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**Cultural changes as reflected in portrayals of women and gender in Chinese magazines
published in three eras**

by

Yue Yin

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----|
| LIST OF TABLES | iv |
| ABSTRACT | v |
| CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM | 1 |
| CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK | 9 |
| Culture Defined | 9 |
| The Dimensions of Culture: The Group and the Grid | 9 |
| Cultural Changes in China | 12 |
| Framing Theory | 13 |
| Ideology, Culture and the Media | 14 |
| The Changing Role of Women in China | 17 |
| Before the Cultural Revolution (1949-1966) | 17 |
| During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) | 20 |
| During the days of reform (late 1970s to date) | 21 |
| CHAPTER 3. METHOD | 25 |
| The Study Design | 25 |
| The Sample | 26 |
| Definition of Variables | 26 |
| Coding Protocols and Intercoder Reliability | 29 |
| CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION | 31 |
| Content Analysis | 31 |
| The sample | 31 |
| Frames depicting women's roles | 33 |

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Frames depicting gender | 40 |
| Discourse Analysis | 45 |
| Sub-frames depicting women's roles | 45 |
| Sub-frames depicting gender | 67 |
| CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION | 76 |
| Content Analysis: Frames about Women's Roles and Gender | 78 |
| Discourse Analysis: Women's Roles and Gender Sub-Frames | 79 |
| Implications of the Findings to Theory | 80 |
| Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research | 82 |
| REFERENCES | 84 |
| APPENDIX A. CONTENT ANALYSIS CODE BOOK | 91 |
| APPENDIX B. CODING GUIDE FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS | 92 |

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Intercoder reliability for quantitative and nominal variables
30

Table 2. Number of stories depicting specific frames about women's roles
39

Table 3. Number of stories depicting each gender frame in the three magazines
44

Table 4. The sub-frames of women's roles and gender and the frequency of their occurrence
47

ABSTRACT

This study examines how women's roles and gender were portrayed in magazines published during three distinct epochs of Chinese history: before (1949-1965), during (1966-1976), and after the Cultural Revolution (1976 to date). It asked: What were the most dominant roles ascribed to women and femininity in each era?

A content analysis of articles that discussed the role of women and gender published in three magazines—*Women of China*, *Rosy Dawn*, and the Chinese edition of *Elle*—was conducted to determine the most commonly occurring frames. Discourse analysis was employed to describe how these frames were applied over time.

The findings show congruence between the dominant ideology of the time and the frames used in articles that discussed women and gender. However, different frames, some of which ran counter to mainstream beliefs, were also found despite high censorship conditions. The results suggest more attention to the combined impact of the mainstream culture and its associated sub-cultures on media content.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

China has experienced tremendous social change since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949. Among the most dramatic cultural shifts that accompanied this political transformation were changes in the general perception of women's roles in society, a phenomenon that may have been documented by the portrayals of women in the mass media. This study examines how women and femininity were depicted over time in magazines published during three distinct epochs in Chinese history. The objective is to provide evidence for the relationship between cultural change and the portrayal of women in the media.

Since the Communist Party came to power, Chinese society has experienced tremendous cultural changes. Three months before the formal proclamation of the People's Republic, Mao Zedong set forth the principles of "New Democracy" in accordance to which the new government was to be established (Meisner, 1999). According to Mao, the new state was meant to serve the working class under the leadership of an alliance of workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie, and national bourgeoisie.

When the Communist Party took power even before the Cultural Revolution, non-Communists were given high positions, or at least were provided with high titles, in the administrative organs of the new state (Meisner, 1999). The party also began establishing urban organizations from the bureaucratic structures left over from the old regime, and many old civic organs were retained. Because various social groups had access to power, there

were conflicts, especially between the party and other political forces, over the ideal socialist culture. On one hand, Mao envisioned freedom of speech, assembly, association, and election for citizens while the government proscribed actions believed to be against the socialist ideology. Intellectuals were urged to serve the collective good, contribute to national economic goals, and uniformly accept Marxist precepts. Some, even those who were subjected to a relentless process of thought reform, resisted these efforts (Meisner, 1999). They campaigned for freedom of speech and tolerance for diverse opinions.

The Cultural Revolution was seen as “Mao’s last desperate attempt to revive a revolution he believed was dying” (Meisner, 1999, p. 291). Although the Communist victory in 1949 destroyed the old bureaucracy and Mao proclaimed China as a state with no hierarchy and oppression, efforts at national unification and industrialization crystallized a process of bureaucratic centralization. In spite of the party’s moves to narrow or eliminate the “three great differences”—between mental and manual labor, the city and the countryside, and workers versus peasants—social inequality intensified in 1960s (Meisner, 1999). As inequality grew, collective values declined and Marxian socialist goals became increasingly divorced from social and political practice. Meisner (1999) observed that after the 1950s, citizens turned to private pursuits and a renewed commitment to family obligations. This rebirth of sorts was accompanied by a revival of traditional religious beliefs and social customs. Mao, who saw himself as the embodiment of the collective will, announced that the Cultural Revolution will be considered a war against bureaucratic oppression. Therefore, at least for official propaganda purposes, the Cultural Revolution was heralded as having eliminated social hierarchy in favor of the collective spirit.

Since the late 1970s, China has embarked on a path of modernization involving a transition from a centrally planned to a market-driven economy. Societal values were seen as having moved from extreme collectivism to individualism, which may be attributed both to a retaliation against the long-term oppression of individual interests and to the dissemination of Western values. Since 1979, the Chinese state has implemented policies consistent with its drive to become an exemplar of neoliberal capitalism in the global economy (Harvey, 2005). This re-direction of values involves encouraging people to pursue personal wealth, a far cry from the previous exhortations to devote individual energies to the development of the country. Before the revolution, every aspect of personal life, including work, marriage, personal relationships, and family was supposed to serve the national good. According to Crider (1999), Deng Xiaoping's reforms attempted to establish more liberalized structures to support national security and prosperity. Deng tried to restore China's position as a global force through economic reforms that favored a more liberal way of life. He did this by instituting agricultural reforms, urban commercialization, and a general atmosphere of openness in policy formulation.

Among the most dramatic cultural changes that occurred as a consequence of Chinese reform policies was the transformation of women's role in society. As Mao tried to establish a new order, he saw patriarchy and gender inequality as antithetical to the new socio-political order he sought to create. The party associated the redefinition of woman subjectivity with a promised socialist transformation (Chen, 2003). The liberation of women was to be realized by eliminating restrictions in domestic labor laws such as the Labor Law of the People's Republic of China and the acknowledgment of women as active agents of production.

Although women were promised to be equal to men, according to Wallis (2006), the women's liberation process was still subordinated to national development goals.

This study proposes that changes in women's roles as prescribed by the dominant political ideology of the day have been captured by mass media reports, especially in articles that saw print in women's magazines. Magazines have long been considered the medium that better portrays people's ways of life at a particular time and place than newspapers, radio, or television. Aside from providing readers with entertainment, they serve a surveillance function by providing information about society and the developments taking place within it. They also perform a correlation function by interpreting new policies and new opinions, and they have a cultural transmission function by educating readers about cultural values (Payne and Dozier, 1988). Because magazines have been known to carry the "comments of the time" using narratives and images, they are useful means with which to examine changes in cultural dimensions across time periods.

For decades, researchers have examined magazines as they search for clues about the construction of gender roles, about the portrayals of women, the roots of gender ideology, and for answers to questions about the intersections of class and race (Cramer, 2001). Glasser (1997), investigating how images of women in magazines have evolved from the 1960s until 1991, found that before the period of economic reforms, Chinese women were portrayed as "self-assured" and "strong." Such characterizations were consistent with Eber's (1976) findings of images of highly committed model workers during this time period. These images showed women as active participants in the labor force and demonstrated the highly politicized nature of social life (Wallis, 2006). Traditional feminine characteristics were

ignored following the tenets of socialist asceticism that denied sexual desire and romantic love between men and women. Instead, women's portrayals propagandized that love is based on economic class and relations. The media were used at that time to integrate that ideology into everyday life through aggressive information campaigns. Such practices cleave toward Anderson's (1991) notion that the modern nation-state relies on the media to implant national consciousness and values, articulating national identity as a ubiquitous and often banal part of everyday experience that influences other identities, including gender and sexuality.

In today's China, however, many say that the images of women in the media are complex and sometimes contradictory. Western values of individualism, aspirations for self-actualization, and the worship of Western lifestyles find resonance in those who are young, better educated, and financially better off (Wei & Pan, 1999). Meanwhile, as the level of women's unemployment increased due to intense competition in the labor market, many returned to traditional values that saw "men taking society as their dominant sphere while women, the family" (Wei & Pan, 1999). In other words, the image of women as subordinate to men has resurfaced (Wallis, 2006). As Rofel (1999) suggests, in today's China modernity is often associated with notions of gender, and a modern woman adheres to a blend of traditional and Westernized standards of physical beauty and feminine comportment.

To what extent are these changing roles in response to how women are portrayed in the media? As Chinese society traversed three distinct eras of cultural life, has it influenced the way the media has portrayed women? To answer these questions, this study analyzes the changes in the images of women in three magazines published in three different time periods: (1) before the Cultural Revolution, (2) during the Cultural Revolution, and (3) after the

Cultural Revolution to investigate the influence of cultural change on magazines' portrayals of women.

According to Entman (1993), "culture is the stock of commonly invoked [media and audience] frames; in fact, culture might be defined as the empirically demonstrable set of common frames exhibited in the discourse and thinking of people or social groupings" (p. 53). Thus, culture, including the dominant culture and sub-cultures, help shape the content of magazines. It is therefore pertinent to determine whether the cultural changes that buffeted Chinese society over six decades are reflected in the magazines' portrayals of women. This study also aims to ascertain what forces in a given historical period had the most influence in framing the role of women in the media. The goal is to examine the different frames with which women were portrayed in the magazines published in three distinct eras of Chinese history.

No Chinese magazine exhibited longevity enough to cover the three periods under scrutiny. Because of this, the current study examines three magazines selected from each era: *Women of China*, *Rosy Dawn*, and the Chinese edition of *Elle*.

Women of China was launched on June 1, 1939 in Yan'an, China's revolutionary base. It was the official publication of the Women's Union of China with the objective of reaching women audiences across the country regardless of residence and level of education. However, because most women at that time were not literate, the magazine became the most influential publication among high status and better educated women. It is the first national periodical initiated by the Women's Movement Committee under the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Mao even wrote a poem to congratulate the magazine's inception. He also

recommended two potential mastheads to show his support of the women's movement. After 1949, the magazine became an official publication of the All-China Women's Federation. This magazine was selected for analysis because it was published at a time when different voices compete for access to public discourse against the backdrop of a lenient political ideology.

Although *Rosy Dawn* was published at the end of the Cultural Revolution, it was founded by Jiang Qing, Mao's wife, who was named in charge of the revolution's cultural aspects. Her opinions about culture, art, and literature represented the government's official stance on these areas. The purpose of this magazine was to emphasize the "rightness" of the Cultural Revolution, and to suppress any potential opposition to it. When the Cultural Revolution ended and Jiang Qing was arrested, the magazine ceased publication. It is hard to determine the demographic and other characteristics of the audiences of *Rosy Dawn*. However, it can be inferred that only high status and better educated people could have had access to the magazine during the Cultural Revolution.

The post-Cultural Revolution era in this study is represented by the Chinese edition of *Elle*, the first international magazine to enter the Chinese market. It is also believed to be the best localized international magazine in China. Since 1988, it has been one of the best selling magazines in the country targeting highly educated urban women. *Elle* epitomizes the desires for sociocultural transformation brewing since the 1980s. It not only conveys information about fashion, health, sex, and lifestyles; it also portrays idealized notions of "modern" identities and ways of life for Chinese readers—the need for social mobility, the struggle for individual self-determination, and the pursuit of non-traditional careers. While the old

ideology is constantly being eroded as people seek new lifestyles—and ways to achieve those lifestyles—from various sources, it is important to investigate how women were portrayed in this new era when people are trying to erase from memory the “radical lifestyle” before the economic revolution and are said to be “seeking new values.”

Women’s magazines function as a window into the real world of women. Through these publications, women gain insights and are taught what is expected of them (i.e., they learn what it is to be a woman). McRobbie (1996) argues that magazines seek to further consolidate and fix an otherwise unstable sense of both self and gender (as cited in Curran, 1996, p. 193); women’s magazines help create a culture of femininity where women are able to at least share common experiences. These magazines provide readers with a sense of community, comfort, and pride in identity as they promote a feminine culture and define and shape the woman’s world (McRobbie, 2000, p. 69).

By investigating the influence of culture on the portrayal of women in magazines published in different eras, this study provides a macro-level picture of the transformation and continuity of women’s roles in Chinese society. If magazines provide insights into people’s socialization strategies, and if such strategies can indeed simultaneously influence and embody readers’ perceptions of themselves, their peers, and the social and material world, then this study provides a longitudinal look at these potential effects. This study will differentiate itself to previous study by offering empirical evidence for the influence of culture and sub-cultures within a society on media content; by providing general pictures on framings of women’s portrayal across time in Chinese history; by presenting the conflicting and consistencies of discourse over three historical epochs.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Culture Defined

In 1874, Tylor (1924), credited with launching the discipline of anthropology, defined culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by...the members of a society” (p. 12). In the 1940s, Malinowski (1945) proposed that cultural manifestations represent a group’s response to basic problems of human existence: distributing tasks and resources, mating, establishing laws and justice, and educating children, among others. What differentiates one culture from another is the form of institutions developed to deal with these universal problems.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) see culture as “nothing more than the way in which groups have organized themselves over the years to solve the problems and challenges presented to them” (p. 54).

To Schein (1991), a given group’s culture reflects “what that group has learned in solving problems in its own history. A different group that has had different problems and experience will...have a culture with different content” (p. 181). He explains that “in the process of learning to solve problems come the beliefs and values that represent predictions about how things are (beliefs) and statements of how things ought to be (values)” (p. 249). These shared beliefs and values can be manifested through what Schein calls “artifacts,” which include language, literature, and artwork.

The Dimensions of Culture: The Group and the Grid

There are a limited number of universally shared problems, which Douglas (1982) calls “themes.” To her, themes “can be identified in every culture, and that the key to the character, structure and direction of the specific culture is to be sought in the nature, expression, and interrelationship of these themes” (p. 184). Douglas (1982) constructed two dimensions of problems that human beings face. According to her, these problems can be categorized as involving the relationship between the individual and the group (or individualism versus collectivism) and the relationship of the individual to authority (or rules versus relationships). She refers to the dimension of individuation as the “grid” and the dimension of social incorporation as the “group.” She asserts that the group and grid dimensions are adequate to capture the variability of an individual’s involvement in social life (Figure 1).

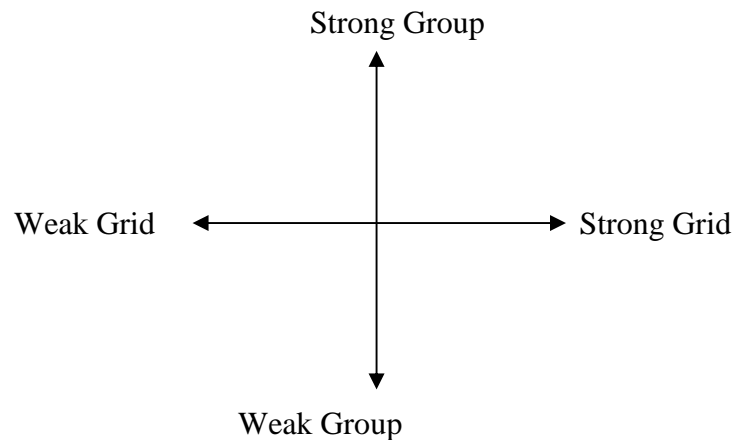


Fig. 1. The grid-group dimensions of culture (Douglas, 1982)

The grid suggests “the cross-hatch of rules to which individuals are subject in the course of their interaction...At the strong end, there are visible rules about space and time related to social roles; at the other end, near zero, the formal classification fades, and finally

vanishes” (p. 192). In other words, in a strong grid society, there are strict rules that govern people’s behavior, leaving little space for the individual to transact across them. For example, in a strong grid society, women do not compete in a predominantly men sphere for time, space, or jobs; strong grid systems have specialized roles for women. In a weak grid society, people are free to behave as they wish.

In the strong group society, “individual behavior is subject to controls exercised in the name of the group” (Douglas, 1982, p. 206) while in the weak group society, personal interests are accorded greater importance than the needs of the group. Individualists look after themselves and tend to ignore group interests. The opposite of individualism, collectivism, occurs when the demands and interests of groups take precedence over the desires and needs of individuals. Collectivists look out for the wellbeing of the groups to which they belong even if such actions sometimes require that personal interests be subordinated or even disregarded (Wagner, 1995). Parsons and Shils (1951) further distinguish between individualism and collectivism. To them, “individualism exists when individuals are able to pursue private interests irrespective of their bearing on the interests of others; collectivism occurs when obligations toward the collective wellbeing are allowed to supersede the pursuit of personal gains” (p. 175).

In short, individualistic cultures emphasize the goals of the individual over the group, whereas collectivistic cultures stress group over individual goals (Triandis, 1988). In individualistic cultures, individuals tend to assume responsibility only for themselves and their immediate family. In collectivistic cultures, individuals tend to belong to in-groups that look after them in exchange for the individuals’ loyalty. In-groups are “groups of people

about whose welfare one is concerned, with whom one is willing to cooperate without demanding equitable returns, and the separation from whom leads to discomfort or even pain” (Triandis, 1988, p. 75).

Cultural Changes in China

Although Mao’s Cultural Revolution did its best to combat individualization, the failure of the collectivist economic policy of the 1960s ushered a renewed desire for individualism. At this time, sociologists suggest that the Chinese people returned to private pursuits and paid more attention to family obligations. Meanwhile, various interests groups never gave up the struggle for greater freedom of speech despite the Communist Party’s incessant efforts at thought reform and the remolding of ideology. It could be inferred, therefore, that in the pre-Cultural Revolution era (1949-1966), Chinese society was more individualistic.

The pre-Revolution era is also believed to be a more class-conscious society, a period of time when traditional religious beliefs and social customs (i.e., strong patriarchy and an emphasis on hierarchy) reigned supreme (Meisner, 1999). At that time, it is said that the family dominated the individual, age dominated youth, and men dominated women.

Because of the lack of internal role differentiation during the Cultural Revolution (equality and similarity among individuals were overly emphasized), society had to deal with arduous conflicts and lengthy decision-making processes. Therefore, Chinese society can be said to have moved from the strong grid to the weak grid as it transitioned from the pre-Cultural Revolution to the Cultural Revolution era.

Today, entrepreneurial impulses unleashed by decentralization and commercialization raise hopes for greater individualism, although social stratification remains deeply rooted in the Chinese way of life (Meisner, 1999).

It can be inferred that the pre- and post-Cultural Revolution eras are characterized by a great deal of conflicts and contradictions among the different cultures that composed Chinese society. During the Cultural Revolution, because of highly oppressive political regulations, political ideology dominated the public discourse; other voices were either marginalized or completely eliminated. Were these ideological clashes depicted in how magazines framed women and their role in society?

Framing Theory

Entman (1993) suggested the idea of “framing” as a theoretical framework to identify the factors which shape the content of media and which influence the effect of communication on audiences. For him, framing essentially involves selection and salience. “To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (p. 52). This definition suggests that media content cannot be a “mirror” which reflects the “truth” as society sees it. The essential components of media content—problem identification, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and treatment—are produced according to certain overarching frames.

Because China is experiencing tremendous change in the economic, political, and cultural fronts, it can be surmised that the frames present in the Chinese media may be complicated and even contradictory. Although McQuail (2000) indicates that the relationship between mass media behavior and other changes taking place in society is still unclear, it can be assumed that the Chinese media behavior is more likely an outcome of the changes in government policy as part of the evolving culture.

The government since the 1990s has been increasingly concerned about how to guide public opinion through the state-controlled media. To do so with greater efficiency, it has restricted direct foreign investments in the media, among other control measures (Zhu, 2003). According to the *Rules for the Implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Foreign-Capital Enterprise*, no foreign-controlled organization shall be established in the following trades: the press, publications, broadcasting, television, and film. In addition, private foreign investors can hold shares of Chinese media enterprises not to exceed 40 percent of total capitalization (Zhu, 2003).

Ideology, Culture and the Media

In any investigation of culture's influence on media content, another factor needs to be taken into consideration: ideology. Because the media are always seen as the "throats and tongues" (Chan, 2007) of the government, the Communist Party's ideology has always exerted a direct influence on media content. By extension then, this influence must have affected the depiction of women in magazines.

Williams (1977) defines ideology as a “relatively formal and articulated system of meanings, values and beliefs of a kind that can be abstracted as a ‘worldview’ or ‘class outlook’” (p. 109). According to Becker (1984), ideology “governs the way we perceive our world and ourselves; it controls what we see as ‘natural’ or ‘obvious.’ Ideology is an integrated set of frames of reference through which each of us sees the world and to which all of us adjust our actions” (p. 69). Questions of ideology center on how diverse groups with conflicting interests “hang together” in a society. As Gouldner (1976) puts it, “ideology assumes special importance as a symbolic mechanism through which the interests of diverse social strata may be integrated. Through the sharing of it, several dominant strata are enabled to make compatible responses to changing social conditions” (pp. 230-231). In short, according to Shoemaker and Reese (1996), ideology is “a symbolic mechanism that serves as a cohesive and interacting force in society” (p. 152).

The media’s ability to define issues, topics and situations gives them ideological power (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996). The nature of ideology as a social integration mechanism and the related social control function of the media suggest that the media also must function to maintain coherence in a society. To integrate societal interests, the media define views and values as falling within the bounds of acceptability, whereas others are read out of legitimacy.

According to the Chinese Communist Party’s media policy, “the media should enhance social stability and boost people’s morale” (Chan, 2007, p. 45). Before and during the Cultural Revolution, the media were called upon to serve ideological goals. According to Mao, the role of newspapers, in particular, was to “bring the party program, the party line,

the party's general and specific policies, its tasks and methods of work before the masses in the quickest and most extensive way" (Chan, 2007, p. 47). In other words, the press was expected to "move public opinion (*dazao yulun*) in support of the state's political line and policies" (p. 548).

Chan (2007) claims that the Community Party has shed the old media policy of "suppressing" public opinion in favor of the more flexible principle of "guiding" public opinion today. This policy ostensibly provides more room for people to express their concerns. According to this new policy, the media are expected to discuss the most important social problems and advance social issues, which means that their main function is to support development initiatives and enhance national stability. This policy has opened the door for publications such as fashion magazines that shift attention away from politics.

To effectively guide public opinion in today's China, the media should get as close as possible to the daily lives of ordinary people. A party leader warns that "falsehoods, humbug and empty talk" will erode people's trust in the press (Chan, 2007, p. 189). Since the 1990s, the media have been encouraged to cover people's concerns, including fashion, emotional problems, family issues, sports, and entertainment. This may also be one of the reasons why the Chinese government allowed some measure of foreign and private capital into the media industry.

Shoemaker and Reese (1996) explain the relationship between ideology and culture. According to them, "ideology works through existing values and should not be considered an alien belief system imposed on an inhospitable host culture" (p. 213). The premise of the current study is that culture helps shape media content. Culture is defined as "the patterns of

meaning embodied in symbolic forms, including actions, utterances and meaningful objects of various kinds by virtue of which individuals communicate with one another and share their experience, conceptions and beliefs” (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996, p. 213). Thus, although both culture and ideology are concerned with meaning, ideology is connected to class interests. As applied in framing, according to Entman (1993),”culture is the stock of commonly invoked frames. In fact, culture might be defined as the empirically demonstrable set of common frames exhibited in the discourse and thinking of people or social groupings” (p. 53). As China undergoes tremendous socioeconomic and cultural transformation, little work has examined the influence of cultural changes on media content.

The Changing Role of Women in China

Before the Cultural Revolution (1949-1966)

“Ideology tends to be seen as inevitably selective and potentially misleading,” argues Johnston (2008, p. 54). According to him, ideology is often portrayed by the dominant sectors of society as natural and desirable, and is used to mask the mechanisms of oppression. Davin (1975) points out that “although the major theoretical articles on women produced by the Chinese Communist Party show considerable variation in approach and emphasis, they have in common as a basis for analysis the proposition that the special oppression of women arises from their being divorced from productive labor” (p. 363). Engels’ (1972) thesis constitutes the best-known passage about women in China. He posits that the emancipation of women and their equality with men is impossible, and remains so, as long as women are excluded from social production and restricted to domestic labor. Thus, “the emancipation of women becomes feasible only when women are enabled to take part extensively in social

production” (p. 221). Heeding this advice, the Communist Party moved to include women into the labor force to promote gender equality. As the speeches at the First National Women’s Congress proclaimed, the tasks of the newly organized All-China Democratic Women’s Federation centered on women workers, and that whenever possible, workers and their dependents should be organized to become producers as well as consumers (*Zhongguo funil diyi ci quanguo daibiao dahui*, 1949). The magazines of that time exhibited model urban women workers as exemplars (Chen, 2003). There is evidence to suggest that women responded to this policy positively. For example, the *China Daily* (1957) published a letter from a reader blatantly saying that people, in general, “despise plain housewives.”

However, there are other views at play during the pre-Cultural Revolution era. In conferences, discussions considered how wives could best maintain their husbands’ morale and preserve their strength for their jobs by protecting them from the problems at home (*Zhigong jiashu gongzuo jingyan*, 1956). A good housewife, according to a magazine article, does everything to keep her husband happy at home. For example, if he likes fresh vegetables, “she should shop for them twice a day, just before each meal” (Cusack, 1958, p. 45). Such a wife conforms closely to the ideal and should be singled out for emulation.

A series of fashion and beauty features that appeared in *Women of China* in 1955 can be seen as part of the same broad movement to “feminize” women (Davin, 1975) because the female body was always associated with the liberation of women prescribed strongly during that era. For instance, the author of a 1952 *Xin Zhongguo Funü* article about China’s first woman train dispatcher, Sun Xiaoju, extolled her exemplary deeds but began by describing her physique. He wrote: “From her stalwart body [and] robust arms, I saw the form of new

China's women" (Chen, 2003, p. 274). Thus, efforts to "liberate" women from traditional roles co-existed with notions of women as a traditional homemaker during the Cultural Revolution.

Some researchers, however, have noticed the preponderance of mentions about the policy to subject women to the service of the party during that period. For example, women were told that eliminating wasteful practices in the household contributes to the national economy in an article published in the *Women of China* in 1955. Such an article is part of the campaign to give housewives a sense of purpose and value, and to link their work to the cause of socialist construction (Davin, 1975). The party was seen as the savior of women. In another story, women were described as being guided by the Communist Party to enhance their contributions to society. It began:

Liang Jun was very familiar with production work. With the help of the school principal and teachers, she began to understand what type of political party the Chinese Communist Party was, the relationship between youth and the nation, and why she should continue to study hard. [The goal is that] in the future, she should contribute her efforts to the nation, and her thoughts would progress quickly (p. 175).

As Chen (2003) commented, women's presence in the workplace in the 1950s arose from the policy of equality between men and women, the need for woman labor, and the desire of women to work outside the home. The first two were men-directed, but the third included "women as active subjects who produced the conditions for their own liberation" (p. 273). The exhortation that "women will succeed through their own efforts" was prevalent in interviews with woman model workers (Chen, 2003).

As such, in the pre-Cultural Revolution era, notions of collectivism and individualism worked together—perhaps toward opposite ends—to spur changes in women’s roles. In contrast, the picture during the Cultural Revolution was much simpler and left no doubt about the role of women.

During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)

During the Cultural Revolution, women were actively inducted into the public labor force and were immersed into the highly politicized nature of life. At this time, the drive toward gender equality was implemented to the extreme; the former division between public and domestic spheres was removed. Femininity or any assertion of a feminine identity was rejected (Wallis, 2006). State propaganda featured the strong, brave, and technically-skilled “iron girls.” Showing interest in love or sex was treated either as “shameful expressions of a warped mind” or as “evidence of bourgeois individualism and are thus detrimental to the collective welfare” (Evans, 1997, p. 107). Yang (1999) called this phenomenon “gender erasure” (*xingbie muosha*).

Influenced by the dominant ideology of that time, the media adopted a special discourse when talking about women. Glasser (1997) investigated the images of women in magazines published from the 1960s to 1991 and found that before the advent of economic reforms, Chinese women were generally portrayed as “self-assured” and “strong.” In Eber’s 1976 study, images of highly committed rigid model workers were common. Gender oppression was supposedly to be removed with gender differences. Therefore, during the Cultural Revolution, women were said to have been liberated from the “old evil traditions” that did not bring freedom but oppression.

In accordance with Mao's often-repeated adage that "women hold up half the sky," Chinese women were expected to play an active role in building the nation (Wallis, 2006). Until Mao's death in 1976, women's patriotic role was articulated clearly in terms of their economic, political, and social responsibilities. The state-run media dutifully reported and portrayed their part in economic production. A key aspect of this era was that women relied on the state for their status although some political analysts opined that deeply embedded cultural and structural impediments to true equality were never eliminated (Riley, 1997; Stacey, 1983; Wolf, 1985).

As a consequence, the personal aspects of women's lives (as mothers, daughters, and wives) were ignored or promptly neglected by the press. Magazines, for example, overemphasized public workplaces and dismissed the private domestic realm (Glasser, 1997). Ironically, however, because the fate of women was always secondary to that of the nation, the improvement of their status was often deferred whenever it threatens the welfare of the state politically or economically (Riley, 1997). Personal considerations had to completely give way to the thought and person of Mao who presented himself as the embodiment of the popular will (Meisner, 1977). It could be inferred, therefore, that the Cultural Revolution media were commanded to convey extreme collectivist values and eliminate gender differences.

During the days of reform (late 1970s to date)

China began to transform itself from a centrally planned to a market-driven economy in the late 1970s. The country also opened its doors to foreign investors. Not only did foreign commodities and capital enter the Chinese market; Western lifestyles and values

challenged the revolutionary ideology that had dominated China for 30 years. As Wang (2006) indicated, reforms in technological and economic domains unexpectedly shifted the existing social order and impinged on people's ways of thinking:

A number of recent studies on students' job selection criteria have provided indicators of value changes on college campuses in China, consistently showing the prevalence of an awakened individualism, manifested as an emphasis on individual happiness, heightened self-awareness and a stronger sense of independence along with an overwhelming concern for individual well-being and a certain negligence of other people's interests...These studies have also consistently shown that accompanying this expanded individualism, there exists a fast-growing materialism, functionalism, utilitarianism and consumerism (p. 234).

Although these changes in character were believed to be the result of the absorption of capitalist values, young people were observed to have imbibed only one-sided Western ideas. Bai (1998), for example, points out that few college students thought about fairness and equality "while focusing on competition and efficiency" (p. 5).

Xu (2007) assumes that consumer values during this period became the core of people's convictions. According to Wei and Pan (1999), "since 1979, China has been engaged in a reform program to reorient its economy toward establishing a consumer market...Shortly after the Tiananmen crackdown and with tacit official encouragement, public energy has been channeled into an unprecedented wave of entrepreneurial and consumption activities" (p. 77). The authors found that people who are younger, better

educated and financially better off were the main bearers of these consumerist values. To obtain a better life instead of serving the country became the ultimate goal of today's women (Wei and Pan, 1999).

In this climate of neoliberalism, women were observed to uphold gender differences as a reaction against the suppression of gender during the Cultural Revolution (Evans, 2002) so that the "modern" woman now adheres to a blend of traditional and Western standards of physical beauty and feminine ways (Rofel, 1999). The current images of Chinese women in advertising and the media in general have become increasingly sexualized and presented exaggerated notions of femininity as ideals to strive for (Evans, 2002).

However, while Chinese women have improved the quality of their lives, there is also evidence that unemployment has increased and the income gap between men and women, particularly in rural areas, has widened. Some women even began to agree that men are, by nature, more able than women or that society is governed by men while women supervise the household (Wallis, 2006). After nearly four decades of Communist Party indoctrination, women are now showing a tendency to return to so-called traditional women's roles.

Not much work has been done to analyze how Chinese women are portrayed in today's media. Glasser (1993) observes that compared to the rapid and radical changes in society, changes in the images of women in the media are obvious but relatively slow. Johnstone (2008) suggests that "one of the ways in which discourse is shaped has to do with what people expect to say or hear, write or see in a given context and how they expect it to sound or look... We select certain aspects of discourse as repeatable wholes, and we re-use text-building strategies and styles that others have used to build new meanings" (p. 162).

Thus, the present study examines the extent to which the conflicting values and cultural clashes in today's Chinese society can be discerned from the frames magazines use to discuss women's roles in society. In summary, as today's women embrace individualism anew, the media are now increasingly depicting gender differences. In Douglas' (1982) parlance, modern China is seemingly fashioning a society characterized by weaker group and stronger grid.

Considering the diverse and sometimes contradictory roles assigned to women by the state and the mixed perspectives that characterize specific eras in Chinese history, it is pertinent to ask:

RQ1: What were the most dominant roles for women portrayed in the magazines published during these three eras?

RQ2: How was gender portrayed in the magazines published before, during and after the Cultural Revolution?

RQ3: How were these roles portrayed by the magazines published during these three periods in Chinese history?

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

To study how cultural changes influenced the portrayal of women in Chinese magazines published in different eras, a content analysis and discourse analysis were employed. The impact of cultural and other social changes in the country on the portrayal of women were expected to be reflected in the content of women's magazines that saw print at three different time periods.

The Study Design

A quantitative content analysis and a qualitative or discourse analysis of women's magazines from three eras—before the Cultural Revolution (1949-1965), during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), and after the Cultural Revolution (1976 to date)—were conducted. Articles that discussed women, including specific personalities, the general role of women, their achievements, their concerns, lifestyles, their careers, gender roles, and how women deal with work and family were selected for analysis. Articles that did not directly portray women but offered suggestions about how women readers can develop and nurture their relationships with men, children, family members and kin were included for analysis. The sample also included stories about romance, fashion, and tips about how to manage the household. Fictional stories that featured women characters were also part of the sample. The sample did not include advertisements.

The unit of analysis is the complete article although the study was limited to an analysis of the text.

The Sample

Elle is a monthly magazine that has been in circulation in China since 1988; all issues released from 1998 to 2008 constituted the sampling frame for this particular magazine. A stratified random sampling strategy was applied to arrive at the stories that were analyzed. According to Lacy, Riffe and Randle (1998), stratified random sampling is a more efficient means of attaining a representative sample of monthly consumer magazines. When sampling from a ten-year period, they observed that a constructed year is more efficient and produces more accurate results than 20 randomly selected issues. To arrive at a constructed year of 12 issues, an issue per month was randomly selected. Therefore, 12 issues from ten years were assembled from which an issue per month was randomly drawn. The Chinese edition of *Elle* contains an average of 68 articles per issue.

Women of China went in circulation in the 1930s and published 12 issues per year. All available issues from 1949 to 1965 constituted the sampling frame for this magazine. From the 17-year timeframe, two issues per month were randomly selected to arrive at 24 issues that comprised the sub-sample of articles from this magazine. The Chinese edition of *Women of China* usually contains about 40 articles per issue.

Rosy Dawn was published in 1975 and 1976. All 18 issues from the two years of circulation were analyzed. *Rosy Dawn* contains an average of 25 articles per issue.

Definition of Variables

The overarching research question this study attempts to answer is: Is there a difference among the magazines published in each of the three time periods in terms of the

way they depicted femininity and the role of women? This study aims to compare the three publications in terms of: (1) the portrayal of the feminine gender (e.g., subordinate to men or equal to men) (2) the roles of women in society (e.g., as productive participants in the labor force and active members of the state, as predominantly circumscribed in the domestic sphere, as individuals), and (3) the ways in which femininity and women's roles were depicted in the magazines as shown by narrative descriptions and the deployment of framing devices in those descriptions.

The quantitative part of this content analysis threshed out the definitions of femininity and/or gender as well as women's roles based on manifest and latent content asked in Questions 1 and 2. From the literature, this study adopts the following operational definition of terms.

With respect to women's roles, stories that show women as having responsibilities *primarily within the domestic sphere* displayed frames that exhort and urge women to stay at home to take care of children, support their husbands, and take care of extended family members. Women are depicted as or are encouraged to be dutiful housewives, mothers, daughters or aunts. Such articles may talk about a woman exemplar or may give advice on how to be successful in exclusively domestic roles.

Women as workers or laborers refers to notions that women share the same rights as men, including the right to earn a living. Articles that framed women in this role encourage them to divorce themselves from the traditional confines of the home, to get jobs, and to be economically independent. These articles may portray women models at work, give advice on how to perform better in their jobs or how to deal with problems at work, or may offer

suggestions about how they can acquire skills to be prepared for future careers. In this role, women are asked to be in the service of the state at the expense of self-interests. Women's contributions to the country or to any collective are extolled.

Women as individuals is a frame demonstrated by articles that encourage women to pursue individual goals regardless of whether they are to serve the state or the family. This frame involves encouraging women to achieve personal goals even though these may run contrary to the expectations of society. Those who are successful in whatever they do are admired. In these articles, women are exhorted to enjoy life on their own terms. These articles attribute women's success to their own ability and hard work, suggesting that they are active and powerful agents of social change.

In this study, *women are said to be feminized* when gender differences are emphasized. In this sense, this magazine frame portrays women as physically different from men (e.g., women are not as physically strong), are given advice on fashion and lifestyle, and are encouraged to be beautiful and attractive following a predominantly subordinate role. Articles that use this frame give advice on how to be involved in a healthy romantic relationship, and how to deal with the opposite sex, among others.

Women as masculinized means women are portrayed as equal to men in physical aspects, attributes and capability. Articles that employed this frame may suggest that women are as strong as men, think like men, and do not have to beautify themselves for whatever purpose. These articles may also posit or imply that women and men can get along well without tension.

Question 3 was examined through discourse analysis. In this qualitative part, adjectives, presuppositions, labels, stances and other linguistic structures and systems that are ideologically associated with specific persons and groups were scrutinized. Special attention was paid to the adjectives used to describe women's characters and roles. These words were also used to describe ideal roles or lifestyles in specific circumstances. According to Bucholtz and Hall (2005), identity relations emerge from the interaction of several related processes, including: "(1) the overt mention of identity categories, labels, and descriptions; (2) presuppositions regarding one's own or other's identity positions; (3) displayed evaluative orientation (stance) to ongoing talk; and (4) the use of structures and systems that are ideologically associated with specific persons and groups" (p. 594).

Besides adjectives, labels are the most obvious way of describing women's roles. For example, a woman could be referred to as "a housewife" or "a CEO." Another strategy for positioning women in certain roles is presupposition. In many articles, women are encouraged to consume fashionable clothes and cosmetics for whatever purpose. Du Bois (2002) characterizes stance as social action: "I evaluate something and thereby position myself, and align or disalign with you" (p. 595). Discourse analysis was used to determine the ways women's roles were portrayed in the narratives.

Coding Protocols and Intercoder Reliability

Two coders, including the author, were trained on the coding protocols. A pilot study was conducted in which 10 percent of the sample articles was randomly selected and independently coded by the two coders. The codebook and the coding instructions were revised based on the results of the pilot test. This procedure was repeated until an intercoder

reliability of at least 80 percent for each of the nominal variables outlined above was achieved.

Reliability is the extent to which a measuring procedure yields the same results on repeated trials (Carmines & Zeller, 1979). Intercoder reliability was assessed by computing for the percent agreement between the two coders, which is the number of agreement divided by the total number of measures. The formula for percent agreement applied in this study is:

$$\text{Percent agreement} = \frac{\text{number of agreement between two coders}}{\text{total number of units the two coders coded}}$$

Table 1 lists the variables coded in this study and the intercoder reliability achieved for each of these variables. The percentages of agreement achieved indicate that the intercoder reliabilities are well within the parameters acceptable for social science research.

| Variable name | Variable label | Values | % agreement |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Magazine | Magazine that published the story | 1= <i>Women of China</i> 2= <i>Rosy Dawn</i> 3= <i>Elle</i> | 100 |
| Year | Year article was published | XXXX | 100 |
| Author | Author of the article | String variable | 100 |
| Length | Length of article in number of words | | 100 |
| Role1 | Women are portrayed as having roles primarily within the domestic sphere | 0= absent 1= present | 90 |
| Role2 | Women are portrayed as workers or laborers in the service of the state | 0= absent 1= present | 80 |
| Role3 | Women are encouraged to pursue their own personal goals, including their role as family members. | 0= absent 1= present | 85 |
| Gender1 | Women are "feminized" | 0= absent 1= present | 85 |
| Gender2 | Women are portrayed as equal to men (gender equality is stressed) | 0= absent 1= present | 95 |

Table 1. Intercoder reliability for quantitative and nominal variables

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The general purpose of this study is to determine and compare the frames used by women's magazines published in three periods of Chinese history that portray gender and women's roles in society. The cultural attributes that prevailed in these three epochs were expected to be reflected in the frames employed by these magazines to describe women's roles and gender. Three magazines were selected: *Women of China* represented women's magazines published before the Cultural Revolution, *Rosy Dawn* was published during the Cultural Revolution, and the Chinese edition of the fashion magazine *Elle* was picked to represent post-Cultural Revolution China. Content and discourse analyses were applied to analyze the frames and the framing devices the articles employed in their discussions of women's roles and gender.

Content Analysis

The sample

A total of 602 articles about women published from 1949 to 2008 were collected from the three magazines. Of these, 236 were from *Women of China*, 98 came from *Rosy Dawn*, and 268 were published in *Elle*.

The articles dealt with a number of topics related to women, but the majority discussed problems or conflicts women face in their families, careers, and personal relationships. A number of these articles talked about women's goals, pursuits and dreams; gave suggestions regarding what clothes or cosmetics to wear; narrated life stories or specific

events in women's lives; and described role models or persons who have scored exemplary or outstanding achievements.

Rosy Dawn, circulated during the Cultural Revolution, published the longest stories in terms of number of words. The mean length of the articles that saw print in this magazine was 4,329 words (range: 100 to 10,000 words). The average length of the articles published in *Women of China* was 1,332 words (range: 80 to 6,000 words). In *Elle*, the average of length of stories was 1,091 words (range: 45 to 9,000 words).

The wide variance in story length indicates a vast array of stories and story types. In *Women of China*, straight news, feature stories, in-depth reports, and reader's letters were published to discuss problems, portray exemplary women, and give lifestyle suggestions. This pre-Cultural Revolution magazine contained more true stories and real problems. The articles in *Rosy Dawn* were longer than the stories in its two counterparts because the magazine published mostly fiction stories that described imagined or ideal identities. Short poems were also common in *Rosy Dawn*. In *Elle*, interviews and feature stories described women's careers, love lives, or family concerns. More images captured new and emerging fashion styles. No news reports were found in *Elle*.

To get a sense of the source of these stories, the author of each article was determined. The author of 56 articles published by *Women of China* was not specified. Of the articles with bylines or taglines, 122 authors were women and 52 were men; the gender of six authors cannot be ascertained from the Chinese characters used. Thirteen authors of articles published in *Rosy Dawn* were missing, but 20 were written by women and 63 were penned by men. These figures indicate a much larger proportion of men writers in *Rosy Dawn*. The

gender of two authors was difficult to discern. The author's name was omitted in 31 articles from *Elle*. Of the articles with detectible authors, 175 were women and 34 were men. The gender of 18 authors cannot be ascertained.

Frames depicting women's roles

RQ1 asks: What were the most dominant roles for women portrayed in the magazines published during these three eras? A limited number of women's roles was found in the three magazines. A quantitative analysis of the articles elicited three major roles: (1) women's roles as primarily within the domestic sphere, (2) women as workers or laborers outside the home, and (3) women as individuals. Examples that demonstrate the use of each of these role or role frames are described below:

Stories that show women as having roles *primarily within the domestic sphere* includes frames that exhorted women to stay at home to take care of children, support their husbands, and look after extended family members. Women were depicted as or were encouraged to be dutiful housewives, mothers, daughters or aunts. Such articles also talked about women exemplars or gave advice on how to be successful in fulfilling domestic duties and responsibilities.

The following are examples of how this frame was used:

In the first few years after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, discussions about life in the "new China" abound. Magazine writers introduced their readers to outstanding housewives:

Jun is a mother of two who works in a spin mill. She works well and takes good care of her family. In her spare time, she sews clothes and makes dinner for her family.

She is a model of the new woman in the new China (*Women of China*, 1949).

In a column called “How to be a new woman in the new China,” a housewife wrote to the magazine’s editor:

I want to be a good housewife. I draw up plans for everyday work at home as I guarantee that the basic needs of my family are met. I save as much as money as I can. I try to be friends with my kids. We help each other in the neighborhood (*Women of China*, 1955).

In the mid-1950s, more articles in *Women of China* started to deal with the dilemma of balancing career and family. In a column titled “What women really want,” a reader wrote:

I got married in 1955 and had my first baby in the second year of my marriage. Since the birth of the baby, I can no longer focus on my job; I always think about the baby. I worry that my mother cannot take good care of him. I’m afraid the baby is not healthy enough. I don’t wish to leave the baby even for a while (1963).

In *Elle*, celebrity interviewees often talked about their role as housewives. A famous actress, Zhang Bozhi from Hong Kong, expressed her desire to raise a family:

A career is not the goal of my life—I want to get married. When I meet Mr. Right, I will quit my job and stay at home to take care of my babies (2004).

The frame *women as workers or laborers* refers to notions that women share the same rights as men, including the right to earn a living. Articles that framed women in this role encourage them to divorce themselves from the traditional confines of the home, to get jobs so that they can be economically independent. These articles may portray women models at work, give advice on how to perform better in their jobs or how to deal with problems at work, or may offer suggestions about how they can acquire skills to be prepared for future careers. In this role, women were asked to be in the service of the state at the expense of self-interests. Women's contributions to the country or to the collective were extolled.

The following are examples of how this frame was employed:

An editorial in *Women of China* called on women to participate in the labor force:

We should try to participate in public labors to serve the people and the country. Our labor is a powerful engine that stimulates the development of the country (1954).

The same frame was used by readers who wrote to express their desire to be involved in public works. One wrote:

Career is more important than family. We should devote more time to serve the people but not at the expense of our own relationships (1949).

In *Rosy Dawn*, a young woman character in a fictional story titled "Green Field" was praised for her diligence and hard work. Talking about her dreams to a friend, she intimated:

Our war heroes devoted their lives to liberate the country. How can we contribute more? I have decided to emulate these heroes and look at difficulties themselves as the enemy. I will devote my youth to the advancement of the country (1975).

In *Rosy Dawn*, poems sang praises for women labor volunteers. According to one verse:

These women work without pay. Why are they still so passionate? It is because they are here to serve the people (1975).

Women as individuals is a frame demonstrated in articles that encouraged women to pursue individual goals, whether it is to serve the state or their families. Women were urged to achieve personal ambitions even though these may ran counter to the goals and expectations of society. Those who succeeded at work or any activity were admired. In these articles, women were exhorted to enjoy life on their own terms. These articles attributed women's success to their own ability and hard work, suggesting that women are active and powerful agents of social change.

This frame was exemplified in the following excerpts:

In a forum about what women want in *Women of China*, a teacher muses:

I just read about a discussion regarding what women want to achieve in their lives. I think women can find happiness outside the family. I am a teacher; I am always happy when I'm teaching. When I look at the faces of young children desiring for knowledge, I am moved (1963).

A famous entertainer, Zhong Chuhong from Hong Kong, tells *Elle* in an interview:

I find the entertainment industry too horrible. I will never allow my child to work in this industry. You have to work very hard to be successful in entertainment circles.

When I encounter difficulties, I cry in the bathroom and then try to have a good night's sleep. Despite the difficulties, I feel I have become stronger with each passing year. I will never change any aspect of myself just to cater to the desires of others. I want to be who I really am (2004).

Qing, a successful fashion designer, was described in *Elle* as a woman who lost but eventually regained her inspiration. She narrates in an interview:

A friend of mine left her job for three years. During that time, she traveled and took a lot pictures. She said she needed time to think about her whole life. She made me realize what I need...so I packed and traveled alone. During my journey, I rediscovered my love for nature, for life, and for humanity. It was an experience that inspires me to this very day (2004).

The frames used to describe women's roles as housewives, public laborers or workers, and individuals were also coded. As shown in Table 2, *Women of China* tended to portray women more as housewives or those whose roles lay primarily within the domestic sphere. Eighty out of 236 articles (33.9%) from this magazine displayed this frame. In contrast, there were far fewer women portrayed as housewives in *Rosy Dawn* (nine articles out of 98 or 9.2%) and *Elle* (15 articles out 268 or 5.6%).

A chi-square test conducted to determine whether the three magazines differed in terms of their use of this frame shows that the frequency with which this frame was used varied significantly across the three eras. Specifically, women were portrayed more as housewives in the pre-Cultural Revolution period (Table 2).

The second frame portrayed women as public workers or laborers in the service of the state. This frame was found more often in *Rosy Dawn* (90 out of 98 articles or 91.8%), followed by *Women of China* (111 out of 236 or 47%). *Elle* used it only once in its 268 articles (1%). The results of a chi-square test indicate that the frequency with which this frame was used varied significantly across the three eras. Women were far less considered to be laborers who should devote their energy toward national service after the Cultural Revolution (Table 2).

The third frame portrayed women as individuals pursuing personal goals. This frame did not appear in the magazine of the Cultural Revolution, *Rosy Dawn*, but was employed in almost equal proportions in *Women of China* (39%) and in *Elle* (41.4%). The results of a chi-square test suggest that this frame appeared significantly more frequently in these two magazines than in *Rosy Dawn*. That is, women were rarely encouraged to pursue personal goals and seek personal benefits during the Cultural Revolution (Table 2).

Before the Cultural Revolution, women were most frequently portrayed as public laborers and workers (47%). This was followed in frequency by the frame that showed women as individuals pursuing their own goals (39%), and the frame depicting women as housewives (33.9%). The proportion of stories that employed these three frames did not vary considerably across the three time periods (Table 2).

In *Rosy Dawn*, the Cultural Revolution magazine, women were most frequently portrayed as public laborers who dedicated their lives and the energy of their youth to the wherewithal of the state (91.8%). This is in stark contrast to the use of the housewife frame (9.2%) and the individual frame (0). Most stories about women in *Rosy Dawn* showed them as active members of the work force that is considered to be the backbone of the country.

In *Elle*, the individual frame was most frequently deployed (41.1%). Women as housewives was the second most frequently used frame (5.6%), while women as public workers were rarely seen (0.4%). Compared to its two counterparts, *Elle* discussed women's roles sparingly.

In a nutshell, women's roles were treated differently through time. Before the Cultural Revolution, a number of women's roles (as housewives, career women, public servants) can be seen in the magazine pages. During the Cultural Revolution, women as a source of state labor was emphasized, and personal lives were neglected. After the Cultural Revolution, women as individuals with their own desires and ambitions took precedence over any other role.

| Role frames | <i>Women of China</i> | <i>Rosy Dawn</i> | <i>Elle</i> | Total | Chi-square | df | Sig. |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------|-------|------------|----|------|
| Housewives, primarily domestic | 80 | 9 | 15 | 104 | 75.696 | 2 | .000 |
| Workers or laborers in the service of the state | 111 | 90 | 1 | 202 | 300.884 | 2 | .000 |
| Individuals with personal goals | 92 | 0 | 111 | 203 | 59.887 | 2 | .000 |

Table 2. Number of stories depicting specific frames about women's roles in the three magazines

Frames depicting gender

RQ2 asks: How was gender portrayed in the magazines published before, during and after the Cultural Revolution? A quantitative content analysis conducted to answer this research question produced two dominant frames: (1) women were feminized and (2) women as gender-neutral. These frames are described and examples of each are given below:

Women were feminized when gender differences are emphasized. This frame depicted women as physically different from men (e.g., women are not as strong physically), gave advice on fashion and lifestyle, and encouraged women to be attractive. Articles that used this frame offered recommendations on how to cultivate healthy romantic relationships, and how to deal with the opposite sex, among others.

The following are excerpts from articles that demonstrate this frame:

Women of China saw itself as a publication that will establish a brand new relationship between genders. Therefore, women need to be informed more about marriage, sex, love and romantic relationships. Given this goal, writers expounded on why women should resist arranged marriages, how to use contraceptives, and what constitutes romantic relationships, among others. For example, a doctor offers tips on how to have a healthy sexual life:

Healthy sex makes relationships more harmonious. Contraception is important when couples are not yet prepared to have children. Thus, this article discusses how to use pills, condoms, ligation, and other contraceptive methods (1956).

Other articles taught women how to choose the proper spouse and what an ideal marriage should be:

Women should not base their marriage on property, wealth or any economic consideration. Marriage should be the integration of two people who are in love. Only under that condition can basic desires for love and sex be fulfilled (1949).

Feature stories described the perfect husband-wife relationship. For example, a fictional story tells of a soldier who fought the Americans during the Korean War (1950-1953):

When Dong came back from the [war] front, he was so eager to see his wife, GuiZhen. When they were finally by themselves, Dong asked Guizhen about her life while he was away. Dong looked at her beautiful big eyes and flushing face, and thought, “What a beautiful and able girl! I love her so much!” (1953).

In *Elle*, women were encouraged to enhance their physical attractiveness in colorful and image-laden articles that display clothes, shoes, and other fashion accessories. For example, an article introduces the new skirts for spring 2004 thus:

Shorter and shorter! Short clothes are becoming more and more in vogue. Inspired by swimsuits, miniskirts should be your first choice this summer (2004).

Women as masculinized is a frame that suggests that women are equal to men in physical aspects, attributes and capability. Articles that employed this frame suggest that women were as strong as men, think like men, and do not have to beautify themselves for

whatever purpose. These articles also posit or imply that women and men can get along well without much tension.

The following examples demonstrate the use of this frame:

Many articles in *Women of China* advocate that women are oppressed not because of physical or intellectual differences between gender, but because class oppression is inherent in feudal and capitalist societies. One such story explains:

Are women born to be weaker than men? No! Strong working women in the new China prove that women are as capable as men. Women can be as rational as men as long as they participate in public labors. If they have the same opportunity to receive education, women can be philosophers, artists, and scientists (1949).

In an article in *Rosy Dawn*, a writer describes what a woman thought about a man colleague:

She respects him totally. They have worked and fought for communism together for a long time. They have built their friendship on mutual belief in communism (1975).

This frame was often used to describe women's physical appearance in *Rosy Dawn*.

An author wrote about a woman explorer:

Chen Shiyong is a tall strong girl who has short hair. Her fist is as strong as a hammer and her arm is as strong as a man's (1976).

The number of articles that displayed these gender frames in the three magazines is shown in Table 3. The table suggests that women were more likely to be feminized in *Elle*

(80.2 %) while in *Rosy Dawn*, gender differences were seldom discussed (1%). In *Women of China*, 39 articles (16.5%) feminized women. The results of a chi-square test indicate that women were significantly more feminized in *Elle*, the post-Cultural Revolution publication.

Frames portraying women as masculinized were more commonly found in *Rosy Dawn* (39 out of 98 articles or 39.8%). This was followed by *Women of China* that displayed the frame in 19.9% of its articles. *Elle* used this frame in only 11 of its 268 articles (4.1%). A chi-square test reveals significant differences in the frequency with which this frame was used through time (Table 3).

In *Women of China*, 39 articles used the feminization frame (16.5%) while 47 of 236 articles portrayed women as masculinized. The disparity became evident when these figures were matched against those of *Rosy Dawn* in which 39.8% of the articles portrayed women as masculinized; only one article feminized women. The distinction between men and women was more apparent in *Elle* where 215 of 268 articles (80.2%) talked about gender differences.

| Gender frames | <i>Women of China</i> | <i>Rosy Dawn</i> | <i>Elle</i> | Total | Chi-square | df | Sig. |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------|-------|------------|----|------|
| Women are feminized | 39 | 1 | 215 | 255 | 290.470 | 2 | .000 |
| Women are masculinized | 47 | 39 | 11 | 97 | 71.782 | 2 | .000 |

Table 3. Number of stories depicting each gender frame in the three magazines

In summary, gender was also treated differently during the three time periods. Before and during the Cultural Revolution, masculinity was emphasized. After the Revolution, women were more feminized.

The results indicate that in *Women of China*, the magazine before the Cultural Revolution, women were shown in traditional domestic roles as mothers, wives, or daughters. At the same time, a considerable number of articles depicted women as active agents in the labor force whose contributions were critical to the construction of a new China. In these articles, they were projected as individuals who fight for equal status. In short, women were described as individuals who pursue beauty, love and perfect relationships while working to benefit the state. All three roles (as housewives, as public workers, as individuals) were used with almost equal frequency in *Women of China*. Gender differences were both stressed and de-emphasized. Such conflicting frames correspond to the conflicting voices existing at that time as suggested in the literature review. These contradictions regarding women's roles and gender differences were also evident in the results of the discourse analysis.

Opposing viewpoints were no longer discernible in the Cultural Revolution magazine, *Rosy Dawn*, wherein women were portrayed in a simpler way. At that time, women were mostly described as strong, masculine workers who live and breathe for the state, who were willing to devote their lives, youth and energy to the whole country. Women as individuals with personal lives vanished. As women were inducted into the public labor force, the former division between public and domestic spheres was removed, and any assertion of a feminine identity was rejected.

The results show that in the reform era or the post-Cultural Revolution period, women were seen more as independent individuals following the doctrine of individualism that resonated especially among young people. As was predicted, gender differences were emphasized in this neoliberal context. Feminized women dominated the frames used in *Elle*.

Nearly 80% of the articles published in this magazine urged women to be beautiful, attractive, and sexy; women should “manage” or take care of romantic relationships. There was a low proportion of frames that saw women as equally capable as men, and women as housewives who enjoy family life and the protection of their husbands.

Discourse Analysis

RQ3 asks: In what ways were women’s roles portrayed by the magazines published during these three periods in Chinese history? To answer this question, the frames were re-examined to reveal “sub-frames” or minor themes that fall under each major frame category. The objective is to determine more nuanced differences and similarities in discourse about women in the three magazines.

A closer examination of the text reveals seven sub-frames about women’s roles and three sub-frames about gender. These are listed in Table 4.

Sub-frames depicting women’s roles

The sub-frames about women’s roles talked about women as: (1) mothers one of whose major tasks is their children’s education, (2) housewives responsible for domestic chores and family care, (3) married persons balancing family and career, (4) individuals who juggle priorities between the family and the state, (5) public servants, (6) successful individuals who have accomplished much in their careers through hard work, (7) people striving for or pursuing material wealth.

Table 4 clearly shows that women as public servants and as mothers responsible for their children’s education were the two most emphasized sub-frames in *Women of China* and

Rosy Dawn, but were absent in *Elle*. Individuals who deal with conflicts between career and family was the second most frequently discussed sub-frame in *Women of China*, a dilemma that also showed up in the articles published in *Elle*. *Rosy Dawn* alluded to this sub-frame only once. Before and during the Cultural Revolution, women were encouraged to maintain a healthy balance of career and family and between family and state. However, majority of the articles in *Rosy Dawn* exhorted women to put state above family. This sub-frame did not appear at all in *Elle*. Women as successful career persons was the third most frequently mentioned sub-frame in *Women of China* and was the most important role displayed in *Elle*. *Rosy Dawn* ignored this sub-frame altogether. Women pursuing material wealth was a dominant sub-frame in *Elle*, but was not found in *Rosy Dawn*. In *Women of China*, the use of this sub-frame was almost negligible.

A mix of frames can be found in all epochs although one or two frames dominate particular time periods. For example, although various permutations of women's roles were discussed during the pre-Cultural Revolution era, collectivism was the dominant frame in the woman's magazine of the time. Women were urged to dedicate themselves to the building of a new state, and were admonished to subordinate the welfare of their families to that of the country. In the shadow of this dominant frame, however, were articles that talked about the value of having a rewarding career and the advantages of acquiring material wealth. While majority of the articles in *Women of China* espoused the value of education so that young women can immediately join the labor force in the service of the state, some articles talked about women as mothers and housewives responsible for maintaining family cohesion.

| Role frames | <i>Women of China</i> | | <i>Rosy Dawn</i> | | <i>Elle</i> | | Total |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----|------------------|----|-------------|----|-------|
| | N | % | n | % | N | % | |
| 1. Women as mothers in charge of their children's education | 36 | 90 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 40 |
| 2. Women as housewives responsible for domestic chores and family care | 10 | 58 | 4 | 24 | 3 | 18 | 17 |
| 3. Women as balancing family and career | 52 | 81 | 1 | 2 | 11 | 17 | 64 |
| 4. Women struggling to determine priorities between the family and the state | 9 | 81 | 2 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| 5. Women as public servants | 111 | 55 | 90 | 45 | 0 | 0 | 201 |
| 6. Women as successful in their careers | 31 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 55 | 64 | 86 |
| 7. Women as pursuing material wealth | 20 | 27 | 0 | 0 | 54 | 73 | 74 |
| Gender frames | | | | | | | |
| 1. Women's marital or romantic relationship | 30 | 33 | 1 | 1 | 60 | 66 | 91 |
| 2. Women as embodiments of physical beauty | 9 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 110 | 92 | 119 |
| 3. Women as physically, emotionally, and intellectually equal to men | 47 | 48 | 39 | 12 | 11 | 40 | 97 |

Table 4. The sub-frames of women's roles and gender and the frequency of their occurrence

The sub-frames were less numerous and less complicated for *Rosy Dawn* wherein public service was the prevalent mantra. Women were urged to suppress personal pursuits and dreams. Although images of housewives were also detected, duty to the state transcended all others in *Rosy Dawn*.

The emphasis on individualism during the post-Cultural Revolution period is evident in the sub-frames about women's roles displayed in *Elle*. In its articles, the magazine goaded women to pursue meaningful careers; the state can take care of itself. Consumerism and materialism went hand-in-hand with the dawn of neoliberalism. More than ever, women were told to strive for a better material life. Although some articles displayed conflicting views, audiences were told they can successfully juggle careers and family as most modern women do; there was no need to give up one for the other. Both *Elle* and *Rosy Dawn* showed images of housewives although at a low frequency.

As for the sub-frames about gender, *Women of China* tended to talk more about romantic relationships while *Elle* relentlessly campaigned for beauty. In *Rosy Dawn*, both sub-frames were absent. Both *Women of China* and *Rosy Dawn* drummed up women's ability to compete with men in all aspects of life, a frame that was also present albeit to a lesser extent in *Elle*.

A fuller description of these role sub-frames is presented below:

1. Women as mothers responsible for educating their children. Thirty-six articles in *Women of China* used this sub-frame; two such articles appeared in *Rosy Dawn* and *Elle*. This sub-frame implied that taking good care of children is a privilege because educated children make for more enlightened citizens. Mothers who educate their kids were therefore cultivating high-caliber citizens for the new socialism. Mothers were exhorted to learn scientific concepts, among others, which they can pass on to their children. In effect, having qualified citizens in the future was largely dependent on how well women educate their

offspring. Those who did a good job of looking after their family were labeled as “working hard,” “making great contributions,” and “leading a happy life.”

This sub-frame also appeared in *Rosy Dawn*. In this publication, mothers were proclaimed successful when they support their children’s decision to sacrifice for the country and for the glory of communism. The mothers in *Elle* were different. They were often seen as enjoying their relationship with their kids, relatively free from societal responsibilities.

The following examples demonstrate the use of this sub-frame:

In the first issue of *Women of China* the editor-in-chief linked mothers to the fate of the state:

Women had made great contributions in the country’s struggles during World War II and in the civil war against the Nationalist Party [Kuomintang]. As mothers, daughters, and wives they took good care of their families, encouraged their sons, husbands and fathers, and educated their young kids at home (1949).

Other articles were also clear about what women should do:

The task of women in the family is to educate their children to be quality citizens for the new society. Parents should help schools in guiding and educating kids (1949).

Many kids do not want to go to school. As mothers, we should make them understand that schools are where they are educated and where they are prepared to be first-rate citizens. We should be patient with the children. Let’s avoid physical punishment (1949).

The same frame can be found in *Rosy Dawn*. During the Cultural Revolution, the highly politicized nature of life was displayed in full glory. A story praises a schoolgirl called Xiaoshan for admonishing the boys who destroyed desks and chairs at school. The writer attributed this enlightened behavior to her mother's education:

Xiaoshan's mother told her she must study hard because she will be one of those who will inherit the socialist state. She should be prepared for a career as a communist (1976).

In another article, a woman was described as an exemplary housewife for supporting her daughter's decision to work in a rural area after graduation:

Ms. Xin is a capable housewife. She takes good care of her children and parents-in-law. Besides, she was very supportive when her daughter wanted to learn from the working class (1975).

In another article, the life of a country woman was singled for emulation:

Although Liewa works very hard, she still spends enough time with her family. She has good relationships with her kids; she takes good care of them and educates them. One of her sons is going to the university for higher study (1949).

In another instance:

Bowa is leading a very happy life. She has a 17-year old daughter who just graduated from high school and an eight-year old son who goes to primary school. She had just bought a new car that she uses to take her husband and mother to the theater (1953).

Similar frames can be found in *Elle*. One letter writer narrates:

I met a woman in the village who can spin very well. She spins clothes and sells them to raise money for her two children's education. She is most happy when she is with her two kids (2004).

In another article in *Elle*, the writer asks career women to re-evaluate their attitudes toward their families.

How long has it been since you last talked to your family? Why don't you spend more time with your husband and kids and enjoy the pleasures of being a mother and a wife? (2004).

In a column titled "How to educate kids" in *Women of China*, commentators argue that good mothers do not inflict physical punishments, do not believe in superstition, and do not spoil their children. A mother named Sufang was harshly criticized for punishing her son:

This should not be tolerated. She beats her boy with sticks. This bad behavior will affect the child's psychological growth (1955).

A reader wrote about how her friend taught her kids the virtue of saving:

Since her daughter was very young, Danniya makes her save money. This is why today, her kid knows how to spend wisely (1955).

Some articles urged mothers to equip their children with scientific knowledge:

Women should learn science because they need to pass on that knowledge to their children. Scientific concepts are also helpful in doing housework. Curious children

ask all kinds of questions: Why does it thunder? Why does it rain? Why do I dream? If mothers do not have scientific knowledge, they would not know how to answer these questions (1955).

2. Women as housewives responsible for domestic chores and the household. This sub-frame, as applied in *Women of China*, shares the logic that the abode is the woman's domain. It suggests that women can free their husbands from the burdens of household tasks so they can focus on their jobs to advance the state. In this way, women are able to contribute to society. Articles that used this sub-frame present the image of traditional housewives who consider the home the women's sphere while their husbands were the breadwinner, a logic that shows extreme role differentiation by gender. Consequently, those who are not good at housework were considered "bad people" whose behaviors need to change. At the same time, some articles chastised women for being satisfied with their role as simple housewives.

In *Rosy Dawn*, housewives still assumed a supporting role to their husband, but by doing so, women lend a hand to the revolution and to Chairman Mao. Even personal health took a backseat to the state.

Elle also described women as family caretakers, but they do so not necessarily to contribute to society. The stories in this contemporary magazine suggest that today's women take care of their children because they find personal joy and satisfaction in such tasks.

The following are examples of how this sub-frame was deployed:

In *Women of China*, housewives were shown to be tender to husbands, loyal to the country, friendly to neighbors, and good at domestic chores:

As a housewife, my most important task is to take good care of my husband. I cook and wash very well. I am always there when my husband needs someone to talk to (1956).

In the new society, women can contribute in their own way. For example, in Harbin, women serve dinners on time, clean houses, and take good care of their kids so that their husbands do not need to worry about housework and can focus on their jobs (1949).

I often fight with my neighbors and so my husband asked me to control my temper. Now that my neighbors and I get along, I have more time for housework and I can take better care of my husband so he can have more time to work (1957).

Stories also talk of “villains”:

Ms. Xu is a housewife, but she is not good at housework. Moreover, she always envies her neighbors who have new clothes or those who eat fish or meat frequently (1957).

Some questioned these highly differentiated roles:

Some women work [outside the home] only because their husbands or fathers have not found jobs yet. The women quit their jobs as soon as the men in their family land jobs. They prefer to stay at home and do household work when they should strive for economic independence (1949).

In *Rosy Dawn*, women were rarely portrayed in roles other than contributors to public labor or as doting wives who acquiesce to their husband's desire to sacrifice for the state. Mr. Wang's wife fits the stereotype:

Ms. Wang takes good care of her husband. When he was ill and still wants to go to work building a dam, she persuaded him not to. However, her husband refused because he wants to be a part of a great project designed by Chairman Mao. "How could I stay at home at this time?" her husband said (1975).

In a similar case,

Hejing cried, worried about her sick husband who refused surgery because he wanted to continue working. She decided to support her husband's decision (1976).

In *Elle*, women were depicted as being proud of their ability to keep a healthy balance between career and family:

In the office, women are as capable as men. At home, they are tender housewives who take good care of their family (2004).

In many stories, being a capable mother is seen as a matter of personal choice, not a prescription.

I have a regular life. Every morning, I take care of my six-month old daughter's needs. Then, I send my six-year old boy to kindergarten. I enjoy being a mother (2004).

3. Women who balance family and career. The pre-Cultural Revolution magazine had women choosing between career and family because it was assumed they could not have

both. This sub-frame suggests that these two realms cannot overlap. Therefore, those who breast-feed are always late for work; women are not able to concentrate on their jobs after having a baby; women give up their jobs after marriage. Work outside the home was seen as service to country while taking care of the family was linked to caring only about personal benefits. The collectivist spirit can be seen from the narratives that demonstrated this sub-frame.

The sole article that employed this sub-frame in *Rosy Dawn* submitted that women should be allowed to feed their babies at work even if this entails interruptions in their job schedules.

The discourse changed dramatically in *Elle* where the articles no longer saw career and family as opposing forces; women can enjoy both at the same time and the two are necessary to be a “complete” person. If women had to choose between these two realms, they did so according to their chosen goals in life. This choice was never associated with the demands of the state.

The following are examples of how this sub-frame was used:

A dancer could no longer perform after having baby. She changed her mind after dancing to a group of factory workers:

Because I am a dancer, I have a chance to perform for workers. Having seen what they do, I realize I should not focus on my little family. Everyone must work hard for the country (*Women of China*, 1963).

Another reader wrote having difficulties focusing on her job after having baby:

After talking to my leader, I realize that a woman should always keep the spirit of work for the country even after having a baby (*Women of China*, 1963).

Another reader said:

As a woman, I always remind myself not to put too much energy on my family; I should not forget my work because of my children. I need to put more energy toward advancing our party. Therefore, I will ask my mother in law to handle much of my housework (*Women of China*, 1963).

While some women decided to put more emphasis on their career, some preferred staying at home:

I had a very happy married life, so I decided to focus on my family. The needs of my husband and children take precedence over my job (*Women of China*, 1963).

Others questioned this attitude:

The story reminds me of another woman leader who cares only about her husband and five children, and have no time for work. I wonder—is it proper to give up one's job for the sake of the family? (*Women of China*, 1963).

In *Rosy Dawn*, only one story alluded to conflicts between family and career mainly because these two dimensions of women's lives were not depicted as diametrically opposed to each other. Such is the case with Guo Fenglian, a leader in Dazhai, a mountainous village in Shanxi province known to be a model agricultural commune. When Mao published his

supreme directive titled *Learn Agriculture from Dazhai* in 1964, Guo Fenglian was hailed as a heroine:

I asked Guo Fenglian what women should do when they need to feed their kids while at work. Fenglian replied that women should be allowed to feed their kids. How could women work well when their children are hungry? (1976)

In an interview rare in the fiction-oriented *Rosy Dawn*, Guo Fenglian reported on her village's agricultural initiatives and how these projects considerably improved people's lives. The party's new policy gave them more to eat and revived the villagers' confidence in the future, she notes.

In *Elle*, stories portrayed women as still vacillating between these two roles. A writer complains:

I have a lovely baby girl. I will quit my job for her, but I am always depressed these days. What should I do?

The editor suggested finding a job because "a woman who never stops growing and changing keeps her charm."

Some were confident of their ability to keep up with the two roles. For example, a woman engineer believes women can have complete lives when they both have a family and a career:

A woman should have a baby, a family, a husband, and a career. I consider myself successful because I have them all, and all of these together make me a complete person (1998).

On the other hand, Zhu Deyong, a Taiwanese writer, saw the two roles as different:

Women face dilemmas in their lives, but they should be able to choose their lifestyles freely. Should they work or should they become housewives? They can certainly choose to get married or stay single (2004).

4. Women who balance duty to family and the state. Most articles in *Women of China* and *Rosy Dawn* displayed a similar pattern in the use of this sub-frame. In these magazines, this theme stressed the primacy of state over family obligations. It also intimated the agony of sending love ones to war, seen as both an honor and a sacrifice. Working was equated with contributing to nation-building. A few articles, however, raised questions about the overarching desire to please the state. In these stories, women complained they were exhausted by the demands of their jobs and their duties at home. The state, after all, does not guarantee family benefits, and some were dissatisfied that state actions did not match its rhetoric.

The following examples demonstrate how this sub-frame was employed:

During the Korean War (1950-1953), an editor said in a letter to readers:

In this war on US imperialism, mothers have sent their sons and daughters to the front, and many have taken the responsibility of tending to the injured soldiers. Although

they worry about their children, these women are willing to send them [to war] to protect the country (*Women of China*, 1951).

The discourse did not change drastically during the Cultural Revolution:

Ms. Zhang sent her son to the war front. When she received a letter telling her that her son died fighting, she did not even cry. She said, "I am sad, but my son's death is meaningful. He sacrificed his life for the greatness of the country" (*Rosy Dawn*, 1975).

In both *Rosy Dawn* and *Women of China*, women were called to save resources for industry and infrastructure. A column in *Women of China* told readers why they should conserve water:

Why should we save water? After years of invasion, exploitation, and civil war, our country faces great economic difficulties. If we save more water for irrigation or industry, our country could produce more and develop faster" (*Women of China*, 1951).

The same discourse appeared in *Rosy Dawn*:

Ms. He gives the rice she saves at home to the village food court. She considers her donation her contribution to the country and the people (1975).

Some readers, however, had different opinions. A village leader gripes about being exhausted from her double duty to family and state:

The women in our village are actively involved in public labor, but we still have to take care of the family after a whole day's work. Socialism is good, but our women are so tired. We hope our problem can be considered and solved by the party (*Women of China*, 1956).

5. Women as public servants. This sub-frame was detected before and during the Cultural Revolution. The banner idea is that women work to serve the state, relegating their personal interests as secondary to those of the state. The articles that displayed this sub-frame talked about people insisting on going to work despite ill health, and people forsaking their family in favor of the state. This sub-frame showed very minor permutations.

This sub-frame has been applied in the following examples:

According to Marxist theory, only when a society is abundant in material resources can communism be realized. In a communist society in which resources and products are distributed according to one's needs, people do not work for money but for self-fulfillment. Thus,

Liang-jun works hard to live up to the expectations of Chairman Mao and the people (*Women of China*, 1949).

Zezen is an outstanding party member. When I first met her, she dressed like an ordinary rural woman. Everyone in her village says she is a great leader because she never forgets she is a servant of the people...Although she is not in very good health, she insists on working as an ordinary peasant (*Women of China*, 1949).

Women have become an important force in helping the government achieve political reforms. Many of them have done great jobs in serving the people. For example, Guilan was selected to be the leader of the women's organization in her village. She has been working very hard to help other women solve their problems. She led her villagers in building an irrigation system for their farms (*Women of China*, 1949).

Zhaozhen is a factory leader. Her co-workers call her "sister" because she is very enthusiastic in helping them with anything. One time, unable to figure out how a machine works, her colleagues started to squabble. She studied the new machine herself and patiently taught others how to use it. She said she is glad to serve her co-workers because she is grateful for their good lives in the new China and she wants to do something for society (*Women of China*, 1953).

Some, however, question this zeal to work to the neglect of one's health:

Ms. Wang has 13 work titles. Because of this, she is too busy to even take care of herself; she becomes ill because of her workload. It is not healthy for one person to have too many tasks (*Women of China*, 1956).

During the Cultural Revolution, service to the state was taken to the extreme; women started working without pay and began to eschew personal life:

Zhang Juhua is a village veterinarian. She told her co-workers that those who look only after their own benefit—those who practice individualism—should be criticized (*Rosy Dawn*, 1976).

These office girls are thinking about how to link their jobs with communism. They realized that as trade assistants asking for no salary, they can promote their efficiency so that customers' time could be saved; thus, these customers will have more time for work (*Rosy Dawn*, 1975).

When I went back home, I could not find my mother there. A neighbor told me she had not been back for weeks. She was working on the construction site as a kindergarten teacher. Her job allows parents to focus on their work because they do not need to worry about their kids (*Rosy Dawn*, 1975).

After graduating from the university, Yamei decided to assist in building the new village in a socialist country. The other day, she received a letter telling her that her mother was in bad condition. Although she wanted to go home, she did not want to leave her job because of this personal reason (*Rosy Dawn*, 1976).

6. Successful career women. An extreme departure from the vague and empty slogans that often characterized women as public servants, the successful career woman sub-frame described career ambitions. In *Women of China*, this sub-frame depicted women enjoying themselves as integral members of the workforce, applying their intelligence to overcome difficulties in their jobs. The discourse that used this sub-frame in *Elle* was substantially similar. However, there were subtle differences in how the sub-frame was employed in these two magazines.

The following examples demonstrate the use of this sub-frame:

When Ms. Yu, a Communist Party member, died in 1949, she was said lauded for championing the education of girls since the 1930s:

Yu Qingtang spent most of her life as an outstanding educator. She helped educate poor girls who have few opportunities to go to school. Her determination has changed these girls' fate. In the new China, we should learn from her spirit and follow in her footsteps (*Women of China*, 1949).

In feature stories, ambitious women gain a sense of achievement through their work:

Miss Yang is a primary school teacher in Shanghai. She exerts a lot of effort on her job. When she prepares for class, she always draws her lesson plan from the standpoint of her students. She always tries to engage them. This is why students always look forward to her classes. She loves her pupils very much. She says she finds great joy in looking at the eyes of students who desire knowledge (*Women of China*, 1955).

Sun and Zhang are never contented with their work efficiency. They keep improving their skills so that their group became the most efficient in the factory...Now that private companies have become public, "I am so glad I am now one of the owners of the factory and can finally work for myself. I want to work hard," Sun said (*Women of China*, 1955).

Women in *Elle* talked about their pursuit of a career:

I fell in love with the camera the first time I used it to record others' lives. No matter how tired I am, I look forward to capturing interesting scenes with my camera (2004).

After graduating from a university in Britain, Qiong chose to go home and open her own clothing shop. She designed everything in her shop because she wanted to convey the beauty of oriental culture through her clothes (2004).

Yu Nan won the best actress award in the Paris Cinema International Film Festival. Even as a student, she was different from her peers. Her elegance touched the heart of every director she met. She said, “As an actress, I need to work hard and keep learning about my craft” (2004).

Although women were portrayed as skilled and capable in their careers in *Elle* and *Women of China*, there is an important caveat. In *Women of China*, women appeared to have a limited array of career options; they were either school teachers, factory workers, or peasants. In *Elle*, women enjoyed high social status jobs and high levels of income as actresses, managers, and designers.

7. Women who pursue material wealth. *Women of China* and *Elle* had different attitudes about this sub-frame. In the former, the discourse about this behavior was more complicated. Some articles regarded it as wrong or dangerous; other stories seem to indicate there is nothing wrong with being rich and having more of life’s conveniences. This sub-frame undeniably links having money with a comfortable life. The articles in *Elle*, on the other hand, blatantly seduced readers to pursue better lives by buying more products—fur, jewelry, and clothes, among others. In short, materialism reigned supreme in this sub-frame. In *Rosy Dawn*, this sub-frame was absent.

The following examples show the use of this sub-frame:

An editorial in *Women of China* frowned upon a woman who dated several men in search of a wealthy spouse:

In capitalist societies, people are judged according to their wealth; thus, women base their love on how rich a person is. It is not right to base marriage on wealth in a socialist country (1955).

Guifang abandons the values of the working class, and is harmed by the ideals of capitalism (*Women of China*, 1955).

My parents did not agree to our marriage because they wanted me to find a rich person. I told them I do not pursue wealth. I love my husband because he is honest and he respects me. Finally, my parents allowed me to marry him (*Women of China*, 1963).

In contrast, a letter from a reader deadpans:

A woman should find a husband who makes enough money to give her all comforts in life. I think it is normal for a woman to pursue a high social status. More money means a more comfortable life. Who doesn't want that? (*Women of China*, 1963).

Another bemoans the power of factory leaders:

I live too far from the factory. I walk two hours a day to work, so I asked for a new apartment near the factory. However, the factory leader refused my request because I am a woman. Should not a woman ask for a better place to live in? (*Women of China*, 1956).

My husband and I live in different places; we have to live in factory dorms. We hope we can stay in the same place. However, when I talked about this to the leader, he refused to grant my request (*Women of China*, 1956).

In *Elle*, material wealth translates to fashionable luxury products. The headlines blare: “Fur and jewelry mean a luxurious and leisurely lifestyle” (2008) and “Be serious about your clothes! They are closely related to your lifestyle and taste. Your character is expressed in them” (2004). Lead paragraphs of stories exhibit the joys of a materialistic lifestyle:

Li Wen likes to collect electronic products, go to clubs, and listen to hip-hop. Her house is full of books and DVDs. She showed us her closet full of Chanel and Dior. She said, “I like to put on decent clothes and wear perfume which make me feel good about myself.” That is how she enjoys her life (*Elle*, 2006).

In another interview, a famous news anchor from Shanghai tells readers:

I like to collect clothes. In a sense, they speak of the lifestyle I wish for myself. Great clothes give me a great sense of achievement” (*Elle*, 1998). The author finishes the story thus: “As a woman, Yuan is beautiful and charming. As an anchor, she is talented and diligent; as a person, Yuan knows how to enjoy her life.”

Another article tells audiences how to relax after a whole week’s work:

Spend a morning alone at home and enjoy the world by yourself. Learn to create a graceful place for yourself this spring [by acquiring furniture, books, music CDs, and skin care products.] (*Elle*, 1998).

Sub-frames depicting gender

The sub-frames about gender discussed (1) women’s marital or romantic relationships, (2) women as embodiments of physical beauty, and (3) women as physically, emotionally, and intellectually equal to men and excelling in fields traditionally considered as men strongholds.

1. Women and their marital or romantic relationships. This sub-frame appeared in both *Women of China* and *Elle* where it was portrayed from almost a similar standpoint. The Communist Party espoused that economic independence will release women from oppression. This sub-frame alluded to the importance of establishing a healthy and equal relationship with men; women were enjoined to attain rich lives through their own efforts. When using this sub-frame, articles in *Women of China* extolled the value of relationships that are based on love and mutual respect, a perspective that rarely appeared in *Elle*. A far cry from the asceticism of the Cultural Revolution, *Elle* discussed sex and its importance in men-women relationships. Only one article in *Rosy Dawn* talked about romantic relationships. Like the articles in *Women of China*, the author urged women to base relationships on mutual understanding.

The following examples demonstrate the use of this sub-frame:

As a promoter of the “new order,” *Women of China* espoused the value of relationships based on love and mutual respect in retaliation against the perceived oppression of women under the old order. A column explains:

In the old society, women depended on men, so they have to find a rich husband to guarantee rich lives. Now women can be economically independent. Should we still depend on husbands or work hard ourselves? (1963).

We should not forget that women used to be oppressed because of their dependence on men. Women can be equal to men in the new society because they can be economically independent...and women can find love and respect in a new type of marriage in the new society (1963).

In addition, *Women of China* railed against the practice of taking on child brides and marrying too early:

A woman can only have a good sexual life when her body has fully developed; she can only have a healthy baby after the age of 18...Besides, people are able to figure out who shares their beliefs, values, or goals only when they are psychologically mature. Early marriage may lead to tragedy (1951).

The magazine also offered recommendations about how to deal with arguments and disagreements. In response to a reader who complained that her husband prefers to sleep rather than talk to her after work, an editor suggested:

It is not right for women to be sensitive and emotional in a relationship (*Women of China*, 1949)

To another reader who complained that her husband refused to communicate after they had a fight, the editor said:

Women should be tender and considerate to their husbands. Talk to him patiently and try to make him understand your opinion (*Women of China*, 1955).

In the single story in *Rosy Dawn* that dealt with a romantic relationship:

Yamei persuaded her friend Hehua to get married a little later so she can do more work for the country. Besides, she should know her fiancé better before getting married (1976).

In *Elle*, independence was the premise of a happy relationship:

A woman can only win respect and love when she has an independent personality and confidence (2004).

Experience tells me I have to face difficulties by myself. Only when a woman earns financial independence can she find true love (2005).

Sex was another hot topic under this sub-frame. Readers wrote to ask for suggestions on how to enhance their sex life:

I love my husband very much. However, he doesn't satisfy me sexually. What should I do? (*Elle*, 2003).

Do you really know your spouse's body? Do you really know how to please him sexually? (*Elle*, 2003).

2. Women who pursue physical beauty. This sub-frame never appeared in *Rosy Dawn*, the magazine of the Cultural Revolution, but was the most dominant sub-frame in *Elle*.

In the articles published in *Women of China*, this sub-frame encompassed everything it takes

to be beautiful and desirable. This sub-frame saw physical attractiveness as normal and appropriate. In *Elle*, physical beauty was seen as equivalent to the consumption of various beauty products—clothing, skin care, and make-up, the major topics of today’s fashion magazines. *Rosy Dawn*, which rejected any assertion of a feminine identity, completely ignored this sub-frame.

The following excerpts demonstrate the application of this sub-frame:

When I met her [a celebrity] again, I could barely recognize her. She was wearing a navy blue suit; she looked glorious” (*Women of China*, 1953).

The stamped pinwale produced by Tianjin Spin Mill is highly recommended. It is colorful and can be used to make beautiful skirts, shirts, and dresses (*Women of China*, 1956).

How does one make a beautiful skirt? I will introduce a few approaches to make yourself look great in self-made clothes” (*Women of China*, 1956).

The photos that accompany these articles were far less fancy than those in *Elle*.

Other articles in *Women of China* waxed poetic about women’s physical beauty. An example is a boy smitten after reuniting with a childhood friend in a university:

Gui xiang has changed a lot since I last I saw her. She has become more beautiful. Her eyes twinkle, and so does my heart. I want to draw her picture (*Women of China*, 1956).

In a love story,

Xiaoyan is a very beautiful girl. Her tied black hair sways behind her head. Her ruddy face is always smiling. A lot of young men fell in love with her (*Women of China*, 1957).

In *Elle*, a woman's physical beauty often results from the use of some product:

In the season of flowers, women's clothes are part of this colorful world. How can we dress up like the most beautiful roses of summer (2004)?

Since the spring of 2004, the nude look make-up has been in vogue. This make-up style makes you look natural, sexy, and sincere. Here are some tips on how to use it (2004).

The purple boots highlight the smooth and soft shape of women's legs (2008).

A girl needs to take special care of her skin after the 20s. Could you recommend some products I can use? (1998).

Almost every woman is not satisfied with one or several parts of her body. How can I achieve charming curves (2003)?

3. Women are physically, emotionally, and intellectually equal to men. In *Women of China*, this sub-frame described women as capable and can compete with men in all aspects of life, but especially in jobs. This sub-frame aimed to destroy the stereotype that women were of the inferior sex in close adherence to the communist ideology that women should be liberated and included as dynamic members of the labor force. Following this logic, men and women were enjoined to share the responsibilities of home and work. Thus, there

should be equal pay for equal work. In *Women of China*, articles that used this sub-frame also talked about women's new-found freedom to choose their role as they see fit. In *Rosy Dawn*, masculinity was expressed by the use of such adjectives as "strong," "mighty," and "tiger-like" to describe working women. These stories highlighted women as being "just like men," and as "iron women." During the Cultural Revolution, men and women were "comrades," not lovers. Women were also depicted as capable managers and administrators, positions that used to be the exclusive purview of men. Women's capability in domains traditionally populated by men was also emphasized in *Elle*. Indeed, some articles stressed that women even do better than men.

The following examples demonstrate the use of this gender sub-frame:

Zhang Lin, a train driver, wrote that some co-workers do not believe a woman can drive a train. However, she successfully showed them she can do what a man can do (*Women of China*, 1949).

Hao is a machinist in a factory. She proudly introduced her new invention, proving that women are capable of mastering technology. The idea that only men can be creative is totally wrong (*Women of China*, 1951).

In *Women of China*, stories of women striving for equal treatment with men were abundant. In a discussion about whether men should do housework, the editor concluded:

Both men and women have responsibilities in society, and they also have equal responsibilities toward the family. Therefore, husband and wife should share the housework (*Women of China*, 1963).

Meanwhile, some women decry unequal pay:

Women protested the difference in salary between men and women when, in fact, the women are even more capable (*Women of China*, 1963).

Rosy Dawn articles consistently showed women excelling in jobs traditionally held by men:

She is a soldier in the construction site. Who said woman cannot erect buildings (1976)?

Who says women cannot plant tea? Here comes the “iron girls” planting tea (1975).

The “iron women” in the group are strong and mighty. They are like dynamites that can blast tons of rock (1975).

Except for her long hair, Tie Ying, a machinist, behaves just like a man. She works like a tiger (1975).

Romantic relationships were taboo in *Rosy Dawn*:

Hong Yan came back to her hometown. Her neighbor, Mr. Muka, picked her up at the dock. He looked at her and asked why she had her long hair cut in Beijing. “Now you look like a young boy,” he said. Hong Yan replied, “I came back to build our country together with the working class” (1975).

Men and women get along just fine in *Rosy Dawn* without sexual attraction:

Daliang, a farmer, was worried he has ran out of seeds. He came across a girl who was also working on the farm. She gave him seeds wrapped in paper. A grateful Daliang shook the girl's hands and said, "Comrade, thanks" (1975).

Elle also praised women for their capabilities on the job:

No one would believe that such a thin girl could work even harder than the men.

When she went out of town with a film crew to a remote village, her coworkers were surprised by her diligence and stamina. They said she slept later and got up earlier than anyone in the production team. She walks faster than other production team members, carrying heavy equipment on her own (2004).

I have never found differences between myself and my men co-workers. Actually, I think women do better than men in this aerospace field (2003).

In summary, the results of the quantitative and qualitative analysis indicated a marked difference in the frames used by magazines to describe women's roles and gender across the three time periods. Before the Cultural Revolution, the magazine that represented the era, *Women of China*, displayed complicated and conflicting frames indicative of the clash of ideologies at that time. Women were encouraged to dedicate themselves to the construction of the state while pursuing personal goals; some articles urged women to subordinate personal desires in favor of the welfare of the state while others questioned this priority. Some women were confined to the household as housewives while others pursued careers.

Images of "iron girls" during the Cultural Revolution dominated its representative magazine, *Rosy Dawn*. Here, women were portrayed as selfless workers who labor for the

common good and who devoted themselves to communism and/or socialism. Their roles as housewives and mothers were also mentioned during this period, but only to the extent that they work in the interest of the state. Women were depicted as emotional and physically the same as men. In effect, the grid between individuals and the group, between men and women, between the domestic and the public sphere, were removed under the influence of the communist ideology.

In stark contrast, the articles from the post-Cultural Revolution fashion magazine, *Elle*, served as the exponent of physical beauty and the pursuit of ideal relationships with men. Materialism and individualism became evident in *Elle* as women pursued personal goals and enjoyed their roles as mothers, wives, or career women without much regard for the state's welfare. In *Elle*, women were more confident and clear about their roles in society than those in the pre-Cultural Revolution era. Women were shown as capable and successful in their careers. The need to be physically attractive gained ground as fashion magazines enticed women to consume more beauty products.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This study set out to determine and compare the frames Chinese magazines employed in their discussions of women's roles and the portrayal of gender. To detect the impact of cultural factors such as the prevailing political ideology on the frames used, three magazines published during three distinct historical periods were examined through content and discourse analyses. Because the country has undergone and continues to experience dramatic social transformation, magazines that were circulated before the Cultural Revolution (1949-1965), during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), and after the Cultural Revolution (1977 to date) were examined to track changes over time.

The three magazines analyzed were: *Women of China* from the pre-Cultural Revolution period; *Rosy Dawn*, published during the Cultural Revolution; and the Chinese edition of *Elle* that circulated during the post-Cultural Revolution period.

Three research questions were asked: (1) What roles were most dominant in the way women were portrayed in the magazines published during these three eras? (2) How was gender portrayed in the magazines published before, during and after the Cultural Revolution? (3) In what ways were these roles portrayed by the magazines published during these three periods in Chinese history?

The study applied Douglas' (1982) group and grid model that stipulate two dimensions in societal relationships. The group dimension describes how strongly people are bonded together. At one end of this dimension are distinct and separated individuals,

perhaps with a common reason to be together though with less of a sense of unity and connection. At the other end are people who have a connected sense of identity, relating more deeply and personally to one another. Douglas (1982) suggests that when people group together, laws are more easily defined and policed. For society to survive when bonds are weaker and central control is less possible, individuals must necessarily display self-restraint.

The grid dimension, on the other hand, describes how people take on different roles as members of a group. At one end of this spectrum are people who are relatively homogeneous in their abilities, work and activity and can easily interchange roles. This makes them less dependent on one another. At the other end are distinct roles and positions within the group with specialization and different accountability. There are also different degrees of entitlement depending on position, and there may well be a different balance of exchange between and across individuals that makes it advantageous to share and organize together (Douglas, 1982).

The findings show the push-pull effects of the group-grid dimensions in the way women were portrayed in the three magazines. The presence of various sub-cultures before the Cultural Revolution was evidenced by many conflicting frames about women and gender in the representative magazine of that time. Women were depicted in the articles as pursuing personal goals while working in earnest to benefit the state. Gender differences were at times neutralized but sometimes emphasized. During the Cultural Revolution, one voice dominated the public sphere and the portrayal of women in its representative magazine. Here, women were presented using very uniform frames—they were depicted as having masculine attributes whose labors were solely dedicated to the service of the state. After the Cultural

Revolution, the reform era ushered in a wave of frames that extolled feminine characteristics and urged women to work to satisfy individual personal goals.

Content Analysis: Frames about Women's Roles and Gender

Three frames about women's roles and two frames about gender were detected, and these frames agreed with the literature. The frequency with which each of these major frames was employed in each magazine was ascertained.

The findings show radical shifts in the ways women's roles and gender were portrayed throughout the three time periods. The findings show congruence between the dominant ideology of the time and the frames used in articles that discussed women and gender. In *Women of China*, the pre-Cultural Revolution magazine, women as contributors to public labor was the most frequently applied frame. Other commonly occurring frames, however, were those that depicted women as individuals pursuing self benefits, and women as housewives. These three frames were employed at very close frequencies judging by the proportion of articles observed to contain them. In terms of gender portrayals, frames that emphasized gender differences and frames that depicted masculinity were also employed at almost the same frequency.

In *Rosy Dawn*, the magazine that saw print during the Cultural Revolution, women were predominantly portrayed as active agents of social transformation, contributing their labors almost exclusively for the good of the collective. Even the frames that showed women as housewives point to their importance as mothers whose major contribution is the

cultivation of high-caliber citizens for the communist society. Frames that suggested the value of achieving personal goals vanished. Gender differences were ignored.

The advent of neoliberalism during the reform period ushered in frames that extolled the value of personal enjoyment and satisfaction. In *Elle*, the fashion magazine that represented the era in this study, women were no longer encouraged to be of service to the state. They were mostly portrayed as individuals in pursuit of meaningful careers. Frames that showed them as housewives reigning supreme in the domestic sphere were employed at a very low frequency. Gender differences were emphasized more than ever before.

Discourse Analysis: Women's Roles and Gender Sub-Frames

To answer the third research question, a discourse analysis was conducted. This more in-depth look revealed sub-frames about women's roles and gender. The results show that before the Cultural Revolution, articles in *Women of China* depicted women as both public servants and homemakers. They were encouraged to take good care of their children, husbands and other family members as a duty to society. Sub-frames espoused the value of putting the state at the highest priority; familial duties were supposed to be subordinate to national interests. The pursuit of material wealth was considered to be wrong. Besides this mainstream sub-frame, other conflicting points of view can also be seen. For example, some sub-frames urged the pursuit of individual dreams, and even questioned the validity of placing the state's demands over those of the family. Although there were conflicting sub-frames, collectivism was the dominant value of the time.

At the height of the Cultural Revolution, women were no longer mothers, daughters, or wives, but were seen almost exclusively as public servants who toil for the collective. In the sub-frames that depict women as housewives, their role was to free their husbands and other family members from household tasks so that they are able to devote more time toward nation building. Women's feminine characteristics were neglected because they were supposed to be as strong and as physically able as their men counterparts. Women and men got along just fine as comrades, co-workers or friends. The overriding intent to remove any social division during the Cultural Revolution can be seen in *Rosy Dawn*.

Elle displayed sub-frames that exemplified the values of a more open but consumerist society. The sub-frames in this magazine told women to establish meaningful careers, accrue wealth, enjoy romantic and sexual relationships, strive to be beautiful, and delight on the comforts material wealth can bring. Women were also described as mothers and wives whose duties can be handled together with the demands of work outside the home. Individualism, consumerism and materialism were reflected in the images of women in *Elle*.

Although there is congruence between the dominant ideology of the time and the frames used in articles published during each era, different perspectives were present in the shadow of the dominant philosophy. Conflicting views were more obvious in *Women of China*. Even in the strictly controlled *Rosy Dawn*, subtle deviations from the almost hegemonic ideology were found.

Implications of the Findings to Theory

Douglas's group-grid dichotomy provided a useful framework with which to analyze the media portrayals of an aspect of social life—the role of women and gender through time. In effect, Douglas's framework helped to link social roles and social values within specific cultural contexts. From the perspective of this dichotomy, culture—and how women were seen in that culture—did not change randomly but along pre-defined continuums.

According to this framework, Chinese society could be seen as having shifted from a moderately high group society to an extremely high group society from the founding of the People's Republic in 1949 until the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976. From there, it appeared to have followed a trajectory toward a weak group society since the implementation of economic and social reforms in 1978. From a weak grid society during the Cultural Revolution, it has moved to a strong grid society during the reform era that began after 1978. Changes in the media's portrayal of women's roles and gender subscribed to this framework.

Sub-cultures that voiced out competing claims were also observed. These differing opinions provided varying spectra of group and grid. The results suggest that mainstream portrayals won over conflicting values and voices, but these opposing views were not completely eliminated. Douglas' model failed to account for these variances and the role they might have played in shaping the phrasing and intensity of the dominant themes or frames. Following this logic, framing theory which views culture as the stock of commonly invoked frames from which journalists can select themes should pay more attention to the influence of sub-cultures in the molding of media content.

In this study, the cultural character of each period was embodied in the frames and sub-frames the three magazines used in discussions of women's roles and gender. That is, the

frames employed were congruent with the dominant ideology of the time. Collectivism dominated the pre-Cultural Revolution frames as well as the frames used at the height of the Cultural Revolution. The weak grid roles during the Cultural Revolution were reflected in frames that saw women with no gender-based attributes. In today's China, individualism, materialism and consumerism surged, and this shift was captured in the magazine reports.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

The impact of culture could have been more discernible had the study examined a magazine's evolution through time. According to Scheufele (1999), media frames can be affected by a host of factors, including the political system under which the media operate, journalistic routines, internal media organizational pressures, and the pressures exerted on the media by external interest groups. These factors could have been more easily tracked in a single publication as it traversed a nation's history, but this study had to contend with three different magazines from each time period.

The study also limited itself to a rather contrived division of historical epochs. In other words, the forced division into pre-, during, and post-Cultural Revolution periods may be too rigid a typology because it does not acknowledge minor cultural shifts within each major epoch that may have produced substantial changes or effects. The number of years that constitute each epoch also varied considerably.

The portrayal of women and gender could have been more representative if more magazines from each time period were analyzed. The extent to which the magazines analyzed were truly representative of the era in which they were circulated is also open to

question. *Women of China* was selected because it was initiated by the Communist Party to become the most important women's magazine in the 1950s and the 1960s. *Rosy Dawn* was the only publication with a national circulation during the Cultural Revolution. It was launched in 1974 and ceased publication in 1976 when the Cultural Revolution ended, but only issues published in 1975 and 1976 were available for analysis. *Elle* was selected because it is one of the best-selling women's magazines in the current Chinese market and was considered to represent magazines in the reform era.

The foregoing limitations imposed restrictions on the generalizability of results. The small sample size also contributes to this limitation. Only 236 articles from *Women of China*, 98 articles from *Rosy Dawn*, and 268 articles from *Elle* were analyzed.

Future studies should try harder at enlarging the sampling frame and the sample size to arrive at richer data and to enable more meaningful comparisons across the three time periods. Magazines that target different audience groups are also worth examining. The qualitative analysis would be better informed by knowledge about the writers' professional background.

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APPENDIX A

CONTENT ANALYSIS CODE BOOK

| Variable Number | Variable Name | Variable Label | Values | Code |
|-----------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 1 | Coder | Coder's name | 1=Yue Yin 2=Ni Zhang | |
| 2 | Magazine | Magazine's title | 1= <i>Women of China</i> 2= <i>Rosy Dawn</i> 3= <i>Elle</i> | |
| 3 | Article ID | Article ID number | | |
| 4 | Year | Year article was published | Enter year | |
| 5 | Author | Author of the article | Enter as string | |
| 6 | Length | Length of article in number of words | Enter number of words | |
| 7 | Role1 | Women are portrayed as having roles primarily within the domestic sphere | 0= absent 1= present | |
| 8 | Role2 | Women are portrayed as workers or laborers in the service of the state | 0= absent 1= present | |
| 9 | Role3 | Women are encouraged to pursue their own personal goals, including their role as family members | 0= absent 1= present | |
| 10 | Gender1 | Women are "feminized" | 0= absent 1= present | |
| 11 | Gender2 | Women are portrayed as equal to men (gender equality is stressed) | 0= absent 1= present | |
| 11 | Role1A | If Role1 is present, how was this role depicted in the text? | Enter as string variable; cite specific and unedited accounts from text | |
| 11 | Role2A | If Role2 is present, how was this role depicted in the text? | Enter as string variable; cite specific and unedited accounts from text | |
| 11 | Role3A | If Role3 is present, how was this role depicted in the text? | Enter as string variable; cite specific and unedited accounts from text | |
| 11 | Gender1A | If Gender1 is present, how was this depicted in the text? | Enter as string variable; cite specific and unedited accounts from text | |
| 11 | Gender2A | If Gender2 is present, how was this depicted in the text? | Enter as string variable; cite specific and unedited accounts from text | |

APPENDIX B

CODING GUIDE FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS

Operational definitions of frames:

With respect to women's roles:

1. **Women as having roles primarily within the domestic sphere** includes frames that exhort and urge women to stay at home to take care of children, support their husbands, and take care of extended family members. Women are depicted as or are encouraged to be dutiful housewives, mothers, daughters or aunts. Such articles may talk about a woman exemplar or may give advice on how to be successful in domestic roles.
2. **Women as workers or laborers** refers to notions that women share the same rights as men, including the right to earn a living. Articles that frame women in this role encourage them to divorce themselves from the traditional confines of the home, to get jobs, and to be economically independent. These articles may portray women models at work, give advice on how to perform better in their jobs or how to deal with problems at work, or may offer suggestions about how women can acquire skills to be prepared for future careers. In this role, women are asked to be in the service of the state at the expense of self-interests. Women's contributions to the country or to any collective are extolled.
3. **Women as individuals** will be demonstrated by articles that encourage women to pursue individual goals, whether to serve the state or to put primary emphasis on

the family. Women are encouraged to determine personal goals even though these may run contrary to the goals and expectations of society. Those who are successful in whatever they do are admired. In these articles, women are exhorted to enjoy life on their own terms. These articles attribute women's success to their own ability and hard work, suggesting that women are active and powerful agents of social change.

With respect to gender:

4. **Women are feminized** when gender differences are emphasized. Women are portrayed as physically different with men (e.g., women are not as physically strong as men), are given advice on fashion and lifestyles, and are encouraged to be beautiful and attractive. Articles that use this frame give advice on how to be involved in a healthy romantic relationship, and how to deal with the opposite sex, among others.
5. **Women as masculinized** means women are portrayed as equal to men in physical aspects, attributes and capability. Articles that employ this frame may suggest that women are as strong as men, think like men, and do not have to beautify themselves for whatever purpose. These articles may also posit or imply that women and men can get along well without tension.