

## Gender Bias in the Huffington Post, Toronto Star, and CBC

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Currently, the consensus on gender difference is that it results from a combination of environmental and biological factors, with many academics proposing that agents of socialization, such as the family, media, and educational institutions play a significant role in gender identity formation (Messner, 2000; Koch, 2004; Koch et al., 2005; Lauzen et al., 2008; Safiyiddeen, 2008; Blau & Kahn, 2016). In this paper, I will argue that there are significant problems with the way that men and women are treated by the Canadian media. This paper will provide an analysis of existing gender bias in the Huffington Post, Toronto Star, and CBC newspapers. Gender analyses of widely consumed media forms, such as newspapers, are crucial because they allow us to uncover how highly influential agents of socialization engage with the issue of gender. This paper will begin with a delineation of the general differences between the representation of men and women in the Huffington Post, Toronto Star, and CBC newspaper. This will be followed by a more detailed discussion on depictions and descriptions of men in the same media outlets.

News stories on politics, sports, and videogames most commonly feature men, whereas stories on dating, relationships, parenting, and famous singers tend to feature more women. Men are consistently shown in positions of power, often accompanied by gestures that suggest power and status. In contrast, the stories featuring women suggest that they play a different and conventionally less important role in society. On a similar note, in the case of reports of violence, men often assume the more 'powerful' position of perpetrator. In contrast, the position of victim tends to be reserved for women. In the entertainment realm, women tend to be depicted as

singers, which is consistent with stereotypes about what type of occupations within the industry are considered feminine, in addition to reflecting real differences in gender representation in the music industry. Evidently, there are a number of significant differences between the representation of men and women in Canadian media. While it may seem as though men are presented in a more favorable light in comparison to women, their representation in CBC, Huffington Post, and the Toronto Star raises some concerns about their treatment by the Canadian media.

For one, women are described in very sympathetic terms in comparison to men. The headlines that describe women engaging in illegal or socially unacceptable behavior are very fact-based and straight to the point, whereas men engaging in similar behavior tend to be described in far more antagonistic terms. Moreover, while the importance of the various types of relationships that women have others is highlighted in the Canadian news, few headlines suggest that relationships matter to the lives of men at all. Intimate relationships, however, are crucial for an individual's well-being, irrespective of gender (Daalen et al., 2005; Demir, 2009; Dahlberg et al., 2014; Heylen, 2010). The unequal emphasis for different genders suggests the contrary, which is a problem because it carries the potential of misleading men into believing that something that is critical for happiness is not very important.

Additionally, consistently featuring men in positions of power, whether it be in the political sphere or in sports, raises another set of concerns for the emotional well-being of males consuming this content. By doing so, these news outlets are implicitly suggesting that men are always strong, they are always the decision maker, and they can not be weak. All of which are

harmful messages that are likely to have a negative effect on the emotional well-being of a male reader.

In this paper, I argued that there are significant issues with men and women's treatment by the Canadian media. The findings of this study seem to indicate that Canadian newspapers uphold a number and perpetuate of harmful gender stereotypes. That said, it is important to note that stereotypical depictions of men and women in these newspapers are likely in part due to the fact that newspapers tend to report on current events, and gender stereotypes are prevalent in virtually all realms of social life.

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