

‘Women Are Warriors’ or ‘Women Are Flowers’: A Corpus-based Study on the Metaphorical Framings of Women in *Women of China*

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Abstract

This study explores how women are represented in conceptual metaphors in the magazine *Women of China* (WoC) and what ideologies about gender and women are presented in the conceptual metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Three conceptual metaphors are located in this study based on the qualitative definition, corpus-driven linguistic method, and statistical calculation, which are WOMEN ARE WAR CHARACTERS, WOMEN ARE FAMILY CHARACTERS, and WOMEN ARE FLOWERS. The first two metaphors are prominently used in the period of 1956-1966, while the last one is used more frequently in 1978-1998. Given the result that the frequency of the conceptual metaphors changes diachronically, the potential dynamics of change are also explored. Additionally, Semino (2008) argues that metaphors are related to using a certain perspective to consider or present a thing, which emphasises and obscures specific aspects of reality. This process of highlighting and hiding specific aspects is a process of framing (Fillmore, 1975; Aubrun & Grady, 2003), which potentially facilitates the standardising and normalising of typical values, beliefs and ideologies (Yanow, 2000; Del Mar, 2017). According to the diachronic evidence in this study, the main ideologies of different periods also potentially influence the productivity of the conceptual metaphors explored.

Keywords conceptual metaphors, framing, corpus linguistics, discourse analysis, media representation, women’s magazine, ideology, Chinese study

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1 Introduction

Women of China (WoC) is a monthly magazine founded in 1939 and published by the All-China Women's Federation (ACWF), which is a national organisation focused on promoting gender equality and protecting the rights and interests of women and children in China. The magazine is the longest-running women-oriented magazine in Chinese history, which covers a wide range of topics, including women's health, rights, education, employment, entrepreneurship, and the environment. The WoC was renamed *New Women of China* in 1949, in keeping with the social context of the birth of the new China. After the country entered a new period of socialist revolution and construction, the name was changed back to *Women of China* in 1956.

In 1967, the magazine ceased publication due to the Cultural Revolution, a nationwide political movement initiated by President Mao to weed out dissenters. In 1978, the magazine resumed publication. However, in the face of marketisation and the growth of commercial women-oriented magazines, the magazine underwent a market-oriented reform in the 1980s and 1990s, with more focus on lifestyle topics and offering more advertising space, and in 1998, the magazine was converted into a bimonthly publication. The magazine of first half of the month continued the tradition of the magazine. The newly created second half of the magazine focuses on women in need in society and the popularisation of legal knowledge, which is outside the scope of this study. The columns of magazines in different historical periods were characterised by different features. As a magazine that focuses on current social issues, each change and turn of the WoC are basically in line with the social background of the time¹.

My focus on the data from 1956 to 1998 is based on the fact that the magazine entered the period of socialist construction in the 1956 “division” alongside sociopolitical change, so focusing on data after 1956 is consistent with the magazine's agenda. Also, the magazine was divided into two semimonthly issues in 1998; the legal section was assigned to the second half of the issue. Focusing on the pre-division data as a whole helps to maintain the integrity of the data. Additionally, I choose WoC as a focus based on the fact that 1) eighty-four years after its founding, WoC is the earliest and longest women's magazine to be published in contemporary China, with a far-reaching history and strong influence. 2) It is the official publication that potentially represents the mainstream ideologies about women in media. As Hall stated, a media product is not a natural product (Hall, 2005) because media is selective in its presentation of certain information or topics. 3) The development of WoC coincides with the social changes since the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), which is conducive to the media study of the representation of women in a macro social context.

To approach women's representation, the theoretical and methodological framework of my study includes Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), framing, and corpus linguistics. According to CMT, metaphor is a mode of thought rather than a rhetorical device (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). “The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:5). Moreover, according to Semino (2008), metaphors are related to using a certain perspective to consider or present a thing, which emphasises and obscures specific aspects of reality. This process of highlighting and hiding specific aspects is a process of framing (Aubrun & Grady, 2003), which potentially facilitates the standardising and normalising of

¹ The following websites have information:

[https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E4%B8%AD%E5%9B%BD%E5%A6%87%E5%A5%B3/53941708?fromModule=d](https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E4%B8%AD%E5%9B%BD%E5%A6%87%E5%A5%B3/53941708?fromModule=d%20isambiguation)

[https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E4%B8%AD%E5%9B%BD%E5%A6%87%E5%A5%B3%E6%9D%82%E5%BF%](https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E4%B8%AD%E5%9B%BD%E5%A6%87%E5%A5%B3%E6%9D%82%E5%BF%97%E7%A4%BE/5372124)

<http://www.womenofchina.com/>

typical values, beliefs and ideologies (Yanow, 2000). Therefore, a rigorous examination of metaphors can reveal the system of value of speech communities. However, despite the value of studying metaphors, there is no automatic way to recognise metaphors as of now (Demmen, Semino, Demjén, Koller, Hardie, Rayson and Payne, 2015; Yu, 2021), so the potential to overuse intuition to identify metaphors exists. In order to diminish this potential, I use the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP), which is a method used to improve the accuracy of locating metaphors, which was developed by Pragglejaz Group in 2007. Additionally, corpus linguistics helps to locate typical lexical units and calculate frequency, which adds quantitative elements to metaphor analysis (Dancygier, 2017).

Although media research on conceptual metaphors is useful for understanding social value systems, such as ideologies about women, previous research on how Chinese media present conceptual metaphors of women is scarce (Yu, 2021) and lacks a systematic approach. In addition to this, to my knowledge, there are no studies focusing on metaphorical change of the representation of women over time in Chinese. As mentioned by Cotter and Drummond (2021:146), “longitudinal awareness... is essential, whether one is examining language, interaction, and discourse on micro to macro levels or in linguistic, discourse, pragmatic, or ideological contexts”. The diachronic study, which includes this awareness, is helpful in comprehending language (which in my study is metaphor) in the ideological context. Additionally, past studies on the changes in women's metaphorical presentation in *Chinese media* are scarce and mainly qualitative in their approach to illustrate the differences. This paper is the first study to present a statistically significant change over time in this type of metaphorical presentation using quantitative methods, which is innovative in its approach and benefits the use of different disciplinary approaches.

There are three research questions in this study: 1) How are women represented in the conceptual metaphors in *Women of China* (WoC)? 2) What are the ideologies of gender/women that are presented in the conceptual metaphors? 3) Do the conceptual metaphors that represent women change in these two periods? and if so, how, why and to what extent do they change? (The Cultural Revolution separates the timeline into two stages).

The structure of this study includes an introduction, literature review, methodology, result, analysis, discussion and conclusion, and I present them sequentially in this article.

2 Literature Review

In this section, I explain how the subject of this study comes into focus and why it should be investigated in light of preceding research. I begin by outlining the social role theory and the social construction of gender theory. Then, I refer to the earlier research on how women are represented in magazines in general and in *Women of China* (WoC) in specific. Although my research adds to the corpus of knowledge on how women are represented in the media, its main value is that it enables a longitudinal study of WoC and a thorough comparison of metaphors shown within it. Therefore, I also draw attention to related studies on metaphors, including those on the rhetorical use of metaphors and their function (e.g. Semino and Demjén, 2016), research that compares studies on various metaphor data sets (e.g. Cotter et al., 2021), and fluctuations in metaphor use throughout the course of history (e.g. Gevaert, 2005). At the end of this section, the research gap, which is dealt with in the following sections, is clearly identified.

2.1 Social role theory and the social construction of gender theory

Social role theory is important to understand in connection with the social construction of gender theory. For example, Mead (1934) describes the stages of development from play to game, where individuals learn to consider the perspectives of multiple others—the ‘generalised other’. This contributes to internalising societal norms and roles. Relatedly, Park (1952) states that the self is presented in the multiple roles people play. Roles are linked to structural positions in society, and the self is closely linked to role-playing as regulated by structural positions in society (Park, 1952). Specifically, according to Eagly's argument (1987), a society's prevalent gender stereotypes result from the distribution of labour between the genders. Kandel, Mark and Raveis (1985) argue that the everyday social roles that women may assume include marital, occupational and household Roles. Also, in different roles, women may internalise certain qualities due to external expectations of social roles (Rand, Brescoll, Everett, Capraro and Barcelo, 2016).

Furthermore, according to the social construction of gender theory, gender roles are an achieved ‘status’ in a social setting that implicitly and explicitly classifies individuals and, as a result, motivates behaviour in society (Lindsey, 2015). Different from sex in the biological sense, gender roles are seen as socially constructed notions that are acquired over one's lifetime (Hackman, 2013). Hence, the connotations of different gender roles are not static and uniform, which is related to social constructs and can change in a wide range of horizontal social and vertical temporal dimensions. This is a relevant dynamic in my study.

Reflected in media, on the one hand, the social role expectations and definitions can impact the representation of women, resulting in specific types of roles, such as traditional domestic women's social roles being emphasised or reinforced (Santonico, Trombetta, Paradiso, and Rollè, 2023). Then, it potentially influences the frequent occurrence of a certain target domain, which refers to the abstract or complex concept that is being understood or explained (‘women’ in this study), in conceptual metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), represented in media. On the other hand, media can represent and reproduce gender roles, and the connotation of gender roles is not monolithic, which inevitably brings about variations in the presentation of gender roles, as I show.

2.2 The representation of women in media

It has been well-documented how significant media is for comprehending gender-related aspects like beliefs, attitudes, or roles (Ward and Grower, 2020). However, according to Kellner (2003), media

cultural texts are neither solely vehicles of the ruling ideology nor unadulterated entertainment. Instead, “they are complex artefacts that embody social and political discourses whose analysis and interpretation require methods of reading and critique that articulate their embeddedness in the political economy, social relations, and the political environment within which they are produced, circulated, and received” (Kellner, 2003: 4). Hence, critically analysing media cultural texts is beneficial to understand their interactivity with macro social and political discourses, such as gender-related discourse.

According to a meta-analysis of gender in media representation, gender stereotypes are frequently overtly evident in the media and often tilt towards men's representation (Santoniccolo et al., 2023). Hentges and Case (2013) make a similar point, finding that the proportion of male characters in children's television programming is disproportionately higher than that of female characters. Specifically, the great majority of research on female representation in media, according to Santoniccolo et al. (2023), focuses on the ‘sexual objectification of women’, which is a popular phenomenon in gender-related discourse.

On the other side, there is societal scrutiny, which is a result of the activism for women's rights, inserts a socially desirable concept, like gender equality, into the framing of women (Eagly, 2018). In the Western world, sentiments towards gender equality also seem to be at an all-time high (Minkin, 2020), which has undoubtedly increased pressure on society and culture to lessen harmful or stereotypical representations of women in media (Santoniccolo et al., 2023). In all, media is not only a (selective) presentation of reality, but also a place where different value systems compete and talk to each other. These insights inform my analysis of the Chinese data.

2.2.1 *The representation of women in Women of China (WoC)*

Research on the journal WoC has been mainly focused on by Chinese academics, and no English-language literature on the journal has been found, as far as I know. Hence, I mainly critically summarise the Chinese-language research literature on the WoC in this part and focus primarily on research on the presentation of women in this magazine.

Feng (1992) takes the 325 typical characters (the protagonists in the newsletters provide the main roles) reported in the WoC during the forty-year period from 1950 to 1990 as a sample. This study, as fundamental research on the women's representation of WoC, initially demonstrates the characteristics of the typical images of Chinese women, as well as their changes in different historical periods. Feng argues that the representation of women in WoC in different periods reflects both the values of the mainstream culture and its subjective choices of women's roles in that period and, at the same time, reflects the objective image of women that existed in the social reality of that period (1992). However, this study is more descriptive summary rather than critical analysis.

Yan's (2008) and Nie and Wang's (2012) studies inherit the research method of Feng (1992), dividing and counting the women presented according to their age, occupation, achievement and other indicators. The difference between these media studies is that when selecting the research samples, different periods are chosen. This kind of research is mainly analysed in conjunction with the embeddedness of the mainstream ideology in the choice of typical characters in order to reveal the influencing factors of the representation of women in different eras.

In addition, Wang's (2011) study focuses on the changes in the visual representation of women on magazine covers, arguing that women's presentation has experienced a shift from production icons to life icons and then to consumption icons. The WoC represents the most images of workers in the planned economy stage (1949-1978), but after 1978, the representation of entertainment stars becomes more and more frequent. After the 1990s, entertainment stars become the visual image with the largest

proportion on WoC covers, accompanied by an emphasis on stereotypical images of women, such as the attraction of appearance (Wang, 2011).

Wei's (2013) study also draws on Feng's division of gender presentation into different indicators, but she analyses the statistical results in a tripartite context of the state, the market, and feminism. Wei (2013) uses the theory of gender roles to study the production and presentation of gender discourse in various power relations exerted on the WoC. Moreover, Wei's (2013) analysis reveals that state discourse dominates the presentation of women in the magazine, setting its agenda. Also, Wei argues that the magazine sometimes strategically narrates gender issues as class issues. For example, in its presentation of laid-off women workers, the magazine focuses mainly on the 'low-quality' unemployed women who become bosses by starting their own businesses. The narrative obscures the systemic inequality, prioritising the sacrifice of female labour at the expense of resource constraints. At the same time, Wei's study is the only one in my systematic research that uses interviews to obtain data. Wei (2013) conducts interviews with the editors of the magazine, and during the interviews, she finds out the influence that the market brings to the magazine, such as the selection of topics and the representation of women on the covers.

In addition to this, there are a small number of studies that compare the WoC with market-oriented women-focused journals of the same period (Zhang, 2010; Cui, 2014). These studies find that the magazine represents a wider image of women in terms of their careers and can also focus on more complex gender-linked legal issues (Zhang, 2010). Narratively, the magazine "breaks out of the neoliberal framework of self-responsibility for issues and can proactively explore institutional or social solutions to gender issues" (translation mine) (Cui, 2014).

In general, studies on the presentation of women in WoC mainly focus on two directions. One direction is to compare the magazine's representation of women in different periods, which reflects the changes in women's gender roles in the dimension of time, as well as the competition and negotiation between the state's dominant ideology and the market, feminist ideology, and the media as the fourth pillar (Schultz, 1998). The second dimension of the studies compares the WoC with other purely market-directed women's magazines, in which the uniqueness and irreplaceability of the magazine in representing women's gender roles are instead emphasised.

2.2.2 Rationale for choosing the Women of China

Based on the above research, the WoC is a journal that represents women in multiple sociopolitical powers' competitions and negotiations over time, and as such, it is a 'complex artefact' that embodies social and political discourses (see Kellner's media study in 2003). In addition to this, it provides data covering almost the entire span of the People's Republic of China, and the analysis of it is of benefit to understanding and analysing the changes of social and political ideologies in China. Hence, in order to investigate the 'embeddedness' of ideologies in WoC, it is essential to understand how gender roles are selected and reproduced in the WoC, and comprehend which and how (typical) gender roles are legitimised or normalised, and their relations with macro social and political contexts are manifested.

2.3 Previous studies on metaphor

Despite the fact that this study adds knowledge to the field of how women are represented in the media, its primary contribution is the longitudinal analysis of metaphors and the in-depth comparison of metaphors from two distinct sociopolitical periods in China. Therefore, I show the previous studies on metaphors in this section.

2.3.1 *The function of metaphors*

According to Charteris-Black (2004), metaphors may express assessment and convince. Yanow (2000) also contends that metaphors often take on a prescriptive component and advocate further behaviour rather than being purely descriptive. A summary is raised by Semino and Demjén (2016) that suggests that metaphors can be studied from three perspectives, which are metaphors in thought (cognitive perspective), metaphors' contribution to real-world discourse (discourse perspective), and metaphors' potential to facilitate or obstruct communication in institutional settings (practise perspective). In all, the functional dimension of metaphors facilitates this study's analysis of the potentially different functions of metaphors and the embedded evaluations or expectations that may come from a particular ideology.

2.3.2 *Studies on the comparison of metaphors*

As mentioned above, the representation of women in WoC is not static (Feng, 1992; Wang, 2011), and hence the metaphors about women in WoC are potentially changeable as well, which makes the comparison of them meaningful. Hence, I review comparative studies of metaphors in this subsection.

According to Jaworska and Kinloch (2018), comparing different data sets enables the researcher to identify how discourses 'travel' between contexts, which also function in the comparison of metaphors. On the level of method, the construction and use of the corpus contribute to the study of metaphor comparison (Dancygier, 2017). Several comparisons of metaphor between different corpora focus on the different discourse types (such as the study of Skorczynska and Deignan, 2006; L'Hôte, 2014; Demmen, Semino, Demjén, Koller, Hardie, Rayson & Payne, 2015). Cotter et al. (2021) compare the corpora of news, government policy, and semi-structured interviews and discover several metaphors that are in common across three types of texts as well as those that are exclusive to each data set.

2.3.3 *Studies on diachronic metaphors*

Moreover, comparative studies of metaphors are not limited to comparisons of different types of texts, and there are also some studies that make comparisons diachronically or explore the change of typical metaphors diachronically. These studies demonstrate 'stability and change' in metaphor usage across time, according to Tissari (2001). Also, Alexander and Bramwell (2014) contend that diachronic research is significant because it can shed light on cultural components that cannot be identified solely in synchronic research, such as the continuous cultural impacts on conceptualisations.

In the study of tracing the usage of metaphorical expressions related to wealth, Alexander and Bramwell (2014) show how, throughout time, the metaphorical use of large-body adjectives (such as "fat" and the outmoded term "cob") to signify riches has reduced. It is probably related to the changing attitude of large body mass over time, they argue.

Additionally, according to Gevaert (2005), who refers to the Toronto Corpus for the Old English period and a selection of texts for the Middle English Period, the prevalence and demise of the 'humoral doctrine'² are both closely tied to the number of heat metonyms and metaphors used throughout English history. Additionally, the "anger is fire" metaphor is Latin in origin and has long been restricted to religious writings, which further supports the notion that conceptualisation is culturally relevant.

² It was a system of medicine detailing a supposed makeup and workings of the human body, adopted by Ancient Greek and Roman physicians and philosophers.

2.3.4 *The metaphors about women*

There are quite a few studies on how gender is metaphorically represented in the media, but based on Gevaert's (2005) view that the development of metaphors may be culturally relevant, my review mainly includes the investigations that focus on metaphors in Chinese media that are used for representing Chinese women.

By identifying metaphorical terms that refer to men and women in two issues of Hong-based magazines, Luchjenbroers (1998), in her analysis of various gender roles, finds that males are portrayed in magazines as proactive doers and intellectuals while women are portrayed as emotional and immature individuals. Also, Otis (2011) finds that in mainland China, where the market economy is dominated by physical characteristics such as age, gender, height, etc., these factors divide the labour market and determine the career longevity of women in the service sector. Employers in the service sector dismiss female employees at a certain age if they believe they are less attractive due to age. To describe this situation, working-class women invoke a metaphor that refers to women in service work as the "rice bowl of youth"³ (*qingchun fanwan*) (2011).

Additionally, Yu (2021) discusses the phenomenon of 'leftover women'⁴, which has been a contentious gender issue in the last ten years according to Yu. In detail, Yu (2021) adopts the discourse dynamics approach to identify metaphors that represent women, divides their categorisations and embedded attitudes, and illustrates the potential ideologies—such as traditional patriarchy and modern egalitarianism—behind the metaphors used in twenty-eight English-language news articles in Chinese media in order to investigate how 'leftover women' are metaphorically represented. The results demonstrate two main semantic domains that women are shown in: 1) various social actors (such as combatants, travellers, fishermen and hunters) and 2) dehumanised objects (such as food and goods).

A point worth emphasising is that while a number of studies have explored the connotations, roles, evolution and categories of metaphors, since the same lexical words may be employed literally in some situations and metaphorically in others, there is presently no effective technology approach for the automatic detection of metaphors (Demmen et al., 2015; Yu, 2021).

2.4 **Research gap**

After reviewing aforementioned research, there are still certain gaps that are found, which my work tries to solve.

First of all, current research is mainly limited to metaphors centred around a particular female social role or the connotative interpretation of a particular metaphor. Therefore, little work has been done on the metaphorical representation of women in Chinese media as a whole.

Second, as far as I know, no diachronic study on the metaphorical representation of women in the Chinese media has been done. Hence, a diachronic study is strongly called in order to comprehend how metaphorical representation of women changes diachronically.

Finally, past studies on the changes in women's metaphorical presentation in Chinese media are scarce and mainly qualitative in their approach to interpreting the differences. This paper is the first study to present a statistically significant change over time in this type of metaphorical presentation using quantitative methods, which is innovative in its approach.

³ It refers to youth as the main reason for these women's income, and also implies that when they are no longer youthful, the value of their labour force is greatly diminished.

⁴ It refers to women of marriageable age or of a certain age who are still single.

3 Methodology

The theoretical and methodological framework of my study, which includes Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), framing (Entman, 1993), and corpus linguistics (Semino, 2021), are described in this section. After that, I explain why they are essential for addressing the questions raised in Section 1.0.

3.1 Theoretical framework

3.1.1 *Conceptual metaphor theory (CMT)*

According to conceptual metaphor theory (CMT), metaphor is a mode of thought rather than a rhetorical device (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). “The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:5). From Lakoff and Johnson’s view, metaphor is the conceptualisation of one abstract or complicated concept, which is the *target domain*, in terms of another concrete or literal entity, which is the *source domain*, and they create a new understanding together (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). *Cross-domain mappings* (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) are the processes by which certain entailments are transferred from one conceptual field to another. In other words, while using metaphor in language, one uses lexical items, words, and expressions from the source domain to discuss the target domain (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Samos, 2018). For instance, from the view of CMT, in the metaphor ‘WOMEN ARE FLOWERS’, the entailments of FLOWERS, which is the source domain, are mapped onto Women, which is the target domain (in a biological sense, WOMEN probably are not abstract - individuals with two X chromosomes (XX) are considered female and have the reproductive capacity to bear offspring. However, WOMEN, as a gender, is more abstract and complicated).

It is necessary to distinguish between conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) and metaphorical linguistic expressions (MLE). MLE is a metaphorical linguistic expression that comes from the terminology of the more concrete conceptual domain and is shown in its source domain (Kovecses, 2002). For example, thinking about the metaphor of ‘*maiden is the age of blooming*’, this metaphor uses *blooming* to refer to women, and it is a linguistic metaphorical expression. The corresponding conceptual metaphor that this MLE makes manifest is *women are flowers*. The same meaning is true in Chinese.

The Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) is predicated on the idea that metaphor is fundamental to thought and can trigger a cognitive mapping from one domain to another (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Experimental cognitive research has demonstrated the cognitive role of conceptual metaphor (Thibodeau & Boroditzky, 2011). This is the premise of my investigation, which indicates that the source domains that are found in this investigation have the potential to cognitively map to the target domain, which is *women* in this study.

3.1.2 *Criticism against the conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) and my approach*

After being raised by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), CMT has received a lot of criticism while gaining wide acceptance and application. I present here some of the criticisms that have been levelled, which can enrich the theory's value, expand its scope, and help consolidate my research.

The first criticism is that some researchers think the data Lakoff and Johnson use mainly comes from introspection rather than empirical data (Deignan, 2005). Recent studies on empirical-obtained data, however, have demonstrated the systematic character of conceptual metaphors (Gevaert, 2005)

and their prevalence across languages (Koller, 2004; Alexander and Bramwell, 2014). My study uses naturally occurring data, and in my corpus, the existence of conceptual metaphorical data is supported both by several correlated metaphorical linguistic expressions (section 4.2) and by calculation (section 4.3).

In addition, introspection data also obscure another question, which is that, in practice, it is vague to divide normal metaphors into conceptual metaphors, as well as define domains and their boundary, which means metaphors can be potentially categorised in different ways (Steen, 2007). In order to solve this problem, Knapton (2013) suggests using large-size data to reasonably identify the classification of metaphors, which validates the advantages of a large corpus. I will separate domains and sub-domains based on the large quantity of data in the WoC corpus.

Additionally, the persuasive function of conceptual metaphor is ignored by Lakoff and Johnson (see Charteris-Black, 2004). He emphasises that metaphor relies on a shared perspective that transcends semantics to be compelling (Charteris-Black, 2004). Additionally, political and economic ideologies may be framed in metaphors that can be viewed as shaping social realities and acting as a roadmap for future action (Yanow, 2000). Therefore, a rigorous examination of metaphors can reveal the values, ideology, philosophies, attitudes, and conventions of speech communities, but it is not emphasised by Lakoff and Johnson (Charteris-Black, 2004; Yanow, 2000).

However, in my perspective, Lakoff and Johnson do not ignore this question totally. “While most metaphors have developed over time, many are imposed by people in power, such as politicians, religious and business leaders and the media. Those who have the ability to impose metaphors get to define what people accept to be true” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980:160). Hence, they realise the possible ideological embedding of metaphors - from people in power - and that the ‘reality’ people see may have been redefined, filtered by those people in power. Also, according to Lakoff and Johnson, the ‘reality’ in media, which is the focus of this study, is potentially imposed (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

Moreover, the use of metaphors repeatedly causes those who create and use them to accept particular ideas as being common, normative, or natural. As a result, it may be difficult to challenge metaphors that have become the standard way of describing certain entities, which is highlighted by Yanow (2000). Therefore, in terms of figuring out the particular ideas or the framed ideology embedded in metaphors of women, the repetition of certain women’s social roles and their source domains is meaningful.

Importantly, the study by Semino et al. (2013) emphasises that without the consideration of the text authors it is inefficient to make broad generalisations regarding metaphor in language and cognition. Deignan (2005) also emphasises the significance of speakers and context when assessing conceptual metaphors. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the metaphors' macro and micro contexts as well as the authors of the texts in which they are utilised. In my research, I identify metaphors in both a societal context and a micro context (the text). In order to discover and explain these relationships in a statistical sense, I will also perform a number of tests on the relationship between the writers of the articles where the metaphors are discovered as well as the metaphors themselves.

3.1.3 *Framing*

As mentioned above, political and economic ideologies can be ‘framed’ in metaphors (Yanow, 2000), which means metaphors can serve as framing tools. In fact, framing highlights the concerns about a specific aspect of the world (Semino and Demjén, 2016). Also, the two main components of framing are selection and salience, according to Entman (1993). He argues that in order to promote a certain problem diagnosis, causal interpretation, moral assessment, and/or problem suggestion for the entity targeted, framing involves choosing a few characteristics of ‘a perceived reality’ and emphasising them

in a communication text (Entman, 1993). Based on this perspective, metaphors can highlight particular aspects of reality while blurring others. Hence, regarding metaphors as a framing tool is beneficial to distinguish the value, belief, and ideology that is embedded in the expression, and I will use ‘framing’ in this sense in my study.

3.2 Corpus-based research of the metaphors of women

This study focuses on the metaphor presented in the titles of articles in the WoC. Corpus linguistics not only makes it possible to add quantitative elements to metaphor analysis, enhancing its empirical rigour, but it also does away with the necessity to restrict data to amounts appropriate for deeper qualitative analysis, lowering researcher bias.

In detail, the key value of the method of corpus linguistics in my study is that it has a strong capacity for searching both typical words and reporting the frequencies of repetition of them, which has been verified in several media studies (Musolff, 2004; Nerlich & Halliday, 2007; Veale, 2012). Using corpora can reveal typical patterns since meanings are tied to how words are used and repeated (Mahlberg, 2007), and as mentioned above, the repetition of certain words, conceptual metaphors or expressions potentially makes the ideology embedded in them normative. Hence, using a corpus is beneficial to expose the repetition of certain thoughts or ideologies.

Additionally, the methods of corpus analysis also benefit the diachronic change of use in metaphors (Tissari, 2001; Alexander and Bramwell, 2014). Tissari (2001) contrasts a few of the most pervasive metaphors for the feeling of love in the two corpora of Early Modern English and Present-Day English and finds that the corpus-based method functions in revealing the variations of metaphors and the relation between metaphors at different time and culture. A similar argument can be found in Deignan and Potter’s (2004) and Chung’s (2017) study, as well. Therefore, the corpus-based method is beneficial to reveal the diachronic variation of metaphors that represent women, as well as their relation to culture.

However, there is also criticism of the corpus-base method for the fact that its data is of out-of-context. I will put the metaphors in both the micro text context and the macro sociocultural context to analyse, and define parameters and identify metaphors based on the context (see section 3.3.2).

3.3 Methods

Following the corpus-based method introduced in 3.2, I present the detailed process of using this method and the decision-making I undertook. My study combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The former improves the visibility and accuracy of the result, and the latter facilitates in-depth work on conceptual metaphors and their meanings.

3.3.1 *Building the corpus*

As mentioned above, this study focuses on the metaphors of the representation of women in the magazine *Women of China* (WoC) and has identified the scope of the data, which is all the titles of the articles in the WoC from 1956-1966 and 1978-1998 (but refers to the content of the articles when identifying the metaphors). I present every step below:

- (1) I chose United Combined Digital Reference Services (UCDRS), which is a platform for delivering literature and finding books in PRC, to export all the titles of the articles (data) that

fall into the time scope of this study into the ‘.xlsx’ (Excel) format for subsequent coding and then saved them in Excel in my laptop. This platform can just export data page by page, so this step takes 20 hours in total.

- (2) After combining all the titles in one Excel file, it is shown that there are a total of 11,497 data entries. The first period (1956-1966) has 3,417 entries, and the second period (1978-1998) has 8,079 entries. Each entry has the information of title, author, the name of the magazine, ISSN number, CN number (China Number), year, issue number and page number.

3.3.2 Identifying metaphors

There has yet to be an automatic way to recognise metaphors so far (Demmen et al., Cotter et al., 2015; Yu, 2021), so the potential to overuse intuition to identify metaphors exists. In order to diminish this potential bias, previous studies (such as Cotter et al., 2021) adopt the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP), developed by the Pragglejaz Group in 2007, involves:

- (1) requiring reading the whole text in order to understand the context in which the metaphor is produced, and in my study, it is related to understanding the articles in which the metaphors are produced
- (2) emphasising the understanding of the meanings of lexical units in context, and in my study, it is related to comprehending the lexical units based on the articles
- (3) finding out whether lexical units have more basic meanings, and in my study, I refer to Xinhua Dictionary, which is the standard Chinese dictionary, to find the basic meanings
- (4) checking whether the meaning of lexical units in context can be connected with more basic meanings

In the process of locating metaphors, a large number of metaphors are discovered. However, since this study only focuses on the metaphors of the representation of women, only these are chosen (if the metaphor belongs to this specific classification, I put ‘1’ in the column of ‘Yes or No’) for later coding, testing and analysing. Then, I access the platform of *Superstar* and *United Combined Digital Reference Services*, which are electronic libraries where the articles of WoC can be found, with the complement of resources from the *National Library of China*. Following this, I read the articles to secure if they are metaphors for the representation of women and record the detailed information of the target domain (women generally, but different social roles specifically) and potential source domains of the metaphors. It is worth highlighting that, in my data, some titles have more than one metaphor for representing women, so I code them separately.

I list the categorisations of metaphors that are not included in this study:

- (1) I exclude the titles of the visual advertisements and comics in this study. Because they involve the relationship between text and vision, the question may be more complex. Given that this is not a multimodal study, I do not discuss it here.

- (2) I disregard metaphors that use women as the *source* domain rather than the *target* domain, such as *zūguo mǔqīn* ‘motherland’ (used in the third issue of the WoC in 1983, No. 5057 in the corpus) because although it also involves women (mother), it primarily presents homeland.
- (3) I consider metaphors that refer to specific women, groups of women, and generalised women, but I do not consider metaphors that refer to objects related to women (e.g., the *huā qīpào* ‘floral cheongsam’, used in the fourth issue of the WoC in 1956, No. 99 in the corpus) because the focus of my study is *women* in their social roles.
- (4) I exclude unrelated metaphors, such as the metaphors that represent men (*bào nánrén yě shì yì suǒ xuéxiào* ‘good men are also a school’, used in the eighth issue of the WoC in 1997, No. 10957 in the corpus).

3.3.3 *The meaning of repetition and key semantic domain*

As mentioned in 3.2, counting the repetition of the lexical units is valuable, especially when they are compared to each other (Musolff, 2004; Nerlich & Halliday, 2007; Veale, 2012). The comparison of several collections of repetition benefits to locate what is statistically significant. In my study, the comparison is run between two different time periods.

In the process of dealing with data, I found 75 lexical units in all the metaphors that represent women (the frequency of use varies) that potentially come from source domains (see Table 1 below), and some have semantic relations that can be divided into the same source domain potentially. Based on their meaning, I separate them into nine semantic domains to distinguish the key semantic domain, which is one that is overused in the sense of statistical significance in one's semantically annotated corpus of data compared to a reference one (Rayson 2008).

However, the overarching conceptual metaphor is different from the key semantic domain as the latter is more related to salience in the statistical sense, but the former is related to the mapping of meaning from the source domain (the source domain may have the same subset as the key semantic domain) to target domain. Therefore, after running the statistic test, I analyse the statistically significantly semantic domain(s) as they are *key* semantic domains verified by the evidence of statistics and worth exploring in-depth as the focus. In this step, I qualitatively approach them from the perspective of CMT. If it is supported by the qualitative evidence that it is a conceptual metaphor, I explore further its connotation in this study.

It is necessary to illustrate the classification and coding in this study. I exclusively locate the metaphors that represent women in the corpus first, and after finishing this step, it is shown that there are sixty-six entities in the period of 1956-1966 and one hundred and twenty entities in the period of 1978-1998. They can be separated into nine semantic domains, the key elements of which are the *Socialist Model Role*, *War Figure*, *Historical Figure*, *Fictional Figure*, *Family Role*, *Nature*, *Artificial and Cultural Object*, *Outlier* and *Men* separately. In the metaphors found in those 186 entities, these semantic domains are used to refer to women.

Moreover, the semantic domains overlap across classifications, for example, Mu Guiying (ID 15) is a fictional female figure who is good at fighting, so it is possible to be included it to the *Fictional Role* that strengthens the literariness of the title. However, I put them in *War Figure* based on the context of the titles and articles, which is more related to *war*, a semantic domain which is quite productive in the period of 1956-1966. In all, I compare the differences in the use of these semantic domains between the two time periods.

Table 1 Lexical Units, Semantic Domain and Key Element of the Domain

	Chinese Lexical Units	English Translation	Coding Number ID	Semantic Domain ID	The Key Element of the Domain
1	Lin Yuying	Lin Yuying	1	1	Socialist Model Role (1)
2	Xing Yanzi	Xing Yanzi	2	1	
3	Lei Feng`	Lei Feng	48	1	
3	dajun	army	3	2	War Figure (2)
4	shenglijun	fresh troops	4	2	
5	niangzijun	women's army	50	2	
6	zhanshi	warrior	5	2	
7	jianjiang	strong general	6	2	
8	nvjiang	female general	7	2	
9	chuangjiang	reckless general	8	2	
10	xiaojiang	junior general	9	2	
12	jianbing	prominent soldier	11	2	
13	hongqishou	red flag bearer	12	2	
14	qishou	flag bearer	13	2	
15	houqin bu	logistics department	14	2	
16	Mu Guiying	Mu Guiying	15	2	
17	Hua Mulan	Hua Mulan	16	2	
18	Liu Hulan	Liu Hulan	17	2	
19	weishi	guard	42	2	
20	xiuca	scholar	18	3	Historical Figure (3)
21	Zhuge	Zhuge	19	3	
22	zhuangyuan	top scholar	28	3	
23	Bao Qingtian	Bao Qingtian	49	3	
24	zhixian	county magistrate	58	3	
25	Xu Xiake	Xu Xiake	63	3	
26	qi xiannv	seven fiaries	20	4	Fictional Figure (4)
27	xian nv	fiary	21	4	
28	zhinv	weaver girl	27	4	
29	fenghuang	phoenix	29	4	
30	meirenyu	mermaid	38	4	
31	Qin Xianglian	Qin Xianglian	44	4	
32	huiguniang	Cinderella	45	4	
33	Tao Chun	Tao Chun	46	4	

34	Xiawa	Eve	51	4	
35	Wu Song	Wu Song	52	4	
36	tianshi	angel	53	4	
37	yuelao	matchmaker deity	59	4	
38	chou xiaoya	ugly duckling	61	4	
39	jinling	elf	66	4	
40	Kaqiusha	Kalinka	70	4	
41	Loulan meinv	Loulan beauty	71	4	
42	jiemei	sisters	22	5	Family Role (5)
43	muqin	mother	23	5	
44	nver	daughter	24	5	
45	haoguinv	well-behaved daughter	25	5	
46	housi	heir	10	5	
47	hua	flower	26	6	Nature (6)
48	yueliang	moon	35	6	
49	niuma	cattle and horses	34	6	
50	mingzhu	bright pearl	32	6	
51	tie	iron	31	6	
52	banbiantian	half of the sky	36	6	
53	liehuo	blazing fire	37	6	
54	niudu	calf	39	6	
55	ying	eagle	40	6	
56	yanzi	swallow	47	6	
57	xique	magpie	54	6	
58	niao	bird	68	6	
59	he	river	55	6	
60	shan	mountain	60	6	
61	yu	fish	64	6	
62	jin	gold	65	6	
63	fengjingxian	scenic line	67	6	
64	caiyun	colourful clouds	72	6	
65	baixue	white snow	73	6	
66	shui	water	75	6	
67	hongqi	red flag	30	7	Artificial and Cultural Object (7)
68	heilian	black face	41	7	

69	huoguo	hot pot	43	7	
70	toujin	headscarf	57	7	
71	hongzhu	red candle	69	7	
72	yuanding	gardener	33	8	Outlier (8)
73	caifeng	tailor	74	8	
74	jiaxiaozi	tomboy	56	9	Men (9)
75	heshangtou	monk's hair style	62	9	

4 Results

I show the result of the statistical work of this study in this section. As mentioned in section 3.3, the coding is finished in Excel, which is the ground for further quantitative calculations and tests. I test the relationship between salient semantic domains (e.g., *War*) and two time periods. Additionally, as mentioned in section 3.1.2, taking the authors into account is necessary (Deignan, 2005; Semino et al., 2013), so I use the model of mixed effects to test the authors' effect and the periods' effect.

4.1 Possible social role in the target domain

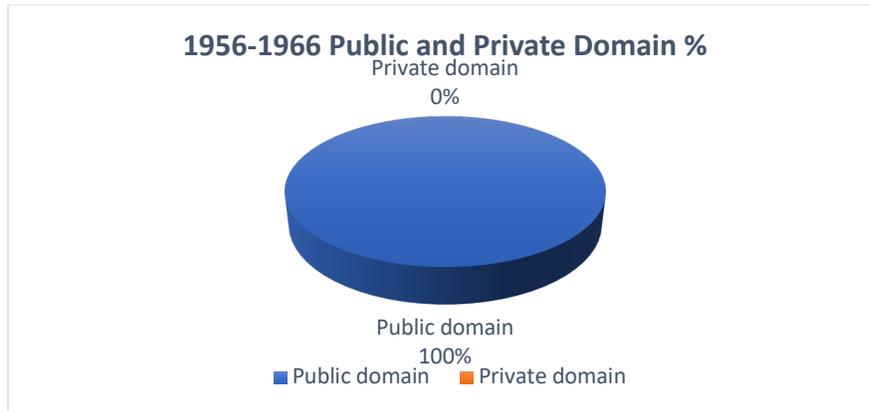
As mentioned in section 2.1, the social roles of women are culturally constructed and various, and a woman can have more than one social role (Eagly and Kite, 1987; Rand et al., 2016). Kandel (1985) argues that the categorisations of women's social roles normally have occupational, marital, and household roles. Additionally, Pain (1991), who is a spatial-feminist researcher, argues that the physical space for women can be divided into three levels, which are public, semi-public, and private, which separately means big public settings, closer groups such as workplaces, and domestic spaces. Physical space is the site where social roles are practised. Therefore, it makes sense to delineate roles, both in a sociocultural and spatial sense.

Jacobs (1961) points out that the separation of public space and private space is necessary, and one of the three elements that make an overall space successful is a clear demarcation of public and private space, and the positive interaction is based on the demarcation of public and private spaces. Otherwise, the interaction that makes public contact rewarding and safe and encourages people to engage in public life will be lost, according to Jacobs, and will result in the death of public life and result in hazardous and dangerous public space (1961). It is in this sense that Pain (1991) separates semi-public space from public space dealing with women sexual abuse survivors' special spatial practise in occupational space after the blurring of the boundaries between private and public space. Therefore, I partly follow Pain's definition of categorisation that separates the private from (semi-)public, but I combine the semi-public and public because, in the context of my data, the social interaction of occupational women is basically 'rewarding and safe' and displayed in the macro sociocultural space. The women who are described based on their public/private practice correspond to the public/private domain. The result of the calculation is shown in Table 2, Picture 1.1 and Picture 1.2 below.

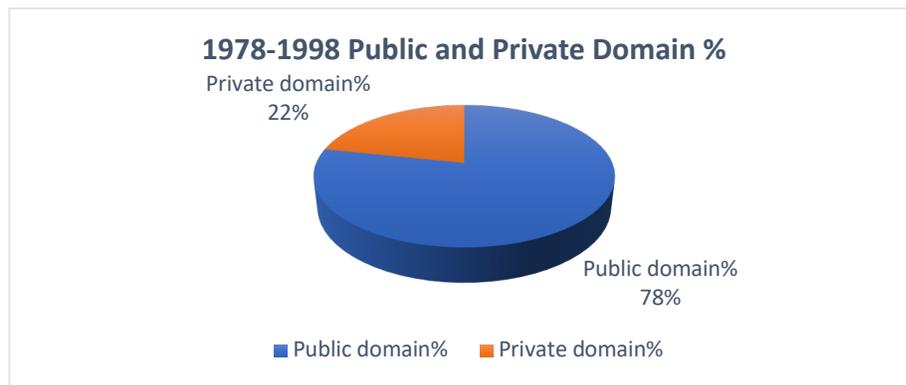
Table 2 Proportion of Women in Public/Private Domain

Period	Public domain%	Private domain%
1956-1966	100.00%	0.00%
1978-1998	78.33%	21.67%

Picture 1.1 Proportion of Women in Public/Private Domain in 1956-1966



Picture 1.2 Proportion of Women in Public/Private Domain in 1978-1998

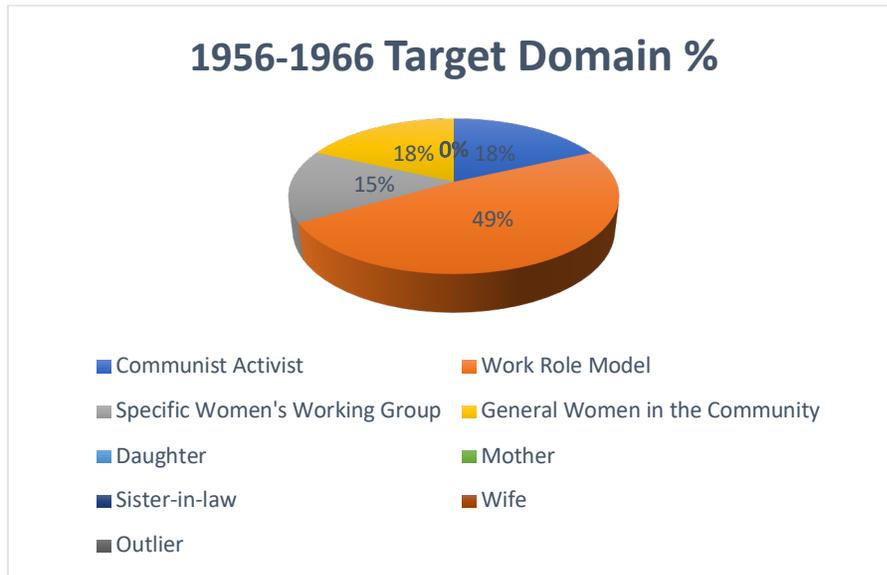


Also, I separate the identity of women, which is the target domain in this study, further into subcategories, which are shown below (see Table 3, Picture 2.1 and Picture 2.2 below). In these subcategories, it is necessary to explain the meaning of some of them because they are not detailed. *Communist Activist* refers to a person who has carried out extensive social activities and made contributions to the early development of the Chinese communist party. The *Work Role Model* is a woman who has achieved a great deal at work. *Specific Women's Working Group* differs from the previous one in that it refers to a work team. *General Women in the Community* is a generalised reference to women in society. *Outlier* only shows twice, which are typical women tourists (showing twice) and the women who suffer from a lack of femininity (showing three times).

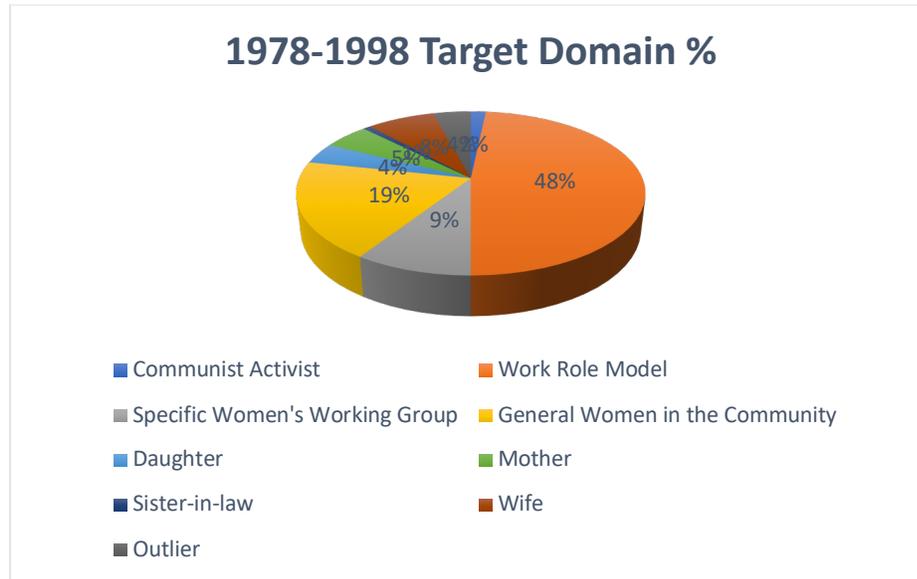
Table 3 Proportion of Different Social Roles

Period	Communist Activist	Work Role Model	Specific Women's Working Group	General Women in the Community	
1956-1966	12	32	10	12	
1978-1998	2	58	11	23	
1956-1966 %	85.71%	41.03%	66.67%	50.00%	
1978-1998%	14.29%	58.97%	33.33%	50.00%	
Period	Daughter	Mother	Sister-in-law	Wife	Outlier
1956-1966	0	0	0	0	0
1978-1998	5	6	1	9	5
1956-1966 %	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
1978-1998%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Picture 2.1 Proportion of Different Social Roles in 1956-1966



Picture 2.2 Proportion of Different Social Roles in 1978-1998



According to the results of the quantitative analysis, in the possible identity of the target domain, there are more public domains than private domains in both periods. Notably in the period of 1956-1966, all metaphors that represent women are used to describe women in the public domain. The difference is that in the 1978-1998, women in the private domain, such as *Wife*, *Daughter* and *Mother*, begin to appear among the targets of the metaphors, accounting for about 22% of the metaphors in this time period.

In the subcategories, the most common is the *Work Role Model*, which accounts for almost half of the data in both periods. In addition, *Wife*, as a social role in the private domain, increases from nothing to occupy the largest proportion of the private domain.

4.2 Semantic domain (possible source domain)

I also calculate the frequency of lexical units in each semantic domain. It is necessary to illustrate that I merge several sets of lexical units because they are compound, have similar meanings and share the same affixes. After merging, there are 68 lexical units in total, and the result is shown below (see Table 4 below). I visualise the proportion of the number of every lexical unit as a sub-semantic domain in the number of all units. Both the proportion and their variations between the two periods can be found in Picture 3. As Picture 3 shows, in the period of 1956-1966, the most frequent units are *jiemei* 'sisters' (15.15%) and *muqin* 'mother' (13.64%), and three units in the semantic domain *war* are more frequent than others, excluding *jiemei* 'sisters' and *muqin* 'mother', and these five units are changed a lot between two periods. In the period 1978-1998, the most frequent unit is obvious, which is *hua* 'flower' (25.21%), which also increases from the first period to the second.

Additionally, Picture 4 shows the diversity of units. From the picture, we can see that there are units that exist in both periods, which also means that there are metaphors used to describe women that exist in both periods, such as *muqin* 'mother', *nver* 'daughter', *hua* 'flower', *zhanshi* 'warrior'. However, there are more unique metaphors in these two periods, and the period of 1978-1998 has a greater richness of metaphors, but this may also be related to the longer time period.

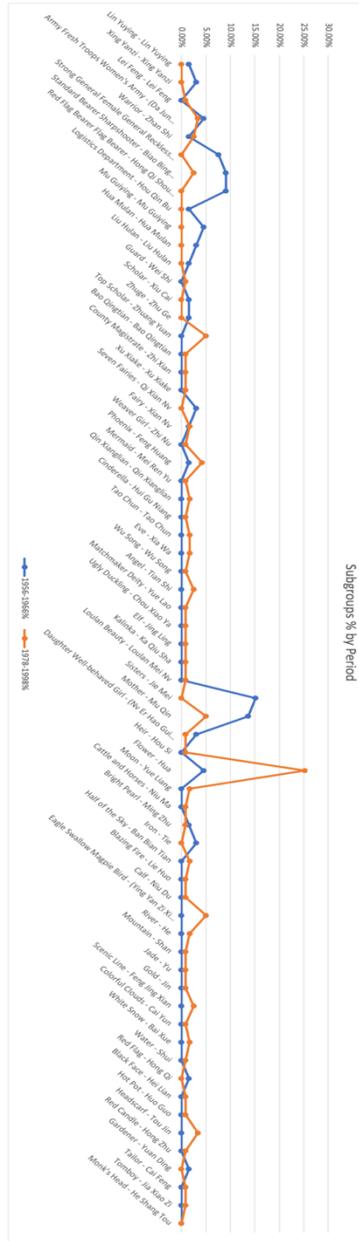
Moreover, Picture 5.1 and Picture 5.2 show the proportion of main semantic domains where the lexical units are separated. The most frequent domain is *War* (42%) and *Family* (32%) in 1956-1966, and exclusive *Nature* (46%) in 1978-1998.

Table 4 Frequency and Proportion of Lexical Units

Period	Lin Yuying-Lin Yuying	Xing Yanzi-Xing Yanzi	Lei Feng-Lei Feng	Army Fresh Troops Women's Army-(Da Jun Sheng Li Jun Niang Zi Jun)	Warrior-Zhan Shi	Strong General Female General Reckless General Junior General-Jian Jiang Nu Jiang Chuang Jiang Xiao Jiang
1956-1966	1	2	0	3	1	5
1978-1998	0	0	1	4	3	0
1956-1966%	1.52%	3.03%	0.00%	4.55%	1.52%	7.58%
1978-1998%	0.00%	0.00%	0.84%	3.36%	2.52%	0.00%
Period	Prominent Soldier-Jian Bing	Red Flag Bearer Flag Bearer-Hong Qi Shou Qi Shou	Logistics Department-Hou Qin Bu	Mu Guiying-Mu Guiying	Hua Mulan-Hua Mulan	Liu Hulan-Liu Hulan
1956-1966	6	6	1	3	2	1
1978-1998	3	0	0	0	0	0
1956-1966%	9.09%	9.09%	1.52%	4.55%	3.03%	1.52%
1978-1998%	2.52%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Period	Guard-Wei Shi	Scholar-Xiu Cai	Zhuge-Zhu Ge	Top Scholar-Zhuang Yuan	Bao Qingtian-Bao Qingtian	County Magistrate-Zhi Xian
1956-1966	0	1	1	0	0	0
1978-1998	1	0	0	6	1	1
1956-1966%	0.00%	1.52%	1.52%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
1978-1998%	0.84%	0.00%	0.00%	5.04%	0.84%	0.84%
Period	Xu Xiake-Xu Xiake	Seven Fairies-Qi Xian Nv	Fairy-Xian Nv	Weaver Girl-Zhi Nu	Phoenix-Feng Huang	Mermaid-Mei Ren Yu
1956-1966	0	2	1	0	1	0
1978-1998	1	0	2	1	5	1
1956-1966%	0.00%	3.03%	1.52%	0.00%	1.52%	0.00%
1978-1998%	0.84%	0.00%	1.68%	0.84%	4.20%	0.84%
Period	Qin Xianglian-Qin Xianglian	Cinderella-Hui Gu Niang	Tao Chun-Tao Chun	Eve-Xia Wa	Wu Song-Wu Song	Angel-Tian Shi
1956-1966	0	0	0	0	0	0
1978-1998	2	1	2	2	1	3
1956-1966%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
1978-1998%	1.68%	0.84%	1.68%	1.68%	0.84%	2.52%

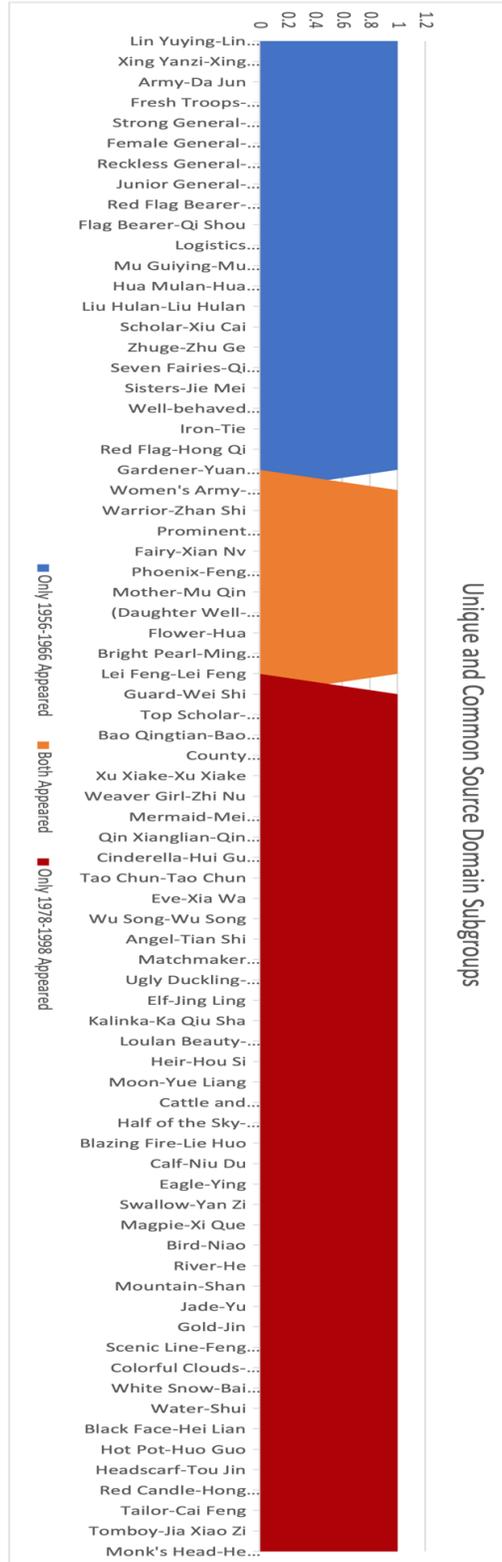
Period	Matchmaker Deity-Yue Lao	Ugly Duckling-Chou Xiao Ya	Elf-Jing Ling	Kalinka-Ka Qiu Sha	Loulan Beauty-Loulan Mei Nv	Sisters-Jie Mei
1956-1966	0	0	0	0	0	10
1978-1998	1	1	1	1	1	0
1956-1966%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	15.15%
1978-1998%	0.84%	0.84%	0.84%	0.84%	0.84%	0.00%
Period	Mother-Mu Qin	Daughter Well-behaved Daughter-(Nv Er Hao Gui Nv)	Heir-Hou Si	Flower-Hua	Moon-Yue Liang	Cattle and Horses-Niu Ma
1956-1966	9	2	0	3	0	0
1978-1998	6	1	1	30	2	1
1956-1966%	13.64%	3.03%	0.00%	4.55%	0.00%	0.00%
1978-1998%	5.04%	0.84%	0.84%	25.21%	1.68%	0.84%
Period	Bright Pearl-Ming Zhu	Iron-Tie	Half of the Sky-Ban Bian Tian	Blazing Fire-Lie Huo	Calf-Niu Du	Eagle Swallow Magpie Bird-(Ying Yan Zi Xi Que Niao)
1956-1966	1	2	0	0	0	0
1978-1998	1	0	2	1	1	6
1956-1966%	1.52%	3.03%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
1978-1998%	0.84%	0.00%	1.68%	0.84%	0.84%	5.04%
Period	River-He	Mountain-Shan	Jade-Yu	Gold-Jin	Scenic Line-Feng Jing Xian	Colorful Clouds-Cai Yun
1956-1966	0	0	0	0	0	0
1978-1998	2	1	1	1	3	1
1956-1966%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
1978-1998%	1.68%	0.84%	0.84%	0.84%	2.52%	0.84%
Period	White Snow-Bai Xue	Water-Shui	Red Flag-Hong Qi	Black Face-Hei Lian	Hot Pot-Huo Guo	Headscarf-Tou Jin
1956-1966	0	0	1	0	0	0
1978-1998	2	1	0	1	1	4
1956-1966%	0.00%	0.00%	1.52%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
1978-1998%	1.68%	0.84%	0.00%	0.84%	0.84%	3.36%
Period	Red Candle-Hong Zhu	Gardener-Yuan Ding	Tailor-Cai Feng	Tomboy-Jia Xiao Zi	Monk's Hair Style-He Shang Tou	
1956-1966	0	1	0	0	0	
1978-1998	1	0	1	1	1	
1956-1966%	0.00%	1.52%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
1978-1998%	0.84%	0.00%	0.84%	0.84%	0.00%	

Picture 3 Proportion of Lexical Units



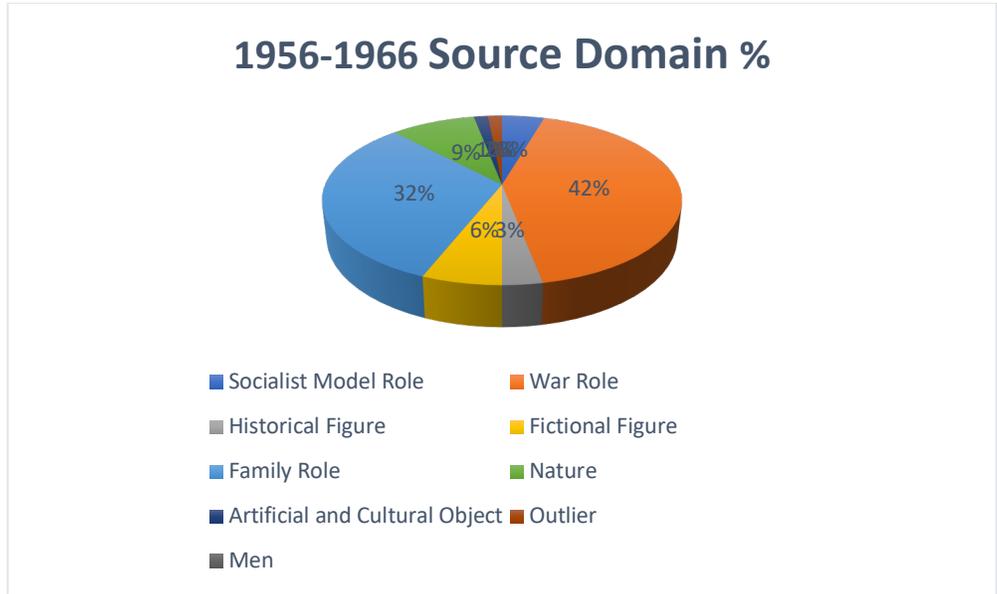
Additionally, Picture 4 shows the diversity of units. From the picture, we can see that there are units that exist in both periods, which also means that there are metaphors used to describe women that exist in both periods, such as *muqin* ‘mother’, *ner* ‘daughter’, *bua* ‘flower’, *zhanshi* ‘warrior’. However, there are more unique metaphors in these two periods, and the period of 1978-1998 has a greater richness of metaphors, but this may also be related to the longer time period.

Picture 4 Diversity of Lexical Units

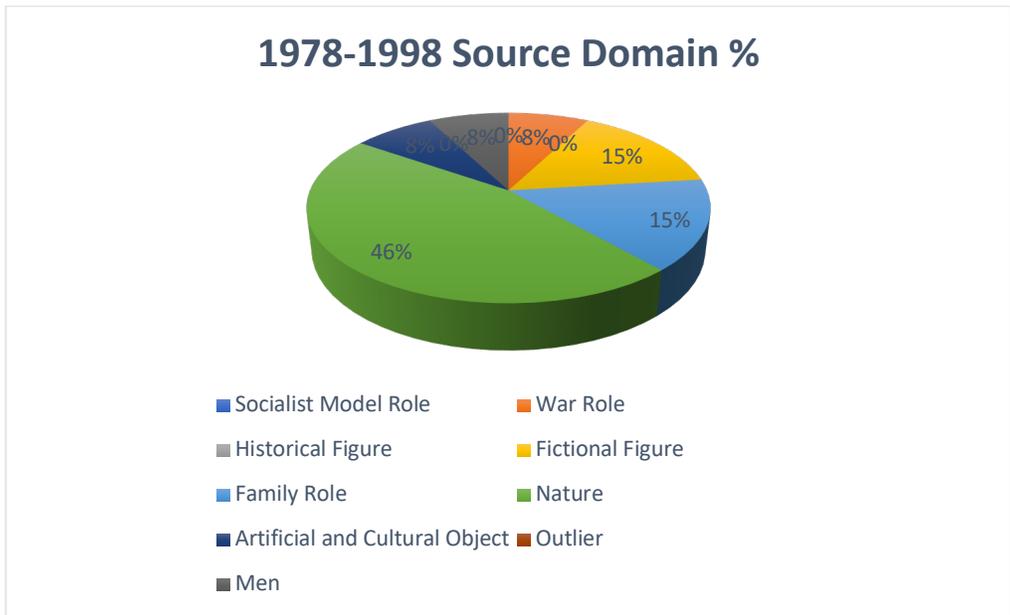


Moreover, Picture 5.1 and Picture 5.2 show the proportion of main semantic domains where the lexical units are separated. The most frequent domain is *War* (42%) and *Family* (32%) in 1956-1966, and exclusive *Nature* (46%) in 1978-1998.

Picture 5.1 Proportion of Main Semantic Domains in 1956-1966



Picture 5.2 Proportion of Main Semantic Domains in 1978-1998



4.3 Testing significance statistically

As shown in section 4.2, there are three prominent semantic domains from the calculation of their proportion, which are *War* (42%) and *Family* (32%) in 1956-1966, and *Nature* (46%) in 1978-1998 and these three domains also change a great deal between two periods. Hence, it is necessary to test their relation to the two different periods. Additionally, given the result that *jiemei* ‘sisters’ (15.15%) and *muqin* ‘mother’ (13.64%) occupy a large proportion of *Family* (32%), and *hua* ‘flower’ (25.21%) are prominent in *Nature* (46%) respectively, testing them are also valuable.

Furthermore, as mentioned in 3.1.2, taking the authors of metaphors into account is meaningful because the prominence of typical (sub)domains is possibly related to the specific author who uses typical metaphors frequently, and it is unrelated to the difference in time periods.

I run six tests using a mixed-effects model in R. The format is $y=x_1+x_2$, x_1 is the period (1956-1966=0, 1978-1998=1), and x_2 is the author (every author has a unique ID). They are all dummy variables. The dependent variable is the probability of a typical semantic (sub)domain. The result is shown in Table 5 below. According to the statistical result, both semantic domains *War* (42%), *Family* (32%) and *Nature* (46%), and sub-domain *jiemei* ‘sisters’ (15.15%), *muqin* ‘mother’ (13.64%) and *hua* ‘flower’ (25.21%) are highly statistically significant. It means that in which different periods affects the frequency of these (sub)domains in a statistical sense.

However, although lots of studies highlight the importance of the authors/speakers of metaphors (Deignan, 2005; Semino et al., 2013), the tests show that the authors do not have a prominent influence on the frequency of the (sub)domains/metaphors except one, which is *muqin* ‘mother’. The coefficient is tiny, so I put ‘0’ here, but the report shows that the frequency of *muqin* ‘mother’ is related to a typical ‘Author ID’. The author’s name is *Huang Gang*, she or he writes a serialised biography and uses the *muqin* ‘Mother’ of revolution to refer to a female communist activist in the title. The biography runs for seven issues in WoC, which may be the reason that *Huang* influences the frequency of the metaphor of the *muqin* ‘Mother’.

Table 5 Mixed-effect Test

	Semantic Domain: War	Semantic Domain: Family	Semantic Domain: Nature
Period	-0.348*** (0.003)	-0.396*** (0.004)	-0.095*** (0.003)
Author ID	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
	Semantic Domain Subgroup: Flower-Hua	Semantic Domain Subgroup: Sisters-Jie Mei	Semantic Domain Subgroup: Mother-Mu Qin
Period	-0.086*** (0.002)	-0.182*** (0.002)	-0.181*** (0.004)
Author ID	0 (0)	0 (0)	0** (0)

5 Analysis

According to the result shown in Section 4, there are three semantic domains that are prominent in one of two periods, which are *War* (42%) and *Family* (32%) in 1956-1966 and *Nature* (46%) in 1978-1998. A key semantic domain is one that is overused in the sense of statistical significance in one's semantically annotated corpus of data compared to a reference one (Rayson 2008). Hence, they are *key* semantic domains. Additionally, based on the fact that *jiemei* 'sisters' (15.15%) and *muqin* 'mother' (13.64%) occupy a large proportion of *Family* (32%), and *hua* 'flower' (25.21%) are prominent in *Nature* (46%), respectively, the influence brought by the difference of time periods is also tested, and they are statistically prominent as well. In addition to *hua* 'flower' (25.21%), the natural domain includes 17 other metaphors, but the percentage of frequency is much smaller than that of *hua* 'flower' (25.21%) (the largest is only 5.04%), so I regard *hua* 'flower' (25.21%) as a key semantic domain qualitatively. In fact, the data proves that *hua* 'flower' is quite productive as a key semantic domain. For example:

- (1) yiduo zhenzhengde dong hua
one real winter flower
'a true winter flower' ID: No 90
- (2) yiduo tushengtuzhangde yishu xin hua
one indigenous art new flower
'a new indigenous art flower' ID: No 3836
- (3) weile si yi huaduo
for four one hundred million flower
'for the purpose of four hundred million flowers' ID: No 8530

Based on the evidence in the corpus, the semantic domain of flowers is mapped onto women, and it creates several MLEs. The examples of MLEs above correspond to the overarching conceptual metaphor that WOMEN ARE FLOWERS. This conceptual metaphor shows in both periods, but the proportion of it statistically significant varies, which presents the change of variation in real-time.

Comparatively, the proportion of the key semantic domains of *War* and *Family* decreases prominently diachronically. According to the data in the corpus, these two domains are also productive and mapped to the representation of women in metaphors, which contribute to two overarching conceptual metaphors, which are WOMEN ARE WAR CHARACTERS, and WOMEN ARE FAMILY CHARACTERS, separately.

Therefore, the three overarching conceptual metaphors that are found in this study are WOMEN ARE WAR CHARACTERS, WOMEN ARE FAMILY CHARACTERS, and WOMEN ARE FLOWERS. These three conceptual metaphors are used in both periods, but the first two metaphors are used more frequently from 1956-1966, and the higher frequency of the second is from 1978-1998. I decide to focus on these three conceptual metaphors qualitatively for the purpose of more in-depth observation and analysis. A restriction to one or a limited selection of domains makes sense since the researcher wishes to keep a thematic emphasis, according to Kimmel (2012). Based on the manual qualitative defining of metaphor, the quantitative support of a corpus, and the statistical calculation, these three conceptual metaphors stand out, and further analysis can expose the dynamics hidden in them.

5.1 Framing the reality and normalising ideologies

The repetition of certain conceptual metaphors is meaningful, which is shown in section 3.1.2, as the repetition can emphasise and normalise certain ideologies. According to Semino (2008), metaphors are related to using a certain perspective to consider or present a thing, which emphasises and obscures specific aspects of reality. This 'typical perspective' can be normalised or standardised by repeating certain metaphors and certain target or source domains of conceptual metaphors. Once normalised in the conceptual metaphors, the reader/receiver may take the typical ideologies for granted and potentially accept them.

Furthermore, presenting the 'typical perspective' is a process of framing, which is also discussed in section 3.1. Conceptual metaphors can construct frames of representing women and hence contribute to constructing or embedding value systems, which is verified by Aubrun and Grady (2003) in their media study. In fact, a media product is not a natural product, as Hall's statement (2005) clarifies, because media is selective in its presentation of certain information or topics, as well as the perspective from which it is presented.

Therefore, the conceptual metaphors found in WoC are a framing tool that can emphasise and obscure certain ideologies in the two different periods. Based on the prominent difference between the repetition of the three metaphors, which are WOMEN ARE WAR CHARACTERS, WOMEN ARE FAMILY CHARACTERS, and WOMEN ARE FLOWERS, it can be argued that the ideologies about women change a lot diachronically from 1956-1998. According to Bayram (2010), ideology is a set of shared values and ideas that create and perpetuate uneven power relations. It is necessary to explain what the shared values and power relations are between these two periods and why they change diachronically.

5.2 Framing typical ideologies in the conceptual metaphors

Wang (2005:519) argues that the PRC is an authoritarian state who has a history of "state patriarchy championing women's emancipation". In detail, "state patriarchy" refers to the rule of the Communist Party of China (CPC), which was absolutely dominated by men in power and in numbers at the time of the formation of the socialist state. Marxist feminism holds that realising public ownership of the means of production and women's economic independence is necessary for women's emancipation because the economic reliance of the oppressed on the oppressor is the main reason for oppression (Bebel, 1904; Barrett, 2014). The Communist Party of China (CPC), which was waging a proletariat revolution at the time, likewise embraced this feminist concept as a potent propaganda tool. The freedom of women and Marxist feminism, which places an emphasis on women's involvement in output, served as a foundation for the legitimacy of the Mao regime (1949–1976), in part. Women started to be viewed as socialist workers when the PRC was built, and they could cover labour gaps and increase output (Rofel 1994). It is true that the Mao regime encouraged women to leave the house and work so they could establish their own agency with autonomous economic standing, which raised the status of women in China as a whole.

The priority and prevalence of this ideology mentioned above effectively explains why in the period of 1956-1966 (that belongs to the Mao regime), all the target domains are women in the public domain. The state's ideology of 'women leaving home and going to the factory' has a significant impact on how women are represented in WoC, the CPC's official media, and these women are the magazine's repetitive attention.

On the other hand, as China recovered from a long war in 1949, the national discourse still views the different social camps in oppositional terms and portrays China as a force that grows stronger in

the midst of imperialist and capitalist encirclement. Producing becomes a *war* of *chanyingchaomei* ‘catching up with Britain and surpassing the United States’ in the era of the Cold War, and the role of women in this war of productivity are portrayed in the roles of *zhanshi* ‘warrior’, *niangzijun* ‘women’s army’, *weisbi* ‘guard’, and so on. Additionally, during the period of socialist construction with low levels of productivity, work is intense, which may explain why the toughness of *women* is emphasised in this era. Thus, even if *bua* ‘flower’ appears at this stage, it is the strong *donghua* ‘winter flower’ (ID: 90).

Moreover, in the dominant ideology, which propagandistically emphasises social equality, society is constructed as a homogeneous and egalitarian community with common goals. In the period of 1956-1966, society is permeated by a passionate narrative celebrating communism, and social distances are greatly reduced – other people are not hell⁵, but the communist *jiemei* ‘sister,’ *gedi* ‘brother’, *muqin* ‘mother’ and *fuqin* ‘father’. With this ideology, it is not surprising that the source domain of the *Family* is widely used and frequently mapped but without any *real Family* role in the target domain. Moreover, this narrative aligns with the Confucian idea of the homogenisation of the family and the state, where the state is the family, and the family is the state. Lin (2002) argues the Chinese are skilled at turning strong networks of mutual support based on ethnic identity (2002). In this sense, the traditional Confucian narrative and the communist narrative achieve a merger.

However, because the narratives of nation-building and women's emancipation are not entirely isomorphic, this narrative is not faultless. The equality between men and women that the state promotes is the equality of men and women in carrying out their individual responsibilities for nation-building and in contributing to it, sharing common social characteristics in their work; however, both men's and women's individual goals, inherent characteristics and difference are disregarded. Hence, as women are expected to behave like men (Honig, 2002), the elements of ‘masculinisation of women’ (Honig, 2002) and ‘gender erasure’ (Yang, 1999) can be found in the metaphors shown in WoC, such as *tie guniang* ‘iron girl’, *Zhuge* (an ancient military man).

Comparatively, the market-oriented reforms that began in 1978 impacted the dominant ideology. Reform elites criticise Maoist feminism for emasculating men and masculinising women (Yang, 1999). Hence, the discourses on sexual difference and femininity have emancipatory features, according to post-Mao feminist theory (Li, 1999). This change is also shown in the WoC diachronically. For example, there is one interesting article (3) in WoC:

- (4) *yijian hua qipao yiqide fengbo,*
 one floral cheongsam cause storm
 ‘the storm caused by a flowery cheongsam’ ID: No 99

⁵ Sartre's original French is "L'enfer, c'est les autres" - Hell is other people.

Picture 6



It tells the story of a woman who is isolated from her other female coworkers because she wears a floral cheongsam in an era of standard gender-neutral uniform dressing. I also show the picture in this article above (picture 6). The presentation of femininity is discouraged in social ideology in the Mao regime, but this ideology changes in the period of 1978-1998. According to the result shown in section 4.0 of this study, *hua* (flower) are the most prominent semantic domain and creates a large number of metaphors as an overarching conceptual metaphor. Noticeably, in another article in WoC (4) in 1992, the relationship between *hua* (flower) and women is discussed:

- (5) hu yu nvren
flower and women
'flower and women' ID: No 8920

The author claims that “women are beautiful and feminine and give the same role of whitewashing to society as flowers, but the beauty that women give to the world needs to be cultivated and perfected later in life” (translation mine). It is obvious that the ideology embedded in this article is totally different from the last period, with an emphasis on the beauty and aesthetic function of women.

Some scholars equate the pursuit of femininity with the discovery of female subjectivity (Chow, Zhang and Wang, 2004). Indeed, women's free expression of femininity presents women's self-identity. However, in my perspective, the view ignores the overemphasis, embedded in the market economy and consumerism, on feminine appearance and body. In societies with significant inequalities in the possession of capital (men occupy more), women are likely to become objects of consumption - objectified and commodified.

Furthermore, cultural hegemony, as proposed by Gramsci (see the collection of his notes published in 1992), is a form of cultural control, which constitutes the dominant culture, and the active submission of one class or group to the dominant culture, ideology, values, or beliefs of another class or group. In the second period, there are metaphors, such as *jiaxiaozi* ‘tomboy’ and *heshangtou* ‘monk’s hair style’, which show the confusion of the ‘under-feminised woman’ with the dominant ideologies that highlighting femininity. Additionally, the magazine uses the metaphor *niangzijun* ‘women’s troop’, which appears in the period of 1956-1966, in order to criticise women who are involved in playing

mahjong (a board game) (No 10786) and neglect their maternal and family responsibilities and roles, the roles of which is emphasised in the second period. The domain of *war* no longer has a positive connotation and refers to the socialist construction here. This is an interesting example, as it demonstrates the shift and reconfiguration of meaning and the longitudinal inheritance.

Andors (1983) argues that the measure of women's emancipation is not how well women meet the needs of the state and society but how effectively women's needs are met in the process of modernisation. In this sense, women are not emancipated in either the first or the second period because there is always a proportion of women who cannot realise their demands because of the dominant ideology outside them.

6 Discussion

In this section, I present my thoughts about the limitations of this study and potential future direction.

First, this study discusses conceptual metaphors representing women in WoC over time. Unfortunately, the journal ceased publication from 1967-1977, so in my corpus, I am unable to test and analyse the use of conceptual metaphors in this missing period and hence lose the possibility of forming a continuum analysis. Future research could focus on other media or textual sources from the period of 1967-1977 and obtain a picture of conceptual metaphors during this time period.

Second, as mentioned in both sections 2.0 and 3.0, metaphors can frame reality in a typical perspective and influence the cognition of the audience. This study focuses on data from magazines and does not consider the reception of the metaphor by magazine readers. The function and impact of conceptual metaphors may be further understood if audiences can be surveyed.

Third, I only focus on the prominence, variation and change in one magazine, a mainstream magazine. Conceptual metaphors may be presented differently in different magazines, and in other types of texts. Therefore, this study presents a magazine influenced by the dominant ideology and is not representative of the distribution of conceptual metaphors in the real world over the same period. Future research could compare WoC with other magazines or text types.

Fourth, this study focuses only on the titles, texts, and ideologies that are manually selected. However, other articles in the magazine may also demonstrate different values and ideologies. The magazine is divided into monthly issues in 1999 because it is no longer possible to confine the magazine's demands for exposing violations of women's legal rights and promoting the rule of law to one small module. This is a testament to the advantage of socialist feminism and the role of the media as the fourth pillar. Future research could focus on and compare other types of conceptual metaphors in magazines, e.g., metaphors about nations and men and include more texts in the study.

Fifth, as mentioned in section 3.3.2, the titles and content of visual advertisements and comics are removed from the study, but they can also display conceptual metaphors (Coats, 2019), resulting in meaning constructions and communication. Future research could consider a multimodal study of magazines to further demonstrate image-text interactions and visual conceptual metaphors.

7 Conclusion

This study has explored how women are represented in the conceptual metaphors in the magazine *Women of China* (WoC) and what ideologies about gender and women are presented in the conceptual metaphors. Also, I have presented the extent to which the metaphor has changed over the two time periods by evaluating the data quantitatively. Moreover, I have placed the metaphor in a macro social and cultural context to explore possible reasons for its variation.

The result of this study is based on qualitatively defining and quantitative calculating the metaphors. The combination of qualitative and quantitative elements enhances research rigour and visualisation, and at the same time, reserves space for further micro-textual and macro sociocultural and sociopolitical analyses afterwards.

In detail, eight target domains are found, which are the *Communist Activist*, *Work Role Model*, *Specific Women's Working Group*, *General Women in the Community*, *Daughter*, *Mother*, *Sister-in-law*, *Wife* and *Outlier*. It is necessary to highlight that the social roles of *Daughter*, *Mother*, *Sister-in-law* and *Wife* as target domains are only shown in the period of 1978-1998, which means the conceptual metaphors that represent women exclusively focus on the women in the public domain in 1956-1966. This phenomenon is potentially influenced by the state's ideology of 'women leaving home and going to the factory'. Additionally, 75 lexical units are found in the metaphors that represent women in WoC, which shows the diversity of describing women metaphorically. Besides this, the period of 1978-1998 has a greater richness of metaphors, but this may also be related to the longer time period that it is.

After the qualitative combination of similar lexical units, the 75 lexical units were divided into nine semantic domains, the key elements of which are *Socialist Model role*, *War Role*, *Historical Figure*, *Fictional Figure*, *Family Role*, *Nature*, *Artificial and Cultural Object*, *Men* and *Outlier*, but the proportion of them varies in two different periods. Based on the calculation, the semantic domains of *War* and *Family* in 1956-1966 and *Nature* in 1978-1998 are prominent. In the last two semantic domains, 'sister', 'mother' and 'flower' occupy a large proportion separately. Then, I tested the effect of different periods in the frequency of these five (sub)categories as well as the influence by the difference of authors, as taking the authors into account is necessary (Deignan, 2005; Semino et al., 2013). The result shows that the different periods highly influence their frequency in the statistical sense. Therefore, they can be regarded as key semantic domains. Besides them, I have found three overarching conceptual metaphors, which are WOMEN ARE WAR CHARACTERS, WOMEN ARE FAMILY CHARACTERS, and WOMEN ARE FLOWERS.

However, the influence of differences between the authors on the frequency of (sub)categories is not statistically significant, excluding one author who writes a serialised biography and uses the *muqin* 'Mother' of revolution to refer to a female communist activist in the title. In all, influenced by its officiality, authors are possibly more frequently conveying mainstream values and authorship is not emphasised. It could also be because the magazine has a large pool of authors, each of whom does not contribute statistically significantly to the relevance of typical conceptual metaphors.

Furthermore, I have analysed the ideologies that are normalised in the three conceptual metaphors mentioned above. On the one hand, I present how the source domain of *War* is mapped into social production and how *War figures* are mapped onto women in 1956-1966, as well as the reason why *Family* roles are mapped onto women without real family roles in the target domain in this period. On the other hand, I show how and why the source domain *Flower* is frequently mapped onto women in 1978-1998 and present the conflict and negotiation between different powers within the national value system, the market value system, and the feminist value system.

As Lakoff and Johnson's statement about the generalisation of conceptual metaphors suggests (1980), these few conceptual metaphors indeed occur in both time periods. However, diachronic evidence in this study shows that the main ideologies of different periods also potentially influence

the productivity of conceptual metaphors. Moreover, this study shows that substituting 'longitudinal awareness' (Cotter & Drummond, 2021) into the study of conceptual metaphors can reveal how meanings are inherited, transferred, and reconfigured, which is worthy of highlighting again.

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