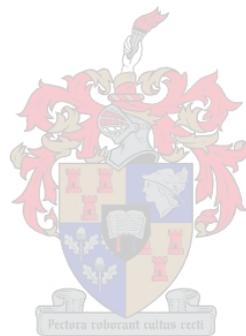


**Choosing to be part of the story:
the participation of the South African National Editors' Forum
in the democratising process**

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Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Philosophy
(Journalism) at the University of Stellenbosch

Supervisor: Professor Lizette Rabe

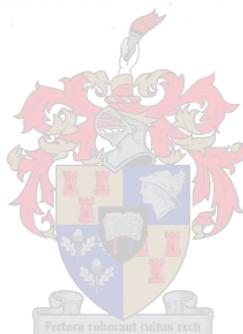
Date: April 2006

Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature: EM Barratt

Date: November 28 2005



Abstract

This study aims to locate the South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef) within South Africa's transformation from apartheid to a nonracial and constitutional democracy. This entails first examining the potential for participation demonstrated by editors' societies at different democratic stages and defining the ideal democratic roles of journalism.

The recent political history of journalism in the country is summarised to draw out the particular obstacles to editors' unity and the transformation needs in South Africa's racialised context. Then the forum's history from 1995 to 2000 is reconstructed in detail using documentary sources. This covers the formation and launch periods of Sanef, and the next couple of years of the forum's existence.

This study is described as a historical, qualitative inquiry from the inside, observing both the sequence of events and the motives related to the context and to concepts of democratic role. It is unusual in that it is a historical study of a journalism society and it uses journalism theories to guide the research and the analysis.

The research shows that despite having to overcome divisive issues from their past, the editors chose to play their part across all democratic roles: liberal, social democratic, neoliberal and participative. Activities were mostly linked to the current democratic stage. Many involved the self-transformation of journalism and journalists, leading to the suggestion of a fifth role for journalism in emerging democracies. However, some Sanef projects were not completed despite their significance for democratic journalism and others had no strategic rationale.

This study recommends that Sanef be more strategic in its activities and look to other emerging democracies for appropriate solutions to problems. It is suggested that failing to do so could result in more complex problems for journalism in South Africa in the future. Finally, it is noted that the existence of a stable and prominent forum giving editors, senior journalists and journalism educators a united voice in areas of common interest in itself lends serious weight to their democratic participation.

Abstrak

Die studie plaas die Suid-Afrikaanse Nasionale Redakteursforum (Sanef) binne Suid-Afrika se transformasie van apartheid na 'n nie-rassige en konstitusionele demokrasie. Dit behels eerstens die studie van die potensiaal vir deelneming, soos gedemonstreer deur redakteursverenigings in verskillende demokratiese stadiums. Die ideale demokratiese rolle van die joernalistiek word ook bepaal.

Suid-Afrika se onlangse politieke en joernalistiekgeskiedenis word opgesom om die spesifieke struikelblokke in die pad van redakteurseenheid en die transformasiebehoeftes binne die land se rasgebaseerde konteks aan te toon. Daarna word die forum se geskiedenis vanaf 1995 tot 2000 in detail danksy dokumentêre bronne geherkonstrueer. Dit sluit in die aanloop tot en stigting van Sanef, asook die volgende paar jaar van die forum se bestaan.

Hierdie studie word beskryf as 'n historiese, kwalitatiewe ondersoek van binne, wat beide die volgorde van gebeure en die motiewe wat verband hou met die konteks en konsepte van die joernalistiek se demokratiese rol in gedagte hou. Dit is ongewoon daarin dat dit 'n historiese studie van 'n joernalistieke vereniging is, wat joernalistieke teorieë gebruik om die navorsing en analise te steun.

Die navorsing toon dat ondanks verdelende kwessies van die verlede, die redakteurs gekies het om 'n rol te speel op alle demokratiese joernalistieke terreine: die liberale, sosiaal-demokratiese, neoliberales en deelnemende. Aktiwiteite was meestal gekoppel aan die huidige demokratiese stadium, wat die self-transformasie van joernalistiek en joernaliste ingesluit het. Dit het gelei tot die vasstelling van 'n vyfde rol vir joernalistiek in opkomende demokrasieë. Egter, sommige van Sanef se projekte is nie voltooi nie, ondanks hul belang vir demokratiese joernalistiek; ander projekte weer het geen strategiese rationale gehad nie.

Hierdie studie stel voor dat Sanef meer strategies moet wees in sy aktiwiteite en om na ander opkomende demokrasieë te kyk vir geskikte oplossings vir probleme. Dit word uitgewys dat indien dit nagelaat word, dit tot meer komplekse probleme vir die joernalistiek in Suid-Afrika kan lei. Laastens word aangedui dat die bestaan van 'n stabiele en prominente forum van redakteurs, senior joernaliste en joernalistiek-opvoeders 'n verenigde stem bied in areas van gesamentlike belang, wat op sigself belangrik is vir hul demokratiese deelname.

Media Freedom Declarations

The media in South Africa work within the ambit of these media freedom declarations:

- **Freedom Charter: adopted at the Congress of the People, Kliptown, June 26 1955**

All shall enjoy equal human rights!

The law shall guarantee to all their right to speak, to organise, to meet together, to publish, to preach, to worship and to educate their children.

- **African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights: adopted June 27 1981, OAU**

Article 9:

1. *Every individual shall have the right to receive information.*
2. *Every individual shall have the right to express and disseminate his opinions within the law.*

- **Constitution of South Africa: adopted May 8 1996**

Chapter 2 – Bill of Rights. Section 16 – Freedom of expression:

1. *Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes –*
 - a. *freedom of the press and other media;*
 - b. *freedom to receive or impart information or ideas;*
 - c. *freedom of artistic creativity; and*
 - d. *academic freedom and freedom of scientific research.*
2. *The right in subsection (1) does not extend to*
 - a. *propaganda for war;*
 - b. *incitement of imminent violence; or*
 - c. *advocacy of hatred that is based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion, and that constitutes incitement to cause harm.*

- **To give further context to these declarations within South Africa's racialised situation:**

“Without a clear and vigorous concept of rights, non-racial democracy is like a fountain without water, beautiful but stony. We must give texture and flow to non-racial democracy. Much suffering and pain have gone into its achievement. It is the basis for unifying the nation, and the context for the expression of our political rights... the rights debate and the evolution of specific charters of rights is likely to continue well into the post-apartheid era.” – **Albie Sachs, a member of the African National Congress' constitutional committee, written in his individual capacity in his 1990 book “Protecting human rights in a new South Africa”**

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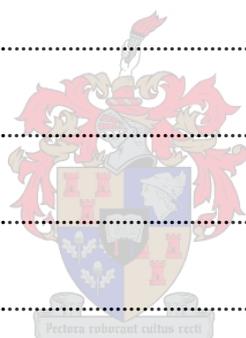
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

The South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef) united editors, senior journalists and educators from all areas of South Africa's post-apartheid but still-divided society. Their primary aims were to overcome the injustices of the past within the journalism profession and to promote media freedom within the new constitutional democracy. Divisive issues – particular to South Africa's political and racialised context – made its establishment difficult and later threatened to split the forum.

This thesis is a historical study of Sanef's early years, from 1996 to 2000. It builds a history of the forum and within this examines the roles it played in the democratising process of South Africa, a country which had its first democratic election in 1994.

Journalism histories tend to concentrate on the stories of individuals and of institutions, or the history of the freedom of the press. In addition, journalism theories are seldom used to analyse or understand journalism history (Nord & Nelson: 1981: 299-300). These are possible reasons why an extensive search failed to produce even one comparable study of a journalism society.

Building a history of Sanef allows the researcher to examine the forum's aims and activities in relation to the democratic roles of journalists, particularly those in countries at a similar stage of democracy. Was Sanef a political manipulator, a moral guardian or an activist? The story also shows how senior journalists from different contexts together tried to shape media and journalism, and their professional lives, during a period of rapid change in South Africa and in the wider media world.

1.2. Rationale

South African journalists worked under a highly restrictive media environment during apartheid, especially in the 1980s. Sanef was formed after many of these restrictions had been lifted and the country's new constitution guaranteeing media freedom had been written. Editors and journalists found it difficult to know how to operate in this new environment and how to relate to a legitimate government, and at the same time needed to transform journalism staffing and content to reflect the new equality and nonracialism of the country.

In a time of political change, there is an opportunity for journalists to do more than observe, reflect and analyse people and events – they are likely to be participants as their work can influence processes. In particular they can choose to participate in the democratising process, which will ultimately benefit journalism in terms of promoting media freedom and independence.

This thesis looks at the difficult circumstances into which Sanef was formed, how and why Sanef formed when it did, and then what its members set as its goals and chose to do as its activities. Sanef did not just deal with issues of democracy, but because of its place in South African history, after apartheid and in the early stages of democracy, this was a dominant motive. Taking a wide view, all its actions were related to trying to improve journalism and improve democracy.

The motivation for the study, therefore, is to look at the contribution of an unusual society of editors in a difficult period for journalism, but one that was critical in terms of carving out a democratic space for journalism of the future. The South African context makes Sanef unique in terms of its racialised environment and its needs for corrective action, but it also has relevance for editors' forums currently being formed in other emerging democracies throughout Africa because in a worldwide context the environments and related transformation needs are similar.

1.3. Preliminary reading

During the literature study it became apparent that, as mentioned above, there were no comparative academic studies. Further reading led to a decision to approach this preparatory research from another angle: to investigate what kinds of journalism societies exist in different contexts around the world, to look at stages of media reform, to examine closely the South African political and journalism context and to study the ideal democratic roles of journalism. This information directed and gave meaning to the historical research of the forum itself and the relationship of its aims and activities to political power, the legal environment, journalism standards and quality and issues of education and training.

The preliminary reading led to a refinement of the study of Sanef and to the clarification of the research problem as the importance of democratic stages and previous political contexts for the process of democratisation became apparent.

1.4. Research questions

History... is understood to be an interpretation of the past made by historians (or writers in any field taking a historical approach). History is not a record of the past, but a selection of data and other information made by historians. (Berger, 1998a: 111)

The nature of historical research requires that the research questions not restrict the activities of the researcher but instead provide a general direction. The research questions are thus exploratory and open-ended. The key research question is:

- What was Sanef's participation in the democratising process in South Africa from 1996 to 2000?

Within this area of study, the sub-questions are:

- What were the major issues, aims and activities of Sanef, and how do these reflect its historical context?
- How do these relate to what other journalism societies do, at various stages of democratisation?
- Which democratic roles has Sanef sought to fulfil: liberal, social democratic, neoliberal or participatory, or a combination of these?
- In the specific racialised conditions of South Africa's democracy, how has Sanef dealt with the issues of "transformation" and their relation to democracy and media freedom?

1.5. Research design and methodology

This study is a qualitative inquiry from the inside. The historical research method was utilised to both reconstruct and understand the sequence of events and the motives, in order to relate these to the concepts of democratic roles of journalism. The results of historical research are often a narrative that provides a composite picture of events, in a nuanced and complex way.

It was decided to do the study purely from documentary evidence as many primary documents were available. This document analysis was sufficient to construct a chronological history, and

the secondary documents available, mostly newspaper articles from a range of sources, helped to give context and make sense of events. Future research would benefit from the use of interviews, which would give a deeper history of the forum in relation to the people involved, their motivations and their understandings of events.

The research was done in five stages: data was collected, documents were located and organised, a chronological reconstruction of events was done, gaps in information were followed up from a variety of documentary sources and finally the narrative was written, allowing also for the evaluation and analysis of data.

The position of the researcher as an active member of Sanef since mid-1999, a journalist who knows most of the participants in this narrative, and a white South African, is acknowledged due to the possible bias this might bring to the research. On the other hand, this position has given the researcher privileged access to Sanef's unpublished documentation as well as "the understanding that comes through experience", which is expected to be part of the arsenal of the historian who has immersed herself in the history (Nord, 2003: 370).

In the South Africa context, it must be noted that "black" in this thesis refers to anyone who was discriminated against under apartheid, just as "white" refers to those advantaged. Where further racial detail may be required, the terms African, coloured and Indian are used.



1.6. Thesis outline

The literature review surveys other journalism organisations and discusses journalists in other emerging democracies. A chapter on the South African context gives the historical and journalism background as well as revealing some of the obstacles and challenges that Sanef faced. The theory chapter examines various role-of-journalism theories to define the ideal democratic roles with which to analyse Sanef's participation. The methodology chapter explains the rationale for and use of the historical, exploratory and interpretative research method.

The next two chapters are the body and the results of this thesis – the results of historical research being the story which is told. Chapter 6 is a detailed, narrative, chronological history of Sanef from before its formation, through its unity phase and its first difficulties up to its launch conference: from 1995 to early 1998. Chapter 7 is a summarised account of the activities of the forum under its second and third councils: from 1998 to mid-2000. This is followed by an analysis of the forum and a concluding chapter that looks at the main findings and their wider significance.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

There is a wealth of research information available about Sanef: piles of primary documents and hundreds of secondary sources. However the search for comparable academic studies was fruitless and it became necessary to follow more tenuous connections to the subject in order to create a literature framework.

The first step in doing literature research should be to find what similar studies have been done, to avoid repetition and reveal the groundwork done by other researchers. However, searches of databases, libraries and the internet did not reveal even one academic, detailed study of a journalist' organisation – and certainly no study done in the context of a new democracy. Furthermore, a close examination of journalists' organisations around the world uncovered only one similar society, though many types exist and many work in emerging democracies.

It was thus necessary to approach the literature differently, by looking firstly at what similar organisations exist and what they do, or aim to do, and secondly by looking at general studies of the role of journalists in particular countries – focusing on those at an early stage of democracy.

The outcome of this literature study was a realisation that to understand the role of Sanef it was necessary to look into more detail at the South African context, and to look more widely at the theories of journalists' possible roles in democracy.

Furthermore, the lack of any comparable studies confirmed the decision to do wide-ranging, historical research of Sanef, rather than a more detailed case study or comparative research. The aim is thus descriptive more than analytical.

In summary, the lack of comparable academic studies led to a decision to undertake a two-stage literature study into:

- Other journalist organisations and what they do – to compare Sanef's aims and activities.
- Studies of journalists' roles in emerging democracies – to understand roles in other contexts.

The literature review will then be followed by two chapters which explain:

- The South African context – Sanef’s roots and particular obstacles and challenges it faced.
- Theories of the role of journalism in democracy – the ideals and possibilities of these roles.

Before tackling this wide-ranging review, it is necessary to define some of the terms used and set some limitations on the research.

2.2. Key concepts

This section defines democracy and democratisation and looks at a theory of stages of democratic transition. A definition of journalism helps to clarify the concepts of journalists and editors used in this thesis. Finally, Sanef’s membership is defined and its areas of concern are summarised to create a perspective within which to examine the sections that follow.

2.2.1. Democracy and democratisation

Democratisation implies progress towards some ideal of democracy. Rozumilowicz (2002: 9) notes the problem of whether a definition of democracy should be substantive, including “factors such as citizen empowerment, inclusiveness, and representativeness” or procedural, “taking account of open and transparent elections, changeover of governments, equal voting rights and so on”. She compares the definitions of top political scientists and concludes that the crucial factors in democracy are:

- political competition
- participation

Berger (1999: 2) includes both substantive and procedural factors when he defines democracy in terms of “specific structures, systems and practices around the exercise of power”, particularly state power. These allow for participation in decision-making and some equity in producing and distributing information, as well as protecting rights to free speech, human rights and political tolerance, and providing checks against abuses.

To be democratising, a development “must contribute to a more competitive or participatory political system as well as to the institutionalised diffusion and fragmentation of political power conferred by the electorate upon a chosen group of representatives” (Rozumilowicz, 2002: 11). The media should be seen to be moving from dependency and control to freedom and independence – with freedom from the state as well as from the market or dominant social forces. This freedom requires both legal-institutional and socio-cultural support. To achieve both competition and participation, a dual-sector approach is needed, with both market-based media and state-funded public access media legally supported. In addition, professionalism among journalists and a cultural context which “promotes information proliferation, competition among views, and tolerance of ideas” are needed (Rozumilowicz, 2002: 17).

2.2.2. Stages of democratisation and media reform

Analysts break the process of democratisation into three stages: “a period of liberalisation; a democratic transition by means of multi-party elections and the development of formally democratic institutions; a period of democratic consolidation” (Olcott & Ottaway, 1999: 3). This is not an inevitable, linear progression but can be derailed by the move to semi-authoritarian states which create a stalemate and halt democratisation, often accompanied by media self-censorship.

However, Rozumilowicz (2002: 17-23) identifies four theoretical stages of establishing free and independent media, that coincide with the general democratic transition process. Although they are theoretical, acknowledging stages is necessary to accentuate the process nature of such transitions:

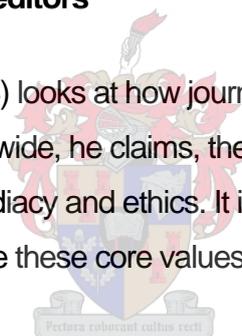
- **Pre-transition stage** – signalled by the old regime opening the previously controlled political, economic and social arenas. Tasks of the media include providing a platform for opposition and criticism, supporting future civil society voices and providing critiques of media infringement.
- **Primary transition** – seen by the destruction of the old system and a new one being established with new institutional and regulatory structures. The main role for media reformers is in the formulation of draft legislation, lobbying the government and pushing for financial support for both state-owned and private media: conditions needed for free media to start developing.
- **Secondary stage** – shows a chaotic mixture of remnants of the first two stages. New political, legal and economic structures are in place but need fine-tuning. There can be

immediate consolidation, an authoritarian backlash or institutional revision if the regime tries to implement the new structures in a way that is most to their advantage. Another big danger is of a social elite taking control. The media need to ensure that harmful remnants of the previous system are removed and new structures are used in a way that increases democracy. Reform from the previous stage that has not worked needs to be re-examined at the same time as the media legislative framework is being fine-tuned.

- **Late or mature stage** – seen as a coherent new system becomes entrenched. Backsliding must be prevented by the media consolidating commitment to the new system and drawing increasingly more segments of society into the framework, thus strengthening democracy through participation. The media will build prestige around free and professional journalism, help other countries in transition, ensure that education at all levels promotes media freedom, train journalists to improve standards and encourage the use of new technology for media freedom.

2.2.3. Journalism, journalists and editors

To define journalism, Deuze (2004: 8) looks at how journalists give meaning to their profession “as an occupational ideology”. Worldwide, he claims, they have ideal-typical core values of public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy and ethics. It is possible to see journalists’ ideology at work by looking at how they negotiate these core values in situations of change at work or change in their professions.



Berger (1999: 1) defines journalism as “a form of realist communication, via text, images and/or sound”, primarily by information. The important aspect is that “journalism is communication done on behalf of the public interest, by people who are relatively independent of special interests”. Journalists and editors are therefore those who, relatively independently, collect and publish or produce journalism in the public interest. Editors are those who manage and control this process.

This is the overall definition, or ideal, of journalism and journalist that will be accepted here – while acknowledging that different sectors of society will have different definitions of what is in the public interest. Liberal pluralists would thus argue that “strong, partisan, and segmented media” are part of what is needed to create an overall balance and satisfy democracy’s requirement of both competition and participation (Rozumilowicz, 2002: 15).

Journalism cannot be equated with media as the latter includes “the economic, organisational and technological structures within which journalists work” (Loeffelholz & Quandt, 2000: 18). On a national level, editors represent the media as an institution in society, so their work is judged against ideals of journalism and of democracy. However in terms of their jobs they have to succeed in the arena of media as business, especially if they work for the private media, so their work is judged against business ideals.

2.2.4. Sanef membership

Sanef represents senior South African journalists and educators of various types:

Membership shall be open to any person in South Africa who is a senior editorial executive in the print and electronic media, including newspapers, magazines, regional publications, radio and television, on-line news media, community media and to people of similar status in media education. A “senior editorial executive” shall be defined as a journalist with executive or managerial responsibilities. (Sanef constitution, 1998)

Being part of Sanef allows members to engage both externally with institutions and society – to speak with one voice as journalism leaders when they agree on issues of common interest – as well as internally with journalists and on other concerns of the journalism profession. Sanef’s constitution shows this dual focus through its inclusion of issues of political power and laws, as well as of standards and ethics (Sanef constitution, 1998). It allows members to engage with the democratic ideals of journalism as a group instead of just as individuals.

2.2.5. Sanef’s areas of interest

The Sanef constitution commits its members to “a programme of action to defend and promote media freedom and independence” on the belief and understanding that:

- Public and media scrutiny of the exercise of political and economic power is essential.
- The law related to the operation of media should be consistent with South Africa’s Bill of Rights in its protection of freedom of expression.
- Journalists and media owners have a duty to work to the highest professional standards and ethics.

- Journalists and media educators embrace a learning culture by committing themselves to ongoing education and training (Sanef constitution, 1998).

It can be argued that there are areas of journalism concern not related to democracy as a political system, such as the education and training of journalists, ethics or the economic aspects of developing diversity. Alternatively, these can all be seen as being essential factors contributing to the development of journalism and hence to democracy. In examining the role of Sanef in South Africa, this thesis will concentrate on the forum's political role – its interaction with political forces – while recognising that all these factors interact.

2.2.6. Summary

In summary, Sanef is concerned with issues of power, the legal framework of journalism, media freedom as a democratic value and standards and quality of journalism. These are all aspects which are important in establishing free and independent journalism, in the public interest, in a country undergoing media reform as a process that increasingly promotes the competition and participation required by democracy.

2.3. Other journalist and journalism organisations

Many organisations – working on local, national or international levels – focus on media or journalism issues of various types. The following section looks broadly at what types of national and international bodies exist. Then, relating these to Sanef's membership and interests as defined above, it looks more closely at the aims, interests and activities of those organisations with a similar membership and/or interests.

2.3.1. Types of journalist organisations

Internet searches for media and journalist organisations reveal a wide and multi-faceted interest around this area. Databases and directories provide lists that allow these to be categorised. A variety of these were consulted (see Appendix A) to draw up the following categorisation of national and international organisation types directly linked to journalism. Most journalism organisations are organised around the following:

- Media type – eg. the Newspaper Association of America, All India Newspaper Editors' Conference, All India Urdu Small Newspapers Editors' Council, Association of Bulgarian Broadcasters.
- Specialist journalism occupations – eg. Association of Health Care Journalists, National Arts Journalism Program, Pew Center for Civic Journalism, Philippine Centre for Investigative Journalism, Online Journalism Review, Indian Farm Journalists' Association, Economic Editors' Conference.
- Academic interest, journalism educators or students – eg. Columbia Journalism Review, Institute for the Advancement of Journalism, Nieman Foundation for Journalism, Pacific Journalism Review.
- Special needs groups – eg. National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association, National Association of Black Journalists, African Women's Media Centre, East Africa Media Women's Association, Young Journalists' Forum, Indian Women's Press Corps.
- Activist groups or networks for media freedom, development or monitoring – eg. Committee to Protect Journalists, Reporters sans Frontières, Network for defence of independent media in Africa, Journalists against Corruption, Media for Development Trust, Media Institute of Southern Africa, Media Rights Agenda.
- Unions of various types – eg. International Federation of Journalists, All India Newspaper Employees Federation, Indian Journalists Union, Gambia Press Union.
- General journalism associations with wide membership and wide interests – eg. International Journalists' Network, Independent Journalism Centre, European Journalism Centre, Press Club of India.



2.3.2. Interests of journalist organisations

Journalist societies were examined in terms of aims and activities to compare these to Sanef's. The following examples show the varying emphases of different categories (Appendix A):

- Special needs groups concentrate on developing and promoting their members' careers. The National Association of Black Journalists in the United States does advocacy, networking,

professional development, annual awards, scholarships, internships and sponsored short courses. The African Women's Media Centre concentrates on gender and jobs, with networking, individual support, lobbying for women's issues and training for women.

- Media freedom groups are usually non-governmental organisations that try to have an impact on society. The international Committee to Protect Journalists tracks attacks on journalists, makes abuses public, organises protests, acts for imprisoned journalists, works through diplomatic channels to effect change, publishes articles on press freedom and puts out alerts.
- Occupation-based groups try to develop their members and promote their interests. The International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors has a focus on standards, independence, leadership, press freedom and "the development of the community newspaper press as an instrument of mutual understanding and world peace".
- International groups organised around a media type do research and provide information. The World Editors Forum deals with issues and problems specific to newspaper editors, giving them ideas, solutions, trends and innovations relating to editorial management. Its focus is on networking, information and research around professional and business issues: how to select, train and motivate journalists, keep up with reader trends and anticipate major editorial shifts.

Union groups focus on working conditions – which in many cases includes media freedom issues – and academic organisations on education and quality issues. Special needs and occupation-based organisations focus on members' needs. Media freedom groups do advocacy work. International groups cater for what is common at a worldwide level, mostly through information and research.

None of these is similar to Sanef: a national, professional forum, uniting and representing a senior editorial membership, as individuals, across all media and with a wide range of interests.

National editors' and journalists' organisations that represent one media type have a range of activities comparable to Sanef's – but context-specific and problem-focused in relation to that media – as well as individual rather than corporate or group membership. However, according to Rozumilowicz's four stages of establishing media (2002: 17-23), their interests and activities should differ depending on their context: that country's stage of democratic development.

2.3.3. National organisations in mature democracies

The Society of Editors, in the United Kingdom, was the one group found with membership nearly the same as Sanef's (Appendix A): members are editors and their deputies in publications, broadcasting, new media, freelance agencies or foreign press bureaux, academics and media lawyers. It was formed in 1999 when the Guild of Editors and Association of British Editors merged to form a body totally independent of any other organisation and owners, and with a key objective of supporting self-regulation. Their website displays a Code of Practice, dated 2004. A major activity is the annual conference, with a focus on getting top journalists and newsmakers as speakers. The website lists non-fiction books about the media, an online survey on whether local councils are becoming more open or secretive, media law advice, Freedom of Information Act courses and articles, and media advisory notes from a police association. The society concentrates on spreading information that aims to improve professionalism and protect media freedom. It has two standing committees to deal with lobbying and training.

Similarly, the Canadian Association of Journalists (Appendix A) "is a national non-profit advocacy and professional development organisation" serving Canadian journalists from all media, including print, radio and television – but without an exclusively senior membership. It was founded in 1978 and claims more than 1 400 active members. As with the Society of Editors, its goals show it exists in a country with entrenched democracy: it promotes professional excellence through conferences and awards, encourages investigative journalism and provides network, advocacy and information services for members.



The American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) has daily newspaper and wire service editors as its members (Appendix A). It was set up in the 1930s and it again shows the interests of those not campaigning for democracy. It was founded on "the common ground of high purpose" to defend the profession and to give individual editors a sense of professional unity. Its annual convention is a place to share ideas, learn job-related techniques and find out more about trends. It does research and gives editors access to legal counsel. It promotes diversity, good writing and leadership, and connects educators with newsrooms. ASNE has a particular similarity to Sanef, in that it has an external focus: it "represents editors' points of view within the newspaper industry, the American political process and society", and internationally.

2.3.4. National organisations in democracies in transition

In contrast to the previous groups, the Union of Independent Electronic Media of Montenegro (UNEM) has aims and activities designed to solve basic problems (Appendix A). It was formed

by nine radio and two television stations to protect their interest in communication by supporting one another. It aims for mutual co-operation and co-ordination to share information and publicly promote their interests in a situation of “low economic activity in Montenegro, monopoly position of state media, non-existence of good broadcasting law”. To achieve “professional solidarity against nationalism and chauvinism”, it tries to solve practical problems by sharing maintenance costs. A law expert is shared to help draft media legislation, and it is raising funds to pay for the independent news agency and to connect all the stations with ISDN lines.

UNEM is a member of the South East European Network of Associations of Private Broadcasters, established in 2000 by 11 broadcasters from 10 countries (Appendix A). The network’s objectives are mutual support, professional collaboration, promotion of high standards, politically and economically independent journalism, training and media policy collaboration. Its projects have included management training, improving co-ordination, fostering media law reform, improving professional standards, broadcasting training and news exchange.

The Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ), although not limited to editors like Sanef is, nevertheless has the same cross-media membership and interests (Appendix A). It grew out of an organisation established in the 1950s that campaigned for the restoration of democracy and helped to draft the constitution. When the number of journalists and journalist organisations flourished, after democracy was restored in 1996, it changed into a federation. According to its website: “It is a matter of pride for the Nepalese journalists that nowhere in the whole world exists such an organisation that incorporates media men from every background of media – print, electronic and cyber”. It aims to protect press freedom and journalists, implement laws for working journalists and a code of conduct, develop the skills of journalists and mobilise press for social development. In the area of legal change, it wants a right to information act, a national advertisement policy, a new mass communication policy and a national policy for the smooth movement and distribution of press materials. However, since the takeover by the king and new restrictions on press freedom in Nepal, the FNJ has had to deal with issues such as journalists losing their jobs, intimidation and restrictions on reporting.

2.3.5. Summary

As described above, only one organisation dealing with a range of national journalism issues and with a wide but senior membership similar to that of Sanef was found: the Society of Editors. However, this was in Britain, a country categorised as being at a mature stage of democracy.

It was seen that the activities of national organisations are related to the political-democratic status of journalism in that country:

- Where media freedom is entrenched, the organisation is a place for editors to share ideas, undertake self-development as individuals, keep abreast of trends, unite to protect press freedom or maintain self-regulation, get legal advice and do research into innovations.
- Organisations in countries at an early stage of transition are concerned with practicalities (like basic infrastructure, mutual support, finance and advertising), legal issues, the promotion of media freedom, concerns around quality and standards of journalism, and basic training.

Sanef does not concentrate on the self-development of its members nor look at media innovations and technological trends. On the other hand, it does not deal with practical issues of basic infrastructure or finance, as other groups in new democracies do. It has media reform aims and activities around the development of law, promoting press freedom, raising journalism standards and training. This analysis indicates that Sanef's context is not "mature" but nearer to the examples of early transition given above – in primary or secondary transition stage.

2.4. The role of journalists in democratic transition

Having seen how national journalism societies differ in their concerns, the focus now turns to studies that describe the role of journalists in countries in democratic transition. These show a wide range of different developments. However, these are not related to geographical location, but to context – the previous history, complexity and nature of media development – as well as the current stage of transition.

2.4.1. Primary transition with a media-rich history

Evensen (1994) looks at the case of Latvia, which became independent of the Soviet Union in 1991 and where journalists played a leading role in this struggle by uniting pro-independence forces and counselling restraint. The country had been independent and democratic only 50 years before and still had strong elements of a media-rich environment. Two years after independence, researchers found journalists were clear on the problems being experienced, but vague about what post-independence roles they should play.

“Our biggest mistake was to imply that independence was the end of political struggle,” says Dace Duze, a lecturer in journalism at the University of Latvia. “Instead, we should have said it is the end of one struggle and the beginning of another” (as cited in Evensen, 1994).

Journalists complained about every-man-for-himself journalism, political parties wanting media to continue to be propaganda instruments, economic problems leading to the need to cultivate commercial interests, being accused of siding with commercial pals, allegations of corruption, a lack of professionalism, the talented selling themselves to the highest bidder, press being as passive as before and journalism educators having to concentrate on money-making and not on improving standards. The transition led to professional and economic uncertainty. Serious political commentary was giving way to “a kind of adolescent entertainment”, journalism was no longer an “educator for political change” and people were left uninformed. Purpose and direction had lapsed into indirection and confusion. Those not used to operating in a competitive market wanted authoritarian solutions and greater structural controls over the press.

The role of mass media in democracy is an ongoing responsibility, notes Evensen (1994).

2.4.2. Secondary transition with little previous media development

In a contrasting view, Blankson (2002) looks at the civil society role of the media in Ghana since democratic reforms of the mid-1990s – before which the media played political propaganda and developmental journalism roles serving the political elite. He says Ghana is a country where freeing the media resulted in the people developing a civic consciousness and becoming more involved. The vibrant and critical independent media was fostering the dissemination and free exchange of information leading to social, political and economic reforms. At the same time, it was contributing to the emergence of an “aroused” public which was shedding the silence it had carried from decades of state control and expressing opinions on non-state as well as state institutions (Blankson, 2002).

However, there is a backlash against this free media. In a short article on West African media, Jallow (2003: 14) notes “the emergence of independent, privately owned newspapers in the past decade is one of the surest indications of the movement toward democratisation”, seen also in the growth of radio stations. Now the principal weapon against the criticism and questioning of an increasingly free media is courts and “insult laws”: libel, sedition or contempt cases threaten journalists with huge fines or prison. Accuracy and fair comment are no protection for anyone

who insults a state official's conduct. He says some of these laws existed from colonial times, while others have been recently introduced. Other forms of oppression – arrest, detention, beating and murder – also still exist.

2.4.3. Secondary transition with well-developed media

Pietiläinen (1999) looks at how media changed in the former Soviet republics from 1989 to 1999, after the collapse of the centralised and state/party-controlled media of the former Soviet Union. The first change was the founding of independent, political newspapers and private, regional television, and an increase in political discussion in existing media. After the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, and the 1992 economic crisis, the political papers declined as society became depoliticised. Tabloid weeklies focusing on everyday issues came to the fore – dominated by regional/local papers as before communism. The economic struggle resulted in a marked difference between quality and popular journalism. By the end of the 1990s, newspapers were a battle-space for polarised disputes between the main political groups or refused to cover politics – the public forum-role of the press had been short-lived. Increased cover of citizens' daily issues remained, with many voices heard. Outside influences on content remained: paid-for stories and hidden advertising. The lack of ethics or professionalism is linked to low salaries rather than a lack of training and commercial influences are greater than political ones (Pietiläinen, 1999).

2.4.4. Post-communist and post-authoritarian countries

Comparing emerging democracies in post-communist central Europe with those in post-authoritarian sub-Saharan Africa in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Campbell (1996) notes that pro-democracy struggles in both highlighted the need for press freedom and independent media. With freedom came a swift startup of new newspapers and periodicals, quickly followed by a drop in readership and rise in production costs – but central Europe was more likely to get foreign investment to save newspapers. States were reluctant to share the broadcast media, but as these increasingly went private they competed with the independent press for commercial resources and audiences. There was also a difficulty in overcoming the legacy of previously playing a propaganda role for or against the state: the media were using loud and unsubstantiated accusations instead of credible reporting and analysis (Campbell, 1996).

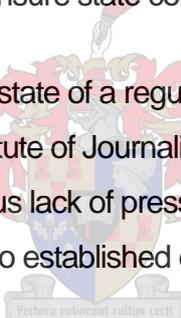
Campbell's sweeping comparisons above do not take into account differences between countries at different stages in democratic transition. Pietiläinen sees economic and political

changes as related to the changes in journalism and the media, Blankson does not define changes over time except to note a growing civic arousal and Evensen is detailing events happening only two years after the transition. What follows is a more detailed study.

2.4.5. Primary transition: the case of Uganda

Kayanja (2002) looked at the role of the media in Uganda, after decades of colonial and post-colonial authoritarian rule and at the time of writing being at a early stage of democratic transition. Obstacles to press freedom, despite it being declared government policy, were multiple:

- Practical – lack of infrastructure, illiteracy and financial restraints.
- Legal – old libel and sedition laws still being used, by a non-independent judiciary.
- Political – intolerance of criticism by the state and the use of a combination of coercive, legal, economic and co-optive measures to ensure state control.
- Professional – the institution by the state of a regulatory media council that registers journalists annually and a National Institute of Journalists of Uganda which only accepts university graduates. Due to the previous lack of press freedom, there are difficulties in identifying the limits of responsible reporting and no established ethical practice.



On the other hand, a number of oppressive media laws have been repealed. There is now no law under which a newspaper can be banned, and journalists can be critical up to a point. There are independent and state-owned print media, and private radio and television as well as state-owned stations. Kayanja (2002: 164) notes the success of media associations – the Ugandan Newspaper Editors and Proprietors Association, Ugandan Journalists Association and Ugandan Journalists Safety Committee – in lobbying the government for some media reform. In addition, despite years of authoritarian rule resulting in a weak civil society, various education, religious and advocacy groups have influenced media performance. For example, Catholics campaigned against immoral publications, women’s groups shifted print media’s focus on gender and analytical journalism is promoted by the University of Makerere and others. Print media declined in number due to financial factors and competition from television and radio, but broadcasting media expanded and became more outspoken. However, Kayanja (2002: 175) notes “there cannot be media development without overall development... poor infrastructure, low levels of education and inadequate incomes all constrain the development of a free media in Uganda”.

2.4.6. Summary

The above examples show the diversity of reactions of countries and their journalists to the process of implementing media freedom in different transitional contexts. These vary from post-struggle confusion, to post-reform arousal, to the intimidation of journalists using colonial laws and to effective lobbying for legal reform. There are different kinds of backlash possible during the secondary stage. A common factor at both stages is increasing financial difficulties as well as commercial restraints and influences.

2.5. Conclusions

This wide-ranging literature review, necessitated by the lack of comparable academic studies, began by defining democracy and looking at the democratisation of media as a process. It defined journalism as a practice in the public interest, and explained Sanef's membership and focus. It also established the political focus of this study. A look at journalism organisations worldwide found huge numbers and variety, but only one like Sanef – and that in a different democratic context.

Detail of the activities and goals of national organisations revealed clear differences related to their political and economic contexts – and previous media situation. An examination of studies of journalism in primary and secondary stages of transition emphasised the importance of a variety of contextual factors in examining what Sanef did in the first years of its existence. This leads to Chapter 3, in which the South African political and media situation leading to the formation of Sanef will be outlined. The following chapter, Chapter 4, will then examine theories defining the ideal democratic roles of journalists.

Chapter 3: The South African political and journalism context

3.1. Introduction

South Africa is a media-rich country in the African environment (Fourie, 2001: 27). In 1996, two years after its first democratic election and six years after the liberation movements were unbanned and political parties became non-racial, black and white editors united to form Sanef. The question can be asked: why then? Were editors too busy telling the story of the end of apartheid to bother about bridging their own differences before? No. The answer is simple: there were almost no black editors before then.

Although South Africa became a republic in 1960, it remained until 1994 a country in which only the white minority had rights to democracy, economic freedom – and the top jobs. Whereas domination by minorities in other countries may be based on economic strength, ethnic issues, religion, military power or other factors, in South Africa it was race (Mkhondo, 1993: vi). The structures built over time by the minority to try to keep power, created enduring divisions between people. The struggle for liberation and political power created further chasms. By the time the first all-race election was held in 1994, many harms needed to be healed.

This chapter sketches the background to Sanef, giving a brief history of the SA media from the 1970s to 1996. The media experienced greater or lesser repression during this time, swaying from partial reform to police state and back again, but finally getting constitutional guarantees of media freedom. It moved from a situation in which all journalism was political, because of apartheid, to dealing with post-apartheid journalism (Louw, 1993: 10; Louw & Tomaselli, 1991a: 222). This broad sweep of a turbulent media history highlights the deep racial, political and economic divisions, sensitive issues, strengths, weaknesses and debates that Sanef was to inherit. The two organisations from which Sanef was formed, the Black Editors' Forum (BEF) and Conference of Editors (CoE), are not examined as part of this wide background as they are studied in detail in Chapter 6.

3.2. Background: before 1980

For its approximate 200-year history, the commercial print media, also labelled the “establishment” or “mainstream” press (Louw & Tomaselli, 1991b: 7), was generally owned by, controlled by and catered for whites. This was the same for broadcasting, which was state-

controlled from the time the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) was established in 1936 (Nel, 1999: 302). The mainstream press was divided by language. The Afrikaans press was owned by Afrikaner businesses and represented their nationalist politics. The English press had ties to English mining houses and was more liberal in its slant.

On a tiny scale, there had been an African press from the mid-1880s and coloureds and Indians had their own media from the early 1900s (Switzer & Adhikari, 2000: xv). However most African papers, critical of the missionaries and government, were bought out or closed by the 1940s. Some merged with the black commercial press owned by white business (Switzer & Adhikari, 2000: 39). Until the early 1960s, the growing resistance movement was covered by socialist newspapers representing the leftwing working and middle classes and the African National Congress (ANC) (Switzer & Adhikari, 2000: 40). The black consciousness movement of the 1970s had no regular publications, but the ideology gave energy to black commercial papers such as the *World*. Progressive-alternative newspapers of the 1980s and early 1990s played a mobilising and politicising role in the final fight against apartheid (Switzer & Adhikari, 2000: 43).

In 1960 the South African government banned the ANC and the Pan African Congress (PAC), detained nearly 2 000 activists and instituted a countrywide state of emergency. This setback for the resistance movements was also the start of the armed struggle. In 1964, Nelson Mandela was imprisoned. These are the middle years of apartheid. The white, Afrikaner National Party (NP) was at the height of its power, implementing segregation policies and encouraging race and ethnic divisions, at huge economic and social cost on the long term (Switzer & Adhikari, 2000: 3).

In the 1970s, as it did again in the 1980s, the state tried to make apartheid “more palatable to domestic and foreign critics” (Switzer & Adhikari, 2000: 6). It reduced blatant repression and tried to make race labels invisible. Nevertheless, labour unrest increased as black trade unions grew. The state gradually allowed Africans into technical education, eased restrictions on their movement in cities and gave full trade union rights. The Soweto uprising of 1976 showed a resurgence of resistance to apartheid despite these reforms. Both working class interests and student interests had become linked to race (Mzamane & Howarth, 2000: 212).

In 1977, the government banned 18 organisations, including the *World* and *Weekend World*, papers distributed mostly among Africans in Johannesburg and Soweto, in an attack on the black consciousness movement (Mzamane & Howarth, 2000: 211; Tyson, 1993: 164).

Afrikaner nationalism strengthened in the face of “Rooi gevaar” (Red danger): government-claimed dangers of communism and Marxism. After neighbours Angola and Mozambique became independent in 1975, South Africa began financing and providing military support for anti-Marxist groups in both countries. In the Cold War climate this gained some Western backing. Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980. By this time the ANC had recovered, the military struggle had grown, the worldwide anti-apartheid movement had expanded and economic sanctions were being imposed (Switzer & Adhikari, 2000: 19; Tyson, 1993: 116)

In 1979, a “Survival of the press” conference was organised by the Department of Journalism at Rhodes University. The political and media environment is summarised in an introduction to the proceedings:

The conference was born as a result of the Information Scandal – South Africa’s “Muldergate” as it was popularly, if inaccurately, called. South African newspapers played the major role in exposing the wrongdoing of various officials and agencies – notably, the Department of Information – and it was a rare but extraordinarily effective exercise in investigative journalism. The government, of course, took steps to ensure such an exercise would be extremely difficult to duplicate in future. The Advocate General Act, Police Act and Inquest Act, for example, were implemented and “opposition” press magnates were told, in effect, that they would have to exercise even greater self-censorship than they had in the past. (Switzer & Emdon, 1979: 1)

There were speakers from English and Afrikaans press groups and education institutions. Out of 22 speakers, two were black: Percy Qoboza, editor of *Post* (Transvaal) and *Sunday Post* (Transvaal), and Clement Ntombela, a senior journalist at the Zulu-language *Ilanga*. John Matisonn spoke for the white South African Society of Journalists (SASJ) and there were “observers from the black Writers Association” (Switzer & Emdon, 1979: 1). This gives a snapshot of the times: excessive legal restrictions on the media, state-controlled broadcasters not included, newspapers dominated by the English/Afrikaans political split, the tiny presence of black editors and other-language press, and dominance by the “largely libertarian press in SA today” (Switzer & Emdon, 1979: 2).

Also in 1979, members of Wasa, the Writers Association of South Africa referred to above, were involved in setting up the community newspaper *Grassroots*. On a certificate awarded to Wasa in

2004 by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, it says the paper “helped local [Cape] communities stand up for their rights and mobilise for a non-racial democracy” (IJR, 2004).

That same year, the United Nations Security Council, branding apartheid a threat to world peace, imposed mandatory economic sanctions on South Africa (Carnegie, 1997: 2).

3.3. Recession, resistance and restrictions: 1980-1990

By the 1980s four newspaper chains owned almost all the daily, Sunday and weekly newspapers. There were 14 English daily papers (mostly anti-apartheid and liberal) and five Afrikaans (mostly linked to the NP). The state dominated the radio and television (introduced in 1976) broadcasting.

Economic factors had weakened the apartheid state. Like some other developing countries, the South African government was trying in vain to “function as a self-contained entity with increasing government intervention in all aspects of economic – as well as political and social – life” in a world where the global economy increasingly demanding the opposite. Apartheid directly and through its economic policies brought in increasing costs, so that when the gold price fell, the economy’s downward spiral became clear. Economic sanctions added to the impact of a long recession (Switzer & Adhikari, 2000: 7).

The 1976 Soweto uprising had mobilised resistance. A crackdown followed, but military conflict increased. In 1981 ANC guerrillas attacked a government petrol plant, in 1982 the ANC mission in London was bombed and in 1982 the South African army raided ANC targets in Lesotho, killing 42 people (Mkhondo, 1993: 183).

Journalist unions show the divisions in the profession. By 1980 about 90% of the roughly 300 black journalists belonged to Wasa, formed in 1977 after the Union of Black Journalists (UBJ) was banned. Wasa had a strong black consciousness (BC) identity and a high political profile (Raubenheimer, 1991: 106). Many members wished to change into an industrial union representing all black media workers, so in October 1980 it became the Media Workers Association of SA (Mwasa). The SASJ, while it started non-racial, became whites-only in 1961 so it could register under the Industrial Conciliation Act. Although it deregistered again in 1977 and had some black members, its history and other factors kept the SASJ and UBJ/Wasa apart.

In the early 1980s,

existing censorship legislation affecting the press was also somewhat relaxed, which allowed more opportunity for mainstream commercial newspapers to cover opposition news and a more congenial climate for launching a new generation of dissident, anti-apartheid publications. Attempts to silence these journalists and their publications by other means, however, increased dramatically during the 1980s. (Switzer & Adhikari, 2000: 20)

The United Democratic Front (UDF), a coalition of about 600 anti-apartheid organisations, was formed in 1983 in Cape Town. “Unprecedented and well-co-ordinated campaigns against apartheid” began (Mkhondo, 1993: 183). The UDF opposed political changes that would split the black population, but Indian and coloured chambers of parliament were created at that time, in a new tricameral parliament, after 62% of white voters supported this in a referendum.

Mwasa faced the challenge of whether to join the rapidly growing UDF. The Transvaal and Natal regions (based on provinces of the time) wanted to stay committed to black consciousness, while the western Cape and eastern Cape regions wanted to open Mwasa’s membership so it could join the non-racial, ANC-supporting and Charterist (backing the 1955 Freedom Charter) UDF. The union eventually decided not to affiliate to any political organisation and to stay black – but change its constitution to acknowledge a future non-racial South Africa (Raubenheimer, 1991: 127). By 1986, excluding banned papers, “black journalists had not been appointed to any major editorial positions on white newspapers” (Raubenheimer, 1991: 116) and few were even in senior journalist positions. Like Wasa, Mwasa asked that members consider themselves as blacks first and journalists second, thus committing themselves to fighting apartheid. The SASJ, on the other hand, wanted to unite journalists against State control of the press and in negotiations with management. Links between the groups were informal.

The English press was being criticised from all sides:

The government believed that the English press misrepresented the South African situation by explaining black resistance in terms of grievances caused and perpetuated by apartheid, and not in terms of communist or Marxist activities. Black journalists, on the other hand, argued that the liberal newspapers had fallen far short of adequately

reflecting black affairs [and did not trust the reporting of black journalists]. (Raubenheimer, 1991: 123)

Wasa and Mwasu challenged the liberal press on whether it opposed white domination:

In other words, black journalists, through their unions, politicised the role of the press beyond the realms of “objectivity” and placed it in a different social and political perspective. (Raubenheimer, 1991: 129)

By the mid-1980s the alternative press was in full swing. There were protest and political education media produced by black and white left-wing activists. There were resistance newspapers: the biggest of the weeklies by 1987 were the *New Nation*, *Weekly Mail* and *South* (Switzer & Adhikari, 2000: 46). Many of these journalists went on to become involved in Sanef. There was also the East Cape News Agencies network (Ecna) providing news content, and a few anti-apartheid Afrikaans publications: *Die Suid-Afrikaan* magazine launched in 1984 and *Vrye Weekblad* in 1988. All of these aimed to cover news not being covered by the state or commercial media – their agenda was to improve political awareness. Alternative media faced harassment and surveillance, though there were spies on most mainstream newspapers too.

Also by the mid-1980s, the townships were ungovernable through action by civic and student organisations. Trade union activities had escalated. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), an anti-apartheid federation of labour unions, had been formed in 1985 (Mkhondo, 1993: 185). The second state of emergency imposed by the government in 1986 was nationwide – others followed it until 1990. This was a period of intense crackdowns on political activity, with widespread violence, police brutality, vigilantes and militias. Violence started in Natal between the Kwazulu homeland’s ethnic Zulu movement, Inkatha, and the UDF – later the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM). ANC guerrilla attacks continued. A bigger drive for sanctions and disinvestment began around the world from 1986 (Switzer & Adhikari, 2000: 27-32).

Alternative sources of news were necessary because the mainstream press were “passive and inept” in covering political developments and conflicts in the mid-80s (Ntshakala & Emdon, 1991: 212). Much of the extreme violence was hidden as a result of emergency media regulations. However, as resistance broadened towards the end of the decade, “the mainstream white-controlled commercial press simply ignored government restrictions and began to report extensively on UDF/MDM and other dissident activities” (Switzer & Adhikari, 2000: 48).

From 1988 there were rumours that Mandela would be released (Mkhondo, 1993: 186). By 1989, the ruling National Party was losing support from whites due to its inability to control the violence (Switzer & Adhikari, 2000: 35) and economic problems. In addition, the end of the Cold War revealed the ANC was not part of a communist plot after all.

In 1989, the Berlin Wall fell. F.W. de Klerk took over as NP leader and then as State President. This is seen as a pivotal moment for apartheid, although the NP had already started talks with ANC leaders. That year, demonstrations against apartheid were allowed, some residential areas could be mixed-race, the government said it would repeal the Separate Amenities Act (which reserved better facilities for whites) and eight leaders were freed. In December, Mandela and De Klerk met (Mkhondo, 1993: 186).

The continued complexity of racial-political splits between journalists is seen in the 1989 formation of the Association of Democratic Journalists (ADJ) in opposition to Mwasu and the SASJ. The ADJ politically leant towards the ANC and was non-racial. Its members were mostly in the left-commercial press (Louw & Tomaselli, 1991a: 131).

ADJ grew out of an initiative by some Natal journalists who saw the need for a new alliance to supply information and views of anti-apartheid organisations in the region. ADJ also aimed to redefine the role of journalists in periods of civil war and transition.

(Ntshakala & Emdon, 1991: 213)

At this time, the apartheid legacy meant that issues of race and ethnic hatred justifiably dominated media freedom disputes. Policy debates had not yet begun – except as part of wider rights or constitutional talks. This situation is described in 1990 by Albie Sachs, a member of the ANC's constitutional committee:

We are not used to the idea of rights, certainly not of constitutional rights. Our debates are about power rather than rights. We speak about human rights only in terms of how they are violated and not in terms of how they can affirm and legitimise a new society. (Sachs, 1990: vii)

This also describes the situation of editors at the end of the 1980s: they were used to fighting the violations of press freedom; they were not used to building it. Building and promoting press freedom would involve the kind of media reform activities described by Rozumilowicz (2002) in Chapter 2, such as contributing to policy development and draft legislation, and lobbying for

financial help for new media. Some years later, in 1997, the chairperson of the South African Human Rights Commission would tell the editors they still did not understand: they were not helping to build a human rights culture (Pityana, 1997).

ANC guidelines for a bill of rights at this time did not spell out “media freedom” but included only: “the democratic state shall guarantee the basic rights and freedoms, such as freedom of association, expression, thought, worship, and the press”. There were qualifications regarding hate/race/ethnic discrimination (Sachs, 1990: 200), showing the emphasis on what was then most important: getting rid of apartheid and the colonial legacy of inequality and discrimination.

The 1980s were a time of violence and repression, of resistance and finally of change. Some writers have noted the contradiction that the government, while struggling to retain control, allowed trade unions and the alternative press to grow:

The apartheid state was not democratic, but it was also not totalitarian, in that it held regular, free elections for those classified “white”. It allowed space for independent organisation within the white community and gradually, under pressure, to an increasing range of interests in the black community. (Pillay 1998: 5)

Some believe the alternative press had an important, lasting impact:

These journalists rendered personalities, events and issues visible that were too often invisible and provided a voice to alienated communities that were too often voiceless. They contributed immeasurably to broadening the concept of a free press in South Africa. (Switzer & Adhikari, 2000: 39)

3.4. Talks and power struggles: 1990-1992

The civil war and military conflicts of the 1980s changed to “a struggle for power via negotiations and political manoeuvring” (Louw, 1993: 11). After the liberation movements were unbanned and ANC president Mandela was freed from prison on 11 February 1990, political violence intensified:

The violence takes five forms: clashes between anti-apartheid activists and security forces; fighting between rival black organisations, with the ANC and Inkatha staging pitched battles; fighting fomented by government agents or white right-wing agent

provocateurs trying to scuttle constitutional negotiations; revenge attacks; and pre-emptive attacks. (Mkhondo, 1993: 186)

In 1990 the state of emergency was lifted, so media curbs were removed and the media was free to report on this changing struggle:

For the left-wing press this should have signalled the beginning of a growth period in which they utilised the new space created. Instead, it saw the start of a period of decline in the fortunes of this press. (Louw & Tomaselli, 1991a: 222)

The big change in mainstream media was that in 1991 the *Sowetan*, aimed at black readers, overtook *The Star* as the largest daily (Switzer & Adhikari, 2000: 44). The commercial press all had increased sales, attributed to the volatile situation and heightened interest in politics. In broadcasting, the only media not part of the SABC stable at this time were M-Net's subscription television, Radio 702, Bop-TV and Capital Radio.

The Afrikaner NP and Zulu Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) opened their doors to all races before the end of 1990. In 1991 the major pillars of apartheid, the Group Areas Act and the Land Acts, were scrapped (Switzer & Adhikari, 2000: 38). However, it was still half a decade before editors formed a non-racial body.

In March 1991, after eight years and with the ANC back in the country, the UDF disbanded. The NP had strengthened but the ANC was battling to change from a liberation movement to a focussed political party. Congress was also not communicating well: the alternative press was preaching to the converted and the ANC did not effectively use the mainstream. However, later events show the ANC's focus was on broadcasting at this stage. The media was criticised for its coverage of this new era: "A sad reflection on many alternative press publications was their lack of reportage on the failure of Congress to organisationally adjust to the post-reform era" (Louw & Tomaselli, 1991a: 223). By 1991 the alternative press were starting to battle financially: the West and the Eastern bloc were withdrawing donor funds. Some tried to widen their readership and become commercially viable, but many journalists left journalism and/or South Africa (Louw & Tomaselli, 1991a: 225).

In late 1991, 20 political organisations agreed to form South Africa's "first multi-party, interracial, constitutional convention", Codesa – the Convention for a democratic South Africa (Mkhondo, 1993: vi). The first session was in December 1991, though the PAC had pulled out. Talks went

on for two-and-a-half years: news lurched from talks to broken talks, to bloody violence, to hopes that talks would resume, and back again. The economy slumped and everyone shared “a crisis of confidence about their future” (Mkhondo, 1993: vi).

With this political insecurity, interest in the media grew as the possibility of elections rose. A number of media policy workshops were held in 1990/1, mostly concerned with broadcasting. The control and regulation of broadcasting was the central issue between the ANC and NP (Louw, 1993: 255). It was a media debate about power: the state-controlled SABC was important due to “the powerful impact that broadcasting was understood to be able to exercise over voters in the forthcoming multi-party elections” (Teer-Tomaselli, 1993: 228). A side issue was ownership and control of the print media, though it would dominate in the future.

Louw’s leftist critique of the media system noted four obstacles to diversity of opinion and therefore to democracy (1993: 13-14):

- Ownership of the press was in too few hands – dominated by mining-finance capital (Argus group and Times Media Ltd) or by Afrikaner nationalism (Nasionale Pers Bpk and Perskor).
- Market censorship had narrowed the range of opinions expressed in commercial media – this led to dominance by media aimed at the white middle class.
- The alternative press was losing its overseas funding and not drawing advertising – market forces would eliminate it unless internal funding was found.
- The key broadcaster, the SABC, had been closely tied to government – for four decades this was the NP, so it had become the party’s mouthpiece.

The Codesa talks would have an impact on all South Africans – but due to these obstacles, media coverage was restricted. The media were more likely to give the views of “the affluent, conservatives, white nationalists, tribalists and liberals” and ignore those of “the poor, unemployed, non-affluent elderly, black nationalists and the left-wing” (Louw, 1993: 15).

3.5. Tension from referendum to election: 1992-1994

The years 1992 to 1994 were a time of talks, but also of boycotts, rallies, marches, outbursts of violence and assassinations. Tension and insecurity rose further as the ANC and NP struggled

for power. However, political apartheid ended on March 17 1992 when a referendum of white voters chose a negotiated future with the black majority. This white mandate for De Klerk started the disintegration of the right-wing parties (Mkhondo, 1993: 122).

Media policy debates gained more prominence, though neither the PAC nor the CP were active in these (Louw, 1993: 256). In February 1992, media proposals went to Codesa from all parties including the Campaign for Open Media's "Free, fair and open media" conference, organised by Raymond Louw. There had been wide representation at this conference, from media companies to Mwasu, the ADJ and the South African Union of Journalists (the SASJ had recently become a union). Like in the ANC's Media Charter, their proposals were short-term. Changes had "to ensure that the media contributes to the fullest possible extent during the transition to a climate for free political participation and free and fair elections" (Louw, 1993: 316).

The concern with race had changed to a concern with "the transition": with representative and independent control of broadcasting, and fairness in media coverage. Everyone was looking at political advantage and narrow options – not at the final picture (Louw, 1993: 256). Interim measures were introduced to get balanced reporting from the SABC, such as the creation of the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) in 1993, with the understanding that further issues would be sorted out after 1994.

In the meantime, the media had other problems. A 1992 speech by Roelf Meyer, NP minister of Constitutional Development and of Communication, recorded a new and dangerous "kind of censorship": intimidation and violence against photographers and reporters for exposing political violence or making critical comments about political parties (Louw, 1993: 361).

Political progress lurched and steadied. From March 1993, talks at the World Trade Centre were the "first fully representative multi-party forum" (Mkhondo, 1993: 189). 26 parties and organisations were represented. The assassination of Chris Hani in April 1993 threatened talks again, but the 104-member Negotiating Council continued to meet and announced that the first all-race elections would be held by April 1994. Inkatha, the KwaZulu government and the CP pulled out. In July, a draft post-apartheid constitution was unveiled (Mkhondo, 1993: 189).

Black ownership of media started to increase when New Africa Investments Ltd (Nail) bought *Sowetan* from the Argus company in 1993. It went on to buy the *New Nation* in 1995, though it

closed it after two years, and then in 1996, with Kagiso Trust, bought shares in TML and Republican Press (Nel, 1999: 308).

Democratic elections took place peacefully. The alternative media died. *South, Vrye Weekblad* and many smaller publications closed in 1994. The *Weekly Mail* survived in association with the British *Guardian*. Berger explains (2000a: xii):

Some publications died early under the dire pressures of the South African police state; others withered later for want of capital and management skill. Still more failed to adapt to the new times and changing audiences following the release of Nelson Mandela and the build-up to the country's first democratic elections in 1994.

This closing down of papers was different to what happened in other African countries, which saw a burgeoning of private media – print, broadcast and on-line – with the advent of democracy, according to De Beer and Merrill (2003: 367). However, these events in the early 1990s in South Africa need to be seen in the wider context of “the flowering of multiparty politics in Africa” at this time (Bourgault, 1995: 206), when changes in the media were also occurring rapidly.

Broadcasting was still under state control in most countries, but print journalism was changing. There was faster and easier access to news from around the world due to technology like satellite television and the internet. In 1994, the *Electronic Mail & Guardian* in South Africa became the first internet-based news publication on the continent. Bourgault (1995: 224) points out that some of the new African print media closed quickly due to a lack of funds – this was also described in Chapter 2 in relation to both post-communist and post-authoritarian countries.

3.6. The struggle for media begins: 1994-1996

The ANC had been worried about getting its own voice into the media for elections, but in February 1994 Mandela was more loudly critical. He pointed out that the newsrooms and boardrooms of the media lacked race, gender or ethnic diversity – without this, how could they cover the multicultural complexity and dynamics of the new SA? (Mandela, 1994a). However, at a 1993 policy workshop for the Independent Media Diversity Trust, Berger had given even wider criteria for diversity. “Because a free press is so important politically, many people think of press diversity in terms of party political criteria”, while broader issues needed to be considered first, he said. These were culture and language, race and class, ownership, control and staffing, audience, gender and region (Berger, 1993: 2-6).

It was only in 1995 that the first black person was appointed editor of a mainstream paper other than the *Sowetan* – Moegsien Williams at the *Pretoria News*. Changes were happening more quickly in broadcasting. The IBA in 1995 issued its first community radio licences, and the SABC sold six of its commercial radio stations (Nel, 1999: 308). Transformation and affirmative action within the broadcaster meant by 1994 it already had black editors (see Chapter 6).

Injustices of the past had to be dealt with. In December 1995 the government established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, with a two-year life. It had to confront the legacy of apartheid from 1960 to 1993: heal wounds, forgive deeds, give reparation to victims, grant amnesty to perpetrators and compile a history of South Africa's repression. A Carnegie Commission report (1997: 10) describes an important difference of opinion on reconciliation: "The fundamental tension remains between those committed to the politics of compromise and those with a strict notion of justice." This was one of the wide differences in perspective the TRC also exposed between black and white journalists (see Chapter 6) when it probed the media's apartheid past.

Another change from 1994 to have an impact on democracy and pluralism was among civic groups. As with the alternative press, they lost donor funding. Foreign governments and other donors had spent millions backing trade unions, civic associations, professional groups, community-based education organisations, etc. Now donors wished to assist the new government directly (Carnegie, 1997: 3).

President Mandela signed South Africa's new constitution on December 6 1996. Media freedom was now constitutionally guaranteed. Many transitional but incomplete solutions had been found, with those from the white minority group still in charge. It was now to be seen whether full democratisation of the media, and of journalism, would occur. As Mphahlele wrote in 1995:

Did I hear job reservation is dead? Tell that to the birds. The very print and electronic media that broadcast this piece of fiction also practise job reservation, some in subtle ways. Indeed the capacity for news media to take criticism against their own employment ethics amounts to a mere thimbleful. (article reprinted in Mphahlele, 2004: 187)

3.7. Summing up: the issues facing editors

The short history above shows that by 1996 the obstacles to a democratic media were being highlighted. The challenge was to start removing the obstacles – the apartheid legacy of

inequality and discrimination – and start developing diversity and pluralism in content and in staffing. Along with this, journalists needed to define their role in expanding and strengthening the democratising process, while considering their relationship to nation-building in a country deeply divided by apartheid and political violence. On top of this, editors had to succeed commercially in an increasingly competitive environment.

Apartheid had fostered deep divisions, mistrust and suspicion between black and white in South Africa – but it was more complex than just a black-white split. Deep divisions among senior journalists included: non-racial vs black consciousness approaches, activists vs commercial journalists, populist vs socialist attitudes, capitalist vs Marxist ideologies, and leanings towards political parties ranging from the far right to the far left. Among Afrikaners there was a variety of attitudes from nationalism to what Mkhondo calls “the new wave of Afrikaner pragmatism” (1993: vii). There were those who came from the marginalised black media, and those who had grown up in the liberal English media; whites who’d had advantages in education and in employment, and blacks who had been disadvantaged. There were journalists who wanted compromise, others who believed in justice and a few who wanted revenge. In addition, journalists had different definitions of democracy – pluralism vs majoritarianism, or participation vs representivity – which divided their definitions of media freedom.

At the same time, journalists needed to ensure the media policy debate moved from political power concerns to the wider future of media freedom and challenges of the information age. Solutions that would last longer than “the transition” needed to be found. Louw (1993: 259) lists the following broad areas of concern:

1. access to media
2. media ownership and control
3. regulation of broadcasting
4. development of a telecommunications manufacturing base
5. languages

A further post-democracy challenge faced journalists: as was seen in Chapter 2, they would face charges of not representing public interests. In new democracies, journalists in the private press

are often accused of representing the interests of owners (Ansah, 1988:10). When stories that have an impact on society and loyalties, such as corruption allegations, are published, they are accused of having a political interest. For those at the SABC, having changed from a state to a public broadcaster, the challenge was similar: they now had to ensure they represented the public interest and not government interests.

Race would remain a complex issue and a central challenge:

Most blacks will judge the progress of reform by what material benefits it brings them, and how speedily. As long as blacks are kept poor by an economy built for and maintained by whites, and as long as they are degraded by white attitudes fostered by decades of official racialism, apartheid will live on. (Mkhondo, 1993: vii)

New approaches to race in media had to be defined and entrenched racism tackled. Anti-racist representation “is now the major force in South African publications”, according to Berger (2000a: xi). Race debates would continue around the pace of change in media ownership, control, staffing and content.

Finally, there was the issue of how to cover the new South African story:

Where courageous dissident journalists previously had to duck, dodge and dive in order to survive state repression, the new democratic South Africa tolerates all manner of critical media coverage. (Berger, 2000a: xii).

However, many media leaders felt the new government should be given a grace period of co-operation and understanding. Journalists wishing to promote democracy then found it difficult to know where to draw the line between independence and hostility, being positive or being submissive. Was it the same as the blurred line between supportive and adversary roles, or the chasm between watchdog and lapdog? Editors needed to find a new tension with the new government, or be “cowed into submission” or “an organ of the ruling party” (Ansah, 1988).

Chapter 6 looks at how editors, senior journalists and journalism educators started to deal with all these issues and challenges, among themselves as well as in relation to government and society. They had to choose whether to become an active part of the country's democratising process or to remain on the fringes of the complex South African story as it unfolded.

Chapter 4: Theory

4.1. Introduction

This chapter looks at the different theories of the role of the journalist or of journalism (not of media), taking into account the limitations to what journalism can achieve. The starting point for any discussion of roles is “Four theories of the press”, written in the 1950s, in which the authors assume a liberal viewpoint and a particular historical context. It is seen that the role of journalism changes over time but also relative to its context. Within a wide view of democracy, arguments for professionalism, for development journalism and for civic journalism are all valid ways of examining Sanef – though are also merely different threads of journalism. This chapter suggests that a theory of the four ideal roles of democratic journalism includes the political-democratic functions of the other theories and therefore is most useful to understanding Sanef’s participation in the democratising process in South Africa.

To open this discussion, it is necessary to elucidate the assumptions this chapter carries about searching for an applicable theory. The first is that there is no universal model.

Trying to define the role of the journalist, Goonasekera (2000: 272) argues that the Western, capitalist, libertarian ideology of the press is not a universal model for different countries, where “the press has grown out of different historical traditions and political experiences”, so the roles they play will differ.

In some countries the free market approach – the assumption that the audience in the free market of ideas will eliminate irresponsible journalism – can bring violence and dissension instead of enlightenment and consensus. This thesis agrees with Goonasekera that a more appropriate and flexible model is needed, and it is essential to relate the roles to their context.

Secondly, the debate over whether journalism has a democratic role is not tackled: this assumption was accepted in Chapter 2. Both theoretically and then in relation to the work of Sanef, this thesis looks for description and detail of what that role entails in practice. A related assumption here is that democracy and journalism interact and enable one another.

Thirdly, as has been discussed, Sanef’s role is not conflated with that of “the media”. It is the role of senior journalists acting as a group in their common interest, within the field of journalism and

within a specific historical context and stage in the process of democratisation. This is what allows this thesis to use “role of journalism” theories to analyse Sanef’s participation.

Finally, this study uses only journalism theory, not media studies/cultural studies theory. This realist, positivist worldview is adopted to ensure this study’s usefulness both to Sanef’s future direction and to other African editors’ forums. Windshuttle (1997: 14) describes the realist perspective as believing there are real people out there who are journalism audiences or potential audiences and who make choices. By extension, it is accepted that real people will be affected by the role journalists choose to play in democratisation in South Africa.

4.2. Limitations of the role of journalism

Although this study assumes journalism has a democratic role, the limitations to that role – in theory and in practice – must be acknowledged to keep perspective. Journalism cannot create or sustain democracy on its own, and is further limited by human failings and practical restrictions.

Studies have shown that journalism cannot change knowledge and opinion – although it is an important agent in reinforcing public perceptions and influencing attitudes (Kariithi 1995: 7). Editors cannot create public opinion or change how people think, although studies show they can shape the news agenda and influence what people talk about. There is some evidence they affect public perceptions of the importance of issues and the urgency of problems: they influence thoughts and feelings rather than behaviour (Semetko & Mandelli, 1997: 205-206).

Journalists are influenced by their contexts: news values “are not only a function of cultural, social, political and economic needs and aspirations of societies, but also reflect social relations and power structures” (Kariithi 1995:8). When the aspirations and activities of a political elite or another powerful group define news values, this influence is usually apparent. For example, if political stories dominate journalism, the context is one in which there is a powerful political elite. The relevance of this is that if a particular part of its democratic participation dominates the Sanef agenda, one should look for the power group causing this emphasis as well as looking for reasons why Sanef is not setting its own agenda.

Practical restrictions limit journalistic idealism and aims. Poorly staffed newsrooms cannot produce high quality journalism. Journalists from non-democratic backgrounds are poorly trained to meet the challenges of newly democratic countries (Kariithi 1995: 8). This may result in editors being concerned about improving standards, training and the quality of journalism. Audience

limitations are another restriction: if most people have no access to media, or only limited access, the potential democratic role of journalists is severely confined.

To sum up, journalism is limited in its democratic role by both the restricted influence that it has on public opinion and a variety of social and practical factors related to its context. Nonetheless, the role it can or does play needs to be examined and defined.

4.3. Role of the media: four theories of the press and beyond

An influential attempt to define the philosophies and values behind media institutions and journalism practices within different political-economic systems was the 1956 *Four theories of the press*, which has come in for much criticism and/or elaboration by later writers. Siebert, Peterson and Schramm outlined the rationale for Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social responsibility and Soviet-totalitarian media (1956: 7).

For Libertarian media – found in a liberal, democratic environment – Siebert et al identified six tasks (1956: 74) still relevant for any theory of the democratic role of media:

- Servicing a political system by providing information, discussion and debate on public affairs.
- Enlightening the public so they can self-govern.
- Safeguarding the rights of individuals by serving as watchdog over government.
- Servicing the economic system by bringing together buyers and sellers through advertising.
- Providing entertainment.
- Maintaining financial self-sufficiency in order to be free of pressures of special interests.

With the end of the Cold War, Altschull argued this and similar theories with their “us-and-them” conflictual approach were no longer relevant. He concluded that the media were always agents of those with political and economic power, and drew up three types: market or capitalist, Marxist or socialist, and advancing or developing countries (Altschull, 1984).

A decade later, Altschull’s work and other theories were used to show how the categories in *Four theories* took into account only a liberal political ideology and a Cold War mentality (Nerone,

1995: 182). The theories were criticised for being abstract, “not especially helpful for discussing specific historical situations” and for defining press freedom only negatively – as the absence of state restraint (Nerone, 1995: 20).

Goonasekera’s categorisation corrects some of these problems and argues that different countries should pursue different communication policies, related to national ideologies. Three “ideal types” are described (2000: 283), of which the first and last could be in democratic environments:

- Capitalist press – the overall ideology is press freedom and its driving force is profit, so it has no public interest element and can be adversarial and confrontational.
- Communist press – the ideology is to spread the party line to serve the proletariat, so it is an instrument of state policy with no need to earn revenue as it is state-funded.
- Communitarian press – the ideology stresses freedom and responsibility, so the collective is more important than the individual, but profit is needed and importance is placed on high standards and working with the government for the well-being of all. This approximates the Asian press (Goonasekera, 2000: 283).

It is seen from the above that since the 1950s, theorists have tried to categorise media types. Within these are non-democratic and democratic types that help to define journalism roles. However, on a practical level the roles of journalists have continued to change.

4.4. Role of journalism in a period of rapid change

Any attempt to theorise the democratic role of journalism needs to take into account the technological and economic changes of the information society. These rapid changes alter what journalists do and can do, further divide the information-rich and information-poor, make more extreme the differences between different contexts and lessen the possibility that a universal “role of journalism in democracy” can be defined. Any theory must relate to a Third World environment in order to apply to the South African context.

Deuze noted a “sense of urgency or even immediacy” (2000: 141) in European journalism as well as a lack of vision or strategies to cope with the fast pace of change in the media. The demands of audiences were having an ever-increasing impact. Changes included:

- The rise of popular culture and multiculturalism, the former giving rise to a demand for infotainment and the latter for coverage of local issues.
- A broader and wider idea of what journalism is and can be.
- The impact of the internet as a news source leading to a need for new storytelling techniques and deeper critical thinking (Deuze, 2000: 147-150).

Hardt points out how changes in technology – happening at the same time as rapid conglomeration and commercialisation of media companies in Western countries – have “made different demands on journalists and their relations to each other and to their institutions” (Hardt, 2000: 212). Journalism is less a personal contribution and more just part of a commercial communications system. Furthermore, “technological and cultural borderlines are becoming blurred” (Loeffelholz & Quandt, 2000: 3) so there are fewer barriers to publishing but also less distinction between news and entertainment, or between journalism and public relations, as new forms of communication are created.

In contrast, the expansion of internet and email has led writers to argue that “access to electronic information can have a positive impact in promoting democracy ... by providing civil society with greater leverage vis-à-vis the state and political elites” (Ott 1998: 1). In Africa, this access is mostly to urban and elite populations. However, “electronic information” is not necessarily journalism, nor is it necessarily suited to its new context if it originates from a different culture. Also, Goonasekera (2000: 265) cautions that with media companies looking for international business and global audiences, cultural domination may result.

On the other hand, global economic changes may increase the democratic role of journalism by increasing pressure for countries to become democratic. Pillay (1998: 7) says this is a phase of capitalism where the world is becoming one free market, driven by finance capital and made possible by technology, especially in communications and information. “Democratisation” is now promoted alongside neo-liberalism. Since the mid-1990s, this has included civil society development, though only among the urban elite because the economic policies continue to marginalise poor and rural people (Pillay, 1998: 7).

In the past 10 to 15 years, Africa has had a revival of democracy and huge increase in the number, type, diversity and independence of mass media, particularly television, radio and

newspapers (Tettey 2002: 2). This coincided with the dramatic changes in communication technologies described above (whether they were a catalyst and whether their influence will be positive will not be explored here). Together, all these changes have led to an increase of journalism – and the potential for journalism to play a democratic role.

4.5. Professionalism

The professionalism approach to theorising journalism looks at work roles (Loeffelholz & Quandt, 2000: 9). These are changing due to the rapid changes described above. Professionalism looks at journalism as an occupational ideology that can be lifted from its culture-specific boundaries to look at what is common, says Deuze (2004: 2-3). The ideology is a “set of values and practices” that creates a “naturalised” way of interpreting the world, and the process of professionalisation is an ideological one.

Deuze says an interest in the professional model arose when public criticism led journalists to “reconsider their approaches, definitions and function in society” (2000: 138). Although they are now changing, the ideals or values for “professional” 20th century Western journalism were to:

- Provide a public service.
- Be neutral, objective, fair and credible.
- Enjoy editorial autonomy, freedom and independence.
- Have a sense of immediacy, validity and factuality.
- Have a sense of ethics and legitimacy (Deuze, 2000: 140).



Professional practice is needed for a free and independent flow of ideas. Professionalism and ethics should limit any power group from using journalism for their own ends. This relates to the democratic role of journalists, but the concept is not sufficient to describe that role; nor is it complex or flexible enough to be applied to a non-Western context or a new democracy.

4.6. Development role of media

The idea that journalism should serve economic development arose with a belief that fragile Third World governments needed authoritarian practices to achieve rapid development and that

adversarial journalism, would derail that. Instead, “information for change” was needed. Arguments against development journalism are that it is linked to economic and cultural dependency, and that it serves the developers. It has also been promoted as valid for “nation-building” (Kariithi, 1995: 10). This section explores the assumptions in the development journalism concept and its relationship to democracy.

Schramm (1964: 247-248) takes information to be a basic right. He says a developing nation needs social change; to achieve this, information must flow in both directions through the mass media or “information multipliers”. The role of communication is to modernise. Its efficiency determines “the speed and smoothness of national development”. For efficiency, the circulation of news must be improved by eliminating political restrictions, it must be easier to set up local media, restrictions on importing informational materials must be lowered, adequate training should be provided and feedback obtained from audiences. In this enabled environment, journalists should provide “information for change” (Schramm, 1964: 262).

Servaes (1996: 31) says this economic-oriented, Modernist view saw development as a “unilinear, evolutionary process” and underdevelopment as a difference in degree rather than kind. Journalists in the nation-state could use information to promote this linear development. However, dependency theories exposed the relationship between development and underdevelopment, and showed how Western media created cultural dominance which perpetuated this dependency.



Whether development journalism has ever led to economic progress, will not be dealt with here. The importance of the concept is that it is still being presented to journalists as an idealistic challenge or social responsibility: a kind of journalism that is paternalistic and one-way in its effect, and not linked to democratic progress.

There is theoretically a different way of serving the development role, however – by seeing development as an outcome of two-way or participatory communication. Servaes (1999: 78) writes of “another development” geared to satisfying basic needs, self-reliance, ecology and sustainability rather than promoting a consumer society. In this model, participative democracy is a necessary principle and journalism can promote that.

Kariithi says development journalism aims to provide educational information to redirect social backwardness and promote development goals, in contrast to the critical approach of economic

journalism (1995: 10). If journalists want to play this nation-building role, they should be careful not to serve an interest group. African media “should fight to eliminate the propagandistic innuendo that African governments are both ‘judge and jury’ of what constitutes national interest” (Kariithi, 1995: 11). Journalists should chart their own course of defining and furthering national goals, for the sake of both democracy and development.

It is apparent from the above discussion that there are different ways of looking at the role and methods of development journalism, some more concerned with democracy than others. Unfortunately, the concept of development journalism as propaganda for the developers – government and business – remains dominant, rather than that of journalism defining the national interest and promoting public evaluation.

4.7. Civic role of the media

Promoting public discussion and public opinion for democratic participation in policy-making is described below as journalism’s civic role. Journalism should contribute to the creation of a public sphere, a virtual space where civil society and government can publicly debate issues of political and apolitical concern. Participative debate is assumed to be at the heart of democracy.

Hardt (2000: 221) says journalism should be “a responsive cultural practice ... sensitive to the need for public participation in constituting social knowledge”. Journalists need to develop a greater alliance with their “respective publics” to reclaim “the pivotal role of journalism in the making of democracy”. In an ideal democracy, self-funded civil society groups would “engage fully with the government in the formulation of public policy” (Pillay 1998: 5) and hold government accountable between elections.

“Civil society” is separate from “political society”, “the state” and “economic society” (Pillay, 1998: 4). It does not seek direct political power but wants to influence public policy. The public sphere is an area of democratic contestation, tension and mobilisation. These are Western concepts that refer to urban, organised interest groups, which are less common in developing countries. South Africa has a “constrained civil society” says Pillay (1998: 6), a semi-democratic society where formal democracy is in place but there is much social inequality and unequal access to means of communication. He sees civil society in South Africa as “helping to rebuild the democratic state... through a combination of co-operation with and opposition to the governing party – what has been described as a situation of creative tension” (Pillay, 1998: 13).

Within the theory of its civic role, as described, journalism has dual responsibilities: to facilitate exchanges in the public sphere and to encourage civil society voices, political and apolitical. However, journalists too should have a voice, either as a trade union or a professional body such as Sanef. When in this organised manner they occupy the public sphere as part of civil society, journalists would also have a relationship of “creative tension” with the state (Pillay, 1998: 13).

4.8. Democratic role of media in Africa

Describing the democratic role of journalism in Africa in the past decade, Tettey (2002: 3-12) details how journalists have fulfilled both political accountability (watchdog) and education or information functions. However, studies have not determined whether, or how much, journalism has promoted democracy. Ott notes in studying the electronic media in Africa:

There is no empirical evidence that electronic media have thus far contributed to “democracy” in Africa. Despite the long-standing presence of both radio and television in some African countries, there appears to be little linkage between access to these forms of media and political democracy. (Ott, 1998: 7)

She says this may be due to state control of these media. However there was also no correlation between democratic states and internet access, nor was the use of the internet in political activity prominent compared to other communication. However, “access to print media is associated with higher levels of democracy in Africa”, an association which had held for more than 25 years but was now declining (Ott, 1998: 9).

Tettey looks at whether journalists themselves uphold democratic principles; whether they are politically accountable. Unwarranted personal attacks and negativity, compromising ethics for bribes, fabricating accusations, turning rumour into stories for political purposes or to sell papers; all these undermine credibility as well as the assertion that journalism’s role is to uphold democratic principles (Tettey, 2002: 19-31).

The difficulties of measuring the democratic impact of journalism have been described. Except for newspapers, there is little evidence of a link. However, it cannot be assumed that journalists themselves stick to or promote democratic principles, making this multifaceted issue even more complex to assess.

4.9. Four ideal roles of journalism in democracy

Professionalism, development journalism and civic journalism all have different elements that describe the democratic role of journalists – none describe the whole ideal role. Two of the theories are not developed for application in the third world environment, nor do they take into account the rapidly changing technology. A theory is needed which can be applied to the South African and African context and allow a complex picture to emerge. Berger's theory of four ideal roles of journalism in democracy described below, which also posits differences between those roles in Western and Third World environments, is both complex and flexible.

Berger (1999: 3-4) argues there are other roles for journalism, but these four facets – or types of journalism – give it democratic significance. He names them as liberal, social democratic, neoliberal and participatory roles. They are not mutually exclusive but used together can promote democracy. These roles are described below as ideal types; in practice the lines between them are blurred (Berger, 1999: 5-8):

- Liberal role – Journalists are an active, autonomous force that guards citizens' rights and holds the powerful to account, especially the state. They ensure publication of news others do not want published. Editorial independence is a precondition. This role strips away the state's secrecy and fights for access to information and for transparency. Journalism is a politically neutral watchdog – an adversary and champion of the people – with both rights and responsibilities. This role overlaps with Siebert et al's Libertarian model and provides a theoretical home for Tetley's political accountability function of journalism.
- Social democratic role – Journalists have a responsibility to guide citizens and should be neutral educators, not political agents. As public stewards, journalists challenge the apathy of people, encouraging them to be informed and knowledgeable. This guidedog or messenger role does not exclude the possibility of playing a watchdog, liberal role, as these are different practices and both are needed. This role connects to some aspects of development journalism.
- Neoliberal role – This involves the journalist as a neutral referee or mirror of society, balanced and impartial, with a democratic duty to diversity and pluralism. The journalist provides a platform for the rational debate of a range of views and disseminates these diverse views as information that helps the audience form opinions. In this neutral role, the journalist challenges prejudices

and highlights alternatives. Some of Siebert et al's Libertarian tasks fall under this category. There are also close similarities to civic journalism, which overlaps with the next role.

- Participatory role – The journalist is an active, democratic player who promotes the ongoing participation of civil society, including grassroots groups. Pluralism is extended to the non-elite and to the information-poor. Ongoing freedom of speech is promoted so that public opinion is not just formed by the elite, but power is exercised by a wider democratic community.

Berger (1999: 19) notes that journalists should not try to democratise a political system on their own, or keep democracy alive alone between elections, but forge alliances with other sectors of society. In what Pillay (1998: 6) calls South Africa's semi-democratic society, this means actively struggling with other groups to advance democratisation – it is the voice of journalists as a force in civil society, lobbying for participation, helping to develop a supportive legal framework, promoting the concept of media freedom among citizens and insisting on its own democratic rights. As Evensen (1994) noted in his study of Latvia, described in Chapter 2, the role of mass media in democracy is an ongoing responsibility.

The general role of journalism in democracy is, arguably, a variable and ever-shifting combination of all four options – not withstanding a number of minor contradictions between them. (Berger, 1999: 8)

How to apply these four roles in First and Third World contexts differs, as the challenges to democracy are dissimilar. The first-world issues will not be described here. What is relevant is Berger's description of the complex challenges that face journalism where democratisation is in its early stages: editors have to deal with government opposition, information scarcity, marginal markets, a lack of media independence and collective struggles for what are often only the preconditions of democracy (1999: 14). Journalism must continually carve out, negotiate or insist on the space for it to fulfil all other roles. – and Chapters 6 and 7 will look at how Sanef did this.

Berger describes the four roles for journalism in democracy, as detailed above. However, operating with their Sanef hats on, the editors are not only doing journalism – they are doing things, as a group, for journalism. They are just not managing news and editorial staff, producing news products – they are participating in a professional organisation with the aim of improving the environment for journalism. Perhaps it could be said that they are doing media reform. The process is not journalism but promoting journalism and representing journalists – both

democratic endeavours. On top of this, they are doing activities which aim to improve the practice of journalism itself.

This thesis therefore suggests that in order to examine Sanef, it is useful to isolate and elaborate a fifth role. Like the other four, it overlaps but has some of its own characteristics. It is the direct activity of media reform within journalism.

The features of this fifth role will become clearer and described in more detail when analysing Sanef's aims and activities (Chapter 8). The other roles are predominately external-looking, while this one is concerned with the democratising and transformation of the internal environment. It is how editors and journalists and educators do their jobs in an emerging democracy: how they tackle the internal challenges. It is also part of the media reform work that Rozumilowicz (2002: 17) describes in her stages of establishing free and independent media (see Chapter 2). In the South African context, how Sanef tackled the apartheid obstacles within its ranks and within journalism, as detailed in Chapter 3, is part of how the editors chose to play this fifth democratising role.

Berger's theory of the four ideal democratic roles of journalists provides an umbrella theory for different types of journalism and reveals their relationships. It is complex, but takes into account rapid changes in the media scene. It is relevant because it differentiates between two stages of democratisation. This theory will be used to analyse Sanef's role in the South African democracy: by looking at its aims as well as its actions. This requires a detailed reconstruction of Sanef's history in order to draw out all the information (see Chapters 6 and 7).

4.10. Conclusion

This chapter looked at earlier and current theories of the role of the journalist or of journalism which relate to democracy, as well as the limitations to what journalists can achieve. The changing roles were examined, as were economic and political contexts, to establish the need for a flexible theory that is relevant to the South African context. A theory of four ideal roles of democratic journalism was described which is seen to include most of the political-democratic functions highlighted in the other theories. It highlights the multifaceted democratic role of journalism. It was accepted as useful for analysing Sanef's participation in the democratising process, though a possible need to extend it was noted.

The lack of previous studies of an editors' organisation (Chapter 2), the complexity of the South African political and journalism scene into which Sanef was launched (Chapter 3) and the need for detailed information to see how Sanef's aims and activities fit into the theory described above, support the decision to use the historical research method. This method puts Sanef's activities into chronological relation to each other as well as to the historical development and events of South Africa's new democracy. The historical method also uses open-ended research questions to permit the further exploration of issues around the role of editors in South Africa and the changing nature of the democratising process.

Chapter 5: Method

5.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the historical research method and the process followed to investigate Sanef's participation in democratisation. It is a qualitative research method designed to help the researcher understand people and the contexts within which they operate. With historical research, research questions should be open-ended so as not to bias the researcher by giving too much direction (Du Plooy, 1995: 96).

Historical study is empirical research that analyses existing data. The data being used in this case is textual and like other textual and narrative study there is not much control over obtaining it. One has to rely on finding what is available in natural field conditions. Documents were sought from sources and then used to reconstruct the past, building a chronology of events.

Future research would benefit from the use of interviews, but the scope of this thesis is already taken up by document analysis which provides sufficient data to allow for a level of sense-making of the history of Sanef as an organisation.

5.2. Research questions

The key research question is exploratory and open-ended:

- What was Sanef's participation in the democratising process in South Africa from 1996 to 2000?

Sub-questions can be formulated as:

- What were the major issues, aims and activities of Sanef, and how do these reflect its historical context?
- How do these relate to what other journalism societies do, at various stages of democratisation?
- Which democratic roles has Sanef sought to fulfil: liberal, social democratic, neoliberal or participatory, or a combination of these?
- In the specific racialised conditions of South Africa's democracy, how has Sanef dealt with the issues of "transformation" and their relation to democracy and media freedom?

5.3. Process

To research these questions, especially in the light of having no comparable academic studies as a guide (see Chapter 2), it was necessary to construct a descriptive history of Sanef as accurately as possible. From that narrative, it was possible to derive an analysis of the forum's main concerns and directions – focussing on those with political connotations.

Historical research is an attempt to examine events and actions in a holistic manner. It "helps us to understand the paths" of how things emerged and allows us to predict future developments (Du Plooy, 1995: 89). It was thus important to continually put Sanef in its historical and political context. Historical research is useful when the boundaries between what is being studied and its context are not clear, and it allows for the use of multiple and varied sources of evidence.

Trying to make sense of Sanef in its context, by a researcher who has inside knowledge and respect for the forum, can be called a qualitative inquiry from the inside (Deacon, Pickering, Golding, & Murdock, 1999: 3). Nord and Nelson (1981: 284) argue for "the historian as humanist" but also as idealist, and relate this to the role of a journalist – in this case it is almost a journalist using a journalistic method and journalism theory to examine journalists.

Journalism and academic work are disciplines of collecting, ordering, verifying, arguing, analysing and presenting information, though writing and presentation styles are markedly different in

relation to their different audiences or markets. In both cases, one of the purposes of such work is knowledge, but herein lies a difference.

Journalism has been called the “first draft of history” while academic writing is a more considered and critical process, expected to involve closer investigation and produce drafts of history with a longer lifespan. For both journalism and history, the story is used as explanation – “the narrative form brings understanding” (Nord & Nelson, 1981: 288), but history often adds to this by using theory (from various disciplines) to increase understanding. This emphasises another difference between academic history writing and journalism: “no field is more atheoretical, more particularistic, more devoted to the simple story than journalism” (Nord & Nelson, 1981: 301). Academic work on the other hand involves theory: either building theory or using it for explanation.

It has been noted that it is rare for journalism theory to be used in journalism histories (Nord & Nelson, 1981: 301). In this case, however, the theory of the democratic roles of journalism is used.

As part of the humanist approach, Nord and Nelson believe “history can provide perspective and wisdom to those who attend to it, and this may be the greatest of its contributions”. This approach allows for the appreciation of the unique and the particular while looking for generalisations and trying to create “the story as explanation” (1981: 287).

The use of narrative to construct the past is a strength of the historical method, as it allows the researcher to put emphasis on process, change and relationships between events (Mouton, 2001: 171). Possible limitations include the availability of data, the researcher’s understanding and ability to make connections and analyse, as well as subjective bias especially in the selection of data and the attribution of importance of events.

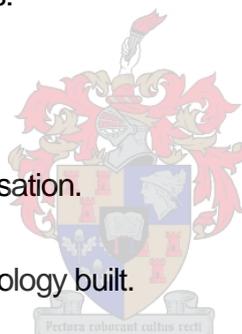
Loose theoretical frameworks are used to categorise and analyse Sanef’s actions, with the understanding that events might fall into more than one category and edges might be blurred. Such frameworks are simplified descriptions of complex entities, abstract formulations of relationships, that are not firmly fixed or defined but can still be helpful for explanation or prediction. It was useful to apply such theories in order to sensitise the researcher to issues and give a guide and reference points to different types of democratic participation.

Theories tell us what to look for, how to describe the things we are interested in and how a particular piece of research can contribute to our general knowledge about the social and cultural world. (Deacon et al, 1999: 12)

The sample here is Sanef and its members as part of Sanef during its early years, 1996 to 2000. The data consists firstly of Sanef's documentation, official/formal and informal. These are minutes of meetings, letters, emails, records of debates, briefings, position papers and reports. The second type of data are newspaper articles from the mainstream English and Afrikaans press, which are useful as a record of events, to highlight the importance of issues and especially to give context. They also provide a cross-check on Sanef documentation, in terms both of when and whether events occurred, and the interpretation of them by the researcher. Sources of error to watch for include the authenticity of documents, gaps in record-keeping and the selection of documents for use.

The research was done in five stages:

1. Collection of data.
2. Document acquisition and organisation.
3. Reconstruction of events – chronology built.
4. Identification of gaps and additional data/documents gathered to fill them.
5. Analysis and evaluation of data – narrative built.



Primary documents about Sanef were obtained from the Sanef office, from long-standing Sanef members and from the researcher's own files. Newspaper articles were obtained from electronic libraries and through the Stellenbosch University library. Data collected was labelled, sorted and filed chronologically, with primary and secondary documents stored separately.

As a useful aid for contextualising events, a chronology was built up on a spreadsheet, showing Sanef as well as South African and world events, and with a column to note trends and connections between events. It has been noted that attention to detail is important in trying to reconstruct events and contextualise them, to help give them meaning (Bryman, 1988: 64). However, the danger of reconstruction and building a chronology is that the researcher may see

events as discrete and not part of a process: many events need to be seen as a series of interrelated and connected occurrences.

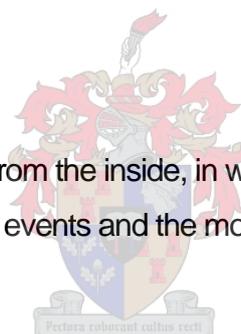
It is in building the narrative, telling the story and evaluating the data, that it is important to note the connections between events, trends and changes of emphasis or action.

5.4. Ethical issues

Informed consent and privacy are the ethical considerations that relate to Sanef documents that have not been published, including minutes and records of forum discussions, as well as emails and letters. The privacy issue relates to the possible effects of disclosure of data, not the effects of data collection (Greenberg, Eastin & Garramone, 2003: 311). The researcher asked for access to such documents and to be able to use them, if necessary, for research purposes. Verbal permission was obtained from the Sanef management committee, followed by written permission by the Sanef chairperson (see copy in Appendix B).

5.5. Conclusion

This research is a qualitative inquiry from the inside, in which the historian researcher looks for understanding both of a sequence of events and the motives, related to their context and the concepts of democratic roles:



They study the available evidence and form “theories” to explain it. The “theories” are not only the interpretations and narratives, but the facts themselves. (Nord, 2003: 365)

Constructing a narrative is one of the typical outcomes of historical research, used to explain the past by telling stories:

But a narrative is more than a description; it is a logical organisation of material into a chronological sequence for the purpose of explanation. (Nord, 2003: 369).

The following two chapters are the results of the research: firstly the narrative of Sanef’s formation and early concerns, then a detailed summary of the kinds of issues and activities – and obstacles – editors focused on to promote democracy and widen the space for journalism in this new democracy.

Chapter 6: How it began: Sanef's formation, ideals, goals and activities

6.1. Introduction

From two polarised groups – the Black Editors' Forum (BEF) and the Conference of Editors (CoE) – the South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef) was formed in October 1996. In the simplest view, these groups epitomised the outcome of apartheid: BEF members were politicised, inclusive and had strong black consciousness (BC) or Africanist approaches, while CoE members were mostly white liberals or nationalists in an exclusive, non-political club of a few English and Afrikaans print or newspaper editors who met for long lunches (Tyson, 1993: 13-14). The reality was much more complex, as will be explored in this chapter, but the huge chasm between the two groups apparent from this simple viewpoint gives rise to some initial why, when and who questions regarding Sanef's formation. The answers to these give context to what follows. The pressures being applied by the dominant political party will be described, after which this chapter will through a chronological narrative look at how Sanef was formed. The sequence and context of events will show how the forum participated in the democratising process.

6.1.1. Context to the formation of Sanef

Why did a united editors' group not rather grow from less difficult soil, such as the non-racial, progressive Conference of Independent Newspaper Editors (Cine) which existed for a short time around 1991? Editors of the *New Nation* (Zwelakhe Sisulu), *Vrye Weekblad* (Max du Preez) and *South* (Moegsien Williams) reported increased circulation and advertising from February 1990 and Du Preez said "we are learning our lessons fast" about changing to fit the new situation in South Africa (Du Preez, 1991: 16). But what he terms "the independent press" (not "alternative") mostly did not survive beyond 1995, as explained in Chapter 3. At the same time, in the mid-1990s, journalism unions which had been feisty during apartheid started to lose their impact:

At a time when retrenchments loom as a by-product of media monopoly wars and the closure of alternatives [newspapers], the Media Workers' Association of South Africa is now largely based in broadcasting. The South African Union of Journalists ... can't even get a viable head office staff together. (Berger, 1995a)

Suddenly, after 1992 when apartheid was definitely ending, "struggle" journalist groups were struggling just to survive. The BEF, on the other hand, was a post-apartheid formation.

Why did the editors merge across print and broadcast media, which Chapter 2 showed is unusual due to their different interests, as well as across the formidable private/independent and public/state divides?

This approach Sanef adopted from the BEF, which gave racial solidarity precedence over many other factors. It can be concluded that this is related to the background of apartheid and a dominant need for unity.

It was predicted that uniting these polarised groups and uniting editors across media would give rise to conflict. Obstacles to unity were described by two editors who worked on uniting the organisations, Anton Harber (CoE) and Mike Tissong (BEF). They wrote of their expectations of a rocky road ahead at the time Sanef was formed.

Harber said the long-term test of unity was less likely to be race and more likely to be “the link between broadcasting and print” (Harber, 1996), a forecast which has not been fulfilled. Tissong looked at the range of ideologies and of personalities in Sanef:

Editors are typically individualistic people with strong opinions so uniform responses to the commitments [of the unity conference] can be excluded. And that will probably be the source of a lot of infighting in the future. Sanef will not be able to sanction editors that do not stick to the spirit in which Sanef was formed. (Tissong, 1996)

Time soon showed Tissong was correct about personalities but he underestimated how the “spirit of Sanef” would lead editors to exclude themselves; sanctions were not needed.

Why did Sanef not form earlier? This was “not possible in the previous political dispensation”, said a *Beeld* editorial (*Beeld*, 1996). However that dispensation had been changing for six years already. Mandela was released in 1990, the main apartheid laws were repealed by the end of 1991, the democratic convention (Codesa) began work in 1992 (Mkhondo, 1993:187) and the ANC won democratic elections in 1994. There was a “rainbow nation” by 1995: the “government of national unity” was formed after the elections and President Mandela continually urged non-racialism (Mandela, 1994b). However, the timing coincides with the end stages of the writing of the constitution and clarity around its media freedom rights. From CoE activities it will be concluded that white editors had feared continued restrictions of media freedom under an ANC government.

The new constitution was adopted on May 8 1996. Sanef was formed five months later. As part of the necessary procedure, the constitution went to the Constitutional Court – and was formally signed by President Mandela in December 1996.

Finally, tracking BEF and CoE membership shows changes that bridged the chasm and may have made the end of polarisation inevitable at that time. Almost all South African editors in the first half of the 1990s were still white and male. The CoE in 1991 widened its membership: it had then four black editors – Khulu Sibiyi, Aggrey Klaaste, T.G. Mthembu and Brij Ramguthee (CoE minutes, 1991a) – while by 1993 it also had three white men from the alternative press – Franz Krüger, Harber and Guy Berger (CoE minutes, 1991b; CoE minutes, 1993). By 1996 the CoE finally had one woman member, Jane Raphaely, among the 29 men.

Changes were happening in the BEF too: BEF member Williams was in March 1995 appointed the first black editor of a mainstream “white” paper, the *Pretoria News*, and in August that year he moved to the more influential *Cape Times*. He had worked with other BEF members at the *Sowetan* in the early 1990s and had been in the alternative press in the 1980s and in black journalism unions (IJR, 2004). He wrote about a new vision in journalism: along with other areas of transformation the editorial organisations had to transform too (Williams, 1995: 3). In 1995 he joined the CoE (CoE minutes, 1996a).

About the time that Sibiyi resigned as CoE chair in September 1995, apparently because of the editors’ resistance to change (Sapa, 1995), Williams took the initiative. As local International Press Institute (IPI) chairperson, he was said to be starting a new editors’ association (Sapa, 1995). However, as a member of both groups, he was at the meetings of BEF and CoE chairs in October 1995 and February 1996 which led to the unity conference in October 1996 (BEF-CoE minutes, 1996; CoE minutes, 1996a). This sequence of events indicates Sibiyi’s action sparked the talks, Williams acted as the bridge and members from both groups nurtured them to unity.

6.1.2. Political pressures

The political context into which Sanef was born reveals further possible areas of conflict. Mandela, as ANC president in 1992, said the party valued “a free, independent and outspoken press”. However, speaking in Prague to newspaper publishers (1992), he outlined his first area of criticism: lack of diversity in the print media. He said:

- Conformism results from print media being dominated by three large, white conglomerates.
- One-dimensional journalism comes from the similar life experiences of the mostly white, male and middle class editorial staff on daily newspapers.
- Courageous, alternative weekly media have diversity and investigative approaches that should be adopted.

What was needed was to reduce imbalances in control of the media and expand their staffing diversity to better reflect the population (Mandela, 1992).

His first point, ownership, was an issue for business owners and markets. However, points two and three were under the control of editors: staffing and investigative content.

In 1994, as South African President, Mandela took his critique into a second area: lack of balance. Speaking to the CoE after the majority government's first 100 days, he said many journalists had predicted a storm that had not come. Despite this, they continued to have a pessimistic approach that could lead to unnecessary tensions.

In the abnormalcy of apartheid, it was much easier to strive simply to be normal and defend that right. In the new situation of relative normalcy, the challenge is to undergo what some would characterise as a transition from the sensation of conflict to that of reconstruction and development. (Mandela, 1994b)

He called for a government-media partnership in pursuit of common interests; saying neither would be subservient to the other and the relationship would have stormy moments.

His third area of criticism concerned the lack of excellent journalism, and then he went on and continued to attack black reporters and their allegiances. These will be expanded upon below, but it is important to note the political pressure these criticisms put on all editors. White editors were being told it was time for them to leave as they were both pessimistic and preventing transformation. For editors sympathetic to the ANC, these attacks put pressure on their journalistic independence. For black journalists, being attacked directly was an added pressure. However, the result was that attacks on the black editors gave them something in common with their white colleagues – and the outcome was the growth of a joint journalistic idealism.

In the sections that follow, Sanef's complex beginnings and first 18 months will be examined in detail, reconstructing a sequence of events from existing documentation and giving them context: to create a story or narrative history. This starts with the immediate backgrounds of the BEF and CoE, their coming together at the Unity Conference in October 1996 and events around that, the transition year and finally the launch of Sanef in January 1998. This covers 1995 to early 1998, as the formation part of Sanef's history. The 1998 launch conference reveals the consensus goals of the editors involved in the forum at that time. Recurring events or themes, areas of unity and conflict, and obstacles and strengths, will be drawn out of this story.

6.2. The Black Editors' Forum (BEF)

The BEF "came into being [in 1992] to represent black editors' interests in the media particularly regarding affirmative action and training, media ownership and the promotion of media freedom" (Tissong, 1996: 5). Its members were not only editors but also senior journalists, from print and broadcast media. Many members were well known as "struggle" journalists in the black and/or alternative press.

In 1994, Joe Thloloe was BEF chair. He had been managing editor of the *Sowetan* but had moved to SABC TV news and gone through the many changes in broadcasting in the early 1990s (see Chapter 3). Describing BEF concerns, he wrote about the "sea change" in South African journalism and resulting restlessness of journalists: a sharp decline in newspaper circulation since the elections, changing audiences, electronic media becoming a credible source of news and "the fundamental structures and tenets of the media industry are being questioned" (Thloloe, 1994: 3). He predicted:

We can expect turmoil in newsrooms as blacks demand a bigger voice in the decisions there and the present rulers of those newsrooms feel insecure and question the competence of those who would take their places. There will be hard questions about an almost lily-white editorial management team at publications like *The Star*. There will be questions about training for leadership roles in the media. Some organisations, such as the SABC, are already confronted by the questions; the rest of the media will follow. (Thloloe, 1994: 3)

Thami Mazwai was BEF chairperson when Sanef was formed in 1996. In 1982 when he was still *Sowetan* news editor and Mwasas national secretary, he had been joint winner of the SASJ's

Pringle Press Award, cited for the “courage and persistence of his efforts to advance black journalism in a hostile environment”, having been harassed and repeatedly detained (The Star, 1982). By mid-1995 he was a widely known media personality as BEF chair, editor-in-chief of Enterprise publications and for his outspoken critique that the whiteness of mainstream media was thwarting black economic advancement. He advised government to regulate media by advertising only with those black enough and by limiting foreign ownership (Gevisser, 1995).

The BEF in the early 1990s represented the interests of black editors and senior journalists, who during this time of post-apartheid change could expect to go into leadership roles due to their experience and seniority – as long as the media did not stall in transformation. Many members came from a Wasa/Mwasa background which, as seen in Chapter 3, meant they united to fight apartheid by considering themselves as blacks first and journalists second. In the 1990s these commitments were still relevant: the interests of BEF members were both race and media freedom. However these now sometimes became conflicting interests which pulled them in opposite directions – and difficult times for Sanef were often when journalists felt they had to decide which interest they should put first.

6.3. The Conference of Editors (CoE)

The CoE was a group of mainly white editors of mainstream newspapers formed in 1981 to unite English and Afrikaans editors for media freedom (NPU minutes, 1996). In 1991 it wrote up its principles, it was formalised (minutes were taken) and its membership was widened, as explained above (Tyson, 1993: 13-14). It had a different focus to the BEF: it was dealing with political matters like refusing to join the Newspaper Press Union (NPU) in having official contact with the police and SADF (CoE minutes, 1991a), concerns about the South African Media Council (in 1993 it became the Press Council) being used by civil servants and government to censor the press, the need for constitutional protection, harassment and intimidation of journalists by political parties, the use of Section 205 by police against journalists, and demands by the Attorney General that newspapers give him information (CoE minutes, 1991b).

The 1991 “principles” document describes its purpose as “to uphold the freedom of the Press and the free flow and expression of information and to protect the interests of a free Press, and to meet to discuss matters of common professional concern” (Appendix C) (CoE minutes, 1991a). The CoE did not write up its principles when under enormous pressure from the white NP

government, but only when it seemed likely a black ANC government would come to power – this possibly shows their fears of the latter at this stage.

By 1993, the CoE was still discussing the problem of having official talks with the army about unrest, but also the limitations of the draft Bill of Rights. A group (Koos Viviers, Berger, Andrew Drysdale and Ebbe Dommissie) was formed to lobby the multi-party technical committee drafting it. Other concerns were new press cards and identifying, red “Press” armbands for identifying journalists who were “still being harassed”, threats of violence against newspapers, a pamphlet on the role of newspapers, a potential award for enterprising journalism and a proposed amendment to Section 205 discussed with the justice minister (CoE minutes, 1993).

As explained the CoE widened its membership in 1991. However, in 1992 the BEF was formed, either ignoring as irrelevant or clearly rejecting the enlarged CoE as a home for editors.

6.4. Shaky foundations: the BEF and CoE in 1995

By 1995 there were black editors in broadcasting, the first ones were being appointed to mainstream papers, and the constitution was being written with its Bill of Rights. It was a year of intense and often angry public debate about the role of the media and its conduct in SA, with personal and political attacks. Deputy president Thabo Mbeki speaking to the BEF pointed out the print media was still mostly white-owned, edited and written; Sibiyi resigned as CoE chair saying he had failed to unite white and black editors; the ANC attacked the media for its lack of complexity in reporting on transformation; and Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale blasted its foreign ownership (FXI update, 1995).

Efforts to unite the two editors’ groups began and were made public in the media. The 1996 Unity Conference “was the culmination of about 10 months work by committees set up jointly by the CoE and the BEF”, wrote Tissong (1996). Nevertheless, this was not without rising emotions, even before formal talks began.

In August 1995, CoE and BEF groups had a hearing with the Constitutional Assembly committee dealing with freedom of expression. *Sunday Times* editor Ken Owen so objected to being “neatly confined to an all-white, middle-aged ghetto”, as he called their delegation, that he resigned from the CoE (Owen, 1995). Berger describes events:

CoE chair Khulu Sibiyana failed to pitch up, and his white colleagues were left playing second fiddle to representations by Thami Mazwai and the BEF. The CoE's well-researched dossier by advocate Gilbert Marcus was eclipsed by Mazwai's call for constitutional limits on foreign ownership of the press. *Sunday Times* editor Ken Owen, moving force in the campaign to get to the Constituent Assembly, felt he had been suckered. (Berger, 1995b: 27)

A bigger concern was that "the media missed the whole story" of what the constitution meant for press freedom (Berger, 1995b: 27). This theme of journalism failing to cover major stories about the democratisation process in South Africa repeated itself through early Sanef history and became a source of conflict between the forum and other bodies.

In the same 1995 edition of *Rhodes Journalism Review* which details the above events, the chasm between BEF and CoE editors' understandings about change, particularly the importance and rate of affirmative action in the media, are also seen. Mazwai writes about three possible areas of transformation – ownership, staff and fast tracking – and finds them all lacking as control has not moved out of white male hands (Mazwai, 1995: 28). John Patten, acting CoE chair, agrees transformation is imperative but says it will take time and will not be quick or easy, because "ownerships and editorships reflect the market position of newspapers fairly accurately". He also worries that fast tracking will lower the morale of mid-level white journalists (Patten, 1995: 30). In a guest editorial, Williams sets a tone of historical inevitability:

South Africa's mass media has helped to change our world, but internally it has done too little about changing itself. (Williams, 1995: 3)

It was in late September that Sibiyana resigned as chair of the CoE. BEF chair Mazwai put this down to racism and resistance to change by some editors, and a Sapa report records that he commented: "We are aware that the more progressive white editors in the CoE are just as frustrated and it is a matter of time before they also walk out" (1995).

Despite the distance in views described above, talks were initiated quickly after Sibiyana's resignation. On October 9, Williams facilitated a meeting of the two chairpersons, Mazwai and Patten, to start discussions on forming a single body for editors (CoE minutes, 1996a).

On October 27, President Mandela outlined his third criticism of the media – a lack of excellent journalism – when he challenged editors at a BEF breakfast. He was encouraged by moves

towards creating one forum for editors, he said, but problems should be dealt with frankly so real unity could emerge. He also felt the debate on foreign ownership had obscured the central issue of diversity: it was possible foreign ownership could advance diversity. He spoke of the challenges of transformation: representivity or diversity alone would not ensure South Africa got the excellent journalism and robust national discourse it deserved (Mandela, 1995).

There were already signs of BEF-CoE co-operation. In December the NPU, CoE, BEF, SAUJ & Mwasa published a joint advert calling for public suggestions on a mechanism to solve press complaints. In July the CoE had said it would cease co-operating with the “outdated” Press Council: “The country’s apartheid policies have gone. We have a constitution that guarantees greater press freedom. There is no need for the structure,” Sibiya had announced. The CoE suggested self-regulation by an ombudsman might be more effective and hoped a new method would be set up by June 1996 (Oppelt, 1995).

During 1995 both black and white editors were being politically attacked. Internal factors were pushing them towards talks. In addition, the example of the Press Council shows pressure also from the opposite direction: to establish a democratic media system the editors needed to speak with one voice despite their differences.

6.5. Looking for common ground: January to October 1996

The BEF aimed to represent the professional interests of black editors and promote media freedom; the CoE’s purpose was to uphold press freedom and to discuss common professional concerns. The words are almost the same – but in reality the professional interests of the two groups were in direct conflict, as has been described. Events to come showed their definitions of media freedom and of democracy were also vastly different. Did media freedom mean blacks were free, or media was free? Was it enough that democracy was representative or should it be participative too? Finding common ground and a united voice was not going to be easy.

Yet by early 1996 the CoE had only one direction in mind: all its minuted items refer to the BEF. When the CoE met on February 13 1996, the first agenda item was “negotiations”. A meeting of several representatives of both groups on February 9 had followed “private talks” between Patten, Williams and Mazwai in October 1995. They had recommended a task group be set up “to adopt joint positions where possible for the two organisations while further work was done to bring them together, and to iron out problem areas that still existed, such as over journalism

training, affirmative action and other issues” (CoE minutes, 1996a). The CoE chose its team: its new chairperson, Harber, as well as Nigel Bruce, Raymond Louw and Willie Kuhn, with Williams as a member of both organisations.

The election of Harber as chair at this point shows CoE editors had accepted that change was coming. Previously, conservative members would not have allowed the election of an outspoken editor of the “alternative” press – but Harber with his anti-apartheid background would be acceptable to the BEF.

The briefing to the CoE’s task team members was:

1. Arrange a conference with the BEF.
2. Seek agreement for joint public representations to the Constitutional Assembly (CA) on issues such as freedom of speech clauses and remaining laws that restrict the press.
3. Examine financial and other arrangements for forming a joint body (CoE minutes, 1996a).

Williams chaired the BEF-CoE task group meeting on March 14 at the Carlton Hotel in Johannesburg. Minutes show Harber, Mazwai, Kuhn, Louw and Anne Naidoo attended, and Tissong is mentioned in the minutes. They discussed a joint bosberaad (suggested August/September), affirmative action and training, press freedom and a structure for a new organisation. The idea of a roadshow to promote press freedom values was debated. Finally, the task group recommended a joint body be formed of editors, senior journalists and those associated with the industry, including the SABC, though they did not reach agreement on membership tiers (BEF-CoE minutes, 1996).

The task group had made some progress. It identified one easy area of common ground: media freedom issues. A statement after the meeting said editors were “gravely concerned at the move by Zimbabwe’s President Robert Mugabe to take direct control of the country’s newspapers”. However, they also got agreement on joint representation of South African editors: “all future representations to the government, national and international organisations would be done jointly by the BEF and the CoE” (BEF-CoE minutes, 1996).

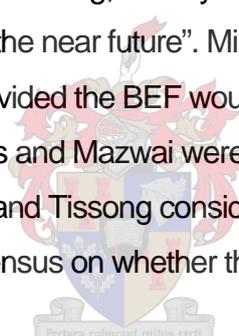
The BEF and CoE seemed to draw closer. In April Mazwai slammed the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism, in Johannesburg, for organising a conference of African editors

without consulting either editors' group; Harber backed him up (Milazi, 1996). This followed a joint statement in March urging the government to protest against arrests in Zambia of the managing director and editor-in-chief of the *Post* for criticising the vice-president (Lamberti, 1996).

While the editors were trying to find common ground, so were other groups nationally. The ANC's newsletter, *Mayibuye*, noted in its March 1996 edition that "the constitution-making process is entering its final stretch, with just over two months until the constitution needs to be finalised", and with differences of opinion being hotly debated (*Mayibuye*, 1996).

On June 13 the NPU-hosted "ad hoc committee on press self-regulation" met to discuss the Press Ombudsman and closing the Press Council at the end of the year. Harber represented the CoE. Although the BEF's representative was absent, its position was included in discussions (NPU minutes, 1996).

In what turned out to be the last CoE meeting, on July 29 1996, Harber expressed "hope that a new umbrella body will be formed in the near future". Minutes note that Mazwai had "expressed support for a new umbrella body, provided the BEF would continue to exist", and that there were now two task forces: Harber, Williams and Mazwai were looking at membership and construction of the new organisation, while Louw and Tissing considered training and an industry-wide editorial charter. There was no consensus on whether the CoE should continue to exist after unity or not (CoE minutes, 1996b).



Finally dates were set: the BEF-CoE conference would be from October 18 to 20 in Cape Town (CoE memo, 1996). On September 20, invitations to the Black Editor's Forum/Conference of Editors Unity Conference went out from Williams, facilitating chairperson of the BEF/CoE task group (BEF-CoE fax, 1996).

At this stage it was difficult to predict what would happen at the Unity Conference. After the first task group meeting in March, it seemed the best that could be achieved was an umbrella body where the groups could co-exist as a watchdog on press freedom. At the other extreme was the possibility they would merge.

6.6. The Unity Conference: October 18 to 20 1996

It is clear from all reports that unity did not come easily to about 80 journalism leaders who gathered at Breakwater Lodge in Cape Town from the evening of October 18 1996.

According to the agenda, they had a social function that first evening and the following morning started with opening remarks by Anthony Sampson, former editor of *Drum*. Objectives were set and workshops held all day to build consensus on the structure, abstract goals and practical activities of the new body. That evening, Deputy President Mbeki was the speaker at a formal dinner. On the final morning, Sunday October 20, resolutions were to be debated and adopted, and elections held (Unity agenda, 1996).

Tissong, still BEF secretary, wrote afterwards that it was a historic occasion on two counts:

Firstly, it was the first gathering of editors of newspapers, magazines, radio and television as well as journalism trainers at universities and technikons with the common purpose to form a representative organisation. Secondly, the three-day unity conference signalled the intention to change the media industry significantly from its apartheid hangup of being a white-dominated industry serving a white minority to being an industry with a responsibility to the South African public as a whole. (Tissong, 1996)

He also put a positive spin on divisions and debates:

Editors at the conference conducted themselves with openness not experienced among leaders in the industry before and the hidden agendas that were feared in the run-up to the meeting did not materialise. There were tensions and strong words exchanged, but they were done in the spirit of keeping all eyes on the prize of leaving Cape Town's Breakwater Lodge with an organisation that will express the interests of South African editors. (Tissong, 1996)

In his speech, Deputy President Mbeki set a dual role for the unified editors' body, in "matters that relate directly to the press and the wider issue of the reconstruction and development of our society" (Mbeki, 1996). It would deal with press freedom, the role of the media, the quality of journalism and diversity, he said, though there was no imminent danger to press freedom. Much of his speech concerned the ongoing building of a non-racial society with non-racial structures:

The establishment of Sanef once more poses the vexed question whether the organisations and institutions which are not themselves non-racial can promote a non-racial outcome. The question has been posed whether the black majority should not preserve its own organisations in a situation in which it is disadvantaged as a consequence of our apartheid past. (Mbeki, 1996)

Black people had a difficult role in predominately white organisations. Sanef would “itself have to grapple with these real and difficult questions” as part of civil society challenged to create a non-racial South Africa (Mbeki, 1996). Mbeki was pointing out a difficulty Sanef would not easily resolve, as future events showed, and one likely to arise in any emerging democracy where only certain groups previously held power.

One of the outcomes of the unity meeting was Sanef’s “Preamble, declaration of intent, organisation and programme of action” (Appendix D). This is the first time the name Sanef is mentioned in documents, although as seen above Mbeki uses it in his speech. The founding document guided the forum until its launch 15 months later. The BEF focus was on transformation while the CoE concentrated on media freedom, so the way the preamble combines these shows the ascendancy of the BEF approach: “Recognising past injustices in the media, we commit ourselves to a programme of action to overcome these injustices and to defend and promote media freedom and independence.” It is also similar to the preamble to the South African constitution.

Harber, who co-chaired the unity meeting, wrote soon afterwards that Sanef had agreed to produce and publish an annual report on affirmative action, and had promised strong action on both media freedom and the promotion of diversity. The BEF and CoE were both asked to dissolve in favour of Sanef (Harber, 1996) – but neither did so immediately. Tissong said Sanef aimed to redress current race and gender imbalances in journalism and media houses, and encourage transformation of the culture in the media industry. It would also establish communication channels with government, the judiciary and other statutory groups. These were big goals and a complex programme of action for a forum that had no staff and whose members had fulltime jobs. However, “if Sanef does not get its act together in less than a year, both the CoE and BEF will have reason to exist for a long time to come,” warned Tissong (1996).

Sanef’s structure was also set up. Future councils would be elected from those at an AGM, but the unity meeting chose an interim council based on a formula: five BEF (Mazwai, Williams, Tissong, Latiefa Mobarra and Dennis Cruywagen), five CoE (Harber, Louw, Dommissie, Brian Pottinger and Shaun Johnson), five broadcast (Thlloe, Phil Molefe, Pippa Green, Debra Patta and Judy Sandison) and five others including magazines (S’bu Mngadi, Raphaely and Wendy Morgenrood) and educators (Berger and Arrie de Beer). The first Sanef leadership was elected: Mazwai as chairperson, Pottinger as deputy and Mngadi as secretary-treasurer (Sanef minutes, 1996a).

Although previous BEF-CoE statements had mostly focused on media freedom issues outside SA, this time the resolutions were closer to home and revealed the common ground had grown slightly. At the end of the conference, Sanef voiced its concern about President Mandela's recent attack on black journalists, saying he was opening them up to intimidation. It would also seek urgent talks with Constitutional Court president Judge Arthur Chaskalson about his remarks on confidential sources (*Die Burger*, 1996a).

Chris Bateman in the *Cape Times* the next day wrote of the difficulties of the unity conference. The historic new body "was formed after harsh words between black and white journalists". Mngadi "described the media industry as 'racist ... we are pussyfooting around ... it's shameful'." Bateman quoted Mazwai as saying: "The question of transformation is germane to the existence of the Black Editors' Forum – we can't have one foot in the transformation process and the other in the old South Africa," and said some BEF journalists were opposed to even speaking to the CoE. These comments came after a white CoE editor questioned the definitions of "corrective action" and "transformation" in Sanef's draft declaration of intent (Bateman, 1996).

However an editorial in *Die Burger*, an Afrikaans newspaper, said all media branches were now represented in one body and a cornerstone was press freedom – important for all South Africans – with the professional development of journalists and corrective action as additional aims. "Sanef's unity did not come without difficulty, but there appears to be greater mutual understanding already," the paper said (*Die Burger*, 1996b).

Unity Conference debates described above again revealed that issues of race and transformation were divisive. It was two years after democratic elections, so journalists disadvantaged by apartheid were impatient for the media to normalise, while others seemed not to understand. However, what the conference had altered was that all Sanef editors were now publicly committed to "redress inappropriate racial and gender imbalances prevalent in journalism and news organisations and encourage corrective action" (Sanef preamble, 1996).

Some editors, critical of Sanef, chose to stay out of the forum. Tissong responded to this:

Sanef cannot be allowed to fail. If it does, editors will have failed to meet the challenges of a changing South Africa and the media as a whole will not deserve respect from the community it is supposed to serve. (Tissong, 1996)

6.7. First steps: October to December 1996

Sanef was a new body with a clear programme of action – but it inherited the BEF-CoE problems and the criticisms of the ANC government. These and other issues it had to tackle were all complex: there were never just two sides to any debate. Among just the council's 20 members – journalism leaders of SA's biggest newspapers, magazines, broadcasting and academia – there were a wide variety of strong viewpoints, which is why it was named a "forum". It was a fragile unity: increasing criticism of the media could either unite them, create permanent splits or lead to the slow death of Sanef.

Five days after the conference, on October 25, Mazwai sent council members a fax: "President Mandela has agreed to a meeting with Sanef at 8am on Friday November 1. The committee feels that the meeting should be open to all council members, instead of the executive" (Sanef fax, 1996a). Pottinger sent a fax to potential members of a working group on affirmative action and training, to meet on November 6 in Rosebank. In addition, the date of the first council meeting was set for February 8 and 9 1997. Sanef was off to a quick start.

By October 31 Sanef's subcommittees and membership had been sorted out with the allocation of council members:

1. Media Diversity – Mazwai (convenor), Patta, Molefe, Harber
2. Training and Affirmative Action – Pottinger (convenor), De Beer, Berger, Thloloe, Mobarra
3. Code of conduct and promotion of media freedom – Williams (convenor), Johnson, Raphaely, Green, Dommissie, Morgenrood
4. Constitution and membership – Tissing (convenor), Louw, Sandison, Cruywagen

On November 1, all but two of the Sanef council met Mandela at the Union Buildings in Pretoria – part of the forum's resolution to build communication channels. Mandela started by saying he hoped more black members would be appointed to the council (eight of 20 were black). Mazwai "expressed the concern of some members" at the use of Section 205 of the Criminal Procedures Act to compel journalists to disclose sources. In response, Mandela said he was unhappy with the use of unnamed, single sources in stories that were often incorrect and damaging. There was

discussion of his earlier attacks on unnamed senior black journalists, training, the state-media seminars Sanef wanted to set up, laws inhibiting press freedom and the possibility of an independent trust to help small media and improve diversity. It was agreed they would meet every three months to improve government-media communication (Sanef minutes, 1996b). The minister of safety and security, Sydney Mufamadi, and police Chief George Fivaz also attended (*Die Burger*, 1996b). A letter afterwards from the president's office, dated November 8, noted that Mandela had undertaken "to follow up on the editors' concerns regarding legislative issues that may impact on media freedom" in relation to Section 205 and other statutes. Sanef was expected to submit a list of the laws and the president's office would arrange a meeting with the relevant ministers (President's office, 1996).

At the November 6 meeting of the training and affirmative action subcommittee, the group divided. Mobarra and Thloloe would look at corrective action conventions and diversity in media companies (affirmative action, corrective action and diversity were terms which Sanef did not clearly define). Pottinger, Berger and De Beer would report on the status of training facilities, propose basic industry norms for training and certification, design a "train the trainers" programme (internships for lecturers), establish the feasibility of joint cadet reporter programmes, review mid-career training opportunities, establish a database of scholarships and convene basic information seminars for journalists and state officials (Sanef AA & training report, 1996).

At this time, changes in media ownership were in the news: control of Times Media Ltd had just been bought by the largely black National Empowerment Consortium (NEC), while Kagiso Trust Investments was negotiating with Perskor for control of the Citizen, 50% of Rapport and other smaller print media. In broadcasting over two years the airwaves had expanded enormously: the IBA licensed 82 community radio stations and six private radio stations were sold off by the SABC (HSRC-FXI invitation, 1996).

Special pressures continued to be put on black journalists by the government. On November 13 Mazwai as BEF leader sent a fax to Parks Mankahlana, media liaison officer in the president's office, saying they urgently needed a meeting to address "current tensions" (Mazwai, 1996). Mandela had accused senior black journalists of having a secret agenda, of being used by conservative whites who still controlled the media to do their dirty work and undermine the government in exchange for promotion (Sapa, 1996). About 20 senior black journalists met Mandela and some top ANC politicians on November 18 at ANC headquarters in Johannesburg. Mandela told them he would hit back when there was unfair criticism or attacks on his or the

ANC's integrity by journalists. The ANC needed many watchdogs after winning such a majority in 1994, but government-press relations would not normalise while the press was still controlled by conservative whites, as senior black journalists would only express views not in conflict with their employers (Makhanya, 1996). Mazwai said afterwards the four-hour meeting had been "robust", and no mercy was asked for or given, but the air had been cleared (Bezuidenhout, 1996).

The Sanef council met Judge Arthur Chaskalson and Chief Justice-elect Ismail Mahomed on November 28 – the venue had to be moved due to a good response from council members. This was a follow-up of Sanef's second conference resolution, so discussions included Section 205 (Sanef fax, 1996b; Sanef minutes, 1997a).

At the beginning of December the affirmative action and training committee met again. It was decided Thloloe would write to human resources departments for AA policies and staff profiles. Berger said an internet site would be up by February 1 to support the projects. It was agreed to ask technikon educators to nominate a representative (Sanef AA & training report, 1996) – this was to be Bhekithemba Zondo.

For the media, 1996 had been a year of ownership changes and verbal attacks on black journalists. It was also the year of mad cow disease in Britain, Dolly the cloned sheep was born, the Taliban captured Kabul and Bill Clinton was re-elected US president. The Olympic Games in Atlanta came and went, and thousands of refugees returned to Rwanda. In South Africa, the TRC had started its hearings on human rights crimes, the new South African constitution was adopted and the National Party withdrew from the government of national unity.

A year before, BEF-CoE talks had just begun. Now a joint body was off to a running start with a variety of plans. It had begun to build relationships with government and judiciary. Some council members were active and all were responsive to meetings. After two months of existence, Sanef no longer looked so fragile.

6.8. Setting up: January to July 1997

Right at the end of 1996, on December 30, a BEF statement welcomed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's "probe of the role of the media in the violation of human rights between 1960 and 1993" but criticised the process. It believed the probe should look at both electronic and print media: how they propagated apartheid and suppressed information, and how staff was treated. It wanted the TRC to probe individuals and it objected to the "proposed

preliminary investigations by an intermediary body” (BEF statement, 1996). This was after a December 13 notice from FXI to all editors and journalists asking for information relevant to the probe being co-ordinated by Louw and Clive Emdon. The Sanef executive had discussed this with Louw on December 27.

The BEF’s objections to the proposed TRC media probe initially seemed procedural: they did not want an intermediary. It turned out they objected to the particular intermediary, the FXI, and they won this argument. Sanef absorbed this conflict without disruption to its many other plans.

At this time, other journalism groups were forming. The Forum for Black Journalists (FBJ) was launched in January 1997 and in February Die Mediaklub was formed for Afrikaner reporters. In both cases, journalists organised around shared backgrounds – not just professional roles or race (Skjerdal, 1997: 5).

The FXI had asked for an urgent meeting of the TRC and media interest groups that had criticised the proposed research, it was reported on January 15. Mazwai said the research would be skewed as the FXI favoured the English press – that’s where its members came from (Bezuidenhout, 1997). On the same day, the BEF and FBJ said in a statement they would not take part in the TRC probe if the FXI did the research (Jones, 1997).

The main protagonists were both Sanef council members: chairperson Mazwai (also BEF) and constitution and membership subcommittee member Louw (also FXI). Louw had been an editor of the anti-apartheid, liberal *Rand Daily Mail* which was closed down in 1985 – and for which Mazwai, as *Sowetan* news editor, had written an epitaph including: “It was the first paper to regard them [the black community] as human beings. It fought for them” (Pogrund, 2000: 336). The other person in the FXI research was Emdon, also from the *Mail* (Pogrund, 2000: 272). Louw was quick to use points-of-procedure arguments within Sanef: on January 12 he faxed council asking for an urgent meeting to discuss Mazwai and Pottinger speaking on policy issues without a mandate. The issue was held over to the next council meeting (Sanef minutes, 1997a).

This TRC issue was resolved after a month. On January 21 Alex Boraine as TRC vice chair put out a statement, after meeting the BEF and FBJ, saying it would review the mandate to the FXI, it welcomed the idea of listening to both individuals and organisations and it would take into account that the media was articulate and needed no intermediary. He also noted “there is now a

broad consensus from within the media on the need for such hearings” (Boraine, 1997). The FXI said it would conduct its own research to submit to the TRC (Golding-Duffy, 1997a).

December’s BEF meeting with Mandela and the TRC issue supported an idea at a time that the BEF was overshadowing Sanef. Sanef editors gave different responses to this in a newspaper report. Mazwai said these initiatives were not meant to undermine Sanef but the BEF had to tackle issues that directly affected its black members. Williams noted that the BEF and CoE continued to exist until Sanef had its launch. Harber said the BEF moves were against the one-voice spirit of Sanef. Pottinger said as long as Mazwai differentiated between wearing BEF or Sanef hats there should be no problem as Sanef was operating as an umbrella body (Golding-Duffy, 1997a). From the faxes filed in the Sanef office, it seems Mazwai mostly used his Mafube job title and letterhead, rather than those of Sanef or the BEF.

At this stage, there is evidence that Sanef members were communicating by fax and by email – the previous year faxes dominated and by 1998 email was taking over.

The CoE was silent at this time. On February 7 Harber faxed members to tell them they would have to elect a new chair: he would no longer qualify as he would not be an editor: he had been appointed CEO of Kagiso. The CoE needed to meet, he said, but he suggested the five Sanef reps have a breakfast meeting before the Sanef council that Saturday (CoE memo, 1997a). The CoE had held what turned out to be its last meeting the previous July – at this breakfast it seems the group’s dissolution was made final.

The first quarterly meeting of the Sanef Council was held in Johannesburg on February 15. The agenda included reportbacks from the four committees, an idea of workshops between journalists and state officials, a freedom of commercial speech campaign, and Sanef and the TRC (Sanef minutes, 1997a). To examine Sanef’s role in media and democracy, it is necessary to look in detail at proposed actions.

Council agreed the media freedom subcommittee would:

- Hold a roadshow promoting media freedom with Print Media Association and National Association of Broadcasters, consisting of four or five seminars that year.
- Investigate running a workshop on media ethics.

- Draft responses for the next meeting with Mandela on anti-media laws, the open democracy bill and Comtask's report on government communications (Sanef minutes, 1997a).

The corrective action and training subcommittee demonstrated the proposed Sanef internet site and presented surveys from Ruth Teer-Tomaselli and Graeme Addison on journalism education institutions and company training schemes. Council agreed the subcommittee would:

- Provide a funding proposal for the internet site.
- Investigate holding a workshop on intern/cadet training schemes.
- Hold information seminars for journalists and public servants (Sanef minutes, 1997a).

The constitution and membership subcommittee presented a draft constitution. Council agreed it would propose amendments and create membership forms (Sanef minutes, 1997a). The diversity subcommittee had no report – from the minutes it seems it had not met.

Council heard Louw's complaint, of the chairperson's "unauthorised and incorrect statements on behalf of Sanef" during the TRC-FXI controversy, and Mazwai's response. It was agreed:

1. The executive could make statements on behalf of the forum but where they deemed wider consultation necessary they would circularise council members for comment.
2. Members were called on to co-operate with the TRC's inquiry into the media – but Sanef would not make a submission (Sanef minutes, 1997a).

The executive was given a list of administrative tasks, including fundraising to set up a secretariat with one staffer. Council adopted a resolution on commercial freedom and editorial independence. Harber said the CoE intended to disband and he was resigning as he would no longer be an editor. Mngadi also resigned as he was moving to a corporate job, and Mobarra was elected secretary general (Sanef minutes, 1997a).

On March 20, the first of Sanef's series of media-government information exchange seminars was held in Johannesburg. A fax from Sanef records that Andile Ngcaba, Director General of Communications, and Dr Nkosazana Zuma, Health Minister, attended, as did officials and 21 journalists from around SA:

The seminar gave the opportunity for the officials to explain their department's role and structure. More, there were a number of frank exchanges between the journalists and the departmental representatives about frustrations and expectations which have arisen in the relationships. Dr Zuma said at the conclusion of the session that it had been extremely useful and she had learnt much. She said she was gratified the media had launched this initiative to reduce miscommunications and misunderstandings between the two parties. (Sanef fax, 1997a)

The fax includes an appeal from Pottinger: "This initiative is being undertaken in the name of Sanef. It has enjoyed enthusiastic support from every state department and is personally backed by the President. It would be tragic, indeed deeply humiliating, if it failed because of lack of support from Sanef members" (Sanef fax, 1997a). Some media groups had not answered the invitation, some promised to send delegates but none arrived and others called reporters out – this appeal was the first of many to Sanef members to support the forum over the years to come.

On April 22, Harber faxed "all ex-members" of the CoE saying he was wrapping up the body. Remaining funds would be paid over to Sanef (R34 000). Johnson had also moved to a management job, so he and Harber had to be replaced as CoE representatives on council. Jim Jones and John Battersby took their places (CoE memo, 1997b).

Around this time a number of media freedom organisations established themselves in Johannesburg. On April 24 and 25, the Media Institute of Southern Africa (Misa) had the founding workshop of its South African chapter – Zondo attended on behalf of Sanef and reported back to the forum. In July the British Article 19 opened its first Africa office and in November the Freedom Forum set up an office (FXI roundup, 1997). By 2005 only the Misa chapter remained.

Sanef received a letter (dated April 30) asking whether it would do a submission to the TRC on the role of the media from 1960 to the 1994 election (TRC letter, 1997). Pottinger replied that council had "decided in view of the wide differences in experience, views and attitudes of the members it was unlikely that Sanef, a professional body devoted to improving journalistic standards and defending media freedom, would be in a position to provide a unified submission" but it had called on members to co-operate (Pottinger, 1997). This is an example of Sanef agreeing to disagree and therefore keeping silent: as a "forum" it could not always speak with one voice and this principle was established during its first year.

However, members agreed on the basics of press freedom. On May 3, international press freedom day, media freedom committees of the NPU and Sanef announced a Free Press Forum would be established as a watchdog of press freedom. Roadshows would be staged in all nine provinces to explain the value of press freedom. The National Association of Broadcasters had agreed to join in, and national and international press and watchdog bodies would be asked to co-operate. This campaign was needed because the importance of a robust and independent free press was not generally understood. An advertising campaign was considered, with the theme “If the press didn’t tell you, who would?” (*The Star*, 1997a).

The corrective action and training subcommittee, as it now called itself, met again on April 21 and May 12. Members reported: it was difficult to get information from companies on the race and gender of journalists, seminars with government officials were successful but a huge task, it was hoped the internet site would be in operation by June and the committee had been asked to act as a standards generating body (SGB) so a conference of media educators was suggested. They agreed on a mission statement, but members were unhappy with Sanef’s delay on membership and in finalising its constitution (Sanef minutes, 1997b).

A media freedom subcommittee task group met representatives of the *Sowetan* and of Makwetla and associates, a public relations company, on May 24 to discuss national media freedom day (October 19) and the roadshow. They discussed having two exhibitions, in Cape Town and in Kwazulu-Natal, before an event in Johannesburg on October 19, the 20th anniversary of the banning of the *World*. The other five provinces would hold events the following year. Potential sponsors were listed (Sanef minutes, 1997b). As will be seen, the roadshow was never held. However, this was the start of Sanef joining the *Sowetan* for its October 19 commemorations.

On June 2 the FXI submitted its 600-page research document to the TRC. The findings are relevant here as they further explain the context within which Sanef was working – why it supported corrective action, for example – and shows how perspectives on the past differed among journalists. As expected, the FXI found the Afrikaans press had been an official organ of the ruling NP and propounded its policies, and the SABC “a bastion of apartheid propaganda” with government interference in news presentation. It had not been able to fully investigate government spies, the FXI said, nor had it had co-operation from SABC or BEF/FBJ journalists. Concerns of business and profits had compromised the journalistic goals of the mainstream press, it said, and this sector had colluded with government “by entering into agreements that resulted in self-censorship”. Censorship “which prevents people from knowing what is going on

or what is being done in their name is a gross human rights abuse”, the FXI found, declaring that censors and collaborators were the perpetrators while all others were victims (IFEX, 1997). SAUJ and FBJ submissions came within weeks. The FBJ said that besides colluding and not informing people, media companies were to blame for enforcing discriminatory laws internally and victimising those opposed to apartheid (Sole, 1997).

The second Sanef council meeting was held in Durban on June 7. The constitution was still being worked on but a draft was adopted, pledges of R150 000 had been obtained from media companies to set up the office and the seminars were continuing. The media freedom campaign was further elaborated. “The plan is to have a roadshow format interactive with the public via exhibitions, debates, panel discussions, phone-ins, workshops, town hall meetings etc and to focus it first in Durban and Cape Town, ending at the *Sowetan* in Johannesburg in October” according to the minutes, while the NPU’s campaign would target opinion-makers, the public and youth. On Section 205, it was becoming clear government and/or the judiciary would not scrap it entirely, and either the “just cause” or exemption approach would have to be adopted. A new convenor was appointed to the Diversity committee, which still had not met, and a task group was asked to look at the Media Charter idea. Besides reporting on its activities, the corrective action and training group suggested Zondo be co-opted to represent technikons. Mary Papayya joined council to represent radio. Issues identified for discussion with the President were: Section 205, legislation infringing on press freedom, the open democracy bill, access to police crime statistics, the seminars and the media freedom campaign (Sanef minutes, 1997b).

The SABC had already had the upheaval of being altered from state to public broadcaster, but disruptive changes in senior editorial staff continued for some years largely over editorial independence issues. Around this time, Sanef members Thlooe resigned as television news editor-in-chief and Crowe resigned as head of current affairs. Problems and disputes within the media industry, even if they involved Sanef members, were not discussed at council meetings according to the minutes.

Another large Sanef delegation went for a second meeting with President Mandela on June 10 (Mobara, 1997). Some planned subjects were discussed, but then editors asked him about his public statement in Zimbabwe that black reporters kowtowed to their white bosses and did not express their real opinions. A “robust exchange of views” (Netshitenzhe, 1997) followed after Mandela told them certain journalists were questioning his integrity and “in many cases conservative whites” were controlling the media (RJR, 1997).

The fourth monthly Sanef media-government seminar was held on June 12. One more was held after this, but the next was postponed and no more were organised. It was noted later that Sanef members were not committed to sending staff (Sanef minutes, 1997c) despite positive accounts of the impact of earlier seminars. A report after this seminar noted that debates included the issue of adversarial versus nation-building or sunshine journalism, and that funding had allowed community media to attend (Addison, 1997).

It had been a busy six months for Sanef, with meetings, seminars, loud disputes, ambitious plans, areas of progress and frequently being the subject of news or opinion reports. The BEF asserted itself and the CoE quietly disbanded. Other media bodies formed or set up branches while Sanef members started to get into a routine of committee work and council meetings. No one wanted to deal with diversity: in nearly a year it seems that the subcommittee never met. As for the TRC media probe, there were some who wanted it done differently, others who preferred nothing be done and many positions inbetween – as the hearings in September were to show. Sanef chose to leave its members to speak for themselves.

6.9. Controversies over responsibility: July to September 1997

The wider TRC hearings – often traumatic for those involved – would continue to 1998 but for just three days in September 1997 the full focus was on the media. By staying out of the hearings, the editors' forum avoided a controversial area that involved many of its members – and on which they would not agree. However, another divisive issue arose instead.

On July 25, Sanef issued a statement condemning arms company Denel for trying to suppress information about SA's largest arms export deal. Denel had been granted a Pretoria High Court interdict preventing newspapers from publishing the name of the Middle East country involved in the R7-million arms deal. Legislation used to suppress information during apartheid had been "resurrected" for use by a government committed to transparency, Sanef said (Sapa, 1997). Nevertheless, the *Sunday Independent* published the name of Denel's client (Saudi Arabia).

Should editors obey the law because the government is legitimate, or break it because they believe in media freedom? On one level, this was the issue that exposed the fragility of Sanef's unity. On another level it was a simpler issue: did the Sanef leadership represent all members, or a majority? Over time, Sanef would continue to deal with the loyalty and responsibility issues, but the immediate crisis was over leadership.

On August 29, Mazwai's column in *Business Day* said Sanef denounced those editors who had defied the court order. However, the Sanef executive had discussed the issue and decided to take it to council, so his unmandated statement came as a shock. Pottinger and Williams sent him formal letters of objection. Williams wrote:

Without going into the demerits and merits of the Denel issue, I must distance myself from a paragraph in a column which gave the impression you were speaking on behalf of Sanef. To my knowledge, neither the members of the council nor the management committee of Sanef were consulted about the content of your column. (Williams, 1997a)

Mazwai said he believed 80% of Sanef would support him in condemning the editors (Mazwai, 1997) but this did not happen. He later said he had been disappointed that some Sanef editors had not backed him. It was not Mazwai's viewpoint or his loyalty that bothered members, they said (Gumede, 1997). Separate events supported this claim.

While this dispute was on, journalism trainers were discussing the need for a new paradigm of journalism appropriate to South Africa. They were meeting in Grahamstown for the Sanef-Independent Newspapers Consultative Conference on Journalism Training from September 5 to 7, organised by the Rhodes University journalism department. Representatives of 13 institutions discussed problems and initiatives to improve journalism education (Berger, 1997a).

The Denel dispute continued. Veteran journalist Jon Qwelane had never joined Sanef and was cynical of it, though he did not hold back from criticising the government or ANC either. On September 13 he wrote that "defying court orders is a crime" and Sanef would remain a waste of time "as long as some members continue to pursue with vigour their whimsical agenda, which pretends this country is an extension of England and Europe". He went on: "Such flippant notions are at odds with the African society of which we in this country are a significant part, and whose values, culture and interests must be nurtured and promoted" (Qwelane, 1997).

At the same time, the varied views of journalists were being explored elsewhere. After some had earlier made written submissions, newspapers and journalists appeared at the TRC media hearings from September 15 to 17. These included representatives for TML and Independent Newspapers – the two big English liberal press groups. Sanef member Williams was part of the Independent team (Brand, 1997a). That March he had written of his regrets that his former editor at the *Cape Argus*, John O'Malley, had rejected the "humble apology" proffered by Independent

on behalf of the Argus Company and had “glossed over” the discrimination experienced by black journalists (Williams, 1997b). The ANC’s submission gave an overview of more than 150 media-restricting laws and looked at the roles of different sectors of South Africa’s diverse media as employers and as disseminators of information (ANC, 1997). In submissions and in the hearings, a variety of views of media from courageously battling apartheid, to applying petty apartheid laws, to actively colluding with the apartheid government, were aired. There were large differences of opinion: “The hearing revealed a chasm in perceptions of what newspapers did during apartheid and what they are doing now to build a new nation” (Brand, 1997b). This is the chasm Sanef was trying to straddle: a range of perceptions of the past and present that sometimes did not overlap.

The clearest divisions in the media had been between Afrikaans and English, with criticism by the ex-alternative journalists and the separate voices of black journalists. Through the TRC process, more complex divisions were seen. There were “those who opposed the TRC process because they claimed they had nothing to apologise for” and “those who opposed the process because it seemingly only served to distort the truth of apartheid media”. There was also a gap between those emphasising the technical or overt professional issues, restrictions and decisions, and those who saw more importance in the deeper, ideological effects of apartheid on the media (Skjerdal, 1997: 6).

Some Sanef views were aired in a *Saturday Star* article that week, September 20, that noted cracks appearing in the editors’ body and tensions coming to a head. Williams, now *Cape Argus* editor, said Sanef was founded on principles of non-racialism, media freedom and “addressing the gross race and gender inequalities in the media industry”, and that the Denel debate was healthy. He explained Sanef’s inherent weakness: “A tender, fledgling organisation born out of the contradictions only found in South Africa, it requires careful nurturing and leadership of the highest standard.” Pottinger said he hoped Sanef’s aims would not be diluted “by major ideological wars among its members”. Others said Sanef was not dealing with pertinent issues, or that it seemed racist attacks prevented constructive criticism (Golding-Duffy, 1997b).

A final set of views still had to be heard by the TRC. It was only on September 26 that 127 journalists from Nasionale Pers (Naspers), the Afrikaans publishing group, defied their employers and made a submission apologising for their role during apartheid, as individuals. Ton Vosloo, the Naspers managing chair, had said in July that his company would not make a submission as it had nothing to apologise for (Skjerdal, 1997: 8).

Sanef work continued in the background. Also on September 26, De Beer wrote to Pottinger with a problem. He had been asked to interpret the AA information obtained from only three media houses – TML, Independent and the SABC – who had sent documents on policies, structures and programmes, but not on implementation and progress (De Beer, 1997). Getting limited information, or not getting information at all, continued to be a problem in Sanef's attempt to assess AA needs and progress.

Although the TRC had brought out splits in the journalism community based on cultural/political backgrounds and experiences of apartheid, all these separation lines did not effect Sanef directly in this context. This paper does not assess the truth-seeking or reconciliation effectiveness of the TRC hearings into the media, but it can be noted that they revealed an underlying unity among journalists: there was no disagreement on what the role of the press should be – just on how it had performed that role (Skjerdal, 1997: 11).

6.10. Surviving the first hurdle: October 1997

In October 1997, the BEF was still fully constituted while the CoE had been dissolved. Top BEF members Mazwai and Tissong, along with Abbey Makoe and Mondli Makhanya of the FBJ, had in their evidence to the TRC stressed that all the mainstream press had failed to oppose apartheid (Skjerdal, 1997: 5). On October 1, while speaking to the South Africa Democratic Teachers Union, Mandela similarly classified all the mainstream media as one when he attacked the “reactionary conservative press”, saying they were stoking violence at platinum mines and ignoring the good work of government and unions (FXI roundup, 1997).

The next day, October 2, Mazwai resigned from Sanef. *Beeld* reported he was disillusioned with a number of white Sanef members. It quotes from his letter to Tissong (BEF secretary), saying these editors did not understand the media was an integral part of South Africa and therefore of the country's national goals. They showed contempt for the transformation process and felt they had to tell black people what democracy was and how the economy should work (*Beeld*, 1997).

Mazwai elaborated his views in an interview with *City Press* that weekend. Although he had also resigned as head of the BEF, he believed the black group should remain for 20 years to give “encouragement, strength and support” as “no black journalist can survive in these non-racial organisations unless he becomes a ‘coconut’ [white on the inside].” He criticised white editors for debating things at Sanef yet not instituting them at work. The last straw had been the Denel

issue, in which “various white editors, who seemed to see nothing wrong with the newspapers defying a court order, tried to gag me” (Seepe, 1997). Mazwai said he still had three months left as chair of Sanef but, “because of a disinformation campaign against him by some Sanef members in Cape Town, it was not longer worth staying on for the remainder of his term” (Gumede, 1997).

Sanef held its third council meeting two days later, on October 4, at the Rosebank Hotel in Johannesburg. Events leading to Mazwai’s resignation were discussed, though he had not come to give his view as requested, and he was thanked for his contribution to Sanef. Williams said there was no basis for Mazwai’s allegations of a Cape conspiracy, cabal and backstabbing. Battersby, editor of *Sunday Independent*, explained the events around the Denel furore and said no one from Sanef had consulted him after his paper published the name of Denel’s client. Williams was chosen as acting chair and committed himself to building Sanef into a non-racial organisation. The forum said it would have a new membership drive leading up to its launch conference in January (Sanef minutes, 1997c).

For Mazwai the divisive issue had been a particular understanding of loyalty to South Africa and its legitimate government. For Sanef, although some members had a different interpretation to Mazwai, this was not the problem. The organisation’s issue was procedural – that he spoke without a mandate from council or even his executive.

At this October council meeting, the Media Charter task group – Jones, Battersby and Siluma – reported that Sanef should not dictate to editors, but each institution should have a code. They said the “function of Sanef is to provide professional support to editors, rather than act as a policing agency” – this should be left to the courts and independent, representative complaints structures such as the ombudsman (Sanef minutes, 1997c). Minutes also show 30 people had applied for the Sanef director post. Thloloe had offered in the meantime to organise the January launch and set up an office. The media freedom roadshow would have to wait until the next year, there was no progress on getting legal opinion on Section 205 and the website could not go up without funding. The diversity committee still had not met – it had gone from Mazwai to Cruywagen and now to Zondo to co-ordinate. In a statement, Sanef noted its concern about reports of intimidation of journalists in Kwazulu-Natal (Sanef minutes, 1997c). And, in a sequel to self-confessed ex-security men telling the TRC there were still many agents in the media, it called for the immediate resignation of spies in the media and for security and intelligence agencies to

“publicly forswear the use of journalists as agents in the spirit of South Africa’s new Open Democracy Bill” (Gumede, 1997).

Barney Pityana, chair of the South African Human Rights Commission (HRC), gave a lunchtime speech to council on the HRC’s progress. Groups mandated to build democracy were still young: the HRC was only two years old and Sanef was one. Pityana said the HRC’s first challenge was the media, “whose attitudes range from hostile to indifferent and cynical”. The HRC, like the media, stood between citizens and government, he said. The media needed to help build a culture in which the HRC and other independent bodies established by the constitution could be trusted with the protection of rights – this included exposing human rights violations. However, the media were ignorant, politically biased and sensationalist – they missed the constitutional importance of stories and did not provide a forum for solid debate (Pityana, 1997). In November 1998, just over a year later, Pityana would announce the HRC’s probe into racism in the media. There was no indication of this in his speech. The only faint link was his generalised frustration with the media and his claim that they unfairly targeted new black leaders.

Pityana was saying journalists should help build respect for independent bodies set up to protect citizens – not because the government was legitimate, which was Mazwai’s standpoint on obeying the courts, but for the sake of protecting and promoting human rights. He was asking the media to play an independent, social democratic role. It is difficult to categorise Mazwai’s approach: it connects to early “social responsibility” or development journalism concepts – but can also be seen merely as a political position of loyalty to both an ANC and black government.

In resigning from Sanef, Mazwai took what he saw as a principled stand. His views were shared by some members and so could have ended Sanef unity. However, editors showed most concern over his non-democratic behaviour, and none followed him or broke ranks in their statements. Instead, the leadership kept Sanef operating as normal as the drama played out in the media, held open talks and did not counter-attack Mazwai, and then united members around Sanef’s shared concerns and new activities – particularly the launch conference.

The significance of this was that on the complex issue of media licence, the race-aligned Mazwai’s view (“whites disrespect black government”) did not have pulling power – black editors did not feel that race trumped all else on this issue. By default, they remained with a Sanef position that tolerated (even condoned) the *Sunday Independent* action. Perhaps one could even

say that in the tug-of-war of racial redress and media freedom, the body of sentiment now leant towards the liberal focus on liberty – especially political independence.

This contrasts with the transformation prior to this, when liberal sentiment shifted towards firstly accepting the TRC, and secondly accepting that media under apartheid had failed its calling. Put simply, Sanef meant that in a common house, whites moved towards the black position on TRC issues; blacks – apart from Mazwai who was left high and dry – were happy with the “white” libertarian position on issues like the Denel court order and subpoenas.

Soon after the October 1997 council, Williams spoke out for Sanef. He said the unique, vigorous body was not falling apart and Mazwai’s reactions were personal, isolated and unfortunate. He was not aware of any polarisation within Sanef based on race. Other Sanef sources told *Beeld* that Mazwai’s autocratic management style had created tension (Tempelhoff, 1997).

On October 8 the cabinet started to transform the South Africa Communications Services which had controlled state information during apartheid. It accepted the recommendations of a committee appointed by Comtask, the task group reviewing its communication policy and structures as well as ownership and control of the South Africa media. The Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) was set up with Joel Netshitenzhe appointed CEO in February 1998 – another body with which Sanef needed to establish a relationship.

Comtask’s recommendations on government communications had a wider significance that impacted on Sanef unity. The replacement communication system that it suggested was not threatening from a liberal point of view, which further deflated lingering CoE-style fears of some white editors that an ANC government would suppress or seek to control the media.

6.11. Moving towards launch: November and December 1997

Sanef had made it over a hurdle while still having no infrastructure and relying on voluntary work by senior journalists. Their commitment and leadership demonstrated how important some editors felt Sanef was in carving out a space for journalism in this emerging democracy.

Then, from November 25 Thlloe became acting executive director (Williams, 1997c). He worked towards the launch, due from January 23 to 25 1998. Before this, on November 28 and 29, a “code of ethics workshop” was held at Peninsula Technikon, Cape Town, where members

drew up ethics principles and a code of conduct to be discussed – this had been set as a goal at the first Sanef council meeting in February.

Mbeki was elected president of the ANC on December 17 at its congress in Mafikeng. He noted there had been peace discussions with the IFP and he reaffirmed the state's basic macroeconomic policy (Hartley, 1997). This was soon after Finance Minister Trevor Manuel introduced budget reform with a new three-year planning system (*The Star*, 1997b). At the congress Mandela came out with his most extreme criticism: that “the bulk of the mass media in our country has set itself up as a force opposed to the ANC”. They declare any transformation efforts as an attack on press freedom:

Thus the media uses the democratic order, brought about by the enormous sacrifices of our own people, as an instrument to protect the legacy of racism. (Mandela, 1997)

Launching this attack at the ANC congress presumably meant Mandela framed it in politically strong language. However, it reflected a mounting frustration that whites were reluctant to change to fit into the new South Africa, and that media transformation was too slow.

It was a powerful attack, to which Sanef did not immediately respond. Instead, it was used to give direction and gravity to its launch conference, as well as to establish a precedent or a “Sanef way of responding” that was confident rather than confrontational.

Sanef was frequently in the news during 1997 and had become part of South Africa's political story. Public attacks like this from an internationally admired statesman made it difficult for the forum to build a positive profile or to promote media freedom among citizens. The confrontation with Mazwai had also led to varied coverage. At the same time, the editors had to cope with almost unbelievably rapid change. It was only the third year of a new government and of a new democracy. The huge edifice of apartheid, built up over decades in every aspect of the economy, infrastructure, society, culture, education, health system and foreign relations, was being dismantled. Sanef was trying to establish itself at a time when editors and journalists themselves were finding it difficult to keep track of the story. As Berger wrote in mid-1997:

Perhaps it is just the momentous changes in Southern Africa in the mid-1990s that make everything seem so busy, so changing before our very eyes It is easy to get swept up in these rapids of transformation; more difficult to find a viewing point from which one can

get a fix on some of the swirling trends, rather than disperse your focus across the whole morass. (Berger, 1997b)

Some of this change was in the media itself, that year. Besides rapid digital and internet advances, the launch of a television station and TRC debates on media's role, print and broadcasting ownership changed, black editors were appointed to print media, journalism organisations tried to find their feet, Comtask introduced communication changes, politicians lashed out at journalists and new laws brought new training challenges (Berger, 1997c). It was also the year Tony Blair was elected Prime Minister of Britain, Princess Diana died, Hong Kong returned to Chinese rule and Eugene Terre'blanche of the right-wing Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) was convicted of attempted murder.

Through this, Sanef needed "leadership of the highest standard" as Williams had put it (Golding-Duffy, 1997b). However, during its first year the forum's leadership mostly vanished as editors stopped being editors. When Mazwai resigned in early October, he had already been appointed managing director of Mafube Publishing a month before. Pottinger had to leave by the end of the year for a managing director job in TML. Patten, who retired, and Mngadi, who went to work for Coca-Cola SA, left near the start, followed by Tisong, Harber and Johnson.

In 14 months, Sanef lost all three of its executive, both BEF and CoE chairpersons and three of the four people who had been pivotal in the unity process. Yet this caused no crisis. Perhaps requiring newly appointed publishers and non-editorial managers to resign – because they were no longer editors – gave Sanef the strength of a stable and clear identity. Another possibility is that the one-by-one losses helped the forum to build a new generation of leaders – just as the attacks by presidents and politicians may have paradoxically helped build unity.

Another possibility was that Thloloe was appointed acting executive director just in time: Sanef had a fulltime, experienced, committed and idealistic journalism leader in place from the end of November to pull the forum through to its next phase.

6.12. Launch conference: January 23 to 25 1998

Mazwai, like Sibiya, said he had given up trying to deal with the white editors. On top of this, black and white editors were strongly, separately, publicly and increasingly criticised by others during Sanef's first 18 months. Critics were hitting Sanef where it was vulnerable: race, politics or ideology, or a combination thereof. The launch conference would for the first time reveal how the

full Sanef membership would react to this. In addition, the forum still had Mandela's allegation that editors were using democracy to entrench racism, to deal with.

Sanef's culture was being forged from its formation in October 1996 to its launch in January 1998. Members had insisted on a consultative democracy within the forum, with speedy leadership when necessary, for making decisions. Now how they responded to attacks was being laid down. The reaction to Mazwai had been to ask him to discuss his issues with council. Similarly non-confrontational or conciliatory, at the end of its launch conference Sanef put out a resolution referring to President Mandela's "challenges" and saying members were making commitments in the light of his criticisms (Sanef launch resolutions, 1998; Appendix E).

However, just before the launch, a second consultative conference between the media industry and journalism training institutions was held. This was the Sanef Broadcast Educators and Trainers Consultative Conference on the NQF, Educator liaison and relationships with the media industry, organised by Rhodes University's department of journalism on January 17 and 18. This further activity showed Sanef to be alive and kicking despite the problems.

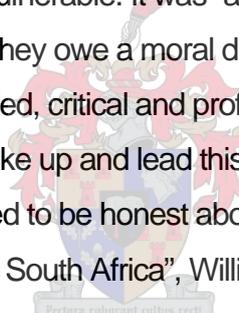
The invitation to the Launch Conference is dated January 10 1998 and is signed by acting executive director Thloloe. It refers to the October 1996 Unity Conference, "when they resolved to start Sanef, an organisation committed to the highest professional standards and ethics in journalism, training, diversity of voices in the media and to media freedom as a democratic value" (Sanef fax, 1998). So whereas, as it has been noted, the only area of agreement between editors as they went in to the Unity Conference was on media freedom, and its invitation mentioned only that it was a historic conference, by this stage the ideals and areas of concern were identified. At this conference, editors would "map out the future of journalism in this country", said the invitation.

This list of ideals in the invitation clearly links Sanef to the journalism bodies in developing democracies rather than to those in or run by older democracies, as was described in Chapter 2. This was not overshadowed even though the speaker was Loren Ghiglione, a former president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

About 80 editors, senior journalists and journalism trainers attended the launch (*Volksblad*, 1998). Despite Mazwai's criticisms of the forum, "a strong Black Editors' Forum lobby showed up, including prominent journalists like Mathatha Tsedu of the *Sowetan* and Ivan Fynn of *Enterprise*" (Berger, 1998b).

The acting chairperson's report notes the problems of trying to unite the two vastly different bodies made up of people of different ideologies – at times it was thought to be too ambitious a programme. On top of this Sanef had a “baptism of fire”: the “well-publicised and acrimonious resignation” of its chairperson which harmed Sanef internally and in the eyes of the public. Despite these huge obstacles, the executive had set up the organisation, held three council meetings and got subcommittees going. The diversity committee had never been active, but training and corrective action had been successful and media freedom gave Sanef a loud voice. Much of what Sanef hoped to do was impossible without an office, staff and funding, it had been realised. In addition, it was clearly important to build alliances with like-minded organisations (Sanef report, 1998a).

Williams, in his report, then called Mandela's December remarks “a watershed event” and gave his analysis. Mandela's aim was to gain an advantage for the ANC, which was the same reason why he attacked black journalists the previous year, and he was doing this at a time when he knew the media was changing and vulnerable. It was “a bid to gain allies by first putting them on the defensive and making them feel they owe a moral debt to the new order in South Africa”. However, he said, independent-minded, critical and professional journalists were many and would not be cowed: Sanef should take up and lead this debate with the ANC. In publicly responding to Mandela, Sanef needed to be honest about its shortcomings but give prominence to its “vision of media in a democratic South Africa”, Williams said (Sanef report, 1998a).



The secretary-general's report notes that Sanef had also organised two interviews with the president and lunch with the president of the constitutional court and the chief justice. It had run a series of government-media workshops, there had been liaison with the FXI to produce a list of anti-media laws and it had helped with fundraising for two conferences on training and one on ethics (Sanef report, 1998b). The subcommittee on media freedom and ethics reported back on the media freedom roadshow, the Sanef/PMA press freedom campaign, progress on Section 205 and other laws restricting press freedom, the editorial charter, a code of ethics for Sanef and the Press Ombudsman, and noted that members should keep Sanef informed so it could react quickly to any threats to journalists.

After workshops, the launch conference agreed on its essential resolutions – these were made public in a “summary of key resolutions” document (Sanef launch resolutions, 1998). The main declaration bound Sanef to leading the debate, developing and defending the credibility of journalism, forging links nationally and internationally, dealing with legislative and restrictive

issues, striving for professionalism and a recruitment drive to become representative. A two-page document detailed a programme of action for the diversity, training, corrective action and media freedom subcommittees (Appendix E).

Articles in newspapers the next day noted that the new chairperson was Siluma, *Sowetan* editor, with Williams as deputy. Among other things, Siluma said Sanef had decided to see Mbeki in February and Mandela in March, where the emphasis would be on the obligation in the new South African constitution to protect the media's historic role as a critical watchdog. Afrikaans newspapers emphasised the media freedom outcomes of the conference: the renewed call to urgently revise legislation that restricted media freedom, objections to photographers being called as witnesses in the trial resulting from the death of Rashaad Staggie, and a call on the justice department to have more respect for the independence of journalists. They also noted that editors and educators were to use their influence to transform the staffing of the media to better reflect the demography of the country, and that Sanef had added its voice to the call for an independent media development agency (*Volksblad*, 1998).

In his column in *Beeld*, editor Arrie Rossouw tackled a sensitive issue: some journalists had feared Sanef would adopt government's media agenda after receiving such strong criticism in December and previously. However, the opposite had happened, he wrote. "For the first time the South African media is united in an organisation that represents the interests of all interest groups" and this forum had unanimously accepted a resolution on transformation as well as one on the watchdog role the constitution had assigned to journalists. Press freedom had been strengthened and Sanef was not going to be prescribed to by the government (Rossouw, 1998).

It had been imperative that Sanef was formed, Sanef chairperson Siluma wrote later:

Basically we do not have a choice in terms of our role during the transformation period and beyond. One of the main weaknesses in South African journalism is that there is no credible voice. Some of the loudest voices are white and they are discredited. Black journalists have views but no clout. There is no debate going on and therefore a vacuum. (Siluma, 1998: 20)

Without a credible voice for journalism others would step into that vacuum – such as government. The new, legitimate government had a "right to be heard too", he said (Siluma,

1998: 20). Siluma was noting the need for editors to have a credible voice so they could play a democratic role as part of civil society.

6.13. Conclusions

Sanef had a combination of a shaky beginning, too ambitious a programme and vigorous participation from some of its members. From outside came a torrent of criticism. However, enough members believed in the need for an editors' body, and that it was possible to build a united, independent voice for journalism in South Africa at least on some issues, that Sanef survived and launched.

At this stage, after 18 months of existence, an office had been set up and funding raised for a part-time staffer. There had been liaison with the FXI, Misa, FBJ and the Freedom Forum, a constitution had been drafted and there had been a membership drive leading up to the launch conference. The media freedom subcommittee had come up with a number of ideas and the training and corrective action subcommittee had organised seminars, conferences, surveys and a possible website. The diversity subcommittee still had not met.

Sanef had survived a political, public and potentially divisive confrontation with its chairperson. It had lost most of its initial leaders at a time when journalism was going through the rapid changes of South Africa's democratising process as well as those experienced by continental and international media. It was already clear that there was no glory and much work ahead for editors, senior journalists and educators who chose to be involved in the forum.

Chapter 7 will look at the activities and debates that occupied the attention of the next two Sanef councils, categorising these in a way which will contribute to the analysis in Chapter 8.

Chapter 7: Sanef actions – the next two councils

7.1. Introduction

Sanef's first year was a public contest of uniting versus divisive forces, coming from within and without the forum. Underneath this was a quiet push for progress. Sanef members were called on to choose between old loyalties and new, shifting allegiances. Perhaps Mazwai expected Sanef to collapse when he withdrew, perhaps not: there was no exodus of members. The loss of most of Sanef's other initial leaders as they stopped being editors also went unremarked.

A handful of people had been pivotal in getting the BEF and CoE to the unity conference, but a wider membership had got the forum going in its first 18 months. They established methods of working and communicating, suggested projects and started activities. A pattern grew around the three subcommittees: media freedom spoke out when needed; training and corrective action got on with a number of projects; and diversity failed to find leadership, impetus or direction.

Sanef's formative years were described in detail in Chapter 6. This chapter will summarise what Sanef did under the leadership of the next two councils: the forum's actions, debates and interventions in relation to politics and democracy under the January 1998 to July 1999 council and then the July 1999 to July 2000 council. These will be summarised under subheadings for each year, after examining some factors common to the three years under study. Chapter 8 will then analyse Sanef's role and participation in the democratising process.

Sanef came out of its formation and launch conferences with wide-ranging ideals and action plans. It was then up to the executive director (at the start of 1998 it was Thloloe), management committee (executive) and council members to follow this direction. The executive director worked for Sanef – all others were senior journalists, journalism educators or editors with fulltime jobs. Sanef participation was voluntary work they did on top of this, though it sometimes complemented their jobs.

7.2. Change and continuity on Sanef Councils

Despite losing most of the initial leadership, there was continuity from the first interim council to the second, elected, one. This shows members chose to remain involved. Of the original 20 council members, seven were no longer eligible. Nine continued on to the next council – though if

replacements during the first year are included, this figure is 11. The table below lists the council members for each period, with the names in bold indicating members who continued on council from one year to the next, providing stability and continuity.

1996 Oct	Mazwai (chair), Pottinger (deputy), Mngadi (sec-gen), Williams, Sandison, Berger, De Beer, Louw, Dommissie, Molefe, Raphaely, Thloloe, Cruywagen, Harber, Johnson, Mobara (sec-gen), Morgenrood, Patta, Tissong, Green. Replacements: Battersby, Jones, Papayya, Zondo.
1998 Jan	Siluma (chair), Williams (deputy), Sandison (sec-gen), Berger, De Beer, Louw, Dommissie, Molefe, Raphaely, Thloloe, Battersby, Papayya , Magoda, Crowe, Minnaar, Du Plessis, Garman, Fisher, Ngcobo, Tsedu. Co-opted: Mosia, Loewe, Mtshali.
1999 Jul	Kaunda (chair), Fisher (deputy), Sandison (sec-gen), Siluma, Williams, Berger, De Beer, Louw, Dommissie, Raphaely, Thloloe, Papayya, Minnaar, Tsedu, Mtshali , Robertson, Sewlal, Frense, Mbuli, Motsepe. Co-opted: Barratt
2000 Jul	Tsedu (chair), Rossouw (deputy), Barratt (sec-gen), Louw, Williams, Thloloe, Battersby, Frense, Mtshali, Papayya, Sandison, Sewlal , Wrottesley, Clay, Fynn, Jeffreys, Mathurine, Minnaar, Rantao, Stewart, Wightman



7.3. Long-term projects

There were four projects that Sanef members worked on from 1996:

1. Media laws – Section 205 and laws that conflict with the media freedom rights in the constitution or still restrict the media.
2. Journalism qualifications – working with the industry education and training structures to develop standards and a journalism qualification for working journalists.
3. Supporting media freedom – issuing statements in response to threats to journalists in South Africa or the region; sometimes holding protests (Zimbabwe, subpoena of photographers).
4. Input on new legislation – Submitting studies and views to parliamentary committees or hearings on the development of new laws that relate to the media or communications.

7.4. Input for journalists and editors

Sanef, usually in partnership with another interest group, organised workshops in different cities for journalists – the main topics being HIV/Aids, media law, xenophobia and human rights. These can be classified as sensitivity rather than skills training.

Briefings for editors were held intermittently, when a need arose or a relevant request came to Sanef, either at council meetings or at a local level. They fell into three categories:

1. Political, legal or connected to controversial issues in the news – briefing from Ministers on HIV/Aids, South Africa's arms deals, the South Africa bureau of standards, and Commonwealth heads of government meeting (Chogm), the self-regulatory Advertising Standards Authority and by Idasa on the Promotion of Access to Information Act. These were to improve knowledge as well as to interact with the politicians on current issues.
2. Human rights and corrective action – briefing from the HRC, input from monitoring and gender groups on women in the media, the United Nations high commission for refugees on xenophobia and the Aids 2000 conference. These were about organisations and projects, often connected to issues in the news on which editors could benefit from further information.
3. Sponsors – briefings from businesses in exchange for sponsorship for council meetings or specific projects.

7.5. Endings and beginnings: 1998

This was a year of new people taking charge and of new structures in South Africa. Joel Netshitenzhe was appointed CEO of the new Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) and Bulelani Ngcuka the first National Director of Public Prosecutions – both of these appointments led to changes in the media environment. Makhaya Ntini was the first black cricketer to represent South Africa in a test match, and Tito Mboweni was appointed Reserve Bank head. The TRC report was handed to President Mandela, the Bogoshi judgment changed the way courts approach defamation cases against journalists and the HRC announced it would do a probe into racism in the media. Cape Town editors received threats of violence as well as subpoenas in relation to a vigilante group, People against gangsterism and drugs (Pagad). The

first attempt to establish a mechanism to support media diversity, the Independent Media Diversity Trust (IMDT), collapsed. Poverty hearings were held around the country.

Sanef activities are categorised below under subheadings that are common to each of the three years under review:

Council meetings – After being elected in January 1998, the second Sanef Council met on April 27 in Cape Town, July 4 in Durban and October 18 in Johannesburg.

Policy positions – this year Sanef realised it was necessary to define its position on some issues, so the forum could “speak with one voice on critical issues” (Sanef minutes, 1998a). Examples include the employment and expulsion of foreign journalists, and Section 205.

Subcommittees – they were not active as in the previous year; convenors did not convene meetings except occasionally on the phone.

Membership – the need to get corporate funding from media houses to run Sanef led to the drafting of an amendment to the constitution to allow for corporate membership with observer status (suggested by the SABC). There is no record of this being implemented. By mid-year Sanef had 60 paid-up members (Sanef minutes, 1998a). However, the membership committee reported that little was known of the forum except where editors were active – there was no wider image of Sanef as a credible force within the media.

Fundraising – this became the on-going task of the executive director.

Government relations – By the end of this year, Sanef no longer expected to have regular interactions with the President. Council members met Mandela in Cape Town on April 28 (Sanef minutes, 1998a). Kwazulu Premier Ben Ngubane was scheduled to speak at the July 4 council meeting, but cancelled due to the Richmond massacre.

Quality journalism – after meetings with the Print Media Association (PMA), Sanef joined it and the Nieman Foundation to present the Nat Nakasa award for integrity in journalism (Nakasa was a young *Drum* journalist who died in New York after leaving South Africa on an exit permit). On October 19, Media Freedom Day, the first award went to journalist and broadcaster Jon Qwelane (who had been so outspoken in criticising Sanef the previous year) (Banda, 1998).

New legislation – the council discussed the issue of Sanef giving input on the green or white paper on broadcasting and the Open Democracy Bill (Sanef minutes, 1998a).

Old anti-media laws – members were invited to an FXI seminar about Section 205, on March 6, at which Williams spoke. After struggling with government liaison to set up a date, Sanef met Justice Minister Dullah Omar, Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi and Western Cape Attorney-General Frank Kahn on August 12. A committee of four was set up to report within six weeks on how to deal with Section 205. It was also agreed Sanef would work with the Law Commission on a project to review apartheid-era legislation. The 205 working group drew up a proposal for an interim agreement effective until laws were amended, and put it to the ministers.

Subpoenas – days after meeting with the ministers in August, three Cape Town editors were given subpoenas to give evidence and hand over material at the inquest of Rashaad Staggie (he had died more than two years before). They publicly refused to co-operate and asked Sanef members to give evidence in their defence as well as provide moral and publicity support.

Promoting media freedom – in October, Sanef put out a statement welcoming the “Bogoshi judgment”, an Appeal Court ruling on September 29 by Justice J.J.F. Hefer on defamation which supported the media freedom approach of the constitution. It meant in defamation cases the media no longer had to prove information was true, just that it had taken care in gathering and publishing it. Sanef said this would give the media more room to pursue investigative journalism and its watchdog role (Sanef minutes, 1998b). The idea of a media freedom roadshow was discussed again due to “levels of intolerance at all levels of society” to critical reporting (Sanef minutes, 1998b) and as a method to promote Sanef’s profile and credibility.

HIV/Aids – Sanef put out a statement in October supporting the Partnership against Aids campaign due to the extent of the national crisis (Sanef minutes, 1998b).

Gender – news workshops on gender issues in the media were suggested in October and council decided to implement these (Sanef minutes, 1998b).

Co-operation in the profession – after the January conference of broadcast trainers, a Broadcast Educators and Trainers Association (Beta) was launched in June (workshop June 19), chaired by Robin Sewlal of ML Sultan technikon. The print educators formed Petasa (workshop June 21) after their conference the previous September, chaired by Pedro Diederichs of Pretoria Technikon. These were organised as a result of the Sanef launch conference resolution that “an

urgent workshop needs to be held with journalism educators concerning the National Qualifications Framework” (NQF) (Sanef launch resolutions, 1998).

Setting standards – the trainers groups aimed to help to generate journalism standards for the NQF. Their meetings led to more trainers joining Sanef, initially to represent Beta and Petasa. However a wider Sanef membership took part in the state’s new education and training structures for industry from the start of this process (see 7.3 above).

Directly supporting democracy – in the run-up to the 1999 local elections, Sanef issued statements or met with party leaders or government officials when journalists were attacked or threatened. This was usually with the ANC or IFP in Kwazulu-Natal, but also involved intolerance by provincial premiers, for example (Sanef minutes, 1998b). Sanef discussed the Electoral Bill and gave input for a code of electoral conduct for politicians in Kwazulu-Natal (Sanef minutes, 1998a). Members pointed out that the code needed to include penalties for intimidating journalists in an effort to get positive media coverage. Emails show Sanef members were advising and supporting each other on this issue. Professor Mandla Mchunu, CEO of the Independent Electoral Council (IEC), briefed editors on election arrangements.

Affirmative action research – by September 1997, TML, Independent and the SABC had submitted documents on their affirmative action policies (De Beer, 1997), but the Corrective Action subcommittee wanted to know the state of the media industry as a whole in order to do planning. Keyan Tomaselli of Natal University asked Sanef to be involved in a Unesco project to gather affirmative action information from the media. However, Sanef in July decided again to try to get information from the industry, and to work with the Freedom Forum and Rhodes chair of Transformation to compile a database (Sanef minutes, 1998a). By October, the subcommittee reported questionnaires had gone out and a report would be submitted to the next meeting.

Continental support – Sanef supported an FXI/IPI/Misa statement in March calling for the release from prison of Pius Njawe in Cameroon. In mid-year Sanef issued a statement that it hoped foreign journalist Newton Kanhema would be allowed to work in South Africa unhindered, after his permit was suddenly withdrawn.

Communication – council members received minutes from executive meetings, which were often held weekly by phone. The secretary general produced a “Sanef Update” report monthly for circulation to all members via email and fax. The website plan was still being pursued, but in April

Coke turned down a request to fund it. News agencies Sapa and ECNA offered to distribute Sanef news.

Liaison with other media bodies – Berger of the training subcommittee met with the FBJ to discuss their proposed survey of training needs of disadvantaged journalists. The media freedom subcommittee proposed building its relationships with SAUJ, Mwasu, FXI and Misa. PMA offered Sanef observer status at its management committee meetings, and Sanef members participated in its media freedom committee. The Freedom Forum let Sanef use its facilities for meetings. In mid-1998, deputy chair Williams was elected president of the International Press Institute (IPI). Thloloe was on the board of the Southern African Media Training Trust (NSJ).

Self-regulation – Sanef was asked in mid-1998 to nominate two members to the founding bodies committee of the print media Ombudsman, to replace the previous BEF and CoE members. It chose to send one person, the executive director.

TRC report – on October 29, the TRC handed the first edition of its report to President Mandela. It found the primary perpetrator of gross violations of human rights from 1960 to 1994 was the government, civil service and security forces, with racism as the motivating core to protect the power and privilege of a racial minority:

A consequence of this racism was that white citizens in general adopted a dehumanising position towards black citizens, to the point where the ruling order and the state ceased to regard them as fellow citizens and largely labelled them as the enemy. This created a climate in which gross atrocities committed against them were seen as legitimate. (BBC, 1998)

On the media, the TRC distinguished between the roles of Afrikaans and English media but said both were guilty of “the racism that pervaded most of white society”:

The management of the mainstream English-language media often adopted a policy of appeasement towards the state, ensuring a large measure of self-censorship. The Afrikaans media, with rare exceptions, chose to provide direct support for apartheid and the activities of the security forces, many of which led directly to gross violations of human rights. (BBC, 1998; IPI, 1998)

HRC racism inquiry – setting the scene for events which would have a strong impact on Sanef in the two years that followed, in November 1998 the HRC announced its probe into racism in the media. It had received a request from the Black Lawyers' Association and the Association of Black Accountants to probe the *Mail & Guardian* and *Sunday Times* for the alleged violation of the fundamental rights of black people. It decided instead to look at all media – the framework for this would be laid out in January. There was a variety of reactions: from welcoming it as something that would help towards unbiased reporting, to fears it would promote a race war or a witchhunt, or be an election ploy (IPI, 1998). The individual opinions of a number of Sanef editors appeared in different media (Sulcas, 1998), but Sanef itself did not make a statement at this time.

This was a year in which Sanef's profile improved and grew, although it initiated little and made almost no progress on any of its projects. However, it did react on a wide range of issues so was perhaps effective symbolically. Minutes from October showed the Sanef Council recognised that subcommittees were mostly not operating, there was no fundraising strategy and even its membership cards had not yet seen the light.

7.6. Election year: 1999

The TRC had critiqued journalism's past. In 1999 and 2000, editors would have to examine the present and the future. Sanef had avoided the racial splits that erupted around the TRC inquiry, but it was not going to side step what the HRC stirred up.

This was Mandela's last half year as President and the start of Mbeki's presidency. It was also the year of South Africa's second national election (on June 2), so politics and the media were in the news with accusations of political bias and intimidation. There was debate over the right of newspaper editors to endorse a party after the black owners of the *Financial Mail* objected to its editor backing the small United Democratic Movement. Organisations discussed how to continue to support community and independent media. *Sportsday* was launched in March and folded in September. In February, the national budget was unusually well received, especially because of its tax relief. Columnists argued over who was an African and politicians started trying to revive ubuntu. The African Renaissance was underway. 1999 saw the Roll back Xenophobia campaign of the HRC, the National Consortium on Refugee Affairs and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Some of these changes showed South Africans were beginning to locate themselves on the continent, after previous decades of isolation. Other remnants of the past still had to be

dealt with: in March the PAC's army (Apla) eventually disbanded and an attempt to improve teaching led to the start of outcomes-based education.

Technological changes continued, with the increased importance of cellphones, internet and satellite broadcasting for media – and as the century drew to a close the Y2K disaster fuelled anxiety that all this technology would fall apart.

Council meetings – The second Sanef Council met on April 10 in Johannesburg. The AGM was held on July 10 and 11 in Durban, and the third council met on September 4 in Port Elizabeth and November 6 in Johannesburg.

Continental support – Sanef issued a statement with the IPI on January 26 condemning the detention of three staffers of *The Standard* in Zimbabwe. On February 9 they issued another expressing outrage at the arrest of four top journalists of the Zimbabwe *Mirror*. By April Williams was working on an African editors' conference, to be hosted by Sanef in Cape Town in September with the theme "Media in Africa in the next century". The negative way other parts of Africa were portrayed in the media was discussed (Sanef minutes, 1999a).

HRC racism inquiry – the Sanef executive met Barney Pityana and Jody Kollapen of the HRC on January 13. Siluma acknowledged the wide differences within the forum when he told them some members welcomed the inquiry and others opposed it. The HRC outlined its inquiry procedure and expressed the hope that the process would be co-operative, without need to use its powers of subpoena. Both parties hoped re-education, sensitisation, dialogue and debate around race would result. Sanef leaders said they would recommend that members co-operate (Sanef-HRC meeting, 1999). After the meeting, the HRC published its draft terms of reference and was criticised for appointing a white researcher and white media monitoring group to probe racism (Jordaan, 1999). By April, the HRC had received few written submissions. In September Sanef decided that when the HRC's first report was published, the management committee would ask to meet the HRC, the corrective action subcommittee would run a workshop and after looking at its political and legal implications Sanef would decide on its position (Sanef minutes, 1999b). On November 22 the HRC released its preliminary study, what the media called "the Braude Report", and said at least 30 senior journalists would have to testify at hearings in January. On December 7 Sanef held its workshop. Its statement afterwards welcomed the report, pointed out the research was flawed and urged the HRC not to use its subpoena and

search powers. The HRC later noted that reaction to the report had mostly been negative and that hostility to the inquiry had increased (SAHRC, 2000).

Old anti-media laws – on February 19, a “Record of understanding” was signed between the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Safety and Security, the National Director of Public Prosecutions and Sanef, on the implementation of existing laws relating to the duty to testify and the protection of journalists’ sources. It recorded that there was a need to continue to negotiate on the laws and media freedom, but in the meantime a new procedure would be implemented. When the state wanted a journalist to testify or hand over materials, the NDPP would mediate before any subpoena was issued (Record of understanding, 1999). In April Sanef decided to ask the Centre for Applied Legal Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand to update their study of the laws that needed revision (Sanef minutes, 1999a). By September this was still being discussed, with no progress on raising funds. On September 13, Williams and Fisher briefed the Communications Portfolio Committee in parliament, and called on the government to speed up reviewing the anti-media laws. Funding was eventually obtained and the law update done.

New legislation – during 1999 Sanef councils were briefed on the progress of the Open Democracy Bill which was first mooted in 1994 and to which the FXI had contributed.

Government committees – this issue arose for Sanef when an advert was published looking for candidates for a broadcasting committee to advise the minister of communications, and later for a committee to advise on HIV/Aids. Sanef decided not to take seats on such committees: there was the danger of being in a minority and outvoted in decisions it did not agree with.

Promoting media freedom – Sanef welcomed a March decision by the Pretoria High Court to allow the media to publish details of a bail application by Wouter Basson, co-ordinator of the former government’s chemical and biological warfare project (Bothma & Malan, 1999). Within days it condemned the “arbitrary arrest” of a Swiss journalist, for allegedly possessing secret documents about Basson’s activities, as an example of authoritarian behaviour (*Die Burger*, 1999). Sanef also issued statements about police not freely speaking to the media on student journalism, on the Record of Understanding and on its own relationship with politicians and government.

Gender – Sanef sent letters to congratulate the first two black women editors: Lakela Kaunda and Paula Fray. In April workshops on gender were again suggested; one was approved for

Durban at a cost of R5 000. This was held and at the AGM it was agreed the workshops would be taken around the country (Sanef minutes, 1999c).

Communication – by mid-1999, for the AGM, the Sanef office was communicating by email to all members.

Membership – transformation became an issue within Sanef as its membership did not reflect the country's demographics, so it held a membership drive. Afterwards it was recorded, at the end of the year, that the forum had 120 members. There is no record whether the demographics improved significantly.

Transformation – the 1999 AGM suggested special measures to encourage black people to take up journalism as a career due to a perceived shortage of black journalists – and that there should be more interaction between industry and tertiary institutions (Sanef minutes, 1999c). As a result, before the end of the year a colloquium on media transformation and democracy was proposed, to be held in 2000, a joint project of Sanef and Rhodes University's department of journalism and media studies (Sanef minutes, 1999d).

Fundraising – suggested methods included breakfasts or dinners at which tables would be sold, workshops run by Sanef members and a travel agency (Sanef minutes, 1999b).

Quality journalism – it was suggested the Nat Nakasa award be marketed and built up to Pulitzer Prize status, and that an audit of existing awards should be done so Sanef could decide which ones to support (Sanef minutes, 1999c).

Directly supporting democracy – an IEC representative gave a presentation on the voting results centre, and it was suggested this be taken to all regions (Sanef minutes, 1999a). Sanef was involved in the signing of the elections code of conduct for politicians, and it was noted afterwards that relationships were better than for the 1994 elections (Sanef minutes, 1999c).

Liaison with other media bodies – the Sanef chairperson spoke at an FBJ fundraising dinner in October. The Nat Nakasa award was hosted with PMA and the Nieman Foundation.

Affirmative action research – in April it was decided Sanef did not have the resources to do its own research so would contribute to the Unesco research. A report on this research was presented at the AGM, with the survey "expected to be complete soon" (Sanef minutes, 1999c).

There was no update for the September meeting and the summary given to the November council meeting was no update on the AGM report (Sanef minutes, 1999d).

Diversity – by July this subcommittee had still not met, but the Sanef executive director took part in several Print Media Development Agency meetings. At the November council meeting, Devan Pillay of GCIS and Natasha Stretton of PMDA did presentations on media diversity (Sanef minutes, 1999d). After the 1999 AGM there was no longer a Diversity subcommittee, though Education and Training was now clearly separated from Corrective Action. Thloloe took over as convenor of the latter, and the intention may have been to include some “diversity” issues – there is no record of any debate on this change.

Building Sanef’s profile – the roadshow idea was discussed again in April, now to build Sanef’s profile rather than a media freedom culture. It was decided again that members would get cards and certificates, and other Sanef merchandise was discussed again. There was an idea for a watchdog hotline for reporters (Sanef minutes, 1999a). At the AGM, talks on Sanef at media houses were suggested, as well as using special days to make statements. Sanef urged government and other bodies to see the forum as a representative body and engage it on policy, legislation and other issues related to media and media freedom (Sanef minutes, 1999c).

HIV/Aids – after its AGM, Sanef put out a statement acknowledging the relationship between violence against women and children, and the increase in HIV/Aids. A working group was set up (Sanef minutes, 1999c). As convenor of this Campaigns and Issues subcommittee, Raphaely publicised this campaign, which was taken up by other members in their own media. When Williams and Fisher spoke to the Communications Portfolio Committee in September, they said Sanef had resolved to break the silence around this issue (Misbach, 1999).

Subcommittees – at the April meeting there was a discussion on why some subcommittees were not working, and a decision to set tasks and goals for them. At the AGM, the chairperson said Sanef should be more realistic about goals and capacity (Sanef minutes, 1999c).

Government relations – the AGM mandated its new chairperson to meet the new president and try to set up regular meetings again. Deputy President Jacob Zuma spoke at the AGM dinner, urging the media to be “constructive, developmental, educational, transformative and generally positive about our future” as well as being “more sensitive to African interpretations of

history and visions for the future” and giving “a voice to the ordinary people” (Zuma, 1999). Gauteng Premier Mbhazima Shilowa spoke at the November council meeting.

Setting standards – Sanef members were involved in getting media bodies to discuss what education and training authority (Seta) journalism should go into and getting representation on national standards bodies. These new structures required much time and effort which Sanef members could not provide, but as no one else was driving these processes a strategy was needed: it was decided to have different members on the bodies but in close contact and serving as alternates for each other.

In 1999, Sanef members had increasingly elaborate ideas: from a travel agency to a hotline for reporters and a continental conference. Nevertheless, the forum contributed on a wide range of other issues. There were direct successes, such as linking violence against women and HIV/Aids in minds of editors, and the signing on an election code of conduct by politicians. However, minutes show Sanef members considered the Record of Understanding as its major achievement. Section 205 and subpoenas had been used extensively by the apartheid government to try to force journalists to give sources and information, so there were strong feelings about these. However, as shall be seen in the next section, editors reacted in different ways to the use of subpoenas in a democratic state and in a different context – revealing again the chasm in understanding that separated their fears.



For Sanef, the year started and ended on the HRC inquiry into racism in the media. There was the small meeting of Sanef and HRC leaders on January 13 and a good turnout of editors at a “Braude report” workshop on December 7. This inquiry was about to put Sanef and editors back into the headlines again.

7.7. Transformation and racism: 2000

Transformation came to the fore for Sanef as the new century began, particularly regarding the content and staffing of the media. The corrective action/diversity subcommittee at last played a pivotal role. The HRC inquiry precipitated Sanef’s biggest threat so far. Again the heritage of apartheid, and of its results not yet having been wiped out, demanded attention – and revealed a split in understanding among editors. Had Sanef ignored this emotive issue for the sake of unity, and would this lapse now prove fatal? Alternatively, did Sanef prove that through unity, with an

appeal for co-operation, it could achieve what HRC would have failed to do with its blunt instruments?

For Sanef, the HRC inquiry was a test of unity, but even more one of leadership. As in 1996 those leaders stayed in the background, but the proof of their existence was the continued progress of the forum under difficult circumstances. As Williams had said in 1997, Sanef was founded on principles of non-racialism, media freedom and “addressing the gross race and gender inequalities in the media industry”, but was fragile:

A tender, fledgling organisation born out of the contradictions only found in South Africa, it requires careful nurturing and leadership of the highest standard. (Golding-Duffy, 1997b)

2000 was set to be a year in which the spotlight was on racism, because the national (September) and international (2001) conferences were being held in South Africa. For over a year it was known the HRC hearings were coming – the final report was published in August.

The new millennium ushered in a dramatic year on other fronts that also occupied the attention of editors. There were political changes that seemed to be ushering in greater democracy: moves towards IRA disarmament, the overthrow of Milosevic in Yugoslavia, a peace accord between North and South Korea and the election of a Mexican president after 71 years of one-party rule. There were floods in Mozambique and the Concorde crashed near Paris. In South Africa, the Democratic and National parties formed the Democratic Alliance, the Promotion of Access to Information Act was passed and the 13th International Aids Conference was held in Durban.

Council meetings – Sanef’s third council held its meetings on February 12 in Cape Town and on May 20 in Johannesburg. The 2000 AGM was held from July 21 to 23 in Johannesburg.

Relationship with owners – Sanef members are by definition not media owners. Media owners provide funding and get reportbacks if Sanef’s executive does fundraising visits. Sanef has working relationships with owners’ groups for specific projects, and at times shared office facilities. However, in early 2000 there was a proposal to share administration with the Newspaper Association – and Sanef decided not to for the sake of its independence.

Liaison with other media bodies – by now this had widened to include the Freedom Forum, the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism, SAUJ, Mwasa, Saspu, Soul City, GCIS, the Commission on Gender Equity, the FBJ and the FXI.

New legislation – Sanef kept its members informed on the Access to Information Bill, with a briefing in February by Idasa. It also highlighted in statements where access to information was being restricted: the Heath Investigating Unit placed a moratorium on communicating with the media and the police banned the release of crime statistics.

Fundraising – ethical issues around sponsorships became an issue during council discussions about money. The executive director was finding it difficult to raise funds for members' travel to attend events and for ongoing projects like the website. Membership fees were a problem: there was no regularity in payment so they had to be collected all year round.

Building Sanef's profile – again the idea of marketing Sanef was suggested. Work was done on a Sanef brochure. However, after events around the HRC, it was recognised that Sanef's actions needed to reflect a new image.

Subpoenas and the HRC racism inquiry – the February council meeting was told that editors of the *Sunday Times* and *Mail & Guardian* had been subpoenaed to appear before the HRC to answer allegations that they had offended against the Bill of Rights by being racist. No specific violations were cited and they were asked to give information on their policies. As seen previously, for some Sanef white members subpoenas sparked off their on-going fears of repression of the media. On February 12 Sanef asked the HRC to withdraw subpoenas against 36 newspapers, on the basis that they contravened media freedom clauses in the constitution but also because this confrontational method would not lead to corrective action. Sanef issued its own plan of action on racism: regional workshops, a national workshop on codes of conduct and ethics, a handbook, debates in the media, and contributions to the national and international racism conferences (Sanef statement, 2000a). The ANC's comment on February 14 was that editors seemed reluctant to give information but citizens had a right to information. Some editors, such as Kaizer Nyatumba in his column of February 23, said subpoenas were not in themselves a threat to press freedom as the HRC was not a government body, but that the HRC should not have pushed for confrontation when dialogue was possible.

Editors split over the HRC racism inquiry – Sanef chair Lakela Kaunda with others on council met the HRC on February 21. By February 23 the HRC said it would withdraw the subpoenas if all media pledged to take part – Sanef responded that it could make this recommendation to its members but could not make this promise. This had become a public and political issue and the HRC met various groups including newspaper owners. On February 24, five black editors in an

open letter said they would attend the hearings whether subpoenas were withdrawn or not. They were Nyatumba, Siluma, Cyril Madlala, Charles Mogale and Kaunda. They said they were expressing themselves as black editors as it seemed black editors had no problem with taking part in the hearings: they were more concerned about the reputation of the media than the subpoenas (Eybers, 2000). Siluma was past chair of Sanef, on council, Kaunda was current chairperson, and Nyatumba had just withdrawn from Sanef. Although Kaunda did not, as Mazwai had in 1996, make this statement as Sanef chair, she was identified in media reports as such (Eybers, 2000). This was a problem for Sanef as its members had a variety of views. On February 28, with hearings due on March 1, the HRC withdrew the subpoenas. Thloloe was appointed as an expert on the HRC panel for the hearings.

HRC racism hearings – these were held in Braamfontein, Johannesburg. In opening, the HRC thanked Sanef and newspaper proprietors “for ultimately making these hearings possible in a different atmosphere than might otherwise have been the case” (SAHRC, 2000). When the five editors made their submission, Kaunda’s name had been replaced by that of Phil Molefe, a Sanef founding member. Amongst other things, they were concerned about the minority of blacks, particularly Africans, in key decision-making positions: “the majority of top editors are white” (Joint submission, 2000). Sanef’s introductory statement was made by Kaunda and the submission by Sanef deputy chair Fisher. He emphasised that racial divisions were greater than Sanef had realised and it would take active steps to tackle transformation, even if there was a danger of causing division among editors (Sanef submission, 2000). Kaunda’s separate submission was on gender in the media.

Quality journalism – Sanef committed itself to producing a handbook on reporting race and racism by June. It held a workshop for members on June 23, to give them tools to tackle transformation and racism in newsrooms (Sanef workshop, 2000a). Trainers pointed out the need for centralised information on in-service training or internships and the need for training around racism issues arising from the HRC inquiry. Sanef said in its statement after the AGM that the ongoing training of journalists was important and should be connected to both transformation and improved standards (Sanef statement, 2000b).

Transformation – Sanef was back in the headlines but with such publicly declared divisions, including the position taken by its chairperson, the future of the forum was not clear. “The polarisation wasn’t just black-white (exceptions allowed), but extended to male-female, African-coloured-Indian, editor-owner, editor-reporter and reporter-reader,” wrote Berger soon after the

hearings (2000b). On April 1 a workshop was held to come up with a proposal on how Sanef should proceed – it was dysfunctional because of the tensions. Besides race and transformation, it had lost public support as it seemed to be pushing freedom of expression over equality. The forum's uniqueness had to be managed: perhaps it was too polite about its diversity instead of having vigorous debate (Sanef workshop, 2000b)? Sanef went through a consultation process with a questionnaire to members, a panel discussion on “racism and transformation in the media – where to?” on international press freedom day (May 3) and a survey of transformation in the training sector. Strategic repositioning ideas were taken to the AGM, held in Johannesburg from July 21 to 23. In a planning session the forum's vision, mission, goals and values were brought up to date by members and there were suggestions on how to make Sanef more effective – for example by setting up regional structures. A statement of these changes was issued to promote Sanef's image and new direction (Sanef statement, 2000b).

Diversity – a GCIS discussion document proposing a Media Development Agency was distributed to Sanef members at the AGM for their comments.

Research – the Corrective Action subcommittee pointed out that it had been hampered since the start of Sanef by a lack of credible research on race and gender in media staffing and content. Sanef examined a proposal for content analysis on race by a media monitoring company called Media Tenor. It also became apparent by mid-year that the forum needed to know more about how technology changes such as ecommerce and cyberlaws affected the new media.

Setting standards – the role of Sanef members on the education and training authorities continued, and they reacted to an advert asking for input on the content of journalism standards, issues around whether print and broadcast be on the same authority and whether professional bodies should be represented on these bodies – or just unions and employer bodies.

Old anti-media laws – by May the document of laws that conflicted with media freedom clauses in the constitution had been updated by the Centre for Applied Legal Studies, organised by Sanef and sponsored by the Freedom Forum. Sanef planned to hold workshops to inform journalists.

Besides many other ongoing issues and projects, Sanef's third council had to deal with two sets of fears: members who felt subpoenas were an indication of media repression and members who felt race and transformation problems were still not being dealt with. After the HRC withdrew

its subpoenas, the first group saw that the hearings were no threat to media freedom. The second set of issues – race and transformation – Sanef tried to tackle head-on. Although it lost a few members, the forum refocused and tried to bring itself in line with the changed and current concerns of its members.

Charles Naudé, writing in *Beeld*, reflected on the changes in Sanef in a mid-year article. He said that to understand a community you could look in the media – but you could also look past that mirror to the media itself. The media, as part of the community, displayed similar problems. He noted that Sanef started out with three aims: media freedom, quality journalism and diversity. With the 2000 AGM these remained but their order of importance changed, with media freedom moving to third place. He wrote that this reflected the concerns of South Africa: firstly quality of service delivery, then diversity and affirmative action, and thirdly human rights (Naudé, 2000).

7.8. Conclusions

From the start, Sanef's most active sub-committees were Education and Training and Media Freedom. This can be attributed to conscientious or passionate leadership, the possibility of taking practical and obvious action, the existence of urgent needs, the immediacy of external pressures and that these issues attracted particular members. The push and pull pressures of events may determine success rather than the size of problems. The Corrective Action/ Diversity subcommittee faced trying to tackle the enormous legacy of apartheid – only when particular and urgent needs arose did this group become active.

Sometimes, such as through 1998, Sanef was more successful symbolically than on a practical level. In 1999 the forum had a range of changes and concerns to react to, and took more initiative on other projects. In the first half of 2000 it had to go back to its roots – as seen in this quote from acting Sanef chairperson Williams at the launch conference in January 1998:

A role for Sanef in ensuring racial and gender equity in the media industry was at the very heart of the unity process between the CoE and the BEF. Under no circumstances must this role be diminished or watered down and, in fact, this conference has a duty to ensure that this role be strengthened and remain a central focus of the organisation. (Sanef report, 1998a)

A recurring issue over Sanef's first years was the reaction of editors when they were put under stress. In each case, some editors reacted with a level of emotion that was carried over from the

apartheid years into the new circumstances. Some of the white editors automatically reacted with fear: they expected events to be a threat to media freedom and to be of great political importance – the HRC hearings, for example. On the other hand, some black editors when confronted by accusations regarding political loyalties which were based on race, also reacted with confusion – though it must be acknowledged that prejudice based on race had not been eliminated.

While trying to deal with the particular anxieties, divisions and hurdles of their South African past, editors had to confront the many issues facing journalism in any emerging democracy and the challenges of a world-wide, fast-changing media and technology environment.

This complexity was described by Jane Duncan of the FXI in mid-2000:

The last six years in South Africa have witnessed the most remarkable changes in the media and in society generally. In broadcasting especially, there has been an efflorescence of new stations, and changes in ownership of existing stations. A completely new layer of community media has taken root in an extremely short time. The SABC has made great strides in transforming itself from a state to a public broadcaster, and in the process it has implemented one of the most aggressive affirmative action programmes yet seen in a public entity. Important changes have taken place to print ownership as well, with foreign ownership taking root and black empowerment consortia have taken over significant sections of the media. (Duncan, 2000)

To survive in the future, Sanef would have to take on further challenges: the impact of continental changes which resulted from the formation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) in 2001 and the African Union in July 2002:

Both organisations promised that civil society and African politicians would play an active role in strengthening democracy on the continent. (De Beer & Merrill, 2003: 368)

Chapter 8: Analysis

8.1. Introduction

Sanef's early history was reconstructed from documents in the past two chapters. The chapters themselves are the results of the research using the historical method. The primary purpose of the research questions was to guide the research and the writing of this story of Sanef. However, the research questions will now be used to identify trends and explore what has been learnt from the history of Sanef. Information from the literature and theory chapters guides this analysis.

The key research question was:

- What was Sanef's participation in the democratising process in South Africa from 1996 to 2000?

However, the sub-questions will be dealt with first as they contribute information and understanding to the overarching, key question. They are:

- What were the major issues, aims and activities of Sanef, and how do these reflect its historical context?
- How do these relate to what other journalism societies do, at various stages of democratisation?
- Which democratic roles has Sanef sought to fulfil: liberal, social democratic, neoliberal or participatory, or a combination of these?
- In the specific racialised conditions of South Africa's democracy, how has Sanef dealt with the issues of "transformation" and their relation to democracy and media freedom?

Three summaries of information from the literature and theory chapters were created and used in the analysis that follows:

Appendix F: Categories of democratic roles and actions (from Chapter 4)

Appendix G: Stages of democratisation and media reform (from Chapter 2)

Appendix H: Summary of activities of other journalism societies (from Chapter 2)

8.2. Aims and activities, democratic roles and transformation

This section looks first at what the issues and aims of the forum were, and how they relate to the democratic roles of journalism. It goes on to look at Sanef’s activities and their democratic roles. These are related to Sanef’s historical context. A fifth role is described more fully. These activities are then compared to those of other journalism societies. Finally, Sanef’s responses to transformation issues within the country’s racialised environment are examined.

8.2.1. Aims and goals

The goals or aims given in Sanef’s 1996 founding document are listed below and labelled with their democratic roles. It must be remembered that these roles are loose categorisations which overlap and are open to interpretation. Items which do not fit easily into one of the four roles are assigned to a fifth – called “internal”.

AIMS: SANEF FOUNDING DOCUMENT – OCTOBER 20 1996
PREAMBLE: overcome injustices (participatory) and promote media freedom (liberal).
BELIEFS: Sanef should scrutinise power (liberal), ensure legal protection (liberal), work to high standards and ethics (liberal), embrace learning (internal).
INTENT: Sanef hopes to encourage media freedom (liberal) in communities (participatory), foster journalist solidarity and co-operation (internal), redress own imbalances and transform own culture (internal), promote media diversity (neoliberal and participatory), promote education of journalists (social democratic and participatory), promote independence in public media (liberal), encourage government transparency and media freedom laws (liberal), use institutions to defend media freedom (liberal).
PROGRAMME: draft a constitution (internal), annual report on corrective action (CA) and lobby owners (participatory), editorial charter for independence (liberal and participatory), communicate with state, judiciary and other statutory bodies (liberal), repeal restrictive laws (liberal), public education programme (social democratic), promote media diversity among disadvantaged (neoliberal and participatory), promote media education and training (social democratic and internal).

The preamble, beliefs and intent above show a range of aims, most of which can be categorised under the two concerns of the preamble. These two concerns – overcoming injustices and

promoting media freedom – show the two different emphases or the split of opinion among editors: liberal versus participatory. However, the “white liberal” viewpoint strongly dominates at the start of Sanef. Despite the strength of the BEF (shown in Chapter 6) and its members’ emphasis on transformation, the “beliefs” are almost all liberal roles. So are the majority of “intents”. The “programme” however is better balanced across the roles.

Each of the goals and aims in the launch document is similarly labelled according to its role:

AIMS: SANEF LAUNCH RESOLUTIONS – JANUARY 1998
<p>COMMITMENT: Lead the debate (neoliberal and participatory), develop and defend integrity (internal), forge links (participatory), represent on legal and restrictive issues (liberal), strive for professional excellence (social democratic and internal), recruitment drive (internal).</p>
<p>MEDIA FREEDOM AND ETHICS: Co-operation on anti-media laws and elections (liberal), media freedom campaign (social democratic), cover media freedom issues (liberal and social democratic), respond to threats (liberal), liaise with regional bodies (participatory), give input on new laws (participatory), condemn media restrictions in region (liberal), get legal opinion on Section 205 (liberal), intervene on Section 205 court case (liberal), push reform of anti-media laws (liberal), welcome creation of ombudsman (liberal), create one code of principles (liberal).</p>
<p>DIVERSITY: Support agency for small media (participatory), do skills transfer with small media (social democratic), support tax relief for small media (participatory), assist with guidelines (social democratic), support other assistance (participatory), ask media groups to support (participatory), monitor unbundling (neoliberal), monitor gender and training (internal).</p>
<p>CORRECTIVE ACTION: lobby to see transformation in staff and training, attitudes and content (internal and participatory), compile policy on implementing CA (internal), CA workshop (internal).</p>
<p>TRAINING: Workshop for educators on qualifications (internal and social democratic), play role in university advisory bodies (neoliberal), lobby to research democratic role of journalism (liberal and social democratic), widen awareness in training/education (neoliberal), survey training budgets (internal).</p>

An interesting change is observed from the 1996 to the 1998 document – in the latter, the aims and programme of Sanef are far more balanced across the four different democratic roles. The liberal role only dominates in the media freedom subcommittee, which is appropriate.

It seems that at the 1996 founding conference, after Mazwai left Sanef, the liberals dominated. However, after the editors had been through the TRC process where black opinions were aired and some white editors admitted the failings of their journalism, after Sanef had survived the divisive race-political loyalty pressures of the Denel issue and after Mandela's criticisms, by early 1998 the "transformation" lobby within Sanef had grown or become stronger.

Chapter 4 noted that the fifth role would be further elaborated here. It has been labelled "internal", and from the above two tables the following items are listed:

- Internal aims and programmes: embrace learning, foster journalist solidarity and co-operation, redress own imbalances and transform own culture, draft constitution, promote media education and training, develop and defend integrity, recruitment drive, strive for professional excellence, monitor gender and training, lobby to see transformation in staff and training, attitudes and content, compile policy on implementing CA, CA workshop, workshop for educators on qualifications, survey training budgets.

It is seen that this category involves improving and transforming journalism itself as well as creating and building Sanef. The role will be further clarified after looking at Sanef's activities.

8.2.2. Activities



Sanef's activities will now be examined: firstly for Chapter 6 (formation to launch) and then for Chapter 7 (launch to 2000). In both cases, activities relating to internal, organisational matters are not listed here – nor are any of the many ideas suggested but not carried out.

This first list takes the 12 main activities of this period and labels them according to their democratic roles (see Appendix F) and media reform stage (see Appendix G). Once again it must be noted that this is open to interpretation – but that the summaries in Appendices F and G were used as a guide.

Actions taken: Formation to launch	Democratic roles	Media reform stage
1. Meet President – relationship, anti-media laws lobbying and intimidation issues	Participatory and liberal	Primary
2. TRC – establish forum principle of no united voice when members have diverse views	Neoliberal	Secondary
3. Meet top judges – anti-media laws	Liberal	Primary
4. Workshops of officials and journalists – educational	Social democratic	Secondary
5. Media charter – debate independence	Liberal	Secondary
6. Denel reaction – procedural issue vs reject court order	Internal	Primary
7. Trainers conferences – educators' involvement	Social democratic and neoliberal	Secondary
8. AA/CA survey – research transformation issues	Internal	Primary
9. HRC briefing – informative	Internal	Secondary
10. Ethics workshop – develop principles	Liberal and social democratic	Secondary
11. Alliances with other media groups – mobilising	Participatory	Primary
12. List of restrictive, anti-media laws – research	Liberal	Primary

This list backs up the impressions of the founding document: that the liberal viewpoint is dominating Sanef activities at this stage. It also seems the activities were strategically chosen to promote the new forum and to fulfil the requirements of its launch document. From this list it is also seen that Sanef engaged in activities that have been categorised as falling in both the primary and secondary stages of democratic transition (see Appendix G).

The second Sanef activities list summarises the main activities over two-and-a-half years (see Chapter 7). This time they are categorised under the different democratic roles as defined in Appendix F. Once again, the categorisation is a simplification of reality: the roles overlap and are not exclusive, and many activities serve more than one role. Sanef's administrative activities are again excluded.

Democratic roles	Actions taken: Launch to July 2000
LIBERAL	Media freedom statements, Record of understanding on Section 205, lobby on anti-media laws, intervene on subpoenas, intervene when journalists threatened, draw up code of conduct for politicians for elections, statements on women abuse, briefings by politicians, react to political intolerance of journalism, promote self-regulation, meetings with President and deputy, statement welcoming Bogoshi judgment, protest action (Liberia, Zimbabwe, subpoenas), united voice of editors on HRC hearings, not participating on government/other non-media structures.
SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC	Work on industry qualification and standards, media law courses for industry, informative political briefings of officials and journalists, getting statements into media, briefing on electoral processes.
NEOLIBERAL	Help formation of media development agency, political briefings, congratulate appointment of women editors, briefings on media diversity.
PARTICIPATORY	Help formation of media development agency, speak on issues on radio/TV and write articles, briefings on human rights/xenophobia/HIV/gender, take part in public media debates, input on gender issues, briefings on refugees, statements on gender/HIV, promote Sanef community, participate in law-making and policy-setting processes, meetings with President and deputy, liaise with other civic bodies.
INTERNAL	Workshops on media law, workshops on ethics, award for integrity, internal debates on responsibilities and ethics, workshops on human rights/xenophobia/HIV/gender, internal debates on diversity issues, briefing on electoral processes, promote voice of Sanef by speaking on radio/TV and writing articles, workshop on poverty, encourage co-operation in the profession, survey own transformation status.

Again it is seen that there is a better spread across the democratic roles in the second period researched, compared to the first. However, it now becomes clear that the activities are bunched around the liberal and participative roles, with fewer falling into the social democratic and neoliberal categories. This can possibly be linked to the previously identified division into media freedom and transformation or racial redress emphases of different groups within Sanef.

The above list also shows a much greater number of activities, as was seen in Chapter 7. However, many were reactions to events and requests rather than showing the proactive bias of the first period. At this time Sanef had become known and many demands were being made of

it. A range of “internal” activities happened, but a clear direction or strategy cannot be seen from this list.

In summary, the liberal role dominated at the start of Sanef, but as the forum developed both aims and activities became more balanced across the four democratic roles of journalism – or the five democratic roles of editors’ forums in an emerging democracy.

8.2.3. Historical context

Relating the above analysis to Sanef’s historical context and background, it is seen that the forum’s aims and activities over the whole period studied show a split between:

- media freedom concerns that come out of the media repression of the apartheid years as well as the country’s status as an emerging democracy,
- concerns which relate to the need to redress imbalances, and overcome or correct results of the apartheid past, and
- concerns around the quality of journalism.

This finding relates to the assertion by Naudé, writing in *Beeld* (2000), that the forum started out with three aims, in this order: media freedom, quality journalism and diversity/affirmative action – though this changed after the 2000 AGM.

8.2.4. Fifth democratic role: self-transformation

At this stage, using both aims and activities, the fifth role can be clearly defined. In Chapter 4 this role was described as doing things for journalism within the internal journalism environment. From the above lists, it is seen that this involves the improvement and transformation of the practice of journalism – helping it to change from pro-apartheid or “struggle” journalism to journalism appropriate to a nonracial, constitutional democracy. If all the efforts Sanef members put in to creating the forum, finding areas of common concern and consensus, and dealing with obstacles and divisions (TRC, Denel, Comtask and HRC in particular) are added to this category, it is seen that this role includes the democratisation and transformation of journalists – or at least Sanef members – and Sanef itself.

This fifth democratic role of editors' forums in an emerging democracy is described below:

5. INTERNAL ROLE: SELF-TRANSFORMATION
AUDIENCE: Sanef members, editors, senior journalists and educators
DESCRIPTIVE VERBS: learn/teach, encourage, negotiate, compromise, transform, unite, build consensus, set new ideals
ACTIONS: Workshops on media law, workshops on ethics, award for integrity, internal debates on responsibilities and ethics, workshops on human rights/xenophobia/HIV/gender, internal debates on diversity issues, briefing on electoral processes, promote voice of Sanef by speaking on radio/TV and writing articles, workshop on poverty, encourage co-operation in the profession, survey own transformation status, embrace learning, foster journalist solidarity and co-operation, redress own imbalances and transform own culture, draft constitution, promote media education and training, develop and defend integrity, recruitment drive, strive for professional excellence, monitor gender and training, lobby to see transformation in staff and training, attitudes and content, compile policy on implementing CA, CA workshop, workshop for educators on qualifications, survey training budgets, search for common ideals, overcome obstacles and historical divisions, previously disadvantaged assert themselves, find consensus, unite around shared concerns.



8.2.5. Other journalism societies

This analysis now turns to the activities of Sanef in relation to those of other journalism societies; firstly specialised ones and then those in either mature or early stages of democratic transition. The activities of other societies are summarised in Appendix H.

Examining the two lists of Sanef activities above, it can be seen that Sanef is distinctly different from special-interest journalism societies because of its wide, cross-media interests, and that it does not aim to help members on an individual basis with their careers. However it does do some of the same media freedom and education activities.

In comparison to journalism societies in mature democracies:

- Both do these activities: commission surveys and research, provide information on media freedom/democracy issues, facilitate networking and professional unity, represent editors in politics/industry/public/internationally and do advocacy work.

- Sanef is different, however, as it does not: have an annual conference with popular speakers and professional development workshops, provide services like coaches/legal advice, do research into industry innovations and trends, give leadership training or provide a sophisticated website.

In relation to societies in other emerging democracies:

- The following activities are common: facilitate networking and communication, protect interests by mutual support, publicly promote journalism interests in political and legislative areas, promote high standards, fight for independent journalism, collaborate on training, foster media law reform and policy advances, speak out or protest against restrictions and threats.
- On the other hand, Sanef does not: share technology or co-operate on work issues, raise funds for work needs, share costs, do news exchanges, implement common codes of conduct, push for policy on distribution of press materials.

In summary, it can be seen that South Africa's media environment allows Sanef to do a few of the activities found in mature democracies. However, it does not do the individualised or career-promoting activities. On the other hand, it has more in common with societies in countries with newer democracies, most of which are concerned with building journalism and media, extending and protecting their democratic space and acting as a voice for journalism. The aspects that Sanef does not do are those that indicate an undeveloped media environment and less economic and infrastructure resources available to the media.

8.2.6. Transformation

Many of the activities of journalism societies in democracies in transition are issues of “transformation”, as they involve improving both journalism and its democratic environment – they are activities of media reform to transform journalism and society from non-democratic to more democratic.

On the question of how Sanef has dealt with issues of “transformation” and their relation to democracy and media freedom, the issues that concern South Africa's particular background of racial discrimination and polarisation have been extracted from Chapters 6 and 7. Xenophobia

and HIV/Aids are included as at times they have been controversially linked to race. The main concerns during this 1996-2000 period, and what Sanef did about them, are summarised below:

Transformation/race issue	What was done
Internal disputes	Try to get members to keep talking, hold debates
Political pressure	Respond to it as a challenge, not as an attack; publicly call for further dialogue
Pressure from other bodies	Respond to it as a challenge and ask for further dialogue
TRC hearings	Encourage individual participation
HRC inquiry	Respond as a forum as well as encourage individual participation; make debates and Sanef's participation public in the media
Affirmative action and corrective action	Try to research AA policies at media houses
Racism	2 workshops
Sexism (gender)	1 workshop
Xenophobia	1 briefing
HIV/Aids	1 briefing from Minister, statement of support for Aids initiative, media campaign to connect Aids and women abuse
Diversity	Minor participation in early bodies to support media diversity (later to become the Media and Diversity Development Agency)



In summary it can be seen that Sanef mostly responded to transformation issues and disputes by trying to set up and continue dialogue, by public participation, by airing the issues in the media and by educating its members and other journalists by either workshops or briefings. Many of these activities were supported by press statements pointing out their relationship to democracy, transition and media freedom, which resulted in media coverage.

It must be noted that Sanef discovered early on that it did not have the capacity to do monitoring activities, which members had felt would be an appropriate way to gain the knowledge needed to approach some of the transformation issues. Similarly, it could only occasionally do research as again this was found to be a time-consuming involvement even when outsourced. These are weaknesses of the forum's structure, fundings and reliance on voluntary participation.

Besides looking at what Sanef did about transformation issues, it is important to examine how Sanef did this. The forum had to develop the group skills to take part in the democratising

process. In each divisive case Sanef tried to use non-confrontational methods which would keep all those involved in the process talking and moving towards resolution. The relevance of this is in its comparison to the situation of editors at the end of the 1980s: they were used to fighting the violations of press freedom; they were not used to building it (Chapter 3). Now Sanef was not only taking part in media reform but had also begun to entrench non-confrontational approaches into its culture.

8.3. Key question: Sanef's participation

The final question is: What was Sanef's participation in the democratising process in South Africa from 1996 to 2000?

Much of this question has been answered in the subsections above. The democratic roles are mostly liberal and participative, the emphases are on media freedom and injustices, the activities are consistent with a society in a primary or secondary transition stage of democratisation, and Sanef tackles problems by using non-confrontational and inclusive actions. Often the forum is reactive, but at times it has been proactive in some of its democratising activities.

There is no doubt, in comparison especially with journalism societies in mature democracies, that Sanef's full focus is on its political and democratic responsibilities – not on business or the careers of individuals. It is also clear that despite its weak capacity and lack of practical resources, the forum has been involved in a wide range and number of activities.

Sanef's democratic participation is also seen to be spread across four levels:

1. Wider society – Sanef provides a civil society voice for editors and promotes media freedom by giving information through media statements, as well as the forum and its activities being subjects of media reports.
2. Institutions and structures – here Sanef has tried to build relationships and understanding with a few political and independent structures, and other media groups. It has also sought to contribute practically to processes such as creating legislation and building industry standards.
3. Journalism/newsrooms – the contributions here are mostly in terms of education around both sensitive issues and understanding of new aspects of South Africa's political environment.

4. Within Sanef – here activities are centred around building relationships, educational input and involving members in external activities. This relates to the fifth role described above.

The examination of media reform in emerging democracies, the activities of other journalism societies, democratic roles and Sanef's aims and activities, reveals some gaps in Sanef's democratic participation. It is useful to relate these to the levels outlined above.

This study recommends that Sanef's strategy should include:

- Wider involvement with civil society organisations (level 1).
- A focus on building its own positive image and the importance of media freedom (level 1).
- A structured and more successful campaign around anti-media laws (level 2).
- Education on the particular journalism skills needed for this democratic environment (level 3).
- Clearer definition of its concern with diversity and corrective/affirmative action (level 4).
- Greater understanding of race and gender divisions which remain within Sanef (level 4).

8.4. Other trends



One unexpected finding was how much time and effort an organisation like Sanef needs to set up and deal with its internal, managerial and administrative concerns. However, it is clear from the documentation that Sanef members minimised their focus on these and maximised their efforts in areas external to the running of the forum. This is highly appropriate to Sanef's position in a country at an early stage of democracy as there are many external media reform tasks for the forum to tackle (and little funding for its own structures). It also reveals the motivation of the members in belonging to and being active in the forum – the stability of membership and involvement showed appreciation of this approach. Sanef was able to be flexible and respond quickly to events, thus interacting successfully with its own media environment.

8.5. Concluding interpretations

As was stated earlier it is not possible through historical research, or even the analysis above, to judge whether Sanef was successful in its roles in the democratising process in South Africa

during this 1996-2000 period. Sanef itself gauged its success only informally by occasionally comparing its activities to its aims: for example in September 1999 the secretary-general drew up a list of achievements in relation to the launch conference resolutions (Appendix I).

However, it is possible to assert that Sanef made many attempts to play a variety of democratic roles – it is clear from its story that this is its main focus. At times this was disrupted by difficulties relating to its existence in South Africa's context and divisive, racist, polarised past; but this was part of the transformation and democratising challenge. A strength of the forum was that members continued with activities during difficult periods rather than allowing the forum to become dormant.

It also became clear from analysing its activities, as from the story of its history, that Sanef did not confront the divisions within its own ranks. The question remains whether the forum avoided the difficult issues in order to retain its fragile unity. Whether this happened, and whether it was necessary, are now historical issues – the HRC inquiry into racism in the media in 2000 forced these issues into the open. Sanef had to go through a refocusing exercise in order to overcome these divisions. It is likely this resulted in a change in its participation in the democratising process or the emphasis put on different roles, but that was not covered by this research.

Finally, there is the question of whether the four roles of journalism in democracy should be increased to five – especially in an early stage of democracy. The above research, and the difficulties of categorising some of Sanef's aims and activities, suggests there is a range of activities primarily concerned with the transformation and democratisation of the media itself.

For countries that previously had repressed or even underdeveloped media due to their authoritarian or non-democratic governments, much of the focus needs to go into developing the journalism and dealing with the challenges of changed circumstances – and current theories do not show that this emphasis is needed. Common difficulties with journalism quality and ethics, and aspects of transformation, are good examples – though activities are often also of a practical nature such as developing infrastructure and finding funding that permits independence.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

9.1. Introduction

Theories of the democratic role of journalism are mostly static and simplistic. They bear little relation to the complex range of decisions made for each story, for each news broadcast, newspaper or news site, by each medium in every city of any country. Mostly, they give little guide to a forum of editors in an emerging democracy trying to overcome problems and carve out a better space for journalism. The theories may also have little relevance to the current, changing media and journalism environment.

In a world where the media are rapidly changing due to technology innovations, where conglomeration and commercialisation mean a marketing approach to journalism dominates, news has become routine, acquiescent and placid (Hardt 2000: 220). News is becoming a set of short statements sent to a mobile. The idea of journalism having a democratic role at all seems old-fashioned when it has only business interests to fulfil:

The fourth-estate model of the press has never been more outdated than it is in the current era of political and economic dependence among major institutions in society, when a technology-driven information and entertainment culture has converted the labour process into a limited and highly controlled activity, leading to the homogenisation and degradation of labour including the media, newswork, and journalists, respectively. (Hardt 2000: 220)

Nevertheless, the close examination of what editors and senior journalists – presuming they are not all delusional or quixotic – are currently trying to achieve in emerging democracies strongly contradicts this negative viewpoint. Attempts to reform the media in which editors are putting their lives at risk for democratic ideals, the aims of journalism societies and the long lists of activities of Sanef and other organisations are incompatible with approaches such as Hardt's.

A historical study of recent events such as this thesis, draws a picture of real groups of people grappling with real immensities in societies undergoing reform. However, their stories are not being recorded in academic histories, nor are journalism theories being applied to understand them: no study of another journalism society, of any type, could be found as a starting point or reference for this research.

This study took as its definition of “democratising” that the editors and their journalism were moving from dependency and control to freedom and independence – and that journalism was helping others to do this. Journalism had to be seen as increasing both political participation and competition. The way this was being done would differ according to the stage of democratisation, the political context and the previous media environment. Journalism was therefore seen to have multifaceted, complex democratic roles to play. These concepts led to the wide-ranging research questions that directed this writing of a historical narrative of Sanef.

The main limitations of this study were laid down as being the possible bias of the researcher, who is involved with Sanef; the use of only documentary evidence (Sanef papers and newspaper articles) in the research; and the lack of previous studies to give direction. A further limitation became obvious during the writing process: the possible bias of the articles being used as part of the study. As Mandela frequently pointed out, newsrooms from which these articles came lacked race, gender or ethnic diversity – without this, they could not cover the multicultural complexity and dynamics of the changing South Africa (Mandela, 1994a and 1994b).

This chapter concludes the study by looking at the main findings of the research, including unexpected finding and anomalies, their wider significance and the researcher’s recommendations particularly regarding further research.

9.2. Main findings and their wider significance

The results of the research and discussion of the main trends was done in Chapter 8. Here, the main findings of the thesis as a whole are summarised.

Sanef is an unusual editors’ body: it crosses news media as well as also involving senior journalists and educators. However, examined closely, it had many similarities in membership, aims and activities to journalism societies in other democratising countries.

With the dominance of information about mature democracies, and in a South African context of government-protected Europeans controlling a relatively media-rich environment from before transition, this researcher is of the opinion that Sanef members mostly did not understand that their role was in the context of a very early stage of democracy. Editors might therefore have missed the importance of putting effort into particular areas of media reform. The significance of this is that studies have shown that on the long term this often backfires and leads to a stalemate in democratisation.

In terms of democratic roles, Sanef's aims and activities fell mostly into either the liberal and participatory categories. It would be interesting to know the implications of this for the progress of media reform, but the theories of democratic roles do not yet include predictive aspects.

However, the dominance of these two roles was consistent with the deep divisions and range of ideologies resulting from the political histories of South African editors. In a simplistic formulation, some believed journalism's watchdog role was of overwhelming importance while others welcomed the political change and wished to contribute to it. One of Sanef's challenges was dealing with these confrontational versus non-confrontational or dialogue approaches.

Examining stages of media reform, the activities of other journalism organisations in emerging democracies and the changes Sanef went through in just four years, it was seen that at times Sanef had no coherent strategy or direction; with little understanding of its own role in a wider context or how to apply it. As a result, efforts were put into a range of activities unlikely to be effective because they were neither appropriate nor relevant to the democratising needs of South African journalism at that stage. The small capacity of a society of this type means efforts should not be wasted like this. For instance, in new democracies there is a small window of opportunity for influencing the creation of new legislation, and another small window for having anti-media legislation reviewed: should Sanef have put more effort here than it did? Editors of the future may as a result have to undertake lengthy and costly legal challenges if they want old and new anti-media laws reformed.



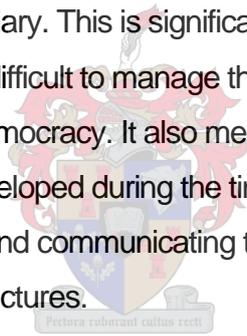
The media reform theory and more particularly the theory of the democratic roles of journalism were essential in developing understanding and giving direction to this study, but they were not sufficient to explain what Sanef was doing and experiencing. However, both sets of theorists have acknowledged that these theories are tentative and require further elaboration and testing to increase their usefulness.

In the early history of Sanef, even over this short period, changes in the forum were seen over time: mostly in relation to external events but also related to leadership. In summary, having formed in late 1996, 1997 was a year of strategic activity that gave the forum its overall direction, with initial decisions on goals and projects. 1998 continued these, but with little advance in most projects. In 1999 Sanef was more reactive. It faced the challenges of the beginning of the HRC race inquiry and media freedom problems, but made progress with its Record of Understanding.

This led into 2000, during which Sanef had to take the initiative to keep the forum together through the end of the HRC inquiry and find a new path: refocus and reunite.

(This study did not cover the next period, but the initial, wide-ranging research showed that immediately after this Sanef became more proactive, particularly in trying to understand its own situation: a transformation colloquium and extensive skills audit research are examples. Also, in mid-2000 for the first time a Sanef leader was re-elected – his three-year term indicated the approval of Sanef membership but also led to a period of stability in which the forum took the initiative on top-level talks with government, a national skills indaba, an African editors' conference and controversial debates on journalism's role in the South African context.)

Sanef, as the voice of the editors, is involved with journalism's relation to power. It has been said there should be "creative tension" between journalists and government (Pillay, 1998). Sanef's history revealed a number of incidents of tension – but these were almost all initiated by the president or government, or the judiciary. This is significant as it revealed that Sanef was not setting the agenda. It was therefore difficult to manage these tensions to ensure they resulted in deeper media freedom and wider democracy. It also meant that other areas, such as relations with wider civic society, were not developed during the time under study – despite these being essential for advancing democracy and communicating the importance of journalism and media freedom to society beyond these structures.



Looking ahead, there are a number of aspects of Sanef's democratic participation that would be interesting to track.

In its future relation to political power, Sanef faces a new challenge: what is its role when one political party has an increasingly overwhelming majority in parliament? If opposition politics is weak, and civil society has not developed, does this change the democratising role of journalism and of Sanef? These are questions the forum will need to examine if it wishes to set the agenda and to continue with the democratising development of journalism.

Two issues in relation to transformation and South Africa's racialised environment stood out in this study, and the future stability or changes in these may be crucial to the forum's continued role in the country and in transformation of journalism and the media industry.

The first was that at the start of South Africa's democracy, editors frequently assumed a causal connection between training and transformation – but confrontations in later years showed a belief that transformation actually resulted from political will (and sometimes political threats). This thesis has pointed out that further corrective action is needed for both race and gender in staffing in particular, so it can be tracked whether this happens through training or political will, or both.

Secondly, under periods of stress a few of the editors continued to react with what became a predictable emotion: fear. The black fear was that they would continue to experience prejudice and disadvantage, and not regain what had been lost through apartheid. The white fear was that they would lose what they had gained since apartheid: that a black government would become authoritarian and repress the media. These fears always led to divisions of opinion and caused a few editors to leave Sanef. However, through their common experiences of difficult events such as the TRC and HRC, many editors moved closer in their views relating to the tug-of-war of racial redress and media freedom. Later events would show whether these fears diminished over time and through the development of a shared history.

Finally, there is the issue of the fifth democratic role: Sanef's activities have included many that relate to the self-transformation of journalism. However, acknowledging that they are operating in an early stage of democracy could help editors in the search for methods to improve standards and the quality of journalism, for example. Research to identify what self-transformative programmes are effective in other emerging democracies could give more useful direction than looking to mature democracies for solutions.

9.3. Conclusion

This study looked at Sanef's contribution to the democratising process. It was not an evaluative study but a historical one. Undertaking such a study during a period of continuous rapid change has inherent challenges:

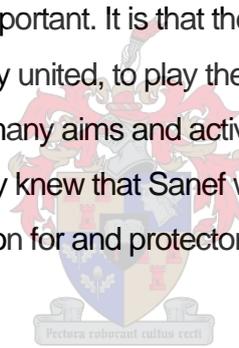
Transitions are, by definition, not easy to capture. Swirling notions of power, democratic tendencies, national influences, and changing technology make each word, each thought, and each chapter a study in instability itself. (Price, Rozumilowicz & Verhulst, 2002: xii)

However, from the process of trying to capture some essences among the changes comes a final perspective.

Sanef, from the start, was a fragile forum with few resources, held together by threads of a common idealism among senior journalists. It seems therefore contradictory that it could demand the ears of presidents and top judges in the way that it did. However, its ability to punch far above its weight was perhaps simply because it was the home of those who decided what the news was. This is why Sanef, and editors' groups like it, are so important in the democratising process.

Price et al identified the most important obstacles to reaching the goal of having independent media that can play a part in promoting democracy. These include economic, regulatory and equipment factors, threatened governments and "isolated journalists who are unable to mount adequate defence of their status" (2002: 7).

It is not only what Sanef did that is important. It is that the editors chose to do it; that Sanef existed. They chose to unite, and stay united, to play their part in the story of South Africa's democratising process. Among the many aims and activities there were faults and weaknesses, but government and the wider society knew that Sanef was there as a participant and mobiliser, an educator and facilitator, a champion for and protector of journalism's democratic space.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: WEBSITES OF JOURNALISM AND MEDIA ORGANISATIONS

African Women's Media Center. <http://www.awmc.com>. Accessed March 23 2005

American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE). <http://www.asne.org>. Accessed March 13 2005

Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. <http://www.aejmc.org>.
Accessed March 30 2005

Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). <http://www.cpj.org>. Accessed March 23 2005

Contemporary Africa Database. <http://africadatabase.org/cgi-bin/s1?words=media>. Accessed
March 23 2005

Council of National Journalism Organisations. <http://www.cnjo.org>. Accessed March 13 2005

Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ). <http://www.fnjnepal.org>. Accessed August 7 2005

Indian Press Council. <http://presscouncil.nic.in/member.htm>. Accessed August 7 2005

MediaChannel.org. <http://www.mediachannel.org/affiliates/all/>. Accessed March 23 2005

National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ). <http://www.journalism.umd.edu/nabj.html>.
Accessed March 30 2005

Society of Editors. <http://www.ukeditors.com/newspro/aboutus/html>. Accessed March 14 2005

Society of Professional Journalists. <http://www.spj.org>. Accessed March 13 2005

South East European Network of Associations of Private Broadcasters (SEENAPB).
http://www.seenapb.org/about_seenapb.htm. Accessed March 23 2005

The Canadian Association of Journalists (CAJ). <http://eagle.ca/caj/>. Accessed August 7 2005

The International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors. <http://www.mssu.edu/iswne/>. Accessed
March 22 2005

Union of Independent Electronic Media of Montenegro.
<http://archiv.medienhilfe.ch/projekte/mon/UNEM>. Accessed March 23 2005

World Editors Forum (WEF). <http://www.wan-press.org/rubrique8.html>. Accessed March 14 2005

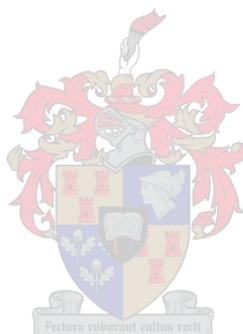
APPENDIX B: UNSIGNED COPY OF PERMISSION LETTER FROM SANEF

(Signed copies are held by Sanef and the author)



SA National Editors' Forum
Nedbank Gardens
Bath Avenue
Rosebank
August 1 2005

Elizabeth Barratt
164 Nottingham Road
Kensington
Johannesburg



Dear Elizabeth

This is to confirm that the South African National Editors' Forum has given permission for you to use all of the forum's records, including minutes and unpublished discussion documents, for the purpose of research for your Masters thesis (MPhil Journalism) through Stellenbosch University. This letter further gives you access to all the records in the Sanef office.

We understand that you are researching Sanef's participation in the democratising process in South Africa from the time just before the forum's formation to the present, concentrating on the historical aspects.

Regards

Joe Thloloe
Sanef chairperson

APPENDIX C: CONFERENCE OF EDITORS – SIX PRINCIPLES, 1991

CONFERENCE OF EDITORS

SIX PRINCIPLES ON WHICH THE CONFERENCE IS NOW FOUNDED

The following were adopted unanimously at the June 24, 1991 meeting of the Conference of Editors in Durban:

1. That the purpose of the Conference be to uphold the freedom of the Press and the free flow and expression of information and to protect the interests of a free Press, and to meet to discuss matters of common professional concern.
2. That membership of the Conference be open to editors of all daily, weekly or monthly newspapers, news magazines or news agencies which subscribe to the Press Code of Conduct.
3. That an editor be defined as a person who bears full legal responsibility for the content of any of the publications mentioned above and who controls the editorial staff it employs.
4. That all decisions of the Conference should be on the basis of a two-thirds majority of editors present, but that those members dissenting have the right publicly to dissociate themselves from any resolution.
5. That the Conference elect from its ranks a chairman and a vice-chairman to serve for two years, to conduct proceedings and to represent the Conference to the public in general and to the government in particular.
6. That the Conference seek administrative secretarial services funded by an annual membership fee as determined by the Conference and that the Conference be entitled to levy from time to time additional amounts from members should the need arise.

APPENDIX D: FOUNDING DOCUMENT OF SANEF, OCTOBER 1996

SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL EDITORS' FORUM

Preamble, declaration of intent, organisation and programme of action.

PREAMBLE

We, South Africa's most senior print and broadcast editors and journalism educators and trainers, gathered at the Breakwater Lodge in Cape Town for the historic unity conference of the Black Editors' Forum and the Conference of Editors from October 18 to 20, 1996, to launch the South African National Editors' Forum. Recognising past injustices in the media, we commit ourselves to a programme of action to overcome these injustices and to defend and promote media freedom and independence.

BELIEF

It is our belief and understanding that:

- Public and media scrutiny of the exercise of political and economic power is essential;
- The law related to the operation of media should be consistent with South Africa's Bill of Rights in its protection of freedom of expression;
- Journalists and media owners have a duty to work to the highest professional standards and ethics;
- Journalists and journalism teachers should embrace a learning culture by committing themselves to on-going education and training.

DECLARATION OF INTENT

- To nurture and deepen media freedom as a democratic value in all our communities and at all levels of our society;
- To foster solidarity among journalists and to promote co-operation in all matters of common concern;
- To address and redress inappropriate racial and gender imbalances prevalent in journalism and news organisations and encourage corrective action and a transformation of culture within the industry;

- To promote media diversity in the interests of fostering maximum expression of opinion;
- To promote the process of media education and to help aspirant and practising journalists acquire or develop skills;
- To promote professional freedom and independence in broadcast media and all media funded by public authorities;
- To encourage government to ensure transparency and openness in administration and to pass laws ensuring maximum freedom of information;
- To use all available institutions to defend media freedom.

ORGANISATION

To give effect to the above intent, we commit ourselves to establishing an organisation with the following structure:

- The organisation is called the South African National Editors' Forum.
- The executive body is called the Editors' Council. It is made up of 20 members. The interim agreement for one year is that the 20 members consist of five BEF, five COE, five broadcast editors and five representatives of magazines, interest groups and journalism educators. After the interim period, the Council would be elected from the general membership.
- The Editors' Council shall have a chairperson and a deputy chairperson. They shall be voted into position by the Editors' Council.
- This Council should endeavour to meet at least four times a year.

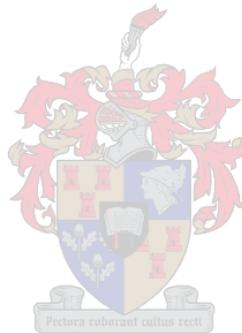
PROGRAMME OF ACTION

This conference instructs the Editors' Council to:

- Draft a constitution so as to accurately reflect the spirit and intent of this founding conference.
- Prepare an annual report on corrective action in the industry and actively lobby media employers for the implementation thereof.
- Draft a charter to protect editorial independence and seek the endorsement of stakeholders including Government, political parties and media owners. Such charter will include a code of journalistic ethics and conduct.

- Promote and defend media freedom by:
 - establishing channels of communication with Government, judiciary and relevant statutory bodies.
 - using all available institutions to defend media freedom including the Constitutional Court, parliamentary bodies and the Public Protector. This should include the repeal of all restrictive legislation.
 - promoting a culture of a freedom of expression in the community by means of a public education programme.
 - Together with other bodies such as the Print Media Association, Independent Media Diversity Trust and major media owners investigate means of promoting media diversity to further the free flow of information and give support to news organisations owned and controlled by people from disadvantaged communities.
 - Together with other relevant training bodies, investigate the promotion of media education and training.

20 October 1996, Cape Town



APPENDIX E: LAUNCH RESOLUTIONS OF SANEF, JANUARY 1998

SUMMARY OF KEY RESOLUTIONS FROM THE LAUNCH CONFERENCE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL EDITORS' FORUM: MIDRAND: 25TH JANUARY 1998:

"We, the delegates at the launch conference of the SA National Editors forum, having noted President Nelson Mandela's remarks at the ANC's 50th conference as well as other criticism of South African media, remain committed to transforming our industry to represent fully the communities we serve. We reaffirm that South Africa's new constitution has granted us an historic role to be critical watchdogs, especially over those who wield power in our society. This is a responsibility which we will never shirk.

To this end we bind ourselves to:

- Leading the debate on the issues affecting our industry and society as a whole;
- Developing and defending the integrity and credibility of our industry and profession;
- Forging links with like-minded groups in South Africa, our continent and across the world;
- Representing the profession on legislative and restrictive issues;
- Striving for professional excellence;
- Embarking on a recruitment drive to ensure we represent the full spectrum of our segment of the industry.

This conference instructs Sanef's Council to take these and other issues further in preparation for our meeting with President Mandela on March 13."

Sanef approved a **new Constitution**. The newly elected executive comprises: Chairperson: *Sowetan* Editor Mike Siluma, Deputy Chairperson: *Cape Argus* Editor Moegsien Williams, Secretary-General: SABC Radio News Regional Editor (KwaZulu-Natal) Judy Sandison and Acting Executive Director: Joe Thloloe

The other 17 elected to the 20-member council are: Mary Papayya (East Coast Radio), Siphiso Magoda (SABC Radio:PE), Sarah Crowe (SABC TV), Phil Molefe (SABC-TV), Isak Minnaar (SABC-TV), Guy Berger (Rhodes), Arrie de Beer (Potch), Ray Louw (SA Report), Ebbe Dommissie (Die Burger), Tim du Plessis(Beeld), Anthea Garman (Rhodes), Wendy Morgenrood

(Readers Digest), John Battersby (Sunday Independent), Siphon Ngcobo (Business Report), Mathatha Tsedu (Sowetan), Lebona Mosia (Northern Gauteng Tech), Mike Loewe (ECN).

Other key resolutions and a **programme of action** came out of the report-backs from workshops held on: Media freedom and Ethics, Corrective Action and Training, Constitution and Membership, Media Diversity; Vision for the future of the media.

***Condolences were expressed to the family of Dr Bheki Zondo, a Council member who died tragically following a car accident in December.*

***A fund has been set up for the family of Ameen Akalhwaya, who is terminally ill.*

***It was suggested that Sanef look into setting up a special fund for families of members who die in tragic circumstances.*

OTHER RESOLUTIONS:

Media Freedom and Ethics:

1. The Media Freedom committee of the Council is to seek with urgency the co-operation of other stakeholders such as the SAUJ, MWASA, FXI, etc to jointly:

- a. approach government and political parties about laws restricting media freedom and election coverage.
- b. plan a media freedom campaign – that could include roadshows in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and Western Cape
- c. facilitate coverage of media freedom issues
- d. swiftly respond to journalists under threat from whatever source
- e. liaise with regional bodies such as MISA
- f. give input on behalf of SANEF on all proposed new legislation such as the broadcasting Green Paper, the Marriage Act and the Open Democracy Bill.

2. Sanef condemns media restrictions in the SADC countries, including the proposed licensing of journalists in Swaziland and Botswana, and asks our government to pressurise those governments to lift such restrictions.

3. Section 205: Sanef is to obtain the services of a legal adviser to pull together and simplify the legal opinions received on this matter as to why journalists should have a 'just cause' defence. A concrete proposal can then be presented to the President in March.

4. Re: the Western Cape Attorney-General Frank Khan's summons to Cape photographers to give evidence in their personal capacity as witnesses to the Staggie murder: Sanef regards this as unjust and an attempt to get around the problems with section 205 and calls for the withdrawal of the summons. Journalists cannot be expected to give evidence that can place their lives at risk.

5. Urgent attention should be given to legislation restricting freedom of expression which is in conflict with the Constitution and has no place in a democracy. Pleas made by various bodies during the past eight years have not yet been acted on. Sanef stresses this matter needs urgent attention.

6. Sanef welcomes the creation of the office of Press Ombudsman which gives the public free access to an independent arbiter for the speedy resolution of disputes and helps journalists maintain high ethical standards; and encourages all editors to regularly publicise the office and its role, and to promote an appreciation of codes of conduct among staff and the public.

7. Sanef supports the code of conduct of the press ombudsman and will facilitate, with the IBA and Broadcasting Complaints Commission, the creation of one common code of principles.

Diversity:

1. There is a need for an independent agency funded by the government and publishers, to serve small radio and print media, to facilitate Black empowerment and in particular to assist small media in rural areas.

2. In the interim: the National Community Media forum and the IDT should facilitate skills transfer between SANEF members and small media.

3. There should be tax incentives to donors and tax relief for small media.

4. Sanef shall assist small emerging media with guidelines on ethics and other aspects – without taking them over – and will monitor the emergence of new media to provide a helping hand and ensure their long-term survival.

5. There should be print subsidies for small newspapers. And alternative marketing and sales and distribution systems set up to assist their development and growth.

6. Main media groups are urged to support developing news agencies.
7. Sanef should monitor the media unbundling processes to establish to what extent they result in real Black empowerment ; and also monitor policies and practices concerning gender, disability and training.

Corrective Action and Training (2 separate committees were proposed):

1. Sanef should lobby editors and journalism educators to use their influence to accelerate media transformation to ensure that the demographics of South Africa is reflected in both staff and training.
2. This process must include the challenges of changing attitudes, editorial direction and content.
3. Sanef should lobby to compile a consolidated policy on the implementation of corrective action and will arrange a workshop on this before July 1998.
4. An urgent workshop needs to be held with journalism educators concerning the National Qualifications Framework and the setting of standards.
5. Sanef should play a more active role in advisory bodies.
6. Sanef should lobby donors and media houses and other organisations to fund research into journalism and raise awareness of the role of the media in a democratic society.
7. Training and education should not only include technical skills but also awareness about class, rural/urban contexts, gender and other contextualised and researched issues.
8. A survey of media training budgets should be done and the results publicised.

APPENDIX F: CATEGORIES OF DEMOCRATIC ROLES AND ACTIONS

These are based on Berger's four democratic roles of journalism, but relevant aspects of other theories as argued in Chapter 4 are included.

1. LIBERAL ROLE
AUDIENCE: Victims
DESCRIPTIVE VERBS: Protect, defend, fight, champion, lobby
ACTIONS: Guard citizens' rights and hold the powerful to account, especially the state. Ensure publication of news others do not want published. Uncover unacceptable activities in the state that would have remained hidden. Protect own editorial independence. Uphold democratic principles and ethics in own work. Strip away state's secrecy and fight for access to information and transparency. Be a politically neutral watchdog, an adversary and champion of the people. Promote own rights and responsibilities. Ensure politicians make a commitment to democracy. Hold office bearers to account for performance of their duties by ensuring they are sanctioned. Ensure transparency so citizens can understand motivations for decisions and actions, and judge the consequences.
2. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC ROLE
AUDIENCE: Citizens
DESCRIPTIVE VERBS: Challenge, encourage, educate, enlighten, research, survey
ACTIONS: Be neutral educators not political agents. Act as public steward, challenging the apathy of people. Encourage people to be informed and knowledgeable. Be messenger. Enlighten the public so they can self-govern. Serve the developers, act as intermediaries between government and citizens. Highlight government policy, spread understanding and debate to draw public interest. Do political education regarding democratic principles and civil and political rights.
3. NEOLIBERAL ROLE
AUDIENCE: Consumers
DESCRIPTIVE VERBS: Reflect, debate, serve, disseminate, balance, monitor
ACTIONS: Be neutral referee or mirror of society, balanced and impartial. Serve democratic duty to diversity and pluralism. Provide platform for rational debate of a wide range of views. Disseminate diverse views as information to help the audience form opinions. Challenge prejudices and highlight alternatives. Service the political system by providing information, discussion and debate on public affairs. Set the news agenda, crusade for own definition of the national interest. Do not leave it to politicians to raise debates.
4. PARTICIPATORY ROLE
AUDIENCE: Community
DESCRIPTIVE VERBS: Mobilise, advocate, question, involve
ACTIONS: Active democratic player. Promote ongoing participation of civil society, including grassroots. Extend pluralism to the non-elite and information-poor. Promote freedom of speech so public opinion is not just formed by elite. Promote existence of wider democratic community between elections. Ensure state responds to all elements of society. Promote public discussion and public opinion to get democratic participation in policy-making. Contribute to creating a public sphere, a virtual space where civil society and government debate political/apolitical issues. Mobilise, present views, air citizens' views and debate alternatives. Do advocacy work, give disadvantaged access to media. Question government actions.
SOURCES: Berger, 1999: 4-8 and see Chapter 4

APPENDIX G: STAGES OF DEMOCRATISATION AND MEDIA REFORM

This is a more detailed categorisation taken from the theory by Rozumilowicz (2002) detailed in Chapter 2 – and will be used to see how Sanef's actions equate to the theory.

1. Pre-transition stage
CHARACTERISTICS: Signalled by the old regime opening the previously controlled political, economic and social arenas. Backsliding often occurs.
TASKS: Tasks of the media at this stage include providing a platform for opposition and criticism, supporting future civil society voices and providing critiques of media infringement. Reformers can try to persuade the state to allow more open criticism without reprisal, and try to minimise reprisals when they occur. Encourage alternative information sources such as international broadcasting. Intervention may include investment in new media to provide more or different information, or media monitoring and critiques of media. Options for media reform are constrained and it is difficult to find a balance so do not push too hard on norms accepted by regime and result in backlash.
2. Primary transitional stage
CHARACTERISTICS: Seen by the destruction of the old system after a period of systematic change, and a new one established with new institutional and regulatory structures. This can come about by different types of structured or unstructured events. Enactment of various media laws (access to information, defamation, ownership, content) and establishment of legislative framework for all media sectors often marks this transition as part of general context of establishing rule of law and democratic institutions and processes. Economic structures often also being changed, having impact on media.
TASKS: Policy-making and implementation are central. The main role for media reformers is in the monitoring and formulation of draft legislation, keeping in mind that structures that administer the law are also crucial part of legal processes. Other media legislative models should be analysed and media law experts should be called on to help draft laws. Lobbying the government is crucial, and so skills to do this effectively should be developed. Pushing for financial support for both state-owned and private media, conditions needed for free media to start to develop.
3. Secondary transitional stage
CHARACTERISTICS: This is the interim stage of the media reform process. It shows a chaotic mixture of remnants of the first two stages. New political, legal and economic structures are in place but need fine-tuning. There can be immediate consolidation, an authoritarian backlash or institutional revision if the regime tries to implement the new structures in a way that is most to their advantage. Another big danger is of a social elite taking control of various institutional functions, which can turn legislative change away from democratic ends – structures or their use may become inappropriate.

TASKS: The media need to ensure that harmful remnants of the previous system are removed and new structures are used in a way that increases democracy. Reform from the previous stage that has not worked needs to be re-examined at the same time as the media legislative framework is being fine-tuned. Politicians and journalists should be educated on the new legal order and how it should work. Policy-makers and media leaders should talk in order to seek common understanding and solutions to grievances. Media networks should be developed. Journalists should be trained in investigative and responsible journalism, and objectivity encouraged instead of the previous partisanship – this is accompanied by creation of self-regulatory methods for media. Foreign investment may be welcomed in order to give some independence to media previously dependent on partisan economic control. Educational programmes needed for society in general.

4. Late or mature transitional stage

CHARACTERISTICS: Seen as a coherent new system becomes entrenched. Backsliding must be prevented by the media consolidating commitment to the new system and drawing increasingly more segments of society into the framework, thus strengthening democracy through participation. Most actors should by now easily operating within the new norms.

TASKS: The media should build prestige around free and professional journalism, help other countries in transition, ensure that education at primary, secondary and tertiary levels promotes media freedom, set up funds or scholarships to promote training in investigative journalism and management, encourage exchanges of media professionals among countries to provide wider network of media experts and to bring in new problem-solving ideas, train journalists to improve standards. Encourage the use of new technology for media freedom. Provide conferences for journalism leaders to keep up with latest developments in media and grow professionalism.

SOURCES: Rozumilowicz, 2002: 17-24 and Price & Rozumilowicz, 2002: 264-267

APPENDIX H: SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES OF OTHER JOURNALISM SOCIETIES

Taken from Chapter 2, this summary can be used to compare Sanef actions to those of other societies – firstly specialised ones and then those in mature or early stages of democratic transition.

ACTIVITIES RELATED TO DIFFERENT AREAS OF CONCERN
CAREERS: advocacy, networking, professional development, annual awards, scholarships, internships, sponsored short courses, individual support, lobbying for career issues.
MEDIA FREEDOM: track violations, publicise them, organise protests, legal help for imprisoned journalists, lobby for change, publish articles, put out alerts, advocacy.
SPECIALISED JOBS: training to improve standards, leadership coaching, debates on independence, information on press freedom, networking.
ONE MEDIA TYPE: do research and provide information on professional and business issues, suggest solutions to specific problems, debate trends and innovations, networking.
WORKERS ISSUES: negotiate on working conditions.
EDUCATION: education issues.
ACTIVITIES RELATED TO STAGE OF DEMOCRACY
MATURE DEMOCRACY: information and communication via well-developed and sponsored website, annual conference with top speakers, promotion of new books on journalism, surveys on governance, media law advice, Freedom of Information Act courses and articles, spread information to improve professionalism and protect media freedom, promote professional excellence through conferences and awards, encourage investigative journalism, provide network, advocacy and information services for members, defend journalism, create professional unity, share ideas, learn job-related techniques, debate trends, do research, promote diversity, encourage good writing, give leadership training, connect educators with newsrooms, represent editors' points of view within the newspaper industry, political arena, citizens and internationally.
EARLIER STAGE OF DEMOCRACY: solve basic problems, protect interests by mutual support, mutual co-operation and co-ordination on work issues, share information, publicly promote their interests economically, politically and legislatively, share maintenance costs, share a law expert to help draft media policy and legislation, raise funds to pay for a news agency, get funding to improve technology and communications infrastructure, promote high standards, fight for politically and economically independent journalism, collaborate on training and media policy collaboration, management training, fostering media law reform, news exchange, campaign for more democracy, protect press freedom, speak out on restrictions on reporting and threats to journalists, implement law for working journalists, implement a code of conduct, develop the skills of journalists, mobilise press for social development. In the area of legal change: right to information act, a national advertisement policy, new mass communication policy and a national policy for the smooth movement and distribution of press materials.
SOURCES: See Chapter 2

APPENDIX I: ASSESSING SANEF PROGRESS, SEPTEMBER 1999

SANEF ACHIEVEMENTS/PROGRESS RECORD

The South African National Editors' Forum was officially launched in January 1998. Since its inception, great strides have been made in areas relating to the promotion of its founding aims.

Leading the debate -

A regular exchange of views has taken place between members of the Editors' Council and the President and Deputy President of South Africa. SANEF has also spoken out strongly on matters of principle affecting the profession, such as on the landmark Bogoshi judgement, and the detention of editors in Zimbabwe. It has facilitated the mobilization of the media in the Partnership Against AIDS campaign and campaigns to end violence against women and children. Various seminars and debates have been held on media freedom and transformation, especially in relation to gender and technology.

Defending the integrity/credibility of our profession -

SANEF has spoken out and/or lobbied on issues where access to information by journalists has been restricted, or where journalists themselves have been harassed or intimidated because of their work. e.g. Kanhema issue, freed Cameroon editor, prevention of intimidation of reporters, PAGAD, meetings with political leaders, etc

Forging links with like-minded groups-

There is regular liaison with organizations such as the Freedom Forum, the Print Media Association and the Freedom of Expression Institute on matters of common concern. SANEF is a partner in several projects to promote ethics and the integrity of the media profession, e.g. the Nat Nakasa award, (run jointly with the Nieman Foundation and the Print Media Association); media freedom documentaries, industry surveys, etc.

Representing the profession on legal/restrictive issues-

Meetings are regularly held with the Ministers of Justice and of Law and Order: a Record of Understanding has been signed with the Justice Minister to limit the use of section 205 of the Criminal Procedure Act (the so-called 'reveal your sources' legislation) against journalists. A joint task team (SANEF members and Justice Ministry members) was formed to review 205, and to work with the Law Commission on ensuring a review of all restrictive legislation that

conflicts with the Constitution. SANEF Council members were instrumental in ensuring that the new Electoral Act included a Code of Conduct, aimed at preventing the intimidation of journalists. SANEF is also giving input into new media legislation such as that governing 'cyberspace'.

Striving for professional excellence-

Great progress has been made in co-ordinating print and broadcast training initiatives and in setting practical standards in journalism education, through SANEF representatives working with the various groups tasked with setting these up.

Several constructive briefings and workshops have been hosted by SANEF to facilitate a more professional working relationship between journalists and representatives of various government departments.

A very successful pilot workshop on gender and diversity was held in Durban and will be repeated, improved and updated in all nine provinces during the next 12 months. Its aim is to stimulate debate as to how issues such as gender violence are portrayed in the media, and whether there are different ways in which journalists can provide a more holistic reflection of South Africa and its people. SANEF executive also engaged with the Human Rights Commission on their controversial Commission of Inquiry into Racism in the Media.

Recruitment drive to represent the full spectrum of the industry –

SANEF is growing and is already a voice to be reckoned with in the industry, making the organization more visible in newsrooms and in the public eye. SANEF is working with UNESCO and the University of Natal Centre for Cultural and Media Studies on a major survey of human resources in the media industry. The project is expected to be completed soon and will provide key information on corrective action, employment equity strategies and the state of media transformation in general.

- Judy Sandison: Secretary-General, SANEF executive, Dbn 9/9/99

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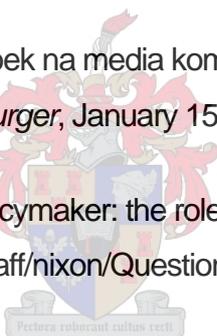
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