

**WOMEN
IN MUSIC**
CANADA
WELCOMES

WOMEN IN MUSIC
2026
GLOBAL SUMMIT
TORONTO | MARCH 2-4

FACTOR Canada  ONTARIO
CREATES | ONTARIO
CRÉATIF

Radio in 2026

PANELISTS:

Dr. Jada Watson (SongData),
Albina Cabrera (KEXP),
Angeline Tetteh-Wayoe (CBC The Block),
Element Everest-Blanks (Program Director,
Radio Milwaukee | HYFIN)

MODERATOR: Sharon Hinds

**WOMEN
IN MUSIC**
CANADA
WELCOMES

WOMEN IN MUSIC
2026
GLOBAL SUMMIT
TORONTO | MARCH 2-4



*Access presentation slides and studies
featured in this deck.*

SHARE THE AIR

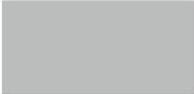
Updated!

Study by Jada Watson (SongData)

Legend for analysis of representation by race and ethnicity

-  Songs by white artists
-  Songs by Black artists
-  Songs by Indigenous artists
-  Songs by Artists of colour
-  Songs by multiethnic collaborations and groups

Legend for analysis of representation by gender identity

	White men
	Black, Indigenous and men of colour
	White women
	Black, Indigenous and women of colour
	White Trans* artists
	Black, Indigenous and Trans* artists of colour
	White mixed gender bands/collabs.
	Multiethnic mixed gender bands/collabs.



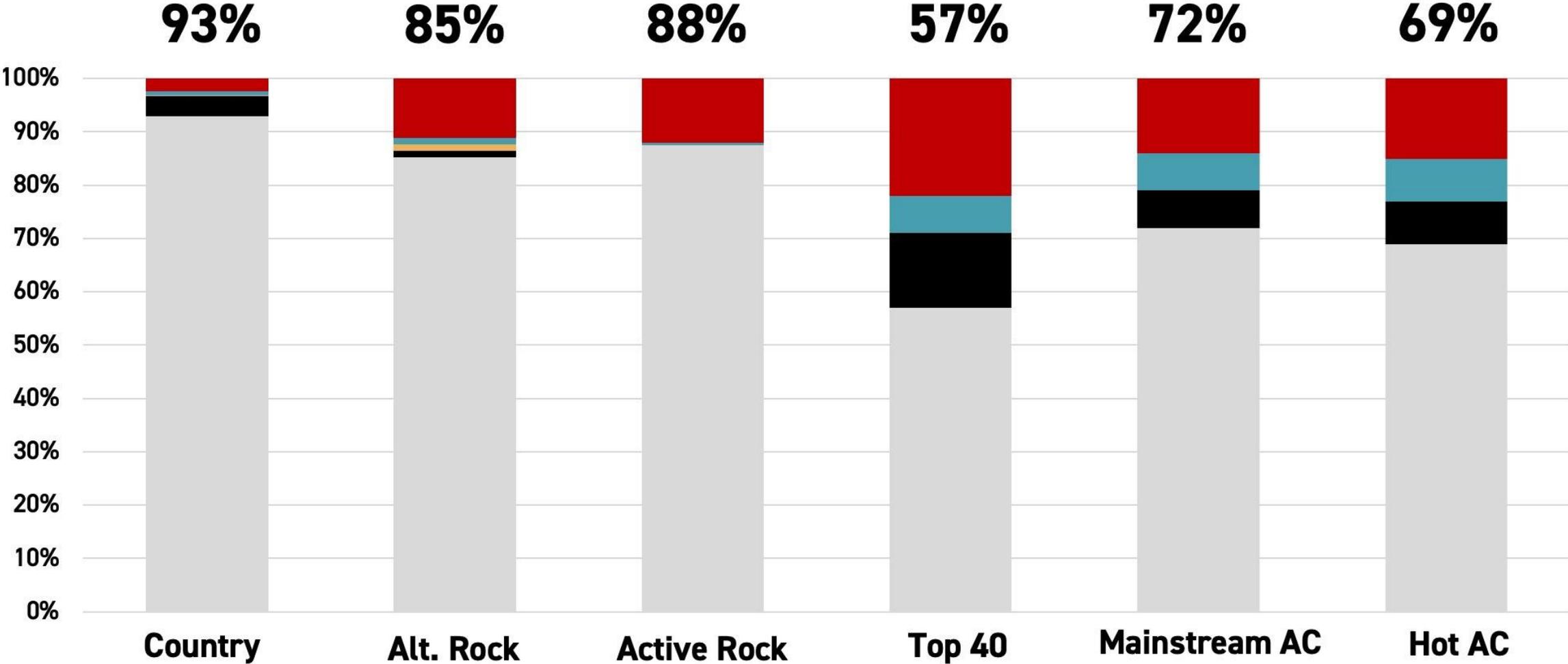
**Canadian
radio**

SHARE THE AIR studied of representation across Top 150 most played songs on Canadian commercial radio for each format's yearend airplay reports between 2013 and 2023 – **updated to include 2024 and 2025!**

- Country
- Alternative
- Active Rock
- Top 40
- Mainstream AC
- Hot AC

Racial inequity embedded in Canadian commercial radio airplay (2013-2025)

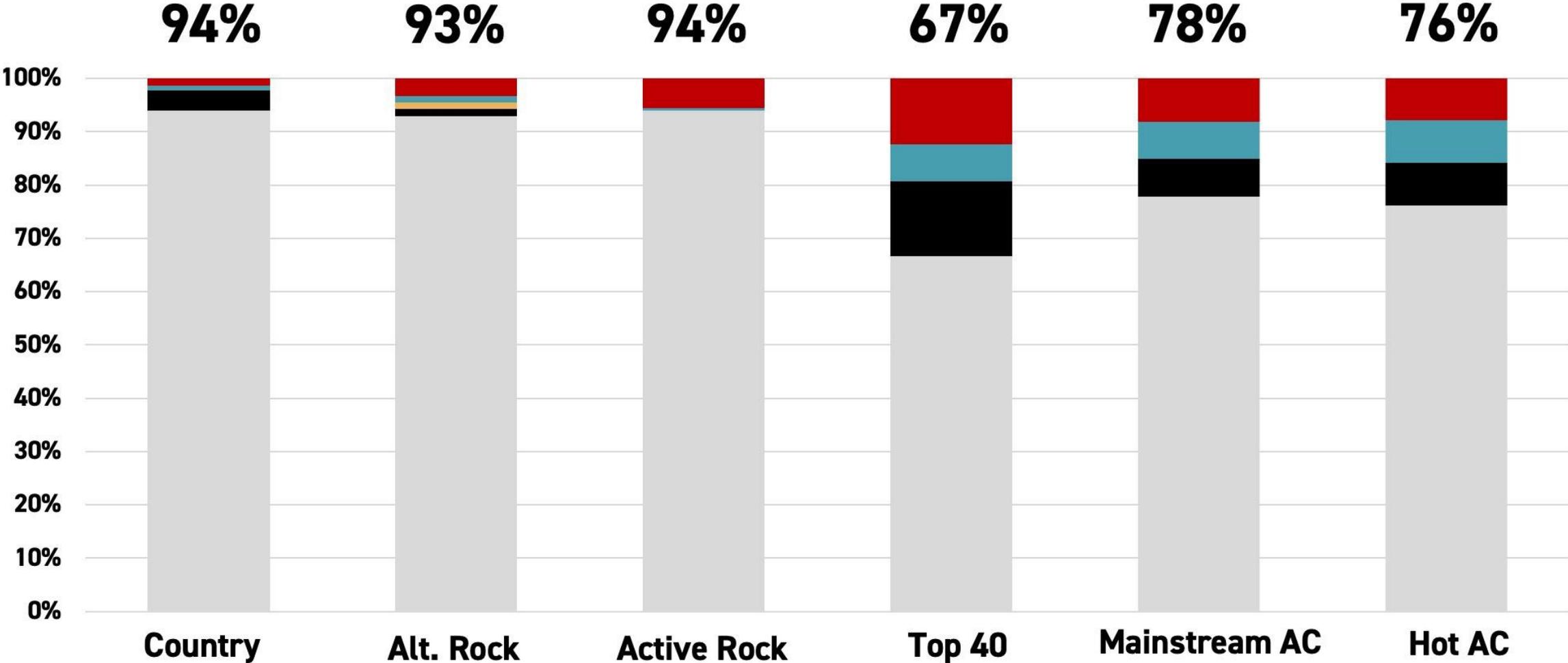
...programming disproportionately favours white artists



White artists Black artists Indigenous artists Artists of colour Multiethnic groups

Racial inequity embedded in Canadian commercial radio airplay (2013-2025)

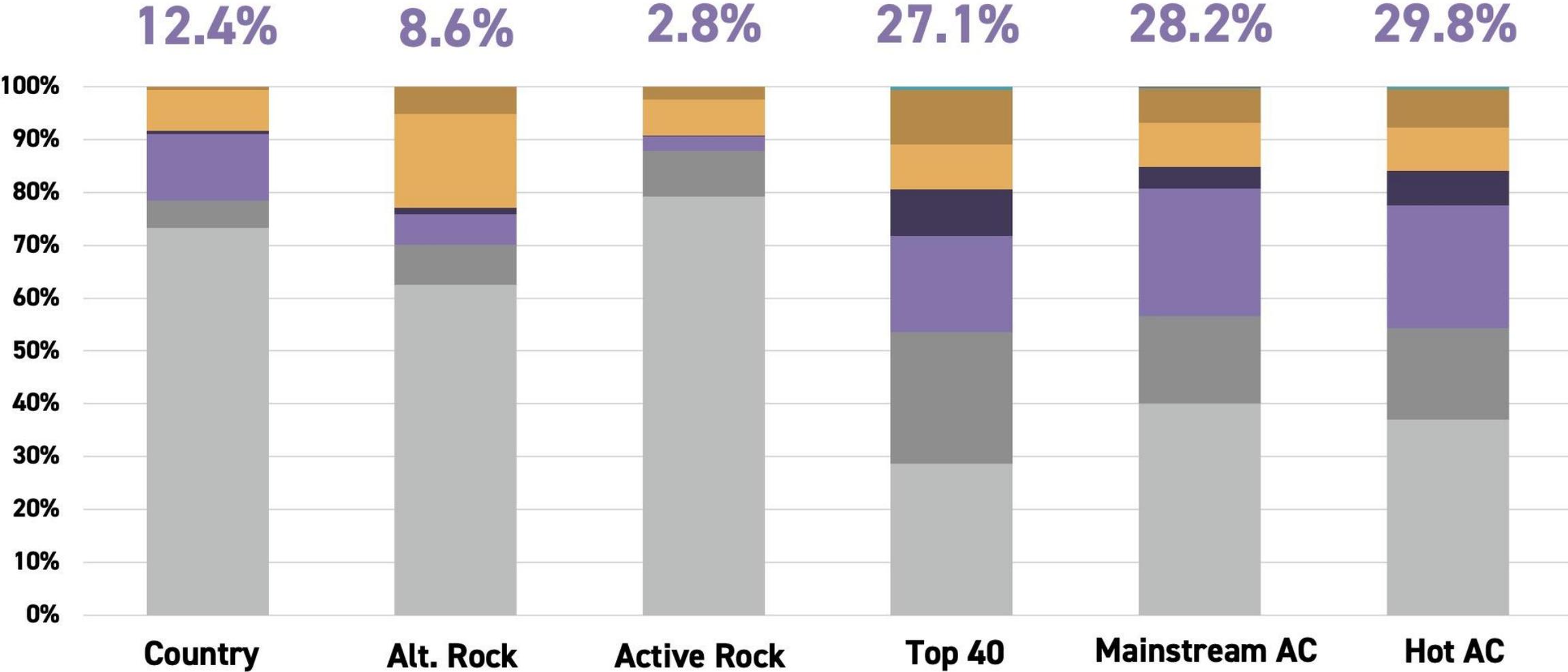
...and intensifies when accounting for white-led multiethnic groups



White artists Black artists Indigenous artists Artists of colour Multiethnic groups

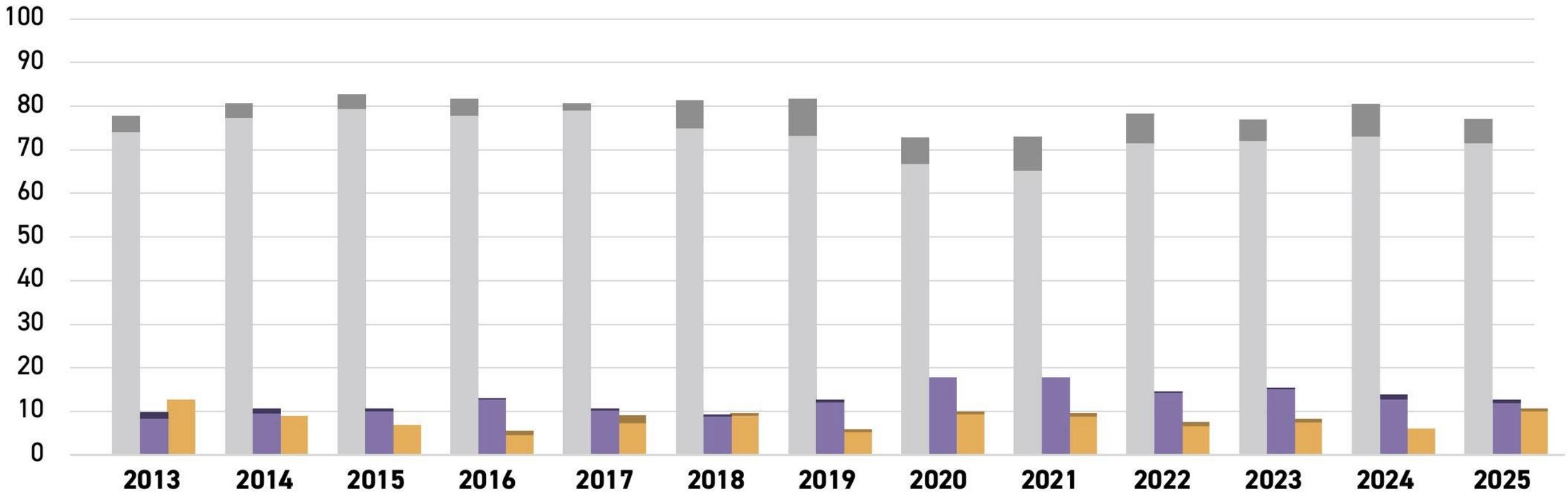
Gender inequity persists within Canadian commercial radio airplay (2013-2025)

... intersectional analysis reveals compounded exclusion for women of colour

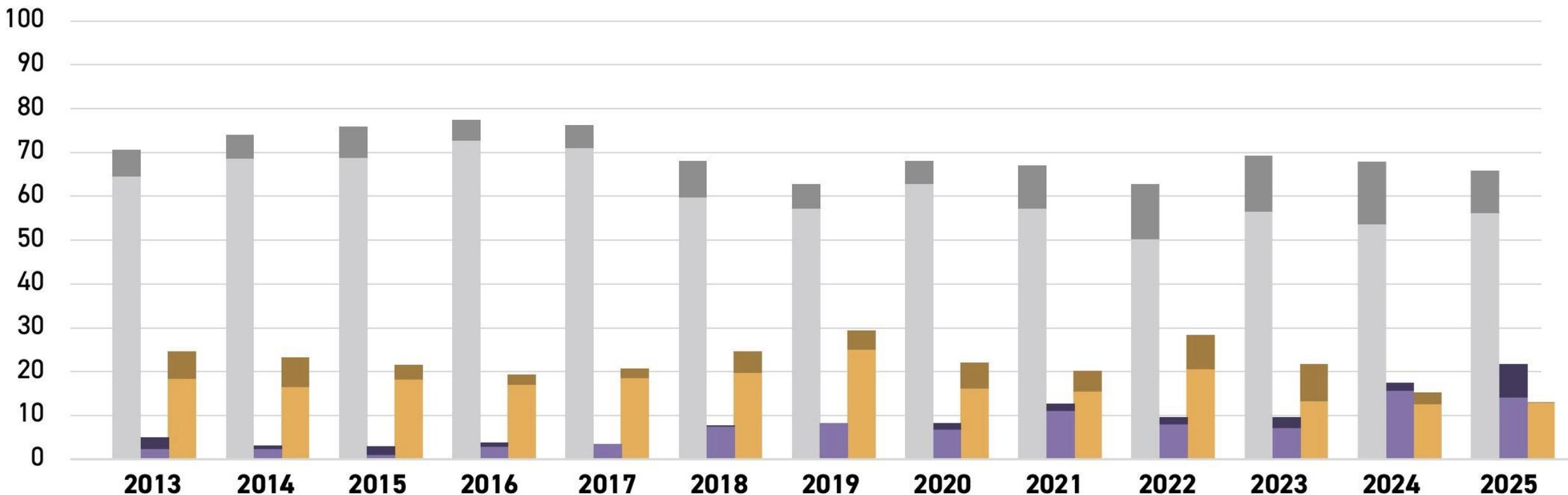


Country radio

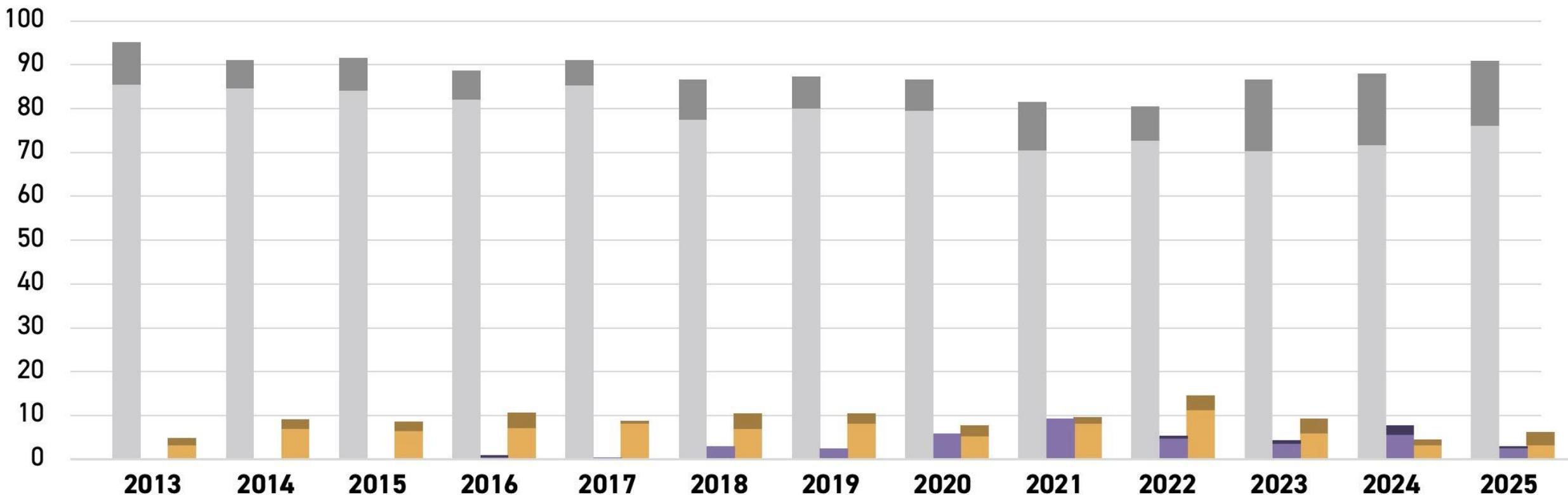
**Songs by women remain underprogrammed at 12.4% avg.,
... songs by women of colour nearly excluded from playlists**



**Songs by women remain underprogrammed but increase to 21.3% in 2025,
... songs by women of colour increase to 7.5%**

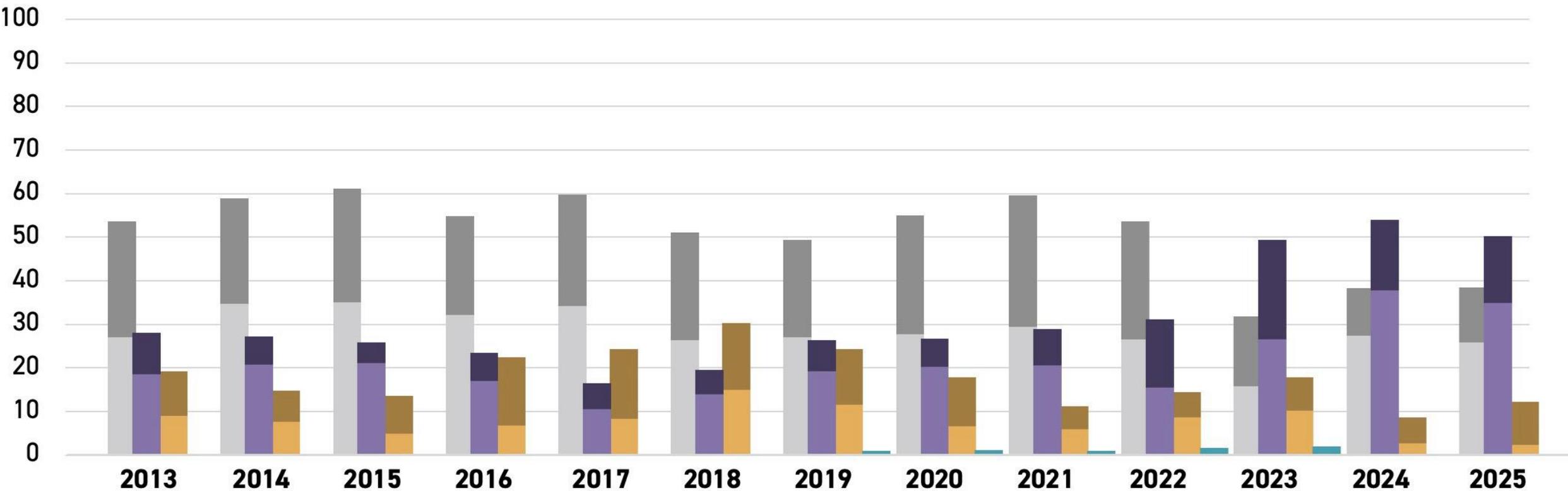


Songs by women remain largely absent outside of 9% peak in 2021,
... songs by women of colour nearly excluded from playlists



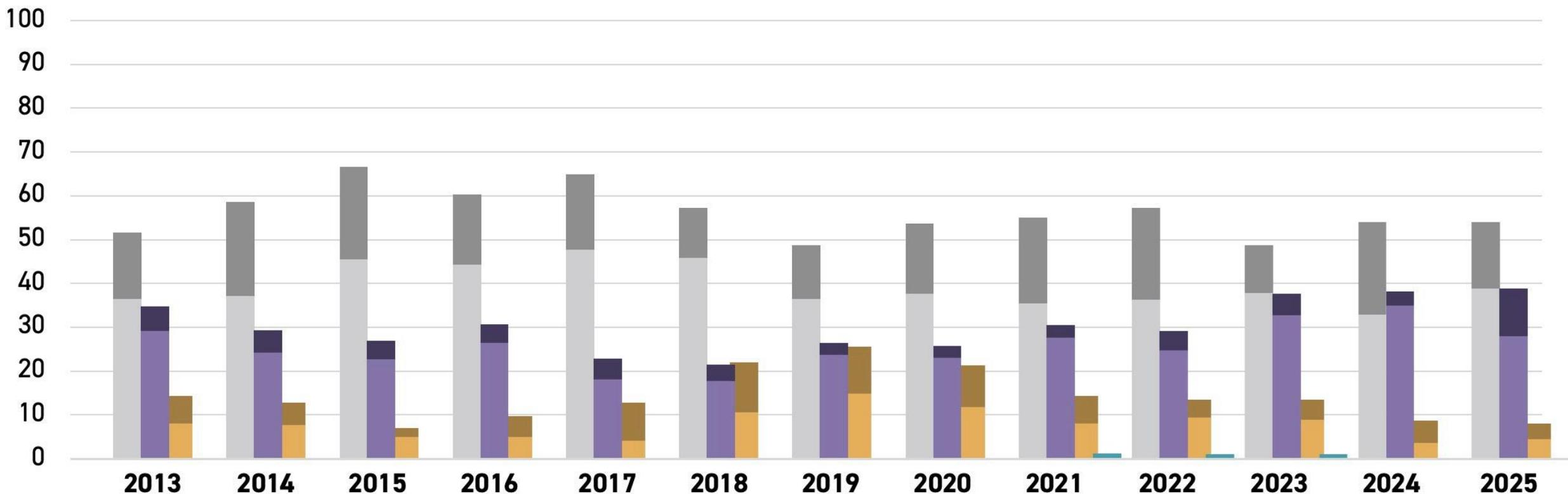
Top 40 radio

Songs by women avg. 30.8% and increase to 53.0% in 2024,
... songs by women of colour peak at 22% in 2023 then decline to 15%



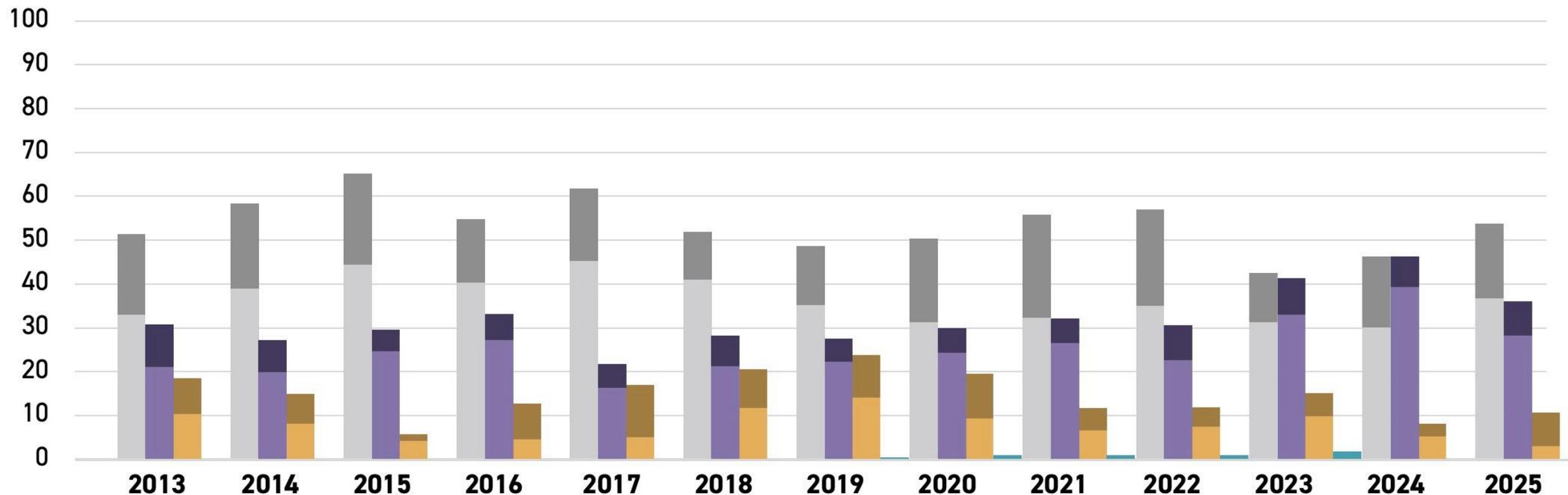
Main. AC radio

Songs by women avg. 28.2% and increase to 38.2% in 2025,
... songs by women of colour avg. just 4.8% of the airplay



Hot AC radio

Songs by women avg. 29.8% and increase to 45.6% in 2025,
... songs by women of colour avg. just 6.5% of the airplay





Studies of US radio

Findings from studies by Jada Watson (SongData)

Other **SongData studies** have examined representation across Top 150 most played songs on US radio for the following format's yearend airplay reports:

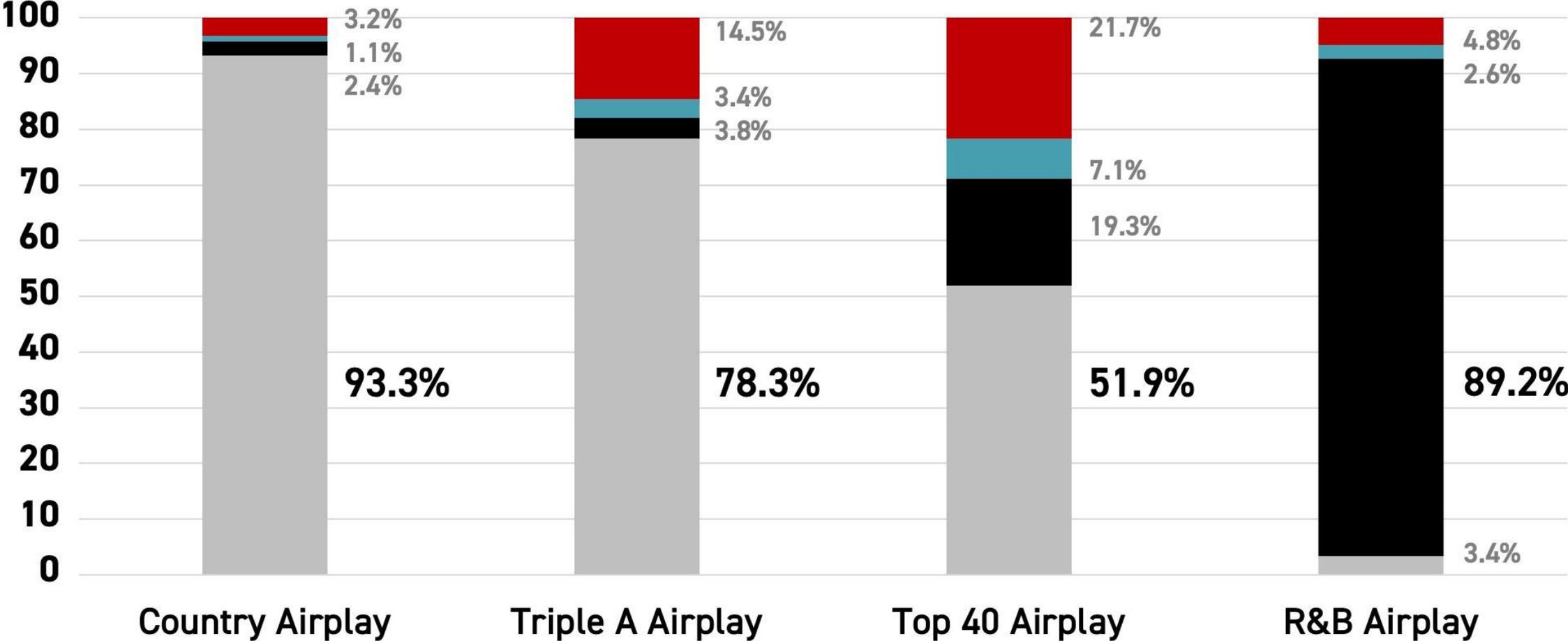
- Country
- Triple A
- Top 40
- R&B

**All data extracted from Mediabase.*

More studies on the way, to include all US radio formats.

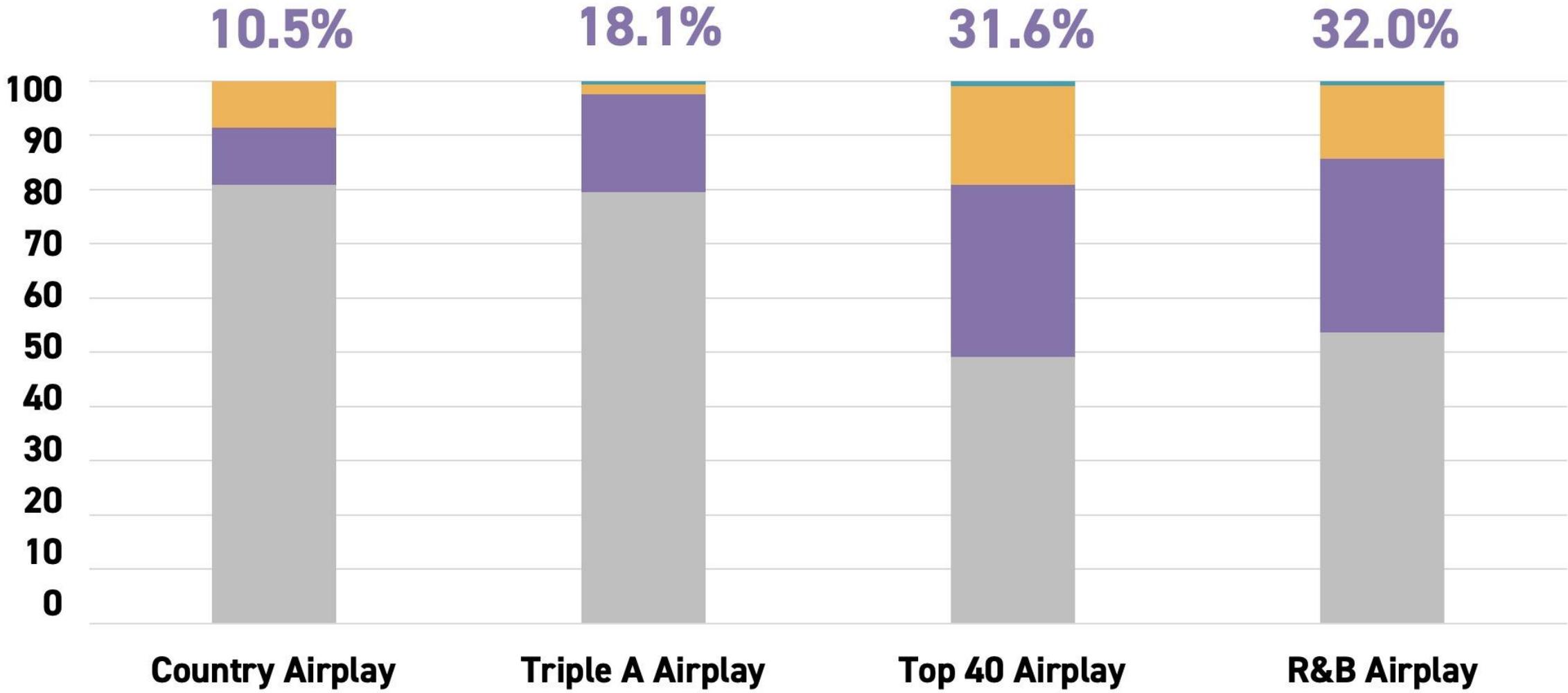
Racial segregation remains embedded in US Radio system

... study of airplay across top 150 songs played on US radio (~2010-2025)



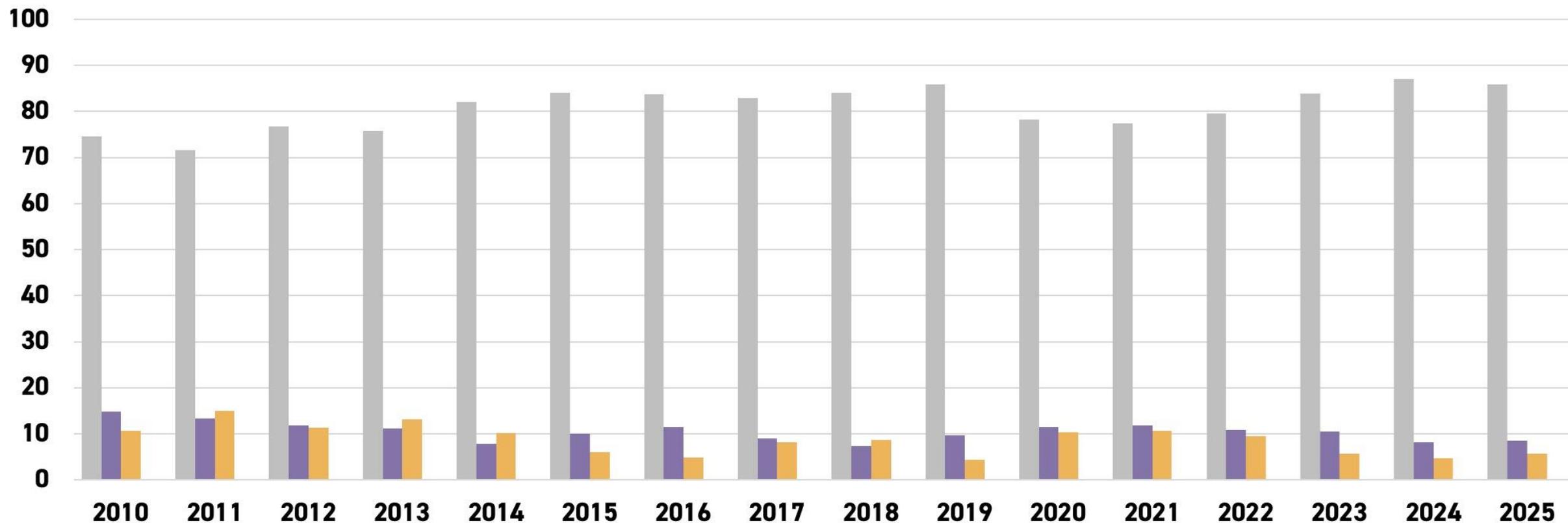
Gender inequity persists on US radio

... study of airplay across top 150 songs played on US radio (~2010-2025)



US Country radio

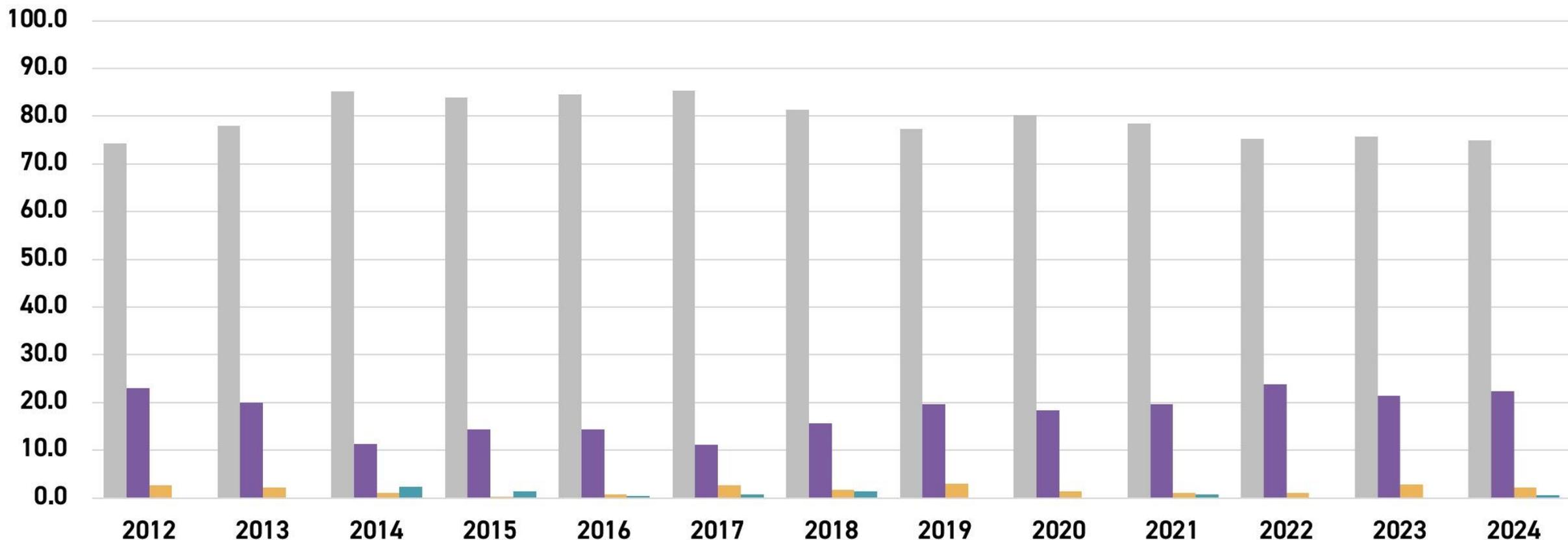
Songs by women remain underprogrammed at 10.0% avg. (2010-2025)
... songs by women of colour nearly excluded at avg. of 0.34% overall



US Triple A radio

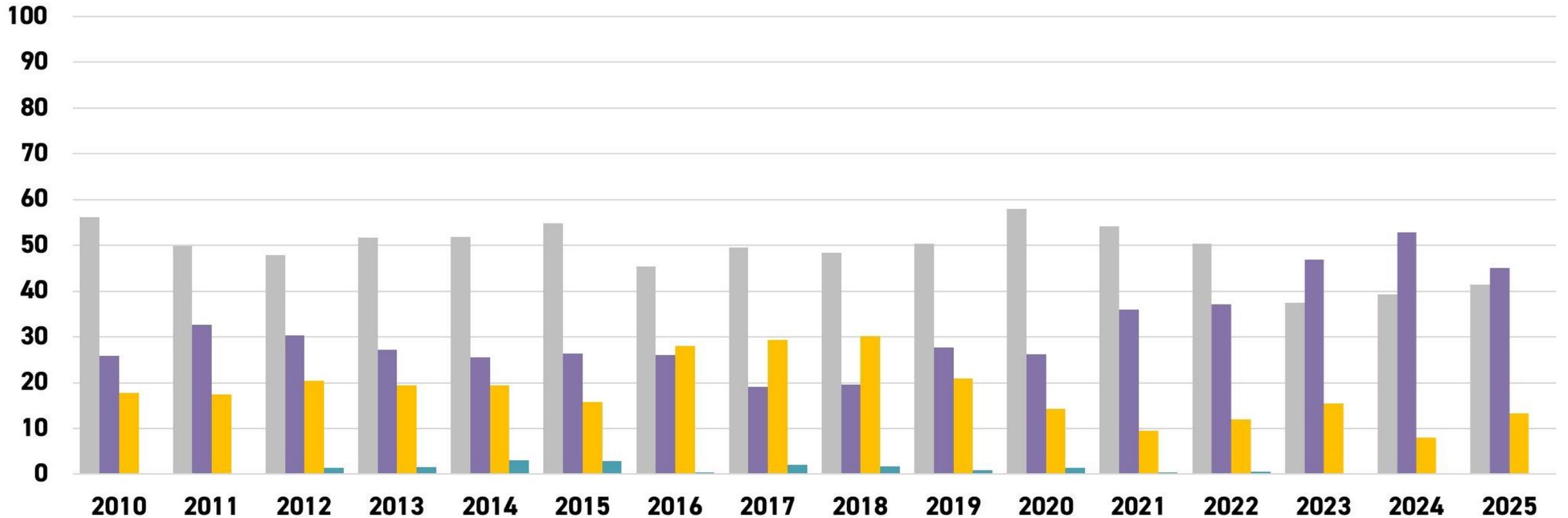
Songs by women underprogrammed, avg. 18.0% (2012-2024)

... songs by women of colour avg. 1.2% across this period



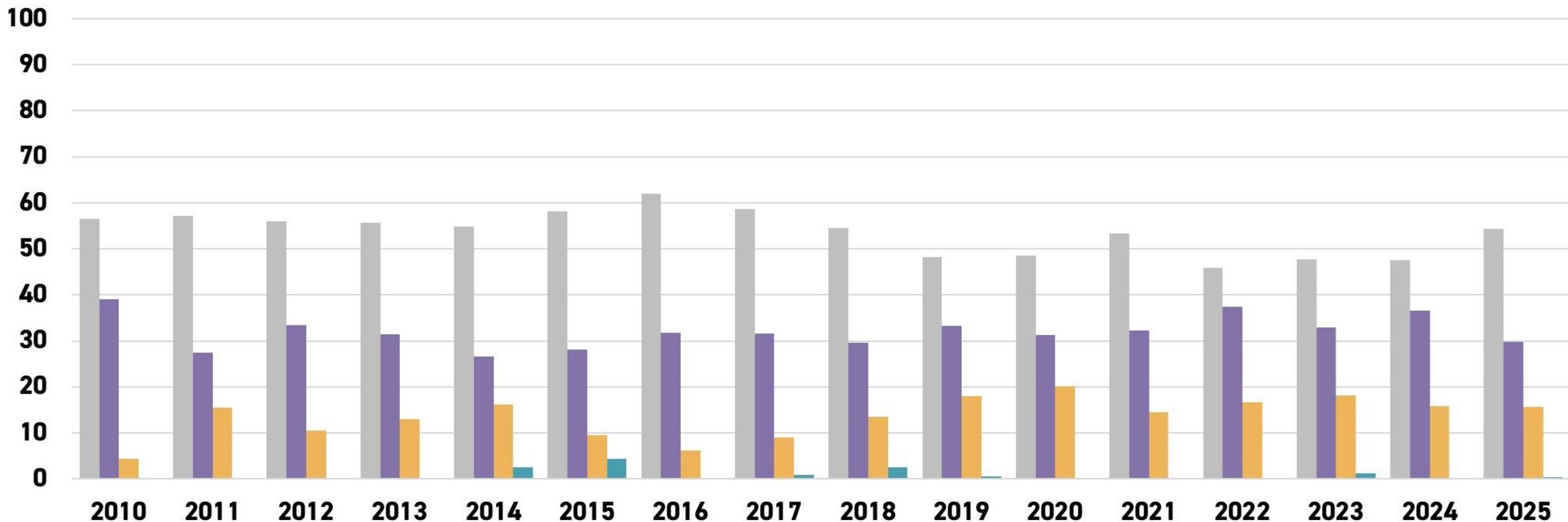
US Top 40 radio

Songs by women underprogrammed, begin to increase in airplay in 2020
... and are programmed at a higher rate than men in 2023-2025



Songs by women underrepresented at 32.0% avg. (2010-2025)

... programming reveals a culture of tokenism that elevates a select few



The background is a solid black color. It features several abstract, flowing shapes in shades of purple and blue, resembling liquid or smoke. There are also two halftone patterns: a dark grey one in the top right corner and a cyan one in the bottom left corner. The text 'Key findings' is centered in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font.

Key findings

Key findings

1. Structural Stability, Not Structural Change

Results across *all formats* reveal a white patriarchal structure of stability and continuity rather than transformation.

2. Visibility Is Not the Same as Equity

In all formats, women's presence increases in headline moments — a #1 song, a spike in Top 10 representation, a breakout year — but inclusion remains uneven. [See full studies for detail.]

3. Racial Inequity Is Deeply Entrenched

While gender representation shows fluctuation and occasional growth racial diversification remains far more constrained. Formats continue to program at least 70–90% white artists.

Visibility alone is not enough.
Change will not come from
standout songs or artists.
To truly share the air,
commercial radio must move
beyond symbolic inclusion and
commit to sustained,
intersectional and equitable
rotation that redistributes
power — not just presence.

Inequity on commercial radio is structural.

Build from the bottom. Break the ceiling.

On **Country and Rock-oriented formats**, equity requires intentional movement upward – sustained rotation that translates into power positions, not just presence on playlists.

Depth. Not tokens.

On **pop-oriented formats**, sustainable equity means distributing opportunity beyond the top few – building depth across all tiers of rotation.

#ShareTheAir

- Don't rely on specialty programming
- Play 'em back-to-back
- Rebuild station golds
- Champion unsigned artists
- Aim higher than CanCon
- Develop new audience testing metrics
- Know your station



SongData

Contact Dr. Jada Watson at
info@SongData.ca