

Photographic Representation of

Women in the Print Media:

A case study of the *POST*

by

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

In Culture, Communication and Media Studies

University of Kwazulu - Natal: Durban

2010

DECLARATION

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts: in the Graduate Programme in Culture, Communication and Media Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. I confirm that an external editor was used and that my supervisor was informed of the identity and details of my editor. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences, University of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to:

- Prof. Jean-Phillipe Wade, who accepted me as a student;
- Dr.Damian Garside, for being so enthusiastic about my research, seeing my potential and continuing to supervise amidst trying times;
- Dr. Harry Garbharran for his precision in editing;
- Prof. Mike Chapman for taking the time to understand my situation;
- Zoe Molver, for being gracious and always taking the time to find the solutions;
- Prof. Keyan Tomaselli and Prof. Ruth Teer-Tomaselli for instilling not just the theoretical underpinnings of media and cultural studies, but imparting a love for them;
- Dr Kenneth Netshiombo for his continued support and determination to motivate staff;
- Prof. Annalie Jordaan and the DUT Postgraduate Department for the financial assistance;
- The late Ms Carol de Kock for her strength and support;
- Robin Sewlal, Reuben Nagoor, Reshina Ramsaroop, Mikhail Peppas, Farzanah Asmal, Ayesha Mall, Jeeva Rajgopaul and Thrusha Maharaj for their motivation and support;
- Brijlall Ramguthee, Gita Maharaj, Ravi Govender, Deena Pillay, Ravi Adimoolam, Candice Soobramoney and Joelene Mariah of *POST*, for their time and consideration, without whom this study would not have been possible;
- Ramola Naidoo and Saras Govender for their inspiration and vision;
- Zorka Duval for always ‘putting things into perspective’;
- My parents and grandparents for providing a warm, loving and solid foundation;
- Vasantha Moodliar for providing a steady supply of meals for my family;
- Kubi Rama, for helping to conceptualize the initial idea and continued strength;
- My husband, Nanda Soobben, for his fierce loyalty and unwavering support;
- My children, Sorubi and Dravid, for their understanding, respect and love; and finally to
- Veena Rawjee, for her generous nature, unstinting support, drive and determination to see me through this long, lonely journey.

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ABSTRACT

The under-representation of women in the media has been contested by gender activists the world over. Studies have indicated that women are more likely to be portrayed as models on advertising bill-boards than as serious news sources. Why are women continually portrayed in a narrow range of roles? If visual representation is a means of how we make sense of the world and women are continually portrayed in a narrow range of roles and particularly as second-class citizens, does that not shape our understanding of the world?

One of the critical areas of concern of the study was the construction, selection and production of gender images in the print media. In the case of *Post* newspaper, it is the media workers who, in order to boost the sales of the newspaper, select a model with a “pretty face” for their front pages. Surely there is more to these women than their physical beauty? According to the findings, models are selected for their attractive features. Photographs are carefully composed, enhancing the model’s appealing attributes. Thereafter the selection of photographs is done by the photographer, sub-editor and editor and produced in weekly editions of *Post*. At the time of the interview, the team of selectors was entirely male. Does this have a bearing on the selection of photographs? According to the findings, it does! When women journalists offer their suggestions during the selection process, they are completely disregarded. Based on the findings regarding the selection of photographs, it is evident that there is a bias towards the opinions of the males in the newsroom, in particular the editor. It is evident that the *Post* does not reflect Indian women on the cover of *Post*, instead it contributes to the gender stereotype of women depicted as models rather than news sources.

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

The abstract has provided an outline of the study. This chapter will provide an overview and introduce the research problem and its setting, the need for the study, the objectives of the study and the key research questions. The limitations and methodology will be presented. This chapter will present a summary of the chapters that follow and lay the foundation of the research paper. On this basis, the study now proceeds to providing an overview of the representation of women in the South African media, and its influence on the identity of Indian women

1.1 Preamble

Women constitute over fifty percent of the world's population (<http://www.prb.org/pdf05/WomenOfOurWorld2005>). However, women are under represented in the print media. Delegates at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September 1995 (www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/) identified women and the media as one of 12 critical areas of concern. One of the objectives at The Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 was to promote a "balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media" (Gill, 2003:1). Fourteen years later, with such vast technological advances in the media, there has not been a great deal of transformation in the media's portrayal of women. Studies in the Southern Africa media show that there are more women represented in advertisements on bill-boards than as news sources (Morna, 2006:4), demonstrating that women are much more likely to be photographed as sex objects than as subjects of news.

For many decades, women have appeared in a narrow range of roles and were often portrayed in the media as second class citizens. According to McQuail (2000:101), media messages were seen as "stereotyped and carrying a predominantly patriarchal and conservative ideology or pandered to male sexuality". The image of a woman in the media is often presented in "one dimensional stereotypes, such as nurturing mother, whore, vamp, dutiful wife, girl Friday or frigid career woman" (Parry and Karam, 2001:385). The images generated by the media give one the impression that women are more valued for their 'down-to-earth' approach, other than viewed as an appendage to the male counterpart in the story.

Of particular interest to this study is the portrayal of women on the front pages of Post. Post is a weekly national newspaper targeted at a predominantly Indian audience. Photographs published on the front page of selected editions of Post will be the primary area of research. The process and production of images as well as editing and lay-out will be analysed

through interviews with reporters, photojournalists and sub-editors. The study will attempt to investigate if women are perceived as decorative add-ons or serious and valued role-players in society. The study, therefore, demonstrates that “gender stereotypes are heavily embedded in all forms of visual images – photographs, clip art, cartoons, billboards, and television” (Seidman, 2002:94). Consequently, gender images and identity are created by the media. The study will attempt to critically analyse how Post constructs gender images and identity.

1.2 The problem and its setting

Research within the media in Southern Africa (Morna, 2002: 96) illustrate that more women are shown as victims, receivers and helpless sufferers rather than women who are “makers and shakers”. If these are the images that women are exposed to, how do they distinguish reality from the image? McKenzie (2002:97) maintains that the average person is “bombarded by about ten thousand media images every day” and these visual images often shape people’s attitudes and understanding of the world. A critical question that remains, therefore, is that if one is exposed to women portrayed as subservient and as victims, does that then not shape one’s understanding of the world? Presently, women occupy all levels of employment and are far from subservient, yet photographs in the Post, where women seem to be regularly stereotyped and shown steeped in traditional roles, portray another reality. In fact, the stereotyping of women in the media arises when “their role in society is represented as either housewives or mothers or sexual objects” (Tuchman, 1978:175). Such representations, according to Kidd (2002:77), are seen as “highly ideological and as serving to reinforce patriarchy”. Considering that gender equality is high on the list of South Africa’s progressive constitution, it is of concern that such fundamental stereotypes are perpetuated by certain sectors of the media.

Images are captured, often manipulated through ‘cut and paste’, cropping, highlighting, darkening and lightening. The images are framed according to what is important to the media workers. Other factors, for example, gender stereotypes are ignored. According to Seidman (2002:94), “visual images reflect and transmit the media workers’ deepest beliefs and understandings and this process sometimes create gender stereotypes”. Therefore media workers at Post should determine if they are aware of how stereotypes are created and what effect they have on society. In doing so, the collaborative representation method will be used by “examining pre-existing visual representations (studying images for information about society), and by collaborating with social actors in the production of visual representations” (Banks, 1995:1). The production team, made up of reporters, photographers and sub-editors, will discuss the process and production of the photographic image. As a South African woman of Indian origin, I am aware that the role of Indian women

has changed significantly, specifically since the 1860s. Indian women first set foot in South Africa as indentured labourers. Of the 152 184 indentured immigrants who arrived from India in 1860, 25% were women (Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 2000:11). They worked side by side with men, toiling the sugar cane plantations. However, nearly 150 years later, many Indian women in South Africa are well established in the social, political, educational and economic spheres. Judge Navinithum Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, is one example of a successful Indian woman in my particular community. However, it appears that women portrayed on the front pages of the Post seem conservative in demeanour, frequently perceived as an appendage to their husbands, almost as an add-on and not a 'stand alone'. I believe the Post could do well to address these injustices. It is within this context that this study sets out to examine the representation of women in the print media.

1.3 The need for the study

1.3.1 The selection and production of photographs

Baderon (2003:315) contends that the media “always tell a particular story, they encode a particular way of looking at the world”. Media practitioners draw upon their own experiences and notions about male and female persons – “about gender roles and behaviour; about how women and men act and think; and also our beliefs about people’s physical appearance, even their body shapes” (Seidman, 2002:94). Creative director and executive director of The Star, Dave Hazlehurst, stresses the importance of women in positions of decision making, without which, he argues “there can be no real change, and, consequently, design can only have negative gender implications” (2002:110). According to Hazlehurst (2002:110), “nothing sets the tone of paper more than pictures” and “everyone is involved – news editors, reporters, copy-tasters, editors, layout-subs, picture editors and copy-subs”. Therefore, editors and sub-editors have a choice in the portrayal of women. The image of women can change by the way the page is designed. As a photographer, I am aware of the various processes that can severely censor an image, for example: cropping, enlarging and highlighting often play an important part in the way the readers interpret or make sense of it. The photographic process of composition, including the use of lighting, varied apertures, filters, different lenses and editing, for example, cropping, enlarging, highlighting and darkening will be analysed. These processes change the meaning of photographs. Hamilton (1997:86) refers to the process as a “double process of construction”. The first part of the construction is the selection and framing of the images followed by the second process of textual information, in other words, reports and captions accompanying the photographs.

1.3.2 Gender Identity in representation

Identity is seen as 'fluid and dynamic' rather than static and staid. After the birth of democratic South Africa, "social configuration have started to shift, identities are in the process of being renegotiated and cultural borders are being transgressed" (Wasserman and Jacobs, 2003:15). Whilst under the old regime, identities were stifled, ethnicity was encouraged and what has currently emerged are "new forms of imageing", also recognized as creolisation or hybridity (Nuttall and Michael, 2002:2). The media, therefore, constructs cultural identities for its readers and identities come into being within representation (Hall, 1994:393). To what extent do the media construct masculine and feminine identities differently? In order to construct identity for readers, media houses have to incorporate key aspects of how a society wants to be conceived and represented.

The way a photograph is represented creates the identity of that particular subject. Hence, identity is not 'fixed'. Grossberg (1997:90) claims that "politics involves questioning how identities are produced and taken up through practices of representation". Post ought to take responsibility for representing women in a way that will help to break the shackles of patriarchy. Sexist stereotypes encourage people to believe that women are suited "only (and always) to so-called 'traditional' female sex roles and discourage people from accepting women who are strong, assertive, independent and self-confident, thus inhibiting women's ability to realize their full personal and professional potential (Carter and Steiner, 2004:14). Therefore, the fundamental problem lies in the misrepresentation of women. "What does it mean to live as a woman? To what extent does gender – our own identities as male and female, our ideas about what that might mean – shape our experience of the culture around us?" (Parry and Karam, 2001:383). This study, therefore, will illustrate how the media creates identities through representation.

1.4 Objectives of the study

This study focuses on the photographic representation of women in the Post. It, therefore, sets out to observe the factors that are considered during the various stages of the photographic process. In brief, this study sets out to explore how women are represented in the print media, in particular the Post. In order to solve this research problem, the following objectives were set:

- To review and critique the literature that informs current theories of representation; and
- To conduct empirical research with the staff at Post.

The emphasis, however, is on the photographic processes and techniques used when photographing women. Empirical research within Post will reveal the many factors that are considered during the various photographic processes. These photographic processes are:

- Composition;
- Selection; and
- Production.

From my experience as a photographer, the initial stage of the photographic process is the composition of a photograph. The photographer demonstrates the factors that are considered during the composition of a photograph. The second stage of the photographic process is the selection of the photograph. This process is carried out by the sub-editor. The sub-editor will illustrate what factors are considered when selecting a photograph. The final stage of the photographic process is the production of the photograph. The result is the production of the image on the printed page. Based on the findings from the literature review and the empirical investigation, the study offers recommendations.

1.5 Research questions

The key research questions are:

- How are women represented in Post?
- How does Post construct and produce gender images?
- What influence does Post have on Indian identity and culture?

1.6 Limitations of the study

The mini study places limits on the time and framework of the project. It, therefore, limits itself only to Post. Empirical research was conducted with a select population of Post. The study confined itself to the photographer, the sub-editor and two women reporters. The editor was not interviewed due to time constraints. The study limits itself to three editions of Post, although several editions were analysed. These three editions were published in 2008 and are typical and atypical of Post. In addition, staff drew attention to these particular editions of Post during interviews.. Whilst efforts were made to source historical material of Post, the library archives at Independent Newspapers were experiencing a few problems in terms of accessing the archival microfilm. Audience analysis was not considered as the mini study placed limits on the framework of the project.

1.7 Research Methodology

The above objectives are achieved by means of the following research methods:

- **Literature study**

A literature study using secondary sources of information was conducted. The aim was to establish, assemble and integrate theory with issues relating to the following:

- representation and identity;
- women in the media; and
- the selection and production of photographs.

Based on the literature review, a research instrument in the form of an interview schedule was prepared (Annexures A, B and C). It comprised open-ended and close-ended questions that were used in the empirical study.

- **Empirical research**

The researcher contacted the editor of Post and informed him of the intended study (Annexure D). Permission was granted to interview staff and make use of the archive facilities at Independent Newspapers. A select population of the staff at the Post was identified and contacted. Structured and semi-structured interviews were conducted with the photographer, sub-editor and two reporters. The interview schedule prepared from the literature review was used. The role-players interviewed are involved in the composition, selection and production of photographs at the Post. Photographs appearing on three editions of the Post were identified from data collected. Copies of these photographs appear as annexure E, F and G.

1.8 Summary

This chapter introduced the research problem and its setting, the need for the study, the objectives of the study and the key research questions. The limitations and the methodology were presented. The chapter presented a summary of the chapters that follow and laid the foundation of the research paper. On this basis, the study now proceeds to provide an overview of Post; explains the link between representation, identity and culture; examines the portrayal of women and thereafter attempts to describe how photographic images are produced and constructed by the media.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has provided an outline of this research study. This chapter sets out to provide an overview of *Post* and then attempts to describe how photographic images are produced and constructed by the media. The main debates centre on the *effects* of the media, their *representation* of the world, the factors shaping the *production* of media messages and the nature of the *audiences* consuming these messages.

This chapter thereafter explains how the representation of these photographic images influences gender identity. Based on this explanation, the chapter specifically examines how the selection and production of photographs have an impact on the portrayal of women and, therefore, influence the identity of women. Carter and Steiner (2004: 11) maintain that, “given the triangular relationships among texts, media organizations and industries, and audiences’ practices, at some level, one cannot discuss one theme without raising the other two”.

The key elements to consider therefore are:

- Women in the Media;
- Representation and Identity;
- Media Selection and Production;
 - Agenda Setting Theory;
 - Gate keeping;
 - Hegemonic Hierarchy
 - Production of Photographs;
- Semiotics and
- An overview of *Post*.

2.2 Women in the Media

As far back as the 1860s, feminists in the USA and the UK were contending for more progressive representation of women. Feminists protested as the magazines and newspapers of the day disregarded women who sought greater social, political, educational,

and economic rights. It seems as though feminists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were dissatisfied with the representation of women and were clearly intent on establishing their own periodicals (Carter and Steiner, 2004:1). Another factor was women's democratic participation, and the position of a newspaper in taking the democratic involvement a step further. A democratic press must also attract women. By the end of the nineteenth century, women insisted on space to express their public concerns (Holland, 2004: 69).

Although women contributed to the country's economic growth, in terms of income and purchasing power, they continued to have negligible roles in the shaping of the media. Holland maintains that the men who produce the pages, will continue to build their power on the decorative excess of the women who are pictures on them" (Holland, 2004: 69). Nevertheless, it seems as though not a great deal has changed. One has to remember comments of Brijlall Ramguthee (2005:1), editor of *Post*, citing the *Golden City POST* as "sleazy, salacious content". Similarly, former *Post* editor, David Wightman (2005:3), speaks of the *Golden City POST* as "publishing pictures of pretty girls on page three and exploiting the lax divorce laws of the time".

Research into media images of women increased in the 1960s with the 'second wave' of the women's movement. Feminist activists and scholars began to research how women were being portrayed in the media - including television dramas, news magazines, films and newspapers. The concern was that "sexist messages of these media forms socialized people, especially children, into thinking that dichotomized and hierarchical sex-role stereotypes were 'natural' and 'normal'" (Carter and Steiner, 2004:1). However, the researchers had decided that they needed evidence of sexism that could be used to challenge ways of representing women in the media. It was also hoped that the evidence would shed light as to the reason so many women apparently felt unable to rise above their second-class citizenship in society (Carter and Steiner, 2004:1).

In the 1970s, research into media representations looked towards the systems of patriarchy and capitalism. The notion of 'hegemony' came up strongly in the research. Antonio Gramsci (1971), an Italian political theorist, demonstrated how the concept of hegemony worked in relation to the various socio-economic classes. The concept of hegemony explains how and why 'dominant' classes have to "constantly renegotiate their powerful positions in relation to the 'subjugated' classes" (Carter and Steiner, 2004:1). Hall (1977:323) maintains that it is the media that perform the 'ideological work' of the ruling class. The media do not act as mouthpieces for the dominant class. However, media organizations "frame reality in a way that serves the interests of the dominant class" (Hall, 1977:323).

The media and other social institutions, for instance, the education system, religion and family, are central to these processes. It seems clear that the media are also instrumental in the process of gaining public consent. Media texts do not merely mirror or reflect 'reality', but instead construct hegemonic meaning of what should be accepted as 'reality'. These meanings appear to be 'real', inevitable and full of common sense. Not surprisingly though, feminists have drawn on the concept of hegemony in order to argue that most of us cannot see how patriarchal ideology is made to appear as 'objective', non-gendered' and 'neutral' and 'non-ideological'. With this in mind, it seems as though staff members at *Post* are responsible for what is produced in the paper and readers accept it as the 'norm' and as a mirror of 'reality'. A key point to remember is that hegemonic realities must be constantly reconstructed, contested, renegotiated and renaturalized (Carter and Steiner, 2004:2).

In 1995, Media Watch Canada organized 71 countries to take part in the first Global Gender and Media-Monitoring Project. Five years later, 70 countries took part in the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) 2000 called '*Who Makes the News*'. The GMMP project studied how men and women are portrayed in the media on one chosen day (Morna, 2006:6). Margaret Gallagher, an internationally acclaimed consultant to the Global Media Monitoring Project, monitors the international news media's employment of women as news reporters and anchors as well as the representation of women in the news, more generally. For the purposes of the Global Media Monitoring Project, data were collected from 70 countries on a single day in 1995 and with a similar number of countries in 2000. In the 1995 project, 15 000 stories were included in the analysis. Not surprisingly, the 1995 international study findings revealed that women make up only 17 per cent of the world's news subjects.

Simply stated, women were unlikely to be news subjects in stories about government, business and politics. Women, however, make the news in stories relating to violence, entertainment and art news, health and social issues. The results of the second Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), carried out in 70 countries on 1 February 2000, revealed that women make up 18 per cent of the world's news subject (Spears, Seydegart and Gallagher, 2000:13). This figure rose by one per cent in 2000. The results of the second Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) were not surprising. "The news world might have been standing still for five years" (Gallagher, 2004:148). Gallagher maintained that the similarities linking the main results from the two global monitoring projects was significant. Gallagher (2004:157) claims that to have expected a significant or noticeable shift in the world's news over the time period would have been naive. She maintains that the global media monitoring should be on-going as it provides a record of the differences and similarities of women's employment as journalists, and how women are represented in the news. These results provide invaluable statistics around factors of gender portrayal. There is evidence of the imbalance in media representations of women and men, in terms of

authority and status. Studies of this kind will help keep track of general patterns and trends. However, Gallagher points out that they are not adequate enough to change media representations of gender (2004:157).

The South African scenario is similar to the rest of the world. Morna, (2006:6), maintains that “freedom of expression presupposes that all have the right and the ability to speak and to be heard”. The Southern Africa Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS), conducted by the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) and Gender Links (GL) in 2002/2003, showed that here, as in the rest of the world, women are invariably either portrayed in a limited number of roles or missing from the news. According to Gill (2003:2), women in Parliaments and National Assemblies receive less media coverage than their male colleagues.

(Parliamentary Ministers’) Women’s age and marital status are routinely commented upon in news reports, they are frequently referred to only by their first name, photographed in domestic rather than parliamentary settings and have their physical appearance excessively picked apart by journalists (Gill, 2003:2).

For instance, a minister of parliament will be described by her dress or as the ‘wife of so and so’. To illustrate the point, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, former Deputy President of South Africa, was often described as the wife of Bulani Ngcuka (former Head of the National Prosecuting Unit). This was mentioned in spite of her being the most powerful woman in South Africa.

What would it mean for the presentation of news to be properly ‘engendered’ (Holland, 2004: 70)? Gender representation in the media is made up in many, subtle ways, for instance, the angle through which a story is approached, the type of questions, the locations in which women and men are shown, the type of interview style adopted. Change will follow when one compares how women and men are portrayed in the media. Gallagher (2004:148) states that, in South Africa, the process of changing gender in the newsroom has started, however, the problem is imbalance. Media audiences, texts and institutions have changed, largely due to the persistent gender advocacy. Media and gender activists have begun to find ways of initiating awareness of ‘gender blindness’ amongst media production houses. Even though the process is at its early stages, the change is painfully slow (Gallagher, 2004:148). Carter and Steiner (2004: 2) state that it is not merely a case of “sexism” and “media representation” and it cannot be remedied simply by the inclusion of more ‘realistic’ and ‘positive’ images of women and girls in the media”. One of the placards in a South African Women’s Media Watch ‘Labels are rubbish’ (1998) protest read: *Gender is not a women thing* (Gallagher, 2004:156).

2.3 Representation and Identity

Representation has always been part of man's cultural practice, from sophisticated cave paintings and carvings to intricate jewellery. Whilst representation was previously restricted to art galleries and places of worship, the physical and technical production of representations was revolutionized in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. It was the photographic camera that led to this transformation. Visual representations are now on display on buses, buildings, bill boards, and lamp-posts and in shopping malls (Reid, 2008: 208). In fact, for most people in the western and developing world, life is saturated with visual images and representations. It is, after all, how we communicate with one another and, more importantly, make sense of the world. Williams (2003:121), maintains that audiences have learnt to actively filter such masses of representations on a constant basis in order to try to receive only those meanings which were important to them. If this is the case, are women, in general, aware of how they are represented in the media? The researcher finds it necessary to explore ways in which the South African media report and *represent* the social world in order to examine the impact of the media on their audiences. The case study is the *Post*, a national weekly newspaper.

South Africa is unique in many ways. In the past, the media was under tremendous strain as society was polarized and unequal. Understandably, the subject of gender representations did not seem to be a priority in the media and women of colour were particularly at a disadvantage. However, since democratization, gender representation in the South African media has received considerable attention. The South African National Editors' Forum and the organization Genderlinks have conducted several studies in 2000 and 2003 on the representation of gender in the media, as well as the position of women in the media industry. The researcher will cite the findings of the surveys into gender representation. The South African media was under scrutiny once more after The Human Rights Commission focused on media representations of 'race'. The Commission conducted an investigation into the media in 1999/2000 and the subject of 'Racism in the media' was under discussion (Wasserman, 2008:262). Following the 1994 democratic elections, the media seemed inclined to portray South Africans as a 'rainbow' nation. However, there was evidence to support the premise that 'racism in the media' was present. The term 'rainbow nation' was coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and provided a symbolic construction of a collective 'rainbow' identity (Wasserman, 2008:262).

Post is targeted at a predominately Indian audience, the South African Indian. The Indian population in South Africa is a minority group that makes up just 2.5% of the total population of South Africa, that is, approximately 47 390 000 (<http://www.statssa.gov.za>). "The roots of the contemporary Indian Diaspora can be traced" to British "exploitation of cheap indentured

labour from the Asian sub-continent in different parts of the colonial empire” (Maharaj, 2007:19). With a population of just over a million, the Indian population is diverse in terms of language, religion and cultural practices. However, prior to 1994, South African Indians were viewed as a homogeneous community. Perhaps, this perception stemmed from the formation of a united front that had to confront the injustices of apartheid (Maharaj, 2007:19). At that time, fundamental differences in religion, language and class were set aside. During the 1940s, Durban “was plagued by hysterical anti-Indianism”. In fact, “Anti-Indianism kept Members of Parliament in their seats, newspapers on the streets and provided the most popular vote-catching bait in the 1948 elections” (Meer,1980:1). With all the anti-Indian sentiments of that time, it was perhaps crucial for the Indians to appear as a homogeneous group.

However, the democratic era of the 1990s soon changed the perceptions that Indians were a homogeneous group. There was a “resurgence of ethnic and sub-ethnic identities (class, language, religion, geographic origins)” (Maharaj, 2007:19). Today, while the older generation upholds the values and traditions of their forefathers, the younger generation is quite often modern and westernized, in thinking and in dress. Herein lies the dichotomy. *Post* upholds the values and traditions of the Indian culture, however, does it have a fixed notion of what an Indian woman ought to be like? Meanings, consequently, will always change, from one culture or period to another” (Hall, 1997:61). Has the *Post* adjusted its stance and forged ahead with the modern times, or has it lagged behind? The main thrust of the argument is, how are women represented through photographs in *Post*? Is *Post* bound to the traditional and cultural views of the past?

Even though South African Indians are not a homogenous group, there are definite common threads. To determine these threads, one looks to the readers of *Post*. What role does representation play in culture? This question leads me to the notion that representation is intricately infused into culture. Members of a particular culture produce and exchange meanings based on the use of language, signs and images. Hall (1997:15) claims that “representation *is* an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture”. Representation is, indeed, at the heart of this process. Through representation we are able to give meaning to people, objects and events. We are able to link people, objects and events with our conceptual maps to ‘make sense of things’. Representation also enables us to conceptualize and give meaning to a set of signs that are arranged or organized into various languages which stand for or represent those concepts, signs and images (Hall, 1997:21). This is an important aspect of the study as it focuses on photographic images.

Of significance are the photographic images of women in *Post*. Visual signs and images carry meaning and, therefore, have to be interpreted (Hall, 1997:21). After all, meaning is produced through representation. However, photographs are nearly always constructed within a social context. Of particular interest to the research, is to ascertain how women are photographed and portrayed in *Post*. The researcher aims to examine the process of photographic production and the social context by which it was created (Hamilton, 1997:79). Questions, outlined below, will give the researcher an indication of how *Post* production team, made up of reporters, photographers and sub-editors, process and produce the photographic image.

Examples of questions posed to the photographer at *Post* are:

What factors did you consider when composing this photograph?

- What are the different framing and selecting techniques for photographing men and women?
- Is there a specific dress code for women?

Examples of questions posed to sub-editors at *Post*:

- Are there any changes made during production and reproduction, for example, cropping, highlighting, and darkening?
- Is there always a picture of a woman on the front page of *The Post*?
- How many copies have not had a woman on the front page?
- What are the criteria for front page pictures?

Central to the argument of representation of women is the construction of identity. This brings into focus Woodward's (2002:92) assertion that the media is important in shaping identity because they provide the "discursive fields through which meaning is produced in relation to power" (2002:92). This is a fundamental aspect to the study. Is *Post* constructing the identity of Indian women? If so, is the staff aware of it? How are identities formed? According to Woodward (2002:92), "identities are produced in the way that individual representations form part of broader, intricate patterns of textual, social and material practices". Wasserman (2002: 89) asserts that subjects are produced through discourse, and are themselves subject to "hegemonic discursive formations".

In other words, the media creates the means for people to engage in media rituals that define their identity (Wasserman, 2008:262). Based on Wasserman's assumption, the researcher would like to further examine what 'media rituals' *Post* engages in to define the

identity of women. What is also important to realize, when considering the way that media representations construct identity, is that the media is not a “mirror of reality”, but also shapes our understanding of reality. What this then means is that when women look at photographs in the *Post*, they believe that this is how they *ought* to look. In other words, media, like other symbolic systems, “are not simple reflections of some external grounded truth. There is no easy or even possible distinction between the material circumstances in which identities are produced and what it is possible to represent” (Woodward, 2002:78).

Consequently, Indian women, as subjects, do not have control over the construction of their identity (Wasserman, 2008:262). Indeed, “to be a subject is to be subjected” (Woodward, 2002: 89). South Africans have additional complexities in terms of identity construction. Apartheid created economic classes and imposed racial and ethnic identities. The study observes how media content can be seen to construct identity. Media structures can also contribute to identity formation (Wasserman, 2008:263). To extend Wasserman’s point, if newspapers use a vernacular language, associated with a certain social class, or a woman’s magazine carries stories on fashion and dieting that correspond with dominant ideas of what women would look like, then these media “call upon their audiences to take on a certain identity” (Wasserman, 2008: 263).

The current editor of the *Post*, Brijlall Ramguthie, describes the *Golden City POST* as “sleazy and scandalous” in content. Ramguthie maintains that the *Golden City POST* was “not kosher to have...in a traditional, conservative Indian home” (2005: 1). This slogan of the *Post* changed from “paper for the people” to *POST*, the “voice and heart of the community”. This then illustrates the point that the *Post* really does want to reflect the Indian community, thereby ‘calling’ on their audiences to take on a particular identity (Wasserman, 2008:263). The *Post* should reflect the changing identity of the Indian women, in particular, the portrayal of women. In the study of representation and identity of the *Post*, the researcher will consider systems of production of texts within the social, historical and material context.

There are several theories that suggest that audiences are not passive receivers of media content, but actively contribute to meaning making (Alexander, 2006:45). An aspect that one has to take into account is the role of advertising. Market indicators and trends in the commercial media still, by and large, favour the racial categories of the past (Alexander, 2006: 45). The media market segmentation is likely to perpetuate social and racial polarization instead of creating opportunities for audiences to negotiate new identities outside of these categories (Alexander, 2006:45). Woodward claims that conceiving of media audiences, in the first place, as ‘markets’ or ‘consumers’, can furthermore contribute to a ‘consumer identity’ (Woodward, 2002:84). It suits everyone and it is market-related. In

post-apartheid South Africa, consumerism has become a more popular framework for identity formation than formal politics and racial categorization (Alexander, 2006:60).

“To the extent that consumption identity is prevalent among sections of the South African population, the media play an important role in prompting audiences to make certain consumer choices, and fostering a culture of individual freedom articulated through shopping” (Wasserman, 2008:264). The audience analysis will be excluded due to limitations of the study. Identity formation, therefore, is integral to media consumption. Individuals construct their identities through use of the symbolic apparatus provided to them through media. An example are the advertisements that one would find before the celebration of Diwali (a Hindu festival). All the major newspapers carry Diwali ‘specials’, a week or two before the actual event. In other words, the major grocery chains are advertising stock items at a reduced rate. These items would be the ingredients that one would use to make ‘sweetmeats’. Prior to Diwali, there is a great deal of conversation amongst my aunts and friends regarding sweetmeats, such as it is too expensive to make, or it is too rich and unhealthy to eat. However, once the Diwali specials are advertised, it seems to mobilize women into going out to buy the ingredients, making the sweetmeats, sometimes much against their will. There are also sari shops that advertise their discounted garments. One of the traditions of Diwali is buying new clothing for the children. With the high cost of living, this tradition is dying, however, the advertisements tempt people to shop in celebration for the Festival of Lights. Kellner (1995:1) maintains that media culture also provides the materials out of which many people construct their sense of class, of ethnicity and race, of nationality, of sexuality, and of ‘us’ and ‘them’.

2.4 Media Selection and Production

2.4.1 Agenda Setting Theory

According to De Beer and Botha (2008:238), agenda setting is used to describe the “media’s very powerful ability to focus public attention on specific issues”. These decisions are taken by the gatekeepers of the organization, from the reporter or photographer to the sub-editor and editor. By emphasizing a particular topic, the attention of the news organization’s target audience is drawn to the subject. However, other aspects of the newspapers, for example, the size of the headlines and the placement of the photograph, also play a large role in agenda setting. When the same sign appears for long periods, week after week, it then becomes possible to “better identify the agenda of a news organization” (De Beer and Botha, 2008:238). Over the years, *Post* has been seen as a traditional newspaper, seemingly not wanting to modernize its stance. Another important aspect of the agenda-setting theory is that “consciously or unconsciously, the media create a particular image of reality” (Fourie,

2007: 244). For example, *Post* seems to have over-emphasised a particular role of women on the front pages and these seem to affect our perceptions of reality. It seems possible that the media, in terms of agenda-setting, not only help to tell people what to think about but also how to think about salient news topics” (De Beer and Botha, 2008:238).

2.4.2 Gate keeping

The term “gate keeping” has been widely used to describe the method by which selections are made in media work. For the most part, gatekeepers decide what is going to appear and how it is going to appear in the media. Gate-keeping also applies to the different kinds of editorial and production work in print and television. It refers to the power to grant or deny access to different voices in society and is often an area of conflict (McQuail, 2002:276). McQuail (2002:276) argues that the weakness in the concept of gatekeeping is that there is generally one main set of selection criteria and its tendency to individualize decision-making. Len-Rios, Rodgers, Thorson and Yoon (2005:155) argue that the under-representation of women is connected to news production. Every newsroom employs bureaucratic and organizational processes for selecting and assigning stories (Carter and Steiner, 2004:144). Apart from selection and emphasis or placement, gatekeepers can also insert and delete material into existing news reports. According to Oosthuizen (2001:198), ideally, editors ought to perform their tasks in accordance with the broad guidelines laid down by their board of directors. However, if they do not keep to these guidelines, it can lead to conflict. It is, therefore, obvious that editors can act as strict gatekeepers and that they can discard or ignore stories or news items that do not conform to their own beliefs or policies. In this way, news can be distorted (Oosthuizen, 2001: 199).

2.4.3 Hegemonic Hierarchy

Williams (2003:153) maintains that people with political and economic power use ideology to maintain their privileged positions. Consequently, media owners shape the messages that the media produce. Thus the hegemonic hierarchy remains. It follows then that as Williams (2003: 155) notes, Barthes argued that the media, through their ability to make images and signs work, disseminate an ideological view of the world. “Between the very broad, general conditions and power relations in the world and the ideological messages which shape media texts that are delivered to audiences is an important system of production” (Carter and Steiner, 2004:15). The question to ask is how media discourses contribute or challenge the “structural (re) production of gender inequalities” (Carter and Steiner, 2004:14). Some of the questions to ask would be: Which audiences are being served? Are women and men addressed differently, via texts with different varieties of intellectual and emotional content? If newspapers under-represent women, they then add to the public approval of male cultural hegemony. Women, therefore, are excluded from a significant symbol of power (Len-Rios *et*

al., 2005:152). Furthermore, the media constructs, presents and even dictates what 'reality' is, as well as what is 'normal' and 'natural' (Karam, 2008:317). Dominant groups use the media to reinforce their definition of normality and reality. The underlying question, therefore, is how are women represented visually?

2.4.4 Production of photographs

If you're a woman and want to get your picture or story in the paper, don't be a role model, and don't climb mountains. Rather get raped; sleep with your gardener to bribe him to kill your unwanted husband; seduce a politician or bare your body for the titillation of men (Hazelhurst, 2002:110). Whilst Hazelhurst, Executive Editor of *The Star*, admits that the above comment is an exaggeration, he confirms that this is indeed the content of most South African papers. The management at *The Star* saw the need to change their policies for several reasons. One of the most important reasons was the large number of competent women in positions of power (Hazelhurst, 2002:110). Hazelhurst came to the conclusion that there can be no real change without women in decision-making jobs. Consequently, design can only have negative gender implications. The employment and promotion policies must legitimately empower women. For many years, women have experienced the newsroom as a hostile environment, particularly because they have been patronized and marginalized. Even though working conditions for women have advanced considerably, it seems as though women have reached the 'glass ceiling'.

By examining how gender is reproduced in the media, one has to look at ways in which the media forms are produced. It cannot be seen solely as the outcome of media workers or owners. What kind of equipment and skills are necessary to produce content? (Carter and Steiner, 2004:16). This question leads to the important aspect of the production of photographs. The camera was always considered to be like a 'mirror held up to Nature' (Hamilton, 1997: 79). However, by examining the "representational paradigm in more detail, we can focus more closely on the condition of photographic production, the social context in which the work was created". Today, photographers use new methods of representing subject-matter. For instance, through the use of colour filters, framing or highlighting a photograph does not necessarily reflect the subject matter in its entirety. The photograph is not longer the 'true image' of the world (Hamilton, 1997:79). Hamilton (1997:85) maintains that photographic journalism, in particular, is highly interpretative. The photographer, through his or her personal interpretations, chooses which events or subjects to place in front of the camera. However, the photographs are often assumed to have some 'truth-value' as they allow the view insight into the events they depict (Hamilton, 1997:85). Hamilton (1997:85) maintains that often a "double process of construction at work". First, the photographer constructs and frames the image. Thereafter, there is the second process of

construction, where photographs are selected out from their original ordering and placed within the confines of a caption.

2.5 Semiotics – Encoding and Decoding

The term semiotics was coined by Charles S. Peirce and Ferdinand de Saussure in the early 1900s. Semiotics is the study of everything that can be used for communication: images, words, flowers, traffic signs, music and many more. It is the study of how signs communicate and the rules that govern their use (Seiter, 1987:18). A prerogative of semiotics is to ask how meaning is created rather than what the meaning is. The sign is the smallest unit of meaning. Semiotics prefers the term 'reader' (even of a photograph or a painting) to a 'receiver' because it implies both a greater degree of activity and it implies that reading is something we learn to do; it is thus determined by the cultural experience of the reader. In other words, the reader creates meaning of the text by bringing to it his or her experience, emotions and attitudes (Fiske, 1990: 40).

In semiotics, the message is a construction of signs that produce meaning through interacting with the receivers. Of importance is the text and how it is 'read'. 'Reading' takes place when the reader interacts or negotiates with the text and finds meaning. Cultural experiences of the reader, for example, his or her class, background, ethnicity and gender, impact heavily on the process of negotiating the text, which is made up of codes and signs. For instance, different newspapers report the same event according to their target audiences' understanding of the world. In other words, readers from different cultures or different social standings may experience different meanings in the same text (Fiske, 1990:3). The *Post* targets the South African Indian population, and whilst they are of the same ethnic group, their social experiences vary. Although audience analysis would fit into this project, this research is limited to a mini-project. Therefore, only interviews and analysis of the photographer, sub-editor and women reporters will be conducted.

Fiske (1990:16) maintains that photographs are open to a number of readings, in other words, they are polysemic. They are never as easy to decode as they may appear. However, on a technical level, the context makes the picture easier to decode, especially at a quick, first glance. On the level of social relationships, we can see it reinforcing social bonds. It shows that we (the readers) are a community who share the similar attitudes, and the similar social meanings. We see things in the same way. This reinforces both our social links with others and our sense of the rightness of our view of the world. A photograph of a starving baby can be an indicator of a Third World famine, and in the same way a fat belly can be an index or indicator of prosperity and consumption. The photographer's influence – framing, focus, lighting and camera angle, - produces a subjective element in the final sign. According to Fiske (1990:110), Barthes uses the term *anchorage* to describe the function of

words used as captions for photographs. Visual images, he argues, are polysemic: ‘they imply, underlying their signifiers, a floating chain of signifieds, and the reader able to choose some and ignore others’. It is true that we rarely see a photograph without some verbal caption, if only one that tells us, at the denotative level, where or what it is (Fiske, 1990:110).

Words direct our reading (Fiske, 1990: 111). They often tell us, *why* and *how* we should read the text. Words will include why the photographer considered taking the photograph. This specifically leads us to what Stuart Hall (1973b) has called ‘preferred reading’. The idea of a ‘preferred reading’ gives us a model that links the negotiated meanings of a message with the social structure within which both reader and message operate. According to Hall (1993:92), there are three basic meaning systems whereby individuals interpret or respond to their perception of their condition in society. These systems are the dominant, the subordinate, and the radical. Stuart Hall proposes that these correspond to ways of decoding mass-media messages. Fiske (1990:112) elaborates on Hall’s theory, stating that the dominant system is the preferred readings of society as it is one that conveys the dominant values. Hall (1993:98) maintains that the sphere of ‘preferred readings’ have the “whole social order embedded in them as a set of meanings, practices and beliefs: the everyday knowledge of social structures, of ‘how things work for all practical purposes in this culture’, the rank order of power and interest”.

However, Williams (2003:153) makes mention of Hall’s input and how influential it was in shaping research into the reception and production of media messages. According to Williams (2003:153), Hall argued that the media and their audiences play a part in the process of producing ideological meaning. It also introduced the concept of the media being a “site of struggle over the production of meaning”.

This research project is limited as it is a research paper and does not explore audience analysis.

2.6 An Overview of Post

Post has been in operation since 1960. Launched as *Golden City POST* by Sir Jim Bailey in 1955, it set off at a time when the apartheid ideology was just beginning to tighten its grip on society (Howard, 2005:3). According to Prospero Bailey, son of Sir Jim Bailey, *The Golden City POST* was *Drum* magazine’s sister publication: a tabloid with a circulation of 300 000 in the late 60s. The paper was distributed nationally as three separate editions. It gave the Coloureds of the Cape, the Africans and Indians in Natal, and the black urbanized inhabitants of the Vaal triangle a voice and opportunity to read their own news. The *Golden City POST* carried local content, for example, births and deaths, wedding announcements and other local news interests. *The Golden City POST* was able to offer all of the

advantages of a weekly tabloid. It was modelled on England's *Daily Mirror* in that it could offer up-to-date sport reporting and run with the latest gossip. *The Golden City POST* was fearless because it reported the daily social impact of apartheid (Bailey, 2005: 4). According to Khan (2005:20):

During the apartheid years, Post told its readers that no matter what they believed, white rule would come to an end. The Post highlighted the political struggle and made mockery of laws like the Immorality Act, the Mixed Marriages Act and the Group Areas Act. It also highlighted bannings, house arrests and imprisonment of political leaders, the battle to get South Africa expelled from world sport, and the birth of the Black Consciousness Movement.

In 1960, the *Golden City Post* became *POST* and was based in Durban. It represented the Indian community in Natal. Meer, (2005:5) maintains that one can trace the resistance struggle of the Indian community in the Natal editions of *POST*. However, *Post* (Natal) and its sister publications changed hands in 1971. According to Ramguthee (2005:1), with the exception of *Post* (Natal), Bailey's other publications were discontinued immediately. The "racy, sexy *Golden City Post* (Natal)" changed its body shape and face from a tabloid to a broadsheet (Ramguthee, 2005:1). It became far more family oriented and its pages were more proudly shared and read by all members of the family. The strategy was to eliminate the image *POST* had acquired, that is, publishing pictures of attractive young women on page three and revealing details of private lives by taking advantage of the lax divorce laws of the time. "Whilst these issues helped circulation, it overshadowed brave reports to injustices and wretched situations of, for instance, conditions in our prisons" (Wightman, 2005:3).

According to former editor, David Wightman, the new modern *Post* does not call for sensational reporting. Instead, it relies on a healthy recipe of community and family news for its solid and growing circulation. The paper is now 'the voice and heart of the community' (Wightman, 2005:3). *Post* became a niche product as it continued to concentrate and focus its energies on its largely Indian readership (Pather, 2005:3). The community became an important focus of the paper. It led to the change of the *Post*'s slogan from "paper for the people" to the "voice and heart of the community". Present editor, Brijlall Ramguthee, maintains that fifty years down the line, the re-energized *Post* has become a forceful market leader. In fact, it is the biggest-selling weekly newspaper serving the Indian Diaspora in South Africa. It expresses the views, fears and aspirations of the Indian community. The *Post* also associates itself with fund-raising projects of community-based organizations. Bursaries are handed to needy students. According to Ramguthee, *Post* "helps transform the otherwise dark lives of those in need of medical care, by providing much-needed financial assistance" (Ramguthee, 2005:1).

Over a period of 50 years, Post entered our homes and hearts and engaged us in a dialogue of all sorts of issues pertaining to our status as a minority group of Indian descent. It spoke for us and fought on our behalf, and all the while acted as a guardian in protection of our rights. In this respect Post was more than a newspaper; it was our mouth-piece (Rajab, 2005:10).

Durban psychologist and *Mercury* columnist, Devi Rajab, maintains that the Indian community was compelled to start their own newspapers since the mainstream press marginalized and negated their existence. Mohandas Gandhi started the *Indian Opinion* in 1926 and the *Leader*, *Graphic* and *Post* followed. This, therefore, meant that the Indian community finally had a 'voice'. According to Rajab, today, *Post* is a highly influential and successful ethnic paper. With a circulation average of 45 000 and a readership of 300 000, it entertains, educates, informs and amuses its readership through its coverage of sport, culture, crime and social events, women's issues and family matters (Rajab, 2005:10). Ajay Swarup (2005:5), The Consul General of India, emphasizes the role of the *Post* as it also helps sustain the historical linkages between India and South Africa. In doing so, the newspaper has helped the local Indian community in preserving and maintaining its cultural heritage and traditions. According to Swarup, the *Post* has been a forerunner in the struggle against colonialism, imperialism, inequality and racial discrimination. It has helped the community in preserving and maintaining its cultural heritage and traditions (Swarup, 2005:5).

(Post)was also a place where the Indian community found its identity as a people and where its culture and practices were recognized and preserved, not as others wanted them to be, but through a process of collective self-determination (Rajab, 2005:10).

Interestingly, the Independent Press Association maintains that the future of the print media lies in the hands of the ethnic press. Although newspaper circulation is declining, vibrant ethnic community newspapers are springing up everywhere. Rajab (2005:10) confirms that the reason for this growth is the ability of the ethnic press to understand and address issues of importance to specific communities. In this respect, South Africa is no different (Rajab, 2005:10).

2.7 Summary

This chapter explained how the representation of photographic images influences gender identity. Based on this explanation, the chapter specifically examined how the selection and production of photographs have an impact on the portrayal of women and, therefore, influence the identity of women. The triangular relationships among texts, media organizations and industries, and audiences' practices were examined. Of significance, was an overview of the *Post*; Women in the Media; and finally, the Selection and Production of

Photographs. Having discussed the triangular relationships among texts and images, *Post* and its readers, the next chapter proceeds to look at the methodology used to conduct the empirical study.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter Two served as a theoretical underpinning for exploring the process of the photographic representation of women in the media. It did so by reviewing and identifying the various models and theories that lead to:

- Representation and identity; and
- Semiotics and selection and production of photographs.

Based on this review, the study maintains that there are challenges facing the print media, specifically relating to the representation of women. *Post* is a national, weekly newspaper that targets the Indian population in South Africa. This research specifically examines the selection and production of photographs in the *Post*. The chapter, therefore, designed a research instrument, a questionnaire that was informed by the literature review. It then uses the questionnaire to explore the various stages and activities of the selection and production of photographs at the *Post*.

This chapter presents the methodology used to conduct the empirical study. It justifies and explains the specific research design that was used by explaining how the sample was chosen; the methods and instrumentation used for collecting the data and describes the analysis techniques used. In addition, this chapter discusses the validity and rigour of the findings. Finally, the chapter sets the scene for the presentation of the findings and interpretation of these findings in Chapter Four.

3.2 Research design

The research design has much to do with choosing an approach of qualitative research. It can be described as a framework or scheme. There are several components that make up the research design, for instance, purposes, conceptual context, methods and validity (Flick, von Kardorff and Steinke, 2007:37). The research design provides for ample and systematic investigation of a research problem.

The main purpose of this study is to examine the photographic representation of women in *Post*. The study is conducted using qualitative techniques. Denzin and Lincoln (2005:3), state that the gendered, multicultural researcher approaches the world with “a set of ideas,

a framework (theory, ontology) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology) that he or she then examines in specific ways (methodology, analysis)". This approach, therefore, lends itself to qualitative research.

3.3 Qualitative research

Research provides the underpinning for reports about and representations of "the Other". Denzin *et al.* (2005:1) are of the view that any definition of qualitative research must work within this complex historical field. Qualitative research uses text as empirical material (instead of numbers). Qualitative research was appropriate as it starts from the "notion of the social construction of realities under study is interested in the perspectives of participants, in everyday practices and everyday knowledge referring to the issue under study" (Flick *et al.*, 2007:2).

Denzin *et al.* (2005) list the following characteristics that define qualitative research:

- Qualitative research comprises a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world 'visible'. These practices turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self;
- Qualitative research uses narrative, semiotics, discourse, content, archival analysis, even statistics, tables, graphs, and numbers; and
- Qualitative research draws on and uses techniques and methods of feminism, ethnography, cultural studies, and participant observation among others.

The methods that can be used to collect data in qualitative research are diverse. According to Bauer and Gaskell (2000:38) in the empirical social sciences, qualitative interviewing is a widely used methodology for data collection. This study has made use of open-ended questions in the interview schedules as methods that were used to collect data in a qualitative study. It is for this reason that the method of qualitative research was used. The method used in this study, namely personal interviews, will be discussed later in this chapter. This study was limited to interviews of the staff of *Post*. As the study is a mini-dissertation, audience analyses were not conducted.

3.4 Sampling

One of the objectives of qualitative research is to sample a range of views. Purposive sampling allows one to choose a case as it illustrates some feature or process of significance to the research. Silverman (2006:306), maintains that purposive sampling requires that we think "critically about parameters of the population we are interested in and

choose our sample case carefully on this basis". This method of sampling seeks settings, groups and individuals where the processes being examined are most likely to occur.

The real purpose of qualitative research is not counting the opinions of people but rather exploring the range of opinions and the different representations of the issue. Bauer and Gaskell (2000:40) maintain that, given a particular social setting, for example, *Post*, one is interested in finding out a variety of views on the issue in question, in this instance "The photographic representation of women in the media, a case study of the *Post*".

Data collection from every person in a community is not required in order to obtain valid findings. Only a sample of a population is selected for any given study in qualitative research. The study's research objectives and the characteristics of the study population (such as size and diversity) determine which and how many people to select. The staff of *Post* comprises ten staff members, an editor, two sub-editors, five reporters and one administrator. This study, therefore, identified the sub-editor, photographer and two women reporters of the *Post* in order to obtain valid findings. These personnel were representative of the *Post* staff. Even though the photographer was selected as an ideal candidate, the editor suggested that the researcher interview the former chief-photographer, who held the position for eight years. While the candidate is still involved in photography, he has taken on the role of sports editor. Although there was much discussion around the readers, the study did not explore audience analysis. The study was limited to just the selected personnel at *Post* and not its readers.

3.4.1 Method of inquiry – personal interviews

In social research, qualitative interviews, open or semi-standard interviews are widely used (Hopf, 2004:203). Bauer and Gaskell (2000:38) maintain that in the "empirical social sciences, qualitative interviewing is a widely used methodology for data collection". Interviewing involves the researcher asking questions, listening and analyzing the responses. Indeed, one of the strengths of qualitative research is its ability to access directly what happens in the world. In other words, conducting interviews allows the researcher to examine what people actually do in real life rather than asking them to simply comment upon it. The media disseminates messages that are always "encoded via recording instruments like field notes and transcripts" (Silverman, 2006:113). The majority of published qualitative research articles use interviews as a method of inquiry. Interviews are relatively economical in terms of resources and time.

Face-to-face interviews are conducted with a respondent during a personal interview, either at the respondent's home or work, or in a field location. Prior to the interview, the researcher will have prepared a topic guide covering the key research issues and problems, called the

interview schedule. Bauer and Gaskell (2000:38) maintain that respondents can be motivated to participate in personal interviews. Responses to the interviews could be recorded using audio or video tape or the equivalent in digital. The interview should be collaboratively produced, thereby allowing the interviewee to become an active participant. The interview may be conversational but, you, the interviewer, do have some level of control.

Silverman (2006:110) notes that open-ended interviews allow for flexibility; rapport with interviewee and active listening, which lead to rich data. It allows the interviewee the freedom to talk and attribute meanings while bearing in mind the broader aims of the project. Semi-structured interviews allow for some probing; rapport with interviewee and understanding the aims of the project. Always try to record the interview. Transcribe the interviews as soon as possible to avoid a pile-up of notes. The interviews conducted at the *Post* were, therefore, open-ended and semi-structured. (Annexure A)

In May 2008, a telephone call was made to the editor of the *Post*, seeking permission to interview his staff as part of the research. This was followed by a formal letter of consent (Annexure B that also sought access to the *Post*'s archives. The researcher could not access the microfilm archives which were housed at the Independent Newspapers' library. Regarding the interview schedule, the editor was then given a call to ask for a suitable time to interview the photographer and sub-editor. Unfortunately, the editor was not interviewed to his tight work schedule. Interviews were then set up with the photographer and the sub-editor. The interviews subsequently followed. A woman reporter was also interviewed. The following week, an interview was conducted with a senior woman journalist. The interviews were conducted in the boardroom at *Post* offices in 18 Osborne Road, Greyville, Durban.

As soon as the respondents were introduced to the researcher, the interview schedule was produced. This was done to allow the interviewees to gain a better perspective of the study. Bauer and Gaskell (2000:51) maintain that the individual or depth interview is a conversation lasting normally for one to one and a half hours. During the personal interview, the interview schedule consisted of both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Therefore, for this study, primary data were collected through an empirical study using a standardised interview and secondary data were collected by conducting a review of related literature.

3.4.2 Data collection instrument

Based on the literature review, an interview schedule was drawn and used to guide the interviews. The interview schedule guided the analysis of the interview data. The interview schedule comprised open-ended and semi-structured questions. Follow up questions were useful to clarify the response from the interviewees. The triangulation method of collecting data was used. Triangulation data are drawn from different sources (Flick, 2004:178). It

usually refers to combining multiple theories, observers, methods, and empirical materials to produce a more accurate, objective and comprehensive representation of the aim of study (Silverman, 2006: 291). The researcher was given access to past newspapers. Of the many editions that were analysed, only three editions were selected to discuss with the staff at Post. These three editions were typical and atypical of *Post's* representation of women. The articles and photographs are attached (Annexures C, D and E). . The researcher was also handed a 2008 Research Survey which included the AMPS and readership profile demographics. The researcher also photocopied a thirty-two page supplement celebrating *Post's* 50 years in circulation. This supplement proved to be an invaluable source as it contained the rich history of the *Post*. Silverman maintains that the triangulation method adds breadth, complexity, richness, rigour and depth to any inquiry (Silverman, 2006:291). This study, therefore, used the triangulation method of collecting data. This method was considered to be the most appropriate.

3.5 Deviant Case Analysis

Unexpected generalizations in the course of data analysis lead one to seek out new deviant (unusual – unexpected) cases (Silverman, 2006:303). Silverman (2006:309) notes that deviant cases go against the pattern identified. Silverman suggests that researchers ought to overcome any tendency to select a case which is likely to support their argument. He emphasizes that it makes sense to seek out negative instances, as defined by the theory with which the researcher is working (Silverman, 2006:309). Using the qualitative approach, deviant case analysis could be one way of validating case study research.

3.6 Data analysis

Moore (2006:154) states that qualitative analysis depends greatly on personal preference. Some of the basic principles outlined by Moore are:

- Analysis should be systematic but not rigid;
- Categorize the segments;
- The main intellectual tool is comparison; and
- Keep the categories flexible.

However, Moore (2006:154) maintains that applying these principles into practice means, first of all, identifying themes and issues, and then referring back to the project aim and objectives and to your experience of the fieldwork. As the interviews were conducted, the answers were recorded manually by the researcher. In addition, interviews were audio recorded. The interviews were then transcribed by the researcher. Thereafter, the data were prepared for interpretation and analysis. The interviews were coded according to the

various themes that the literature review cited. The researcher read through the interviews and identified the issues that were set out to be explored in the research.

3.7 Validity and reliability of data

Reliability and validity are two of the most important aspects to be considered when evaluating a particular instrument. Reliability can be addressed by using standardized methods to write field notes and prepare transcripts (Silverman, 2006:288). According to Bloor and Wood (2006: 147), reliability is the extent to which research produces the same results when replicated. In other words, when another researcher replicates the study he or she ought to come to the same or similar conclusions. Validity refers to the degree to which the researcher's conclusions accurately portrayed the data collected. A strategy to improve validity is triangulation (Bloor and Wood, 2006:147). However, the credibility of qualitative research studies rests not simply on the reliability of their data and methods but also on the validity of their findings. Validity is the extent to which the research produces an accurate version of the world.

3.8 Summary

This chapter outlines how this study was conducted. It focuses on the methodology used to conduct the empirical study. It justifies and explains the specific research design that was used. This chapter explains how the sample was chosen; the instruments and methods used for data collection and describe the analysis techniques used. Furthermore, it discusses the trustworthiness and rigour of the findings.

The next chapter presents the findings of the study. It presents an analysis and discussion of findings. The final chapter then draws conclusions based on the study and offers possible recommendations based on the findings from the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters reflected on the photographic representation of women in the print media, specifically the *Post*. This chapter presents a thematic analysis of the data obtained from the empirical study. It further provides a discussion of these findings and sets the platform for the final chapter which presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

The research methodology chapter confines the empirical research to interviews of those who produce the paper, i.e., the photographers; sub-editor and reporter. The findings are, therefore, reported according to these interviews.

4.2 Interview with the (former) chief photographer of the *Post*

4.2.1 Composition of a photograph

Composition plays an integral role in the photographic process. When asked what factors are considered in composing a photograph, the following response was given:

- *I think as a photographer at Post, bearing in mind that you have to work with the 'constraints' of not showing flesh, you tend to look for what else is appealing about women. The bottom line is that it comes to 'face', a pretty face. So a lot in terms of lighting, the focus becomes the face, rather than the outfit, or the body or the figure, so largely we tend to look for pretty faces and try to portray them in the best way.*
- *In terms of women in the newspaper, I think it is largely, we think 'man', and we think attractiveness. I think those are the features one looks for in terms of a front page picture. The girl must be appealing, not 'sexy' appealing.*

- *When photographing women, you tend to get a lot more clinical, you look for the different angles, the bottom, the side, basically, it's like treating the subject, and you need to get the most out of it.*
- *When photographing men and women, you look at them differently, not just as subject material. As for photographing guys, I don't know if it's a guy thing, but we just take a full-length picture. Dimples, blue-eyes and cheekbones do not matter; it's probably a guy thing. But it does matter when it comes to women, and we highlight that. Whereas with guys, you do not see them as 'sex-symbols' – for want of a more descriptive word - but then they're just guys. I think we fall into that trap.*
- *I physically keep in mind our requirements and with that, shoot the picture accordingly, according to the requirements of the paper, the standards of the paper. But we do get away with it now and then, photographers always try and push the boundaries as much as they can, but that's basically the way it's done, in terms of the way we use it.*

Based on the above response it is evident that in composing a picture, the photographer's key consideration during photographing a woman revolves around the physical beauty of the subject. Literature states that the photographer's influence – framing, focus, lighting and camera angle - produces a subjective element in the final sign, the photograph (Fiske, 1990:110). It also seems apparent that men and women are viewed differently when composing a photograph. It appears as though much thought is involved around the physical features of women, not so with the men. According to the findings, it seems as though images are framed according to what is important to the media workers and what is suitable for the newspaper. Other factors, for example, gender stereotypes, are ignored. Studies in the Southern Africa Media (*Mirror on the Media in the Southern African Region*, 2007) indicate that more women are likely to be represented on advertising bill-boards than as news sources (Morna, 2007:4). This finding, therefore, demonstrates that women are much more likely to be photographed as sex objects than as subjects of news.

Photographs seem to reinforce social bonds. It shows that we (the readers) are a community who share the similar attitudes, and the similar social meanings. We see things in the same way. This reinforces both our social links with others and our sense of the

rightness of our view of the world. This is, therefore, strengthened by *Post's* management's decision of how women are represented in the *Post*.

Evidence suggests that *Post* photographer has to work within certain boundaries. According to the findings, the photographer "cannot show any 'flesh'" and, secondly, "the woman must be appealing but not 'sexy' appealing". These remarks stem from management's view of the *Post*. According to the editor, *Post* changed its "racy, sexy *Golden City Post* (Natal) image" to become far more family oriented (Ramguthee, 2005:1). In addition, one of the main strategies of *Post's* management was to eliminate the image that the *Golden City Post* had acquired, that of publishing pictures of attractive young women on page three. Therefore, the above evidence suggests that *Post's* photographer has certain limitations and restrictions that he has to adhere to. Hall (1993:98), maintains that the sphere of 'preferred readings' have the "whole social order embedded in them as a set of meanings, practices and beliefs: the everyday knowledge of social structures, of 'how things work for all practical purposes in this culture', the rank order of power and interest".

4.2.2 Selection of photographs

Selection of photographs is predominantly (if not only) done by the males. The term gate-keeping describes the methods by which selection are made in media work. It also refers to the power to grant or deny access to different voices in society and is often an area of conflict. This is evident in the following excerpts of the interview:

- *A typical example would be what happened in this week's issue, the collage of three Ms India finalists. Now one of the girls, looked sultry, so we said let's reduce that picture. We blew up the pictures of the other two women. But the sizes in which we used the pictures were different. The editor and I decided, we didn't want the sultry look, we wanted a more smiling face. The sultry look doesn't work – it might look sexy or whatever, but it doesn't work with us. So we reduced that picture (the girl with the sultry look) (Annexure E).*
- *We like to be politically correct in terms of gender and stuff like that, but your personal preference comes in now and then. For example, on that particular story, a girl (senior woman reporter) looked at that picture and said "but that girl looks pretty, why don't you blow that picture up?" But when it came to the decision making, the editor went for that and I supported him and we went*

that route. So there is that latitude of how you can place pictures but it's obviously influenced by our thoughts, and what we think the public would want to see.

- *When it came to selecting the photograph, there are two men and one woman. The woman didn't argue her point, although she did mention, well, let's look at that picture (the sultry picture). Both of us laughingly said to her: "hey, ask a man to judge beauty". It was done in jest, but in the end that's what actually happened. That's what determined the way we placed the pictures.*
- *And I've heard of our girls (female reporters) often joking asking us 'hey, you know what, I want to see the six-pack, where's the abs.?' I think the editor is okay with that, but not okay with women showing more. Then again, maybe it's personal preference. I'm sure if it goes to the editor, depending on his frame of mind, he'll say this is not on, this is not Post. You have a conservative readership out there, but the readership is changing. We have younger people out there and people identify with it, it's not a case of us pushing it down someone's throat. I think newspapers should be reflective and not pushing something down and to basically handle pictures like that, if they're sent through, I don't see a problem with that because this is the way we dress today.*
- *From a policy point of view, we are aware of women's rights and the contribution they make but I think just as much as women like to see 'six packs' on men, men like to see a pretty face on the front page.*
- *There is that expectancy out there of the product and what the product carries. So in as much as we try to change mind-sets and try to adapt to a changing readership which we recognize is changing.*
- *In terms of that, I think our policy at Post, needs to be reviewed. In terms of what we deem to be unacceptable to our readers. I would think so, we are like the gate-keepers, and we shouldn't be that. We should be reflective and not try to preserve something according to our own beliefs.*

Based on the findings regarding the selection of photographs, it is evident that there is a bias towards the opinions of the males in the newsroom, in this instance the photographer and the editor. A senior woman reporter's suggestion as to which photograph ought to be published was simply ignored. In fact she was told, "ask a man to judge beauty". It seems that within the newsroom there seems to be contestation. It is also evident that in the selection and production of photographs (also known as gate-keeping), there is much contestation. The tendency is also to individualize decision making. Len-Rios *et al.*, (2005:155), suggest that the under-representation of women is connected to news production. Apart from selection and emphasis or placement, gatekeepers can also insert and delete material into existing news reports.

According to Oosthuizen, (2001:198), ideally, editors ought to perform their tasks in accordance with the broad guidelines laid down by their board of directors. However, if they do not keep to these guidelines, it can lead to conflict. It is, therefore, obvious that editors can act as strict gatekeepers and that they can discard or ignore stories or news items that do not conform to their own beliefs or policies. Based on the findings, the photographer's view that a photograph will be used depending on the "editor's frame of mind at that time" is evident that a photograph or story has to conform with the editor's own beliefs, otherwise it is not used. According to the findings, the photographer said that the photograph of models with the "sultry, sexy look will not work". It appears that if the composition of a photograph does not confirm with the editor's belief, the photograph is not used. News can be distorted in this way. De Beer and Botha (2008:153) suggest that the placement of a photograph within the newspaper also plays a large role in agenda setting. When the same sign appears for long periods, week after week, it then becomes possible to "better identify the agenda of a news organization" (De Beer and Botha, 2008:238).

The media encode a particular way of looking at the world. In this instance, whose views are we seeing? Seidman (2002:94) maintains that media practitioners draw upon their own experiences and notions about male and female persons about many factors, for instance, gender roles, behaviour, how women and men think and act, and our beliefs about body shapes. It is, therefore, important for women to be in positions of decision making. Hazelhurst (2002:110) argues that without women at the helm of decision making, there can be very little change. Consequently, pages of the newspapers will only have negative gender implications.

4.2.3 Representation of women

The representation of women through photographic images is significant to this study. When asked how women are portrayed in Post, the following response was given:

- *While we talk gender equality, at the end of the day, you've got a product to sell. Your product has to look good, and unfortunately these are factors that come into play. We're looking for sex, even if it means a pretty face that goes on the front page.*
- *A Post reporter was showing me a picture on her screen, asking me: "do you think Post will use this picture?" It's a picture of two girls from Pietermaritzburg who are doing quite well on the pop scene, they go by the name 'Demonique', and they're wearing pretty skimpy outfits, lot's of midriff, boob-tube tops, with the skirt at the bottom, showing a lot of body, a lot of flesh. She asked me: Will we use that? And I said: "why not? Because if we can use Bollywood people like that, why not here?"*
- *Just as much as men want to see flesh and shape and figure and beauty, the same thing works the other way around (in reference to pictures of men).*
- *Based on news strength, we need to support a strong story with a strong picture. In the event of not having any strong pictures, a back-up comes in. For example, what entertainment is around, someone's having an arranjethrum (Indian graduation dance), someone having a dance-show. Those would be for a stand alone picture idea. Not something going with the story, it's going to add colour to the front-page, that's when we look at the pretty woman.*
- *Personally, when I was involved in it, on a full-time basis, my wife got used to it, if I'm taking a walk through a shopping centre, and I see a pretty girl standing on a balcony, I'd go up to her and say to her: 'you're a very pretty girl, would you mind modelling?' And most times they say 'yes'. So I used to build up my diary of pretty faces and used to find opportunities – if there's a fashion show – I say to the guys – you've got the dress, I've got the girl.*

- *You have to be constantly thinking with that mind-set. It's awkward. It takes quite a bit of guts, especially if the guy is with the girl – but you handle it professionally. I've never had a problem, even at a night-club, you see a pretty girl, introduce yourself. So I used to have that as my back-up, basically a pretty girl is your bail-out. If nothing else works out, your pretty girl is your bail-out. That's basically pictures at Post for you.*
- *We don't have many 'success' stories on the front page, in terms of women, but then again, the same applies to men as well. Those stories tend to be on page 2 or the inside stories. That comes from our on-going research – it seems that 'blood and guts' sell and unfortunately it's mainly the women who are victims. It might appear that stories on the front page are about women in distress, but it's society that we're reflecting on and society causes situations where more women are in distress. We report it because it's a selling story. In a way, we're guided by our buyer. It has shown and proven time and again. Not too long ago, we wrote a political story, we had our worse sales. Then the next week some women and children died, and we were back to normal.*

Based on the comments of the chief photographer: “we're looking for sex, even if it means a pretty face that goes on the front page”, it is evident the *Post* perceives a woman as a commodity. In other words, without the “pretty face”, the product, which is the newspaper, will not sell. Fiske (1990:16) implies that photographs are open to a number of readings, in other words, they are polysemic. However, on a technical level, the context makes the picture easier to decode, especially at a quick, first glance.

Carter and Steiner (2004:14), suggest that sexist stereotypes encourage people to believe that women are suited to 'traditional' female sex roles. These views are supported by Morna (2002:96). According to research within the media in Southern African (Morna, 2002:96), more women are shown as victims, receivers and helpless sufferers rather than women who are “makers and shakers”. These stereotypes, therefore, discourage people from accepting women who are independent, strong and self-confident. It also inhibits women's ability to realize their full professional and personal potential. The fundamental problem, therefore, lies in the representation of women.

The *Post* ought to take responsibility for representing women in a way that will help to break the shackles of patriarchy. Sexist stereotypes encourage people to believe that women are suited “only (and always) to so-called ‘traditional’ female sex roles and discourage people from accepting women who are strong, assertive, independent and self-confident, thus inhibiting women’s ability to realize their full personal and professional potential (Carter and Steiner, 2004:14). Therefore, the fundamental problem lies in the misrepresentation of women. “What does it mean to live as a woman? To what extent does gender – our own identities as male and female, our ideas about what that might mean – shape our experience of the culture around us?” (Parry and Karam, 2001:383). This study, therefore, will illustrate how the media creates identities through representation.

4.2.4 Deviant Case

Unexpected generalizations in the course of data analysis lead one to seek out new deviant (unusual – unexpected) cases. When asked if there were such cases, the following response was given:

- *The Post carried a picture of a bikini-clad girl for the first time three weeks ago. It took us back to the days of the Golden City POST, but I managed to ‘smuggle’ the picture through because of the story. She was a ‘Sharks flasher girl’ and as a ‘flasher girl’, that’s what you do, show some bikini. (Appendix F)*
- *It was a preview to the Sharks-Bulls final and the Sharks players weren’t available for the picture, so to supplement the story with the picture, we said there’s an Indian girl, our market, who does this – as a flasher girl.*
- *But I think under any other circumstances, that picture may not have been used. Yes, it went through the editor, but because it was part of the story, she is a Sharks Flasher Girl, that’s what she does.*
- *With that in mind, I think that’s how we managed to push that through. But just to get a girl to pose on the front page in a bikini – I don’t think we’ll do that. Because this had a story to it, and the picture basically told the story, so it was accepted.*

- *So there are areas, we find, where we can ‘sneak’ our way through. (Regarding the ‘Sharks flasher girl’ picture), In my experience with the paper, by and large, men would have ogled at it, women would’ve said ‘look at her body’.*

Based on the above findings, it is evident that photographers do face certain challenges. Whilst it was an important provincial rugby game, the sports editor still had to ‘smuggle’ the photograph because it went against the ethos of the newspaper. *Post* aspires to be family orientated and far more acceptable to all members of a household than the *Golden City Post*. However, had this photograph been taken whilst the *Golden City Post* was in circulation, it would not have been a problem. Research into *Post* has ascertained that women seem to be portrayed as traditional and conservative. The case identified above, seems to go against the grain and proves otherwise. According to a senior reporter, readers did not complain about the “Sharks flasher girl”.

4.3 **Interview with the sub-editor of *Post***

4.3.1 **Composition** – various techniques

Images are often manipulated through ‘cut and paste’, cropping, highlighting, darkening and lightening. When asked if these factors were taken into account, the following response was given:

- *There are changes made all the time, in terms of selection of photographs. It depends on the photograph itself, our photographer is given the assignment and briefed on what’s to be taken for usage on the front page.*
- *Based on the guidelines that he’s been given, he shoots the photograph. When he comes through, we have a look at the photograph, the quality, the sharpness and basically the creativeness of the photograph. The more creative it is, the better it is, and we can use it well.*
- *Our photographer is briefed on what’s required – it’s discussed at length with the editor and news editor of what’s required – if the photographer is not briefed – and he’s going about on his way – but he sees something that can make the front page – he brings it in – and sometimes it makes the front page. We have access*

to the 'wires' – we have access to Reuters –SAPA – and we go through them regularly to see if there's anything good and eye-catching to use for our market – we use a lot of pictures from India – if there's something good – we take it from the system and place it on the page.

- *(Cropping) I do it all the time – if there're 5 people if there's no space – I'll cut them off. In this week's paper (Annexure E), two pictures were standard pictures, they were used the way they were shot. The picture of the girl on the left was deep-etched, it was done that way and it really did bring out the effect that it did have. If you used the whole three pictures in the standard way, it wouldn't have had the same effect.*
- *In terms of cropping, highlighting and darkening - those processes are done in Johannesburg. If the picture is too dark, then we send it for colour correction, they would sharpen it and brighten it for placement. Basically we also look at the quality of the picture – if the picture is a good quality and we can deep etch it and use it on the front page. The deep etching brings out the 'oomph' of the picture and brings out the copy.*

Based on the above response, it is evident that the sub-editor makes use of a number of photographic techniques. Literature by Hamilton (1997:86) refers to these processes as a “double process of construction”. In other words, the first process is the composition of a photograph, thereafter the photograph lends itself to cropping, highlighting and darkening. These methods can often change the meaning of the photograph. The images are also framed according to what is important to the media workers. Based on the findings, according to the sub-editor, if certain techniques, for example, deep etching and cropping were not used, the effect of the photographs would have been quite ordinary and not ‘eye-catching’. The photographer’s influence – framing, focus, lighting and camera angle, - produces a subjective element in the final sign. Based on the above response, it seems as though the sub-editor of *Post* makes use of these various techniques to enhance the photograph and not necessarily to change its meaning.

4.3.2 Selection of Photographs

The sub-editor plays a major role in the selection of photographs. When asked what factors are considered when selecting a photograph, the following response was given:

- *It depends, being a news product, we cater for all our readers, when we cater for Diwali, your focus is going to be on Diwali, and your pictures are going to be based on Diwali. So it's the same with all the other religious functions as well.*
- *From time to time, we try to do our best, bring out the best, our readers are paying for the paper and we need to give it out best, but on the same token, you can't take a dead picture and bring it back to life. If the picture's boring, there's nothing you can do about it.*
- *There have been occasions when we had to use a picture on the front page, although they were not front page material but because the story required that picture, we had to use it. It's one of those things.*
- *Pictures also attract people. We always thought the picture is the window to the newspaper, into the story, but if you look at the paper on the street, someone driving past will say 'that looks good, let me buy a copy'.*

Based on the above response, it is, therefore, evident that the sub-editor has many factors to take into account when selecting a photograph. This does vary on a weekly basis. Williams (2003:153) states that people with political and economic power use ideology to maintain their privileged positions. Consequently, one can assume that media owners shape the messages that the media produce. Therefore, the hegemonic hierarchy remains. However, a closer look at the role of the sub-editor at *Post* indicates that he merely has a job to do. The main task is to make the paper look attractive, thereby encouraging sales. McQuail (2002:265) supports this view by adding that "media organizations are to a great extent in the business of producing spectacles as a way of creating audiences and generating profit and employment". McQuail adds that there is "an assumption that the personal characteristics of those most directly responsible for media production will influence content" (2002:265). This assumption does seem to be the case at *Post*.

Regarding the selection of photographs, the sub-editor added that, in many instances, photographs depend on a particular religious or cultural event. According to the findings, if Diwali is being celebrated, the photographs on the front cover of the *Post* will depict images of the Diwali celebration. Members of a particular culture produce and exchange meanings based on the use of language, signs and images. Hall (1997:15) claims that “representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture”. Cultural experiences of the reader, for example, his or her class, background, ethnicity and gender, impact heavily on the process of negotiating the text, which is made up of codes and signs. For instance, different newspapers report the same event according to how their target audiences’ understanding of the world. In other words, readers from different cultures or different social standings may experience different meanings in the same text (Fiske, 1990:3). *Post* targets the South African Indian population, and whilst they are of the same ethnic group, their social experiences vary.

4.3.3 Representation of women

The representation of women in the media has always been a point of contestation. When asked how women are represented in *Post*, the following response was given:

- *Women are more photogenic than men – they bring out a bit more brightness in the picture. Women are more into modelling – they lend themselves to pictures.*
- *The Post has a very, very large women readership, I would say, most of our readership are women. Men are more reserved. We’re trying to attract more men readers, that’s the business.*
- *I have been at the Post for eight years and there has always been a picture of a woman on the front page, be it glamour or murder.*
- *People don’t want to see too much of grim stuff on the front page – there needs to be something more eye – catching. (The reason women are used in the front page).*
- *Post has that style, big, bold blood – but you have to give readers something lighter – like the beauty pageant taking place and some lovely fresh faces on the front page – it breaks up the page – as far as possible we try to break it up – it makes the paper look good – it brings out the brightness of the paper.*

- *You don't want to have a gloomy person on a happy function – it's about the looks as well. Somebody who looks good – brings about that look of confidence – and she looks good.*

The sub-editor states that for the past eight years there has always been a picture of a woman on the front page 'be it glamour or murder'. Based on the findings, it seems evident that women are perceived as either 'victims' or decorative add-ons and not as serious role-players in society. Literature by Seidman (2002:94) supports this view as she maintains that "gender stereotypes are heavily embedded in all forms of visual images". The visual image has a powerful effect on how one views the world. In addition, according to the sub-editor, photographs of beauty pageants bring out the 'brightness of the paper' and these images are used to attract more male readers. Media texts do not merely mirror or reflect 'reality', but instead construct hegemonic meaning of what should be accepted as 'reality'. These meanings appear to be 'real', inevitable and full of common sense. Not surprisingly though, feminists have drawn on the concept of hegemony in order to argue that most of us cannot see how patriarchal ideology is made to appear as 'objective', non-gendered' and 'neutral' and 'non-ideological'.

With this in mind, it seems as though staff members at *Post* are responsible for what is produced in the paper and readers accept it as the 'norm' and as a mirror of 'reality'. A key point to remember is that hegemonic realities must be constantly reconstructed, contested, renegotiated and renaturalized (Carter and Steiner, 2004:2). If women are constantly 'bombarded' with these visual images, how do they distinguish reality from the image? Such representations are, therefore, seen as "highly ideological and as serving to reinforce patriarchy" (Kidd, 2002:77). However, other aspects of the newspapers, for example, the size of the headlines and the placement of the photograph, also play a large role in agenda setting. When the same sign appears for long periods, week after week, it then becomes possible to "better identify the agenda of a news organization" (De Beer and Botha, 2008:238).

4.4 Interview with the senior woman reporter

4.4.1 Selection of Photographs

The selection and production of photographs convey ideological messages which are delivered to audiences. When asked what factors are considered in the selection of photographs, the following response was given:

- *I always tell them (the editor and sub-editor) that I would like to see a picture of a handsome man on the front page. No one listens to me. It'll be a total change. It'll only happen if someone won Mr Bollywood. It'll be a total change.*
- *Whenever you associate a front page picture, it's always a stand alone picture and it would be of a woman, whether it's baking or a horse-racing event. Instead of getting a handsome jockey, they'll get a girl in an outfit posing next to a horse.*
- *It's the editor who makes the decision.*
- *(on choosing a male for the front page) I would do the same – it's so instilled because of being here for so many years – on the odd occasion if there's a need to use a male, which would be okay.*
- *Sometimes I'll use (models) them in a bikini top. When the readers know they are Bollywood celebrities, then it's expected. A few years ago, readers used to complain. When we used to carry pictures that didn't 'suit' our title, readers used to complain about the content. They are prepared to complain about it when they see it in the paper, yet they are the very ones going to see these Bollywood movies and they're not complaining then. We don't get a letter saying that we saw Celina Jaitley (Indian actress) and this is what she wore. Then it's the older female readers who would complain. About 52% of our readers are women.*
- *If the pose is too seductive, sub-editor will crop it in a way that you don't see anything – he'll be the back up.*
- *(Regarding the Sharks Flasher girl in a bikini) I don't think it's 'kosher' for our paper. On the odd occasion it's okay, but I personally don't think it's 'kosher'. I suppose it's because we appear as such a traditional paper. Even when I'm sourcing pictures for Bollywood, and some of the pictures of the Indian starlets there are 'way more' saucier than the Hollywood, I have to be so specific of what I'm taking. It depends on the pose, the clothing that they're wearing. I feel some poses are too seductive for the paper and I don't want anyone complaining, I tone it down. Unless the story is about how sultry this 'babe' is, I have to choose a picture accordingly.*

Based on the above response, it is evident that the selection and production of photographs create certain tensions in the newsroom. Regarding the selection of photographs, the senior woman reporter adds that ‘no one listens’ to her. The term “gate keeping” has been widely used to describe the method by which selections are made in media work. For the most part, gatekeepers decide what is going to appear and how it is going to appear in the media. Gate-keeping also applies to the different kinds of editorial and production work in print and television. It refers to the power to grant or deny access to different voices in society and is often an area of conflict (McQuail, 2002:276). McQuail (2002:276) argues that the weakness in the concept of gate keeping is that there is generally one main set of selection criteria and its tendency to individualize decision-making. Based on the findings, it seems as though the editor makes the final decision. Len-Rios et al. (2005:155) argue that the under-representation of women is connected to news production. Every newsroom employs bureaucratic and organizational processes for selecting and assigning stories (Carter and Steiner, 2004:144). Apart from selection and emphasis or placement, gatekeepers can also insert and delete material into existing news reports. According to Oosthuizen (2001:198), ideally, editors ought to perform their tasks in accordance with the broad guidelines laid down by their board of directors. However, if they do not keep to these guidelines, it can lead to conflict. It is, therefore, obvious that editors can act as strict gatekeepers and that they can discard or ignore stories or news items that do not conform to their own beliefs or policies. In this way, news can be distorted (Oosthuizen, 2001:199).

4.4.2 Representation of women

Women in the media are portrayed as either the ‘victim’ or ‘housewife’ or ‘sexy’ model. When asked to describe the women of today and how they are portrayed in the media, the following response was given:

- *The women of today are self-confident, they know what they want of life, they’re role-models, they’re mothers, they’re business women, and they’re wives. They are multi-skilled, whether it’s at the office or at the home. They’re aware of what surrounds them.*
- *With regard to Post readers, we have the traditionalists and the modernists. The traditional would be the older Indian market. There’s an imbalance between the two.*

- *An example of the modern day women is the Mrs India pageant that we're covering. All the women that I've covered there over the past month are very articulate women, they know what they want, and they are go-getters, whether it's community workers, businesswomen. Some of them are so motivating.*
- *We are able to accommodate whereas if it's at the Greyville or a horse-racing day, there would be someone in modern Indian attire though, it's not specifically western, and we still have that Indian edge that we're always looking for.*
- *There's always an Indian element to it, no matter what it is because we have to know what our target market is, but depending on the event, we are able to make changes.*

Based on the above response, it is evident that there are a large number of modern, articulate and independent women readers of *Post*. McDonald (2004:56) suggests that the women of the 20th and 21st centuries have been propelled into the executive boardroom. Whilst this change may seem to be the case, the *Post* still relies heavily on the traditional dress. Based on the above responses, it is evident that it is the editor's call to maintain the traditional Indian dress, presumably, as the target audience is the South African Indian. Holland (2004:69) maintains that the "men who produce the pages, will continue to build their power on the decorative excess of the women who are pictured on them". Although, according to Holland, (2004:69), women have contributed to the country's economic growth, in terms of income and purchasing power, they continue to play an insignificant role in the shaping of the media. One can only assume that the editor is confident that the modern day woman can remain in the boardroom but still maintain her traditions.

Based on the findings, representation is infused into culture. The woman reporter added that women are mostly photographed in Indian attire as the *Post* has the 'Indian edge'. Research reveals that members of a particular culture produce and exchange meanings based on the use of language, signs and images. Hall (1997:15) claims that "representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture". Representation is, indeed, at the heart of this process. Through representation, we are able to give meaning to people, objects and events. We are able to link people, objects and events with our conceptual maps to 'make sense of things'. Representation also enables us to conceptualize and give meaning to a set of signs that are arranged or organized into various languages which stand for or represent those concepts, signs

and images (Hall, 1997:21). This is an important aspect of the study as it focuses on photographic images.

Fiske (1990:40) supports the above findings as the readers create meaning by 'reading' the photograph according to the readers' own cultural experience. In other words, the reader creates meaning of the text by bringing to it his or her experience, emotions and attitudes (Fiske,1990:40). In response to the sub-editors comment on the Post possessing an 'Indian element', cultural experiences of the reader, for example, his or her class, background, ethnicity and gender, impact heavily on the process of negotiating the text, which is made up of codes and signs. For instance, different newspapers report the same event according to how their target audiences' understanding of the world. In other words, readers from different cultures or different social standings may experience different meanings in the same text (Fiske, 1990:3).

4.4.3 The media creates identity through photographs

Media representations construct identity. When asked if the media creates identity through photographs, the following response was given:

- *To an extent, the Post does create an identity for Indian women.*
- *For us even if it's a dancing or singing event, we ask them to dress in something traditional. Most of the local music artists will dress in their full Indian attire.*
- *Yesterday we had a picture of a woman who'd won a Hallmark watch through a competition in Post. She knew that she was going to be photographed, so she came in her sari and her 'India' shoes, even though she was going back home by taxi and bus. That's how she wants to be seen in the paper. Although she would have to walk back to the taxi rank and travel by taxi, she wanted to be seen in that Indian outfit.*
- *Even if it's for Diwali, no one would tell the women or girls how to dress. They would know before hand because it's for this publication. The other newspapers would not go out of their way to have a person in a traditional outfit, unless it's for a specific occasion.*

- *However if you look at the broadcast media (television), I think the stereotype is very much alive. You'll find an Indian woman has to wear a sari, whether she's advertising for Rama margarine or baking power. Even if they have an advert for Hullett's sugar, the Indian lady will have a big red dot on.*
- *The broadcast media play a bigger role in creating identity. Although on television, one can see that it is an Indian person, does one really have to wear an outfit to say that she's Indian? They are not asking anyone else to wear their traditional garb.*
- *We used to run a weekly fashion page, catering for all the Indian fashion and the response was quite big. We've cut down by four pages, so we now have Indian fashion once a month. (It is so popular) If we didn't mention that store that was selling these garments, you'd expect a series of calls, asking 'where can we buy this' or they'd assume that Post is selling the garments.*
- *I think we still follow the very traditional aspect. For instance, if there's Diwali or a pageant, women are always in a sari, depends what the event is. But we are able to accommodate, for example if the photo-shoot is at the Greyville Race Course at a horse-racing day, the model would be dressed in modern Indian attire. It's not specifically western but we still have that Indian edge that we're always looking for.*
- *There's always an Indian element to it, no matter what it is. We have to know what our target market is, however, depending on the event, we are able to make changes.*

Based on the above response, it is evident that the *Post* does play a part in constructing the identity of Indian women. Literature by Wasserman (2008:263) suggests that media structures can also contribute to identity formation. In the South African context, apartheid created economic classes and imposed racial and ethnic identities. In particular, if a newspaper uses a vernacular language or pertains to a cultural group, these media “call upon their audiences to take on a certain identity” (Wasserman, 2008:263). For instance, the readers of the *Post*, many are not asked to dress in their traditional outfits, however, as it is the *Post*, they are dealing with, they are aware of the ‘calling’. This practice seems to indicate that Indian women, as subjects, do not have control over the construction of their identity. Alexander (2006:45) suggests that “market indicators and trends in the commercial media still, by and large, favour the racial categories of the past”. The market perpetuates social and racial polarization instead of creating opportunities for audiences to negotiate new

identities outside these categories. It suits everyone and is market-related. This tendency, therefore, means that one still finds an Indian woman, in a sari, buying a block of Rama margarine. Consumerism, therefore, also leads to identity formation.

4.4.4 Deviant case

Deviant or unusual cases go against the identified pattern. When asked if there were such cases, the following response was given:

- (Re the Sharks Flasher girl) *I was taken aback that we published that picture. She's always in that outfit because she's an FHM model type girl –and she's the flasher girl for the Sharks. I didn't hear any complaints. Even on the 'sms Post chat' there were no complaints. (readers send their thoughts via their cell-phone). I would've assumed that our readers would complain.*
- *Women don't always want to see a picture of a pretty woman on the front page of the newspaper. We had Upen Patel, but it was a big stand alone – there were four little girls surrounding him at a religious event. (Annexure G)*
- *It was nice to see a male for a change, on the front page and it had nothing to do with a man being killed or having him kill someone. It's very seldom that you're going to see a male on the front page, unless Shahruk Khan comes to Durban. That's the only time we'll use pictures of men on the front page. Local men are only used as a 'stand alone' on the front page, for example if they've won the Mr India competition.*

Based on the above response, it is evident that deviant cases do pose a challenge for the staff at *Post*. These negative instances offer a crucial test to the theory. The case study of the Sharks Flasher Model seems to have stunned many staff of *Post*. Interestingly, the senior woman reporter said that the model in her bikini (Sharks Flasher Model) was not 'kosher' as the newspaper was conservative. However, as there were no complaints reported, one begs to ask – are the gate-keepers in 'sync'/step with their audience? Comments by staff have indicated that women, pictured in the *Post*, seem to be portrayed as traditional and conservative. The case identified above seems to go against the grain and prove otherwise.

4.5 Interview with junior woman reporter

4.5.1 Selection of photographs

A weakness in the concept of selection and production is its tendency to individualize decision-making. When asked what factors are considered during the selection of photographs, the following response was given:

- *We always go about the round about way, even if it's a saucy, sassy picture.*
- *It's the mind-set here, our leader comes from the old school. That's where the direction and the drive for this newspaper come from.*
- *We are a very conservative newspaper. I'd like to assume that we are much more conservative than other newspapers.*
- *There's one word to describe the Post and that's conservative.*
- *We target traditional, conservatives from the 'old school'.*

Based on the above response, it is evident that there seems to be dissension amongst staff due to the lack of consensus when it comes to the selection of a photograph. Carter and Steiner (2004:14) state that news accounts are changed to fit the editors' and owners' prejudices. This form of internal gate keeping often works against reporters especially when trying to work around issues related to gender, class and race (Carter and Steiner, 2004:14). The comment by the woman reporter that *Post* is conservative stems from the editor's belief that the newspaper ought to become more family orientated. In addition, one of the main strategies of *Post*'s management was to eliminate the image *Post* had acquired, that of publishing pictures of attractive young women on page three. Hall (1993:98) maintains that the sphere of 'preferred readings' have the "whole social order embedded in them as a set of meanings, practices and beliefs: the everyday knowledge of social structures, of 'how things work for all practical purposes in this culture', the rank order of power and interest". It seems apparent that *Post*'s management has taken a stance on its views on women, therefore implying that society follows its example (Ramguthie, 2005:1). Fiske (1990:112) elaborates on Hall's theory, stating that the dominant system is the preferred readings of society as it is one that conveys the dominant values.

4.5.2 Representation of women

Women in the media are portrayed as either a housewife, a 'victim' or 'sexy' model. When asked to describe the women of today and how they are portrayed in the media, the following response was given:

- *I think they've become very modern, from their dressing to their career expectations.*
- *A lot more women have stepped away from being typical housewives, and they've made their mark in the career industry.*
- *Being a reporter and having profiled a number of companies, you'd be surprised at the number of Indian women that have taken up high positions, many of them unknown. You won't even know, unless you go there.*
- *For example, Local Government and Traditional Affairs, you have this perception that there are many African females. You'd be surprised at the number of Indian women who have taken up top positions within government and within corporate companies.*
- *Being a reporter I look for women to profile and we target Indians, success stories, whether it's entrepreneurs, corporate companies, NGO's, if you look at Lifeline, there's an Indian woman at the helm. I recently did a story on suicide and was surprised to find her there.*

Based on the following response, it seems evident *Post* is taking steps to identify and target women success stories. Gallagher (2004:157) maintains that women make up 18 per cent of the world's news subject. In other words, women were unlikely to feature in stories about government, business and politics. The woman of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has been propelled into the executive boardroom. The executive superwoman is always on the move and always in complete control, whether it is jet-setting, caring for the children or revelling in the social life (Macdonald, 2004:56). However, it seems evident, from the response, that *Post* does target and profile successful Indian women. These are women who have catapulted into the working world and broken away from the stereotype of being housewives or pretty 'add-ons'. It is hopeful to see women portrayed in a positive

empowering light and it challenges the stereotypical image of women in the media. These articles give hope to women to rise above their second-class citizenship in society.

4.5.3 The media creates identity through photographs

Media representations construct identity. When asked if the *Post* reflects the women of today, the following response was given:

- *Definitely not! I think it's hypocritical. If you look at Bollywood, why I say Bollywood, is that we punt Bollywood so much, especially the North Indian movie. They have all their skimpy outfits, it's amazing. I think they've even bettered Hollywood these days.*
- *The Indian woman is not conservative, there's a misconception. If you look at Indian girls nowadays, I think pants were taboo at one stage, they're wearing mini-skirts, buxom tops, showing cleavage.*
- *I think they've really stepped away from what it was – the old school – we've just become modern. In all sense, not only the 'white' girls, it's across the board. The Indian women in their bikinis are so buxom and they aren't afraid to show it.*
- *We have Punjabi and sari clad women in our newspaper. That's the argument that we have, if I have to buy the YOU Magazine, the first thing I look for it what the latest Hollywood stars are wearing and I'm also looking at what are available at the shops.*
- *At Post we only target saris and Punjabis, I'm not going to be buying that on a weekly basis, so it doesn't appeal to me, I'm only going to use it once a year if I go to a wedding.*
- *That's what the paper lacks, because as youngsters, we want to know what are that latest shoes on the market, are they sandals or pumps and so on?*
- *We have our discussions in the newsroom – I'm a youngster in comparison to others around here. I love looking at fashion. The paper lacks something.*
- *It's the cost of the Punjabi and saris. I'm looking for a t-shirt, and then I'll go to Mr Price and say 'wow' that's fashionable. I'm not going to be able to afford a R1000*

Punjabi or R 500 sari. You must be able to get many things from a newspaper, be it the movies that are showing tonight, news, fashion, entertainment, celebrity news.

It is evident from the findings that the Post does not seem to be truly reflective of the Indian women of today. The woman reporter acknowledged that Indian women in their bikinis are so 'buxom' and they are not afraid to show it. The word 'buxom' probably also reveals that the modern young Indian women are not tall and slender as images in the *Post* seem to depict. The media provides the materials out of which many people construct their sense of class, of ethnicity and race and nationality, thereby leading to identity (Kellner,1995:1). Wasserman (2008:267) says that "it is also important to note that the media is a site for power struggle, and that the construction of identities through media takes place in relation to social, political and economic contestation". It seems as though the Post is sending out mixed signals regarding the representation of women. South Africans have additional complexities in terms of identity construction. In the South African context, apartheid created economic classes and imposed racial and ethnic identities. However, South Africa has emerging new identities. Jacobs (2003:_29) states that, after democratization, there was the "renegotiation of cultural boundaries and the manifestation of hybridity" (Jacobs, 2003:29). This seems to be the tension that is emerging in the responses.

4.5.4 Deviant Case

Unexpected generalizations in the course of data analysis lead one to seek out new deviant (unusual – unexpected) cases. These cases go against the identified pattern. When asked if there were such cases, the following response was given:

- *Recently we had Yosheen Govender, who was a Sharks 'flasher girl', the other newspapers used her in a bikini, but we held a sharks flag around her, because we don't use pictures like that, as I said the Post is conservative.*
- *We don't have bikini-clad women on the front page, regardless if it's part of our marketing strategy, in comparison to the Herald, which also targets Indians.*

Based on the above response, it is evident that deviant cases do create a 'stir' in the newsroom. In the literature by Silverman (2006:309), he notes that deviant cases go against the pattern identified. These negative instances offer a crucial test to the theory. The case study of the 'Sharks Flasher Model' seems to have surprised many staff. Interestingly, the

respondent mentions that the model had a flag around her, suggesting that the flag was 'wrapped' around her, thereby 'lessening' the impact of her bikini-clad body. However, upon examination of the photograph, it appears that the flag was used as a backdrop as it was positioned behind her. The findings indicate that the editor is conservative and of 'the old school'. However, the deviant case, identified above, seems to prove otherwise and go against the grain.

4.6 Summary

This chapter presented a thematic analysis of the data obtained from the empirical study. It further provided a discussion of these findings and set the platform for the final chapter which presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study. The research methodology chapter confined the empirical research to interviews of those who produce the paper i.e. the photographers, reporters and sub-editor. The findings were, therefore, reported according to these interviews. The next chapter discusses the conclusions and recommendations of the study in terms of the key elements of photographic representation.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the results of the empirical research were interpreted and discussed in terms of the representation of women that emerged from the literature review. More specifically, the results from the empirical study were based on the following themes of representation:

- Identity;
- Women in the media; and
- Selection and production of photographs.

This chapter will discuss the following conclusions and recommendations based on the literature review and the empirical study. The conclusions and recommendations are presented on the key themes identified in the literature review and used in the research instrument.

In brief, this study sets out to explore how women are represented in the print media, in particular the *Post*. In order to solve this research problem, the following objectives were set:

- To review and critique the literature that informs current theories of representation; and
- To conduct empirical research with the staff at *POST*.

The first and second objectives have been achieved in the preceding chapters.

5.2 Conclusions and recommendations

The following conclusions and recommendations are based on the literature review and the empirical study. The conclusions and recommendations are presented on the key themes identified in the literature review and used in the research instrument.

5.2.1 Composition of photographs

Women photographed for the front pages of the *Post* were frequently chosen for their 'appealing' and attractive features. These photographs were used to 'brighten up' the newspaper and to draw more male readers. Women are viewed differently compared to men, it seems that women are natural and photogenic therefore they make good subjects. Photographic techniques, for example, cropping and highlighting are used to create a better image. It seems as though women are often presented in one dimensional stereotype. It is, therefore, recommended that photographers consider other aspects when composing a photograph. It is further recommended that photographers be trained to consider issues of gender.

5.2.2 Selection of photographs

The selection of photographs was done predominately by men, in particular the editor of *Post*. Although a senior woman reporter is at times present, she is over-ruled and this act is supported by the editor's comment that 'men know more about beauty'. Photographs of women are used to attract male readers. However, women are on the front cover of the *Post*, be it 'blood or beauty'. Men are seldom on the cover of the *Post*, unless it is a Bollywood celebrity. It is, therefore, recommended that women reporters and junior reporters participate in the selection of photographs. This participation would ensure that photographs are more reflective of a changing society.

5.2.3 Representation of women

Articles and photographs analysed in *Post* seem to reflect the modern Indian women. However, physically attractive women are photographed for the front pages of *POST* as a means of making the paper more attractive, thereby increasing sales. Articles inside the paper reflect the modern career women. However, photographs of women on the front cover are there, be it 'beauty or blood'. It is, therefore, recommended that the staff find alternative photographs depicting the modern Indian woman. It is recommended that the staff consider a simple course hosted by Genderlinks, an organization that makes the public and media aware of the issues of gender and gender sensitivity.

5.2.4 The Media creates identity through photographs

Photographs published on the front cover of *Post* do create an identity for Indian women. It is recommended that staff at *Post* conduct an audience analysis as to how women ought

to be portrayed. It is recommended that the policy at *Post* be reviewed, in terms of what is acceptable and what is unacceptable to its readers. It is further recommended that the staff of *Post* ought to reflect the women of today and not rely on its own beliefs and traditions.

5.3 Overall recommendations of the study

Based on the above conclusions, the study therefore recommends that staff at *Post* pay particular attention to the portrayal of women. The Indian women are modern in thought and dress. Audience surveys ought to be conducted to gauge how the Indian woman would like to be portrayed on the front page of *Post*. During the selection of photographs, the process should include women and junior reporters. When women are at the helm of decision making, it increases a positive gender dispensation. The policy of selection and production of photographs at *Post* should be reviewed to become a wider process to include more reporters. The policy should consider the younger career orientated readers. Finally, photographs published in *Post* should be reflective of today's modern women.

5.4 Recommendations for future research

This study was only limited to photographs in *Post*. The study recommends a study into audience analysis research of *Post*. Although this study was limited to photographs of the *Post*, a greater scale of study could include the coverage of women in sports. In addition, the study recommends that a study be conducted into representation of women in the mass media.

5.5 Conclusion

The abstract has provided an outline of the study. This was followed by the he research problem and its setting, the need for the study, the objectives of the study and the key research questions. The limitations and methodology were presented. Theories underpinning representation, in particular, identity, gender and the selection and production of photographs were analysed. The research methodology was discussed, followed by the findings and analysis, leading to the recommendations and conclusions. The critical question was how are women represented in *Post*? In order to find the answers, I analysed photographs on the front pages of *Post*. A select population of the *Post*'s staff was interviewed regarding the construction, selection and production of gender images.

The findings were not entirely unexpected. Firstly, men were the sole selectors of the photographs. Men selected what was appealing to their senses and in turn what was appealing to their newspaper audiences. According to the sub-editor if audiences are attracted to the photograph on the front page of *Post*, they will buy the newspaper. Indeed, a *Post* woman journalist also indicated that she would not change the status quo regarding women posing on the front pages of *Post*. Whilst gender stereotypes remain and are enforced every week, with newspapers sales spiralling down, can one find fault with the staff for wanting to attract more sales?

During the interviews, I found that I shared a similar view to that of the *Post* photographer. It is only natural to photograph someone who is beautiful and to enhance their physical qualities. However, women ought to be used as news sources as well. The study gave me an insight into how the newsroom operates. While gender activists campaign about the stereotyping of gender images, I found that staff at *Post* was focused on selling newspapers rather than redefining their stance on gender images.

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Questions to be answered in the research:

Questions for photographers:

- What factors did you consider when composing this photograph?
- What are the different framing and selecting techniques for photographing men and women?
- Is there a specific dress code for women?

Questions for sub-editors:

- Are there any changes made during production and reproduction, for example, cropping, highlighting, darkening?
- Is there always a picture of a woman on the front page of *The Post*?
- How many copies have not had a woman on the front page?
- What are the criteria for front page pictures?

Questions for women reporters:

- How would you describe the modern day South African Indian women?
- How are women portrayed in the front page of *The Post*?
- Do the media create a specific identity for Indian women? If so, what is it?
- Are you aware of how a photograph is manipulated?
- What effect do these changes have?

P.O.Box 26465

Isipingo Beach

4115

23 June 2008

Dear Mr. Rumgathee,

RE: INFORMED CONSENT RE. MA – UKZN

I am a lecturer in the Department of Media, Language and Communication at the Durban University of Technology. I am presently studying towards my MA in Communication, Media and Cultural Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and my supervisor is Professor Damian Garside. The research component of my studies is a proposed dissertation, titled: Photographic representation of women in the print media – a case study of the *POST*.

To complete this study I would require the assistance of *Post* regarding the following:

- i. access to 'back-copies' of the *Post*,
- ii. assistance from staff members with regards to a questionnaire and
- iii. consent to observe photographers and sub-editors at work

I would appreciate all the support I receive from *Post* as this will contribute greatly towards the completion of my studies.

Thank you

Yours sincerely

Deseni Soobben (Ms)
Lecturer: Media, Language and Communication
City Campus
Durban University of Technology
Tel: 031 – 3736617 / Fax: 031-3736623
Cell: 073 2614772

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LOGAN GOVENDER
 "THE accused has not shown that he not a flight risk, that he will stand trial and that there will not be a public outcry if bail is granted. Bail is refused."
 After Acting Magistrate Yugs Naidu yesterday pronounced his verdict before a packed gallery at the Pinetown Magistrate's Court, double murder accused, Mathew Naidoo, 22, showed emotion, as he was whisked to the ground by a policeman. In fact Naidoo's mother, Rita, and other family members who were seated at the back, and in the front of the courtroom, were unsure of the magistrate's decision, and had to ask Mathew if he got bail. When the accused responded that bail had been refused, his family appeared to be puzzled.
 Also in the dock were Naidoo's estranged lover, Nicolette, 26, and his brother, Hardus Lotter, 20, the other alleged masterminds of the July 19, 2007 horrific double murder of their parents Johan and Magdalena Lotter.
 The Lotter siblings did not apply for bail. The blood-spattered bodies of the couple were found at their home on Thames Avenue, Westville.
 Naidoo was represented by attorney Rajen Nathalall, who said after bail had been denied that he was awaiting further instructions on whether another bail application should be made in the Durban High Court.
 Yesterday, in a well-crafted judgment, Acting Magistrate Naidu said:
 ■ He (Naidu) had to decide whether Mathew had satisfied the court that, on a balance of probabilities, there were exceptional circumstances for bail to be granted and whether it was in the public interest to do so.
 ■ The couple had been brutally murdered.
 ■ As a result of swift investigations by detectives from the Durban Organized Crime Unit, the Lotter siblings and Naidoo were detained and subsequently charged.
 ■ In a nutshell, the evidence before the court was that the three accused

Ms India 2008 Hopefuls. The model with the sultry look

POST 16 October 2008

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SPORTS EDITOR: DEENA PILLAY
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PO

Sharks look to a hard bite

WHEN we talk about great battles in the sporting world, thoughts of Federer and Nadal on the tennis courts, India and Australia on the cricket field and Manchester United and Liverpool in soccer come to mind. The epic Sharks/Bulls battles of the past can match any of the above, and the 4pm date they have in Saturday's Absa Currie Cup final has all the ingredients of a contest to reach titanic proportions. Reservoir Hills Rhinos tighthead prop and rugby fundi VERNON CHETTY, who is also the manager of the Kwazulu Natal Junior Sharks and Dukers team and who has aspirations to one day manage the Sharks outfit, analyses the strengths of both teams and calls the match for **POST**.

"IN THE front rows we have a fantastic battle with the two Springboks locking horns – Beast Mtawarira for the Sharks against Gurthro Steenkamp of

tional class front row of Jannie Du Plessis, Bismarck Du Plessis, Mtawarira, Deon Carstens and John Smit.

In the lineouts the Bulls hold a massive advantage. Springbok captain Victor Matfield is a colossal force to reckon with in this department. Johan Muller and Steven Sykes will have to lift their game to compete against the Bulls here.

In the battle of the loose forwards, we have a mouth watering tussle with Jacques Botes, Ryan Kankowski and Jean Deyssel of the Sharks against Wikus van Heerden, Pierre Spies and Dannie Rossouw of the Bulls. It's going to be a contest of the Bulls' brute strength against the agility and flair of the Sharks. I think we will edge this battle especially when later on in the game we bring on our "supersub" Keegan Daniel.

At the half back you have Fourie Du Preez and Morne Steyn against Ruan Pienaar and Frederic Michalak for the Sharks.

The Sharks should win this battle with the finesse and tenacity our half backs have.

The midfield mêlée will see the Sharks' Francois Steyn against Wynand Olivier. Will Steyn redeem himself after



Sharks flasher girl Yosheen Govender and mascot Mr Sharkie will be cheering on their team on Saturday

Picture: NINEY RUTHNAM

I believe Steyn has what it takes to land a 60m drop goal and accumulate the points to bring home the cup.

In the wings we have Bryan Habana versus JP Peterson and the expected battle of the twins, Odwa (Sharks) and Akona Ndungane for the Bulls seems to be a non-starter for these sprint machines after the latter failed a fitness test. However, it remains to be seen whether Akona is really injured or is part of pre-match gamesman-

against the youthful Zane Kirchner. I think here, Terblanche will come out tops. He's been performing like a 20-year-old this season, playing awesome rugby at 35.

Coach John Plumtree and his team of experts in charge of conditioning the Sharks have done a sterling job this season and the players are primed to produce the desired results.

And finally, I will stick my neck out and call the match *95/17 in favour of the Sharks*.

Yosheen Govender – the “Sharks Flasher Girl” –

POST 3 October 2008



Bollywood Film Star – Upen Patel on the front page of the POST - 16 August 2008