

A Snapshot Survey of Women's Representation in the South African Media at the end of the Millenium

Commissioned for
Women's Media Watch
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1 INTRODUCTION

The media plays a significant role in the lives of almost every South African. As a source of information, entertainment and learning the media shapes our perceptions, understanding and ideas about the world, our society and ourselves. For this reason the media's representation of the world is very important. It can open up our minds to new ideas, it can challenge our creativity, our imaginations and it can stimulate our thinking. At the same time it can limit it, close off ideas, fail to inform, exclude and efface.

The media is thus a powerful political, social and economic element in our society. But the media does not simply reflect our lives it re-presents it, it doesn't tell us what to think, but what to think about.

In our country discrimination against women and sexism continues despite a new constitution which guarantees all South Africans freedom and equality. The media plays a role in this. The extent to which the media allows and opens our eyes and minds to the rights and roles of women in our society, helps to shape public perceptions and the attitudes of people in our country to the rights of women and against discrimination.

However the media can also prevent or limit our understanding. This project aims to evaluate just how limiting or open the media is being about women and the roles women occupy in our society. It is fitting, at the close of the millennium, to evaluate where women feature in our media and to reflect on the message that their status in the media sends to the society in which we live.

2 METHODOLOGY

People often engage with more than one form of media on a daily basis. They read the paper on the bus or listen to the radio on the way to work and then watch television in the evening. In doing so they see women selling baby products, they hear women reading the news and they might also watch women detectives on a television programme. Women are represented in different forms across the media, either visually, aurally or as a combination of both. Because of the diversity of the media available, this project aimed to examine as broad a range of media as possible.

Three days of media coverage were therefore extensively monitored. With this form of horizontal monitoring the various methods of representing women, had a person switched on the television, turned on the radio or opened a newspaper, would be captured.

The aim of this project was to see how women were represented in the media on a daily basis. In doing so not only would the diversity of roles in which women were represented be illustrated but also the types, racial breakdown, age and sexuality of the women in the media. Such an examination allows for a critical assessment of how women are represented and whether the representation of women in the media allows for all possibilities and roles for women in society.

The three-day period chosen was selected during the middle of the week in order to achieve similar forms and levels of media each day. The days monitored were Tuesday the 12th, Wednesday the 13th and Thursday the 14th of October 1999.

The following media were monitored:

Print:

The Star
Die Burger
Cape Times
Die Beeld
Sowetan

Daily News
Argus
Business Day
Citizen
Natal Mercury

Radio:

Punt
Ukhozi
Lesedi
Metro
East Coast Radio
Good Hope

Radio 5
Y-fm
Highveld Stereo
Lotus
Cape Talk
SAfm

Television:

SABC 1
SABC 3
M-Net

SABC 2
e-tv

Media were monitored on the following basis:

- ◆ *Print media*: the entire newspaper was monitored, except for the classified advertisement sections.
- ◆ *Radio stations*: were monitored for three hours each day from 6:00am until 9:00am, as this is their peak listening period.
- ◆ *Television stations*: were monitored during prime time from 17:00 until 22:00 each day (**M-Net** was the exception in this instance as it was monitored during open time i.e. from 17:00 to 19:00).

During the monitoring period every time a woman could be identified the item was monitored. Those items where no women featured were not monitored. Consequently all figures given refer only to those instances where women were found. Overall **3354** items were monitored and 6094 women were counted and analysed.

A team of trained monitors all of who are graduates in media studies or related fields undertook the monitoring itself. First language speakers monitored all media. Each time an item was monitored the following information was noted down and then entered into a database.

1. *The date and time of the item*

2. *The type:*

Advert	Graphic	Opinion Poll
Analysis	Illustration	Picture
Cartoon	In- brief	Profile
Comment	Interview	Review
Continuity	Letter	Sitcom
Documentary	Magazine	Soap
Drama	Music	Talk-show
Editorial	News	Traffic
Feature	Opinion	Weather

3. *The Topic*

3.1. *General and News*

A-Economics & Business	B-International Politics
C-Diplomacy	D-Disaster
E-Political Violence	F-Demonstrations
G-Corruption	H-TRC
Humour	I-Labour and Unemployment
J-Education	K-Crime
L-Housing & Land	M-Rates and Services
N-Gender	O-Media

P-Human Rights
R-Arts & Culture
T-Environment
V-Opinion Polls
X-Racism

Q-Sports
S-Health
U-Religion
W-Politics/Government
Y-Violence Against Women
(General non-specific VAW)

VAW Specific Topic Codes

Z-Rape
BB-Domestic Violence
DD-Genital Mutilation
FF-Sexuality
HH-Child Abuse

AA-Assault
CC-Femicide
EE-Anti-VAW activities
GG-Aids
II-Relationships

3.2. Topic codes for Adverts

Products where a woman is mentioned or sells items:

Adornments: Products like perfume (male and female), clothing, jewellery

Business/ Finance: Products like banking, financial services, insurance

Cars

Competition

Education

Entertainment: Products like theatre and films including self-promotional material

Equipment: Products like cell phones, copiers, office equipment

Food: Products relating to food including restaurants

Homeware: Products related to the home, e.g. vacuum cleaners, toilet cleaners, disinfectants, lounge suites

Impotency

Media

Personal Hygiene: Sanitary pads, tampons, other products directly linked to women's hygiene.

Sport

Tobacco/Alcohol

Travel

4. The count of men in the item

All men were counted up in each item.

5. The count of women

All women were counted up in each item.

6. The race of the person

Where this was clearly identifiable women were categorised as white, black, coloured, indian, asian and Unknown. While it is acknowledged that the use of these terms is to some degree problematic they are being used in this research merely as indicators and not as methods of ascribing particular behavior.

7. *The Social Role of women*

The following were used as broad categories to try and encompass the various roles in which women were represented. For the purposes of monitoring particular words were chosen for their ability to encapsulate not only a physical description of the role of a woman but also something of the discourse of the particular role. Thus the labels of Object¹ and Prostitute were used (acknowledging their derogatory meanings) because they more accurately described particular roles of women. We have for the same reason used both the term victim and survivor for while they may refer to the same woman in an item they have different implications in so far as the power attributed to them.

The Social Roles used were as follows:

Activist	Object
Beauty Contestant	Official
Career – Women in corporate positions	Politician
Child	Presenter
Commission – Woman that are part of a particular commission	Professional – Includes academics and doctors, lawyers etc.
Consumer	Prostitute
Criminal	Scholar
Daughter	Secretary
Doctor	Sister – Sibling
Entertainer – includes dancers, actors, directors, singers, etc.	Sports
Girlfriend	Stripper
Grandmother	Student
Housewife	Survivor
Journalist	Suspect
Lawyer	Temptress
Minister	Union
Model	Unknown
Mother	Victim
NGO	Waitress
Nurse	Wife

As the monitoring progressed so other social roles emerged which were added to the list.

8. *Sexuality*

The sexuality of the woman was noted either as Heterosexual or Homosexual where clearly identifiable. All others were entered as Unknown.

¹ The social role “Object” refers to women who are represented as sex objects and there to provide visual pleasure for male viewers

9. Age of the woman

Child (0 - 12years)

Teenager (13 - 19 years)

Young (20 - 34 years)

Mature (34 - 64 years)

Pensioner (65 + years)

It is important to note that all items and all the requisite information was only entered when the relevant piece of information was clear. Only when a woman was clearly identifiable as young would she have been monitored as such. All instances where various characteristics about the women could not be clearly identified were marked as unknown. In some media it was difficult to identify the race, age and sexuality of a woman. For this reason there were fairly considerable levels of unknown characteristics.

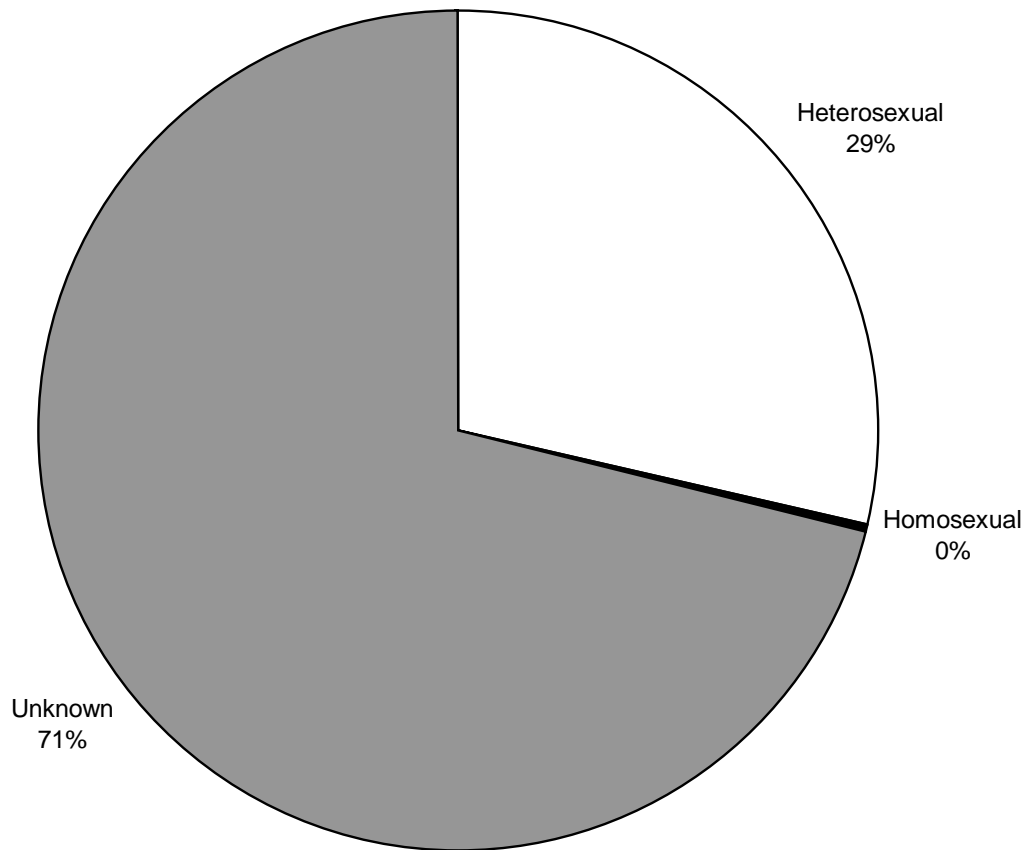
When going through the results it must be remembered that this study is not suggesting that these are the only ways in which women are represented. Indeed because the period monitored was relatively brief, the results do not represent patterns of how women were represented across the media. What the results do offer are a comprehensive picture of how women were represented, the roles they were given, their sexuality and their racial breakdown for the period monitored and as such serve as a comprehensive snapshot of women's identities across the media.

3 SEXUALITY

3.1 Sexuality totals

Sexual choices are often narrowed by socialisation, with heterosexuality being favoured. This begins from an early age with children being exposed to and channelled toward a very limited range of sexuality at home and through other institutions, which reinforce a particular kind of sexual identity. The media is one of those institutions; it normalises heterosexuality and renders any other form of sexuality taboo and deviant. This is done through the stereotyping of sexual roles and the naturalising of heterosexual behaviour and identity.

3.1 Sexuality Totals



The research noted specific sexuality only when it could be clearly identified. The pie chart above (3.1) shows that the sexuality of the majority of women monitored was unknown (71%). The power of the media lies in its ability to render heterosexuality as invisible and normal. The discursive practice of not marking or stating heterosexuality naturalises it by making it the accepted practice. Homosexuality, on the other, hand is clearly marked either by statement or stereotyping. Thus the stability of heterosexuality is secured and reproduced as being accepted and not requiring explanation.

The pie chart also shows that in cases where sexuality was clearly identifiable heterosexuality dominated (28%). Less than 1% of all women monitored could be clearly identified as homosexual. Homosexual women appeared in drama, self-promotional adverts, and magazine programs.

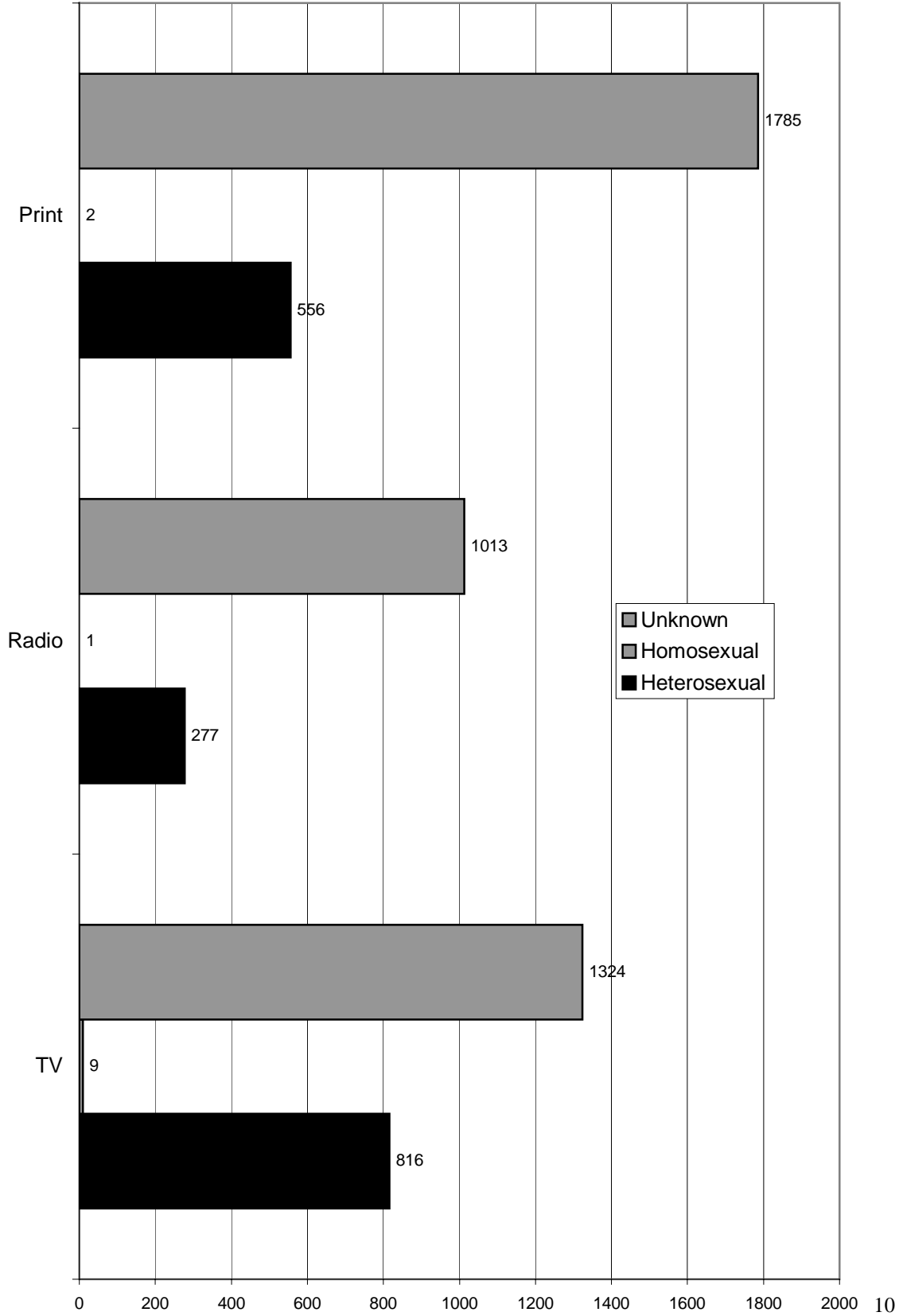
3.2 Sexuality by type

The small number of clearly identified homosexual women makes it difficult to identify any trends. Of the 3354 items monitored, only 12 items clearly identified homosexual women. Of the 29 types of programs monitored, homosexuality was only identified in 5, (drama, self-promotional advert, magazine, news, and in brief). It is not possible, given this limited number to suggest any stereotyping of homosexual women, but this clearly illustrates a heterosexual bias in the media.

3.3 Sexuality by medium

The following graph illustrates how women's sexuality was identified in print, radio and television. Like the trend throughout the research the unknown category dominated in all the mediums. It is followed by the heterosexual category. The homosexual category is almost invisible, with only two items in print, one in radio, and 9 in television.

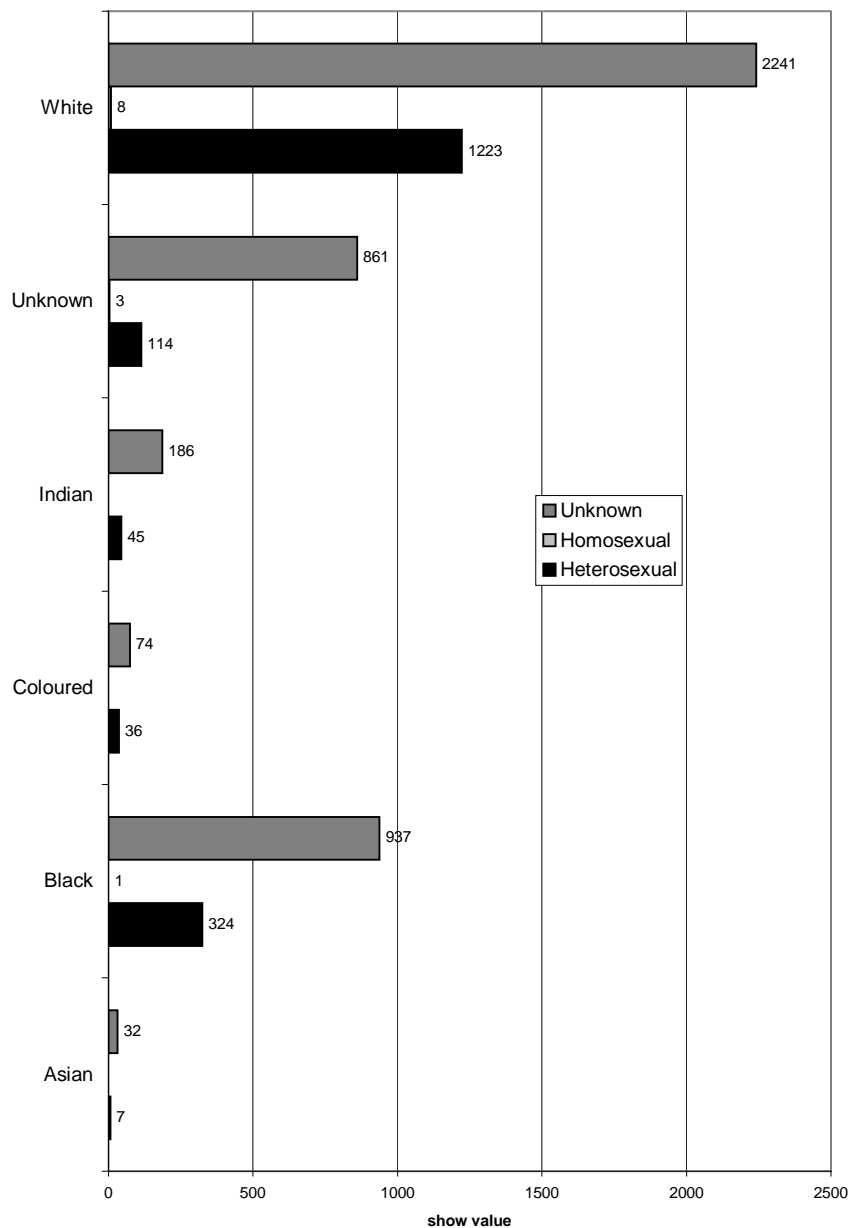
3.3 Sexuality by Medium



3.4 Sexuality by race

As the chart below shows, of the 12 homosexual women identified 8 were white women, 3 of them could not be identified racially, (these were cited in radio or newspapers where homosexuality would just be stated). There was only 1 black woman homosexual and no indian, asian or coloured. It is difficult to draw any conclusions about the absence of black, indian, asian and coloured homosexuality in the media, firstly because of the limited data (12 women only out of 6093) and because there were more white women in the media than any other race. 57% of all women monitored were white.

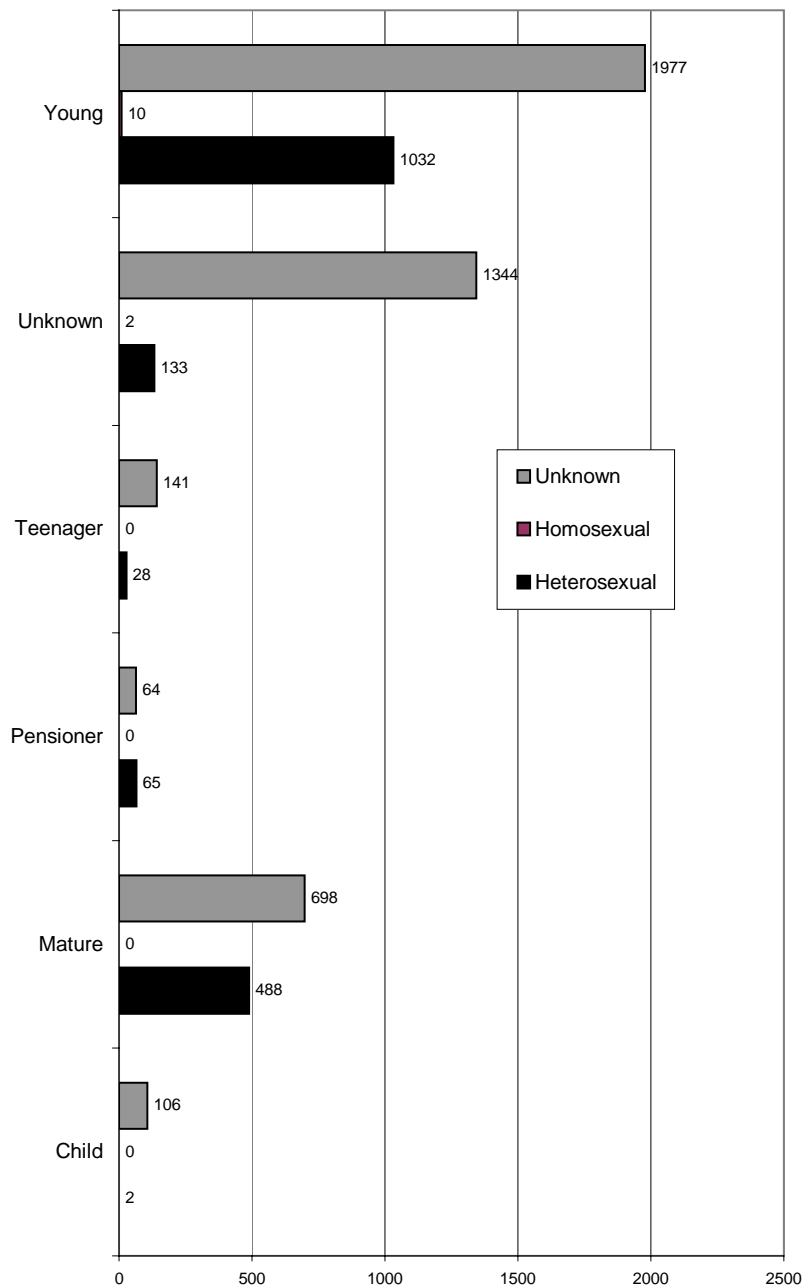
3.4 Sexuality by Race



3.5 Sexuality and age

The Unknown category was dominant as with all the other sections discussed above. There were more young women (20-34 years) in the media than pensioners (65 +), mature women (34-64), teenagers (13-19) and children (0-12). Homosexuality seemed to be predominantly associated with young women. However, because of the limited data there can be no substantive claims about age and homosexuality. Heterosexuality was also prominent among young women. Children's sexuality was generally unidentified.

3.5 Sexuality by Age



4 RACING WOMEN

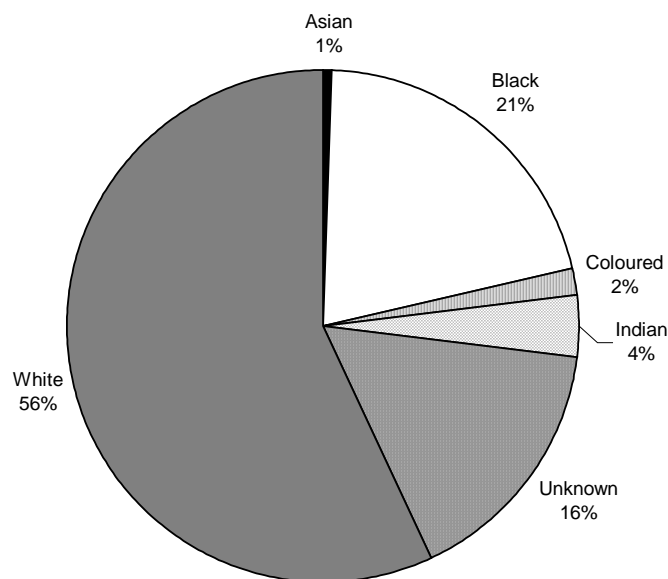
It is impossible to ignore the effects of South Africa's racist past, a past that affected every aspect of society, and which continues to impact on our media. As such it was an important aspect of this research to try and identify the racial representation of women in the media.

4.1 Race Overall

The use of the terms white, black, coloured, indian, asian and Unknown has been discussed in the methodology and their limitations noted. Due to the difficulties of determining race in the non-visual media the percentage of women whose race could not be identified was significantly high making up 16% of the women monitored.

Chart 4.1 illustrates the overall racial breakdown. 56% of all the women monitored were identified as white and only 21% of women monitored were identified as black. Black and white women made up 77% of all women monitored, which indicates that not only is there is massive discrepancy in the representation of white and black women, but also that there is a discrepancy in the representation of other races. Women identified as indian made up only 4% of all women identified while coloured women and asian women made up 2% and 1% respectively.

4.1 Totals: Race



4.2 Race and Mediums

It is clear that there is a tendency to represent society as consisting of largely white women. Table 4.2 reveals the breakdown per medium monitored. The mediums are grouped into Television, Radio and newspapers. Looking at the television broadcasters it can be seen that more than 80% of the women represented on **M-Net** (92.1%) and **e-tv** (81.9%) were white. The **SABC** channels, (although to a lesser degree), were also dominated by white women, with **SABC 2** and **SABC 3** having 62.2% and 62% white women respectively. **SABC 1** was dominated by white and black women, although one group of women did not dominate the channel, (together black and white women made up 94.5% of the race groups represented).

All of the television channels monitored left little room for other race groups to be represented, representing the world as inhabited by white, and to a lesser degree, black women. The majority of programming on during prime time is foreign and largely American and this may account to some degree for the dominance of white women, although **SABC 1** does schedule African-American sit-coms and this may account for their relatively high degree of black women. It is nevertheless concerning that all of the channels offer such a skewed racial representation of women.

Table 4.2 Breakdown in Percentages

Medium	White	Black	Coloured	Indian	Asian	Unknown
SABC 1	50.2	44.3	2.7	1.8		0.9
SABC 2	62.2	24.1	5.5	3.8	1.6	2.7
SABC 3	62.0	15.7	2.6	4.4		15.3
e-tv	81.9	12.1	1.3	1.7	1.7	1.3
M-Net	92.1	6.3	0.5		0.5	0.7
Radio 5	37.4	5.1				57.6
Cape Talk	6.4	1.1		3.2		89.4
East Coast Radio	43.1	4.6		11.1		41.2
Good Hope	32.7	49.3	0.7	0.7		16.7
Highveld Stereo	83.8	2.0		4.0		10.3
Lesedi	5.6	86.1				8.3
Lotus	31.9	11.2	1.7	55.2		
Metro	13.4	65.2	1.2	0.6		19.5
Punt	73.8	4.6	1.5	6.2		13.8
SAfm	50	11.1		11.1		27.8
Ukhozi	14.7	84.0		1.3		
Y-fm	8.4	91.6				
Argus	30.5	7.4	1.8	1.2	0.3	58.9
Beeld	74.6	6.9	0.8	2.7	0.2	14.8
Business Day	53.5	14.7	2.3	4.7		24.8
Cape Times	32.1	11.5	1.5	4.6		50.4
Citizen	68.8	12.1	1.9	1.3	8.3	7.6
Daily News	63.4	17.9		14.9		3.7
Die Burger	52.2	5.3	4.7	0.6	0.3	36.9
Natal Mercury	38.0	12.0	1.3	4.7		44.0
Sowetan	27.6	64.7	2.6	2.6		2.6
The Star	67.9	21.3	3.7	2.6	0.8	3.7

An examination of radio stations offers a different racial breakdown but a similarly extreme one. The trend in the radio stations appears to have created a link between the language and culture of the stations audience and the race of women most frequently mentioned. **Radio Lotus**, therefore, is the only radio station (in fact the only medium) to be dominated by women who were clearly identifiable as indian. Similarly black women dominate all **Y-fm**, **Ukhozi**, **Lesedi** and **Metro**, while white women dominate **Highveld Stereo** and **Punt**. Again, as with television one race tends to be almost exclusively represented. Interestingly **Radio Good Hope** had similar levels of representation of black and white women. Surprising is the low levels of representation of coloured women particularly on **Good Hope** and **Cape Talk**.

The print media tends to offer a similar racial breakdown where most of the identifiable women tended to be either white or black. The **Daily News**, (similarly to **East Coast Radio**), while dominated by white women had over 10% of the women identified as being indian. The **Sowetan** was the only newspaper monitored that was dominated by black women.

Table 4.2 illustrates quite clearly how each of the mediums tend to offer little racial diversity of women and that where other racial identities are found they tend to be significantly lower.

4.3 Race and Type

Table 4.3 Breakdown in Percentages

Type	White	Black	Coloured	Indian	Asian	Unknown
Advert	68.8	19.8	1.3	1.7	0.8	7.6
Analysis	100					
Cartoon	82	9.8		3.3		4.9
Comment	15.3	65.3		1.0		18.4
Continuity	79.4	7.6				13.0
Documentary	86.7	6.7		6.7		
Drama	84	10.7	2.7	0.4	0.4	1.8
Editorial	40	40				20
Feature	33.3					66.7
Graphic	75	25				
Illustration	100					
In brief	58.6	9.9	1	1.7	0.2	28.6
Interview	42.1	52.6		5.3		
Letter	57.5	5	2.5	2.5		32.5
Magazine	85	5		10		
Music	22.5	42.6		7.8		27.2
News	45.6	19.2	2.7	6.5	1.1	24.9
Opinion	66.7	33.3				
Opinion Poll	100					
Picture	64	19.6	5.6	4.7	0.6	5.6
Profile		100				

Review	47.5	16.1	1.3	1.3		33.9
Sitcom	71.4	24.7		1.3		2.6
Soap	65.5	29.1	3.6	0.6		1.2
Talk-show	45.4	27.9	1.1	10.4	0.5	14.8
Traffic	20	40		13.3		26.7
Weather	94.7			5.3		

Table 4.3 represents the percentage racial breakdown of women by the Type of item they were identified in. White women dominate across the majority of types, of the 27 types shown in the table; white women dominate all other races identified by a clear majority in 21 of the 27 types. It is interesting to note that some of the types where white women dominated were in Drama, Magazine, Soaps and Talk shows. Apart from these being visual types they are also entertainment programmes.

These similarities link to the high levels of white women on television and are largely attributable to the programmes being foreign. While these are entertainment programmes their importance cannot be ignored. Indeed it is particularly in entertainment programmes where issues of the racial makeup of programmes are simply taken for granted. After all it may be argued that as entertainment programmes they are not claiming to represent the “real world” like documentaries and current affairs and as such one need not worry about the racial representation in the programmes. Such an argument however ignores the role that entertainment programmes play in naturalising a white Western view of the world. Not only does this domination in the entertainment programmes contribute to the world looking white, but it also serves to normalise such a picture. In South Africa this is problematic because it is important to represent women in as a diverse a manner as possible in all forms of programming and items.

There are only five instances where black women were more commonly identified. They are in Comments, Interviews and Profiles. An examination of editorials reveals that white and black women each had 40%. While the actual instances where Comments, Interviews and Profiles occurred were less in number than Adverts for instance, it is positive to note that these types were in areas where black women were identified in more positive positions and positions of authority. However, it must be pointed out that in the Opinion, Letters and Documentary types white women dominate. As a result white women not only dominate in terms of being the most frequently accessed, but they are also the most naturally identified across the majority of types.

The racial breakdown by types of items in percentages is valuable in that it has illustrated how women tend to be represented in the media. In terms of the actual count of how many times a women was identified, women were most commonly identified in two areas, Adverts and News programmes.

Table 4.3.1 Breakdown of News into topics

News Topic	White	Black	Coloured	Indian	Asian	Unknown
Economics & Business	80	37	5	1	1	35
International Politics	38	26		27		19
Corruption	3	23		1		15
Crime	56	41		7	10	48
Arts & Culture	96	23	2	2	2	33
Health	37	17	4	6		15
Politics/Government	28	28	5	21		17
Rape	39	23	7	14		50

The table above shows the breakdown of topics in the news. In all but two of the topics white women outnumber every other women monitored. The two exceptions are Politics/Government where the numbers are equal, and (perhaps more concerning) is the topic of Corruption where there are over seven times more mentions of black women than of white women. Interestingly although Crime is still outweighed by white women, the number of black women is relatively high.

While Rape received a number of mentions, there were very few relating to other forms of violence against women (VAW) and very few relating to anti VAW activities. Where the topic of VAW was dealt with broadly, white women were almost exclusively identified.

4.4.1 Race & Topics

The following table illustrates the racial breakdown by topic codes. As with the other areas already analysed there is a clear dominance across the codes by white women. In most instances only white and black (to a lesser degree) women were mentioned, which again lends to an understanding of women in black and white. There were exceptions, most notably coverage of Corruption where the majority of women mentioned were black women (28 black women as compared with only 5 white and 2 indian women). In addition to this there were topic codes where the spread of mentions was more even. International Politics for example had 52 white women, 28 black women and 31 indian women. Aside from these exceptions coloured, indian and asian women clearly received very few mentions.

Table 4.4.1

Topic	White	Black	Coloured	Indian	Asian	Unknown
Economics & Business	113	63	7	6	1	43
International Politics	52	28		31		27
Disaster	18	8				6
Political Violence	7	4	1	2		
Anti- VAW	8			1		
Sexuality	5	4				4
Corruption	5	28		2		17
Aids	4	6	3			4
TRC	68	7		10		3
Child Abuse	5	3	3	2		6
Humour	49	7				13
Labour/Unemployment	27	1	5			2
Relationships	275	126	10	15	1	106
Education	33	17	13		1	0
Other	105	30	7			38
Crime	152	63		10	11	71
Housing & Land	4	6		1		3
Rates & Services	6	7	3			
Magazine	18					
Gender	37	19	2	2		10
Media	36	21				6
Human Rights	6	3		2		1
Sport	122	29		2	5	74
Arts & Culture	399	123	8	12	3	141
Health	174	52	5	6		28
Environment	44	13		6		17
Religion	16	13				5
Opinion Polls	9					
Politics/Government	40	46	5	21		30
Racism	6	8		2		2
VAW	36	26				11
Rape	57	26	8	14		88

Table 4.4.2 illustrates the racial breakdown of women according to the type of adverts in which they were identified. The three advert types that were found to have the greatest number of women were Entertainment, Adornment and Business. Entertainment adverts were those adverts that were selling particular forms of entertainment, such as films and included self-promotional items such

as adverts for future programmes. The high number of mentions (814) is to some degree attributable to the relatively high number of women found (particularly in television) in promo's for up-coming programmes. What is interesting to note is the almost exclusive domination of white women.

Adornment adverts were those where women were identified selling any product related to a woman's adornment, this included products such as perfume, jewelry and clothing. Although white women still dominate, other women are at least identified even though the amounts are very small. Business as the third most commonly identified advert types included all items where women were identified selling business's such as financial firms, banks and insurance products. As with adornment there were at least a few other races identified, although again the differences were substantial.

Table 4.4.2 Breakdown in Percentages

Advert Topic	White	Black	Coloured	Indian	Asian	Unknown
Adorn	68.3	20.9	1.7	3.5		5.7
Business	62.2	11.4	2.7	7.6		16.2
Cars	96.8					3.2
Competition	57.6	11.9		27.1		3.4
Education	40.9	13.6	9.1			36.4
Entertainment	79.5	13	0.5	0.2	1.7	5
Equip	52	34.3	2	1		10.8
Food	63.2	28.5	2.1	2.1	1.4	2.8
Home	62.4	34.2	1.7	0.9		0.9
Media	51.7	19		3.4		25.9
Impotency	100					
Personal	63.2	28.5	1.4			6.9
Sport	73.7	15.8		10.5		
Tobacco	57.1	14.3				28.6
Travel	77.8				5.6	16.7

While the number of women identified selling cars or car products was fairly low (31 items) there is a clear racial bias, with white women making up 96.8% of all the items. A similar situation can be seen in Travel (all products relating to travel such as holiday packages) where white women dominate almost exclusively. Interestingly the highest levels of asian women were identified in Travel adverts and this hints at notions of the exotic and travel in relation to asian women.

Personal type adverts referred to Personal hygiene adverts and included products such as sanitary pads and tampons. Yet again there is a substantially higher level of white women identified selling these products than any other race. While this percentage cannot be claimed to be conclusive, it is difficult to understand how and why there is a dominance of white women.

4.5 Race & Age

Table 4.5 Breakdown in Percentages

Age	White	Black	Coloured	Indian	Asian	Unknown
Child	54.6	23.1	11.1	4.6		6.5
Mature	56.2	26.3	3.1	7.3	0.3	6.7
Pensioner	67.4	15.5		8.5		8.5
Teenager	52.1	24.9	1.2	3.6	0.6	17.8
Unknown	40	12.2	0.6	1.8	1.1	44.4
Young	65.5	22.6	1.7	3.2	0.6	6.5

Young women were the most frequently identified (3020 items) across the media. As white women have dominated all areas it is not surprising to find that of the young, white women were identified in 65.5% of the items and black women were only mentioned in 22.6% of the items. The remaining 5.5% was spread across coloured, indian and asian women. The second most frequently identified age group of women was mature women, with 1186 items. Interestingly the highest level of black women fell into this category with 26.3% and this may be attributed to their social roles as mothers. Children and teenagers had more general spreads across the races, although white women still dominated.

5 Social Roles: Putting Women in their Place

The allocation of a marker for each woman identified in the monitoring was determined by the social roles that each woman portrayed based on the symbols, signs and icons attached to each image, description or soundbite.

A predefined list of social roles was devised and based on common social roles (both active and passive) applied to women in our society. However as the monitoring progressed further social roles emerged. Although for the most part these were not as frequent as the stereotyped roles usually given to women. At times social roles were difficult to assign simply because the woman mentioned was given no meaning other than her gendered identity as a woman. Largely these women were not sourced or did not play an active role in the programme or news item or advertisement but appeared as a 'background' to other people. This in itself is a symptom of the extent to which women are effaced from active participation in media communication.

The table below reflects all social roles that scored more than 0.1% (10 mentions) in the monitoring results. Social roles which featured less frequently than these were excluded because their statistical count was too small.

Table 5.1

Social role	Count	Social role	Count
Activist	31	Mother	272
Author	14	NGO	48
Beauty Contestant	12	Official	83
Object	261	Police	37
Career	889	Politician	160
Child	44	Presenter	428
Community	14	Professional	157
Consumer	154	Prostitute	32
Contestant	13	Royalty	31
Criminal	13	Scholar	59
Daughter	56	Secretary	32
Entertainer	1128	Sister	24
Friend	14	Sports	221
Girlfriend	91	Stripper	40
Grandmother	23	Student	73
Housewife	108	Survivor	17
Journalist	141	Teacher	22
Minister	52	Tempress	28
Model	272	Woman	407

Social role	Count
Victim	236
Waitress	18

Social role	Count
Wife	231
Worker	27

As expected women as entertainers, singers, musicians, and actors, was the most common role and this was because of music played on radio, the arts and culture pages of the print media and from TV programming. In most cases actors in dramas were assigned the social roles given them in the programmes in which they appeared, for instance as housewife, victim, mother etc. However as actors, women appeared in magazine programmes and the promotions of programming.

The age breakdown of entertainers demonstrates that 78% of them were young (20 -34) and of that 78%, 65% were white and 26% black.

The second most common social role was that of career women and professional women. While this may have seemed positive, the age and racial breakdown is again perturbing: 65% of career women are young, while mature career and professional women constituted just 18%. 68% of career and professional women are white, while just 16% were black. These representations undermine the active economic roles played by women in our society by stressing youth rather than experience and maturity.

The table below shows how the career woman social role was spread across the type of items monitored:

Table 5.2

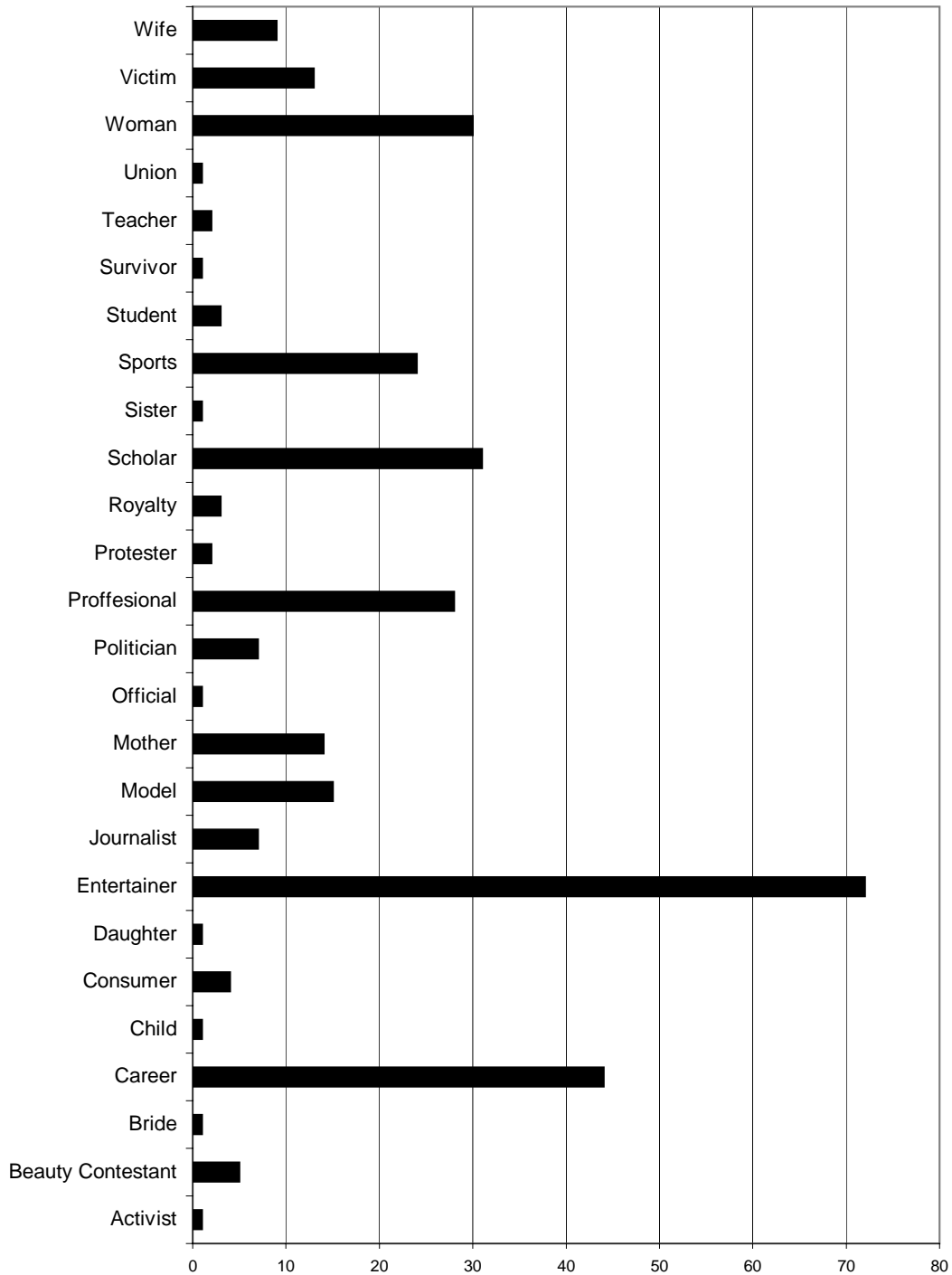
Type	No. of Mentions
Advert	298
Comment	15
Drama	38
In Brief	63
News	301
Picture	63
Review	44
Soap	33

The high number of career women in advertising underpins the portrayal of them as young and white. In adverts monitored, 65% of career women are young, while mature career and professional women constituted just 18%.

A breakdown of career women in news demonstrates a different emphasis where mature women are more frequently mentioned. (83 as opposed to 57 mentions). However in over fifty percent of news items the monitoring was unable to identify the age of the women mentioned. Racially speaking however, the pattern was very similar with 57% being white and just 16% being black. In

27% of the mentions it was not possible to identify the race of the woman concerned. Indian and coloured career women achieved just 3% of the total number of mentions for career or professional social roles in news.

5.3 Photographs of Women: Social Roles Portrayed



The chart above covers the represented social roles of women in still photographs monitored in the print media.

Images of women as entertainers provided the most examples. Again this is predictable but clearly suggests that women appear in the media when they entertain rather than as sources of information. The career social role is the next prominent role featured closely followed by scholars, professionals and woman. This would suggest that still images of women are more positive, although an analysis of the age breakdown of images of career women shows that 55% of career women, featured were young, while just 30% were mature.

Further a racial breakdown of women appearing in photographs features the clear domination of white women. The table below reveals that just 21% of women imaged were black while 68% were white.

Table 5.4

Race	%
Asian	1
Black	21
Coloured	6
Indian	5
White	68

5.5 Women as Workers

At the other end of the scale, women as workers featured infrequently and reflects the class bias of media representations of women. Rural women and the poor are absent from media representation of South African women.

The table below of the spread of coverage of women as workers by programme type is revealing.

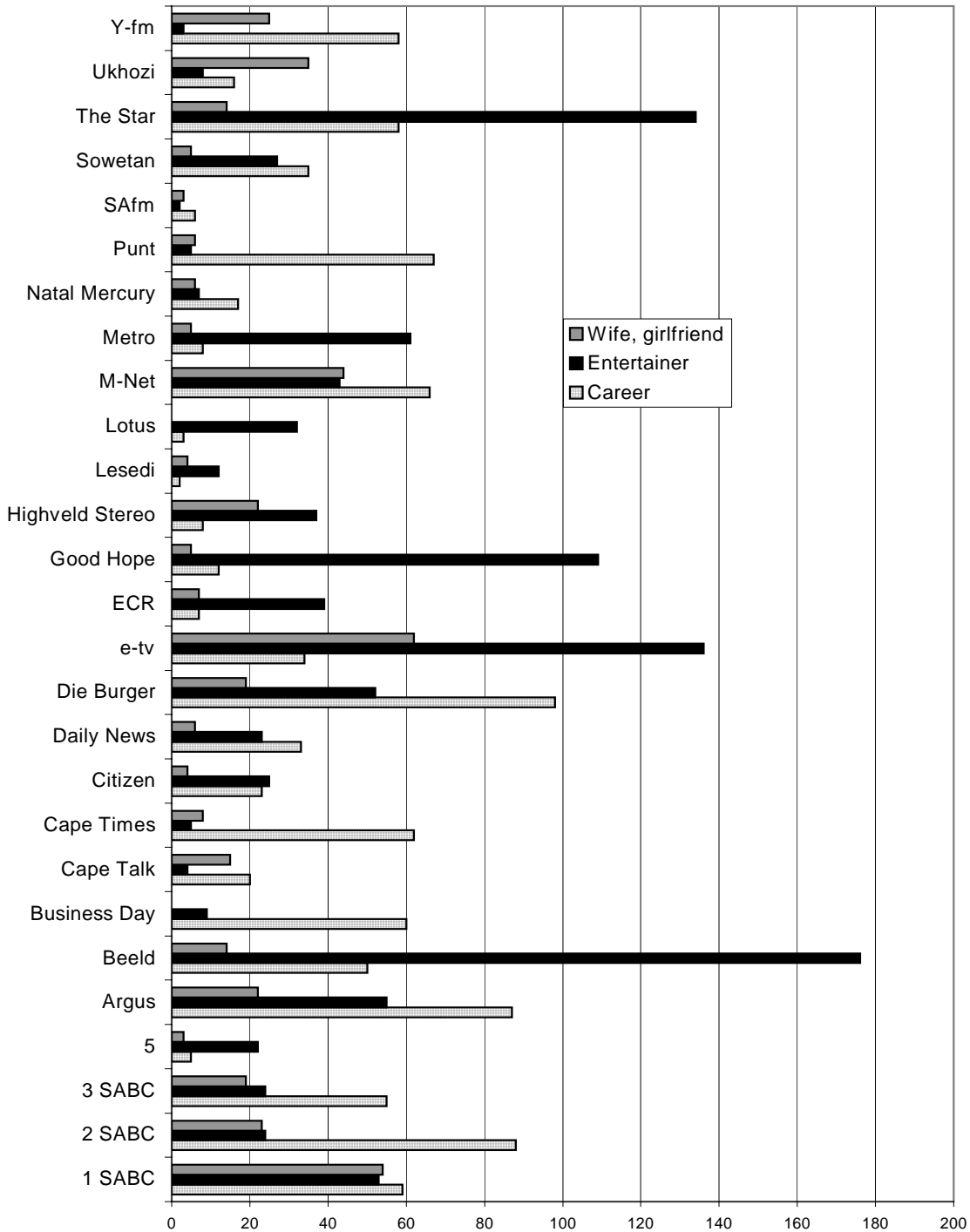
Table 5.5

Type	Count
Advert	15
Cartoon	2
Drama	3
News	2
Sitcom	1
Soap	4

It is advertising which carried the most mentions. News coverage of women as workers is disappointingly low, although women as workers in a crowd was a

feature of some TV news footage but aside from being difficult to quantify, did not allow those women any meaning other than as a chanting crowd.

5.6 Social Roles by Medium: Big three



The chart above demonstrates the spread of the three most frequent social roles across the media monitored. In print media, the **Beeld**, **Citizen** and **The Star** are dominated by entertainers. The career social role was more dominant in the other print media monitored. In all print media the wife, girlfriend roles are less than either. Interestingly the wife social role scores higher than the others on e-tv. **SABC** TV stations **SABC 2** and **SABC 3** have a similar pattern to MNet, while **SABC 1** carried fewer career roles. Entertainers predictably dominate representations on the music radio stations.

5.7 News versus Advertising

The two highest scoring types of programming, news and advertising reveal interesting elements when compared.

The table below represents the social roles that were found in advertising and then compared with the frequency of those roles as featured in the news.

Table 5.7

Social Role	Adverts	News
Activist	35%	55%
Air Hostess	100%	0%
Aunt	33%	0%
Baby	100%	0%
Beauty Contestant	42%	8%
Object	71%	1%
Bride	33%	0%
Bridesmaid	75%	0%
Career	34%	34%
Chef	17%	50%
Child	50%	11%
Clairvoyant	100%	0%
Community	7%	50%
Consumer	34%	1%
Contestant	69%	0%
Daughter	39%	13%
Entertainer	21%	9%
Farm Worker	100%	0%
Friend	43%	0%
Girlfriend	57%	9%
Grandmother	35%	0%
Heroine	25%	0%
Housewife	66%	5%
Journalist	16%	66%

Social Role	Adverts	News
Model	79%	0%
Mother	34%	28%
Nun	50%	0%
Pensioner	100%	0%
Police	27%	46%
Politician	3%	81%
Presenter	44%	20%
Professional	24%	35%
Sexworkers	22%	38%
Royalty	32%	52%
Scholar	14%	7%
Secretary	50%	0%
Sister	29%	29%
Sports	15%	58%
Stripper	8%	23%
Student	44%	7%
Survivor	24%	41%
Teacher	14%	50%
Tempress	21%	4%
Woman	30%	30%
Victim	6%	70%
Waitress	33%	17%
Wife	45%	25%
Worker	56%	7%

The table reveals the domination by advertising of portrayals of women in the core traditional roles of wives (45%), housewives (66%), models (79%), contestants (69%), objects (71%) and bridesmaids (75%). Women in the news tend to be represented in more positive and active roles such as Politicians (81%), journalists (66%) and activists (55%). Women are however still negatively represented in the news. The social role of 'victim' is a clear example where 70% of the 'victim' women in news and advertising are in the news. It is also interesting to note that while advertisements do tend to represent women in passive and objectified roles, women, comparatively, are represented in less roles in the news. The table shows that of the 48 roles, in which women are found in advertising and news, women are represented in 33 of them in news. An examination of the roles in which women do not feature in news and advertising together reveals that many of them are in familial roles such as aunt, grandmother, friend, bride, bridesmaid and baby. These factors suggest that there is a tendency for news to represent women in more positive active roles than the ones in which they are represented in advertising.

5.8 Race and Roles

A racial breakdown of the social roles represented in the media monitored shows a clear pattern where whites dominate the social roles. This domination is fairly regular but is considerably marked in certain instances. Women as objects (usually sexual) are heavily dominated by whites. Of the 261 representations, 216 (82%) were white and just 29 (11%) black. The representation of women as objects for the male gaze is limiting both because it objectifies women and removes their status as subjects but also because it renders them as passive rather than active. However by the further racial bias attached to these depictions, comes the message of what constitutes beauty and clearly, from the monitoring, it is white women who are considered beautiful. A very similar bias is evident in the representation of women as models.

An unexpected exception to the general and clear trend is in the depiction of the housewife. For this social role, black housewives dominate. This is because of the depiction of black women as housewives in advertising. Interestingly, the social role of wife, rather than housewife, was dominated by white women.

The racial mix of the social roles is also interesting for those roles associated with the marginalised in our society. Sex workers (represented as prostitutes and strippers) were dominated by black women, while workers were evenly balanced between black and white. The domination of white women as programme presenters, 280 (65%) over their black counterparts suggests that the media still portray a predominantly white face and voice. The full table of racial representations appears below.

Table 5.8

Social role	Total	Asian	Black	Coloured	Indian	Unknown	White
Activist	31		8		2	2	19
Air Hostess	4					1	3
Alien	1						1
Angel	2		1				1
Astrologist	1						1
Aunt	3						3
Author	14		1				13
Baby	2						2
Beauty Contestant	12			1		1	10
Bimbo	261	5	29			11	216
Bride	3						3
Bridesmaid	4		1				3
Career	889	1	161	17	23	165	522
Chef	6		3			1	2
Child	44		7	1		5	31
Clairvoyant	1		1				
Commission	7		3			2	2
Community	14		2	1		2	9
Consumer	154		45	6	15	37	51
Contestant	13		2			2	9
Criminal	13		3			4	6
Daughter	56		13	1	3	6	33
Doctor	1					1	
Entertainer	1130	6	261	7	34	200	622
EU	1						1
Farm Worker	2		2				
Farmer	1						1
Friend	14		5				9
Girlfriend	91		18	1		3	69
Grandmother	23		1	2		6	14
Heroine	4		1				3
Historical Figure	2						2
Housewife	108		69	1		2	36
Journalist	141	4	30	3	17	10	77
Minister	52		30	8	4	5	5
Model	272		52	5	6	25	184
Mother	272	1	55	12	6	23	175
Mystic	1		1				
NGO	48		7		2	18	21
Nun	4						4
Official	83		23		26	16	18
Pensioner	1						1
Police	37		9		1	2	25
Politician	160		48	2	45	27	38
Presenter	428	1	110	2	22	13	280

Professional	159	1	27	3	2	10	116
Prostitute	32	4	15			6	7
Protester	5		4				1
Relative	3						3
Royalty	31						31
Rural	1		1				
Saint	1						1
Sangoma	1		1				
Scholar	59		8	10	1	4	36
Secretary	32		8				24
Sister	24		2			2	20
Sports	221	5	19			69	128
Stripper	40	7	25			2	6
Student	73	2	13		1	1	56
Survivor	17		2	1		5	9
Suspect	8					1	7
Teacher	22		5			1	16
Temptress	28		11	2		1	14
UN	3					2	1
Union	3			2			1
Unknown	405		41	2	11	159	192
Victim	236	1	30	11	5	81	108
Waitress	18		2	2		1	13
Wife	231		35	3	5	42	146
Witch	2						2
Worker	27	1	11	4		1	10

5.9 Social Roles through the Ages

In the representation women, age plays a critical part. The stereotype of women who have traditionally featured in the media has stressed their appearance and their age rather than their skills or competence. The use of conventionally attractive young women to read the news, is a perfect example of this.

Our analysis of age split the ages into easily defined categories each with some degree of their own symbolic meaning. Children for example are generally portrayed as being asexual and are less prominent. Senior citizens are also frequently stereotyped as being slow, conservative and a burden to society. However it is the domination of young women, which carries the symbolic and the codes of physical beauty and visual pleasure.

For obvious reasons determining the age of women represented on Radio and in the print media was often difficult or impossible. The table below of the breakdown by age of the social roles represented shows a common bias in

favour of young women through the social roles. Young women overwhelming dominate the roles of model, object, presenter, girlfriend and sportspersons.

Women politicians were a challenge to the common bias towards young women and this was due to news media coverage of the political activities of the country. (70% of those represented were mature).

Most interesting too is the domination of young women in the journalism social role that suggests a bias against utilising mature women as journalists in the visual media.

The full table of social roles broken down by age is listed below.

Table 5.9

Social Role	Total	Child	Mature	Pensione	Teenager	Unknown	Young
Activist	31		4			11	16
Air Hostess	4					3	1
Alien	1						1
Angel	2		1				1
Astrologist	1			1			
Aunt	3		3				
Author	14		4	1		9	
Baby	2	2					
Beauty Contestant	12	1			3		8
Bimbo	261	1	2			9	247
Bride	3						3
Bridesmaid	4						4
Career	889		230	10	2	285	362
Chef	6		4			1	1
Child	44	42			2		
Clairvoyant	1			1			
Commission	7		3			4	
Community	14		3			5	6
Consumer	154	2	11	4	9	64	64
Contestant	13		1			2	10
Criminal	13		1			5	7
Daughter	56	23			17	5	11
Doctor	1						1
Entertainer	1130		127	11	5	314	673
EU	1					1	
Farm Worker	2					2	
Farmer	1					1	
Friend	14		1				13
Girlfriend	91		6		1	7	77
Grandmother	23		5	18			
Heroine	4		1				3
Historical Figure	2					2	

Housewife	108		58	2		10	38
Journalist	141		17	1		35	88
Minister	52		46			6	
Model	272	1	5		1	8	257
Mother	272		122	10		34	106
Mystic	1		1				
NGO	48		7			39	2
Nun	4		2	2			
Official	83		43	7		32	1
Pensioner	1			1			
Police	37		6			13	18
Politician	160		112	5		40	3
Presenter	428		43		3	57	325
Professional	159		43			41	75
Prostitute	32				10	10	12
Protester	5		4			1	
Relative	3						3
Royalty	31		2	13		9	7
Rural	1						1
Saint	1					1	
Sangoma	1		1				
Scholar	59	15			44		
Secretary	32		3			5	24
Sister	24		2			6	16
Sports	221	1	17	5	8	58	132
Stripper	40		12		10	8	10
Student	73	4	1		12		56
Survivor	17		8	1	1	5	2
Suspect	8		1			2	5
Teacher	22		9			4	9
Temptress	28		4		1	2	21
UN	3					3	
Union	3					2	1
Unknown	405	2	69	17	14	184	119
Victim	236	14	42	8	26	87	59
Waitress	18		2			3	13
Wife	231		77	10		42	102
Witch	2		1				1
Worker	27		19	1		2	5

Overall the social roles revealed in the monitoring demonstrate that the media portrayal of women is still dominated by women in social roles which are both passive and limiting. Women are predominantly there to be entertained or look at, they perform an activity related to pleasure and their contribution to society is consequently downplayed.

While women were frequently presented as being economically productive career and professional women, these representations were biased in favour of young white women and downplayed the roles of both experienced and black women in our society. Finally the scarcity of social roles pertaining to rural women and the poor was extremely disappointing.

Conclusion

One of the arguments most frequently put forward by the likes of advertisers is that they are simply reflecting reality, and that it is largely up to society to change and then the advertisers will follow. If for the moment this argument is accepted, the question is which reality advertisers and broadcasters are referring to, for clearly there are considerably more black women in South Africa. They occupy a significantly greater diversity of roles than the ones they are allowed to occupy in the media. Indeed were this argument to be taken seriously this research has highlighted that the reality the advertisers are reflecting is one where the majority of women are young white 'objects'. A "reality" where South Africa consists largely of white and black women and few others.

This report demonstrated that the media helps create a particular reality. A random, three-day sample of a spread of media showed certain clear elements:

- A racial bias in the representation of women towards whites and underrepresenting black women
- Bias against homosexuality and the naturalisation of heterosexuality
- The domination of women in social roles which are for the benefit of entertaining and providing pleasure to men

As we enter the new millenium this report lays the challenge very clearly before us: to fundamentally transform the ways in which women, their roles, identities and sexualities are represented in the media.