

# Relationship between Media and Society——With a Focus on the Difference Between Men and Women in Media

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**Abstract:** Media is a big part of our lives all the time. Especially, with the development of internet and new media, there are more ways to communicate and spread messages nowadays, and it costs less. Since changes have been happening in a rapid way, the relationship between media and its audience also changed strongly. Paintings in ancient times, for example, can only be consumed in a relatively small area. People who owned paintings always belong to the upper class, where they have time and money to have an artist finish the work. But as our society develops further, we have better containers for these paintings, and what improved the spread of them is the invention of photography. Photography not only make it possible for paintings to spread out in larger areas, by making a reproduction of them in only a few seconds, but it also cause art to be less scarce, most people can afford a photograph of themselves, so they do not need an artist to paint for them anymore.

**Keywords:** Media; Relationship Between People and the Media; Difference

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## Introduction

Media need audiences, and its form is based on the audience. They certainly can be controlled by people, when they can choose what kind of message they want to take in, and what kind of information they want others to know. When the Wenchuan earthquake happened in 2008, the news spread out on the Internet for only a few minutes, and people who have the ability to help them can donate money online to those who suffer from the natural disaster (Kodon, 2011). In this case, the media is controlled by people. Otherwise, it can be used as a tool for getting to know the information you need when it is produced in distant places. People may use media like magazines, documentaries, broadcasting, or some social media to learn the culture and customs of a certain place, learn to interact with people, and how they act in different ways. This can greatly affect our point of view towards something that we might first notice only from one aspect, and we can get closer and closer to the truth. The truth might not be the most important, but many other aspects of life can be influenced, like treating one's relationship with people differently, from the position of each other. However, media has an important fluence on our lives in different ways.

Although media have no ideology itself, it works for the ideology offered by people. Media that participates much in our life in China, like some TV series, is suggesting to us the ideology that with our hard work, we can eventually get what we want in the end. Respect from others, enough money for a comfortable life, more and more power, those can all be earned after a long time of hard work, even though you are just a normal person. In a TV show, *The Good Wife*, the heroine experiences so many dramatic changes, and in the end, only her hard work as a lawyer can save her and her life. If the audience might also want this kind of life, they are likely to be influenced by the media and change their past beliefs and behaviors. In the same way, when some violent films and video games are becoming available for people to consume, the setting and events have a strong impact on people, and they might also change their behaviors.

At this point, we get to know that the media is definitely just a tool. It cannot be defined simply as good or bad but will be decided by what purpose people use it for. On top of that, the relationship between media and people also depends on the usage of media. Media can be controlled by people, on the other hand, people can be changed by the media.

People need media for many different purposes, some of them need it to control others, some of them need it to earn

money, and some of them need it to entertain themselves. So with so many usages that people cannot give up, the media is developing in our society. New technology has not only changed the power of humans, but also improved media, and many new forms of media are popping out. Many mainstream ideas are also being flipped over. One of the most obvious and complicated ideas is the different appearances of men and women in the media.

Finding out the difference in appeal to men and women in the media, should be traced deep in the river of history. In ancient times, there was no technology that could exceed human power multiple times. For example, when people wanted to build a house back then, they needed to dig through the ground to lay the foundation. However, women are weaker in strength, and it costs much more time for them to do this. So men appear to be the main labor in society, and women can only work at home most of the time. In this case, the difference between men and women had been significant. Women needed men to survive, especially in the low class, while those people are selling their manpower for a living (Gender Differences, 2002). Women had less power, and what they are good at is taking care of the house, and doing some work that cost less physical strength. While in this division of labor, men eventually had more power than women do in the society, and therefore women had to rely on men for a living. Having this background, John Berger said in his book *Ways of Seeing* in 2008, that women appeal, while men act. This was true at that time, a woman had to take care of her image all the time, in order to have a man being attracted, and wait for his action so that she could survive in society. For example, in ancient paintings, we can see paintings about women, no matter in what setting, in what clothes, they are being watched by others, can be character directly from the picture or people outside, that is, you, the audience. They are showing the feeling of shame, and the purpose of the painting is mainly for pleasing the man.

With the first industrial revolution, humans began to develop many strong powered machines, like trains and boats. As the industrial revolution continues, many inventions have been changing our lives. They are dozens of times stronger than tools humans could use in the past, but controlling them is not that hard. People do not need to be highly skilled for driving a car, or be super strong when they want to pick up heavy objects using trucks. Men are no stronger in these aspects than women, they can now achieve the same level basically, there will not be a difference in the strength of a machine when it is controlled by men or women. So women can participate more and more in society since the difference between men and women bodies are not significant anymore, and they can have more power than before, just like men. What's more, there are more job choices for women, like lawyers and doctors. Those careers become popular after people have more types of division of labor. They can participate in society as doctors, and the differences between men and women are nearly negligible. Women can even be more detailed in dealing with patients, they can be paid with their own effort (Shmerling, 2017).

As women become powerful in society, they no longer need to rely on men to survive anymore, they can earn money or other sources needed for living by themselves. So how they appear in the media has definitely changed. Social media can be the perfect point for exploring that. It appears in recent decades, and it can clearly show how women appear in the media after they have a different role in society. What has certainly changed is that women are more active than they were in the past.

On social media, although women are still posting selfies that have the purpose of attracting others, especially men, more of them are trying to post other sides of their life. Some of them are sharing experiences in their career, and they are not simply just posting pretty selfies that only appeal anymore. On top of that, there is an interesting new phenomenon that rarely happens in the past, men begin to appeal to women. When women have the ability to earn enough resources to survive, men can also earn a living by pleasing women in the same way. They are posting selfies that are not active, like just staring into the camera, or having positions that look good in a photo. In other kinds of media, women figures are also changing a lot. They can present speeches confidently, or act out real selves in front of short videos. This can show the changes over time apparently, where the position of men and women are getting closer, women no need to be that attractive anymore. Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook COO, presented a speech at TED in 2010 about why we have fewer women leaders. She gives out examples about how men and women treat things differently. Women appeal more to emotions. However, she is sharing her experience as a leader, not trying to just present herself, but to act (Sandberg, 2010).

In recent TV series, unlike those in the 90th, the audience prefers to watch women who have their own life, career, and things they need to worry about. Just like what has been mentioned before, in the TV show published in 2009, *The Good Wife*, the heroine's husband faced a great failure, and the heroine, unlike others in TV shows, stands out as a lawyer and tries hard in her field to overcome her family problem. Men are not only heroes anymore, women can also be. What's more surprising,

combined with the relationship between media and people, women can be affected by the media. What has shown in this TV showed told its audience that women can also earn respect and achieve success in their careers, and the result they get after the same amount of work as men is similar to men, they can be brave to step out and for the first time, try to live for themselves, for their families, not only rely on men. Once more, it builds on the point of view that media is the message, people can release the message, like new types of sharing in the social media and women characters in TV series; they can also receive messages from the media, that they can also be the center of themselves.

The relationship between media and people can be represented by public attitudes changes towards the difference between men and women. Media is changing people's thoughts about men and women nowadays through TV series, magazines, books, music and so on. However, the differences between men and women are not completely being noticed, and need more attention. This is what the media is for, finding problems, and changing the world.

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