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TRANSFORMATIONS OF WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN MEDIA OF TRANSITIONAL POST-SOVIET SOCIETY (STUDY OF WOMEN'S MAGAZINES "RABOTNITSA" AND "KRESTYANKA", 1971–2010)

Abstract

This article examines transformations of females' representation in women's magazines of Soviet and Post-Soviet times. The paper is based on case study of two domestic publications "Rabotnitsa" and "Krestyanka" of two decades before Soviet Union's collapse (1971–1990) and two decades after it (1991–2010). Using the method of content analysis, texts, visuals and advertising are analyzed in terms of portraying women as of their gender and social roles, occupational images, beauty types, body languages, and job representations. Range of topics of the women's magazines of two periods under research are compared. Major inference of the study is that Soviet propaganda and communist values are replaced by a western-style image of a woman in Post-Soviet women's magazines, yet still influenced by traditional Slavic views of womanhood.

Key words: women's magazines, representation, Soviet press, Post-Soviet media, western values, traditional value

Introduction

Mass media as transmitters of social values have become important elements in constructing social identities of people across nations. Gender roles and stereotypes are being built and communicated by the media vividly through all times, especially in the modern reality of the increasing onslaught of western pop culture of consumerism. Its influence is spreading on the global scale and particularly on transitional societies of Post-Soviet Russia, and Ukraine. These Post-Soviet countries, which gained their independence two decades ago in 1991, are still facing

challenges of changing values on the level of the generations' contradictions: gender roles, behaviors, and morality are perceived greatly different by the older people of the Soviet mentality and post-communist era children, who became new consumers of the media messages of the market driven society.

The major shift from ideologically demagoguery press to the virtually independent advertising-driven mass media occurred in the early 1990s and introduced "fantasy feminism"¹ to Ukrainian and Russian women, who used to take the press's words for granted and now were put into the new reality of advertorials and commercial values of endless profit making. Traditional closed collective (but was it such?) Soviet society has crashed to fifteen independent countries converted to the open individualistic western values. Did the old print press adopt these values? How has the content of women's magazines changed over the years? How is a modern woman portrayed in the mass media of developing countries under study?

As gaining more rights and freedoms throughout the years, Eastern European women have been getting their voices heard in the media mostly through women's magazines. Since the early 1920s Soviet women's magazines became a powerful tool to communicate the ideological messages of the ruling Communism (Bolshevik) party, and at the same time expressed the major concerns and positions regarding women's status in the society. In this article we are going to look at the changes in the representations of the female roles and images pictured in the women's magazines "Rabotnitsa" [Female Worker] (published since 1914) and "Krestyanka" [Female Peasant] (published since 1922). The magazines are ongoing domestic publications that used to be the most circulated printed media (in different years "Krestyanka's" circulation exceeded 6 million, and "Rabotnitsa's" – 12 million copies) in the Soviet Union and transformed to the modern Russian women's magazines in 1990s. Using the methodology of content analysis, we analyzed visuals and texts in terms of how women were portrayed two decades before (1971–1990) and two decades after (1991–2010) the Soviet Union's collapse.

Traditional Eastern European female roles vs. Soviet ideology: the 1920s–1940s

Slavic Russian and Ukrainian Orthodox culture, which had been constantly under devastating attacks from Bolsheviks since the early 1920s, traditionally posed a woman as the center of a family: as mother and "Berehynia" [Guarding Mother-Caregiver]. Several studies point to the idea of the Eastern European so-

¹ S. Stephenson, *The Changing Face of Women's Magazines in Russia*, "Journalism Studies" 2007, 8 (4), p. 613–620.

cieties as those with matriarchal roots² and the roles of women in the family and community.³

In the book *Gender, Politics and Society in Ukraine* the authors mention: "The narrative of «Berehynia» is based on the idea of matriarchy as inherent to Ukrainian society from ancient times up to the present day".⁴ Females were highly respected and obeyed in the family. They were never on secondary roles in decision-making, despite the fact they were formally "behind" men as heads of families. That is why women have been active since early Christian times: as writers (Lesya Ukrainka, Marko Vovchok, and Olga Kobylyanska in the 19th–20th centuries), politicians (Grand Duchess Olga in the 10th century), and artists (Marusya Churay in the 17th century). Over centuries, the concept of "Berehynia" became a symbol of Ukrainian womanhood, motherhood and even nationhood, mixing mythological pagan beliefs and the Christian symbol of the Virgin Mary.

The Soviet ideology of atheism and erasing of feminine/masculine differentiation in social life and work was unnatural and hostile to traditional values of Ukrainians and Russians. Tolstikova and Scott notice:

Using this highly controlled and fully integrated ideological apparatus, the Communist Party of the early Soviet Union tried to compel its citizens to give up the notions of gender they had held for centuries. Always, however, the position was pointedly Marxist, rather than feminist.⁵

The socialist and communist ideas of Marx, Engels and others originated in Western Europe, but applied at Eastern European nations. That nations were mostly rural (feudalism and serf regimes ended in the late 1860s, only fifty years before the Bolsheviks came to power), illiterate, vulnerable, and hence naive and easy manipulated.

The "new Soviet person" came, of course, in male and female form. However, the "new woman" presented more of problem than the "new man" did.⁶ According to Attwood the Bolsheviks paid great attention to converting women into active advocates of communist ideas that supposedly would give them some relief from so-called "domestic slavery" of motherhood and household chores. However, Mamonova and Maxwell (1989) acknowledge that it was not really the women's choice:

² O. Hankivsky, A. Salnykova (eds.), *Gender, Politics, and Society in Ukraine*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 2010, p. 152–179.

³ T. Mamonova, M. Maxwell, *Russian Women's Studies: Essays on Sexism in Soviet Culture*, Pergamon Press, Oxford 1989.

⁴ O. Kis, (Re)Constructing Ukrainian Women's History: Actors, Authors, and Narratives [in:] O. Hankivsky, A. Salnykova (eds.), *Gender...*, op.cit., p. 153.

⁵ N. Tolstikova, L. Scott, *The New Woman and the New Byt: Women and Consumer Politics in Soviet Russia*, "Advances in Consumer Research" 2001, 28, p. 107.

⁶ L. Attwood, *Creating the New Soviet Woman: Women's Magazines as Engineers of Female Identity, 1922–1953*, Macmillan in Association with Centre for Russian and East European Studies, University of Birmingham, Houndmills 1999, p. 1.

female labor was mandatory (underpaid in most cases), and the active participation in production was greatly propagandized.

The newly emerged urban woman-worker was in vanguard of social changes followed by the retrograde rural peasant's woman: that was the female look with-in new Soviet values. From the 1920s to the 1930s illiteracy of peasant's women was an obstacle for converting them into active followers of the new ideology. That is why opinion leaders – educated doctors, teachers, agronomists, who were involved in *zhenotdely* (women's departments of the Communist Party), articulated and explained Soviet ideas. In the 1920s, women's magazines played a crucial role in this process since they presented a new life put into simple words; and more importantly, those opinion leaders collectively read them in *izba-chitalnya* (reading houses).⁷ Educated opinion leaders read aloud the magazines to illiterate women, who were supposed to believe in these uttered words of Soviet propaganda.

Growth of women's magazines and their influence on women and society

Later on in the mid- 1930s Socialist Realism as a literary style emerged in the Soviet Union cultivating the idea of artists as so-called “engineers of the souls”. Journalism adopted that style too. “«Rabotnitsa» was full of photographs of happy and fulfilled women workers living with their families in resplendent new apartment blocks. «Krestyanka's» pages depicted fields rippling with corn, tended by healthy, ruddy-cheeked farm girls on tractors”⁸ – Attwood pointed. However, that media reality somehow contradicted with the real world. Builders of the young country were truly devoted to communism and greatly celebrated in the press, but outnumbered by devastated poor people, who struggled through hunger caused by collectivization. Collectivization was compulsory collective farms creation by forced requisitioning of individual households-farms. Collectivization and total industrialization forced people to give everything to build that so-called “pretty socialist reality”. The individualistic farming culture of a Ukrainian (and partly Russian) village was opposite to the collective and aggressive style of Soviet industrial-driven society, which cruelly used peasants as tools to feed the workers-builders of the new proletariat's country.

⁷ O. Poda, *Communicators in Women's Magazine (1920–1930)*, “Juznalityka” 2012, 11 (36), p. 145–153.

⁸ L. Attwood, *op.cit.*, p. 84.

Success and downsides of Soviet women's magazines: the 1950s–1970s

In spite of the unpleasant tools communists used to construct society, using the ideological press, agitation, and propaganda, women's magazines became extremely successful with readership rising to several million in a few years.

The paradoxical success of such publications as "Rabotnitsa" lies in their closeness to the audience. Tolstikova found that although some feminists claimed such magazines had second-rate journalism with poor writing and bad quality of photographs, "women readers not only wanted to compare their lives with those of other women, but they sought standards and social ideals that they could emulate while adhering to party requirements. In «Rabotnitsa» Soviet women found a friend, an adviser, a consultant and an entertainer".⁹

In her report, Meek (1952) provided a comprehensive study on what the Soviet women's magazine «Rabotnitsa» looked like at the beginning of the 1950s. A look established the magazine's content for the following decades (till the late 1980s *perestroika* [rebuilding]):

Each issue [of "Rabotnitsa"] has about 30 pages. Practically every item is illustrated, and many of these illustrations are coloured. Most of the full-page portraits are of women, who have distinguished themselves and these portraits are produced irrespective of whether the woman is beautiful or not. The front cover has a coloured picture. This sometimes depicts something of particular seasonal interest; the April issue, for instance, has young people in the streets celebrating May Day.

A considerable section of "Rabotnitsa" deals with women taking an active part in the life of their country (...). Some of these articles describe the position of women in general, giving the numbers of women doctors, teachers, etc., in a particular country or republic. Others are short sketches describing women, who have become outstanding in their own particular field of activity.¹⁰

Indeed, celebrating a woman at her workplace, a woman-activist, and a woman-mother/worker (ideologically families were considered as so-called "social cells", which the country was built of) was the primary content for the magazines. In the years of the Soviet Union's stability (1950–1970s), educating and informing were main goals of the press:

Whether articles are dealing with the equality of the sexes or with a famous composer, practically all the features in "Rabotnitsa" have this in common, that they are produced primarily to educate the reader.

Although "Rabotnitsa" is written in a light, popular style, and although most of the features have illustrations and are set out attractively it is not the main aim of the journal to

⁹ N. Tolstikova, "Rabotnitsa". *The Paradoxical Success of a Soviet Women Magazine*, "Journalism History" 2004, 30 (3), p. 131.

¹⁰ D. Meek, *A Soviet Women's Magazine*, "Soviet Studies" 1952, 4 (1), p. 32.

provide relaxation for its readers. The main function of "Rabotnitsa" is to inform the reader about her country and about its aims, and to show her, through examples of specific cases where these aims have already been realized that they can be achieved universally.¹¹

Along with the roles of an educator and informer, the women's magazines were something much more important to their readers. Their pages were the forum to communicate and enlighten in many fields, including fashion and beauty, although in very limited amounts.

As suggested "truly feminist perspective would look to theorize consumption even under Marxist and non-industrial economies, expecting the politics of gender to occur in material culture everywhere".¹² We agree with this statement in terms of the fact that propaganda of goods' modernization and their consumption indeed were highly emphasized in each issue of the studied women's magazines. The growing of production and consumption were positioned as a constant progress made possible *only* because of the Soviet's authority. It was a core feature describing the nature of the press' rhetoric of those times.

The portrayal of the Soviet women's lives as full of joy and beauty quite differed from the view of the rest of the world. Griswold (2012) mentions how they were stereotyped in America:

One prevalent discourse characterized Soviet women as graceless, shapeless, and sexless, a description that functioned to discredit Communist women and, more important, Communism itself. In the eyes of Western critics, the ills of Communism were inscribed on the bodies of women, and the clothes, makeup, and jewelry that "adorned" these bodies became metaphors for the systematic failures of the Communist system.¹³

The American vision on the Soviet women was centered neither on fat bodies nor on maternal and grand-maternal qualities. Although "fat, poor, over-worked women symbolized the primitive, atavistic, and crudeness of Russian life" the Soviet women still amazed the world by Valentina Tereshkova being the first female astronaut, who "became a focal point for those in the United States calling to expand female opportunities outside the home".¹⁴

This contrast in Soviet and Western perception of women reflected the general relation between two parts of the world: traditional *vs.* feminist; Eastern European *vs.* Western; atheistic and gender-equal labor *vs.* religious and patriarchal societies.

Nevertheless, as the Soviet Union was facing a gap between itself and the rest of the world along with its own socioeconomic and cultural multinational problems, the changes in values and social behaviors became obvious since the mid- 1980s. It was the time of *perestroika* introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev, the first and the only

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 47.

¹² N. Tolstikova, L. Scott, *op.cit.*, p. 106.

¹³ R. Griswold, "Russian Blonde in Space": Soviet Women in the American Imagination, 1950-1965, "Journal of Social History" 2012, 45 (4), p. 881.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

ever-elected Soviet president. The print press as the most powerful medium since the early times of Soviet propaganda reflected the changes and transformed the social views of the people mostly toward the western values of overwhelming consumerism and commercialism.

Transitional society of Post-Soviet era: values' change reflected in media

Journalism, as with any other spheres of public life of any Post-Soviet country, has faced huge transformations for the last two decades since 1991, when the Soviet republics gained their independence. These changes can be recognized in several directions: *firstly*, content of media; *secondly*, layout formats and visual representation of information; *thirdly*, incorporating advertising and public relations materials in media content.

In the early 1990s, the distrust and prejudices to the journalistic profession and press that formed over years of communists' propaganda shifted the readership from print media to television and newly emerged internet.¹⁵ During the Soviet governance women's magazines positioned themselves as political and literary magazines and used to be published by No. 1 national newspaper "Pravda's" publishing house, hence essentially were ideologically right mouthpiece of Communism. The Union's collapse provoked a crisis in journalism: changes in topics, genres, and writing styles. "Krestianka" and "Rabotnitsa" had to face free market rules and booming of advertising, which is one of the fastest growing industries in the world.

Women's magazines reacted to changes although not immediately, but definitely qualitatively brining up a new type of publication to the newly emerged media market – a glossy press – something that was completely new to a Post-Soviet reader. As Ratilainen puts it, "by developing a modernized image and making itself a brand"¹⁶ "Krestyanka" as well as "Rabotnitsa" should have redefined their goals and targets including shift from mass to niche audience of urban middle and upper middle class women and promoting consumer culture.

There are number of specific peculiarities why Soviet women were a different market from those in the Western countries. We agree with Lissyutkina's (1993) opinion that Soviet women's material problems and lack of goods to consume were

¹⁵ A. Arutunyan, *The Media in Russia*, Maidenhead, Open University Press, Berkshire, England 2009.

¹⁶ S. Ratilainen, 'Family – That's an Opera': *Creativity and Family Representations in Russian Women's Magazine "Krest'ianka"* [in:] *Russian Mass Media and Changing Values*, eds. A. Rosenholm, K. Nordenstreng, E. Trubina, Routledge, London 2010, p. 159.

a core difference between them and western women. Researcher mentions six main differences, which include:

- Soviet women's view of emancipation as a right NOT to work;
- value to consume freely what they want, not what they are forced to;
- the right finally to be a romantic lady not an 'iron woman-worker' or a party activist.

"Living under forced labor", "hypocritical sexual morality", "impoverishment", "isolation from the West"¹⁷ are factors that made Post-Soviet women crave for changes and new life that shortly after Soviet Union's collapse were glorified by women's magazines, especially in the advertising images. Advertising was not (and to certain extent is still not) considered as something negative, annoying or irritating. Russian attitudes towards – and, hence, the effectiveness of – advertising is influenced by a legacy of social trends, including the "shopping deficit" of the Soviet Union, which market analysts say, is still being compensated for to this days".¹⁸ There is similar thought about booming consumerism:

The process of rebuilding the Soviet model of femininity, also found on the pages of "Krest'ianka", has led to representations of women as free and cultivated shoppers and consumers. Leaning heavily towards the imagery in Post-Soviet luxury, "Krest'ianka" still regards itself as a forum for every woman, especially for the Russian or even Slavic woman".¹⁹

Blooming of this new type of content heavily relies on two factors: firstly, lack of consumerism tradition (Soviet women did not have much choice in terms of consuming); secondly, sudden emerging of middle and upper classes, who had paying capacity and were potential readers of such content. Luxury products, western style models, presence of topics on fashion and beauty became trends of women's press. Ratilainen describes them as "selective journalism" and "fantasy": "they [magazines] display a selective and revised version of what the interviewees really tell the journalists. (...) Women's magazines' messages can be seen as fantasies supporting the social order of consumerist society".²⁰

There is another appeal to the term "fantasy" describing transitional press market:

They [women's magazines] would advocate a lifestyle and life philosophy that most Russian women could only dream about and to most of their readers their new glossy, colourful covers resembled the stuff of fantasy removed in every tangible way from the reality of lives.

So the fantasy had to work on three levels: as a framework for choice, as a model of the self, and as a rebuttal of their ideological heritage. Russian women in the 1990s were no longer

¹⁷ L. Lissyutkina, *Soviet Women at the Crossroads of Perestroika* [in:] *Gender Politics and Post-Communism: Reflections from Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, eds. N. Funk, M. Mueller, Routledge, New York 1993, p. 274–286.

¹⁸ A. Arutunyan, *op.cit.*, p. 7–9.

¹⁹ S. Ratilainen, *op.cit.*, p. 160.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 161.

a propagandist tool of the state bearing a sickle in one hand and baby in the other; however, they were being asked to take on new roles, untried and untested by their mothers or grandmothers. These women did not have the opportunity to embrace openly the radical feminism of the 1970s in the West; they had been reared in a society that already projected many of its attributes.²¹

This content was new to a Post-Soviet reader, but not new to the rest of the world. Moreover, by its ultimate essence it was not new to editors of Post-Soviet women's magazines either: it was still *constructing of the virtual reality* – desirable but not possible to majority of audience. In her own way, Kay also supports this idea: “The manipulation of women to fulfill the roles which suit a current political goal is by no mean a new phenomenon in Russia. In fact, the promotion of a given ‘ideal’ of womanhood was a constant feature of the Soviet era.”²²

Real or not new image of Post-Soviet woman is tightened to idea of promoting femininity, rejecting Soviet women's past of masculinization in favor of western civilized values. Tired of being an object of labor, women longed to be a weaker part of the humanity. This desire converted into completely new media discourse of glossy women's press that western countries launched into the newly opened market: such magazines as “Cosmopolitan”, “Burda”, “Viva”, “Vogue”, “Elle”, “Good Housekeeping” and many others. The domestic publications “Rabotnitsa” and “Krestyanka” struggled through facing dramatic changing of values and came up with rebranded products transformed in terms of women's representations. In this article we study portraying of women across two significant eras: Soviet and Post-Soviet times.

Research questions and hypothesis

Based on previously discussed scholarly works of Soviet and Post-Soviet womanhood's representations in media, particularly in women's magazines, the research questions of this study are as follows:

RQ1. How have thematic content of the women's magazines “Rabotnitsa” and “Krestyanka”, and representation of women's roles in these magazines changed over decades?

RQ2. What is a modern image of an Eastern European woman? What roles are being projected and sustained by domestic women's magazines so far?

These research questions will also test the following hypotheses:

H1. Soviet women's magazines of the 1970–1980s reflected communist ideology of labor equality of men and women portraying women in both masculine and

²¹ S. Stephenson, *op.cit.*, p. 614, 617.

²² R. Kay, *Images of an Ideal Woman: Perception of Russian Womanhood through the Media, Education and Own Eyes* [in:] *Post-Soviet Women: From the Baltic to Central Asia*, ed. M. Buckley, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1997, p. 77.

feminine types of work (e.g. crane operators, builders, drivers, teachers, doctors, cooks, and so on).

H2. During Post-Soviet times content of domestic women's magazines became similar to international western women's magazines with prevalence of commercial messages, pushing women to consume 'female' content about beauty, health, fashion, housekeeping, etc.

H3. Post-Soviet women's magazines have changed essence of a woman's image (current portrayal of a woman-consumer replaced Soviet image of a highly ideologized woman-worker/activist), but reserved Soviet magazines' function of constructing a woman's image within both textual and visual contents.

H4. Modern women's magazines present a new woman of transitional Post-Soviet society according to the global western-dominant values with minor emphasis on traditional Eastern European features.

Methodology and data analysis

Using the method of the content analysis, we analyzed each story and some visuals and ads portraying women in the selected research sample. We chose content analysis for our study because it is systematic, objective and quantitative research method and good for assessing the image of particular groups in the society.²³ Since our main aim is to analyze the content of women's magazines within the timeline of several decades and numerical data is collected content analyses fits the best in terms of fulfilling the goal. The texts, visuals, and advertising pieces were categorized and coded separately.

Sample Collection

Total population of this study comprises of two magazines (in some years the magazines were published unevenly yet usually monthly) – "Rabotnitsa" and "Krestyanka" from 1971 till 2010: issues of 1971–1990 (two decades before the Soviet Union's collapse) and 1991–2010 (two decades after getting independence by Russia and Ukraine).

Four issues were chosen at random from each half-decade (1971–1975; 1976–1980; 1981–1985; 1986–1990; 1991–1995; 1996–2000; 2001–2005; 2006–2010), or total of 32 issues. Whole issues, including all stories, visuals and ads were analyzed.

²³ R. Wimmer, J. Dominick, *Mass Media Research: An Introduction*, Wadsworth Cengage Learning, Boston 2014.

Units of Study:

- a) An article or a story of certain topic.
- b) A visual (a single photograph with or without a caption, a photograph within the story, an art piece (a reproduction of painting, drawing, etc.) that contains women's images.
- c) An advertising piece that contains women's images.

Categorizing, coding procedure, and study limitations

The texts were categorized by 'topics.' Division of topics categorizing was controversial since Soviet journalism historically was tightened greatly with propaganda and literature. Indeed, women's magazines presented themselves as sociopolitical and artistic-literary ones. Since Soviet and Post-Soviet journalism styles differ greatly we aimed to find the general set of topics proposed by different studies: recent (Frith and Karan, 2008; Ratilainen, 2010) and of the different decades of the Soviet Union (Mamonova and Maxwell, 1989; Meek, 1952). Thus, we came up with the topic categories as follows: health, fashion, professional life, motherhood/childrearing, home/housekeeping, sex/romantic relations, family, psychological issues, political/ideological views, history, international life, art/culture/sport, religion, beauty, cooking, gardening, personal profiles, science, social issues, humor/entertaining, and stories about men (see Appendix 1 for Operational Definitions).

Since our purpose was to examine representation of women in the studied magazines, we selected for analysis visuals and ads with only female images irrespective to age, social position or any other limitations. Those visuals and ads showing the cartoons, men, groups with hardly recognized figures of people, art pieces containing other than female images were excluded. The coding scheme for the visuals and ads analysis was largely based on previous studies, particularly those applied for analyzing the international women's magazines.²⁴ Six categories of women's portraying were developed: gender and social roles, jobs representation, body posture, gaze, beauty types, and occupational roles. Each category was explicated into subcategories as follows:

- *Gender and social roles*: mother/grandmother, wife, (sex)-partner, sister, daughter/granddaughter, worker/professional, caregiver/nurse, professional leader/business partner, activist/party member, and student.
- *Jobs representation*: heavy industry, light industry, politics, education, medicine, art/music/media, science, engineering/IT, farming/agriculture, services, and sport.
- *Body postures*: opened and closed.

²⁴ K. Frith, K. Karan (eds.), *Commercializing Women: Images of Asian Women in the Media*, Hampton Press, Cresskill, NJ 2008.

- *Gaze*: direct to the camera and aside of the camera.
- *Beauty types*: cute, classic/elegant, sex kittens, trendy/fashionable, traditional/folk, and natural/non-trendy.
- *Occupational image*: glamorous lady, professional woman, family caregiver/casual woman, and opinion leader/celebrity.

In order to meet the requirement of intercoder reliability²⁵ of content analysis results two individual Russian-speaking coders did a pilot study of four issues of magazines (two of Soviet times and two of post-Soviet period). When disagreement arose, the coders discussed their points of view; thus, several categories were modified and some subcategories were added. At least 0.80 of agreement was met among the coders across all categories.

Results and findings

We summarized the results of our content analysis in Tables 1–2 (see Appendix 2). Thematic content of stories was categorized according to whether a story has only one main topic that embraces its general idea (Topic 1) or additional second topic that independently or supportably contribute to understanding of a story (Topic 2).

As seen from Table 1 the main topics of *texts* of Soviet and post-Soviet magazines differ greatly. The major topics of stories in pre-independent times were professional life (11% of all content), politics/ideology (10%) and social issues (10%) with dramatic shift to beauty (10%) and art/culture/sport (10%) in first two decades of the countries' independences. Meanwhile in all times there is sustainability in quantity of textual coverage (not taking into consideration visuals and ads as for now) of such topics as health, fashion, cooking/food and humor/entertaining.

Comparing the content of texts, we found out that in post-Soviet magazines the major change is observed in *decreasing of number of stories*. So, politics/ideology (no stories at all, which is ten times less than in Soviet magazines – 10%), professional life stories decreased from 11% to 2% (five times less), social issues and motherhood/childrearing and family are covered two times less (decrease from 10% to 5% and 6% to 3% respectively). At the same time major *increase of coverage* is in such areas as psychological issues (from 1% to 7% – seven times more), beauty (from 2% to 10% – five times more), home/housekeeping (from 3 to 7%), and stories about men (from 4% to 7%) – each topic – increase in two times.

While in Soviet magazines the major additional topics were exactly the same as main ones, the post-Soviet magazines have shown wider diversity in additional thematic aspects of stories: art/culture/sport, family, social issues, and history.

²⁵ O. Holsti, *Content Analysis for Social Sciences and Humanities*, Addison-Wesley, Reading, MA 1969.

These results of content analysis support our first hypothesis (H1) that Soviet women's magazines of two last decades of the Soviet Union's existence mostly supported the communism politics/ideology portraying women mainly as workers and social activists; and the second hypothesis (H2) that post-Soviet magazines became similar to international (western) print women's magazines in terms of variety of topics. Analysis of texts showed that despite heavily ideologized and propagandized content Soviet women's magazines informed, enlightened, and advised women in a broad diversity of issues, since quite a few topics had got the same amount of coverage both during Soviet, and Post-Soviet periods of time.

The results of content analysis of *visuals and ads* (see Table 2) present the transformations in females' portrayal over four decades under study. We found that Soviet magazines tended to portray women showing them mostly in gender/social roles (79% of images), and only in little more than a half (60% of images) of cases Post-Soviet magazines did so. Major *gender/social roles* of Soviet women were a worker, a professional leader, and a mother/grandmother. Women of the newly independent countries were primarily portrayed as business professional leaders, wives, and daughters/granddaughters. We believe, such shift in portraying from more serious and older workers/mothers to younger and more independent women was obviously dictated by newly opened market-driven circumstances of post-Soviet societies discussed in the previous parts of this paper.

The *representation of women at their jobs* also was a feature of Soviet women's press (66% of images in Soviet magazines presented women at their work place and only 41% – in Post-Soviet ones). Three major areas Soviet women worked at were farming/agriculture, heavy industry, and art/music/media; the post-Soviet female professionals were mostly portrayed in art/music/media and politics.

Representation of Soviet women in their *occupational roles* was traditional: as professional women and family caregivers/casual women. Women of new democratic countries were portrayed in magazines as opinion leaders/celebrities and family caregivers/casual women. The *beauty types* of ladies shown in Soviet and post-Soviet magazines also reflect major direction in transformations. Natural/non-trendy look prevailed in representations of Soviet women; cute women's beauty type is presented in magazines of the 1991–2010. Interesting that traditional/folk beauty type is equally popular in picturing women in all times (it is among top-three beauty types). Partly it contradicts to our fourth hypothesis (H4) since, in fact, Post-Soviet magazines do not make minor emphasis on presenting the traditional Eastern European features in presenting women. Obviously, to certain extent the rebranded “Krestyanka” and “Rabotnitsa” found their unique niche in appealing to a traditional Slavic female image incorporated into global values. The analysis of visuals and ads in categories of *body posture* and *gaze* also supports this statement.

As seen in the literature gaze into the camera and open body postures (legs and arms are not crossed, non-strained, etc.) characterize a person as self-confident,

opened, dynamic;²⁶ while closed body postures (crossed legs and arms, strained, turned away from the camera) and gaze aside the camera refer to dependent, closed, and submissive/subordinated features.²⁷ According to our findings, predominantly Soviet magazines pictured women in closed postures glazing aside the camera; the Post-Soviet women were shown in mostly open postures, but still mainly looking aside the camera. It might also mean that some of the traditional Russian and Ukrainian female look as shy, modest, fairly dependent on families/men is still being utilized in women's press.

Nevertheless, we assume that Post-Soviet women's magazines contributed to creating a modern stereotype of female success seen as being an art/media/sport/politics celebrity or a family caregiver, rather than an obedient worker or a professional. Finally, content analysis results support third and fourth hypotheses (H3 and H4) proposed in this paper – the global western-dominant values of independence, beauty obsessing, commercialized politics and consumerism prevail in post-independent women's magazines'; it helps constructing a new female image by replacing the previously image of a highly ideologized woman-worker.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to indicate transformations in the females' representations in the women's magazines of two decades before and two decades after the Soviet Union's collapse. Particularly, we discussed and compared transformations of women's images in transitional society of Soviet times and Post-Communism.

Overall, the predominant portrayal of a Soviet woman was as a worker or a mother, closed in her bodily and facial expressions, looking mostly natural or non-trendy with occupational images as a family caregiver or a professional woman. The rebranded woman's magazines has been building the image of a new lady since Russia and Ukraine fell apart into two independent countries. ***It is an image of a business leader or a wife, opened and self-determined in her body language, but still with traditional accents in behavior and look, cute rather than natural, with occupational image as a family caregiver or oppositely an opinion leader/celebrity.*** Interesting is the fact that beauty type defined as sex kitten was the least used in women's representation of all times. Obviously, traditional Christian Orthodox modesty (promoted during Soviet years as well, though in much more strict and dictatorial ways) is still dominant in this transitional society.

In our opinion, such mix of traditional elements and western-adopted features in representing a Post-Soviet woman refers to a phenomenon of cultural hybridi-

²⁶ G. Wainwright, R. Thompson, *Understand Body Language*, Teach Yourself, London 2010.

²⁷ K. Frith, K. Karan (eds.), *op.cit.*

ty as it appears in the literature.²⁸ Globalization of cultural sphere and its following reflection in mass media resulted in fusion of identities, forms, and also journalistic styles and genres. The findings of our study clearly show such transformations. Women's looks not only have changed, but also complete print magazines structures and forms of their content. From literary and political-social, media domestic women's magazines turned into entertainment and beauty-oriented publications.

Indeed, changing entire approach to publishing of women's print media as influential players in the market of products and ideas, the core function behind them remained the same: women's magazines still construct reality for their readers. Communist propaganda is replaced by advertising, work obsessed women's images – by beauty/body obsessed ones.

Nevertheless, we see the positive remark as the “Rabotnitsa” and “Krestyanka” did not vanish totally in flow of launching global western-style publications like “Elle”, “Vogue” or “Cosmopolitan”. On contrary, they maintained some of distinct traditional views on how modern Slavic woman should look like both as a professional and a wife, cute, but moderate in her looks, values and preferences.

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²⁸ M. Kraidy, *Hybridity or the Cultural Logic of Globalization*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia 2005.

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Appendix 1. The operational definitions of the categories of content analysis

Visuals and advertising

A. *Gender and social roles*: roles that undertaken by women within social groups (among family members, at work, in society):

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Mother/Grandmother | 7. Caregiver/nurse |
| 2. Wife | 8. Professional leader/Business partner |
| 3. Sex-partner/Sex object | 9. Activist/party member |
| 4. Sister | 10. Student. |
| 5. Daughter/granddaughter | 11. Other (can't be defined) |
| 6. Worker (both industry and farm) | |

B. *Jobs representations*: work typed, where women obtain certain positions:

1. Heavy industry (metallurgy, aircraft building, automobile, defending industry, mining);
2. Politics (deputies, officers, delegates etc.);
3. Light industry (textile industry, food industry);
4. Education (kindergarten educators, school teacher, professor, librarian etc.);
5. Medicine (doctor, nurse, pharmacist);
6. Art, Music, Media (journalist, dancer, artist, museum worker, model, actress etc.);
7. Science (physics, space, astronomy, astrology, chemistry, architecture);
8. Engineering/Informational Technologies;
9. Farming/agriculture (milk maids, planting workers, collective farm workers);
10. Services (tourism, hotels, public catering);
11. Sport;
12. Other (can't be defined).

C. *Body postures*: general look of body and posture:

1. Opened (arms and legs are not crossed, open face/head, front positions);
2. Closed (arms and legs are crossed, covered face/head, turned/back positions).

D. *Gaze*: the way women's eyes look towards the camera

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Direct into the camera | 2. Aside from the camera |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|

E. *Beauty types*: the way women dress, use make-up, and being positioned at the visuals:

1. Cute (casual, but pretty clothes; light make-up; mostly relaxed);
2. Classic/elegant (elegant style, formal make-up, mostly within business situations);
3. Sex kittens (sexy clothes, bright make-up, appealing postures);
4. Trendy/fashionable (newest brand clothes, professional make-up, 'in center of events');
5. Traditional/folk (traditional, formal or folk closing and accessories, minimal make-up, outwardly restrained modest look);
6. Natural/non-trendy (casual closing, no make-up, neutral postures and positions);
7. Other (can't be defined).

F. *Occupational image*: major life style position women occupy in the society:

1. Glamorous lady (trendy, beauty-obsessed);
2. Professional woman (business style, work-oriented);
3. Family caregiver/casual woman (mother, housewife, housekeeper; casual woman);
4. Opinion leader/celebrity (successful, beautiful, self-sufficient leader, style icon);
5. Other (can't be defined).

Stories' Topics

1. **Health** (any themes related to healthy life style, diseases prevention, sports);
2. **Fashion** (stories about newest trends in clothing, accessories, cosmetics, etc.);
3. **Professional life** (stories describing women at their work place, as successful professionals);
4. **Motherhood/childrearing** (stories related pregnancy, child birth, child rearing, child's issues, successful mother's stories);
5. **Home/Housekeeping** (anything related to home interior/exterior, decorations, remodeling);
6. **Sex/Romantic relations** (stories about sexual life, romance, partners' relations);
7. **Family** (stories about successful families, family traditions, family relations);
8. **Psychological issues** (discussing physiological problems; professional counseling);
9. **Political/ideological views** (stories that include obvious/hidden political context/agitation; ideologically 'right' stories – those supporting the mainstream politics);
10. **History** (any pieces about historical figures or events);
11. **International life** (international news, stories about foreign countries' lives);

12. **Art, Culture, Sport** (about music, art, popular or traditional culture, media, education);
13. **Religion** (topics describing religious views, traditional Orthodox Christianity);
14. **Beauty** (stories about beauty, cosmetics, accessories, dressing styles advising);
15. **Cooking** (recipes, cooking tips, advices);
16. **Gardening** (planting advices, products);
17. **Personal Profiles** (profiles of successful women);
18. **Science** (information about scientific inventions useful for regular life);
19. **Social issues** (stories about current social issues: unemployment, violence, safety, etc.);
20. **Humor/Entertaining** (humorous pieces, cartoons, games, horoscopes, etc.);
21. **Stories about men**;
22. **Tourism** (domestic and international);
23. **Others** (can't be defined).



Appendix 2. Results of content analysis

Table 1. Results of content analysis of texts in category 'topic'

Variables Topic 1 Topic 2				
Variables description	N of texts (Soviet decades 1971–1990)	Frequency (%) (Soviet decades 1971–1990)	N of texts (Post-Soviet decades 1991–2010)	Frequency (%) (Post-Soviet decades 1991–2010)
Health	33 5	6 2	47 8	7 5
Fashion	29 6	5 2.5	42 0	6 0
Professional life	58 26	11 11	15 6	2 3
Motherhood/Childrearing	33 20	6 9	18 5	3 3
Home/Housekeeping	18 2	3 1	48 0	7 0
Sex/Romantic Relations	16 4	3 2	28 4	4 2
Family	36 11	6 5	24 23	3 14
Psychological Issues	6 5	1 2	45 12	7 7
Politics/Ideology	57 36	10 16	1 5	0 4
History	9 21	2 9	11 13	1,5 8
International life	15 21	3 9	4 12	0,5 7
Art/Culture/Sport	48 19	9 8	68 34	10 21
Religion	1 1	0 0.5	16 0	2 0
Beauty	9 2	2 1	66 4	10 3
Cooking/Food	22 12	4 5	45 4	6 3
Gardening	6 0	1 0	19 0	2 0
Personal Profiles	25 5	5 2	23 4	3 3

Variables Topic 1 Topic 2				
Variables description	N of texts (Soviet decades 1971–1990)	Frequency (%) (Soviet decades 1971–1990)	N of texts (Post-Soviet decades 1991–2010)	Frequency (%) (Post-Soviet decades 1991–2010)
Beauty	9 2	2 1	66 4	10 3
Cooking/Food	22 12	4 5	45 4	6 3
Gardening	6 0	1 0	19 0	2 0
Personal Profiles	25 5	5 2	23 4	3 3
Beauty	9 2	2 1	66 4	10 3
Science	5 0	1 0	14 3	2 2
Social Issues	55 23	10 10	33 13	5 8
Humor/Entertaining	22 4	4 2	35 4	5 3
Stories about men	24 8	4 3	50 7	7 4
Tourism	4 0	1 0	19 1	3 0.5
Other	18 0	3 0	29 0	4 0
Total 'Topic 1'	549	100	700	100
Total 'Topic 2'	231	100	162	100

Source: own research.

Table 2. Results of content analysis of visuals and advertising

Variables and their description	N of visuals and ads (Soviet decades 1971–1990)	Frequency (%) (Soviet decades 1971–1990)	N of visuals and ads (Post-Soviet decades 1991–2010)	Frequency (%) (Post-Soviet decades 1991–2010)
Gender/Social roles				
Mother/Grandmother	54	15	33	5
Wife	16	4	74	12
Sex partner	14	4	38	6
Sister	0	0	11	2
Daughter/Granddaughter	35	10	56	9
Worker/Professional	77	22	33	5
Caregiver/Nurse	4	1	2	0.3
Professional Leader/ Business partner	45	13	82	13
Activist/Party member	21	6	30	5
Student	15	4	6	1
Other/Cannot be defined	76	21	247	40
Job Representation				
Heavy Industry	22	6	0	0
Politics	19	5	59	10
Light Industry	15	4	2	0.3
Education	5	1.5	4	1
Medicine	5	1.5	9	1.5
Art, Music, Media	35	10	118	19
Science	8	2	11	2
Engineering/IT	0	0	9	1.5
Farming/Agriculture	73	21	16	2.5
Services	12	3	16	2.5
Sport	6	2	7	1
Other/Cannot be defined	157	44	361	59
Occupational Image				
Glamorous lady	16	4	82	13
Professional woman	94	26	79	13
Family caregiver/ Casual woman	95	27	130	21
Opinion leader/ Celebrity	60	17	129	21

Variables and their description	N of visuals and ads (Soviet decades 1971–1990)	Frequency (%) (Soviet decades 1971–1990)	N of visuals and ads (Post-Soviet decades 1991–2010)	Frequency (%) (Post-Soviet decades 1991–2010)
Other/Cannot be defined	92	26	192	32
Beauty Type				
Cute	34	10	167	27
Classic/Elegant	34	10	105	17
Sex Kittens	5	1	49	8
Trendy/Fashionable	70	19	71	12
Traditional/Folk	80	22	109	18
Natural/Non-trendy	123	35	100	16
Other/Cannot be defined	11	3	11	2
Body Posture				
Open	159	45	356	58
Closed	198	55	256	42
Gaze				
Direct to camera	81	23	271	44
Aside from camera	276	77	341	56
Total for each variable	357	100	612	100

Source: own research.