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### **Co-constructing Gender Norms in ‘True Life Stories’**

This paper explores the possible role of personal narratives in the co-construction of gender norms when they appear in the form of media discourse. Studying reader-contributed ‘true life stories’ in a women’s page, the researcher looks at how the mediated personal narratives, mostly concerned with family life and relations, may dialogue with gender norms in telling about one’s life experience or story while representing the perspective of ‘common women’. Giving retrospective accounts of life fragments, the storytellers reflect on their personal doings or problems encountered in the past, from time to time with expressions of their doubts about and efforts to negotiate with gender norms, and usually with words of self-evaluation or justification. In doing so, they turn the women’s page into a negotiating space, where the readers as authors interpret and redefine gender norms. That said, the participatory communication is always undertaken within the media institution and cannot go outside the reign of the underlying ideology of the newspaper.