Experiences of Social Inequalities Related to Skin Colour Enhanced by Fashion Magazines in South Africa

– A case study on how women in South Africa identify themselves in relation to the representation of race in South African fashion magazines

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Abstract

This study was carried out during the spring of 2013 in Cape Town, South Africa on a Minor Field Study (MFS) scholarship funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

South Africa is a country with a complex society due to the still recent history of Apartheid. South Africa faces great challenges with the gap between rich and poor, high unemployment and deep expertise gaps between the white minority and the historically disadvantaged coloureds and black majority. As a result the contemporary situation there is extensive segregation and difficulties for the multicultural population to conduct a common cultural identity.

The aim of this study is to find out how four South African fashion magazines deals with the representation of black, white and coloured people. Furthermore to find out how South African women from socially diverse areas experience and perceive this representation.

Quantitative content analysis, connotative and denotative picture analysis and the conduction of interviews was made in order to reach a result. Consequently, it turned out that the investigated magazines do not present a fair and equal representation of the South African society, hence highly over representing the white minority in each magazine. Additionally, South African women do not describe the fashion magazines as presenting an equal representation of race, neither that a reality based ideal is being conveyed.
Forewords

First of all I would like to thank SIDA who funded the scholarship that made it possible for me to execute my fieldworks in South Africa. It has been an adventure bursting of experiences and new knowledge valuable for me for the rest of my life.

Furthermore I would like to give special thanks to Lotta Schwarz, for supporting me during the application period and later on for being my supervisor in Sweden. Without your inspiring and motivating help this thesis would probably not have been finished. I would also like to thank my contact person and landlord in Cape Town; Ola Säll for contributing with help and guidance in Cape Town as well as teaching me about South Africa. Thank you also Fatima Dike for your warm welcome and for becoming a mentor educating me about the Capetonian history as well as about the media landscape of South Africa today.

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1. Introduction

During my time at the university one theorist that has been recurrent and has made a great impact on me is Stuart Hall and his theories about race, ethnicity and cultural identity (Hall, 1996:1). Many works which I have read by him has made me reflect a lot about my own identity and the cultural identity of the Swedish society. I believe it is not very complex or complicated for us Swedes, most of us simply feel Swedish and can relate to what it takes to embrace “swedishness”. However Hall argues that identity is affected not only by culture but also by history; hence it is an on-going production rather than a finished product (Hall, 1996:2). Considering this, reading Hall also made me think about other countries and cultures where the cultural identity is not as obvious. These thoughts inspired me to apply for the Minor Field Study (MFS) scholarship which would enable me to visit South Africa for my fieldworks. The scholarship is financed by SIDA, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and arranged by the University of Södertörn. The purpose of MFS is to raise the level of knowledge and interest of Swedish students in international development as well as promoting international understanding and cooperation.

Studying media and communication made me align my research questions on identity to one of my other interests; fashion related press. Considering that the media is central to what is represented as our social realities (Brooks & Hébert, 2006:297) I find it extraordinarily interesting to see how this is manifested in South African fashion magazines. Magazines in all its forms play a significant part in the everyday lives of people of all classes, races, and genders. Therefore, they are an important part of peoples search for identity information as well as defining what it means to be part of a certain class, community or even generation (Cornell Magazines Conference, 2013-05-16). Furthermore I believe many people are strongly influenced and affected personally of what they see in fashion magazines in particular; which makes me concerned of the emotions amongst the women living in such a complex society as South Africa. By complex I mean due to the country’s heavy yet recent history of apartheid which has contributed to contemporary problems in search of belonging and identity in the South African society.

Consequently, the reason I specifically wanted to go to South Africa for my minor field study was because of the country’s history. The fact that apartheid still is part of modern history makes the area very unique for my thesis. South Africa is today often described as a “miracle”
concerning its peaceful transition from authoritarian minority rule to democracy in only two decades. However, the country still faces great challenges and many problematic issues such as the gap between rich and poor, high unemployment and deep expertise gaps between the white minority and the historically disadvantaged black majority (UD: 2008).

Concerning the modern society Cape Town is today, still carrying these social issues, I believe media’s representation of specific groups or certain parts of the population can provoke very strong feelings. These feelings possibly become even stronger all the more the individual members of the special group feel attached to it, can identify with it, and get their identity through the membership of the group (Gripsrud, 2002: 27-29).
2. Aim and Purpose

The purpose of the thesis is to develop an indication of compliance in South African media. My aim is to bring light to how four selected South Africa produced fashion magazines deals with the representation of black, white and coloured people. I intend to find out to what extent they are being equally represented as well as analyzing if they are represented in likewise. Furthermore I intend to bring understanding on how women in South Africa experience the race representation in the investigated magazines.

Considering the increasing space and power of media in today's society and the greater accessibility most people have to it, this seems to be creating an even clearer image of what an “icon” or ideal is. Hence, I intend to bring understanding to how this is manifested in South Africa being a multicultural society (Havel in Benhabib Seyla, 2002). Moreover, through interviews and connotative picture analysis I want to bring understanding to how South African women from socially diverse areas in Cape Town experience and perceive the represented ideal in these contexts, as well as, if this perception varies depending on social class and ethnicity.

My choice of thesis ponder in the problems concerning in what way black, white and coloured ideals are represented in these contexts. I aim to find out what the social images conveyed in those magazines are, and if South African women can relate and identify themselves to these. Alongside with these aims I intend to find out to what extent Pierre Bourdieu’s theory about Habitus (Bourdieu, 1990) is applicable amongst women in the South African society, and if there is such a thing as a common understanding of cultural identity (Hall, 1996) in South Africa.

2.1. Research Questions

- How do South African women experience the way skin colour is represented in South Africa produced fashion magazines?
- How do South African fashion magazines enhance skin colour related social differences amongst women in South Africa?
I aim to bring forward the importance of how media chooses to portray the representation of race in South Africa and what consequences and results this may or may not lead to. I will use theories considering the concept of habitus and cultural identity as well as semiotics to problematize this. The result of this study should help people to understand the importance of equal representation in fashion magazines in order for South African women to be able to feel belonging and identification amongst each other.
3. Terminology and Definitions

3.1. Definition of the Word ‘Race’

The South African population refers to themselves in four different categories of race. Black, white, coloured and Asian. In this essay I will sometimes use the word ‘race’ when I refer to the skin colour of a person. The definition of the word race in South Africa is the same as referring to skin colour or ethnicity. However, the word race may appear a little bit harsh and explicit to a western reader, despite this I have chosen to use this word in order to be as clear as possible since I realized during my time in South Africa that using the expression ‘skin colour’ lead to confusion amongst South Africans since they are used to the word race in those contexts.

3.2. Naming of Colour

In my study I will use the terms black, white and coloured when I refer to the population of South Africa. A white person in South Africa is called Afrikaner, and is of Cape Dutch and Boer origin. A black person in South Africa is a person of any African tribe. A coloured is someone who is either an Indian or a person of mixed race, including Khoisan, African, Malay, Chinese, and white (Oxford Dictionaries, 2013).

In contemporary South Africa the definition of black, coloured and white people simply signifies the actual race and consequently their skin colour, hence there is no value in the word. Consequently, the reason I use these concepts in my study is because the South African society still divides the population into categories depending on the colour of their skin.

3.3. Black and White Magazines

There are black and white lifestyle and fashion magazines in South Africa. The “white” magazines do not necessarily refer to themselves as “white” magazines but I have understood that this is how South Africans refer to them. Nevertheless, they do target the minority white wealthy population according to the contents of the magazines. However, many black magazines do describe themselves as targeted against black/African women. Furthermore, the content of these magazines shows that they turn to the lower income population according to the prizing of the presented products.

True Love is a black fashion magazine describing themselves as follows:
“True Love is the iconic South African fashion, beauty and lifestyle magazine for black women. It is the recommended handbook and style guide for women who believe that their magazine should be stylish and thought provoking. True Love is an indispensible [sic] accessory that inspires, comments, entertains and advises modern African women.” (Media 24, 2013)

Moreover, the price of black magazines is between 8,50-25 Rand which is about 5-18 kronor. White magazines are more expensive; between 30-40 Rand each which is about 22-40 kronor. Apparently, all of the international magazines I had chosen for my analysis are all white magazines. I have based the explanations of the magazines above on their own descriptions at their websites, as well as based on what my respondents have told me.
4. Delimitations of the Study

There is much to say about the topic of my thesis, therefore I will outline the delimitations being made in the field of my study.

Shortly after my arrival to South Africa and Cape Town I realized how much more complex the society was than I could ever had imagined in beforehand. I came with a vision and goal to spend my first time exploring and searching for answers in order to get an overall understanding of the society in Cape Town.

On the first meeting with my contact person Ola Säll I was told that it is “mission impossible” to understand South Africa in only eight weeks, meaning that many things does not make sense and that there are issues and difficulties in the structure of the society at so many levels. Ola has lived in Cape Town for 20 years and claims to still learn new things about the South African society every day.

Furthermore, one of the first things I learned from Ola was that I was not going to convey a fair picture of the South African society only looking at the representation of black and white people, which I was first intending to do. Explaining to me that officially, the population is divided into four racial groups: Africans/blacks, Coloureds, Asians and white Europeans. Despite the fact that coloureds are separated into two categories, Ola suggested that I could bring together Asians and coloureds into one category in my study in order to make it easier to go forward.

Other delimitations of my study is that I have chosen not to focus on TV, radio or internet. As mentioned earlier, one part of my study will be based on the conduction of the representation of black, white and coloured people in the South African editions of four international fashion magazines. However in my analyse of these magazines I will not consider text, since my interest lies in visual communication.

In addition to this, I have due to my limited time in Cape Town, narrowed down the scope and only chosen one issue from each magazine. I presume that the reporting in these magazines gives me a general picture of what the representation of race usually is like. To broaden my understanding on South African fashion magazines in general I have in addition to my main
analyse also looked into the black fashion and lifestyle magazines True Love, Move Magazine and Bona (see appendix 2).

Another part of my study is to conduct focus group interviews with women from socially diverse areas. I have chosen to only interview women since the magazines of my study are targeted towards women. Although my interviews only focus on women's view, I will to the extent possible associate and draw general assumptions for all social ranges.

English and Afrikaans used to be the dominant languages in South Africa but by the end of apartheid the number of official languages increased with nine African Bantu languages (Landguiden, 2011). I did not see any fashion magazines in African languages; however, there are fashion and lifestyle magazines in Afrikaans that could have been suitable for my study. Nonetheless, due to my lack of understanding Afrikaans I have only included English magazines in this study.
5. Background

This chapter will enhance a brief historical and contemporary description of South Africa, in addition to this it will problematize the current segregation that still exists in the South African society.

5.1. General Facts about South Africa

South Africa is the largest economy of Africa with a population of 50 million people. Furthermore, the country has the highest BMP in Africa at 7 585 USD (53 104 Swedish kronor) per person (Landguiden, 2011).

South Africa has three capital cities; Pretoria, where the government is situated, Cape Town where the Parliament is, and Bloemfontein where the Supreme Court has its headquarters. The African National Congress (ANC) has been the ruling political party since the fall of apartheid in 1994, and the current president is Jacob Zuma (Landguiden, 2011).

The South African population consists of four racial categories as mentioned earlier; black, white, Indian and coloured. The population is often referred to as the “Rainbow Nation” because of its great cultural diversity. There are eleven official languages in the country, Afrikaans which is a simplified version of Dutch, English is the language being used socially and in media, and the lingua franca¹. The remaining nine languages are African languages: Xhosa, Zulu, Ndebele, Northern Sotho, Sotho, Swazi, Tswana, Tsonga and Venda.

There are extremely big gaps socially in the South African society where the white population is obtaining one of the highest living standards in the world, while the black population is in general extremely poor. The average person lives 52 years which is a very low number, some of the main reasons for this is that South Africa has the highest percentage of HIV/AIDS infected people in the world; 21,5 percent of the population, combined with low living standards amongst the black (Globalis 2013, Landguiden 2013, Ola Säll 2013-03-05).

¹ Lingua Franca is a language used to communicate between people who don’t share the same mother tongue
5.2. **South Africa and Apartheid**

Apartheid or “the state of being apart” was enforced through legislation by the National Party ruling from 1948 to 1994 in South Africa. The National Party was ruled by Afrikaner who through conservative politic tools aimed to promote the culture of “their” people, the white minority of South Africa – Afrikaner. The African National Party (ANC) with Nelson Mandela and many others leaders of significance was the National Party’s greatest threat during the whole period. However, in 1962 Mandela was arrested for sabotage and conspiracy to overthrow the government, and spent the following 27 years in prison along with many other political prisoners (Landguiden, 2010).

During the election of 1948 the official policy of apartheid was introduced, thus the rights of the majority black and coloured inhabitants were curtailed and white supremacy was a fact during this period (Landguiden, 2011).

Apartheid was a system of racial categorization protected by the law of which classified all South Africans into three basic racial categories (Seeking, 2008:3). A white person was in general appearance accepted as a white person, hence this did not include a coloured person who in general obviously looked like a white person. A native or also known as a black person was accepted as a member of any aboriginal race or tribe of Africa while a coloured person was someone who was not a white nor a native (Seeking, 2008:3).

Consequently the category of coloureds was complex and diverse including the offspring’s of relationships between black and white people as well as from the “Malay” slaves from South East Asia², and of the native Khoi and San³ (Seeking, 2008:3).

This systematic racial classification was needed in order for the government to achieve the three aims with apartheid.

The first aim was ideological, there should be no marriage or sexual intercourse between the different races. This because of wanting to maintain racial purity, hence preventing the “mixing” of “white blood”. To accomplish this and to prevent possible temptation there was residential segregation by race which led to the forced removal of almost one million people. Mostly coloureds were affected and removed from mixed residential areas when they were...

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² The ‘Malay’ slaves were brought from Indonesia to Africa to work as slaves especially in the Cape Province (Landguiden, 2011).
³ Khoi and Sun is now called Khoisan, a native African tribe who used to live in the whole area south of Sahara in Africa. However after being displaced by farmers they now live in the Kalahari Desert (Landguiden, 2011)
declared ‘white’ areas. In addition to this segregation was developed in to all other areas of social interaction. There were established schools and universities for each racial group, there were separate railways for each race, most public facilities such and parks and benches were also segregated. At some places like post offices and railway stations where complete segregation was not possible partial segregation was introduced providing separate entrances and counters (Seeking, 2008:3-4).

The second aim was to first establish a “privileged economic situation” (Seeking, 2008:4) to later be able to remain this position by reserving land for white people as well as making sure that whites had better paid professions. Furthermore the apartheid state made sure that children from poorer white families were put in privileged positions in the labor market and there were large investments in the education for white children (Seeking, 2008:4).

The third main aim of apartheid was to make sure that the political dominance was held by the white minority. At the beginning of apartheid, during the 1950’s the focus was on removing the coloureds right to vote. When that was accomplished the main concern was the political threat by the black majority, or the “swart gevaar”, meaning “black danger” in Afrikaans. Doing this the apartheid state restricted the political rights of black people to their homelands while they also devolved power towards chiefs and semi-elected. The apartheid state wanted to restrict the political rights of black people to the “Bantustans” or “homelands” as they called it. First they targeted chosen chiefs, and after that ‘Homelands governments’ (Seeking, 2008:4).

The apartheid state accomplished all those aims which consequently changed the whole society of South Africa. Inequality was a fact and suppression lead to enormous consequences for the non-white population to feel South African and to find their identity (Seeking, 2008:5). However, apartheid did not manage to change the country’s demographics and the white minority was too small to maintain economic growth. Leading to that they during the 1980’s gradually and slowly were forced to reduce the discrimination in public welfare. However they were not willing to give up, which lead to many years of struggle trying to keep the apartheid alive, while the ANC (The African National Congress party) and the whole population of non-whites fought for freedom. Finally, during country-wide revolt as well as

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4 The black population was forced to move into 'homelands’ which were established for each African tribe around South Africa (Landguiden, 2011)
pressure from the rest of the world apartheid came to an end and in April 1994 and the first
democratic election was made (Seeking, 2008:4-5). Along with the fall of apartheid all
political prisoners including Nelson Mandela was released. A new era of freedom now started
in South Africa with the ANC and their new leader Nelson Mandela.

“I have walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter; I have made missteps
along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only
finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal
a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come.
But I can only rest for a moment, for with freedom come responsibilities, and I dare not
linger, for my long walk is not ended.” (Nelson Mandela, 1995)

This quote from Nelson Mandela is still highly relevant today, for there is still not equality
and people of South Africa still struggle to achieve the goals that Mandela set up in 1994.
Hence the atrocious history is still part of modern time and has made a great impact on how
the population of South Africa relate to each other as well as in their still ongoing struggle
towards an equal society.

5.3. **Racial Categorization and Segregation in Cape Town Today**

I have put a lot of effort into trying to somewhat understand the complexity of the South
African society. I have done so through long and informative conversations and interviews
with people living in Cape Town. Even though South Africa is often referred to as the
“rainbow nation” meaning a multi-cultural society and a role model for other African
countries there are still big and very complicated issues in the society. Much has happened
since the fall of apartheid and people of diverse races in South Africa do follow the same
laws, however there is still a long way to equality.

There is a large majority of black people living in Cape Town, however many of them feel
like they live under suppression and they do to a great extent live in townships and rural areas
with very poor conditions. Many of the black people I have talked to feel like they are still not
“free”. They feel trapped and put in a box in their native country. They don’t feel as if they
have the same rights or opportunities to get high rate jobs, in the same extension as white
people do. Many of them do not consider themselves being welcome to buy a home in a
“white area”, and they do not feel like they are being treated with respect in the same extent as
white and coloured people are. “When I entre a shop that I obviously could never afford to
“buy anything in, I receive suspicious and not very pleasant looks from the staff. A white person wouldn’t experience that.” (Thandekile, 2013-03-22)

However white people also feel suppressed in some ways. They feel like there has been a ‘reversed racism’ in the last couple of years. The younger generation, who were hardly born during apartheid, feels like they have to pay the price for the past. “A white male would struggle to find work, a black male would not” says Aletta, a white South African during our interview at STILL (Aletta, 2013-04-02). Furthermore she tells me that there is a program called BEE (Black Economic Empowerment, today renamed B-BBEE = Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment) which regulates that there has to be a black majority on a company that reads under the BEE. The aim of this program is to give previously disadvantaged groups the privileges they did not obtain during apartheid (Bee 123, 2012, Seeking, 2008:8). Aletta thinks this is necessary to encourage and help black people getting high rate jobs, but still believes it causes problems for them (the whites) and in some ways are “sending out the wrong message” (Aletta, 2013-04-02). She believes it pushes the differences between the races further and does not help the common population to think in non-racial terms.

Interaction between races is a big issue in South Africa. Most suburbs and communities established post-apartheid are as segregated as the neighborhoods established during apartheid. Prices of houses and land make it almost impossible for the majority of low-income African families to move into middle-class suburbs (Seeking, 2008:12). Consequently, people live in highly segregated areas where white people provides high walls around their houses and alarms connected to armed security, black people live in rural areas or townships without any security at all. Coloured people do also live in separated townships, but do to a greater extent than black people also live in communities with security and real houses.

Despite the existing economic hinders to integration, and the fact that people may have been forced to move to certain areas during apartheid it is a fact that now, many years after apartheid, people are to some extent making choices themselves to continue residential segregation. In Cape Town it is very clear that African and coloured households with growing incomes choose to continue living in mono-racial neighborhoods. Proving that wealth and income are no longer the main reasons for residential choice in Cape Town (Seeking, 2008:12).
This is equivalent to the impression I got during my many conversations with black Africans. I got to know a lady during my time in Cape Town, she was about 65 years old and lived in a township called Langa. Langa is located in the suburbs of Cape Town and is the oldest township in the area. The population in Langa is about 50 000 people were of 99,6 per cent of the population is black, the 0,4 per cent is coloured (Fatima Dike, 2013). My friend is today around 65 years old and she has been living in Langa since she was born, apart from a couple of years in her youth when she lived in New York. The years away from Langa made her homesick and when she returned from America she never again left Langa, even though she financially probably could have. She explained to me that being close to family, friends, roots and culture belonging is far more important than living “a high standard life”. I also heard stories about black people having so much money that they bought an apartment in the Cape Town City Centre, but instead of moving there they lend the apartment to others. In order to earn more money rather than living a high standard life.

There are however four communities in the Cape Town area where state driven low-income housing projects (helping poor people to get proper homes) has developed in middle-class suburbs; Masiphumelele in Noordhoek, Westlake near Muizenberg, Marconi Beam in Milnerton and Imizama Yethu in Hout Bay (Seeking, 2008:12). The latter where I lived during my stay in South Africa. Even though people live close to each other in those areas, unfortunately this does not necessarily lead to much interaction. People of different income consequently ask for diverse social needs, they go shopping at different supermarkets; low-income people make use of the public transport, whereas the middle-class uses private transport (Seeking, 2008:15). In Hout Bay where I lived during my eight weeks in Cape Town I clearly witnessed this. At Woolworths which is the most “exclusive” supermarket in South Africa I don’t think I ever saw one single black or coloured person, except from the staff which was 100 per cent black and coloured. At the Shopping Centre in Hout Bay there were hardly any black or coloured people either. However at Checkers which is the cheapest supermarket in Hout Bay the majority visitors were black and coloured. This separation may be obvious according to the differences in incomes, however at public areas like the beach and at markets and restaurants in the area there were mainly white visitors as well.

In addition to the state-driven housing projects for low incomers mentioned above, the government also makes efforts to build communities with a “village atmosphere” not allowing high fences to separate the neighbors from each other (instead the whole suburb is walled).
However residents of different race does not yet seem to be entirely ready to be living in a mixed community close to each other (Seeking, 2008:15). A good example of this is the new private housing areas where people have been moving by own will. People here live close to each other and most residents, especially the ones moving in from coloured or black areas are happy about the security but still they have nearly no contact with their neighbors. However Seeking describes in his article *The Continuing of Race: Discrimination and Diversity in South Africa* white people complaining about neighbors having “low class behavior”, and about one white man who did not want his children to play with black children because of the risk of AIDS (Seeking, 2008:14).

This shows a pretty clear picture of the current and complex situation of segregation in South Africa. The racial and cultural differences continue to play an important part in the making of identity and belonging (Seeking 2008:8). However race does not exclusively have anything to do with class anymore, even though class is important and makes the contemporary segregation even more tangible. South Africans tend to have many different identities; black, white, coloured or Indian, as well as “South Africans”. Increasingly they are in addition to this also likely to refer to class identities; working class, middle class or poor. Many also tend to refer to religious identities, or lingual ones like Xhosa, Zulu or Afrikaans (Seeking, 2008:6).
6. Previous Research

Many studies have been carried through within the field of media and communication on race representation and identity in the media and in the press. However it seems to be little research done on race representation in fashion magazines in the country of South Africa.

One of many studies made in the field of race and identity in media is done by Brooks and Hebért. The study is called *Gender in Communication* in which essentialist ways of thinking about representing race and gender is ripped into pieces, and they problematize the ideal the media create by portraying different ideals for black and white women. The ideals are extreme and almost impossible to achieve; black women are urged to have large breasts, thin waist and round buttocks. Whereas the ideal for white women is being extremely tall and slim with long hair and green or blue eyes. Brooks & Hebért also brings up the paradox when these ideals collide and when for example black women strive towards the westernized ideal with light skin and a body that is not natural for them. They argue that it is harmful for young women to have such portraits as their ideals and also that it is confusing the ability to feel belonging and identification in women of other race (Brooks & Hebért, 2006).

Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni has done deep and historical research to bring light on the problematic process of South African identity making. Gatsheni brings up the complexity and difficulties of getting rid of racialised and ethnicised identities coming from colonialism and apartheid periods and how these issues lead to conflicts with nativity versus settlerism. Gatsheni investigates how these questions lead to difficulties in knowing who is entitled to what in the society where whites use constitution to maintain the current privilege while Africans try to establish rights and privileges as part of the compensation of the past and the present segregations (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012).

Nadia Sanger has done a research during 2003-2006 called *New women, old messages? Constructions of femininities, race and hypersexualised bodies in selected South African magazines*. Sanger discusses the different ways of racialised femininities being presented as hyper(hetero)sexual in different ways in three South African Magazines; Femina, Fair Lady and True Love. Sanger has been looking on advertises in these magazines which is about ideals and how a woman “should” be like and look like. Sanger finds out that there is a certain “black femininity” which is located within African discourses, promoting black women to ‘ethnicity’ and ‘culture’, to “be Africa”. While white women not are included in this ideal but
are forced towards a ‘cultureless’ norm located within the more westernized ideals (Sanger, 2009).

7. Theoretical Framework

The following chapter will present the theoretical framework used in my study.

7.1. Pierre Bourdieu, Habitus and Doxa

Pierre Bourdieu was a sociologist and anthropologist who is a common name in media and communication research as well as in feminism studies. Bourdieu invented the concept of *habitus* to reveal the power relations in social life. He considered it crucial to resolve a noticeable antinomy of subjectivism and objectivism hence came up with the concept of habitus. His concepts of habitus, field and capital is a great tool in order to make sense of the relationship between objective social structures like institutions, ideologies and discourses and with everyday practices; what people do and how they do it (Webb, Schirato and Danaher) 2002:1). Habitus is something individual that each and every agent emerges from their reality, namely their *doxa*. Doxa is a set of values and discourses which turns out to be the fundamental principles that each and every agent in a certain field believe is the true and compulsory reality (Webb, 2002:xi).

“Thus, the habitus implies a ‘sense of one’s place’ but also a ‘sense of the other’s place’” (Bourdieu, 1990:131) meaning that the position in the social space differs depending on what social levels and classes the agents fall into. It is considerable that the established habitus, thus might impact on the way a person experience, relate and perceive things. Furthermore, it is interesting to consider if it may is possible for the individual habitus to contribute in the establishing of the doxa in a certain group of people.

In consideration to this it seems interesting to investigate how the concept of habitus and doxa becomes particularly clear and distinguished in certain countries in the world where identity and ethnical belonging is of great importance. As a consequence of South Africa’s history with apartheid and still ongoing greatness of segregation the population has established great values in finding their identity.
7.2. Cultural Identity

Cultural studies and social theory has long been minted by a debate regarding cultural identity (Hall, 1996:1). The question is about whether or not the definition of social and cultural identity is moving from the classic identities of race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity and nationality to be more about new forms of “identification and fragmenting the modern individual as a unified subject” (Hall, 1996:1). This is interesting to consider in this study in order to be able to combine a number of identities to create something that is possible to apply in a country like South Africa where a number of cultural traditions exist.

It is argued that the distinctions and sharp lines between different cultures are being more and more blurred due to globalization (Hylland Eriksen, 1999:17). However there are and will always in some extent be cultural variation in the world. People will always have different mother tongues, belong to different religions and have knowledge and skills about diverse things.

Thomas Hylland Eriksen describes in his book *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Etnicitet och nationalism) that a great combination of ethnical groups is enriching and of great importance for the social and individual development of the world. He describes how countries like these have to focus on solidarity between each other as well as the importance in defining each other as “members of the same nation” (Hylland Eriksen, 1993:129). However, he also brings up the difficulties when ethnical differences don’t succeed to complement each other but instead causes disintegration.

Perhaps this is what happens in countries with a history of colonialism or historical eras concerning mistreatment of specific groups of the population, such as apartheid. Hylland Eriksen argues that this even can lead to discrimination of minority groups (Hylland Eriksen, 1993:40). Thus, South Africa’s apartheid regime’s mistreatment of blacks and coloureds shows how easy it is to obscure a whole nation’s ability to behave and identify themselves as a united “multicultural” nation (Havel in Benhabib, 2002:1). I will take this into consideration throughout the work and in the later analysis of my research. In addition, the concept of cultural identity will be examined and analyzed in relation to the South African society.
7.3. Two Steps of Meaning: Denotation and Connotation

During the 1960’s linguist Roland Barthes further developed some already established concepts within the field of linguistics, namely, the definition of denotation and connotation (Gripsrud, 2002:142). These concepts aim to distinguish between each other in terms of that a sign varies between time and space. The content is changeable, thus the same sign can have different meanings for different people during different times. The denotation regards what we actually see when we look at something, thus is more or less a fixed definition. While the connotations are established culturally, thus are not associations which are individual and personal thoughts about something. Consequently, one can think of a connotation as a collective-association (Gripsrud, 2002:142-144).

As mentioned earlier, each individual person holds certain individual experiences as well as “cultural competent” which together forms a doxa. This doxa makes us all connote different things from a certain picture or item (Fodge in Ekström & Larsson, 2010:183). However, both the connotative and the denotative meanings are regulated by codes that follow certain rules that commit expression and content to one another (Gripsrud, 2002:144).

In addition, connotations regarding a certain place, picture, being or item may be changed over time and space, hence, will connote different things to people of different habitus and doxa. The fact that an individual person’s habitus or a specific group’s doxa affects the ability to make connotations is an interesting aspect to consider in my research. A meaningful part of my research involves a connotative picture analysis made by my respondents. Analyzing the result of these will possibly implicate and include a consideration of many of the concepts and theories mentioned above.
8. Methods

8.1. Focus Group Interviews
I chose to do focus group interviews for the greatest part of my research because I thought it would be the most successful method for my study and that I needed to learn about the context. I wanted to induce a discussion and lively conversation between my respondents in order to get as spontaneous and honest answers as possible concerning the questions I wanted to bring forward. This made me organize a structured interview with a couple of themes and questions that I wanted the discussion to focus on (Ekström & Larsson, 2010:83).

This method requires some extensive planning putting together the focus groups in order to get the most successful combination of respondents. The research question decides the content and size of the focus groups as well as how structured the interview should be (Nilsson, 2010:81). Regarding the size of the group experts tend to disagree since some insist that it is not possible for more than four people to be active in a conversation at the same time, while others think that twelve people is the maximum amount. Most experts think that three or four groups is the optimal in order to be able to read as much as possible from the material (Nilsson, 2010:81). In addition to this it is important to consider the combination of members of the group, whether or not it should be homogeneous or heterogeneous. Doing this decision one should mainly look at education, social background and interests. Many experts considers it crucial to use homogeneous groups since that tend to help the members being honest and speaking more when they bond with the other members of the group (Nilsson, 2010:81)

8.1.1. The Respondents

Focus Group 1 at Still⁵ in Woodstock, Cape Town 2013-04-02
Three white girls called Farran 27, Aletta 25 and Carla 22 years old. They all have university degrees and are currently working as retouchers at a media agency in Cape Town.

Focus Group 2 at Stellenbosch University in Stellenbosch 2013-04-15
Two white girls called Louzel 22, and Megan 22 years old. One coloured girl Bronwyn 21 years old. They are currently studying journalism.

⁵ Still is a retouching agency
Focus Group 3 at Project Playground in Langa, Cape Town 2013-04-18

One black woman called Hazel around 45 years old and one coloured girl Aimee around 25 years old. Both are currently working at the nonprofit organization Project Playground.

8.2. Qualitative Interviews

Like mentioned earlier my main interview method was focus groups however at three occasions I only had one respondent showing up, making it impossible to form a group for discussion. Luckily, a qualitative interview is also a suitable method for my study with an aim to get new information that was not possible to predict on beforehand such as opinions, values and reflections about a certain theme (Østbye et al, 2003:102). In order to get as much information as possible from my respondents I conducted semi-structured interviews with a couple of themes leading the respondent in a preferred direction however this is a time and effort consuming method since it requires a great deal of planning before, during, and after the implementation (Østbye et al, 2003: 101-102).

In addition to this, a qualitative interview is a suitable method since it is flexible in its implementation giving me as the moderator many opportunities to ask follow-up questions, making it easier for me to make sure I cover everything in my interview-guide. To be able to listen as carefully as possible making sure I understood everything my respondents said, I used a recorder during all the interviews making me not being forced to write everything down. Furthermore to keep the source in its original, making it possible for me to be able to go back and listen to the interview whenever I want to.

8.2.1. The Respondents

Qualitative interview 1 at an internet café in Langa, Cape Town 2013-03-22

Two black women called Thandekile 35 years old unemployed and Meme 34 years old a columnist at City Vision⁶.

Qualitative interview 2 at a Hair dressing saloon in Langa, Cape Town 2013-03-22

A black woman called Babalwa 50 years old working as a cashier.

⁶ City Vision is a free weekly community newspaper for the black townships around Cape Town (www.media24.com)
Qualitative Interview 3 at Artscape Theatre in Cape Town, 2013-04-17

A coloured woman called Viola 35 years old. Working at the finance section at the Artscape Theatre in Cape Town.

8.3. Conducting of Interviews

Being in South Africa made the recruiting process a little bit difficult for me since I only knew a limited amount of people there. Considering this I more or less recruited all the women I came along through the people and informants I got to know along the way. This method is often referred to as the snowball-effect (May, 2001) meaning that the informants help the researcher get in contact with other respondents (May, 2001).

This resulted in three focus group interviews with three respondents in each group. In addition to these focus groups I executed three qualitative interviews.

I started each interview by introducing myself and my study since many of them did not know much more than that I was a Swedish student in South Africa doing fieldworks for my bachelor thesis when they agreed on being interviewed. I informed the respondents about what I was aiming to do with their answers as well as their ability to remain anonymous if they wished so. However none of my respondents asked to remain anonymous. After doing that I began following my interview-guide which consisted of concrete questions to start off in order to make my respondents feel comfortable with the situation. Moving on to questions requiring some more reflection, finishing with potential critical and controversial questions towards the end (Østbye et al, 2003:105).

In my two last focus group interviews I focused on letting the respondents do a connotative picture analysis which I will explain further in the next excerpt.

In all cases the interviews were conducted at a place that the respondents were familiar with. I believe this is a very important aspect in making the respondents feel secure and safe about themselves in a sometimes bright new situation. Hence I organized all interviews at either their office, University or other suitable place.
8.3.1. **Preparing for Interview analysis**

The interviews were transcribed in order to be able to analyze and identify contexts and patterns in the themes of the discussion (Larsson, 2010:80). Since no linguistics was to be analyzed the transcription was simplified hence did not include pauses or hesitations, however focusing on factual content (Moberg in Ekström & Larsson, 2010:200). Only some words such as humming or laughing are in some extent included if they strengthen or contribute to the validity and reliability, other than that the transcription is made word by word (Moberg in Ekström & Larsson, 2010:198, Kvale, 1997:213).

8.4. **Quantitative Content Analysis**

The quantitative content analysis is a suitable method when the aim is to investigate the occurrence of different categories of content in a certain material (Nilsson, 2010:119). In addition to this a quantitative content analysis aims to bring forward the specific from the general (Nilsson, 2010:119) and the aim of my investigation was to find out to what extension certain groups of race was represented in the different types of material. The quantitative content analysis is an effective and objective method which is supposed to be made as clear and systematic as possible so that another researcher could be able to execute the same analysis with the same result (Nilsson, 2010:122). Despite being an objective method there are some cases when one has to interpret some parts of the analyzed material. To prevent too much interpreting one has to have clear and detailed code instructions, which minimizes the need to interpret (Nilsson, 2010:126).

8.4.1. **Definitions**

I used a couple of variables in my investigation in order to differentiate the category of the pictures as well as to see in what extent each race was represented in each category.

“**Ads**” means advertisements, pages that represent a brand or a product. These pages are delivered to the magazine by the brand or the company wishing to advertise. “**Stories**” are the pages that the magazine uses to present interviews and reporting on new clothes. The magazine hire photographers for this, thus the magazine is in total control of this material. “**Catwalk**” are the pages where the magazine present pictures from fashion shows, these pictures are often sourced from photographers not part of the magazine crew. “**Red carpet**”
are photographs of celebrities at different parties and events, those photographs sourced from paparazzi’s and photographers.

This categorization was also made in order to differentiate photographs that were 100 per cent controlled by the magazine crew from the other categories’ which consists of photos that the magazine has bought from photographers and companies in the industry.

8.4.2. **Selection and Presentation of the Magazines**

I decided which magazines my investigation would be based on before my arrival to South Africa. I chose four international fashion magazines; ELLE, Marie Claire, Cosmopolitan and Oprah Magazine. I did this specific selection since they are published as national issues in different countries around the world, and I find it interesting to see how a to me familiar magazine looks like in South Africa.

I chose to look at one issue from each magazine being published during my project trip which was the March issue of 2013.

**ELLE South Africa**
ELLE is the world’s biggest fashion magazine with 42 editions worldwide. Their target group is women aged 16-49 and their average reader is 30 years old. They describe their South African average reader to be “confident, ambitious, educated, image-conscious and a trendsetter”. They also claim that their readership closely reflects the South African demographic with 66% black readers (Times Media, 2013)

**Cosmopolitan South Africa**
Claims to be one of the most successful women’s glossy magazines in South Africa. Their reader is a “is a loyal, Fun, Fearless female in her freedom years”. The magazine focuses on guys, beauty, sex, careers, fashion and money matters and encourages women to be “fun and fearless” (Associated Media Publishing, 2013).

**Marie Claire South Africa**
Marie Claire labels their typical target group as multifaceted women who are interested in everything from social issues to fashion, and who empathize with other women and are curious about the world. Furthermore Marie Claire claims to provide content not found anywhere else in South Africa with “dynamic, picture-led reportage, real women’s stories,
critical reporting and sophisticated fashion and beauty across age categories” (Associated Media Publishing, 2013)

**Oprah Magazine South Africa**

O Magazine refers to themselves as a ‘catalyst’ that helps confident, intelligent and wealthy women to the Oprah Winfrey “live your best life” philosophy. It focuses on personal growth addressing material, intellectual and emotional aspects. Furthermore they claim to create an intimate conversation with its readers working towards spiritual growth and the goal of making them become more of who they really are (Zinio, 2013)

8.4.3. **Conducting Quantitative Content Analysis**

When I executed my quantitative content analysis I followed a systematic approach of six steps that I found in Åsa Nilssons book “Metoder i kommunikationsvetenskap” (Methods in media and communications) (Nilsson, 2010:127).

1. Define the research problem
2. Define the selection
3. Define the variables and variable values
4. Construct a scheme of codes
5. Validate and analyze the data

My research problem was to find out what the representation of race was like in South African fashion magazines. The investigation was done through quantitative content analysis by counting how many times I spotted a black, white and a coloured person in the categories of variables that I was looking at.

I used a couple of variables/categories mentioned above to differentiate the appearing pictures in the analyzed material, however as mentioned in my delimitations I only focused on pictures and not the text. Using these variables I counted how many times a black, white and coloured person appeared in a photograph or ad. I did this to be able to generalize what the race representation in these magazines is like.
8.5. **Semiotic Picture Analysis**

As I mentioned earlier in the theoretical framework there are different levels of a picture analysis in semiotic methods, the denotative part is where the researcher states what is *actually* in the picture with any further analysis (Fodge in Ekström & Larsson, 2010:181). The connotative level of a picture analysis is the cultural associations we read from a picture (Fodge in Ekström & Larsson, 2010:183). This is a suitable method for my study since I aim to first state what the pictures presents, to continue the analysis with help from my respondents to understand what these pictures represents in the minds of the asked South African women. Consequently, I have included a denotative and a connotative picture analysis in order to contribute to the other methods in my investigation. Through these analysis I aim to broaden my understanding on how women are being portrayed and consequently how South African women perceive these ideals.

8.5.1. **My Denotative Picture Analysis**

I executed a denotative picture analysis on one picture from each investigated magazine. I wanted to analyze likewise pictures from each magazine hence I chose a theme that occurred in all magazines.

I have chosen to do a denotative analysis on four different photographs produced by the magazines. Thus pictures where they themselves have chosen the model, theme and story behind the photograph, consequently, not any pictures such as catwalk photos, snapshots from the streets or red carpet photos.

Doing my selection I searched in each magazine’s content index to find a category and article that appeared in all of them. I found that featuring a celebrity could be found in all four magazines and that they had a similar aim of portraying a celebrity based on an in-depth interview. I analyzed the first picture in these stories.

I did this analysis to map out and establish a broad understanding for the pictures before moving on to the connotative analysis. I used the following questions for my denotative analyze:
1. Who is the photographer?
2. How is the camera angle?
3. What size is the photograph?
4. What is the person wearing?
5. How is the facial expression?
6. What is the surrounding environment in the picture like?
7. If there is any text according to the photograph, what does it say?
8. Is the photographed person the main character of the article?
9. What is the skin colour of the person?
10. How old is the person? (child 0-15, young 15-35, middle aged 35-65, or old 65-100)
11. What is the person doing in the picture?

8.5.2. The Connotative Picture Analysis

In order to remain objective in my picture analysis I let my respondents execute the connotative picture analysis. I brought the pictures from my denotative analysis to my interviews to let the respondents discuss and talk about their connotations and thoughts about the pictures being presented. I expected this to contribute to my investigation with an interesting aspect about how South African women from socially and educational diverse perspectives perceive and conduct to the material. In addition to this I believe that due to the problematic history South Africa holds with apartheid, the government still has issues accepting the scrutiny of the press (Landguiden: 2012). This presumably holds back magazines in their ability to publish advertising with controversial messages and makes the analyze even more interesting and important for my understanding. An event can and will most likely be framed in different ways depending on different countries’ political factors, media systems and public opinions. (Mc Quail, 2005: 378-379).
9. Validity and Reliability

The validity and reliability is high throughout my thesis although, there are some doubt factors. By combining three methods I believe that I have increased the validity in my study. Furthermore I consider the quantitative content analysis to be reliable using four magazines from the same month during my stay in Cape Town. Doing rough analysis apart from my main analysis showed similar results; hence I consider my material reliable. The combination of quantitative content analysis and interviews makes the reliability higher since interviews are not very reliable on their own. However this combination contribute to reliable results together, it is possible to do a similar research in Cape Town with women of the same age and same social conditions as the ones being used in my study, it is also possible to execute a content analysis of the investigated magazine.

However being a human being it is not one hundred per cent possible for me to remain objective, I might have done some unconscious reflections over my respondents answers, and it is possible that the respondents sometimes provides answers that he or she believes me as a researcher would like to hear (Østbye et al, 2004).

Moreover, two of my focus group interviews were made with women working in or studying media. I realized that this had a great impact on their answers and way of thinking about fashion magazines. One group being journalism students advocating newsworthy information and the other group working at a retouching agency knowing all about the backside of the photographs. This surely made my results interesting and is in no aspect negative, however does affect the reliability of the results.
Limitations

10. Limitations

Being a white young western woman implies some limitations in my role as an interviewer in South Africa. I don’t share the same worldview or habitus as South Africans who carries a heavy history of suppression and inequality. All I could do was to study and learn as much as possible about their country and society to not behave or say inappropriate things, but I would nevertheless be seen as a foreigner distant and different from them. I did at some points suspect that this affected my respondents wanting to behave or respond in a certain way to some questions even if this was not their natural answer. I did however only feel this with the white women being around the same age as myself.

My ability to remain objective was in some cases a little bit problematic. Me being Swedish cannot in the same extent as a South African see who is coloured and who is black. A person that would be referred to as a coloured person in South Africa would be considered black (Afro American) by American, it took some time for me to learn how to make these distinctions. In general there was not a problem in this distinction but at some points I had to interpret and get assistance by looking at the person’s name to determine the colour of their skin. Their names would namely indicate whether it was a black (African name) or coloured (Asian name).

The selection of respondents would have been favorably made with more caution only talking to women who actually read or are interested in fashion magazines.
11. **Result and Analysis**

In this chapter I will present the results of my study. The aim of my bachelor thesis was to bring understanding about how South African women identify themselves to the race representation in South African fashion magazines according to Pierre Bourdieu’s theory about Habitus. In the performed interviews the aim was to get an understanding on how South African women relate to women of other race, furthermore to understand if it is possible to create something like a cultural identity in South Africa.

In order to do this I have combined three different methods and I will present the results from my investigation below. I intend to combine the results with an analysis in order to present a deeper understanding on how women in South Africa experience the representation of race in South Africa produced fashion magazines. At the end of the chapter I will summarize the results in a concluding analyze.

11.1. **Quantative Content Analysis**

I have studied 940 photographs from four South African issues of international fashion magazines ELLE, Marie Claire, Cosmopolitan and Oprah Magazine. My research questions for the quantative content analysis are:

- Are black, white and coloured people represented to the same extent?
- Are black, white and coloured people being over or under represented in any certain categories? (Ads, Stories, Catwalk or Red Carpet)

By presenting the variables and diagrams below I will answer these research questions to analyze the results from the whole study in a conclusive analysis at the end of this chapter.
11.1.1. Are black, white and coloured people represented to the same extent?

*Diagram 1.1 Race Representation in Cosmopolitan*

Race Representation in Cosmopolitan

*Diagram 1:2 Race Representation in ELLE*

Race Representation in ELLE
According to diagrams 1:1, 1:2, 1:3 and 1:4 white people are being overrepresented in all four magazines. However, in three of the magazines the overrepresentation is extremely high; Cosmopolitan (1:1) 59 per cent, ELLE (1:2) 68 per cent and in Marie Claire (1:3) 71 per cent. In Oprah Magazine (1:4) the white representation is 48 per cent, making it a little bit more even with the highest black representation amongst the magazines at 37 per cent. Coloureds are being significantly underrepresented in all four magazines, never reaching more than 18 per cent. Considering the fact that South Africa’s population contains of 79,3 per cent black people (Landguiden, 2008) it is clear that these magazines target against the white minority of only
9.2 per cent of the country’s population (Landguiden, 2008). The other minority of coloureds are making out 12 per cent (Landguiden, 2008) of the population, and thereby has about the same representation in these magazines as in the South African Society.

Population of South Africa
(Rounded to the nearest integer)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Landguiden, 2008

It is shown in my study that white people are being highly overrepresented in the magazines of my investigation. Furthermore this is equivalent according to Sanger’s study on race and hypersexualised bodies in South African magazines where the white ideal is being mostly represented (Sanger, 2009).

11.1.2. Are black, white and coloured people being over or underrepresented in any certain categories?

Marie Claire: representation of race in each category

Diagram 1:5

Catwalk

- Black: 13%
- White: 73%
- Coloured: 14%

Diagram 1:6

Stories

- Black: 13%
- White: 67%
- Coloured: 20%

Diagram 1:7

Red Carpet

- Black: 6%
- White: 94%
- Coloured: 0%

Diagram 1:8

Ads

- Black: 10%
- White: 85%
- Coloured: 5%
ELLE: Representation of race in each category

Diagram 1:9

Catwalk

- Black: 6%
- White: 22%
- Coloured: 86%

Diagram 1:10

Stories

- Black: 21%
- White: 20%
- Coloured: 59%

Diagram 1:11

Red Carpet

- Black: 6%
- White: 22%
- Coloured: 72%

Diagram 1:12

Ads

- Black: 8%
- White: 19%
- Coloured: 73%

Cosmopolitan: representation of race in each category

Diagram 1:13

Catwalk

- Black: 33%
- White: 0%
- Coloured: 67%

Diagram 1:14

Stories

- Black: 18%
- White: 29%
- Coloured: 53%
Oprah Magazine: Race Representation in each category

Diagram 1:15
Red Carpet

Diagram 1:16
Ads

Diagram 1:17
Catwalk

Diagram 1:18
Stories

Diagram 1:19
Red Carpet

Diagram 1:20
Ads
The diagrams above shows that it is clear that whites are being the most represented race in all magazines, in all categories except for two diagrams 1:13 and 1:20 where black has the highest representation.

However, the category where the representation is most unequal is the red carpet. In Marie Claire the white representation was almost exclusively with 94 per cent. There were six per cent coloureds and not any black representation at all. Cosmopolitan and Oprah Magazine had a white representation of 60 respective 61 per cent and ELLE was at 72 per cent. The red carpet category only includes celebrities, national but mostly international ones; furthermore this material is based on outsourced photographs which mean that it is not the magazine’s editorial staff that has produced the photographs. They have however, at some point decided and made choices about what photos to publish. This boils down to the conclusion that the magazines have to make these decisions in contrary to what there is available, however, they cannot fully control the selection of material. This presumably affects the representation in this category.

Nevertheless, they do fully control the material being published in the category stories where the editorial staff produces the material. In this category there was the most equal representation being presented in general throughout the magazines. However still overrepresentation of whites, then blacks and the least representation of coloureds once again. The fact that the category with the highest equality is the one where editorial staff of the magazines has the greatest influence is considered a good sign to me. This is possibly meaning that the approach towards becoming more equal is exists in some extent.

The catwalk category was the one were the magazines differed the most in representation. Marie Claire presenting 79 per cent whites and ELLE presenting 86 per cent, which is an extremely high white representation. Cosmopolitan has a complete opposite representation reading 67 per cent black and 33 per cent white, and no coloured representation at all. Oprah magazine did not have any catwalk photos at all. This possibly shows that there is some more diversity amongst models in the world. The magazines use these photos to show the latest trends from the runways and fashion weeks from around the world. Furthermore the magazines cannot control what skin colour the model that they choose has, since they probably choose these photographs according to what they are wearing and not according to their skin colour.
The ads category is interesting to analyze because it is very much showing what ideal the magazine wants to sell. I believe one can tell this ideal by looking at what skin colour is being most commonly presented. In Marie Claire, it was 85 per cent white and in ELLE 73 per cent, in Cosmopolitan it was 72 per cent white. However in Oprah magazine the black was mostly represented with 46 per cent, white 33 per cent and coloureds 21 per cent. Hence the general result is that all magazines want to portray a white ideal in their ads only Oprah Magazine striving towards this trend.

The general result is in summary that whites are being overrepresented in general in all categories. Marie Claire and ELLE are the magazines with the least diversity between races. Oprah magazine is the magazine with the highest representation of coloureds and blacks. Cosmopolitan has a somewhat more equal approach presenting more coloureds and blacks than ELLE and Marie Claire.
11.2. **Semiotic Picture Analysis**

In the following section I will present the result from my denotative analysis as well as the connotative analysis being made during my focus group interviews and the qualitative interviews. I will combine answers from the respondents and in that way present the connotative analysis.

11.2.1. **Denotative Analysis of Picture nr 1, ELLE South Africa**

Below follows the answers to the questions presented in section 8:5:1:

1. Rankin.
2. It is in front of her, slightly from above.
3. It is a full page.
4. She is wearing a light blue and white dress.
5. She has a neat smile on her face, and she is looking at something outside the picture.
6. She is standing against a grey wall.
7. And God created Beauty and brains. No wonder she’s Hollywood’s favorite Woman.
8. Yes she is.
9. She is white and has blond hair.
10. She is young.
11. She is standing with her arms above her head.

**Connotative Picture Analysis of Picture 1**

The general connotations with picture 1 amongst the respondents were that it reflects peace and strength. However the definition of strength differs to some extent between the respondents. Focus group 1 and 2 discusses the photograph and makes connotations with physical strength, that she looks healthy and strong muscle vise.
“She is not like your average anorexic Hollywood star” (Megan 2013-04-15).

Whereas the black and coloured respondents also mention physical health, however talk more about mental strength, about being in command of your own life, being settled and satisfied: “She looks settled, and calm. Everything is where it needs to be and that inspires me” (Aimee 2013-14-18)

Hence it is interesting to see that women of different age, stage in life and social conditions connote different things about the same photograph. They have different habitus and doxa hence perceive things in diverse ways.

The photograph appears a little bit controversial in some respondent’s opinions prevailing some negative connotations:

“I just don’t like the fact that they are optimizing her as “the alfa woman”, that they are saying: “If you wanna be a real woman this is what you should look like; you should have strong arms, bad ass tattoos, blond hair, strong hair, strong eyes…” (Louzel 2013-04-15)

Louzel refers to the text on the photograph, and that this in combination with the photo portrays an ideal that is not applicable on the reality. However all respondents are agreed that fashion magazines in general are not a fair reflection of the South African Society. This is consistent to what Mc Quail says about all kinds of audio-visual media objects being more or less subjective, consequently should not serve as a mirror of reality (Mc Quail, 2005)

“Since the majority of these magazines target against a very small, white, rich minority I don’t think it is a true reflection of reality at all, since the South African population consist of 80% black people” (Megan 2013-04-15)
11.3. Denotative Analysis of Picture nr 2, Cosmopolitan South Africa

Below follows the answers to the questions presented in section 3:2:1:

1. Toby Hudson (male).
2. It is in front, slightly from below.
3. It is half page.
4. She is wearing a blue knitted top, a pair of sequent pants, a golden necklace and leopard high heels.
5. She is laughing and almost has closed eyes.
6. She is in a room looking like some sort of studio; it looks like a creative environment.
7. Golden Goulding. She’s topping charts, winning awards, dating DJ’s- and she sang at Will and Kate’s wedding. Rock on, Ellie!
8. Yes.
9. She is white and she has blond/pink hair.
11. She is standing in the “studio” leaning forwards, holding her hands together between her legs, laughing.

Connotative analysis of Picture nr 2

The first connotations to this picture differed quite a lot in the focus groups answering the same questions:

“She is dressed shitty!” (Louzel, 2013-04-15)
“Yeah… I don’t like her pants” (Megan, 2013-04-15)
“Don’t like her shoes. I actually don’t like anything about what they try to do here!” (Bronwyn, 2013-04-15)
“I think it is just meant to be like fun and lighthearted…” (Megan, 2013-04-15)

Another focus group spontaneously said:
“She looks happy, she looks young, she looks funky…” (Aimee 2013-04-18)
“She loves what she is doing..!” (Hazel, 2013-04-18)
“This photo connotes happiness, lightness. The happy and light side of life” (Viola, 2013-04-17)

This once again shows that the opinions and spontaneous reactions, namely the doxa differs between the focus groups. This is not surprising since these women are from socially diverse areas of Cape Town, hence are living very different lives.

This also shows the different cultural belongings amongst the respondents and how this reflects on the reality in the South African society.

” I mean they don’t want to read about whites… there is a cultural difference. We don’t relate to their traditions, and they don’t relate to ours. So… I mean if they don’t want to, I’m not gonna force them!” (Aletta, 2013-04-02)

To them it is obvious that they (black, whites and coloureds) are different from each other, hence they don’t share the same doxa, thus should not be forced to read about and be interested in the same things. However the cultural differences is something that one has to consider in the making of identity and belonging (Seeking, 2008:8) in South Africa as well as the fact that identity is an ongoing production (Hall, 1996:2).

“There are different ways of how different people think about different things” (Bronwyn, 2013-04-14).

That is exactly what Bourdieu indicates with his theory about habitus being something individual that each and every person emerge from their reality, namely their doxa (Webb, 2002:xii).

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7 Common belief and world view of a population
11.4. **Denotative Analysis of Picture 3, Oprah Magazine South Africa**

Below follows the answers to the questions presented in section 3:2:1:

1. Dewey Nicks.
2. From the side, a little bit from below.
3. Two full pages.
4. A red dress with a big flower in front.
5. She has her mouth open in what seems to be a smile. She looks a little bit stiff in her facial expression.
6. She is at an open green area surrounded by trees. It is during the day and the sun is shining.
7. Leading Lady: “With starring role in *Django Unchained*, actress Kerry Washington is fast becoming a Hollywood darling. Oprah talks to her about what drives her to achieve her dreams”.
8. Yes she is.
9. She is black and has long shiny black hair.
10. She is middle aged (35-65).
11. She is swirling around at the grass with her arms reaching out.

**Connotative analysis of Picture nr 3**

Similar to previous photos the main connotations differs between the respondents. The white girls are continuing to be critical. They begin my discussing the setting of the photo shoot and that it looks fake and unnatural.

“It seems like they want us to think that it’s just a normal day out, that she is just being herself and that this shot was just accidently snapped. But I mean what the fuck is she doing??” (Louzel, 2013-04-15).

“We retouch, so we know exactly what the models and the surroundings in the photographs in those magazines looks like BEFORE…” (Farran, 2013-04-02)
Hence it is obvious that the girls from focus groups 1 and 2 are looking at the pictures from a certain angle considering their professions and orientation of education.

However looking a little bit further in to the photo Louzel connote the picture with freedom. “She looks something like an east indian-colombian exotic black woman that is free and obviously sexually free as well.” (Louzel, 2013-04-15). Hence the negative connotations are left behind and reading the text on the photo Bronwyn says: “It is funny how she is in this pose like I’m free, in contra verse the fact that she was currently in a movie about slavery” (Bronwyn, 2013-04-15).

Freedom was the most common connotation to this photograph however it seems like the definition of freedom differed between the groups. Focus groups 1 and 2 talking more about sexual and physical freedom while the women from focus group 3 connoted freedom in terms of being in control of your own life, similar to the connotations with picture 1. “She is free, she is successful and she is really living the life she wants to live. I would love to be her, have her body -her weight! And her skin… and her hair…” (Hazel, 2013-04-18). Hence the respondents from interview 1 and focus group 3 are being able to look behind the practical and underlying factors of the photo. Buying more what the magazines are actually trying to convey selling a certain lifestyle or style.

“This is what you see out there I think. This is what you wanna be wearing, designer clothing. You become very much accepted and respected if you wear expensive clothes” (Thandekile, 2013-03-22).

This was leading us in to their connotations about black and white ideals. According to focus group 3 and interview 1 white ideals being all about money, connoting expensive clothes, cars and houses. “You sometimes see things that are really expensive in the magazines and you just think “acht, that is not for me, those things are for white people”. (Hazel, 2013-04-18)

However all white people in South Africa are not rich. “That’s not the reality being portrayed, nobody can afford that. Who has ten different kinds of pants that can go with like seventy different kinds of shoes. I have two pairs of shoes. Maximum.” (Megan, 2013-04-15)

Consequently, this is where the pictures of each other collide. Not having a correct or fair picture of what other cultures and identities really are like can cause issues in a society of diverse cultures (Hylland Eriksen, 1993:129).
11.5. **Conclusive Analysis**

To sum up I have chosen to analyze the system of characteristics and opinions in the field of fashion magazines and identity of people in the South African society with the concept of habitus as inspiration. I was recently watching the Eurovision Song Contest 2013 (SVT 1, 2013-05-18) that was held in Malmö Sweden in May 2013. Between the performances there was a middle act where Sweden was making fun of our traditions and the so distinguished “Swedishness”. From my perspective, this “Swedishness” is the common cultural identity which appears amongst people who has been brought up in Sweden, thus something we all can relate to, regardless of ethnicity. Watching this made me feel extremely Swedish and it really occurred that we seem to have a very strong cultural identity in Sweden, or else it assume it would not have been possible to do this kind of performance. However this also made me think about South Africa and what their act about “South Africaness” would be like? Would it even be possible to do something comparable in South Africa? Is there even a cultural identity shared between the different races in the South African society?

After doing this research it has very much occurred to me that there is a concept and idea of “Africaness” but not specifically something such as “South Africaness”. Nadia Sanger discussed in her study about race and sexualized bodies in South African magazines that the media, or especially women’s magazines are focusing on portraying the white westernized ideal in these magazines as the most admirable to look up to. In addition to this they also, however not being as common, also present an ideal targeted towards black women about bringing forward the “real Africa” out of themselves. This representation of ideal, and consequently representation of race is also seen in my research. The white race is, as we can clearly see being overrepresented in each magazine of my investigation. Thus this makes it hard and sometimes impossible for black and coloured people to relate and identify themselves to what they see in the magazines. This separation of ideals contributes to and enhance the segregation between women of different race and also shows how the concept of habitus is relevant and highly applicable in the society of South Africa.

I have come to the conclusion that there are a number of factors which makes the doxa and consequently the habitus of women in South Africa extraordinarily distinguished. All these aspects boil down to be rooted in the era of apartheid.

It is a fact that people of different nationalities and cultures are different from each other, thus it is and will always be like that (Hylland Eriksen, 1999). However the system of apartheid
took the differences between people to the extreme, and the mistreating of blacks and
coloureds destroyed the established national and cultural belonging in South Africa.

“Their market maybe is majority black people, and so why would they have a white person on
the cover, it doesn’t make sense. But I think, because we are mixed, we are the rainbow
nation, like a mixed bag of races. They have to look at what is my target market, who am I
supposed to be representing? It would not make sense with a blond white woman on the cover
of Drum magazine for example…!” (Farran, 2013-04-02)

I believe Farran is referring to the fact that the cultural differences and beliefs
namely the
doxa, of black and white people are too different in order to be interesting for each other. As a
result of apartheid this is an interesting aspect to consider, how people with different habitus
behaves, dresses, talks and share food cultures and tastes. Sometimes one can see on a certain
behavior or hear on the accent what part of Cape Town that specific person comes from. Thus
Bourdieu argues that those “choices” are not always conscious, however that it rather has to
do with one’s reality and surroundings and what becomes agreeable or suitable for that

And perhaps that is so, I learned during my interviews that respondents from diverse race and
social levels did have different connotations with the same picture to some extent.
Furthermore, in some cases, the definition of certain concepts did not obtain the same set of
values. One of my last questions during my interviews considered their definition of a “dream
ideal”. All respondents referred to the concept of being successful in some way or another.

The focus group consisting of white students connote successful as being a healthy strong
woman, both psychologically but also physically, “… and being as strong as men…” (Megan,
2013-04-15). Megan highlights the fact that it is important for her not to be subordinate men,
especially not physically.

Conversely, the focus groups and the qualitative interview with black and coloured women
had other connotations about being and becoming successful. For them it seemed to be more
about living a lifestyle you want to live, to have a wealthy life and succeeding in being able to
do what you love and really want to be doing. Ultimately, about being free in your own life.
This I believe, is also referable to the history of apartheid, that some of the respondents was a
part of, or had parents who lived during apartheid. It is not possible to get away from the fact
that nearly everything and every one’s doxa in South African people’s lives boils down to be affected in some way or another of apartheid.

Stuart Hall writes about identity and that the making and establishing of one’s identity is a forever ongoing process (Hall, 1996). Thus, what does it take to dislodge and change a person’s habitus? Habitus is shaped through a person’s position in society, through social surroundings, people and factors that build up the sphere around that person. The fact that cultural belonging is of extreme importance to South Africans makes the possibility to change the habitus difficult. Like I mentioned in the background chapter financial factors are not solely the reason of people living segregated anymore. People choose to stay in the sphere where they culturally belong, amongst people and surroundings where they are able to relate and identify themselves. Thus are people afraid to expand their habitus? Or is it not in their interest to do so?

My experience is that the more urbane a person is, the easier it is to expand and develop their doxa and apartheid. From the people I got to know in South Africa that had been travelling a lot, and maybe even been living abroad I got the impression that they had developed their habitus. They seemed to be able to relate and identify themselves to people of other cultures to a broader extent than people who only know their own “reality”. Thus, this is connected to a serious problem in contemporary South Africa regarding education. The education is overall lacking of quality but the situation in the townships is the most crucial. Bad education leads to less opportunities to succeed financially later in life. Nevertheless, in relation to the fact that people remain segregated, this also leads to that the same people largely stay privileged, namely the white population (Seeking, 2008:8).

Hence, when the education system improves its quality, children of new generations will be able to get high rate jobs in a higher extent and consequently have the opportunity to expand their doxa through higher integration with people of other cultures more than people do today. This in turn, will lead to that people manage to relate to other races hence will learn to find interest in reading say a fashion magazine with a white woman on the cover, nevertheless being black or coloured themselves.

“Comparing from when I grew up, our kids has got the chance to change their lives. It is only up to them to use the chances they get.” (Hazel, 2013-04-18).
12. Conclusion and Discussion

The purpose of this bachelor thesis in Media and Communication studies was to develop an idea of the observance of equality in South Africa. I intended to raise to the discussion how four South African editions of international fashion magazines deal with the representation of black, white and coloured South Africans. Are they being equally represented and are they being represented in likewise ways? In order to get a deeper and broader understanding to this I also investigated how South African women from different race and socially diverse areas in Cape Town experience the representation of race in these contexts.

To sum this up I used the following research questions:

- How do South African women experience the way skin colour is represented in South Africa produced fashion magazines?
- How do South African fashion magazines enhance skin colour related social differences amongst women in South Africa?

When I began my study I had a hypothesis that white people would to some extent be overrepresented in fashion magazines in South Africa. However I could never imagine in what extreme extent it came to be. I had in beforehand studied the country’s history and contemporary social and political condition in order to be prepared since I had never been to South Africa before. This helped me in an almost insignificant extent since the many conversations with the population came out to be my most valuable education about South Africa and Cape Town. However, also the segregation showed to be much more extended than I could have imagined. This also showed in my research since the white representation formed more than half the content between 59-71 per cent in three of the investigated magazines and 48 per cent in one magazine. This says a lot about the complex society of South Africa since the white population only holds 9 per cent of the entire population.

Furthermore, this is equivalent to the perception being prevailed from the women during my interviews; no one considers any South African fashion magazines as being equal in terms of race representation. This distorted representation of reality makes it difficult for South African women to find their cultural identity furthermore to find a reliable ideal to relate to. Moreover, the imaging of ideals in those magazines is according to the respondents in my interviews neither a true reflection of the South African society. Nadia Sanger discusses the
ideals in South African fashion magazines as being “westernized” for whites and “Africanized” for black women (Sanger, 2009). This too was being prevailed in my study, hence women in my interviews described a similar picture of idealization in the investigated magazines. Thus, South African women experience the skin colour representation in South African produced fashion magazines as unequal.

By not presenting a representation of race being equivalent to the contemporary South African society does the magazines of my study enhance the social differences amongst women to a further extent. This problematizes the ability to create a cultural identity in a multicultural society like South Africa (Gatsheni, 2012).

The results and analysis of my thesis has brought me to the conclusion that a society can become that complex and wrong when media enhance the already problematic state of a society. South Africa struggles towards a more integrated society between the races of the population. However, the fact that apartheid is still being so freshly dealt with makes this development difficult and requires many years to come until equality will reign in South Africa.
13. **Future Research**

For future research it would be interesting to do a comparative analysis on the race representation in both black and white magazines. Doing that through quantitative content analysis it would furthermore be interesting do interviews with South African women to find out how black and white people prevail the ideal in these magazines in comparison. It would also be interesting to add the magazines perspective to the study, conducting interviews with editorial staff of the magazines in the investigation.

In addition to this it would be extremely interesting to do a study based on South African fashion magazines through a coloured South African’s perspective. Aiming to find out how coloureds experience being underrepresented in so many fashion magazines. Which magazines do they read and how would they like the magazines to be like?
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15. Appendix

1. Question Guide

When you are looking for fashion and beauty tips, where do you look?

How often would you say that you read or look into those kinds of magazines?

Which magazines do you prefer?

What do you associate with this kind of magazines?

What ideal do you think these magazines try to convey?

Do you feel that you can relate to this ideal?

Do you think that these ideals convey reality?

When you look into these magazines, do you ever reflect over the race representation?

Do you think that they portray black white and coloured people in likewise ways?

Showing pictures. (Pic 1 Kerry Washington, pic 2 Ellie Goulding, pic 3 Scarlett Johnsson)

What do you see when you look at this picture?

Do you think it is a good or a bad picture?

Do you like the way she is being portrayed in this picture?

And what associations does this picture give you?

What emotions do you get?

Do you get inspired by these women?

Do you feel that you can relate or identify yourself to these women or images?

Thinking about these ideals, do you think that they are achievable?

Do you feel like you could look up to them? Are they role models?

Just thinking in general, do you have a dream ideal woman?

Is it something you fight to achieve?
2. **Shallow Analysis of the black fashion magazines True Love, Bona and MOVE**

I have done a rough content analysis of two black fashion magazines in order to get some understanding of the representation of race in these magazines. During my interviews I learned, first of all the fact that there is such a thing as black and white magazines consequently that the representation in black magazines is mainly black. My white respondents talked about how white magazines do include all races, even though not at an equal basis. However, how black magazines almost exclude white and coloured people completely.

My results were content to what I had learned from my respondents. Around 80% of the people appearing in these issues were black people. In True Love 80% were black, 13% were coloured and 7% were white. In Bono 85% were black, 9% were coloured and 6% were white. In MOVE magazine 90% were black, 6% were coloured and 4% were white.)