Research into the Representation of Gender and Body Image in the Press

A Visual and Textual Analysis Examining the Presentation, Portrayal and Treatment of Gender and Body Image in British National Daily Newspapers

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Abstract:

Today's society is dominated by celebrities. According to Bonner (2003), this has been driven by the emergence of the 'ordinary celebrity' as a result of the popularity of television formats such as reality TV shows, game shows and talk shows and their demand for ordinary people to participate. Some argue that this has constituted a process of democratization within the media, which has opened up media access and broadened representation. This research aimed to investigate whether there has in fact been an improvement in the nature of representation in the media by focussing on the portrayal of gender and body image in the press.

A content analysis of 36 British national daily newspapers from 1 week in July 2007 was conducted. The results revealed that the visual portrayal and discursive treatment of body size and weight, appearance, and attractiveness has indeed broadened to include less of the 'ideal' body image and very few stereotypical and sexist tendencies. Males as well as females were subjected to positive and negative references to body image, but overall, underweight unhealthy bodies were condemned and fuller, curvier figures were championed.

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[1] INTRODUCTION

Introduction:

The last few decades has witnessed a growth in the production and consumption of celebrity and as a result has spawn an interest and concern for its potential impact and effect on society. The popularity of television formats such as reality shows, game shows and infotainment, giving the opportunity for everyday ordinary people to be raised to media prominence, has been instrumental in the creation of today's celebrity culture (Turner 2004: 79). Some argue that this has given rise to a 'DIY' celebrity culture whereby entry barriers to celebrity status have been lowered, therefore widening access and representation. This is known as the populist democracy perspective (Evans and Hesmondhalgh 2005: 14-5). Anyone can become a contestant on a reality television show and does not need to have a particular talent. Once they have appeared in the celebrity labour market, they can maintain their status and dispense presence by appearing on TV shows, magazines, internet sites, advertisements etc. Hartley (1999) refers to this process as the democratization of the media.

"Like it or loath it, celebrity culture is with us: it surrounds us and even invades us. It shapes our thought and conduct, style and manner. It affects and is affected by not just hardcore fans but by entire populations" (Cashmore 2005: 6). As Boon and Lomore (2001: 460) have pointed out, there is no sign or reason for the current celebrity climate to falter, therefore relationships with celebrities are likely to play an increasingly important role in people's lives. Combine the increasing importance of celebrity with the way body image and gender is portrayed in the media, the potential for physical and psychological damage certainly demands serious attention.

Due to a rise in eating disorders especially amongst young women, the UK government's Women's Unit called for a Body Summit. Held in June 2000, magazines' depiction of extreme slenderness, fashion and beauty were believed to be the root cause for eating disorders (Wykes and Gunter 2005: 73). Numerous studies have been conducted over the years that have also concentrated on the link between the ideal body image promoted in magazines and body dissatisfaction, not only amongst women but men too. It is often not the image alone that can have an effect but it is the associated ideas, concepts and messages attached to that image that can prove to be just as damaging, if not more.

Even though the media have been blamed for these effects, Wykes and Gunter (2005: 9) claim that there has in fact been very little research addressing the nature of media representations of the body. Gauntlett (2002: 58) has observed that since 1990, there has been a decrease in the publication of content analysis studies of gender representations. Surprisingly, the majority of studies regarding body image and gender representation have in the past, focussed on magazines and television. However, as Birchill (2000) points out, newspapers should also be recognised for their negative influence: "The *Daily Mail* has created thousands more anorexics than *Vogue*, because *Vogue* simply shows thin women while the *Daily Mail* keeps up a non-stop commentary on the weight gain of famous women and links it to their sexual orientation and career success". Rather than providing a few disjointed images of thin bodies, newspapers provide a narrative that tells a complete story firmly held together with words and pictures, juxtaposed with other news stories thought to be complementary (Wykes and Gunter 2005: 71-2). With the British national press selling approximately 14 million newspapers a day, it is the most accessed form of print media in the UK (Audit Bureau of Circulations 2007).

It is precisely for these reasons that this research will therefore concentrate on newspapers to conduct a content analysis of the images and language in order to explore the nature of body image and gender representations. Research within this field has tended to be concerned mostly with women, however this research will address the representations of both males and females. With fewer content analysis studies on gender representation being conducted since the 1990s, it certainly seems that it is an area of research that has begun to get neglected.

In terms of the present celebrity climate and the so-called DIY celebrity culture, the 1990s through to the present day is a crucial era for exploring representations of gender and body image. With claims that the media are undergoing a process of democratization - with easier access to the media and a broadening of representation due to the emergence of the ordinary celebrity – surely this should be reflected in the images portrayed and the narratives associated with them. This research therefore aims to discover whether celebrity culture and the supposed democratization of the media has in fact contributed to a much broader, positive and realistic representation of gender and body image, today, in the twenty-first century.

Research Aims:

Main Aim:

To investigate the impact of celebrity culture and the 'ordinary celebrity' on body image and gender representation in the press.

1. To find out whether the 'ideal' slender body image is still the predominant image portrayed in the media.

2. To find out whether a person who does not conform to an 'ideal' body image is portrayed differently to somebody who does.

3. To find out whether a person's age has an impact on the likelihood of appearing in the media and the way in which they are portrayed.

4. To find out what proportion of males are portrayed compared to females.

5. To find out whether the representation of gender roles are becoming increasingly equal, more realistic and non-stereotyped.

6. To find out whether the discourse and narrative is reinforcing gender stereotypes and body image ideals.

[2] LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Review:

2.1 The feminist movement: the background to the study.

Feminism today is widely recognized as the driving force for securing and defending equal rights and opportunities for women and raising awareness that issues exist, which need to be addressed. High on their agenda is the matter of representation. This is not a recent concern; in fact representation has always been a key battleground for feminism (Van Zoonen 1996: 12). As far back as the 1860s, feminists in Britain and America campaigned relentlessly about the treatment of women in newspapers and magazines. At the time, many women were beginning to seek increasing rights socially, educationally, politically and economically, yet the newspapers and magazines chose to mock these women or even ignore them completely. A century later in the 1960s, and the 'second wave' of the women's movement brought about a flurry of interest by feminist scholars and activists into the way in which all forms of media portrayed women. According to Carter and Steiner, "The concern was that the sexist messages of these media forms socialized people, especially children, into thinking that dichotomized and hierarchical sex-role stereotypes were 'natural' and 'normal'" (2004: 2). Therefore, in order for feminists to challenge these standards of representation, empirical evidence was required. The 1960s through to the 1980s is an era where systematic research into media images of women burgeoned (Carter and Steiner 2004: 1-2). In reviewing many of these studies from all over the world, Gallagher found striking similarities. Women were underrepresented in both media production and content, and the women that did appear in media content were mostly young and pretty, defined in relation to another man, usually their husband, son, father or boss, and characteristically portrayed as passive, dependent, indecisive or submissive (1980, 1985 cited in Van Zoonen 1996: 17).

In comparison, scholarly interest in the representation of men in the media and the construction of masculinity has not been as significant. The study of gender representation in the media have tended to focus on women, to the extent that the portrayal of men and masculinity have often not even been regarded as problematic but their roles have instead been viewed as positive, good, admirable and emulative.

Men and masculinity in the media have consequently been treated as the 'norm' and as a result of this emphasis within research on the role of women, the male sex role is believed to possess characteristics that are simply opposite to those of the stereotypical female and thus have a propensity to be illustrated merely by default (Durkin 1985: 110). This situation is slowly beginning to change and an increasing number of scholars (such as Craig 1992; Horrocks 1994; Peterson 1998; Beynon 2002) have begun to examine men and masculinity more seriously and critically (Carter and Steiner 2004: 3-4). Despite the emergence of 'men's studies', its impact on media research so far is believed to be limited (Craig 1992: 1).

2.2 Representation and stereotypes.

Before going any further it seems necessary to take a look at the issue of representation and what exactly stereotyping is, what it involves and how it functions. To represent something or someone, involves a process of description, depiction or symbolization. According to Hall, "Representation is the production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language. It is the link between concepts and language which enables us to *refer* to either the 'real' world of objects, people or events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people and events" (1997: 17). Hall suggests there are two systems of representation. The first involves the direct associations of objects, people and events with a set of concepts or mental representations that people hold in their minds. Meaning is therefore dependent on these correlations. The second system is language, for in order to produce meaning, these concepts need to be translated into a common language. The term 'language' is used by Hall to mean anything from written words, spoken sounds and visual images, to music, fashion and even facial expressions (1997: 16-19).

Stereotyping is therefore a form of representation but a stereotypical representation will often be negative, inaccurate, limited and partial. A stereotype is a distorted, exaggerated or misleading representation of a person or group of people through the reduction of that person or group to a few essential characteristics (Itzin 1986: 128 and Hall 1997: 257). Stereotypes do not represent 'real' people - in other words, as Itzin clearly explains, a stereotype basically "represents a set of ideas or a

set of beliefs about people – an ideology – rather than people as they are. Stereotypes are deliberately misleading; they perform the function of creating attitudes which, by their very nature, are negative attitudes. They function as a form of propaganda; they are the language of ideology – the way it is communicated" (1986: 128). With regards to the representation of 'real men' and 'real women', the problems that are encountered therefore rest upon whose reality it is, what reality and according to whom (Gledhill 1997: 346).

Lester and Ross (2003: 2) have listed five reasons why the media continue to stereotype:

1. Advertisers require pictures that can be quickly and easily understood.
2. Reporters do not take the time to view things differently or explore new issues.
3. Not enough people from diverse cultural groups working within the media industry.
4. Those working in the media presume audiences will only accept certain images of a particular diverse group member.
5. Culturalism – the belief that one cultural group is better or worse than another – can control what is worthy of coverage.

Whilst stereotypes in the media are often met with disapproval, Linn has interestingly observed how situation comedies actually rely on stereotypes and shared prejudices as the basis of its humour. Linn does point out however, that the jokes do depend on the stereotypes being recognized as such, both in terms of knowing and being aware of the stereotype and not believing the stereotype to be true (2003: 23-4). Although the news can be said to be one area of the media where stereotypes really should not exist, journalists do in fact draw upon similar stereotypes as the comedy writers. They do this through the selection of examples and cases the journalists choose to illustrate a story. The dilemma they face is that for a story to be meaningful and interesting it has to be about specific people but in doing so it consequently produces imbalance (Linn 2003: 24-5). Furthermore, "The news media stereotype because typically they portray members of diverse cultural groups within specific content categories – usually crime, entertainment, and sports – and almost never within the categories of general interest, business, education, health and religion"

(Lester and Ross 2003: 3). Therefore, as Len-Rios, Rodgers and Loon have found, newspapers actually sustain gender stereotypes (2005: 165).

2.3 The impact of media stereotypes.

Stereotypes thus have the potential to produce hatred, violence, and misunderstanding. If we consider the number of media messages that are transmitted and consumed each day coupled with the assertion that media stereotypes actually reinforce and amplify personal stereotypes, there is certainly a huge probability that particularly harmful effects will ensue. In this way, the media can be said to exacerbate the problem of prejudice and discrimination. (Lester and Ross 2003: 3 and Gorham 2004: 20).

Take for instance the portrayal of sex roles. Past studies have found that the depiction of sex roles in the media have been incredibly narrow, with women often only being shown within the domestic private sphere, but with men being portrayed in a whole variety of different occupations within the public sphere (Carter and Steiner 2004: 13-4). In recent years social expectations and social conditions have changed dramatically. This has impacted the role of men but most significantly, the role of women in today's society. It is in the face of this change that Tuchman strongly believes that the way in which sex roles are portrayed in the media should not be disregarded but the implications should seriously be addressed (1978: 3-4). If traditional stereotyped sex roles continue to be portrayed in the media, these out of date, sexist depictions will ultimately be providing dangerously inaccurate messages. The impact on society will be detrimental in terms of the non acceptance of those women and men who do not 'fit' these images but also through the way in which they are potentially preparing young people for a world that simply does not exist anymore (Carter and Steiner 2004: 14 and Tuchman 1978: 6).

Signorielli, McLeod and Healy (1994) have provided evidence for such a concern through their study of gender portrayals in MTV commercials. The content analysis revealed that gender associations were made with particular types of products, both through the way in which the commercial was visually presented and with regards to the users of the products. Therefore as a result of these gender

associations, the commercials presented overt stereotypical designations of men's and women's roles. Through the analysis of character attributes, the MTV commercials were also found to be full of stereotypical information regarding gender roles. For example, females appeared less frequently than males and when they did appear they were often portrayed as very physically attractive, with beautiful bodies, wearing sexy, skimpy clothing, and usually the object of another's gaze. Such portrayals create the message that a woman's purpose is to look attractive in order to provide pleasure and enjoyment to others. In conclusion, Signorielli, McLeod and Healy state that "MTV commercials preserve and perpetuate stereotypes about women. If adolescents, as is likely, utilize MTV as a source of social learning about gender roles, then they receive warped views of the roles and responsibilities of women in society" (1994: 99-100).

What this study also highlights is the view that it is not only the restrictive traditional portrayals of gender roles that can cause harm but the physical appearance of women in particular, can be just as damaging. The idealized presentations of perfectly proportioned, beautiful women are what Elliot refers to as 'images that injure'. This is because such images provide a basis for comparison to the whole of society, thus creating unreasonable and often unattainable physical expectations that consequently give the impression that real women fall short (2003: 8).

What the impact of stereotyping therefore indicates is the power of the norm. Accordingly, Newton and Williams claim: "The misappropriation of archetypes to promote a divided, always struggling, never good enough self who seeks wholeness through the attempt to live the stereotyped, sexualized, product consuming lives of characters of the media is the benchmark of normalcy in our culture. There we see the constant portrayal of women's and men's bodies through mediatypes and lifestyles condensed into restricted caricatures of mediated normalcy that reflect little of the complexity or diversity of actual human character" (2003: 218). Whilst the media may portray something in such a way and to the extent that it is subsequently believed and accepted as the norm, the reality is that it is most likely anything but the norm. The impact of media stereotypes thus illustrates the power the media possesses and the influence it can exert.

2.4 The power of the media.

The realization of the media's power to influence thought, feelings and behaviour has spawned a huge amount of interest (Cashmore 2005: 108). When we talk of something having an influence on someone we are in essence referring to its effect or power to affect. Usually this is in relation to a person's knowledge, action or opinion. However, as Belton (2000: 630) points out "'influence' – whether from the screen or elsewhere – can also act at a more general level, in matters less concrete and specifiable than opinions, insinuating itself into our ideas and perceptions, affectively and aesthetically, as well as cognitively, in ways that we cannot articulate and may not even be aware of". The media have certainly been recognized and implicated as a very powerful influential force especially, some would argue, in terms of its promotion of a thin standard of bodily attractiveness (Silverstein et al 1986).

As we noted earlier, there has been a great deal of interest in the representation of gender in the media, both in terms of sex roles and physical appearance and studies have proved that portrayals of men and women are misrepresented and stereotyped. However, such studies may be deemed of little value if there is no evidence that such portrayals do have negative consequences. Many of these studies have been conducted under the assumption that the media have the power to influence and cause harm and due to this widespread belief, there has accordingly been an upsurge in the number of proposals, theories, studies and experiments regarding the causal or probable relationships between media representations and self image (Wykes and Gunter 2005: 2). We live in a media saturated world and therefore countless numbers of representations, signs and images are provided by the media every single day, and when constantly bombarded by such a consistent endless supply, it is inevitable that they begin to shape and direct our taste. Such is the volume and repetition, that many associations automatically get made and as a consequence, the association that thin is beautiful, for example, ultimately get taken for granted and accepted (Cashmore 2005: 108).

When considering the power of the media, we need to also consider more specifically the power of pictures. The constant bombardment of visual stimulus have produced a very visually intensive and dependent society (Harris and Lester 2002: 1). The media, especially the news, appear to have become very heavily reliant on the

visual. One reason why pictures are particularly powerful is because of the emotion that they contain and conjure. Such is the strength of a picture or an image, that they are more susceptible to becoming part of our long-term memory (Lester and Ross 2003: 3). Newton and Williams have identified a number of scholars whose research have proven that information delivered visually rather than in words is significantly better remembered (For example: Graber 1990; Madigan 1983; Paivio, Rogers, and Smythe 1968; Sargent and Zillmann 1999; Schultz 1993 cited in Newton and Williams 2003: 214). This is a concern when pictures often rely on interpretation. This is the main reason why stereotypes that are delivered visually are all the more damaging.

A picture or image should not be accepted as simply a snapshot of reality. There are so many stages within the production of an image where intervention takes place and truth and realism is affected. As Berger points out "An image is a sight which has been re-created or reproduced" (1972: 9). The decisions that occur in this re-creation or preproduction of a sight can be anything from choices of what or whom to include and exclude, to the angle, the lighting, even the subject's facial expression. Manipulation and editing of an image is another way in which decisions take place and intervention occurs most frequently exercised in fashion magazines and advertising where photographs of women are digitally resized to elongate the legs and flatten the torso in order to produce an ideally proportioned body shape (Elliot 2003: 8). Berger proposes that what dictates these decisions is the way we see things and because the way we see things is affected by what we know and what we believe, the re-creation, reproduction and most importantly, the interpretation of the image is an entirely subjective and individual experience. "The photographer's way of seeing is reflected in his choice of subject. The painter's way of seeing is reconstituted by the marks he makes on the canvas or paper. Yet although every image embodies a way of seeing, our perception or appreciation of an image depends also upon our own way of seeing" (Berger 1972: 10).

These issues become all the more poignant when we consider news pictures. According to Hall, "news photos have a specific way of passing themselves off as aspects of 'nature'. They repress their ideological dimensions by offering themselves as literal visual-transcriptions of the 'real world'" (1973: 188). The newspaper photograph after the regime of illustrated news was once welcomed as an unmediated authentic capturing of the real (Barnhurst and Nerone 2001: 137). This belief also

extended to television, regarded as a realist medium, vision was seen as a vehicle of knowledge and truth (Slater 1995: 220). Whilst appearance and reality have been looked upon as one and the same, it is the words within news reports rather than the pictures that many consider to be the ambiguous human invention (Crisell 2002: 157). Whilst both words and pictures can be seen as an invention, it is important to recognize the impact that the accompanying words and even the presentation of a news item can have on the interpretation of the image. Because the connotation of photographs can be so unclear, the accompanying titles, headlines, bylines and text can have such a vast influence on the meaning - not just the meaning of the image but also the meaning of the entire news story (Colson 2003: 36-7).

Hall goes on to say, "by appearing literally to reproduce the event as it *really* happened, news photos suppress their selective/interpretive/ideological function" (1973: 188). Crisell (2002: 157) claims that images teach us to feel not to think. In doing so, visual intelligence disappears and we yield to naïve realism (Barnhurst and Nerone, 2001: 138). Surely it would be ignorant of us to accept that all images are an unmediated, objective, direct window on reality. We therefore need to acknowledge the need for interpretation and realise that the camera is not simply a neutral extension of human vision but the image is instead a selective reproductive creation. For instance, even just by carefully selecting and composing a shot, the photographer and cameraman are accordingly acting as the first filter of reality (Evans, 1997). The perception of truth and reality in visual news is thus a complex task.

2.5 Media effects and the impact of celebrity.

There are three major psychological media effects theories. The first is Cultivation Theory developed by George Gerbner (1969 cited in Holmstrom 2004: 198). The theory proposes that the more television a person watches, the more likely they are to believe it as real and will begin to adopt a set of beliefs, opinions, attitudes and behaviours consistent with the messages that television transmits. For heavy viewers, television thus cultivates a distorted social reality. In order to test this theory Stern (2004) conducted a study to investigate the cultivation effects of thoughts about

beauty. After interviewing 63 kindergarten girls (ages 5 and 6) to learn about their perceptions of and attitudes toward beauty, Stern was able to conclude that heavier viewers defined beauty differently to lighter viewers, with heavier viewers' definitions very closely matching the ideas frequently shown on television. The study also revealed that the heavy viewers believed beauty and physical attractiveness was very important for women – a belief not evident or as prevalent amongst the lighter viewers (Stern 2004: 24-28).

The second is an adaptation of Markus's (1977) Self Schema Theory, which is mainly concerned with the way in which individuals process and incorporate media messages, specifically how an individual's concept of self is affected. According to the theory, the self is made up of a mental representation developed from reflecting on their own behaviour, observing the reactions of others to themselves and identifying valued aspects of the self (Grogan 1999: 100-1). Myers and Biocca (1992) believe body image to be one element of the mental representation that makes up the self. In their study into the effect of television advertising and programming on body image distortions in young women, they found evidence for an 'elastic' body image whereby a woman's actual body size is in constant conflict with the ideal body image represented in the media. This therefore results in an unstable self-perceived body image illustrating the potential power of the media to make a person's internalised ideal body unattainably and unrealistically thin.

The third is an adaptation of Festingers Social Comparison Theory, which claims that images from the media are used as a basis for comparison (Grogan 1999: 100-1). In a study by Jones (2002), attractiveness comparisons to either media models/celebrities or same-sex peers were examined amongst adolescent boys and girls. The results indicated that both groups were used as a relevant source for comparing physical attributes thus supporting the connection between negative body image and attractiveness comparisons.

In realizing the power of the media in its ability to affect and influence people's behaviour, attitudes, values, beliefs, and perceptions, if we combine this effect with the impact of celebrities and the result is rather alarming. An interview study with 15-year-old girls conducted by Wertheim et al (1997 cited in Wykes and Gunter 2005: 150) revealed how the print media was a major influence in developing body image dissatisfaction by making comparisons between themselves and role models. In a study conducted in America by Garner (1997 cited in Wykes and Gunter 2005: 150)

both males and females were reported to study the shapes of models in magazines and to always or very often compare themselves to these models. Grogan (1996 cited in Grogan 1999: 106) carried out a study on 200 American college students, half female and half male, aged between 16 and 48. They were each asked who would be their body image role model. The results showed that for a large percentage of men and women under the age of forty, media figures comprising fashion models, actors, actresses and sportspersons, were reported to be their body image role models. The older the participants were, the more likely it was for a family member to be chosen as their role model, thus indicating the importance of media role models for younger men and women.

These studies certainly demonstrate not only the power of the media to influence body image perceptions but also the impact of media figures and celebrities in influencing these perceptions. Brown, Basil and Bocarnea (2003) conducted a study into the social influence of international celebrities and focussed specifically on responses to the death of Princess Diana. It investigated the international influence of Princess Diana and audience involvement with celebrities. In order to assess the influence, a set of variables was identified that were thought to influence involvement with Diana and then three consequences were predicted of that involvement. The results indicated that gender, age and television were all important variables associated with people's involvement with a celebrity. Those of the same gender and similar age had a stronger attachment than others. The level of involvement - predicted by media exposure - and people's feelings toward them were factors that appeared to mediate a celebrity's influence. Whilst this study has been able to demonstrate a celebrity's influence through involvement, it does not provide an adequate explanation as to the power of celebrity to potentially influence attitudes, beliefs and behaviours (Brown, Basil and Bocarnea 2003).

Another study conducted by Boon and Lomore (2001) investigated admirer-celebrity relationships among young adults in an attempt to explain perceptions of celebrity influence on identity. They aimed to collect data in order to determine the degree of influence the young adults felt were due to celebrity idols which was measured in terms of the extent to which they had invested in their relationship with the idol, efforts to emulate their idols, beliefs regarding the extent to which they shared an intimate connection with their favourite idol and the extent to which their idol had influenced their sense of identity and feelings of self-worth. The main

objective was to identify qualities within the admirer-celebrity relationship that would explain the extent of the influence perceived by the young adults. The results showed that significant proportions of the sample admitted they had engaged in efforts to change their personality, beliefs, attitudes and personal values to bring them more in line with their idol. (Boon and Lomore 2001).

Thus, these studies serve to highlight the powerful effect the use of celebrities in body representation can have on the audience over images of unknown people (Wykes and Gunter 2005: 103). As Cashmore has made clear, there is no escaping today's celebrity culture. It is with us and it shapes us (2005: 6). Therefore, in today's celebrity climate these images are surely likely to produce an increasingly pervading impact.

Although many studies and experiments have been conducted in order to substantiate claims that the media's portrayal of gender and body image does have a negative effect on society and the individual, what needs to be taken into account is the fact that causation can be extremely complex and difficult to prove. Whatever research method is chosen, it is impossible to be able to consider all influences, individual differences and intervening variables, especially when many intervening variables are not always identifiable or even measurable. Fejes highlights the fact that whilst many content analysis studies have proven that the media do replicate traditional stereotypes, the exact impact has been less conclusive and heavily criticized. Therefore, "Given that people are affected by their entire environment and thus affected by notions of masculinity and femininity present in the family, school, church, and larger social environment, the task of isolating the effects of the media is a difficult one" (1992: 19). Moreover, Holmstrom's (2004) meta-analysis of thirty-four existing studies of the effects of the media on body image actually resulted in the conclusion that portrayals of thin women may have little to no effect on viewers. This certainly draws our attention to the fact that the effects of the media have not been conclusively proven.

2.6 Body image.

A woman's body is integral in the formation of their identity. Bodily shape and size, clothes and accessories, make-up and care of the skin and hair are all codes of appearance based on the body that actually shapes and moulds a woman's identity and determines what it means to be 'feminine'. It is accordingly, the aspects of the female body that are attractive to men that are associated with a woman's identity rather than the functioning or dysfunctioning elements of the body such as childbirth or osteoporosis that women themselves would be most likely to ascribe to their identity (Macdonald 1995: 193-4). Whilst biological differences have appeared to provide justification for women's suppression in terms of exclusion from education and the workforce for instance (Ussher 1989: 1), the physical appearance of their bodies have meanwhile become spectacles that are subjected to the gaze of men (Van Zoonen 1996: 88). Berger claims that because women are aware that they are being watched and surveyed by men, then women actually survey themselves being surveyed. Women are thus the surveyor and the surveyed. In doing so, she then turns herself into an object (1972: 46-7). Berger goes on to say, "Women are depicted in quite a different way to men – not because the feminine is different from the masculine – but because the 'ideal' spectator is always assumed to be male and the image of the woman is designed to flatter him" (1972: 64).

Wolf believes that the portrayal of the ideal female image is a dissemination of what she calls 'the beauty myth' whereby images of female beauty are used as a political weapon against women's advancement and therefore as a form of social control. Before the industrial revolution there was no means by which women could compare themselves to a mass circulated physical ideal, but with the invention of image reproduction technologies at the beginning of the nineteenth century, this changed significantly and women began to be controlled by images of how women should look. As the women's movement gained ground, it successfully dispelled the social fictions of femininity that flourished during the Victorian era. Wolf therefore claims that the social control that these fictions once exercised had to be reassigned to the one remaining feminine ideology of beauty. "This reimposed onto liberated women's faces and bodies all the limitations, taboos, and punishments of the repressive laws, religious injunctions and reproductive enslavement that no longer

carried sufficient force. Inexhaustible but ephemeral beauty work took over from inexhaustible but ephemeral housework. As the economy, law, religion, sexual mores, education, and culture were forcibly opened up to include women more fairly, a private reality colonized female consciousness. By using ideas about "beauty," it reconstructed an alternative female world with its own laws, economy, religion, sexuality, education, and culture, each element as repressive as any that had gone before" (1991: 16). Wolf believes the beauty myth is still as powerful today manifesting itself in the barrage of current ideal images of the perfect body.

In an attempt to overcome this patriarchal power and social control, Orbach has noted how women use their bodies in becoming or remaining fat so that it neutralizes their sexual identity. "Fat is a way of saying "no" to powerlessness and self-denial, to a limiting sexual expression which demands that females look and act a certain way, and to an image of womanhood that defines a specific social role. Fat offends Western ideals of female beauty and, as such, every "overweight" woman creates a crack in the popular culture's ability to make us mere products" (1978: 33-4). A woman's body is thus extremely complex.

Although it seems that men's bodies are not lavishly splashed across the media as much as women's bodies, their bodies are still displayed a considerable amount, mainly their face and upper body (Horrocks 1994: 157). Yet, in contrast to how women's bodies are defined, men's bodies are generally associated with how it functions and performs and is related to activities that are powerful and energetic (Macdonald 1995: 194). In fact, Berger claims that the mere presence of a man's body exudes power. This power can be moral, physical, economic, social, or sexual and whilst the man may not actually be capable of delivery, his presence will always suggest his capability (1972: 45-6).

It has been observed that despite huge interest in the pressure for women to physically achieve the social ideal, men are certainly not immune to the demands of the beauty culture. Reports have shown that the number of anorexic men have actually increased over the last twenty years as has the number of men taking steroids with the aim of developing a body to match the bodily standard that has been socially constructed as the ideal. It has, however, been argued, that whereas women are viewed as victims of beauty culture, that men's new participation in this culture is in order to maintain their involvement in consumer capitalism. Others have argued that it is in fact the weakening and variability in specific gender roles that have caused men

to partake in this beauty culture (Cranny-Francis et al 2003: 198-200). This is illustrated in the way makeover television shows have pushed the boundaries of the space it has traditionally held, in that it is now regarded as perfectly acceptable for men to use and talk openly and proficiently about beauty products, fashion and style (Moseley 2000: 309). Whilst the terrain may be shifting, it is doubtful whether it is completely and equally shared as of yet.

2.7 The media's portrayal of the ideal body.

Wykes and Gunter (2005: 2) have observed how the apparent increase in focus on the body over the last forty years has appeared to parallel the explosion of the mass media. The media have a tendency to produce an ideal feminine image as "thin, free from unwanted hair, deodorised, perfumed and clothed…they produce a picture that is far removed from the reality of everyday lives" (Orbach 1978: 20-21). For years we have been surrounded with images of idealized physical beauty intensified by consumer culture within which the media have supplied a rapid spread of stylised images of the body (Featherstone 2001: 170). Advertising has been recognized as one of the main outlets through which we are relentlessly exposed to ideals of bodily perfection. In addition, the diet and fashion industries constantly promote the benefits of looking a certain way and with its distillation into the women's magazine press, they have often been blamed as the primary cause of eating disorders (Macdonald 1995: 209). This media emphasis on the presentation of the body has according to Orbach, led women to believe that making their image pleasing and attractive, is the core purpose of their existence (1978: 20). Cranny-Francis et al thus claims that a discourse of femininity pervades all forms of media telling us what a beautiful woman is, that all girls and women should desire to be beautiful, and providing instruction on how to become beautiful (2003: 198).

So, with the media's promotion of a perfect body image, does this mean that everyone is under pressure to conform? Gauntlett believes that the pressure to attain this beauty ideal is on men as well as women. "Today, men are expected to spend time in the gym, working to develop 'tight, toned' bodies. Women who have these well-toned bodies are likely to expect – equitably enough – that men will put in a

similar effort. Every male film star today has to have a good body, just as women do. So you might say that it's a pressure that our culture puts on *people* these days, but it's not just limited to women" (2002: 78). Whilst pressure may well be on both sexes to achieve the perfect body, content analysis studies indicate that this pressure is nowhere near equal. Silverstein et al (1986) demonstrated rather distinct gendered messages relating to bodily appearance, firstly in their analysis of television characters of which the females were more likely to be slim and less likely to be fat than the male characters; and secondly, through their analysis of magazines whereby significantly more messages to be slim and stay in shape were found in women's magazines than in men's. Similar results were found by Malkin, Wornian, and Chrisler (1999) in their examination of magazine covers. Their results showed that whereas 78 per cent of women's magazine covers displayed a message regarding body image, absolutely none were found on the men's magazines. With women's magazines focussing on the transformation of the self in order to improve their lives, men's magazines, in contrast focussed on entertainment, hobbies and activities. Nemeroff et al (1994) also found huge gender differences in the content of men's and women's magazines with consistently a great deal more body related articles evident in women's magazines. However, what was indeed interesting were their results from the time-trend analysis, which indicated that between 1980 and 1991 there had been a decrease in emphasis on weight loss in women's magazines and focus on weight loss in men's magazines actually increased. These results therefore show that whilst there are more media messages that put pressure on women to achieve the ideal body, there does appear to be proof that men are also becoming subjected to this pressure, although certainly not yet to the same extent.

It is perhaps as a result of this greater media emphasis on women and the ideal body that it would seem that men can easily get away with any imperfection, whereas for women, even the smallest aberration is deemed entirely unacceptable in today's media culture (Gauntlett 2002: 79). Banet-Weiser and Portwood-Stacer (2006) argue that reality makeover television shows have had a huge impact on the way in which flawless femininity has become the norm, even to the extent that cosmetic surgery has been normalized through efforts to become this ideal woman. It is therefore rather deperironic that whilst the media appear to emphasize and promote the ideal body image, many would argue that this is actually impossible to attain (Ussher 1989; Mondini, Favaro and Santonastaso 1996; Malkin, Wornian, and Chrisler 1999;

Guendouzi 2004). Thus, according to Wolf, the ideal beautiful body image is an ideal because it simply does not and cannot exist (1991: 176). However, Singh (1993, 2004) has in fact found through her cross-cultural study of female physical attractiveness, that there does seem to be an indicator of female physical attractiveness that is universal. This consists of a low waist-to-hip ratio but at the same time the woman must not be underweight or even overweight. Both weight and shape do appear to have a strong influence in ratings of physical attractiveness and ideal body image but while there has been wide recognition of this ideal, the actual reason *why* this ideal body image has become the dominant social and cultural ideal has been given very little attention. What has in fact been acknowledged is that this thin ideal has not always been the dominant ideal body image. What constitutes the ideal female body has varied significantly over time.

Changes in the ideal body image in the past can also be seen as indicative of changes in media messages. However, it would not be fair to place all responsibility for such variations on the media as social conditions such as war, famine and fertility can affect what a culture considers acceptable or desirable at a certain period of time (Guendouzi 2004: 1636). The media perhaps just promotes this image. Ussher (1989) claims that a historical analysis proves that the image of the ideal woman is entirely socially constructed. It is worth pointing out here that no such data is currently available for men (Nemeroff et al 1994: 170).

There have been numerous transformations in the ideal female body over the years. During the Renaissance period, the ideal was full and well rounded, and by the Victorian era, the corseted hourglass figure had emerged as the ideal. The rate of change began to increase during the twentieth century starting with the androgynous, flat Twenties Flapper image, a stark contrast to the seductive elegance of the 1930s' slinky bias-cut look (Ussher 1989: 38 and Macdonald 1995: 197). This too was a period when the success and popularity of the visual media had also begun to increase and along with it, a sharpened awareness of external appearance and bodily presentation. The motion picture industry had become one of the foremost creators and purveyors of images, thus "The Hollywood cinema helped to create new standards of appearance and bodily presentation, bringing home to a mass audience the importance of 'looking good'. Hollywood publicised the new consumer culture values and projected images of the glamorous celebrity lifestyle to a worldwide audience" (Featherstone 2001: 179). From the post-war period through to the 1950s,

the ideal body was buxom and curvaceous but by the 1960s, this had changed once again, this time to a skinny, almost starved appearance (Ussher 1989: 38). It would seem that this slender ideal body image has continued to dominate ever since (Macdonald 1995: 197).

Silverstein et al (1986) found evidence of this potted historical analysis of trends in ideal body image. They conducted a study that involved measuring bust, hip, and waist widths of models appearing in magazines between 1901 and 1981, which confirmed the above transformations in female ideal body image that have occurred throughout the twentieth century. In another study conducted by Silverstein et al (1986) a similar method was utilized to measure the curvaceousness of movie actresses between 1933 and 1973. As in the previous study, the results showed how movie actresses had become thinner and less curvy thus indicating that the standard of female bodily attractiveness have become thinner. A study by Garner et al (1980) found that that the slender ideal of the 1960s that is said to have stayed with us to the present day, has now changed and is even thinner than before. The thin ideal has thus become thinner. Garner et al obtained data from Playboy centrefolds and Miss America Pageant contestants between 1959 and 1978 and the results indicated a strong evolution in the ideal standard body toward a thinner shape for women. Interestingly, this thinner ideal has evolved at the same time that Garner et al also found there to be a significant increase in the number of diet articles in women's magazines over the same period. Singh (1993) however, disputes these findings that the ideal has become thinner and in particular criticizes Garner et al's study. Singh also obtained data from Playboy centrefolds and Miss America winners except the results showed only minor changes in slenderness and certainly did not indicate a trend towards a tubular body shape as Garner et al's results suggested.

Not many would agree with Singh. Bordo for instance certainly believes that the ideal has continued to grow thinner to the extent that a body we would once consider slender would now be seen as fleshy. Bordo states: "as our bodily ideals have become firmer and more contained (we worship not merely slenderness but flablessness), *any* softness or bulge comes to be seen as unsightly" (1995: 57). Guendouzi expresses similar sentiments: "The media currently presents a world view that implies women should not only be slender but also 'perfectly-toned'" (2004: 1649). Thus, it would seem that the ideal body image in the twenty first century is one that is toned as well as thin – a requirement that is actually even harder to achieve.

2.8 The representation of gender in the media.

The media frequently portray women in one of three roles. The first is as a wife, a mother or a housekeeper for men; the second is as a sex object; and the third is as someone trying to appear beautiful for the benefit of men (Orbach 1978: 20 and Hole and Levine 1971: 249). Other sex role stereotypes were identified by the Women's Media Action Group (WMAG) through an examination of the media between 1981 and 1983. They found women were portrayed at home, either in the kitchen, in bed, or with the children; if they were at work it was a servicing job; they possessed perfect feminine qualities including caring, nurturing, sensitive, passive and house proud; displayed incompetence at manual or technical jobs; and were often depicted as the dream ideal woman (1983 cited in Itzin 1986: 119-20). Tuchman believes that portraying women in these limited sex role stereotypes, they are by condemnation, trivialization or even absence, subject to 'symbolic annihilation' "through banishment to hearth and home" (1978: 29).

In a content analysis of magazine advertisements between 1988 and 1990, Thomas and Treiber (2000) were able to demonstrate that significant use of gender stereotypes continue in advertising. Craig (1992a) found similar results in his content analysis of television advertisements. Adverts aired during the day focussed on the traditional stereotypical image of the housewife, cooking and cleaning and looking after the home and family but successfully maintaining her physical attractiveness. A content analysis study conducted by Davis (1990) examined the portrayal of women in all prime-time television programmes on every network for one week in 1987. The results interestingly showed that the observable demographic characteristics of women in terms of age, beauty, hair colour, status, role, and function in the shows, had changed very little since the 1970s even though there had been significant improvements in the treatment of minority groups within that time.

Thus, it is not only the roles of women that are stereotyped in the media but so too are their bodies. Bordo refers to how often women who are thin are depicted as smart, intelligent, and competent; and women who are more curvaceous and have a fuller figure tend to be equated with "wide-eyed, giggly vapidity" (1995: 55). McRobbie refers to the way it has become quite common for the media to use the bodies of young women as a way of differentiating their social class in a derogatory

manner. McRobbie uses the example of ex Atomic Kitten singer Kerry Catona who was referred to on a website as 'pramface'. This term is used to indicate a girl who is single, with a baby, not very presentable, not appealing enough to attract a long-term partner, does not go to work and therefore lives on benefits. "The bodies of young women are now to be understood according to a scale running from welfare-dependent, single maternity, marking failure, to well-groomed, slim, sophistication, marking success" (2004: 102). Furthermore, for the media to portray a woman as 'sexy' there are certain stereotypical criteria that tend to always have to be met. The woman has to have a thin body with a perfectly flat stomach, show lots of cleavage, and have skin so smooth that it looks more like plastic than flesh (Walsh-Childers 2003: 141-3).

In this sense, it would seem that the media only has one definition of sexy. Yet it is wrong to say that a woman who does not meet any of these standards cannot be regarded as sexy. One common misconception that the media tend to uphold is that women over a certain age cannot be viewed as sexy. When a woman reaches forty, it is as if her sexuality ends and the under representation and misrepresentation of older women in the media, particularly advertising, is indicative of such misbelieve. This is one reason why soap operas are valued so much by women because they often include older women, who are also sexy women (Macdonald 1995: 194). Thus, they do not adhere to the ageist and sexist messages that the media so frequently and so devastatingly portray: that women have two functions; one is sexual and the second is domestic. By the time women reach their mid-forties, both these functions disappear because they are no longer able to have children and with any children they did have leaving home, the domestic role involved in child-rearing is then not required. Women therefore have to carry on with the rest of their life with little perceived status or value. Itzin consequently claims: "This valulessness is not inherent, but created; not biologically determined, but socially constructed – with the assistance of the media" (1986: 130). It is worth noting, however, that a more recent study by Kaufert and Lock (1997 cited in Smythe 2003: 169) found there to be a significant improvement in the portrayal of ageing women in advertisements. Active, happy, and physically in good condition in terms of health and appearance, it would seem that there is evidence of older women thus being given a much more positive image of late.

As mentioned earlier, with such an emphasis in the past on the representation of women in the media, the representation of men in the media have subsequently been assumed to be unproblematic and consequently comparatively little research into their portrayal has been conducted. There is a presupposition that men in the media are merely represented in a way that is opposite to women and as such will therefore be mostly positively represented. Cranny-Francis et al illustrates this in the way that women are stereotyped as emotional; hence men are regarded as emotionless. In addition to this gendered trait, Cranny-Francis et al also identifies other stereotypical masculine representations that construct men as powerful, rational, and authoritative (2003: 145). Craig (1992a) found these and other traditional masculine stereotypes including, independence, physical strength, ruggedness, aggressiveness, daringness, and competitiveness to prevail in television commercials. Such traits are recognizable in so many media figures in all forms of media but especially in film, like for example, the character John McClane in the *Die Hard* films. Furthermore, there has been a tendency for men to be portrayed as more active, decisive, courageous, intelligent and resourceful than women and the quantity of men in film and television is recognized as being much greater also (Gauntlett 2002: 56). Even photographs of men in newspapers have been found to outnumber women (Luebke 1989 cited in Fejes 1992: 16). Another interesting finding by Copeland (1989) is that in a study of commercial television programming, men were most likely to be visually portrayed with a close-up face shot rather than a full body shot like women. However, Horrocks (1994) claims that attention has recently begun to move towards the lower part of the body to include the belly, thighs, and buttocks. This has at least been observed to occur more frequently in advertising. Studies referred to earlier have revealed how men's bodies are not given anywhere near as much attention or emphasis in the media than women's bodies and so it seems that in the same way that men are not constrained by their bodies, they are also free from the constraints of age. It would consequently appear that there is no end to a man's sexuality or active functioning of the body (Macdonald 1995: 194).

Another stark contrast to how women are represented is the way in which men are often portrayed in the public realm rather than the private domestic space, perhaps because many public places including the marketplace, the economy, and the state are all deemed aggressive, competitive and masculine (Cranny-Francis et al 2003). This also maybe explains why studies have shown that men are more likely to be portrayed

in high status employment (Barcus 1983 cited in Fejes 1992: 11) and to be shown at work rather than in the home (Durkin 1985).

2.9 Gendered language and discourse.

Also of huge importance and should certainly not be dismissed are the connotations of body image and gender-roles that are formulated and reinforced through language and discourse. Many feminists argue that language is biased, in that it is male dominated and actually favours men (Spender 2001). According to Thorne and Henley, language therefore transmits every type of inequality there is between men and women. Thus "Words associated with males more often have positive connotations; they convey notions of power, prestige, and leadership. In contrast, female words are more often negative, conveying weakness, inferiority, immaturity, a sense of the trivial" (1975: 15). In looking at the many ways in which women are defined, Mills (1989) discovered categories of words that expose how women are stereotyped and consequently become more fragmented. For example, words connected to 'woman and her appearance' include bag; dog; cow; doll; hag; Jezebel; scrubber; slag; tart; and wanton. Words associated with 'woman and work' include fishwife; housewife; maid; matron; nanny; slut; spinster; wench. Also interesting are the words connected to 'woman and words' such as blabber; bitch; cat; chatter; gossip; nag; and trivia. These interconnected words not only demonstrate the negativity of words associated with women but the connotations also reflect massively on the way women are viewed in society in general.

In recognizing that language semantically derogates women, Schulz (1975) has investigated the origin and usage of such words throughout history and found that they were originally used to positively designate women. However, it seems that over time, a process of pejoration occurs whereby the positive designations gradually degenerate, become abusive, finishing as a sexual slur. Ullman suggests euphemism, prejudice, and association with a contaminating concept are three possible reasons for this decline in meaning (1967: 231-2). What Mills (1989) claims to be the purpose and perhaps even the outcome of this semantic derogation of women, is the control and domination of women by men. This supports Foucault's theory (1980) that power

is constructed, reconstructed, and conducted through discourse. Foucault argues that this discursive play of power is an inevitable part of everyday life and therefore as the media is a huge part of everyday life in western society, it also becomes inevitable that media discourse will promote this patriarchal power (Macdonald 1995: 47-8).

An example of this semantic derogation of women and the proposed patriarchal control in the media is the way in which the tabloid press covered the Greenham Common peace camp – a peaceful protest by women against the siting of an American Cruise missile base during the 1980s. Young's analysis of this press coverage found it to focus intensely on the fact that they were women and were therefore held to be trivial, emotional, and referred to with regards to their biological capacity as mothers. The purpose and impact of the protest was neglected in favour of the press's preoccupation with the women's abandonment of their families and homes, and their roles as mothers and wives. Young also observed an incredible amount of unusual deployments of the body. For example, the women's bodies as dirty and needing to be cleaned was one method the press employed to criticise the protest. In their disruption of the traditional classifications and dichotomies, the Greenham women hit "a raw nerve in the symbolic content of the dominant discourse" (1990: 63). Through language and images, they were consequently subjected to defilement by the press.

Wolf refers to the way that what women do and say is constantly undermined by the way the media give so much attention to their appearance. "Whenever we dismiss or do not hear a woman on television or in print because our attention has been drawn to her size and makeup or clothing or hairstyle, the beauty myth is working with optimum efficiency" (1991: 274). It would therefore seem that women in mass culture are accordingly dictated by this beauty myth, which is the reason why Wolf believes stories involving 'unprocessed' women do not tend to be made.

In the same vein, Guendouzi (2004) also supports the notion that physical appearance is the main characteristic by which women are evaluated. Therefore, in making evaluations based on body image, it certainly seems necessary to address the associated values and expectations held by the media. Burchill (2000) writing in the Guardian has observed that "to be a woman today is to be subjected to a barrage of nagging from cradle to grave, much of it about morals, conduct and health, but mostly on the way one looks…Whereas a woman might once have been disapproved of

merely as sloppy, today her appearance calls into question her sexual orientation, morals and even sanity".

Fouts and Burggraf (1999) carried out a content analysis of prime-time television situation comedies to examine the body weights of the main female characters. The study also analysed the verbal comments received from other characters regarding body weight as well as the main characters' self-comments about their own body weight, shape and dieting activities. The analysis found that females who were below average body weight were over-represented receiving more positive verbal comments regarding body weight and shape from the male characters than the above average characters. Above average characters were therefore, under-represented with dieting characters giving themselves more verbal punishment for their body weight and shape. In another content analysis study, Kinnick (1998) analysed newspaper coverage of the 1996 Olympic Games and found significant bias against women in the way the female athletes' marital status, emotions, physical attractiveness, and dependency on others were regularly referred to in journalists reports. Such descriptions were certainly not used to the same extent in reports about male athletes. Both these studies highlight the strong gendered messages within the media that are not only communicated through images but also through language.

2.10 Changing times? The democratization of the media.

According to Gauntlett and Hill (1999: 211) the media over the last fifteen to twenty years, have made a significant attempt to steer away from stereotypical gender representations. Gauntlett (2002: 58) even goes as far as saying that since the 1990s gender roles on television have become increasingly equal and non stereotyped. Yet, can this be said for other forms of media too? If this is the case, some would argue that this development may have been brought about by the increase and popularity of television formats such as reality television shows, game shows, talk shows, lifestyle, and makeover shows since the 1990s as they have brought a new level of participation and greater accessibility to appear in the media. Bonner refers to these shows as 'ordinary television'. It is mundane programming that reduces the gap between the

viewer and the viewed but more importantly it incorporates ordinary people into the programmes (2003: 211). This has consequently led to an increase in the production of 'ordinary' celebrities. Some believe that this opening up of media access – a sign of democratization - has as a result set in motion a broadening of representation within the media. However, Turner would tend to disagree with this theory: "there is no necessary connection between, on the one hand a broadening demographic in the pattern of access to media representation and, on the other, a democratic politics. Hence my view that these developments are more correctly seen as a demotic, rather than a democratic, turn" (2006: 158). With such an increase in the number of celebrities in recent years, many would agree that their novelty is waning and they are starting to become less and less interesting. Therefore, one could argue that in order for a celebrity to stand out from the crowd they need to step away from the ordinariness and strive to be different. Yet, would this differentiation therefore mean trying to conform to the ultimate ideal image that the media portray or would it mean being different to what the media expectations are? Thus it could be that the supposed democratization of the media and the increase in celebrity culture is in fact working against a broadening of representation because if everyone is striving to achieve a certain desirable image to remain in the public eye, then the bar will continue to rise with everyone trying to gain distinction. Whilst gaining distinction will become even harder to achieve it is only likely to restrict representation rather than broaden it in the long run.

In the past, television and magazines have tended to be the two most popular mediums to be subjected to detailed study and analysis regarding gender representation and body image. However, given that newspapers are produced more frequently and circulation figures are much higher than magazines and most television programmes (Wykes and Gunter 2005: 74), surely newspapers need to be acknowledged more with regards to its potential level of impact. Research accordingly needs to reflect this as the type of impact can only truly begin to be discussed once the way the representation of gender and body image in newspapers today have accurately and systematically been analysed. However, an analysis of newspapers in 2000 and three years later in 2003 by Wykes and Gunter (2005: 69-82) revealed how women still "feature rarely unless sexually attractive and/ or linked to a famous man. Whether famous or not in their own right, it is their sexual role (mother, wife, mistress, rape victim) that tends to be newsworthy. Moreover the typology of

those featured is very narrow: young, slender, white, blonde, famous and under-dressed, and the representation tends to be visual rather than verbal" (2005: 81-2). Yet, if indeed the media is undergoing a process of democratization amidst the current celebrity climate, should this not be reflected in the range of images and discourses published and portrayed in newspapers?

In recognition of the power of the media and its potential to influence and affect audience perceptions, along with the claim that the rise in ordinary television has resulted in greater access to and participation in the media, the following research aims to test whether this has indeed meant a shift in representation of gender and body image through the deconstruction and analysis of newspapers.

Research Questions and Hypotheses:

Main Research Question:

Has the Proliferation of Celebrity Culture Contributed Towards a Broader and Less Stereotypical Representation of Gender and Body Image in the Press?

Main Hypothesis:

The recent increase in reality television and the resultant proliferation of celebrity culture has contributed to a broader and less stereotypical representation of gender and body image in the press.

Null hypothesis:

There has been no positive improvement towards a broader and less stereotyped representation of gender and body image in the press despite the recent proliferation in celebrity culture.

RQ1: Visual Representation.

Is gender and body image more broadly and less stereotypically represented visually?

a) Are there a greater number of photographs devoted to females compared to males?

b) Are there a greater number of photographs depicting older men than older women?

c) Do photographs depict women as active or passive?

d) Are males and females photographed in the same range of sites and locations?

e) What percentage of photographs include a celebrity compared to an 'ordinary' person?

f) Do photographs of females show more of their body than photographs of males?

g) Are females more likely to be portrayed in photographs if they have a slimmer body and is more physically attractive?

h) Are females more likely to be portrayed in photographs with skimpy or sexy clothing?

i) Are the sizes of the photographs of females larger or smaller than the photographs of men?

j) Is the percentage of the area of the photograph in relation to the size of the entire article greater for photographs of females than males?

Hypothesis 1:

Newspapers display a broader and less (previously identified) stereotypical representation of gender and body image within their photographs.

Null hypothesis 1:

Photographs in newspapers display a narrow and stereotypical representation of gender and body image.

RQ2: Discursive representation.

Is gender and body image more positively and less stereotypically represented discursively?

a) Are females' bodies more likely to produce negative comments than males'?

b) Do articles comment on females' beauty, appearance and attractiveness more than males'?

c) Do articles comment on females' personal life and relationships more than males'?

d) Do the articles refer to traditional/stereotypical gender roles?

e) Do articles accompanying photographs of males and females that conform to the ideal body image include more positive references?

f) Are articles written by males, more negative about the body and appearance than articles written by females?

g) Are references to age more common with respect to females?

Hypothesis 2:

Newspapers display a positive and less (previously identified) stereotypical representation of gender and body image within the articles that accompany the photographs.

Null hypothesis 2:

Newspaper articles that accompany photographs display a negative and stereotypical representation of gender and body image.

[3] METHODOLOGY

Methodology:

3.1 The research method.

3.1.1. Content analysis.

Since the aim of this study is to assess the presentation, portrayal and treatment of gender and body image in the press and therefore involves visual and textual analysis, the most appropriate research method to facilitate in achieving the necessary findings is a technique referred to as content analysis. It has been defined by Neuendorf as "the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics" (2002:1). Rather than assuming cause-and-effect relationships between media content and audience beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviours, the method enables a methodical exploration and examination of the content in order to accurately assess the true extent of a phenomenon and its potential to influence or cause harm (Traudt 2005: 22). Riffe, Lacy and Fico have defined and described the process in more detail: "Quantitative content analysis is the systematic and replicable examination of symbols of communication, which have been assigned numeric values according to valid measurement rules and the analysis of relationships involving those values using statistical methods, to describe the communication, draw inferences about it's meaning, or infer from the communication to its context, both of production and consumption" (2005: 25). Thus, as it was the manifest quantitative content that we were concerned with in this study, there was no question over the method of research to employ.

3.2 The process of content analysis.

The basic process of conducting this content analysis involved four main stages:

1) Identifying and defining the sample of media to be analysed.
2) Establishing the variables and categories of content.
3) Measuring the existence and occurrence of each of the categories within the sample.

4) Interpreting the results.

3.2.1. Population and sample.

Newspapers were chosen as the medium for analysis because they are rarely recognized for their potentially negative influence with regards to body image and with them being the most accessed form of print media in the UK, they are certainly in need of assessment. Therefore, as it is the medium of newspapers that we are concerned with in this study, it would have been an impossible task to analyse all newspapers and therefore, boundaries needed to be set that determined the parameters of the investigation. The universe was thus defined as British national daily newspapers of the current year i.e. 2007 because the aim is to investigate the present nature of representation. A sample was then selected from this population. The main sampling method chosen was purposive sampling, which is where the researcher decides on what units to include in the sample according to what they deem to be appropriate (Neuendorf 2002: 88). There were several factors that influenced this decision. First of all, the intention was to study both tabloid and broadsheet newspapers in order to anticipate any variation in representation between the styles of reporting. Secondly, it was the newspapers with the highest circulation figures that wished to be studied as this generally tends to indicate that these are the newspapers with the highest readership, thus the most popular and therefore indicating a larger audience that can potentially be affected by the messages within its content. Thirdly, because the study is not concerned with a particular event or a certain period of time other than to be as current as possible, the dates of the editions were not an important consideration because as far as this study was concerned, the editions could be selected from any week of the current year and the results could still be generalized. There was nothing deemed significant enough to suddenly impact or affect the press sufficiently to change the way its content would generally represent gender and body image. A random sample would have caused problems in actually obtaining the newspapers because although libraries hold past newspapers, these are often in microfiche form, so measuring the articles would be difficult to conduct and visuals are sometimes not included. If this had not been a foreseen difficulty, a stratified sample would have been chosen. Random samples are proven to be more generalizable to the population than nonprobability samples because nonprobability samples are often based on practical considerations such as availability rather than

aiming to be truly representative of the population. However, for the reasons stated above, this was not considered hugely problematic given the purpose of this study.

In terms of the choice of newspapers to analyse, an element of quota sampling was employed. Having identified 12 British national daily newspapers, 50% of these were chosen as the sample. This consisted of 3 tabloids and 3 broadsheets. Six newspapers were deemed an appropriate number for the results to be both representative of the population and generalizable. They were chosen according to which had the highest circulation figures from an audit of the first quarter of 2007 undertaken by the Audit Bureau of Circulations. The 3 tabloids with the highest circulation figures were the *Daily Mirror, The Sun,* and the *Daily Mail* and the 3 broadsheets with the highest circulation figures comprised *The Daily Telegraph, The Times,* and *The Guardian.* Originally, the intention was to take a 2-week sample (from Monday to Saturday as some of these newspapers are not published on a Sunday or their names are changed) as this has been proved to provide an adequate representative sample of 1 year's content (Stempel 1952 cited in Riffe, Lacy and Fico 2005: 113). However, after conducting a pilot study, the length of time it took to analyse each newspaper became a concern so instead of reducing the range of newspapers it was decided that it was preferable to do a detailed study of 1 week's newspapers rather than an analysis that would be of a longer period but of less quality. This was largely due to the quantity of units to be analyzed within each newspaper edition.

The recording units were defined as articles with accompanying photographs depicting one male or one female character. Although the majority of photographs within newspapers are of just one person, there are instances where more than one person is framed. The pilot study helped to redefine these units by broadening the definition to include articles with accompanying photographs that may include other people as long as one person is very clearly distinguishable as a primary character. Articles within the supplements, register and obituaries, announcements, letters, the television guide and classifieds sections were all excluded in order to concentrate on the main bulk of the newspaper, rather than the sections that people often skim over or even throw away.

Therefore, to sum up, the sample comprised 36 newspapers in total that consisted of:

- 3 tabloids: 1) *Daily Mirror,* 2) *The Sun* 3) *Daily Mail.*
- 3 broadsheets: 1) *The Daily Telegraph* 2) *The Times* 3) *The Guardian.*
- Taken from 6 consecutive days, Monday to Saturday, of one week between July 9th and July 14th 2007.
- Articles with accompanying photographs depicting one main character.

These instructions also serve the purpose of transparency so that others could repeat the analysis with a different sample.

3.2.2. Units of analysis: designing the codebook.

As the study is interested in examining whether representation of gender and body image has become broader and less stereotypical than has previously been identified in the past, a method of operationalizing these concepts needed to be devised in order to make them measurable. First of all, this involved determining what elements of gender and body image have been accused of not being sufficiently, positively, accurately or equally represented in the past. From the literature reviewed earlier, the main indicators as to the nature of gender and body image representation were identified as:

- The number of males represented compared to females.
- The range of roles, sites, and locations males and females are portrayed in.
- The roles in which males and females are referred to as assuming within the text.
- Age.
- Activeness.
- Area of space devoted to males compared to females.
- The composition of photographs.
- Body size and weight, beauty, appearance, and attractiveness.
- Reference to personal life and relationships.
- Positive or negative referencing within the text to body image.

From these indicators a set of variables was formulated. To facilitate in measuring these variables, a codebook was created. Variables were operationalized further by devising categories by which these variables could be coded and assigning each category with a corresponding number where necessary. Some of the measures used were taken from previous studies including the attractiveness and clothing/appearance variables and corresponding categories from Signorielli, McLeod and Healy's content analysis study of gender stereotypes in MTV commercials (1994) and Silverstein et al's (1986) weight rating measurement in their study of male and female television characters' weights. The advantage of using existing measures from other studies was that they had been tried and tested although care did need to be taken to ensure the variable had not changed too vastly from those in existing literature (Riffe, Lacy and Fico 2005: 92). Alongside each variable within the codebook, specific coding instructions, classification rules and rules about how the variables are linked were written. Definitions of terms that were slightly ambiguous were also included. These instructions, rules and definitions were written with the aim of being as explicit and detailed as possible to achieve accuracy, reliability and validity.

3.2.3. The pilot study.

Before going ahead with the research a pilot study was conducted in order to test the coding procedure. One edition of each of the 6 newspapers published on 21st June 2007 was analysed. This was considered an adequate sample as it enabled the measurements to be tested on each style of newspaper providing opportunity to highlight any issues in implementing the procedure that may have been specific to a particular newspaper. It also allowed for a time frame to be realized (referred to earlier) because before conducting the pilot, there was no way of knowing the length of time each recording unit would take to code or how long it would take to code a whole newspaper. This therefore helped to plan the time that would be required to conduct the research. Furthermore, the pilot study helped to highlight some other important aspects, specifically within the codebook that consequently needed alteration, amendment or addition. These included:

- Refining the sections where articles would be excluded from the analysis.

- Adding to the list of genres, roles/type of celebrity, and gender roles and altering some of the category names so as to be more specific.

- The removal of two of the variables that were regarded as unnecessary i.e. number of people in the photograph, and the gender of all the people in the photograph.

- Extra clarification within the instructions and rules in terms of how to rate appearance and apply the codes accurately by providing examples where coding the characters could cause difficulty such as how the 'sexy' or 'very sexy' codes can be assigned to males.

With regards to this latter point, it is certainly acknowledged that ratings of attractiveness, appearance, and even body size and weight can be rather subjective. Therefore, in an attempt to eliminate as much subjectivity as possible, the rules were enhanced and elaborated to provide clearer instruction, description and clarification in order to define exactly what would constitute each particular rating. In addition to this, a visual aid was created to act as a guide and a comparison for assistance in making the judgments as well as to improve the validity of the study (see appendix 2).

3.2.4. Conducting the research.

A code sheet was constructed to analyse each article according to the 29 variables listed below, using the amended codebook (see appendix 1).

V1 Article identification number (AID)
V2 Newspaper name
V3 Date (day, month, and year)
V4 Page
V5 Genre
V6 Size of Article (cm^2)
V7 Size of photograph (cm^2)

V8 Ratio of photograph to article

V9 Gender of primary character

V10 Age of primary character (years)

V11 Role of primary character/type of celebrity

V12 Shot composition

V13 Site/location

V14 Presentation of the primary character

V15 Body weight of primary character

V16 Attractiveness of primary character

V17 Clothing/appearance of primary character

V18 Gender of writer/journalist

V19 Number of positive references to body size or weight

V20 Number of negative references to body size or weight

V21 Number of neutral references to body size or weight

V22 Number of positive references to appearance, beauty, or attractiveness

V23 Number of negative references to appearance, beauty, or attractiveness

V24 Number of neutral references to appearance, beauty, or attractiveness

V25 Number of positive references to personal life or relationships

V26 Number of negative references to personal life or relationships

V27 Number of neutral references to personal life or relationships

V28 Reference to traditional/stereotypical gender roles

V29 Reference to age

The length of time it took to analyse each newspaper differed as the size and number of articles varied quite considerably. However, on average one article took approximately 3 minutes to analyse whilst one newspaper took $2^1/_2$ hours to analyse, which meant that overall, the analysis of all 36 newspapers took approximately 90 hours (see appendix 3 for examples of how the articles were coded). The data was recorded on the coding sheets by hand and then when the data collection was complete it was input into the computer statistics programme SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for interpretation and analysis.

3.3 Evaluation of the method.

3.3.1. The advantages of the method.

Analysing the newspapers using this method had a number of advantages. First of all, it was very inexpensive. The only cost was the price of the newspapers. Also, because the research material was current day newspapers, it was easy to obtain as well as being completely unobtrusive. There were no issues of interference with other people or problems with gaining access and having to rely on others who would perhaps be unwilling or unable to cooperate accordingly (Riffe, Lacy and Fico 2005: 38). As the foundation for content analysis is in scientific methodology, it therefore has the advantage of being able to claim objectivity. Therefore, the results produced can be regarded as more true and reliable than if a qualitative method had been adopted (Van Zoonen 1996: 69). Furthermore, using this quantitative method also facilitated in gathering a large amount of data, enabling a greater range of material to be analysed and consequently improving its generalizability.

3.3.2. The disadvantages of the method.

Whilst recognizing the quantifiable and objective nature of the method as an advantage, it is also seen to be a disadvantage. This is because of the way it is perceived to limit insight through its concentration on manifest content by preventing the researcher to look beyond the explicit images and words and finding a deeper level of meaning by reading between the lines (Van Zoonen 1996: 69). Consequently, the method has been criticized for being trivial and lacking in significance due to the research subject having only been chosen because it could be quantified (Riffe, Lacy and Fico 2005: 36). The quantification element of the method thus leads to problems with the categories, definitions and rules. The results are seen as being limited because with there are only being a finite number of categories, findings are restricted to what a researcher predicts and assumes will be observed. In this study, attempts were made to overcome this weakness in the methodology by conducting thorough research of the subject and reviewing similar studies in order to gain as much understanding and awareness of the possible outcomes. Unfortunately, the results will

always be limited by its framework (Wimmer and Dominick 2006: 154). Definitions of concepts can also be difficult to establish as well as formulating the rules in applying the codes (Bertrand and Hughes 2005: 184). This became a problem within this research, which the pilot study brought to light. It was particularly an issue when the variables required making judgements about weight or attractiveness. As mentioned earlier, the only way to try and overcome this was to provide visual guides and attempt to make the rules and definitions as lucid and unambiguous as possible. However, even with the most clear and eloquent descriptions, the problems could very well lie in the ambiguity of the object of analysis rather than in the explicitness of a particular rule or definition.

Although content analysis is hugely criticized for the fact that it is merely a measurement of a phenomenon and therefore does not provide explanation or supply any meaning, it does still form a very thorough method of data collection and a solid basis from which meaning can subsequently be inferred, as the following section will now demonstrate.

[4] FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Discussion of Findings:

4.1 The visual representation of gender and body image.

It is certainly a recurrent finding that females are underrepresented in the media. Time and again, studies have revealed that there are substantially less females represented in the media than males. Not just in Britain but also all over the world, the same phenomenon has been observed (Gallagher 1980, 1985 cited in Van Zoonen 1996: 17). This study is no different. The findings still indicate a male bias with considerably more males visually represented than females in each of the six different newspapers analysed. Luebke's study (cited in Fejes 1992: 16) of newspapers in 1989 revealed the same - that photographs of men outnumbered the photographs of women. Yet, it is almost twenty years since this was carried out. It would have been thought that by now, the situation would have changed. It tends to be widely recognized that this is the case, but why in the twenty-first century is this still continuing to occur?

One possible explanation is that masculine cultural hegemony exists within newspapers. According to Van Zoonen, "Because the news is made by men, it is thought to reflect the interests and values of men too" (1998: 34). Therefore, as it is mostly men who own the means of production - and this is certainly the case within the newspaper industry - men dominate the production, but they also dominate the content. Even though women have entered the industry as journalists, this has been a long and hard process. Macdonald (1995: 49) claims that women's delay in gaining access to the media meant that they were forced to emulate male voices in order to progress in their career. This was illustrated in the way that in the late 1980s women conducted the editing of the Sunday British national newspaper *The News of the World* and nothing changed within its content that would have indicated a transition from male to female editors. Ferguson (1990) also takes this viewpoint and believes that rather than challenging the dominant ideologies, female journalists are embracing them because of the masculine domain they are working in. In a study by Len-Rios et al (2005) they compared content of newspapers to the perceptions of news staff and

news readers to examine the representation of women in the news. Their content analysis results also found a male numerical domination in the photographs with a 2-1 male to female ratio. Whilst the news staff tended to disagree that there was a disproportionate weighting towards males, the news readers were generally more conscious of this. These and other findings gained from this study consequently led Len-Rios et al to conclude that newspapers reflect a masculine cultural hegemony and that "By providing men more of the news hole, journalists confer power to men" (2005: 165). Thus, it is a concern that merely by over representing males and under representing females in the photographs of newspaper, this can in effect perpetuate a masculine dominated power structure (Ibid: 166).

However, as discussed previously in the findings, such disparity in the number of male photographs compared with female photographs was largely as a result of the huge number of male sports people visually represented in the newspapers. Thirty-two percent of the photographs were male sports people. Therefore, if sports photographs had not been included in this study, it would have meant that 57% of photographs were of males compared to 43% of females. These figures imply much more of an equal representation of gender. If it were not for sport, this would be a very positive result. Yet, the fact that sport is traditionally a very important element of a newspaper, we cannot merely eliminate it from our enquiry. What it does reveal, however is that sport in newspapers is very heavily biased towards the representation of male sports and male sports people.

Another impact the comparatively huge number of male sports people had on the results were that the age of those represented in the photographs were predominantly in the 18 to 29 category and male, for it is within this age group that the majority of professional sports people fall into. Whilst this has skewed the results, it is still a valid and important finding because it does mean that it is mostly males aged 18 to 29 that are represented the most. Yet, in terms of the percentages within each gender, the proportion of females that were represented in this age group were actually almost identical to the proportion of males. Overall, this was the age group that was most frequently represented for both genders. There were also the same proportion of males and females within the 30 to 39 age group, but between the ages of 40 and 59 the proportion of females became much less. This appears to support the views of Macdonald (1995: 194) that women from around the age of forty are underrepresented and thus misrepresented as a result of a loss of sexuality. Men on

the other hand, are perceived to be free from the constraints of age and in contrast, gain an increase in status and prestige the older they get. Itzin (1986: 130) would also explain this finding in terms of how women's value decreases from when they enter their forties. Yet, in order to make a true assessment, this would require more of a detailed examination into the portrayal of men and women in relation to their age. This is potentially a research project in its own right and therefore was restricted to the extent this could be pursued within the confines of this piece of research. Overall, the results did show there to be a full range of ages represented of both males and females. There were fewer in the younger two categories and similarly fewer in the oldest two categories but the four mid age ranges from 18 to 59 were substantially populated.

Another popular research finding in the past has been that women are often portrayed as passive whereas men are more likely to be portrayed as active (Gauntlett 2002: 56 and Gallagher 1980, 1985 cited in Van Zoonen 1996: 17). Although the findings in this study indicate the same, in that more women were visually portrayed in a passive position than men and more men were visually portrayed as active than women, neither genders completely dominated each category. The little difference between each gender perhaps suggests a broadening of the way men and women in particular are represented and a weakening of activeness being stereotypically a male trait and passivity stereotypically a female trait.

Similarly, the range of sites and locations that males and females were photographed in is also indicative of a shift towards a broader and less stereotypical representation in terms of gender roles. From the home through to special events, males and females were represented in all the sites and locations categories, with roughly the same proportion of males and females portrayed in each. Many scholars have in the past observed a distinct gender divide between those represented within the public sphere compared with the private sphere. Carter and Steiner (2004), Cranny Francis et al (2003) and Durkin (1985) for instance, have all referred to the way in which women tend to be portrayed in the private domestic sphere, usually in the home, whilst men tend to be portrayed at work in the public sphere, and often in a variety of occupations. The results obtained in this study suggest otherwise. This accordingly challenges the views of Tuchman for if women are not predominantly banished to hearth and home the argument that women are thus subject to symbolic annihilation as a result, no longer stands up (1978: 29).

Research such as that conducted by Copeland (1989) has shown how men and women are portrayed differently when it comes to the composition of photographs as well. The trend which has been observed where men are more likely to be portrayed in a close up shot rather than a full body shot like women has subsequently not been proven in this study. Here, the results show that such a distinction does not exist as both males and females were portrayed in a full range of shots with no evidence of any bias or leaning towards one particular shot in relation to a certain gender over another. Whilst it therefore appeared that gender was not the determining factor in the type of shot chosen, other factors were consequently taken into consideration. These included the body size and weight of the primary character in the photograph, their attractiveness, and their clothing and appearance. Whereas it was regarded a strong possibility that those with a slim body and who were physically attractive would be more likely to be portrayed in a larger shot than a smaller one, there was again no relationship evident. However, in terms of the primary character's clothing and appearance, the results were inconclusive. Although there were a greater number of females coded as 'very sexy' photographed in a full-length shot than any other shot, the problem referred to within the analysis of the results, is the fact that the full body shots perhaps enabled more 'very sexy' judgements to be made because more elements were visually available to make the judgement. An alternative interpretation is that the reason for these females being portrayed in a full body shot was precisely because they were regarded as sexy. Yet, at the same time, there was a considerable number of males and females rated as neutral in clothing and appearance that were portrayed in all the shots including the larger shots, which would then suggest little evidence of a relationship between the 'sexyness' of a person's appearance and the composition of the shot. It would therefore seem that whilst there may be a small tendency for more sexy females to be portrayed in fuller body shots there is overall, very little substantiating evidence to demonstrate a clear relationship either between gender, attractiveness, or clothing and appearance and the shot composition of the photograph. Consequently, the implication in terms of gender and body image is that the composition element of the visual portrayal in newspapers does not indicate any sexism or a preference for certain type of body image.

Whilst it seems that there is no relationship between body image and shot composition, it is interesting to see how body image is represented in the press and the impact it has on the likelihood of being portrayed. The under representation of

females in particular, has been recognized in numerous studies including those of Signorielli, McLeod and Healy (1994), Mondini, Favaro and Santonastaso (1996) and Silverstein et al (1986). These studies and many others have highlighted how the media present an ideal image of beauty and bodily perfection. Furthermore, Wolf (1991: 16) has claimed that the media produce a barrage of current ideal images of the perfect body with the current ideal body shape identified as being one that is not merely thin but has to be firm and toned also – an ideal for women as well as for men (Bordo 1995: 57 and Guendouzi 2004: 1649). With respect to the results obtained here, it would appear that this is not so prevalent. The newspapers represented a wide range of body sizes and weights, but the number of photographs that matched the above description of the perfect body image was actually very few. People with an average body size and weight were visually represented the most. Plus, the fact that there was a good number of overweight people represented also refutes the idea that a perfect body image dominates the media – at least in terms of the press. Moreover, the results also showed there to be an equal proportion of males and females within each weight category, which also indicates that there is not a tendency to represent gender according to a particular body size or weight.

Similar results were obtained for the attractiveness of the character and their clothing and appearance in that all levels of attractiveness and appearance were observed to be present within the newspapers' photographs. However, with an equal proportion of males and females within each category here also, no relationship appeared to exist that would imply that a certain level of attractiveness or glamour would determine whether a person is portrayed in the newspaper or whether a particular gender is more likely to be portrayed. Thee results are certainly contrary in the most part to the studies and theories referred to earlier. They generally show there to be a reasonably broad representation of body image especially in relation to gender. Perhaps thinness, beauty and imperfection is the dominant cultural ideal but this does not seem to be reflected visually within the press, unless the ideal is in fact changing.

Also important in the examination of how gender and body image is represented in the press, is the size of the photograph. The results showed that there was no significant difference between the size of the male photographs compared to the females although a calculation of the mean did reveal that the female photographs were overall, on average larger than the males. This is only a small and subtle difference but it can be interpreted in one of two ways. Firstly, it can be taken to mean

that women are given prominence and visual presence within the newspapers and are not subordinate to men. Despite the actual number of photographs being less than males, the size of their photographs perhaps compensates for this. Secondly, it can also be taken to mean that photographs of women are chosen to be printed larger than men because if the women are in some way more physically and aesthetically pleasing, they could be seen as more deserving of a larger image. When body size and weight was compared to the photograph size, there was actually nothing to suggest that the body weight was a determinant. There was no overwhelming difference between the mean size of the photographs between any of the different weight categories and neither was there any major difference between each gender. However, comparing the photograph size with the attractiveness, and the clothing and appearance of the main character did reveal some interesting results. The mean size of the photograph of females increased quite significantly, the more attractive the female was and the more glamorous and sexy they were in their clothing and appearance. The same pattern was not evident within the photographs of the males. This therefore suggests a tendency for females to be given more visual prominence, the more good-looking and sexually desirable they appear.

This can perhaps be understood in relation to Berger's theory of how women are depicted differently because the ideal spectator is assumed to be male and women's bodies are designed to please them. (1972: 64). This relates to Laura Mulvey's (1975) notion of the 'male gaze' and how the media construct women as a spectacle for voyeuristic pleasure. If we then take into account the newspapers target audience and the actual readership, this may indeed account for the nature of the representation of gender, at least to some extent. For instance, newspapers have traditionally been seen as a male medium as women in the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century tended to be viewed as lacking in intelligence and therefore not able to read or understand the content (Macdonald 1995: 75). Yet, even now, figures obtained by the National Readership Survey (2007 cited in The National Marketing Agency 2007) show that newspapers are still predominantly a male domain with a far greater number of male readers than female readers. It is interesting that the *Daily Mirror* was originally set up as a newspaper aimed specifically at women. However, when this did not take-off it was transformed into a general interest picture paper. Despite this failure, it did not deter others from starting to include women's sections in their newspapers, like in the *Daily Mail* for example (Macdonald 1995:

75). Such inclusion of women's sections as a section in its own right and the absence of a specific man's section thus tends to separate and in a way insinuates that the bulk of the newspaper is indeed aimed primarily at a male audience. Even though there had been attempts to feminize the press from the nineteenth through to the twentieth century, this eventually turned into a 'sexualization' of the press starting with *The Sun* in the 1970s. With a more visual mode of presentation, a divided address became evident as the female body was presented as a spectacle and image of pleasure "with a masculine insistence on the inalienable right to a lustful gaze" (Holland 2004: 76). Therefore, with regard to this apparent link between the photograph size and the attractiveness and appearance of the female primary character, it is the male dominated audience and content of newspapers plus their sexualization, which may well explain why this finding has occurred.

When comparing the article size and the ratio of the photograph to the article with the gender of the primary character in the photograph, it revealed no relationship. The size of the article did not seem to be determined by the gender of the character in the photograph. Although the mean size of the ratio of photograph to article was slightly larger for the articles containing female photographs, this was not a huge difference. This consequently proves that there is not a tendency to place more emphasis on either the image or the text in terms of size depending on the gender of the main character in the photograph. Articles including photographs of females are thus no more likely to be any larger or smaller than articles including photographs of males. Neither are the photographs of females more likely to be considerably smaller nor larger in comparison to the rest of the article than photographs of males. No higher value or preference has been placed on words over pictures or pictures over words according to gender and therefore, certainly indicates an element of equality in the visual presentation between males and females.

4.2 The discursive representation of gender and body image.

Whilst the above discussion has concentrated on the visual representation of gender and body image in the press, it is also extremely important to consider the treatment of the images within the text. The language used in the article can be sexist, derogatory and stereotypical and when this is used in reference to the person in the

photograph, new meanings can be construed. This can then have a significant impact, not only on how gender and body image is represented but also how it is perceived.

Although a lot of studies have previously found there to be substantial reference to traditional and stereotypical gender roles within the press, this has not been the case in this study. Surprisingly very few references were made and out of the ones that were the majority were with reference to males as fathers and females as mothers. Whilst these are gendered roles, they were often not used in a way that was sexist or critical. Rather it was merely stating the fact that these people did have children. One other role, which Wykes and Gunter (2005) had also observed, is that women were a number of times referred to in terms of their association with their husband or boyfriend. "Fury of Lampard's Girl" was how the *Daily Mirror* headlined an article about footballer Frank Lampard's girlfriend (McCaffrey 2007: 9). This creates the impression that women do not have the value or status to appear and be represented independently of a man. These were interesting observations but the fact that there were so few references strongly indicates that the press has become less stereotypical in terms of gender roles. Another possibility however, is that the categories identified in the codebook as specific traditional and stereotypical roles were not comprehensive enough. It could also be possible that just in the way that Schulz (1975) talks of the systematic pejoration of words and terms that refer to women, perhaps this process is also in operation with regards to gender roles. If this is the case, it would require further research in order to identify these accurately.

The number of positive, neutral, and negative references to gender and body image about the main character in the photograph were overall very little. There were so few references that it would certainly not be too hasty to infer that the press through its written language, is not an agent of condemnation or reinforcement with regards to gender and body image. From the references that were made however, there were some interesting results. In terms of references made in the articles about the body weight of the main character in the photograph, there were more negative references made to males than females and the females actually received more positive references. Negative references to males' bodies consisted of comments such as "One of the most impressive man-boob-and-belly combinations currently to be seen in the Mediterranean sun" (Sears 2007: 3) and "Jack Nicholson, 70, who seems to have piled on the pounds will have to go on a proper diet to downsize his huge belly" (Anon. *Daily Mirror* 2007: 8). Positive references to women's body weight and

size included comments such as "Her curves have won her countless admirers" (Simpson 2007: 25) and "she already looks stunning again, carrying just a pound or two of baby weight and showing off curves that must be being boosted by breast-feeding" (McCaffrey 2007: 9). This illustrates how the positive references are not reinforcing a thin and slender body size and weight but rather they are applauding a fuller and curvaceous figure. Accordingly, the references received by those that were skinny and underweight were all negative. An example of such a reference was made in *The Daily Telegraph*: "Eva Longoria, a 32-year-old, the size of a child and dressed like one too" (Mower 2007: 27). This also demonstrates how the press appears to condemn unhealthy bodies and reinforce the healthy and realistic figures. All other categories of body size and weight received a range of positive, neutral, and negative references, therefore proving that the press is taking a much broader view of body size and weight for both men and women. Thus, whereas Fouts and Burggraff (1999) found that below average weight females were overrepresented and received more positive verbal comments regarding their body weight and shape, the findings obtained here clearly contradict those of Fouts and Burggraff.

Whilst females received more than twice as many comments regarding their beauty, appearance and attractiveness than males, males were certainly not exempt from receiving such references. The majority of the references made about women were in fact positive although the results also indicate that the more attractive and sexy a character was, the more likely they were to receive comments - positive, neutral and negative but mostly positive. Adjectives such as 'stunning', 'gorgeous' 'glamorous' and 'hot' were frequently used in reference to the female characters in the photographs. Examples of these positive references made to females include "Her strong brows, winsome smile and tiny waist make her an arresting sight" (Boshoff 2007: 62) and "Even in her sixties, Debbie Harry remains a striking beauty" (Dalton 2007: 23). Positive references to males included "Dougherty, 25, now super slim and with looks to match his talent" (Facey 2007: 68-9). Females did also receive more negative comments than males. These consisted of comments about actress Anne-Marie Duff's "arrestingly bony features" (Billington 2007: 15) and Madonna "Looking like a cross between Courtney Love and Margaret Thatcher" (Shelley 2007: 13). Negative comments that males were subjected to included a reference to a "buck-toothed 29-year-old" (Syson 2007: 1). The level of attractiveness and appearance did not seem to be a determining factor in the likelihood of receiving a negative comment.

Therefore, it would seem that although positive references were linked to a greater level of attractiveness and sexyness, thus reinforcing a particular image of beauty, it is not surprising that this result occurred as it is almost natural to complement attractive and glamorous people. However, negative references were also made to a range of people of all levels of attractiveness and appearance, which proves that it is not just those who do not have the 'ideal' body image that are more likely to be criticised.

What is clear from these results is how there were overall more women who received references to their body image and also to their personal life and relationships, more than men. This does seem to support the belief that women are judged discursively more than men in newspapers. Wolf (1991) and Guendouzi (2004) have both documented how the media give so much attention to the way women look and it is often their physical appearance that is the characteristic by which they are evaluated. Furthermore, Wolf (1991) claims that the emphasis on the physical appearance of females, takes attention away from the purpose and value of a woman and thus becomes an example of how the beauty myth operates as a way of promoting patriarchal power. Whilst this does appear to be the case here to some degree, this is not the overriding finding. As previously mentioned, the number of references made regarding body image and personal life were extremely small in comparison to the number of articles. As such, evidence of stereotyping and the derogation of women are nowhere near to the extent identified by others such as Young (1990). This therefore indicates a reduction in stereotypical representation in the press.

What the nature of these references do reveal however, is that men are certainly not immune to such judgements and evaluations as Cranny Francis et al (2003) has also observed. The range of positive, neutral, and negative comments referring to men's body weight, attractiveness, and appearance that were recorded is certainly indicative that men too are expected to conform to a certain image. This would certainly hold up when compared to the findings by Nemeroff et al (1994) whereby a time-trend analysis of men's magazines showed that pressure and the number of messages to achieve an ideal body, increased over time. Perhaps the existence of such references within the press is evidence of men's entrance into the beauty culture. If this is indeed the case it may have a number of important implications. Firstly, it may indicate a shift towards a levelling or equalising of men and women. If beauty and appearance is going to form the basis of evaluation for both genders, assuming that

the standard is to be the same, body image can no longer be used as the tool for the derogation and subordination of women because men would be assessed by these means also. That particular power, which men held over women, will therefore be shared. In the same way that the beauty myth evolved from men's loss of exclusivity in the public sphere, this may therefore result in a new form of social control if men continue to insist on exerting their power and influence on society, particularly over women. Another important effect could be a change in the tradition of women as spectacles and men as spectators and a move towards men as spectacles and objects of gaze and women as spectators. However, for this to manifest itself within the press, its patriarchal structure may need breaking down.

An important constituent of the patriarchal structure of the press is the writers and journalists as often they are predominantly male and therefore this is bound to affect the content of the newspaper. The majority of the journalists in this study were indeed male. Yet, as Kinnick (1998) also found in her study of gender bias in newspapers, there was no relationship between the gender of the journalist and the nature of the references they made to the body weight and appearance of the character in the photographs. Although, as referred to earlier, this could mean that female journalists have adopted patriarchal values, we still need to remember that there were actually very few references made in comparison to the articles.

Something that perhaps needs to be considered is the interpretation of references and how they can be easily perceived to mean something other than its intention. Take for instance the following quote from an article in *The Daily Telegraph*: "Mead, all girlish black curls offset by manly vocal polish and natural stage command" (Rees 2007: 30). It is essentially contrasting the feminine nature of his hair with his masculine presence. On the one hand, the fact that they are making the contrast could imply that it is being described as a weakness. On the other hand, it could be seen as a positive reference to his appearance because despite being described as girlish, his masculine presence makes up for it and thus, it is emphasising the fact that he suits such an appearance. There are various ways in which interpretation can differ and this is one of the main ways that this study along with other content analyses is limited.

4.3 The limitations of the study.

This research was certainly not without its problems and limitations. First of all, the person in the photograph was not always the person the article was about. Sometimes there was absolutely no reference to the person in the photograph, which therefore affected the analysis comparisons between the image and the text could not be made in the same way. Secondly, there were a good number of articles, where more than one person was portrayed in the photograph. Although the analysis included a lot of these photographs where there was clearly one main character depicted, it would have still been interesting to code the number of people in the photograph and the number of males and females portrayed within it. This could have drawn some interesting results in terms of whether, for example, there was a tendency for men to be portrayed on their own and women to be portrayed with other people. This would also have gained a more accurate insight into the proportion of males and females represented in the newspapers, as would coding every single photograph in the newspaper, rather than just those with accompanying articles. And finally, it was also recognized that the number of possible combinations of variables for comparisons was enormous. Therefore those chosen for investigation were selected because they were considered to yield the results that would prove to be the most enlightening.

I believe this has been achieved.

4.4 In summary....

Although stereotypical tendencies and male biases have been found to persist within the press, this is certainly not the overarching finding. Compared to past research, the visual representation of gender and body image has undoubtedly shown signs of improvement. The detailed examination of the presentation of males and females according to their body size and weight, appearance, and attractiveness has most definitely proven that newspapers have broadened their representation and

discursive treatment. Furthermore, such was the range of shot compositions, sizes of photographs and articles, body sizes and weights, levels of attractiveness and appearance, and positive, neutral, and negative references that there was certainly no evidence to suggest that an ideal body image is continually reinforced and promoted visually or discursively within the British national press.

[5] CONCLUSION

Conclusion:

In bringing this research to a conclusion, it is therefore necessary that we refer to the original aims identified at the beginning of the project in order to assess its effectiveness.

The first aim was to find out whether the 'ideal' slender body image is the predominant image portrayed in the media. Thus in terms of newspapers, this was not found to be the case. A variety of body sizes and weights, and levels of attractiveness and appearance were represented. The type of body image that was represented the most was one that was categorized as 'average' and was therefore an image that was regarded as consisting of a normal, healthy weight according to their gender and height, which did not stand out as being especially attractive nor unattractive. There has been however, slightly more of an emphasis on the representation of women's body image within this research and whilst previous research had identified the ideal body shape promoted by the media as one that was very thin and slender, this is very different from the ideal body shape that has been promoted for men. Therefore, it is a possibility that some of the men coded as having an average body weight and appearance, may actually be representing the so-called male 'ideal'. In retrospect, this could have been accounted for in the coding of the men's images so that the toned and muscled men could be differentiated from those that were not. However, overall, the results prove that the ideal image of beauty and bodily attractiveness according to the social ideal previously identified, is not promoted in the press.

With regards to those who do conform to this ideal image, the research also attempted to prove whether they are in fact represented any differently to those who do not meet the criteria. This was investigated by examining the size of the photographs and the shot composition. Although it was revealed that sexy women seemed to be portrayed in larger full body shots and the photographs of attractive women were larger than those depicting men or less attractive women, these were comparatively small differences. On the whole, the results showed no overriding tendencies for a person of a certain body weight, appearance or attractiveness to be given more or less visual prominence than any other.

Another aim of this research was to find out whether the age was a factor in the likelihood of a person appearing visually in the press and to investigate the nature of

their portrayal. Although there was not an equal number represented within each age group or an equal number of males and females in each, the results did prove that all ages, from young to old, are represented visually in the press. However, there was a tendency for people between the ages of 18 and 29 to be represented in the photographs more than any other age group, yet this was largely due to the number of sports people in this age category. Also, the proportion of females in some of the higher age groups was considerably less than the proportion of males. Thus, a weakness in this research was that it did not explore and compare the portrayal of older women with older men. This could have revealed some interesting results. Consequently, it has meant that this element of the original aim has not been fulfilled.

The fourth research aim was to find out what proportion of males were portrayed visually in the newspapers compared to females. There was certainly without doubt a greater proportion of males, however as this result was mainly due to the male dominated sports sections of the newspapers, it was therefore interesting to see that if the sports genre was eliminated from the enquiry, despite there still being a greater number of males, the difference would be considerably less, thus indicating a possible move towards a more equal numerical representation of gender.

In terms of the representation of gender roles, the research found there to be very few stereotypical references and portrayals. This was investigated by examining the range of sites and locations males and females were photographed in, whether they were portrayed as active or passive within the photograph and by identifying any references to specific roles within the written text of the article. There was definitely evidence of a more equal and less stereotyped visual portrayal of gender and the lack of references to specific roles within the text certainly confirmed this. Also, the identification and examination of references within the written text regarding body size and weight, appearance, beauty and attractiveness, and personal lives and relationships proved that overall, the press do not reinforce gender stereotypes and body image ideals, therefore fulfilling the sixth and final original aim.

In satisfying these research aims and producing relevant and reliable data that enabled the above findings to be reached, we can now confidently declare that the results are in support of both hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2. Newspapers do display a broader and less (previously identified) stereotypical representation of gender and body image within their photographs and they also display a positive and less

(previously identified) stereotypical representation of gender and body image within the articles that accompany the photographs.

Therefore, having established that newspapers do portray a broader and less stereotypical representation of gender and body image than in the past, in order to fulfil the main aim of the research, we need to assess this in relation to the current celebrity climate and the recent proliferation in celebrity culture. Given that the present definition of celebrity encompasses not just those in the public eye with a recognized talent or ability but includes anyone from politicians and Royal family members to footballers' wives and reality TV contestants, the results showed that an overwhelming majority of the photographs in the newspapers depicted a celebrity over an 'ordinary' person. To be exact, 66% of the photographs depicted a celebrity of some kind and just 34% depicted an ordinary general member of the public. It was also calculated that the average size of the photographs that depicted a celebrity were in fact larger overall than the photographs of ordinary people. Consequently, celebrities are thus given greater visual prominence. Even though the majority of the newspaper consisted of celebrity images, the results still indicated a broad representation of gender and body image. This can be explained in the way that 'celebrification' has pervaded many sections of society, like politics for example, and this has meant heightened media coverage and attention of people that do not particularly match the traditional image of a celebrity. It would seem that this celebrification process, strengthened by the reality television phenomenon that has allowed easier access into the media, has indeed contributed to improving representation. From the results of this study, this is certainly evident within the press and as newspapers are the most accessed form of print media in Britain, this is definitely a positive result. Consequently, we can confirm that the main research aim has been achieved and the accompanying main hypothesis proved. The recent increase in reality television and the resultant proliferation of celebrity culture has contributed to a broader and less stereotypical representation of gender and body image in the press. Whether this is evidence of a democratic turn or a demotic turn is almost irrelevant. What remains important is the fact that broader representation has ensued.

However, it could be argued that once the celebrification process takes hold and access is achieved, that there is subsequently a pressure to conform to a socially

accepted body image. Yet, with the recent concern over the use of size zero models and the dangerous effects this can have on influential adolescents, the media have in fact been the channel by which this disapproval has been aired. A greater awareness of the health issues associated with obtaining and maintaining unrealistically thin body shapes has ensued, the consequences of which appears to be reflected in the results obtained here. Very few thin and underweight people were portrayed in the photographs and those that were, tended to have negative comments made about their weight within the article. Therefore, rather than promoting such body shapes, it has been proven that the press generally condemns such an image. With a greater numerical representation of healthier and fuller figured body shapes that are positively reinforced discursively, curves are thus being applauded. Perhaps this signifies a shift in the ideal body shape. The implication this has in terms of the possible media effects would thus be very positive indeed.

This would accordingly be an interesting area for future research. If the body shape being represented and promoted as the ideal body has in fact changed like this present study has implied, it would certainly be fascinating to investigate audience perception of body image in response to this. In addition, there are several other ways in which this research can be furthered. One would be to analyse material from the period immediately prior to the popularity in reality TV i.e. early 1990s, as this would form a clearer foundation for which a comparison can be made. Another would be to compare a larger range of newspapers - national, local, and even newspapers from other countries. An analysis of different mediums would also enable us to compare whether the findings from this study are consistent throughout the media. Also, a more detailed discourse analysis may produce further interesting findings.

Although a much broader and less stereotypical representation of gender and body image has been found in the press, we still cannot claim equality. Perhaps this is due to the masculine cultural hegemony of newspapers, but if so, this needs to be challenged. Yet, at the same time, should the portrayal of beautiful, perfectly proportioned women always be an indication of male dominance and unfair representation? Surely this can also be viewed as a celebration, an embracement and appreciation of femininity and the female body not just by males but by females too. The act of interpretation is thus paramount to the impact of representation. For years, women have struggled in a relentless battle for equality in the media, but as Marshall McLuhan (1964) claimed, it is the medium which is the message and therefore,

regardless of the content, the medium will always be beneficial to some messages whilst being hostile to others. Therefore, can equality ever be achieved? But surely equality is in itself an ideal – an unrealistic and unattainable existence.

Despite this, as the results have shown, we have come a long way in the battle for a broader and less stereotypical representation of gender and body image in the media.

This is definitely a cause for celebration.

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[7] APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

- The codebook

Codebook:

For the visual and textual analysis of articles where the main photograph depicts one main character to examine the presentation, portrayal, and treatment of gender and body image in the press.

The Units:

Unit of analysis: Newspapers

Recording unit: Newspaper article with an accompanying photograph of one main person. The photograph may include other people as long as one person is very clearly distinguishable as a primary character. Excludes supplements, register and obituaries, announcements, letters, television guide and classifieds.

The Variables:

V1 Article identification number (AID)

1, 2, 3, etc.

V2 Newspaper name

1 = The Sun	4 = The Daily Telegraph
2 = Daily Mail	5 = The Times
3 = The Mirror	6 = The Guardian

Identifying the source of each article will enable comparisons to be made regarding each newspaper's treatment of gender and body image and as to whether there is any overall difference in their treatments between tabloids and broadsheets.

V3 Date (day, month, and year)

V4 Page

Rule: Indicate the page number the article appears on. If the article crosses onto the next page, code the page number it starts on.

1, 2, 3, etc.

This will provide information as to whether there is any pattern to where photographs of males and females appear and whether those who are rated as slimmer and more attractive are more likely to appear near the front of the newspaper.

V5 Genre

Rule: To be coded according to the name of the section of the newspaper it appears in or if this is not evident, by the topic of the article.

1 = UK national news   6 = Feature

2 = World news   7 = Show business/celebrity news

3 = Commentary   8 = Entertainment

4 = Business/finance   9 = Sport

5 = Lifestyle/health   10 = Miscellaneous

Identifying the genre of the article or section the article appeared in might highlight any differences in the presentation and treatment of gender and body image.

V6 Size of Article (cm^2)

Rule: Calculate the area of the entire article including headline, main body of the text and visuals. Use the following formula:

Width (cm) x length (cm) = area (cm^2).

Round it up to the nearest cm.

This variable will indicate the salience of the article.

V7 Size of main photograph (cm^2)

Rule: Calculate the area of the photograph (use above formula). Round figures up or down to the nearest whole number. If there is more than one photograph, the main photograph - which is usually the largest - is coded. If part of the photograph is used a

as a background to the article or for the headline/subtitle, then only measure the area that includes the person.

This measurement will provide some indication as to whether a certain body image or a particular sex is given more visual prominence.

V8 Ratio of photograph to the article

The percentage of space attributed to the photograph out of the entire article.

Rule: Use the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Area of photograph (cm}^2)}{\text{Total area of article (cm}^2)} \times 100 = \%$$

This will indicate whether more emphasis has been placed on the visual or the text and depending on the character's gender and body this may lead to some interesting inferences. For example, will a slim and attractive female be allocated more visual space within the article than an overweight not so attractive female?

➢ **CODING THE PHOTOGRAPHS:**

V9 Gender of primary character

Rule: If there is more than one person in the photograph, the person given most prominence in the picture, or given most attention to in the article is the person that is coded. If there is uncertainty as to the person's gender, coding should be based on the possession of physical attributes that are universally acknowledged as either male or female.

1 = Male
2 = Female

This will give an indication as to the proportion of males and females visually represented in newspapers.

V10 Age of primary character (years)

Rule: The age of the main person in the photograph should be estimated according to physical appearance and any reference to their age in the text.

1 = 12 and under   6 = 50 – 59

2 = 13 – 17   7 = 60 – 69

3 = 18 – 29   8 = 70 and above.

4 = 30 – 39   9 = Unable to determine

5 = 40 – 49

This information determines whether there are any differences in the range of ages of the males and females that are chosen to be visually represented.

V11 Role of primary character/type of celebrity

Rule: If, for example, the main actor is a presenter but became a presenter after appearing on a reality TV show, it should be coded as a reality TV celebrity because that is the origin of their fame and entrance into the media.

1 = General member of the public   9 = Reality TV 'celebrity'

2 = Politician/political leader   10 = Artist/writer/director

3 = Royal family   11 = Renowned businessman/entrepreneur

4 = Model   12 = WAG/boyfriend/husband of a

5 = Actor/Actress   celebrity

6 = Singer/musician   13 = Unknown

7 = Presenter   14 = Other

8 = Sports person

Determining the characters' role or reason for being in the newspaper provides data to compare the number of 'ordinary' people that are visually represented with the number of celebrities. The term 'celebrity' is used in the broadest sense of the word and encompasses everyone who is famous. Therefore the Queen can be coded a celebrity as can the Prime Minister.

V12 Shot composition

1 = VCU very close-up (from mid-forehead to above the chin)

2 = BCU big close-up (full head nearly fills entire picture)

3 = CU close-up (from just above the head down to upper chest)

4 = MCU medium close up/chest shot (body is cut at lower chest – at breast pocket/armpit

5 = WS waist shot (cuts the body just below the waist)

6 = ¾ shot (cuts the body just below the knee)

7 = FLS full length shot (includes entire body)

This will determine whether there is any pattern in the way males and females are generally portrayed in the photographs and whether emphasis is placed on certain parts of the body more than others. The person's body image may have a large impact on how the photograph is shot/printed.

V13 Site/location

1 = Home   5 = Special event

2 = Business/work   9 = Unable to determine

3 = Outdoors at home   10 = Other

4 = Outdoors away from home

This variable will indicate whether there are distinct differences in the sites and locations of the photographs between males and females.

V14 Presentation of the primary character

1 = Active (engaged in some sort of activity)

2 = Passive (not appearing to be participating in anything - perhaps just in a pose)

This variable will indicate whether males are more likely to be photographed carrying out some kind of work or activity and whether females tend to be photographed doing nothing or just posing.

V15 Body weight of primary character

Rule: These codings are to be allocated with reference to a weight-rating scale composed of photographs selected from magazines. The scale is to act as a guide in making the assessments. Height and gender should be considered when making the judgments.

1 = Skinny/very underweight   4 = Slightly overweight

2 = Thin/slightly underweight   5 = Very overweight

3 = Normal/average   6 = Unable to determine

Making these body weight assessments will assist in finding out whether body weight has any significant effect on other variables such as size, and placement of the photograph and the nature of the discursive references i.e. whether the text refers to the body and in what manner (positively/negatively) and makes any specific sexist connections.

V16 Attractiveness of primary character

Rule: Judgements are to be made according to how the character is portrayed in the photograph. The 'attractive' category should be used when a person stands out as being particularly attractive. If someone does not comfortably fit into the attractive category but would not be seen as being particularly unattractive, the coding 'neither' should be used. This category could also be described as average.

1 = Unattractive   3 = Attractive

2 = Neither/neutral   4 = Very attractive

This variable will also provide a means to find out whether any relationships exist between the size, and placement of the photograph plus any references within the accompanying text. For example, is a female rated as very attractive more likely to be referred to in the text as a sexual object than a female rated unattractive who is maybe referred to in relation to their role as a housewife or a mother?

V17 Clothing/appearance of primary character

Rule: Again, the judgements are to be made according to how the character is portrayed in the photograph and how they are made to appear. To code a character's clothing and appearance as 'drab' means it is dull, dowdy and no particular effort have been made. 'Neutral' means their appearance is an average, everyday look. The 'somewhat sexy' category is designed to include an appearance that has been glamorized slightly and 'very sexy' is to include images that are glamorous, seductive, suggestive, where characters may be wearing skimpy or revealing clothing or even none at all. The same rules apply for both men and women, however as 'sexy' is easier to attribute to a woman's appearance, an example of a male that would fit into the 'very sexy' category would perhaps have a very toned body and wear clothes that reveal this such as a tight shirt or even no shirt at all.

1 = Drab	3 = Somewhat sexy
2 = Neutral	4 = Very sexy

Such an assessment of the appearance of the main character will help in assessing whether there are any relationships with the size, and placement of the photograph and article, and the nature of the references within the text.

➢ **CODING THE TEXT:**

V18 Gender of writer/journalist

1 = Male

2 = Female

3 = Both

9 = Unable to determine

This variable will indicate whether articles written by males are more likely to include 'ideal' images and have negative and stereotypical content.

V19 Number of positive references to body size or weight

Rule: A 'reference' is defined as one specific comment about one specific something or somebody. Only code the references about the photograph's primary character. If the same thing is mentioned twice but in different parts of the article, this is counted as two separate references. If something is referred to in one sentence and continues to be commented on in the next sentence, this counts as one reference. References to body size and weight can include comments about health and fitness. References should only be coded if they refer to the person as they appear in the photograph as references could be made about an earlier or later point in time that does not relate to the image present.

0, 1, 2, 3 etc.

V20 Number of negative references to body size or weight

0, 1, 2, 3 etc.

V21 Number of neutral references to body size or weight

0, 1, 2, 3 etc.

Variables 19-21 will provide data to examine whether newspapers are guilty of promoting the message that slim is good and fat is bad.

V22 Number of positive references to appearance, beauty, or attractiveness

Rule: A 'reference' is defined as one specific comment about one specific something or somebody. Only code the references about the photograph's primary character. If the same thing is mentioned twice but in different parts of the article, this is counted as two separate references. If something is referred to in one sentence and continues to be commented on in the next sentence, this counts as one reference. If for example, the character's hair, clothes, and good looks are mentioned but all within the same sentence, then this counts as three separate references. References should only be coded if they refer to the person as they appear in the photograph as references could be made about an earlier or later point in time that does not relate to the image present.

0, 1, 2, 3 etc.

V23 Number of negative references to appearance, beauty, or attractiveness

0, 1, 2, 3 etc.

V24 Number of neutral references to appearance, beauty, or attractiveness

0, 1, 2, 3 etc.

Variables 22-24 will provide data to examine whether newspapers make more positive comments about beautiful and physically attractive people and more negative comments about less attractive people. It will also measure whether females receive more references to their appearance than male's and if they tend to be more positive or negative.

V25 Number of positive references to personal life or relationships

Rule: A 'reference' is defined as one specific comment about one specific something or somebody. Only code the references about the photograph's primary character. If the same thing is mentioned twice but in different parts of the article, this is counted as two separate references. If something is referred to in one sentence and continues to be commented on in the next sentence, this counts as one reference.

0, 1, 2, 3 etc.

V26 Number of negative references to personal life or relationships

0, 1, 2, 3 etc.

V27 Number of neutral references to personal life or relationships

0, 1, 2, 3 etc.

Variables 25-27 will provide data to examine whether newspapers make more comments about female's personal lives and relationships than male's and whether there is any difference in the number and negativity of these type of references depending on their body size and attractiveness.

V28 Reference to traditional/stereotypical gender roles

Rule: A 'reference' is defined as one specific comment about one specific something or somebody. Only code the references about the photograph's primary character. If the same thing is mentioned twice but in different parts of the article, this is counted as two separate references. If something is referred to in one sentence and continues to be commented on in the next sentence, this counts as one reference.

0 = None	5 = Male as main earner
1 = Mother	6 = Female in the home
2 = Wife	7 = Father
3 = Housewife	8 = With reference to boyfriend/husband
4 = Sexual object	10 = Other

This variable will indicate whether stereotypical gender roles are referred to in the press and if so, to what extent. This variable will also be used to consider whether there is a link between a reference to a certain stereotypical gender role and a particular style of accompanying image.

V29 Reference to age

Rule: Any mention of the primary character's age either with reference to number of years or terms associated with or referring to age, like for example, old, young, middle aged, teenager, toddler, etc.

1 = Yes
0 = No

This variable will indicate whether there is any relationship between the mention of the primary character's age and the primary character's gender, age, and body image presented in the photograph.

APPENDIX 2

- Visual guide for female body size and weight

 - Visual guide for male body size and weight

APPENDIX 3

- 3 examples of how the codes were applied to the newspapers

Example 1: *Daily Mail,* July 10 2007, p. 25.

I stopped a shoplifter but security guard told me: Sorry, I can't help

Daily Mail Reporter

Doing the right thing? Robert Franks's efforts were wasted

WHEN Robert Franks noticed two teenagers stealing from a shop, his instinct was to stop them.

Mr Franks grabbed hold of one boy, while his wife Julia called the security guard, thinking he would take over.

But they thought wrong. Instead of detaining the culprits, the guard told Mr Franks, 28, to let go of the youngster.

It wasn't in his job description to apprehend shoplifters, he said.

And besides, he was busy guarding the lavatories.

Mr Franks, a locksmith, was in the Wilkinson hardware store in the Dolphin Shopping Centre, in Poole, Dorset, when he saw the boys, who looked about 17.

'I noticed two teenage boys put two toy guns and a rubber duck under their coats and then walk out,' he said.

'I started to follow them and when they saw me they started to run so I chased after them.

'I managed to grab hold of one and asked him why he was stealing.

'He denied it and started hitting out a bit but I didn't let go. My wife saw a security guard who was standing by the toilets a few yards away and she went over to him – but he refused to help.

'He said he was too busy and that he couldn't leave the toilets as there was a problem with them and that he had to stop the public from using them.

'He then said to let the boy go. I was amazed – all I wanted was help.

'But he wouldn't even take ten seconds out to call the police.

'The boy was smirking and laughing at this and as soon as I let go he ran off.

'I am flabbergasted – I don't think I'll bother trying to do the right thing in future.'

Jerry Stampfer, manager at the Dolphin Centre, said security staff were 'not employed to prevent shoplifting' but to 'protect the health and safety of the public'.

The guard could have intervened only had he witnessed the theft or been invited to act by staff at Wilkinsons, he explained.

Had the guard detained someone after being asked to by a member of the public, he could have been liable for arrest for assault, Mr Stampfer added.

'The security guards' primary function is to look after the health, safety and welfare of the customers and staff within the centre.

'There was an incident in the

'The law is very hazardous'

public toilets at the time and, if the guard left, it would have put the public's health and safety at risk.

'It is not in the guard's brief to intercept shoplifters – that is not what they are there for.

'Intercepting shoplifters is the job of the staff within Wilkinson and the other stores. However, if shop staff were to phone our guards and personally invite them into the store then they are allowed to assist.

'And if the guard actually saw someone shoplifting then they can get involved and should get involved.

'But if someone runs past shouting, "Stop that man – he has stolen something", and the security guard tries to assist they can be prosecuted for assault.

'The law is very hazardous, you can't simply assist because someone tells you that someone else has committed a crime.

'I can understand why someone would feel aggrieved and let down after they have done their duty as a citizen.

'But the security guards have to work within the law.'

Example 2: *The Sun,* July 13 2007, p. 25.

Example 3: *Daily Mail,* July 11 2007, p. 32.

By **Sean Poulter**
Consumer Affairs Editor

PLASTERED on billboards, the photograph of her svelte form on a sun-drenched beach helped sell thousands of bikinis.

Now Marks & Spencer must be hoping that Myleene Klass's appeal will help shift socks, pants, skirts, shirts, tops and trousers too.

The company's figures, issued yesterday, show a slowdown in sales growth that threatens its revival.

Recent store sales – not including new outlets – had a modest annual rise of 2 per cent. This is well below the rate of 8.2 per cent at this time in 2006. M&S

'Market conditions are volatile'

says it has been weighed down by the extreme weather that saw the wettest June on record, and the impact of higher interest rates on spending.

City analysts say its difficulties are indicative of the problems affecting other fashion retailers.

Many stores brought forward their summer sales, with some cutting prices by 75 per cent.

However, one bright point for M&S was the recruitment of Miss Klass, 29, in a deal said to be worth close to £1million.

Last year, the singer made a big impression on fans by wearing a white bikini on I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!

After being signed as the face and body of the M&S spring and summer collection, one of her first tasks was to wear a similar outfit in the high-profile advertising campaign.

The £30 'authentic wood square halterneck bikini set' sold out in weeks and had to be re-ordered to keep up with demand. Miss Klass, whose first baby is due in September, is now appearing in adverts for less revealing outfits.

Since 2004, M&S has enjoyed a renaissance in the hands of new chief executive Stuart Rose – posting a 28.5 per cent increase in annual profit to £965.2million last year.

Powerful advertising for food and fashion, using celebrities such as Twiggy and Erin O'Connor, has been central to recovery so far.

Mr Rose said: 'Rising interest rates, general uncertainty over consumer spending and extreme weather conditions combined to make market conditions particularly volatile over the quarter. We believe that the short-term trading environment will remain very challenging but our plans are unchanged.'

He added: 'You're bound to slow down in real terms if you've made great progress the year before.

'We are confident that our focus on product, service and environment and our investment in the brand will ensure we continue to make progress.'

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Boost: Miss Klass's bikini was a sell-out

Example 1 Analysis: *Daily Mail,* July 10 2007, p. 25.

Newspaper	Date	Page	Genre	Article Size	Photo Size	Ratio	Gender	Age
2	10-Jul-07	25	1	478	147	31	1	3
Role	**Shot**	**Site**	**Activeness**	**Weight**	**Attractiveness**	**Appearance**	**Writer**	**Positive Body**
1	5	9	2	3	2	2	9	0
Negative Body	**Neutral Body**	**Positive Beauty**	**Negative Beauty**	**Neutral Beauty**	**Positive Life**	**Negative Life**	**Neutral Life**	**Gender Role**
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Age Reference								
1								

Example 2 Analysis: *The Sun,* July 13 2007, p. 25.

Newspaper	Date	Page	Genre	Article Size	Photo Size	Ratio	Gender	Age
1	13-Jul-07	25	1	280	227	81	2	7
Role	**Shot**	**Site**	**Activeness**	**Weight**	**Attractiveness**	**Appearance**	**Writer**	**Positive Body**
6	7	5	1	4	3	3	9	0
Negative Body	**Neutral Body**	**Positive Beauty**	**Negative Beauty**	**Neutral Beauty**	**Positive Life**	**Negative Life**	**Neutral Life**	**Gender Role**
0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Age Reference								
1								

Example 3 Analysis: *Daily Mail,* July 11 2007, p. 32.

Newspaper	Date	Page	Genre	Article Size	Photo Size	Ratio	Gender	Age
2	11-Jul-07	32	1	385	109	28	2	3
Role	**Shot**	**Site**	**Activeness**	**Weight**	**Attractiveness**	**Appearance**	**Writer**	**Positive Body**
9	5	4	2	3	4	4	1	1
Negative Body	**Neutral Body**	**Positive Beauty**	**Negative Beauty**	**Neutral Beauty**	**Positive Life**	**Negative Life**	**Neutral Life**	**Gender Role**
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Age Reference								
1								