

Dr. Claudia Padovani (University of Padova) on the Media, Gender, Policy and Some of the GMMP Key Findings

Dr. Claudia Padovani (University of Padova, Italy) had, as she puts it, a “thin entrance” into the GMMP – Global Media Monitoring Project – world.

‘I am not a gender scholar by training, I come from International Relations, and Political Science. I was connected with WACC (World Association for Christian Communication) around 2000, I liaised with them because they had an interest in communication as a human right.’

Dr. Padovani was invited to take part and, subsequently, coordinate, the 2000 GMMP edition for Italy.

And she’s been involved ever since.



Media, Gender and Policy: the Key Challenges

During the interview with Yann Ilunga, Dr. Padovani touched upon what she considers key challenges related to media, gender and policy.

‘These issues are complex and very much interconnected. I think that, today, on the one side, we’re still witnessing the persistence of a number of problematic elements and discriminatory practices – both in relation to representation and portrayal, and in relation to women’s participation in the media.

Many of the old issues are still with us.’

As she stressed during the conversation, the GMMP and other studies have shown that some progress has been made.

However, some of these studies have also highlighted how such progress has been slow, and that years will still need to pass before we will get to a situation where we could actually talk about equality.

'This is a long, long, trajectory of unequal practices and experiences, which, then, touches upon the life of women and men, but particularly women,' Dr. Padovani adds.

'So, it's not just the profession, but it's how these inequalities may impact on your personal self-esteem, on your possibility to organise a family, to have projects for your life, and then how you perform within your profession.'

Over the years, the majority of the research focus on these issues appears to have been primarily on issues of representation and portrayal. But the overall intersection of gender equality and media is much more complex than that.

'This is certainly the majority of the bigger part of a scholarly work in relation to gender and media,' Dr. Padovani shares.

'However, there have also been studies on how women live and experience their professional work inside the media, the news media, and also the audio visual sector more in general.

So, issues that pertain to the media, as well as to other sectors, like the so-called "glass ceilings" and difficulties for women to access managerial roles and powerful positions that have been investigated for the media.'

In Dr. Padovani's eyes, there are different stakeholders who could contribute to the shortening of this long trajectory of data collection, studies and analyses.

'Starting from Section J from the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action Conference, international organisations, and national governments, as well as scholars, educators and the institutions that focus on training the next generation of journalists – universities and vocational training.'

GMMP: From Italy to the Scandinavian Countries

Her work and her position enable Dr. Padovani to paint a good picture of gender equality both at a national level, with the specific case of Italy, and at a more global level through the findings of researches like the GMMP or activities such as those carried out by the EBU (European Broadcasting Union).

‘When we talk about training, training is also something that happens and should be carried out within the media themselves to allow and help professionals develop their own understanding and competencies.

It's interesting to see that, for instance, in Italy, where we have not been identified as a model on these issues for many years.

But in more recent years, there are efforts being done, particularly by women journalists associations – such as GIULIA, association that gathers more than 600 professional women from around the country.

And such organisations organise trainings, which are recognised by the order of journalists.

So, there are formal trainings that are offered on different aspects of gender equality with a particular focus on the language, through which we report on gender-based violence, for instance.’

In Dr. Padovani’s opinion there are at least four points worth highlighting, when it comes to these matters, especially on a global level:

- *Constant need for updated data:* having sets of data that are up-to-date allows for a better understanding of such diversities, which represent a reflection of the reality we’re facing
- *Not an issue for women:* the gender equality aspect is not an issue for women in leadership nor just for those who are working in that field. It’s an issue that, in order to be addressed and fixed, requires a cultural transformation that should involve all the players in the media space, both female and male
- *Reflections from the newsroom:* in Scandinavian countries like Sweden and Finland, for instance, there are practices being carried out within the newsroom, where data collection and monitoring are done on a regular basis. This process and data become the elements upon which a conversation starts within the newsroom – the issues are addressed and this leads to a better understanding of where the gaps, challenges, and possible solutions are

- *Policy*: having a policy in place, which becomes something for everyone from within the industry to recognise, represents and remains a pillar for those who are struggling to have their equal rights recognised

Want to Get Involved in the GMMP?

Dr. Padovani has message for students, researchers, activists, and other actors who would like to get involved in the Global Media Monitoring Project.

‘We need to be grateful for the wealth of data, knowledge, and resources that have been elaborated over time and are now available.

This is a very rich context.

As we said, though, some issues are less common, less part of the mainstream conversation, when we talk about gender and media.

But there is very much that can be explored. So, maybe, it's not really a recommendation, but it's a “warning”, for anybody who is entering this space, to be aware of that richness and also of the challenges, because navigating through all this is not easy.’

And historical awareness is something that shouldn't be forgotten, as Dr. Padovani stresses.

‘Things are happening. Every other week, we are provided with new data, with a new study. However, there is a long history of exploration, recognition of the issues at stake, a long history of institutional commitment.

There is the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action conference, but if we take this longer approach, we should go back at least to the first World Conference on Women in Mexico in 1975.

So, be aware of those instances and also the struggles, feminist struggles, societal struggles, that have accompanied it all.

And, of course, all the reports, and the studies, and the analyses, that have been done.

I think it's quite crucial because, as I said, many old issues are still with us, but they have a history. And some of the newer issues I think can be better understood if there is a historical awareness of what is actually building up.'

You can learn more about the Global Media Monitoring Project and the resources mentioned during the interview [here](#).

RESOURCES MENTIONED DURING THE INTERVIEW:

- [University of Padova](#)
- [WACC](#) (World Association for Christian Communication)
- [GMMP](#) (Global Media Monitoring Project)
- [Media Gender-Equality Regimes: Exploring Media Organisations' Policy Adoption Across Nations](#) (this chapter is part of Nordicom's *Comparing Gender and Media Equality Across the Globe*)
- [European Institute for Gender Equality](#)
- [AGEMI](#) (Advancing Gender Equality in Media Industries)
- [EBU](#) (European Broadcasting Union)
- [GiULia](#) (Giornaliste Unite Libere Autonome)
- Unesco's [UniTwin](#)
- [GAMAG](#) (Global Alliance on Media and Gender)
- [Gender Matters? Promoting Equal Gender Representation in the Media, Politics, and Leadership Positions](#)