It is hard to miss the numerous convenience stores on the streets of Taiwan these days. Inside these stores, one can’t help but notice the various women’s magazines displayed on the shelves, calling for the customers’ attention. On closer inspection, one sees titles such as *Cosmopolitan*, *Marie Claire*, *Elle*, and *Harper’s Bazaar* on the glossy covers of these magazines, accompanying the sometimes Caucasian and sometimes Asian, but always glamorous and sexy, models. These magazines are what we call “international women’s magazines” in Taiwan. In contrast to the multinational corporations who own the “original” versions of these magazines, the Taiwanese publishers of these magazines obtain their patent rights and turn them into “international women’s magazines.” Though written in Chinese, their content is mostly translated from the Western women’s magazines that also furnish fashion spreads. Sometimes a few “English” words will appear here and there, although they probably won’t make much sense to a native speaker of English.

As recently as the 1980s, not only were these international magazines unknown to the Taiwanese public, but so were the convenience stores, which have become the largest retailers for women’s magazines and newspapers. The internationalization of women’s magazines in Taiwan is closely connected to the expansion of convenience stores, and both developments are constitutive of the rise of Taiwanese consumer culture. My chapter therefore uses women’s magazines as an entry point to understand the relationships between the rise of Taiwanese consumer culture and the expansion of global capital. The magazine market in Taiwan marked its new era of internationalization, or, as most people would like to label it, globalization, since the late 1980s. However, one needs to note that the “internationalization” of Taiwanese women’s magazines is not a new phenomenon. Since the 1950s the Kuomintang (KMT, Nationalist Party) had launched women’s magazines, pirated and translated from Western women’s magazines, for political mobilization. What is different at the current stage of internationalization is the contractual relationship between the Western magazine moguls and the Taiwanese magazine publishers. This contractual relationship is the product of particular political and economic configurations.
This chapter explores the historical conditions that made way for the new internationalization of women’s magazines in the late 1980s and the effects that international women’s magazines brought to the field of magazine production in Taiwan. The first part of this chapter considers the political and economic forces that created the conditions for an “international” market in Taiwan. It discusses the global economic restructuring in the 1980s that had forced Taiwan to adopt the policy of internationalization in order to be further incorporated into the global economy. The second part continues to investigate the conditions for the emergence of international women’s magazines, such as the lifting of press censorship and the implementation of global intellectual property rights. In the third part, this chapter explains the institutional processes in which women’s magazines are produced in Taiwan. The fourth and final part explores the effects that international magazines bring to Taiwan’s cultural market, focusing particularly on the practice of market research in changing not only the industrial practices of women’s magazines but also the whole field of cultural production.

The Internationalization of the Market

The emergence of international women’s magazines required a market that allowed international goods to flow without inhibition across national borders, and in the 1980s this market was created as a result of Taiwan’s adoption of liberalization policies. The major force for this change came from U.S. pressure on Taiwan to open its markets. American direct foreign investment in Taiwan began primarily in the mid-1960s when the U.S. government sought to use multinational corporations (MNCs) to replace U.S. aid, thereby ensuring the survival of a non-Communist Chinese model of development (Gold 1988). The Taiwanese government’s basic strategy for local accumulation has always been to fit Taiwan into the capitalist system to ensure the constant flow of capital, thereby stimulating industrial development and increasing foreign-exchange earnings. Taiwan’s main resource at the time was its abundant, low-cost, literate, trainable, and disciplined labor force. As rising production costs in the West and in Japan reduced their competitiveness, and as companies developed global production strategies and capabilities, Taiwan’s comparative advantage in cheap labor plus a battery of other incentives became lures for MNCs. Because production technology was capital intensive, American MNCs came to Taiwan to take advantage of the low-cost labor. Although the actual products were developed at R&D facilities at headquarters in the West, local and expatriate engineers in Taiwan continued research to improve production efficiency (Gold 1988: 195). Taiwan’s bargaining chip was its ability to provide labor, political and social stability, a responsive bureaucracy, and financial incentives (Gold 1988: 201).

As East Asian scholar Edwin Winckler (1988) observes, the main political development by the 1980s was the Soviet Union’s advance to global parity with the United States, whereas the main economic development was Japan’s rise to global
parity with the United States. The increasing costs these two developments imposed on the United States increased American efforts to displace these costs onto its allies: As a result, American business resorted still more extensively to Far Eastern “sourcing” for its increasingly transnationalized network of production and sales (Winckler 1988).

Although intensified American-Japanese economic competition still meant more opportunities for skill-intensive industries elsewhere in East Asia, the global economic contraction and rising production elsewhere in the Third World intensified competition with Taiwan’s declining labor-intensive industries (Winckler 1988). The recruitment of cheap labor from Malaysia, Indonesia, and China influenced Taiwan the most and reduced Taiwan’s competitiveness within this global economic restructuring in the 1980s. Taiwan had to find a new niche beyond cheap labor to survive in the global economy and upgrading the economy was the first step. Rather than staying in low-end production, Taiwan’s main effort was to develop the R&D capacity for high-tech industries. In 1981, Hsin-chu Science and Industrial Park was built as the first effort toward a technology-oriented industry. Instead of cheap laborers, Taiwan began to advertise cheap engineers. Foreign investment in traditional exports, such as the textile industry, was discouraged, whereas investment in new ones, such as microelectronics and machinery, was encouraged by the government. Taiwan simultaneously tried to improve the quality of suppliers and worked to develop the island into a place that could ship goods and services from the “core” to less-developed countries. Efforts were also made by the government in the mid-1980s to develop offshore banking as a way of luring financial houses from Hong Kong (Gold 1988: 202). These efforts to upgrade the economy had some impact. In 1986, the proportion of high-tech exports was 27.6 percent; in 1993, it was 41.6 percent. At the same time, the GDP in the service sector increased from 47.9 percent to 55.9 percent (Hsia 1995).

The negative side of Taiwan’s economic restructuring was the “running away” of multinational businesses from the island to countries where labor is cheaper. The increased cost of labor in Taiwan, the intensifying environmental concerns, and the forced appreciation of Taiwanese dollars caused many of Taiwan’s businesses to move their production sites to China, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The impact of this corporate runaway was twofold. First, it intensified social injustice by suppressing the development of democratic social movements. The big corporations complained about the “bad investment environment” created by all kinds of social movements and the government assumed the business side. To ensure that the corporations would stay and, in the process, create more job opportunities, the then Minister of the Executive Yuan, Po-chun Hao, declared in 1990 that he was devoted to creating an environment conducive to business investment. In addition, immigration law was implemented to make use of cheap labor from the Philippines and Thailand to solve the high-cost labor problem. Despite all the measures the government took to prevent businesses from run-
ning away, businesses still left for places with abundant cheap labor. Economists and the politicians, worrying about the “emptification” of production, proposed to build Taiwan as an “Asia-Pacific Regional Operations Center” (APROC) in 1995.

The APROC project aimed to reposition Taiwan in the new global economy by making the country the base for domestic enterprises and as a gateway for international businesses that targeted Asian markets, especially those in Southeast Asia and mainland China. To do so, the Taiwan government proposed developing operation centers in financial services, telecommunications, air transportation, shipping, manufacturing, and media. The concept of the APROC was to make alliances with other transnational businesses and use Taiwan's resources and experiences in a way that could make Taiwan the springboard for the transnational businesses operating in the Asia-Pacific region (Hsia 1995). Yet, in order to do so, it was necessary for Taiwan to follow the rules of a free market. Therefore, since the 1980s, liberalization and internationalization drove all economic policies, especially once Taiwan decided to become the APROC. Financial sectors, service sectors (including telecommunications), and cultural sectors were all liberalized as a result.1

A large part of the pressure to liberalize Taiwan came from the United States. In the early 1980s, the United States faced the pressure of Japan becoming an economic power, threatening U.S. global hegemony. Furthermore, the growing trade deficit became a pressing issue for the U.S. economy as signs of economic depression started to show. These factors, over-simplified here for brevity, drove the United States to use its foreign policies to protect its interests. The U.S. trade deficit with Taiwan, caused by the trade privileges given to Taiwan since the outbreak of the Korean War, immediately made Taiwan the target of a liberalization campaign. Taiwan responded to U.S. pressure in two ways: First, it dispersed its market by expanding commerce with Japan and Europe; second, it lowered tariffs and lifted unnecessary restrictions on U.S. imports, thereby increasing them. Taiwan also opened its service industry to direct U.S. investment, which included entertainment, tourism, finance, and insurance (Winckler 1988: 300).3 As a result of this, there was an influx of imported goods in the early 1980s.

Creating International Women's Magazines in Taiwan

So far, I have sketched the background in which Taiwan was forced to liberalize and internationalize its market. The liberalization of the economy, especially in the service sector, created the necessary conditions for the emergence of international women's magazines. However, other structural factors—such as the expansion of international advertising agencies, the easing of press restrictions, and the enforcement of intellectual property rights law—brought about international women's magazines' visibility in Taiwan. Below, I will elaborate on these more specific features of the political economy that produces international women's magazines in Taiwan.
The Expansion of Western Advertising Agencies to Taiwan

Following the inflow of innumerable imported goods were the Western advertising agencies, which, with the support of the multinationals, came to Taiwan to sell the imported goods. The emergence of the advertising agency in Taiwan was closely related to the export-oriented industrialization policy, which helped Taiwan become included in the world economic order. Although Taiwan’s advertising industry was greatly influenced by Japan in its formative years in the 1960s and 1970s, it remained closed to foreign investment. Therefore, prior to 1985, local agencies profited enormously from advertising both domestic and imported goods. However, when the government lifted the import restrictions and lowered tariffs in 1984, thereby allowing foreign goods to flood into Taiwan within a short amount of time, the restrictions on establishing wholly foreign-owned and joint-venture advertising operations were also lifted. As a result, according to Ho, “from 1987 through 1989, total advertising market expenditure experienced approximately 40 percent growth each year. Most of that came from a dramatic increase in foreign products newly available on the market, about 400 to 500 every year, of which an average of 100 will be advertised. Local agencies did not have the capacities to deal with that growth. Foreign agencies didn’t come in to serve local advertisers, they came in to serve their already existing multinational client relationships” (Free China Review, quoted in Freuan 1996: 32).

Between 1984 and 1987, virtually every multinational advertising agency had set up an office in Taiwan (Freuan 1996). The first agency to arrive was Ogilvy and Mather (O&M), then Leo Burnett, J. Walter Thompson, McCann-Ericson, Lintas, and Saatchi & Saatchi all followed to divide the market. When these giants descended on Taiwan, they immediately took over the market. According to Freuan (1996), in 1995 the annual billings for the top thirty-seven advertising agencies in Taiwan totaled US$1 billion. Wholly owned foreign agencies and those with foreign majority shareholding accounted for 58 percent of that total, while those with foreign minority shareholding accounted for another 12 percent. As Hiro J. Oshina, executive vice chairman of the Taiwan Advertising Company, a joint venture with Japan’s Dentsu, remarks: “The local advertising market is now controlled by international companies” (quoted in Freuan 1996: 32).

The Lifting of Press Restrictions

Another factor that contributed to the internationalization of women’s magazines was the easing of press restrictions in January 1988, after which a sudden boom in printing ensued. The most significant restrictions dropped by the government were the removal of newspaper registration and of the twelve-page limit for a daily newspaper. With the removal of these two restrictions, newspapers increased their numbers of pages and added consumer information pages and women’s pages in the daily newspapers. These pages included entertainment news, lifestyle infor-
mation, consumer reports, the Cosmos (international cultural and entertainment news), the cultural editions (information on cultural activities such as concerts), and tips for women consumers, and so forth. These changes in the dailies not only helped to accelerate the transmission of consumer information but also to expand the reach of such information, thereby facilitating Taiwanese society's transition to a consumer society. In the process daily newspapers crossed their boundaries to "take over" issues that were considered to be the domain of women's magazines. In turn, women's magazines that traditionally identified themselves as "general interest magazines" faced an identity crisis. To solve this crisis, magazines distinguished themselves from the "general-interest" newspapers by claiming that newspapers were now for quickly digesting information during breakfast time or coffee breaks and that the consumer information pages in newspapers generated a need for more in-depth information. As a result, magazines came to position themselves as providing in-depth information and claimed to serve special-interest groups. However, this special-interest magazines rhetoric was more conducive to the existence of international women's magazine than domestic ones. Although Western women's magazines have a long history of serving "special interests"—middle-class, white, women—many Taiwanese versions faced the difficulties of transforming their self-images.

In addition to shaping a more consumption-oriented society and creating the need for special-interest magazines, the easing of press restrictions also created favorable conditions for "sexual advertising" (that is, using scantily clad, attractive women to sell commodities) in international women's magazines. Taiwan's pre-1980s press had been under the strict regulation of state censorship, particularly in the area of sex and politics. Domestic women's magazines' appeal to the "general-interest" rhetoric was also a response to this censorship in that by claiming the magazines as family reading material, the magazines also announced their "purity," that is, their absence of sexual matters. However, even with such strict censorship on the publication of sexual materials, local magazines, in one way or another, still managed to publish some sexual material. For example, Kuo (1997) showed that, in Taiwan during the 1960s and 1970s, there were many underground publications which dealt with the topic of sex that were oriented to a male readership. Some women's magazines used sex as their selling point (although some of them were censored, such as Life magazine). In many cases, when these sexual materials were banned, the publisher would merely change the title of the material in question and republish it. In some cases, the authors of these materials claimed their medical authority and smuggled in magazine content on love-making technique in the guise of eugenics (Kuo 1997). The persistence in publishing sexual material despite state censorship indicated the existence of a market for sexual material. The lifting of press restrictions therefore legitimized this market. Because Western advertising agencies "specialized" in "sexual advertising," and they tended to use sex as their trademark, Western women's magazines were easily transported into the Taiwanese market with the easing of press restrictions.
In short, the lifting of press restrictions created a demand for more in-depth consumer information. At the same time, it also created a more “liberated” atmosphere which tolerated the explicit use of women’s bodies as a sales strategy. International women’s magazines, featuring scantily dressed pin-ups on the cover pages and sexy topics inside the covers, could be distributed with the lifting of the press restrictions. Moreover, the international advertising agencies could sell goods to women with disposable income.

Enforcing Intellectual Property Rights Law

In addition to the lifting of press restrictions, the enforcement of intellectual property rights law in the late 1980s also provided a necessary condition for creating an international women’s magazine market. The issue of intellectual property rights in Taiwan can be traced to 1903 when the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation was signed between China and the United States. The treaty “granted Chinese subjects the privileges of printing and selling original translations in Chinese of any written works or maps produced by American citizens” (Yeung 1989: 22). The agreement originally aimed to “boost China’s development” (Ibid.) while, at the same time, achieving U.S. hegemony over less-developed countries. The spirit of this treaty remained alive for more than half a century. In the 1960s and 1970s, the issue of intellectual property rights came up again, this time in competition with other discourses. Intellectual property rights exemplified “American interests,” which were in tension with the “developing country’s right to exist” (Yeung 1989). However, at that time, the United States was still a superpower, so pirating in developing countries did not really constitute a danger to the existence of American businesses. In addition, pirating U.S. cultural products actually helped the United States to maintain its cultural dominance. Therefore, even with the tension, pirating was passively tolerated, until the global economic restructuring in the 1980s changed the way intellectual property rights were conceived.

To guarantee that U.S. business benefited from the operation of a “free” market, the approach under the presidencies of both Reagan and Bush to intellectual property rights became predicated on the ethics of market exchange and, therefore, needed to be enforced. This changing attitude on the part of the United States, while reflecting the restructuring of the center-periphery relationship to the demands of the market and the changing international division of labor, forced the major import countries such as Taiwan, South Korea, and China to observe intellectual property laws. The enforcement of intellectual property laws in Taiwan in the late 1980s made it possible for local publishing companies to negotiate with Western ones. With the advent of “cooperation” between local and Western publishing companies, it is possible to argue that the sudden trend of producing international women’s magazines in the late 1980s and early 1990s was partly a result of the intellectual property laws.

To summarize, the global economic contraction in the 1980s forced Taiwan to
liberalize its economy and, with U.S. pressure, Taiwan opened up its domestic market to foreign investment. This step accelerated the formation of Taiwan’s consumer culture because it triggered the inflow of imported goods to Taiwan within a short period of time and the immediate establishment of the affiliated industries that came to sell the goods. Multinational advertising agencies that came to Taiwan to sell Western goods are part of the trend. Therefore, international women’s magazines came to Taiwan to serve these international giants by providing them with outlets. In addition, the lifting of press restrictions created a more sexually liberalized environment; and the enforcement of intellectual property rights guaranteed enormous profits for Western magazine industries while at the same time enabling the rise of international women’s magazines in Taiwan. Consequently, *Cosmopolitan* was the first international women’s magazine to test Taiwan’s market, featuring scantily dressed, sexy pin-ups. This was followed by *Elle*, *Harper’s Bazaar*, and *Marie Claire*, all of which were laden with extravagant international brands of consumer goods, gaining the attention of affluent modern Taiwanese women.

### The Internationalization of Women’s Magazines

In “We Are Writing Women’s History,” the chief editor of *Cosmopolitan* in Taiwan, Wu Li-ping, stated that:

> The publication of *Non-no* (an international women’s magazine) divided the history of Taiwanese women’s magazines into two stages. Before *Non-no*, women’s magazines were very conservative; after *Non-no*, it became a mainstream practice for women’s magazines to attend primarily to fashion information and consumer information. Because the information provided was closely connected to women’s everyday lives, women’s magazines had tremendous impact on women. After the success of *Non-no*, many of its editors went on to work in other women’s magazines. *Non-no* used to run an ad which is quite telling: “Without *Non-no*, the world of women’s magazines will never be as prosperous.” Because all the magazines published after *Non-no* imitated *Non-no’s* style, finding a unique women’s magazine was quite difficult. It was not until the publication of *Cosmopolitan* in 1989 that a new phenomenon began to emerge. *Cosmopolitan* found a new perspective and a new place for women’s magazines. It expanded women’s life space, emphasized women’s self-actualization, and brought women to an age that valued taste, style, and depth. (*Cosmopolitan* August 1990: 4)

Before the 1980s, “conservative” women’s magazines (as *Cosmopolitan*’s chief editor labeled them) claimed to serve women and all the members of the society even though the issues the publications addressed concerned mainly middle- and upper-middle-class women. Such an ideological claim to serve the interests of all members of the society was part of the rules of game that one needed to observe in the field of cultural production. However, the rise of television as the most popular medium made it impossible for magazines to use such rhetoric to attract advertisements, especially when magazines in Taiwan have always been too costly for a gen-
eral audience. By the early 1970s, the total advertisement revenue for TV had already surpassed that of print media. Magazines responded by making a functional claim to serve special-interest groups, with *Commonwealth* (*T'ien hsia Tsa chih*) being the first special-interest magazine. *Commonwealth*, first published in June 1981, specialized in economics and in-depth business reporting; it also set high standards in graphics, layout, and printing. Packaged as a commodity, its professional format and marketing strategy gave rise to its early market dominance.

Among the special-interest magazines, three categories stand out: political magazines, financial management magazines, and women’s magazines. The first women’s magazine that took on the trend of market segmentation was *Non-no*, first issued in 1984. Before the publication of *Non-no*, women’s magazines were called “Family and Women’s magazines.” Because the role of the woman/mother was equated with the family, women’s magazines were designed for both women and family members; therefore, issues of morality, ethics, justice, aesthetics, and propriety were the most-often-discussed topics in letters to the editors. Furthermore, the letters to the editors in *The Woman*, an early “Family and Women’s magazine,” in the 1970s and early 1980s were mostly written by men, and the contents of the letters were not gender-specific. In these magazines, single women and teenagers were invisible categories, as a woman’s destiny was to be a family caretaker or a housewife. However, the publication of *Non-no*, initially published to capture a share of the emerging teen-aged market, became one of the forces in the early and mid-1980s that enticed teenagers into creating consumer identities.

When first introduced, *Non-no* was the pirate of a highly popular Japanese teen-aged girls’ magazine of the same name. The publisher of the Taiwanese *Non-no*, Kuo-Tai Corporation, failed to negotiate issues of copyright with the Japanese publisher and pirated the title as well as the content and format of the Japanese *Non-no*. The publication of *Non-no* was immediately successful and remained the best-seller among women’s magazines in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s despite the competition from Western international magazines. *Non-no*’s publication indicates several significant trends in the history of women’s magazines. First, *Non-no* was the first women’s magazine to use niche marketing. After its success, market segmentation became a necessary strategy for any successful magazine in Taiwan. Second, *Non-no* foregrounded the notion of lifestyle, articulated through extravagant consumption of fashion goods. As already noted, *Non-no* was the first women’s magazine that “attended primarily to fashion information and consumer information.” It was also the first magazine that provided information that was “closely connected to women’s everyday lives.” Because *Non-No* claimed to provide guidelines for women to live their everyday lives as consumers, the prominence of fashion in the pages of the magazine indicated that fashion information was seen as constituting women’s everyday experiences. Following *Non-no*, subsequent women’s magazines published in the mid- to late 1980s, such as *Diana* and *Yun*, packaged themselves as “pursuing taste and fashion.” Since then, lifestyles have become the selling point for women’s magazines. Finally, *Non-no* also fore-
shadowed the later “internationalization” trend in the magazine business.

It was not until the publication of *Cosmopolitan* in 1989 that Taiwan’s magazine market began its process of “official” internationalization. Hence, the aforementioned chief editor of *Cosmopolitan* Wu claimed that her magazine “found a new perspective and a new place for women’s magazines.” Despite their short history in the local market, all four of these foreign magazines, *Cosmopolitan, Elle, Harper’s Bazaar,* and *Marie Claire,* stayed on the top-ten list for best-selling women’s magazines (according to *Brain,* a monthly marketing and communications publication). Each magazine claimed to sell between ten thousand and thirty thousand copies a month, although circulation figures were not audited and were often unreliable. As a comparison, among the twenty or so viable women’s magazines in Taiwan, it is estimated that one-third of these magazines sell more than ten-thousand copies per issue, 40 percent sell five- to ten-thousand copies, and 20 percent sell two- to five-thousand copies. The rest sell fewer than two-thousand copies, the bottom line for survival (“An Estimate of the Numbers of Magazines Produced in the Taiwan Area” 1993).

The obvious advantage of foreign-based publications is their vast international resources. “*Cosmo* is one hundred years old and has twenty-six editions worldwide, and *Bazaar* has around twenty editions. We exchange information with other editions all the time,” explains Chang Ming-Chun, chairman of Hua-Ker Publishing, which publishes the Taiwan editions of both magazines under licensing from the U.S.-based Hearst Corporation. One of the biggest magazine publishing houses in Taiwan, Hua-Ker also owns the Taiwan edition of *Esquire and Arch,* a local interior design magazine. In addition to their abundant resources, international magazines also have the advantage of advertisements from international advertising agencies. Local advertising agencies lost their international clients when the international advertising agencies entered the Taiwan market because the international advertising agencies are able to place their advertisements in international magazines rather than local ones. Therefore, one-third to one-half of most women’s magazines are filled with advertisements for Christian Dior, Ralph Lauren, Pierre Cardin, Lancôme, and Estée Lauder. Yet, despite these two advantages, international women’s magazines have to deal with the tension between localization on the one hand and internationalization on the other in order to attract local readers. Each magazine has adopted a different strategy for dealing with this tension.

Tsai Tung-chao, the publisher of *Cosmopolitan,* emphasizes that international women’s magazines are not magazines that are directly translated from American magazines: “The Chinese *Cosmopolitan* is not a direct translation of the American *Cosmopolitan.* Our readers will feel distanced if it is a direct translation. Our Chinese edition emphasizes the ‘energetic, active, individualistic, and independent’ spirit of the American *Cosmopolitan.* Following this spirit, we try to refashion a new modern Chinese woman and encourage women to improve themselves and face more challenges” (October 1989: 2). Given this definition of internationalization, different women’s magazines try different ways to catch the “spirit” of the Western magazines. For example, about one-half to two-thirds of the content of
both *Cosmopolitan* and *Harper's Bazaar* are adapted from other international editions (and mostly from American editions), and both magazines use Western cover girls. Although the adapted stories are sometimes modified (for example, the articles on sex might be written in more reserved and euphemistic language), they are still basically translations. “We insist on maintaining the style and tradition of these magazines,” Chang Ming-Chun of *Cosmopolitan* says. “We translate articles on sex and relationships, which is *Cosmopolitan*’s forte, and we adapt fashion reports, which is *Bazaar*’s strong point, and we also translate or adapt the regular columns on health, beauty, interior design, cooking, horoscope, etc.” (Yun 1994: 32). Despite their strong international coverage, these magazines must still provide some articles and columns written from a Taiwanese perspective in order to attract readers. According to the chief editor of *Cosmopolitan*, Iris Chou, “To localize the content of the magazines, we sometimes choose the topics from the American edition and interview local people and then write down the result of the interview from local people’s perspectives” (personal interview by author with Iris Chou, 1996). In addition, both magazines include regular profiles of Chinese singers, actors, and other personalities; columns introducing local movies, books, concerts, and art exhibitions; and information on boutiques and jewelry stores around Taipei. According to Chang Ming-Chun, “50–50 is a healthy combination, but we are still experimenting” (Yun 1994: 32).

The Taiwan edition of *Marie Claire*, produced by *China Times Weekly*, has taken an even more locally oriented approach. The editor in chief said, “Eighty percent of its content is written in Taipei. Like the original French edition, many of these articles are more in-depth and thought-provoking than the typical half-page sex and beauty features in most fashion magazines.” The magazine claims to appeal not only to its readers’ fashion tastes, but also to its readers’ intellect. *Marie Claire* seeks to pursue “individual taste, liberty and humanitarian concerns” (Yun 1994: 33).

Perhaps the most localized of the international fashion magazines is *Elle*, published in Taipei by Hatchette International, a joint venture between France Editions and Publications and Intercultural Magazines Ltd. in Taipei. Like *Marie Claire*, *Elle* always uses Chinese models on its covers, and its locally produced fashion spreads often have a distinctly Chinese quality. The articles and columns adapted from its other editions, which make up about one-third of *Elle*’s content, are also given a strong local flavor. For example, *Elle* often compares local fashion to fashion abroad or invites comments from local designers. The Chinese is also more fluent, rather than inflected with an English flavor. Nevertheless, although the establishment of a local angle is important, it is still the international appeal that gives these magazines an edge (Yun 1994).

**Changing the Market of Women’s Magazines**

The fact that international women’s magazines have claimed positions on the “best-seller list for magazines” since they first hit the market posed great challenges for
local women’s magazines. As a result, local women’s magazines underwent many changes to survive the market liberalization. The first strategy that local women’s magazines adopted was market research. Before examining the strategies of local magazines, I will first look at the relationships between international women’s magazines and the use of market research.

As discussed earlier, the Western advertising agencies came to Taiwan to sell imported commodities that were suddenly available to the Taiwanese people as a result of the state’s decision to open its domestic market. Under the pressure of local manufacturers to compete with foreign goods, local advertising agencies improved their sales and promotion strategies by adopting strategies used by foreign agencies. Therefore, all local agencies implemented market research to survive the brutal competition from transnational giants. As Hiro Oshima notes: “In the past, local manufacturers thought that as long as they made a product, priced it competitively, and advertised it, then it would sell. Since clients thought this way, advertising agencies did accordingly. Neither had any idea about market research or targeted campaigns. Foreign agencies, on the other hand, first considered market analysis, consumer research and product positioning. They then decided the ad campaign’s approach” (quoted in Freuan 1996: 33). As a consequence, market segmentation, the necessary result of market research, became the mandatory business practice.

Market research, a scientific method used to understand consumers’ buying habits and buying power, created a new category of special-interest magazines. According to Ohmann, market research was used to control the sales of products. When market research was first used in the United States, it was historically intended to reduce risks and increase competitive power by integrating production and consumption. Through market research, companies could divide up customers into shares of the market and differentiate products by matching particular segment of consumers with particular products based on customers’ loyalty (Ohmann 1996: 53). As Raymond So of the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency stated:

Foreign agencies differ from the local counterparts in [that] they have a more scientific approach toward consumer marketing. A successful agency must understand how consumers think and behave, particularly with regard to how they interact with the media and a brand. And you must understand how to use that knowledge to communicate effectively with consumers, both in terms of what media to use to reach them, and in knowing what kind of ideas they will respond favorably to. (quoted in Freuan 1996: 33)

What do the rise of international advertising agencies and the adoption of market research have to do with international women’s magazines? As mentioned earlier, when restrictions on imported goods were lifted, international advertising agencies came to serve international commercial giants by selling their goods to the Taiwanese people. International women’s magazines, therefore, came to serve the multinational advertising agencies by providing a forum for them to sell their
goods. As a result, women's magazines came to depend more on advertising revenues than on individual sales and subscription rates. As the survival of women's magazines came to depend on advertising income, certain readers became more valuable than others because they had more buying power.

Local women's magazines, faced with the challenges coming from international women's magazines, also adopted market research to attract "quality" readers in order to sell them as "elite" readers to the advertising agencies. For example, in a local trade journal, Modern Management Monthly, Lin discusses the importance of market research and the idea of "special interest" in marketing:

There are three types of women: traditional, modern, and family-oriented.... Women possess a variety of lifestyles; every group of women has its unique thinking patterns and its special needs. Even if the manufacturers produce goods that possess attractive traits, there is no guarantee that all women will like the goods. The way to improve this is through market segmentation. You need to divide women into subgroups according to their age, occupation, education, income, and their lifestyle. Then you need to assess each group's buying power, its special traits, and demands. After these steps, you can start to plan your sales strategy and get into the market. (Lin 1985: 38)

Consequently, market research helps magazine industries control their profits by creating new identities for these groups, and then tailoring their products to different groups of affluent consumers.

Who constitutes this "special-interest" group toward which women's magazines imagine themselves to offer services? In the first issue of Taiwanese Cosmopolitan, Helen Gurley Brown gave a clear picture of its readers:

Cosmopolitan is different from other women's magazines. It doesn't emphasize how to mother your children, how to be a good housewife, or other traditional roles. Our readers are women who desire to actualize their potentials. . . . We emphasize that a woman needs to have a career and romantic love to be truly happy. . . . We offer you information and ideas on how to help single women to find ideal partners, how to help married wives to take care of their husbands, their children, and their work without feeling overstressed, how to negotiate your sex lives, how to find a good job, etc. (Brown 1989: 6)

Brown's view about their readers is not specific to Cosmo, but is shared by all international women's magazines as well as the local ones. In general, women's magazines are targeting a group of women who "love men, children, work, and themselves" and whose principle in life is to "keep their youth and beauty forever" (Cosmopolitan May 1992: 8). In general, this "special interest" group is made of women who live in metropolitan areas, who have an office job, and who range in age from twenty to thirty-five, in other words, the group of women who are considered as having the strongest buying power by the advertisers.

From Brown's statement, we also infer the birth of a new "species." If women
were traditionally associated with the family, as earlier general-interest magazines assumed, then international women's magazines signaled a new type of women. Instead of investing herself in her husband and children, she now has an identity of her own. She desires to actualize herself through her work and her romances. Her place has shifted from the domestic home to the public world of the workplace and romantic consumption.

Hence, the invention of the “special-interest” group by market research helped facilitate some women, in the form of the modern woman, in dissociating their identities from the home and re-orienting them toward the workplace and the market. This new identity of women as individuals dissociated from the traditional role of mothers and wives also contributed to the success of international women’s magazines whose interest in individual consumption tended to exclude women with a family. Therefore, by catering to the category of “special-interest” women, women’s magazines served the advertising agencies by providing them forums to sell their goods to a group of modern, metropolitan, young (age ranging from twenty to thirty-five), and affluent women consumers.

Where do these women come from? As Taiwan continued its process of modernization in the 1970s, more and more women, usually from the new middle-class and traditional middle-class (petty bourgeois) backgrounds, received college educations. Therefore, they worked in the modern industrial and service sectors as secretaries, assistants, administrative staff, and even professionals. This group of women grew up with Western influence and aspired to the cosmopolitan aesthetic that the international women’s magazines helped to construct. However, at the same time, factory girls, women from lower social strata, and women of old age became more marginalized in the society because they did not constitute a “special-interest” group in the marketplace; therefore, they no longer had access to representation.

In addition to changing the character of women’s magazines from “general interest” to “special interest,” market research also changed the relationship between readers and writers.

Ohmann (1996) points out that U.S. market research, emphasizing sales and consumption, changed the identity of a worker from a producer to include that of a consumer. In the world of Taiwanese women’s magazines, the opposite has happened. The readers of women’s magazines, traditionally seen as pure consumers, have now become producers (writers). According to the chief editor of The Woman, the relationships between the “Writers and Readers” should be construed as follows:

Before, the relationship between an author and a reader is analogous to that of a cook and a customer. They have very different roles and different identities [the customers do not cook, they only consume]. But nowadays, a reader can also take on the identity of a writer. . . . For example, with the recent changes in news media, newspapers also invite their readers to write and publish their ideas in the newspapers.... We the editors would like to... eliminate the distance between the reader and the writer. For example, we sponsor opinion surveys, publish letters
Driven by profit, magazines became more interactive. The more the consumers participated, the more the producers understood the concerns of the consumers. Hence, magazine publishers sponsored activities such as luncheon talks, fashion shows, concerts, movies, and make-up workshops, particularly for college seniors who would soon be "social freshwomen." These activities not only promoted the sales of the magazines but also gave the producers a sense of who the readers were and what they wanted (so that the publishers could sell the audience back to the advertising agencies). To promote more sales and to ensure that the advertisements in women’s magazines would reach the optimal number of consumers, some magazines such as *Elle* even began to distribute unsold magazines to participants in their sponsored activities. By doing this, publishers also solved the problem of overstocking magazines. Coupons and free cosmetic samples were also given out to consumers to induce sales.

It was not only the use of market research which changed the way women’s magazines were marketed; the post-liberalization transformations in magazine distribution also changed magazines’ formats, layouts, and cover designs. In the 1960s and 1970s, bookstores were not the major outlets for magazines. In fact, periodicals were rarely found in bookstores. At this time, magazine income came mostly from subscriptions rather than individual sales and advertising. Magazines were distributed through a general or local consignee, who mailed the magazine to subscribers each month (Wang 1976). This situation changed when Kingstone, the first chain bookstore in Taiwan, established special in-store sections for selling magazines in the mid-1980s. The establishment of magazine sections forced local women’s magazines to compete with international magazines for customers’ immediate attention.

Kingstone launched two strategies in bookselling that were eventually taken up by all other chain bookstores: the establishment of a magazine section in the front part of bookstores and the institution of best-seller billboards. The former made magazines the most visible commodities in a bookstore, whereas the latter changed the types of books being produced. With Kingstone pioneering the bookstore business, Ho-Chia-Jen and Hsin-Shuei-Yo followed suit and established their chain bookstore businesses in the busiest parts of Taiwanese cities. The result was a rapid expansion of chain bookstores and a rapid disappearance of traditional bookstores from street corners.

Along with the expansion of chain bookstores was the expansion of “fast bookstores” at the convenience stores. Convenience stores were small so there was room for only books or magazines that had high circulation. Books that were “new, fast, practical, and simple,” or “light, thin, short, and small,” were sought because they did not take much counter space and they could be easily carried and digested. In 1990, Yen-liu Publishing Company made a breakthrough by cooperat-
In addition to the rise of chain bookstores and convenience stores, the cooperation between bookstores and department stores that began in 1987 contributed to changes in the publishing industry. The industry regards books sold in bookstores that are attached to department stores as “extra” consumption because, in general, consumers do not go to department stores for books. Therefore, the books and magazines that are sold there are mostly entertainment- and leisure-oriented. Foreign magazines and women’s magazines (international editions) are also available there (Chang 1996). With these changes in magazine and book outlets, the publishers now raced to produce “individualized, spontaneous, entertainment-oriented cultural commodities” with an emphasis on the appearance of the commodities. The result of this is an overflow of small, delicate books dealing with topics such as astrology, romance, comics, and dream notebooks. Changes in magazine and book outlets also caused the death of “serious” magazines, such as Wen-Hsin, The Human World, and The New Earth Literature in 1990 (Wu 1992). Local women’s magazines, under pressure to get immediate attention from buyers at the magazine counters in bookstores or convenience bookstores, changed their cover design to include more sexy women. They also used more high-quality printing, transformed their format to the current standard in the industry, and shifted their content to focus more on fashion, celebrities, and consumer information.

With the changes in magazine outlets, which resulted in the easy availability of women’s magazines, the publications came to depend more on individual sales. However, even with the dramatic increase in the number of women’s magazines during the 1990s, Chih-Li Evening Daily observes that “there is not much increase in the percentage of women’s magazines consumed by female readers.” How then could women’s magazines flourish in the publishing market if not enough women were buying magazines? The answer is obvious: advertising. The editor of Cosmopolitan clearly explains the significance of advertising in women’s magazines:

In fact, given the high quality of women’s magazines, the financial burden is very heavy for the publishers. The fierce competition among different women’s magazines forces the publishers and editors to make more investments in bettering the quality of women’s magazines. Readers enjoy all the benefits because we cannot raise the price of the magazines.... As a result, advertisements naturally become the life source of women’s magazines. (Cosmopolitan February 1990: 2)

About two-thirds of the magazine’s income comes from advertising sales. Since magazines are the major media for cosmetic ads, more than 50 percent of the cosmetic ads go to women’s magazines. According to Brain, female consumers in Taiwan spend an average of NT$25,390 each year (approximately U.S.$950) on cosmetics; hence there is a rapid growth in cosmetic advertising in women’s magazines. For example, in 1992, there was a 15 percent increase in the number of cosmetic ads in women’s magazines; in 1993, there was a 22.7 percent increase ("Elle Magazine’s Female Con-
sumer Survey on the Booming Cosmetic Market” 1994: 87). This begs the question of how these magazine publishers persuade the advertisers that their magazines have enough readers when circulation and subscription sales remain low.

In Taiwan, the availability of women’s magazines in coffee shops, beauty salons, restaurants, teahouses, and rental bookstores makes it easy and convincing for the publishers to claim that their magazines reach a much larger audience than the retail sales demonstrate. This is also the main reason why even the best publications have a hard time building sales to subscribers or to individuals. In addition to the free magazines in public entertainment places, the high cost of women’s magazines also drives some women to go to book-rental stores where current magazines, books, and comics can be borrowed for only $2.50 (U.S.) for a copy, instead of spending $7.50 (U.S.) on a copy.

The fact that women’s magazines are easily available in these public spaces and the fact that the advertisers believe that women read these magazines in such places indicate that women’s magazines have changed from a “domestic entertainment” in the 1970s to a “public entertainment” in the 1990s. In the 1970s, women’s magazines imagined their readers to be domestic mothers who stayed at home taking care of the house and children. As a result, women’s magazines were considered “domestic entertainment” in the sense that they were about women’s domestic duties and were delivered to the home (through subscription) so that a woman could stay home and read women’s magazines.

In the 1990s, the “imagined” readers are assumed to be “quality” women who roam around public places of consumption. If, as previously discussed, these “imagined” readers are the twenty to thirty-five-year-old women who are affluent, (mostly) single, metropolitan, and who care about their beauty and youth, their identity as such is grounded in the industry’s calculation of their readers’ accessibility to women’s magazines. Accessibility here is defined as the readers’ economic resources to obtain the magazines and their cultural resources to understand the magazines’ aesthetic and textual practices, as well as their spatial access to these magazines. The easy availability of women’s magazines in cafes, convenience stores, salons, book-rental stores, and chain bookstores is predicated on the image of a female consumer who is college educated, affluent, and mobile. Furthermore, the advertisements and the content in women’s magazines also support this idea of a “public” woman whose mobility is extended (or confined?) to these consumption spaces. For example, the ads usually show different fashion items on display at department stores, the information page tells readers where these department stores are, and the special reports encourage the readers to buy these items for a better look that will enable her to find romance in the public space, such as the workplace and restaurants.

Changes in the Rules of Cultural Production

The use of market research, the reliance on advertising as the magazines’ main source of support, and the changes in the distribution systems have reconfigured
the way cultural workers do their businesses. Previously, women’s magazines emphasized the importance of social responsibility as a marketing strategy. In promoting women’s magazines as a form of social service, the editors and publishers of women’s magazines at this stage also claimed their “disinterestedness,” that is, they were there to help women improve their lives, not to earn money for themselves. However, in the 1990s, the rhetoric of disinterestedness was refuted in women’s magazines. Instead, it is the recognition of culture as a business that seeks profits that is emphasized. This changing rhetoric indicates that the dominant principle of hierarchizing the “field” of cultural/magazine production is now structured by commercial interests.

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of cultural production as a “field” offers a productive way to analyze the power struggles that take place within the realm of cultural production. In Bourdieu’s analysis, any social formation is structured by way of a hierarchically organized series of fields: the economic field, the educational field, the political field, the cultural field, and so forth. Each field is defined as a “structured space with its own laws of functioning and its own relations of force independent of those of politics and the economy, except, obviously, in the cases of the economic and the political fields. Each field is relatively autonomous but structurally homologous with the others” (Johnson 1993: 6). The structure of a field is determined by “the relations between the positions agents occupy in the field.” Hence, a field is a dynamic concept because “a change in agents’ positions necessarily entails a change in the field’s structure” (Johnson 1993: 6). Bourdieu points out that each agent in the field will necessarily do things to advance his or her own interests, which will result in the change of the structure of the field. Hence, Bourdieu argues that the field of cultural production is a field of struggles.

As Bourdieu (1993: 35) points out, cultural criticisms offer one productive site to examine how the struggles for power take place because cultural critics “take part in a struggle for the monopoly of legitimate discourse about the work of art.” Even though Bourdieu is specifically referring to the field of art production, the notion of power struggles as manifested in the realm of cultural criticism can also be applied to the field of cultural production in general. As Bourdieu says,

The production of discourse (critical, historical, etc.) about the work of art [and culture] is one of the conditions of production of the work. Every critical affirmation contains, on the one hand, a recognition of the value of the work which occasions it, which is thus designated as a worthy object of legitimate discourse, and on the other hand, an affirmation of its own legitimacy. All critics declare not only their own judgment of the work but also their claim to the right to talk about it and judge it. In short, they take part in a struggle for the monopoly of legitimate discourse about the work of art [and culture]. (Bourdieu 1993: 35–36)

In Taiwan, the debate over the role of women’s magazines and the role of cultural workers between the elite cultural critics and the magazine editors provides
an entrance to investigate the power struggles in the field of cultural production. From this debate, one can argue that women’s magazines have changed from a product of elite culture to that of mass culture and that the pursuit of commercial interests has become the dominant principle in the field of magazine production in the 1990s. To elaborate this argument, let me turn to the cultural battle over the definition of cultural worker in the field of Taiwanese magazine production.

As previously mentioned, with the changing pace of everyday life, changes in the distribution system, and the need for “light, thin, short, small” books, “serious” magazines such as *The Human World* went out of business. Faced with this situation, many elite cultural critics blamed women’s magazines for “corrupting” culture and humanity. Wong’s “Unmasking Women’s Magazines” provides an example of how the elite cultural critics both embraced the rhetoric of anti-economy and excluded women’s magazines editors from the category of serious writers. I quote the text at length because the article represented most cultural critics’ view toward women’s magazines. Published in *China Times* (one of the largest daily newspapers in Taiwan) on January 15, 1990, Wong wrote:

Let’s start by looking at the “mask” of women’s magazines. Women’s magazines use models, sexy actresses on their covers, making them the objects of women’s envy and identification and men’s object of desire. As a result, women’s bodies are commodified. Inside women’s magazines are ads for cosmetics, fashion, and so on. They give us the message that a woman’s ultimate concern in life is to have a beautiful face and a slender body. If we look closely at the content of women’s magazines, we find that the topics they deal with are all very similar; they only talk about love, marriage, sex, skin care, horoscopes, and food. If these topics really reflect modern women’s needs, then we will have to believe that the feminist movements in Taiwan have seriously failed: women’s thoughts, ideals, consciousness, and their ability to be independent are still at their “infantile” stage.

Under the guidance of “market segmentation,” it is easy for us to see that the editors of women’s magazines define women’s life as confined in their pursuit of extravagant material life in metropolitan cities. There is no care for suffering human beings, no reflection on the social reality....What this reflects is that women’s magazines have now become commercial institutions because all we have there is exquisite advertisements. The overflow of ravishing ads in women’s magazines indicates that the function of women’s magazines is to stimulate extravagant consumption.

Superficially, you can buy the brandname fashion to show off your social status and to use it as a tool to attract the opposite sex, but these are not women’s real needs. The proliferation of women’s magazines is a backlash against Taiwan’s women’s movements. When feminists fight patriarchal social structures for women’s liberation and independence, women’s magazines, with their numerous readers, only show those “model dolls” who know nothing about improving themselves and the society but who follow fashion. Women’s magazines not only fail to instruct women on how to raise women’s consciousness and how to establish an equal world for men and women; they also reinforce gender stereotypes and, hence, trap women in their small world.
Implicit in this quote is a dichotomous thinking which divides traditional cultural workers from women's magazines editors and invokes the traditional cultural workers as the exemplar of autonomy from economic interests. Wong simultaneously condemns the magazine editors as having been coopted by commercial interests. The traditional cultural workers enact the mission of bettering the society, care "for suffering human beings," and reflect "on the social reality." On the other hand, the editors of women's magazines accept commercial interests and have made women's magazines the tools of the commercial institutions whose sole purpose is to "stimulate extravagant consumption"; as a result, they contribute to the decline of humanity in general. From Wong's critique of women's magazines, we can see that it is the autonomy from commercial interests that characterizes the role of a traditional cultural worker and the "purity" of traditional culture.

Immediately following the publication of this article, the chief editor of Cosmopolitan Wu Li-ping responded by redefining the term of culture and the role of cultural workers. In the editorial in the February 1990 issue of Cosmopolitan, Wu retorted:

I felt very sad after reading the article ["Unmasking Women's Magazines"]. In fact, like the author of the article, there are many people who hold the same view toward women's magazines. We call these people "the cultural workers who embrace the spirit of humanities and social consciousness," but they are definitely not the "critics who understand the dynamics of the economy and the direction of cultural businesses."

The number of ads is used to measure the growth of a nation's economy. Our neighbor, Japan, had a growth rate of 13 percent in 1988 and 9 percent in 1989 in their advertisements, and magazines enjoyed the largest growth in advertising. If you walk on the streets of Tokyo... you will also find that the pedestrians are all properly dressed and full of energy. Does their mode of dress not reflect their society's cultural and material standard? The definition of "culture" should not be limited to concerns of human suffering. Culture is about people, it is about people's everyday experiences, human behavior and human relationships. Culture is rooted in the good habits people have in their everyday experiences. Therefore, in addition to emphasizing "know-how" information, women's magazines should also cover women's everyday-life experiences: They start with caring about and loving themselves, and then they can love others. This is the responsibility of women's magazines.

But we cannot deny that women's magazines are commodities. Because they are commodities, they have to pursue commercial interests (otherwise, how can we survive?). Hence, women's magazines have to find their niche by deciding who their readers are and what content to offer. Women's magazines work with advertising agencies to arrange the best content that is in harmony with the advertisements so that advertisements are not seen as intrusions into the content of the magazines. In order to know the newest market trend, the editors are also constantly investigating what the readers want, so that they can tailor their articles to the readers' preferences.

I want to emphasize again that women's magazines are life magazines and advertisements are the necessary information for living a modern life. Commercials and everyday life experiences are inseparable. Let us view women's
magazines from another perspective: “She” is the product of our economy, “she” is closely related to our everyday life experiences, and “she” reflects the heartbeat of our society. Little by little, women’s magazines make contributions to educating women about their consciousness for life. Let us reposition women’s magazines; let the humanitarian issues go back to the humanities; let women’s rights issues go back to women’s movements, environmental issues go back to environmentalism, and everyday life issues go back to women’s magazines. In this case, we will not confuse the different “natures” of different magazines. (1990: 2)

Wu Li-ping uses four strategies here to defend her magazine’s commercial interests and to impose commercial interests as the dominant principle. First, instead of defining the role of the critic as one who carries the mission of moral responsibility and who cares about humanity in general, the Cosmopolitan editor “pluralizes” the role of the cultural critic. By using the market rhetoric of difference (market segmentation), she argues that there are different kinds of cultural critics, and “the cultural workers who embrace the spirit of humanities and social consciousness” is only one of them. The editors of women’s magazines do not deal with these social issues; instead, they only deal with issues concerning everyday life. However, in another response to Wong’s criticism published in March 1990, Wu agrees with Wong’s position that the cultural workers’ mission entails “social responsibilities.” Yet, in this case, she redefines the notion of social responsibility: “Some critics usually condemn women’s magazines for not shouldering social responsibilities. But what is the definition of social responsibility? Women’s magazines offer women a cultural forum to expand their thoughts and ideas. Isn’t this also a form of social responsibility? It’s just that we do not talk about social responsibility in that jargon” (Wu 1990: 2). Hence, the readers are informed that there are different types of cultural workers and that no universal standard should be imposed on what the cultural worker should do. Furthermore, even if there is a standard, such as a mission of social responsibility, women’s magazines do not fail this mission; rather, it is only that they speak a different language—a language of everyday life—that is distinct from that of the traditional, jargon-spewing cultural elite.

The second strategy that the Cosmopolitan editor uses is to redefine the meaning of culture. For Wong, an elite cultural critic, culture is about uplifting humanity. Culture is the domain of the serious. However, women’s magazines argue for a kind of anthropological definition of culture: The definition of “culture” should not be limited to concerns on human sufferings. Culture is about people; it is about people’s everyday experiences, human behavior, and human relationships. This definition of culture justifies the existence of women’s magazines. In addition to redefining culture, in a follow-up article published in March 1990, the editor of Cosmopolitan also claims that modern women’s magazines should “integrate women’s life experiences into women’s magazines.” The fact that modern women’s magazines are the target of scorn is because those “old and stubborn women’s
magazines cannot step forward and modernize themselves." In this manner, a new dichotomy along the line of modern and traditional is established. The cultural elite’s notion of culture as “uplifting the humanity” is now pushed to the realm of tradition (the old and the backward) and the new definition of culture as “everyday life experiences” is now elevated to the realm of the new and the modern.

The third strategy that Wu deploys is to adopt the dominant principle of hierarchization from the field of power (the economy). Unlike the cultural elite who claim their disinterestedness through a rhetoric of social responsibility (a mission that is ostensibly independent of the elite’s own material interests), Wu asks readers to recognize the nature of women’s magazines as cultural commodities. As commodities, magazines need to follow the dominant principle in the field of the economy; hence, commercial interests are recognized as essential to the survival of the magazine. As Wu asks the readers to recognize commercial interests as the dominant principle of the field of production, she also claims that the pursuit of commercial interests does not necessarily contradict the ideal of “social responsibility” that is traditionally associated with “disinterestedness.” The *Cosmopolitan* editor posits:

> We are angry that cultural enterprises have been forced to “give feedback to the society.” Why is it that publishing businesses cannot be “interested and idealistic”? It should not be taken for granted that publishing businesses necessarily have to lose money and to “give feedback to the society.” We the editors of women’s magazines have given what we learn and what we know to the readers through women’s magazines. Isn’t this also a form of giving feedback to the society? (Wu 1990: 2)

Fourth and finally, the editor of *Cosmopolitan* uses Japan as an example to legitimize women’s magazines. By treating the proliferation of women’s magazines as a sign of Japan’s prosperity, the editor argues that the prosperity of Taiwan depends upon the increase in women’s magazines. The reference to Japan or America as a way of authorizing the speaker’s position is not specific to the field of cultural production (of either the magazine editors or the elite critics) but is characteristic of other fields in general. It is an ideology deeply embedded in Taiwan’s modernization discourses across the cultural, economic, and political fields. Hence, women’s magazines also use American critics’ comments on women’s magazines to discredit the Taiwanese critics’ derogatory comments:

> In the West when women’s magazines began to thrive, some “well-read” intellectuals, while having nothing to do, found fault in women’s magazines. . . . The Second Wave feminist, Betty Friedan, in her *The Feminine Mystique*, pointed out that “[i]n the world of women’s magazines there are only marriage, housework, and childrearing. Women’s magazines trap women into gender ideologies.” However, even though these feminists can deny marriage, housework, and childrearing, they cannot deny their existence because, for most women, these are the sources of their happiness.
The criticisms that our traditional cultural elite made were already talked about [and refuted] in the 1960s America. In other words, those critics who don’t read women’s magazines but condemn them either plagiarize their ideas from American “intellectuals” or they are just twenty years behind those traditional cultural elite from America. (Wu 1990: 2)

In general, by appropriating the ideology of modernization, editors like Wu appealed to the West and Japan as their sources of power and used this power to undermine the authority of the elite critics. In this debate, women’s magazines established commercial interests as the dominant principle of hierarchization in the field of cultural production. The fact that women’s magazines’ editors won this struggle is evidenced by the death of traditional women’s magazines such as The Woman, which appealed to a rhetoric of disinterestedness. Since the late 1980s, traditional women’s magazines faced many challenges from international women’s magazines; as a result, they adopted market research methods, changed their cover girls, and, furthermore, focused more on topics regarding sexuality, fashion, and consumption. However, despite these changes, these magazines still made claims to social responsibility and disinterestedness. For example, in the October 1993 issue of The Woman, the editor states: “The Woman not only deals with issues that concern the family but also goes beyond the family to include the larger social environments. We present our in-depth analysis to the readers about issues that concern the society and women’s life realities” (1993: 36).

However, this rhetoric of social responsibility did not fare well in an intensifying market milieu. A year later, The Woman went out of business. In the last issue of The Woman, its chief editor lamented the declining standard of women’s magazines characterized by their pursuit of commercial interests. The Woman, he added, because of its unwillingness to lower its standard and to bend to commercial interests, was forced to go out of business:

Ten years ago, Mr. Chang [the founder of the magazine] died of cancer. However, his insistence on what should be done (to improve the magazine’s service to the society) and what should not be done (to surrender to commercial interests) became a good model for all his colleagues . . . Mr. Chang not only taught us to write good articles and edit magazines but also to be a principled person. . . . There were a lot of changes during the past ten years, especially after the lifting of the martial law. Many women’s magazines arose like the shooting bamboo after the spring rain. . . . Some packaged themselves with glossy pictures and quality papers, some worked with international women’s magazines to get information from other countries while also saving production expenses. . . . It is very hard for us to make it in this competitive market. If we adopt business methods to run this magazine, then it goes against our goal to serve the society. Therefore, we have decided to stop issuing this magazine and to say good-bye, though reluctantly, to our readers. (November 1994: 6)

Contrary to the Cosmo editor who insisted on seeing women’s magazines as a business, the editor of The Woman refused to run a woman’s magazine like a busi-
ness. However, this refusal only led to its own demise. The bankruptcy of *The Woman* seems to indicate, in Bourdieu’s words, a change of the dominant principle of hierarchization from the autonomous pole in the 1970s to the heteronomous pole in the 1990s. When discussing the production of art in France, Bourdieu argues that the field of cultural production is a site of struggle between two principles of hierarchization: the heteronomous principle and the autonomous principle. The heteronomous principle favors “those who dominate the field economically and politically” and the autonomous principle favors those who see themselves as independent of the economy. The most heteronomous cultural producers, because of their lack of symbolic capital, are least resistant to the dominant fields of power. They tend to discredit the autonomous cultural workers by defending their own interests through the dominant principles outside the field of cultural production. As a result, by serving their own interests, they also serve the interests of the dominant class. On the other hand, the autonomous cultural workers, while struggling to impose the principle of autonomy through a rhetoric of disavowal of economic interests within the field of cultural production, tend to see the heteronomous cultural workers as “enemy agents.” Consequently, they exclude them from the definition of writers or artists.

Despite the editor’s espousal of anticommercialism and spiritual uplift, if we further situate *The Woman*’s rhetoric of anticommercialism within the realm of the political and economic fields, one finds that the term “autonomy” cannot be used to characterize Taiwan’s magazine production or cultural production in general. The survival of women’s magazines before the mid-1980s (especially for *The Woman*, which won several awards) depended in large measure on their promotion of the state’s goals including their complicity with the state in building a Chinese nation on Taiwan. More specifically, in the domain of culture, this meant that women’s magazines had to make anticommercialism and the uplifting of spirituality their goal because the building of a Chinese nation on Taiwan required the production of frugal subjects and the inculcation of subjects who would look to Chinese culture and tradition as their roots. Hence, while the rhetoric of anticommercialism at first might seem to indicate the magazine editors’ “autonomy” from economic pressure in the field of cultural production, it is the product of a particular political (and economic) configuration that predated liberalization. In this sense, with respect to the political field, the field of cultural production in the 1990s is much more “autonomous” than that of the 1970s because the imperative for women’s magazines to promote the Nationalist agenda no longer exists. Rather than a shift from autonomy to heteronomy, the production of women’s magazines has been regulated by different power mechanisms at different historical periods; and in the 1990s, it is the pursuit of commercial interests that lies at the heart of magazine production.

Moreover, the Taiwanese magazine editors’ changing rhetoric (from a repudiation to an espousal of commercial interests) indicates that the better-funded international women’s magazines have established a new paradigm, enabled by the
changing material basis for what comprises the elite and the middle classes. Bourdieu points out that the field of cultural production is a "universe of belief"; in other words, in the field of cultural production, the critics only preach to the converted. In this sense, the demise of The Woman illustrates that the readers of women's magazines no longer believe in the rhetoric of spiritual uplift and social responsibility. Instead, the majority of these readers now believe in the role of magazines as providers of commercial information for everyday life-experiences, as established by international women's magazines. This change in the readers' beliefs can be explained by the changing constitution of women's magazines' readers. Although these magazines have always targeted upper- and middle-class women as their ideal readers, the constitution of the middle class is highly different in the 1970s from in the 1990s. In the 1970s, upper- and middle-class women still constituted a tiny part of the population and women's magazines therefore used a discourse of moral superiority (expressed through the rhetoric of social responsibility) to help these few better-educated people of the society to construct a sense of (class) difference. However, as the middle class rapidly expanded during the late 1970s and 1980s and a consumer capitalism began to take root in Taiwan, taste/style consumption came to replace moral superiority as a defining feature of the middle-class identity in women's magazines. Women's magazines' use of moral superiority and taste consumption has to be situated within a particular logic of the economy of cultural production. Before the mid-1980s, magazines were largely sponsored by subscription sales; hence, a women's publication had to speak to these middle-class women's sense of moral superiority in order to gain their support. However, in the 1990s, it is advertising that constitutes the majority of the magazines' income. Editors are therefore forced to address the affluent "mass" readers in order to sell them to the advertisers. As a result, the editors have to recognize their sponsors' (the advertisers') commercial interests, while at the same time making the claim to offer "service" to the readers; and what they now have to offer to the readers is very different from the discourse of spiritual uplifting in the 1970s.

Conclusion

To conclude, in this essay I have used the internationalization of Taiwanese women's magazines as a way to talk about the changes, and the forces that brought about these changes, in Taiwan's consumer culture. I have identified the political and economic forces that forced Taiwan's internationalization, including the economic restructuring in the 1980s. Areas of liberalization have included the lifting of press restrictions and of restrictions on advertising agencies, and the enforcement of intellectual property rights. These changes made it possible for international women's magazines to emerge in the Taiwanese market. In turn, the advent of international women's magazines restructured the local magazine market. Local women's magazines adopted market-research methods, shifted their content from
the spiritually uplifting to that of consumption, and caused the outlook of older magazines for women to be revamped. International women’s magazines targeted the “modern” woman, and tended to focus their articles on “self-care,” including the maintenance of a certain body image, thereby promoting the beauty products advertised in the magazines. The working woman emerged as an individual who cared mainly about her image, her work, her romances, and her sexuality. The middle-class moral superiority and domesticity dominating the narratives of women’s magazines in the 1970s and 1980s were now absent. The family woman that had been the primary figure before is now also transformed into the individualistic, enthusiastic, young single woman who desires a good sexual partner and a good career. The women “designed” in these magazines, like their editors, are devoid of the moral mission to better society by devoting themselves to the family or the society; they now care only about their own pleasure and their personal growth. Thus, the international women’s magazines feature mostly entertainment news, cultural activities, consumer information, fashion, and content on women’s love and sex lives (which are largely detached from the traditional notion of a family). International women’s magazines, as a result of their aim to sell international name-brands, partly construct Taiwan’s consumer society by shaping a new cosmopolitan, individualistic female subject whose primary passion is to consume.

Moreover, the field of magazine production, though once conceived as offering social services, has been transformed to a business enterprise. This shift toward cultural production as a business legitimizes the use of marketing strategies such as sponsoring make-up workshops. It also indicates that magazines have changed their identity from a form of elite culture that embraces moral superiority to that of consumer culture, and seeks profit maximization. In addition, the changes in the magazines’ systems of income (from subscription sales to advertising) and of distribution (from home subscription to availability in bookstores, convenience stores, and cafes) also reshape the identity of a women’s magazine from a domestic entertainment to a “public” entertainment. However, the implications of this change on the redefinition of femininity remains to be explored.

Notes

The author thanks Carol Stabile, James Hay, and Larry Grossberg for their insightful comments on this essay.

1. The agricultural sector, the last frontier of Taiwan’s virgin land, is only now opening itself up to global competition due to Taiwan’s admission into the World Trade Organization.

2. Since the import substitution industrialization (ISI) period in the 1950s, Taiwan had established high import tariffs to protect local businesses. Even with the changes in economic policies and the opening up of certain sectors to foreign investment, tariffs for imports remained high.

3. McDonald’s was the first foreign service industry to test Taiwan’s market in 1982. McDonald’s success had a tremendous impact on the formation of Taiwan’s consumer culture. For example, it shaped the young generation’s eating habits; it affected the design and
the nature of food businesses; and it also played an important role in manufacturing the first
generation of youth consumers in Taiwan.

4. The precursors of Taiwan's advertising industry can be traced to the ISI period,
1951–60. During the ISI period, in order to promote imported goods, Japan, and, later,
Hong Kong, set up offices in Taiwan to advertise their products in newspapers. In 1958,
a group of people who specialized in writing advertisements gathered together and formed
Eastern Advertising, the first professional advertising agency in postwar Taiwan; it was,
however, an industry far different from the current one. Around the same time, Japan's
largest advertising agency, Dentsu Advertising, held the first conference on advertising in
Asia, aiming to "strengthen the connection among the advertising field in Asia in order to
promote economic progress and prosperity of the Asia region" (Freuan 1996). One con-
ference attendee was from Taiwan. The second conference, held in 1960, had five confer-
ence attendees from Taiwan. Three of these five attendees formed three advertising com-
panies, the first agency system in Taiwan. In 1961, Japan's Dentsu Advertising set up a
branch office in Taiwan. In 1966, the Fifth Annual Conference was held in Taiwan, mak-
ing advertising a discernible industry. Also, around this time, the United Daily News
Group first signed a contract with the advertising agency, making it possible for the ad-
vertising agency to exist as an autonomous trade. (Before the late 1960s, there was no
separate agency responsible for newspaper ad production. Advertising belonged to the
newspaper industry.) In that year, the market's total advertising volume was U.S.$5.35
million (Freuan 1996).

5. Even though cooperative alliances were established between foreign and local agen-
cies, such as Japan's Dentsu with Taiwan's Kuo-Hau Advertising, direct foreign investment
was not allowed.

6. Special Treaty 301 was imposed on Taiwan by the United States in the late 1980s,
forcing Taiwan to take action to criminalize pirating.

7. Other forces that came to construct teenagers as a consumer category included
the emergence of McDonald's, pachinko parlors (computer-video-game stores trans-
planted from Japan), and MTV parlors (private rooms that show movies on tape, first
established in 1986). The establishment of McDonald's in 1984 was the first move to
promote the notion of teenagers as a consumer category. The targeted teenagers then,
as mentioned, were the first generation in Taiwan to grow up en masse with abundant
material goods.

8. The first convenience store, 7–11, settled in Taiwan in the mid-1980s, and rapidly
took over the traditional community grocery stores. In 1991 there were more than 1,500
convenience stores in Taiwan. Among these were 594 7–11 stores, 375 President stores,
and 88 Circle K stores.

9. Most of Taiwan's department stores are wholly or partially owned by Japanese con-
glomerates; as a result, bookstores in department stores sell mainly Japanese books and
magazines. However, most international magazines are also available.

References

Publications in English


**Publications in Chinese**


**Taiwanese Women's Magazines (cited)**

*(Author's note: In Taiwanese women's magazines, authors are usually not identified. If they are, they are mostly pseudonyms and are printed in small fonts in marginal places where people cannot see them unless they look for them carefully. Therefore, I have listed the women's magazines under analysis by title.)*

**References from The Woman**


References from Cosmopolitan, Marie Claire, Elle, Harper’s Bazaar, and Citta Belle