Channel 4 Pilot Study:
Diversity Portrayal Monitoring

Introduction

Just how well does mainstream television do today in the diversity stakes? To answer this Channel 4 commissioned this survey. It provides a snapshot of peak time viewing examining the on-screen representation of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality and age. The sample is of 863 programmes covering 386 hours of output across BBC1, BBC2, ITV1, Channel 4, Five and Sky1 taken between September and October 2009. The focus here is on UK productions and so acquisitions as well as films and sport were excluded from analysis.

The results below begin with the overall frequencies of representation on screen. These were calculated by logging all participants making an individual contribution to a programme. In this overall count of the television population, people were categorised according to their ethnicity, gender, age and level of appearance. A log was made where participants revealed their sexuality or any disability.

In addition to the above, participants were profiled to record details of the way in which they were portrayed as well as their role in the narrative such as whether their minority group status was relevant to the role or used to highlight issues of discrimination or stereotyping. Profiles were completed for:
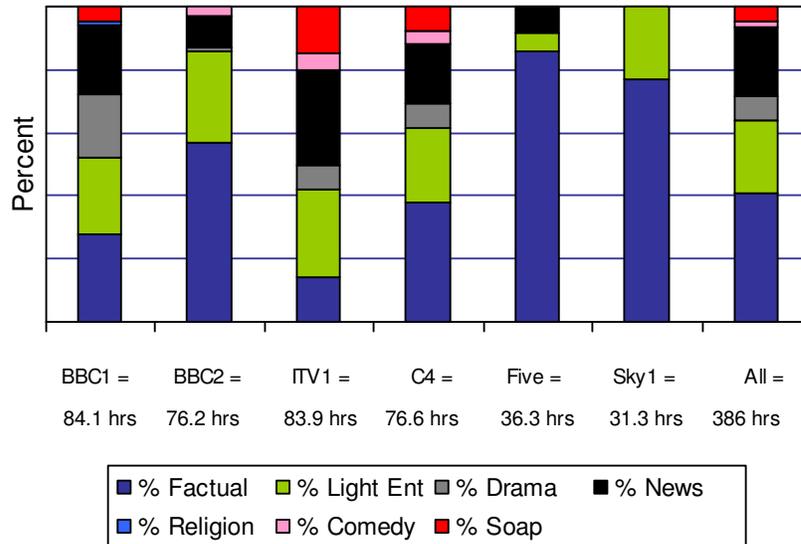
- All disabled, gay and lesbian (LGBT) and those demonstrating some faith.
- In the case of older people and ethnic minorities, although all were counted, incidental fictional characters were excluded from profiling along with both minor and incidental contributors in factual programming.
- Finally, gender profiles were limited to a maximum of 2 males and 2 females taken from each programme.

The sample

The sample drawn was of 3 composite weeks recorded over seven weeks from 01/09/09 through 17/10/09. Focussing on UK productions and excluding acquisitions, films and sport reduces the codable output especially for Five and Sky1. For these channels it also results in a greater proportion of factual programming. BBC1 and BBC2 were the least affected by this. Thus in order to produce less unequal samples for analysis, the

third week of BBC1 and BBC2 was limited to news output. Figure 1 below shows the sample composition by production type.

Figure 1: Sample details: composition % time by production type

BBC1 =	BBC2 =	ITV1 =	C4 =	Five =	Sky1 =	All =
84.1 hrs	76.2 hrs	83.9 hrs	76.6 hrs	36.3 hrs	31.3 hrs	386 hrs

■ % Factual   ■ % Light Ent   ■ % Drama   ■ % News
■ % Religion   ■ % Comedy   ■ % Soap

In this sample, factually based material accounted for the vast majority (88%) of programmes (84% of output time) and includes comedy sketch shows under Light Entertainment. Comedy as a genre refers to sitcoms and other comedy drama. Religion is included as a separate genre here because faith is part of this research.

Overall levels of representation

The overall television population (excluding background participants) was N=15,427. The actual numbers from each minority group encountered are shown below as well as the proportion they represent of the TV population. Older people were defined as those aged 60 and over; ethnic minority embraced all BAME who were resident in a predominantly white culture. For each group real world estimates are provided for comparison. In the case of ethnic minority, (where statistics are dynamic) the figures are based on mid 2009 projections for England. Further definitional issues for each group are noted in each relevant section.

One of the characteristics of a television population is that participants can make repeat appearances and some account needs to be taken of this. For example when David Blunkett was Home Secretary, he reliably boosted the representation

of blind people by his almost daily appearances in news bulletins. Although it is important to identify the number of individuals whose repeat appearances contribute to the overall count, the grand total of participant appearances remains the most important in providing both a measure of impact and a means of calculating the proportion of the television population represented by each group.

Figure 2: Overall minority group representation
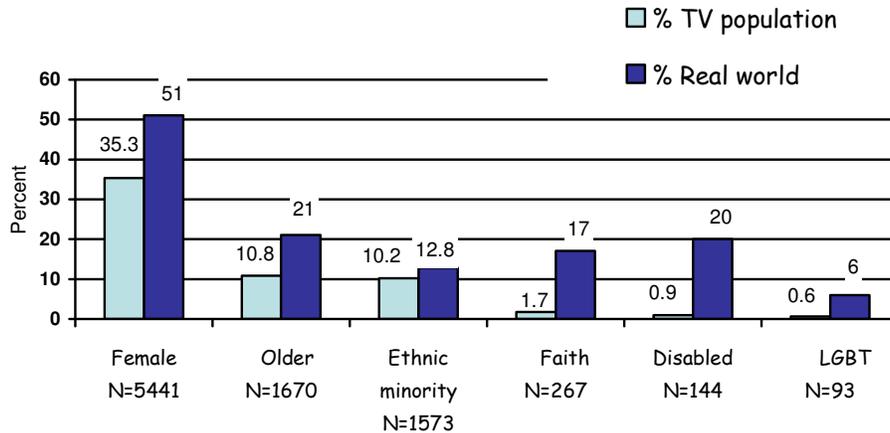
Clearly, compared with real world figures, the television population appears to under- represent all of the minority groups of interest here. The lowest discrepancy is in the case of ethnic minorities where undoubtedly on screen representation has increased over the years but has failed to keep pace with demographic trends.

Each of these groups is examined below from the numerically largest to the smallest. Note that while the sample size might appear generous at first sight, the numbers soon reduce when broken down by production type and level of appearance.

Gender
Males outnumbered females almost 2:1 at 65:35% in the TV population. This was true across all channels and most genres. In order for television to approximate to real world demographics, the number of females would need to be increased by 186% (or the number of males reduced proportionately).

The gender imbalance of television shown in this sample is largely due to factually based programmes which accounted for 84% of output in this sample. Figure 3 shows the proportion of female participants in each production type.

Figure 3: Gender by production type
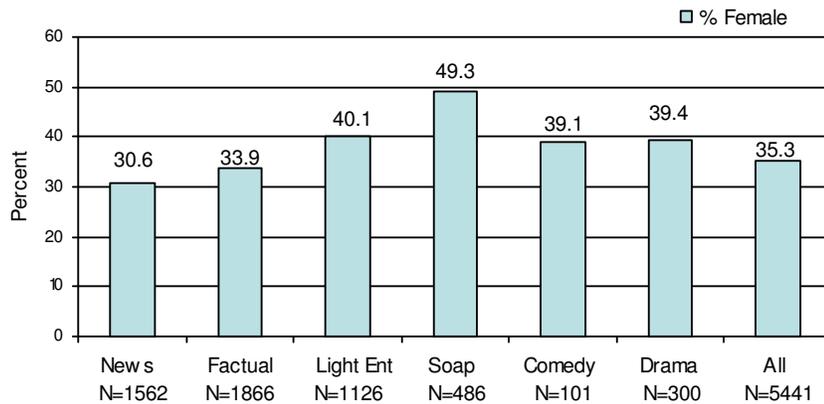
The variation across production types is considerable. Soaps provide almost equal numbers of roles for males and females. Light entertainment, Comedy and Drama level peg at around 4 in 10 participants being female. However Factual at only 34% female and News at only 31% pull down the overall level of representation to 35%.

Various editions of the Reality Shows: *Grease: The School Musical* (9 editions on Sky1), *The X Factor* (5 editions on ITV1) and *Big Brother* (4 editions on C4) helped boost Light Entertainment's score for females. Elsewhere, Light Entertainment makes a more modest contribution with only 35% for Quiz (such as *Eggheads*, BBC2), and 37% for Chat (such as *Friday Night with Jonathan Ross*, BBC1 and *The Paul O'Grady Show,* C4). Surprisingly, even in Popular Arts representation was only 39% (e.g. *Strictly Come Dancing: It Takes Two*, BBC2 and *Mobo Awards*, ITV1)

As noted earlier, fictional programming generally has a relatively high representation of women. Here we can see that it also has a strong one with almost half (47%) of all major roles being female. Apart from Soaps, major roles included Eve Lockhart in *Waking the Dead* (BBC1); DCI Janine Lewis in *Blue Murder* (ITV1); Jen in *The IT Crowd* (C4); DC Jo Masters in *The Bill* (ITV1) and Jacky Johnson in *The Take* (Sky1). By the same token, the much lower rate of

just over one third (36%) of incidental roles might seems an anomaly and one perhaps more easily remedied.

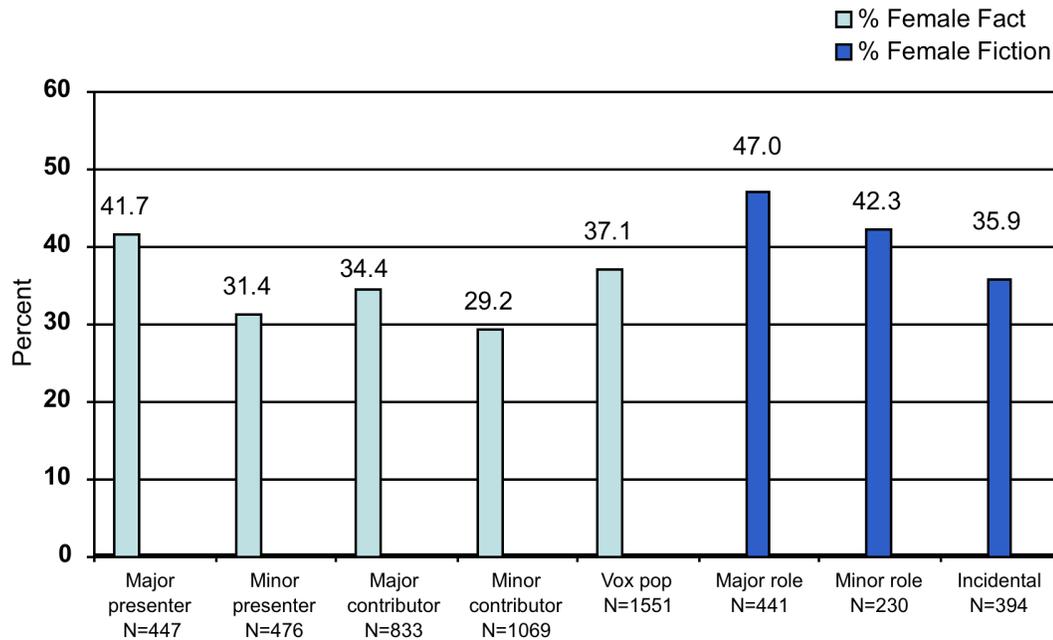Figure 5: Gender by level of appearance

Figure 5 also reveals that, while the overall representation in factually based programmes is very low at 34%, women contributed 42% of all major presenters. This relatively high proportion is achieved largely through News where over half (52%) of major presenters were women. The highest rate was generated by Five with 66% followed by ITV1 at 49% and BBC1 at 46%. It is worth noting that on a simple count, Five's short news bulletins with repeated appearances (31 in this sample) of Polly Whitehouse helped win the numbers game. Similarly, weather presenters such as Lucy Kite (ITV1) contributed generously. Other major presenters included Samira Ahmed (C4), Riz Lateef (BBC1) and Julie Etchingham (ITV1).

One other surprising result is that less than one third (31%) of minor presenters were female. These include Anita Rani (*The One Show* and *Watchdog*, BBC1), Alys Fowler and Carol Klein (*Gardner's World*, BBC2) and Jilly Goolden (*Britain's Best Dish*, ITV1). In addition minor presenters as reporters included Lindsay Hilsum and Cathy Newman (C4), Alex Forest (ITV1) and Nina Nanaar (ITV1).

A notable feature of factually based programmes is that such a small proportion (29%) of minor contributors is female. None of the channels achieved more than 34% (C4) with BBC1 (at 26%) being at the bottom end. News plays no small part in reducing rates of representation providing overall only 25% female minor contributors. The position is not much better in the case of major contributors at 34% a figure also brought down by News where only 22% were female. One explanation might be that minor contributors are often experts or political figures where gender equality in the real world remains elusive. However, even at the level of vox pop - where particular expertise is rarely a requirement - the proportion female is still remarkably attenuated at only 37%.

The considerable difference in the contribution of men and women to factually based television needs closer scrutiny. We examined News in more detail. Coders had logged the subjects covered in news items, so these could be examined by the gender of those who had made some contribution. There was a difference, as shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Looking first of all at major contributors, males were more likely to generate Hard news subjects than Soft (62% versus 38% respectively of all subjects contributed by males) while the opposite was the case with females (31% Hard versus 69% Soft).

Table 1: Subjects covered by major contributors in News by gender

Type of news subjects	% subs by males	% subs by females
Hard (e.g. Politics, the Economy, Technology, Science, Motoring)	62	31
Soft (e.g. Health, Culture, Education, Environment, Cookery)	38	69
Total stories	100	100

Base: N= 232 (129 Hard; 103 Soft)

Looking at minor presenters, where subject differences would probably not be expected, men were more likely to report Hard news than Soft (58% versus 42% of all subjects contributed by males). Almost exactly the opposite is the case for women (43% Hard versus 57% Soft). Quite apart from this pattern of gender difference, it should be remembered that women make up only 32% of all minor presenters.

Table 2: Subjects covered by minor presenters in News by gender

Type of news subjects	% subs by males	% subs by females
Hard (e.g. Politics, the Economy, Technology, Science, Motoring)	58	43
Soft (e.g. Health, Culture, Education, Environment, Cookery)	42	57
Total stories	100	100

Base: N=463 (240 Hard; 223 Soft)

The population of television tends to be quite youthful compared with the real world. Figure 3 presents the age distribution of males and females. It does not show the ratio of males to females (2:1) but rather the age profiles to allow the two groups to be compared and contrasted.

The difference between the male and female profiles is quite remarkable. Men are visibly older than women since a larger proportion of the male TV population fell into the older age groups than their female counterparts.

Figure 3: Gender by age showing relative age profiles
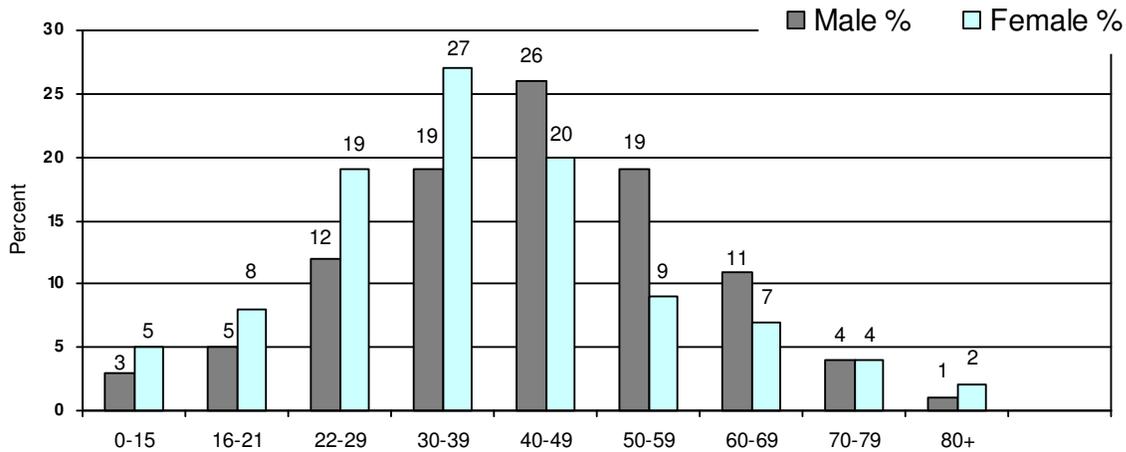
Base: all participants profiled, N=6,175 re-weighted to match population log

Perhaps the most striking difference is in the 50-59 age group which was occupied by 19% of men but only 9% of women.

The other notable feature of the plot is that women cluster and peak in the 30-39 age band whereas men cluster in the 40-49 age band and maintain this

advantage throughout their 50s and 60s. To summarise: six out of ten men (61%) were 40 plus compared with four in ten women (42%). Similarly, more than half (54%) of women were in the age band 16-39 compared with just over one third (36%) of men.

A further investigation into the gender portrayals done qualitatively found that
- More of the male portrayals were assertive and self-assured compared to the female portrayals (but not a huge difference)
- Within fiction, men were more likely to have a negative role and to be the villain. Conversely victims were more likely to be female
- Abusive or derogatory terms were encountered by only a tiny proportion of women
- A very small percentage of the portrayals of women were evaluated either as gratuitously discriminating or as counteracting gender stereotypes

Older people

As seen in Figure 7 earlier, perhaps the most obvious characteristic of the television population is its relatively youthful profile. Older people (those aged 60 and above) appear at half the rate as they do in the real world (10.8% versus 21%). Indeed, compared with the demographics of the viewing audience where older people consume the most television, their under-representation is even more stark. To achieve parity with UK population demographics, the number of older people would need to be increased by 185%

The incidence of older people varies considerably by production type. It is particularly low in Light entertainment and Comedy at just over 7% but rises to nearly double this in news programmes.

Figure 8: Older people by production type
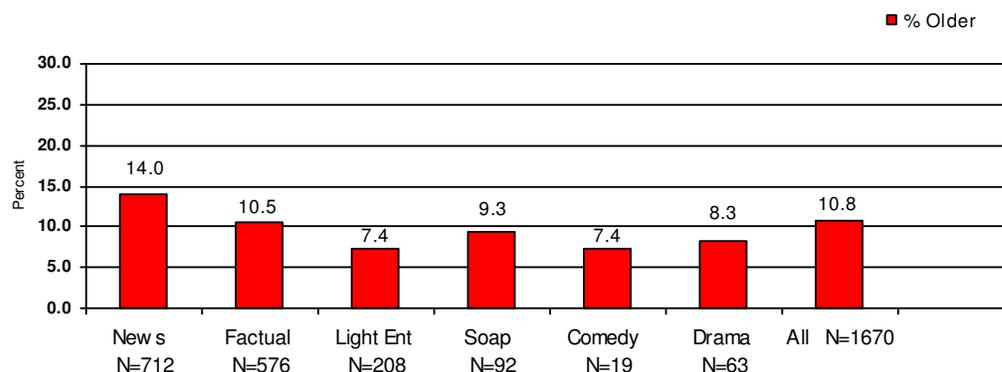
In Light Entertainment, Anne Robinson contributed 7 appearances in *The Weakest Link* (BBC1) while Arlene Phillips appeared 5 times – twice on *Have I Got News for You* (BBC1 and BBC2) and 3 times on *Grease: The School Musical* (Sky1). Contributions to Comedy (where just 19 older people were found) came from Madge, Mel and Noreen in two episodes of *Benidorm* (ITV1).

The relatively high rate in News is to be expected. Not only are older people reasonably well represented among the captains of industry and state, but a device commonly employed is to invite previous incumbents of posts to comment on events. However, none of the production types come close to the 21% real world rates.

Figure 10 shows how older people were represented at different levels of appearance. Major contributors who were classified as older included such heavyweights as Joan Bakewell, Margaret Beckett, Irwin Stelzer and John Bolton on *Newsnight* (BBC2), General Sir Mike Jackson, Anthony Beevor and David Letterman on *Channel 4 News* and Dame Vera Lynn who appeared in two editions of *ITV News*. It is worth adding that just over one fifth (21%) of all major contributors in News were older people as were a similar proportion (20%) of all minor contributors.

They were rarely found at the level of minor presenter (at 4% including 7 appearances of Nick Owen on BBC1 news) but were somewhat more prevalent as majors (7%) where Jon Snow helped boost representation by repeat appearances. By far the largest number of older people was found as contributors – both major and minor. Here the wisdom of experts alongside the advice of elderly statesmen from the world's legislatures produced a strong presence of older people in factual programming.

However, it should be noted that even as minor contributors older people occur less often (at 16%) than might be expected (21% of the UK population).

Figure 10: Older people by level of appearance
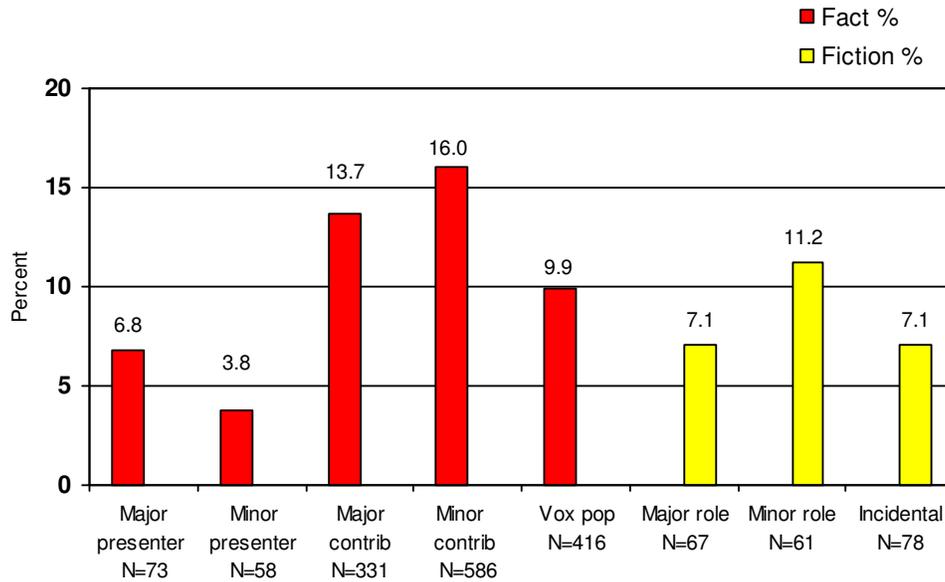
As with other minority groups, a concerted effort was made to track cases where the same individuals appeared in more than one programme. From the pool of participants profiled, just over four in ten (41%, N=259) of portrayals comprised 79 individuals who were repeated across various different programmes in this sample. Notable cases include 21 appearances of presenter Nick Owen (*Midlands Today* and *BBC News*); 8 by Bob Warman (*Central news*); 11 by Jon Snow (*Channel 4 News*) and *Eggheads* (BBC2) regulars Daphne Fowler and Judith Keppel with 7 each.

Ethnic minorities

The key figures here are 10.2% minority ethnic on television compared with 12.8% real world. This suggests that representation would need to have increased by 25% to match the overall population in England in 2009. Any new targets must factor in the growing proportion of ethnic minorities in the UK.

Most departments concerned with diversity or human resources and all those in broadcasting tend to use BAME (Black and Asian Minority Ethnic) as the central concept. However there remains some controversy surrounding definitions. This has not been helped by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) changing the census categories in 2001, albeit for good reason. Categories will change again in the next 2011 census.

A number of writers have noted that the BAME ethnic minority population in Britain rose numerically by 53% between the 1991 and 2001 census. However, there have been very few projections to give ongoing contemporary population estimates.
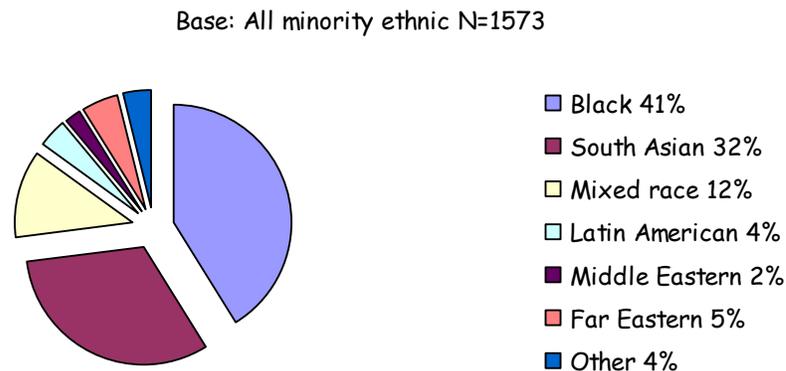
In 2009, ONS released an 'experimental projection' for mid 2007 putting the ethnic minority population of England at 11.8%. (UK wide statistics are not expected). Examining the available evidence, assuming steady state migration, fertility and morbidity we might guess a BAME population in England of around 13% by 2009 (the year of our sample). Fortunately, guessing is now redundant since David Coleman (Professor of Demography at the University of Oxford) has recently and kindly provided us with his own extrapolation from the various data. He recommends a figure of 12.8% BAME for mid 2009. Of course, in addition to this there would be perhaps 4% white ethnic minority (notably migrants) but these are beyond this remit.

It is worth adding that the metropolitan orientation of so much television might well lead us to expect a BAME population considerably higher than 12.8% – indeed in many areas it would be the majority population.

In order to ensure some correspondence with real world population estimates, in this study, a separate note was made of ethnic minority visitors to the UK. Additionally a separate tally was kept of indigenous appearances such as Shilpa Shetty in Bollywood. The results below are of ethnic minorities resident in a predominantly white culture.

Figure 12a shows the composition of the ethnic minorities identified. In the case of real people (the majority in this sample), it was often possible to check biographical details. Fictional characters (few in this sample) were checked in terms of the character played where this could be ascertained or by the ethnicity of the actor. In figure 12a, although the largest proportion of the Mixed race group was Black African Caribbean, it seemed safer to retain these as Mixed race in the chart.

Figure 12a: Composition of ethnic minorities

Base: All minority ethnic N=1573

- Black 41%
- South Asian 32%
- Mixed race 12%
- Latin American 4%
- Middle Eastern 2%
- Far Eastern 5%
- Other 4%

The most notable feature is that Black participants outnumbered South Asian while in the real world the opposite is the case. Figure 12b provides a further breakdown where possible of the South Asian group. Most often this could be done on the basis of name, but family names were not always made available on screen ('call me Dave').

Figure 12b: Composition of South Asian group

Base: all South Asians where specific ethnicity could be identified N=275

- Indian 60%
- Pakistan 34%
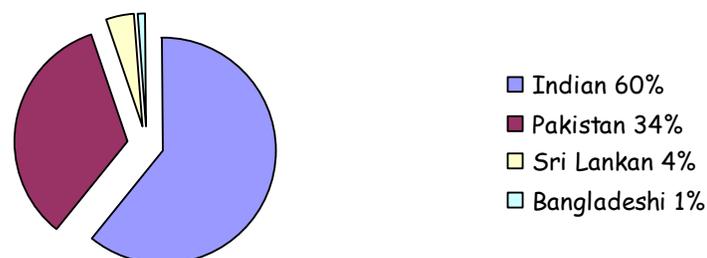- Sri Lankan 4%
- Bangladeshi 1%

Figure 13 shows representation by production type. Clearly, Soaps stand well above all others. It might be expected that the London Borough of Walford (*EastEnders*) should score highly here as might Weatherfield - being 4 miles from Manchester - (*Coronation Street*). However this would be less likely for *Hollyoaks* (located in a suburb of Chester) or *Emmerdale* (a village in Yorkshire).

Figure 13: Ethnic minorities by production type
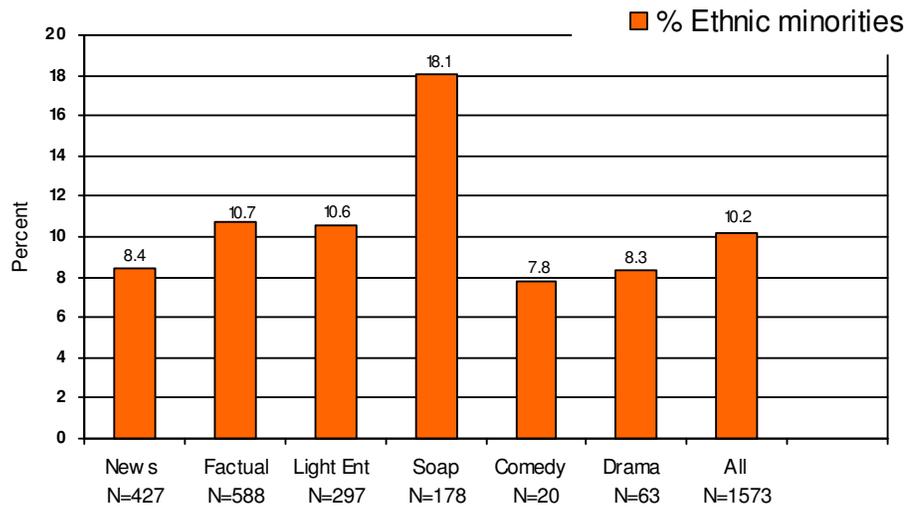
In other programme genres the range is relatively narrow (7.8% - 10.6%) with no glaring deficiencies.

Figure 15 shows level of appearance. It reveals the surprising finding that the highest rates of representation were achieved as either major presenters (where just under one in six was ethnic minority) or in major fictional roles (where just over one in six was ethnic minority). Elsewhere the rates drop closer to the overall figure with the exception of minor presenters and incidental characters in fiction where it was much lower.

Figure 15: Ethnic minorities by level of appearance
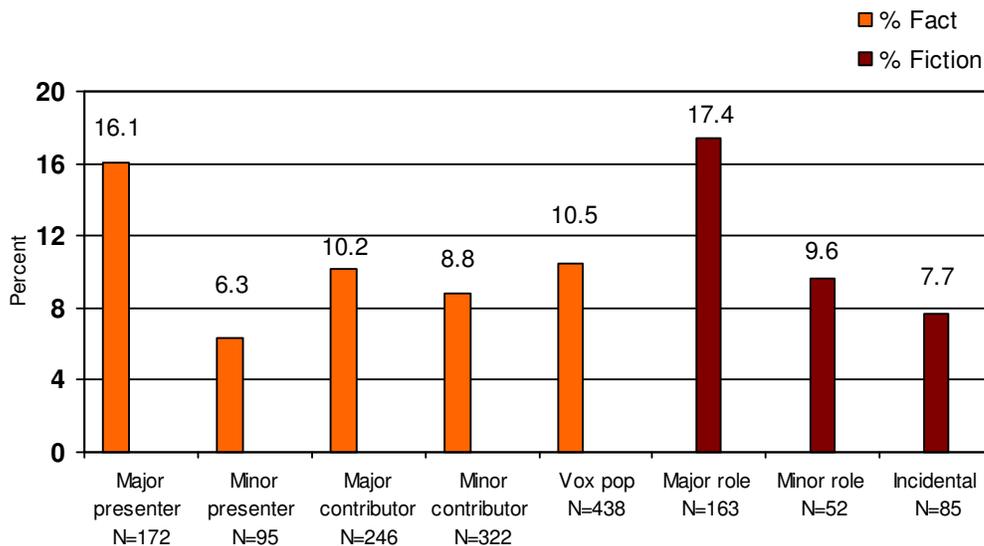
Major presenters included Samira Ahmed (C4 *News*), Sameena Ali Khan (ITV1 *Central News*) Suzanne Virdee (BBC1 *Midlands Today*) as well as Krishnan Guru Murthy noted above. Outside of News, examples of major presenters included Ian Wright (*Football Behind Bars,* Sky1), Gok Wan (*How to Look Good Naked*, C4) and Liz Bonnin (*Bang Goes the Theory*, BBC1).

Notable major fictional roles were DI Spencer Jordan (*Waking the Dead*, BBC1), Maurice Ross (*The IT Crowd*, C4) and Eddie Olosunje (*The Bill*, ITV1) as well as members of the Masood family (*EastEnders,* BBC1), the Roy family (*Hollyoaks,* C4) and the Sharma family (*Emmerdale,* ITV1)

From the above, it is clear that some of the participant appearances are due to the same individuals appearing in more than one programme. It would be difficult to track all repeated appearances on television – the task would be enormous. However when participant profiles were completed, the names of minority group representatives (wherever they were available) were logged on the data base. This could be trawled for repeats. In total 775 profiles were completed for ethnic minorities and of these 540 portrayals (70%) were created from 123 individuals who were repeated across various different programmes. This means that there were 417 additional portrayals than there were individuals.

If the repeated appearances by all the 123 individuals were removed (i.e. 417 cases) then the pool of all major and minor presenters, major contributors and major and minor fictional characters (775) would be more than halved to 358 individuals. However there is no comparison figure for the television population at large so that this data cannot be used to estimate what proportion individuals contribute.

The biggest generators of multiple appearances were the news presenters mentioned earlier. The most prolific with 23 appearances was Krishnan Guru Murthy (*Channel 4 News*) followed by Suzanne Virdee with 22; (*Midlands Today,* BBC1) and Sameena Ali Khan with 19; (*Central News,* ITV1). Samira Ahmed (*Channel 4 News*) appeared on 14 occasions; Satnam Rana (*Midlands Today,* BBC1) on 13; George Alagiah (*BBC News*) on 11 and Shefali Oza (*Midlands Today,* BBC1) on 10. Outside of News, high generators include 14 appearances of Ian Wright in *Live from Studio 5* (Five) and *Football Behind Bars* (Sky1); 12 of BBC weather presenter, Jay Wynn; 9 of Stacey Haynes and 7 of Rakeem both in

Grease: The School Musical (Sky1); 8 of Rajiv Poppat on *Central News* (ITV1); 6 of Lucas Johnson in *EastEnders* (BBC1).

The following themes emerged from a close qualitative examination of 775 ethnic minority portrayals (all the portrayals coded except minor or vox-pop contributors to factual programming)

- The TV population of ethnic minorities has a more balanced gender split than the overall TV population – although it shares the youthful bias seen on Television as a whole

- Ethnic minority status was incidental to the participant's TV role in 9 out of 10 cases – which could be taken to support the argument that colour blind casting has been established. Additionally:
  - Positive portrayals far outnumbered negative ones
  - No abusive or derogatory terms were directed at participants based on their ethnic minority status
  - The few examples of gratuitous stereotyping were more than counterbalanced by portrayals which counteracted stereotypes

Disability

Here, as in previous studies, our categorisation of disability has followed that used by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) to allow comparison with the real world[1]. A fairly uncontroversial real world prevalence figure would be 20%[2]. This is also very close to the number of people who would be covered by the Disability Discrimination Act (1995). In this content analysis, a total of 144 participants were portrayed as having some disability. This equates to a TV population prevalence of less than 1% (0.9%). Thus we might conclude that disabled representation would need to be increased by over 2000% to achieve parity with the real world.

Disability was coded when a participant was portrayed having a disability in a programme visually, verbally or by some other cue. A log was also made of participants who were known to be disabled but not portrayed as such in the programme. For example, sometimes Frank Gardner was seen with a mobility aid (portrayed) and sometimes not, when only his head and shoulders were seen (=

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[1] Cumberbatch, Guy (1992) *Images of Disability on Television*. London: Routledge
[2] Papworth Trust, The (2008) *Key Facts about Disability: a review of the literature*. Cambridge

known, not portrayed). In this sample, he was coded as known on two occasions and portrayed on one.

Some 98 people were identified as known disabled. Of these, 60 were appearances of Gordon Brown in various different programmes – predominantly news. This figure is not 'scientific' since there may have been others who were disabled in the sample unknown to a coder and thus the preferred statistic here is portrayed disability.

A further issue for consideration is that of repeat appearances where the same individual or character appears in more than one programme. These are set out in Table 3 below.

Overall, 38% (N=54) of portrayals comprised 21 individuals who were repeated across various different programmes in this sample. If the repeated appearances by all 21 cases were removed (i.e. 33) then the disabled population would be reduced to just 111 individuals. However, as mentioned in the previous section, there is no comparable figure for multiple appearances in the television population at large so that this data cannot be used to estimate what proportion the individuals contribute. Nevertheless, the exercise is useful in highlighting the paucity of disabled portrayals if any reminder were needed.

Table 3: Repeat appearances of disabled participants

Times repeated	Name	Programme
2	Adam	EastEnders, BBC1
2	Alexandra Emery	Central News, ITV1
2	Barry Newton	Hollyoaks, C4
3	Debby Purdy	Channel 4 News, BBC News
2	Ellie Mae Mellor	Central News, ITV1
4	Gary O'Donaghue	BBC News
3	Gordon Brown	BBC News; ITV News
2	Grady	Jamie's American Road Trip, C4
2	Haroon Arif	Central News, ITV1
5	Hayley Ramsay	Hollyoaks, C4
3	Jim Branning	EastEnders, BBC1
2	Michael Hurl	Piers Morgan's Life Stories, ITV1
2	Michael John Mishkin	Red Riding, C4
4	Ravi Roy	Hollyoaks, C4
2	Red T shirt	Newsnight, BBC2
2	Sir Nicolas Winton	ITV News
2	Spencer Gray	Hollyoaks, C4
4	Stacey Slater	EastEnders, BBC1; Harry Hill's TV Burp, ITV1
2	Stefan Koscinski	Waking the Dead, BBC1
2	Stephen Hawking	The Kevin Bishop Show, C4; Newsnight, BBC2
2	Stuart Parker	BBC News

The criterion for disability was that it should be a chronic condition and not temporary nor due to a transitory illness. In the case of mental illness, although checked against DSM-IV categories, this needed to include a disabling element so that milder forms such as anxiety were excluded.

Table 4 below shows the various types of disabilities portrayed. These add up to more than the total number of disabled appearances since some participants had more than one disability – for example, Jim Branning (*EastEnders,* BBC1) was coded both as partially paralysed and having a speech impediment (on account of a stroke).

Sensory disabilities were the most prevalent. The categories blind, partially sighted, deaf and partially deaf comprised 21%. This was followed by mobility problems where the cause was unclear (14%), mental illness (10%) and learning disabilities (also at 10%). In total 48 mobility aids were logged including 28 portrayals of a participant using a wheelchair which remains the icon of disability.

Table 4: Types of disability portrayed

Types of disability	N	%
Blind	13	8
Partially sighted	10	6
Deaf/partially deaf	12	7
Missing limb/limbs	8	5
Disfigurement	12	7
Cerebral palsy	2	1
Parkinson's disease	2	1
Multiple sclerosis	3	2
Arthritis (severe)	4	2
Partial paralysis	9	5
Lame (cause unclear)	10	6
Cannot walk (cause unclear)	14	8
Mute/unable to speak	3	2
Speech impediment	4	2
Restricted growth	2	1
Autism	4	2
Downs syndrome	2	1
Motor Neurone disease/Muscular Dystrophy	3	2
Mentally ill	16	10
Learning disability	16	10
Brain damage	7	4
Others (e.g. Alexander disease x 2)	10	6
All disabilities coded	**166**	**98**

NB: Percentages total less than 100% due to rounding

The sample is really too small for any reliable breakdown by production type (see Figure 21) or channel (see Figure 22) but details are provided here for completeness.

Figure 21: Disability by production type
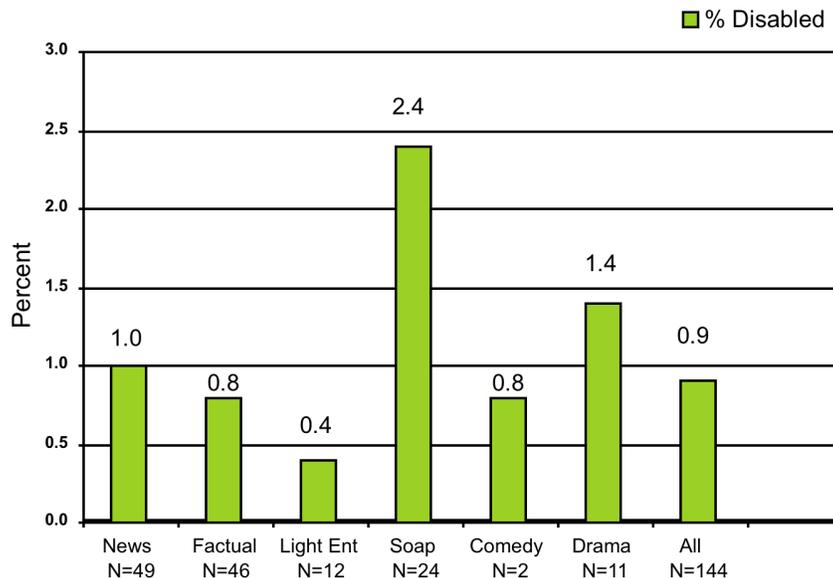
News and Factual generated the highest number of disabled participants albeit at very low rates of incidence. In News, of the 49 participants, two thirds (65%) were concerned with minority issues relating to disability. These included two of Gordon Brown where the issue of his deteriorating sight was used to raise questions about his ability to continue as Prime Minister (*ITV News*, *BBC News*). Debbie Purdy appeared three times in her campaign for the law on assisted suicides to be clarified (*BBC News*, *Channel 4 News*). Charlotte Webber appeared as the youngest person to have a guide dog after Guide Dogs for the Blind amended their rules about ownership (*BBC News*).

A wide variety of programmes contributed to disabled portrayals in Factual. One fifth (21%) emanated from two editions of *The Secret Millionaire* (C4) where ten individual portrayals were encountered. This series follows the philanthropic interventions of different millionaires who go undercover and make donations towards worthy causes. These programmes focused on Daisy UK (a charity for disabled children), Helping Hands (a charity which helps vulnerable people) and a garden centre offering help to adults with learning disabilities. A further 5 portrayals (11%) occurred in two editions of *The Choir* (BBC2) when members of

the community volunteered to join a new choir which Gareth Malone was seeking to establish. One of the local organisations visited was a special needs school. Soaps produced the highest rate of disability representation at 2.4% with a total of 24 participants. These are shown below:

Name	Programme	Channel	Disability	N
Hayley Ramsay	*Hollyoaks*	C4	Cannot walk	5
Ravi Roy	*Hollyoaks*	C4	Brain damage	4
Barry Newton	*Hollyoaks*	C4	Mentally ill	2
Spencer Gray	*Hollyoaks*	C4	Learning disability	2
Jake Dean	*Hollyoaks*	C4	Mentally ill	1
Jim Branning	*EastEnders*	BBC1	Partial paralysis & Speech	3
Stacey Slater	*EastEnders*	BBC1	Mentally ill	3
Adam Best	*EastEnders*	BBC1	Cannot walk	2
Incidental man	*Coronation Street*	ITV1	Restricted growth	1
Incidental woman	*Emmerdale*	ITV1	Blind	1

The next highest rate was found in Drama at 1.4% disabled representation where there were 11 portrayals as listed below:

Name	Programme	Channel	Disability	N
Michael John Mishkin	*Red Riding*	C4	Learning disability	2
Stefan Koscinski	*Waking the Dead*	BBC1	Mentally ill	2
Georg	*Waking the Dead*	BBC1	Mentally ill	1
Jamie Harris	*Holby City*	BBC1	Mentally ill	1
Maria Kendall	*Holby City*	BBC1	Partial paralysis	1
Misty Fisher	*Holby City*	BBC1	Autism	1
Mrs Bates	*Emma*	BBC1	Cannot walk	1
Sick woman	*Land Girls*	BBC1	Mentally ill	1
Freddy Snr	*The Take*	Sky1	Brain damage & Speech	1

Light Entertainment produced the lowest rate at only 0.4% representation with just 12 portrayals. These were:

Name	Programme	Channel	Disability	N
Michael Hurl	*Piers Morgan's Life Stories*	ITV1	Parkinsons	2
Stacey Slater	*Harry Hill's TV Burp*	ITV1	Mentally ill	1
Roy	*Scrapheap Challenge*	C4	Arthritis	1
Bernie	*Scrapheap Challenge*	C4	Other	1
Stephen Hawking	*The Kevin Bishop Show*	C4	Muscular dystrophy	1
Gregory House	*House: An Insider's Guide*	Sky1	Lame, mentally ill	1
Walter Bishop	*Fringe: Access all areas*	Sky1	Mentally ill	1
Ray Charles	*Later with Jools Holland*	BBC1	Blind	1
Man in wheelchair	*Armstrong & Miller Show*	BBC1	Cannot walk	1
Ian Scott Massie	*Mastermind*	BBC1	Partially deaf	1
Bridge keeper	*Movie Connections*	BBC2	Partially sighted	1

There were few comedy programmes in the sample producing only two portrayals: Warren who was dyslexic in *Porridge* (BBC2) and an unnamed incidental character shown using a wheelchair in *The Inbetweeners* (C4).

Figure 23: Disability by level of appearance
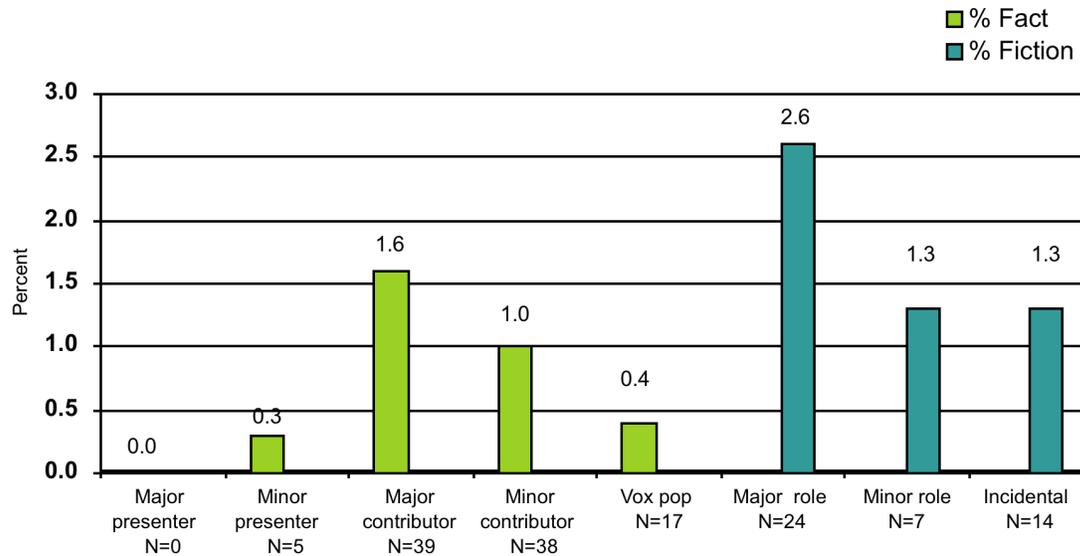
Disabled participants achieved a relatively high rate as major contributors in factually based programmes – particularly in News where there were 11 which represents a rate of 3.8% of all major contributors. The majority (8) of these were concerned with disability issues.

Major contributors who discussed other subjects comprised Stephen Hawking who had stepped down as Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge (*Newsnight*, BBC2) and two appearances of Sir Nicholas Winton on his experiences during World War 11 (*News at Ten*, ITV1).

Major roles in fiction were also relatively high at 2.6% - here 18 of the 24 portrayals were due to 7 individuals in Soaps (*Hollyoaks*, C4 and *EastEnders*, BBC1).

It is worth noting that even in vox pop, where normally there is usually no particular expertise or restriction imposed on the participants, the rate of representation remained low at only 0.4%.

A judgement was made about the extent to which a participant's disability played a part in their on-screen portrayal.

- *Central* – was where the disability provided the dominant focus for the portrayal.
- *Relevant* – was where the disability had some bearing on the portrayal but there were also other reasons for the participant to be present in the programme.
- *Incidental* – was where the person's disability bore little or no relation to their role in the programme and they just happened to be disabled.

Figure 24: Relevance of disability to role
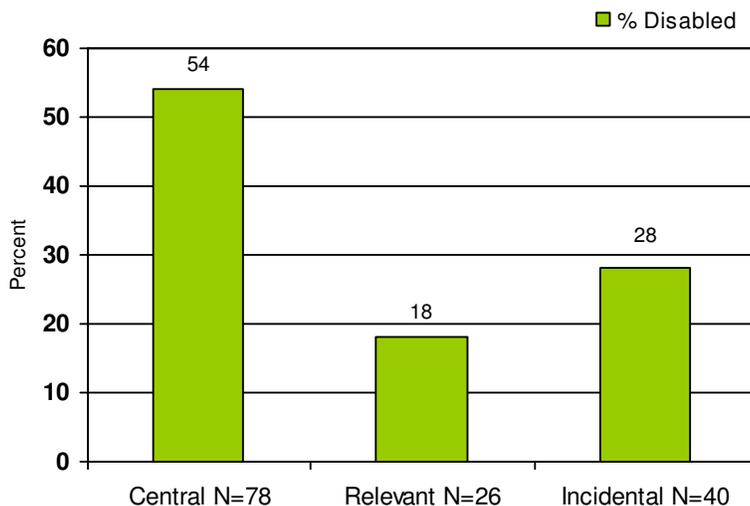
The results in Figure 24 show that there was a notable lack of portrayal where disability was an ordinary everyday phenomenon. For more than seven out of ten (72%)
participants, their disability was their defining attribute to a greater or lesser extent while less than three out of ten (28%) just happened to be disabled.

Examples of *incidental* disability were provided by Gary O'Donaghue and Frank Gardner (both *BBC News*) and, in quite a different way, by Hayley Ramsay in *Hollyoaks* (C4). Across the various episodes she was portrayed as an ordinary young woman enjoying life as a student including fresher's week pranks, drinking games and deliberating on what to wear for a night out.

Disability as *relevant* was illustrated in *Live from Studio Five* (Five) where an interview with the actor, Leslie Ash, covered various topics from her career and her family life through to the court case she had brought after the MRSA virus had left her partially paralysed. Similarly, a programme focusing on top golfer, Seve Ballasteros (*Inside Sport Special*, BBC1), covered a number of different aspects of his life including the brain tumor which had left him lame and partially sighted.

Where disability was *central* (78 cases), the portrayals were categorized into the themes of suffering (N=28, 36%), bravery/endurance (N=27, 35%), cures/campaigning (N=7, 9%), humour (N=3, 4%) and a small group (N=13, 17%) of miscellaneous portrayals (e.g. neutral).

Stacey Slater provided examples of *suffering* in various episodes of *EastEnders*, (BBC1). She had recently been diagnosed with bi-polar disorder and her portrayal was of a young woman struggling to come to terms with her diagnosis, swinging between moments of complete denial followed by a frightening clarity about her situation.

Richard Whitehead, who was thought to illustrate *bravery*, was the subject of an item in *Central News* (ITV1). A man without legs, he was being nominated for a Pride of Britain Award in recognition of his achievements that included running numerous marathons and visiting schools with the aim of encouraging children to become involved in sport.

Debbie Purdy was seen on 3 occasions in jubilant mood after succeeding in her _campaign_ to clarify the law on assisted suicide (*BBC News* and *Channel 4 News*). In an example illustrating _cures_, Stuart Parker was interviewed in connection with the introduction of ear protection for soldiers by the MOD. Had this occurred earlier, Corporal Parker could then have been saved from the fate of becoming partially deaf as a result of battlefield noise.

Finally additional analysis done qualitatively found that some positives emerged from the small number of portrayals of disabled people
- There is no indication that disabled people are less sexualised in their portrayals than non-disabled
- More of the portrayals of people with disabilities were as assertive, self-assured people (than as less confident/ less assertive)
- Abusive or derogatory terms were very rarely encountered
- Counteracting stereotypes was much more prevalent than stereotyping

Sexuality

Although as always, much depends on how this is defined, a working figure of 6% population incidence for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) seems to have become accepted.[3] In this content analysis, transgender was taken to encompass transvestism and transsexuality. There were only four portrayals where no sexuality was implied. A total of 93 participants were portrayed as being lesbian, gay or bisexual, thus indicating a television population incidence of 0.6% - one tenth of the real world estimates.

The majority here was male (88%, N=82) with only 11 female portrayals observed. However a further 91 participants were known to be gay even though not portrayed as such in the programme where they appeared. As with disabled participants, the television population estimate and the figures used here are based on participants who are portrayed as LGBT (i.e. 93). Overall, 42% (N=39) of these portrayals comprised 14 individuals who were repeated across various different programmes in this sample.

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[3] Aspinall, Peter J. (2009) *Estimating the size and composition of the lesbian, gay, and bisexual population in Britain*. Equality and Human Rights Commission Research Report 37.

Table 5: Repeat appearances of LGBT participants

| Times appeared	Name	Programme
2	Charlie	Big Brother, C4
2	Charlotte Lau	Hollyoaks, C4
3	Christian Clarke	EastEnders, BBC1
2	Danyl Johnson	The X Factor, ITV1; Live from Studio 5, Five
4	Elton John	ITV News; Five News
3	Gok Wan	As Seen on TV, BBC1; Harry Hill's TV Burp, ITV1; Kevin Bishop Show,C4
2	Kris Fisher	Hollyoaks, C4
3	Mr Toledo	UK Border Force, Sky1
2	Paul O'Grady	The Paul O'Grady Show, C4
2	Rodrigo	Big Brother, C4
4	Sean Tulley	Coronation Street, ITV1
2	Stephen Fry	Last Chance to See, BBC2; Channel 4 News
5	Stephen Gately	ITV News; Five News
3	Syed Masood	EastEnders, BBC1

If the repeated appearances by all 14 cases were removed (i.e. 25) then the gay population would be reduced to 68 individuals. However, since no equivalent figure is available for repeats in the television population at large, these cannot be used to estimate population incidence.

Figure 25 provides a breakdown of where participants were located. The highest rate of appearance was found in Comedy at 5.8%. This was based on

- 11 portrayals in two episodes of *Benidorm* (ITV1)
- 2 portrayals in *Peep Show* (C4)
- 1 portrayal in *Home Time* (BBC2)
- 1 portrayal in *Doc Martin* (ITV1)

A relatively high rate was also observed in Soaps. Here the gay relationship between Syed Masood and Christian Clarke (*EastEnders*, BBC1) produced six portrayals. Lesbian relationship dynamics were also featured in *Hollyoaks* (C4) with a further 4 generated by Charlotte Lau, Lydia Hart and Sarah Barnes. In addition, Kris Fisher was portrayed as gay twice. In *Coronation Street* (ITV1) Sean Tulley appeared four times and Leon once, while in *Emmerdale* (ITV1) there were a further two incidental lesbian portrayals.

Figure 25: Sexuality by production type
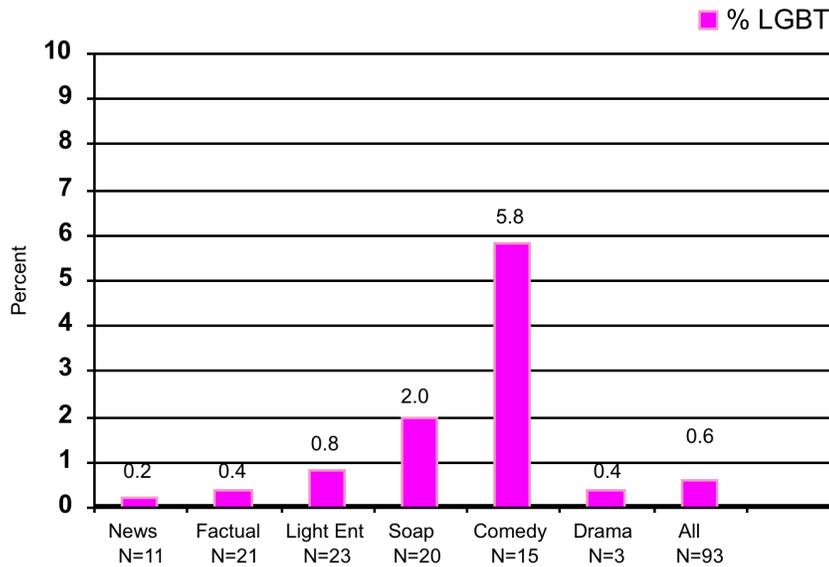
There were 38 programmes in Drama making up only 9% of output. However, while more might have been expected, in total only 3 portrayals were identified. These comprised a minor portrayal each in *Casualty* (BBC1) and *Red Riding* (C4) and an incidental role in *Lewis* (ITV1).

The largest number (23) of portrayals was found in Light Entertainment across a relatively wide variety of programmes. These included:

- 6 portrayals in four editions of *Big Brother* (C4)
- 4 portrayals in *Friday Night with Jonathan Ross* (BBC1)
- 3 portrayals in *Benidorm Uncovered* (ITV1)
- 2 portrayals in 2 editions of *As Seen on TV* (BBC1)
- 2 portrayals in 2 editions of *The Paul O'Grady Show* (C4)
- 2 portrayals in *The Kevin Bishop Show* (C4)
- 1 portrayal in *The Armstrong and Miller Show* (BBC1)
- 1 portrayal in *The X Factor* (ITV1)
- 1 portrayal in *Harry Hill's TV Burp* (ITV1)
- 1 portrayal in *The Weakest Link* ((BBC1)

The overall rate in Factual at 0.4% is very low, yet because of the large number of programmes, this production type generated 21 cases. They were clustered in a small number (12) of programmes:

- 7 portrayals in 2 editions of *Brighton Beach Patrol* (Five)
- 4 portrayals in 4 editions of *UK Border Force* (Sky1)
- 4 portrayals in *Monty Python – Almost the Truth* (BBC2)
- 3 portrayals in 2 editions of *Live from Studio 5* (Five)
- 1 portrayal in *Dragon's Den on Tour* (BBC2)
- 1 portrayal in *Last Chance to See* (BBC2)
- 1 portrayal in *Vice Squad* (Five)

There were only 11 portrayals in News so that the rate of appearance at 0.2% is the lowest of all production types. In fact these 11 portrayals were comprised of repeated appearances of only 5 individuals:

- Elton John, 3 portrayals on his attempts to adopt a Ukrainian orphan (*Five News*; *ITV News*).
- Stephen Gately, 3 portrayals featuring video clips on the occasion of his death (*ITV News*, *Five News*).
- Stephen Fry, discussing his perception of homophobia in the Conservative Party (*Channel 4 News*).
- Ashley Crossley, defended Conservative Party attitudes to LGBT in response to criticism from a member of the public (*Channel 4 News*).
- Adam Lake attacking a *Daily Mail* article which was critical of Stephen Gately (*ITV News*).

A number of the gay portrayals were of prominent figures (see figure 27).

Figure 27: Sexuality by level of appearance
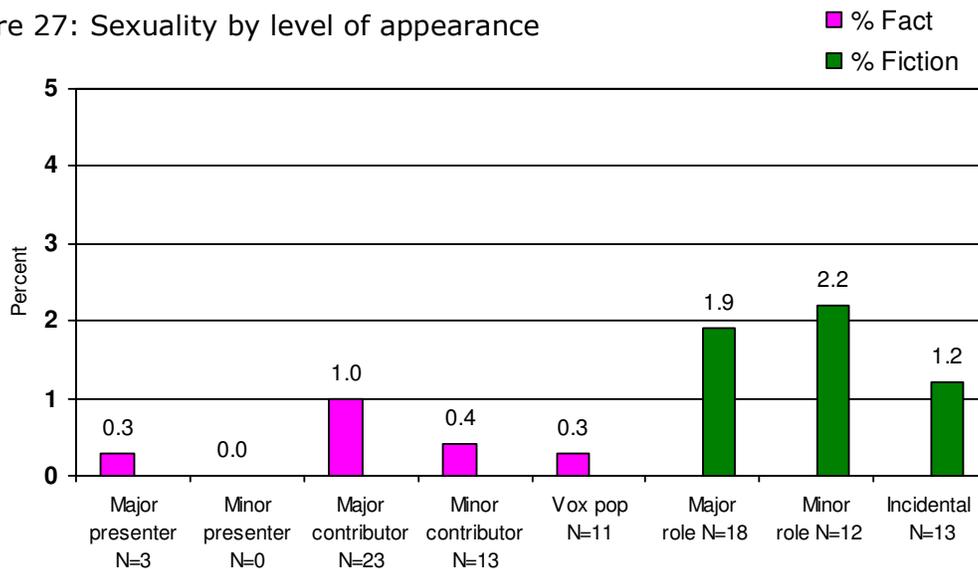
The three portrayals as major presenters were: Paul O'Grady on two occasions in his own show and Stephen Fry in *Last Chance to See* (BBC2). Although there were no minor presenters logged, some 23 major contributors were LGBT who comprised 18 individual people. These included six appearances of four people in *Big Brother* (C4).

As might be predicted, most (13) of the major roles were in Soaps as were 5 of the minor roles with Comedy contributing strongly to the remainder.

A final set of results is derived from a coding question about the extent to which the participant's minority group status (here sexuality) had a bearing on their role in the programme. Figure 28 shows that for the majority (almost eight out of ten) their sexuality was central or relevant.

Figure 28: Relevance of sexuality to role in programme
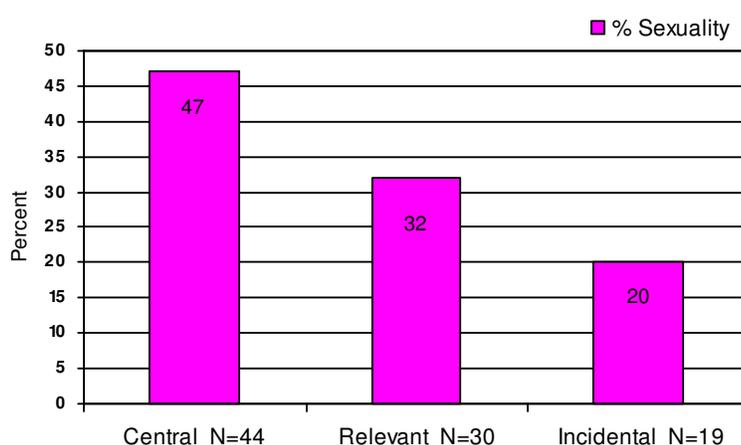
As with disability, there is a notable dearth of portrayals where the minority group status was only *incidental* to the role. One example was Josef in *The Weakest Link* (BBC1). He was categorised as 'implied gay' being very camp and wearing eye make up, but there was nothing else in the portrayal which built on this. A similar case was hairdresser and major contributor Sean Pulfrey in *Dragon's Den on Tour* (BBC2).

An example of *relevant* was given by Sean Tully (*Coronation Street,* ITV1) who felt very guilty after his landlady's house was burgled, knowing he was to blame. The night before he'd been to a club and brought a man back with him. The next morning, the man had left early and so must have been responsible for the theft.

However, this made up only part of Sean's storyline in this episode and therefore his sexuality was classed as relevant but not central to the portrayal.

In factual programming, Conservative MP Ashley Crossley was portrayed answering quick fire questions from the public on Channel 4 News item called 'tweet or dare'. To the question, *How can DC* [David Cameron] *claim that the Tory party has changed and loves LGBT people, when siding with homophobes in Europe?* Crossley replied, *That's a rubbish question. I am the first openly gay Conservative. I don't feel threatened. To say we're siding with homophobes is complete propagandist rubbish!* This portrayal was classed as *relevant* because there were reasons other than his sexuality for being on the programme.

One example of *central* was provided by Christian Clarke and Syed Masood (*EastEnders*, BBC1) who carried major storylines focussing on their love affair and Syed's reluctance to come out. Being Muslim and engaged to be married, Syed felt compelled on the one hand to adhere to family and religious expectations of marriage and children. On the other hand, he had fallen in love with Christian and consummated their relationship.

In *Harry Hills TV Burp* (ITV1), Hill was amused by a video clip of Gok Wan presenting a programme in which he said, *Today this city boy is being taken up the mountain* which was judged as central.

The following themes emerged from the qualitative analysis of sexuality portrayal
- Fictional characters were predominantly neutral or positive
- Abusive or derogatory terms were very rarely encountered – when they were it was in fictional programmes and mostly came from gay participants
- Less of the portrayals than might be expected showed LGBT people as assertive and self-assured
- Comedy or humour was derived from over a third of LGB portrayals
- There was evidence of LGB portrayals which were considered to be gratuitously discriminatory

Conclusions on diversity monitoring

Although relative modest in size, especially compared with the sheer quantity of television transmitted each week, this monitoring exercise is indicative of patterns across UK television. These suggest a number of areas for editorial debate and ones where closer scrutiny might be merited.

Almost all groups examined here are seriously under represented on television. For the most part, the small numbers restrict analysis. Important parameters such as by levels of appearance and programme type reduce sample sizes dramatically quite apart from satisfying any curiosity about channel similarities or differences.

Perhaps the first point to be made is that this monitoring exercise picks up the cumulative consequences of both imbalances in society and editorial decisions about representation and portrayal. It cannot in itself provide detailed advice about how things might be different. In any case, making a difference is a creative process best suited to those actively involved in television production. It needs encouragement to achieve rather than sanctions to comply.

The considerable under representation of women is quite clear, with the notable exception of major roles in Soaps and major presenters in News. More than this, unlike the real world, men evidently enjoy longer lives on television than their female counterparts. Given this, there is an anomaly in the absence of youthful age groups on television (children's programming was not included but young people might well protest that they should not exist in a ghetto). In the UK, around one quarter of the population is under twenty years old compared with less than 6% in the television population sampled here.

At the other end of the age scale, older people are well under represented across all programme types but particularly in Light Entertainment and Comedy. Additionally very few appeared as major or minor presenters.

Ethnic minorities, at first sight, seem far closer to real world proportions and appear to have gained greater access to the on screen world. However, population dynamics suggest that television is moving a little too slowly here and the goal posts may be becoming more distant. A notable phenomenon is the relative under representation of South Asian groups and the virtual absence of many others such as Chinese. On a positive note, qualitative exploration of

ethnic minority portrayal found that ethnicity was incidental to the participant's TV role in the vast majority of cases, suggesting that colour blind casting has been established.

In a sense, the representation of disability is quite clear cut. As a minority group, people with disabilities are almost invisible citizens on television and so any recommendation must be quite simply to show more disabled people. However even here representation cannot easily be separated from other demographics since disability prevalence increases quite dramatically with age. Additionally, issues of portrayal are quite vital here since, when representation was achieved, in the vast majority of cases it was tendentious – the portrayal of disability as an ordinary everyday phenomenon was very rare.

It is more difficult to draw conclusions about the representation of sexuality since the numbers are very small to detect a pattern, especially when broken down by production type or any other parameter.

Issues of representation are far from simple. The temptation may be to consider each minority group independently. However they are not mutually exclusive, whilst disability increases with age, ethnic diversity decreases with age. So any one population parameter can relate to others. However, in debates about diversity the results of this monitoring provide one starting point and perhaps a salutary reminder that the world of television is quite different to the real world.

Next Steps

The Cumberbatch Research Group and Channel 4 recommend a full study designed to both boost sample structure and deal with methodological issues that have arisen from this pilot research. A CDN steering group could be set up to progress this full scale study.