A Study on South African Media Organisations
(Print and Broadcasting)

TOWARDS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION:
ISSUES OF RACE AND GENDER IN MEDIA ORGANISATIONS

FARHANA GOGA
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Acronyms
CMS  Graduate Programme in Cultural and Media Studies
HR    Human Resource
NAIL  New African Investments Limited
SANEF South African National Editors Forum
SAPA  South African Press Association
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
Towards Affirmative Action

The Brief

Consistent with the Windhoek declaration on Creating an Independent and Pluralistic African Press, and the UNESCO Work Plan on Communication, Information and Informatics in the Service of Humanity, this project is designed to enhance the free flow of information and ideas in South Africa. The project is particularly directed at a country... where the democratisation process has been embraced, and where disadvantaged communities have made strides towards self-empowerment through the media. This takes note of the fact that, for media freedom and diversity to flourish, all sections of society should have access to both the production and consumption of media materials. (McClain 1994:1)

In SOUTH AFRICA, racial discrimination was legalised and thus became ingrained in all aspects of life, including the media. Further, the inherent discrimination against women has been clear-cut. Women’s access to media positions and to media itself, has not been equal to that of men.

The aim of UNESCO’s initiative is to build a new generation of media organisations and media workers truly representative of South Africa’s cosmopolitan society to facilitate the democratisation process (McClain 1994:7). To this end, the projects proposed focus on both public and private sectors of the media. The particular focus of the projects is the promotion of women and women’s rights in and through the media, together with the empowerment of rural and other marginalised communities through the development of media initiatives (McClain 1994).

In this regard, projects in public service broadcasting, community radio, print media, human resource development in media organisations and women in the media are necessary. Research, publishing and monitoring the media will be essential aspects that need establishing, to stimulate both debate and development within the media industry. Through the projects, there should be a circulation of knowledge and the development of skills to effectively deal with issues that arise in the new democracy. Further, this empirical evidence is important as a basis for future media policies (McClain 1994).
The brief for the project conducted by the Graduate Programme in Cultural and Media Studies (CMS) was in Human Resource Development. The project had to explore issues in human resource, such as demographic distribution within the organisations, recruitment, promotions, experiences of staff access to media and affirmative action. Further, UNESCO envisaged that the information would be used in the conducting of three workshops. Firstly, a round table conference conducted by the Department of Communication. Secondly, workshops enabling management to address issues relating to gender equality and raise gender awareness. Thirdly, increasing gender awareness amongst journalists. The Graduate Programme in Cultural and Media Studies (CMS) will conduct the latter two. The particular focus of the project was women in the media. The brief to CMS included a complementary project on Public Service Broadcasting, exploring the history, theory and future of public service broadcasting in South Africa.
Towards Affirmative Action

Preface

UNDER THE Apartheid government, racial discrimination was legalised and became ingrained in all aspects of South African life. The release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 began South Africa’s official progression towards democracy.

In 1992, in preparation for and in fear of perceived changes by a new government, business reacted by the implementation of affirmative action. The affirmative action practised at this stage was one of “window dressing” rather than a commitment to redressing past discrimination (Sikhosana 1993 & 1996).

Since 1994, the new government has been passing legislation to bring about effective change. The Equity Act, passed in 1998, stipulated the steps and regulations which companies must follow to redress the past discrimination, including that experienced by women. All companies with fifty or more employees must comply with the Act. Media organisations are in a particular situation where they not only report on, but also have to implement government policies.

Media research, in South Africa, has focused on reception and representation of women and people of colour in the media (Garda 1999; Prinsloo 1996; Roome 1998). There is little research exploring personnel distribution within the media and such research has focused on specific companies. Susan Manhando (1994) focused on the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and Karen Jackman (1998) on Independent Newspapers in Durban.

This particular project, Towards Affirmative Action, explores the distribution of personnel within media organisations and ties in with the philosophy of the Graduate Programme of Cultural and Media Studies (CMS). The University of Natal’s CMS seeks not only to educate students, but also to have an active involvement with issues of concern to media organisations.

CMS is aware of the past racial and gender discrimination in our society and the difficulties in redressing these. Thus, the particular focus of this project was on the issue of race and gender representation in the media workplace.
The purpose of the project is to provide an understanding of the state of media and the daily professional experience of personnel employed within media institutions. Such an investigation would provide a foundation for workshops sensitising media professionals to some of the issues raised while focusing on gender awareness. The workshops will be a first step towards raising awareness and addressing the concerns. It is assumed that further attention would be given by each company, on both a daily basis and through the establishment of committees and future workshops, to deal with problems that may arise.

This document is presented in twelve sections:

1. The **introduction** outlines the need for this project.

2. The **method** states the aim, lists the subjects (both the companies and interviewees) and the materials used and outlines the analysis applied in exploring the information collected.

3. The **definition** explores the essential concepts of race, gender and equality.

4. In the section titled **policies**, discussions of the **Equity Act** and companies’ policies occur.

   The rest of the paper is an exploration of the state of the industry based on the questionnaire, interviews and other research.

5. **Affirmative action: the concept**, explores what affirmative action is and who should benefit from it. The need for affirmative action is discussed. We conclude that affirmative action is necessary.

6. In **critique of affirmative action: the concept**, we find that members of staff do not have an in-depth understanding of affirmative action. Examination of both the negative conceptions and benefits occurs.

   The conclusion drawn from sections five and six above is that affirmative action is a contentious concept.

7. In **evaluating affirmative action**, evidence supporting the arguments that affirmative action is both effective and ineffective is provided. Where it is effective, an examination of the general distribution across the industry and the changes within each job category from 1994 to 1999 is offered. Where affirmative action is not effective, we examine the economic distribution, the 1999 distribution across job categories, and
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then specifically women in the media. Perceptions supporting both viewpoints are noted.

The conclusion drawn is that management is more inclined to believe that affirmative action is effective. This is because they examine numbers and policies as their reference point. On the other hand, members of staff feel that it is not effective. They focus on their individual achievement and opportunities as the baseline for evaluation.

8. From the sections above, it becomes clear that possibilities for informal discrimination for people of colour and women exist. This section explores these possibilities. They include obstacles for women, sexual harassment, assignment allocation, relationships within the organisation, and problems experienced by trade unions. These are difficult to address as they are not tangible problems but rather based on experiences and concerns of staff.

9. Given that affirmative action is about redressing past discrimination, there is a need for companies to provide training as part of their affirmative action policies. In the section on affirmative action and training, analysis of some of the problems experienced by management and the experience of training by staff is offered.

10. Recommendations are made in the way forward.

11. Conclusions are drawn.

12. The technical problems encountered are included for anyone wishing to do this type of research in the future.

It should be noted that community media organisations were not approached as the UNESCO brief instructed research to target profit making organisations.

It must also be noted that the interviews are not meant to be representative of the entire population in media organisations, but rather to provide a lively narrative into the experiences of some staff.

Further, the use of ‘black’, ‘coloured’ and ‘white’ as opposed to ‘Black’, ‘Coloured’ and ‘White’ is to ensure that these groups are not objectified and further to acknowledge that race is a constructed concept. The use of ‘Indians’ is only because of the reference to a continent, and refers to South Africans who are of Indian decent.
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Executive Summary
Executive Summary

The study was conducted between January 1999 and July 1999, with the write up between August and December 1999

Motivation for the Research Project:

South Africa is undergoing a period of transition from Apartheid to democracy. In this process, redressing past discriminatory factors is of utmost urgency and importance. The Equity Act and within this, affirmative action, are ways in which these are being addressed. Every organisation that fits into the designated category, in terms of employees, have to follow the terms laid out in the Act, this includes media organisations.

The media not only report on but also implement the changes presently occurring countrywide. Given this position, there is a need to assess the implementation of these changes within the media. Further, this period of transition may cause strain on staff and management. During this process of change, it may be difficult to allow people the opportunity to discuss their experiences and hence to address the needs of staff. Internationally, in the past few years, UNESCO has been involved in exploring the distribution of gender within media organisations and the role that women play within the industry. Research reveals that there is an under-representation of women in senior positions and there is a need to promote women and women’s rights. UNESCO feels that such an initiative is particularly needed in South Africa, which has the most developed media industry in the region, but where imbalances in access to media are probably most marked (McClain 1994).

UNESCO contracted The Graduate Programme in Cultural and Media Studies (CMS, University of Natal) to undertake a national survey. CMS acknowledges that both race and gender issues need addressing, hence the survey Towards Affirmative Action: Issues of Race and Gender in the Media was undertaken.

Aim of the Project

The aim of the research was to analyse trends from 1994, address racial and gender imbalances, as well as investigate the experiences of members
Towards Affirmative Action

of staff in the industry. It intended to answer some of the questions around race, gender and equality in the media, specifically around issues of:

- demographic representation of groups in the industry and different job categories,
- benefits and salaries,
- allocation of assignments,
- treatment by management,
- issues of sexual harassment and discrimination, and
- training.

Collection of Data

The sources used to collect the information were:

1. A questionnaire completed by the Human Resource (HR) Managers in the industry exploring the demographic distribution.

2. The affirmative action policy of the media organisation (where available.)

3. Meetings with HR Managers, through which we developed an idea of the issues in recruitment and the difficulties in meeting the demands placed on companies in relation to the Equity Act.

4. Personal interviews with individuals (males and females of all races in management, journalism, administrative and technical positions) in the industry to explore experiences of staff. The issues discussed in these were:

- Understanding of affirmative action;
- Conditions of employment;
- Allocation of assignments;
- Relationships with managers and colleagues; and
- Issues of harassment.
At the time of the study the following applies:

**Affirmative Action: The Concept**

The general understanding of affirmative action is that it is about providing opportunities for previously disadvantaged people, which includes people of colour and women.

Although disability is part of affirmative action and we acknowledge that the rights and needs of homosexual staff have to be addressed, this research does not address these issues. However, homosexual staff express problems of not having their partners recognised and not being given the same rights as partners of heterosexual staff.

**A Critique of Affirmative Action: The Concept**

Members of staff acknowledge the need for affirmative action and identify that women and people of colour should benefit from it. They do not however appear to have an in-depth understanding of the concept. Some of the problems identified with affirmative action are:

- Feelings of marginalisation by Indians and coloureds;
- Whites experiencing it as reverse discrimination;
- A feeling of entitlement by blacks;
- The creation of unrealistic expectations by blacks; and
- The development of a middle and elitist class with no real upliftment for the general population.

Thus, affirmative action is a contentious concept.

**Evaluating Affirmative Action**

There is a lack of women and people of colour (blacks, Indians and coloureds) in senior positions. White males dominate senior positions and a male corporate culture exists.

Overall distribution figures show that there are more males than females in the industry and more people of colour than whites.

The categories of analysis were taken from the Patterson scale. The results in terms of these categories follow:
Towards Affirmative Action

White males tend to dominate on a decreasing scale, from the category of top and senior management to that of skilled labour. The next most predominant, in the grades of middle management to skilled labour is white females. This is followed by males of colour, except for the category of middle management where they have a stronger presence than white females.

Thus, males, particularly white males, dominate the top and senior management positions. People of colour dominate the positions of semi and unskilled labour. White women are well and equally distributed across levels of middle and junior management. The distribution of white males, white females and males of colour is more or less equal at the level of skilled labour. Further, women are concentrated in administrative fields.

There is a salary discrimination. Generally, whites earn more than people of colour and males earn more than females, except for the new affirmative action category of junior management in which the reverse is true.

Generally, managers and technical staff feel that the implementations of affirmative action are effective. Journalists and administrative staff, however, feel that it has merely been "words reduced to paper". The overall distribution in the industry and the examination of changes within each grade, or job category, since 1994 shows that affirmative action is effective. However, an examination of the distribution across grades, as well as the economic distribution provides evidence that affirmative action is not effective.

Thus affirmative action, in practice, is contentious.

Possibilities for Informal Discrimination

Women experience the following obstacles for promotion:

- They are not trained for leadership positions;
- They have to work harder than men do for the same recognition;
- The organisation is male dominated and a male corporate culture exists;
- Women in senior positions are often undermined;
- There is a belief that certain jobs are suited to certain genders;
- Women receive no concessions and no facilities to aid them in the other roles they play, such as mothers, which then hinders their chances of promotion and even applying for the promotion.
There is an under-reporting of harassment.

In keeping with international research, the interviews revealed that members of staff, within the organisation and across all levels, are not aware of what constitutes sexual harassment.

Men are stigmatised when they apply for positions stereotyped as being for “females” such as receptionists.

Misunderstandings occur due to different cultures and a lack of understanding of cultural pressures.

On the one hand, black journalists feel that they have to do double the work as they work in townships and other areas. They report that whites are only allocated to urban areas and some say that blacks are only ever allocated assignments in townships. This, they conclude, results in stories being stereotypical and proves that job allocation based on race continues.

Added to this problem, blacks express that when they then write stories, white editors change them to fit into established stereotypes, and hence that affirmative action is not effective in relation to content. A white editor feels that this interpretation merely reinforces the belief that white editors and journalists are racists. He went on to say that stories are subbed due to copy-errors, rather than to fit into a general stereotype. Hence, companies must be cautious where addressing these issues.

Unions express a fear of the loss of skills should they insist on training and promotions. They further express the lack of time to fulfil their union duties.

Affirmative Action and Training

There are different types of training:

- **Tertiary education**

  There is a discrepancy in education.

  Management feels that there is a lack of qualified people available to fulfil jobs, especially in special areas.

  Further, managers report that staff do not feel passionate about their careers.

  Journalists expressed that specific problems faced by women should be addressed in educational institutions.
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- **General training in the organisation**
  
  Journalists and administrative staff do not feel that training is effective. They also feel that even when general training does occur within the company, in-house promotions seldom occur. The company would justify it by saying that the staff lacked experience.

- **Training of affirmative action appointees**
  
  They feel that while affirmative action appointments did occur, there is a lack of training and development.

  While some of the above observations are resonant with international trends, many are specific to the present South African experience. In general, managers tend to think in terms of the institution. Staff, however, think in terms of their individual achievement, recognition and promotion.

  Broadly, residue effects of Apartheid explain racial discrimination, demographic and salary discrepancies and the limited number of people available for specialist jobs. The view that women are regarded as wives and mothers and not as breadwinners may explain gender discrepancies in salaries and the lack of facilities. Social practices, attitudes and beliefs largely explain gender discrimination (male, female, homosexual).

**The Way Forward**

Based on these and other issues, the following are recommended:

1. **Increase representation** of females and people of colour in management positions.
2. Equalise **salaries**. Further, redress issues of salary distribution in company policies.
3. Somehow, focus on addressing the **disillusionment** experienced by white staff at present, while simultaneously redressing the past discrimination.
4. Address the **marginalisation** experienced by Indians and coloureds.
5. Eliminate the feeling of **entitlement**.
6. Provide opportunities for **discussions** among staff, teaching women to be more assertive and men to change their attitudes. Teach both genders ways to address contentious issues, the role of language and ways to address and reconcile social and domestic issues with careers. Included in this may be the establishment of crèche facilities, paternity leave and the scheduling of meetings to accommodate school lift clubs.
Executive Summary

7. Provide **union** representatives with time to attend to union matters.

8. **Unions** can possibly stipulate that their members should continue to contribute to union work after promotion, should unions take up issues of training etc.

9. Provide more **training** to develop people and move them progressively up the ladder

10. Provide adequate **training** for affirmative action appointees.

11. Provide **training**, such as in language, to broaden the areas into which white reporters can go. This will ensure the development of cultural understanding and reporters will be able to explore a wider range of stories.

12. Ensure that when all journalists enter a dangerous area they have constant contact with the organisation and are properly **debriefed** on their return.

13. Develop ways in which editing of stories is done so that both journalists and editors understand each others’ view. The message of the story must not be lost while writing skills are developed. This can be achieved via **workshops and discussion groups**.

14. Discussions between **tertiary** educators and professionals must occur to address the issues raised and the needs of the organisation and staff.

15. Allow women opportunities to explore how they want to conduct themselves as managers.

By providing equal opportunity, there can be an eventual move towards recruiting and promoting people based purely on their skills.

**The Benefit to the Company: The Workshops:**
Two workshops will be conducted in each of the three centres, Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town.

a. A workshop for senior management to address some of the issues raised in this study and other issues relating to gender is to be organised by the Graduate Programme in Cultural and Media Studies.

b. A workshop for journalists to address some concerns raised in the study on gender, co-ordinated by the Graduate Programme in Cultural and Media Studies, is planned.

The workshops are aimed at ameliorating situations of possible tension in the industry regarding race and gender. It is also anticipated that companies will use this information for their training programmes and in the formulation of their policies.
Introduction
Introduction

Given that South Africa is undergoing a period of transition, companies are grappling with redressing discriminatory factors within their structures. UNESCO proposed projects designed to aid in this democratisation within media organisations. This particular project focuses on Affirmative Action: Issues of Race and Gender in the Media. Methods to collect data included a questionnaire and personal interviews. The purpose of these was to gain a general understanding of the demographic distribution and experiences of staff. Various methods of analyses were applied. The results revealed that the overall race and gender distribution was adequately “representative” of the South African population. Affirmative action is a contentious issue with management and members of staff having different opinions on the effectiveness of its implementation. On the one hand evidence that the implementation of affirmative action was effective was provided in the change within each job category since 1994. On the other hand, evidence that the implementation of affirmative action was not effective was noted in the present race and gender discrepancies in the demographic distribution across the job categories and salaries. Members of staff had a limited understanding of the concept. There was an under-reporting of harassment. Other findings included problems encountered by unions, homosexual staff and men who applied for positions traditionally considered female. Race discrepancies occurred in assignment allocation and editorial changes. Cultural misunderstandings were evident. Managers reported that there was a shortage of qualified people for jobs. Gender discrepancies occurred in training. The findings can be explained through the examination of international and local research. Racial discrimination, demographic and salary discrepancies and the limited number of people available for specialist jobs were explained by Apartheid laws and residue effects. The view that women are regarded as wives and mothers and not as breadwinners, explains the gender discrimination in salaries. Social practices, attitudes and beliefs largely explained gender discrimination (male, female and homosexual). The implication of the research is that companies and policy makers can be made aware of some of the present experiences and needs of their staff and address them through policies and training. There also needs to be a review on training of professionals within tertiary institutions based on the needs of the company and experiences of staff.

South Africa is undergoing a period of transition from Apartheid to democracy. In this process, redressing discriminatory factors (race and gender) is of utmost urgency and importance. The Equity Act and within this, affirmative action, are ways in which these issues can be addressed.

The Apartheid government used legislation to inhibit the economic advancement of people of colour ensuring that the labour force has historically been a migratory black class. Labour was strictly controlled and segregated into townships (Kraak 1996). Access by people of colour to jobs and economic resources (land, capital and technology) was restricted through laws and regulations. The repercussions were that in the early 1990’s, this country had an oversupply of black unskilled labour and a shortage of blacks and females in skilled, professional and management positions. Many skilled women did not even enter the market and many black women entered at a very low level. In 1993, blacks owned only 2% of the total assets of the private sector. Whites held 90% of the top
Towards Affirmative Action

managerial positions in the economy (Innes 1993). Further, the government budget enhanced the development of whites through education, health facilities and housing. Added to this was the demeaning of African culture and values and the adoption of white values and patterns of behaviour as the norm (Nkulu- Nkulu 1993:11). This made it very difficult for blacks to penetrate the centres of power in this country. With the recognition that change had to occur, there was a crisis in the labour market. Legislation, minimal government budgets for blacks and the lack of an inclusive culture, placed blacks and women at a disadvantage (Nkulu 1993; Sikhosana 1993&1996).

Presently, blacks own 16% on the JSE alone (Businessmap report 1999). White males continue to dominate top and senior positions.

Discussions and literature is readily available on the issue of race. Researchers have however largely neglected the question of gender equality. Thus, there is a national need to explore issues of gender in industry, and in the media industry in particular. This national need ties in with the broader international emphasis by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

UNESCO has in the past years been involved in exploring the distribution of gender within media organisations worldwide and the role that women play within the media industry. Media is an important source of inquiry as it is a site of struggle. The mass media should not only report on events, legislation and issues of interest, but should also be an example of how one can address these points of tension in society. These UNESCO studies found that there has been an increase in the demographic representation of women in media companies. In some countries women are even in the majority, however, they do not hold positions of power and decision-making. Men continue to dominate the decision-making positions in the media industry (UNESCO 1987).

South African feminist scholars have historically been attracted to Marxist feminism (Hendricks and Lewis 1994). This is because of its emphasis on the close interaction of class, race/ethnicity and gender (Mamathoko 1992). While studies conducted have examined race and affirmative action in South Africa, very few studies have explored the state of media specifically.

In 1996, Jeanne Prinsloo identified three areas that need addressing in relation to women in the media, namely: the portrayal of women in the media, the coverage of women’s issues, and the representation of women in the industry. She researched the first two. She found that the portrayal of women as sex objects or as mothers/nurturers and in the private/affective mode rather than
the public/rational mode reserved for men predominated. The media validated
the stereotypes and the audience, it was believed, internalised these.

Both their studies explored the distribution of women across categories in
specific companies. Manhando focused on the South African Broadcasting
Corporation (SABC) and Jackman focused on the Independent Newspapers
in Natal.

The role that women play in the media is an international debate and issue of
concern. Further, the socio-historical context in South Africa makes the present
government policies and their implementation important aspects to observe
societal change. Most topical then, is the role of the media amidst all this
change.

Against this background, it is important to investigate the ways in which
affirmative action has been implemented in terms of the new Equity Act,
1998. Such an investigation should also explore the historical and current
opportunities given to women of different racial groups. The specific objective
of this research project was to analyse movements under way since 1994 with
the aim of addressing racial and gender imbalances in the work place in print
and broadcasting organisations in South Africa. It was also to analyse whether
all gender and race groups have been and are being incorporated equally in the
process of transition, at all levels within the industry.

The process of change is a potential strain on management and staff. With the
excitement of new-found opportunities, comes the added pressure to produce
and perform in an unfamiliar situation (Leresche1993). During this process
(of change), it may be difficult to allow people sufficient opportunities to
discuss their experiences and hence address the needs of staff. There may be
feelings of isolation or perhaps camaraderie, which go unacknowledged. In
this light, not only the race and gender distribution of employees, but also
staff experience of the training, benefits and salaries, allocation of assignments,
treatment by management and issues of sexual harassment and discrimination
have to be examined. Such an analysis provides an indication of the state of
and the needs of the media industry. Further, this analysis is necessary to map
general trends and offer policy suggestions to the industry. Workshops,
discussing the findings and hence concerns, will occur. These workshops will
also aim at raising gender awareness and hence, how individuals are constituted
as gendered- beings. The study also hopes to aid in addressing problems
experienced and to facilitate the creation of a healthy environment by providing
equal opportunity for all.
Method
Aim

Given the present historical context and government policies in South Africa, an exploration of changes in the demographic distribution and the lived experiences in the media industry, is necessary. This will provide information for the industry to assist development within organisations during this period of transition.

The collection of the data was conducted between February and July 1999.

Subjects

The research team approached twenty-three print and broadcasting media organisations. The thirteen companies who returned the completed questionnaire are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Total number of employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e-TV</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Newspapers</td>
<td>2712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail and Guardian</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natal Witness</td>
<td>445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Africa\ Sowetan</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penta Publishing</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramsy, Son and Parker</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reuters</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South African Broadcasting Corporation</td>
<td>3324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South African Press Association</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times Media Ltd</td>
<td>1571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touchline Media</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umafrika</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Associated Magazines, Naspers and New African Investments Limited (NAIL) assisted in the study. The survey also received endorsement from South African National Editors Forum (SANEF).

The overall distribution of the subjects for the one-to-one interviews, in terms of race, gender and job description, was as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MANAGERS</th>
<th>JOURNALIST</th>
<th>TECHNICIAN/ ADMIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Male</td>
<td>White Male</td>
<td>White Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Female</td>
<td>White Female</td>
<td>White Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloured Male</td>
<td>Coloured Male</td>
<td>Coloured Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloured Female</td>
<td>Coloured Female</td>
<td>Coloured Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Male</td>
<td>Indian Male</td>
<td>Indian Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Female</td>
<td>Indian Female</td>
<td>Indian Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Male</td>
<td>Black Male</td>
<td>Black Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Female</td>
<td>Black Female</td>
<td>Black Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interviewees were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACE</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. White</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Editor/manager</td>
<td>Union rep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Coloured</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>Union rep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Black</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Coloured</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>Homosexual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Indian</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Coloured</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Coloured</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Technical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Indian</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>Job threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. White</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Union rep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Indian</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Senior journalist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Black</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Black</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. White</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Indian</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. White</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Editor/manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. White</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Black</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. White</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>HR Manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. White</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>HR Manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Coloured</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>HR Manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Black</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>HR Manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. White</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>HR Manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Indian</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>HR Manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Materials

The Graduate Programme in Cultural and Media Studies formulated a research questionnaire. It comprised eleven questions both open and closed-ended in nature. The main purpose of this questionnaire was to illicit quantitative data on the demographic structure of the organisations. The particular focus was on how this changed, between 1994 and 1999, in relation to race and gender.

The Human Resource (HR) Department from each media organisation granted permission for the research team to send them the questionnaire to peruse. Farhana Goga, the Research Manager then met with the HR Managers to discuss the survey, their expectations of it and generally, their experiences of the current changes. A guarantee of confidentiality occurred.

Thereafter, the research team approached HR Managers to liaise with staff to obtain volunteers for the qualitative aspect of the survey, which involved one-to-one interviews. The research team requested HR Managers to circulate a letter explaining the purpose of the survey and its benefits amongst members of staff. The objective was to obtain a selection of staff, including people from different race and gender groups, as well as from different job categories, such as managers, journalists and technical staff. The volunteers had to contact either their HR Manager or the research team in Durban and appointments were set up in each province. The research team chose individual interviews as opposed to focus groups as the method of enquiry, to ensure that free and open expression of opinion occurred.

Farhana conducted nineteen one-to-one interviews with staff. Due to the issue of confidentiality, the names of the organisations that participated at this stage are withheld. The face-to-face interviews took place in a private room on the premises of each organisation. The conducting of interviews on neutral premises would have been ideal but was not possible due to time constraints by staff. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. The interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed and analysed. The interview explored, through open-ended questions, issues of affirmative action, including their understanding of it and its effectiveness, the problems with it and the training and workshops provided. Staff relayed their experiences of unions and the difficulties
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experienced by unions. Explorations of problems encountered in the company, relating to demographic distribution, assignment allocation, experiences of homosexual staff, obstacles for women and salary discrimination occurred. Further exploration of harassment, job allocation and relationships within the organisation occurred. The interviewees expressed opinions on how the company should move forward. All the interviewees spoke in their private capacity. The Graduate Programme in Cultural and Media Studies (CMS) retains the transcriptions.

The problem experienced at this stage was the small number of companies, which agreed to interviews. Within these companies, there was also a lack of volunteers. Some companies, who agreed to interviews, did not inform the staff of the research and did not circulate the letter sent by the research team. Thus, I spent time with interviewees explaining the project, ensuring confidentiality and obtaining their consent.

Where available, organisations supplied their equity/affirmative action policy.

Analysis

The aim of the research was to analyse general trends within the industry rather than individual companies and sectional trends. Analysis of the quantitative data for statistical significance was not possible, as organisations provided the data in varying forms. The study could not undertake a complete comparison between the years from 1994 to 1999 and across all the companies and in all sections of the questionnaire, due to a lack of information provided.

I used Ms-Excel to generate graphs for an exploration of the following (as applicable to those companies that responded):

- 1999 race and gender distribution of the sample;
- 1994 and the 1999 race and gender distribution within each grade/job category; and
- 1999 race and gender distributions across grades in the companies.

Ms-Excel enables an exploration of quantitative data. In this project, demographic information was required to set the context for the experiences by staff.
The interviews are not meant to be representative of the industry's staff, but to provide a narrative of some of the present experiences. The qualitative data, including the interviews with the Human Resource managers and the employees, the open-ended questions in the questionnaire and the companies’ affirmative action policies, revealed themes and issues relevant to the changing climate of the industry.
DEFINITIONS
To fully investigate the issues of race and gender in the media, it is necessary to tease out the important concepts of race, gender and equality.

Race

The concept of ‘race’ is based on the particular physical features of individuals within a group. Race is however, not a biological reality, but rather a socially imagined, ideological tool used to construct and understand social relations. The fact that only physical features determine a person’s racial group indicates that ‘race’ is an aspect of the social construction of reality by society. Race then, is part of the process of constructing reality. This does however not detract from the fact that the experience of it is very real.

‘Race’ has been (and continues to be) instrumental in establishing beliefs, attitudes and behaviour in human relations, both between individual people and between countries. It is used to maintain existing international and national social structures through discrimination (which is morally unacceptable) (Miles 1989: 71). Affirmative action, in South Africa, is geared towards trying to correct the imbalances caused by the misconceptions on which Apartheid was based (Manhando 1994).

The use of ‘black’, ‘coloured’ and ‘white’ as opposed to ‘Black’, ‘Coloured’ and ‘White’ is related to the idea that race is a social construction rather than a reality. Further, people should not be objectified based on this construction. The use of ‘Indian’ refers to the continent, from which these members of society originally descended. It thus refers to South Africans of Indian descent. The term ‘people of colour’ refers to blacks, coloureds and Indians.

The focus of this research is on race/culture and gender; thus, a closer examination of the concept of gender is necessary.

Gender

*Behaviours that mark masculinity and femininity are socially constructed, neither innate nor determined once and for all by a biological substratum...* (Malson et al 1989:4).
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Feminists, in the 1970's conceived the concept of gender, as a means of conceptualising the social construction of masculinity and femininity. Whereas sex identifies the biological difference between men and women, gender identifies the social relation between men and women. It is a system of human relations and as such is socially constructed. Embedded in it are issues of dominance, power and rule. Gender is therefore a category of analysis (Flax 1989; Malson et al 1989; Mannathoko 1990 in Meena 1992; Tsikata 1992).

Gender is both an analytical category and a social process and is relational. It is a thought/construction/category that helps us make sense of particular social worlds and histories. It is a social relation that enters and partly constitutes all other social relations and categories from which it cannot be separated such as class, race and religion. Gender then, is historically and culturally differentiated and hence is changeable (Flax 1989; Mbilinyi 1992).

Given the present discriminatory gender relations that exist, an examination of the concept of equality is necessary.

**Equality**

Equality is defined as

*both a goal and a means whereby individuals are accorded equal treatment under the law and equal opportunities to enjoy their rights and to develop their potential talents and skills* (Pietilä and Vickers 1990:46).

Equality as realisation of rights previously denied

Equity is defined as:

*Treating people fairly as opposed to treating them equally, as if they had the same needs and background. It allows treating people unequally to obtain the goal of fairness* (Hicks, 1997:24).

In South Africa, the majority of blacks and women hold jobs in the manual, unskilled and semi-skilled sectors. There is an over-representation of whites and males in white collar, managerial and professional occupations. These discrepancies need to be addressed (Sikhosana 1996). Cultural, institutional, behavioural and attitudinal discrimination have denied rights to blacks, coloureds and Indians and in particular women.
These previously disadvantaged groups view equality as the realisation of rights (Manhando 1994:108). The local government should be instrumental in redressing past discrimination, through affirmative action, argues Gwagwa (1991). This would empower women and transform gender relations.

The attempt to achieve this type of equality forms the basis of the Equity Act, in operation since August 1999.
POLICIES
1. The Employment Equity Act

The Employment Equity Act is just one Act of many which together constitutes the “employment law” in South Africa. All media organisations fall under the group targeted by the Act (see Government Gazette, 19 October 1998, No 19370, Act No. 55, 1998: 8). The Act has four steps, the first (Commission for Employment Equity) and fourth (Links to Government Procurement System) deal with the overall governance of the Act. The second (unfair discrimination) and third (affirmative action) steps deal with the specific objectives embodied in the Act (Mdladlana 29 April 1999):

a) The First Step: the Commission for Employment Equity

On May 14 1999, the Commission for Employment Equity came into effect. It is in charge of setting out the codes and regulations necessary for the implementation of the rest of the Act.

The Equity Act has twin objectives, as specified in the Government Gazette No. 19370 (19 October 1998:12-15) and the Minister of Labour (29 April 1999:1). These constitute the second and third steps of the Act, namely to:

b) Eliminate unfair discrimination through promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment; and

c) Entrench equality through affirmative action by addressing disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups, in order to ensure their equitable representation in all-occupational categories and levels within the workforce.

b) The Second Step: Unfair discrimination:

The essential objective at this stage is to prohibit discrimination based on gender, sex or race, particularly of black women. This part of the Act came into effect from the 2 August 1999.

It states that no person may unfairly discriminate, directly or indirectly, in policy or in practice, against an employee, on one or more of the following criteria: race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language or birth.
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Further, there is prohibition of sexual harassment of any nature.

An employer however, may take affirmative action measures consistent with the Act. He/she may also distinguish, exclude or prefer any person based on an inherent requirement of a job.

c) The Third Step: Affirmative Action

The affirmative action measures of the Act apply to the designated groups, defined in the Act as blacks (Indians, Coloureds and Africans), women and people with disabilities. The affirmative action measures are in place to ensure that suitably qualified people from the designated groups have equal employment opportunities and equal representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workplace. It took effect at the beginning of December 1999. Affirmative action measures include means to:

- Identify and eliminate employment barriers, including unfair discrimination;
- Diversify the workplace;
- Make reasonable accommodation for people from the designated groups;
- Ensure the equitable representation of suitably qualified people from designated groups in all occupational categories and levels in the workplace; and
- Retain and develop people from the designated groups and implement appropriate training measures, including those providing skills development.

The employer is required under this section of the Act to:

a) Consult with employees;

b) Conduct an analysis of its employment policies, procedures, working environment and a profile of the workforce;

c) Prepare an employment equity plan; and

d) Report to the Director-General.

To provide support and assistance to companies in drafting the plans and reports as they transform themselves in accordance to the law, the Department of Labour will:
❖ Publish codes, regulations and guidelines;
❖ Conduct public seminars;
❖ Prepare a video; and
❖ Consider an interactive website.

d) The Fourth Step: Links

The fourth and last step refers to the **links with government procurement system**, whereby any company wishing to tender for government contracts will have to comply with the **Act**. It will be implemented in September 2000 and April 2001.

South African businesses, including media organisations, have to meet the requirements of the **Act**, which is often a challenging task. This is therefore an exciting, though often very difficult stage in South African business and media history.

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2. The Companies’ Equity Policies

Most media organisations and companies were, during the period of the study, working on their Equity Policy to fit into the **Equity Act**. Companies were at different stages in the development of their policies. Some had completed the analysis, the policy writing and even the establishment of their plan as required by the **Act**. Many, with existing policies, were in the process of revising them to make provisions for the new labour laws. This often entailed the abandonment of the existing document to make provisions for a new one. Others, who have never had a specific policy in place, were in the process of establishing ones as laid out in the Labour Laws. Hence, very few companies submitted their policies to the research team. For these reasons, combined with the companies’ emphasis on confidentiality, a detailed analysis of companies’ affirmative action policies was not possible.

In general, however, the policies show that media companies are particularly aware of the needs of this country to redress imbalances in relation to race and gender, as addressed in the **Employment Equity Act**. Companies believe that the previously disadvantaged groups include “Indians, Coloureds and Africans” and they have often made allowances for these groups in the policy. Companies focused on recruitment and promotion, training and development, remuneration, establishing targets and methods of achieving the
Companies are aware of issues raised in the Equity Act

The rights of homosexuals and their partners must be addressed

Race is the predominant focus

implementation of strategy, which included a monitoring unit. They were also concerned with nominating a specific person responsible for each specific goal, as directed by the Equity Act. The remuneration however does not focus on redressing the race and gender discrepancies that exist within the organisation.

Specific mention of homosexuals does not occur. While some policies acknowledge the rights of homosexuals, they neglect to make provision for their partners as well as heterosexual common law partners. They should deal with these issues specifically, as this is not considered the “norm” and hence cannot be taken for granted. Further, through interviews with members of staff, it is obvious that most companies have excluded these partners from medical aid benefits. The policies do not make it clear whether they regard these partners as family or not. If the partner falls ill, for example, it would also therefore be unclear whether the company may grant compassionate leave to the employee. Homosexual employees have stated that while they do not feel discriminated against in the company, they do feel excluded because of the benefits they do not receive as a result of their sexual orientation.

While women and people with disabilities are members of the targeted group, race is the predominant focus.
Affirmative Action: The Concept
THE GENERAL understanding of affirmative action is that it is about providing opportunities for previously disadvantaged people, which includes people of colour and women.

Although disability and homosexuality continue to be issues of concern, this research does not address these issues. Homosexual staff however, expressed problems of not having their partners recognised and not being given the same rights as partners of heterosexual staff.

The questions that arise then, are “what is affirmative action?” and “who should benefit from affirmative action policies?” The definition affects implementation and is very important in assessing its result.

1. A Contentious Concept

Various groupings see affirmative action as a contentious concept, with a variety of meanings. Innes (1993:6) argues that it has two meanings and purposes, namely to:

i) overcome discriminatory obstacles that stand in the way of achieving equality of employment.

ii) introduce preferential policies aimed at promoting one group over others to achieve equality of employment.

The implementation of affirmative action depends on the specific emphasis of the company and government, through its policies and laws.

2. Origins of Affirmative Action

Affirmative action originated in the United States in the 1960’s. It was a response to pressure by the civil rights movement; thus, race was instrumental in deciding its beneficiaries (Sikhsana 1996). In the United States, unlike South Africa, its purpose was to uplift the position of oppressed minority groups, rather than that of an oppressed majority. Thus, its application and impact in the US would be different from that in South Africa. Nevertheless, affirmative action is a process of transformation. It is evident that the context of the particular country within which the affirmative action operates is of utmost importance (Schreiner 1996).
Towards Affirmative Action

3. Definition of Affirmative Action

a) General Definition in South Africa

The implementation of affirmative action began in South Africa in 1992. It is thus firmly located in the political transition from apartheid to democracy.

The South African transition brought with it a strong belief that, in addition to political freedom, blacks must also be provided with access to means and resources to overcome their past economic marginalisation. Unless this occurs, the patterns of economic control, ownership and management produced by the apartheid system will remain unchanged even in a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic South Africa (Nkuhlu 1993).

Deracialisation and equalisation of economic opportunity will not automatically occur, with the abolition of apartheid laws (Sikhosana 1993). Redressing the effects of past discrimination via social measures is necessary. In achieving these goals, blacks should receive preferential support, have access to resources and be given the opportunity and space to contribute to the development of the organisation and to the economy of the country. Hence the mindset of both blacks and whites has to be changed (Nkuhlu 1993). Affirmative action is thus conceptualised as a tool to bring about a changing set of social and economic relations, in the transition to democracy. Therefore, in South Africa, affirmative action in general is a

... part of transformation away from apartheid, poverty and exploitation, towards a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic nation in which the socio-economic conditions of the majority, that is, black working women and men, are substantially transformed in a manner which is empowering (Schreiner 1996:80).

In the early days of political transition, companies implemented affirmative action policies in anticipation of a change in government. They feared that unless they voluntarily changed their policies, blacks would revolt. However, they also acknowledged, and continue to acknowledge, the need to remove obstacles to black advancement. Further, at present, companies must tread a careful path in the implementation of affirmative action policies. This is necessary so that informal discrimination does not replace formal discrimination. Informal discrimination is embedded in attitudes, behaviour,
subconscious values and beliefs and is therefore harder to remove (Innes 1993). This is the general context and definition of affirmative action.

b) Closer examination of the definition and beneficiaries of affirmative action in terms of Management and Trade Unions

On closer examination, the definition of affirmative action by trade unions and management is very different. Trade unions view affirmative action in South Africa as a comprehensive strategy to overcome the imbalances caused by Apartheid and racism. It is therefore collective empowerment, the aim of which is to make up for long term deficits. Affirmative action seen in this light should address wide-ranging goals of work-place equality rather than simply developing a small number of management trainees. Further, trade unions, unlike management, target gender as well as racial discrimination. Affirmative action for trade unions reflects Schreiner’s (1996) view that it is a process of development and empowerment.

Management on the other hand generally sees affirmative action as any action that is taken specifically to overcome the results of past discriminatory practices (Hall and Albrecht in Hugo 1986:55). Further, as a process of identifying, recruiting, training and promoting blacks (and less often women) into junior management positions (Alperson 1993a:120). For business, affirmative action is necessary to increase access, affordability and the creation of opportunities. This ensures that blacks take an interest in the business. This would then serve to enhance the company (Thomas 1994; Montsi 1994). Thus, the focus by management is on individual empowerment. (This view is, in fact, reflective of earlier beliefs of white managers that blacks are not interested in the company.)

The search for consensus between management and trade unions continues.

4. Beneficiaries of Affirmative Action

a) Race

It is clear that people of colour should benefit from affirmative action. This view is also accepted by managers and trade unions. Less examined is gender.
b) Gender

*Human activity or material life, not only structures but also sets limits on human understanding: what we do shapes and constrains what we know* (Harding 1987:185)

In South Africa, most past research on affirmative action has focused on race. However, women in South Africa and internationally are also recipients of discrimination in the workplace. Like racial discrimination, gender discrimination is also historic.

Distinct trends have occurred internationally regarding women in the workplace. Initially there was a disregard of women as workers. It was only out of “necessity” in World War 2 that they were encouraged to enter the workforce. Thereafter, they were encouraged to return to the home (Rappaport and Rappaport 1993). In the 1970’s, through the Contemporary Women’s Movement, women expressed their desire to re-enter the workplace. There were no concessions and provisions made for those issues perceived as women’s responsibilities such as childcare. Career women were therefore disadvantaged. Pressure from women’s movements resulted in discussions that the structures had to change. There were however, no tangible outcomes. It was only in the late 1980’s, when research revealed that these concerns were no longer female concerns alone, but males expressed them as well, that some structures changed to address these needs. These took the form of child-care facilities, maternity leave and in some countries, paternity leave. However, the real structure and role stereotypes remained unchanged (Rappaport and Rappaport 1993). Today, *society remains structured in ways, which favour men and disfavour women in the competitive race for goods with which our society rewards us: power, prestige and money* (Tong 1989:29).

Ideally, society should acknowledge and consider the differences (biological, social or cultural) between men and women and then equalise the problem. Instead, there is often a disregard for women as active members of society. Further, men regard them as not fitting into the work place (Hersch 1993). *The point is that women and men must be treated as equals, and this requires that women are not penalised for the ways in which they are different from men...* (Hersch 1993:171). The above trends are also true for the media industry (Beasley 1989).

Although most women experience the general difficulties described above, they are not a homogenous group. Power relations among men
and women, racial and ethnic groups, classes, women and men in rural and urban areas differ across cultures (Harding 1987; Mbilinyi 1992; Steeves 1989). This is particularly relevant in a multicultural society such as South Africa. Black women feel particularly alienated from the broader research agenda of the women’s movement. They feel that past research focused on the needs of white middle class women. Further, they feel that a broader analysis is needed which focuses on their experiences as black working class women, that is as experiencing triple discrimination. This discrimination is related to them being women, black and workers (Alperson 1993b; Matabane 1989; Rhodes 1989). Harding (1987), while acknowledging that women share different experiences because of culture, race and class, argues that women can and should come together to form a resistance to fight oppression at the general level.

c) Evidence of Race and Gender as part of affirmative action
The interview discussions reflected the difference in definitions and beneficiaries.

With regard to definitions: The general understanding was that affirmative action is about providing opportunities for previously disadvantaged people. Managerial and editorial staff focused on individual empowerment and were thus more in keeping with the ‘managerial’ viewpoint. Journalists however focused on collective empowerment (except for interviewee 19). They were thus more inclined to support the trade union definition of affirmative action.

Regarding beneficiaries: The interviewees had different perceptions of who qualifies for affirmative action. Generally, white and older males felt that it applied to race alone while females and younger males, both usually from disadvantaged communities, felt that it included both race and gender.

The question “What do you understand by affirmative action?” was put to all the interviewees. Some of the responses follow. The responses not only related to their understanding but also indicated the beneficiaries of affirmative action.

A young black female journalist (3) responded:

My understanding is that there have been people who have been disadvantaged. These include blacks, Indians, coloureds
Towards Affirmative Action

and women. They are disadvantaged by not being able to enter the job market equally to another group of people and to me affirmative action seems to address that issue by allowing fair chance to all.

An older coloured male and a union representative (2) stated:

Affirmative action for me is the redressing of that situation where people who were previously disadvantaged (blacks) are given the opportunity to develop ... even if they do not have the highest qualification.

A white male editor (17) said:

A mechanism, to address the wrongs of the past, in as much as they impacted on people who weren't given the opportunity. My understanding is that people from previously disadvantaged backgrounds... (in terms of race ... women are not seen as having the same priority...) will be given the same opportunity to reach higher status on the basis that should the candidate be of the same quality as a white candidate, that person will get the job.

With a view to bring to our company, through all the steps of seniority, a balance which somewhat reflects the society we live in.

An Indian female manager (5) expressed:

Affirmative action is an opportunity for people, the less privileged from before, it doesn't necessarily mean that you are a black person, you could be anyone like a women, black, coloured, Malay, anyone from the disadvantaged sector who must now be given the opportunity and training to advance. You must take a person who shows a potential and develop them to work their way up; it doesn't just apply to managers or senior positions. Affirmative action doesn't mean that just because you are of the right skin colour you will get the job, it also doesn't mean kick a person out if they are doing a good job.

A black male manager (13) stated:

To me it is to affirm people who have been disadvantaged. We see it as being organised as priorities: 1. African women; 2. African Men; 3. Indian and coloured males and females. To a certain extent, white women but they would be the last priority.
These feelings were also found by Manhando (1994) who found that people regarded affirmative action as racially neutral and did not fully understand who should be benefiting and why. One such person was an Indian presenter and producer who stated (Manhando 1994:56):

My understanding is that people will have the ability to do certain tasks, who for some reason have not had the opportunity to do so, will be given the opportunity, making certain that not race or gender should come into question. We are talking about affirmative action, relating it to blacks and women in particular but this will create problems in the future. What about the white people, especially the young? Twenty years from now, we will need another policy to redress a policy that disadvantaged the minority. I cannot help but feel that we are going to live through this programme again, targeted at the white population.

A black male young journalist (19) who was different and related to individual, rather than a collective empowerment responded:

Affirmative action in most cases is linked to black empowerment, or so called black empowerment. And my theory in life is that there is no such thing as black empowerment. There’s always self-empowerment.

A white male, working on the technical side, (10) whose job was threatened, offered a completely different view of affirmative action:

Affirmative action is a way to get cheap labour. They want to get rid of the qualified people, and bring in semi-trained people. I say get the person trained, give him the opportunity to learn and then compete fairly. Don’t just get them into the company and don’t train them. Uplift them to a point, help the person.

All interviewees expressed the need for both affirmative action and a company policy document specifically addressing affirmative action. In keeping with international trends and academic theory, affirmative action was seen as both a way of overcoming past discrimination and a way of introducing policy aimed at promoting one group over another to achieve equality of employment. Hence, affirmative action cannot be racially neutral (Degenaar 1980; Innes 1993).
d) Disability and homosexuality as part of affirmative action

The Employment Equity Act states that affirmative action will apply to race, gender and disability. Homosexuals experience specific problems that need addressing. Discrimination against both homosexuals and the disabled receives little attention by business in South Africa.

I was fortunate to interview a male homosexual administrator (interviewee 6). While exploring the questions he remarked:

> When people talk about gender, they always refer to male/female but you know gays also have very distinct problems. It seems as though you are focusing on the promotion of women and I’d like it if you would include my experience as a gay person.

Farhana:

> Although our initial aim was to focus on women, we do recognise the needs and rights of gay people and do feel it is important to address these as well, hence feel free to talk about your specific experience.

He went on to say:

> They (the company) talk about equality, but there’s no gender equality and you talk about man and woman and not gay and lesbian … with your pension fund, provident fund, medical aid they don’t have provision for your partner. I would put a man but I can’t because he’s not my husband. Our policy fund, pension funds don’t give you the opportunity to make your boyfriend, your partner the right to claim your pension/provident fund, if you should die. I think they should actually include this by law. Just recently somebody fought the case where his partner died and the company just paid him a lump sum and not the provident fund. I didn’t know that the constitution actually gave you that right until I read the article. But I think that the company should on black and white make provision for that as well, and the unions should fight for it.

Thus, it is possible that homosexual staff experience problems of not having their partners recognised and accorded the same rights as partners as partners of heterosexual staff.
I proceeded to ask the interviewee 1 (white male editor) and 12 (black male senior journalist) about gay rights:

*How are the rights of gays addressed by the company?*

Interviewee 1 (white male editor) responded,

*To be honest I don’t know. I think it’s not something that would come up because I think we’ve got a tolerant environment. Certainly any kind of discrimination against gays would have to be stopped. They are treated like anybody else, I think. And certainly I have never heard a complaint. But I think if there were complaints we would take them seriously.*

Interviewee 12 (black senior male journalist) responded:

*There is a commitment not to discriminate against people based on race, gender, sexual orientation etc ... sexual orientation is not a problem*

Farhana asked interviewee 12:

*Are you aware if homosexual partners are given the same recognition as heterosexual partners?*

He responded:

*I am aware that the company feels the need to review certain issues and chapters in their policies. I do believe the administration has taken great strides to have a policy in place that serves the interest of its employees.*

Unfortunately this study failed to explore the experience of gays more profoundly and did not tackle the experience of the disabled at all. From these responses, one may wonder if homosexuals experience discrimination. Further, there is ignorance around the company’s policies towards homosexuals.

5. The Need for Affirmative Action as Seen by the Interviewees

Given that the government has passed legislation to which companies are responding, and that we know what constitutes affirmative action and who
Towards Affirmative Action

should benefit, the next question asked was whether staff felt that affirmative action was necessary. Most interviewees replied “definitely”. Some interviewees expanded on this belief.

A white male technician (10) expanded:

Yes, everybody needs an opportunity. But I mean at the end of the day, you must pick the best person applying for the job, irrespective of his colour because your company can only benefit if the company benefits, the worker benefits.

A young black female journalist (3) responded:

Definitely without a doubt there is. For instance when I look at myself, I don’t think that I would have had this job 10 years ago, but I do now and I am allowed to compete … at least I have a fair chance at competing. So most definitely there is a need for it.

A coloured female administrator and union representative (4) responded:

I think so, … right now affirmative action is keeping them (the company) under control and not putting 90% of the whites in positions again.

The idea that careful implementation of affirmative action is necessary was expressed by an Indian female manager (5) who responded:

I think to a degree there is a need for affirmative action, but it must be implemented properly. I don’t believe it’s been implemented properly. There’s no use putting someone in a position that they can’t do. You are setting them to fail. I think you have to start training people to fill positions. And why you have to always take people from outside and put them in top positions when you can actually develop people from the bottom and work them to the top, within the company.

In general, people of colour and women were considered to be beneficiaries. There was also a belief that affirmative action is necessary.
A Critique of Affirmative Action: The Concept
WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING the need for affirmative action and being aware of who should benefit, members of staff do not hold an in depth understanding of affirmative action. Manhando’s 1994 study supports this. Many of the negative conceptions are international beliefs. An exploration through the literature and evidence from participants into these critiques and ways to counter them occurs in this section.

The negative connotation of ‘affirmative action’ has lead to many companies and the government referring to their policy as the ‘employment equity policy’ (Thompson 1994).

This section deals with the criticisms levelled at affirmative action.

1. Negative Effects of Affirmative Action

- Affirmative action has been criticised for being discrimination in reverse as it implies preferential treatment of certain racial/ethnic and gender groups. Some people view the policy as one against a particular group, usually white males. This however would only be true if there had been no discrimination before and if it was not aimed at equalising the past (Human 1993; Sikhosana 1993; Singh 1996).

Some whites experience affirmative action as a reverse discrimination. This causes cultural tensions within the company and places HR managers in a difficult position as blacks and whites feel that the other race is privileged. As one Indian female manager (5) commented:

*Often in the company issues are reduced to racial discrimination where a black says ‘why do the whites get the jobs and privileges’. And the whites say that blacks now have it too easy and they have privileges that whites don’t have. It is difficult to deal with.*

It is important that companies emphasise that affirmative action is not reverse discrimination as there was no equality experienced in the first place. The role of affirmative action as a simply a tool to combat racism, must be emphasised. At the same time, acknowledgement and alleviation of the retrenching effects experienced by white males is necessary.

Retrenchment is a problem experienced by whites, particularly males. This creates a low morale among the workers.
Towards Affirmative Action

A white male (10) related his experience:

At the moment, there is a lot of pressure on everybody because this company has just retrenched people. People are very uneasy as to where their lives are going. I mean I’ve been working in this company for 28 years and now I’m not going to be here much longer. As long as they need my skills I will be here but ... I’ve got two more years until I’m 55 and then if it falls apart. Fortunately, I have other skills that I can fall back on. But the younger person, I don’t know, especially those around 48, they’ve got a couple of years to go. It’s very demotivating.

However, not everyone feels threatened. A white female journalist (18) said:

Personally, affirmative action doesn’t threaten me, although if I had to look for another job, I’d be threatened. But in the company, I feel fine about it. I hope it goes well. I just hope they don’t get over the top about it ... where they forget about people’s abilities... and they’re just filling shoes.

Affirmative action elevates the status of the perpetual underclass and its aim is to re-dress past wrongs and restore equal access to the benefits of society. It is therefore aimed at equalising the past (Degenaar 1980; Human 1993; Sikhosana 1996; Singh 1996). The Human Resource Department must take an active role in promoting this belief.

- Affirmative action is criticised for establishing a quota system, which involves the setting of targets. This leads to a disuse of, and disregard for merit as a job criterion and a general lowering of standards (Sikhosana 1993). If resistance to a quota system occurs, the alternative is the establishment of goals, which focuses on what the company and the individual should achieve. This replaces a system of targeting set numbers, regardless of the actual progression of the company and the individual (Goldman 1979).

Even with quotas however, affirmative action should not involve the lowering of standards. The normal criteria in choosing the person and the quality of the product should not change. There is only the added criteria based on the targeted group (Sikhosana 1993). There
A Critique of Affirmative Action: The Concept

was no mention of this by the interviewees; thus, it would appear that affirmative action, as a quota system is not adopted by most companies in South Africa.

- Thirdly, affirmative action has been criticised for impacting negatively on the free market system and therefore being incompatible with economic growth. However, as affirmative action establishes a class division within the group, the market system continues (Sikhsana 1993). Further, business itself argues that an increased interest by the majority can only help the company (Montsi 1994).

Affirmative action is often associated with race (in particular), and gender, and ignores class and socio-economic conditions. The problem with affirmative action is that it only benefits the elite of the targeted group. Inequalities within the group continue, as the wealth does not trickle down. It does not benefit the most deprived of the community. It helps those of the disadvantaged group who already have some access to wealth, that is, the middle classes. In South Africa, this translates to people who had the finances to study, etc but lacked opportunities. In short, it will benefit the middle classes and does not reduce the class-based inequalities (Sikhsana 1993).

An Indian female journalist (15) expressed the fear of merely developing an elitist black class and ways to address this. She stated:

_There is a danger of a black elitist being established. The ordinary black person is hesitant to talk to those blacks that have the jobs, and those in higher positions are hesitant to deal with these people. I see this process leading to a class divide. The people who will end up benefiting from affirmative action will be people who have already benefited ... at least one generation is already benefiting through education ... where the parents probably went to a good school. So you have to come up with a time frame, you can also then at that stage make some things as part of the criterion ... you should find out about the economic status of the person and only take those people who did not go to such good schools._

This experience suggests that the critique of affirmative action as detrimental to the free market system is incorrect. Other studies found that affirmative action benefits the elite in a group and that the inequalities within the group continue. It increases and re-establishes a
class divide. Hence, it should be just one small step in the process of the transformation. One cannot dismiss the importance of and need for affirmative action, although also cannot ignore the possible negative effects of it either. Perhaps a time frame for affirmative action appointees should be established. (Sikhsana 1993; Straw 1989; Mandaza 1996).

Thus, negative perceptions persist seven years after the implementation of affirmative action programmes. The following issues are new to the international body of literature, although both Manhando (1994) and Jackman (1998) found these experiences in their research. Thus, the need to address these is prevalent.

- There is a feeling of marginalisation felt by Indians and coloureds. This includes a sense of not belonging within the organisations, although the company acknowledges through the affirmative action policy that they belong to the disadvantaged groups.

An Indian female (26) expressed a sense of not knowing where she belongs within the company:

_The minute you are an African person you tend to stand a better chance of qualifying for a position at the moment...so what do they regard us as? Are we black? Are we coloured or Indian? A few years ago, we were all regarded as black and now they differentiate._

Human Resource managers are aware of the problem. An Indian female manager (26) said:

_Indians and coloureds feel uneasy as to where they fit...it’s now blacks vs. whites, there’s no room for the Indian and coloured situation and they feel marginalised and their issues aren’t addressed in affirmative action; their issues must be brought to the fore, cross-cultural understanding must be created and we must not look in terms of blacks and whites._

- White managers complain that an attitude of entitlement prevails.

One white male manager (24) stated:

_There is a school of entitlement and this is not going to get the company anywhere, we must concentrate on merit rather that just placing people in jobs._
It is possible that affirmative action is creating unrealistic expectations by blacks and there is a need to assure whites of their jobs.

Black journalists were aware of these two problems. A black male journalist (12) stated:

*Two issues must be addressed: firstly, white people and white males in particular must be assured that they will not be unfairly discriminated against on the basis of their race and gender. Secondly, the policy must not create unrealistic expectations by young black employees of rapid advancement. It is trite that several companies traditionally employ black people, as either window dressing or to present a distorted view. We know of black people appointed with no real worth. These people are set up to fail and we must not create expectations that are unrealistic and we must provide ongoing and developmental training and assistance once they have achieved the positions.*

2. Benefits of Affirmative Action

While acknowledging the above problems with affirmative action, one cannot dismiss the benefits of affirmative action. On the one hand, the negative perceptions make acceptance of affirmative action very difficult and overshadow its benefits. On the other hand, the positive aspect of affirmative action is that it combats racism, and racial inequality. It elevates the status of a perpetual underclass. It addresses past wrongs and restores equal access to the benefits of society (Degenaar 1980).

Affirmative action is an effective way of addressing the imbalances of the past. It however, does increase class divisions through the establishment of a petty bourgeoisie within the targeted group. Affirmative action is therefore just one small step in the process towards addressing political, economic and social imbalances (Mandaza 1996; Sikhosana 1993; Straw 1989). As a process, it should be continuously examined, assessed/evaluated and modified on a general level, as well in terms of its implications and reactions (Straw 1989). Expansion to include gender is necessary.

Unless there is emphasis on these benefits and the eradication of the misconceptions that people have of affirmative action occurs, discrimination and undermining of the process will continue. Further, there will be constant questioning of the ability of people of colour and women.
Towards Affirmative Action

Interviewees were aware of both the need for and benefits of affirmative action (see above section and no 4. In affirmative action: the concept). At the same time, they felt that monitoring of the implementation of affirmative action is necessary.

The conclusion drawn then is that the concept of affirmative action is contentious.

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Summary

Some of the problems identified with affirmative action internationally, and in this study, are:

- that affirmative action is discrimination in reverse
- problems with a quota system
- its negative impact on the free market system
- the development of a middle and elitist class with no real upliftment for the general population
- feelings of marginalisation by Indians and coloureds
- feelings of entitlement
- the creation of unrealistic expectations and hence the need to reassure whites of their jobs

The benefits of affirmative action are that it:

- redresses past discrimination
- combats structural racism
- combats racial inequality
- elevates the status of the perpetual underclass
- restores equal access to the benefits of society.

Therefore the concept of affirmative action is contentious.
Evaluating Affirmative Action
HAVING EXPLORED perceptions and definitions of affirmative action, the study will now explore affirmative action within media organisations.

1. Affirmative Action is Effective

If affirmative action is defined in terms of management, that is, in relation to policies and individual empowerment, it becomes more of an investigation into overall distribution. Within the framework of this definition, the South African media in 1999 is more reflective of South African society, than in previous times.

a) Current Demographic Distribution of Media Organisations in Research Sample for all Job Categories

Race and Gender

There are more males of colour than any other group in the industry.
Towards Affirmative Action

Race

There are more people of colour than whites in the industry.

![Current Race Distribution of Sample](image)

These results would appear to be more reflective of the general population in South Africa than before. The problem however is in the distribution of gender and racial groups across job categories.

Gender

There are more males than females in the industry.

![Current Gender Distribution of Sample](image)

If one examines the national figures that the country consists of 54% females, then there is an under-representation of women in the media industry, although managers may feel that women are doing “well”.

42
b) Perceptions that Affirmative Action is Effective

Respondents who accepted a management view of affirmative action and those who believed that they have benefited from affirmative action also believed that affirmative action was working in South African Media. They felt that one should focus on the promotions.

When asked if he thought that affirmative action was effective, an older coloured male technician and a union representative (2) said:

Yes it is working. Take the Human Resource department for example, there’s no males there. It is predominantly female and predominantly coloured. In some of the other departments the head is also coloured.

A white male editor (1) stated that affirmative action was most effective in top and senior management positions rather than middle management and offered the following explanation:

Affirmative action has been implemented very effectively in various senior positions but there haven't been a lot of middle management moves on affirmative action for a number of reasons ... government pressure on proprietors put black editors in charge .. there aren’t a lot of senior highly qualified black journalists on the market, and those who are, have a damn good shot at those very senior positions.

An Indian female manager (5) said:

Yes it is effective, there has been quite a few changes going on.

African action is effective due to promotions especially in top positions

c) Changes Within Each Grade Between 1994 and 1999

A comparison between the 1994 and 1999 race and gender distribution within each grade also provides evidence proving that affirmative action is effective as change is noted. The number of people of colour and women are increasing in the higher grades. Further, there is a more or less equal distribution in the category of skilled labour, which is a change from 1994.
Towards Affirmative Action

The grades are based on the Patterson scales and include:

**Top and Senior Management (TSM):** Executives, chairpersons/ group managing directors, general managers, senior managers, editors in chief

**Middle Management (MM):** Group managers, engineers, productions, managers, accountants, editors

**Junior Management (JM):** This is a specific category in some companies

**Skilled Labour:** Senior section leaders, foremen, senior technicians, artisans, bookkeepers, journalists, photographers, scanner operators, sub editors

**Semi and Unskilled Labour:** Section leaders, interns or trainees, receptionists, secretaries, driver, junior clerk, filing clerk
Top and Senior Management

Since 1994, there has been a 9% reduction in the number of jobs held by white males in the 13 companies which provided access to its personnel files. There has been no real change in the employment of white women. A 4% increase in the number of jobs held by males of colour occurred. In 1994, there were no females of colour employed. In 1999, change occurred as females of colour hold 6% of the positions.

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Top and Senior Management 1994

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race and Gender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Males</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Females</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males of Colour</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Top and Senior Management 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race and Gender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Males</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Females</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males of Colour</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females of Colour</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some 'positive' change is noted
Middle Management

White males currently hold most jobs. This figure is however 12% less than that of 1994. There has been a 4% increase in the number of jobs held by white women. The jobs held by males of colour have increased by 10%, whereas those held by females of colour have decreased by 2%.
Junior Management

There has been a 10% decrease in the number jobs held by white males. A 5% reduction in those held by white females is noted. A 6% and 9% increase in those held by males and females of colour respectively, is evident. Reduction of white females in this category may be due to promotion to middle management.
Towards Affirmative Action

Skilled Labour

There has been an 11% decrease in the number of jobs held by white males, a 2% reduction in those held by white females and a 2% increase in those held by males of colour. The above changes in this grade have served to level the distribution between these sectors.

There has been an 11% increase in the number of jobs held by females of colour. There is now just a 5% difference, (as opposed to 15% to the next group in 1994) between them and the number of jobs held by the next two groups.
Semi and Unskilled Labour

The number of jobs held by males of colour has increased by 7%; those held by white males have decreased by 9%. The number of jobs held by white females has increased by 2%. The number of jobs held by females of colour has remained the same at 40%.

It is possible that the decrease in white men is due to retrenchment.

Semi and Unskilled Labour 1994

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race and Gender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Males</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Females</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males of Colour</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females of Colour</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Semi and Unskilled Labour 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race and Gender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Males</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Females</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males of Colour</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females of Colour</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, from 1994 to the present, statistically it would appear that slight change is evident and companies are implementing affirmative action.
2. Affirmative Action is Not Effective

a) Perceptions of Affirmative Action

People who felt that affirmative action was not effective responded with anger, disillusionment and sadness. These included journalists and administrative staff of colour. They expressed that the policy was in place but that in fact, in terms of them really benefiting, there were no real changes on a personal level. Power relations have not changed. Interviewees were asked, “do you think that affirmative action has been effective in the company”. A young black female journalist (3) responded that it was not something she saw both in the newsroom and in the final product:

No, I don't think so. The company has this thing of affirmative action but when it comes to practising it, I don't see it. I look at the news desk and I don't see it. When I need help doing a story I don't see it. When I write a story that gets subbed I don't see it. When I read the newspaper I don't see affirmative action, when it comes to stories being written and angles of certain stories, you don't see affirmative action. No I don't see it, no.

Often respondents acknowledged the existence of the policy. They however felt that the government forced the company into it and was not really committed to affirmative action. A coloured female journalist (4) said:

No, they're going through the motion ... but when it comes to applying for positions in the company, you get nowhere. They've got a piece in the affirmative action policy where they say they will give you training if you apply and you don't get that ... its definitely window dressing...

She went on to say that perhaps the company felt pressured into putting the policy in place.

I get the funny feeling that the government of the day is somehow forcing them to put the policy in place. Therefore, they have this thing in place where they can throw it on anybody's desk tomorrow and say yes, it is in place.
An Indian male journalist and union representative (11) responded that it was “words reduced to paper”.

All we have been having is words reduced to paper, and that to me is the company’s escape route. When they are approached they whip out their policy and say we have a policy. Now we don’t see that policy in its implementation. If it’s happening it’s not visible

A young black journalist (3) responded, talking about the effect of not having women and people of colour in top positions:

You know in the organisation itself we deal with people you see and we write about people, we are for the people and the problem that I have with this company is that they are not sensitive to the problems of the people. We are a media organisation; we are a mouthpiece, which we are supposed to strive to be. But the problem that I have is that when I open a newspaper I still see certain stereotypes being reinforced and it shouldn’t be that way, but it is.... We may have black people and women coming into the organisation, but again, they do not make decisions. Also they send us to areas because we know them, but then they change the story to fit into their belief, so what’s the point.

A white male manager (1) believed that the reason women are not in top positions is that they do not stay within the company:

Traditionally journalism has had possibly more than 50% women on the staff, but very few in senior positions and very few with a lot of experience in one organisation. In other words women don’t seem to stay, whether this is because there aren’t as many opportunities as there are for men, I’m not sure.

In general, males and females shared the notion that the women in high positions are merely there as a gesture and are token women.

An Indian male journalist and union representative (11) stated that there were some changes but that it was merely a gesture without there being a real desire to promote and encourage women:

There has been some change in the attitude but its more of a gesture than anything else. The gesture just says that we are a company who writes about these things happening in other organisations, that happens out there in the community, and before

Women appear to be in top positions as tokens

In terms of decisions and the product, affirmative action does not exist
Towards Affirmative Action

we are questioned we must make sure we are doing something so we cannot be questioned on the same thing that we are exposing. So its more of a gesture than a real desire to promote and to take care of its women and to sort of uplift them.

A coloured female administrator (4) reported:

There are a few token women... I see many women but not in management positions really. So I know there are a lot of women but in management no. The top three management positions in my department are all male.

A black female journalist (16) said that males still dominate:

The company will say that the attitude to promoting women have changed because a few have been promoted, but it hasn’t really changed. The number of males still dominates the newsroom. Even in senior positions, there aren’t that many women, if any. There are thousands of people of colour and women qualified to take senior positions, but they just expect us to work twice as hard to see if we can fit the positions.

However, staff in smaller companies reported differently.

A black male manager (13) said:

We are aware that we need to promote more women.

An Indian female journalist (15) in a small company:

I think there is a fair amount of women here, working here. We’ve got a night women sub-editor...

A coloured male administrator (6):

I think women are given a fair chance here.

The perception that affirmative action is not effective was further supported through the examination of the economic distribution and the race and gender, the race and the gender distribution across grades, that is, the actual distribution of power. Respondents were reacting to the distribution of power.
b) Affirmative Action as Economic Empowerment

Gender

If affirmative action means spreading economic benefits then it is not effective across both race and gender. In all categories but *semi and unskilled labour* and *junior management*, males earned about 11%-12% more than females. In *junior management* women earned more than men.

**Average Salaries by Gender and Grade (in Rands)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TSM</th>
<th>MM</th>
<th>JM</th>
<th>Skilled</th>
<th>Semi/Unskilled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Males</strong></td>
<td>258 007</td>
<td>174 065</td>
<td>129 401</td>
<td>91 346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Females</strong></td>
<td>229 231</td>
<td>153 276</td>
<td>140 401</td>
<td>81 924</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* TSM: Males earn 12% more than females
* MM: Males earn 12% more than females
* JM: Females earn 8% more than males
* Skilled: Males earn 12% more than females
* Semi and Unskilled: Females 10% more than males

The largest discrepancy was with males earning 12% more than females in *top and senior positions* and *middle management*.

Females earned 8% more than males in *junior management* and *semi/unskilled* positions.

Within the *semi/unskilled labour* category, there are more female receptionists, which is a higher earning job than the next job description dominated by men within this same grade.

The poor representation of women in top positions and their relatively smaller pay packages is an international trend. In general it is related to the belief that women are regarded as wives and mothers and not breadwinners (Dyer 1989; Gallagher 1981; Gallagher 1995; Hersh 1993; Johnson 1989; Joshi 1987; Manhando 1994; Smith et al 1989; UNESCO 1987; UNESCO 1997). In South Africa, the emphasis has been to redress race discrepancies rather than those of gender.
Towards Affirmative Action

Salary discrimination affects morale. In a 1984 study conducted by Smith et al (1989) on *Television: Sex discrimination in the newsroom in USA*, figures confirmed that women earned less than did men. From 1955 – 1983, women earned between 57% and 64% of male salaries. In 1986, women earned 70% of what men earned. Overall salaries decreased as women entered the media industry (Gallagher 1981; Smith et al 1989; Joshi 1987). Women also received less of an economic return for their years of experience. The explanations given by managers were that women spend a shorter time at work than men do and do not invest as much due to other commitments. Further, women take time off work to raise children and when they return their skills are stale (Lafky 1989). Women however argue that they leave because of the lack of benefits. They also argue that women leave because of the salaries. A black female journalist (16) in this study remarked: Many female journalists leave because of the salary.

Similar trends occurred in comparison of people of colour and whites concerning salary. People in small companies complained that they get “pathetic” salaries. This ensures that people in these companies often leave to join other companies. Journalists are not aware if there is a salary discrepancy across race and gender, an Indian female journalist in a small company (15) said:

*The salaries are pathetic and I don’t know if males, females, and the different races get different salaries, though I have always wondered.*

**Race**

The South African trend is that whites earn more than do people of colour. The data from the questionnaire revealed this, except for the case of the new affirmative action positions in *junior management*.

A coloured male technician (9) said:

*Whites are paid more.*