

ПОД- СЕКЦИЯ 2. Теоретические и методологические основы.

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**FEMINISM AND ADVERTISING  
IN TRADITIONAL WOMENS' MAGAZINES  
IN THE USA AND IN THE USSR IN 1950s-1980s:  
COMPARATIVE ASPECT**

The basis for analysis is the period of 1950s-1980s. This time frame allowed analysis from several historical vantages: 1959 (pre-feminist movement), 1969 (developing feminism ideology), 1979 (social implementation of ideology), 1989 (post-feminism movement). In spite of Soviet Union being closed from different so called western theories, feminism was the part of socialistic ideology, produced by communists. The data were analyzed from the perspectives of two major variables: the first being time (the specific historical period, which had a great influence on ideology), and the second being produced category. We understand that the type of magazine is also very important, but Soviet Union had only two (very traditional) names of women's magazines ("The Woman from Village" and "The Soviet Woman") and a lot of addings (very traditional) to newspapers of all-country meaning, and the US had a number of traditional and non-traditional magazines.

There are several publications, which concern this goal, but no one is devoted to the USSR and magazines in the USSR.

"Although there has been considerable about the context of visual image analysis and about the advertiser's rationale for using particular gender images, sociologists have long recognized that analysis of media images can be useful in calibrating social changes. Social theorists, attempting to understand the times in which we live, realize that messages embedded in advertising constitute a large piece of these puzzle revealing values and motives of individuals in 20<sup>th</sup>-century America" [2, p. 247].

Almost 50 years ago Diane Barthel wrote: "...advertisements are... about society. Moreover, they are totally embedded within it..." [1, p. 12].

The splash of the second feminism movement in the United States is generally set it about 1963 with the publication "The Feminism Mistique" by Betty Friedan. Sex role stereotyping in media content has been a major concern of feminist leaders who believe that media images have been partially responsible for creating and maintaining limited social roles for women.

All feminism movement included some major positions:

- opening up all jobs categories to women;
- compensation tied to job description, not to gender;
- a more equal division of labor within the home;
- less emphasis on the female as an "object" whose primary function is attracting the opposite sex;
- the right to each individual to develop to her full potential... [3]

The deference between the US and the USSR in feminism movement is that in the USSR it became the part of communistic/socialistic ideology. The main goal of this ideology – “Each should give as much as he/she can; each will receive as much as he/she needs” – guaranteed the equal rights for men and women in all spheres of life: starting with home and up to the hardest jobs (demanding the physical abilities).

We are going to explore the question “To what extent do ads in women’s magazines reflect the main feminism positions after the emergence of the second feminist movement in early 1960s both in the US and the USSR.

In the past three decades there has been a considerable amount of content coding for sex-role imagery in advertising media: “Cortney and Whipple in “Sex Stereotyping in Advertising” wrote: “Over 300 published sources in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, and other countries contribute scholarly work in the area of sex stereotyping in advertising. The literature comes from marketing, psychiatry, mass communications, psychology, sociology, women’s studies and many other fields...” [2, p. 248]. Some of these researches have dealt specifically with magazine advertising. And even the earliest shows four general conclusions:

- “a woman’s place is in the home” [2];
- “women do not make important decisions or do important things” [2];
- “women are dependant and needs men’s protection” [2];
- “men regard women primarily sex object” [3].

All these researches studied only general-interest magazines and only in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and some countries of western Europe – no one were concerned to the press of the USSR or even Russia (the country associated with the USSR). We are going to compare the women’s image in the magazines both in the US and in the USSR.

The point we are going to start the research is: “Does the role portrayal of women is women’s magazines vary over time?”. To analyze this question we used two traditional American magazines and two traditional Soviet ones.

As for American magazines, we found that there were some significant variations in the role portrayed by women in the ads over time. The most striking finding here was the relatively large changes which occurred in role-imagery between 1959 and 1969 – namely, the number of family roles for women decreased markedly, while the number of decorative roles increased significantly.

As for the Soviet Union magazines we should admit the constant women’s image during the whole period. The varieties in one or another ways should mean the changes in political ideology of the country.

The second question is: “Does the role portrayal of women in ads vary over the type of products advertised?”.

In beauty, clothing, tobacco and alcohol and personal care products women are primarily shown in decorative roles. For household products (cleaning and food products) the portrayals of women are frequently in a family setting, but even for household products women are often portrayed in decorative roles.

As for the advertising in the USSR we should admit that it found only in later 70s. The advertising of alcohol and tobacco was permitted in early 90s on TV and very rare in press. As for the rest products, the portrayals of women are frequently in decorative

(sometimes – it was connected with the opening of “iron curtain” – even pornographic).

In summary both questions were answered in affirmative. First, we found that the role portrayal of women in traditional women’s magazines varied over time with the most significant changes occurring between 1959 and 1969, apparently driven by the feminism movement.

As for the USSR we noticed quite stable women’s image, which was connected with the political ideology. In later 80s-90s (at the end of the USSR existing), together with the advertising permission the women’s image in advertising of clothing, beauty, household products was quite decorative even pornographic. We had so called “back” affect when women tired of having equal rights and duties with men wanted to be just sex object.

In conclusion we should admit that different ways of feminism developing (in the United States and in the USSR) caused the different media reality for women’s image.

### **References**

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3. Maria Marx Free and Beth Hess. *Controversy and Coalition: the New Feminist Movement*. – Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985.