

Public Abstract

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Fifty years ago, women were largely confined to the home, and men were responsible for breadwinning. Today, many would suggest the genders are closer to being equals and that women can choose whatever life they want. This study looked to see if magazines in 2011 are, in fact, more progressive than their 1961 counterparts. A content analysis of 36 issues of Good Housekeeping, Ladies' Home Journal, and Redbook analyzed story types and topics; subject function, relationship status, parental status, occupation, and responsibility; and themes of work-life balance, sharing of domestic work and breadwinning, and acknowledgment of income and education disparity. A total of 454 articles and 1,102 subjects were studied, and statistical analysis looked for significant differences between the samples. The results showed significant change in portrayals of females and males over the period and an increase in most themes. However, men and women were still unequal in most factors in 2011. At the same time, an analysis of more specific aspects of the data yielded a more positive outlook than the significance tests alone and indicated that women's magazines' gender role constructions today are much more progressive and egalitarian than they were 50 years ago, though men and women are not yet treated equally and further progress is possible in magazines.