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**Gender Role Represented in Official Media:
Communist Legacies and the Gap between
Rhetoric and Reality**

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Abstract

The question addressed in this paper is how the mainstream media reproduced and participated in reshaping gender discourse before and after the transformation in Russia and the Peoples Republic of China, selecting *People's Daily* and *Rabotnitsa* from 1980 to 2000 as research objects and conducting both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

In general, both countries have gone through the centralised state market economy reforms and suffered the impact of free market consumerism and commercialization with these. As a result, women's aesthetic is more diversified, but it also strengthens the sexual gaze of women's bodies. There are more new occupations, but women also face great challenges when a depression or labour surplus occurs. Meanwhile, the legacies inherited by the two countries also differed to some extent. Russia experienced a more violent and comprehensive onslaught of ideas, where consumerism and commercialization were more directly reflected in the mass media, and the social gender order took on a state of tug-of-war between the traditional, communist and emerging identities, while China's reform has eroded the legacies in a more insidious and slow manner. Semiotics management remains in the hands of the Party, but economic and social liberalization are not only influencing people's mindset, but also the basic principles of social issues, including gender issues, within the Party.

Keywords

Gender discourse, Mass media, Propaganda, Communist legacy, Transformation, Russia, China

Abstrakt

V této práci se zabýváme otázkou, jakým způsobem mainstreamová média reprodukovala a podílela se na přetváření genderového diskurzu před a po transformaci v Rusku a Čínské lidové republice. Jako objekt výzkumu jsme zvolili Lidové noviny a Rabotnici z let 1980 až 2000 a provedli jsme kvantitativní i kvalitativní analýzu.

Obecně lze říci, že obě země prošly centralizovanými reformami státního tržního hospodářství a spolu s nimi utrpěly dopady konzumního způsobu života a komercializace volného trhu. V důsledku toho se estetika žen více diverzifikuje, ale zároveň se posiluje sexuální pohled na ženská těla. Vzniká více nových povolání, ale ženy také čelí velkým výzvám, když nastane deprese nebo přebytek pracovních sil. Mezitím se do jisté míry liší i dědictví, které obě země zdědily. Rusko zažilo prudší a komplexnější nápor idejí, kde se konzum a komercializace více přímo odrážely v masmédiích a společenský genderový řád nabyl stavu přetahování mezi tradiční, komunistickou a nově vznikající identitou, zatímco čínské reformy erodovaly dědictví záladněji a pomaleji. Kontrola jazyka zůstává v rukou strany, ale ekonomická a sociální liberalizace ovlivňuje nejen myšlení lidí, ale i základní principy společenských otázek, včetně genderových, uvnitř strany.

Klíčová slova

Genderový diskurz, masmédia, propaganda, komunistické dědictví, transformace, Rusko, Čína

Declaration of Authorship

1. The author hereby declares that he compiled this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature.
2. The author hereby declares that all the sources and literature used have been properly cited.
3. The author hereby declares that the thesis has not been used to obtain a different or the same degree.

Prague ... May 3, 2022

Jiarong He

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May knowledge bring us closer together rather than widen the distance between us, and may it help us to understand ourselves, each other and the world, rather than become a capital of arrogance and an invisible barrier. I will always maintain the greatest degree of gratitude and humility for the matter of being able to learn knowledge.

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1. Introduction

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, The original bolshvik's communism seems to have faded away in the wake of reform slogans after reform slogans. So did China after the reform in 1978. The Maoist ideology was replaced by Deng's market economy straties. However, the imprint that this history has left on generations through various means is still vaguely recognizable. What did the communist years leave for Russia and China today? Are there any differences in their respective legacies? If so, what exactly causes these similarities and differences? A large number of scholars have done quantitative and qualitative research on the legacies of communism in democratic values, political participation, market economy concept and influence, gender concept, etc.; a considerable number of them have compared the former communist countries in Eastern Europe with Russia and reached many interesting conclusions this work builds on when comparing the impacts of both the transformations on the position of women in Russian and Chinese societies.

In *Communism's Shadow*, Grigore Pop-Eleches and Joshua A. Tucker concluded that the degree of support for democracy in post-communist countries is lower than that in other countries in the world, and this conclusion still holds even after controlling conditions at the time of collapse.¹ They think that there is a connection between exposure to communism and less support for democracy after controlling the age factor. The longer the exposure time, the lower the support for democracy.² Jeff Carter, Michael H. Bernhard and Timothy Nordstrom, based on Bernhard, Nordstrom, and Reenock (BNR) Survivable Dataset, compared the post-communist countries with other new democratic countries in transition in the third wave of democratization. It is found that there is no significant difference between post-communist countries and other newly transformed democratic countries in terms of democratic survival, and the legacy of communism in democratic system may not be as big as we imagined.³

Market economy, social welfare and gender equality are also important fields for scholars to study communist legacy. Grigore Pop-Eleches and Joshua A. Tucker found

¹ Communism's Shadow:111

² Communism's Shadow 115

³ Communist Legacies and Democratic Survival in a Comparative Perspective: Liability or Advantage:849

out that post-communist citizens' support for the market economy was lower than that of citizens in other states, even if the researchers controlled the demographic characteristics, economic conditions, and political system of the current and pre-communist period.⁴ In terms of social welfare, people in post-communist countries have shown a more supportive attitude. According to their research model, the attitude of adult exposure under the communist regime towards democracy, market and social welfare has the expected influence, that is, the longer the exposure time, the lower the support. Interestingly, however, childhood exposure has almost no influence on the degree of support for democracy, and its influence level on the attitude towards market economy and social welfare is only half that of adult effect. It is worth noting that only when the attitude towards gender equality is asked, the effect of children's socialization is remarkable, not that of adults. According to the authors, this is in line with the characteristics of "rhetoric but not reality" of gender equality under the communist regime. It can be said that only in schools and books, the gap between the rhetoric of gender equality and reality will not be so big.⁵ Contrary to early communist exposure, which can improve the support for gender equality, adult exposure has a significant negative effect. Although communist ideology has left people with the impression that "men and women are the same", the data show that the history of communism has not made people's support for gender equality rise as expected: post-communist citizens are less supportive of gender equality.⁶

Amanda Orza reached a similar conclusion in a 2013 study.⁷ She believes that the communist legacy is still influencing men's and women's views on women's participation in politics and their efforts to achieve gender equality. The forced mobilization of women under communism and the official measures to eliminate gender differences, coupled with women's negative experiences in politics and their loyalty to the private sphere, all lead to women's lack of spontaneous and active "gender awareness" in the post-communist era. From this point of view, communism did inhibit women's participation in political and social activities. Malina Voicu went further on this topic, and investigated the influence of political transition on gender concept in

⁴ Communism's Shadow 143-144

⁵ Communism's Shadow 25-27

⁶ Communism's Shadow 220

⁷ The Legacy of Communist Social and Political Practices upon Post-Communist Political Culture: A Gendered Approach

post-communist countries. She concludes that there is a connection between gender equality and political democratization in post-communist countries. To put it concretely, "the political transformation has influenced gender attitudes in two ways: by changing the individual values orientation and by reshaping social institutions."⁸, the level of social democratization influences people's attitude towards gender issues.

Although Marx never systematically expounded his views on gender issues, "gender equality" seems to be closely related to communist rule in both the Soviet Union and China. Gender struggle, as if it were a natural appendage of class struggle, runs through the communist political propaganda all the time, but is never the core topic. It is more like a means, a tool that can be picked up when needed, and when the party has different goals, it can be kneaded into a new shape at will. This paper attempts to examine women's gender roles in the post-community period. I analyse how the experience of community influences through the construction of media messages shapes women's gender roles in the process of socialization in the post-communist societies. The previous, especially British and American, research compared the post-communist countries in Eastern Europe with Russia, to identify what communism has left for people. This paper chooses to compare the Soviet Union/Russia with China before and after the reform and opening to describe effects which community rules have on definition of gender roles in both societies. First, I will answer the question what the similarities and differences between the effects of communist legacies in the two countries are. Second, I will examine the causes of these similarities and differences to conclude with an overall comparison of evolution of the women positions in Russian and Chinese society.

The reasons for choosing China before and after the reform and opening-up to compare with the process and results in the Soviet Union/Russia are mainly due to the following considerations:

(1) Comparability between two countries:

As shown in the Table 1, There are several common factors, but if we look closely at these commonalities, some detailed and potentially very important differences could be

⁸ Mapping Value Orientations in Central and Eastern Europe:239

found. Therefore, observing the similarities and differences of results between the two countries may contribute to the understanding on how these historical factors play roles. Moreover, these two are the largest and most influential communist/post-communist countries.

Table 1 Similarities and Difference between Russia and China

	SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES
CULTURE/TRADITIONS	Imperial; Masculinities;	Confucian vs. Orthodox
THE EXPERIENCE OF COMMUNISM	Planned economies; The leading role of the Communist Party	Disputes on ideologies; The main contradictions they faced under an international context were different, which lead to different specific policies. The basis and development level of social, economic and demographic conditions were different; The changes of period they experienced were different
SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, DEMOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT, GEOGRAPHY	Vast territories; Multi-ethnic character; The economic structure shared similarities during the communist period: gave priorities to state or social ownership, central planning, state monopol on banks and foreign trade, the development of heavy industries resulting in unbalanced economic structure	The basis and pace of economic and cultural development were different; The amount and structure of population; After reforms, their economic structures were quite different

REFORM/TRANSFORMATION

Crisis were aroused as a result of reforms; “Strongman” leads the reform. The reforms in both countries are incomplete and unfinished, and show great historical and traditional legacies;	Means, degrees and direction of marketization are different; Russia also carried out political reforms, while China did not (although there were changes on political system as a result of economic reform); Results and effects of reforms;
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(2) Comparability between two nodes:

The period explored in this paper is 1980-2000. Unlike some previous studies, this essay prefers to concentrate in both the cases exactly on the same beginning and final year to guarantee the common international context.⁹ The year 1980 was chosen because firstly, in 1981, Brezhnev began to seek the normalization of Sino-Soviet relations and received a relatively positive response from China. This is a common important point, so this was chosen as the beginning year. Secondly, the reform and opening-up of China began in 1978-1979, while Gorbachev came to power in 1985. 1980 is an intermediate point, given that it took time for the reform and opening-up to expand in China and that, although Gorbachev did not come to power until 1985, the political and social climate necessary for him to do so already existed in 1985. Thus, 1980 is therefore a better time to balance the two.

The reasons for choosing 2000 are: on the one hand, in terms of observing the leaders' changes and the stage of reforms in the two countries, 2000 is quite suitable. Although Jiang Zemin had come to power in 1989, Deng Xiaoping was still the de facto ruler of China at that time. It was only after Deng Xiaoping's death in 1997 that Jiang gradually became the real ruler of the Chinese Communist Party. On the Russian side, the year 1998 was the point at which Putin came to central power.

Although different from the Soviet Union and other ex-communist countries in Eastern Europe, China is still a one-party dictatorship of the Communist Party at present, and the only ideology recognized by the government is still the communist ideology,

⁹ The Communist and Postsocialist Gender Order in Russia and China, p423

regardless of whether it conforms to the original Marx's doctrine or not. However, this "communism" or "socialism" (because Marx divided the road to communism into different stages, and the Chinese official statement is that it is currently in the "primary stage of socialism") has been prefixed with "Chinese characteristics" after the reform and opening-up. What does this "Chinese characteristic" mean? Is communism with this prefix still the original communism? In this paper, because Marx's communism is based on the analysis and construction of the economic system, the economic system (including production, division of labour and distribution, etc.) is the most basic standard. The reform and opening-up process abandoned the almost purely centrally state-planned economic system, equal distribution and the division of labour peddling, and allowed market competition to be the front line, while the government gradually moved behind the scenes. Such a fundamental change produced, as Marx put it, a huge social transformation: a widening gap between rich and poor, exploitation, corruption, a repressed workforce that could not hold the means of production, and the ensuing violent clash of different ideas. This is one of the reasons why reform and opening-up can be compared with great transformation in Russia.

The second reason for the comparison is that between Russia and Peoples Republic of China exist differences too. Although reform and opening-up is a great change that changes China's development, it is not thorough after all. This incompleteness cannot simply be interpreted as a result of absent radical political change in China compared to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Despite the Communist Party's efforts to maintain its past status, economic change, the resulting social change and the changes in the way and ease of access to information due to technological change have made it impossible to preserve it fully. Political change is inevitable, even if it cannot be completely disrupted, as it was in the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries.

During the process of writing the theses, I did face difficulty in obtaining and reading necessary materials. I use qualitative methods such as text analysis, it was essential to reach first-hand materials.. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related difficulties with international traveling, the focus of my research had to concentrate on Chinese side more than the original project intended.

The focus of the theses is how the official media shaped the gender roles during the socialization in the communist and post-communist (post-transformation) period. This will allow better understanding to the continuing social political and economic effects of communism. The gender issue is an important part of official communist ideology, and it is one of the most unique features of communist regimes. It interconnects their core spheres: politics, economy, and education. To certain extent, gender can be observed as an instrument attached to communism as well. It can provide a perspective different from democracy, economy, and other elements, and enrich understanding of the communist regime and its influence.

Secondly, debates on gender help to understand how the will of communist countries is conveyed and operated. Both from the ideological and practical perspective, the gender issue could well reflect how the communist legacies work. Thirdly, help understand how the communist legacy interacts and operates together with traditional factors and contemporary conditions. Gender policies were not only dependent on the communist ideologies. Traditional, economic and some other pragmatic factors were also important driving force for governments. This makes the issue comparable among different communist countries. Finally, it provides a way of thinking for explaining the problems left by predecessors. Some previous quantitative research found that the experience of communism has quite different effects on gender issues from other issues like attitudes toward democracy, market or welfare, etc., especially on socialization effect. And some scholars suggest that this may be due to the abnormal great gap between rhetoric and reality in the actual development of gender equality. Thus, the gender topic is of high importance for further research.

This paper is divided into six parts. The first part briefly reviews the communist history of China and the Soviet Union and the current scholars' research on the communist legacies, puts forward the research questions, explains the logic of the research questions, and introduces the article structure. The second chapter mainly introduces the key concepts and theories used in this paper. The third and fourth parts respectively review the female history of the Soviet Union/Russia and China and the change of female image in the official media propaganda in these two countries. The fifth part discusses and compares the similarities and differences between Soviet Union/Russia and China and the reasons for them. The sixth part summarizes the full text.

2. Key Concepts and Theory

Since this paper belongs to the cross-study of journalistic communication and gender, there are three key concepts and theoretical analysis frameworks involved: Feminism, feminist criticism of mass media and political propaganda under the Communism rule.

2.1 Feminism

Feminism is not only an ideological thought and an academic school, but also a movement for social change with extensive social foundation. In a broad sense, the feminist movement is a social movement in which women strive for equal rights, with the aim of improving women's social status and living conditions.¹⁰ Although the main issues of different movements in different periods are not the same, feminism is united in its common goal: to eliminate gender differences and achieve gender equality.¹¹

Marxist feminism holds that the oppression suffered by women is closely related to the larger social structure of capitalism. Women, along with other disadvantaged groups, such as homosexuals, ethnic minorities, working class and other vulnerable groups are subjected to a variety of oppression, but the ultimate origin is the capitalist system. The social structure and interests of capitalism have shaped a set of concepts of femininity that meet the economic needs but marginalize women's right. In the book *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Engels investigated the history of the development of productive forces, analysed the process of the formation of class society, examined the changes in the social status of women, and revealed the social roots of the oppression against women. In primitive society, women were responsible for various affairs within the clan, sewing clothes, raising offspring, caring for the elderly and children, and played an important role in the development of the clan. Therefore, a matrilineal clan society was gradually formed, and women had a very high social status.¹² However, with the emergence of private ownership and class, women according to Engels gradually became oppressed. The division between the rich and the poor emerged, and

¹⁰ Porter, E. *Women and Moral Identity*[M]. Sydney: Allen & Unwin,1991.

¹¹ Beasley, C. *What is Feminism: An Introduction to Feminist Theory*[M]. London: Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE,1999.

¹² Engels, Untermann, and Untermann, Ernest. *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. Chicago: C.H. Kerr &, 1902. Print. Standard Socialist Ser. 44-58

society gradually divided into two opposing classes, the exploited and the exploiters. At the same time, the accumulation of private wealth within the family led to the desire of men to inherit property along their own lineage, and the guarantee of women's chastity became a necessary condition to realize this desire, with wives inevitably becoming the private property of the man and his instrument of succession. The unequal status and role of men and women in the family eventually led to the confrontation between husband and wife. Thus, private ownership is not only the origin of class oppression, but also the root of gender oppression.¹³

For socialist countries, "feminism" is mainly manipulated by the state. It refers to an abstract movement pattern and paradigm, emphasizing the dominant position of the "state" as the subject in promoting women's emancipation and carrying out women's work.¹⁴ In describing the women's movement dominated and led by the state power in the process of socialist revolution, "state feminism" has two meanings. First, it is the generalisation and designation of the phenomenon and historical process of women's emancipation movement led by the state, which, together with "Marxism", "nationalism" and "revolutionism", it constitutes the basic features of women's movement, and is a description of a movement mode and characteristic. Secondly, it is a state-led and state-implemented movement for gender equality, especially for women's gender emancipation, including the construction of theories and practical actions, which is a "governance" issue.

2.2 Gender-specific Media Communication Research

Mass media, in general, include newspapers, magazines, radio, television, books and other public carriers that disseminate information in large quantities in society. As an important element in the realization of the function of political socialization mechanism, mass media have an impact on people's political perceptions and attitudes. It is the role of mass media in political socialization on gender issues that this paper will study.

¹³ Engels, Untermyer, and Untermyer, Ernest. *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. Chicago: C.H. Kerr &, 1902. Print. Standard Socialist Ser. :63-98

¹⁴ Outshoorn, J. & J. Kantola. *Changing State Feminism*. PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2007, Preface. Lovenduski J. Introduction: state feminism and the political representation of women. Lovenduski J. Ed. *State Feminism and Political Representation*. Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 1.

Current research on gender and media consists of examining and critiquing three main domains: the production domain, the textual domain, and the impact on audiences. The research in the field of media production mainly examines the internal and external environment of the media production process. The research at the organizational level mainly focuses on the conventions and practical operations within the production organization. The research on media and women's individual level focuses on the personal analysis of communicators. Among them, the number of women employed, the status of women in the communication industry and the special problems faced by women in the media are the focuses of attention.

The second major area of research on media and gender relations is the field of texts. This area has been the focus of research examinations, and the study of women's media images has focused on the frequency of being presented, the way they are reproduced, and their symbolic meaning. Research on the mediated image of women has focused on content analysis of the five media forms of popular culture, namely fiction, television, film, women's magazines, and advertising. Research on the influence of media on women focuses on analysing the potential educational functions of media on women, including the influence of media on women's perceptions and women's behaviours. Feminists use various theoretical approaches to study the influence of media on human perceptions and behaviour and the extent of that influence. According to constructivism, language is a construct. Therefore, the content analysis of news is particularly important. The media's intentional reproduction of the same term implies artificial discursive practices and has an ideological significance. In textual analysis, it is often possible to see that a certain group or individual is stereotyped or even stigmatized, and they are basically voiceless and in an inferior position of being constructed and shaped. From the perspective of culture and power, reproduction itself is a manifestation of power relations within culture, and these powers dictate the characteristics of the reproduced object and how it is reproduced.

According to Foucault's view of power discourse, the most fundamental factor that influences and controls the movement of discourse is power. Power is realized through discourse. Discourse is both a product of power and a component of power.¹⁵ Because

¹⁵ Foucault, Michel. "Orders of discourse." *Social science information* 10.2 (1971): 7-30.

the current Foucault's society is male-centred and men realize their power through discourse, the use of media discourse follows the principles adopted by communicators from their own perspectives. The male perspective and dominance of the media makes media discourse usually standardized by normative male discourse orientation. It is not easy for a truly female discourse to have a place in mass media in Russia and China. Thus, one of what this paper will analyse is how the mass media "reproduce" the gender culture and order under the power struggle of politics, capital and culture, and through this "reproduction", use their own power of representation to influence people's gender perceptions.

2.3 Political Propaganda under Communist Rule

Leninist political propaganda thoughts mainly emphasizes the importance of political propaganda. Political propaganda should proceed from practical needs; and promote with typical propaganda. Lenin believed that under the capitalist system, the proletariat was inculcated by the ideology of the bourgeoisie and could not realize and fulfil its historical mission. Therefore, only through political propaganda could the proletariat organize the masses to fight for their rights, to take the initiative to undertake their own mission, and to lay the foundation for the class revolution of the proletariat. At the same time, Lenin attached great importance to the role of typical propaganda in political propaganda. He emphasized the power of positive and negative examples in propaganda from the perspective of organizational communication. The main elements are: first, the emphasis on the warning function of negative examples. Second, Lenin criticized the Party's political propaganda work for neglecting the power of positive examples. Third, the positive role of propagating positive examples was fully affirmed¹⁶.

The main contents of Marxist political propaganda thought with Chinese characteristics can be summarized as Mao Zedong's and Deng Xiaoping's thoughts. Mao Zedong had always maintained a strong and keen interest in newspapers, and regarded "not reading

¹⁶ Lenin, Golovanova, Yevseyeva, Ovsepian, Burmistenko, Saifulin, Golovanova, Galina Anatol'evna, Yevseyeva, L. P., Ovsepian, R. P., Burmistenko, Alekseï Nikolaevich, Saifulin, M, and International Organization of Journalists. Lenin about the Press / [compiled by G.A. Golovanova, L.P. Yevseyeva, R.P. Ovsepian ; English Edition Compiled by A.N. Burmistenko ; Edited by M. Saifulin]. Prague: International Organisation of Journalists, 1972. Print. Journalist Library; v. 1.

newspapers" as the biggest dereliction of duty of party leaders. Mao Zedong's "newspaper theory" is mainly composed of newspaper criticism. Mao emphasized the need to combine the methods of criticism and self-criticism in the newspapers. However, due to a misjudgement of the class struggle during the socialist construction period, this approach was not practically implemented. Second, newspaper should be run by politicians. Mao emphasized that the editorial and publishing work of the *People's Daily* must be handled by politicians who knew the policies of the central government. Third, the party newspaper played the "five major roles" of organizing, inspiring, motivating, criticizing, and promoting.¹⁷

For political propaganda, Deng Xiaoping especially emphasized the importance of "typical" propaganda and reporting. He clearly pointed out that "when propagating good examples, we must make it clear under what conditions they are, how to get up according to their own situation, not to say that they are good at everything, all the problems are solved, and not to ask other places to ignore their own conditions rigidly". For the propaganda of typical deeds, Deng Xiaoping stressed that leading cadres should first become typical. When Party cadres manage propaganda work, they should first strive to make themselves as a positive example. Then they should combine good publicity and typical propaganda with their own specific behaviour of good example.

However, whether the emphasis on the dominance of political propaganda or the use of typology, essentially, as Grigore Pop-Eleches & Joshua A. Tucker put it, it served the communist regime's "purpose of not only trying to rule people, but also of trying to implement 'projects' or policies to shape and transform them".¹⁸ Strengthening official political propaganda and controlling the use of language through control of the mass media is an important part of this "shaping" and "transformation".¹⁹ "Language in use, or discourse, is normative and ideological, in that it evinces both referential and symbolic (ideological) meanings".²⁰ The so-called communist language that contains ideology is

¹⁷ Wu, Lengxi. *Remembering Chairman Mao (Chinese version)*. Beijing, Xinhua Publishing House, 1996.: p63-65.

¹⁸ Deng, Xiaoping. *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping, Vol II (Chinese version)*. Beijing: Renmin Publishing House, 1994.: p316-317.

¹⁹ Communism's Shadow: p3

²⁰ Legacies of Totalitarian Language in the Discourse Culture of the Post-Totalitarian Era: (Matthew H. Ciscel, p56, Chapter 3: What Does Democracy Mean in Moldova? Political Discourses around Contested Words in the Disputed Elections of 2009)

first and foremost a political propaganda language whose rhetorical tendency is always to exaggerate the regime's good points and achievements while underestimating its shortcomings and failures in order to keep a firm grip on the population.²¹ This kind of political propaganda language has the following two most obvious characteristics: (1) it reduces everything to a simple dichotomous model of the progressive and the reactionary, in which the former is equated with the reality of "socialism/communism" and the latter is equated with all things that are opposed to the "socialist/communist" thing.²² (2) The ideological language is to create the illusion of reality. Its purpose is not to represent reality, but to represent "the imaginary reality it needs".

"A lie repeated a thousand times becomes the truth." Then a set of discursive patterns repeated for decades can also become habits that are difficult to break and still influence post-communist countries today after the great transformation. In their study on Czech, Polish, Romanian, and Russian political discourse in post-communist period, Marek Skovajsa, Magda Stroinska, Cosmina Tanasoiu, and Ekaterina Levintova coincidentally found that the communist discourse system still has a profound influence on the present-day political discourse. This influence is manifested mainly in three ways: (1) the use of terms and methodologies in academia; and (2) in politics, the combination of these old meanings and attitudes with westernized political language creates a new linguistic hybrid that is different from traditional communist newspeak, but just as confusing and full of conceptual traps. (3) A "backlash" in political expression has emerged, but after a period of pronounced liberalism, official discourse has recently shifted to a renewed emphasis on the conservative categories of a strong state, law and order, the revival of national values, and an independent foreign policy.²³

In general, although the media reports did not represent the reality of social life at that time, they did serve as a reflective mirror of the direction in which the officials of each period expect people to "shape" or "transform" them. In terms of the topic under discussion, the media's approach to gender issues and the meanings and values they convey are, in fact, determined by the specific social formations. During the period of

²¹ Legacies of Totalitarian Language in the Discourse Culture of the Post-Totalitarian Era (Rossen Vassilev, p103, Chapter 5: Newspeak in the language of Politics in the Post-Totalitarian Era: The Case of Bulgaria)

²² Legacies of Totalitarian Language in the Discourse Culture of the Post-Totalitarian Era (Ernest Andrews, p1, Introduction)

²³ Legacies of Totalitarian Language in the Discourse Culture of the Post-Totalitarian Era.

socialist construction, when the state ideology was dominant, the media constructed a series of women's emancipation discourses in accordance with the grand narrative logic of the state's political "central task" and became an important part of state construction. Defining the goals and strategies of women's development according to the needs of state construction is the essence of women's liberation discourse production. Through such state feminism and the production of gender discourse in the mass media, the socialization process of both men and women in it is reshaped, while adapting to social changes and improving and securing the social order. The transformation of the production of gender discourse in the mass media is itself a microcosm of the changing times and political, economic, and cultural transformation.

This paper will examine and compare the changing image of women in the official media discourse in China before and after the Soviet Union/Russia and the reform and opening up of China from 1980-2000: in order to help shape women's gender roles in the post-communist period, how the experience of communism affects the construction of media, which is a tool of socialization, in order to help shape women's The aims of this paper include: to show the types of ideal female roles reflected in the Chinese and Soviet/Russian mainstream media in different historical periods; the changing trends of these ideal female roles in terms of image, occupation, quality, and value orientation; and the dynamics and factors behind this process of change. factors behind this process of change. The basic idea of this paper is to reflect the changing expectations of society regarding the female roles by selectively presenting the images of women in the media in different historical periods. Then, through comparison, the changes in gender culture and order in the two countries and the similarities and differences of the changes are drawn. The selection of media is then mainly based on *People's Daily*²⁴ and *Rabotnitsa*²⁵, combined with other relevant historical background and materials. The image of women in the media is also used as an entry point to analyze the impact of the overall social change on the role of women.

²⁴ *People's Daily* is the organ of CPC, the most authoritative and influential comprehensive newspaper in China today, and an important window for the world to understand and observe the latest changes in China.

²⁵ *Rabotnitsa* (*Работница*) was founded on March 8th, 1914. It is the first women's magazine published by Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (Bolshevik).

3. China

3.1 Historical Background

During the long feudal era, the norm of Confucian traditional culture for women was three obediences: obedience to father before marriage, obedience to husband after marriage, and obedience to son after husband's death.²⁶ Being a good wife and mother is the traditional image of Chinese women and the basic paradigm of life. The core concept of "virtuousness" is the most important to women in traditional culture, which is a historical construction of patriarchal consciousness. In Ban Zhao's *Commandments for Women*, it is said that "the husband is the god of women, just like the sky, which cannot be escaped, the husband as a god cannot be violated", which raised the patriarchal power to the status of an inviolable god. These admonitions, which sought to rationalize the male-oriented social order, were widely circulated and became a moral and cultural yoke for women.

The women's emancipation movement in modern China began with the ideological enlightenment of the Hundred Days Reform (1898) period.²⁷ The idea of women's emancipation was mainly put forward by Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao and Tan Sitong, who believed that foot-binding, early marriage and women's lack of education were not conducive to "strengthening the seeds and protecting the country" and were among the direct causes of the country's weakness and poverty. During the May Fourth New Culture Movement, the idea of women's emancipation was once again promoted in the discourse of enlightenment, with the *New Youth* as the front. During the May Fourth Movement, female students everywhere struggled together with male students, breaking down the barriers of gender distinction and promoting open social interaction between men and women. The struggle for freedom of marriage and opposition to feudal arrangements became common themes in literature and newspapers in criticism of the old gender relations.

In modern Chinese history, the unique characteristics of women's liberation are: First, the history of women's liberation was driven by male dominance. On the one hand, the

²⁶ Bock, Philip K. *Modern cultural anthropology: An introduction*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1974.

²⁷ Benedict, Ruth. *Patterns of culture*. Routledge, 2019.

movement was a joint battle. On the other hand, it also brought the danger that women demanded their emancipation by male standards and thus blurred female subjectivity. Second, from the Hundred Days' Reform (1898), the Xinhai Revolution (1911), and the May Fourth Movement (1915), the theme of women's liberation was closely linked to the theme of strengthening the country, calling for women's liberation because it was related to the needs of China's modernization process and to the fate of the country. At the stage of anti-Japanese war, the national discourse became more dominant. In the first half of the twentieth century in China, the survival of the nation was the main concern. It can be said that women's liberation and feminist discourse were only part of state and nationalist discourse in the modern era.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, it inherited the legislative tradition and principles of the Soviet Union. The new *Marriage Law* advocated marriage autonomy, monogamy, equality between men and women, prohibition of bigamy, concubinage and child brides, clearly stipulated that everyone had the freedom to remarry, completely declaring the feudal marriage system illegal. Gender discourses in Mao Zedong era, such as "Women can hold up half the sky", "Times are different, men and women are the same", "What male comrades can do, female comrades can also do", completely changed the thought of "taking husbands as the god of women" in feudal culture from the level of state-dominated gender discourses, and taught women to break through gender differences and become independent. At the same time, the state regarded the women's liberation movement as part of communism and formulated protective policies in favour of women (mainly urban women). Under the condition of underdeveloped productivity, it achieved the full employment of urban women. In the countryside, based on the need for women's emancipation and the government's need for economic development, women were mobilized as an untapped human resource and generally took up the burden of agricultural labour. This social mobilization has achieved remarkable results through the intervention of ideological forces and grassroots power organizations.

Thus, under the will of the state, Chinese women rapidly transformed their identity from "person in the family" to "person in society", and their economic status and sense of autonomy and independence were greatly enhanced. However, there were still gender problems in this process: First, the state-led emancipation of women had led to the idea

of dependence, and women's self-awareness had not yet developed. Within the family, the traditional gender division of labour was still in place, women still bore most of the housework. The customs and cultural psychology of patriarchy were still preserved. In other words, the reduction of gender differences was mainly promoted by administrative forces, without challenging the cultural concepts and value standards of male superiority over female from the deeper level. As a result, women entered the male world, but failed to change the gender-defined hierarchy and values. Social resources and power were still controlled by men, and the field of knowledge production rarely accommodated women's life and experience. Women's emancipation measures that were incorporated into the national economic policy created and maintained gender differences and gender inequalities in society while promoting women's advancement into society.

In the post-Mao era, after a few years of hovering, China welcomed the reform and opening-up under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping. Since 1978, from the era of "class struggle" to "economic construction", from the era of "planned economy" to the era of "market economy", China began a profound transformation from an agricultural society to an industrial society, from a rural society to an urban society, from a ritualistic society to a legalistic society, and modernization became the theme of the times for social development. These conditions of economic and social development constitute the profound background of Chinese people's psychological evolution.

The social transformation from tradition to modern is a process that requires time and tempering. Due to the imbalance of development between regions, traditional forces or customary inertia may still be very strong in relatively backward regions. Moreover, it is difficult to avoid the potential contradiction and tension of values in a certain historical period. For example, under the condition of socialist market economy, part of the social services originally undertaken by the government was shifted to the market, which led to the reluctance of enterprises to choose female labour due to issues such as the need to bear the maternity costs of female workers, resulting in an increasing phenomenon of gender discrimination in the employment market.

Another example is the shift of the cadre selection system from an appointment system to a differential election system and an open appointment system, resulting in many

women cadres being defeated in the general election. After the loss of special state protection policies for women's political participation, the true level of Chinese women's political participation emerged. At that time, All-China Women's Federation (ACFW), the representative of the Party's grassroots women's organizations, was in a period of transition.

In the early stage of socialist construction, the main role of ACFW was to propagate and mobilize Chinese women's policies in line with the state's development strategy. At that time, the Women's Federation was influenced and controlled by the national discourse and did not finish thinking about the task of leading Chinese women to liberate themselves. It was only after the 1980s that the role of the ACFW in representing and defending women's rights became clear. It inevitably experienced many difficulties in the process of transformation.

At the early stage of Chinese reform, women's pursuit of their own personal development and the development of the country had conflicting interests. At that time, ACFW had two responsibilities, and it was very difficult to regulate women's development and national development, such as the conflicts between the protection of labour interests of women from disadvantaged groups and the national strategy to promote economic development. In addition to the conflicts of interests at the national level, after the marketization of society was ushered in, the impact of marketization and consumerism led the magazine *Chinese Women*, the representative journal of ACFW, to increase the number of topics related to consumption, beauty, and fashion in line with market appeals, while the number of reports on topics that could really lead women's emancipation and address women's issues was decreasing.

At the same time, the advancement of family planning policies since the 1970s was a typical manifestation of the forced invasion and control of women's bodies in response to the consequences of social transformation under the leadership of the will of the state. Internationally, family planning mainly refers to the family or individual's control and regulation of fertility, while the International Family Planning Association regards family planning as a basic human right for women to control their fertility.²⁸ In China,

²⁸ United Nations Population Fund. "Family planning". Retrieved 6 March 2018. <https://www.unfpa.org/family-planning>

the meaning of family planning is not simply a matter of individual or family fertility control and regulation, but a matter of macro planning and unified leadership by the central government to regulate the reproduction of population in a planned manner throughout society, and to differentiate and provide guidance for various specific situations, so that the quantity, quality, distribution and structure of the human population are compatible with the development of the economy and society, and to promote the sustainable development of society.²⁹

Family planning, as a national legal requirement, has effectively reduced the rate of population growth on the one hand, and greatly changed the family structure and fertility concept of Chinese people on the other. Objectively, family planning has indeed liberated some women from uncontrolled childbearing. Many women are less burdened by children, have more time and energy to participate in social work and various other activities, increase their economic independence, gain more rights for themselves, and increase women's initiative in marriage. However, at the same time, the national family planning policy has made the traditional ideology of preference for sons over daughters prominent in society.

When there was a limit on the number of children to be born, the gender choice of childbirth became the focus of people's attention. Especially in rural areas, many couples tried anything to have boys. Therefore, there was a lot of resistance to the family planning policy in rural areas, and the traditional concept of "there are three kinds of unfilially, and having no offspring is the most serious one" is deeply rooted. This leads to the idea that most rural areas value male children more than female children. The difference between men and women in rural areas in the division of land policy and the lack of social security also make farmers prefer to have boys to support their families. As a result, many rural women are still instruments of sonship, and are even forced to evade the control of state policies and laws by leaving their hometowns to fulfil this family duty that is rich in patriarchal ideology. To fulfil this responsibility, women become victims of conflicts between family responsibilities and law. In some areas, infanticide occurs, and most of the babies killed are girls. There are also many inequalities between men and women in cities, which encourage people's preference for

²⁹ "A report on family planning work". http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2015-11/19/content_10304.htm

sons over daughters. Many enterprise units allocate housing to men, and recruitment is also dominated by men. Some departments recruit professional students, and the scores of girls are higher than those of boys. This phenomenon of discrimination against women exists not only in general enterprises and institutions, but also in state organs. There is still a big gap between women and men in terms of employment and development, which leads to the consideration of gender selection in childbirth and the emergence of an attitude of indifference to the value of life because of subjective needs. Therefore, relying solely on the provisions of laws and policies cannot change the deep-rooted patriarchal ideology in society. To eliminate the patriarchal ideology, it is necessary to reduce the inequality between men and women in society.

In 1995, on the Fourth World Women Conference held in Beijing, and in response to the United Nations' call to promote women's development, Chinese leader Jiang Zemin stated at the conference that he would make gender equality a basic state policy to promote China's social development. *The Outline for Women's Development in China (2001-2010)* incorporates the basic state policy of gender equality, stating: "Implement the basic state policy of gender equality, promote women's full participation in economic and social development, and further realize gender equality in the political, economic, cultural, social and family life fields."³⁰ This is the first time that the basic state policy of gender equality has appeared in an authoritative national policy text, indicating that the Chinese government has formally strengthened and implemented the basic state policy of gender equality through policy documents. *The Outline for Women's Development in China* is currently the most comprehensive and important policy document on gender equality in China. Promoting gender equality and women's development goals into the formulation and implementation of the national action plan has an important role in accelerating the process of gender equality and women's development in Chinese society.

In sum, China's gender culture and order has undergone a process of transition from the dominance of traditional culture to the dominance of ideology and administrative discourse, and then to a four-way tug-of-war between economy, culture, politics, and

³⁰ National working committee for children and women under the state council. *Outline for the Development of Chinese Women (2001-2010)*. Beijing: China Women's Publishing House, 2003:2-23.

ideology. The reform, which began in China around 1980, was an important point in time when the latter transformation began.

3.2 The Purpose and Method of this Paper

People's Daily is chosen for this study mainly because: First, *People's Daily* is the organ of CPC, the most authoritative and influential comprehensive newspaper in China today, and an important window for the world to understand and observe the latest changes in China. Since running the newspaper, *People's Daily* has witnessed various important moments since the founding of PRC, including women's liberation movement and feminist ideological dissemination, etc., which plays an important role in guiding the growth of Chinese women. The investigation of *People's Daily* is conducive to observing the general situation of Chinese women's development, gender equality and gender awareness. Secondly, the nature of *People's Daily* determines that its reports on women are mostly "positive" reports advocated by the official. By reporting on advanced typical figures, setting examples and guiding public opinions, its portrayal of women's images can best reflect the gender consciousness expected by Chinese society under the Communist Party of China.

The ideal female role types in different historical periods can be traced in the reports of women characters in *People's Daily* from 1980 to 2000 on Women's Day on March 8 and took them as research objects to build a corpus. Through the interpretation and analysis of the text, the differences are summarized. By coding the number of reports and social identity factors such as age, political outlook and occupation, and by conducting quantitative analysis and macro statistics, the overall profile of women's images was roughly sorted out. In addition, through the analysis of "propositions", this paper probes into how the media covertly convey the gender consciousness in society and culture through the expression of propositions. The specific division and coding methods are as follows:

1. Objective reporting data: the number of reports per year
2. demographic characteristics:
 - a. Age
 - b. Political affiliation

- c. Education
 - d. Urban/Rural
3. Statistics requiring further qualitative analysis.
- a. Themes of news coverage: divided into honorary recognition and leadership reception, participation in public events and meetings, advanced deeds and experiences, current affairs commentary, foreign women coverage, and others.
 - b. Whether the nature of the coverage is positive, negative, or neutral.
 - c. The name of women (only the title is counted): woman, madam/wife, mother, female + occupation, etc.
 - d. Occupation of the role model women
 - e. Description of the personality/qualities of the role model women
 - f. Whether or not to describe external characteristics: looks, height, weight, dress, demeanor, movement, etc.
 - g. Public and private spheres: whether the public/private sphere life is mentioned in the report.

This paper mainly applies the content analysis method, a common method in media research. This method was first introduced in 1952 by Bernard Berelson, an American communication scientist. He defined content analysis as a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of communication content with clear characteristics.³¹ However, most later scholars think that content analysis should also include qualitative analysis of the content of the communication text, which should be a systematic analysis of the content of the communication text in a quantitative and qualitative way.

The quantitative statistical analysis is conducted by classifying and coding the content of information. Female roles are divided into several dimensions such as image roles, professional roles, and value tendencies, and each dimension is measured by several variables. Image roles are reflected by several variables such as appearance and temperament tendencies; professional roles are measured by several variables such as industry and professional status; value tendencies are divided into collectivism and

³¹ Michael Singlefary, *Mass Communication Research: Contemporary Methods and Application*, New York: Longman, 1994:281

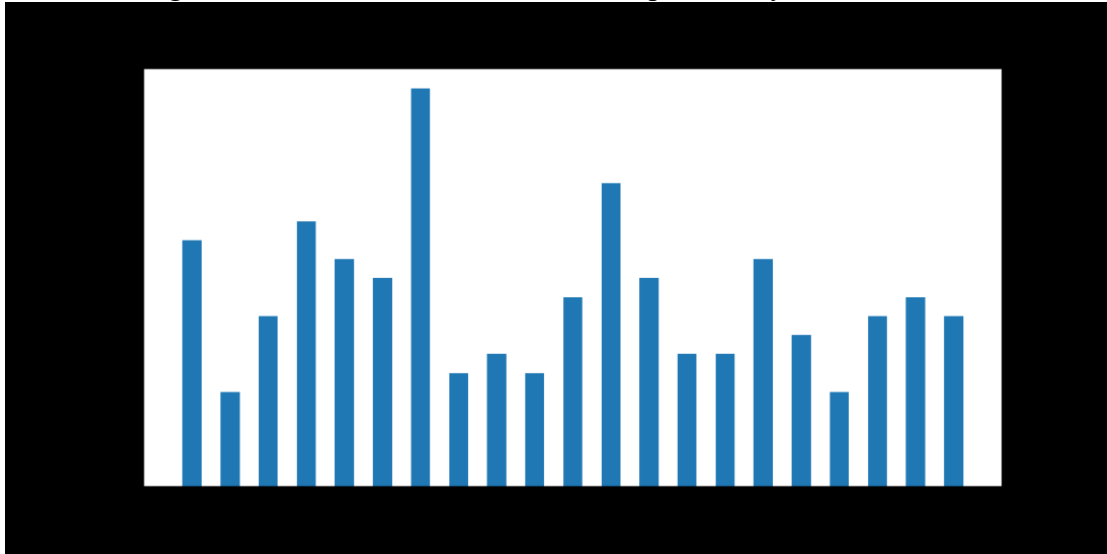
individual struggle, which are reflected in the theme of promotion of excellent character reports. After data collection, the frequency and percentage distributions among the variables are counted and compared in stages, and descriptive statistics are conducted on the variables to compare the frequencies or percentages for the information conveyed by the words and sentences of the text and the pictures, reflecting the changing trends of female role traits in different periods.

Qualitative analysis, on the other hand, tries to reveal the subtext behind different people's stories or statements and the substantive meaning reflected by them, and analyse the influencing factors behind this process of change. Although qualitative analysis cannot quantitatively compare and statistically analyse the characteristics of different units, it can summarize, classify, and compare the observed data, and then make generalizations about the nature and characteristics of a certain phenomenon or class of phenomena. Based on the statistical analysis of the information of excellent character reports, this paper selects some typical cases in different historical periods and conducts textual analysis to compare cases in different era backgrounds and specific histories and explore the transformation process of typical cases at the micro level; analyse the main issues that *People's Daily* focused on in different periods and discover the social transformation and modernity imagination gave to the image shaping of individual characters. The main issues of the *People's Daily* in different periods are analysed, and the significance of social transformation and modernity imagination on the image of individual characters is discovered.

3.3 Content Analysis Results

According to the keyword search, this paper collected a total of 265 articles in *People's Daily* from 1980 to 2000. A total of 208 valid articles are analysed after excluding newsletters that are irrelevant to the topic of women, repetitive, and have only one sentence. The total number of articles per year is plotted as Figure 1.

Figure 1 The numbers of articles in People's Daily from 1980-2020



It can be seen that the number of reports on women near March 8 is not stable every year, from as few as 5 articles (1981, 1997) to as many as 20 or more (1986). Observing the content of the reports and the social environment at that time, the peak of the reports around 1985 was mainly about women's talents in various industries and their personal efforts to become rich, which might be related to the upcoming reform of state-owned enterprises and the wage reform in progress under the background of reform and opening-up. The reform of state-owned enterprises has broken people's "iron rice bowls" and put many workers at risk of unemployment, with women being the "high-risk group" for unemployment. These stories, which emphasized the importance of growing one's talents by learning advanced knowledge and making a difference in a completely new industry that was not available under the planned economy, were a prelude to this impending change.

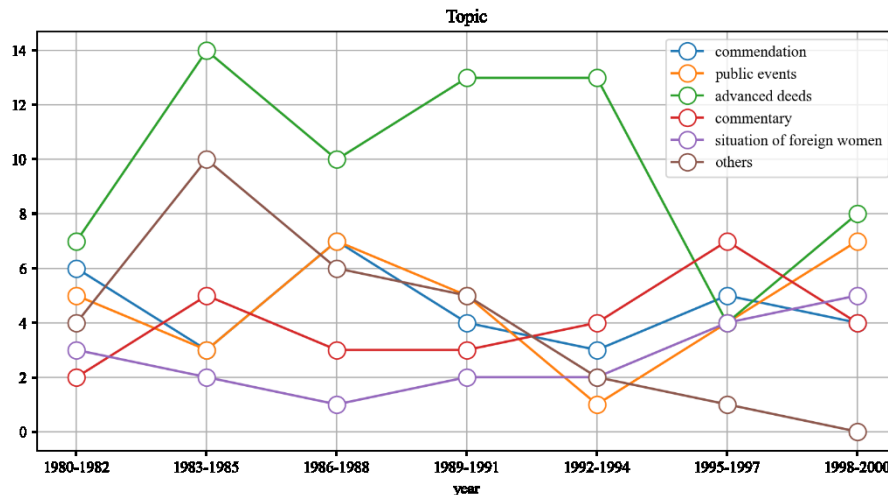
The spike in coverage near 1990 was related to the nationwide poverty alleviation campaign "Double Learning and Double Competition", which was specifically targeted at rural women. " This campaign referred to a nationwide competition among rural women of all ethnic groups to "learn culture, learn technology, compare achievements, and compare contributions."³² Since 1989, the "Double Learning and Double Comparison" was led by the ACFW, together with 12 ministries and commissions (later increased to 14), including the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Forestry, the State Education Commission, the State Science and Technology Commission, and the

³² National Rural Development Bureau. http://nrra.gov.cn/art/1994/12/30/art_46_51505.html

State Council Leading Group for Poverty Alleviation and Development, and was organized on the basis of the experience created by ACFW in various regions in accordance with the serious situation facing agriculture. During this activity, several typical people emerged who got out of poverty and became rich by their own ingenuity and technology, which was the main object of the *People's Daily's* coverage during this period.

In this paper, the collected reports are divided into the following types according to the content: It is divided into honorary recognition and leadership reception, participation in public events and conferences, advanced deeds and experiences, current affairs commentary, foreign women's reports and others. See the following figure for changes in the number of reports of various types. The changes are plotted in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Changes in the number of different article types over the years



The reports of advanced deeds occupied the mainstream in 1980s, and greatly decreased after entering 1990s. Current affairs commentary, public affairs and recognition remain at a relatively stable medium level, with a slight increase in current affairs commentary. Coverage of the situation of women abroad has increased since the 1990s, and a look at the specific coverage shows that this change is related to China's hosting of the World Conference on Women in 1995. However, the choice of countries for coverage is still skewed toward those in the socialist camp.

For the convenience of coding analysis, this paper decomposes the female roles mentioned in these reports into three dimensions: image roles, identity roles and value

tendencies. Each dimension is measured by multiple variables. Image roles are reflected by image appearance, age and temperament tendency. Identity roles are measured by several variables such as professional status and designation. Value tendencies are divided into collectivism and individual progress and struggle, which are reflected in the theme of promotion of good people reports. After the data were collected, the frequency and percentage distributions among the variables were counted and compared in stages, and descriptive statistics were conducted on the variables to compare the frequencies or percentages for the information conveyed by the words and sentences of the text and the pictures, reflecting the changing trends of female role traits in different periods.

First, in terms of image roles (Table 2), the percentage of reports mentioning women's appearance in single-person stories has been gradually decreasing, from 28.5% in 1980-1984 to 11.1% in 1995-2000. For example, in the personal story of Lin Fang, a translator lived in Japan reported on March 9, 1985, she was described as "thin and frail" to emphasize the quality of her hard work and patriotism even though she was physically ill. The story is not simply about the beauty of women.³³

However, the decline in the narrative of women's appearance in single-person stories does not mean that the *People's Daily* is less concerned with women's appearance. With the reform of the market economy, consumerism and commercialization have also naturally changed Chinese society. In its coverage of women's morality and the face of women in the new era, *People's Daily* expresses a more negative assessment of consumerism as reflected in women's appearance. The emphasis on grooming and avid consumption of women is far removed from the image of simple working women in communist propaganda and is worthy of criticism for a party newspaper whose overall tone remains loyal to the Communist Party. In addition, in terms of temperament image (Table 3), this paper divides the personal qualities reflected in the reports into the following categories: patriotism, love of the collective, dedication, diligence, self-motivation, endurance, positivity and optimism, talent, sincerity and kindness, and strong will.

³³ Liu, Ying. "She left her heart in the motherland--Remembering Japanese Chinese translator Lin Fang". *People's Daily*. 9 March 1985.: P8.

The table below shows that patriotism and collectivism, which are distinctly collectivist qualities, are less and less represented in the typical reports of *People's Daily*, while the number of individual qualities, such as aggressiveness and individual talent, is increasing. This is consistent with the trajectory of China's gradual transition from a planned economy and collective economy to a market economy and individualism, starting in the 1980s.

Table 2 Numbers of articles by appearance description across years

PERIOD	APPEARANCE-FREE DESCRIPTION	HAVE A DESCRIPTION OF APPEARANCE
1980-1984	10	4
1985-1989	5	3
1990-1994	10	2
1995-2000	8	1

Table 3 Numbers of temperament images across years

Period	Patriotism	Collectivism	Dedication	Diligence	Self-motivation	Endurance	Positivity	Talents	Sincerity and Kindness	Strong Will
1980-1984	4	3	8	5	4	4	4	4	5	3
1985-1989	2	2	2	2	4	2	1	3	1	1
1990-1994	1	1	5	6	5	3	1	7	3	1
1995-2000	1	1	2	4	5	3	0	6	2	1

Secondly, in terms of identity roles, this paper is divided into two dimensions, one is the occupational role (Table 4) and the other is the female identity characteristics (Table 5) reflected from the reporting appellation. In terms of occupational roles, the proportion of leading cadres in the reports is gradually decreasing, and the typical proletarian occupational identities such as workers, peasants and soldiers are basically the same as other occupational reports. Among other occupations, the number of entrepreneurs and scientists has increased. Besides "women (*funv*)" and "female (*nvxing*)", the *People's Daily* also refers to women as "*jinguo* (courageous, talented and great women)", "female + occupation" and female kinship title such as Madam, wife and mother. This kind of title is not only a name, but also represents the position of the group of people to whom

it refers in social relations and contains the social requirements for the behaviour of that group.

The significance of appellations is that, on the one hand, women construct their self-identity based on the connotations carried by some widely circulated appellations, while the state can use the social relations behind these appellations to regulate women's social behaviour. "*Jinguo*" is an ancient Chinese term of praise for women who are not inferior to men, which not only affirms women's achievements, but also unintentionally sees men as the standard for measuring women's achievements.

The addition of gender to a profession is, in a way, a tacit acknowledgement that the profession itself is a male-dominated field in its current state, so that when a woman makes an outstanding contribution, her gender needs to be highlighted. Just as an article published on March 8, 1996 in the *People's Daily* titled "*A Thought on Equality*" stated, "When will the word 'women' or 'female' not be specifically mentioned?"³⁴

On the other hand, the emphasis on women's professional roles reflects the state's attempts to integrate women into the social construction system, rather than other areas such as the family. A person has many identities at once, as a wife, a mother, a daughter and as a superior subordinate working class, and the choice of which one to highlight for praise is a reflection of what the state wanted for women at the time. The decline in female kinship titles (wife, daughter, mother, etc.) reflects this same trend.

Table 4 Number of professional roles across years

PERIOD	WORKERS	OTHER OCCUPATIONS	LEADING CADRE
1980-1984	6	7	5
1985-1989	6	6	2
1990-1994	10	7	5
1995-2000	5	6	1

³⁴ Yang, Xuemei. "Random Thoughts on Equality". *People's Daily*. 8 March 1996.: P9.

Table 5 Number of different addresses across years

PERIOD	WOMAN	FEMALE KINSHIP TERMS	FEMALE + OCCUPATION	FEMALE	JINGGUO	OTHER/NO ADDRESS (FIRST NAME)
1980-1984	25	5	12	1	0	10
1985-1989	21	2	11	4	4	9
1990-1994	19	1	13	3	2	13
1995-2000	26	0	8	4	4	11

In terms of value propensity, this paper uses two variables for measurement. One is whether collectivism or individualism is promoted, which is judged by whether the behaviour praised in the article is for individual welfare or for collective welfare (Table 6). The second is whether the private life of the subject is mentioned in the report (Table 7), i.e., whether the harmony of private life is a dimension to evaluate the contribution of the figure when *People's Daily* makes a typical report.

According to the table below, it is obvious that the number of reports on collectivism is decreasing, and the strong woman who used to lead the whole village to get rich becomes a laid-off woman worker who gets rich with her personal efforts. The portrayal of the private sphere has rebounded after a decline from 1990 to 1994, showing that the happiness of the family remains an important measure of female achievement.

Table 6 Number of articles by individual or collective across years

PERIOD	INDIVIDUAL	COLLECTIVE
1980-1984	2	12
1985-1989	1	8
1990-1994	4	8
1995-2000	4	5

Table 7 Number of articles by having private domain or not across years

PERIOD	NO PRIVATE DOMAIN DESCRIPTION	HAVE PRIVATE DOMAIN DESCRIPTION
1980-1984	5	9
1985-1989	3	5
1990-1994	9	3
1995-2000	4	5

3.4 Text Analysis

3.4.1 Women as Mothers

Women as mothers are the focus of the state's gender discourse. In contrast to individual female emancipation, the state discourse values the role of successful motherhood in the stability of the family and society. It is in this sense that the state discourse has a greater urgency for "motherhood" than for individual women's emancipation. The national agenda of the "Outstanding Mothers" competition closely links the performance of "mothers" in private family roles with their contribution to society in the public sphere. A woman's role as a good mother is necessary not only for the family—the microstructure of society, but also for the healthy growth of the next generation, the construction of social production, and the creation of a stable society. The discourse of the state, the nation, and the next generation seems to be an echo of the "mother of the nation" in modern nationalism.

A report in *People's Daily* on March 11 1999, was titled " *Girls-Mothers-Future (Spring Bud Project)*". The article states that the purpose of the program is to return millions of out-of-school girls to school in China, which in turn will save countless future mothers from poverty and ignorance³⁵. Here, the girl is the "future mother", and motherhood has become a label that stereotypes the role of women and obscures the power of girls as independent human beings. The instrumental value of girls' education is manifested, first of all, in the reinforcement of women's traditional family roles. "Today's girls,

³⁵ Zhang, Yanhong. "Girl - Mother - Future". *People's Daily*. 11 March 1999.: P12.

tomorrow's mothers" and "Educating a boy is only educating one person, educating a girl is the same as educating two generations." Such slogans, while easy to understand, make the girl child herself and her needs disappear in the positioning of the role of motherhood. The intention of girls' education is to train "mothers," and girls do not have a natural right to education as independent subjects, but because of the role assigned to them by their families and society. The value of the girl child and her education is expressed through the reflection of others and through the performance of the traditional female role of mothering. In this way, girls are deprived of the right and opportunity to receive education, and in a sense, they are deprived of the opportunity to develop in the future society.

3.4.2 Women as Wives

A March 7 1983, article titled "*If All Mothers Had Only Boys*" criticized the mistreatment of mothers for having girls and the drowning of baby girls in the context of family planning. In the article, it is written that the root cause of son preference is not that girls are inferior to boys, but that girls cannot "carry on the family line". From this perspective, the author criticizes the idea of son preference, saying that if everyone has a boy, it is impossible to "pass on the family line" because they cannot find a woman to marry. If you want to have a family, you must ensure the ratio of men to women, "so that they can be a couple and have children". "If we don't break the patriarchal mindset, which results in more men than women, many men will not be able to find women in the future, and this is a big problem that cannot be solved.³⁶" This article is typical of the way of thinking about gender distribution in the context of family planning: the imbalance between men and women is a serious problem because men cannot get wives and thus cannot have children in the first place. Here, the value of the woman appears as an appendage of the man, her value is "owned by the man" and her value is reproductive. This is the first burden that women encounter in their social role as wives.

Another heavy burden for women is domestic work. Although women have gradually gained the right to work outside the home, the burden within the family is still considered to be women's responsibility. As mentioned in a March 9, 1995 *People's*

³⁶ Kui, Hai. "If all mothers have boys". *People's Daily*. 7 March 1983.: P1.

Daily report on comparative statistics between men and women, women spend an average of more than four hours a day on housework, more than twice as much as men. The total time spent on work and housework is 1.2 hours more per day for women than for men³⁷. In another roundtable discussion, which brought together women writers, social science researchers, teachers and journalists, it was also mentioned that even though men's respect and recognition of women in the workplace has increased compared to the past, when it comes to the topic of family and choosing a spouse, they will again prefer women who conform to the traditional "male domination and female domination", who are gentle and virtuous, and who are "inferior" to themselves³⁸. It seems to be more difficult to shift roles and power positions in the private sphere than in the public sphere. Being a wife in the traditional family role of keeping the home is an old burden that modern women find it hard to get rid of from the old days to today. This old burden, in turn, can conflict with the new role requirements arising in the new era. The most typical one is the conflict with professional roles.

3.4.3 Women as Practitioners

In the 1980s, Chinese society began to undergo a great transformation, with the state's control over the economy reduced and the distribution of jobs and resources no longer left to the state, and the emergence of marketization led to a redistribution of jobs and economic resources. In this change, the "shareholding system" and "institutional streamlining" led to a continuous increase in the number of unemployed and laid-off workers during this period, with women becoming the first to be laid off or unemployed. Moreover, due to the limitations of female laid-off workers' education level, age, gender, and physical condition, their re-employment is more difficult than men, and the process of female workers' layoff and their re-employment is always accompanied by gender exclusion in the labour market.

The laid-off women workers encounter the double exclusion of policy and labour market exclusion, which is not based on occupational ability alone but on gender

³⁷ Zhu, Jianhong. "How are men and women attached to each other in China? The first comparative statistics of men and women show many aspects of data". *People's Daily*. 9 March 1983.: P4.

³⁸ Lu, Xining, and Zhu, Huaxin. "How eastern women integrate into modern society". *People's Daily*. 17 April 1995.: P10.

exclusion. In the great debate about "whether women should go home" in the 1980s and 1990s, it was often taken for granted that if one of the family members had to give up work and take on family responsibilities, it undoubtedly would be the woman who would be sacrificed. But at the same time, society always places a higher value on professional work and a lower value on domestic work. The division of labour is often more professional work for men and more domestic work for women. This reinforces a traditional gender discrimination: women's domestic work is not as valuable as men's professional work, which is why self-sacrifice and selflessness are required. Praise for women is directed more toward their domestic roles than their domestic labour.

Thus, the difficulties women suffer in their professional roles are manifold: first, from heavy family responsibilities, including daily household chores, giving birth to children, educating children, and caring for the elderly; second, from various types of discrimination in employment units and industries. Women are not recruited, the threshold for recruiting women is high, and implicit requirements (such as not recruiting unmarried women without children) abound. These two aspects of discrimination affect each other: the heavy burden of family takes away the time available for women to work and improve themselves, thus affecting the evaluation of women by employers and in turn rationalizing the discrimination against women. The *People's Daily* has published many cases of discrimination against intellectual women, as well as examples of the busy lives of working women abroad (e.g., South African women³⁹), but all these kind of reports are only at the level of raising problems and not offering suggestions and thoughts for further improvement.

3.5 Summary

The narrative pattern of the *People's Daily* shows that, first of all, women's professional roles are expected to change from ordinary working women to economic, scientific and cultural elites, at the same time, women's value orientation changes from a focus on collectivism to a greater appreciation of individual struggle. As a direct result of the emancipation of women by the state, women's behavioural and conceptual dependence

³⁹ Wen, Xian. "A day in the life of the 'best female manager'". *People's Daily*. 8 March 1996.: P7.

and identification with men were directly shifted to dependence and identification with the society and the state. The State's control over the whole society is achieved through the integration of women into the "employment-unit-state" model by promoting women's employment.

In terms of the distribution of women's issues, *People's Daily* is more likely to report on women's public policy topics and issues related to women and career development. They are reported as exemplary workers and advanced figures, and the coverage focuses on their contributions to society and the country. However, in the narratives of these stories, women's gender identities are often not gendered, and they are awarded for the same reasons as men. What the articles believe are that the fundamental way for women to progress is through continuous self-development and self-improvement.

After the reform, "layoffs" of workers in state-owned enterprises have gradually become a hot topic of social discussion. As a common problem in the reform of state-owned enterprises, layoffs have also become an inevitable pain in the development of market economy. "Layoff" brings difficulties to individuals and families, and re-employment is faced with the change of viewpoint and updating of skills. As professional workers, women are not only marginalized economically, but also face the danger of being marginalized by society and family psychologically due to their gender, age and knowledge structure. In the *People's Daily*, a report on women's re-employment calls for "the solution to the problem of re-employment of laid-off workers in state-owned enterprises requires the care of the Party and the government and the strong support of all sectors of society, but ultimately, it is the workers themselves who decide their fate"⁴⁰. In this set of reports, the stories of several women workers who have successfully come out of difficult situations are depicted. As can be seen in the above examples, when conflicts arise between national development and women's personal interests, newspapers, by successfully reporting on typical people and typical events, put the responsibility back on individual women themselves and call on women to adjust their forms of work and human attitudes within the existing structure, to respond positively, and to seek the reunification and integration of their interests.

⁴⁰ Gu, Xiulian. "Guiding women's work with scientific theories". *People's Daily*. 27 August 1998.: P10.

In general, the coverage of women in party newspapers follows the national agenda and state ideology, sometimes influenced by the reflection and influence of feminist and gender discourse on women's emancipation since the new era. As a mainstream party newspaper, *People's Daily* is more rigorous than other newspapers in adhering to the basic state policy of "equality between men and women". Even so, in the process of "reproducing" the gender ideal, *People's Daily* still cannot escape from the stereotype of associating the value of women with the traditional cultural "virtuous wife and mother". At the same time, it is also unable to escape the influence of commercialization. Although the *People's Daily*, as a party newspaper, has very few traces of commercialization, the Chinese society it faces has inevitably become commercialized. Even if its own purpose is not to present reality but to shape "idealized reality," it cannot completely detach itself from the real reality. *People's Daily* is mostly critical of the impact of commercialization and consumerism on women. On the one hand, it presents a state narrative that encourages and promotes the imaginary and exemplary construction of women in a "politically correct" manner, but on the other hand, it is a political communication process that faces resistance from traditional gender culture and gender practices, as well as new problems arising from the construction of a new gender ideology from the top-down. On the one hand, the state-led women's emancipation movement has introduced women into social production and freed them from the deep bondage of the feudal family, but at the same time, it has also created a new wave of oppression and obscurity for women in the process of transferring power from male authority to power.

4. Russia

4.1 Historical Background

Lenin thought that "to completely liberate women and make them truly equal with men, we must have a public economy and let women participate in common productive labour"⁴¹. Therefore, whether in the civil war, the Great Patriotic War, or in the period of collectivization, industrialization and recovery of national economy, socialism had opened up a way for women to obtain employment rights. These measures not only made the employment rate of women in the Soviet Union rank among the best in the world, but also had a superior labour distribution. By 1988, 92% of Soviet women of school age were working and studying, accounting for 51% of the total number of employed people. At the same time, women were widely distributed in all fields of the national economy, and even in some fields traditionally considered as "non-women", they also participated, such as police, army, aerospace industry, diplomacy, and even social activists. The high employment rate of women guarantees their economic income, and they add to, and even play an important part in, the economic income of their families. The rise in women's economic status directly affects the change in their family status, and women no longer need to rely solely on men for survival.⁴²

The improvement of women's economic ability and status cannot be separated from the improvement of women's education level. Before the October Revolution, illiterate adults in Russia accounted for more than 70% of the total population, among which 93% of rural women in Russia were illiterate, which was far behind the world average at that time⁴³. Lenin attached great importance to the education of women's groups, and issued documents specially for many times and personally inspected women's education. The first Constitution of the Soviet Union stipulated that women enjoyed the same right to education as men. With the support of the policy, the government encouraged girls to actively enrol in schools and set up girls' schools, encouraged women to actively accept higher education and rewarded families that cultivated female

⁴¹ Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich. *Collected works of VI Lenin. Vol. IV (Chinese version)*. Beijing: Renmin Publishing House, 1986.: p15.

⁴²The data of the Soviet Union may not be true.

⁴³ Barbara A. Engel & Anastasia Posadskaya –Vanderbeck: *A Revolution of Their Own: Russian Women Remember their Lives in the Twentieth Century*. Boulder: Westview Press, 2010, p 21.

college students. These measures had promoted the improvement of women's education level to a certain extent. By 1970, the illiteracy rate of women in the whole Soviet Union had dropped to 15%, and the proportion of women receiving secondary education had risen to 65%. In 1940, there were 33,400 women scientists (34% of the total), and in 1981, there were 562,500 women scientists (40% of the total). The number of female doctors increased from 600 in 1950 to 5,400 in 1981.⁴⁴

The 70-year socialist construction had objectively improved the education and economic level of women, made them become knowledgeable and educated classes, and enhanced their awareness of participating in political decision-making. The liberation of women workers had gradually become a conscious behaviour, rather than simply the result of external giving. With the awakening of this self-consciousness, the rise of women's studies has also led the public opinion direction of theoretical circles. Around 1960, some scholars in the Soviet Union began to study women's movements in their own country, with Serafim Serafimovich Shashkov as the representative figure, whose representative works are *History of Russian Women* and Elena Likhacheva, who has made a deep study of women's movements in the Soviet Union and before. With the rapid development of women's studies, a large number of feminist researchers have been trained. At the same time, feminist theoretical books and other research results have also led the public opinion direction of theoretical circles. On the one hand, the ideological trend of theoretical circles has directly influenced the national policy makers, on the other hand, it has also played a role in promoting the publicity and education of all members of society.

Since coming to power, Gorbachev has been committed to reforming the country's political and economic system. However, the economic depression led to widespread unemployment among employees, and women were the first to bear the brunt.⁴⁵ By the mid-1990s, the proportion of working women with advanced or secondary professional degrees had fallen to 10-12%.⁴⁶ Women who lost their financial resources had to return to their families. These women who lost their income began to rely on men materially

⁴⁴ E. Peljonok. *Soviet Women*, Moscow, News Agency Press, 1985. :p6-9, 21, 35-36, 41.

⁴⁵ 《Number of Unemployed》 in <https://eng.rosstat.gov.ru/labour>

⁴⁶ Прокофьева Л., Феси П., Мурачева О. Профессиональная карьера мужчин и женщин // Вопросы экономики. 2000. No.3.

again, and their family status declined. Under the pressure of life, some women even engaged in improper labour to get paid to maintain their families' livelihood. All kinds of stale ideas that belittle and discriminate against women were making a comeback. The number of women participating in politics also began to decrease.⁴⁷ Although there were still some women who were members of committees, and even two women were heads of them, these committees were far away from the political core. The number of female representatives in the upper house of the Federal Assembly of Russia was also decreasing year by year.⁴⁸ Their political opinions had not received enough attention.

However, although the social and political status of women has declined to a certain extent after the collapse of the Soviet Union, there is one aspect worthy of attention, that is, the growth of women's organizations. Among them, the most active one is the Women's Union of Russia, which takes the initiative to mobilize other women's organizations to organize female compatriots across the country to help women improve their social and political status and enable them to better participate in national political life⁴⁹. Helping women to find jobs is an important task of the Union. For example, in order to help women to find employment, with the support of its sponsors, the Union offers training courses to help women acquire various professional skills, and funds women to start small businesses, etc., which is the best embodiment that the flame of Russian feminism is still alive.⁵⁰

4.2 Rabotnitsa and the Research Methods of this Chapter

As mentioned earlier in the part "Political propaganda and mass media under communist rule", under the highly centralized news system of the Soviet Union, the media was characterized as a propaganda machine with a single function. This is mainly manifested in one-sided emphasis on the instrumental nature of news dissemination and the role of public opinion organizations, and over-emphasis on the news media as a tool for the ruling party to implement its line and policies. From the practical point of view,

⁴⁷ http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b09_11/IssWWW.exe/Stg/d01/02-06.htm

⁴⁸ О.А.Хасбулатова: «Рооссийская гендерная политика в ХХ столетие: мифы и реалии», Иваново-Издательство «Ивановский государственный университет», 2005, с. 338.

⁴⁹ Е.Ф.Лахова: «Женское движение в годы реформ:проблемы и перспективы», Москва, АОЗТ «Информатик», 1998г, с.18.

⁵⁰ Russian Women's Union website. <http://www.wuor.ru/about.html>.

the single functional mechanism was reflected in the media, that is, the communication mode was the same, and "false and empty" reports were flooding all kinds of media, making unrealistic flattery to Soviet society, sanctifying state leaders and so on. The Soviet press was often described as "dead and dull" and "hollow and didactic". Some even satirized the two major newspapers in the Soviet Union: "There is no truth in *Pravda*, and there is no news in *Kommersant*." Under the planned economy system, the media, as a public institution, had no concept of audience, circulation or cost. Therefore, the economic and cultural reports were mainly to meet the goal of higher-level political propaganda.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, under the new social environment, the Russian media realized the transformation from a single-function mechanism to a multi-function mechanism. The development of pluralistic politics and the values of capitalist democracy and freedom objectively provide the media with a broad space for information dissemination and the right of public opinion supervision. The market economy and privatization have broken the tradition of the state as the sole owner of the media, and formed three ownership relationships among the state, organizations and the political parties, and individuals, who have different expectations of the functions of the media they control, making the multi-functionalization of the media a reality. Also, political democratization, economic marketization and cultural diversity make the information demand of society and audience constantly increase. Russia's media is going to the market, operating independently and being responsible for its own profits and losses. Only by playing a variety of functions and fully meeting all kinds of information needs of society and audiences can it seek self-development.

Russian women's periodicals were first founded, edited, and published by men. In 1779, Nikolay Novikov founded the first women's magazine. The contents of this magazine were almost all literary works, and some of them were equipped with fashion pictures, which were mainly used for entertainment, education, aesthetics or fashion guidance. After the October Revolution, the content goals of women's magazines were to be in line with party policies, and the publications' activities focused on election campaigns, the process of attracting women to production, and the propagation of communist ideology. The most famous one among them is *Rabotnitsa*.

Rabotnitsa (Работница) was founded on March 8th, 1914. It is the first women's magazine published by Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (Bolshevik). Its original founding purpose is: Protect the interests of the women workers' movement.⁵¹ This slogan was published under the title of the cover of each issue. Since its inception, *Rabotnitsa* has always attached great importance to contacts with readers and consulted their opinions. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the social transformation of Russia, *Rabotnitsa* has also entered a complicated and difficult transformation process. From the crisis of survival after turning to independent operation, to the later strong impact of international and domestic emerging women's fashion periodicals, to the current smooth development in the era of new online media, *Rabotnitsa* has also made corresponding development countermeasures following the changes of the times, and its idea of running a magazine has gradually changed during the transition period, from only targeting women to its family members.⁵² Since 1991, the slogan of running the magazine has been changed to “Monthly magazine for women in the family⁵³”, and since the 4th issue of 2000, the slogan on the cover of each issue has been changed to “Magazine for family reading⁵⁴”.

The trajectory of the development of the magazine has always reflected the connotation of the times. During Lenin's period, *Rabotnitsa* published a large number of works of women's movement.⁵⁵ The female images in this period were mostly revolutionaries. At that time, Women Workers appeared in all industries at that time, and their working abilities were almost the same as that of male workers, even some exceeded that of male workers. By the mid-1930s, due to the government's policy of encouraging childbirth in the 1930s, most of the women in magazines of that period were mothers, and the task of women was to give birth and protect children and families.⁵⁶ In 1950s and 1960s, political propaganda was no longer completely dominant, and the political nature of media was slightly reduced and entertainment was strengthened. New images of women in the new Soviet Union under the new concept of morality and ethics began to appear

⁵¹ «Журнал ставит себе целью всестороннюю защиту интересов женского рабочего движения.»

⁵² <http://www.polit.ru/culture/2006/03/30/krylova.html>, Без глянца о жизни(Translated from an interview with the editor-in-chief of *Rabotnitsa*).

⁵³ «Ежемесячный журнал для женщины семьи»

⁵⁴ «Журнал для семейного чтения»

⁵⁵ З.В. Гришина.Союз равноправности женщин // Проблемы истории СССР[.]. Москва,1997,4:28-32.

⁵⁶ А.И.Акопов. Методика типологического исследования периодической печати[М]. Иркутск, 1985

in magazines. In the 1980s and 1990s, more images with obvious feminine features appeared in magazines, and the contents of the columns were not only labour, housework, raising children, but also beauty, psychology, handmade, fashion trends, etc. Clothing styles were no longer black and blue work clothes, but curvy skirts, colourful professional suits, varied hats and various high heels. During this period, women's makeup was particularly rich, emphasizing the combination of clothing and makeup, showing women's unique style and temperament in different occasions, and women's images such as beauty, occupation and elegance gradually returned. Until today, the female images in media magazines still maintain this style.

This chapter will take time as a clue to analyse the change of gender discourse of female periodicals represented by *Rabotnitsa* before and during the transition period of Russian society. *Rabotnitsa* is chosen because: First, it was the most influential women's magazine which was closely related to official ideology before the collapse of the Soviet Union, so it could accurately convey the gender requirements of Russian society before the transformation. Secondly, in order to survive after the collapse of the Soviet Union, it made a series of reforms to meet the market demand. Therefore, this paper argues that the magazine can provide a clearer and more relevant picture of the transformation of gender culture in post-transition Russian society. Due to the limitations of sources, quantity of data, publication status of the magazine itself and length of articles, for the Soviet-era, this paper selected the March issue of the magazine with special significance for gender discourse in the socialist countries and where International Women's Day is held, while for the post-Soviet period, the sample was taken without any month limitation. The sampling results are as follows:

1980-3; 1981-3; 1983-3; 1985-3; 1987-3;
1991-3; 1992-3/4; 1994-11; 1998-2; 1999-11/12.

Different from *People's Daily* as an official comprehensive newspaper, *Rabotnitsa*, as a women's magazine, reports almost all about women. At the same time, as a magazine, *Rabotnitsa* has more colourful illustrations and more diverse sections than *People's Daily*. From the visual point of view, the pictures provide a reference for this paper to analyse how the mass media intuitively shape the expectation of gender image, while the design of the columns and the adjustment of the length of each column also provide an argument for analysing how the mass media shape the expectation of gender role.

Therefore, when setting the content code, based on these characteristics of *Rabotnitsa*, this chapter makes some adjustments:

1. Demographic characteristics:
 - a. Age
 - b. Occupation
2. Statistical data requiring further qualitative analysis:
 - a. Topics: public events and conferences, advanced deeds and experiences, current affairs/policy comments, foreign women's reports, gender and sexual topics, family and parent-child topics, fashion, literature and art and others.
 - b. Is the nature of the report positive, negative or neutral?
 - c. Description of the personality/quality of role model women
 - d. Public-private sphere: Whether the public/private sphere is mentioned in the report
3. Picture
 - a. Proportion of male, female, and child
 - b. Proportion of women by age group
 - c. Whether highlight appearance or professional characteristics?
4. Columns: Proportion of articles of various topics

This chapter also uses content analysis and qualitative analysis. Through classification and coding, quantitative statistical analysis is carried out on the data content, and at the same time, the observation of different characters' stories or speeches is classified and compared, and then summarized. Based on the statistical analysis of the demographics, pictures, themes, and sections of *Rabotnitsa*, this chapter selects some typical cases from different historical periods, analyses the texts and compares them with the specific era background, and explores the transformation process of the image of typical female characters from the micro level. This chapter will also analyse the main issues that *Rabotnitsa* focused on in different periods and try to discover the significant meaning given by social transformation and modernity imagination to the shaping of individual characters.

4.3 Content Analysis Results

According to the difference between *Rabotnitsa* and *People's Daily* in service nature, magazine function and typesetting, this chapter slightly adjusts the setting of codes, but it is still measured from three dimensions of image role, identity role and value tendency, counted and compared the frequency and percentage distribution among various variables in stages, carried out descriptive statistics on variables, compared the frequency or percentage of words and sentences in the text and the information conveyed by pictures, and reflected the changing trend of female role characteristics in different periods.

The image roles are mainly reflected in the rich figure pictures, supplemented by demographic statistics such as the age of the reported characters. Identity roles are reflected from two perspectives, directly and indirectly: the changes in women's professional identities and identities in the family covered in the magazine are direct evidence of the changes in women's identity roles during the transition process; while the nature of the magazine itself, which first served the officialdom and then transformed in response to the commercialization trend, makes the adjustments in the length of its sections in different areas, such as family affairs, public affairs and professional competence, at different times, an indirect reflection of the shift in the focus of the state and society's expectations of women's identity. The value dimension can also be seen by observing the change of the focus of *Rabotnitsa* on women's reports. At the same time, the textual analysis of a typical report will provide a more detailed description of the positive and negative tendencies of the report on the flow of femininity.

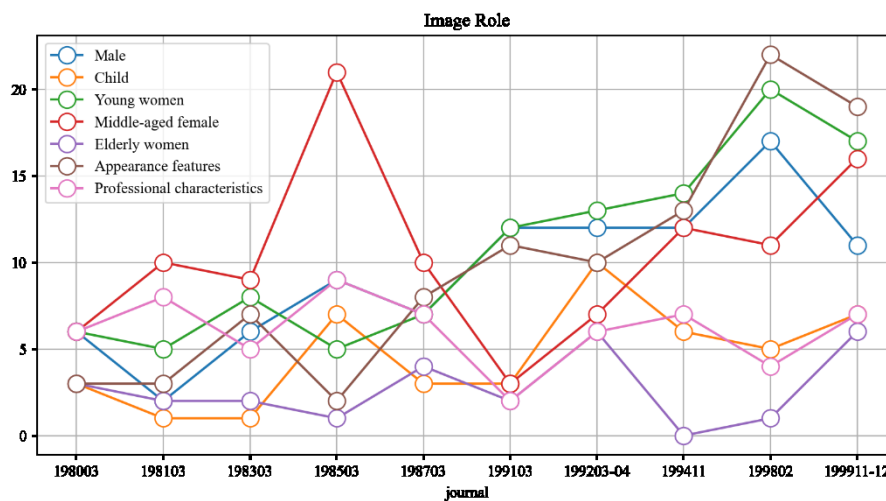
First of all, this paper counts the figures in magazine pictures, and divides them into men, children, young women, middle-aged women and old women according to gender and age (Table 8, Figure 3). The distinction is based on the appearance and dressing characteristics (wrinkles, jewellery, etc.), the reference to age and occupation (such as students) and the use of specific adjectives (such as youth) in the corresponding articles with pictures. From the perspective of image and role change, the attention paid by *Rabotnitsa* to elderly women has declined. However, the attention to middle-aged women has been steadily rising again after a cliff-like decline around 1990. The

attention to young women is relatively stable. After the transformation, it has always been the primary group of *Rabotnitsa*. To a certain extent, this has something to do with the change of the audience orientation of *Rabotnitsa*, from middle-aged women to young women before the transition, which is also the result of market selection after the opening and commercialization.

Table 8 Number of pictures of *Rabotnitsa* by image role

JOURNAL	MALE	CHILD	YOUNG WOMEN	MIDDLE-AGED FEMALE	ELDERLY WOMEN	APPEARANCE FEATURES	PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS?	TOTAL FIGURES
198003	6	3	6	6	3	3	6	24
198103	2	1	5	10	2	3	8	20
198303	6	1	8	9	2	7	5	26
198503	9	7	5	21	1	2	9	43
198703	7	3	7	10	4	8	7	31
199103	12	3	12	3	2	11	2	32
19920304	12	10	13	7	6	10	6	48
199411	12	6	14	12	0	13	7	44
199802	17	5	20	11	1	22	4	54
19991112	11	7	17	16	6	19	7	57

Figure 3 Plots of image roles across years



At the same time, this paper makes statistics on the female features appearing in magazine pictures. Those that highlight women's makeup, clothing, jewellery, hairstyle and body shape are marked as "emphasis on physical features"; those that highlight women's occupational categories, or those that clearly show women's occupational and job characteristics are marked as "emphasis on occupational features". According to the table, it can be seen that the number of pictures emphasizing the appearance characteristics has increased significantly, while the number of pictures emphasizing the occupation characteristics has not changed much. However, if we consider that with the development of commercialization, the total number of pages and illustrations of *Rabotnitsa* is increasing, then the display of women's professional characteristics in the pictures is weakening. According to the line chart, the number of pictures emphasizing women's professional characteristics in the total map shows a downward trend. This proves that in the dimension of image roles, , the magazine *Rabotnitsa* demonstrates that the construction of the image of women in the Russian gender discourse tends to be younger. The presence of older women is weakened, the focus on women's appearance is intensified and the professional character and distinctness of women's external appearance is weakened.

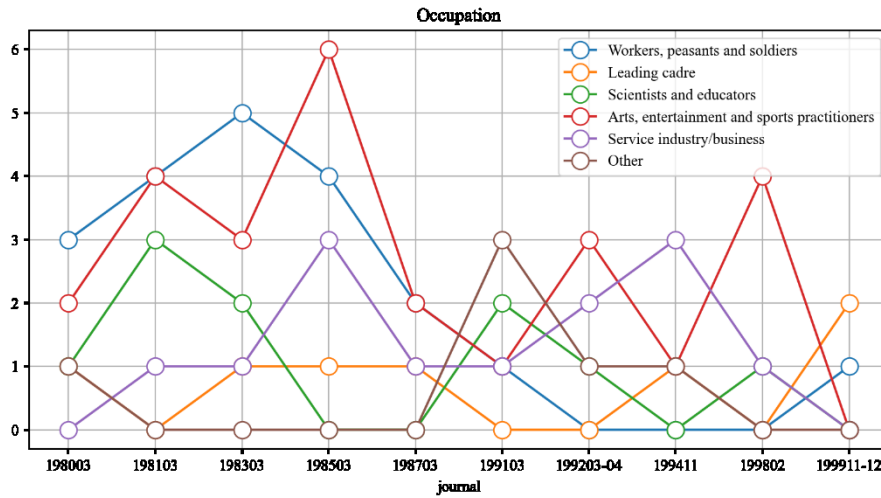
Secondly, this paper divides occupations into workers, peasants and soldiers, leading cadres, scientists and educators, entertainment and sports practitioners, service industry/business and others. The three classes, workers, peasants and soldiers, are usually considered the most thoroughly proletarian and the most revolutionarily advanced in socialist countries and appear as positive praise in the propaganda of political movements. Leading cadres mainly refer to leaders in the sense of political participation, including women representatives, excluding managers at the economic level such as factory directors. Scientists and educators mainly include professors, doctors, chief engineers, and other highly educated people who have made achievements in the field of knowledge. Arts, entertainment, and sports practitioners refer to those who work in the arts, entertainment and sports. The service industry/business refers mainly to a series of professions associated with the open economic system that only gradually became visible in the mass media in the late 1980s. They are rare and hard to find under the socialist planned economy.

Table 9 Number of reports in *Rabotnitsa* by women's occupation

JOURNAL	WORKERS, PEASANTS AND SOLDIERS	LEADING CADRE	SCIENTISTS AND EDUCATORS	ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT AND SPORTS PRACTITIONERS	SERVICE INDUSTRY/BUSINESS	OTHER	TOTAL
198003	3	1	1	2	0	1	8
198103	4	0	3	4	1	0	12
198303	5	1	2	3	1	0	12
198503	4	1	0	6	3	0	14
198703	2	1	0	2	1	0	6
199103	1	0	2	1	1	3	8
19920304	0	0	1	3	2	1	7
199411	0	1	0	1	3	1	6
199802	0	0	1	4	1	0	6
19991112	1	2	0	0	0	0	3

According to Table 9 and Figure 4, the number of reports in *Rabotnitsa* that emphasize women's occupation is decreasing, which is in line with "the professional character of the external image is becoming less and less distinct" in the image role characteristics. If we exclude the year 1999, when the sample size is too small (N=3) and look at the changes in the proportion of reported occupations, the group of workers, peasants and soldiers, which had the highest number of reports in the Soviet era, has almost disappeared since 1992. While art, entertainment and sports, service/business and so on have increased. This is in line with the requirements of the commercial transformation of the magazine and the transformation of the number and evaluation of different professions in the conditions of economic transition in Russia. In addition, among the "other occupations" not specifically reflected in the table, housewives are mentioned twice, indicating that their contributions to the family are recognized as occupational contributions. At the same time, religious roles, such as monks and witches, have reappeared in the occupations reported in *Rabotnitsa* since 1991.

Figure 4 Plots of occupation across years



Thus, from the above description, the perspective of professional roles in the dimension of female role image in Russian society shows a tendency of dilution, diversification, and commercialization. Dilution means that the importance of professional role as an important part of the female role dimension is weakened and ignored in the mass media representations. Diversification refers to the fact that compared with the Soviet period, which mainly focused on occupations in the fields of workers, peasants and soldiers, leading cadres and science, education, culture and sports, the transformed *Rabotnitsa* focused on more kinds of female occupations. This includes not only the emerging service industry or business positions that emerged with the economic and political transformation, but also the traditional and ancient religious positions that existed in Russian society before the socialist period. Commercialization refers to two levels of expression content and importance choice. Commercialization has brought about the diversification of occupations, and it also determines which occupations the mass media choose to express, which occupations are more important and get higher social evaluation. The most direct manifestation of this is that the workers, peasants and soldiers group, which were regarded as the most positive and worth reporting in the socialist period, suffered a huge blow after the social transformation in Russia. Both the number of reports and the evaluation given by these reports are not as good as before.

Another way to observe the change of women's identity role is to observe the change of typesetting length in each section of *Rabotnitsa*. The more important, the more ink will be spent to describe and emphasize in detail, while the unimportant will not give so much space. Therefore, in this chapter, the statistics of the page lengths occupied by

each section type of *Rabotnitsa* are conducted, and the results are as Table 10 and Figure 5.

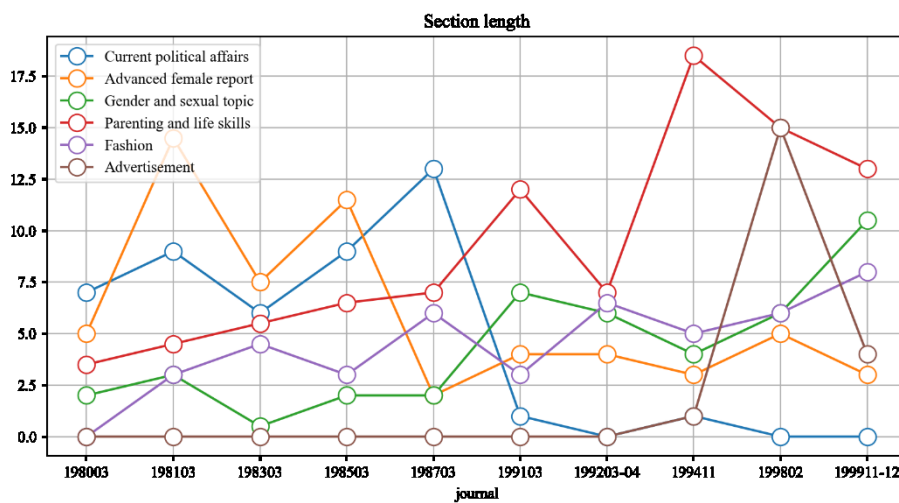
Table 10 Typesetting length in each section of *Rabotnitsa*

JOURNAL	CURRENT POLITICAL AFFAIRS	ADVANCED FEMALE REPORT	GENDER AND SEXUAL TOPIC	PARENTING AND LIFE SKILLS	FASHION	ADVERTISEMENT
198003	7	5	2	3.5	0	0
198103	9	14.5	3	4.5	3	0
198303	6	7.5	0.5	5.5	4.5	0
198503	9	11.5	2	6.5	3	0
198703	13	2	2	7	6	0
199103	1	4	7	12	3	0
19923/4	0	4	6	7	6.5	0
199411	1	3	4	18.5	5	1
199802	0	5	6	15	6	15
199911/12	0	3	10.5	13	8	4

This paper divides the articles of *Rabotnitsa* into current affairs politics, advanced women's reports, gender and sexual topics, parenting and family life skills, fashion, advertising and others, and counts the number of pages reported in each section. Current affairs include policy comments, conference reports and news. Advanced women's reports mainly include interviews with outstanding women and biographies of characters. Gender and sexual topics mainly refer to articles and stories that discuss relationship between men and women. Parenting and family life skills mainly include articles related to educating children and taking care of housework (sewing, kitchen, hospitality, etc.), which are mostly concentrated in the "*Домашний Kaleidoscope (family kaleidoscope)*" column in *Rabotnitsa*. According to the tables and line charts, the number of reports on current affairs and politics and advanced women shows a sharp decline. Advanced women's report is a special report form under the socialist news system, and its foundation is the "typical report" that has been valued since Lenin's time. After entering the transition period, this kind of report with ideological colour is less and less common in mass media.

However, the decrease of attention to current affairs politics and successful women's deeds, combined with the increase of attention to parenting and life skills, gender sentiment and fashion topics, also seems to reflect the change of society's expectation of women's involvement in which field. Under the selective expression of mass media, society seems to expect women to pay less attention to current affairs, politics and professional achievements, and spend more energy on paying attention to and learning how to educate children, take care of families, deal with men's and women's problems and dress up their appearance.

Figure 5 Change in typesetting length in each section of *Rabotnitsa* across years



From the perspective of value tendency, the importance of women's family roles in gender discourse has returned, and the importance of women's roles as mothers, wives, housekeepers and lovers has been increasingly emphasized. At the same time, women show a trend of more diversity and freedom in both status and image roles. The repressed urge for beauty during the socialist period was transformed into an ever-increasing number of fashion pages, and there was more open discussion about what constituted beauty and how to dress oneself more beautifully.

However, women's participation and activism in the public sphere has declined. In other words, under the gender discourse system, the importance of these activities for women is declining. On the one hand, the reduction of the length of comments, current affairs news, etc. limits women's access to this information, on the other hand, it also reflects a prejudice of mass media against female audiences: this information is unnecessary and unimportant for women. It doesn't matter if they don't know this. People don't ask a woman to understand current affairs and politics.

4.4 Text Analysis

4.4.1 Women in the Private Sphere

The primary status of a woman in the private sphere is to be a housekeeper. The fact that the "Family Kaleidoscope" section has grown from the last few pages of each issue to a separate supplement is a testament to the growing emphasis on this identity. In this supplement, from tailoring and sewing clothes of men, women, children, and the elderly, to the design and care of bedroom, study and kitchen, to the design of menus in different festivals and situations, every aspect of housework seems to be the knowledge that women need to master. Because there is a demand for this knowledge, the corresponding sections in women's magazines are covered; because there is a growing demand, the corresponding sections grow in length. Similarly, because women are perceived to need this knowledge, magazines targeting women will do these stories; because women are perceived to increasingly need this knowledge, the corresponding sections will grow in length. In fact, the importance of women as housekeepers can be seen not only from the design of magazine columns, but also from many stories published in *Rabotnitsa*. For example, *Чисто Женское (Purely Feminine)* published in March 1980⁵⁷, in which the heroine is the mother of three children. As she was going to be hospitalized, she kept telling her husband and children various trivial precautions before leaving home, worrying about their lives after leaving home. And it wasn't until she was lying down in the hospital, finally able to rest properly, that she felt that everything that had come before - marriage, children, work, illness, etc. - was about someone else. Only this moment now is her own. But when she woke up from her dream again, she immediately worried about all sorts of trivial matters for her husband and children. This not only reflects the image that women are the main or even the only stewards of family affairs, but also reflects the interactive relationship between women and other characters in the family: whether they are mothers or wives, women are the "caregivers".

⁵⁷ Чисто Женское, 198003, р5-7, Лилия Беляева

This seems to be contrary to the statement that women have long been regarded as weak and protected by men because of their physiological differences. However, in the family, compared with "being taken care of by husbands or children", the quality of caring for husbands and children by women is more emphasized in mass media works. This view can be easily proved by the praise of gentle and virtuous mothers and wives in various reports and literary and artistic works. For example, in 1981, in order to celebrate International Women's Day, *Rabotnitsa* selected male celebrities from all walks of life and countries to bless women, and only one of them didn't mention the value of women as mothers and wives.

Others' cognition of women's contribution is nothing more than being a mother to cultivate excellent children (children's value is women's value) and assisting her husband to contribute (husband's value is women's value).⁵⁸ Even if women's other achievements or values (such as professional achievements) are recognized, the status of "mother" or "wife" is still the most important status role of women. For example, in 1985, a speech about the employment policy benefiting women clearly focused on women's employment⁵⁹, but at the end, it spent several paragraphs mentioning the help provided by the government in children's education and domestic service and regarded these two points as part of the employment policy benefiting women.

This kind of thought reflects that even when discussing women's professional roles, it is inherently unavoidable to discuss women's responsibilities as both mother and wife. The value of women in other fields can't hinder the value of women as "caregivers" in the family. This view can also be reflected in interviews with some typical female figures in magazines. For example, in 1999, *Rabotnitsa* published an article entitled *Портрет Жены Чиновника (Portrait of an official's wife)*⁶⁰ and interviewed an official's wife. Besides being an official wife, she has had a wonderful life for decades. She opened an orphanage in Moscow, adopted a seriously ill boy and helped some young people to continue their college studies. Although the focus of the whole article is on how she helps orphans, the title and the point of entry of the article are all about the identity of the "wife": it is as if what she does and what she achieves is inseparable from her

⁵⁸ Все цветы вам, женщины!, 198103, p8-9

⁵⁹ С заботой о женщине, 198503, p13-14

⁶⁰ Портрет жены чиновника, 199911/12, p4-5

husband's special identity. The most important feature of what she does is the identity of her husband.

4.4.2 Women in the Public Sphere

Women in the public sphere, first, exist as citizens who undertake and carry out the will of the state. In the socialist period, where planning was emphasized everywhere, women's bodies were not entirely their own. When the country's population is in short supply, women are overwhelmed by the overwhelming propaganda of "heroic mothers"; When the country needs to reflect the political correctness of political participation, women are overwhelmed by overwhelming propaganda of these policies; When there is a national labour shortage, women are inundated with propaganda about the glory of female employment. Take the labour force as an example. Around 1980, there was a certain shortage of labour force in the Soviet Union, so articles such as *Бабушка Ушла На Работу* (*Grandma went to work*, calling for the elderly to get back to work)⁶¹ and *Неполный Рабочий День - Новые Возможности* (*Part-time jobs-new opportunities*, calling for housewives to do part-time jobs)⁶² appeared in magazines. Even the elderly and housewives need more contact with society, and it is good for them to go out to work. However, this does not prevent women from being persuaded to go home to take on family responsibilities when they were laid off in a large area due to economic transformation in the 1990s.

Under such circumstances, both women and men have spontaneously explored their own ways to adapt to the social gender order. Just as the basic methodology of Marxism requires, one thing can be viewed from the front or the back. The construction and evaluation of women by social gender order, on the one hand, limits the fields where women can grow up, on the other hand, can also become "advantages". Women can "take advantage of" their status as women and turn the sexual gaze with some discrimination into the beginning of seizing the opportunity to get ahead. On the one hand, they exploit the mutual repulsion between men, and on the other hand, they use their specific gender advantages (e.g., beautiful looks, gentle personality) to gain

⁶¹ Бабушка ушла на работу, 198003, p19-20

⁶² Неполный рабочий день-новые возможности, 198103, p22-23

attention. This idea of turning discrimination into advantage is also mentioned in the report as the experience of successful women. Ultimately, this approach exploits societal stereotypes and stereotypes about the biological differences between men and women, such as the belief that men are more aggressive, and women are more inclusive. On the one hand, this kind of mindset and stereotype has scientific endorsement (*Голова У Женщин Устроена Иначе, Чем У Мужчин, The Brain Structure of Women is Different from that of Men*)⁶³, on the other hand, it has become a reasonable excuse for women to fight for public rights («Быть Женщиной – Большое Преимущество», - *Говорит Президент Исландии Вигдис Финнбогадоттир, Being a woman is a great advantage and I believe we can live better*", *President Vigdís Finnbogadóttir of Iceland said*)⁶⁴, which holds that women can make up for the shortcomings of men.

4.5 Summary

Through the observation of the articles and pictures published in *Rabotnitsa*, we can see that the female image roles have changed from all ages, eliminating gender characteristics, and highlighting professional characteristics to younger and more diversified aesthetics. Women's appearance characteristics gradually exceed professional characteristics, which are reflected in articles and pictures. This is not only the result of women's independent choice under the wave of consumerism after getting rid of ideological shackles.

This is also the new gender discourse's new image construction for women after the old gender discourse loses its authority. In 1970s and 1980s, the idea of daily life's dematerialization (*razveshchestvlenie*) was concealed by the increasing demand of Soviet consumers and the values of personal style and taste. In 1990s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the discourse about consumption became more diversified. In the 1990s, consumption and fashion were mostly related to identity. Clothes once again mark the class status and identity and transform the relationship between people into the relationship between things, just as Marx predicted.⁶⁵ In this sense, the category of

⁶³ Голова у женщин устроена иначе, чем у мужчин, 199911/12, p18-19

⁶⁴ «БЫТЬ ЖЕНЩИНОЙ – БОЛЬШОЕ ПРЕИМУЩЕСТВО», - говорит президент Исландии ВИГДИС ФИННБОГАДОТТИР, 199103, p20; Я верю, что мы можем жить лучше, 199911/12, p13

⁶⁵ Olga Gurova, Chapter 3: The Ideology of Consumption in the Soviet Union, Communism and Consumerism:

"image" appearing in the discourse of 1990s means creating a certain type of identity and producing a special impression, which reflects this change in the meaning of consumer goods in the post-socialist period. Sex appeared as an obvious category and replaced the norms of simplicity and moderation in the Soviet Union. The consumption of women's appearance is, on the one hand, a manifestation of autonomous freedom and pluralistic choice, but on the other hand, it is also a manifestation of passive acceptance, of being the "watched", of being a projection of male eroticism.

This change of external image expression also affects the reconstruction of the importance order of women's different identities and roles. In the socialist period, even in the 1980s, when the ideology has been loosened, the social gender order, as a part of the official ideology that must be interfered, still has the unchangeable "political correctness", and there is still the requirement of maintaining this political correctness through administrative power. For example, when the country lacks labour force, it will vigorously advocate the benefits of women's employment, and when the country needs a healthier population structure, it will vigorously advocate the "glory" of motherhood. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, this kind of administrative and conceptual external force based on ideology disappeared with communism, resulting in a vacuum in the social gender order. Various forces have poured into this field and tried to exert influence on the construction of new social gender order. The most notable of these is the return of the traditional gender order. The ideal of communism has been broken, the new ideal has not yet been fully formed, but the old and traditional order has been perfected and the masses can get used to it, so it is easy to choose to go back to the past. The gradual emphasis on women's family responsibilities and the gradual erasure of women's professional characteristics are the proof. The importance of women as caretakers of the home, as wives and mothers, is increasingly ranked higher in all the identity roles of women. However, despite being the caretaker of the household, the wife is not the master of the household. She is merely the deputy who handles the chores, not the decision-maker who makes the decisions for the big things. The family is a woman's domain and therefore requires a woman to take care of everything; it has no place for a woman because she can be a wife or a mother, but not herself.

5. Discussion

Before answering the central question posed in this paper, a basic overview of the context in which the question arose is necessary to make. During the ruling period of the Communist Party, there was a huge gap between the theoretical emphasis on gender equality and the actual situation of "real socialism". For the Soviet Union, this gap was aggravated by the fact that gender policies were largely subordinated to other economic and political matters with higher priority.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the change of social system caused political chaos, economic decline and rising crime rate in Russia, and women became one of the groups that suffered the most. At this time, women's problems were mainly manifested in the following aspects: firstly, the conflict between the deep-rooted traditional patriarchal ideology and the awakening consciousness of women's independence. Russian women, who had generally received a good education, were frustrated frequently in the process of improving their self-awareness and fighting against the concept of gender discrimination, and their performance was unsatisfactory.

Secondly, as a result of the economic crisis, a large number of women have lost their jobs and returned to their families as housewives, and women who have lost their economic independence have lost important leverage to fight for equality. Thirdly, the conflicts arising from conflicting values of different social systems. The ideological confusion and social changes caused by individualism instead of collectivism, market economy instead of planned economy and free competition instead of state distribution system have troubled Russian women and put them in contradictions, which were mainly manifested in the contradiction between western self-evaluation standards and traditional self-evaluation standards, and the contradiction between the image of women advocated under the socialist system and the misplaced image of women in the current mass media culture, etc. At this time, the gender order in Russian society was actually in a "vacuum", with different values battling it out in a confusing arena.

"The situation in Russia was different from the European countries, but it had many similarities with China. For Russia and China, the oppression of feudalism was the same. The economic and cultural backwardness was similar. Therefore, the experience

of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia had a particularly strong and deep impact on China, and its influence on Chinese journalism was no exception. "⁶⁶

The news model of the Soviet Union had a profound and comprehensive influence on China's news model. For example, the media mainly focused on the resolutions, instructions and conference reports of the party and government, with dull articles, empty contents and sameness, blind worship of leaders, etc. After the reform, although the connotation and function of ideological discourse of mass media have changed with the influx of new consumerism and free thoughts brought by market economy, CPC retained the language engineering practice of Mao Zedong era in the party, requiring its members to use the language formula led by the party to speak and write. These words are still expressed in the language of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, updated by Mao Zedong's successors, and linked with the history of the Party itself. Using a unified language system is a very effective tool of party discipline. All party members must learn and publicize the words dominated by their leaders, so that the process of repeated downward copying forces everyone to admit that leaders have the right to decide theoretical issues, distinguish good behaviour from bad behaviour, and tell everyone what to say and how to say it. The control of language publicly expressed thoughts and people's lives strengthen the power of rulers. From beginning to end, the basic principle of restricting public speech is that no one can challenge the legitimacy of the CPC's rule or threaten the stability of its rule.⁶⁷

Therefore, there are four differences between Chinese and Russian mass media in the transitional period. First, in terms of the purpose and depth of the reform, Russia's reform is to "bid farewell to the past" and abandon the socialist news system for the purpose of establishing a capitalist "democratic and free" news system. However, no matter how the form and content of China's system are adjusted, it basically adheres to the basic principles that the party leads the mass media. Its purpose has never been to realize the complete transformation of the system, but to study how to firmly control the

⁶⁶ Tse-Tung, Mao. *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung: Volume 4*. Beijing: Renmin Publishing House, 1969.: p1358.

⁶⁷ Ji, Fangyuan. Chapter 9: Language, State and Society in Post-Mao China: Continuity and Change, *Legacies of Totalitarian Language in the Discourse Culture of the Post-Totalitarian Era*, p191-192

political and public opinion positions and economic benefits under the market economy situation.

Secondly, from the content of reform, the content of Russian media reform is mainly comprehensive westernization, carrying out news freedom policy of "no forbidden zone for speech", and fully implement privatization and marketization in the media field. While in China, media has gradually improved the state's macro-control system without changing its party spirit, implemented the separation of ownership and management rights, and promoted the development of media industrialization.

Thirdly, in terms of reform methods, the Russian Democrats have adopted a one-step "shock therapy" for media reform, while the news reform in China is much more cautious. Worried that the economic opening-up will have a huge impact on politics, culture, and ideology in a short period of time, which will affect the state's control over these areas, the CPC still adopts a conservative attitude in news review, and the propaganda tone of core issues and ideology is still controlled by political parties.

After understanding the background of transformation in China and Russia, as well as the similarities and differences in the goals, degrees, methods, and contents of mass media system reform in the two countries, we can better understand what legacy communism has brought to the gender discourse system in the two countries, and what are the similarities and differences between the two countries. China's understanding of communism, which was deeply influenced by the Soviet Union, also included the understanding of the gender equality requirements of communism. Under such a similar historical background, the market economy reform that happened in the two countries brought some similar changes to the changes of gender discourse in the two countries. The market economy has brought about consumerism and commercialization, which is reflected in the gender discourse, on the one hand, a more diverse aesthetic, shifting from an attempt to downplay the differences in male and female appearance to reflect physical equality during the communist period to a return to femininity. On the other hand, consumerism and commercialization also take back the power of defining beauty through advertisements, models, pictures, and other forms. This practice has also brought some negative effects. Women internalize these value judgments and aesthetic standards into their own aesthetics and obey the definition of aesthetics in the mass

media, thus losing their own subjectivity and becoming objects shaped by social power discourse.

In addition to the above-mentioned intuitive influence on gender discourse, the reform has also changed the requirements of gender culture for women by influencing the job market. On the one hand, with the abolition of the planned economy system, many new professions poured in, and the industries and professions presented in newspapers and periodicals no longer rigidly adhered to the workers, peasants and soldiers and leading cadres who met the political requirements in the communist period, and the service industry, self-employed workers and even the capitalist roles who were hostile before and should be "defeated" all appeared in the mass media and were publicized as the benchmark of the new era.

On the other hand, the reform of market economy has also caused great impact on the original job market. The demonstration of the "naturalness" of women's family responsibilities and the praise of women's family roles all proved this tendency of social gender arrangement. Secondly, the high education level of women have subtly promoted the awakening of women's independent equality consciousness for decades, which leads to people's contradiction and confusion when the mass media strengthens the propaganda of family roles. At the same time, the development of the international feminist movement and international women's organizations also had an impact on China and Russia. For Russia, this influence came along with the collapse and other western liberal ideas, while for China it was more evident in the hosting of the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. The influx of non-communist gender discourse provoked discussions within the limits of the regime's official discourse, both in terms of promoting gender equality policies (e.g., shifts at the level of China's constitution and state policies) and in terms of bringing fresh perspectives on thinking and new vocabularies and goals of gender discourse. The involvement of international women's organizations has somewhat diffused the power of a small group of states to control gender discourse, acting as an external watchdog.

Although both Russia and China have undergone the reforms, there are still differences in the extent, methods, and results. Russia is a much more comprehensive reform, while China is partial; Russia has adopted a more radical approach, while China is more

cautious; After the transformation, Russia has encountered a low economic tide, while China's reform and opening-up has achieved better results in economy. These differences are also reflected in the changes of gender culture. First of all, for the return of femininity, the Russian aesthetic is not only more diverse compared to China, but also more specific and obvious. The change in the aesthetics of women's appearance is shown graphically through the pictures in magazines, advertisements and op-ed articles. Although there is a certain degree of femininity return in China, the expression of this kind of aesthetics and femininity is vaguer in newspapers that pay more attention to the expression of ideology and pursue party spirit.

On the one hand, the pictures are still mainly standard photos of people and work scenes, and the emphasis on women's appearance is not as strong as that of Russia, and the discussion on the standard of "beauty" is more focused on textual discussion rather than in a more visual way such as pictures. On the other hand, the attitude of *People's Daily* is very different from that of *Rabotnitsa* in the face of the real trend of women's greater attention to their appearance due to the emergence and growth of consumerism. The *People's Daily*, standing on its partisan basis, evaluated more negatively the emerging aesthetic trend that did not conform to the plain image of women celebrated during the communist period. In its coverage of advanced female archetypes, the *People's Daily* shows a marked decline in its attention to women's physical appearance. Its discussion of the increasing diversity of female aesthetics and "fashion" is mostly found in editorial articles and is often presented as a negative example and negative influence.

Secondly, although both countries show a pluralistic nature of employment on the one hand, and voices calling for women to go home on the other hand because the labour market supply far exceeds demand, for one thing, because China still has to conform to the requirements of the communist concept of gender equality, regardless of the actual employment situation of women, regardless of whether women encounter discrimination in the process of seeking employment, the publicly published newspapers that are subject to the Party's language censorship must always conform to the Party's established system of discourse. Even if the use of specific vocabulary and external expressions are relaxed and the focus of social transformation brought about by the market economy changes, the core and basic principles cannot be changed.

However, even if the CPC wants to firmly grasp the control of the language system including gender discourse, with the advancement of market economy reform, the change of social structure and people's living conditions, and the new schools of thought brought about by opening-up will inevitably make people's values change involuntarily to some extent.

Another biggest difference in the transformation between China and Russia is that one was carrying out political reforms while the other was not. Abandoning the political concept of communism completely means that Russia theoretically needs to break all kinds of basic concepts in the Soviet era (including the concept of gender equality of communism) and abandon the discourse system that has been well-known in the Soviet era (including the social gender discourse of communism). However, on the one side, it is almost impossible to completely forget a set of discourses that have been implemented for 70 years in just a few years and throw away the ideas that have been repeatedly publicized for 70 years. This is reflected in the conversational and lecture texts.⁶⁸ On the other side, after the breakup of the old order, a "vacuum" of various social orders, including the gender order, will emerge, in which various views, including traditional Orthodoxy and Western liberal thought, will compete, presenting a sense of confusion and chaos. This kind of confusion and chaos can be especially reflected in the love stories and family topics of *Rabotnitsa*.

Discussion on extramarital affairs, love triangle, single mother, domestic violence, etc., in which the protagonists long for the freedom of love on the one hand and are bound by religion or moral sense on the other hand. For one thing, the protagonists long for the courage to get rid of the shackles of feelings and family, for another thing, they believe that people must find a family as their home and can't escape the shackles of family responsibility.

Different from this, *People's Daily* rarely reports such unsolvable, contradictory, and confused stories. For *People's Daily*, it is necessary to put forward solutions at the end to achieve a more balanced ending. Its pursuit of commercialization is far lower than

⁶⁸ Ekaterina Levintova. Chapter 8: Official Ideological Discourse in Pre-Transition and Post-Communist Russia: What Has Really Changed Since the Communist Period? *Legacies of Totalitarian Language in the Discourse Culture of the Post-Totalitarian Era*, p155

that of *Rabotnitsa*, but its requirement for politics is far higher than that of *Rabotnitsa* after the transformation, so it needs to reflect the reality created by the Party more than the reality of readers. Even in the 1990s, when international feminist discourse was flooding in, the Chinese Communist Party continued to show a greater ability to control the influx of new ideological discourse than Russia did during the transition. The extent to which the international feminist movement and international women's organizations can have influence in China remains subject to Party censorship. However, as mentioned earlier, political, ideological, and other factors can't exist independently of other factors.

With the advancement of market economy reform, social structure and people's thoughts will inevitably change to some extent. Even if the Communist Party still has the power to censor language, it can't completely stop the slow and subtle changes of gender discourse. In fact, changes are taking place within the Communist Party itself. Obviously, the Party's understanding of ideology in Deng's era is obviously different from that in Mao's era, so the so-called "Chinese characteristics" will be added as the attribute in front of socialism. This language art, which clearly reflects the traditional pragmatism of Chinese people, on the one hand reflects China's gradual departure from the past communist ideology and its renewed favour for traditional Confucian philosophy, on the other hand, it also reflects the pragmatic tendency of political discourse controlled by the Party, and as a result, the secondary social issues including gender discourse also show the pragmatic trend. According to the political and economic requirements of the CPC Central Committee and the national development plan, China's gender discourse is characterized by flexible adjustment with the overall political and economic situation and the adjustment of the CPC Central Committee policies.

To sum up, the two countries' treatment of gender discourse order in the communist period is like some extent in mass media. Both countries have experienced the market economy reform, and both countries have experienced the impact of consumerism and commercialization with this reform. The return of femininity and more diversified aesthetics also led to the re-emphasis of women's identity as "being watched". With the increase of new occupations, the job market is full of opportunities and challenges at the

same time, and the tide of layoffs is coming, which leads to the discussion of women returning to their families.

However, the differences in the areas, intensity, methods, and results of reform in China and Russia during the transition period, as well as the different treatment of the old communist ideas of gender equality, have led to differences in the communist legacies inherited by the two countries. Russia has experienced the impact of more rapid, violent and comprehensive reform. Consumerism and commercialization are more direct and obvious in the mass media, and the social gender order presents a wrestling state of old order, traditional order, and emerging order, which is an expression of confusion, contradiction and chaos in the mass media. China's reform and opening-up has eroded the legacy of gender equality left by the communist era in a more subtle and slow way. Although the control of language is still in the hands of the Party, economic transformation and social opening are not only affecting the ideas of ordinary people, but also influencing the definition of basic principles of various social issues within the Communist Party. The flexible and practical transformation of the *People's Daily's* propaganda discourse in line with the party's policies at various stages and the overall political and economic needs of the country is the embodiment of this trend.

6. Conclusion

The question to be discussed in this paper is how mainstream media reproduce and participate in reshaping gender discourse before and after the transformation of China and Russia. This paper chooses to compare the Soviet Union/Russia with China before and after the reform and opening-up, in order to explore what impact the communist legacy has had on the changing gender discourse in the two countries, what are the similarities and differences in these impacts, and what has led to these similarities and differences. In this paper, *People's Daily* and *Rabotnitsa* are selected as the main research objects. On the one hand, by coding the characters based on demography, occupations, external image, and other factors, and by quantitative analysis and macro data statistics, we can roughly sort out the overall overview of female images. On the other hand, through the interpretation and analysis of typical cases, the differences are summarized.

For *People's Daily*, first, in terms of image roles, the proportion of reports mentioning women's appearance in single-person reports is gradually decreasing, and qualities with distinct collectivist overtones are reflected less and less in typical reports, while the number of reports emphasizing individual qualities is increasing. This is consistent with the trajectory of China's gradual shift from a planned economy to a market economy and from collectivism to individualism, starting in the 1980s. Secondly, in terms of identity roles, the proportion of leading cadres in the reports is gradually decreasing, and the number of entrepreneurs and scientists has increased. The emphasis on women's professional roles, as seen in the reported designation of women's roles, also reflects the state's attempt to integrate women into the social construction system. However, when talking about family planning and employment difficulties, *People's Daily* also emphasizes the importance of women's traditional family responsibilities of caring for their husbands and children. Obviously, when there is a contradiction between national development and women's personal interests, *People's Daily*, by choosing specific typical figures and cases to promote, pushes these responsibilities and difficulties arising from this contradiction back to individuals. On the one hand, the state narrative encourages and promotes women's imagination and model construction of gender equality with the attitude of "political correctness". On the other hand, it creates pressure from traditional gender culture and resistance to gender equality practices in the process of political

communication, creating a new wave of oppression against women in the process of transferring power from male authority to power.

For *Rabotnitsa*, in the dimension of image role, *Rabotnitsa* demonstrates the tendency of the construction of the image of women in the Russian gender discourse to be younger, to intensify the focus on appearance, and to weaken the professional characteristics of women. At the same time, the proportion of each occupation in the report has changed. The most reported group of workers, peasants and soldiers almost disappeared in reports, while reports on entertainment, service industry/business and so on increased. This is in line with the requirements of the commercialization transformation of magazines, and it is also the embodiment of the change of the number and evaluation of different occupations under the condition of economic transformation in Russia.

The professional roles of women are gradually weakening, diversifying and commercializing. Secondly, from the point of view of report content and magazine section design, the reports with communist ideology, represented by advanced typical reports, are becoming less and less common. At the same time, the attention paid to current affairs politics and successful women's deeds has also decreased, while the attention paid to family, gender emotion and fashion has gradually increased. In terms of the dimension of value orientation, the discourse emphasizing the importance of women's domestic roles returns, and the importance of women's roles as mothers, wives, housekeepers, and lovers is increasingly emphasized. Even if other achievements or values of women are recognized, the status of "mother" or "wife" is still the most important identity role of women. Under this condition, women are encouraged to learn how to "turn discrimination into advantage", that is, use their specific gender characteristics (such as beautiful appearance and gentle personality) to achieve their goals. This line of thinking ultimately exploits society's stereotypical thinking and stereotypes about the biological differences between men and women, and quite ironically becomes a legitimate excuse for women to use when fighting for their rights in the public sphere.

After reviewing the changes in gender discourse in the mass media in China and Russia, this paper discusses what legacies communism has brought to the gender discourse

systems of the two countries, and how the two countries are similar and different, considering the general context of social transformation in China and Russia, and the similarities and differences in the goals, extent, methods and contents of mass media institutional reforms in the two countries. During the ruling period of the Communist Party, there was a huge gap between the theoretical emphasis on gender equality and the actual situation of "real socialism". The gender policy was largely subordinated to other economic and political matters. On the one hand, in rhetoric, the officials needed to follow the requirements of communism for gender equality on the surface; on the other hand, in actual operation, the form of gender equality served the needs of national governance, and at the same time, it had to fight against the ubiquitous traditional gender concept in daily life. Based on this, this paper holds that the early treatment of gender issues based on ideology in the two countries was similar. Under such a similar historical background, the market economy reform that also happened in the two countries brought some similar changes to the changes of gender discourse in Russia and China. First, the market economy has brought consumerism and commercialization, which is reflected in the gender discourse, that is, more diversified aesthetics and the return of femininity. On the other hand, consumerism and commercialization also compete for the power to define "beauty" through advertisements, pictures and other forms. Secondly, the market economy reform has also changed the requirements of gender culture by influencing the job market. On the one hand, with the abolition of the planned economic system and the influx of many new occupations, the female occupations in newspapers and periodicals are more diversified. On the other hand, the reform of market economy has also caused great impact on the original job market. Women's natural responsibilities in the family are emphasized again, and women practitioners are the first to give up.

Meanwhile, the extent, methods and results of the reforms differ between China and Russia. Russia has undergone a comprehensive transformation while China has only undergone a market economy transformation; Russia has undergone a more radical transformation while China has been more cautious; Russia has experienced a downturn after the transformation while China's economic results of reform and opening-up have been better compared to Russia. These differences are naturally reflected in the change of gender culture in society. First, the same femininity is returning, and the Russian aesthetic is not only more diverse compared to China, but also more specific and

distinct. The Chinese newspapers, on the other hand, express it in a non-specific, non-intuitive way and evaluate this trend more negatively. Secondly, although the demand for women to go home appeared in both countries because the supply of labour market far exceeded the demand, because China still had the requirement of meeting the communist concept of gender equality, no matter what the actual job-seeking and employment situation of women was, the public expression of newspapers must always follow the discourse system established by the Communist Party, and cannot violate the basic principles established by the Communist Party.

Thirdly, one of the biggest differences between the Russian and Chinese transitions is that one carried out political reforms, while the other did not. For Russia, there is a conflict between the deep-rooted traditional patriarchal ideology and the awakening consciousness of women's independence. There is a conflict between the western self-evaluation standard and the traditional self-evaluation standard, and the female image advocated under the socialist system is misplaced with the female image in the current mass media culture. For China, which has not undergone political reform, the commercialization of the mass media needs to be balanced with the demands of its political nature, which is expressed in the language and views of the *People's Daily*, which needs to reflect the reality demanded by the Party more than the reality in which its readers live.

Although the connotation and function of ideological discourse of mass media have changed with the influx of new consumerism and free ideas brought by market economy, CPC still dominates the way and environment of mass media writing. Its basic principle is that no one should challenge the legitimacy of the CPC's rule or threaten the stability of its rule from beginning to end. However, political, ideological, and other factors can't exist independently of other factors. With the advancement of market economy reform, social structure and people's thoughts will inevitably change to some extent. Even if the Communist Party still has the power to censor language, it can't completely stop the slow and subtle changes of gender discourse. In fact, changes are taking place within the Communist Party itself. China's gender discourse is characterized by flexible adjustment with the overall political and economic situation and the adjustment of the policies of the CPC Central Committee.

In short, the dramatic changes of these 20 years have undoubtedly impacted on the old communist ideology of gender. As an important part of social issues, gender issue is a microcosm of the changes and developments in society as a whole. There was a time when women's survival under the impact of market economic reforms, political reforms and various trends of thought was regressive. However, unlike the communist era when the state did everything and defined everything, the more liberal environment has allowed women to become more self-reliant and to strive for their rights according to their own understanding rather than the Party's demands.

Of course, there are still many challenges to further research in this study. First, due to the limitation of data sources and space, it was not possible to make statistics and analysis of Russian newspapers and magazines with a larger sample size. Secondly, this paper only selected *People's Daily* and *Rabotnitsa* as research objects, which are limited in the positioning of newspapers and magazines. In future research, we may be able to make a more detailed classification according to their political and commercial positioning, and then supplement different types of newspapers and magazines as research objects according to this classification. Again, although both quantitative and qualitative research methods are used in this paper, the quantitative statistics are mainly descriptive, and in future research, inferential statistics must be designed to verify the opinions. In the qualitative research section, textual analysis can be conducted on a larger number of cases.

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