

Activity: Food In The Media



TIME ESTIMATE
45 minutes



MATERIALS
Digital devices to access the links to the advertisements, or paper print-outs of the advertisements

PURPOSE

To examine how the media shapes dominant narratives on food and gender and reproduces notions of gender normativity.

DESCRIPTION

Participants will analyze and discuss real examples of how food and gender are portrayed and represented in mainstream media. They will also have an opportunity to reimagine the media piece that more accurately represents the gender spectrum and uses gender expression as a tool for liberation instead of oppression.

STEPS

- 1** Introduce the activity.
 - Food is everywhere in contemporary mediascapes, as witnessed by the increase in cookbooks, food magazines, television cookery shows, online blogs, recipes, news items and social media posts about food.
 - The mediatization of food means that the media often interplays between food consumption and everyday practices, between private and political matters and between individuals, groups, and societies.
 - Understanding food media is particularly central to the diverse contemporary social and cultural practices of food where media use plays an increasingly important but also differentiated and differentiating role in both large-scale decisions and most people's everyday practices.
- 2** Divide the participants into 3 separate groups, and provide links/printed copies of the example advertisements that are indicated below via hyperlink (one example per group). Each group is to assign a notetaker within their small groups and discuss a prompt provided with each advertisement in their small groups as well as the following discussion questions.

Prompts:

- Group 1
 - Ad: [Del Monte's Fruit Undressed campaign](#)
 - How does this ad promote or reinforce corporeal expectations based on gender?
- Group 2: How does this ad inform, challenge, or reinforce sociocultural expectations around gender?
 - Ad: The Macy's I Do print campaign
 - How does this ad inform, challenge, or reinforce sociocultural expectations around gender?
- Group 3:
 - Ad: [Giving my wife a Kenwood chef print ad](#)
 - How does this ad portray gender expectations of food preparation roles? In contemporary times, do similar expectations exist in the material realm (eg. hospitality/restaurant industry, agriculture, etc.)? If so, do these expectations align with the real social structures of these work environments?

MODULE 7: GENDER, EQUITY AND FOOD SECURITY**Discussion Questions:**

- Who made the advertisement, and who is the target audience?
- What is the key message behind the advertisement?
- How does the advertisement reinforce the gender binary and reproduce expectations of how gender identities should perform?
- What other dominant identity markers do you often identify in similar advertisements (in terms of gender, race and ethnicity)?
- Who is often being represented, tokenized or fetishized in the media?
- What are the systemic factors that underlie the messaging communicated in the advertisement? Whose bodies are valued as superior and perceived as ideal?
- How have you seen this advertisement or similar ones being replicated by your preferred media outlets? How does it make you feel?

- 3** Regroup the class. Invite 1-2 participants from each group to share their responses to the prompts and discussion questions.

ASSESSMENT: OP-ED

After conducting a literature review and formulating your own opinion, write an opinion editorial (op-ed) on one of the following statements and delineate the reasons behind your position. The op-ed should present well-researched and backed up arguments with at least 5-10 academic or community sources.

- US or Canadian policies for advancing equality adequately addresses the experiences of womxn, transgender, and gender-nonconforming people.
- Within the household context, gender roles have changed considerably over the past century and womxn, transgender, and gender-nonconforming people no longer experience disproportionate oppression in relation to food.
- The media is increasingly broadcasting food advertisements that are gender-neutral or that do not portray normative assumptions of gender.

These reflections can be picked up at the end of the class as an 'exit ticket', where learners submit their short reflection before leaving the class or workshop, or assigned as a take-home exercise.

Facilitator Note

You are encouraged to create your own statements for learners to choose from. Ensure that your statements are adapted to your local context. You are also encouraged to provide resources on how to write an op-ed, including [Op-ed Writing: Tips and Tricks by The OpEd Project](#), as well as samples for learners to refer to.

NOTES: