

That we regret the rise of women's magazines (NEG)

Context:

Women's magazines are a form of print media with a female target audience. They span lifestyle, fashion, and news, varying by publication. [85% of women read a women's magazine on a daily basis.](#) Historically, these publications provided platforms for political discourse and feminist empowerment. Today, they provide a platform and pressure point for intersectionality and inclusion.

Set-up:

We support the status quo, where women's magazines function independently and provide a flexible platform for discourse.

Summary:

To win this debate we have 2 main burdens:

- 1) That women's magazines have had a unique and profound impact on society.
- 2) That any practical harms of women's magazines are outweighed by their benefits (past, present and future).

Substantive:

1.1 – Historical empowerment

- Women's magazines assisted the feminist movement
 - o Mechanism 1: Provided a platform to include women in political/social discourse during a period when women were excluded from society
 - o Mechanism 2: This form of print media had better reach, increasing engagement and sharing the women's movements' messages further
 - Involved recruitment, organisation, and education on the movement's goals and doctrine
 - Other 'hard news' media was less likely to print this information because society was dominated by Caucasian men
- Even if women's magazines have some harms, these are outweighed by their impact on women's movements.
 - o Impacting:
 - If not for this engagement, we don't see second and third wave feminism could have moved as quickly as it did or engaged with more marginalised members of society.
 - It is inherently harmful to remove this pillar of connecting and supporting women in a historical time of struggle and ignorance.
 - o Example: [Şükufezar magazine used in 1980s Turkey was a platform for women to voice their opinion on the standing regime and to fight back against the coup d'état.](#)

- Conflicting principles:
 - Potentially harmful messages surrounding women
 - We believe the historical advancement of the feminist movement is significantly more important than these potential messages. Even then, 1.2 and 2.1 explain that these ‘harmful messages’ are not present.

1.2 – Plays key role in 4th wave feminism

- Even if 1.1 wasn't true, women's magazines provide significant benefits to 4th wave feminism.
 - Mechanism 1: Women's magazines are a platform to boost intersectionality
 - After accusations of exclusivity and misogyny, the industry changed, resulting in clear and noticeable intentions to spread more positive messages.
 - The creation of specifically targeted women's magazines (e.g. [Gal-Dem for women of colour and marginalised genders](#); [Mille World for Arab women](#)) generated a market for diversity in women's magazines.
 - Magazines are incentivised to represent all demographics because their readership is diverse.
 - Outcomes: Because of this shift we see more positive, realistic and intersectional representations of womanhood.
 - Mechanism 2: Women's magazines focus on social justice issues relevant to women
 - Because women's magazines' predominant readership is women and minorities, they are best placed to discuss these groups' issues with minimal backlash
 - We see that women's magazines can discuss women's issues in politics, facilitate dialogue about mental and physical health, and open conversation about women's struggles.
 - Other 'mainstream' media with non-female audiences are wary of backlash, alienating readers or giving information not relevant to them. Thus, they are less willing to engage with women's issues.
 - Outcomes: This destigmatises women's issues in media and sends more positive messages surrounding beauty standards.
- Thus, this is an important vessel for 4th wave feminism to push for change and discuss minority issues that cannot be mirrored by other media.

2.1 – Readers are not taught negative attitudes

- Two-faceted:
- Negative attitudes are actively opposed
 - Side proposition will mischaracterise women's magazines as archaic institutions making no effort to evolve with time or culture; we tell you that they are platforms for empowerment and discourse.
 - As explained in 1.1 and 1.2, women's magazines have consistently promoted the feminist movement, encouraging positive attitudes about women. Beyond this;

- Mechanism 1: The industry challenges exclusive ideals
 - Although in the past, negative messages may have been portrayed due to societal/cultural attitudes, this is no longer the case.
 - As outlined in 1.2, women's magazines largely promote inclusivity through realistic and intersectional depictions of womanhood.
 - The impact of historical prejudiced views can only be dismantled if magazines, and hence, readers, pressure the fashion/beauty industry to be more inclusive/intersectional.
 - While the negative attitudes from the fashion/beauty industry cannot be eradicated with women's magazines, it is better than alternative platforms (i.e. social media, where there is less critical analysis and regulation).
 - Outcomes: With women's magazines, people are more likely to engage in pressuring the greater beauty industry for change than they would without them. Hence, inclusivity can spread to other media and markets.
- Even if negative attitudes were present, readers are not affected:
 - Mechanism 2: The target audience are mature enough to have critical analysis skills to break down what is real/fake.
 - Resultant of social media and digitisation, people are increasingly cautious/critical of what they read/see; more inclined to question it.

2.2 – Diversifies Journalism

- It is important to have a wide range of media sources and styles to maximise reach/readership/accessibility.
- Mechanism 1: Inclusion of women in journalism
 - Women are underrepresented in journalism. [Studies consistently find that over 70% of journalistic writers, publishers and people quoted are male.](#)
 - Women's magazines are essential to ensuring women have a platform prioritising their voices and work in the industry.
- Mechanism 2: Supports print media
 - Women's magazines are one of the few remaining publications to be consistently printed and are unlikely to become a completely digitised sub-sector of journalism.
 - Sustains jobs and provides another level of accessibility, ensuring that not all media becomes internet-dependent.
 - Increases inclusivity in accessing media
- Mechanism 3: Supports 'lifestyle' journalism as an industry sub-sector
 - Lifestyle journalism is more likely to focus on diverse issues that actually affect women's daily lives
 - This provides another level of accessibility to information that isn't solely based on 'hard news'.

Pre-emptive Rebuttal:

Promotes/Perpetuates negative attitudes surrounding women

- 1) The incentive of these magazines is to not alienate their readers, so we don't believe these messages are being sent.

- 2) If these messages were being sent, we don't believe they have significant impact, for the three reasons stated at 2.1.
- 3) At the point which women's magazines have profoundly benefitted the feminist movement, the historical, present, and future benefits outweigh any harms.

Endangers health of readers by promoting unrealistic beauty standards

- 1) These beauty standards are promoted everywhere and removing women's magazines will not affect that.
- 2) These negative ideals can only be fully removed by consistent pressure on the beauty/fashion industry. Women's magazines are the best avenue for this:
 - a. 'Mainstream media' is less likely to engage with women's issues
 - b. There is no other way for grassroots advocates to push for change in the industry
 - c. The industries/brands rely on support/advertising from magazines. Thus, magazines are incentivised to adapt to changing social attitudes.

Concluding Remarks:

Women's magazines have had a profound historical impact on the feminist movement, continue to provide a platform and encourage discourse on issues relevant to women in a way no other form of media can facilitate. We are so proud to oppose.