Editorial

THE #MeToo and #TimesUp movements have put the public attention on the evident gender inequality in the media and new technologies sectors. Although it seems to be a recent issue, the gender and communication agenda has a history of more than five decades, when feminist scholars initiated the first studies that evidenced the patriarchal nature of media.

A milestone in the development of this agenda is the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), published in 1995 by United Nations. Thanks to the influence of scholars and journalists, the BPfA included "Women and Media" as one of the strategic areas for the advancement of women in the world. Known as 'Section J', this area identified two objectives to achieve gender equality in and through the media and information and communication technology (ICT):

- To increase women's participation and access to media and decision–making positions.
- To promote a balanced and non–stereotyped representation of women in media content.

These groups also managed to influence the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the main multilateral body devoted to the promotion of gender equality and women's human rights. Supported by the United Nations Organization, in 2003 and on the occasion of its 47th Session, this body focused its attention on the issue of women's participation in media and information technologies, and their impact on the advancement and empowerment of women. The Commission then determined that the 68th Session, to be held in March 2018, would have it as review theme, in order to review the progress made by member states since 2003. What was the balance made at the Commission? That the advances have been incipient, and in some cases there are setbacks. One of the main obstacles identified by the experts, is the resistance of media and ICT companies to promote gender equality. The reiteration of sexist stereotypes and discrimination and violence against women in content has spread to digital platforms, through what it has been called as cyber-violence. Likewise, the limited access of women to decision-making positions in the media and ICT, the precariousness of their working conditions, and violence against women journalists,

are a symptom of this resistance. Another obstacle identified, is the instrumental perspective over new technologies. ICT are seen as tools for the economic empowerment of women, as they can make them more profitable for the market, when in reality the access of women and girls to media and new technologies is directly linked with their human rights.

In response, UNESCO launched in 2013, together with more than 500 organizations, the Global Alliance on Media and Gender (GAMAG). This multi-stakeholder alliance calls for the participation of academics, civil society, journalists, regulatory bodies, media and ICT, with the purpose of promoting this agenda within the global framework and achieving gender equality in and through these sectors. Linked to GAMAG, UNESCO announced during the International Meeting on International Cooperation in Gender and Media, at United Nations headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, in December 2015, the creation of the UNESCO University Network UniTWIN in Gender, Media and ICT. The purpose of the Network is to promote research, teaching and dissemination in gender equality, media and new technologies in the universities around the world.

The Network includes the participation of universities from the five regions of the world, recognized internationally for their contribution to research in gender and communication. It is coordinated by UNAM, through the Center of Interdisciplinary Research in Sciences and Humanities (CEIICH), the RMIT University (Australia) and the University of Padova (Italy). Other universities are: Autonomous University of Barcelona; Complutense University of Madrid (Spain); Hawassa University (Ethiopia); Howard University (United States); Multimedia University of Kenya (Kenya); University of Newcastle (United Kingdom); Polytechnic of Namibia (Namibia); Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaíso (Chile); SNDT Women's University (India); Universidad Iberoamericana (Dominican Republic); Simon Bolivar Andean University (Ecuador); and University of Gothenburg (Sweden).

The particular objectives of the Network are to:

a. Promote gender equality in the media through the media, through research, education and dissemination.
b. Support training and research on media, information and communication technologies (ICT), which are fundamental to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women.
c. Work to stimulate and show some of the most important academic contributions to knowledge related to women's participation in all media platforms.

In order to support the achievement of the Network's objectives, this issue of the journal **INTER**disciplina is dedicated to disseminating research in gender,

media and ICT led by members of the Network. All of them assume the two principles of feminist research: it is scientific as well as political, since it seeks to transform social conditions for the achievement of gender equality.

The Dossier section includes the contribution of the Australian researcher Lisa French, who in the article "Women documentary filmmakers as transnational 'advocate change agents'", examines the key role that women have played in the production of documentaries in making visible and giving voice to women. The author points out that this work empowers women and constitutes a form of feminist activism.

The article "Journalism of opinion and gender discourse: comparative analysis of the columns of *El País Semanal* (*El País*) and *Magazine* (*La Vanguardia*)", by the scholar Soledad Vargas, represents a good example of interdisciplinary research. The author puts in dialogue feminist critical theory, literary and journalism studies to analyze the way in which gender determines the work of women and men, both at thematic level and stylistic discourse.

Aimée Vega Montiel studies the structural conditions of violence against women journalists. The author places special emphasis on the importance of promoting an international report that allows to know periodically the dimensions of this problem and to be able to influence policies and legislative changes, in order to guarantee the life and freedom of women journalists in the world.

Melisew Dejene and Tafesse Matewos Karo, from Hawassa University, share the results of a study conducted in Southern Ethiopia, aimed at identifying how media and technologies impact on women's lives, particularly their well–being and economic empowerment.

With the aim of addressing gender inequality in the media, Claudia Padovani and Karen Ross share the project Advancing Gender Equality in Media Industries (AGEMI), which aims to combat gender stereotypes and promote equal opportunities, through educational resources aimed at inspiring and informing students and media professionals, and developing a bank of good practices.

In "Education as a tool for social change: education in values and gender based violence", Isabel Rodrigo Martín, Patricia Núñez Gómez and Luis Martín analyze the role of education in the prevention of gender based violence, inclusion and visibility of women and the recognition of diverse identities that break with stereotypes and roles against all forms of discrimination.

Edgar Vega Suriaga examines in "Gays and trans and then to gender/generic diversities: two decades of descriminalization of homosexuality in Ecuador" the development of an inclusive discourse both in public policy and in militancy itself, but also the political strategies behind of this action, in the context of the emancipatory processes of popular sectors and sexualities.

Lucía Sánchez-Díaz closes this section with the article "Street harassment perception and it relations with self–objectification of women". The author analyzes the results of a study conducted in the Dominican Republic on the experience of women victims of sexual harassment.

The Interview section includes a text prepared by Adina Barrera. The author interviewes to the civil society organization Communication and Information of Women [CIMAC], with the objective of knowing the possibilities and limits that this NGO identifies in the access to the public information right, when it seeks for information on violence against women journalists.

The section 'Independent Communications' includes a text by Toby Miller that analyzes a current topic in the research agenda: the exaltation of hegemonic masculinity, through the representation of the bodies of athletes as objects of individual and collective consumption, through the use of marketing methods that allude to nationalism and social referents. The other contribution, by Lucía Álvarez, adresses the issue of citzenship in the context of growing informality.

The review introduces UNESCO's latest global report *World trends in freedom of expression and media development.* The document concentrates its attention on four dimensions: Freedom of communication, pluralism and independence of the media, and security of journalists. One of the main successes of the document is having incorporated the gender perspective in the analysis of these dimensions.

In summary, what these works show, is the holistic nature of the feminist agenda in communication and invite to take advantage of the possibilities of the UNESCO UniTWIN Network in Gender, Media and ICT, to promote gender equality and the human rights of women and girls. ‖d

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Guest Editor