Call for papers for a special issue of Comunicazione Politica (ComPol) Journal of the Italian Association of Political Communication (vol. 2, 2017)

Title:
**Gender, politics and the media.**
**Lessons learned and struggles for change twenty years after the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women**

Guest editors
Claudia Padovani (University of Padova, Italy) and Elena Pavan (Scuola Normale Superiore, Italy)

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The year 2015 was an important time for reviving global public attention on gender and media issues. The twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women invited an assessment of the progress made since 1995, and a new emphasis was placed on the commitment made by the international community on that occasion to “Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication” as well as to “Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media” (Section J of the Beijing Platform for Action).

In this context, initiatives oriented to gender equity in and through the media are increasing. For example, in 2014, UNESCO launched a *Global Alliance for Media and Gender* to gather the knowledge, competences and energies centred around gender-aware media operations across all world regions. Moreover, in 2015, UN Women fostered a partnership with leading media houses, the *Media Compact*, to galvanize attention and develop concrete actions to promote women’s rights and gender equality. Meanwhile, at the national level, forward-looking media organizations, particularly public service broadcasters and professional associations, are developing good practices to better support women’s career aspirations as journalists and communicators; while civil society organizations have consolidated mechanisms to monitor and assess media operations from a gender perspective, as demonstrated by the worldwide participation in the 5th edition of the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP).
The politics of communication seem to be gradually, though slowly and at uneven pace, evolving towards more gender-aware approaches: media outlets and their policies, at the national and regional levels, are under scrutiny in relation to their responsiveness to gender equality; political communication is also being transformed by the growing presence and participation of women in political spaces and policy-making roles, as well as by their use of less formal channels of communication, including social media.

And yet in all world regions, the picture in 2016 remains one of unequal gender and media relations. Women still find it hard to have their concerns taken into consideration by the news media, or be recognized as knowledgeable voices to represent professional groups and communities. Also, new forms of gender discrimination and violence characterize the digital environment and gender mainstreaming as an operational principle for policy development in the media sector remains widely disregarded. While the media landscape is being transformed and more opportunities are offered to citizens and political actors to engage in public debates and orientate policy developments, a persisting lack of equal opportunities, particularly for women, still characterizes the content, structures and operations of the media, both traditional and digital.

Twenty years after Beijing, research on gender, politics, policies and the media remains crucial to develop necessary knowledge on the contradictions and tensions that prevent gender equality in the media from becoming a reality. Further studies are required to investigate structural and cultural barriers, from the local to the supranational level; new research is needed to develop comparative understandings of the political, socio-cultural and discursive conditions that constrain women's specific competence and perspectives, and hamper opportunities for change, especially those deriving from digital developments.

Given the above, this special issue seeks to bring together contributions that reflect the richness of scholarly approaches to gender and media today, with a special focus on political and policy developments. Welcoming a wide range of analytical foci, research questions, and methodologies, we invite theoretical, conceptual or empirically-based contributions that address the following topics:

- the disconnections between gender concerns and media policies (international and/or national): existing formal provisions and actual media operations; policy discourses on the responsibilities of the media in overcoming gender stereotypes and codes of conduct or equality mechanisms adopted by media corporations; the potential for diverse voices to speak and be heard in the digital space and persisting challenges to women's communication rights in loosely regulated domains;
- the role of ideational elements in media governance: frames, discourses and norms that result in, and reflect, the historical variability of gender (in)equality in the media;
• **good (and bad) practices** in elaborating policy frameworks for gender equality in the media, at both the national and the individual company level, including the presence and participation of women and men in decision-making and strategic orientation;

• **political communication** reconsidered: on language, content, narratives and media usage from a gender perspective;

• **reframing divides** and emerging **policy responses**: “old stereotypes” in the “new media”, barriers to access and relevant use of ICTs, new forms of gender violence online, gender-neutral technology design;

• principles, frameworks and practices of **gender-aware media literacy**, training and career developments, and related policies;

• feminist approaches to **theorizing power** in media structures and operations, and in fostering or resisting social change;

• new **analytical and empirical perspectives** to investigate persisting gender-related cleavages by exploiting the potentialities of emerging digital and computer-assisted research tools

**Instructions for Authors:** Authors interested in submitting a paper to the special issue should send their abstracts (about 500 words, with a tentative title) by email to the following email addresses by **July 30, 2016** (claudia.padovani@unipd.it, elena.pavan@sns.it, compol.rivista@gmail.com).

Email subject: Special issue - Gender, politics and the media

ComPol publishes in Italian and English. Further information about the journal and instructions for Authors can be found at: [https://www.mulino.it/riviste/issn/1594-6061](https://www.mulino.it/riviste/issn/1594-6061).