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From paths of glory to celebrity boulevards:
Sociology of *Paris Match* covers, 1949-2005

Alain Chenu

Résumé :

La construction sociale de la célébrité engage une relation triangulaire entre des personnalités, des publics et des médias. On aborde ici son étude en considérant comme célèbre toute personne nominativement identifiable représentée une fois au moins, de 1949 à 2005, en couverture de l'hebdomadaire français d'images d'actualités générales *Paris Match*. 85 % des sujets traités concernent des célébrités. La distribution des scores de célébrité (mesurés en nombre de couvertures) apparaît comme très inégalitaire. On décrit la composition de la population des célébrités par score, domaine de spécialisation, âge, sexe, nationalité. On explore ensuite l'univers des valeurs ou des conflits de valeurs qu'incarnent les célébrités.

L'article procure un éclairage inédit sur les changements sociaux intervenus au long du demi siècle observé. Dans les années 1950 et 1960, le souvenir encore vif des deux guerres mondiales, l'engagement direct de la France dans les guerres d'Indochine et d'Algérie, la geste de la conquête spatiale continuaient de faire vibrer le public au rythme de la grande histoire, faite de conflits de pouvoir, de progrès des sciences et des techniques. Ensuite l'accroissement de la part des aristocrates et des professionnels du spectacle est allé de pair avec un renforcement de la quête d'un bien-être avant tout privé, dont témoigne la montée de l'intérêt pour la vie amoureuse et familiale des princesses et des acteurs.

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Abstract:

The social construction of celebrity involves a triangular relationship between personalities, audiences and the media. Here a celebrity was defined as any person identified by name and appearing at least once on the cover of the French weekly general news magazine *Paris Match* between 1949 and 2005. 85% of the topics handled by the magazine concern celebrities. Celebrity score distribution (scores calculated by number of covers a person appears on) is highly uneven. The celebrity population is described in terms of scores, area of specialization, age, sex and nationality. The article then explores the world of values or value conflicts incarnated by these celebrities, offering a new way of viewing the social changes that occurred over the half-century observed. In the 1950s and 60s, the as yet vivid memory of the two world wars, France's involvement in the wars in Indochina and Algeria, and the ongoing space race kept the public stirring to the beat of *la grande histoire*, history made of power conflicts and scientific or technological advances. Later, the proportionally stronger presence of aristocrats and show business professionals went along with a more intense quest for what is first and foremost private well-being, as attested by increased interest in the love lives and family life of princesses and actors.

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All information media set an agenda for their audience (McCombs and Shaw 1972), identifying certain topics and giving them priority, handling them by means of a particular format (Altheide 1995), and offering a certain way of “framing” current events— “Frames are *organizing principles* that are socially *shared* and *persistent* over time, that work *symbolically* to meaningfully *structure* the social world” (Reese 2001: 11, cited in McCombs 2004: 166; see also Goffman 1991).

For generalist media the topic range is wide and has to be fully represented. If a single specialty area such as sports, politics or show business were given lasting priority, the news magazine or program would cease to be generalist. Moreover, they have to comply with the accessibility principle: the aim is to address a vast audience, so they must not try to communicate esoteric messages that would require expert knowledge (Abbott 1981). In exchange, these media confer a kind of transcendent glory or fame on the personalities and events they handle, a fame that exceeds the boundaries of specialized fields and attains the status of a universal within the limits of a given historical and geographical context.

This article focuses primarily on changes in the way information is framed and in the relative weight of the different topics handled. A two-dimensional analytic grid was used. The first dimension establishes an opposition between two types of topic-framing: topics where protagonists are named personalities and other topics, which do not necessarily involve people and are all handled without names. The dominant framing approach in *Paris Match* is personalized: images of celebrities made up 85% of the magazine's covers, and the tendency to personalize has grown stronger over time. The present analysis, then, may be described as a sociological study of the social construction of celebrity. The second dimension concerns the news agenda. The topics covered by *Paris Match* were sorted into four different categories or headings representing four different theme areas assimilable to professional worlds (Becker 1988; Strauss 1992: 269). These worlds vary by the type of selection test by which an individual in one of them moves up the celebrity scale. The *Aristocracy* category refers to a hereditary world in which celebrity involves selection procedures of designating and training privileged heirs of the highest lineages and contracting marriage alliances with other houses. In the second category, *Show business professionals*, celebrity ranking results from movements on the cultural goods and services markets and the choices of more or less collegiate decision-making bodies such as judges in various artistic contests. In the third category, *Political personnel*, celebrity “awards” are the result of institutionalized contests (elections), wars and crisis situations. The fourth category, a residual one, encompasses athletes (athletes attain celebrity on the basis of their performance in tournaments and games in a specific sport; this is combined with a ranking of the sports themselves), heroes and victims in human interest stories or disaster events, experts and explorers.

Selection mode diversity means that the number of names in which celebrity was concentrated varies for the four sub-populations observed, as does social morphology (age, sex, family situation, nationality).

The length of the period under study—1949-2005—allows for defining changes in how news has been covered since the end of World War II. The empirical study focuses on covers of the weekly magazine *Paris Match* throughout the period. This choice is justified by the following combination of criteria: *Paris Match* handles general news; it has a wide circulation; readership composition closely resembles composition of the French population at large; the cover lends itself to systematic content analysis, which in

turn allows for characterizing news agenda composition and how it changed over more than half a century of publication.

The main developments observed concern the increasing amount of space devoted to aristocrats and show business professionals, as well as rising interest in celebrities' love lives and family life. Those developments are interpreted here as signs of increased interest in "private welfare goals" (Hirschman: 1982: 3), an increase in the strength of hedonist values and a weakening of the power value (Schwartz 2006). In the 1950s, the roads leading to celebrity were "paths of glory"—steep and dangerous (*ad augusta per angusta*). Today celebrity is increasingly likely to be attained along pleasant boulevards where the jet-set offers the spectacle of its fine taste.

What is the scope of the observations? The developments described here are internal to the reference world that *Paris Match* offers its readership. But what of changes in the order of the social imaginary itself, the living memory of readers, rather than the dead memory represented by magazine covers? To answer this question we would need to examine how the magazine was received, and try to identify important events or changes by questioning readers themselves, as Schuman and Scott did with a sample of American adults (1989). I did not proceed this way; *Paris Match* readers' minds remain a black box here. But there is one thing we can be sure of: millions of persons actively bought *Paris Match*, and their imaginary fed on the topics handled by this magazine. Because this study focuses on a major generalist weekly, it enables us to acquire better knowledge of an important if not fundamental source that was active in shaping our contemporaries' cultural horizon.¹

1. Defining celebrity

Any definition of celebrity brings to the fore a dissymmetry criterion: a celebrity is recognized by more persons than he or she knows. In information societies, where the effect of the media is to ensure that the names and faces of the most famous persons are known to millions, the breadth of the dissymmetry attains previously unknown levels.

The idea that celebrity can be measured seems to have been first developed in 1902 by Gabriel Tarde, who claimed there was a "clear need" for what he dubbed a "glorimeter." He indicated that such an instrument should not only measure the subject's renown—"fame is one component of glory; it can readily be measured by number of individuals who have heard of a man or one of his acts"—but also take into

¹ My thanks to Armelle Le Bras-Chopard, Yvon Lamy and Pernelle Chaboureau for their donation of magazine collections; to Mireille Cléménçon for her help in entering, coding and analyzing the data; to Louis Chauvel, Philippe Coulangeon, François Héran, Laurent Lesnard, Pierre-Michel Menger, Maryse Tripier and Bernard Zarka for our exchanges at conferences and seminars and our informal discussions; and to Jacqueline Bourget and Jacques-Marie Bourget for their friendly support of all kinds. Also to the anonymous readers of the *Revue Française de Sociologie* editorial committee for their helpful comments and suggestions on a previous version of the text.

account “admiration, a no less essential component, ... a more complex matter to measure. We would have to count the number of admirers, to calculate the intensity of their admiration, and also—here’s the rub—take into account [the admirers’] sharply unequal social value” (Tarde 1902: I, 70-71).² The program sketched out by Tarde in these few lines is indeed highly complex (intensity of admiration and admirers’ social value are much harder to measure than fame), but he performed a useful service in distinguishing between glory and fame—glory is fame worthy of admiration—a distinction either missing or unclear in later studies; e.g., Girard’s of social success (Girard 1961), William Goode’s of the celebration of heroes (1978) and Kurzman et. al on celebrity status (2007).³ While Tarde established an opposition between fame—which is value-neutral—and glory—a personalization of positive values—he failed to address the case of bad reputations; that is, the social sanction for negatively valued behavior. What justifies glory is exceptionally fine behavior; glory comes first and foremost to heroes. What awaits “heroes” of wrong or evil is of course not admiration but opprobrium, which may indeed be considered a form of glory. Mere fame—celebrity—can come to individuals with no particular personal merit: heirs, persons with extremely uncommon physical characteristics, victims of disasters and the like. It was Stefan Czarnowski who analyzed the entire range of hero models (Czarnowski 1919), and his study can be enlarged to encompass celebrity worlds.

² “A man’s glory, like his credibility and wealth, is likely to increase and diminish without changing its nature. It is therefore a kind of social quantity. It would be interesting if, by means of some ingenious statistics, we could get an approximate measure of this singular quantity for each species of celebrity. The need for a *gloriometer* is felt with particular sharpness given how fame of every color has multiplied, how suddenly it comes and how fleeting it is, and how, despite its usual transience, it always goes together with formidable power, being a *good* for the person who possesses it while for the society it is an *illumination* and source of faith. ... Resolving the problem I raise here is an extremely troublesome matter, though not in itself impossible. *Fame* is one component of glory; it can readily be measured by number of individuals who have heard of a man or one of his acts. But admiration, a no less essential component, is a more complex matter to measure. We would have to count the number of admirers, to calculate the intensity of their admiration and also—here’s the rub—take into account [the admirers’] sharply unequal social value. How could we avoid seeing approval from thirty or forty members of the elite, any type of elite, as far superior to approval from thirty or forty individuals selected at random from the crowd (Tarde 1902: I, 70-71).

³ In *La réussite sociale en France*, Girard looked at both admirable persons, whom he considered—and who consider themselves—social successes, and “illustrious figures” mentioned in the Petit Larousse dictionary of proper names, including big criminals who of course had not “succeeded” in the sense of the first group. He excluded members of reigning families from the set of illustrious figures “because of the very nature of their birth” (Girard 1961: 235), without clearly identifying what it is that distinguishes “social success” from fame. In *The Celebration of Heroes*, Goode offered a somewhat kaleidoscopic historical review of the literature without making a clear distinction between heroism and fame. In an article entitled “Celebrity status,” Kurzman et al. characterize the celebrity system that developed out of capitalism and the mass media as a new kind of “status group” prevalence, a general phenomenon that Weber had claimed was declining; their literature review is wide-ranging yet indifferent to the problem of how to make concepts operational—precisely the problem Tarde sensed for his idea of a programmatic “gloriometer” and the type of development that distinguishes the earlier works from the innumerable studies of social stratification done in the last half century using surveys that identified class, status and power positions by means of batteries of empirical indicators.

1.1. Czarnowski and hero-worship

In *Le culte des héros et ses conditions sociales*, Stefan Czarnowski described the circumstances in which livestock breeders spread out over a vast territory in Medieval Ireland came to form social ties.⁴ At regional seasonal gatherings that were both masses and fairs, the stockbreeders traded together and communed in worship of Saint Patrick. Czarnowski explained that his study was important in a more general perspective with regard to the concept of *value*: values guided the actions of the believers and thus functioned as a kind of fuel for developing social ties among the Irish:

“The purpose of this book is to bring to light the relations between hero worship and social organization. But I am moved to write it by more general sociological preoccupations. The point is to grasp the question of social authority as a concrete form beneath which to discern fundamental social values. Heroes are one of those forms, one of the most typical” (Czarnowski 1919: I).

Czarnowski moved on to develop the idea that diverse heroes could incarnate diverse values:

A hero incarnates a value. ... A hero's perfection lies in the way he fully realizes a certain, clearly defined value. This value may be value *par excellence*—i.e., moral virtue, holiness, religion, the value that all others descend from, or it can be the main value of a particular category. This means that the notion of hero is infinitely variable. On the one hand it is consistent with the ideal of each civilization and period of time. This refers to physical force, skillfulness, cunning—qualities for which Homer's characters deserve the title of hero. ... On the other hand, some heroes incarnate the ideal of a particular religious sect. ... There is also a crowd of specialized heroes. Many are healers, perfect doctors who satisfy their patients' every wish. Others personify warrior virtues. Still others correspond to a professional ideal; this includes inventors and men who have excelled in their particular work ... The glorious memory of Garibaldi is the object of hero worship in Italy. There are heroes of knowledge, such as Galileo, Pasteur, Leonardo da Vinci; navigators such as Christopher Columbus; explorers such as Livingstone. Everyone knows of heroes and heroines of perfect love: Abelard and Heloise, Romeo and Juliet. ... Even such phenomena as vice and crime have had their heroes (Czarnowski 1919: 3-6).

Clearly warriors, inventors, learned men, navigators and explorers are distinguished from each other not so much in terms of the values they incarnate as the areas of expertise they are specialized in or the professional worlds they belong to. There is no doubt that Christopher Columbus was a navigator and explorer, but it is not so easy to identify the values he personified: thirst for knowledge, for gold, for power? Probably all three, since each can be an instrument for obtaining the others. One and the same type of professional excellence can be put into the service of contradictory values; a single value can be incarnated by experts from different fields. The confusion between diversity of occupational worlds and plurality of

⁴ Mauss was particularly impressed by *Le culte des héros*, reports Patrick Waldberg, who took Mauss's seminars (Waldberg and Waldberg 1992: 75). After studying with Simmel in Berlin, Czarnowski lived in Paris from 1902 to 1912, taking Durkheim's courses at the Sorbonne and working with Hubert and Mauss in the religious sciences section of the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (Markewicz-Lagneau 1982: 188-189). Centlivres, Fabre and Zonabend (1998) note the interest of Czarnowski's contribution.

values is not analytically justified but it is understandable given that certain types of expertise have affinities with certain values: “a particular category” of hero can personify a “main value.” The world of film, for example, may be seen to have special ties to the values of hedonism, estheticism and eroticism—if we agree with François Truffaut, who gives the following line to Nathalie Baye in *La nuit américaine*: “What is this cinema world where everyone’s always kissing everyone?” Aristocrats are very likely—and willing—to incarnate tradition; learned men to incarnate universalism and the quest for knowledge; political officials, security and power. However, the possible affinities between areas of expertise and values should not be asserted a priori but rather identified in the course of the analysis—which is what I have done here.

It is fairly easy to identify empirically what field a hero or celebrity is expert in, whereas the relationship between heroes (or celebrities) and values is even more complex than Czarnowski claims. Certain heroes (in the plays of Shakespeare or Corneille, for example) owe their “perfection” to the value conflicts they are caught up in rather than any incarnation of a particular value. Moreover, the values incarnated by heroes are not necessarily those of the public, as attested to by anti-heroes who provoke the public’s rejection and a feeling of distance. Others figures remain ambiguous or are received differently by different segments of the audience.

Czarnowski does provide us with two guiding ideas, however: the notion that hero worship involves a triangular construction (the triangular relation between Saint Patrick, the Irish people, and the seasonal arrangement which brought them together can be transposed to a relation between celebrities, the public and the media) and the understanding that the content of such notions as hero or celebrity is plural. Here I analyse that plurality in terms of two dimensions: professional (or near-professional) worlds, and values. The first dimension is analyzed here with reference to the interactionist sociology of the Chicago tradition (Abbott 1981; Becker 1988; Strauss 1992), while study of the second is based primarily on Schwartz’s typology of values (Hitlin and Piliavin 2004; Schwartz 2006).

1.2. Celebrity worlds

Paris Match celebrities were sorted into four major areas of specialization or “social worlds”: the nobility, arts and show business, politics, and the composite category “society.” The distinction between these groups is directly related to the nature of the itinerary that individuals have to follow to attain celebrity in it. Each world is endowed with specific institutions that award celebrity labels upon conclusion of selection tests determined by its own rules and criteria. Generalist media, on the other hand, award a kind of celebrity that transcends specialization. The perspective adopted here is wider than the one commonly applied in sociology of the media, where the “agenda-setting function” of the media is limited to the political field (McCombs and Shaw 1972; Altheide 1976). It is also wider than the one used in “the economics of superstars,” concerned above all with celebrities belonging to the market world of the show business industry (Rosen 1981; Frank and Cook 1995).

Pitirim Sorokin distinguished seven types of avenues or channels of vertical social mobility: the army, the church, the school, political organizations, professional organizations, the world of business and wealth-

making organizations, and the family (Sorokin 1964: 164-181). I use his approach here, but distinguish instead four types of itinerary that lead celebrities to be labelled as such.

In the *aristocracy*, the main selecting body is the extended family. Lineages or “houses” organize themselves in such a way as to safeguard their way of life and promote certain of their heirs. As Maurice Halbwachs noted, “Three characteristics define the nobility as a class: heredity, prestige and thirdly, a way of life—a situation and the wealth needed for a certain way of life” (Halbwachs 1937: 91).

What is essential in the noble class is a certain way of life, a certain order of relations, a system of friendships, homage-paying, mutual consideration. The nobility as a society can be compared to a family with a great many branches whose members recognize each other precisely because they have preserved the memory of just those facts that must be known in order to position each person within this complex hierarchy. This gives rise to a whole set of highly personal, interpersonal, relations. ... What characterizes the nobleman is that he is never absorbed into his function, assuming he does perform one, and he never becomes a mere instrument in the hands of society. Whereas every technique implies the notion of size, unity, quantity, the nobleman is a man of quality. He has nothing in particular to pride himself on; that is, he is not specialized in anything” (Halbwachs 1937: 93-96).

In the world of *arts and show business*, selecting and consecrating is done by professional organizations and cultural product and service markets. Specific authorities deliver prizes, such as those for the Cannes film and Venice art festivals, the Hollywood Oscars, the French “Césars” [equivalent of the Oscars], etc. Performances are hierarchically ranked by sales and audience ratings. The specificity of these markets inheres in the immaterial nature of the goods and services, analyzed by Sherwin Rosen in *The economics of superstars* (Rosen 1981). On media markets, slight inequalities in talent are likely to lead to huge disparities in income. The costs of producing “one more unit” concern not the information itself but the material means of transmitting that information; they are generally remarkably low compared to the outlay capital.

In the world of *politics*, admission tests involve armies, churches and political parties that spar off, forge alliances, or become reconciled in different types of arenas: battles, wars, elections, etc. In democratic regimes, voting is to the political personnel what cultural product purchasing behavior is to show business professionals: to succeed, you need to be known and appreciated “by name.”

The fourth large category—*society*—is a heterogeneous one encompassing several specific worlds of modest weight. The world of *sports*, itself broken up into various disciplines, is structured at the highest level around such competitions as the Olympic Games, world tennis tournaments, Formula 1 *grands prix*, etc. As great athletes become *superstars*, this world loses its specificity, becoming virtually indistinguishable from the world of show business. The *legal world*, which for the major press organs is the world of miscellaneous human interest stories, is made up of victims, criminals, police investigators, judges and defense lawyers. The *scientific field* is composed of competing scientists and scholars, distinguished by their peers according to the principles implied in collegial-type organization; it encompasses such undertakings and exploits as the space race, geographic exploration, medical breakthroughs, environmental and animal species protection. The *disasters* category does not usually lead to lasting personal celebrity,

but occasionally the finger of fate points to a lifesaver or victim, thereby conferring planetary glory or fame on them.⁵ Last comes the world of “wealth-making organizations” (Sorokin 1964: 175), encompassing entrepreneurs and heads of professional organizations.

1.3. The superlative celebrity conferred by generalist media

The generalist press can be thought of as a second-order selection agency that awards the superlative celebrity label to events or persons who have attained center stage in this or that specialization sphere; they then become famous above and beyond that sphere thanks to the most powerful media. Winning world-class sports titles made Zinedine Zidane and David Douillet recognizable to a lay public not particularly interested in or informed about the technical subtleties of soccer or judo. The big press media at times go no further than transmitting judgments and rankings by specialists in a particular field. But whereas specialists often have esoteric criteria (Abbott 1981), the press owes it to the public to diffuse messages accessible to a lay audience. In doing so it sometimes gives the leading role to professionals who have not won the esteem of the specialized audience. The recognition obtained by cultural goods producers through the generalist press, for example, may be qualified as “ambivalent”: it broadens their audiences but exposes them to losing legitimacy in the eyes of the experts or “producers for producers” (Bourdieu 1971: 114). Generalist media give priority to the minor arts over the major ones, popular songs over classical music, figurative over abstract painting. When it comes to publicizing medical or athletic performances and holding them up for admiration, technical virtuosity is less important in these media than the drama, and dramaturgy, of the feat. Pathbreakers such as the cardiac surgeon Chris Barnard and the mountain-climber Maurice Herzog are better known to the public at large than other surgeons and mountain-climbers who may be higher on the esteem scales of connoisseurs. In journalism, talk-show hosts are better known and loved than reporters, though reporters tend to have a poor opinion of talk-show hosts (Chalvon-Dermersay and Pasquier 1990). Lastly, since famous and ordinary people alike are affected by love life and family life events in approximately the same way, the big generalist press gives priority to those events, precisely because they allow for presenting celebrities from the angle of their “private” lives rather than their specialized performances—lives that are, of course, no longer private from the moment they are made public (Morin 1957; Mehl 1994). The opera singer Maria Callas was famous not only for her voice but also for her relationship with the industrial tycoon Aristotle Onassis; Presidents François Mitterrand and Bill Clinton were famous not only for their political actions but also for certain aspects of their private lives that were hidden from public knowledge for a time. In France, the use of the English word “people,” which became generalized in the 1990s—“people” in the sense of “media coverage of celebrities as private individuals” (Grand Robert Dictionary 2001) and more recently, by extension, the term “*les people*,” which in French designates celebrities themselves—has been inscribed in a spontaneous sociology of the

⁵ See, for example, Carlsen, the brave captain ready to sink with his ship (cover of *Paris Match*, Jan. 19, 1952) and Omayra, the little Columbian girl stuck in the mud during a flood; the entire world watched live on television as she slowly expired (Nov. 29, 1985).

phenomenon. The earlier expression “sensational press” had nearly the same meaning as “people press” but did not imply so strong a notion of personalized celebrity.

Interest in celebrities’ private lives is nothing more than the main feature of a vast division of labor that enables the magazine press to survive in a media landscape where news first reaches the public by television, radio and now the internet. Political election results, Cannes film festival awards, outcomes of major sporting competitions first become known to the public by means of live or slightly deferred coverage—i.e., independently of the printed press. Because press news cannot be fresh, its specific contribution is to focus from a slightly shifted perspective on persons who have already been made famous by the front-line media, and to describe them in roles that fall outside their main area of expertise. These magazines are interested in the roles of parent, lover, sick person that may be part of show business, sports or political professionals’ lives. It will be noted that for aristocrats those roles are in no way a secondary media focus: the specific characteristic of the nobility—since well before the emergence of the “society of the spectacle”—is to manifest the excellence of their taste precisely by exposing their lives, lives utterly free of the need or constraint to work, i.e. to have a profession. Instead, the press will detect a patented professional’s expertise in a *different* field. *Paris Match* thus headlined on princesses as fashion models (“*Caroline la princesse top-model*,” June 14, 1990) or dieticians (“Ten kilos less. Fergie: ‘my diet secrets,’” November 2, 1995),⁶ actors as intellectuals (“Delon tells all,” December 7, 1984),⁷ actors as novel writers (“Sophie Marceau publishes *Menteuse*, her first novel,” May 23, 1996), actors as gymnasts (“Jane Fonda, high priestess of aerobics,” December 6, 1990). In its very principle this way of framing current events involves focusing on a field other than the celebrity’s area of expertise. It lifts the veil on a person’s private world, the “secret garden” that every normal modern individual is supposed to have and cultivate (“The subject must appear particularly remarkable precisely because of what he hides from others,” Simmel 1999: 372). *Paris Match* covers make intensive use of such terms as “secret,” “mystery,” “a confidence,” “a confession,” “privacy,” “revelation” and their derivatives.⁸ The tension between the “right to have secrets” (Simmel 1999: 365)⁹ and the need to feed public demand by delivering up a part of those secrets is what

⁶ Sarah Fergusson is not the only diet expert on this cover: “Pasqua, Séguin, Barre [three important right or center-right French politicians], Johnny [Hallyday, superstar singer and actor] and the others give their recipes [for diet success]. In five months, Fergie got her figure back—and her smile. Her new sparkle fuels the hopes of all women fighting for their silhouettes.”

⁷ The text of this cover continues thus: “At the request of *Paris Match*, Alain Delon reveals his thoughts for the first time: “I’m worried about my son Anthony. What are they doing to your life? And to our name? I’ll star in films shot in France and I’ll pay my taxes. I’m ready to fight for Raymond Barre.” If intellectuals are defined by the combined criteria of belonging to a culture-producing or culture-mediating profession and being engaged in public life, Alain Delon may be said to have been playing the role of an intellectual here.

⁸ 7.2% of covers include at least one of these terms or a derivative. That proportion rose from 5.2% in 1949-1976 to 8.4% in 1976-2005 (frequency weighted by length of text) or 3.8% to 10.5% (unweighted).

⁹ “Profound, fertile relationships, relationships in which, behind even the fullest self-revelations we sense and honor something still more private, relationships in which we also like to conquer each day what we are nonetheless certain to possess, are simply the reward for that sensitiveness and self-control that even in the closest ties, those encompassing the entire being, respect internal private property and accept that the right to ask questions is limited by the right to have secrets In many areas, society’s historical development is defined by the following principle: something that once was manifest comes to be protected by the right to privacy, and conversely, something that once was private can manage without that protection and become manifest” (Simmel 1999: 365-366).

creates ambivalent relations between the media and celebrities. In this regard, the relations between *Paris Match* and the royal family of Monaco is exemplary: the family alternates between expressing displeasure and disapproval of the intrusions of paparazzi and requesting a media echo of its economic activities, activities which would decline if ever the media took it into its head to ignore them since they are directly implicated, at least in part, in the communications and show business industries. “With the Grimaldi family, things oscillated between the bouquet of flowers and the blue paper [notification that a law suit has been filed]” notes Roger Thérond.¹⁰ For the journalist Albert Du Roy, many of the celebrities who complain about being importuned are being “hypocritical”; after citing Edgar Morin (“It’s the duty of stars to make their private life public”), he writes: “In general, and even without reading Edgar Morin, stars understand and recognize that offering up a part of themselves is part of their job” (Du Roy 1997: 138). In this respect, the situation of the nobility in regimes where aristocratic privileges have been abolished differs little from that of show business professionals: the material prosperity of both groups depends fairly directly on their media impact.

In giving priority to non-specific roles or to specific roles that do not correspond to the profession or status in question, the general press renders the boundaries between the different celebrity worlds relatively permeable; it tends to give the celebrity population the image of a group cut off from the ordinary world and unified by a common habitus. That image of unity led Edgar Morin (1962) and Violette Morin (1963) to suggest the term “Olympians”¹¹ for designating the celebrity set: in addition to their generally opulent economic condition (which they share with the more discreet wealthy), celebrities known to the mass public are all familiar with media professionals and the matter of self-presentation. Aristocrats, stars, political officials, sports champions all turn to the same fashion designers, hairdressers and photographers, are harrassed by the same paparazzi, follow each other on the same television talk shows. In the society of the spectacle, they are front and center stage, regardless of their area of specialization.

¹⁰ Comment reported by Michel Sola, editor-in-chief of the photography department (*Le Monde* 2, April 23, 2005, p. 42).

¹¹ Observing Club Méditerranée vacation villages, Henri Raymond showed that the success of people’s stay depended on the talent of the activity leaders and entertainers; without them the villages would be little more than places of rest and boredom. He proposed using the term “Olympians” for personalities who enjoy getting up in front of tourist groups that way—not just the “nice organizers” paid by the club but also extrovert paying vacationers. With the Olympians, “social life was reorganized into a hierarchy involving leisure activities that were also shows, spectacle” (Raymond 1960: 330). In *L’Esprit du temps*, Edgar Morin transposed this analysis to the role of stars: “In the roles they incarnate, Olympians are superhuman, while in their private lives they are simply human. The mass press invests Olympians with a mythological role while diving into their private lives to extract the human substance that will make identification possible. ... By means of this dual nature—divine and human—the Olympians activate a continual circulation between the world of projection and the world of identification. Concentrated within their dual nature is a virulent projection-identification complex. They realize the fantasies that mortals cannot, yet call on mortals to realize the imagining. In this respect, the Olympians are mass culture energy capacitors” (Morin 1962: 141-142). In her analysis of French press content in the early 1960s, Violette Morin drew up a list of “Olympians” and sorted them into ten categories: royal families, performing arts and show business, sports, intellectuals, politicians, money, adventure, industry, the army, the priesthood (Morin 1963: 106). Her eligibility criteria for admission to the Olympian category and subcategories were not very clear. The research program at the Centre d’Etudes des Communications de Masse (CECMAS, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes) paid particular attention to *Paris Match* (Frère 1961; Morin 1963).

2. Corpus and analytic grid

2.1. Why Paris Match

With the exception of a few specialized weekly magazines (television program guides, women's magazines), *Paris Match* is the widest-circulating French weekly magazine. Its readership reflects the composition of the French population at large more closely than any other weekly, and it is the longest-lived high-circulation magazine. *Paris Match* was created in 1949 by the industrialist Jean Prouvost, who had already turned the daily *Paris Soir* and the weekly *Match* into French press front runners in the 1930s. *Paris Match* (like *Match* before it) was inspired by the American magazines *Life* and *Look*. News is covered by linking it to exclusive *photo-reportages* and texts that are often signed by well-known, admired writers (Antoine Blondin, Gaston Bonheur, Anthony Burgess, Raymond Cartier, Jean Cau, Armand Gatti, Jean-Hédern Hallier, Guy Hocquenghem, Joseph Kessel, Jacques Laurent, François Mauriac, Angelo Rinaldi, Alexandre Vialatte, to name a few). The original style of the magazine owes much to Roger Théron (1924-2001), who was on the editorial board for nearly 50 years and ran the magazine from 1962 to 1968 and again from 1976 to 1999. Théron was nicknamed "the eye." For Henri Cartier-Bresson, "Théron is a 'visual'—that's unusual. He had a feeling for the document, the *grand reportage*, and for lay-out. A lot of magazine editors would ask the photographers for ideas. Théron didn't. You'd give him the raw material and he'd figure out the right way to lay it out. His authority was so great that foreign magazines copied his photo choices and page layouts."¹²

In May 1968, Jean Prouvost took Théron off the editorial board because he considered him too close to the strikers and the new society of Paris Match journalists. Circulation of the magazine declined until 1976, when Prouvost sold the magazine to Daniel Filipacchi, a former Paris Match photographer then working with the Hachette group and co-directing the radio station Europe 1. Filipacchi brought Théron back on as editor-in-chief, a moment that Théron describes in his preface to a book commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of Paris Match: "The magazine that Filipacchi took over in 1976 was moribund. To save it, we returned to our origins, reinstating coverage of major news events, reactivating the freedom to tell and show. Just as we were putting the finishing touches to the first issue of the new *Paris Match*, we get the dispatch: 'Mao is dead.' Event, cover—and success is back. Fate was on our side, and it never deserted us again" (Théron 1998: vol. 1, 7). The September 18, 1976 issue on the death of Mao Tse Tung did indeed mark a shift in editorial policy, but as we will see further on, the change consisted above all in a massive increase in the amount of cover space devoted to three princesses—Caroline, Stephanie and Diana—photographed during photo sittings rather than as part of any "*grand reportage*." In 1978 Jean Cau invented the slogan "*Paris Match*: the weight of the words, the shock of the photos," which was soon splashed across the front of thousands of newsstands.

¹² Quoted by Michel Guerrin, "Ils ont fait *Paris Match*," *Le Monde*, Oct. 17. 1998.

Most of *Paris Match*'s first competitors were popular magazines; later it had to hold its own against news magazines and television; the latter of course ended up marginalizing the written press altogether. Like the press in general, *Paris Match* was more likely to be read by managers than manual workers, women than men. Its readership center-of-gravity shifted slightly over time toward the working class, women and older people (see Table 1). Right and far right political sensibilities are over-represented among *Paris Match* readers, but the left-leaning minority is still sizeable.¹³ Altogether, no other weekly magazine can claim to have circulated as long to as large a readership—a readership that, as mentioned, also came fairly close to reproducing the characteristics of the French population as a whole. However, at the end of the observation period this exceptional status was under threat: in 2005, the “people” magazine *Voici* had a penetration rate equal to that of *Paris Match*. Another reason for choosing *Paris Match* is that the full series of issues is relatively available; many libraries have it.¹⁴ The archives used in this study are on open access and the observations presented here can be checked.

Table 1 — *Paris Match* and competing magazines: penetration rates, readership characteristics

	Year	Paris Match	Jour de France	Figaro Magazine	Point de Vue	Noir et Blanc	Détection	VSD	Voici	Le Nouvel Observateur	L'Ex-press
Percentage of readers among persons aged 15 or older	1962	21.0	7.0			3.5					
	1971	18.6	13.8				4.7			3.6	
	1982	12.6	9.3		2.9			6.0			
	1998	9.6		5.3	2.4			4.5	8.4	5.6	5.3
	2005	8.6		4.1	1.6			2.4	8.6	5.3	4.1
Differentiation Index by ...	<i>Social and economic classification</i> (managers/ manual workers*)	1962	275	364		221	354				
		1971	288	271		311		25		1056	
		1982	208	178		148		180			
		1998	147		390	117		116	46	640	430
		2005	141		107			86	187	95	75
	Sex (women/men)	1962	89	134		115	123				
		1971	91	159		191		62		61	
		1982	105	159		200		94			
		1998	123		118	229		75	178	83	74
		2005	141		107			86	187	95	75
	Age group (15-24/50-64)	1962	150	202		196	128				
		1971	141	141		85		129		193	
		1982	106	89		34		158			
		1998	88		84	60		118	172	93	82

Reading: in 1962, 21% of French persons aged 15 or over read Paris-Match. The proportion of Paris-Match readers in French households with manager head-of-household was 2.75 times higher than in households with manual worker head. (Index value of 100 when penetration is the same in the two categories considered.)

* In 1998 the French socio-occupational nomenclature was changed (“foremen” were taken out of the “manual workers” category). Before 1998 the category was “head of household”; it then became “reference person in household” the Paris-Match reader belonged to.

Sources: From 1962 to 1982, Centre d'Etude des Supports Publicitaires; 1998 and 2005: AEPM (Association d'Etude de la Presse Magazine).

From 1962 to 2005, regular circulation of *Paris Match* declined. The magazine used to reach one French person in five; it is now read by fewer than one in ten. But it is still the only generalist weekly that can claim a readership of over 4 million a week.

¹³ According to a CSA 2002 presidential election exit poll of 5352 persons for the weekly magazine *Télérama*, 26% of *Paris Match* readers had voted for a candidate on the left, 47% for a centrist or rightist candidate, 24% for a far right candidate. In that election, the left won 37% of votes; the right 41.5%, and the far right 18.5%.

¹⁴ “Vignette” reproductions of all *Paris-Match* covers are available www.parismatch.com but definition is poor.

2.2. Limiting the study to cover content

Every week, *Paris Match* editors jointly determine cover content. This eminently strategic choice is made partially on the basis of the week's news, partially with an eye to the stock of available *photo reportages*. And it determines whether the issue is a sales success or failure. *Paris Match* has few regular subscribers;¹⁵ many buyers are semi-regulars who decide to purchase if they like the cover they see on the newsstand. Cover "readability" is of crucial importance in my analysis of cover content. Potential readers have to be able to see and read a cover quickly ("The cover should jump out at you from the newsstand", according to the art director of *Playboy*¹⁶). The text is concise and there is usually only one image, a photograph taken by a seasoned professional (only 1.6% of covers reproduce drawings or paintings).¹⁷ Displayed on posters, exposed on the top of piles in newssshops, the cover can be perceived or glimpsed for free by an audience that is much larger than the magazine readership. The cover has its own format and type of diffusion, making it almost a communication medium in itself.

This study gives priority to analysis of image content, "the visual." In this it is consistent with the magazine itself, which offers its readers a great many exclusive, previously unpublished photos. This editorial policy is particularly strong for the cover, because cover images are very likely to remain in readers' memories. I hypothesize that the notion that certain medieval societies were the equivalent of "textual communities" (Stock 1983; Carruthers 2002)¹⁸ can be transposed to modernity: modern societies are "image communities." Fixed images reproduced on the covers of major magazines seem particularly likely to constitute "sources of group memory," contrary to the Amazonian flow of televised images or the more recent Brownian swarm of images reaching internet users. The latter, though they may be seen by a vast audience, do not lend themselves as well to focusing collective memory on a limited number of images.¹⁹

¹⁵ In 1998, subscriptions accounted for 22.8% of *Paris Match* sales; i.e., 75.2% of the figure for *Le Nouvel Observateur* and 1.8% of the figure for *Voici* (source: *Tarif Média* 190, Mar. 1999).

¹⁶ Tom Staebler, art director of *Playboy Magazine*, quoted by Jim Peterson in *Playboy: 50 ans de photographies* (Hong Kong: EPA, 2003): 210.

¹⁷ Just as great sovereigns had their portraits painted by the greatest artists of their time, so the greatest stars turn to the greatest photographers for images of themselves, and the greatest photographers owe it to themselves to photograph the greatest stars: "An American star who hasn't been photographed by Annie Leibovitz is not really a star" (W. Rizzo, with J.-P. de Lucovich, *Mes stars* [Paris: Filipacchi, 2003]: 209). *Paris Match* cover portraits of the greatest celebrities were signed by some of the greatest photographers: Tony Armstrong Jones, Claude Azoulay, Cecil Beaton, Walter Carone, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Raymond Depardon, Philip Halsman, Danièle Issermann, Youssouf Karsh, Karl Lagerfeld, Helmut Newton, Jean-Claude Pedrazzini, Jean-Marie Périé, Bettina Rheims, Willy Rizzo, Bruce Weber, and others.

¹⁸ "Where literature is valued for its social functions, works (especially certain ones, of course) provide the sources of a group's memory. Societies of this sort are 'textual communities,' in Brian Stock's phrase, whether those texts exist among them in oral or written form" (Carruthers 1990: 12).

¹⁹ In *Je me souviens* (Paris: Hachette, 1978), Georges Perec describes a subjective memory that in many instances corresponds to *Paris Match* covers, though the author never mentions the magazine ("I remember Doctor Schweitzer," etc.). Altogether, 67 of the 382 characters presented in the index of *Je me souviens* were photographed for covers of *Paris Match*. This rate can be considered high given that many of the characters that did not appear on *Paris Match* covers belong to the world of music and literature, i.e., Perec's area of specialization. According to Howard Becker in *Je me souviens* "[Perec's] strategy overlaps more than a little with what at least some kinds of social scientists set out to achieve: the description of what a group of people interacting and communicating under particular historical circumstances have produced as a body of shared knowledge, understanding and practice—what is usually called culture" (Becker 2007: 267). Given that both

Organized sequentially week by week, the covers of a major general news magazine form a system of images whose components make sense in relation to each other, creating a structured “imagery” (Strauss 1968). Commenting on how Walker Evans ordered the negatives of the photos he chose for his *American Photographs*, Howard Becker noted that order of presentation influences the meaning that the reader-viewer attributes to them: “The documentary photograph ... typically contains so much detail that an interested user can easily make a great many comparisons between any two such images” (Becker 2007: 48) and “we take those images with us when we explore other photos in the sequence” (Becker 2007: 47-48). Like a photo story, which may be said to make sense as a series of images extending over several pages, a sequence of magazine covers is also made up of images whose interdependent meanings are constructed over time—in this case over weeks and years. Regular or semi-regular *Paris Match* readers advancing in time from issue to issue take their memory of past covers with them “when [they] explore other photos in the sequence” of covers, and can thereby adjust the typified image they have of the identity of this particular magazine, as well as their image of what themes constitute news and who legitimately famous personalities are.

2.3. An analysis that gives priority to images

Image surface is quantifiable. In this study a topic that occupies the whole page counts as 1; for two topics of equal surface area, each counts as 0.5. Topics not represented by an image or where the image occupies less than 10% of cover surface were not included in this study.²⁰

If a topic represented one or more named personalities, each was allotted a weight equal to subject weight divided by number of persons (in order to limit coding time, the surface area actually occupied by each was not measured). The same 10% minimum point was applied: figures occupying less than a tenth of the cover were not taken into account. In other words, for any given cover, no more than ten personalities were counted and described.²¹

Perec and I are attentive to “things which, in this or that year, everyone of the same age had seen, had experienced, had shared” (Perec 1978, dust jacket), my project is like his, except that mine aims to characterize a source of collective memory rather than the memory of a given person, and it proceeds not by introspection but through highly systematic analysis of a corpus of material. To Perec and Becker I will add the hypothesis that a limited selection of fixed images diffused by the mass press and readily memorized is a crucial component of “what is usually called culture.”

²⁰ Only one cover, published in the context of a printers’ strike at the magazine, had text only (“Can the press be allowed to die?” Oct. 11, 1975). Fifteen covers handled several image-represented topics of equal or near-equal surface area. The cover of the first issue, particularly readable, brought together four photographs of equal surface area on three different topics. Nine issues handled two subjects in about the same surface area; three others handled three or four subjects. All the other covers dealt with one topic only, or evoked secondary topics by text only (less than 40% of the cover surface) or illustrated them with small photographs only—less than 10% of the page. Those photos were part of the “catch lines” for reports inside the magazine.

²¹ Topics referring to imaginary creatures (exs.: Mickey Mouse, Lucky Luke), animals, artefacts (the Sputnik satellite, the cruise ship “France”, the Concorde) were understood to show no named personalities. On the social life of things, see Appadurai 1985. It was particularly difficult to code topics on death when, in place of the celebrity himself or herself, what was shown was his or her coffin, hearse, funeral procession, or some of his or her clothes, emblems or relatives. The cover published on the death of Philippe Pétain (August 4, 1951) was a metonymy: the image was of the victor of Verdun’s “blue-horizon” colored uniform laid out on an armchair—any

Text is much more heterogeneous than images in terms of both length and surface. The conventions used for weighting text were more complex, also more arbitrary. Caption space for some topics is tiny; others are given huge headlines, and text length ranges from 10 or so characters to over 500. Average text length increased over time; it would therefore be important to consider issue date when comparing word occurrence frequency.²²

Image and text are complementary in the sense that what can be seen need not be said. The word “beauty” and its derivatives are much more likely to be associated with older women than young ones.²³ To illustrate this point we can consider Claudia Cardinale’s media career. The actress was 22 when photographed for the first time for the cover of *Paris Match*, 24 when she played a leading role in *The Leopard* (June 1, 1963), 43 when she became a grandmother (July 10, 1981). But only when she made the cover for the seventh time, at 56, did the text refer to her “charm”: “She smiles with her eyes. She radiates the warm brilliance of maturity. Claudia never fails to charm us” (October 26, 1995). Never before had the words “beauty,” “charm” or any of their derivatives been used for her; the photos themselves attested to her obvious beauty. An analysis based on cover text alone could lead to the grossly mistaken conclusion that for *Paris Match*, charm and seductive power increase with age.

direct representation of the man, condemned to death in 1945, would have been judged unseemly. The convention I adopted in this case was to assimilate personal effects to the person himself or herself; the image on this cover was therefore understood to refer to Pétain and was not included among no-name topics. Likewise, the cover that appeared after the death of Edith Piaf, an image of a crowd in tears captioned “Père-Lachaise, 40 000 people at Piaf’s funeral. Some indecent jostling, but also deep, true emotion among Parisians, profoundly moved and sad,” was understood to refer by name to the singer and was not handled like a no-name topic (Oct. 26, 1963). However, a cover such as that of April 12, 2005, showing Caroline of Monaco on her knees paying homage to the recently deceased pope is credited exclusively to the princess: “Rome, the world pays homage to John Paul II, historic funeral ceremony. 50 pages. Monaco. Caroline mourns her father and fears for her husband. Rainier’s novel. 50 pages. Tuesday, April 5, as Prince Rainier dies and Ernst-August of Hanover is hospitalized, Caroline attends the pope’s memorial mass. Deeply shaken, the princess kisses the hand of the archbishop of Monaco, Monsignor Bernard Barsi.” All that may be seen of the archbishop is his hand, so the image does not increase his celebrity because it does not allow for identifying him; Princess Caroline on the other hand was understood to represent herself rather than being an indirect representation of the pope. In itself, a representation of a body is no less metaphorical than that of a blue cape. “Every time beings appear in images, what is actually represented is bodies. This kind of image has a metaphorical meaning: *it shows bodies, but it signifies beings*” (Belting 2004; his italics). That the body works to identify the person on *Paris Match* covers is attested by the priority given to representations of the face. But representation of a body can also have non-metaphorical functions, namely when the primary focus is the body’s esthetic or erotic properties. Nine topics showing groups whose members, while identified collectively by name, did not have their own individual cover careers were counted as a single collective figure: the “Petits chanteurs à la croix de bois” (Dec. 29, 1951), the Fredanoff clowns (Dec. 17, 1955), two soccer teams (Racing, May 12, 1950 and Rennes, June 6, 1965), a group of young girls who appeared in the television program “Loft Story 2” (Apr. 25, 2002), three sets of multiple birth siblings (the Léal quadruplets, Aug. 4, 1950; the Dionne quintuplets, July 12, 1952; the Brunner quintuplets, Dec. 29, 1978), the 16 children shot down in Dunblane, Scotland (Mar. 28, 1996).

²² Certain messages aimed at press professionals rather than the public—issue number, date, price (later, price in various currencies), bar code (since Dec. 1, 1988) and cover photo credits—first figured at the bottom of the cover or in the title box; they were later printed as a barely visible vertical line running across the far left-hand side of the cover. The photo credits feature indicates the emergence of an author policy for photography. Without all this information, average cover text amounts to 196 characters, including spaces (standard deviation: 112). To September 18, 1976, average length was 142 characters; after that date it rose to 245 characters.

²³ For no more than 5% of women show business professionals aged 15 to 19 does the text accompanying their image use the word “beauty” or a derivative. The figure is 12.4% for the 30-44 age span and 20.1% for the 45-49 age span. The term [the French *beauté* and its adjective form are used indifferently for men and women] is much less likely to be found for men: 0%, 3.8% and 3.4% respectively for the three age spans.

Choosing to give priority to images makes it easier to weight the topics handled, but it also leads to interpretation difficulties. While texts and conversations are always indexed on a situation containing irreducibly implicit aspects (Garfinkel 1967), making it difficult to objectify obvious but unstated material in them, it is even more difficult to objectify the meanings of an image—to prove, for example, that a person who says that Claudia Cardinale as she appears in *The Leopard* is ugly is either being insincere or is mentally deranged. The text remedies ambiguities in the images, but covers that produced record sales—e.g. the deaths of General de Gaulle and Grace Kelly Grimaldi²⁴—were virtually textless. The budget for photo acquisition is greater than for text acquisition. Still, text cannot be neglected. In fact, the fundamental expressive unit is a combination of text and image—an “iconotext,” to use a term once suggested by a linguist (Montandon 1990) but that did not stick. Here, all text for image-illustrated topics was entered. Images, meanwhile, were coded in a way that leaves little room for interpreting situation meaning:

For each topic, the following variables were entered:

- Magazine issue
- Topic ranking
- Publication date
- Category, indicated by means of four headings referring to the main celebrity worlds—*Aristocracy*,²⁵ *Show business*, *Politics*, *Society*—and 15 subheadings (cf. below).²⁶
- Triggering event (disease, love life, family life, professional activity or assimilated; cf. Table 13).
- Image surface area (from 0.1 to 1 cover)
- Geographic location of the action represented in the image (cf. Table 9).
- Number of persons identified by name (requires the presence of a last and/or first name either as part of cover text or inside the magazine).

²⁴ For the death of General de Gaulle the magazine ran a printing of 2 114 000 copies; for Grace Kelly, 1 333 720 copies (*Paris Match*, July 14, 1994: 45-46). While the magazine does make information available on its record printing runs, they did not comply with my requests for information on consecutive issue sales, considered a business secret.

²⁵ A person was considered a member of the aristocracy if he or she was presented as a “noble” by *Paris Match* and if his or her public role was due to this membership. Winston Churchill and Geneviève de Galard (a nurse at Dien Bien Phu) were not included in this category since their public life was not constructed with reference to their aristocratic status.

²⁶ The following accounts referring to topics involving celebrities pertain not to topic or theme categorizations but categorizations for personalities themselves, who were sorted by main specialization area or professional world. Many events pertain to several categories at once. The encounter between Elizabeth II and Brigitte Fossey (Feb. 21, 1953) brought together *Aristocracy* and *Show business*. The death of the actress Marie Trintignant after she was beaten up by her boyfriend, the singer Bertrand Cantat, established a link between *Show Business* and *Society* (subheading “Miscellaneous human interest stories”) (July 31, 2003). Categorization by individual’s specialization area is more robust than categorization by event, which explains why it overtakes theme-based topic categorization. It follows from this that two covers that handled the same theme may involve different categories. The covers of May 12, 1973, and March 4, 1999, were on the theme of mores and lifestyles. On the first of these covers, the theme was handled without names: “We’re the girls of Brest. We’re virgins and proud of it. We agree with our teachers. We go out with short-haired guys. We want to take our exams.” The second mentions celebrities: “Amélie Mauresmo and Sylvie: ‘We’re happy, we’re not hiding anymore.’ For the first time, a female couple dares pose and speak out without deception. She’s France’s golden opportunity in tennis. Amélie Mauresmo, 19, finalist at Melbourne and playing in the Paris-Coubertin Open, dedicates her victories to Sylvie Bourdon.” The topic of the 1973 cover was categorized “Society,” subcategory “Mores.” The 1999 cover topic, on the other hand, was categorized “Society,” subheading “Sport” because the celebrity on it, Amélie Mauresmo, is a tennis champion, and her partner, as a derivative celebrity, is attached to Mauresmo’s category. The results obtained when topic category and celebrity specialization area variables are used without this composite variable are very similar.

For each of the figures identified by name there was another series of variables:

- name
- tie to 1st-ranking figure (if relevant)
- sex
- date of birth²⁷
- nationality
- specialization area (same nomenclature as the one used for the “category” or “heading” variable)
- whether celebrity is derivative or not: a derivative celebrity owes his or her reputation to the love or kinship tie he or she has to the primary celebrity.²⁸

Between March 26, 1940, and December 29, 2005, 2954 covers were published. Total topic weight comes to 2935.4 covers, however. The space of the remaining 18.6 covers (2954-2935.4) was occupied by topics reported with text alone or topics for which images represented less than 10% of cover surface. “Imageless” topics were only subtracted from total cover surface area if they came to less than 10% of it.²⁹

²⁷ Date of birth was generally taken from *Paris Match*, occasionally from other sources (film or sports encyclopedias and the like). Source convergence is almost always good. One of the few exceptions is Raquel Welch’s birth date: according to *Paris Match*, she was 42 in 1989 and 39 in 1982 (covers of Sep. 4, 1981, and Jan. 8, 1982). In such cases I turned to Jean Tulard’s *Dictionnaire du cinéma* (v. 2, *Les Acteurs* [Paris: Lafont, 1996], but these touch-ups are of minor importance because the aim here is to characterize the magazine’s representations of celebrities rather than reestablish the truth as opposed to false media claims. My understanding here is different from that of David Altheide, who studied media “distortions” (Altheide 1976). Altogether, date of birth is unknown for 9.3% of topics presenting persons of attested historical existence (imaginary creatures such as Lucky Luke or Mickey Mouse account for less than 1% of covers).

²⁸ The following conventions were used in coding celebrities as derivative or primary. When a celebrity’s career was a combination of derivative and primary, he or she was coded primary. The actress Nathalie Baye, for example, who first appeared on the cover of *Paris Match* as Johnny Hallyday’s girlfriend but who pursued an independent career after separating from the singer, and Grace Kelly, who “made the front page” as a single actress but then definitively attained the status of princess, were ranked as primary celebrities. For the aristocracy, the notion of derivative celebrity is hard to apply since membership is a question of birth and not personal merit: every aristocrat is an heir, and therefore, in a certain sense, a derivative celebrity. Here I chose to make parsimonious use of the derivative celebrity attribute: personalities linked to an aristocrat through marriage or filiation were considered primary celebrities.

²⁹ Using the topic list (N = 2967), a co-occurrence list was constructed for describing relations between personalities shown together in a single topic. From each topic with n celebrities I derived n x (n-1) ordered pairs for describing the company in which the celebrity appears. The weighting variable of an ordered pair (PONDC) was calculated on the basis of a topic’s POND weighting: $PONDC = POND / [(n \times (n-1))]$. For topics with more than 4 figures (the case for 22 topics), relations between Rank 5+ figures (figures ranked by surface area they occupy in the image) are not described. For covers with three or four figures, relations between Rank 2+ are not described. Moreover, I drew up a biographical file—including name, sex, date of birth, date of death if relevant, country in which celebrity made most of his or her career, area of specialization (nomenclature identical to that used for the categories and headings), whether celebrity is primary or derivative—on the 1566 named figures who appeared on the cover at least once. The three files mutually enrich each other: biographical information could be transferred to the topic and co-occurrence lists and cover information into the biography file, thereby transforming it into a file on celebrities’ media careers. Careers were censored on the left by the date that *Paris Match* was founded and on the right by the closing of the period: end of 2005. The distance between Winston Churchill’s birth year (1874) and the birth year of French tennis player Yannick Noah’s son Joalukas Noah (2004) is 130 years. With the chosen window of observation, it was possible to fully follow careers of such personalities as Brigitte Bardot and Johnny Hallyday, both born slightly before *Paris Match* was founded.

3. *Paris Match* news agenda composition and changes in it during the period

3.1. Reporting the news by focusing on individual personalities

The vast majority of topics presented on *Paris Match* covers—85%—involve personalities identified by name. This kind of “personalized” framing and handling of news is an essential characteristic of the way the magazine operates. By definition, this approach differs from approaches where the understanding is that history is made by collective actors or entities such as classes, nations, and ethnic or religious groups.

Two-fifths of *Paris Match* covers are devoted to personalities or events in the world of the performing arts or show business and culture; i.e., actors, singers, television anchorpersons and talk-show hosts (Table 2).

Table 2 – *Paris Match* cover headings and personalized and non-personalized framing of the news

Heading Sub-heading	Covers		Proportion of no-name topics (% in row)	Number of celebrities	Average number of covers per celebrity
	No. of covers	% (in column)			
All	2935.4	100.0	14.8	1566	1.60
1. Aristocracy	499.5	17.0	1.5	141	3.49
2. Arts and show business	1246.2	42.5	2.6	750	1.62
2.1. Artistic creation	39.9	1.4	15.0	39	0.87
2.2. Fashion	76.7	2.6	22.1	54	1.11
2.3. Film	761.5	25.9	0.8	425	1.78
2.4. Song	265.1	9.0	0.0	149	1.78
2.5. Television	95.6	3.3	3.1	75	1.23
3. Politics	647.5	22.1	29.2	281	1.63
3.1. War	145.9	5.0	79.8	23	1.28
3.2. Religion	69.4	2.4	13.0	20	3.02
3.3. Politics	433.3	14.8	14.8	240	1.54
4. Society	542.1	18.5	38.0	394	0.85
4.1. Science, technology	79.4	2.7	56.4	42	0.82
4.2. Mores, lifestyles	118.2	4.0	60.5	71	0.66
4.3. Sports	178.3	6.1	12.9	168	0.92
4.4. Disasters	64.9	2.2	96.9	4	0.50
4.5. Business	23.1	0.8	4.3	22	1.00
4.6. Miscellaneous human interest stories	84.4	2.9	3.6	93	0.88

Reading (e.g.): From 1949 to 2005, sports news accounted for 178.3 covers, or 6.1% of the overall total. 12.9% of sports topics were handled without identifying anyone on the cover by name. The remaining topics in this sub-heading presented a total of 168 different sports celebrities, each of whom figured on an average of 0.92 covers.

Aristocrats figure on approximately one in six covers: the British royal family on 179 (= 6% of the total) and the royal family of Monaco just behind them with 176 covers. The Pahlavis and the Belgian royal family had 30 covers between them. Each of the 141 celebrities in this category occupied on average 3.5 covers—a much higher level than for celebrities in the other categories. Information on arts and show business constituted a large relative minority of covers (42.5%, 26% of which were on film and 9% on song—many actors sing and many singers star in films, but usually one specialization is clearly dominant in

their careers). The sub-heading “artistic creation” refers primarily to writers, painters, film and theater directors, and fashion designers.

Politics in the broad sense accounted for slightly over a fifth of all covers (politics in the narrower sense for 15% of covers, war for 5%, religious news for 2%). The markedly heterogeneous “Society” category accounted for 18.5% of covers (sport for 6%, mores and lifestyles for 4%, miscellaneous human interest stories, science and technology, and disasters for 2% to 3%). The business world was nearly absent (0.8% of covers): business persons do not have to be known by name to the public at large to succeed in their activities. Those of them who made it onto the cover of *Paris Match* often did so in connection with miscellaneous human interest stories (kidnapping of the Baron Edouard Empain), incursions into politics (Bernard Tapie), encounters with show business personalities (Aristotle Onassis and Maria Calas) or with the aristocracy (Dodi Alfayed and Diana Spencer). Heiresses—Athina Roussel, shipowner Aristotle Onassis’ granddaughter (5.5 covers) and Christina Onassis, his daughter (2.4 covers)—were at the top of the personality list, though that heading (with the exception of derivative celebrities) was made up almost entirely of men.³⁰

The degree to which current events are framed by focusing on personalities varies greatly from one category or heading to the next. As Halbwachs’ analysis highlighting the importance of person-to-person relations in the aristocracy would have predicted, events affecting this world are very seldom handled without mentioning people by name. The same is true for the world of show business, the arts and media, where signatures, copyrights, name identification are essential. On the other hand, questions of politics, religion and society were fairly often handled without any named person figuring on the cover. 29% of topics related to politics, war and religion, and 38% of “Society” topics were handled without names.

3.2. Celebrity scores: a Pareto distribution

Like cities ranked by population, words by frequency of their occurrence in a text, or households by income, the distribution of celebrity scores fairly closely follows “Pareto’s law” (Pareto 1964: vol. 2, 305) or a Zipf curve (the “rank-size law,” a discrete equivalent of Pareto’s law), where rank logarithm is a decreasing linear function of size logarithm (city population, household income size and, here, number of *Paris Match* covers per celebrity).

20% of celebrities occupied 63% of covers with identified personalities. This concentration is weaker than indicated in Pareto’s canonical description of wealth distribution: “The richest 20% of the population possess 80% of total wealth.”

³⁰ The two exceptions are Régine (“Régine, or how a kid from Belleville became the Queen of Monaco this summer, after conquering Paris and Deauville,” Aug. 31, 1974) and Alicia Koplowitz, “the Spanish real estate queen” (Oct. 3, 1991).

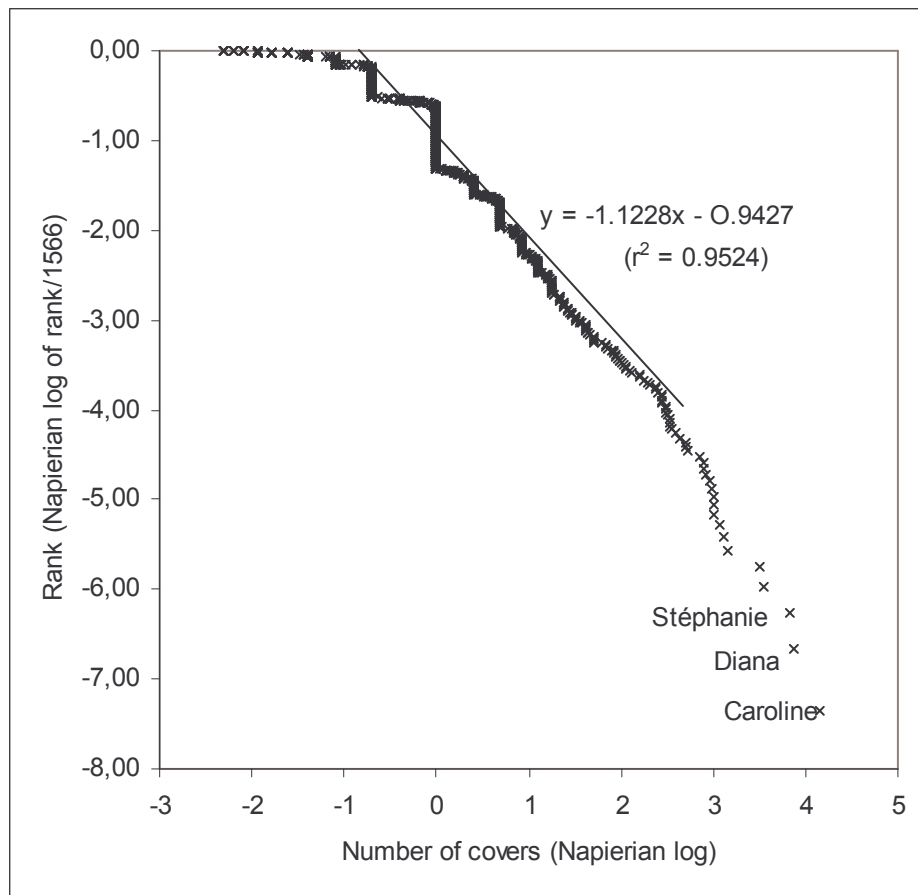


Figure 1 — Celebrity rankings and scores (highest-ranking celebrities for 1949-2005)

Reading: Caroline of Monaco ranks first, with a score of 64.2 covers (Napierian logarithm of 64.2 = 4.16) and a relative ranking of

$1/1566$ ($\log(1/1566) = -7.36$).

Linear adjustment concerns the 20th-1400th-ranking celebrity segment of the curve. Parameter k (Pareto's law) = 1.1228.

The rough linearity of this distribution is an interesting property. It enables us to assimilate competition among celebrities to a tournament in which the sum of the winnings (a kind of symbolic “capital” in the form of a certain number of *Paris Match* covers) increases geometrically from one round to the next with the elimination of a given percentage of candidates in each round.³¹

³¹ If y_i is the relative ranking of celebrities in round i of the tournament, x_i the number of covers each will have “won” if eliminated in that round, k the slope of the curve and a another constant, then the Pareto function after logarithmic transformation is:

$$\ln(y_i) = k \ln(x_i) + a$$

or:
$$\ln(x_i) = \frac{\ln(y_i) - a}{k}$$

If r is the percentage of celebrities eliminated in each round, then:

$$y_{i+1} = ry_i$$

The tournament model is not realistic, however. In 1949 *Paris Match* obviously could not grant cover space to celebrities who were not even born yet; the 1566 celebrities figuring at least once on the magazine cover were not competing at the same time. Still, the single tournament model does fit the empirical data fairly well, at least in the central section of the distribution curve: it is as if the flow of newcomers to the celebrity world balanced out the flow of those leaving it, i.e., personalities who began to fade from collective memory.

Heading the general list for the years 1949-2005 were 69 celebrities with at least 5 covers each (Table 3). Together, they absorbed nearly a third of *Paris Match* covers.

and: $\frac{y_{i+1}}{y_i} = r$

$$\begin{aligned}\ln\left(\frac{x_{i+1}}{x_i}\right) &= \ln(x_{i+1}) - \ln(x_i) \\ &= \frac{\ln(y_{i+1}) - a}{k} - \frac{\ln(y_i) - a}{k} \\ &= \frac{\ln(y_{i+1}) - \ln(y_i)}{k} \\ &= \frac{\ln\left(\frac{y_{i+1}}{y_i}\right)}{k} \\ &= \frac{\ln(r)}{k}\end{aligned}$$

From which it follows that: $\frac{x_{i+1}}{x_i} = \exp \frac{\ln(r)}{k}$

If $r = 0.5$ and $k = -1.1228$, the number of covers increases by 85.4% from one round to the next. The regression line in Figure 1 can be segmented into the 6 phases of a model tournament. The resulting distribution displays two elbow bends, one separating figures characterized by a very low level of celebrity (the 166 least famous celebrities were excluded from the linear adjustment since the characteristics of this category are too dependent on the “grain” of the analysis—i.e., the basic unit of one cover—and on coding conventions: the threshold of 10%), the other indicating the most famous, of whom there are 20. Starting from a total of 1400 celebrities, each of the first 700 eliminated “won” 0.8 covers; the next 350 won $0.8 \times 1.854 = 1.48$ covers, and the series continues: 175 persons had 2.75 covers to their name; 87.5 had 5.10 covers; 44 had 9.46; the top 22 each had 17.54 covers. For the 22 remaining celebrities, the model does not fit the observed distribution well: scores fall below predicted values.

Table 3 – Celebrities with a total of at least 5 covers, 1949-2005

	Ranking	Celebrity score			Area	Sex	Country	Year of	
		Total	<1976*	>=1976				birth	death
Princess Caroline	1	64.2	5.6	58.7	Ar	W	MC	1954	.
Princess Diana	2	48.4	0.0	48.4	Ar	W	GB	1961	1997
Princess Stephanie	3	46.2	0.4	45.8	Ar	W	MC	1965	.
Johnny Hallyday	4	34.5	4.0	30.5	Sb	M	FR	1943	.
Brigitte Bardot	5	33.4	19.3	14.0	Sb	W	FR	1934	.
Alain Delon	6	23.6	0.5	23.1	Sb	M	FR	1935	.
Charles de Gaulle	7	22.4	22.4	0.0	Po	M	FR	1890	1970
Isabelle Adjani	8	21.8	2.0	19.8	Sb	W	FR	1955	.
Princess Margaret	9	20.3	17.0	3.3	Ar	W	GB	1920	2001
Catherine Deneuve	10	20.3	5.3	14.9	Sb	W	FR	1943	.
Princess Grace	11	20.2	13.0	7.2	Ar	W	MC	1929	1982
Elizabeth II	12	19.9	15.9	4.0	Ar	W	GB	1926	.
Valéry Giscard d'Estaing	13	19.2	9.4	9.7	Po	M	FR	1926	.
Sophie Marceau	14	18.5	0.0	18.5	Sb	W	FR	1967	.
François Mitterrand	15	18.2	2.5	15.7	Po	M	FR	1916	1996
<i>Jacqueline Kennedy</i>	16	18.1	13.3	4.7	Po	W	US	1930	1994
Sylvie Vartan	17	17.3	6.5	10.8	Sb	W	FR	1945	.
Empress Farah Pahlavi	18	15.2	11.9	3.3	Ar	W	IR	1938	.
John Paul II	19	15.0	0.0	15.0	Po	M	VA	1920	.
Sophia Loren	20	14.8	8.3	6.5	Sb	W	IT	1934	.
Paul VI	21	13.8	10.8	3.0	Po	M	VA	1897	1978
Duchess Sarah Ferguson	22	13.4	0.0	13.4	Ar	W	GB	1959	.
Jacques Chirac	23	12.9	2.0	10.9	Po	M	FR	1933	.
Prince Charles	24	12.7	4.3	8.3	Ar	M	GB	1948	.
Liz Taylor	25	12.5	9.0	3.5	Sb	W	US	1932	.
Raquel Welch	26	12.5	4.5	8.0	Sb	W	US	1940	.
Mireille Darc	27	12.3	1.0	11.3	Sb	W	FR	1938	.
Claire Chazal	28	12.1	0.0	12.1	Sb	W	FR	1957	.
Gérard Depardieu	29	12.0	0.0	12.0	Sb	M	FR	1948	.
Romy Schneider	30	12.0	2.0	10.0	Sb	W	AL	1938	1982
Georges Pompidou	31	11.6	11.6	0.0	Po	M	FR	1911	1974
Jean-Paul Belmondo	32	11.5	1.0	10.5	Sb	M	FR	1933	.
Claudia Schiffer	33	11.4	0.0	11.4	Sb	W	AL	1971	.
Princess Anne	34	11.4	8.4	3.0	Ar	W	GB	1948	.
Michèle Morgan	35	11.0	8.5	2.5	Sb	W	FR	1920	.
Vanessa Paradis	36	10.9	0.0	10.9	Sb	W	FR	1974	.
Jane Fonda	37	10.7	3.0	7.7	Sb	W	US	1937	.
Yves Montand	38	10.2	1.5	8.7	Sb	M	FR	1921	1991
Prince Albert of Monaco	39	9.9	1.4	8.5	Ar	M	MC	1958	.
Prince Rainier of Monaco	40	9.4	4.1	5.4	Ar	M	MC	1923	2005
John Kennedy	41	9.0	8.3	0.7	Po	M	US	1917	1963
Queen Paola	42	9.0	7.5	1.5	Ar	W	BE	1937	.
Gina Lollobrigida	43	8.3	8.3	0.0	Sb	W	IT	1927	.
Marlène Jobert	44	8.1	1.9	6.2	Sb	W	FR	1943	.
Ingrid Bergman	45	7.8	5.8	2.0	Sb	W	SU	1917	1982
Patrick Poivre d'Arvor	46	7.7	0.0	7.7	Sb	M	FR	1947	.
France Gall	47	7.7	0.0	7.7	Sb	W	FR	1947	.
Princess Soraya	48	7.5	7.5	0.0	Ar	W	IR	1930	.
Dwight Eisenhower	49	7.3	7.3	0.0	Po	M	US	1890	1969
Nathalie Baye	50	7.3	0.0	7.3	Sb	W	FR	1951	.
Michel Sardou	51	7.1	0.0	7.1	Sb	M	FR	1947	.
Claudia Cardinale	52	7.0	3.0	4.0	Sb	W	IT	1939	.
Marilyn Monroe	53	7.0	5.0	2.0	Sb	W	US	1926	1962
<i>Estelle Lefébure-Hallyday</i>	54	6.8	0.0	6.8	Sb	W	FR	1966	.
<i>Sarah Biasini</i>	55	6.8	0.0	6.8	Sb	W	FR	1977	.
Queen Fabiola	56	6.7	5.2	1.5	Ar	W	BE	1928	.
Prince Philip	57	6.4	4.4	2.0	Ar	M	GB	1921	.
Winston Churchill	58	6.3	6.3	0.0	Po	M	GB	1874	1965
Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi	59	6.2	3.4	2.8	Ar	M	IR	1919	1980
Audrey Hepburn	60	6.0	5.0	1.0	Sb	W	US	1929	1993
<i>Athina Roussel</i>	61	5.5	0.0	5.5	So	W	GR	1985	.
Eric Tabarly	62	5.5	4.0	1.5	So	M	FR	1931	1998
Pius XII	63	5.5	5.5	0.0	Po	M	VA	1876	1958
Jeanne Moreau	64	5.5	5.0	0.5	Sb	W	FR	1928	.
<i>David Hallyday</i>	65	5.4	0.5	4.9	Sb	M	FR	1966	.
<i>Anthony Delon</i>	66	5.2	0.0	5.2	Sb	M	FR	1964	.
<i>Laetitia Smet-Hallyday</i>	67	5.2	0.0	5.2	Sb	W	FR	1975	.
Jesus Christ	68	5.2	5.2	0.0	Po	M	PA	0	33
<i>Paul Belmondo</i>	69	5.0	0.0	5.0	Sb	M	FR	1963	.

<1976: Prior to September 18, 1976 (cover on the death of Mao Tse Tung). Sex: M, W. Area: Ar (Aristocracy); Sb (Show business), Po (Politics); So (Society). Derivative celebrities in italics.

The majority group in this hit parade are show business professionals (27), but aristocrats—Princesses Caroline, Diana and Stephanie—are at the top of that list; all three figured on the cover of *Paris Match* for the equivalent of slightly over three years. There are twelve political and religious figures. The only representatives of the “Society” category are an athlete and a rich heiress.

Celebrity score distribution characteristics differ from one specialization area to another (Figure 2).

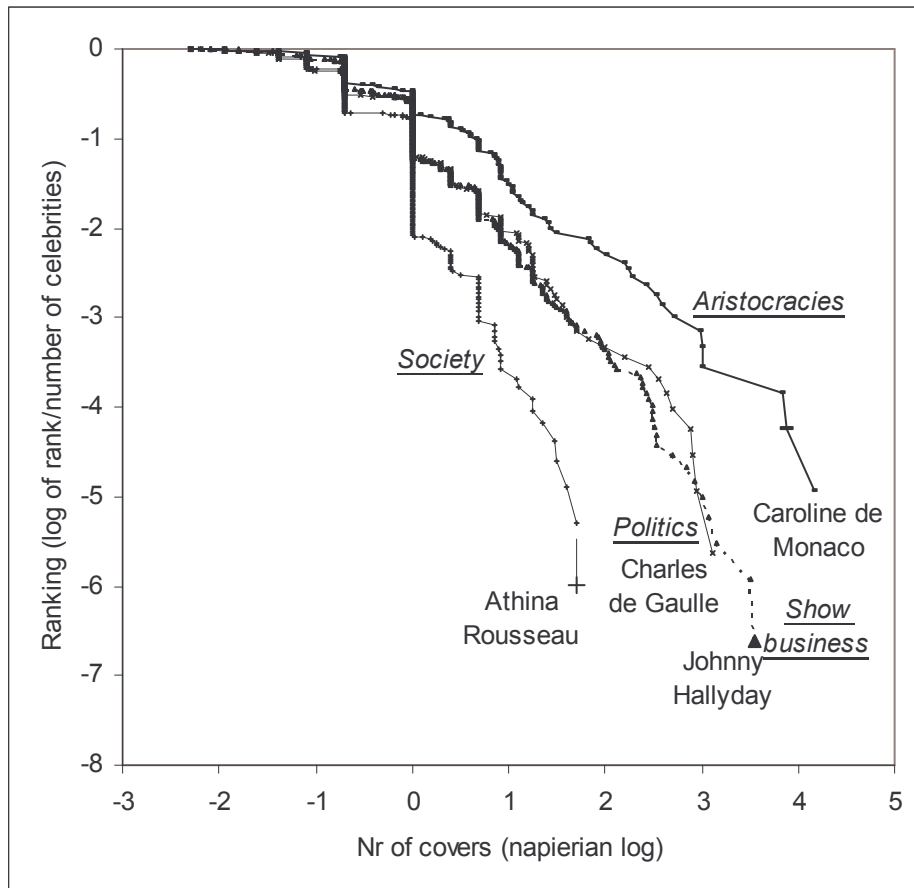


Figure 2 — Highly uneven celebrity score distribution for aristocrats; fairly even for “Society”; intermediate in the worlds of show business and politics

Reading: Caroline of Monaco was at the top of the Aristocracy category with a score of 64.2 covers (Napierian logarithm of $64.2 = 4.16$) and a relative ranking of $1/141$ (this category contains 141 celebrities; $\log(1/141) = -4.95$).

The “Society” category is characterized by a strong concentration of celebrity scores on the zero abscissa, i.e., the modal score of one cover. This category comes closest to the egalitarian world that Andy Warhol prophesied in the 1960s (“In the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes”),³² though

³² This was of course more a fable than a prophecy, despite the fact that Warhol himself declared it had come true (see Warhol 2006, *Géant* [Paris: Phaedon]: 456). Only in village groups do we come close to the model of egalitarian interacquaintanceship. Inequalities in celebrity tend to become more pronounced rather than less, at least to judge by *Paris Match* covers, which were more sharply inegalitarian after 1976 than before: the celebrities

here “everyone” already belongs to the narrow elite of individuals who appeared at least once on the cover of *Paris Match*). It covers cases of day-long fame: athletes, inventors, criminals whose feats are short-lived. At the opposite end of the spectrum is the sharply uneven distribution for aristocrats. Show business and politics are in an intermediate position.

3.3. The increasing weight of aristocrats and show business professionals

As mentioned, the breakdown of the entire period into two periods of nearly equal length, 1949-1976 and 1976-2005, reflects the switch in editorial policy manifest in the September 18, 1976 issue on the death of Mao Tse Tung. Of greater relevance here is the fact that this switch corresponded to an overhaul of news agenda composition. The magazine had emphasized political news, especially from the 1960s. The politics and society headings accounted for half of all pre-1976 covers, whereas after that date the figure fell to one-third. Conversely, information on aristocrats increased from 15% before 1976 to 20% after, and arts and show business also took on weight, from one in three covers in the period 1949-1976 to one in two from 1976-2005.

Table 4 – *Paris Match* cover headings and personalized or non-personalized framing of news before and after September 18, 1976 (death of Mao Tse Tung)

	Covers (% in column)		No-name topics (%)		Covers published after Sept. 11, 1976 (% row)
	Before Sept. 18, 1976	After Sept. 11, 1976	Before Sept. 18, 1976	After Sept. 11, 1976	
All	100.0	100.0	23.0	7.2	51.8
1. Aristocracy	14.9	19.0	2.8	0.5	57.8
2. Arts and show business	33.5	50.8	5.7	0.6	62.0
2.1. Artistic creation	1.8	1.0	19.8	6.8	36.8
2.2. Fashion	3.3	2.0	36.5	0.0	39.3
2.3. Film	23.3	28.4	1.5	0.2	56.7
2.4. Song	4.6	13.1	0.0	0.0	75.3
2.5. Television	0.2	6.1	0.0	3.3	96.3
3. Politics	28.4	16.2	34.0	21.5	37.9
3.1. War	8.0	2.2	77.5	87.8	22.4
3.2. Religion	3.3	1.5	15.1	8.7	33.3
3.3. Politics	17.1	12.6	17.3	11.5	44.1
4. Society	23.2	14.0	47.4	23.5	39.3
4.1. Science techn.	5.2	0.4	55.6	66.7	7.6
4.2. Mores, lifestyles	6.7	1.5	68.5	27.2	19.4
4.3. Sport	6.7	5.5	16.9	8.3	47.0
4.4. Disasters	2.3	2.1	100.0	93.7	49.2
4.5. Business	0.6	1.0	12.4	0.0	65.0
4.6. Miscellaneous human interest stories	2.0	3.7	0.0	5.3	67.0

in the highest quintile in the 1947-1976 period accounted for 57% of period covers, while from 1976 to 2005, 20% of celebrities accounted for 64% of all covers.

The greatest drops were in the subheadings War, Religion, Science and technology, and Mores and lifestyles. For war the explanation is obvious: France was not at war after 1962. Major world conflicts were amply commemorated in the 1960s (1963 was the tenth anniversary of Dien Bien Phu; 1964 the twentieth anniversary of the Liberation; 1966 the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Verdun); then memory of them began to fade.

The decline of religion took the form of a certain disinterest in papal activity and a secularizing of year-end issues. 1950s Christmases were often marked by a cover representing the “Holy Family”; this explains the presence of Jesus Christ in Table 3. Later the practice disappeared.³³

The fall in scientific and technological news was a more massive phenomenon than the decline in religious topics. During the period of strong, regular growth in France (1948-1973) under the Fourth Republic and the de Gaulle and Pompidou presidencies, confidence in scientific and technological progress was at an all-time high. The cruise ship France, the hover train, the “epic of the Mont Blanc tunnel,” construction of La Défense business district, the Concorde, heart transplants, and first and foremost the conquest of outer space accounted for dozens of covers. With the oil crises and slowed growth, the rhetoric of technical exploit yielded to grim images of the Columbia shuttle exploding, the Concorde supersonic accident and the spread of AIDS. The presence of Science and technology on the cover of *Paris Match* fell to zero.

The decline of the Mores and lifestyles subcategory is partly homologous to the decline of Science and technology (car shows, included in Mores and lifestyles, figured on half a dozen covers but disappeared after the 1960s) and partly linked to my coding conventions: topics related to sexual mores or child adoption were handled anonymously; they were then evoked in connection with events affecting celebrities and categorized by those persons’ specialization areas (see n. 25).

Over the long term, the weight of sports and disasters remained stable; the wide variations from year to year conceal remarkable regularities at the decade scale.

The two expanding categories—Aristocracy and Show business—are the ones *Paris Match* has always handled by discussing events involving famous persons. Furthermore, in each of the four main categories, the proportion of news stories involving celebrities increased.

As the dichotomy between pre- and post-September 1976 (death of Mao) is quite cursory, it is useful to break the time span down into briefer periods. Table 5 presents the most famous celebrities by five-year periods.

³³ The last year-end to have a religious subject on the cover was 1968 (Dec. 21), with a photo of a sculpture in Notre Dame Cathedral representing Jesus, the cow and the donkey.

Table 5 – The ten most famous celebrities, by five-year period

S: sex (M, W). NC: news category (Ar: aristocrats; Sb: show business personality; Po: political, religious or military figure; So: society). Score: weighted number of covers throughout the period. The first five-year period actually measures five years and nine months; the last, six years.

S	NC.	1949-1954	Score	S	NC.	1955-1959	Score	S	NC.	1960-1964	Score
W	Ar	Elizabeth II	4.2	W	Ar	Grace Kelly Grimaldi	9.2	W	Ar	Margaret	8.0
M	Po	Dwight Eisenhower	3.0	W	Ar	Margaret	5.0	M	Po	Paul VI	6.3
W	Ar	Margaret	3.0	M	Po	Charles de Gaulle	4.0	W	Ar	Farah Pahlavi	5.4
W	Sb	Gina Lollobrigida	3.0	W	Sb	Ingrid Bergman	4.0	W	Sb	Brigitte Bardot	5.3
W	Sb	Michèle Morgan	3.0	W	Sb	Sophia Loren	4.0	W	Ar	Fabiola	5.0
W	Sb	Dany Robin	3.0	W	Ar	Elizabeth II	3.8	M	Po	John Kennedy	4.7
M	Ar	Charles d'Angleterre	2.8	M	Po	Pius XII	3.5	W	Po	Jackie Kennedy	4.7
M	Ar	George VI	2.5	W	Sb	Liz Taylor	3.5	M	Po	John XXIII	4.0
W	Sb	Rita Hayworth	2.5	W	Ar	Soraya	3.5	M	Ar	Tony Armstrong Jones	3.5
W	Sb	Brigitte Fossey	2.3	M	Po	Dwight Eisenhower	3.3	M	Po	Nikita Krushchev	3.5
S	NC.	1965-1969	Score	S	NC.	1970-1974	Score	S	NC.	1975-1979	Score
M	Po	Charles de Gaulle	9.3	W	Ar	Ann	6.9	M	Po	Valéry Giscard d'E.	9.9
W	Po	Jackie Kennedy	6.7	M	Po	Georges Pompidou	6.8	W	Ar	Caroline of Monaco	5.0
M	Po	Georges Pompidou	4.7	M	Po	Valéry Giscard d'E.	4.5	M	Po	John Paul II	5.0
W	Ar	Farah Pahlavi	4.0	W	Sb	Raquel Welch	4.5	M	Sb	Johnny Hallyday	4.5
W	Sb	Brigitte Bardot	4.0	M	Po	Charles de Gaulle	4.3	W	Sb	Brigitte Bardot	4.0
M	Po	John Kennedy	3.6	W	Ar	Caroline of Monaco	4.0	W	Sb	Sylvie Vartan	4.0
M	Po	Paul VI	3.5	W	Sb	Brigitte Bardot	4.0	W	Po	Valérie-Anne Giscard d'E.	4.0
M	Po	Winston Churchill	3.0	W	Ar	Elizabeth II	3.6	W	So	Françoise Claustre	3.8
M	Po	Bob Kennedy	2.6	W	Po	Claude Pompidou	3.5	W	Po	Jackie Kennedy	3.5
M	Po	Philippe Pétain	2.5	W	Sb	Sylvie Vartan	3.0	W	Ar	Grace Kelly Grimaldi	3.0
S	NC.	1980-1984	Score	S	NC.	1985-1989	Score	S	NC.	1990-1994	Score
W	Ar	Caroline of Monaco	16.8	W	Ar	Stephanie of Monaco	11.2	W	Ar	Diana Spencer	15.7
W	Ar	Diana Spencer	11.3	W	Ar	Caroline of Monaco	10.0	W	Ar	Caroline of Monaco	12.8
M	Sb	Alain Delon	10.0	M	Sb	Johnny Hallyday	8.4	W	Ar	Stephanie of Monaco	10.8
W	Ar	Stephanie of Monaco	9.0	W	Ar	Diana Spencer	6.7	W	Sb	Claudia Schiffer	5.3
W	Sb	Sylvie Vartan	7.0	W	So	Christine Villemin	5.0	M	Sb	Johnny Hallyday	5.0
M	Sb	Johnny Hallyday	6.3	W	Ar	Sarah Fergusson	4.8	W	Sb	Isabelle Adjani	5.0
W	Sb	Marlène Jobert	5.7	M	Sb	Anthony Delon	4.0	W	Ar	Sarah Fergusson	3.8
M	Po	François Mitterrand	5.5	W	Sb	Isabelle Adjani	4.0	W	Sb	Adeline	3.8
W	Sb	Romy Schneider	5.5	W	Sb	Sophie Marceau	4.0	M	Po	François Mitterrand	3.5
M	Po	John Paul II	5.0	W	Sb	Chantal Nobel	3.8	W	Sb	France Gall	3.3
S	NC.	1995-1999	Score	S	NC.	2000-2005	Score				
W	Ar	Diana Spencer	13.3	W	Ar	Stephanie of Monaco	7.2				
W	Ar	Caroline of Monaco	8.7	W	Ar	Caroline of Monaco	5.2				
W	Ar	Stephanie of Monaco	7.2	W	Sb	Claire Chazal	4.6				
W	Sb	Sophie Marceau	5.8	M	Sb	Johnny Hallyday	4.3				
W	Sb	Claire Chazal	5.5	M	Sb	Gérard Depardieu	3.5				
W	Sb	Claudia Schiffer	5.1	W	Sb	Isabelle Adjani	3.5				
W	Ar	Sarah Fergusson	4.7	M	Sb	Patrick Poivre d'Arvor	3.4				
M	Sb	Patrick Poivre d'Arvor	4.2	W	Sb	Sophie Marceau	3.3				
M	Po	Jacques Chirac	4.0	W	Sb	Laeticia Smet	3.2				
M	Po	François Mitterrand	3.5	M	Sb	Alain Delon	3.2				

Aristocrats and show business personalities are omnipresent in the most recent celebrity lists, whereas French and American political figures and their families, as well as popes, used to figure in the five-year top ten. Television anchors (Claire Chazal, Patrick Poivre d'Arvor) began appearing at the top of the lists in 1995. Politics was at its height in 1968, accounting for eight personalities in the 1965-1969 list (correlatively, this five-year period was characterized by a high level of no-name topics: 35.4%). It should be noted that the great politicization phase began before 1968, specifically in 1965-1967, a moment in which

France distanced itself critically from American involvement in the Vietnam War, took an interest in Che Guevara and Rudi Dutschke, expressed benevolent neutrality toward contraception, long hair, miniskirts—all themes that in retrospect may be seen as forerunners of the events of May '68.³⁴ Conversely, and for the first time in the history of *Paris Match*, there were no political figures in the top ten for the five-year period that opened the twenty-first century.

The weight of five-year top-ten celebrities in the totality of covers was heaviest in the years 1980-1990 and lightest before 1955 and after 2000. The 1980s and 1990s were marked by intense concentration on three princesses: Caroline, Stephanie and Diana. The romantic and family lives of these aristocrats amounted to three intertwined soap-operas that had the effect of increasing readership over a long period; audience levels began declining after Diana Spencer's fatal accident in 1997.³⁵ 1997 was also the year Alain Genestar took over from Roger Thérond as editor-in-chief of *Paris Match*. Genestar brought back *in situ* photo coverage of major events.

Twenty-four of the personalities in the 1949-2005 celebrity list (Table 3) did not figure in any five-year top-ten list. They may be thought of as celebrity's "long-distance runners." Catherine Deneuve is the most famous among them, with a total score of over 20 covers.³⁶

4. Celebrities' civil status

Having described celebrity score distribution variations by category and period, we can continue analyzing the social morphology of the celebrity population and how it evolved, describing category composition in terms of sex, age, generation and nationality.

³⁴ "Raymond Cartier: 'President Johnson, where is Vietnam leading you?' " (May 8, 1965); see also the echo of de Gaulle's speech at Phnom Penh (Sep. 10, 1966); "Lartéguy: the Guevara mystery" (Oct. 21, 1967) and "Young Germans revolt after the attack against Rudi the Red" (Apr. 27, 1968); "Green light for the pill" (Mar. 26, 1966), "Long-haired England. 5 votes for Wilson—the Rolling Stones. The Rolling Stones are setting the tone for English youth as it shakes off the old Victorian dust" (Apr. 2, 1966), "Mini-jupes dare to make their appearance on the street. Will they conquer Paris?" (Apr. 16, 1966), and "Fashion: short wins" (Aug. 12, 1967).

³⁵ On the Windsor side, the story began with Charles and Diana's engagement in 1981, followed by the wedding, two births, divorce, and Diana's death in 1997. Caroline of Monaco's 1978 wedding was followed by a break-up in 1980, a happier and more fertile union with Stefano Casiraghi in 1983, his death in an accident in 1990, an affair with the French actor Vincent Lindon (1993-1996), and the encounter with Prince Ernst of Hanover, followed by remarriage and renewed motherhood in 1999. Stephanie's career began with her romantic connections to two boys with famous last names, Paul Belmondo and Anthony Delon (1983-1986), followed by mentions of three other partners, the birth of two children, a wedding to and later sensational separation from Daniel Ducret (1991-1996).

³⁶ The other long distance runners, i.e., present in Table 3 but not in Table 5, are Albert of Monaco, Athina Roussel, Audrey Hepburn, Claudia Cardinale, David Hallyday, Eric Tabarly, Estelle Lefébure-Hallyday, Jane Fonda, Jeanne Moreau, Jean-Paul Belmondo, Jesus Christ, Marilyn Monroe, Michel Sardou, Mireille Darc, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, Nathalie Baye, Queen Paola, Paul Belmondo, Prince Philip, Rainier of Monaco, Sarah Biasini, Vanessa Paradis and Yves Montand.

4.1. Female domination

55% of the celebrity population are women. This general average covers broad differences: the Aristocracy and Show business headings are both primarily female, whereas Politics and Society are clearly male. Aristocracy and Show business involve beauty and glamour, qualities in which women are said to excel; Politics and Society are spheres in which the exercise of power and violence prevail, together with physical strength and mastery, weapons, science, technology—all activities that gender stereotypes predestine men for.

Before 1976, the percentage of women among *Paris Match* cover celebrities was only 51%; after that date it reached 58%. The two fields in which women are most likely to appear are expanding, and the two more male ones are in decline. This feminization may be understood as a mere reflection of the trend in distribution by specialization area, and this is partially true, but sex ratios vary widely within the different areas, and feminization is the dominant development. In Show business before 1976, 3 out of every 4 celebrities was a woman; after that date only 3 in 5 were, but everywhere else the proportion of women rose, in accordance with the general trend (Table 6).

Table 6 – Proportion of women celebrities by heading and period (%)

	1949-2005	1949-1976	1976-2005
All	55.0	51.1	57.9
Aristocracy	71.5	65.8	75.6
Show business	64.6	74.8	58.6
Politics	26.6	19.0	36.7
Society	36.2	24.3	49.2

The increasing proportion of women is partly due to the fact that *Paris Match* became increasingly interested in celebrities' relatives or significant others—lovers or spouses, children. The fact that women represent 27% of celebrities in Politics in no way means there is slightly over one woman for three men among political personnel: women usually appeared on the cover as politicians' spouses. Mrs. Eisenhower or Madame Giscard d'Estaing would probably never have figured on the cover if their husbands had not been elected president of their respective republics. Women account for only 10.6% of political figures who attained celebrity through their own actions rather than those of a family member. That proportion did increase, however—from 8% before 1976 to 15% after. But in Politics the proportion of derivative celebrities increased from 17% to 30%, and the derivative celebrity population was also feminized, rising from 76% before 1976 to 87% after.

The increased proportion of women in Politics is thus due both to the fact that more women have access to political responsibilities and the magazine's increased interest in politicians' families (Table 7).

Table 7 – Proportion of women by derivative or non-derivative celebrity status

	Proportion of women (%)						Proportion of derivative celebrities (%)		
	Primary celebrities			Derivative celebrities					
	1949-2005	1949-1976	1976-2005	1949-2005	1949-1976	1976-2005	1949-2005	1949-1976	1976-2005
All	52.4	50.0	54.5	70.2	63.5	72.5	14.3	8.5	18.9
Aristocracy	72.4	66.7	76.3	58.7	52.2	63.7	6.2	6.5	5.9
Show business	64.9	76.9	56.6	63.0	41.6	66.6	15.0	5.9	20.4
Politics	10.6	7.7	15.2	82.1	76.0	86.7	22.3	16.6	30.1
Society	30.0	21.5	41.2	79.1	84.6	77.9	12.7	4.4	21.7

In Show business there is no clear trend. There were fewer and fewer women primary celebrities, and the percentage of women derivative celebrities increased. *Paris Match's* increased interest in male actors and singers after 1976 is reflected in the attention paid to Johnny Hallyday, Alain Delon, Jean-Paul Belmondo and Yves Montand. All four were often on the cover, each accompanied by a very young woman, and all four changed girlfriends several times. Each man's fame redounded to that of their female partners, and their children. David Hallyday, Anthony Delon and Paul Belmondo were the most famous boys of their generation; it was impossible for men born after 1950 making a career in show business to attain the highest levels of celebrity if they did not already belong to the Olympian cast by birth.

4.2. Age and the life cycle

The age pyramid of the celebrity population as a whole is a cross between a fir tree and a poplar. It sits on a base made up of very young children, often photographed at birth or when baptized for covers designed as birth announcements. There are virtually no children aged 5-14. The fir shape concerns women, who were most likely to figure on the cover between 20 and 29 and were very seldom photographed in old age. Men form the poplar; they could be presented at any age. Altogether, 49% of men—and only 12% of women—were 45 or over when they appeared on the cover.³⁷

³⁷ These calculations were done for personalities whose birth year is known (the average results are not much different when age is estimated on the basis of the photographic image, but those results are not presented here.). Age is defined as the difference between publication year and year of birth. Posthumous representations were not taken into account; in such cases, age at time shown in the image was often difficult to determine. The difference between the date the photo was taken and the date it was published was considered negligible. Percentages of personalities whose date of birth is unknown: 9.3% for posthumous representations, 23.4% for derivative celebrities, 0.4% for aristocrats, 4.0% for show business professionals, 7.3% for politicians, 27.9% for "Society."

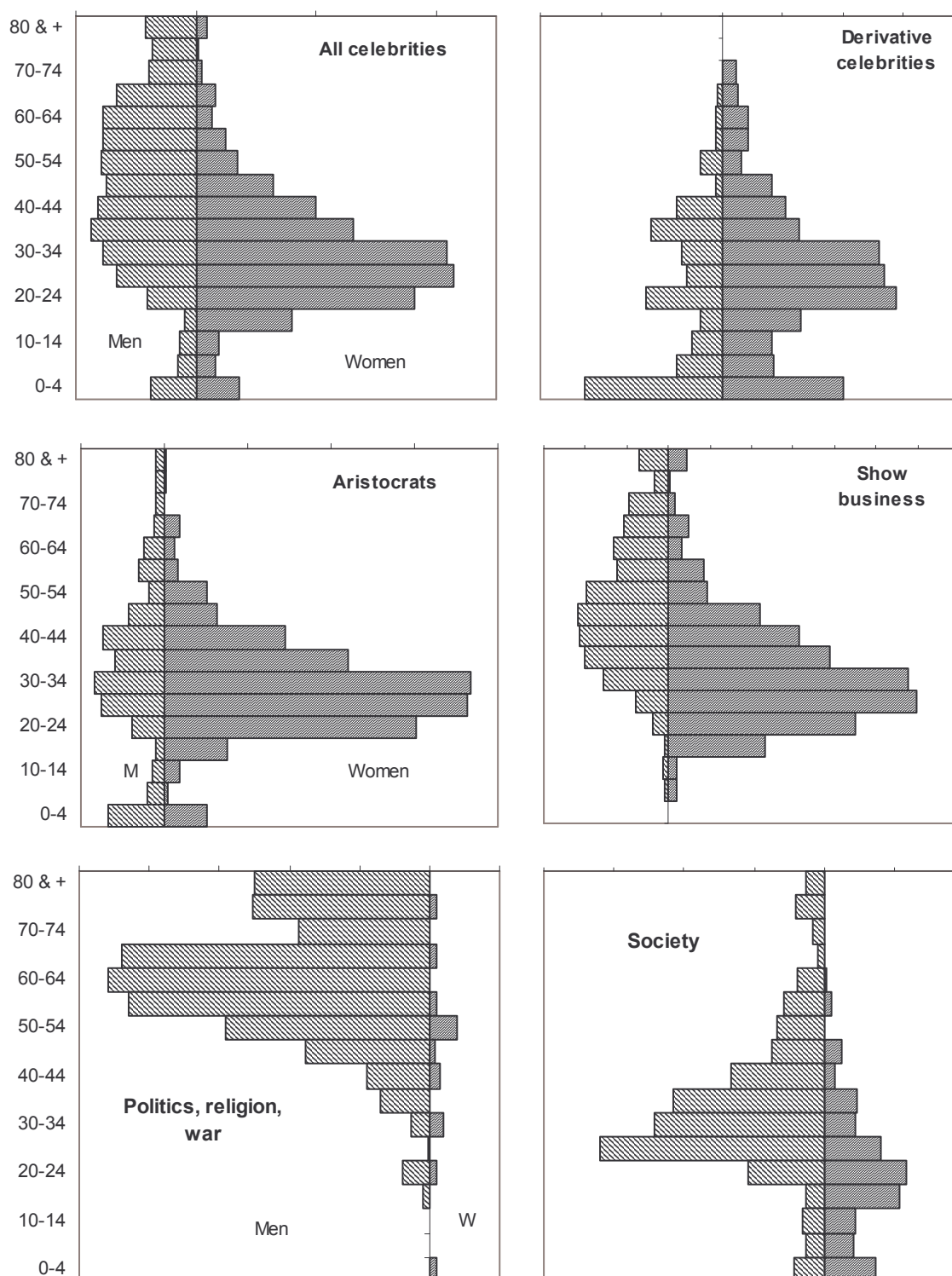


Figure 3 – Celebrity age pyramids by heading

Field does not include posthumous images, and derivative celebrities form a separate category.

Age distribution for aristocrats differed little by sex. The proportion of young children is high: in a world of heirs, celebrity often comes at birth.

Among show business professionals, age characteristics vary sharply by sex. As mentioned, the modal age span for men is 45-49, for women 25-29. This difference suggests that for women the most valued qualities are sex appeal and beauty, generally understood to deteriorate fast with age, whereas male charm is understood to resist more successfully against ageing.

For *Paris Match*, female beauty comes to the fore with adolescence and declines with maturity. At 9, Romy Schneider's daughter Sarah "*already* has her mother's beauty" (June 18, 1986; my italics). At 24, Estelle Hallyday is "*at the height* of her beauty" (August 9, 2001). "At 51, Mireille Darc *has kept* her radiant beauty" (June 8, 1989). Once a woman is over 30, the nature and "location" of her beauty changes. The beauty of Meryl Streep, 34 at the time she figured on the cover in question, was defined as "less sexy, more human" (May 29, 1987). At 44, the beauty of Raquel Welch "begins in the mind" (June 14, 1985). The "secrets" that the magazine reveals to its readers ensure preservation of the erotic and esthetic capital represented by the bodies of such stars as Jane Fonda and Raquel Welch.

Over time, the threshold of old age shifted. The December 22, 1962 cover of *Paris Match* reads: "Ingrid Bergman tells our reporter: 'You see, at 48, Hollywood has not changed me, I still have my own teeth.'" On February 18, 1967, the caption beneath a portrait of Martine Carol (who had just committed suicide) read: "This photo ... was her favorite. Her beauty here is no longer what it was in her days of stardom, it is the serious beauty of a 40-year-old woman." Women who were in their 50s in the 1990s seem better turned out than women in their 40s in the 1960s. At 53, Jane Fonda "is more radiant than ever" (December 6, 1990).

The themes of beauty and its erosion with age are not as likely to be evoked in connection with men; the text generally evokes their charm, a more active quality than beauty.³⁸ On the massive difference between the importance of beauty for women and the virtual irrelevance of this notion for men, my analysis parts company with Daniel Hamermesh and Jeff Biddle's 1994 analysis of the role of beauty on the job market: Hamermesh and Biddle judged beauty to be at least as important for men as women; my observations converge instead with those of Jean-François Amadieu (2002: 92).

³⁸ The words *beau/belle* and *beauté* were more likely to be used for women show business professionals than their male counterparts.

Men	Women	All	Chi sq. (hypothesis that usage is equally probable for M and W) significant at 0.001
3.6%	10.3%	8.0%	

Conversely, use of the words "charming" and "charm" is more frequent in texts on men

Men	Women	All	Chi sq. significant at 0.05
4.0%	1.6%	2.4%	

The scope of these observations is limited given the quantity of an image's possible meanings, meanings which are only supplemented by the text (see n. 21 above) and the fact that the text for a given personality is the result of choice: this or that textual attribute might refer to another figure (nonetheless, similar results are observed when we limit ourselves to topics showing a single personality).

In the world of politics the presence of aged celebrities was strong. Only 11% of political celebrities were under 45; 52% were 60 and over. 95.5% of the religious celebrities—primarily popes—were 60 and over. And 49% of the political class in the narrower sense was 60 or over.

As mentioned, the Society category is heterogeneous. The primarily young age profile has to do with the heavy sports component. By convention, my Athletes subheading extends to explorers, some of whom were quite old when they appeared on the magazine cover (Jean-Yves Cousteau, Paul-Emile Victor). There were four times more famous male athletes than famous female ones.

Secondary figures are persons whose celebrity derives from that of their relatives (aristocrats excepted); they are generally the children or spouses of show business, politics and sports personalities. Eight such instances of derivative glory were “Olympians” with at least five covers (Table 3). While political personnel were almost all male, we know that *Paris Match* tended increasingly to handle politics by attending to the private behavior of public personalities—i.e., by presenting politicians’ wives and children. But in the “performing team” (Goffman 1959: 93) that political officials and their spouses (usually wives) have long formed, the woman usually has the “second role” (Singly and Chaland 2002). In the 1950s, “Mamie” Eisenhower and Madame Vincent Auriol or Madame René Coty fit this definition very well. The John and Jacqueline Kennedy couple changed this situation: “A 43-year-old ‘K,’ John Kennedy, a 30-year-old ‘mamie’ [“grandma” in French, but here a reference to Mamie Eisenhower],” announced the November 19, 1960 cover of *Paris Match*. Young and beautiful, Jacqueline was no longer in the “second role”; ultimately, her popularity score was twice as high as John’s.

4.3. Posthumous fame

Celebrities whose existence is situated on magazine paper, as in this study, can have a life after death. A tightly circumscribed elite enjoyed posthumous fame: 34 celebrities (out of the 1566) figured on the cover at least once over a year after their death (Table 8).

Table 8 – Celebrities represented more than a year after their death, by sex and specialization area

Area	Men	Women	Celebrities			Covers		
			M	W	both	M	W	both
<i>Aristocracy</i>	Ramses II, Edward VIII	Grace Kelly, Grimaldi, Diana Spencer	2	2	4	1.5	2.8	4.3
<i>Show business</i>	Michel Berger, Jacques Brel, James Dean, Jean Gabin, Clark Gable, John Lennon, Yves Montand, Gérard Philipe	Vivien Leigh, Marilyn Monroe, <i>Véronique Mourois</i> , Edith Piaf, Romy Schneider, Simone Signoret	8	6	14	4.9	6.8	11.7
<i>Politics, religion, business, the military.</i>	Jesus Christ, <i>Joseph</i> , Napoleon Bonaparte, Adolf Hitler, Philippe Pétain, Joseph Stalin, Charles de Gaulle, Jean Moulin, Philippe Leclerc de Hautecloque, Jean-Marie de Lattre de Tassigny, John Kennedy, <i>John John Kennedy</i>	<i>Marie, Jacqueline Kennedy, Carolyn Bessette</i>	12	3	15	21.7	3.1	24.8
<i>Sports</i>	Philippe de Dieuleveult		1	0	1	2.1	2.0	5.1
TOTAL			23	11	34	28.1	12.8	40.8

Derivative celebrity names are in italics. Joseph et Mary, who appear above all in crèches, were considered historical rather than fictional figures in this study. Philippe de Dieuleveult was a journalist-explorer who died on an expedition to Central Africa.

Celebrities who enjoyed temporally extended glory were very likely to be men, specifically men in politics or religion (Ramses II, Jesus Christ, Napoleon, Pétain, Hitler, Stalin, de Gaulle). A few personalities of relatively modest reputation (Véronique d'Alançon-Mourousi, wife of a television anchorman; President Kennedy's son and daughter-in-law John-John Kennedy and Carolyn Bessette) would not have been included in the list of posthumous famous persons if the conventional interval between date of death and date of appearance on the cover were over one year.

There were many posthumous representations of political, religious, and military figures in the first years of *Paris Match*; their number later dwindled: 20.6 covers before the 1976 cut-off point, only 4.2 after that date. The opposite tendency was observed for arts and show business celebrities : 3 covers after 197, 8.7 after. The weight of collective event commemorations—primarily the two world wars and primarily no-name topics—also fell. *Paris Match*'s memorial and commemorative ambitions shifted focus from heroes and the dramas of *la grande histoire* to stars and princesses.

4.4. The geopolitics of celebrity: a tendency to withdraw within French borders

Paris Match geography changed significantly. From the first half of the magazine's life to the second, the percentage of covers on Monaco went from 1.5% to 9%, while those involving all other countries fell from 56% to 38% (Table 9).

Table 9 – Topics by category and country

Period	Category	Distribution by country (%)						Total	Covers
		France	Monaco	Great Britain	Western Europe other than France, Monaco, GB	USA	Others, undetermined		
1949-2005	All	48.2	5.0	8.0	13.3	12.0	13.4	100.0	2935.4
1949-1976	All	43.0	0.8	8.0	15.0	13.8	19.5	100.0	1415.3
1976-2005	All	53.1	8.9	8.0	11.8	10.4	7.8	100.0	1520.1
1949-2005	Aristocracy (primary celebrities only)	3.9	29.2	35.7	17.6	4.7	8.9	100.0	492.1
	Show business (celebrities)	64.8	0.2	2.6	14.1	15.3	3.0	100.0	1213.2
	Politics (celebrities.)	48.9	0.0	1.9	11.8	19.0	18.4	100.0	458.1
	Society (celebrities.)	62.9	0.1	2.1	14.1	9.7	11.1	100.0	336.9
	Topics handled without names	39.9	0.1	2.8	7.4	5.7	44.1	100.0	434.9
1949-1976	Aristocracy	6.3	5.6	34.6	30.4	6.6	16.5	100.0	205.0
	Show business	56.8	0.0	4.6	16.2	18.7	3.6	100.0	446.5
	Politics	42.7	0.0	2.9	10.7	21.2	22.6	100.0	265.2
	Society	58.2	0.0	2.9	13.8	14.4	10.7	100.0	173.0
	Topics handled without names	39.2	0.0	2.8	7.8	5.1	45.2	100.0	325.7
1976-2005	Aristocracy	2.2	46.0	36.5	8.4	3.4	3.4	100.0	287.1
	Show business	69.5	0.3	1.4	12.9	13.3	2.7	100.0	766.8
	Politics	57.4	0.0	0.5	13.5	16.0	12.6	100.0	193.0
	Society	67.9	0.3	1.2	14.3	4.7	11.6	100.0	164.0
	Topics handled without names	42.3	0.4	2.7	6.4	7.3	40.9	100.0	109.2

From 1949 to 1964, most five-year top-ten celebrities were foreign, and the only French members were actresses—Michèle Morgan, Dany Robin, Brigitte Bardot—and a politician, Charles de Gaulle. Great Britain and the United States were better represented than France at the time, Great Britain by five members of the royal family and Winston Churchill; the US by President Eisenhower followed by the Kennedy couple and, for Hollywood, Rita Hayworth followed by Liz Taylor. Italian cinema was present with Gina Lollobrigida and Sophia Loren. Belgium, Iran and Monaco, like the United Kingdom, owed most of their celebrity to their sovereigns.

After 1975, French celebrities were in the majority. The foreign presence on celebrity heights was limited to members of the houses of Windsor and Grimaldi (Princess Anne and Sarah Fergusson put in brief appearances, added to the more lasting ones of Princesses Diana, Caroline and Stephanie), Popes Paul VI and John Paul II, and three show business personalities who made their careers primarily in France: Romy Schneider, Raquel Welch and Claudia Schiffer. Throughout a period where the proportion of international economic flows was increasing and the theme of globalization seemed to occupy increasing space in public debate, the leading list of celebrities distinguished by *Paris Match* attests—from the 1950s to the early 2000s—to a clear withdrawal within French borders. The percentage of topics located abroad (not counting Monaco) went from 56% during the first half of the magazine's existence to 34% over the second half.

The tiny state of Monaco accounted for one-twentieth of *Paris Match* covers because of the reputation of its princely family, whereas Germany, France's primary demographic neighbor and economic partner, was a kind of media dwarf, with less than one-fiftieth of covers (1.7%), most of them on personalities whose careers were developing outside their country of origin: the actress Romy Schneider and the model Claudia Schiffer.

The United States' reputation rested on a more diversified portfolio and three major locations: Hollywood for the show business industry, Washington for the exercise of political and military power, and the Kennedy Space Center at Cape Canaveral for the exploration of outer space. The Third World and Eastern Europe "weighed" on average as much as the United States, but declined massively after the colonial wars and the collapse of the USSR, whereas the weight of the US remained approximately the same.

5. Collective portrait composition

A cover topic can be compared to a household: celebrities are sometimes represented alone, sometimes in the company of other celebrities. In the latter case, the family ties and romantic attachments (as well as other types of ties) between or among the different persons represented can be described in the same way as for statistical household surveys. The proportion of romantic or family ties increased to the detriment of other kinds of ties, namely professional ones.

5.1. A decline in portraits of individuals

The general trend shows a fall in the proportion of individual portraits, though most were still of this sort (72% before 1976; 56% after).

On average, the proportion of celebrities shown varied little from one category to another, but the category proportions evolved very differently over time. Prior to 1976, individual portraits were the rule for show business professionals (83% of cases); the figure plummeted to 53% afterwards. Among aristocrats, on the contrary, the proportion of individual portraits rose. In the other categories—politics, society—the figures fell slightly (Table 10).

Table 10 – Celebrities shown alone, by category, period and sex (%)

	Both sexes			Men			Women		
	1949- 2005	1949- 1976	1976- 2005	1949- 2005	1949- 1976	1976- 2005	1949- 2005	1949- 1976	1976- 2005
All	62.9	72.1	55.8	57.9	67.6	49.1	67.0	76.3	60.6
Aristocracy	57.7	55.6	59.3	31.3	36.1	26.4	67.6	65.1	69.2
Show business	64.2	83.1	53.2	52.0	71.1	44.9	71.0	87.4	59.0
Politics, war, religion	65.8	68.8	61.7	70.7	72.7	67.2	51.9	52.0	51.9
Sports, society	61.7	68.0	54.9	65.8	72.2	56.2	54.1	55.2	53.4

Women were much more likely to figure alone on the cover than men. They were more likely to be shown individually in the Aristocracy and Show business categories, whereas men were likely to figure alone in the other two categories.

These differences reflect sharply contrasting male and female roles. Many women, namely in Aristocracy and Show business, owe their fame to their beauty, appreciated by means of an individual portrait, whereas young male actors were more often shown in the company of women whose beauty and youth attested to their partner's charm.

What relationships obtain between persons who appear together on a cover? To answer, we need to have a predetermined definition of different types of possible ties between celebrities. Here the contrast is primarily between romantic and family ties on the one hand, professional or near-professional ties on the other. The former refer to particularist roles, the latter to universalist ones. As we know, Talcott Parsons analyzed the opposition between “traditional” and “industrialist” societies in terms of roles: particularist roles, prescribed and affect-laden, predominate in traditional societies, whereas in industrialist societies, roles are likely to be chosen, and they are emotionally neutral, universalist and specific, and oriented toward accomplishment (Parsons and Shils 1951).

The likelihood of portraits of couples or groups being composed of peers or rivals linked by near-professional relations—Brigitte Fossey meeting Elizabeth II (February 21, 1953), Pope Pius XII receiving René Coty (May 25, 1957)—fell, and it became more likely for such portraits to show celebrity's relatives or lovers. This trend is a major symptom of the “people” perspective. Professional or near-professional links—between political officials of different countries, actors working together on the same film, etc.—accounted for 8% of covers showing persons identified by name from 1949 to 1976, and 7% from 1976 to 2005 (Table

11). Particularistic ties—romantic, marital or parental—went from 18% to 36%. The generalist press, at least *Paris Match*, thus followed the opposite trend from the one described by Parsons: the proportion of emotional ties rose while that of bureaucratic and professional relations fell.

Table 11 – Type of company the celebrity is shown with, by heading and period

	Romantic attachment or marital tie (%)			Parent-child or other family tie (%)			Professional tie (%)			All types of relations (%)		
	1949-2005	1949-1976	1949-2005	1949-2005	1949-1976	1949-2005	1949-2005	1949-1976	1949-2005	1949-2005	1949-1976	1949-2005
All	117.8	111.4	22.8	110.4	66.9	13.1	77.2	77.7	6.9	35.4	26.0	42.8
Aristocracy	224.8	330.9	20.6	112.9	88.0	16.4	33.0	33.4	2.8	40.7	42.3	39.8
Show business	117.9	66.2	24.8	110.3	77.0	12.2	66.4	22.5	8.7	34.6	15.7	45.7
Politics, war, religion	113.4	88.7	19.6	77.2	66.3	8.3	111.6	114.1	8.3	32.2	29.1	36.2
Sports, society	113.3	55.5	21.5	111.4	66.2	16.8	110.3	116.0	4.3	35.0	27.7	42.6
Men	119.8	111.7	27.0	110.8	66.2	14.9	99.8	112.0	7.8	40.4	29.9	49.7
Women	116.2	111.1	19.7	110.0	77.6	11.7	55.2	33.6	6.2	31.4	22.3	37.6

In the aristocratic world there was little change in the type of representations: the fall in proportion of couple portraits or situations (from 31% to 21%, whereas in all the other fields there was an increase) was made up for by the increase in the proportion of parent-child relations (from 8% to 16%). Altogether, the Aristocracy tended to lose its singularity: before 1976 it was the only group for which so much attention was given to family and romantic relations; after 1976 the other categories followed suit. Correlatively, cover vocabulary attests that love, beauty and charm came to occupy an increasing amount of space, whereas themes of competition, conflict, success, victory, courage, heroism, feats and performances, and epic were stable or declined.³⁹ Hedonistic values outstripped the values of power and success.

5.2. Gender roles and number of romantic partners

Turning to individual itineraries, we see that the average number of romantic partners or spouses with whom celebrities were shown on the cover is slightly over 1. This is a function of celebrity level. There were no cases of polygamy;⁴⁰ a celebrity presented once only could have no more than one partner, whereas a celebrity with a long career could have been photographed in the company of several successive partners. Among celebrities with a score below 5 covers, differences by specialization area and sex were slight and depended above all on celebrity score. For the 69 persons of greatest renown (scores of at least 5 covers), the contrast was between the aristocracy and show business worlds: number of partners in the aristocracy is higher for women than men; the opposite holds in show business (Table 12).

³⁹ The terms “love,” “beauty,” “charm” and their derivatives appear ed in 15.1% of topics (8.1% before 1976, 19.0% after). The terms “hero,” “record,” “victory,” “courage,” “triumph,” “epic,” “legend,” “combat,” “battle,” “conflict,” “confrontation,” “war” and their derivatives appeared in 17.8% of topics (20.3% before 1976, 16.3% after). The rates for each of these two periods were weighted by the inverse of average text length (see n. 19). The unweighted rate for “love” and “beauty” vocabulary was 5.9% before 1976 and 23.9% after; for accomplishment and power it was 15.0% before 1976 and 20.5% after that date.

⁴⁰ One cover simultaneously shows Roger Vadim and several of his partners, but this was a retrospective reconstruction that appeared simultaneously with publication of a book. Vadim posed holding portraits of Catherine Deneuve, Brigitte Bardot and Jane Fonda, presented as his consecutive partners (Apr. 25, 1986).

Table 12 – Average number of romantic partners or spouses by celebrity score, sex and specialization area

<i>Average number of partners</i>							
		All		Aristocracy		Show business	
Score	Both sexes	M	W	M	W	M	W
<1	0.40	0.37	0.44	0.76	0.50	0.45	0.42
1 to <2	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.76	0.48	0.27	0.18
2 to <5	0.51	0.61	0.42	0.60	0.56	0.74	0.38
5 to <20	1.17	1.17	1.16	1.79	1.16	1.87	1.15
≥ 20	4.20	5.31	3.87		4.24	6.97	2.88
All	1.00	0.93	1.11	1.04	2.74	1.60	0.82
<i>Number of celebrities</i>							
		All		Aristocracy		Show business	
Score	Both sexes	M	W	M	W	M	W
<1	716	403	313	26	27	163	167
1 to <2	556	282	274	17	21	97	173
2 to <5	214	111	103	19	14	43	67
5 to <20	63	28	35	5	7	10	25
≥ 20	11	3	8	0	5	2	3
All	1560	827	733	67	74	315	435

A few personalities were crucial to these differences. For women aristocrats, the high average is imputable to the two princesses of Monaco, Caroline and Stephanie. For professional show business men, Johnny Hallyday, Alain Delon and his son Anthony, Yves Montand, and Paul Belmondo appeared with 3 to 9 partners, where for women, only Brigitte Bardot and Romy Schneider were photographed in the company of more than two different partners. Conversely, images of couples are absent or rare, and for actresses such as Catherine Deneuve, Isabelle Adjani and Sophie Marceau, the vocabulary of “secrets” is over-represented. The only celebrity shown in a homosexual couple is the tennis champion Amélie Mauresmo, near the end of the period (March 14, 1999). The absence of male couples may be interpreted as indicating lower tolerance of male homosexuality. Within the world of politics (not distinguished in Table 12 because the number of cases was so low), belonging to an apparently tightknit, stable “marital team” was long the rule. Signs of change appeared in 1994, when the veil was lifted on President Mitterrand’s double life, again in 1998 when the relation between President Clinton and a White House intern came to light (*Paris Match* strongly disapproved),⁴¹ and most recently in 2005 with the echoes of marital strife between Nicolas and Cécilia Sarkozy.

Overall, hedonistic expression of romantic drives was better accepted in men than women, better tolerated among art world entertainers than in the lofty spheres of politics and the aristocracy, and better accepted generally as time went on. In the 1960s Brigitte Bardot was accepted as a relatively legitimate

⁴¹ “Clinton and Monica: the story of the scandal that is worrying the world. Who, then, is this young seductress? At the heart of the affair: sex, lies and the judiciary. The President with the young Californian Monica Lewinsky during a reception on the White House lawn after his reelection in 1996” (Feb. 5, 1998); “Clinton’s told too many lies! Monica: it was a real affair. Damning sexual details in the Starr report. His family and friends are abandoning him. Hilary can’t take it any longer. His presidency is in danger” (Sep. 17, 1998).

pioneer of *la liberté des mœurs*, but thirty or forty years later, *Paris Match* stigmatized a number of “scandalous princesses.”⁴² For men, particularly men in the artistic professions, having multiple partners was more likely to be considered flattering; it came close to being a professional obligation. Overall, the celebrity population varied little from the French population at large: according to the 1991-1992 *Analyse des comportements sexuels* survey, men claimed to have a much higher number of sexual partners than women did.⁴³

Analyzing the events that triggered the cover stories confirms these trends. Extra-professional events affecting celebrities (illnesses, love affairs, family life events) came to occupy more space: 15% before 1976; 32% after. Conversely, events related to celebrities’ areas of expertise—i.e., political, artistic, scientific, athletic or military events—decreased proportionally (Table 13).

Table 13 – Proportion of triggering events involving illnesses, love affairs, births, other family life events

Category	Proportion of triggering events involving illnesses, love affairs, births, other family life events (%)		
	1949-2005	1949-1976	1976-2005
All	24.2	15.3	32.4
(number of covers)	(2935.4)	(1415.3)	(1520.1)
Aristocracy	53.7	53.4	53.9
Show business	28.2	16.7	34.9
Politics, war, religion	10.8	6.9	16.1
Sports, society	6.9	2.8	14.3

Much of the interest in aristocrats has to do with a passion for genealogy, with its attention to alliances and misalliances, fertility and sterility, illnesses, possible hereditary defects, accidents of the sort that ensure a lineage’s continuation or threaten it with extinction—all events that may be part of the private life of ordinary families but which, among aristocrats with a certain degree of power (or in a position to claim to exercise a certain degree of power) are necessarily at the heart of their public life because they involve the future of their “houses.” *Paris Match* has always shown keen interest in official ceremonies (baptisms,

⁴² “The scandalous princess. The Queen of England expels Marie-Christine of Kent. The only photo of her affair with the billionaire Hunt” (Jul. 26, 1985); “Sarah. The scandal photos, the album showing the ‘escapades’ of a girl who had a high time of it before entering Buckingham” (Apr. 18, 1986); “Anne, scandalous princess. England shocked by the secret love letters. Photos of her marital betrayal ... and of the betrayal committed by her husband Mark Philips” (Apr. 20, 1989); “Lady Helen, the wedding of the year. The Queen’s second cousin was causing a scandal. By marrying Tim, she’s brought a smile back to the English royal court” (Jul. 23, 1992); “Stephanie thrown out of the palace. Her latest romantic exploits have shocked Rainier. Princess Stephanie resplendent at the ‘Bal de la rose Africa’ last March 22; 24 days later, after a new scandal, she’s been expelled from official ceremonies in Monaco” (Apr. 17, 2003). Princess Diana elicited a certain ambivalence; she was alternately praised and chastized: “Diana alone ... A fierce will visible on the face of the Princess of Wales, the will of a woman who means to master her destiny” (Dec. 24, 1992); “... accused of harrasing a married man on the phone, a friend of Prince Charles ... Spattered by this new scandal, Diana finds she is utterly alone” (Sep. 8, 1994).

⁴³ In the course of their lives, “50% of men have had 5 partners at most. ... 50% of women have had more than one partner” (Spira and Bajos 1993: 135); “It is reasonable to think that men have a tendency to overestimate the number of partners they’ve had and that women—perhaps—tend to underestimate it” (*ibid.*, p. 136).

weddings, burials), and its interest in offenses against the conventions of honor and religion were just as intense.

In the other categories, interest in love life and family life events was low before 1976 and quite strong after, namely in Show business, where it was increasingly fed by show business professionals' love affairs and echoes of information about their heirs. Aristocracy and show business, the expanding categories, are also those in which the role of "people" is greatest. This view of celebrity focuses more on the person than on his or her professional performance—a development that Michel Leiris described in a diary entry dated October 27, 1966: "Read in *L'Express* that Johnny Hallyday, who seemed to be running out of steam and hadn't performed since his attempted suicide, has made a triumphant come-back at the Olympia... It seems that in contrast to the "*monstres sacrés*"—they were still actors—... today's "idols" (the late James Dean, Brigitte Bardot, Johnny Hallyday, etc.) are appreciated only if they play their own character. No more 'distanciation' for the audience: JH is not an artist who sings songs, he's JH singing" (Leiris 1992: 617).

Interest in the relatives of political officials is nothing new. France's presidential office offered an example as early as the 1950s, with a cover on the wedding of President René Coty's granddaughter (May 29, 1954).⁴⁴ That interest became stronger during the Kennedy presidency (1960-1963) and the seven-year presidential term of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (1974-1981). Covers pertaining to the latter showed not only wife and children but also a considerable number of labradors.⁴⁵ There were already examples of sports

⁴⁴ "The Elysée bride. Janine Egloff, granddaughter of President Coty and secretary to Mme Coty, is becoming Mme. Jean-Paul Le Maréchal. Her wedding dress, designed by Jacques Heim, is made of 58m. of tulle, 29.3m. of ottoman and 39m. of faille."

⁴⁵ "Her third spring at the Elysée Palace. Anne-Aymone recounts. Under the eyes of Bella, the presidential labrador, Mme Giscard d'Estaing plants rhododendrons in the Elysée garden" (May 8, 1976); "Giscard—his third round. By Marc Ullman, Michel Gonod, Jean Cau. Photos of victory Sunday. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing received *Paris Match* on Friday, March 17, before leaving for the Château d'Authon. At his feet, the labrador 'Samba,' a gift from the Queen of England (Mar. 31, 1978); "Valérie Anne. Elections: the Giscards move up to the front line. Mme Gérard Montessier, daughter of the President of the Republic, with Othon, her labrador, a present from her father. Coverage at her home, where she is working her husband's campaign in the canton elections" (Mar. 23, 1979; note the word play on Authon the castle and Othon the labrador). A fourth cover with labradors came out after Giscard d'Estaing's presidency: "Exclusive on Giscard. The most powerful pages from his new true-story book. The confrontation. His secret wounds, the "diamond" trap, in the company of the great in Venice. In the arms of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing are 3 of his 6 new labradors: Gabon, Gaïa, Ghost, Gobi, Godiva and Goth—six weeks' old today" (May 23, 1991). Other presidential labradors: François Mitterrand's Julie (Mar. 16, 1979) and Baltique (Jan. 16, 1997); Claude Chirac's Maskou (Aug. 17, 1995). Among *Paris Match* covers, the only other representation of a labrador shows Princess Stephanie Grimaldi holding two-and-a-half-month-old Funny Face (photo for April 25, 1991). Altogether, dogs figure on 35 *Paris Match* covers, cats on 6. Personalities with cats are likely to be intellectuals: Albert Schweitzer, Georges Brassens, André Malraux, also Amanda Lear, who was close to Dali and Warhol. Brigitte Bardot was interested in both dogs and cats, as well as cheetahs, leopards, cows and elephants. In accordance with François Héran's study of pet ownership—a 1982-1983 French survey showed that 22% of French households had a cat and 35% a dog (Héran 1987: 420)—the proportion of dogs appearing on *Paris Match* covers is higher than those of cats. "For artists, intellectuals and degree-holding public servants, cats are a ready-made incarnation of detachment from the most visible forms of power, whether economic, military or political ("There are no cat policemen," as Prévert used to say). Dogs are radically different, of course; their social image remains strongly associated with defense of property and persons and maintenance of authority-based relations" (Héran 1987: 422). Given the connotations of the animals shown, *Paris Match* may be said to rank on the side of the defense of property and persons and the maintenance of authority-based relations, rather than that of intellectuals and highly educated civil servants. But the observed deviation—for 41 covers only—is not

“people-ization” in the 1950s—the bull-fighter Luis-Miguel Dominguin’s marriage to “former Miss Italy and Italian film star” Lucia Bose (March 12, 1955) and the tennis player Jean-Noël Grinda: “the Don Juan of the courts is going to marry the Mexican heiress Sylvia Casablancas” (November 3, 1959)—but the phenomenon became much more massive after 1976, and around 2000 it affected champions or former champions in several disciplines: tennis (Yannick Noah, Amélie Mauresmo), soccer (Zinedine Zidane, Jean-Pierre Papin, Bixente Lizarazu, Didier Deschamps, Emmanuel Petit), sailing (Eric Tabarly), judo (David Douillet), rugby (Franck Tournaire) and swimming (Laure Manaudou).

6. Conclusion

With an original grid for observing a particular magazine’s news agenda, it is possible to characterize the changes that occurred in the editorial content of a major magazine over a period of over half a century. Several of the results are of more than mundane interest: the persistence and indeed revitalization of the aristocracy; the increasing interest in celebrities’ particularist roles; the tendency to withdraw within national boundaries.

The constituent properties of the nobility make it a reference group with very strong symbolic attraction. Because of its past privileges (in a few countries it maintains those privileges), the aristocracy elicits a virtually religious interest in what may still incarnate the sacred, as well as a political interest in the dynastic events affecting it, and therefore a strongly political interest in aristocrats’ love lives and family life. Above all, what affords this group its enduring prestige is the excellence of its taste, while its “person-to-person” relationship structure (Halbwachs 1937: 93) means that it readily fits into the increasingly “personalized” handling of news attested to by the weekly magazine *Paris Match*. This is not economic and political persistence of the Ancien Regime, of the sort identified by Arno Mayer in Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth century (Mayer 1990), but rather a symbolic revitalization of the aristocracy. The renewal goes together with a shift in the values it incarnates: those of tradition and power have declined while that of “glamour” or esthetic pleasure has increased.

Another important change concerns the increased focus on public persons’ private lives, the declining tendency to sanctify stars, the increasingly exclusive interest in who individuals are in their lives as ordinary persons, and, conjointly, a radically lower tendency to celebrate the feats they have accomplished in their area of specialization. This is not so much “the fall of public man” (Sennett 1979) as a shift in the sources of interest in that man: he is now expected to share the same romantic and family joys and pains as his audience—to have a specular relation to that audience, whatever the income gap between them.

statistically significant. Meanwhile, horses appeared on 13 covers: aristocratic when shown with Elizabeth II, Princess Anne, the Olympic champion Pierre Jonquères d’Oriola; military in connection with Maréchal Alphonse Juin; Hollywoodian the the company of John Wayne. Two other actors, Dany Robin and Gérard Dépardieu, were photographed in the company of a horse.

Third unexpected result: the tendency to withdraw within national French borders. This is visible in each of the main categories. For show business, there was a decline in interest in Hollywood and Cinecittà, an increase in the attention paid to the major French television stations. In Politics, focus on the presidential Elysée Palace increased. One Society topic was the end of the American-Soviet space race. With regard to the Aristocracy (a group in which the French nation strictly speaking has never had much of a presence), there was a massive rise in attention to the near-by principality of Monaco and declining interest in more distant and powerful aristocratic houses.

The strength of these editorial changes tended to weaken over time due to the overall decline in *Paris Match* circulation: in 1960 the magazine was read by one in five French persons; in the 2000s by fewer than one in ten. This decline can be interpreted as the effect of a stronger segmentation between the “cultured” public’s tastes and those of the general public. Circulation of news magazines in general and of the “people” press in particular increased over the period while circulation of the generalist weekly *Paris Match*, torn between its two types of readership, crumbled away. The gradual separating out of the stock of bourgeois first names from working-class first names (Besnard and Grange 1993) can be seen as a facet of this same segmentation: persons in the French Who’s Who and the French population as a whole used to have common tastes in that the first group set the fashion and the second followed; now the two categories tend to choose first names from different stocks. It is perhaps more relevant to say that there are a variety of publics, rather than one, and that in the competition among media, the space available to a truly generalist press bringing together learned and popular culture is continually shrinking. Still, no other generalist weekly in France can claim a penetration rate of 8% or 9%, and this can be interpreted as signifying the existence of a culture that, while not common to all, is widely shared in the French population.

The issue of how press content and the public’s beliefs mutually influence each other remained outside this scope of this study. We do not know whether *Paris Match* is escape reading, entertainment, or a source of touchstones for behavior in a changing world. However, we can identify certain affinities between the observations presented here and certain massive, well-known social shifts: France moved from war to peace, from strong to weak growth; mores and lifestyles were liberalized; it became possible for individuals to devote more time and energy to their quest for personal development and self-fulfillment. The change in editorial policy at *Paris Match*, the move toward a more intensely “people” approach to the news, seems closely related to this set of transformations.

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