle, Audible, Twitch.tv, Washington Post		\$388	3 (of 10), 30%
Facebook, Inc. (USA)	Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Oculus, Facebook Messenger, Internet.org		\$371	2 (of 8), 25%
AT&T, Inc. (USA)	AT&T, DirecTV, Cricket Wireless, U-verse, YP.com (aka Yellowpages.com), Sky Brasil		\$227	4 (of 13), 31%
Verizon Communications, Inc. (USA)	Verizon Wireless, Fios, AOL, Huffington Post, Engadget, TechCrunch, Terremark	Complex Media, Awesomeness TV, Seriously TV, RatedRed.com	\$198	4 (of 12), 33%
Walt Disney Co. (USA)	ABC News, ESPN, Disney Channel, Walt Disney Studios, Pixar, Marvel, Lucasfilm, Disneyland and other parks and resorts	Vice Media, A&E, Lifetime, Hulu	\$151	4 (of 12), 33%
Comcast Corp/ NBC Universal (USA)	Xfinity, NBC Network, MSNBC, CNBC, Telemundo, Bravo, USA Network, Universal Pictures, Universal Studios and other parks and resorts	BuzzFeed, Hulu, Eater, Recode, Flipboard, Slack	\$146	2 (Of 12), 17%
Time Warner, Inc. (USA)	CNN, HBO, Warner Brothers Entertainment (also Records, Motion Pictures), TBS, TNT, NCAA.org, TMX.com, DC Comics	The CW, Hulu	\$68	2 (of 9), 22%
BCE (Canada)	Cable TV stations, specialty channels (Bravo, Canal D, Book TV, etc.), Bell Broadcast Radio group, wireless technologies.		\$64	4 of 13, (31%)
Grupo Televisa (Mexico)	Broadcast TV stations, radio stations, Videocine film, Editorial Televisa publishing, Televisa Digital (Internet), Televisa Musica, football teams, Aztec stadium		\$15	0 of 19 (0%)
Source: Byerly, C. M. (forthcoming), Gender, Media, Oligopoly: Connecting Research and Action. In N. Benequista & S. Abbott (Eds.), <i>International Media Development: Historical Perspectives and New Frontiers</i> . New York: Peter Lang Publishing.				

level, as has been shown. The conclusion to draw is that women are presently peripheral to both the control of and the benefits from the world's communication technology companies and what they provide. The salient question to pose with this realization is how will women become full

participants in their societies if they cannot tell their own stories, see the wide array of images and roles they occupy, and obtain the information they need to advance? Women have paid less attention to the national, regional and international policy governing communication systems than they have more practical realities such as information available (or not in those systems) and access to jobs. There is little research to date on whether and to what extent gender equality figures in national-level communication policy. Male scholars have avoided the subject for the most part, and both feminist scholars and activists have given it only minor attention (Gallagher, 2014).

And yet, as Gallagher (2011) insists, any discussion of freedom of expression must ask, "Whose freedom, defined by whom?" (p. 457). It should not be defined, as it typically has, as men's right to squander the profits of communication companies to secure their own economic and political power, or continue

to omit and stereotype women in the content of their news and programming. Despite the passage of international documents like the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995, with its Section J calling for gender equality in the media, or the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against

Women (CEDAW), there has been little success in securing a place for gender and media concerns on the international agenda (Gallagher, 2011, p. 459).

The next frontier for feminist research and activism, therefore, is at national and international policy levels, something that gatherings of women, such as the annual U.N. Commission on the Status of Women meetings in New York City affords the opportunity to develop. ■

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## Investing in young women: Sustaining women-led community media

Sian Rolls

*The legacy of women's media networks that negotiated for the broadening of the Women and the Media section of the Beijing Platform for Action, to reflect the opportunity for women to be recognized as producers of their own media form, was the inclusion of the Strategic Objective in Section J which recognizes the need to increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication.*

While there have been advances in certain areas of media across the Pacific region large gaps continue to exist in both traditional and digital media outlets (Macharia, 2015). Pacific women are challenging the status quo as the producers of our own print and electronic media. Women also operate community radio stations, are media correspondents, producers of video documentaries, information providers, communicators and media activists. This includes femLINKpacific's regional media network that started with the "suitcase" radio station in 2004.

"Whether it is the women who have taken to the airwaves or the development partners who have journeyed with femLINKpacific, they have recognized and supported the role of community radio to enable women and young women in all their diversities claim their communication rights in our region and that without a media platform of their own women's rights, peace and

human security will remain invisible”  
(femLINK, 2016 (1))

Primarily, much of the work of the “suitcase” radio has been bridging the inter-generational gap that exists – with young women learning the technology and older women finding their voice, often after years of being told to be silent. Establishing the community radio platform was “a bold move because it challenged the status quo of existing decision-making structures in Fiji by enabling women to speak openly on common matters and, crucially, it also involved young women. The suitcase radio has also been used as a training tool to empower women to speak to each other and with their communities” (Bhagwan Rolls and Narayan, 2008). The expansion of the suitcase radio and all of its growth since 2008 has only been possible through years of work and dedication by teams of young women producer-broadcasters.

The Generation Next Project was femLINKpacific’s flagship project for young women throughout the Pacific region, funded by the International Women’s Development Agency (IWDA) which supported young women to become community radio producers and broadcasters.

Initiated in Fiji in 2005, the project has since enabled a cadre of more than 100 young women to take to the airwaves and use information and communication to bridge the divide between urban and rural women and their communities and national and local governance structures (femLINKpacific, 2012).

The Generation Next project also has served as an entry point for young women into femLINKpacific, as several of them have become members of femLINKpacific’s core team at the community media centres in Suva and Labasa.

“Outside of femLINKpacific, there aren’t as many young women engaged in the technical aspect of media production. I love learning about different ways to use technology and after my time outside the organisation, I know just how critical it is to continue to resource women’s media. We need to be setting the agenda, telling

our stories and creating the narratives. It’s not as simple as just trying to get a woman to talk to a camera – it’s about investing effort, time and passion to enable someone who’s never been asked her opinion to tell her story.” – Sian Rolls (Evans, 2017)

“Through listening to women, communicating their stories, reading and researching policy documents and policy briefs of women, producing and documenting stories with women, for women, peace and security to enhance conflict prevention and peacebuilding (I am learning from them as women leaders). Another (thing I enjoy) is the radio. Women are able to speak wherever they are, from the comfort of their homes, on the mat or the community hall and with the availability of ICT their voices are reaching out wide and far across the globe.” – Lucille Chute (Waq, 2017)

Ultimately, the Generation Next project, has enabled femLINKpacific to demonstrate an approach to assessing sustainability gaps in the community media sector and/or within the media landscape as a whole: it requires a conducive media regulatory environment it requires investment in appropriate and accessible technology, it requires investment in a programme production and broadcast infrastructure and it requires investment in young people, in particular young women of all diversities.

What started in 2004 as a mobile “suitcase” community radio with young women in-school volunteers from Saint Joseph Secondary School, conducting monthly “weekend” broadcasts with a 100W transmitter, is now truly a women-led community radio network. femLINK now manages the Pacific’s first women-led community radio network, contributing more than 800 hours of content on gender equality, peace and human security to the public airwaves.

FemTALK 89FM Suva station runs 24 hours a day, with hosted shows happening during the day between 7am and 7pm most days – Morning Waves starts off the live shows, featuring Who Makes The News, with Rainbow Connections (open to and hosted by members of the LGBTIQ community) during the mid-mor-



ning from Monday to Wednesday. Thursday mid-morning features the Look at my Abilities show – for, by and about women with disabilities. Live shows during the weekend are more general but are still run by young women in all their diversities.

As the only rural-based radio station, FemTALK 89FM Labasa, now broadcasts every weekday from 9am to 5pm from the Labasa CMC in Vanua Levu with 4 young women supporting the broadcast operations. A mobile “suitcase” radio remains available to travel to rural women including to support disaster preparedness response.

femLINKpacific will continue to demonstrate its commitment to progress and define the implementation of Section J of the Beijing Platform for Action including to support women to hold governments to account by sustaining a regional women-led media network that mobilizes resources for women of all diversities, including young women, women with disabilities and LGBT allies to produce and broadcast radio programmes and “proving to be a viable tool that provides young women with the skills and confidence to move into leadership roles and address development barriers in their communities” (femLINK, 2016 (2)).

It is doing this now with a new wave of young women defining the way in which community radio and media will amplify gender equality, peace and human security.

## Recommendations

- \* Governments must ensure that broadcast policy and regulations support women’s media networks, in particular community media/ radio and feminist networks who have a demonstrated role to enable women of all diversities, including young women, to use accessible and appropriate Media and ICTs bridge the gap in media content in particular via the public airwaves.
- \* Donors and development partners must earmark specific funding towards the resourcing of women’s media networks in particular community media networks and femin-

ist media initiatives which are addressing the persistent societal gender inequalities through the use of qualitative and quantitative research including media monitoring linked to the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP)

- \* Donors and development partners must re-define sustainability of women’s media networks in particular community media networks and feminist media initiatives by ensuring that at least 30% of all media capacity development funds are ear-marked for young women’s development and content creation. ■

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# Imagine media that promote gender justice

Joanne Sandler

*The following article is a shortened version of a speech given at the WACC Congress on “Communication is Peace: Building viable communities” (South Africa, 6-10 October 2008). At that time, Joanne Sandler was Deputy Executive Director-Program of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). While the examples of how women are using “the radical potential of media to contribute to progress towards gender justice” may appear dated, they remain relevant and inspiring in today’s changed context.*

The title of my presentation is “Imagine media that promote gender justice”. We have to imagine it because it needs to proliferate at all levels: in the mainstream media, in the blogosphere, in alternative media. It needs to exist because gender justice is critical in its own right, central to the achievement of justice in general and interdependent with the achievement of social and economic justice.

It is important, also, because the path to gender equality and women’s empowerment – a project that gained steam with the first world conference on women in 1975 and continues on a fairly bumpy road until today – is uneven. One could reasonably argue – and this is the irony of work on gender equality – that there is much to celebrate with data showing good progress in many areas.

The media have huge and largely untapped power to promote and protect gender justice. We know because we’ve seen it. Many of you have probably heard the story of Mukhtar Mai in Pak-

istan who was gang-raped on the orders of a council of tribal elders from her village of Meerwala. Mai herself was not charged with any wrongdoing, but a rumour had spread through the village that her 14-year-old brother had been seen in public with a girl from a rival tribe. When Mai heard that the rival clan was going to put her brother on trial she rushed before the self-appointed councillors to plead for mercy on his behalf. The elders heard her plea. They spared Mai’s brother and ordered that she should be raped, explaining that the rape would shame her family and thus restore the offended tribe’s honour. Four volunteers carried out the sentence in the presence of a cheering mob.

Mai’s attackers had assumed she would be too ashamed to reveal what had happened, but with the assistance of her friends and the imam, she got word out to the local and international media. The media attention shamed the civil authorities into action. The tribal elders and the rapists were brought to trial and sentenced to life in prison. Mai, who has since received international honours, used her compensation money to build the first of two schools in her village and now campaigns for women’s rights around the world. The resolution of her case and national and the international attention it received in the media contributed to the passage in 2006 of amendments to a 1976 rape law in Pakistan. These included eliminating the death penalty for extramarital sex and easing a clause on making rape victims produce four witnesses to prove the case.

Without media attention, Mai could have died, either by her own hand or that of others. Instead, she was named Glamour Magazine’s Woman of the Year in 2005. That is the power of the media: to save lives and to change them.

But the media are also perpetrators of gender injustice. The concept of gender justice is complex, but we certainly know gender injustice when we see it. Around the world, the distortion by media of women’s voice and women’s lives is increasingly being recognized, but the response has been inadequate. This is an issue of accountability. UNIFEM just issued its biannual publication, *Progress of the World’s Women*, which focuses on gender and accountability and asks the ques-

tion: *Who Answers to Women*. We identify two dimensions of accountability from a gender justice perspective:

*Answerability* – that is, the ability of women and men to call for answers for the policies, programmes and resources that power-holders make available to promote and protect women's rights.

*Corrective action* – that is, power-holders, once confronted with the need for answers, must take corrective action to ensure redress.

In relation to gender justice and the media, the media's answerability and willingness to take corrective action depend to a large extent on the push that women's rights defenders provide, the extent to which men and women together use their power of choice to show a preference for media that promotes gender justice, and the generation of high quality content for social justice media produced by women's human rights defenders.

### **Media's radical potential**

My presentation today will focus how women are using the radical potential of the media to contribute to progress towards gender justice. One of the key assets that women are bringing – along with other social justice groups – is a purposeful use of the media to achieve broader social justice and gender justice aims, to challenge discriminatory gender norms, and make visible solutions that lead to change. It will look at two changes in particular: using information and media to stimulate greater accountability for sexual violence in conflict situations via the UN Security Council; and using media and media campaigns to encourage men to take responsibility and action for ending violence against women.

My first example deals with sexual violence in conflict. Over the past years, many manifestations of violence against women are receiving more attention, including in the media. Too often, this is sensationalized, showing women as victims rather than as agents of change which – in the face of horrifying odds – they often are. And, while there may be more coverage, there is not necessarily more action or adequate funds to meaningfully address this hidden pandemic which many

have referred to as “the missing MDG” or, at least, “the missing MDG target”.

In 2006, in one of her earliest acts as Africa's first democratically elected female head of state, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf ushered in the country's historic anti-rape legislation to send a powerful message that crimes of sexual violence committed during and after the war would not be tolerated. Rape remains a pandemic in Liberia, but the President along with many of her male and female ministers are unswerving in their commitment to address it.

That sexual violence in conflict is now receiving more attention is due to those who have worked for years to put it on the agenda and who deserve special mention. Groups like Isis WICCE in Uganda and many others have helped us to focus on the numbers, which themselves should galvanize us to action. 20,000 – 50,000 women were raped during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the early 1990s. 50,000 – 64,000 internally displaced women in Sierra Leone were sexually attacked by combatants. An average of 40 women are raped every day in South Kivu, DRC. Yet, the phrase “no more and never again” does not seem to have resonance when it comes to sexual violence.

This continues to happen despite the commitment of the highest Security institution in the world – the UN Security Council – through Security Council resolution 1325 on women peace and security. It continues to happen, in part, because of inadequate accountability on the part of those who can make a difference.

It is revealing to compare accountability mechanisms for two Security Council resolutions passed in 2000: resolution 1612 on children and armed conflict, with resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

- \* The Children's resolution includes monitoring and reporting on violations; the women's resolution only monitors UN agency actions
- \* The Children's resolution involves the Secretary-General in answerability, with reports on Member States violations; the women's resolution has no answerability mechanism;



- \* The Children's resolution reviews progress through a working group of the Security Council chaired by a Permanent Member and bi-monthly meetings; the women's resolution has an annual and voluntary 'commemoration' of the resolution;
- \* On the ground, the Children's resolution has country-level task forces that monitor and press for compliance; UN organizations involvement in compliance with the women's resolution is ad hoc, depending on available expertise.

I show these differences to make the point that, when it comes to the rights of women and girls, there are often distinct differences in what institutions see as their responsibility. Recognizing these gaps, there has been – over the past several years – a growing interest in the Security Council agreeing to a follow up resolution to 1325 with more accountability built in. This led to Security Council resolution 1820 on preventing sexual violence in conflict in June of 2008.

Information and media played a key role in moving Security Council members to agreement on Resolution 1820. Articles in leading newspapers about the atrocities that women faced were instrumental. Women's groups around the world were instrumental. Leading governments lobbied for it. UNIFEM's contribution to this broad-based strategy was to uncover and bring to the attention of Security Council members the practical approaches to dealing with this issue, believing that one of the obstacles was that even where there is political will, there is also a lack of knowledge about concrete steps to be taken.

We worked with UN Action against Sexual Violence – a coalition of 12 UN organizations and departments – to focus on the potential role that military peacekeepers could play in increasing women's security and preventing

sexual violence. Whereas most discussions about peacekeepers and sexual violence have focused on them as perpetrators, we took another approach. We produced an inventory of what peacekeepers are doing actually to protect women, even in an ad hoc fashion. As we discovered, too often peacekeepers do not have an explicit mandate to protect women and thus their ability to do so is weakened.

The inventory looked, first, at where women were most vulnerable. Research as far back as 1999 in refugee camps in Kenya showed that 90% of reported rapes of women took place when women and girls travel into the desert, bush or forest for food, fuel or water. These rapes have become so commonplace that they are referred to as "firewood" rapes. The inventory showed that, recognizing this, some of the peacekeepers in DRC, for instance, began accompanying women, using their vehicle headlights to shine light on the paths, honk their horns, and take other measures to create safe passage. But, in the absence of orders and resources, these actions were generally reactive, short-term and ad hoc.

The production of an inventory of what peacekeepers were doing in an ad hoc way – and then bringing this to the attention of high-level decision makers and military commanders at a conference in London with the Governments of the UK and Canada in May 2008 – was an important input to getting the Security Council to develop stronger accountability mechanisms for addressing sexual violence in conflict.

*Joanne Sandler speaking at the WACC Congress 2008 in Cape Town, South Africa. (Photo: Erick Coll.)*



Another component that contributed to the eventual outcome was the independent documentary called *The Greatest Silence: Rape in the Congo*, which won the 2008 Sundance Special Jury Prize in the Documentary Category. Lisa Jackson, a freelance independent filmmaker, produced this searing look at Congolese women who survived gang rape and mutilation only to find themselves bearing the shame of their family's rejection. It was produced in association with HBO, and broadcast to HBO's 35 million subscribers.

While Lisa Jackson did not have a Security Council resolution in mind when she produced the film, strategic use of the documentary played an important role. For example, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations saw the film and said publicly that it inspired him to introduce resolution 1820 in the UN Security Council. The film is an excellent example of how media – in conjunction with other focused advocacy strategies – has the potential to lead to concrete political action.

This role of media in accelerating progress toward greater accountability for gender justice – in this instance, in relation to Sexual Violence – is a good example of purposeful media. The result is that the Security Council now recognizes sexual violence as an issue which then justifies a security response. Once UN peacekeepers have a mandate and the resources to protect women collecting fuel, firewood and water, thousands, if not tens of thousands of lives can be saved and their dignity preserved. And the notion of national, international and human security has been broadened significantly.

### **Applauding purposeful media**

My next example is by Breakthrough, an international human rights organization. In 2008, Breakthrough launched its third multimedia campaign – “Bell Bajao” (which in Hindi means “ring the bell”) – a call to both men and women in India to intervene to stop domestic violence. UNIFEM and the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women that UNIFEM manages on behalf of the UN system are both supporters of Breakthrough's work.

Here, again, we see purposeful media that proposes actions that viewers can take. India passed an important law on domestic violence law (2005), but like so many laws, implementation is not proceeding adequately. That's why Breakthrough is also partnering with the Indian government, who are taking a leadership role in this campaign and thereby also increasing state accountability for taking action to address domestic violence.

The campaign was designed pro bono by one of India's leading advertising agency and its brand ambassador was movie star Boman Irani. It is being distributed across major Indian TV and radio channels and through powerful collaborations with media partners like The Viewspaper. It includes an interactive website for the audience to post comments and questions.

The Group Creative head of Olgivy and Mather – the pro bono advertising agency – highlighted the campaign's central focus: “Domestic Violence is a subject where the man is always seen as the culprit. We wanted men to be our partners supporting the cause...we wanted a strong call to action. A call to action that makes people say ... I can do (something). Ring the Bell fit that brief perfectly.”

Some of the elements that make this a strong campaign include: a) the partnerships – which created a top notch product with high production values and wide distribution; b) a positive message about taking action in the community, that appeals to men and provides information on services rather than portraying women as victims.

My final example is the Internet-based “Say No” Campaign launched by UNIFEM's Goodwill Ambassador, Nicole Kidman, in November 2007 and its contribution to the global campaign on ending violence against women launched by the UN Secretary-General in February 2008. “Say No” asks citizens and leaders to spend less than a minute clicking their mouses to express their commitment to end violence against women. We've also supplemented the internet campaign with high level signing ceremonies and postcards. It prompts citizen action and links power-holders to the issue.

At the launch of his campaign in February 2008, Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon committed the UN to challenge men to stand up with him to end violence. He said, "Violence against women and girls makes its hideous imprint on every continent, country and culture. It is time to focus on the concrete actions that all of us can and must take to prevent and eliminate this scourge... It is time to break through the walls of silence, and make legal norms a reality in women's lives."

### **Institutional transformation in the media**

These few examples do not represent fundamental institutional transformation in the media, which is what we need if we are to have a media that actively promotes gender justice. And there are four areas of work ahead of us that I think are crucial and receiving too little attention.

1) The first goes back to accountability: Commercially owned media understand their accountability in the context of shareholders and profit; state-owned and public media have not been much better on gender justice. So, how do we strengthen their accountability?

*Progress of the World's Women* makes the point that there are two pathways that women are using to demand greater accountability from power-holders: voice and choice. That is using the power of organizing and monitoring and their power as consumers or voters. We need to strengthen media monitoring to build media literacy so that both men and women are demanding media that promote – rather than erode – gender justice and so that they have the capacity to call for corrective action when the opposite is taking place.

2) We need to produce gender and social justice content with high production values. Too often, the media that social justice groups produce cannot compete with the production quality that mainstream media offer. That was Breakthrough's goal: use popular culture, partnerships with groups like MTV and Olgivy and Mather, to produce content that looked as good as any other. There needs to be a huge increase in skills, resources and partnerships so that the gender justice media gets produced and can compete in the

marketplace.

3) We need to link media with action and solutions. We need to go beyond broad-based awareness raising and offer people opportunities to make a difference. The new media give us that opportunity: purposeful media that use the full power of the media to inform, connect, change minds and act to achieve gender and social justice.

4) Partnerships, partnerships, partnerships. We cannot do this alone. Women cannot do this alone. Faith-based groups cannot do this alone. Men cannot do this alone. Even the state cannot do this alone. If communication is peace, then partnerships are the pathway to peace.

### **Using the full power of the media**

I want to close with two quotes: First, *you can't be what you can't see* (Marion Wright Edelman). If we are not using the media to challenge gender discrimination and gender norms that limit both men and women from exercising their rights and securing justice, then we are missing the opportunity to use the full power of the media, especially in the 21st century when its reach has expanded exponentially.

We have to use the media to question the assumption that sexual violence is an inevitable consequence of war. We have to use the media to question why are those who made war the ones who are invited to negotiate the peace, while those who have an interest in peace are prevented from having a voice. We can't imagine gender justice without media and communications to help us see it.

And, finally, a Native American adage: *She or he who tells the story rules the world*. It is important and uplifting to see or hear media that show us dialogue across lines of conflict to advance gender justice. But it is not enough just to have a growing number of good examples of social justice media. We have to work on transforming the media and democratizing ownership and leadership. Only then will stories that promote and protect gender justice regularly make it on to the nightly news.

Let's work together to move from imagining media that promote gender justice to actually seeing it. ■



# Violence against women in media and digital content

Aimée Vega Montiel

*Defined by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, as “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field”, violence against women (VAW) constitutes the main obstacle for women’s human rights.*

Based on the theoretical framework of feminism, nowadays legal definitions on VAW have adopted a holistic perspective which recognizes both types – physical, sexual, psychological, economic and femicide – and modalities – institutional, community, work, school – of violence against women and girls.

Most recently, the Sustainable Development Goal 5 Target 5.2 calls to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

The CEDAW recognizes the centrality of media to the elimination of VAW. Actions promoted by the Commission include member States to adopt mechanisms to eliminate sexist stereotypes in media and advertising, to encourage media to establish codes of production and to stimulate a

public debate on this issue.

The Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), called in 1995 explicitly on governments to “take effective measures, including appropriate legislation against pornography and the project of violence against women and children in the media” (UN, 1995, p.102). The BPfA recommended media industries to establish guidelines to address violent, degrading or pornographic materials concerning women, including advertising and to disseminate information aimed at eliminating all forms of violence against women.

However, instead of decreasing, sexism and misogyny in media have increased dramatically during recent decades. The original issues around the responsibility of media to end violence against women are still at the core of international debates. In addition, the new media environment has exacerbated some existing problems and raises new challenges that need to be addressed –such as sex trafficking and pornography.

## Evidence

Reviewing feminist research during the last 50 years, the prevalence of violence against women in media contents becomes evident. The complexity of theoretical and methodological frameworks has increased to the extent that types and modalities of representing VAW have changed.

First studies focused on the representation of sexual violence to demonstrate how through the commodification of women’s bodies, media content contributed to the normalisation of sexual assault and other forms of sexual violence, and how they reinforced gender inequalities. These studies were identified by their interdisciplinary nature. Influenced by psychoanalysis, Laura’s Mulvey *male gaze* and *sexual objectification* categories evidenced the patriarchal order existing in film industry and how these discriminated women in society. Guided by the questions *How do media portray women?* and *How do these portrayals limit women lives?*, sociologist Gaye Tuchman called attention to the *symbolic annihilation* of women in media discourse, through *omission*, *trivialisation* and *condemnation*.

The next phase was linked to social intervention. Content analysis served to produce quantitative statistical data about gender portrayals. These data supported campaigns against stereotyped representations in both media content and advertising which evidenced the presence of different forms and modalities of VAM in content – i.e. domestic violence.

Current research promotes holistic analysis in order to look at different forms and modalities of gender-based violence in media discourse (Vega Montiel, 2014).

Findings have demonstrated how media content reproduces sexist stereotypes that associate male identity to violence, domination, independence, aggression and power, while women are linked to emotions, vulnerability, dependency and sensitivity (Elasmar, Hasegawa and Brain, 1999; McGhee and Frueh, 1980; Thompson and Zerbinos, 1995).

In particular, news reports of violence against women tend to represent women as victims and as responsible for the violence of which they are victims. Usually, aggressors are not part of news reports. VAW is not shown as a structural problem which is the consequence of inequality between women and men in society, but as a mere individual experience which uses to happen in domestic spaces (Diez, 2002; Vega Montiel, 2007).

With the development of ICT, cyber-VAWG is emerging as a global problem. Almost three quarters of women have been exposed to some form of violence online. Types of cyber-violence include: hacking, surveillance, harassment, death threat, recruitment and malicious distribution (Broadband Commission for Digital Development, 2015).

Violence online and offline “feed into each other. Abuse may be confined to networked technologies or may be supplemented by offline harassment including vandalism, phone calls and physical assault. Similarly, the viral character of distribution is now explosive. What was once a private affair can now be instantly broadcast to billions of people across the digital world” (Broadband Commission for Digital Development, 2015: 7).

In countries such as Mexico, cyberviolence

has been at the core of public debates in recent years. In 2016, at least ten young women denounced through social networks that they had been harassed by men in public spaces. These women publicised the aggressors and, in response, they became victims of both sexual violence and death threats from Facebook and Twitter users. A very powerful response came from young women in the country. Through the hashtag #My-FirstHarassment (#MiPrimerAcoso, in Spanish), 100,000 women told of their experiences as victims of sexual violence.

A similar movement emerged in October 2017, in USA. The hashtag #MeToo was used to denounce the Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein as a sexual aggressor. The hashtag was promptly popularized worldwide for millions of women to publicize personal experiences of sexual harassment or assault.

Online and social media have become new and powerful vehicles for misogynistic threats and harassment which can result in the silencing of women. While fewer women than men access the Internet today – there are currently 200 million fewer women online than men – new sexist media and new sexist discourses can exacerbate violence against women and girls.

Another dimension of the sexist nature of online discourse is the widespread circulation of pornography. Some statistics suggest that there are more than 4 million websites that offer pornography – 12% of the total number of websites in the world – 100,000 of which offer child pornography. The online pornography industry has a turnover of 97.06 billion dollars per year, more than Microsoft, Google, Yahoo, Amazon, Netflix and Apple combined (Feminist Peace Network, 2006).

Linked to pornography is the sex trafficking of women, girls and boys that has been enhanced by new media. Sex trafficking used to happen mainly in countries which there is a lack of Internet regulation and policy, particularly in countries where there is a high percentage of poor women.

What can we conclude about violence against women offline and online? That the initial feminist research questions – originating in the

1960s – are still at the core of theory and research on media content. “This still revolves around the most basic questions of power, values, access and exclusion” (Gallagher, 2002: 5).

In addition, the new media environment has exacerbated some existing problems and puts new challenges that need to be addressed:

“Media sexism and male-dominated power structures are continually shifting and finding new forms of representation and practice... [then] our critique can be never be static or one-dimensional, but we must act collectively... Across disciplines and sectors and across countries and regions” (Gallagher, 2015).

## Recommendations

In view of the evidence, we further call on the UN and the international community to bring into global focus the responsibility of media and ICT industries in eliminating violence against women and girls. This is crucial to promoting discussion and to enhancing public visibility and awareness.

Key recommended actions include:

1. To commission and produce global comparative reports on VAW in traditional and digital media contents, with a cross-national and cross-regional perspective, emphasising advances and challenges. These reports must include the analysis of the dimensions involved in this problem: existing legislation, policy and regulation, self-regulation and co-regulation forms, content of media and ICT, media and information literacy programs.
2. To call on member States to introduce or strengthen regulation and policy aimed at preventing the spread of gender-based violence through the media and ICT.
3. To encourage media and ICT organisations to: adopt gender mainstreaming mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and action; adhere to national and international legislation to end VAW; improve gender mainstreaming training programs for content producers.
4. To encourage media unions and journalists groups to adopt basic principles for the

production of news on VAW free of sexist stereotypes.

5. To promote the exchange of best practices to end VAW in media and online contents and link with the research community. ■

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# Gender mainstreaming in journalism and communication schools

UNESCO / UNTWIN

*“The absence of substantive education about gender issues and newsroom culture in university journalism courses, helps to maintain systemic gender inequality in the industry” (Louise North, 2010).*

The Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) Section “J” on women and the media, called attention to the centrality of media and ICTs for gender equality. Echoing the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), the 47th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2003 noted the responsibility of these industries to end discrimination against women. Most recently, Sustainable Development Goal 5 also referred to the role of media and ICTs in women’s empowerment.

Recommendations emerging from these initiatives include: combating sexist representations in media and ICT content; equal access and participation of women in media and ICTs industries, particularly to foster the participation of women in decision-making positions; access of women and girls to ICTs; development of gender sensitive media and ICT policy; and the promotion of media and information literacy programs for women and girls.

However, progress has been slow and some areas have moved backwards – for example, the extended proliferation of violence against women in media and digital representations. A potential reason for the lack of progress is the absence of gender mainstreaming in higher education and of curricula that are gender sensitive within media

and journalism programs globally. These institutions prepare future media and ICT professionals and journalists.

Changes in curricula must be relevant to and meet the needs of communication and information industries whilst also educating emerging media and journalism practitioners to understand the importance of creating gender sensitive media structures and content. To date they have most primarily concentrated on technological innovation but not in the implications of the production of content for gender equality.

## Evidence

Since the publication of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) in 1995, institutional efforts were concentrated in combating sexist stereotypes in media and ICT content. Gender sensitivity in media and journalism education was not regarded as the starting point to change media content and operations. It has been thanks to the influence of feminist scholars who, in linking with activists and women media workers, have called public attention to this issue, that education has been recognized as a strategic domain to promote change.

Most recently, the UNESCO UNITWIN University Network on Gender Media and ICTs has claimed the centrality of gender mainstreaming in the curricula of communication and journalism schools, to combat gender inequality in those industries.

Teaching gender issues in journalism and communication schools has to do with understanding the construction and impact of the gendered production of media content, and also with the status of women in newsrooms, professional career opportunities, equal payment, and eradication of sexual harassment, among other issues (North, 2010).

According to Gertseema (2014), gender mainstreaming in journalism was adopted first by the Inter Press Service News Agency, which implemented this policy in 1994 to improve gender equality in both media structures and news content.

Following this, in 2012 WACC and the IFJ together launched the Learning Resource Kit for

Gender-Ethical Journalism and Media House Policy, a resource to promote gender ethical journalism. The kit is based on the insights of media practitioners, educators and scholars from all regions of the world. It includes guidelines for gender equality in media contents and encourages dialogue within media structures and self-regulatory bodies and NGO's.

Implementing the gender mainstreaming principle in the media and journalism education field, relates to a diversity of dimensions:

- \* Institutional normative framework – gender equality and gender mainstreaming principles implemented throughout the curricula; including through the adoption of a code and/or mechanisms to prevent discrimination, unequal treatment, harassment as well as to foster gender-responsive pedagogical approaches and consistent content;
- \* Promotion of parity of male and female students and scholars at schools, in all activities and programs;
- \* Curricula development and course content – existence of gender specific courses within programs that should be planned through a gender-sensitive perspective;
- \* Teaching/learning - lecturers and students training on feminist theories and methodologies, also building on the richness of gender analyses and approaches;
- \* Learning materials – inclusion of texts, readings and pedagogical materials on gender equality, gender analysis, intersectionality;
- \* Assessments – gender equality as a standard criteria in university assessment tools;
- \* Research / publications – draw upon/foster and support research and publications that focus on gender in media and communication (Made, 2009).

Based on this model, the South African NGO Gender Links conducted an audit of gender equality in media and journalism education in



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two Namibian universities. Findings revealed lack of a formal gender policy at the institutional level and the absence of gender mainstreaming in the curricula. They also revealed a dearth of gender specific courses

and a lack of mechanisms to mainstream gender into undergraduate programs.

The audit made evident that the incorporation of gender-related issues mostly depends on the lecturer's own knowledge and on her/his feminist interests (Made, 2009); a situation that resembles the broader reality of media and journalism courses across the world.

Indeed, similar results were found by North (2010) in a national study which included 30 universities in Australia. According to the study, no academic journalism program in Australia offers courses that address the portrayal of women in the media, neither gendered media culture nor gendered production of content. A few of them just include some aspects of gender in unit synopses. Also, women students outnumber men in communication and journalism programs in a ratio between 2:1.

However, according to North (2010, p. 104) there is an institutional resistance to including feminist theoretical or critical pedagogies in Australian journalism curricula. Thus, the lack of gender mainstreaming in curricula seems to be the consequence not only of the beliefs, values, knowledge and experiences of the course developers but of a patriarchal structure that resists the introduction of the feminist perspective in teaching (North, 2010).

Although there are exceptions, in most of cases female out-number male students, when they enter the professional field, and they tend to have lower status. They occupy the lower-income positions and have difficulty reaching parity within media and ICT industries – including in gaining senior and managerial roles in media organisations – which has an impact in media content.

Why is there still resistance to introduce gender mainstreaming in the curricula of journal-

ism and communication schools? Louise North offers some insights that inform this question:

“To find reasons why journalism education should embrace gender in its curriculum, one just has to ask why men dominate in the editorial hierarchy. Why is sexual harassment a continuing problem in the newsroom and effectively unaddressed by media organisations and the industry union? Why is there a disproportionate number of men graded higher than women of equivalent industry experience? And why are women more cynical about the industry?” (North, 2010: 111).

### Recommendations

In view of the evidence, the UNESCO UNITWIN University Network on Gender Media and ICTs issues a strong call to member States, UN agencies, universities, media and ICT industries to implement the actions listed below:

1. A policy and a plan of action on gender equality to be in place/adopted by universities, particularly where journalism and communication programs are offered;
2. All universities work guarantee gender mainstreaming in their journalism and communication programs (as per the above dimensions) with a special attention to digital transformations that have gendered implication for the profession;
3. Gender mainstreaming practices need to incorporate intersectional approaches to ensure a fully inclusive educational offer.
4. With the support of the universities represented at the UNESCO UNITWIN University Network on Gender Media and ICTs, to promote the exchange of expertise, knowledge, materials and best practices for the development of gender-sensitive curricula in journalism and communication;
5. Member States, UN agencies, and universities to allocate adequate resources to conduct research on gender equality in journalism and communication teaching programs, in

view of strengthening a gender-aware approach to the educational offer;

6. To train gender-aware next generation of professionals that may contribute to implement gender equality principles, and gender equal practices in both media structures and content;
7. Universities to conduct gender-focused monitoring of students performance during education and after graduation. ■

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*The Gender, Media and ICTs University Network is a UNESCO UniTWIN (the abbreviation for University Twinning and Networking Programme). Supporting education and research on media, information and communication technologies, the Network specifically aims to promote gender equality and women’s participation in and through media on a global scale through research, education and advocacy.*



# Genre et radiodiffusion

Evelyne Faye

*La Conférence des Nations Unies sur les femmes tenue en 1995 a souligné le rôle essentiel des médias dans la promotion de l'égalité des genres dans tous les domaines, les parties prenantes se s'étaient accordées sur la nécessité d'unir leurs efforts pour lutter contre « les images stéréotypées des femmes et l'inégalité de l'accès et de la participation à tous les systèmes de communication », en particulier les médias.*

A son tour, en 2003, lors du second sommet de l'Union africaine (UA) à Maputo (Mozambique), il a été adopté, en complément de la Charte africaine des droits de l'homme et des peuples votée en 1986, un Protocole relatif aux droits des femmes en Afrique, appelé également « Protocole de Maputo ».

Avec le Protocole de Maputo, l'Union africaine s'est dotée d'un instrument destiné à remédier à la précarité de la situation juridique des femmes en engageant les pays qui l'ont ratifié à prendre des mesures concrètes en vue d'assurer l'égalité des femmes et des hommes. Ainsi, il existe pour la première fois un document contractuel qui enlève tout fondement aux critiques qui prétendent que l'égalité des sexes serait uniquement une préoccupation des pays du Nord, et que tout effort en ce sens constituerait une « ingérence dans la culture et les traditions » des peuples du Sud.

La Conférence des femmes de 1995 dénonce les stéréotypes dans les médias et appellent les professionnels des médias à définir et adopter des codes ou des lignes éditoriales sensibles au genre pour donner une image impartiale et exacte des femmes.

## Evidence

Au cours de la dernière décennie, la question des

« femmes et des médias » a fait l'objet de nombreux travaux et séminaires dans la plupart des pays d'Afrique Sub-saharienne. Des organisations internationales comme l'UNESCO, des chercheurs, des autorités nationales, des instances universitaires et des organisations de médias, des organisations féminines ont, à différents niveaux soulevé la question de la présence et de l'image des femmes dans les médias.

Le nombre de femmes employées dans les médias a considérablement augmenté. Mais cette augmentation ne s'est pas traduite par la présence de femmes à des postes de responsabilité dans les médias et n'a pas eu d'impact sur la représentation des femmes dans les contenus. Elles sont cantonnées à des postes de présentatrices de bulletins d'information et sont beaucoup moins présentes dans les postes de reporters où les hommes sont plus nombreux ou les reportages sur les thématiques dites « douce » leur sont réservées.

Une étude du GMMP a révélé que 32% des informations dites « dures » sont rédigées ou couvertes par des femmes qui sont davantage orientées vers les sujets dits « doux » de société, de santé, de culture etc...

Par exemple, leur représentativité au niveau des postes de responsabilité reste très faible par rapport aux hommes (voir tableau ci-dessous), selon le Projet de l'Union Africaine de Radiodiffusion conduit dans 7 de ses organisations membres.

## Equilibre entre les genres au niveau décisionnaire des medias

Médias	Effectif Cadres	Hommes	%	Femmes	%
TV Algérie	1554	933	60%	621	40%
Radio Algérie	293	191	65%	102	35%
Bénin	103	91	88 %	12	12%
Cameroun	379	275	73%	104	27%
Kenya	171	112	66%	59	34%
Sénégal	452	316	70%	136	30%

Source : Union Africaine de Radiodiffusion

Dans le contexte de modernisation et de démocratisation de la société en général, il est nécessaire que les gouvernants apportent les réformes nécessaires aux textes légaux en vue de l'égalité des chances hommes et les femmes à



*Formation de radiodiffuseurs africains francophones sur « L'Application des indicateurs d'égalité des genres dans les médias » 21-24 Octobre 2016.  
Photo:UNESCO/OIF.*

diplômes et qualifications égales mais aussi la liberté de pensées et des opinions et d'assurer une visibilité et un accès égal aux médias.

Depuis les femmes se sont organisées en associations, ONG, pour défendre et faire respecter leurs droits en tant que professionnelles mais en tant qu'actrices du développement de leurs pays respectifs.

En Afrique, les femmes sont bien représentées dans les organes de presse et les salles de rédaction. Elles sont même très souvent plus nombreuses que les hommes. Cependant, elles n'occupent pas la même place que leurs homologues masculins dans les rédactions et dans les positions de prise de décision. Néanmoins il y a eu des avancées importantes en ce qui concerne les conditions de travail, le traitement salarial et l'environnement de travail.

La formation continue des journalistes professionnels aux politiques d'intégration de la dimension genre est essentielle dans la définition des lignes éditoriales. Cette démarche contribuerait à réduire considérablement les stéréotypes omniprésents dans les pratiques des médias.

## Recommandations

### *Pour les gouvernements*

- \* Définir des politiques et des processus d'institutionnalisation de l'égalité des genres

- \* Garantir la liberté d'expression des médias et leur protection dans le cadre des textes institutionnelles
- \* Prendre en compte la dimension genre dans les politiques sectorielles en adoptant des textes législatifs dont l'objectif sera de rétablir l'équilibre entre les genres
- \* Renforcer le pouvoir institutionnel des organes de régulation

### *Pour les agences des Nations Unies :*

- \* 23 ans après la conférence de Beijing actualiser la déclaration de Beijing
- \* Mettre à la disposition des organisations professionnelles des ressources pour favoriser la formation des professionnels des médias
- \* Appuyer par la mise à disposition de ressources la formation des professionnels des médias à la dimension genre
- \* Elaborer des outils partage des bonnes pratiques. ■

Evelyn Faye, Chef du Département marketing et communication – Union Africaine de Radiodiffusion. Elle a fait des études en management des affaires et a obtenu en 2004 un master en marketing et communication, puis un MBA en stratégie des organisations de l'université de Chicoutimi au Québec.



# Community media networks in Latin America

**María Soledad Segura**

*Community, alternative and popular radio stations have a long tradition in Latin America that began in the middle of the 20th century. They accompanied the struggles of social organizations and popular sectors against dictatorial or authoritarian states despite the fact that those states persecuted them or, in the best of cases, ignored them. At the same time, they always demanded legal recognition.*

**I**n this century, community media supported wide-ranging alliances of civil society organizations in each country that promoted communication policies based on the human right to communicate and that succeeded in influencing the new broadcasting acts passed in the last 15 years. What has been their role in these struggles and what did they achieve? Why today, in an era of digital media, are they still relevant?

## **Their history**

People's radio stations have been a relevant part of the media landscape in Latin America since the 1940s. In the beginning, they were founded by grassroots movements with a strong presence of Christian organizations. They are connected to myriad social movements and organizations of workers, peasants and farmers, miners, indigenous peoples, human rights groups, unions, local churches, neighbourhood associations, and the urban poor.

They are conceived as channels for ordinary people to express themselves publicly and to make demands of society. By rejecting the propaganda of state-run media as well as the profit-seeking goals

of the private media, they sought to expand communication spaces by providing access to alternative issues and perspectives generally ignored by the mainstream media.

Despite widespread and longstanding links with social movements and local activism, they have survived – often clandestinely – under precarious conditions. In most countries, they were considered illegal or faced significant restrictions until recently when many broadcasting acts were changed. Because they operated without licenses, they were frequently the target of judicial persecution as well as police raids and closures. They have chronically operated on shoestring budgets. Because they existed outside legal frameworks, they could not access much funding, which perpetuated economic difficulties. One of the most important financiers of community, alternative and popular media was – and, in some few cases, still is – foreign aid.

Community media constitute the least visible sector of the cultural industries in the region. Neither their networks nor the states have centralized, systematized or complete information about their coverage, audiences, number of workers, and possibilities of development. Although there are no reliable figures, community radios in the region are estimated to be in the tens of thousands: according to Gumucio Dagron, in Brazil there are eight thousand and in Peru four thousand.

Although this is a vast and diverse group, some shared characteristics can be identified. They question profit as the purpose of their communication practices. They seek a change in social relations from inequality to inequality and to intervene in public spaces to contribute to the construction of more just societies. They also oppose the hegemonic media system formed predominantly by for-profit and highly concentrated companies, which collude more in legitimising the social order than in criticising and transforming it.

That is why community, popular and alternative media are characterized by the expression of historically silenced voices, a willingness to intervene in public debate, the construction of agendas and approaches that challenge the domin-



ant ones, the promotion of participation, and the creation of alliances as strategies to gain influence.

Community radio stations historically provide an important service function to their communities. Besides, as a result of their work, there are thousands of people trained in communication, education and development in every country. They also contribute to media growth on the continent. In addition, people's radio stations aimed to strengthen democracy after the dictatorships, and that effectively happened.

### **Their struggles**

Community radio stations founded national networks such as ERBOL (Bolivia), UCBC and UNDA (Brazil), CNR (Peru), Arpas (El Salvador), IGER (Guatemala), CORAPE (Ecuador), and UDECA (Dominican Republic). In 1972, many of them founded ALER (Latin American Association of Radio Education), the regional association of community radios. At the international level, they supported the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) promoted by the movement of Non-Aligned Countries, that had an impact on the MacBride Report published by UNESCO in 1980. In each country, while they accompanied other popular movements fighting for social, politic and civil rights, community radio stations also demanded legal recognition.

In the 20th century, that demand was extended to integral media policy reforms aimed at limiting media concentration, legalizing and promoting community media (including indigenous media), and fostering national, local, and independent production. The aim was to restrict the domination of private corporations based on the perception that the unmatched power of market forces in terms of ownership, funding, and content was the key problem of public communication in the region.

These notions are based on the concept of communication as a human, universal, collective, and positive right that should be guaranteed by the State. They draw on the principles promoted by the Non-Aligned Movement (which endorsed the New World Information and Communication Order debates in the 1960s and the 1970s) and

articulated in the MacBride Report in 1980. The right to communicate includes but goes beyond freedom of speech and access to information. The human right to communicate is not just for media owners and journalists, but for everybody. It includes access to media consumption and production, social participation in media management and production and in devising broadcasting policies, content diversity in every media, diversity in the media system, and equity in the distribution of information between nations, regions of a country, political powers, cultural communities, economic entities and social groups.

To reinforce this demand, community radio allied with other media movements and social movements in coalitions and networks in each country such as Coalición por una Radiodifusión Democrática (Coalition for a Democratic Broadcasting) in Argentina and Coalición por una Comunicación Democrática (Coalition for a Democratic Communication) in Uruguay. In most countries, they played key roles in bolstering communication policy reforms in the 2000s.

After decades of resistance to states, community radio stations and their allies began to negotiate with them to influence communication policies. These traditionally disempowered entities have been the main promoters of communication legislation reform that ensures diversity and, in particular, participation by the sector in the legal provision of audiovisual communication services. Alongside other civil society organizations, they played an unprecedented role in the debate and formulation of new media policies in the region.

People educated in and motivated by the right to communicate ideal in community radio stations and networks decades ago – intellectuals, activists and politicians – play key roles in communication and political fields today. Some of them even became important state functionaries like Augusto Dos Santos, Minister of Communications during the presidency of Fernando Lugo in Paraguay, or Rafael Roncagliolo, Minister of Foreign Affairs during the government of Ollanta Humala in Peru (Dietz, 2017).

## Their impacts

Over the past decade and a half, in many countries community media have succeeded in their struggle for state recognition. They have had an impact on the 11 new radio broadcasting and telecommunications acts passed in the region since 2004, which recognized community media as legal providers of broadcasting services. In addition, almost all of them introduced more equitable distribution of the radio spectrum in the commercial, state and community sectors. Some laws reserved for them a third of the electromagnetic spectrum (Uruguay, Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador), established state promotion mechanisms (Argentina), and participation in media policy-making institutions (Argentina, Uruguay).

This created an unprecedented scenario for community media. They need to apply for a license or legal authorization to provide audiovisual services. In addition, they can advocate for the implementation of new laws in relation to the particularities of the sector. Fulfilling the requirements of new laws brings novel challenges for their economic sustainability and growth, and requires new administrative, legal and accounting skills and knowledge.

Since 2015, in several countries of the region and along with political changes there has been a change of direction in communication policies directed at community media. Although the norms sanctioned in the previous period were not repealed, there are significant slowdowns in the processes of legalization and promotion of these stations. At the same time, measures allowing concentration of ownership by audiovisual and telecommunications corporations have been deployed. Governments that lean to the right distrust popular voices.

## Their relevance today

In a context of high concentration of media ownership, advertising and audiences, rapid and massive diffusion of information including false news, and media linked to political and economic elites, community media are needed to provide alternative information from a diversity of perspectives. When violent expressions of racism, xenophobia,

and classism increasingly come not only from isolated social groups but also from states, a form of communication that recognizes different people as equal, with history and destiny in common, is essential for democratic societies.

In the digital age, community broadcasting is still important in a region with growing levels of internet access and affordability, but also with enormous inequalities in access according to the geographical location and socio-economic situation of the population. Here, community broadcasters are starting – slowly and unevenly, according to their economic possibilities – a transition towards digitalisation and convergent technologies.

In summary, we reaffirm the relevance of community, people's and alternative media for their history of solidarity with popular movements, social struggles and disadvantaged sectors of society; for their leading role in the challenge to expand communication rights; and for their contribution to diversity and pluralism: crucial factors in the construction of democratic and just societies.

On the one hand, their presence helps to configure more plural and diverse media systems, given that the sectors that participate in it multiply. On the other hand, these media allow the intervention of subjects, themes and perspectives that usually do not have a place in the private-commercial or state media. That is why non-profit media are central to guaranteeing the right to communicate and crucial to the development of democratic, diverse and pluralistic societies. For these reasons, the existence of community media cannot be left to the market. The role of the State in promoting them is essential. ■

### This article is based on:

- Segura, M. S (2011) *Las disputas por democratizar las comunicaciones. Las tomas de posición de las organizaciones sociales. (Córdoba, 2001-2009)*, PhD Thesis, UBA. Available at: <http://democratizarcomunicacion.eci.unc.edu.ar/tesis/>
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# On the screen

## Venice (Italy) 2017

The INTERFILM Jury at the 74th Mostra internazionale d’arte cinematografica in Venice (August 30 to September 9, 2017) gave the 8th INTERFILM Award for Promoting Interreligious Dialogue to *Los versos del olvido* (*Oblivion verses*) directed by Alireza Khatami (France, Germany, Netherlands, Chile, 2017).

*Motivation:* The film combines harsh realism with visual poetry to tell a story that transcends time and place and crosses political, cultural and religious boundaries. In *Los versos del olvido* (still below), Alireza Khatami tells a tale about loss, memory, lost bodies and mourning. Convincing scene-setting and images convey a strong sense of compassion and humanity. To care for the dead as well for the living brings us even though handed down by different traditions and rituals through the history and religions of humankind.

The members of the 2017 Jury: Takoua Ben Mohamed (Italy); Jacques Champeaux (President of the Jury, France); Charlotte Wells (Sweden).





## Miskolc (Hungary) 2017

At the 14th Jameson CineFest International Film Festival held in Miskolc 8-17 September 2017, the Ecumenical Jury, appointed by INTERFILM and SIGNIS, awarded its Prize to *Aritmija* (Arrhythmia, see still below) directed by Boris Khlebnikov (Russia/Finland/Germany, 2017).

*Motivation:* Oleg and Katya are a young couple dedicated to their work as emergency medics but he drinks too much and she is disappointed by their relationship. As in arrhythmia, the couple is in crisis and love at the same time. With the use of fiction and documentary, the film asks, in ordinary situations, questions about the value of life and human dignity under financial pressure. It shows with humour and sensibility that it is always worth to fight for your rights and that love is always an answer.

*Synopsis:* Oleg is a young gifted paramedic. His wife Katya works at the hospital emergency department. She loves Oleg, but is fed up with him caring more about patients than her. She tells him she wants a divorce. The new head of Oleg's EMA substation is a cold-hearted manager who's got new strict rules to implement. Oleg couldn't care less about the rules – he's got lives to save.



His attitude gets him in trouble with the new boss. The crisis at work coincides with the personal life crisis. Caught between emergency calls, alcohol-fueled off-shifts, and search for a meaning in life, Oleg and Katya have to find the binding force that keeps them together.

Members of the 2017 Jury: Beáta Késda (President, Hungary); Agoston Erhardt (Hungary); Christine Ris (Switzerland); Magali van Reeth (France).

## Chemnitz (Germany) 2017

The Ecumenical Jury at the 22nd International Film Festival for Children and Young Audience Schlingel (22 September to 1 October 2017) awarded its Prize to *Sobre rodas* (*On Wheels*) directed by Mauro D'Addio, Brazil, 2017.

*Motivation:* Atmospheric images transport us to the dusty roads of small-town Brazil. *On Wheels* takes us on an inspiring journey of self-discovery with classmates Lais and Lucas, two equally charming and well-developed main characters. Aided by the trust they place in each other they are able to overcome adversity and build resilience to the challenges life throws at them. Lucas may not regain the ability to walk and Lais may not find the

father she has never met, but along the way, they nevertheless become empowered through the development of an open and loving relationship to each other. *On Wheels* portrays with a refreshing lightness the importance of resilience in life and seeing beyond the outward limitations of others.

In addition, the jury awarded a Commendation to *Zuckersand* (*Sugar Sand*) directed by Dirk Kummer, Germany, 2017.

*Motivation:* The film tells



the story of an extraordinary friendship between two 10-yearold boys faced with the threat of separation by the inner German border in the year 1979. Questions of faith and values come to the surface for Fred as he is met with the religious background of his best friend Jonas. With an open curiosity towards the world that he as a GDR citizen is unable to experience, Fred explores the true meaning of solidarity and the properties of the soul through his friendship with Jonas.

Members of the 2017 Jury: Ingrid Stapf (President, Germany); Reinhard Middel (Germany); Astrid Skov-Jacobsen (Denmark).

## Leipzig (Germany) 2017

At the 60th International Leipzig Festival for Dokumentary and Animated Film (30 October to 5 November 2017) the Interreligious Jury awarded its Prize to *Liefde is aardappelen* (Love Is Potatoes) directed by Aliona van der Horst (Netherlands, 2017). The Prize carries €2500, donated by the Interreligious Roundtable Leipzig and the VCH-Hotels Germany GmbH in the “Verband Christlicher Hoteliers e.V.” including the Hotel Michaelis in Leipzig.

*Motivation:* Using the example of a personal search for traces, the film (still below) reveals an

episode of world history. On a quest for her own roots, the author finds, in a house in Russia, evidence of her origins, the flight, the story of her family, the way the past was dealt with, the issue of forgetting, the effects of hunger – all measured against the yardstick of death.

Working with pictures of the house and souvenirs, with letters, sound recordings and especially with Italian animation artist Simone Massi’s excellent visuals, Aljona van der Horst has created a moving and profound work of art, not without risking a pinch of irony and humour, too.

Members of the 2017 Jury: Michael Jäger, CO (Germany); Yasmine Kassari (Belgium); Brigitte Rotach (Switzerland); Christiane Thiel (President, Germany).

## Lübeck (Germany) 2017

At the 59th Nordic Film Days Luebeck (1-4 November 2017) the INTERFILM Jury awarded the Church Film Prize of €5000 donated by the Evangelical Church Luebeck-Lauenburg, to *Verdwijnen* (Disappearance) directed by Boudewijn Koole (Netherlands, Norway, 2017).

*Motivation:* In search of a reconciliation with her mother, a photo-journalist returns to Norway’s sparse mountain regions. With the help of





her younger half-brother, the two women gradually overcome their inability to speak to each other. The director uses arresting images and sound to confront the audience with existential questions.

In addition, the Jury awarded a Commendation to *Rett vest* (Going West) directed by Henrik Martin Dahlsbakken (Norway, 2017).

*Motivation:* This Norwegian road movie approaches its characters with a persuasive affection and dignity. The film invites the viewer to a non-judgemental look at human diversity.

Members of the 2017 Jury: Arne Kutsche (Germany); Kirsten Senbergs (Denmark); Anita Uzulniece (President, Latvia); Thomas vom Scheidt (Germany).

## Mannheim-Heidelberg (Germany) 2017

At the 66th International Film Festival (9-19 2017), the Ecumenical Jury appointed by INTERFILM and SIGNIS awarded its Prize, endowed with €1500 by the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Catholic Film Work in Germany, to the film *Une vie ailleurs* (Life Beyond Me) directed by Olivier Peyon (France, Uruguay, 2017).

*Motivation:* To whom does a child belong? *Une vie ailleurs* focuses this problem in an impressively emotional way. The film tells the painful process of respecting this basic question and stresses the importance of telling the truth. The ethical challenge is more than only a juridical case. The eyes of the protagonists are finally open for the perspective and dignity of the child with all consequences for their own life.

In addition, the Jury awarded a Commendation to *Oralman* (Returnee) directed by Sabit Kurmanbekov (Kazakhstan, 2017).

*Motivation:* The film is a small and as well paradigmatic story on the importance of people's roots and the quest for the homeland in times of worldwide migration.

Members of the 2017 Jury: Christoph Strack, Germany – President; Linda Dombrovsky, Hungary; Johannes Feisthauer, Germany; Franz-Günther Weyrich, Germany; Michel Zucker, France.

*INTERFILM* is the international network for dialogue between church and film. It participates in festivals through ecumenical, interreligious or solely Protestant juries which award prizes to outstanding films. WACC partners with both *INTERFILM* and *SIGNIS* to facilitate the work of the ecumenical juries. ■

