



DJ at work at Kaya FM.  
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

# Chapter Four South Africa

# 4

This section of the report is based on the South African findings of the *Mirror on the Media* radio talk show monitoring project conducted in four countries, Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Media monitored in South Africa included Kaya FM's *Kaya Talk*, the *Given Mkhari* show on Metro FM, SAFM's *After Eight Debate* and *Afternoon Talk* and Thobela FM's *Taba Kgolo*. The monitoring covered five shows for each programme in June and July 2005. It included quantitative and qualitative analysis of the content as well as interviews held with both listeners and talk show hosts where possible. The methodology and tools used are found in **Annexes 1-3**.

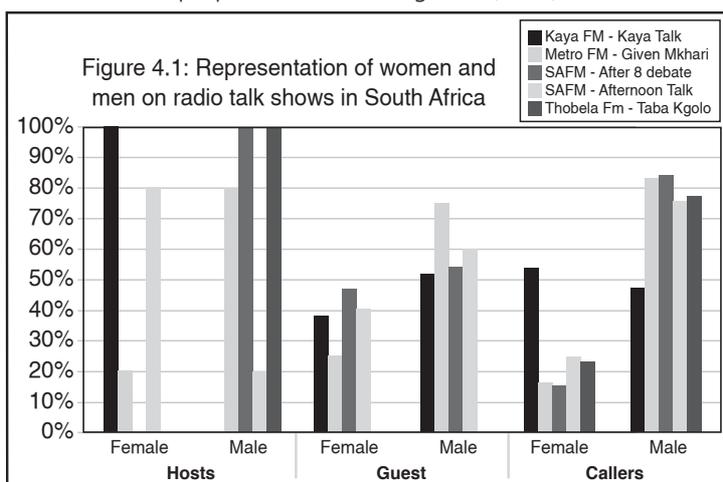
### Key findings

**Women are under represented in all areas of talk shows:** On average, women constituted 25% of the callers to radio talk shows; the same as the average for the study overall, but lower than Lesotho (49%) and Zimbabwe (33%). Of the five South African programmes, *Kaya Talk* had the highest proportion of women callers (53%). The *After Eight Debate* had the lowest proportion of women callers (16 %).

Women comprised only 39% of the guests on the five shows monitored; slightly above the four country average of 36%. Although it had the lowest proportion of women callers, the *After Eight Debate* had the highest representation of female guests (47%). The *Given Mkhari Show* had the lowest proportion of female guests (25%).

Women comprised 40% of the talk show hosts in South Africa: the second highest such proportion in the study which had an average of 32% women hosts.

**Business and the economy dominate:** Business and economic issues dominated discussions during the monitoring period (38%), followed by social issues (30%), current affairs (26%), sport (4%) and entertainment (2%). None of the talk shows monitored focused specifically on women's empowerment or gender equality.



**More women engage on social issues:** The qualitative monitoring suggested that the extent to which women call in could be affected by the topic. For example, the number of women callers increased in programmes on education and health.

**Listeners want to talk about a wider range of issues:** The audience survey found that the most preferred topic of the majority of female listeners (29%) is gender equality and women's empowerment (compared to 8% men). Men most want to talk about current affairs (27%), compared to 15% in the case of women. Both women (27%) and men (21%) have a strong interest in social issues.

**But do not believe it makes a difference whether more women call in to talk shows:** A large percentage of all listeners (54% women and 64% men) believe that it makes no difference to talk shows whether women or men call in. However, a higher percentage of women than men believe that this does make a difference to the quality of the programme.

**Gender dimensions are often not raised in mainstream discussions:** In most instances the talk show hosts did not raise the gender dimensions of mainstream debates.

**But there is evidence of changing attitudes:** Radio talk shows are an excellent barometer of changing attitudes and some of these reflected during the monitoring. For example, in a show on who should be the next deputy president most of the male callers said they thought the next holder of this post should be a woman.

**Gender balance enriches the debate:** The monitoring also showed that shows with greater gender balance had a greater diversity of views and perspectives on such every day issues as whether bringing a new business creates jobs for communities or crowds out local businesses.

### Background and context

Freedom of expression and access to information is enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa. There are several laws, policies and organisations in place to protect and promote press freedom.

Broadcasting in South Africa is better resourced than anywhere else in the region. The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) is the country's public broadcaster. The SABC's national radio network now comprises 18 stations broadcasting in 13 languages, which, combined, reach an average daily adult audience of 19 million. There are currently 15 private radio stations that operate throughout the country.

### Gender and Media in South Africa

The 2002/2003 Gender and Media Baseline (GMBS) study carried out in 12 Southern African countries revealed that women's views and voices are grossly under represented in the media. In South Africa women constituted 19% of news sources, compared to the regional average of 17%.

Snapshot surveys carried out as part of the *Mirror on the Media* project since then show some improvement, with women sources averaging around 25% in many of these studies. Monitoring conducted on Women's Day, 9 August 2004 saw women as sources, on average, increase to 40% of the top ten news items of a cross-section of media surveyed.

The 2004 Gender and Media Audience Study (GMAS) found that a higher proportion of South African women (9%) compared to men (5%) cited news that asks for feedback like letters to the editor and talk shows as amongst their favourite genre. This shows that some women are interested in engaging with the media.

Although unlike many countries in the region audiences in South Africa (and especially women) cited television as their main source of news, equal numbers, and a fairly high proportion of women and men (34%) cited radio as their most important source of news. These combined findings demonstrate the importance of radio, and especially of radio talk shows, in enhancing citizen participation.

### Key events during the monitoring period

The monitoring took place in June 2005. During this month a number of events received media coverage, including:

- The outcome of the Schabir Shaik trial concerning corruption in high places;
- The firing of Deputy President Jacob Zuma;
- The appointment of Phumzile Mlambo-Ngucka as the country's first woman Deputy President.

### Media monitored

The monitoring covered five radio talk shows on four stations.

#### Kaya FM – Private radio broadcaster

Kaya FM broadcasts both music and talk. *Kaya Talk* is a current affairs and lifestyle talk show that takes up topics ranging from HIV/AIDS (Positive Talk every Monday night); entertainment, current affairs and business.

Date	Time	Topic
3 June 2005	19:00-21:00	Celebrating Africans - Dr Tebogo Kogisile
6 June 2005	19:00-21:00	Positive Talk - HIV/AIDS, depression, nutrition, society challenges
14 June 2005	19:00-21:00	The Presidents decision regarding DP Zuma, gun, ownership, international aid, crisis in the mining sector
22 June 2005	19:00-21:00	Investing in people standards, multilateral trade negotiations in WTO, strokes, business opportunities for young people
30 June 2005	19:00-21:00	Entertainment - SA documentary, fundraising, call in question - Is it ever okay to date a friend's ex?

#### Metro FM - Public radio broadcaster

Metro FM is a predominantly music station that also serve the listener's information and education needs. The *Given Mkhari Show* is broadcast daily at 20h00 and 21h00. During this hour talk show discussions centre on politics, economics and business. Metro Fm is aimed at a primarily black listenership.

Date	Time	Topic
9 June 2005	20:00-21:00	Personality profile - Interview with a Real Estate Agent
21 June 2005	20:00-21:00	ANC National General Council Meeting
29 June 2005	20:00-21:00	CEO Feature - Interview with the CEO of Grinrod
4 July 2005	20:00-21:00	Gautrain Rapid RAIL Links Project
6 July 2005	20:00-21:00	Ceo Feature - Interview with CEO of SAA regarding SAA results

#### SAFM – Public radio broadcaster

SAFM is the only TALK FM radio station in South Africa. It covers news stories and provides analysis of current affairs.

AM Live's **After Eight Debate** advertises itself as "first with the news, the insights, the analysis and the debate". It is a programme that debates news and current affairs issues ranging from politics to sports. The debate is structured in such a way that a specific question is posed to guests and callers are encouraged to call in to give their opinions or ask questions of the guests. There are usually three guests on the panel of each show.

Date	Time	Topic
3 June 2005	08:00-09:00	The Shaik judgement - what next, what are the implications for Jacob Zuma?
6 June 2005	08:00-09:00	Are SA companies behaving responsibly enough on the African continent?
14 June 2005	08:00-09:00	Are NGO's struggling for cash?
15 June 2005	08:00-09:00	Did President Mbeki make the right decision regarding DP Jacob Zuma?
30 June 2005	08:00-09:00	Jake White - is this a real truce or simply an uneasy one?

**Afternoon Talk** with Thabiso Sikwane is a "daily dose of thought provoking commentary, humour and a platform to add your voice on a wide range of issues". The show is more socially- oriented and covers a variety of subjects, from politics to arts, culture and lifestyle. The programme attempts to highlight efforts being made by ordinary South Africans in the upliftment of communities. The programme show cases local talent in music and the performing arts.

Date	Time	Topic
6 June 2005	14:00-15:00	SA businesses in Africa
7 June 2005	14:00-15:00	Bank charges, tourism
10 June 2005	14:00-15:00	Sanlam business, Male grooming
21 June 2005	14:00-15:00	Economic empowerment, road safety
22 June 2005	14:00-15:00	Depression

#### **Thobela FM** - Public radio broadcaster

Thobela FM broadcasts in Northern Sotho and offers a combination of music (60%) and talk (40%). *Taba Kgolo* is broadcast daily from 12:00 – 13:00 and covers predominantly current affairs and social issues.

Date	Time	Topic
3 June 2005	12:00-13:00	Conclusion of the Schabir Shaik trial has turned the focus on DP Jacob Zuma
6 June 2005	12:00-13:00	Are South Africans as peace loving as they are said to be?
14 June 2005	12:00-13:00	What decision should President Mbeki take regarding DP Jacob Zuma?
22 June 2005	12:00-13:00	Who should be next Deputy President?
30 June 2005	12:00-13:00	Do winter schools benefit matric students or is it just a money making scheme by those who run them?

## Findings

### Topics

Business and the economy (38%) featured most prominently during the monitoring period, followed by social issues (30%), current affairs (26%), sport (4%) and entertainment (2%).

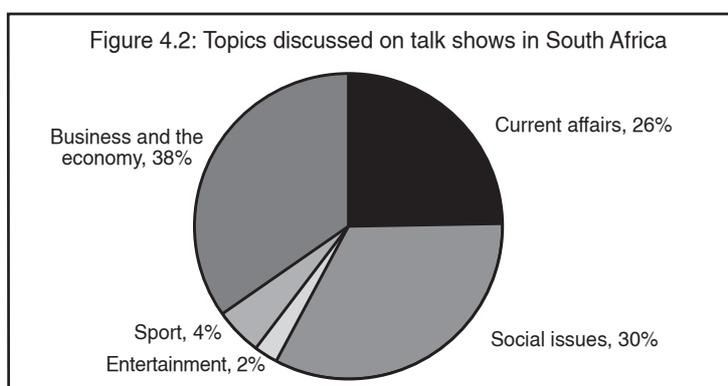


Figure 4.3 shows the variations in topics covered by the different talk shows.

*Kaya Talk* covers predominantly social issues. The *Given Mkhari Show* and *Afternoon talk* covered mostly business and the economy topics. The *After Eight Debate* gave equal time to current affairs and business issues and was the only show to cover any sports-related topics. *Taba Kgalo* covered current affairs and social issues.

Of all of the topics discussed during the monitoring period only one (on male grooming and how boys are socialised) had a gender-specific angle.

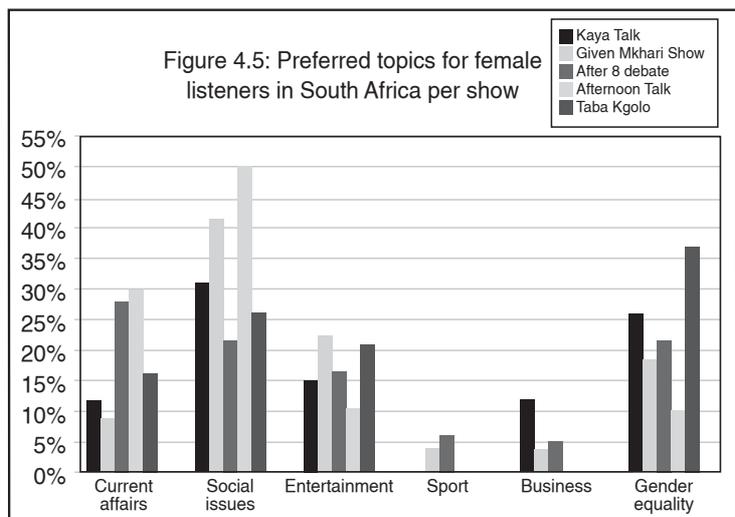
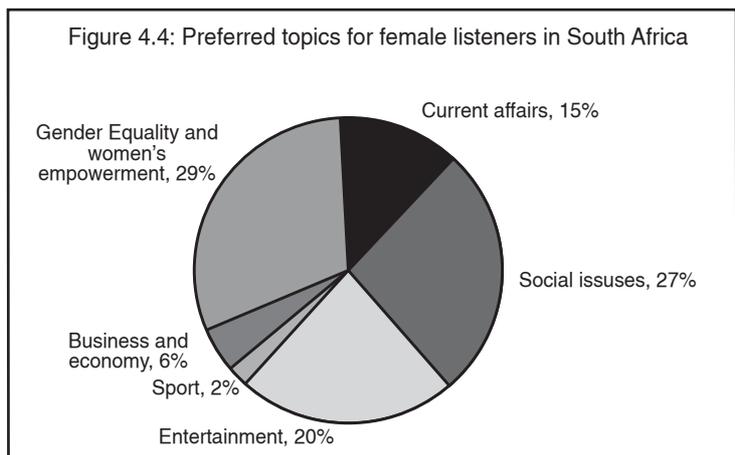
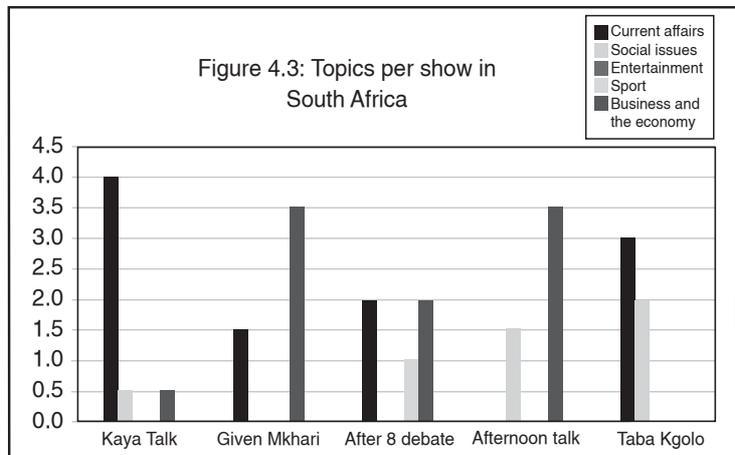
**Who chooses the topics?**

The host and producer of the *After Eight Debate* indicated that there is a debate team which is responsible for choosing the topics. These mostly stem from current news and events.

**What listeners want to talk about**

The audience survey that accompanied this research showed audiences would be interested in debating a broader range of issues than what is currently on the menu. For example, 29% of the women polled said that they would like to talk about gender equality and women’s empowerment issues; followed by social issues (27%), entertainment (20%), current affairs (15%), business and economy (6%) and sports (2%).

Figure 4.5 illustrates the preferred topics for female listeners to specific shows.



The listeners survey findings for men are more in line with the topics discussed, with the majority of men (27%) wanting to talk about current affairs; followed by social issues (21%). Only 8% of the men interviewed want to talk about business and the economy despite this being the issue most discussed during the monitoring period.

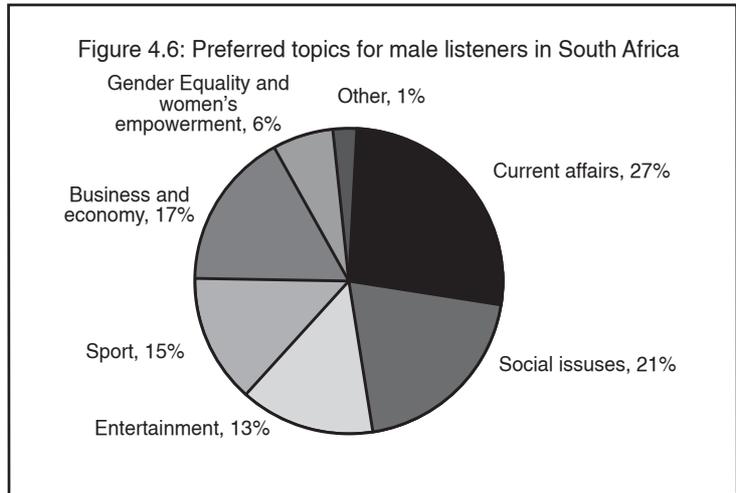
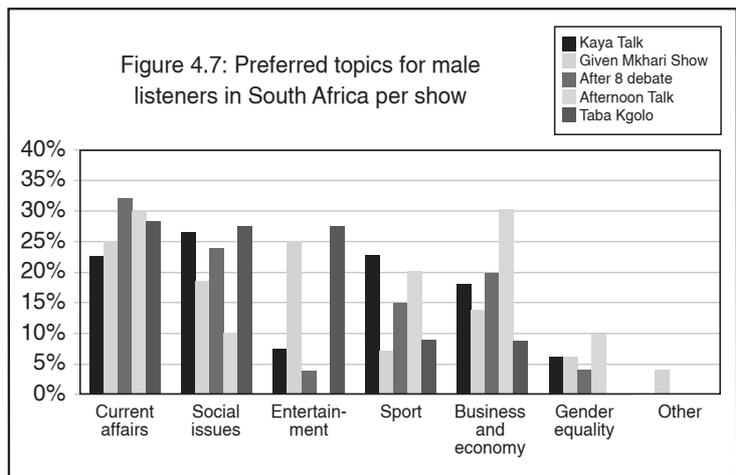


Figure 4.7 illustrates the preferred topics for male listeners on specific shows.

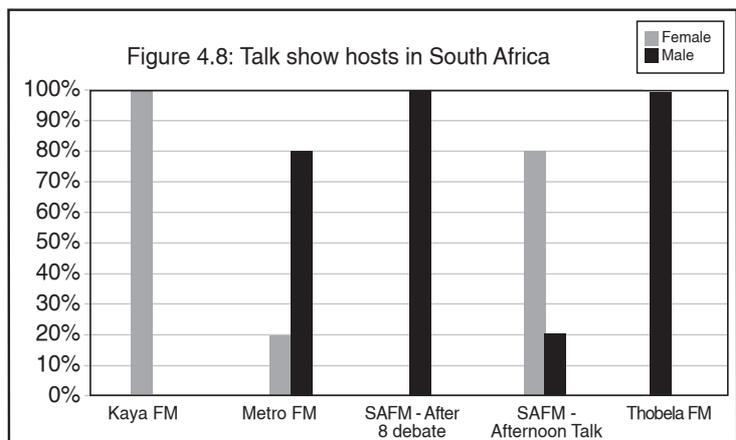


### Hosts

Overall, during the monitoring period more men (60%) than women (40%) hosted radio talk shows. But, as illustrated in figure 4.8, in most instances there was one permanent host for each show who was either female or male.

In most cases the hosts treated callers, both women and men, with respect.

The host of the *After Eight Debate* gave equal time to all guests to have their say. The show is fast moving and very informative with the downside being that callers are not given a lot of time to make their points and are sometimes cut off if they take too long.



The *Kaya Talk* host often gives useful information. For example on the HIV/AIDS show “Positive Talk” she gave information to callers on Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) and ARV’s. The predominantly female listeners appreciated this, but some suggested that the presenter should be joined by a male host. Three listeners, two female and one male said that the host should be less aggressive because by interrupting callers she discourages people from calling in.

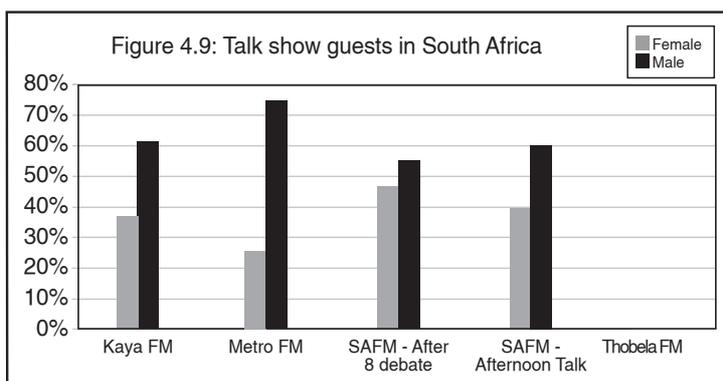
The *Afternoon Talk* host is chatty and tries to make callers feel comfortable. She is always careful to give callers and guests equal time to make their point.

Female listeners on the *Taba Kgolo* show said that the host does little to encourage women to call in to the show and sometimes intimidates callers. In one instance during the monitoring the host asked a female caller whether she understood political issues when she called in to comment on the Schabir Shaik trial. This question was not asked of any of the predominantly male callers.

Two women listeners of the *Given Mkhari Show* also complained that he had a tendency to be aggressive and patronising towards women.

**Guests**

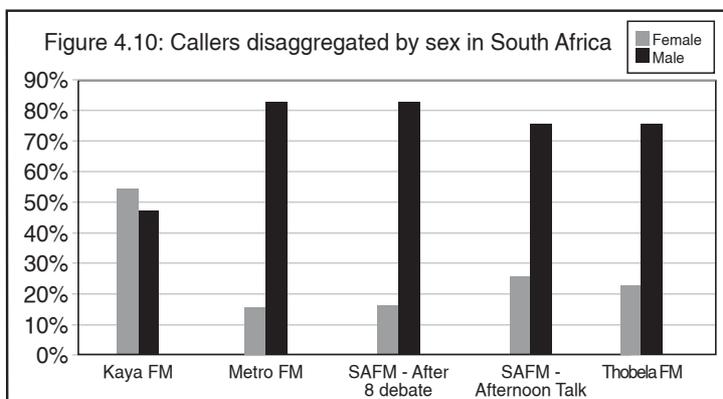
Overall women represented 39% of the guests. As illustrated in figure 4.9 this varied from 47% in the *After Eight Debate* to 40% in *Afternoon Talk* to 38% on *Kaya Talk* to 25% on the *Given Mkhari* show. The *Taba Kgolo* show had no guests, female or male throughout the monitoring period.



The host and producer of the *After Eight Debate* said the most important criteria in inviting guests to the show is to ensure balanced views on the topic being debated. The show did not deliberately go out to get women or men, but rather people qualified to speak on the issues. The host and presenter agreed however that in making choices about guests a conscious effort could be made to include both women and men.

**Callers**

On average, in South Africa women comprised 25% of those who called into talk shows (the second lowest figure of the four countries in the study). The two shows hosted by women had the highest proportion of women callers (*Kaya Talk* at 53% and *Afternoon talk* at 25%). *Taba Kgolo* had 23% female callers, the *Given Mkhari* show 17% and the *After Eight Debate* only 16% female callers.



The audience survey showed that listeners have a good sense of who calls into which shows, with most aware of which programmes attract male and which attract female callers. The host and producer of the *After Eight Debate* are aware of the gender imbalance of callers. They said they would like to change this but were not sure how. *After Eight Debate* listeners suggested that varying the topics more, and a greater allocation of time to callers would encourage more women and young people to call in.

Interestingly, while male callers dominated the *Taba Kgolo* show, the day on which an education related topic was discussed saw female callers increase from an average of 23% to 71%.

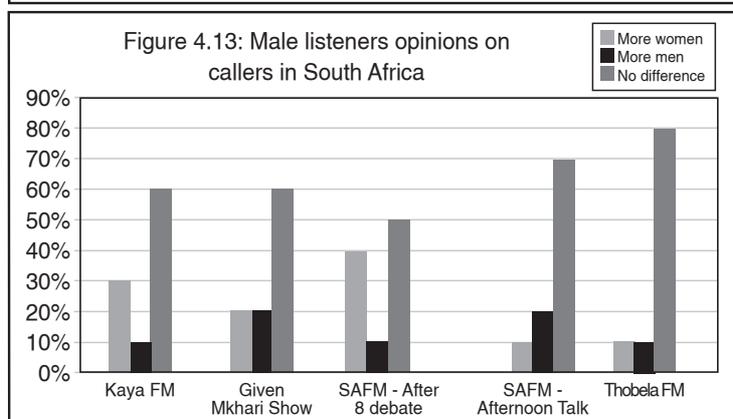
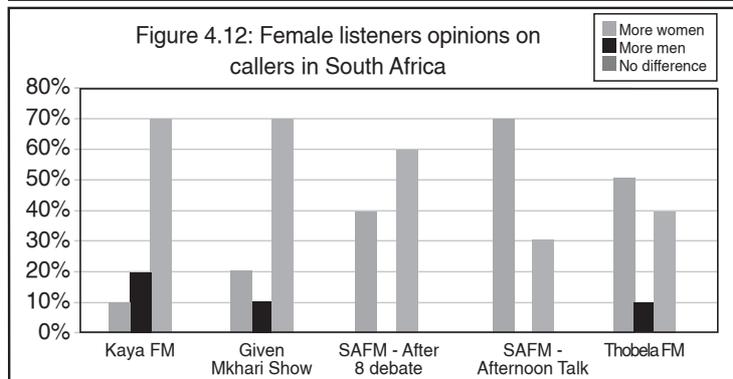
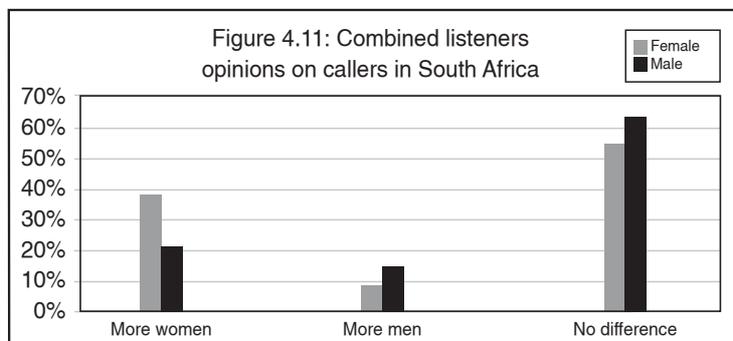
Similarly a discussion on HIV/AIDS on *Kaya Talk* attracted 10 women callers out of the total of 17. When the topic of depression came up on *Afternoon Talk*, the number of female callers shot up. This suggests that there is a direct correlation between the topic being debated and the extent to which women are likely to call in. *Kaya* listeners proposed having a wider variety of topics including current affairs to encourage more men to call in.

Listeners of the talk shows were asked the question – *Would talk shows be more interesting if more women called in, more men called in or it makes no difference?*

The majority of women and men said that it makes no difference to talk shows whether women or men calling in. However 39% women (compared to 21% men) felt that shows would be more interesting if more women called in.

Figure 4.12 illustrates the opinions of female listeners to each show. Listeners of *Afternoon Talk* (70%) and *Taba Kgolo* (50%) believe that radio talk shows would be more interesting if more women called in. 40% of the *After Eight Debate* listeners and 20% of the *Given Mkhari Show* listeners think that more women should call in. The show with the highest number of female callers, *Kaya Talk*, has the highest number of listeners who think that more men callers would make the show more interesting.

Figure 4.13 illustrates the opinions of male listeners to each show. The majority of male listeners on all of the shows are of the opinion that it makes no difference whether it's women or men calling in. 40% of *After Eight Debate* male listeners think that more female callers



would make talk shows more interesting. Contrary to what their female counterparts think, only 10% of male *Afternoon Talk* and *Taba Kgolo* listeners think that more women would make the show more interesting and more of male *Kaya Talk* listeners (30%) think that more women callers would make the show more interesting.

These findings are in contrast to the GMAS where a high proportion of women (66%) said that they would find the news more interesting if the ideas and views of women were reported more often. A higher proportion of men (38%) than women (23%) said that the news would be more interesting and “no different” if the ideas and views of women were reported more often.

### What was said in the programmes

For the most part, the talk show programmes could be described as “gender blind”; that is they neither tackled gender issues specifically nor seized opportunities to explore the gender dimensions of debate when these arose.

*Afternoon Talk* hosted the one debate that had gender specific underpinnings: male grooming. But the topic was dealt with superficially, with no reference to the way men are socialised and how this affects their approach to grooming. The day that President Mbeki announced the appointment of Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the host missed the opportunity to explore what it means to South Africa and the struggle for gender equality to have a woman in this position.

On *Kaya Talk*, which is also hosted by a woman, the discussions on the day of Mlambo-Ngcuka’s appointment covered a range of issues from strokes to business opportunities for youth. The host mentioned the appointment in passing at the end of the show as a day to celebrate and congratulated the new Deputy President. However, another *Kaya Talk* programme illustrated how interesting gender dimensions can be taken up in talk shows when a guest made reference to the almost equal representation of young women at the seminar being discussed. This led to a discussion on the need to develop the confidence of young women. In her entertainment show the presenter show-cased a film produced by a young female documentary maker and highlighted the need to make women part of mainstream film making.

In an interesting indicator of changing attitudes on the part of men, the mostly male callers on the *Taba Kgolo* show on who should be the next Deputy President said they thought that this person should be a woman. One man said he would prefer a woman deputy president because men are more interested in furthering their own ambitions whilst a woman would deliver the services that are required.

One woman said that talk shows like *Taba Kgolo* should use the platform to address gender issues considering most women are in rural areas. Some men who listen to the show also think that different opinions from both sexes will make it more interesting and feel that the host should encourage everyone to participate.

The qualitative monitoring showed that having a mix of women and men led to a greater variety of views which enriched debate. For example in a show on *Afternoon Talk* on South African business in the rest of the continent a female academic took on two male businessmen regarding the perceived lack of interest by South African business in the communities of countries where they invest. This perspective is unlikely to have been raised by another businessman.