

2009

Star Tracks: Celebrity Values in People Magazine

Jordan Kees

Follow this and additional works at: http://pilotscholars.up.edu/cst_studpubs



Part of the [Communication Commons](#)

Citation: Pilot Scholars Version (Modified MLA Style)

Kees, Jordan, "Star Tracks: Celebrity Values in People Magazine" (2009). *Communication Studies Undergraduate Publications, Presentations and Projects*. 46.

http://pilotscholars.up.edu/cst_studpubs/46

This Student Project is brought to you for free and open access by the Communication Studies at Pilot Scholars. It has been accepted for inclusion in Communication Studies Undergraduate Publications, Presentations and Projects by an authorized administrator of Pilot Scholars. For more information, please contact library@up.edu.

Star Tracks: Celebrity Values in *People* Magazine

By Jordan Kees

Presented to the Department of Communication Studies of the
University of Portland, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Bachelor of Science

December 2008

I understand that in the interest of shared scholarship the University of Portland and its agents have the non-exclusive license to archive and make accessible my capstone project in whole or in part in all forms of media in perpetuity. Further, I understand that my work, in addition to its bibliographic record and abstract, may be available to a wider community of scholars and researchers through electronic access.

Abstract

Following a review of previous literature regarding the issues of social class and media communication, a content analytic approach involving coding and functional analysis was adopted to answer the question: Does *People* magazine's "Star Tracks" section compose perceptions of upper-class celebrities as "other" for its middle- and working-class readership by portraying universal values in ways that are unattainable by those not in the socio-economic upper class? This study addressed the research question by examining the celebrity photographs as well as the captions of those photographs which are presented in the "Star Tracks" section of the June, July, and August 2008 issues of *People* magazine. Overall, 13 issues of *People* provided the sample of 208 photographs and captions examined through content analytic coding of the values presented.

Star Tracks: Celebrity Values in *People* Magazine

In the United States, media are everywhere. Television, magazines, newspapers, advertising, everywhere you look there seems to be some form of media staring you right back in the face, telling you how to dress better, look slimmer, and who to look up to. Seeing as media are an influential aspect of life, it is possible that the representations that one sees can have an affect on perceptions and standards of what is considered normal. After all, the nightly news can influence how many people view the world, just as a romantic movie can cause disillusionment for a woman about the ideal romantic relationship.

One popular form of media consumed by Americans is magazines. Ever since the 1740s, when the first colonial magazines were created, this first national mass medium has been both constructing and reflecting portrayals of American life (Campbell, Martin & Fabos, 2006). Today, one of the largest and most profitable mass market magazines in circulation is *People*, created in March 1974 by Time Inc. This magazine is filled with celebrity news and profiles, targeting readers interested in and fascinated with television, music, and movie stars (Campbell et. al, 2006). One regular segment each week is *People's* "Star Tracks" section. This section features tabloid-like pictures of celebrities both when they are acting the part of 'celebrity,' as well as when they are relaxing in a more natural environment. In short, this section presents candid glimpses of celebrities.

Moreover, in American culture, celebrities seem to be in a social category all their own. People look up to celebrities in a way that places them in a separate and distinct section of the upper-class, even though their wealth may not have earned them that status (Campbell et. al, 2006). Many people who consider themselves middle class look to *People* magazine to inform them about this exclusive celebrity class. This is due in large part to the fact that most

individuals have a degree of interest in the life of celebrities. According to North, Sheridan, Maltby, & Gillett (2007), this is “manifested by, for example, an interest in discussing the celebrity with friends and agreement that learning about the celebrity through magazines or newspapers represents having a good time” (p.292). Taking into consideration that the mass media can have an effect on the way humans view reality (Campbell et. al, 2006), it is possible that magazines, such as *People*, can influence the perceptions that individuals have with regards to social class and social class values.

Extensive research shows mass media’s effects on individuals’ perceptions about reality (Campbell et. al, 2006). However, there has been little research concerning how and what particular magazines construct with regards to social class. The purpose of this study is to examine how the “Star Tracks” section of *People* magazine both constructs and reflects social class barriers and values. This study will focus particularly on the barriers between values that separate the upper socio-economic celebrity class and the working- and middle classes. More specifically, this study asks if *People* magazine’s “Star Tracks” section composes perceptions of upper-class celebrities as “other” for its middle- and working-class readership by portraying universal values in ways that are unattainable by those not in the socio-economic upper class. This examination reviews what is known about the influences of media on individuals, and details common theories about social class and values. The literature review also discusses studies examining media’s impact on social class construction itself.

Literature Review

Social Class

Social class is a concept that has been around for hundreds of years. Although many individuals in the United States often hold fast to the idea that Americans live in a “classless” society, there is no denying that there is and always has been social stratification in the U.S. Social class is often associated with one’s economic status. However, social class is a much more complex concept, encompassing one’s economic, political, and social standing. According to Brenda J. Allen (2004), social class is “an open stratification system that is associated with a systematically unequal allocation of resources and constraints” (p 97). Moreover, research suggests that individuals are not only aware of their social class, but they also conform to it. In one study regarding social identity theory, Argyle found that:

Lower-status groups not only accept their position in the hierarchy, but agree that middleclass people are superior in intelligence, leadership and other desirable qualities. And about a third of lower-class people accept the class system as just and legitimate, have no desire to change it and vote Conservative (Argyle, 1994).

Furthermore, a study conducted by Millicent E. Poole of Macquarie University examined social class with regards to sex and linguistic coding. Through the use of a discriminate function analysis, Poole (1979) found that the way in which teenagers verbally communicate is distinctly different depending of the social class of the subject. For example, this study found that working-class females communicated with low preposition use and a high frequency of personal pronouns, while middle-class females had higher structural complexity for their sentences, and a high mean pre-verb length with low preposition use. Since Poole’s study only looked at social class based on socio-economic status, it is possible to draw the conclusion that there is a strong correlation between the amount of wealth that an individual possesses and their verbal communication abilities.

A separate study by Martin Holt and Christine Griffin (2005) deals with a similar topic which addresses how the working-class is often distinguished as “other” through language. This investigation looked at the language used by middle-class young adults in describing group accounts of the people and places they encountered on a “nigh out” to bars and pubs. Results indicated that “participants often positioned local people as unwelcoming and aggressive working-class ‘others,’ and local pubs as unpleasant or dangerous places. Working-class locals were often seen as static or fixed in terms of education, opportunities and location, while middle-class students were represented as upwardly mobile” (Holt & Griffin, 2005, 262). This furthers the idea that not only is social class prominent in society, but it is also maintained, albeit subconsciously, by the individuals living in society itself.

Overall, social class is a predominant characteristic of modern society. Although many people would like to believe that humans have moved beyond such a system, research suggests otherwise. Moreover, academic conversation suggests that members of society are not only aware of the existence of social class, but that they accept and act in ways that mirror their perceived social standing. Social class is influenced and enforced through a number of factors. Among the most influential devices that impacts social class is the language structures and communication styles present within a given society.

Effects of Media

Media is consumed for the purposes of both entertainment as well as information. Over the years, a wealth of research has been conducted involving the various forms of mass media. This research extends to many different categories. One interesting finding about media is that individuals believe that others are more in danger of being negatively affected by popular media

than themselves (Cho & Han, 2004). Consequently, individuals are not always aware of the amount of influence the media has on them. Thus, an in depth study of the influences of the media can be very informative, especially regarding information about the self. Still, researchers continue to try and understand this complicated area of study.

Since media are present and syndicated all over the world, it is not uncommon for people to feel shared experiences with other individuals through their media experiences. A study conducted by Albada and Godbold (2001) found that these media derived experiences are shared in everyday interactions and dialogue. Additionally, this study found that the genre of media that these experiences were taken from changed depending on the type of interpersonal relationship. For instance, dramas were the most commonly shared experience in romantic relationships, as opposed to comedies in less intimate relationships. This study shows how common television, movies and other forms of media are involved in everyday life. Similarly, the effects of television on the perception of gender roles are another fascinating and commonly examined area of study. In general, researchers have found portrayals of males to be more dominating, whereas representations of females were found to be underrepresented and inferior to males (Glascock, 2003). A study by Jack Glascock (2003) found that there is presently a greater similarity between the roles of men and woman then there were in the past. This could be due to the cultural changes over the years, especially since more and more women are entering the work force. Through investigation of this study, it is apparent that what is shown in the media is tied into the type of society that the consumer lives in.

Another common area of research pertaining to the media is its effects on violence and aggression. Many researchers have hypothesized that consuming media that involve violence can lead to increasing aggression. However, in a review of scientific research, Primavera,

Herron and Jauier (1996) conclude that though media consumption can generate hostility in some people, there is insufficient evidence to prove that viewing violence in media will increase aggression in an individual. Nevertheless, this does not mean that there is no relationship whatsoever between these two variables. The use and availability of media is growing all around the world. Since there likely is a slight connection between individuals' actions and media consumption, it is important to continue to study how these forms of media affect individuals and groups of people.

An additional area of study pertaining to mass media is the effects that it can have on public opinion. Brannstrom and Lindblad (1994) conducted a study evaluating the ways in which Swedish mass media reported a community-based preventive program for disease and diabetes in order to find out to what extent the mass media is able to persuade the public. This examination found that the media tends to focus on particular subjects that it deems newsworthy, while completely neglecting the "less interesting" stories. This led to knowledge gaps about the program and its benefits. Also, personal success stories seemed to be the most popular form of story. This shows how the media has the power to influence the flow of information to the public, and large of a degree that a person's knowledge of a subject stems from mass media.

A supplemental study involving the power of media was conducted by Thomas Stevenson, and involved a six-decade long study of the portrayal of African Americans in the advertising in print media. This study looked to understand whether or not advertising trails, mirrors, or leads social change in society. Results found "that by 2005 African Americans were being better represented numerically on the advertising pages of widely read business-to-business magazines than they are in the businesses themselves" (Stevenson, 2007, 11).

Additionally, the roles that African Americans are playing in these ads have shifted from more

blue-collar work to more professional and managerial roles. Although it is not possible to draw definite conclusions from this research, it is evident that there is a correlation between social roles and print media. Yunjuan and Xiaoming (2007) also examined this research question in a study applying to portrayals of women in magazines in China. This investigation found that the magazines both highlighted and overlooked aspects relating to the Chinese woman with regards to what the editorial staff wished to portray about society. Also, the portrayals were, in large part, influenced by the socio-economic and political changes in China (Yunjuan & Xiaoming, 2007). Despite these findings, it is still possible that the media may have an effect on spurring social change.

In brief, mass media is widely spread and highly consumed mechanism in human life, however, individuals are not always aware of the amount of influence it has on them. Additionally, many people use the media when communicating with other individuals because of the sense of a shared experience. The media has also been looked at as a source of gender stereotyping or source of aggression, and can also be a vehicle for social change. Although these theories are not entirely conclusive, they suggest a correlation with media consumption and its ability to have effects on the way in which humans view reality.

Social Class and Media

An interesting study that examines both social class and magazines was conducted by Sari Thomas of the University of Pennsylvania. Thomas examined the editorial photography in major erotica magazines in order to determine how they act as a function of social class. This study observed that there are notable differences in the photographs contained in magazines targeted to members of the upper-class and those contained in magazines targeted towards

members of the working class. An example of this is the fact that upper-class magazines portray the “good life” by depicting luxuries such as expensive cars. Thomas notes that, “these variations may play an important role in reconciling the given audience members to their respective positions in the established social structure (Thomas, 1986, 107). This study suggested that popular pornographic magazines are able to maintain the social order through their content.

In an investigation of class in television reality court shows, Helene Shugart (2006) of the University of Utah looked at how media can act in a way that manages and maintains social class and racial barriers. This study found that the offenders coming from the working or poverty classes were most often associated with moral lapses and inherent criminal elements to their character, which are attributed to poor choices, self-indulgence, and lack of self-control and discipline. Furthermore, this study found that the judges “exhibit the trappings of middle-to-upper class success by dint of their status as lawyers and judges, which implicitly establishes their relatively high level of education as well as their relative degree of wealth and privilege” (Shugart, 2006, 96). It is possible to see how media messages can reflect and enforce the social class barriers of the population.

Another investigation conducted by Kathryn Keller (1992) examined imagery in women’s magazines to determine the messages that were portrayed about the role of women in the middle class. At the time this study was published, American women were at a crossroads between “the housewife” and “the working woman.” Keller’s study found that magazines attempted to justify both the “housewife” and the “working woman” lifestyle because since the readership consisted of both kinds of women, it could not favor one lifestyle over another. Therefore, the content of the magazines regarding the middle-class woman was generally based

on the standards of society (Keller, 1992, 595). Research from this study suggests that magazines mirror the social barriers and standards of the society of which it is targeting.

Overall, there has been a wealth of research conducted involving social class as well as the effects of the media upon society. However, there has been a limited amount of research conducted which involves magazines and social class collectively. Conversation suggests that print media may have an effect on the way in which individual construct reality. Therefore, this study presumes that a magazine can compose perceptions about a particular group's values for its readership, and sets out to show how one section of a popular magazine may participate in that process.

Method

The purpose of this study is to explore what *People* magazine both constructs and reflects about the social class values of the celebrity segment of the upper class for their working and middle class readership. Previous research in this area suggests that there may be a correlation between people's perceptions and the amount of media that they consume. Therefore, this study examined the following research question:

RQ: Does *People* magazine's "Star Tracks" section compose perceptions of upper-class celebrities as "other" for its middle- and working-class readership by portraying universal values in ways that are unattainable by those not in the socio-economic upper class?

This study addressed the research question by examining the celebrity photographs as well as the captions of those photographs which are presented in the "Star Tracks" section of *People* magazine. Due to the high volume of pictures in the "Star Tracks" section of the magazine, in addition to the fact that *People* is a widely distributed weekly publication, this

study did not examine an entire year's sample. Instead, this study examined a sample consisting of all "Star Tracks" pictures and captions contained in all of the issues released in the months of June, July, and August 2008. Therefore, 13 issues of *People* provided the sample of 208 photographs and captions examined through content analytic coding of the values presented. Also, images that were placed together on the spread as a set were counted as one image. Therefore, if an image's purpose was to clarify or extend a main image, then it was reviewed, but not counted in the sample. Moreover, the captions for the photographs were examined each in tandem with its photo because captions both clarify and extend the meanings presented in the visual. For example, a picture of a woman playing tennis tells the viewer very little about the setting that she is playing in. However, with a caption, the viewer is able to learn that, perhaps, the woman is playing tennis in an exclusive country club, thus offering clarification and added meaning to the visual.

This study coded data by replicating the method used by Slopen, Watson, Gracia, and Corrigan (2007) in their study entitled *Age Analysis of Newspaper Coverage of Mental Illness*. Whereas Slopen's (et al.) study coded newspaper articles into the categories of:

1. Type of article
2. Types of disorders named or described
3. Themes related to crime attributions of the disorder, treatments, and critiques of the mental health system.
4. "elements of responsible journalism"

This study coded the images into four mutually exclusive categories:

1. Middle/Working class value/activity

2. Themes related to upper/wealthy class only values/activities
3. Themes related to celebrity only values/activities
4. Universal value/activity for all classes.

This study used the definition for social class found in Brenda J. Allen's book *Difference Matter: Communicating Social Identity*. Therefore, social class was defined as "an open stratification system that is associated with a systematically unequal allocation of resources and constraints" (Allen, 2004, 99). Furthermore, "resources and constraints" can refer to various types of capital, including money, savoir-faire or 'know-how,' social skills, authority, experience, and clout" (Allen, 2004, 98). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, "upper-class" values and activities were defined as of or relating to high economic, political and cultural standing. Likewise, "middle/working-class" values and activities were defined as of or relating to low to mid economic, political and cultural standing. Finally, the term celebrity was defined as "an individual who is known to the public (actor, sports figure, entertainer, etc.) for his or her achievements in areas other than that of the product class endorsed" (Friedman and Friedman, 1979). These definitions helped to define the parameters for this examination.

Following the initial coding into the four categories, the images were further separated into more narrow categories. These categories included: dating/relationships, work, family, friends, vacation/travel, charity, sports/recreation, leisure, miscellaneous. These categories were obtained through a content analysis of the recurring themes in the images. "Dating and Relationships" included visuals that dealt with love, weddings, and romantic involvement, while the "work" category incorporated any activity that dealt with earning an income or the subjects occupation. Furthermore, the "family" and "friends" categories contained images that depicted a celebrity interacting with members of their immediate families or people that the captions

described as their friends. Also, the “vacation and travel” category featured images in which the captions specifically stated that the subject was on some kind of holiday for a non-work related occasion. Lastly, “sports and recreation” referred to physical activities, while “leisure” contained images relating to relaxation, as well as attendance at movie premiers and award shows when the subject was not depicted presenting an award. Due to the vagueness of some of the context of the visuals, images coded as “miscellaneous” were not able to be placed in a social coding category. Moreover, an image could only fall under one of the sub-categories. For that reason, if an image could fall under more than one category, the predominate theme of the image and caption combination was used. This procedure allows for greater understanding of the messages and values that are most commonly portrayed in the magazine.

Once the data were collected and coded, a functional analysis was conducted. This approach consists of “looking for consistent patterns in mass-media artifacts... the functionalist’s goal is to determine how these patterns serve the large social system from which they emerge” (Thomas, 1986). In order for this to be accomplished, this study also replicated the procedure found in Sari Thomas’ examination of Gender and Social class in pornographic magazines. Therefore, this study performed a content analysis which examined the subject’s physical appearance as seen through the photographs and the captions. The photographs were measured in light of these criteria, as well as the results from the coding. These analyses permit greater understanding of the messages and values that *People* portrayed as “normal” about upper class celebrities.

Results

Table 1 (see appendix) reports the findings regarding the coded images from the “Star Tracks” section of the June, July and August issues of *People* magazine. Of the 208 visuals and captions examined: 5 images were of or relating to middle/working class values and activities, accounting for 2% of all the visuals; 37 images were of or relating to upper/wealthy class values and activities, for 18% of all the visuals; 69 images were of or related to celebrity values and activities, for 33% of all the visuals; 82 images pertained to universal values and activities, for 40% of all the visuals; and 15 images were coded as miscellaneous and not related to any category, for 7% of all the visuals.

Moreover, among the sub-categories: 11% of the images were coded as relating to dating and relationships, 19% of the images were coded as relating to work, 27% of the images were coded as relating to family, 1% of the images were coded as relating to friends, 6% of the images were coded as relating to vacation and travel, 5% of the images were coded as relating to charity, 10% of the images were coded as relating to sports and recreation, and 15% of the images were coded as relating to leisure.

The examination also computed the frequency of the sub-categories within the larger social categories. The middle/working class coding category could only be applied to 5 of the 208 visuals examined. In this category, the activities that related specifically to the values and activities associated with this group were: Dating and relationships (2%), Family (4%), and Charity (4%). The activity associated with dating and relationships featured going for a walk to the mall in sweats. Similarly, the activities associated with family featured parent and child engaging in simple activities such as playing on the front lawn and going to a small amusement park. Finally, the charity activities building a center for the disabled and a 5k walk for the greening of vaccines.

The upper/wealthy class coding category could be applied to 37 of the 208 visuals and captions in the study. In this grouping, the activities that related specifically to the values and activities associated with this group were: dating/relationships (16%), family (21%), friends (3%), vacation/travel (19%), charity (11%), sports/recreation (11%), and leisure (19%). The dating and relationships images consisted mostly of depictions similar to large diamond engagement rings, spending time in an exclusive yacht club, and dinner in an exotic location such as Italy. In the same way, the family and friends categories mostly depicted the subjects in member's only type venues, expensive restaurants and in foreign locations. In addition, images regarding vacation and travel often included luxuries such as private yachts and jets in foreign destinations, while depictions of charity commonly included private lunches or balls hosted to benefit a particular cause. Finally, for the sports and recreational activities the subject is often on a personal jet ski or in a private sports club, and the leisure activities the subjects were most commonly sitting courtside at some sort of sporting event.

The images from celebrity coding category were applied to 69 of the 208 visuals and captions in the study. The dating and relationships category included 6% of the images from the celebrity grouping, and most commonly depicted the subjects interacting with their significant other on a movie or video set, attending or having an private celebrity wedding, and posing at an exclusive event such as an awards ceremony. In the work sub-category, the largest group with 50.5% of the visuals, the images commonly showed the subject on set of a movie, performing at a concert, or appearing on a talk show to promote themselves or a project that they are working on. In the same way, the family (11.5%) and friends (1%) sub-categories were coded as exclusively celebrity activities when the images depicted the subjects at award ceremonies and grand opening events. 3% of the images were of celebrity vacation and travel to exclusive

events such as film festivals, whereas 6% pertained to charity and showed the subject in hosting events for charity. For example, Madonna is depicted auctioning off a private concert to aid a charity. Sports and Recreation accounted for 6% of the visuals in this section and mostly showed a celebrity throwing the first pitch at a baseball game or playing in a celebrity golf tournament, while leisure activities (16%) depict the subject attending a movie premier or attending private tours or dinners.

Visuals of or relating to the universal values and activities coding category were applied to 82 of the 208 visuals and captions in the study. The images in this category were the largest in quantity and were coded in this group specifically because the values and activities shown in the visuals were attainable for members of every social class. The dating and relationship category (15%), as well as the family (45 %) and friends (1%) categories all typically depicted the subject in some sort of public venue, usually a park or mall. Moreover, the three instances in which the category of work (3.5) was depicted, the subject was serving in some sort of military service, while the charity (1%) images illustrated the subject volunteering as a coach for a disadvantaged youth soccer team. Travel and vacation represented 4.5% of the images and the subject was often traveling to a location that is a possible vacation spot for all social classes, such as Disneyland or Mexico. Finally, leisurely activities (15%) most often depict the celebrity on a beach or reading a book, while sports and recreation (15%) involved going for a run or a bike ride.

Lastly, a functional analysis of recurring themes presented in the images revealed that the visuals and their accompanying captions displayed or discussed fashion and the way in which the subject is dressed on 8 occasions. Also, the concept of the subject's weight and physical appearance occurred 10 times.

Discussion

Following a thorough examination of previous studies on the subject of social class and media effects, as well as the results of the coding and functional analysis, it is possible to draw several conclusions regarding the perceptions of upper-class celebrities as “other” presented in the “Star Tracks” section of *People* magazine for its middle- and working-class readership. Results propose that *People* magazine shows celebrities in a way that encompasses universal values and activities, but also includes a large number of upper-class and celebrity-only activities to remind the readership that such an exclusive status as the celebrity “other” is unattainable except to a select few. This is done through the fact that although universal values and activities have the highest number of activities, the unattainable activities for the middle/working class readership of the upper/wealthy class and celebrities outnumber universal values when they are combined with one another. Therefore, when the viewer looks at the “Star Tracks” section of *People* magazine, they are overwhelmingly presented with activities that they are not able to participate in based on their social status, while also looking upon activities and values that are unanimously attainable by social category. Moreover, the middle/working class readership is also able to view the images of the celebrities as “other” because activities that would be reserved exclusively for the middle/working class are virtually left out of that section of the magazine.

Furthermore, the content analysis which helped to code the sub-categories (dating/relationships, work, family, friends, vacation/travel, charity, sports/recreation, and leisure) offers insight into what *People* wishes to portray as the most common activities for the celebrity “other.” Research suggests that the most common celebrity value is spending time with family in a universally attainable setting such as playing or relaxing in a public park. This is

closely followed by work and leisurely activities. This suggests to the *People* magazine readership that celebrities value family above all else, but are required to spend a majority of their time working. In addition, the celebrity is able to enjoy leisurely activities often, while also making time to engage in recreational sports or hobbies. Moreover, while the celebrity does value friendship, these friendships most often take the form of dating and romantic relationships. On the same note, the celebrity is hardly ever without a significant other, since the majority of the subjects are depicted as either dating or married. The frequency in which the celebrity is shown as “single” is very low. Furthermore, the celebrity is always in good physical condition, and is in possession of the most expensive and fashionable pieces of clothing. Finally, *People’s* middle/working-class readership can assume that celebrities are charitable people who are constantly attending premiers and award shows, while having the luxury of traveling to exotic locations all over the world for both work and pleasure.

Conclusion

In American culture, celebrities seem to be in an upper-class social category all their own. People look up to celebrities in a way that places them in a separate and distinct section of the upper-class, even though their wealth may not have earned them that status. Many people that consider themselves middle class look to *People* magazine to inform them about this exclusive celebrity class. One of the regular segments that has made its way into each of *People’s* weekly publications is the “Star Tracks” section. This section features candid pictures of celebrities both when they are acting the part of ‘celebrity,’ as well as when they are relaxing in a more natural environment. Academic conversation suggests that print media may have an effect on the way in which individuals construct reality, particularly social class. Although there has been a wealth of research conducted involving social class as well as the effects of the media

upon society, there has been a limited amount of research conducted which involve magazines and social class collectively. Therefore, this examination employed the use of coding and functional analysis to answer the question: Does *People* magazine's "Star Tracks" section compose perceptions of upper-class celebrities as "other" for its middle- and working-class readership by portraying universal values in ways that are unattainable by those not in the socio-economic upper class?

Results indicate that the most common celebrity values include family, work, and leisure, while vacation, charity, and time for friends are much less ordinary. Moreover, *People* magazine shows celebrities in a way that encompasses universal values and activities, but also includes a large amount of upper-class and celebrity only activities to remind the readership that such an exclusive status as the celebrity "other" is unattainable except to a select few. While this study aided in the understanding of what *People* magazine portrays about celebrity values and activities for its middle and working-class readership, the research does not seek to explain why or for what purpose, though existing research poses interesting arguments in this regard. This is an area that could be examined in the future. Also, future research could include collaborative focus group coding of the social categories to offer more insight regarding what the target readership of *People* magazine perceives about various social class values.

Appendix

Figure 1:

| | Middle Woking Class | Upper Wealthy Class | Celebrity | Universal | Total: |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| Dating & Relationships | 1 | 6 | 4 | 12 | 23 |
| Work | 0 | 0 | 35 | 3 | 38 |
| Family | 2 | 8 | 8 | 37 | 55 |
| Friends | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Vacation/Travel | 0 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 13 |
| Charity | 2 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 11 |
| Sports/Recreation | 0 | 4 | 4 | 12 | 20 |
| Leisure | 0 | 7 | 11 | 12 | 30 |
| Miscellaneous | | | | | 15 |
| | | | | | |
| Total: | 5 | 37 | 69 | 82 | 208 |

References

- Albada, K. F. & Godbold, L. C. (2001). Media-derived personal idioma: The talk of a new generation. *Electronic Journal of Communication, 11*(1).
- Allen, B. J. (2004). *Difference Matters: communicating social identity*. Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press, inc.
- Argyle, M. (1994). *The psychology of social class*. London: Routledge.
- Brannstrom, I. (1994). Mass communication and health promotion: The power of the media and public opinion. *Health Communication, 6*(1), 21-36.
- Campbell, R., Martin, C. R., & Fabos, B. (2006). *Media and Culture: An Introduction to Mass Communication*. (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's).
- Cho, H. & Han, M. (2004). Perceived effect of the mass media on self vs. other. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication, 14*(2). 299-318.
- Friedman, H., & Friedman, L. (1979). Endorser effectiveness by product type. *Journal of Advertising Research, 19*(5), 63-71.
- Glascock, J. (2003). Viewer perception of gender roles on network prime-time television. *Communication Research Reports, 20*(2), 173-181.
- Holt, M. & Griffin, C. (2005). Students verses locals: Young adults' constructions of the working class Other. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 44*, 241-267.

- Kamins, M. A. (1989). Celebrity and noncelebrity advertising in a two-sided context. *Journal of Advertising Research (June/July)*, 34-42.
- Keller, K. (1992). Nurture and Work in the Middle Class – Imagery from Women’s Magazines, *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 5(4), 577-600.
- North, A. C., Sheridan, L., Maltby, J., Gillett, R. (2007). Attribution style, self-esteem, and celebrity worship. *Media Psychology*, 9, 291-308..
- Poole, M. L. (1979). Social class, sex and linguistic coding. *Language and Speech*, 22(1), 49-69.
- Primavera, L. H., Herron, W. G., & Jauier, R. A. (1996). The effect of viewing television violence on aggression. *International Journal of Instructional Media*, 23(1), 91-104.
- Slopen, N. B., Watson, A. C., Gracia, G., & Corrigan, P. W. (2007) Age analysis of newspaper coverage of mental illness, *Journal of Health Communication*, 12(1), 3-15.
- Stevenson, T. H. (2007). A six-decade study of the portrayal of African Americans in Business Print Media: Trailing, mirroring, or shaping social change? *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising*. 29(1), 1-15.
- Sugart, H. A. (2006). Ruling Class: Disciplining Class, Race, and Ethnicity in Television Reality Court Shows. *The Howard Journal of Communications*, 17, 79-100.
- Thomas, S. (1986). Gender and Social-Class Coding in Popular Photographic Erotica. *Communication Quarterly*, 34(2), 103-114.
- Yunjuan, L., & Xiaoming, H. (2007). Media Portrayal of Women and Social Change. *Feminist Media Studies*, 7(3), 281-300.6