

MEDIA REGULATED LIVES:

A Comparative Study on the Effects of Media Regulation on Australian and
American College Students

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On my honor
I have neither given nor received
unauthorized aid on this thesis.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the relationship between media regulation and social status by conducting comparative study between Australian and American college students. The thesis defines popular culture as a new form of high culture used to elevate social status. The hypothesis states that less media regulation exposes people to more popular culture and therefore improves their social status. Australians live in a context of less media regulation and are therefore popular culture and media exposures are hypothesized to have less of an impact on their social statuses compared to Americans. In order to test this hypothesis, a survey was sent to Australian students at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, and to students at the Colorado College in the United States. The survey results and analysis revealed that though American students have higher levels of achievement and aspiration in college compared to Australian students, American students have significantly lower prestige scores. The results of the thesis as well as other alternative hypotheses ask questions and start a discussion for future comparative research on media regulation and society.

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“The average American will spend three years of his or her life watching television commercials, just the commercials” (Kilbourne 2010). Popular culture surrounds our day-to-day lives in various forms such as in art, music, sports and fashion. People living in a fast paced developing world would struggle to spend the first three hours of their day away from any form of media exposure or popular culture; it is on your cereal boxes, in your closets and, in the way you decide to do your hair. Knowledge of popular culture is similar to a prerequisite college class that you need take in order to make good progress; it provides you with something that the rest of society can relate to you with. Possessing that cultural knowledge is possessing information that could affect your social status. The vessel that popular culture usually communicates itself in is through the media. As a vehicle for popular culture, the media has the potential to affect and mold what we consider popular culture, making popular culture a media product. Media presence is affected by government media regulations and the extent of these regulations varies form country to country. This thesis defines popular culture as a new form of high culture. It explores whether or not the differences in media regulation affects the media product, popular culture, sent out into society. Additionally, this thesis questions how differences in popular culture, due to media regulation, affect an individual’s social status given their knowledge of popular culture.

In this thesis I will specifically explore for relationships between social status, popular culture and different media regulation in two developed countries: Australia and the United States. I hypothesize that less media regulation leads to increased exposure to the media and popular culture. This increased exposure might impact an individual’s need to know about popular culture in order to gain social status.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Popular Culture and the Media

Popular culture encompasses a multitude of possible definitions. Hoppenstand (2003) feels that popular culture has the potential to be anything and everything. The word 'pop' on its own covers a wide range of possible meanings. Fishwick (1974) narrows 'Pop' down to three definitions, he says it is something that appeals to and is understood by the ordinary person, rather than just the elite. It is something new and in high demand, it could be something “universal-electronic-instant” (Fishwick 1974). By Hoppenstand and Fishwick's definitions, the media is a part of today's popular culture.

Popular culture has grown to a new level mostly because media gave it the ability to reach large numbers of people and penetrate almost all aspects of society. Television, movies, music, fashion, social attitudes and lifestyle are all communicated through, and in many cases, created by the media. This is a testament to the leading role that the media plays in making popular culture what it is today. Research argues that even before the media was prevalent, popular culture existed in the form of music, fashion as well as working and middle class culture (Hoppenstand 2003). However, today's popular culture is mass culture and a reflection of western society's progress because of the media.

The media does more than communicate, it also consists of television directors, art directors, journalists, reporters, and others who create and choose the transmitted material. This is where the media overlaps into being a piece of popular culture because it is both the vehicle and the content. In this thesis I define the media as an important part of popular culture; given the knowledge that today's popular culture is both created and communicated via the media. It is by these definitions that regulation affects the media

and therefore affects popular culture.

The media turns modern popular culture into a new and different breed of culture. Media makes it possible for society to fulfill almost any curiosities with the click of a button on an Internet search. The Internet has opened doors that allow all who have access to gain new forms of open expression. Music, art and fashion change at rapid paces with multitudes of variety, allowing for everyone to have a preference. The media is an all including culture with no boundaries or rules, where thoughts and ideas are expressed and sent out to the masses to do with them what they please (Fishwick 1974). The media's 'no limit' characteristic means that there are infinite possible effects that it could have on society, both good and bad.

Media Regulation and its Impact on Society

Media regulation is a way of controlling how relevant popular culture is in society. Research addressing media regulation shows that less regulation affects the type and amount of media sent out to society, and therefore affects the how influential the media is on people's lives. The history of media regulation in the United States and Australia indicates that Australia has much stricter media regulation compared to the United States. Research on the effect violence in the media as well as Tom Englehardt's "Shortcake Strategy" theory, supports the idea that media regulation impacts media output as well as the way that people consume media.

The history of U.S and Australian media regulation

The history of media regulation in Australia and America has gone in opposite directions, with American regulation becoming less and less limiting while Australian regulation increases. The American Federal Communications Commission (FCC) was

established by the 1934 Communications act. The FCC's job is to regulate television as well as all other communications such as radio, wire, satellite and cable in all 50 states (FCC 2011). The FCC ensured that television broadcasting had a limited relationship with business corporations who usually had more economic rather than ethical interests. Additional regulation came when the Fairness Doctrine was established in 1949 (Limburg 2012). At the time there were few frequencies available to listeners and viewers. The doctrine wanted broadcasting stations to allow for different points of view, rather than basing their opinions on the perspectives of a small group of people. Over the years regulation on the number of media vehicles an entity could own was limited. The media broadcaster was seen as a "public trustee" who holds the great responsibility of delivering accurate and unbiased information to the public (Limburg 2012).

Australia followed suit and also began introducing media limits similar the new American regulations. A study done by the Australian minister for communications in 1985 began a forward movement to monitor and review rules of media ownership and the report led to some new adjustments. The audience reach rule was introduced, which meant that entities could not have licenses that served and dominated over 75% of the population (Gardiner-Garden and Chowns 2006). Additionally, cross media rules were put in place to ensure that no entity was allowed to own more than one media outlet license. One could not own a television and a radio-broadcasting license, a radio and a newspaper or a television and newspaper broadcasting license at the same time (Gardiner-Garden and Chowns 2006). This, similarly to the U.S.A, was done to promote democracy and diversity in the media by ensuring that the television, radio and newspapers in the same region were not run under the same owner.

America and Australian regulation trends parted ways with the 1981 election of Ronald Reagan who had a new view on the direction of regulation in America. The Reagan administration saw media limitations as reducing market productivity. Reagan's placement of Mark Fowler as the new chair of the FCC took care of the administrations concerns with regulation (Limburg 2012). After his placement, Fowler made moves to abolish the fairness doctrine, which was done in 1987 (Limburg 2012). This led to a snowball of further deregulation implemented by both the FCC and Congress; guidelines on the amount of advertising allowed were removed and there was an increase in the number of stations one entity can own. All in all, as American media became more and more deregulated, the Australian government has made regulation a consistent priority.

Popular culture and the media as social instruments

Many scholars feel that the media and the lack of good media regulation are to blame for the manipulation of society in order to make money, as well as contributing to bad social attitudes and behavior. Research shows that the media can affect our behavior and plays a pervasive role in society.

Media's contribution to increased violence in society shows its capability to control our actions. There have been cases in the United States and England where the presence of violence in the media directly caused individuals to act violently (Alexander 2003). Though few, these cases are extreme signs of the media's impact on its audience. A psychological study by Bandura, Ross, and Ross (1963) looked at the effects that violent television shows and films have on children. The study used four groups of children. One group was the control group and they did not watch any kind of violent media. The second group watched a real life violent act performed by a person. The third

group watched a film of a violent act performed by a person and the fourth group watched a film of a violent act performed by a cartoon character. All the groups were then placed in a play area and then had the toy they were playing with taken away in order to frustrate and provoke them. The room contained both aggressive and non-aggressive toys, as well as a large toy punching bag. Of the four groups, the control group was found to be least violent when in the play pen (Bandura, Ross, and Ross 1963). The study concluded that visual violence in mass media does affect behavior.

Bandura, Ross and Ross's study is one of the earliest done of its kind; since the 1960s similar more recent studies have been conducted on the affects of media content on society. A more recent study on attitudes towards cosmetic surgery in middle-aged women found that media exposure, particularly television and magazines, changes women's opinions on cosmetic surgery (Slevec and Tiggerman 2010). The results show that it is possible that continued media exposure to cosmetic surgery “may overtime modify attitudes (towards surgery), such that it becomes viewed as an acceptable method for addressing body discontent” (Slevec and Tiggerman 2010:71).

The theory that media exposure can change societal views and actions is widely disputed. Some researchers and many TV broadcasters feel that the media simply reflects what happens in society, and that the films and shows on TV also reflect what society demands. Even so, Bandura, Ross and Ross's study and other research do show that children act more violently after watching violent films than they do having not watched them. Additionally, Slevec and Tiggerman's study reveals how the media might have the ability to work more subconsciously in changing society's perceptions, and normalizing things such as cosmetic surgery. Jean Kilbourne's documentary about portrayals of

women in the media discusses how the media has a subconscious and long lasting effect on society (2010). Kilbourne talks about the ubiquitous nature of advertising and how it sends subliminal messages to men and women about their self worth and their identities (2010). She emphasizes that the media, particularly advertising, sells more than just products; it sells “values, images, and concepts of love, sexuality, success, and normalcy. [It tells] us who we are and who we should be” (Kilbourne 2010).

The media is a part of popular culture that is capable of being manipulative and is often motivated by capitalism. Tom Engelhardt's article (1986) discusses the program length commercial; an example of the misuse of the media as well as the power that it can hold over its audience. The program length commercial was born in 1980 with the election of Ronald Reagan as president. The Reagan era emphasized less media regulation; they exercised this with the election of Mark Fowler as the head of the FCC who executed that desire. The program length commercial began with Strawberry Shortcake, a character and image of a little girl created by two employees of the American Greeting Card Association, Tom Wilson and Jack Chojnacki (Engelhardt 1986). Strawberry Shortcake was created with the deliberate combination of things that little girls love, or are assumed to love; namely, pink, sweet and pretty things (Engelhardt 1986). Usually, a children's television show sparked the creation of merchandise based on the show. The TV character's image and name was licensed, which meant that toy, clothing, and other companies had to pay licensing fees in-order to sell merchandise based off of the TV character's image. Strawberry Shortcake turned licensing backwards since the TV show was born out of the character and its products. Wilson and Chojnacki saved as well as made money by creating the character and the show themselves, that

way they did not have to pay to license the character from other creators. This was a revolutionary way to capitalize on marketing toys seeing as the TV show, the actual advertisements, and the toys each reinforced and sold the each other (Engelhardt 1986). The TV program was essentially a commercial in itself, hence given the name: the program-length commercial. Though some television stations at the time refused to run the TV show, rightly seeing it as a money making scheme, the Reagan era's lenient standpoint on media regulation made it easier for more people to emulate the “Strawberry Shortcake Strategy” (Engelhardt 1986). The creation of media solely to make money rather than creating media that educates and stimulates a child's mind is a negative aspect of mass culture. The deliberate exploitation of the audience to make money is also an example of the media's power to mold society's behavior and choices.

Violence on television and the “Shortcake Strategy” are examples of media and mass culture's impact on social behavior. The discussion surrounding mass media and its impact on society focuses on the critique that mass media numbs the lives of everyday people, particularly the working class. Following that theory, research argues that the elite class creates mass culture and media as forms of hegemonic tools. Hegemony is the elite class's “form of cultural control” (Alexander 2003:44). The elite create ruling ideas, cultural values and norms, then presents these ideas as “the only rational universally valid ones” (Marx 1846[1978] Alexander 2003:44). The working class then passively accepts these cultural ideals and by doing so, they distract themselves from the fact that they are being undermined and treated unfairly. Raymond Williams' discussion on hegemony begins with defining culture as a ““whole social process”, in which men define and shape their whole lives” and states that “hegemony goes beyond culture” because it works

within the crevices of the “whole social process,” and therefore shows itself in the inequalities between social structures such as class, within the social process (1977:108). This emphasizes that hegemony is in some ways more dangerous than direct displays of power and ruling because hegemony works as part of people's lives, unassumingly shaping their views and norms.

Overall, the existing critiques describe mass culture and the media as corrosive to society and as tools for the elite class to use against the working class in order to gain power (Alexander 2003). This thesis investigates mass culture and the media as providing a different type of tool to society. Rather than being a completely negative instrument, all of society can use mass media and culture in order to gain social status as well as identify with various status groups. Within that context, mass culture and media, as tools, are not exclusive to the elite because they have morphed into forms of high culture that can be learned and adopted by many.

Popular Culture as High Culture

Weber's writings on status-culture appreciation and Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital address the question of society's appreciation and recognition of popular culture as a type of cultural capital. Bourdieu describes cultural capital as “instruments for the appropriation of symbolic wealth socially designated as worthy of being sought and possessed” (Bourdieu 1977). This description was usually reserved for high culture. In this thesis, I define modern day's popular culture as a valuable tool for social wealth and social status; today popular culture is high culture. High culture was and still is a form of cultural capital because it communicates your social wealth. If you were well educated and brought up in a wealthy household, you were more likely to have knowledge of high

culture; values and activities that were usually reserved for wealthy and well educated elite classes.

In the 1800s, popular culture was considered culturally invaluable compared to high culture (Peterson and Kerns 1996). However, Peterson and Kern's (1996) study on the shift from highbrow to omnivorous tastes investigated highbrow society's increasing taste for popular culture. They hypothesized that cultural omnivores are emerging who enjoy both popular culture and previous forms of high culture. Their investigation concentrated on musical taste and was done in both 1982 and 1992. The study found that people of high status, who had previously fallen under the category of exclusively high culture consumers, were now accepting lower classes of culture as legitimate and worth their time; they were going "from snob to omnivore" (Peterson and Kerns 1996:900). They listed multiple reasons for this, one of which was the way that upper class groups understood cultural consumption. High status people were more open to trying new things because they felt that if they could find a way to appreciate a genre or a trend intellectually, then they were able to place it on the same platform as high art. However in order to assess and understand something intellectually, they needed the tools to do so. When popular culture started to emerge in magazine articles, studies, documentaries and books, it gave high-culture consumers the opportunity to treat it as something that could be studied and critiqued like all other high culture (Peterson and Kerns 1996).

The media was and still is integral to the change in highbrow taste because it makes differing tastes, trends and genres more accessible to a great number of people. The media makes it harder to isolate high art as the only form of acceptable culture worth knowing. Other structural social changes that led to popular culture's shift were increased

availability of education, improved standards of living, a growing tolerance for new things and the change in the art world towards accepting avant-gard art (Peterson and Kerns 1996). Overall, popular culture has made its debut as part of modern day high culture. High culture consumers are diversifying their tastes and developing an omnivore's pallet for culture.

Popular culture's rise to the level of high culture opens windows for dominant status groups to form exclusive social barriers related to how well people master popular culture. Peterson and Kerns point out that society's increased diversity in taste make it harder for dominant social groups to look down on popular culture like they did before. However, high status groups are finding new ways to take command of certain aspects and parts of popular culture. DiMaggio's discussion on status-culture takes an in depth look at what status-culture and status-groups are, and how they could contribute to the gentrification of popular culture. Status-culture is created by “elite status-groups...bound together by personal ties and a common sense of honor based upon and reinforced by sharing conventions” (DiMaggio 1982) Their “specific distinctive cultural traits tastes and styles” are exclusive to the group. Inside knowledge allows the status-group to form a bond as well as generate and foster networks that are helpful and mutual to the group members. Modernization of society has made it harder to for status-groups to remain distinct. Today, people adopt different parts of a multitude of status-group cultural styles and traits. DiMaggio's study on cultural capital and school success (1982:190) calls the selective choice of different status-cultures, “status-culture participation.” DiMaggio explains that society's new overlapping tastes allows for the display of different status-group membership associations, as ways to easily communicate with others who share

the same association. However, the diversity in tastes means that your status-culture participation has to be more pronounced and clear in order to identify yourself as having the cultural knowledge needed to belong in certain status-culture groups. Higher status-culture groups can make parts of popular culture exclusive by making the needed marker's of group affiliation difficult to attain. Lower status group members who want to participate in higher tier status-culture could try to pick up on cues and styles that are considered high-status cultural traits (DiMaggio 1982). However, they may not have the resources or connection to do so successfully. Popular culture's shift to high culture brings the possibility of status power tensions, where parts of popular culture are used as cultural capital as well as keys into higher tier status-culture groups.

In this thesis I will look at the differences in U.S and Australian media regulation in order to examine the effects of regulation on the media. The research on the history of media regulation, popular culture and the media as a social instruments as well as the discussion on popular culture as high culture, give this thesis some context and basis for future analysis and arguments that it will make. The thesis will explore whether or not popular culture has enough social influence to be considered a form of cultural capital and whether or no this differs in the United States and Australia. I hope to show that popular culture is not just corrosive and invaluable, as described by many scholars, but that it is also a social tool and an asset.

DATA ANALYSIS

Alternative Hypotheses

The survey data analysis revealed that the relationship between society and media is complex and involves more factors than anticipated. The data analysis produced two new alternate hypotheses to the initial hypothesis. The thesis began with the idea that societies with differing media regulation would also have different relationships with popular culture and how it affects the socioeconomic statuses of their populations. The initial hypothesis was that those with more exposure to popular culture, due to a lack of regulation, would receive knowledge that would positively affect their social status. Here, media is a deciding factor that is capable of affecting one's social status. The analysis found that though there were differences in the Australian and American society, the variance was not always connected to media use and popular culture.

One alternative hypothesis is that media use is a byproduct of socioeconomic status. Individuals with high status positions in society do not approach media and popular culture in the same way that those with lower status positions do. For those in high status positions, media is a tool that they use to their benefit. Alternately, for people in lower status positions, media is a form of entertainment and so is more restrictive and used with less intent. A second hypothesis is that media use and popular culture are not factors that affect or are involved in a person's socioeconomic status. American and Australian students differ in their statuses in and out of school because of a separate deciding factor that does not involve media use. The job market, school systems, upbringing, and social values might be factors that come closer to explaining for variance in American and Australian society when it comes to socioeconomic and social status

rather than media regulation.

Data and Variable Definitions

The data for this study comes from a survey sent out to both Colorado College in Colorado, U.S.A. and to the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. There were 56 Australian respondents and 43 American respondents; two respondents out of the whole group did not complete the survey.

The variables used in this analysis are:

1. American respondents (usa). A count of all American respondents
2. Australian respondents (aus). A count of all Australian respondents
3. American versus Australian (usavsaus). A binary variable of both American and Australian respondents, where American=1 and Australian=0.
4. Restrictive use of media (restrictive). This variable includes the number of respondents who use all of the following media: Facebook, Twitter and watching one and a half to five and a half hours of television in the last 24 hours. These media types were grouped together because they represent less stimulating ways to use the media. Television has many channels and though each aims to engage different audience groups, no channel can tailor itself to an individual. The act of watching television is also more restrictive than doing research, blogging about something that interests you or reading blogs of your choice. Facebook and Twitter are also less stimulating forms of popular culture. A study done on College students' social networking experience with Facebook shows that out of each of the activities students do on Facebook, the one they do the most is to look at or read other people's profiles (69.57%, N=92) (Pempek, Tiffany et al. 2009).

This use of social networking sites is possibly un-stimulating because people spend most of their time looking at what other people are doing. It is almost equivalent to gossip magazines, where one becomes engrossed in other people's lives and forgets their own. In this way, respondents who watch a lot of television and those who use Facebook and Twitter use less stimulating and restrictive forms of media.

5. Active use of media online (activeonline). This variable includes the number of respondents who use all of the following media: blogging, reading blogs, online news coverage and online research for school. These media types were grouped together because, compared to confined media forms like Facebook or finite mass produced media forms like television, active media is almost infinite.

Respondents who use the Internet to blog, do research, or read blogs tailor the media to their needs. They are only able to do that because of the vast number of options that these media types provide. This form of media makes for a more stimulating interaction between the media and the respondent.

6. Prestige Score (prestigescore). These are calculated numerical scores that measure the prestige of a respondent's highest status job; the higher the status the higher the prestige score (Nam Boyd 2004). They are taken from a study conducted in 2000 that recalculated the scores for more modern results (Nam Boyd 2004).
7. Socializer (social). How social a respondent is, this included respondents who did all of the following during their last weekend: go out to a club or a disco, have dinner with friends, attend a social gathering.
8. Achievement (achieve/achievement). Achievement was measured on a college

level and included respondents who were either one or all of the following: on the dean's list, held a leadership position, or the leader of a club.

9. Levels of aspiration (highlevaspire). This variable was a measure of the highest level of education the respondent's hoped to reach. Respondents were given the options: some undergraduate, full undergraduate and graduate degree.
10. Parent's earnings (parentsearnin). What respondent's thought their parents earned in the past year in American dollars for Americans and Australian dollars for Australians. (1.00 USD=0.929391 AUD)
11. Facebook and Twitter use (facetwitter). The number of respondents who use Facebook, Twitter or both as forms of social networking.
12. Time spent watching TV (tv24hrs). The amount of TV watched in the past 24 hours, measured in hours.

Methodology

In order to understand how the media may affect popular culture and an individual's use of cultural knowledge for status, I designed and distributed a survey in both the United States and Australia (see appendix for survey). The survey consisted of 22 questions created with five themes in order to gain as much information about all the possible factors. It aimed for 100 or more responses from the two countries combined and received 105 responses: 43 from Americans and 56 from Australians and six responses from students who were neither Australian nor American. I am a student in the United States and I traveled to Australia for a month allowing me to analyze television programs as well as conduct participant observation in both countries. The survey, T.V analyses

and participant observations were used to create a body of data that will determine how the media affects of popular culture and the use of that cultural knowledge for social status.

The five themes used to construct the survey were general information, media intake, current social standing, the applied use of social standing, and finally social interactions with others. Questions about the respondent's general information included inquiries on their race or ethnicity, age, country of residence and their field of study. The survey was sent to two universities: the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia and the Colorado College in Colorado Springs, U.S.A. This was done because each of the schools had large groups of students aged 18 and over who live in a media filled age. Respondents were asked to name the country and city they came from in order to separate Australians from Americans as well as to determine if there are regional differences within the countries respectively. The respondents had to be above 18 years old in order to avoid taking information from a vulnerable audience. Race and ethnicity is usually seen as a factor when there are disparities in job interviews or career opportunities (Reskin 2000). The question regarding race and ethnicity was included in the survey order to separate any racially related reasons in the results concerning career advancement.

The second theme in the survey questions assessed the amount and type of media respondents were exposed to in the last 24 hours. Media was classified as television, Internet content and publications since these are more conscious activities of media intake compared to other unquantifiable media outlets such as billboards. A 24-hour window was used as a reference in order to make the questions easier and more accurate

to answer since respondents had to draw from recent memory. Respondents were also asked if the amount of time they spent interacting with various media within the last 24 hours was the usual or not, in order to eliminate abnormal data.

The third survey theme looked into the respondent's current social standing. Questions on their income, current educational level and future educational aspirations help to situate the respondents within the social ladder as well as provide explanation for previous occupational successes or failures. The fourth theme looks into how the respondent applies their social status to their occupational aspirations and whether or not this works for them. The survey asked about their highest paying job, how they got the job, if they had to interview for it, and how the interview went. These questions attempt to measure how their exposure to media affects their success in areas where they are likely to be tested on their cultural knowledge, whether or not employers can relate to them and see them as involved, savvy members of society.

The last survey theme looks into their relationships outside of jobs and careers. Respondents are asked about their involvement in clubs, leadership positions, who they spend time with, and if they enjoy going to social gatherings. These questions investigate possible connections between media intake and a respondent's social behavior in their more casual lives and interactions.

The population sample as well as the people who chose to respond within that sample size will affect the data because it holds many biases. The survey question regarding the respondents' parents' earnings may not deliver precise results because it might be difficult for respondents to know or remember the accurate amounts of money that their parents earn. The majority of the respondents were sociology or anthropology

majors. The survey was sent out through the Sociology departments at both Colorado College and the University of new South Wales in order to ensure that the survey circulated to enough students. Additionally, because the survey was sent out on only college campuses, almost all of the respondents were college students, with some Australian graduate students. These limitations mean that results reflect more on the millennial generation rather than all generations. Of these millennial respondents 80% of them are female. Gender, like race, is another factor that could associate with poor career advancement and could distort data findings (Firth 1982). However, since both Australian and American respondents were mostly female, the survey results were gender equal across the two countries. The limitations and biases of this study are taken into account as much as possible when making deductions.

Table 1 below shows a strong correlation of key dependent and independent variables. There are initial unexpected findings within the correlation that support parts the alternative hypotheses. Respondents who use media proactively have a positive correlation with prestige scores, meaning that they are likely to get higher status jobs compared to those who use media less proactively. Americans show a negative correlation with prestige scores, while Australians show a positive correlation. These two results are both highly significant, suggesting that Australian respondents have relatively higher prestige scores than American respondents. The college achievement variable also separates American and Australian respondents, as Americans have a positive correlation with achievement in college while Australians have a negative correlation. The results show that college achievement appears to lend itself more to American respondents, significantly so. The same correlation occurs with the levels of aspiration between

American and Australian respondents. Americans have a much more positive correlation with levels of aspirations while Australians have a very negative correlation coefficient with levels of aspiration. Social respondents have a positive correlation with having high levels of aspiration.

Table 1

Correlation								
Variable	active online	usa	aus	prestige score	social	achievement	highlevel aspire	parents earnings
active online	1.0000							
usa	0.0426 0.6704	1.0000						
aus	-0.0891 0.3731	-0.8191 0.0000	1.0000					
prestige score	0.2259 0.0388*	-0.5056 0.0000***	0.4116 0.0001***	1.0000				
social	-0.0216 0.8296	0.1164 0.2439	-0.0825 0.4095	-0.0835 0.4503	1.0000			
achievement	0.0088 0.9652	0.6427 0.0003***	-0.5030 0.0075**	-0.0429 0.8574	0.0466 0.8174	1.0000		
highlevel aspire	0.1732 0.0916	0.3830 0.0001***	-0.3067 0.0024 **	-0.1194 0.2792	0.2615 0.0101*	0.3260 0.1387	1.0000	
parents earnings	0.0915 0.3886	0.2451 0.0192*	-0.1850 0.0792 *	0.8470 0.0219*	0.1218 0.2501	0.1860 0.4600	0.3688 0.0003***	1.0000

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

A respondent's parents' earnings have a positive correlation with being an American respondent, having a higher prestige score as well as having high levels of aspiration. However, being an Australian respondent negatively correlates with having parents who earn a lot of money. More correlations were run and they found no significant relationships between the variables listed in Table 1 and variables concerning restrictive use of media and variables that question if respondents received their high status jobs from family and friends. Table 1 lays down a foundation for the analysis and assists in being a guide that allows for further data analysis into relationships between the

media, society, regulation, and popular culture.

Hypotheses

This thesis explores a hypothesis with three assumptions. First, that media is the vessel for popular culture, and that popular culture is a new form of high culture. The second assumption is that differing media regulation will affect the amount of popular culture that society is exposed to. The third assumes that exposure to popular culture increases an individual's ability to absorb and learn about it as a new high culture. Greater exposure to popular culture then plays a role in increasing social status. Overall this thesis hypothesizes that American respondents will have higher social statuses and achievement because there is less media regulation in the United States, making popular culture more widespread and accessible as a form of high culture. Media will have less of an impact on Australians, because there is more regulation there, making media less of a factor for social status gain. Table 2 lists the predicted directions of the coefficients for the variables involved in the hypothesis.

Table 2

Predicted direction of coefficients with media use and regulation as predictor variables						
	Social Status	Prestige Score	Levels of Aspiration	Achievement	Australian	American
Media Use	+	+	+	+	-	+
Media Regulation	-	-	-	-	+	-

The analysis began by testing the predicted directions of the coefficients listed in Table 2, with media use and media regulation as dependent variables. Three variables describe social status within the survey, these are: prestige score, levels of aspiration and achievement. Media regulation is measured indirectly using the United States versus

Australia (usvsaus) variable. The literature lays out the history of media regulation in both the United States and Australia, explaining that the United States has maintained a very relaxed attitude towards media regulation, leaving it mostly up to the creators and producers of media in television, print and radio. Inversely, research demonstrates Australia’s continued dedication to monitoring and enforcing media regulation. According to the hypothesis, evidence of media regulation or lack thereof will show itself in the socioeconomic and social statuses of American survey respondents and less so in Australian respondents. Those with high social statuses, who are also heavily exposed to the media, should be American respondents because of the lack of media regulation in the United States.

Table 3 shows a logistic regression of the survey data between Americans and Australians as well as media use. The regression addresses the hypothesis that Americans are exposed to more media compared to Australians.

Table 3

Logistic regression, odd ratio percentages, row probability

	USA	AUS
online24hrs	19.9%	-3.46%
	0.340	0.846
tv24hrs	-33.4%	23.6%
	0.111	0.384

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

The table shows that there is no statistical significance between media use in neither Australian nor American respondents. The odds ratio percentages show that Americans use the Internet slightly more than Australians, while the opposite is true for television watching. However, neither of these observations is statistically significant.

Table 4 shows a correlation similar to Table 1, only this one shows the variables: tv24hrs and online24hrs as indicators of media use. There is a slight significant relationship between a respondent's prestige score and time spent watching television. Prestige scores are also significantly higher for Australian respondents than they are for Americans. Given the results, there is a possibility that Australians spend more time watching television than Americans. The correlation coefficients reflect that assumption, showing a positive correlation between time spent watching TV and being Australian and a negative correlation for Americans and time spent watching TV. However neither of the coefficients is statistically significant. The slightly significant correlation between a respondent's prestige score and time spent watching television is the only presence of media use differences between the two countries. Time spent watching television appeared to vary for Australians and Americans, but only in terms of prestige scores with very slight levels of significance.

Table 4

Variable	usa	aus	prestige score	achievement	Highlevel elaspire	tv24hrs	online 24hrs
usa	1.0000						
aus	-0.8191 0.0000	1.0000					
prestige score	-0.5056 0.0000***	0.4116 0.0001***	1.0000				
achievement	0.6427 0.0003***	-0.5030 0.0075**	-0.0429 0.8574	1.0000			
highlevel aspire	0.3830 0.0001***	-0.3067 0.0024 **	-0.1194 0.2792	0.3260 0.1387	1.0000		
tv24hrs	-0.1532 0.1241	0.0854 0.3935	0.2041 0.0626*	-0.1563 0.1185	-0.0481 0.6416	1.0000	
online 24hrs	0.0845 0.3983	-0.0140 0.8890	0.0152 0.8909	0.1483 0.1388	0.1356 0.1879	0.0597 0.5509	1.0000

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.0001

These results in Tables 2 to 4 hardly support the hypothesis, because they do not isolate positive correlations between media use and social status to either American or Australian respondents as predicted. Australian respondents' highly positive correlation with high prestige scores goes against the hypothesis. Similarly, the significantly low American prestige scores also go against the hypothesis, which assumes that Americans will use more media and therefore have higher social statuses both in and out of the college context. American students do however have high levels of achievement in college as well as high aspirations, ruling out the possibility that media use does the opposite of what the hypothesis predicted. Media use does not appear to decrease or increase social status for either Australian or American respondents. Even so, the analysis demonstrates that there are differences in Americans and Australians in terms of types of social statuses, as well as the relationship between media use, within those social status types.

Media and Context

Research and literature support the idea that the media is pervasive and can affect our behavior. The initial hypothesis followed this theory, stating that media regulation can change the prevalence of popular culture in society and how it is used as a cultural asset or tool. The data analysis does not completely support this hypothesis because, though media has a significant relationship with social status, it is contingent on the way that respondents interact with media. During the analysis process, it was clear that there were differing outcomes in data that depended on the type of media and the way that respondents interacted with it. This led to the creation of two composite variables for media: 1. Restrictive media use such as time spent watching television and

social networking websites and 2. Proactively used media such as blogging, reading the news online, doing online research and so on. Table 1 shows a positive relationship between prestige scores and proactive use of the media. According to the table, respondents who use the media proactively are more likely to have better jobs. Proactive media use also has a relationship with a respondent's aspirations. Table 5 demonstrates that proactive use of the media reflects positively on a respondent's ambitions as well as the status level of their jobs.

Table 5

Logistic regression		
activeonline	Odds Ratio	Probability
prestigescore	1.035622	0.038*
highlevelaspire	4.383959	0.016*
social	.3445869	0.196
usavsaus	.7837659	0.760
parentsearnings	.9669475	0.844

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

The logistic regression shows that with every one-unit change in a respondent's prestige score, there is a 3.6% increase in their proactive use of the media. Additionally, with every one-unit change in a respondents prestige score, there is a 338.4% increase in the number of people who use the media proactively. This percentage change is extremely high; showing that proactivity online has a greater impact on prestige scores than it does on a respondent's levels of aspiration.

Proactive use of media, particularly online, requires respondent's to pick and choose the type of media they want to use. A respondent who uses the Internet to read blogs, do research and catch up on daily news is being more selective about what they take from the media. The respondent controls the relationship rather than being limited

and controlled by media. Active use of the media showed no significant differences in whether respondent's attained their high ranking jobs through family ties and networks or their own.

The correlation in Table 1 showed no statistically significant relationships between restrictive media use and other variables. A logistic regression focusing solely on restrictive media and prestige scores was also not statistically significant. In order to further investigate the connection that restrictive media use may or may not have with other variables, the 'restrictive media' variable was broken down into its components: time spent watching television and the use of social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter.

Table 6

Correlation					
Variable	tv24hrs	facetwitter	prestigescore	social	achievement
tv24hrs	1.0000				
facetwitter	0.1941 0.0506*	1.0000			
prestigescore	0.2041 0.0626	-0.2388 0.0287*	1.0000		
social	-0.0715 0.4753	0.1777 0.0740	-0.0835 0.4503	1.0000	
achievement	-0.4190 0.0296*	-0.1196 0.5525	-0.0429 0.8574	0.0466 0.8174	1.0000

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

The correlation in Table 6 shows that time spent watching television and the use of social networking sights are positively correlated where significance is very close to p<0.05. These two variables should be correlated given the assumption that they are both the same type of media; one that is a more restrictive and less stimulating. Table 6 also

shows that the use of social networking sites is negatively correlated with prestige scores. The survey respondents who use social networking sites are likely to have low prestige scores. Television watching also has a negative impact on respondent's success, as it is negatively correlated with college achievement.

This analysis of data shows that respondents decide on the types of media they use and these decisions are based on their social status. Respondents, whose status is high because they have a more prestigious jobs, tend to use the media more proactively. Similarly respondents, who want higher statuses judging from their high ambitions, also use the media more proactively. Inversely respondents who are low college achievers are likely to spend more time watching television, something labeled as a more restrictive use of media since there is less variety and choice in what you watch. Respondents who have lower prestige scores are also more likely to use social networking sights, a type of media that is also considered restrictive and dulling.

Peterson and Kerns (1996) found a growing acceptance of lowbrow culture, like popular culture, as a new form of high culture. Additionally, research shows that media use is one way for society to gain knowledge of popular culture as high culture. DiMaggio's discussion on status culture looks into high culture as a commodity; something individuals use to express their status as well as use to gain status (1982) In the context of this thesis, popular culture is established as high culture and therefore an asset. The literature does not differentiate between which the types of popular culture and media are social assets and which are not, if they are at all. The data analysis separates media into restrictive and proactive groups; something that the initial hypothesis did not foresee. The thesis hypothesized that the media and popular culture were factors that

molded social status given that popular culture and media were forms of high culture. The data analysis shows something quite the opposite, where a respondent's social status determines whether or not respondents use restrictive media types or if they use the media proactively, as well as what parts of popular culture are subsequently absorbed and used.

American Dreams and Reality

The data analysis brought forward interesting findings that the starting hypothesis and thesis question did not address. The survey showed that indeed, American and Australian respondents do share differences; however these differences were not directly linked to media use and popular culture as the thesis initially assumed.

An investigation of social status in the form of prestige scores, levels of aspiration and achievement, hoped to connect popular culture and media use. The hypothesis assumed that media use would change these three factors, seeing them as dependent variables that were molded by media use and improved by the knowledge of popular culture.

The results show that American respondents display higher levels of college achievement as well as much higher levels of ambition compared to Australians. Table 7 shows that 52.5% of American respondents are very high college achievers, compared to 17.6% of Australians. Additionally, only 10% of Americans are not high college achievers, compared to 31.3% of Australians. Levels of college achievement were tested against how social respondents are, on respondent's proactive use of media and the respondent's parent's earnings, none of which gave statically significant results.

American respondents have much higher aspirations compared to Australian respondents. Aspiration measured as the highest level of schooling a respondent hopes to complete.

Table 7

Frequency Table with row percentages

	achievement			total
	none	high	very high	
USA	4	15	21	40
%	10.00	37.50	52.50	100.00
AUS	16	26	9	51
%	31.37	50.98	17.65	100.00
total	20	41	30	91
%	21.98	45.05	32.97	100.00
probability of the table	0.001**			

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Table 8 shows that 84.2% of American respondents aspire for higher levels of education compared to 43.8% of Australians. American respondents also have higher aspirations as a whole compared to Australians. Only 13.2% of American students aspire to a just bachelor's degree compared to 43.8% of Australians. This percentage is also equal to that of Australians who aspire to complete a graduate degree.

Table 8

Frequency with row percentages

	highlevelaspire			total
	somebatchelors	batchelors	graduate dregee	
USA	1	5	32	38
%	2.63	13.16	84.21	100.00
AUS	6	21	21	48
%	12.50	43.75	43.75	100.00
total	7	26	53	86
%	8.14	30.23	61.63	100.00
probability of the table	0.001**			

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Given that all the students who took the survey are already enrolled in an undergraduate degree program at the least, Table 8 shows that many Australian respondents are unsure that they will complete their current studies, while a large majority of American respondents are sure they will go through with finishing their bachelors. Table 6 brings in a new factor, one regarding confidence. American respondents appear very secure and confident in their ability to finish their degrees, while Australian respondents are not as convinced of their success in their current degrees.

Table 9

Frequency with row percentages				
parentsearnings	highlevelaspire			total
	somebatchelors	batchelors	graduate dregee	
\$0-40,000	4	4	9	17
%	23.53	23.53	52.94	100.00
\$50,000-60,000	2	9	4	15
%	13.3	60.00	26.67	100.00
\$70,000-100,000	1	8	11	20
%	5.00	40.00	55.00	100.00
\$101,000+	0	9	30	39
%	0.00	23.08	76.92	100.00
total	7	30	54	91
%	7.69	32.97	59.34	100.00
probability of the table	0.003**			

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Other factors that led to higher levels of aspiration were the respondent's parent's income and how social respondents were. Table 9 shows how much a respondent's parents earn and the relationship this has with levels of aspiration. Those whose parents earn between \$70,000 and \$100,000 have significantly higher educational aspirations. The few respondents (N=17) whose parents earn between \$0 and \$40,000 also have

significantly high educational aspirations. Money appears to play a role in the amount of aspiration a respondent has, but the respondent's citizenship does so as well.

Table 10 demonstrates this more clearly; it shows how American respondent's parents earn more than Australian respondents. 59.5% of American parent's earn \$101,000 compared to the 35% of Australians parents earning the same amount. American respondent's come from wealthier families than Australian respondents, which may be the reason for their higher levels of ambition. Even so, the possible inaccuracies in the respondent's ability to recall their parent's earnings have to be taken into account.

Table 10

Frequency with row percentages

	parentsearnings				total
	\$0-40,000	\$50,000-60	\$70,000-100	\$101,000+	
USA	7	1	7	22	37
%	18.92	2.70	18.92	59.46	100.00
AUS	8	12	10	16	48
%	17.39	26.09	21.74	34.78	100.00
total	15	13	17	38	86
%	18.07	15.66	20.48	45.78	100.00
probability of the table	0.019*				

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Americans have higher aspirations, higher earnings and higher levels of college achievement compared to Australians. The American respondents appear to have bigger dreams, and confidence that those dreams will be realized given their achievements and monetary security. However, once the prestige scores of American and Australian respondents are compared, an interesting discovery surfaces.

The analysis revealed that Australian respondents have much higher prestige scores compared to American respondents. Table 11 shows that Australian respondents

have a mean prestige score of 57 compared to American respondents whose mean score is 33.2.

Table 11

Prestige Score: Two-sample t-test with equal variances		
variable	observations	mean
USA	37	33.24324
AUS	39	56.974397
Combined	76	45.42105

probablility=0.0000***
t=-5.0193

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

The significant difference in means shows that outside of the college context, Australians achieve more in the job market than Americans do. Research and literature on the differences between Australians and Americans focused on media regulation. It supported the idea that higher media regulation in Australia prohibits popular culture and the media from molding social status, and being a significant tool that a person needs for status advancement. However, Table 11 shows that contrary to the hypothesis and the research, Australians have higher prestige scores; their jobs are higher in status compared to American respondents, regardless of their exposure to the media. The table shows that media regulation does not control for social status in the United States the way that it was hypothesized to. These results prompt a deeper look into why Australians have higher prestige scores compared to Americans, even though they have more media regulation. It opens up the possibility that there are factors other than media regulation that contribute to differences in social status for American and Australian college students.

The data analysis never found a significant connection for media use as a factor that differentiates Americans and Australians. Table 5 shows that there is no significant relationship between citizenship and media use of any type; proactive or restrictive.

However Table 12 does show a connection between prestige scores and proactive media use.

Table 12

Two-sample t-test with equal variances		
variable	observations	mean
not-activeonline	16	35.6875
activeonline	68	49.17647
combined	84	46.60714

probablility=0.0194*
t=-2.0996

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

The table demonstrates how respondents who use the media more proactively, have higher mean prestige scores compared to those who do not use the media that way. However, as mentioned earlier, media use appears to be the result of having higher prestige scores rather than the reason for them. The data analysis does not explicitly show any connection between media use and citizenship that clearly separate Americans and Australians in terms of regulation. Nevertheless, the history of media regulation in the two countries shows that Americans and Australians exist in different media environments because of the differences in regulation.

Though the analysis does not reflect the regulation differences as the initial hypothesis anticipated, one has to acknowledge that regulation in the two countries is different. The context in which the respondents use media is meaningful and could explain for other differences that Australian and American students share, such as prestige score and college achievements. The analysis demonstrates how American students seem unable to translate their college success and achievements into the world outside of college. Their low prestige scores in the job market do not reflect their college

accomplishments and aspirations. It is possible that media deregulation causes a disconnect between what students aspire to and desire for themselves and the reality of what happens to them in the world outside of college. Deregulation in the United States allows for misinforming news broadcasting stations, staged 'reality' television and Hollywood-ending shows to flourish. Fairleigh Dickinson University's 2011 Public Mind Poll, asked people in New Jersey how much they knew about local and international news. The results showed that people who watch Fox News, a 24-hour cable news network, are less likely to know what is really going on in the news, compared to people who say they don't keep up with the news at all (Woolley Peter 2011). FAIR.org, a national media watch group dubs Fox News as a propaganda tool for the Republican party and a news network that continuously reports biased information as fact (Ackerman Seth 2001). The Public Mind Poll opens up the possibility that media deregulation in the United States disconnects reality from desire in society. Fox News seems to deliver what the right wing desires to here, while skirting over the realities of what actually happens in society (Ackerman Seth 2001). Though American viewers know the difference between the life portrayed on a sitcom and real life, shows like Fox News and the mass onslaught of unregulated media might start to blur the line between the life portrayed in the media and reality. Australia's media regulation might make it easier for viewers to differentiate what they see in the media and what happens in reality. Overall, media regulation is not a factor that differentiates the United States from Australia in the data analysis, however the literature and research makes a clear distinction. Further more, the analysis shows that high achieving American college students have lower prestige scores than low college achieving Australians. Given that analytical information and research on deregulation in

the two countries, one could speculate on what deregulation means for American and Australian students. Jean Kilbourne's study, on advertising and its affects on what it means to be a woman in American culture, explains that the media and popular culture shape society's views on reality (2010). Additionally an article called "Growing up with Television" discusses cultivation theory where "heavy media (particularly television) exposure to certain events, values, and people gradually shapes the individual's perception of social reality, often without awareness" (Gross et al 1994; Slevic and Tiggerman 2010:71). Possible future research could test if Americans do in fact live in an unreal world, with blurred lines between what they know to be true and what they want to be true.

This leaves an open question: why do Americans have high educational aspirations and college level achievements, but fail to reach the same caliber of achievement in the job market, outside of a college context? The survey analysis shows that, media does have a relationship with social status and achievement; however, it is less causal than initially anticipated. Respondents use the media differently according to their achievement levels, whether it is in college or in the job market. Those who have higher status jobs and those who are high college achievers, and have high aspirations, all use the media proactively. Media use is a result of the respondent's actions; therefore it does not explain for differences in prestige scores between Americans and Australians, as both groups use the media proactively, given their separate types of achievement. The explanation for lower American prestige scores given American college achievement is open, and one that needs exploring.

CONCLUSION

The literature and research give examples of media and popular culture's potential impact on society. The "Shortcake Strategy" shows media as a vehicle for television producers to capitalize on children's television shows by using manipulation and implicit coercion. Additionally, television shows that are used solely for capitalistic reasons lack any real educational or cultural value. The different discussions on television violence show how the media and popular culture are capable of having very direct impacts on society. This thesis aimed to take a different approach to looking at how media works within society; the hypothesis has more positive ideas of the media's impact on society. The thesis hypothesized that media and popular culture provided type of cultural capital that society used as an asset to improve their social status.

The analysis did not entirely reveal any of what the literature or the initial hypothesis suggested. The literature discussed the media's negative impact on society and this type of reaction to the media was not explicitly found in the analysis. The media did have a positive relationship with social status and cultural capital, however not as the initial hypothesis anticipated. The hypothesis placed media as an independent variable that affected social status. For the purpose of this thesis, social status described college achievement, aspirations and prestige scores.

The data analysis revealed that media was more of a dependent variable rather than an independent one, because media use was contingent on social status rather than the other way around. Additionally, the factors that affected media use were different for both Australian and American respondents. Australian respondents with high prestige scores tended to use media more proactively compared to Australians who had lower

prestige scores. The same group of Australians who had high prestige scores, did not have a positive correlation with levels of aspiration or high levels of college achievement, however, they still maintained proactive media use given that they had high prestige scores. On the other hand American respondents with high levels of aspiration and high college achievement also used the media proactively compared to those with low aspirations, low college achievement who positively correlated with restrictive media use. This same high achieving, proactive-media-using group of students, had significantly lower prestige scores than Australian students.

Given these variations, it is clear that first, media use does not affect social status; social status determines media use. Additionally, media use does not depend on one form of social status but rather on various types. These types include high levels of aspiration, high college achievement and high prestige scores. If a respondent falls under any of the three social status types, they are likely to be proactive media users rather than restricted media users. Overall these results show how media use is dependent on a respondent's social status and that media controls only those who allow for that control. Restricted media users are more likely to fall prey to the negative media affects discussed earlier because they are not actively choosing what to take from the media.

As mentioned before, this study and the survey methods used come with their limitations. The sample size of the survey respondents was just over 100 students; half of them from the University of New South Wales and the other half from Colorado College. The small sample size could affect the possible relationship between the findings and how true they are to the greater population of American and Australian undergraduate students. The University of New South Wales caters to both undergraduate and graduate

students, while Colorado College is mostly an undergraduate institution. Though the survey was sent out to the University of New South Wales with the intention for it to reach undergraduates, it is possible that graduate students also participated, since there was no mention in the consent form that they were not allowed to participate in the survey. This may affect the prestige scores of the Australian respondents because graduate students are more likely to have the experience required to attain higher status jobs.

The survey sent out in Sydney went through the Sociology Department, making most of the respondents social science focused majors. The survey sent out at Colorado College attempted to reach a diverse group of students, however once again, the majority of the students who responded had social science directed majors such as Anthropology and Sociology. Overall there survey received more female than male respondents, with 81% being female. This makes it hard to control for possible gender related results in the study, especially in reference to prestige scores. Gender discrimination in the work place could play a role in lowering prestige scores, however since the high percentage of female respondents came from both Australia and the United States, there is still some validity in the findings pertaining to Australians having higher prestige scores.

This thesis provides new subject matter for future research on social differences between Australian and American students. The analysis revealed that though American students have high levels of aspiration and college achievement compared to Australian students, they have significantly lower prestige scores. Media use does not appear to hold any explanations for this disparity within the data analysis. However the literature and research do show differences in the media environments in Australia and the United

States because of differences in media regulation. One could speculate that less media regulation gives American college students a warped view of the reality of the job market, because the media that they are exposed demonstrates very unrealistic views on society. There are plenty of other possible explanations for this difference, which opens up some ideas for future research to find if there are fundamental differences between Australian and American societies at the college level, or even within the overall social systems.

Though the study did disprove the hypothesis, it revealed a much more interesting finding. Popular culture and the media do not directly affect social status based on media regulation, however they are still important aspects of society. The analysis shows how a respondent's socioeconomic statuses make them want something different from the media compared to respondents with lower statuses. In a sense, high status respondent gain an asset because they are able to capitalize on the media and use it proactively for their benefit. Alternatively, lower status respondents use the media in the traditional sense; they watch, listen and use a small selection of what the media can provide rather than using it as a tool. This group of respondents is more likely to fall into the negative consequences of the media and popular culture such as increased buyer mentalities and desensitization. Even so, proactive media use does come with its disadvantages. If the media is something that an already mobilized group of people can use more effectively, then the media is one other aspect of society that could work to create social inequalities.

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APPENDIX

Survey

1. Which category below includes your age? (You must be 18 years or older to participate in this survey)

8-20

21-29

30-39

40 or older

2. Are you male or female?

Male

Female

3. What race are you?

Black

White

Aboriginal

Asian

From multiple races (please check them off the list if applicable)

Some other race (please specify)

4. What country and city do you come from?

City/Town: _____

Country: _____

5. What are you studying?

Anthropology

Art History

Studio Art

English

Sociology

Biology

Psychology

Chemistry

Physics

Engineering

Medicine

Business/Economics

Other (please specify)

6. In the last 24 hours, how much time have you spent watching television all together?

- 1-15 mins
- 16-30 mins
- 31-45 mins
- 46-60 mins

7. Was your time spent watching television in the past 24 hours:

- The usual amount
 - Less than usual
 - More than usual
 - Optional explanation
-

8. In the last 24 hours, how many hours have you spent online on your computer?

- 0.5-1 hours
- 1.5-2 hours
- 2.5-3 hours
- 3.5-4 hours
- 4.5 or more hours

9. Was your time spent online in the past 24 hours:

- The usual amount
 - Less than usual
 - More than usual
 - Optional explanation
-

10. When online, which areas do you spend the majority of your time? Check all that apply.

- Facebook
 - Twitter
 - YouTube
 - Online Shopping
 - Reading Blogs
 - Blogging
 - News coverage sites
 - Watching online shows/movies
 - Other (please specify)
-

11. Do you have subscriptions to any of the following?

- Magazine
- Newspaper
- Both

12. What is the highest level of schooling you hope to complete?

- Some college/university but no degree
- Associates degree
- Bachelor degree
- Graduate degree

13. How much total combined money did your parents or benefactors earn in 2011?

- \$0 - \$5,999
- \$6,000 - \$10,999
- \$11,000 - \$20,999
- \$30,000 - \$40,999
- \$50,000 - \$60,999
- \$70,000 - \$80,999
- \$90,000 - \$100,999
- 101,000 or more

14. Have you ever applied and interviewed for a job and been turned down?

- Yes
- No

Optional: If you were turned down, what was the reason?

15. What is the highest status job you have had?

16. How did you find out about your highest status job?

- Through family ties
- Through a friend
- From a job listing
- Non of the above
- Other (please specify)

17. How competitive was the position for the job referred to above?

- Not competitive
- Fairly competitive
- Very competitive

18. Did you have to interview for this job?

Yes

No

19. Please select one or more categories. Have you ever been:

On the Dean's list

In a leadership position

The head of a club

The member of a club

Part of a sorority or fraternity

None of the above

20. If you are a part of a club, how many are you a part of?

1-2

3-4

4>

21. What did you do last weekend?

Go out to a club/disco

Go to a movie

Have dinner with friends

Attend a large social gathering

Stay at home

Other (please specify)

22. Did you spend your last evening meal:

Alone

With a friend/s

With a new acquaintance/s

With a roommate/s

Other (please specify)
