Media Landscape 2014

Celebrating

20 Years of South Africa's Media

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In early 1994 South Africa was on the brink of democratic transformation. The mood in the country was euphoric, with citizens excited about the impending changes. Within the media, journalists revelled in their newfound freedom from harassment, banning and imprisonment – merely for reporting the news. Within government, policy makers grappled with how to transform the media to reflect the demographics of the country and to play a role in building an informed and inclusive South Africa.

A technological revolution that was to fundamentally change the way media sources and delivers news and information was also beginning to have a global influence. Twenty years ago the Internet, referred to then as the 'information superhighway', was gathering momentum as more and more users came online. Social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook were still only a dream in the minds of developers.

Two decades later, *Media Landscape 2014: Celebrating 20 Years of South Africa's media* reflects on the changes in the media environment and considers how far things have come in this time. In South Africa, there is cause to celebrate – the media definitely has 'a good story to tell'.

Media freedom is guaranteed; there is increasing media diversity; more community radio stations are on air; and journalists are able to work without intimidation or fear.

But there is more work to be done. Print media ownership is a cause for concern as transforma-tion has been slow. Media diversity also needs to be deepened – citizens should be able to receive media in the indigenous languages and content should reflect a range of viewpoints. Government has also a duty to ensure that more and more citizens are reached and kept informed so that they are able to participate in issues that affect them and in taking South Africa forward.

With the revolution in technology we now also live in a world that is unrecognisable from that of 20 years ago. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have turned everyone into a reporter. Citizens are taking to social media sites to report, inform, debate and discuss. Journalists are adapting to the new media and media houses are diversifying their print media platforms and entering the realm of cyberspace. Government is also actively engaging with these platforms to introduce policy and programmes and to engage with citizens.

In the media landscape it is important for all of us to acknowledge and appreciate how things have changed. We should pause and reflect on the last 20 years of the media – and see what has worked and where we might have gone wrong. Let us discuss and debate robustly, but in the end aim to forge a vision for the media that ensures that all South Africans are kept informed, are educated – and are entertained.

This edition of *Media Landscape 2014* is devoted to tracing 20 years of the South African media with a view to crafting a way forward.

Ms Faith Muthambi, MP
Minister of Communications

South Africa is celebrating 20 years of freedom – a milestone for a country that in 1994 emerged from an apartheid past and had just started on the road towards building a democratic and inclusive society.

Building democracy is a process. All sectors of society, to a greater or lesser extent, have played a part in transforming South Africa so that today we live in a better place. In the media environment it has been no different.

Media Landscape 2014 is a collection of chapters from media experts. Each of them was asked to consider the media landscape of 1994, to

reflect on how far we have come, and to suggest a roadmap for the future. All were given the opportunity to present a range of views and opinions and to focus on the print, broadcast and digital media space where appropriate.

Broadly speaking, all the authors start from the premise that the South African media of today is in a far better position than it was 20 years ago. Many refer back to the key principles and policies that were discussed, debated and adopted during the transition to democracy and that now form the important foundational building blocks like those rights enshrined in the Constitution such as the right to freedom of opinion and expression, to receive and impart information, and freedom of the press. There is also the important aspect of transformation (of media ownership and within newsrooms) so as to ensure racial integration and economic redress. Media diversity is also recognised as a crucial principle – not only in terms of who owns the media but in language and content, so that all South Africans are able to receive information that reflects different views, and opinions that will enable them to participate actively in debates on issues that affect their lives.

Media Landscape 2014 **is a collection of chapters from media experts. Each of them was asked to consider the media landscape of 1994, to reflect on how far we have come, and to suggest a roadmap for the future.**

From this common starting point, each chapter focuses on a topical issue. The media policy of the African National Congress (ANC) pre- and post-elections is considered in light of some of the more recent initiatives of the ANC government: namely the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA), the Media Appeals Tribunal (MAT) and the Protection of State Information Bill. Media diversity – of language and content – is explored by a number of authors. Evidence suggests that we still have a long way to go before we can argue that we have a truly inclusive media. Media ownership, especially in the print media environment, is still seen to be untransformed and requiring intervention. We also get a glimpse into the world of community and government media and see how far this has progressed along the continuum of freedom and democracy.

No current discussion would be complete without a look at the digital environment, but it is only touched on in this edition. Here we are introduced to Twitter and the role that it has played in changing the face of journalism. We also hear about how South Africa has taken advantage of technological innovations to support and stimulate development, more especially within the communications environment.

We hope that this *Media Landscape 2014* inspires ongoing discussion and debate. In order to build democracy and a media sector that reflects all our needs, wants and aspirations we need to take on board as many views and opinions as possible.
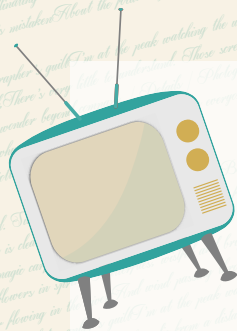
Chapter 1:

Evolving media policy of the ANC: Time to go back to the drawing board?

Yacoob Abba Omar

During the early 1990s the African National Congress (ANC) was involved in debates and discussions not only about the future of the country but also about issues relating to media and communication policy. The approach adopted when the ANC was still a liberation organisation and not the government of the day is reflected in its Media Charter and 'Ready to Govern' documents.

In 1994 the ANC became the governing party. In giving effect to its democratic principles, it played a role in transforming the media environment, repealed censorship legislation, widened TV and radio access and created an enabling environment for diversity in the landscape.

More recently, leaders of the ANC-led government have been accused of becoming increasingly intolerant of the media and of being involved in setting up and using some media as a party mouthpiece. The Media Appeals Tribunal and Protection of State Information Bill have also been viewed as attempts to stifle press freedom.

This chapter explores whether, after 20 years, the more recent actions of the ANC are excesses, or the normal behaviour of a ruling party. The author concludes that many of the emerging issues require extensive debate and discussion as there are no clear-cut answers, but that many opportunities for this to take place have been lost. He argues for a broader dialogue on South Africa's media, bearing in mind that we are now entering the third decade of democracy.

Chapter 2:

Media diversity *Tawana Kupe*

South Africa's media system is undoubtedly the most pluralistic on the African continent and this gives it the appearance of catering for the needs of the entire nation. The system differs from that of the rest of Africa in that it is largely privately owned and commercially driven. Even the public service media relies to a large extent on a commercial source of funding – advertising – to survive.

Against this background the author questions whether South African media is both pluralistic and diverse. He looks at media ownership, content and audience needs and wants, and considers how far South Africa has come in ensuring media diversity. He concludes the chapter by arguing that government should take further steps to ensure pluralism and – depending on the media sector – diversification, suggesting how pluralism could be achieved in the broadcast, community and print media environments.

Chapter 3:
Twenty years of media ownership
Reg Rumney

Post-1994 political pressure to transform racial ownership patterns had a significant impact on the media landscape, and caused major shifts.

At the dawn of democracy, the media had been controlled by white interests for decades and the alternative press was in decline owing to lack of funds and loss of senior journalists to the mainstream press. At the time, the print media was owned by the four big media groups, Naspers, Independent News and Media (INM), Times Media Limited (TML) and Caxton. The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) had a monopoly on broadcasting.

In 2014, the four big print media houses remain, although they have undergone shifts in ownership and influence over the past 20 years. In the broadcasting environment, government regulation initially drove ownership changes which included the privatisation of radio stations and support for the community media sector through the issuing of licenses. However, the SABC, a public broadcaster, still dominates.

This chapter takes us through the shifts and changes in media ownership from 1994 to 2014 and suggests that although there has been massive reshaping of the sector, in other ways not much has changed. The author argues that South African media, with the growth of broadband Internet access and the mobile revolution, stands at the cusp of tremendous transformation in line with global media trends that it cannot escape.
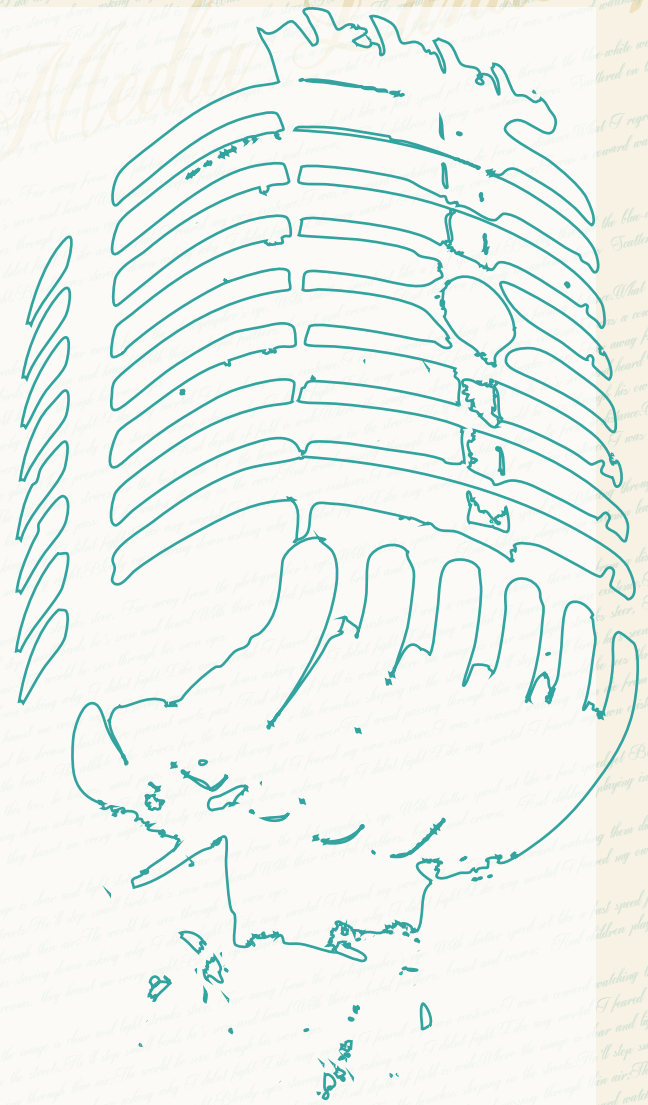
Chapter 4:
Indigenous languages and South Africa's media environment
Cyril Madlala

After 20 years of freedom, there is a multiplicity of voices in the media although the question is whether the vast majority of South Africans who are comfortable speaking indigenous languages are being catered for.

The use of indigenous languages in the media and the impact that this has had on diversity is explored, particularly in relation to the print and broadcast media in KwaZulu-Natal. In addition, a role is suggested for government in ensuring the survival of indigenous languages.
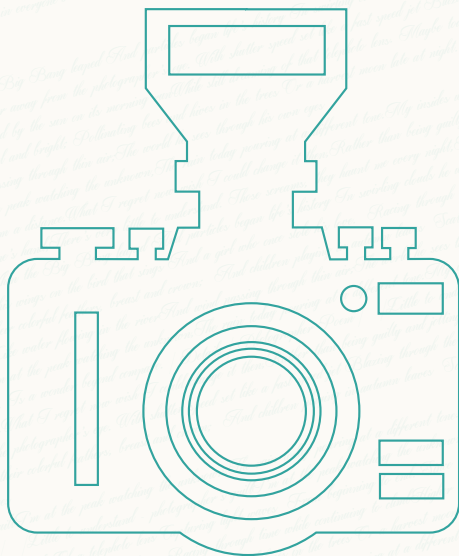
Chapter 5:

Twenty years of freedom: Whose democracy are we reporting?
William Bird

The media is light years away from where it was in 1994. There is a Constitution that guarantees media freedom; industry bodies that ensure media accountability; and a burgeoning community print and broadcast media sector.

However, problems still persist within the media space, and transformation is necessary. The author argues that transformation requires a commitment to go beyond the regulatory and legal requirements of Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) and should include building a media sector with a diversity of views expressed across a range of platforms and in a variety of voices.

The chapter explores content and how and if there have been changes within a news media environment over the past 20 years. This is done through an analysis of the reporting on five critical aspects of our society: race, racism and xenophobia; elections; children; HIV and AIDS; and gender and gender-based violence (GBV).

Chapter 6:

Journalism in a new world of social media *Shaka Sisulu*

The invention of the World Wide Web in 1983, which gave rise to the use of the Internet, has revolutionised the world. Worldwide, over 2.5 billion users access the Internet – with many of the interactions carried out on smartphones. Users of social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter expand daily.

Media professionals have been caught up in the social media environment and some journalists have made a name for themselves in the way that they use social media. Media houses have also started paying a lot of attention to social media and have begun to invest in it, realising that this is the future. This has required an understanding that news can now be created by ordinary citizens and by professional journalists. This is the new world of journalism.

In this chapter we are introduced to the changing nature of journalism since the introduction of the World Wide Web and the take-up of social media platforms.

Chapter 7:
Mind the perception gap
Stephano Radaelli

The media has an important role to play in keeping the public informed and aware about what is happening in society, and should present the facts in a balanced and objective way. Journalists are only human, though, and represent facts from their own point of view. This might not always reflect reality. A perception gap is therefore created between what is being reported and what is fact. This could possibly lead to a situation where attitudes, beliefs and stereotypes are reinforced.

In this chapter the author explores 'public perception' and considers four ways in which the media influence or contribute to the widening of the perception gap: through the sources they select; inadequate balance in reflecting the society's demographics; the topics they choose to report on; and the tone of the reporting.

In this chapter we find out how South Africa compares with international media, especially in relation to the widening or closing of the perception gap. A case study that reflects a 'constructive journalism' approach is suggested as one way that this challenge might be overcome.
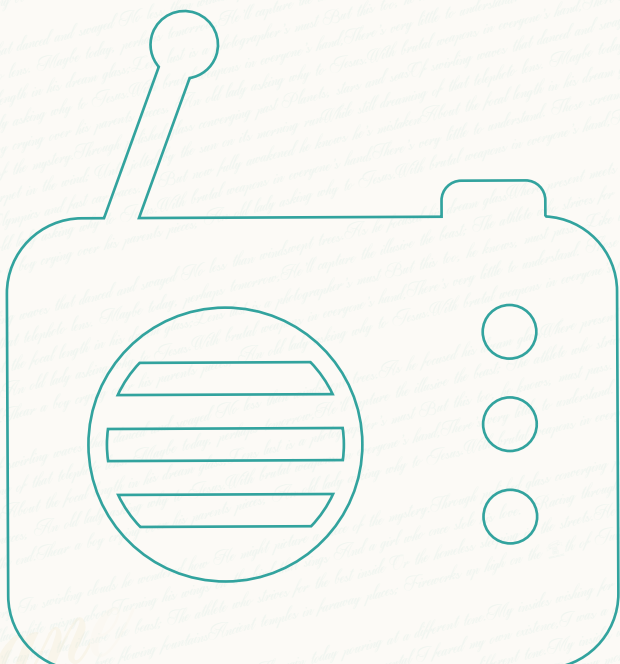
Chapter 8:
Twenty years of media development and diversity *Lumko Mtimde*

The Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) was set up as a public entity to encourage ownership, control and access by historically disadvantaged groups to the media; to raise public awareness of and research issues relating to media development and diversity; and to encourage the channelling of resources to community and small commercial media. These objectives were supported by its vision: 'Access to diversified media for all'.

Since its establishment in 2004, the MDDA has made significant inroads into ensuring media development and diversity. Community radio stations have expanded and now command over 25 per cent of listenership; 570 media projects have been supported; over 2 000 people have been trained – the list goes on. One area of increasing concern, however, is media ownership and transformation, more particularly print-media ownership and the value chain that is still largely controlled by white monopoly capital.

In the chapter, the author demonstrates what the MDDA has been able to achieve within the constraints of resources and time. At the same time, consideration is given to how the lack of transformation in the print-media environment and lack of media diversity pose a real threat to media freedom. In conclusion, the author argues for government to institute a Green/White Paper process that will inform government proposals for initiating new transformational programmes to meaningfully influence media development and diversity.

Chapter 9:
Community Radio: A snapshot of the landscape after 20 years
Jayshree Pather

Community broadcasting, enabled by the liberalisation of the airwaves that led to the setting up of a three tier broadcasting system (public, private and community), has grown exponentially in the last 20 years. Recent figures show that there are currently over 160 community radio stations with close to 8.3 million listeners, compared to the 65 licensed stations that existed in 2001.

The community broadcasting sector was widely supported post-1994 as a means of ensuring diversity of content and ownership of the media. Community ownership has created the potential for community members to engage, making this a participatory form of media. This opens up possibilities for development to be promoted while broadcasts could be used to educate and entertain.

The sector has made an important contribution towards diversification and democracy, but there are still many challenges. This reflection examines the community radio landscape in South Africa through its growth and development and considers a number of key dimensions: community ownership, control and participation, content and programming, and financial sustainability.

Chapter 10:
20 years of empowerment and development *GCIS*

Government communications pre-1994, managed by the South African Communication Service (SACS), was characterised by censorship and propaganda, control of the public broadcaster, limited or no engagement with citizens, misinformation campaigns and clampdowns on press freedom.

The advent of democracy ushered in a diametrically different government communications dispensation. The establishment in 1998 of the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) in place of the SACS formalised a range of reforms of the communications practices of government that had started in 1994.

Under democracy, government communications was founded on the principles of transparency, accountability, and the right to know. Communication could no longer be one-sided and top-down. In being accountable, government would need to provide access to information, to regularly engage around its programmes, and to empower citizens better to understand their rights. Media freedom was established as a constitutional right.

The GCIS set about creating the platforms and programmes to realise the key founding principles. For the past 20 years, there has been intensive face-to-face engagement with communities in all corners of the country, the creation of various publications, and the provision of an array of services.

This chapter explores the changing role of government communication since the end of apartheid by comparing and contrasting the communication approach of the SACS and GCIS. The GCIS, its projects, programmes and services are explored and considered against its founding principles. While it is clear that the country has come a long way since the days of apartheid propaganda, there is recognition that there is still much to do in order for the impact and reach of government communications to be felt far and wide.

Fact Sheet 1:
South Africa and the ICT revolution

This fact sheet explores how South Africa has responded to the global technological revolution – especially the changes that have been seen in the telecommunications environment in the last two decades. The growth in the number of South Africans with access to the Internet and mobile phones has been phenomenal – and this provides opportunities for the country that could have a positive influence on developmental objectives. The potential opportunities are explored and the particular issues facing South Africa introduced as a way of ensuring that these are tackled and ICTs are harnessed to meet our developmental goals including those of job creation and poverty alleviation.
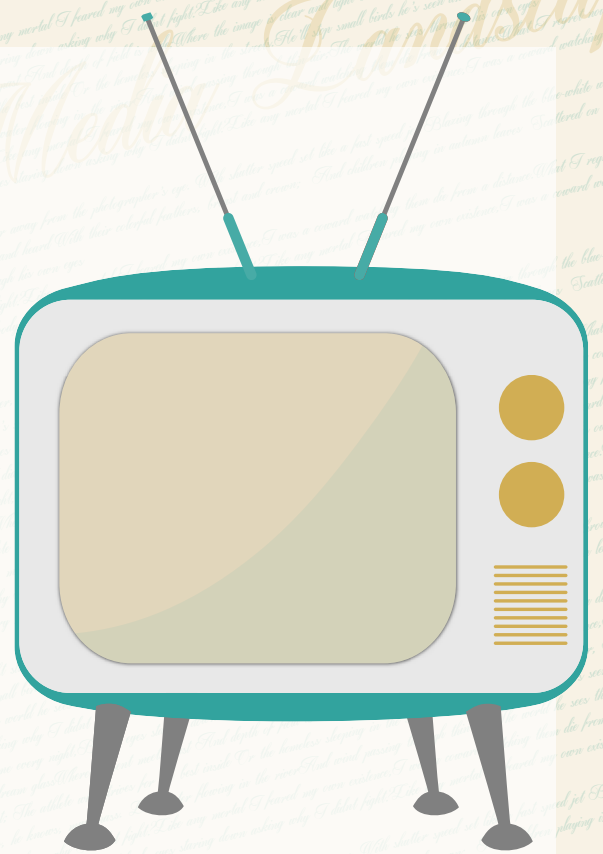
Fact Sheet 2:
Competition Tribunal update: Competition Commission vs Media 24 Limited
Nandi Mokoena

The Competition Commission of South Africa is a statutory body established in terms of Section 19 of the Competition Act, 1998 (Act 89 of 1998) as amended, and is responsible for investigating anti-competitive behavior, considering exemptions from competition law and regulating mergers. The Competition Tribunal hears complaints brought by the Competition Commission and in November 2013 it started a hearing into a complaint against Media 24. This fact sheet explores the nature of the complaint.

Each edition of the media landscape series will provide an update on those cases that have been brought before the Competition Commission and that have an impact on the media environment.
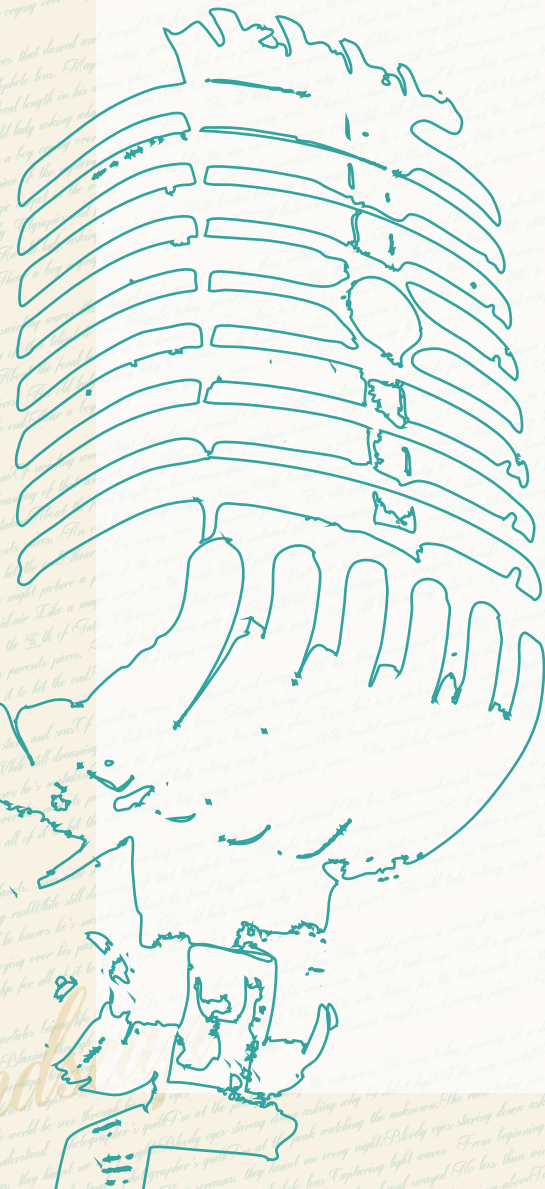
Evolving media policy of the ANC: Time to go back to the drawing board?

Yacoob Abba Omar

Yacoob Abba Omar is Director: Operations of the Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (MISTRA). He served in the ANC's information and publicity structures from 1987 to 1994. He was Deputy Director-General of GCIS from 1998 to 2002 and has been South Africa's Ambassador to Oman (2003-2008) and the United Arab Emirates (2008-2012).

Today, when the public is asked to recall what the ANC media policy is, it is likely that the first two items which come to mind are the Media Appeals Tribunal (MAT) and the Protection of State Information Bill. And, possibly, the *New Age*, or Iqbal Survé … leading a cynic to ask whether we are seeing white domination of the media replaced by brown domination.

What could have been productive debates were stifled when accusations were thrown around that the ANC is against freedom of the press because it called for a review of the press ombudsman's office, or that freedom of access to information was threatened under the principle of the Protection of State Information Bill.

All this does not seem to square off with one of the ANC's foundational documents, the Freedom Charter of 1955, which proclaimed under its 'all shall enjoy equal human rights' clause that: 'The law shall guarantee to all their right to speak … to publish'. These rights continued to be reinforced through various commitments to which the ANC was party, such as the Harare Declaration of 1989 and the negotiating process which eventually led to the finalisation of the South African Constitution in 1996.

This chapter follows the debates on media and communication policy within the ANC, tracing the arc from liberation movement to governing party, including positions taken during the early 1990s as the ANC began putting the finishing touches to a number of constitutional issues. Of particular significance is its Media Charter and 'Ready to Govern', the set of policy guidelines that emerged from the ANC's 1991 Durban Conference. The debates and discussions will be contrasted against the positions taken by the ANC after 1994. Of particular interest will be the almost parallel discourses in which the ANC was engaged as it transformed the state, removed the apartheid system from statutes and gave expression to the ANC's democratic commitments. In removing the legacy of apartheid, the ANC had to weigh up which parts of its inheritance are relevant to a state, be it democratic or repressive. And in trying to ensure the institution of a democratic

system it had to face up to the obstacles to effective participation of the marginalised and the impoverished in the process of governance. The chapter also refers to some of the salient positions of the African Union (AU), a very important source for government policy.

The burden of being in power has led to the governing party playing an increasingly developmental role in terms of the economy; to staffing security apparatuses; to nurturing democratic expression through an array of endeavours ranging from reforming censorship laws to transforming the state broadcaster and widening the number of radio/TV licences issued to broadcasters.

Much of this can be seen in the policy documents of the government, but even more telling were the actions of the key role players, including the path-breaking talks between Cabinet and editors at Sun City on 30 June 2001, a practice which has continued in some form to this day.

The law shall guarantee to all their right to speak … to publish

In bringing the narrative to its current context, the chapter explores the suggestion of growing intolerance by members of the ruling party, as evidenced by statements against leading members who questioned the diktat of Luthuli House. The President's litigious relationship with the press, and especially with a particular cartoonist, is part of this mix, as is the ANC's perceived involvement in the *New Age* to turn it into a party mouthpiece, and also some ANC leaders calling for the withdrawal of advertising from some newspapers.

The chapter also weighs up the three most recent initiatives of the ANC government: namely the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA), the MAT and the Protection of State Information Bill, and it concludes by highlighting some of the key questions to be addressed in the spirit of a national conversation which revives the ethos of the 1990s. After 20

The Constitution that guarantees freedom of speech and of the press is one of the foundational documents upon which ANC policies are based.

the ANC there was significant cynicism about its commitment to freedom of expression and access to information. This was notwithstanding numerous assurances by the ANC, such as in the 1991 Draft Media Charter where it is stated that 'all the people shall have the right to freely publish, broadcast and otherwise disseminate information and opinion, and shall have the right of free access to information and opinion'. Keyan Tomaselli (1994) tried to strike a reassuring note when he wrote: 'Processes already under way, from 1988 on, may result in the media in the post-apartheid era being much freer than is commonly supposed by De Beer and the media industry in general'.

Amongst the processes referred to were a

'… a man's reach should exceed his grasp – or what's a heaven for?'

series of conferences, research projects and workshops which the ANC's Department of Information and Publicity organised or was involved in. In November 1991, 300 media delegates convened by the ANC generated a statement on media policy. The meeting was remarkable for the wide approach it took to media policy, incorporating the issue of an independent public broadcaster, the breadth of which was captured in the Media Charter. The Charter was written very much in the vein of the Freedom Charter – aspirational and inspirational – and addressed issues such as basic rights and freedoms; democratisation of the media; the public sector; the relationship between those working in that sector and society; media education and training, and proactive measures to promote diversity.

Also in 1991 there was the 'Jabulani: Freedom of the Airwaves' conference in the Netherlands. This was connected to the 'Free Fair and Open' conference in February 1992 organised by the Campaign for Open Media, and was attended by party political delegations, civic and media organisations, academics, and the press. Decisions were taken there by 'sufficient consensus', the catch-phrase of the time, which involved all those who were party to

years of governance we must tackle questions such as the extent to which such behaviour is normal for a governing party, or whether the actions of the ANC have simply been the excesses of an organisation which has swung away from its democratic roots. As with most societal issues, there probably are no clear-cut answers – making the need for an open dialogue even more necessary. We may not end up with the perfect relationship between media and the government but, as Robert Browning put it: '… a man's reach should exceed his grasp – or what's a heaven for?'

ANC policy utterances

Throughout the past two decades several themes have permeated the positions the ANC has undertaken concerning media. These have been:

- Commitment to freedom of expression;
- Addressing the concentration of media ownership;
- Promoting diversity so that the information needs of those under-represented by the mainstream media can be addressed.

However, at different moments differing facets of the ANC's policy framework have been emphasised, reflecting the context in which they were drawn up. At the time of the unbanning of

the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa) process. Those opposed to any of the resolutions had their opposition noted.

In 'Ready to Govern', the ANC's 1992 policy document which emerged after its Durban conference of that year, the organisation called for a constitution that guarantees that people are free to speak their minds and can benefit from the free circulation of ideas and information, and be exposed to different philosophies and ways of seeing the world. It also stipulated that the right to information must be secured, together with a free press and public media, which is controlled neither by the state nor by political parties, but by an impartial and independent broadcasting authority.

The policy document stated that 'Media freedoms should be understood in the context of other citizens' rights such as the right to privacy and dignity' and also spelled out the responsibility of the state: 'All people shall have the right of access to information held or collected by the state or other social institutions subject to any limitations provided for in a Constitution and Bill of Rights. There shall be no institutional or legislative measures restricting the free flow of information or imposing censorship over the media and other information agencies.' The section dealing with democratisation of the media emphasises that 'ownership of media resources, production facilities and distribution outlets shall be subject to anti-monopoly, and anti-trust and merger legislation', and that the public broadcaster 'shall be independent of the ruling party or any other interest group'.

The habit of involving civil society continued into the first years of government. This could be seen in various ways, but especially around government's centrepiece, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). About 70 organisations were involved in the consultations convened by the Task Group handling the drafting of the Open Democracy Act. A wide range of institutions were represented, including provincial governments, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), business, trade unions, church groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).
On the other hand, media's habit of not being

self-reflective could be seen in the derisive manner it responded when it was suggested they needed to present itself to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) at hearings held from 1996. As Mandla Langa, former board member of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and former chair of the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Icasa), put it at the time: '… the TRC opens up the possibility (for the media) of examining their own culpability, their own silence when they could have spoken, when they had the requisite weapons to analyse and give society a glimmer of light'. And 'if the media didn't know, then they have no business pretending to be the fourth estate'. The media's habit of not being self-reflective was also seen in the way it dragged its heels on the SA Human Rights Commission enquiry into racism in the media in 2000.

All people shall have the right of access to information held or collected by the state or other social institutions subject to any limitations provided for in a constitution and Bill of Rights.

There shall be no institutional or legislative measures restricting the free flow of information or imposing censorship over the media and other information agencies.

In 2002, at the ANC's 51st National Congress, the discussion document 'Media in a democratic South Africa' was tabled. It argued that there '… needs to be a re-evaluation of our approach to the political economy of the media with the view to ensure balance in the reflection of the needs and interests of the South African citizens and the projection of their voices on all major national development'. A key proposal was the establishment of a publicly funded model so that public and community media could 'serve as vehicles to articulate the needs of the poor, rural people, women, labour, and other marginalised constituencies'. The ANC discussion document worked within the framework of accepting the

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limits of the media in corporate hands, including its inclination to be 'intrusive, embarrassing, irresponsible, disruptive, vulgar, brash and uninformed'.

The ANC's acceptance of the dominance of the commercial media, and its focus on the public broadcasting and community media, could be attributed to the two economies framework articulated by President Thabo Mbeki. In the 1998 parliamentary debate on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), he described the second economy as follows: 'The second economy (or the marginalised economy) is characterised by underdevelopment, contributes little to GDP, contains a large percentage of our population, incorporates the poorest of our rural and urban poor, is structurally disconnected from both the first and the global economy, and is incapable of self-generated growth and development.' As shall be shown below in the discussion on the MDDA, the approach which was adopted accepted the dominance of the first economy commercial media and sought to focus on the development of the media servicing the second economy through government assistance.

The relationship between the ANC and the media was marked by attempts at getting as much positive publicity through good media relations. By the time of the 2007 National Congress in Polokwane the relationship was becoming increasingly prickly, epitomised by the fight over coverage of the Minister of Health, Dr Manto Tshabalala-Msimang's alleged abuse of alcohol, even while in hospital. In addition, incoming President Jacob Zuma had been taking a strongly litigious line on the media, instituting court proceedings for damages to his dignity and reputation. Between 2006 and 2010 President Zuma (he took office in 2009) had initiated 15 cases against the media (all the cases were to be dropped in May 2013). In this context the ANC media policy was focused on the media's inability to portray the diversity of views and interests in society, because of its untransformed nature.

The Polokwane conference resolved that the press ombudsman's office, which had been

established only in October 2007, was inadequate to the task of protecting 'the rights of individual citizens, communities and society as a whole' and that 'freedom of expression shall not be elevated above other equally important rights such as the right to privacy and more important rights and values such as human dignity'. As discussed below, after several years of heated debate a Press Freedom Commission (CPFC) chaired by Judge Pius Langa recommended a restructured and strengthened Office of the Press Ombudsman.

The discussion document which was served at the ANC's September 2010 National General Council stated: 'Our objectives are therefore to vigorously communicate the ANC's outlook and values (developmental state, collective rights, values of caring and sharing community, solidarity, Ubuntu, non-sexism, working together) versus the mainstream media's ideological outlook (neo liberalism, a weak and passive state and overemphasis on individual rights, market fundamentalism etc.).' This captures the increasingly combative relations
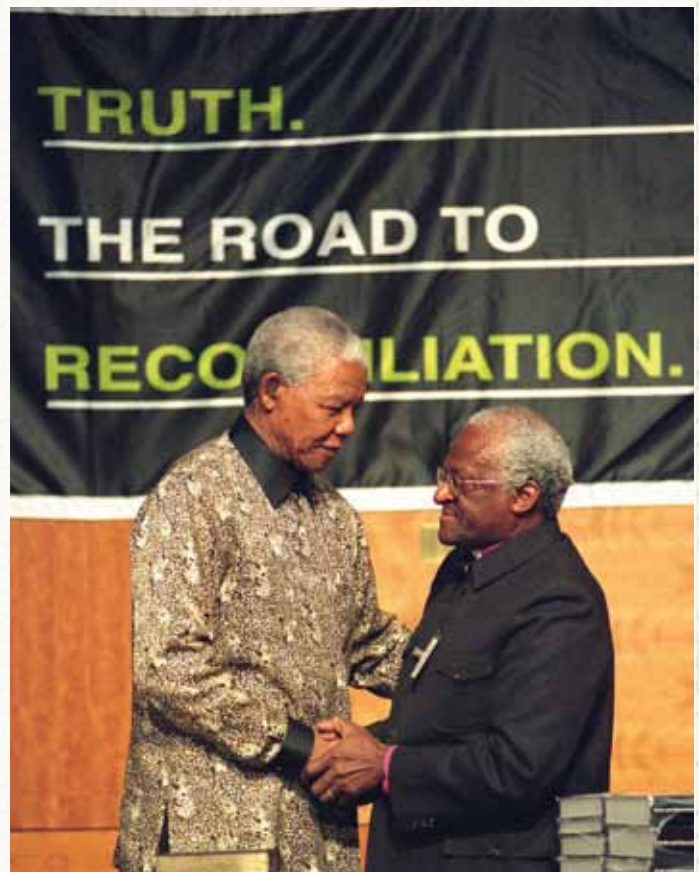
The TRC provided an opportunity for the media to be self-reflective and to consider their own culpability during the apartheid period.

between the ANC and the media, partly caused by the party's frustration with transformation in the media, notwithstanding that by 2011 the media was showing what was termed by Guy Berger as a 'glass half-full' level of transformation: 65 per cent of the editors in the major commercial titles were black, compared to only seven per cent in 1994. This had to be offset by the 'glass half-empty' view that black ownership of the press was about 14 per cent, with female representation only 4.4 per cent[1]. This was also a time when the ANC was looking at either establishing its own newspaper or taking over some major titles through allied black businesses. It was this trajectory which forms the backdrop to the establishment of the *New Age* and the takeover of Independent Newspapers.

The discussion document on communications policy for the ANC's 2012 conference set out in greater detail the premises of the organisation. An important starting point is:

> The apartheid patterns and behaviour that treat South Africans in an unequal and discriminatory manner sometimes manifests in some of the conduct of the print media in the content, coverage, distribution, management and opinions … Such attitudes and practices need to be confronted for the media to be a mirror of the present democratic dispensation.

> The reality arising out of this situation is that the majority of South Africans do not have media that report and project their needs, aspirations and points of views onto the national discourse.

Just as the two economies approach of the Mbeki era influenced the attitudes of the ANC towards the media, in the 2012 document we can see a manifestation of the Second Transition approach. This is explained in the ANC discussion document of February 2012, prepared for the Mangaung Conference and entitled 'The Second Transition? Building a national democratic society and the balance of forces in 2012':

> Our vision for the next few decades should be informed by an approach that suggests that having concluded our first transition with its focus on democratisation over the

last eighteen years, we need a vision for a second transition that must focus on the social and economic transformation of South Africa over the next 30 to 50 years … Our first transition was characterised by a framework and a national consensus that may have been appropriate for a political transition, but has proven inadequate and even inappropriate for a social and economic transformation phase.

In the 2012 communications policy document mentioned above, the ANC notes:

> The ANC needs to review its own Media Charter to take into regard the developments that have taken place since its adoption, strides that have been made in realising the rights enshrined in it as well as the emergence of new technologies.

While declaring that it remains committed to a media climate that is free from vested political and commercial interests, the ANC reaffirms:

> … the need for Parliament to conduct an inquiry on the desirability and feasibility of a media appeals tribunal within the framework of the country's Constitution that is empowered to impose sanctions without the loss of any constitutional rights.

Such a process, the document states, is to be firmly couched in the country's Constitution and must 'review the existing media accountability mechanisms; balance the individual's rights to dignity and freedom of expression and freedom of the media; and review the privacy laws as well as those dealing with libel and defamations'.

It also states that the following must be introduced to encourage media diversity:
- An economic empowerment charter to promote broad-based black economic empowerment (BBBEE) in the sector, addressing the 'availability of print media in the languages South Africans speak and communicate with';
- Strengthening the MDDA to support more community and commercial entities;
- The Competition Commission should focus on anti-competitive practices within the sector.

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Evolving media policy of the ANC: Time to go back to the drawing board?

When looking at the policy positions adopted by the ANC and government, it is also important to keep in mind the AU. Perhaps its most seminal document is the Declaration on Principles of Freedom of Expression in Africa, adopted in October 2002, which elaborated on Article 9 of the AU's charter dealing with freedom of expression.

The key points from its Preamble are:

- Reaffirming the fundamental importance of freedom of expression as an individual human right, as a cornerstone of democracy and as a means of ensuring respect for all human rights and freedoms;
- Desiring to promote the free flow of information and ideas and greater respect for freedom of expression;
- Convinced that respect for freedom of expression, as well as the right of access to information held by public bodies and companies, will lead to greater public transparency and accountability, as well as to good governance and the strengthening of democracy;
- Convinced that laws and customs that repress freedom of expression are a disservice to society.

We can now focus on the three key initiatives the ANC-led government took which embodied and influenced media policy: the MDDA, the MAT and the Protection of State Information Bill. An important backdrop to this discussion was the establishment in 1994 by then Deputy President of a task team into communications. Referred to as Comtask, and chaired by Mandla Langa, it studied the state of play in government communications across the world. Its report, entitled 'Communications 2020: A vision of government comunications in South Africa', made about 90 recommendations covering a wide range of areas such as government's role in ensuring media diversity and how government should communicate with the public and relate to the media. This led, inter alia, to the creation of the GCIS in 1998.

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The MDDA

One of the responsibilities the Comtask report had handed to the incoming GCIS leadership was the establishment of the Media Diversity Agency, which came to be called the MDDA. The MDDA was considered by the ANC as one of the ways to tackle the challenge of concentration of media ownership. At one level it was building on the traditions of the vibrant community media sector which marked the anti-apartheid struggle. These depended on donor funding which was reduced after the first democratic election of 1994, a fate which affected the NGO sector generally.

The initial thinking around the MDDA was very ambitious – breaking up monopolies, containing monopolistic tendencies and generally removing obstacles to diversity. Joel Netshitenzhe, CEO of GCIS from 1998 to 2007, speaking at a media review seminar on 13 August 2004, explained that one of the problems with the concentration of media ownership was the surging power of the bottom line. He argued that this leads to the 'base instincts of consumerism'.

'The audience does matter, we are told, because they can vote with their purses. But in the ethics of the bottom line, marketers and advertisers become the kings of content.' Furthermore, 'concentration encourages cost-cutting and rationalisation, reliance on a smaller pool of active journalists … George Orwell's "1984" becomes a living reality: mind control takes root, not from the exercise of power; but from within the industry itself.'

He pointed out that this commercialisation of media practices has seen good journalists and editors rewarded with management posts, and shareholding for editors can mean buying loyalty to the bottom line.

The GCIS leadership was seized with looking at how maximum impact could be wrought in an appropriate way that would facilitate freedom of expression for all. The GCIS studied a range of models that have schemes in place to

ensure diversity and deal with barriers to entry and fair competition. It came to the conclusion that the Competition Commission should be left with the task of looking at anti-competitive behaviour. A statutory levy was considered but this was dropped given the line that was coming out of the Ministry of Finance at the time, that the various departments should be wary of imposing any more taxes, levies, duties or tariffs.

The approach that was finally adopted has been criticised as being too watered-down and having left market forces to shape the media industry. Also, the MDDA could only support non-profit entities (community) and small and micro enterprises; the MDDA Act, 2002 (Act 14 of 2002) excluded even medium-sized enterprises. Competition law has also been seen as insufficient in curbing creeping acquisitions on the basis that they fall under notifiable acquisitions, which led to increasing concentration in the print-media environment, especially among the four major media groups, namely Naspers/Media24, Independent News-papers, Times Media and Caxton (see Reg Rumney's chapter for a more detailed analysis of ownership patterns in the South African media).

The broadcasting sector has, however, become less concentrated. Before 1994 there was only the SABC and the pay TV station M-Net operating, whereas by October 2013, there were 192 TV channels on air (including commercial and free-to-air, DStv, local and Top TV stations). During the same period, radio stations increased from 34 to 234 – incorporating both publicly and privately owned stations.[2] However, despite this, as noted by the ANC in its 2012 Communications Policy Discussion Document, compared to countries such as Nigeria, Canada and Australia, South Africa still had the lowest content quotas in the world.

Duncan (2014) argues against a view that the growth in digital media has made the need for agencies such as the MDDA unnecessary – that new technologies allow us all to be citizens and reporters. She states that 'the digital environment is particularly susceptible to concentration and consolidation, leading to fewer owners exercising potentially even greater power over the public sphere than in the legacy era … [also] … spectrum scarcity is being replaced by a new form of scarcity, content scarcity … impacting on the quality of democracy.' She argues that transformation in the media can only be achieved if three dimensions can be addressed: racial and gender representivity, diversification and democratisation. 'The post-apartheid media transformation has largely (although not completely) stressed the first dimension at the expense of the second and third.'

The initial thinking around the MDDA was ambitious - breaking up monopolies, containing monopolistic tendencies and generally removing obstacles to diversity.

In looking at the way forward, the ANC will have to review its conciliatory attitude to the concentration of ownership in the commercial media sector; the patterns in the ever-evolving social media sectors, and government improving the budget of the MDDA, so that the information needs of the marginalised can be addressed. As suggested below this will need to be part of a broader dialogue which takes the unmet intentions of the Media Charter as its starting point.

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Evolving media policy of the ANC: Time to go back to the drawing board?

Media Appeals Tribunal

As seen above, the ANC was not entirely pleased with the performance of the Press Ombudsman's Office. This section looks at the debates generated by its pronouncements. A useful starting point is the position of the AU which, in its Charter on Freedom of Expression, states: 'Effective self-regulation is the best system for promoting high standards in the media.' Under the protection of reputations it states: '… sanctions shall never be so severe as to inhibit the right to freedom of expression'.

A discussion initiated at the ANC's 2007 Polokwane Conference resulted in the September 2010 National General Council resolving to call upon Parliament to review the current media regulatory system and set up a system which is 'accountable to the people through Parliament', which disciplines 'journalistic scoundrels' and ensures objective reporting.

Starting from the premise that the ANC always stood for freedom of expression, the ANC's main problems with the regulatory system can be summarised as follows:
- That decisions were skewed towards the media;
- The system and the courts did not sufficiently protect the dignity of individuals;
- That journalists were more open to being bought off by corporate interests than the media was willing to admit;
- Waiving of the rights to court action if one decides to go through the press ombudsman denied complainants their access to justice;
- The system's penalties were quite weak, being limited to corrections or retractions, which were often not placed in as prominent a spot as the original story. Or, as Jeremy Cronin put it, 'Saying sorry after the event is just not good enough;'
- The Press Code, against which complaints could be lodged, was drawn up by the press itself and there was no appeal process independent of it;
- That the ANC did not aim at censorship;
- The press itself had an anti-ANC and anti-transformation bias, whereas the media should be instruments of transformation.

Raymond Louw's presentation at the August 2010 South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef) Summit, which is representative of many in the media, argued that:

- While the ombudsman is a former journalist, which is an advantage because it is important for such an office bearer to be familiar with the workings of journalism, the hearings are conducted in the presence of a representative of the public and another journalist – drawn from a pool of six each.
- The ANC and government had already been making successful use of the Press Ombudsman's Office.
- Media is accountable in two ways: through the law and through the purchasing power of the public.
- Imposing fines was not the way to go. 'Where fines do exist editors risk publishing intrusive stories – and then paying the damages – because the increase in sales more than compensates for the cost of the fine.' Critical adjudication is a more powerful sanction.
- Not waiving the right to go the route of the courts would subject newspapers to 'double jeopardy'. Also, the press ombudsman's route could be used as a fishing expedition to gain access to the defence the newspaper would be using.

These various debates led to the setting-up by the Sanef and Print Media South Africa of a PFC. The initiative came when the original Press Council's term was coming to an end. Debates within these structures finally led to the review under Justice Pius Langa, who chaired the PFC. It resulted in the establishment of a new press code and a revitalised Press Ombudsman's Office. Among the changes made to the code was the reintroduction of a clause which read: 'The press shall exercise exceptional care and consideration in matters involving dignity and reputation, bearing in mind that any right to privacy may be overridden only by a legitimate public interest.' Other changes showed the responsiveness of the media to accusations of poor journalism, with the code including a specific ban on plagiarism. Furthermore, complainants did not have to waive their right

to the courts if they were unsuccessful with the Press Ombudsman's Office. The PFC also proposed the introduction of a public advocate and the inclusion of more members of the public – it now consists of 12 members, half from the public and the other half from the press. An independent chairperson, in the form of a retired judge, is considered the additional public voice.

One of the challenges of the debate was that the differing parties were taking entrenched positions, few seeing the middle ground. Instead of an honest engagement to do with media quality, this debate has been portrayed as ANC versus the media. There was considerable public support for a media appeals tribunal but the approach taken by both sides prevented honest debate. Those who need greatest protection are the marginalised in society, not the ministers and other leaders about whom it appeared the ANC was so concerned.

The Press Ombudsman's Office has now been in existence for over a year. To date all political parties have been using its services. This is probably an indication of acceptance of its role and powers.

Protection of State Information Bill

A unique opportunity to debate the relation between national and public interest was missed when the ANC introduced the Protection of State Information Bill. This provided a perfect opportunity for intense debate that would result in consensus on that question via an open, robust deliberation. The connection between the two was captured somewhat tongue-in-cheek by James Fallows, of *Atlantic Monthly* and the US's National Public Radio fame, who wrote: 'The first instinct of many journalists is to cry "first amendment", which is like the military's reflexive use of "national security" to rebut outside criticism of how it does its work.' South Africa is clearly not alone in considering the issues raised by the Protection of State Information Bill.

Let us not delude ourselves: there will always be a tension between those who think they are acting in the national interest and those promoting public interest. The debate goes to the essence of sovereignty, which the leading writer on the subject, FH Hinsley (1986), described as 'the idea that there is a final and absolute political authority in the political community'. The national interest is understood to be articulated by the state as the ultimate formal authority and its definition must be of such a nature that it withstands the vicissitudes of electoral fortunes. Public interest represents the interests of the aggregate collective of interests.

Netshitenzhe, addressing an October 2002 Media Freedom Day event, argued that the two are not necessarily contradictory – under popular democracy they should be complementary and that in the South African case the Constitution is the starting point for defining the national interest. 'Its provisions, in real life, can be disaggregated to identify how the national interest can and should manifest itself.' The media sees itself as representing the public interest, as an earlier version of the South African Press Code put it: 'The freedom of the press to bring an independent scrutiny to bear on the forces that shape society is a freedom exercised on behalf of the public.' The key question is: who defines the national interest? This process in itself must be an open and frank one which involves all elements of civil society, and not one drawn up behind closed doors.

There has been a 'knee-jerk reaction' by the media to suggestions that they act in the national interest. This is understandable given the decades of lies that the National Party and its apartheid government fed media – in the national interest.

In the same speech Netshitenzhe also tried to address the concern of the media when he argued that 'pursuit of the national interest by the media does not make for conformity and boring journalism … positive stories and serious national interest issues do not make for bad sales – bad journalists do'. South African media

should serve both national interest and public interest. Guy Berger, in a 4 August 2010 blog, points out that 'the press … is somewhat further away from being in touch with public interest than is the ANC', citing how the media missed Zuma's rise to power as a glaring example.

In drafting the Protection of State Information Bill the ANC could have been well-served by using as a starting point the freedom of information section of the AU's Declaration on Freedom of Expression, which states, among other things, that:

The right to information shall be guaranteed by law in accordance with the following principles:
- Everyone has the right to access information held by public bodies;
- Everyone has the right to access information held by private bodies which is necessary for the exercise or protection of any right;
- Any refusal to disclose information shall be subject to appeal to an independent body and/or the courts;
- Public bodies shall be required, even in the absence of a request, actively to publish important information of significant public interest;
- No one shall be subject to any sanction for releasing in good faith information on wrongdoing, or that which would disclose a serious threat to health, safety or the environment save where the imposition of sanctions serves a legitimate interest and is necessary in a democratic society; and
- Secrecy laws shall be amended as necessary to comply with freedom of information principles.

There is general agreement even within the ANC, that the whole process around the Protection of Information Bill has not been one of its better moments. Even its steadfast ally, the South African Communist Party (SACP), noted in its Central Committee statement of 4 December 2011: 'The process of developing this legislation has not always been well-handled politically.' The various amendments made by the ANC, albeit in the wake of widespread opposition from civil society, bear testimony to the organisation's capacity to try and remain true to its democratic roots.

The former Minister of Intelligence, Ronnie Kasrils, under whose watch the Bill was originally introduced, has weighed in by calling for a balanced approach and arguing that 'since freedom of expression is a very dearly won principle of our liberation struggle it needs to be treated as sacrosanct outside the narrow national security sphere'. A major part of the debate was on the need for a public-interest defence, which would have empowered people who were willing at great risk to expose corruption and wrongdoing. There was also a spirited argument for a public-domain clause, which would allow the publication of information that is already out in the open.

Jeremy Cronin, writing in *Umsebenzi* of October 2011, captured the dilemma of the ANC: on one hand the 'imperative of any sovereign democracy to protect sensitive personal information in the hands of the state (for example information held by the Revenue Services), and for the integrity of intelligence information … We [also] need to protect legitimate whistle-blowing, and we need to be vigilant against the potential abuse of document classification.' The SACP Central Committee's December 2011 statement points out that 'the success of this Bill, once it is enacted, will also require public vigilance'.

> **… We [also] need to protect legitimate whistle-blowing, and we need to be vigilant against the potential abuse of document classification.**

Government tried to enact as much control of state information as it could get away with; civil society pulled it in the opposite direction. We have arrived at a compromise which may not have satisfied all parties, but which has provided a good platform on which to proceed. Upon the Bill's passing it will be up to the various

role players to ensure that the tension between national interest and public interest continues being spelled out in the interest of the people of this country, and not any one political party, or worse still, a faction of a political party. However, the battle to improve on the legislation has not ended. On 1 June 2014, in a statement to mark International Press Freedom Day, Sanef chairperson Mpumelelo Mkhabela said a public interest defence clause in the Bill would truly enhance the ability of media to assist in the fight against corruption. Sanef called upon the President to refer the Bill to the Constitutional Court before it is signed into legislation.

Revisiting the dialogue

It was a brave, confident and idealistic ANC which played a crucial role in the media debates of the 1990s. As with many other engagements with civil society, the elections of 1994 and the deployment of thousands of cadres into different levels of government heralded the decline in this organic connection the ANC had developed with civil society. Today there is a need for a broader dialogue on South Africa's media, not only in the spirit of the 1990s, but cognisant of the realities of the third decade of our democracy.

In doing so the ANC needs to lead with all the high morality that its members invest in the organisation. It alone has the capacity to speak and act on behalf of all the people of South Africa. It alone has the breadth of support to bring in the largest sections of society into this dialogue. Other political parties remain tainted with narrow sectarian agendas. Just as we have managed the tensions within our broad church, so too we can take into the account the needs of the Sandton resident and the rural mother; the Democratic Alliance and the African Christian Democratic Party; the Guptas, Motsepes, Oppenheimers and Reddys, as well as the unemployed.

To begin with, the ANC has to go back to its original commitment to freedom of expression and culture of tolerance. There should be an acknowledgement that the ANC and the SACP have not handled the debates around the Media Appeals Tribunal and the Information Bill very

well. The manner in which Kasrils and serving Member of Parliament Ben Turok (who came under severe censure when he voted against the Bill at its first reading in Parliament)[3] have been treated for raising contrarian voices alarmed many stalwarts of the movement. The refrain that if they are not happy with the policies of the ANC they should get out of there is too glib and against a tradition which was willing to consider all the views of its membership. One needs to recall only the tortuous debates which the movement went through around the lead-up to the negotiations, especially in relation to the suspension of the armed struggle.

Freedom of expression is framed largely as a negative freedom, where the government has a duty of non-interference in expressive activities.

It is also critical to mention the importance of the ANC's adhering to its principles of an independent public broadcaster. The continuing crises at the SABC and government's apparent unwillingness to address them fundamentally undermines any legitimate critique the ANC makes of the other commercial and community media.

It also needs to be appreciated that freedom of expression is a complex notion which Duncan (2011) captures to an extent. Citing Article 19 of the United Nations' Declaration on Human Rights, she explains that 'freedom of expression is framed largely as a negative freedom, where the government has a duty of non-interference in expressive activities'.

She argues that this approach has the following weaknesses:
- Access to 'the marketplace of ideas' is uneven, since media ownership is often highly monopolised.
- 'The free flow of information and ideas … may in reality mask ideological interests.' As Netshitenzhe argued journalists should not see themselves as independent from their

environment, 'as unique human beings with unique journalistic genes and genealogy'.

- Governments are not the only forces of censorship, 'market forces can also censor information'.

She also points out that, seen as a negative freedom, it ends up precluding the positive obligation to provide the resources for freedom of expression.

Freedom of expression and the commitment to media diversity must not be seen as the province of the media or 'whites' or 'liberals' alone. At the same time, this commitment, drawn from universal principles, must be infused with the culture drawn from South African values. As has been seen above, the notion of dignity plays a very important role for the majority of South Africans. It is also a universal demand for people who have been brutalised by colonialism and dictatorships – the restoration of dignity was a demand of protestors involved in the Arab Spring.

Another starting point of the dialogues must be the acknowledgement of the power of the media to promote, to create and to destroy. This acknowledgement must come especially from media practitioners who are quite deprecating when it comes to acknowledging the role media plays in society. The media must thus get away from its self-righteousness which ends up precluding critical self-examination.

Relations between government and the media

For this dialogue to succeed there is a need to continue building relations between government and the media. Cronin quite correctly pointed out that there is nothing free about the South African press given the high levels of 'oligopolistic domination'. As recently as 17 May 2013, Makhudu Sefara, editor of *The Star*, had occasion to write about an attack on black editors by government spokespersons. They claimed that the South African story is being written through the eyes of white males

and that black editors are mere puppets. It must be recognised that the media has gone through a certain level of transformation – especially in terms of racial representation in the newsrooms – and the arrival of *New Age* and the takeover of Independent Newspapers group by a majority black-owned company could be an indication of emerging trends.

The free flow of information and ideas ... may in reality mask ideological interests.

Berger argued in 2002 that transformation since 1994 could be considered to be disappointingly half empty or admirably half full. The ANC should take the optimistic view and use the half glass of water to nourish the process of transformation.

To improve relations between the media and government we must not assume that media owners, editors and journalists all have common interests. The ANC has to appreciate that journalists do operate with relative autonomy. However, there is no doubting that they work within a paradigm that takes the capitalist system (whatever its form – postcolonial, neoliberal) as its starting point.

Phil Graham, former editor of the *Washington Post,* described the work of journalists as 'our inescapably impossible task of providing a first rough draft of history that will never really be completed about a world we can never really understand'. It alerts us to the impact the media can have in shaping our first impression of an issue. The problem with this is that '… by seeking to overplay the dramatic as opposed to the mundane but profound movement of history, the media face the danger of missing the essence,' argued Netshitenzhe.

Even amongst the most ardent critics of government there is common cause that the media needs to get its house in order in terms of plagiarism; entrapment (especially in the context of factionalism); and the ridiculing of public representatives just because they express

a view different from the mainstream – and should examine whether it has been promoting the interests of other states. It also needs to address the often-repeated charge of decline in the quality of South Africa's journalism: that it engages in 'churnalism' where a story emanating from one source is repeated over and over again.

The media has to recognise that the ANC and its alliance are not homogeneous in their outlooks, as much as the jackboots would prefer a policy straightjacket to be placed on their members. We can see this in the stances taken during the debates around the Protection of State Information Bill. This has led to Berger calling upon the media to recognise the ANC as a site of struggle.

There is a need for government to continue building relations with the media. For this to happen, the ANC needs to appreciate that journalists operate with relative autonomy and the media also needs to improve the quality of reporting.

Other areas in which the media could improve have been suggested by many of the writers cited above: bring the youth into the platforms provided by the media, and increase the level of coverage of women (Media Tenor's 2013 report points out that women featured in about 15 per cent of media coverage in South Africa).

Getting all this right will give a sense of being in Nirvana; so let us keep trying, because that is what heaven is there for.

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Media diversity

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The South African media system is undoubtedly pluralistic in terms of the different forms of media – from audiovisual, through print, to online. There is arguably no media system with the same level of pluralism on the African continent. From daily national newspapers to regional papers and community papers and to national, regional and community radio and television stations to cinemas (even in decline) and online-based media there is an appearance of saturation and of catering to the needs of the entire nation. The growth of mobile telephony should add to media pluralism and diversity, as access through mobile phones is growing, especially among the youth, for whom it is the preferred platform for media consumption.

Government policy and regulation post-1994 has opened space for new media outlets. The creation of agencies such as the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) has also aided the pluralisation and diversification processes in ways that have changed the media landscape in the two decades since the advent of democracy, and the strong constitutional protections for freedom of expression and media freedom have provided a nurturing environment for media expansion.

Compared to the rest of the African continent, most of the media system is privately owned and commercially driven. Even public service media such as the public broadcaster, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), and the community broadcasting sector are largely dependent on commercial sources of funding – and this dependence is one of the factors limiting the diversity of programming, and even of editorial independence. South Africa is one of the very few African countries without national newspaper titles owned and controlled by the government.

In this regard South Africa appears to fit a media system profile typical of liberal western democracies, in which a defining feature is a market-based system of pluralistic media independent from the state but not necessarily from powerful commercial interests and the political forces with which they intersect. However,

South Africa is not a country with the levels of economic development and social equality of European and North American countries – it only shares with these countries levels of media freedom from direct state and government control. Direct censorship, with regular arrests and imprisonment of journalists, is not a feature of the South African media landscape.

The key question, though, is whether the South African media system is both pluralistic and diverse. The answer is not an easy one, for several reasons. The most obvious is that the media landscape shows a diversity very different from that of the apartheid era. This is important and cannot be ignored. However, it is universally acknowledged that South Africa is a society marked by growing socioeconomic inequality, poverty and high levels of unemployment, especially among the youth – inequalities resembling the racial inequalities that are a legacy of over 300 years of colonialism and apartheid. Media systems are shaped by and bear the marks of the social systems in which they are embedded. Although the advent of democracy in 1994 made all South Africans equal before the law it did not create social and economic equality. This is the task of the new society. Neither did it create equal access to a plurality and diversity of the media. This is another task of the new society. Access to both a plurality and diversity of the media follows patterns of socioeconomic inequality and geographies of economic activity.

Diversity of and in the media

Before one assesses the South African media system for diversity it is important to make some propositions about diversity in relation to the media. Diversity is not the same thing as pluralism, which says a lot about numbers but does not necessarily speak to range. Second, diversity means many, but different. There can be no diversity without pluralism, which is a necessary – but not a sufficient – condition for diversity. Diversity of media is not only a function of one aspect (the demography of media owners or media producers) for there can be diversity of ownership in the media without significant

diversity in the content of the media and the audiences it serves. Full diversity in the media should cover the whole value chain, from ownership through media producers, to the content (or presentations of social reality) they produce, to the audiences that consume. In relation to content it is not only an editorial and programming focus and perspectives that are important but also – in a multilingual or diverse linguistic context like South Africa – the range of languages that are used across different media platforms. The range of images or representations is also of critical importance to full media diversity, especially in visual media. It is also true to say that in a society some can enjoy both a plurality and a diversity of the media available, yet some can have a much leaner media diet that is only pluralistic. So there can be diversity for some and a plurality for others.

Diversity of media ownership

On the face of it, the South African media landscape is both pluralistic and diverse. But this appearance is deceptive because some forms of ownership are more dominant, control larger parts of the media system, and carry influence that is disproportionate demographically but congruent with the distribution of power in society. The print media sector is dominated by a few companies that produce print media products which are targeted at and appeal to different or diverse audiences yet do not have the same levels of quality information. Often, the quality, papers which carry informative and analytical journalism necessary for the informed citizens of a democracy are targeted at educated, affluent and urban markets. The less-educated, who are often also the poor, are provided with papers with lesser quality information and tabloid journalism with generous doses of the sensational and mystical which, while entertaining, do little to raise the critical faculties of their readers and their ability to engage critically with the concerns of their society.

The largest circulation daily, the *Daily Sun*, is a tabloid leading every day with headlines that could win a prize for fantasy. This paper is also the cheapest and therefore accessible to the majority of people who cannot afford to spend a lot of money on information. Its popularity is therefore partly because it is the only choice available for some, especially working class people. In this instance one cannot speak about plurality. There is only one mainstream widely accessible paper at that price. To be sure, the *Daily Sun* does have different types of content – not just the bizarre and amazing – but this is diversity

within a paper that does not question the social order and the ideological underpinnings of policy choices. Instead, the *Daily Sun* limits itself to questioning the conduct of the authorities and their management of public affairs.

These large print media companies (until the very recent change of ownership of Independent Newspapers to a black-led consortium) were and are white-owned, often also having a majority white management and senior editorial staff. Their major titles are in English and Afrikaans even though these are not the home languages of the majority of the population. Independent Newspapers does publish newspapers that are popular (and thus commercially viable) with readers in isiZulu in KwaZulu-Natal, where isiZulu is the dominant language. What this example shows is that diversity in the use of languages in print media is often a commercial consideration, and is not motivated by the needs of citizens.

South Africa does not yet, after 20 years of democracy, have black-owned commercially viable and profitable print media companies that publish several major titles although the recent purchase of the Independent Group by Sekunjalo has changed this. Many of the other major print media companies have black shareholders in some form or other, especially as black empowerment partners, and employ highly qualified and experienced, accomplished and award-winning black and women editors, managers and journalists. Black editors and journalists, like their white counterparts, have shown themselves to be strong and even strident defenders of editorial and programming independence. The presence of black editors and women in media structures has contributed to both pluralism and diversity. But it is important to note that no race demographic is all-determining when it comes to media diversity and pluralism.

The print media sector is dominated by a few companies that produce print media products which are targeted at and appeal to different or diverse audiences yet do not have the same levels of quality information

But there is a relationship between ownership and control which creates a glass ceiling. This contradiction of excellence in black skills in journalism and media management often causes some to argue that ownership does not matter or is inconsequential. But the occasional occurrence of dismissal of black editors, journalists and managers over the last 20 years confirms that the demography of ownership does matter. Owners do not only have the power to allocate resources, set editorial policy and direction, but also – crucially – to hire and fire editorial and management staff. Majority black ownership in print media was, until the buyout by the Sekunjalo led consortium of Independent Newspapers South Africa (then a 100 per cent foreign owned profitable company) limited to the ownership of the *Mail & Guardian* by a black Zimbabwean, Trevor Ncube, who also publishes newspapers in Zimbabwe, and the plethora of community newspapers outside the major urban centres that are struggling to survive and of which most are unlikely ever to achieve commercial viability, let alone sustainability. These community papers often serve black communities in small areas. A key factor here is that ownership diversity is difficult to achieve for media that are commercially driven. Their ability to survive depends on astute management; and, to some extent, how historically political factors have shaped the media landscape and the economy. It can be argued that the demographic colour of the market forces is white in the sense that racial discrimination privileged whites in the economy.

The most successful media company, Naspers, which publishes a range of newspapers in Afrikaans and English including the largest circulation daily the *Daily Sun* targeted at the lower end of the market, is a descendant of Nasionale Pers. Nasionale Pers was historically close to the nationalist apartheid government and benefited from some of its regulatory

measures which have proved to be a bonus and advantage in the post-apartheid era. This closeness constituted support for the apartheid philosophy and its implementation. Naspers's licence for subscription television has given it the advantage to dominate subscription television in South Africa and Africa. On the back of this experience the company has been able to take advantage of new developments in digital technology and the Internet to access investment opportunities in Russia, China and Brazil which are large markets. Today these investments make a major contribution to its income and profits. In the post-apartheid context Naspers is making a contribution to media pluralism and diversity of the broader landscape in its own way.

In contrast, black owned papers which supported the liberation struggles, like *New Nation* and *Sowetan,* were casualties of the post-apartheid media landscape in different ways. *New Nation* simply died. The *Sowetan* tried to adapt to the new commercial environment so as not to die but ended up the stable of a media company that has some black shareholders but is not black controlled. Times Media Limited, publisher of the largest circulation Sunday paper the *Sunday Times* is one of the major media companies. As part of this stable The *Sowetan* has also lost some of the essence that made it connect to the inhabitants of Soweto, and now targets only some segments of that community as part of its commercial strategy.

It is worth pointing out that the ANC-led government has (for some good reasons like attracting investment) not been as opposed to foreign ownership and control of print media as it has been in the traditionally more regulated broadcast environment.

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Diversity in the airwaves

The broadcast environment appears on the face of it to be a story of diversity of ownership that does not exist in print media. The largest broadcaster is the SABC, a publicly owned broadcaster with four television channels and 18 radio stations. There is a privately-owned commercial sector with some degree of black ownership. E-tv, the second largest broadcaster after the SABC, has significant black ownership and control, including ownership by union investment companies.

However, companies with white ownership such as Primedia are significant players in the radio space with radio stations like Radio 702 that pull in large audiences and are influential through a talk-radio format. New black-owned entrants in the different provinces have diversified ownership and are a direct result of policy and regulatory measures to open up the media space to historically disadvantaged individuals, social groups and communities.

A key factor here is that ownership diversity is difficult to achieve for media that are commercially driven

The emergence of a community radio sector is also a significant marker of ownership diversification in post-apartheid South Africa. The broadcast sector can claim to have greater diversity of ownership than any other media sector in South Africa today, but the bugbear of commercial imperatives has affected it as well, so while ownership might be fairly diverse it does not mean that content is necessarily diverse. Neither does the lack of a direct correlation between ownership diversity and content diversity mean that ownership does not matter. It simply points to a factor that constrains ownership diversity.

Black-owned broadcast media struggle with commercial viability and long-term sustainability to varying degrees. It is true that management ability and experience in crafting commercial strategies is an important factor to consider when assessing viability and sustainability – so is the general economic environment and management of the economy in cases where media are dependent on the market for survival. The SABC's and the community sector's content is influenced by commercial concerns in ways that curtail or limit their respective roles as

sources of general public and community information in the broadest sense of the word.

The film exhibition sector (cinemas) in South Africa also demonstrates lack of diverse ownership and is often part of larger media companies that are white-owned or dominated and controlled.

Diversity of and in media content

Content is what the audience consumes, and the audience is often unaware of ownership. Nor do audiences choose media products because of the demography of ownership, even though ownership is one of the key factors that shape content. The demographics of ownership do not, on their own, influence diversity of and in content. In short, white-owned or black-owned companies cannot simply produce content for their racial or social group, especially in a market-driven media system. What matters is what audiences attractive to commercial sponsors – and even public entities, including government or advertisers – are deemed to want or need.

A market-driven system where commercial strategies are a matter of survival and are also profitable has several effects which undermine diversity of and in media content. There is a need for some content to have to meet – to some degree – the test of commercial support. Then, over time these commercially supported forms of content become dominant and often define what is seen as the norm within content and what has proved to be commercially successfully.

As scholars of the relationship between media and democracy have pointed out, content or information necessary for the citizens of a democracy to know and exercise their rights should not be subject to tests of commercial acceptability in order to be circulated in the public domain. For South Africa, which most agree has one of the best constitutions in the world and media policy and regulatory documents firmly committed to diversity and intended to create a new society, diversity of and in content

is critically important. Inclusivity, vibrancy and the sustainability of democracy are not possible if the political suppression of diversity of and in content which existed during apartheid is now replaced by commercially-driven censorship and licensing.

How do the market and commercial imperatives curtail or limit and undermine diversity of and in media content in the South African media landscape?

A market-driven system where commercial strategies are a matter of survival and are also profitable has several effects which undermine diversity of and in media content.

First, they often limit owners who might wish to serve social groups that are not traditional or profitable audiences. Although the black Sekunjalo consortium bought Independent Newspapers South Africa it does not follow that their newspaper will broaden the content, audiences and views and perspectives of their papers. Commercial imperatives might dictate that the owners keep to urban readers of certain levels of income and largely those who can read English, except for the two successful titles they publish in KwaZulu-Natal, including the daily *Isolezwe*. So, contrary to the current discourse about Dr Iqbal Survé's threat to editorial independence, the greater long-term threat is the discipline of the market. Independent and Dr Survé might find that their papers have to keep supporting economic policies that have contributed to growing inequalities that disproportionately affect black people, women and the youth. Independent might continue an editorial line whose ideological influences were as if the papers were still owned by a foreigner who is part of an economic system that promotes European and North American ways of shaping the economy and society.

Second, market-driven media subject to strong commercial imperatives limit voices and views to the elite segment of society which colours the perspective represented in the media. In turn, public debate and influence on public policy is skewed. Despite being owned by trade union investment companies, e-tv does not have content that could be said to be aligned, or even sympathetic, to the left-wing or socialist views of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu). Instead e-tv's programming is typical of commercially-driven privately owned television stations. It promotes the values consistent with capitalism, individualism and consumerism, and much of its entertainment

Media diversity is about serving diverse audiences and addressing their needs and wants. Print media start-ups have been supported but with limited budget available none have emerged as daily newspapers.

fare is sourced from the capitals of capitalism in the West and consequently depicts the lives of Americans and Europeans rather than of South Africans. A market-driven system often simply reduces the range of voices, even if it gives access to popular voices able to speak about popular discontents and ideas. There is no democratisation of public discourse but instead a kind of marginalisation of alternative and dissenting views. The result is that even the representative views of the elected government can become defensive, and its action paralysed, and this phenomenon often manifests itself in what is seen as government hostility to the media.

Third, lack of diversity of and in content also lessens media influence on the public and the government until, as in South Africa, the government believes that according to electoral outcomes it has more support among the voters than that is reflected in the media. The media is then marginal to the majority of the public. This might account for why, despite strong criticisms of the performance of the ANC government, this has no effect on their electoral appeal and predictions of reduced support have so far not been reflected in election outcomes. This situation does not serve the long-term interests of building a new society and a democracy.

Fourth, media content often exhibits a disproportionate allocation of space and voice to issues, concerns and interests of the affluent and elite in society. This is a limitation of the diversity of content and in content. The media does not carry very much content on issues to do with the transformation of South Africa's socio-economic landscape and in particular poverty, unemployment and inequality which is critical and central to creating a new society. Where these issues are covered, the focus and perspective is largely about the implications for business and the self-interest of the elite in ensuring social stability. The media does not frame the issues from the perspective of the poor and the constitutional imperative to create a just and equal society. This lack of balance is evidence that the media can be said to reinforce social inequality instead of questioning it and creating space for debates on how to achieve equality.

Where inequality, poverty and unemployment are given space they are framed as threats to the affluent and a problem, not as challenges that require social transformation, carrying the implication that self-interest should move society to address the problem. Such a framing favours taking ameliorative or containment approaches

to social transformation and not rethinking social arrangements.

A glaring lack of diversity of and in media content is in the fictional audiovisual media on television and in the cinemas. The dominant fictional material, especially films seen even on SABC channels, is imported from North America and Europe, especially the UK because of the legacy of British colonialism. The point is not that we should not see film from these regions of the world but that they should form part of a diversity of content and in content in our media landscape. Media scholars have argued correctly that the audiovisual, because of its creative representation of social realities, has an influence on how people understand themselves and their circumstances. The more people see themselves, and people like themselves, in circumstances like theirs, the greater the influence. The audiovisual also influences the ways in which people think and gives them ideas of how to tackle their circumstances. A preponderance, or dominance, of film that depicts other societies deprives audiences of the opportunity to see representations of themselves and contributes to lack of affirmation and to undermining their own cultures including critical reflection of their cultures. Film is an important resource for self-realization, building confidence and generating creativity sparked by one's own environment in the broadest sense of the word. South Africa and Africa have had the misfortune of being represented through their worst challenges: poverty, war and disease and instead of a mix of the positive and negative things that happen.

Policy and regulatory frameworks for broadcasting and the audiovisual sector more broadly, have attempted to create diversity through regulating the amount of local content, and there is a local television and film production sector struggling to make a mark and provide programmes, films and documentaries that seek to tell our own stories. Soap operas (or 'soapies') have large audiences and resonate with people's lives. There is nothing wrong in adopting this genre but it cannot be the only popular way of telling stories of everyday life. We need to create genuine diversity, to also create media forms that tell a wider range of stories about the 'new' South Africa. After all, the subtle messages of the soapies genre are underpinned by values promoted by a consumerist lifestyle – rarely do soapies base stories on the hard side of life or explore rural settings.

South Africa is also a location for production by Northern production companies producing stories about themselves using our locations. To be sure, this generates much needed economic value from the services, employment and goods purchased. The point, though, is that we have the locations in which we could produce works that could tell our story to ourselves and the world. Film and television is almost exclusively in English, even in local programmes – another element of lack of or limited diversity. The language factor limits the range of voices and views, and even creativity, for those who are not necessarily first language speakers of English. It is true, however, that there are creative ways in which local television programmes, including soapies, use multiple languages as a way of capturing the real-life behaviour of South Africans, who switch languages in different situations and for different topics.

Radio is probably the medium that not only demonstrates broader ownership diversity but also diversity of and within content. For starters, it is the medium where more African languages are used. The majority of South Africans have an African language as their home language, and the Constitution's recognition of 11 official languages is given expression through radio, partly because of the SABC's African language stations and the community radio stations that use the languages of their communities. The mere use of South African languages other than English and Afrikaans introduces a wider diversity of topics and issues as well as voices. Radio phone-in programmes and debates definitely gives South Africans who do not have space in newspapers as analysts, experts, officials and columnists a voice without the constraints imposed by lack of high levels of education and command of the English language. (It does not follow, though, that there is necessarily a wider diversity of perspectives and ideological views;

conservative views, even those that go against the spirit of the Constitution, can sometimes be expressed in African languages and justified on grounds of culture and tradition – as if all culture and tradition are by definition good.)

Diversity of audiences, and audience needs and wants

Media diversity should also be about serving diverse audiences and their diverse needs and wants. Audiences can only choose from the media menu available to them. That is why diversity of and in the media is so critically important. Theoretically, audience needs and wants should lead to media pluralism and also diversity but in reality not all media needs and wants will result in this desirable outcome, especially in a market-based and commercially driven-system. If media diversity is a critical factor in the creation of a new society lack of diversity of and in the media is a hindrance to its realisation.

Quite clearly, given the lack of diversity of ownership and content that is restricted to English and Afrikaans (except for newspapers in isiZulu (*Isolezwe*; *Isolezwe NgoMgqibelo*, *Isolezwe NgeSonto* and *Ilanga*) and the commercial imperatives that restrict newspaper circulation to urban areas) the mainstream print media is not adequately catering for the needs of all South Africans. The success of the isiZulu newspapers raises the question of whether there is a gap in the market, and a market in the gap, for newspapers in Sesotho and isiXhosa, languages spoken by a significantly large numbers of South African. It raises the question of whether the market is conservative in its linguistic preferences or whether there is a lack of commercial creativity and risk-taking by print media entrepreneurs and prospective entrants. Part of the problem might be lack of support by financial institutions who believe that the return on media investments on untested products is too risky and would rather lend money to those who speculate in the financial markets.

Only the MDDA has supported print media start-ups and community radio stations but, with its limited budget, cannot fund large projects like the launch of a daily paper in Sesotho. Print media is important because it develops reading skills that are part of a set of critical analytical skills necessary for active citizenship in a democracy and which include engaging with information and producing information, as well as writing. There is no doubt that the acquisition of skills requires the reception of information in a variety of forms including the written word. Some of the content in the large circulation quality print media is not of general interest – there is more content on investment, the stock market, shares, tourism, travel and interior décor in newspapers that are positioned as general papers than there is about concerns of the general public, in particular changes to their social conditions.

> **Radio is probably the medium that not only demonstrates broader ownership diversity but also diversity of and within content.**

The popularity of soapies is testimony to the fact that people would like to see local productions that affirm them when they see people like themselves. This need is unfulfilled. The commercial cinemas specialise in the Hollywood fare and ignore films from the Indian film industry ('Bollywood') and the Nigerian equivalent ('Nollywood') that on DStv appear more popular with broader sections of the public.

Deepening and sustaining diversity: What needs to be done?

The government needs to take further steps to build on the successes of pluralisation and, to a lesser extent, depending on the media sector, diversification, that accompanied the advent of democracy in 1994. Policy and regulatory reviews are an urgent task. In the broadcasting sector it is clear that increased funding of the public broadcaster, the SABC

(easily, by audience reach, the largest media organisation in South Africa) and strengthened accountability to the broader public is necessary. It is with more public funding without editorial and programming strings attached, and more accountability to the public rather than government, that the SABC can diversify its content to ensure better news coverage of the provinces and enjoy the means to produce more local content internally and to source it from independent producers. The SABC ought to lead and be the home of diversity of and in content, and to dispel notions that it does not enjoy full independence from advertisers and the government of the day. The oddity of a public broadcaster that is funded largely from commercial advertising and sponsorships is an impediment to diversity of its content. It reinforces the dominance of commercial influences on the media.

The community radio sector needs resources to be sustainable because the reality is that the number of licensed stations is not necessarily the number of stations on air, or of stations with content relevant to the community. Such community stations carry programming that can be described as 'mini-me' of commercial radio stations. If community radio programming or its content lacks diversity, the whole idea of a distinct sector playing a different but complementary role is undermined – and it also means that the policy goal of a diversified broadcasting sector is a mirage. Targeted funding and resources to community stations will ensure that this relatively new sector, vital to local participation in determining the affairs of communities and indeed participatory democracy at the national level, becomes a reality.

The print media requires attention in three ways. First, the government should use its regulatory power to encourage the financial sector to support print media start-ups, especially for newspapers in African languages.

Second, it should use its advertising power to support a broader range of papers including new newspapers that might be launched in African languages but in doing so the government must be mindful of the constitutional guarantee of editorial freedom and media freedom. Greater diversity of editorially independent print media is a potentially good platform for disseminating government programmes and broadening public opinion. Third, it needs substantially to increase the budget of the MDDA so that it can fund large projects such as launching national daily newspapers in African languages.

Quite clearly the government also needs to ensure that the policy and regulatory measures that are necessary to take advantage of the digital revolution are an urgent task that has implications for media diversity. Digital migration from analogue systems holds the potential for a new era of channel multiplicity that has hitherto been limited by spectrum availability. The danger could be that we simply have pluralism of channels without diversity of content. Strengthening the public broadcaster and providing funds for the production of radio and television programmes and films by South Africans is vital. The process so far has been marked by too many starts and stops which undermine media diversity. We must take advantage of technological developments, not lag behind them.

In conclusion, it can be said that the South African media landscape is definitely pluralistic in ways that are both good and bad. To the extent that the pluralism is good it has created a platform for diversity; there is some degree of diversity which requires a shot of policy and regulatory reform to give the diversity sustainable momentum.

Twenty years of SA media ownership (1994-2014)
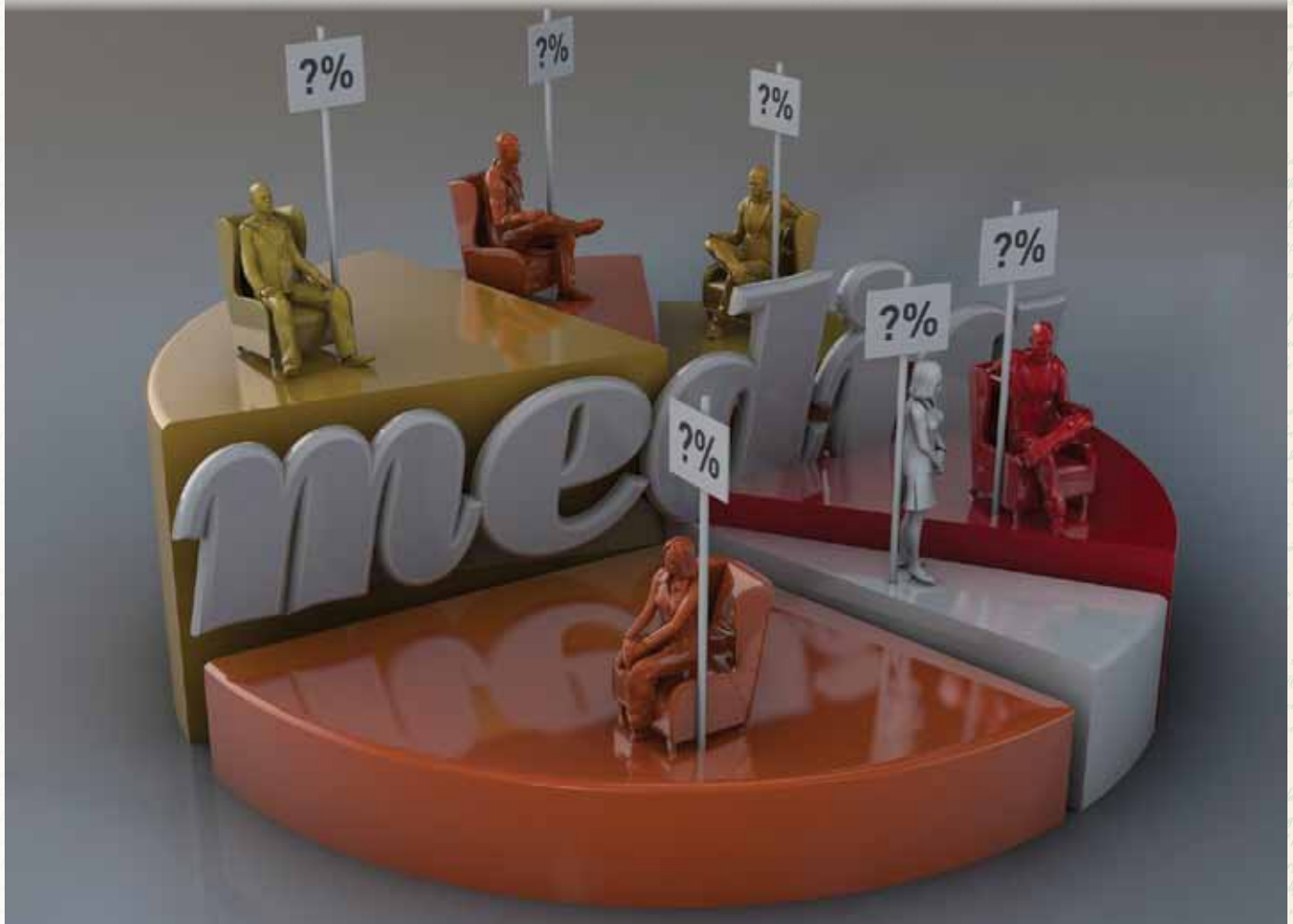
Reg Rumney

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Overview

The powerful political and economic forces that have reshaped the media ownership landscape in the first twenty years of South African democracy are hard to disentangle.

There is no doubt, however, that political pressure for racial ownership transformation, finding its expression in the initially voluntary policy of black economic empowerment (BEE), together with renewed foreign investment (by foreigners investing money into the South African media and South Africans investing in media elsewhere in the world) helped to cause a seismic shift in a landscape that was for decades static – a publicly owned but only nominally independent broadcast sector set against a privately owned and highly concentrated print sector, with Afrikaans and Nationalist Party-supporting newspapers backing apartheid policies and the English-language press mostly opposing apartheid without espousing radical change.

This stand-off seemed set in stone, so much so that in their influential 1984 book, *Total Onslaught: The South African Press Under Attack,* Hachten and Giffard saw the roots of the polarity in colonial times, with the arrival of the first press in South Africa. Writing when they did, they could not envisage anything other than a partisan press in South Africa, and one that was characterised by a conflict between the state and the press.

> The continuing gulf between the population groups has meant that the country's newspapers have never outgrown the stage of a highly partisan press … So conflict between the government of the day and the newspapers has been inevitable.

The lack of media dynamism in the private sector during the apartheid years was reflected in the racially discrete consumption of news as well as the almost total white ownership of the production of news and its lack of diversity. In the public sector, a state monopoly froze out most private sector innovation, with the exception of those who could exploit the homeland system – for example, Radio 702 which, in the 1980s, broadcast from the Bophuthatswana bantustan to Gauteng, and Capital Radio in the Transkei.

As 1994 dawned, the media had been controlled for decades by white interests or by the government of the day – the only innovation represented by the anti-apartheid alternative press which would diminish at the end of apartheid as democracy slowly staunched the supply of funds for 'oppositional' or 'progressive' non-profit organisations. An early casualty was the Afrikaans publication *Vrye Weekblad,* which closed in January 1994. Added to the withdrawal of mainly foreign funding, the loss of senior journalists from alternative media to the better-paying mainstream media, and the sense of a lack of purpose now that democracy had arrived, contributed to the closure of *South, New Nation* and others, including the alternative news agency, the Eastern Cape News Agency. None of the major alternative publications survived, save the *Weekly Mail,* in the form of the *Mail & Guardian,* which staked out a space for itself in the mainstream print media.

In 1994 the press remained a duopoly. The English-language press was controlled by Anglo American and limited in competition by cross-holdings, whereas the Afrikaans-language press similarly seemed monolithic. The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) had a monopoly on broadcasting in the Republic of South Africa (as defined by apartheid) – excluding the homelands where the loophole opened up by the apartheid system was soon exploited by competing independent media. However, these were limited in scope by their distance from major urban areas, which made the physical business of transmission difficult. Except for Radio 702 and Bophuthatswana TV (Bop TV), there was little competition to the SABC, which also owned the signal distributor Sentech. Bop-TV remained an independent entity, but was absorbed into the SABC in the 1990s, while Radio 702 grew to become a successful commercial radio station and the kernel of the media company Primedia.

In 1991, according to advertising research conducted by Omnicom Media Group (OMD), 22 daily newspapers were published in South Africa, and that number had not changed by mid-2013, whereas the number of major weekly newspapers had increased by three to 28. Consumer magazine titles at 600 and business-to-business publications at 640 had both more than doubled in the same period, although this growth, according to Hadland, could be ascribed to the 'rapid development of the niche, client magazine or contract publishing sector'.

The rise of mostly free and alternative streams of news and entertainment on the Internet is often cited as the cause of the decline, although the causes may be complex and may include cutbacks in newsrooms. Whatever the case, traditional newspapers have inexorably been losing advertising revenue to broadcasting. The threat of TV adspend moving from print to TV motivated the decision in the 1980s to allow the big four newspaper groups to hold shares in a new venture, the Electronic Media Network, or M-Net, the seed of what was to become the MultiChoice satellite network.[4]

In 1991, print publications commanded half of all advertising spend while radio and TV had 46 per cent between them. By the middle of 2013, radio and TV had around 64 per cent, and total print was left with 29 per cent, with most of the growth in TV rather than radio, but definite declines in print (see Table 1).

In 1994, the SABC dominated the airwaves, except for homeland-based radio and TV (notably Radio 702 and Bop-TV). By 2014, the SABC was challenged in English-language broadcasting by several radio stations, such as Radio Highveld, that were privatised from the SABC, mostly in the late 1990s and specifically to stimulate diversity and black ownership. There was a lull after that, until a renewed spate of licensing in 2007 brought further competition in the form of Capricorn, m-power and, more recently, Power-FM. In TV, the SABC had a new commercial competitor in the form of e-tv, ultimately controlled by a black empowerment company, Hosken Consolidated Investments (HCI). More importantly the privately owned

There were four big media groups in 1994, mostly print-based but with a small interest in the nascent electronic media: Times Media Ltd (TML); the Argus Group; Nasionale Pers; and Perskor. Over the two decades, TML, which was born out of the South African Associated Newspapers (SAAN) group, would be renamed Johncom, then Avusa, and finally Times Media as in the Times Media Group (TMG). The Argus Group would be renamed Independent Newspapers SA and then Independent News and Media SA. Nasionale Pers would be formally renamed Naspers.

In 2014 there are still four big media groups although they have undergone big shifts in ownership and influence: Naspers, TMG and Independent News and Media still exist, while Caxton-CTP replaced Perskor, whose assets it had acquired. Changes in the ownership of the media should be seen not only in the political and economic context but also in the commercial and environmental contexts. The environment in which the press operated has changed dramatically during the two decades with the transfer of advertising revenue from print to broadcasting, specifically TV (which had already begun before 1994) continuing apace. An astonishing decline in newspaper circulations started just after the 1994 election (Hadland 2006: 11), and this has continued in the following two decades, with declining revenues in print that were not being made up by their online offerings (Politicsweb 2013).

Table 1: Share of above the line advertising expenditure			
	1991	2004	mid-2013
Total print	50.2m %	39.6 %	28.7 %
TV	35.1 %	39.6 %	48.0 %
Radio	10.8 %	13.2 %	15.6 %
Total broadcasting	45.9 %	52.8 %	63.6 %
Source: OMD Media Facts			

pay-TV satellite platform MultiChoice had eaten into the SABC's viewership and even its advertising revenue.

The first South African democratic election of 1994 heralded the dismantling of legislation which was part of the vast mechanism of media censorship control, such as the Internal Security Act, 1979 (Act 32 of 1979). Some apartheid-era anti-free speech laws, such as the National Key Points Act, 1980 (Act 102 of 1980) stayed on the statute book, but fell into disuse or were counter to the new, liberal Constitution. Democracy also meant a new interest by foreign investors who, after years of disinvestment, saw opportunity in South Africa as it reintegrated with the world economy. With normalisation came the desire – in all realms, including media – for racial redress for apartheid's exploitative economic and political exclusion; and civil society began to agitate for greater diversity in, access to, and production of news.

What constitutes 'control' is not always a straightforward calculation.

The shake-up in media ownership was aided by the enthusiasm of investors for de-conglomeration or 'unbundling' of the conglomerates that had dominated business in South Africa, their growth aided by years of disinvestment. As Andrew McGregor of *Who Owns Whom* has noted, in 1990 South Africa's three largest investment groupings, Anglo American, Sanlam and Old Mutual, between them controlled three-quarters of the market

capitalisation of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. By 2009, that figure had fallen to 25 per cent. Large modern South African companies tend to have a spread of passive shareholders, with no large investor holding any sizeable portion, although the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF), through the Public Investment Corporation (PIC) and by virtue of the massive amount of funding it invests, is often the biggest shareholder.

The desire to unlock value trapped in the subsidiaries of sprawling conglomerates, especially Anglo American Corporation, coincided with the wish to introduce diversity of ownership and control. What constitutes 'control' is not always a straightforward calculation. A discussion paper by the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Icasa) – which regulates electronic communications, including broadcasting – has tackled this issue in relation to regulating stakes in broadcasters. Fifty per cent plus one share is sometimes taken to constitute control, but the discussion document numbers at least four categories of control, ranging from 100 per cent to control of proxy votes by management with little visible ownership. In any event, it is clear that control can be exercised by one shareholder with greater voting rights than any other shareholder. The Anglo American chairperson, Harry Oppenheimer, was said to control the giant corporation with only eight per cent of the voting rights.

The dominance of Anglo American in the South African Press, through its subsidiary Johannesburg Consolidated Investment (JCI) Ltd, is dramatically illustrated in Diagram 1, from 1992. Particularly noteworthy is the 37 per cent cross-ownership of Argus Holdings in

TML, which made any real competition between the two groups problematic: if Argus (later to become Independent Newspapers) gained circulation at the expense of TML it would harm its own profitability.

Diagram 1 – The old ownership order (1992)

Source: Who Owns Whom 2009
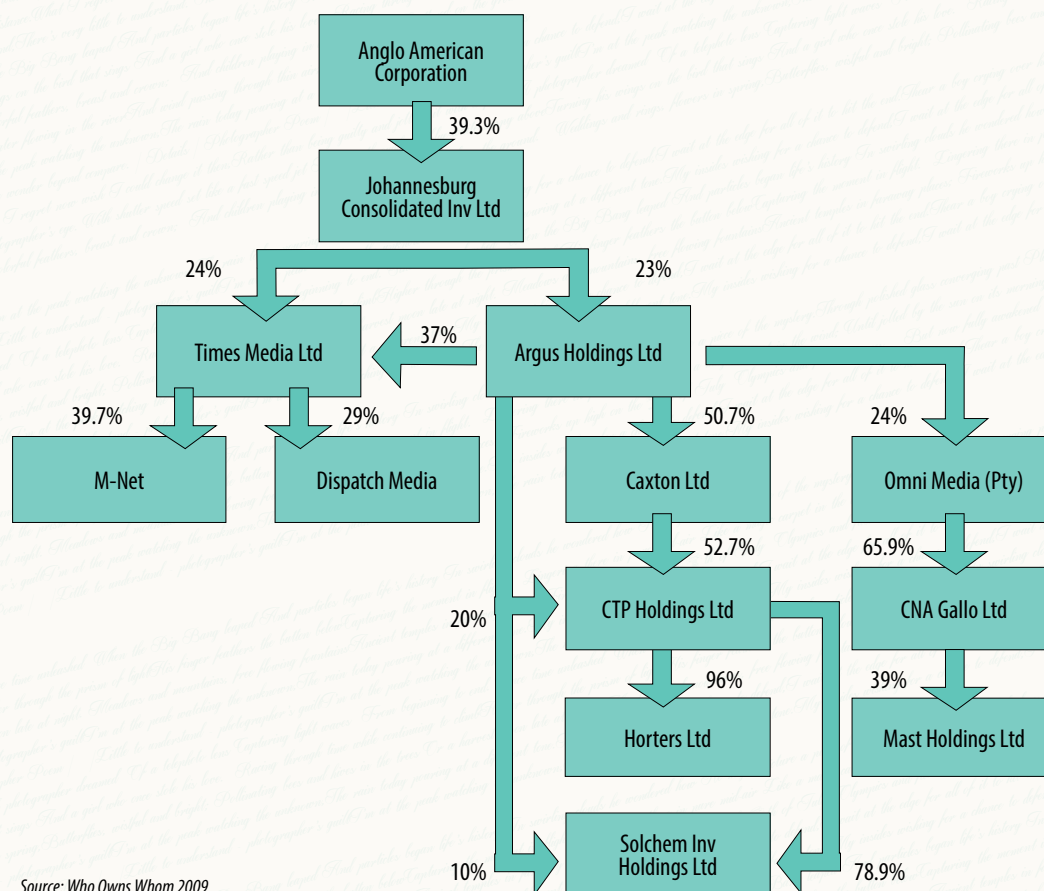
Foreign direct investment (FDI) and Anglo unbundling

In 1994 the Dublin-based Independent Newspapers (ING) group – later to be renamed Independent News and Media (INM) – bought 31 per cent (a sizeable stake) of the Argus Group from JCI. Anglo American had started to follow the worldwide trend of unbundling ownership of non-core assets to shareholders, and the newspaper groups were the least compatible with the corporation's core business of mining.

Moreover, they had, as *Who Owns Whom* founder Robin McGregor noted, writing in the July 1994 issue of the *Rhodes Journalism Review*, the greatest 'nuisance value' of the non-core investments because of the political nature of the press. Surprisingly, the Irish investment elicited little debate about the externalisation of control to a foreign investor of a major source of political influence. Researcher Sean Jacobs (1999) commented on the deal: despite this major upheaval in the South African media – which in one fell swoop plunged South Africa into the politics of globalisation and multinational media corporations – there is virtually no serious public debate regarding the influence of foreign press ownership on the nature of political debate in South Africa.

McGregor (1994) contrasted the deal with regulations that prevented more than 20 per cent foreign ownership of a radio licence, but he was the exception in questioning the sale to foreign interests. Instead, political motive was seen by conservative commentators in the mainstream press. Before the democratic elections, the ANC president and soon-to-be first President of the democratic era, Nelson Mandela, had given his blessing to the sale. Tony O'Reilly, INP's CEO, had reportedly become friendly with Deputy President Mbeki and with President Mandela, who had been a guest of the Irish tycoon in the Bahamas. The sale was also seen to be a way of ensuring that in the run-up to the elections the Argus group would support the ANC or even propagandise for it. Martin Williams (1994), writing in the *Witness*, supposed that the new owners would ensure that editors of the Argus newspapers would be favourable to the ANC: '… you can expect Mandela's friend to have his way with the bulk of South Africa's English newspapers. For the ANC it is a brilliant coup.'

But being positively disposed to foreign investment did not mean that President Mandela exempted the Argus in his attack on the press in his 16 December 1997 address to the ANC's 50th National Conference, in which he argued that '… the bulk of the mass media in our country has set itself up as force opposed to the ANC'.

After the initial acquisition, the Irish company quietly added to its interests in the Argus, so that in 1999 it transpired that minority interests only comprised 24 per cent. In April 1999 the Irish holding company bought out the minorities and delisted the company, taking it out of the public spotlight, a move undesirable because transparency of ownership can be considered vital for press freedom.

In the years between 1994 and 1999, the South African arm of the Independent seemed to prove the wisdom of the investment, launching the *Independent on Sunday* as a quality newspaper and the *Business Report* as a focused business insert in all its major titles. The outright acquisition of the local operation meant that INM in Ireland could send back all profits not

deemed necessary for local reinvestment to the parent company. The Media Workers' Association of South Africa (Mwasa) contended in its submission to National Treasury in 2013, in response to the Treasury's 2011 cross-border direct investment document, that possible outflows of almost all profits of around R4.5 billion between 1999 and 2011 have dwarfed the initial investment of an estimated R560 million to R725 million. At the same time, the ownership by INM has seen employee numbers drop from 5 223 in 1994 to around 1 500 in 2013. Mwasa also reckons that between 1997 and 1998 the INM benefited from pension fund holidays, whereby the company was allowed to suspend its contribution to the company pension fund. An estimated R200 million pension fund surplus was repatriated to Ireland from the South African company (Mwasa 2013).

> ## … the bulk of the mass media in our country has set itself up as force opposed to the ANC.

The use of the South African subsidiary as a cash cow for the UK-listed company and the lack of any obvious benefits to the host country caused much resentment. The parent company has been accused of greed. Mwasa (2013) claims that the foreign investment has not resulted in any great technology transfer and that the severe cost-cutting approach of the shareholder, involving massive staff reduction especially after the company was delisted, enabled the Irish company to siphon off billions in profits to the detriment of the local operation. This, it says, has left the quality of the group's newspapers impaired and the circulations of most under pressure, with no viable alternative sources of revenue and an underinvestment in online operations.

FDI is supposed to be more beneficial than small foreign share investments or investments in the bond market. Defined roughly as an investment of more than 10 per cent by a foreign entity in a domestic entity, it is supposed, among other

benefits, to be long term and to transfer know-how and technology. It was ironic that one of the first high-profile foreign direct investments after years of disinvestment was in the media sector which, as National Treasury has pointed out, is among those sectors sometimes considered strategic. A strong argument is to be made that, apart from the launch of the Zulu-language daily *Isolezwe* and a few other products, the investment did not contribute to the diversity of media.

At the ownership level it is undeniable that the Irish owners resisted – for almost two decades – any pressure to introduce black ownership into the group. The zero per cent black ownership of the local company INM South Africa (INMSA) contributed to a situation in which the entire newspaper sub-sector could be accused of minimal transformation at the ownership level, with the zero black ownership of Caxton-CTP not making a defence easier.

However, the sale meant that true competition among the big four newspaper groups became possible, with the cosy ownership and cross-ownership between SAAN and the Argus that characterised the apartheid years a thing of the past. Also, in a market economy the fate of the former Aunty Argus (as the company was fondly called) solid, dependable, dull and trustworthy, showed what might happen when a partisan press was replaced with a profit-driven press. Those who criticised the deal on the grounds that the Argus would become too close to the ANC were wrong: those who saw in O'Reilly an owner who would put profit above all else were right.

With hindsight, the sale to the company controlled by the former Irish football player and baked beans king could be considered a poor move by the Anglo American Corporation, although not in the same league as its support of the decision to close the *Rand Daily Mail.* However, some of the other foreign contenders might well have been worse, and it is not clear who else would have been able to buy the Argus at the time, when South Africa was still struggling to emerge from the insularity of the apartheid economy and the conglomeration that this had aided.

In 2012 it became apparent that the investors in Independent News and Media in Ireland wanted to sell the South African subsidiary, and early in 2013 it was clear that a grouping headed by the black empowerment company Sekunjalo was bidding for the group. Most speculation about the nature of the consortium was put to rest in June 2013 by the executive chairperson of Sekunjalo Investments Ltd, Dr Iqbal Survé, a black empowerment pioneer.

The news that the Irish company was to sell the South African arm was greeted by some INMSA journalists, wearied by years of cost-cutting, and by some observers, with relief. That relief was replaced with disquiet when Survé effectively fired a prominent and independent-minded editor in controversial circumstances. The Sekunjalo chairperson offered two different reasons for the removal of Alide Dasnois from the editorship of the *Cape Times,* first for presiding over a decline in circulation and then for not abiding by a group-level decision to lead the paper with the news of the death of Nelson Mandela, relying instead on a 'wrap-around' addition to the newspaper to carry the news. The real reason, it was surmised, was that Dasnois had chosen to lead the paper with a story critical of Sekunjalo. The firing of Dasnois was followed by the departure of several senior staff members, including award-winning business journalist Ann Crotty, and an attack on senior members of the *Cape Times* news staff by the newly appointed group executive editor Karima Brown and

Vukani Mde, group op-ed and analysis editor in an op-ed piece in the *Cape Times* (Brown 2014). As newspaper commentator Gill Moodie reported at the time, an earlier, unedited version of the piece explicitly mentions Dasnois's decision to lead with the Sekunjalo story.

However, at issue is the original piece sent out by Brown and Mde to the titles [before editing and publication] that makes mention of 'four editors' who decided not to change the front of the *Cape Times* on the night of Mandela's death and 'decided they … would run a story that in their view was damaging to [Survé's company] Sekunjalo, as their own "up-yours" message to Dr Survé (Moodie 2014).

Survé himself assured journalists that editorial independence would be respected and accused rival media organisations of being inspired by fear of competition in their critical reporting of his group and the INMSA acquisition.

Long before the events at the *Cape Times,* Anton Harber, head of journalism at the University of the Witwatersrand, had already expressed concern (with what he described as coyness) about the involvement of an unnamed Chinese consortium, possibly government aligned, in the company.

This was among the details finally announced in a Sekunjalo Independent Media (SIM) press release in June 2013 that revealed that a Sekunjalo-led group of investors had paid Independent News and Media of Ireland R2 billion for the local operation – a considerable disinvestment figure. The statement said that the PIC would own 25 per cent of INMSA after the deal; the rest would be held by the SIM consortium, with 75 per cent. This turned out to be 55 per cent, since a mooted 20 per cent investment by the Chinese consortium Interacom was soon in place. The SIM consortium itself would have two distinct groups of investors: a lead shareholder grouping which would hold 63 per cent of SIM, and 'a number of broad-based value adding partners' which would hold 37 per cent.

The broad-based partners, comprising development trusts and black investors among others, is diverse to say the least, and numerous, in common with many black empowerment transactions of the past. It included politically connected individuals, development trusts, community organisations and a Sekunjalo company. The majority SIM shareholder comprises three groups: 10 per cent is reserved as a special purpose vehicle for employee shares. That means that 53 per cent is shared – in a manner that has not been disclosed – between Sekunjalo Investment Holdings (Pty), an unlisted company controlled by Survé, and three union investment companies: Cosatu investment company Kopano Ke Matlaka, Southern African Clothing and Textile Workers' Union Investments Group (Pty), and the Food & Allied Workers Union's Basebenzi Investments (Pty) (see Diagram 2).

> **In 2012 it became apparent that the investors in Independent News and Media in Ireland wanted to sell the South African subsidiary, and early in 2013 it was clear that a grouping headed by the black empowerment company Sekunjalo was bidding for the group.**

The 25 per cent holding by public-service pensioners was a surprise. Harber noted at the time that the investment did not seem to fit into the mandate of the GEPF:

> 'This is a high-risk, high-price investment in a declining industry – not the kind of thing one normally spends pensioners' money on.'

There is a precedent for the PIC investing in the media though: in November 2013 *Who Owns Whom* recorded the PIC as having a 20 per cent holding in TMG and 11 per cent in Naspers.

Naspers is more than a South African media company however, with a market capitalisation

Diagram 2 - INMSA post Irish disinvestment
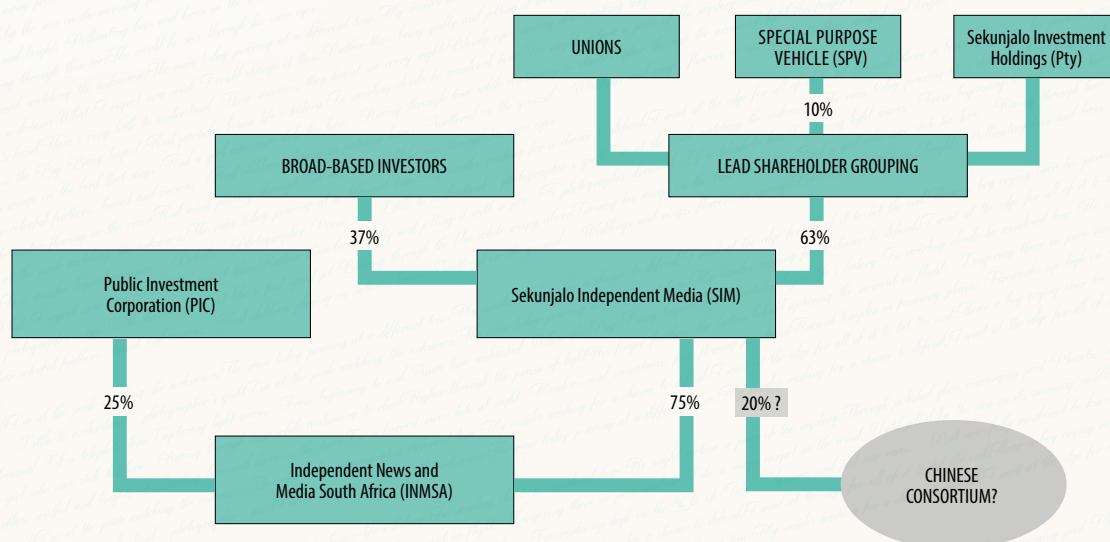
that dwarfs other media companies and an international revenue base. The investment in TMG is equally puzzling, and the PIC does not give reasons for its investments.

INM of Ireland exited with a sizeable sum for a total investment that is unknown but was clearly small in relation to the annual outflows of profit in the period 1999 to 2011 and the final sum paid. If the foreign investment in the Argus did well for the foreign investor, however, this does not necessarily mean that the country as a whole lost out, for investment is not a zero sum game, and it was an important signal to other foreign investors at a time when South Africa was desperate for foreign direct investment after years of disinvestment. Yet the investment by the Irish company is unlikely to be viewed positively, because of the R200 million repatriation of pension money and the belief that the company underinvested in its South African operations while taking billions out to finance the other operations of INM. Other foreign investors have not fared as well. The Financial Times (FT) Group, part of the Pearson group that publishes the *Financial Times* and the *Economist*, bought a 50 per cent stake in two Times Media publications, *Business Day* and the *Financial Mail,* to form the BDFM subsidiary in 1997. In 2013 it was announced that the FT Group had sold its 50 per cent holdings in

BDFM back to TMG for an undisclosed sum. This partnership arrangement gave the Pearson group a strong decision in editorial matters. In the run-up to the 1999 election, the then *Financial Mail* editor, Peter Bruce, backed a rival of the ANC, the United Democratic Movement, led by Bantu Holomisa. Cyril Ramaphosa, the black chairperson of Johnnic, the holding company of TML, was angered by this. Had he wanted to dismiss Bruce, however, the 50 per cent Pearson stake would have made it difficult. The even split of ownership between the foreign owners and TML meant that neither could make a unilateral decision, and Pearson would almost certainly have supported Bruce, who had ties with the company as a former journalist at the *Financial Times*.

Another foreign investment and disinvestment in the first 20 years was the sale (for an undisclosed sum) by the Guardian Media Group of London of 87 per cent of the *Mail & Guardian,* the only major newspaper independent of the big four publishing houses, to Zimbabwe-born regional publisher Trevor Ncube. The investment by the *Guardian* after the failed attempt by the *Weekly Mail* to launch a daily newspaper, the *Daily Mail*, in the early 1990s probably saved the company from collapse, though there was some criticism in London that the Guardian group would have done better to

invest in one of the major media groups. In the end, I surmise that the Guardian is unlikely to have made much on the disinvestment, since the *Mail & Guardian* as a company has struggled to expand beyond its core product, the weekly *Mail and Guardian*.

Another notable example of a venture that did not benefit the foreign investor was the launch in October 2003 of a quality newspaper, *This Day,* by Nigerian media mogul Nduka Obaigbena. The paper closed in October 2004, barely a year after it was launched. Obaigbena was said to have invested millions, the first significant investment from Nigeria into South Africa rather than the reverse, but one that was not to be followed by other big investment inflows from that country. Perceptions are that the paper closed because of poor financial decisions by the owner rather than editorial performance, and the fate of the newspaper illustrated the tough environment for any new entrant into the print media, especially in the light of cosy printing and distribution arrangements between the incumbent print groups. The pity of the failure is that a genuine pan-African media investment faced such an unfriendly welcome. The other pan-African media investment, by Trevor Ncube, was a newspaper that, though not belonging to the big four publishers, was already established.

FDI has been associated with new investment in news media, including print. In 2010 the Gupta family, said to be close to President Zuma, launched a newspaper called *The New Age,* harking back to the brave alternative publication of the 1950s. The financing details were unclear, but foreign money was involved since the Gupta family are from India. The same family has launched the Africa News Network (ANN7) news channel on the DStv platform to compete with the other two general news channels run by e-tv and SABC. Even the vaunted 'bringing home' of the Independent newspaper group was made possible by a Chinese group, Interacom Investment Holding, comprising China International Television Corporation and the China-Africa Development Fund, buying 20 per cent of the company.

Foreign investment is neither good nor bad in itself, even in a sensitive area such as the news media. What it has done, in an area which is not a natural magnet for high levels of local investment, is supply capital to enable a change in the media landscape. The purchase of the Argus group by Independent Newspapers of Ireland was probably necessary because at the time conglomerate ownership was so concentrated that selling the newspaper group to a domestic investor would only have meant changing ownership from one conglomerate to another. The *Mail & Guardian* newspaper, the only major newspaper independent of the big four groups, exists because the London-based Guardian group invested money at a time when the *Weekly Mail* desperately needed capital. *This Day* failed, but it could have been yet another independent voice. *The New Age,* which hopes to support news values that differ from the mainstream, would not exist without foreign capital. Even new entrants to TV, such as DStv challenger Top TV, have foreign investment.

Black economic empowerment (BEE), regulation and corporate restructuring

Whether the sale by the Guardian group counts as black empowerment is debatable, since black empowerment was clearly meant to benefit those 'previously disadvantaged' by apartheid. Nonetheless, Ncube is the only visibly African media mogul, and stands out among his white peers.

The company most associated with the phenomenon of black economic empowerment is the Times Media Group. Known in 1994 as Times Media Limited, it was, like the Argus group, controlled by Anglo American through Johannesburg Consolidated Investments Ltd, a mining company that controlled or part-owned a grab-bag of interests, including shares in SA Breweries and Toyota.

This was an era where conglomerates were becoming unpopular because they tended to trade at discount to the underlying assets. In other words, the value of all the assets of the diverse companies that made up the conglomerates was higher, lumped together, than investors on the stock exchange were prepared to pay for the shares of the conglomerate. This meant that unbundling, whereby companies passed shares in the companies held by conglomerates directly to the shareholders of those conglomerates, could at a stroke unlock the value in those underlying companies.

Anglo American took the first steps to de-conglomerate, and Johnnic was seen as a handy vehicle for Anglo American to show, in a concrete way, its support for the new democratic dispensation that embraced BEE. In the minds of Anglo executives, this deal was probably intended to mimic the sale of a controlling stake in General Mining Corporation by Anglo to Afrikaner interests in 1964 so as to establish Afrikaner participation in the mining industry. This was to be the platform for creating the Afrikaner mining company Gencor which was to play a key role in Afrikaner empowerment.

Anglo American first divested Johannesburg Consolidated Invested Ltd (or 'Johnnies' as it was known) of the *Argus* and the *Sowetan* newspaper in 1993. These ended up in the stable of the New African Investment Ltd (Nail) group founded by Dr Nthato Motlana. Anglo then split the original JCI into three separate entities, and set about finding black empowerment investors for two of the three entities, Johnnic and JCI Ltd. JCI Ltd focused on mining, while Johnnic contained many of Anglo's industrial holdings, along with Times Media Ltd. JCI Ltd was sold to a consortium headed by Mzi Khumalo, while most of Anglo's holding in Johnnic was sold to a broad consortium of black investors, which included Nail, in two stages, starting with 20 per cent in a highly publicised deal in 1996.

The new BEE-headed Johnnic was an unfocused investment conglomerate, controlled by a group, the National Empowerment Consortium, itself too diverse to be decisive about the direction of the company. What happened to Johnnic proved

to be symptomatic of much BEE at the time: rather than focus on building a black version of Sanlam or Gencor, Johnnic itself was unbundled, sold off and restructured in a seemingly endless process in the years that followed, as investors (including the BEE investors) sought to extract monetary value. The stakes in Toyota and South African Breweries were sold off and, crucially, a valuable stake in cellphone service provider MTN was spun off. Over time, holding company Johnnic faded away and TML, renamed Avusa and then more recently TMG, became a 'pure media play', meaning that it was focused on newspapers, books and film. The restructuring continued until the remaining valuable assets that might have cross-subsidised the print media arm, the 50 per cent holding in M-Net/Supersport, were split off to leave a much leaner and smaller entity that was renamed TMG.

The question that is often asked, with an implicit expectation of the answer 'no' is: has BEE or BBBEE in the print sector made a difference?

The fate of TMG can be contrasted with that of Naspers, which went in the opposite direction, building on its MNet stake and diversifying into new media in the form of Internet service provision as well as internationalising its operations. At the time of writing, Naspers had a market capitalisation (the number of its shares multiplied by its share price) of almost R500 billion whereas TMG had a market capitalisation of under R3 billion. Naspers's media interests are housed in a separate company, Media24.

With the restructuring of Johnnic, the 35 per cent BBBEE stake in Johnnic was replaced by an investment by Tokyo Sexwale's Mvelaphanda Group in TML, maintaining the company's BEE ownership status. This was followed by the acquisition of the Universal Hirt & Carter group boosting the BEE holding to around 50 per cent and making Avusa by far the most 'empowered' of the big four print groups at the time. This was especially the case since two groups,

Caxton-CTP and INMSA, had zero, and Naspers has kept its BEE percentage at 15 per cent for some time. The Mvelaphanda group sold its stake and the controlling shareholder became the Blackstar private equity company in 2012 when it bought 28 per cent of Avusa.

Motlana's Nail had been part of the original NEC that bought a controlling stake in Johnnic, and it had bought the *Sowetan* in the early days of empowerment, but Nail had used its original stake in Metropolitan Life to become a serial dealmaker, disposing of a valuable stake in MTN along the way, and only when the founder and his long-time associate were ejected from the company in May 1999 (in an apparent shareholder revolt) did the company split into a financial services New Africa Capital company and a focused media company New Africa Media, which shortly retook the name Nail. Nail, under the leadership of BEE businessperson Saki Macozoma, wanted through acquisition (particularly in the broadcasting arena) to create a media company weighty enough to make a difference, and made a bid of R377m for the assets of the successful BEE group Kagiso Media. According to a report in *The Star* in January 2002, Nail controlled the Cape-based Kfm and had a 37 per cent stake in Radio Jacaranda in Gauteng, around 25 per cent of Johannesburg-based Kaya FM, while Kagiso held 43 per cent of Radio Jacaranda, 90 per cent of KwaZulu-Natal's East Coast Radio, and a minority stake in Free State radio station OFM. Nail also had, in addition to 100 per cent of the *Sowetan,* a controlling stake in the *Sunday World,* and other media interests. Nail's ambitions to become a major media group, however, came to naught. Icasa put paid to its ambitions in January 2002 by disallowing its purchase of the assets of Kagiso Media.

Had Icasa granted its approval, Nail would have acquired a controlling interest in East Coast Radio in addition to the controlling interests it already had in the Jacaranda and Cape Town-based KFM radio stations – but Section 49 of the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) Act, 1993 (Act 153 of 1993) provided that one company may not own more than two FM radio stations, and Icasa refused to grant

Nail an exemption from this prohibition. Icasa also viewed the black ownership of Nail (less than 5 per cent) with concern because Nail was seeking to take over Kagiso Media, which had a higher percentage of black ownership. Icasa felt the deal would have diluted the empowerment status of Kagiso Media. The decision was the death blow for what remained of Nail, whose assets were gradually sold off. The company continued to linger for a while as a shell on the JSE Securities Exchange.

It is ironic that regulations preventing concentration in the broadcasting arena would crush a possible black-led challenger to the big four, and an illustration of the unintended consequences of legislation. The mainstream groups had grown in an environment of little regulation of ownership but harsh regulation of content: the reverse of this situation prevented the growth of a major BEE media group.

That was not the only reason, however, for a failure of the black-owned press to flourish in the 20 years. In general, black companies such as National Sorghum Breweries found, early on in the new era, that patriotism had little effect on black consumers. As democracy took hold it became clear that, with the exception of the Afrikaans press, concentrated in the hands of Naspers, itself now more infused with capitalism than Afrikaner patriotism, newspapers could not easily be considered black or white. A good example is the *Sunday Times*, for many years South Africa's biggest circulation weekend newspaper. According to the 2013 financial results, Times Media's flagship *Sunday Times* has seen black readership grow from 50 per cent in 1992, to 76 per cent in 2002, and to 85 per cent in 2012.

Moreover, print media incumbents were in a strong position to repel invaders of their territory, because of the capital requirements of running newspapers and magazines, including printing costs. Some companies such as Media24 were vertically integrated, with their own printing presses, and others were party to distribution arrangements. Breaking into this closed world, as the *Weekly Mail* was to experience, was no easy task.

The question that is often asked, with an implicit expectation of the answer 'no' is: has BEE or BBBEE in the print sector made a difference? Looking at Table 2, I would say that this answer is simplistic. BEE has changed both the ownership and the employment equity of the big groups, as the BEE levels, measured in terms of the BBEE Codes scorecards, indicate. Now only one group, Caxton, has no black ownership. It is effectively a one-man show, with the quiet media baron Terry Moolman controlling the company (although the controlling share is referred to as the Moolman-Coburn partnership, Moolman's long-time partner Noel Coburn is very much in the background).

Table 2: Listed print media groups					
	Turnover	Market capitalisation	Major shareholders	BEE ownership %	BEE level
R-million					
TMG	R3 899	R2 684	Blackstar, PIC	55.64 %	4
INMSA	N/A	N/A	BEE and Chinese Consortia, PIC	Estimated 55 %	N/A
Media24	R7 970	N/A	Naspers Ltd	44.74 %	4
Caxton	R5 984	R8 337	Caxton Ltd, Element One	0 %	5

Source: Who Owns Whom, Sharedata, author's own calculations

Caxton has stepped out of the shadows of the Argus/Independent and TML to become a powerful print media operation, focusing on printing and advertising-heavy free 'community' newspapers. It also owns the *Citizen,* a newspaper that resembles the *Sowetan* in having changed ownership twice during the first 20 years of democracy. At one stage during the restructuring of Johnnic, owner of TML, it seemed that Caxton, in which Johnnic then held around 43 per cent, might take over TML.

The *Sowetan* went from the Argus company to Nail to TMG. The *Citizen,* born out of the illegal and secret apartheid 'total onslaught' against the English-language press, became part of the portfolio of Kagiso Publishing, a subsidiary of Kagiso Trust Investments (KTI), in 1997, when Perskor merged with Kagiso Publishing to give KTI a 15 per cent joint-control stake in the company that published the *Citizen* and had 50 per cent of *Rapport*. In 1998, Caxton bought Perskor, and acquired control of the Citizen, along with the 50 per cent of *Rapport* which it sold in February 1999 to joint owner Naspers. According to a report in the *Citizen* at the time, Caxton also gained '23 regional newspaper titles, 13 consumer magazines through subsidiary Republican Press' and 'electronic media

investments in MNet, MIH Holdings and M-Cell' (*The Citizen*, 1997). Perskor was involved in the manufacture of ink and speciality printing for envelopes, cheques, business forms and exercise books, and educational material. The deal enabled Caxton, or more correctly Caxton and CTP Publishers and Printers Ltd, to expand its regional newspaper reach substantially. According to *Who Owns Whom,* the company now has around 170 newspaper titles, excluding *The Citizen*, which is the company's only major metropolitan newspaper.

At the end of 2013, a R2.3-billion bid was made for the untraded listed company ElementOne. Trade in the company's shares on the JSE was stopped in 2009. ElementOne is a leftover from the days of print media company cross-holdings, spun off in a restructuring that saw Johncom sell its stake in M-Net/SuperSport to Naspers to become separated into the publishing arm Avusa and ElementOne, which held some cash as well as a 40 per cent stake in Caxton. Legal disputes prevented shareholders selling their stakes in ElementOne. The bid meant, according to newspaper reports, that Terry Moolman would entrench his control of Caxton.

During the buying and selling and unbundling that characterised the years after 1994, and which saw the end of Perskor, its long-time rival in the Afrikaans newspaper market, Naspers, focused its attention on the electronic media. All the while it maintained and strengthened its position in the Afrikaans print media through wholly owned subsidiary Media24 by acquiring in February 1999 the 50 per cent it did not already own in the Afrikaans Sunday newspaper *Rapport* from Caxton after its acquisition of Perskor. It also grew its printing interests so that it is, with Caxton, one of the biggest printers as well as publishers.

Media24 launched a successful South African tabloid paper, the *Daily Sun*, which is still the biggest daily newspaper in terms of circulation although its circulation has declined (along with that of most newspapers) from previous highs. In May 2012, the Competition Commission approved the acquisition by Naspers subsidiary Media24 Ltd and Paarl Coldset (Pty) Ltd of the 50 per cent of the Witness Printing and Publishing Company (Pty) Ltd, taking Media24's shareholding to 100 per cent, and ending the independence of the newspaper that was for a long time the only substantial publication not in the hands of the big four.

In 2006, Naspers launched broad-based 'retail' BEE schemes, Phuthuma Nathi and Welkom Yizani, aimed at enabling a large number of black South Africans to have shares rather than high-profile, politically connected individuals. The 2006 launch of Media24's Welkom Yizani retail offering gave black individuals and groups 15 per cent of Media24 Holdings. Naspers boasts that largely through the Phuthuma Nathi share schemes more than 100 000 black South African individuals and groups own shares in MultiChoice South Africa. The broad-based approach means that there is no single large BEE shareholder who might

want to influence company direction (though most BEE shareholders have tended to be passive investors). The PIC, which represents government pension funds, is, with 11 per cent, the biggest single shareholder in Naspers, which can be regarded as controlled by management, particularly the chief executive, Koos Bekker. According to a report in the *Mail & Guardian* in August 2013, Bekker, who is compensated only in shares and not a salary, controls 'almost 4 per cent of Naspers through a combination of 11.7 million share options he holds directly and a 1.1 per cent stake held by a family trust'. Outside of the big four groups, there has been an explosion of 'business-to-business' publications,

Satellite TV has offered greater diversity, but not much transformation of media content. Digital Terrestrial Television will provide more channels of communication and could open this up to the poor

with OMD research noting a doubling in growth, to around 650, from 1991 to October 2013. This includes specialist trade magazines, but also publications such as *Engineering News,* a family-owned publication and an important source of news about the real economy. Many, if not all, are independent of the big four groups and include magazines such as the SA Institute of Chartered Accountants official journal; and there is little black ownership, other than that of Mafube Publishing, founded by black media pioneer Thami Mazwai.

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Broadcasting, BEE and the private sector

The Naspers focus on electronic media took two approaches: pay-TV and Internet services. Both have paid off well, transforming the staid company into a dynamic multinational, taking advantage of South Africa's new acceptability after 1994 to invest first in Africa and then in the rest of the world.

The pay-TV operation, MIH Holdings Ltd, had its origins in M-Net, or Electronic Media Network, the pay-TV channel formed in 1985 to offset the siphoning of ad revenues from print to TV for the dominant four print groups at the time. M-Net, listed on the JSE Securities Exchange in 1990, owed its success to its ability to persuade South Africans to pay to add to their TV viewing, restricted for many years to three SABC channels. In October 1993, M-Net was divided into two companies. The channel remained M-Net. The subscriber management, signal distribution and cellular telephone businesses, together with a holding in European pay-TV operator FilmNet, were subsumed in a new company called MultiChoice Ltd, later named MIH Holdings Ltd. In December 2002, Naspers unbundled MIH, so the minority interests in MIH Holdings and MIH Limited were swapped for shares in Naspers itself, leaving Naspers as the sole shareholder. M-Net/Supersport was delisted and consolidated under Naspers in 2004, and is now majority owned by Naspers.

Naspers also developed its educational services arm, forming, in January 2000, Educor Holdings Limited. It went into Internet service provision with the launch of M-Web in 1997, but its acquisition of a 47 per cent interest in May 2001 in Tencent Holdings Ltd, the operator of what has become the leading instant messaging platform in China (called QQ), has been enormously profitable for the group. The investment has been described by Bekker himself, along with other investments in emerging markets before the 2009 financial crisis, as 'pure luck'. Naspers strategy means that in the media sector it far outstrips other groups, with a market capitalisation of R368 billion.

The significance of Naspers's early move into pay TV, distributed by satellite through decoders (unlike in the US where cable companies are the medium), is that it has enormously broadened the diversity of news and entertainment. The South African authorities, which moved speedily to privatise some SABC radio stations and license new ones, have not even considered a new free-to-air station after licensing the only private commercial TV operator, e-tv. In the interim, aspiring broadcasters such as Summit TV, now rebranded as Business Day TV, and ANN7 have had to use the MIH platform and its decoders. Naspers's MIH subsidiary is entrenched in this area, having been allowed to grow quietly in the background while commercial free-to-air TV has stagnated.

A big winner of the lack of movement has been e-tv. Midi Television, in which US-based Warner Brothers had a 12 per cent stake, was granted a licence for the new free-to-air private television channel in April 1998. Midi TV originally contained a host of small empowerment entities, along with a holding by Sabido, the investment vehicle of the empowerment investment holding company HCI Ltd. In 1999, Midi applied to the broadcasting regulator to restructure its shareholding structure so that the entire South African shareholding of around 80 per cent was placed into HCI's wholly owned subsidiary Sabido Investments, since the smaller shareholders had forfeited their shares by failing to meet their funding obligations. The growth of e-tv involved not only foreign investment and BEE but also Afrikaner capital. In 2000 the Rembrandt Group was reported to be about to acquire an estimated 26 per cent stake in Midi TV for around R300-million.

In broadcasting generally, government regulation has been the key driver of ownership changes. The IBA, later to be merged with the telecoms regulator and renamed Icasa, was established in 1994, with sweeping powers. One of the first steps of the IBA, to create diversity in broadcast media, was, according to the National Association of Broadcasters, to spur community radio.

From 1994 the IBA processed hundreds of community radio licence applications from diverse groups and sectors of South African society.

Over 100 community sound services exist and although the sector has struggled to access advertising and other forms of financing it is recognised as being a crucial part of the South African broadcasting landscape – in providing diversity for listeners and much needed skills for the commercial radio sector (NAB 2014).

The IBA, in line with the authority's *1995 Triple Inquiry Report*, recommended that the SABC privatise its six regional radio stations (Highveld, Jacaranda, Kfm, East Coast, Algoa and Oranje), and this was approved by Parliament. On top of this, in early 1997 the IBA started to hold hearings for new 'greenfield' commercial radio licences. The former SABC stations, since they had already carved out parts of the market, were easy to profit from. The greenfields stations required capital, and this meant that smaller bidders such as empowerment companies would have to raise debt.

Broadcasting, however, offered an easier transformation path than the print sector because the capital requirements were not great and the dominance of the airwaves by the SABC until privatisation and issuing of new licenses had kept the radio arena under-traded. For a newspaper or magazine, every extra reader costs money: for a broadcaster, every extra listener is free. Producing a newspaper or magazine incurs substantial printing and distribution costs for each copy. Radio stations, which are less capital intensive, could be easily turned around and made profitable. Hence the new BEE owners of radio stations could quickly pay off debt and be in the black. The opening up of the airwaves enabled the creation of an entirely new and profitable listed media company, Kagiso Media, and the growth of Primedia as well as other small aspirants such as Union Alliance Media (which was later dissolved) and African Media Entertainment (AME) (which survived some trying times to remain listed on the JSE). AME has majority stakes in Free State-based OFM and Radio Algoa. Interestingly, the

Moolman and Coburn partnership owns 25 per cent of the company.

Alternative media, the Internet and community newspapers

One of the things the new democracy grappled with was the lack of a diversity of voices in the media. Part of the solution to that problem was racial transformation of ownership although black owners are as likely to be distracted from social responsibility desires by the need to profit from their ownership as are white owners. The commercial motive can lead to what media commentator Jane Duncan has called the 'hotelling effect' or race to the bottom of many different media enterprises imitating each other in chasing the same audience. The experience of the alternative media, where in the years after 1994 almost the only survivor of the feisty newspapers that came onto the scene in the mid-1980s was the *Weekly Mail* (in the form of the *Mail & Guardian),* was telling. Though it was formed with a political purpose, the *Weekly Mail* was structured as a company rather than a nonprofit organisation. The other alternative newspapers, heavily dependent on funding, did not make the transition into mainstream media to survive in the new era.

The growth in numbers of community media, in both broadcasting and print, is startling, although there is a big difference between community-owned newspapers and regional 'knock and drops' owned by one of the big four. Commercial community media has its place in hyper-local news, but it is not what is envisaged when talking about media diversity. Community radio was an early winner of the new era, and to this was added, in 2007, the first community TV licence, granted to Soweto TV. OMD records almost 500 community or local newspapers or magazines including local newspapers owned by Caxton and INMSA. The MDDA reports that the Association of Independent Publishers (AIP) represents 230 small, community-based, grassroots publishers around South Africa

producing 3.2 million newspapers a year. There are around 165 community radio stations, and a handful of community TV stations.

Community broadcasting and publishing is differentiated from commercial by the nature of ownership and the profit motive. But when a community radio or TV station becomes extremely successful, and raises revenue through advertising that more than covers costs, how and to whom should that money be distributed? The Deputy Minister of Communications, Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams, expressed concern at the commercial nature of some community TV stations in 2013, and threatened to take back licences. She was also reported to have said that community TV should be better regulated than community radio stations.

This investment should be protected and safeguarded by a strong governance model instead of the fluid one prevalent in the community radio environment currently,

she was quoted as saying (Mungadze 2013), suggesting that some community radio stations have also adopted a commercial model.

Satellite TV has offered greater diversity, but not much transformation of media content and has been in effect a monopoly industry until fairly recently. The dominance of DStv, provided through the MultiChoice platform, was presented with a potential challenger in the form of four new licensed pay-TV providers, among them Telkom Media, the majority stake in which Telkom was forced to dispose of to the Chinese Shenzen Media group after not making any headway in launching the channel. DStv has had years in which to entrench itself and its set-top decoder boxes. New competition from free satellite-to-home TV providers has arrived, with Freevision, owned by Sentech, and Openview, owned by e-tv's sister company Platco Digital, both offering one-off payments for decoder boxes and no subsequent subscription payment for receiving their broadcasts.

It does not auger well for the fate of Top TV, the first competitor for MultiChoice. Top TV was launched in 2010 by On-Digital Media, but the channel failed to catch on. On-Digital Media was reportedly taken over by China's StarTimes TV conglomerate and relaunched as StarSat in 2013.

One new and promising area of diversity-enabling media is that of web-based news publications on the Internet. Again, capital requirements for a start-up are not huge, as no presses, or even studios, are necessarily involved, but news is labour-intensive. There have been a few attempts at starting web-based news products, the longest lasting being the independently owned *Daily Maverick.* Moneyweb, a business-based website that was ahead of its time, has been taken into the Caxton stable.

Although the independent *Mail & Guardian* pioneered using the Internet to publish news, the big four news companies have now established a strong presence. According to Politicsweb in September 2013, data showed that measured by unique browsers Media24 had by far the largest online readership of the big newspaper houses. 'Its websites – excluding those of its magazine division, which are recorded separately – were visited by an average of just over half a million Unique Browsers a day in July 2013. The Times Media Group websites had the next largest following, followed by Independent News and Media South Africa, then the Mail & Guardian and then Caxton' (Politicsweb 2013).

Conclusion

It is tempting to quote the author of the Italian novel, *The Leopard:* 'Everything must change, so that nothing can change.' But it would be too cynical.

There has, in one sense, been a massive reshaping of the ownership of the sector, in both the mature markets of the print media and in broadcasting. In another sense, not that much has changed, since four big groups still control the print media even though Naspers, through Media24, has outstripped its peers of 1994. There has been a concentration of ownership as well as streamlining of ownership – and the previously independent Natal Witness ending up

owned by one of the big four groups is symbolic. Entering the market is not easy, as shown by the failure of the Nigerian investment *This Day* – which also underlined that the restructuring of the print media has been associated with and driven by foreign investment as much as by BEE, with both negative and positive consequences. Yet the barriers to entry are not so high that new entrants do not take the chance, especially in times of optimism and prosperity. Moreover, some academic research suggests that South Africa may have the right number of big media firms for its population.

Ownership has definitely moved out of the old corporate conglomerate mould that shaped the sector for so many years. A mark of this is the entry of new media moguls, individuals who stand out in directing media companies, such as HCI's Marcel Golding and Johnny Copelyn, Caxton's Terry Moolman (publicity-shy though he may be), Naspers's Koos Bekker, *Mail & Guardian's* owner Trevor Ncube and, lately, INMSA's Iqbal Survé.

In broadcasting, despite massive changes in the regulatory environment, a big push for diversity and BEE, the SABC still dominates the airwaves. In ethnic-language radio it owns Ukhozi FM, and all the other ethnic language stations; the private sector has shown little interest in this market, making it a public service. More pertinently, while regional stations were privatised in the 1990s, the SABC owns all the national radio stations such as Metro FM and 5FM. Ukhozi FM has 20 per cent and Metro FM (also owned by the SABC) has around 18 per cent of the total adult radio listenership. The five national SABC stations and Ukhozi together account for more than half of all adult listenership.

In TV, no new commercial free-to-air terrestrial channel has been licensed to compete with the SABC, and only recently have competitors to DStv or SABC-TV been licensed – without, so far, much noticeable impact on DStv's dominance of satellite TV. The private sector has, on DStv, filled the vacuum created by the failure to liberalise the free-to-air TV sector, creating new demand by offering dozens of channels, specialising in sport, entertainment and news, and including foreign news offerings. The popularity of satellite TV can be witnessed by the proliferation of satellite TV dishes even in relatively poor areas, and the figures bear out the growth, with Naspers's annual report for the year ending March 2013 announcing that subscriber numbers had grown to around 4.5-million.

The private sector has provided – at a price – a greater range of media through satellite TV where the public sector could not do so through free-to-air TV. However, the increase in diversity is limited, with many channels offering entertainment rather than education. More importantly, the market mechanism still fails to provide ethnic-language radio challengers to SABC radio stations. In the print arena apart from two isiZulu language newspapers, INMSA's daily *Isolezwe* and the independent biweekly *Ilanga*, South African non-English and non-Afrikaans speakers are not well served.

We should be cautious about seeing media in isolation, and expecting swift and dramatic change in this sector when there has been little rapid change in the economy as a whole. Although South Africans are better off than they were under apartheid, persistent income inequality, unemployment, and positive but low rates of annual economic growth still bedevil the ability of the country to improve the lot of millions. In this environment it is unrealistic to expect massive change in the media. As the UK academic Clive Barnett has noted, 'One should be wary of an overly media-centric view of the determinants of the democratisation of the media in particular, or of democratisation in South Africa in general' (Barnett 1999).

South African media also stands on the edge of tremendous change. With the growth of broadband Internet access, middle-class South Africans already have the choice of a wide variety of news and opinions. The introduction of digital terrestrial TV and the growth of mobile data (both of which are beyond the scope of this chapter) will provide more channels of communication, even for the poor. Community hyper-local media stands to gain from the decline in traditional national and regional newspapers. The big lesson to

be learned from the advent of democracy and the end of apartheid isolationism is that South Africa tracks the developed world in economic terms, and will not escape global media trends – in media ownership as in other areas.

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Who Owns Whom was established in 1980 by the late Robin McGregor who first identified the concentration of economic control in the 1980s which was largely voluntarily unbundled – largely voluntarily – in the 1990s. Today the Who Owns Whom file identifies 16 000 company ownership linkages and more than 30 000 cross-directorships across 300 industries in South Africa. Parts of the source material for the chapter on media ownership in the last 20 years was made available from Who Owns Whom.

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Indigenous languages and South Africa's media environment

Cyril Madlala

Cyril Madlala *was head of the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government Communication from 2009 to 2014. He established the weekly isiZulu government newspaper,* Simama KZN, *which is distributed throughout the province as an insert in* Ilanga *and* Isolezwe*. He has served previously as Editorial Director:* The Natal Witness *Printing and Publishing Company; Editor and Publisher:* UmAfrika *newspaper; Editor:* The Independent *on* Saturday *and as parliamentary and political correspondent for the* Sunday Times*.*

Introduction and context

It was the founding father of South African democracy, former President Nelson Mandela, who observed: 'If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language that goes to his heart.'

The broadening of the media horizon with the advent of democracy in our country has presented further layers of growth opportunities for the industry. The birth (and demise) of several new communications platforms testifies to the vibrancy of the market. Investors with deep pockets have ventured into initiatives as bold as the establishment of a brand new media house and the buying out of foreign-owned entity.

The New Age Media Ltd, owned by the Gupta family with strong ties to the ANC government, launched its first publication, the *New Age*, in 2010. This was followed in 2013 by a satellite news channel, Africa News Network (ANN7). The *New Age* is a national English daily that seeks not only to survive, but to thrive where the traditional powerhouses are gasping for breath amid declining circulations and plummeting profits.

ANN7 is South Africa's third 24-hour news channel. It broadcasts on MultiChoice's DStv satellite television service and covers segments ranging from politics, to business, sports and entertainment news. The political connection between The New Age Media Ltd and the ruling African National Congress has resulted in a partnership with government departments and state-owned entities that ensures a steady revenue stream, with 'sold for copies' totaling nearly 50 000[6] according to executive at the New Age. Advertising space, in December 2012 and January 2013 was bought largely by parastatals (48 per cent), other government departments (28 per cent), the private sector (17 per cent) and the Gupta family companies (10 per cent).[7]

If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language that goes to his heart.

Table 1: SA Newspaper Circulation (2012)[5]

Newspaper	Drop in circulation figures (2012)		Percentage drop
Rapport	220 494	183 187	16.9 %
Sunday Times	451 676	420 066	7%
City Press	135 148	121 137	10.4%
Saturday Beeld	69 109	59 690	13.6%
Daily Sun	336 319	291 132	13.5%
The Star	105 686	100 805	4.6%

Most newspapers have recorded a dramatic drop in circulation over the past few years. Research has shown that readers are hungry for news written in indigenous languages though – and some, such as *Isolezwe,* have recorded circulation increases.

The jury is out on the long-term sustainability of the business model.

Another major transaction in the media industry, the purchase of Independent News & Media SA by Sekunjalo Independent Media Consortium has restored to South Africans ownership of a large media house that was previously foreign owned. Independent Newspapers was already operating in the indigenous language market through the high flying *Isolezwe* offering, and this newspaper has been retained.

The pre-1994 South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) was a tool brazenly used to perpetuate apartheid ideology, as was evident from programming designed to promote ethnicity and tribalism through stations such as the then Radio Zulu and Radio Xhosa. Commentary on current affairs, often echoing the views of the Nationalist Party, was the mandatory staple diet for the national broadcaster's indigenous language radio stations. This explains why the SABC's radio and television news pre-1994 was received with scepticism by pro-democracy forces, who relied primarily on alternative voices such as Capital Radio and Channel 702.

Twenty years into our democracy, the airwaves have been liberated. The number of radio stations has grown substantially. In 2013, there were 18 radio stations run by the SABC and 17 commercial stations (this excludes community radio, where over 160 stations have been licensed).[8] More and more new entrants, such as Power FM in Gauteng and Vuma FM in

Language diversity is most successful within the broadcast environment, with stations broadcasting in all eleven official languages to the nine provinces.

KwaZulu-Natal, continue to emerge, further diluting the influence of the SABC. Language diversity is most successful within the broadcast environment, with stations broadcasting in all eleven official languages to the nine provinces. SABC TV has also seen major change – with TV channels expanding from seven in December 1991, to 180 by December 2012.[9] TV stations have also grown, with e-tv being launched in 1998 as a national free-to-air broadcaster, MultiChoice launching a new digital satellite service, and four more subscription services

being awarded licences by Icasa in 2007 (although not all have been launched). The spectacular success within the broadcast environment has opened up additional platforms to air indigenous language movies, soapies and documentaries, but funding remains a challenge

Advances in technology have also enhanced communication methods. Cellular telephony is as much of the rich and educated South African's daily life as it is of the poor subsistence woman farmer in the remote village. The playing field remains uneven, however, as the cost to communicate is high.

As the gap between the rich and the poor widens in South Africa, these advances in technology do not necessarily translate into universal access for all. While the democratic government did much to try and narrow the gap through the

setting up of the Universal Service and Access Agency of South Africa, this agency has been mired in controversy amid allegations of fraud and maladministration when it should have dedicated its energies to fulfilling the mandate to ensure that every South African has universal access to broadband by 2020.

Advances in technology have also enhanced communication methods.

While levels of success may fluctuate, what is beyond doubt is that after 20 years of freedom there is a multiplicity of voices in the media. While the voices of wealthy urban dwellers are more numerous, many more platforms exist for poor rural people to interact with, and as the number of media platforms continues to rise it is important to pause and reflect on whether the vast majority of South Africans who only feel comfortable when communicating in indigenous languages are being carried along. Are the messages that are finding expression in the many new voices in the media going to the heads or hearts of South Africans? Government might be shouting from the rooftops about the better life it has created but what matters is whether these messages are finding their way into the hearts of those who, prior to 1994, had every reason to be deeply sceptical of messages about and by the government. All this growth notwithstanding, until all languages are reflected equitably on all platforms we can hardly talk of the kind of diversity that would be embraced by all citizens.

This chapter will consider the use of indigenous languages in the South African media, with a particular focus on the print and broadcast sectors of the media industry, more especially those in KwaZulu-Natal. In addition, the chapter will explore what government is doing, and can do, to support and ensure the survival of indigenous languages.

Indigenous languages, government and media plans

Community members speak to each other in a language they understand. According to Census 2011, isiZulu is the most common home language, spoken by 20 per cent of South Africans, followed by isiXhosa at 16 per cent, whereas English and Setswana tie at 8.2 per cent each.

The last census showed that English is the first language for an increasing number of South Africans (a one-million people increase), although this constitutes only 9.6 per cent of the population. As integration takes root in the new South Africa and the doors to decent education open up for black African children, proficiency in the English language seems to be the desired outcome by most parents, which explains the upsurge in the numbers of English speakers as reflected in the latest census. So-called 'Model C' accents, accompanied by disdain for the vernacular, are increasingly becoming defining features of those born after the dawn of freedom.

The abandonment of vernacular languages is confirmed by the *South Africa Survey,* published by the South African Institute of Race Relations, which has noted that the number of public single-medium African language schools has declined since 2008, from 7.2 per cent of all single-medium schools to 4.6 per cent in 2012. Of all the official African languages used as a medium of instruction in single-medium schools, only isiXhosa saw an increase in the number of schools, from 278 in 2008 to 317 in 2012. The report points out, however, that isiXhosa single medium schools accounted for only three per cent of all such schools. The usage of isiZulu had, for the same period, declined from 188 to 85 schools, meaning that isiZulu single-medium schools accounted for

According to Census 2011, isiZulu is the most common home language, spoken by 20 per cent of South Africans.

only 0.8 per cent of all single-medium schools in 2012. Significantly, English is the preferred language for 81 per cent of all public single-medium schools.

Releasing the findings in March 2014, Institute of Race Relations researcher Thuthukani Ndebele observed that: 'Most pupils learn in an African language at foundation phase, but switch to either English or Afrikaans as early as Grade 4. The decline in the use of African languages in schools is evidently not a choice made at tertiary level, but is exercised by parents and pupils at the early schooling stages.'

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Our languages are in trouble.

Unabashedly alienated from their traditional roots, the new generation of African children increasingly can hardly read the mother tongue and are not inclined to learn to write properly in isiZulu, Sepedi or Setswana. There seems to be a perception that the mother tongue is backward – that it is not a language of commerce and of the digital global village.

Mandla Langa, an author/poet and media expert[10] in an address to the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) in 2014 further emphasised this: Our languages are in trouble. You just have to listen to certain radio stations – we used to call them jukeboxes in the past – that present an aesthetic that's so remote from the lives and loves of our people. The disc jockeys – because I cannot call them anything else – outdo one another in aping pseudo-African-American accents or gangsta slang. They have no idea of the struggles of those self-same Americans to preserve their African roots after being kidnapped and sold off as slaves in the plantations. Malcolm X has commented

on the basis of spirituals like "I couldn't hear nobody pray."[11]

It is not only in South Africa that indigenous languages are not being properly passed on to the younger generation in schools and homes. Professor Chinyere Ohiri-Aniche, the president of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria has lamented that research pointed to an average 25 per cent of children below 11 years who were unable to converse in their parents' mother tongue.

The Vanguard of Nigeria reported in February 2014 that Professor Ohiri-Aniche had told the Unesco Mother Language Day Celebration in Abuja that research projected that in two to three generations Nigeria's 400 indigenous languages would be extinct. Some were already dead and forgotten, while another 152 were on the brink of extinction. The solution being proposed there is similar to the South African government approach: every child should be taught in their vernacular language at primary and secondary school levels. In Nigeria this was prescribed in the national policy on education as far back as 1977, but the tide is not turning, as more citizens continue to opt for English, the official language of the country.

Unesco, which has conducted research on this issue, points out that language endangerment and disappearance is a global phenomenon – every region and almost every country has been affected:

The most important thing that can be done to keep a language from disappearing is to create favourable conditions for its speakers to speak the language and teach it to their children. This often requires national policies that recognise and protect minority languages, education systems that promote mother-tongue instruction, and creative collaboration between community members and linguists to develop a writing system and introduce formal instruction in the language. Since the most crucial factor is the attitude of the speaker community toward its own language, it is essential to create a social and political environment that encourages

multilingualism and respect for minority languages so that speaking such a language is an asset rather than a liability.[12]

Fortunately, the South African democratic state has recognised that it cannot preside over the demise of African languages, and is taking steps to ensure that our new freedom and educational opportunities do not inadvertently also contribute towards the marginalisation of indigenous languages. *The White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* affirms the government's approach that universities need to take further the Department of Basic Education's language policy aimed at ensuring that ultimately African children are taught in the mother tongue. The White Paper noted that the demise of African languages at university level posed a further threat to linguistic diversity in South Africa. The University of KwaZulu-Natal has already taken the bold initiative to work towards being a dual-medium educational institution by making isiZulu compulsory for first-year students who don't speak the language. But although there are initiatives underway to address the issues of preserving and developing African languages, there are still many shortcomings within the media sector.

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History of the black press in South Africa

A brief look at the evolution of the black press in South Africa helps to locate the context of the language debate in the media today.

Christian missionaries of various denominations were responsible for establishing publications aimed at the African population. Studies by Les and Donna Switzer *(The Black Press in South Africa and Lesotho – a descriptive bibliographic guide to African, Coloured and Indian newspapers,* newsletters and magazines 1836 -1976) cite the first recorded publication as having been produced by the London Missionary Society in Setswana in Kuruman, Northern Cape.

However, it is *Umshumayeli Wendaba,* published in isiXhosa between 1837 and 1841 in the Eastern Cape that is recognised as the pioneering newspaper for the African market in southern Africa.

The work of the missionaries in setting up newspapers in other parts of southern Africa is well documented. These included *UmAfrika,* the Roman Catholic Church's isiZulu newspaper initially established in 1910 as *Izindaba Zabantu* in Mariannhill, in Natal. *Isigidimi sama Xosa,* started in 1876, is lauded as the first African newspaper edited by blacks in southern Africa. A remarkable historical achievement was when blacks established their own independent newspapers, most notably the English/Xhosa weekly *Imvo Zabantsundu,* the first black-owned and controlled newspaper in South Africa in 1884, and Dr John Langalibalele Dube's Zulu-English *Ilanga lase Natal* in 1903.

> **Recognising the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of our people, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages.**

This period was followed by a wave of periodicals by political parties, such as *Abantu-Batho* edited by the ANC's Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme and *Izwi Labantu* under Dr Walter Benson Rubusana. *Inkundla ya Bantu* was established in 1946.The issue of English as the preferred language in newspapers targeting black Africans is not a new phenomenon of the 'Model C School' generation. As early as 1862, a trend was set by *Indaba* for a publication aimed at the African community to publish in both English and a vernacular language.

English, moreover, was clearly the favoured medium of communication for African, coloured and Indian publications. *Bantu World,* for example, was published in English and six other languages.

Umshumayeli Wendaba

UmAfrika,

Izindaba Zabantu

Isigidimi sama Xosa

Imvo Zabantsundu

Ilanga lase Natal

Abantu-Batho

Izwi Labantu

Inkundla ya Bantu

Indaba

Bantu World

English had always dominated the news pages, however, and articles in vernacular languages were gradually phased out in the 1950s. All of (Jim) Bailey's publications and most of the political newspapers, pictorial and photo-story magazines were in English. Even government publications relied heavily on English before the advent of 'Bantu' education in 1954.

The traditional stronghold of the vernacular press – religious newspapers, newsletters and magazines – gradually gave way to inter-denominational publications written in English for a multiracial and increasingly secular audience in the 1960s and 1970s.[13]

This is largely the scenario that obtained at the dawn of democracy in 1994.

Post 1994: The constitutional imperatives, government initiatives and community media

It was imperative for the new democratic state to restore the dignity of its entire citizenry by instituting measures to give meaning to the injunction in one of the founding provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 which directs that: 'Recognising the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of our people, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages.'

The official languages are Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Siswati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu.

The founding fathers of our Constitution also deemed it proper that the Pan South African Language Board be established by national legislation to 'promote, and create conditions for the development and use of all official languages'. A national language

policy framework was developed to promote language equity. Two major changes were of particular interest to the media. The first was the establishment of the SABC as the public (as opposed to state) broadcaster. The SABC was to 'encourage the development of South African expression by providing in the official languages a wide range of programming (SABC Charter Chapter IV of the Broadcasting Act 4 of 1999).

The Independent Broadcasting Authority Act 153 of 1993 reinforced this by regulating that broadcasting should 'promote the provision of a diverse range of sound and television services on a national, regional and local level which, when viewed collectively, cater for all languages and cultural groups and provide entertainment, education and information'.

These commitments resulted in all 11 languages across the nine provinces being represented. In 2005, the public broadcaster was also granted licences for two regional television stations to be broadcast in indigenous languages – but the stations, to be known as SABC4 and SABC5, did

not survive owing to lack of funding to sustain them in the long term.

By 2012, SABC TV channels were struggling to meet their language diversity mandate. English dominated SABC programming (76 per cent) even though English is spoken as a first language by only eight per cent of South Africans. Almost 65 per cent of locally produced content was also in English, with other languages trailing behind: Afrikaans (six per cent), isiZulu (five per cent), isiXhosa, Sesotho and Tshivenda (three per cent)[14]. Despite good intentions, 20 years into our democracy we are still struggling with ensuring language diversity – even in the public media space.

The MDDA Act, 2002 (Act 14 of 2002), was also passed 'to help create an enabling environment for media development and diversity that is conducive to public discourse and which reflects the needs and aspirations of all South Africans'. The agency has also been entrusted with the responsibility to 'encourage ownership and control of, and access to, media by historically disadvantaged communities as well as by historically diminished indigenous language and cultural groups'. Through the work of the MDDA, the democratic state has begun the arduous task of levelling the playing field by giving support to indigenous language media through encouraging the development of human resources and training and capacity building, particularly among the previously less privileged. The more than 218 community radio stations in the country, broadcasting mostly in indigenous languages and licensed since 1995, indicate the extent to which the country has gone towards freeing itself from the stranglehold that was the apartheid-era SABC.

Many rural communities are today exposed to more information in their own languages through community radio than ever before. The National Community Radio Forum (NCRF) boasts of a combined 8.7 million listeners throughout the country. Gradually, the memory of the poisonous diet of homeland government propaganda that dominated the airwaves 20 years ago is being erased.

Through support rendered to initiatives that promote literacy and a culture of reading, the MDDA points to a number of publications in indigenous languages.

Among the beneficiaries from its interventions in various provinces are the following:
- In the Eastern Cape, *Idikelethu, Nemato* Voice and *Taxi Talk,* all published in
- isiXhosa.
- In the Free State, *Masilonyana* and *Free State News,* published in Sesotho.
- In KwaZulu-Natal, *Intuthuko News* and *Iqhawe,* both in isiZulu.
- In North West, *Leseding* and *Ponelopele News* in Setswana.
- In Limpopo, Balaodi Publishers, who publish *Seipone* in Sepedi, Xitsonga and Tshivenda; *Thavela* published in Xitsonga and *Northern News* in Setswana and Sepedi.
- In Mpumalanga, *Inzalama* and *Coal City,* both published in isiNdebele and SiSwati, and *Ihlokohloko* in isiNdebele.
- In the Northern Cape, *Kasi to Kasi* in Afrikaans and isiXhosa.

By its own admission, for the MDDA the print media remains a fiercely 'contested terrain', prompting the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Lumko Mtinde, to observe: 'We still carry the baggage/legacy of our past where one language dominated most official communication, whilst it was Afrikaans in the apartheid era; English is now the language of business choice, leaving the rest of our 11 languages to fight their way in a playing field that is not at all levelled. How can it be levelled, when skills development and working conditions still reflect the disparities in power relations, which are still based on language, race, gender and class? Language does become a tool of exclusion in big mainstream media in South Africa, as is still mostly in English and Afrikaans. It's against this background that the MDDA board has decided to focus support on media produced in indigenous languages.'[15]

This suggests that despite commendable commitment by the government to stimulate more language diversity in the media environment through legislative and financial support mechanisms, we celebrate 20 years of democracy having made remarkable strides in a war not about to be won.

This is because the evolution of the media looks set to follow the trend of the 1960s and 1970s when English entrenched itself as the preferred language of African communities.

Mainstream broadcasting and newspapers – use of indigenous languages

Broadcast media in South Africa have done far better than print media at promoting language diversity. Numerous radio stations continue to target given language groups (such as Phalaphala FM which broadcasts in Tshivenda) and all 11 languages across the nine provinces are represented on the airwaves.

Ukhozi FM, has more than seven million listeners, targets mainly the Nguni languages market – and has by far the biggest audience in broadcasting. (Yet isiZulu language purists despair by the day as they hear less and less proper usage and grammar. An odd English word that could have slipped in here and there in the past has given way to broadcasts peppered with the queen's language during certain popular programmes.) SABC TV cannot even boast of the same level of diversity. English language broadcasting still dominates SABC 1, 2 and 3 (76 per cent) and local content programming is also mainly in English. Even within the public broadcast field challenges remain.

Language diversity in the print media environment is even worse, even though research suggests that readers are hungry for news written in indigenous languages. For example, isiZulu newspapers in KwaZulu-Natal are defying the odds as they continue to record phenomenal growth amid dwindling circulations across the board. This is attributable in part to the fact that the language is spoken at home by a fifth of the South African population.

Ilanga, established by Dr Dube as *Ilanga lase Natal* in 1903, has survived many turbulent periods, has celebrated its centenary, and by 2012 was still sitting comfortably with a circulation of close to 115 000. More recently, though, October/December 2013 Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) figures show that it too has seen a drop in circulation, to 95 994. At the same time, its English counterparts have been shrinking in circulation and influence, as figures by the ABC confirm. The proprietors' decision to expand into the highly contested Sunday newspaper territory and succeed, despite recent industrial action upheavals by staff, has served to confirm that the isiZulu press market is yet to be exploited to the fullest.

Nothing, perhaps, could have illustrated the point better than the dramatic entry into the scene by Independent Newspapers' *Isolezwe* after the company lost the contract to manage, print and distribute *Ilanga.* The fallout was particularly unpleasant and the parting of ways remarkably acrimonious, considering that it had been Independent Newspapers' forebears, the Argus Group, that had sold *Ilanga* to a political party, Inkatha Freedom Party, in 1987 in what remains one of the most controversial transactions in the history of newspaper acquisitions in this country.

Launched in 2002 with a circulation of under 30 000, the Monday to Friday edition of *Isolezwe* had by the end of December 2013 reached a circulation of 107 119 copies, making it the third highest circulating daily newspaper in the country after the *Daily Sun* and *The Times,* according to the ABC. Reporting on the latest performances, the Bureau said in February 2014 that the Saturday edition, *Isolezwe ngoMgqibelo,* had recorded the largest growth for weekend newspapers for the previous quarter (October to December 2013). At 82 339 copies, it was remarkable to recall that the debut edition in 2011 had sold 56 166 copies. Similarly, the Sunday offering, *Isolezwe ngeSonto,* had grown from 42 489 in March 2008 to 88 026 in the same period.

When *Isolezwe* achieved a remarkable 1 049 000 average issue readers in 2013 (All Media and Products survey), the editor Sazi Hadebe told *The Media* magazine: 'Readers see it as a quality newspaper – well laid out with the latest news and attention to grammar and spelling.' He added that contributors wrote about subjects ranging from isiZulu culture to politics and humour, while periodic changes kept the content fresh.

The industry needs to explore growth of African languages. Readers are hungry for news to be told in their mother tongue. The growth of *Ilanga* and *Isolezwe* newspapers in KwaZulu-Natal is proof that there is a market for such diversity.

In presenting to the Print and Digital Media Technical Task Team (PDMTTT) in February 2013, the veteran broadcaster Dumile Mateza reinforced the view that: 'The industry needs to explore growth of African languages. Readers are hungry for news to be told in their mother tongue. The growth of *Ilanga* and *Isolezwe* newspapers in KwaZulu-Natal is proof that there is a market for such diversity.' [16]

The foray by the *Sunday Times* into the isiZulu market did not last. Launched in November 2010, it had folded by the first quarter of 2013. It had no discernible identity of its own and sought to outdo *Ilanga* and *Isolezwe* at their own game by translating into isiZulu articles initially written for entirely different types of audiences in other English sister publications. The isiZulu edition of the *Sunday Times* ended up being neither a perfect clone of the English *Sunday Times* nor a worthy impostor warrior in the isiZulu newspaper wars. It did not speak to the hearts of those readers, while unlike the *isiZulu Sunday Times* that relied on a skeleton staff and translations from sister publications, *Isolezwe* initiates the bulk of its content to suit its market.

The failure of the *Sunday Times* Zulu project was followed by the closure of *UmAfrika* by its new owners, Media24, signalling the closure of a chapter in isiZulu publishing that had remained for more than a century a breathing testament to the fruits of labour of those missionaries who had come to South Africa to preach to the natives of Natal the motto of '*Ora et Labora*' (Pray and Work).

The issue of language diversity in the media environment in South Africa tends of course to anchor around isiZulu media platforms in KwaZulu-Natal because that is where the country registers the presence of extremely powerful media in indigenous languages, namely Ukhozi FM and the two giants in African language newspapers, *Ilanga* and *Isolezwe.* The hasty retreat by the publishers of the *Sunday Times* from the isiZulu market probably best explains why in the rest of the country we have not seen massive investment in indigenous language newspaper publishing. It is not a territory for those expecting quick returns. Traditionally, those who plough money into newspapers do not expect to break even in the first two years – and that was before the advent of the free online news and other social media wobbled the best that the world has ever had to offer in the form of newspapers. For centuries we all looked up to the British and the American templates for successful and profitable newspapering. The ideal of a truly diverse media which reflects the richness of all our African languages might therefore remain a pipedream.

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Government and the media – ways to ensure the survival of indigenous languages

While investors may simply walk away from unprofitable ventures, the option not to contest this space because of unfavourable trading conditions is not open for the South African government.

At the 20th anniversary of democracy the measure of our success has to be the extent to which we have responded to the injunction (of one of the founding provisions of the Constitution): 'Recognising the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of our people, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages' (Chapter 1: 6(2).

There are a few practical measures that government might want to adopt. The first is to channel a significant portion of the government's massive advertising expenditure towards the vernacular media, both print and electronic, in all provinces. A most welcome development in this regard is a call early in 2014 by Parliament's portfolio committee on communications for community and small commercial media to be allocated at least 30 per cent of government advertising. This move is supported by both the State-Owned Entities Communicators Association and the State-Owned Enterprises Procurement Forum. It will also help struggling indigenous language media not only to survive, but also to streamline their operations better on the back of guaranteed revenue streams.

An argument often advanced is that the emerging indigenous community media is too small, fractured, and not structured properly as enterprises, to comply with the onerous requirements of the Public Finance Management Act.

But as the latest census has shown, English is taking over even in African households. Those who contribute towards the preservation of indigenous languages by keeping afloat media promoting the use of these languages, need to be supported by government through advertising and there should be a policy directive to this effect in all three spheres of government. The MDDA is playing its role, but government as a whole should make more money available to help sustain efforts to promote language diversity in our media.

In communication and information, Unesco 'supports the use of local languages in the media and promotes multilingualism in cyberspace'.[17] Not enough information has cascaded down to all levels of our society. Lack of effective

communication between the political leadership and the community is often cited as the reason people resort to service delivery protests; more often than not, the municipalities in question have limited capacity to produce even a decent newsletter in the local language to remain in touch with the people. Therefore, as a second measure, government should investigate the feasibility of assisting each and every municipality to produce a newsletter in the predominant home language of the area.

After all, Madiba was correct. The good news of 20 years of freedom and democracy needs to reach the hearts of our communities by talking to them in their language, thus touching their hearts. This will also serve to ensure that the commendable efforts of the missionaries who came to these shores to introduce indigenous language media are also commemorated, and that the vernacular press they established does not become a victim of our freedom and democracy as the new generation discards, and frowns upon, what defines them: their mother tongue.

Twenty years of freedom: whose democracy are we reporting?

William Bird

William Bird is the Director of Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) which was started in 1993 to enable the organisation to carry out the first monitoring project focused on the South African Broadcasting Corporation's (SABC's) reporting on the 1994 elections. MMA has been monitoring the media for 21 years and in that time has carried out over 130 different media monitoring projects, across key issues from representing elections, to gender, children, HIV, health, race and racism.

Analysing our media[18] 20 years into South Africa's democracy is rather like a 20-year-old looking into a fractured mirror. Some pieces are similar to the reality; others make the viewer seem quite grotesque; yet others make her seem more beautiful. The media is of course not merely a mirror – it has the ability to shape and be shaped by that which it seeks to represent. Analysing the news does, however, offer critical insights into the state of South Africa's democracy.

There is no question that as a country we are light years away from where we were in 1994. So, too, is our media. A surface scan reveals that we have some of the best legal and policy instruments (including our Constitution) dealing with media. We have a host of bodies, supported by both state and industry, that promote and entrench media freedom. We have clear parliamentary processes, an independent broadcast regulator, an agency set up specifically to encourage media diversity (the Media Diversity and Development Agency) and a public broadcaster striving but struggling to break free from its self-censoring past. We have also seen the development and establishment of crucial industry bodies in response to the democratic imperative for accountability, including the newly revitalised Press Council and the Broadcast Complaints Commission (BCCSA). We have seen an explosion of media, from small commercial and community print to community radio, and an exciting TV broadcast environment.

The picture is not all sunshine, roses and lollipops. Indeed, there are threats to media freedom from various quarters – some by misguided miscreants in government and in political parties; others from the profit-seeking corporate sector; and those seeking to undermine our democracy for selfish ends. As with other sectors, the media face challenges and the legacy of apartheid is manifest in different ways. Despite the significant changes, we are still not sufficiently transformed as the media. Some of the key issues around structural

But what do we mean when we talk about transformation?

transformation are outlined in greater detail elsewhere in this book – indeed, transformation remains one of our biggest challenges, not only in media but in our society more broadly.

But what do we mean when we talk about transformation? Some argue strongly that above and beyond the regulatory and legislative requirements of broad-based black economic empowerment (BBBEE), it is the transformation of content and organisational culture, and the building of a skilled cadre of journalists and editors, that will go the longest way in effecting sustainable and lasting transformation in the print and digital media industry. In various sectors, and not just the media sector, 'transformation' imperatives, drives, processes and plans have often not yielded the desired results. Many have had a narrow focus on meeting targets for representivity, employment equity, BBBEE and related initiatives – the ticking of boxes. Although there are definitely boxes to be ticked, true transformation requires a serious commitment to going beyond, to building a diverse media sector where all in South Africa can access a diversity of views and voices across a range of platforms and in the languages of their choice. It is clear (from the current state of the public service broadcaster, as well as in the print media sector, as highlighted in the Print and Digital Media Transformation Task Team report of 2013) that in terms of transformation our media has a long journey ahead. What is perhaps less clear is the point at which a sector can be considered transformed – and who determines such transformation. These questions must be debated as we go into our twenty-first year of democracy.

While the media environment has changed fundamentally since 1994, and broadly speaking in ways aligned with the kind of society envisioned by our Constitution,[19] less attention has been given to the content of the news media and to how that has, or has not, changed. News media matters, and the content matters, not because audiences can be brainwashed but because the news media plays a critical role in

setting and framing debates. As the expression goes, the media doesn't tell us what to think, but it does tell us what to think about.

A defining element of traditional news media is that it seeks to portray or to represent the news or events to its audiences in a simplified and narrative manner in limited time and space. An analysis of the news can reveal what, and also who, the media views as important. The issues covered, how often they are covered, how they are framed, and those who speak, help to inform us about who and what the media considers to be important – and also which subjects, people and institutions hold power in society. Conversely, those marginalised and whose voices are not heard indicate who has less power and is less important. One of the most effective methods of determining these issues is through media monitoring,[20] which enables us to analyse hundreds of thousands of news stories in great detail. It also enables us to analyse trends over time – and in so doing to assess shifts in the media coverage of crucial issues.

This chapter seeks to unpack some of the media shifts since 1994 and to examine how key issues facing our emerging democracy have been reported on. The analysis of media content (which will also necessarily indicate a bias) will be drawn from the data and monitoring projects Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) has carried out over the last 20 years.[21]

The point of departure for this chapter is to consider five critical aspects of our society and, together with case studies and reference to research, indicate how they are represented in the media. The following areas have been selected:

- **Race, racism and xenophobia.** Given South Africa's racist history, race and racism have been and continues to be critical to our development and transformation.
- **Elections.** These are a core element of democracy. Valuable insights into shifts in our media's basic performance can be gleaned from how the media reports on elections, whether they inform the public and provide balanced, accurate and fair coverage.

- **Children.** Children account for 39 per cent of our population, and this figure will increase in the future. Children are also arguably the most protected group in our country and yet they experience high levels of trauma and abuse, and are marginalised in society and the media. How they and their issues are portrayed offers crucial insights to our country's sustainability.
- **HIV and AIDS.** As it is one of South Africa's biggest health and social challenges, understanding how this pandemic has been reported will help us understand how key health issues are portrayed in the media.
- **Gender and gender-based violence (GBV).** South Africa has among the highest levels of GBV in the world. With our deeply sexist and patriarchal history (like race), how gender and gender-based violence is dealt with so that dignity and equality is realised becomes an important indicator of our democracy.

Each aspect listed above could easily be the focus of a separate book, and there are already books on some of these issues. For current purposes, however, I seek to highlight key elements in order to show how far we have come and how far we still have to go. Also, by drawing greater attention to these elements, I hope to stimulate deeper debate on how we can meet the challenges we face.

Race, racism and xenophobia

South Africa's Constitution speaks directly to these issues in the founding provisions, where it notes the values of '… human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms [and] … non-racialism and non-sexism.' Given our deeply racialised and racist past, few other aspects are as essential to consider as race, racism and xenophobia and how these issues are portrayed in the media. It is an area where some fundamentally positive changes have been seen but also one in which a great deal more transformation is necessary.

It was common, for example, in the mid 1990s, for media to include the race of a person in a story such as a crime story. A case in point was a story saying that three black men hijacked a white woman in Sandton. Not only was the person's race irrelevant but mentioning it served to perpetuate a range of stereotypes about black people as criminals. This filtered through to reporting on crime, where in the late 1990s it was common for media to portray whites as the victims of crimes and blacks as the perpetrators.

Following the Human Rights Commission's inquiry into racism in the media, a number of substantial changes occurred in the coverage of race. It is highly unlikely that a person's race would be mentioned unless it is clearly relevant to the story (for example, an item about a racially-motivated crime).[22] The chances of a South African media breaking the law and being openly racist are even more unlikely.

In spite of the positive changes to the media, however, racism and the perpetuation of racist stereotypes still occur. While race may not be so easily and overtly assigned in stories, negative stereotypes may be perpetuated through trends in representation. An example lies in some media tendencies in the mid 2000s to report on issues of race – and especially racially motivated crimes –as graphic or violent events without, in most instances, any analysis or explanation as to the underlying issues or causes. Such reports often perpetuated stereotypes. The cases of labourers being painted silver by their employers, or made to engage in humiliating activities such as being forced to eat dog food had clearly racist undertones but these were seldom explained, unpacked or analysed. In a deeply disturbing case in early November 2000, the TV programme *Special Assignment* showed police dog unit officers encouraging their dogs to attack 'illegal immigrants.' Understandably, much of the subsequent media focus was on the brutality and illegal actions of those involved – however, the racist and xenophobic nature of the incident received far less coverage.

In 2009, research by Media Monitoring Africa on the representation of race and racism highlighted that with one exception, *Die Afrikaner* (a newspaper aligned to the Herstigte Nasionale Party), all print media monitored adopted editorial positions opposing racism and the most common proposition identified in the monitoring was, 'There is no place for racism in the new South Africa'.

In spite of the positive changes to the media, however, racism and the perpetuation of racist stereotypes still occur.

However, although there has been a significant shift in reporting content, journalists interviewed in 2009 indicated that there had not been sufficient transformation in the media industry. Some four years later (and while the research did not focus on content), the report by the PDMTTT[23] shows that there has still not been sufficient transformation in the print media. There is not necessarily a clear link between the transformation within newsrooms and the content, but it seems reasonable to assert that there is far greater likelihood of the content being influenced if the newsrooms are themselves sufficiently transformed. There is still some distance to go in addressing the coverage of race and racism, but there have been significant positive shifts. A quick glance at the coverage of children in terms of racial breakdown highlights this shift.

In 2004, research[24] revealed that 39 per cent of children represented in the media were black (30 per cent were white). This figure has more than doubled in 2013 results,[25] with black children accounting for 65 per cent of those accessed or mentioned in reports and whites dropping to 12 per cent.

Figure 1. Children represented in the media by race (2013)

n = 8439

- Other 13%
- Indian 2%
- Asian
- Coloured 7%
- White 12%
- Black 65%
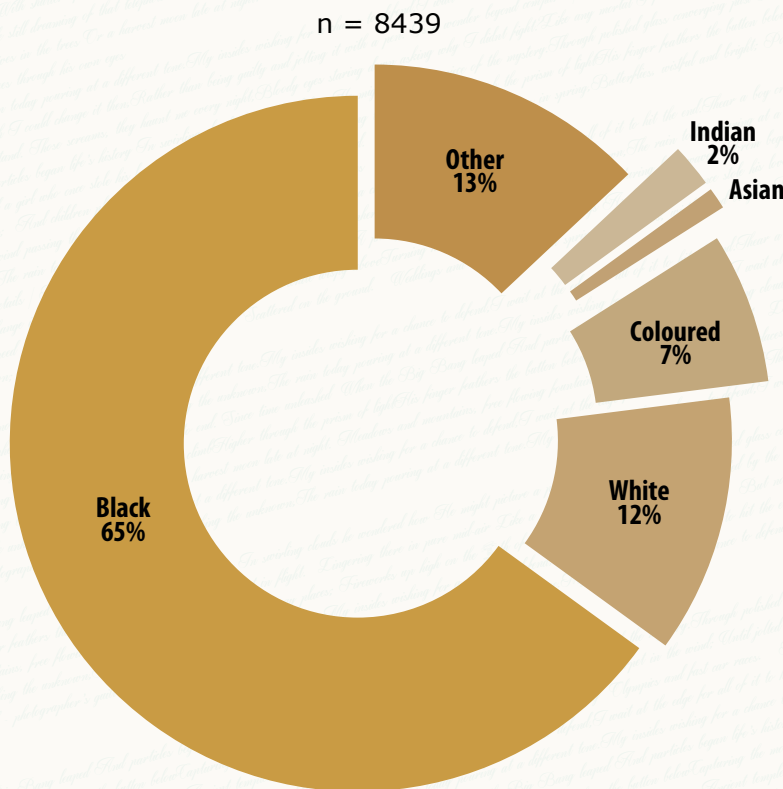
Xenophobia: A case study

In May and June of 2008 there was an outbreak of violence around Johannesburg which was soon identified by media, government officials and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as being xenophobic-based violence. It was located largely in townships around central Johannesburg and in most instances took the form of aggression expressed against African non-South Africans by African South Africans. In a three week period more than 60 people were killed and 50 000 were displaced from their homes. The authorities were seemingly caught off-guard and media reported their delayed response to the violence. In many instances it was reported that NGOs were operating more efficiently and effectively than formal government response services. The media coverage during this period was extraordinary. Most media were able to emphasise the brutality of the violence through the use of graphic visuals.

All the media monitored by Media Monitoring Africa (with one glaring exception, the *Daily Sun*)[26] condemned the violence – even the majority of tabloids: 'We are all to blame' (*Sunday Sun* 18 May 2008) and 'Act now, or it won't end' (*Sunday Sun* 1 June 2008). The condemnation of the xenophobic-based violence was given extraordinary prominence in some cases through the use of front page editorials. *The Sowetan* (14 May 2008) said: 'Do unto refugees as you would them to you'.

The media coverage was typified by a diversity of issues being covered, from dealing with the violence, to response from authorities, to shelters and emergency service stories. The media monitored carried special sections in their newspapers. There were special debates and discussions on radio, and even public debates with experts aiming to unpack some of the causes.

Generally, media made efforts to ensure that coverage did not only focus on the hatred and xenophobic violence. Some media carried stories

focused on communities where all the people were getting along – for example, 'Hatred and mayhem shatter SA, but … in Bokfontein love transcends borders' (*City Press* 18 May 2008), an article, accompanied by photographs, which focused on positive relationships between foreign nationals and South Africans in an area with high unemployment and poverty. Another article, 'Khutsong vows to support its comrades in 'demarcation struggle' (*City Press* 1 June 1008), drew attention to a community where the local residents' forum and the Merafong Demarcation Forum had pledged that they would live in peace and not involve themselves in attacks against foreign nationals. The article highlighted the history of South Africans and foreign nationals living together in that area, and sharing the same cause. One forum member is quoted as saying: 'These comrades from other countries have been on our side in the demarcation struggle. They have been living with us for more than 20 years and have not done anything wrong to us.'

The media's general response to the violence went beyond the news, and included local soap opera stars, musicians and other celebrities coming out and calling for an end to aggression. There were even a few stories about rape as a form of xenophobic violence (generally, however, there was an absence of gender perspective, which was a significant area of weakness in the coverage, as will be discussed further).

Do unto refugees as you would them to you.

Other stories served to humanise the victims, largely by giving them a voice and telling their stories. In so doing, the media helped to challenge stereotypes about non-South Africans and to highlight the consequences of the violence. For example, 'Foreign nationals are marooned between a rock and a hard place as former neighbours go beserk' (*City Press* 18 May 2008) tells the story of a 'naturalised

South African citizen', a 'municipal employee', who had lived in Alex since 1994, who could not go back to Zimbabwe owing to lack of jobs, and a Zimbabwean with a South African wife who had lived in South Africa for 11 years. Numerous articles with a similar focus appeared in *City Press,* including 'Dreams of prosperous life in SA shattered' (25 May 2008), 'I'd rather die here than go back to Zim' (25 May 2008), 'Refugee life is not a bed of roses' (1 June 2008), 'Shop owners forced to abandon their business' (1 June 2008), and 'A blessing taken away, at only four months' (1 June 2008).
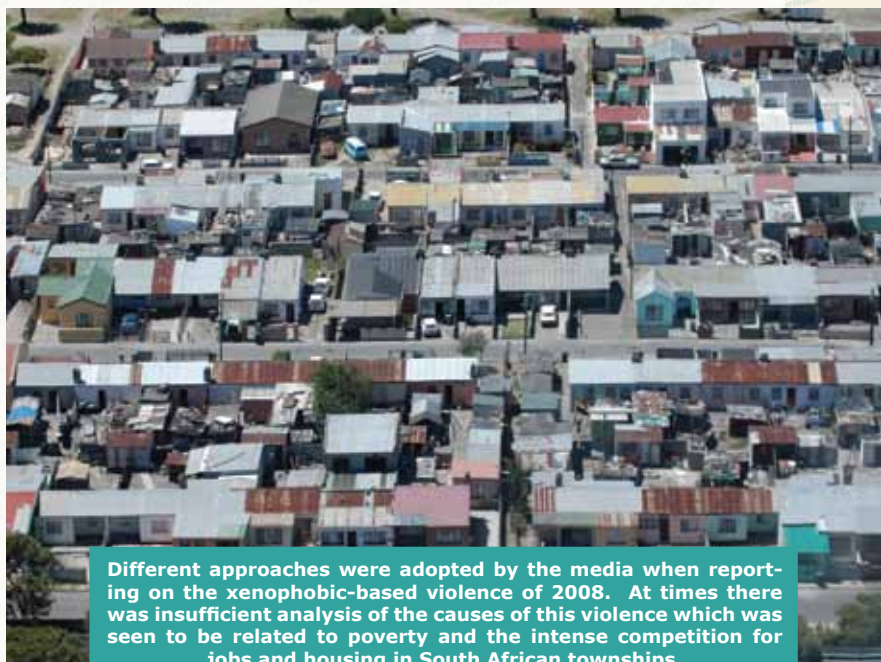
Different approaches were adopted by the media when reporting on the xenophobic-based violence of 2008. At times there was insufficient analysis of the causes of this violence which was seen to be related to poverty and the intense competition for jobs and housing in South African townships.

Other media stories focused on the perspectives of children, which made for particularly powerful accounts. A story in *City Press*, 'I am 12 and I am always scared' (25 May 2008) was written from the child's viewpoint and talks about the impact of the violence on the child. Another story in the *Sowetan,* 'Hope beats fear' (25 May 2008) also examined the violence from a child's outlook and demonstrated how the children were hopeful that things would be resolved. The *Mail & Guardian* also took the extraordinary step of using the drawings of children on its front page, accompanied by powerful accounts of their experience during the attacks: 'Tell them we are from here' (*Mail & Guardian* 24 May 2008).

In many instances media went beyond traditional lines of ethics and responsibility by setting up their own initiatives and actively encouraging help from their readers, viewers and listeners. Some media, like *The Star,* set up funds and encouraged companies to donate. Others provided information about where people could make donations. Media professionals, journalists and camerapeople continued to work in the communities after filing their stories.

In their coverage, media pushed ethical boundaries to the limit. There was extensive public debate over the use of a particular series of photographs of a man who had been set on fire. The man can be seen in the foreground bent over double while his flesh burns. Subsequent images show police officers extinguishing his burning body, while the man was alive.[27] Some media argued that the use of such images was essential to bring home the brutality of the violence, while others argued that the pictures were offensive and undignified. The media's response to these images and to the brutality generally demonstrated how difficult covering such violence can be and also highlighted how media can and sometimes do clearly adopt positions (opposing violence), engaging with the issues and not merely reporting on them from a distance. It also highlights how difficult daily ethical decision-making processes are.

Although there were many truly remarkable instances of in-depth reporting and of rights-based positions, there were of course also significant gaps and weaknesses in the media's coverage. In most instances the gender dimensions of the attacks were not considered, and whereas the media can shoulder some of the blame for this, civil society (including institutions such as the Commission on Gender Equality) also failed in this respect. There was also insufficient analysis of the causes of the violence. Overall, however, the majority of media adopted very firm anti-xenophobic positions.

The coverage of race, racism and xenophobia highlights an editorial bias that seeks to highlight racism and xenophobia in negative terms and in ways that show how they undermine our democracy. The extensive coverage of race, racism and xenophobia during the attacks of 2008 highlighted some incredibly powerful storytelling and presented a stark contradiction – with the media broadly opposed to racism and yet, transformation around race within newsrooms still remaining a challenge.

What makes the contradiction all the more startling is that despite clear editorial positions on the importance of voting; combating gender-based violence as well as HIV; and, reducing child abuse, reports on these matters often tend not to contextualise or offer deeper analysis of the situation.

Reporting elections

At no time is the role of the media more important than during elections. Not only is this the acid test for freedom and fairness of media coverage, but the media's pivotal role in democracy is most visible during this period.[28] Balance and fairness are key to election coverage. It is only to be expected however that during an election period there will be some bias where a party will make allegations against another, and the media will not counter-balance this in the same story. In most cases such incidents might be reported on the following day or in a later bulletin where a response from the opposing party is sought. Such practice is in line with the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Icasa) elections regulations,[29] but where such opportunities are not afforded the news item is obviously biased.

On fairness, we can take some pride in the knowledge that on average over 80 per cent of all elections items monitored since 1994 were fair. In 2009 this figure was 84 per cent across the 56 different media monitored. Among the lowest performing media were some print media, for example the *Sunday Times* and *Saturday Star,* but it is also to be noted that other print media including the *New Age* and the *Mail & Guardian* were also among the highest for balance overall. Where bias does occur it tends clearly to favour or to oppose a political party.

In 2009 the ANC received the lion's share of coverage across all media monitored for all elections, averaging 46 per cent in the 2009 elections. Together, 77 per cent of all coverage was afforded to just four political parties, with the remainder spread among the rest. The ANC received the highest number of biased items overall, but only a handful of these items were clearly biased 'against'. Given that it has a majority in government, dominates coverage and that it was subject to most of the attacks by other political parties, it is hardly surprising that it should have more biased items than any other party. Overall, there was no evidence in the media monitored of any intentional systematic bias for or against the major political

parties. While such a scenario certainly seems equitable for the larger parties, there is cause for some concern around the extremely low coverage afforded to the smaller parties. While media may assert that coverage was broadly in line with or proportional to seats in parliament, it seems difficult to argue that affording a party less than three per cent coverage will allow voters to be fully aware of what the party stands for or what its strengths and weaknesses are. That so much coverage in an elections period is also driven by events, and is campaign and personality focused means voters are likely to be even less informed about the smaller parties.[30]

It is important to distinguish the coverage in news from party elections broadcasts, for which a formula is used to calculate the levels of coverage. The requirement for news is a reasonable opportunity for conflicting views to be heard and for all parties to be treated equitably.[31] It is obvious that solutions must be found to ensure that the views of smaller parties are heard.

It is certainly an achievement worth boasting about that the majority of media coverage in mainstream private, public and community media is overwhelmingly fair. Considering South Africa's history of media bias prior to democracy, the achievement is all the more significant and speaks in some way to the commitment of the majority of media professionals to free and fair elections. And yet, far too often media fail to adopt a citizen's agenda by reporting on issues of immediate relevance to citizens and providing information necessary for making informed choices, opting instead for easier 'follow the leader' stories and reports on campaign trails and political party rallies. If anything, then, the media may be accused of not being sufficiently critical of political parties and of allowing them to determine the election coverage.[32] The contradiction mentioned above is once again highlighted: we have media coverage during an election period that is overwhelmingly fair, and yet some of the most critical issues and the voices of ordinary citizens are marginalised. Media's agenda is also heavily influenced by the actions of the major political parties, and the smaller parties are further marginalised.[33]

Children: Our future today

Children account for roughly 39 per cent of our population.[34] The African continent's population is getting younger, with UNICEF's 2013 State of the World's Children report showing that 47 per cent of the population in eastern and southern Africa is under the age of 18: that is, children. Despite this, children only feature in only 10 per

cent of all South African news stories, and their voices are marginalised still further with only seven per cent of all children's stories carrying the voices of children themselves.[35] The good news in these figures is that compared with 2003 where children only appeared in six per cent of news items the trend, while perhaps not as high as it should be represents a 67 per cent increase.

In 2003, one in ten stories violated the rights of the child (see Figure 2). Not only did the media act unethically – and in many cases illegally – but also not in the best interests of the child. In the last five years we have seen a very positive shift in our media. The South African National Editors Forum (Sanef) has recommended a set of guidelines for reporting on children to all its members; the Independent Group of newspapers has adopted them; and Times Media and the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) have included key clauses focused on children in their own editorial policies. Most recently, during the comprehensive revision of the South African Press Council, children and children's rights (including a dedicated clause on children) have been incorporated in the new Press Code which came into effect in 2013). The latest research shows that only two per cent of news stories further violate the rights of the child and while this is still two per cent too many, it does indicate a significant improvement in South African reporting.

The positive trends in reporting on children go further than the number of children in stories. In 2003, the single most common role for children in the news was as victim whereas the latest figures from 2013 show a greater (but still limited) range of roles, with a child given the status merely as a child in over a third of all roles. The positive shifts need to be celebrated.

Figure 2. Children's rights in 2003

Violate 10%

Respect rights 90%
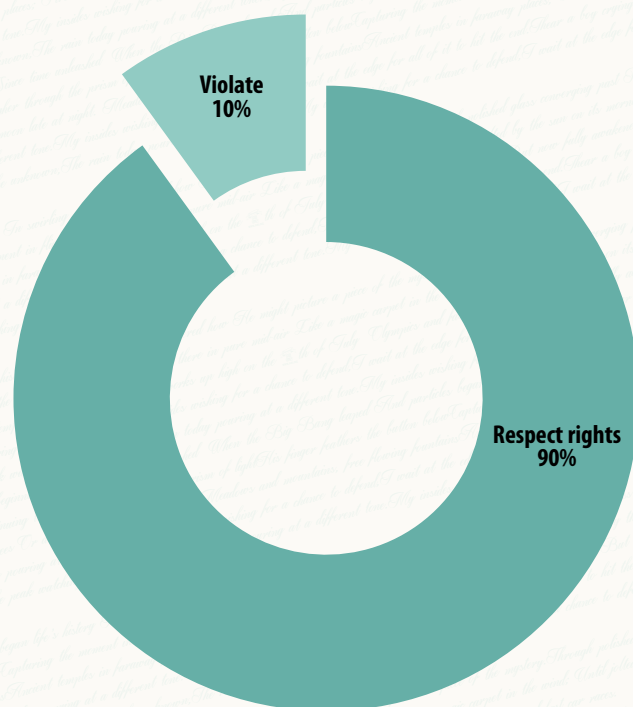
Figure 3. Top 10 roles children assigned in media coverage 2003

Role	Percentage
Child offender	3.5%
Sick child	3.5%
Teenager/Youth	4.5%
Group	4.5%
Vulnerable	5%
Sportsperson	6%
Baby/toddler	7%
Student	13%
Member of family unit	17%
Victim	24.5%
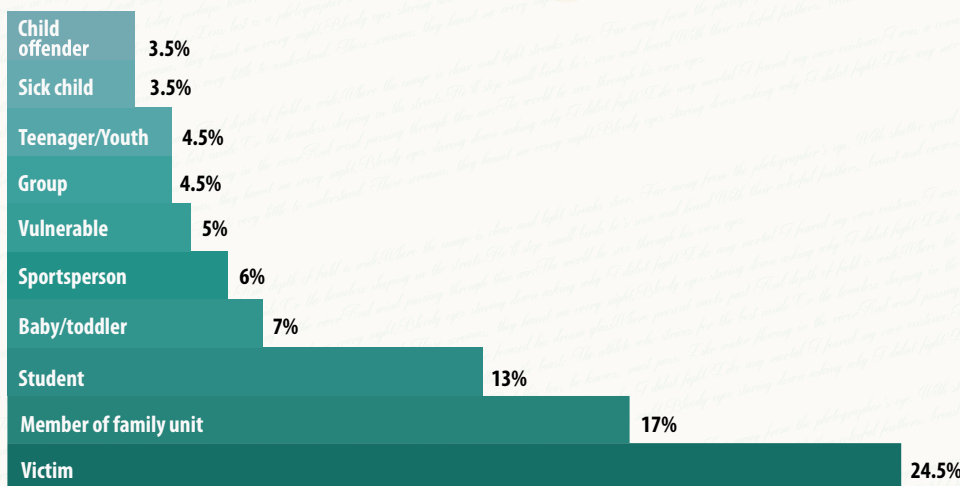
If we consider the topics or subjects that are about or feature children we see a similar positive trend, away from the stereotype and victimisation to recognising children as citizens with value – a dramatic shift from stories featuring children being dominated by crime, war, conflict, child abuse and disasters/accidents (49 per cent of all stories collectively) to stories about or featuring children focused on education, the justice system and health (52 per cent collectively). Although many of these stories revealed how children are being failed by society, the change of emphasis from children as helpless victims is at least positive.

Figure 4. Top 12 topics 2003

What are the stories with children about? Top 12 topics (90% of all stories).

Topic	Percentage
Crime	18%
Sport	12%
Education	11%
War, conflict and violence	11%
Disasters and accidents	10%
Child abuse	10%
Health	8%
Arts, entertainment, culture	7%
Personalities/profiles	4%
HIV and AIDS	3%
Social welfare	3%
Human rights	3%
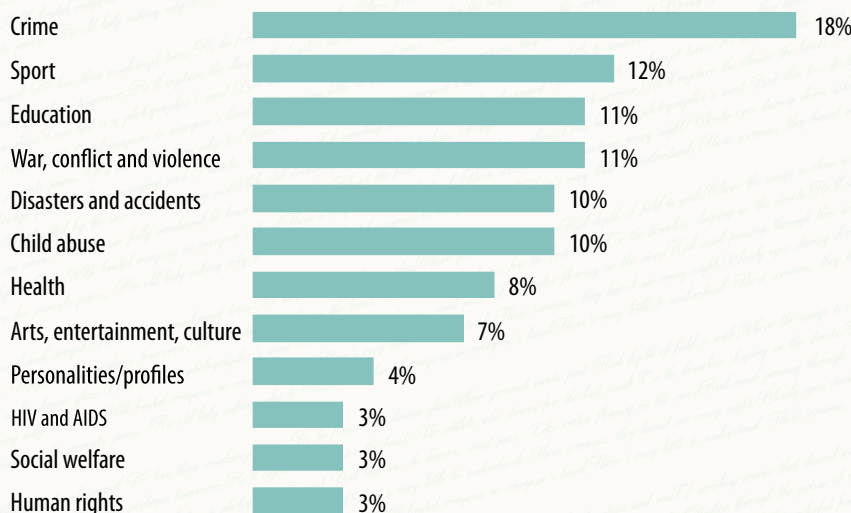
Figure 5 Top 10 topics 2013

Topic	Percentage
Education	25%
Justice system	17%
Health	10%
Crime	9%
Disasters and accidents	9%
Personalities/profiles	9%
Child abuse	7%
Media and arts	6%
Conflict, political violence	4%
Sport	4%
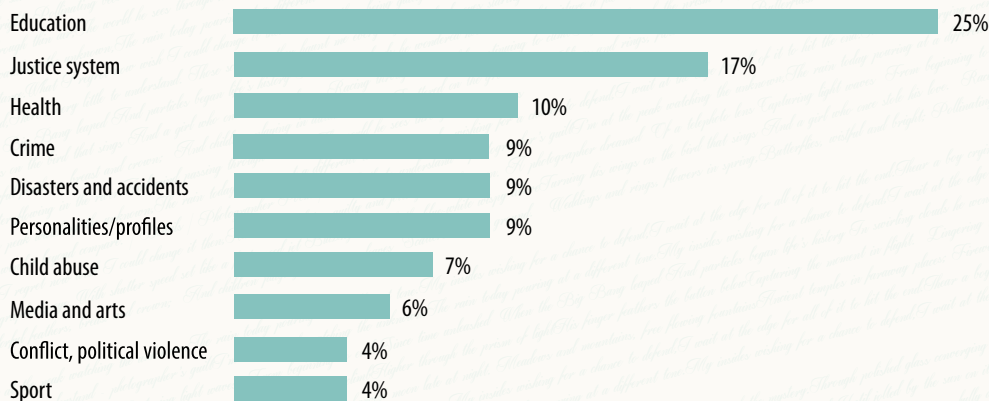
There is still a long way to go towards a situation in which media reports on children are more in line with South Africa's realities. Challenges to the SABC, (including its ongoing financial instability and leadership crises) present worrying threats to the public broadcaster's ability to fulfil its mandate in respect of children. Quality children's programming is expensive and requires extensive planning and research. There is currently no local South African drama for children and the news for children on television, with some wonderful exceptions, is generally extremely limited and of very poor quality.

It is perhaps in the portrayal and reporting of children that the clearest transformation trend of the South African media can be seen. From increased portrayal and voice, to shifts in roles and issues covered, to seeing that girl and boy children are generally represented in equal numbers (but, it must be noted, not equitably, as will be discussed below) the trend is encouraging. Children are however still generally badly marginalised in terms of voice and portrayal, particularly when compared against their numbers in the population, the level of protection afforded to them under our democratic dispensation, and, their importance for our nation's future.

Reporting HIV and AIDS

A brief review of the coverage of HIV and AIDS, one of South Africa's most serious health challenges, is useful for two important reasons: it offers an indication of the accuracy of reporting on complex issues while reflecting on how such critical issues are covered – and what drives the coverage.

Research carried out in 2003[36] sought to address a range of issues focused on HIV and the media, including the media's ability to report such a complicated health challenge accurately. There was a sense, expressed by some of the partners carrying out the research, that the media was not accurate in its coverage of HIV. One of the methods devised to test the accuracy of the stories included having a doctor, an expert on HIV, analyse a random sample of stories to assess this. In 2003 the accuracy level was found to be 88 per cent accurate to very accurate. A similar test was carried out in 2005 on a study on the prevention of mother-to-child transmission and the results were very similar. While positive, this finding cannot be extrapolated to all areas of media coverage, but what it does suggest is that, significantly, the media is able to accurately report on extremely complicated health challenges when they devote sufficient capacity and resources to doing so.

Accurate reporting of HIV, however, does not necessarily mean that coverage of HIV is equally

good. Again, there are challenges in how HIV is reported. Very few voices of people living with HIV are heard in the print and broadcast media, which tends to cover the actions of leaders, allowing their agenda to be determined not by the issue but by the leaders and the stories they generate.[37] As a result there has been a significant drop in coverage of HIV as the conflict between government and civil society that drove so much of the reportage was removed when the government changed its policy around HIV and AIDS after a Constitutional Court Ruling in 2002. Research from 2009 indicates that coverage of HIV has dropped by 63 per cent.[38]

Table 1: showing the decrease in articles over the two periods analysed	
	Count (all items for period)
Survey 1: 2003	2 204
Survey 2: 2009	806

While there was clearly less conflict-driven news, it would be difficult to argue that the drop in coverage was in line with the reduction in the impact of the epidemic. Rather, it points to the manner in which the media were reporting the epidemic, and which needs to be changed.

Gender-based violence

Gender in general is frequently marginalised in discussions about transformation, yet it must be given the same importance as issues of race and children if our nation is to be a constitutional democracy. Gender inequality and patriarchy prevent more than half of our population from realising their rights as equal citizens with dignity. Unsurprisingly, it is also one of the core areas that requires radical transformation in the media sector, across virtually all parameters.

On average, women account for only 29 per cent of news sources in South African media. On a fundamental level the media perpetuate gender inequality[39] and the degree to which media can be said to be fair and accurate must therefore be questioned. Although the figure is better than the global average of women in the media (23

per cent, according to the most recent Global Media Monitoring Project), we have some way to go in realising gender equality and balance. While our media are not much different to media throughout the world there is no reason to be complacent, as we can, and should, expect our media to outperform global media.

A review of media coverage of gender reveals some broadly positive trends. In the 1999 general elections, women accounted for 10 per cent of all news sources about elections. In 2004, that figure had more than doubled to 23 per cent – which could not be attributed to the media alone and reflected broader changes in South Africa at the time. It remains nevertheless a very positive shift. In 2005, during the 16 Days of Activism campaign (running annually from 25 November to 10 December), MMA's monitoring found that for the first time there were more female voices than male in the news. Female voices accounted for 55 per cent of all voices during the period. But unfortunately the increase remains tied to issues or events with an overt gender focus, and these levels are not maintained.

South Africa has one of the highest levels of gender-based violence in the world. While it is still dramatically under-reported there have also been some significant changes in the manner in which these crimes are reported. In the mid-1990s, it was commonplace for rape to be reported from a male perspective and largely by men. It was also commonplace for reports of gender-based violence to be trivialised – cases of severe domestic violence were reported as lovers' spats or lovers' tiffs. Such reports are now the exception and are quickly addressed and corrected even in the tabloid media.[40]

Two high profile events in 2013 highlighted the strengths, weaknesses and complexity of the advances and lack thereof in our media. The first was the killing of Reeva Steenkamp by Oscar Pistorius and the second the rape and murder of Anene Booysen. The cases are both unusual in the amount of media coverage received: the levels of coverage of the Pistorius-Steenkamp case were unprecedented, and before the loss of former President Nelson Mandela it was the biggest story of the year.[41] It also highlights

the society we live in. If you are wealthy, live in an urban area, are good looking and white you will get preferential treatment – not just by the media but by political parties, the justice system, and on social media. It helped that Pistorius was a celebrity and a sportsman, which also affected the level of coverage afforded to Steenkamp.[42] Of course there is more to the Pistorius-Steenkamp story: it is a perfect news story, the death of someone popular and 'beautiful', her career set to boom and her life ended by an international sports hero (the fall of a hero always makes better news than an ordinary person simply killing another person). The story was so big that the President's State of the Nation Address (SoNA) was relegated to inner pages and barely analysed. The story was even prominent in the *Daily Sun,* a paper that normally has a very different agenda to that of mainstream media. *Business Day* was the notable exception. We need to ask, however, whether the story merits the huge attention and the relegation of issues of greater national importance. This appears to be a case in which the public interest has been trumped by what is of interest to the public.

Surely, government plans to combat gender-based violence require deeper discussion and analysis than a tragic murder and the fall of a hero, but we cannot only blame the media for we need to look to the audience, as it is the audience driving the interest and insisting on the stories. It is worth asking just who the audiences are. Is the story as big in small community media? Only a few days later the *Daily Sun* had already moved away from the story. Are the other stories on rape or education not as interesting to the public? Is it because they are more often focused on issues and not individuals? Or is it because of the manner in which they are reported and communicated? Perhaps it is a combination of all of these.

The coverage also raised another gender issue. It seemed to be obligatory when referring to Steenkamp to note that she was a 'model' or that she was 'beautiful', repeated so often that it seemed significant and that somehow her death was all the more tragic because of her beauty. Surely there is no need to refer to her physical looks or modelling career as they have no bearing on her being killed and/or its

importance? If this were the case however why is it so emphasised by certain media.

Compare her to Booysen, a 17-year-old who was described as a 'girl', with more attention paid to her wounds and that she had been gang-raped than how she was as a person. In contrast, we know Steenkamp was 'beautiful', a 'model,' but also much more. We have seen interviews and tributes to her that ensure we have a much fuller sense of who she was as a person; we are able to empathise with her family and friends, even though most of us never knew her.

It may well be positive for the media to humanise Steenkamp and to provide a sense of who she was as a person, but in comparison we know little about Booysen, or about a woman in Daveyton, whose husband killed her and cut off her head (a story reported in *The Sun* of February 2013). These are all women who have become symbols, or objects about which people can vent their anger, frustration and despair about violence, and gender-based violence in particular. Surely, they also deserve to be treated with dignity – to have their full selves represented in the media; for us to know they too had families, what they liked, what their hopes and dreams were.[43]

Inequality

It is easy to argue that the media simply has not transformed, and this is true in many respects. But it also, to a degree, reflecting on the inequalities of the society on which it reports. Pistorius is wealthy and has an expert legal team, a spin doctor and a pathologist, whereas the accused in the rape and murder of Booysen had a state-appointed attorney; wealth and power make a crucial difference to justice. The inequalities in media coverage do not end there. Both the Steenkamp and Pistorius families have had media access carefully mediated. Spokespersons have been appointed within the families, and the media have by and large respected them. The Steenkamp family wanted a private ceremony and even though the media crowded outside the cemetery, the family's wishes for dignity and privacy were respected. (There were some ethical and legal violations when a number of

media houses ran images of Pistorius crying in court despite the explicit instructions of the court. The news organisations apologised afterwards.)

In contrast we saw the family and friends of Booysen in their most private grief. Not only were the media present but politicians used the opportunity for their own agendas. Like the Steenkamp's, the family and friends of Booysen also surely deserved time to deal with the death of a loved one and not have it so crassly interrupted. Where was the sanction for the parties concerned? There was some media critique[44] that did serve to highlight how Anene's death was used for politicking.

We are not going to see a sudden end to the Pistorius story, which looks set to continue getting extensive media coverage. What we would have hoped to see was the use of the case beyond its sensational and gratuitous detail – for example, an explanation of how the criminal justice system works, or what our gun laws are and when guns can be taken away. We also hope to see media asking questions. How can we reduce violence in South Africa? What are our understandings of masculinity? What should our government be doing to eradicate gender-based violence? What can citizens do? How can we make sure that the next time a celebrity is arrested on charges of gender-based violence and the charges are withdrawn that the story continues? How many of those celebrities own guns? Should they still have them?

Conclusion

Three trends emerge from the aspects highlighted and cases mentioned. The first is that across crucial elements of race, elections, accuracy, children, and gender the South African media has made changes generally in line with the country's constitutional order. At the same time, the need for further and extensive transformation remains – not to reach some utopian ideal but to be more representative and to offer a greater diversity of views and voices, ensuring that all within our borders are represented. The third trend is that across the issues highlighted the concern about voice has been raised. Far too often, the media is dominated by the voices of the powerful. When it comes to public violence, to strikes, to education, to racism, the voices of those directly affected are seldom heard, for the media is dominated by the powerful in government or in the corporate sector. Voices are further limited along urban-rural, rich-poor, and gender divides. Tackling such dynamics is not easy.

The media is in a 'catch 22' situation where they must engage with and start portraying other audiences, telling the stories of a greater diversity of South Africans – but at the same time the media operate in a society where inequality is increasing and where they tend to target audiences with means and resources. How does one target new audiences when it makes no business sense to do so? The same holds for the public broadcaster for even though its mandate and editorial policies promote diversity, and even though it should be seeking to meet the needs of all, its commercial operations and reliance on advertising – coupled with social and economic inequality – means that it serves the interest largely of the urban and the middle to upper middle living standards measures. So what is required for our future and to strengthen the gains made? A few crucial elements are: a good institutional framework, an effective three tier media system, with effective public broadcasting, commercial and community broadcasters and other media.

It is critical to strengthen and develop our media sector in a meaningful and sustainable manner. Short term desires for 'better' or more positive coverage of certain groups or interests do not achieve that aim. What is necessary is a skilled and diverse media that informs and offers credible and diverse perspectives, voices and issues, and that engages audiences and does not speak down to them. It is a truism that you cannot have quality media where media freedom is heavily curtailed. This is a call for effective social democracy where there is a strong policy framework and strong democratic accountability with accessible institutions that maintain and entrench media freedom and limit the influence of those with disproportionate power. For such a system to be realised the media in all its forms needs to transform, but so too do the other key stakeholders including government and civil society. For this reason, we need to ensure we highlight the gains made in the last 20 years, and harness the positive energy to push ahead with further transformation so that the next 20 years will see as many dramatic positive shifts.

Journalism in a new world of social media

Shaka Sisulu

Shaka Sisulu is public speaker, writer, social activist and entrepreneur. He is well-known for his columns in City Press and Destiny magazine. He works as an entrepreneur in the media and technology sectors and is currently involved in media monitoring, book publishing, content sharing and social media businesses, many of which are start-up businesses. Shaka is a founding member of Cheesekids, a volunteer organisation which in seven years has enabled over 20 000 young people to give back to their communities, in fun and meaningful ways.

A brave new world
– how social media is proving as revolutionary a medium as any

Years ago, a smart young man invented a new technology that allowed for the creation of a new form of media that the world found accessible and easy to use, and essentially changed the way in which information was shared between people. Like a godsend, this new form of media made certain information, especially local news, available to a great number of people, even thousands of kilometres away, and led to an explosion in the stimulation and expression of ideas.

This new form of media would eventually lead to cultural and political revolutions, especially in places where information had been tightly controlled before. It was in every sense revolutionary.

The smart young man was Johannes Gutenberg, and the technology he invented in 1439 was the printing press, which led to books and newspapers being easily published. You would be forgiven for thinking that the young man was Tim Berners-Lee, who invented the World Wide Web in 1989 and which allowed the use of the Internet as we know it today, because online media is changing the world in much the same way that the advent of printed books and newspapers did centuries before.

The Internet is today accessed by roughly 2,5 billion users, 70 per cent of whom use it every day. The growth of this medium has been staggering – somewhere in the region of 566 per cent since 2000. That's the equivalent of eight new people getting online every second. One of the reasons for this growth is the proliferation of devices to access the world wide web – smartphone users are doubling every year. Consequently, 38 per cent of media interactions today are on smartphones.

Not only are net citizens finding the online world accessible and easy to use, they are exploding onto social media sites sharing an estimated 500 million photos and 144 thousand video clips each day. The top nine social media platforms globally have a collective 3.2 billion users who spend an average of 3.2 hours daily on these sites. After Google, the world's largest search engine, the three most visited sites every month are the video sharing site, YouTube, the friend site Facebook, and the 140 character thought sharing site, Twitter – making social media the web's favourite activity!

At any moment each of the popular social media sites has its own unique *zeitgeist* or 'memes', which very quickly spread like wildfire (or rather 'go viral' in tech-speak), representing a true explosion in the stimulation and expression of ideas.

YouTube was in the past year beset with the 'Harlem Shake' phenomenon – within a month of a group of Australian college students uploading a video of themselves dancing oddly in a room, there were 12 000 copycat videos typically following the same basic structure of a masked man dancing alone before being joined by a huge group all improvising their dance moves, to the beat of American music producer Baaue's 'Harlem Shake' song. Just a few months earlier, YouTube's big craze was 'Gangnam style', a music video by Korean pop-star PSY, which amassed an unprecedented one billion viewers and was the inspiration for thousands of parodies and copies.

Facebook and Twitter have in the past few years been at the centre of somewhat less frivolous trends. The Arab Spring, a region-wide uprising beginning in late 2010, spread like wildfire across the Middle East with the aid of these two social networking sites – not unlike the way the American and French revolutions of the late 1700s relied on newspapers at the time.

In South Africa, Facebook, at 9.4 million, now has more users than Ukhozi FM, the largest radio station in Africa, has listeners. Increasing by more than two million users since last year, Facebook's local growth is only eclipsed by Twitter, which has experienced a year-on-year jump of 129 per cent in membership to 5.5 million on the back of greater mobile penetration. Despite the oft-lamented state of South African broadband, South Africans are getting online in leaps and bounds, and joining the world-wide trend whereby social media is the number one activity online.

The little tweep that could
- how media professionals are getting plugged into social media

In a turn of events that shocked the world, South Africans woke on Valentine's Day 2013 to find that their athletic hero Oscar Pistorius had supposedly shot and killed his girlfriend, the rising star Reeva Steenkamp. Whereas the social networks were completely abuzz with news of this tragic saga, one account dominated them all. News reporter with Eye-Witness News (EWN) Barry Bateman followed the story to court and gained a massive 105 314 followers in a single week. Bateman tried to explain the unprecedented rise in his circle of influence by saying, 'Followers appreciated that I took the time to answer the questions … and that I refused to be drawn on speculation.'

Journalists like Bateman have found themselves gaining prominence as social media users interested in particular news stories have tuned into their profiles or timelines to read about them. One of the most important and yet under-rated skills that fuels this interest and that online journalists are increasingly required to possess is called   Live Tweeting – the ability to summarise proceedings via 140 character tweets in real time. Live Tweeting allows journos or even ordinary users to relay events as they take place as well as provide context, commentary and even interpretation.

And so with the ability to serialise the moment, journos like Bateman and his colleague Mandy Weiner are becoming massively influential and credible on social media.

Another skill that successful online journos possess is engagement – or, rather, fun. *The Mail & Guardian's* Verashni Pillay and *City Press's* Carien du Plessis are gaining a name for fun timelines interspersed with information. Meanwhile, journos like Harja Omarjee (formerly of eNCA and now of ANN7) display another important characteristic – frequency. The number of updates and Retweets her Timeline pushes out means that any followers will undoubtedly come across the topical issue at the time – important in a rapidly cluttered social landscape.

Lastly, the analytical prowess of journos is fast coming to the fore. Not only is Radio702's Stephen Grootes a reporter-cum-talk show host, he now regularly posts video blogs giving his opinion on topical issues. Called the Considered View, it is quickly becoming a favourite piece of content for his audience to consume. Ranjeni Munusamy is another journo who increasingly has become an opinion piece writer. In fact, many reporting contributors to the *Daily Maverick,* her online paper, tend to percolate their news articles with their opinions. It may well be that within the next few years South Africa will, like some Western countries, embrace openly biased media reporting.

The internet in numbers

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and growing ...

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and locally

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Statistics from 2013/14

Going, going, gone online
… how media corporates are using social media

It was a relatively quiet New Year's Eve morning in 2011 when a stir was created in the twittersphere (just one of the monikers the Twitter social network has acquired by some of its 5.5 million adoring South African users). That morning a rundown of the year's highlights was taking place on one of the TV news stations. A local radio jockey half-watching the show during his own radio broadcast was suddenly shocked and dismayed to see a particular story breaking on TV.

It was a story about Nelson Mandela's sudden hospitalisation. This story had actually unfolded a few months earlier. As the highlights package was simply replaying all of the shots related to the incident, the words 'breaking news' and 'Mandela gravely ill' could have fooled anyone. They fooled our jockey, who very quickly reached for his mobile phone and punched into his Twitter application the awful news that the beloved father of the nation was in hospital yet again.

The news spread like wildfire. Within the hour the story was trending.[45]

Soon newsrooms picked up the story, and some, notoriously, ran with it. After all, the jockey in question was a seasoned broadcaster, and quite credible among his audience. Many hundreds of his followers and their networks retweeted (RT) this piece of information, and consequently many South Africans woke in a state of panic that day. Not again, many groaned, and get well soon, many wished.

Meanwhile, in another part of Joburg city, a news team was given the instruction not to run with the story, though it was the biggest news item on a typically slow news day. While the online journos in the room were chomping at the bit, the acting editor was frantically calling around trying to verify the story before confirming it. The company this team worked for had in the past decade spent significant time and resources in building a brand as a premier news organisation and so cherished the credibility it now enjoyed above all else – including breaking a scoop.

This organisation, Primedia's Eyewitness News, had recently been paying a lot of attention to social media, and had issued a directive to its staff to 'not break news' on Twitter – particularly not in relation to the former President and his condition. The argument management made was that any 'scoops' broken by staff would be attributed to their vantage point working in a news environment, and any mishaps such as the one experienced across town would cost the brand dearly. Consequently, all staff, news reporters and others, could only break news on their official account once the normal checks of headlines news were met.

This organisation has begun unwittingly to follow an international trend related to news, breaking news and credibility. As the amount of news and information sources in social media has exploded – every user can now break a news story – and more and more users get their news from social media,[46] the credibility of 'established' or bona fide news outlets is paramount. Samantha Barry, a pioneer of the BBC's social media strategy, points out that as more people find news online, they turn to trusted sources to verify it – thus news brands need not be the first to break the news, but they'd better give a correct, in-depth and possibly also insightful version of events.
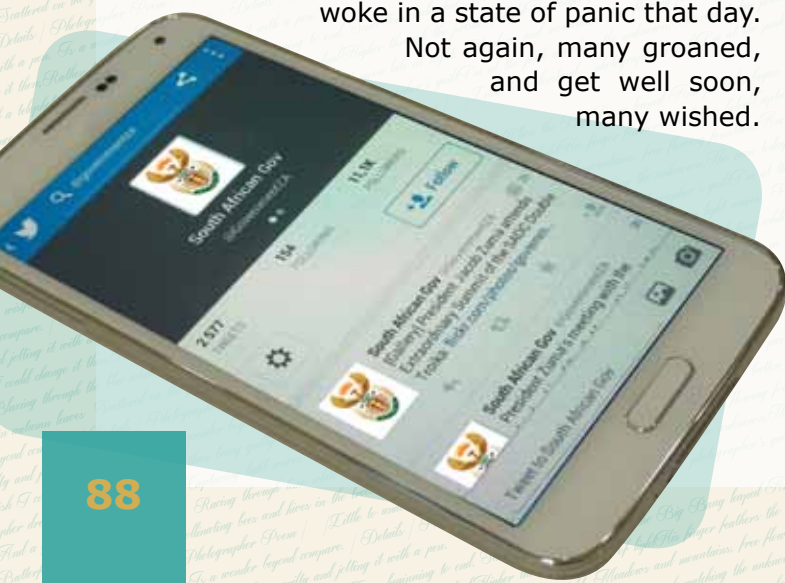
'live-tweeting'

Within an hour of his ill-fated revelation, the Joburg DJ was exposed as being incorrect and suffered the double ignobility of having got it wrong and having 'sent Mandela to hospital'. In a platform renowned for 'killing' people (that is, incorrectly proclaiming living people as dead) this was but a short step away.

Strategically, his organisation, although not directly affected, may have erred by not putting a policy in place to address not just the social media behaviour of their official accounts but also that of their staff. Continues Barry, 'the concept of a news or media organisation employing a separate social media or online team is outdated. Now everyone in the organisation should be new media savvy; and be part of the online strategy.'

A local news organisation that has heeded some of these teachings is *City Press* newspaper. celebrity, or rather tweleb (Twitter celebrity) editor Ferial Haffajee famously quipped that the 'scoop was dead', and though the paper is a weekly their account is busy throughout the week headlining news stories that are published directly to the paper's website. This site has become a massive news blog in the guise of *Huffington Post* that posts the lifestyle, economic and entertainment sections of the usually thick Sunday paper within hours of the printed edition hitting the street. In the days leading up to each Sunday, suggestive tweets by the *City Press*' official account, as well as Haffajee's, will punt the headline stories. Many of their opinion columnists are also online, and will be mentioned in 'throw-forwards' or promotional tweets which they in turn will RT to their own networks. Their reporting staff is also very social media savvy and can be seen 'live-tweeting' from press conferences and events, interspersed with quirky or witty commentary and insights. As a result, the paper seems 'switched on' and is as present in the virtual world as it is in the physical world, if not more so.

In contrast, Marvin Meintjies, former editor of the *Sunday World,* laments the cannibalisation

of newspaper sales that putting content online ensures. He preferred to put up the content a day or two later, whilst headlining it on the day. Although this maximised sales it meant that the online side of *Sunday World* suffered – like a rather dated blog, the paper doesn't offer a premium online experience. *The New Age,* also confronted with this challenge, prefers to post on its Twitter page entire news clips with headlines, and the text blurred out, all with an enlarged call to 'buy the paper'.

Venturing in a different direction – the Freemium model of established international broadsheets and magazines, BDFM, publisher of the *Business Day* paper and *Financial Mail* magazine, graces online visitors with a number of free readings after which a fee kicks in. After some five years or so of tinkering, their online platform BDLive now attracts half a million unique visitors a month, the second largest online news platform.

Every user can break a new story

In a similar vein, upstart news site Maverick launched a Freemium service with a twist – an ezine for iPads. It also threw in an offer to its base of 5 000 odd subscribers to get a free iPad with a monthly subscription. Maverick was once a much vaunted business magazine, and has in the past few years reinvented itself first as a daily news blog and more recently as a newswire service. Again, although they may be mavericks, the executive team is watching the shekels quite closely as the online Eldorado is still very illusive for local publishers.

Undoubtedly *City Press* derives its rather 'ballsy' attitude to social media from its mother company, Media24, which has created a massive news portal that pulls information from its over 100 magazine and newspaper titles. Complete with smartphone apps, Media24 is South Africa's most formidable online platform, complete with blogs and micro-blog functionality for its 1.3 million monthly visitors. Media24 represents one of the pioneers of the South African digital
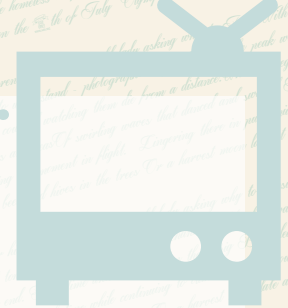
world, which is not surprising as they are one of the country's larger media groups with the wherewithal and resources to invest in a division that, until very recently, very few people knew how to monetise effectively.

Some larger players such as DStv, whilst scoring big with their own digital development, also had the scars of uninspiring portals like MWEB on which to reflect. MWEB cost over a R1-billion worth of investment. When the dust had settled, South African online users had moved on from portals to Google and social media. Such stories would be enough to scare any executives with clever digital ideas.

Back to Primedia now, which also begun to invest quite steadily in social media – it has developed an internal division whose mandate is to find, develop and manage content, especially internal content generated from its four radio stations, and monetise it. Management seems to have taken a page out of Jack Welsh's book when he famously in the early 2000s declared 'destroy-your-business-dot-com'. The idea was very simple: build an online business to rival your bricks-and-mortar business before someone else arrives and does it for you. In a staggering example of the benefits of this approach, GE plastics grew its global online revenues from R15-billion in 2000 to R49-billion in 2006.

In the building of a recent upstart competing with one of Primedia's stations, Power FM, the social media activity is less intricately planned, and yet is intrinsic to all their shows. The new jocks on the block, the likes of Eusebius McKaiser, seem particularly social media savvy, as do their producers, thereby creating a seamless interplay between radio, Twitter and Facebook. Audiences listening in and posting

comments on social media may find themselves driving the conversation in studio, and social media audiences don't miss a word as every salient point is in turn also posted online.

Similar experiences can be found by audiences of younger radio stations – YFM, 5FM, Highveld – which are even beginning to incorporate advertising into their online model. Alas, TV hasn't yet caught up with this level of convergence.

To its credit, TV, especially Youth TV, has shifted from delineating an online audience from its core audience on a demographic basis. Whereas having a social media account may have been elitist a few years ago, today the rural/urban technology gap is roughly 18 months, meaning that a year and a half from now, the number of rural users will be equivalent to the number of urban users. You can thank mobile technology for that. Just as the cellphone has leapfrogged fixed line access all across Africa, it is now rapidly substituting the computer as the device of choice with which to access online sites.

A few months ago, productions barely mentioned twitter, now it is *de riguer*, with a few production houses putting hashtags onto the screen for the duration of the programme. On live TV shows, reading SMS feedback has slowly been replaced with reading Facebook or Twitter messages. That said, TV programmes locally still play it safe compared to how major US TV events such as the SuperBowl use social media.[47]

Local news channels, eNCA, SABC News and ANN7, are increasingly putting televised content online. However, owing to a mismatch with the South African preference for shorter clips (three minutes and under), and poor or non-existent content mining and exploitation plans, TV journalists still have some way to go in leveraging the benefits of social media.

Inside the editorial room
- what media trends are emerging in the era of social media

Sometime in late 2012, Dr Khaled Elmufti, a surviving local hero of the civil war in Iraq, joined a group of 100 or so net rebels at a conference in Washington DC. In attendance were a blogger dissident from China who spoke of how he and fellow bloggers shared news of what was going on inside China with the outside world by using coded messages, especially pictures, which, as in a dictionary, could represent various things. There was a young Facebooker who organised Russia's largest-ever civil protests simply by posting a protest event. He was woken in the morning by a phone call from a news agency – apparently over 100 000 Facebookers had joined the event overnight. Dr Elmufti's story was as fascinating: an IT specialist working in London, he was visiting his home city of Benghazi when the Arab Spring hit Libya. Within days he was holed up in the city centre with other combatants fighting against the Libyan army. He restored communication cables and, using an old modem, proceeded to send messages and images to the outside world in a painstakingly long process. Soon, his messages became one of the famed sources of information used by external news agencies and journalists. A real-life citizen journalist.

This trend of citizen journalism has been burgeoning for some time, but nothing has accelerated it quite like social media. Not only are civilians giving reports on local topical issues and events whether in text or video clip, but news agencies are rushing to use this content. Five years ago, CNN launched its I-Report platform which allowed users to share local news stories. It has since become an application for most smart phones, allowing users to simply record and send. To improve the quality of submissions, CNN launched I-Report Awards to honour users with the most useful reports. Most major news networks have since launched similar initiatives.

Back at home we can expect to see increased use of citizen journalism. The tragic story of Mido Macia, the taxi driver who lost his life in late February 2013 after being brutally dragged behind a police van, would probably not have come to light had the clip not been filmed and circulated online. This trend can only increase as the hunger for content grows in proportion to the expected increase in media, and in particular broadcast stations that the digital migration of our television system will bring.

Barry notes that this is a significant caveat of the consumer now being the other person in the editorial meeting. Not only are consumers adding news content; they are providing instant feedback, and even the basis of further debate and discussion. Online users and even bloggers are finding their utterances fair game for quotation in mainstream media.

A potential downside to the increased use of amateur news content by professional organisations is the veracity, integrity and depth of context of the contribution. Media strategist and author Ryan Holiday points out the inherent dichotomy between traditional media and online contributors – the former isn't anxious for name recognition, mainly concerned with protecting reputation whereas the blogger is more interested in building a name than protecting one.

Another aspect worth noting is the rise of alternative user-generated content. Although

some news people have significant followings, the most followed may be celebrities, controversial figures or even parody accounts. Again, the issue of what sort of information is shared online arises, as influential and captivating accounts are more likely to have offbeat observations or representations of a news account. The potential for the narrative of an occurrence to be skewed, for humour, dramatic effect or otherwise is very real. These representations will then probably find further expression in the mainstream media based on their net popularity or the relationship between the news agency and the contributor.

The potential for the narrative of an occurrence to be skewed, for humour, dramatic effect or otherwise is very real.

One of the people Dr Elmufti met at the conference in Washington was a young woman from Chile, Paloma Baytelman. She unwittingly fell into a form of citizen journalism when some of her video blogs went viral. Then she started stalking community and country leaders for interviews that were zany at best. A few years later, Paloma is considered a bona fide journalist (or, rather, news personality) bringing information to audiences through dedicated channels. Paloma and the millions of YouTube users like her fulfill the promise of everyone's 15 minutes of fame; where amateur users become professionals without training, and recognised not for excellence but rather for chance.

The same is true for opinionistas and columnists – thought leaders are increasingly blurring the lines between reporting, providing analysis and actually just providing their own opinion. Many public relations professionals are capitalising on this phenomenon: @Anatius, @KaySexwale, @TebogoDitshego and @JJTabane, known for his #DearSpinDoctor tweets, which give practical solutions to how PR specialists could handle current PR hot potatoes.

The rise of the thought leader has become an interesting social media phenomenon. South Africa's TV and radio personalities tend to have the greatest numbers of followers, particularly on Twitter but, surprisingly, news afficionados and opinistas are increasingly ranking among the twelebs (twitter celebrities): names like @TOMolefe, @ComradeSipho, @Noma-langaMkhize, @Sentletse and @KhayaDlanga are known for getting debates started. @Sbo-shmafu has recently gone on to join a Cape Town talk radio, which is indicative of how media companies are looking for a social media presence and following alongside the more traditional qualities.

The looking glass
– what the future holds for social media

Any good salesperson born before social media will tell you that in their day there were two options for attracting sales – hitting the road and speaking to as many people as possible, or taking out an ad and speaking to hundreds if not thousands of would-be buyers. Insofar as mediums go, the telephone is most like a salesman on the road, as it is about direct one-on-one conversation. The radio on the other hand is what the salesperson would use to advertise.

Social media typifies a very nuanced but significant caveat to the media world. Now, social media allows for many people to communicate many messages to one person or to a small group of people, or broadcast it to everyone. It provides a distribution and production flexibility far superior to that of any other media before it, and as such is a key driver for convergence between the media – and that includes content and style.

Importantly users are not merely consumers of content; they are also participants, creating what is known as user-generated content, and they are sharing these types of content with common users of different online (or virtual) communities. Stylistically, social media encompasses a number of different application platforms that include collaborative projects where users collaborate to achieve a collective objective (Wikipedia); content communities where users primarily share content like pictures (Instagram), video (YouTube) or music (Soundcloud); blogs (Wordpress) and microblogs (Twitter); where users journal their thoughts and reflections; social networking sites where users network for commercial, romantic or shared interests (LinkedIn); virtual game worlds where users play games together or against each other; and, finally, virtual social worlds where users create entire virtual worlds to inhabit and connect in (SecondLife). Without doubt the most important aspect of social media are the social trends that have emerged.

Each of these types of platforms demands a particular protocol or style of engagement. It is a user's proficiency with such style guidelines that will ensure their continued prominence in their social media of choice. Newsmen and women are no different. They will increasingly deliver their news content within a specific style mandate, whereas non-traditional journalists will increasingly encroach on the reporters' 'turf' and report the news. Other certain trends are a conglomerisation of the various big media, which will inevitably drive to a consolidation of narratives. Recently, in the wake of South Africa's fifth democratic national election, media commentators have found themselves pondering the chasm between the poll results and the dominant pre-election narratives widely expressed in the media – narratives of South Africans looking for change. One of the likely reasons for this contradiction is that certain narratives find more expression across the media than others, giving the impression that they are dominant in society. This is one of the challenges that media platforms must guard against.

As the tools for self expression increase daily, we will continue to see a glut of news being produced by professionals and by amateurs. The most valued commodity of the social media networks will at this time become trust. Currently 'the persona' is the online commodity of choice.

'The revolution will not be televised' – it's online

Like the Gutenberg press, the web has brought forth a truly revolutionary media. When American the activist and poet, Gil Scott Heron wrote the now famous poem 'the revolution shall not be televised', little did he know just how right, and completely incorrect, he was. The revolution shall in due course be televised, but first it will be brought to you by an engaged, informed persona, whom you trust, in real time, live and in packaged sound-bites.

The revolution will not be televised brother – it's online.

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Mind the perception gap
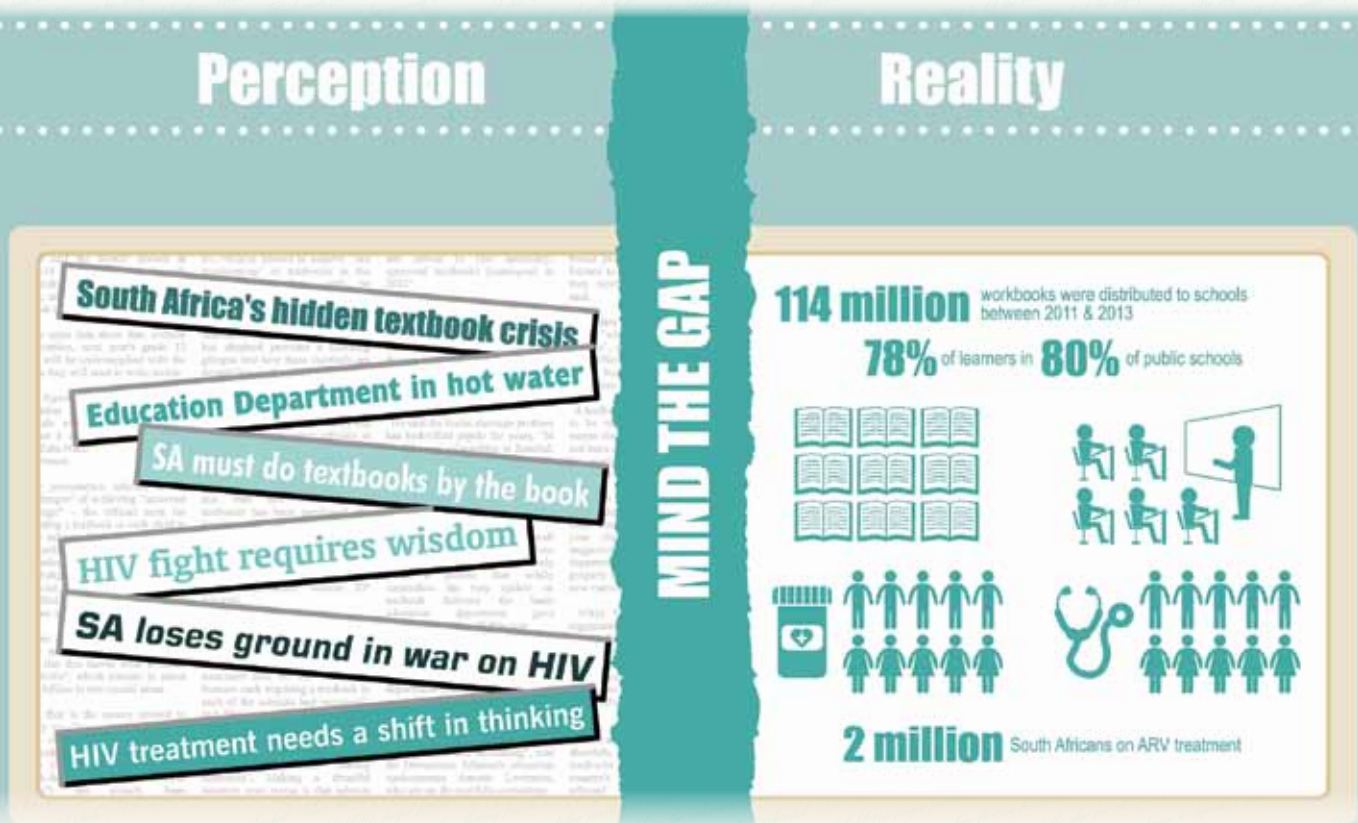
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Introduction

The Information Age has led to more and more information becoming available the world over. It would therefore seem logical that people would be better informed, but this is not the case because, cognitively, people choose the information that they find relevant or of interest or which supports their worldview.

Public perception is defined as the difference between what the facts are and how the public feels about something (popular opinion) which can be swayed by factors such as cultural bias, prejudice, and, a particular set of beliefs and values.[48] Perceptions are not finite and academics[49] have shown that these can change[50] even though research shows that these shifts are not easy to attain. The distinction between what exists perceptually and what actually exists in reality can be best referred to as the 'perception gap'.

The media has an important role to play to keep the public informed of certain 'facts' and 'truths' as they exist in reality.[51] The expectation would be on them to provide an objective and balanced view, based on the facts at hand. But media are also human and journalists/ editors can often represent facts from one particular point of view.[52] They can therefore be criticised for playing a role in perpetuating the perception gap by creating a gap between the facts (reality) and their own version of reality. Through this they tend to further reinforce certain attitudes, beliefs and stereotypes.

An example of this has been in how the media has reported on education within South Africa. They have been critical of the government's handling of the delivery of textbooks in Limpopo, deteriorating conditions in Eastern Cape schools, and the closing down of schools in the Western Cape. This has influenced public opinion, with more people becoming negative towards government's performance with regard to education. This is illustrated in the table below.

Figure 1: Share of average tone (positive / negative) on government's performance with regard to education from 2003 – 2013
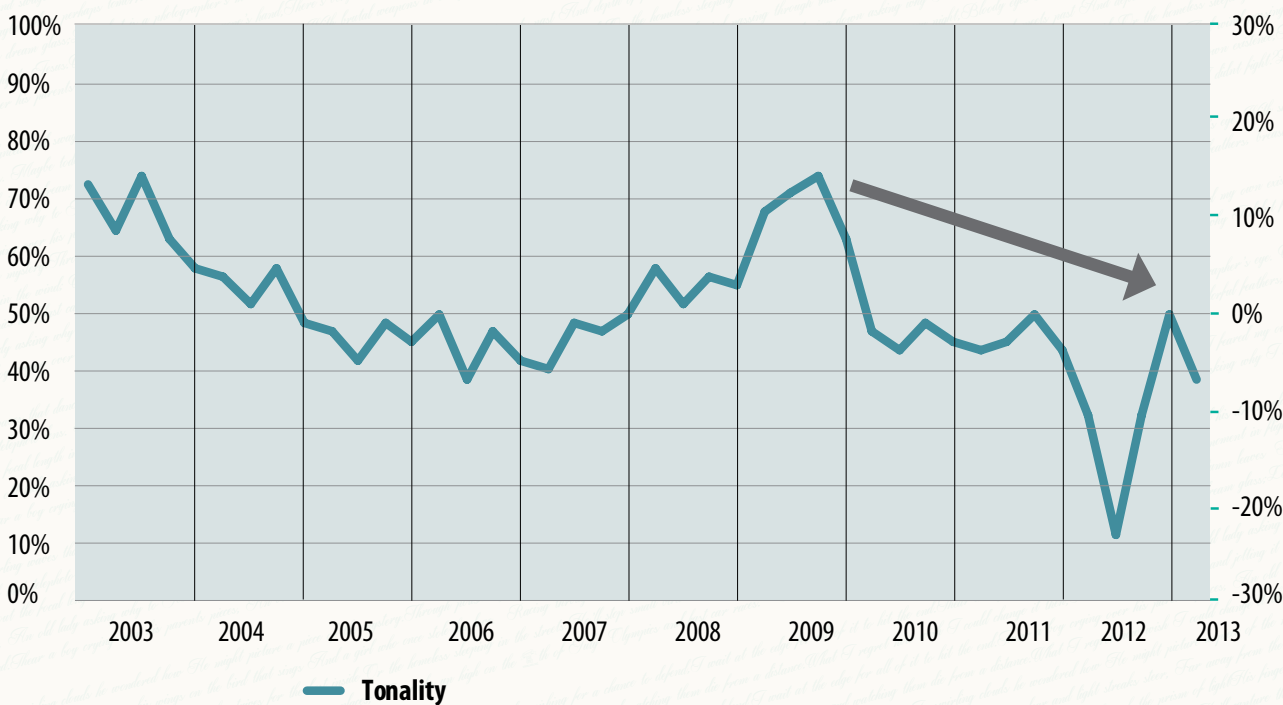
When information is therefore presented to the public based on a review[53] of '20 years of progress', this does not fit with what they have been exposed to in the media. Government's 20 Year Review reveals that the economy grew by 3.2% on average per year, from a GDP of USD136 billion in 1994 to a GDP of USD384 billion in 2012; job creation rose from 9.5 million in 1994 to 15.2 million in 2013; and 78 per cent of learners (more than eight million) in 80 per cent of public schools (close to 20 000 schools) benefited from the no-fee policy. The reality is therefore different to opinions that might have been formed. This disparity is created when media choose what they think is relevant for audiences, and represent a version of events that can be quite misleading. The media skews perceptions away from reality, which results in the perception gap.

According to Noelle-Neumann[54] and Scheufelle,[55] media have an important role to play in redefining public perception – and can contribute towards changing this perception gap. It is on this latter point that the media's role in future would be to rather focus on bridging the perception gap and deliver content that is more objective and closer to the reality as it exists in truth and fact.

Furthermore, the media should be sensitive to a range of issues and be able to present these in a balanced way. Currently, there are a number of ways that media reports reinforce or influence public perception – and not necessarily in a positive way. This is seen in:

- How the media select the stories and topics on which they report;
- The sources and commentators they use;
- The inadequate balance in representing society's demographics (for example, gender imbalances);
- The tone of their reporting.

The chapter will provide a context for areas where South African media have been the benchmark of news reporting globally – and where South African media houses get it wrong. It will cover these aspects over the past five to 10 years with global comparisons to news reporting in North America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia. South African media has much to teach their counterparts in Asia, Europe and North America but there are other areas where South African news media does less well and this will be demonstrated.

In addition, an introduction to 'constructive journalism' and a case study from a Danish TV news station will be included in the conclusion as a possible direction in which South African media should be heading in future.

Closing the perception gap

Reporting issues – is there enough diversity?

Diversity in media is about embracing and focusing on a variety of issues that stem from different cultures, beliefs, ideologies and geographies. It is essential that, no matter how niche the target market, content differs enough so that audiences are informed about different themes, persons, events, organisations and economies from a range of perspectives. While it is impossible to represent this difference in daily news publications or broadcasts, over a longer period of time there should be enough diversity of content to ensure that the public is better informed across a range of issues instead of being restricted to a select worldview. This is about diversifying the news. Diversity in news reporting is important because it can broaden public perception and opinion about what is happening in the country and abroad.

Prime-time TV news bulletins in South Africa have struggled to keep up with global diversity benchmarks in media reporting though. More specifically, countries such as France, Spain, Germany and the UK (refer to Figure 2 below) have produced more diversity of thematic content in their news than South African news programmes produce in a year. Media Tenor measures this diversity of news content according to (how often the media report on 24 selected broad themes, for, e.g. politics,
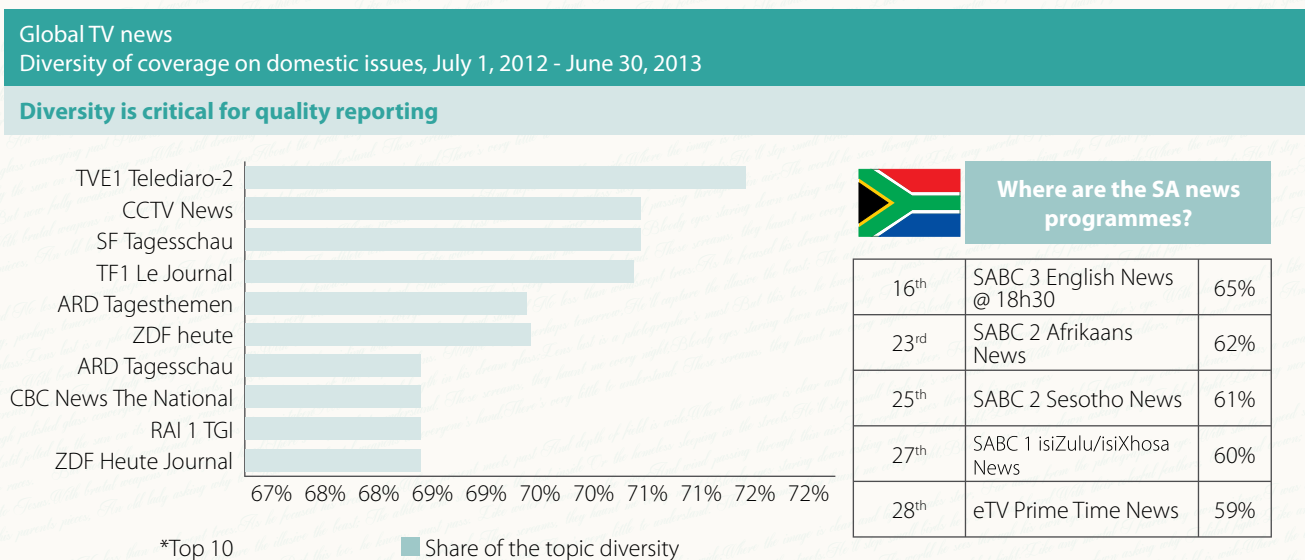
economics, sport, environmental affairs. Each prime-time TV news bulletin is measured proportionately based on the number of broad themes covered.

International prime-time news broadcasters ensure diverse news coverage. South Africa's prime-time TV news programmes, on the other hand, have struggled to make the top 10 over the years in diversifying coverage on domestic issues. Rather, South African prime-time TV news programmes rank near the bottom – as is seen in the figure 2 below. Media Tenor analysed 28 international prime-time TV news programmes; e-tv prime-time news and SABC1 isiZulu/isiXhosa news fared poorly in terms of diversity on domestic issues, coming 28th and 27th respectively. The SABC3's English news at 18h30 was the best local programme, and even it did not fare well, ranking 16th.

Figure 2: Share of diversity on domestic issues (July 2012-June 2013)

Global TV news
Diversity of coverage on domestic issues, July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013

Diversity is critical for quality reporting

	Where are the SA news programmes?	
16th	SABC 3 English News @ 18h30	65%
23rd	SABC 2 Afrikaans News	62%
25th	SABC 2 Sesotho News	61%
27th	SABC 1 isiZulu/isiXhosa News	60%
28th	eTV Prime Time News	59%

*Top 10   ▉ Share of the topic diversity

It is a key responsibility of news broadcasters to highlight reality from different perspectives. Programmes with a strong diversity of issues offer their viewers a greater range of information outside the regular daily news headlines.

Media Tenor has conducted research that shows that four issues continue to ride the crescent of news reporting in South Africa: the economy, crime, politics and sport. This is illustrated in Table 1 on the next page, where, over a period of six years, South African TV news has focused primarily on the topics on the left of the table, while ignoring the issues on the right. The research indicates that for every 45 news reports on the economy (such as job creation) or 30 news reports on sport or crime in the South African media, one report emerges on social welfare, two reports emerge on science and technology, and six reports emerge on environmental affairs.

Given the dominance of economics, crime, politics and sport in local news, one might be led to believe that these are the only significant topics core to the nation's being. While many may argue this to be the case, there are other topics which are not covered extensively due to the primary focus on these four. This results in less information being published about other issues that the general public should know about, such as the environment, welfare, research and development, science and technology and consumer protection.

Table 1: Share of coverage on issues in the South African media (July 2007-June 2013)

Issues high on the media agenda in South Africa (2007 – 2013)		Issues quiet in the South African media (2007 – 2013)	
Economy	14%	Environmental affairs	2%
Sport	10%	Science & Technology	0.6%
Crime	8%	Welfare	0.3%
Politics	8%	Consumer protection	0.1%
Society	7%	R&D (companies and institutions)	-

According to the agenda setting theory[56] and the awareness threshold[,57] in South Africa the media therefore creates the perception that the economy, crime and violence, politics as well as sport, are (the only) priority areas for all citizens. While they are indeed important, too much focus on these issues often results in other stories (for example, job creation and welfare) being largely ignored. The public are therefore less aware of these issues, although many could directly affect their quality of life. A perception gap therefore exists in South Africa in terms of the topics presented to the public and what is really happening in the country day by day.

The focus by the South African media on only a few issues also creates a distorted image of what affects people in this country. Media are often quick to expose scandals related to government, yet fail to inform citizens on important government initiatives of benefit to the broader public. For example, there has been minimal media coverage on the abolishment of public healthcare fees for certain individuals or on the Nurse Initiated Management of Antiretroviral Therapy (NIMART) initiative that has been instrumental in managing the HIV and AIDS epidemic. This often leaves the public with a 'sour taste in their mouths' and with little knowledge about key empowering developments taking place in their own country. It is crucial for media to re-think their position when prioritising content, in order to minimise the perception gap.

Different sources and voices in the media

Diversity in the newspapers or on radio and TV news programmes requires not only the inclusion of a variety of issues but also of sources providing their version of events. Ensuring that differing sources have an opportunity to provide commentary is another important step in driving the transparency and legitimacy of programming. This can ultimately help to reduce the perception gap as a range of views are given voice ensuring a more informed society which also trusts the information it is receiving.

Producing print and broadcast news bulletins day-in and day-out requires expertise, as a lot of information has to be condensed into short news clips that still carry across the intended message. Because of space and time constraints not every source can be called upon to comment and often a journalist makes the comment instead. Many South African news broadcasts are guilty of using their journalists more frequently than they should to provide the comments on behalf of experts or the public – to the extent that on average almost eight out of ten reports by TV news in South Africa (81 per cent) makes use of the journalist only. The global average is seven out of every ten reports (70 per cent). This practice tends to blur the line between news and opinion, reducing the news to the opinion of an individual journalist.

Figure 3: Share of diversity of sources (July 2012- June 2013)

Global TV news
Diversity of external sources, July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013

Diversity is critical for quality reporting

	Where are the other SA news programmes?	
27th	SABC 3 English News @ 18h30	19%
28th	SABC 2 Sotho News	18%
29th	SABC 2 Afrikaans News	17%
30th	eTV Prime Time News7	%

*Top 10 ■ Share of voice provided to external sources
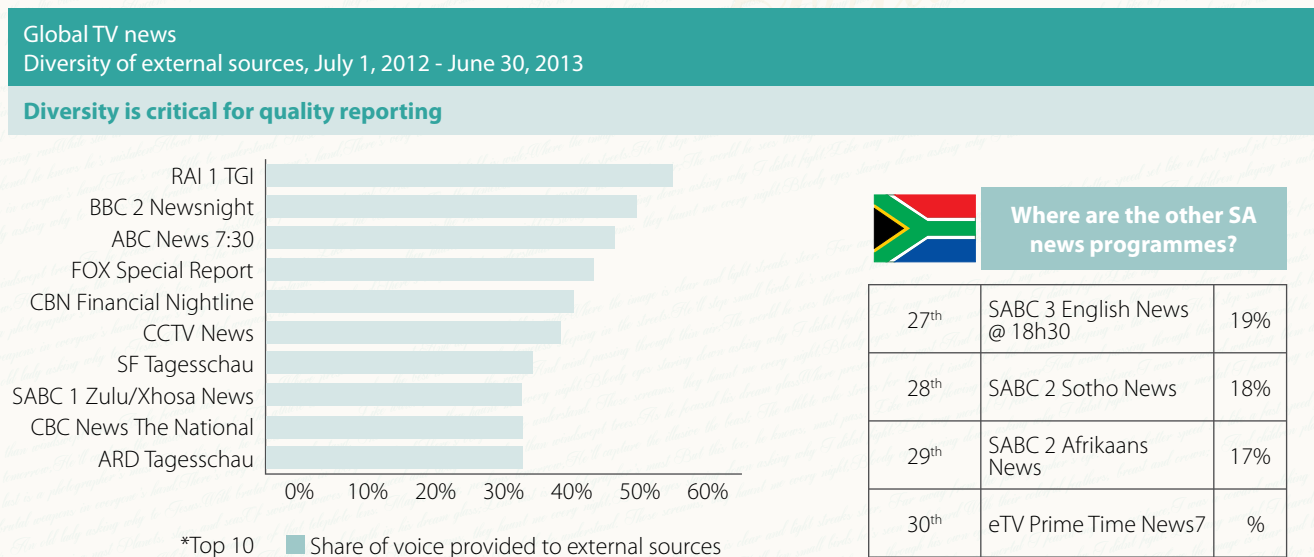
Giving reliable sources an opportunity to comment on events is the key to improving trust and restoring cond encde in TV news. This way, the information is more trustworthy and it allows CEOs and politicians to know where their voice is more likely to be heard.

It would be preferable for the journalist to sum up alternative views and present all sides of an argument, so that public perception is not skewed in any one direction, but this is not happening and public confidence in news reporting has been diminished.

Global public opinion surveys, such as the Gallup poll on[58] 'public trust in TV news' reveals that just over four in every 10 people (44 per cent) trust in the content they see on TV news, down from five in every ten (54 per cent) in 2004 – and similar shifts are replicated, in various studies from around the world.[59] Qualitative research in the form of focus groups conducted by Reuters goes further to suggest that global audiences[60] are losing trust in mainstream media because, with exposure to more information in the digital age, members of the public are becoming more scrupulous about how and when they interact with traditional media sources such as TV news.

Inadequate balance in representing the demographics
– gender biases

Society is known to be prejudiced, whether this is through sexist,[61] xenophobic[62] or racist behaviour.[63] The media often without realising reflects this reality. It is therefore hardly surprising that women are significantly under-represented in global print and broadcast media, receive very little coverage and are not quoted extensively. In a country where women are highly active in politics and business, this limited representation in the media tends to contradict reality and creates a perception that reinforces gender stereotyping and patriarchy.

As Figures 4.1 and 4.2 on the next page indicate, only 14 per cent of the protagonists in media reports in South Africa are female. Breaking the glass ceiling is not just a struggle for women in their professional development; it also applies to their global relevance. In a comparison of regions, Germany fares best at 18 per cent representation and Asian countries, namely China and Vietnam (not represented in the graphs below) the worst at seven per cent representation on global TV. Even where strong female leaders like Angela Merkel have

Figure 4.1: Share of coverage for males and females on global TV 2011- 2013

South Africa

14%

86%

Germany

18%

82%

Australia

17%

83%

Canada

17%

83%
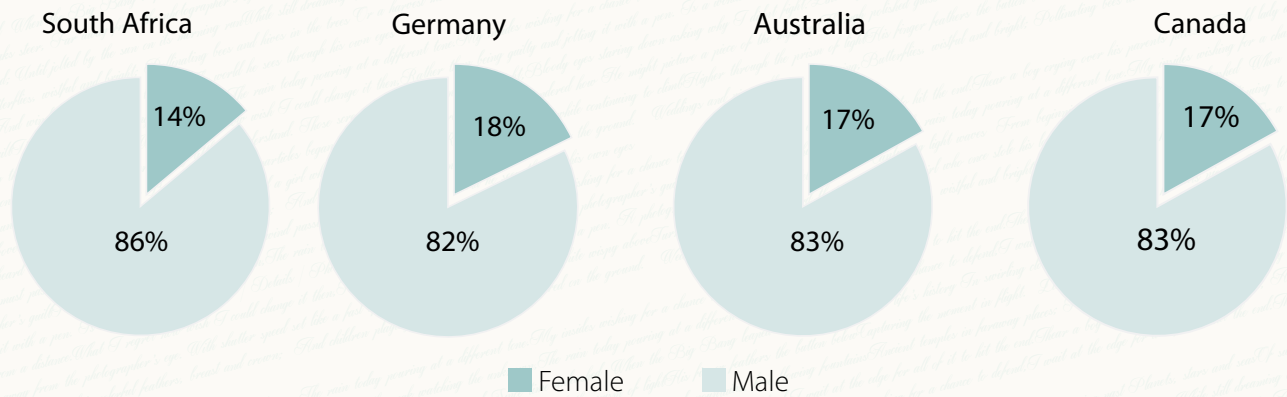
■ Female ■ Male

Figure 4.2: Distribution of male and female coverage (January 2013-July 2013)

SA TV

14%

86%

International TV

14%

86%

■ Female ■ Male
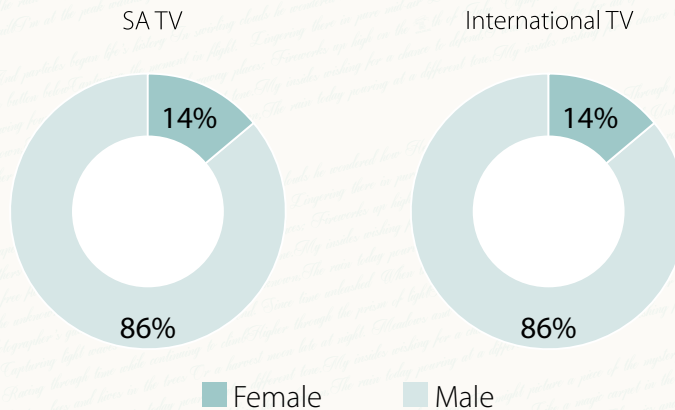
been making an impact, women still seem to struggle for relevance in the global media agenda. Broadcast media should be re-looking at their equal representation policies because these figures are not where they should be.

Based on Figures 5 and 6, South African TV news also falls short of representing women in equal proportion to their numbers on executive boards or in parliament (14 per cent on TV news as against 17 per cent as executive board members and 42 per cent as parliamentarians). A perception gap is therefore created between the reality and what is portrayed by the media. Research by Media Tenor reveals that the media continue to highlight men in sport, almost ignoring the achievements of women. The only place where women receive some balance of representation is in human interest and celebrity gossip columns.

Figure 5: Top 12 countries where share of women on boards is highest[64]

Country	Share
Norway	40.9%
Sweden	27.0%
Finland	26.8%
France	18.3%
UK	17.3%
Denmark	17.2%
South Africa	17.1%
Netherlands	17.0%
U.S.A.	16.9%
Israel	15.0%
Germany	14.1%
Poland	13.6%

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40% 45%
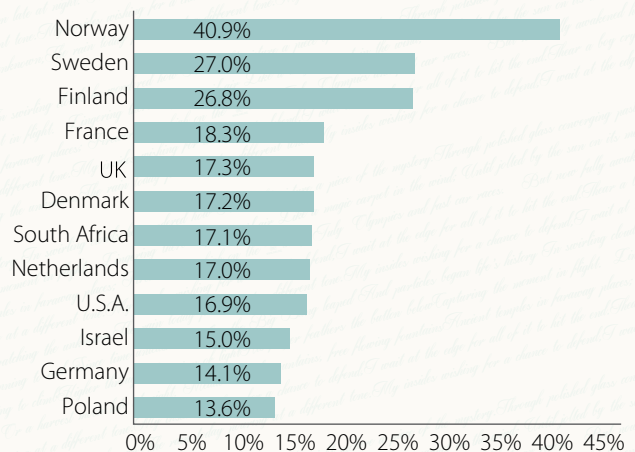
Figure 6: Top 12 countries where share of women in parliament is highest[65]

Country	Share
Rwanda	63.8%
Andorra	50.0%
Cuba	48.9%
Sweden	44.7%
Seychelles	43.8%
Senegal	42.7%
Finland	42.5%
South Africa	42.3%
Nicaragua	40.2%
Iceland	39.7%
Norway	39.6%
Mozambique	39.2%
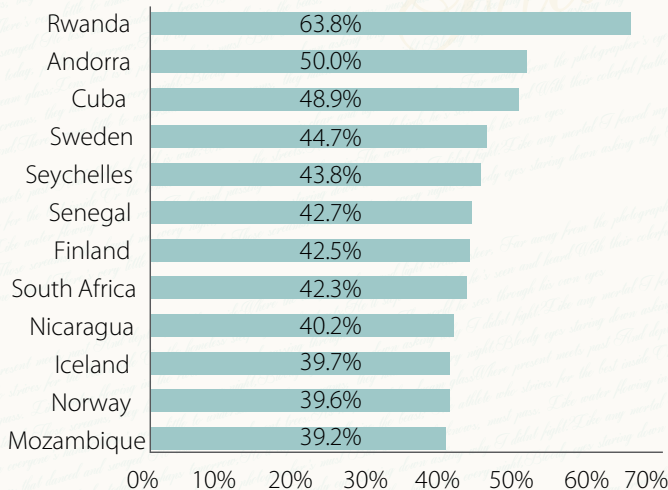
Based on media analysis of all 528 169 reports across 28 international TV news broadcasts from July 2012 to June 2013, SABC2 Sotho News was among the top performing news programmes in giving an above-average share of coverage to women. However, there are Australian, German and American TV news programmes which outperform the South African in this regard.

When programmes are failing to better represent women in their news stories, TV news cannot claim that they have diversity of news coverage. South Africa appears to have a high level of women in politics and more women entering the corporate environment, yet the local media have failed to acknowledge this with better visibility of women. This creates a perception gap – leaving the general public unaware of the changing political and corporate world for women, and reiterating the patriarchal stereotypes so entrenched already in the public sphere.

Figure 7: Share of coverage on women in global TV news programmes (July 2012-June 2013)

Programme	
RTL Aktuell	
ABC News 7:30	
ABC World News Tonight	
ZDF Heute	
ARD Tagesschau	
ARD Tagesthemen	
SABC 2 Sotho News	
NBC Nightly News	
ZDF Heute Journal	
CBC News The National	

*   Top 10   ■ Share of coverage
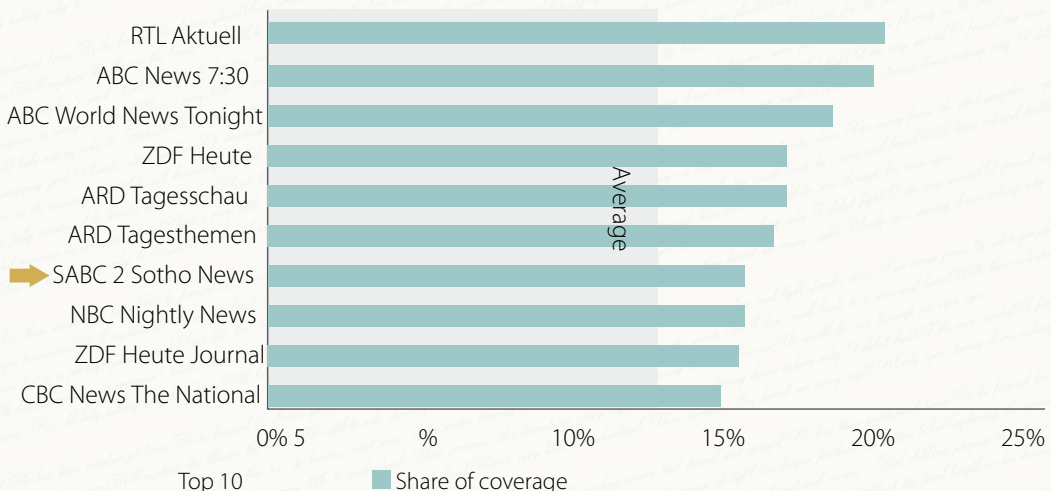
Keeping the public informed on key policy areas

Even though news media could better diversify content in order to bridge the perception gap, the South African news media has certain strengths. Domestic policy issues position South Africa above its global peers – in particular the SABC vernacular language news broadcasts (see Figure 8 below). In many countries, media hike up the coverage on domestic policy around election time and allow it to slide between elections whereas South African media consistently ensure that their coverage of domestic issues remains high between election periods and increases just before general and local elections.

Coverage on domestic policies is vital if the public is to be kept informed on politically related issues. If coverage is low the public remains uninformed about the laws which regulate society and cannot join in the debate around topics with which they agree – or disagree – and government will be unable to receive buy-in from the citizenry on key policy initiatives.

During the past 20 years of democracy, South African media has ensured that the public have been kept informed about key political decisions – and have reflected the positive and negative reactions.

Some of these issues are:

- New Constitution (1994-1996)
- Land reform, restitution and provision of housing (1995 – ongoing)
- The adoption of the outcomes based education (OBE) curriculum in the basic education system (1999-2010)
- Rolling out of 'free' antiretroviral medication to AIDS patients (2003 – ongoing)
- E-tolling and the upgrading of the national freeway system (2010 – ongoing)
- The National Development Plan Vision 2030 and its progress (2011 – ongoing)
- Privacy of information Bills and Acts (2011 – ongoing)
- Nationalisation of certain industry sectors such as mining (2011 – ongoing).

Two policy issues which have struggled to gain international media attention in the past few years have been health and education – and yet these are the two most relevant government policy issues covered by our local media. Almost a third of media coverage on government is dedicated to either one of these policies (see Figure 9).

Figure 8: Share of coverage on education in global TV news programmes (July 2012-June 2013)
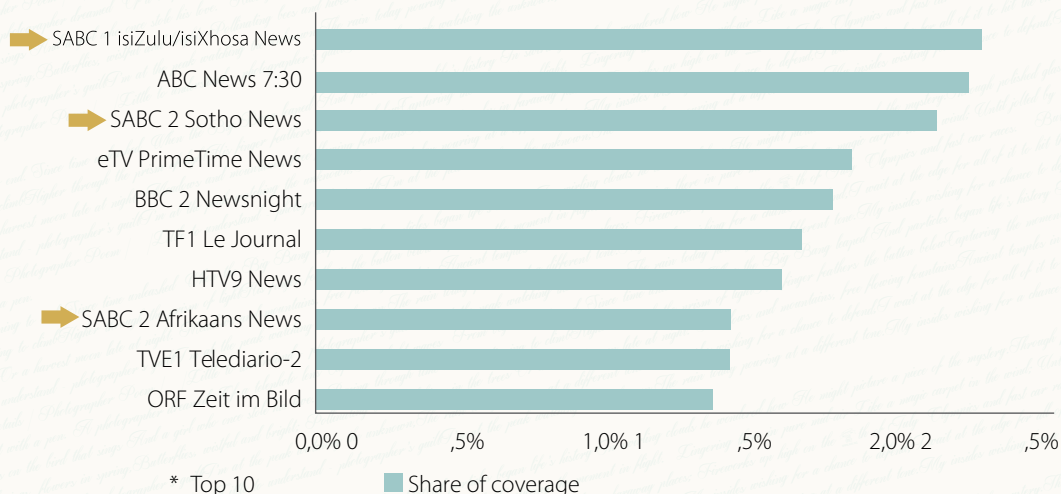
Despite this there are some limitations. Media Tenor's research indicates that local media have not helped the public understand the true extent of these two policy areas in particular because they have often chosen instead to sensationalise certain incidents or focus almost solely on a few issues such as the textbook scandal in Limpopo or generators failing in public hospitals.

Keeping health and education issues high on the agenda ensures that basic services in these sectors are improved – and ultimately trust of these sectors is built up.

Figure 9: Share of coverage on health and education issues for South African government policies in print and TV news (July 2012-June 2013)

Health Policy

30%

70%

Education Policy

27%

73%

Other Policy Policy
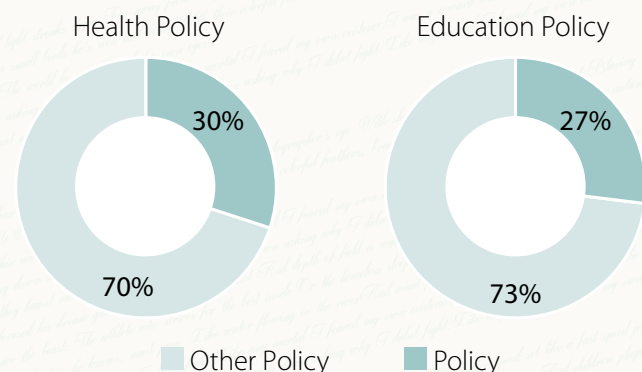
Keeping a positive tone

Figure 10 below illustrates how South African TV news programmes provide a more upbeat image of the news than is common in most European and North American TV news programmes.

Figure 10: Tone of coverage on global TV news programmes, 2011-2013

Spain
Vietnam
South Africa
China
Switzerland
France
Italy
UK
Germany
Canada
Austria
Australia
US

-20% -15% -10% -5% 0%5% %1 0%

Negative Positive
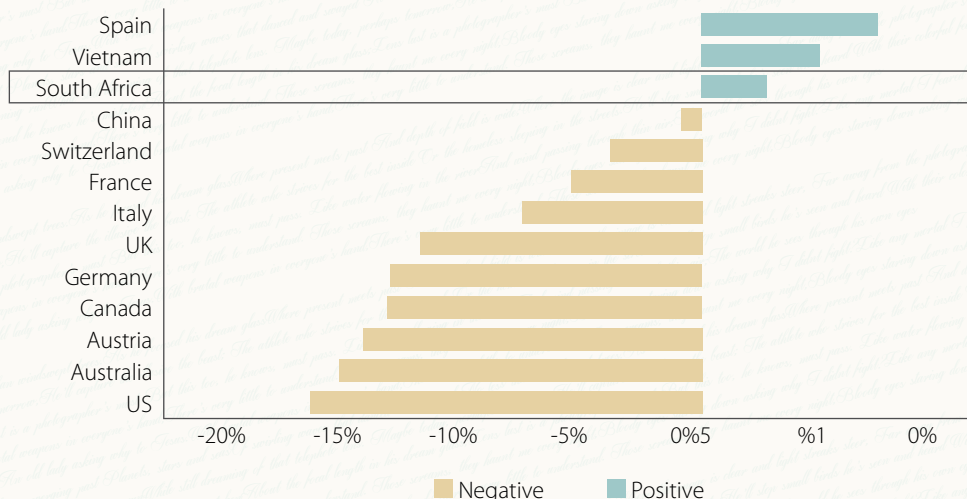
Figure 11: Comparison between news from *Financial Times* and *Business Day*, 2012-2013

Negative No clear tone Positive

Figure 12: Comparison between global financial news and South African financial news on bank CEO'S

Global media

WSJ	
Les Echos	
Handelsblatt	
FT	
FAZ	

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

SA media

Business Day	
Business Report	
Financial Mail	
Business Times	
The Citizen	

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Negative   ■ Without tone   ■ Positive
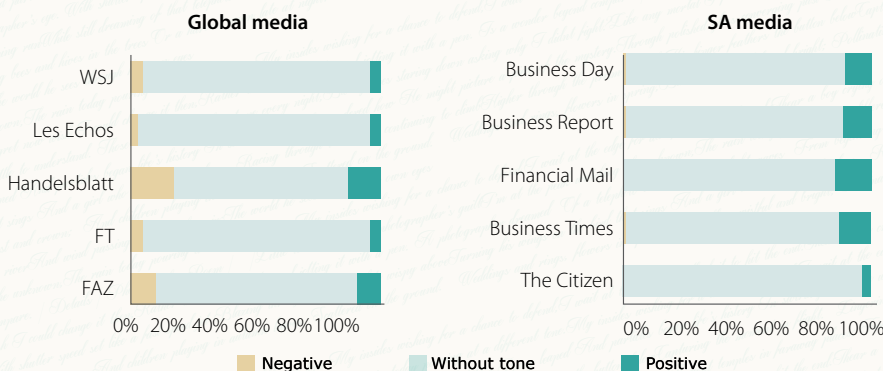
Media Tenor's research reveals that the positive coverage emerges mostly when journalists simply relay public relations communiques from both private and public sectors which carry a positive tone (see Figure 13). Secondly, as the two issues most frequently reported on in South Africa are economy and sport, and these two are usually viewed positively, the tone of the reporting is also more positive.

South African financial newspapers and magazines also adopt a different approach to reporting and do not focus on scandals and regulatory matters, instead covering issues such as corporate social responsibility and the expanding progress made by companies. This also results in a more positive tone in the media, as these issues are generally viewed positively. While a negative tone can at times be adopted towards the private sector, it is less so than that of the public sector.

Figure 13: Share of tone of voice by journalists vs. public/private entity on own affairs

Public sector on own affairs	
Journalists on public sector	
Private sector on own affairs	
Journalists on private sector	

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Negative   ■ Without tone   ■ Positive
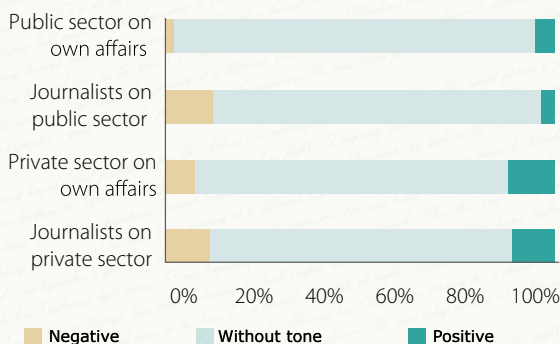
Figure 14: Growing presence of CRS related coverage with positive tone in South African business media, 2007-2013

Legend: ■ Share of coverage   — Average tonality

Y-axis: Percentage (0 to 30)
X-axis: 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013
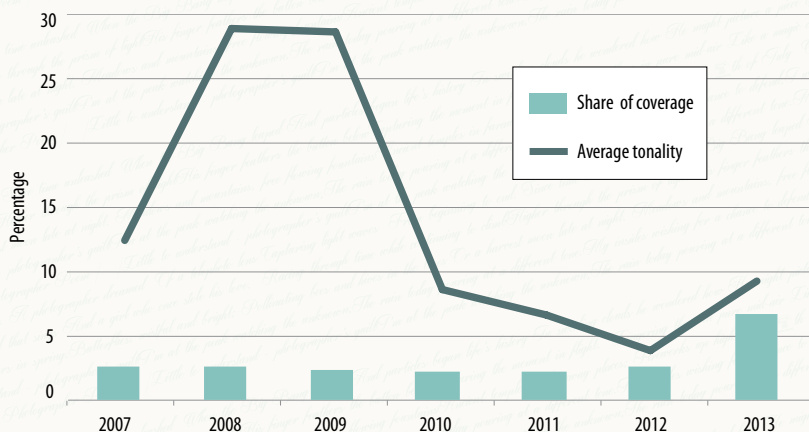
Reports that carry a cautionary tone, or one of dread, have an influence on readers. Research by PEW Research[66] and similar organisations often reveal that South Africans are more optimistic than their counterparts living in the UK or in Germany. Media Tenor has drawn correlations between survey data and media tone on a number of issues. Analyses reveal that the tone of a report plays an important part in affecting how the residents of a country view their world and the world outside. The graphs below help illustrate this point. In Figure 15, the data reveals how a positive or negative tone from the media when writing

Figure 15: UK, US and German media reporting on their economies and drawing correlations with survey data on consumer confidence

Economy: Media perception — Nationwide: CCI

Economy: Media perception — Conference Board Index

Economy: Media perception — GFK Consumer Confidence
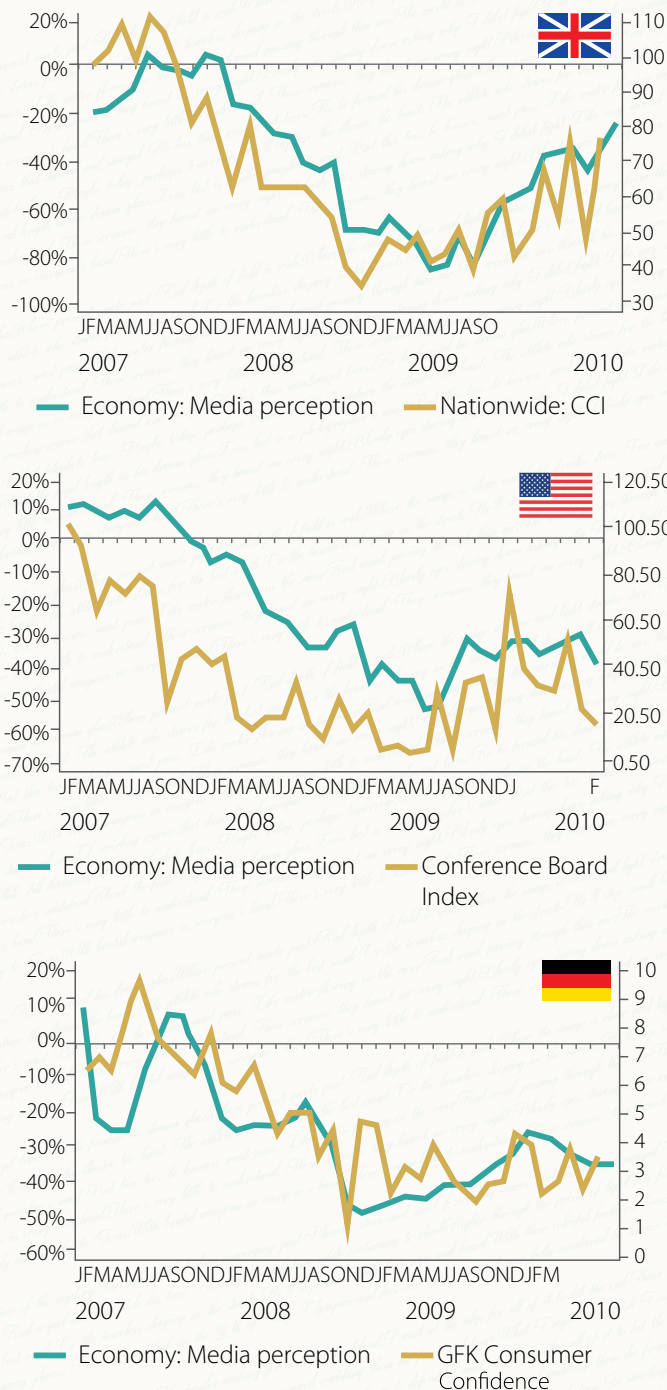
about the country's economy can lead to public perception becoming more optimistic or pessimistic about the country's economic circumstances.

The important point is that the media tone has the power to sway perceptions whether or not this representation is true. The constant portrayal of a negative image of the world or the country in question reduces public confidence and instils greater pessimism.

'Constructive journalism' challenges media around the world to minimise this negative manner of reporting in an effort to bring back trust in the media and to encourage audiences to become solution-oriented.

Constructive journalism

For years, academics and media leaders have been in search of the perfect formula to create news content that appeals to the masses and is not all doom and gloom. 'Development' or 'peace' journalism became the focus for some academics although it had little buy-in from chief news editors. It quickly faded and media resorted to 'old tactics' to keep the bottom-line in check – until Ulrik Haagerup stepped into his role as head of news for a Danish TV station where his unorthodox approach proved successful. His approach was labelled as 'constructive journalism' and helped restore audience ratings and revenue to this TV station. He has since been knighted by the Danish royal family for his outstanding efforts in journalism.

Q: So, what is constructive journalism?

A: The premise of this approach is that journalism follows a formula that incorporates a positive approach to news.

Q: Does this mean that journalists should ignore conflict, corruption, disaster, crime and similar negative news stories.

A: No. Rather, instead of only focusing on the negative side of the story, the journalist is required to seek out solutions to these problems.

This is still premised on the principles of development journalism and peace journalism, but the approach used by Ulrik Haagerup has instilled more public trust in the type of news received. The news fed to society should not continue instilling in readers and viewers a sense of hopelessness, mistrust and pessimism. The value of news reporting is that it has the power to influence people. Therefore, it is vital that news broadcasters and news media houses realise this power and understand the responsibility that comes along with it.

The highest role of the news sector is to give people critical knowledge, and knowledge is the tool that allows citizens to think constructively about problems and be a part of advancing solutions. Ulrik Haagerup, Head of News, Danish Radio.

Table 2: Summary of areas where South African media compares to its international counterparts

	South Africa	Asia, Europe & North America
Keeping the public informed about key policy areas, e.g. education and health	⬆	⬇
Diversity of news and sources	⬇	⬆
Accurately reflecting country's demographics	⬇	⬆

Conclusion

In summary, the perception gap lies between what the media houses choose to deliver to the public and the true reality of the situation. South African media create a distorted image of what affects people in the country by focusing on too narrow a range of issues. It is important for media to report on matters to encourage perceptions of the country as developing and making progress in the scientific field. This would provide the public with a wider perspective.

Similarly, unequal treatment of gender in the media results in under-representation of women's issues. Better representation of women is a first step towards re-defining the perceptions of women; creating greater awareness of the challenges facing women in business, sport, politics and society; and questioning stereotypes in the minds of the public.

Unfortunately, content that further entrenches perception gaps in South Africa will continue if the old formula to keep audiences interested goes unchallenged. A shift is required towards diverse issues of interest to the masses so that people can identify themselves and their circumstances through the media. Constructive, solution-oriented news is necessary and likely to bridge the perception gap. That being said, South African news media need to continue keeping key policy issues such as health and education at the fore so that public engagement with and participation in improving these two sectors can continue through debate and public forums.

Let the news media not fail society by keeping it uninformed and pessimistic about the future of the country. Let them take on the responsibility of challenging perception gaps with constructive information; of bridging perceptual beliefs with reality; and of representing key issues facing the majority of the population in an unbiased and constructive manner

Twenty years of media development and diversity

Lumko Mtimde

Lumko Mtimde has over the past 20 years accumulated extensive policy, regulatory, leadership and management experience in the information and communications environment. This he has built up through working first as an Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) and then Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Icasa) councilor, serving on the SABC Board and, until June 2014, acting as the Chief Executive Officer of the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA). From time to time he guest lectures at the University of the Witwatersrand on broadcasting policy and regulations. He is also a member of the Minister of Communication's National Communications Task Team (NCTT).

The 31st of March 2014 marked the tenth anniversary of the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA), a public entity set up as a partnership between the government and the media to support and promote media diversity. Coincidentally, this takes place at a time when South Africa is celebrating 20 years of freedom and democracy. Within the media and broadcasting industry, South Africa is also celebrating 20 years of the independent regulation of broadcasting and 20 years of licensing of community radio services.

The media landscape today cannot be compared to what existed in 1994. Much has changed to accord with the objectives of the legislative framework: the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996; the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act of 1993 (now the Electronic Communications Act of 2005); the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa Act of 2000; and the MDDA Act of 2002.

During the apartheid era (before the 1994 democratic elections), the white minority government curtailed freedom of expression and ensured that the media industry 'toed the line' in terms of apartheid government policies. Newspapers were forced to apply for registration if they published more than 11 times a year. An arbitrary amount was also required before registration was approved. Government enforced regulations controlling what the newspapers could publish, especially articles and activities deemed to be counter the views of the apartheid system (De Beer, 1998:90).[67]

In 1994, then President Mandela, addressing the International Press Institute's congress in Cape Town, reflected on the press post-apartheid, and laid the founding principles for media development and diversity, and freedom of expression.

Truth does indeed have immense power; yet it remains extremely elusive. No single person,

We must deepen the practice of participatory democracy in all spheres of public life.

no body of opinion, no political or religious doctrine, no political party or government can claim to have a monopoly on truth. For that reason truth can be arrived at only through the untrammelled contest between and among competing opinions, in which as many viewpoints as possible are given a fair and equal hearing. It has therefore always been our contention that laws, mores, practices and prejudices that place constraints on freedom of expression are a disservice to society. Indeed these are the devices employed by falsehood to lend it strength in its unequal contest with truth … Freedom of expression, of which press freedom is a crucial aspect, is among the core values of democracy that we have striven for … A critical, independent and investigative press is the lifeblood of any democracy. The press must be free from state interference … It must have sufficient independence from vested interests to be bold and inquiring without fear or favour. It must enjoy the protection of the constitution, so that it can protect our rights as citizens … The tragic absence of diversity in the South African media has been a matter of grave concern to us over a number of years … It remains to be seen how these changes will affect both the diversity of viewpoints and address previous imbalances in the access to and control over the press.[68]

Similar principles were reiterated by President Zuma in his inauguration speech on 9 May 2009.

We seek a vibrant, dynamic partnership that is enriched by democratic debate that values diverse views and accommodates dissent. Therefore, we need to make real the fundamental right of all South Africans to freely express themselves, to protest, to organise, and to practise their faith. We must defend the freedom of the media, as we seek to promote within it a greater diversity of voices and perspectives. We must deepen the practice of participatory democracy in all spheres of public life.[69]

Twenty years on and the media and broadcasting industry has been re-structured in a three tier form: public, commercial/private, and community media. The legislative and regulatory framework has created an enabling environment for the growth of community and small commercial media. This is through a licensing regime that requires no fees for community broadcasting; reserving radio frequency spectrum for community broadcasting; prescribing regulations that accommodate this sector of the media; and, creating supporting bodies such as the MDDA which provides financial and non-financial support for community and small commercial media.

The Press Freedom Commission (PFC), the Print Digital Media Transformation Task Team (PDMTTT) and the MDDA reports of 2009 and 2014 confirm the lack of adequate transformation in this industry, noting however that there have been some changes such as the Sekunjalo acquisition of Independent Newspapers and the introduction of the New Age. Despite interventions by the MDDA and the state through their promotion of transformation processes and BBBEE, the mainstream print media consumed daily, weekly and monthly remains owned and dominated by a few individuals and companies.

It is important to review our laws and policies, to discuss the past 20 years and celebrate the good story. This chapter argues that as part of the preparation for the next phase of transformation, we should reflect on 20 years of media freedom and diversity; consider the conclusions of many reports (including those of the PFC, PDMTTT and MDDA); review the policy on media development; and map a way forward for a media that reflects South African demographics and diversity and serves the needs of all sectors of our society.

TEN YEARS OF THE MDDA

Prior to 1994, community and alternative media, in the form of newspapers and magazines such as the *New Nation, South, Saamstaan, Grassroots, SASPU National, Vrye Weekblad,* as well as Bush Radio, were the voice of the democratic forces and were largely supported by international donor funding.

In 1995, the community media sector met in Cape Town at the Community Media 2000 conference. Among its recommendations was a formation of an 'enabling support mechanism' or 'media development agency'. This 'Community Media 2000' conference provided an opportunity for the community media sector to respond to the drying-up of international donor funding; to lobby for support and the

Similarly, the commercial/private and public media have grown tremendously in terms of listenership and viewership. Broadcast media has made significant strides in transforming in line with the national Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) strategy, as well as the legislative and regulatory requirements. The print media landscape, on the other hand, has not transformed much with ownership and control mainly being retained by white monopoly capital.

creation of a sustainable enabling environment; and to ensure that provisions supporting the sector were included in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP).

During the 1990s, civil society was unable to create the required support mechanism for community media. Already, some community newspapers like *NEMATO Voice* had closed as donor funding dried up. Government was, however, committed to this sector as a means of promoting access by marginalised groups and of enhancing media diversity – and considered that community media would be best served by setting up a media development agency. This was based on a recommendation from the Communication Task Group (Comtask) of 1996 led by Mandla Langa and established through the leadership of the then deputy president, Thabo Mbeki.

This Task Team's further recommendations included that a professional advisory and consultative committee, Communications 2000 be set up to:
- Advise on the subsidy and support mechanisms to be adopted for the promotion of media diversity (Recommendation 37).
- Explore, advise, encourage and consult on avenues for partnership with sectors engaged in information delivery at community level (Recommendation 38).[70]

These and other advocacy processes led to the recognition of three tiers of broadcasting (community, commercial and public) in South Africa which were legislated through the IBA Act of 1993 (now repealed and replaced by the Electronic Communications Act of 2005). Another favourable achievement for the community media sector was the Authorities Position Paper on Community Sound Broadcasting Services of 1997 and the subsequent Community Sound Broadcasting Policy Position Paper of June 2006. Of note also is the Community Television Broadcasting Services Position Paper of November 2004.[71]

After extensive discussion and debate, the development of policy positions and enabling legislation, the MDDA was launched in 2004 to promote media development and diversity. The MDDA Act established the agency and defined media development as transformation of the media environment and infrastructure so that historically disadvantaged communities and persons would have access to the media as owners, managers, producers and consumers. Further, the Act defined 'diversity' with regard to media as meaning access to the widest range of sources of information and opinion as well as equitable representation within the media in general. The objective of the agency was seen to be to promote development and diversity in the media throughout the country, consistent with the right to freedom of expression as entrenched in section 16 (1) of the Constitution, in particular freedom of the press and other media and the freedom to receive and impart information and ideas.

To give meaning and effect to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, the MDDA Act of 2002 established the agency to:

- Encourage ownership and control of, and access to, media by historically disadvantaged communities as well as by historically diminished indigenous language and cultural groups;
- Encourage the development of human resources and training, and capacity building, within the media industry, especially amongst historically disadvantaged communities;
- Encourage the channeling of resources to the community media and small commercial media sectors;
- Raise public awareness with regard to media development and diversity issues;
- Support initiatives which promote literacy and a culture of reading;
- Encourage research regarding media development and diversity; and,
- Liaise with other statutory bodies, such as Icasa and the Universal Service and Access Agency of South Africa (USAASA).

MDDA MTEF 2014-2019 approved strategic objectives

The objectives and strategic focus of the MDDA in its second decade remains informed by its vision 'Access to diversified media for all' and mandate 'Ensuring the sustainable development of a vibrant, innovative and people centred media'.

In the last ten years, there has been an increase in available support for media development and diversity.

	Strategic objective	Linked programmes
1	Ownership, control and access to information and content production by communities.	Programme A: Grant Fund and support Subprogramme A1: Community media
2	Enhancement of ownership and control by independent media entrepreneurs.	Subprogramme A2: Small commercial media
3	A vibrant, innovative and people-centred media.	Subprogramme A3: Research, training and development
4	The strengthening and promotion of a vibrant, innovative and people-centred and diversified media.	Subprogramme A4: Monitoring and evaluation
5	Legally sound contract management and litigation free Agency.	Programme B: Legal and contract management
6	Creation of an environment and capabilities that deliver MDDA value products and services.	Programme C: Human resources and corporate services
7	Enhanced governance and accountability standards of the MDDA.	Programme D: Risk management and internal audit
8	To strengthen, grow and protect the MDDA funding base.	Programme E: Financial management and auxiliary services Subprogramme E1: Finance and supply chain management
9	To standardise the basic IT infrastructure and to ensure that it complies with industry standards.	Subprogramme E2: IT
10	A well-known, valued and reputable brand.	Programme F: Communications, branding and stakeholder management

SUCCESSES AND DELIVERABLES OF THE MDDA

20 years of media freedom and diversity – MDDA celebrates the good story

- Media freedom, freedom of expression and access to information is protected and guaranteed through the Constitution.
- A number of statutes have been enacted to give effect and meaning to the Constitution, creating an enabling environment for media diversity.
- The 20th anniversary of the establishment of independent broadcasting regulation in South Africa (the then IBA was set up in 1994).
- A three-tier broadcasting system (public, community and private) enables a diverse broadcasting industry.
- South African content, languages and cultures enjoy airtime.
- Listenership and viewership has grown since 1994.
- Broadcast coverage has increased.
- There is an ongoing funding partnership between broadcast and print media, and government.
- Ten years of unqualified and clean audits.
- 570 media projects supported through MDDA grants worth R275million.
- Community radio commands more than 25 per cent of total radio listenership.
- Signal distribution costs for community broadcasting are reduced.
- Community television is licensed in more than four provinces, viewership is growing and access to government advertising has opened up.
- Readership of community and small commercial newspapers has increased to more than three million.
- More community and small commercial newspapers and magazines are produced in indigenous languages and spread throughout district municipalities.
- More than 2021 individuals have been trained and skilled.
- More than 247 bursaries have been awarded in media studies.
- More journalists are provided accredited training through the MICTSeta partnership.
- More than R30 million government adspend is allocated to community and small commercial media per year.
- More than 12 per cent of government advertising expenditure, amounting to more than R60 million, has been spent on community and small commercial media from April 2011 up to March 2013.
- State-owned entities are committed to allocating their adspend to community and small commercial media.
- Easy to use toolkits on governance, advertising and marketing have been produced to empower community and small commercial media.
- Research reports are produced and published on *www.mdda.org.za*.
- Visible efforts to improve media diversity.
- MDDA has received a number of acknowledgements, including being a finalist in the National Business Awards 2013.

MDDA by numbers:[74]

Comtask Report	**1996**
National Action Plan for Promotion and Protection of Human Rights	**1998**
MDDA Position Paper	**November 2000**
Total estimated budget requirements for MDDA over five years (Position Paper 2000)	**R500m**
Expected budget requirements/target in the first five years (Position Paper 2000)	R300m
Expected worse case budget target for MDDA (Position Paper 2000) per year	**R60m**
MDDA Act enacted	**24 June 2002**
First board appointed	December 2002
Inaugural board meeting	January 2003
First CEO appointed	**August 2003**
First staff complement appointed	**September 2003**
First request for proposal	**November 2003**
First board meeting to allocate grants	January 2004
Second CEO appointed	**1 July 2006**
Total number of first applications received and processed	**27**
First Annual Report	**2003/4**
First private partners funding deposit	**August 2004**
First allocation (Jan 2004)	**R12m**
Total awarded grants as at January 2014, since Jan 2004	R275m
Total number of projects supported in 2004/5	74
Total number of projects supported as at January 2014, since Jan 2004	567
Total number of trained people since April 2004	**2021**
Total number of bursaries to different radio and print media	247
Total number of directly employed people in projects since April 2011	544
Total number of indirectly employed people in projects since April 2011	1632
Total MDDA staff numbers as at January 2014	24

Funding the MDDA

The MDDA held its first grant award meeting in January 2004, one year after it was established. With the limited resources at its disposal (cumulative total of R275million, as at 31 March 2014) it has had to do more with less. The MDDA is funded through a partnership between the government and the private sector, as tabulated below:

Table 1: MDDA Funding

Income in rands	
Government (GCIS)	20 000 000
Print media	4 000 000
Broadcast media	28 644 876
Interest	4 025 765
Management and admin fee (DoC Project)	
Total Income	56 670 641
Source: Annual Report 2012/13	

This public private partnership funding model has been a success. The Electronic Communications Act of 2005 legislates on the broadcasting contributions which, in terms of Section 89, require that Icasa prescribes a contribution from the industry. Icasa has since prescribed that 0.2% of annual turnover of licensed activities be paid by licensees, and when this contribution to the MDDA is made, the Electronic Communications Act deems licensees compliant.

The real funding challenge is in respect of the print media industry as their contributions are voluntary. Inflation has also decreased the value per media entity (namely Media24, Independent Group, Times Media and Caxton), from R1.2m at the onset to R1m in 2013/14. The print media industry has also opted as from 2014/15 not to renew the agreement until the media development and diversity policy has been reviewed. This review may take 18 months or more to complete, which in effect means that the print media mandate of the MDDA in terms of small commercial media will be negatively affected for at least two years (this is far from ideal, and requires urgent intervention). The only sustainable revenue is therefore through the support that government provides as well as the broadcast media partnership that exists.

Since inception, the MDDA has had a clean audit record, receiving unqualified reports from the Auditor General of South Africa (AGSA). This attests to its sound leadership, financial management and good corporate governance practises.

Ownership, control and transformation of community media

As at January 2014, with its limited accumulative budget of R275 million the MDDA has supported more than 567 media projects in all provinces, focusing on historically disadvantaged communities. Now, more than ever before, community and small commercial newspapers and magazines are owned by diverse media owners and communities and publish in a range of indigenous languages. They are also, according to the Association of Independent Publishers (AIP) read by more than three million people.

Broadcast media has also made significant strides in transforming in line with BEE strategy and the regulatory and legislative framework. Broadcast media figures reveal that 26% of the total radio listenership in South Africa listens to community radio.[72] The community radio stations are organised by the National Community Radio Forum (NCRF) and National Association of Broadcasters of South Africa (NAB) while the Association of Community Television of South Africa (ACTSA) organises community television. ACTSA also reports that community television viewership is now more than five million.

The advent of community broadcasting has contributed towards diversification of the media

landscape: in addition to the public broadcasting services and the private commercial broadcasting services, the 52 district municipalities all have access to their communities through community radio. Community radio services are owned and controlled by the communities they serve as per their licence as issued by Icasa.

Although community and small commercial magazines are also available in the 52 district municipalities these are however less developed than the community broadcasting services and some local municipalities are not reached by this media. Local community news and information is therefore not covered by newspapers, even though community members may have access to some local 'knock and drop' newspapers owned by Media 24 or Caxton. The community and small commercial newspapers are organised under the Association of Independent Publishers (AIP) but not all of them belong to the association.

In line with MDDA's initial vision, 20 years on the situation is much better in most district municipalities. Consumers are now able to choose from media that includes community and small commercial newspapers and/ or magazines as well as community radio produced in local languages. However, there are still areas with no access due to topographical challenges as the landscape is mountainous. More work is needed to ensure that universal coverage, access and the production of media in indigenous languages is achieved.

One of the major projects is the establishment of the online booking and monitoring system, aimed at improving and professionalising access to advertising income and complying with reporting and accountability. This system will enhance access to advertising by the community and small commercial media and, it is hoped, contribute to the sustainability of the sector.[73] The MDDA will continue to pursue this project although the rollout is delayed because of the procurement process and funding.

In the future, once access to affordable broad-band is available to all, digital, broadcasting, mobile and online media will mainly dominate the landscape. Support for the online presence of community and small commercial media is also seen as the vision for the future. Applications for MDDA support will also be made online by those who have access to the Internet – the application forms are already accessible online and in the next financial year they will be activated and made interactive.

Training and skills development

MDDA's developmental approach provides for coaching and mentoring programmes to assist empower and capacitate projects. More than 2021 young South Africans have been trained and skilled, and now form part of the industry. Research work has been conducted and provides a reference point in reflecting our country's media landscape.

The promotion of media literacy and the culture of reading has increased with interventions in four provinces. The Media Literacy and Culture of Reading programme is one of the flagship projects. This project targets learners from historically disadvantaged schools and since 2009 four provinces – Eastern Cape, North West, KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State – have hosted launch summits.

Easy-to-use toolkits and other materials have also been produced and published by the MDDA. These have assisted not only community and small commercial media but

others in the mainstream media too. These toolkits focus on the building of specific skills, such as marketing, advertising and corporate governance.

Through the MDDA/Sanlam Media Awards the acknowledgement and the appreciation of excellence in the community and small commercial media has encouraged skills development and the growth of expertise in the sector.

Advocacy and lobbying

The MDDA's advocacy and lobbying interventions have started to create an enabling environment for media development and diversity. The MDDA has successfully advocated and lobbied for:
- A regulatory environment (created by Icasa);
- Reduction of tariffs for community broadcasting signal distribution by Sentech;
- Printers' discounts for community and small commercial newspapers and magazines;
- Discounts provided by Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) for community and small commercial newspapers and magazines;
- Easily available research and information for reference that reflects the South African media landscape;
- Increased support for the MDDA agenda by the mainstream broadcasting industry.

MDDA's passionate interventions have helped build the consciousness of government communicators, political leadership and the private sector towards community media. This has led to an increase of advertising revenue for community and small commercial media, thereby ensuring its sustainability. Over the past two years more than R30million per year has been spent on this sector.

But there is still a long way to go. One of the most serious challenges is that some local government communicators do not realise the importance of using relevant communications platforms. It is not unusual to find an advert about a local meeting in a national newspaper, whereas this should be placed in the local media in an appropriate language.

There is also a limited understanding of the difference between community and small commercial media, and local media owned by the mainstream media. As a result adspend meant for community and small commercial media is spent in the mainstream media – which works against the country's commitment to media diversity. There is a continuing need for government communicators to be aware of and engage with the community and small commercial media; to communicate in languages spoken by the consumers; and to use media consumed by the targeted audience.

The transformation of the media industry – the 'elephant in the room' - is now an accepted reality, as is confirmed by the PFC and the PDMTTT. The PFC, although focusing on regulation of the press, addressed the issue of media transformation because many of the public submissions received brought this up. The PDMTTT was set up primarily to focus on media transformation within a print and digital media environment.

It is through the hard work of the MDDA that these transformation discussions are taking place. The MDDA, in addition to its financial support, has conducted research on areas ranging from the trends of ownership and control of media to content. MDDA also reported on the transformation challenges in Parliament that led to the public inquiries into the transformation of print media. Of necessity now is the implementation of the recommendations from the PFC, PDMTTT and MDDA research reports.

Research initiatives

The MDDA is working on some key research that includes reflections on the past ten years and the media diversity index. The research outcomes help shape the agency's programme and have been used by stakeholders with an interest in the media landscape.

Achievements against objects of the Act

These are but a few of the MDDA interventions that have had a positive influence on media transformation in the last decade. The MDDA has had a visible impact on each of the seven objectives of the MDDA Act as seen from the table below:

Preamble	Strategic objective	Key Result Area	Achievement/ Output indicator
Create an enabling environment for media development and diversity that reflects the needs and aspirations of all South Africans	To contribute towards improving the operating environment of the community and small commercial media sectors	Advocacy for media development and diversity	Submissions to Icasa, DoC, Parliament etc
	To strengthen, grow and protect the MDDA capital base, accordingly to increase the funding and resource base of the MDDA and its beneficiaries	Fundraising and resource mobilisation	Renewed funding agreement. Increased government and broadcasting funding revenue
	To strengthen, grow and protect the MDDA capital base	Financial management	Clean unqualified audits
Redress exclusion and imagination of disadvantaged communities and persons from access to the media and the media industry	To contribute towards improving the operating environment of the community and small commercial media sectors	Advocacy for media development and diversity	1. Prioritise indigenous language and rural projects 2. Submissions 3. Research reports
Promote media development and diversity by providing support primarily to community and small commercial media project	To contribute towards improving the operating environment of the community and small commercial media sectors	Advocacy for media development and diversity	1. Research reports 2. Submissions 3. Training 4. Grants 5. Toolkits 6. Learning forums 7. Awards
	To enhance and improve programming, production and build capacity in community broadcasting sector	Quality programming and production in community broadcasting sector	1. MoU with DoC 2. Funding IAJ/ABC, Ulwazi/MTC 3. Grants
Encouraging ownership and control of, and access to, media by HDC as well as by historically diminished indigenous language and cultural groups	To contribute towards improving the operating environment of the community and small commercial media sectors	Advocacy for media development and diversity	1. Research reports 2. Grants 3. Training 4. Summits/roundtables/ engagements with partners.

Objectives	Strategic objective	Key Result Area	Achievement/Output indicator
Encouraging the channelling of resources to the community media and small commercial media sectors	To contribute towards improving the operating environment of the community and small commercial media sectors	Advocacy for media development and diversity	Funding agreements
	To promote and strengthen the small commercial print and	Grant and seed funding	341 projects funded
	To enhance sustainability of community and small commercial media To strengthen and consolidate beneficiary projects	Capacity building interventions for beneficiary organizations, including mentorship	341 projects funded with R128m
Encouraging the development of human resources and training, and capacity building, within the media industry, especially amongst HDG	To contribute towards improving the operating environment of the community and small commercial media sectors	Advocacy for media development and diversity	1. Training 2. Bursaries 3. Workshops 4. MoU with MAPPPSETA (MICTSETA) / NEMISA
	To strengthen the operational efficiencies of the MDDA so as to deliver sustainable media development and diversity content and impact	Internal business processes	1. PTSS 2. Grants, Funding Cycle 3. Pastel 4. Tight internal controls 5. Policies and procedures 6. Systems 7. Clean audit reports
Raise public awareness with regard to media development and diversity issues	To enhance and position the MDDA as a leader in media development and diversity To strengthen relations with MDDA contractual and non-contractual stakeholders	Communications and public awareness with regard to the sector and the MDDA in general Partnership and stakeholder management	1. Annual reports 2. COMSTRAT 3. Outreach programmes 4. Publicity 5. Debates 6. Publications 7. Research reports 8. Websites 9. Press office 10. Facebook
Support initiatives which promote literacy and a culture of reading	To promote media literacy and the culture of reading	Media literacy and culture of reading	Summits in partnership with key stakeholders
Encourage research regarding media development and diversity	To enhance innovation and learning in the sector.	Research and knowledge management	1. Research reports published 2. Research reports informed public discourse.

MEDIA DEVELOPMENT AND DIVERSITY – THE CHALLENGES

The challenges that affect the sustainability of small commercial and community media, as well as media development and diversity, include: media ownership, control and transformation; the print media value chain; competition; lack of advertising support for community media; and the language of the media. These have been confirmed and detailed in the PFC Report 'Press Regulation in the Media,' the PDMTTT *Report on the Transformation of Print and Digital Media* as well as the MDDA research report 'Trends of ownership and control of media in South Africa.'

SA media: ownership, control and transformation – a bird's eye view

Since 1994, South Africa's media and broadcasting industry has changed for the better, this as a result of the collective and regulatory intervention of the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), Icasa and MDDA.

On the public broadcasting service front, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) manages 18 radio stations, three TV channels, and a 24-hour news channel (SABC News 24). There are prospects of many more channels as a result of Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) and Direct To Home (DTH) opportunities.

In the 2013/14 financial year, there were more than; 17 commercial/regional or provincial stations private radio stations; 180 community radio stations;[75] and, seven community television stations.[76] The community TV stations include: Soweto Community TV in Soweto/Johannesburg (Gauteng); Bay Television in Empangeni/Richards Bay (KwaZulu-Natal); Tshwane TV in Tshwane (Gauteng); Cape Town Community TV in Cape Town (Western Cape) and the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) (Eastern Cape). A few of the licensees have not been able to take off because of lack of access to not only radio frequency licences but also to funding.

E-tv is the only privately owned free-to-air commercial terrestrial television station. MultiChoice owns: M-Net (Pty) Ltd which broadcasts the M-Net premium channel; the Community Services Network (CSN) targeting special interest communities; and, a Sports and the digital satellite bouquet on DStv.

MultiChoice was the only pay-TV and satellite broadcasting service in the country until 2007. In 2007, Icasa licensed new satellite broadcast services: MultiChoice, On-digital Media, Telkom Media, Walking on Water and eSat. Prior to the 2007 licensing, the only grandfathered service was MultiChoice, as it existed prior to the legislative changes made post-1994.

Currently, with digitisation, there is a move to Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) wherein free-to-air television services are to migrate from analogue to digital. This is also complemented by direct-to-home satellite television services, an example being the Sentech's Freevision and e-tv's Openview (OVD).

The changes in the broadcasting industry reflect the success of the work of the then IBA (established in terms of the IBA Act of 1993) and Icasa's regulatory and licensing interventions. The criteria to qualify for licensing as enshrined in the law is ownership by historically disadvantaged individuals (HDIs), foreign ownership limited to 20 per cent, and that broadcasting is effectively controlled by South Africans.

Print media is by far the largest media sub-sector in South Africa (in terms of the number of titles). The print media remains dominated by the 'big four', Caxton, Naspers (Media24), Sekunjalo Independent (previously Independent Group) and Times Media Group who own and control a large number of newspapers and magazines across the country. In addition, there are public titles such as *Vukuzenzele*, the *Public Sector Manager, GovComms;* a number of independent newspapers and magazines; and a number of small commercial and community newspapers and magazines as defined in terms of the MDDA Act of 2002.[77]

On the 23 October 2012, Quest Research Services was contracted by the MDDA to conduct research into the transformation of print media in South Africa. This research focused on the lack of black ownership in the industry, and the report – based on consideration of levels of real ownership by black persons and not on the BEE scorecard – confirms that on this level the print media is not doing well at all. (It is worth noting though that the new entrants, *The New Age* and Sekunjalo contributed positively to some changes in the ownership and control of print media).

Print and Digital Media SA (PDMSA), instead argues for the BBBEE scorecard to be used as a measure of transformation, as it measures other elements of transformation. The PDMSA's argument implies that if the scorecard is used, then the industry has actually transformed much more than the MDDA has suggested.

In fact, the industry's performance in terms of even the scorecard is very good in some respects and very patchy in others. All four mainstream media houses have scored top marks for the indirect indicators of transformation, namely enterprise development and socio-economic development. Scores for preferential procurement are strong.

Table 2: 2011/12 Figures for 'Big 4' media companies[80]

Media Company	Preferential Procurement (Maximum 20 points)	Enterprise Development (Max 15 points)	Socio-Economic Development[78]
Media24	18.2	15	100%
Caxton[79]	15.61	15	
Independent	15.4	15	100%
Times Media Group	7	15	100%

These are unsurprising findings as companies often find these targets easier to meet than the direct empowerment targets. The scores for skills development, however, are poor, with Media24's score being particularly dismal. The low scores imply that managers have slashed training budgets in response to the recession, an unstrategic move as it strengthens the argument that commercial imperatives are driving down journalism standards.

Print media is by far the largest media sub-sector in the country. It remains dominated by Caxton, Media24, Times Media Group and Sekunjalo Independent. Within this environment, the small commercial and community media struggle to survive as they are challenged by issues of affordability and sustainability.

Table 3: Print media owners as at June 2013

Owner	HDI (Max 20 points)[81]	Manage-ment Control (Max 10 pts)	Black Ownership	Female Ownership	Total Score	BBBEE Status
Media24	20.00	6.10	35.77%	16.66%	71.72%	Level 4
Caxton	0.0	8.44	0.0%	0%	57.94	Level 5
Times Media Group	18.95	4.61	55.64%	0.00%	65.28	Level 4
Independent News-papers (Sekunjalo Independent Media)[82]	0.00	3.25	10.95%	10.58%		Level 6
The *New Age*[83]	18.08	9.00	21.58%	21.58%	75.16%	Level 3
Mail & Guardian[84]	0.00	8.88	0.0%	0.00%	48.26	Level 6

Source: Individual Company Scorecard

Table 4: Current B-BEE Codes

2007 BBBEE GENERIC SCORECARD		
Element	Weighting	Compliance Target
Ownership	20 points	25% +1
Management control	10 points	(40% to 50%)
Employment equity	15 points	(43% to 80%)
Skills development	15 points	3% of payroll
Preferential procurement	20 points	70%
Enterprise development	15 points	3% (NPAT)
Socio-economic development	5 points	1% (NPAT)
TOTAL	**100 points**	

2013 Revised B-BBEE Scorecard		
Element	**Code series**	**Revised weighting**
Ownership	100	25 points
Management control	200	15 points
Skills development	300	20 points
Enterprise and supplier development	400	40 points
Socio-economic develop-ment	500	5 points
TOTAL		**105 POINTS**

Source: Amended BBBEE Codes of Good Practice 2013.

Transformation must focus much more broadly though – on ownership and control, management, conditions of employment, newsrooms, content and so on. The biggest threat to our democracy is media monopoly as this has a negative impact on the battle of ideas; access to diverse information and therefore informed public participation. South African society is diverse and all views and opinions must find expression in the public discourse and the media narrative. Media ownership and control (like in all other industries) must reflect the demographics of our society if there is to be confidence in its integrity.

Many South Africans, 20 years into our democracy, have become increasingly concerned about the lack of transformation in the print media, the lack of media diversity (in particular) – and the real threat this poses to media freedom. This has been expressed vividly in a number of radio interviews, phone-ins, in parliamentary hearings, and in the submissions made to the PFC and the PDMTTT. The domination of ownership and control of the print media by whites has been confirmed through different reports, MDDA research, the PFC and PDMTTT. Hence we see a convergence of ideas that suggest that transformation within this industry needs to be fast tracked.

In the print media space potential new entrants are challenged by issues of affordability and sustainability. The high cost of printing machines prohibits the smaller media owners from growing into significant operations. For meaningful transformation to take place, the MDDA's capacity must be built so that a viable funding plan is developed which will help new companies to become independent of the big operators.

There is a further challenge with each change of ownership as the gains made in transforming media ownership and control are eroded or threatened. Questions are raised about whether there have been significant changes since the Comtask Report of 1996 and the Human Rights Commission inquiry into racism in the media of 2000. An honest and dispassionate introspection is needed. The envisaged policy review on media development and diversity should deal with the question and inform a more radical approach to changing the media landscape.

The MDDA has a huge task as, in keeping with the requirements of the MDDA Act of 2002, the organisation must give meaning and effect to Section 16 (1) of the Constitution and encourage the ownership, control and access to media by historically disadvantaged communities as well as by the historically diminished indigenous language and cultural groups. This means working together with the industry and the South African citizenry to build an environment where a diverse, vibrant and creative media flourishes and reflects the needs of all South Africans.

> **South African society is diverse and all views and opinions must find expression in the public discourse and the media narrative.**

Competition and the print media value chain

White monopoly's ownership of the print media extends across the value chain – into publishing, printing, distribution, advertising, research, news agencies and the ABC[85]. This is of increasing concern and any transformation process must therefore focus on the entire value chain.

In the publishing market, printing of newspapers is concentrated among the large media houses. These media groups have extensive printing footprints with established printing capacity that is either in-house or outsourced. There are very few independently owned newspaper printing presses and those that do exist often have standing agreements with the large media houses. This makes it very difficult for the community media to compete.[86]

Recently, the Competition Commission[87] and Competition Tribunal[88] investigated complaints related to 'knock and drop' distribution mergers; the use of 'predatory pricing' to drive competitors

out of the market by selling advertising at a low cost; barriers to entry; mergers with publishing companies; and creeping acquisitions. The small size of the firms being acquired often results in the mergers being classified as small mergers in terms of the Act and therefore non-notifiable allowing them to escape competition scrutiny. In this way, the large companies are able to gain control of a range of com-munity newspaper titles. This has a negative effect on the promotion of media diversity.

A number of rulings[89] [90] suggest that there should be an eye-out for 'anti-competitive behaviour' in respect of the entire value chain of the print media.[91] The focus by the Competition Commission on the possibility of anti-competitive behaviour in the print and electronic media will complement the mandate of the MDDA in promoting media diversity.

Language diversity

English is the most commonly used language especially in the print and television media environment. This does not correspond to the language profile of our country and the needs of all consumers are therefore not served.

The broadcasting industry is relatively open, and reflects the country's diversity in respect of languages (as all eleven official languages are represented). The linguistic spread of radio broadcasts (viewed collectively) accommodates all eleven official languages and the Khoisan language which is broadcast on public radio (SABC). More than 80 per cent of community radio stations broadcast to communities in indigenous languages, as per their license terms and conditions. The public broadcaster has also reported full compliance with licence terms and conditions in respect of meeting language obligations as published in the *Icasa 2009/10 SABC Compliance Report*.

There remains an opportunity on television though as not all the local languages are equitably reflected. Commercial broadcasting and almost all formats are predominantly in English. For example, there is no indigenous language talk radio format in existence.

Similarly in the mainstream print media, newspapers are printed largely in English and Afrikaans while most community and small commercial newspapers and magazines such as *Coal City News*, *Pondo News*, *Seipone Xivoni*, *Ikhwezi News*, *Rainbow News*, *Balaodi Publishers*, *Dizindaba News*, *Idikelethu News*, *Bua Sedibeng News*, *Guluva Magazine*, *Isibane Somphakathi*, *Maputaland Mirror*, *Masilonyana News*, *Sebatakgomo News*, *Umamgobhozi*, *Ngoho News*, *Skawara* are in indigenous languages. These are spread throughout all South African provinces.

According to the MDDA 2009 research report, 'Trends of ownership and control of media,' the history of South Africa's indigenous language media dates back to the eighteenth century. The origin of the black press is linked to the arrival of Christian missionaries in South Africa. Some of the first indigenous language newspapers in South Africa were *Umshumayeli Wendaba* (Publisher of the News) published in 1837, *Indaba* published in 1862 and *Ikwezi* in 1884. The first newspaper written by black journalists for black readers is considered to be *Isigidimi sama Xosa* published in 1876 (De Beer, 1998:90).

The first black-owned and controlled newspaper was *Imvo Zabantsundu*, published in King William's Town in 1884. It was owned and edited by John Tengo Jabavu,[92] whose political comments were influential. Jabavu is often described as the first real black journalist in South Africa (De Beer, (1998:90).[93]

Ilanga lase Natali (The Natal Sun) is another early black indigenous language newspaper which was established by John Dube[94] and his partners in 1903 (De Beer, 1998:90). The *Bantu World* was established in 1930s, and was later adopted by the Argus Company, a move that initiated the slow death of the independent black press as apartheid took hold of the country (De Beer, 1998:90).

The indigenous language newspapers (com-munity and small commercial media as defined in terms of the MDDA Act of 2002) are faced with major challenges. They compete with

mainstream newspapers that have a healthy business history, huge capital and a competitive advantage. They also compete with local newspapers owned by the mainstream media that publish mainly in English and Afrikaans, languages that seem to be preferred by chain stores who then distribute these. For indigenous language newspapers to attract more readers and advertisers they need to be run like real businesses and to publish quality and relevant content.[95]

The transformation of the print industry must include change within the entire value chain and should result in an enabling environment for the sustainability of these indigenous newspapers and magazines. Indigenous publications are important not only for media diversity but also to stimulate a culture of reading and to promote literacy. Support for indigenous newspapers will contribute towards ensuring an expanding readership base in the future.

Content diversity

Content diversity is key for media diversity but this cannot be altogether de-linked from ownership and control. Content diversity encapsulates language, class, gender, culture, geographical representivity, ideology and worldview. Changes in ownership in the industry may not have had a direct positive effect on diversity of content.

The frontiers of transformation in ownership and control patterns need to be pushed – appointing the editor/sub-editors is the prerogative of the owner and therefore they reflect the owner's worldview. It is in this way the owners indirectly oversee and control operations. Many editors/sub-editors who enter this industry are introduced to the concept of 'editorial independence' and therefore adopt a 'hands-off' approach. Whereas editorial independence is a noble principle in the context of a free media, active involvement and participation by new owners in board activities such as in editorial policy setting as well as in the remuneration and human resources committees will assist in promoting the landscape change and media diversity.

The complexion of owners is the key to transforming those editorial rooms. South Africa needs to package information in sustained creative, colourful and informative ways and this should be shared in a manner which is educational and entertaining.

In broadcasting, there is little substance to the argument that content has not changed significantly owing to commercialisation – the Icasa local content regulations have led to licences being granted based on a requirement to change programming. This has resulted in different programming formats and styles thus enhancing diversity. It is, however, true that reliance on advertising does limit the provision of content that serves public service obligations.

Community broadcasting adds value to media diversity but still needs more work from a content point of view. Change can be effected through a combination of things: regulation; funding; capacity building; awareness at community level, and so on. These areas should be tackled as part of the envisaged policy review process.

Advertising and sustainability

Government, as one of the major advertisers, must start driving the transformation agenda at these media houses. What stops government from taking a decision as an advertiser to not support those media houses seen to be derailing transformation?
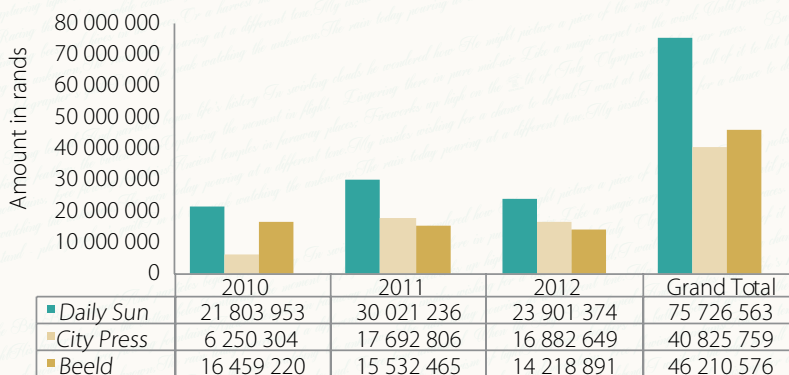
According to the GCIS, government advertises in all mediums – in newspapers, in radio stations, television and digital media – reaching a variety of targeted audiences. In the 2012/13 financial year, by the end of November 2012, government had, through the GCIS media bulk buying service, spent R108 million across all platforms – in the process saving about R17 million of public funds.
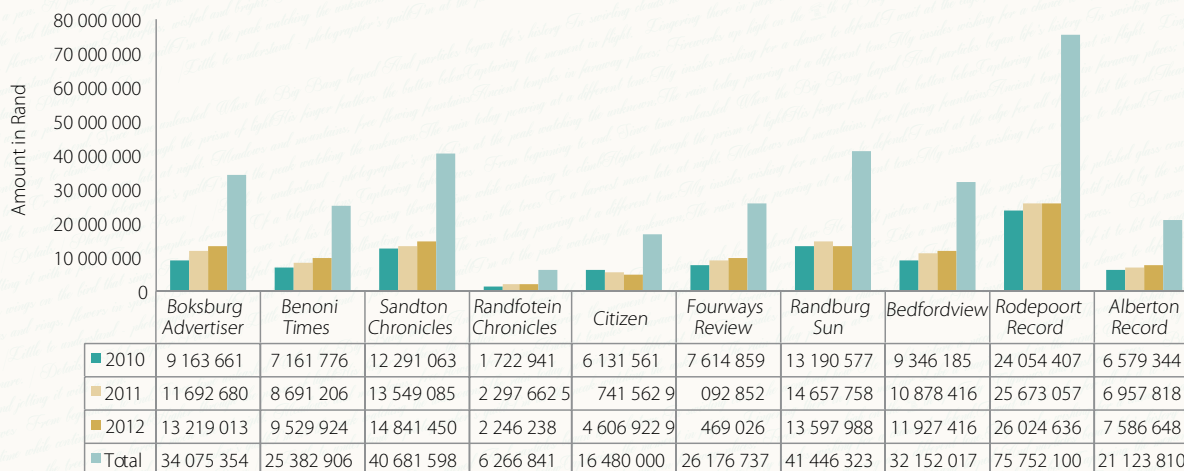
Table 5: The advertising expenditure on newspapers groups for the past financial years through GCIS[96]

Newspaper Group	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Naspers	R7 035 538 (35%)	R19 431 629 (35%)	R16 003 717 (27%)
Avusa	R6 891 259 (34%)	R 15 588 285 (28%)	R16 451 828 (28%)
Independent	R2 726 400(13.6%)	R 7 950 114 (14%)	R 11 681 268 (19.7%)
New Age	R122 700 (0.6%)	R8 850 165 (15.9%)	R6 070 697 (10.2%)
Total	**R16 775 897.00**	**R51 820 193**	**R50 207 510**

Figure 1: Adspend – Media24 top newspapers[97]

	2010	2011	2012	Grand Total
Daily Sun	21 803 953	30 021 236	23 901 374	75 726 563
City Press	6 250 304	17 692 806	16 882 649	40 825 759
Beeld	16 459 220	15 532 465	14 218 891	46 210 576

Figure 2: Caxton – Top 10 newspapers with high adspend

	Boksburg Advertiser	Benoni Times	Sandton Chronicles	Randfotein Chronicles	Citizen	Fourways Review	Randburg Sun	Bedfordview	Rodepoort Record	Alberton Record
2010	9 163 661	7 161 776	12 291 063	1 722 941	6 131 561	7 614 859	13 190 577	9 346 185	24 054 407	6 579 344
2011	11 692 680	8 691 206	13 549 085	2 297 662 5	741 562 9	092 852	14 657 758	10 878 416	25 673 057	6 957 818
2012	13 219 013	9 529 924	14 841 450	2 246 238	4 606 922 9	469 026	13 597 988	11 927 416	26 024 636	7 586 648
Total	34 075 354	25 382 906	40 681 598	6 266 841	16 480 000	26 176 737	41 446 323	32 152 017	75 752 100	21 123 810

Figure 3: Sekunjalo Independent Newspapers top ten adspend[98]

	The Star	Isolezwe	Daily Voice	Cape Times	Daily News	The Mercury	Pretoria News	Diamond Field Advertiser	Cape Town Business report	Isolezwe Nge Sonto
2010	358 041 001	6 643 805	2 842 655	2 801 771	9 877 319	100 107 413	3 817 809	19 912 609	3 018 324	0
2011	374 468 386	13 371 764	2 587 490	3 337 584	9 514 940	96 271 758	4 646 203	22 395 047	5 009 034	0
2012	369 791 444	12 842 327	2 044 536	2 506 467	9 512 868	86 639 647	4 579 035	23 593 350	6 177 908,00	2 611 494
2013	1 102 300 831	32 857 896	7 474 681	8 645 822	28 905 127	283 018 818	13 043 047	65 901 006	14 205 876	2 611 494

Table 6: National government adspend through GCIS in 2011-2012

2011-2012 GCIS Adspend summary- National government departments booking adverts through GCIS		
Community and Small Commercial Media	Fiscal 2011-2012	% Share
Print	R 2 141 329.87	8.91%
Radio	R19 075 336.44	79.30%
Television	R 2 811 548. 70	11.70%
Total	**R24 028 215.01**	**100%**
Mainstream media	R182 099 347. 99	
Total adspend under GCIS management including community and small commercial media	**R206 127 563.00**	

Source: PDMTT Report p.44

Table 7: National government adspend through GCIS in 2011-2012

2012-2013 GCIS Adspend Summary- National government departments booking adverts through GCIS		
Community and small commercial media	Fiscal 2012-2013	%share
Print	R10 001 150. 29	26. 63%
Radio	R20 497 094. 62	54. 58%
Television	R7 053 833. 78	18. 7%
Total	**R37 552 078. 69**	**100%**
Mainstream	R181 693 652. 31	
Total adspend under GCIS management incl. community and small commercial media	**R219 245 731. 00**	

Source: PDMTT Report p.44

Table 7: Summary of business adspend towards mainstream print media

Media House	2010	2011	2012	Total Adspend
Media24	2, 508, 205, 192	2, 616, 216, 648	2, 551, 067, 163	7, 675, 489, 003
Sekunjalo's Independent Newspaper	1, 901, 207, 889	1, 981, 770, 154	1, 980, 925, 827	5, 863, 903, 870
Times Media Group	1, 418, 935, 194	1, 560, 047, 134	1, 625, 120, 551	4, 604, 102, 879
Caxton4	1, 122, 470, 539	1, 263, 330, 079	1, 278, 339, 667	3, 664, 140, 285

Source: ADEX (Nielsen) 2013

Figure 1, 2 and 3 give an indication of the adspend in some of the newspapers owned by the "Big 4" print media companies.

Even though, in previous financial years, government adspend on community and small commercial media (radio, TV and print) increased to more than R30 million per year, this remains an opportunity worth further exploration. Community and small commercial media connect directly with people at grassroots who are in desperate need for information about developments and opportunities that will help improve their lives.

Government should, in communicating to its target audience (which coincidentally is the audience consuming and desperately in need of this information), be using its adspend to drive transformation and enterprise development, focusing on enterprises owned by blacks. The MDDA must be strengthened and provided with sufficient funds to support black start-ups and new commercial mainstream initiatives, possibly in partnership with the Public Investment Corporation (PIC) and the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF). Currently, Section 3 (iii) of the MDDA Act encourages the channelling of funding and resources to only community and small commercial media. This restriction should certainly be reviewed, a new media development and diversity policy be adopted, and amendments to the MDDA Act of 2002 effected in order to strengthen the Agency and to fund new entrants in line with its objectives.

Twenty years on, questions still arise about government adspend – whether this should be used for radical transformation and to support the objectives of the MDDA Act of 2002? National Treasury could even issue a Practice Note/ Regulation that provides for no transactions with untransformed media houses, so that the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) through the audit process exposes departments and state owned entities that support a white media monopoly.

As part of the second phase of the transition, it is of utmost importance that radical transformation is seen in the media landscape so as to ensure that an information rich and knowledge based society is created.

Conclusion

As we reflect on the last 20 years, we see that our Constitution (read together with the MDDA Act of 2002) enshrines the principles of a diverse and free media, seen as central for sustaining and deepening our democracy. The question then arises: do we have a diverse media? What effect does the lack of a diverse media have on democracy? What is already being seen is that a dominant and narrow narrative persists in every discourse.

It is envisaged that government will continue to support and uplift the work of the MDDA in order to meaningfully impact and create an enabling environment for media development and diversity. This will be done with an endgame in

mind – to allow public discourse to flourish and to ensure a diverse, vibrant and creative media thrives and reflects the needs and aspirations of all South Africans.

The hope is that government will develop a Green Paper/Discussion Paper on media development and diversity. This should be informed by the research conducted and supported by the Agency, industry research, and 10 years of MDDA experience. Other policy matters identified by the Board should also be discussed.[99]

This Green Paper/White Paper process will inform government proposals on how to initiate any new transformational programmes aimed at fast tracking and ensuring radical change in this industry which holds the key to the building of an informed and knowledgeable society. This could include possible amendments to the MDDA Act of 2002 as the mandate of the organisation in reviewed.

It is hoped that the noble agenda pursued by MDDA of media diversity and plurality of voices and opinions will continue to be supported. MDDA funding also needs to be increased in order to fast track the transformation of South African media. We should build strong partnerships between community media and government, in order to achieve the 100% access to information as espoused in the 2030 vision of the National Development Plan, information that can be enjoyed by all communities, even in deeply rural areas.

Community radio: a view of the landscape after twenty years

Jayshree Pather

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South Africa has witnessed substantial transformation of the broadcast sector over the past 20 years. In addition to the constitutional provisions of freedom of expression (section 16) and access to information (section 32); the liberalisation of the airwaves that began in the 1990s led (among other important measures) to a three-tier broadcast system (public, commercial and community); a shift from a state broadcaster to a public broadcaster, and the establishment of an independent regulator.

Well over 1.6 million people in South Africa now listen to community stations.

Changes are most visible when it comes to community broadcasting – as shown by the growth in the number of community radio stations that have been licensed and by increasing listenership. In 2001, a study commissioned by the Open Society Foundation of South Africa (OSF-SA), and undertaken by Nell and Shapiro, recorded that 65 community stations had been licensed and a conservative estimate was that 'well over 1.6 million people in South Africa now listen to community stations'.[100] By 2005 there were 92 stations that had received four-year licences and three million people were listening to community stations according to SAARF figures.

A 2011 study commissioned by the Department of Communications (DoC) found 'there were 165 nonprofit and low-power service licensees' and of these '143 had been on air in the period between July and October 2011. Nineteen years later, almost every district municipality has community and small commercial media (CSCM) in the form of either community radio and/or newspapers and magazines.[101] Recent SAARF figures[102] (February 2013-February 2014) show that 8.3 million people listen to a community station and there are 204 stations broken by provinces as follows: Eastern Cape (27), Free State (15), Gauteng (39), Kwazulu-Natal (23), Limpopo (25), Mpumalanga (18), Northern Cape (10), North West (17), and Western Cape (30).

There are also eight community television stations licensed in four provinces: Gauteng (Soweto TV, Bara TV and Tshwane TV), North West (Platinum TV), KwaZulu-Natal (1KZN and Bay TV) and Western Cape (Cape TV), in addition to the grandfathered Trinity Broadcast Network (TBN).

Figure 1: Number of community radio stations by provinces

Number of radio stations
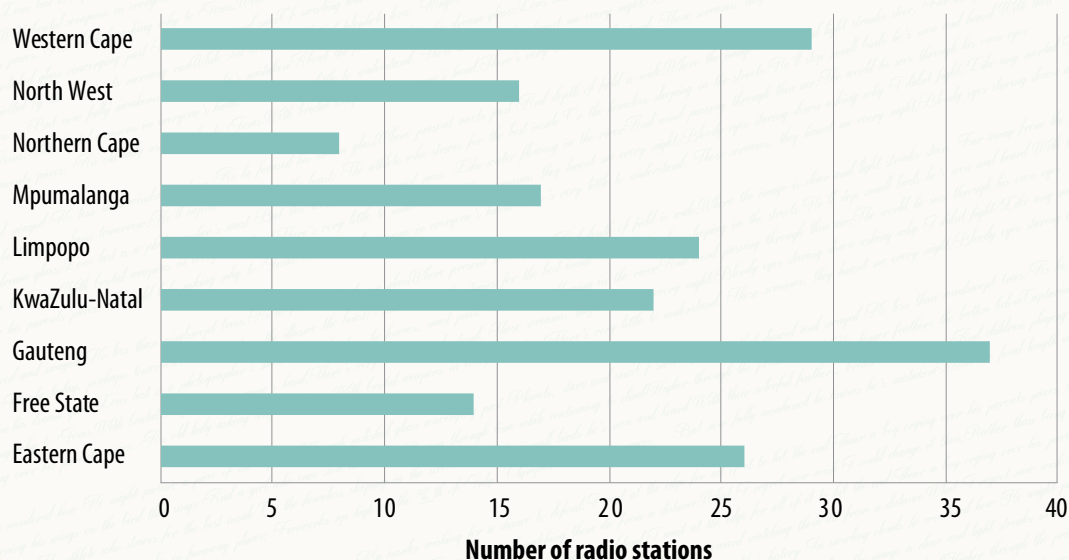
The opening of the airwaves has led to South Africa's rich cultural, religious and language diversity being reflected and has cut across a range of geographies from rural to urban to peri-urban. This is a remarkable achievement considering our past culture of repression, silencing and censorship.

The formalisation and institutionalisation of the third tier of broadcasting: to inform, educate and entertain; to add to diversity (of ownership and content); to ensure a more participatory form of media (at a level people can engage in more directly); and to promote development, social cohesion and a greater voice was therefore very critical.

... the core principle of community broadcasting which is broadcasting for the community by the community.

Given this purpose, the following reflection examines the community radio landscape in South Africa through the prism of some key dimensions – community ownership, control and participation, content and programming, and financial sustainability. It does so by drawing on academic research, workshops and media reports.

Before homing in on these dimensions, some general observations:

Firstly, given the size of the sector, the wide range and spread of geographies and socioeconomic contexts in which stations operate, it is very hard to generalise. There are considerable variations in levels of governance, management, programming quality, sustainability and impact. Some of the different models of community stations are also as a result of a station being started for different reasons: 'some founders wanted to pursue certain interests – religious and political in some cases, like some of the conservative Afrikaans stations; stations founded by community "activists" who wanted to create a platform for community expression;

and entertainment-based stations founded by young people with a DJ mentality (or [who] want to emulate a commercial station)'.[103]

In a policy submission made to the DoC in 2009,the NCRF called for a move away from the one-size-fits-all approach to community radio[102] as 'too prescriptive; [it] does not take into account the vast diversity that exists within many communities nor does it allow for communities themselves to define what its core issues are (in contravention of the core principle of community broadcasting which is broadcasting for the community by the community).' The NCRF argued instead that each community should define what the objectives of its community station are as guided by the regulator, Icasa.

As Kruger et al (2013) put it 'Real radio stations resist easy cataloging and take a wide range of forms... There is little benefit in searching for an abstract purity in the sector, which would exclude stations on the basis that they fail to measure up to one standard or the other. It is far more productive, and makes a better contribution to real diversity of voices, to be inclusive, allowing for inventiveness and initiative in responding to different circumstances.'[105] While there has been a notable increase in a research focus on community radio, as demonstrated by a growing number of research papers on the sector, the lack of quantitative information related to the sector is a gap, as is the lack of impact studies on community radio.

In 2011, the DoC commissioned a study looking at the impact of its Community Radio Support Programme, some of the findings of which are reflected in this report. Undertaken by Pygma Consulting, the study involved a desktop review of the legislative, regulatory and policy framework for community radio, market research and a questionnaire that was sent to all community radio stations.

In 2013, the MDDA invited bids[106] for research into the impact of MDDA funding on both community and small commercial media as the agency had supported 413 projects to the value of R201 million and wanted to evaluate

its support to improve its positive effect in the future. It is hoped that this research is prioritised as it will provide useful and important insights that should feed into upcoming policy review processes.

A brief history

According to the Windhoek Charter on Broadcasting in Africa (a statement of press freedom principles adopted by African newspaper journalists at a UNESCO seminar in Windhoek, Namibia in 1991), 'Community broadcasting is broadcasting which is for, by and about the community, whose ownership and management is representative of the community, which pursues a social development agenda, and which is nonprofit.' The South African community radio sector can trace its roots to the CASET project (Bush Radio's predecessor) and Radio Zibonele. The CASET project provided audio political education by producing cassette tapes containing political speeches from banned political activists, local music and radical poetry, and disseminated these to activists and grassroots formations in the Cape Peninsula.[107] Radio Zibonele evolved out of the Zibonele Community Health Workers' Project, a health awareness project in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, that produced health programmes in the 1990s using a participatory approach and with content produced with members of listeners' committees.

The 'Jabulani! Freedom of the Airwaves' Conference in the Netherlands in 1991 made a series of recommendations for broadcast reform that would become founding principles for post-apartheid broadcast policy and laid the foundation for some of the legal and institutional frameworks. These include a definition of community broadcasting based on the principles of community ownership and control, and were run on a nonprofit basis.

The Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA, and later to merge with SATRA to become Icasa) was established in 1993; the IBA Act was promulgated in 1994; and the first community broadcast licences were issued in 1995 to Radio

Maritzburg, Bush Radio, Radio Mafisa, Soweto Community Radio, Radio Bushbuckridge, and Radio Zibonele. The period that followed saw significant support channeled to community stations, initially by international donors such as OSF-SA (which provided infrastructure and training to enable the first stations to set up) and later by government. Stations targeting specific groups (such as religious stations) have also received support from their respective communities and the institutions or organisations to which they are linked.

Community broadcasting is broadcasting which is for, by and about the community, whose ownership and management is representative of the community, which pursues a social development agenda, and which is nonprofit.

The Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) was set up in 2004 with the specific mandate to provide support for community media in order to encourage the growth and development of small commercial and community media for greater diversity. The Department of Communications has also played a significant role through its Community Radio Support Programme (CRSP) – an infrastructure roll-out to provide technical equipment to stations; signal distribution and upgrade; programme production support; training and capacity-building; and satellite network infrastructure support.

Government Communication and Information Services (GCIS) has been instrumental in channelling government advertising to community stations as well as providing access to important government information. In 2013, the then minister in the Presidency, Collins Chabane, reported that in the previous

financial year alone, GCIS had supported the financial viability of community and small commercial media by placing R37 million worth of advertising on community media platforms (print, radio and television).[108] The National Community Radio Forum (NCRF), a national, membership-driven association, was formed in 1993 to build an enabling environment and coherent sector identity for community radio. The NCRF website reports current membership as 120 stations. Over the past couple of years the NCRF has been weak–partly due to financial challenges and internal power struggles[109] and as a result of 'its helicopter (that is, top heavy)' approach[110] but is now in the process of organisational renewal and re-building as reported by the deputy chair of the NCRF at the Joburg Radio Conference held in July 2014.

The development in community radio in South Africa has been described as a 'project to create and build community broadcasters … as an entirely new arena for public discussion, geared specifically for poor and marginalised groups', and 'has to be seen as a deliberate and programmatic attempt to create local public spheres and to balance what was seen as a mainstream media not sufficiently attuned to the new order and its values. The phrase 'voice of the voiceless' is often used to capture this purpose.'[111]

A picture of the landscape

This section draws on different reports to examine some of the successes, challenges and problems that have emerged over the past 19 years and tries to give a snapshot of the landscape. It is by no means exhaustive.

> We have just been on a two month journey through a fascinating terrain – the community radio sector in South Africa. We have spoken to 18-year olds who dream of the power of the microphone to a 70-year old woman who wants to share her stories with the community

over the airwaves before she dies. We have seen young activists stop to listen to the old people of their communities … We have listened to moving programmes that seemed to our inexpert ears as professional, and far more meaningful, than anything we hear on commercial radio. We have travelled to every province in South Africa, to urban, rural and peri-urban areas. We have listened to people, both station-based and service providers, speak with passion of this extraordinary medium, and they have done us the honour of sharing with us their love affair with community radio.[112]

Some of the challenges that Nell and Shapiro identified in their 2001 evaluation of community radio training programmes were: a lack of understanding of what community radio is; a lack of organisational development and management skills; a lack of communication skills; a lack of radio and broadcasting skills (technical, programming and presentation); and, a lack of resources (financial and human). These challenges are still prevalent today. In 2009, at a workshop held in Johannesburg, members of the National Community Radio Forum (NCRF) identified the following challenges facing community broadcasters: a limited understanding of community radio by government, officials and researchers (participants felt that the decision to support community radio was often modeled on corporate or public broadcasting and ignored

the mandate of community radio); community stations that mimic mainstream broadcasters; community stations as a 'breeding ground for big media houses' and the dangers of an over-reliance on government and corporate funding.

Participants were also frank about the power struggles that emerged from hidden or vested interests in setting up community stations, and the tensions that existed between management and boards at many stations. Delegates were also uncertain about freedom of expression and were concerned about repressive elements of new policy; particularly given their dependence on state funding: 'We do not know how the state will respond to criticism and pressure, nor what this will mean for a sector that is largely dependent on state funding.'[113]

Community ownership, control and participation

'It is your radio station; you must be involved in its running, and you must be able to tell your community station what kind of programming you would like it to broadcast; and to make it truly a community station you ought to be able to communicate with it' (Community activist, Right2Know Media Diversity workshop, July 2011).

How to give meaning and effect to community ownership has arguably been one of the most vexing dilemmas facing community broadcasters. This has partly to do with the notion of community which, as Kruger points out, is vague and 'tends to idealise the underprivileged groups to which it is most often applied and glosses over internal complexities'.[114]

Van Zyl (2003) highlights the valuable role a community radio station can play in creating a sense of community: 'Interest groups within a said geographical setting can come together to apply for a licence and once the licence is granted then a community is created around the station's interactivities; so where no community existed before, the radio through discussion and debate can construct one.'

However, communities are not all homogeneous – not even communities of interest – as there is a range of class, language, cultural, religious, political views and interests. Understanding communities as sites of struggle over access to resources, influence, status and voice is crucial because, as Burkett highlights: 'A community is a paradoxical experience. It is about difference as much as unity. It is about conflict and harmony, selfishness and mutuality, separateness and wholeness, discomfort and contentment. Privileging one of those opposites in interpreting communities denies the transforming powers of human communion and resorts to fixed ideas about communities.'[115]

The reality is that many community radio stations are located in areas where they are one of the few places for employment and training, especially for the youth, and the station as a source of money, power and influence becomes a site of struggle for control and access to these.

Poor communities faced with high unemployment and lack of access to infrastructure view the sector as providers of income and resources such as gaining access to telephones, fax machines, photocopiers, the Internet, training opportunities and above all, paid work rather than as initiatives needing community support. For example, the early experiences of community radio projects in South Africa, where volunteers rebelled, staged sit-ins and strikes, stole equipment and CDs, or simply abandoned stations when they realised there was insufficient income to pay salaries, are testimony to this. (Siemering & Fairbairn, 2007)

The Pygma Consulting study found that 'Governance problems have beset many stations Forty-eight per cent (48 per cent) of those interviewed cited this as a key problem. This was reinforced by interviews with stakeholders (including Icasa).

These stem predominantly from a lack of understanding of the roles of boards and management and challenges faced by many stations in facilitating substantive participation by communities.'[116]

Examples where there have been struggles around the radio station include Thetha FM in Orange Farm, Gauteng, which was the epicentre of conflict[117] when one of its presenters accused a local pastor of being a satanist, which led to a situation where staff were held hostage.[118] The situation at Thetha FM station has also been exacerbated by allegations of fraud, mismanagement and nepotism and has been ongoing since 2006.[119] In May 2014, staff at Radio Zibonele in Khayelitsha in the Western Cape went on strike because of concerns about the station manager and allegations of mismanagement and nepotism.[120]

Village FM, a newly licensed station in North West Province is among the stations where there is infighting and two competing boards, and Icasa has launched an investigation for non-compliance with licence conditions; Unitra in the Eastern Cape was embroiled in similar conflicts in 2010.[121]

Some community stations have adopted a sectoral approach to representation on the board whereby any community structure can participate (church groups, NGOs, youth organisations, sports associations) with the exception of political parties in accordance with Icasa's regulations. Others, like Radio Zibonele, Thetha FM and Karabo FM have adopted a membership approach to AGMs – while the AGM is open to all, only members are allowed to nominate and vote for board members. The danger of this model is it that could privilege those in the community with money and marginalise working class or unemployed people.

Listeners' clubs or associations have become popular mechanisms for enhancing community participation in content and programming, and particularly for engaging with perceptions and levels of awareness among listeners. The demographics of listeners' clubs vary but if stations have a deliberate strategy of encouraging diversity (age, educational levels, socioeconomic levels) this could be an effective way of engaging the community broadly.

The challenges of 'community', given South Africa's diverse language, cultural and religious interests coupled with the challenges of dealing with our deeply divided past and huge levels of socioeconomic inequalities, are immense and some of the tensions that have emerged over the years may indicate that this was underestimated. 'While the idea of media for the community, by the community was to achieve popular currency in both popular and legal definitions of the sector… within this broad definition lay much that was, and remains, contested… Policy interventions grappled with the issue of community participation and ownership since the early days of community radio, and to date the issue is unresolved.'[122]

> **It is your radio station; you must be involved in its running, and you must be able to tell your community station what kind of programming you would like…**

In future, policy makers and practitioners will once again need to need to wrestle with the difficulties of building communities, and this time with greater recognition of community stations as sites of resources, power and status – and therefore contested.

Content and programming

A community station needs to 'offer programming that answers the needs of its community, often through the familiar trio of education, information and entertainment.'[123] To this, Fairbairn adds 'validating and strengthening communities, covering topics that are relevant; encouraging discussion and debate; providing platforms for marginalised voices and others' as important dimensions.[124]

A study conducted by Jansen in 2009, found that:
   The pre-occupation with generating com-

mercial revenue, and dependence on advertising from either commercial or state sources, was not only impacting on the orientation and style of programming, but also de-prioritising drawing in the actual community into programme content and direct participation and that a lack of development, deepening and widening poverty in townships and the departure and decline of the radical intelligentsia has caused community radio stations in South Africa to be a sterile imitation of what they ought to be – distinguished only by their size, scope, locality and formal adherence to broadcast licensing requirements.[125]

A 2009 study by the Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership (SPI) highlighted the risks of sponsored programmes and paid-for slots:

Listeners are concerned that local government departments mask some of the serious issues that need discussing, such as service delivery. Inexperienced presenters and journalists sometimes self-censor by not discussing critical issues, which they feel, could offend the government officials. This can be attributed to a number of reasons, such as lack of journalistic experience, and fear of interrogating the department that buys the most programme slots. On the other hand, the business relationship allows the stations to leverage government support. [126]

…not a single international story showed up in our sample. While community stations should focus primarily on local news, ignoring the rest of the world entirely seems surprising.

News is another important component of a station's role to inform:

If community stations are to play a role in building local public spheres, the way in which they handle their news output must be relevant to how effectively they are able to shape a local agenda and local discussion. If they simply reflect a national news agenda by following the priorities of major national media, their contribution is limited.[127]

In a study undertaken with a small sample of 13 community radio stations, the following insights emerge: most news on community stations was lifted from newspapers and websites; only half of the stations studied had a news department of any kind; and there was very little international news on geographic community stations:

…not a single international story showed up in our sample. While community stations should focus primarily on local news, ignoring the rest of the world entirely seems surprising.[128]

Some of the challenges with collecting news included lack of staff, facilities and resources – the vital organisational features that influence the production of news and which are a key factor hampering a stations' ability to fulfil its mandate. 'Station-owned transport is rare, and money has to be scraped together to pay for public transport. Thetha FM news editor Simon Nwanba said he sometimes used his own money to pay reporters' taxi fare.'[129] Language translation requirements place additional demands on staff time and affect staffing patterns.

'The most important observation from this research is that the news function at many community stations has atrophied to a simple matter of finding items on news websites, editing them somewhat and reading them on air. Too often, actual reporting does not form part of the picture.' (Kruger, 2011)

Sustainability and independence

The reality is that many community radio stations are located in areas where they are one of the few places for employment and training. A substantial entrepreneurial spirit exists in community radio, and in practice community radio stations employ a range of financial

sustainability mechanisms (again, much of this is not well documented).

Radio Ikwezi, a religious (and therefore a 'community of interest' station) in KwaZulu-Natal partnered with a church mission which resulted in the station being able to negotiate a lease for a nominal fee from the mission. Radio Ikwezi also pools its Internet costs with two organisations (a school and a local business) in the area. The bulk of its revenue comes from advertising, but it does not sell generic spots – instead its sells programme sponsorship and sells mostly to the big seed companies in the area, where agriculture is the main industry.

An Outside Broadcast Unit has been central to Radio Riverside's sustainability and the station is able to generate an income stream from making syndicated programmes for other community stations in the province. Radio Riverside also gives local businesses and 'spazas' a lower advertising rate. Radio Islam gets about 95 per cent of its income from advertising and there are some months when it does not have enough advertising space to cope with the demand.

Radio Phalaborwa credits local businesses with supporting it to purchase studio equipment and a transmitter, and relies on advertising agencies such as Serongwane, Motswako Media, Media Connection and the NCRF and the GCIS for its revenue, as most local businesses do not see the value of advertising. Only about 0.1 per cent of local businesses advertise on the station.

Community radio has also served an important training and capacity-building role, with many people leaving to join public and commercial broadcasters and media enterprises. Here again, there is insufficient data and more needs to be done to track this movement of people from community to commercial media and to quantify this important contribution to building skills.

Brenda Leonard from Bush Radio (interview, 2012) saw advertising as the big obstacle to sustainability and believes that 'the whole industry needs to be changed.'[130] She cited a recent experience where the station had to wait

for a long time for the media buyer to finalise the arrangements despite the client's having made the decision to advertise with the station quite quickly. Some agencies are slow in making payments to stations and this has a huge effect on plans and cash flow.

In early 2012, the MDDA and GCIS announced the development of an online booking system for community and small media that would ensure that GCIS adspend would reach these sectors. This came on the back of oversight visits to community media initiatives in Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, Western Cape and Northern Cape by the Portfolio Committee on Communications (PCC), where one of the main complaints raised was the difficulty community radio experienced in terms of raising advertising revenue.

Community radio has also served an important training and capacity-building role, with many people leaving to join public and commercial broadcasters and media enterprises.

While the proposed centralised advertising system mooted by the MDDA and GCIS is a good idea which will allow for the monitoring of advertising revenue flowing to community radio, a challenge is compliance. Stations will need to be in good standing with South African Revenue Service and Icasa, and for many this is currently a big problem.

Some community radio stations are doing very well financially – but more research needs to be undertaken to understand how resources flow into community radio and how they are being used, how they are ploughed back into the station and the community – and especially to assess what impact this has had on content.

Ntshangase (2009) raises this challenge in relation to Jozi FM: 'Its huge potential audience, with increasing levels of wealth, has allowed the station to build an audience that stood at over 500 000 at its peak, although recent figures show that it has dropped back to 289 000 (Rams October 2012). Although it is structured as a nonprofit entity and is governed by a board elected by the community, it has adopted a resolutely commercial approach.

It is able to generate some R5 million, which amounts to 70 per cent of total income (2007 figures). However, it has been criticised for losing touch with its mission of community service, and has had to face demonstrations by disgruntled members'.[131] Recent SAARF Rams figures (February 2013) put Jozi FM listenership at 394 000.[132]

At a NCRF/AIDC workshop held in Johannesburg in 2009, Mashilo Boloka from the Department of Communications proposed that struggling community radio stations become fully funded so that they are not concerned with generating resources and able to focus their time and attention on the other critical challenges they are facing. In an interview with Wits Justice Project, Alex FM saw the consistent covering of baseline costs as important for sustainability. 'We receive money for advertising from the government communications department. If we could move to a more sustainable funding model, with a consistent covering of our baseline costs by some means that would be great, as funding is a real challenge.'

Proponents of the funded model view argue that an annual subsidy to a community station that qualifies and which can demonstrate compliance and commitment to the values and principles of community broadcasting –will help to reduce the current bureaucratic and onerous application systems and ensure greater stability and predictability of funds for stations. This is an issue the Right2Know Campaign (R2K) is exploring and in 2014 its national summit resolved to campaign for an annual grant to community radio.[133]

The point about South Africa's race and class complexities and its impact on the financial sustainability of stations has also been a recurrent theme. Tleane has observed:

Like many other aspects, or facets, of the community radio sector its financial state, and ability to remain sustainable is very much shaped by the race and class complexities that make up the country. The sector is therefore a mirror image of the broader society… stations that serve richer sections of the society are much better-off when compared to those that serve working class communities.[134]

Zane Ibrahim, widely recognised as a pioneer of Bush Radio, writing in the *Rhodes Journalism Review* in September 2004,[135] also highlighted the influence of racial and class dynamics on the community radio sector:

Those radio stations classified as geographical are more likely to have to struggle for survival than those servicing an interest group. The broadcasting system, at all levels, relies on good commercial revenue, which broadcasters can only achieve through the wealthier listeners. It is also interesting to note that the geographically-based stations are managed by people of an average age of 27, while the average age of the management of the special interest, and mostly faith-based station, is 40 years … over 90 per cent of the stations owned by special interest groups have membership in the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), while all the geographically-based stations are members of the NCRF. Sadly, this divide essentially represents a racial divide as well, with some elements of class division.

Findings from the Pygma Consulting study include :[136]

- Just over half (52.6 per cent) of the stations surveyed in the market research reported that they had been off air for a period during the licence terms. Reasons included power failures/problems, debts to Sentech for signal distribution, governance problems or staff issues'.

- Over half (52.6 per cent) of the stations surveyed relied on volunteers for programming. Others stated that they used part-time staff rather than volunteers so that there are some contractual obligations in place.

- Fifty-five per cent of stations surveyed indicated that they had staff/volunteer crises over the past three years. There also seems to be a lack of policies (human resources, volunteers, finance, editorial, programming) to assist in determining roles and responsibilities in stations. Even where stations stated that they do have such policies, very few indicated that these had been implemented and assisted in resolving challenges.

- More than half (54.3 per cent) of the stations surveyed produce annual audited financial statements. Those that didn't regularly audit their financial statements indicated that the costs are often prohibitive and/or that they did not have easy access to qualified auditors. Stations in rural areas for example said they had to take their books to auditors in larger towns for auditing.

  The most significant common monthly costs include signal distribution (for those using Sentech), staff salaries (including volunteer stipends where relevant), communication costs (telephone, internet, fax and Telkom studio to transmitter links), rent, technical maintenance (including costs associated with leasing photocopies, faxes etc.) and SAMRO fees.[137]

A central debate around community radio in South Africa has been the tug-of war between political and commercial pressures and the impact that this could have on the independence of community stations. 'The common fixation with generating income can often threaten a station's independence, since money often comes with strings attached. It is easy to be tempted by a large contract, but it is essential to make sure that it does not jeopardise the station's relationship with the community.'[138]

A 2005 study by Console Tleane of the Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI) 'The state, size and shape of the community radio sector in South Africa' found

> Overall, there has not been any quantifiable state interference. There are only isolated incidents where one or two stations reported political pressures from the ruling party … The critical test though is the extent to which stations are indeed owned and controlled by communities.[139]

Since then,

> there have been instances where government entities have used their position in an attempt to influence content. South African municipalities in Grahamstown, Eastern Cape and in Hartswater, Northern Cape, have mounted advertising boycotts of community media over critical reportage (Parliamentary communications committee, 2011)' and Icasa noted that some stations 'have been presented with challenges from local government representatives who seek to have undue influence on the administration of the stations. If not regulated and managed properly by community broadcasters, local government funding might exacerbate such a trend.[140]

The chilling attack on Karabo FM is the starkest example of pressure exerted on a station with the burning down of the station in 2013.

> On Saturday 7 September 2013, two guys came in wearing balaclavas and with guns. There were two guests in the studio with the presenter. The armed men took the guests

to the back door, tied up the security guard and came back to the studio. They asked the presenter to please switch off the mikes and told him we are here to do our jobs, we are not here to hurt you. They then poured petrol and set the station alight.[141]

In this case, in court papers it was alleged that two politically connected individuals – the mayor and deputy chair of the ANC Free State – were involved. Pule Nkomo, who has been charged with arson alleged that he was paid by the executive mayor of the Metsimaholo Local Municipality and the Deputy Chair of the ANC in the Free State to burn down the radio station. The investigation is still ongoing.

Ref: Free State Times 11 Nov 2013 Mayor implicated in radio fire / Power FM Brutus Mahlaku implicated in the torching of Karabo FM. (*www.powerfm.co.za*).

Community unhappiness with the municipality for service delivery failures, allegations that the mayor was implicated in fraud and misman-agement and the changing political landscape – particularly as a result of the emergence of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) in the area – are thought to be some of the ingredients that led to the attack on Karabo FM.

While community stations have experienced tension and conflict, particularly around resources and positions of influence as has been described earlier, nothing as violent as this has occurred before and shows how vulnerable stations are.

The SPL study raises another dimension of commercial advertising.

Commercial advertising can contradict the norms and values of community radio. In one of the stations visited, listeners complained about the inability of the station to hold local business accountable to the community because the station was receiving funds from the said businesses and local government departments – to the extent that one listener labelled a station 'ANC aligned'.

Gender

Women's participation in community radio in South Africa is a subject of debate among relatively few people. It seems that men have very quickly and easily colonised the sector. Glass ceilings have been installed faster than a studio can send a signal to transmitter link… National gatherings of the community radio sector are comparable to bachelors' parties. For women, employment selection processes can seem like temporary dating agencies.[142]

It seems that men have very quickly and easily colonised the sector.

Gender is another important area that warrants further documentation and research and women's participation cannot be measured only in terms of numbers but also by representation in the production, ownership and decision-making bodies of the station.

In 1996, Naughton observed that 'the general trend was that women are around at the development phase of a project, but after gestation, the operations become more male in representation, organisational structure and dynamic'.

A 2008 study into the participation of women at Al-Ansaar, a Muslim station based in Durban, found that while the station's policy documents state that the role of women would be 'paramount' in its policies, projects and programmes, in practice, 'deference to religious leaders and their dogmatic stance on the role of women' has made the station management very circumspect about whom they give a voice. This in turn has influenced the form and level of community participation and, overall, 'although women are involved in the operations management, programming and in a technical capacity, they are not adequately represented in the ownership and decision-making bodies at Radio Al-Ansaar.'[143]

It would be important to assess, for example, what has happened with Moutse community radio that was started by a community (in this case, the Rural Women's Movement) to see whether the station was 'able to retain its female power and be a shining example of the sisters doing it differently. Particularly … [as] this would be a reflection of the demographics of the community.'[144]

While there have been a number of studies looking at gender and the media – notably the 2008 Gender Links 'Glass Ceilings' study – and the MDDA hosted a gender and media round-table in 2009, this is another area that requires more focused attention.

Prospects for community radio

South Africa is on the brink of a significant overhaul of the broadcasting policy architecture. The community broadcast sector is amongst the most under-researched development sector in South Africa, and the review comes at a very opportune moment. This review will provide the community broadcast sector the opportunity to grapple with a number of key challenges – in terms of the structure, governance and management of stations as well as issues related to policy and the enabling environment. If a new policy framework is going to be created, it

must build on the lessons learned over the past 20 years of community broadcasting and not on a superficial understanding of the challenges, obstacles and opportunities.

What emerges from this brief reflection is a vibrant, robust sector that has years of experience, has grown significantly and makes a critical contribution to our democracy and the diversification of our media, particularly in terms of language. In future, policy frameworks need to build on lessons from the past nineteen years, have a less rosy-eyed view of community stations and recognise that much has changed on the political and economic front.

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Government communications – 20 years of empowerment and development

GCIS

*T**he Government Communication and Information System (GCIS)* was established in 1998 to actively communicate with the public about government policies, plans, programmes and achievements. This chapter traces its history and reflects on how far the organisation has come. A number of GCIS employees collaborated in the writing of this chapter.

South Africa's historic democratic elections in 1994, and the subsequent ushering in of freedom and democracy, irrevocably changed the landscape of South African society and the economy. In the period building up to the political transition in the early 1990s, shifts in communications were both a cause and result of the profound changes that unfolded. For the apartheid regime, the endgame of what the United Nations had formally classified a crime against humanity saw various challenges to the longstanding communication practices the regime had employed to suppress the liberation struggle and distort the South African reality for national and international audiences.

For decades, the apartheid state's communication culture and machinery had been characterised by censorship; the banning of media channels that aligned themselves with the struggle; physical attacks of terror on progressive media operations; control of the public broadcaster; misinformation campaigns and support from media that were sympathetic to the apartheid cause.

The advent of democracy ushered in a diametrically different government com-munications dispensation in which the ruling party's commitment (even before the adoption of an interim or permanent Constitution) to human rights, including freedom of speech, shaped South Africa's transformation. The ruling party also advocated for free media and freedom of expression.

The establishment in 1998 of the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) in the place of the South African Communication Service (SACS) formalised a range of reforms of the communications practices of government that had started in 1994. Under democracy, government communications has been founded on transparency and accountability, creating more platforms for direct engagement between government and citizens, and for media to connect with government. Mechanisms such as the Promotion of Access to Information Act have deepened the means by which citizens or the media can obtain official information that they believe are in their or in the public interest.

Given the range and pecking order of national transformation priorities, government communications has not always been allocated the budget required for greater effectiveness. Nevertheless, GCIS, working with departments, provinces and municipalities, has sought to diversify government communication platforms and innovate the communications practice.

For the past 20 years, a system of intensive face-to-face engagement with communities in all corners of the country, the creation of various publications, the provision of services and information at walk-in centres and media services at seminal events – such as the 2010 FIFA World Cup or the state funeral of former President Nelson Mandela – have charted the evolution of government communications. At the heart of this is government's belief in the provision of information and the value of interaction as part of empowering citizens and communities to participate in the national effort to create a better life for all South Africans and to build national unity and social cohesion.

Government's creation of its own communication platforms is born out of the realisation that while public media play an important role in the life of the nation and in public discourse, such media are not responsible for providing essential and routine information to citizens.

Beyond its own communication objectives, government has urged the transformation of the media sector, so that this influential industry will reflect diversity in ownership, professional practice and voice. This is essential, given the history of exclusion of black South Africans

> **GCIS, working with departments, provinces and municipalities, has sought to diversify government communication platforms and innovate the communications practice.**

from participation in all sectors of the economy. In the light of South Africa's role and place in Africa and the international arena, government communications has, in the past 20 years, deliberately incorporated an international approach to brand South Africa positively, so as to attract trade and tourism. Government communications has also profiled the country in line with its strategic role internationally as a voice of reason and reconciliation, which has helped to assert South Africa's position as a champion of reform of international governance.

This chapter takes a brief look at government communications during the apartheid era. It will consider the narrowly focused communication approach of the SACS of that time, and contrast it with the GCIS.

THE HISTORY OF COMMUNICATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The history of government communication in South Africa largely mirrors our journey from apartheid to democracy. Under the apartheid government, communication was used as a tool to enforce white supremacy. There was no free flow of information, but instead a steady stream of propaganda aimed at upholding the *status quo* was fed to the public.

In its desperation to cling to power, the apartheid government turned to every dirty trick in the book. In the early 1970s, it felt under increasing pressure and, convinced that English-language newspapers such as the *Rand Daily Mail*[145] were on a 'hate South African' crusade,[146] began looking for a way to influence international and local opinion. The regime believed that newspapers were spreading bad news about South Africa – and that the state needed its own propaganda to counterbalance this. To this end, R65 million was shifted from the defence budget to enable the government to bribe international news agencies, purchase the *Washington Star* and establish a government-controlled newspaper, *The Citizen.*

The plan failed when the *Rand Daily Mail* exposed this propaganda war. The Muldergate[147] scandal (as it came to be known) opened up the opportunity for PW Botha to pursue his political ambitions and become prime minister in 1977. In the 1980s, conditions worsened, with increasing detentions and bans. As local and international pressure grew on the apartheid government, they reached out to right-wing groups all over the world to bolster their cause and to manufacture a sense of legitimacy.

Apartheid Dead, French Group Finds
July 13, 1987 | From Reuters

Nine conservative members of the French Parliament ended a two-week visit to South Africa on Sunday, declaring that apartheid is dead and labelling international sanctions against the Pretoria government a serious political error. The nine were visiting the country at the invitation of the white government. They said that South Africa is on the road to genuine democracy and called for supportive measures from the West to permit this to be achieved without further human suffering.

Just as the National Party used propaganda in an effort to uphold the system, it also used censorship to control what the media published. Journalists were not free to report the facts of a story. Foreign and domestic journalists working in South Africa had to operate within the constraints of legislation, such the National Defence Act 44 of 1957 which stated that no-one could publish information on the South African Defence Force that could embarrass or prejudice the government in its foreign relations. Fines, banning and even imprisonment awaited journalists who dared to break or challenge these laws.

The Publications Act of 1974 gave the government the power to censor movies, plays, books and other entertainment, and the right to decide what South Africans could or could not view. Books critical of apartheid or racial discrimination were routinely banned. Movies showing interracial relationships were barred. The government mouthpiece, the SABC, only aired programmes and news which supported the apartheid

government and reinforced white supremacy. In spite of these restrictions, media continued to report on the horrors of apartheid, often at great cost. Apartheid was one of the major

The history of government communication in South Africa largely mirrors our journey from apartheid to democracy

worldwide stories during the 1980s and 1990s. Many American newspapers, including the *New York Times, Christian Science* Monitor, the Los Angeles Times and the *Washington Post,* had correspondents permanently stationed in South Africa. The major American television networks (ABC, CBS, and NBC) also had correspondents stationed in South Africa or in nearby countries. Many British and European newsgroups had a strong presence.

Time and *Newsweek* were sold locally. South Africans could listen to news broadcasts from the Voice of America, the British Broadcasting Corporation and other Western shortwave radio outlets.

Apartheid 'War' Will Intensify, Tambo Warns
February 3, 1987 | Leonard Greenwood, Times Staff Writer

The armed struggle of blacks for freedom in South Africa will increase and intensify because people in that country have become used to violence, Oliver Tambo, leader of South Africa's outlawed African National Congress, said in Los Angeles on Monday. 'It's a war – a low-key war, but a war all the same,' Tambo said. 'People are dying in that situation.'

For Schools, Apartheid Takes Toll
October 28, 1989 | William Maclean, Reuters

Every weekday morning, thousands of Johannesburg's black children climb into buses and taxis to go to segregated schools in black townships up to 40 miles away. Under South Africa's apartheid race policies, the children are not allowed to attend the 'whites-only' schools of Johannesburg, which, like other South African cities, has no state-run schools for the country's black majority. Strictly speaking, the pupils are not even supposed to live in Johannesburg.

Samaranch: Apartheid to Keep IOC Ban in Effect
February 21, 1990

Juan Antonio Samaranch, president of the International Olympic Committee, Tuesday dismissed reforms in South Africa as superficial and said a sports ban against the country will not be relaxed. 'The ingredients for eradicating apartheid have not been lifted, therefore the international sanctions should be maintained to pressure South Africa to lift its policy of apartheid,' Samaranch said at a meeting of a United Nations anti-apartheid commission in Kuwait.

At the same time, the ANC and its allies were broadcasting messages into South Africa via Radio Freedom, which was started in 1963. Radio Freedom, the oldest liberation radio station in Africa, operated until the early 1990s. The broadcasts were initially from South Africa, but later broadcasts were made from various radio stations in countries such as Tanzania, Zambia, Angola, Ethiopia and Madagascar. Listening to these broadcasts was illegal but many tuned in to them.

Increasingly, the resistance movement, internally and abroad, began to apply pressure. Demonstrations, confrontations and boycotts by the majority of South Africans were commonplace during the 1990s. South Africa also experienced immense economic pressure to end apartheid. Banks and investment firms withdrew, indicating that they would not invest

until apartheid was ended. Many churches also applied pressure. In 1994, after a negotiated settlement, South Africa held its first democratic election and a new government was introduced.

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HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF THE GCIS

In 1994, the apartheid communication apparatus, the SACS, was responsible for coordinating government communications and was required to project a positive image of the nationalist government against increasing resistance, locally and internationally. During the State of Emergency in the late 1980s it was the only institution that was able to report on the unrest – newspapers were censored and journalists harassed.

Essentially, the SACS operated as the arm of the State Security Council.[148] This meant that it catered for only one section of the populace and was largely geared to reinforce the apartheid system. While the SACS had a strategic communications branch, Stratkom, that focused on setting up agents within the mass media, the SACS continued to monitor the domestic and international press daily to identify issues that would require a response from government.

In the early 1990s, when change was imminent, the SACS tried to reinvent itself and develop closer links with citizens, assisted by the Department of Planning and Provincial Affairs transferring the 'responsibility for the promotion of inter-community relations … to SACS.'[149] The SACS vision and mission reflected how this was perceived:

Vision: informed and committed communities for the sake of peace and prosperity

Mission: To render a cost effective, coordinated and specialised government information service to the population in order to inform and involve them, as well as to render such a service to foreigners on request.

After 1994, the new government was called upon to honour the constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression and the media. The public's right to information also guaranteed a new, open and accountable style of government. For the first time in South Africa, the government became fully accountable to all its citizens. The new freedoms were seen as important because:

> "Without such freedom, without the means to access information and to communicate their own activities, ideas and opinions, citizens shall be hapless observers in the process of change. Indeed, the content of that change and its pace will be severely distorted, if not totally undermined." *(Essop Pahad, Minister in The Presidency, 1998 Communication Budget Vote)*

At this time there was recognition, too, that due to the history, organisational culture and structural framework of the SACS it lacked legitimacy, and its personnel were not trained to serve a democratic society. The SACS was in many respects an organisation without a clear mandate, and very much a collection of undirected components. Departments worked in silos and it was not structured to offer integrated campaign planning advice to government.

At the same time, the SACS staff suffered from low morale and a large number of senior personnel (approximately 160) had applied for retrenchment packages. It also had little or no contact with national and provincial departments (two thirds of departments, ministries and provinces had contact from 'time to time' and a further 17 per cent 'not often'[150]) as it was never structured to be the overall communication vehicle of government. One of critical issues addressed by the new government after 1994 was the complete overhaul of the SACS to fulfil the requirements of the new constitutional framework and build a communication system that would allow people to be part of determining their destiny. The democratic government also understood the importance of communication in achieving the vision of a nonracial, nonsexist and prosperous society. The new system had to ensure the free flow of information; would need to inform

and educate; and would espouse the values of transparency and accountability while serving all South Africans. At the same time it had to change the way that South Africa was perceived internationally.

A Communication Task Team (Comtask) was appointed in 1995 by the then deputy president, Thabo Mbeki. The brief of the Task Team was to review government communications at the local, provincial, national and international level, and recommend how they should be restructured in line with the constitutional principles of freedom of expression, transparency and openness.

The Comtask Report

The Comtask team consulted with a broad range of stakeholders including academics, the media, civil society organisations and advertisers. Members studied the best international approaches to learn more about systems that encourage good communication flow between government and its citizens. The team established a policy framework to guide its deliberations and recommendations, with guiding principles such as the emphasis on law that 'shall guarantee to all their right

The Comtask Report reiterated that government communication would have to be consultative and empower citizens to better understand their rights and responsibilities. This has informed government practices of taking outreach programmes to the public.

to speak, to organise, to meet together, to publish, to preach, to worship and to educate their children' extrapolated from the Freedom Charter. The constitutional principles of freedom of expression and the media, as well as freedom of information, were also encapsulated.

The framework considered the need for:

- A culture of accountability and the right to know. Knowledge and openness was seen as essential. Communication could no longer be one sided and top down; government communication would need to empower citizens better to understand their rights.
- Leaner administration, more particularly a streamlined, efficient and transparent public service.
- Coordination within government recognising the interdependence of the different government departments and the balance between the three tiers.
- Affirmative action and empowerment of all disadvantaged by apartheid, which would happen on three levels – for the communicator, the producer of materials and information and the public.
- Ownership and control of the media – a move away from the monopoly of the press and foreign ownership so that a plurality of voices and media diversity would become a reality.

Comtask also considered the political and social imperatives of an open and accountable society. They reiterated that it was necessary to have an efficient public sector based more broadly on the demographics of the population and committed to serving the citizenry. This would require the budget to change, as a broader population was to be served, with a wider diversity of language over a greater geographical space. The task team felt that annual planning, monitoring and evaluation to ensure adequate budgeting was needed in order to ensure effective service delivery.

Comtask also researched international perceptions of South Africa and considered ways in which the country could be more positively marketed and promoted. Finally, Comtask addressed pluralism in the media space, and strategies to open this sector to all.

Jane Duncan, the Highway Africa Chair of Media and Information Society in the School of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University, told the *Daily Maverick* in 2013:

> In principle what Comtask did was to reject the view of government as a strong controller of media, or an owner of media in its own right. The idea was to establish a Ministry of Communications rather than a Ministry of Information, because the old information ministry was really all about one-way communication from government to the people, where the state told people what to think.

The Comtask team delivered its final report to the then Deputy President Mbeki, in October 1996. The report included 83 recommendations dealing with the structure of government communication, media diversity and access to information legislation.

The report had foreseen the following:

1. A government communications and information system would be established to coordinate all government communication. GCIS would be structured so as to build partnerships between government and civil society. The head of GCIS would be responsible for reports to The Presidency.

2. The GCIS would serve as a secretariat in The Presidency responsible for determining communication strategy, advising and acting on behalf of the president and Cabinet, and coordinating the different communication structures.

3. The development of a professional communications unit within each ministry and the different spheres of government responsible for delivering the communication strategy.

4. A centralised Communications Service Agency (CSA) responsible for coordinating bulk-buying of media and research into media needs and trends as well as assisting in developing content.

5. The need to embark on initiatives that would ensure media diversity. This would require a focus on the subsidy and support mechanisms and an exploration of possible partnerships at community level. Government was called upon to set up a statutory media development agency that would dispense subsidies to the community media sector.

6. A conscious focus on development communication aimed at communication to empower citizens. The GCIS was encouraged to support the multi-purpose information centres that had already been initiated as these were important for information dissemination and presented an opportunity for the two-way flow of communication with government.

7. The establishment of a legislative environment to support the principles of the democratic government, including the citizens' right of access to government information and the removal of censorship legislation.

8. The referral of print media industry monopolies to the Competition Commission.

9. Direct and unmediated communication with South Africans.

10. The development and coordination of ongoing training in government communication.

Once the bare framework of the new system was in place government realised the need for an implementation committee to oversee the transformation of government communications as recommended by the Comtask report. The role of this committee was to assist with transformation of the old SACS.

The committee also led the restructuring of communications across government departments and levels. Ministries would become directly responsible for the communications functions of their respective departments.

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LAUNCH OF THE GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

In May 1998, the GCIS was launched during the Communication Budget Vote in Parliament by Essop Pahad, Deputy Minister in the Office of The Presidency:

> "This day ... marks one of the most prominent milestones on the road to a new South African communications order.
>
> The road we hope to travel is ripe with promise; it is so full of hope because we are convinced that our country has a team of communicators who share a common passion for the profession – individual citizens in the public, private and community sectors who wish to see our country succeed.
>
> Today, government sets out on that road as a partner in the communications industry, so that our society in all its ramifications can truly have the freedom of speech and the right to be heard."

The GCIS was formally established in terms of Section 7 (subsection 2 and 3) of the Public Service Act, 1994 as a strategic unit located in The Presidency. Its mandate was to coordinate, guide and advise on government communication (including media liaison, development communication and marketing).

At the first Government Communicators' Consultative Conference, Dr Pahad explained GCIS's role:

> "Our task, hand in hand with partners in the communication industry, including the media, is to ensure that this right is indeed realised in practical life.
>
> It is to see to it that all South Africans receive comment and information that enable them to make rational choices about their lives. It is to see to it that they themselves can pass on information and views about their activities as they change their lives for the better. They have got the right to know, and to be heard."

The core vision was to achieve integrated, coordinated and clear communication between government and citizens to enable the latter to be involved in the country's transformation.

REFLECTIONS ON 20 YEARS OF COMMUNICATION

In 1996, as Comtask assessed the old SACS machinery, the task team described government communication as a demoralised, ineffective bureaucracy that needed to become more streamlined and effective. The GCIS came to replace the SACS in 1998 and set about providing leadership for, and implementing, a developmental communication system that would better serve all South Africans.

Following its establishment, the GCIS focused on six priority areas:

- Establishing a coherent government information system;
- Building a development information network to service grassroots needs;
- Developing an information strategy for Thusong Service Centres;
- Building relations with the media as communication partners;
- Encouraging media diversity;
- Improving the competencies of government communicators.

Sixteen years on, the GCIS has gone through two reviews (2008 and 2014) and while it is clear that the country has come a long way since the days of apartheid propaganda, there is still a long way to go before it can claim that all the initial objectives have been achieved. Although communication mediums have been

put in place and structures set up, a lot still needs to done on the quantity and quality of communication initiatives so that the impact and reach is felt throughout the length and breadth of South Africa.

This section reviews what has been achieved in the 20 years of government communication, considered against the six priority areas the GCIS identified at its establishment.

Establishing a coherent and integrated government communication system

Cohesive and coordinated communication was very early on considered as vital for the success of democratic government. Government needed to speak with one voice – across departments, at local, provincial, national and international level.

With the establishment of the GCIS in 1998 the CEO became the spokesperson for Cabinet and government as a way of ensuring clarity of issues reported into Cabinet and clear messages emerging into the public sphere. 'Current Affairs', a document submitted to Cabinet every two weeks and detailing evident or potential issues also provided an opportunity for Cabinet to deliberate on matters and consolidate government messaging for opinion makers, foreign missions and government communicators.

On the international front, the democratic government had also early on realised that it had to change how South Africa was perceived internationally if it was to attract trade and tourism – crucial ingredients for the country's development. The International Marketing Council (IMC) was initially established to market and build a South African brand. Campaigns such as the National Pride Campaign and the securing of Brand Champions were examples of this. In 2011, the IMC was reconfigured as Brand South Africa (BrandSA), moved into the Presidency and was mandated to continue to create a positive and compelling brand image for South Africa.

Increasingly, government departments also began employing communicators at senior level after realising how good communication could contribute towards the achievement of objectives. The GCIS was expected to provide strategic leadership and guide departments on organisational mechanisms that would enhance communication and to ensure that the public was informed and had access to the programmes that would benefit them.

A National Strategic Framework for communication, communication policy guidelines and a scorecard to standardise and improve communications developed by the GCIS was adopted by Cabinet. Government communicators have initiated and are now participating in a range of forums: Government Communicators' Forum, the cluster system, Provincial Government Communicators' Forum, District Government Communicators' Forum, and the Forum for Ministerial Liaison Officers. These forums provide opportunities for the development of a greater understanding of the communication environment to enhance communication planning and to synergise messaging. Information sharing has also enabled communicators to be proactive in setting the government agenda and to adopt a more strategic approach to achieve better

The GCIS has played a leadership role in supporting the development of communication strategies, key messages, and the production of communication material.

messaging.

Since 2000 heightened efforts have been made to strengthen intergovernmental communication. Initially, there were concerns that the established forums were not being taken seriously and that senior staff were sending in juniors to represent them. This hampered decision making and required a review of the

structures to strengthen them, and a focus on content and message coordination to improve coherence. At the same time, communication forums and institutions in municipalities and provinces were being built to ensure effective communication at all levels. This reflected a major shift from the past as the communications capacity became more decentralised.

The improved and centralised communication initiatives have yielded positive results although difficulties remain. As the GCIS delivered quality and professional work so departments, provinces and local government have begun to rely more heavily on it for guidance and support in implementing their communication functions. The GCIS has played a leadership role in supporting the development of communication strategies, key messages, and the production of communication material. However, the authority of the GCIS remains at issue as the organisation can *coordinate* but not *enforce* any decisions taken (this problem was identified in the 2008 Comtask review).

The GCIS has increasingly adopted approaches to make government messages available to the public. The post-SoNA ministerial media briefings, implemented by the GCIS annually, is one way this is done. Here, government departments present and create media publicity for their respective programmes of action. The GCIS hosts the ministerial cluster media briefings regularly throughout the year, rather than annually, so that citizens are provided with up to date information.

The year in which 20 Years of Freedom is being celebrated provides a perfect opportunity to reflect on whether the GCIS has indeed fully achieved its mandate to strategise, coordinate and advise the public sector on communications as a whole. This is done against the background of the reconfiguration taking place leading to a DoC.

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Izimbizos provide a two-way communication channel between government and its citizens to improve service delivery.

Building a development information network to service grassroots needs

Since 1998, government communications has recorded significant advances, especially in keeping the rural poor, youth and women up to date with government initiatives and opportunities. Close to two million monthly newspapers are distributed, community radio stations broadcast news nationally, and a government website containing a repository of all government information receives close to five million hits annually. Every year, about 21 million South Africans are reached through the communication projects undertaken by the GCIS in partnership with lead government departments.

Back in 2000, government began placing greater emphasis on unmediated contact between political principals and communities. The GCIS launched the Izimbizo programme to allow political principals to meet communities to explain programmes, hear views, complaints and compliments, and enhance transparent, accountable government. The Imbizo programme was led by the president, who travelled widely in the country to interact with the public.

> "This (*izimbizo*) is a marvellous idea. It is a clear indication that the people are governing. It is the first time in history that government comes down to its people."

> "The president takes time off to talk to the people; governance is from bottom to top."

And:

"The government imbizo is an excellent idea. It gives government an opportunity to interact with communities. It gives communities an opportunity to question and make recommendations in the running of government" (GCIS Presidential Imbizo Research conducted by African Response).

Besides face-to-face communication, the GCIS has developed a number of communication platforms to extend reach. *Vuk'uzenzele,* a monthly newspaper and *SANews,* an online news agency, as well as the twice-daily GCIS radio bulletins, available online and to community radio stations for broadcasting, are some of the services that have become increasingly available.

Vuk'uzenzele focuses on news and information about government's programmes relating to its five key priorities: health; education; job creation; rural development; and safety and security. In addition, it provides advice on available socioeconomic opportunities – issues of particular interest for the target audience and that address the gaps in information about government services, especially among people in the LSM 1 – 5 brackets.

Printing and distribution has increased steadily over the years as demand for the publication grows. In 2014, there were 1.7 million copies in all languages in circulation, with eight people on average reading each copy. Despite some distribution challenges, the publication is well received. The *Vuk'uzenzele: Assessment of the Magazine*[157] *Citizen Surveys 2007* found that for citizens *Vuk'uzenzele is:*

'… for us to be knowledgeable about different skills, so that we can create a better life for ourselves.'

'… an eye-opener because it shows a lot of things we were not aware of.'

Public Sector Manager (PSM) magazine, targeting middle and senior public sector managers, took a different approach. It was introduced in 2012 to educate public sector cadres and build a broad understanding of key government policies and programmes amongst those officials responsible for delivery. The idea was that if public servants were kept up to date they would be better able to take up workplace challenges and maintain and defend the reputation of government in their life at work and at home. The magazine has attracted favourable reviews and there have been some requests for the content to be expanded to include wide-ranging issues of implementation.

'What I like most is that it is very informative – all the new stuff that's happening in the public sector. It gives me some insight into other public service managers: the profiles, the challenges they face, and issues that they are addressing.' (Director, National Government)

'I would be more interested in the state of implementation of government programmes, progress in terms of how we are doing since the State of the Nation Address. I want to know

... for us to be knowledgeable about different skills, so that we can create a better life for ourselves.

what has happened and what the challenges are …'

(Acting Director General, National Government)
(Assessment of the Public Sector Manager Magazine Qualitative Research Report April 2012 Citizen Surveys).

The GCIS has also expanded its communication platforms into the Internet and social media space as new technologies have emerged. Through the gov.za domain, the GCIS ensures that all current government information is posted. *SANews* produces hard news and human-interest features, carries pictures, video content on YouTube, and is also available on Facebook and Twitter. The agency attracts about half a million hits a month from domestic and international users.

Despite more people gaining access to government information through these products and platforms, penetration is still low and maximum impact has not been achieved. There is still a lot to be done to reach the target markets so that government's commitment to being fully accountable to all citizens is realised.

At a Cluster Media Briefing in June 2014, the minister of communications, Faith Muthambi, summed up how poor information dissemination leads to and perpetuates inequality:
'Over the last 20 years government has created numerous opportunities for people to get out of poverty. A number of these opportunities have passed many communities by. The reason? Poor information accessibility especially to rural communities … Schemes for supporting up and coming farmers were put in place for

communities to take advantage of – research shows that half of these were either not taken up or neglected for the simple reason that their existence did not fall on the right ears. This must change as one of the basic things to accelerate the reversal of poverty in our communities.'

During South Africa's first 20 years of freedom, rapid growth has been seen in the number and types of platforms available for people to engage and express their views freely. This development has created space for the media, analysts, commentators, civil society and political parties to compete in public discourse. At the same time, government has been compelled to become more innovative and effective in this space by strengthening its own products and platforms and working in partnership with the media.

Encouraging media diversity

Many challenges still remain in terms of achieving diversity in content and ownership. The Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) was set up in 2002 and with its vision 'Access to diversified media for all' it has, in the last decade, supported 570 media projects with grants worth R275 million; contributed to growing the community broadcast sector so that today it commands more than 25 per cent of radio listenership; seen community TV licensed in more than four provinces; and has ensured that the readership of community and small commercial newspapers increased to more than three million (these achievements are covered more extensively in the chapter on the MDDA that looks at media diversity in detail and considers how far we have come in this regard).

Building relations with the media

The Constitution, the cornerstone of the country's democracy, protects the freedom of

the media, freedom of expression and access to information, and is also supported by a legislative framework. In a press release on Media Freedom Day 2013, the acting GCIS CEO, Phumla Williams, said:

'South African media have been free from state and government control since the attainment of democracy.'

The role of media in society is imperative as it informs and empowers all members of society, and enhances democratic values.

Since 1994, relations with the press have improved substantially. Media freedom has been guaranteed and asserted. Since 2001, Cabinet has held meetings with the media (through the South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef)) to discuss matters of common interest and expectations of one another, bearing in mind the constitutional provisions.

Challenges between the government and the media have arisen from time to time though. For example, the media has strongly opposed the introduction of the Protection of State Information Bill. Sanef has also called on government to repeal or amend apartheid-era laws, such as the National Keypoints Act, 1980 (Act 102 of 1980) and the Criminal Procedure Act, 1977 (Act 51 of 1977) that are still in force

and which, in Sanef's view, unjustifiably restrict the free flow of information. The Cabinet indicated that work in this regard had already started and both parties are committed to expediting the process.

While there is agreement that it is not the role of the media to do the government's public relations, the media has a crucial role to play in engaging the public about the aims and achievements of government – both positive and negative. At the Nat Nakasa Awards Dinner hosted by Sanef in 2014, Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa summed this up. He called for more balanced coverage, however, and indicated that the media should criticise key delivery failures but also include how the lives of many South Africans have been changing for the better, including how the government had managed to deliver services for millions.

'In a word, continue to be critical, speak your minds to the extent that it balances the story of hope, progress and missed opportunities. Empower us to understand our world and our own deficiencies.'

'But also write of the experience of the woman who has been freed from the burden of collecting firewood because she now has electricity, of the one who no longer has to walk to the river to draw water because she now has running water at home. Tell us how this has enabled them to go out to find work, and how their lives have improved.'

In the 2008 Comtask review, journalists raised a number of their own concerns relating to media liaison. Firstly, they considered that the communication they receive from government is reactive rather than proactive. Some of the more general problems identified included a general lack of understanding of the role of the media and what defined a good story. There was also concern that there was often an overly bureaucratic response to requests, or communicators acting very defensively when providing responses.

The GCIS has since put in place, through the rapid response system, a means of ensuring that government is more proactive in communicating policies responding quickly.

More regular media briefings are conducted and government communicators participate in shaping the content of these briefings as well as drawing up statements.

Despite these improvements media engagement needs to be strengthened. Communicators should explore more effective ways to engage media outside formal structures and governments' voice needs to heard in talk shows, articles and through statements. The time has come for greater engagement with media owners and journalists so that discussions on vital issues are elevated and stories that are covered in the media happen from a more informed perspective.

Developing an information strategy for multipurpose community centres, now Thusong service centres

The Thusong service centres, established in 1998, were one of the first ways in which government attempted to address the historical, social and economic imbalances that had limited citizens' access to information, services and participation. The Thusong service centres were set up to provide opportunities for people to access information, developmental opportunities and government services that would help them to develop and improve their lives. This has been especially important for those living in outlying, rural areas who remain the most marginalised and vulnerable groups. Thusong service centres coordinate programmes that encourage self-sufficiency and sustainability. Business opportunities are promoted, as well as skills development and training for young South Africans. These centres have also been active in fighting for a green society and in promoting active and responsible citizenship.

"We really thank the Hibiscus Coast Municipality and the municipal official from the Bhomela Thusong Service Centre for teaching us skills to start

our own business and be able to take income home."

Simile Sewing Project (Thusong Service Centre: Success Stories: GCIS Booklet, September 2014 p. 9)

"The Bhomela Thusong Service Centre helped us so much by offering the computer training. They helped to bridge the skills gap by affording us an opportunity to learn basic

The Thusong service centres(TSCs) were established to bring government services closer to the public and over 180 are operating throughout the country.

computer literacy. I am now able to do my own CV. I do not have to ask people to help me with it any more." Siboniso Zungu *(Thusong Service Centre: Success Stories pg 10).*

Providing services and information to historically underdeveloped communities has remained an ongoing priority of government, and 183 Thusong Service Centres are operating today, working in partnership with other government departments. The initial target was to establish one Thusong Service Centre per municipality – 278 in total – so there is still some way to go. However, there are 114 mobile units countrywide that are operational. These allow people to register for social grants and to apply for IDs and certificates through the Department of Home Affairs within their localities. These initiatives are positively viewed by community members:

"I think bringing service here is a good idea and hope it could be done regularly." (Kgomotso Khoarane and Nompumelelo Mdluli after applying for an ID for the first time at the Faranani Thusong Service Centre in July 2012).

"We thank government for creating platforms such as Thusong Service Centres where we are able to receive skills development and run projects that support the government's priorities. Today we are proud and are always looking forward to go to work. Through our business we change the lives of the community by providing affordable services and renewing their furniture." (Johannes Abraham and Gurshin Linders).

Thusong Service Centre: Success Stories: GCIS Booklet, September 2014 pg 40).

Budgeting for communications

Initially the low status afforded communications was reflected in the budgets allocated to this function. From the outset the GCIS worked with a budget approved for the SACS. Minor adjustments were made over time – but there have been no substantial increases over the years despite the fact that all South Africans are now serviced. This has been recognised as a problem and greater funds will have to be provided in future.

Improving the competencies of government communicators

Over the years there have been some attempts to host workshops and develop qualifications to build the capacity of government communicators. the GCIS had adopted a developmental approach, seeing communications as linked to the country's transformation. This has required a specific form of training for government communicators that was not being delivered in the mainstream training previously taking place.

In 2003, the Academy of Government Communication had already been established and was offering a professional certificate in government communication and marketing. The course focused on the functions and performance of government in formulating and implementing policy, the skills required to manage the civil service, and the ethics and values that would guide the conduct of public affairs. There were also additional joint training interventions at local level – Department of Provincial and Local Government, South African Local Government Association and the GCIS – to develop the capacity of municipal communicators. Despite these, the 2008 Comtask review emphasised building the capacity of government communicators and professionalising communication at all levels of government. There was also recognition of the need for relations to be improved between politicians and the communicators throughout.

Six years on there remain varying degrees of competence among communicators. The GCIS and School of Government at the University of Pretoria have forged a partnership and developed a qualification and curriculum for communications training. This programme will be offered through the National School of Government, and the GCIS believes that it should be compulsory for all government communicators who – especially at the local sphere – require capacity building better to understand communications planning.

Political principals also need to work with communicators in order to professionalise the service – more especially in their interactions with

the media. At times, politicians are not aware of the role of communicators whereas communicators are unsure of what messaging they should deliver. Inductions and close collaboration will assist – as will communication policy guidelines that should be enforceable throughout the public service.

Conclusion

2014 is a milestone year as South Africa marks 20 Years of Freedom. Elections have been held and new ministries have been created. A Ministry of Communications, responsible for overarching communication policy and strategy, information dissemination and publicity, as well as branding the country internationally, has been established – and signifies the important role that government attaches to communications. The National Communication Strategy Framework (NCSF) for 2014-2019 has been adopted. This framework addresses some of the challenges of the last 20 years – but also presents ways to build on the strengths. Communication is seen to be vital for effective delivery and keeping citizens informed – and this is demonstrated in the approach. The DoC has been given the central role of providing direction on government communication instead of playing a coordinating role with no authority. This direction would need to happen at national, provincial and local level. Successful publications such as *Vukuzenzele* are to be further supported and expanded, in keeping with the communication vision of an informed citizenry, aware of government programmes and able to access the information they need to take up opportunities to improve their lives.

The content of the NCFS (2014-2019) presents a government communication environment is fundamentally different from what existed in 1994. The GCIS's role is setting systems in place, creating government platforms for the dissemination of information and getting government communication to the point that it can be built on and taken forward.

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The GCIS journey

1998 - 2014

1998
The **GCIS CEO** is appointed as the Cabinet spokesperson.

GCIS radio unit is established.

South Africa **Government Online** – the official government website is launched along with the government news agency BuaNews.

1999
The first **Thusong Service Centres** are launched countrywide.

2000
A **Presidential Imbizo** to the Northern Province signifies the start of the Imbizo programme.

The **International Marketing Council** (IMC) is established under the executive authority of the GCIS. By 2011 the IMC becomes known as Brand South Africa is mandated to help create a positive and compelling brand image for South Africa.

2001
The **Government Communicators' Forum** (GCF) is consolidated and remains the premier platform where government communicators engage.

GCIS, as directed by Cabinet, begins submitting a **Current Affairs** document.

2002
The **Media Development and Diversity Agency** (MDDA) Act, 2002 (Act 14 of 2002), is passed and the first Board is appointed.

GCIS, the South African Local Government Association and the then Department of Provincial and Local Government host the **first national conference on communication in municipalities.**

2003
The **Academy of Government Communication** is established, offering a professional certificate in Government Communication and Marketing.

2004
GCIS takes over the South African government online website (www.gov.za) that provides a one stop portal for all government information and services. The service is used by academics, students, public servants and citizens.

2005
Vuk'uzenzele magazine is launched. In 2007, 1 million copies of *Vuk'uzenzele* are in circulation, and by 2014, this has increased to 1.7 million.

2005	The **Municipal Imbizo Programme** is integrated into the broad *izimbizo* communication campaign.
2006	A national forum of local government communicators meets and adopts a **five year communication plan**. A final set of guidelines for communication in municipalities is developed and approved by the President's Coordinating Council.
2007	The **annual mass campaign to popularise Government's Programme of Action** (PoA) using all official languages and Braille includes a photo story placed in publications with wide circulation and targets the poor. Radio dramas in all official languages except English form part of this campaign. The PoA is also placed on the government website to allow for public scrutiny.
2008	A **Government-wide Communication System Review** as part of a 10-year evaluation of the system takes place.
2009	**Government's PoA (2009 – 2014) is available online** so that citizens would be able to hold government accountable. It addresses the ten priority areas for government will tackle in the medium term.
2010/11	The **GCIS Opsroom** bring together role players from various government departments to allow for greater coordination of resources and to ensure consistent leadership, clearer messaging and better communication support to political officials. The Opsroom is used to great effect during the 2010 FIFA World Cup, COP 17, the African Cup of Nations, the African Nations Championship and more recently in co-ordinating the communication arrangements for the funeral of former President Nelson Mandela.
	About 21 million South Africans are reached through the **3 200 communication projects** undertaken by GCIS in partnership with lead government departments. These projects are aligned to the National Communication Strategy and relate to the priorities of government's Programme of Action. GCIS district communication officials conduct 4 516 community and stakeholder visits in support of these projects.
2012	**Public Sector Manager (PSM) magazine** is launched.
	My District Today, a weekly electronic newsletter provides a snapshot of government progress in implementing its five priorities. The focus is on key projects, service delivery initiatives – at district level. Currently over 500 key stakeholders from within and outside government (NGOs, Community Media etc) receive this product and over a hundred issues have been released online since 2012.
	The **South African Government News Agency**, formerly known as BuaNews, repositions itself as SANews.gov.za.
2013/14	A total of **R227 340 470.94 is spent on advertising** across government departments and the recorded savings due to bulk buying is R29,409,059.98.
	A **web streaming facility** is introduced to enable all media briefings to be accessed online. This has been done in tandem with the use of social networks to further ensure that government information reaches as many media people and citizens as possible.

South Africa and the ICT revolution

President Zuma, post his election in May 2014, announced that the previous Department of Communications would be reconfigured. The Department of Telecommunications and Postal Services (formerly known as the DoC) would now be responsible for creating a vibrant Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) sector for all South Africans. On the other hand, the new Communications Ministry (new DoC) would develop overarching communication policy and strategy, disseminate information and publicity, as well as brand the country abroad.

This Fact Sheet in reflecting on projects and programmes is referring to the work of the previous DoC (now Department of Telecommunications and Postal Services) and not the current Ministry of Communications.

Over the past 20 years South Africa has taken advantage of technological innovations to support and stimulate development and, despite many challenges, has progressed in advancing the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector. More citizens have access to a diverse range of communications services than before and are enjoying the socioeconomic benefits. The advance has taken place against the background of major transformation since the end of apartheid. In 1994, government had begun grappling with the creation of an enabling environment to support fundamental change across all sectors, including telecommunications.

Creating an enabling environment

The South African Constitution forms the backdrop for the laws and regulations that have come to govern the telecommunications sector: the Telecommunications Act, 1996 (Act 103 of 1996); the Telecommunications Amendment Act, 1997 (Act 12 of 1997), the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa Act (IcasaAct) 2000, and the Electronic Communications Act of 2005.

The 1996 *White Paper on Telecommunications* created the framework that was to shape the laws of the sector. The White Paper was underpinned by a number of objectives that defined the approach of the new government, including:
- Black economic empowerment
- Human resource development
- Stable and predictable regulation
- Universal service and access
- A reduced digital divide.

The White Paper recognised the importance of communications in development and envisaged universal access and high level service delivery to all, including those from disadvantaged rural and urban communities. Universal service and access was considered crucial for all citizens as a way specifically of contributing towards reducing the digital divide, and the

Telecommunications of 1996 established the Universal Service Agency (USA). This agency (and, later, the Universal Service and Access Agency of South Africa (USAASA)) was tasked with the rollout to underserviced areas and was to facilitate universal and affordable provision to all communities.

Transformation of the sector was incorporated into the White Paper through the express support for the economic empowerment of the historically disadvantaged, as well as meaningful participation in economic activity within the industry. There was also consideration of the market structure, with recognition of the need to address competitiveness in the industry through market liberalisation. Telkom, however, was initially going to retain exclusivity in the market for five years in exchange for the rollout of services to those who previously had no access.

In 1996, the Telecommunications Act was promulgated – the primary objective being 'to provide for the regulation and control of telecommunications matters in the public interest'. This Act set out the fundamental rules of the telecommunications industry, detailing licensing obligations as well as establishing the telecoms regulator. At the time, the South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (Satra) regulated telecommunications seen as a national resource and managed the radio frequency in the national interest, although broadcasting was excluded.

'To provide for the regulation and control of telecommunications matters in the public interest'.

Later, with the amalgamation of the IBA and Satra in line with the convergence of technologies, Icasa emerged in 2000 as the independent regulator, free from party political control and responsible for the regulation of the ICT sector. The establishment clauses in the Telecommunications Act were replaced by

provisions in the Icasa Act. The regulator assumed responsibility for interconnection agreements that looked at quality and levels of service; fees and tariffs to be paid between parties; the re-issuing of licences and monitoring of licence conditions; and a numbering plan (a numbering system that is used in telecommunications to allocate numbers to subscriber telephones).

The Electronic Communications Act of 2005, which replaced the IBA/Broadcasting and Telecommunications Act, was intended to ensure that the regulatory approach was similar in the telecomms and broadcasting sectors. It also allowed for more competition through various regulations including facilities leasing, interconnection and the rapid rollout of ICT infrastructure and spectrum management. [152]

The Telecommunications Act was intended to ensure that the regulatory approach was similar for the telecomms and broadcasting sectors.

By early 2014, the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa Amendment Bill and the Electronic Communications Amendment Bill were in the final stages of the parliamentary process of being enacted into law. The aim of the former was to make Icasa more effective, involving technical issues and empowering the CEO, aligning it with broad based black economic empowerment principles, and reducing the licensing process turnaround time from 90 to 60 days. The main aims of the Electronic Communications Amendment Act were to establish the Broadband Council and to align the Electronic Communications Act with broad based black economic empowerment principles and with the international convention for people with disabilities.

ICTs in South Africa – the past 20 years

Twenty years ago, Telkom and the Post Office were state-owned entities; telecommunications companies (telcos) were traditionally monopolies; and there was pronounced disparity of service provision. Subsequently, political and democratic development, innovative ideas and technology advances changed not only South Africa but also the world. After the end of apartheid, the democratic government began creating the conditions to build a new society. At the same time, revolutionary advances in computing power and communication technology were also setting the stage for a major change in the way people would work, live and play. Electronic circuit boards became globally mass-produced chips, and over time Twitter and social networks emerged and attracted billions of users all over the world. Calls over the Internet were almost free. More and more South Africans were engaging with this technology.

Before 1994, the situation had been very different. In the first place, the telecom-munications sector was racially disparate. In 1985, the number of telephone lines per hundred inhabitants was 8.4, of which 65.7 per cent were in white hands (down from about 90 per cent in white hands in 1978).[153] The 1994 Central Statistical Services October Household Survey found that only 11.6 per cent of black households had a phone and 47 per cent had no telephone access at all whereas 87.4 per cent of white households had a phone and only 6.4 per cent had no telephone access.[154] In 1995, the government announced plans[155] to sell a share in Telkom to a 'strategic equity partner' for about R4.4 billion, put in four million new lines and restructure the corporation. In 1996, only 19 000 telephones served an Eastern Cape population of about four million,[156] about 0.5 telephones per hundred people. By April 1997, the number of lines was 4.26 million,[157] or 11.2 lines per hundred people.

Technology overtook events and the growth of fixed lines never materialised. Instead, in 1993 two cellular companies, Vodacom and MTN, were issued licences.[158] By 1996, cellular phone connections were double that of new, fixed lines installed by Telkom, with between 650 000 and 700 000 cellular subscribers countrywide.[159] On 27 May 1997, Vodacom announced that South Africa had a million cellphones.[160] This growth continued, and today the mobile phone penetration rate is about 136 per cent of the population (because some people have more than one phone or sim-card), while only 7.9 per cent have access to landline phones. In 2012, the cellular market grew by around 9.41 million subscribers to reach a total user base of 66.56 million, a significant increase that suggests that the surging growth within that sector shows no sign of slowing in the near future.

The growth in the Internet and access had also been phenomenal over this period. Although today only 33.7 per cent of South Africans have access to the Internet,[161] this is up from almost zero in the early 1990s, when the Internet was globally almost exclusively the communications medium of scientists and engineers.[162] Just two decades prior to that, the operating protocol TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol) had been defined and provided a basis for communication across diverse computer networks.

When 'browsers' were developed in the 1990s to interface with the World Wide Web (WWW), interest from the commercial sector grew rapidly, and in 1995 the quantity of data traffic overtook voice traffic on the world's telecommunications networks.[163] Worldwide, new policies and laws followed to support these developments. In South Africa numerous legislative instruments were introduced between 1993 and 2013 as the ICT sector changed and technology advanced.

An increase in the use of smartphones more recently has also contributed towards bringing many more people online, as they Google the Internet and send e-mails. South Africa had followed the pattern where growth in telecommunications was largely driven by growth in mobile penetration (2G, or voice). This pattern has re-emerged, since mobile telephone technology has also become the main driver for mobile broadband, and 3G was implemented in 2009. Since the end of 2012, LTE (a further improvement to cellphones) has slowly become available.

One of the biggest challenges to effective Internet services is the poor bandwidth in South Africa. Bandwidth is basically the size of the pipe delivering the digital signals; if there is insufficient bandwidth, a movie may pause or freeze while the receiving device catches up.

At the end of September 2012, the household broadband penetration remained firmly below the 10 per cent mark. Developments that were expected to boost growth, such as the rollout of competitive, mass-market, fixed line services by the second national operator Neotel and the planned implementation of local loop unbundling, failed to materialise. Furthermore, the high prices charged for Internet access are preventing many South Africans from acquiring a high-speed Internet subscription.

Local loop unbundling is the regulatory process where an operator makes its local network (the copper cables that run from customers premises to the telephone exchange) available to other companies. Operators are then able to upgrade individual lines and offer services such as high speed Internet access, direct to the customer.

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ICTs – what opportunities for South Africa?

A revealing view of what a digital world may eventually look like is to observe what is happening in countries that are further along the digitisation path. We have already seen profound change. As digitisation proceeds, more and more of the captured information is available for downloading from websites and information is readily available in a way unknown to previous generations. This has had a considerable impact on the media: the technology shifts have enabled anyone and everyone to publish and upload information. Breaking news can therefore come from the community and can be much more interactive than delivery of the news by newspapers or radio broadcast.

Information from and about government (such as what social grants one might be eligible for) can be made far more accessible through the use of ICTs. Learning materials can be broadcast into a classroom from a single source. Electricity load control equipment, used to switch off hot water geysers for short periods during peak electricity usage, could be managed from a national control centre, reducing power outages. The most valuable benefit of social networking, however, may be in education, since digital networks greatly facilitate the sharing of information and knowledge.

Information also has enormous economic benefit. Many people buy and sell things online, where online stores, open 24/7, have sprung up selling almost anything. Trading in shares, currency and commodity futures, once the preserve of share brokers and derivatives traders, is now open to anyone able to access bank websites. These sites often delay presenting the latest prices by 15 minutes, requiring an additional small charge for receiving the prices in real time – an example of the value of receiving news immediately, so that one can act on it and buy or sell shares or derivatives before others in the market. Computers are even programmed to communicate directly with each other, so that when a news event occurs that may cause an economic reaction, trading is done automatically and immediately, without human intervention.

A number of studies also show that ICTs have the ability to deliver significant economic benefits. On the most obvious level improved communication and information flows can improve productivity and efficiency within the economy. However, ICTs can also bring job opportunities, not only in the construction and maintenance of the networks but in more specialized areas, such as software development. This will require that the e-literacy is improved at basic and secondary school as well as tertiary levels.

ICTs have provided a host of new opportunities which range from being able to access information to doing business online. Government is working on universal service and access and reducing the digital divide so that all South Africans can benefit from the ICT revolution.

National economies are feeling the benefit of digitisation and convergence. Online shopping is one of the most popular and profitable areas of the economy across the world. In 2009, the World Bank estimated that for every 10 per cent of a country's population that was provided with broadband access, the GDP would grow by 1.38 per cent. In short, the ICT transformation has resulted in phenomenal change. ICTs have enabled services that can include breaking real-time news stories,

applying for identity documents online, receiving textbooks electronically at schools, interactive communication with healthcare workers, submitting tax returns, managing e-Toll accounts and so on – as well as online shopping, and searching for and applying for jobs. Generally, lives will be made easier and be more productive.

Mobile broadband

Mobile broadband has the potential to further expand this transformative experience by bringing the Internet to consumers. Across Africa, the lack of affordability, coverage, and reliability of fixed networks means that mobile broadband is the only way for the vast majority of consumers to access the Internet. Mobile broadband uptake will be supported in the coming years by the increased penetration of smart phones. The number of smart phones sold is forecast to grow 40 per cent per year, on average, up to 2017. Smart phones were expected to make up 25 per cent of all handsets in 2013.

The improved affordability of smart phones and other Internet-enabled devices will result in an estimated volume of smart phone sales in South Africa, Tanzania, Nigeria, and Kenya of 106 million devices. The availability of cheap smart phones will allow entire segments of the population that are currently unconnected to incorporate Internet browsing and the information age into their daily lives.

The issues for South Africa

Concerns have emerged in recent years to challenge South Africa's participation in the digital world. They include access and cost (supply side), skills as well as general content/knowledge sharing (demand side).

Access is one of the biggest challenges in the developing world, caused by a lack of infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, and resulting in what has been dubbed the 'digital divide'. A general lack of awareness of the opportunities made possible by a digital world

exacerbates this, as does a shortage of skills to design and build local applications. It may be argued that access to healthcare and clean water are more important than access to ICT, but access to ICT services can facilitate acquiring them.

The following reflects some of the key challenges and the way the government has attempted to tackle them:

1. The lack of infrastructure in both rural and urban areas is the fundamental obstacle to progress

The concept of Thusong service centres, originally known as multipurpose community centres, was officially adopted in 1999. These centres were then identified as the primary focal points where government could offer a wide range of services and information to poor communities. The focus of the Thusong services centres is on rural and underserviced communities and they aim at addressing the historical factors that limit citizens from accessing government services and information.

Coupled with the lack of access is poor levels of awareness of ICTs. Telecentres are not easily accessible or adequately used by the communities, and some are dysfunctional. Even where citizens are aware of or able to access telecentres, they may have no idea how to use the Internet. Access, therefore, is only one part of the problem. Knowledge of functionality is also essential.

The broadband policy developed by the DoC was also introduced as one way of facing up to accessibility by setting targets so that by 2016, 50 per cent of the population will have broadband access at a speed of 5Mbps, and by 2030 the whole population will have it at a speed of 10Mbps (and 80 per cent at 100Mbps).

2. The lack of ICT skills

In order for South Africa to move faster in its pursuit of ICTs, there must be an increase in e-literacy but, also, more must be done to encourage ICT graduates in higher education. The more knowledgeable and educated people are about ICTs, the quicker the transition and the spread of valuable information.[164]

The high cost of communication has not been resolved but progress is being made.

The DoC has established the e-Skills Institute to build ICT skills for those needing an introduction to computers and others seeking high-end jobs in the knowledge economy. In 2012/13, according to the department's Annual Report, the e-Skills Institute has been active not only in curriculum development but also in training over 1 000 young people in e-Literacy. National e-skills programmes have been designed to provide the required capacity for those in the knowledge economy where job opportunities exist, and partnerships with higher education institutions are resulting in the consideration of advances in e-skills transfer methods.

3. The high cost of communication

Service providers in the electronic communication environment enjoy huge profits and costs to consumers are exceeding high. For example, in its 2013 Annual Report, Vodacom reports a net profit of R13 224 million and a revenue of R69 917 million. That means a profit margin of 18.9 per cent and a monthly profit of over 1 billion rands. The imbalance between cost, profit and service provided must be changed if South Africa wants to elevate its ICT use and functionality in the near future.

The previous broad telecommunications policy of managed liberalisation served its purpose to a certain extent, but was less successful in lowering the costs of access and use, causing consumers to benefit less than business. Government has a mandate to step in when markets do not function properly or exclude segments of the population.

The high cost of communication has not been resolved but progress is being made. The DoC has finalised a new policy directive on transparent pricing policy; has convened a pricing workshop as part of a consultative process on the cost-to-communicate; and has engaged the network operators and the relevant government departments to explore the possibilities of reducing the cost to communicate without undermining the independent role of Icasa, whose independence as a regulator of the broadcasting sector is enshrined in the Constitution. Network operators have proposed an industry forum where the minister could engage the sector on pricing matters and the state of the ICT sector, and it is intended that the minister will consider the proposal to establish a standing industry/CEO forum.

Lack of content

Software and technology must be designed for all people, including those with disabilities, those who are illiterate, and those who speak indigenous languages but not English. The lack of appropriate content and software for them is a major problem affecting South Africa's connectivity and use of ICTs.

The constitutional provisions that cover the rights of access to information and to choice of language and that promote equality of all persons set the framework for policy and legislation in all spheres of society, including ICTs. According to a survey conducted in 2010,[165] software for computers was not found to be user-friendly and did not make use of indigenous languages. People with disabilities were also placed at a disadvantage in terms of content (sign language and sub-titles) and infrastructure (user-friendly end-user hardware such as cell phones and jumbo TV remote controllers). This places severe limitations on access to ICTs – with the ripple effect of limited

access to information, and in a rapidly changing technological world where access to economic benefits will increasingly rely on understanding and access to information, it may further increase the divide between rich and poor.

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South Africa's communication future

The National Development Plan (NDP)

The NDP presents a vision for 2030 South Africa: a dynamic information-based, inclusive and prosperous society and knowledge economy, underpinned by ICTs. The NDP says that by 2030: 'A seamless information infrastructure will meet the needs of citizens, business, and the public sector, providing access to the wide range of services required for effective economic and social participation – at a cost and quality at least equal to South Africa's competitors.'

The NDP suggests a phasing of priorities in order to realise its vision:

- **The short term (2012 – 2015):**
  The DoC is going to develop an e-strategy to assist in achieving the government's goals of eliminating poverty and reducing inequality. This will includes plans for spectrum allocation and a clear strategy for universal access. In addition, e-literacy, skills development and capacity building interventions should be introduced to support ICT diffusion.

- **The Medium Term: (2015 – 2020):**
  The focus will shift to broadband penetration. By 2020, the government plans for the entire population to have broadband access.

All citizens and communities should be able to disseminate news and information online. The ordinary citizen will be able to use the Internet: to find information; to read the news; to complete tax returns online and access government policies and laws, as well as ministers' speeches and other documents; to engage in buying and selling activities (e-commerce); and to participate in new forms of entertainment.

As there is uncertainty about the pace of technological development and services, benchmarking performance against other countries is preferable to setting numerical targets.

- **Long-term (2020 – 2030):**
  The e-strategy will be implemented and ICTs will be used to support rather than limit the global competitiveness of South Africa. By 2030, government will be using ICTs to engage and provide services to citizens. All individuals will be able to use a core set of ICT services and access a wide range of entertainment, information and educational services.

The vision of the NDP implies that we will derive long-term benefits from a knowledge-based economy by harnessing ICT to aid South Africa in meeting its developmental goals of job creation, economic growth, poverty alleviation, and competitiveness. Ultimately, South Africa needs an e-strategy, because technology is continuing to move the world towards a digital society and for South Africa to remain competitive and relevant it must be a part of this change.

Broadband policy

The DoC has redrafted a vision for broadband services, which was published in December 2013.

The previous 2010 broadband policy used a definition of broadband recommended by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU): an always-on connection that has a download speed of at least 256 kbps. The new policy

proposes a less specific definition: an ecosystem of high-capacity, high-speed and high-quality electronic networks, services, applications and content that enhances the variety, utility and value of information and communication for different types of users. Targets for different types of users will be reviewable and are initially proposed as follows:

Target	Penetration Measure	Baseline (2013)	By 2016	By 2020	By 2030
Broadband access in Mbps user experience	Per cent of population	33.7% Internet access*	50% at 5Mbps	90% at 5Mbps; 50% at 100Mbps	100% at 10Mbps; 80% at 100Mbps
Schools	Per cent of schools	25% connected	50% at 10Mbps	100% at 10Mbps 80% at 100Mbps	100% at 1 Gbps
Health facilities	Per cent of health facilities	13% connected	50% at 10Mbps	100% at 10Mbps 80% at 100Mbps	100% at 1 Gbps
Government facilities	Per cent of government offices		50% at 5Mbps	100% at 10Mbps	100% at 100Mbps
*Research ICT Africa, 2012 ICT Access and Use Survey[167]					

Spectrum Policy

Progress has been made towards developing an effective spectrum policy to facilitate the development of wireless technologies in support of universal access and economic development.

With the changeover from analogue terrestrial broadcasting to digital, additional spectrum will become available. The NDP suggests that spectrum allocation is the biggest regulatory bottleneck that impacts on the distribution of wireless services needed for the economy and society to flourish.

As spectrum becomes available, regulators are being called upon to discourage spectrum hoarding where licensees buy spectrum that they do not use or use in a limited way. Mechanisms for spectrum allocation will need to be improved generally and allocation of spectrum licences should be technology neutral.

The NDP outlines government's primary role to be 'to determine policy that promotes market access, and so create effective institutions to ensure competition, and regulate operator behaviour and market failure.'

National integrated ICT policy

The DoC is leading a process to review the various policies in the postal, telecommunications, broadcasting and information technology sectors. A panel of experts, made up of academics and industry leaders, issued a Green Paper in January 2014. The panel is looking for an integrated policy that will lead to legislation and will take South Africa into the future by promoting investment in the sector, digitising many government services (e-government), and stimulating e-commerce, including becoming linked into a global market.

Implications for the media of the future

Although many people are hesitant to fully jump into a digital world, there might not be the option of abstaining for much longer. Old methods of communication are slowly being eliminated – particularly print media. For generations, people have relied on newspapers for most of their information, and while papers are still being produced they are no longer the preferred method of information dissemination. This shift to online content has stimulated many discussions and policies around the world, in terms of everything from freedom of the press, and libel to the verification of sources and honest reporting. It is only a small area of what being 'connected' really represents for people, but it is yet another form of digitisation that is dramatically affecting lives.

Reports have recently shown that print media has declined significantly in South Africa. Combined levels of circulation dropped from 2.34 million circulated copies from July to September 2012 to 2.16 million users from July to September 2013. That level is expected to continue falling. On the other hand, news websites are thriving, and while the decline of print media is certainly the end of an era, online subscription numbers mean that people are still hungry for information and knowledge. Three online news sources top the list in impressive fashion, and eBis MBA, which tracks website traffic around the world, names Yahoo News, Huffington Post and CNN as the top three sources for news, with an estimated 110, 85, and 70 million unique monthly viewers respectively. In South Africa, in 2012 News24 came in ninth in the 'Top 20' report. Independent online was 18th. Those are impressive numbers, and that is the sort of website traffic that is not only profitable, but also informative and stimulating for the general public.

Digital media is faster to access and is easier to engage with and retain. Consuming information is of utmost important in modern society, and some of the most valuable information for people comes from the media. South Africa wants to remain competitive and in-tune with global society, and must make digital media an accessible and functional tool for its entire population. This is the road ahead, and South Africa is moving in the right direction through policy development and governmental awareness of the issues relating to supply and demand. The ICT sector and the increased online presence of South Africa's citizens will continue to grow, but this growth must be accompanied by consistent technical support and educational opportunities.

by Nandi Mokoena

Each edition of the media landscape series will provide an update on those media cases that have been brought before the Competition Commission/ Tribunal. In 2013/14 this was a complaint brought against Media24. Nandi Mokoena, Communications: Competition Tribunal.

In November 2013, the Competition Tribunal ('Tribunal') started a hearing into a complaint brought by the Competition Commission ('Commission') against Media24. The Commission alleged that between 2004 and 2009 Media24 deliberately drove a competitor, Gold-Net News, out of the market for advertising in community newspapers. According to the Commission, Media24 did this by positioning a competing community newspaper, Goudveld Forum, as a 'fighting brand' against Gold-Net News and running the brand at a loss until Gold-Net News eventually closed down in 2009. Having succeeded with this strategy, the Commission alleged, Media24 closed Goudveld Forum in January 2010 and either retrenched Goudveld Forum staff or redeployed them to other Media24 publications including Vista, which operated in the same geographic area as Gold-Net News and Goudveld Forum.

Media24 denied the commission's allegations, saying that Goudveld Forum covered its costs during the 2004-2009 period and that there was no truth to the allegation that Media24 kept Goudveld Forum open in order to inhibit or deter competition with Vista. Media24 also denied that Gold-Net News closed down due to anti-competitive strategies on Media24's part,

citing the 2008 economic downturn and other possible reasons for Gold-Net News's decline.

The commission's complaint to the Tribunal came after Berkina Twintig (Pty) Ltd, trading as Gold-Net News, filed a case against Media24 with the Commission in 2009. Gold-Net News claimed that from 2004 to 2009 Media24 drastically reduced its advertising rates to a level lower than its production and overhead costs, leading Gold-Net News to reduce its advertising rates to unsustainable levels. Following an investigation, the Commission found this conduct to be in contravention of the Competition Act which prohibits dominant firms from unjustifiably pricing below cost. The conduct allegedly took place in what the Commission termed 'the Goldfields area' which comprises Welkom, Odendaalsrus, Allanridge, Riebeeckstad, Virginia, Henneman, Bronville, Jerusalem, Wesselbron, Bultfontein, Theunissen, Ventersburg, Thabong, Meloding, Kutluanong and Phomolong. According to the Commission, Media24's conduct resulted in advertisers and readers being deprived of the benefit of competition between community newspapers.

The Tribunal's hearing into these allegations began on 12 November 2013 and was initially set to end in March 2014. However, the hearing took longer than expected and continued for two weeks in May, with further hearings in November 2014. The Tribunal expects to hear testimony from 17 witnesses in this case. It is unlikely that there will be a decision this year.

Endnotes

Chapter 1:

Evolving media policy of the ANC: Time to go back to the drawing board?

1 For an updated description of ownership and a profile of media staff, see Reg Rumney's contribution in this volume.

2 Omnicom Media Group South Africa (2014) *South Africa and SADC: OMD Media Facts Future of the Media* p. 45.

3 ANC spokesperson Jackson Mthembu accused Ronnie Kasrils of wanting to rule intelligence from the grave, describing his critique as mere 'ranting'.

Chapter 3:

Twenty years of SA media ownership (1994 – 2014)

4 The idea to establish a pay-TV station was initiated by Koos Bekker of Naspers precisely because advertising revenue in print was down. Naspers initially wanted the other three major media companies – Times Media, Avusa and Perskor (Caxton) – to be involved. However, over time only Naspers was involved in this project.

Chapter 4:

Indigenous languages and South Africa's Media Environment

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6 Evans, S and Faull, L (2013) New Age: Dawn of advertising riches with no circulation figures, *Mail & Guardian*. (25th January 2013). Available at: http://mg.co.za/article/2013-01-25-00-new-age-dawn-of-advertising-riches-with-no-circulation-figures.

7 Evans, S and Faull, L (2013) New Age: Dawn of advertising riches with no circulation figures, *Mail & Guardian*. (25th January 2013). Available at: http://mg.co.za/article/2013-01-25-00-new-age-dawn-of-advertising-riches-with-no-circulation-figures.

8 Omnicom Media Group SA (2013): The *Future of Media Blueprint OMD South Africa and SADC Media Facts 2013*: Available at: http://www.omd.co.za/media_facts/FOM029_Blueprint_OMD_mediafacts2013.pdf

9 Growth of Media Opportunities, OMD Media, Future of Media: Blueprint 2013.

10 Mandla Langa has received South Africa's National Order of Ikhamanga (Silver) for literary, journalistic and cultural achievements. He is worked extensively in the media environment – as the Chairperson of the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), has served on the SABC board etc.

11 MDDA (2014) Mandla Langa acknowledges 20 years of freedom and diversity. (28th May 2014) Available at: http://www.bizcommunity.com/article/196/15/113972.html

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15 Mtimde L *The Role of the MDDA in Promoting Multi-lingualism in Local Government*.

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17 www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/endangered-languages/faq.

Chapter 5:

Twenty years of freedom: Whose democracy are we reporting?

18 The print and digital media industry is taken here to include mainstream and community media. Print media includes newspapers and magazines while digital media includes mobile and apps.

19 One of the core areas to be addressed is media ethics. How ethical is our media? What ethical challenges have they overcome and which challenges are presented by the changing media environment? These questions, while critical, are beyond the scope of this chapter.

20 For current purposes, media monitoring is understood to be: the carrying out of close content analysis using a standardised methodology, collecting and analysing data informed by discourse analysis; and, cultural studies.

21 Insofar as this chapter seeks to highlight broad trends, the various forms of media are spoken of in general terms, except where specific examples are given. It is understood that there are clear exceptions to general terms, and more often than not the exceptions serve to highlight the general rule.

22 Sadly, however, the same is not necessarily true when it comes to other non-South African Africans where their nationality is referred to in media reports. These often tend to be in brief reports about crime in which it may be noted, for example, that 10 people were arrested, including five illegal Zimbabweans. Indeed in cases of illegal mining the nationality of the miners is often highlighted even when this is not necessary or relevant. Although more common than identifying race, it is an area that has seen considerable improvement since democracy.

23 Transformation Task Team (September 2013) *Report on the Transformation of Print and Digital Media*. Available at: http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:IZKmZ6_zGfYJ:www.pdmedia.org.za/pressreleases/2013/PDMTT%2520FINAL%2520PRINTED%2520REPORT.PDF+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk

24 Media Monitoring Africa, (2004) *Children Dying to Make the News* Available at: http://www.mediamonitoringafrica.org/images/uploads/ECM_FinalReport.pdf

25 See: Rikhotso, M., Morwe, K, Namumba, L., Kalu, G., Singh,. R. (2013), *Children in the News Seen but Still not Heard*, Media Monitoring Africa.

26 It should be noted that the Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) together with its partner, Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (CoRMSA), lodged a complaint with the press ombudsman. On appeal the parties reached mutual agreement and the case was settled. The *Daily Sun* published a front page explanation which included a commitment to never refer to non-South Africans as aliens.

27 As it turned out, the man was identified and the media paid for him to be returned to his home in Mozambique and also covered the costs to give him a dignified burial.

28 It is precisely because of the importance of media at this time that the MMA was started in 1993. MMA has monitored the media's coverage of all democratic elections in South Africa. This means that we have monitored over 67 000 elections stories across more than 70 different media, including print, community, commercial and public service radio, as well as television.

29 Regulations on party election broadcasts, political adverts, the equitable treatment of political parties by broadcast licensees and related matters. Government Gazette Vol 584 No. 37350 (17 Feb 2014). Page: 13 2. Editorial Matters 2. Available at: https://www.Icasa.org.za/Portals/0/Regulations/Regulations/Party%20Elections%20Broadcasts%20Political%20Advertisements/RegsPartyElectionBroadcasts2014.pdf.

30 It is worth noting that MMA's findings around fairness have been mirrored by other monitoring groups using different methodologies including commercial organisations as well as the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Icasa). While the media coverage can be said to be fair and balanced regarding the majority of political parties, MMA has consistently highlighted the media's failure to cover core elections issues in sufficient depth and diversity. These include issues of poverty, HIV and Aids, gender-based violence, education, health, crime and children.

31 Regulations on party election broadcasts, political adverts, the equitable treatment of political parties by broadcast licensees and related matters. Government Gazette Vol 584 No. 37350 (17 Feb 2014). Page: 13 2. Editorial Matters 1. Available at: https://www.Icasa.org.za/Portals/0/Regulations/Regulations/Party%20Elections%20Broadcasts%20Political%20Advertisements/RegsPartyElectionBroadcasts2014.pdf.

32 MMA (2009) *National and Provincial Elections 2009: "A win or a place, citizens come last*." Available at: http://www.mediamonitoringafrica.org/index.php/resources/entry/national_and_provincial_elections_2009_a_win_or_a_place_citizens_come_last/

33 The results of the 2014 analysis were out too late to be included in the chapter, but people can visit the link and decide if the coverage has changed: http://elections2014.mediamonitoringafrica.org/

34 Hall, C (2013) SA Children's Gauge Report 2013. Children's Institute.

35 See MMA report http://www.media-monitoringAfrica.org.

36 The research was carried out by the Peri Natal HIV Research Unit (PHRU), the Wits School of Journalism HIV and the Media project, an HIV and media fellow, and MMA.

37 Finlay, A. (2003) Shaping the Conflict: Factors Influencing The Representation of Conflict Around HIV/AIDS Policy in the South African Press.

38 http://www.journaids.org/images/uploads/docs/Research_HIV_in_the_print_media.pdf

39 During the 2009 general elections analysis, some of the most inequitable media were public service broadcast stations

40 See *Sunday World* article, 'Hands of stone' socks baby mama' (23/05/2010), as an example where gender-based violence is trivialised.

41 Journalists from three different major news organisations noted at the time that it was the story of the year. This was a bold claim in South Africa where just a few months prior in 2012 we managed to hit international news because of the death of 44 people at Marikana.

42 In stark contrast, the coverage given to the Marikana miners in the ongoing Farlam Commission of Enquiry is much reduced and they are often portrayed as a group not as individuals.

43 The upside of these reports (if we can term it that) is that at least the issue of gender-based violence is highlighted and some people humanised. It hasn't always been this way. For example in the 2000's, stories were still reported through a heterosexual male perspective. In one story, for example, the rape of a woman in a home robbery was acknowledged as horrific. Perhaps more disturbing however was that it was portrayed as even more horrific that the husband was forced to watch his wife being raped - as if somehow his trauma was worse than that of his wife. So we do indeed have a long way to go but gender-based violence is more frequently reported and more accurately portrayed.

44 Stegeman, K (2013) Remembering Anene Booysen: The sound, the fury and the politicking. *Mail and Guardian*. (11th Feb 2013). Available at: http://mg.co.za/article/2013-02-11-remembering-anene-booysen-the-sound-the-fury-and-the-politicking.

Chapter 6:

Journalism in the new world of social media

45 Trending is when a lot of people speak about the same topic at the same time on Twitter. There is daily a new list of trending topics which vary by region. Increasingly, brand managers are excited by reports that a product in their portfolio is 'trending' as this is an informal barometer of popularity. The flipside of course can be devastating. Recently a young woman of South African descent, Justine Sacco, living and working in the US, boarded a flight from London to Cape Town. Before she switched off her mobile she tweeted 'Going to Africa, hope I don't get AIDS. Kidding, I'm white'. With that she settled in for a good night's sleep over a long haul. Upon landing 12 hours later she discovered that she was the topic of worldwide conversations and condemnation, and the subject of a trending topic #HasJustineLandedYet. Trending topics on Twitter were initially the domain of hashtags – key words with which users can search conversations – but now any noun in any conversation that generates a significant amount of mentions in any particular geographical location can trend there.

46 US online trends, which tend to set the bar, have seen the percentage of people who see their news headlines online more than double in the past two years. Over the same period, the number of regular users of online news sites has tripled, whilst 33 per cent of under 30s get their news from social media and 34 per cent from TV, in contrast to 13 per cent who read traditional or even digital newspapers. Undoubtedly, social media influence is rising.

47 Not only did the Superbowl shatter two records for tweets per second in 2012 – peaking at 12,233 TPS, this year, pre-game marketing has incoporated a light show in on New York's Empire State Building. Responses to the hashtag #WhosGonnaWin either swathe the building in green and silver or orange and blue. These colour combinations represent the two competing teams, Seahawks and Broncos. Whichever team has the most support gets their colours posted on the tallest building in America.

Chapter 7:

Mind the perception gap

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53 Twenty Year Review: South Africa 1994 - 2014.

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trusted-and-least-trusted-list.html; http://www.globescan.com/news_archives/bbcreut_country.html.

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66 http://www.pewresearch.org/

Chapter 8

Twenty years of media development and diversity

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81 Historically disadvantaged individuals

82 http://www.sekunjalo.com/about/about-sekunjalo-group

83 http://www.tnamedia.co.za/

84 http://mg.co.za/

85 http://www.abc.org.za/About.aspx/BoardOfDirectors

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98 MDDA/ Quest (2014) A Report on the Transformation of Print Media in South Africa pg 60

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Chapter 9:

Community Radio: A snapshot of the landscape after 20 years

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Chapter 10:

Government communications: 20 Years of empowerment and development

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Fact Sheet 1:

South Africa and the ICT Revolution

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