

Gender and Tabloids in Southern Africa

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MIRROR ON THE MEDIA

Mirror on the Media
Gender and Tabloids in Southern Africa

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Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
Gender Links	Gender Links
GEMSA	Gender and Media Southern Africa Network
GEMSAT	GEMSA Tanzania
GMBS	Gender and Media Baseline Study
GMMP	Global Media Monitoring Project
GMAS	Gender and Media Audience Study
HIV	Human Immuno Virus
IBA	Independent Broadcasting Authority
ICASA	Independent Communications Authority of South Africa
IJMC	Institute of Journalism and Mass Communication
MBS	Mauritius Broadcasting Services
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
MWO	Media Watch Organisation
MMP	Media Monitoring Project
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPU	Newspaper Press Union
OSISA	Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa
SABC	South African Broadcasting Coorporation
SADC	South African Development Community
SANEF	South Africa National Editors Forum
SAPA	South Africa Press Agency

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Independent media consultant Rene Smith wrote the concept paper for the research and participated in a reference group meeting to define its parameters. Other participants included GEMSA CEO Kubi Rama; MMP director William Bird; Lynette Steenveld, a senior lecturer in the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University; photojournalist Trevor Davies and Jacolette Kloppers of the Department of Journalism at Stellenbosch University. Preliminary research findings were debated at a launch of the third Gender and Media Diversity journal that focused on tabloids during Highway Africa at Rhodes University in September 2007.

Themba Mahleka, a GEMSA intern, conducted desk top research on the tabloid phenomenon in Southern Africa. MWO President Loga Virahsawmy and Wilbert Kitima, an executive committee member of GEMSAT coordinated the research from their respective countries. Joyce Ambale translated the Tanzania case study articles from Kiswahili into English. Loga Virahsawmy and Marie Annick Savripene translated the French case study articles into English.

GL Researcher Sikhonzile Ndlovu coordinated the research in South Africa; compiled the final report and assisted with editing. GL Assistant Director Loveness Jambaya-Nyakujarah assisted in testing the research questionnaires. Raashied Gallant of the Gender Advocacy Project (GAP), also a member of the South African Gender and Media Network (SAGEM) coordinated the audience research in Cape Town.

All three country teams worked with field researchers, including students who conducted the audience research. Lukhanyo Nyathi, a GL research associate, captured the data and generated the graphs from the audience research.

GL Executive Director Colleen Lowe Morna designed the research tools and queries; managed the project and edited the final report. While several inputs and ideas have contributed to the research and its interpretation, GL and GEMSA take sole responsibility for the conclusions reached and recommendations made.

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Foreword



The scene is the quarterly meeting of the South African National Editors Forum (SANEF) in Cape Town in early 2007. The focus is a panel of tabloid editors. A media studies professor has just thrown down the gauntlet, saying in his view tabloids should not even try to masquerade as journalism. He cites the case of a story in one tabloid in which the penis of a rapist is referred to as the "spear of the nation." Don't tabloids have any kind of obligation to uphold the basic human rights principles of the Constitution, he asks?

If that's the way people speak in the townships, retorts a tabloid editor, why should we censor it? Women readers love tabloids, he adds, and there are far more women sources and stories about women in tabloids than in the mainstream press.

Tabloid help lines, he adds, are flooded with calls from women because they are far more effective at fighting crime and finding lost children than the local police station. Rather than just lambaste tabloids, the editor argues, gender and media analysts need to take note of the social contribution that they make.

As an orgasnisation that has pioneered research on gender and the media in Southern Africa, we would not be living in the real world if we did not take up debates such as this. In this research, GL and the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) network have brought together the best of their monitoring and audience research methodologies to produce this first comprehensive report on gender and tabloids in Southern Africa.

The Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS) undertaken with the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) in 2003 showed that women in Southern Africa constitute 17 percent of news sources. The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) in 2005 showed that the figure had gone up slightly, to 19 percent.

How do tabloids measure up? This research, conducted in the three countries with the highest tabloid density in Southern Africa (Mauritius, South Africa, and Tanzania) shows us that contrary to the claims made by editors, tabloids only give slightly more voice to women than the mainstream media (an average of 25 percent in this study).

Women in tabloids are more likely to feature as images than as news sources, and blatant stereotypes abound. Screaming headlines exacerbate the image of the macho man and helpless woman, coming close at times to glorifying gender violence. Tabloids often portray women in extremes of either the virtuous virgin or devil incarnate. While editors may argue that there are stories of "ordinary" women in the inner pages, it is the images of woman as sex objects in the prominent front, page three and back pages that remain etched in the mind.

Yet tabloids are popular; they are mushrooming and they are here to stay. Why is this so? Overwhelmingly, the research shows, audiences buy these relatively cheap publications for light entertainment and escapism, not for news. Most readers of these publications, it turns out, get their news from TV.

The research also shows that although owners claim to be targeting women audiences, the majority of those who buy these publications are men. The tabloid phenomenon does, however, help to elucidate one of the central findings of Gender and Media Audience study (GMAS): that across Southern Africa, audiences yearn for more local and human interest news. This is clearly the void that tabloids are helping to fill. They are also doing so in easily accessible styles, languages and affordable formats for readers with lower levels of education. In that sense, it is argued, they are creating a new reading public.

But what is this public being served? And what are the bottom lines when it comes to ethical standards in countries committed to upholding human rights? Many editors interviewed for this research said that they don't do "sleaze"; others claimed to have editorial codes that they live by. Audience responses suggest that not all readers are happy; many women are downright insulted. As in the GMAS, both women and men would like to see greater diversity in the way they are portrayed.

As I was writing this foreword a colleague and gender activist called to say she had been offered a column by a tabloid. Should she take it? I said she should. We cannot ignore a medium that is clearly reaching millions of people. What we must do is work with them, as we have been with the mainstream media, on defining bottom lines, and serving their audiences, especially women, much better.



Colleen Lowe Morna
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Chairperson, Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) Network

Executive summary

This report is part of *Mirror on the Media* series of monitoring reports coordinated by GL with the support of the Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa (OSISA) on gender and the media. Previous studies include: *Gender and Advertising in Southern Africa; Who talks on radio talk shows* and *Who makes the news*, an analysis of the 2005 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) results in Southern Africa.

The study focused on gender and tabloids in three Southern African countries with the highest density of tabloids, defined both in terms of size and content. It included monitoring of three newspapers in each country over the month of June 2007. The monitoring covered a total of 2546 news items: 859 in Mauritius; 1203 in South Africa and 484 in Tanzania (where tabloids are much fewer pages than in the other countries).

Researchers also conducted desk top research; interviewed editors; gathered case material and administered an audience survey to 280 readers in the three countries.

Findings

Key findings include:

The tabloid phenomenon is mushrooming across Southern Africa: Out of 182 newspapers in ten countries, 27 (or 15%) are regarded by media analysts in those countries as tabloid both in form and content. These are characterised by sensation with stories told in a melodramatic and breathless tone. Stories about superstitious incidents are often reported as fact, with little or no verification.

The main target is lower wage earners: In all countries tabloids target the working and lower middle class and in South Africa the main target is black readers. The research showed that the majority of tabloid readers have a secondary school education, although in Mauritius quite a high proportion have a tertiary school education.

Men are the main buyers of tabloids: Although tabloid editors claim to be targeting women, the research shows that they are not the primary buyers of tabloids. Only 43% women buy the paper directly compared to 62% of men. Women are more likely than men to get the paper from a spouse; other family member; friend or neighbour.

Tabloids make use of more images than mainstream media. Images make up 21% of content in tabloids while images take up only 15% of space in mainstream papers. Advertising takes up 35% of space in tabloids compared to 44% in mainstream media.

Most editorial content in tabloids is of a non-news nature. News constitutes only 45% of the editorial package (except in Mauritius, where the figure in 60%). The balance comprises human interest stories, features and other genres.

Audiences like interactive aspects of tabloids: The favourite genres for women are the agony aunts and human interest, profiles and portraits; news and articles that ask for feedback. The favourite genres for men are articles that ask for feedback; news and editorials. The fact that both women and men responded so positively to "articles in which people are asked what they think about something" suggests that there is more scope for interactive features in tabloids.

Sports and celebrity news dominate: Both tabloids and mainstream media share a love of sports (21 percent of all topics in this research and 17 percent in the Gender and Media Baseline Study). On the other hand, mainstream media has a much higher proportion of economic and political news (25 percent compared to 10 percent in the case of tabloids). Tabloids in turn have a much higher proportion of media, entertainment and celebrity news (24 percent in tabloids compared to 8 percent in mainstream media).

Gender hardly features as a topic: At about one percent each, gender violence and gender equality are equally marginal topics in both tabloids and the mainstream media.

Community concerns are not well covered: Despite the claim by editors that tabloids are like a service arm to communities, the majority of both women and men felt that tabloids only cover issues affecting the community partially, not well or very poorly.

The main reason for reading tabloids, especially among women, is for entertainment and escapism: Some 60% women and 50% men said they read tabloids to "catch up on the gossip." Other reasons given by women included looking at photos of celebrities and "to have a laugh." Other reasons given by men included more serious reasons, like news coverage. Men also like the headlines. Significantly, none of the women said they liked the headlines, which often perpetrate blatant gender stereotypes.

Tabloids are not the main source of news for their readers: Tabloids are not the main source of news for their audiences; indeed other than the Internet they are the least likely source of news. Overall, TV is the main source of news for audiences in the three countries (although there are country variations, such as Mauritius, in which radio is cited as the main source of news).

Despite the fact that they read tabloids a lot, audiences are aware that tabloids do not always tell the truth: When asked to select from a long list of what they dislike about tabloids, 52% women and 50% men said they do not always tell the truth (see figure 2.13). The second highest proportion said that tabloids exaggerate. Men said that tabloids do not provide useful local information.

Gender biases abound in the way stories are told: Applying the Gender and Media (GEM) classification system to the

items monitored, the research found that about two thirds of these items demonstrated gender biases of one kind or the other, with only one third classified as "gender aware". Audiences perceived a high level of blatant stereotypes.

Women's views are often ignored: Women constitute 25 percent of news sources in tabloids in the three countries monitored compared to the Southern African regional average of 19 percent in the Gender and Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) the latest study for which such figures are available for the mainstream media. In Mauritius and Tanzania the figures are exactly the same for tabloids and the GMMP (24 percent and 18 percent respectively).

South African tabloids have the highest proportion of women sources: At 30 percent, women sources in tabloids in South Africa were the highest of the three counties and slightly higher than in South Africa's GMMP figure of 26 percent.

But the voices of black women are still marginalised: At 18 percent, black women are better represented in tabloids than in the mainstream media (7 percent in the GMBS) but are still grossly under-represented relative to their strength in the population (45 percent).

Women are more likely to be seen than heard: Women in the tabloids monitored constituted 35% of all images (compared to 25% of sources). The majority of audiences in all countries, and especially women in Tanzania believed that there are more pictures of women than men in tabloids even though this is in fact not the case. This points to the power of visual imagery.

Women have little to say on 'hard core' issues: As in the findings in both the GMBS and GMMP, women's views are under-represented in all topic categories in tabloids: especially in sports, politics and economics. Unlike the mainstream media, in which women had more to say than men in only the gender equality topic category, in tabloids men's views predominate even in this topic category. The only topic category in which women's view predominated in tabloids was health, with celebrity news a close second.

Male reporters predominate: Tabloid newsrooms, like those of their mainstream counterparts, are dominated by men. The monitoring showed that women journalists constituted 29 percent of those who wrote stories, compared to 22 percent print journalists in the GMBS. This varies across countries, from 37 percent women writers in South African tabloids to 21 percent in Tanzania.

Gender stereotypes are reinforced in the roles that women and men are portrayed in: The only occupational category in which women predominate in tabloids is as beauty contestants; home makers and domestic workers; office workers; social workers and students. Men on the other hand predominate in a range of roles, from professional, to NGO, to business person, labourers and drivers, religious figures and politicians.

Older women are virtually non-existent: Another way that subtle stereotypes are reinforced in tabloids (as in the mainstream media) is the tendency for older women to be virtually non-existent in coverage. Figure 2.25 shows that across all countries in which the monitoring took place, women predominate in the 20-34 year old category and become virtually non-existent in the age categories over fifty.

Women are more likely to be identified according to a personal relationship than men: In contrast 18 percent of women sources were identified according to a personal relationship in tabloids compared to two percent of men.

Audiences, especially women, are unhappy about the blatant stereotyping of women in tabloids: Some 69% women said they feel uncomfortable when they see sexual images of women in tabloids. Roughly equal proportions of men (31%) found such images entertaining as those who said they felt uncomfortable about them.

The monitoring yielded some interesting examples of more gender aware reporting. These included women in new roles; men caring about their children; a gay man seeking out a partner in the UK etc.

Audiences would like to see greater diversity in the way women and men are portrayed: When asked what other ways they would like to see women represented, the top two choices of women and men were in professional and leadership roles. When asked how else audiences would want to see men represented they both gave as their first choice "parents". Women gave "homemakers" as their second choice and men "non traditional roles" as their second choice.

They would like more positive and local news: In findings very similar to the Gender and Media Audience Study (GMAS) the study found that women and men would like more positive stories, as well as more local/community news in tabloids.

And less violence, pornography and victimisation: When asked what they wanted to read less about in their tabloids, men cited violence and crime while women pointed at pornography and women as victims.

Structure of the report

The report comprises six chapters. The first chapter covers the background and rationale for the study; the international and local context and methodology used. Chapter two covers the regional findings. Chapters three to five covers findings in the three countries where the research took place. The final chapter draws conclusions and makes recommendations, including the need for gender and media networks to take up cases of blatant stereotyping and campaign for greater gender balance and sensitivity in tabloids.



Tabloid reader in central Johannesburg

Photo: Brendan Kennedy

Chapter One
Overview

This first chapter provides background to the research; the methodology and research questions. Subsequent chapters cover the regional findings as well as specific findings in each of the three countries in the study.

BACKGROUND

Over the past three years, as part of the *Mirror on the Media* series supported by OSISA, GL has undertaken periodic monitoring of different aspects on gender and media coverage in between major regional monitoring projects.

These have been a source of ongoing critical commentary, and have provided material for the Virtual Resource Centre (VRC): online case studies and training tools. The research has included monitoring of specific days (e.g. World Press Freedom Day; Women's Day); events and campaigns (egg the Sixteen Days of Activism); themes (e.g. elections) and genres (e.g. Radio Talk Shows and advertising).

This research focused on gender representation and portrayal in tabloids and audience responses to this. This is the first time that GL and GEMSA have conducted research on tabloids. To our knowledge it is the first comprehensive study on gender and tabloids in Southern Africa.

Tabloids have been an important focus of current media debates. Most of these debates have focused on tabloids in relation to journalistic standards, media ethics, and the related tabloidisation of the media (IAJ (2006) Strelitz & Steenveld (2005); Joseph (2005a & 2005b); Berger (2005).

Limited research exists on gender portrayal in tabloids. It is thus appropriate to evaluate not only the reasons behind the popularity of this medium but also how women (in particular) are able to access tabloids; how women and men are portrayed and how they respond to this form of media.

Origin of tabloids

The word 'tabloid' itself is a derivation from 'tablette', an old French word for *"small slab… with or for inscription"* (Langer, 1998). There are a number of serious newspapers with serious, hard-news content, of high journalistic standards in tabloid form (e.g. *Mail and Guardian* in South African and the *Daily Mail* of London).

However, the modern day understanding of tabloids is most closely aligned to the British tabloids, renowned for their emphasis on scandal, particularly as it relates to politicians, and other personalities (sports or entertainment), a recipe of 'news' evidently popular with the 'masses'/ the working class majority. The distinctions are felt in terms of readership where the mainstream press is seen as more *highbrow* and its readers distinguished (from *low brow*, popular culture that is).

As S Elizabeth Bird (1998) argues, unlike the trend in the UK, tabloids in USA – "supermarket tabloids" - focus exclusively on the lives and loves of celebrities with no "news about politics, the economy, or any subject we might think of as traditional hard news" and limited distinction between the classes of readers of tabloids.

Tabloidisation of the media

The above creates the impression that clear differences exist between tabloid and mainstream media. But the distinctions are not always clear. This is primarily due to the characteristics of tabloids becoming increasingly evident in the

mainstream media. Sex, scandal and sport are favoured while analysis and balanced coverage remains the preserve of 'finer', quality/*highbrow* publications as opposed to reflecting a normative approach to journalism.

Tabloidisation of media is a phrase generally used to explain the growing trend of mainstream media reflecting the character of tabloid-style journalism. This has resulted in the terms 'tabloid' and 'tabloidisation' being (erroneously) conflated, although they are distinct categories.

The tabloidisation of the media has often been understood to represent the shifts in mainstream media from critical reportage to a more "dumbed-down" version of media products. Tabloidisation reflects the way in which reporting and programming on television in particular begins to reflect more the audiences need for scandal and trivia where television's entertainment value is seen to supersede its other functions of informing and educating its audiences. It is the news genre and television news in particular where this blurring of boundaries is most evident. Here, hard news and critical analysis "merges into the countless talk shows and syndicated reality programming" (Bird, 1998, 34).



Credit: Brendan Kennedy

The tabloidisation of the mainstream media in South Africa for example, is evident in the blurring of boundaries between the more established daily, the Sowetan and the newer *Daily Sun*. The former is a traditional mainstream paper in tabloid format and the latter a tabloid (in content and form). The shift, it is argued, is partially due to 'the bottom line', where the uptake of the Daily Sun encroached on the Sowetan's market thus necessitating a review of strategy in securing readers.

Definition of a tabloid in this research

For the purposes of this research, tabloids are defined both in terms of **form** and **content.** The following characteristics broadly define the kind of newspapers that constitute the focus of this research.

"Tabloid" refers to:
- A type of news characterised as *"extravagant, sensationalistic, over dramatise and focused almost entirely on a human interest angle"* (ibid.).
- Media that contains news in a condensed form and much photographic material, and that features stories of violence, crime, or scandal presented in a breathtaking style. (http://www.radessays.com/viewpaper/45781/Motzart.html).

In a nutshell, tabloids are newspapers focusing on scandal, gossip, entertainment and sport. It is a press that is characterised by sensationalism. Their use of photographs and colour add to the visual appeal and the language (basic address) of tabloids adds to the popularity of both the form and content.

For convenience, the non-tabloid press is referred to in the research as the "mainstream media". Given the penetration of tabloids in some markets, this may be something of a misnomer. But the alternative term often used - "the quality

press" - is also problematic because of its value judgments. The term "mainstream" is therefore preferable, if not entirely accurate.

The African context

Measured against the above definition, the African media landscape has seen a proliferation of tabloid journalism over the past few years. In South Africa, newspaper readership trends show a steady growth in favour of tabloids (AMPS 2005). The *Daily Sun* is the most popular daily newspaper with sales of 301 800 and an estimated readership of 2.29million followed by *The Sowetan* with daily sales of 118 261 and a readership of 1.54million.

The *Daily Sun* commands 11.2% of the 30.6 million readers (SAARF, 2005). The paper has managed to capture the largest chunk of the newspaper reader market, (followed by the *Sunday Times* 10.4% of total readership). The Daily Sun's exponential growth has occurred amidst the demise of other publications in South Africa (e.g. This Day, Nova)[1].

Together the Daily Sun, Sunday Sun, Sowetan, Son and Sunday World command the biggest share of total readership (that's 11.2%; 6.3%; 5.3%; 4.5% and 3.4% respectively).

According to an article on Tanzanian media by Lawrence Kilimwiko, not a day goes by in Tanzania without sensational headlines about death splashed across the front page of its tabloid newspapers[2]. Kilimkwiko suggests that colour photographs of grisly accidents or violent crimes feature most prominently.

Very little empirical research exists on tabloids in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, but a cursory desk top review conducted for this research in ten Southern African countries (see Table one) showed that out of a total of 182 publications, 27 (or 15%) are regarded by media analysts in those countries as tabloid both in form and content as defined earlier.

Table one: Mainstream versus tabloid newspapers in Southern Africa

	Mainstream	Tabloids
Botswana	9	3
Lesotho	7	0
Malawi	7	2
Mauritius	21	4
Namibia	13	1
South Africa	31	7
Swaziland	5	0
Tanzania	24	5
Zambia	14	3
Zimbabwe	24	2
Total	155	27

[1] It is accepted the demise of these publications was a collective consequence of branding and marketing, of regulation as well as of issues of structure and ownership and of technological innovation (e.g news on demand via the Internet).

[2] http://www.misa.org/sothisisdemocracy/tanzania/tanzania.html

Even these numbers are open to contestation because of the difficulty of defining tabloids. For example at a debate on the preliminary research findings held at Highway Africa, Rhodes University in September 2007, Professor Richard Rooney, head of media studies at the University of Swaziland, argued that all the newspapers in Swaziland that claim to be mainstream media are in fact tabloids both in content and form.

African media commentators have argued that the proliferation of tabloids is a result of the "shrinkage of mainstream press" as a consequence of political pressure (e.g. Mabweazara (2005) on the scenario in Zimbabwe) or of a discontent with incessant stories on politics or simply a general need for diversion from the usual, lived experiences of poverty and politics (e.g. Opolot (2005), writing on Uganda).

Making media accessible or destroying journalism?

In South Africa, tabloids have been the subject of an ongoing debate in media-related publications, specifically *Equid Novi*, the *Media* magazine, the *Rhodes Journalism Review* (Wasserman (2005); Strelitz & Steenveld (2005); Joseph (2005a & 2005b); Berger (2005). Arguments have focused primarily on tabloids in relation to journalistic standards, media ethics, and the related tabloidisation of the media. Similar debates are emerging in other countries as the tabloid phenomenon takes root.

Tabloids are viewed in relation to *highbrow*, quality press. "Quality" in this instance refers to a press, which adheres to editorial codes in pursuit or newsworthy stories. These debates have essentially focused on whether or not tabloids are "good journalism" or good for journalism. This is situated within the ambit of ongoing dialogue about journalistic standards and standards of journalism.

In a background interview for this research, Mireny John, Business Editor of the mainstream *Guardian* newspaper, characterised tabloids as: "catering services for the public; having a specific audience; sensational; ethically questionable; and not requiring a high level of skill." Wilson Kaigarula, Associate Editor of the *Guardian on Sunday* added that they are: "handy; act as a deterrent to the abuse of power; engage in character assassination and mudslinging; are notorious for disrespect of privacy; have a subtle way of telling lies; delight in fictionalization and extortion; and divert readership to the inconsequential and trivial."



Catching up with mainstream news *Photo: Trevor Davies*

Unlike tabloids, mainstream media - it is argued - present objective facts, and are meant to reflect and interrogate the political and socio-economic realities of societies. Moreover, as Lynette Steenveld (2006:20) argues, the address of mainstream press is more authoritative than tabloids (which are conversational): "[t]heirs is serious, official, and impersonal, aimed at producing understanding and belief" […] "they address their readers from the position of one who know, and is providing information for those who don't."

In Tanzania, content editor of the *Guardian* newspaper Wallace Maungo pointed out that Tanzania did not have an independent media until relatively recently. Tabloids have flourished with the growth of the private press, and are known locally as *"magazeti pendwa"* meaning the popular press.

Argument in support of tabloids often focuses on a form of journalism, which talks to the needs of "ordinary" people

and which profiles the realities of working class people in particular. It is argued; tabloids focus more on people than the state. As a South African commentator quipped, tabloids "are talking to ordinary people about their lives and their issues, about things that affect them, often with humour, in a language they understand and can relate to" (Joseph, 2005).

As Bird (1998) argues, the growth of the tabloids and the tabloidisation of the media points to the audience preference for "human interest stories, celebrity gossip and life-style advice". This observation concurs with findings of the recent Gender and Media Audience Study (2005) conducted across 12 countries, which found that women and men would like more local and human-interest news (Lowe Morna, Rama and Muriungi, 2006, 19).

Tabloids, it is argued, contribute to public dialogue and debate, which in post-apartheid South Africa as well as emerging multi-party democracies in the region reflects a move away from the marginalisaton of the majority.

The notion of the "public sphere" remains relevant to discussions about tabloids and the use of this space for dialogue, discussion and debate. A critical analysis of this requires an evaluation of how this dialogue is structured and the extent to which it functions in the public interest or 'for the public good'. This requires an evaluation of the social and political relevance of tabloids – that is, how the public sphere is utilized to discuss issues of social and political concern.

According to Jochen Gaugele (a political editor of a German tabloid who recently participated in public dialogue on *'The Tabloid Challenge'*[3]), *"[g]ood journalism provides access to information to all groups in a society, not just the elite. A good newspaper should fascinate people who would otherwise not read at all"* (IAJ, 2006:9). Gaugele (IAJ, 2006) argues that his tabloid can be defined as good journalism because it not only offers readers what the public wants (as apposed to what editors think their readers should have), but that it conforms to what he has referred to as the seven tenets of good journalism:

- Presents difficult subjects in a comprehensible way.
- Offers the readers actually what they want, not what they should want.
- Takes the readers seriously and views the world from the reader's perspective.
- Looks behind the scenes of power and sometimes even into the private life of the individual.
- Reveals and sets the agenda and political debate.
- Provides orientation and counseling.
- Is independent from party politics.

Arguments against tabloids highlights the ways in which tabloids often violate the basic ethics of journalism including objectivity, investigation, facts and the "pursuit of the truth". As the quotes below demonstrate, tabloid editors say this is not so.

Tabloid editors defend ethical practices

When asked about the ethical practices of their publications during this research, the following were some of the responses of editors:

"We pioneered tabloid journalism in the country. We believe we are a credible, thinking person's tabloid. We are celebrity driven, and many of the celebs we feature are role models to our readers. Most importantly, we are not the kind of tabloid that will publish a story that says 'Tokoloshe gave me Aids."

Charles Mogale, Editor of the Sunday World, South Africa.

"In other countries tabloids are popular because of their taste for sensationalism and scandals, but in Mauritius this is different. The format, the approach, the angle, and the variety of information that covers the whole week, the choice of the day it is put on the market (Sunday) and the richness in content are all gathered together to make tabloids so popular. *5-Plus* is therefore a magazine of news that puts in perspective the events of the week with a human approach. Media Practitioners of La Sentinelle Ltd work according to a Code of Ethics, which insist on accuracy, balance, and precise information in articles, ethics, freedom and independence. 5 Plus distinguishes itself by its commitment to give voice to the voiceless and by its creative angles… apart from informing, education and entertaining, the media must build a link between people. Tabloids in Mauritius cannot be accused of being "dumbed-down" compared to the broadsheets."

- Ariane de l'Estrac, Managing Editor of La Sentinelle which owns 5-Plus, Mauritius.

"Our news values are honesty, fairness and double-checking. We do not have a locomotive alone and no wagons behind like the mainstream newspapers. We make sure that we have wagons full of astonishing things."

- Jean-Claude Dedans, a senior journalist with L'Hebdo, Mauritius.

Critical discourse has focused on how the production of "irrelevant news" eventually engulfs "consequential" news. The concern here is the effect of this tabloid style of journalism across the press in general, at the expense of investigation, facts and elucidation.

As South African media ethics specialist Franz Kruger observes, while the participatory nature of tabloids is laudable, "[t]he question is whether that connectedness means a paper should uncritically buy into even the worst prejudices and superstitions of its audience." (2006,31).

The Media Monitoring Project (MMP) in South Africa notes: "Tabloids have introduced newspapers to millions of new readers, and some provide informative content on the inner pages. However, reporting in some of these tabloids is not only sensationalist in nature, lacking context and leading with shocking visuals and inflammatory headlines, but they are also blatantly sexist and frequently xenophobic. As a result journalistic practices of ethical conduct are sometimes sidelined by such tabloids. This leads to lower-quality news and less regard for human rights." (MMP, 2007).

A gendered analysis

Limited research exists on gender portrayal in tabloids. Preliminary findings by the Media Monitoring Project (MMP) point to a general stereotyped portrayal of "foreigners" and women and to limitations to social responsibility – both

of which are key criteria in ethical journalism[4].

Earlier research showed that women are grossly underrepresented in media as sources and are portrayed in a narrow range of roles: most often as homemakers; sex objects and victims of violence (GMBS, 2003). The 2006 Talk Shows research revealed that women make up only 25% of callers to radio talk shows. The Gender and Media Audience Study (GMAS, 2006) showed that women and men would like to see women portrayed in a far more diverse range of roles than is presently the case. It also showed that audiences would like more local and human interest news.

OBJECTIVES

The research is informed by the belief that media have a responsibility to project a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society (Ronning, H et al. 2002).

The research set out to evaluate what role this medium is playing with regard to gender equality and the potential role this medium could play in reporting public interest matters and in promoting gender equality and other rights. Specific research questions may be summarised as:

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

General characteristics from a gender perspective

Local context
- How are tabloids different from the mainstream media in each country studied?
- What is the extent and influence of tabloids in each of the countries studied?
- What reasons are advanced for the tabloid phenomenon in the different countries, and for the success of particular publications?

Target audiences
- Who are the target audiences and how does this reflect?
- Who buys tabloids? Do readers buy tabloids themselves or do they read tabloids that have been bought by others? Is there a difference in buying patterns between women and men?

Design features
- What are the main design features of tabloids?
- How do these differ from the mainstream media in each country?

Genre
- What types of coverage (news, features etc) are given the greatest coverage?
- How do these compare with the genres most popular among women and men?

Origin
- Where do the stories originate from (community, own reporter, local agency, foreign agency etc)?

Topics
- What topics are given the most and least coverage by tabloids?

[4] See Retief 's (2002) propositions regarding a code of ethics.

- How responsive is this to the topic preferences of women and men?
- To what extent do these publications play a service role for their readers and how does this differ from the mainstream media? Are there differences in the way that women and men perceive this?

What do audiences like about tabloids?

- Why are tabloids so popular? Are there gendered differences in the reasons for choosing to buy these publications?
- Are these publications the main or a supplementary source of news for those who read them? Is there a difference between the responses of women and men?
- If tabloids are a supplementary source of news, what is the main source of news for those who read them? Is there a difference between women and men?

What do audiences dislike about tabloids

- What, if anything, do readers dislike about tabloids?
- Are there differences between women and men?

Specific gender concerns

Perspectives

- To what extent can editorial content be regarded as gender blind; perpetrating blatant or subtle gender stereotypes as opposed to being gender aware?
- Do audiences perceive these differences? Is there a difference between women and men?

Content

- Are there gender biases in the way the tabloids cover issues and do audiences perceive this?
- Who are the main sources in tabloids and what is their sex?
- Who are those mostly depicted in tabloids and what is their sex?
- Do audiences perceive gender disparities in the extent to which women and men are represented either as sources or images in tabloids? Is there a difference in perceptions between women and men?
- What age groups are covered and are there differences between women and men? Do audiences perceive these differences? Is there a difference between women and men?
- What is the function of the source (ordinary person; expert; official etc) and are there differences between women and men? Do audiences perceive these differences? Is there a difference between women and men?
- Who speaks on what? Do audiences perceive these differences? Is there a difference between women and men?
- To what extent are male and female sources identified according to a personal relationship? Do audiences perceive these differences? Is there a difference between women and men?
- In what roles are women and men found? Do audiences perceive these differences Is there a difference between women and men?

Who tells the story

- What proportions of articles are written by women and men reporters? Do audiences perceive these differences? Is there a difference in perceptions between women and men?
- Do audiences think that there are differences in the kinds of things women and men tabloid writers write about? Is there a difference between the perceptions of male and female respondents?

Audience preferences from a gender perspective

- What would audiences like to read less of in tabloids? Are there differences between women and men?
- What would audiences like to read more of in tabloids? Are there differences between women and men?
- Is it possible to be popular without violating human rights and basic journalistic ethics?

METHODOLOGY

The research made use of several different tools: desk top research; interviews with editors; media monitoring; case studies and audience research as follows:

Desk top research

Each country team leader conducted desk top research in their countries from June to July 2007 covering:
- Country profile;
- Structure of the media and print media industry in particular;
- Regulatory bodies and legislation governing the media industry in general;
- Print industry regulatory authorities;
- Legislation specific to gender and the media;
- Newspaper circulation and Readership figures disaggregated by sex– including those of tabloids to be monitored.
- Background to the growth in tabloids, their size and circulation relative to other media, their impact; response; any debate within the country on tabloids.
- Any existing research in the country on tabloids and what this has revealed.

Interviews with editors

Team leaders conducted interviews with editors and business managers before they came to the monitoring meeting in Johannesburg in mid July. The interviews provided:
- Operational information on the publications being monitored.
- Perspectives on tabloids generally.
- Perspectives on the success of their publications.
- Perspectives on the relationship between media managers and audiences.
- Information on how these publications determine audience needs.

Editors interviewed included: Charles Mogale, editor of *Sunday World* in South Africa; Jean-Claude Dedans, senior journalist at *L'Hebdo*, Ariane de *l'Estrac*, managing editor of *La Sentinelle* which owns *5-Plus* and Raymond Richard Nauvel, Editor-in-chief of *Le Dimanche* in Mauritius; Joyce Bazira, managing editor for Alasiri, Amran Kaima, editor of *Amani* and Eric Shigongo, Managing Director of Global Publications that owns *Uwazi* and *Amani* in Tanzania.

Media monitoring

As GL and GEMSA narrowed the research to the print media for this first piece of research (see limitations) this made it possible for researchers to gather all the newspapers in June and then bring these to Johannesburg in mid July for a central monitoring exercise. Conducting the monitoring centrally assisted in providing training, backstopping and quality control at one central location and helped to ensure accurate data capture. The monitoring covered two important aspects: design and content.

Design features
This sought to establish how much space is taken up by the different categories of content divided into images, advertising and editorial.

Content

Team leaders in each country chose three of the highest circulation tabloids to monitor for the month of June 2007. In the case of dailies, dates were staggered across the month amounting to five days (one constructed week) of monitoring per paper. In the case of weeklies, four weekly newspapers were monitored. The criteria used for selecting tabloids are set out below:

Tabloid checklist

✓Does the publication include a mix of scandal, gossip, human-interest stories, shocking headlines and striking images?
✓Is the style of the writing dramatic? (e.g. filled with drama, lots of adjectives).
✓Is the style of the writing conversational? (e.g. personal and generally easy to read).
✓Are most of the stories personalised (e.g. human interest stories)?
✓Are the angles of stories mainly routed in gossip or scandal?
✓Do the stories focus on extraordinary accounts – unusual events and occurrences?
✓Are there more stories that focus on ordinary people and celebrities than those focusing on hard news?
✓Do stories of celebrities and other high profile people focus on scandal and gossip?
✓Are the headlines sensationalist?
✓Are the articles generally short?
✓Are the images used intended to shock (e.g. this could include action shots of demonstrations, pickets).
✓Are the images, photos and headlines generally in colour and bold?

Media monitored

Table two sets out the media monitored in each country: three weeklies in Mauritius; two dailies and a weekly in South Africa (two Johannesburg-based and one Cape Town- based) and a daily and two weeklies in Tanzania. All three South African papers are in English; all three Mauritian in French and all three Tanzanian in kiSwahili.

Table two: Newspapers monitored

COUNTRY	NEWSPAPER
Mauritius	L'Hebdo (weekly); 5 Plus (weekly) Le Dimanche (weekly)
South Africa	Daily Sun (Media 24); The Daily Voice (Independent) and the Sunday World (weekly)
Tanzania	Alasiri (evening daily); Amani- weekly; Uwazi (weekly)

The quantitative monitoring, covering every item in each paper, provided quantitative data on topics; sources; images; functions of sources; who speaks on what; roles; ages and gender perspectives (whether or not stories are gender blind; display blatant stereotypes; subtle stereotypes or may be regarded as gender aware).

Number of items

Data was entered directly into a database constructed specifically for this research. Altogether (see Table three) the monitoring covered 2546 items: approximately half from South Africa (1203); 859 from Mauritius and 484 from Tanzania. The disparity in numbers is accounted for by the different sizes of the newspapers in each country, ranging from 80 pages in some instances to just 12-16 pages in other instances.

Table three: Items monitored			
Mauritius	South Africa	Tanzania	TOTAL
859	1203	484	2546

Qualitative case studies

Team leaders identified at least four case studies from each newspaper monitored and classified this according to GL's Gender and Media (GEM) classification system: gender aware, gender blind, blatant stereotypes and subtle stereotypes.

Table four: GEM Classification	
Blatant stereotype (BS)	**Subtle stereotype (SS)**
Women are presented in stereotypical roles such as victims or sex objects.	Articles or images that reinforce notions of women's domestic and men's more public roles in ways that make this seem normal, e.g. a mother's agony, rather than parents agony over a child.
Men are presented in stereotypical roles such as strong businessmen or leaders.	Articles or images in which women are referred to according to personal relationships that have no relevance to the story; e.g. a woman minister is referred to as the wife of someone.
Gender-blind (GB)	**Gender aware (GA)**
Lack of gender balance in sources.	Gender balance of sources.
Gender biased language	Gender neutral language
Lack of awareness of gender dynamics	Awareness of differential impact
Biased coverage of issue • Double standards • Moralising e.g. being judgmental • Open prejudice e.g. women are less intelligent than men etc • Ridicule e.g. women in certain situations • Placing blame e.g. on rape survivors for their dress etc	Fairness in approach to issue • No double standards • No moralising • No open prejudice • No ridicule • No placing of blame
Perpetuates stereotypes	Challenges stereotypes
Use of jargon and stereotypical gender biased language	Simple accessible gender sensitive language
Aggregated data	Gender disaggregated data
Gives a one-sided view.	Prompts debate on complex issues

The qualitative monitoring yielded a total of 36 case studies (four case studies from each of the three newspapers monitored). Excerpts from these case studies are cited at appropriate points in the texts. The full case studies are housed in GL's Virtual Resource Centre (VRC) on www.genderlinks.org.za for use by media trainers.

Audience research

The next phase of the research from October to December 2007 drew on the findings of the content analysis to conduct research into how audiences, women and men, respond to tabloids. The methodology for this aspect of the

research involved administering a questionnaire with both quantitative and qualitative questions to respondents chosen on the basis of a purposive sampling method. This was done so as to ensure that a reasonable spread of respondents is achieved for each research site.

Purposive sampling

This methodology consists of administering a questionnaire with both quantitative and qualitative questions to respondents chosen on the basis of a purposive sampling method[5]. Given the budget constraints of the project, and as the research covered three countries, GL could not utilise a probability sampling strategy (whereby each sample element/respondent is selected on a random basis from a sampling frame and each element has an equal chance of inclusion in the sample).

Purposive sampling, in contrast to quota sampling, does not require the researcher to fill a quota from within various strata. Rather the researcher uses his/her own judgment about which respondents to choose, and picks only those who best meet the purpose of the study.

240 respondents were interviewed in three countries, 120 in South Africa; 84 in Tanzania and 36 in Mauritius. The figures are based on the different populations of each country.

Limited quota requirements

To ensure that a reasonable spread of respondents for each research site, interviewers had to fulfil a limited quota requirement[6].

This limited quota incorporated two variables applicable across the three countries chosen for the research:

- *Location:* The research had to be conducted in **two** different geographical sites in each country: peri-urban (or in the case of Mauritius rural) and in the city centre.
- *Sex:* An equal number of women and men had to be interviewed.

The spread of respondents is illustrated in Table five. In addition to these requirements, researchers had to ensure that all respondents were readers of one or other of the three tabloids being monitored.

[5] While non-probability sampling is frequently used in mass media research (Wimmer and Dominick 1991: 65) there is the recognition amongst researchers that since the probability that a person will be chosen for the sample is not known, the researcher cannot claim that his/her sample is representative of the larger population. This generally limits the researcher's ability to generalize his/her findings beyond the specific sample studied (Bailey 1978: 81).

[6] Unlike the case with strict quota sampling, the size of each quota will not relate directly to the known distribution of these quotas in the research population. To undertake a strict quota sample across six countries is financially prohibitive in that the sample size is ultimately decided by the size of the smallest cell (which is advisedly not less than 30 respondents).

Table five: Limited quota requirements							
		South Africa		Tanzania		Mauritius	
Sex	Age	Per site	Total for 2 sites	Per site	Total for 2 sites	Per site	Total for 2 sites
Female	1. 16-35	10	20	7	14	3	6
	2. 35-45	10	20	7	14	3	6
	3. 45+	10	20	7	14	3	6
Male	4. 16-35	10	20	7	14	3	6
	5. 35-45	10	20	7	14	3	6
	6. 45+	10	20	7	14	3	6
Total		**60**	**120**	**42**	**84**	**18**	**36**

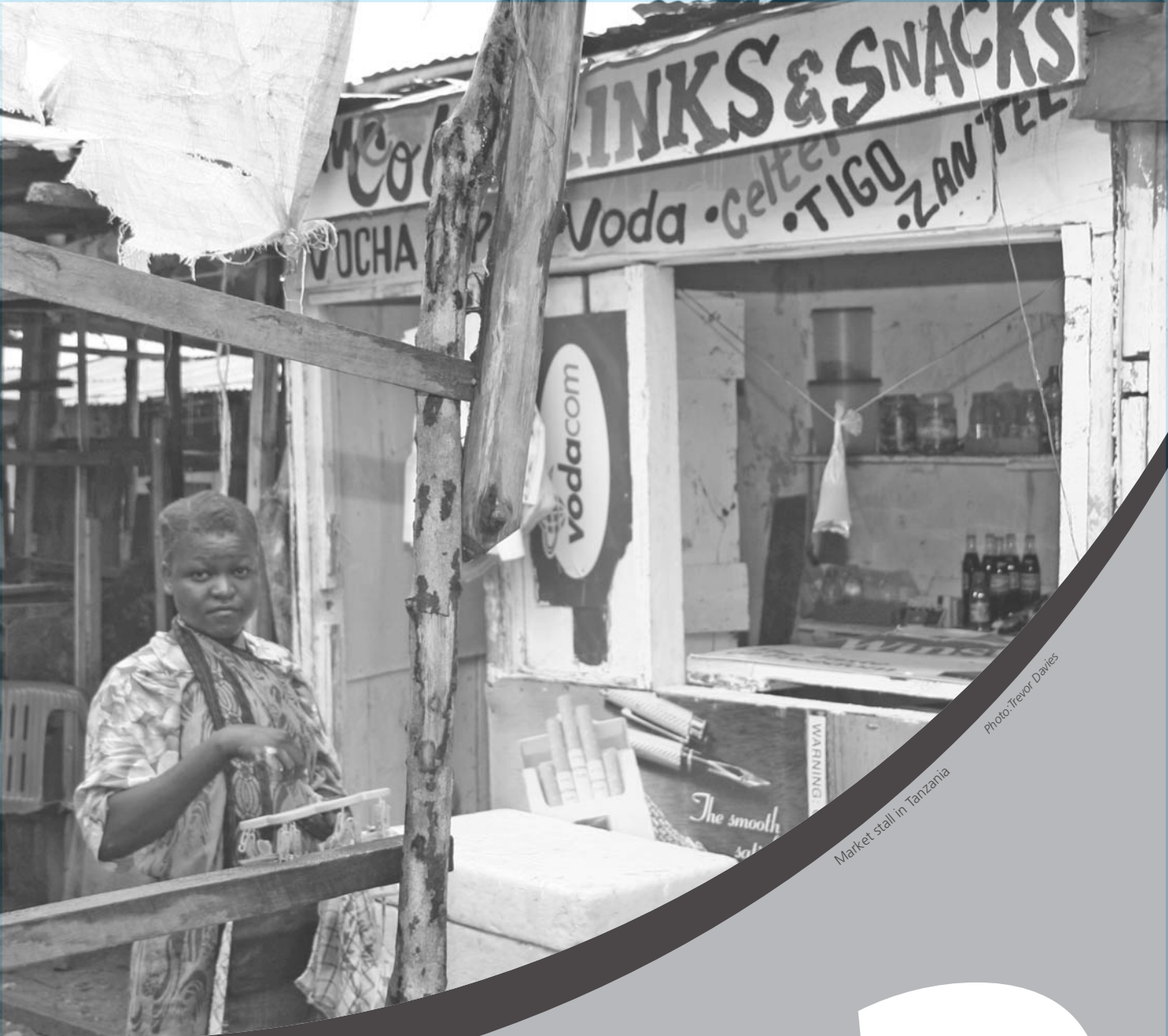
Limitations

In addition to the budgetary constraints mentioned which also limited the research to three countries, it is important to underscore that the research focused only on print media. As the desk-top research revealed, there are many forms of electronic tablodisation - such as soap operas and reality TV shows. These are the subject of a further research project.

Every piece of research builds on another and in turn contributes to the next piece of research. This *Mirror on the Media* study has provided many ideas for our next study, on community media, as well as the sequel to the GMBS planned for 2009/2010. This report is a triangulation of results from the content analysis and audience research which together provide rich information and insight into both the gender dimensions of tabloids in Southern Africa and this phenomenon more broadly.

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Market stall in Tanzania

Photo: Trevor Davies

Chapter Two
Regional findings

2

This chapter summarises the overall findings of the research in the three countries: Mauritius, South Africa and Tanzania; selected because they have, as far as can be determined, the highest density of tabloids in the region. Where similar parameters have been used, the average figures for the three countries are compared with the regional averages in the GMBS (2003), GMMP (2005) and GMAS (2005).

GENERAL FEATURES FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

As mentioned in the last chapter, a distinctive feature of tabloids is that they have large and growing markets. With a circulation of over 300 000, the *Daily Sun* is the highest circulation newspaper in South Africa, and the biggest of the newspapers monitored for this research.



Charles Mogale, editor of the *Sunday World* told researchers that his paper (also one of those monitored) had hit the 203 000-plus mark in August 2007 and they had been selling over 200 000 copies for three weeks in succession. Based on an estimated readership of seven people per copy, the readership should be upward of 1.5 million. Mogale described his paper as being: "different, fresh and unlike mainstream, traditional newspapers, not angry. Tabloids are funny and entertaining, and people want entertainment sometimes, especially on Sunday [people] love being taken into the personal lives of their role models and other celebrities."

In Mauritius, *L'Hebdo* sells about 10 000 copies per week, while *5-Plus* sells 80,000, the second largest readership in Mauritius of the ten weeklies. "It's easy to read, small and the front page is attractive. You have to run a full story on the six columns and this will act as a teaser," noted Jean-Claude Dedans, *L'Hebdo*.

Alasiri normally prints up to 26,000 copies daily, though the number may vary depending on various factors. "The language, humor and our style of presentation of facts make our paper different from others. Readers like our style of telling hard facts using jesting style as well as our way we break news on time," noted *Alasiri* editor Joyce Bazira. In all countries, editors estimate that their paper is read by at least five times as many people as those who buy it.

Target market

For the most part, the tabloid editors interviewed said that they target readers who are young and female, largely in the lower or middle income bracket. *Sunday World*'s readership is mostly 18-35 year-old, affluent, ambitious blacks with some disposable income, living in both townships and suburbs, more than 70 % in Gauteng province.

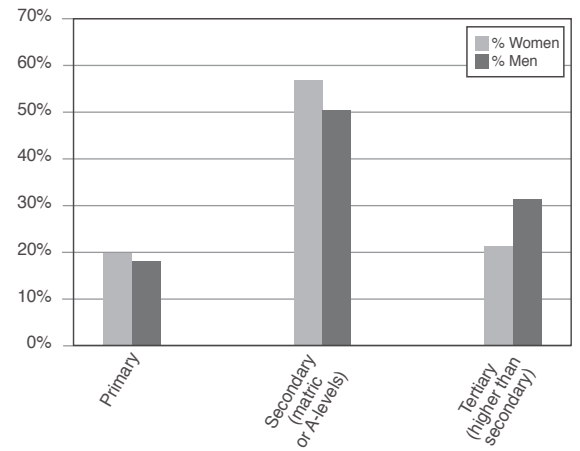
Both *L'Hebdo*'s and *5-Plus*'s readers are mostly women and middle class people, though *L'Hebdo* is principally found in towns and suburbs and *5-Plus* sold in both urban and rural regions. *Alasiri* targets Tanzanians with low income who cannot afford the price of big papers, especially women. In all instances, however, there appears to be limited market research to back these assertions; less still gender disaggregated data.

Education level

The research did not in anyway claim to establish the readership profile of tabloids in the countries surveyed. The sample of 280 had two requirements: there had to equal numbers of women and men and they had to come from two different locations. They also had to be readers of one of the three tabloids surveyed in the three countries. To the extent that education was not a pre-determined variable, the findings on education provide some insight into this aspect of tabloid readers.

Figure 2.1 shows that most readers of tabloids have a secondary school education. Interestingly, at 57%, there are more women than men (50%) in this category; but there are less women with a tertiary education and more with a primary school education than men. As demonstrated in the Chapter three (on Mauritius) there is a higher proportion of tabloid readers with a tertiary education in this country than in the other three. This is consistent both with the relatively high levels of education on the island and the claims by editors that they target the middle class.

Figure 2.1: Education level in region

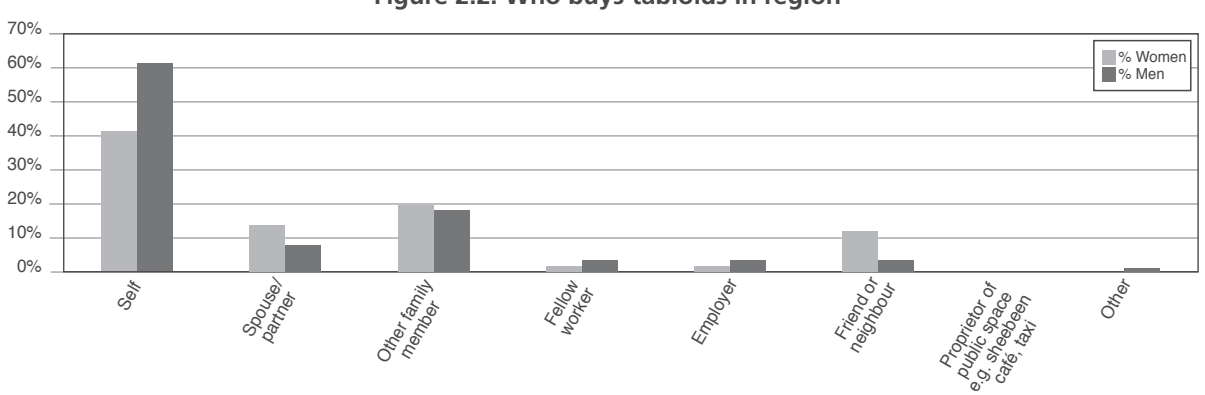


Who buys tabloids?

The majority of audiences in the three countries read newspapers that they buy themselves as opposed to papers bought by other family members, employer, fellow worker, friend or proprietor, or that they get in a public space.

Although tabloid editors claim to be targeting women, the research shows that they are not the primary buyers of tabloids. Figure 2.2 shows that only 43% women buy the paper directly compared to 62% of men. Women are more likely than men to get the paper from a spouse; other family member; friend or neighbour.

Figure 2.2: Who buys tabloids in region



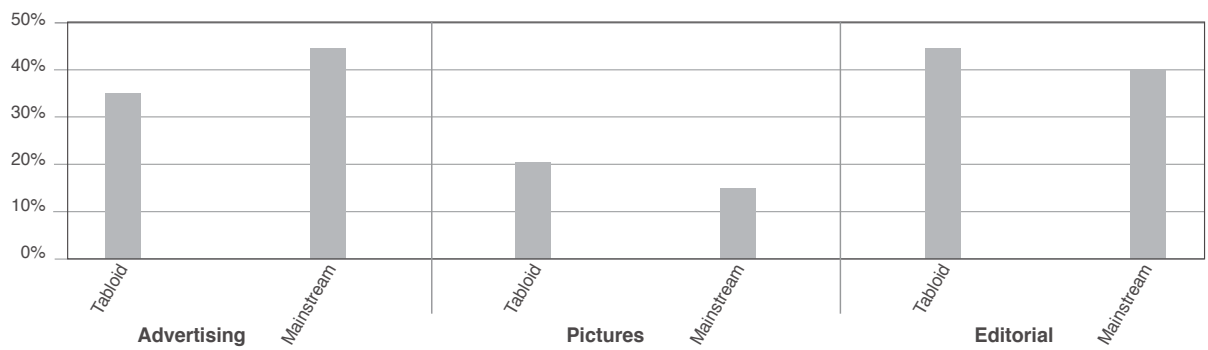
Design and accessibility

Asked why his paper went from being a broadsheet to a tabloid Charles Mogale of the *Sunday World* responded that the research the paper sent the clear message "to change to tabloid, or close shop."

As part of the monitoring researchers measured the amount of space devoted to editorial, advertising and visuals in samples of tabloids and mainstream media in each country.

Figure 2.3 shows that there is approximately equal space given to editorial content in the tabloids and mainstream press in the three countries (44% and 40% respectively). The main difference concerns the proportion of content taken up by advertising and pictures. At 44%, the mainstream press devotes considerably more space to advertising than tabloids (35%) that clearly rely more heavily on their higher circulation for survival. Tabloids fill this extra space with more images (21% visuals in tabloids compared to 15% in the mainstream press).

Figure 2.3: Design features of tabloids versus mainstream media in region



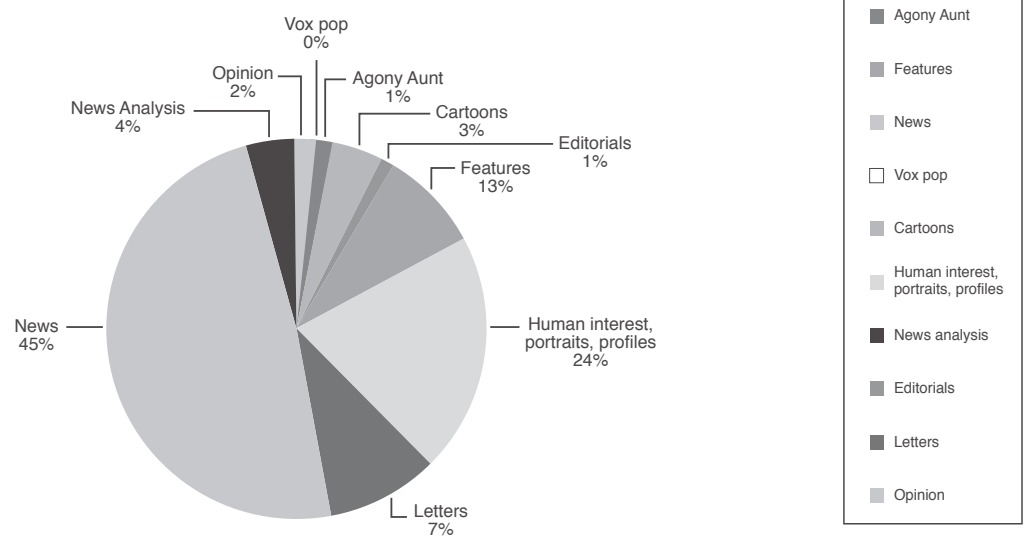
Indeed, stories in tabloids are often told in photo essays with much punning and playing on headlines (and also with sexist connotations). An example is the story in the *Sunday World* (24 June 2007) entitled "Abreast with the big shots". It shows Chomee, aprominent South African musician and dancer, standing with Chris Brown, an American R'n'B and pop singer, who is on a visit to South Africa. Below the photo is the caption "YUMMY CHUMMY: Our very own Chomee gets Chummy with… Chris Brown…" Chomee is clad in revealing clothing and Chris Brown has his hand wrapped around her back.

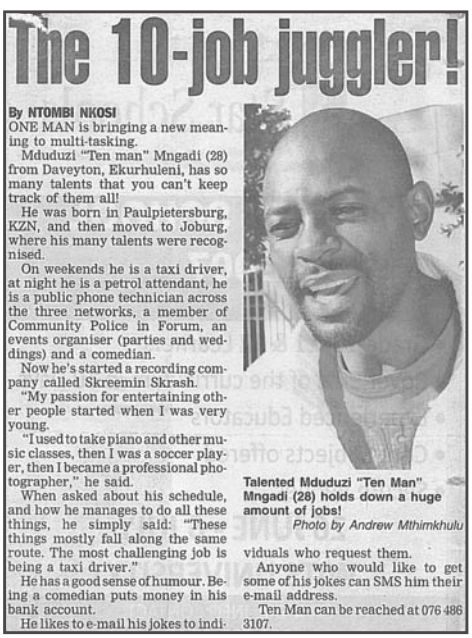


Types of stories covered

In response to why *5-Plus* is so popular in Mauritius, group managing editor Arianne de l'Estrac attributed this to "its politics of being close to the people and each event has a human dimension and takes the angle of the human being." Figure 2.4 shows that in contrast to the mainstream press in which news dominates, about half of tabloid content is of a non-news nature. This includes a relatively high proportion of features, human interest stories, portraits and profiles.

Figure 2.4: Genres in tabloids in region





The 10-job juggler!

By NTOMBI NKOSI

ONE MAN is bringing a new meaning to multi-tasking.

Mduduzi "Ten man" Mngadi (28) from Daveyton, Ekurhuleni, has so many talents that you can't keep track of them all!

He was born in Paulpietersburg, KZN, and then moved to Joburg, where his many talents were recognised.

On weekends he is a taxi driver, at night he is a petrol attendant, he is a public phone technician across the three networks, a member of Community Police in Forum, an events organiser (parties and weddings) and a comedian.

Now he's started a recording company called Skreemin Skrash.

"My passion for entertaining other people started when I was very young.

"I used to take piano and other music classes, then I was a soccer player, then I became a professional photographer," he said.

When asked about his schedule, and how he manages to do all these things, he simply said: "These things mostly fall along the same route. The most challenging job is being a taxi driver."

He has a good sense of humour. Being a comedian puts money in his bank account.

He likes to e-mail his jokes to individuals who request them.

Anyone who would like to get some of his jokes can SMS him their e-mail address.

Ten Man can be reached at 076 486 3107.

Talented Mduduzi "Ten Man" Mngadi (28) holds down a huge amount of jobs!

Photo by Andrew Mthimkhulu

A typical example of the sort of profile/human interest story that is common in tabloids is "The 10-job juggler" (the *Daily Sun*, 10 June 2007) profiling a man who is a taxi driver on weekends, a petrol attendant at night, a public phone technician across three networks, a member of the Community Police Forum, an events organiser and a comedian. He has just started a recording company.

Figure 2.5: The types of stories women and men like in region

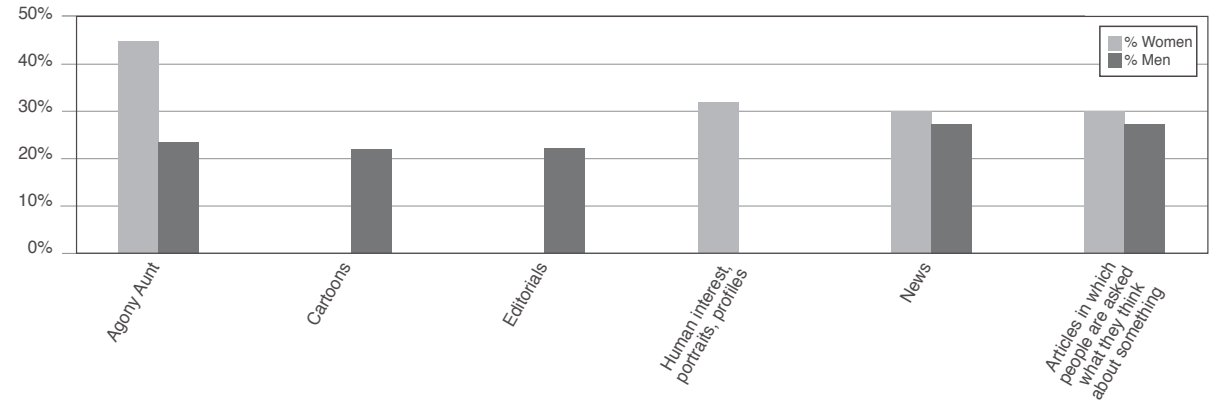


Figure 2.5 shows that the favourite genres for women are the agony aunts and human interest; profiles and portraits; news and articles that ask for feedback. The favourite genres for men are articles that ask for feedback; news and editorials. Based on these preferences, most tabloids would argue that they are getting the mix right for both women and men. The strong indication by women, however, that they need places to go for advice suggests that this aspect of coverage could be increased (as Figure 2.4 shows, agony aunts currently only constitute 1% of editorial space).

The fact that both women and men responded so positively to "articles in which people are asked what they think about something" suggests that there is more scope for interactive features in tabloids. While letters constitute 7% of the total, there were no vox pops in the monitoring which is surprising as it is an obvious way to reach out to readers and make them feel part of the publication.


Aibu tupu!

Wanaume wachapana makonde, mwanamke aingia uvunguni kujiokoa, suala laripotiwa polisi

Na Makongoro Oging'

Vurugu kubwa imetokea ghorofani Kariakoo, wilayani Ilala jijini Dar es Salaam wiki iliyopita, kitendo kilichosababisha damu kumwagika baada ya mwanaume mmoja aliyejulikana kwa jina la ...

Inaendelea UK. 2

Style and language

Sensation plays a big role in tabloids, and is prominently displayed. Typical headlines in tabloids are like the one in *Uwazi* (24 June 2007): *"Aibu Tupu! Wanaume wachapana makonde, mwanamke aingia uvunguni Kujiokoa, suala laripotiwa polisi - Shame! Two men fight over a woman while she hides underneath the bed!"*

Stories are told in a melodramatic and breathless tone. In the case of the *Daily Sun*, this is emphasised through different kinds of formatting in the writing. An example is the following excerpt from the story entitled "Save me from evil voice! A sister says she is sorry!" (12 June 2007):

SAVE ME FROM
EVIL VOICE!

A sister says she's sorry!

LULAMA DINDO used muti to teach her sister a lesson…

But then an adult's voice in a baby's body started tormenting her… and her nights became sleepless.

YESTERDAY, AS A TEAM FROM *DAILY SUN* WATCHED, LULAMA CONFESSED TO HER SISTER WHAT SHE HAD DONE!


SAVE ME FROM EVIL VOICE!
A sister says she's sorry!

Superstition is another distinguishing feature. As in the case of the *Daily Sun* story above, stories about superstitious incidents are often reported as fact, with little or no verification. An example from another country is the article that appeared in *Le Dimanche* (Mauritius, 24 June 2007) about how several inhabitants on a street called Diego Garcia saw a woman with long hair walking at night. One woman coming from the hospital with her son said she saw a woman walking very fast but without any legs. When she turned around to have a good look the woman had reportedly disappeared!


• Fantôme à Plaine-Verte ?

Une femme sans jambes aurait été aperçue à la rue Diego Garcia

• L'hystérie collective prend une dimension de psychose

Rahim Murtuza

Depuis quelque temps, on constate un engouement pour les choses qui ont trait au surnaturel et qui échappent du domaine du rationnel. Dans le concret des choses, les Mauriciens sont friands de nouvelles qui font frissonner. Le surnaturel a toujours été un mystère et beaucoup de questions sont posées sur tout ce qui concerne le diable, le fantôme et la sorcellerie.

Le fantôme existe-t-il ?

Pour certaines personnes qui ont été témoins de l'action des mauvais esprits, le fantôme existe même si des phénomènes paranormaux n'ont jamais été prouvés. Mais beaucoup de personnes superstitieuses ont recours à la sorcellerie pour jeter un mauvais sort en faisant croire qu'un fantôme hante l'esprit de la victime visée.

Il existe des fantômes qui, selon des spécialistes ou " traiteurs " enlèvent l'esprit d'un membre décédé de la famille. C'est l'esprit de mort. Il sort la nuit, rôde autour des cimetières ou dans les chapelles. Il est particulièrement conseillé d'éviter pendant la nuit la croisée des chemins et les cimetières.

Il ne fait pas bon de mettre le nez dehors en cette période hivernale, non pour ne pas attraper une mauvaise grippe mais pour éviter de croiser un fantôme qui traîne les rues durant la nuit.

En effet, plusieurs habitants de la rue Diego Garcia, à Plaine-Verte, affirment avoir aperçu une femme, avec de longs cheveux, marcher dans la nuit. Une femme qui sortait de l'hôpital Jeetoo avec son fils malade aurait aperçu une femme qui n'avait pas de jambes, mais qui se déplaçait très vite. Elle a disparu au moment où la mère et son fils ont voulu regarder en arrière pour voir si elle était encore là.

Un chauffeur de taxi nous raconte que ses parents étaient dans une salle verte à la veille d'une cérémonie de mariage quand ils ont été témoins d'un événement étrange. *" Ti éna banne jeunes ti pé épluche pommes de terre et lezotte ti pe mette la viande lor la table. Zotte finne trouve ène madame avance prélart pe guetté. Kan zotte finne sorti pou alle guette li, li finne disparaître "*, dit-il.

Une jeune fille au nom de Waeza nous raconte qu'elle a effectivement entendu parler de cette affaire, mais ne peut confirmer la chose. *" Oui, moi aussi mo finne tanne dimoune pe causé, pé raconté, mais mo pa capave dire ou si ça li vrai. Mais dimoune pe commence gagne peur pou sorti à soir "*, dit-elle.

Une femme raconte que des jeunes qui ont voulu tenter l'expérience de braver la peur pour apercevoir la femme ont été stoppés par un religieux. " Ene homme religieux finne dire zotte ki si zotte peur, pas bizin tente l'expérience, sinon capave malade. *Ene jeune ki finne mette so réveil pou li sonné deux heures du matin pou li levé, inne senti ène la main pé trangler li pou empêche li levé. "*

Toujours à la rue Diego Garcia, certaines personnes affirment avoir entendu une femme pleurer et soupirer durant la nuit. Notre enquête a révélé qu'une jeune fille s'était suicidée à cause d'un jeune homme. Les mauvaises langues prétendent que *" so nâme pé trainé "*.

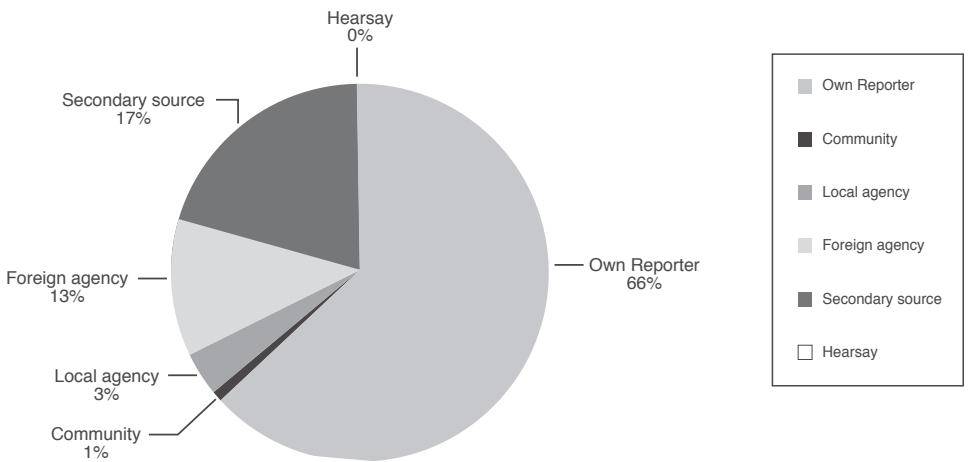
Les chauffeurs de taxi des environs ne mordent pas à l'hâmeçon et affirment que *" dimounes pé rode créé ène psychose et pé rode fatigue la tête dimounes. Zotte pé rode détourne l'attention dimounes lors banne problèmes Budget. Ça fausse ça ! Péna aukaine fantôme, sinon nou ti bizin trouvé ".*

Par ailleurs, une autre rumeur circule à l'effet qu'un chauffeur d'une compagnie privée aurait aperçu deux femmes sans jambes à Grand-Bale. Après enquête, il s'avère que deux femmes laboureurs avaient été tuées dans un accident dans cette région, il n'y a pas longtemps.

Origin of stories in tabloids

The relatively high level on local content is underscored by the fact that only 13% of stories come from a foreign news agency (Figure 2.6). Comparative figures do not exist for the mainstream media in Southern Africa but will be included in the next GMBS. Other interesting observations from the tabloid monitoring are that contrary to expectation, none of the stories trace their origin to hearsay. Reporters of the different publications originated 66% of the stories, with only 3% coming from local agencies. However, a fairly high proportion of tabloid stories in the three countries (17%) are based on secondary sources such as reports.

Figure 2.6: Origin of stories in tabloids in region



Topics

Figure 2.7 provides data on the topics covered by tabloids in comparison to the mainstream media, as measured in the GMBS. A few topic codes are exclusive to the tabloid monitoring (cheating; gossip; superstition; service to community; sex and sexuality) while others (human rights and sustainable development) are exclusive to the GMBS monitoring. These, however, constitute a small proportion of the total.

The comparative analysis shows that both tabloids and mainstream media share a love of sports (21% and 17% respectively).

On the other hand, mainstream media has a much higher proportion of economic and political news (25% compared to 10% in the case of tabloids). Tabloids in turn have a much higher proportion of media, entertainment and celebrity news (24% in tabloids compared to 8% in mainstream media). At about 1% each, gender violence and gender equality are equally marginal topics in both tabloids and the mainstream media.

Figure 2.7: Topics - tabloids versus GMBS in region

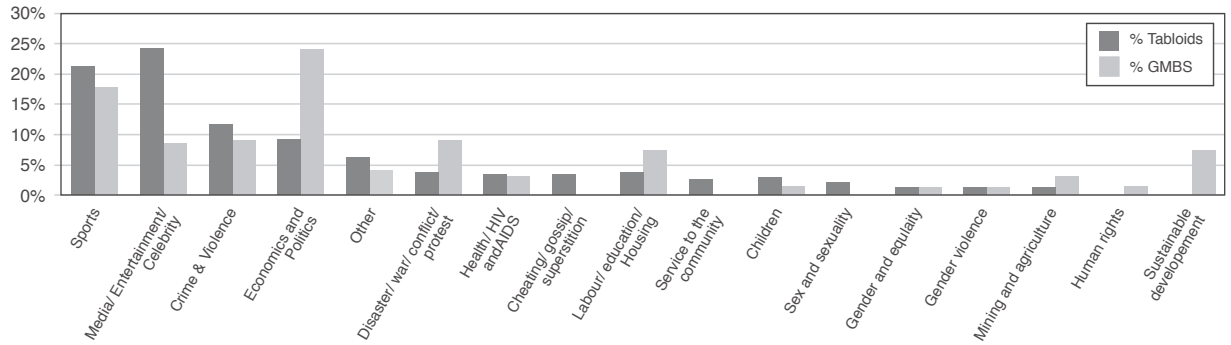
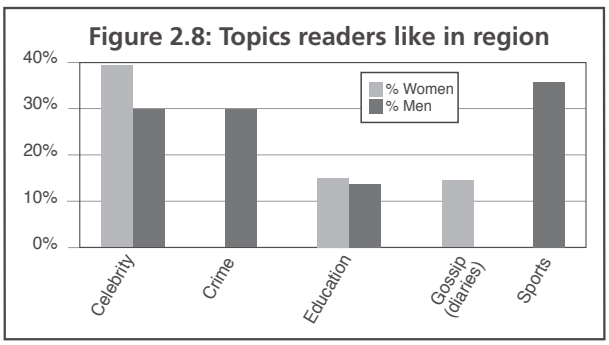


Figure 2.8 shows that in the space that they devote to different topics, tabloids are responsive to men's preference for sports and crime news as well as women and men's preference for celebrity news. However, women would like more of the "gossip" (diary news). Women and men are interested in education as a topic, but this gets a poor showing in the topic line up.

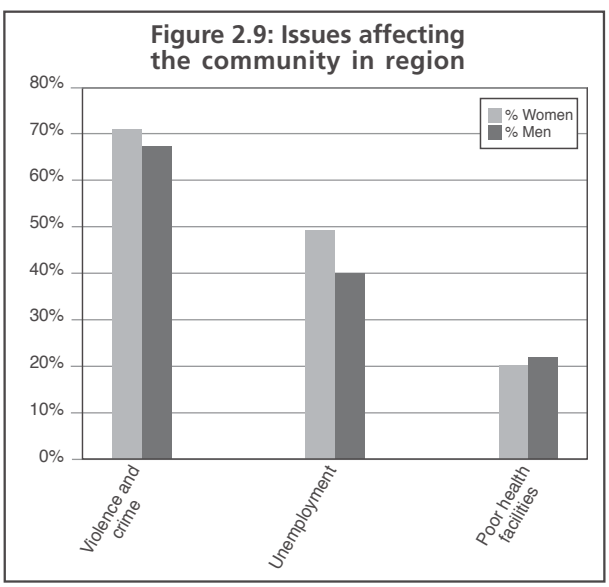
Figure 2.8: Topics readers like in region



Issues that affect the community

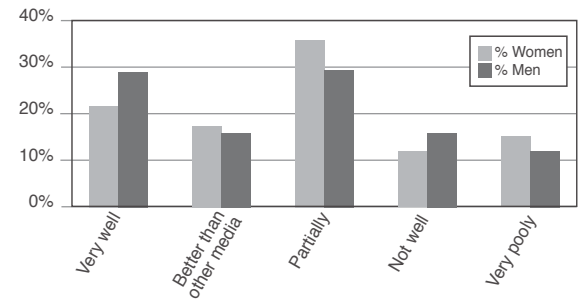
When asked what issues affect the community most, women and men prioritised violence and crime; unemployment and poor health facilities (see Figure 2.9). While tabloids cover the first issue relatively well, the social and economic issues get limited coverage.

Figure 2.9: Issues affecting the community in region



Casting some doubts on claims by tabloid editors that they are a good source of news on local issues that readers can relate to, Figure 2.10 showed that the majority of both women and men felt that tabloids only cover issues affecting the community partially, not well or very poorly.

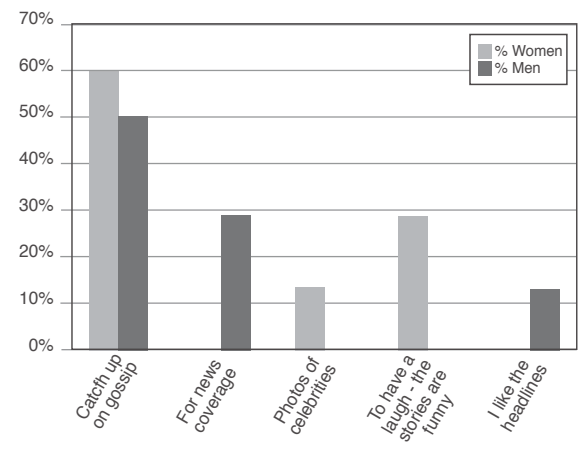
Figure 2.10: How well tabloids cover issues affecting the community in region



What readers like about tabloids

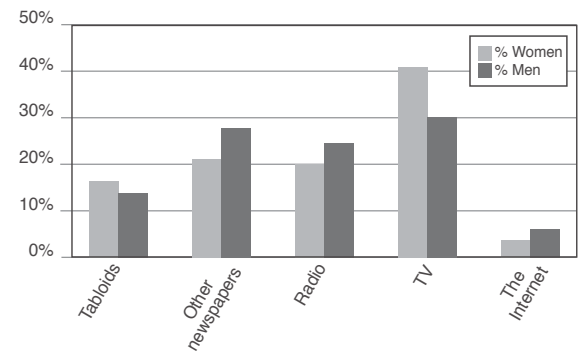
So what do readers most like about tabloids? When asked to select just two reasons out of a long list that ranged from escapism to being better informed, women and men, but especially women, cited light entertainment-related factors as the reasons they liked these publications the most. Figure 2.11 shows that 60% women and 50% men said they read tabloids to "catch up on the gossip." Other reasons given by women included looking at photos of celebrities and "to have a laugh." Other reasons given by men included more serious reasons, like news coverage. Men also like the headlines. Significantly, none of the women said they liked the headlines, which often perpetrate blatant gender stereotypes.

Figure 2.11: What readers most like about tabloids in region



A significant related finding (Figure 2.12) is that tabloids are not the main source of news for audiences; indeed other than the Internet they are the least likely source of news. Overall, TV is the main source of news for audiences in the three countries (although there are country variations, such as Mauritius, in which radio is cited as the main source of news. Consistent with the findings of GMAS, more women (41%) compared to men (30%) cited TV as their main source of news. The assertion made by some editors that tabloids are a source of useful community news and recourse (more helpful than the local police) is not primarily how audiences see this medium.

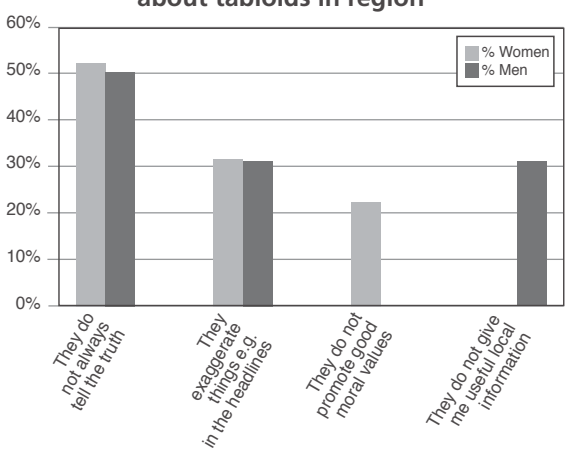
Figure 2.12: Main source of news in region



What readers dislike about tabloids

When asked to select from a long list of what they dislike about tabloids, 52% women and 50% men said they do not always tell the truth (see Figure 2.13). The second highest proportion said that tabloids exaggerate. Some 22% women said that tabloids do not promote good moral values while 30% men said that they do not provide useful local information.

Figure 2.13: What readers dislike about tabloids in region

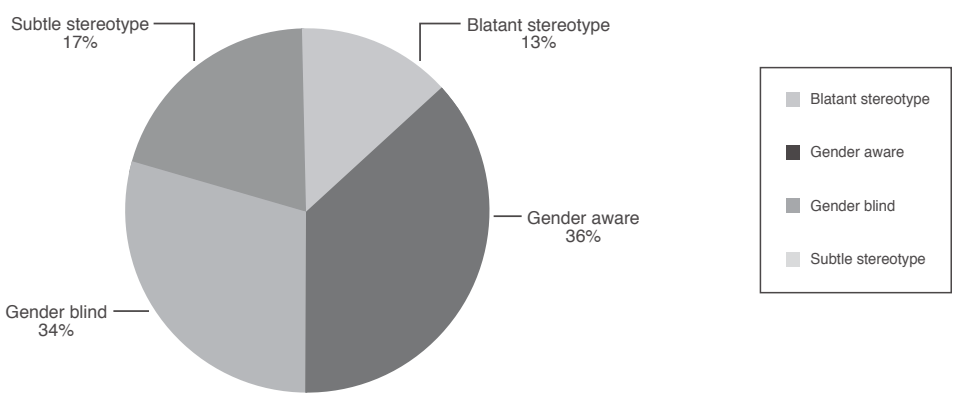


GENDER IN EDITORIAL CONTENT

As sex is the most basic demographic of any society, virtually every story has a gender dimension of some kind, whether it be the failure to seek out the views of both women and men, or the perpetuating or challenging of gender stereotypes in the way the story is told. Over several years of monitoring, GL has developed a Gender and Media (GEM) system for classifying stories as either gender blind (ignoring gender dimensions where they clearly exist); perpetuating stereotypes (subtly or blatantly) as well as a category for stories that may be regarded as gender aware. The criteria for each category are set out in Chapter two, which covers methodology.

In results strikingly similar to the advertising monitoring that GL has conducted, the GEM Classification of the tabloid stories monitored showed that about two thirds demonstrated gender biases of one kind or the other, with only one third classified as "gender aware" (see Figure 2.14).

Figure 2.14: GEM classification in region

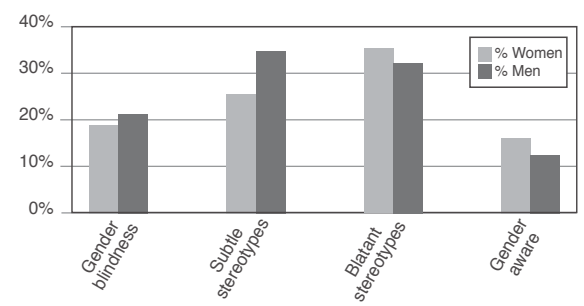


In seeking to determine whether audiences perceive gender bias in the news, the GEM classification was simplified in the research as follows:

- Tabloids tend to ignore women views even when they may be relevant, for example their views on a sporting event (gender blind).
- Tabloids portray women and men in traditional roles for example women doing the washing and men as sports heroes (subtle stereotypes).
- Tabloids perpetuate blatant stereotypes, for example that women are sex objects and men are strong and make all the decisions (blatant stereotypes).
- Tabloids have many interesting stories about women and men taking on new and different roles, like women in politics and men taking care of their children (gender aware).

Asked to choose which one of these was most true, the majority of women (37%) and men (35%) chose blatant stereotypes (see Figure 2.15). The gender aware option got the least responses, with slightly more women than men choosing this option. These perceptions show that audiences perceive a high level of gender bias in tabloids, with the main form of this in the shape of blatant stereotypes.

Figure 2.15: Audience perception of gender bias



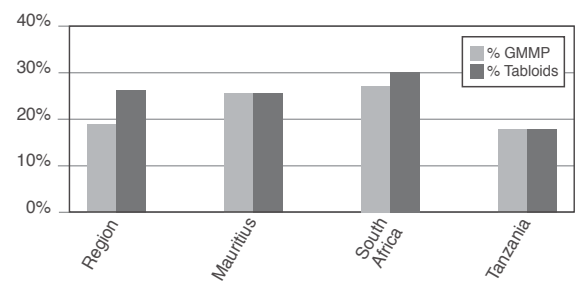
Gender blindness in tabloids

Gender gaps in the editorial content of the media concern both what is and what is not. The sins of omission or "gender blindness" are reflected in the multiple ways in which women's views are ignored. Despite the protestations of tabloid editors to the contrary, monitoring results show that there is little difference between tabloids and the mainstream media on this front as reflected in results on sources (further disaggregated by race in South Africa, see Chapter five); who speaks on what topics and the many examples of missed opportunities in the qualitative monitoring.

Sources

Overall, as illustrated in Figure 2.16 women constitute 25% of news sources in tabloids in the three countries monitored compared to the Southern African regional average of 19% in the GMMP, the latest study for which such figures are available for the mainstream media. In Mauritius and Tanzania the figures are exactly the same for tabloids and the GMMP (24% and 18% respectively). At 30%, women sources in tabloids in South Africa were the highest of the three counties and slightly higher than in South Africa's GMMP figure of 26%.

Figure 2.16: Women and men in the news - tabloids versus GMMP




Boost for youngsters

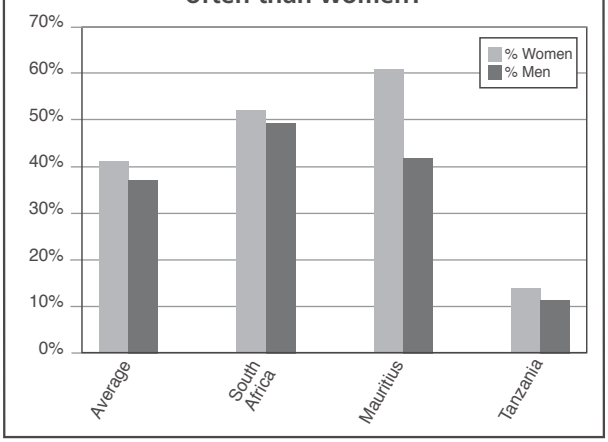
THE DREAMS of 50 young budding soccer stars could come true!

On Friday a new youth scouting initiative called

Examples of how women's views are ignored in tabloids abound. For example, an article in the *Daily Sun* (20 June) previews the setting up of a new youth scouting initiative called Football Dreams. The aim of the project is to identify 50 young players for a weekly training session with top European coaches. Football Dreams is supported by the United Nations Office of Sport for Development and Peace. All those interviewed are men. There is no mention, nor discussion, as to whether young women are to be included in the training.

Figure 2.17 shows that in both South Africa and Mauritius, there is a strong perception by both women and men (and especially by women in the case of Mauritius) that men are quoted more often than women in the media. The fact that so few believe this to be the case in Tanzania may be due to lower levels of gender and media literacy among the public.

Figure 2.17: Are men quoted more often than women?





Images

Because of the more visual nature of tabloids, GL gathered gender disaggregated data on images in this monitoring (information not collected in the GMBS). With women constituting 35% of those depicted in tabloids, the finding is that women are more likely appear as pictures than as sources in tabloids. Even then pictures of women are still less than half of the total pictures. This finding is strikingly similar to that made in the gender and advertising research which concluded that women are "more likely to be seen than heard" in advertisements.

The majority of audiences in all countries, and especially women in Tanzania (see Figure 2.18) believed that there are more pictures of women than men in tabloids even though this is in fact not the case. This points to the power of visual imagery. It is especially telling that while Tanzanian audiences had very little knowledge of women as sources, they had strong perceptions that women dominated images.

What kind of women and men speak?

One of the innovations of the GMMP in 2005 was to gauge the function of sources: are they the main subject of the story; a spokesperson or expert? Alternatively, are they speaking from personal experience, were they an eye witness or are they part of a snap public opinion survey (or vox pop)? And is there any difference between the function of women and men sources? Figure 2.18 shows the functions of women and men sources in all stories monitored in tabloids while Figure 2.19 shows comparative Southern African results for the GMMP that measured the same parameters in the mainstream media. Figure 2.19 shows audience perceptions of the functions of women and men sources.

The three graphs (Figures 2.19 to Figure 2.21) are strikingly similar. They show that both in tabloids and in the mainstream media the majority of sources are either the main subject of the story or spokespersons; that in both instances men are the dominant voices and that audiences perceive "important people" as the ones whose voices are most heard.

At 12% in the case of tabloids and 11% in the case of mainstream media experts and commentators (those who provide context and analysis to stories) are relatively low on the list and again men predominate.

Women's views are more likely to feature in equal measure to men in the three "ordinary person" categories of personal experience, eye witness and popular opinion, especially in tabloids. Yet, despite the claim by tabloids to being "people's newspapers" these three categories (constituting 13% of all sources) are even lower than in the mainstream media (15% of all sources).

Figure 2.18: Are there more pictures of women than men in tabloids?

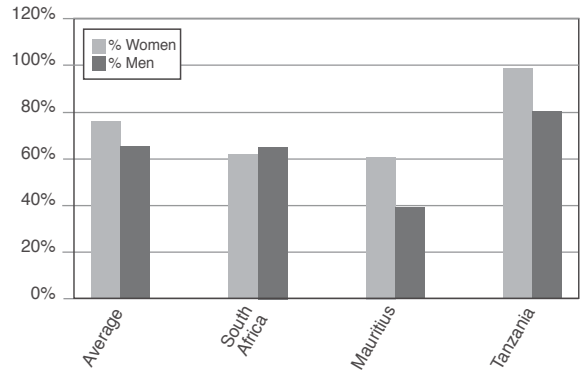


Figure 2.19 Function of sources in tabloids

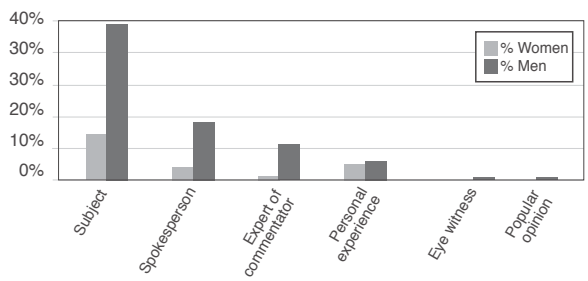


Figure 2.20 Functions of sources (GMMP)

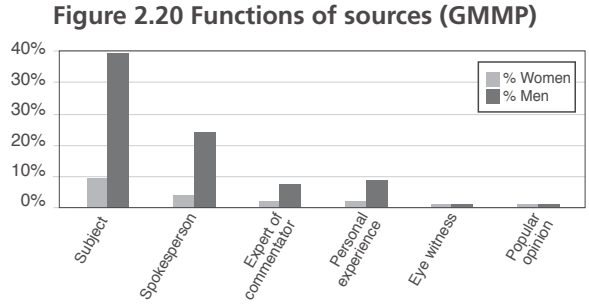
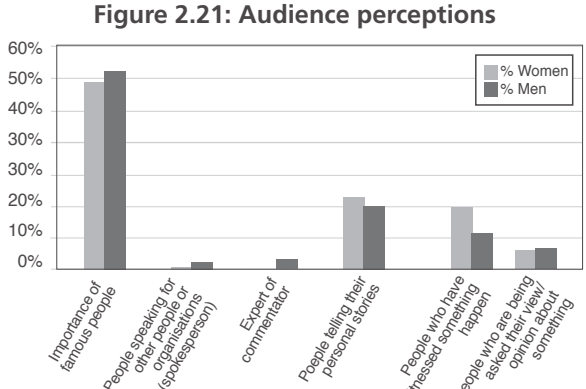


Figure 2.21: Audience perceptions



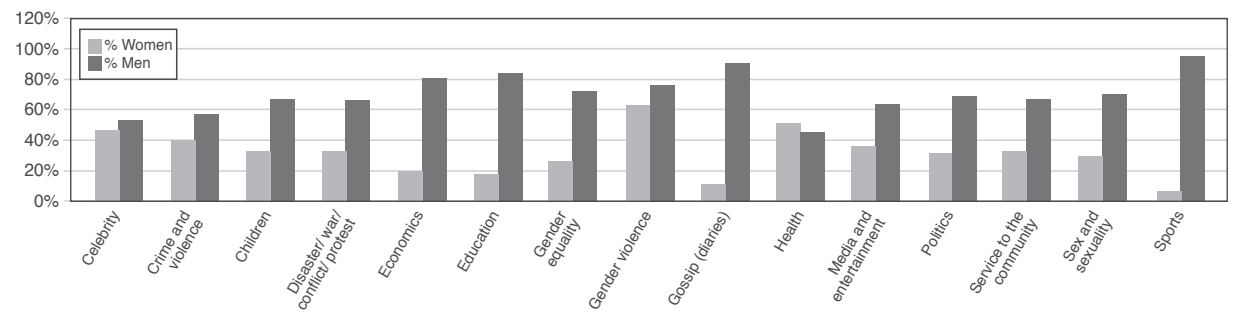
The fact that audiences perceive "people telling their stories" and "people who witnessed something happening" being the two kinds of voices most likely to be heard after "important people" does suggest that they feel tabloids to be more accessible to ordinary people.

But the content analysis shows that both tabloids and mainstream media in the region suffer from a hierarchical approach to news, often dominated by the single source voice of authority, who is invariably a man. Until the media fulfils its purported function as "the voice of the voiceless" - seeking out the views of not just those who make policies but those who are affected by them - there is little hope of the gender imbalances in the news being corrected.

Who speaks on what?

As in the findings in both the GMBS and GMMP, women's views are under-represented in all topic categories in tabloids: especially in sports, politics and economics. Unlike the mainstream media, in which women had more to say than men in only the gender equality topic category, in tabloids men's views predominate even in this topic category. The only topic category in which women's view predominated in tabloids was health, with celebrity news a close second.

Figure 2.22: Who speaks on what in tabloids?

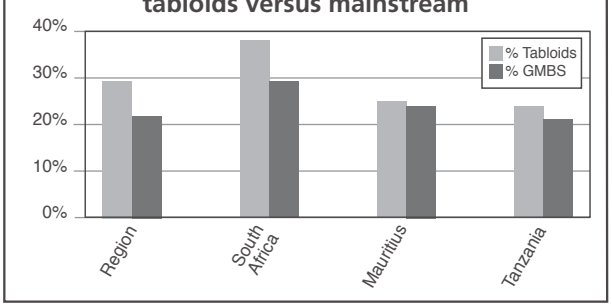


As in the mainstream media, gender blindness in tabloids translates into missed opportunities for being more reflective of, and responsive to audiences. An example from *5-Plus* in Mauritius (17 June) is an economic story on the increase in the price of milk in which the only two people interviewed are the male spokesperson for a consumer organisation and the director of a supermarket, with no views from women consumers who are most likely to have the strongest views on the issue.

Who tells the story?

Tabloid newsrooms, like those of their mainstream counterparts, are dominated by men. The monitoring (Figure 2.23) showed that women journalists constituted 29% of those who wrote stories, compared to 22% print journalists in the GMBS. This varies across countries, from 37% women writers in South African tabloids to 21% in Tanzania. The tabloid monitoring did not measure to

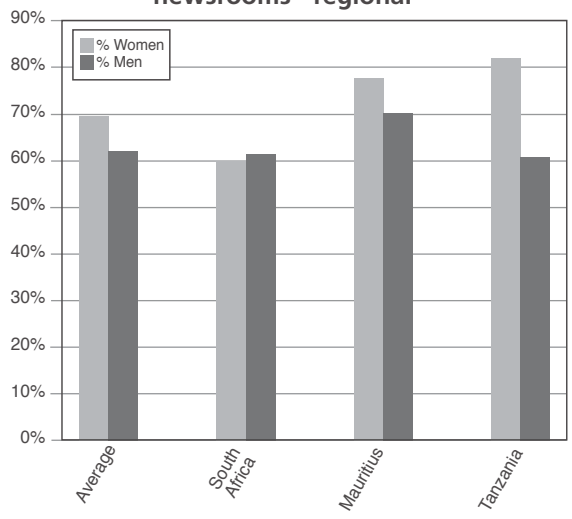
Figure 2.23: Gender gaps in newsrooms, tabloids versus mainstream



what extent women journalists are more likely to consult female opinion in their stories. However, the GL Southern Africa analysis of GMMP results has shown that on average, women are more likely to consult female sources. Gender gaps in newsrooms are therefore another way in which gender biases reflect in the tabloid press.

Figure 2.24 shows that in all countries, but especially among women in Mauritius and Tanzania, the majority of audiences believe that there are gender gaps in newsrooms.

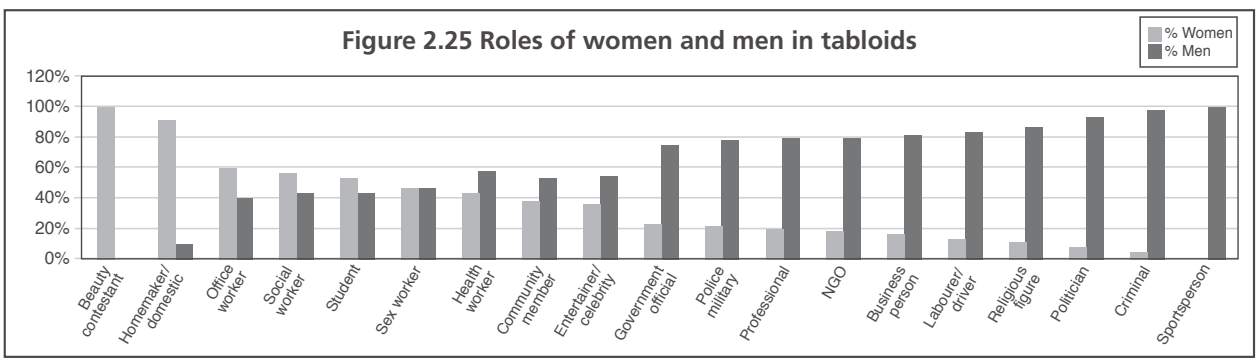
Figure 2.24: Perceptions of gender gaps in newsrooms - regional



Stereotypes

As in the case of the mainstream media, gender stereotypes are perpetuated in a number of ways in tabloids. In findings that mirror those of both the GMBS and GMMP, Figure 2.25 shows that the only occupational category in which women predominate in tabloids is as beauty contestants; home makers and domestic workers; office workers; social workers and students. Men on the other hand predominate in a range of roles, from professional, to NGO, to business person, labourers and drivers, religious figures and politicians.

Figure 2.25 Roles of women and men in tabloids



A question often asked is whether this is not just the way society is. It is true that the gender division of labour is still heavily pronounced in all societies. However, even where women are present, they are often not reflected. For example, while women now constitute about 20% of all politicians in Southern Africa, they constituted only 8% of the politicians who spoke in the GMBS and 5% in the tabloid monitoring. The graph also shows that there are virtually no sportswomen portrayed in tabloids. This again is not the reality on the ground.

Audiences are aware of the gender disparities in the roles that women are portrayed in tabloids. When asked to identify the predominant roles in which women and men are found in tabloids, women and men gave answers strikingly similar to those above. For example women and men agree that women are more likely to be portrayed as sex workers, entertainer/celebrity than they would appear as politicians and professionals.

Subtle stereotypes

Stereotypes are expressed in both subtle and blatant ways. Subtle forms include the numerous stories that emphasise the domestic and traditional roles of women in a way that makes this seem normal.

Another way that subtle stereotypes are reinforced in tabloids (as in the mainstream media) is the tendency for older women to be virtually non-existent in coverage. Figure 2.26 shows that across all countries in which the monitoring took place, women predominate in the 20-34 year old category and become virtually non-existent in the age categories over fifty.

Figure 2.26: Women in tabloids by age

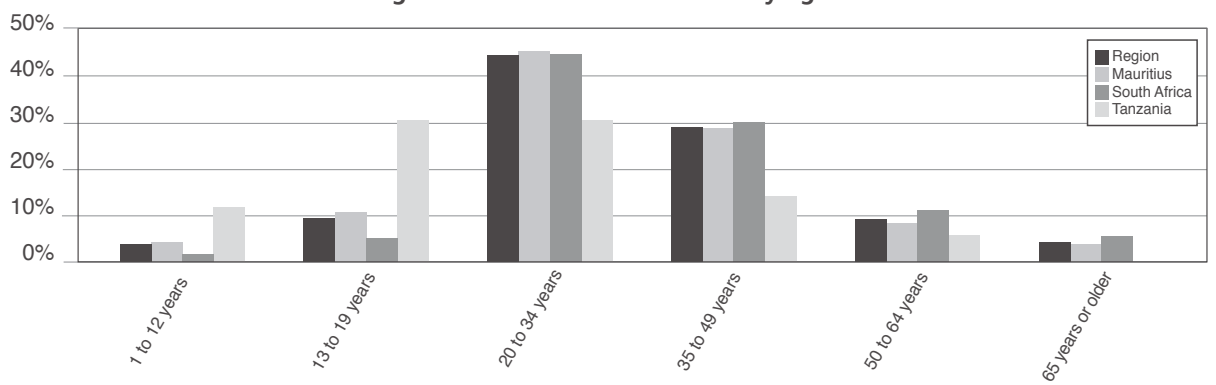
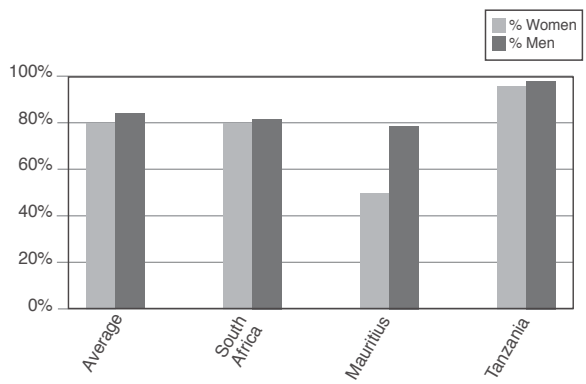


Figure 2.27 shows that across all countries in the research audiences agree that younger women are more likely to feature in tabloids than older women.

Figure 2.27: Are younger women more likely to feature in tabloids than older women?



As in the findings of the GMBS, another way in which subtle stereotypes are reinforced is the tendency to refer to women according to a personal relationship, as a mother, wife, or daughter, while men are identified in their own right. In the tabloid monitoring, only 2% of all men were identified according to a relationship (compared to 3% in the case of the GMBS). In contrast 18% of women sources were identified according to a personal relationship in tabloids (compared to 11% in the case of the GMBS).

Figure 2.28 shows that, especially in South Africa, audiences are strongly of the view that women in tabloids are more likely to be identified according to their personal relationships than men.

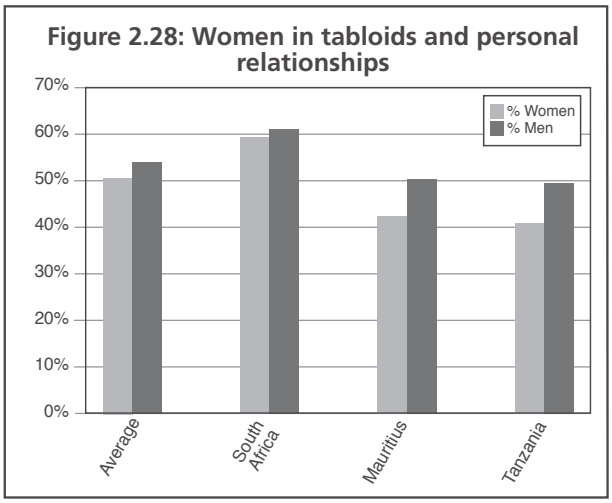


Figure 2.28: Women in tabloids and personal relationships

Blatant stereotypes

As described earlier, even though not every article in tabloids carries blatant gender stereotypes, audience perceptions are that blatant stereotypes predominate, because these tend to be so prominently displayed.

An example is the article in the *Daily Voice* (20 June 2007) on Hlomla Dandala, a prominent South African actor (voted among the top 100 South African hunks) who has fathered four children with different women in the past three years despite describing the condom as "his favourite piece of clothing." He attributes his wayward behaviour to the fact that he spends a lot of time away from his wife. None of the views of the women are expressed. The story is accompanied by a face shot of him on one side and a curious image of a woman's legs slightly parted on the other.



Serial dad smaaks condoms

GENERATIONS:
SABC1, 8PM

SOAP star Hlomla Dandala's favourite piece of clothing is a condom.

This may come as a shock to some, especially considering the rumours about him cheating and fathering children across the country.

But, according to the former *Generations* star, he loves nothing more than wearing a condom.

Hlomla made this claim after being voted as one of South Africa's Hot 100 hunks.

This seems strange in light of the fact that he has fathered four children with four different women in the past three years.

Decisions

Hlomla says being away from his wife, *Lotto* presenter Candy Litchfield, led to his making bad decisions.

"I was incredibly self-destructive away from her," he says.

"It takes a fair amount of irresponsibility to have children with four different women."

However, the soap star says he is ready to move on from his mistakes and wants to heal his relationship with his wife and all his children.

FATHER: Hlomla

Women in tabloids are often portrayed in extremes of either the virtuous virgin or devil incarnate. An article in *Le Dimanche* (10 June, 2007) speculates on whether Princess Diana was a virgin on the day of her wedding. The article is based on a book by a former friend claiming that she slept with the Prince in the Royal Train before getting married. The article takes it for granted that Prince Charles should not have been expected to be a virgin on the night of his wedding.

Reporting on the sentencing of Dina Rodrigues, the woman who shocked South Africa by murdering a child fathered by her former boyfriend, the *Daily Voice* (29-30 June) adds to the words of the judge: "heartless, cowardly and ruthless" its own interpretation: "Pure Evil."

There is a headshot of Rodrigues with her image manipulated to give her bloodshot eyes. The main story is carried on pages six to eight of the main paper. The main story on page six carries the headline, "Dina is evil personified."

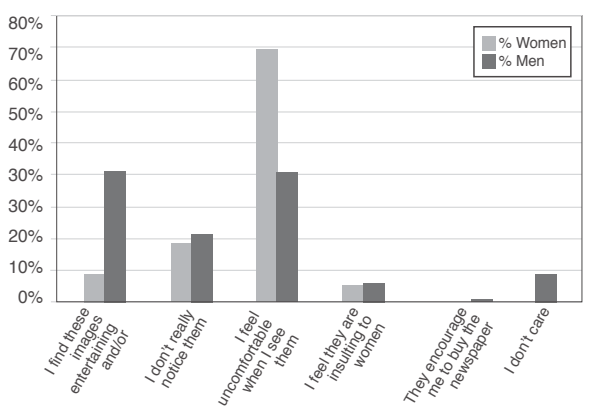


While it is true that Dina Rodrigues committed a ruthless crime, the story is not a court report but a highly personalised attack driven by the stereotype of the "devil woman." Little mention is made in the story of the men who actually carried out the murder.

Independent women in tabloids are few and far between. The idea of a man having to rely on a woman is taboo. An article in *Alasari* (21 June) concerns a man who lodged a complaint with the court over an alleged insult by a woman who said that he was "not a man because he is being supported by his wife". The article is entitled: *"Jose, hata kama unalishwa na mkeo, usione soo, yote maisha* (Jose, even if you rely on your wife for basic necessities, don't feel ashamed of it, it is all life)". But there is little in the story to persuade the reader that this is indeed not the ultimate shame and that the man has strong cause to feel aggrieved.

Figure 2.29 shows that 69% women feel uncomfortable when they see sexual images of women in tabloids. Roughly equal proportions of men (31%) found such images entertaining as said they felt uncomfortable about them.

Figure 2.29: Audience responses to sexual images



The qualitative audience research revealed that some readers are disgruntled with the perpetual portrayal of women as objects. One reader in South Africa highlighted the fact that even women musicians are portrayed in sexual terms. An example is when the *Sunday World* reported that Queen Seseko performed at a show with no "knickers on" (14 October 2007). Audiences found this report unnecessary and in poor taste. The following are some examples of other audience responses on the issue:

What audiences said

- Yes I feel uncomfortable and because they are insulting to women I wish the government would make sure that those tabloids are warned or banned.
- In this age of HIV/AIDS these pictures are encouraging wrong values. They also do not respect women.
- Women need to be protected in newspapers.
- As a father I feel embarrassed when I see half naked women in tabloids and I don't want my son to view them and I feel they are insulting women and they take away their dignity.
- We should not try to hide anything; we should be open.



Some respondents argued however that women are not forced to pose naked for pictures, "so I don't care." Others said they either ignored the images or they made them buy the papers.

What audiences said

- These images are entertaining because women have sexy bodies to attract people and also they know how to entertain people the way they dress, wear makeup also pose for the picture. Also, they insult women by making fool of them that they ask women to appear on newspapers and yet they say bad words about them.
- They encourage me to buy the tabloids as I want to know exactly what the society is doing and how much young women are indulging in sexual acts despite HIV/AIDS threats.
- I ignore them.
- Although tabloids often show women primarily according to their body images, this actually boosts readership. Men (some) are encouraged to buy the paper.

The mixed responses by audiences on the matter, and the strong views by women readers on images that they find degrading and insulting suggest that the simple argument that sexual images of women sell tabloids need to be re-examined. In particular there is need to interrogate to what extent this assumption derives from gender blindness to the fact that there may be strongly differing views on this issue between male and female audiences.

Gender awareness

The monitoring yielded some interesting examples of more gender aware reporting. These included:

Men and parenting: An article in the *Sunday World* (24 June 2007) concerns a man, Musa Sokulu, who is seeking to understand what happened to the foetus of his unborn baby when his wife was involved in car crash. The wife who was seven months pregnant at the time of the accident was buried without the unborn baby when Musa, who was also in the accident, was still recovering in hospital.

Challenging gender and racial stereotypes: An article in *5-Plus* (3 June) is a love story about two dancers, Eva Dalais from Reunion who met Thabo Legrand from Botswana on the island of Mauritius. They share a life and a baby. As they prepare for their show "Utopia", their responsibility as parents and their choreography intertwine with ease. During the interview the two literally glow. Theirs is a strange and unusual tale in this racially polarised region.

A gay ending: The same issue of *5-Plus* (3 June) carries the story of a Mauritian who emigrated to the United States as he could no longer hide his sexual orientation. Vincent de Gersigny, formerly employed at the Commercial Bank in Rose Hill, is gay and could not talk about his sexual orientation as this was taboo in Mauritius. He was supported by one of his friends at the bank who gave him the address of his partner-to-be, Jonathan Gordon, 54 years old. They corresponded and finally he left everything behind to meet his partner in New Jersey, the third state in the United States to recognise gay marriages. De Gersigny got his visa through the green card lottery. From New Jersey he wrote to his parents to inform them that he is gay. His parents were not shocked and accepted him as he is. He finally got married to his partner. What is most important for him is that gay couples have the same rights as heterosexual couples.



Assertive women: A story in the June 28 - 1 July issue of *Amani* in Tanzania concerns popular performer Asha Baraka taking on the police after they asked her to stop her show because it was too noisy. Upon arrival, she opposed the order for the music to be switched off explaining that if they complied there would be chaos from the fans. In the ensuing argument Baraka got her way.

Listen to the children! An unusual story in *Uwazi* (June 19-25) concerned boys and girls petitioning the government to look into issues that concern their welfare such as drug abuse, transportation and diets in schools as well as the needs of orphaned children during the Celebration of the Day of the African Child. They presented their petition to a woman minister, Magreth Sitta in the presence of parents, guardians and children's rights activists.

Figure 2.30: How else would audiences want women represented in region

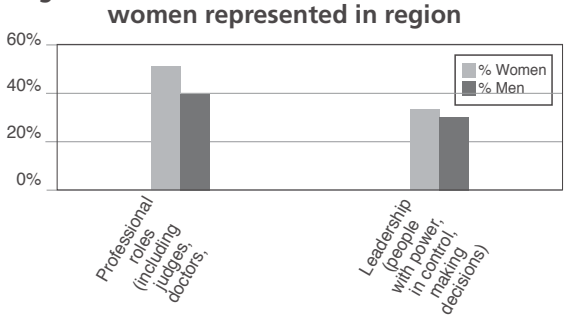
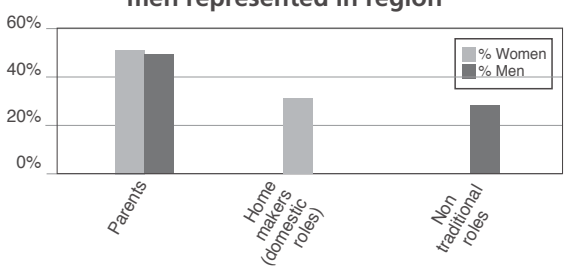


Figure 2.31: How else would audiences want men represented in region

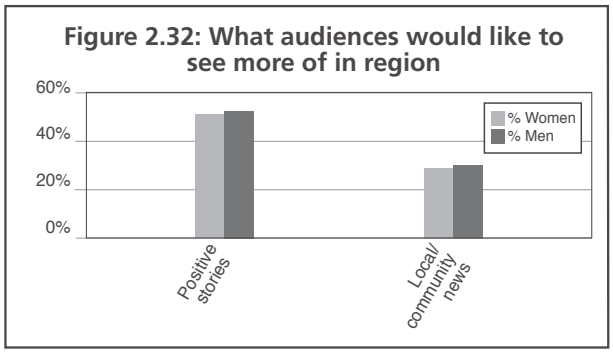


WHAT AUDIENCES WANT

Figure 2.30 shows that when asked what other ways they would like to see women represented, the top two choices of women and men were in professional and leadership roles.

Figure 2.31 shows that when asked how else audiences would want to see men represented they both gave as their first choice "parents". Women gave "homemakers" as their second choice and men "non traditional roles" as their second choice.

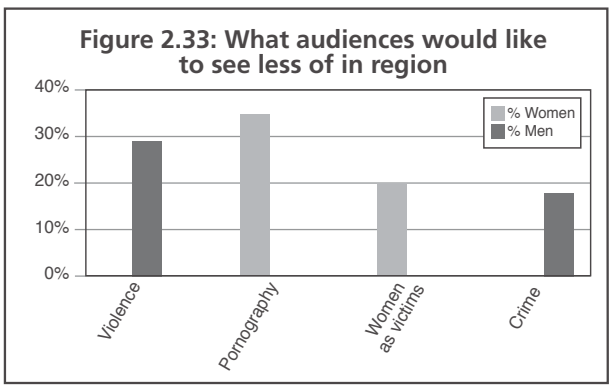
In findings very similar to the GMAS, figure 2.32 shows that overwhelmingly what women and men would like more of in their daily tabloid are more positive stories, as well as more local/community news.



Other areas for increased or improved coverage raised by readers during the research included:

- Education and economics issues.
- Grocery prices, furniture.
- More stories about affluent communities/ white communities.
- More debates: stories showing both sides of an argument.
- HIV stories.
- Down to earth problems.
- Business.
- African and international news.

Figure 2.33 shows that when asked what they wanted to read less about in their tabloids, men cited violence and crime while women pointed to pornography and women as victims.



Examples of comments included:

- Too much of pictures of women depicted as depression victims.
- Get rid of Page 3.
- Too much gossip.
- They should stop lying; writing what is not the truth.
- Stories are scary.
- Headline that does not relate with the inner content.

Concluding comments

The concluding comments in the audience research show that there are clearly two kinds of audience readers; those who are satisfied with what they are getting and those who want more. An example of those who do not have high expectations of their tabloid is the reader who said: "These are just funny stories so they can remain as they are. Although sometimes the pictures are a bit naughty!"

Not all women readers found this funny: "Women should not be treated like this; it is not good," a woman reader said. "The tabloids should write more about gender equality and human rights. I also need more opinions from ordinary people in the streets," another woman said.

Summing up the views of many readers a man said that tabloids must "focus more on stories which promote the common good and well being of the communities that they aim at selling their newspapers."



Indira Seebun, Minister of Women's Rights, Child Develoment and Family Welfare and Loga Virahsawmy, Chairperson, Media Watch Organisation - GEMSA

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Chapter Three
Mauritius

Key facts

Tabloid readers, especially men, are well educated: Mauritius is the only country in the study in which the highest proportion of those interviewed fell in the tertiary category. However, there were more men than women with a higher level of education. This suggests that tabloids are not as popular among well educated women as they are among this category of men.

Men are the main buyers of tabloids: While 45% men said that they bought these publications themselves, 16% women said they got the papers from their spouse and 44% from other family members. Only 17% of women buy tabloids directly.

Tabloids in Mauritius have a higher level of news content than elsewhere in the region: News in Mauritian tabloids constitutes 60% of the total package compared to 37% in South Africa and 40% in Tanzania.

Most of this is locally generated: Three quarters of the stories in tabloids in Mauritius are generated by their own reporters, with the remaining 25% from foreign news agencies.

The content is light-hearted: As in the other two countries, sports, media and entertainment (20% each) dominate tabloid coverage in Mauritius. Economics (9%) and politics (7%) – the dominant topics in the mainstream media - get much less space in tabloids.

There is little focus on community concerns: The majority of both women and men interviewed felt that tabloids cover issues affecting the community only partially, not well, or very poorly.

Audiences, especially women, read tabloids as a form of escapism and not for news coverage. 56% of women and 33% men said they read tabloids to "catch up on gossip". 39% of men said they read tabloids for news coverage. No women cited this as a reason for reading tabloids.

Tabloids are not the main source of news in Mauritius. Only 17% of women and 6% men said tabloids are their main source of news. 39% men and 33% women cited radio as their main source of news.

Audiences distrust what they read in tabloids: As in the other two countries in the study, what readers most dislike about tabloids is that "they do not always tell the truth" and "they exaggerate". Men also felt that tabloids do not promote good moral values, while women said that tabloids do not cover their concerns.

Gender bias is not as pronounced in Mauritian tabloids as in other countries in the study: Mauritius monitors found a majority of the items (54%) to be gender aware, with the balance (46%) displaying gender biases of one kind or the other.

But women's views are under represented: However, women constituted only 24% of news sources in tabloids; the same proportion as in the mainstream media as measured in the GMMP of 2005.

Women are more likely to be seen than heard: At 36%, women were more likely to feature as images than as news sources, but this is still well below the parity mark.

Men tell the story: Men comprise 75% of tabloid reporters compared to 76% in the mainstream media (GMBS).

Stereotypes are reinforced through the roles of women and men: Although women professionals do get a relatively good showing in Mauritian tabloids, the most common roles are as entertainer; celebrity; home maker and beauty contestant. Men on the other hand predominate as politicians, sports persons and professionals.

Women are more likely to be identified according to personal relationships: 11% of women sources in Mauritian tabloids were referred to according to their personal relationships compared to 3% of the men.

Women are offended by sexual images: When asked how they felt about sexual images in the news, men said that they did not notice them or that they did not care. Women on the other hand said that they were either uncomfortable or that they felt insulted by them.

Both women and men would like changes: Tabloid audiences in Mauritius would like women represented in more professional and non-traditional roles, and men in parenting roles. They would like less crime and violence; more positive local news and more in-depth features and analysis.

This chapter summarises the findings of the study in Mauritius where GL worked with Media Watch Organisation (MWO) GEMSA to monitor three papers: *L'Hebdo*; *5-Plus* and *Le Dimanche* in June 2007: a total of 859 items. Researchers also interviewed 36 readers of tabloids as well as managers or editors of the three papers.

BACKGROUND

The Republic of Mauritius is a group of islands in the south west of the Indian Ocean, consisting of the main island of Mauritius, Rodrigues and several outer islands located at distances greater than 350 km from the main island. The population is estimated at 1.2 million.

Since independence in 1968, the Mauritian economy has diversified from a low-income, agriculturally based economy to a middle-income diversified economy with growing industrial, financial and tourist sectors. The information, communication and technology sector is growing rapidly. The aim is to make Mauritius a centre for high-tech and software services which can be exported.

The media

The country has a vibrant democracy and media industry. The Mauritian press has played a major role in the society since the French colonial era. The first newspaper *"Annonces, Affiches et Avis Divers"* started in 1773.



Newsroom training in Mauritius Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Mauritius boasts an uninterrupted free press since the early 1830s. During the period of censorship, after the British took over in 1810, the Franco-Mauritian elite fought for, and won, the right to a free press from the British rulers in 1832. During the nineteenth century, the press became an instrument tool in the fight for political and social emancipation of different groups. In post-colonial Mauritius, the media has consolidated its position as a key player in the island's democracy.

Private interests owned the first radio station in Mauritius, but around 1944-45, colonial authorities took this over and it became the Mauritius Broadcasting Services (MBC). MBC became a corporate body in 1954. The state launched a television station in 1965, and colour television came in 1975. Liberalisation of the airwaves began with radio in 2002.

While the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) is a statutory body that regulates the airwaves, the MWO-GEMSA is the only organisation that has taken sexist complaints to the IBA. There is no press complaints commission in Mauritius. The Association of Advertising Agencies is a self-regulatory body.

La Sentinelle Group which comprises four print media, one magazine for women and one radio has its own Code of Ethics and a Mediation Commission that takes complaints from the public. The Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), Le Defi Media Group and La Vie Catholique have policies on HIV and AIDS and Gender.

Gender and the media

The Gender and the Media Baseline Study (GMBS) found that women constituted 17% of news sources in Mauritius.

Women's voices were virtually absent in certain occupational categories including politics, economics, religion, the police, science and technology.

Women sources had increased to 21% in the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) study in 2005. There are differences between media houses. For example in monitoring done in August and October 2004 by eight print and broadcast media in Mauritius, La Vie Catholique had 43% women sources.

In the Gender and Media Audience (GMAS) in 2005 women and men cited radio as their main source of news. Mauritius was the only country in the survey in which women, who have a relatively high level of education, said they preferred in-depth features to any other news genres. A high proportion of women expressed their displeasure with sexual images of women in the news saying that they feel insulted by these. The majority of women (76%) said that the news would be more interesting if the views of women were reported more often.

Newspapers monitored

Out of the 25 newspapers in Mauritius, 21 are tabloid in form and 4 are tabloid in form and content as defined by the study. Most of them are weekly except for Defi Sexo which is a monthly.

The three weekly tabloids chosen for this research (*Le Dimanche*, *5-Plus* and *Hebdo*) are a mix of serious and light hearted contents, covering titbits, news in general as well as entertainment. *5-Plus* belongs to La Sentinelle Group which is the largest media company in Mauritius and *Hebdo* to Le Defi Media Group, the second largest group. *Le Dimanche* is one of the oldest newspapers in Mauritius. Table six gives the monitoring schedule for the research.

Table six: Newspapers monitored in Mauritius

DAY	DATE	WEEKLY X 3 L'Hebdo; 5-Plus; Le Dimanche	Number of papers
Sunday	June 3-9	XXX	3
Sunday	June 16-17	XXX	3
Sunday	June 17-23	XXX	3
Sunday	June 24-30	XXX	3
TOTAL		**12**	**12**

Interviews conducted

Researchers in Mauritius conducted audience research with 36 women and men in two different sites; one urban and another rural. The audience research, interviews with editors, monitoring and case studies are brought together in this analysis of the findings.

GENERAL FEATURES FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

L'Hebdo senior journalist Jean Claude Dedans attributes the popularity of tabloids in Mauritius to the fact that they are easy to read, small and the front page is always attractive. He said that the paper has a reputation for hard-hitting news, but a major selling point is "good human interest stories and some big scandals."

However, Dedans argues that tabloids in Mauritius are not only popular for sensationalism and scandals like in other countries but for their richness in content. *Le Dimanche* Editor in Chief Richard Nauvel added that tabloids are close to the people and each event has a human dimension an opinion.

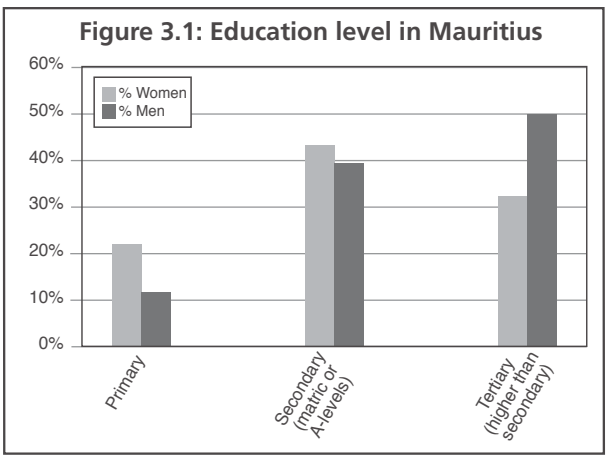
Arianne de L'Estrac, group managing editor of *La Sentinelle* summed up the views of the editors when she said: "The format, the approach, the angle, the variety of information and the richness of content are all gathered together to make tabloids so popular."

Interestingly tabloid readers in Mauritius are aware of tabloids in other countries in the region. One reader said that Mauritian tabloids "have a lot to improve before becoming like *The Sun* in South Africa, for example." This shows that the influence of tabloids extends well beyond national borders.

Education level

Compared to the other two countries in the study (South Africa and Tanzania) Mauritius is the only country in which the highest proportion of those interviewed fell in the tertiary category. As shown in Figure 3.1, 50% of male readers have a tertiary education while 33% of female readers also have tertiary education. This reflects the generally higher levels of education in the country as well as the fact that tabloids in Mauritius tend to have more of a balance between news and entertainment than in other countries.

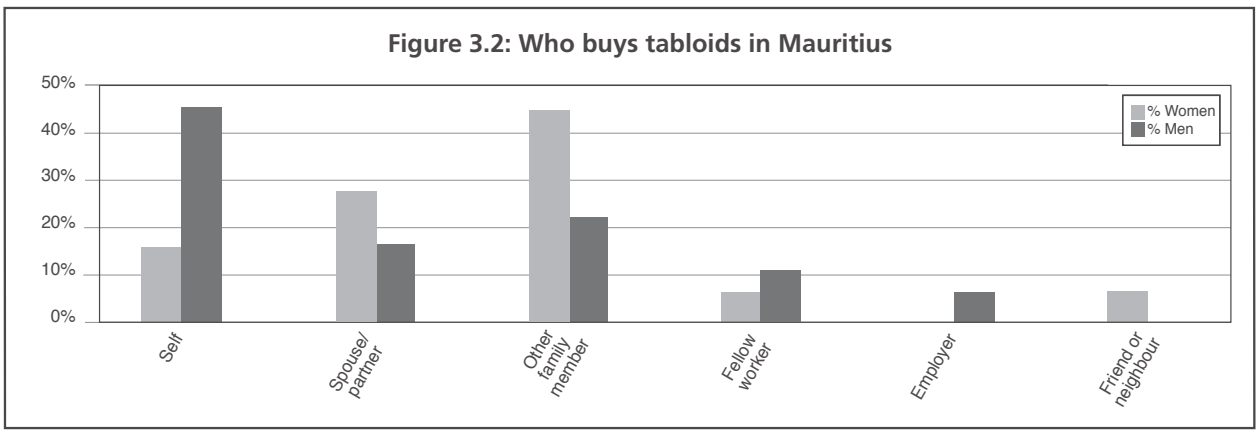
Figure 3.1: Education level in Mauritius



Given that women and men in Mauritius have similar levels of education, it is interesting that there are more men than women with a higher level of education who read tabloids. This suggests that tabloids are not as popular among highly educated women as they are among highly educated men.

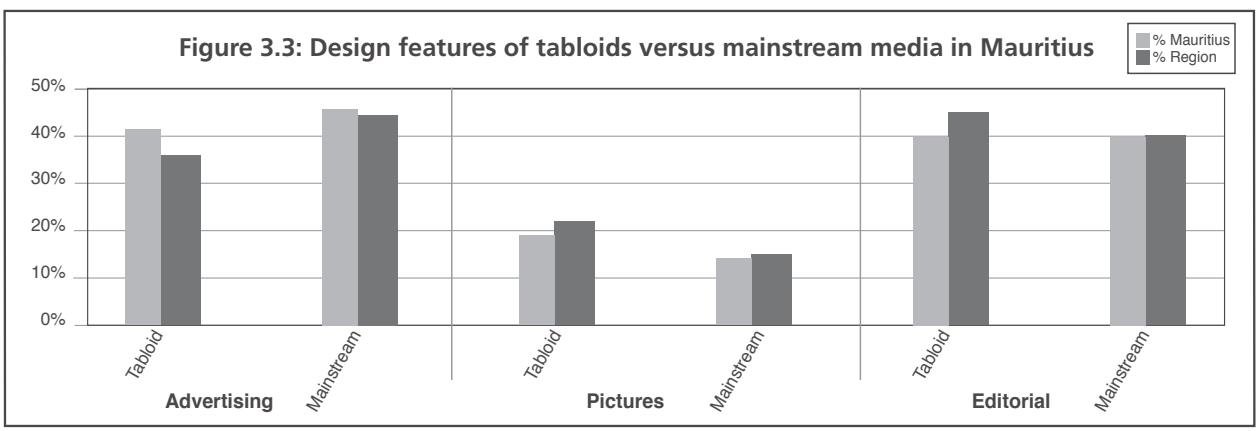
Who buys tabloids?

The gendered differences in who buys tabloids were more pronounced in Mauritius than in any other country in the study. Figure 3.2 shows that while 45% men said that they bought these publications themselves, 16% women said they got the papers from their spouse and 44% from other family members. Only 17% of women buy tabloids directly. This contrasts sharply with the findings in GMAS that showed that 37% women source their news directly. The finding suggests that men in Mauritius are far more enthusiastic about tabloids than women, who read them because someone else happens to have brought them home.



Design and accessibility

Figure 3.3 shows that as in the other two countries in the region, editorial space takes up about 40% of the space in tabloids and in the mainstream media in Mauritius. Advertising for tabloids is higher for Mauritius than in the region (42%) but still lower than the mainstream media (47%). As in the region, a distinguishing feature of tabloids in Mauritius is that pictures (19%) take up a higher proportion of space than in the mainstream media (14%).



An example is the story of Thabo Legrand from Botswana and Eva Dalais from Reunion quoted in Chapter two. This love affair between two dancers across the borders of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region is mostly told in pictures, of them, their baby and on stage. Illustrations such as this are what give tabloids their distinctive human interest appeal.


Eva Dalais et Thabo Legrand

Deux cœurs à l'unisson

Utopia ou incursion dans un monde de rêve

Types of stories covered

Underscoring the fact that tabloids in Mauritius are more serious than elsewhere in this study, the analysis of genres (Figure 3.4) showed that news constitutes 60% of the total compared to 37% in South Africa and 40% in Tanzania (giving an overall average of 45% in the study).

Figure 3.4: Genres in tabloids in Mauritius

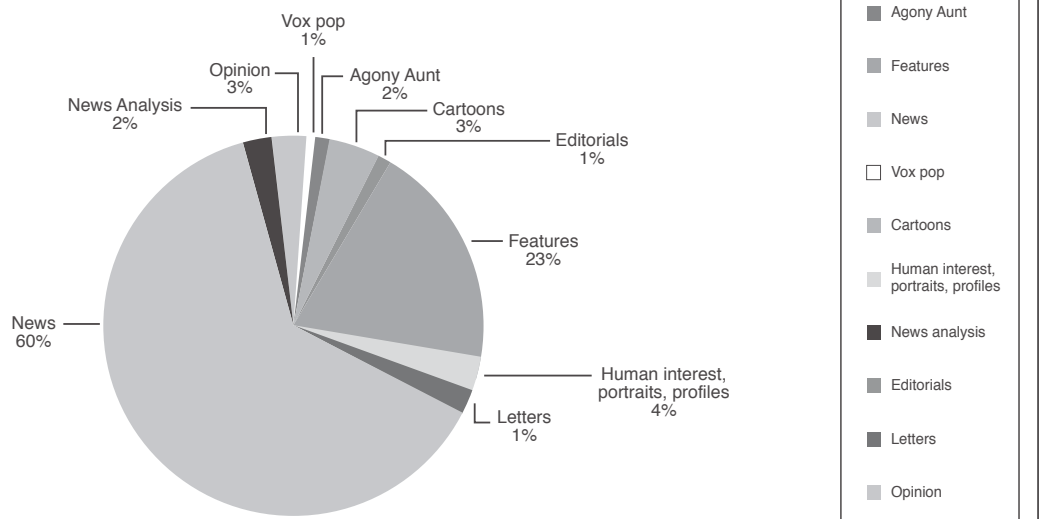
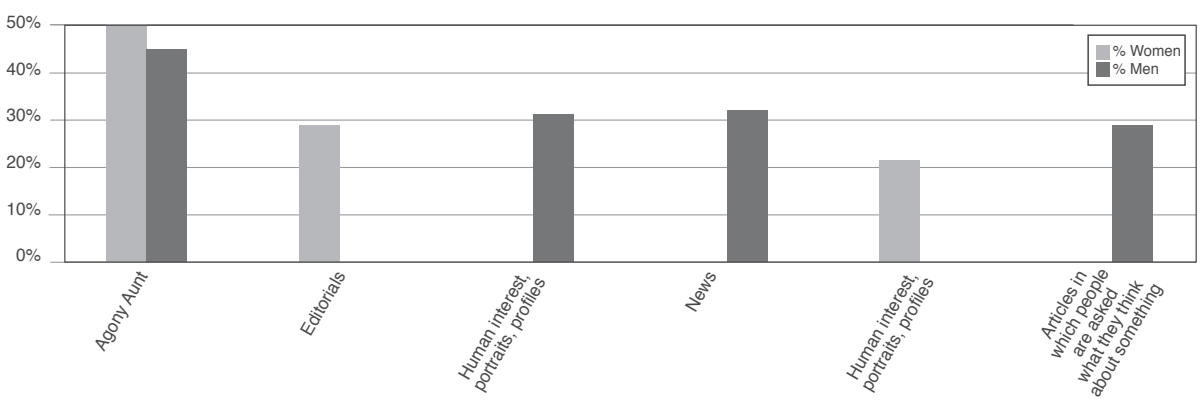


Figure 3.5 shows, however, that news is not what audiences most like about tabloids. As in the other two countries, both women and men selected agony aunt as their favourite genre. Women chose editorials and human interest as their second and third favourite genres. Men chose human interest and news as their second and third favourite genres. The clear message from these preferences is that it is those aspects of tabloids that are interactive and speak most directly to audiences that make them popular.

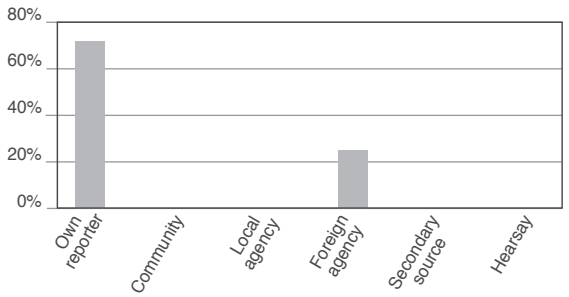
Figure 3.5: Types of news readers like in Mauritius



Origin of stories in tabloids

Three quarters of the stories in tabloids in Mauritius are generated by their own reporters, with the remaining 25% from foreign news agencies. There were no stories from the community, local agencies, secondary sources or hearsay. These results show that it is incorrect to suggest that tabloids rely mostly on gossip and hearsay for their stories.

Figure 3.6: Origin of stories in tabloids in Mauritius



Topics

Figure 3.7 illustrates the top ten topics in the tabloids monitored. As in the other two countries, sports, media and entertainment (20% each) dominate tabloid coverage in Mauritius. Economics (9%) and politics (7%) which dominate mainstream media coverage get much less space in tabloids. This shows that tabloids are more likely to focus on soft news than hard news. Significantly, gender specific coverage did not feature at all in the top ten topics. There was only one piece, a cartoon, which addressed gender violence specifically.

Figure 3.7: Topics in tabloids in Mauritius

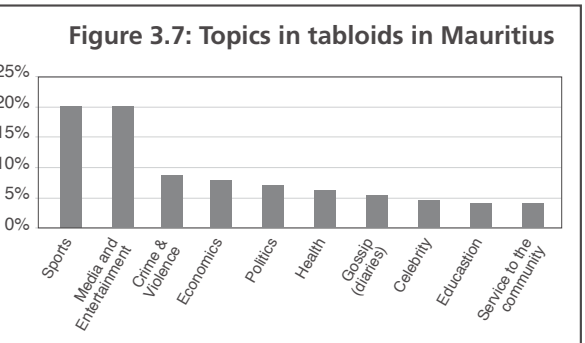
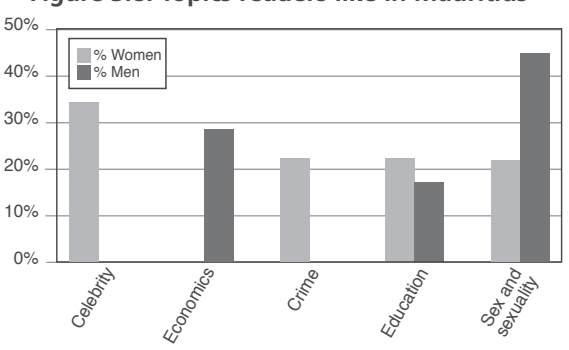


Figure 3.8 suggests that the topic mix is not entirely in keeping with audience preferences. Women have a clear preference for celebrity news (34%) and men for sex and sexuality (44%). As in the other two countries, both women and men like to read about education, which features low on the topic list of tabloids. Unlike other countries, men in Mauritius did not demonstrate a great love for sports news, even though this dominates coverage. They do have a healthy interest in economic news, which as mentioned earlier is not a priority topic for tabloids.

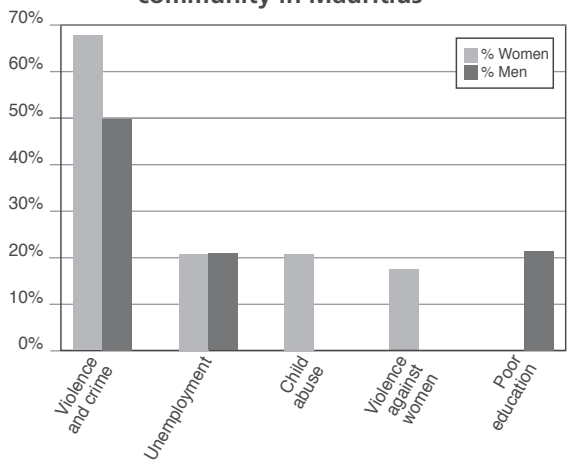
Figure 3.8: Topics readers like in Mauritius



Issues that affect the community

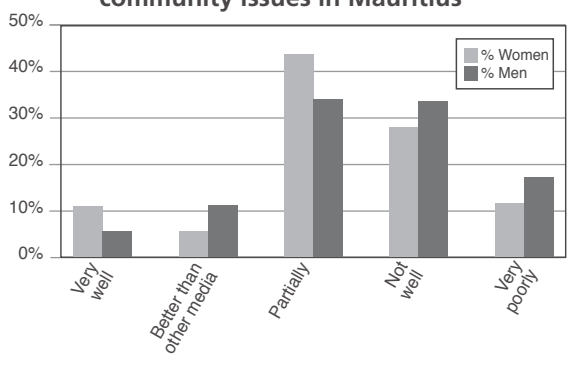
When asked what issues affect the community most, women and men prioritised violence and crime, as well as unemployment. Women added child abuse and violence against women, while men added poor education (see Figure 3.9).

Figure 3.9: Issues affecting the community in Mauritius



Casting some doubts on claims by editors of tabloids that they are close to communities, their issues and concerns, Figure 3.10 shows that the majority of both women and men interviewed felt that tabloids cover issues affecting the community only partially, not well, or very poorly.

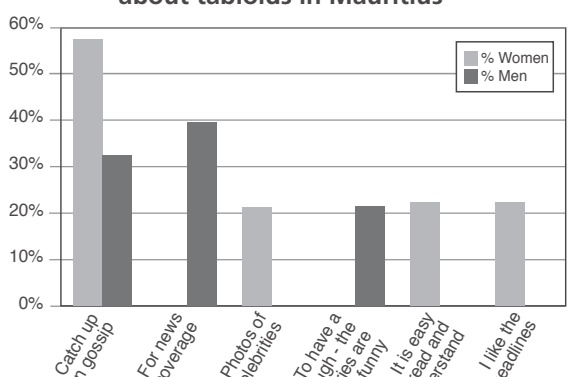
Figure 3.10: How tabloids cover community issues in Mauritius



What readers like about tabloids

In a pattern very similar to that found in South Africa and Tanzania, women said they read tabloids mainly to catch up on gossip; for photos and celebrities and because they are easy to read and understand (see Figure 3.11). Unlike elsewhere, women in Mauritius also said that they liked the headlines (perhaps because these are generally not as offensive towards women in Mauritius as elsewhere). While men also like to catch up on gossip, the main reason that Mauritian men gave for reading tabloids is for the news (reflecting the fact that the news component of tabloids is appreciated). One reader said he liked tabloids because other papers in the country are biased towards one or other political party. Interestingly, the other reason given by men for reading tabloids is "to have a laugh." In other words men view tabloids in both a serious and lighthearted way.

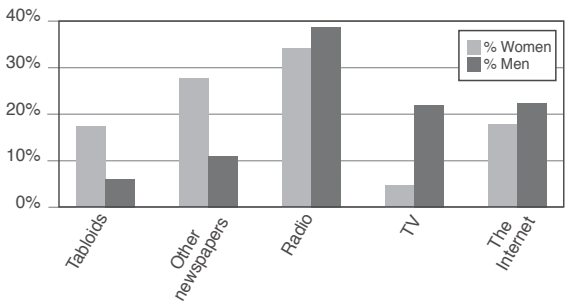
Figure 3.11: What readers like about tabloids in Mauritius



Main source of news for audiences in Mauritius.

Tabloids are not the main source of news for women or men in Mauritius. In findings very similar to those of GMAS, both women and men cited radio as their main source of news (see Figure 3.12). As in the case of GMAS, Mauritius is the only country in the study in which a significant proportion of respondents cited the Internet as their main source of news (22% men and 17% women).

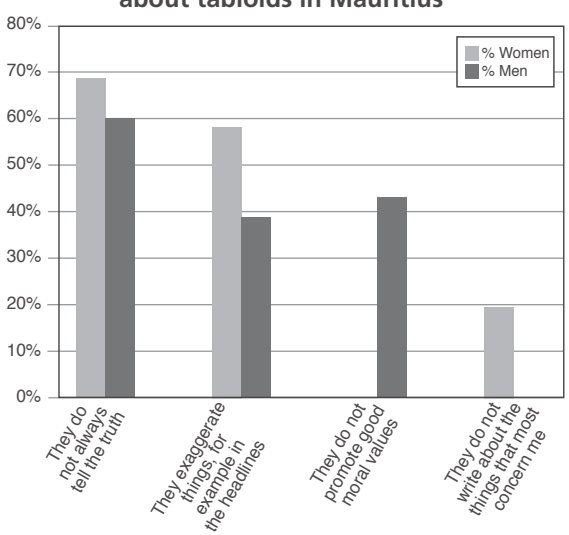
Figure 3.12: Main source of news in Mauritius



What readers dislike about tabloids

Figure 3.13 shows that, as in the other two countries, what readers most dislike about tabloids is that they do not always tell the truth and they exaggerate. Men also felt that tabloids do not promote good moral values, while women said that tabloids do not write about the things that concern them most.

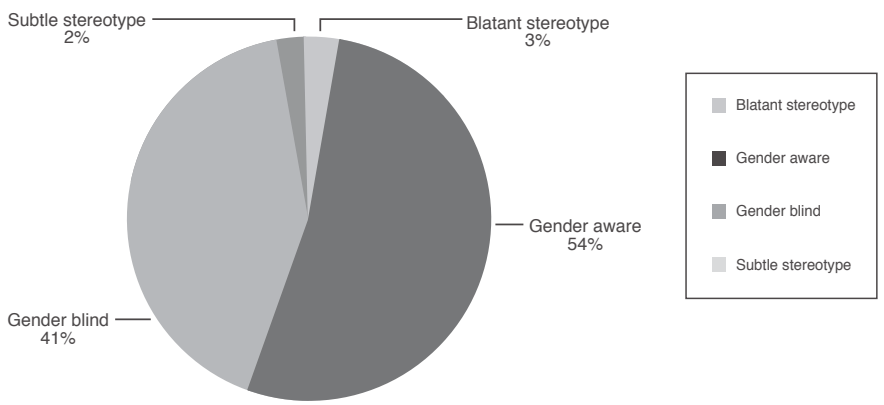
Figure 3.13: What readers dislike about tabloids in Mauritius



GENDER IN EDITORIAL CONTENT

All items monitored were classified according to GL's GEM classification system into gender blind, gender aware, subtle stereotypes and blatant stereotypes (Figure 3.14). Unlike the other countries, in Mauritius monitors found a majority of the items (54%) to be gender aware, with the balance (46%) displaying gender biases of one kind or the other. Perhaps reflecting the more socially conservative environment in Mauritius than in the other two countries, only 3% of items were classified as "blatant stereotypes." The major challenge in Mauritius, as elsewhere is gender blindness, or ignoring the views of women (41%).

Figure 3.14: GEM classification in Mauritius



Gender blindness

The exclusion of women's views and voices reflects in many ways in tabloids as in the mainstream media: in sources, images, what kind of people speak and who speaks on what.

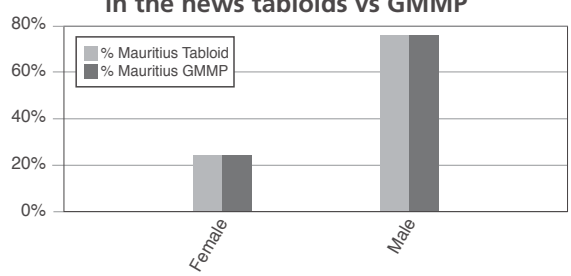
Sources

Figure 3.15 shows that as in the case of the mainstream media, women's views are missing in most stories in Mauritian tabloids. Women constituted 24% of news sources in tabloids; the same proportion as in the mainstream media as measured in the GMMP of 2005.

An example of how this happens is a story on a budget breakfast (*L'Hebdo*, 17 June). Every year the budget speech is analysed by the Association of Certified Chartered Accountants (ACCA). The ACCA comprises both male and female accountants yet only male views are reported on.

Audiences in Mauritius, especially women, are aware of the gender disparities in tabloid representation of men and women. Some 61% women (the highest in the study) said they believe that men are quoted more often than women. This reflects a high level of gender and media literacy.

Figure 3.15: Women and men sources in the news tabloids vs GMMP




ACCA Budget Breakfast

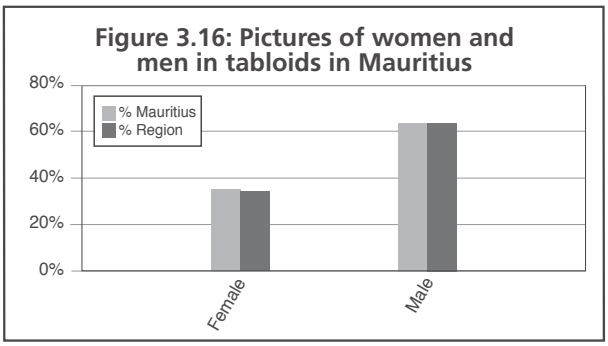
Les claques du Dr Pramode Jaddoo

ACCA MAURITIUS BUDGET BREAKFAST

"Un budget à la Lutchmeenaraidoo." L'économiste Pramode Jaddoo n'a pas mâché ses mots lors de l'ACCA Budget Breakfast qui s'est tenu samedi à La Flore

Images

Because of the more visual nature of tabloids, the monitoring included images. Figure 3.16 shows that as in the other countries, women are more likely to be seen than heard, but even as images they are still under represented in tabloids. Women comprised 36% of all images monitored, compared to the regional average of 35%. The audience research showed that 61% women in Mauritius thought that there are more women than men depicted in tabloids, compared to 39% men. It is interesting that women were more likely to believe that pictures of women dominate than men.



What kind of women and men speak

The majority of tabloid sources in Mauritius are either the main subject of the story or a spokesperson (Figure 3.17). Men dominate in both categories.

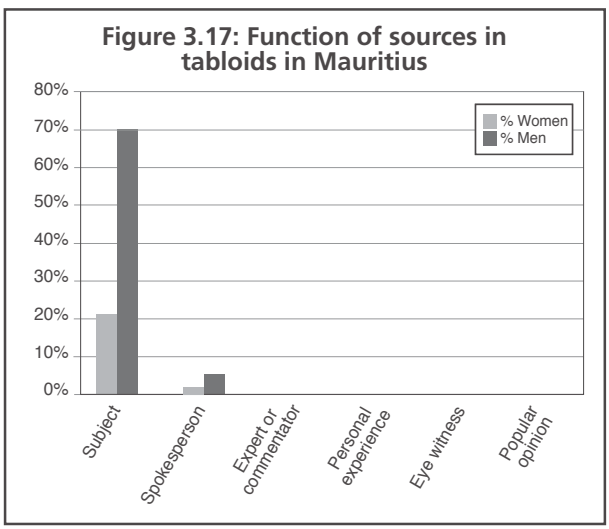
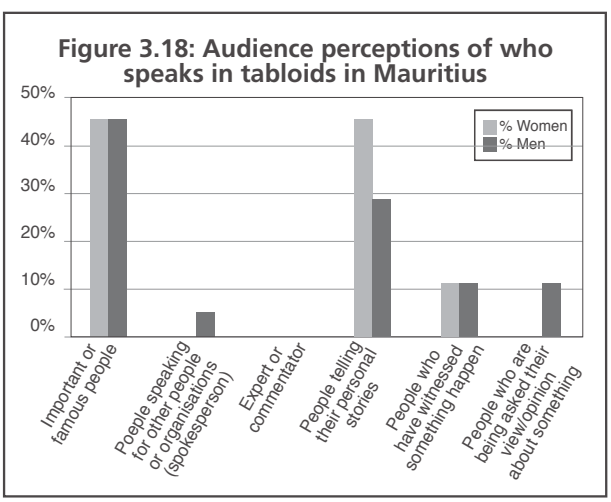


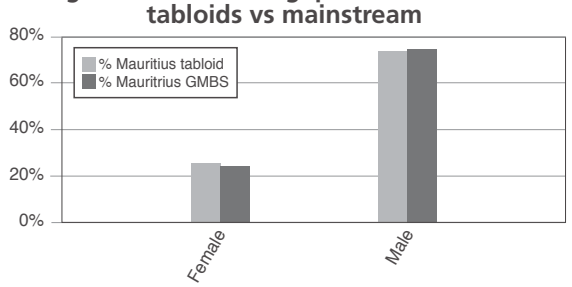
Figure 3.18 shows that audiences perceive "important people" to be the ones whose voices are most heard. The fact that audiences perceive a relatively high proportion of those who speak to be "ordinary people" telling their personal stories; eye witnesses and vox pops when in fact there are very few such sources in Mauritian tabloids is interesting. The reason for this may be that because audiences perceive tabloids to be close to them, they similarly believe it is familiar voices speaking, even when this is not the case.



Who tells the story?

Male journalists dominate in newsrooms of both the mainstream and tabloid press in Mauritius. Figure 3.19 shows that men constituted 75% of those who wrote articles in the tabloids compared to 76% in the mainstream media (GMBS). The majority of both women and men interviewed in the audience research said that tabloid articles are predominantly written by men.

Figure 3.19: Gender gaps in newsrooms, tabloids vs mainstream



Stereotypes

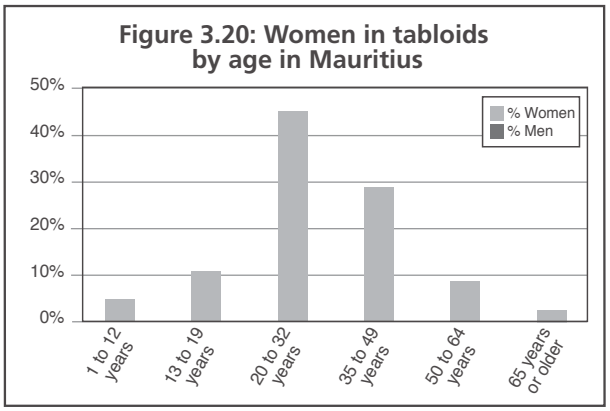
Stereotypes are evident in the manner in which women and men are portrayed in different roles in tabloids. Previous research such as the last *Mirror on the Media: Gender and Advertising in Southern Africa* (Morna, C.L and Ndlovu, S: 2007) have revealed that media tend to portray women in "traditional roles" that confine them to the private domain or to roles that emphasise their physical and sexual attributes. Men, on the other hand, appear more in challenging and diverse roles such as politicians, professionals and business persons, among others.

Table seven: Top ten roles of women and men in Mauritius

	Women	%	Men	%
1	Other	28%	Politician	18%
2	Professional	15%	Sportsperson	14%
3	Entertainer/celebrity	9%	Other	13%
4	Home maker	7%	Professional	10%
5	Student	7%	Entertainer/celebrity	8%
6	Community member	6%	Business person	8%
7	Business person	5%	NGO	6%
8	Government official	5%	Government official	5%
9	NGO	4%	Community member	5%
10	Beauty contestant	3%	Student	3%

Table seven shows that while women professionals do get a relatively good showing in tabloids in Mauritius, the most common roles are as entertainer; celebrity; home maker and beauty contestant. Men on the other hand predominate as politicians, sports persons and professionals. No Mauritian men featured in the home maker and beauty contestant categories.

Subtle stereotypes



Stereotypes can be both blatant and subtle, reinforcing traditional domestic roles and divisions of labour in ways that make these seem normal. Another way in which subtle stereotypes are reinforced is that older women are made virtually invisible. Figure 3.20 shows that 74% of women fall in the 20-49 year category; thereafter women are virtually invisible.

Another way in which subtle stereotypes are reinforced is through women being referred to according to their personal relationships. The research showed that 11% women sources in tabloids in Mauritius are referred to according to their personal relationships compared to 3% men. These findings are similar to those in the GMBS (15 % women compared to 3% men).

Blatant stereotypes


Clips

Striptease, sexe et étudiants

Deux nouveaux vidéoclips à caractère érotique et pornographique sont actuellement en circulation. Dans le premier, une étudiante fait du striptease en classe alors que dans l'autre, un couple d'adolescents est en pleins ébats.

LA saga des clips continue. Après *The Show, Bon Accueil* et *Sharon* (*voir hors-texte*), deux autres vidéos d'amateurs circulent depuis quelques semaines. Dans le premier, qui porte le nom d'une institution secondaire privée et qui dure au moins cinq minutes, on voit une jeune fille d'environ quinze ans faisant du striptease devant ses copines. Dans le second, d'environ sept minutes, c'est carrément du hard. L'on y voit une adolescente ayant des rapports sexuels.

Ces deux films s'ajoutent à plusieurs autres à caractère pornographique, qui circulent depuis l'année dernière (*voir hors-texte*).

Décidément, tourner des clips pornos à l'aide d'un portable semble être devenu le cœur du moment. Dans celui qui se déroule dans une salle de classe, il y a au moins cinq filles : la striptéseuse, une qui fait le guet à la fenêtre, une qui surveille la porte et une autre qui se tient derrière celle qui filme. La jeune fille qui tient la caméra prend la peine de bien capter la scène. On aperçoit alors un tableau ainsi que la table et la chaise du prof.

Cette scène se déroule dans une salle de classe avec pour 'background' le tableau.

On voit clairement les visages de la fille et du garçon. Ce dernier a un tatouage au cou et un piercing à l'oreille gauche. À un moment, le cameraman prononce le prénom du garçon et lui conseille de ne pas éjaculer trop tôt. Le clip prend fin lorsque le garçon se masturbe.

JEAN MARIE GANGARAM

The Show, Bon Accueil et Sharon

D'autres clips à caractère pornographique sont en circulation. Dans le premier, *The Show I*, une étudiante et quatre garçons s'adonnent à des jeux sexuels. Quand l'affaire éclate, l'année dernière, trois des garçons sont arrêtés, puis relâchés sous caution. Le quatrième qui s'est s'enfui en Australie est toujours recherché par la police.

Dans *The Show 2*, une étudiante est filmée à son insu en pleins ébats avec l'un des garçons du clip précédent. Quelques semaines plus tard, *The Show 3* circule, mettant en scène une étudiante d'un collège privé. La figurante dit avoir été piégée. Dans un autre clip baptisé *Sharone*, on peut voir une femme ayant des relations sexuelles avec un homme. Il dure deux minutes.

Un autre clip, *Bon Accueil*, qui dure deux minutes, met en scène une jeune femme d'une vingtaine d'années et de teint clair. Si on distingue la femme, par contre on ne voit pas le visage de l'homme. Il y a également des scènes de sodomie.

Les auteurs des deux films d'amateurs qui circulent sont toujours recherchés par la police.

An example of blatant stereotyping in tabloids is the article in *5-Plus*, 24 June 2004 on two new erotic and pornographic video clips involving adolescents in circulation on cell telephones.

In the first clip there are three girls, the stripper, one girl who watches from the window, one from the door, one who holds the camera and the last one stands near the camera. The stipper wears a pair of jeans and a t-shirt. She takes out her belt and passes it through her leg while dancing in a provocative manner. She takes off her t-shirt, takes her bra off, pulls down her trousers and keeps on dancing. She dresses up quickly and the camera shows the faces of all the girls and mentions their names.

In the other clip in circulation, the scene starts in a room. The cameraperson focuses his cell phone on a computer playing a pornographic film. The person who does the shooting goes to a room where there are two young people making love. The faces of both the girl and the boy can be seen. The cameraperson mentions the name of the boy and advises him not to ejaculate too early. The clip ends with the boy masturbating.

There is a box in the story that reminds the readers of other pornographic clips that were in circulation some time back which resulted in arrests by the police. While the article is supposedly about the concern of school authorities about these clips circulating in schools, much of the article focuses on the description of the video clips, which are primarily about young women as objects of pleasure for young men.


S.O.Sexe

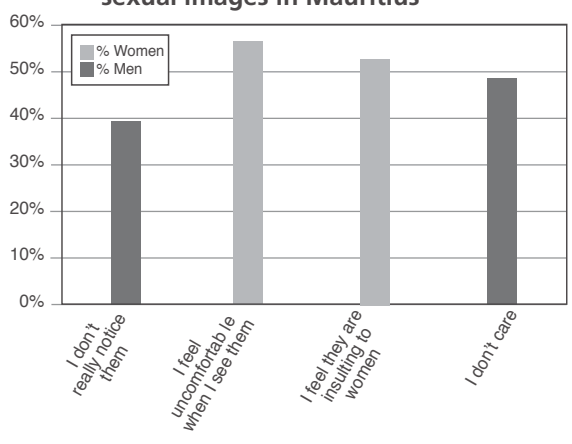
L'approche féline

Si vous êtes fantaisiste et aimez la volupté, attaquez votre amie par touches très rapides de tous côtés à la fois, en l'enrobant de sensations aussi multiples qu'imprévues sur tout le corps, la faisant basculer sur gazon, moquette ou lit. Roulez alors

SOS sex-the catty approach, a story in *Le'Dimanche* on 3rd June shows a woman in a cat suit ready to scratch her partner. The article talks about the different ways that men's sexual desire can be excited. The story is told from a male perspective and then accompanied by the picture of the seductress in a cat suit.

Unlike the other two countries, only women in Mauritius appear to be offended by such images. Figure 3.21 shows that when asked how they felt about sexual images in the news, men said that they did not notice them or that they did not care. Women on the other hand said that they were either uncomfortable or that they felt insulted by them. This suggests that tabloids are not very sensitive to their women audiences.

Figure 3.21: Audience responses to sexual images in Mauritius



Gender awareness

The research in Mauritius did, however, yield several examples of gender aware coverage. In addition to the examples in the overview, one such example is an article that appeared in *Le Dimanche* (17 June 2007).

The story is about a 22 year old boy born without hands and legs but who has never felt that he is disabled person. His parents never put him in a special school. He walked on his knees until he had an operation in a French Hospital. He now walks with artificial legs and drives his motorcycle. He met his wife at an NGO.



Vécu

Sans mains ni jambes, Jean-Marc ne baisse jamais les bras!

- Christine, sa fiancée : " Il m'apporte un bonheur qu'un homme normal n'aurait jamais pu m'apporter "

Thierry Léon

Né sans mains ni jambes, Jean-Marc Gopeenath affronte la vie avec beaucoup de courage. Epaulé par Christine, sa future épouse, ce jeune de vingt-deux ne s'est jamais senti différent. Pour lui, son handicap ne s'arrête d'ailleurs qu'aux yeux des autres. Libre dans sa tête, Jean-Marc ne souhaite qu'une chose : Vivre ! Pour lui, pour celle qu'il aime éperdument et surtout le bébé qu'il attend avec beaucoup d'impatience. Récit.

Si vous demandez à Jean-Marc de quoi il souffre, il vous dira : " De rien, je suis parfaitement normal sauf que ne n'ai pas de mains ni de jambes à proprement dit. A part ce détail, je ne me suis jamais senti handicapé de toute ma vie! "

Né le 4 juillet 1984, il n'est pas venu au monde comme les

pour prendre l'autobus comme c'était le cas dans le passé. Je pouvais moi-même le faire comme un grand. "

Après le collège, il s'inscrit au centre Terre de Paix, à Albion où il y passera quatre ans : " Je ne rentrais chez moi que pendant le week-end. Mais, je dois dire que j'ai beaucoup appris pendant ces quatre années que j'ai fréquenté ce centre. On m'a, entre autres, appris à faire la cuisine, la lessive et surtout comment aider les camarades à ma façon. Au chapitre des apprentissages, je dois dire que la troupe de scout de Grand-Baie, dont j'étais membre, m'a également beaucoup apporté dans ma vie. J'y ai appris la discipline, le sens de la responsabilité. "

Christine : " Je suis prête à travailler pour soutenir ma famille financièrement "

Jean-Marc à l'époque qu'il marchait encore sur ses genoux

She recounts how initially her mum forbade the relationship until the young woman went to live with her disabled boyfriend. They lived together for seven years before they got married on 14 July 2007. Although he cannot work outside he does the household chores while she takes a job to sustain the family. She is five months pregnant and is not afraid that her child could be disabled: "Even if the child will turn out to be disabled. I am very much in love with his/her dad and will give the child the same kind of love."

Jean Marc has a message to the disabled. "Even if you are physically handicapped it is all in the mind and you must say that you are normal and can behave and act as a normal person. This is the only way to come and meet others as a rare diamond like Christine."



• Ténnis de table

Le couple Bhurtun vise haut

Alexandre Esmyot

Premier au prochain Jeux des Iles de l'Océan Indien (JIOI) 9-19 août à aMadagascar. C'est l'objectif du couple Ravi et Sharon Bhurtun. L'an dernier fut l'ascension de Ravi Bhurton au titre de champion de Maurice. Le pongiste de 34 ans est arrivé aux bouts des neuf ans de suprématie de Rajessen Descann. Sa femme, Sharon, elle garde sa suprématie pour la quatrième année consécutive.

Classé mondialement, les deux bénéficiant des bourses High Level, le couple s'entraîne ensemble quotidiennement: *"Actuellement on fait deux séances quotidiennement, de lundi à vendredi et des fois pendant les week-end. Il y a des compétitions organisées par la fédération. Le matin on fait des séances de 11hrs à 13hrs et l'après midi, c'est de 17h à 19h. Au niveau des entraînements cela se passe très bien. On reçoit beaucoup d'aide, avec le soutien de la fédération et avec le MJS et on a beaucoup de facilités"*, nous confie Ravi Bhurtun.

Ravi Bhurtun a débuté le tennis de table chez lui, à Quartier Militaire, vers l'âge de 7 ans. Puis, il a participé à des compétitions régionales de l'époque. C'est à travers les jeux de l'avenir qu'on l'a détecté pour intégrer la sélection junior. Il n'avait que treize ans. Il fit sa scolarité au collège New Eton et était un passionné d'architecture.

Pour ces études tertiaires, Ravi Bhurtun a passé deux ans et demi en France, notamment à Bordeaux et à Lille où il a décroché son Brevet d'Etat d'Éducateur sportif en 1993. Il avait également été plébiscité à plusieurs reprises sur le plan continental. Vainqueur de l'Open d'Afrique du Sud en deux occasions (1993 et 1996), il avait aussi brillé au Tournoi international de Bordeaux tableau 25. Il avait remporté le *East Central & Southern Africa Championships* en 1997.

Il prépare son brevet en *Physical Education*, tout comme sa femme Sharon, à l'Université de Maurice. Il fut également médaillé aux Championnats d'Afrique et aux Jeux d'Afrique à plusieurs reprises. Aux Jeux des Iles de 1993, il fut finaliste en simple avant de décrocher l'or en 1998 dans la compétition par équipes. Toutefois, il dut déclarer forfait aux JIOI de 2003 en raison d'une blessure au poignet.

Professeur de d'Education Physique au Phoenix SSS, il nous confie que *"des fois il n'est pas de tout repos de travailler avec des adolescents."*

Sharon et Ravi ce sont connus à travers le tennis de table, il y a dix ans de ça. C'est en décembre 2004 qu'ils décident d'unir leur vie.

Sharon Bhurtun, 27 ans est à son quatrième titre d'affilée de championne de Maurice. C'est à l'école, en form 2, qu'elle commença le tenis de table, "A l'époque mon prof de P.E. Sydney Picon était aussi le président de la fédération. Puis en 1995, j'ai intégré le centre de formation et après le centre de formation, j'ai intégré la sélection en 1997", nous confie-t-elle.

C'est à l'age de 18 ans qu'elle rencontre Ravi Bhurtun. Cette même année, elle remporte son premier championnat de Maurice. Puis en 2003 en remporta les JIOI dans la catégorie des simples dames. Au niveau d'Afrique, elle a remporté la médaille de bronze par équipes et doubles dames.

Après les Jeux des Iles, ils viseront la qualification pour les prochains jeux d'Afrique.

Another example is the article in *Le Dimanche* (3 June 2007) about a young couple who are both champions of table tennis.

Ravi Bhurton is 34 years old and his wife Sharon is 24 years old. Since they have been put on the world list for table tennis they both train on an everyday basis.

The couple met ten years ago through table tennis. They got married in 2004. She is the champion of Mauritius for the fourth consecutive year. In 2003 she won in the category of single woman category. He has won several regional awards. For the future Island Games which will be held in Madagascar soon they are going for gold and hope to qualify for the African Championship.

The story is unusual in that it centres on sport- a male dominated field. Equal space is given to listing the achievements of both husband and wife. The fact that they are equal partners succeeding because of their support for each other is a central tenet of the story.

WHAT AUDIENCES WANT

Figure 3.22 shows that tabloid audiences in Mauritius would like women represented in more professional and non-traditional roles, while men would like to see more women in public life, arts, culture and leadership.

Figure 3.22: How else would audiences want women represented in Mauritius

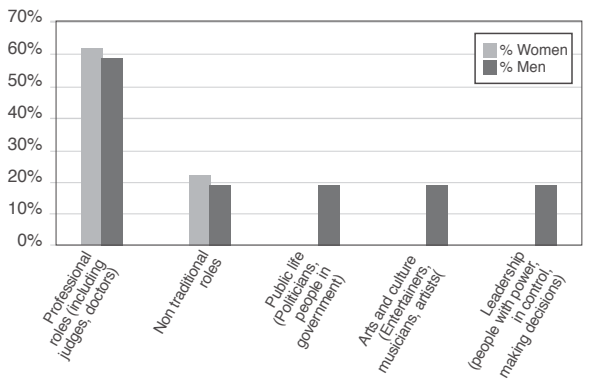
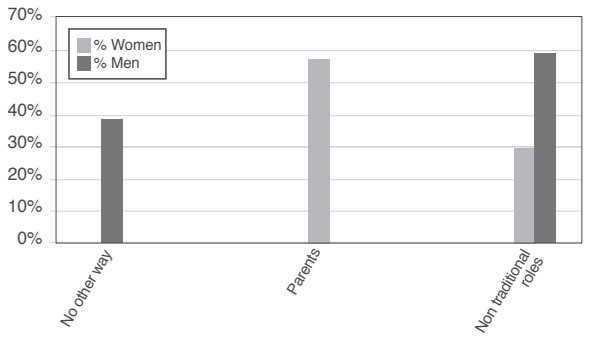


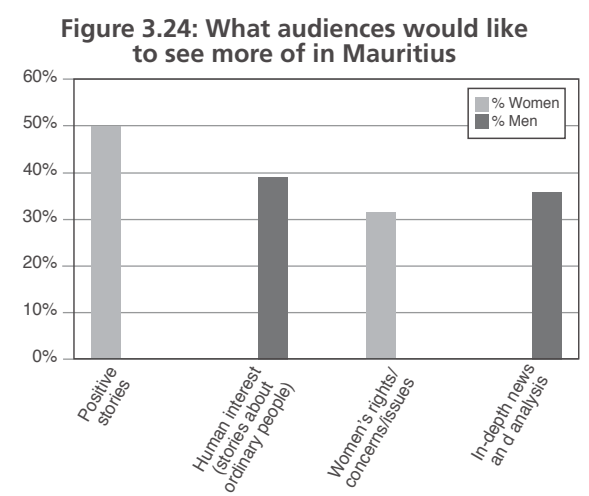
Figure 3.23 shows that while 40% men are happy with the way they are represented, 60% would like to see themselves portrayed in non-traditional roles. 55% women said they would like to see men portrayed as parents while 30% said they would like to see men in non-traditional roles.

Figure 3.23: How else would audiences want men represented in Mauritius



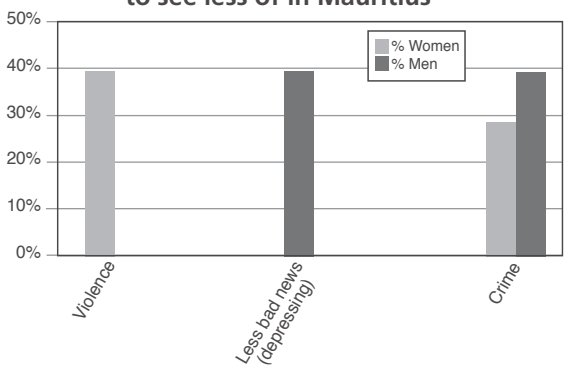
As illustrated in Figure 3.24, women would like to see more positive stories in tabloids and more stories featuring women's rights issues and concerns. Men would like more human interest stories and more news and in-depth analysis.

Figure 3.24: What audiences would like to see more of in Mauritius



Men would like to see less crime and violence in tabloids. Women on the other hand would like to see less bad news (Figure 3.25). One of the criticisms of tabloids is that they carry horrific pictures and stories which are sometimes uncomfortable for their audiences.

Figure 3.25: What audiences would like to see less of in Mauritius



Concluding comments

Clearly tabloids in Mauritius do have a better mix of news and entertainment than elsewhere. But they do not necessarily respond to community concerns or to the wishes and sensitivities of their readers. Two comments made by Mauritian women in the study stand out. These are:

- Tabloids in Mauritius are of a poor standard and
- I hope to see better articles in tabloids in the future.





Flicking through a tabloid at a Johannesburg taxi rank

Photo: Trevor Davies

Chapter Four South Africa

4

Key facts

Tabloids target less well educated readers: The majority of women and men readers have a secondary school education. Only 19% women and 24% of the men interviewed had tertiary qualifications.

Most South African readers are black: The research found that 67% of readers were black; followed by coloured (31%) and Asian (2%). There were no white readers, which may also reflect the fact that the monitoring did not include an Afrikaans tabloid.

Most readers, women and men, buy their own paper: Unlike other countries in the study in which men predominated as buyers of tabloids, in South Africa 48% women said they bought their own tabloid compared to 57% men. The rest said they got the paper from someone else - a spouse, family member or work mate.

Tabloids are scant on news: News comprises only 37% of the total editorial package (compared to the average of 45% in the rest of the study) with the other genres taking up 63% of content. Of this, human interest stories make up 33%.

Sports and entertainment dominate: Sports in South African tabloids accounts for about one-fifth of all coverage. Crime and violence, media and entertainment are next in line. Economics and politics, which generally make up 20 to 30% of coverage in the mainstream media, account for less than 10% of the total.

Tabloids are mostly a form of escapism: As in other countries in the study, at least half of all readers surveyed said they read tabloids to "catch up on gossip." Interestingly, the second reason given by women and men was for news coverage; followed by the fact that tabloids are "easy to read and understand."

They are not the main source of news: Consistent with the pattern elsewhere in the study, tabloids are not the main source of news for either the women or men who read them. Both women and men, but especially women (48%, compared to 41% men) cited TV as their main news source.

Nor are they seen as trustworthy: As in the other countries in the study, the top three things that both women and men in South Africa said they do not like about tabloids was that "they do not always tell the truth"; they "exaggerate things", and "they do not give me useful local information."

Women's views are marginalised: Women constitute 30% of news sources in tabloids, slightly higher than in the mainstream media (26% in the 2005 GMMP) but still well short of parity.

Black women are silenced: Despite boasting that they have a large following among black women, tabloids do little to give this audience a voice. At 18%, black women are better represented in tabloids than in the mainstream media (7%) but are still grossly under-represented relative to their strength in the population (45 %).

Women are more likely to be seen than heard: As in the case of adverts, women constitute 35% of the images in tabloids; higher than news sources (30%) but still short of parity.

Men tell the story: Men comprise 63% of tabloid reporters.

Women are more likely to be identified according to personal relationships: Some 23% of women sources in the study were identified according to a personal relationship compared to 4% of men. The comparative figures for the mainstream media as measured in the GMBS were 14% for women and 2% for men.

Women are offended by blatant stereotypes: While most men said that they either found the images entertaining or did not notice them, 67% of women said they felt uncomfortable about these images. Only a tiny proportion of respondents (all men) said these images are what encourage them to buy the newspaper.

There are examples of gender aware reporting: Over a third of news items (34%) were classified as gender aware. An example is a letter in the Daily Sun (12 June 2006) on the idea of having a woman as the next president of South Africa.

But readers want a more diversified menu: But both women and men said they would like to see themselves cast in roles that challenge gender stereotypes. They also want more positive and more local news.

This chapter summarises the findings of the study in South Africa where GL worked with members of the South African Gender and Media (SAGEM) network and students at Rhodes University to monitor three papers: *Daily Sun* (Media 24); The *Daily Voice* (Independent) and the *Sunday World* (weekly) in June 2007: a total of 1203 items.

Researchers interviewed 120 readers of tabloids in three geographical locations: Johannesburg in the Gauteng province; Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape and Cape Town in the Western Cape. GL also interviewed the editor of the *Sunday World*. Efforts to get interviews with editors of the other two publications proved unsuccessful.

BACKGROUND

South Africa is situated at the southern tip of Africa and is bordered by Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Swaziland. Lesotho is situated within South Africa's borders.

South Africa has a population of 46 888 205 over an area of 1, 223, 201 square kilometres. The country is unique for its history of white minority apartheid rule that finally ended with the first democratic elections in 1994. The new Constitution has strong provisions for gender equality and media freedom.

There are nine provinces – Gauteng, Western Cape, Kwa Zulu Natal, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Free State and the North West. Pretoria is the executive capital and Cape Town the legislative capital. Other major cities include Johannesburg, Durban, Port Elizabeth, Bloemfontein and East London.

Diversity is a key feature of South Africa which has 11 official languages. These are English, Afrikaans, Ndebele, North Sotho, South Sotho, Swazi, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa and Zulu. Newspapers are, however, primarily in English and Afrikaans with a spattering of Zulu publications.

South Africa has one of the largest economies in Africa. This has been growing steadily since 1994. The most important contributors to the economy include the mining sector, manufacturing and agriculture.

Gauteng, home of the gold mines, is the smallest but richest province. The mining industry is a magnet for migrant workers who call Johannesburg *Egoli* - the City of Gold. It is estimated that South Africa is home to three million legal Zimbabweans, (*The Sowetan*, 6 July 2007). In addition, there are millions of illegal economic refugees who are unaccounted for. More than a decade into the new democracy, xenophobia, racism and sexism remain key human rights challenges.



Johannesburg is a draw card for migrants Photo: TsvangirayiMukwazhi

Structure of the media industry

South Africa is the continent's major media player, and its many broadcasters and publications reflect the diversity of the population. The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) boasts five television channels, SABC1, SABC2, SABC3, SABC Africa and SABC News International. ETV is an independent TV network.

Deregulation in 1996 led to a proliferation of radio stations. Listeners in Johannesburg alone can choose from among some 40 radio services, from the national broadcasts of SABC to community stations targeting local neighbourhoods or ethnic groups.

The constitution of the country provides for freedom of the press, and this is generally respected. Laws, regulation and political control of media content are generally considered to be moderate and there is little evidence of repressive measures against journalists. There have been instances however, where the government has been accused of interfering in the operations of the SABC.

Print media

The country has a vibrant press including 19 daily and 10 weekly newspapers. Most of these are in English although there are a few publications in Zulu and Afrikaans. A number of specialised news websites keep citizens abreast with what is happening in the country and abroad.

Some of the most popular newspapers in the country include *Daily Sun* which has the largest circulation figures; *The Sowetan*; *The Star* (Johannesburg's oldest newspaper); *Sunday Times*, *Mail and Guardian*, *Beeld* and *Rapport* (the latter two are in Afrikaans.)

Media regulation

Media regulation has eased considerably post apartheid (http://www.southafrica-newyork.net/consulate/news/htm#history). During the apartheid era, newspapers had to apply for registration if they published more than 11 times a year. They also had to pay unreasonable registration fees.

The government enforced regulations controlling what newspapers could or could not publish, especially relating to articles and comment on activities against the apartheid system. Newspapers were, for instance, not allowed to quote banned organisations and their spokespersons, or report on conditions inside prisons or the activities of the security forces.

1994 ushered in a new era in the media industry. The Bill of Rights in the Constitution guarantees every citizen the right to freedom of expression, which includes freedom of the press and other media, freedom to receive or impart information or ideas, freedom of artistic creativity, academic freedom and freedom of scientific research.

The Independent Communications Authority, (ICASA) is the regulator for the South African communications sector and is responsible for the regulation of broadcasting, postal and telecommunications service. ICASA was established through an act of parliament by the independent Communications Authority of South Africa Act no 13 of 2000. This act provided for the replacement of the Independent Broadcasting Authority, (IBA) by ICASA.

The print media is self-regulated although plans are underway to set up a Press Council. The Film and Publications Board Bill, recently passed into law, provides for the regulation of the film and publications industry.

Media monitored

In South Africa the monitoring covered three tabloids: the Gauteng based *Daily Sun* and *Sunday World* which both have a national circulation and a Cape Town daily, the *Daily Voice*. Table 8 outlines the actual monitoring dates.

Table eight: Newspapers monitored in South Africa				
DAY	**DATE**	**DAILY X 2 Daily Sun Daily Voice**	**WEEKLY X 1 The Sunday World**	**TOTAL**
Sunday	June 3		X	1
Monday	June 4	XX		2
Sunday	June 10		X	1
Tuesday	June 12	XX		2
Weekend	June 16-17		X	1
Wednesday	June 18	XX		2
Thursday	June 21	XX		2
Weekend	June 24-25		X	1
Friday	June 29	XX		2
TOTAL		**10**	**4**	**14**

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

The *Daily Sun* is the first South African tabloid aimed at the black working class. Initially met with disdain by the established press, its huge sales - and the fact that it has made new newspaper readers out of millions of South Africans - have earned it some respect. The *Daily Sun* has average daily sales of 301 800. An estimated 2.29 million people read the paper daily.



Serving a different menu

Photo: Brendan Kennedy

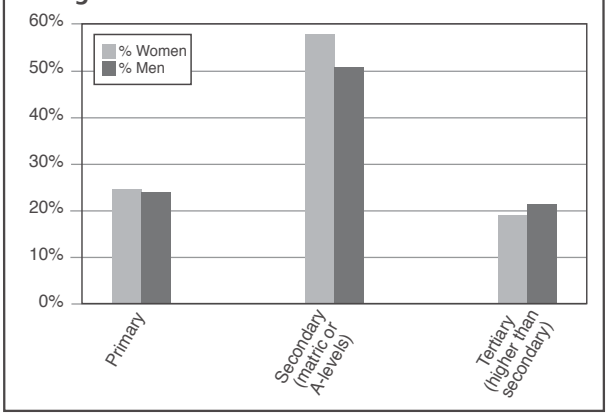
As of August 2007 the *Sunday World* had a circulation of 203 000. When asked about his target audience and editorial orientation, Editor Charles Mogale noted:

"Mainstream newspapers serve a different need in the market," argues the editor, Charles Mogale. "Some are papers of record; some pursue political agendas; some take up social issues (on behalf of their constituencies). We are different and serve a different market. We can't all be angry political watchdogs. Some must entertain, and we do… We believe those who want to be educated must read textbooks. Our market knows politics, business, world affairs etc are all important, but they prefer something else on Sunday. They want a light-hearted, uplifting, often amusing read. That's what we supply… The *Mail and Guardian* is one of the best newspapers in the world, and it's a fact. But we are not trying to be like them. Imagine if every newspaper tried to solve the problems of the world … boring, boring, boring!!!" –

Education level

Figure 4.1 shows that out of the 60 male and 60 female readers of tabloids interviewed in three different parts of the country, the majority of both women and men had a secondary school education. The percentage of readers with a tertiary education is relatively low (19% women and 24% men). This suggests that tabloids appeal more to the less well educated members of the community.

Figure 4.1: Education level in South Africa



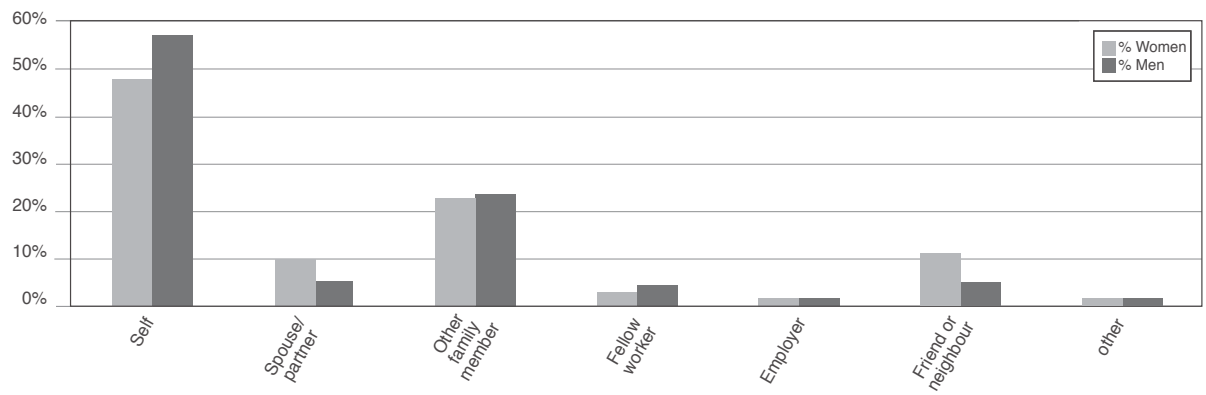
Race

Researchers did not target any particular race group. The key criterion was that interviewees had to be tabloid readers. The research found that 67% of readers were black; followed by coloured (31%) and Asian (2%). There were no white readers, which may also reflect the fact that the monitoring did not include an Afrikaans tabloid.

Who buys tabloids?

Unlike other countries in the region in which men are the main buyers of tabloids, in South Africa 48% women said they buy their own tabloid compared to 57% men. A slightly higher proportion of women than men said they get the paper from their spouse or partner; worker or neighbour. But overall women and men readers in South Africa like tabloids enough to go out and buy them.

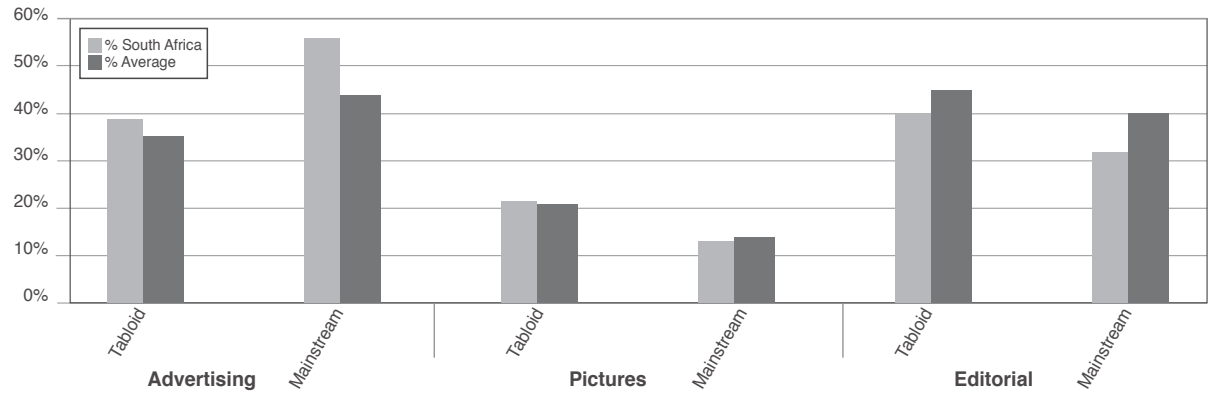
Figure 4.2: Who buys tabloids in South Africa



Design and accessibility

Mainstream newspapers in South Africa get substantially more advertising than tabloids (55% of the total package compared to 38%). At 40% tabloids actually have more editorial content than their mainstream counterparts (32%). However, tabloids have more images than the mainstream press (22% compared to 13%). The more visual nature of tabloids is their distinguishing feature.

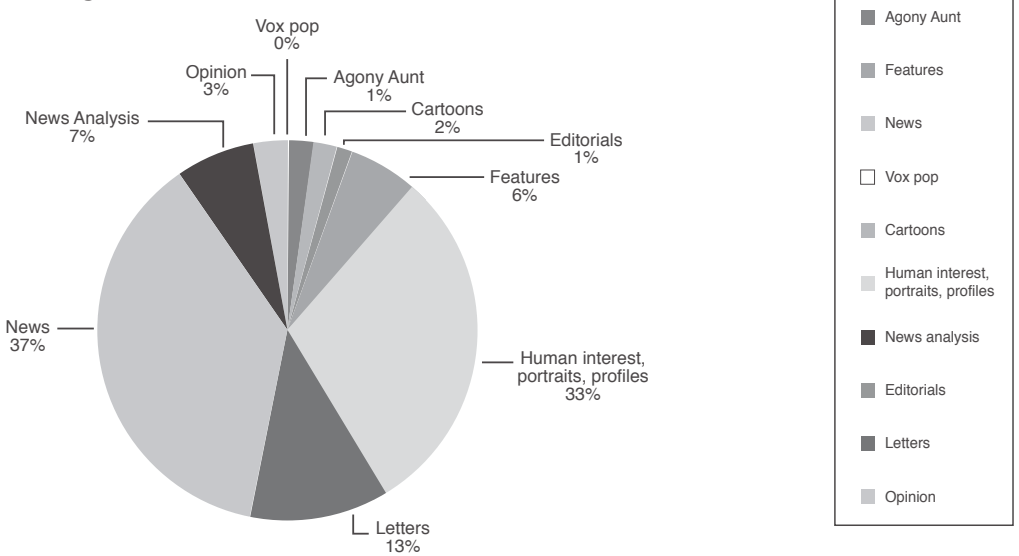
Figure 4.3: Design features of tabloids versus mainstream media in South Africa



Types of stories covered

Figure 4.4 shows that in South Africa news comprises only 37% of the total editorial package (compared to the average of 45% in the rest of the study) with the other genres taking up 63% of content. Of this, human interest stories make up 33% of the total.

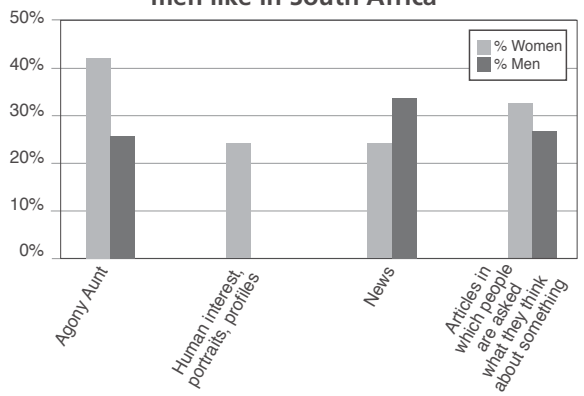
Figure 4.4: Genres in tabloids in South Africa



Letters are also a popular feature in tabloids in South Africa, accounting for about 13% of the total editorial package. The *Sunday World* has a whole spread dedicated to letters. Here the topics discussed range from light issues like sport, entertainment up to serious issues like business and politics.

The most popular type of stories in South Africa are agony aunt, followed by human interest, and articles in which readers are asked what they think (Figure 4.5). South Africa is the only country in the study in which a substantial proportion of women also cited news as a favourite genre. As in Mauritius, men cited news as their favourite genre; followed by articles in which people are asked what they think about something and agony aunt. Overall, audience preferences suggest that more could be done through tabloids to provide advisory services as well as more interactive features.

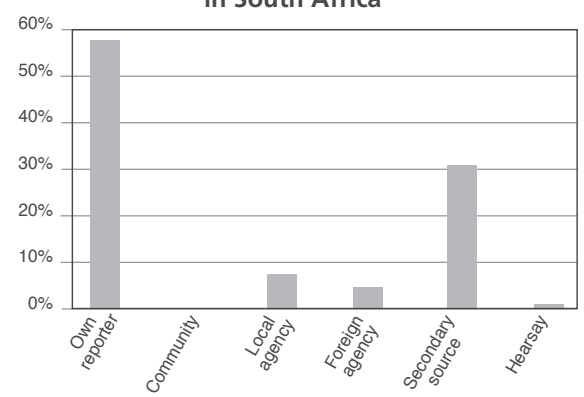
Figure 4.5: The types of stories women and men like in South Africa



Origin

Contrary to the belief that most tabloid stories originate from hearsay, Figure 4.6 shows that 56% of tabloid stories are generated by their own reporters, with very few stories from local or foreign agencies. But quite a high proportion (31%) of tabloid stories in South Africa come from secondary sources such as written reports. This suggests limited investigation and verification, as normal journalistic standards would require in the mainstream media.

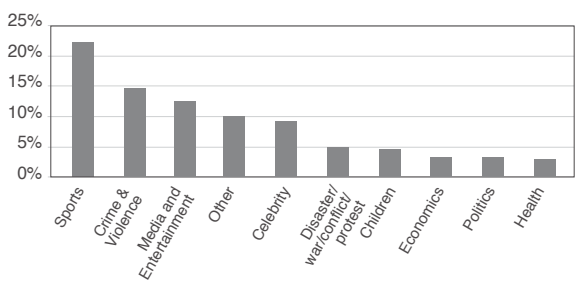
Figure 4.6: Origin of stories in tabloids in South Africa



Topics in tabloids

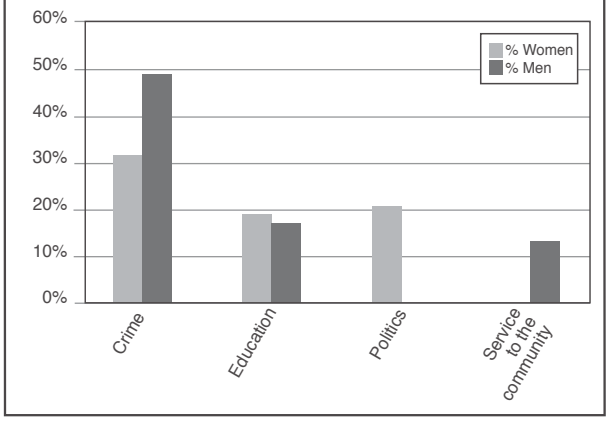
The analysis of topics (Figure 4.7) shows that as in the mainstream media, sports in South African tabloids accounts for about one-fifth of all coverage. Crime and violence, media and entertainment are next in line. Economics and politics, which generally make up 20 to 30% of coverage in the mainstream media, account for less than 10% of the total. *Sunday World* editor Charles Mogale noted: "We are celebrity driven, and many of the celebs we feature are role models to our readers."

Figure 4.7: Topics in tabloids in South Africa



The audience research revealed that favourite topics among women and men readers (see Figure 4.8) include crime, education, politics and service to the community. South Africa is the only country in the study in which women cited politics as a topic they would like to know more about. This suggests that whilst readers enjoy reading light issues, they also want serious issues discussed in tabloids. The *Sunday World*'s Mogale conceded that readers of the paper feel that the paper is too short on the general news of the day.

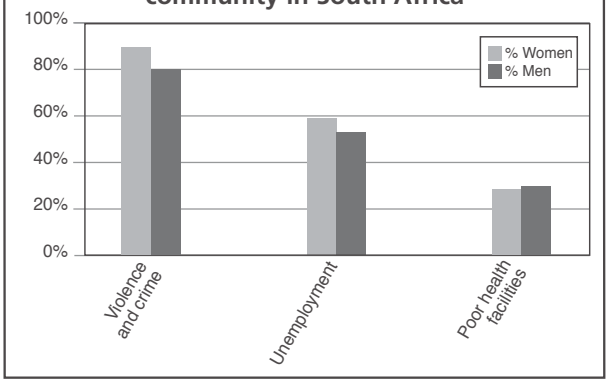
Figure 4.8: Topics readers like in South Africa



Issues affecting the community

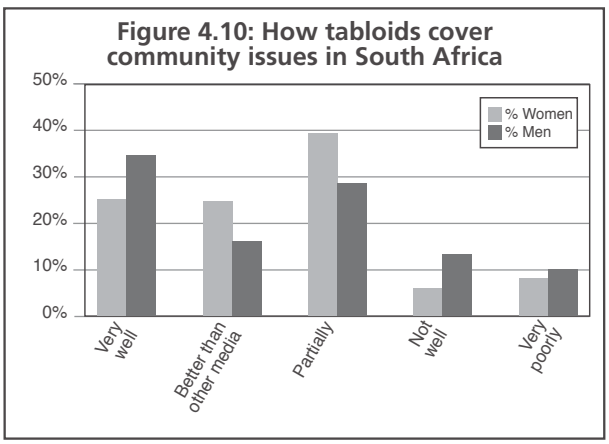
When asked to rank issues that most affect communities in South Africa, women and men concurred that these include: violence and crime; followed by unemployment; followed by poor health facilities (Figure 4.9).

Figure 4.9: Issues affecting the community in South Africa



Unlike other countries in the study, readers (especially men) were more positive about how well tabloids cover issues of concern, with about half responding "very well" or "better than other media." Women similarly felt that tabloids do a good job of covering community concerns, though as demonstrated in Figure 4.10 they were apt to be more skeptical, with 38% saying that tabloids only cover these issues "partially." One reader commented that "tabloids are more focused on entertainment than helpful information."

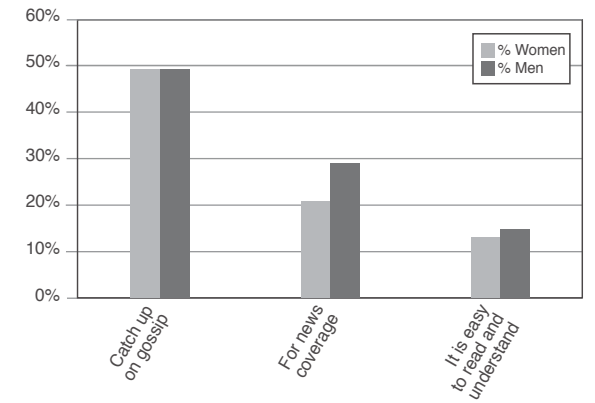
Figure 4.10: How tabloids cover community issues in South Africa



What readers like about tabloids

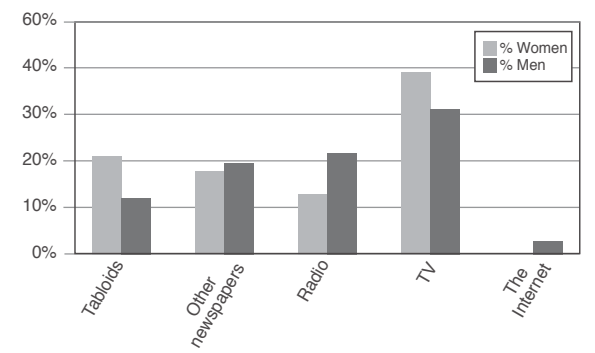
As in other countries in the study, at least half of all readers surveyed said they read tabloids to "catch up on gossip." Interestingly, the second reason given by women and men was for news coverage; followed by the fact that tabloids are "easy to read and understand" (Figure 4.11).

Figure 4.11: What readers like about tabloids in South Africa



Consistent with the pattern elsewhere in the study, Figure 4.12 shows that tabloids are *not* the main source of news for either the women or men who read them. In a finding that resonates with the Gender and Media Audience Study (GMAS) both women and men, but especially women (48%, compared to 41% men) cited TV as their main source of news. Radio and other papers come next. As in GMAS, no women, and only a handful of men, cited the Internet as their main source of news.

Figure 4.12: Main source of news in South Africa

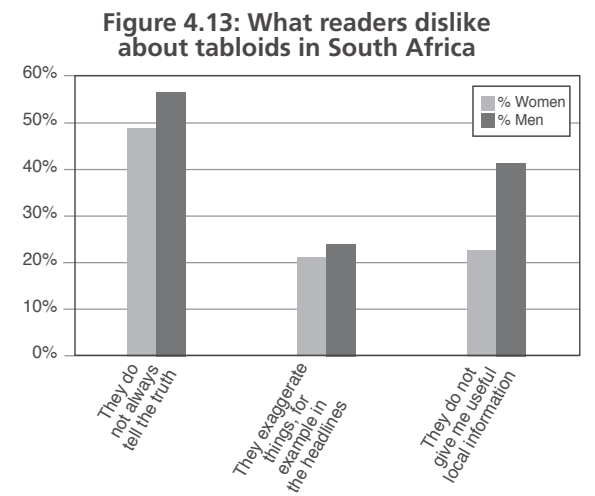


What readers dislike about tabloids

As in the other countries in the study, the top three things that both women and men in South Africa said they do not like about tabloids was that "they do not always tell the truth"; they "exaggerate things", and "they do not give me useful local information" (Figure 4.13).

In comments made during the research, audiences expressed concern that tabloids often carry grisly pictures of accidents and stories about death. One reader said that some pictures are so scary that one is scared to read the actual story. Audiences also said they do not like the way that women are portrayed in tabloids.

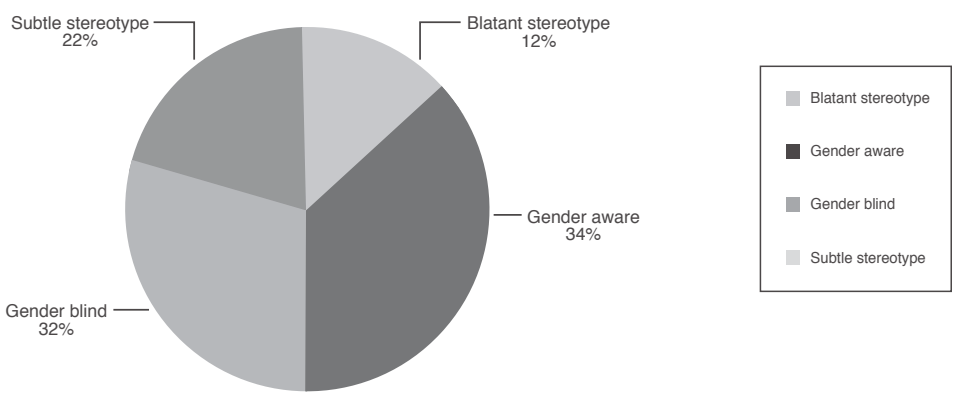
Figure 4.13: What readers dislike about tabloids in South Africa



GENDER IN EDITORIAL CONTENT

The study categorised stories according to GL's GEM classification system into stories that are gender blind; convey subtle or blatant gender stereotypes or are examples of gender aware reporting. In findings similar to the rest of the region, 66% of the items were classified as either gender blind, displaying subtle or blatant stereotypes, with only 34% classified as gender aware (see Figure 4.14). Asked in simple language which of these they felt most predominate both women and men chose blatant stereotypes, probably because they feature more prominently. This suggests that as in other countries, South African audiences are aware of the gender biases in tabloids and in the news generally.

Figure 4.14: GEM classification in South Africa



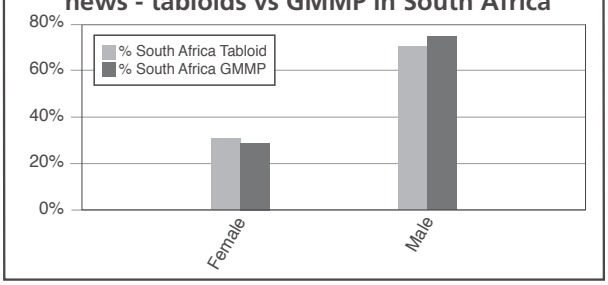
Gender blindness

The biggest source of gender bias in tabloids is not so much what is pronounced as what is missing. Gender blindness manifests itself in several ways, starting with the way that women's views are ignored even when they are clearly relevant.

Sources

Figure 4.15 shows that at 30%, women constituted a slightly higher proportion of sources than in the mainstream media as measured by the 2005 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) which put women sources in South Africa at 26%. However, contrary to the claim by editors that women get an equal showing in tabloids, this is clearly not the case.

Figure 4.15: Women and men in the news - tabloids vs GMMP in South Africa



Women are spoken for

The qualitative monitoring yielded several examples of stories in which women are denied their own voice. An example is an article in the *Sunday World* (17 June 2007) about King Goodwill Zwelithini expressing concern about men whom he calls "opportunists" who want to marry his daughters for financial gain. The King also issues a stern warning that anyone wanting to marry any of his daughters should be prepared to pay 144 cows.

The King boasts that he taught his daughters abstinence, not the use of condoms which encourages people to sleep around. Although several of the king's daughters were present, none of them were asked their views.


Wed on royal terms

NOT FOR DEALS: Princess Nombuso and fiancé businessman Sandile Mthiyane


Captain kicks it with Flats kids

PLAYERS SCORE A NEW KIT

By ROMAN STUBBS
PICTURES JACK LESTRADE

CAPTAIN Voice Power put on his soccer boots yesterday to kick it with the lasties of the Flats.

And while he was there, he handed out free soccer equipment to three clubs.

The Cape Flats' favourite superhero teamed up with Sporting Chance to give out soccer jerseys, shorts and balls to the talented young stars.

Outreach

Players from Eastern Rovers, Kraaifontein and Square United were beaming from ear to ear when they received the gear.

"This is a fantastic feeling," Natalie le Brun of Sporting Chance told the *Daily Voice*.

"Just for the children to be in a uniform and on a team means that they have a sense of belonging."

Formed in 1990, Sporting Chance is one of South Africa's leading sports coaching and outreach companies.

They also give coaching clinics and free gear to other sports teams including cricket, hockey and rugby.

TEAM: Hero with Michael Sias of Eastern Rovers and Natalie le Brun of Sporting Chance

The outreach company also hosts sports days and festivals for a variety of games.

And more than 4 000 children attend clinics every year.

"It is all about giving kids an opportunity to play games," explained Natalie.

"Our philosophy is getting children off the street and onto the soccer field where it is safe."

Sporting Chance is holding free soccer clinics for kids throughout June and July on the Cape Flats.

Equipment

Michael Sias of Eastern Rovers soccer club says the equipment is exactly what their junior teams need.

"This is great for our kids and our club," he added.

Michael says soccer clubs on the Flats are so poor that they are always in danger of closing down.

"It's a constant struggle. Our club is very poor and the kids are very poor," he explained.

"Our kids come to practice with no food in their stomachs, so any kind of help is great."

The Captain decided to stick to his day job after the talented lasties ran circles around him.

BEAMING: Michael Sias with new equipment

FUN: Hero with United Soccer Club members

HAPPY: Abraham Comelis of Eastern Rovers, left, and Warren Valentine of Sporting Chance

Sport is a man's world

Another example of gender blindness is an article entitled "Players score a new kit" in the *Daily Voice* (12 June 2007). The article is about a donation of sporting equipment by soccer player Michael Sias to Sporting Chance, a leading sports coaching and outreach organisation. Although Sporting Chance is represented by a woman, all the images of beneficiaries are men or boys. The article notes that 4000 children benefit from the work of the organisation, but does not say whether it specifically reaches out to girls and young women who are typically left out in sporting initiatives. Questions along these lines may have revealed interesting story angles.

Gender and race

As in the GMBS, monitors in South Africa disaggregated data on sources both according to sex and race (see Table 9).

Table nine: Gender and race, tabloids versus mainstream media in South Africa

	MEN			WOMEN		
	Population	Sources GMBS**	Sources tabloids	Population	Sources GMBS	Sources tabloids
Black*	41%	27%	61%	45%	7%	18%
White	6%	32%	8%	7%	7%	4%

(*Includes Coloured and Indians; **17% of sources were unknown or classified as other in the GMBS; ***9% of sources were unknown or classified as other in the tabloid monitoring).

Because they target black readers, tabloids have a significantly higher proportion on black male sources (61%) than the mainstream media (27% in the GMBS). But the gender gap is still glaring. At 18%, black women are better represented in tabloids than in the mainstream media (7%) but are still grossly under-represented relative to their strength in the population (45 %).

How does this come about? An article in the *Sunday World* entitled "I don't want a Brenda Fassie for a wife" (10 June 2007) is a case in point. It concerns an older man complaining about his young wife, a musician. The story is all about why she should stay at home and take care of their baby rather than be on the road promoting her album. But the story is told entirely from the perspective of the man. At no point is the young woman or anyone close to her interviewed.



'I don't want a Brenda Fassie for a wife'

GATVOL Mandla Mthembu is thinking of divorcing Khanyisile Mbau because "he doesn't want a Brenda Fassie for a wife".

Mthembu made this remark to *Sunday World* yesterday.

"Khanyi signed a record deal with EMI behind my back.

"Malcom X, who has been pretending to be the mediator between Khanyi and I, is now her manager.

"This means she will spend months on the road promoting her new album.

"Who will take care of our baby when she is out promoting her album?

"I want Khanyi, not a nanny, to take care of our baby."

Mthembu also says Khanyi was overheard saying she met someone at *The Lion King* premiere in Fourways and has a crush on him.

"I confronted her about these issues at the filling station but she denied everything.

"Knowing Khanyi, I think there is a modicum of truth in the claim."

Mthembu also says Khanyi always comes back home in the wee hours of the morning.

"When I ask her to stop what she is doing, she refuses and says she still needed her freedom.

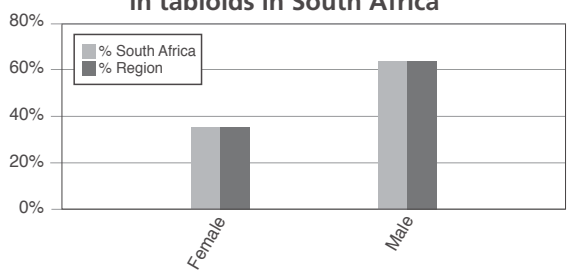
"Then why did she get married?" asks a fuming multi-millionaire.

BETTER DAYS: Mandla Mthembu hugs his young wife Khanyisile Mbau. *Pictures by Elvis Ntombela*

Images

Figure 4.16 shows that as in other countries in the study, women are more likely to be seen than heard. They comprise 35% of the images in tabloids; still less than parity, but higher than news sources (30% in South Africa).

Figure 4.16 Pictures of women and men in tabloids in South Africa



What kind of women and men speak?

When women and men sources in tabloids are analysed according to what function they perform, men dominate as subjects of the story; spokespersons; experts and commentators (see Figure 4.17). It is interesting however that there is a roughly equal proportion of women and men who speak from personal experience or are eye witnesses and that this proportion is higher in South Africa than in other countries.

Figure 4.17: Function of sources in tabloids in South Africa

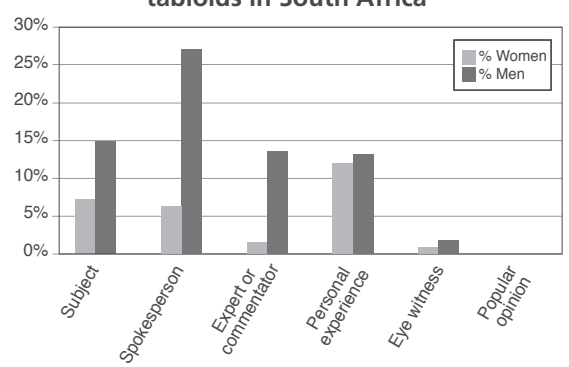
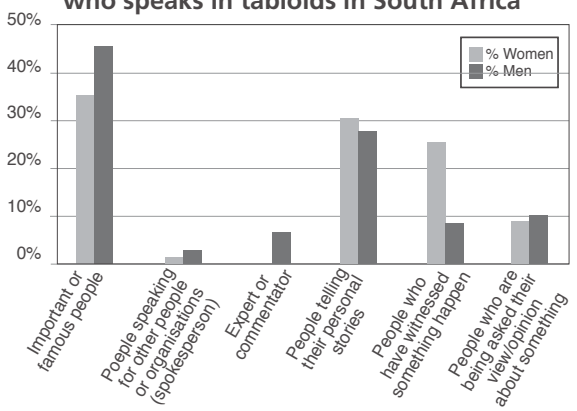


Figure 4.18 shows that audiences perceive that "important people" are the main sources in tabloids but that there are also a fair proportion of personal and human interest sources.

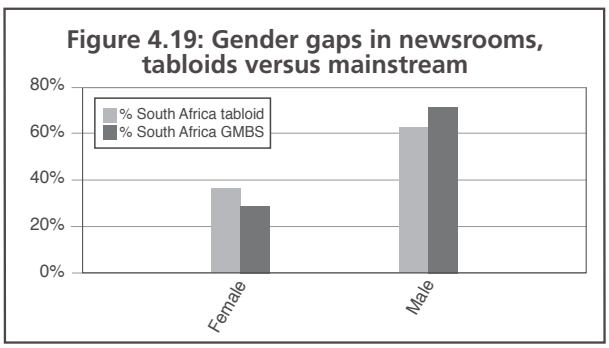
Figure 4.18: Audience perceptions of who speaks in tabloids in South Africa



Who tells the story in tabloids in South Africa?

Figures 4.19 shows that there are more women reporters (37%) in tabloids than in the mainstream media (29%) as measured by the GMBS. However, at 63%, male reporters still dominate tabloids. When asked who tells the story in tabloids, 70% of women and 63% men said there are more men than women reporters in tabloids.

Figure 4.19: Gender gaps in newsrooms, tabloids versus mainstream



Subtle stereotypes

The persistent portrayal of men in certain roles and women in others sends out subtle but powerful messages about their expected roles in society. Table 10 shows that the top occupational roles for women in tabloids is as celebrities and entertainers, though it is interesting that a high proportion of women also featured in the police/military and professional categories, suggesting that tabloids are beginning to challenge some traditional norms.

Table ten: Top ten roles of women and men in tabloids in South Africa

	Women	%	Men	%
1	Other	31%	Sportsperson	34%
2	Entertainer/celebrity	23%	Professional	14%
3	Police/military	13%	Police/military	13%
4	Professional	10%	Entertainer/celebrity	10%
5	Community member	6%	Other	9%
6	Government official	4%	NGO	4%
7	Student	5%	Government official	3%
8	Social worker	2%	Business person	3%
9	Politician	2%	Politician	2%
10	Business person	1%	Community member	2%


Playing roles 'n not girls

LONELY: Chris

EX-LOVER: Michelle Botes

NO ACTION STAR

HE may be a playa on soapie *Isidingo* but in real life this star isn't getting any action.

Chris Beasley, who plays the TV show's hot lover Len Cooper, confesses that he actually prefers to spend his Friday nights at home. "I'm not a playboy like Len at all," he reveals to the *Daily Voice*.

By STEAN DOWNES

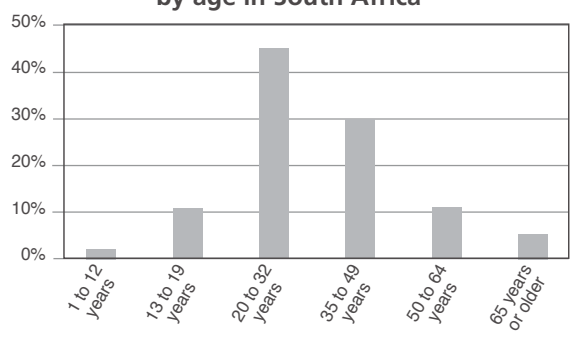
Not surprisingly, the top category for men is as sportsperson, followed by professional, police/military and entertainer/celebrity. Within these roles, there are certain expectations of men's behaviour. For example, an article in the *Daily Voice* (12 June 2007) entitled "Playing roles 'n not girls" looks at the "social' life of an actor Chris Beasley who plays the part of a hot show lover in local soap opera *Isidingo*. The article quotes Beasley saying that he is totally different from his role in the soap. He also says that he is a shocking celebrity who does not have different girls every night as should be the case.

Use of language like "shocking celebrity" and "no action star" reinforce the case. The article misses an opportunity to explore why Beasley is different. The article is accompanied by photos, one of them of Beasley's former girlfriend Michelle Botes with the caption "ex-lover" as though her only identity is her previous relationship to the TV star (she is in fact a star in her own right).

Personal identification

Indeed, the research shows that as in the mainstream media, women in tabloids are far more likely to be identified according to a personal relationship than men (for example as a wife, lover, former lover, daughter etc). Some 23% of women sources in the study were identified according to a personal relationship compared to 4% of men. The comparative figures for the mainstream media as measured in the GMBS were 14% for women and 2% for men.

Figure 4.20: Women in tabloids by age in South Africa



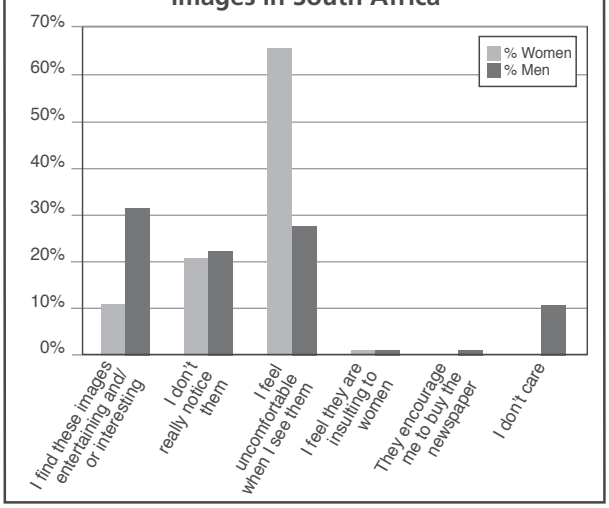
Age

Another way in which subtle stereotypes are reinforced in tabloids (as in the mainstream media) is the tendency to completely ignore older women. Figure 4.20 shows that 75% of all women in tabloids are in the 20-49 year age category; after those ages women almost disappear altogether. Readers feel that while older women are less likely to appear in media, they almost always feature in stories associated with witchcraft and superstition.

Blatant stereotypes

Tabloids portray women in roles that emphasise their physical attributes while men are portrayed in diverse and challenging roles. Figure 4.21 shows that audiences- especially women- do not necessarily share this view. While most men said that they either found the images entertaining or did not notice them, 67% of women said they felt uncomfortable about these images. Only a tiny proportion of respondents (all men) said these images are what encourage them to buy the newspaper.

Figure 4.21: Audience response to sexual images in South Africa



Sunday World editor Charles Mogale defended the use of women as sex symbols in his paper as follows:

"We find that if we do not have a woman on the cover, the sales tend to dip. We try and 'lighten' up Page 1, 2 and 3 with a nice image of a lady – preferably a well-known personality… those who do not read us accuse us of being trashy. We are not – it is the fault of those publications who give tabloids a bad name. One of them recently brazenly referred to the president's private parts. We do not do that. We believe smut is not smart. We are sexy without being gross and sleazy." –

Below are comments made by women and men on sexual images of women in tabloids during the audience research.

Comments by women

- Women deserve respect.
- Why must women be the object on page 3.
- We are not sex toys; always we are shown naked so all those sexual images of women in tabloids must stop.
- They refer to women as sexy when they are half naked; gold diggers when dressed.
- The pictures make me uncomfortable and insulted because usually they show women as sexual objects instead of portraying the other good side about women.
- Some of the images portrayed are very degrading as women are shown very or half naked. This is very disturbing.
- More exposure of women as sex symbols is totally uncalled for. Women are strong creators of this wonderful nation and should be given enough respect rather than being exploited.
- It's a disgrace to us women, why don't men appear likewise. Why are women the ones who are exposed, this is highly unfair, men also have to be exposed.
- I feel they reinforce the way women are viewed generally. They are just pretty faces there to be admired and lusted for by men, which is very insulting and stereotypical view.
- I'm a woman too, seeing women being exploited like that makes me wonder how people perceive us as women that we are just objects rather than human beings.
- These women agree to be there, so I don't care.
- I read the stories I do not care about the pictures.
- I ignore them.

Comments by men

- They make the paper colourful.
- That is why they are tabloids, to entertain me. They are sometimes exaggerated which makes it that interesting.
- They are just pictures.
- They are not the reason I read tabloids.
- Newspapers need to market themselves.
- If a woman feels sexy and confident in her own body, being it big or thin; I say big up.
- They do not affect me.
- Women need respect.
- Treat women and men equally in the newspapers.
- Some of the pictures that are printed in the newspapers are quite disgusting as they portray women negatively. But if the pictures are of models, and they are done professionally, I find nothing wrong with them; it's entertaining.
- Men are raping and abusing these beautiful creatures.
- In this age of HIV/AIDS these pictures are encouraging wrong values. They also do not respect women.
- Images of naked people are generally degrading to those represented; it's unfair and insulting
- I feel uncomfortable when I see them because sometimes they show pictures of almost naked or naked women. I also feel like they are insulting women because they sometimes don't respect women values and morals therefore presenting a wrong image about women to the public e.g. *Sunday World*'s story on the 14th of October about Queen Seseko in which it was said she performed without underwear.

Gender awareness

Over a third of news items (34%) were classified as gender aware. An example is a letter in the *Daily Sun* (12 June 2006) on the idea of having a woman as the next president of South Africa. The writer (a man) argues that women played a pivotal role in the struggle for democracy and have the right to lead the country as this would be a way to empower women. He also asks what a woman needs to be a president.


YES for a woman president

I also agree with the opinion that the next president should be a woman.

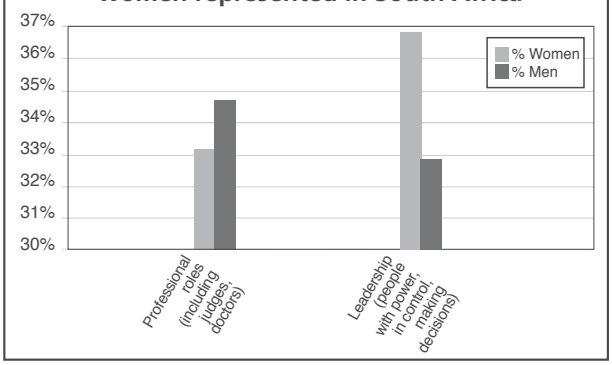
This could an alternative way to empower women.

The letter is unapologetic about the need to empower women in South Africa. The writer points out that men have been in leadership for a long time. Although South Africa has a woman deputy president, the writer is not interested in the number two post. He says that women should be gunning for the top post.

WHAT AUDIENCES WANT

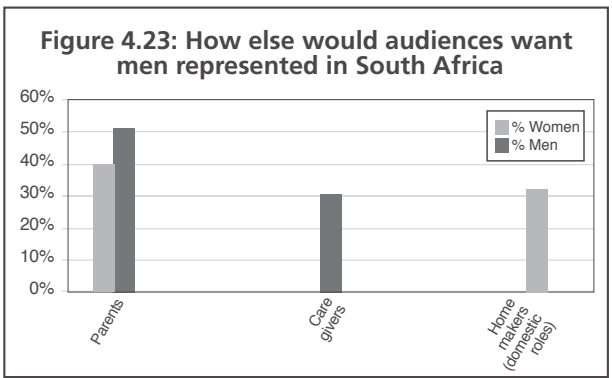
Given a range of choices on other ways in which they would like to see women and men represented, Figure 4.22 shows that South African tabloid audiences (women and men) said they would like to see many more women in professional and leadership roles.

Figure 4.22: How else would audiences want women represented in South Africa



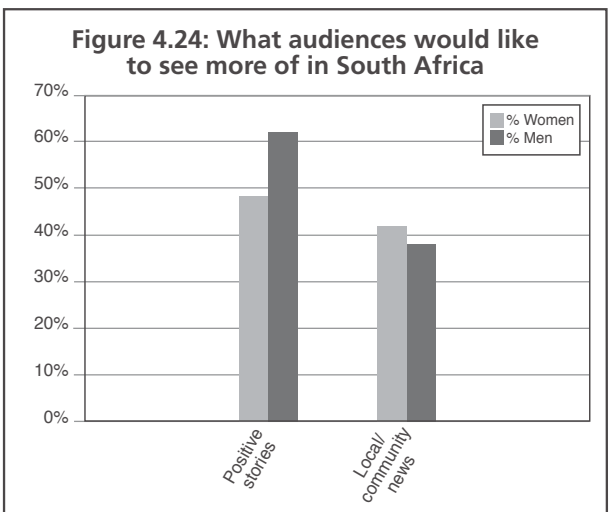
Women said that they would want men portrayed more often as parents and home makers, while men prioritised parenting and care giving (Figure 4.23).

Figure 4.23: How else would audiences want men represented in South Africa

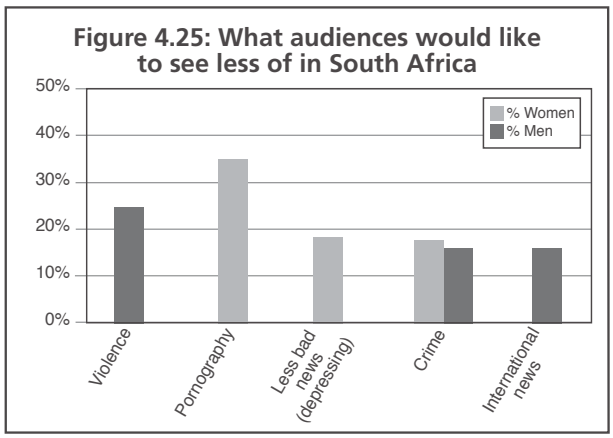


In findings that concur strongly with the Gender and Media Audience Study (GMAS) both women and men said they would like more positive as well as local/ community news (figure 4.24).

Figure 4.24: What audiences would like to see more of in South Africa



South African men said they would like to see less violence, crime and international news. Women said that they would like less pornography; bad news and crime (see Figure 4.25).



Concluding comments

While audiences clearly love their daily read, they are also critical and skeptical consumers. As one reader put it: "Tabloids are a very good source of information. They are cheap and readily available to the ordinary citizen but they must try to cover the rest of the country rather than just the big cities thus neglecting the rural areas."

Another commented: "The *Daily Sun* is a very good paper especially for us who work. What I have seen is that the paper writes about the black community and I am very happy about that. The problem I have with the paper is that it always shows pictures of women as depression victims as if they (women) are the only people who always lose their loved ones. In other words it sympathises a lot with women, more than men."

A woman reader said she did not trust what she reads: "Usually stories in tabloids make me wonder if they are true or not and if these stories were researched thoroughly." A male reader of the *Daily Sun* said the paper needs to "improve its headlines as they are sometimes exaggerated."

Readers are also concerned about ethical standards: "There are disturbing pictures in the tabloids. Sometimes we are not even able to read the story because the picture about the story is so scary," one said.

Readers have many suggestions about topics and angles they feel are missing. Women readers suggested:
- The tabloids should write more about gender equality and human rights.
- The tabloids must write more about education so that our children can understand the value of education.
- I like to read about what is happening to my country and what the government doing in our community.

The following comments by male readers show that the need to improve gender balance and sensitivity in content is not just a concern of women:
- Tabloids should improve their female representation.
- Tabloids must not degrade women. Women and men must be treated equally.



Easy to read, but needs improving

Photo: Brendan Kennedy



Monitoring the media in Tanzania

Photo:Trevor Davies

Chapter Five
Tanzania

Key facts

Tabloids have a cross cutting appeal: The majority of both women and men tabloid readers in Tanzania have a secondary school education. However, considering the generally low levels of education in Tanzania, quite a high proportion of men (38%) and women (22%) also have higher level education qualifications. This suggests that tabloids in Tanzania have a fairly broad appeal across different education and income levels.

Men are the main buyers of tabloids: Men (78%) are the biggest buyers of tabloids in Tanzania. Just less than half the women readers buy their own paper and the rest get it from a spouse, family member or colleague.

The content is not news heavy: News makes up 40% of the content of Tanzanian tabloids (compared to the average in the study of 45%), with the other 60% going to non-news items. These mainly consist of human interest stories and profiles.

Local news dominates: Contrary to the belief that many tabloid stories are based on hearsay, the bulk of stories (73%) are originated by the paper's own reporters.

A light agenda: Media and entertainment accounted for 27% of the topics covered in Tanzanian tabloids, followed by sports at 16%. Politics and economics, which make up about 40% of the coverage in the mainstream media, come in at less than 10% in tabloids. When asked their favourite topics, both women and men selected celebrity news; followed by cheating and seduction; gossip and sports.

Women are more dissatisfied than men on coverage of community news: While the majority of men felt that tabloids cover community issues very well; better than other media or partially well most women felt that tabloids cover community issues partially; not well or very poorly.

Most audiences buy tabloids as a form of escapism: Women readers like tabloids purely as a form of escapism - to catch up on gossip; look at photos of celebrities or have a laugh. Men also like to catch up on gossip and look at photos of celebrities, as well as news and headlines.

Tabloids are not the main source of news: An important related finding (Figure 5.12) is that while tabloids are popular in Tanzania, they are not the main source of news to audiences. Women cited television as their main source of news while men said radio is their main source. It is interesting that the handful of respondents who cited the Internet as their main source of news were all women.

And they are not trusted: When presented a long list to choose from of what they disliked about tabloids, the most popular responses among women and men were that tabloids do not always tell the truth and that they exaggerate things, for example in the headlines.

Gender bias abounds: At 25%, Tanzania has the lowest proportion of gender aware stories (compared to 36% for the study overall). It also had the highest proportion of stories that reflected blatant gender stereotypes (25% compared to 13%). 18% conveyed subtle stereotypes while 32% were regarded as gender blind.

Women in Tanzania are the least heard: Women in Tanzanian tabloids constituted the lowest proportion of sources in the study - 18% compared to the average of 25%.

Women in Tanzania are more likely to be seen than heard. They constitute 34% of those who are depicted (compared to 18% of news sources). Yet at 66% men dominate even the pictures in tabloids.

Men dominate newsrooms: Although at 24% there are more women reporters in tabloids than in the mainstream media (21% in the GMBS) tabloids are still highly male dominated.

Stereotypes are reinforced through roles assigned to women and men: While the most frequent role of women in tabloids is that of a community member, for men the top role is as a professional. There is a higher proportion of women than men celebrities; and of men sports personalities (women sport personalities do not feature at all). There were no male beauty contestants or home makers.

And personal identification: The research showed that in Tanzania, 17% of women sources are identified according to a relative (compared to 11% in the mainstream media as measured in the GMBS). On the other hand only 2% of men in tabloids and 3% in mainstream media (GMBS) are identified according to a relative.

Audiences are unhappy about sexual images: When asked about their responses to these kinds of stories in tabloids, 78% of women said they found them uncomfortable. 37% of men said they found the images entertaining. 40% of men said they felt uncomfortable and 10% said they were insulting to women.

And are demanding greater diversity in portrayal: Audiences would like to see women and men portrayed in more diverse roles. They also want less negative, more positive and local news.

This chapter summarises the findings of the study in Tanzania where GL worked with members of the Gender and Media Tanzania (GEMSAT) network to monitor three papers: *Alasiri* (evening daily); *Amani* (weekly) and *Uwazi* (weekly) in June 2007: a total of 484 items. Researchers interviewed 42 male and 42 female readers of tabloids. The team leader conducted interviews with Amram Kaima, editor of *Amani*; Joyce Bazira, managing editor of *Alasiri* and Elvan Stambue, editor of *Uwazi*.

BACKGROUND

With a population of 33 million, Tanzania is the biggest of the East African countries and belongs to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) as a result of its historical involvement in the struggle against apartheid.

After decades of one party socialist rule, political and economic liberalisation in the early 1990s ushered in media reforms in Tanzania. Many media houses began on a note of undercapitalization and inexperience, investing in fast moving publications which border on sensationalism. This explains why tabloids have enjoyed considerable readership at the expense of the serious press.

The Department of Information estimates that more than 400 newspapers and periodicals have been registered since liberalization of information, but there are now less than 50 active newspapers and magazines; nearly 80% of these based in the capital of Dar-es-Salaam.

There are four serious English dailies – *Daily News*, *The Guardian*, *The Citizen* and *The African*, all with circulation hovering between 8,000 and 15, 000. Most of the popular readership is *Kiswahili* newspapers because people communicate effectively in their national language. English remains as a medium of communication among the elite and business classes.



Scanning the news Photo: Trevor Davies

In general, media practitioners lack training and experience. Until recently, Tanzania had no formal training in journalism at tertiary level. The former Tanzania School of Journalism has now been upgraded to the Institute of Journalism and Mass Communication of the University of Dar es Salaam.

The future of the press and especially private media is bright because former practitioners are now coming together to invest in publications. In 1994, former journalists of the Kiswahili daily, *Uhuru*, joined to invest in Habari Corporation, which now boasts of five titles. Organisations such as the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) and GL are working to improve ethical standards and professionalism in the media. But tabloidisation of the mainstream media in Tanzania is seen as a major threat to professionalism.

Table 11 sets out the monitoring schedule for the three Tanzanian tabloids monitored during this research.

Table eleven: Newspapers monitored in Tanzania				
DAY	**DATE**	**DAILY X 1 Alasiri**	**WEEKLY X 1 Amani & Uwazi**	**TOTAL**
Monday	June 4	X		1
Tuesday	June 12	X		1
Friday	June 15		XX	2
Weekend	June 16-17		XX	2
Wednesday	June 18	X		1
Thursday	June 21	X		1
Weekend	June 24-25		XX	2
Friday	June 29	X	XX	3
TOTAL		**5**	**8**	**13**

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

According to Amran Kaima, *Amani* is popular because of its content, which appeals to readers. This includes love stories, features, and investigative stories among others. Creativity also contributes to the popularity of tabloids.

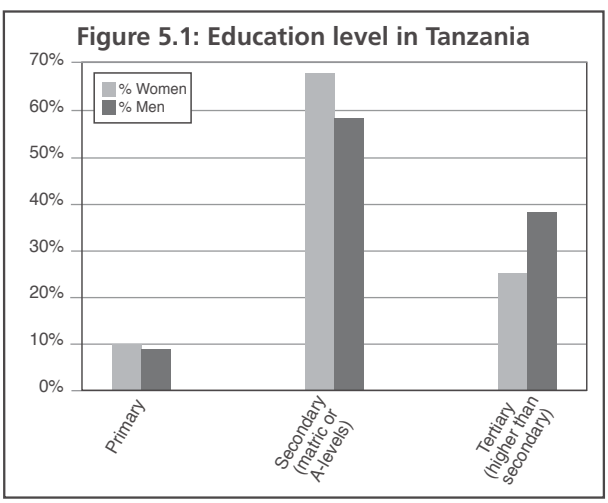
Elvan Stambue, Editor of *Uwazi* said his paper is unique: "We write in-depth coverage after thorough investigation. Our readers do not like political stories or PR. We carry tantalizing stories about public figures and scandals. The most popular sections with our readers are tragic, horrifying and social stories."

Joyce Bazira, Managing editor of Alasiri, says tabloids are also popular because they are affordable. "What we mostly consider in our stories is their timelines, relevance and ethic," she added. "The language, humor and our style of presentation of facts make our paper different from others. They like our style of telling hard facts using jesting style as well as the way we break news on time. They get annoyed when we write stories which were published in morning papers."

Education level

Figure 5.1 shows that the majority of both women and men tabloid readers in Tanzania have a secondary school education, with women (65%) slightly higher than men (57%). However, considering the generally low levels of education in Tanzania, quite a high proportion of men (38%) and women (22%) also have higher level education qualifications. This suggests that tabloids in Tanzania have a fairly broad appeal across different education and income levels.

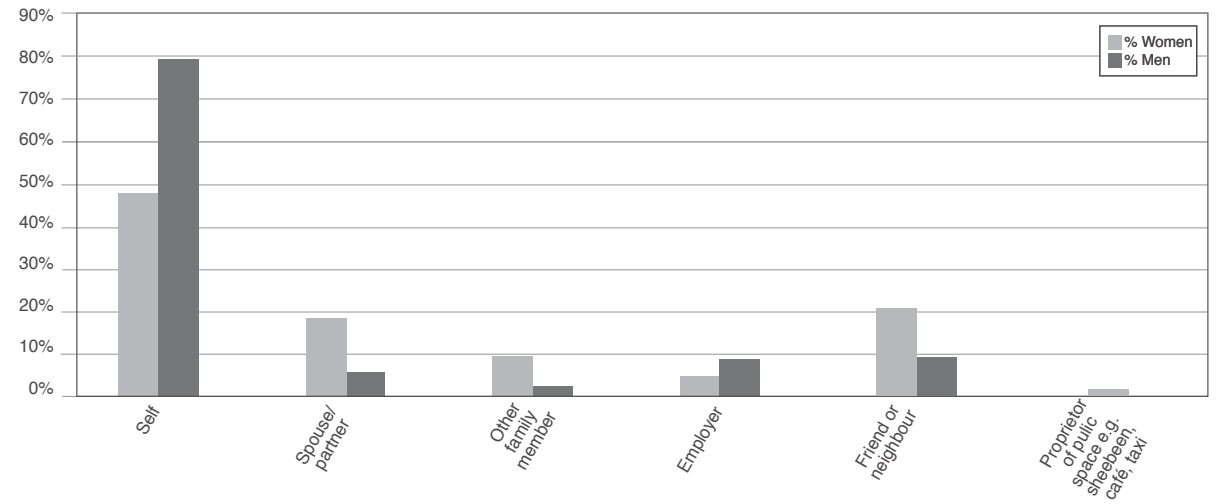
Figure 5.1: Education level in Tanzania



Who buys tabloids

Figure 5.2 shows that men (78%) are the biggest buyers of tabloids in Tanzania. Just less than half the women readers buy their own paper and the rest get it from a spouse, family member or colleague.

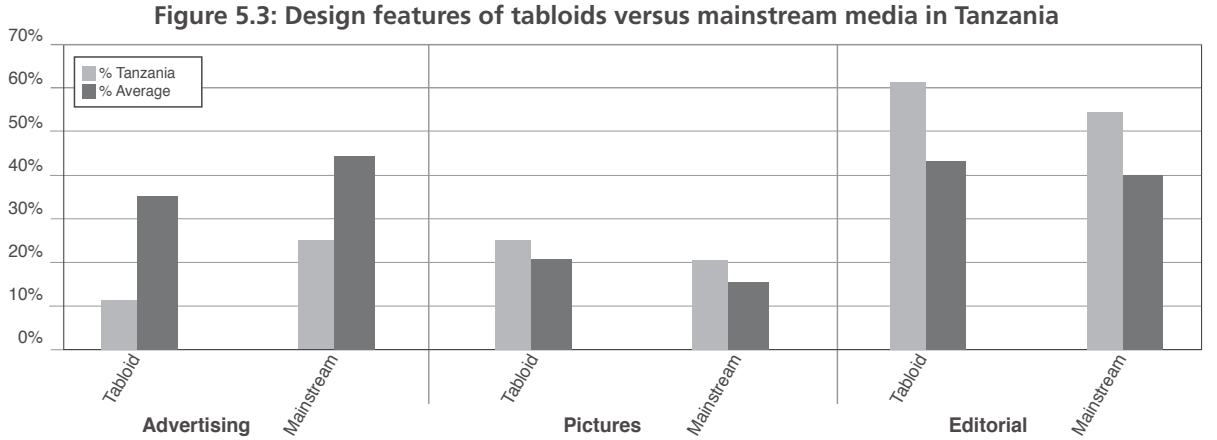
Figure 5.2: Who buys tabloids in Tanzania



Design and accessibility

Figure 5.3 shows that tabloids in Tanzania are a lot more "grey" than in the other countries in the study. They have very little advertising (12%, compared to an average of 35% in the study and 25% in the mainstream media in Tanzania). Conversely, they have a higher proportion of editorial content (62%) than either the regional average or their mainstream counterparts. However, Tanzanian tabloids do have more pictures (26%) than either their tabloid counterparts in the study (22%) or the mainstream press in Tanzania (22%).

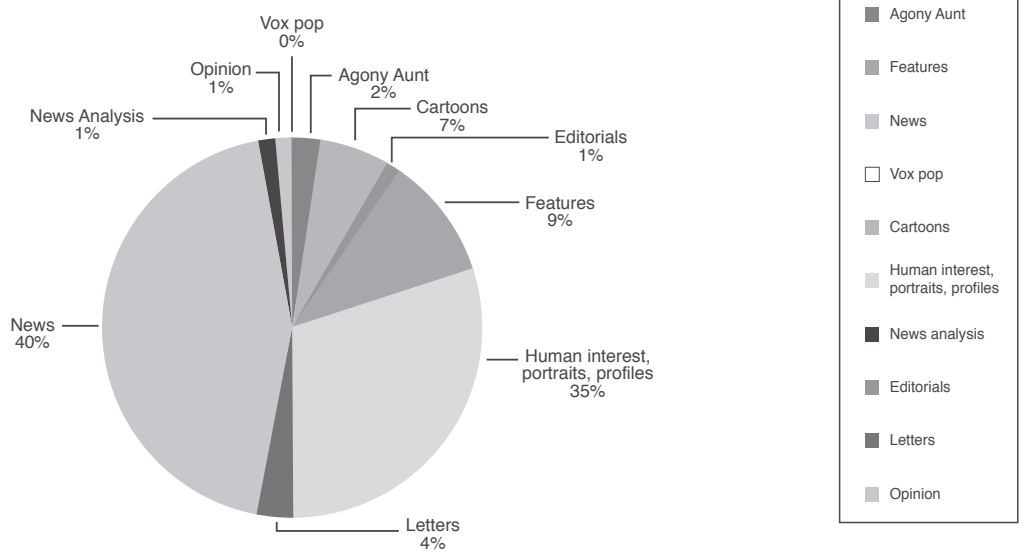
Figure 5.3: Design features of tabloids versus mainstream media in Tanzania



Types of stories covered

Figure 5.4 shows that news makes up 40% of the content of Tanzanian tabloids (compared to the average in the study of 45%), with the other 60% going to non-news items. These mainly consist of human interest stories and profiles. Letters also take up a sizeable proportion of the content.

Figure 5.4: Genres in tabloids in Tanzania





Amina akumbukwe kwa ujasiri wa kutetea taifa

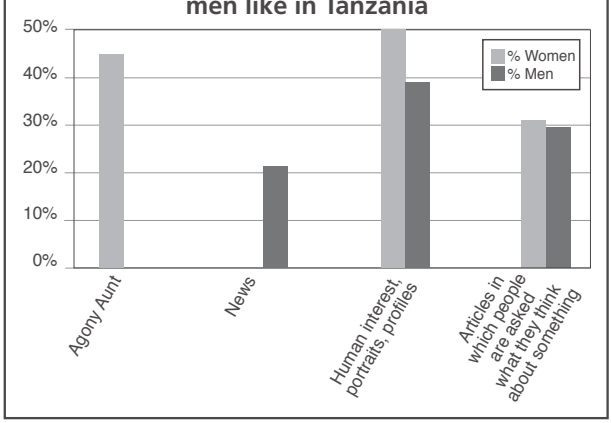
Mhariri,
KWANZA napenda kutoa masikitiko yangu juu ya kifo cha Amina Chifupa ambacho kusema kweli kimesababisha msiba mkubwa kwa taifa.

Nawatakia wote, walioguswa na msiba huo, hasa wazazi wa Amina moyo wa subira. Msiba huu ni mkubwa kwa sababu Amina alikuwa mtetezi wa watu, kijana mdogo aliyeibuka kuwa nyota katika ulingo wa siasa.

An obituary written by a reader on 29 June 2007 gives a flavour of the human interest appeal of tabloids and their personal style. The piece is entitled "Amina akumbukwe kwa ujasiri wa kutetea taifa" (Amina should be remembered for her dedicated service to the Nation). The opinion piece follows the news report on the death of the Member of Parliament for youth.

When asked their favourite genres, Figure 5.5 shows that – as in all other countries in the study - women listed agony aunt and human interest stories followed by articles which show what people think about something. Men listed editorials, human interest and articles that ask for feedback.

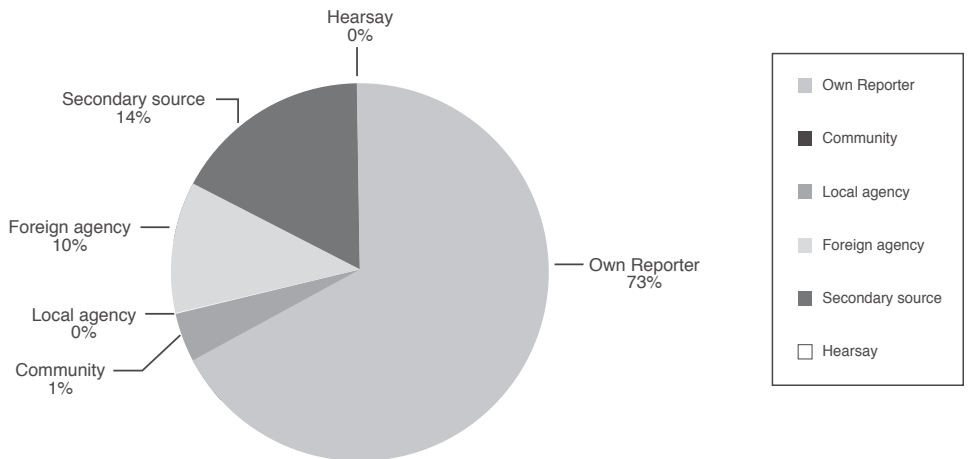
Figure 5.5: The types of stories women and men like in Tanzania



Origin

Contrary to the belief that many tabloid stories are based on hearsay, the bulk of stories (73%) are originated by the paper's own reporters. A fairly high proportion (14%) come from reports or secondary sources; and 10% come from foreign agencies.

Figure 5.6: Origin of stories in tabloids in Tanzania



Topics in tabloids in Tanzania

Media and entertainment accounted for 27% of the topics covered in Tanzanian tabloids, followed by sports at 16%. Politics and economics, which make up about 40% of the coverage in the mainstream media, come in at less than 10% in tabloids (see Figure 5.7).

Figure 5.7: Topics in tabloids in Tanzania

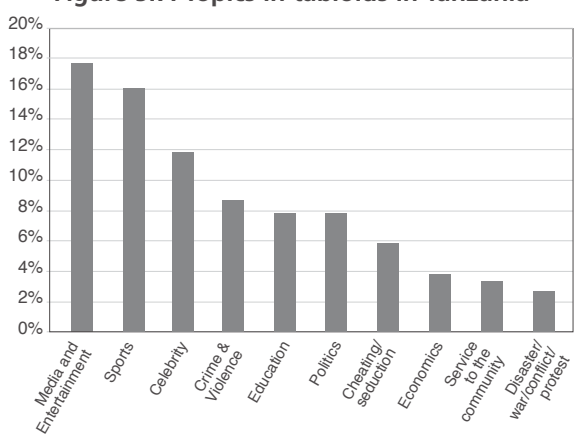
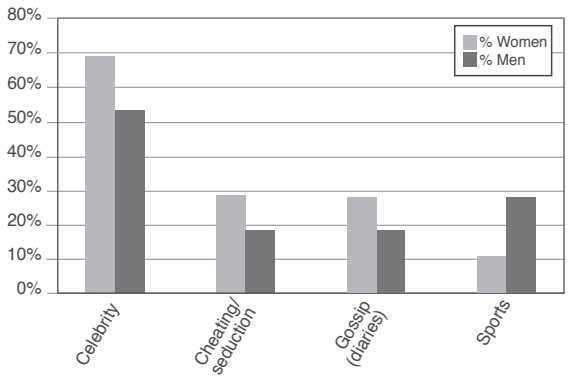


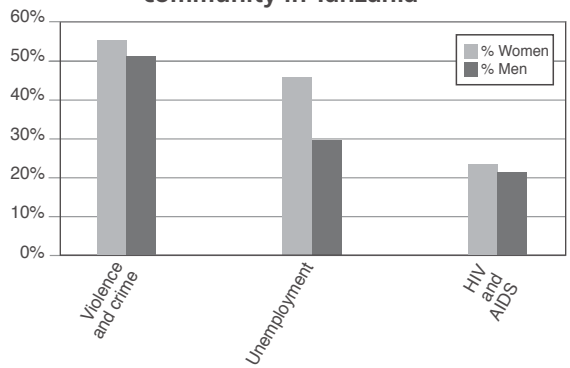
Figure 5.8 shows that both women and men selected celebrity news as their favourite topic; followed by cheating and seduction; gossip and sports. It is interesting that in Tanzania there was little difference between audience preferences of women and men.

Figure 5.8: Topics readers like in Tanzania



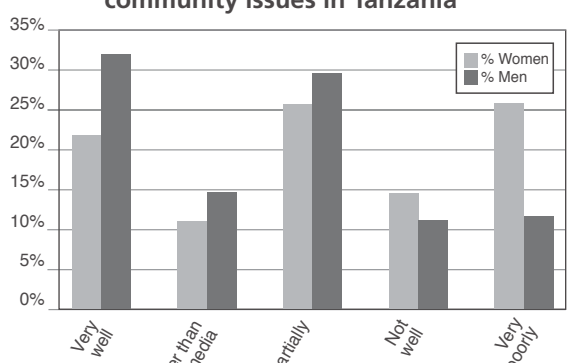
Women and men listed crime and violence; unemployment; HIV and AIDS as the three key challenges for their communities (see Figure 5.9).

Figure 5.9: Issues affecting the community in Tanzania



As in the other countries in the study, the majority of men felt that tabloids cover community issues very well; better than other media or partially well. On the other hand most women (see Figure 5.10) felt that tabloids cover community issues partially; not well or very poorly.

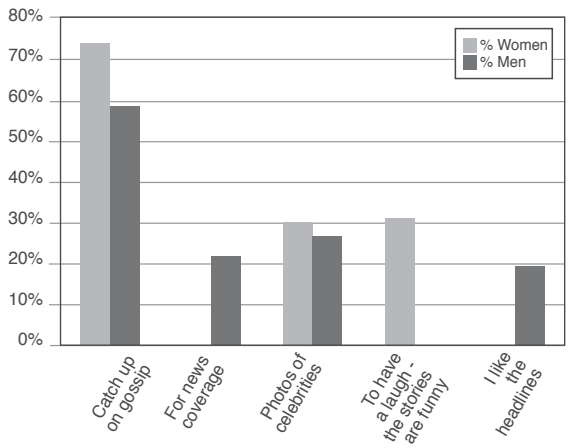
Figure 5.10: How tabloids cover community issues in Tanzania



What readers like

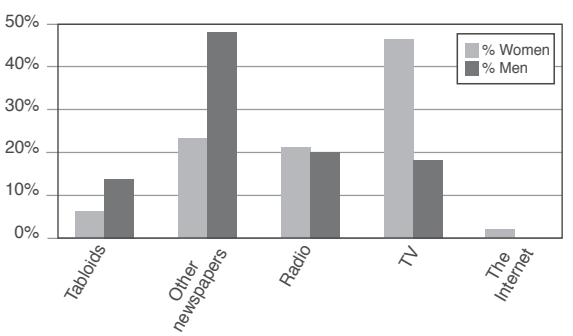
Figure 5.11 shows that women readers like tabloids purely as a form of escapism- to catch up on gossip; look at photos on celebrities or have a laugh. Men also like to catch up on gossip and look at photos of celebrities but they also like tabloids for the news and headlines.

Figure 5.11: What readers most like about tabloids in Tanzania



An important related finding (Figure 5.12) is that while tabloids are popular in Tanzania, they are not the preferred main source of news. In findings that resonate with the Gender and Media Audience Study (GMAS) women cited television as their main source of news while men said radio is their main source. It is interesting that the handful of respondents who cited the Internet as their main source of news were all women.

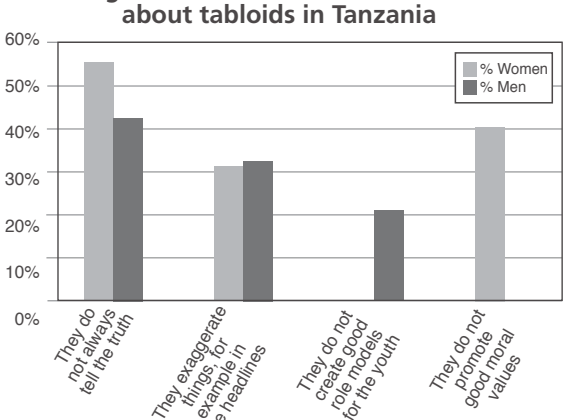
Figure 5.12: Main source of news in Tanzania



What readers dislike about tabloids in Tanzania

When presented a long list to choose from of what they disliked about tabloids, the most popular responses among women and men were that tabloids do not always tell the truth and that they exaggerate things, for example in the headlines. Men added that tabloids do not create good role models for the youth and women said that they do not promote good moral values (Figure 5.13).

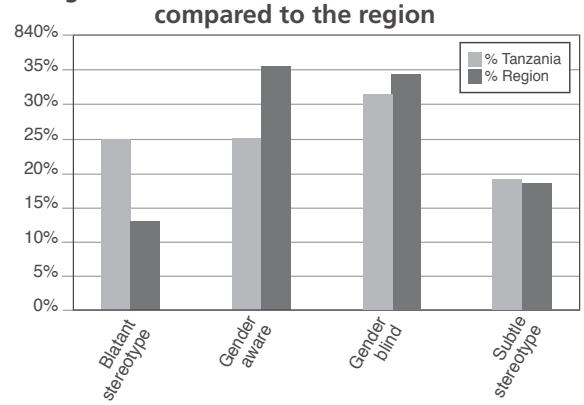
Figure 5.13: What readers dislike about tabloids in Tanzania



GENDER IN EDITORIAL CONTENT

Researchers classified all items monitored according to GL's GEM classification system into gender blind; stories that reflect either subtle or blatant stereotypes and gender aware stories. Figure 5.14 shows that at 25%, Tanzania has the lowest proportion of gender aware stories (compared to 36% for the study overall). It also had the highest proportion of stories that reflected blatant gender stereotypes (25% compared to 13%). 18% conveyed subtle stereotypes while 32% were regarded as gender blind.

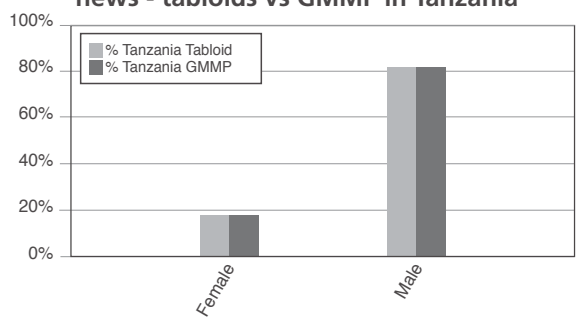
Figure 5.14: GEM classification in Tanzania compared to the region



Gender blindness

Figure 5.15 shows that women in Tanzanian tabloids constitute the lowest proportion of sources in the study. Women constitute 18% of sources in tabloids; exactly the same as the 18% for mainstream media in the 2005 GMMP. In the audience study, only 18% women and 13% men thought that men's voices are heard more than women (the lowest in the whole study). This suggests that gender and media literacy levels in Tanzania are still very low.

Figure 5.15: Women and men in the news - tabloids vs GMMP in Tanzania



An article in entitled *"Walimu Mbeya vijijini 'walamba' mkopo wa milioni"* (Teachers in Mbeya rural area benefit from millions in loan) in *Alasiri* on June 21, 2007 shows how women's views and voices are often marginalised.

The story is about how 900 teachers benefitted from a bank loan scheme. At the function, the teachers are advised by the only source in the story, a man called Leonidas Gama, to use the money wisely and not to waste it on women. This immediately assumes that the majority of teachers are men which is not the case as the teaching service is dominated by women. Ironically, the cartoon is of women teachers benefiting from the scheme, but none of them are interviewed. The report does not give gender disaggregated of statistics on how many male/female teachers benefited from the scheme.


Walimu Mbeya Vijijini 'walamba'

Na Thobias Mwanakatwe, PST-Mbeya

WALIMU 900 katika Halmashauri ya Mbeya vijijini wameula kwa mkopo baada ya benki ya CRDB

tawi la Mbeya, kuwapa pesa za mkopo kupitia chama chao cha Kuweka na Kukopa cha Walimu SACCOS zinazofikia Sh. Bilioni 1.647.

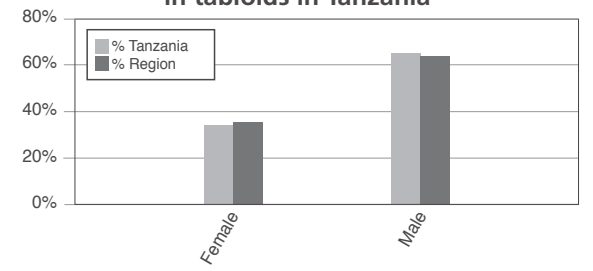
Walimu hao wamekabidhiwa hundi za mapesa hayo na Mkuu wa Wilaya ya Mbeya, Bw. Leonidas

N.mjusi

Images

Figure 5.16 shows that as in the rest of the study, women in Tanzania are more likely to be seen than heard. They constitute 34% of those who are depicted (compared to 18% of news sources). Yet at 66% of the total men dominate even the pictures in tabloids.

Figure 5.16 Pictures of women and men in tabloids in Tanzania



What kind of women and men speak

When women and men sources were divided into the function that they play in each story (see Figure 5.17), the research found that most sources are either the subject of the story; spokesperson; expert or commentator with men dominating all these categories. Contrary to the claim that tabloids are the voice of ordinary people, very few of the sources spoke from personal experience; witnessed an event or were approached for vox pops. Men dominated all categories, with women only coming close to parity in the personal experience category.

Figure 5.17: Function of sources in tabloids in Tanzania

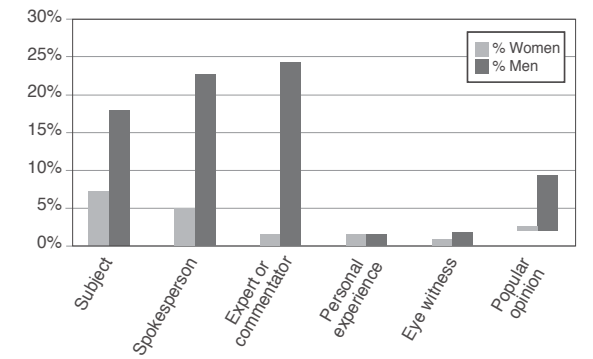


Figure 5.18 shows that both women and men in Tanzania believe that it is important or famous people who are most likely to be heard in tabloids. They hardly think of tabloids as being a medium for ordinary people to express their views.

Figure 5.18: Audience perceptions of who speaks in tabloids-Tanzania

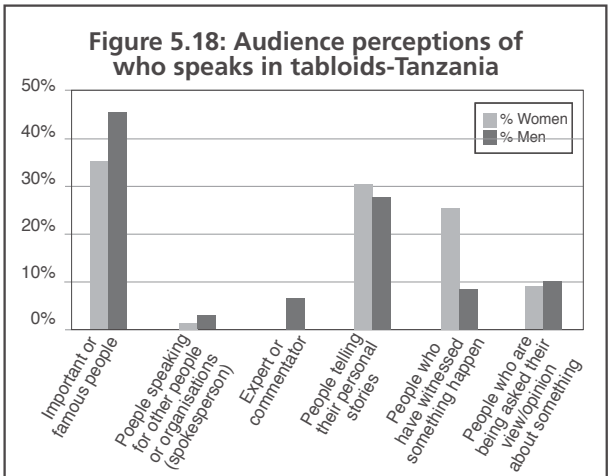
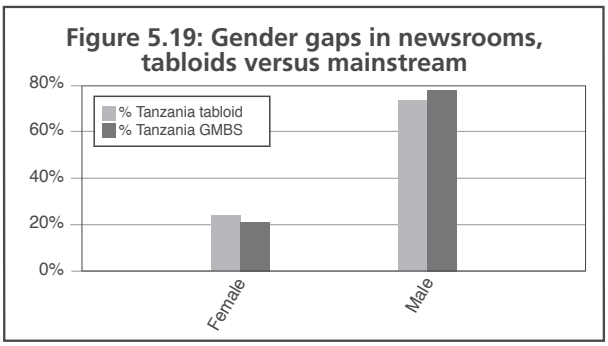


Figure 5.19 shows that although at 24% there are more women reporters in tabloids than in the mainstream media (21% in the GMBS) tabloids are still highly male dominated.



Subtle stereotypes

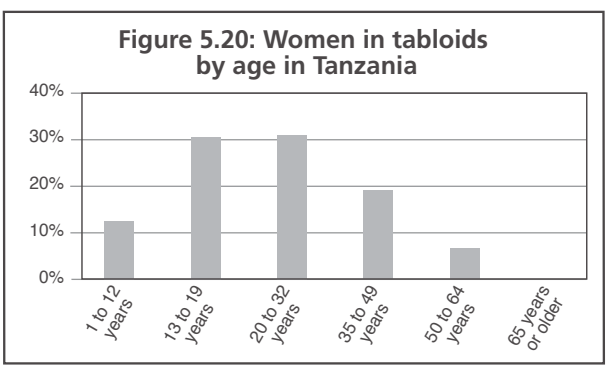
As in the mainstream media, subtle stereotypes are reinforced in tabloids through the roles that women and men play. Table 12 shows that while the most frequent role of women in tabloids is that of a community member, for men the top role is as a professional. There is a higher proportion of women than men celebrities; and of men sports personalities (women sport personalities do not feature at all). There were no male beauty contestants or home makers.

Table twelve: Top ten roles of women and men in tabloids in Tanzania

	Women	%	Men	%
1	Community member	26%	Professional	34%
2	Entertainer/celebrity	22%	Entertainer/celebrity	16%
3	Government official	12%	Community member	12%
4	Student	11%	Sportsperson	12%
5	Professional	8%	Government official	11%
6	Other	8%	Police/military	5%
7	Home maker	5%	Other	3%
8	NGO	5%	Politician	2%
9	Beauty contestant	3%	Business person	2%
10	Office worker	2%	NGO	1%

Age

Figure 5.20 shows that women from the ages 13 to 34 dominate tabloids in Tanzania. Older women are virtually non-existent.



Personal identification

Another way in which subtle stereotypes are reinforced is though women being identified according to a personal relationship such as mother, wife, or daughter far more so than men are referred to as a son, husband or father. The research showed that in Tanzania, 17% of women sources are identified according to a relative (compared to 11% in the mainstream media as measured in the GMBS). On the other hand only 2% of men in tabloids and 3% in mainstream media (GMBS) are identified according to a relative.

Blatant stereotypes

The qualitative monitoring yielded several examples of blatant stereotypes. Headlines such as *"Aibu Tupu! Wanaume wachapana makonde, mwanamke aingia uvunguni Kujiokoa, suala laripotiwa polisi"* (see Chapter two) are commonplace.

Such stereotypes show themselves in stories like *"Makahaba Tele!"*(Prostitutes in plenty!) in *Amani* (June 14-20). Ironically the reading of the budget presents men with serious business opportunities while women benefit by selling their bodies to men.

An article entitled "Warembo hawa ni Sexy 100% - The sexy 100% beauties" in *Amani* (June 7 – 13, 2007) is about beauty queens who have previously won the Miss Tanzania Beauty pageant. Jacquline Ntuyabaliwe, Nancy Sumary, Wema Sepetu and Lisa Jensen, who have been voted the sexiest Tanzanian women.

Many men in Tanzania are said to be having sleepless nights because of these women, with some swearing to give any amount of money to "have them". The women are reduced to objects for men's pleasure. All those interviewed are men; the story is about the beauty queens but their voices are never heard.

When asked about their responses to these kinds of stories in tabloids, 78% of women said they found them uncomfortable. 37% of men said they found the images entertaining. 40% of men said they felt uncomfortable and 10% said they were insulting to women (Figure 5.21).



Warembo hawa ni Sexy 100%

Na Mwandishi Wetu

Warembo waliowahi kutwaa Taji la Miss Tanzania, Jacqueline Ntuyabaliwe (mwaka 2000), Nancy Sumary (2005), Wema Sepetu (2006) na Lissa Jensen aliyeshika namba tatu mwaka huo, wametajwa kuwa wanyange wenye mvuto wa aina yake kimapenzi (sexy), kuliko wanawake wengi nchini.

Uchunguzi uliofanywa na Amani kwa muda mrefu sasa umebaini kuwa, walimbwende hao ndiyo wanaowachanganya zaidi wanaume na kuwakosesha usingizi, huku wengine wakila yamini kuwapata kwa gharama yoyote.

Katika uchunguzi huo uliohusisha maoni ya wanaume wa sehemu mbalimbali nchini imebaini pia kwamba, Jacqueline a.k.a 'K-Lyin, Nancy, Wema na Lissa ndiyo warembo ambao wanaume huwaangalia mara mblimbili kila wanapowaona na kujikuta wakiwatamani kimapenzi.

"Wanavutia sana kimapenzi, hapa Tanzania ukiuliza warembo wanne bomba, basi hakuna zaidi ya Wema, K- lyin, Nancy na Lissa. Binafsi natamani kuwa na uhusiano na Lissa, lakini ndiyo hivyo nasikia ana mshikaji wake,"alisema Michael Lamosai, mkazi wa Mwenge.

Aidha imedaiwa kuwa, baadhi ya vigogo wa serikali, makampuni mbalimbali na wafanyabiashara ambao wanafahamika zaidi kama mapedeshee, wamekuwa wakigongana kuwanasa wanyange hao huku wengine wakitenga mamilioni ya shilingi kwa ajili ya kufanikisha zoezi hilo.

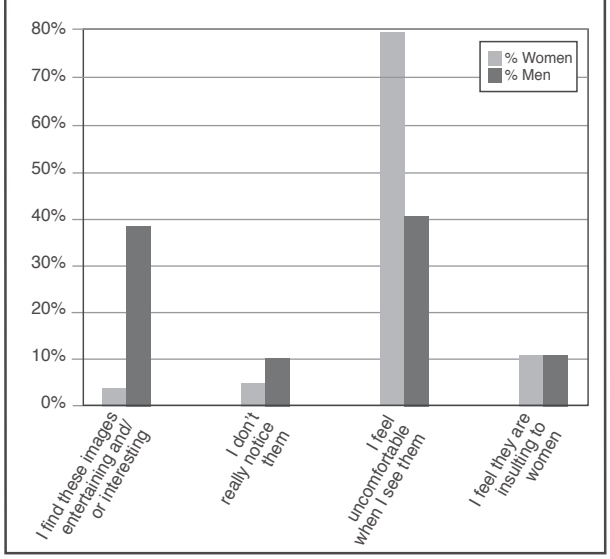
Kijana mmoja aliyejitambulisha kuwa mtu wa karibu na 'pedeshee' mmoja maarufu alisema, ndugu yake huyo amepagawa sana kwa Wema na aliwahi kumtengea shilingi milioni 4 ili aweze kumnasa, lakini hakufanikiwa.

"Inaonekana wanajitunza na hawautumii vibaya uzuri wao, wangekuwa na tamaa ya pesa, wanaume wengi wangekuwa wameshawavuruga, kwa sababu wapo wengine hawangalii pesa mbele ya warembo kama hao.

"Jamaa yangu alitumia hela nyingi kwa Wema, aliwalipa makuwadi lakini hawakufua dafu, lengo lake liikuwa kumpa shilingi milioni nne keshi, endapo tu angekubali kufanya naye mapenzi japo mara moja," alisema mpambe huyo.

Lissa Jensen

Figure 5.21: Audience response to sexual images in Tanzania



Below are some of the comments made by women and men:

Comments by women

- Generally tabloids undermine women because they portray the women mainly as sex objects.
- I feel uncomfortable and because they are insulting to women I wish the government should make sure that those tabloids are warned or banned
- The material is not conducive to children.
- The women are presented in negative way compared to men.
- The tabloids concentrate on scandals and people like to read them but the pictures of naked women are bad.
- The stories are okay but the pictures are disturbing.
- Tabloids are too much of sexual matters than any other sensible news; what they do is they seek profit than educating the society.
- If you read tabloids you may think that they are made for insulting women. You will find many stories which portray women in negative way while men are in a positive way
- They encourage me to buy the tabloids as I want to know exactly what the society is doing and how much young women are indulging in sexual acts despite HIV/AIDS threats.

Comments by men

- They write about mischief so it is okay to have such pictures and stories.
- I know the stories are about scandals so I don't mind the pictures.
- They portray women nudity; depicting commercialisation of sex. In our culture this is unethical.
- They are portrayed in unfair costumes which leave some of their body parts out. Despites all that I don't care due to the fact that most women are not forced to put on such clothing; they do it at will.
- It is women themselves who want to be depicted in the newspapers.
- They are funny stories so I like them.
- The sexual images should be tones down a bit.
- The presence of sexual images in tabloids sends a clear and uncompromising view that women are not important at all in the society. They are simply tools to satisfy the sexual urge of men, which is a totally wrong perception.
- Tabloids undermine the respect of women in the society.
- Women do not get their fair treatment in the tabloids.
- Women as sexual objects should be totally abolished in tabloids.

Gender awareness

The monitoring yielded some examples of gender aware reporting. An example is an article entitled *"Asha baraka nusura atwangane"* (Asha Baraka in near brawl with police) in *Amani* on June 28 – July 01, 2007

The story is about how popular female artist Asha Baraka took on the police who were trying to stop her show which they said was noisy. In the ensuring argument with the law enforcement agents, Asha argued out her case and managed to have the show continue.

This is a case of an assertive woman who would not allow the police to stop her show without giving a satisfactory explanation for their actions. This piece reflects a woman with agency; she does not just sit and complain about being ill treated but takes control of the situation and opposes the order to have the music switched off. The portrayal of Baraka challenges the stereotype of weak women artists.



Asha Baraka nusura atwangane

Na Issa Mnally

Onyesho la bendi ya Twanga Chipolopolo lililofanyika mwishoni mwa wiki iliyopita katika ukumbi wa Mango Gadern jijini Dar es Salaam, nusura lisababishe Mkurugenzi wa bendi hiyo Asha Baraka kutwangana baada ya maafisa utamaduni kutoka manispaa ya Kinondoni kuvamia na kulazimisha muziki uzimwe.

Maafisa hao wakiongozwa na Mgambo wakiwa na marungu yao walivamia ukumbini hapo majira ya saa na kutaka muziki uzimwe kwa madai kuwa ulikuwa ukisababisha kelele.

Kufuatia amri hiyo, baadhi ya viongozi wa bendi hiyo waliokuwepo ukumbini hapo akiwemo meneja Hassani Rehani, walipinga amri hiyo na kuamua kumpigia simu Asha Baraka ili afike eneo hilo.

Mkurugenzi huyo alipofika ukumbini hapo naye alikataa amri ya kuzimwa kwa muzuki huku akieleza kuwa, kufanya hivyo kungesababisha vurugu kutoka kwa mashabiki.

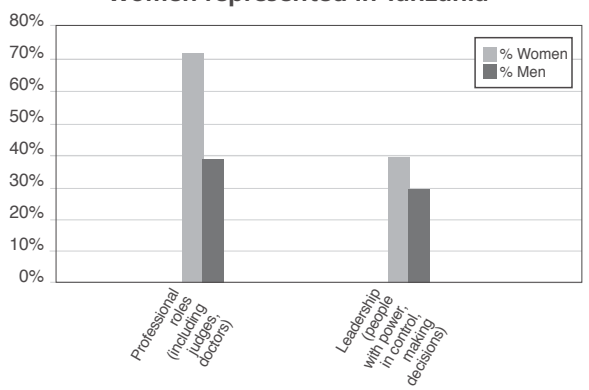
"Nyinyi kweli wauaji mna lengo la kutaka kusababisha maafa makubwa hapa ukumbini. Mnafahamu kabisa kuwa hapa zinauza bia na watu wameshalewa sasa ukiwaambia kuwa tunazima muziki kitatokea nini?" alihoji mkurugenzi huyo.

Aidha mmoja wa maafisa wa manispaa hiyo alifikia hatua ya kutamka maneno yaliyomchukiza Asha Baraka kiasi cha kutaka kuanzisha 'soo' lakini alizuiwa na mabaunsa wake.

WHAT AUDIENCES WANT

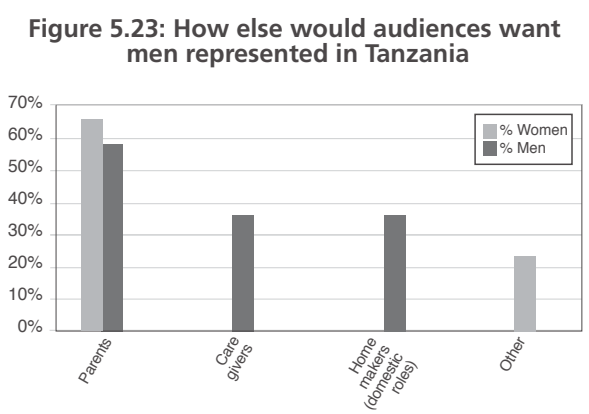
When given a range of roles that they would want to see more women in, both women and men tabloid readers in Tanzania selected professional and leadership roles (Figure 5.22).

Figure 5.22: How else would audiences want women represented in Tanzania



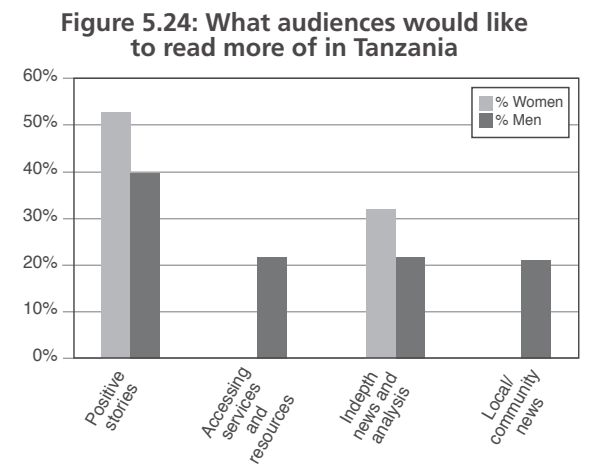
Women and men said they would like to see more men portrayed as parents. Women added to list caregivers and home makers (see Figure 5.23).

Figure 5.23: How else would audiences want men represented in Tanzania



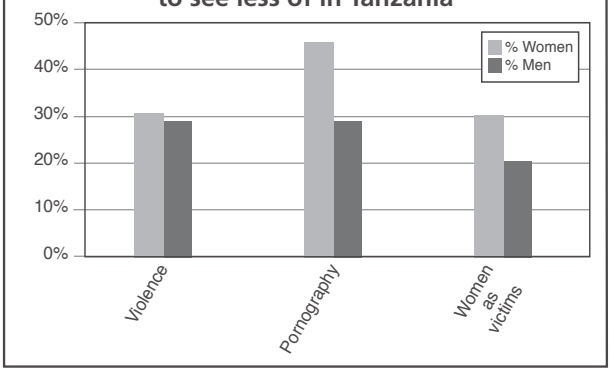
Asked what they would like to read more of in tabloids, women and men cited positive news as well as in-depth news and analysis. Men added local and community news, as well as stories of accessing local services and resources (Figure 5.24).

Figure 5.24: What audiences would like to read more of in Tanzania



Men said that they would like to see less violence followed by pornography and then women as victims. Women spoke resoundingly against pornography. They also felt that its high time tabloids stopped showing women as victims (Figure 5.25).

Figure 5.25: What audiences would like to see less of in Tanzania



Concluding comments

Tabloids are clearly here to stay. As one reader put it: "Despite the shortfalls that may appear in tabloids, forcing some readers to dislike them, I think they should stay. Tabloids are sometimes annoying but they go deep about how people can sometimes behave as animals though they are human."

One reader felt that tabloids "must focus more on stories which promote the common good and well being of the communities that they aim at selling their newspapers." Another added: "The papers should be written in such a way that every member of the community (old people, children) should be able to read them comfortably."

Several of the concluding comments by participants reflected the desire by audiences for women to "presented in a more respectful way." There were also calls for women to be "show as they are. If there are women judges, business persons we should see them."

Another added: "Tabloids should present women in positive ways and the source of stories should also be improved." Others commented that there is need to diversify the roles that women are portrayed in: "Not only celebrities should be presented; why not activists?"

Women and men readers stressed the need for tabloids to adopt better professional and ethical standards generally. Examples include:

- They should research well their news.
- The editors should verify the stories before publishing them.
- Tabloids should write true events.
- They should write incidents which are true not fictional e.g. the photos don't relate to the actual incidents and stories.
- They should balance the news and verify and they should educate the community.
- *Uwazi* paper should be closed down because they continue to lack ethics in their publication.
- They should publish researched and positive news not sensational news.
- The stories should get more balanced such that every member of the family, parents and the children can read them comfortably.
- The news in tabloids should be ethically and morally reviewed and edited.
- Tabloids should be realistic. Do not base stories on few people.
- Tabloid reporters should follow the principles of news writing so that they can make accurate information as most readers of these news papers are young people and women.



Photo: Trevor Davies

Chapter Six Conclusions and recommendations

6

This study was prompted by a debate between tabloid editors and their mainstream media counterparts about the role of tabloids in our emerging democracies and specifically their role with regard to gender equality.

Tabloids do not claim to provide much more than light hearted reading for their audiences. In turn, their audiences do not expect much more of them. Two key findings of the research are that what readers most like about tabloids are gossip and the chance to escape the daily drudgery of their lives as well as the fact that they are not a main source of news (TV, as it turns out, is where most audiences in the three countries turn for news).

However, one of the arguments in favour of tabloids is precisely that they are creating a new newspaper reading public among citizens who did not read before. Tabloids claim to be closer to communities; to carry more local news; more views of "ordinary" people and indeed to provide more effective services than government in some instances (like helping to find lost children.)

Editors of tabloids interviewed for this study argued forcefully that they do not believe in "sleaze" as a way of selling papers nor should slang and colloquial language degenerate into blatant sexism.

Measured against these standards, tabloids fall short on many counts. The research shows that women constitute 25% of tabloid sources; 35% of the images; that gender as a topic hardly features and that subtle and more blatant forms of stereotyping abound.

Audiences are aware of these gender biases, especially the blatant stereotypes which women readers in particular find offensive. While women read tabloids, the majority do not go out and buy them, relying instead on papers bought by others. This suggests that tabloids have in fact not reached women audiences in the manner they claim to have done.



Audiences want more positive news

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Contrary to the marketing theories, many men either said they don't notice sexual images or that they find them degrading of women; very few cited them as their main reason for going out to buy tabloids. Many men said that one of the reasons they read tabloids is for news. They would like to be able to rely on tabloids more for the day's news.

Across the board, what readers said that they most

dislike about tabloids is that "they do not always tell the truth" and "they exaggerate." It is patronising to assume that less well educated readers do not want or deserve content that answers to basic professional and ethical standards. In their comments, many readers spoke about the need for truth and verification; thorough research and the need to respect the dignity of subjects, especially women.



Gender activists get down to business in Tanzania *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

Overall, tabloid audiences say that they want less negative news; violence; pornography and images that degrade women. They want, in many instances, a better mix of entertainment and news. Audiences also want more local, human interest news, including on subjects such as education, health, HIV and AIDS.

The popularity of agony aunts, especially among women, is a reflection both of a need for more socio-psycho counseling services at community level as well as more interactive news forms. Tabloids could, for example, light the way when it comes to on-line discussions and bulletin boards on topical social and lifestyle issues, opening up the Internet to readers who have never had access to this space, especially women.

The many examples in the research of gender aware reporting, like breaking down taboos on gay marriages; showing that the disabled can lead healthy and normal love lives; as well as profiling professional and assertive women who are in control of their destiny show that tabloids have a positive role to play in challenging gender stereotypes. Unfortunately, however, the mixed messaging ends up being confusing to readers. It is the blatant images and headlines that leave the more indelible marks than the "soft" stories on the inside pages.

This brings us to the role and responsibility of the media - any kind of media – in emerging democracies. While we do not advocate censorship in any form, we believe that the media has a significant role to play in developing a critical and informed citizenry. There are also certain bottom lines with regard to respect for human dignity to which every citizen and organisation is enjoined by the Constitutions that are the supreme law of the land. Tabloids are not above these norms. They, like any other form of media, must be held accountable, by their readers, by media watchdogs, and most important by themselves.

Against this background, the following are key recommendations emerging from the research, divided into different stakeholder groups responsible for their implementation.

Gender and media activists:

- Conduct campaigns to publicise the findings and devise strategies for increasing gender awareness and sensitivity in the tabloid industry.
- Broaden media literacy, consumer awareness and activism within, especially the taking up of complaints against sexist reporting through existing regulatory bodies.
- Conduct further research into the extent to which sex actually sells, and conversely measures that can be taken to grow female audiences and markets.
- Sensitise tabloid owners and editors of the role that tabloids plays in socialisation and in either perpetrating or challenging stereotypes.
- Offer support in developing HIV and AIDS, gender and diversity policies through the Media Action Plan on HIV and AIDS and Gender.
- Seek partnerships with tabloids around specific campaigns like the Sixteen Days of Activism; the 50/50 and the "Making IT work for gender justice" campaigns.

Tabloid owners and editors

- Adopt Codes of Conduct and policies that define sexist reporting and imaging and seek to promote more inclusive, gender-aware editorial content.
- Involve women in the drawing up of such guidelines.
- Have in-house complaints mechanisms that give readers the chance to complain and obtain redress at quickly and at no cost.
- Encourage complaints of a gender nature and act on these as such cases play a significant role in prompting debate and change.

Gender ministries and public bodies

- Publicise the findings of research such as this and engage with tabloid owners on more progressive approaches.
- Form partnerships with tabloids in providing advisory services to women, for example on domestic violence, making use of the newspapers as well as their websites, and using this as an opportunity to empower women in the use of ICTs.

For better or for worse, Southern Africa is in the grips of a tabloid explosion. Press freedom and the discovery of new markets among readers previously not reached by the written media have led to a mushrooming of newspapers that are not only tabloid in form but also in content - visual; sensational; superstitious; feeding off local celebrity news and scandals. Women's bodies are unashamedly used as a selling point. Yet these papers have a large following among women (even if many are secondary rather than primary readers). They reach millions of people. They claim, at least in their inside pages, to give more space to the views and voices of "ordinary" men and women than the mainstream media and to provide better information services to the community than many state-run services. How true is this? Can tabloids be part of the march to transform gender relations, or are they just another of the many reactionary forces to be contended with? Timely, provocative and well researched, this sixth issue of *Mirror on the Media* by Gender Links and partner organisations is the first comprehensive study not just of gender and tabloids in Southern Africa, but of this phenomenon in the region more broadly.

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