

**WORKING MOM AND DOMESTIC DAD:
A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF GENDER ROLE CONSTRUCTIONS IN
WOMEN'S MAGAZINES IN 1961 AND 2011**

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by
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The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

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ABSTRACT

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 quantitative content analysis of 36 issues of *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and *Redbook* coded 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 analyzed, and chi-square goodness of fit tests were used to look for significant differences in distributions and proportions. The results showed significant change in construction 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 categories 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.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In 1961, it was not uncommon for a white, upper-middle class woman to go to college only in pursuit of her “MRS” degree, and, once that was achieved, she was expected to leave school and quit her job in order to take care of her home, her children, and her husband. Fifty years later, in 2011, more women graduate from college than men (U.S. Department of Labor, 2010, p.85), and little girls grow up being told they can be anything they want to be.

However, the fact remains that women and men face different obstacles in pursuit of career and family success. Often women are still expected to be primary caretakers and homemakers, and the struggle to balance such responsibilities with a career can act as a deterrent at work and source of stress at home (Kaufman 1999). Men, while arguably more involved at home today than in the past, take on much less responsibility than their female counterparts when it comes to homemaking and raising children (Arnold and Wall 2007). Further, recent examples, such as the Wal-Mart sex discrimination lawsuit, indicate that women still struggle to gain leverage and equal treatment in the workforce (Biskupic 2011).

Males and females, as children and adults, obtain and absorb instructions on what they are supposed to be and do from a variety of sources. A mixture of positive and negative messages might come from parents and teachers, magazines and books, movies and television, and other media and cultural elements. Together, these messages can create a confusing, supportive or discouraging picture of what a man or woman is supposed to be.

The theory of social construction of reality (Carey 1989, Baran and Davis 1995, Berger and Luckmann 1966) suggests that media messages shape an individual's perception of herself and the world around her and that frequently received messages can eventually be adopted as the paradigms through which a person sees the world. Using this theory, as well as Marxist theory and Feminist theory, as a basis, this study set out to examine what messages women's magazines send and what role responsibilities they construct for their readers. Further, the investigation intended to compare content today to content from 50 years ago, asking:

How are gender roles and responsibilities for males and females constructed and assigned in the editorial content of women's magazines today, and how have such constructions evolved over the past half-century?

Previous research on gender roles and media has shown mixed and not always heartening results. Scholars have looked at the construction of women in magazine advertisements (Ferrante, Haynes, and Kingsley 1988, Courtney and Lockeretz 1971, and Kellerman and Kellerman 1998) and found only small changes and a continuation of gender stereotypes. Although women were shown more frequently in the working world, their primary responsibilities still resided in the home. Studies on male constructions in the media (Wolhuter and Lammers 1980, Kaufman 1999, Wall and Arnold 2007, and Martinson 2008) found male involvement in parenting and homemaking to be limited and framed around masculine roles. Fathers were involved in cooking and caretaking only as secondaries to mothers.

More specific studies have noted penalties to mothers in the workforce (Correll 2005) and continued portrayals of women as sole nurturers and health caretakers (Craig

1992 and Barnett 2006). A lexical analysis of women's magazines (del-Teso-Craviotto 2006) observed a feminine/motherhood slant not present in the vocabularies of men's magazines. Finally, an analysis of women's magazines from 1954 to 1982 showed only minimal improvement in gender roles (Demarest and Garner 1992).

Together, these studies suggest that there has been some improvement in gender role constructions in magazines since the 1950s, but only in small degrees and at a very slow pace, with both men and women still largely confined to their traditional functions and responsibilities. However, most of these studies were conducted years or decades ago, with magazines from the 1980s or earlier. This suggests that a revised look at the topic, with more recent magazines, is necessary.

This research is intended to fill that gap, through a quantitative content analysis of three of the matriarchs of the magazine world: the women's magazines *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and *Redbook*. Articles and subjects were analyzed for gender role constructions in terms of subject function, relationship status, parental status, occupation and primary responsibility, as well as for the presence of work-life balance for men and women, sharing of domestic and breadwinning responsibilities, and acknowledgment of disparities in income and education levels. The researcher expected — and hoped — to find that in years and months following the Feminist movement and peak of the economic recession, magazines would present men and women as more egalitarian in the home, with the children, and at work, thereby suggesting that little girls can, in fact, grow up to be anything they want.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Social construction of reality

The primary theory that informs this research is the social construction of reality, which posits that individuals and societies create boundaries and rules for themselves to maintain social control and existing paradigms.

Social constructionism depends on the understanding that individual reality is not objective or static but is shaped by social forces, including media. As Carey (1989) writes, “communication is a symbolic process whereby reality is produced, maintained, repaired, and transformed” (p.23), and “it is a presentation of reality that gives life an overall form, order, and tone” (p.21). According to Baran and Davis (1995), “Active audience members use the media’s symbols to define their environment and the things in it” (p.292). Although the reality constructed by the media is not necessarily accurate, individuals absorb it as a means of organizing and understanding their worlds.

This theory stems from the ritual view of communication (Carey 1989), in which media functions include maintaining society and representing communal beliefs. Messages communicated can address, among other things, gender roles and responsibilities regarding family, children, work, and home. Through such messages, media communication has the power to communicate norms and roles — categories and typifications for directing behavior and understanding the behavior of others (Berger and Luckmann 1966). Constructed roles, behaviors, and perspectives then become

habitualized in individuals because they provide a way to “quickly make sense of what goes on around us and then structure our actions” (Baran and Davis, 1995, p.292).

Habitualization occurs when an individual “develops a set process for dealing with a situation that he or she faces many times” (Calhoun, et al, 2002, p.28). Thus, patterned behaviors and values develop — not because they must be but because they are constructed — and continue until questioned (Berger and Luckmann 1966).

Adoption of constructed perspectives and behaviors can be problematic because, according to Berger and Luckmann (1966), “The reality of everyday life is taken for granted as reality” (p.23), and the “institutional world is experienced as an objective reality” (p.56). Individuals do not question the forces and symbols portrayed by the media and do not distinguish between constructed and actual realities. Instead, they use social constructions to the extent that “What is real ‘outside’ corresponds to what is real ‘within’” (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p.123).

Turning to this study, social constructionism suggests that magazine content might not showcase the truth of women’s responsibilities but, rather, magazines might broadcast the responsibilities society values and imposes on women. Nonetheless, these constructions have the power to shape women’s views of their roles and realities. This theory leads to the question of whether magazines today are constructing a 1960s view of women or something more reflective of 2011 realities.

Marxist theory

Social constructionism yields significant power to those who determine the constructions that influence realities. Marxist theory asks who holds power and how that

party shapes political economy, including work, labor, class, and ownership of production. Applying Marxist theory to media, McQuail (2000) concludes that “Media work ideologically by disseminating the ideas and worldviews of the ruling class, denying access to alternative ideas that might lead to change” (p.76). Media have the power to do so in a way that “imposes an imaginary unity or coherence,” so as to limit variation among individual views (McQuail, 2000, p.307). This implies that creators of media have the power to impose social values and the status quo in a way that leaves little room for debate or gray area.

Applying Marxist theory to gender creates a view of a society “dominated by a ruling class or political-economic elite” — men — “which has a privileged hold on material resources and economic power and, as such, also controls cultural and ideational production” (Van Gompel, et al., 2002, p.169). This means that if men dominate the workforce, they also dominate cultural roles. Put more simply by Donovan (1985), historical materialism “holds that culture and society are rooted in material or economic conditions” (p.66). If economy determines society, then gendered labor and housework values shape women’s social status (Donovan 1985). This makes it highly significant if domestic work is valued as labor, women are equal owners of production, and women are class equals to men.

Feminist theory

Feminist theory uses Marxism to address women’s role in society, degree of agency, and power relations to men. Feminist analysis investigates, in part, “how texts ‘position’ the female subject in narratives and textual interactions and in so doing

contribute to a definition of femininity” (McQuail, 2005, p.310). It proposes “a relationship between the modes of production, or capitalism, and women’s status” (Donovan, 1985, p.76), making how housework and women’s labor are valued by capitalism significant in determining women’s class status and chances for gender equality (Donovan 1985). Feminism contends that a sexual division of labor exists in both private and public life and “connects domestic gender politics to gender politics in the paid workforce and public life” (Agger, 1998, p.100). This means that how women are valued at home affects how they are valued in corporations and society; if housework is devalued, women will be socially restricted and relegated to “pink-collar” jobs (Agger 1998).

Feminist theory extends well beyond these ideas, but for the purposes of this study will be used as it addresses issues of equality and power relations in the workplace and at home and issues of the dynamics between the genders and constructions of femininity and masculinity. The study’s research questions can thus be interpreted to ask if today’s magazines, compared to those from 50 years ago, are advocating a post-feminist worldview, with men’s and women’s work valued equally, or one in which sexual division of labor is still present.

CONCEPT EXPLANATION

Gender

The Merriam-Webster dictionary (2004) definition of gender directs a reader to a definition of sex: “Either of the two major forms that occur in many living things and are

designated male or female according to their role in reproduction; or, the qualities by which these sexes are differentiated” (p. 660). The two parts of this definition indicate both a biological aspect of gender and a socially constructed aspect of gender, likely because ways of differentiating between the sexes are not always objective and universal. For the purposes of this study, gender is seen from a biological perspective as the anatomical difference and distinction between men and women.

However, Newbold, Boyd-Barrett, and Van den Bulck (2002) write that gender “can be defined as the cultural” — not merely biological — “differentiation of male from female.” Also, although ‘sex’ refers to physiological differences between men and women, “‘gender’ refers to the cultural meaningfulness attributed to these natural differences” (Newbold, Boyd-Barrett, and Van den Bulck, 2002, p.421). This culturally mediated definition is essential to the larger perspective of this study, which is obtained from the responsibilities and aspects of identity assigned to individuals on the basis of their gender. Calhoun (2002) names gender, along with race, sexuality, and class, as “schemes of classification” that can be used to “uphold social hierarchies that granted privilege to those on top,” (p.8). Newbold, Boyd-Barrett, and Van den Bulck (2002) corroborate this power perspective: “social definitions of ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’ are culturally constructed and have to do with ideology and power rather than being ‘natural.’” Also, the definitions of gender, masculine, and feminine are “based on cultural expectations of behavior” (p.421). These explanations of the term clearly inform this research and relate to the Marxist and feminist theoretical perspectives on how gender roles and divisions of labor shape societal structures, reality construction, and individual behavior, as well as how they have the potential to evolve over time.

Gender as a concept involved in identity construction is inextricably tied to race, class, sexuality, age, and other variables. For the purposes of this study, however, and due to constraints on time and resources, gender will be examined as its own entity.

Labor

Merriam-Webster (2004) offers definitions of labor as both a noun and a verb. As a noun, labor can be “1. Physical or mental effort; human activity that provides the goods or services in an economy. ... 3. Task. 4. Those who do manual labor or work for wages;” as a verb, labor, most simply, means “work” (p.404). Berger and Luckmann (1966) write that, in the broadest use of the term, labor can be considered any human activity, and labor informs the “social relations brought about by this activity” (p.6). This is certainly true, given that nearly every human activity requires some effort, and most of the tasks in which people engage take place in or draw meaning from their social context.

In the case of this research, labor falls into paid and unpaid, as well as professional and domestic, categories. Seen from the broader perspective, both raising children and homemaking are labor because they are human activities that require effort, take place in a social context, and do work that yields an output. The role of breadwinner, on the other hand, depends on a more narrow perspective of labor. Labor done by a breadwinner fits only those human activities that produce monetary rewards for the individual performing the work.

Role

Unlike gender, roles are entirely constructed by culture and cannot be universally identified. Priest (1996) defines a social role as a “prescribed way for someone in a given

social relationship to act ... norms for individuals acting in these roles are different from the general norms of the society” (p.252). This means that the role in which someone is acting provides guidelines for his or her behavior. In this study, the coded roles of each gender are identified as a way of assessing the guidelines presented to men and women. Priest (1996) further explains that “Different cultures not only have different beliefs about the world around them, they also have very different expectations for how people should behave in a particular social role, such as mother or brother,” (p.19), and because roles are socially constructed, their definitions can also change with the passing of time. This study seeks to investigate if role definitions, as shown in magazines, have evolved over the past half-century. Furthermore, Priest’s statement that “what are seen as appropriate roles for men and women also vary around the globe” (Priest, 1996, p.19) indicates that some roles tend to be assigned along gender lines. All these aspects of the definition are important factors in shaping this study’s goal of assessing if and how magazines are reflecting the changing roles of men and women in American society. Merriam-Webster (2004) defines role as “1. An assigned or assumed character; a part played. 2. Function” (p.630). Both definitions relate to this research, for the male and female roles to be identified in this study are both “parts” to be played, such as homemaker or breadwinner, and “functions” to be fulfilled, such as raising children and earning money.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Mothers in the workforce

Vavrus (2007) and Graff (2007) analyzed the media's coverage of the supposed "opt-out" trend, in which mothers choose to leave work in order to stay home with their children. Graff (2007) examined the past 50 years of coverage of women in the workforce, and Vavrus (2007) began with the rise of the opt-out story in 2003. Both found that media coverage of working moms and their options skewed the issue around a narrow segment of the population, communicated a false idea of choice, and perpetuated traditional ideas of mothering and family care.

Graff (2007) and Vavrus (2007) both contended that the idea of choice is not reality. For most women and families, two incomes are necessary to make ends meet. The stories on the opt-out myth focused on white, educated, and well-paid women, who are more likely to be married when they have children, thus providing a second income (Graff 2007). Not to mention, the idea of choice was entirely framed around gender; most fathers are never pressed with choosing between home and work, thus perpetuating patriarchal power (Vavrus 2007). The coverage also completely ignored women without husbands and the possibility that those who opted-out would end up divorced, as about half of married women do. Thus, media "erased most American families' real experiences and the resulting social policy needs from view" (Graff, 2007, p.52) and disregarded important issues associated with childcare and family labor (Vavrus 2007).

Graff (2007) also argues that the opt-out myth is just that: a myth. Over the past 50 years, the number of women earning wages has increased, maternity leave has gotten

shorter, and women have moved childbearing to later in life, after they establish their careers. Plus, census data at the time of Graff's (2007) study did not indicate a rise in women leaving the workforce. In fact, even those women who did stay home were likely to earn money by working from home or working late at night — much as women have always done through tasks such as laundry, sewing, taking in boarders and managing their husbands' businesses.

Further, even those women who ended up at home did not really choose to do so, (Graff 2007, Vavrus 2007). Women felt forced to choose and pressured to go home, but their decisions were presented in the media as personal rather than public or institutional. Such discourses, Vavrus (2007) argued, condone workplace discrimination against mothers by attributing work differences between genders to mothers' choices rather than institutional structures. In reality, women were pushed out of the workforce by discrimination or the sheer exhaustion of trying to juggle home and work life, and those who left face significant and sustained cuts in pay and responsibility upon their return. Disregard for these issues constituted a failure to bring public policy attention to the issues of childcare and women's work.

Finally, coverage ignored the negative side of the life of a stay-at-home mom and, in general, failed to explore that life at all (Vavrus 2007). For the subjects of stories, what happened after they left their jobs was rarely discussed, thereby ignoring what they opted into when they opted out: “copious amounts of uncompensated labor, financial and psychological powerlessness, and, perhaps, a very difficult or impossible re-entry into the labor force” (Vavrus, 2007, p.54). What's more, the emotional and psychological effects on stay-at-home mothers were not explored. Graff (2007) found that women were happier

occupying several roles, and the well-being of homemakers suffered when compared to working women, who were less likely to feel lonely or depressed.

Correll (2005) specifically explored the penalties mothers face in the workforce, through a laboratory experiment in which undergraduate students evaluated job applicants who were identical except for parental status. Although previous research had been unable to distinguish between productivity and discrimination explanations for the per-child wage cut seen with working mothers, Correll expected to identify status-based discrimination as the key factor. Her results strongly supported her hypothesis, as mothers were rated as “less competent, less committed, less suitable for hire, promotion or management training, and deserving of lower salaries” (Correll, 2005, p.1299). At the same time, mothers were expected to uphold higher standards for performance and punctuality. Men, on the other hand, were not penalized for being parents, and fathers were actually seen as more committed to work and deserving of higher starting salaries (Correll 2005).

These findings suggest that there are significant institutionalized biases against women with children, regardless of other attributes, habits, and accomplishments, and these biases deter their success in the workforce. Vavrus (2007) and Graff (2007) suggest that the media has done a poor job of portraying the evolution of gendered labor roles — something this study also hopes to assess — and that these failures have negatively affected women. Such conclusions emphasize the importance of perceptions of gendered labor roles and the power socially constructed realities have in daily life. All three of these studies stress the importance of accurate portrayals in the media of the lives and

options of mothers, as well as the power of the institutions that influence those lives and options.

Gender roles in other media

Overall, studies on media depictions of gender seem to have focused heavily on advertisements and television, rather than print forms of media. Much of this research is also 10 or more years old, suggesting a need to revisit the topic of gender with 21st century material and a focus on magazines.

One recent examination of gender in print media looked at differences in portrayals of political candidates in the 2008 presidential election (Payne 2009). This thesis involved a quantitative content analysis of *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune* treatment of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. Although other factors, such as race, experience, and age, likely influenced journalists' depictions, gender was no doubt also a highly influential factor. Payne's (2009) research was grounded in social constructions of gender, constructed female and male traits and behaviors, and how gender roles affect perceptions of selves and others, making his theoretical background highly relevant to this investigation. He coded personal-versus-issue and positive-versus-negative coverage and looked for frames that signaled gender stereotypes and issues constructed as feminine (such as health care and education) or masculine (such as crime and defense). In general, stereotypes used gender constructions to cast candidates in purposefully positive or negative lights. Through positive framing and coverage of masculine issues, Obama was associated with more qualities of leadership and presented with more focus on issues and more positive messages; Clinton, on the other hand, was shown with more feminine

issues, more negative coverage and more personal coverage, casting her in less of a leadership position. This research suggests that socially constructed perceptions of gender roles go so far as to influence journalists' coverage of politicians and society's selection of political leaders.

Turning to television advertisements, Ferrante, Haynes, and Kingsley (1988) examined portrayals of women from 1972 to 1988. They conducted a content analysis of 1988 commercials by coding for product, gender of voice-over, gender of character, setting, age, and occupation. These methods replicated the work of Dominick and Rauch (1972), which were used as a basis for comparison. This study found that women were portrayed in a wider range of occupations and more frequently outside the home than in 1972, but the remaining factors — most saliently products of association — did not significantly change. Women continued to be overrepresented in hygiene and cosmetics ads and underrepresented in car commercials. What's more, the progress identified was minimal and still allowed for a great disparity. Women were shown as wives or mothers 53.5 percent of the time, which represented a 3-point decrease but was still more than half; representation of men as fathers increased from 14 to 23.4 percent, which was barely half the proportion of women shown as parents. Women decreased in the home from 38 to 30.2 percent and increased in business from 7 to 13.1, but both changes still showed great emphasis on females in the home and resistance to females at work, especially in light of the proportion of women working outside the home at the time of the study. These findings suggest that media depictions might be changing, but such changes are small and slow — and still have a long way to go.

A few years later, Craig (1992) looked specifically at advertisements for over-the-counter drugs and how they constructed female roles. The study coded commercials for product, gender and role of characters, and presence of children and hypothesized that the ads would take advantage of stereotypical images of women as home caregivers in order to sell products, which proved true. Although men appeared as the primary visual character (PVC) in more than half of the advertisements collected and in 55.3 percent of non-medicine commercials, they made up only 35.8 percent of PVCs in medicine commercials (Craig, 1992, p.307). This made women the PVC in more than 60 percent of medicine ads; the highest representation was 76.5, in ads for pain relievers, suggesting the roles of mothers as nurturers and caretakers (Craig, 1992, p.307). Craig began the study with the understanding that women are frequently portrayed as experts on home medical care and caring for children, and this was supported by the complete absence of medicine ads showing men and children without wives. Women were the experts and administrators, and when men were shown with their children they needed their wives' help (Craig 1992). All of these findings suggest that over-the-counter medicine commercials reinforce the idea that home health care is a gender-specific responsibility and that women are in charge of caring for the home and family.

More recent studies have turned their attention to men's roles. Kaufman (1999) examined portrayals of men as fathers and husbands in television commercials and found that involvement in family life was contingent on activities that were stereotypically male. She examined commercials during football, daytime, and primetime programming and coded central figures by gender, presence or absence of partner and children, children's age and gender, product, setting, and activities. In the entire sample, only about

30 percent of men and women were shown with a spouse; however, 62 percent of men with children also had a spouse, while only 42 percent of women with children had a partner present (Kaufman, 1999, p.445). Regarding setting, women were most likely to appear at home and men outside the home. Household activities such as cooking, cleaning, washing dishes, and shopping weren't often portrayed but were nearly always allotted to women. Sometimes depictions went so far as to show husbands and children being waited on, as in the case of the wife wondering what to make for dinner (Kaufman 1999). When men did participate in household labor, they performed masculine tasks, such as taking out the trash, which involved physical labor or being outdoors. When shown performing other home duties, men were often portrayed as incompetent. Implying a similar incompetence, men without spouses were never shown caring for girls and rarely shown caring for infants; however, they were more likely than women to be shown with boys, suggesting a fatherly bias toward male children. In concurrence with Craig's (1992) findings, women were more likely to be shown in caring roles, such as administering medicine, but, surprisingly, men were more likely than women to be shown teaching, reading to, eating with, and playing with children. This seems to suggest some progress in the involvement of fathers in childcare, but Kaufman (1999) contended that the content might actually communicate that "fathers can be involved without spending much time doing daily childcare tasks" (Kaufman, 1999, p.455). Thus, this sample suggests that fathers might be more involved — but only in masculine ways — and they still rely on their wives for daily childcare and household work.

Similar ideas on masculinity regarding childcare and housework arose in Courtney's (2009) examination of cleaning advice books for men. She identified this

niche within the genre of self-help and how-to books for the home. Such texts have historically been written for and read by women, but a growing number of books, magazines, blogs, etc., are targeting men in the home (Courtney 2009). Through her qualitative content analysis, Courtney determined that these texts craft an ethos and voice to establish and affirm the masculinity of readers. This ethos is “heterosexual, family-oriented, sports-minded, upwardly mobile, and mildly bawdy,” and relies on familiar, masculine frames, such as sports, warfare, and power tools, to transition the male role and alleviate male anxieties about loss of masculinity through domestic work (Courtney, 2009, p.67). The books, Courtney finds, convey a need to “convince men to take responsibility for household tasks,” and they do this through ethos rather than explicit argument, going so far as to imply that doing housework will lead to more sex (Courtney, 2009, p.80). Because of this ethos, Courtney concluded that while these books ostensibly promoted the sharing of domestic tasks, they portrayed ambivalence about changing notions of masculinity that come with domestic labor changes and, even in the 21st century, did not truly endorse men taking on traditionally female responsibilities.

In another examination of texts directed at domestic actors, Wall and Arnold (2007) analyzed the yearlong series “Family Matters” in the Canadian newspaper *Globe and Mail* to see if the media culture surrounding family issues had changed. They wanted to test the common perception that the culture of fatherhood had shifted since the 1980s to promote more involvement and nurturing, and they examined how stories in the series were framed. Overall, they found that mothers were still portrayed as primary parents, with fathers playing a secondary, part-time role. Most stories on parenting were directed to mothers, fathers were mentioned in text and appeared in images less frequently than

mothers, and fathers were often absent from interviews, “leaving readers to assume that the father is at work,” all of which served to perpetuate stereotypes (Wall and Arnold, 2007, p.519). The institutional pressures associated with opt-out coverage also arose through portrayals of mothers as having more important relationships with children, more feelings of guilt and responsibility, and more struggles with work-family balance. In fact, fathers were often praised for being supportive or enabling their wives to have successful careers, but women never received such credit for their husbands’ careers. Engendered patriarchy and masculinity appeared again with fathers participating in mostly play and outdoor activities with their children. Also, a clash between fathering and masculinity was identified, in particular for new fathers and stay-at-home dads, suggesting a socially constructed idea of men and nurturing as incompatible. Overall, when compared to statistical data, these authors concluded that fathers were not lagging behind societal changes. Fathers were meeting the cultural expectations communicated through the newspaper series, but the expectations had not actually changed as much as had been supposed.

Gender roles in magazines

Overall, scholarly research on magazines in the past four decades seems to have focused on high-selling, younger, sexier titles such as *Cosmopolitan* and *Maxim*. Related to gender, the emphasis has been on health and body messages, and how body image is constructed. What’s more, as with other media, significant attention has been paid to advertising, with much less attention paid to editorial content.

Much similar research was conducted on male and female role portrayals in magazines advertisements from 1958 to 1998, and researchers built on one another's work. Courtney and Lockeretz (1971) coded advertisements from 1958 and 1968 in a study that was later replicated by Sterrett, Kellerman, and Kellerman (1984) with the addition of advertisements from the 1970s. Kellerman and Kellerman (1998) then combined all these studies, which looked at role portrayals in eight magazines' advertisements (*Life*, *Newsweek*, *The New Yorker*, *Time*, *U.S. New & World Report*, *Reader's Digest*, *Saturday Review*, and *Look*). Previous studies had found a slight increase in the presence of women as workers and little overall change in stereotypes (Courtney and Lockeretz 1971, Sterrett, et al, 1984). In the 1998 follow-up, ads from 1970, 1982, and 1996 were coded for number, sex, occupation, and activities of adults, and findings again showed limited improvement in roles of women. Men were still much more likely to be in a working role, with 55 percent and only 11 percent for women — the same ratio as in 1970 and actually slightly higher than the 4-to-1 ratio in 1982 (Kellerman and Kellerman, 1996, p.3). There was some increase in variety and presence of occupational roles for women, but largely in entertainment and sports capacities. In the category of non-worker roles, men declined in family roles while women declined from 1970 to 1982 but by 1996 nearly returned to the 1970 level, possibly as a reflection of changing feminist tides in society (Kellerman and Kellerman, 1996, p.4). Finally, recreational roles decreased for both sexes, while decorative — also known as sex object — roles increased. This shows some equalizing of objectification, but whether that is a positive for either gender is debatable.

In a similar endeavor, Wolheter and Lammers (1980) replicated the methods of Courtney and Lockeretz (1971), as well as Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976) — this time to look specifically at males in advertisements. They looked at the same eight titles from 1958, 1968, and 1978 and coded men for the same working and non-working roles. This study also found that men increased in non-working roles, but the increase came only from decorative roles, such as models, celebrities, and sex objects, while father and recreational presences decreased. Again, this indicates that sex objects in advertisements are no longer exclusively female. Wolheter and Lammers (1980) also found a decrease in male working roles to less than half of the 1978 sample, a decrease that came largely from drops in blue-collar, high-level business, and military portrayals (Wolheter and Lammers, 1980, p.760). The authors proposed that declines in blue-collar and military appearances possibly reflected changing circumstances in the economy and class structure, as well as changing viewpoints regarding politics and military policy, such as regarding the Vietnam War (Wolheter and Lammers 1980).

Some magazine content research exists, with most if regarding specific niches of content. This research tended to employ social construction of reality as the basis for examining messages communicated to magazine readers. For her thesis, Kristina Tauchen (2009) examined the portrayals of adults and consumerism in children's magazines. She looked at two commercial and two non-commercial magazines and analyzed the editorial stories and accompanying visuals. Tauchen coded references to money, shopping, school, multitasking, media consumption, work, exercise, and leisure, looking at differences between the two categories of magazines. She found that consumer magazines contained significantly more commercial messages, thereby promoting consumer culture (Tauchen

2009). Tauchen (2009) used methods similar to those to be employed in this study and also grounded her research in social construction of reality, on the basis that portrayals of adult consumerism provide instructions for children and that consumerism is not innate but, rather, taught and shaped by media.

Another thesis examined parenting magazines' portrayals of mothers and fathers on the theoretical grounds that behaviors modeled in media shape gender attitudes beginning in childhood and extending into adulthood (Martinson 2008). Again, social construction of reality informed her ideas that magazine ideologies shape readers' perceptions of gender roles. Martinson looked specifically at photographs and coded characters for nine variables, including behavior, activities, interactions, and attributes, to see if they were linked to gender. Interestingly, she found that depictions of children tended to be egalitarian, but parenting roles were gender-specific. Fathers were underrepresented, making up only 20 percent of all characters in photographs — indicating a severe parental gender bias even in parenting magazines (Martinson, 2008, p.34). Images also showed conventional portrayals of parenting, with mothers in affectionate and nurturing roles and fathers in instructive and playing roles. Much like in the TV ads, fathers were restricted to teachers and playmates and were rarely seen as nurturers, cooks, or caregivers. Possibly reflecting the masculine ambivalence brought up in other research, fathers were shown as nurturing much less frequently in public than in the privacy of the home (Martinson 2008).

Looking specifically at *Seventeen* magazine, Massoni (2004) examined how work messages were constructed for teenaged girls. She examined four 1992 issues to see what the magazines taught about occupations, work realities, and work possibilities, based

again on the idea that young women's perceptions of their occupational landscape would be at least partially constructed by media. She coded for the gender and occupation of each character and found that role portrayals communicated four primary messages. First, entertainment careers were viable and prestigious for women, with occupations such as actor, singer, dancer, and photographer dominating the occupational world. Second, modeling was shown as the pinnacle of women's work and also as an attainable career. Third, and more relevant to this study, men were the norm as workers; even in a magazine for females, men made up 70 percent of job references and 76 percent of desirable white-collar/high-skill positions (Massoni, 2004, p.57). Women were dominant only in white-collar/low-skill jobs such as secretary and assistant. Finally, men were shown as holding the power in the working world; of 40 coded occupations, 24 were male-dominated and 11 were male-only (Massoni, 2004, p.58). Plus, males dominated within-field gender distributions, such as doctor-nurse, executive-secretary, and photographer-model (Massoni, 2004, p.60). Massoni (2004) emphasized the importance of these findings because teen magazines are an experience unique to girls — there is no comparable media for teenaged boys. Also, she contended, “teen and women's magazines market themselves as vehicles of women's worlds and mirrors of women's lives, yet ... they tend to reflect patriarchal expressions of gender norms” (Massoni, 2004, p.50). Thus, even though girls might aspire to professional occupations, they see them — even in their own magazines — as men's jobs and see their own place in the working world as temporary or secondary, which can have powerfully negative affects on their role constructions.

Gender in women's magazines

Narrowing the focus further, it appears that much of the research on women's magazines was conducted in the 1970s and 1980s about those decades and the century prior, and there seems to be a lack of attention to women's magazines post-1990. Also, while the Seven Sisters titles *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Redbook*, and *Good Housekeeping* are frequently selected for studies, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Family Circle*, and *Women's Day* are nearly absent from research on women's magazines. This study poses to fill these gaps by conducting a comprehensive and comparative content analysis of this niche post-2010 and pre-1970.

As with most areas of media, magazine advertising has been studied for identification of messages targeting consumers. Zinkhan and Hayes (1989) sought to address the theory that U.S. social character had changed throughout the 1900s from inner-directedness to other-directedness (Riesman, Denney, and Glazer 1950). Inner-directedness was defined as behavior shaped by internalized goals, while other-directedness is behavior oriented around a sensitivity to the expectations of others (Zinkhan and Hayes 1989). The authors analyzed advertisements from *Ladies' Home Journal*, *McCall's*, and *Good Housekeeping* from 1890 to 1984 and found that the incidence of other-directed appeals increased significantly and consistently throughout the entire 95-year period. This bias toward other-directedness is most clearly represented in traditional feminine roles of nurturing, caretaking, and mothering (Zinkhan and Hayes 1989). These findings suggest that, despite women becoming more independent and increasing in the workforce over the past century, advertising messages continue to —

and even increased efforts to — construct a responsibility for females to orient their decisions and behaviors to the needs of others, particularly husbands and children.

In another, more modern look at gender role directives, Barnett (2006) examined health messages in women's magazines and how they framed femininity. She contended that while women's magazines provide valuable information on health — going back to warnings about patent medicines in *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Good Housekeeping* — they also teach readers about gendered roles and values (Barnett 2006). Barnett (2006) qualitatively analyzed 10 women's magazines (*Cosmopolitan*, *Curve*, *Essence*, *Girls' Life*, *Jane*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Latina*, *Marie Claire*, *Ms.*, and *Redbook*) from 2001 and examined health topics, contexts, content, and underlying messages. Overall, the magazines depicted women as caretakers responsible for their own health as well as the health of their families; in fact, nearly 12 percent of all articles concerned health topics, suggesting just how important these issues should be to females (Barnett, 2006, p.5). Health was framed as a topic of women's work, thereby reinforcing and idealizing stereotypes of female characters. It was depicted as a woman's job to keep everyone healthy and to protect her family against illness, and it was her fault if anyone lost the battle against disease. Barnett (2006) argued that such frames reflected larger societal values and perceptions, such as women as the primary caretakers for children and the assumption in Western norms that women are natural caregivers. This norm went so far as to portray caregiving as a rewarding and fulfilling fact of life, but, as discussed in the opt-out myth coverage, absent from the articles were the negative side of caretaking and stories from women about their lives as caregivers.

Again looking beyond coding to evaluate messages and frames, del-Teso-Craviotto (2006) conducted a lexical study of *Good Housekeeping*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Working Woman*, and *Ms.*, which were selected for a mix of traditional and progressive titles. She expected *Good Housekeeping* to be representative of traditional roles of wives and mothers, *Cosmopolitan* to be progressive about independence but traditional about relationships, *Working Woman* to have a progressive focus but recognize traditional gendered constraints on women, and *Ms.* to be the most progressive and feminist in ideology. The author quantitatively and qualitatively examined connections between vocabulary used in each magazine and dominant gender ideology expressed, arguing that the ideology of a magazine is sustained by word choices that maintain or challenge ideologies of readers (del-Teso-Craviotto 2006). Using the WordSmith Tools program, she determined the most frequently used words across contexts and topics, as well as the ideologically revealing ways they were used in each publication. For instance, “work” was commonly found in all titles, but in different and typically non-occupational meanings, such as “work out,” “work on it,” or “it doesn’t work” (del-Teso-Craviotto, 2006, p.2011). Work was clearly tied to ideology, as *Ms.* included the most occupational uses. Context surrounding the word “woman” was also revealing: most common pairings included “black,” “American,” and “battered” in *Ms.*; “independent,” “high-profile,” and “working” in *Working Woman*; “young,” “healthy,” and “intelligent” in *Cosmopolitan*; and “some,” “a,” and “one” in *Good Housekeeping* (del-Teso-Craviotto, 2006, p.2013). Other common topics exactly reflected the ideologies del-Teso-Craviotto expected: family, health, and shopping in *Good Housekeeping*; sex, beauty, and diet in *Cosmopolitan*; company, business, and market in *Working Woman*; and mother, world (in

reference to world issues and causes), and right (as in women's, political, and civil rights) in *Ms.* (del-Teso-Craviotto, 2006, p.2015-2016). However, despite these differences in ideology, the author found that the magazines all indicated an overall feminine slant through their shared vocabularies, which "create a specific idea of femininity that emphasizes women's investment in emotions, caring, childrearing, and motherhood" (del-Teso-Craviotto, 2006, p.2010). Words common throughout the sample but rare in men's magazines included "need," "feel," "child," and "mother." Overall, del-Teso-Craviotto concluded that the presence of words was not nearly as important as how they were used and that, despite great differences in mission and focus, women's magazines across the spectrum communicated many of the same societal gender biases.

Angling their attention to the presence of roles rather than the implications of messages, Joliffe and Catlett (1995) wanted to investigate factors affecting the gendered content of magazines. These authors examined the influence gender of editorial staff had on content, based on Marxist ideas that those in power control the system and dominate audiences through shaping of ideology (Joliffe and Catlett 1995). They specifically wanted to test the assumption that male leadership leads to content demeaning to women and sought to see if sex-role stereotyping was less prevalent when women were in power. The study looked at the Seven Sisters from 1965 to 1985 (although the authors were unable to find issues of *Family Circle* and *Women's Day* for some years) and coded for roles of women, tone of articles, and strength and weakness of female characters, as well as genders of top editors and article editors (Joliffe and Catlett 1995). Overall, the number of women in executive editor and editorial department head positions increased dramatically over the 20-year period, but the vast majority of women in the magazines

were still in passive-dependency roles (rather than active-mastery) and shown with negative traits such as submissive and family servant (rather than positive traits such as active and independent). The articles with an adult-to-adult tone increased somewhat, but most were still adult-to-child in tone. More specifically, a trend toward positive traits occurred from 1965 to 1975 but not from 1975 to 1985 (Joliffe and Catlett 1995). Thus, the authors concluded that the presence of women editors did not reduce stereotypical portrayals; rather, they attributed the changes to social upheaval and the rise of the women's movement. Joliffe and Catlett (1995) concluded that magazines reflected societal change and the culture of the majority, not individual editors, so women's rise to authority might coincide with change but is unlikely to cause it.

Previous research from Newkirk (1977) disagreed with these results through findings on the limited effect of the women's movement on role portrayals. Newkirk (1977) asked if the women's movement had led magazines to portray women in roles beyond wife, mother, and homemaker. She looked at issues of *Redbook* and *Mademoiselle* from 1966 to 1974 and *Ms.* from its founding in 1972 to 1974, dividing the sample into two periods, and coded for article topics, types of women's roles, and treatment of roles (Newkirk 1977). The author expected the most non-domestic roles in *Ms.*, which arose during and due to the women's movement, and more traditional biases in *Mademoiselle* and *Redbook*, which already had established ideologies. In the first sample, *Mademoiselle* showed more non-domestic roles than *Redbook*, but neither increased non-domestic role portrayals over the study or had as many as *Ms.* in the second period. *Redbook* was the most traditional, with by far the fewest professional/managerial roles and only 17 percent of women shown outside the home,

while *Ms.* had no mother, wife, or homemaker roles, a category *Redbook* led (Newkirk, 1977, p.782). However, many of these changes were not statistically significant and showed merely numeric trends toward non-domestic portrayals. Thus, Newkirk concluded that “the women’s movement and social change pose no substantial threat to the traditional formats of women’s magazines;” rather, these changes take a long time and require broader societal transformations (Newkirk, 1977, p.782). Taken together, Newkirk’s and Joliffe and Catlett’s work perhaps suggests that neither editors nor social movements have great or immediate impact on content; however, gradual change in societal and institutional biases can lead to gradual change in gender portrayals.

In a final analysis of women’s roles, Demarest and Garner (1992) examined portrayals in *Ladies’ Home Journal* and *Good Housekeeping* from 1954 to 1982. Their thematic content analysis identified nine content categories (marriage/family, homemaker, personal health, beauty/fashion, political/social awareness, career, personal growth/development, travel, and general interest/other) and broke content into three 10-year periods around the women’s movement (before, growth, and entrenchment) (Demarest and Garner, 1992, p.360 and 361). Throughout the sample, traditional sex roles dominated the pages. Most articles in each period focused on marriage, family, and homemaker, while travel, career, and personal growth/development were rarely seen. However, marriage, family, and homemaker themes dropped from 70 to 58 percent over the period, and political/social awareness increased from 2 to 10.5 percent in *Good Housekeeping* and 3 to 18 percent in *Ladies’ Home Journal* (Demarest and Garner, 1992, p.361 and 362). Both of these changes, while positive, were small and allowed a significant disconnect from reality, with more than half of women still in the home and

less than one-fourth politically aware. On the advertising side, the types of products shown in the pages did not change over the sample, and cooking, cleaning, and personal hygiene continued to dominate. The authors suggested that this might indicate a desire on the part of advertisers to continue appealing to the same stereotypes, which could translate to pressure on editors to sustain ideologies in order to keep ad revenue (Demarest and Garner 1992). Overall, the authors identified a gradual decrease in domestic themes and increase in political and career themes, and they suggested that magazines likely do not cause social change but slowly and steadily reflect it.

Taken together, the previous research in this field suggests the power of magazines to both reflect society and construct norms for readers. These changes might come slowly, but they also seem to occur in print faster than on television (Demarest and Garner 1992), and given enough time, will be seen. The Seven Sisters are noted to be more traditional than many of their counterparts in the women's market (del-Teso-Craviotto and Newkirk), suggesting ample room for change in the recent past. All of these findings lead perfectly to this study, which looks for changes in women's magazines' gender role construction as a reflection of societal change. This study contributes to the existing literature by examining if and how the content of this group of historically traditional magazines has reflected changes in social values and economic realities in American society over the past half-century. What's more, this study's 50-year timeframe of comparison (broader than timeframes used in previous literature) avoids the smaller effects of the pre- and post-feminist rise and fall to, instead, offer a more comprehensive picture of the impacts of the movement as a whole and allow sufficient time for magazines to acknowledge and reflect societal changes.

STATISTICAL BACKGROUND

This study was, in part, motivated by recent changes in gendered labor and education breakdowns. According to the U.S. Department of Labor (2010), from 1970 to 2009 the proportion of working women with college degrees roughly tripled, and from 1979 to 2009 women's earnings as a proportion of men's increased from 62 percent to 80 percent (p.1). Despite the economic recession, women have continued to increase their share of the workforce. In 2009, 59.2 percent of women were in the labor force (p.8); from 1975 to 2000, the labor force participation of working mothers increased from 47.4 to 72.9 percent (p.15). In 2009, women made up 51 percent of management and professional occupations (p.28).

Although the gender gap in salary still exists, women's wages have risen to 80 percent of men's median weekly earnings (U.S. Department of Labor, 2010, p.52). What's more, according to James Chung of the Reach Advisors, who analyzed data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, in 147 out of 150 of the largest U.S. cities, salaries of young women are now higher than their male counterparts. The difference was as great as 20 percent in Atlanta and Memphis. Although this refers only to unmarried, childless women under 30, it represents a significant change from data of past decades and suggests a possibility of continued change as this group of women continues to pursue their careers (Luscombe 2010).

Women have also made strides in education: From 1970 to 2009, the percentage of working women with college degrees rose from 11 to 34, and the percentage of female high school dropouts fell from 34 to 7 (p.23). Among 2009 high school graduates, 74

percent of women and 66 percent of men were enrolled in college the following fall, and the women were also more likely to complete their degrees (p.85). This extended to secondary degrees: In 2008, 378,532 master's degrees were conferred to women, while 246,491 were conferred to men (U.S. Department of Education 2009).

These statistics are also being reflected in changes for families and marriages. In 2008, 72 percent of women and 86 percent of men worked full-time, representing a 5-percent increase for women and 2-percent decrease for men since 1970 (p.74). The proportion of single-income, husband-only households was down to 18 percent in 2008, a drop from 36 percent in 1967. (p.76). In 2008, working wives contributed 36 percent of household income, up 9 percentage points from 1970 (p.77), and the proportion of wives earning more than their husbands increased from 18 percent in 1987 to 27 percent in 2008 (p.78). As salaries for women continue to increase, it seems that paid labor takes priority over domestic labor, as only women over the age of 65 spent more time on household activities than on working and work-related activities in 2009 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2011).

These labor changes are due in part to the economic recession of the past few years. Of the 6.9 million workers laid off between January 2007 and December 2010, roughly 80 percent were men (U.S. Department of Labor, 2010, p. 83). By August 2009, the unemployment rate for men was up to 11 percent and only 8.3 percent for women; in late December 2007 unemployment rates were roughly equal — 5.1 percent for men and 4.9 percent for women (Sahin, et al, 2010, p.2). The latest 2.7-percent difference is the largest unemployment gender gap in the postwar era (p.1) and is likely because industries dominated by men, such as manufacturing and construction, suffered most, while

industries filled mostly by women, such as education and health, actually saw increases in employment (p.6).

All of these economic and labor changes for women have implications on the Marxist theory background of this study. Shifts in the workforce and income levels seem to suggest that more of the means of production and control of labor are being granted to women. According to Marxist philosophy, such greater power in the working world should translate into greater autonomy and even power in the social and domestic worlds.

Scholars have also looked at the effect of these changes in workforce participation on domestic labor responsibilities. In an examination of more than 200 scholarly articles and books published between 1989 and 1999, Coltrane (2000) examined changes in division of household labor and factors that influenced those changes. His information was collected primarily through time diaries and survey questions. From 1989 to 1999, he found a slight decrease in women's and a slight increase in men's contributions to housework, but women still did at least twice as much as their husbands. The greatest predictors of sharing of domestic responsibilities were employment, earnings, gender ideology, and age. As women worked more hours or made more money, the amount of time they spent on housework decreased. As the difference between spouses' incomes decreased, division of labor became more equal; however, dependent or unemployed husbands did less housework the more they depended on their wives for income. Ideology and age were also influential in shaping dynamics between couples. Disparities in housework tended to correlate with age of couples, while men in their 20s often reported enjoying cooking and cleaning. Major life transitions, such as marriage and the birth of children, were expected to increase women's household labor more than men's,

but the more discrete role identities women already had (through being older or employed), the more equal the division of labor after the transition. These findings suggest that as more women take on paid roles, domestic labor division should improve, and that younger couples are moving in the direction of equality but still have significant disparity to overcome. Another important implication from this research is the additional finding that more equal division of labor led to women perceiving more fairness, experiencing less depression, and enjoying higher material satisfaction — even further evidence of the importance of progressive gender role constructions.

Menendez and Hidalgo (1997) looked more specifically at the effects of life changes on division of labor. They studied a group of married couples in their transition to parenthood, by interviewing subjects shortly before a child was born and when the child was 10-12 months old. In concurrence with Coltrane (2000), the subjects indicated a more traditional division of chores post-child and a decrease in women's satisfaction with that division of labor. The fathers' involvement in childrearing at the second interview was lower than what wives had expected at the first, indicating that the wives' expectations were more optimistic than the outcomes. These findings suggest that childless couples might succeed in being egalitarian with their labor division, but once children enter the picture, women — either out of feelings of obligation or lack of contribution from men — take on more of the home and child labor responsibilities (Menendez and Hidalgo 1997).

Greenstein (1996) probed deeper into the effects of husbands' and wives' gender ideologies, arguing that the key element in shaping division of labor is the interaction of the two gender ideologies, rather than the ideologies themselves. Gender ideology was

defined as “how a person identifies himself or herself with regard to marital and family roles traditionally linked to gender” (Greenstein, 1996, p.586). Using data from the National Survey of Families and Households, he surveyed couples to see how many hours they spent on housework and to determine their individual ideologies, and he found that the wife’s ideology was the greatest determinant. A husband’s ideology mattered only when he had an egalitarian wife; husbands with traditional wives did about equal amounts of work — even those at opposite ends of the ideology spectrum. Essentially, husbands did relatively little domestic work unless both spouses were egalitarian in their beliefs about roles. Greenstein (1996) concluded that division of labor is not just about economics, but with an egalitarian, working wife, husbands were less likely to see themselves as exempt from domestic work. Greenstein added that, regardless of either spouse’s ideology, only one-fourth of the men surveyed contributed as much as 40 percent of all hours on domestic labor, but his findings also showed that as more couples become committed to equal partnerships, divisions are likely to become more equal.

Based on this research, the gendered division of domestic responsibilities seems to be gradually changing, but whether magazines today are reflecting this or continuing to portray the 1960s-esque feminine ideal remains to be seen. In light of societal changes in gender roles at home and in the workplace, this study intended to determine if women’s magazines are continuing to sustain an outdated status quo or are working to adapt their portrayals to their readers’ evolving and ideal realities. This research aimed to examine the content of current women’s magazines and their past incarnations in order to compare the realities and gendered identities each set constructs for female readers and their male

counterparts, with hopes of assessing how those constructions have changed over the past 50 years.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The inquiry to be investigated was: How are gender roles and responsibilities for males and females constructed and assigned in the editorial content of women's magazines today, and how have such constructions evolved over the past half-century? Similar questions included what functions men and women fill in magazine articles, what role directives women's magazines provide for readers of each gender, in what contexts gender constructions are presented, how women's labor is valued, and how well gendered constructions mirror reality. This study examined the construction and evolution of gendered roles over the past 50 years by looking at subjects' functions, relationship status, parental status, occupations, and responsibilities in magazine articles. Essentially, the research questions sought to determine, by comparing past and present issues, if women's magazines are maintaining the status quo between men and women or encouraging a more progressive gendered allotment of roles and division of labor.

For the purposes of this study, the status quo is taken to mean the 1950s-esque family model of a breadwinning father and homemaking mother. The father spends his days outside the home earning money, while the mother spends hers at home cooking, cleaning, and caring for her children. If the mother does work, she is relegated to service industry, education, and secretarial jobs. This status quo presents the male as producer and female as consumer. The female is also constructed as responsible for maintaining

the health and relationships of herself and others. Within this status quo, men and women are expected to date for the purpose of entering a heterosexual marriage. Divorce, remarriage, single parenting, and homosexual relationships are not supported or commonly presented. In magazine articles, most expert sources are male.

As the alternative, a progressive construction of gender roles is taken to be a more egalitarian and liberal presentation of men and women. In the progressive view, both men and women are commonly shown in the workplace and as expert sources in articles. All occupations are open to both genders, and incomes and educations are equal. In the home, both genders participate in an equal division of domestic labor, childcare, and health responsibilities. Both genders are consumers and producers. This progressive view also includes nontraditional relationships and circumstances, including divorce, remarriage, homosexual relationships, and single parenting. Although this construction is several steps ahead of reality, this would be the ideal that progressive readers and writers would aspire to and a construction that progressive magazines could present as a goal for their audiences. An even more progressive perspective would emerge if magazines advocated change for women or actively challenged the status quo, but it was expected that progress would emerge more realistically in depictions of a changing status quo. Progressive magazines in this study were defined as those that portrayed men and women in more equal contexts, without the requirement that such magazines actively push for women's issues and needs.

RQ1: Have the contexts in which male and female subjects are constructed changed in the past 50 years?

- Which article types and topics are most common in 1961 and 2011?
- What functions do male and female subjects most commonly serve in articles in 1961 and 2011?
- Are female expert sources and second-person subjects more or less prevalent in 2011 than in 1961?

RQ2: Have gendered role constructions changed over the past 50 years?

- Are traditional relationships less dominant in 2011 than in 1961?
- Are parental roles presented more equally between the genders?
- What are the most common occupations for men and women in 2011 and in 1961?
- What proportion of female subjects is shown in paid occupations in 1961 and 2011?
- What primary responsibilities are most commonly assigned to each gender in 2011 and in 1961?
- For each year, what proportion of primary breadwinning, parenting, and spousal responsibilities fall to each gender?

RQ3: Are themes of disparities between the genders more present in articles today than they were 50 years ago?

- Is work-life balance represented more in 2011 than in 1961? For both genders?
- Are breadwinning and domestic labor presented more as shared responsibilities in 2011 than in 1961?
- Are disparities in income or education addressed in 2011 or 1961?

SIGNIFICANCE

This topic is important to practitioners in light of recent research on American marriages and families. By analyzing the content of magazines that target an audience largely consisting of wives and mothers, the study assessed how well such magazines have represented changing family dynamics. If magazines continue to portray homemakers and caretakers as primarily female and breadwinners as primarily male, this is a problem the industry needs to address. The theories applied in this research suggest

that women's magazine portrayals of men and women in editorial content have an influence on how readers view themselves and the men in their lives, in terms of gendered responsibilities and division of labor. Unrealistic or inaccurate portrayals by magazines can skew the way women see themselves, their social roles, their value in society, their responsibilities in the home, and their sense of independence and agency (Berger and Luckmann 1966). For younger women, acceptance of the messages of women's magazines could have the power to influence their expectations and goals for themselves. Adoption and habitualization of these portrayals could have the power to deter social progress and gains in gender equality, if the messages from the media construct discouraging role frames in the minds of women's magazine readers (Baran and Davis 1995). For example, if messages suggest that it is far too difficult to be a good mother while also pursuing a successful career, some younger women might be deterred from striving to do both. This study sought to investigate if this is the case or if magazines are painting a picture of men and women as sharing responsibilities in the home and supporting each other on their roads to career success.

Also crucial to magazine practitioners is that issues of women's roles are restricted largely to the middle — even upper-middle — class, which is the same audience the Seven Sisters magazines target. If this group of women do not see themselves represented in these magazines, they are unlikely to be interested in reading or purchasing the publications. A third-party assessment of how in-touch these practitioners are with their readers could prove highly valuable in assessing their content direction and if they need to refocus and reorient their perspectives and missions. Also,

those titles that are more progressive and equal in their treatment of the genders and their roles deserve to be recognized and appreciated for this progress.

This study is also significant to scholars in areas of sociology and gender studies. Scholars are already part of the discussion through research on changing family dynamics and gendered labor responsibilities. Scholars would be interested in this evaluation of how media portray realities about a large and influential segment of the population and if these portrayals have evolved with social change. This study also has the power to lend insight into the changing attitudes and values of media, and women's magazines in particular, which could be an important directive for future research, especially as the attitudes and values of modern women continue to evolve.

PROJECT SCOPE

The theories and research questions used in this study did not address media effects. The goal of this investigation was an analysis of the content of magazines and the realities, roles, and responsibilities constructed for each gender. The theories did not offer explanations for how such constructions are processed by readers or if they are internalized and habitualized. Cultivation theory, which focuses exclusively on effects of media consumption, provides a possible social implication for the findings from this investigation and offers areas for further research, but cultivation theory did not inform this research.

Analyzing magazines from a social constructionism perspective also does not address how or why the constructions come to exist. Individuals and institutions are

necessary for directing the creation of role constructions, but those influences are not the focus of this study. The theories and research questions involved were intended to investigate what constructions are present as reality-shaping forces but did not address the forces and factors that created those constructions. To investigate those aspects of role construction would require interviews with and research on media practitioners. This study examined women's magazine content, but it did not inquire as to the reasons behind or the implications of the content.

The application of these theories is also limited by the small segment of the population to which they apply: middle to upper-middle class white women. The changes looked for in magazine constructions of women will likely not apply to women of color or women of lower socioeconomic status. However, this narrow segment of the population makes up the bulk of the readership of the women's magazines and, thus, the audience most affected by the constructions presented.

Finally, this research did not address the realities constructed by other forms of media; it focused exclusively on magazines as a social barometer. It is possible that television, Internet, newspapers, radio, etc., construct women's realities and responsibilities much the same way magazines do, but other media are not as ideal for assessing such portrayals. The research questions in this study were best answered by the unique attributes of the magazine medium. As outlined by Johnson and Prijatel (2007), magazines provide depth and timelessness of coverage, specialization of content and audience, outlets for opinion, interpretation and advocacy, permanence as a long-lived entity, and consistency in content and frequency. These unique attributes of the medium make it the best choice for analysis as a measure of cultural standards and gender roles.

All these questions, though not addressed, offer directions for further research through analysis of magazine consumers, magazine practitioners, and content of other media.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS AND DESIGN

METHOD

In the words of Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (2005), “Quantitative content analysis is the systematic and replicable examination of symbols of communication, which have been assigned numeric values according to valid measurement rules,” and content analysis is done to “describe communication, draw inferences about its meaning or infer from the communication to its context” (p.25). Further, content analysis is used to “describe what are typical patterns or characteristics or to identify important relationships among the content qualities examined” (Riffe, Lacy, and Fico, 2005, p.3). Krippendorff (1980) added that the purpose of content analysis is to “provide knowledge, new insights, a representation of ‘facts,’ and a practical guide to action” (p.21).

Content analysis has been used in sociology, political science, economics, psychology, nutrition, and other fields because of the pervasiveness of communication in human life and because communication content “represents a rich data source, whether one focuses on describing images and portrayals because of their assumed effects or examines content as an unobtrusive indicator of antecedent conditions or behaviors” (Riffe, Lacy, and Fico, 2005, p.17). Thus, content analysis can be used to address content seen as a precursor to media effects or content seen as a result of societal and institutional circumstances.

Wimmer and Dominick (2006) asserted that a successful content analysis must be systematic, objective, and quantitative. For a content analysis to be systematic, it must

provide clearly identifiable terms and concepts, specific rules for inquiry, and testable hypotheses. This means all content is “selected according to explicit and consistently applied rules” and, when analyzed, “treated in exactly the same manner” (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006, p.151) To be objective means that other researchers could conduct the same analysis, perceive the data the same way, and obtain the same results. In Wimmer and Dominick’s (2006) words, “personal idiosyncrasies and biases should not enter into the findings” (p.152). Finally, the quantitative aspect of content analysis necessitates that numbers be assigned to attributes, based on rules of assignment, so as to produce data that can be statistically analyzed. The final outcome of content analysis should be “an accurate representation of a body of messages” that “allows researchers to summarize results and to report them succinctly” (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006, p.153).

Content analysis is a means of “inquiry into symbolic meaning of messages,” which makes it an apt approach for an investigation involving the theory of social construction of reality (Krippendorff, 1980, p.22). As Krippendorff (1980) explained, in a content analysis, “the task is to make inferences from data to certain aspects of their context and to justify these inferences in terms of the knowledge about the stable factors in the system of interest” (p.27). This means that analyzing the content of magazines can be a lens through which to see the larger societal and gender constructs the medium portrays and a reflection of the conditions in which those constructs are created. Plus, as Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (2005) wrote, “To draw from content inferences about the consequences of consumption of content or about production of content, the researcher must be guided by theory” (p.35). This means that the theoretical groundwork provided by social construction theory, Marxist theory and feminist theory all inform how the

content to be analyzed in this research study might have an effect on its audience and provide relevance to the insights and conclusion to be drawn from the study's findings.

Regarding the applicability of content analysis to these research questions, Wimmer and Dominick (2006) offered two relevant uses of content analysis: assessing the image of particular groups in society and comparing media content to the "real world." The first, which examines the media image of minority or notable groups "to assess changes in media policy toward these groups, to make inferences about the media's responsiveness to demands for better coverage, or to document social trends," directly relates to this study's inquiry into how men, women, and their roles and responsibilities are presented in magazines, as well as how those portrayals have changed over the past 50 years (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006, p.153). The second use of content analysis, which involves "reality checks in which the portrayal of a certain group, phenomenon, trait, or characteristic is assessed against a standard take from real life," relates to this study's inquiry into whether magazine portrayals in the 2011 sample are stuck in the past (as represented by the 1961 sample) or reflective of the modern evolution of gender roles (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006, p.152).

Finally, according to Priest (1996), "Quantitative content analysis is an important tool for studying what's actually in the media" (p.98). Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (2005) added that "one cannot study mass communication without studying content. Absent knowledge of the relevant content, all questions about the processes generating that content or the effects that content produces are meaningless" (p.39). Given that social constructionism addresses the content of media messages, and given that this study examines the constructions in magazine's editorial content, both this theory and topic are best

addressed by looking directly at media content as a representation of larger societal realities and constructions.

UNIVERSE AND POPULATION

A few criteria were considered when identifying the magazines to be studied in this content analysis. Because of the varying missions among women's magazines today and the varying aspects of a woman's life, the population is intended to represent a range of content topics. With the goal of analyzing content that reaches the largest female audience possible, the population was chosen to highlight magazines with high levels of circulation. Finally, for consistency in publication schedule and availability among the sample, monthly magazines were chosen.

The Seven Sisters magazines — *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Family Circle*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Redbook*, *Woman's Day*, and the folded *McCall's* — were founded over a period of more than 50 years, beginning with *Ladies' Home Journal* in 1883 (Endres and Lueck, 1995, p.180) and ending with *Woman's Day* in 1937 (Endres and Lueck, 1995, p.444). However, all came into their glory in the post-World War II era that saw boosts in readership and advertising revenues for national magazines; by 1955 ad revenue for magazines had nearly doubled from 1946 numbers and was seven times the revenue of Depression-era years (Zuckerman, 1998, p.203). Faced with heavy competition from television, women's magazines expanded their merchandising efforts, and the movement to suburban living increased subscription readers. Newsstand sales for the top 54 American magazines decreased from 47 percent of circulation in 1946 to 35

percent in 1954 (Zuckerman, 1998, p. 204). These changes in the industry led to a concentration of ad revenues among the Seven Sisters, which were the clear leaders in the women's category by the 1960s. This group of "matriarchs *Ladies' Home Journal*, *McCall's*, and *Good Housekeeping*; relative newcomers *Family Circle* and *Woman's Day*; a revamped *Redbook*; and the shelter journal *Better Homes & Gardens*," despite their diverse histories, founding dates, and editorial focuses — and until the close of *McCall's* in 2001 — have maintained their place among the highest-selling women's magazines since the 1950s (Zuckerman, 1998, p.205). Thus, given their lasting success and significance over such a long period of time, these magazines are ideal for a comparative analysis of magazine content from today and 50 years ago.

These titles, which traditionally target women with homes, husbands, and children, provide a historical justification for their selection and meet all this study's criteria: diverse content, high circulation and consistent publication. According to the *Advertising Age* online Datacenter's rankings of magazine circulations for the first half of 2010, all six remaining Sisters were among the 25 top-selling American magazines. *Better Homes and Gardens* ranked second with 7,644,011; *Good Housekeeping* ranked fifth with 4,427,964; *Woman's Day* ranked seventh with 3,919,488; *Family Circle* ranked eighth with 3,849,673; *Ladies' Home Journal* ranked ninth with 3,831,072; and *Redbook* ranked 25th with 2,226,356. All six titles had fluctuations of no more than 5 percent from their 2009 circulations.

The Seven Sisters magazines provide a diverse population due to their differing backgrounds and varying content on home, family, work, health, and other topics. At the same time, these titles are unified in addressing a mature audience that faces a variety of

daily responsibilities. The median reader age is 49 years for *Better Homes and Gardens*, 52 for *Good Housekeeping*, 51 for *Woman's Day*, 48 for *Family Circle*, 56 for *Ladies' Home Journal*, and 44 for *Redbook* (Online media kits). To be relevant to this study, it was critical that the magazines and their readers regularly deal with, to some degree, issues of homemaking, raising children, and earning money — all types of work involved in gender role constructions. The older audience of these women's magazines makes the titles ideal for these research questions because popular magazines that appeal to a younger female audience might not cover topics of responsibility topics of raising children, maintaining a home and earning an income. The readers of the magazines studied, however, likely face these topics regularly, and so editors likely provide substantial content on these subjects, making the publications good sources of material to address this study's research questions. These titles have also continued to be viewed as magazines for wives and homemakers and as stalwarts of traditional gender ideologies, providing ample room for changes in a progressive direction and making this study applicable for evaluating if the constructions presented have evolved.

The exception to this was *Better Homes and Gardens*. Because of its emphasis on shelter content, such as food, style, decorating, gardening, and fashion, and high proportion of service over story writing, the title lacked the lifestyle content and narrative presentation necessary for construction of gendered subjects. As will be explained further in the research design, the gender roles to be studied needed to be constructed through stories about human subjects. The almost exclusively service and shelter content of *Better Homes and Gardens* severely limited what the magazine would've contributed to the sample.

Availability further restricted the population used in this study. *McCall's* became *Rosie* in 2001 and folded by the end of the next year, making it impossible to study a 2011 sample and, thus, eliminating it from the population. Issues of *Women's Day* and *Family Circle* were available from 2011 but 1961 issues were unavailable for this research. Thus, the population was narrowed to six issues each of *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Redbook* from both 1961 and 2011, for a total of 36 magazines.

RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (2005), "a census provides the most valid discussion of a population because it includes all units" (p.98) and in some cases, samples do not address all necessary content, resulting in limited or inaccurate results. They also noted that, for consumer magazines, "the best approach to studying a year's content is to examine all issues," possibly because magazine issues cycle through the calendar, with differing themes and content each month (Riffe, Lacy, and Fico, 2006, p.116). For these reasons, and to not require inordinate time demands, this study analyzed a census of content in January through June 2011 and January through June 1961 issues of the three magazines. From both 1961 and 2011, half a year of three magazines was included in order to study a variety of magazines, editors, and ideologies. The range obtained through this sampling decision allowed the data to include a broad range of topics and views.

Regarding dates of publication, the 2011 sample consisted of the most recent content magazine available, allowing the best representation of today and maximum time

for economic and labor changes to begin to be reflected in content. The 1961 sample offered an exact 50-year period of study to provide adequate time for historical understanding and reflection of social change. Also, the sample was produced before the second wave of the feminist movement occurred (late 1960s through 1970s) and began to impact society, magazines, and gender roles.

Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (2005) explained that “sampling units are discrete elements of content that will be selected for study from the entire content of interest” (p.70) and “are analyzed statistically to test hypotheses or answer research questions” (p.72). In this study, the unit of analysis was a magazine article. A preliminary survey of a 2010 issue of each of the five publications and a 1960 issue of two of the publications was used to determine which articles to code. To focus the sample on those articles with constructed gender roles, topical and length requirements were instituted. A narrative story type and sufficient length of content were necessary for the author to develop multiple characters, use multiple sources, and offer clear role portrayals to the reader. For this reason, a blurb of a few hundred words would not suffice. Plus, longer stories indicate an editor’s perception of importance, given their significant space allotment. Therefore, only features and department stories that filled at least a page were coded.

It was also necessary to study articles with a range of options for role constructions. Some articles, due to their topics, have automatically dictated roles, given that they target a female reader. For instance, decorating, craft, and food stories automatically speak to a woman as the homemaker and family cook — because the reader is female. This is not a reflection of gender construction that will vary among articles; it is a reflection of regular content that has been a staple of women’s magazines

for decades. Inclusion of such stories and roles in the coding would have skewed the gender construction in the study, so they were left out. Topics with more options for gendered responsibilities, such as health, lifestyle, and family/children, were coded instead.

The ideal stories for this study were those that presented real people and developed characters, not objects to purchase or step-by-step instructions. Stories with people offered the best representation of magazines' gender roles. Most service-oriented stories, including recipes and DIY projects, did not meet the criteria. Often, these stories were too short or presented in small sections, leaving little room for the development of characters. Product evaluation articles also did not fit the sample because they were typically short and about things, rather than people. This lack of human characters is also the norm for reviews, fashion, and beauty stories, which were left out of the sample. Letters to the editor and advice questions from readers were not coded because these stories represent views of and topics of concern of readers, not the magazines or their editors. Fiction was coded because, although it did not appear in all titles in the sample and although fictional characters are created by their author, such characters still offered developed subjects and gender constructions for readers. In addition to health, family/children, and lifestyle stories, editor's letters, profiles, interviews, and personal essays were coded because of their inclusion of developed subjects and gendered role constructions.

In beginning the analysis, coder collected basic information on each article to be coded. They identified the title and issue of the magazine, the title of the story, the page(s) on which the story appeared (excluding jump pages), and the section or

department of the magazine in which it was located. The pretesting survey of the magazines included only one title with an implied gender role, so display type was not coded quantitatively for gender role construction.

In examining each article, coders first assessed the content of the article by identifying the type and topic of the story. Possible story types included editor's letter, advice/service, fiction, interview/Q&A, investigative, first-person narrative, profile, and trend; letters to the editor, advice, poems, reviews, and instruction stories, such as recipes, crafts and DIY, were not coded. Possible story topics included editor's letter, celebrity, family/children, fashion/beauty, finances/money, food, friends/relationships, health/fitness, news, philanthropy/volunteer work, products/consumption, recreation, sex/love, time management/stress, travel, and work/office; stories about beauty, crafts, decorating, DIY projects, entertaining, fashion/style, food, home, pop culture, and reviews were not coded. For both story type and topic, an "other" option was included for stories that met the coding criteria but did not fit any of the categories. Coders were also asked to supply an explanation of why the article did not fit an existing category and to attempt to identify the type or topic the article in question represented.

Coders then analyzed the first three subjects discussed or referenced in each article, regardless of their gender, to assess how men and women were presented in the story. Authors were included as a source whenever the article was written in first-person, thereby inserting the writer into the narrative. If fewer than three sources appeared in the article, extra coding spaces were to be left blank. Because the study was designed to assess adult gender roles, subjects under the age of 18 were skipped and not coded.

Before analyzing the subject, coders were to indicate the individual's gender and transcribe his or her name (if it was provided in the article).

Subject attributes to be coded were source function, relationship status, parental status, occupational field, and primary responsibility. First, coders identified the function of the subject. Options included author, subject, expert source, real person source/example, absent/referenced subject, and second-person subject. "Other" was again included for subjects that do not fit one of those categories, and coders were asked to label the function the subject filled. Second, coders identified the subject's romantic relationship status. Options included single, heterosexual dating, homosexual dating, heterosexual marriage, homosexual marriage/civil union, divorced/separated (further divided into single, dating, and remarried), widowed, and other. In case relationship status was not indicated in the article, a "not indicated" option was included. Third, coders identified the subject's status as a parent. Options included parent, step-parent, absent parent, no children, other, and not indicated. Fourth, coders identified the subject's occupation or field of work as indicated in the article. Options included artist/designer, author/journalist, business/professional, chef, dietician/nutritionist, education, entertainment, government, homemaker, manual labor, medicine/science, military, ministry, money/finance, nonprofit, retired, self-employed/entrepreneur, secretarial, service industry, student, technology, unemployed, unspecified "work," other, and not indicated. Fifth, coders identified the primary role or responsibility the subject filled in the context of the story. Beyond occupation, this question was designed to assess what the article constructed and presented as the subject's most important "job." Options included breadwinner, cook/food provider, consumer/household shopper, entertainer,

expert, friend/relative, guardian of health, money manager, parent, spouse/partner, volunteer, other, and not indicated.

Finally, to look for the magazine's acknowledgement of modern gender ideologies and disparities, coders assessed the presence of five gendered themes in articles by indicating which themes appeared. First, coders looked for a struggle to balance career and home responsibilities (work-life balance) and, if it was present, indicated which gender(s) was shown handling this struggle. Second, coders indicated if sharing of domestic responsibilities between genders was present and, similarly, if subjects shared breadwinning responsibilities. Fourth, coders looked for acknowledgement of a disparity in income between subjects of opposite genders, and the same was done for disparities in education. Inclusion of these themes in magazine articles, even if the article constructed traditional gender roles, could indicate promotion by editors and writers of more progressive gender ideologies and acknowledgement of modern disparities between genders.

Further explanation of these procedures and criteria were provided on the coding sheet and coding protocol, which, prior to data collection, were pretested with a sample issue of each publication from 2010 and issues of two from 1960. Optional answers for each question were based on functions, relationships, occupations, and responsibilities present in the pretest sample. Pretesting was necessary because, as Wimmer and Dominick (2006) wrote, it is "the best way to discover whether a research instrument is adequately designed" (p.194). After pretesting, the coding sheet was revised and further clarified before formal data collection was conducted.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The results obtained by this study were statistically analyzed to draw conclusions on the portrayed constructions of roles for men and women and to answer the research questions previously outlined. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and proportions within categories, were analyzed to compare the constructions of men and women. Constructions from 2011 were compared to those from the 1961 issues to see whether 2011 magazines' portrayals of gender roles still reflected gender norms from 50 years ago or had progressed to construct gender roles more in line with 2011 realities. Constructions of 2011 females were compared to those of 2011 males to see if magazines were promoting a more equal and equitable view of the genders, in terms of their functions, statuses and roles. Chi-square goodness of fit tests were used to look for significant differences between samples in the frequencies and distributions of article types and topics; frequencies and distributions of subjects' functions, relationship statuses, parental statuses, occupations, and responsibilities; and frequencies of themes of work-life balance, sharing of breadwinning, sharing of domestic responsibilities, income disparity, and education disparity.

The primary coder in this study was the author. To assess the reliability of the data and coding material, a second coder — Cassandra Batchelder, a University of Missouri journalism student with experience in quantitative coding — examined a randomly selected sample of approximately 10 percent of the population in order to test intercoder reliability. The second coder examined four magazines (11.1% of the total), 49 articles (10.8%) and 97 subjects (8.8%). The coder filled in all elements of the coding

sheet for each issue, for a total of 1,017 items coded. A simple Holsti's reliability test ($2M/N1+N2$) yielded .9027 reliability between the two coders; however, this formula does not account for expected, or chance, agreement. The Scott's pi test (percent observed agreement — percent expected agreement / 1 — percent expected agreement) accounts for probability of agreement. This formula yielded an observed agreement of 88.8% and an expected agreement of 3.4%, for a reliability value of .8841.

PROJECT SCOPE

Because of the nature of content analysis, there are a few potentially important issues that this study did not address. First, content analysis does not deal with media message effects. The investigation analyzed the editorial content of magazines as a representation of the gender constructions, and the theories involved lend insight as to the likely impacts of those constructions, but content analysis itself does not study readers or the messages' actual impact on them.

Second, this research did not address the content of advertising. Advertisers create content with different objectives, techniques, and audiences than magazine publishers and editors. Advertisers' purpose is sales, and their most important judge of the material is their client's profit. Because of these differences in the context in which and the purpose for which the messages are created, this investigation focused solely on editorial messages. Given that editorial messages are created exclusively for the readers and without the goal of motivating them to purchase something, editorial content is a better representation of media constructions of gender.

Third, content analysis is “limited to the framework of the categories and the definitions used in that analysis” (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006, p. p.154). The criteria of this content analysis were defined by the particular explications of the key concepts, though another researcher might have defined them differently. This analysis was also limited to the coding elements and criteria outlined for these magazines, despite the fact that analysis of other factors and contents could also have provided insights relevant to the theories and concepts involved. Categories such as race, socioeconomic status, and age — all important aspects of the identities of women — were not coded. Although gender identity cannot be fully separated from these realities, they were not the focus of this research. Moreover, familiarity with these magazines leads the author to believe that there would be non-significant numbers of women of color or varying ages or socioeconomic statuses. As a result, this study leaves out an assessment of the evolution of such other aspects of identity. A fuller analysis of changes in magazines’ construction of men and women would require inclusion of those aspects of identity as well as analysis of how they interact to influence male and female gender roles.

Finally, content analysis does not address magazine messages’ latent or connotative meanings, which Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (2005) defined as “the individual meaning given by individuals to symbols” (p.37). Not all individuals interpret messages the same way, and words mean different things to different people, so the messages analyzed are unlikely to be viewed equivalently by all readers. As with all media content, the editorial content of women’s magazines is subject to individual interpretation, which is shaped by the unique circumstances of each reader’s life, meaning that conclusions and interpretations that will be drawn by might not be universally agreed on. However, the

foundation of this research in social construction of reality supports the idea that societal and media forces often lead to similar perspectives and ways of thinking — even among diverse individuals — and therein lies the power of media messages.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

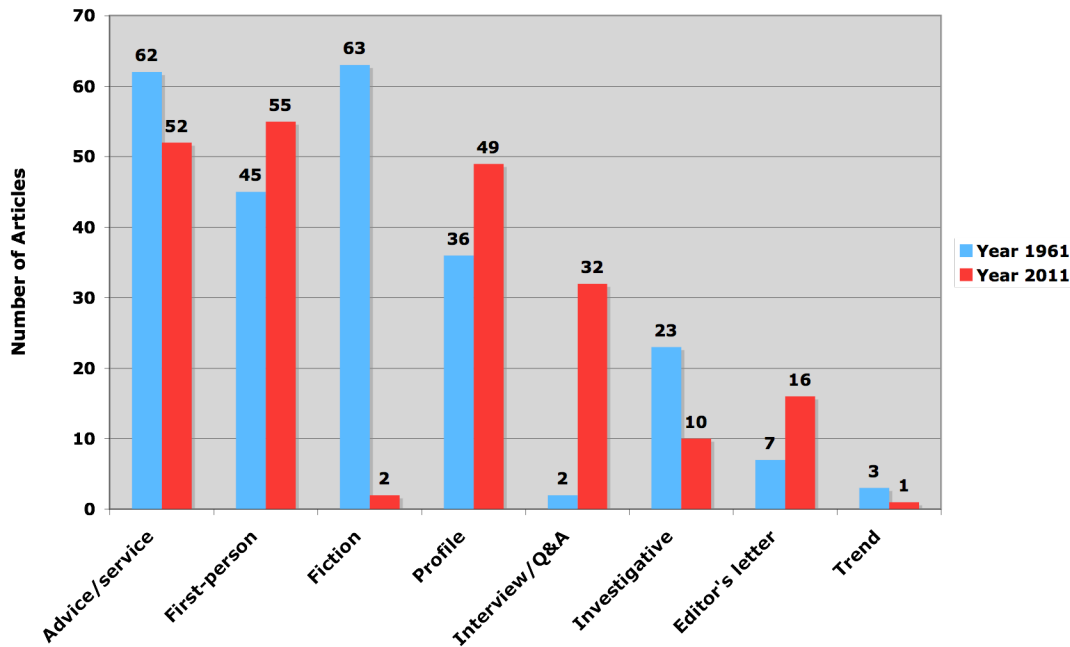
This research study analyzed 36 magazines for their construction of gender roles. The total population included 18 magazines from 1961 and 18 from 2011, with each sub-population consisting of six issues each of *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and *Redbook*. The 2011 issues yielded 211 articles and 511 subjects that met the coding criteria. This gave an average of 11.7 articles per magazine and 2.42 subjects per article to be coded. The 2011 subjects consisted of 367 females (71.8%) and 144 males (28.2%). The 1961 sample provided 243 articles and 597 subjects for coding, yielding an average of 13.5 articles per magazine and 2.46 subjects per article. The sample included 334 female subjects (55.9%) and 263 males (44.1%).

RESEARCH QUESTION 1

The first research question asked “Have the contexts in which male and female subjects are constructed changed in the past 50 years?” This question was designed to assess the circumstances in which males and females were presented to readers. This question is also reflective of the great changes in society and the magazine industry between 1961 and 2011. In 1961, the most common article types were fiction (25.9%), advice/service (25.5%), and first-person (18.5%). Most common in 2011 were first-person (26.1%), advice/service (24.6%), and profile (23.2%). Fiction made up less than 1.0% of articles in 2011. There was a significant difference between the distributions of article types in the two years ($\chi^2(7) = 594.677, p < .001$). Figure 1 shows the frequency

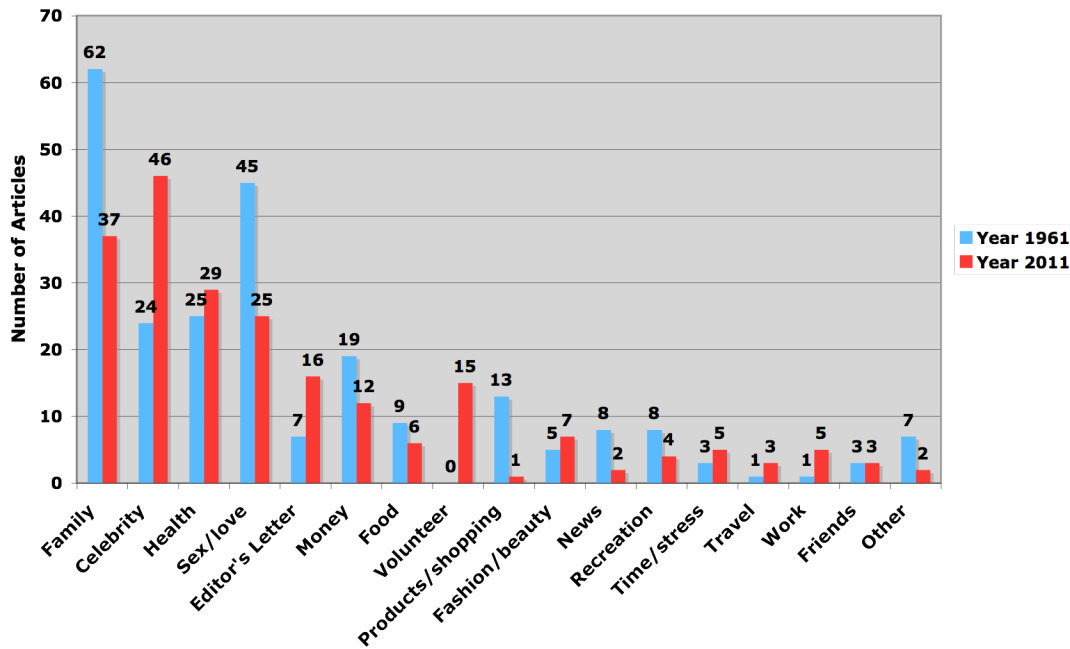
of each type of article in each year's data and highlights the great differences in the frequencies of fiction and interview/Q&A.

Figure 1: Frequency of Article Types



In 1961, the most common article topics were family/children (25.5%), sex/love (18.5%), and health/fitness (10.3%). Most common in 2011 were celebrity (21.8%), family/children (17.5%), health/fitness (13.7%), and sex/love (11.8%). There was a significant difference between the distributions of article topics in the two samples ($\chi^2(16) = 322.822, p < .001$). Figure 2 shows the frequency of each topic in each year and highlights the great differences in many of the topics, including family/children, celebrity, sex/love, volunteer/philanthropy, and products/consumption.

Figure 2: Frequency of Article Topics



Context for gender role construction was also provided by the uses of male and female subjects, in terms of their functions in articles. In 1961, females were most commonly used as subjects (37.7%), second-person “you” subjects (19.2%), and absent/references (17.7%); in 2011, females were seen most as subjects (28.1%), authors (22.6%), and real-person examples (13.6%). All functions made up at least 10.0% of the 2011 sample, while only expert source (3.0%) was less than a tenth of the 1961 sample. There was a significant difference between the distributions of subject functions in the two samples ($\chi^2(5) = 192.944, p < .001$).

Males in 1961 were seen most as subjects (36.1%), absent/references (31.2%), and experts (11.8%); in 2011, males were shown most in absent/reference (42.4%), subject (22.2%), and expert (14.6%) functions. In neither year were any men presented in a second-person “you” function. No other function made up less than 9.0% of the male

sample from either year. There was a significant difference between the distributions of subject functions in the two samples ($\chi^2(5) = 192.944, p < .01$).

Finally, there was a significant difference between the distributions of subject functions in the 2011 samples of males and females ($\chi^2(5) = 830.629, p < .001$).

Figure 3 shows the frequency of each type of function by sub-sample, to show the distribution for each gender/year group. Figure 4 shows the proportions of each function in each sub-sample, to show each function's prevalence within the year/gender categories.

Figure 3: Frequency of Functions by Year and Gender

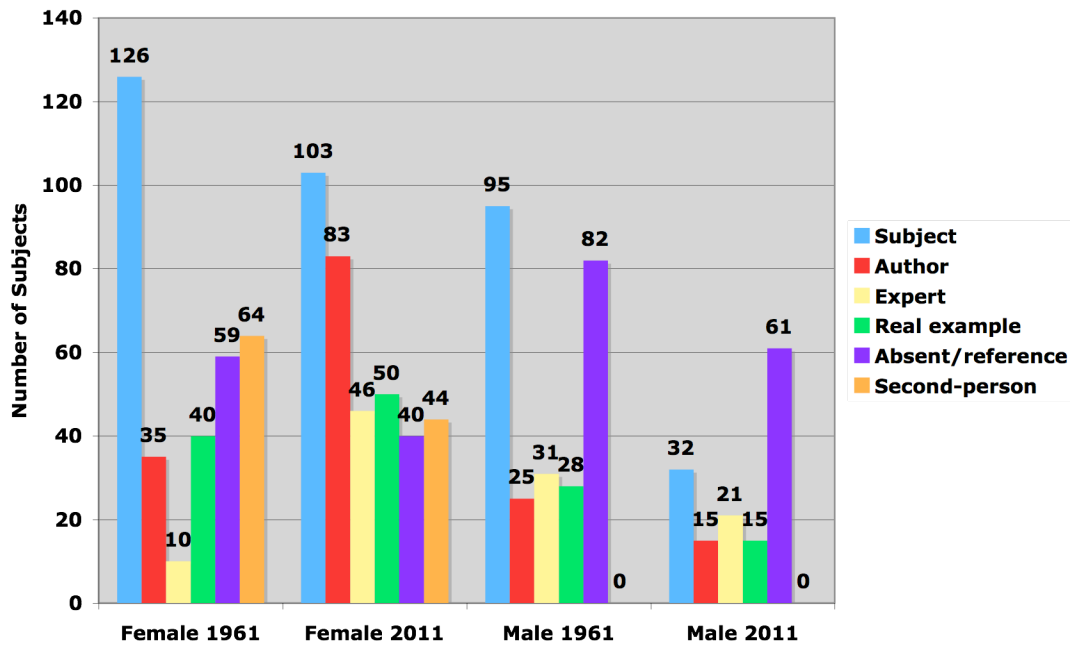
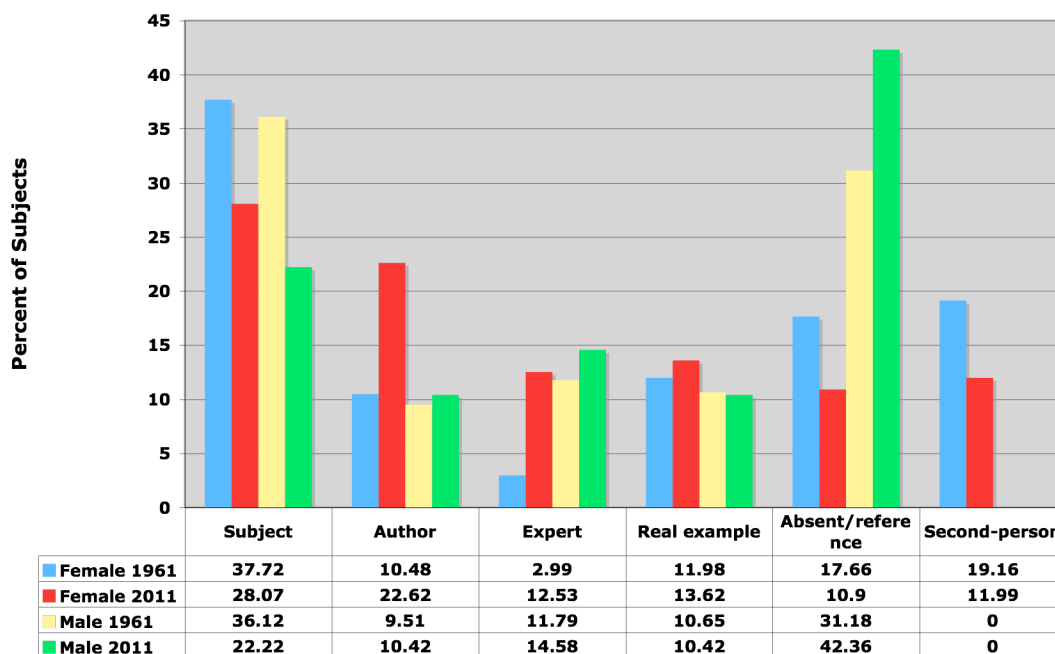


Figure 4: Proportional Representation of Functions



Focusing more on changing contexts for genders, this research question also asked about the prevalence of female expert sources and female directive (second-person) sources. It was expected that a move to a more progressive view of gender would lead to the inclusion of more females as experts and fewer females receiving instructions on simple or mundane household tasks. As listed previously, there were no male second-person subjects in the population, and the proportion of female “you” subjects decreased from 37.7% in 1961 to 12.0% in 2011, a significant difference ($\chi^2(1) = 26.727, p < .001$).

Looking at expert functions, 3.0% of females were experts in 1961 and 12.5% were experts in 2011, while 11.8% of 1961 males and 14.6% of 2011 males were shown in expert capacities. There was a significant difference between the percentages of experts in each gender in the two years ($\chi^2(1) = 12.223, p < .001$). In terms of the

proportional breakdown of expert sources in each year, women made up 24.4% (10 subjects) to the male 75.6% (31) in 1961 and 68.7% (46) to the male 31.3% (21) in 2011. Thus, there was also a significant difference between the divisions of experts between the genders in the two years ($\chi^2 (1) = 26.727, p < .001$).

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

The second research question asked if gendered role constructions have changed over the past 50 years. The coding of the first three subjects presented in each article was intended to answer this question by looking at changes in relationship statuses, parental statuses, occupations, and responsibilities presented for men and women in magazines. The first component of the research question — relationship status — provided insight on both the common portrayals for each gender and whether magazines have moved in a progressive direction. In 1961, 73.4% of female subjects were in a heterosexual marriage; the remaining subjects were single (6.3%), widowed (3.0%), heterosexual dating (2.4%), remarried (2.1%), or divorced and single (1.5%). The relationship of 11.4% of subjects was not indicated. In 2011, 46.3% of women were married and 40.6% were not indicated, with the remainder single (4.4%), divorced and single (2.7%), remarried (2.7%), dating (2.4%), or widowed (0.8%). No female subjects from either year were divorced and dating, homosexual dating, or in a homosexual marriage/civil union. There was a significant difference between the distributions of relationship statuses in the two samples ($\chi^2 (6) = 324.387, p < .001$).

In 1961, 60.5% of men were married, while 4.6% were dating, 4.2% single, 2.7% remarried, 2.3% divorced and single, 1.5% widowed, 0.4% divorced and dating, and 24.0% not indicated. Men in 2011 were 65.3% married, 6.3% divorced and single, 2.8% remarried, 2.1% dating, 1.4% divorced and dating, 0.7% single, and 21.1% not indicated. There were no widowers among the 2011 men, and, like the women, there were no homosexual dating or homosexual marriage/civil union relationships among the male sample. There was a significant difference between the distributions of relationship statuses in the two male samples ($\chi^2(6) = 17.907, p < .01$). Looking at the distributions of relationship statuses in the gender shown in magazines today showed a significant difference between the 2011 men and 2011 women ($\chi^2(6) = 171.301, p < .001$).

Figure 5 shows the frequency of each relationship status by sub-sample, to show the distribution for each group. Figure 6 shows the proportions of each status in each sub-sample, to show each status' prevalence within the year/gender categories. Both highlight the predominance of heterosexual marriage in all four groups.

Figure 5: Frequency of Relationship Status by Year and Gender

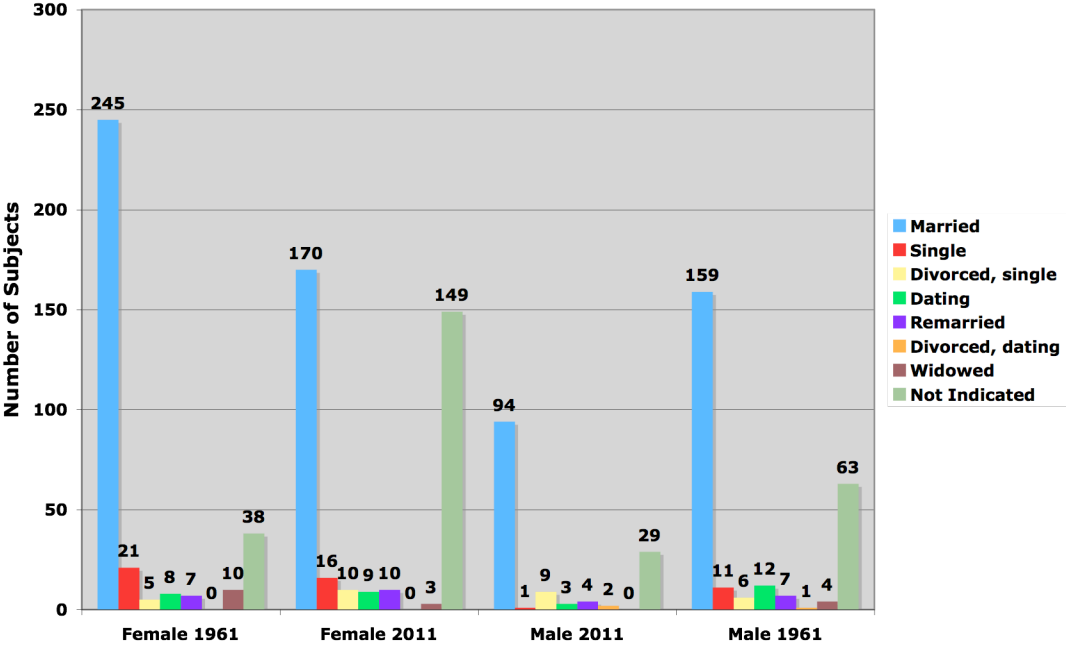
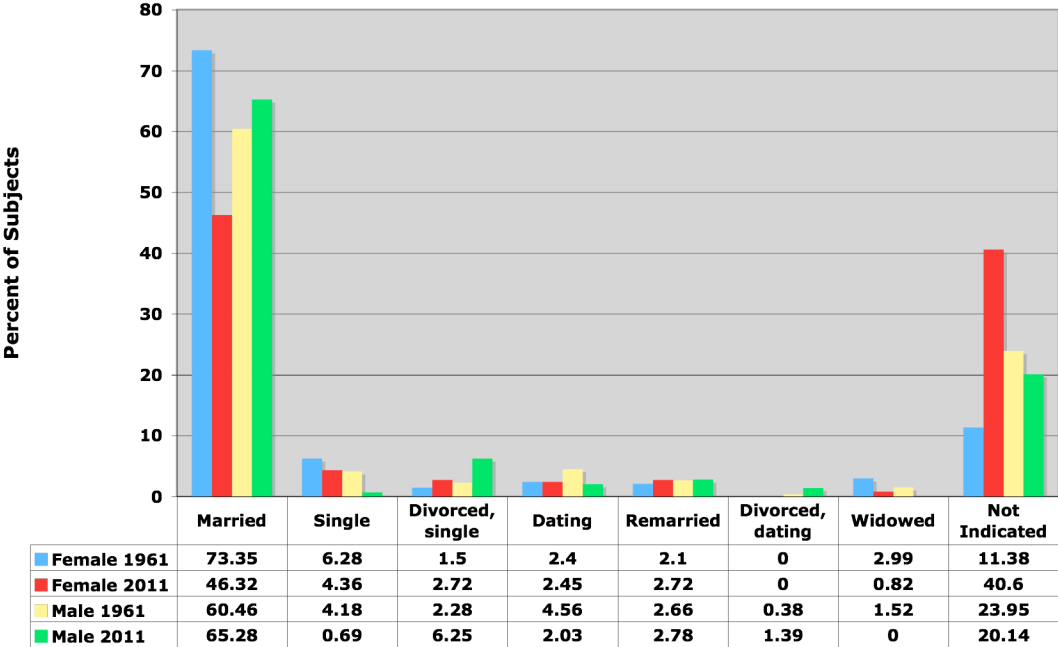


Figure 6: Proportional Representation of Relationship Status



Because heterosexual marriage was by far the most common relationship status, further analysis was conducted on this category. A significant difference was found between the proportions of married women in the two years ($\chi^2 (1) = 36.986, p < .001$), but not between the proportions of married men in each year ($\chi^2 (1) = .51, p = .475$). There were also significant differences in the proportions of married men and women in 1961 ($\chi^2 (1) = 5.56, p < .05$) and in 2011 ($\chi^2 (1) = 15.87, p < .001$). The proportion for women was higher in 1961, while the proportion for men was higher in 2011.

The second criteria — parental status — was intended to measure if the genders were presented more equally as parents in 2011 than they were in 1961. Among the female 1961 sample, 69.2% were parents, 15.9% had no kids, 0.9% were step-parents, 0.3% were absent parents, and the status of 19.4% was not indicated. The 2011 female sample had 68.4% parents, 7.6% no children, 1.4% step-parents, 0.5% absent parents, and 21.5% not indicated. There was a significant difference between the distributions of parental statuses in the two female samples ($\chi^2 (4) = 32.085, p < .001$).

Men in 1961 were 54.0% parents, 15.2% no children, 2.3% absent parents, 0.8% step-parents, and 37.4% not indicated, while 2011 men were 65.3% parents, 9.7% no children, 3.5% absent, 1.4% step-parents, and 19.4% not indicated. The ranking of statuses, in terms of representation in the sample, was the same among all four subgroups, but there was a significant difference between the distributions of relationship statuses in the two male samples ($\chi^2 (4) = 11.234, p < .05$). There was also a significant difference between the distributions of parental statuses among 2011 females and 2011 males ($\chi^2 (4) = 12.056, p < .05$).

Figure 7 shows the frequency of each parental status by sub-sample, to show the distribution for each group. Figure 8 shows the proportions of each status in each sub-sample, to show each status' prevalence within the year/gender categories. Both highlight the predominance of parents in all four groups, as well as not indicated among 2011 females and 1961 males.

Figure 7: Frequency of Parental Status by Year and Gender

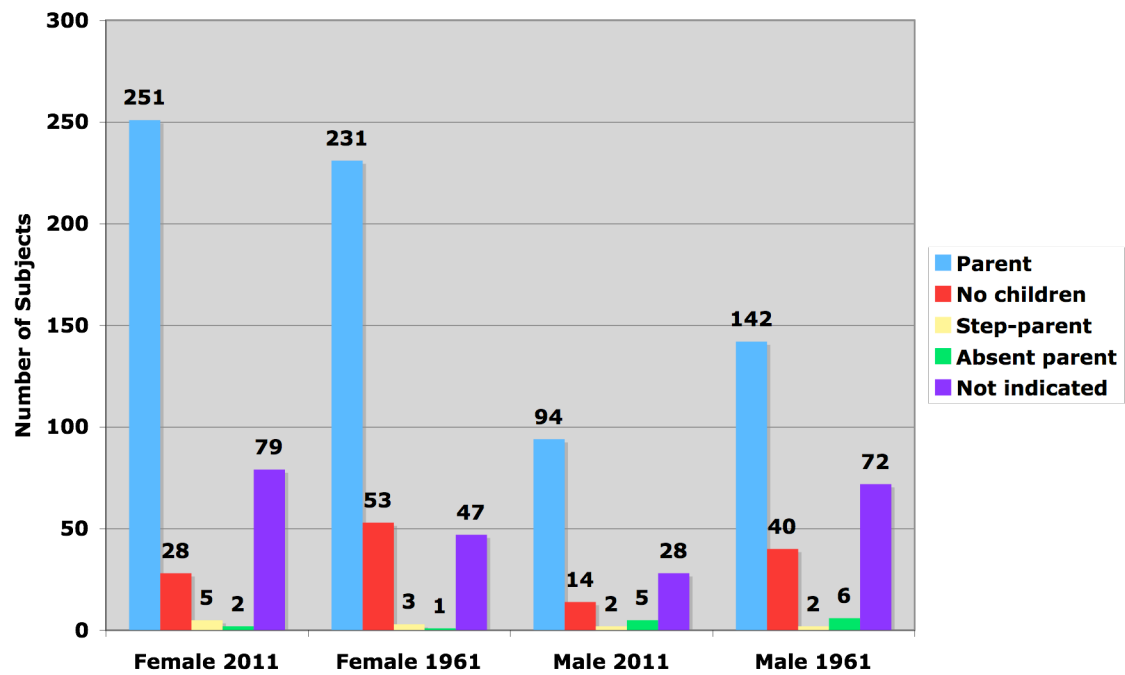
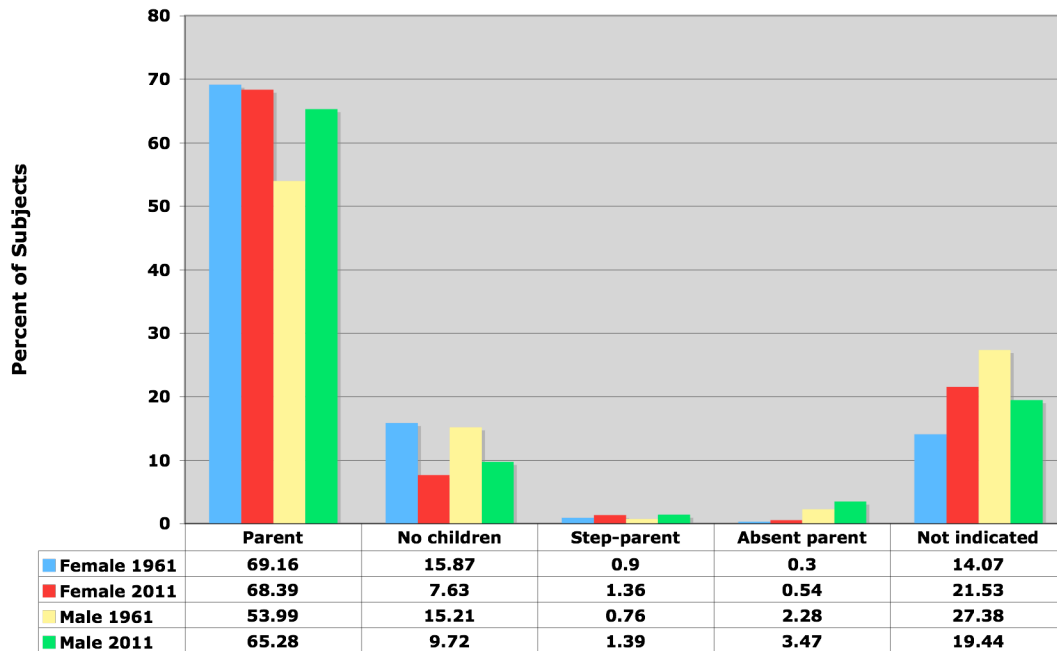


Figure 8: Proportional Representation of Parental Status



Analysis was also conducted on the proportions of subjects shown in an active parenting capacity, meaning as a parent or step-parent. The percentage was the same for 2011 females and 1961 females (70.0%), while 66.7% of 2011 males and 54.8% of 1961 males were parents of some sort. There were significant differences between the proportions of male parents in each year ($\chi^2(1) = 5.818, p < .05$) and the proportions of male and female parents in 1961 ($\chi^2(1) = 9.09, p < .01$). However, there was no significant difference in the proportions of female and male parents in 2011 ($\chi^2(1) = .407, p = .523$) and the proportion of female parents (70.0%) did not change.

Third, coding looked at occupations to assess the presented capacities of and contexts for men and women to earn money. In 1961, 53.4% of women were (unpaid) homemakers. The second largest occupation was author (5.7%), followed by entertainer (5.3%). All other categories made up less than 5.0% of the sample, excepting the 9.9%

not indicated. There were no women in manual labor, technology, or the military. In 2011, author was the dominant occupation (22.6%), followed by entertainer (12.5%) and medicine/science (10.6%). Except for the 17.7% not indicated, all other occupations — including homemaker (3.0%) — contributed less than 5.0% of the sample, and secretary was absent. There was a significant difference between the distributions of occupations in the two samples of women ($\chi^2 (25) = 843.054, p < .001$).

Among the 1961 males, 22.8% worked in business/professional jobs, 18.3% in medicine/science, and 7.2% in manual labor. Unspecified “work” filled 7.2%, and other filled 5.3%, while dietician, secretary, and technology were absent from the group. All other categories made up less than 5.0% of the sample. In 2011, men were seen most in entertainment (19.4%), medicine/science (12.5%), author/journalist (10.4%), and business/professional (7.6%) capacities. Other also made up 10.4%, while there were no dietician, ministry, secretary, service, or student roles present. There was a significant difference between the distributions of occupations in the two samples of men ($\chi^2 (25) = 239.010, p < .001$).

Further analysis compared the genders in 2011 to see how equally occupations were constructed, and a significant difference was found between male and female distributions ($\chi^2 (25) = 234.380, p < .001$). Figure 9 shows the frequency of each occupation by sub-sample, to show the distribution for each gender/year group. Figure 10 shows the proportions of each occupation in each sub-sample, to show the prevalence of each occupation per year/gender. Both highlight the dominance of author among 2011 females, homemaker among 1961 females (note: 179 homemakers were present in the sample and contributed 53.4%, but for purposes of scaling the length of the bar in both

figures was reduced), entertainment among 2011 males, and business/professional and medicine/science among 1961 males.

Figure 9: Frequency of Occupations by Year and Gender

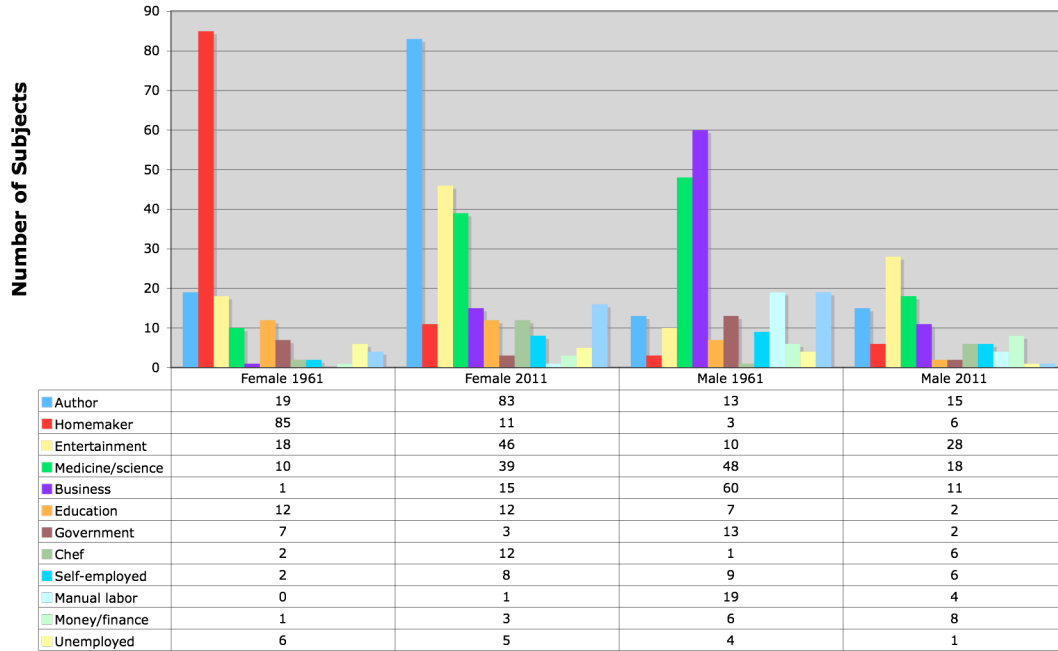
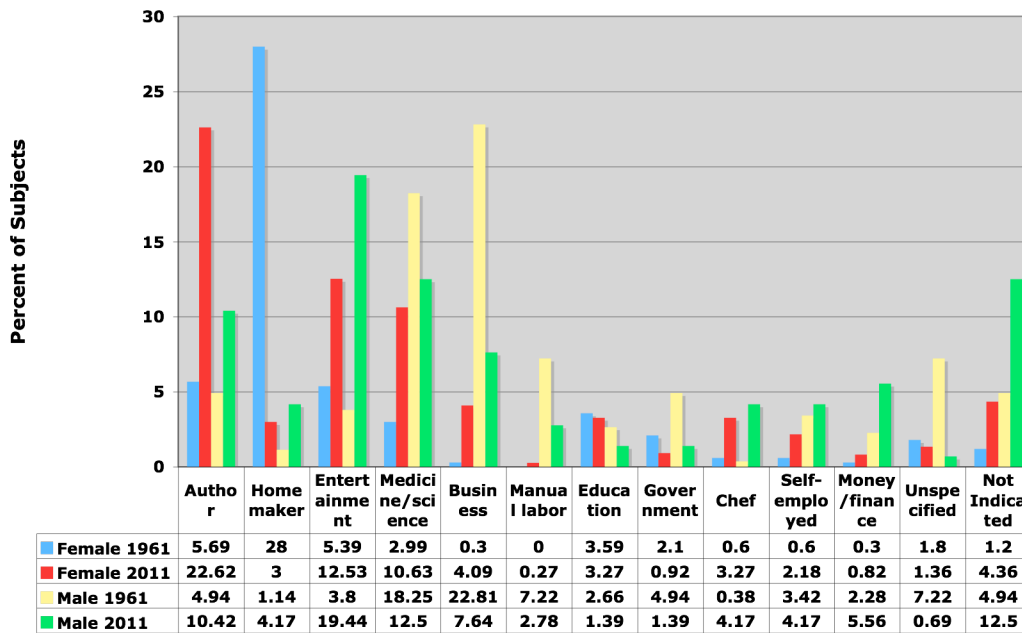


Figure 10: Proportional Representation of Occupations



Beyond the job titles held by subjects, it was relevant to look at the proportion of women who were presented in wage-earning capacities, as this would provide an indication of changes in women's perceived roles in society and the value placed on labor done by women. The proportion of women in paid occupations — excepting homemaker, unemployed, retired, students, and not indicated — was 32.3% in 1961 and 77.1% in 2011. As a comparison, the percentage of men in paid occupations was 89.4% in 1961 and 81.4% in 2011. There were significant differences between the proportions of paid women in 1961 and 2011 ($\chi^2(1) = 93.061, p < .001$) and the proportions of paid men in 1961 and 2011 ($\chi^2(1) = 6.537, p < .05$). However, there was no significant difference between the proportion of paid women and the proportion of paid men in 2011 ($\chi^2(1) = 1.040, p = .308$), though there was a significant difference between the genders in 1961 ($\chi^2(1) = 331.87, p < .001$).

Finally, gender role construction was assessed in terms of primary responsibility. This aspect was important in recognizing the multiple functions and roles that a subject could serve and identifying those considered, in the context of the article, most important. For instance, though a female subject might be shown progressively as a single businesswoman, if her primary responsibility in the article was parenting, then the subject was actually constructed traditionally in terms of her main role. Females in 1961 were shown primarily as parents (31.4%), spouses/significant others (18.3%), cooks (8.4%), and money managers (7.8%). Females in 2011 were shown primarily as parents (25.6%), expert sources (12.8%), health guardians (12.3%), spouses/significant others (10.9%), and breadwinners (9.0%). There was a significant difference between the distributions of responsibilities in the two samples ($\chi^2(12) = 275.733, p < .001$).

Males in 1961 were primarily breadwinners (39.5%), spouses/significant others (18.6%), experts (16.7%), and parents (9.1%); there were no male volunteers or consumers in 1961. Males in 2011 were primarily spouses/significant others (34.7%), parents (23.6%), experts (13.9%), and breadwinners (9.7%); there were no male consumers or health guardians. There were significant differences between the distributions of responsibility in the two male samples ($\chi^2(12) = 164.844, p < .001$) and between the distributions of responsibilities for males and females in 2011 ($\chi^2(12) = 806.944, p < .001$).

Figure 11 shows the frequency of each responsibility by sub-sample, to show the distribution for each gender/year group. Figure 12 shows the proportions of each responsibility in each sub-sample, to show the percentage each responsibility contributes. Both highlight the predominance of parent among females, breadwinner among 1961 males, and spouse among 2011 males.

Figure 11: Frequency of Responsibilities by Year and Gender

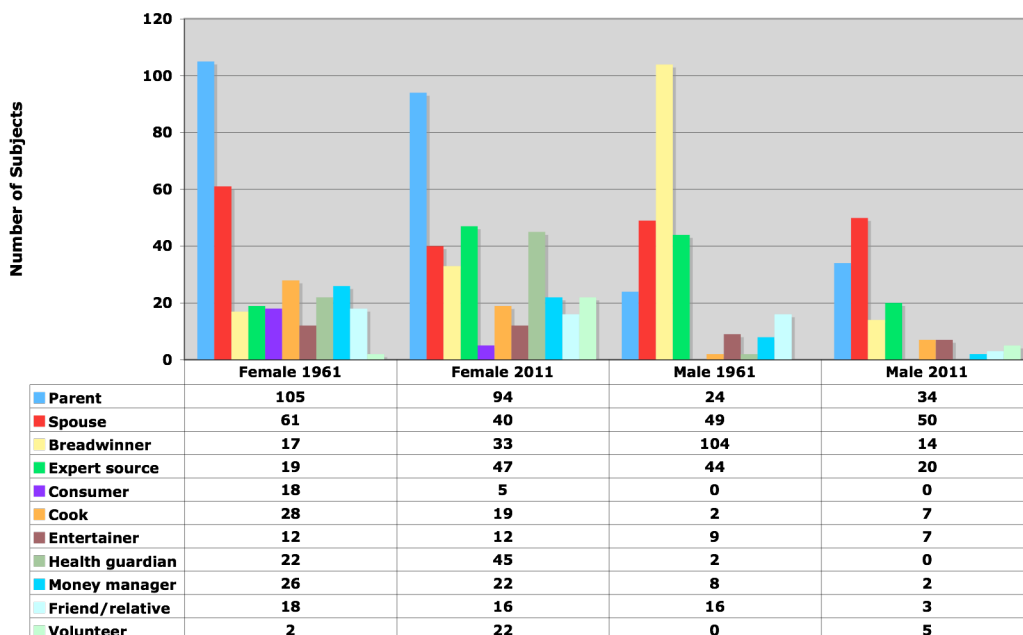
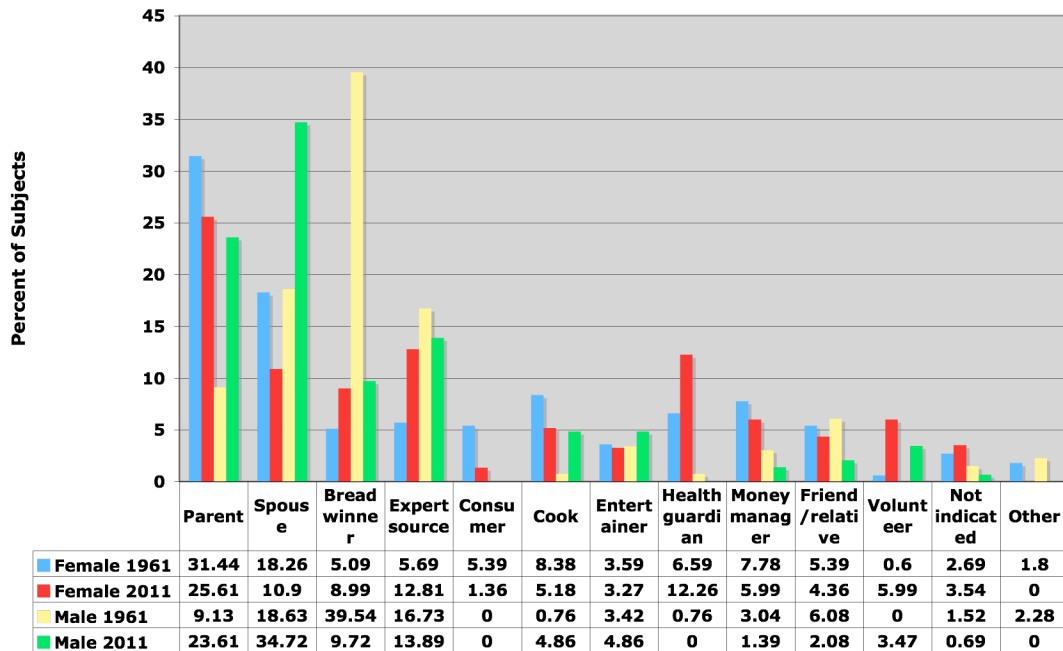


Figure 12: Proportional Representation of Responsibility

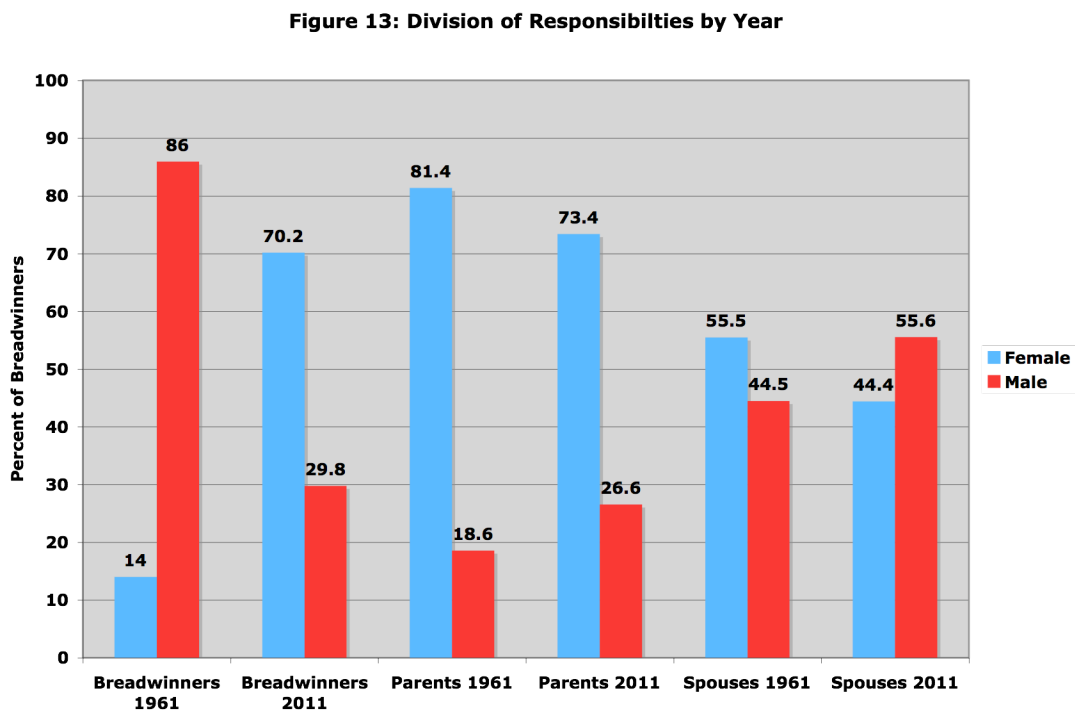


A further analysis of primary responsibilities looked specifically at the division between the genders of breadwinning, parenting, and spousal responsibilities. Although it would be expected that there are more women in each category, given that there are more female subjects overall, changes in percentage breakdown from 1961 content to 2011 content could be indicative of changing norms.

In 1961, the 121 breadwinners were 14.0% female and 86.0% male; in 2011, the 47 breadwinners were 70.2% female and 29.8% male. In 1961, the 129 parents were 81.4% female and 18.6% male; in 2011 the 128 parents were 73.4% female and 26.6% male. In 1961, the 110 spouses were 55.5% female and 44.5% male; and in 2011, the 90 spouses were 44.4% female and 55.6% male. Thus, there were significant differences between the years' divisions of breadwinning responsibility ($\chi^2(1) = 260.465, p < .001$).

parental responsibility ($\chi^2(1) = 4.159, p < .05$), and spousal responsibility ($\chi^2(1) = 4.889, p < .05$).

Figure 13 shows the division between genders of each responsibility in each year and highlights the great change in division of breadwinning responsibility, the disparity in the division of parental responsibility, and the reversal of the division of spousal responsibility from 1961 to 2011.



RESEARCH QUESTION 3

The third and final research question asked “Are themes of disparities between the genders more present in articles today than 50 years ago?” This question was designed to measure themes that would indicate an acknowledgement or recognition of gender

inequality issues in magazine articles. If present, these themes would indicate a more progressive viewpoint on the part of the magazine, even if the article's subjects were still shown in a fairly traditional view.

The theme of work-life balance was present in 10.7% of articles from 1961 and 47.4% from 2011. More specifically, it was present for men in 2.1% of 1961 articles and 11.8% of 2011 articles and present for women in 9.9% of 1961 articles and 41.2% of 2011 articles. There were significant differences between the 1961 and 2011 proportional representations of work-life balance in general ($\chi^2(1) = 132.380, p < .001$), work-life balance for men ($\chi^2(1) = 51.020, p < .001$), and work-life balance for women ($\chi^2(1) = 106.778, p < .001$). A significant difference was also found between the 2011 representations of work-life balance for men and work-life balance for women ($\chi^2(1) = 79.040, p < .001$).

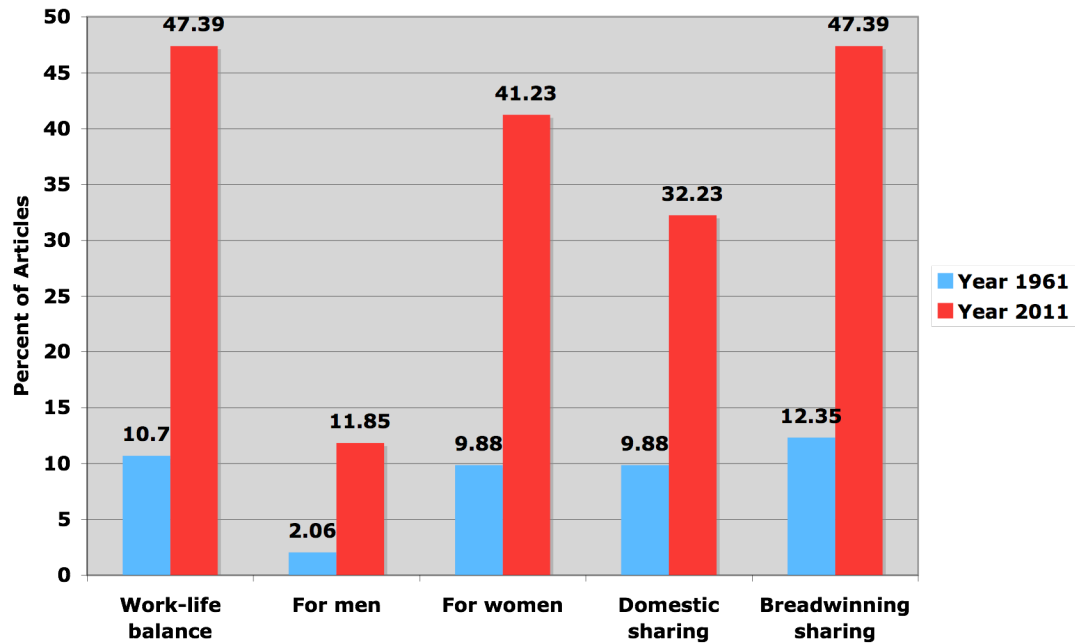
The theme of sharing of domestic responsibilities was present in 9.9% of 1961 content and 32.2% of 2011 content, and the theme of sharing of breadwinning responsibilities was present in 12.3% of 1961 content and 47.4% of 2011 content. There were significant differences between the 1961 and 2011 proportional representations of domestic sharing ($\chi^2(1) = 53.778, p < .001$) and the 1961 and 2011 proportional representations of breadwinning ($\chi^2(1) = 116.004, p < .001$).

An acknowledgement of income disparity between genders was present in 1.2% and 1.9% of articles in 1961 and 2011. There was no significant difference between proportional representations of income disparity in 1961 and 2011 ($\chi^2(1) = 11.010, p = .315$). There was also no 2011 acknowledgment of any educational disparity. A disparity was present in 3.7% of 1961 articles — but as an acknowledgement of women being less

educated than men. Thus, recognition of women as more educated than men was not present in any article coded in this study.

Figure 14 shows the representation of themes in each year, highlighting the great increase in the themes with significant difference from 1961 to 2011.

Figure 14: Presence of Themes in 1961 and 2011



CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

CONCLUSIONS

Looking collectively at this study's data, a few general observations emerge. It seems that magazine contexts have changed and portrayals of women and men have made significant, progressive strides since 1961. However, magazines are not yet portraying men and women as equals in the domestic and working worlds, although they are much closer than they were 50 years ago. In society as well, men and women are not yet equals, so magazines are closer to reflecting realities; however, as agents for social progress and equality for women, magazines could challenge the status quo and present what would be the egalitarian ideal for the genders.

First, it is clear that magazines changed from 1961 to 2011, given that the distributions of both article types and articles topics showed significant differences. The biggest difference was the near disappearance of fiction; while short stories and novels were included in every issue from 1961, only *Good Housekeeping* had short stories in 2011 — and not even in every issue. Fiction stories tended to be about young love or marriages, which is likely the reason sex/love is such a large proportion of 1961 topics. Articles from 1961 that fell into this category tended to be about dating and love and were often fiction; articles from 2011 in this category tended to be about sex or relationship troubles and were often service.

The 2011 content filled the fiction gap with profiles and celebrity coverage, which emerged as a growing interest for readers. It would seem that the content of

magazines designed for readers' entertainment has switched from fiction to celebrities. This could be due to the media-immersive culture of modern societies and the constant awareness of celebrities that it has created. This could be a sign that celebrity culture is almost a form of "fiction" and that celebrities represent readers' new ideal. The switch away from longer content (which short stories and novels tended to be) is also reflective of the speed of culture today, which coincides with the shortening of stories. Finally, the decrease in fiction could be the result of changes in the publishing industries and a reflection of readers' ability to now obtain inexpensive fiction from books, websites, and other non-magazine outlets. Whatever the exact explanation, these findings suggest a shift in what American culture and magazine readers seek for entertainment, a shift that would have bearing on the contexts in which male and female gender roles are constructed in magazines.

Context also changed in terms of the proportional division of subjects by gender. There were substantially fewer males in 2011 than in 1961. This decrease is likely due to the shifts to more females as authors and more females as expert sources, as well as the shift away from defining women by their husbands and significant others. These changes contribute to the movement away from portrayals of males as sources of information and holders of powers.

The functions served by subjects in stories have also evolved. There were significant differences in the distribution of female subjects and the distribution of male subjects. What's more, significant differences were found in the frequency of female second-person subjects, the frequency of female expert sources, and the gendered division of experts. The decrease in "you" subjects indicates a decrease in the

instructional tone adopted by many 1961 articles, a tone that often seemed to talk down to or belittle readers while instructing them as mothers, cooks, and homemakers. Women in 2011 were much less likely to be spoken to merely as consumers, though the 2011 magazines still had a large amount of advice/service content. The lack of male second-person subjects would seem to indicate a gap in gender portrayals, but that is more likely due to a lack of male readers.

The decrease in female second-person subjects parallels the significant increase in female expert sources, which both recognizes women in scientific and specialized fields and reduces the impression of male control of positions of power and status. From 1961 to 2011, both male and female experts increased in percentage of subjects, but the gender breakdown of all experts greatly shifted to women, who made up 24.4% in 1961 and 68.7% in 2011. Whether this is in line with society or is due to a conscious effort by editors is less significant than the fact that female readers are now seeing women as their sources of advice and information.

Turning to gender role constructions, it is clear that the portrayal of women and women's roles has changed. Women showed significant differences in their distributions of relationship statuses, parental statuses, occupations, and primary responsibilities, and it seems women's role constructions have changed in a positive direction. A similar picture emerges from the male samples. There were also significant changes from 1961 to 2011 in the distributions of male relationship statuses, parental statuses, occupations, and primary responsibilities.

In the first specific category coded — relationship status — heterosexual marriage was by far the dominant relationship status for all four groups, to the point that no other

status contributed more than 5.0% of a sample, except for divorced/single (6.3%) among 2011 males. The significant difference among women is likely due to the drop in presentation of married women, from 73.4% to 46.3%. This change, which was significant on its own, was largely made up for by the 40.6% of 2011 whose status was not indicated. This suggests that women were less likely to be defined in terms of husbands or significant others, as nearly half the subjects didn't even acknowledge their romantic lives. The difference in male distribution likely came from the increase in married and decrease in single men.

This progress, however, is countered by the complete absence of other nontraditional relationships. The proportion of single women actually decreased and dating after divorce was very rare in any group, though individuals with those statuses might have been included in the not indicated category. Further, homosexual dating and homosexual marriage/civil union were completely absent from the population of this study. This suggests that though these magazines are recognizing more paths outside of heterosexual marriage, they are still a long way from including and acknowledging, much less celebrating, other paths to love and family. Besides sexuality, magazines could also be making progress in inclusion and promotion of subjects of other races and ethnicities. Although not coded in this study, general observation of the magazines in question indicated an increase in the prevalence of male and female subjects of color.

In parental status women and men again showed significant change. The ranking of categories by frequency was the same for all groups, and the women were very similar in 1961 and 2011 — the largest difference came in the not indicated category, perhaps suggesting that women in 2011 are also less defined by their children than in 1961.

Another key change for women was that in 1961 they were almost never shown as working in paid occupations once they had children — a combination that was plentiful among the 2011 sample. Parent was the dominant status across the population, and there was actually a large increase in the proportion of males shown as parents and a decrease in the proportion of males with statuses not indicated. Looking at proportions of parents of any type, there wasn't a significant change in women between the years, but a substantial increase was present in the male subjects from 1961 to 2011.

Interestingly, the proportion of both men and women without children decreased from 1961 to 2011. This does not, however, logically imply that more men and women had children in 2011; census data implies that fewer adults are having children today than 50 years ago. Rather, the data shows that the proportion of women not indicated greatly increased, suggesting women are less defined by their roles as mothers, and the proportion of men as parents greatly increased while not indicated decreased, suggesting men are more involved and recognized in the parenting process. The increase in no children could also suggest that it has become more socially acceptable to choose not to have children, especially for women who would rather focus on a career.

Both genders showed significant change in the distribution of occupations. Although more than half the 1961 women were homemakers, that occupation filled only 3.0% of the 2011 sample. Instead, 2011 women were shown in author/writer, entertainer, and medicine/science jobs, findings that fit with the increase in first-person stories and female expert sources in 2011. There were no women in manual labor, technology, or the military in 1961, but those occupations were represented in the 2011 sample. There were

no secretaries in 2011, but those could have been replaced by unspecified work, which typically was referenced as taking place at an office.

The substitution of female homemaker with author could speak to an important trend in female occupation. These findings suggest an increase in females freelancing or working from home while also fulfilling homemaker responsibilities. Recent research has shown an increase in the proportion of female freelancers (from 19.0% in 2007 to 23.4% in 2010), but the vast majority of freelancers are still men. However, in terms of specific types of freelancers, writer is one of few in which women hold the majority (60.7% to 39.3%) (Hackwith, 2011, p.18). Other studies have also noted a great increase in women in digital consulting and freelancing jobs, a trend that could continue to grow with the technology sector (Hughes 2011).

The 1961 men, fitting with stereotypes of the era, were shown predominantly in business/professional situations and as doctors and experts. Among the 2011 males, however, entertainers were most common (which parallels the increase in celebrity content). In 2011, medicine/science was just as common among men as women, and businessmen made up only 7.6% of the sample, indicating a significant shift away from stereotypical male wage-earning portrayals. Also interestingly, male homemakers were present in both years, though as only 1.1% in 1961 and 4.2% in 2011.

Another progressive finding was the increase in the proportion of females shown in paid occupations. Women jumped from only 32.3% in 1961 to 77.1% in 2011. There was also a significant change in proportion of paid men, which decreased from 89.4% in 1961 to 81.4% in 2011. This could be a reflection of the economic recession, in which more men than women lost jobs, but it could also be simply the result of having fewer

male subjects and more females as breadwinners. It was also much less likely in 2011 that a referenced worker or salesperson would be assumed to a man, which was often the case in 1961 content.

The final subject criteria, primary responsibility, also showed significant change for both genders. Although parent was the dominant responsibility for women in each year, expert and health guardian passed cook and spouse/significant other to make up the top three roles in the 2011 sample. Again fitting with stereotypes of the era, 1961 males were predominantly shown as breadwinners, followed by responsibilities as spouses/significant others that largely came from the fictional and sex/love content. In 2011, the spouse role moved to the top for men, and parent and expert surpassed breadwinner, which fell to less than a tenth of the sample.

All the three key responsibilities — breadwinning, parenting, and spouse — showed a significant shift in proportions between men and women. The roles reversed in breadwinning, from 86.0% male in 1961 to 70.2% female in 2011. Much like the expert sources, this portrayal might not reflect reality but does suggest to readers the increasing and important presence of women in the workforce. Parenting, unfortunately, still skewed to women, who made up more than 70.0% of primary parents in each year. Meanwhile, spousal responsibilities were fairly evenly divided between the genders in both years but flipped proportions. This suggests that women are constructed as mothers nearly as often in 2011 as in 1961, though they are more likely to be working (even after having children) and less likely to be valued in terms of their husbands and children.

Beyond the changes seen in each gender's construction, also crucial in the evaluation of this data is assessing how equally men and women are presented in relation

to each other, as measured by the five coding criteria. The emerging picture from these findings is not nearly as progressive when male and female portrayals in 2011 magazines are compared. There were significant differences between the distributions of male and female subject functions, relationship statuses, parental statuses, occupations, and responsibilities. These findings indicate that in 2011 there is still a substantial gap between magazine portrayals of men and magazine portrayals of women.

Despite the statistical significance of these differences, however, there are some positive findings in the 2011 samples. First, the difference in subject functions is likely a reflection of the female audience, as women were mainly subjects, authors, and real person examples, while men were absent references and subjects. Second, the difference in relationship status, though statistically significant, came mostly from the large proportion of not indicated women. In fact, a higher proportion of men than women was indicated to be married in 2011, while there had been a far higher proportion of married women in 1961.

The proportion of female parents was still higher than that of males in 2011, and there was a significant difference in the distribution of male and female parental statuses. However, there was no substantial difference in the proportion of men and women shown in an active parenting capacity in 2011, although this value was significantly different in 1961. This represents an increase in male involvement in parenting and a move toward equal sharing of parenting responsibility, as the proportion of male parents was substantially lower in 1961 but nearly matched that of females in 2011.

There was a significant difference in the genders' distributions of occupations, but the top three occupations (author/journalist, medicine/science, and entertainer) were the

same for men and women. The proportion of medicine/science, in fact, was exactly equal. What's more, there was a higher percentage of men as homemakers (4.2% to 3.0%) than women, and men were only slightly more common in business/professional roles (7.6% to 4.1%) in 2011. Finally, there was no significant difference in the proportions of men and women shown in wage-earning capacities in 2011, which included 77.1% of women and 81.4% of men, though there had been a large difference in 1961 (32.3% of women and 89.4% of men).

The significant difference between 2011 men and women in terms of primary responsibilities came largely from the rise of men as spouses/significant others. Although men were shown as parents almost as commonly as women (23.6% to 25.6%), they were more prevalent as spouse/significant other. Women were almost as common as men in expert (12.8% and 13.9%) and breadwinning (9.0% to 9.7%) roles, of which the male proportion significantly decreased from 1961. However, there were no male consumers in the entire sample and no male health guardians in 2011, a responsibility that constituted 12.3% of women in 2011.

Looking at the three predominant themes also yields a positive conclusion for gender equality. The proportion of women as breadwinners was vastly larger than that of men in 2011 (70.2% to 29.8%), though the situation was the opposite in 1961 (14.0% to 86.0%). There was not a large gap in spousal responsibilities in either year, but the majority switched to the men in 2011 (55.6% from 44.5% in 1961). Finally, although women still owned a large majority of parental responsibilities, the proportion taken by men did increase significantly (26.6% from 18.6%).

Finally, the analysis of themes provides another perspective on the degree of progress made in the past 50 years. The great increases in acknowledgement of work-life balance for both genders and sharing of domestic and breadwinning responsibilities indicate a shift in a progressive direction and an acknowledgement of the many responsibilities of women and men today. This balance for men is still much less present than balance for women (11.8% to 1.2%), but that could also be due to the much smaller number of male subjects in the sample. Strides have been made toward more equal divisions of breadwinning and domestic labor between men and women, although these themes were still present in less than half of articles in 2011. On the other hand, the lack of recognition of disparities in income and education suggests magazines are either unaware of or simply not acknowledging those circumstances between the genders.

Overall, it seems the most progress has been made in the portrayal of individual genders. Although dominantly shown in a parental capacity, women are depicted as having much greater freedom and independence with their relationship statuses and occupations, as well as a greater share of wage-earning power. Their expertise and careers are more likely to be acknowledged, and their responsibilities are more commonly shared. They are less likely to be defined by their husbands and children; the increase in not indicated relationship status and parental status for women suggests a greater degree of autonomy for female subjects in those areas of their lives.

Men in 2011 are much less likely to simply be the breadwinning husbands and experts of 1961 and more likely to be involved fathers in a variety of occupations. They are shown more as parents and husbands and less in stereotypically male occupations and responsibilities. In a trend opposite that seen with the women, men were more likely to be

defined by their spouses and families. This suggests increase in the importance of men when attached to women and the importance of women as the centerpiece of the family and household.

Comparing men and women today, there are statistically significant differences in all categories of construction, but most of the key attributes (married, parent, paid occupation, key responsibilities) have become substantially more egalitarian. Finally, magazines are moving in a positive direction in showing work and home life concerns and responsibilities as things men and women both face and share. However, these themes were present in less than half the samples, and articles continued to fail to acknowledge nontraditional families and disparities in income and education.

IMPLICATIONS

For scholars

Looking back to the previous literature on this topic, these results offer both contributions and contradictions to the existing knowledge. Much like Graff and Vavrus (2007), these findings offer no support for the existence of an “opt-out” trend. Whether by choice or necessity, this population of magazine content overwhelming constructed women as both mothers and members of the workforce.

When compared to previous research on gender roles in the media, these results extend those of Ferrante, Haynes, and Kingsley (1988) to suggest a continued expansion of women’s range of occupations and much less resistance to women in the workforce. Previous research by Kellerman and Kellerman (1996) and Courtney and Lockeretz

(1971) had found only minimal change in breadwinning distribution and women's choices of occupations, but this study suggests a more even division of labor and more freedom for women in the working world. Except for the prevalence of entertainment careers due to articles on celebrity, the occupational options presented in this population seem realistic and achievable for women, and women were frequently shown in positions of power and comfort in the workforce, unlike the portrayals analyzed by Massoni (2004) in her study of *Seventeen*.

Turning to the home, men in this study were found to be constructed as parents nearly as often as women. This contradicts the findings of Ferrante, Haynes, and Kingsley (1988), who found male parents to be much less common. Also, unlike the findings by Wolheter and Lammers (1980), men in non-working roles were not shown only in decorative contexts but, rather, as parents and spouses. Women were shown out of the house nearly as often as men, even though they were still constructed as the family health guardians, as Craig (1992) and Barnett (2006) found in their research.

Acknowledgement of spouses and spousal responsibilities were found to be much more prevalent in this study than in previous research. Kaufman (1999) found mothers to be rarely shown with a parenting spouse, but spousal and parenting responsibilities were very common for males in this study. What's more, acknowledgement of marriage and absent references to spouses in this population suggest a more supportive dynamic between couples, in terms of parenting, than noted in previous research.

Male resistance to changing gender roles and egalitarian distributions of responsibilities, as observed by Courtney (2009) and Wall and Arnold (2007), was also not present in this sample. The analysis of sharing themes suggests a big increase in the

participation of men in home labor and the participation of women in earning money.

What's more, specific articles acknowledging men as homemakers and men who are out-earned by their wives were included in the population, indicating little to no resistance to changes from these practitioners and readers.

Finally, Demarest and Garner's (1992) analysis of *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Good Housekeeping* noted a dominance of traditional sex roles throughout the sample, with most articles focusing on marriage, family, and homemaking and largely ignoring career and personal growth. They saw a decrease in traditional roles over the period studied, but only to a small extent. This study extended that research further and showed a much greater change in the gender roles, with women increasingly leaving the home, getting involved in careers and volunteer activities, and sharing parenting responsibilities with their husbands. Although it might have taken a long time for these changes to take place, it is clear that over the 50-year period from which this study's magazines were gathered, and since the previous research to which findings were compared, women's magazines have moved much closer to representing men and women progressively and equitably in the workforce and the home, as parents and breadwinners.

For scholarship

The theory of social construction of reality holds that media messages frequently disseminated by the media have the power to shape an individual's view of her world and herself. If that is the case, the results of this study found changes in a positive direction. The realities constructed for both men and women in 2011 are much more egalitarian than they were 50 years ago. Men and women are nearly equally likely to be shown

working, raising children, and sharing responsibilities with a spouse — all constructive messages that will be progressive influences for readers.

Marxist theory holds that those in power in the economic sphere will also have power in the social spheres. The findings also suggest positive changes in this regard, as women in 2011 were far more frequently shown to be in control of means of production and economic equals to males. Women today are means of production more than they are merely consumers. Although domestic work is still not necessarily valued as paid labor, women in 2011 are shown earning money outside the home nearly as frequently as their male counterparts.

Finally, regarding feminist theory these results also have positive implications. Based on the findings of this study, the position of women in relation to men has changed. Patriarchal messages — in this context meaning men instructing women on how they should act, valuing them only in terms of men, and controlling their places in the workforce — in the magazines studied have practically disappeared. Men are no longer shown in power over women, and women are no longer defined by the men in their lives. Instead, a reversal seems to have taken place, as the men in this study were often presented in terms of their wives and children and in the roles of spouses and parents. A sexual division of labor still exists, and men and women are not yet complete equals, but this gap has significantly narrowed.

Taken from constructivist, Marxist, and Feminist perspectives, this study suggests that the Seven Sisters magazines have adopted much more progressive viewpoints in the past 50 years. They seem to have evolved from their traditionalist reputation to be more progressive than some readers, practitioners, and scholars might think. They are no

longer guidebooks for women in the home and stalwarts of domesticity. Today, they present a reality in which women and men share many of the same roles and responsibilities, work side-by-side in the labor force, and function in a largely egalitarian social structure.

For practitioners

These findings suggest that magazine editors and publishers have made significant progress since 1961 — and even since other media studies on gender roles were conducted — in their portrayals of men and women. However, there is still further progress to be made. The recognition of women in the workforce is to be celebrated, as is the acknowledgement of work-life balance and sharing of responsibilities, but women are still predominantly constructed as mothers. Husbands are more likely to be shown in spousal and parental capacities, but women are still given ownership and primary control of those tasks. Although portrayals of both men and women have significantly evolved in 1961, the gap between the two genders today needs to be addressed and narrowed.

Even more pressing for practitioners, however, is the complete absence of nontraditional relationships. In 18 issues of magazines from 2011 there was not one homosexual individual. If magazines hope to reflect social progress and continue to represent all potential readers, this exclusion needs to be amended. Also, in the effort to stay current on social circumstances, it is also important for practitioners to start addressing the gaps between men and women in income and education. The education gap is an opportunity to show the progress of women, while the income gap is an area

that still needs change, but both deserve some recognition as important and evolving aspects of economic and social realities.

The messages women's magazines are sending to their readers are positive in that they suggest women can have successful careers as well as a happy family life, but the management of that balance is a recurring problem. Women seem to be offered a wide range of career choices but not an alternative to parenting and homemaking responsibilities, which might explain the increase in occupations, such as author, that allow women to work from home.

To further encourage readers (and their daughters) to exercise their freedom in the workforce, set goals for themselves, and succeed as independent individuals, it is important that magazines continually and more frequently show men fulfilling duties in the home, supporting their wives' careers, and actively participating in parenting. Magazine practitioners must remember that it is their responsibility to not only reflect changes in society but also encourage and further social progress.

LIMITATIONS

This study was limited in a few ways. Beyond the theoretical and methodological restrictions previously acknowledged, availability of magazines narrowed the range of this research. The exclusion of *Women's Day* and *Family Circle* prevented this study from looking at the full scope of gender role constructions in the remaining Seven Sisters magazines. What's more, the selection of these magazines and the narrow scope of their audience necessarily limited the range of subjects studied to a largely white, upper-

middle class demographic. The changes shown in magazine content between 1961 and 2011 apply to this demographic of the population and do not reflect the then-and-now existences of women of other ethnicities and financial circumstances. This is a reflection of the target audience of the magazines studied rather than an intentional exclusion of certain demographic groups.

This research was also limited by the nature of quantitative analysis. In order to acquire a body of analyzable data, qualitative acknowledgement of themes and individual items were disregarded. The nuance and connotation of some articles and the unique attributes of subjects — which readers would observe — were necessarily left out in an effort to objectively and numerically examine each magazine.

Third, this study can make no claim on the reason for the constructions found or their effects on readers. While other studies in the literature attempted to determine whether editors or social movements had more of an impact on content, this study can only say that content has changed; it cannot offer any explanation for those changes. This study can also offer no evidence for how these magazines, constructions, and themes will affect readers. Expectations can be made based on the theories that grounded this study, but no conclusions can be drawn.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The research questions and results of this investigation offer several suggestions for further research. First, the differences noted between this study and older examples in the literature suggest that more updates are necessary. Further research on other media,

advertising, and other magazines would likely find new results at this time and different conclusions that what was offered by previous research.

Second, the methodological limitations of this study could be used to expand the research into a qualitative approach. A qualitative analysis of gender construction — also looking at functions, relationships, parents, occupations, and responsibilities — would likely offer an excellent complement to this investigation and would also be able to focus more on stories and themes that stand out from the body of content. What's more, a qualitative study could examine the issue of tone. This could mean how articles are presented to readers (as advice in 2011 versus as instructions as 1961) as well as the tone with which magazines handle women's issues (as advocates of change or methods of coping). The issue of work-life balance is one in which tone is highly significant, as an article offering women ways to survive does not challenge the status quo in the way an article advocating better workplace support for working parents would. A study distinguishing distinction between handling messages and changing messages would provide much further insight on magazines' construction of working women.

Third, more and newer research needs to be done on the reasons for and effects of media messages. As social circumstances are changing and magazine content is beginning to reflect such changes, the attitudes and influences of editors and publishers deserve a re-evaluation, likely through qualitative in-depth interviews. Also appropriate would be a new examination of whether and how practitioners' viewpoints translate to and affect readers. This could be done quantitatively or qualitatively to get a sense of readers' reactions to and absorption of magazine content. Given the progress made in society and the growing independence of females, it would be worth investigating if

magazines, and media in general, still hold significant power over their audiences, enough to influence the paths they foresee for themselves, in terms of marriage, children, and work — of all kinds.

Another trend worthy of further study is the near disappearance of fictional content in modern magazines. It would be interesting to study when this trend began and why it occurred. A parallel examination would be the rise of celebrity content and the interview/Q&A style of articles. Research could look into whether and how celebrity content has taken over the role of fiction, magazine readers have become immersed in celebrity culture, and celebrities have come to represent gender ideals for readers.

Finally, this study focused in on the construction of gender as an aspect of identity, but gender is only one component and is inextricably tied to factors such as race and class. Although the readership of the magazines studied limits diversity in those categories, further research should explore changes in the portrayals of these facets of identity in the Seven Sisters magazines and others. As suggested above, racial diversity seemed to increase from 1961 to 2011 and certainly deserves further study. What's more, a complete picture of evolving identities in the magazine medium requires examination of intersectionality and how these factors interact in order to create the fuller picture of subjects in magazines.

APPENDIX A

CODING SHEET

Publication Info

1. Magazine:

- Family Circle
- Good Housekeeping
- Ladies' Home Journal
- Redbook
- Woman's Day

2. Issue:

- January 2011
- February 2011
- March 2011
- April 2011
- May 2011
- June 2011
- January 1961
- February 1961
- March 1961
- April 1961
- May 1961
- June 1961

3. Story title: _____

4. Page(s): _____

5. Section/department: _____

Article info

1. Type: Identify the type of article being coded. Do not code letters to the editor, advice, poems, reviews, or instruction stories (recipes, crafts, DIY, fashion).

- Editor's letter
- Advice/service
- Fiction
- Interview/Q&A
- Investigative
- Personal essay

- Profile
- Trend
- Other: _____

2. Topic: Identify the primary topic covered or addressed in the article. Do not code letters to the editor, beauty, crafts, decorating, DIY projects, entertaining, fashion/style, food, home, pop culture, or review stories.

- Editor's letter
- Celebrity
- Family/children
- Fashion/beauty
- Finances/money
- Food
- Friends/relationships
- Health/fitness
- News
- Philanthropy/volunteer work
- Products/consumption
- Recreation
- Sex/love
- Time management/stress
- Travel
- Work/office
- Other: _____

Subjects

Code the first three subjects in the article, regardless of gender. Include the author only if the story is in first-person. If there are fewer than three subjects, extra coding lists can be left blank. Do not code subjects under the age of 18.

Subject 1

Name: _____

- Female
- Male

1. What is the function of this subject in the article?

- Author
- Subject (profile, interview)
- Expert source
- Real person source/example
- Absent referenced/implied
- Second-person subject
- Other: _____

2. What is the subject's relationship status?

- Single
- Heterosexual dating
- Homosexual dating
- Heterosexual marriage
- Homosexual marriage/civil union
- Divorced/separated, single
- Divorced/separated, dating
- Divorced/separated, remarried
- Widowed
- Other
- Not indicated in the article

3. What is the subject's parental status?

- Parent
- Step-parent
- Absent parent
- No children
- Other
- Not indicated in the article

4. What is the subject's occupational field?

- Artist/designer
- Author/journalist
- Business/professional
- Chef
- Dietician/nutritionist
- Education
- Entertainment
- Government
- Homemaker
- Law
- Manual labor
- Medicine/science
- Military
- Ministry
- Money/finance
- Nonprofit
- Retired
- Secretarial
- Self-employed/entrepreneur
- Service industry
- Student
- Technology
- Unemployed

- Unspecified “work”
- Other: _____
- Not indicated in the article

5. What primary role or responsibility is this character fulfilling?

- Breadwinner
- Cook/food provider
- Consumer/household shopper
- Entertainer
- Expert
- Friend/relative
- Guardian of health (of self or others)
- Money manager
- Parent
- Spouse/partner
- Volunteer
- Other: _____
- Not indicated in the article

Subject 2

Name: _____

- Female
- Male

1. What is the function of this subject in the article?

- Author
- Subject (profile, interview)
- Expert source
- Real-person source/example
- Absent referenced/implied source
- Second-person subject
- Other: _____

2. What is the subject’s relationship status?

- Single
- Heterosexual dating
- Homosexual dating
- Heterosexual marriage
- Homosexual marriage/civil union
- Divorced/separated, single
- Divorced/separated, dating
- Divorced/separated, remarried
- Widowed
- Other
- Not indicated in the article

3. What is the subject's parental status?

- Parent
- Step-parent
- Absent parent
- No children
- Other
- Not indicated in the article

4. What is the subject's occupational field?

- Artist/designer
- Author/journalist
- Business/professional
- Chef
- Dietician/nutritionist
- Education
- Entertainment
- Government
- Homemaker
- Law
- Manual labor
- Medicine/science
- Military
- Ministry
- Money/finance
- Nonprofit
- Retired
- Secretarial
- Self-employed/entrepreneur
- Service industry
- Student
- Technology
- Unemployed
- Unspecified "work"
- Other: _____
- Not indicated in the article

5. What primary role or responsibility is this character fulfilling?

- Breadwinner
- Cook/food provider
- Consumer/household shopper
- Entertainer
- Expert
- Friend/relative
- Guardian of health (of self or others)
- Money manager

- Parent
- Spouse/partner
- Volunteer
- Other: _____
- Not indicated in the article

Subject 3

Name: _____

- Female
- Male

1. What is the function of this subject in the article?

- Author
- Subject (profile, interview)
- Expert source
- Real-person source/example
- Absent referenced/implied source
- Second-person subject
- Other: _____

2. What is the subject's relationship status?

- Single
- Heterosexual dating
- Homosexual dating
- Heterosexual marriage
- Homosexual marriage/civil union
- Divorced/separated, single
- Divorced/separated, dating
- Divorced/separated, remarried
- Widowed
- Other
- Not indicated in the article

3. What is the subject's parental status?

- Parent
- Step-parent
- Absent parent
- No children
- Other
- Not indicated in the article

4. What is the subject's occupational field?

- Artist/designer
- Author/journalist
- Business/professional
- Chef

- Dietician/nutritionist
- Education
- Entertainment
- Government
- Homemaker
- Law
- Manual labor
- Medicine/science
- Military
- Ministry
- Money/finance
- Nonprofit
- Retired
- Secretarial
- Self-employed/entrepreneur
- Service industry
- Student
- Technology
- Unemployed
- Unspecified "work"
- Other: _____
- Not indicated in the article

5. What primary role or responsibility is this character fulfilling?

- Breadwinner
- Cook/food provider
- Consumer/household shopper
- Entertainer
- Expert
- Friend/relative
- Guardian of health (of self or others)
- Money manager
- Parent
- Spouse/partner
- Volunteer
- Other: _____
- Not indicated in the article

Themes

Which, if any, of the following themes are present in the article?

1. Struggles to balance career and home responsibilities: Yes No
 For which gender(s) is this theme present and/or a concern?
 For men: Yes No
 For women: Yes No

2. Sharing of domestic responsibilities: ___ Yes ___ No
3. Sharing of breadwinning responsibilities: ___ Yes ___ No
4. Gendered disparities in income: ___ Yes ___ No
5. Gendered disparities in education: ___ Yes ___ No

APPENDIX B

CODING PROTOCOL

Complete one coding sheet per article that is coded. Unless otherwise indicated, place a check mark next to the category that best answers each question. If a story appears to fit multiple categories, choose the one that applies most or is the primary answer.

1. Publication info

The purpose of this section is to gather basic information on each unit of the content analysis. Coders should identify the magazine from which the article was taken, the date of the issue, the story title, the page(s) on which the story appears (exclude jump pages), and the section or department of the magazine in which it is located. Section/department names should be taken from the magazine and transcribed verbatim. If a story appears in the feature well, “feature” should be the answer.

2. Article info

The purpose of this section is to identify the content of the article being coded. Coders should analyze those stories that fill at least a full page, are written largely in narrative style, and present developed characters and role constructions. Do not code advertisements.

First, coders should indicate the type of story (otherwise known as the format or structure of the article). Letters to the editor, advice Q&As, poems, reviews, and instruction stories, such as recipes, crafts, and DIY projects, should not be coded. The following definitions and examples should be used to determine story types:

Editor’s letter: This category applies to the letter, appearing in the early pages of the magazine, that the editor writes to readers. Editors typically use these to address a pertinent issue or direct readers to certain elements in the magazine.

Advice/service: This category applies to pieces offering practical information and/or suggestions to readers. This could mean tips and tricks for daily life, ways to get involved in a cause, health information, etc.

Fiction: This category applies to stories and excerpts that are not rooted in fact. The characters and plotlines are created by the author; nonetheless, these articles still offer developed characters and gender constructions for readers.

Interview/Q&A: This category applies to profiles written in a non-narrative format. Such stories could be about celebrities, experts, or regular people. The key is that the author has not crafted the content into a narrative structure but has kept it in a back-and-forth format.

Investigative: This category applies to narrative features designed to uncover and develop a topic in order to inform readers of something they do not already know. Likely topics for this are health, medicine, and fidelity issues.

First-person narrative: This category applies to content written in first-person about the author's life or experiences. It could be based exclusively on the writer's perspective, or could also incorporate research or interviews.

Profile: This category applies to stories focused on one individual. The distinction from Interview/Q&A is that profiles are written in narrative form, meaning the author has interviewed the profile subject and crafted his or her answers into a third-person retelling. Profile subjects could be celebrities, experts, or regular people.

Trend: This category applies to coverage of news, fads, and changes. These could relate to health, travel, family habits, nutrition, diet, etc. The key is that the topic reflects something new and current in which readers might be interested in participating.

Other: This category applies to any stories that do not fit into one of the previously listed categories. Coders should briefly explain why the story does not fit into any of the other categories and attempt to identify a label for the type of story.

Second, the coders should identify the topic of the story. Given the criteria for role constructions, stories about beauty, crafts, decorating, entertaining, fashion/style, food, home, pop culture, reviews, or DIY projects should not be coded. The following definitions and examples should be used to determine story topics:

Editor's letter: See above.

Celebrity: This category pertains to stories that cover a variety of topics all related to the life of a celebrity. This category most likely appears with profile and interview/Q&A stories, and the pieces probably also address family, work and/or relationships.

Family/children: This category pertains to stories about family relationships and parenting. It does not include stories about marital relationships.

Fashion/beauty: This category pertains to stories about clothing, makeup and other ways for readers to alter and/or improve their outward appearances.

Finances/money: This category pertains to stories about managing money, keeping track of finances and budgeting for the family. It could also include stories on taxes, stocks, or the economy. It does not include stories on jobs and earning money, which should be marked as “Work/office.”

Food: This category pertains to stories about cooking and serving food. It does not include diet and nutrition stories, which would be considered health/fitness.

Friends/relationships: This category pertains to stories about social relationships, most likely friends. Stories in this category likely cover the management of friendships and problems with friends.

Health/fitness: This category pertains to the maintenance of health, both of the mind and the body. Topics include exercise, diet, nutrition, disease prevention, and mental health. Time management and stress, however, belong in their own category.

News: This category pertains to current events, politics, pop culture, and other happenings. Anything strictly informative that does not relate to health, home, parenting, or relationships likely belongs in this category. The key factor with this category is timeliness.

Philanthropy/volunteer work: This category pertains to stories on organizations, events, and projects that benefit others. These could include profiles of individuals and nonprofits and might offer readers ways to get involved. These stories cover work and tasks outside the home, but the workers do not receive monetary reward.

Products/consumption: This category pertains to stories about consumption and products that readers might purchase. These stories most likely construct subjects with a second-person directive and offer advice on purchase decisions.

Recreation: This category pertains to other activities that readers might engage in for fun, such as reading, scrapbooking, knitting, sports, camping, and entertainment. Travel, however, belongs in a separate category.

Sex/love: This category pertains to romantic relationships, including marriage and dating. Stories could relate to physical or emotional aspects of a relationship, as well as handling conflicts and problems in a relationship.

Time management/stress: This category pertains to stories about juggling multiple aspects of life, dividing time among various tasks, and handling stress and busy schedules. However, stories about specific tasks likely belong in their respective category.

Travel: This category pertains to stories about trips and vacations. These could be service articles about destinations, tips on planning a vacation, or personal essays about traveling.

Work/office: This category pertains to stories specifically about paid work. Most likely, this work will take place outside the home, but stories could also include working from home or self-employment.

Other: This category applies to any stories that do not fit into one of the previously listed categories. Coders should briefly explain why the story does not fit into any of the other categories and attempt to label the topic of the story.

3. Subjects

The purpose of this category is to identify how men and women are presented in the stories by coding their functions as sources, relationship statuses, occupational fields, and primary responsibilities in the article. Coders should analyze the first three subjects to appear or be referenced in the story, regardless of gender. If the article is written in first-person, the author should be coded as the first source. If there are fewer than three sources, extra coding spaces can be left blank. Subjects under the age of 18 should not be coded. Before answering the questions, coders should mark the gender of the subject and transcribe his or her name, if it is supplied in the article.

First, the coders should identify the function each subject serves in the article. The following definitions and examples should be used to determine subject functions:

Author: The writer of the story, only to be coded if the article is in first-person and the author has inserted himself or herself into the content.

Subject: The topic of the story or person the article is about. This function is likely to appear in profile and interview/Q&A stories.

Expert source: A subject asked to comment on the topic or issue, likely to give advice, offer an opinion or provide information. This function is likely to appear in stories about finances/money, health/fitness, news, sex/relationships, and travel.

Real person source/example: A subject the author uses to provide evidence or an anecdote in support of the article's argument or theme. This function is likely to appear in any narrative story.

Absent referenced/IMPLIED: A subject that is referred to by the author or another subject but does not actually play a role in the article. If referenced within the first three subjects, absent subjects should still be coded because of the implications they might offer for gender roles.

Second-person subject: A subject that is spoken to by the author using "you." Articles written in second-person only fit into the coding criteria when the author constructs a sufficient picture of this implied reader over the course of the piece. This subject is likely to appear in stories written in first-person or offering advice to readers.

Other: This category applies to any subjects that do not fit into one of the previously listed functions. Coders should briefly explain why the subject does not fit into any of the other categories and attempt to label the function of the subject.

Second, coders should identify the romantic relationship status of each subject. If no information on relationship status is provided in the article, that should be noted. The following definitions and examples should be used to determine status:

Single: The subject is currently uncommitted. He or she might be going on dates but is not monogamous, or he or she might not be dating anyone at the moment.

Heterosexual dating: The subject is in an exclusive dating relationship with someone of the opposite sex.

Homosexual dating: The subject is in an exclusive dating relationship with someone of the same sex.

Heterosexual marriage: The subject is legally married and monogamously committed to someone of the opposite sex.

Homosexual marriage/civil union: The subject is monogamously committed to someone of the same sex. If the partners consider their relationship a marriage, this should be coded even if their state of residence does not legally recognize their union.

Divorced/separated: The subject has been married but is no longer committed to his or her former spouse. This category is further divided into single (see above), dating (see above), and remarried, meaning the subject has entered into a second, third, etc. legal and monogamous marriage.

Widowed: The subject's spouse is no longer living. The subject might or might not still consider herself or himself married.

Other: This category applies to any subjects that do not fit into one of the previously listed relationship statuses. Coders should briefly explain why the subject does not fit into any of the other categories and attempt to label the relationship status of the subject.

Third, coders should identify the parental status of the subject. If no status is indicated in the article, that should be noted. The following definitions and examples should be used to determine parental statuses:

Parent: The subject has children, either biologically or through adoption, and is actively participating in raising and caring for them.

Step-parent: The subject's spouse has children, either biologically or through adoption, and the subject is participating in raising and caring for them.

Absent parent: The subject has children, either biologically or through adoption, but is not participating in raising and caring for them.

No children: The subject does not have children, biologically, by marriage or through adoption.

Other: This category applies to any subjects that do not fit into one of the previously listed statuses. Coders should briefly explain why the subject does not fit into any of the other categories and attempt to label the parental status of the subject.

Fourth, coders should identify the occupational field in which the subject works. If no means of employment is indicated in the article, that should also be noted. The following definitions and examples should be used to determine occupations:

Artist/designer: The subject makes a living in a creative capacity. This could mean painting, drawing, crafts, architecture, floral design, interior decorating, etc.

Author/journalist: The subject makes a living by writing. This could be for magazines, newspapers, books, blogs, etc.

Business/professional: The subject makes a living in the corporate world. This likely requires some sort of college degree or specialization.

Chef: The subject makes a living creating, serving and/or selling food. This is not the category for those who cook only for their families and for no monetary gain; those individuals are homemakers.

Dietician/nutritionist: The subject makes a living as an expert on food and healthy eating. These subjects are likely expert sources.

Education: The subject makes a living educating others. This could mean elementary, secondary, or university educators or teachers of other trades and skills outside a school setting.

Entertainment: The subject makes a living entertaining others. This could mean actors, TV personalities, musicians, performers, etc. These subjects are likely celebrities and/or profile and interview subjects.

Government: The subject makes a living in the public sector. This could mean police officers, politicians, social services, or other government employees.

Homemaker: The subject does not get paid for his or her labor and works primarily in the home, caring for family, and running the household. Common tasks include cooking, cleaning, and caring for children.

Law: The subject makes a living as a lawyer or attorney. This career requires a specialized degree and significant experiences. These subjects would likely be examples or expert sources.

Manual labor: The subject makes a living through physical tasks that likely earn an hourly wage. This does not require a college degree, though it might require trade school or other specialization.

Medicine/science: The subject makes a living through healthcare practice or research. This occupation requires extensive education and experience. This could mean doctors, nurses, or medical researchers. These subjects are likely expert sources.

Military: This subject makes a living through participation in the armed services. This includes army, marines, navy and coast guard.

Ministry: This subject makes a living as a religious figure, most likely as a pastor, minister, priest, etc. or nun.

Money/finance: The subject makes a living through the management of others' money. This could mean financial advisers, stockbrokers, economist, etc. These subjects are likely expert sources.

Nonprofit: The subject does not get paid for his or her labor but works primarily outside the home for the good of others. This could involve humanitarian work, volunteer organizations, etc.

Retired: The subject is no longer working. This is by choice and because the subject has earned enough money to sustain himself or herself for the remainder of his or her life. If forced out of a job, the subject should be coded as "unemployed."

Secretary: The subject makes a living as an assistant and typist to another person, most likely a businessman. This occupation is expected to be seen more frequently in 1961 content than in 2011.

Self-employed/entrepreneur: The subject makes a living through his or her own business. The good or service produced is not the key factor here; rather, the subject has created and now manages his or her own operation.

Service industry: The subject makes a living in a service or hospitality industry. This could mean food service, hotels, housekeeping, etc.

Student: The subject currently does not make a living; he or she is earning a degree and does not have time at present to also hold a full-time job. Likely the subject plans to begin a new career once the degree is completed.

Technology: The subject makes a living working with new technology, such as computers, phones, and other gadgets. This could mean sales or invention of technology.

Unemployed: The subject currently does not make a living. He or she might have been fired from or quit a job previously and is likely looking for another one.

Unspecified “work:” This category applies to subjects that are clearly identified as going to work and earning money for the household, but the details of his or her job are not provided in the article. For example, subjects in this category might be referred to as “at work” or “at the office.” If further information on occupation is provided such that the subject can be put into a more specific category, that should be done.

Other: This category applies to any subjects that do not fit into one of the previously listed occupations. Coders should briefly explain why the subject does not fit into any of the other categories and attempt to label the occupation of the subject.

Fifth, coders should identify the primary role or responsibility the character is fulfilling in the article. This question is designed to assess the subject’s most important job in the context of the articles. If no role or responsibility is indicated in the article, that should also be noted. The following definitions and examples should be used to determine roles:

Breadwinner: The subject’s main responsibility is to provide money for the household.

Consumer/household shopper: The subject’s main responsibility is to select and purchase items for the household. This role would likely appear in finances/money, health, and travel stories.

Cook/food provider: The subject’s main responsibility is to prepare and provide food for the household. This role would likely appear in family/children and health stories.

Entertainer: The subject’s main responsibility is to entertain others. This likely applies to celebrity subjects.

Expert: The subject’s main responsibility is to offer advice or information. This likely applies to expert sources and some first-person authors.

Friend/relative: The subject is named as a friend or relative of the author or another subject. This might apply to absent sources.

Guardian of health: The subject’s main responsibility is to keep himself, herself or others disease-free and nourished. This role is likely to appear in family/children and health stories.

Money manager: The subject's main responsibility is to keep track of the family's budget and limit debts. This is different from the responsibility of earning the money, which would make the subject a "Breadwinner."

Parent: The subject's main responsibility is to care for and raise children.

Spouse/partner: The subject's main responsibility is participation in and/or maintenance of a relationship or marriage, physically or emotionally.

Volunteer: The subject's main responsibility is to help or serve others, outside the home, for no monetary reward.

Other: This category applies to any subjects that do not fit into one of the previously listed roles. Coders should briefly explain why the subject does not fit into any of the other categories and attempt to label the role or responsibility of the subject.

4. Themes

The purpose of this section is to identify themes present among subjects in the stories. Coders should indicate which of the five themes appear in the article and to which characters they apply. If any of the themes is not present in the article, that should be noted.

First, coders should look for struggles to balance career and home responsibilities. This struggle would be reflective of a subject filling multiple roles, rather than just one. Coders also should indicate which gender(s) is constructed as struggling with this balance.

Second, coders should look for a sharing of domestic responsibilities between men and women in the story. This is likely to appear in stories with couples and would be reflective of egalitarian gender roles in the home.

Third, coders should look for a sharing of breadwinning responsibilities between males and females in the story. This is likely to appear in stories with couples and would be reflective of egalitarian gender roles in terms of income.

Fourth, coders should look for acknowledgement of disparities between the genders in how much money females and males earn from their careers. This would be reflective of the persistent gap between male and female salaries (males make more).

Fifth, coders should look for acknowledgement of disparities between the genders in the level of education that has been achieved by each. This would be reflective of the growing gap between male and female educational achievement (females have passed males).

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