YOUTH, MEDIA & LIFESTYLES: AN AUDIENCE STUDY ON MEDIA (TELEVISION) CONSUMPTION AND LIFESTYLES OF BLACK YOUTHS LIVING IN BOTH DURBAN AND ALICE, SOUTH AFRICA

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DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate Programme in Culture, Communication and Media Studies, the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

I declare that this dissertation is my own unpaid 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. Ms Megan White copy edited chapters One to Four for editorial correctness only. The thesis is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy 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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ABSTRACT

Presented as a comparative analysis, this qualitative audience study tests the hypothetic proposition that youths'[1] consumption of media is mediated by various socio-economic determinants as well as cultural and institutional practices. In order to test this hypothesis, the research examines the media (more specifically, television) consumption practices and lifestyles of black South African youths living in an urban city (Durban) and a peri-urban town (Alice) at a particular moment in time.

Positioned as a historical study that reflects a specific period in the history of television (and media) in South Africa, the study attempts to provide a snapshot of youths, television consumption and lifestyles in post-apartheid South Africa. It assesses the relationship between youths and media during a specific period, namely, around a decade after South Africa's first democratically elected government and when the country was still in the throes of political and economic change and transition. It assesses this relationship over a four-year period (from 2002 to 2006) and reflects on this epoch in relation to the then existing policy and regulatory framework as well as to the findings from other relevant empirical research.

The analysis reflects upon the social constructs of class and gender in relation to the study's broader findings on television consumption, which are derived from qualitative and quantitative empirical data. It develops categories and typologies of the lifestyles of youths towards this end and it concludes that youths' media consumption practices and the production and reproduction of lifestyles is a complex matrix of 'lived' experiences, cultural identity and other socialising

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[1] I refer to youth*s* (in the plural) in recognition of the heterogeneity of young people classically referred to as the amorphous group, *youth*.

factors such as age, race and class. Moreover, it shows that peoples' media choices and the related selection and appropriation of media are fundamentally informed by specific policy and regulatory regime. Notwithstanding this, the ways in which black South African youths use media (imported programming or local television content, for example) and accordingly fashion their lifestyles, remains largely determined by their class, their access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the proximity of the experiences represented in the media to those with which they can identify.

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Source: Googlemaps
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ABBREVIATIONS

AMPS   All Media Products Survey

AR   Audience Ratings

AU   African Union

BBBEE   Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment

GEAR   Growth Employment and Redistribution Policy

HDI   Historically Disadvantaged Institution

HSRC   Human Sciences Research Council

IBA   Independent Broadcasting Authority

ICT   Information & Communication Technology

ICASA   Independent Communications Authority of South Africa

ITA   Invitation to Apply

LSM   Living Standards Measurement

NEPAD   New Partnership for Africa's Development

RAMS   Radio Audience Measurement Study

RDP   Reconstruction and Development Programme

SAARF   South African Advertising Research Foundation

SABA	Southern African Broadcasting Association
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAS	Statistical Analysis Software
SATRA	South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority
TAMS	Television Audience Measurement Survey
WRYT	Women Researching Youth and Television

SECTION I

CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

> [P]eople's media use is anchored in the contexts of everyday life in which people live their lives as members of partially overlapping large and small groups, at the global, national, regional and local levels. (Kim Schroder *et al*., 2003:5)

> [L]ifestyles are constructed through consumption, which is in itself the primary indicator of lifestyles in a changing world. (Steven Miles, 2000:29)

This study is the culmination of almost a decade of research into the sociology of youths[2] and media in South Africa. Whilst my previous research focused on youths and television in relation to the meanings of specially selected texts as a result of consumption and production practices, this study attempts to evaluate South Africa's youths in relation to the broader process of 'meaning making' and cultural expression. It is primarily concerned with youths' everyday interactions with the media and with assessing the relationship between media and people's everyday lives, especially in relation to symbolic expression and lifestyles.

This research is presented as an audience study of youths, their television consumption patterns and their lifestyles. In some respects it provides an opportunity for reflection. Firstly, by revisiting my other earlier research on media and youths, I now attempt to chart a new direction of research, one that merges marketing research (which dominates current research into the youths of South Africa) with more critical research (which emanates, primarily, from the fields of sociology and literary, media and cultural studies). Secondly, in analysing youths, media and lifestyles in post-apartheid South Africa, my research also attempts to convene these distinct schools of thought. This research also provides an opportunity for self-reflexivity.

My previous studies on youths' media consumption practices focused specifically on analysing texts and genres in relation to issues of representation (Smith, 2000 and

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[2] I explain later in this chapter that this thesis recognises the heterogeneity of young people and thus refers to youths (in the plural) as symbolic thereof, as opposed to the conventional category, 'youth'.

2002). Of principal concern was the ways in which the experiences of black township youths as depicted on screen are meant to 'stand in for the real thing'. In other words, the research interrogated essentialist notions of 'blackness' as well as black township youths' experiences of the dramatic representation of the lives of township youths attending a fictitious township school. My earlier discursive studies were concerned with the production of texts and with agency in the consumption process (Fairclough, 1992), as well as with providing a glimpse into youths' consumption practices.

Regarding *consumption*, my previous studies found that black youths are generally active consumers: they engage with texts at multiple levels, appreciating both the aesthetic value on offer as well as the narrative value of iconic black popular culture, but they do tend to not entirely embrace or adopt the educative messages and lessons implicit in the texts. The *production* of these very texts also proved somewhat schizophrenic as producers found themselves jostling the myths of black township life with certain creative conventions (such as cliff-hangers and violence). In other words, producers found themselves employing codes of form and content in order to authenticate the experiences of black youths while at the same time making use of narrative devices - sometimes inappropriately for an educational series - in order to 'capture' viewers and thereby sustain audience ratings. This I found particularly problematic for a series trumped as *educational*, emanating from the South African Broadcasting Corporation's (SABCs) award-winning Education Unit (SABC Education), in partnership with, and endorsed by the national Department of Education). Consequently, I argued, it was more an educative drama series than a formal or even informal educational text.

The primary television text analysed in my first paper was South Africa's most watched drama series[3], *Yizo Yizo*, which took on iconic status as it birthed a new kind of black popular culture in South Africa. The series was chosen by me for three reasons: it portrays the lives and experiences of black youths, it achieved phenomenal viewership figures amongst its young black target market, and at the time it first aired (1999), it presented a marked shift from the usual low-budget, B-grade, dreary portrayals of mainly older black people living in apartheid South Africa and speaking

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[3] This 13-part series was aired on SABC television in 1999, 2001 and 2003. It maintained consistently high Audience Ratings (ARs) throughout this period (see also Phalatse, 2001).

predominantly vernacular languages. *Yizo Yizo* offered a coming-of-age drama that was innovative and multilingual, and that had award-winning directorial and cinematographic standards.

My Master of Arts dissertation specifically relied on the textual analysis of a specific sequence (a syntagym of signs, a montage of shots, and dialogue), which in turn provided data for the evaluation of codes of form and of content (Smith, 2000). This was then accompanied by interviews with the *Yizo Yizo* producers, who illuminated the intended meanings and messages encoded in the programme. A reception analysis was then conducted in order to evaluate the audiences' interactions with the intended meanings and messages. Ultimately, the empirical research attempted to explore not only the latent ideological meanings inherent in the representation but also the audiences' choices in the encoding-decoding process (Hall, 1993, and Fiske, 1987). The thesis that was advanced vis-à-vis *Yizo Yizo* is that texts by their very constitution – i.e. they exist within a context of consumption and capital – are not free from the dominant ideology of the time. That is to say, although unique and filled with multiple meanings that allow for multiple interpretations, *Yizo Yizo* is fundamentally a hegemonic text.

Subsequent studies done by me on the *Yizo Yizo* series developed upon my initial empirical work by critically analysing specific elements of the entire three-part drama series, namely, the consumption of local content (Smith, 2002), its representations of violence and gender relations (Smith, 2003*a*), and its value as entertainment-education (Smith, 2003*b*).

During the initial stakeholder interviews (in Smith, 2000), the commissioning editor of the series observed that there was a need for more research on the role of the media in everyday life and into the ways in which youths are engaging with what they see on television (having what could be called a post-apartheid, South African viewing experience). This decision rearticulated the call for a "research mode which prioritises multiple levels of experience, including ongoing relations which connect everyday life with cultural forms" (McRobbie, 1994:184).

Images synonymous with the television series, *Yizo Yizo*

Scene from Yizo Yizo 1

Image from Yizo Yizo 2

Iconic image representing Yizo Yizo 3
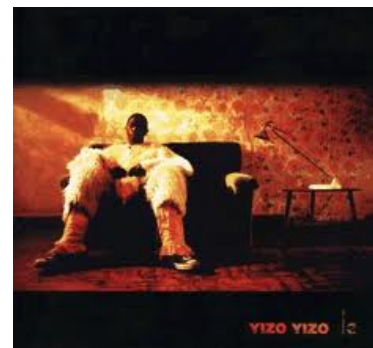
Copy of sleeve from soundtrack to Yizo Yizo 3

Source for all photos on this page: http://www.thebomb.co.za/yizo3.htm

The present research is a critical research response to this call by exploring the interplay between youths, media consumption and lifestyles. It is primarily concerned with youths' consumption of media - television in particular - in an environment of media convergence. In other words it investigates the ways in which audiences navigate the barrage of signs on offer to them in both private and public spaces and how they consequently make choices on how they prefer to *reflect* who and what they are through their chosen lifestyles.

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND HYPOTHESIS

The present research aims to evaluate youths' interactions with the media in their everyday lives by considering the relationship between their media consumption practices and their constructing of their own 'lifestyles'.

This study acknowledges that media consumption is a part of everyone's everyday life and it also accepts that one's media use is negotiated alongside one's other habits, routines and behavioural patterns. It argues that much of the apparent 'choices' on offer to audiences are mediated by macro policies and regulations and that therefore, active consumption of media is arbitrated by certain social, cultural and institutional practices.

The hypothesis to be tested by this research is that youths' consumption of media is mediated by various socio-economic determinants, as well as cultural and institutional practices, including by a specific policy regime of a specific moment in time, and is articulated in various lifestyles.

YOUTHS' MEDIA CONSUMPTION PRACTICES AND LIFESTYLES

Youth as an analytical category is understood to be a social construct. It is about belonging to a social group that is constituted by specific individuals who have been categorised and commonly identified according to certain physiological and biological characteristics (namely, that they are all post-adolescent human beings). In

South Africa, the group or category 'youths' represents the single largest proportion of the population (Stats-SA, 2007, also discussed further in Chapter Two)[4].

While membership to the category 'youths' is decided by your age, much of the commonly understood criteria for belonging to this group hinges on your consumption practices and on those cultural expressions that reflect youthfulness (e.g. how you dress, how you style your hair, what you watch and what music you listen to). Notwithstanding all this, age is critical when it comes to defining who is part of this category called youths.

There are various opinions as to what ages ought to be included in the group known as 'youths'. For example, both the National Youth Commission Act (as amended) and South Africa's National Youth Policy[5] define 'youth' as being between the ages of 14 and 35, while the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) defines it as 16-24, as do some scholars of youths and cultural processes, arguing that it refers to people between the ages of 13 and 19, or 14 and 25 (Amit-Talai and Wulff, 1995).

In recognising the challenges to defining what is meant by 'youths' through the use of the yardstick of age, South Africa's National Youth Policy (2000) observes that while 14-35 years is broad, this definition is thought to be inclusive of young people's shared experiences:

> [I]t is understood that this is a time in life when most young people are going through dramatic changes in their life circumstances as they move from childhood to adulthood. It is recognised, however, that there may be some people who fall outside this age range but who may experience similar circumstances to other young people. Thus, this definition indicates the primary target group, without excluding those who may share similar circumstances.

Although this research was initially concerned with the 16 to 24 years old age group, as adopted by most media research bodies and categories (including South Africa's

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[4] Current statistics (Stats SA 2010) confirm this reality.
[5] The National Youth Policy is meant to provide the framework for youth development and to coordinate the work of stakeholders in youth development (stakeholders include non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, and the three tiers of government, amongst others). The National Youth Policy is discussed further in Chapter Two.

Audience Ratings and Audience Share figures), this decision was refined during the proposal phase of this thesis on the advice of the Higher Degrees and Research Committee of the then University of Natal[6]. This research is thus primarily concerned with young adults between the ages of 16 and 21. This is an age when young adults actively negotiate (within the confines of school/university and other social and cultural institutions) the formation of their cultural identities. They are thus "to be understood at various levels, as individuals, in their social surroundings, and as part of societal or cultural institutions" (McLeod, Kosicki and Pan, 1991:236).

Accepting that youths are further distinguishable by other constructs such as gender, class and race, this study is particularly concerned with the experiences of black African[7] young men and women. In recognition of this differentiation, this thesis refers to youths (in the plural) so as to reflect the diversity within the group of young people ordinarily defined as 'the youth'. This differentiation is akin to what Angela McRobbie (1994) refers to as "different, youthful subjectivities".

Located principally within a cultural studies framework, this study is premised on the view that **media consumption** is a *process* – informed and determined by broader social, political and economic realities – and one that is a form of cultural production and reproduction. The current study further acknowledges that consumption practices exist in relation to production, regulation, representation and identity; it is the 'circuit of culture' as proffered by Stuart Hall (1997). Although acknowledging the collective contribution of these indices when it comes to the construction of meaning, this thesis focuses specifically on consumption practices. It investigates the intersection between media and television consumption practices and the lifestyles of young people, accepting that "consumption is […] in one way or another, part of a larger socially and culturally constituted project" (Friedman, 1994:22).

While the act of consumption is in itself a consequence of the encoding and decoding process, this study is less concerned with interrogating the specific messages relayed at a specific point in time, but rather it assumes that youths interact with many, wide-

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[6] The University of Natal has since changed its name to the University of KwaZulu-Natal, following a merger with the University of Durban-Westville.

[7] For the purpose of this research, references to black youths and black African youths will be used interchangeably. It is, however, accepted that South Africa's Employment Equity Act (1988) differentiates black people as "Africans, Coloureds, and Indians". The nuances of these distinctions are acknowledged where necessary.

ranging meanings during their lifetimes. **This thesis is an audience study of a particular heterogeneous group of people, at a particular period in time. As such, this study moves away from pure textual analysis since it adheres to the argument that "even the most insightful of textual studies cannot tell us anything about how people appropriate the textual products offered by the media into their everyday lives, nor can they tell us how they make sense of cultural meanings offered by these messages" (Schroder *et al.*, 2003:16). The thesis further takes into consideration the fact that researchers' subjectivities and biases could "impede a truly phenomenological exploration of the informant's lifeworld-based [sic] experience" (*ibid.*:126).**

Lifestyles are understood to be the outward expressions of individuals' cultural identities. Premised on the belief that media (mass media and Information Communication Technologies (ICTs)) are a part of people's everyday lives, lifestyles are generally acknowledged to reflect people's consumption practices. One's chosen lifestyle is the result of one's cumulative interactions with a variety of media and cultural products and how one has interacted over time with a range of experiences and 'socialising institutions'. This symbiotic relationship is cyclical and fluid, open to change and influence. As Chris Barker (1999:31) argues in relation to representation and identities, "television is a major communicative device for disseminating those representations which are constitutive of (and constituted by) cultural identity." Stephen Miles (2000:28) concurs, arguing that the centrality of electronic media usage to youths' lifestyles is connected to their consumption practices and exists as the "material expression of an individual's identity".

While it is difficult to attach one single definition to *lifestyle*, in the main it is understood to refer to one's outward expression of culture or cultural identity. In his book *Youth Lifestyles in a Changing World*, Miles (2000:16) defines lifestyle as an "active expression of a 'way of life'". He asserts that "[l]ifestyles are, in effect, lived cultures in which individuals actively express their identities but do so in direct relation to their position as regards the dominant culture" (*ibid.*:26). This definition is instructive and concurs with my hypothesis as outlined earlier. However, it is critical to note that this study is less concerned with interrogating cultural identity than it is with assessing youths' lifestyles which (amongst other things) "provide the symbolic

resources through which identities can be constructed […]" (Miles, 2000:6). As Jeanne Steele and Jane Browne (1995:555) have proffered, youths' sense of self shapes how they interact with media, "and those encounters in turn shape their sense of themselves in the ongoing process of cultural production and reproduction."

Television consumption, for example, is accepted as a part of most people's everyday lives and is thought to reflect one's choices and preferences, which in turn reflect one's 'taste'. For Pierre Bourdieu (1984), "cultural capital", reflected in "taste", is innate and reflects the established behaviour of one's social class. Following on from this hypothesis, our future aspirations and choices would thus correspond with our social class, as determined by the habitus. The *habitus*, as Randal Johnson (1993:5) succinctly articulates in his reading of Bourdieu, is "a set of dispositions which generates practices and perceptions […] the result of a long process of inculcation, beginning in early childhood, which becomes a 'second sense' or a second nature[8]."

Through Bourdieu's empirical research that he conducted in France in the 1960s and 70s, "taste" and "cultural capital" are understood to reflect the role of culture in maintaining distinctions of class, where class, in turn is understood to be "defined by consumption". Similarly, as Miles has observed of young people's role in the "cultural capital of consumption":

> […] lifestyles are about behaving in culturally accepted ways, depending upon the cultural capital of the person concerned: the more cultural capital you have the more extravagant your lifestyle is likely to be. The crucial point, however, is that there is a hierarchy of taste whereby certain activities are deemed more culturally appropriate than others. (Miles, 2000:23)

This audience study set out to test this assumption. The empirical research sought to sample the "cultural capital" of respondents, beginning with an assessment of their lived conditions, their access to media and ICTs and their preferences or value judgements of specific television programmes; before further exploring the rationale for individual lifestyle choices and the various ways in which these are used to reflect

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[8] Although Bourdieu's work remains relevant to the twenty-first century, it has been critiqued for its "tendency to economic reductionism" (Friedman, 1994:9).

not only who one is but who one wants to become. Additionally, a comparative analysis[9] of urban (working class to middle class youths) and peri-urban (poor to working class) sites was employed in order to fully assess the hypothesis of 'distinctions of taste'.

AUDIENCE RESEARCH

This study is largely qualitative in design. It is mostly concerned with the nuances of cultural reproduction, which is to say how media consumption interfaces with the production of lifestyles. It is a study of media audiences, with specific focus being given to audiences' television consumption practices. Although it does not evaluate media consumption in relation to the reception of individual texts specifically (which means it is not strictly a reception analysis), this audience study does, in its attempt to evaluate media consumption and lifestyles, focus on the ways in which youths "actively and creatively make their own meanings and create their own culture, rather than passively absorb pre-given meanings imposed upon them" (Ang, 1996:136).

As an audience study, this study employs the established traditions and methodologies of both reception analysis and ethnography as a means to better understand the correlation between youths, their media consumption practices and their lifestyles. *Ethnography* is a qualitative approach to research that draws on its anthropological tradition in order to understand people and their behaviours. It also emphasises the need to "study the ideas, attitudes, motives and behaviour from the point of view of subjects in natural situations" (Du Plooy, 2001:151). *Media ethnography* looks specifically at media texts and contexts. As Shaun Moores (1993) has asserted, media ethnography requires the researcher to engage with "local settings" as well as with the "macro context". Concerned with the "anthropology of consumption", Moores advocates a "critical ethnography", which is research that assesses audiences' interpretations within the context of their everyday lives and routines.

The current research tried to adhere to this requirement as far as possible when it came to the collation of empirical data at its two research sites (which are further

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[9] The comparative analysis is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

discussed below). Notwithstanding this, I do acknowledge upfront, owing to the purpose and nature of this research, that I was not in the field for lengthy periods of time and was thus not living with the study's 'informants' or strictly observing the use of a diary for participant-observation purposes. Consequently, a more accurate description of this research might be that it is a quasi-ethnographic study. The observations of Ellen Seiter *et al.* (1989:227) are noted in this regard:

> Television audience studies, even when they use ethnographic or qualitative methods, have not satisfied the requirements of ethnography proper, and our own work is no exception. While ethnographies are based on long-term and in-depth field work, most television audience studies have involved only brief periods of contact, in some cases less than an hour, with the informants.

Triangulation in data collection

This study uses different methods of data collection in order to elicit responses from its participants that can then be used for interpreting their media consumption practices and lifestyles. Methodological triangulation was employed so as to balance the strengths and weaknesses of the different research methods that were used: principally, a questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews.

The survey research that was conducted provided a snapshot of media access amongst youths, as well as an insight into their general media consumption practices, their brand awareness and their genre preferences. The qualitative interviews meanwhile probed these areas/themes in order to further explore the above and delve deeper into the findings from the survey research so as to better understand the nature of youths' interactions with media in their everyday lives. The quantitative analysis focused on testing the preliminary hypothesis (i.e. youths' media consumption determined by 'cultural capital') of this study, while the qualitative approach advanced an exploratory objective, testing my assumption regarding youths' media consumption practices and lifestyles.

While focus groups are a critical part of ethnographic research and are often used for the benefit of observing the participants' interactions with one another, this study is specifically interested in individuals' interactions with media and in their cultural

expressions. Consequently, face-to-face, semi-structured, individual, in-depth interviews were employed as the primary method of ethnographic research (discussed further in the chapter on methodology: Chapter Four). By conducting such interviews, this study moves beyond textual analysis as a means to explore only consumption practices and audience engagement with meanings and messages. Recognising that *access* and other related socio-economic determinants, as well as cultural and institutional practices, all impact upon the consumption process, the current research seeks to test this very assumption by way of a comparative analysis.

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS – URBAN AND PERI-URBAN SITES

In order to test the hypothesis that **youths' consumption of media is mediated by various socio-economic determinants as well as cultural and institutional practices,** this research presents a comparative analysis of consumption practices amongst youths living in a peri-urban town, Alice (situated in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa) and youths living in a cosmopolitan city, Durban (in the province of KwaZulu-Natal). Critically, both locales are also habitually accessed and traversed by young people from the periphery (i.e. rural dwellings, townships and informal settlements outside of Durban and Alice) [10].

Although the Eastern Cape occupies a square kilometre radius almost twice that of KwaZulu-Natal (*South Africa 2005/06 Yearbook*), the population of the latter is much larger than the population of the former. National figures from Statistics South Africa (Stats-SA) suggest that (although Gauteng is the most densely inhabited province) KwaZulu-Natal has the largest share of the national population and the Eastern Cape has the third largest share (see **Table 1** below).

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[10] It is acknowledged that although residing, working or studying in Durban, many of the youths in that city do in fact originate from outside the city, quite possibly from areas akin to Alice. Nonetheless, their life-worlds and livelihoods are urban contemporary.

Table 1 Percentage distribution of estimated provincial share of the total population (2001-2007)

Province	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Eastern Cape	15.1	15.0	14.9	14.8	14.7	14.5	14.4
Free State	6.5	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.2
Gauteng	19.2	19.4	19.6	19.7	19.9	20.1	20.2
KwaZulu-Natal	21.1	21.1	21.0	21.0	21.0	20.9	20.9
Limpopo	11.6	11.6	11.5	11.4	11.4	11.3	11.3
Mpumalanga	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.4	7.4	7.4	7.4
Northern Cape	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3
North West	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.1	7.1	7.1
Western Cape	9.4	9.5	9.7	9.8	9.9	10.0	10.1

Source: Stats-SA Mid-year figures (2007)

Disaggregated data suggests that in both the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape there are more women than there are men (Stats-SA, 2007), hence the overweighting of women in the samples from both sites. The national General Household Survey reveals that the Eastern Cape is one of the worst-off provinces in South Africa in terms of its lack of access to basic services, such as on- and off-site piped or tap water. The survey further shows that both KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape are two of the provinces that are the most dependent upon welfare services (*ibid*.). It is thus not surprising that a recent study on child deprivation (i.e. unmet needs) found that the Eastern Cape, followed by KwaZulu-Natal, has overwhelmingly the greatest number of the country's most deprived municipalities (Barnes, Wright, Noble and Dawes, 2007).

KwaZulu-Natal's city of Durban is recognised as "one of the fastest-growing urban areas in the world. Its port is the busiest and one of the 10th largest in the world" (*South African Year Book*, 2005/06:13). Durban-based students, who reflect the diversity of the province, are generally (expected to be) more urban, more cosmopolitan, more economically and socially mobile, and they tend to enjoy greater (opportunities for) access to different forms of media and ICTs. There exist a range of technical institutes or universities of technology[11], in addition to the province's main

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[11] The most notable being the Durban University of Technology, initially Durban Institute of Technology, which is the result of a merger between the historically whites-only institution of Natal Technikon and an Historically Disadvantaged Institution (HDI), M.L. Sultan Technikon.

university, the University of KwaZulu-Natal. These tertiary institutions provide a vehicle through which a person might improve his/her life and ultimately attain that social and cultural capital that arises as a result of education and the opportunities that this in turn presents to the individual.

Alice, on the other hand, is a small town is situated 20 kilometers (km) away from a slightly bigger town called Fort Beaufort, which is 60 km away from the closest town with service amenities, King Williamstown, and 120 km away from East London, the nearest city (equivalent of Durban). During the fieldwork phase of this research, Alice had one main supermarket store (a sparsely stocked Spar), a few local cafés several taverns, a few cost-effective retail outlets (such as Pep and Dunn's), and one bank (First National Bank). Furthermore, during the period of 2002-2006 (when the empirical data was collected), it was not uncommon to see livestock walking along the streets of Alice, and many of the neighbouring rural villages still had only limited modern basic infrastructure like in-house flush toilets and a fresh water supply. In fact, it was only in 2003, when data for this research was being collected, that one of the villages on the outskirts of Alice – Emazotsheni – first acquired clean running water[12]. Indeed, the dwellings and lifestyles of some of the town's inhabitants are arguably more rural in nature than they are urban.

The University of Fort Hare is the economic centre of Alice and the town's principal employer. The university's students are drawn from the local area, as well as from across the province, the country and even the entire Southern Africa region (Lesotho and Zimbabwe in particular). The university is also renowned for being the alma mater of some of South Africa's and the African continent's liberation leaders. It is one of three universities in the Eastern Cape and, importantly, is regarded as a Historically Disadvantaged Institution (HDI).

While 'urban-fringe' does not strictly apply to the town of Alice, the town does play a mediating role between deep rural areas, where there is extremely limited or no access to different media and ICTs, and urban settings, like Durban, where there is increased access to diverse and pluralistic media. Consequently, the term *peri-urban* is used in

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[12] The municipality's homepage includes other interesting information that is useful when it comes to situating the town of Alice. (For more information see:
http://www.amathole.gov.za/files/news/ESSENTIAL_SERVICES_ALICE.pdf)

relation to Alice as it is considered the best possible term for describing this type of research site. David Iaquinta and Axel Drescher's (2000) *Peri-urban Typology* is instructive in this regard. The authors use socio-demographic processes, institutional contexts and migration to distinguish "ideal types of peri-urban".

Spatially, culturally, linguistically and socially distinguishable from Durban (in keeping with the aforementioned area-mapping and statistical data), Alice is a microcosm of constrained socio-economic capabilities and thus embodies the related limitations with respect to media and Information Communication Technology (ICT) access.

STRUCTURE OF THESIS

The thesis is divided into three sections. The first section contains the contextual analysis, which provides an overview of the government's youth policy and media regulatory frameworks. This is followed by a literary survey of audience research and relevant local studies. The survey research informs the conceptual framework for this study. The second section focuses on the methodological framework of the study as well as on the findings and analysis of the audience research. The final section presents my conclusions, as drawn from the empirical study.

In this chapter the research problem, the principal research method and the broad context of the research were outlined. The chapter engaged with the notions of youth, media consumption and lifestyles, which will be further explored in the coming chapters. The following chapter (Chapter Two) provides the contextual analysis for the research.

IMAGES OF DURBAN – KWAZULU NATAL

The coastal city of Durban

Durban Town Hall

Durban CBD

All the above photos sourced from: http://www.nairaland.com/nigeria/topic-15092.0.html
(The collection, posted in 2006, presents a picture gallery of South Africa's third largest city)

University of KwaZulu-Natal (Durban)
Source: http://askbluey.com/Image?q=University+Of+Kwazulu-Natal

Aerial view of Durban including several campuses of Durban University of Technology (a merger of two institutions: Technikon Natal and M L Sultan)
Source: http://www.southafricastudy.com/durban_inst_tech.htm

IMAGES OF ALICE – EASTERN CAPE

"Alice – Centre Panorama" (2003)
http://srufaculty.sru.edu/james.hathaway/rainbow/alice_environs/alice_panorama_center.htm

"Educare Centre" (2003)
http://srufaculty.sru.edu/james.hathaway/rainbow/alice_environs/educare_center_gqumashi.htm

"House in Gquamashe" (2003)
http://srufaculty.sru.edu/james.hathaway/rainbow/alice_environs/house_gqumashe_1.htm

"Mavuso" (2003)
http://srufaculty.sru.edu/james.hathaway/rainbow/alice_environs/mavuso.htm

"A roof weighed down by rocks in Mtwaku" (April 2003)
http://srufaculty.sru.edu/james.hathaway/rainbow/alice_environs/roof_w_rocks_mtwaku.htm

Source: All the above photos can be found at:
http://srufaculty.sru.edu/james.hathaway/rainbow/alice_environs/alice_environs.htm

Images of the people of Alice can be found at:
http://srufaculty.sru.edu/james.hathaway/rainbow/alice_people/alice.htm

Jim Hathaway – Department of Geography, Geology, and the environment, Slippery Rock University
http://srufaculty.sru.edu/james.hathaway/rainbow/southafrican_maps+pix.htm

University of Fort Hare – Alice (2002)
Source: 'Finhliwe' ©
http://www.flickr.com/photos/fihliwe/1648170280/

CHAPTER TWO – CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

South Africa finds itself in many respects in the rather unique situation of engaging in an old-fashioned exercise of nation building, needing to construct a national identity after decades of apartheid and separate development. That is why the broadcast debates are so important, as broadcasting is understood to be an essential institution in that exercise. Broadcasting, of course, is also acknowledged as a key medium of the public sphere and hence crucial to the transition to democracy and the ongoing process of democratization. (Robert R. Horwitz, 2001:175)

Although the country is now a constitutional democracy, post-apartheid South Africa is still characterised by persistent disparities and inequalities with respect to gender, income, class and race[13]. With an average annual growth rate of 1.5%, the nation's 2007 mid-year estimates revealed a population size of approximately 48 million (see **Table 2**), 80% of which are black African (of the remaining 20%, 9% are white, 9% are coloured and 2% are Indian/Asian). Women constituted 51% of the total population (Stats-SA Mid-year estimates, 2007).

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[13] Recent reports (based on the Gini coefficient measure of inequality of income distribution) suggest that South Africa has in fact overtaken Brazil as the most unequal society in the world (Campbell, 2009).

Table 2 - Number of individuals per province (GHS 2002-GHS 2007)

Province	Total Population (in millions)					
	2002	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**
Western Cape	4,344	4,446	4,547	4,652	4,745	4,841
Eastern Cape	7,002	7,017	7,030	7,040	7,052	6,907
Northern Cape	885	891	897	903	911	1,102
Free State	2,929	2,939	2,947	2,953	2,959	2,966
KwaZulu-Natal	9,424	9,505	9,581	9,655	9,732	10,012
North West	3,747	3,775	3,801	3,825	3,858	3,394
Gauteng	8,498	8,674	8,848	9,029	9,211	9,689
Mpumalanga	3,154	3,178	3,200	3,221	3,252	3,536
Limpopo	5,550	5,580	5,608	5,636	5,671	5,403
Total	**45,533**	**46,007**	**46,459**	**46,913**	**47,391**	**47,851**

Source: General Household Survey (2007:27)

Moreover, South Africa is primarily a youthful population with the vast majority of its citizens being under 35 years of age (see **Table 3**). As the shaded area of **Table 3** demonstrates, in 2007 almost 18 million people in South African were between the ages of 15 and 34. (Table 4 provides an overview of the South Africa's key indicators, entitled, 'South Africa at a glance' (StatsSA, 2010))

Table 3 - Mid-year population estimates by age (2007, 2010)

Age	Total Population	Total population
0-4	5,177,100	5, 120, 700
5-9	4,997,700	5, 181, 200
10-14	5,090,400	5, 202, 300
15-19	4,975,800	5, 226, 200
20-24	4,675,100	5, 018, 500
25-29	4,335,500	4, 518, 800
30-34	3,863,900	4, 035, 700
35-39	2,972,200	3, 465, 200
40-44	2,400,400	2, 524, 200
45-49	2,222,400	2, 230, 600
50-54	1,872,000	2, 019, 100
55-59	1,486,000	1, 653, 700
60-64	1,306,400	1, 319 700
65-69	1,002,300	985 200
70-74	698,000	694, 900
75-79	422,500	441, 400
80+	352,100	353, 900
TOTAL	**47,849,800**	**49, 991, 300**

Source: Stats-SA Mid-year figures (2007, 2010)[14]

Poverty in South Africa continues to undermine any efforts being made to improve the living standards of the nation's children. National and local figures show that over 40% of South Africans are living in poverty (Stats-SA, Global Insight's 2007). This means that almost half the population has no access to basic services (such as adequate housing, healthcare and sanitation and clean, running water) and that they also lack any form of proper income and/or are unemployed[15]. **Figure 2** below illustrates the percentage of people living in poverty in South Africa, disaggregated by province.

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[14] The figures in table demonstrate that youth have consistently remained the largest population cohort over the years.

[15] The Gauteng Socio-Economic Review's poverty indicators are instructive in this regard.

Fig. 2 - Poverty in South Africa (2008)

Percentage of people living in poverty in SA , per Province
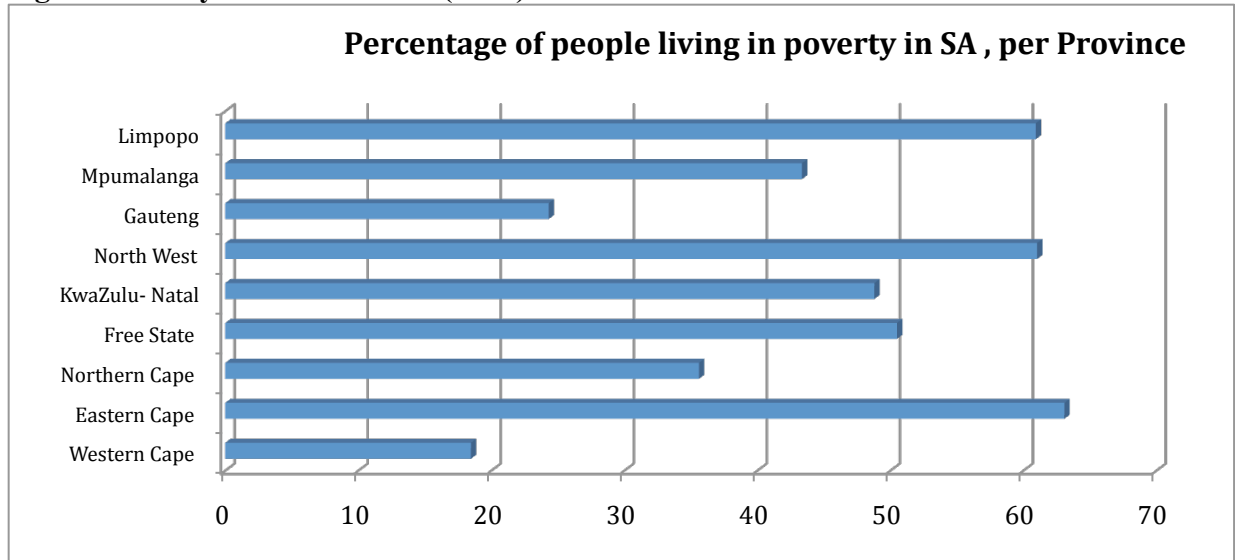
Source: Gauteng Socio-Economic Review (2008) (adapted by R.A. Smith)

The 2006 General Household Survey revealed that there has been a decline in the number of South African households in which children and adults are going hungry. It did, however, also show that at least 2.4% of South African children and 2.5% of South African adults are still going hungry on a daily basis. Stats-SA noted these declining figures and surmised that they are largely attributable to the improvement in the country's social services such as education and healthcare, as well as to the increased accessibility of certain other basic services.

In addition, almost 13 years after South Africa's first democratically elected government which promised a better life for all, Stats-SA (2007 Community Survey) suggested that there have been advances on a national scale with respect to people being able to access basic amenities. According to Stats-SA, 70.5% of the population now live in formal dwellings, 88.6% have access to piped water and 80% have access to electricity. However, in spite of these advancements, 2.2% of South African households still have to make use of the bucket toilet system and almost 40% of South Africans do not have the 'luxury' of a weekly refuse removal system. A 2006 national study showed that 15.4% of the households in South Africa are informal settlements or 'shacks'; this is an increase from 12.7% in 2002 (2006 General Household Survey). Moreover, whilst the vast majority (97.9%) of South African children attend school, "one in every ten persons aged 20 years and above (10-12%) still has no formal education." (*ibid.*, iv) There has also been an increase in the number of learners aged

between 7 and 20 who drop out of school owing to socio-economic factors (*ibid*.). Critically, for the purpose of the current research, youths in South Africa "are twice as likely to be unemployed, with 58% of young people aged 15-19 and 50% aged 20-24 unemployed in 2005" (Altman, 2007).

With respect to ICT access, Stats-SA's 2007 Community Survey showed that there has been an increase in the number of households with access to computer facilities (15.7% in 2007 as opposed to only 8.6% in 2001). At the same time, only 7.3% of South Africans currently have access to the Internet at home. Significantly, the proportion of households containing a radio, a television, a computer, a refrigerator and at least one cellphone increased considerably between 2001 and 2007 (from 32.3% in 2001 to 72.9% in 2007)[16].

While the aforesaid helps to illuminate South Africa's socio-economic context, the following section provides an overview of the government's policy regime with respect to youths and the media. It is worth reiterating that as with the national statistics presented in this chapter, I have tried as far as is possible to contextualise the period under review (2002-2006). The reader is reminded of the relevance of the context to the research hypothesis (i.e. the socio-economic determinants mediating the media consumption practices of youths). The sections below aim to illustrate both the youth and media policy as well as the regulatory regime mediating the consumption practices of youths.

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[16] SAARF statistics suggest 83.4% of South Africans watch television daily, with SABC channels dominating the upswing in viewership (SAARF, 2007). Media consumption is further discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

Table 4 - South Africa at a Glance

Indicator	Values	
Real GDP (2007)	R1, 750 billion	$248 billion
Real GDP per capita (2007)	R36, 461	$ 5,168
Adult Literacy Rate	Male – 87.2	Female 86.9
Population	Total	49, 320, 500
	Male	23, 868, 700
	Female	25, 451, 800
	0-14 years	15, 500, 700
	15-34 years	18, 447, 000
Households Household size		13,8 million Average, 3.6 persons
Land surface area		1,220,813km2
Provinces	Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, North West, Limpopo, Free State, Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape, Western Cape, Northern Cape	
Key economic sectors	Mining services, transport, energy, manufacturing, tourism, agriculture	
Office languages	English, isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele, Afrikaans, siSwati, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Tshivenda, Xitsonga	
Government	Constitutional multiparty, three spheres (local, provincial, national) democracy.	
Capitals	Pretoria (administrative); Cape Town (legislative) Constitutional Court is located in Johannesburg	
Currency	Rand (ZAR) – 100 cents equals one rand	
Time		GMT +2 hours

Source: Stats SA (2010:5) – South Africa's Millennium Development Goals Country Report

YOUTH POLICY FRAMEWORK

At the dawn of the country's democracy in 1994, the need to develop South Africa's youths was seen by policymakers as being an integral part of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which was South Africa's overall policy framework for development. The RDP prioritised certain key socio-economic services, such as land reform, housing, water and sanitation, telecommunications, electrification, social security, and social welfare, amongst others[17].

The *National Youth Commission Act* (1996) (which provided for the establishment of the National Youth Commission) and the country's National Youth Policy have been the key instruments in informing the approach that has been adopted towards youths in South Africa. Section 3(a) of the *National Youth Commission Act* (1996) (amended in 2000) mandated the National Youth Commission (the Commission) to "coordinate and develop an integrated youth policy" (s3(a)). The Commission, as custodian of the National Youth Policy, is expected to ensure the effective implementation of this policy and to make recommendations to the government towards this end. Responsibility for the Commission falls within the ambit of the minister that is in the office of the President[18]. Commissioners are appointed by Parliament following a public nomination process and include five full-time members, five part-time members and nine other part-time commissioners who represent each of the country's nine provinces.

The Commission's five key areas are: the monitoring of 'youth development', research and policy development, advocacy (promoting the participation of youths at all levels of society, including the government), capacity building (achieved through partnerships with other stakeholders), and coordination and facilitation.

South Africa's National Youth Policy, adopted in the year 2000 after an extensive public consultation process, was "designed to address the major needs, challenges and opportunities of young men and women, accommodating provincial variations and

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[17] The RDP was replaced by the Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR), advanced as the macro-economic framework for the implementation of the RDP. GEAR has been criticised in some quarters for its neo-liberal agenda, which focuses on promoting foreign investment at the expense of addressing South Africa's pressing socio-economic inequalities (see Hassen, 2007; NALEDI, 2002).
[18] For further information see: http://home.intekom.com/nyc/.

specific sectoral issues". The National Youth Policy is considered to be the framework for youth development, which, according to the government, refers to:

> A process whereby young women and men are able to improve their skills, talents, and abilities, as well as to extend their intellectual, physical and emotional capacities; it includes the opportunity for young men and women to express themselves and to live full lives in all social, cultural, economic and spiritual spheres.

According to the National Youth Policy (2000), in place at the time the research towards this research was conducted, South Africa's macro-economic framework for development includes a commitment to "job creation through a more competitive and faster growing economy, the transition to greater flexibility and productivity in the labour market, and the investment by business in training and development initiatives" – all of which are meant to improve the lives of South African youths.

The government considers employment and 'capacity building' to be essential if the above goals are to be achieved and if 'youth development' is going to be advanced. In keeping with this view, it was thus necessary for it to create the National Youth Service, an intervention aimed at integrating young people into activities that lead to capacity building as well as the reconstruction and development of communities and of the country at large. Such endeavours are consistent with the government's broader development agenda. Correspondingly, the empirical research that was conducted as part of the current research investigates access to capital, which facilitates consumption practices and lifestyles.

In accordance with the relevant national empirical data of the time (i.e. the 1995 National Household Survey), the National Youth Policy (henceforth referred to as "the Policy") illuminated a couple of conceptualisations and descriptors, which I submit as being of relevance to the present study. The research informing the Policy found that just over a quarter (27%) of the youths in South Africa were at this stage "marginalised"[19] – that is to say, they are alienated from society in a number of social and economic spheres – while five percent (5%) were defined as being "lost". Another

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[19] Incidentally, a similar observation is echoed in the Independent Broadcasting Authority's Triple Inquiry Report (1995:18), which itself is discussed later on in the thesis.

quarter (25%) of the country's youths were seen as "fine" or fully engaged with society and requiring no direct support. Significantly, approximately 43% of youths were described as "at risk", which refers to "those functioning fairly well, but showing signs of alienation in some areas".

These general findings are significant to the current research as they informed the Policy framework of the previous decade and the South African government's responses to the country's socio-economic development and to the upliftment of its young people[20]. The findings (i.e. that the overwhelming majority of South African youths suffer from a degree of alienation) are astounding, but they are also plausible when assessed within the framework of apartheid South Africa. The cited research was clearly conducted in the early years of post-apartheid South Africa when many of the experiences of young people were still being defined by apartheid (a segregationist regime). Correspondingly, the research that informed national policy at that time showed that apart from those living in the Western Cape or in Gauteng, the vast majority of the nation's youths were unemployed. It also showed clear racial and gender disparities with respect to unemployment: "young African women feature highly amongst the unemployed, followed by young African men".

The last issue of significance to the current research was a general finding pertaining to youths' fears, where crime (either as perpetrators or victims)[21] was seen as a major concern for youthful South Africans. According to the Policy, "[t]he emergence of gangs in townships as a result of youth marginalisation has added a new sub-culture and dimension to youth violence and crime. Other forms of violence that have been found to increase are domestic violence, sexual abuse and rape". Considering the fact that South Africa continues to be one of the most violent countries in the world, it is perhaps unsurprising that those youths that were interviewed for the current research reiterated their mutual fear of suffering from some form of violence. The current research corroborates this finding (youths' aspirations and fears are further discussed in Chapter Six).

Another significant fear for youths in contemporary South Africa is HIV and Aids. While the 2000 National Youth Policy was silent on the issue of HIV and Aids, the

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[20] A revised National Youth Policy was published as recently as 2009.
[21] Critically, the threat of being drawn into a world of crime, or being enticed or forced to be in a gang is highlighted alongside that of being a victim of crime.

2005 'Status of Youth' Report highlights HIV and Aids "as the greatest threat to the health of young people, ironically hitting with particular force at the healthiest and most vigorous section of the population". It further states: "[…] there has been real progress in persuading young people to adopt preventative measures, and the treatment of AIDS is becoming a reality. However, the challenge remains to persuade some hard-to-reach sections of youth to change their risky behaviour."

The 'Status of Youth' Report is significant to the government's youth policy framework as it presents a kind of 'mid-term review' of the achievements of the Policy. Entitled *Young People in South Africa in 2005: Where we're at and where we're going*, the 'Status of Youth' Report found that many of the priority issues identified in the 2000 National Youth Policy remain as challenges for young people today, in spite of the advances that have been made as a result of government initiatives. The Report highlights the continued efforts of civil society and of state structures in relation to addressing the needs of young people in South Africa. It also looks at the work being conducted by various youth development networks and organisations as well as the collective government structures, referred to as the National Youth Machinery, which includes the National Youth Commission, the Umsobomvu Youth Fund, the relevant Parliamentary Portfolio Committee, and other youth structures within provincial and local governments.

Notably, the afore-mentioned research was commissioned by the Umsobomvu Youth Fund, which was established by the South African government in 2001 in order to promote "job creation and skills development and transfer" among young South Africans aged 18 to 35. It aims to "enable the implementation of effective youth development programmes and mainstreaming of youth development for youth to have sustainable livelihoods" (www.youthportal.org.za).

Conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), the 2005 'Status of Youth' Report argues that young people continue to grapple with the issue of employment and unemployment, poverty, and all forms of crime and violence. It further argues that while the political dispensation has changed, the socio-economic status of the country's youths remains largely unchanged, demonstrating that there have been limited advances in youth development since the Policy was adopted. It shows, with respect to youths and unemployment, that "[w]here jobs are created youth are

badly paid, have to deal with poor working conditions and no job security". The Report also illuminates the serious deficiencies in the "quality of education" that youths receive and the limited "access to resources" that they enjoy, concluding that while "[a]ccess to education at all levels has improved […] every year, an estimated half a million people drop out of school, mainly for financial reasons".

The findings of the Report concur with the findings of the 2006 Household Survey, which states that an inability to pay fees was the primary reason for youths not attending school. Even more disconcerting is the upward trend reflected in the study that suggests that the socio-economic realities facing youths are worsening. The implication of this for the current research is the impact on access to different forms of media and to other information and communication technologies. It is for example arguable that limited spending and buying power impedes one's ability to, for example, own a cellphone or even purchase airtime in order to keep in touch with one's peers and maintain other relevant social networks.

While the "criminalisation of family and community life" and "political violence" were critical concerns for youths of the early 1990s, the freedoms of South Africa's new democratic dispensation have largely disposed of these realities for most of today's youths. However, "political apathy" and "disengagement from civil society" were raised as key areas of concern in the 2005 'Status of Youth' Report. The Report does, however, suggest that the frame of reference for this apparent political apathy is couched in an expectation of what youths ought to be interested in. It argues that this might be the case as youths are also decidedly "optimistic about the future".

The apparent "disengagement" and "political apathy" of youths is particularly relevant to the current research as youths' dissatisfaction over the past few years with service delivery – which has lead to them committing various forms of violence and engaging in criminal activity – appears to suggest that they are in fact not particularly optimistic about the future[22]. Their mobilisation around such substantive issues reflects the

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[22] The 2006 and subsequent demonstrations in Khutsong are a case in point (see Chibba, 2006 and Sapa, 2006). Khutsong is a South African township "of widespread unrest". This unrest is the result of its residents' objection to having been transferred from the province of Gauteng (a relatively wealthy province that includes Johannesburg, the hub of the country's economic activity) to the North West Province (a less wealthy province). The protests have been both violent (including illegal road closures and petrol bombings) and non-violent (a High Court application – an articulation of the democratic process – was made by the residents). Young people have been at the forefront of much of the

following: (1) that the lived realities of youths necessitate their becoming politically engaged (i.e. the personal is political), (2) that young people are easily caught up in mass demonstrations and this shows that they actually care about issues, (3) that youths' pent-up anger and frustrations are interwoven with broader community struggles, and/or (4) that they yearn for leadership. Further socio-psychological research is required for these assumptions to be tested.

MEDIA POLICY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The analysis that is here provided of the country's media policy and regulatory framework seeks to contextualise the popularity of local content (South African productions), particularly amongst the nation's youths. In what follows below, I argue that policy directives – which mandate that significantly more local than foreign content be placed on offer to audiences – have a direct relationship to the probability of young people choosing to watch or listen to local content.

The media and South Africa's development agenda
The history of migration in South Africa has adversely affected family structures and (for the purpose of this study) cultural practices of black African people; family units were eroded as men were forced to live and work in hostels in big cities, far away from their homes and families. Additionally women were also forced to find work away from home as maids or nannies to wealthier families, mainly in the cities. Television viewing practices for example, would not have been consistent with what audience studies found in the United Kingdom for example. It is here acknowledged that local patterns of television viewing are not solely a result of the nuclear family's leisure or routine habits, as it is perhaps in other Western countries (Morley, 1980). Indeed, as the findings from the audience study conducted for this research demonstrate, the majority of South African youths watch television with their friends, with their siblings, or by themselves, and viewing takes place either at their homes or at their 'homes away from

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demonstrations and violence. (See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khutsong. Accessed: 16 September 2008.)

home' (namely, their university residences, or accommodation, or the homes of friends).

The media operates within this milieu and has an added and explicit 'development' agenda (from a policy perspective), one that seeks to promote 'a South African identity' as well help ensure the survival of indigenous languages and cultural identities. For example, the editorial code of South Africa's national public broadcaster, the SABC, aptly states: "[w]e support South African culture and develop programmes that are identifiably South African and contribute to a sense of national identity; to a sense of shared experience and the goal of nation building" (SABC Editorial Code, 2004).

For many, the notion of a homogenous national identity is part and parcel of a broader vision for a unified Southern Africa region and continent; this broader vision is exemplified by ex-President Thabo Mbeki's African Renaissance project, by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), by the formation of the African Union (AU), and by the long-term agenda of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). This vision is also echoed in provisions within the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) Act and in the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) Act and delineated in local content regulations specifically, which expressly aims to "develop, protect and promote a national and provincial identity, culture and character" and to "create vibrant, dynamic, creative and economically productive local industries" (ICASA Local Content Discussion Paper, 2000). This is largely evident in the regulator's assertion that:

> South African television and radio need to reflect and engage with the life experiences, cultures, languages, aspirations and artistic expressions that are distinctly South African. Through local music and television programming, radio and television can make a vital contribution to democracy, nation building and development in South Africa. Local content quotas seek to protect and develop our national cultures and identities and to extend choice for the public. South African music and television programmes need to be produced by a wide range of South Africans, for South African audiences, in languages they understand and choose. (ICASA Discussion Document, 2000:4)

This idea is rearticulated in the public broadcaster's editorial polces:

> We aim to tell stories from a South African point of view and deal with issues that are important to South Africans. This includes local, African and global issues. We endeavour to contextualise for South Africans their life as global citizens, and to recount the story of South Africa in all its variety and complexity. Given our history, and that South Africa is part of Africa, we see it as our responsibility to endeavour to represent Africa and African stories fairly and diversely. (SABC's Editorial Code, *ibid.*)

This attitude is in turn consistent with the provisions contained in the charter of the SABC to which the public broadcaster is enjoined. Although largely repealed by provisions in the Electronic Communications Act (2005), section 10 of the Broadcasting Act (1999) states that the public broadcaster must:

> (a) make services available to South Africans in all the official languages;
> (b) reflect both the *unity and diverse cultural and multilingual nature of South Africa and all of its cultures and regions to audiences* [my emphasis];
> (c) strive to be of high quality in all of the languages served;
> (d) provide significant *news and public affairs programming* [my emphasis] which meets the highest standards of journalism, as well as fair and unbiased coverage, impartiality, balance and independence from government, commercial and other interests;
> (e) include *significant amounts of educational programming* [my emphasis], both curriculum based and informal educative topics from a wide range of social, political and economic issues, including, but not limited to, human rights, health, early childhood development, agriculture, culture, justice and commerce and contributing to a shared South African consciousness and identity;
> (f) enrich the cultural heritage of South Africa by providing support for traditional and contemporary artistic expression;
> (g) strive to offer a broad range of services targeting, particularly, children, women, *the youth* [my emphasis] and the disabled;
> (h) include programmes made by the Corporation as well as those commissioned from the independent production sector; and

(i) include national sports programming as well as developmental and

   minority sports.

Since the 2 February 1990 unbanning of political parties fighting against the apartheid regime, political interventions at a macro level have focused on advancing reconciliation as opposed to retribution – in the interest of 'nation–building'. A unified nation is advanced alongside policies that aim to redress historical imbalances. These policies include employment equity provisions in labour legislation, Broad-Based Black Economic-Empowerment (BBBEE) and various empowerment charters with specific scorecards for specific industries.

BBBEE provides an avenue for black South Africans, women and people with disabilities to participate in the mainstream of the South African economy at strategic and management levels (thus affording allocative and operational control). This means that black people now own and control increasingly more shares in the media. For example, there was the 2006 Phutuma Nathi public share offer as well as the 2007 Asonga Share Scheme, both of which afforded discounted preference shares to those South Africans who have been historically disadvantaged (principally, black people)[23]. The media's role in developing and sustaining the government's broader development agenda has, however, been contested[24], particularly with reference to the country's public service broadcaster, the SABC, which is perceived by many as advancing a (ruling) 'party agenda' instead of a 'national agenda'[25].

ICASA, the country's broadcasting and telecommunications regulator, was established in July 2000 according to the *ICASA Act*[26]. ICASA arose out of the merging of the

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[23] For more information on satellite broadcaster Multichoice's *Phutuma Nathi* preference shares, and on telecommunications operator MTN's 2007 *Asonge Share Scheme*, see I-Net Bridge (2006) and http://www.nefcorp.co.za/AsongeShareScheme/tabid/81/Default.aspx (Accessed: 17 August 2008).

[24] Cf. Boloka (2004). Diversity goes global: Small fish in the South African media industry have had a torrid 10 years. *Rhodes Journalism Review*, (24), 30-32.

[25] This is evidenced in reports of various forms of interference and particularly of state 'capture' of the public broadcaster. For example, there was the *Sisulu Commission of Enquiry* into the alleged 'blacklisting' of certain SABC commentators.
(See http://www.fxi.org.za/index.php?Itemid=&option=com_search&searchword=sisulu. Accessed: 17 August 2009.)

[26] The *ICASA Act* was amended in 2006 so that it would, amongst other things, consolidate ICASA's powers and duties. It also aimed – controversially – to amend procedures regarding the appointment of councillors. The ICASA Amendment Bill proved to be extremely contentious and was rigorously challenged by various stakeholders, who argued that the proposed provisions would threaten the independence of the regulator (Berger, 2006; Ensor, 2005). (See also Report of the ad hoc committee

Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) and the South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (SATRA). In accordance with section 192 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (1996), as well as with ICASA's founding legislation (the *ICASA Act*, as amended), the regulator is an independent body mandated to regulate broadcasting and telecommunications in a manner that safeguards the best interests of the public. Notwithstanding apparent state and business 'capture', the *ICASA Amendment Act* (2006) and the *Electronic Communications Act* (2005) are collectively meant to bolster the regulator's powers, as well as expedite the 'managed liberalisation' process of broadcasting and ICT reform.

Although focused on promoting growth and investment in the communications sector, the *Electronic Communications Act* (2005) reveals that the contemporary policy regime is consistent with the development framework that was in operation at the time the empirical data for this research was collected. The 'Objects' or objectives of the *Electronic Communications Act* (2005) continue to highlight the interface that exists between cultural products and the country's broader development agenda (as did provisions in earlier statutes). Not only is the empowerment of historically disadvantaged persons promoted (including black people, with particular attention to the needs of women, opportunities for youth and challenges for people with disabilities), but also children and youth-related programming is prioritised (section 2, *Electronic Communications Act*, No. 36, 2005). ICASA is also mandated to ensure that the country's public broadcasting services, when viewed collectively, do the following:

> […] promote the provision and development of a diverse range of sound and television broadcasting services on a national, regional, and local level, that cater for all language and cultural groups and provide entertainment, education and information. (*ibid*.)

This mandate is consistent with earlier provisions in media policy and legislation that were inspired by the Triple Inquiry Report (1995), which in turn laid the foundation for policies and regulations vis-à-vis "local television content and South African music", "cross-media control of broadcasting services" and "the protection and viability of

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on the Review of Chapter 9 & Associated Institutions (2007) and http://www.pmg.org.za/bills/070821chap9report.pdf. Accessed: 17 December 2007.)

public broadcasting"[27]. Significantly, for the purpose of this thesis, the *Triple Inquiry Report* also provided for policy development with respect to local (i.e. South African) television content. Local content regulations sought to and still seek to "protect and develop our country's national cultures and identities and to extend choice for the public" (2002:3).

The definitive 1995 Triple Inquiry Report therefore essentially mapped the way forward with respect to the liberalisation and diversification of the country's media. The regulator thus set in place stringent measures (i.e. limitations on cross-media ownership) so as to ensure that the landscape of the South African media reflects diversity of content as well as diversity of ownership and control.

Local content as well as ownership and control regulations aim to contribute towards increased media diversity in terms of media programming and ownership. While the extent to which ownership and control regulations *per se* have promoted media diversity still needs to be evaluated, it is arguable, as evidenced in the amount of local content on television, that stringent quota requirements has indeed promoted a plurality of voices.[28]

With respect to local content, all licensees (i.e. broadcasters such as SABC, e-tv and M-Net) must adhere to ICASA's regulations for South African local television content and South African music. During the licensing process, in addition to fulfilling ICASA's criteria (as detailed in the Invitation to Apply (ITA)), a broadcaster's commitments with respect to flighting local content is spelled out in what is referred to as their 'promise of performance', which in turn is translated into licence conditions. Fundamentally, however, a broadcaster's local content quota – or the extent to which broadcasters are compelled to flight content produced in South Africa – is predetermined by a specific policy and regulatory regime. Consequently, in fulfilling these requirements, there is

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[27] The framework for broadcasting policy specifically included the need to 'review' the policy in later years. ICASA's ten-year Review of Broadcasting Policy (2006) partially fulfils this requirement.
[28] See the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) Report entitled: 'Trends in Ownership of Media in South Africa' (www.mdda.org.za/trends%20of%20Ownership.htm Accessed: 15 November 2010). The issue of media ownership and control has been brought into sharp focus by the proposed Media Appeals Tribunal (MAT) which is contrary to the preferred self-regulatory system that is a global standard with respect to print media (see: www.sanef.org.za), while the ruling party contends "the creation of a MAT would strengthen, complement and support the current self-regulatory institutions (Press Ombudsman/Press council) in the public interest" (Accessed August 2010 http://www.anc.org.za/docs/discus/2010/mediad.pdf)

today a greater proportion of local content on offer to South African audiences than there might have been if no policy or regulatory regime were in place.

With respect to local music, the Triple Inquiry Report (1995) suggested that an incremental approach be adopted when it comes to achieving an increase in South African music content. Similar provisions were recommended with respect to programming. Private terrestrial free-to-air stations were expected to achieve a 30% local content quota "within the South African television performance period", while public stations were specifically required to broadcast 50% local content. Subscription broadcasting was also subject to quotas: either 5% of their programming needed to be local in content, or they needed to "expend a specific sum of money per year", or they must adopt a combination of both **Table 5** below lists the requirements placed on broadcasters across specific programme categories.

Table 5 - Triple Inquiry Report provisions – local television content quotas by 2000

Programming	Public terrestrial free-to-air	Private terrestrial free-to-air
Drama	20%	15%
Current Affairs	80%	70%
Documentary and informal 'knowledge building'	50%	40%
Education	60%	–
Children	50%	30%

Source: Triple Inquiry Report (1995)

In support of the above regulations, the Triple Inquiry Report (1995:80-82) drew on international best practice, primarily citing the Canadian and Australian experiences. At that time, 60% of all programming on Canadian free-to-air television had to be Canadian in content and 30% of all music on private Canadian stations had to be Canadian. There were similar provisions in Australia, where local content quotas were at 25% for radio and at 50% for commercial free-to-air television. Similar findings emerged from Europe, cementing the view that 'nation building'; national identity and local content are all interconnected.

In 2000, ICASA's Monitoring and Complaints Unit concluded that all broadcasters were complying with their licence conditions and requirements with respect to local content. The Unit – speaking specifically of the public broadcaster – said that this compliance was "both in terms of quantity of local content (25% local content) and balance of programming" (ICASA, Local Content Discussion Document, 2000:9).

The BBC World Service Trust (2006:8), an international body, confirmed that South African broadcasters are meeting their local content requirements. It argued further that local content quotas are "such powerful audience drivers most broadcasters are exceeding them". **Table 6** below shows the percentage of South African content on television during 2005 (the period during which the research towards this dissertation was being conducted). It shows the required and actual amount of local content across different broadcasters[29]. The table is particularly relevant to the present research in two respects: firstly, it presents data from the period under investigation, and, secondly, it confirms the extent to which the South African television programming choices on offer to youths are informed and arguably circumscribed by local content production quotas.

Table 6 - Percentage of local content in total schedule (2005)

Channel	Time	Local content requirement	Actual local content
e-tv	Prime Time	45%	Exceeds
M-Net	Open Time	35%	Exceeds
M-Net	Full Day	8%	Exceeds
SABC1	Prime Time	55%	63%
SABC2	Prime Time	55%	76%
SABC3	Prime Time	35%	41%

Source: *Broadcasters in Laschinger, 2005* (BBC World Service Trust Report, 2006:33)

As the findings in Chapter Five will illustrate, during the period under review (2002-2006), SABC1 and e-tv were the most popular television channels, accessible to the

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[29] The Policy and regulatory framework for subscription satellite television was only introduced in 2006.

vast majority of South Africans. Unsurprisingly, the BBC World Service Trust Report (2006:4) found that "the top five programmes on SABC channels and M-Net are overwhelmingly local". It further noted that the private free-to-air offerings of e-tv appeared diverse: "three of the five shows were foreign imports. A news update and the live Lotto draw make up the difference. Two of the top five shows are wrestling shows (International Smackdown and International Raw), consistent top performers for e.tv."

Of significance to this research are the licensing obligations with respect to local content quotas that have been placed on the SABC with respect to its children-related (which includes youths) programming and educational programming. These obligations mean that young people now have increased opportunities to access programmes that include characters and presenters who look like them, speak their language, and presumably share their fears, anxieties, dreams and aspirations.

Local content quotas not only offer certain economic advantages to broadcasters in the form of developing local skills, harnessing local talent, and promoting local industries, but there is also a socio-cultural and ideological motivation for these measures. Arguably, broadcasting regulations are also about "safeguarding national security and protecting the public against negative or harmful material" (Kariithi, 2003:165). Across the African continent as well as to varying degrees internationally the policy justification includes "promoting national and collective identity, protecting cultural sovereignty, promoting national cohesion, engendering a culture of tolerance through pluralism in opinion and choice, and fostering democracy and democratic values" (ibid.:163).

Similarly, the Triple Inquiry Report noted that South African music, local television content and independent production quotas provide an opportunity for broadcasting in South Africa to "develop national identity, culture and character through a range of local programming and music which celebrates the diversity of South Africa's people and extends choice for South African audiences of all ages" (1995:82).

In addition, the revised local content regulations state that:

> Through South African music and television programming, radio and television can make a vital contribution to democracy, nation building and development in South Africa. South African content quotas seek to protect and develop our

country's national cultures and identities and to extend choice for the public. South African music and television programmes need to be produced by a wide range of South Africans, for South African audiences, in languages of their choice. (ICASA, SA Local Content Position Paper and Regulations, 2002:6)

In February 2002 the 'Position Paper' – *South African Local Content Position Paper and Regulations* – was published. These local content regulations informed the regulatory framework that was in place during the process of empirical data collection that was undertaken for this audience study. According to the Position Paper, the revised regulations aim to "develop, protect and promote a national and provincial identity, culture and character", "create vibrant, dynamic, creative and economically productive local industries", and "redress historical imbalances in the cultural and broadcast industries".

In this respect the Position Paper rearticulated sentiments from the preceding Triple Inquiry Report when it argued that "[l]ocal content quotas will protect and develop our national culture, character and identity" (submissions to the Inquiry, Triple Inquiry Report, 1995: 82). The public submissions unanimously argued that while South Africa needs to "celebrate the world's diverse cultures", it also needs to maintain "a strong sense of national identity, culture and character" (*ibid*.). Recommendations from the Triple Inquiry Report spoke directly to the issue of the role of broadcasting in furthering these aims, as well as the relevance of local content and music quotas in "facilitating these developments" (*ibid*.).

The problems arising out of the current lack of homogeneity and social cohesion in South Africa reinforce the perceived need for a singular South African identity and a unified nation (especially when one considers the country's segregationist past). Nevertheless, efforts at homogeneity and cohesion have often been at the expense of difference and heterogeneity, which define multicultural societies. As David Goldberg has stated, "it makes little sense to render homogeneity natural, in terms of social conditions or ideals and values. Homogeneity is an artifice" (1994:21).

Although the government's 'nation building' project continues – as evidenced, for example, in the charter and editorial policies of the country's public broadcasters (as discussed earlier on) – the trajectory of this project has advanced so as to also include

(and affirm) difference and begin to promote a broader 'African identity'[30]. While attempts to 'recentre' local culture are possibly a consequence of globalisation and postmodernism (Featherstone, 1995), this trajectory is also a direct consequence of interventions that have been made at a macro level in the form of policies and directives. That is to say, while globalisation infers assimilation and homogenisation as a consequence of blurred boundaries, cultural fragmentation, Americanisation and Eurocentrism, it simultaneously induces a move towards indigenous local cultures. These processes are, in other words, neither wholly organic nor exclusively orchestrated.

Rural-urban divide in media and ICTs

As South Africans become increasingly more 'mobile', the socio-economic disparities that currently exist within society place increased pressures on the digital divide. Rural communities remain less able to access different media and ICTs than do their urban counterparts. There are still major concerns when it comes to the success of interventions aimed at expanding teledensity, lowering the costs of telecommunications, and increasing universal service and access.

Notwithstanding all this, access to mobile telecommunication has risen considerably in recent years to almost 30 million subscribers[31] (Ndungu, 2007:170). In fact, the most recent (2009) South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) figures suggest that 31.3 million people own, rent or use a cellphone. The figures also show that pre-paid vouchers are the most popular means of payment and the service provider *Vodacom* is the country's most popular service provider.

Yet in spite of these advancements, the disparities between rural and urban communities remain stark, a factor critical to this research owing to the choice of research sites (i.e. the urban and peri-urban samples). These disparities across the urban and peri-urban divide are, however, not peculiar to telecommunications. Peri-urban and,

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[30] The controversial *Native Club* and *SADC Calling* are examples of such attempts: The *Native Club* is an 'intellectual' project that aims to advance indigenous South African scholarship and promote the "cultural decolonization of the people and the country" (www.nativeclub.org). *SADC Calling* is an electronic media initiative of the Southern African Broadcasting Association (SABA) that aims to provide an environment conducive to the adoption of SADC policy. (See also www.saba.org.za.)
[31] Subscribers here refers to pre-paid and contract customers and does not necessarily reflect the total number of consumers with access to actual handsets.

even more so, rural youths (such as some of those living in Alice, one of the research sites) continue to bear the burden of unequal socio-economic development. This situation serves to further marginalise youths and thus remains an ongoing concern of government (HSRC, 2005).

According to the South African government, "in the labour market" peri-urban youths are "often constrained by lack of education and skills and largely difficulties in accessing information about careers and jobs available" (The Presidency Policy Co-ordination and Advisory Services on the National Youth Development Policy Framework Mid-term Review: Terms of References, 2007).

CONCLUSION

In keeping with the findings from research informing the South African Youth Policy and reflecting the current status of youths, it is evident that crime, education, unemployment and HIV and Aids are critical considerations for any research on youths in contemporary South Africa. Accordingly, demographics and provincial distribution were taken into consideration during the comparative analysis phase of this audience study. In addition, crime, unemployment and HIV and Aids were expressly referred to in the questions and responses of the interviews vis-à-vis the interviewees' fears and concerns.

The empirical component of this study assesses not only access to media as well as ICT usage, but it also focuses specifically on programming so as to assess the public's consumption patterns with respect to local and foreign television content. As was earlier observed, local content regulations are generally instituted in order to promote programming diversity as well as to stimulate growth in local industries. It follows, that a policy framework that is conducive to growth in the local market for example would consequently further contribute to the promotion of media diversity and development.

Finally, in presenting an overview of the South Africa's youth and media policy framework, this chapter sought to demonstrate that the respective policies advance an agenda, which is intrinsically connected to the country's socio-economic and political past and the government's corresponding corrective or redistributive interventions which I argue in turn impacts the kinds of programming choices on offer to youths.

That is, the post-apartheid menu of programming is one that prioritises South African content, thereby creating an appetite for and providing a diet of local television productions for example.

CHAPTER THREE – LITERATURE REVIEW

> Meanings are determined socially: that is, they are constructed out of the conjuncture of the text with the socially situated reader. (John Fiske, 1987:80)

> [C]ulture, however it is defined, now exists in a position of dominance in a world where TV and the visual image have become the primary means through which the mass communication industry works […]. (Angela McRobbie, 1999:30)

Post-apartheid South Africa is both a society of fragmented audiences who navigate their way across and between media as well as a society where these choices are in effect still determined by socio-economic realities. As shown in the preceding chapter, South African society is widely regarded as being an unequal one. Correspondingly, universal media and ICT access remain a deferred reality for the vast majority of South Africans, even though this was a founding principle of the reform of South Africa's communication sectors (Horwitz, 2001)[32]. The current situation is particularly unfortunate as reform of the South African media landscape is arguably a representation of the country's broader transformation (or lack thereof). As Horwitz has argued, "[t]he South African communication reform process was a model of deliberative, participatory democracy in the transition to democracy phase" (*ibid.*:22).

This thesis is concerned with the youths, their media consumption practices and their lifestyles. Following on from the contextual analysis and conceptual framework that were presented in the preceding chapters, this chapter presents a review of the literature that is relevant to the methodological and conceptual frameworks of this

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[32] With respect to television, while audiences are indeed able to access a wide range of channels when they purchase a satellite bouquet, there are only four free-to-air channels, of which only one – e-tv – is commercial. Moreover, as recent figures have suggested, only 9.7% of adult South Africans are subscribers to digital satellite television (SAARF 2009 AMPS). The vast majority are thus fed a diet of South African public service broadcasting. But South African audiences do also consume other types of media, such as magazines (of which there is a diverse range), newspapers, and commercial and community radio and television stations.

study and which will inform the findings of this audience study, presented in subsequent chapters.

The present research is concerned primarily with what I will refer to as 'black youth culture'; it is an investigation into the production and reproduction of lifestyles of a particular sample of young people, at a particularly moment in time. The study's focus is on the experiences of predominantly black African youths who reside in urban and peri-urban areas. The study is situated within the context of growing critical research on media consumption and cultural production amongst youths (Strelitz, 2005, Nuttall, 2004, Hyde-Clarke, 2004, Dolby, 2001, and Teer-Tomaselli, 2000). It is also contextualised by more publicly renowned studies on youth that are essentially market research and brand awareness surveys associated with the Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing in Cape Town. Other studies include the annual 'Generation Next' - S*unday Times* Brand Surveys*,* the 'Black Diamonds' Study, and the *loveLife*-related studies, which include the '2001 National Youth Survey', for example.

The growth of the music genre kwaito[33], of urban youth radio stations such as *Y-FM*[34] and of youth-focused television series attests to a general interest in local black youth culture (more especially urban black youth culture), which Sarah Nuttall (2009:108) refers to as "an emergent youth culture in Johannesburg which moves across various media forms and generates a 'compositional remixing' that signals an emergent politics of style, shifting emphasis away from an earlier era's resistance politics."

Television shows such as *Gaz'lam*[35] (an educative drama series), *Take 5*[36] (a youth talk and magazine show), *Tsha Tsha*[37] (a local television drama series)*, Zola 7* (a talk

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[33] *Kwaito* is a hybrid local music genre that often employs revolutionary and provocative lyrics about the experiences of primarily black township youths. (See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kwaito.)

[34] *YFM* is a local, contemporary, urban hit radio station, aimed at young black South Africans. It is known for showcasing local South African music and subcultures. (See http://www.yfm.co.za/.)

[35] Aired on SABC1, *Gaz'lam* is an educative drama series aimed at youth. It "explores love, sex and relationships against a backdrop of HIV and AIDS". (See http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0481038/. Accessed: 17 December 2007.)

[36] *Take 5* is a talk format show designed to engage young people in a more purposively designed entertainment-education format. It has been on air since 1997 and aims "to engage, stimulate, inspire, challenge, inform and educate the youth about their lifestyles while addressing pressing issues facing our country and its future." (See http://www.sabceducation.co.za/take5/take5_page1.htm. Accessed: 17 December 2007.)

show)*, Zone 14*[38] (another local television drama series), and the more recent lifestyle programmes, such as *Street Journal* (a magazine culture programme), have been instrumental in both reflecting and cultivating an urban black youth culture.

It is through the shopping mall culture, kwaito and spoken-word poetry, for example, that black youths continuously rearticulate their everyday lives as forms of cultural expression. While these are overt expressions of youths' ability to narrate their lived experiences, these cultural expressions are also at times testimony to their re-appropriation of the dominant ideology as well as their socio-political and economic subordination. Critically, these cultural expressions are further interpreted as reflecting the paradoxes of contemporary society, such as political apathy and awareness, fatalism and nihilism.

This study aims to unpack youth-related issues in terms of their "geographic regionality" (as defined by the National Youth Policy) and, to a limited extent, their gender distinctions. In so doing it attempts to answer the call for "a research mode, which prioritises multiple levels of experience, including ongoing relations which connect everyday life with cultural forms" (McRobbie, 1994:184). It does so specifically in order to further understand how youth media consumption interacts with the production and reproduction of youth lifestyles.

THE CULTURAL STUDIES APPROACH

Cultural Studies has its roots in Britain. In 1964 Richard Hoggart established the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, a postgraduate centre at the University of Birmingham. Stuart Hall eventually took over headship of the centre and he continued to lead it in the tradition of Hoggart and Raymond Williams in a movement otherwise referred to as *left culturalism* (Milner, 1994).

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[37] *Tsha Tsha* is a locally produced drama series that focuses on young people and HIV and Aids. It is "a multi-part entertainment education television drama series commissioned by the South African Broadcasting Corporation's Education division and produced by CADRE and Curious Pictures. Additional support is provided by Johns Hopkins Health and Education in South Africa (JHHESA) and Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg, School of Public Health, Centre for Communications Programs". (See http://www.cadre.org.za/about-tsha-tsha. Accessed: 17 December 2007.)
[38] *Zone 14* is a local series that portrays the trials and tribulations of a township soccer team (The Tiger Boys), the drama of living in a township, and the competition that exists between different football divisions. (See http://www.tvsa.co.za/mastershowinfo.asp?mastershowid=500.)

Andrew Milner's (1994) account of British cultural studies (or of work emanating from the Birmingham School) differentiates between *culturalist* and *structuralist* approaches. Milner argues that those studies that have originated out of the Birmingham School attempt to either explore the social influences of culture or to problematise social issues in relation to their context (or, more specifically, in relation to their modes of production). These studies have either proffered the view that the dominant ideology reflects the ideas of the ruling classes (as espoused by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels) or have emphasised agency in working-class cultures. The current research resonates with the latter tradition, as it offers up 'meaning-making' and lifestyles as opportunities for resistance – that is, for black youths to resist the status quo or dominant ideology.

As scholarship in cultural studies developed with time, the subject's theoretical trajectory also evolved and came to embrace neo-Marxist approaches, as influenced by Louis Althusser (1971). Some scholars adopted a more post-structuralist approach, being influenced by Antonio Gramsci (1971). In relation to the media, Althusser's (1971) contribution – namely, that ideology constructs subjects – provided scholars with an understanding of how the media (potentially) 'interpellates' audiences into specific subject positions. This tradition of research exists in a framework, which assesses the role of the media as an ideological apparatus in relation to power, and also assesses how these ideological apparatuses help to naturalise class domination (e.g. the media and cultural imperialism thesis).

Gramsci's influence is most evident in studies that emphasise *agency*, a framework that engages resistance to the dominant ideology. Gramsci's theory of hegemony has been applied in scholarship to the sociology of media so as to understand both dominance and 'consent' to the power of the dominant classes. As Tony Bennett (1986:xiii) has argued, Gramsci's work "both avoids and disqualifies the bipolar alternatives of structuralism and culturalism". Bennett further argues that Gramsci shuns "the intolerable condescension of the mass culture critic while simultaneously avoiding any tendency toward a celebratory populism" (*ibid.*).

Gramsci's hegemony, the semiotics of Ferdinand de Saussure, and Roland Barthes' concept of *myth* have all helped refine thinking with respect to *representation* and *cultural reproduction*[39]. So too has the work of Dick Hebdige (1993) whose account of counter-hegemonic subcultures falls within this cultural studies approach to understanding culture.

British cultural studies in particular, has also been influential in terms of its contribution towards the growing body of knowledge on sub-cultural resistance and style (Hebdige, 1979, and Hall and Jefferson, 1977). As suggested above, these studies employed Gramsci's concept of hegemony in order to unpack forms of resistance by class youths articulated in their various forms of cultural expressions (for example, the quintessential English 'mods and rockers' and 'punks').

The Birmingham School's contribution to present day audience research is typified by the emphasis it places on culture as contextualised within specific historical moments (e.g. studies on subcultures in post-war Britain). Birmingham's cultural studies scholars invariably apply (post-) structuralist approaches when it comes to examining culture, production and reproduction (for example, studies on subcultures and later mass media).

South African scholars have, in the main, employed the interdisciplinary field of cultural studies as a means for understanding the interrelationship between *text* and *context*, the latter of which refers to the micro and macro environments within which texts exist and operate.

The history of cultural studies in South Africa specifically has been varied, moving from an earlier emphasis on the deconstruction of race and class in the study of (media and) culture to an emphasis on culture as a site of struggle, and from ethnographies of media and culture as sites of contestation to more recent analyses of contemporary life (Nuttall, 2009, Laden, 2002, Nuttall and Michael, 2000, Roome, 1997, and Tomaselli, 1989). As Sarah Nuttall (2006:265) succinctly explains, the following "three major assumptions dominated the work of the cultural during this

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[39] Keyan Tomaselli (1996:29) laments the overemphasis on 'the text' at the expense of contextual analysis (that is to say, "the political, economic, social and historical processes out of which specific texts […] arise").

period: the over-determination of the political, the inflation of resistance and the inflections given to race as a determinant of identity." In essence, Nuttall argues that much of this past work has focused on community solidarity, the struggle against apartheid, resistance politics and race as a 'meta' signifier.

Indeed, neo-Marxist and post-structuralist approaches to understanding cultural practices dominate much of the literature on South African cultural studies. Seminal texts on culture and cultural practices (for example, Fiske, 1987, Radway, 1984, and Morley, 1980) are often drawn upon or revisited in order to give expression to television/ magazine/ shopping mall culture in the local context (South Africa). There has been an increasing focus on active consumption amongst academics; Peter Lunt and Sonia Livingstone have argued: "Cultural Studies has approached consumerism in a different way, attempting to give respect to popular culture and the consuming practices of ordinary people" (1992:17). Notable studies, such as those by Roome (1997) and Tager (1997) that have focused on audience sovereignty and praxis, have emanated from the Centre for Cultural and Media Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Here popular culture is not just seen as a propaganda tool used to perpetuate a dominant ideology but as a vehicle with which to potentially offset hegemonic practices. It seeks to assert the role of agency in cultural production and challenges the cultural imperialist thesis.

The internationalisation of the media in relation to viewing experiences and the reclaiming of local forms of cultural expression and lifestyles are current areas of analysis and scholarship. The current world order is exemplified by unbridled consumerism, free market ideology, and the "fragmentation of the working class into a plural popular culture and the consequent decline in traditional collective solidarities" (Lunt and Livingstone, 1992:19). Correspondingly, as Lunt and Livingstone (*ibid.*) have argued, "[o]n a personal level, the shift has been away from identities based on social class position towards identities based on lifestyle and mode of consumption."[40] This is the framework for the current study.

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[40] Similarly, other research has attempted to show how youths actively use spaces such as shopping malls, for example. The 'mall experience' as a leisure activity is about youths both actively exerting their power by consuming and fulfilling the existing perceptions of what youths are meant to be doing. The mall experience is also about a sense of identifying with others. This is akin to a form of solidarity where leisure operates as a "collective activity" (Frith, 1981).

FROM MEDIA EFFECTS TO USES OF MEDIA

Most interpretations of media consumption and lifestyle presuppose media . The history of Communication Effects research in media studies can be traced back to the 1940s when political rhetoric was widespread[41]. Paul Lazarsfeld's political studies of the 1940s are generally identified as being instrumental to defining of the effects tradition (which is often demonstrated by pointing to listeners' responses to Orsen Wells's radio play *War of the Worlds*). However, as Jack McLeod, Gerald Kosicki and Zhongdang Pan (1991:239) have argued, Lazarsfeld's work was preceded by the empirical studies of the sociologists and educators Max Weber, Walter Lippmann, John Dewey, Willard Bleyer and Robert Ezra Park. Other studies within the effects tradition have utilised psychoanalysis in order to demonstrate the power of film and television texts when it comes to 'constructing' the viewer into specific subject positions[42].

Later research within the effects tradition included 'agenda setting', which argues that the media does not necessarily tell us *what* to think as opposed to telling us what to think *about*. In a similar vein, although not steeped in the epistemological framework of the media effects tradition, an argument could be made that regulations per se do not dictate what audiences should watch, but they do roughly determine the choices that are on offer (from which audiences can then choose).

The effects tradition has since advanced to incorporate a specific focus on media violence[43]. George Gerbner's cultivation theory is often advanced in defence of this, arguing that people who watch a great deal of television (i.e. 'heavy users' of the medium) are the most likely to relate their lived realities to the 'realities' they see on television – and are most likely to feel unsafe. Gerbner argues that people are exposed to specific ideas and social behaviours by way of the television content that they view and that this, together with the social setting in which the viewing is taking place, alters the beliefs of heavy users, who are the most likely to be accordingly affected. South African research has further shown that those individuals exposed to real life

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[41] Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer (1947/1972), heavily influenced by the work of the Frankfurt School with regards to mass culture, followed in the effects tradition.

[42] Another influential paper in the effects tradition is Laura Mulvey's (1975) *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, which demonstrated the ways in which cinema works to reinforce patriarchy.

[43] See Gunter Barrie's (1985) feasibility study of television programme content and the portrayal of violence therein.

violence are the most likely to be affected by violence that is, for example, represented in news programmes, whereas viewers who are not exposed to such real-life situations are likely be less affected when confronted with such images (SABC, 1994:16). Instead, the latter are, in fact, more likely to be affected by fictional violence (*ibid.*).

Interventions by regulatory and other bodies across the globe are a testament to concerns about media violence. These concerns have led to the various classification (parental guidance) systems that are in place in many countries, which are there so as to protect children from the potentially harmful effects of the media. In South Africa, for example, the television watershed period and the parental control options on unscrambling devises for satellite signals are additional tools and options available to parents. The UNESCO (Nordicom) Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media[44] – a critical portal to relevant research on approaches to protecting children (globally) from the possibly negative effects of the media – earlier published a yearbook on media regulations and media literacy as distinct approaches to protecting children (Von Feilitzen and Carlsson, 2003).

Although Katz and Lazarsfeld's 1955 'two-step flow model' has been used by many to exemplify a paradigm shift in the traditional 'magic-bullet' theory of media effects. The 'two-step flow' model provides for a message to be mediated by 'opinion leaders' (step two) thus essentially minimising the effects as was advanced by the earlier, linear, 'stimulus-response' approach to understanding media effects.

While the effects theory of media focuses on what the media did/does *to* the audience, the uses and gratifications approach focuses on what the *audience* did/does with the media. The latter tradition pioneered the active audience approach by arguing that the audience uses the media to fulfil or gratify some kind of need.

The effects tradition not only assumes a unidirectional approach to understanding how media work, but, critically, also assumes that viewers are passive. Contrary to the belief that encoded messages are soaked up wholesale by the audience, the uses and gratifications approach spearheaded an active approach to understanding the audiences

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[44] The Clearinghouse publication is an annual study that results in the production of a volume that is focused on varied aspects of the sociology of children and media

of media. David Morley's works *Nationwide Audience* (1980) and, in particular, *Family Television: Cultural Power and Domestic Television* (1986) offered up new approaches to understanding the ways in which audiences view media, and television viewing is engendered, as well as understanding the domestic context of viewing.

James Lull's (1990) ethnographic work provided further insight into television viewing in relation to people's everyday routines, while Sonia Livingstone's (1998) social psychological account of soap operas provided further reflection on the audience's interpretative faculties. Shaun Moores (1993) offered new approaches to "investigating and interpreting audiences" and understanding how audiences make sense of the "texts, techniques and technologies encountered in everyday life". Later studies, developing upon all these arguments and others, contended that media use is essentially overwhelmed by the routines of the viewer's everyday life (Gauntlett and Hill, 1999).

In the main, studies on media use over the past forty years have shown how television viewing is both structured while it at the same time structures everyday life: audiences make use of the media for escapism or as a release from the realities of everyday life, for companionship or to intuitively plan ones personal daily agenda, in relation to the viewing schedule (McQuail, Blumler and Brown, 1972, in Schroder *et al*., 2003:35).

Polysemy and intertextuality

The media, it is argued, disseminates a barrage of different meanings, most of which are consistent with the dominant ideology. As John Fiske (1996:126) argues, it is the polysemic nature of television that makes it popular: "A television text can only be popular if it is open enough to admit a range of negotiated readings through which various social groups can find meaningful articulations of their own relationships to the dominant ideology." This thesis accordingly accepts that, as a cultural product, "the meanings of television are always intertextual, for it is always read in the context of the other texts that make up this cultural experience" (*ibid*.:142).

Polysemy has also been used to understand people's interaction with cultural products, and Stuart Hall's encoding-decoding model in particular helps to delineate the various readings or interpretations arising from polysemic texts. As Fiske

(1996:132) enunciates: "[e]very text and every reading has a social and therefore a political dimension, which is to be found partly in the structure of the text itself and partly in the relation of the reading subject to that text."

Hall's seminal work demonstrates a concern with both the process of production and the process of consumption. He refers to a text's 'preferred readings' as well as to the dominant, negotiated and oppositional decoding positions[45]. This model has enunciated audience interaction with texts, where the preferred readings could either be accepted wholesale, negotiated or resisted/subverted (Hall, 1980, reprinted 1993). The 'circuit of culture' (discussed later in this chapter) further enunciates this model.

Towards critical research

Critical research evaluates both the text/cultural product as well as the political economic context and the consumption of texts (Curren and Gurevitch, 1991). Consequently, researchers recognise that "audiences are both heterogeneous and selective in their responses to television" (Livingstone, 1998:18). The present study also assesses people's consumption practices and the macro environment within which these occur. The approach here adopted is to assess the socio-cultural context, which in turn reflects the political and economic context.

As an audience study, this research assesses audiences' interactions with the media within a specific macro environment and regulatory framework (i.e. the context) and it attempts to evaluate all this in relation to consumption practices. The research assesses the ways in which media consumption interacts with people's daily lives. It provides a snapshot of youths' interactions with the media and with other cultural products. Furthermore, it accepts that "audience research is […] fundamentally the analyst's interpretation of people's interpretation of their own social practices involving the media" (Schroder *et al*, 2003:30). Moreover, the methods employed to elucidate responses from the informants/participants were adopted at a specific time in a specific context and, naturally (as with all research), can be tested and re-evaluated so as to further enunciate the findings and further develop new findings.

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[45] While Hall's theory of preferred reading also assesses class as a major determinant in the process of reading texts, it has been criticised for not interrogating other determinants (cf. Morley, 1981).

The following chapter on methodology (Chapter Four) provides further details in this regard.

The critical research tradition has critiqued the stimulus-response approach as being administrative and "overly individualistic in orientation", and it argues that media effects research specifically "lacks theoretical ties to the production of messages as embedded in the power relations of society" (McLeod, Mosicki and Pan, 1991:236).

This move away from effects studies has given rise to academic interest in and emphasis on *pleasure*, a move that challenged elitist approaches that had positioned audiences as passive dupes. An appreciation of 'the popular', as is often exemplified in the work of John Fiske, affirms the 'audience as sovereign' approach to understanding media use. In his influential text, *Television Culture*, Fiske (1987:239) argues that television viewers are sophisticated viewers:

> Their pleasure in television is not explained by the ease with which they can accommodate themselves to its ideologically produced meanings and subject positions. A better explanation of the pleasures of television lies in understanding it as a text of contestation which contains forces of closure and openness and which allows viewers to make meanings that are subculturally pertinent to them, but which are made in resistance to the forces of the closure of the text, just as their subcultural identity is maintained in resistance to the ideological forces of homogenisation.

However, as Ien Ang (1995:140) has observed: "revalidating […] the popular alone – by pointing to the empirical fact that audiences are active meaning producers and imaginative pleasure seekers – can become a banal form of cultural critique if *the popular itself is not seen in a thoroughly social and political context* [italics mine]."

The openness of texts and audience sovereignty is in itself contentious. This approach is often challenged by the belief that emphasis on agency and pleasure is often at the expense of an interrogation of the socio-economic and political-economic conditions in which cultural production takes place. Critical political economy emphasises the ways in which structure(s) sustain the dominant ideology.

Using neo-Marxist approaches, which allude to the ideological power of media that work to interpellate audiences into specific subject positions, critical political economy unpacks the structural dynamics of media consumption by assessing the impact of ownership and control on this process. As Peter Golding and Graham Murdoch argue, "[c]onsumer sovereignty is in any total sense clearly impossible – nobody has access to a complete range of cultural goods as and when they might wish, without restriction" (1991:28).

CRITICAL RESEARCH – RECEPTION STUDIES

> In media-saturated and media-integrated societies, then, scholars are encouraged and enforced to seek routes of study that are geared to grasping how media interrelate as material objects and symbolic forms of expression, and how media are constructive of people's sense-making processes and exchanges of experiences in their everyday lives. (Kim Schroder *et al*., 2003:63)

As Ang has argued, the critical tradition in empirical audience studies is rooted in the Marxist and poststructuralist trajectory of the Frankfurt School, hence the emphasis on "the ideological and/or economic role of the media in capitalist and patriarchal society" (1996:37). Falling within this framework, reception analysis has been utilised as both a research tool and a theoretical framework by those arguing for various discursive approaches to culture (for example, Ang, 1985, Tager, 1997, and Gauntlett and Hill, 1999).

Globalisation has instigated a more self-reflexive approach to unpacking culture. Media studies researchers in particular have utilised reception analysis as a means for engaging the meanings and messages of texts as well as their interplay with socio- and political-economic contexts. Increasingly evident is a move away from culture as an elitist construct to culture as a "discursive articulation of a set of characteristically contemporary social contradictions, which continue to structure the lived experiences of characteristically contemporary kinds of intellectual" (Milner, 1994:7).

According to Schroder *et al.* (2003:70), the standard approach to media ethnography has been a combination of "textual analysis of particular media genres and formats with participant-observation, diaries and ethnographic interviews". The authors further argue that this approach defines the Nordic/European approach to media ethnography, while the North American approach is rooted in "interpretative traditions of anthropology and micro-sociology" and the Latin American tradition of media ethnography "is deeply embedded in wider discussions of the political role played by the media" (*ibid.*). Notably absent in their enunciation is any reference to an African or Southern African approach, which this study attempts to present.

As a method of engaging these constructions, the relevance of cultural studies to media studies is precisely in the application of the text-context analysis to any assessments of media. Following in the tradition of the Birmingham School, cultural theory is concerned with not only media production and consumption, but also with representation, identity and regulation. As mentioned earlier, the 'cultural circuit' is not only useful in assessing media impact or effects, but also, critically, in illuminating the symbolic representation of the dominant ideology. However, as argued in the introduction of this paper, whilst acknowledging the locales identified in the cultural circuit, this research is primarily concerned with the interface between consumption (and regulation), youths and lifestyles.

South African studies on youth cultures

Recent critical research conducted in South Africa on youths and media has attempted to unpack media consumption and cultural agency. Notable studies within this critical tradition include the Women Researching Youth and Television (WRYT) study (championed by Prof. Teer-Tomaselli of the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Culture, Communication and Media Studies Department) and an evaluation of Eastern Cape youths' interactions with global media (Prof. Larry Strelitz's from Rhodes University's Journalism Department). Other studies have explored taste in the production of identities and the interface between black cultural identity and consumption practices (Laden, 2002, and Dolby, 2001 and 1999).

As discussed earlier in the chapter, much of the contemporary critical work on youths and media in South Africa has attempted to unpack media consumption and cultural

agency (Strelitz, 2005, Nuttall, 2004, and Dolby, 2001 and 1999 for example). These matters are discussed in more detail later on in this chapter. The critical studies most relevant to this audience study were all conducted relatively around the same time as each other (i.e. between 1996 and 2005) thus potentially limiting opportunities to build on each other. While some were collating data, others were publishing their findings. They also do not draw upon existing market research and other surveys on youths that I argue are in fact relevant to studies on media consumption practices and lifestyles.

South African youth identity

One of these studies for example, is Nadine Dolby's ethnographic study on schooling, race and identity amongst South African. Her research was conducted over a one-year period amongst learners of various race groups at a high school in South Africa (Dolby, 2001, 2000, and 1999).

Dolby utilised Bourdieu's concepts of *taste* and the *habitus* as a means to better understand interactions and friendships across races and for related reflections on cultural practices amongst youths. Dolby's study demonstrates the significance of music and clothes amongst youths as markers of race and identity. She further reflects on this in relation to the contradictions of the socio-political context of schooling in South Africa. Dolby argues that taste is connected to the political, social and economic structures and that this construct (i.e. taste) is used "to signal that these preferences are not natural and innate, but instead are mediated by forces which include class (Bourdieu's primary concern), but also race and global location" (Dolby, 1999:296).

Dolby's research found that South African youths tend to be inclined towards non-local celebrities (and American celebrities in specific) and that they also tend to appropriate non-local, global brands to themselves, such as Levis, Nike, Reebok and Sebago with respect to clothing labels. In this regard, Dolby (2001) observes in her work *Constructing Race: Youth, Identity and Popular Culture in South Africa* that none of the commodities consumed by South African youths are local, South African products. She argues that "[r]acial identities are produced through an engagement with both local material forces and the global space of affect" (2000:7).

Another key finding of Dolby's research that is of significance to the current audience study relates to what I will refer to as *classroom culture*. This term speaks of the ways

in which learners use their textbooks/files and pencil cases/boxes to 'post' or reflect their experiences of celebrity culture. In this regard, classroom culture is not dissimilar from the concept of *room culture*, to which Steele and Brown (1995) refer. Dolby found of classroom culture that "youths are not passive receivers of an undifferentiated onslaught of corporate generated popular culture, but instead carefully select, mold and combine specific commodities and other aspects of popular culture to form identities" (1999:292).

Critically, Dolby also observed that learners are more likely to model their lives on American celebrities such as Michael Jordan, Oprah Winfrey and the cast of *New York Undercover* than on someone local like Nelson Mandela. In the main, Dolby (2001) appears to argue that consumption practices, which include the consumption of fashion and music genres, act as specific markers of race, and that 'taste' is "the primary signifier and practice of race". Dolby further argues that while these cultural products are linked to what she refers to as "collective, racialized identities", "taste's flexible and changing borders also allow for instances of border crossing and hybridity" (2000:8).

The 'Y generation'

In her essay on urban visual cultures, Sarah Nuttall explores various forms of stylisation in relation to the self, to global youth culture and to local subcultures. Her study on what she refers to as the 'Y generation' in Rosebank, Johannesburg, "reveals the preoccupations of increasingly middle-class young black people in Johannesburg and the intricacy of their modes of self-making", as well as the city as "engine for this self-stylizing" (2004:449).

The youth culture as explored by Nuttall is an essentially (pun intended) 'black' one that traverses the contradictions of middle class and working class township lifestyles. This generation of mobile black youths whom she studied listened to the urban black youth radio station *Yfm*, wore global and local brand labels such as South Africa's *Loxion Kulcha* (which represents location/township culture), and (window-) shopped at The Zone (a shopping mall) in Rosebank.

Critically, for the purpose of this research, Nuttall explored the ways in which these young people "develop a mode of cultural accessorization in the making of contemporary selfhood" (Nuttall, 2004:433). The Zone then is a site where all forms

and cultures (i.e. information technology, media cultures, clothing cultures, urban culture and cultural identity) coalesce. The Zone is also a space where youths fostering new urban black identities can enjoy a sense of cultural freedom, distanced from the 'struggle' politics of previous generations.

While Nuttall's sample appears limited, her discursive comparative analysis of *Y Magazine* and *SL* provide critical insights into notions of identity in post-apartheid South Africa[46]. As Nuttall argues, the taglines of each magazine (*SL*'s tagline is "EVERYTHING YOU KNOW IS WRONG" and *Y*'s is "BECAUSE YOU WANT TO KNOW") are revealing: "while *SL* expresses the existential uncertainty of young white people whose security has been compromised by history, *Ys* line captures the confidence of a free black youth" (2004:443).

Nuttall's analysis of a few copies (the exact number is unclear) of *Y* and *SL* magazines allows for preliminary assessments on cultural identities in post-apartheid South Africa. The languages (i.e. the tone, attitude and style) and rhetoric of the two publications play into and perhaps even reinforce the cultural identities of the readers. In *Y*, blackness and middle class aspirations are in the foreground, while *SL*'s counter-culture approach attempts to "rewrite South African histories of whiteness" (*ibid.*:445).

Significantly, Nuttall (2004:443) further argues that "*Y* magazine's response to African American culture tends to shape, as well as reflect, attitudes expressed in the culture at large." Arguing for example, black South Africans tend to enlist the struggle against apartheid as a referent and also reclaim derogatory words as a part of an empowered consciousness.

Youth and Television Studies
In the year 2000 the Cultural and Media Studies graduate programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal received funding to complete (at the time) cutting-edge critical research into youths and television. The Women Researching Youth and Television (WRYT) research project was spearheaded by Professor Ruth Teer-Tomaselli, funded by the National Research Foundation's focus area grant, and presented at the International Forum of Researchers on Young People and the Media. At the time, there

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[46] Both publications are aimed at the youth. *SL* caters to a predominantly white/mixed audience while *Y Magazine*, which is aligned to *Y Fm*, caters to the urban black youths.

appeared to be a dearth of critical research into youths and media. Indeed, a similar observation was expressed by Larry Strelitz, who noted that "[t]he area of media consumption amongst youth is under researched worldwide" (2005:56) and that there is "a complete absence of qualitative [local] research examining the complex ways local and global media are incorporated into everyday lives of young people" (2005:4).

The WRYT project was particularly concerned with consumption and with the cultural meanings of television shows by fifteen- to twenty- year-olds living in Durban, South Africa. The project made use of survey methodology for collating information on trends with respect to youths' consumption patterns. The methodology was underpinned by focus group interviews, which explored the meaning-making process with respect to specific television programmes. Specific programmes were identified within the following genres: entertainment-education (*Yizo Yizo*), formal education (Liberty Life learning channel), soap operas (*Generations* and *The Bold and the Beautiful*), dramas and sitcoms (*Dawson's Creek* and *Friends*), and various music videos.

Larry Strelitz's study on South African youths' consumption of local and global media provides important insights from which the present study is able to draw. Strelitz's doctoral research, which investigated "how mass-mediated popular cultural forms are consumed by local audiences" (2005:41), was the impetus for his book entitled *Mixed Reaction: South African youth and their experience of global media* (1995). Data on local youths' consumption practices of global media was collated by way of: a questionnaire survey, focus groups, in-depth interviews, and student essays on media imperialism and their local or global media preferences. Strelitz's data collection took place largely between 1999 and 2001. The sample included a cross-section of students from Rhodes University. Rhodes University is situated in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape, approximately 70 km from Alice, one of the sites for this research. Critically, as Strelitz noted, the differentiation amongst the youths that comprised the sample is a reflection of the country's broader socio-economic inequalities:

> While we can distinguish between poor rural and urban middle-class Africans, on the whole African youth live in a different world compared with white youth. It is a world of unemployment, poverty, high population growth, inadequate schooling and largely unavailable basic social amenities. (2005:51)

Strelitz's study found that generally, the youths that were sampled prefer local media as opposed to the gamut of global texts on offer. He argues that this general preference for local television raises questions around the effects of media consumption on identity formation. He thus questions the media imperialism thesis, which says that local cultures are being usurped by global (largely American and European) conglomerates that control the flow of information. Arguing further that "[i]n many societies, there is a desire by the 'lower classes' for 'cultural proximity', which is translated into a preference for local media" (2005:5)[47].

The findings from Strelitz's qualitative data collection led him to observe that there is an apparent erosion of certain local belief systems such as *ubuntu*[48], which he argues is a consequence of more than just the consumption of global media. Strelitz demonstrates this argument through analysing his informants' various approaches to the 'preferred readings' of global media and some of the contradictions in the constructions of cultural identities. Whilst arguing that youths actively consume a variety of 'symbolic resources' and polysemic texts, Strelitz's work also highlights the "interplay between agency and structure, between individual choice and the structuring of experience by wider social and historical factors" (2005:141), within the context of South Africa, itself operating within a global system. And here there exists a consonance with the current research.

Significantly, Strelitz's study confirmed that there are distinctions in patterns of media consumption across determinants such as race and class, not unlike the social divisions that exist in the immediate environs of those youths living on the Rhodes University campus and that are also consistent with the broader differentiation of social and personal lived experiences in South Africa. The study also challenged the thesis that cultural homogenisation is a consequence of globalisation. As Strelitz concludes: "[c]ultural power is both exercised and resisted by particular audiences in particular social contexts" (2005:141). Moreover, Strelitz's study reaffirmed the complexities of media consumption and the need for qualitative critical research that assesses not only

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[47] Similar findings were noted in the Southern African Gender and Media Audience Study (GMAS), which states that "[w]omen and men want more positive, human interest news: women and men across thirteen countries said they would like to receive more positive, local and human interest news" (Lowe Morna, Muriungi and Rama, 2005:19).
[48] The concept of humanity; that 'we are who we are because of others' (see also: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ubuntu_(philosophy)

media use but also the context of this usage, of meaning-making and lifestyle production.

Other local studies – positivist market research

Much of the earlier research on youths' interactions with media was comprised of audience measurement studies, which focused on consumption patterns essentially in relation to advertising (revenue). These studies include audience ratings studies and the SAARF studies (namely, the Radio Audience Measurement Survey (RAMS) and the Television Audience Measurement Survey (TAMS)).

One study that must be mentioned due to its pronouncements based on its comparative analysis of black youths is a social psychological study that was conducted in the early 1980s amongst those black youths referred to by the researchers as the 'Sovenga youth'. The Sovenga Youth Study conducted social psychological research amongst fifteen- to sixteen-year-olds. The study is not a media-related or audience study; it is critically located within a specific positivist framework and was conducted at a particular historical moment in time (i.e. during the years of apartheid in South Africa). It does however contain a few findings and conclusions relevant to my own audience study that are interesting to note.

The Sovenga Youth Study highlighted the challenges facing young black youths who seek to actively express their identities (read 'cultural identities'). It found that there is a great difference in the rural-urban divide across gender, and it also found that rural and urban black youths both "idealistically identify with their parents as positive role models, though the urban youth do so to a greater degree" (Weinreich, Kelly and Maja, 1988:236).

While the findings cannot be generalised to reflect all youths, nor can they be extrapolated wholesale in relation to my audience study, the Sovenga Youth Study did deal with issues of cultural identity while also illuminating nuances and discrepancies in urban-rural experiences in South Africa, and also with the issue of role-modelling, all of which are considered in the present study.

National surveys and market research

Apart from all the above-mentioned studies, there are two other noteworthy studies on youths that have been conducted within South Africa, namely, the '2001 National Survey of South African Youth' and the '2002 Trend Youth Study'. Another relevant study is the annual 'Generation Next Youth Brand Survey', which is conducted by HDI Youth Marketeers and Monash SA and published as a supplement to the *Sunday Times* newspaper. The Generation Next Survey study (2007) provides data on youth brand choices with respect to the first quarter of 2007 (covering the months of January to April). Some of the findings from the Generation Next Survey are assessed alongside the findings of the current audience study (see Chapters Five and Six).

❖ 2001 National Survey of South African Youth

The 2001 National Survey of South African Youth – a study commissioned by *loveLife*[49] – was conducted in October and November of 2001 with youths between the ages of twelve and seventeen, as well as with their parents and guardians, on the topics of *sex*, *sexuality* and *open communication with youths*[50]. Prioritising HIV and Aids, the research concentrated on youths' attitudes and awareness levels, and in relation to the *loveLife* programme specifically.

Of significance to my audience study is the fact that the survey found that South African youths appear to be more concerned about HIV and Aids, and teenage pregnancy than they are over any other issues. With respect to media use specifically, the survey found that there had been significant growth in terms of the numbers of South Africans who view television (95% viewership) as well as with regards to radio listenership (92%). According to the survey, while only 6% of young South Africans used the Internet everyday, 67% watched television everyday and 57% listened to the radio everyday.

❖ 2002 *Trend Youth* study

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[49] *loveLife* is a local non-governmental organisation that focuses on sexuality, on sex education and on HIV/Aids prevention amongst youths through awareness and education campaigns that utilise all forms of media, including billboards, posters, and television and radio advertisements. *LoveLife*'s main target group is adolescents, aged between twelve and seventeen. (See www.lovelife.org.za.)
[50] The sample of 2001's *loveLife National Youth Survey* was a nationally representative, random sample of 2,204 youths.

This 2002 Trend Youth Study of South African youths is particularly relevant for it reflects a move away from purely functionalist and positivist approaches to understanding 'youth' in South Africa (e.g. Weinreich, Kelly and Maja, 1988). Youths are no longer seen in relation to politics exclusively or with respect to specific ethnic identities. Furthermore, the 2002 study broke away from seeing *youth* as an '*absolute* concept' to instead assessing it as a 'state of mind'.

The 2002 Trend Youth Study is a market research study that aimed to provide South African marketers with an increased understanding of the country's youth consumers. It is primarily concerned with local youth trends, and evaluates them in relation to the global market. The project sponsor was the Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing at the University of Cape Town and one of the key partners was the youth-based radio station *Y-fm*, whose target market is primarily urban black youths.

For the 2002 Trend Youth Study, eighteen (18) focus groups, 100 in-depth interviews and 800 (survey) interviews were conducted with approximately 2,000 youths. The sample included eighteen- to twenty-four-year-old males and females of all race groups, from South Africa's three major cities of Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg. The socio-economic measurement tool Living Standards Measurement (LSM) was used so as to reflect a demographic group within the middle-to-upper socio-economic bracket. LSM 6-10 was used for distinguishing urban, upwardly mobile youths. In addition, the sample considered the employment status of its participants.

One finding of significance to this research is that young adults tend to be very adept with technology and even though those with the most access to ICTs (e.g. historically advantaged, white youths) have similar levels of proficiency with them as do youths in developed countries, black youths are increasingly 'leap-frogging', which is to say, many black youths are not necessarily going through all the recognised 'stages' of technological innovation (i.e. from awareness to adoption), as is contended by development scholars. The Trend Youth Study suggests that young people are either 'born into' or grow up "*e*-mersed in technology" (2002: slide 42).

The Trend Youth Study also draws specific attention to 'interactivity' as being both a consequence of technology as well as a marker of this 'new' generation. The study

further suggests that this new generation of youths has thus paved the way for a future that allows individuals to 'customise' their lifestyles.

Another finding of the 2002 Trend Youth Study of significance to this research is that the former study also provides insight into youths' consumption practices in relation to their lifestyles. Whilst remaining within the market research paradigm, the study does reflect a more nuanced approach to understanding youths as active participants in the processes of cultural production and socialisation. The Trend Youth Study found that "[t]his new generation is adopting a set of more common, altered and negotiated values and attitudes – particularly evidenced in sport and music. [….] High levels of social mixing are taking place in schools, campuses and the work place" (2002: slide 51).

Another notable finding in the Trend Youth Study is what is referred to as the 'depoliticisation' of youths; the vast majority of the study's participants believe South Africa to be an equal society. The study found that "75% of 18-24 year olds believe that everyone in South Africa is equal. This perception is stronger amongst black youth – 78% of black youth versus 62% white believe this to be true" (2002:52).

Consistent with the findings of the research informing the National Youth Policy, the 2002 Trend Youth Study suggested that there is a type of political apathy amongst youths. It argued that youths have a greater confidence in their own entrepreneurship skills (rather than in political leaders) to create a better future for themselves.

Although political apathy and politicisation were not taken into consideration during the data collection phase of this audience study, it is important that they are noted, seeing that, as discussed in an earlier chapter, the National Youth Policy also reflects concerns over political apathy. This is particularly interesting for they are to be located within the context of high levels of unemployment, crime and HIV and Aids amongst youths in South Africa. Moreover, the differences found between white and black youths with respect to these findings on 'depoliticisation' is critical and while it is not the subject of this research it ought to be interrogated further as part of the growing scholarship on the sociology of youths in post-apartheid South Africa.

The Trend Youth Study also picks up on the contradictions that exist within the lifestyles of youths and contrasts this with global trends. For example, there was

evidence of 'conspicuous consumption' being prioritized ahead of planning for financial security. This the authors argue (in the Trend Youth Study presentation) was in stark contrast to the climate of consolidation and conscientious spending intensified by the 11 September 2001 terror attacks in the United States of America.

The 2002 Trend Youth Study discredits the assumption that youths are rebellious, preferring to instead label local youths as "explorers" of "virgin territory and as *"creative editors"* [my emphasis] of their own identities. The study further states that young people are "culturally omnivorous" and have global palettes that include a taste for varied music, fashion and media (2002: slide 124). This new interpretation reinforces the idea of the fluidity of cultural identities and it specifically highlights the notion that young people have the choice or option of adapting themselves to local and global media patterns.

Similar to Dolby's (2001) findings, the 2002 Trend Youth Study (p. 121) observed that while youths "feed off global youth trends, South African youth are the product of 'struggle and isolation parents' […]. In a sense, SA [South African] youth today are in a vacuum. They are the product of massive societal change."

Critically, for the purposes of this audience study, it is evident that the 2002 Trend Youth Study acknowledges identity as a construction and believes that youths are constantly adopting new approaches to reinventing themselves. The study also showed that the adaptability of youths is partly informed by external factors such as lived realities and politics.

Audience research and the researcher's subjectivity

As Ellen Seiter *et al*. (1989:227) have argued, the social and cultural backgrounds of researchers are critical when it comes to audience research, especially since researchers invariably "go into the field to learn about the uses and understandings of groups of viewers with social and (sub) cultural backgrounds usually different from their own." So while (during the course of this research) I fell within the youth category myself, I am also someone who grew up in a township that was regarded as an historically 'coloured' suburb, and have lived and worked in urban and peri-urban settings, the nuances of my experiences as a mixed-race black South African delineate

a specific subjectivity which is not the same as – although not entirely dissimilar to – the majority of the informants in my study who are black African learners and students of the working class and working class poor.

Fundamentally, as Seiter *et al.* (*ibid.*) opine, "[t]his means that the differences and similarities between participants and scholars in terms of class, gender and race, culture or subculture, educational background, age, etc. *have to be reflected* [my emphasis]." Audience studies – and perhaps more so ethnographic studies – must declare the subjectivity of the researcher. The reality in South Africa however, is that the vast majority of published critical and other studies on black youths have been conducted by non-black African, middle class men and women, who are sometimes not South Africans themselves. The methodology chapter of this thesis provides further reflection in this regard as it points to the differentiation of the researcher (myself) as a middle class, 'coloured', female professional, while the informants' perceptions of me as the researcher were steeped in the apartheid practice of race as a primary marker. Another signifier that is ideologically loaded and that could potentially have affected my rapport with the participants was their description of me as a 'teacher' by virtue of the fact I was a lecturer at the time.

CONCLUSION

The present chapter has attempted to illuminate the history of audience research so as to reflect an appreciation of how everyday life 'regulates' people's television viewing patterns and vice versa. Reference was made to 'media effects', its history, and related and advanced research traditions in order to provide a context for the research methodology and theoretical foundations of this research, which is a move away from focusing on the effects of media consumption on youths to understanding how their interactions with various media interfaces with their lifestyles.

The research presented herein accepts that media effects are the result of consumption practices (which are cumulative and take place over time), people's predispositions, and their lived experiences. It also accepts that the mass media operates as an ideological apparatus, but it further acknowledges the role of 'agency' in cultural production and reproduction. Acknowledging the media's ideological role in relation

to sustaining consent to the dominant ideology and unequal power relations, this thesis highlights Hall's (1980) encoding/decoding model, which shows that preferred readings can either be accepted wholesale, negotiated or resisted/'subverted'.

The final sections of this chapter drew on the findings of several key studies (critical and market research studies) on youths and it elaborated on those most relevant to my audience research. In keeping with scholarship on ethnography and media ethnography, I advanced that while this audience study is not entirely ethnographic, it does draw on an epistemological tradition that "has intensified our interest in the ways in which people actively and creatively make their own meanings and create their own culture, rather than passively absorb pre-given meanings imposed upon them" (Ang, 1996:136).

As an audience study, the current research assesses audiences' interactions with media, within context, and, more specifically, within the macro environment and the existing regulatory framework, and it then attempts to evaluate all this in relation to youths' consumption practices. The research assesses the way in which media consumption interacts with daily lives. It provides a snapshot of youths' interactions with media and other cultural products. Furthermore, it accepts that "audience research is […] fundamentally the analyst's interpretation of people's interpretation of their own social practices involving the media" (Schroder *et al.*, 2003:30). Moreover, the methods employed to elucidate responses from the study's informants/participants were adopted at a specific time in a specific context and, as with all research, can naturally be tested and re-evaluated so as to further enunciate the findings and further develop new findings. Chapter Four (the chapter on methodology) provides further details in this regard.

SECTION II

CHAPTER FOUR – METHODOLOGY

> The embedded nature of media reception means that, in the end, we have to widen the scope of our inquiries to take in the whole gamut of texts, objects and daily activities – asking about ongoing and intricate processes through which social subjects articulate their lived cultures. (Shaun Moores, 1993:10)

The present study adopts a critical research approach to understanding youths' media consumption practices and lifestyles. As a qualitative audience study, the current research attempts to reflect patterns of youth media consumption by extrapolating the findings from empirical research that was conducted in urban and peri-urban sites[51]. The research draws on national surveys for benchmarking so as to both contextualise the research findings and also respond to the common criticism that is made concerning the limits of external validity or representativeness vis-à-vis qualitative empirical research.

In analysing the empirical data, I do so on the understanding that media consumption (television viewing in specific) is a multi-layered experience. Texts are neither static nor inert. They are mediated by other texts, "always mobilized, placed, and articulated with other texts in different ways" (Morley, 1989:22). In other words, audiences engage with texts across programmes, formats, genres, and, indeed, across different media, constantly negotiating their viewing preferences (Gauntlett and Hill, 1999, Livingstone, 1998, and Fiske, 1987). Moreover, as the current study attempts to demonstrate, the context of viewing and the lived realities of audiences both come to bear on the interconnectedness of texts (such as television programmes) with other texts (such as clothing or accessories) in intricate ways. Audiences in general have access to various information communication technologies (ICTs), ranging from cellphones, the Internet, television, radio, film, DVDs (digital videodisks), magazines and newspapers, each of which relay meanings and messages as well as signs that are linked to other signs. Indeed, in the current age of the 'mobile revolution', an

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[51] As described in Chapter Two, the Durban sample is largely urban, reflecting contemporary settings, while the Alice sample is largely peri-urban, although some respondents and participants were in fact from rural areas but merely studied at schools in and around the small town of Alice.

explosion in instant messaging, in chat room platforms and in social networking usage has added to the multifarious nature of navigating between and within media[52].

AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The theory that is herein investigated is that media consumption – and television consumption in particular – is intrinsically connected to the construction of lifestyles. Furthermore, the research aims to evaluate the hypothesis that consumption practices and patterns are symptomatic of class distinctions (and of other determinants, such as gender) and that the type of media being consumed reflects the macro media environment as well as the regulatory regime, which are in turn symptomatic of the country's policy directives and of globalisation.

TRIANGULATION

Triangulation (i.e. the use of several research methods to determine the reliability of one's data) was employed in the approach to data collection in order to best explore youths' media consumption practices during a specific period of time (namely, between 2002 and 2006). The quantitative research provided variables for analysis, which the qualitative research then attempted to investigate even further. The qualitative research also allowed for the further exploration of relevant aspects of the research that the quantitative data did not cover. For example, while the questionnaire-based audience survey attempted to provide an indication of trends around general consumption patterns, preferred genres, access to media and ICTs, room culture, brand awareness, and celebrity consciousness, the face-to-face, in-depth interviews attempted to further probe youths' aspirations, fears/concerns, social contexts and lived experiences.

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[52] Recent reports suggest that most students connect to the Internet via their mobile phones (Kornberger, 2009). Mobile phones allow youths to access social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. It is important to note that the phenomenon of social networking was not as much of a reality for youths during the period of 2002-2006 (when the empirical data for this research was collected) as it is now.

It is universally accepted that qualitative research is generally subjective in nature. That is to say, the relationship between the interviewer and interviewees/participants, the kinds of questions that are asked, the decisions on what to further probe, the decoding process for both parties, the responses following on from decoding, and any language barriers and translation, are all open to various interpretations. Notwithstanding this, the current research draws on both the qualitative and quantitative methods in order to first of all analyse the information received and then assess the findings that are gathered against previously published local and international studies, which is a step aimed at mitigating the supposition of subjectivity.

SAMPLING

As a qualitative study, this research was less concerned with obtaining a nationally representative sample than with studying "a few cases, to identify problems or generate hypotheses" (Bulmer, 2000). Non-probability sampling was used for the survey and the ethnographic research. The sampling grid was deliberate and selective: sixteen- to twenty-one-year-old black South African youths were chosen. As stated earlier, the initial sample comprised youths between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four and thus reflected the sample used in media audience studies (see SAARF figures and SABC Audience Ratings). The age range was, however, later refined in light of feedback that suggested the category was too broad (University of KwaZulu-Natal, Faculty of Humanities Higher Degrees and Research Committee, 9 November 2001). While the questionnaire listed the age group, administrators were asked to specifically identify black African respondents in Durban and Alice. The most accessible groups were those comprised of students at school and institutions of higher education (e.g. Durban University of Technology[53] and University of Fort Hare). As I was no longer in the Durban site, snowball sampling in specific was used so as to secure the pre-defined population for in-depth interviews.

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[53] As was earlier mentioned, the Durban University of Technology, which arose out of the merging of two distinct institutions of higher education (namely, ML Sultan and Natal Technikon), was initially referred to as the Durban Institute of Technology, and it was this name that was in operation during the empirical data collection phase of the current research.

The requirement for interviewees was more specific: I required all interviewees to be black Africans.[54] For the in-depth interviews I also endeavoured to secure a 50/50 gender split amongst youths aged between sixteen and twenty-one years old. Slightly more women than men (20:18) were interviewed, which is relatively consistent with the national population. The gender-disaggregated national population figures over a similar period (presented in **Tables 7** and **8** below) reveal a South African population that is predominately female.

Table 7 - Gender-disaggregated, total population figures

Year	Total	Men	Women
2003	46,322	22,569	23,753
2004	46,708	23,249	23,459
2005	47,005	23,424	23,581
2006	47,249	23,598	23,651

Source: SAARF Sampling (www.saarf.org.za)

Table 8 - SAARF AMPS Universe[55]

Year	Total	Men	Women
2003	29,773	14,266	15,508
2004	30,310	15,014	15,296
2005	30,656	15,218	15,438
2006	30,903	15,398	15,505

Source: SAARF Sampling (www.saarf.org.za)

The empirical data for this research was principally collated over a three- to four-year period (2002-2006). The quantitative data was primarily collated during 2002 and 2003 while the qualitative data was primarily collated in 2005 and 2006.

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[54] This criterion was particularly important, as it is assumed (through looking at their names) that some of the survey respondents were 'coloured' or of Indian descent, although survey administrators were asked to identify black *African* youths in specific. Presumably the respondents who elected to participant in the research felt they were in fact black Africans.
[55] Adults over sixteen years of age, with exclusions. (See www.saarf.org.za.)

Bias and overweighting

While convenience sampling (in this instance, the use of students especially) is a common feature in scientific research, the findings of this research point to bias in that there was a preference for media content and career choices amongst the students surveyed. This, it is assumed, is a result of the overweighting of communications or journalism and media studies students specifically. It is noteworthy that the research sample was comprised of mostly upper high school learners (i.e. grade 11 and 12 learners) and university students. An analysis of age-disaggregated data revealed that there was an additional bias towards youths aged between eighteen and twenty-one.

RESEARCH METHODS

The primary research methods used in the present study were survey research and in-depth interviews. This research extrapolates findings from the views and experiences of the 244 black youths sampled, whose opinions were specifically solicited over a period of four years (2002-2006) for the purposes of this research.

❖ **Questionnaire survey (Annexure One)**

Survey research is generally quantitative in design and this helps ensure the increased scientific validity of one's data. According to Thomas Lindlof (1995:121), "[a] significant strength of survey research is its ability to reveal the distribution of behaviours, attitudes, and attributes in a population." The questionnaire applied to this research used a mixture of open and closed questions, as well as a scale with reference to pre-selected television programmes, which were clustered according to their genres (see **Annexure One**).[56]

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[56] The questionnaire design draws on the genre categories considered in the Women Researching Youth and Television (WRYT) project. The WRYT survey was instructive in that it prioritised general media consumption and provided a scale for genre preference. For numerous reasons the research project, led by Professor Ruth Teer-Tomaselli at the Centre for Cultural and Media Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, was not finalised.

The empirical research explores youths' media consumption practices in relation to their brand and celebrity awareness, their room culture and their role modelling, which are seen as symbolic and indexical of their lifestyles. The questionnaire (Annexure One) was largely quantitative in design in order to illuminate quantifiable empirical data for further extrapolation. It did, however, include a few open-ended questions in an attempt to solicit exploratory responses and to allow respondents an opportunity to express their opinions in their own words. The specified options were a result of preliminary research (i.e. work done prior to submitting the proposal for this study to the university's Higher Degrees Committee) that had identified relevant criteria and variables for analysis. Questions regarding the participants' demographic details (facts on age, sex and language, for example) were included and were distinguishable from those questions that were focused on soliciting more normative data concerning their attitudes and values.

The survey aimed to assess participants' socio-economic conditions as indicative of their capabilities, wealth, poverty and deprivation levels (the ability to meet needs), general media (and ICT) access and consumption, as well as brand identification, room culture and role models (indexical of their lifestyles). In this respect, my survey conforms to the generally held view that surveys are used "for the investigation of the more factual aspects of communicative behaviour such as questions about the frequency and duration of media exposure, genre preferences and cultural tastes, etc" (Schroder *et al*., 2003:31).

The first section of the questionnaire looked at demographics, sociographics[57] and social mobility, attempting to provide a profile of respondents' sex, age, language, residential area and degree of education. In addition, it probes the extent to which the youths surveyed have disposable income or access to money. This is evaluated against the employment status of their primary caregivers (parents), whether or not they are given an allowance or 'pocket money', and whether or not they have access to credit facilities at retail stores (and especially clothing outlets). The second section of the questionnaire fundamentally assesses their brand awareness, their general access to media and their media consumption. The questions focus on the youths' familiarity

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[57] While demographics looks at age, sex and language, sociographics refers to the socio-economic profile or social mobility status of respondents.

with brands or designer labels and the extent to which they have access to media and ICTs that could potentially grow this awareness. Respondents are also required to reflect on their own consumption practices, so as to provide an indication of the amount of media they consume each day. As the research was particularly interested in assessing television consumption, the final section of the questionnaire deals specifically with their television genre preferences.

Some trends emerged from the quantitative data collection with respect to television viewing preferences and socio-economic backgrounds and these required further probing and 'hypothesis testing'. Face-to-face, in-depth interviews thus not only provided me with the opportunity to investigate the preliminary findings of the survey research, but also, critically, the opportunity to examine and potentially theorise issues surrounding the youths' cultural identity, fears and aspirations, and room culture, which are areas on which the survey research did not focus.

Of the 250 questionnaires that were administered in Durban as well as in Alice and the surrounding areas, 206 were completed fully, and these were then coded and analysed. The coding of the questionnaire's data was done in consultation with the statistician Patrick Igonor (a statistics lecturer then at the University of Fort Hare). The categories, choices of variables and the data analysis were all chosen/done exclusively by me (the researcher and author of this study). The Microsoft Excel template on which the data was entered so that a statistical programme could code them was designed by the statistician in accordance with the research requirements that I had stipulated. A recognised statistics programme, Statistical Analysis Software (SAS), was used for the coding of the survey's data.

❖ **In-depth interviews**

Thirty-eight (38) in-depth interviews were conducted between 2003 and 2006 (nineteen in Alice and nineteen in Durban).[58] In Durban, eight males and eleven females were interviewed, while nine males and ten females were interviewed in Alice. The interviews aimed to garner a broader understanding of how youths interact

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[58] I intended to interview forty youths but two of the youths were 'no shows' (did not arrive for their interviews).

with media. (The interview questions are appended as **Annexure Two**.) All interviewees were media consumers between sixteen and twenty-one years old. The questions aimed to assess how their media consumption practices interface with certain other facets of their lives. The interviews were semi-structured as there were key areas that needed to be covered, such as leisure, access, consumption, brands and labels, sex, room culture, concerns or fears (such as HIV and Aids and unemployment), and dreams or wishes (such as the ideal house, car and furnishings).

The first section of questions aimed to elicit responses as regards the participants' *class*. That is to say, the questions asked the participants where they live, whether or not their parents and/or guardians are employed, and whether or not they have access to their own cash and are able to buy their own clothes. These questions were mostly interested in determining the ability of the youths to afford 'labelled' or branded items.

Other questions were centred on the issue of *leisure*. Some youths described their daily schedules and routines. It was envisaged that the youths would offer responses that demonstrate whether or not they have the luxury of 'parading' malls, spending hours listening to music and conversing with friends or if their social lives are moderated by family and other commitments or expectations, such as daily household chores and looking after their younger siblings.

The youths were also asked about their degree of access to ICTs in general. The interviews aimed to assess the extent to which their access to ICTs impacts upon their general media consumption. In other words, the interviews investigated the effect of limited access to media and ICT appliances (the Internet, DVDs, CDs and VCRs) on the youths' extended mass media consumption (of television, radio and magazines in particular). Acknowledging the growth that has taken place in terms of access to cellphones across the different classes and LSM groups in South Africa, the interviews also aimed to determine the extent to which cellphones specifically form a part of youths' lifestyles. That is to say, do these youths see cellphones as an essential communication tool or are they primarily desired because at the time this research was conducted they are seen as being an indicator of social mobility?

Following on from the results of the survey, the hypothesis was that while many of the youths indicated their preference for branded products, most did so on the basis of the assumption that branded products are expensive and are therefore of a higher quality. Preliminary survey results showed that urban youths are more likely to wear branded products than are their peri-urban counterparts.

In the in-depth interviews, the emphasis on labels or branded products was then followed up with other questions that focused on the youths' desires and aspirations as well as on the sort of 'dream lives' that they enjoy. I was thus able to determine (by allowing for a scenario where money is not to be a limiting factor) what the most desired lifestyle would be, namely, a modest lifestyle where one's basic necessities are met, or a lifestyle defined by brands and that is essentially middle class and upwardly mobile, or a lifestyle that is wealthy and ostentatious.

Youths' aspirations form an important component when it comes to the 'unpacking' of media consumption and lifestyles. Here questions differentiated between whom interviewees "admired" (i.e. who they look up to and acknowledge), who their "role model" is (i.e. who they model their behaviour on or what qualities or characteristics they wish they could emulate), and who they "aspire to be" (i.e. who they most want to be like or wish they could be). It also probed into the youths' "dreams" and "future aspirations" and attempted to identify expressions of taste and class, so as to draw links between these, cultural expressions and media consumption practices.

The questions also tried to gain a sense of the fears and/or concerns that youths face (e.g. unemployment and HIV and Aids). It also tried to assess this in relation to the role sex plays in young people's lives and whether or not media consumption has any impact on their choices concerning sex.

Other supplementary questions looked into the kinds of posters they have pasted onto the walls of their bedrooms, the kinds of television programmes they watch, and their views on culture and race.

Rapport

Recognising the importance of both rapport and room culture to youths, the interviews were conducted, whenever possible, in the participants' homes, in the homes of their friends or in the participants' 'homes away from home' (i.e. a dormitory, 'digs' or university residence). While attempts were made to interview the youths in their own personal spaces so as to ensure they would feel relaxed and comfortable, many appeared hesitant and reluctant to be interviewed in their own homes or bedrooms – they felt more comfortable being interviewed at other sites, such as the home of a friend in their neighbourhood. Most of the Durban-based interviews were conducted in two homes, which served as bases for this research. One of the homes was in Mount Moriah and the other was in KwaMashu D-Section. While many of the Alice interviews were conducted in the interviewees' homes or digs, some interviews were unfortunately conducted in sterile environments such as a seminar room at the University of Fort Hare.

It is worth noting that the Eastern Cape moderator – an African woman, conversant in all Nguni languages – was granted greater access than was I to the interviewees' personal spaces. It is recognised that this may have to do with a rapport having already been formed between them as the moderator was based and living in that area. Additionally, the language factor was also significant as the moderator was able to offer participants the option of communicating in their vernacular languages when necessary. As the primary researcher, I – the Durban interviewer – relied on my long-standing relationships with the two Durban contacts whose homes were used for interviews as a means for developing a good rapport with the other interviewees and putting them at their ease.

With this being a qualitative study, I was concerned that I should obtain as much information as possible about the participants' everyday experiences, especially in relation to their media consumption practices, and I therefore used the interviews to "facilitate my personal engagement in the collection of data" (Brown and Dowling, 1998:72). This approach allowed for flexibility, which helped me in my pursuit of establishing a good rapport with the interviews, and I was thereby able to 'mine' as much data as was possible through interpersonal dialogues, which I attempted to make as natural as possible. Some of the participants, however, remained wary about

being interviewed and specifically about sharing responses to what they perceived to be personal matters, such as their relationships, sex and sexually transmitted infections.

Coding of Interviews

All the interviews were recorded on analogue tapes and then transcribed. Thematic analysis, which focuses on grouping material together according to specific themes and patterns of behaviour (Aronson, 1994), was also used to analyse the responses and experiences shared by the youths during the interviews. Additionally, notes were made (on the tape sleeve, after the interviews) concerning: any atypical behaviour on the part of the participants in terms of their demeanour, any peculiarities in their interests, and, where significant, the context (for example, their bedrooms). This was done so as to provide further information and enhance the understanding of individuals' characteristics, and it proved useful during the analysis phase when I was at a distance to the research participants (both physically and in terms of the time lapse).

Questions for the in-depth interviews were categorised in ways that provide both demographic and sociographic data as well as information on the participants' beliefs, attitudes and values. More specifically, the research sought to elicit details as regards the following: class, race and cultural identity, celebrity culture, branding and labels, style and taste, access to media and ICTs, consumption practices, aspirations and role modelling, fears and concerns, and sex and sexual health. These predetermined categories were arrived at on the basis of: the preliminary research, the literature review that preceded the empirical data collection phase, and the actual findings from the survey research. The transcribed responses to interview questions were classified accordingly and suppositions were then drawn in order to make sense of youths' media consumption practices in post-apartheid South Africa. The current research thus draws on *thematic analysis* to "formalise the identification and development of themes" (Thomas and Harden, 2007:5).

The coding of interviews followed a matrix that sought to align the variables across a scale (see **Tables 9-12** below):

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Table 9 – Interview code: Scale of activities/ symbolic expressions important to youths

VARIABLE	CATEGORY		
	1 – Low	2 – Limited	3 – Heavy
a. Leisure			
b. Access			
c. Media consumption			
d. Brands/labels			
e. Sex			
f. HIV and Aids			
g. Unemployment			
h. Posters/room culture			

Source: Research data coding (R.A. Smith, 2006)

Table 10 - Interview code: Scale of role models and related choices

VARIABLE	CATEGORY		
	1. Parent/relative	2. Icon	3. Celebrity
i. Role model/ admire			
j. Aspire (to be like)			

Source: Research data coding (R.A. Smith, 2006)

Table 11 - Interview code: Scale of race and gender consciousness

VARIABLE	CATEGORY		
	1.Aware/ Has an idea or perception of	2. Ambivalent	3.Very aware/ Race or gender conscious
k. Race/Culture			
l. Gender			

Source: Research data coding (R.A. Smith, 2006)

Table 12 - Interview code: Scale of future aspirations/ dream life

VARIABLE	CATEGORY		
	1. Modest (just enough to get by comfortably)	2. Brand aware/ conscious of labels/ dream of upwardly mobile life/ middle class dream world	3. Opulent/ very wealthy/ defined by money and by size (the bigger and flashier, the better)
m. Dream life/ aspirations of future life			

Source: Research data coding (R.A. Smith, 2006)

After tabulating the results using the above templates, participants were then divided into three main categories (1, 2 and 3) and a profile was developed to describe each category. These profiles were then analysed so as to provide a broad description of youths within the various categories. These findings are discussed in Chapter Six.

SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY

One of the key shortcomings of the audience survey is that the questionnaire design does not tend to lend itself to the interrogation of cultural meanings. Yet qualitative empirical research is often also castigated for its limitations in terms of providing for external validity or representativeness. In other words, the sample size is generally limited, which raises questions about the scientific reliability of the data that has been collected. However, this research maintains that qualitative research provides for insight into general views, which in turn provides the basis for preliminary assessments, which can then be tested on a larger scale, through adequately resourced and quantifiable national surveys. These kinds of nationally based surveys are, however, beyond the scope and ability of the current research, which has been done at doctoral thesis level.

Language is a critical issue when it comes to conducting research in developing countries and multi-ethnic societies. Such is certainly the case in South Africa, a country with eleven official languages.[59] And it is particularly so in light of the country's divided history. Researchers are thus tasked with ensuring they possess "knowledge of the local language", especially for the purpose of "understanding the connotation of words" (Peil, 1983:86).

In the peri-urban site of Alice, participants were encouraged to speak in Xhosa (a regional dialect) when it was felt this was absolutely necessary in order for them to effectively express an opinion. This was possible as the interviewer for the peri-urban site was an Nguni language speaker named Ntando Siwela. The selection of the moderator was influenced by the following two criteria: fluency in English and Nguni

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[59] It is, however, accepted, as Margaret Peil (1983:87) opines, that "[e]ven within a monolingual community there are often differences in the meaning and use of words from one sector to another."

languages, and experience in interviewing or facilitating discussions. The programme coordinator of the Communication Department at the University of Fort Hare identified a suitable candidate, who was later briefed by me. (The moderator brief and the guidelines for interview questions are appended as **Annexure Three**.) It is worth noting that the interview guide was designed to a) provide the interviewer with a guide on both the key subject matter and the principle areas to be investigated, and b) allow for free-flowing conversation, which would hopefully allow the interviewees to overcome any inhibitions that might keep them from describing their personal views (Jensen, 2002). The Alice moderator was briefed on the specific requirements of the research and the sample, and was encouraged to be open and flexible with language (preferences) during the interviews. This was identified as being a critical factor, owing to the related challenges with respect to the survey research where I, as researcher, was often required to provide clarity on certain questions for the respondents (particularly for those learners in the peri-urban setting). While the use of a moderator could be construed as a limitation, it instead proved to be advantageous, owing to the Alice moderator's familiarity with the specific site, the various cultural beliefs, the customs and the linguistic nuances, which were critical to establishing a good rapport with the interviewees. It was also advantageous because of the moderator's superior knowledge of indigenous African languages.

Apart from the one interview in the peri-urban site that was conducted in Xhosa, the Alice interviewees preferred to have their interviews conducted in English (though numerous utterances were made in their mother-tongue language of Xhosa). Similarly, all the Durban-based interviews were conducted by me, the researcher, in English, although the interviewees were informed that they should indicate if or when they would prefer to use Zulu (a regional language) as these views could be translated at a later stage. None of the urban youths that were interviewed exercised this option. However, some of the Durban interviews did include Nguni language phraseology as well as references to cultural rituals and customs, and these required translation and explanation.

The choice of English as the medium in which to converse is particularly interesting with respect to the Alice cohort. The assumption was that the youths residing in this small town (which is 120 km away from the nearest city of East London) would be

steeped in a cultural context, necessitating the engagement of a facilitator with knowledge of indigenous African languages and cultural practices. However, the preference for English by the interviewees is arguably a choice that is symptomatic of broader issues surrounding youths' aspirations and lifestyles. It is also recognised that English is sometimes perceived as the language of interviews and/or scientific research in general and that this is a contributing factor to the noticeably predictable, staccato-like responses that the respondents and participants sometimes gave the interviewers. Notwithstanding this, throughout the course of my research into youths' media consumption practices, I remained particularly attentive to the possibility of schooled or rehearsed English responses, which, as Jeanne Prinsloo (2007) argues, "obscure lived worlds".

As Prinsloo observed at the 5th World Summit on Children and Media, schooling and literacy practices have an impact on the research process in South Africa. Citing the 2003 research that was conducted on the television programme *Soul Buddyz* and the 1998 research conducted on *Yizo Yizo*, Prinsloo argued that national research on youths and entertainment-education has illuminated the practice of answering as a didactic practice and of "learning and the echo of didactic school practices" (*ibid.*). This is to say in South Africa the established culture of rote-learning and the historical banking system of education did not encourage critical thinking[60]. Instead, learners offer responses or provide answers they assume the teacher wants to hear.

Whilst acknowledging the pitfalls of language in terms of empirical research, it must be said that the ability to identify schooled responses does not necessarily reflect a particular disposition or a theoretical framework alone, but could also indicate that there is a lack of experience on the part of the researcher. It is a skill , which hopefully all researchers operating in developing countries and foreign settings (i.e. foreign to them) are acutely aware.

Time and costs are also critical considerations when it comes to comparative audience research. For the current research, while there was a time lapse between the data collection phases and the write-up of the thesis, the on-the-ground work would have

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[60] A more Freirian approach to education was adopted by the South African government in the form of Outcomes Based Education (OBE), which is currently (2010) being replaced by a different pedagogical system.

benefitted from more time in the research sites, especially since limited time with the interviewees affects one's ability to develop a good rapport with them and this limitation in turn fosters the aforesaid didactic practices.

The data collection phase was surprisingly time-consuming. Completed questionnaires were not always returned on time, and extra time and costs were incurred in replacing incomplete questionnaires, which could not be coded and analysed. It is, however, acknowledged that one of the possible reasons for this includes the actual length of the questionnaire and indeed the kinds of questions that were being asked. As is evident from the interactions with, in particular, the respondents from the schools in the Eastern Cape, some of the youths battled to decode the survey questions as intended.

Another apparent limitation to the present study is related to the context of the participants (and to the proliferation of ICTs and cellphones specifically) during and following the data collection period. The survey findings with respect to the media, as they are presented in the subsequent chapter of this thesis, do necessarily have some gaps, especially with regards to the relevance of increasingly obsolete technological devices such as VCRs and the rapid uptake of mobile phones and other appliances such as DVD players that have become increasingly more affordable over the years. Notwithstanding the relative affordability of this technology, recent national data has confirmed, universal service and access to different media and ICTs remains unrealised for the vast majority of South Africans. Internet usage in 2007, for example, was at less than 8% of the total population (AMPS, 2007).

Subjectivity in research

The extent to which participants can or do engage the subjectivity of a researcher is not always recognised or acknowledged by the researcher. As Dolby (2000b:488) reflects, the subjects of her South African study constructed her as an American: "What I did not anticipate was how the space of the United States and of a "real American" was already constructed and how I was expected to play out a particular role that was tightly scripted". This is significant because the way in which

researchers are socialised with respect to their race and gender can affect the participants' interpretation of questions, their level of honesty, and also the rapport that is developed between them and the researcher. During the administration of questionnaires towards the present study's survey research, it was evident that the respondents perceived me as an English-speaking, middle class woman. In fact, at a school in the Eastern Cape, the additional role of 'teacher' was imposed on or assumed of me, with respondents referring to me as "Madam". Lastly, while the researcher's identity is rooted in a black reality and experience, it was evident that some of the respondents thought of my identity as being 'coloured'. This race designation is a peculiar, South African-specific construct of the apartheid system. The consequent baggage of such a system could have affected both the type of rapport that I was able to develop with the respondents and interview participants as well as the level of honesty with which they felt able or willing to respond to the questions I put to them.

CONCLUSION

Although this research did not employ a purely ethnographic observation as a scientific approach, it does recognise the need to explore the living spaces of the study's participants and to do so in a non-intrusive manner. Consequently, I was at pains to ensure that the interviews be conducted, as far as is possible, in natural settings, namely, the participants' 'lived in' spaces or those places that are inhabited by them. Such places included their homes, their college rooms, and their 'homes away from home', as proved to be the case for many of the participants. This is particularly significant as some of the participants' rooms in their family homes do not bare any resemblance to their rooms away from home (e.g. their university residence rooms), and thus a more nuanced understanding was required of Steele & Brown's (1995) concept of 'room culture' within the South African context.

In the main, the data collection period coincided with my direct access to groups of young people. As I lived and worked in Durban and Alice during 2001 and 2004, I

managed to interact with youths on a daily basis[61]. I actively sought to establish as close a relationship as possible with the 'subjects' as well as with subject matter of this research. Indeed, this experience of living and working amongst and with various youths, not just the participants of this research consistently provided for reflections on young people's choices as well as their fears and aspirations that were often shared in an honest fashion as part of informal conversations as well as through essays and other higher education assessment approaches. The anecdotal evidence garnered over about five years of direct interaction with youths during the data collection phase complements the empirical evidence that informs this research. As I have argued earlier, this participant-observation is offered only as anecdotal information as formal diaries were not updated and thus not offered as scientific research. However, these experiences do provide a general frame of reference when it comes to engaging the subject matter of this thesis.

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, this study was conducted during a specific period in South Africa's history. The views of youths were canvassed at a time when the post-apartheid regulatory regime and the policy environment were fostering a particular media landscape, one that prioritised local content and universal access to media and ICTs. The approach adopted in researching youths, media and lifestyles reflects a critical research approach that recognises the interpretative framework within which this occurs. The research findings in the following chapters offer some insight into the ways in which young people interact with media, and the lifestyles that they subsequently adopt.

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[61] This interaction took place either in a classroom setting or through informal exchanges. These informal exchanges took place at some events, which included spoken word (MC-ing), particularly popular in the youth culture scene. Informal interactions also took place at the national Youth Day (16 June) celebrations that I attended and at cultural events, such as fashion shows, poetry readings and other performances at the Bat Centre in Durban or the Museum Africa in Johannesburg for example.

CHAPTER FIVE – MEDIA CONSUMPTION FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH FINDINGS

> The goods people possess affect their social reputation, their image of themselves and their self-esteem, their desires for future purchases, and their assessments of their relative standard of living and status in relation to others, both present peers, and past upbringing. – Peter Lunt & Sonia Livingstone (1992: 59)

> Young people's experiences of growing up in contemporary South Africa are characterised above all by the coincidence of the widening range of opportunities that arise from age alone and the changing opportunities and constraints in society as a whole as apartheid is dismantled (Bray et al, 2010: 323)

The following chapters delineate findings from the audience survey and in-depth interviews discussed in the preceding chapter on the research methodology. Before commencing with a presentation of findings, I offer below an overview of the demographic and social profile of audience survey respondents before turning to findings as they relate to youth media consumption specifically, which is the focus of this chapter, before turning to the quantitative and qualitative findings as they relate to cultural capital, branding and lifestyles, in Chapter Six.

PROFILE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

❖ *Demographics*

Of the 250 questionnaires administered in Durban and Alice and surrounding areas, only 206 were completed. Of this amount, the majority of respondents (61.5%) were women and the mean age of youths sampled was 18 to 20 years. These were mainly isiZulu and isiXhosa first-language speakers- the principal dialects of the two provinces, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape respectively. English was the second language most spoken and understood by the research partic[r]ipants.

Critically, whilst not entirely consistent with the national gender-disaggregated figures (52% women in South Africa), this overweighting was considered throughout the analysis so that when reference is made to 'majority female', it is in excess of the 10% overweighting. While it is recognised that alternative findings could have been arrived at had the sample been more scientifically drawn, I contend that the aforesaid consideration as well as the fact that this is a qualitative study is equally significant in arriving at findings which reflect general views on youth media consumption.

❖ *Social mobility*

While the majority of urban respondents surveyed were studying further at a tertiary institution, the majority of the sampled peri-urban respondents appeared to be still at school. However, approximately 60% of the total number of respondents were studying further, reflecting some kind of social mobility. It is worth noting further the institutions that most respondents were studying through, were historically disadvantaged institutions (Durban University of Technology's M L Sultan Campus and University of Fort Hare), where fees were generally more affordable than those for historically 'white' universities and the admission criteria regarded as more lenient. Interestingly, within the 18-20 year old age group, it appears peri-urban youths were more likely to still be at school while urban youths were more likely to be studying further, potentially reflecting a legacy of apartheid.

Most urban youth indicated they lived in 'suburbs', although it was later deduced from the names of residential areas listed (as required by question seven of the questionnaire) that most urban respondents actually lived in townships, small towns

and in university or college residence in the city centre or surrounding areas. These youths generally lived in 'homes away from home' such as residence or 'digs' – invariably in suburbs - as opposed to homes they grew up in and or go home to during vacation periods. Alice youths on the other hand listed 'township' as a best descriptor of where they resided, ahead of 'suburb', which arguably could have been used to describe peri-urban small towns like Alice or Fort Beaufort.

Just over half the total number of youths surveyed indicated at least one parent was unemployed, with peri-urban youths being more likely to have one parent or both parents or guardian(s) unemployed. While the majority of respondents from Durban indicated they received an allowance, the vast majority of those from Alice indicated they did not. This is consistent with the fact that 74% of these respondents indicated their caregivers were unemployed and unable to give them any pocket money or an allowance.

This research was particularly concerned with probing access to capital, which is perceived as a fundamental indication of the ability to afford luxury goods such as branded products (discussed in Chapter Six), as well as access to education and the ability to pursue further and higher education, which in turn increases ones social capital. As Lunt & Livingstone, 1992:3 argue: "[P]eople's everyday lives depend both on and affects their income and outgoing[...]".

It is worth noting with respect to the question on access to capital, that male youths were more likely than their female counterparts not to respond to the question on parent or guardian unemployment. This could be due to socialisation, where women are more likely to share their life experiences and difficulties in particular, as opposed to males having learned not to open up about personal matters such as the reality of unemployed parents or guardians.

Following the aforementioned demographics, it would appear the overall profile of the youths sampled is of a primarily working class group of young people, which could be further differentiated as predominantly upper working class to middle class urban black youths in Durban and largely working class and poor youths in Alice.

Critically, there were however, smatterings of middle class youths amongst the respondents surveyed from the peri-urban locale.

The section that follows presents the findings with respect to media access and further enunciates this profile where clear disparities are evident with respect to media access for urban youths when assessed in relation to their peri-urban counterparts.

ACCESS TO MEDIA & ICTS

Respondents from in and around Alice were generally worse off in terms of access to media when compared to the Durban cohort. It is important to note that the question of access was less concerned with whether or not youths had their own television sets than the extent to which media and ICTs were generally available, or put another way, the extent to which the youths surveyed had *access to* media and ICTs, particularly in light of South Africa's socio-economic disparities. That is, typically South African households are made up of three or more dependents (see Table 4), which means that it is expected that several people will view a television set at any given time.

With respect to media and ICT access and entertainment, it is deduced from the survey responses that satellite television, a DVD Player and Digital Camera were essentially luxury items, unavailable and inaccessible to the majority of respondents (see figures 3.1 and 3.2).

Fig 3.1 - Access to Media & ICTs amongst urban youths
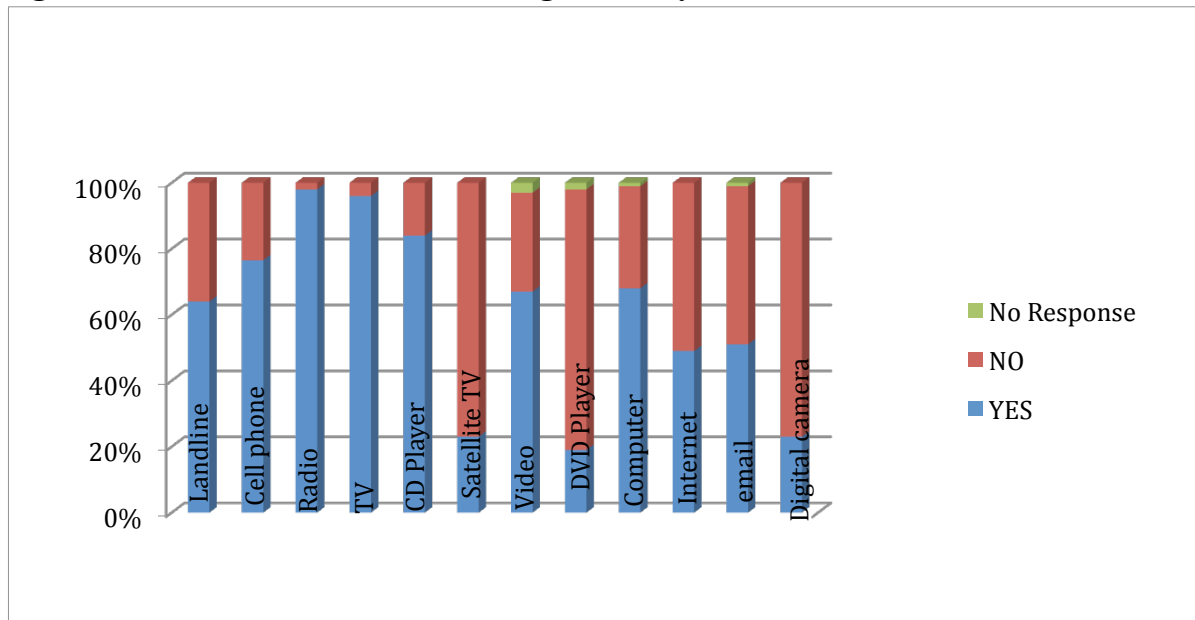
Source: Research findings from questionnaire data – Durban sample (2003/4)

Fig. 3.2 - Access to media & ICTs amongst peri-urban youths
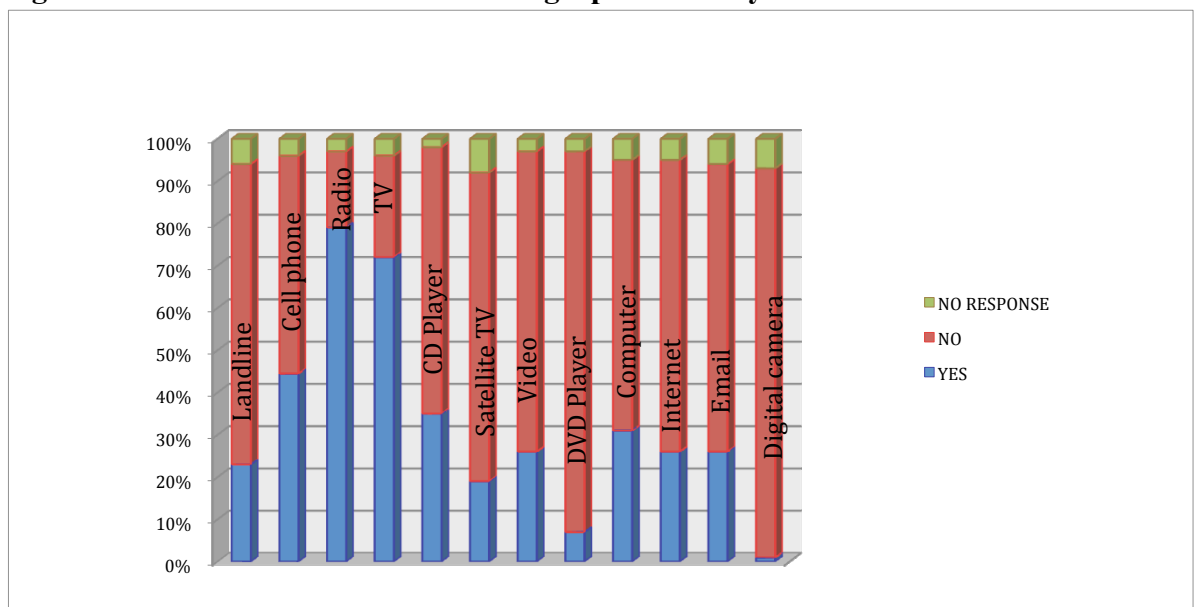
Source: Research findings from Questionnaire data – Alice sample (2003/4)

Although ICT figures during the period under review appear limited, what is evident is the vast majority of youths (in fact almost all in urban areas) had access to a radio and television. Similarly, while the vast majority of youths in the Durban sample had access to a computer, only 30% of youths in Alice did. This could also be due to fact that most of the urban youth sample could have accessed computers at university, while scholars in the peri-urban site did not have the same opportunity on school

premises. Access to the Internet and email was generally limited, although more so in the peri-urban site. This appears consistent with findings of preceding national data, surveying youth specifically, which found that 59% of youth never use the Internet (National Survey of South African Youth, 2001), and that Internet usage was race and class specific - with the majority of users residing in urban areas. Critically, as mentioned earlier, AMPS data shows marginal improvements in Internet usage in South Africa: only 6.0% to 6.9% over the past seven days and 7.1% to 8.1% over the past 4 weeks (SAARF, 2007).

Other significant findings include the fact that Durban youths were three times more likely to have access to telephones through landlines than Alice youths. While the figures were much higher for mobile phones, again, Durban youths were almost twice as likely as Alice youths to have access to a cell phone. Access to a CD player and videocassette recorder amongst Durban respondents was much higher than for Alice youths.

As mentioned previously, while this reflects the historical period within which this study was conducted with current DVD player prices comparatively more affordable, it is advanced that the vast majority of South Africans still are unlikely to have access to these items. With almost 15 million social grant dependents in 2010[62], it is highly improbable that the vast majority of South Africans would be able to afford such items even in present day South Africa. Indeed, (at 92.67%)[63], access to mobile phones has facilitated increased access to a digital camera through their handheld devices, as provided for by the multifunctional aspects of mobile phones. However, digital cameras *per se* are still largely unaffordable for most South Africans. It cannot be overstated that the vast majority of South Africans live below the poverty line, with limited access to adequate food and nutrition, let alone access to technology of any kind. We also know that even in 2009, less than 10% of South African households had Internet access or a fixed telephone line and less than 20% had a computer at home (ITU, 2009). Subscription (satellite) television remains largely

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[62] See: 2011 State of the Nation Address by South Africa's President Jacob Zuma (A child support grant is R220 per month, the equivalent of less than $30 per month)
[63] South Africa's total number of mobile-phone subscribers is estimated at 92.67% or around 45 million (ITU, 2009) – although this estimation is contested as it is based on total number of sim card sales, which arguably distorts actual numbers given that one person could have purchased more than one simcard in their lifetime.

inaccessible with around 2.5 million satellite television subscribers in 2010[64]. The argument thus is that while the landscape has changed dramatically with respect to technological advancements and access, in many respects, South Africa is still lagging behind – rather significantly to the developed world in terms of ICT costs and related issues of access. It is arguable that while this research presents a slither or information on media consumption at a specific moment in time, much of the findings could find congruence with the present day experiences of youths in Durban and Alice.

❖ *Media Consumption*[65]

Although this research is predominantly a television study, the content of general media consumption remains pertinent as the research proffers the production of lifestyles as multifaceted and multilayered. The current research found that the majority of youths listened to radio for "three hours or more" per day, as opposed to "one to two hours" or "less than an hour".

While the majority of respondents from the peri-urban site in the Eastern Cape listened to the African language public service station, *Umhlobo Wenene FM*,[66] the majority of participants from the urban site listened to *Metro FM*, an urban contemporary, national, public commercial station (i.e. a station generating income to subsidise public service broadcasting). *Metro FM* in particular proved immensely popular amongst both groups of youths surveyed and was chosen as the second favourite station for respondents from Alice while the urban youths surveyed chose a regional commercial station as their second favourite station. At the time, East Coast Radio[67] was regarded as "the largest English language station in the KZN region of South Africa, with an adult contemporary hit music format".[68]

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[64] Multichoice boasts around 2, 372 752 subscribers (In 2011 Top TV, Multichoice's new competitor claiming 200 000 subscribers) http://www.multichoice.co.za/multichoice/view/multichoice/en/page235
[65] Appendix Four presents a graphic representation of the findings in relation to respondents' rating of various television genre.
[66] *Umhlobo Wenene* is an isiXhosa language station, with the second largest listenership (4 871 000) in South Africa. Recognised as the "most dominant medium in the Eastern Cape it also has a substantial presence in Gauteng, Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, North-West, Mpumalanga and Northern Cape. […] It is the only African language station to broadcast into eight of the nine Provinces and cover all the metropoles" (www.uwfm.co.za).
[67] *East Coast Radio* has "almost 2 million multi-racial listeners", with its target market being 25-49 year olds. The brand is positioned as "casual, fun-loving, down-to-earth, young-at-heart, well-informed, passionate, outgoing, creative, positive and responsible". (East Coast Radio – 'Durban's No 1' http://www.bizcommunity.com/PressOffice/AboutUs.aspx?i=643. Accessed: 18 December 2007)
[68] Ibid.

Significantly, the findings of my audience research are consistent with findings from the SAARF's national Radio Audience Measurement Survey (RAMS) and the *Sunday Times*/*Markinor* 'Top Brands' Survey of the period under review (2006) for example. According to the 2006 RAMS figures for age 16-24, *Ukhozi Fm* (16.4%), *Umhlobo Wenene FM* (11.8%) and *Metro FM* (9.8%) are the top three stations listened to (www.saarf.co.za). The 2006 Sunday Times/Markinor Top Brands Survey confirms *Ukhozi FM*, *Umhlobo Wenene FM* (15.1%), Metro FM (14.2%), and *East Coast Radio* (5.4%) are amongst the top 10 brands with respect to their brand relationship scores.

While a limited number of respondents from Durban chose the isiZulu language *Ukhozi FM* as their favourite station, where youths did chose the station, gender disaggregated data reflected a tendency towards a majority male listenership. Similarly, the majority of those who chose *Umhlobo Wenene* as their favourite station were also men. Moreover, it is also observed from the findings that women were more likely to listen to *East Coast Radio* for example than men. These findings provide preliminary data on male youth preference for African language stations, to which an African cultural value is attached. Female youths on the other hand, appeared to prefer contemporary, cosmopolitan stations to which a more Western cultural value is attached.

African language stations are those which broadcast in indigenous languages, and often include variations within dialect, where some presenters would speak what is regarded as 'deep' or authentic isiZulu and others more colloquial isiZulu. For example, rich isiZulu idioms are used which require an understanding of Zulu culture, custom and tradition, and similarly for isiXhosa on *Umhlobo Wenene* or *Lesedi FM* for example.

A gendered distinction in format preferences is thus noted and inference is drawn about potential lifestyle choices. That is, whether or not male youths are more likely to identify with more traditional cultural practices and conservative world-views while women are more likely to be liberal in outlook and consumption preferences. These assertions are indeed bold and more research would need to be conducted in order to fully assess how these choices are played out and the lessons to be drawn

from male youths' apparent preference for culture, cultural identity and related symbolic preferences.

❖ *Print media*

A greater proportion of youth in urban areas (89%) read newspapers compared with their peri-urban counterparts (63%). As mentioned in the previous chapter, it is assumed this is due to the overweighting of journalism and communication students. While *Sunday Times* and the *Mail and Guardian*[69] were the most read national weeklies for urban youths, *City Press*[70] and *Sunday Times* were the most read national weeklies for the peri-urban cohort, who selected the local *Daily Dispatch* as their premier choice for a daily dose of news. The *Sunday Times* remains South Africa's most read Sunday weekly and caters to a diverse target market.[71] It features a mix of investigative journalism, tabloid type celebrity features as well as more high-brow contributions such as opinion pieces and editorials.

The choice of *City Press* as a favourite amongst youths from the peri-urban site is an interesting observation as this Sunday weekly's national target market is predominantly black and it prides itself on a 'distinctly African' approach to reporting. Inference can be drawn from a preference for a publication which generally features more local stories and whose images are mainly of local, predominantly black newsmakers and celebrities. However, again these findings are preliminary and would need to be tested further.

The research however did show that slightly more youths from the peri-urban cohort preferred reading magazines to newspapers. Magazines that proved most popular were *Drum*[72], *True Love*[73] and *You*[74], with youths indicating they read these

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[69] The *Mail & Guardian* is a weekly newspaper renowned for its investigative reportage. It is known for in-depth analysis and a strong focus on politics and government (For more information see: www.mg.co.za)

[70] *City Press* is an English Language weekly (Sunday) newspaper. It is sold in South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia. It projects an African appeal, ostensibly catering to a predominantly black readership (see also http://www.news24.com/City_Press/Home/)

[71] *Sunday Times* has 3,820-million readers, while *City Press* currently has 2,667-million currently (AMPS, 2009). It is worth noting the most read daily newspaper in South Africa is a tabloid called the *Daily Sun*. Its most recent current readership figures are 4,755-million, more than double that of its nearest rival, *Sowetan*, which has only 2,040-million readers (ibid.). SAARF research reveals these papers are particularly popular in Gauteng province, which includes greater Johannesburg and Soweto.

[72] *Drum* is "currently the sixth largest consumer magazine in Africa". It caters largely to a black audience, while its sister magazines *Huisgenoot* (the Afrikaans version), and *You* (the English Version)

magazines primarily for 'information' purposes. Other reasons cited included: 'knowledge', 'inspiration' and 'entertainment'. Some indicated they read these magazines specifically to improve their 'English' or 'vocabulary'. While Durban respondents also added "interesting" to their list of adjectives, respondents from Alice cited "knowledge" and "inspiration" and the need to improve their command of English or "vocabulary". This is an interesting observation, which other researchers reflect upon as a potentially learned response to questions (Prinsloo, 2007).

Urban-based youth also selected *Drum*, *True Love* and *You* as their favourite magazines, followed by *Cosmopolitan,* which was not mentioned by the peri-urban sample. While most respondents listed "interesting" as a reason for reading the magazine, followed by "informative and entertaining"; other comments related directly to the role of magazines as cultural capital and to blackness as a signifier:
"Interesting facts about men and women"
"They are all black-oriented"
"They talk about my side of the fence"
"They are black magazines and they relate to me"

This appears consistent with Nuttall's (2004) observations in her earlier work on *Ymag* for example. The above comments (in relation to *True Love* and *Drum* specifically) from youth sampled reflect a process of identification with the characters and stories that reflect in some way the lives of black youth, providing an opportunity for role-modelling.

As with observations regarding brands and labels, Alice respondents appear to attach a 'learning' and knowledge-seeking value to media. This is particularly reflected in their preference with respect to education and current affairs television programmes. Durban youths on the other hand appear more image conscious, hence the need to be aligned to a specific look/image. Although Alice respondents were aware of their

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cater to a white readership primarily.
(http://www.media24.com/generic.aspx?i_BusinessUnitID=2&lang=Eng&i_CategoryID=73).
[73] *True Love* is a glossy magazine aimed at upper working class and middle class black South African women (http://www.truelove.co.za).
[74] With over 2.1 million readers, *You*, is the biggest-selling English-language magazine South Africa, (http://www.you.co.za).

image, the reasons advanced appeared to speak more to issues of self-reflection and identity than just image.

Unlike the findings with respect to African language radio stations, few youths chose isiZulu language newspapers as their favourite reads. The two publications that were listed were listed mainly by youths from Durban where these isiZulu language newspapers are more accessible. On the basis of these responses, more respondents appeared to read the relatively newer *Isolezwe*[75] a more youthful, 'liberal' indigenous African language paper, than those who read *Ilanga*[76] the more established, 'conservative' paper. It is however noted that the sample of those who in fact selected these publications is too small to draw concrete inferences.

❖ *Television*

The overwhelming majority of youths surveyed indicated they watched television by and large for three or more hours per day.[77] Differences emerged in youths' preferred channels. That is, while the majority of respondents from the urban site listed the commercial, free-to-air channel, *e-tv* as their favourite, the peri-urban cohort preferred *SABC1*, with *e-tv* featuring as their second channel of choice. This is consistent with national data where SABC has over the years consistently been recognised as the preferred channel for South African, followed by e-tv, which is closely followed by SABC2 and SABC3. The majority of respondents indicated they watched television at home.

South African local content proved most popular amongst respondents, particularly so for youths from the peri-urban site. As evident in **Table 13**, 60% of the ten most watched programmes chosen by Durban respondents were local productions, whilst 80% of those chosen by Alice respondents were local content. The most popular

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[75] Available in tabloid format, *Isolezwe* is an isiZulu language, Durban -based daily newspaper owned by a major commercial media house, Independent Newspapers.
[76] Founded in 1903 by John Dube (who was also the first President of the African National Congress), *Ilanga* is an isiZulu language, regional daily newspaper. Regarded as a 'conservative' family newspaper, *Illanga* also has a Sunday newspaper, *Ilanga lange Sonto*. (For more information see: http://www.ilanganews.co.za/)
[77] An earlier national study found that 95% of youths watched television (37 % higher than radio), and that 67% of which saying they watching television daily (2001 National Survey).

programmes across all respondents were *My Wife and Kids*[78] (imported American sitcom aired on SABC 1), *Backstage*[79] (a locally produced series aired e-tv at the time), *e-News* (e-tv), *Isidingo* (a locally produced soap opera aired on SABC3)[80] and *Moesha* (an imported American programme aired on SABC 1).

In Durban, 30% of the top choices were locally produced news and current affairs, 30% were American sitcoms, 20% of programming choices were locally produced drama series, 10% were locally produced soaps and 10% American talk shows. In Alice, 30% of programming choices were locally produced soaps, 20% were American sitcoms, 20% were (locally produced) news and current affairs; 10% was a locally produced talk show, a locally produced drama series, educational magazine programme, respectively. Whilst the apparent preference for news and current affairs is noted, especially with the urban group, it is advanced that is potentially largely due to the overweighting of journalism and communication students.

Still, it is notable that the urban youths selected news and current affairs programmes, followed by American sitcoms, then local series, whilst youths from peri-urban areas did the reverse (local series, American sitcoms and then news and current affairs programmes). This, it is advanced, reflects the centrality of 'cultural proximity' with respect to viewing practices of peri-urban youths and issues of *cultural mobility* with respect to urban youths.

Notwithstanding (as Table 13 illustrates) the overwhelming preference for local productions, urban youth did appear to favour American personalities and celebrities. This could be due to the fact that while local productions with local celebrities and local life was enjoyed; aspiration is most associated with the lifestyle of American celebrities who perhaps represent more cultural capital and possibilities of 'a better life'.

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[78] Sitcom which focuses on an African-American nuclear family: "a loving husband and modern-day patriarch"; a successful wife and three kids (see: http://www.mywifeandkids.com/show.html. Accessed 20 January 2008)

[79] Aired on e-TV, *Backstage* was a locally produced drama series which revolved around the lives of students attending an art college initially set in Cape Town, before moving to downtown Johannesburg. The programme has since been discontinued, although repeats have been broadcast

[80] *Isidingo* is a locally produced soapie revolving around the lives of families on Horizon Deep Mine and Johannesburg, and tackling real issues affecting South Africans daily (see: www.isidingo.co.za/ Accessed 20 January 2008).

Table 13 - Comparative analysis of Top Ten programme preferences

Rating	TV Programme – Durban site	TV Programme – Alice site
1	Special Assignment (local, current affairs)	Generations (local, soap)
2	e-News (local, news)	News on One (local, news)
3	3rd Degree (local, current affairs)	My Wife and Kids (American, sitcom)
4	Oprah (American, talk show)	Felicia (local, talk show)
5	Isidingo (local, soap)	Backstage (local, drama series (soap))
6	My Wife and Kids (American, sitcom)	Moesha (American, sitcom)
7	Yizo Yizo (local, drama series)	Isidingo (local, soap)
8	Moesha (American, sitcom)	Take5 (7)* (local, educational magazine)
9	Backstage (local, drama series (soap))	Soul City (8)* (local, drama series)
10	Girlfriends (American, sitcom)	e-News (8) * (local, news)

Source: Research findings from questionnaire data (2003/4)   **(*) reflects a split in choices**

Question 35c (of the survey) asked respondents to list their favourite programmes from memory, as opposed to the pre-determined selection provided in the latter part of the questionnaire. Upon analysis it was found that local productions again proved popular with *Generations* and *Backstage* - both programmes with an overwhelmingly black South African cast – particularly popular amongst youths in both sites. Interestingly two African language programmes were listed by youths in the peri-urban site: *Asikhulume: Let's talk*[81] (an isiZulu and multilingual phone-in current affairs programme on SABC 1) and *Emzini Wezinsizwa* (an isiZulu sitcom on SABC 1).

This confirms that per-urban youths were more likely than their urban counterparts to attach a particular value to language and culture, while urban youths were more likely (than peri-urban youths) to attach a value to aesthetics, the look and feel of a programme.

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[81] *Asikhulume: Let's Talk* is a current affairs, isiZulu language, talk show broadcast on Sundays on SABC 1; The show is also presented to a lesser extent in English. Focusing on current issues, *Asikhulume: Let's Talk* also relies on audience participation through online polls and sms messaging. (See: www.tvsa.co.za/showinfo.asp?showid=59).

- *Quality of Television shows[82]*

As this is a study on lifestyles and media consumption, it was important to reflect on aesthetics of the media choices youths were making. The scale ranking preference was included in the questionnaire so as offer a more nuanced reflection on taste.

As detailed in **Table 14** most participants felt the predominantly English language, urban **music programmes** on offer were generally "good", except for the African music show *Ezodumo*, which Alice participants rated as "good" while almost as many participants from Durban indicated it was a "poor" show. While respondents were not asked to elaborate on the choice, it is assumed that responses reflected limited appreciation for the content or subject matter as well as the production value, as *Ezodumo* is not a slick, *M-TV*-type production, with tight editing, deft camera movements, clever graphics and various inserts for example. The supposition thus is that urban youths attach a higher value to aesthetics and style, and thus taste.

American **sitcoms** generally proved popular, with *Moesha* (R&B singer Brandy's show) and my *Wife and Kids* regarded as "excellent" shows by both urban and peri-urban respondents. Critically both shows are imported productions with Moesha's appeal largely attributable to the fact that the award-winning African-American musician Brandy (playing Moesha) is the protagonist of the show. Additionally the series unpacks the life and lifestyle of a teenager. *My Wife and Kids* deals with a successful, black, nuclear family. It is humorous and deals with the trials and tribulations of heterosexual committed relationships and raising children – one of which is a teenager. Of the sitcom preferences *Dharma and Gregg* was the exception with the majority of Durban youths choosing "excellent" whilst Alice youths generally did not respond to the question with few listing it as "poor". It is assumed, urban youths presumably would have identified with the urban, cosmopolitan life of *Dharma & Gregg*, which also revolves around the experiences of a homosexual man. It is worth noting that representations of homosexuality on South African television has always been met by some kind of public outcry or notable media attention and as apparently 'non-African'. Scenes featuring gay characters in *Yizo Yizo*, *Generations*,

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[82] Appendix Four presents a graphic representation and accompanying narrative of specific findings per site, in relation to respondents' rating of various television genre.

Gazlam, *Tsha Tsha* have all been met by public criticism.[83] All of these shows have predominantly black casts and a black target market. *Dharma and Gregg* on the other hand not only includes a principally white cast but potentially appeals more to youths that can identify with or aspire to the upper-middle class lifestyle represented.

Locally produced television **drama series** also proved particularly popular. Interestingly, while the majority of urban youth indicated *Yizo Yizo*[84] was "excellent" and *Soul City*[85] and *Gaz'lam,* as "good", youths from peri-urban areas said *Yizo Yizo* was "good", while *Soul City* and *Gaz'lam* were seen as "excellent". The observations are instructive as (mentioned in the introduction to this thesis) *Yizo Yizo* revolved around the lives of township (urban) youth, and lauded for its realism in depicting the realities facing black youths, a reality not affecting all black youths but perhaps more accurately of a peculiarly urban black township experience. The lifestyles portrayed in the captivating series *Yizo Yizo* reflect a largely urban phenomenon. This popular series told story about black township youth, who largely existed on the margins of society and spoke to the experiences and lived experiences of scholars at township school who mature and move on to other experiences post-school as the series progresses.

The majority of participants across both sites indicated that *Backstage* was "excellent". Aired on e-TV, this locally produced drama series revolved around the lives of students attending an art college initially set in Cape Town, before moving to downtown Johannesburg. Part of show's appeal was (the show has since been canned) no doubt the show's overwhelmingly youthful, attractive, mainly black cast. The youths surveyed were no doubt able to identify with the experiences and portrayal of

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[83] See: 'Storm over gay kiss' by Lesley Mofokeng. In, *City Press* (www.citypress.co.za/Entertainment/News/Storm-over-TV-gay-kiss-20090908) Accessed 31 May 2011. In 2009, a Facebook group called "We will stop watching Generations if Senzo and Jason continue kissing" was started and boasted almost 20 000 members, according to the website celebrating gay South African lifestyles online (http://www.mambaonline.com/article.asp?artid=3592). In 2010 news reports highlighted the bigotry of a local political youth organisation that opposed the portrayal of gay people on television by arguing it was against African culture and tradition. (see: "SA soapie at war with culture". By Sydney Masinga. In *News 24.Com* (http://www.news24.com/Entertainment/SouthAfrica/SA-soapie-at-war-with-culture-20100120 [accessed 01 June 2011])

[84] An award-winning locally-produced television drama series set in a township school discussed throughout this research (See also http://www.thebomb.co.za/yizo1.htm).

[85] *Soul City* is an award-winning "multi-media health promotion and social change project", which includes a television series. The radio and television series is supplemented by advocacy strategies which aim to educate and mobile people about HIV&AIDS (www.soulcity.org.za).

the shows' characters who were students faced with similar personal and professional challenges, betrayal, love, unwanted pregnancies, drugs, gangs and so on. The series was also multilingual and included 'city wise' type characters alongside out-of–towners' all of whom go to the college in search of fame. Indeed the show appears to have been modelled on the American drama series of the 1980s, *Fame*. The intertextuality with other television texts as well as performing artists reinforces its credibility and appeal. For example, award-winning local songstress, KB was 'discovered' as it were on national television through her musical performance in *Backstage*. The aspirational and inspirational qualities of the series, characters and performers position *Backstage* as a natural choice for both urban and peri-urban youth role modelling.

Magazine shows were generally seen as good, with the educative, *Take5* seen as "excellent" by youths from peri-urban settings (Durban youths felt it was "good"). This appears consistent with the value attached to instruction and education and information as core selection criteria for youths from peri-urban areas with respect to media consumption. Interestingly, with respect to the show *Dube on Monday*, urban youths felt it was a 'poor' quality show, while peri-urban youths felt it was a good programme. Desmond Dube, renowned for his performances in local slapstick comedies, hosted the show.

Views on the quality of **talk shows** varied: while *Oprah* and *Ricki Lake* were seen by the majority of youths as "excellent", opinions on the local equivalent, *Felicia*, were divided. Whereas the majority of urban youths said *The Felicia Mabuza Suttle's Show* was "poor", the majority of youths from peri-urban Alice said it was "excellent".

The American syndicated, Oprah Winfrey Show is the most successful and highly-ranked TV talk show of all time. It is aired on SABC 3, the predominantly English-language, middle-class channel[86]. Oprah Winfrey herself represents a 'rags-to-riches' tale and therefore a plausible role model for the disenfranchised in general. She is also a celebrated personality with a recognisable brand. The subject matter of her shows varies from celebrity features to more self-help for self-actualisation-type material. The show is skilfully produced and the lifestyles portrayed likely to appeal to middle-

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[86] The show is aired on SABC 3 (see: http://www.sabc3.co.za)

class audiences able to readily identify with the gratification of needs beyond the base level of 'survival'. Oprah's success story, the quality of her show as well as the wealthy and 'A'-list celebrity lifestyle she represents sustains her popularity with both the urban and peri-urban youth cohorts.

Ricki Lake on the other hand is an American talk show with all the elements of a soap opera: "[l]ies, cheating, revenge, sexual fantasies". The talk show host "coaxes her guests to reveal what they could not in the privacy of their own homes" [87]. The show features guests and includes audience members who appear to be largely working class. The themes of her shows are at times crass, dealing with troubled teens for example and more broadly, the trials and tribulations of extraordinary people and situations. *Ricki Lake* is an energy-filled show with a bubbly, boisterous and youthful host and audience, which no doubt contributes to its appeal amongst youth. There are also several opportunities for expression and laughter as the characters assume gargantuan caricatures. It is unclear at times if one is laughing at the absurd, unbelievable story line and/or more broadly if one one's laughter is (proverbially) 'a reaction to hegemony'.

The findings with respect to the Felicia Mabuza-Suttle show were most insightful. This programme is a locally produced talk show by a middle aged black woman – incidentally a former beauty queen. While the show is no longer on air, its popularity was largely due to the fact that the programme was the first South African produced talk show. Her political exile to the United States of America, a wealthy professional spouse, two children and the big house are presumably proof of the 'American dream'. While her show traded on the lived experiences of ordinary South Africans, her lifestyle in South Africa was largely exclusive. A professional, businesswoman and entrepreneur, Felicia Mabuza-Suttle represents an ideal role model. Her brand consciousness is evident in her personal line of sunglasses and advice to millions of viewers on how to maintain a specific image for the purposes of first impressions. She endeared herself to millions through her commitment to the people of South Africa (her husband lived in Atlanta and visited her while she was in the 'motherland') and responding to Nelson Mandela's call to those who left *apartheid* South Africa, to

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[87] For further information on the Ricki Lake Show, please see:
http://www.etv.co.za/programs/view/ricki_lake. (Accessed 20 January 2010)

return to the 'new' democratic country and 'give back'. (Ironically, Mabuza-Suttle spends most of her time in the United States)

The *Felicia* talk show dealt with real issues and real people with subtle references to fostering a culture of aspiration. It is thus possible that youths from Alice not only identified with the people they were introduced to via television, but also bought into the glamorous life and lifestyles that *Felicia* (the host) herself represented. For urban youths, largely drawn to things contemporary, the aesthetics, and quality of the programme would not have been particularly appealing. The largely working class adult audience, themes, politics and socio-economic challenges would not be material for aspiration, nor would the codes of form manage to captivate their attention.

Following the above, the research findings with respect to talk shows reveal 'distinctions of taste', which are played out to varying degrees across sitcoms and drama series (discussed earlier) and even soap operas.

American and local **soap operas** were enjoyed by all youths surveyed. However, while *Generations* and *Days of our Lives* were seen as "excellent" by peri-urban youth, these were seen as "good" and "poor" respectively by youths from Durban.

Generations is one of South Africa's oldest locally-produced soap operas. It revolves around the lives of influential family businesses in the advertising industry. The story line includes upwardly mobile and established black characters principally and focuses on their aspirations and success (www.generations.co.za). Michele Tager's (1997) ethnographic study on the series illuminates this further, with working class African women identifying with the matriarchal figure of doyenne Stephanie Forrester for example.

Set in the fictitious town of Salem, America, *Days of our Lives* is the longest-running daytime drama, which has been on air in that country since the 1960s. It revolves around the escapades of the Horton, Brady and Reed families primarily[88]. Interestingly, this serial has over the years included elements of the absurd. Marlena Black (nee Evans) being possessed by the devil and having related out of body

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[88] For further information on Days of our lives, please see: www.nbc.com/Days_of_our_Lives/.

experiences is but one such example. Other fantastical and science fiction-type scenes include a time capsule-type scene where characters are transposed between places of captivity (invariably at the hands of Stefano) to freedom. While the characters are no doubt middle class, their lives in this small town of Salem reflect a peculiar experience that perhaps does not accord with the experiences of the South African urban youths sampled. It would appear that peri-urban youth, were more likely able to identify with the other-worldly happenings of *Days of our Lives* in much the same way as working class readers identify with have wired and bizarre stories (of witches and tokoloshes)[89] that adorn the pages of South Africa's largest daily newspaper the tabloid, the *Daily Sun*.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, while **current affairs** programmes were generally seen as "excellent"**, news** programmes (across channels) were generally seen as "good", with *e-tv news* singled out as "excellent" by the majority of youths in Durban and Alice. The interest in news and current affairs programmes is again potentially due to the overweighting of journalism and media studies students.

Formal education programmes ranged from "average" to "excellent" with youths in Durban preferring *Liberty Life learning Channel* as "excellent" while youths in Alice preferred *Education Express* as 'excellent'. The former was largely pedagogical and hosted by `English language educators while *Education Express* dealt more with teacher and learner issues.

Sports programmes were generally seen as "good", while *Soccer Zone* and *Laduma* in particular were seen as "excellent" by peri-urban youths. None of the sports programmes sampled were seen as "excellent" by youths from Durban. The afore-mentioned sport shows deal exclusively with soccer, arguably still a predominantly working class sport in South Africa, and where most of the local soccer or football teams have predominantly black players.

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[89] So commonplace is this assessment that the Youth League of the ruling political party, the African National Congress, advised the *Daily Sun* should stick to "witchcraft and tokoloshes, because reporting about politics will expose them to the humiliation they suffered having to retract and apologise unreservedly on issues the could have avoided"; arguing further that the *Daily Sun* "is nowhere close to respectable"
(ANC Youth League Statement 01 April 2011,
http://www.politicsweb.co.za/politicsweb/view/politicsweb/en/page71654?oid=229002&sn=Detail&pid=71654. Accessed 01 June 2011)

Table 14 below provides an overview of ratings preferences across programmes all as evaluated by the baseline survey. (Annexure Four provides more detail to the overall findings with respect to television preferences as presented in this chapter).

Table 14 - Ratings preference across programmes (2003/2004)

PROGRAMME	GENRE	LANGUAGE	LOCAL/ IMPORTED	DURBAN RATING	ALICE RATING
Channel O	Music	English	Imported	Good	Good
Castle Loud		English	Local	Average	Good
Ezodumo		Nguni	Local	Poor	Good
Jam Alley		Multilingual	Local	Good	Excellent
Gospel Gold		Multilingual	Local	Poor	Good
Hughleys	Sitcoms	English	Imported	Good	Good
SOS		Multilingual	Local	Good	Good
Dharma & Gregg		English	Imported	Excellent	No response
Friends		English	Imported	Good	Good
My Wife and Kids		English	Imported	Excellent	Excellent
The Parkers		English	Imported	Average	Excellent
Moesha		English	Imported	Excellent	Excellent
Yizo Yizo	Drama	Multilingual	Local	Excellent	Good
Backstage		Multilingual	Local	Excellent	Excellent
Soul City		Multilingual	Local	Good	Excellent
Girlfriends		English	Imported	Excellent	Good
Gaz'lam		Multilingual	Imported	Good	Excellent
Mamepe	Magazine programme	Sesotho	Local	Average	Good
Take Five		English	Local	Good	Excellent
Top Billing		English	Local	Good	Good
Replay		English	Local	Average	No response
Selimathunzi		Multilingual	Local	Good	Good
Dube on Monday		Multilingual	Local	Poor	Good
Crux		English	Local	Average	Good
Felicia	Talk Shows	English	Local	Poor	Excellent
Phat Joe		English	Local	Good	Good
Oprah		English	Imported	Excellent	Excellent
Montel Williams		English	Imported	Average	Good
Ricki Lake		English	Imported	Excellent	Excellent
SABC 3Talk		English	Local	Average	Good
Isidingo	Soap Operas	English	Local	Excellent	Excellent
Egoli		Multilingual	Local	Average	Good
Generations		Multilingual	Local	Good	Excellent

Bold & Beautiful		English	Imported	Average/Good	Excellent
Days of our Lives		English	Imported	Poor	Excellent
Sevende Laan		Afrikaans	Local	Good	Good
News on 1 (SABC1)	News & current affairs	Multilingual – Nguni language	Local	Good	Excellent
News on Two (SABC 2)		Multilingual – minority languages	Local	Good	Good
News on Three (SABC 3)		English	Local	Good	Good
e-News		English	Local	Excellent	Excellent
Special Assignment		English	Local	Excellent	Excellent
Third Degree		English	Local	Excellent	Good
ReaBua	Educational	Sesotho	Local	Average	Average
Liberty Life Learning Channel		English	Local	Excellent	Good
Education Express		English	Local	Good	Excellent
e-Shibobo	Sports	English	Local	Average	Good
Supersport		English	Local	Good	Good
Mabaleng		English	Local	Good	Good
Soccer Zone		English	Local	Good	Excellent
Laduma		English	Local	Good	Excellent
Sportswrap		English	Local	Average	Good
WozaWeekend		English	Local	Good	Good

Source: R A Smith Research findings from questionnaire data

CONCLUSION

The findings in this chapter demonstrate that media and television in particular plays a decidedly important role in the lives of youth. Additionally, as I attempted to demonstrate, notwithstanding the advances in mobile penetration in present day South Africa, much of the findings from that particular period in time (2003-2006 specifically) remain a relative indicator of baseline data on media consumption amongst South African youths living in urban and peri-urban areas.

Critically, this chapter sought to illuminate patterns of distinction as youths attach certain value judgements to the programmes that they consume, and that these are arguably indicative of taste, as per Pierre Bourdieu's reflections on the 'habitus' as

discussed earlier (in Chapter Three). Consequently, it is clear from the findings presented in this chapter that viewing patterns amongst youths are distinguishable largely by class. Moreover, as Chapter 6 will demonstrate, the factor of closeness ('cultural proximity') to lived experiences is equally identifiable in role model choices, where youths from the peri-urban site for example were more likely to identify with and aspire to be like local celebrities, Felicia Mabuza-Suttle (mentioned in the section on Talk Show preference) for example, than American celebrities in general (as advanced by other critical research studies (e.g. Dolby, 1999).

Before delving into the findings on aspiration with respect to role models, the following chapter provides an overview of findings on brand awareness and cultural as gleaned from responses to the survey questionnaire as well as the in-depth interviews.

CHAPTER 6 – BRANDS AND LIFESTYLES

The black market is by no means static. There are now more BMW's in the township than before. There are more blacks in upmarket suburbs than before. More black and white children go to the same schools. Yet musicians like U2 and Genesis will sell more to whites than to blacks. And, Babyface, Mdu, TKZee and 2PAC sell more to blacks than whites – Muzi Kuzwayo (2000: 2)

Township style reflects the music, recreation, fashion, indulgences, and moral stances characteristic of township living. Townships are also spectacular sites – one in which violence, crime, gangsterism, substance abuse, poverty, and religious and cultural belief interact in producing complex moralities. – Sharlene Swartz (2009:14)

BRAND AWARENESS AND CULTURAL CAPITAL

Brand awareness is often articulated in lifestyle choices, either in the adornment or active appropriation of designer labels, purely for aesthetic reasons or to make a statement – a provocative indication of who and what you are. Youths for example would accessorise so as to reveal the kinds of brands that they wish to be associated with and that represent the kind of lifestyle they aspire to. In such instances, youths would wear particular fashionable labels or brands, which reflect not just a chosen style, but also an association with all things modern or reminiscent of a bygone era ('retro') or associated with a (sub) cultural group (a 'hip hop' or 'grunge' look for example).

Designer labels and other Branded products

Adorning designer labels resonated strongly with all the youths sampled although urban youths were more likely to wear branded products than youths from peri-urban areas. While Durban youths appeared to have more access to disposable income and social mobility than youths from Alice, the vast majority of all youths indicated they

did not have accounts at retails outlets, which would have facilitated their own purchase of such goods. Notwithstanding, the preferred clothing retail outlet amongst all respondents was *Truworths* (with the *Daniel Hechter* label). Targeted at a upper working class and middle class consumer, *Truworths* is widely regarded as a more up-market store (relative to alternative retail brands such as *Foschini* or *Edgars* for example) with better quality trendy clothes, which is perhaps best exemplified by the French fashion label, Daniel Hechter – Paris (DH).

More than half the number of Durban respondents, and less than a quarter of Alice respondents, specified that they actually wore designer-label clothes, accessories or perfume. *Lévis* and *Adidas* were the most popular labels amongst youths sampled in both provinces. These findings concur with findings of the 2007 'Generation Next' national survey and Dolby's (2001) observations, where *Levis* and *Adidas* also featured in the top five brands for youths.

An interesting observation emerging from the analysis was the differences in preference between men and women of specific branded products. That is, male respondents were more likely to list designer clothing labels (including shoes) such as *Billabong* or *All Stars*, while female respondents were more likely to list cosmetic labels such as *Elizabeth Arden* and *Tommy Girl* (Tommy Hilfiger), in addition to branded clothing.

Most urban participants indicated they believed their preferred brands to be "quality", while some suggested "comfort", which resonated with peri-urban youths who indicated their choices were largely functional believing branded products to be of a higher quality, with increased comfort and thus better long-term financial choices or investments as the quality meant they would not need to replace the item of clothing or shoes as often as they would need to with a cheaper alternative.

Some youths in both sites suggested they wore these branded products because it was 'the thing to do' and/ or because they believed the items to be "fashionable". Other comments focused specifically on characteristics related to image, social mobility and status:

>"[the brand] is famous and desirable"

"portray[s] image"
"They make me feel good and worth a million"
"Looks good-provides me with good status"
"Cool to be stared at"

Similarly, youths from peri-urban areas focused on status, how the brand made them feel and its ability to distinguish or set them apart from 'others':

"I feel more strong when I wear those brands"
"They cater for my needs and boosts self-confidence"
"They're so cool to be worn"
"Very powerful"
"Makes you stand out from the rest"

In general however, youths advanced similar reasons for their choices: 'quality', 'comfort' and 'fashion' or 'style', although as stated above, Alice participants were more likely to focus on how the brand actually made them feel (e.g. strong or confident). A possible interpretation of this is that respondents from Durban, who arguably are moderately more affluent than the youths from the peri-urban settings, appear to wear designer labels or branded products for outward or external expression or as a status symbol, and a means to attract the attention of others and to be desired. In this regard, the use of branded products such as fashion labels for example, are a means to "tells others whether you've got money, style or character" (Kuzwayo, 2000:55). On the other hand, the adornment of similar amongst less affluent youths appears to be about aspiration largely; wishing you were something else and respected as someone else.

It is important to note, as most respondents indicated they did not have alternative income through part time employment to sustain the purchase of expensive or branded products, the relative popularity of the brands could indicate that either their parents have disposable income or that these youths put pressure on their guardians/ parents to purchase branded items or designer labels.

Role models

With respect to role models, the overwhelming majority of respondents in both urban and peri-urban sites indicated their 'mother' (specifically) was their role model. While

some respondents listed both parents, others said a family relation (a granny or aunty) was their role model. This finding was particularly interesting given the widely held belief that celebrities and media personalities are central to consumer culture and the apparent popularity of brands amongst youths (see Dolby's findings (1999) for example). Correspondingly, the assumption was that youths would be more likely to look-up to and admire celebrities than one or more of their parents, which in this research did not prove to be the case. So, while celebrities played an integral role in lifestyle production, fundamentally it is mothers who were in fact acknowledged as role models to youth.

Favourite TV personality

With respect to the popularity of celebrities, while the African-American media mogul and billionaire talk show host Oprah Winfrey was a firm favourite personality for youths from Durban, Alice participants preferred a range of local television personalities such as Zandi Nhlapo (ex-SABC 1 continuity presenter), KB (*Backstage* actress and singer), Zola[90] (music artist, performer and television talk-show host) and Felicia Mabuza-Suttle (a television talk show host and businesswoman).

Some of the reasons advanced in support of Oprah included:

> "She has managed to create an empire and still have the world love her. She was able to beat all the odds and become the first black billionaire who is a female"
> "She is strong, independent, black woman. She inspires me."
> "Because she went through so much to be where she is now. She is rich and famous but went through […] bad things."
> "She doesn't seem to be caught up in herself. She spreads her wealth, worked her body into shape. She reads and is well-informed and she seems to like simple things"

Of the celebrity choices, it is interesting to note the popularity of talk show hosts (as noted in the preceding chapter) and personalities who embody the 'rags to riches' tale. Youths were also more likely to choose characters from local television shows than

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[90]Zola (Bonginkosi Dlamini) is an entertainer (performing musician and actor) and "youth-celebrity. He shot to fame following his appearance in the youth series *Yizo Yizo* and his television show *Zola7* offers assistance and advice to young people: "Each show revolves around the story of one person who is preparing for a day that will have a huge impact on their lives. It is a rite of passage, a dream come true, a day in their lives they will never forget" (www.zola7.co.za/index.htm).

from imported shows as favourites. Here, characters from *Generations*, *Backstage* and *Isidingo* (a multilingual, multiracial series about life on a gold mine) proved most popular, which is contrary to Dolby's (1990) findings amongst learners at a Durban high school where youths appeared to prefer and admire non-African, mainly American celebrities.

It is however important to note that no clear favourites emerged as to the precise television characters, which respondents most wished to be like. However, while the names of preferred television characters were diverse, a pattern did emerge with respect to preference for popular local productions, ahead of American programmes as was assumed. While local personalities and characters were most popular, a few respondents did list American personalities like Will Smith, Bill Cosby, Oprah Winfrey, Damon Wayans, Taina and Brandy specifically. Significantly, the overwhelming majority of celebrities and television characters chosen as role models were black (the exceptions were three white women: American's Sabrina and Sandra Bullock, and a South African character Joey from *Isidingo* fame).

It is worth noting that amongst the South African/local personalities chosen by Durban respondents, the ex-Miss South Africa, now businesswomen and media entrepreneur Basetsana Khumalo (nee Makgalemele) proved particularly popular. Basetsana is married to another South African celebrity Romeo Khumalo, and together they represent the country's A-list celebrity couples[91]. The Nobel Laureate, liberation leader, international icon and inaugural President of a democratic South Africa, Nelson Mandela was also a firm favourite amongst youths. These personalities demonstrated youths' preference for local heroes and heroines who through leadership positions and fame were and still are able to change people lives. For example, Zola, another easily identifiable local celebrity, was liked for helping people and for making people's dreams come true, while Felicia Mabuza-Suttle was liked for similar reasons and for giving people advice in order to improve their lives.

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[91] Basetsana Khumalo is a well-known South African, who later served as chair of South Africa's Business Women's Association (BWA). She was the First black African Miss South Africa, who then went on to host and eventually produce a well-known television lifestyle programme, *Top Billing*, which is complemented by a glossy lifestyle magazine. She has numerous other business interests and is married to another well-known black South African, Romeo Khumalo, formally Station Manager for the SABC's MetroFM. Romeo was once regarded as one of the country's most eligible bachelors. The couple represents the 'empowerment project', the success of a select group of wealthy, empowered black South Africans.

The general reasons cited for the choice of characters youths most wished to be like included the fact that preferred characters were intelligent, beautiful, caring and helped others.

TV Characters to 'model'

Of the few respondents that answered the question on which television character they most wished to be like, the majority (48%) chose South African (local) characters, followed by (North) American characters and cartoon characters. Although no clear individual favourites emerged owing to negligible differences amongst choices, the majority of characters mentioned were from *Generations,* (e.g. Kaya Motene, Karabo Moroka) followed by *Backstage* (e.g. KB). Character descriptions included: 'strong', 'powerful' and 'confident'.

Room Culture

While more than half the total number of all youths surveyed had posters and photographs in their bedrooms, youths in urban areas were more likely to have posters or photographs on their room wall than youths from peri-urban/rural areas. These posters would mainly be of celebrities and photographs of loved ones. Furthermore, while more than half the posters of Alice participants were local personalities (especially soccer celebrities such as Jabu Pule and Lucas Radebe, and the local music genre *kwaito* artists such as Zola, Thembi Seete and Mandoza), the majority of Durban respondents listed American personalities such as actresses Halle Berry and Jada Pinkett-Smith, rap stars like 50c and Ja Rule, and Rhythm and Blues (R&B) stars like Brandy, Toni Braxton, R Kelly, Destiny's Child and Deborah Cox.

Musicians proved most popular in poster selections ahead of screenplay artists or sports stars, confirming perhaps the centrality of music in the lives of youths. Again, as with the most admired characters and personalities, the overwhelming majority of celebrities featured in posters were black. As Steele & Brown (1995:552) argue in their work on 'room culture', these spaces are where young people project (amongst

others) their fantasies and desires about themselves "in relation to others and the larger culture". As these authors argue in their 'Adolescent Media Practice Model', the *selection* of "favourite characters and models to emulate and lust after" demonstrates an active "*interaction*" with media and related characters which ultimately results in the "*application*" of meanings gleaned from these images in their everyday lives. The process of *application* I posit is akin to the production and reproduction of lifestyles, which often represents aspiration(s).

Careers and future goals

Recognising the role of aspiration in the lives of young people, the survey towards the current research additionally sought responses on the future goals and career paths youths preferred to adopt.

While the majority of Alice respondents chose future careers in the field of economics (e.g. accountant or economist), medicine and law, safety and security and then communication-related fields, the majority of Durban respondents preferred careers in the communication industry (again this could be a result of the overweighting), followed by medicine, law and politics. Correspondingly, while most Alice respondents listed community and personal development and philanthropy as their reasons for these career choices, Durban respondents said they enjoyed writing and wished to use their future careers as a means to help or work with people. Some youths did however indicate their choices were driven by the desire for "money" or "glamour" and a few (especially amongst the peri-urban cohort) indicated their future careers were chosen largely because of their desire to improve the limited number of black people in those professions. The above demonstrates that while youths are driven to achieve and succeed, they are not always motivated to do so because of money and glamorous lifestyles. Arguably, their lived conditions or what Steele & Brown (ibid.) refer to as their *lived experience* come to bare on the choices they make and their sense of self. That is youths' choices, uses and interpretation of media (the *selection*, *interaction* and *application*) is influenced by the "[b]asic socio-cultural factors such as gender and race as well as the multivariate conditions of their own lives" (ibid: 572).

The latter observation is evident in some of the responses to open–ended questions in the questionnaire administered towards the current research, where some youths focused on access to basic amenities (e.g. "Mbeki [at the time the president of South Africa] should build houses"). Alice youths in particular focused on their lived experiences of poverty:

> "In my area there are no telephones and electricity."
> "In my village there is no high school and no taps."
> "I am going to school, no transport and no telephone. So there are 5km to walk to school"
> "In the rural areas, we suffer about water and we fetch water from the river, which is full of diseases. Also the most thing [sic] is poverty"

Concerns and Fears

For most of the youths' interviewed, their lives and livelihoods were defined by daily struggle, hence the fear induced with respect to the death of their primary caregiver. This also explained the very real fear about losing their parents(s) or primary caregiver, which for the youths surveyed would result in a closer proximity to poverty.

In addition to poverty and the afore-mentioned related socio-economic problems, as well as unemployment and joblessness, youths also highlighted HIV and Aids, crime and corruption as critical areas of concern or fears. Youths identified crime and the prevalence of corruption as specific concerns and fears ("I would like to comment about crime - people are killed and hijacked and no-one does anything about it and it has to stop" (Alice youth), and "Too many corrupt police in Durban"). These fears and concerns as well as youths desires were explored further in the in-depth interviews.

While the survey questionnaire did not probe HIV and Aids specifically, youths themselves highlighted the lack of focus on HIV and Aids (for example, "No questions about Aids" / "If more young people could abstain from sex then I don't think we'll have so many abortions and HIV infections"). Some also drew attention to the need for safe sex messaging on television:

> "I think that television should promote safe sex, especially in the movies"
> "We urge that television personalities portray the use of condoms of TV"

"Movies and dramas that you play must portray the practice of safe sex"

As a result of the concerns and fears around HIV and Aids amongst young people, the subsequent in-depth interviews thus sought to probe this further. The findings from the qualitative data revealed some interesting contradictions in perceptions of body image, sex, HIV and Aids. With respect to HIV and Aids, some youths felt that having a fuller figure reflected good health and being HIV negative. Critically however, the pressure to look thin was common amongst most youths as this was seen to relay a specific, more affluent image. That is, youths (especially young women) felt that being thin equated to being 'monied' - like a celebrity, or belonging to a specific class.

For the youths sampled, most media messages or lessons on HIV and Aids appeared to be taken from television dramas such as *Tsha Tsha*, *Soul City* and *Gaz lam,* all of which (as discussed earlier) are youth oriented in form and content. For some youths, apart from guidance from teachers, the media proved to be the main source of 'education' about HIV and Aids, as they indicated they did not discuss the HIV with their parents or guardians. Moreover, the overwhelmingly majority of youth indicated they did not discuss sex with their parents – although they did indicate clearly that that they *would like to* do so. Youths appeared afraid to talk to their parents about sex owing to the implications of being seen to be sexually active. As a result, most discussions about sex were had with friends or teachers. In a context where youths are consistently seen as most affected by HIV and Aids it is particularly problematic that discussions on sex occur separately to those on HIV and Aids. Furthermore, and perhaps more critically, that the moral imperative and pressure from their parents not to engage in sexual intercourse is impeding honest engagement between young people and their parents or guardians about HIV and Aids.

TOWARDS A TYPOLOGY OF YOUTH LIFESTYLES

As discussed in chapter 4, the coding of interviews towards this research followed a matrix that aimed to align the variables across a scale (**see Tables 9 – 12**). After tabulating the results using the templates designed, participants were then divided into three main categories (1, 2, 3), which were then analysed further so as to provide a profile for each group. Only one group, category three (3) revealed some additional differences and this category was subsequently subdivided into 3 and 3+. A typology was then developed to loosely reflect the different profiles (see **Table 15** below) and to provide further details on these profiles in relation to possible consumption practices identified (see **Tables 16-18**). With respect to the latter, few participants fell within the first two categories (Score 1 and 2), hence the difficulty in further refining the profile and developing a descriptive label for these groups.

Table 15 - Typology of youth lifestyle profiles

Category	Typology
1.	Generally dream of 'a better life'. Self-imposed limitations on dream life possibly as a result of socio-economic reality or religion. Aware of brands – but practical, likely to list older more established or classic brands
2.	Generally modest, pragmatic in approach, and sometimes religious – dream of a comfortable life, brand aware but not flashy.
3.	Dream of 'a better life', upwardly mobile, middle-class oriented, brand conscious, dream lifestyle defined by moderate consumption. *"aspirant middle class"*
3+	Big dreamers, brand conscious, dream lifestyle defined by ability to consume and amass wealth *"the bling brigade"*

Source: R A Smith Research data analysis (2006)

As mentioned above, the vast majority of all youth interviewed fell within the third category (either *3* and *3+*) - a category for the brand-conscious and aware. The dream life and lifestyle was either defined by moderate consumption or by excessive and conspicuous consumption and a focus on wealth or accumulation of capital.

Within this category, some interesting differences were observed. The comparative analysis showed that potentially, youth from working class or impoverished areas were more likely to aspire to being part of a 'bling brigade' than urban working-class youth. This seems to correspond to the 2002 *Trend Youth* findings on 'conspicuous consumption' particularly amongst the previously disenfranchised and historically disadvantaged. In addition, my findings suggest the female youth sampled were more likely to aspire to this lifestyle than their male counterparts, which appears consistent with young women's preferences for more modern programmes, or media aligned to a more cosmopolitan lifestyle as gleaned from the findings on media consumption presented in Chapter Five. Critically however, urban youth collectively are more brand-conscious and focused on labels than youth from peri-urban areas.

Those falling in Category one (1) presented in **Table 15** appeared pragmatic regarding dreams. This is illustrated as follows:

> Interviewer: Tell me about your dream life. What kind of a home would you like to have?
> Youth: I don't want my house to be a double storey; I just want a simple beautiful house…with a kitchen, lounge, bathroom…
> Interviewer: How many rooms?
> Youth: 8 or 10 rooms where I can have my own private [bed]rooms…even enough room so that when my family visits they can relax…yeah things like that
> Interviewer: What kind of furniture would you like to have inside the house?
> Youth: Everything should be Panasonic …I want the kitchen to have a fitted unit throughout and it should be tiled. In the sitting room…I should have African art on the walls…not too colourful; maybe the colour in there would be Zebra
> Interviewer: What colour would you like to have on your inside walls?
> Youth: Brown
> Interviewer: How about outside?
> Youth: Dull grey so that the kids cannot easily mess it up…
> Interviewer: What kind of a car would you like to have?
> Youth: Mazda 3…since I said I want to have two kids, it should fit me, my husband and my two kids. I also want to have a second car, a Venture so that when my family visits I can take them out
> (19 year-old female, Alice)

In addition, consistency in consumption practices across this group led to the following possible profile with respect to youth media consumption specifically:

Table 16 - Profile 1- Youth Media Consumption

Score	Typology in relation to media consumption
1.	Limited consumption and very limited access to media and ICTs. Tend to like educative or educational programmes or programmes focused on social issues (e.g. *Soul City*) or 'soapies' (e.g. *Backstage*) Consumption and room culture restricted by family/ living environment

Source: R A Smith Research data analysis (2006)

Those falling in the second category (*2*) were also brand conscious but their dream life or future aspirations were mostly practical in approach:

> Interviewer: What kind of home do you wish to have in the future?
> Youth: I am thinking of a double storey. I think peach walls and the window sills can be green…two bedrooms and two kitchens…
> Interviewer: Why two kitchens?
> Youth: So that when there are many people we won't be stuck. The other one will be used for cooking and the other one will be used for tables and serving special dinners […]
> Interviewer: What kind of brands would you like to have inside the house?
> Youth: TV, a Panasonic; DVD, a *Tedelex* and the radio the same… as I told you before I am not that much into the brands…whenever I buy something I don't look at brands because I am a Christian so I want simpler things…
> (16 year-old, male, Alice)

Indeed, as the '2007 Top Brands' survey found with respect to electrical and electronic goods, *Panasonic* (along with *LG* and *Samsung*) was one of the leading 'top brands', listed as desirable for and in the ideal future life.

Consistency in consumption practices across this group led to the following possible profile with respect to youth media consumption specifically:

Table 17 - Profile 2 – Youth Media Consumption

Score	Typology in relation to media consumption
2.	Limited to average media consumption and access. Likely to watch a mixture of local programmes or movies on television (generally do not go to cinema). Likely to read *Bona* and *Drum* magazines. Moderately brand conscious.

Source: R A Smith Research Analysis (2006)

Most youth fell in the third category (*3*), and those falling within the *3+* category were additionally fashion and image conscious.

> Interviewer: […] what do you like about True Love?
> Youth: The fashion, the style I like it and the news, I like news about celebrities and all that stuff I like them. And then Drum I like the rumours [gossip]…
> Interviewer: […] Ok so you really like celebrities, you really like to know what are they getting up to, what they wear etc.?
> Youth: Yes.
> Interviewer: Are you aware of the clothes that you wear, are you into fashion, do you get up every morning and say I'm wearing this and this?
> Youth: No. […]
> Interviewer: But you look at other people in the magazines?
> Youth: Yes I do.
> Interviewer: Why?
> Youth: I want to look like them in the future.
> Interviewer: …And how do they look […]?
> Youth: They are sexy; they are feeling comfortable a lot. I like the way they dress up.
> (17 year-old, female, Alice)

Sometimes contradictions were evident for those living partly immersed in a middle class lifestyle (e.g. Model C school with access to ICTs), which was far removed from the township reality.

> Interviewer: You mention something about his being white inside and black outside, do you think this is actually of concern in S.A …?
> Youth: I would say it is a concern, because most of the time we usually see black people/parents sending their kids to multiracial schools but at the same time there is a missing link there because most of our parents actually think it's safer in the multiracial schools but at the same time they are actually putting a whole lot of pressure on their kids to actually become people with identity crisis because they move with the popular culture the way you speak and dress. From 8-4pm you are one person, then later you are a different person at home …The actual problem with that is that our white peers have their set of values (they talk about family, cars, swimming pool, holidays and vacations) … we don't know all that …if a black person assumes the same values, their experience is just not the same …
> (20 year-old male, Durban)

In the main, interviewees in the third (3) category were brand aware and conscious of celebrity status and lifestyles. There were also consistencies between a focus on

money and an acute awareness one's status and the potential of brand labels to signify an improved living standard or status.

> Interviewer: For a person to have 'status', what do they have to be wearing?
> Youth: *Levis*, *Billabong*, *Lecoste*, *Puma* …things like that
> Interviewer: How about perfumes?
> Youth: No …only the clothes
> Interviewer: Accessories … cosmetics and the likes …?
> Youth: No …it's mainly clothes
> Interviewer: As a CA, what will you look like?
> Youth: I have a *PT Cruiser*, I would live in a town house - not in Durban [...], having junk food, having money, wearing labels, shopping all the time...
> (Gugu, 16 year-old female, Durban)

For some youths, aspiration was brusquely associated with access to money, wealth or financial freedom.

> Youth: *Generations* shows about what is going on especially in the blacks suburbs, most of the people in the townships don't know what is going on in the suburbs and also in town and also how they deal with problems. If you can see in Generations, most of the people there have problems like of relationships, some of them, there is this guy Tau Mogale […] there is this other guy, Khaya, he has a lot of money and I think it is also showing us that you can have a lot of money but it doesn't mean you can be satisfied with all the money, you can have the money and find that you are still complaining or you are not satisfied. He has the money but he is still suffering in other ways, he is suffering in relationships. It doesn't mean that if you have the money you have a lot in the world. I think that is what I can say […]
> (20 year-old male, Durban)

A few others, although able to identify key criteria for aspirations, were still realistic and able to evaluate this against other lessons learned through television programmes for example:

> Youth: Like what I have said, I focus on that guy that he has all the money. […] but he still has problems and the money cannot solve your problems, you have to solve problems and not depend on money thinking that money can solve problems, no. We do need money to survive but I don't think it is the main thing that we have, a major resource
> (20 year-old male, Durban)

Similarly, another interviewee observed in relation to their favourite television programme:

Interviewer: What do you like about Backstage in general, do you follow the storyline?
Youth: Yes.
Interviewer: What do you like about it?
Youth: Maybe it's because it involves most of youth and it shows us about the circumstances that we are facing and it also teaches us how to behave ourselves like when the … this story Backstage they are in the college, I don't know maybe it's' the college or what but they are studying but it teaches us that we as youth have to study. So it's so interesting.
(17 year-old female, Durban)

These youths who are brand and celebrity conscious also identified with lived reality or stories similar to theirs:

Interviewer: Do you like him [Eminem] a lot?
Youth: Yes.
Interviewer: Why?
Youth: I have learnt about his life although it is like mine, it is nearly like mine because he grew not knowing his father like me, I don't know my father, I have never seen him. And when he is an adult and he is not suffering anymore, he says when he was growing there was nobody who was maybe supporting him and now he has everything, he has people like aunties, where were they when he was still growing. It is because his story is related to mine.
(20 year-old male, Durban)

Moreover, with respect to the third category, there were subtle differences in consumption practices across those in the lower part of the third category and the rest (e.g. *3+*). A possible typology with respect to youth media consumption for Profile 3 could be (**Table 18**):

Table 18 - Profile 3 – Youth Media Consumption

Score	Typology in relation to media consumption
3.	Average to high media consumption and access to ICTs Likely to watch SABC 1, soaps, local drama series. Likely to read *True Love*, *Real Mag*, *Drum* magazines.
3+.	Average to high media consumption and access to ICTs Likely to watch SABC 1 and e-tv, to read *Cosmopolitan*, *Glamour*, *True Love*, *Drum*, *Y-Mag* (*Bona* – amongst peri-urban youth mainly). Likely to listen to *Metro Fm*. *East Coast Radio*, *CKI* and *Umhlobo Wenene*

Source: R A Smith Research Analysis (2006)

Cell phones – utilitarian need or brand conscious desire

Cell phones proved popular across the board – across all youth and across all three categories developed - and were identified as a significant device in terms of access. This concurs with the findings of 'Generation Next 2007'. Interestingly, youth in the upper third category *(3+)* preferred mobile phone handsets on the basis of features such as ring tones (whether or not these were polyphonic), video camera, media player, video calling, Bluetooth and being able to download true tones for example. While appreciating the basic functionalities of mobile phones, youths were also concerned with aesthetics – whether or not the design of the mobile handset was attractive or what some youths referred to as 'beautiful' (for example, whether or not it was a 'flip up' handset or slim design).

Some of the comments on youths' utility-based approaches to mobile phones included:

> Interviewer: What else do you use your phone for (other than calls and messages)?
> Youth: Alarm to wake me up in the morning, the calculator and games
> Interviewer: Which network are you on?
> Youth: *Vodacom*
> Interviewer: Do you like it?
> Youth: Yeah…but I like *MTN* because you personalise [the please call me's] everyday
> (Grade 10 female learner, Alice)

The above response reflects the scenario where telecommunication service providers were chosen on the basis of providing personalised 'call back' services and a sim card/ number for life. As another youth clarified: "*Vodacom* [is my favourite], because I can send five callbacks" (17 year old female, Alice).

As detailed above, some youths explained their choice of network specifically was based on access to 'a number for life' (at the time, prior to number portability, this a guarantee offered by *MTN*, while *Vodacom* offered a limited, pre-defined period). Both these brands were mentioned ahead of other telecommunications service providers and this is consistent with the related 2007 Generation Next survey where *Vodacom* and *MTN* were listed as the top two brands. Popular brand names for mobile handsets were *LG, Motorola, Nokia and Samsung*.

Brands signify a certain look and image

Other popular brands listed included: *BMW*, *Jet* and *Edgars*. Significantly, *Nokia* and *BMW* were also listed in the 2007 survey as top brands amongst youth (ibid.). *Edgars* was also listed as the top fashion store amongst youth in the 2007 national brand loyalty survey.

Youth in the lower part of the third category (*3*) however appeared more likely to identify with celebrity images and proved more conscious of the way they looked and the image they were projecting. As one of the urban youths in this category noted:

> Interviewer: Is body image a big thing to young people, do you care about your body?
> Youth: Ja because style demands so people who are slimmer wears anything they like than people who are fat so young people like to be slimmer
> (Female, Durban)
>
> Interviewer: Do you read a lot of magazines?
> Youth: I do sometimes.
> Interviewer: What sort of magazines?
> Youth: Like *Drum* and *True Love*.
> Interviewer: And what do you learn from these magazines?
> Youth: I learn a lot about life …like seeing models I like, seeing famous people I like.
> Interviewer: Tell me, you say models, would you like to be a model?
> Youth: I like to be a model but I feel that I won't be a model.
> Interviewer: And what are those characteristics?
> Youth: Like being tall, beautiful and slender.
> Interviewer: You don't see yourself as tall, beautiful and slender?
> Youth: Yes. […] sometimes I feel like maintaining my weight, I did try to maintain my weight but I lost concentration, so my teacher told me that I must never do it again.
> (Female, Durban)

Indeed, consistent with the survey research, the most popular magazines amongst youths interviewed were *Drum, True Love, You* and *Cosmopolitan.* These were also listed among the top ten magazine brands amongst youth the Generation Next (2007) national survey.

Aspiring to an upwardly mobile, middle-class lifestyle is adequately reflected in comments that at times are associated with a specific brand as the ideal:

> Interviewer: And what is this nice life? Please explain it to me. Give me an idea of your dream life, what would it be?

Youth: To have nice clothes, nice car, nice house, you know. Ja and have money of your own and have things of your own

Interviewer: So if you were to describe your ideal life and your dream life what would it be, I want to picture it […]?

Youth: Ok my car would be a *Pajero*, I would live in Umhlanga Rocks and I would have a husband and two children a boy and a girl and my house will be full of furniture, beautiful furniture.

Interviewer: Is it a big house?

Youth: Yes a big house, a double storey house with two garages and I'm having a DVD a system, a radio and a flat screen TV and a computer at home with internet.

Interviewer: And what job would you be doing then?

Youth: I would maybe … librarian.

Interviewer: At UDW?

Youth: Yes.

Interviewer: And your husband, what do you think he would be doing?

Youth: I think he'll be a manager at Lever Brothers [*Unilever*].

Interviewer: Okay is that where your boyfriend works now?

Youth: No, he is not working.

(18 year-old female, Durban)

Although clear-cut distinctions between men and women did not emerge from the in-depth interview findings, both men and women in urban (90%) and peri-urban (79%) areas were generally more brand and celebrity focused than not (see **Tables 19 & 20**):

Table 19 - Gender disaggregated data of youth lifestyle profiles - Durban

DURBAN			
Category	**Female**	**Male**	**Total Percentage**
1	1	-	5%
2	-	1	5%
3	3	4	37%
3+	7	3	53%
Total	11	8	100%

Source: R A Smith Research data analysis (2006)

Table 20 - Gender disaggregated data of youth lifestyle profiles - Alice

ALICE			
Category	Female	Male	Total Percentage
1	2	-	10.5%
2	-	2	10.5%
3	1	-	5%
3+	7	7	74%
Total	10	9	100%

Source: R A Smith Research data analysis (2006)

LIVED EXPERIENCE AND 'CULTURAL PROXIMITY'

In the main, youths' responses about the programmes they watched and liked showed that preference was often given to programmes they could relate to (e.g. "I see myself" or "he/she is like me" or "that shows my experience"). Television programmes that reflected something removed from their lives or daily experience were sometimes seen as a threat to their security (that is, to what they know, their reality, and what they have power or control over).

Consistencies were evident between survey findings and in-depth interviews, which were substantiated by other national studies, such as the Generation Next 2007 Study referred to above. As with the survey findings regarding role models, in-depth interviews with youths revealed that parents or family relations – and mothers in particular – were the primary role models for youths'. While youths indicated preferences for television characters they'd most like to be like, in the final analysis it was their mothers who they most looked up to. So while they may not wish to be like their parents or have the same live or lives, they do admire the courage, tenacity and commitment of their caregivers.

It is thus unsurprising that youths longed to be able to share their anxieties, concerns and sometimes fears about HIV and have discussions about sex with their mothers (as

mentioned earlier in this chapter). Unsurprisingly then, for the youths sampled, their teachers, friends and the media were their primary sources of information on HIV and Aids. Correspondingly then, the media and their teachers or educators are expected to share relevant, truthful and responsible messages about safe sex and HIV and Aids. Indeed as the youths sampled confirmed, local television productions focusing on HIV and Aids and related themes were identified as having relevant messages and lessons. The findings thus point to a missed opportunity for parents to engage youths in viewing practices – to dialogue, discuss and debate issues, rather than censor or ignore.

The simultaneous popularity of local content and American celebrities was particularly interesting given the findings from Dolby (1999), Strelitz (2004) and Nuttall (2005) as mentioned in earlier chapters: While urban and peri-urban youths appear to prefer local productions, international celebrities remain appropriated or incorporated into lifestyles. As advanced in Chapter Three, the findings on local content are largely a consequence of the regulatory and policy framework, which in some respects determined that which was on offer for youth to choose from, though not negating the agency of youths.

With respect to other mass media consumption, *Drum*, *True Love* and *You* (and *Cosmopolitan* to a lesser extent) proved to be the most popular magazines amongst youth, while Generations, *Backstage* and other youth-related television programmes such as *Yizo Yizo*, *Tsha Tsha* and *Gaz'lam* were firm favourites amongst all youth. Significantly, all of these shows are local productions, featuring mainly black casts and in the case of the latter four programmes mentioned, dealing specifically with youth issues, challenges and lifestyles. The findings thus suggest a possible correlation between viewing choices and proximity to lived experiences; what Strelitz (2005) refers to as the lower classes desire for cultural proximity.

While marked distinctions exist with respect to access to media and ICTs amongst youth from peri-urban and urban settings, consumption practices in the main reflect an interest in youths seeing 'themselves' reflected on television. In addition, youths showed a particular affinity to celebrities with some kind of philanthropic behaviour ('social entrepreneurs'), who had 'rags-to-riches' life stories and who were able to

move beyond tough/ poor conditions, which they could identify with. The popularity of local television programmes as discussed above supports this ability for youths to identify with representations of their own lived experiences. Even where American programmes proved popular, youths appeared to prefer television programmes with mainly black people as cast members. Similarly, youths sampled, observed racial differences in the magazines consumed (e.g. *Drum* being a black version of *You* and *True Love's* target market being mainly black or *Cosmopolitan's,* mainly white).

The issue of cultural proximity is again evident in youths' preference for programmes dealing with a family situation or that centres on the life of a young protagonist or the experiences of youths. Urban youths for example were more likely to identify with experiences represented in *Yizo Yizo's* drama about the lived experiences of township high school youth or *Backstage's* urban art school experiences. Additionally, Peri-urban youths appeared to watch *Backstage* not only because it reflected the experiences of young people in general, but also because it was indicative of what to expect from life and living in the big city (a learning experience).

Questions on 'room culture' attempted to assess the 'concrete' ways in which posters and media in general were applied and/or incorporated into existing practices of media consumption amongst youth (as opined by Steele & Brown (1995)). The assumption was that room culture reflects not only young people's conceptions of self, but also their 'encounters with media'. Drawing on the 'Adolescents Media Practise Model' (ibid.) I was thus interested in assessing the signifying practices of lifestyle production - images, meanings and messages appropriated from media into everyday life, and reflected as lifestyles, or incorporated into everyday life (as part of the negotiation with lifestyles).

Both the survey and interview findings reflect nuances in the approach to 'room culture' amongst South African youths. Here, cultural expression is necessarily affected by living conditions such as access to one's one room for example or having to share with others and thus not having their own space or ability to express themselves within that space. In the main, cultural reproduction and symbolic expressions appeared to be constrained by family realities, practices and norms (for instance, not being allowed to hang-up posters because of family disapproval or

because the walls would 'get dirty' or because the room is shared with other family members).

As mentioned earlier, the qualitative interviews confirmed that cell phones are an indispensable part of youth lifestyles. This concurs with the national research which found further that male youths in particular could not live without their cell phones, although the majority of youths surveyed stated they 'could not live without' their family first, and then their cell phones (Generation Next, 2007). Moreover, the interviews towards this research found that mobile phone preference was determined both by the brand, the handset design and the available interactive functions (video camera, media player, video calling, bluetooth, ability to download true tones for example). The choice of service provider proved equally important to youth and was determined by the extent to which the product could be personalised (e.g. the ability to personalise the 'call back'/ 'please call me' service).

'Cultural proximity' – class and gender
In general, brands appear central to youth lifestyles – this was true for clothing, household appliances and cell phones. For urban youths, brands were "incorporated" in the present day lifestyle, both in terms of clothes or cell phones, the latter of which appeared particularly common with peri–urban youths. Significantly, while youths from Alice were brand-conscious, their "appropriation" of brands was generally circumscribed by their livelihood or ability to consume branded products. Nevertheless, brands emerged as an essential part of their dream life –indispensable to their future ideal lifestyles.

Class was specifically articulated in aspirations invariably reflecting an upwardly mobile, middle-class lifestyle. Assumptions about this 'better life' revealed subtle differences between working class and working class-poor/impoverished youths. While urban youth collectively appeared more brand-conscious and focused on labels than youth from peri-urban areas; the latter were more likely to envision a lifestyle of 'bling' as symbolic of having "arrived"/ achieved or succeeded in life.

The current research findings demonstrate that the context and framework of media consumption (affected by globalisation and regulation- as observed in previous

chapters) impacts the construction of lifestyles. The blurring of boundaries and fragmentation of audiences is equally apparent in print media consumption, where this study found an equitable number (proportional to sample) of men and women magazine readers, and a less distinct engendered reading pattern for hard news and newspapers. Clear-cut gendered distinctions also did not emerge with respect to broader media consumption - both males and women in urban and peri-urban were generally more brand and celebrity focused than not. However, female youths in particular appeared to be more likely to aspire to a brand-conscious, 'bling' lifestyle, than their male counterparts. They also identified more with modern, cosmopolitan images presented in and by media, possibly because of the associated socio-cultural and political freedom this represents

CONCLUSION

This chapter and the preceding one illustrate that traditional media remains relevant, notwithstanding the converged media landscape.

The findings on youth preference for local content, local celebrities and role models support those of other studies on youth such as Strelitz (2005) and Nuttall (2004) in particular. They do however also confirm Dolby's (1999) findings on the popularity of global brands amongst South African youths (both urban and peri-urban black African youths in this case).

Local media and television characters proved popular amongst youths, partially because youths identified with experiences of individual characters and because they aspired to have their lives or be like them. Most of the programmes appreciated and valued by youths represented youth experiences and catered to a youth target market. This is not only both a result of the increasing desire for youths to see themselves reflected on local television, as well as a direct consequence of the policy and regulatory framework.

A common feature across the majority of programmes and posters selected by all youth was that almost all television programmes selected had predominantly or

exclusively black casts and the posters were mainly of black celebrities. Urban (middle to upper middle class) youth preferences on the other hand appeared more diverse. The observation is noted not to advance an essentialist argument about race, but to argue that on closer reading, the lifestyles reflected in all of the youth media choices closely correlate with their class positions. While black youths from Alice found very little, in fact, almost nothing to identify with in a programme like *Dharma and Gregg*, urban youths not only liked the show but also suggested it was excellent. That the wholesome family shows selected by the working class cohort were largely black is instructive of the broader socio-economic conditions in South Africa, of class and of 'taste' and resonates with Bourdieu's conception of the habitus.

Youths' aspirations of a 'better life' were often circumscribed in economic terms defined specifically in relation to the accumulation of capital and 'brands' as symbolic of cultural capital and aspiration for what they perceived to be a better life. It is equally arguable that lived conditions, poverty, high unemployment, crime and HIV and Aids incidence, and the related fears that this induces is partially responsible for youths aspiration of the fantasy world of celebrity life and especially the 'bling', get-rich-quick culture. The dreams expressed by youths, which were more likely to be defined by material wealth were symbolic expressions of a 'better life' and the imagined lifestyles corresponded with what youths associated with empowerment and personal transformation.

Significantly, most youths' dreams of a better life were inextricably related to money and an overt display of wealth (as described in Typology3). Their 'dream-life' signalled a life of 'bling'- the life epitomised by American hip hop mogul and artist P Diddy and the flashiness of local celebrities such as Khanyi Mbau (who tabloid reports constantly refer to as a 'gold digger'), as opposed to the classic appropriation of wealth reflected in a middle-to-upper class reserved and conservative 'taste' preference. With respect to the appeal and aspiration of the 'bling' lifestyle the study found, following the topologies developed, that women were slightly more likely to prefer a lifestyle of conspicuous consumption. Future research would need to be conducted in order to interrogate this further and to determine whether or not this might be a result of the desire to be removed from the constrained realities of their lived experiences. That is, could women's desire for wealth and/or 'bling' lifestyles

be symptomatic of their aspiration to be free? What does this say about young women's conceptions of liberation? This is borne out in the preliminary findings on radio station preference where women preferred the more contemporary, cosmopolitan stations that allowed them to escape the pressures of conforming to more conservative lifestyles constrained by culture, custom and traditions.

These findings also pose a challenge to the view that youths are "actually more conservative than they were in the past" (Miles 2000:33). Certainly, urban women surveyed and interviewed towards this research appeared to be more likely to push the boundaries and contest traditional spaces perhaps as means of protest (as I argue above). Again, further research is indeed needed to assess whether or not youths lifestyles do in fact reflect resistance, apathy or simply reinforces hegemony. Similarly future research would need to explore the findings that both men and women appeared to enjoy magazine reading and soap operas (traditionally seen as women's genres).

Finally, a key outcome of the research towards this paper is that one's context has a marked bearing on consumption patterns. While early international ethnographic research has illuminated the role of family and domestic spaces with respect to television viewing (Silverstone, 20044, Morley, 1986) this study found that the experiences for South African youth are more nuanced. As the reflections of some youths highlighted for example, the impact of migrancy on the South African family structure has meant that by and large television viewing, even when it takes place at home, is distinct from family routines and interaction or engagement with other texts. Others explained that their viewing experiences were impacted by cultural practices, which dictated what they ought to watch. Here for example I draw on the commonly held belief that soap operas are generally 'vulgar' and inconstant with Zulu or Xhosa values and expectations of how women in particular ought to behave.

Furthermore, as the overall research findings suggest, there are instances where some traditional or cultural practises determine viewing practices. This is evident for example when some boys were seen to come of age, they were afforded separate room outside of the main home and thus would have their own privacy and thus had the option to watch television independent of other family members. Consequently, I

argue, just as with the policy and regulatory frameworks impacting on choices, the way in which 'room culture' amongst black South African youths is conceived is also influenced by socio-economic realities and cultural identities.

SECTION III

CHAPTER SEVEN – CONCLUSION

TOWARDS A MODEL OF YOUTH MEDIA CONSUMPTION AND LIFESTYLES

The current research set out to evaluate youths' interaction with media and the relationship between media consumption and the construction of 'lifestyles'. Quasi-ethnographic in design, it is positioned as an audience study on youth, media consumption and lifestyles.

In the preceding chapters I have attempted to examine differences in patterns of media consumption practices and lifestyles amongst urban and peri-urban Black South African youths specifically. In this concluding chapter I attempt to offer a model of youth-media-consumption, which prioritises internal and internal contexts impacting on meaning-making.

In so doing, I hope to contribute to the dearth of critical research on youth and media. As Strelitz (2005:56) suggests, "[t]he area of media consumption amongst youth is under researched worldwide". Moreover, with specific reference to South Africa, there is "a complete absence of qualitative [local] research examining the complex ways local and global media are incorporated into everyday lives of young people" (ibid: 4). This concurs with observations made by Swartz in a more recent study about the "less substantial body of academic writing about black South Africa youth" (2009:4).

Additionally, in attempting to make sense of youths' media consumption practices in post-apartheid South Africa, the current research has adapted and tweaked established research methods and methodologies. Indeed as observations in the foreword to Swartz's (2009) book on township youths illuminate "dominant theoretical psychological frameworks" can not be adopted wholesale to studies of youths in post-apartheid South Africa, "[n]or can current methodologies alone provide a fully understandable, or even accurate portrait." (Prof Robert L, Selman of Harvard University in Swartz, 2009: xi).

Drawing on the findings of the current research the model developed reflects that youths' media consumption and lifestyle production is mediated by and through specific contexts (including the personal, socio-economic, political and policy frameworks). That is, who and what we are, is reflected in our consumption patterns. Lifestyles are then a reflection of 'taste', 'cultural proximity' and 'cultural identities', which in turn are impacted upon by the policy framework, political and socio-economic, and personal contexts and the media consumed. The diagram in **Figure 4** attempts to illustrate graphically that youth, media consumption and lifestyles is a dynamic, fluid and constantly evolving process.

Indeed, the findings of the current study demonstrate that not only is the media (and television in particular) an integral part of youths' everyday life but that consumption practices are reflected in lifestyles. The lived experiences of youths and the *context* [my emphasis] in which consumption takes place determines not only the choices of media consumed but also the meanings of the multifarious signs on offer (Fiske, 1996). As I have tried to demonstrate through this study, the actual choice(s) of what to consume is also mediated by regulation and access to media and ICTs. Moreover, while the *relational* and *structural* (Lull, 1990) uses of television remain relevant, youths' interaction with media is contextual, interactive and 'multidimensional', and equally significant, personal and personalised.

Fig. 4 - Model of youth, media consumption and lifestyles (Source: R A Smith (2007))

IDENTITY
Cultural identities,
beliefs, values

PERSONAL
CONTEXT:
Culture, religion, school,
family, relatives, care-
givers

MEDIA
CONSUMPTION:
Polysemic,
intertextual
texts;
local & global,
genre preference,
programming

Youths

SOCIAL,
POLITICAL &
ECONOMIC
CONTEXT,
Class, gender,
access to media
& ICT s

POLICY
FRAMEWORK:
Youth policy,
media policy &
regulation

LIFESTYLES
Music, fashion &
accessories, Assets:
furniture, car, house,
'room culture',
'classroom culture'

'Taste''

Finally then, the current study, drawing on the ethnographic research tradition and located within a cultural studies framework is but one response to calls for more critical and academic research on black South African youths. It does not assume authority in presenting a timeless study on youth behavior in the abstract; rather it explores methodological responses to examining the multifarious nature of youth media consumption and lifestyles. This study thus offers a particular methodological approach to researching youth media consumption in post-apartheid South Africa. Indeed as I have consistently argued throughout the thesis, this; therefore, is a specific study, of a particular group of youths, in a specific space and place, at a particular moment in time. So while some findings are consistent with earlier studies, others have resonated with later work done on South African youth and some differences have been observed. Hopefully, the methodology employed to arrive at the findings will prove useful to future research and audience studies on youth media consumption in post-*apartheid* South Africa.

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APPENDICES

ANNEXURE ONE: QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research. This questionnaire is part of research towards a Ph.D in Culture, Communication and Media Studies, University of Natal (Durban). The research focuses on television consumption and identities of youth (ages 16-21) in post-apartheid South Africa.

1. First Name of interviewee --

2. Location of interview --

Please cross or tick your answers, unless you are required to explain your choice.

3. Gender:

Male	Female

4. Age:

16	17	18	19	20	21

5. Home language:

English	isiZulu	Afrikaans	Xhosa	SeSotho	Other ------------------

6. Other languages spoken and understood:

English	isiZulu	Afrikaans	Xhosa	SeSotho	Other ------------------

7. Residential area (please list area): --

suburb	township	Residence (please list campus) --------------------------------

8. Educational level:

Still at High School	Matric Completed	Studying further	Tertiary qualification

9. Parent(s) employment status:

Mother	Employed part-time	employed full-time	unemployed
Father	Employed part-time	employed full-time	unemployed
Guardian	Employed part-time	employed full-time	unemployed

10. Do you receive an allowance? Yes No

11. Do you receive payment from part-time or full-time jobs? Yes No

12. Do you have an account at a retail outlet? Yes No
(If No, proceed to Question 14)

13. If Yes, please list name(s) of store(s) --

14. Do you wear/use any designer label clothes, shoes, accessories or perfume? Yes No
(If No, proceed to Question 16)

15a. If yes, please list the designer labels that you wear (state if it is clothes, perfume etc.).

15b. Why do you like this/these brand(s)?

----

16. Do you have access to a fixed landline (telephone)?   Yes   No

17. Do you have access to a cell phone?   Yes   No

18. Do you have access to a radio?   Yes   No

19. Do you have access to a CD player?   Yes   No

20. Do you have access to a television?   Yes   No

21. Do you have access to satellite television?   Yes   No

22. Do you have access to a video machine?   Yes   No

23. Do you have access to a DVD player?   Yes   No

24. Do you have access to a computer?   Yes   No

25. Do you have access to the Internet?   Yes   No

26. Do you have access to e-mail?   Yes   No

27. Do you have access to a digital camera?   Yes   No

28. Do you read any newspapers?   Yes   No
(If No, proceed to Question 30)

29. If yes, please list newspaper title(s)

----

30. Do you read any magazines?   Yes   No
(If No, proceed to question 32)

31a. If yes, please list magazine title(s)

31b. Why do you read the above publication(s)?

----

32. Do you listen to the radio?   Yes   No
(If No, proceed to Question 34)

33a. If yes, what is your favourite radio station? --

33b. What other radio station(s) do you listen to?

33c. How long do you spend listening to the radio per day?

Less than an hour	1-2 hours	3 hours or more

34. Do you watch television?   Yes   No
(If No, proceed to Question 37)

35a. If Yes, what is your favourite television channel?

SABC 1	SABC 2	SABC 3	e-tv	M-Net	Other (please list)
					--

35b. What other television channel do you watch?

35c. What are your favourite Television programmes (3 only please!)

------------------------------   ------------------------------------   -----------------------------------

35d. Where do you watch television?

Home	Friends	School/Institution of Higher learning	Other (please list) --

35e. How long do you spend watching television per day?

Less than an hour	1-2 hours	3 hours or more

36. How would you rate the following programmes?
MUSIC

Channel O	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Castle Loud	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Ezodumo	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Jam Alley	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Gospel Gold	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Other (please list) -------------------------------------	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent

SITCOMS

The Hughley's	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
SOS (Save our Souls)	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Dharma and Gregg	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Friends	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
My wife and kids	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
The Parkers	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Moesha	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Other (please list) -------------------------------------	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent

DRAMA SERIES

Yizo-Yizo	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Backstage	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Soul City	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Girlfriends	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Gaz'Lam	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Other (please list) -------------------------------------	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent

MAGAZINE PROGRAMMES/VARIETY SHOWS

Mamepe	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Take 5	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Top Billing	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Replay	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Selimathunzi	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Dube on Monday	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Crux	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Other (please list) ------------------------------------	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent

CHAT SHOWS

Felicia	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Phat Joe	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Oprah	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Montel Williams	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Ricky Lake	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
SABC 3 Talk	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Other (please list) ------------------------------------	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent

SOAP OPERAS

Isidingo	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent

Egoli	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Generations	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
The Bold and the Beautiful	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
The Days of our Lives	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
7de Laan	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Other (please list) --------------------------------------	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent

CURRENT AFFAIRS & EDUCATION

News on 1	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
News on 2	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
News on 3	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
e-TV News	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Special Assignment	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
3rd Degree	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
ReaBua	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Liberty Life Learning Channel	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Education Express	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Other (please list) --------------------------------------	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent

SPORTS PROGRAMMES?

e-Shibobo	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Supersport	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Mabaleng	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Soccerzone	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Laduma on 1	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Sportswrap	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Woza Weekend	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Other (please list)	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent

37. Who is/are your role model(s)? --

38a. What television personality would you most like to be like? --

38 b. Why? ---

39a. What character in a television programme would you most like to be like? (e.g. a character in a cartoon, soap opera, comedy, sitcom drama series and so on)

39b. Why? --

40a. Do you have any posters of photographs on your wall? Yes   No
(If No, proceed to Question 41)

40b. If yes, what posters or photographs adorn your walls? ---

----

41a. What career do you intend pursuing? --

41b. Why?

----

42. Are there any other comments that you would like to make?

Thank you !

ANNEXURE TWO: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions for semi-structured, in-depth interviews

(Background, class)
Please introduce yourself?
Please tell me little bit about yourself, who you are, what you like, what you don't like?
Do your parents work? Where?
Do you receive a monthly allowance or some form of cash?

If so, how do you use the money?
Do you have access to a clothing or other account? Which one?
What are you currently doing?/What are you studying?
What would you like to do in future?/ What do you wish you were doing?

(Room culture, identity, race, culture, room culture, celebrities, labels, style, taste)
Do you have your own room?
Do you have posters on the/your wall?
(If yes) What kinds of posters? Who? (If celebrities, ask interviewee to list them)
Do you wear labels? Names? Why?
Are you conscious about the way you look? (This is open to interpretation: could mean the way you dress/ shoes you wear or race)
Describe your dress style/ your way of dressing? (probe what interviewee thinks this says about him/herself or see if they draw comparisons to other social groups/ class)
What music do you listen to?
What do you do for fun?
Do you have many friends?
Do you have friends from other race groups?
(If no) Why not?
(If yes) What do you talk about?
How many languages can you speak?
Which one are you most comfortable with? Why?
Are you aware of race?
Have you ever in your life so far been made aware of the fact that you are a black person? (probe/ ask participant to explain)
Do you know of any traditional customs? which ones?
Where do you learn about culture? Do you know any tv programmes that deal with culture?
What do you think they learn from the programmes?
Do they think there is any custom that should be banned or stopped? why?

(Access)
Where do you watch television? How often do you listen to the radio? Which station/s? Why?
What do you read? What kinds of books? Which magazines? Which newspapers?
Have you been to a cinema? Where when?
What was the last film you saw? What is your favourite film?
Do you have access to the internet? Where? What do you use it for?
Do you use email? How often? Where?
Do you have access to a video machine? Where?
Do you have access to the DVD player? Where?
Do you have access to the CD player? Where?
Do they own a cellphone? If yes, What model is it?
Did you buy it or did someone buy it for you?
Why did they choose the model?

(If they did not choose the model, Which model would you rather have?
Which features do they like on the model of their choice?

(Consumption)
What kinds of programmes do you prefer? (if necessary prompt: comedy, soaps, news, talk shows, science fiction, sitcoms, series, movies (romance, thrillers, action, arthouse), etc). Why?
What are your favourite programmes? Why?
Do you have a favourite channel? Why/why not??
Are you conscious when watching TV that some programmes you are watching have black people or that deal with issues that relate to black people?
Does this matter to you?
What are your favourite adverts? Why? (probe if interviewee begins to relate it to class, gender/ race/ culture etc)

(Aspirations, role models)
Who do you admire most in the world?
Who do you aspire to be? / Who would you most want to be like?
Do you have a role model? Who?
Which character on television would you most like to be like? Why?
What car do you wish to have? (make/model) Why?
What kind of home do you wish to have in the future? (where/ what does it look like inside and outside?) Why?

(Concerns/fears)
What are your fears/ what are you concerned about as a young person?
(If they do not mention jobs) Are you worried about finding a job? / (if they are unemployed) Are you worried about finding a job in future? / Are you worried about finding a job when you are done studying?
(If they do not mentioned HIV, ask about it)

(Sex/ HIV/AIDS)
Are you in a romantic relationship? Do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend?
Do you talk about sex?
(if not) Why not?
Have you had sex? Why did you choose to have sex?
Do you discuss sex with your parents? (Guardian? Teacher? friends)
(If not)Why not?
(if Yes) How often and what advice have you received?
Do you talk about HIV/AIDS?
What are your thoughts about HIV/AIDS?
(NB: probe to determine whether opinions on HIV are informed/ influenced by the media/ education/ culture)

Do you have anything else you wish to say about youth and media?
Thank You!

ANNEXURE THREE: MODERATOR BRIEF

COPY OF EMAIL TO MODERATOR

Dear Ntando

Thank you for agreeing to assist as Moderator.

The information contained herewith and responses from interviews towards this research are to be treated as confidential and will remain the property of myself, René Alicia Smith.

Please note, after careful consideration I have decided that it would be more beneficial if you commence with two test/ pilot interviews as soon as possible. You will then need to courier it to me immediately for me to assess the data collected.

We will only commence with a contract for you to complete 20 in-depth interviews thereafter.

As discussed you will then be paid a fee for your service as a qualified research moderator after I receive the total number of audible recordings on tape.

Please note, I cannot pay interviewees. Should you choose to pay them for transport etc, this is entirely up to you and has to be at your expense. It is advisable you try to get participants who agree to participate without payment.

Data collection – semi-structured, in-depth interviews

The research explores television consumption and the construction of identities and lifestyles amongst black South African youth. The qualitative research, in-depth interviews will focus exclusively on black African youth.

The research aims to explore whether and the extent to which one's aspirations, tastes, values, style and personal opinion (regarding race or HIV/AIDS) is determined by cultural identity.

To this extent, it is important to look out for or probe responses around values, styles, taste and how society or national debates impact on the above as well as our opinions, wants, needs, aspirations,

It has been argued that lifestyles are chosen by ones social status – class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality. My research will test this and assess whether one's relationship with society and culture plays a more significant role than one's personal identity. My hypothesis is that it is both personal and cultural. But this needs to be tested, hence the interviews.

So, at all times, remember the broader issues/ thesis/ hypothesis.

Please ensure the tapes are adequately marked with the name of the interviewee, the place of interview and date.

Please note any observations that you deem significant on a separate piece of paper, or record your comments. I would prefer you record your observations after the interview on the same tape. (e.g. what stood about the interviewee, body language)

I wish you success.
Sincerely,
René

Questions for semi-structured, in-depth interviews
I have included **comments for you in brackets** - the rest are questions to use as a guide.

(Please state the **Name, Place, Date** of interview number for purposes of purposes transcription)

Please introduce yourself?
Please tell me little bit about yourself, who you are, what you like, what you don't like?
What are you currently doing?/What are you studying?
What would you like to do in future?/ What do you wish you were doing?
Do you have your own room?
Do you have posters on the/your wall? (If yes) What kinds of posters? Who? (If celebrities, ask interviewee to list them)
Do you wear labels? Names? Why?
Are you conscious about the way you look? (This is open to interpretation: could mean the way you dress/ shoes you wear or race)
Describe your dress style/ your way of dressing? (probe what interviewee thinks this says about him/herself or see if they draw comparisons to other social groups/ class)
What music do you listen to?
What do you do for fun?
Do you have many friends?
Do you have friends from other race groups?
(If no) Why not?
(If yes) What do you talk about?

(Self ,identity, family, friends, race, music, room culture, celebrities, labels, style, taste)
Are you aware of race?
Have you ever in your life so far been made aware of the fact that you are a black person? (probe/ ask participant to explain)

(Access)
Where do you watch television? How often do you listen to the radio? Which station/s? Why?
What do you read? What kinds of books? Which magazines? Which newspapers?
Have you been to a cinema? Where when?
What was the last film you saw? What is your favourite film?
Do you have access to the internet? Where? What do you use it for?
Do you use email? How often? Where?
Do you have access to a video machine? Where?
Do you have access to the DVD player? Where?
Do you have access to the CD player? Where?

(Consumption)
What kinds of programmes do you prefer? (if necessary prompt: comedy, soaps, news, talk shows, science fiction, sitcoms, series movies (romance, thrillers, action, arthouse), etc) Why?
What are your favourite programmes? Why?
Are you conscious when you watching TV that some programmes you are watching have black people or that deal with issues that relate to black people?
Does this matter to you?

What are your favourite adverts? Why? (probe if interviewee begins to relate it to class, gender/ race/ culture etc)

(Aspirations)
Who do you admire most in the world?
Who do you aspire to be? / Who would you most want to be like?
Do you have a role model? Who?
Which character on television would you most like to be like? Why?
What car do you wish to have? (make/model) Why?
What kind of home do you wish to have in the future? (where/ what does it look like inside and outside?) Why?

(Concerns/fears)
What are your fears/ what are you concerned about as a young person?
(If they do not mention jobs) Are you worried about finding a job? / (if they are unemployed) Are you worried about finding a job in future? / Are you worried about finding a job when you are done studying?
(If they do not mentioned HIV, ask about it)

(Sex/ HIV/AIDS)
Are you in a romantic relationship? Do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend?
Do you talk about sex?
(if not) Why not?
Have you had sex? Why did you choose to have sex?
Do you discuss sex with your parents? (Guardian? Teacher? friends)
(If not)Why not?
(if Yes) How often and what advice have you received?
Do you talk about HIV/AIDS?
What are your thoughts about HIV/AIDS?
(NB: probe to determine whether opinions on HIV are informed/ influenced by the media/ education/ culture)
Have you seen any AIDS related programmes on tv, radio, newspapers, mags or internet? Check if they didn't mention any programme earlier on to this effect.

Do you have any favourite programme that deals with AIDS?

Do you have anything else you wish to say about youth and media?

Thank the interviewee!

ANNEXURE FOUR: TELEVISION PREFERENCES AMONGST YOUTHS

Graphs and supporting narrative

Source: Research Findings From Questionnaire Data (2003/4)

Fig. 5.1 URBAN YOUTH PREFERENCE - MUSIC

Fig. 5.2 PERI-URBAN YOUTH PREFERENCE - MUSIC

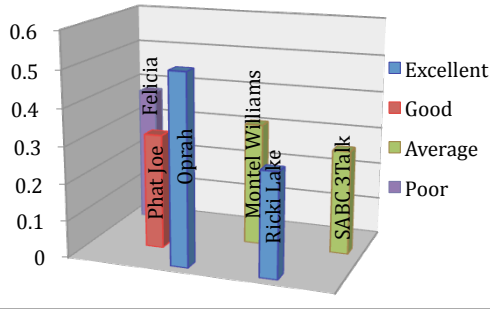
Fig. 6.1 URBAN YOUTH PREFERENCE - SITCOM

Fig. 6.2 PERI-URBAN YOUTH PREFERENCE - SITCOM
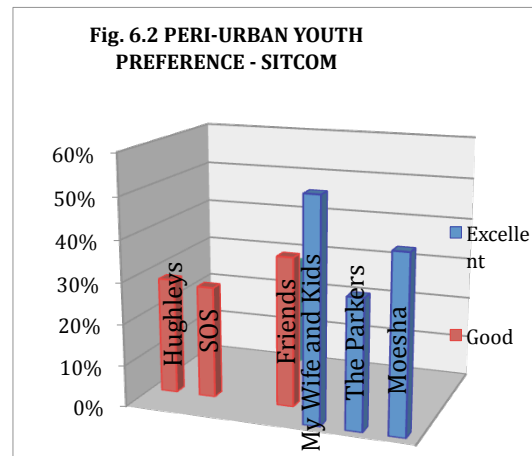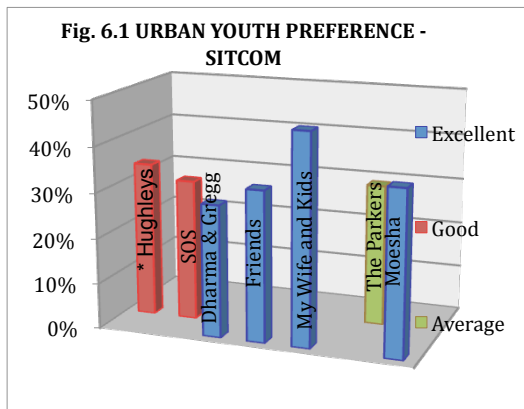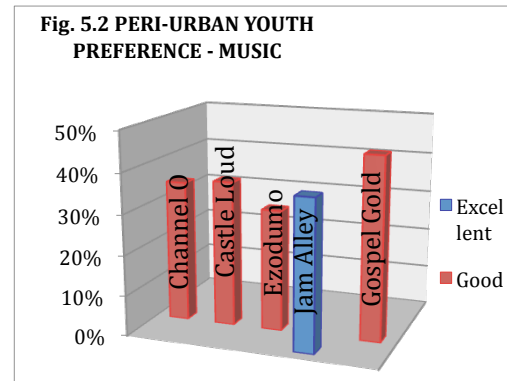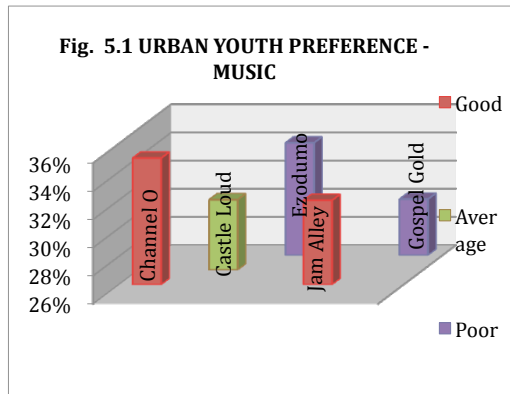
Fig. 7.1 URBAN YOUTH PREFERENCE - DRAMA
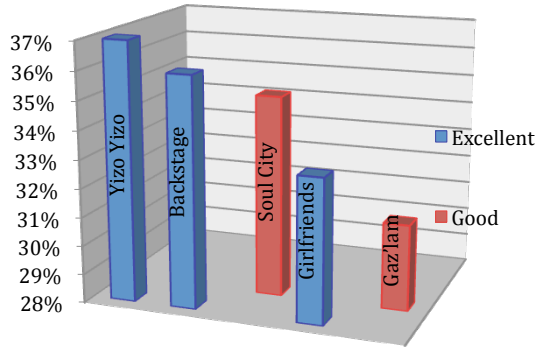
Fig. 7.2 PERI-URBAN YOUTH PREFERENCE - DRAMA
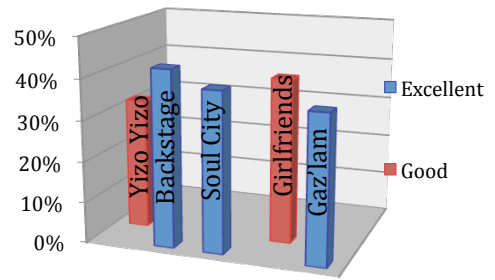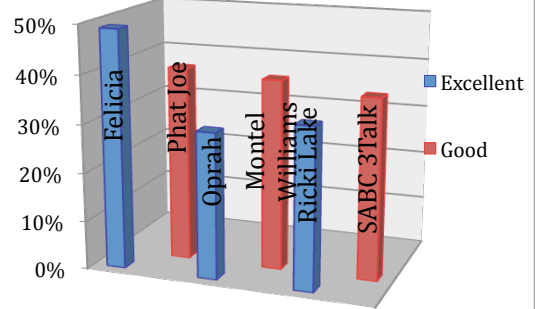

Fig 8.1 URBAN YOUTH PREFERENCE - MAGAZINE
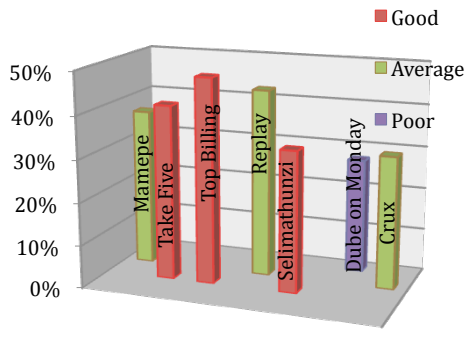
Fig. 8.2 PERI-URBAN YOUTH PREFERENCE - MAGAZINE
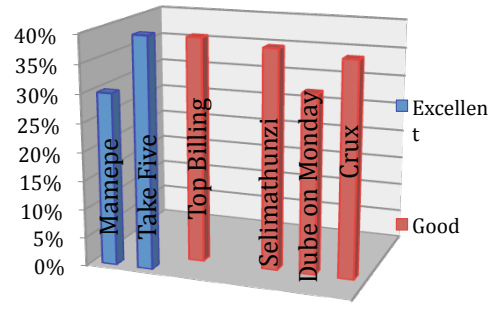
Fig. 9.1 URBAN YOUTH PREFERENCE - CHAT/ TALK SHOW GENRE
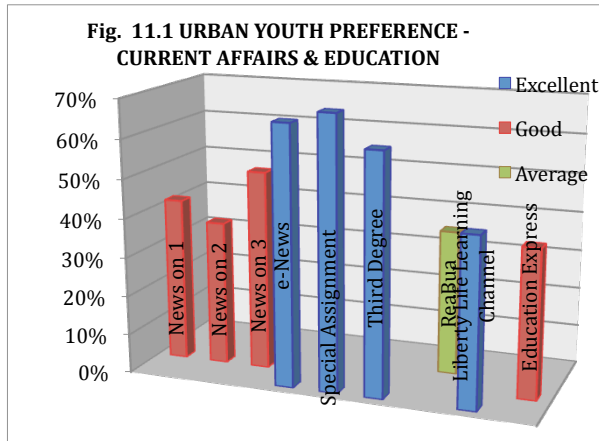

Fig. 9.2 PERI-URBAN YOUTH PREFERENCE - CHAT / TALK SHOW GENRES

Fig. 10.1 URBAN YOUTH PREFERENCE - SOAP OPERA GENRE

Fig. 10.2 PERI-URBAN YOUTH PREFERENCE - SOAP OPERA GENRE

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Fig. 11.1 URBAN YOUTH PREFERENCE - CURRENT AFFAIRS & EDUCATION

Fig. 11.2 PERI-URBAN YOUTH PREFERENCE - CURRENT AFFAIRS & EDUCATION

Fig. 12.1 URBAN YOUTH PREFERENCE - SPORTS
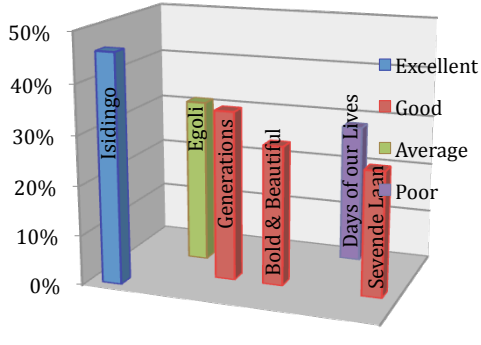
Fig. 12.2 PERI-URBAN YOUTH PREFERENCE - SPORTS
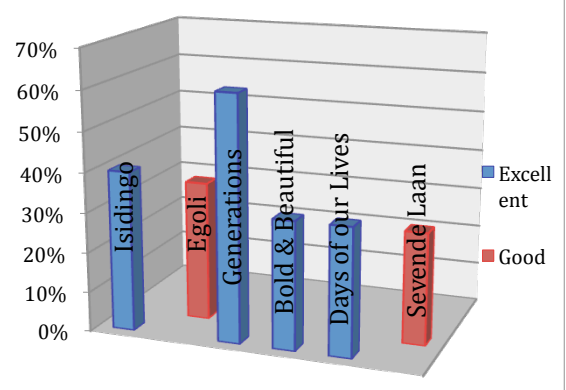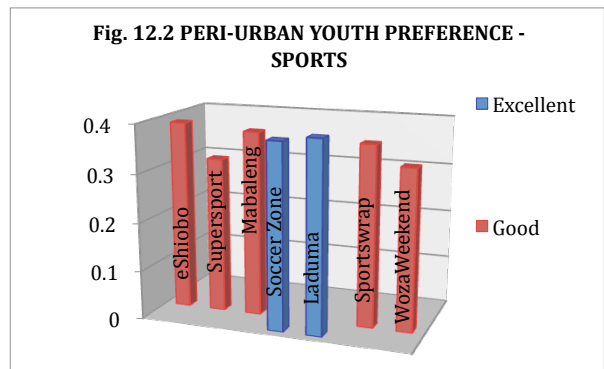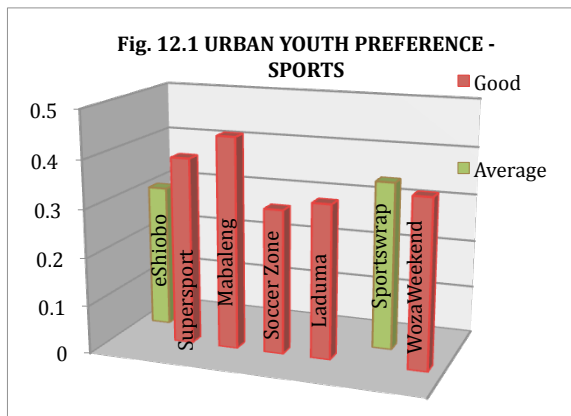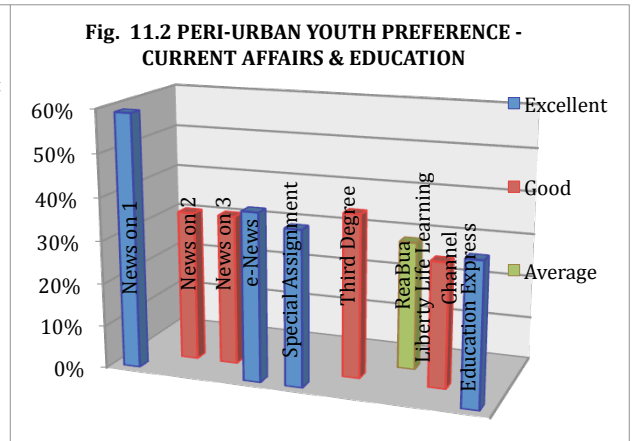
TELEVISION GENRE PREFERENCES AMONGST YOUTH

- Genre - Music

Durban youths

With respect to youth preference across music programmes, *Channel O* was a firm favourite and youths indicated they found the show to be "excellent" (see figure 5.1). The format of *Channel O* is largely based on the *MTV* format but with an African 'feel' or influence. 'VJs' are selected accordingly to reflect the 'flavour' of the channel and different genres, and broadly reflect the demographics of the continent. Although an offering on a subscription service, at the time the research was

conducted, SABC1 flighted *Channel O* during 'graveyard'[92] hours on the public broadcaster (otherwise available via satellite on the DSTV platform). The local equivalent, *Castle Loud* did not fare as well as the long-running local 'teen' interactive music show, *Jam Alley*[93] (also on SABC 1).

While of youth appeared to prefer the 'urban contemporary' music television channel, *Channel O*, almost as many youths indicated they watched *Ezodumo*, a local traditional music show. Although popular, *Ezodumo* was rated as 'poor', along with the local gospel programme, *Gospel Gold*[94].

Alice youths

With respect to music programme preference, *Gospel Gold* was a firm favourite with youths indicating they found the show to be mainly "good" (see figure 5.2). *Castle Loud*[95], *Channel O*[96] and *Jam Alley* were equally popular, although the latter 'teen' interactive music show was the only programme identified as excellent amongst peri-urban youths.

- Genre – Sitcoms

Durban youths

American sitcoms dealing with relationships amongst family and relations (e.g. *My Wife and Kids*, *The Hughleys*[97]) proved popular amongst urban youth (see figure 6.1). The options presented in the questionnaire were mainly of sitcoms from the 'youth'-focused channel, SABC 1, dealing with a predominantly black cast or protagonist. *Dharma and Gregg* and *Friends* were the exceptions, having an all white cast. Critically, the sitcom selections available or on offer to viewers at the time were almost exclusively imported products. An exception was the locally produced *SOS*, which reflected a multiracial South African cast of young adults. This series was liked

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[92] 'Graveyard shift' refers to very late night and early morning radio slots (usually from midnight to 6am). (See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graveyard_shift)

[93] Jam Alley is a youth focused variety game show aired on SABC 1, "where teenagers have the opportunity to interact with local artists, sports personalities or actors. Participants answer a quiz on the latest trends in the music world and also get the chance to perform to the latest popular songs".

[94] A locally produced (Christian) gospel music show aired on SABC1 (See: www.gospelgold.co.za/)

[95] Castle Loud is a South African music show (sponsored by South African liquor label, Castle Lager) catering for black youth market, featuring local and global music genres.

[96] Channel O is a local music channel (similar to MTV), which can be accessed via subscription television service, DSTV. The channel focuses on local music genres and caters to predominantly black audiences, across the African Continent (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Channel_O).

[97] An American sitcom focusing on the lives and experiences of an upwardly mobile African-American family who move from the inner city to a middle class suburb (see: www.tv.com/the-hughleys/show/277/summary.html).

as much as the long-running American sitcom, *Friends*. However, while *SOS* was rated 'good', *Friends* was viewed as 'excellent'. *Moesha*, which revolves around the life of a teen, played by an established music artist and celebrity *Brandy*, was viewed as 'excellent'. *Brandy* was also listed by some youth as a popular celebrity to adorn (posters) their room walls.

Alice youths

The most popular sitcoms amongst peri-urban youth are those with a predominantly black cast or protagonists. Similar to urban youths, American sitcoms dealing with relationships amongst family and relations (e.g. *My Wife and Kids*, *The Parkers, Moesha*) proved popular amongst peri-urban youth (see figure 6.2). These programmes were viewed as "excellent" by youths from Alice. Unlike for urban youths, the locally produced, multiracial, multilingual, *SOS* was their least favoured programme, and *Dharma and Gregg* received no responses (while urban youths found it "excellent").

- Genre – Drama series

Durban youths

The youth focused *Yizo Yizo*[98] and *Backstage*[99] proved most popular amongst urban youth (see figure 7.1). As mentioned in Chapter 1, the locally produced *Yizo Yizo* is recognised for being the most watched drama series during the period under review. While *Yizo Yizo* dealt primarily with high school learners, *Backstage* focused on youth at an arts college. The third and final series of *Yizo Yizo* aired in 2004; while *Backstage's* run came to an end in 2007. The American series, *Girlfriends*[100] was also regarded as "excellent", while the locally produced health edutainment drama, *Soul City* proved slightly more popular.

Alice Youths

The locally produced youth focused *Backstage* proved most popular amongst peri-urban youth (see figure 7.2). The American series, *Girlfriends*, was second most

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[98] An award-winning locally-produced television drama series set in a township school discussed throughout this research (See also http://www.thebomb.co.za/yizo1.htm).
[99] Aired on e-TV, Backstage was a locally produced drama series which revolved around the lives of students attending an art college initially set in Cape Town, before moving to downtown Johannesburg.
[100] Produced in association with CBS Paramount Network Television Inc, Girlfriends explores the experiences of a group of women and the challenges of family, friendships and sand relationships.

popular, but seen as "good" only, as opposed to the third favoured *Soul City,* which was also seen as "excellent". While *Gaz'lam* proved less popular than *Yizo Yizo*, it was regarded as "excellent" unlike the latter, which was seen as "good".

- Genre – Magazine Programmes

Durban Youths

The middle class lifestyle programme, *Top Billing*[101], was the most popular magazine programme amongst Durban youths and was regarded as 'good' (see figure 8.1). The youth-focused *Take 5* (discussed in Chapter Three) and *Selimathunzi*[102] (both on SABC 1) faired equally well. Urban youths also enjoyed *Replay*, *Mamepe*[103] and *Crux* although all three were seen as 'average'. *Dube on Monday*[104] was seen as a 'poor' production.

Alice youths

The youth-focused programmes *Take 5* and *Selimathunzi* proved most popular amongst peri-urban youths (see figure 8.2). The former was seen as "excellent", while the latter was viewed as "good". Similar to Durban youths, the middle-class lifestyle programme, *Top Billing*, was the second most popular magazine programme and was regarded as "good". *Crux* was the fourth most popular show. *Dube on Monday* was also seen as a "good" production (unlike urban youth preference, where it was rated poorly). Unlike with urban youths, who generally liked *Replay,* there were 'no-responses' amongst Alice youths in relation to the show.

- Genre - Talk/ Chat shows

Durban youths

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[101]Top Billing is a locally-produced magazine programme promoting middle to upper class living and lifestyles. According to the website, it is "the longest-running entertainment and lifestyle television programme in South Africa. It is now supplemented by a glossy print magazine, also called Top Billing, which covers the best of the good life in terms of homes, décor, food, gardens and travel (www.topbilling.com).

[102] A locally-produced, multilingual variety show aired on SABC 1and which caters for a predominantly black, youth audience (http://www.seli.co.za/seli_proof/index.php/Selimathunzi).

[103]A Sesotho language lifestyle magazine programme; equivalent to Top Billing (www.mamepe.co.za).

[104] A locally-produced comedy sketch show hosted by comedian Desmond Dube.

The American show, *Oprah* was the most popular chat show amongst urban youth and was seen as 'excellent', while the second most popular show, a local production, *Felicia* (although popular) was regarded as 'poor' (see figure 9.1). This is in stark contrast to youth from peri-urban areas that chose *Felicia* as favourite, while *Oprah*, although rated "excellent", was the least favourite talk show. *Ricki Lake* was less popular but also seen as "excellent". *Phat Joe*[105] was seen as 'good' while *SABC 3 Talk*[106] (now *3 Talk with Noleen*) and M*ontel Williams*[107] seen as "average".

Alice youths

The South African show *Felicia* was the most watched talk show for peri-urban youths followed by the American shows, *Ricki Lake* and then *Oprah* which were both also seen as "excellent" (see figure 9.2). *Phat Joe, Montel Williams* and *SABC 3 Talk* (now *3 Talk with Noleen*) were all seen as "average".

- Genre – Soap operas

Durban youths

The locally produced *Isidingo* was a firm favourite amongst urban youth, followed by the multilingual shows, *Egoli*[108] and *Generations*[109] (see figure 10.1). The latter, along with the American soap, *Bold and the Beautiful*[110] and the (Afrikaans) multilingual,

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[105] The *Phat Joe Show* was a successful youthful talk show hosted by controversial Majota Khambule. It initially aired on *e-TV*, before an unsuccessful stint on in a different variation to SABC1.

[106] This locally produced, live, one-hour talk show hosted by Noleen Mohalwana Sanqcu. It includes live phone-ins and is aired n SABC, the public broadcaster catering for a predominantly English upper LSM market (See: http://www.sabc3.co.za/3talk/3talk.html).

[107] Emmy-award winning American talk show "tackling social issues and interviewing ordinary people dealing with extraordinary circumstances" (http://www.cbstvd.com/shows.aspx?showID=15*).*

[108] Aired on M-Net, a private broadcaster, *Egoli* is South Africa's longest running soap opera. It revolves around the lives of a few influential business people and average people. Initially accessible during M-Net's 'open-time' window (free to non-subscribers), since April 2007, it is only accessible through a decoder. This is critical as it would necessarily impact the extent to which youths are currently able to access the product (http://www.egoli.mnet.co.za).

[109]*Generations* is one of South Africa's oldest locally-produced soap operas. It revolves around the lives of influential family businesses in the advertising industry. The story line includes upwardly mobile and established black characters principally and focuses on their aspirations and success (www.generations.co.za). See also Tager's (1997) ethnographic study on the series.

[110] The *Bold and the Beautiful* is an American Sap Opera which has been on South television almost as long as it has been in the United States (since 1987). Set in Beverly Hills, the series revolves around the lives of the more affluent Forrester fashion designers, the more working class Spectra's and Logan's.
(http://www.cbs.com/daytime/the_bold_and_the_beautiful/ and
http://www.soaps.com/boldandbeautiful/).

Sevende Laan[111] were all seen as 'good' by urban youths, while *Egoli* was seen as "average". The American *Days of our Lives* was generally rated as "poor".

Alice youths

The locally produced *Generations* was a firm favourite amongst urban youth, followed by *Isidingo,* both of which were seen as "excellent" productions (see figure 10.2). The multilingual (though mainly Afrikaans) programmes *Egoli* and *Sevende Laan* were both seen as "good" and fared slightly better that the American soaps *Days of our lives* and *Bold and the Beautiful*, which were both mainly seen as "excellent".

- Genre – Current Affairs and Education

Durban youths

Of the three most popular current affairs and education programmes two investigative current affairs programmes and one news bulletin came out tops amongst urban youths (see figure 11.1). *Special Assignment*[112] was chosen as the most popular programme and along with *e-news* topped the ratings. These two programmes were also seen as "excellent" by peri-urban youth, who also found *Education Express* to be 'excellent'. *Third Degree* and educational *Liberty Life Learning Channel*[113] were also seen as 'excellent' amongst urban youths, while *Education Express* was seen as 'good' and *ReaBua,* 'average'.

Alice youths

News on 1, *Third Degree* and *e-News* proved most popular (see figure 11.2). Similar to findings on urban youth preference, current affairs programmes were mainly viewed as both "excellent" and "good" by peri-urban youths. While urban youths preferred *Liberty Life Learning Channel*, peri-urban youths mainly preferred *Education Express*.

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[111] Although chiefly Afrikaans, this multilingual locally produced soap opera modelled on private, social and business life of Melville (a Johannesburg suburb) residents and patrons (see also: http://www.sabc2.co.za).
[112] An award-winning locally produced current affairs programme aired on SABC 3, which is renowned for its investigative journalism, and for exposing various scandals (http://www.sabcnews.com/specialassignment/about.html).
[113] An educational programme produced by Liberty Life, Standard Bank, SABC Education and the Department of Education. It is used to augment teaching and learning and to provide input on curriculum-related matters (subjects and examinations) (http://www.learn.co.za/).

- Genre - Sports

Durban youths

In the main, all the sports programmes broadcast on the public broadcaster, SABC, were seen as 'good', while those *on e-tv* were viewed as 'average' (see figure 12.1). *Mabaleng*, along with *Supersport* (from the subscription channel) were also favourites.

Alice Youths

In the main, all the sports programmes broadcast were seen as equally popular across peri-urban youths (see figure 12.2). While e-TV's *e-Shibobo* was most popular, it was seen as "good" while *MTN Soccer Zone & Laduma* (both on SABC1) were seen as "excellent" productions. Critically, across the board, most responses from peri-urban youths listed the quality of programmes as "excellent" or "good", whilst the urban youths appeared more discerning and varied in responses. This suggests, possibly the impact of access to more, better quality television programmes – possibly via satellite television.