

Exploring Gendered Futures

Journal of Communication Inquiry

2024, Vol. 48(2) 183–184

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DOI: 10.1177/01968599241227059

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I began my tenure as the managing editor of the *Journal of Communication Inquiry* with an issue about the body politic. It began the story of volume 48 with politics to establish how interconnected our research and the world are. This volume of *JCI* recognizes the idea that “everything is political,” and in doing so, we embark on a journey to discover just how the public and the personal are deeply intertwined – whether we like it or not.

This issue interrogates issues of gender. At this moment, issues of gender are at the forefront of global politics – especially as nations around the world stare down autocracy and the rollback of personal rights. Gender parity still does not exist in our global body, including in the nation I currently write this note. Gender equality is still debated, calling into question the world’s ability to achieve peace and sustainability. Gender equality is a basic human right. Where this volume of *JCI* goes from here is an opportunity for us to converse about how we utilize our research to achieve parity and equality and how our scholarship can continue to challenge oppressive and domineering systems. The articles in this issue do just that.

This Issue

Volume 48, issue 2, contains seven peer-reviewed articles and one book review. Collectively, they tell the story of this issue’s theme: “Gender challenges, traumas, and opportunities for an equitable future.”

The lead article of this issue, “Keeping up with the boundaries of advertising,” by Patrick Ferrucci and Erin Schauster. In their paper, Ferrucci and Schauster delve into the advertising industry’s norms and practices, particularly how they shape and are shaped by social and cultural contexts. They focus on the Pepsi ad featuring Kendall Jenner as a critical incident that reveals the industry’s implicit and explicit boundaries. The paper explores the industry’s role as an interpretative community, where ethical norms and boundaries are socially constructed through discourse among practitioners and external actors, rather than through official rules. By analyzing reactions to the ad’s attempt to capitalize on social justice movements and its failure to authentically connect with the cause, the study underscores the need for genuine brand activism aligned with brand identity and a diverse workforce, contributing to broader discussions on gender parity and equality. By examining the industry’s response to the Pepsi commercial, this investigation into paradigm repair aims to unearth the previously implicit norms and

standards, thereby enhancing the reader's understanding of advertising ethics and the importance of authentic, socially conscious branding.

We continue to thread the connections between gender and social justice in Rachel Grant and Diane Ezech Aruah's "'With Pride:' Media Coverage of Dwyane Wade and Gabrielle Union's Black Parenting of Zaya." In their paper, Grant and Aruah explore how Dwyane Wade and Gabrielle Union's portrayal of their family life, particularly their support for transgender daughter Zaya Wade, challenges traditional media stereotypes of Black families by showcasing a narrative of completeness, support, and care. It examines the impact of their social media presence in reshaping mainstream media's coverage of Black parenting and transgender youth, highlighting the role of critical race parenting in addressing transphobia and racism, as well as promoting a broader understanding of Black identity and experiences. These types of experiences can also be understood by interrogating interpersonal communication. This becomes clear in Daisy Milman and Miglena Sternador's "'If You Were a Horse, You Would Have Been Shot': A Thematic Analysis of Medical Professionals' Communication with Mothers." In their study, they analyze mothers' responses to an online survey to explore how medical professionals' communications affect their stress related to "good mother" norms, revealing the reinforcement of an evolving normative system that often unintentionally oppresses the very individuals it governs.

Other articles in this issue explore how gender is constructed in specific media, such as specialized magazines, television, and the press. "Selling Yoga 'Off the Mat': A 10-year Analysis of Lifestyle Advertorials in *Yoga Journal* Magazine," by Bhalla et al., explores a decade's worth of advertorials in *Yoga Journal* magazine, revealing a predominant emphasis on health products and lifestyle brands targeting female practitioners, and discusses the implications for the continued commodification of yoga through such promotional content. We then encounter Anqi Peng's "Representing Single Women: The Transformation of 'Leftover Women' on Chinese TV Series," where she compares two Chinese television series to discuss the evolving portrayal of unmarried women, known as "leftover women," in the context of China's post-socialist gender politics and the increasing societal anxiety over late marriage and singleness. The two papers offer varying critiques of social and cultural constructions of gender and the importance of combatting issues of disparity and hate. The issue's last article is "Weinstein's Scandal: Contrastive Study on Intensification in American and Spanish Opinion Columns" by Conchi Hernández-Guerra. In this study, Hernández-Guerra analyzes and compares the media coverage of Harvey Weinstein's trial in the United States and Spain, revealing that contrary to expectations, American reports were more objective and used euphemisms, while Spanish media overused intensifiers to demand action against sexual harassment; it emphasizes the need for deeper studies on the use of intensification and repetition in media as tools for enhancing or mitigating opinions and facts.

Until the next issue. Fight on.

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