COVERAGE OF GENDER ISSUES IN MASS MEDIA

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Abstract
Mass media is one of the most influenced agents of socialization. Antonio Gramsci an Italian Marxian thinker, created a created a concept of cultural hegemony, which is a intellectual and moral leadership, distinguished from armed force. It can be formed by cultural and political consensus through institutions such as the church, school or media. The male female stereotype "continue to be put together to make stories, and these stories suggest how men and women should relate to each other." Men's life style magazines are a relatively new phenomenon compared to women's magazine, having taking off in the 1990s. TV shows have traditionally depicted men and women in stereotypical manner. There is always a greater childhood that men will be depicted as assertive, independent and competent: women will usually be portrayed as submissive, passive and emotional. In TV advertisements gender stereotyping has a tendency to be at its strongest, because target audiences are regularly either female or male. As with all forms of media, messages perpetrated through social media can have good and bad influences on society and youngsters in particular. Media has improved greatly in the past few years. Women are slowly gaining leading roles and it's not uncommon to see women depicted as equal, working alongside each other equally challenging settings. However the attempts to breaks down the stereotypes threaten to reject the message about the world. Hence a society has to achieve an adequate level of social readiness, so that messages breaking gender stereotype could be effective.

Gender Stereotypes in Mass Media

Mass media is one of the most influential agents of socialization. Media has a direct impact upon an individual's mind on cognition, affect and behavior. It may change one's thinking, feeling and actions. Or it may further strengthen the already existing attitudes. We are constantly bombarded by media in the form of commercial, bill boards and other advertisements blatantly telling us who we ought to be. Media as entertainment also has a subtle influence on society's way of thinking. "Every message you see or hear will have some impact on you, however small' (Martin).

People organize their knowledge about the world around them by sorting and simplifying received information. Therefore they create cognitive schemes which are certain representations of the reality displaying its most typical and fundamental elements and properties. These schemes are responsible for defining the essence of our world view and have a significant influence on social cognition understanding anticipation, situation and emotion control.

One of the most important types of the schemes used for orientation in the social environment is the stereo types, representing the opinions among members of a certain group about the other groups. They are internalized during the socialization. They can be a result of our own observations or be adopted from the influence of the significant others, such as family, friends, teachers and media. Because they produce, stereotypes presents incomplete, subjective and sometimes false images of the reality. They are often based on tradition and are resistant to change. Although they can both have positive and negative undertone, the latter is much more common. Even if certain arguments allow refute a stereotype, people would rather treat it is an exception that proves the rule, than the change the way of thinking. Besides, social categorizations can lead to the effect of homogeneity of the foreign group. Elliot Aronson, another American psychologist said that stereotypes are used to attribute the identical features to each member of a certain group without taking the existing differences among the members in to consideration (1972).

In order to create a medium which is universal, understandable and acceptable for numerous and diverse recipients, senders very often use stereotypes, which fill the social life and evoke certain associations. However mass media not only gives people information and entertainment, but according to a Canadian communication theorist Marshall McLuhan it also affects people's live by shaping their opinions, attitudes and beliefs (1964). It controls social life by invisibly transferring the dominant hegemonic ideology. Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxian thinker, created a concept of cultural hegemony, which is an intellectual and moral leadership, distinguished from armed force. It can be formed by cultural and political consensus through institutions such as the church, school or media. In the case of gender role, the societies have established the hegemony of the males by institutionalizing of male dominance over women. Men have been perceived as the head of the household and women are mainly housewives. Now-a-days the difference between male and female roles are smaller, however mass media still perpetuates traditional gender stereotypes.

The media also defines what a good and bad woman ought to be like. A "good" woman is submissive, sensitive and domesticated'. Women contrary to these descriptions are seen as bad and rebellions. "A woman who stands up for herself is

no longer a woman" (Martin). The media presents two life styles choices for women by glorifying a good obedient woman and making the bad, disobedient woman miserable and horrid.

Men, on the other hand are shown as "fearless, tough decisive, a man of action" (Martin). Men are often portrayed as commanding and authoritative. They have no fear and never show any weakness. The media leads viewers to believe that the masculine stereo type is "natural, normal and universal" (Chandler).

These two stereotypical gender definitions are not entirely separate entities. Rather they co-exist-playing off each other to form a single social stereotype. The male female stereotype "continue to be put together to make stories, and these stories suggest how men and women should relate to each other. In this relationship, men and women help bind each other to their traditional roles. This dependence reinforces the idea that woman must have a man when they are weak and emotional, and a man is incomplete without a woman. However, the woman must remain "discretely in the background so as not to detract attention from the male" (Martin).

Print Media and Portrayal of Gender
Even after the popularity easy availability of television, the written word did not lose its effect. However in the 21st century, the trend has shifted more and more people, especially youngsters spend most of their time with TV or computers still the print media remains to be one of the first sources of information that a child comes in contact with print media includes newspapers, books, magazines. So called, women's magazines make women more and more conscious of their looks. These magazines make them worry about their appearance and to strive to please the men (Pierce, 1990). Children story books also promote stereotyped gender roles. The hero usually being a male, the one to be rescued by him is usually a female: the wizards are male and witches are female.

Betty Friedan, American feminist and writer, analyzed American women's journals (such as ladies Home Journal, Mc Calls, Good Housekeeping and Women's Home Companion) in her book the *Feminine Mystique* published in 1963. She discussed the role of women in the American society; post World War II, noticing that until 1939, media spread the idea of modern woman, happy and willing to get the right to build her own life. In those stories, heroines are women with a professional life, who are determined and independent. After the Second World War, media broadcast a new propaganda of a housewife's life style as the only proper way for women to reach happiness. These magazines addressed women as housewives who aimed to impress their authoritative, working husband and gave them advice that focused on bringing happiness to their families. Betty Friedan also underlines the overlap of media representations with social relations between sexes. It produces the paradigm of masculinity's superiority over women.

When Helen Gurley brown took over the editorship of Cosmopolitan in 1964, it enabled the "assertion of a strong sexual identity from the outset". The readers of the magazine represented a new generation that had gone to college, were often on the pill, and had high expectations of the world.

Victoria Secret magazines are filled with woman models, ho are often times digitally altered. "In 2011, the American Medical Association (AMA) stated that any alterations to a body image can create unrealistic expectations that children and adolescents are subject to "Victoria Secret Models that are back models, are often times put into "jungle clothes", which is offensive and racist. In addition to Jungle like attire, they also wear tribal like make up and face paint. Victoria Secret Magazines are guilty of hiding their models' faces by their own hair or shadows. This is problem because it dehumanizes the model and makes that model to be seen only as an object for sale, like the products. Frequently magazines also entertain the themes of commodification, which is "the selling of cultural, sexual and gender differences in a way that supports institutionalized discrimination". An example of commodification could be an online dating site, because the users are then thought of as being "bought" or "purchased".

Men's lifestyle magazines are a relatively new phenomenon compared to women's magazines having taking off in the 1990s. Even if each has a different focus, they cover aspects of modern men's lives that weren't included in the previous magazines for men, helping define the social construction of men and most have reviews of films, music, video games and books.

Portrayal of Gender on Television
Television being strong medium providing role models plays a vital role in teaching all sorts of behaviours. Television is their major sources of information. Children obtain their information about various occupations from TV and believe in this information to be accurate (Green Berg, 1982). Most of TV programmes on the other hand portrays men and women to be indulging into stereotypical occupations (M.Harris and Vorhees, 1981: Zuckermen and Zuckerman, 1985). TV shows have traditionally depicted men and women stereotypical manner (Singorielli and Bacue, 1999). There is always a greater

childhood that men will be depicted as assertive, independent and competent; women will be usually be portrayed as submissive, passive and emotional; (in other words men are shown to be in charge of life and women in need of support).

The women on TV have to be good looking and physical attractive. It is not necessary that men on TV will always be handsome; they may not be looking. But most of the women are young, attractive and sexy (Davis, 1990). Men solve mysteries, show acts of chivallary; and when women unmark the villains, it is by mere chance or luck or may be accident.

Many narratives on TV are implicitly designed to be interpreted from a masculine perspective. It seems that in almost all forms of media, viewers are frequently supposed to identify with male characters and to objectify female characters. Gender roles are not necessarily biologically determined because they vary according to the culture. That is why gender roles have been described as being socially constructed. Most of the behaviours associated with genders are learned rather than being inherent. Within a cultural masculinity and femininity may be defined differently by various people.

According to study from 1975 conducted by Jean Mc Neil "Feminism, femininity and Television shows: A content analysis" in 74 percent of the cases studied women's interaction were "concerned with romance or family problems", whereas men's interactions were concerned with these matters is only 18 percent of the cases. The Mary Tyler Moore show was a television break through because it introduced the first female character whose central relationships were not her husband or boy friend or her family, but her friends and coworkers. The main character was a sort of stand-in for the "new America female" who put her job before romance and performed to be alone than with the wrong men, but still had to do stereotypically female office work (like typing and getting coffee) and did not speak up to her boss and other male workers.

By the time the series premiered, "television was starting to embrace female actions stars with police woman, get christie love and charlie's angels. Wonder women followed the formula these shows put forth; the main character was powerful, yet beautiful and feminine. Nevertheless even though the show avoided the stereotypical housewife trope, the protagonist was "positioned as a sex symbol above all" and as in Charlie's Angels and Bionic woman, women had to respond to and take orders from a man, did not talk about their wants, needs and had provocative clothes.

In 1990s TV shows producers "arrived at comfortable, not particularly- offensive models of masculinity and femininity," which the public seemed to accept. The three male characters in the Sitcom Friends (1994-2004), for example "fit easily within conventional models of masculinity, but are given some characteristics of sensitivity and gentleness and male bonding, "and the three female protagonists are "clearly feminine, whilst being sufficiently, intelligent and non-housewifey."

For the last several years reality television has dominated main stream television programming, providing relatively inexpensive entertainment. Reality TV depicts another side of female and male stereo types. The premise of reality TV requires that individuals place themselves on public display, thus forfeiting all claims to personal privacy for the sake of transient fame and possibility of monetary compensation. With the showing, of the Bachelor, continuing on with its 18th season as of 2015, it seems like we are on a downhill climb away from females being stereotyped on TV shows. Reality television has emerged as America's most vivid example of pop cultural backlash against women's rights and social progress. Power imbalances in heterosexual relationships are codified in relationship shows. On the Bachelor, men and women are seeking to find love the "traditional way" by going on live TV and falling in love with someone after only going on to four of the most extravagant dates ever with them and then being thrown back into reality where they fight for what they had in paradise. The Bachelor depict women as desperate a needing a man to live a happy and whole life. Producers focused on a narrow regressive interpretation of marriage in which all single women are pathetic, all couples are straight, parenting and house cleaning are women's work, families can survive on only the income of a strong male provider and "love" is the sole domain of skinny white women and rich white men.

"A positive depictions of women challenge negative stereotypes even when the content includes sexuality and violence". How to get away with murder is a show full of sexy and intriguing characters followed by confusing character relationships and murder mysteries.

Gender and Advertisements
In TV advertisements gender stereotyping has a tendency to be at its strongest, because the target audiences are regularly either female or male. There has been a decrease of this in recent years, but the general pattern still remains to be prevalent. In TV advertisements men tend to be portrayed as more independent and self sufficient. They are portrayed in more occupations than women because women are portrayed generally as mothers and housewives. Men are shown mostly advertising domestic house type of products. So in general men are more likely to be portrayed as authorities in a business setting or outdoors and women in domestic settings.

In American Advertisements with girls playing with action figures and boys using easy-bake ovens was fruitless, and even when it moved to a gender neutral product, side walk chalk, the advertisement was sending different messages towards boys versus girls. Tide, a Procter & Gamble laundry detergent, has taken its advertisement in a better direction, recently showing a clip where the leading male actor proudly proclaims "I am a stay-at-home dad". And later goes on to braid his daughter's hair. By showing a man playing out typically "feminine" behaviours, Tide is promoting a more equal society.

In Gender Advertisements, Canadian-American Sociologist and writer, Erving Goffman gave his 1979, anthropological study of visual communication and gender representation in advertising. The book is a visual essay about how sex roles are depicted in advertising, with stereotypical differences between men and women that communicate subtle, underlying, symbolic messages about the sexual roles projected by masculine and feminine images used.

According to Steve Craig's research (1997) women can be presented in commercials on several variants. The first one is the most popular; a housewife obsessed by a steam on a new table cloth or a woman whose main problem is the lack of ideas for dinner. The other examples are less traditional; however they are still very stereotypical. One can distinguish commercials with female vamps-sexy seductresses, the objects of desire of every man. They mostly advertise cosmetics, but they also appear in the commercials directed to men. When a beautiful woman accepts and praises the male cosmetics, it is treated by men as a guarantee of its quality. Another type is a woman, whose major concern is to preserve her beauty. Hence she presents a healthy life style is physically active, uses a wide range of body and facial cosmetics. However, one can observe mainly the presence of very thin actresses in this type of commercials, which can lead to the assumption that only thin woman can be beautiful and healthy. As a result many female receivers fall into the obsession with their weight, which sometimes can have negative effects.

Commercials exploit women's sexuality by using her bodies to sale products. Two examples are Ferrari and Lamborghini, which have ads where women are used to make the cars more desirable, and therefore attract more consumers. Other examples are women in bikini promoting trips to sunny places, commercial for alcoholic beverage (especially beers; like corona and Modelo), or Victoria's secret, which uses the body of the models to sell clothes and underwear.

Male stereotypes are also various. The first model is "a real man", athletic, successful, professional, seducer with a beautiful woman by his side. He also has a branded car and a smart phone. The other type is less popular and presents men devoted their families who can save enough time for them. Men are very rarely presented during house cleaning. And if they are, it is rather a satirical image e.g. in the Mr. Muscle commercial-or they appear as the experts and they advice women, for instance, how to do laundry properly. Advertising specialists also use the stereo type of male friendship, which can be called "buddy narratives", men are presented as acting together, for instance by going to a football match or to the pub. They share the same interest and opinions and they enjoy spending together by doing something extremely interesting and adventurous (Pawlica, Widawska 2001)

Social Media and Gender
Social media has assumed a significant role in the tech-savvy nations of the world in that it not only allows extensive networking but also brings nations closer together by easy discrimination of news and opinions. As with all forms of media, messages perpetrated through social media can have good and bad influences on society and youngsters in particular. Given that more woman than men use social media, it is but logical to support that this form of media has a sizable impact, both good and bad on gender matters. The attitude of women versus men towards voicing opinion, particularly in relation to the response they get, plays a significant role towards relative female silence in social media. Sharon O' dea digital communications and internet specialist explains that while women have fewer qualms about sharing content there is a reticence towards taking a public stand point on an issue, and this is seen in the greater presence of women in media sharing applications such as facebook rather than a verbal sharing media such as twitter.

This reticence of women in social media is largely a result of the unfavourable and even often abusive, responses they get purely on the basis of their gender. Pornography, email harassment, "flaming" (abusive or obscene language), and cyber stalking are some of the issues faced by women in social media. The most common form of the harassment found in social networking sites is "flaming", the use of highly aggressive language pattern-Slut shaming is a frequently used and dangerous form of flaming in social networks. Women are often ignored, trivialized or criticized by men.

Commercials that appears in social net working sites, as with advertisements in all other forms of media, can be source of gender stereotyping. An important discrimination is that ads show entire figures of women and close up shots for men, the former objectifying the female body, while the later evoking positive associations. Thus culturally constructed gender roles and relationship continue to remain cross-cutting elements in limiting the portrayal of women in social media.

Adolescent girls and boys differ in the types of content they post to their profiles: girls reportedly post "cute" pictures, either of themselves or random, while boys were likely to share pictures and comments that they described as self promoting and often containing sexual content or references to alcohol. Such behaviours reiterates the cultural gender stereotypes and media portrayals of the "commodified" woman and the strong, stable man. Adolescent girls are also more likely to share personal information than boys, thus exposing themselves to possible sexual predation or cyber bullying. But on the positive side, women are more aware of the impact of their pictures and content, especially those related to alcohol on their employable future than men and tend to use social media more carefully. Fortunately for young adults and children, a variety of protection tools are available to allow monitoring by adults so that they (especially girls) do not fall victims to the social evils of social networking.

Conclusion

Men and women differ psychologically from the way in which they communicate to the way in which they communicate to the way they attempt to influence other. Academic research has shown that while women tend to have more expressive, tentative, cooperative and polite communication characteristics, men use more aggressive, assertive, direct and powerful communication traits (Basow & Rubenfield, 2003, Maltz & broker, 1982, Wood, 1996, Mason, 1994). The gender difference in influence tactics mirror the gender differences in communication styles as women's use "soft" influence tactics align perfectly with their intimate relationship oriented communication style. This psychological gender differences in communication styles and influence tactics create stereotypical roles for men and women in the workplace, providing a set of expectations for what is expected of women, often putting women at a disadvantage.

Media has improved greatly in the past few years. Women are slowly gaining leading roles and it is not uncommon to see men and women depicted as equals, working alongside each other equally challenging settings. The main aim of the mass media is to be universal and suitable for everyone, in order to gather the largest possible audience. The television responsible for providing central social discourse, is supposed to be "a mirror of the society". However, because of the stereotypical way of explaining the reality, some groups are underrepresented or ignored, therefore society image is incomplete. But the way media depicts men and women and their roles in the changing now-a-days. With significant real life changes in gender roles, media especially TV is also adopting a realistic path. However, the change is not as prominent and rapid in our part of the world as it is in the west. Most of the TV programmes still not only promote the traditional stereotypical gender roles, but also reinforce such views. Today we see women as working outside the home, and we also see men doing shopping or caring for children, however even today life is portrayed on TV in a manner more stereotypical than life in the real world (Coltrane and Adams, 1997; Ruble and Martin, 1998). If prime time TV programmes follow this non-stereotyped track, children take its impact. If children watch non-stereotyped characters in major roles, their view of gender roles are more flexible; they accept males and females in non-traditional occupations (Wroblewski and Huston, 1988). It is high time media authorities recognized their social responsibility and take charge of initiating social change, for which they have the stronger means that can enter into every household and every viewer's mind.

According to Debra Pryor and Nancy Nelson Knupfer (1997), "If we became aware of the stereotypes and teach critical viewing skills to our children, perhaps we will become informed viewers instead of manipulated consumers". Moreover the commercials evolve along with the development of the society and are the answer to many social and political changes, such as emancipation of women, growing role of individualism, globalization and revaluation of patterns of social roles. More and more advertising specialists produce non-stereotypical commercials. However the attempts to break down the stereotypes threaten to reject the message; they affect security and well established knowledge about the world. Hence, a society has to achieve an adequate level of social readiness, so that messages breaking gender stereotypes could be effective.

Social networking holds potential to boost the economic, political and social empowerment of women and the promotion of the gender equality. But such boost is possible only with awareness of risks and benefits of the medium. Social networking cannot be demonized without a judicial consideration of benefits possible for women. The campaign by the United Nations for example, attempts to use social media to close the equality gap between men and women. A new study published in British journal of Social Psychology reports that even discussing sexism in social media could also improve women's well being because of the possibility of a sense of catharsis and "collective action" that offers support. While blogging or tweeting is different from holding protest march, its strength lies in the possibility to reach millions of the people separated by geographic boundaries and extend support. Media researcher Johanna Blakeley believes that social media applications, as they outgrow traditional media, may actually free us from some of the gender assumptions in society.

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