

Treating Men and Women Equally on TV

Are we nearly there yet?

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Background to the research

The objective

Within the Channel 4 Diversity Charter, we committed to commissioning and reporting on original research on diversity issues within broadcasting

Background to the research

RACISM SEXISM

AND HOMOPHOBIA

The research company

The Communication Research Group is an acknowledged leader in the field of academic research in broadcasting

IN THIS AREA

Background to the research

We wanted to investigate

Gender representation on TV and the nature and frequency of sexism on TV, directed at both men and women

The methodology

We examined

500 hours of prime time TV

7pm to 11pm

Over three months

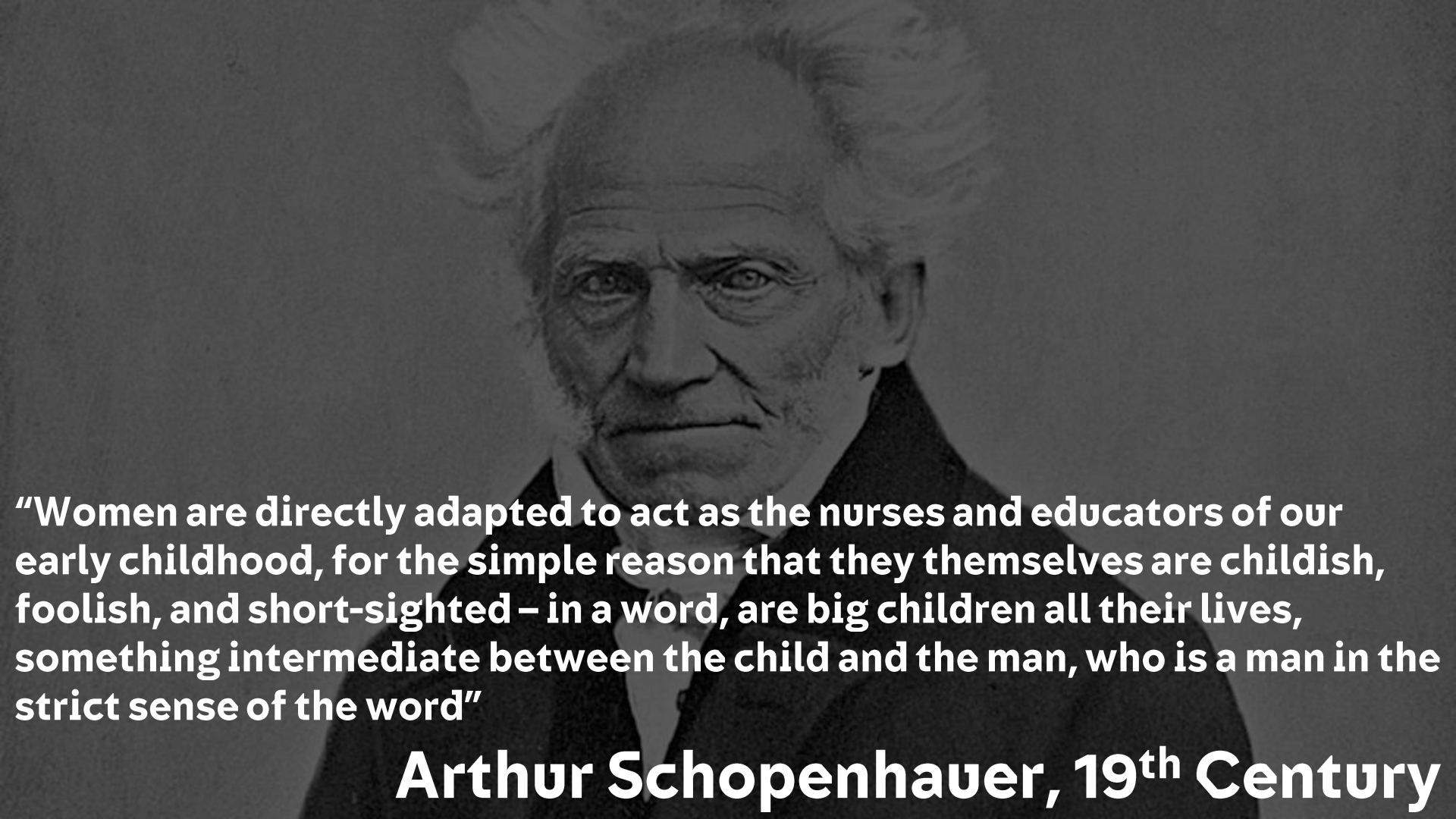
(April to July '15)



How far have we come?



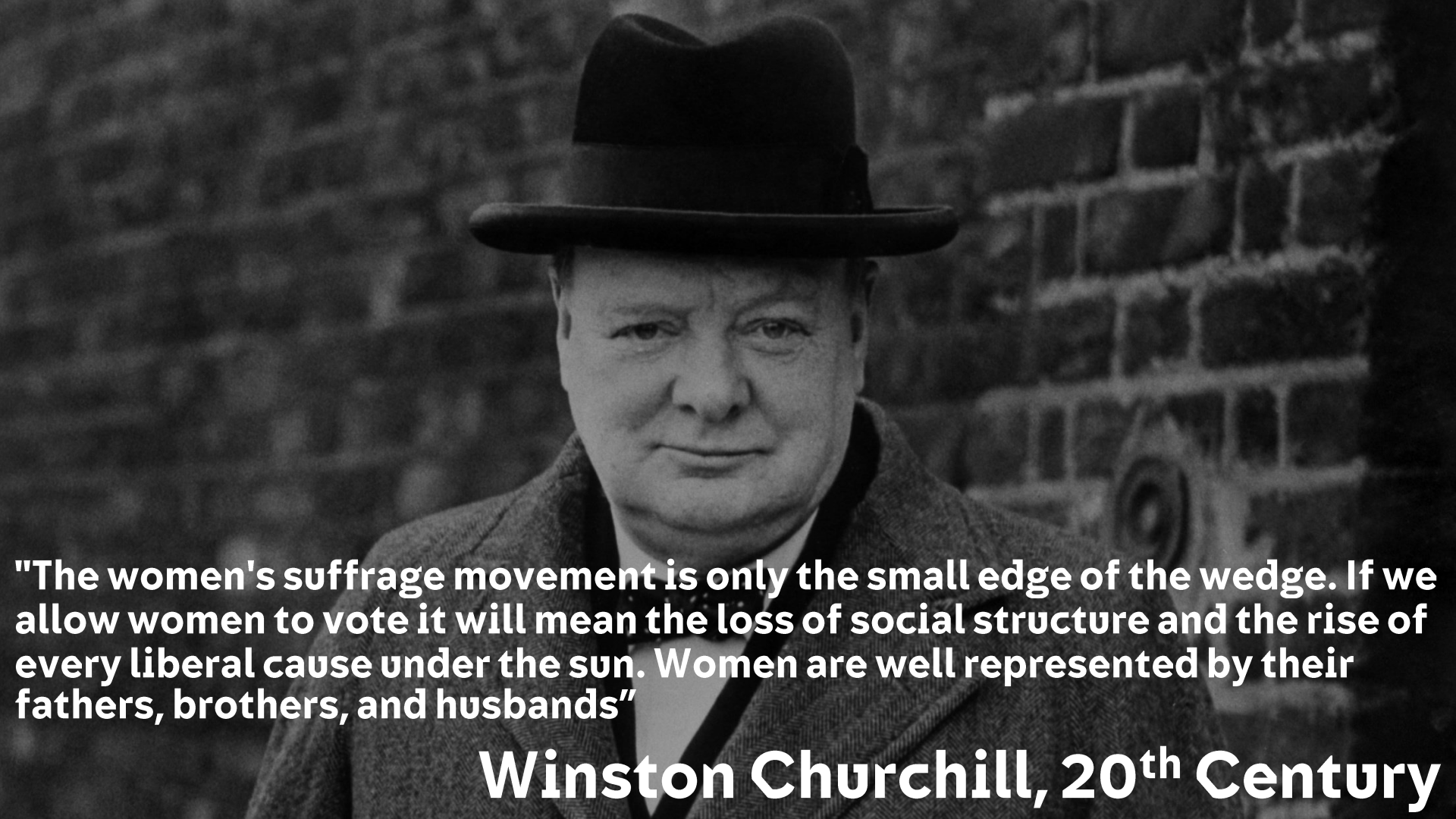
“Women are directly adapted to act as the nurses and educators of our early childhood, for the simple reason that they themselves are childish, foolish, and short-sighted – in a word, are big children all their lives, something intermediate between the child and the man, who is a man in the strict sense of the word”



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Arthur Schopenhauer, 19th Century

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Winston Churchill, 20th Century



Justin Trudeau, 2015

A close-up portrait of Justin Trudeau, the Prime Minister of Canada, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. He is wearing a dark blue suit jacket, a light blue checkered shirt, and a dark blue tie with a small floral pattern. The background is dark and out of focus, with some warm, bokeh light spots.

“Because it’s 2015”

Justin Trudeau, 2015

**So, what about gender
representation on TV in the UK
in 2015?**

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representation on TV in the UK
in 2015?**

50:50?

2

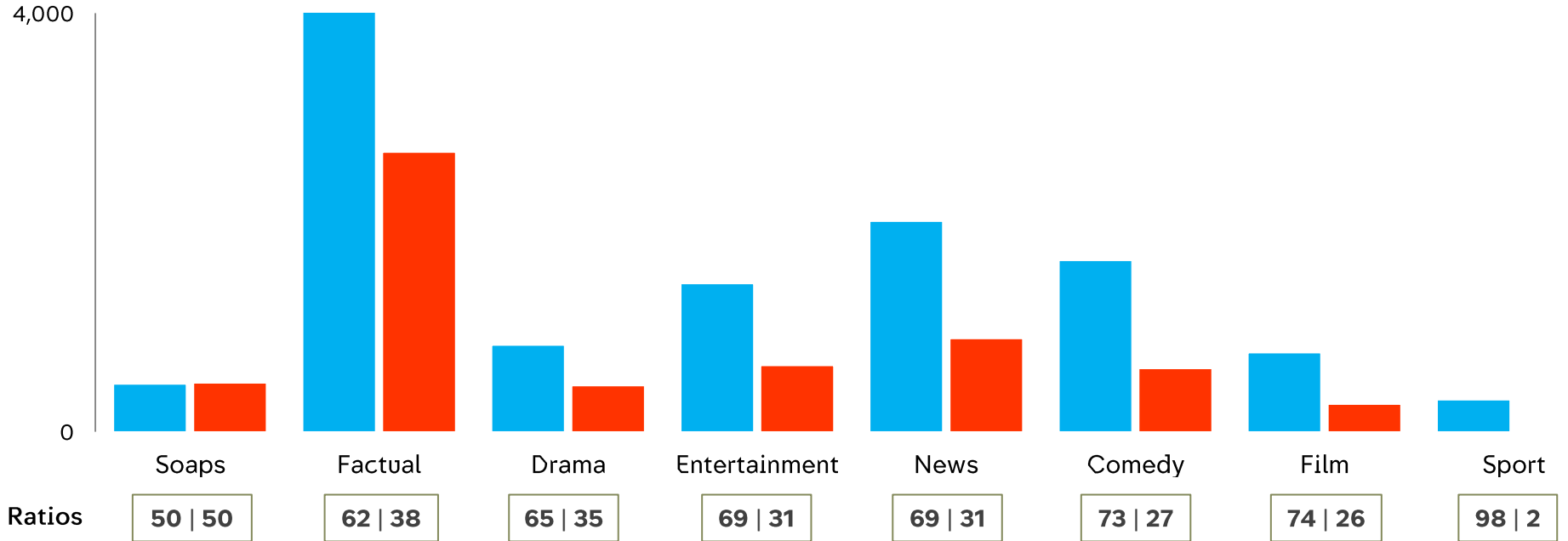
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**Men are twice as likely to appear on television than women,
a figure which is surprisingly consistent by channel.**

The ratios change significantly by genre

No. of people (500hrs peak tv)

Male Female



Fictional programming by genre

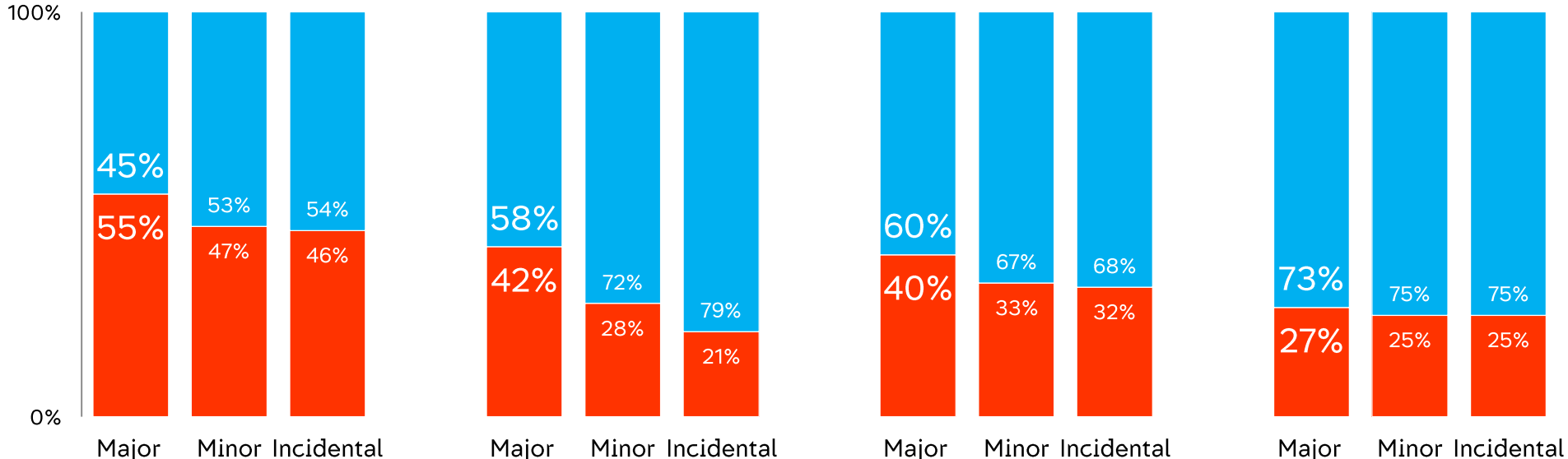
SOAPS

COMEDY

DRAMA

FILM

Female Male



Factual programming by genre

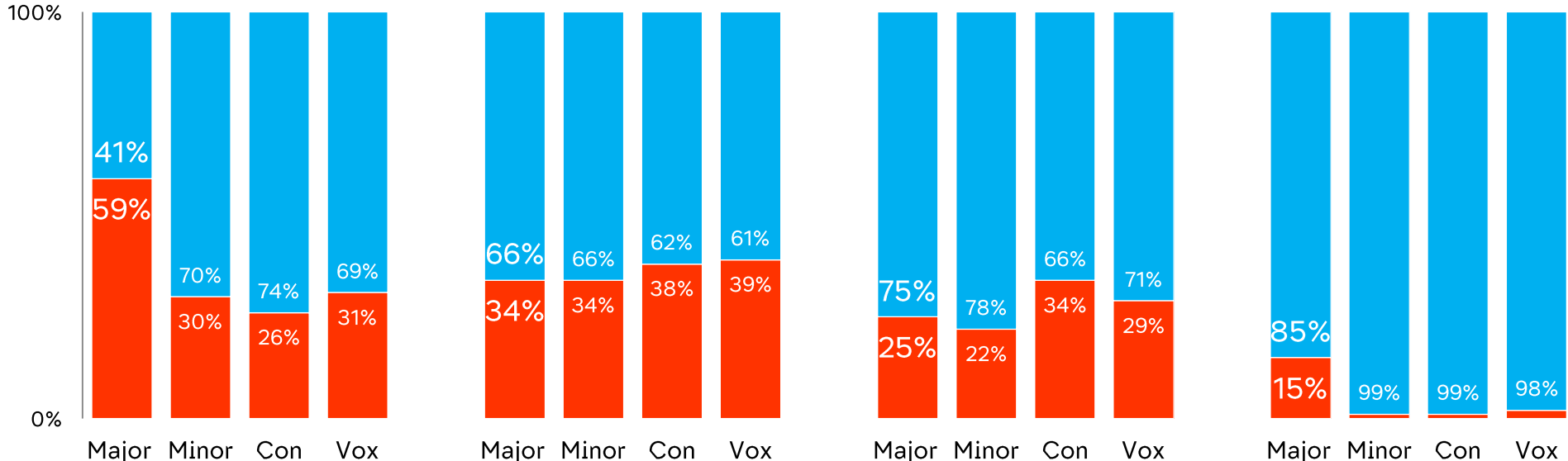
NEWS

FACTUAL

ENTERTAINMENT

SPORT

Female Male

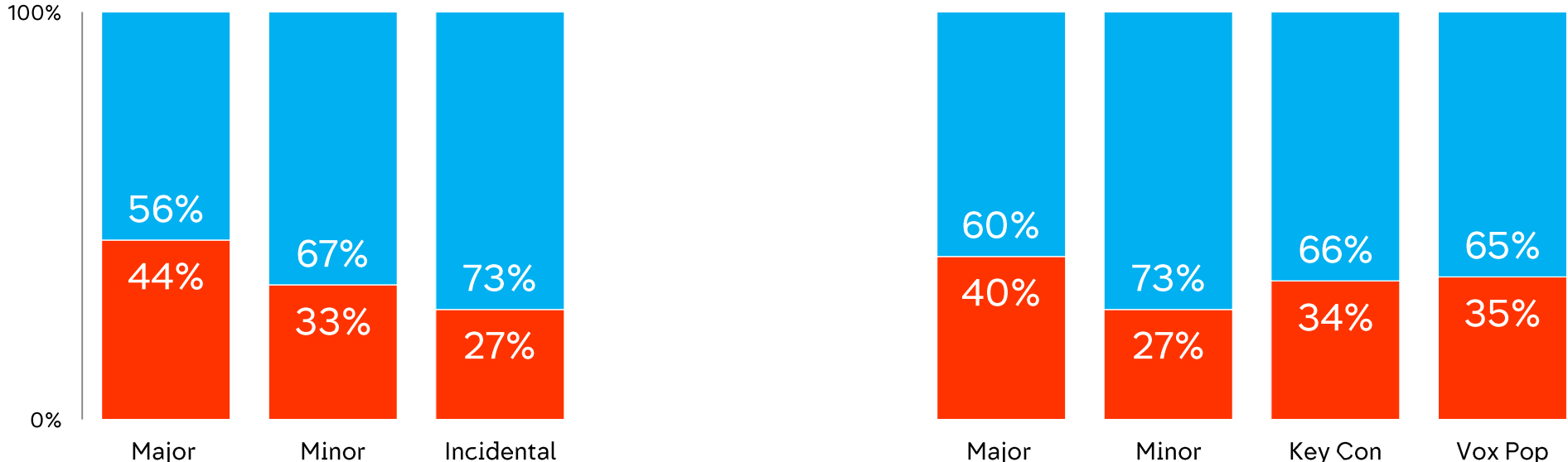


Fictional & factual roles by gender

FICTIONAL

FACTUAL

Female Male



Age on TV

As a woman, you are far more likely to be represented on TV if you are under 50

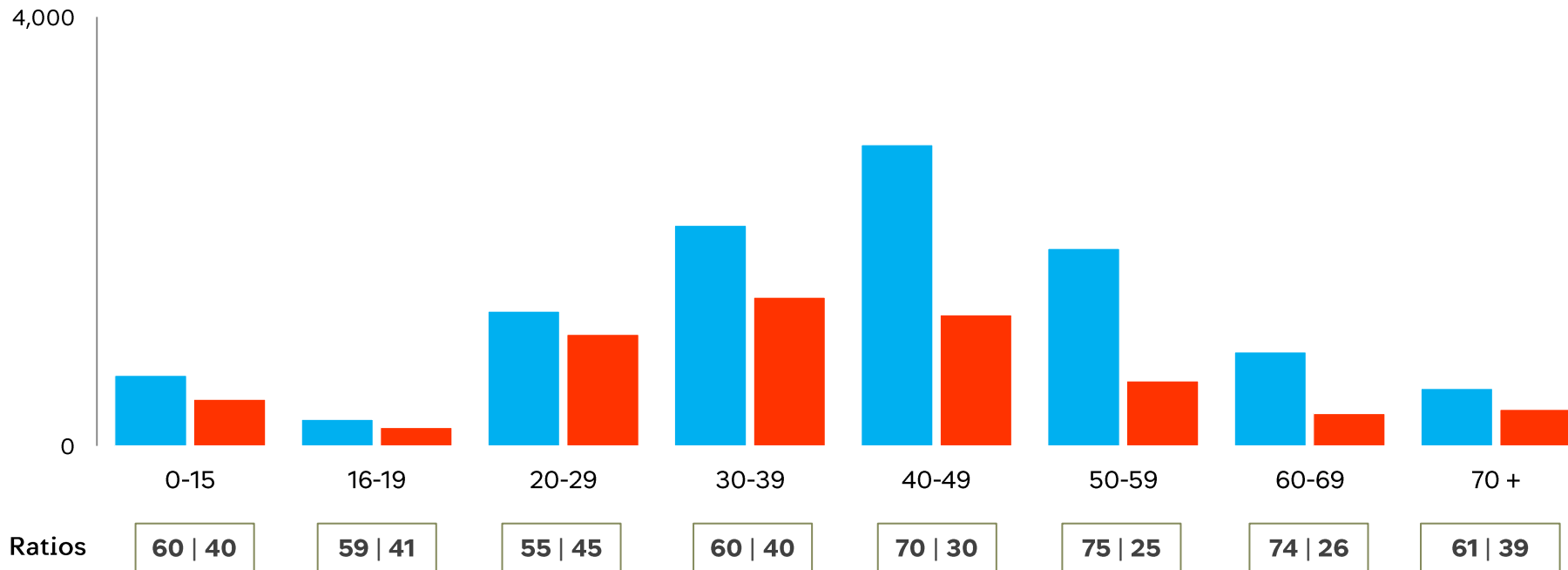
36% of women in the UK are over 50

On TV, only 23% are above this age

Up to the age of 40 women occupy between 40-45% of all appearances on TV.

No. of people (500hrs peak tv)

Male Female



A dense display of toys, including dolls and cars, with a central text overlay. The background is filled with various toy boxes, including dolls in pink packaging and cars in blue and red packaging. The text is white and bold, centered on the image.

**How do we fare in our
portrayal of the sexes?**

How are we doing now?



Pretty well, by *comparison*

Research suggests the most serious sexism has been eradicated from British TV, for which the industry deserves huge credit



A close-up photograph of two fried eggs on a white plate. The eggs are cooked to a medium level, with a golden-brown, slightly crispy top and a runny yolk. The plate is white and has some water droplets on it. The background is dark and out of focus. Overlaid on the center of the image is white text in a bold, sans-serif font.

**But ... low-level sexism
continues to thrive on-screen**

Defining sexism



Measuring on-screen sexism presents challenges

While serious sexism, like serious racism, is obvious and undisputable, we wanted to categorise the full spectrum

We identified four academic definitions...

A mannequin with long, wavy, reddish-brown hair is the central focus. She is wearing a pink bandana tied around her head, large, dark, wrap-around sunglasses, and a black and white striped bikini top. She is posed in a way that emphasizes her physical appearance. The background is a dimly lit room with some colorful vertical stripes on the right side and some lights on the left. The overall tone is somewhat somber and critical.

Sexual / physical objectification
Including someone being reduced to appearance



Lack of agency

When a person is treated as if owned,
there to serve, or as dispensable



Discounted

Where a person's views are
discounted or considered inferior
because of their gender

Other

including trivialisation and gender-specific derogatory terms
(cow, bitch, prick)



BASIC
BITCH

Examples of sexism

DO YOU WANT TO GET YOUR BEACH BODY READY?

THE WEIGHT LOSS COLLECTOR


Substituting two daily meals of an energy restricted diet with a meal replacement, contributes to weight loss

MEAL REPLACEMENT & SUPPLEMENT





'I didn't mean it...'

A red protest sign is the central focus, featuring the text "SEXISM IS A CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY!" in black, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The sign is slightly tilted and appears to be part of a larger protest or demonstration. In the background, there are other signs, including one with a black and white checkered pattern, and a red bag or object. The overall scene is outdoors, with some greenery visible in the upper left corner.

How frequently does some form of sexism occur on prime-time TV?

Five sexist incidents per hour
in prime time, on each individual channel examined

Sexism towards women or men?

72%

Female-directed

28%

Male-directed

In the context of men outnumbering women 2:1 in the TV universe, this means that women are five times more likely to suffer sexism than men

Most frequent type of sexist incident



Men

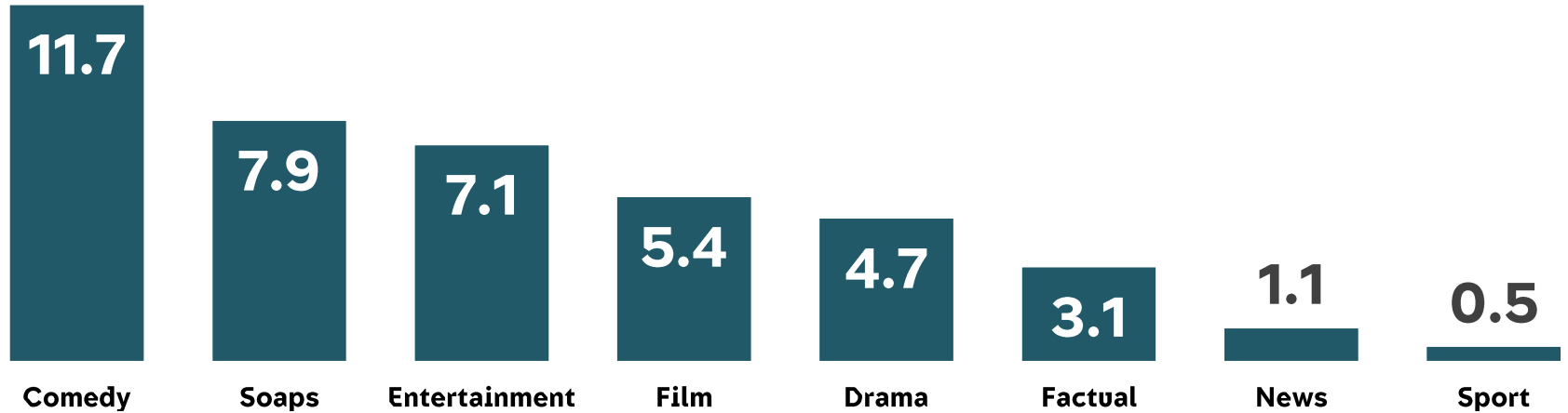
74% of all incidents of sexism towards men fell into the sexual/physical objectification category

Women

For women, 58% of all sexist incidents towards them were in this category.

29% of all incidents towards women were categorised as 'other' and were mainly gender-specific derogatory terms

Average sexist incidents per hour by genre



Conclusions

Representation

- Females are outnumbered by males, is still at a ratio of 2:1
- Ratios of men to women vary significantly by genre
- Women are better represented in major roles than minor or incidental roles
- For women over the age of 50 years old on TV, they are significantly under represented compared with men

Conclusions

Portrayal

- **The most serious sexism has been eradicated from British TV**
- **Low-level sexism continues to thrive on-screen**
- **There are five sexist incidents per hour on every channel in peak**
- **72% of these incidents were directed at women and 28% towards men**
- **Women are five times more likely to be the object of sexism**
- **Sexual/physical objectification is the most frequent incident**
- **Comedy had the highest number of incidents, proportionately**



**WORST
HOBBY EVER:
SEXISM**