

Media as Agenda Setters
A study of the infected and affected living with HIV/Aids

Theophilus Mamnkeli Ngam



“This woman had just had a bed bath. Here she was weak and had bed sores. Although her family supported her and she had access to medications, she died two weeks after this photograph was taken” (*Daily Dispatch*, 2004:12, December 1).

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Supervisor: Prof Lizette Rabe

Date: March 2007

Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously submitted it as a whole or partially at any university in South Africa for degree purposes.

Signature..... Date.....

TM Ngam



Acknowledgements

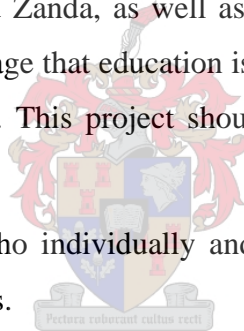
I sincerely thank Professor Lizette Rabe for encouraging me to finish my studies. She was always willing to assist each time I phoned her to ask for guidance. She would end our telephone conversation by saying, 'feel free to contact me anytime and good luck'. Dankie Prof, en Lang lewe.

I dedicate this research work to my late grandmother, Nomzamo Tose Ngam (may her soul rest in piece), my mother Sekethwa and sister Thenjelwa Ngam. These are unsung heroines who ensured that I registered and finished my BA in Communications degree at Fort Hare University.

To my wife, Babalwa, thank you for your help and support.

To my two nieces, Landezwa and Zanda, as well as my daughter, Afika Buhlebethu, I want them to know from an early age that education is the key to their future. Knowledge is power and the sky is the limit. This project should encourage you to follow in my footsteps.

Thank you to all those people who individually and through their various institutions made this academic work a success.



I dedicate this research work to people whose lives are affected and infected by the HIV/Aids epidemic. To those who are still alive, I say do not lose hope, be strong. Those who have lost their lives due to HIV/Aids related opportunistic diseases, may their souls rest in peace.

Lastly, I thank God for giving me strength throughout this academic journey. In Xhosa we say, uThixo uluthando (God is Love).

This is a human achievement worth researching further, to monitor the mass media to report on HIV/Aids in a socially responsible manner that respects the privacy and protects the dignity of those affected and infected. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, Act 108 of 1996, should always guide the media.

Abstract

The media, in its ongoing task to inform and educate South Africans, seemingly set the agenda in such a way that depicts poor black African people as the only racial group that is affected and infected by HIV/Aids. Photographs of poor black Africans are also used to inform and educate the public about the pandemic. In short, the media has set an agenda that has given HIV/Aids a black African face: vulnerable, helpless and living in squalid conditions. The hypothesis of this research is that it is racial stereotyping of poor black Africans, and that it is perpetuated by the *Daily Dispatch* and other media.

It is also important to note that the voices of the affected and infected are not prominent in news reports about the pandemic. Their stories are either told by the journalists themselves or someone else as a spokesperson. The media must begin to give space to the heroes and heroines who are affected and infected by the HIV/Aids pandemic to tell their stories in their own words.

Qualitative content analysis of the *Daily Dispatch* from 1 to 31 December 2004 was conducted. News stories, photographs, headlines and captions were analysed.

This analysis shows that the voices of the affected and infected are still lacking in news reports and that poor black African people are used as the only visuals in HIV/Aids news stories.

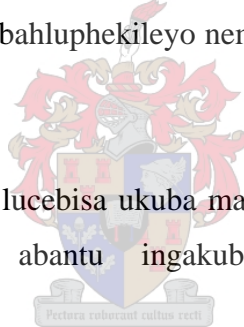
This study recommends that more attention should be given to upholding and respecting the rights of the affected and infected by the disease. The media should also allow their voices to be heard, not through spokespeople, but from their own mouths.

Isishwankathelo

Kubonakala ngathi amajelo eendaba kwinzame zawo zokufundisa nokwazisa uluntu loMzantsi Afrika ngesifo sikaGawulayo neNtsholongwane yaso, abonakalisa abantu abaNnyama beli njengohlanga ekukuphela kwalo oluthi luchatshazelwe sesi sifo. Nkqu nemifanekiso ethi isetyenziswe kumabalili athetha ngesi sifo, yileyo yabantu abaNnyama abazimpula zikalujacu ezingathathi ntweni. Ngokufutshane amajelo eendaba anika isizwe umzobo osengqondweni othi, uGawulayo neNtsholongwane yakhe uchaphazela ze ubulale abantu abaNnyama abahluphekileyo nabaphila phantsi kweemeko zobugxwayiba.

Kusenjalo olu hlalutyo lubonakalise ukuba amazwi abantu abanesifo sikaGawulayo nabo bachaphazelekayo awakho kupapasho lweendaba. Kwakhona iingxelo ngesi sifo zinika ingqwasela kubantu abaNnyama abahluphekileyo nemifanekiso yabo kuphela. Akukho nto ithethekayo ngezinye intlanga.

Okokuqala, olu phando ngoko ke lucebisa ukuba makuhlonitshwe umGaqo Siseko weli ngokubhekiselele kumalungelo abantu ingakubi abo banesifo sikaGawulayo neNtsholongwane yaso.



Okwesibini, amajelo eendaba mawaqinisekise ukuba abantu abagula sesi sifo nabo sibachaphazelayo bayazithethela ngemilomo yabo kuba ngabo abajamelene neentlungu umhla nezolo.

Abstrak

Dit lyk of die media in sy voortgaande taak om Suid-Afrikaners in te lig en op te voed, die agenda op so 'n manier stel dat dit arm swart Afrikane as die enigste rassegroep voorstel wat deur MIV/Vigs geaffekteer en geïnfekteer word. Foto's van arm swart Afrikane word ook gebruik om die publiek oor die pandemie in te lig en op te voed.

In 't kort, die media het 'n agenda gestel wat MIV/Vigs 'n swart, Afrika-gesig gee: een wat arm, ontvanklik en hulpeloos is, en wat in haglike toestande leef.

Die hipotese van hierdie navorsing berus daarop dat dit rasse-stereotipering is van arm swart Afrikane, en dat die *Daily Dispatch* en ander media dit perpetueer.

Dit is ook belangrik om daarop te let dat die stemme van die geaffekteerde en geïnfekteerde nie so prominent in nuusberige oor die pandemie is nie. Hul stories word vertel deur die joernaliste self, of iemand anders wat 'n segspersoon is. Die media moet begin om hierdie helde en heldinne wat deur die siekte geaffekteer en geïnfekteer is, self hul storie te laat vertel, in hul eie woorde.

Kwalitatiewe inhoudsanalise van die *Daily Dispatch* van 1 tot 31 Desember 2004 is uitgevoer. Nuusstories, foto's, opskrifte en onderskrifte is geanaliseer.

Hierdie analise toon dat die stemme van die geaffekteerde en geïnfekteerde steeds in ons nuusberigte ontbreek en dat arm swart Afrikane die enigste visuele onderwerpe in MIV-Vigs nuusstories is.

Hierdie studie beveel aan dat meer aandag gegee moet word om die regte van die geaffekteerde en geïnfekteerde te bewaar en te respekteer. Die media moet ook toelaat dat diegene se stemme gehoor word, nie deur segspersone nie, maar uit hul eie monde.

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1. Introduction and Rationale

The findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) shall be used as a barometer of how the media used to report in the past, at the present moment and the need to monitor it in future so as not to abuse its freedom to the detriment of South Africa and her people. This is the point of departure, and will give context and focus to this study. As (Mouton, 2001:27) writes, a researcher should endeavour to use his or her experience and reflection on issues as a basis of research:

“A first obvious source of ideas is your own experience and reflection about things around you. People who are more aware of what is going on around them, who are more sensitive to their surroundings, are more likely to come up with interesting topics for research” (Mouton, 2001:27).

This case study originated from reading reports in the East London daily newspaper, the *Daily Dispatch*, about HIV/Aids, especially the issue of 1 December 2004 on World Aids Day.

In this issue of the (*Daily Dispatch*, 2004:12, December 1) five photographs of people infected and affected with HIV from the Masiphathisane HIV/Aids Home Based Care Project were published. Former *Daily Dispatch* chief photographer Patrick Kukard took the photographs.

The headline read: *Staring HIV/Aids in the face*. On top of the page are two hands, one covered with a white glove, and a black hand that is not covered. The following photograph of a naked HIV positive woman lying on a bed is an example.



Source: (*Daily Dispatch*, 2004:12, December 1)

After reading through this particular story, and looking at these photographs, this quote from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) study report came to mind:



“Having considered the relation between human rights violations and the media, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) showed that the objectivity of the South African Fourth Estate has been profoundly compromised, news manipulation had been the order of the day... A number of procedures had to be put into place in order to tackle the task of monitoring the media” (Braude, 1998:8).

Based on the above, the key findings of the HIV/Aids Gender and Media Baseline Study Report (GMBSR, 2006:2) state that:

“There is a general commitment to covering HIV/Aids in South Africa although the quality of the coverage could be improved.”

The objective of this case study therefore is an attempt to monitor the South African media by doing a content analysis of the *Daily Dispatch* from 1 to 31 December 2004 to establish the manner in which it publishes news reports on HIV/Aids.

The following question will guide this researcher:

Does the *Daily Dispatch* use poor black African people as the only faces and voices of HIV/Aids?

1.1 Profile of the *Daily Dispatch*

The *Daily Dispatch* (2005:n.p.n) contains the following information:

- It has 252 000 average issue readers.
- It remains the Eastern Cape's biggest selling daily newspaper, covering the eastern sector of the Province, stretching from the Kowie River in Port Alfred through to Aliwal North on the Orange River and down to the KwaZulu Natal border.
- Independent research showed a very high African readership and that readers find the publication "indispensable".
- Markinor's Top Brand Survey also showed that the publication has the highest level of reader trust and loyalty in the group.
- Readers are young, black, ambitious and of the up and coming generation, while established readers are older, white and wealthier.
- Readers are fiercely loyal and trust the information carried six days a week.
- 71 % of readers have Matric or better.
- 64% of readers are within LSM 6 to LSM 10.
- Readers have an average monthly household income of R5 762.
- Audited circulation figures from January to June 2005 are 33 007.

1.1.1 Home Language

- 18% English or other
- 5% Afrikaans or bilingual
- 77% African.

1.2 Definition of Key Concepts

Affected: People whose lives are changed in any way by HIV/Aids due to the broader impact

of this epidemic (ILO, 2001:1).

Agenda setting: According to Eoff (2002:n.p.n) traditionally, agenda setting theory “explores the relationship the news media has on the perceived salience of key political issues”. The notion of agenda setting relies on the transfer of issues from the media to the public.

Eoff (2002:n.p.n) says through agenda setting, what the media finds important will eventually be mirrored in what people think are important. He adds that agenda setting constitutes the following:

- Transfer of salience from agenda primers (media) to agenda adopters (consumers).
- From agenda setting stems the formation of public opinion and the distribution of pros and cons of a particular issue.
- Relies on transfer of issues from the media to the public.
- The media has the ability to influence what issues people think about even if it does not tell people what to think of those particular issues.

Aids: According to the International Labour Office (ILO, 2001:1) the acronym stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, a cluster of medical conditions often referred to as opportunistic infections and cancers and for which to date there is no cure. The Body (2006:n.p.n) adds that *Acquired* means that one can get infected with the disease, *Immune deficiency* means a weakness in the body’s system that fights diseases and *Syndrome* means a group of health problems that makes up a disease.

“Aids is caused by a virus called HIV. If you get infected with HIV your body will try to fight the infection. It will make ‘anti bodies’ which are special molecules to fight HIV” (The Body, 2006:n.p.n).

According to The Soul City Institute (2005:4) Aids is a collection of diseases that are “acquired” from HIV once the immune system is no longer able to protect the body from illness. As HIV weakens the immune system, a person with HIV develops a number of diseases that the body would normally be able to fight off. These are known as opportunistic infections.

Faces: People whose pictures and images are used together with news reports on HIV/Aids (Own definition).

HIV: This acronym stands for Human Immuno Deficiency Virus (ILO, 2001:1). The Soul City Institute (2005:5) says HIV is transmitted through blood, semen and vaginal fluids. Once

in the body, the virus uses CD4 cells of the body's immune system to replicate itself and in the process destroys those cells.

These CD4 cells are vital as they co-ordinate the body's immune system, protecting us against illness.

Infected: The Body (2006:n.p.n) states that one might get infected with HIV and later develop Aids. HIV infection might be from anyone who is infected, even if they do not look sick and even if they have not tested HIV positive.

Many people get the HIV virus by:

- Having sex with an infected person.
- Sharing a needle with someone who is infected, and
- Being born when the mother is infected or drinking breast milk of an infected mother (The Body, 2006:n.p.n).

Media: According to De Beer and Merrill (2003:58) media is defined as mass communication, comprising the technology for sending and receiving messages and the organisation for gathering and transmitting news and information to a mass audience. Global news agencies, newspapers, magazines, broadcast stations and satellite networks are commonly identified as the media.

Voices: Sources of news reports and information about HIV/Aids. In other words spokespersons and ordinary people quoted in HIV/Aids related news stories (Own definition).

2. Background to the Study

2.1 South African Media: A Historical Perspective

This chapter will deal with the South African media landscape, its history and challenges concerning HIV/Aids, the political economy of the media, media ethics and the coverage of the phenomenon in general.

“Journalism is under close scrutiny around the world. It is not the first time that the magnifying glass has been turned on a profession that has huge power but at the same time, huge responsibilities” (Wrottesley, 2002:n.p.n).

There is an old saying that one cannot teach an old dog new tricks. In the case of the South African mass media, it would appear that the majority of senior journalists and news editors come from the apartheid era. One can argue that we all have our own backgrounds and history, as individuals, friends and as the nation as a whole.

This researcher says our historical background as South Africans is the embodiment of who we are, how we relate to one another, to the society and the nation in its totality. A Xhosa adage says

“Ungayikhupha imfene ehlathini kodwa soze ulikhuphe lona ihlathi ngaphakathi kuyo”.

Translated, this expression means that you can take the baboon out of a forest, but not the forest out of the baboon. Simply put, it means that although South Africa is a democratic country, some journalists might still live in an apartheid era in terms of their thinking, mindset and how they look at issues that are in the public discourse.

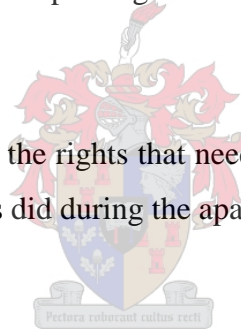
This in my view applies to the South African media, which has its roots from the apartheid system, which dates back to almost five decades of white minority rule and a colonial past of three hundred years of oppression.

We therefore should ask:

- To what extent has the South African media transformed itself to serve a democratic society?
- Has the “leopard” changed its “spots”, in other words has the “old guard journalists” transformed themselves from an apartheid mindset to the one of serving and reporting in a Constitutional democracy?

According to Jazbhay (2005:1) media freedom is a necessary corollary to other freedoms guaranteed under the Bill of Rights enshrined in the Constitution. Jazbhay encourages journalists to be acclimatised to the underpinning values of the Constitution:

“They need to be assertive of the rights that need to be protected lest they stand in the same light as those journalists did during the apartheid era” (2005:2).



The ANC in its online publication (*ANC Today*, 2002:2) has noted that the media itself is often guilty of misrepresenting efforts to transform. The ANC adds that on several occasions any criticism of how the media is structured or functions is denounced by the same media as threats to freedom of the media.

“The media whose overriding responsibility is to promote the airing and reflection of a diversity of views is most often when faced with criticism turns to the role of being the suppressor of open discussion. The ANC should place the transformation of the media firmly on its political agenda of building a democratic society and meeting the needs of the people” (*ANC Today*, 2002:2).

According to the International Marketing Council of South Africa (IMCSA, 2006:n.p.n) the apartheid government enforced regulations controlling what newspapers could or could not publish, especially articles and comments on the activities against the apartheid system.

In terms of the apartheid government's regulations, newspapers were not allowed to quote banned people like Nelson Mandela and other Rivonia trialists, banned political organisations including the African National Congress (ANC), Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), Azanian People's Organisation (Azapo), South African Communist Party (SACP), South African Congress of Trade Unions (Sactu), etc. Newspapers were not allowed even to report on the conditions of South African prisons where political prisoners were incarcerated, and ignored the activities of the security forces that might portray South Africa's image in a negative light.

Switzer and Adhikari (2000:25) says when the reign of terror erupted in KwaZulu Natal in May 1987 where the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi used the state of emergency to attack the United Democratic Front (UDF) and other organisations in the area, the majority of victims were hidden from the public view, because the South African press was barred from covering virtually any activity in these townships under a set of emergency media regulations.

However, Switzer and Adhikari (2000:26) hasten to add that publicity campaigns on a scale never experienced before in South African opposition politics "saturated South Africa's black townships with pro UDF print and visual media":

"The newsletter *UDF News* circulated widely in white areas and received considerable notice in various media outlets overseas. UDF newsletters and pamphlets evoked the term 'people's power' as a framework for 'liberating' the townships but the restrictions imposed on UDF activities by successive states of emergency had an impact on UDF publications" (2000:26).

It is this researcher's belief that the South African media pre-1994, as part of its history, collaborated with the now defunct National Party (NP) government and state security agencies in a campaign of disinformation and propaganda against the liberation movements and the majority of citizens. For an example, in news bulletins of the former Radio Xhosa,

now called Umhlobo Wenene, freedom fighters were referred to as terrorists who wanted to overthrow the NP government by force of arms in favour of a communist regime. This was part of the state propaganda against the people's liberation movements.

To illustrate this point Makunike (1993:n.p.n) in the *Syracuse Herald and Journal of Zambia*, says the republics of Tanzania and Zambia were referred to as the “two black ruled African countries which train and harbour terrorists fighting to overthrow these white ruled governments (Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe and the former apartheid South Africa)”.

This researcher argues that it is a historical fact that the headquarters of the ANC were housed in Zambia under former President Kenneth Kaunda. The late Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere was sympathetic to the South African liberation movements and gave them support in different forms.

2.2 The Publications and Entertainment Act of 1963

According to the Beacon for Freedom of Expression (1996:n.p.n) the power to ban publications was held by the Minister of Interior under the Publications and Entertainment Act of 1963. Under this Act a publication could be banned if it was found to be “undesirable” for any reasons including obscenity, moral harmfulness, and blasphemy, being prejudicial to safety, general welfare, peace or order of the state.

The IMCSA (2006:n.p.n) says newspapers were barred from reporting on any demonstrations or activity against the apartheid government or any of its laws. The threat of closure forced newspaper editors to apply a self-censorship policy, while other papers printed blank pages or whole paragraphs blackened out as a sign of protest.

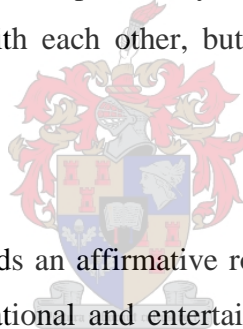
Braude (1998:35) says the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) found that the South African media played a “crucial role” in helping to reflect and mould public opinion during the apartheid years. She adds that

“The TRC hearings on the role of the media in perpetuating apartheid have served as a stark reminder that the media is far from being a passive observer of society. The

activities of the media industry during the apartheid years leave in their wake a profound crisis of credibility for the contemporary mass media.”

This writer argues that the above findings by the TRC should encourage the public, including communication scholars and opinion makers alike, to continue to monitor the media to practice its craft in line with the provisions of the South African Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Indeed the media should be placed under a microscope to ensure that it transforms itself in a manner that instils public confidence and trust.

One should add that reconciliation and racial harmony in the South African context is still “work in progress”. To that end, the mass media should assume centre stage in the process of nation building based on the principles of non-racialism, respect for human rights and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa as the supreme law of the land. According to the notion that the mass media has a social responsibility to the nation, media freedom and social responsibility are not in conflict with each other, but rather complement each other. Day (2003:39) says



“Social responsibility demands an affirmative role for the media in building positive images both in their informational and entertainment content. The media should be responsible for the presentation and clarification of the goals and values of society. They should transmit the cultural heritage thereby reinforcing traditional values and virtues.”

Battersby (1997:n.p.n) admits that unless the media is seen to be transforming itself in line with other institutions in society, it will not have the credibility to play its role as a “vehicle of information about transition to democracy or society’s watchdog.” In addition, Battersby says:

“As an institution which attempts to reflect society and purports to be society’s watchdog over government and the expenditure of state funds, it is vital that the media

should not only be undergoing their own transformation, but should be doing so publicly.”

Thloloe (1997:n.p.n) calls for a new “journalistic paradigm” in the place of the “old paradigm”. The features of the “old paradigm” include an assumption of a homogenous society, authoritarian, male focused stories without meaning and relevance, stories dictated to by sources and not receivers, and ownership monopolies dictated by the bottom line:

“The old paradigm also struggles to understand how to situate itself within major imperatives such as globalisation and nation building.”

Thloloe further argues that in terms of the “new paradigm features” journalists have a role in society by linking the individual to the world. He says there is a need for a consciousness of diversity, not just in terms of race and gender, but also class, rural, urban, youth and the aged.

“We need to give our audience a sense of what it is to be South African on the African Continent and connected to the world. We must use African voices to emphasise context, interpretation, research investigation, complete reporting and analysis” (Thloloe, 1997:n.p.n).

This researcher agrees with Thloloe that media freedom should benefit all South Africans, urban and rural, rich or poor, for them to become part of the transformation process and the global village. The media’s role in society, be it print or electronic, is to empower the public to make informed and educated decisions about their lives on a daily basis. Therefore access to information is a right, not a privilege.

Netshitenzhe (1998:n.p.n) concurs that the government should seek mechanisms for the disadvantaged to acquire the channels to air their views. They should not “merely” be the recipients of the views of others, but should also have the right to impart their own information and ideas. He believes that:

“Information about social phenomena should not be the preserve of the rich and powerful. Indeed the realisation of the imperative of freedom of expression in its true meaning requires that we change the relation of citizens to the means of dissemination of news, views and comment.”

2.3 Media in a Democracy

One argues that the demise of apartheid ushered in a democratic system, which guaranteed media freedom, and that meant media practitioners are free to exercise their craft without fear of victimisation, harassment and closure by the ANC government. The media is free to criticise the government of the day to the point of being accused of behaving like opposition political parties. This writer says that is the media’s contribution to the process of nation building and reconciliation.

“Times have a changed, and worrying about state suppression of press freedom is now irrelevant, especially since in the last ten years not a single journalist has been detained without trial, not a single publication has been gagged by the state¹ and the press is protected by the Constitution” (Kuzwayo, 2004:36).

Braude (1998:18) says the media plays a crucial role in society because it serves as the “Fourth Estate”, a watchdog over power, which is a crucial part of developing and maintaining the basic fabric of a democratic society. To her this is the media’s role of keeping an eye on the government’s abuse of power. In recognition of the important role the media plays in keeping the nation informed, freedom of the press and other media is guaranteed in the South African Constitution.

In a democracy, Leiter, Harris and Johnson (2000:6) believe that information is vital and the role of journalists is not only to report this information but also to analyse and interpret it for the public as it relates to its impact on their lives. This makes the journalist a “vital cog” in the democratic system.

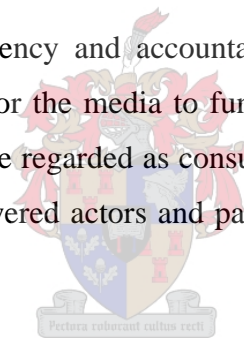
¹ Since Kuzwayo made this statement in 2004, state interference with certain media has occurred.

In practical terms, one argues that it is the media's role to continue public education programmes beyond the election period about the importance of voting in an election. People should be told what it means to be a voter, what democracy is all about and the role of each citizen to make democracy work.

Du Plooy (1997:8) says the mass media play a “pivotal role in bolstering democracy” through the provision of diversity of opinions to the people.

Nxasana (2003:n.p.n) supports this view and argues that informed public opinion is a key element in a fair and open democracy. Democracy, he adds, requires that citizens have the right to know about government's activities, especially decisions that affect their lives, and liberty for them to take part in the democratic process and make it work. He believes that

“[t]he principles of transparency and accountability that characterise South Africa today make it much easier for the media to function, seek the truth and disseminate information. People cannot be regarded as consumers of markets or passive recipients of information but as empowered actors and participants in a multi-directional social dialogue.”



To that end, it is this researcher's view that the media's role dictates that it is accountable to the society it serves through accurate, unbiased, balanced and fair news reports to ensure the plurality and diversity of views at all times. The media should always do self-inspection so as not to abuse its hard won freedom. Structures like the Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI) and the Press Ombudsman are there to ensure that the media does not go astray.

The “Fourth Estate” says Rabe (2002:n.p.n) owes it to society to get its house in order. She adds that an informed society is an empowered society and South Africa needs professional journalists who can act in a professional way according to the demands of the profession.

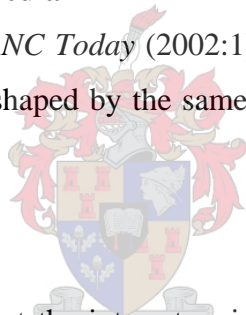
Mandela (1996:n.p.n) believes that the “creative and healthy” tension between the government and the media is natural in a democracy. In a sense, says Mandela, journalists are part of a legion of builders of the South African democracy. He says:

“...media freedom is not, has not been and will never be under threat in our country as long as the ANC is the majority party in government. It is in the selfish interest of the ANC that we should have a probing, robust and critical media. Neither institution nor individual can arrogate to themselves the title of repository of wisdom and knowledge. A critical media should operate within the normal bounds of decency (and) not be aimed, without justification at impugning the integrity of any of the role players.”

The above begs the questions: in a democracy like ours, to what extent does the ownership and transformation of the media promote news diversity?

2.4 The Political Economy of the Media

The ANC in its online publication *ANC Today* (2002:1) believes that in “broader terms” the mass media in South Africa is still shaped by the same political and economic forces which existed under apartheid.



“As a result, it tends to reflect the interests, views and political aspirations of those who benefited from apartheid. The political economy of the media places the interest of the advertisers and the well being of South Africans above the interest of other citizens. This reliance on advertising revenue therefore places direct limitations on the ability of the media to expand and reach the majority of South Africans” (*ANC Today*, 2002:1).

Kuzwayo (2004:36) believes that to understand the role of the media in the new South African society requires “us to swallow some unpalatable truths about the news media environment”. He says firstly, it must be accepted that when private media companies list on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) they “cease to be the guardians of society”. He adds:

“Instead, they become businesses whose purpose was to increase value for their shareholders. Profit is the only yardstick at the stock exchange and where principle and profit clash, it is the former that loses...”

Thlloe (2005:n.p.n) believes that the media have a responsibility to serve the aims set out in the Constitution “even if we do so at a profit”. He adds that while there is room for variation in how that mandate is interpreted, there is no room for those who are motivated by “greed to pander to the lowest taste”.

In the same vein, Fourie (2003:138) says in a democracy all people are “theoretically free” to start a newspaper, however, “it is not always easy to enter the market”, especially if the position of competition is entrenched. He believes that being the only purveyor of local news and the carrier of local advertisements can put such a newspaper in a potentially powerful position.

In this case, the East London *Daily Dispatch* newspaper is an example of a powerful monopoly in terms of news and advertising revenue. It is a monopoly in the sense that it also produces *Indabazethu* and *GO! & Express*, which are community newspapers that cater for the Xhosa and English readership, respectively. These are weekly community-based publications. *Indabazethu* is distributed as an insert in the main copy of the *Daily Dispatch* whereas *GO! & Express* is a knock and drop in the urban areas.


As a result of its monopoly, two new entrants to the market, namely the weekly bilingual East London based *Siyaphambili* newspaper and *Isigidimi* newspaper in King William’s Town struggled to survive and had to eventually close shop. Notwithstanding the niche market in the rural areas and African townships, the two publications could not withstand the realities of business start-ups, chief amongst them lack of capital and insufficient proper business planning. The printing costs, which are the biggest cost drivers, also contributed to the closure of these two publications.

Emden in Duncan and Seleokane (1998:139) believes that small-scale independent community ventures do not have the resources to set up their own services. For that reason, such ventures may suffer closure, merge or be obliged to sell their companies as a result of their dependency on large firms for printing of newspapers, marketing and distribution.

In the same vein, Mandela (1997:n.p.n) says the media is still in the control of whites and that black companies that are supposed to be in charge of “enormous assets are a hollow claim at present because they are heavily indebted to white companies”.

Romanelli, Iwanczuk and Smith (2003:n.p.n) argue that although there have been many changes to media ownership in South Africa, the public sphere is still organised by property-owning people and corporate diversity still remains elusive. They maintain that apartheid, more than any other factor, prevented the development of an “even minimally homogeneous public sphere or national culture”.

Emden (as cited in Duncan and Seleokane, 1998:139) agrees that while there may have been substantial changes in ownership of media, there is still massive concentration of ownership with English and Afrikaans language newspaper markets run by duopolies, namely the traditionally Afrikaans media group Naspers on the one hand, and the English press, owned by Johnnic and Independent, previously Times Media and the Argus Group, on the other hand. He says



“[t]ransforming the white control of the major markets is a priority of the new South Africa. There is a need for increased black ownership and control of media and a role for media in support of development. Press capacity is limited for newcomers because they would face enormous costs to enter the market. Where they have succeeded, advertising revenue has remained low because of their relatively impoverished mass readership” (Emden, as cited in Duncan and Seleokane, 1998:139).

Fourie (2003:138) says although South African media ownership could be said to be “highly centralized”, after the 1994 elections it has been characterised by “dramatic and ongoing” changes in ownership with the emergence of black economic empowerment. In terms of the circulation and advertising revenue, the newspaper industry reflected strongly concentrated ownership and market activity, hence, under these conditions, entering the market could obviously be quite difficult.

Rama (2004:7) believes that ownership is concentrated in the hands of a few multinationals and that limits the range of perspectives that is covered in the media. She says that ownership removes a key function of the media, which is the presentation of a multiplicity of views. She says the view of the “hegemonic class” will be entrenched further as the class that represents the majority of the people.

This researcher believes that it can be said that the emergence of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) deals in the media sector is yet to benefit the poor. The majority of the population, which happens to be poor, is still marginalised in the media discourse. The “African Renaissance” as a concept is a case in point in that it has become an issue between the elite classes at the exclusion of the poor. Media diversity is yet to be accomplished because the poor do not have a platform from which to express themselves.

IMCSA (2006:n.p.n) says there are four newspaper groups in South Africa based on separate control of editorial and management departments. These groups are:

2.4.1 Independent News and Media

The Independent News and Media first acquired a stake in local newspapers in 1995 when it took control of the Argus Newspapers in the 1990s and renamed it Independent Newspapers. It publishes 14 daily and weekly newspapers in the country's three major metropolitan areas (IMCSA, 2006:n.p.).

The Star is the group's flagship daily newspaper. Other dailies are the *Cape Argus*, the isiZulu newspaper *Isolezwe*, *Daily News*, *Cape Times*, *Mercury*, *Pretoria News*, *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, *Business Report* and *Daily Voice*.

Independent's Sunday newspapers are the *Sunday Tribune*, *Independent on Sunday* and *Sunday Independent*, with the *Post* published on Wednesdays and Fridays. The company also publishes 13 free weekly community newspapers in Cape Town, and holds a number of profitable commercial printing and distribution contracts in all areas (IMCSA, 2006:n.p.n).

2.4.2 Johnnic Communications

Formerly known as Times Media Limited (TML), Johnnic Communications (Johncom) is owned by a coalition of black business groups and trade unions, the National Empowerment

Consortium (NEC). The consortium bought TML from Anglo American's Omni Media Corporation in 1996. The NEC's takeover of Johnnic Communications coincided with the establishment of a joint venture between British Group Pearson's and TML, under which the former acquired half of TML's *Business Day* and *Financial Mail* (IMCSA, 2006:n.p.n.).

Pearson's and TML subsequently set up the Internet publishing operation I-Net Bridge. Johncom also publishes the *Sunday Times*, South Africa's biggest Sunday newspaper, as well as the *Sowetan*, *Business Day*, *Sunday World*, *Daily Dispatch*, the *Herald*, *Weekend Post*, *Algoa Sun*, *Ilizwi* and *Our Times* (IMCSA, 2006:n.p.n.).

2.4.3 Naspers

Naspers is a multinational media group with its principal operations in print media, newspapers, magazines, printing, book publishing and private education and electronic media such as pay television and Internet service provision. Formed in 1915, Naspers's first newspaper, *Die Burger*, was the official mouthpiece of the former NP in the Cape. The print media section is comprised of two segments, Media24 and book publishing and private education (IMCSA, 2006:n.p.n.).

Media24 is the largest publisher of magazines, one of the largest publishers of newspapers and the largest printer and distributor of magazines and related products in Africa. Media24's newspaper division publishes five regional dailies, the *Daily Sun*, *Die Burger*, *Beeld*, *Volksblad* and the *Natal Witness*. *Daily Sun* is the largest daily newspaper in South Africa. On Sundays, the company publishes *Rapport*, *City Press* and *Sunday Sun*, printed in four cities and distributed nationally.

It also has two weekly publications, *Soccer-Laduma* and *Son*, and English and Afrikaans community newspapers in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Free State, Northern Cape, Vaal Triangle and North West (IMCSA, 2006:n.p.n.).

2.4.4 CTP/Caxton

Caxton and CTP Publishers and Printers publish the *Citizen* daily as well as 30 regional and community newspapers. The magazine division publishes 15 titles, including *Farmer's Weekly*, the oldest magazine in South Africa. CTP is involved in various fields of the publishing and printing business: newspapers, magazines, commercial print, book printing,

stationery, packaging and labels, as well as manufacturing ink for web presses (IMCSA, 2006:n.p.n).

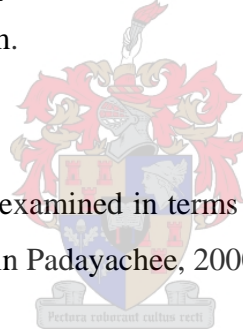
2.4.5. Discussion

This researcher argues that the environment in the South African political landscape provides ample opportunities for the deracialisation of the media ownership, which is still monopolised by the English and Afrikaans media conglomerates. The status quo determines what news get covered and how.

Tomaselli in Padayachee (2000:n.p.n) says the 1990s have seen significant shifts in the political economy of the Southern African media in newspapers, broadcasting, cinema and telecommunications.

Tomaselli adds that the time is now ripe for a critical and regionally integrated discussion on issues relating to political economy of the Southern African media and on methods of analysis, theory and trans-nationalism.

“These dynamics need to be examined in terms of public interest, not just in terms of market interests” (Tomaselli in Padayachee, 2000:n.p.n).



Given the scenario of media ownership as given above, Kuzwayo (2004:36) contends that media owners are behaving predictably by buying the competition.

He says too much media concentration in the hands of a few cannot be good for democracy:

“Mainstream media can no longer claim to be guardians of society. The future does not look any brighter for media credibility.”

Netshitenzhe (1998:n.p.n) on the other hand doubts if freedom of expression is possible if the four media groups own 82% of publications registered in the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC), excluding magazines. He believes that

“In other words, virtually all the dailies and weeklies are in their hands and possibly most of the local papers and knock and drops. Further the same houses control mass printing and distribution. Our submission is that a variety of measures are required in order to attain diversity. One of the primary expressions of such diversity is of course the structure of (print media) ownership.”

In the findings of its report, Gender Links and the Media Monitoring Project (GLMMP, 2006:12) suggests that the South African media is “reactive and driven by commercial news values” rather than proactive and analytical about one of the most serious crises facing the country.

Both the electronic and print media rely entirely on advertising revenue for their operations, existence and survival.

“This reliance on advertising revenue therefore places direct limitations on the ability of the media to expand and reach the majority of South Africans. Commercial considerations are at the apex of what market to target and what content to deal with and what perspectives reflected” (*ANC Today*, 2002:n.p.n).

Hanefeld (2005:n.p.n) says the South African media are becoming “increasingly commercialised” and that can mean being more prone to sensationalism and chasing an “easy story” with negative consequences.

2.5 Media Globalisation

In Grotan and Svendsen (2003:1) Thompson defines globalisation as the growing interconnectedness of the different parts of the world in a process which gives rise to the complex form of interaction and interdependency.

In the same breath, Kuzwayo (2004:37) describes globalisation as the “centralisation” of the media. He says to achieve economies of scale global companies tend to concentrate certain

operational functions and editors will decide what is seen, heard or read about in different parts of the world.

Quoted in De Beer and Merrill (2003:138) Grosswiler believes that the state of media content and control today underscores the steep challenges faced by organisations like the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). Grosswiler adds that the increasing neo-liberal globalisation of the media under the control of a few Western media industries raises serious concerns about global democracy. He says before globalisation, media giants stayed within limited boundaries.

In the South African context, Emden notes in Duncan and Seleone (1998:150) that there are no policy constraints on media ownership as foreign ownership in the local media industry is expanding and evident. He says some of the national and global linkages with South Africa are from the United States and Britain.

Emden cites the take-over of Argus Printing and Publishing by the Irish newspaper group to form the Independent Newspaper group, which currently has “monopoly control” of English newspapers in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and Pretoria.

Another example is the buying into the independent *Weekly Mail* by the British *Guardian*, hence the name *Mail & Guardian*. Emden in Duncan and Seleone (1998:151) also observes that

“CNN and Sky News feature prominently in SABC broadcasting and an array of foreign satellite broadcasters sit in the wings as do dozens of US and European radio and TV broadcasters.”

It is this writer’s contention that this is true if one looks at the existing contract between SABC and the producers of the soapie *The Bold and the Beautiful*. The soapie has been on the SABC1 television screen for a long time.

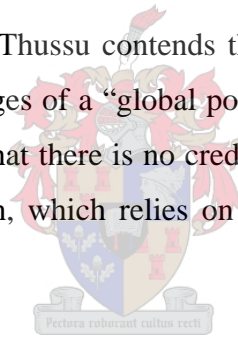
By extension, music that dominates South African radio and television sets is foreign to South Africans and is at the expense of home brewed African music productions.

This is cultural imperialism at best because South Africans look up to the Western and European countries for role models and imbibe value systems that are in conflict with their own. The effect of globalisation on our music and thus our society should always be taken into consideration.

Mkhuma (2004:21) argues that *The Bold and the Beautiful* is a “wealth of lessons” on how money, youth, beauty and talent can take people to heights they never thought possible. He concludes that

“*The Bold* has given rise to a generation bent on emulating the lifestyles of the rich and famous.”

In De Beer and Merrill (2003:139) Thusso contends that the media still brought a Western view of the world along with messages of a “global popular culture that erodes local cultural values and reinforces the assertion that there is no credible alternative media system”. Media globalisation is evident in television, which relies on United States based networks as the world’s primary provider.



“In print media globally, newspapers and magazines like the *Wall Street Journal*, *Business Week*, *Fortune*, *Reader’s Digest*, etc demonstrate US and British dominance. US and British news agencies Associated Press and Reuters also dominate news and information. CNN and BBC are the leading international television news channels” (Grosswiler as cited in De Beer and Merrill, 2003:138).

One can thus argue that the South African public read, listen and watch television movies and soapies from the United States and Britain, hence they adopt foreign lifestyles and value systems based on these experiences. As such the public identify more with the foreign movie stars and copy them as a way of life. This is agenda setting at best and cultural imperialism at worst.

Schechter (2002:140) agrees that this substantiates the agenda setting theory, which states that the media determines what the public thinks about. He says that the media set our agendas and ultimately shape our decision making on political and social issues. Schechter (2002,140) adds:

“The media as gatekeepers show only their version of reality and thereby manipulate the reader’s mind. In doing so, they investigate among all possible elements of reality, the more useful one for attracting their audience. The media as gatekeepers show only their versions of reality and thereby manipulate the reader’s minds.”

This is true in the South African situation where the public seemingly identifies more with the British and United States flags at the expense of the South African national flag. They prefer music by R Kelly and not that of Lucky Dube, which has a message relevant to the South African and African context. This researcher is not against one’s freedom of choice when it comes to issues of entertainment etc, but is rather driving a point that media imperialism is still a factor in the South African society.

Schechter (2003:17) is correct when he says that news management always works best when those who are its target are unaware of its dynamics.

2.6 HIV/Aids News Reports

In its HIV/Aids Report, Gender Links and the Media Monitoring Project (GLMMP, 2006:2) notes that

“South Africa has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the world, with an estimated 5,5 million people infected in 2006. The most recent statistics released by the Department of Health in 2004 stated that (HIV/Aids) prevalence had risen to 29, 5 percent.”

In the light of this report, one can submit that the role of the media has become more relevant to educate, inform and raise public awareness about HIV/Aids.

The media should not merely produce news and information about HIV/Aids, but should also interpret, analyse and simplify news reports for better understanding by both the urban and rural communities.

Cullinan (2001:n.p.n) confirms that the South African media needs to make “a more significant” contribution to fighting the HIV/Aids pandemic with “sensitivity” and commitment to prevent the further spread of HIV as “touchstones”. Cullinan adds:

“In this way, the media could become more of a blessing it seldom is, and less of a curse it often has been to those living with HIV/Aids.”

Kruger (2005:n.p.n) encourages journalists to be accurate by getting the “science right” by knowing one’s ARV to the CD4 count. This includes reporting how the disease affects women differently from men, covering rural areas as well as urban and ensuring that it is not represented as a “black disease”. Kruger believes that

“The social, medical, personal, scientific, economic and the political aspects of this issue must all be covered. That kind of balance will not be achieved in a single story, but it can be achieved over time.”

The “most powerful” role of the media, according to Stein (2001:5) is to define the challenge of HIV/Aids for the general population, given the “public’s dependency” on the media as sources of information on how to deal with the disease. Stein adds that

“Journalists are to a large degree educators. The media therefore has an essential function in social learning to provide information that will empower ordinary people.”

2.7 Politics and HIV/Aids

This writer believes that in the South African context, HIV/Aids have been contested politically between the government on the one hand, and on the other, the media, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), HIV/Aids activists and scientists in terms of public discourse. Accusations and counter-accusations have been made from both sides of the equation.

Msimang (2004:52) supports this view in that, as she says, at times the government is portrayed as bungling and corrupt, and in turn the media are depicted by the government as racist and unpatriotic.

On the other hand, Stein (2001:8) says in the post-apartheid South Africa HIV/Aids has achieved extensive media coverage. This coverage is due to the conflict around the Aids policy, hence it achieved a status of high politics. Stein maintains that the Aids policy has become a hot potato that has been used to gain political mileage by just about every political player. To him, media stories with an overtly political angle, which involve “conspiracy or controversy”, have taken precedence.

This is true if one looks at the media’s coverage of South African President Thabo Mbeki’s views on HIV/Aids. The media at home and abroad gave the issue a lot of attention, thus creating a never-ending political debate and controversy about the government’s perceived reluctance to deal with the disease.

Schneider, cited in Stein (2001:9), describes HIV/Aids coverage “as the very public disagreement and almost complete non-accommodation between senior politicians in the African National Congress (ANC) and a range of NGOs”. That public debate on HIV/Aids has been dominated by a series of responses and counter-responses in which actors competed to set the agenda for Aids in South Africa.

On the other hand, Kruger (2005:n.p.n) maintains that the story of HIV/Aids did hit all the “right buttons once”, with the conflict between Aids activists and the government making news. Since the conflict has died down, it is hard to write the story of HIV/Aids.

Kruger (2005:n.p.n) talks about a South African experience being an excellent case study about what happens to media ethics in transitional societies “when the ground under them moves”.

He cites the media speculation about the death of Parks Mankahlana, spokesperson to President Thabo Mbeki, as having caused a lot of controversy, thus dividing the “journalism family” along racial lines. He argues that for some journalists the report on Mankahlana’s death was justified due to the importance of openness about HIV/Aids to fight stigma and because his previous statements on the disease aligned him with dissidents. On the other hand, Kruger adds that the speculation was “racist, culturally insensitive, an invasion of privacy and politically motivated”.

One can accept as an ethical norm that the media should be called upon to respect the rights of the affected and infected by the HIV/Aids disease, in line with the Constitution. Media freedom is not a license to infringe and violate the rights of others, and in this case, the HIV/Aids affected and infected.

This researcher believes that the media speculation after Mankahlana’s passing away showed the media’s lack of respect for both the deceased and his family. Mankahlana’s wife was put under media scrutiny unnecessarily for political reasons. Careful attention should be taken to differentiate between public interest and respect of the deceased and his family. The media was propelled by sensation when it chased this particular story.

“In the eyes of many HIV positive South Africans, media ethics around privacy are sorely lacking. The high profile case of Parks Mankahlana and Peter Mokaba has been well documented. In both cases, the men denied being HIV positive when they were alive, but media speculation persisted” (Msimang, 2004:52).

The South African media’s reporting on HIV/Aids, says Vialva (2005:n.p.n), has “generally” been sensationalist in nature.

“The media has failed to take up ‘an excellent opportunity’ to address the issue of stigma. Stories of HIV/Aids give an impression of a dirty history, a sort of punishment for doing something bad”

One can argue that the media is not to blame for everything associated with HIV/Aids, however, to some extent sensation has made the majority of HIV positive people to be reluctant to come in the open and declare their status for fear of public rejection, amongst other things. Media reports continue to be alarmist by focusing on statistics of people who have died of HIV/Aids related illnesses as opposed to positive stories of people living with Aids.

This researcher believes that the media is also failing to explain the disease to the majority of people who do not know the difference between HIV and Aids. If one is said to be HIV positive, people conclude that s/he has Aids. In a sense, this researcher submits that the media is failing in its duty to inform and educate the public in a user-friendly manner about the causes of the disease. Instead, it threatens and frightens people about the ultimate death because there is no cure for the disease.

Hanefeld (2005:n.p.n) says the media are possibly the most powerful tool in humanising and normalising HIV/Aids and taking it from a “disease” status to a day-to-day reality of our lives.

2.8 The Constitutional Rights of People with Aids (PWA)

Chapter Two of The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996:7) states that everyone has an “inherent dignity” and the right to have that dignity respected and protected. It goes further to say that everyone has the right to privacy, which should not be infringed.

Kruger (2005:n.p.n) concurs that the right to privacy is enshrined in the Constitution and is a legal right, and an ethical duty. He adds that the issue becomes more relevant when journalists are dealing with people who are poor and disadvantaged.

“They (media) need to take particular care not to bulldoze people, pushing them into doing something they may not really want to do. Their story, the way the family deals

with the situation, medical details, all of these belong to their private sphere over which they have control” (Kruger, 2005:n.p.n).

Cullinan (2001:n.p.n) accuses the media of a number of “media violations” in terms of the privacy of ordinary people living with HIV, yet, no one has stood up for them and no one has said that they must respect the right to privacy of all South Africans, especially those who are HIV positive. Cullinan concludes

“[t]his is exploitation and humiliation and journalists cannot continue to operate as though they live outside of society untouched by this pandemic. Reporting on HIV/Aids is complicated and often controversial.”

Overland (2004:5), citing a study by the Media Monitoring Project in 2002, believes that media reports on HIV/Aids are “dramatic” and they often compromise the rights to privacy and dignity of people living with HIV/Aids. Such reports lack educational content and gender sensitivity.

The condition under which the poor and disadvantaged live is such that some of them are not aware of their rights to privacy and therefore also being able to refuse to be photographed. In such instances some journalists take people living with HIV/Aids for a ride by publishing their naked photographs without weighing their private interests as opposed to those of the public.

Gevisser, cited in Stein (2001:9), says more than anything else, the photographs of Aids victims shocked him, as did any media image of a person living with Aids. To that, Kruger’s views could be added:

“In a broader sense, journalists have a duty to minimize harm to society as a whole by reporting in a way that does not further irrational fear and myths, stereotypes and stigma” (2005:n.p.n).

2.9 Media Ethics

According to Delate (2005:n.p.n) the actions of media practitioners have consequences for people's lives, especially in the area of reporting on HIV/Aids. Delate adds that stigma and discrimination meant that careless reporting could have serious negative impact on the person concerned. For these reasons, he says there is a need for specific ethical guidelines for reporting on HIV/Aids.

This researcher contends that certain ethical considerations need to be observed. The media is no exception. To ensure that it reports accurately and in a fair manner, some guidelines must be put in place.

Kruger (2005:n.p.n) says that journalists are "licensed truth tellers", albeit without a physical license. He believes that society allows journalists to perform a useful social function because society wants to know what is happening around them and in other parts of the world.


"At the bottom, the ethical challenge of HIV/Aids is to tell the story properly despite ourselves. We need to find ways around our news values and sometimes myopic views of our audiences. We need to find ways to report on the pandemic in new and interesting ways" (Kruger, 2005:n.p.n).

Stein (2001:13) calls for media institutions to develop urgently codes of good practice for reporters to safeguard against reports, which simply count the numbers of the infected, and the dead. Such codes, adds Stein, should as well prevent explicit or implicit presentations of HIV/Aids as an issue of morality rather than public health. Journalists as "truth tellers" are supposed to be analytical about HIV/Aids issues to give the public all sides of the disease.

This researcher believes that it would appear that a lot has been reported about black people who have been affected and infected with HIV/Aids. Now it is the time for the public to be told about the disease with respect to other racial groups. HIV/Aids do not discriminate and as such nobody is immune from it.

Journalists should be encouraged to report in their stories, analyses, feature stories, infotainment and even advertising departments in advertorials. Such ongoing education will help dispel the perceptions that the disease affects only black people. As Kruger (2005:n.p.n) says:

“All our ethics are built around the basic principle of telling the truth. If we want to be journalists worthy of the name, HIV/Aids is the one story we need to tell.”

Jordan (2004:n.p.n) says poor people of Africa only make news when some terrible disaster like famine, floods, pestilence or war befalls them:

“Regrettably that also applies to poor black South Africans who are projected solely as victims of misgovernment, HIV/Aids pandemic...”

Stein (2001:13) maintains that reporters urgently need to unpack the larger social forces including the legacy of apartheid and gender inequality, which drive the disease. Likewise, the analyses of the cultural practices that enhance the spread of the disease are urgently required.

Panos Case Studies (2005:9) argue that notwithstanding the “liberalisation” of the electronic and print media, it could be said that HIV/Aids reporting is limited “due to the commercial and profit oriented approach” that accompanies the privately owned media. It concludes that

“...there is a need to balance the many potential advantages of a liberalised media ensuring that commercialisation of outputs does not lead to flattening of coverage to the lowest common denominator where issues perceived as no entertainment like HIV/Aids and audiences perceived as non-profitable are neglected.”

Kruger (2005:n.p.n) says almost all news media are also businesses, hence they develop particular audiences, generally those with disposable incomes. Reporting is shaped by economic realities because journalists develop news values to guide them. Stories are chosen on the basis that they will appeal to audiences. Kruger says

“[t]hey need to be new, involve celebrities, conflict, surprise and much else. But the story of HIV/Aids does not always fit neatly into these values.”

Cronkite in Schechter (2002:23) says to place the needs of advertisers or companies above the public’s need for reliable information distort a free press and threaten democracy itself. He adds:

“We are always ready to speak out when journalists are at risk. But today we must speak out because journalism itself is at risk.”

2.10 Improving Media Coverage of HIV/Aids

The media is considered one of the key and critical stakeholders for a healthy and robust democratic state that grows and flourishes. To that end, this writer argues that the media should be seen to be engaged in constructive criticism of the government on a number of issues, not only the arms deal debacle and HIV/Aids.

De Wet (2001:14) states that “qualitatively assessed”, the prominence of the infected and affected in the media has increased lately with the announcements of the HIV/Aids status by prominent public figures. The prominence of the Treatment Action Campaign’s (TAC) “public disobedience approach” places the voices of the infected and affected “more prominently in the public domain”.

In its report, the GLMMP (2006:2) says that the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) “successfully” took the government to court and compelled it to provide antiretroviral drugs to pregnant women to reduce the risk of mother to child HIV transmission. It further

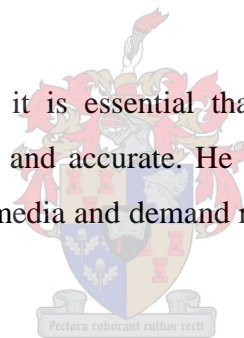
maintains that “some experiences have shown that the media have a limited influence” to play a powerful role in determining the change of human behaviour on HIV/Aids.

The report points out that the media can be instrumental in breaking the silence that surrounds the disease and create an environment that encourages discussion on how individuals can protect themselves and change their behaviour.

It says the media can make Aids programming a key part of their output and indeed their corporate strategy. The GLMMP (2006:2) states:

“But the quantity of coverage, spread of topics, absence of the voices of those most affected, lack of depth in much of the coverage and lack of awareness of gender dimensions of the pandemic are still cause for concern.”

Vilakazi (2004:n.p.n) believes that it is essential that the news media along with other institutions be challenged to be fair and accurate. He calls on media consumers to become media activists and talk back to the media and demand relevance when they see unfair, biased or inaccurate news coverage.



“The first step in challenging biased news coverage is documenting bias. Demand that the media you consume reflect the diversity of the public they serve. In order to fairly represent different communities, news outlets should have members of those communities in decision making positions” (Vilakazi, 2004:n.p.n).

The key findings of the HIV/Aids (GMBSR, 2006:2) are as follows:

- There is a general commitment to covering HIV/Aids in South Africa, although the quality of the coverage could be improved.
- Coverage is often event driven and does not contextualize actions and events.
- The voices of people with HIV are very often excluded or ignored.
- The media tends to focus on high profile people with HIV rather than the ordinary

people.

- HIV is portrayed as a predominantly poor, black and female disease.

Howa (1996:n.p.n) says that journalistic values drive what goes on in the newsrooms each day, hence the era of the media being third party witness is over. Instead, Howa calls for journalists to locate themselves within the communities they serve in order to judge better what information is relevant and meaningful to the people.

“A particular challenge is that our middle managers who really run our media do not necessarily understand the communities we serve. Journalists must provide the background, context and perspective required to paint a complete picture for the people, thus creating a bond with our communities.”

The Global Media Aids Programme (GMAP, 2004:17) proposes collaboration between broadcasters, grass-roots organisations, service providers and government agencies to work together. Through that collaboration, vital services such as counselling and testing, provision of condoms, treatment and care will be made available at community level. Broadcasters can also join with partners to educate their publics about HIV/Aids and publicise the availability of services.

The GMAP (2004:17) adds that documentaries, news items, public service announcements, competitions, hotlines, books and websites can be linked together to reinforce awareness, information and messages about HIV related attitudes and behaviour.

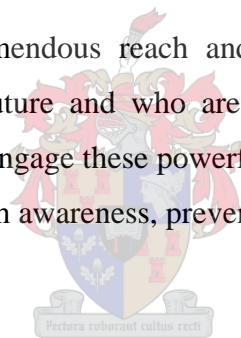
The (GMAP, 2004:17) maintains that

“[c]ollectively, these efforts connect hundreds of thousands of young people with services. To be effective, messaging about HIV/Aids must both be educational and entertaining. These two goals should not be mutually exclusive. A number of programmes have served to inform their audiences about the virus while at the same time achieving marketing success.”

It is this researcher's view that broadcast media should be used to complement other media and public awareness campaigns to escalate the fight against HIV/Aids. These two media to a greater extent transcend the barriers of illiteracy when news and information get disseminated in the vernacular language.

Annan, quoted in the GMAP (2004:n.p.n), believes that when one is working to combat a disastrous and growing emergency, one should use every tool at his or her disposal. He adds that HIV/Aids is the worst epidemic humanity has ever faced which has spread further, faster and with more catastrophic long-term effects than any other disease. He says the impact of HIV/Aids has become a devastating obstacle to development. Annan in GMAP (2004:n.p.n) concludes that:

“Broadcast media have tremendous reach and influence, particularly with young people who represent the future and who are key to any successful fight against HIV/Aids. We must seek to engage these powerful organizations as full partners in the fight to halt HIV/Aids through awareness, prevention and education.”



3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

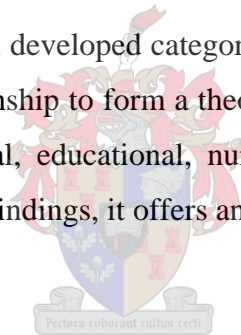
Strauss and Corbin in Patton (2001:488) have this to say in terms of objectivity and the researcher:

“Fortunately, over the years, researchers have learned that a state of complete objectivity is impossible and that in every piece of research, qualitative or quantitative, there is an element of subjectivity.”

3.1 Theoretical Framework

In his description of theory, Patton (2001: 487) says:

“Theory denotes a set of well developed categories that are systematically interrelated through statements of relationship to form a theoretical framework that explains some relevant social, psychological, educational, nursing or other phenomena. A theory usually is more than a set of findings, it offers an explanation about phenomena.”



On the subject of objectivity, Patton (2001: 488) adds that over years, researchers have learnt that a state of complete objectivity is impossible and that in every piece of research, quantitative or qualitative, there is an element of subjectivity.

“What is important is to recognise that subjectivity is an issue and researchers should take appropriate measures to minimize its intrusion into their analysis” (Patton, 2001:488).

Leiter, Harris and Johnson (2000:13) argue that the press is a great educational institution to inform the public fairly, accurately and objectively in all matters of public concern.

This therefore means that the media amongst other things fulfil a social function to inform and

educate the public about HIV/Aids.

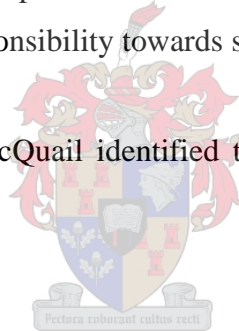
De Beer and Merrill (2003:59) say the media has the ability to identify, create, manipulate and spread public opinion.

“The media is the institution in society that not only informs the public but also can help move the masses in the collective purposeful and productive action.”

It is on that basis that I have chosen the Social Responsibility Theory as a theoretical framework for this project. The media empower the nation through information sharing to make informed and educated decisions.

Fourie (2003:272) believes that the exponents of this theory attempt to reconcile the ideas of freedom and independence with responsibility towards society.

According to Fourie (2003:273), McQuail identified the following basic principles for the Social Responsibility Theory:



- The media should accept certain responsibilities towards society.
- The media should fulfil their responsibilities mainly by setting professional standards with regard to truth, accuracy, objectivity and balanced reporting.
- Application of self regulation within the framework of the law and established institutions.
- The media should avoid publishing information that can lead to crime, violence or social disruption or information that can offend ethnic or religious minorities.
- The media should collectively represent all social groups and reflect the diversity of society by giving people access to a variety of viewpoints and the right to react to these viewpoints.

Fourie (2003:274) says that society is entitled to expect high professional standards and intervention is justifiable if the media fail to meet these standards (Leiter et al, 2000:13) says

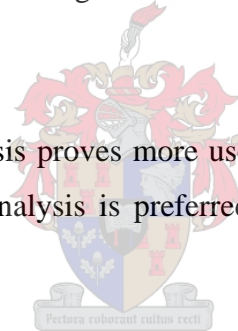
the following:

“The press, both print and electronic, is an important institution in modern society. It is recognised as the principal medium of mass communication and has become increasingly important because ... (it) keeps people informed of the day to day developments.”

3.2 Content Analysis

According to Du Plooy (1997:32) there are two types of Content Analysis, namely Quantitative and Qualitative. Quantitative Content analysis involves some form of counting and applies the scientific method “rigorously”. On the other hand, Qualitative Content Analysis tends to be more critical in nature and can be used when one needs to “penetrate the deeper levels of a message such as semiological or narrative analysis”.

“Quantitative Content Analysis proves more useful for examining manifest messages while Qualitative Content Analysis is preferred for analysing latent messages” (Du Plooy,1997:32).



For purposes of this study the focus will be on Qualitative Content Analysis.

Mouton (2001:55) defines a research design as a plan or blue print of how one intends to conduct research. Mayring (2000:n.p.n) has this to say about content analysis:

“Qualitative content analysis defines itself as an approach of empirical, methodologically controlled analysis of texts within the context of communication following content analytical rules and step by step models without rash quantifications.”

However, Berelson in Palmquist (1980:1) defines content analysis as a research technique for

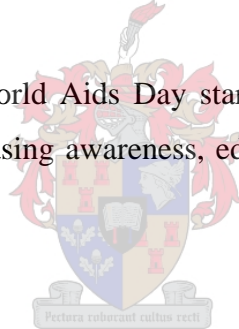
the objective, systematic and qualitative description of manifest content of communications. Berelson adds:

“Content analysis is a research tool focused on the actual content and internal features of the media. It is used to determine the presence of certain words, concepts, themes, phrases, characters or sentences within texts or sets of texts and to quantify this presence in an objective manner.”

Qualitative content or text analysis will be used as a guide to this case study of the East London *Daily Dispatch* newspaper. The unit of analysis will be news reports covered from 1 to 31 December 2004.

Annually, 1 December has been declared the World Aids Day by the United Nations.

According to Avert (2006:n.p.n) World Aids Day started in 1988 and it is not only about raising money, but also about increasing awareness, education and fighting prejudice. Avert adds:



“World Aids Day is important in reminding people that HIV has not gone away and that there are many things still to be done. Around 95% of people with HIV/Aids live in developing countries. But HIV today is a threat to men, women and children on all Continents around the world.”

Avert says according to UNAIDS estimates there are 38.6 million people living with HIV, including 2.3 million children. During 2005 some 4.1 million people became newly infected with the virus.

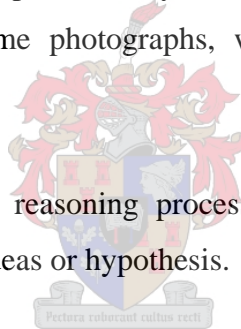
The (Canadian Aids Society, 2006:n.p.n) says on World Aids Day communities around the world honour and commemorate those lost to Aids and those who continue to live with the effects of HIV/Aids.

“World Aids Day is also used to mark the achievements made and the work still to be done in the fight against HIV/Aids” (Canadian Aids Society, 2006:n.p.n).

This researcher believes that Qualitative Content Analysis is an appropriate research tool because media reports on HIV/Aids occur in real life situations. This includes people living with HIV/Aids, families and relatives. What this means is that in our communities we live, work and socialise with people infected and affected with HIV/Aids. Therefore this is an empirical case study.

Grounded Theory will be used to analyse text or concepts as in words, headlines, sentences, themes, lead paragraphs, and phrases to understand their meaning in messages. This writer seeks also to establish the existence and pattern of certain words and their meaning in the context of HIV/Aids. This would help to identify both positive and negative words used in news reports about HIV/Aids. Some photographs, where possible, will be used as an illustration.

This will be done using inductive reasoning processes. Thorne (2000:2) says inductive reasoning uses the data to generate ideas or hypothesis.



“Grounded Theory strives to provide researchers with analytical tools for handling masses of raw data. It is a package, a lock step method that starts the researcher from a know nothing to later become a theorist ...” (Patton, 2001:489).

3.3 Literature Review

This researcher has come across a similar research work by De Wet (2001:15) titled, *Agenda Setting Politics: The Voices of the Infected and Affected HIV/Aids News Sources: An exploratory study*.

In his conclusion De Wet (2001:15), states that his study did not focus on readers and their needs regarding news on HIV/Aids. He adds that, what is however clear and admittedly, from a very brief snap shot of major newspaper’s agenda on HIV/Aids matters, is that information

and knowledge on HIV/Aids and the voices of the infected and affected “are by far not high up on the agenda.” He adds:

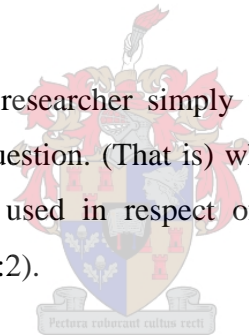
“The fact that the voices of the infected and affected, to a very large extent, are not heard in the media, could be addressed through ethical journalistic practices.”

De Wet (2001:15) stresses that, “qualitatively assessed”, the prominence of the infected and affected in the media has increased lately, especially with the announcements of their HIV/Aids status by prominent public figures.

3.4 Methodological Approach

This researcher seeks to find an answer for his research question according to the following guidelines.

“In conceptual analysis the researcher simply wants to examine the presence with respect to his/her research question. (That is) whether there is a stronger presence of positive or negative words used in respect of a specific argument or respective arguments” (Palmquist, 1980:2).



Once this researcher has selected the various texts, the text will be coded into manageable content categories to get both manifest and latent meanings in the HIV/Aids news reports.

“Manifest meaning” refers to what the reporter has written in his/her story, whereas “latent meaning” describes what the reporter intended to say or convey in his/her news story about HIV/Aids.

The study will attempt to answer the following question:

- What has been reported on HIV/Aids in the *Daily Dispatch* from 1 to 31 December 2004 and how?

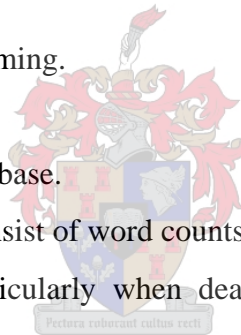
Palmquist (1980:3) says content analysis offers some advantages to researchers. Likewise, he adds that Content Analysis also offers some theoretical and procedural disadvantages. Some of these are:

Advantages

- Looks directly at communication via texts or transcripts.
- Can allow for both quantitative and qualitative operations.
- Allows closeness to text, which can alternate between specific categories and relationships and also analyses the coded form of text.
- Can be used to interpret texts for purposes such as the development of expert systems.
- Provides insight into complex models of human thought and language use.

Disadvantages

- Can be extremely time consuming.
- Is subject to increased error.
- Is often devoid of theoretical base.
- Tends too often to simply consist of word counts.
- Is inherently reductive, particularly when dealing with complex texts (Palmquist, 1980:3).



3.5 Data Coding

Du Plooy (1997:159) defines coding as the process of transforming raw data into a form suitable for analysis. Therefore, this researcher, when analysing data in news reports about HIV/Aids, will use the following criteria:

- Length
- Readability
- Headlines
- Structure
- Use of quotations
- Balance
- Location on the page of the newspaper

- Use of value laden terms.

Berelson in Palmquist (1980:n.p.n) says to conduct content analysis, text is coded or broken down into manageable categories on a variety of levels including words, word sense, phrase, sentence or theme and then examined using either conceptual or relational analysis.

3.6 Qualitative Reliability

Berelson in Palmquist (1980:n.p.n) argues that with respect to the reliability of Content Analysis, it refers to its stability or tendency for coders to consistently recode the same data in the same way over a period of time.

This researcher is concerned that his personal experiences and views on HIV/Aids as the subject matter could interfere with data analyses. This could lead to lack of objectivity on his part.

Moghaddam (2006:4) agrees that “personal thoughts may affect the process of coding and consequently the categories formed”.

However, as Patton (2001:488) puts it, Grounded Theory “unabashedly admonishes the researcher to strive for objectivity”.



Having said that, Strauss and Corbin in Patton (2001:488) believe that over the years researchers have learnt that a state of “complete objectivity is impossible”. They conceded, as stated at the beginning of this section, that

“Subjectivity is an issue and researchers should take appropriate measures to minimise its intrusion into their analyses.”

This researcher is therefore suitably sensitised to, throughout this study, endeavour to exercise precaution not to be personally involved.

4. Findings

4.1 Content Analysis

This researcher looked at the following sections of the *Daily Dispatch* in the issues covering the period 1 to 31 December 2004:

- News reports
- Letters to the editor
- Editorial opinions
- The Chiel column
- Photographs.

The reports or news stories as well as the headlines and captions were analysed. In total there were twenty-nine news items that dealt with HIV/Aids. The breakdown is as follows:

- The fourteen news reports on HIV/Aids that were found and analysed gave a picture of the impact of the diseases on the social and economic fabric of the South African society. This was a positive contribution.

Achmat (2005:n.p.n) says according to the Health Department more than 5 million South Africans live with HIV and nearly 500 000 need treatment.

- The number of letters sent to the editor by the readers is also an issue in terms of educating and informing the *Daily Dispatch* readership, which in turn should pass on that information to their families and friends. The letters to the editor's page could have had more letters in the period under review. The readership should be encouraged to air their views on issues of HIV/Aids.
- There were two editorials in the period analysed. It was found that the editorial opinions in the period between 1 to 31 December 2004 were fair and encouraging. This clearly shows that the pandemic was high on the news agenda of the *Daily Dispatch's* top management and its editorial team.

- The Chiel Column commented twice about the disease and this was a good thing to let the public know about the problem of HIV/Aids in the Lidgetton West township in KwaZulu/Natal. The comment claimed that the township is “only half occupied because of Aids deaths” due to the rising number of HIV/Aids related deaths. However, The Chiel should also have told the public about HIV/Aids deaths from the point of view of other racial groups including whites. That would have been news diversity at best.

Rantao (2001:8) has this to say:

“It is urgent that we address this abominable anomaly, lest our young people, particularly unsuspecting white youth, perish before they know it.”

- The five photographs that were used are those of poor black African people from the Masiphathisane Home Based Care project in Mdantsane. Firstly, this scenario promotes the racial stereotypes that HIV/Aids is a disease for poor black African people only. Secondly, it is an indication of a lack of news diversity on the epidemic.

The following words and their frequencies were recorded:

- The reference to *African* and *black* more often gave the pandemic a black face only, as there is no plurality of news and views in the *Daily Dispatch* on the subject of HIV/Aids. However, a few references were made about white, Coloured and Indian people.

Rantao (2001:8) says if one lives in South Africa, he or she will know that Aids kills, and (also) know that “the colour of Aids is black”:

“The face of Aids in South Africa is black. Aids knows no colour, the syndrome runs helter skelter through anything that is human. By our very nature we are all susceptible to this horrible thing and that is a fact.”

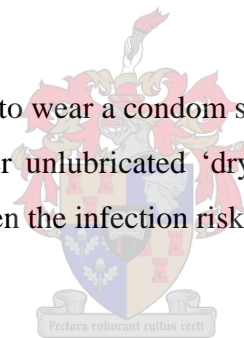
- The words *women* and *children* were mentioned and referred to sixty six and sixty times respectively. It is this researcher's view that the *Daily Dispatch* in this way is reinforcing the stigma and discrimination that women are the carriers of the disease hence the mother to child HIV/Aids transmission.

Thomas (2004:6, December 20) says each year about 3 000 babies themselves become infected in their mother's wombs. She adds that "children are the scorch centre(s) of Aids".

- Men seem also to be playing a role in the spread of HIV/Aids through unprotected sex with their partners, rape, child trafficking and child abuse. The word "men" appeared twenty seven times.

Again Thomas (2004:6, December 20) believes that "brutality and unconcern are pervasive (because) children are raped and trafficked". Also read this:

"African men are often loath to wear a condom saying this will spoil their pleasure and in some cultures, men prefer unlubricated 'dry sex' a practice blamed for causing vaginal abrasions that heighten the infection risk" (Thomas, 2004:6, December 1).



This writer believes that this is another racial stereotyping of African men.

- The negative impact of the disease in societies is illustrated by the frequent reference to orphans in the text (eleven times).

Consider this:

"The profile of one of these grandmothers is of a woman in her sixties, a regular church goer living in rural areas, caring for two or three orphaned grandchildren on inadequate pensions and often not eating so that the children can" (*Daily Dispatch*, 2004:8, December 8).

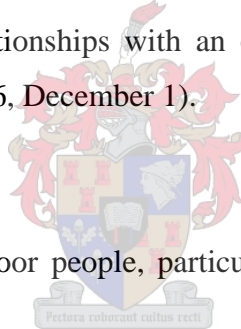
Van Eyssen (2004:6, December 1) argues that South Africa has “no official” register of orphans. She adds that figures for orphans are extrapolated from the number of pregnant women who test positive for the disease.

“Last year (2003) the National Department of Health put the number of infected adult females at close to 3,2 million, adult males at 2,4 million and children under 15 years at 96 228” (Van Eyssen, 2004:6, December 1).

- The frequency of the word poor (thirteen times) in news reports once again put a spotlight on the poor people in the South African society.

“Lack of resources, scant opportunities for work and poor self esteem drive many young women into prostitution or relationships with an older or wealthier man who may be infected” (*Daily Dispatch*, 2004:6, December 1).

Achmat (2005:n.p.n) agrees that “poor people, particularly poor women, bear the brunt of HIV stigma and discrimination”.



4.2 Text Analysis

4.2.1 Headlines

This researcher studied the headlines relating to HIV/Aids in the period, and found them relevant for the purposes of this study.

- “Blood Service to apologise to Mbeki” (*Daily Dispatch*, 2004:5, December 8)

In this story President Thabo Mbeki was to receive a private apology from the SA National Blood Service (SANBS) after it was revealed in the media that the blood he donated was destroyed. This particular story caused a stir and grabbed media headlines locally and nationally.

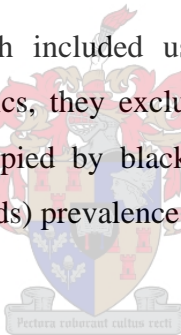
The SANBS came under fire for using race to profile the safety of donated blood. It argued that this was done as part of efforts to “weed out HIV positive donations that are still in the window period”. As a result of the controversy surrounding the racial profiling of blood the board of the SANBS met to discuss whether to continue categorising blood from black donors as high risk. The matter has since been resolved not to use race to profile blood donations.

- “Racist” blood donor profiling criticised (*Daily Dispatch*, 2004:2, December 3)

This headline is linked to the one above and was accompanied by the following quotations:

“Blacks, because of the prevalence of HIV and hepatitis in the African Community fell in the high risk, ‘Category 3’ ” (Crookes, 2004:2, December 3).

“Based on this method which included using ante-natal HIV surveys taken at government hospitals and clinics, they exclude Khayelitsha, Langa, Gugulethu and Umfuleni, predominantly occupied by black residents, as their surveys showed a higher than 30 percent (HIV/Aids) prevalence rate” (Champion, 2004:8).



This researcher believes that this amounts once again to racial stereotyping of poor black Africans.

- Jajula gives teddies to Aids children (*Daily Dispatch*, 2004:1, December 2)

The reference to “Aids children” encourages stigma and discrimination against the children who are infected with HIV/Aids and should have been avoided because it is negative. A headline that reads: *Jajula gives children living with HIV/Aids teddies* could have been better.

4.3 Visual Analysis

Five photographs that were directly related to the HIV/Aids were recorded in the period under review. Three form part of this analysis.



Figure 1: Source: (*Daily Dispatch*, 2004:12, December 1).

Fig 1 is a picture that shows a gloved hand and that of a bony hand, seemingly of an HIV/Aids patient. The caption reads:

“Sometimes we would arrive at the people’s homes and they had not eaten for four days. They were either too sick to prepare food or were too poor to buy any. The project mostly relied on handouts from the fruit and vegetable outlets and antiseptics from a pharmaceutical company. But remember, most of the sick lived in places where there was no running water. Some funding help was received from government but it was never enough and Masiphathisane volunteers were always running out of antiseptics. Sometimes they did not even have rubber gloves and used packets on their hands.”



Figure 2. Source: (*Daily Dispatch*, 2004:12, December 1).

The caption of Fig 2 reads:

“This woman had just had a bed bath. Here she is weak and had bedsores. It was particularly sad because she had been taking immune system boosters like spirulina and was up and about and caring for herself. Although her family supported her and she had access to medications, she died two weeks after this photograph was taken.”

This writer argues that both photographs answer the research question:

Does the *Daily Dispatch* use poor black African people as the only faces and voices of HIV/Aids?

The researcher concludes, yes, it does and the pictures speak for themselves.

The photographs used were those of poor black African people. Unfortunately, this researcher is unable to include two other photographs due to poor quality. However, even those photographs show poor black African people who have been affected and infected by

HIV/Aids looking after one another and others suffering alone. This third photograph vindicates this point.

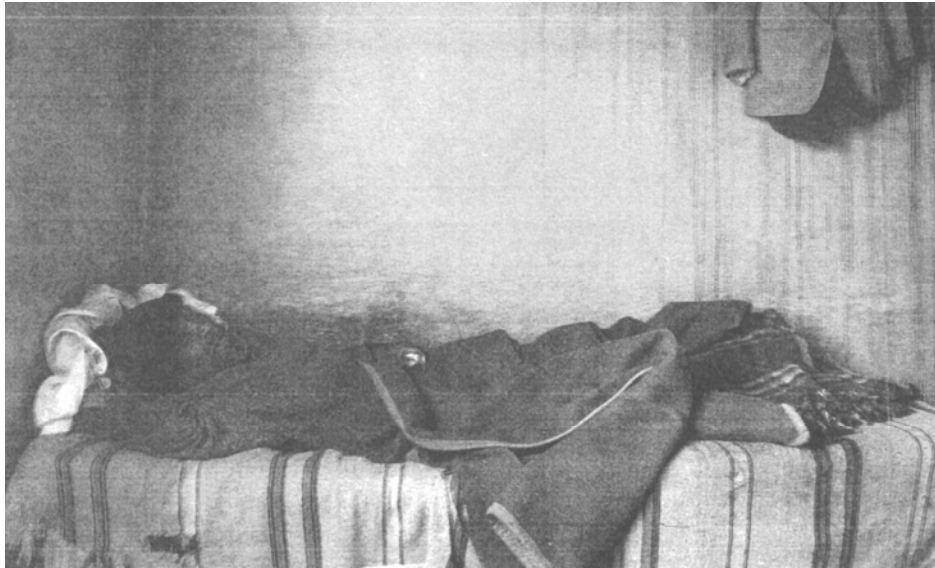


Figure 3. Source: (*Daily Dispatch*, 2004:12, December 1).

The caption reads:

“This old man was alone, he was blind and he was living in an outside room. The people at the main household did not take too much notice of him, they had their own problems. If you look carefully he was holding an asthma pump in his hand, he had TB. I was struck by the poverty and loneliness of the people. The volunteers themselves are unemployed and poor, most gave of their time but did not have too much else to give. Sometimes we would arrive at people’s homes and they had not eaten for days. They were either too sick to prepare food or were too poor to buy any. The project relied on mostly hand-outs from fruit and vegetable outlets and antiseptics from a pharmaceutical company.” (*Daily Dispatch*, 2004:12, December 1).

4.4 Discussion

The three photographs and their captions show poor black Africans suffering from the HIV/Aids disease. It would appear that the *Daily Dispatch* in this instance sets the media agenda in such a way that the public, when they think about HIV/Aids, they must think about poor black South Africans only. Where are news reports about White, Coloured and Indian people who are affected and infected with HIV/Aids?

The following observations refer:

4.4.1 Firstly, this researcher believes that, given the frequency of some phrases in the HIV/Aids related news stories in the period analysed, it becomes clear that in African societies, mothers and their children are hardest hit by the disease.

As (Thomas, 2004:6, December 20) puts it:

“Each year about 3 000 babies themselves become infected in their mother’s wombs. Most of these infants die, they seldom survive the virus for more than two years. The babies who die of Aids are buried and soon forgotten, lost in the memories of their dead mothers.”

4.4.2 Secondly, poor communities suffer most from HIV/Aids because their condition makes it difficult to provide for themselves. Due to poverty some have been left alone to fend for themselves. Kukard (2004:12, December 1) in the period under review, writes:

“These photographs bear testimony to the poverty, anguish and sheer loneliness of dying alone...”

4.4.3 Thirdly, the controversy about the racial profiling of blood by the SANBS has revived stereotypes about African people and the areas in which they live. It also raised questions about racism as the quotation below reads:

“Blacks, because of the prevalence of HIV and hepatitis in the African Community fell in the high risk, ‘Category 3’. ‘Category 1’ is currently all white and Indian, while Coloureds and whites as well as Indian first timers fall in the relatively low risk ‘Category 2’” (Crookes , 2004:2, December 3).

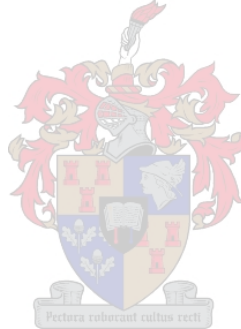
Still on the controversy about the racial proofing of blood, Letlape (2004:2, December 3) says they would like to hear a “scientific rationale” for the (racial) profiling.

“They (SANBS) need to find a system of classification that is non-racial.”

4.4.4 Fourthly, the controversy with the SANBS revealed that the disease affects all human beings, irrespective of the colour of one’s skin.

“Clearly there are areas in Cape Town where I am very hesitant to go because it would be extra risk. There are Coloured areas I would not go to, but there are other Coloured areas where we get fabulous supplies. There were also white areas in the Western Cape which the (SANBS) service did not name, that were excluded” (Thurtell, 2004:5, December 8).

Another wrote:



“Even among ‘whites’ there is a higher prevalence of HIV than in Europe. But not all black people are infected and not all whites are pure” (Gazi, 2004:n.p.n).

Given these quotations, the question then arises:

Why is the media not telling the nation about the extent of the epidemic in White, Indian and Coloured areas?

Consider this secondary quotation:

“The fact is that whites are just as much part of the pandemic as other groups in South Africa” (Hermann, 2005:n.p.n).

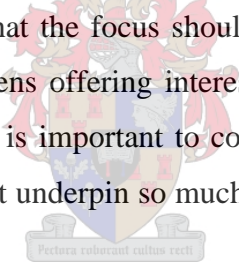
4.4.5 Fifthly, the *Daily Dispatch* in particular and the media in general should be seen to be playing a more integrated role when reporting about HIV/Aids by accommodating plurality of views about the disease.

One of the findings of the GMBSR (2006:2) states that:

“The media should collectively represent all social groups and reflect the diversity of society by giving people access to a variety of viewpoints and the right to react to these viewpoints.”

Tleane (2003:12) says given “our sheer numbers”, the majority of victims in any epidemic in South Africa will always be black. However, he adds:

“Yet, it is rather disturbing that the focus should solely be on black people who are shown on our television screens offering interesting story lines and case studies for journalists and researchers, it is important to consider some of the subtle and not so subtle political undertones that underpin so much of the discourse surrounding Aids in this country.”



4.4.6 The sixth point is that the media is alarmist when it reports about HIV/Aids by telling the public about “over five million children who are affected, orphaned or orphaned by Aids”. Such news reports point to a crisis without giving some solutions for people to live better and positively with the disease. More so, such reports do not give hope to the affected and infected about living longer.

Gevisser quoted in Stein (2001:7) says the media often kills people with Aids long before they are ready to die, fuelling the public misconception that if you have it, you might as well be dead.

4.4.7 The seventh point has to do with the photographic images used. This writer argues that although the people in the photographs gave permission to be photographed, as Kukard (

2004:12) claimed, at least their faces should have been hidden and the body of the naked woman covered.

4.4.8 Summary

This researcher therefore submits that the *Daily Dispatch* violated their rights to privacy and undermined the dignity of the naked woman.

Twain in Schechter (2002:25) is quoted:

“There are laws to protect the freedom of the press’s speech, but none that are worth anything to protect the people from the press.”

Kruger (2005:n.p.n) says the right to privacy is enshrined in the South African Constitution and is a “legal right, and an ethical duty”. He adds that the issue becomes more relevant when journalists are dealing with people who are poor and disadvantaged.

By extension, Chapter Two of the Bill of Rights in The Constitution of the Republic of SA, (1996:7, 8) states that “everyone has an inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected, including the right to privacy”.

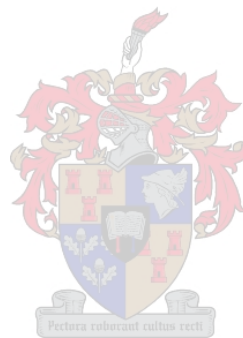
Chaskalson cited in Duncan and Seleokane (1998:135) warns that rights are never absolute and that press freedom is no exception to this rule.

“Press freedom does not entitle a journalist to trample on the dignity and privacy of others, a restraint that some journalists and newspapers are reluctant to acknowledge.”

Lastly, this researcher argues that through the photographs the editorial team of the *Daily Dispatch* either consciously or unconsciously depicted poor black African people as the only faces of HIV/Aids, both men and women.

This has confirmed the research hypothesis of whether the *Daily Dispatch* uses poor black people as the faces and voices of HIV/Aids.

Conversely, in the text the voices of the affected and infected are still not heard.



5. Conclusion

While the work done by the *Daily Dispatch* to inform and educate the general public about the HIV/Aids pandemic is commendable and a service to its readership and the public at large, the content of news reports lacks diversity. HIV/Aids news reports are told only about poor black Africans and nothing is said about whites, Coloureds and Indians who are affected and infected by the disease.

Tsedu (2000:n.p.n) believes that in South Africa:

“...any story about Aids which needs visual enhancement will have a black face on it, perpetuating the impression that ...the disease is affecting black people only.”

It is therefore the duty of the media in general and, in the case of this study, the *Daily Dispatch* in particular, to investigate HIV/Aids cases in white, Coloured and Indian areas and bring the findings to the public view as it is doing with news reports on acts of fraud and corruption in government.

South Africa is now a Constitutional democracy where the freedom of the media is guaranteed. Therefore the media should be seen to practice its craft objectively and without bias, especially about HIV/Aids.

Against this background *ANC Today* (2004:1&2) calls for the building of a united South Africa, free of the demons of racism, sexism and ethnic stereotypes. The ANC encourages national consensus to realise this “noble objective” enshrined in the Constitution.

Braude (1998:8) wrote:

“A number of procedures had to be put into place in order to tackle the lack of monitoring the media.”

6. Recommendations

After studying the role of the media in a new democracy, with the pandemic of HIV/Aids being such a harsh reality, this researcher recommends the following:

- The *Daily Dispatch* as well as other media should encourage their reporters to familiarise themselves with the contents of the South African Constitution to guide them on their day-to-day newsgathering activities.
- The management of the *Daily Dispatch* and other media should consider dedicating a space to cater for HIV/Aids related news and information as part of educating and informing the nation about the pandemic. That space should address news diversity on HIV/Aids, which is not offered at the moment. Daily HIV/Aids news briefs could be one option to address news quantity on the epidemic. The *Mail & Guardian* publishes an HIV/Aids barometer and that should be commended. If there are dedicated pages for sports, politics, and economic news in the *Daily Dispatch*, the same should be done with HIV/Aids, which is the biggest challenge of the 21st century.
- Workshops should be organised for the editorial staff of all media institutions to have some insight about the HIV/Aids as a disease or to write about it in a scientifically, ethically and humanly correct way.
- Broadcast media, radio and television, and community radio stations should use vernacular languages to spread the messages and information about the pandemic. That would to a large extent address the problem of illiteracy of both rural and urban communities with regard to printed forms of media, including newspapers.
- More in-depth research should be undertaken to ensure that the voices of the affected and infected by HIV/Aids are used as primary sources of information in news reports.
- Media monitoring should be an ongoing exercise to ensure that the media inform and educate the South African nation about HIV/Aids across racial lines, not from the point of view of the “poor black African people” only.

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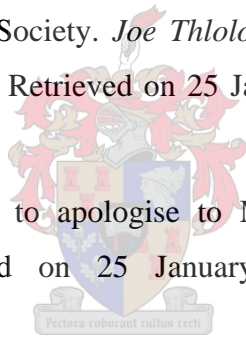
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