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**Reproduction of Gender Ideology Through Russian Consumer Culture: The Case of Iconography of the 'Mother' in Russia**  
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# Reproduction of gender ideology in Russian consumer culture: the case of iconography of motherhood.

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## Abstract

*Gender is one of the central topics of contemporary studies in marketing and consumer research. Since the introduction of Goffman's schema on gender roles and portrayals in advertisements (Goffman, 1979), scholars continue adapting his method and reveal some of the hidden factors of gender roles, portrayals or inequalities in contemporary marketing practices (Bettany et al 2010). Noticeably, less attention has been given to the ideological aspects of gender portrayals and its unique value of producing and reproducing sociocultural meanings around gender. Thus, this research looks into the archetypal images of Russian mothers and proposes multiple iconographic images of motherhood implemented in contemporary Russian print media. The study adopted critical visual methods (Schroeder, 2002) and qualitative content analysis (Schreier 2014) while analysing advertisements from three Russian and three Western origin 'mother and baby'/'parenting' magazines. The study is positioned within the theoretical spectrum of Consumer Culture Theory and contributes to the field by unpacking the role of 'symbolic power'/(ideology) (Bourdieu, 1979) around the motherhood that persists in contemporary Russian consumer culture.*

*Key words: Gender Ideology, Consumer culture, Motherhood, advertisements, Russia*

Gender related studies were first introduced to the marketing field in late 1960s (Cova et al. 2013) with the emerging topics of gender stereotyping, gender roles and portrayals in print and TV advertisements (Berger 2015, Schroeder and Zwick 2004, Kroska 2006). In the contemporary marketing research a gap related to the thematic approach towards the reproduction of gender ideology and its role on consumer culture is noticeable (Thompson and Ustuner 2015). This study is positioned within CCT research and acknowledges the social reproduction (Bourdieu 1979; Arnould and Thompson 2005) and construction of identity as a result of socio-historic and sociocultural change that are evoked through mentioning's, symbols and signs (Moisio et al. 2004, Arsel and Zeynep 2013). By exploring archetypal images of mothers in contemporary Russian consumer culture we propose five archetypes of motherhood frequently used in print media. The study applies novel theoretical framework and attempts to unpack iconography of Russian mothers and the effect of reproduced gender ideology in Russian consumer culture.

Following Schroeder's (2006) interpretation the study looks at images as core components of advertising practice that continuously circulate in everyday life by producing and reproducing sociocultural meanings (Borgerson and Schroeder 2002), stimulate gender roles (Goffman 1976), circulate signs and symbols that contribute towards identity formation as well as lifestyle choices (Arnold and Thompson 2005, Featherstone 2006). We also further argue that advertising is built on cultural codes (Schroeder 2013), icons (Cian et al 2015) universal archetypes (Thompson 2004, Belk and Costa 1998), symbols (Scott 1994, Moisio et al 2013), ideological images (Bourdieu 1979, Shepherd et al 2015, Humphreys and Thompson 2014) persisting in Russian cultural capital. Russia is a country that passed through several socio-historic transitions and political and cultural transformations that largely constructed contemporary Russian consumer culture (Roberts 2013, Kaufmann et al 2012). In this sense Russian consumer culture is considered as a strong representation of symbolic capital that sustained throughout centuries thanks to its ideological strategies (Wirthschafter 2006, Carmichael 1968, Kravets and Orge 2010) and strong believes in national traditions and heritage (Bartlett 2005, Simes 1994). Literature evidenced that one of the strongest and main sources of ideology propaganda was first promoted in Russia through icons and iconography (Agadjanian 2001, Bondarenko 2000, Brittlebank 2009).

A novel methodological framework of critical visual methods (Schroeder and Borgerson 2015) and qualitative content analysis (Schreier 2014) were applied in order to conducted thorough image analysis of mothers produced in Russian 'mother and baby' magazines. The dimensions and categories of qualitative analysis are mainly based on Goffman's schema (1979) and critical visual analysis (Schroeder 2006, Schroeder and Zwick 2004). We followed the triangulation method for the purpose of confirming the reliability and validity of data interpretation.

The results revealed plural archetypal images of mothers in contemporary Russian print advertisements. Namely we explored 1) traditional archetypal figure of mother within conservative family settings (the image contained male figure, two or more children in casual everyday life settings), 2) modern family in more formal settings (male figure one or more children in more formal settings and representing higher social class) 3) mother and daughter goddess were more often seen together engaged in various activities (here again no male figures observed) 4) mother and child (infant) where the figure of mother is more a background symbolising protective shield for a child (the image mostly did not

involve any male figures), 5) positive and independent mother figure (this archetype moves towards Western stereotypes of motherhood where mothers are more often seen in social spaces, more active and engaged).

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