

**The coalface of journalism: A qualitative research investigation into  
development communication objectives amongst  
rural newspapers in the Overberg District**

Raashied Galant



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

Supervisor: Mr J.O. Ogada

November 2009

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

Signature:



Date: 29 October 2009

(Raashied Galant)

October 2009

**DECLARATION BY PROMOTOR/SUPERVISOR WITH REGARD TO THE  
SUBMISSION OF DISSERTATION/THESIS FOR EXAMINATION**

**Name of student:**

**Raashied Galant**

**Student number:**

**14927519**

**Degree programme**

**MPhil**

**Title of dissertation/thesis:**

*"The Coalface of Journalism: A Qualitative Research Investigation into HIV/AIDS and Gender Development Communication Objectives within Rural-based Newspapers in the Western Cape"*

**Year of first registration:**

**2006**

**Department:**

**JOURNALISM**

**Promotor/supervisor**

**JOSHUA OKOTH OGADA**

I hereby declare that I **support** the submission of this student's dissertation/thesis for examination

Signature.:



Date: October 28, 2009

## **Abstract**

This thesis explores how six commercial local newspapers based in the towns of Swellendam, Bredasdorp, Caledon and Gansbaai are reporting on gender and HIV/AIDS in ways that may help to shift specific attitudes as well as to generate appropriate community responses. The overall aim of the study is to advance theories around the location of commercial news media in the development context. It also aims to inform and empower development workers and activists on the opportunities or pitfalls in engaging with rural local media to advance their development goals.

In most prior studies into the nature of gender or HIV/AIDS reporting in the media in South Africa, the focus has been exclusively on mainstream corporate and/or urban-based media titles and very little investigation has been done into the performance of small rural-based media. The study employs two methods of data collection namely, a quantitative content analysis of newspapers and structured interviews with the editors of the papers, and a sample group of government employees and community activists in the respective towns.

The structured interviews provide a qualitative dimension to the content analysis, bearing in mind the dangers of quantifying media content and making isolated judgements on the actual context of journalistic practice. Through the interviews, the researcher has been able to explore the extent to which the perceptions of the media editors vis-a-vis a public interest role with respect to gender and HIV/AIDS actually differs from the quantitative evidence of their performance and the perceptions of key informants in their communities.

The findings of the study suggest that local rural media hold out great hope with respect to the advancement of development communication goals through commercial media platforms. The editors in the four towns have established organic connections with their community, albeit tenuous, but which extend into the ranks of development workers in their towns. The data from the content analysis suggests that women enjoy high visibility in the pages of their local papers, and they are most likely to be portrayed as positive achievers than as women encountering violence.

The tenuous nature of the connections between editor and community are most starkly evident around the issue of HIV/AIDS, with coverage of this being very low despite much work being undertaken in the community to deal with the pandemic. With respect to the issue of gender, there was demonstrable evidence from actual examples of content, that showed on the one hand the capacity to motivate for change in women's lives, but also on the other hand a danger of reinforcing attitudes that compound women's oppression. The study offers recommendations to a range of roleplayers to ensure, firstly, the continued survival of local rural newspapers, and also support in building capacity to see these papers mature into journalism products that are integrative and transformative.

## **Acknowledgements**

Firstly I'd like to acknowledge the Ford Foundation for making it possible for me to take leave of my work to focus on my studies. Then also to the Media Development and Diversity Agency who provided funding, through the Gender Advocacy Programme (GAP), to conduct some of the field research in the Overberg and the Breede River Winelands Region.

A great big thank you to Maroot Reynolds for his kind and patient assistance in developing the statistical framework for the computer-generated data in the content analysis.

Thank you to the six media monitors for your dedicated work: Randall Bennett, Thornica Matrose, Maureen Thompson, Sulmor Swartz, Erica Bucchianerri and Cindy Sampson.

Thank you to Yasmeen Raban for helping in transcribing most of the interviews, and who also organised a large part of my life while I was focussed on my books.

To my family, to whom this work is dedicated, it would not have been possible without your interest, support and encouragement all the way. To my mother Mymoena, who remains an inspiration for dedication and hard work, to my brother Khalid, for his support both moral and financial, and to my sister Jaamiah, for her helpful comments that helped to shape a large part of this study.

To the 16 anonymous interview subjects, you know who you are, and I thank you for your time and your openness to allow me to peek into aspects of your community. And finally, to the editors who may not be aware just how much they had helped with this study. Thank you for your time and your openness. To Erika Roux, Juani Walters, Louis Koen, Francois de Jongh and Hugo Geldenhuys - Salute! May you continue your dedication to the craft of journalism and be inspired to ever greater heights of serving the interests of your community.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Chapter one: Introduction and background to the study</b>	1
1.1 Background to the study	1
1.2 Violence against women, HIV/AIDS and rural South Africa	2
1.3 HIV/AIDS in the Overberg region of the Western Cape	5
1.4 The purpose of this study	6
1.5 Preliminary Literature Study	7
1.6 Research Problem and Focus	7
1.7 Assumptions	9
1.8 Research design and methodology	9
1.8.1 Quantitative analysis of newspaper content	10
1.8.2 Structured interviews	10
1.9 Overview of this thesis	10
<b>Chapter two: Theoretical Framework</b>	12
2.1 Media influences and effects	12
2.2 Media and mediation	13
2.3 The special location of journalism	14
2.4 Development communication	17
2.5 Development journalism vs media for democracy vs public journalism	19
2.6 Local news media and community involvement	20
2.7 Gender and media content	23
2.8 HIV/AIDS and the role of the media	25
Summary of chapter two	27
<b>Chapter three: Review of Empirical Studies</b>	28
3.1 Defining the field of rural local media	28
3.2 Assessing media coverage on HIV/AIDS	29

3.3 Identifying the constraints in effective coverage on HIV/AIDS	30
3.4 Assessing coverage of gender in South African Media	32
3.6 Baseline data on gender and HIV/AIDS coverage in rural local media	33
Summary of chapter three	35
<b>Chapter four: Methodological Paradigms and Rationale</b>	<b>36</b>
4.1 The newspapers in this study	36
4.2 Quantitative content analysis	37
4.3 The value of quantitative content analysis	40
4.4 Sampling and validity	41
4.5 Coding and quality control	42
4.6 Structured interviews	43
4.7 Interviews and informants	44
Summary of chapter four	47
<b>Chapter five: Structured Interviews</b>	<b>48</b>
5.1 Informed consent	48
5.2. Government employees or officials	48
5.2.1 Profile of interviewees	48
5.2.2 HIV/AIDS work in the community	49
5.2.3 HIV/AIDS challenges in the local community	51
5.2.4 Gender-related work in the local community	51
5.2.5 Challenges around gender and women's empowerment	52
5.2.6 The role of the local media around HIV/AIDS	53
5.2.7 The role of the local media around gender	53
5.2.8 Perceptions on the media's performance	54
5.3. Community Workers	55
5.3.1 Profile of interviewees	55
5.3.2 Interaction with the media	55
5.3.3 Challenges around HIV/AIDS	56

5.3.4	HIV/AIDS-related programmes and initiatives	57
5.3.5	Challenges around gender in the local community	57
5.3.6	Gender-related programmes and initiatives	58
5.3.7	Role of the local media around HIV/AIDS	59
5.3.8	Role of the local media around gender	59
5.3.9	Perceptions on the media's performance	60
5.3.10	Coverage of community events	61
5.4	The editors of the six local rural newspapers	61
5.4.1	The news operation and interactions with the GAP	61
5.4.2	The local media and HIV/AIDS	62
5.4.3	Challenges around HIV/AIDS	64
5.4.4	Challenges in reporting on HIV/AIDS	64
5.4.5	The local media and gender	65
5.4.6	Challenges around Gender	66
5.4.7	Gender-sensitive news practices	67
5.4.8	Reporting on gender-based violence	67
	Summary of chapter five	69
 <b>Chapter six: Results of the Content Analysis</b>		<b>70</b>
6.1	General limitations of this content analysis	70
6.2	Overall count of gender, HIV/AIDS and local government articles	71
6.3	Who is appearing and speaking in these stories?	72
6.4	What are the occupations of those mainly featured in these stories?	77
6.5	What different subject areas are being reported on?	80
6.6	Victims and survivors	82
6.7	Overall comparison of the content analysis of the two sets of samples	84
6.8	The presence of women in the six papers	87
	Summary of chapter six	90
 <b>Chapter seven: A Qualitative Assessment</b>		<b>91</b>



7.1 Connecting the community	91
7.2 The instrumentality of community	94
7.3 Leverage for change	96
7.4 The depth of journalism	100
Summary of chapter seven	102
<b>Chapter 8: Overall Conclusion and Recommendations</b>	103
8.1 Overall Conclusion	103
8.2 Recommendations	106
8.2.1 Research	106
8.2.2 Media diversity	107
8.2.3 Media development and rural development	107
8.2.4 Local Government	108
8.2.5 Specific Content	109
Bibliography	114
Appendix One: List of rural based newspapers in the Western Cape	119
Appendix Two: Newspaper coding manual and coding sheet	122



# Chapter One – Introduction and Background to the Study

## Introduction

This chapter outlines the background to the study and the motivations for exploring the issues of gender and HIV/AIDS reporting in the context of rural local media. It notes the genesis of this study in the work of the Gender Advocacy Programme (GAP) and then proceeds to provide a contextual overview of the developmental priorities around gender-based violence and rural communities, as well as HIV/AIDS in the Overberg region of the Western Cape. The chapter then outlines the basic purpose and focus of the study; the research problem; the assumptions borne by the researcher and finally; a brief overview of the methodology of the study.

## 1.1 Background to the Study

Rural development, gender and HIV/AIDS are a trio of development concerns that in many cases have merged into a single package informing the goal-orientated projects of several non-governmental organisations in the country. One such organisation has been the Gender Advocacy Programme (GAP), based in Cape Town.

In 2005, based on two years of earlier consultation and advocacy work amongst rural communities in the Western Cape, GAP's Women & Media Project, one of five focus areas in the organisation, committed itself to the following overall developmental objective: *To contribute to a culture of gender-sensitive reporting in South African media in order to facilitate the general empowerment of women through generating greater community responses specifically to gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS.*

The immediate objectives that shaped the actual activities stemming from this broad goal were:

- 1. To influence the willingness and capacity of rural and peri-urban based media to embrace and implement principles and practices of gender-sensitive reporting;*
- 2. To develop the capacity of media to effectively cover and report on local issues with a gender perspective; and*
- 3. To empower rural gender activists and workers to better interact with their media and to hold their local media accountable to gender sensitive practices.*

These goals and objectives involve questions about whether the way the media report on and depict women in their media, can have an effect on attitudes towards women generally. Moreover, where violence against women is a critical overall concern for GAP, how can media coverage of this specific topic have the effect of changing attitudes and generating progressive community responses to the issue?

Between 2005 and 2008, the Women & Media project activities were implemented in the Overberg region, an area of roughly 60km in radius with a population of 237 000 scattered around up to 30 small towns and settlements. During the three years of GAP project activities in the area, there were between 17 and 13 small commercial newspapers operating in the region, making it an area with a very high concentration of small newspapers in the Province.

The Overberg was chosen as the primary research location for this study because of this healthy concentration of local media and because the work of GAP had very importantly opened up opportunities to explore qualitative research questions amongst the three sectors of Local Government, media and civil society.

## **1.2 Violence against Women, HIV/AIDS and Rural South Africa**

Notwithstanding South Africa's liberal legislative and political environment, women – young and old - continue to be persecuted because of their gender. Acts of violence which are experienced predominantly by women in South Africa, include (Soul City, 1999:7):

- sexual harassment;
- rape;
- domestic violence;
- forced prostitution, or trafficking, of women; and
- particular kinds of murder such as
  - witch burnings;
  - rape-murders;
  - sexual serial killers; or
  - intimate femicide (murder by a husband or boyfriend).

South Africa has among one of the highest rates of violence against women in the world. Research

by the South African Medical Research Council [MRC] found that a woman is killed every six hours by an intimate partner (Mathews, Abrahams, Martin, Vetten, Van der Merwe, and Jewkes, 2004:2). Over the past seven years, the highest reported incidence of rape occurred in 2005, when over 40 000 women were raped [and reported it to the police] (South African Police Services [SAPS], 2008i). This has since declined to 36 000 reported rapes in 2007 (SAPS, 2008i).

In the most recent study by the MRC, one in four men in South Africa admitted to having raped someone, and many confessed to having attacked more than one victim (M&G Online, 2009). The study found that three out of four rapists first attacked while still in their teens, while one in 20 men said they had raped a woman or girl in the last year (M&G Online, 2009).

Violence against women [VAW] and poverty have a sinister link, with poverty increasing a woman's vulnerability to VAW through greater exposure to potentially violent situations and by reducing their ability to avoid or escape from such situations (Terry, 2004:470). In South Africa's rural landscape, poverty is pervasive. In 2001, the Government adopted a 10-year rural development strategy and the policy document that formed the basis of this strategy, the *Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy* [ISRDS] policy document, reported that (South African Government, 2000: 6):

“Approximately 70% of South Africa's poor people live in rural areas, and about 70% of the rural residents are poor. Their incomes are constrained because the rural economy is not sufficiently vibrant to provide them with remunerative jobs or self-employment opportunities. Their cost of living is high because they spend relatively more on basic social services such as food and water, shelter, energy, health and education, and transport and communications services. Moreover, the natural resource base to which they have access cannot provide rural people with the means of subsistence.”

Given this assessment, one can deduce that deeper gender schisms exist between men and women in rural areas, and that women face a greater degree of marginalisation in rural areas. The HIV/AIDS pandemic places an additional twist to VAW amid the close intersection between VAW and HIV/AIDS (Amfar, 2005:1). Women, and particularly young girls, are at highest risk of not only

being coerced into forced sex, but of also being infected with HIV/AIDS as a result (Amfar, 2005:1). The continued social stigma attached to HIV/AIDS compounds matters resulting in people either shunning away from tests or failing to disclose their status to sexual partners.

Attitudes and perceptions of sexual violence, particularly among young people, show a disturbing trend of acceptance of sexual coercion, where sexual violence is largely accepted rather than challenged. In a national cross sectional study of views on sexual violence and risk of HIV Infection and AIDS among South African school pupils, it was found that misconceptions about sexual violence were common among both sexes, but more females held views that would put them at high risk of HIV infection (Andersson, Ho-Foster, Matthis, Marokoane, Mashiane, Mhatre, Mitchell, Mokoena, Monasta, Ngxowa, Salcedo, and Sonnekus, 2004:1).

In this study by Andersson et al (2004), over 260 000 school pupils aged between 10-19 years were sampled throughout South Africa, and among the findings were (2004:2-3):

- Up to 58% believed that sexual violence did not include forcing sex with someone you know or that sexual violence did not include unwanted touching;
- 30% believed that girls do not have the right to refuse sex with their boyfriend;
- 48% believed that girls mean yes when they say no; and
- 26% believed that girls enjoy rape

Of these respondents:

- 43% of urban/metropolitan youth believed that condoms cannot protect against HIV infection; and
- 45% of those who supported this contention were young girls.

Further findings were that respondents of either sex who had been abused in the past year were more likely to have misconceptions about sexual violence and about the risk of HIV/AIDS infection. Respondents who had been sexually abused in the past year were more likely to have no intention of taking an HIV test, more likely to say they would not inform their family if they were HIV positive, and more likely to believe that sex with a virgin could cure HIV infection or AIDS (Andersson et al, 2004:3-4). The survey illustrated a disturbing pattern of young South Africans internalising their risk of sexual abuse into misconceptions about sexual violence and about the risk of HIV infection

and AIDS.

In a detailed participatory research into domestic violence conducted by GAP in the Saldanha Bay Community on the Cape West Coast, it was found that domestic violence was still largely considered a private matter and that women often suffer in silence (Khan, 2003:31).

The research in both instances underscores the fact that current social messages are inadequate in stemming the crisis of gender-based persecution in the country, and in fact many of the perceptions and attitudes, particularly among young people, are feeding into this crisis. The media can play a role in changing some of these attitudes.

At the outset, with respect to VAW, the single most important attitude that needs to change is the tolerance for violence against women. Hence, those at the receiving end of this violence should have no tolerance for the experience and should be empowered to challenge it, report it and seek help to end it. While those witnessing or knowing about it, should equally have less and less tolerance for its occurrence and be empowered to put an end to it. The progressive community responses would involve public mobilisation and support for violence against women initiatives, as well as the development of support structures and help for survivors of violence against women.

### **1.3 HIV/AIDS in the Overberg Region of the Western Cape**

The Overberg is located in South Africa's third richest province (Koenderman, 2006:3) and the province with the lowest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in the country (Department of Health 2008:11). Nevertheless, with a population of around 237 500, the overwhelming majority [around 70%] of the Overberg's population earn less than R1 500 per month (Overberg District Municipality [ODM], 2008:43). The Overberg Municipality states in its 2008-2009 Integrated Development Plan Report that the majority of households in the district "can be regarded as relatively poor", while 28,3% of households are living "on or even below the breadline" (ODM, 2008:42).

The towns in the district include: Grabouw, Villiersdorp, Botrivier, Kleinmond, Hawston, Hermanus, Stanford, Caledon, Riviersonderend, Swellendam, Bredasdorp and Gansbaai. The district is made up of four local municipalities, viz [in order of size of population]: Theewaterskloof Local Municipality (TLM), Overstrand Local Municipality (OLM); Swellendam Local Municipality

(SLM) and; Agulhas Local Municipality (ALM).

HIV prevalence in the Overberg has more than quadrupled over three years. Statistics in 2005 showed an HIV prevalence rate of 4.10% (Western Cape Provincial Government, 2007:2). In 2006 this went up to 13% (Department of Health 2008:19), and in 2007 the figure was at 19.4% (Department of Health 2008:19), the second highest for the province's six districts and even higher than the Cape Metropole. The statistics belie a serious HIV/AIDS crisis in this district. It indicates that around 46 000 people in the Overberg are HIV positive.

In the greater Overberg-Boland region, HIV/AIDS (at 10.8%) and TB (at 12.7%) account for the most premature deaths, more than homicide and road traffic deaths (Groenewald, Bradshaw, Van Niekerk, Jefferies & Van Der Merwe, 2007:9-10). TB overall is the leading cause of death in the Overberg (Groenewald et al, 2007:12), while projections for all areas in the Overberg show that HIV/AIDS prevalence and numbers of death will continue to rise (ODM 2008, 45). Because of the increased susceptibility of HIV-positive people to TB disease and mortality, it becomes even more important to put in place measures that will control and address the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the district (Groenewald et al, 2007:15).

These facts and figures are merely to show that HIV/AIDS is indeed a reality in the Overberg. My assumption is that the policy direction in the district – both by government and non-government role players - should be expected to follow the three broad priority areas of prevention, care and treatment.

With respect to attitudes and community responses which the media can address, these would include stigma around the disease, the willingness and openness to be tested, sexual conduct, and misconceptions about the nature of infection.

#### **1.4 The Purpose of this Study**

This study explores how rural-based local commercial news media are reporting on gender and HIV/AIDS in ways that may help to shift specific attitudes as well as to generate appropriate community responses.



It further explores the perceptions of media editors, community activists and local government workers in four towns. The aim of this is to examine the extent to which the perceptions of the media editors vis-a-vis their community/public role with respect to gender and HIV/AIDS actually differs from the quantitative evidence of their performance and the perceptions in the community.

It is hoped that this study will bring rural-based media more into the fold of debates around gender and HIV/AIDS reporting in the media. The study as a whole aims to advance theories around the location of commercial news media in the development context. It also aims to inform and empower development workers and activists on the opportunities or pitfalls in engaging with rural commercial media to advance their developmental goals.

### **1.5 Preliminary Literature Study**

In most prior studies into the nature of gender or HIV/AIDS reporting in the media in South Africa, the focus has been exclusively on mainstream corporate and/or urban-based media titles and very little investigation has been done into the performance of small rural-based media. Where studies have included rural media, they were invariably community and not commercial media. Rural commercial media and rural-based media practitioners are significantly absent in gender and HIV/AIDS media research in South Africa. In 2005, GAP was the first organisation to focus specifically on rural-based media. At the time it undertook a snapshot survey of gender and HIV/AIDS, which covered 12 rural newspapers in the Western Cape. In 2006, it undertook a more extensive survey covering 20-rural based papers. I report on these surveys more extensively under the literature review in Chapter 3.

### **1.6 Research Problem and Focus**

This study has been guided by the following research questions:

- How do rural local media differ from their urban mainstream counterparts in taking on a progressive agenda with respect to gender and HIV/AIDS?
- Do they mimic their mainstream counterparts when it comes to their performance around gender and HIV/AIDS reporting and do they experience the same constraints in reporting more effectively around HIV/AIDS?

- Do commercial local media have the potential to shift attitudes and motivate towards progressive responses to HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence in their local communities?

Insights gained from engaging with these questions will allow activists and/or community workers to better identify or develop strategies of intervention and advocacy around gender and HIV/AIDS development messages in their local media. At the same time, they get to appreciate the nuances and complexities around rural local media's ability to take on a progressive agenda with respect to developmental issues. For the media themselves, exploring these questions becomes a reality-check exercise, on the one hand, of their performance around these specific developmental issues, and on the other hand, a measurement of difference with respect to their urban counterparts around these same issues.

The study explores the performance of sixteen rural newspapers with respect to coverage in the three topic codes of gender, HIV/AIDS and local government. A subset of six papers from this larger sample is then analysed separately and is the focus of a full qualitative analysis. The full qualitative study with respect to the subset of six rural-based local newspapers focusses on:

- their content;
- the perceptions of the news decision makers of these papers;
- the unique production constraints each of the media organisations must contend with; and
- the perceptions of selected members of the community that forms part of the perceived audience or target market of the papers.

Gender and HIV/AIDS are the parameters within which the performance of the six newspapers will be explored. The primary field location will be the Overberg region of the Western Cape, specifically the towns of Caledon, Bredasdorp, Swellendam and Gansbaai. The newspapers that will be focussed on are: *Caledon Kontreinuus*, *Suidernuus*, *Langeberg Bulletin*, *Gansbaai Courant*, *Gansbaai Herald* and the *Overberg News*.

## **1.7 Assumptions**

The programme activities of the GAP Women & Media Project in this region, provided the opportunity and/or capacity for media practitioners to shift consciousness through exposure to advocacy and awareness raising around gender and HIV/AIDS in the media.

While the study does not evaluate implementation of the project activities, it does question editors on whether any of the GAP materials had had any influence on their newsroom activities.

The media being focused on in this research study are small businesses, hence they may enjoy much the same constraints as other “mainstream” commercial media in taking on a progressive agenda with respect to gender and HIV/AIDS. However, it remains presumptuous to assume that rural commercial media will mimic their mainstream counterparts in all the quantitative and qualitative findings on gender and HIV/AIDS in the media. It is therefore instructive to observe how exactly they may differ.

A further assumption is that rural media practitioners, being significantly more locally focussed and operating in small communities, are aware of and in touch with the developmental realities in their localities, including those around gender and HIV/AIDS. This study to some extent puts this assumption to the test.

## **1.8 Research Design and Methodology**

This research study comprises two separate methodologies of data collection viz: (1) a quantitative analysis of newspaper content and, (2) a series of structured interviews. These two sets of data are then analysed together to provide a qualitative assessment of:

- the nature of community attachment the newspapers enjoy;
- how rural media practitioners perceive their role with respect to gender and HIV/AIDS;
- how members of the community view the media's role;
- the capacity of the newspapers to motivate for change around the respective developmental issues; and
- their actual performance based on the content analysis;

### *1.8.1 Quantitative Analysis of Newspaper Content*

Sixteen rural-based papers will be monitored over a six week period. This will serve as a larger sample to the subset of six newspapers that will be the focus of the full qualitative investigation. The 16 papers all come from the broader Overberg and Breede River Valley regions and are included owing to the dearth of any quantitative studies focusing exclusively on rural local media. The data from the full count of 16 papers will in large part serve as an anchor to compare the six papers to their peers in the immediate geographic region. At the same time they serve as a corroborative tool against trends emerging from the six papers.

The quantitative data analysis includes: the number of stories, the types of stories, the disaggregated subjects, the proportion of those appearing in the media and those directly quoted, the occupation of news makers and, the main topics emerging. The data from this analysis provides a general appraisal of the performance of rural-based papers when it comes to gender and HIV/AIDS reporting. The data from the six newspapers that are the focus of the full qualitative study, have then been analysed separately and compared to the overall findings, to explore how exactly they differ or indeed conform to the general trends in rural-based media's reporting on gender and HIV/AIDS.

### *1.8.2 Structured interviews*

Three sets of interviews were conducted with the following sample of interviewees.

- A. media practitioners – the respective editors of the six newspapers (5 persons);
- B. community workers (involved in gender and/or HIV/AIDS development work) – two each from the four towns (8 persons); and
- C. Government employees or officials – two each from the four towns (8 persons);

The 20 interviewees have been chosen across these three sectors on the assumption that together, they provide a broad context to the local media's performance with respect to gender and HIV/AIDS development communication objectives. They were questioned variously on the perceptions of their local media's role around their developmental issues; how they viewed the performance of the media in reporting on these issues; and then also what they regarded as the most important challenges pertaining to these issues in the local communities.

## 1.9 Overview of this thesis

This thesis is divided into six sections:

- Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework and concepts which are dealt with in this study.
- Chapter 3 explores and defines the critical concept of rural local media. It also outlines previous research conducted into media and gender content, as well as HIV/AIDS content in the media.
- Chapter 4 presents the methodology of this study as well as the rationale for the research design.
- Chapter 5 presents the results of the structured interviews conducted with media practitioners, civil society activists and government employees or officials.
- Chapter 6 presents the results of the quantitative content analysis of newspapers.
- Chapter 7 presents the qualitative analysis of the structured interviews and the content analysis.
- Chapter 8 presents the concluding observations and recommendations.

## **Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the overall theoretical framework that informs this study. It starts out by exploring the polemics around media influences and effects and how these polemics have progressed towards the conceptual middle way of recognising the media as a mediating agent in society. The chapter then makes a case for the special location of journalism within the consideration of the mediating role of the media. The chapter then presents an overview of the paradigm of Development Communication and how this relates to journalism and the news media. It then explores studies that have dealt with local media and how they contribute to community involvement and community integration. Finally, the chapter outlines a theoretical framework for the study of gender and media content; as well as exploring the role of the media with respect to HIV/AIDS.

### **2.1 Media Influences and Effects**

The main body of media studies to date concerns the media's interaction with mass society (McQuail 2002:4). Characteristics of the mass society are that it isolates people psychologically and socially, strips them of their communal values and alienates them from what they produce (Du Plooy 1997:4).

The first studies in what was originally called "mass communication" were concerned with the effects the media at the time was having on the way people were interacting with each other and other social institutions. The media in this context came to be seen as "[providing] the social cement and the nervous system of society that compensated for the decline of communal ties and the socially disruptive consequences of migration (across frontiers and into cities)" (McQuail 2002:4). Furthermore, the media was seen as an important functionary "in re-establishing the structure (and moral unity) associated with earlier communities" (Du Plooy 1997:4) as well as playing a pivotal role in "bolstering democracy by providing a diversity of opinions to recipients" (Du Plooy 1997:4). Mass communication hence was considered to be a large-scale one-directional process involving messages produced for a receiver who was "part of a large aggregate audience, but [with] little or no contact with fellow-audience members and little direct knowledge or awareness of who they are" (McQuail 1994:37).

Early mass communication studies suggested the media were very powerful in influencing mass publics (Philo, 1993:254), but over the years scholars and researchers have moved cyclically from the notion of strong effects to that of weak effects, and back again (Jensen & Rosengren, 2007:54). At the same time, the different notions of the nature of effects have also undergone lots of change.

Hence the effects can range from short-term, direct and specific effects to long-term, indirect and diffuse effects (Jensen & Rosengren, 2007:55). Moreover, media came to be seen as part of a process of cultural reproduction, hence media messages are situated within political and cultural assumptions about what is normal and acceptable within society (Philo, 1993:255), and are more than just isolated pieces of information and opinion.

## **2.2 Media and Mediation**

One of the biggest conundrums that remains a matter of polemic in media studies is – is it society shaping the media's content [the benign linear construct of the media that serves to inform, educate and entertain in response to needs or demands]; or is the media shaping society's content [the effects of the media]?

To put it another way, are those people who are responsible for writing or uploading content onto platforms of mass communication [media practitioners] merely reflecting what is truly happening in society and/or the current state of society or; are those media practitioners reflecting a false reality and hence responsible for a false awareness, consciousness, contentment or simply malicious political designs within society?

To put it still another way, is the media [collectively the owners and practitioners] merely a mirror of or messenger in society; or is it an active moulder of society? Hence, on the one hand responsible for or an aggravating agent in some of the recognised social ills that may plague a mass society at any time [including racism, xenophobia, gender-based violence or political violence] or on the other hand, capable of stimulating progressive behaviours or alternative consciousness in society?

The most important conceptual middle way allowing theorists to tackle some of the above questions is to assign to the media a role of mediator of social relations. Here mediation is not about conflict

resolution, but rather about the “indirect way in which we form our perceptions of groups and cultures to which we do not belong” and the way in which the media serves as a “key source of standards, models and norms” in society (McQuail 1994: 64-65).

This involves recognising that - notwithstanding the claimed or critiqued effects of the media; the ability or inability of audiences to resist preferred meanings in messages; and given that the media's construct is necessarily a greater dynamic than just that of linear sender and receiver relationship - the emphasis should be on understanding the manner in which the media is interposed “between us and any experience of the world beyond our direct sense observation” (McQuail 1994: 64). It is a metaphorical location that involves recognising the media's objective function of (McQuail 1994:65):

1. Relaying second-hand (or third-party) versions of events which we have not or cannot observe for ourselves; and of
2. Being used by other actors or institutions in society to contact us for their own purposes (or our own supposed good).

McQuail (1994) outlines six theoretical metaphors which can be applied variously to the manner in which the media mediates, or “intervene[s] between ourselves and reality” (1994:65):

- as a window [on events and experiences];
- as a mirror [of events in society and the world];
- as a filter or gatekeeper;
- as a signpost, guide or interpreter;
- as a forum or platform [for the presentation of information and ideas]; and
- as a screen or barrier [from reality].

The media at any one time can be all of these at once, or play the role of one of these specifically and significantly.

### **2.3 The Special Location of Journalism**

Journalism occupies a special place in the mediated world of the mass media and society. Very broadly, journalism involves the practice of gathering, writing, reporting, editing or presenting news on a mass media platform, but naturally such a neutral definition has long since been re-evaluated.



Most central to this re-evaluation is the contentious topic of “news”, since it is recognised to be a value-laden concept that varies considerably through different professional, cultural and political contexts. In removing the concept of news from the definition of journalism, Medsger (in Berger 2000: 81) offers a definition that describes journalism as “a form of realist communication, via text, images and/or sound”. Berger (2000) further expands on this definition by explaining (2000: 81):

“It is less the appearance or material form of communication that is relevant, than the principles brought to bear – thus elements of journalism can be found in entertainment, education and even public relations, and these elements may also be lacking within informational formats.”

In my opinion, the following three principles pervasive in the field of journalism make it a special component of the mass media:

1. PUBLIC INTEREST – This is the political aspect of the act of journalism and the main motivation for its legal protection (or advocacy to have it protected), the fact that “journalism is communication done on behalf of the public interest” (Berger 2000: 81). Believing that the act of journalism [whether real or imagined] has at heart the interest of the public, requires, on the one hand, the need for an enabling environment to facilitate the practice of journalism, and on the other hand, the need for the blanket protection of this practice and its practitioners even if in some instances they may fall short of serving this public interest. So in other words, the enabling environment must allow for, and the legal environment must protect both, the highest and “noblest” forms of journalistic craft and public interest engagements; as well as the “sleaze” (Berger 2000: 83) and the lowest forms of offence that can possibly be mediated by the media. The contention is that the positive political role of serving the public interest [in the case of South Africa, this can be broadly stated as democracy and development] either exceeds, or if not the case then it has and must be given the potential, to exceed the negative contrary to serving the public interest (Berger 2000: 83). This public interest notion is what Berger (2000) describes as “... a powerful motivating force in the media industry globally, and which serves as one very important standard by which the purpose and performance of journalism can be assessed” (2000: 83). In America in the early 1990s, the positive perception of media serving the

public interest was in deep deficit and journalism was described as being in a crisis there, leading to the significant movement around public journalism (Voakes 2004: 26-27). In South Africa, exactly the opposite was happening, where a new and never-before-seen era of democratic engagement dawned in the country. At the same time, a new era of media freedom and mediated social relations emerged.

2. TRUTH – there is no getting away from the fact that news and journalism is about truth telling. As a professional practice, this is invariably the first and basic ethical practice to uphold. Even though in some instances this might not be so, i.e. on occasion when media publish or broadcast an untruth (as opposed to fiction); a general truth of the mediated realm of journalism in the mass media, is that what they write and report on is in fact the truth, and that the reader and/or audience can expect to find and believe truthful reports in the news media about real and true events in the world (Peterson 2001: 201-202). That critical media theorists on numerous occasions have pointed out the dubious selections of which truths are told [i.e. it is true, but is it news?] as well as the latent and often divergent truths that emerge through the telling and presentation of news, are beside the point. The expectation remains that journalism should comprise of the truth and journalists should act truthfully.
  
3. DEMOCRACY AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE – Apart from the normative articulation in the context of the public interest [that the presence of news media is essential for the workings of democracy and democracy is in the public interest], the very practice of journalism is a democratic craft. As Mark Dueze points out (2008: 6):

“Media work in general and journalism in particular takes place both within and outside of institutions (including salaried employees and an army of stringers and freelancers), by both professionals and amateurs (including so-called ‘citizen media’), both within and across particular media (especially considering converged newsrooms).”

It is also at this point – in the realm of democracy and democratic praxis – where another one of the important conceptual tools in modern media theory across the paradigms is found

i.e.: the public sphere as articulated by Jurgen Habermas. From the outset, it has largely been the craft and content of journalism and news media that has been observed through this lens of the “mediated public sphere”. Over the course of the years though, and starting virtually simultaneously with the emergence of the thesis on the public sphere, was the story of the decline of the public sphere, the world over. Habermas' public sphere is an idealized realm in society in which “ideas, opinions, and views freely circulate” (Croteau & Hoynes 2001: 14). The nature, size, structure, location and even numbers of different public spheres have over the years been mapped out by media theorists (Berger 2002: 24). The realm of the public sphere is the space in which members of mass society engage in “communicative action” (Compton 2000: 456) – i.e. pragmatic debate and discussion to ensure awareness about and prompt responses to needs or concerns of the general public (Compton 2000: 457). The idealized purpose of the healthy public sphere would be to ensure consensus on public decision making and the ability of each uniquely defined group or movement [however identified] in society to make themselves heard (Compton 2000: 454, 458). The media is a crucial facilitating agent in the realisation of a healthy public sphere, since it has the capacity to provide the platforms for a diversity of voices, opinions and discussion. However, the narrative of its decline stems particularly from the critical appraisals of the extent to which, on the one hand, the media landscape actually comprises of a diversity of voices and, on the other hand, the level of equality in competency and access to the media that people in society enjoy.

These three factors - public interest, truth and, democracy and the public sphere - thus place journalism in a special location within the mediated realm of social relations.

## **2.4 Development Communication**

Communication for Development or Development Communication [DC] is the strategic use of communication to advance the project of development either broadly or specifically (Huesca, 2006:50; Boafu, 2006:41-42). This advancement, or the outcomes that are desired in the DC project, can encompass variously (Inagaki, 2007:24):

- behaviour change either at individual or broad social level;
- a change in knowledge or attitude;
- empowerment and capacity building;

- coalition building and partnership; or
- resource development.

The role of journalism in the DC project is tied to the normative functionalist articulation of the performance of the media with respect to informing people and serving the public interest. Hence, where development would be seen as in the public interest, the role of journalism and news media revolves around what the media can actually do, or help to get done, in some of these development projects.

Inevitably, but not exclusively, the targeted beneficiaries of development are “the grassroots, the oppressed, *el pueblo*” (Dervin and Huesca 1999: 170). This has morphed into a myriad of other terms in development-speak, including poor, marginalised, peasants, disadvantaged and underprivileged.

However, here is where journalism and the news media clash with DC objectives. In the majority of instances, except in Africa, journalism and news media occur within the context of media platforms that are private and commercially driven. As such, the focused beneficiaries of development, and those involved in DC projects and campaigns, are not likely to be the desired target audiences of commercial media. Moreover, in some instances developmental ambitions of poor people can be out of sync with the vested interests of media owners and media advertisers. Hence communication for development activists face the twin challenges of having to convince commercial media to take on developmental initiatives [since market logic will not facilitate a natural inclination towards this], while also ensuring adequate and fair coverage of developmental projects and campaigns in the mass media.

The result of this persistent disjunct between commercial news media and development communication has seen a greater emphasis by activists on community media or own-media, including Internet Communication Technologies (ICT), to advance developmental goals through communication.

## **2.5 Development Journalism vs Media for Democracy vs Public Journalism**

Notwithstanding the apparent disjunct between journalism and DC, much has been written about the news media's actual and desired performances with respect to development issues such as poverty, gender, xenophobia, and HIV/AIDS (see Wood & Barnes, 2007; Genderlinks & MISA, 2006; Mtwana & Bird, 2006; Stein, 2001); while at the same time numerous development projects throughout Sub-Saharan Africa have been undertaken in the past 25 years focussing on journalists, journalism education and the news media (see Milne & Taylor, 2006). Moreover, there remains a persistent confidence and a deep-seated ideological conviction that the commercial news media, media practitioners, and the news products they disseminate are – or at least can be – essential role players in the development project.

In the context of Africa, this has taken on a particularly deep-seated common sense where liberal democracy - involving universal suffrage, multi-party politics, freedom of expression, and market capitalism – has been positioned as the essential framework for development to happen, and where the commercial “independent” news media [whether committed to DC or not] is a necessary component of this framework. More specifically, the news media is seen as an essential component for a healthy public sphere.

In this context, the greater discourse in the articulation of the news media/journalism with respect to development, has been around its impact or potential to advance deliberative democracy as opposed to development per se (Berger, 2000:82-83). In America, a nuanced variation on development journalism is found in the whole new movement around public journalism, civic journalism and advocacy journalism.

The common motivation behind these instances of journalism practice, is on the one hand to rescue a dying public sphere (Compton 2000: 454-455), and on the hand to shift journalism from being “only an independent, factual chronicler for a democratic society [to] a cultivator of democratic process” (Voakes 2004:30). In my opinion, the articulation of public journalism in America holds great merit with respect to lessons learned and strategies employed, for commercial news media in South Africa and the articulation of a developmental agenda for them.

Joyce Y.M. Nip (2006) outlines three broad goals of public journalism in helping democracy

(2006:214):

1. to connect to the community;
2. to engage individuals as citizens; and
3. to help public deliberation in search for solutions.

These goals are consistent with ones used in a study by Indiana University School of Journalism into the perceptions of public journalism amongst American journalists, and quoted by the Poynter Institute (Nip, 2006:214):

1. giving ordinary people a chance to express their views on public affairs;
2. motivating ordinary people to get involved in public discussions of important issues;  
and
3. pointing people toward possible solutions to society's problems.

## **2.6 Local News Media and Community Involvement**

While studies abound around the role and value of community non-profit media in local communities in South Africa, very few similar research has been conducted around local commercial newspapers and not least of all, local rural media. Rau, Milne, Du Toit and Mdlongwa (2008), in their case study of six small newspapers, five of which were rural-based, made a step towards exploring the community value and function of small commercial papers. At the outset, they make an important conceptual leap aimed at making the term “community” more inclusive of commercial media. They contend that “a conceptual division between small for-profit independent media enterprises and not-for-profit community media may lead to or perpetuate a perception that the former are less community orientated, in the sense of prioritising profit over caring about and meeting their communities' wishes and needs, including their development needs” (Rau et al, 2008:100).

An important part of the content of the newspapers in my study, as well as those examined by Rau et al, are contributions and articles from the local community, as well as notices about community events and organisations. In this sense these media are community-orientated, albeit within the confines of individual – as opposed to collective – editorial diktat as well as small business economic pressures.

But this study is concerned with specific development concerns in the community and people's responses to this, as opposed to the general informational role of the paper. In this respect, studies from the United States and Europe around local media and community involvement are instructive to, on the one hand, underscore the important location of local media in rural communities, and on the other hand, highlight what has been identified as ways in which these media can facilitate involvement in community issues.

Newspapers are the most local of media and have been more active practitioners of civic journalism aimed at bolstering civic democracy (Jeffres, Lee, Neuendorf and Atkin, 2007:6-7). Mahrt (2008), in a study of local newspapers in a German community, found that local media perform "central integrative functions" for the local community (2008:244). These include providing local topics of conversation that lead to consistent contacts between individuals in the community, as well as informing people of events in their own community "which will often be relevant for their neighbors and fellow inhabitants too" (Mahrt, 2008:244).

Local media content, as opposed to national media content, is likely to convey a "common life" and generate a "local identity" (Paek, Yoon and Shah, 2005, 590). Moreover, localities where there are high levels of print news consumption "produce an information climate that fosters engagement in community life even among non-readers who have a higher likelihood of learning about community events and getting recruited into community activities" (Paek et al, 2005:590). The point is, the climate of information and opinion generated by local media "may encourage learning and deliberation about local events and issues among newspaper non-readers as these ideas flow through interpersonal networks" (Paek et al, 2005:597)

There is also significant evidence from studies in the United States linking local news media consumption with community involvement and civic engagement. The concept of "community involvement" emphasizes participation in "collective activities revolving around the construction and sustenance of the broader community" (Paek et al, 2005:588). Finnegan and Viswanath (quoted in Jeffres et al, 2007) found that regular reading of the local community weekly was correlated with neighbourhood involvement and with use of local community facilities (2007:7), while Jeffres and Dobos (quoted in Jeffres et al, 2007) found that attention to neighbourhood newspapers led to awareness of local groups (2007:7). In their study amongst residents in a U.S. metropolitan district,

Jeffres et al (2007) confirmed among others that reading the newspaper more frequently was an “important predictor of organizational ties and involvement in community activities” (2007:17).

The range of studies in the U.S. into local media and community involvement and community attachment contrasts sharply with the dearth of such studies in South Africa. While this study unfortunately does not fill this gap in that it does not delve into audience research, studies from the U.S. present useful guidelines that can be used to infer from the content analysis of this study how local media content may or may not contribute to progressive community responses to both gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS.

Stramm, Emig and Hesse (1997) proposed several mechanisms by which communication can contribute to community involvement. They developed these mechanisms by first asking what it would take to produce community involvement.

Among the requirements for community involvement, is the availability of a group through which collective action can be taken (Stramm et al, 1997:99). Hence they suggested that local media can help to identify those groups making a difference, or the potential to make a difference, and help bring members of a community together by publicizing group activities (Stramm et al, 1997:99).

Recognising that an individual can only be spurred on to collective action if what happens in or to the community is of some consequence to the individual, then “community” requires to be made relevant to the individual. In situations thus where there is a problem requiring collective action, “community” becomes relevant as an instrumentality for doing something about a problem (Stramm et al, 1997:99). In this respect, local media can identify problems that need community attention and make known their consequences for the individual and/or community (Stramm et al, 1997:99).

And finally, another one of the proposed mechanisms is to assist in the development of individual capability to make a difference within the collective process. This may include “the ability to comprehend others' views of the problem, to express one's own view, and/or to help create the needed group” (Stramm et al, 1997:99). Local media can help this process by getting people to think about and understand the problem so they can clarify or construct their own view (Stramm et al, 1997:99).



## 2.7 Gender and Media Content

Gender is the social distinctions that exist between the sexes (Lowe-Morna, 2001:39), and is distinctly different to the biological distinctions between men and women. As such, gender *roles* are constructed and change over time.

In the development communication paradigm, women feature most prominently in gender goals and outcomes. Numerous development objectives pertaining to gender the world over are targeted mainly at women. The fact is that in the real life balance of equality between the sexes – the gender relations informed by the assumptions about gender roles in society – women face a particularly heavy burden. Women in South Africa face unique and specific burdens of fear, stress, anxiety, illness and violence in society, compared to that of men.

In the case of particular types of violence that mainly women and young girls face in society – sexual assault, rape, domestic violence, femicide – the assumptions around gender roles that can validate this type of violence can include that a man has a right to beat his wife; that a women should in fact bear violence when it occurs within marriage and the household; that women generally are in fact promiscuous; that in most cases women generally desire forced sex or; that sex with a virgin can cure AIDS, for example. While these assumptions do occur at times in South African society, they are not dominant views, and least of all not in the media in the sense of them openly promoting, condoning or justifying these assumptions.

It will be presumptuous to say that it is precisely because of this stance of the media around the hypothetical gender assumptions above [they do not openly subscribe to them], that these assumptions may generally be aberrant [in society]. It will be equally presumptuous to discount any role the media may have in the construction of these assumptions on the basis that, “sexism is so endemic [in society] that the media could contribute relatively little which could not be obtained from many other sources” (Howitt, 1982: 80).

When applying a gender-based approach to the role of the media in society, the approach would question whether the media “can provide some lever of change or element of resistance for women in a social situation still generally structured by inequality” (McQuail, 1994:102). The motivations

for exploring this are the basic assumptions that the media *is* in fact pervasive, influential, and meaningful in society. Hence in the development context, notwithstanding that (1) sexism; (2) gender assumptions that validate violence against women; or (3) restrictive gender norms and values, are informed from many different sources in society, the media requires to be watched or involved in gender development projects since:

1. there may well be a significant role the media can play in challenging unfair restrictive gender norms and values due to its influence on public opinion; or
2. there may well be times when the media contributes to the construction of attitudes, assumptions, or perceptions that can be dangerous and deadly for women.

The Johannesburg-based gender-and-media organisation, Gender Links, points out in its book, *Who's News? Who's Views* that the media in many instances are guilty of the “sins of omission” and the “sins of commission” (Lowe-Morna, 2001: 65) in their coverage of gender issues. In calling for an integration of gender considerations into all media coverage, Lowe-Morna proposes a triangular test composed of: (1) the breadth of coverage; (2) the angle from which the story is told and; (3) the depth of coverage (2001: 65).

The breadth of coverage refers to the extent to which the media actually cover topics pertinent to or about women. Here the call would be for media coverage to reflect a holistic and realistic view of women that also shows the full spectrum of activities in which they engage (Lowe-Morna, 2001: 68).

The angle of the story refers to the approach and treatment of particular stories in the media. The checklist here for the media among others is to ensure a gender conscious approach to reporting; to ensure that male and female subjects are treated equally; and that the experiences and concerns of women are not trivialized in any way (Lowe-Morna, 2001: 82).

The depth of coverage test examines which sources are consulted in a story; the extent of investigation and inquiry into an issue; and “the ability to use a gender lens to uncover hidden stories, context and balance” (Lowe-Morna, 2001: 68). As such, journalists are urged among others to give fair and equal space to women's and men's voices; that they probe gender issues that may underlie stories; that they consult women across the racial and class spectrum and; provide adequate

context and balance (Lowe-Morna, 2001: 73).

## **2.8 HIV/AIDS and the Role of the Media**

At the outset, the overall role of the media with respect to the HIV/AIDS pandemic involves its performance in “mediating democratic debate in the public sphere” with respect to “effective societal responses to HIV and AIDS” (Jacobs & Johnson, 2007:2). Additionally, it involves the manner in which its content or coverage [information role] can “counter misinformation, reduce stigma and bring about behavioural change that is necessary to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS” (Stally in Panos, 2004, 2004:12).

In both the idealised, normative articulation of the media, and the developmental paradigm of communication, theorists, activists and researchers have variously postulated the role of the media with respect to HIV/AIDS to incorporate:

- Serving as a valuable watchdog by “holding the powerful [and/or the government] to account for their responses – or lack thereof – to the crisis” (Berger, 2004:4; Wasserman & De Beer, 2004:85).
- Acting as a “*courier* for public health messaging” (Finlay, 2003:14) and complimenting public health information drives by influencing “public health policy to change the conditions that sustain public health problems” (Stein, 2002:5) [original emphasis].
- Stimulating public debate and dialogue while at the same time challenging “long-established social norms that prevent more widespread changes in behaviour” (Panos, 2004:12). This would include the media's role of elevating the “interest articulation and deliberation” of HIV/AIDS in society by assembling, explaining, debating and disseminating “the best available information and ideas” (Jacobs & Johnson, 2007:2).
- Providing “opportunities for many perspectives and voices to be heard” (Panos, 2004:12).
- Promoting “advocacy on good governance and accountability in combating HIV/AIDS” (Panos, 2004:29). This is also the essence of the process of “mediated deliberation” that involves how well journalists “represent and service the public” (Jacobs & Johnson, 2007:2-3). Stein (2002) further adds flesh to this concept by pointing out that “news media advocacy can therefore expect to influence the larger issues that create an environment determining personal behaviour” while also advocating for “constructive approaches to dealing with the epidemic” (2002:5 & 8).

- Facilitating “communication for social change” which aims to tackle “the underlying issues of discrimination, poverty and marginalisation seen to be driving individual behaviour and the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the first place” (Stein, 2002:6). The media's role in this regard would be to support “dialogue and debate on the key issues of concern” and move away from merely “designing, testing and delivering messages” (Stein, 2002:6). And finally
- Setting an agenda that amounts to “bringing HIV/AIDS into the public awareness” (Finlay, 2003:18) while at the same time establishing the priorities of the policy-and-developmental agendas for tackling the issue (Berger, 2004:3; De Wet 2004:98).

In measuring and/or exploring the media's actual performance with respect to any or all of the above ideals, researchers have over the years conducted qualitative and quantitative analysis of media content; interviewed focus groups and sample groups in the media; applied analytical conceptual tools such as framing, agenda setting and discourse analysis to the media's reporting around specific incidents involving HIV/AIDS or general HIV/AIDS reporting over specific periods and; researchers have conducted audience studies into the perceptions and expectations that media consumers have over the role of the media and the messages they transmit with respect to HIV/AIDS. In short, there has been a considerable amount of study and analysis about the media's coverage of HIV/AIDS, particularly in Africa.

In South Africa, these studies have focused [almost exclusively] on mainstream urban-based news media and journalists, to the exclusion [and marginalisation] of rural-based news media and practitioners. So in other words, in the debate and research into the role of the news media in the fight against HIV/AIDS in South Africa, rural-based media and media practitioners have been virtually ignored.

## **SUMMARY**

This chapter proposes that the metaphorical interventions stemming from viewing the media as a mediating agent in society, is a useful way of taking forward the debate around the influences and effects of the media. I argue for a special place for journalism in the mediated world of mass communication, due to the three factors of truth, public interest, and the public sphere: all three are bound to the practice of journalism. I then outline the paradigm of Development Communication. Here I contend that while there appears to be a persistent disjunct between commercial news media and development community, there remains a deep-seated conviction that the news media is an essential component of a healthy public sphere, which of itself is an essential component of development. Within the commercial print news sector in South Africa, there is a mix of mainstream corporate owned media - who own the daily and tabloid markets wholesale - weekly free-sheets, and then independent local media. Very few of the latter, are based in cities. Most of the independent weekly local newspapers are in rural towns and reporting on small town news. I propose in this chapter that the articulation of Public Journalism in primarily the USA, holds great merit in establishing a location for journalism in respect of a developmental agenda in South Africa. Finally, the chapter outlines a framework within which to study gender and news media content; as well as exploring the role of the media with respect to HIV/AIDS.

## **Chapter Three: Review of Empirical Studies**

### **Introduction**

This study deals with three critical concepts: rural local media, HIV/AIDS, and gender. The chapter starts out by defining the field of “rural local media” and describing its characteristics. It then reflects on the findings of various studies in South Africa exploring the media's coverage of HIV/AIDS and the constraints media practitioners experience in covering this topic. The chapter then reflects on the studies conducted in South Africa around media coverage on gender issues. Finally, it reports on research conducted by this researcher on behalf of the Gender Advocacy Programme (GAP), into coverage of gender and HIV/AIDS in rural local media.

### **3. 1 Defining the Field of Rural Local Media**

The term “rural local media” is hardly used to refer to or even define members of the small commercial and community print media sector in South Africa. The sector has notoriously lacked clarity around its meaning and definition (Rau, Milne, Du Toit, and Mdlongwa, 2008:96). Among the terms that have been used over the years in this sector are, “grassroots media” (Arenstein, 2005), “regional papers” (Koenderman 2006:9), “community titles” (SAARF AMPS, 2007) and, “local weekly newspaper” (Milne & Taylor, 2006:40), all of which lacked any clear definitions.

Hadland and Thorne (2004) grapple with some definitions in their attempt to define “small media” in South Africa (2004:9), and their discussion in this regard is very pertinent. Firstly, they correctly draw a distinction between community media and independent media. They describe the former variously as locally focussed, “owned and controlled” by the community, participatory in nature, and allowing the “opinions and positions of the marginalised to be presented along, and challenge, the authoritative voice of the mainstream media” (Hadland & Thorne, 2004:10).

Independent media they describe as being “privately-owned, commercial media which is free of control and influence by corporate or government interests” (Hadland & Thorne, 2004:10). They go on to point out that “while small, independent media often target a defined geographic community or community of interest, it is not owned or controlled by that community, nor are they necessarily 'participatory' in nature” (Hadland & Thorne, 2004:10). Brought together, they provide a topography of the small media sector in South Africa that comprises of independent media [i.e. small, commercial media] and community media [not for profit media] (Hadland & Thorne, 2004:1).

Rau et al (2008) use the term “independent community media” in their study of six small for-profit independent newspapers South Africa. They contend that these for-profit papers “meet and match” criteria for defining an organisation as 'community media' due to, among others, being locally owned and controlled and committed to showcasing local content (Rau et al, 2008:100). However, while their definition of “independent” is consistent with that of Hadland and Thorne (2004:10), they acknowledge that “independence” remains a highly contested term and that editorial independence is a delicate issue that is difficult to probe (Rau et al, 2008:108).

For the purposes of this study, “rural local media” refers to:

- (a) news media [as opposed to advertising sheets];
- (b) whose editorial and production offices are based in a rural town; and
- (c) whose targeted readership and distribution are confined to specific rural towns.

### **3.2 Assessing Media Coverage on HIV/AIDS**

Stemming from the numerous studies that have been conducted into the South African mainstream media's coverage of HIV/AIDS, the following findings have emerged:

- The coverage of HIV remains extremely low (Gender Links & MISA, 2006:1; Jacobs & Johnson, 2007:11). So for instance, of the 9248 stories that were monitored in South Africa as part of the *HIV and AIDS Gender Baseline Study [GBS]* (Gender Links & MISA, 2006), only 2% mentioned or focused on the topic (Gender Links & MISA, 2006:5). The implication is that, even though reporting on the topic generally increased, “HIV/AIDS stories were not given prominence and priority when compared to other forms of news” (Panos, 2004:30).
- People living with HIV or AIDS are hardly given a voice in the media (Gender Links & MISA, 2006:1; Jacobs & Johnson, 2007:11; Stein, 2002:20). In reports monitored in the *GBS*, people living with HIV and AIDS constituted only 6% of sources, with officials, international agencies and “experts” constituting the majority of sources on the topic (Gender Links & MISA, 2006:6-7).
- In terms of the depth of coverage, Jacobs and Johnson (2007) found that media coverage did not reflect “the urgency of the crisis” as it focused “primarily on conflicts around HIV/AIDS policy,” and specifically the conflict between government and AIDS activists (2007:2,11; Finlay, 2003:15). This amounted to the media failing to “examine the reasons behind stigma

and denial, and not adequately engaging with or seeking out the views of people living with AIDS” (Jacobs & Johnson, 2007:11).

- Overall coverage in the region, including South Africa, has been characterised as “event-driven” and primarily focused on statistics, speeches, workshops and conferences, while pertinent issues were not being investigated (Panos, 2004:24, 27).
- In several specific instances, the media's coverage of HIV/AIDS has been found to be “frequently unbalanced, inaccurate and sensationalized” (Finlay, 2003:18; Panos, 2004:30,31; Jacobs & Johnson, 2007:11). Among the inaccuracies that crept in was misleading statistics or reports on AIDS cures, which was described as both “irresponsible” and giving “false hope” to those who did not understand HIV/AIDS issues (Panos, 2004:30).

Some of the more positive findings that have emerged are:

- there is considerable difference in coverage between media houses (Gender Links & MISA, 2006:1). Hence in the context of the 2% of HIV/AIDS coverage, weekly papers carried up to 9% of this coverage while daily papers averaged between 1% and 2% (Gender Links & MISA, 2006:1, 6). This indicates there may well be exceptions to the general research findings listed above;
- women living with AIDS were becoming more vocal (Gender Links & MISA, 2006:1). Hence, of the 6% of instances where people living with HIV/AIDS were sourced in the media, 63% of the time it was women speaking (Gender Links & MISA, 2006:1); and
- there is a relatively high number of original stories (Gender Links & MISA, 2006:1). Most of the stories on HIV/AIDS were original stories, written by journalists, rather than obtained from agencies and guest writers (Gender Links & MISA, 2006:1). This meant that “newsrooms are investing resources in obtaining original stories” (Gender Links & MISA, 2006:1).

### **3.3 Identifying the Constraints in Effective Coverage on HIV/AIDS**

Given the basic assumption of this study, that rural local media would enjoy the same constraints as their urban mainstream counterparts in taking on a progressive agenda with respect to HIV/AIDS, it is useful to reflect on some of the observations that have been made by researchers so far.

Panos (2004) found that among the constraints that perhaps explained the media's poor coverage,



was that “journalists themselves, as part of the communities they live in and report on, have not come to terms with the universal impact of HIV/AIDS” (2004:12). The tendency thus was to treat HIV/AIDS as a job for other interests groups such as NGOs and the government (Panos, 2004:12).

The profit motive in no uncertain terms is the bulwark that constantly trips the media in its recognition of an advocacy role. Stein (2002) found one extreme of a “strong advocacy role” (2002:9); another position where media practitioners saw their role as “neutral” but with a “weak advocacy role”; and of course the other extreme of negating any other role except that of making money (Stein, 2002:9).

The strong advocacy includes the celebrated fourth estate and watchdog roles of the media. The weak advocacy role hearkens to the “seemingly neutral educational or informative role, defined as 'reporting what is happening' (i.e. information-giving) rather than as a direct attempt to influence actions or the course of events (i.e. agenda-setting)” (Stein, 2002:9).

What seems to be a linked chink in the profit motive and bottom-line journalism that constrains reporting on HIV/AIDS, is the “occupational ideology” (Golding and Elliot:2000) of news values (Jacobs & Johnson, 2007:13). So in other words, journalists have internalised the notion of the “business of news”, i.e. to only create news that sells, and in choosing and publishing particular news over other news, they have linked the “imperative of conforming to news values [with the] financial sustainability of the commercial media” (Finlay, 2003:14).

A critical and practical constraint experienced by media organisations in effectively reporting on HIV/AIDS is resources, both human and financial (Panos, 2004:13; Stein, 2002:28). It is highly likely rural local media will come up against the same constraint, given the small nature of their operation. On the one hand there may be the need for training, both to grapple with the complexities of the issue as well as skills building in effectively researching and writing up the stories. On the other hand, it is time and human resource capacity that are required for dedicated and consistent coverage.

And finally, “AIDS fatigue” has at times been cited by journalists to explain inconsistent and occasional coverage (Jacobs & Johnson, 2007:13). The reasoning is that “readers and viewers are saturated with and turned off by HIV/AIDS and as a result they don't see the point of regular

coverage” (Jacobs & Johnson, 2007:13). Berger (2004) provides an important counter to this pointing out that “it is more likely that journalists (rather than the people) have fatigue” (Berger, 2004:8). In his audience research amongst focus groups in South Africa, Finley (2003) observes (2003:21):

“There was strong evidence of active consumption of media dealing with, or referring to HIV/AIDS...[as well as]...equally strong indications of participants seeking out particular media that discussed or referred to issues such as love and sexuality and HIV/AIDS. These included buying specific newspapers on specific days for their health supplements and tuning into specific radio stations and TV programmes at particular times.”

### **3.4 Assessing Coverage of Gender in South African Media**

The general reporting on women and gender issues in South African mainstream media has been under the spotlight in recent years. The wide-ranging Gender Media Baseline Study (GMBS) conducted by Gender Links and the Media Institute of Southern Africa [GL & MISA] (2003), found serious discrepancies in the manner in which women were reported on and represented in the media. Since then, there have been progressive shifts in the media's performance.

Among the findings of the GMBS was that despite the fact that women comprise nearly a third of legislators, they comprised eight percent of politicians sourced for comment (GL & MISA, 2003:12). In total, women constituted only 19% of known news sources, while black women, who constitute about 45% of the population, represented some five percent of news sources (GL & MISA, 2003:12). There was no topic category in which the voices of women predominated. Women's voices were least well represented in topic codes economics and politics (GL & MISA, 2003:34).

In 2004, the Media Monitoring Project's [MMP] analysis of media during the 16 Days of Activism campaign found an “unprecedented” high number of female sources (46%), although still less than male sources (MMP, 2005:2). The monitoring also showed a dramatic increase in the number of gender-based violence, woman and child abuse stories than in previous research; and found that “a number of media outdid themselves in their support of the 16 Days campaign, while others appeared

to ignore it completely” (MMP, 2005:2).

Similarly, in 2005 the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) found that South African media – along with 8 other countries in the sub-region - had shifted in their reporting. The percentage of female sources in South Africa increased to 26% (Lowe-Morna, 2006:139). As far as subjects were concerned [those who are in the news], female subjects remained under represented at 26%, showing the general dominance (78%) of men news makers (World Association of Christian Communication WACC, 2005:5). I quote further from the GMMP South Africa Report (WACC, 2005:5):

“Men dominated as subjects in all topics represented in the media. The only subjects where women received 100% were in the categories of sex worker and as retired persons. Men dominated the media as experts, with only 5% of women being used as experts.”

All these gender specific studies of the media, where they covered South Africa, focussed exclusively on mainstream and/or urban-based media. Where rural media was included, they were invariably community and not commercial media. So in other words, rural media and rural-based media practitioners are significantly absent in gender-and-media research in South Africa.

### **3.5 Baseline Data on Gender and HIV/AIDS Coverage in Rural Local Media**

In 2006, the Gender Advocacy Programme (GAP) did a media monitoring exercise of 20 newspapers in the Overberg and Breede River Valley regions. This was in fact the first such study to focus exclusively on rural local media and most of the papers covered in this study were included in the GAP 2006 study (GAP, 2006:6-7).

The GAP study provides some baseline data to plot whether there have been any changes in the quality of reporting around HIV/AIDS and gender. The GAP study made no qualitative assessment of content and was confined to a quantitative examination of gender and HIV/AIDS reporting in the 20 papers. Its findings showed that less than 1% of total news coverage over a six week period dealt with or even mentioned HIV/AIDS (GAP, 2006:12). In the study, a total of 600 stories were monitored over a six week period, and only 11 stories dealt with or mentioned HIV/AIDS (GAP, 2006:12).

As far as gender representation was concerned, women constituted 33% of sources and 32% of subjects in the articles monitored (GAP, 2006:13-14). With respect to the occupation of those featured in the news, government officials and spokespersons featured the most while activists or community workers featured just more than 1% of the time in the articles monitored (GAP, 2006:17).

## **SUMMARY**

This chapter defines "rural local media" as news media that gets produced in a rural town, and whose readership and distribution are confined to rural towns. I observe that in both the areas of research into HIV/AIDS- and-the-media, and gender-and-media content, where they covered South Africa, focussed on mainstream and/or urban-based media. As such I contend that rural media, and rural-based media practitioners, are significantly absent from the debates and scrutiny around these two developmental issues. The chapter reports on various empirical studies on HIV/AIDS done in South Africa around the news and the nature and quality of coverage, and who gets a voice in this coverage. Based on the assumption that rural local media will enjoy the same constraints as mainstream papers in taking on a progressive news agenda around HIV/AIDS, I report on studies over the years that have explored this aspect of news production. And finally, the chapter looks at the issue of gender and media content. It reports on studies conducted in South Africa onwards from the Gender Media Baseline Study released in 2003. These studies reviewed explored the manner in which women were reported on and represented in and on South African mainstream media. The last of these studies - part of a global study - found that the proportion of female sources in South African media had increased to 26%, but as before men dominated as subjects in all topic codes. The final empirical study reviewed around gender, I propose as the baseline data for the research conducted in this study. It reports on a study conducted by this researcher on behalf of the Gender Advocacy Programme (GAP) in 2006, and which was the first such study to focus exclusively on rural local media. The study found, among others, that women constituted 33% of sources and 32% of subjects in the news, while less than 1% of total news coverage dealt with or even mentioned HIV/AIDS.

## Chapter Four: Methodological Paradigms and Rationale

### Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology employed in this study. It first outlines the nature of the media that will be studied. It then outlines the design of the quantitative research study while also advancing reasons for the value of content research. The chapter then establishes the sampling strength as well as validity of the study. Finally, the chapter presents the outline of the structured interviews employed in the study, in the context of qualitative research methodology.

### 4.1 The Newspapers in this Study

Most of the newspapers that are part of this study fall within either Hadland and Thorne's "small print media sector" or Rau et al's "independent community media" sector. However, seven of the 16 papers covered in the quantitative content analysis, are owned by Media-24, a major media conglomerate in South Africa. They would be excluded from either of these two sectors, which is why I use the term "rural local media" in this study: to be inclusive of these titles. Notwithstanding these seven titles falling outside the ambit of independent media, their rural geographic base, editorial focus and distribution make them pertinent to include in this study on how HIV/AIDS and gender issues are being covered in rural-based media.

Eleven of the newspapers covered in the content survey of this study are based in the Overberg region, the other five are based in the Breede-River Winelands district.

All these newspaper titles have a defined geographic community focus and distribution in rural towns, with their editorial and production offices located in one of these towns. All the titles are commercial papers, meaning that they depend on advertising for survival, and are in fact small business entities. All of them contain a good dose of local hard news [including crime, violence and political news], editorial, and letters to the editor, and are hardly just advertising sheets.

Except for the *Overberg News*, all of them have a cover price. The *Overberg News* along with the *Stanford River Talk* and the *Greyton Sentinel* are the only monthly papers, otherwise all the rest are weekly publications. All the papers enjoy a healthy mix of English and Afrikaans between their pages, except for the *Gansbaai Courant*, which is exclusively Afrikaans, and the *Stanford River Talk*, which is exclusively English.

The six newspapers which are the focus of the full qualitative investigation of this study are the *Langeberg Bulletin*, *Suidernuus*, *Overberg News*, *Caledon Kontreinuus*, *Gansbaai Courant* and *Gansbaai Herald*. The latter two are under one editor. In the quantitative study, the six papers will be examined separately as a sub-set of the 16 papers.

Except for the *Caledon Kontreinuus*, which is part of the Media-24 stable, the editors of these papers are also the owner and publisher. All six papers operate only a small office with a single editor and several freelance correspondents/journalists scattered amongst several towns. In all instances too, the editor lives in the same geographic community in which the newspaper is distributed. All six newspapers have a print-run of 5 000 and under, while the *Overberg News*, which has no cover price, has a print of 10 000 and under.

Except for a pirate/illegal radio broadcasting intermittently in Bredasdorp, and a special community radio broadcasting during the two-week Whale Festival in Hermanus, there are no permanent community broadcasters in the Overberg. My contention is that the local newspapers in this study, enjoy a special location in their communities in that they are more often than not the only source of news, information and expression about and for their communities. Inevitably, urban based and national media cannot be depended upon to routinely report on issues and events in rural communities unless it is sensational enough or fits in with a running story.

#### **4.2 Quantitative Content Analysis**

This study undertakes a quantitative content analysis of a sample of rural commercial media's reporting around gender and HIV/AIDS over a stratified six week period. The research question posed in this regard is – what is the media's performance with respect to reporting on gender and HIV/AIDS?

Quantitative content analysis is the “systematic and replicable examination of symbols of communication, which have been assigned numeric values according to valid measurement rules, and the analysis of relationships involving those values using statistical methods, in order to describe the communication, draw inferences about its meaning, or infer from the communication to its context, both of production and consumption” (Riffe, Lacy and Fico, 1998:20).

It is about counting and measuring the amount of something as it appears in the media. McQuail (1994) outlines a basic five-step sequence in applying the content analysis technique (1994:277):

1. choose a universe or sample of content;
2. establish a category frame of external references relevant to the purpose of the enquiry;
3. choose a 'unit of analysis' from the content;
4. seek to match the content of the category frame by counting the frequency of the references to relevant items in the category frame, per chosen unit of the content;
5. express the results as an overall distribution of the complete universe or chosen content sample in terms of the frequency of occurrence of the sought-for referents.

The universe or “sample of content” chosen were the following 16 rural-based commercial newspapers:

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>TOWN</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>
<i>Langeberg Bulletin</i>	Swellendam	Weekly
<i>Suidernuus</i>	Bredasdorp	Weekly
<i>Overberg News</i>	Bredasdorp	Monthly
<i>Gansbaai Herald</i>	Gansbaai	Weekly
<i>Gansbaai Courant</i>	Gansbaai	Weekly
<i>Stanford River Talk</i>	Stanford	Monthly
<i>Caledon Kontreinuus</i>	Caledon	Weekly
<i>Hermanus Times</i>	Hermanus	Weekly
<i>Overberg Venster</i>	Hermanus	Weekly
<i>Overstrand Herald</i>	Kleinmond	Weekly
<i>Greyton Sentinal</i>	Greyton	Monthly
<i>Witzenberg Standard</i>	Ceres	Weekly
<i>Worcester Standard</i>	Worcester	Weekly
<i>Witzenberg Herald</i>	Ceres	Weekly
<i>Paarl Post</i>	Paarl	Weekly
<i>Eikestad Nuus</i>	Stellenbosch	Weekly

The 'units of analysis' that were chosen to be monitored were hard news stories, editorials and letters



to the editor. These units of analysis were scanned within a specific frame of reference covering three topic categories, viz:

(a) Gender – these were defined as articles dealing with violence against women (rape, domestic violence, sexual assault), reproductive health issues, women community leaders, women achievers, women in business, women politicians, or general debates around the role of men and women in society. Gender-based violence reports include incidents of rape, domestic violence, violence involving intimate partners, sexual assault, and sexual harassment.

(b) Local Government - a very wide definition was applied here to include articles reporting on or dealing with any matter pertaining to local government, including: articles involving local government officials and employees; reports on council meetings; public engagements of officials and employees, election reporting (excluding advertising and advertorials), articles on local government issues (specifically: housing, water, sanitation and local amenities).

(c) HIV/AIDS - Here any article that merely mentioned HIV/AIDS was monitored. The aim here was to give the widest berth possible to the mere mention of this issue in local media. In other words, to what extent is HIV/AIDS even talked about in local media? If the units of analysis did not concern any of these three topic categories, they were not monitored.

Six issues of the papers, straddled over three months, were chosen from each weekly newspaper. In the case of the three monthly papers, four issues were chosen.

Local Government was included as a topic reference since on the one hand, local government is a critical interface with the community in responding to any policy issues in the town; and on the other hand, this sphere of government has been shown to be crucial to women and gender equality as it has “the potential to transform women's lives through the provision of services, such as water, sanitation, clinics, child care facilities, roads and transport” (DPLG, 2007:12). It can also play an important role in addressing gender-based violence. Interventions which have been proposed for Local Government around gender-based violence include, “raising awareness, developing workplace sexual harassment policies, reducing women's vulnerability through the creation of income-generating activities, and ensuring women's safety through the provision of street lighting, provision of places of safety by availing un-utilised buildings for gender-based violence interventions such as

counselling rooms and shelters”. (DPLG, 2007:12).

### **4.3 The Value of Quantitative Content Analysis**

Holsti (in Riffe et al, 1998:19) describes content analysis as a “technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages”. While journalists may object to the “head-count” that is involved in content analysis and the fact that the messages are examined separately and apart from communicators and receivers (Riffe et al 1998:30), it is particularly through being engulfed by their daily and professional tasks that journalists loose track of the habits and patterns they inculcate in their work output (Kolmer, 2008:120). In this regard, content analysis can be instructive for them.

Specifically with regard to gender and HIV/AIDS, content analysis has been used routinely in a range of studies both in South Africa and globally, to explore the media's performance around these issues. In the wide-ranging Gender and Media Baseline Study conducted in 2003, some 25 newspapers, radio and television news were monitored for two weeks stratified over a month, while the Global Media Monitoring Project last conducted in 2005, involved a quantitative analysis of media in up to 70 countries over one day. The HIV/AIDS Gender Baseline Study of 2006 covered 20 newspapers, radio and television stations in South Africa over 15 days staggered over a month. The findings of virtually all of these studies have been important mechanisms of advocacy to bring about progressive change in the media's reporting and attitudes towards gender and HIV/AIDS.

Content analysis remains the most important method of analysing the products of journalism activity (Kolmer, 2008:117). Thus while Hallin and Mancini (in Hadland, 2007:20-26) identified several media systems in which the role and constraints of media organisations differed significantly, “the ultimate relevance of these constraints for the daily work of journalists cannot be assessed without reference to the actual output of the journalistic production process” (Kolmer, 2008:117).

Content analysis in many ways can also serve as a reality check for the media. Where news content is the product or consequence of routines, practices and values (Riffe et al, 1998:7), content analysis can assess patterns and consistencies in reporting, be it about groups, phenomena, traits or characteristics. When these assessments are made against facts and observations of real life, they can in some instances serve as an index for media distortion (Riffe et al, 1998:10). For example,

when the Gender and Media Baseline Study found that black women constituted only 7% of sources in the media, even though they made up 45% of the population.

Content analysis is a “non-obtrusive, non-reactive” measurement technique (Riffe et al, 1998:30), which allows a researcher to explore communication content without having to gain access to communicators directly. Herein also lies one of the basic objections to content analysis, in that on its own, it fails to deal with the social context of the production and reception of media content (Kolmer, 2008:120). This study aims to overcome this objection through incorporating an additional methodological approach that involves interviews with both communicators and outside stakeholders in the media under focus.

#### **4.4 Sampling and Validity**

A sample is a subset of units from the entire population that is being studied (Riffe et al, 1998:81). Content research inevitably has to rely on sampling to deal with the great volume of mass media content (Kolmer, 2008:121). However, the chosen sample must confidently represent the population to which it will make inferences. This is the crux of the validity of a sample.

The sample of rural-based newspapers chosen for this study are from the Breede River Winelands and the Overberg Districts, in the Western Cape. These two areas were the primary focus areas of the development work of the Women & Media Project of the Gender Advocacy Programme (GAP), between 2005 and 2007. The two areas are also media-rich with around 20 newspapers, more than half of which were independent, operating there.

It is a limitation that the sample does not cover and include more newspapers from other rural areas across South Africa, but time and costs prevented that. However, given the general dearth of any content research around gender and HIV/AIDS in rural media, this study will hopefully lay some initial groundwork that will bring rural commercial media more into the fold of this research. Moreover, Kolmer (2008) observes that, “In order to take into account the great variability of media content, in terms of chronological and media structures, the development of incessant and comprehensive studies becomes necessary; in other words continuous media monitoring” (2008:118). The hope is therefore that other researchers would be able to build on this study by incorporating a more varied sample of rural media from across the country, and which might then explore other variations or even consistencies with this study.

As it stands now, due to the purposive nature and choice of the sample, it cannot be used to infer to the larger population of rural media in South Africa. However, with respect to the two regions in question, the sample size represents 72% of the print media based there, and hence the findings can confidently be used to infer about the population of media in these two regions.

#### **4.5 Coding and Quality Control**

Apart from validity, any quantitative research must also be reliable in the measurements that it uses and the data and analysis that flow from these measurements (Riffe et al, 1998:104). Here is where the quality control over the rules and procedures around the coding and inputting comes in.

A detailed coding manual along with a coding grid was developed (Appendix). Both of these were adapted from the methodology of the 2006 GAP Study, which was developed in conjunction with the Southern African Media and Gender Institute, (SAMGI). Six media monitors drawn mainly from the town of Bredasdorp were recruited and trained to conduct the monitoring exercise. They underwent a week-long training course that involved modules on:

- the role and function of media in society;
- critical gender and media awareness; and
- technical and theoretical skills in the methodology of quantitative content analysis.

A trial-run coding exercise was conducted before the actual monitoring commenced. The entire monitoring of the 90 newspapers was conducted over five days in Bredasdorp. The coding was captured on paper, and thereafter inputted into a data spreadsheet.

While a great part of the quality control of a quantitative research lies in the recruitment and training of analysts (Kolmer, 2008:126), as well as the clear conceptual and operational definitions about what is to be identified and coded in the content (Riffe et al, 1998:107), reliability ultimately is about the agreement amongst coders about categorizing content (Riffe et al, 1998:104). This is to ensure and confirm that the assigning of content to particular categories by the coders is the result of explicitly defined and accepted concept definitions, and not human bias or conjecture (Riffe et al, 1998:104).

The agreement amongst coders was assessed by choosing four randomly selected articles from the

6 coders, a total of 24 articles, which were then re-coded by each coder, except the four which they had already coded. In this way each coder was randomly assessed four times against another coder. The number of times they agreed or disagreed in assigning a specific code was then added up for each article, per coder. The units of entry for each article was calculated from the number of fixed required entries per coding sheet plus the variable units according to the number of people to be coded in the article.

A percentage of agreement with the four other coders in relation to the units of entry for the articles was calculated for each coder. The proportions of agreement amongst the six coders, when assessed against four colleagues, was between 87% and 95%.

#### **4.6 Structured Interviews**

The next important methodological approach of this study is that of structured interviews. The aim here is to provide a qualitative dimension to the content analysis by exploring in more detail how the gender and HIV/AIDS reporting in five of the newspapers in the sample are, on the one hand, perceived by strategic members of the community, and on the other hand, perceived by the media owners themselves.

Among the three distinctive features of qualitative research that Jensen (2005) identifies, is the notion that “human agents [people] experience both their ordinary lives and extraordinary events as meaningful”(2005: 236). This concept of meaning referred to by Jensen, identifies the media as one of the “vehicles of meaning” (Jensen, 2005: 236) in society. So in other words, the media along with “... cultural artefacts and other vehicles of meaning” (Jensen, 2005: 236), are the means through which much of what is meaningful is discerned in everyday life.

Qualitative research explores “the textual contents of the technological media, but also their materiality, scheduling, and social uses” in order to evaluate “... empirically how the media generate meaning” (Jensen, 2005: 236). Moreover, a distinguishing feature of more recent qualitative work has been to connect meaning and action “... as performed inside media organisations ... as well as by audiences” (Jensen, 2005: 236).

The aim of the research in this study is to explore empirically how rural-based commercial news media are reporting on gender and HIV/AIDS in ways that may help to shift specific attitudes as well as to generate appropriate community responses. The connection between meaning and action

are fundamentally linked in this objective.

The second distinctive feature of qualitative research identified by Jensen, is the way in which such research connects theory and practice. According to Jensen (2005), “qualitative studies involve a weighing of theoretical aims with practical constraints” (2005: 236). This research report will reflect on some of the constraints rural media practitioners face vis-a-vis the idealised role they can play in shifting attitudes and generating appropriate community responses to gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS.

The third distinctive feature of qualitative research identified by Jensen, is the role of the researcher, who is defined as an “interpretive subject” (Jensen, 2005:236). The qualitative ambition, hence, is for the researcher to interpret “meaning in action”. Through the structured interviews with media editors, the researcher aims to explore whether they themselves feel they have any meaningful role to play around the issues of gender and HIV/AIDS in the community. Through other interviews with key informants, the research aims to explore how the perceptions of media practitioners around priorities with respect to gender and HIV/AIDS development work in their local communities may or may not converge with those of the key informants, and the impact this has on their news content.

#### **4.7 Interviews and informants**

This research study involves interviews with 16 key informants across four towns, as well as interviews with the five editors of newspapers based in these towns [two of the papers are edited by the same person]. The key informants were chosen because of their unique experiences and location in the local communities, and in this way they were considered to provide important insight and qualitative context to the local media's performance with respect to gender and HIV/AIDS news content.

The interviews were structured along three stratified groups of interviewees [in other words, the same questions were be posed to people in the same group]:

- A. media practitioners – the respective editors of the six newspapers [two of the papers are edited by the same person] [5 persons];
- B. community workers involved in gender and/or HIV/AIDS development work – two each in the four towns [8]; and
- C. Government employees or officials – two each from the four towns

[8];

#### *A. Media Practitioners*

Without informing on the results of the content analysis, the editors were interviewed about:

- their personal attitudes towards any advocacy role, if at all, they perceive with respect to gender and HIV/AIDS;
- General awareness (consciousness) about gender and HIV/AIDS and local community initiatives with respect to this;
- the nature of the contact, if at all, they had had with GAP, and any sorts of influence it may have had on their attitudes and practices in the news room.

#### *B. Community Development Workers or Activists*

This group of interviewees had been intimately connected to community-based initiatives around gender and/or HIV/AIDS. They could also be seen to be the proverbial voice of civil society since they would be aware of the development challenges around gender and HIV/AIDS which people in their community faced. With respect to this group of interviewees, the researcher explored:

- Their personal attitudes towards development communication messages and/or civic journalism practices with respect to gender and HIV/AIDS;
- Their historical experiences with respect to interacting with their local media or securing coverage around community initiatives pertaining to gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS;
- Their perceptions around the local media's performance with respect to reporting on gender and HIV/AIDS; and
- The nature of the contact, if at all, they had had with GAP and any sorts of influence this had on their approach to gender and media issues.

#### *C. Government employees or officials*

The final group of interviewees comprised of Government employees or officials closely linked to Local Government. This is an important sector in this research study since many projects pertaining to gender and HIV/AIDS in rural areas are implemented through local government. This sector would also be generally sensitive to local media coverage of development initiatives. With respect to this group of interviewees, the researcher explored:

- Their perceptions of any role the media should have with respect to gender and HIV/AIDS;
- Their perceptions around the local media's performance with respect to reporting on local initiatives pertaining to gender and HIV/AIDS;
- The nature of contact, if at all, they had had with GAP and any sorts of influence this may have had on their approach to gender and media issues.



## **SUMMARY**

This study involves a quantitative content analysis of 16 rural local papers from the broader Overberg and Breede River Winelands Districts. Six newspapers, based exclusively in the Overberg, are then analysed as a sub-set of the 16 papers. The content analysis of the six papers is complemented by structured interviews with 21 subjects from across four towns and covering the three sectors of government, civil society and the editors of the six papers. The content analysis allowed the researcher to explore the proportion of local government, gender and HIV/AIDS-related articles appearing in the newspapers. These articles were then coded in order to explore the disaggregated occurrence of people appearing in the news across these three topic codes, their function in the stories, the nature of their occupations, and then the different subject areas that were being covered. In making a comparison between the 16 papers and the sub-set of 6 papers the researcher was able to observe upfront how consistent or different the performance of the six papers appeared to be when compared to their peers in the immediate geographic region. The structured interviews provide a qualitative dimension to the content analysis. At the outset, the interviews allowed the researcher to compare the editors' stated perceptions and aspirations around their news products with actual performance in the content study. The interviews further gave insight into the role of the media that was being desired amongst key informants in the towns as well as their perceptions on their local media's current performance around specific developmental issues.

## Chapter Five: Structured Interviews

### Introduction

This chapter will explore the perceptions of five media editors along with the perceptions of 16 government employees and community activists spread across four towns in the Overberg. The aim is to explore on the one hand, the media editors' perceptions around their role with respect to HIV/AIDS and gender in the community and, on the other hand, the extent to which their understandings of the development priorities around these issues coincide with key informants in their town. The chapter will first report on the interviews with government employees, followed by the interviews with community activists and then the interviews with the six media editors. Each section will indicate the specific questions interviewees responded to. Finally, the chapter presents an outline of overall observations stemming from the three sets of interviews with a view to identifying areas of convergence or divergence around specific issues.

### 5.1 Informed Consent

All respondents gave their informed consent for the interviews. The respondents will not be identified by name. In the case of the media editors, it was pointed out that while their responses will be reported anonymously, they will most likely be identified through association with the listing of the newspapers in the content analysis. They all graciously still consented to the interviews. The interviews were conducted individually between October 2008 and July 2009. Most of the interviews were conducted in Afrikaans, and the responses have been translated appropriately.

### 5.2 Government Employees or Officials

#### *5.2.1 – Profile of Interviewees*

*What work do you do now? Does it involve any work relating to gender or hiv/aids?*

*Have you ever been involved in a GAP Women & Media activity?*

*How often do you read your local community newspaper?*

- *All the time, every week*
- *Occasionally, when I happen to come across one*
- *Only if I know there's something in there I want to see*
- *Never*

Three of the interviewees were Community Development Workers (CDW), employed by the

Provincial Department of Local Government and Housing. The CDW's role is to serve as liaison between the community and Local Government (LG). In this way they identify issues and refer it to the relevant department or unit in local government. Their work is thus intimately connected to both LG and the community. The other interviewees were two local government councillors, two primary health care practitioners responsible for a municipal sub-structure, and one employee in a local municipality's Human Resources Department. Only two of those interviewed had ever been involved in a GAP event, and thus would have come into contact with the GAP-specific advocacy around gender, HIV/AIDS and the media. Only one of the eight respondents was male.

All the interviewees in varying degrees of intensity dealt with issues of HIV/AIDS or gender in the course of their work. For the CDWs and the health practitioners it was virtually a daily encounter in their local communities. The two councillors were the least involved in any HIV/AIDS issues, while the human resource employee was involved in the issue at work-place policy level.

With respect to gender issues, one of the councillors was a member of the gender committee in the local council, while once again the human resource employee was involved in the issue at a work-place policy level in terms of gender equity. One of the CDW's mentioned that they also dealt with domestic violence issues, where they would assist women affected in accessing the justice system.

Except for one, all of them indicated that they read their local newspaper "all the time, every week". The one other respondent said she read her local paper only "occasionally".

### 5.2.2 HIV/AIDS work in the Community

*What programmes or initiatives pertaining to HIV/AIDS are you aware of that local government implements?*

*What community-based organisations or NGOs in the district do you know of who focus on issues pertaining to HIV/AIDS or gender?*

The aim of these questions was to get an idea of the nature and scope of any activities pertaining to HIV/AIDS in the local community. Where local newspapers generally devote much attention to local municipal matters, it was also important to get an idea of what the LG authority was doing. Activities stemming both from the civil society sector as well as the LG sector could well be the source of much information for the local media.

Across the board in the four towns it seems, the LG authority has very few, if any, consistent programmes or initiatives dealing with HIV/AIDS. This may largely be due to the fact that health and primary health care are no longer issues falling within the ambit of local government, but under Provincial Government. Most of the respondents cited December 1, World Aids Day, as an occasion when LG organises various symbolic activities. One of the councillors mentioned attending an HIV/AIDS workshop organised by LG. Nevertheless, there are a host of services that are rolled out through the clinics. These include:

- mother-to-child transmission programmes;
- Anti-retroviral (ARV) roll-out programmes for pregnant mothers;
- follow-up services for babies;
- a feeding scheme and testing for babies;
- voluntary counseling and testing services both at clinic level and for businesses;
- home-based carer services for AIDS sufferers;
- HIV, AIDS, TB and Sexually transmitted disease (HATS) programme; and
- numerous awareness raising initiatives and campaigns.

Within the communities themselves, there appeared to be several non-governmental organisations dealing with HIV/AIDS and gender issues. Respondents listed over a dozen organisations across the four towns, the majority of whom dealt with issues pertaining to HIV/AIDS. These included:

- Child and Family Welfare
- Community Police Forum and Community Safety Forums (gender issues – such as domestic violence and rape)
- Health and Welfare Forums
- Compassion in Action
- ACVV
- Early Childhood
- Lovelife
- Ikamva Youth (dealing with both gender and HIV/AIDS issues)
- Rainbow Trust
- Aids Action / Vigs Aksie
- BADISA
- Hospice
- Christelike Aksie (dealing with gender issues)

- Rape Forum (dealing with gender issues)

### 5.2.3 HIV/AIDS Challenges in the Local Community

*What do you consider to be the main challenges with respect to HIV/AIDS in your local community?*

As far as the local challenges with respect to HIV/AIDS were concerned, the responses varied considerably. Surprisingly, stigma as well as general awareness about HIV/AIDS were cited only once by any of the respondents as a challenge. Most of the respondents were very specific about the challenges. At least two cited poverty and unemployment as challenges needing to be confronted “since they play a role in the spread of the disease”. While at least two people identified information for young people as a challenge, two other respondents felt it was more important to educate parents and older people since “the youth are quite aware but the older people are less informed”. Other challenges cited were:

- the need for a hospice to provide care for AIDS patients;
- to get more people on ARV treatment and they remain on the treatment;
- for people to come earlier for ARV treatment;
- building support networks
- an orphanage for children left alone due to death of parents; and
- emotional support and guidance on how family life will be influenced.

### 5.2.4 Gender-related work in the Local Community

*What programmes or initiatives pertaining to gender (such as gender equality and gender-based violence) are you aware of that local government implements?*

Similarly here, the aim of these questions was to get an idea of the range and scope of activities undertaken by LG with respect to gender. Civil society organisations involved in this issue were listed under the previous questions. The interviewees pointed out to several projects pertaining to gender and women's empowerment that LG was involved in, including the fact that there were several women in high ranking positions in LG across the district. Among the specific projects which some of the local authority's were involved in were:

- a Women in Construction initiative that was housed by LG; and
- a women's-run food garden project that aimed to provide basic vegetables to households and for which the municipality granted land;

- sponsoring programmes and events for the Rape Forum;
- production of materials about children's awareness around sexual harassment;
- information and awareness programmes around foetal alcohol syndrome;
- Women's Day events; and
- symbolic events and awareness raising during the 16 Days of Activism on Violence Against Women.

One of the councillors mentioned a gender-sensitive workshop that was held for LG employees and officials. The councillor who also serves on the local municipality's gender desk reported on several courses on gender which the municipality had sent a group of its employees on, along with efforts by the committee to facilitate greater gender sensitive information and awareness raising throughout all the departments in local authority. Two of the respondents was not sure of any projects around gender undertaken by the local authority.

#### 5.2.5 Challenges around Gender and Women's Empowerment

*What do you consider to be the main challenges with respect to gender equality and women's empowerment in your local community?*

The challenges facing women in business and leadership positions were the most common problems raised by respondents under the question of gender equality and women's empowerment in their local communities. At least half the interviewees noted the persistence of gender inequality in their local communities, where “men are still dominant”; “women are still regarded as not being capable of leading and are undermined”; and the persistent view that “women should look after children”. At least three respondents cited a need for more education for women, particularly about their rights. Given this, among the observations were that women were still “underdeveloped”; they were “still scared and submissive to husbands”; and there was a need for “more leadership amongst women”. Women also needed more “financial support”, while one respondent noted that women in business were discriminated against particularly in the handing out of tenders since “many of them [women] are only starting out but they don't get a chance because they want experience”. As such, job opportunities was cited by one respondent as a big challenge for women in the community. One respondent cited teenage pregnancies as a challenge and the need to educate parents on “how to deal with the teenage pregnancies”.

### 5.2.6 The Role of the Local Media Around HIV/AIDS

*Do you feel your local newspaper can play a role when it comes to the issue of HIV/AIDS?*

The eight respondents were generally unanimous in agreeing that their local newspaper had a role to play around HIV/AIDS. All of them stated in the main, that this role was about information:

- they can give bigger exposure/coverage to the issue and publish more awareness raising materials;
- they can play a role through more advertisements and information on the issue, particularly on services available and to address misconceptions around the disease

Beyond this information role, one of the respondents suggested the media can also “link one organisation with another organisation”. One of the respondents was more pointed in her remarks, saying the media “need to start making this issue [HIV/AIDS] their business as well ... We always have to go to them to ask them [for publicity], but they need to start coming to us a bit as well”.

Only one of the respondents was doubtful of any role that her local newspaper could play:

“ ...People who must get the message don't read the paper. We realised that you have to get people together to spread the message [like a community gathering/meeting]. The newspaper costs money and people can't afford this. They can play a role only amongst those who know already – i.e. the people who buy the paper normally know the basics about AIDS and HIV.”

### 5.2.7 The Role of the Local Media Around Gender

*Do you feel your local newspaper can play a role when it comes to gender equality and women's empowerment in your community?*

Similarly as far as gender equality and women's empowerment were concerned, the interviewees were unanimous in agreeing that their local media had a role to play. Although at least two of the interviewees regarded this role as providing more information and publicity around women's rights and women's events, generally it was more than just an informational role the interviewees saw for the media. One interviewee noted that the local media “can play a motivational role for women by encouraging them to achieve and reach for goals”. Another suggestion was that the local media involve more women in its operations so that they can be empowered. A more forthright suggestion

was that media should not only look more at the issue of abusive relationships in the community, but also expose [name and shame] abusive people in the community. The interviewee added, “We need to get people to talk about things ... they're way too quiet, and the media only concentrates on statistics”. Only one of the interviewees was sceptical about a role for the media, saying that while she believed the paper can play a role, “it also depends on how much information they get [from the community]”.

#### 5.2.8 Perceptions on the Media's Performance

*How would you rate your local newspaper with respect to reporting on these issues [challenges around HIV/AIDS]?*

- *They give regular coverage to these issues*
- *They only provide occasional coverage of these issues*
- *They never cover or report on these issues*

*How would you rate your local newspaper with respect to reporting on these issues [challenges around gender equality and women's empowerment]?*

After interviewees gave their opinions on the challenges around HIV/AIDS and gender in their community, they were separately asked two closed questions to rate their newspaper with respect to reporting on these various challenges.

On the challenges around HIV/AIDS, five of the respondents said their newspaper reported only occasionally on these issues, while three said it never covered or reported on these issues, but most of them qualified their answers. Only one of the interviewees who responded with “never” qualified her response by adding that, “I don't blame them because I feel I should give more information to the media myself”.

Those who responded with “occasionally” admitted that while the local media did report on HIV issues, “it was very little”, “once or maybe twice a month”, or “they mainly concentrate on the statistics and not actual prevention information”.

When it came to rating their local media with respect to reporting on the challenges around gender equality and women's empowerment, only two said “occasionally” while the rest said the local media never reports on these issues. There were no qualified responses to this question.



## 5.3 Community Workers

### 5.3.1 Profile of Interviewees

*What work do you do? Does it involve any work relating to gender or HIV/aids?*

*Were you ever involved in a GAP Women & Media activity?*

The majority of these interviewees were paid employees of non-governmental organisations. Only one respondent was a volunteer worker. Three of them were home-based care givers who provided various services to people with HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis (TB). Two were counsellors based at their local clinics, and who provided counselling on various issues including pre- and post-HIV testing, substance abuse, domestic violence, sexual abuse and rape counselling. The rest of the interviewees were project managers in NGOs engaged in local development work, including HIV/AIDS awareness, youth development and substance abuse. Three of the interviewees had previously been involved in a GAP programme and were thus exposed to GAP-specific advocacy around gender and HIV/AIDS in the media. Two of the interviewees were male.

### 5.3.2 Interaction with the Media

*Have you ever interacted with your local media in any of the following ways:*

- *Called in to a radio talk show*
- *Written a letter to the editor*
- *Written an article on a community event or activity*
- *issued a media release on a community event or activity*

*How often do you read your local community newspaper?*

- *All the time, every week*
- *Occasionally, when I happen to come across one*
- *Only if I know there's something in there I want to see*
- *Never*

The aim of these questions was to see whether the interviewees were actually avid readers of their local paper or not, and whether they themselves interacted with their media beyond just being readers. Where they pro-actively engage with the media might demonstrate a greater sensitivity to what coverage is in the media.

Only one of the respondents said they read their local paper only “occasionally”, while all the rest said they read their paper “all the time, every week”. As far as their actual interactions with their

local media were concerned, at least four of the interviewees had written an article on a community event or activity, while three of these had additionally written a letter to the editor and issued a media release. The rest of the interviewees had had no pro-active engagement with their local media. Thus half of these interviewees were passive consumers of their local media.

### 5.3.3 Challenges around HIV/AIDS

*What do you consider to be the main challenges with respect to HIV/AIDS in your local community?*

Two of the interviewees cited stigma as a big challenge, and hence the need for support for “people to come out and be open about their status”. At least three of the interviewees mentioned the challenge of people knowingly infecting others.

“People are misinformed, or they know about the dangers but do nothing about it.  
I've come across people who are positive who are still sleeping around.”

One of the interviewees blamed ignorance and denial, hence “people are infecting others on purpose and they need to take responsibility for their actions.” Several of the respondents highlighted education, with one pointing out that awareness raising was still lacking. One interviewee called for greater involvement of the church because “they can really help to spread the message”, while another called for education with a “live, active approach in order to get the message across” since “young people are not taking it seriously”. One respondent said the lack of proper information meant that people felt they were powerless against the illness. Another interviewee felt a challenge was education that should focus on mother-to-child infection since “many parents are infected and they need to be educated about how to deal with the children”. Two of the interviewees lamented the lack of resources they have to conduct awareness programmes.

Social and economic upliftment were cited by two interviewees as big challenges. According to one response, social problems abound and poverty is associated with the illness because most of the Aids sufferers are young and are not eligible for pension, therefore they need a grant but it takes time. Another challenge was the need to set up community gardens since many HIV positive people were not getting the right nutrition. One interviewee cited the challenge to women as the biggest problem, since they are most infected, and hence there was a great need to uplift women in the

community.

#### 5.3.4 HIV/AIDS-Related Programmes and Initiatives

*Over the past 2 to 3 years, what initiatives, programmes or events pertaining to HIV/AIDS are you aware of that were conducted in your local district?*

As far as HIV/AIDS-related programmes and events were concerned, only one interviewee said she didn't know of any programmes that had been held in her locality. All the other interviewees listed several initiatives which had taken place in their communities, such as:

- the establishment and continued running of an HIV/AIDS clinic;
- distributing food parcels to people with HIV;
- an HIV/AIDS activator programme;
- awareness-raising workshops amongst high school learners;
- prevention workshops;
- arts and culture events involving dancing and drama with groups dealing with HIV/AIDS issues;
- campaign work and awareness raising events around December 1, World Aids Day;
- door-to-door awareness raising events; and
- youth camps that included specific programmes around HIV/AIDS.

#### 5.3.5 Challenges around Gender in the Local Community

*What do you consider to be the main challenges with respect to gender equality and women's empowerment in your local community?*

Women not being aware of their rights in the face of violence and being scared to speak up, were common challenges that several interviewees raised. It was noted by one interviewee that domestic violence was on the rise in her locality, but women were not doing much about it because they didn't know their rights. One interviewee added that there was still a problem at police level when women reported a matter, as they still often had to deal with a man, and were thus still too scared to speak. Another interviewee said there was a need for more women and gender organisations to give women an opportunity to speak out. The same interviewee though noted that most of the organisations in her locality were still largely run by white people, which she said was a problem “that one group still has so much power”. Still around violence, another challenge that was raised was the need for a place of safety.

With respect to youth, one interviewee said that most of the youth were uninformed about gender issues and rights and would thus walk straight into danger, while another interviewee said a challenge was to get youth off the street since often this had implications for young girls.

As far as economic issues were concerned, job opportunities for young women was one of the challenges raised, while two other interviewees noted that many women were still financially dependent on men hence they remained subservient to men. This problem was made worse by high unemployment amongst women, noted one interviewee. Another problem raised in this respect, was that the government was taking too long to approve grants for needy people.

Justice around maintenance issues and court cases was another challenge around gender, and one interviewee suggested that the Department of Justice “send out people and station them in different towns” because of the high expense in travelling to the District Court.

#### 5.3.6 Gender-Related Programmes and Initiatives

*Over the past 2 to 3 years, what initiatives, programmes or events pertaining to HIV/AIDS are you aware of that were conducted in your local district?*

Generally, the interviewees could recall few gender-related programmes or initiatives held in their local district. At least two interviewees said they were not aware of any programmes, while one interviewee responded by saying that in her experience “Men are still at the helm and in positions of power” to explain the lack of gender-related programmes in her locality. Nevertheless, some of the activities listed by the other interviewees included:

- initiatives by the police in dealing with and responding to domestic violence in the community;
- the establishment of a special victims unit at the police station to deal with issues of gender violence;
- a local organisation, ACVV, that runs programmes for women and children;
- gender workshops and seminars organised by a local NGO; and finally
- gender and women's empowerment workshops that were conducted by the local municipality for its employees and officials.

### 5.3.7 Role of the Local Media around HIV/AIDS

*Do you feel your local newspaper can play a role when it comes to the issue of HIV/AIDS?*

The interviewees were totally unanimous in agreeing that their local media had a role to play when it came to HIV/AIDS. For most, this role revolved around providing more information on matters such as: services and help available; correcting misconceptions; condom use; being faithful to your partner; the dangers of infection and; statistics about HIV/AIDS in the area. Additional information roles the interviewees suggested was providing educational material on prevention and other infections. A basic role in providing more information which one interviewee identified was simply to get more people talking about the disease since “in a small town ... we still have the stigma around HIV/AIDS so people don't want the community to know about them”.

One interviewee suggested that the media work more closely with counsellors to facilitate people coming forward and being open about the disease since if this happens, “more people will realise they can still live with the disease ... and the community will be more informed and involved”. One of the misconceptions which an interviewee pointed out the media can correct was that it was not just “a poor man's disease, and anybody can be infected”.

### 5.3.8 Role of the Local Media around Gender

*Do you feel your local newspaper can play a role when it comes to gender equality and women's empowerment in your community?*

When it came to gender equality and women's empowerment, once again the respondents all agreed that the media had a role to play. One respondent qualified this, however, but adding that they can only play a role “only if they know about the stuff”, implying the community should be providing more information to the media.

In the main, the role respondents saw for their local media was informational. This would include getting the police to provide monthly statistics on domestic violence and rape; advertising services and available options; speaking to people who have gone through trauma of gender abuse; providing more information on women's rights and; giving publicity to workshops when they happen.

### 5.3.9 Perceptions on the Media's Performance

*How would you rate your local newspaper with respect to reporting on these challenges around HIV/AIDS?*

- *They give regular coverage to these issues*
- *They only provide occasional coverage of these issues*
- *They never cover or report on HIV/AIDS*

*How would you rate your local newspaper with respect to reporting on these issues [challenges around gender equality and women's empowerment]?*

- *They give regular coverage to these issues*
- *They only provide occasional coverage of these issues*
- *They never cover or report on these issues*

The interviewees were asked two closed questions to rate their local newspaper with respect to reporting on the various challenges they had raised around HIV/AIDS and gender in their local community.

While only two interviewees said their local media provided occasional coverage on HIV/AIDS issues and the rest responded with “never”, several of their answers were qualified. One respondent noted that while her local paper reported occasionally on HIV issues, “if people don't come forward with their needs then the newspaper won't know what to write”. Another respondent made it clear that he never comes across HIV/AIDS issue in his local media, while another said it was perhaps only around December 1 [World Aids Day] that she read about HIV issues. Another respondent said while her local media largely covered events, they never had information pertinent to the youth.

When it came to reporting on the challenges around gender and women's empowerment, respondents were more evenly divided in their responses between “occasionally” and “never”. One respondent said that while her local media reported occasionally on the challenges she raised, it was normally confined to what the council or municipality was doing and not what the community was doing. Another respondent that chose occasionally added that while the local media reported on incidents when they happened, “they don't put in a message about what to do, and what their rights are”.

### 5.3.10 Coverage of Community Events

*As a community worker, what experiences have you had with your local media when it comes to them providing coverage of community events and initiatives (generally) in your specific locality?*

The interviewees were then asked an open question as community activists themselves, about their experience of getting local coverage of community events and initiatives. The aim of this question was to explore, notwithstanding their responses to the closed question, how they perceived the media's performance in relation to specific events they may have been involved in.

The responses were largely positive, with most respondents saying their local media normally came to their events when invited. One respondent said that while they did get coverage occasionally, “they don't come willingly...only when we call them”. Another respondent added that the coverage was normally only for that event at the time, implying there was no follow-up stories to an initiative. Another respondent was critical of the depth of coverage, saying that while they covered virtually all their events, it would just be “a photo and short report and nothing in-depth”. Two respondents said they generally did not get coverage, with one adding that the local media provided coverage “regularly on events in the white community but seriously lacks [coverage] in other communities”.

## **5.4 The Editors of Six Local Rural Newspapers**

[In order to maintain the anonymity of responses, 3<sup>rd</sup> person references of “he” and “she” will be replaced by “they” in order to avoid possibly identifying a particular editor's response.]

### 5.4.1 The News Operation and Interactions with the Gender Advocacy Programme

*How many journalists are part of your news organisation?*

*Do you have regular community correspondents? About how many?*

*Have you read any of the GAP materials pertaining to women & media issues?*

*Has the newspaper received any news copy or media releases from GAP?*

*Did the newspaper ever use any of the news copy or report on any of the media release events?*

*Have you or anyone else from your news organisation been involved in a GAP event?*

*Has any of the materials from GAP been of value or useful to you?*

Of the five newspaper editors interviewed, two were women. Two of the papers officially had two

full time journalists, while at the other three the editor was the only journalist. All of the papers relied on community correspondents for additional copy, but very few of them were paid. At the one paper with two journalists, the editor admitted that over the past year they had rarely gone out on a story since they get their articles from the readers. Three of the editors said they paid up to three regular correspondents who had regular columns, and two of these papers also had irregular freelance correspondents. All the papers received copy from the community, either articles about events or announcements, which were not paid for.

Only one of the editors had been involved in a GAP event, but all of them had received news copy [media releases or articles] from GAP in the past. Three of them said they had used of the GAP content in their papers. Four of the editors said they had read some of the GAP materials pertaining to women & media issues, and three of them said it had been of value to them but mainly in a general sense in terms of providing a “fresh perspective”. Only one of the editors said they had actually implemented a gender-sensitive practice in the newsroom based on the GAP materials. This was around the use of gender-sensitive language in news stories.

#### 5.4.2 The Local Media and HIV/AIDS

*As a newspaper editor what do you consider your role to be in the community with respect to HIV/AIDS?*

*Does your newspaper report on issues pertaining to HIV/AIDS?*

*If you could rate your own newspaper when it comes to regular and consistent reporting on HIV/AIDS in your local community, how would you rate it:*

- *Good*
- *Fair*
- *Poor*

The editors were asked up front whether their paper reported on issues pertaining to HIV/AIDS, since it was important to set aside any assumption that the paper automatically did or had to cover this issue. There could well have been an editorial decision not to cover anything on this issue. However, this was clearly not the case and each one said they did in fact report on the issue. At least three editors qualified this answer by adding “... if there is something to report” or “when we get something”. One editor also added that it was in fact difficult to say since, “at this stage there is nothing on HIV ... we haven't got articles on HIV, but when I do receive information, then I do publish.”



With respect to a particular role around this issue, only one editor was clear and forthright in articulating a role for his/her paper. The editor saw their role as “speaking to young people and those who don't have AIDS”. The editor added:

“Everybody focuses on people with AIDS, and we want to focus on them too, but especially young children through to mothers [who are not positive]. We want to focus on them NOT to get AIDS.”

Another editor that agreed they had a role felt, however, they were hamstrung by a lack of information. The editor maintained, “Of course I have a role to play in the community with regards to HIV/AIDS – by publishing facts and precautions - but the only problem is we don't get enough articles regarding HIV/AIDS”.

All the other editors were not clear about any specific role. “We don't receive any information about it [HIV/AIDS], but if we do get any information then I use it,” said one editor. Another editor saw no special role they should play around HIV/AIDS:

“The role of any newspaper is to inform and in some ways to educate. To me that pertains to all aspects including HIV/AIDS. I don't see a newspaper's role different in regards to certain issues.”

It was only one of the editors that raised the unique prospect of the small town community with respect to their role around HIV/AIDS:

“This is a small community so unlike the mainstream newspapers I don't have much to write about. I don't want to scare people [by focusing on the death of people in the community] because it will also make them not want to come out with the issue. ... If there is an issue [about HIV/AIDS] that I feel I want to write about, then I'll do so. ... There is so much that is being written about AIDS. I am not an educated person to write the same like that. I can only do the human interest stories. As a community newspaper, the real investigative stuff is more mainstream and for the whole country, but here we are sitting on a small nest ...

and we have to work with what we've got.”

Two of the editors rated their coverage on HIV/AIDS as “fair”, while the rest said it was “poor”. In admitting to poor coverage, one editor added, “There are cases [of HIV/AIDS in the town] but it is so secretive, I don't know of any person that has it.” Another editor added, “I've never not written a story of AIDS because I don't want to or whatever. When I come in contact with the story yes then I publish, but I don't go out hunting for stories on AIDS.”

#### 5.4.3 Challenges Around HIV/AIDS

*What do you consider to be the main issue with respect to HIV/AIDS in your local community?*

Only one editor was reluctant to respond to this question saying, “I don't have friends near to me with HIV ... and I'm not involved in projects ... my correspondents may know more about it.” Three of the other editors mentioned stigma as among the biggest challenges in their local communities.

The other challenges emerging from the editors' responses were:

- apathy - “People give the impression of not really caring about it ... it is only a great issue to people living with it [the disease], but not much with the general public.”;
- children without mothers and fathers;
- lack of information - “What's going on? What are they doing to help these people? What action are they taking to make people aware about AIDS?”; and
- the illness itself - “The fact that they get sick and they can't look after their children and they can't look after themselves and they are in a position where everything deteriorates and you can see them slipping away.”

#### 5.4.4 Challenges in reporting on HIV/AIDS

*What do you feel are the main challenges/obstacles you may face in reporting on HIV/AIDS in your paper?*

Responses to the challenges they face in reporting on HIV/AIDS was quite varied. Only one editor pointed to information, saying it was “not easy to get information and make sure of my sources”. It was also only one editor that saw no challenge in reporting on the issue:

“I report on events and health issues. I never had any obstacles or challenges in

this regard.”

Other responses raised the following challenges:

- Resistance from readers - “Being a journalist I know I need to publish this but I also know there is a kind of rejection to your newspaper or magazine if you publish too much about this ... people will tell you listen if you write one more article about HIV and AIDS like that, then we are not going to read your magazine again. ... Maybe its got something to do with the same story over and over. Maybe its because people don't want to face reality.”
- Maintaining compassion - “While there may be the human interest in some stories, we also have to be humane.”
- The news team - “My people writing for me ... they are not qualified journalists ... I think if they adopt a project or charity and learn how to look at an issue, then they may be able to write about HIV, but they've got very little knowledge.”

#### 5.4.5 The Local Media and Gender

*As newspaper editor, what do you consider your role to be in the community with respect to gender equality and women's empowerment?*

Few of the editors saw any clear role for themselves around this issue, beyond respecting gender equality:

“I would like to see everybody treated equally. I've always been against it that women get less money than men and things like that.”

“Yes, I have a role to play in gender considering I'm the editor, to show that women are equal to men.”

The rural context was also pertinent to one editor:

“There is not enough focus on the role of women. It seems now in the rural areas that a woman is still viewed as a less-equal, particularly amongst the disadvantaged communities. It seems the woman's role is merely to be in the home. It think too little is being done to empower women generally. A white women still stands a chance of becoming a manager in our town, but there are

very few black women managers, unless of course it is their own business.”

Only one editor had a more transformational approach:

“We try to tell people that in general you should have respect for all people. ... We can help them to change if we ... realise that women only accept certain things because they feel that they can't change it. We are trying to influence men out there to change their views and their approach towards women and in that we think we can contribute to create gender equality.”

#### 5.4.6 Challenges around Gender

*What do you believe are the main challenges with respect to gender equality in your local community?*

At least two editors saw no challenges in their community:

“In the years that I've been here, I have never heard of gender inequality in [the specific town], so I cannot answer this question.”

“Equal opportunities yes [is a challenge for women] ... But in all the businesses I've walked in there is equality. People doing my books for instance, there are more women than men. You go to the doctor, you go all over you into the shops, managers on the floor and I think it is fine yes. To tell you the truth, I haven't had any complaints. It's difficult to find jobs for everybody [not just women].”

Two other editors, though, maintained the main challenge around gender was job opportunities for women. Said the one, “There is too little work for women, and if they don't have work then they are just in the home.”

Only one editor raised the challenge of domestic violence and women's ability to respond effectively to this.

“In this community it is very hard ... they have a perception that women are a support mechanism and not the mainstream human being. ... In general I think

this is quite an unfriendly environment for women in [specific town]. Almost every weekend you will walk in the streets and you will see men beating up their women in public. Women report this to the police and on Monday or Tuesday they withdraw these charges. Violence against women is almost being ignored. They have their men telling them that they were drunk when this happened. You will ask them are you being beaten up and they will say no because they feel there is no other alternative. There is just no support mechanism for these women. ... They will even get a court interdict against these men and then after a week they will just withdraw these cases. But that is of course because there is no other alternative.”

#### 5.4.7 Gender-Sensitive News Practices

*Do you at any time consciously consider/evaluate gender-sensitive practices in:*

- *the way stories are reported in the paper?*
- *the types of stories chosen for publication?*
- *the pictures or images used in the paper?*

Only one editor noted a conscious decision to alter newsroom practices by implementing gender-sensitive language usage in all their stories. For the other editors a basic practice they implement is not to identify rape survivors or to publish revealing photos of women.

One editor noted, “I’m not going to target people/stories because they are women, it’s only because it might be of interest to the community”. Similarly another editor made it clear:

“I try to be fair and unbiased to all issues, even ones I feel strongly about. I believe newspapers are not there to carry the opinion of the editor or journalist, but the opinion of the people, so I judge each issue not on how I feel about it, but how the public would feel about it.”

#### 5.4.8. Reporting on Gender-Based Violence

*Do you report on gender-based violence / violence against women in your newspaper? How often would you say?*

- *All the time, virtually every issue;*
- *regularly, as and when it is reported by the police;*

- *occasionally, when it is a big story only*

*Do you apply any specific considerations to the way in which you report on gender-based violence?*

Once again the editors were asked upfront if they reported on gender-based violence, to dispel any assumption that this was automatically covered by the paper. Two editors said they reported on this only “occasionally”, when it was a big story. Two other editors said they reported on the subject “regularly, as and when it is reported by the police”, and only one editor said they reported on gender-based violence “all the time”.

All the editors followed the convention of not publishing the name of a rape survivor. One editor added too, “I must remember always that the rights of children must be protected, but this will not stop me from addressing the issues that I must address ... If I cannot mention any names, it won't prevent me from still writing the story.” For another editor, there were no specific considerations around gender-based violence stories:

“I keep everything objective and impartial.”

## **SUMMARY**

The interviewees from government and civil society were very forthcoming with answers to all the questions, and clearly had opinions and an interest in developmental concerns around HIV/AIDS and gender equality in their towns. They also had clear views on their local media, which was based largely on them also being regular readers of their local newspaper. The editors were also largely forthcoming with their responses. In three instances - once pertaining to HIV/AIDS and twice pertaining to gender - some of the editors appeared "ignorant" of any challenges facing their community. The interviewees generally established that a whole range of programmes and initiatives pertaining to gender and HIV/AIDS were being undertaken in the four towns. All the editors confirmed that their newspapers reported on HIV/AIDS-related matters as well as, specifically, gender-based violence in their communities. While both government and community respondents were largely negative about their local media's performance in reporting on challenges around gender and HIV/AIDS, the community respondents were generally positive about their local media's coverage of community events and initiatives. This resonates with observations in other parts of the world on how local media contributes to community integration and involvement. The three sets of interviews will be analysed further in the qualitative assessment in Chapter 7.

## **Chapter Six: Results of the Content Analysis**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the results of the content analysis of 16 rural local papers based in the greater Overberg and Breede-River Valley Regions, along with the analysis of a subset of six newspapers based exclusively in the Overberg. The sub-set of six papers variously serve the towns of Bredasdorp, Swellendam, Caledon and Gansbaai, which were the towns from where the 16 interviewee subjects were drawn. Six issues of each weekly newspaper were monitored over a three month period from June 2008 until August 2008. In the case of the three monthly papers included in the study, four issues were monitored from May 2008 until August 2008. The content analysis seeks to explore the performance of these papers with respect to their reporting on gender and HIV/AIDS issues. The analysis explores three topic areas of Gender, HIV/AIDS and Local Government. It looks at the sources in these articles, the gender of the subjects, the occupations of those featured, their functions in the article, and the various subject areas the articles dealt with.

The quantitative data provides a basic idea of the actual journalistic output of the media under discussion and is a useful guide to explore possible trends in the media content. The researcher is mindful of the dangers of quantifying media content and making isolated judgements on the actual context of journalistic practice. Hence the series of interviews will be an important means of providing this context while also linking the quantitative data both with those who created it, and those for whom it bears considerable relevance or who might well be featured in it.

Following the presentation of the quantitative data, the chapter will present an overall comparison between the 16 papers and the subset of six papers, and finally it will look specifically at data pertinent to the six papers only.

### **6.1 General limitations of this content analysis**

As a purposive sample the study generally cannot be used to infer onto the larger population of rural local media. Another significant shortcoming in the methodology, and which was observed in hindsight, was that the entire “universe of content” of the six papers was not coded. The three topic areas were chosen to be coded in order to focus on the media's performance around the development issues of gender and HIV/AIDS. However, in failing to code the entire content of the papers, a statistical judgement cannot be made on the number of women and men generally appearing in these media over the period of study, since it reflects only the articles in the three topic codes monitored. Nevertheless, all other analysis will provide a quantitative appraisal of the 16 newspapers'



performance in reporting on gender, HIV/AIDS and Local Government.

## 6.2 Overall count of gender, HIV/AIDS and local government articles

In the 16 rural local papers, a total of 271 articles in the three categories were monitored (Table 1). The majority dealt with gender issues and were news stories. Over the six issues of the papers, only 12 stories dealing with HIV/AIDS appeared.

Topic	News Story	Letter	Editorial	Total Result	
Gender	99	1	44	144	53%
HIV/AIDS	7		5	12	4%
Local Gov	78	18	19	115	42%
<b>Total Result</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>271</b>	

68%                  7%                  25%

*Table 1: Breakdown of topic and article type in the 16 papers*

In the breakdown of the six Overberg papers, a slight variation occurs. A total of 106 articles were monitored and coded (Table 2). While the majority of articles monitored were still news reports, local government was the more dominant topic, followed by gender. While only 4 articles over the three month period dealt with HIV/AIDS, it was consistent with the proportion emerging from the 16 papers overall.

Topic	Editorial	Letter	News	Total Result	
Gender	18		27	45	42%
HIV	2		2	4	4%
Local government	10	6	41	57	54%
<b>Total Result</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>106</b>	

28%                  6%                  66%

*Table 2: Overall count of the 3 topic areas and types of stories in the six newspapers*

Of the six papers, most of the articles in total came from the *Caledon Kontreinuus* (Table 3), while the *Langeberg Bulletin* contributed the least overall.

Paper	Gender	HIV	Local government	Total Result
Caledon Kontrei News	14	1	15	30
Gansbaai Courant	9		7	16
Gansbaai Herald	10		7	17
Langebaan Bulletin	2	1	4	7
Overberg News	2		16	18
Suidernuus	8	2	8	18
<b>Total Result</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>106</b>

Table 3: Overall count of 3 topic areas as they appeared in the 6 newspapers

### 6.3 Who is appearing and speaking in these stories?

A total of 310 people were coded as “people in the news” in the 106 articles monitored in the six papers (Table 4). It implied that these 310 people “appeared in the media”. The people coded as such were person's who were interviewed; those quoted either directly or indirectly; any person whom the story was about even if they weren't interviewed or quoted; and persons who were simply mentioned or listed in the story or in a picture caption, even if the story was not about them.

The last consideration, of people who are merely mentioned or listed, was important in the context of local rural media. Very often a report on a community event amounts to a photo and caption of 2 or three sentences about the event and the people in the photo. I contend that people listed in this manner can claim to have “appeared in the news” even if the story or article was not about them per se, hence the requirement that they be coded appropriately.

In the count of those appearing in articles on gender, HIV/AIDS and local government, a very close gender parity emerges from the six Overberg papers in total (Table 4). Individually, the *Gansbaai Courant*, by quite a big margin, and the *Suidernuus*, by a much smaller margin, were the only papers where there were more women than men appearing in the stories monitored (Table 4).

Count - AN	Gen		
Paper	Female	Male	Total Result
Caledon Kontrei News	48	51	99
Gansbaai Courant	49	33	82
Gansbaai Herald	15	21	36
Langeberg Bulletin	8	11	19
Overberg News	14	27	41
Suidernuus	17	16	33
<b>Total Result</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>310</b>

49%      51%

*Table 4: Gender breakdown of people in the news in the six papers.*

In the monitoring of the 16 papers, some 834 people were coded as having “appeared in the media” (Table 5). While the gender breakdown in the 16 papers still maintains a fairly close gender parity, more females appeared in the articles across the three topics than in the six Overberg papers.

Gender			
Female	Male	Unstated	Total Result
437	394	3	834

52%      47%      0%      100%

*Table 5: Gender breakdown of those appearing in the news in the 16 papers*

All persons who appeared in the articles, were additionally coded as to whether they were directly quoted or not in the article. Those who were directly quoted can obviously be said to be “speaking” in the media. When Table 4 is filtered to show only those who were directly quoted, the number of people drops significantly, but the gender parity remains fairly consistent (Table 6).

Count - AN Paper	Gen		Total Result
	Female	Male	
Caledon Kontrei News	5	4	9
Gansbaai Courant	11	12	23
Gansbaai Herald	5	3	8
Langebaan Bulletin	3	1	4
Overberg News	4	10	14
Suidernuus	5	6	11
<b>Total Result</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>69</b>

48%      52%

*Table 6: Breakdown of those who appeared in the news and were directly quoted in the six papers*

When a similar filter is applied to the 16 papers in Table 5, once again the number of people drops significantly, but the gender proportions are virtually transposed when compared to the six papers (Table 7). So in other words, more women were directly quoted proportionally in the 16 papers, compared to the six papers in the Overberg.

Gen		
Female	Male	Total Result
107	94	<b>201</b>

53%      47%      100%

*Table 7: Breakdown of those who appeared in articles monitored in the 16 papers and who were directly quoted*

All person's who were coded as having appeared in the news, were additionally coded for the function that they performed in that story. A range of seven different codes for the function of the person in the news was devised for the coders:

0	<b>Do not know:</b> the person's function is not clear
1	<b>Subject:</b> the story is <i>about</i> the person, or something the person has done
2	<b>Spokesperson:</b> the person represents or speaks on behalf of another person, a group or organisation
3	<b>Expert or commentator:</b> the provides additional information, opinion or comment, based on specialist knowledge or expertise
4	<b>Personal experience:</b> the person provides opinion or comment, based on individual experience; the opinion is not necessarily meant to reflect the views of a wider group
5	<b>Eye Witness:</b> the person give testimony or comment, based on direct observation (eg being present at an event)
6	<b>Popular opinion:</b> the person's opinion is assumed to reflect that of the "ordinary citizen" (e.g. a street interview); it is implied that the person's point of view is shared by a wider group of people.
7	<b>Other:</b> where the function does not fall into any of the above categories

People who were merely listed in photo captions or on lists of “people who attended” a function, were largely coded as seven. When the 310 people coded in the six papers are filtered to show only those who appeared as subjects – irrespective of whether they were quoted or not - the number not only drops significantly, but the gender parity also alters more significantly (Table 8).

Paper	Female	Male	Total Result
Caledon Kontrei News	37	14	51
Gansbaai Courant	11	15	26
Gansbaai Herald	5	3	8
Langebaan Bulletin	7	2	9
Overberg News	5	8	13
Standard News	10	11	21
<b>Total Result</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>128</b>

59%                      41%

*Table 8: Breakdown of those appearing as subjects in the six papers*

The *Caledon Kontreinuus* specifically enjoys a significant margin of more female subjects than male subjects (Table 8). The difference in proportion to the male and female subjects reflected with this filter may be obvious and unsurprising if the articles monitored concerned only gender, but it includes local government which in fact made up more than half of the all the stories monitored.

When applying this same filter to the 16 papers, to show those who appeared as subjects in the articles monitored, the number of people drops and the gender proportions reflect similarly the case with the six newspapers, where more females appeared as subjects overall (Table 9).

Gen		
Female	Male	Total Result
238	123	361

66%                  34%                  100%

*Table 9: Breakdown of those appearing as subjects in articles from the 16 papers*

When the two filters are applied – those who appeared as subjects *and* were directly quoted – then once again the numbers drop significantly and the more consistent overall gender parity seen in Table 4 is reflected, except in this case the proportion of females are more (Table 9).

Count - AN	Gen		
Paper	Female	Male	Total Result
Caledon Kontrei News	5	1	6
Gansbaai Courant	2	6	8
Gansbaai Herald	2	1	3
Langebaan Bulletin	3	1	4
Overberg News	1	3	4
Suidemuus	3	3	6
<b>Total Result</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>31</b>

52%                  48%

*Table 10: Breakdown of subjects who were also directly quoted in the six papers*

When the two filters are applied to the 16 papers, the gender parity disappears as a significantly higher proportion of women are shown to be both appearing as subjects and are directly quoted across the articles from the 16 papers (Table 11).

Gen		
Female	Male	Total Result
76	38	114

67%                  33%                  100%

*Table 11: Breakdown of subjects who were also directly quoted in the 16 papers*

When applying any of the other filters pertaining to function, such as “expert”, “spokesperson” or “popular opinion” the total number is less than 10 and hence not useful to reflect here.

#### **6.4 What are the occupations of those mainly featured in these stories?**

Each of the persons who were coded, were also coded for their occupation as stated in the article, or as was obvious or made clear in the article. Coders also had the option of coding “not stated” where the person's occupation was either not stated or was not clearly obvious in the article.

In the top ten occupations of the 310 people who appeared in the articles across the six Overberg papers, male government officials head the list (Table 12). Two different percentage proportions are shown on this table. The one next to the total column reads across, and is the total proportion of people coded in that category. The other figure accompany the gender columns reads down, and is the proportion of the occurrence of that occupation category in that gender category.

It was mainly females who appeared in articles as local residents without any specified occupation, or where occupation was not stated or clear in the article. When community activists or NGO workers appeared in articles, they were mainly female, the same went for celebrity, health professionals or school learners. State and government employees, including police, who appeared in the articles were most often male (Table 12). Celebrity in this context were local residents that were showcased for some or other achievement, and not necessarily artists or actors.

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>		<b>Total Result</b>	
Government Official	27	18%	85	53%	<b>112</b>	36%
Not stated	30	20%	18	11%	<b>48</b>	15%
Resident in unspecified occupation	28	19%	3	2%	<b>31</b>	10%
community / NGO worker	24	16%	4	3%	<b>28</b>	9%
Government employee	2	1%	10	6%	<b>12</b>	4%
Celebrity	10	7%	1	1%	<b>11</b>	4%
Health professional /practitioner	8	5%	3	2%	<b>11</b>	4%
School learner / Student	6	4%	3	2%	<b>9</b>	3%
Police / military		0%	9	6%	<b>9</b>	3%
Media practitioner / journalist	3	2%	3	2%	<b>6</b>	2%
Academic expert, education professional, teacher, childcare worker	5	3%	1	1%	<b>6</b>	2%

*Table 12: Top ten occupations of those who appeared in the articles in the six papers*

The pattern above is not very different to the one emerging from the 834 people coded in the 16 papers. Male government officials still appear the most overall, and women were most likely to be coded as either residents in unspecified occupations, or with occupation unstated (Table 13). Except for government official, government employee and police/military, women appeared the most in all the occupation categories. This is particularly significant in the category of lawyer/judge/magistrate category, which are socially powerful and prominent occupations. However, this category does not feature in the breakdown of the six papers. It is no surprise that women featured most in the categories of business person/entrepreneur and celebrity, given the choice of the three closed topics in the methodology. A different picture may have emerged, had the full universe of articles in the sample of papers been coded.



Occupation	Female		Male		Total Result	
Government Official / Politician	42	10%	130	33%	<b>172</b>	21%
Not stated	68	16%	47	12%	<b>115</b>	14%
Community activist or NGO worker	46	11%	28	7%	<b>74</b>	9%
Resident in unspecified occupation	49	11%	16	4%	<b>66</b>	8%
Government Employee	23	5%	40	10%	<b>63</b>	8%
Celebrity	35	8%	22	6%	<b>57</b>	7%
Business person / entrepreneur	36	8%	15	4%	<b>51</b>	6%
Lawyer / judge / magistrate / legal expert	35	8%	9	2%	<b>44</b>	5%
Health or social service professional / doctor/ nurse	29	7%	11	3%	<b>42</b>	5%
Academic/ teacher / child care worker	25	6%	8	2%	<b>33</b>	4%
Police / Military	9	2%	19	5%	<b>28</b>	3%

*Table 13:*

*Breakdown of those who appeared in articles in the 16 papers*

When the breakdown of the occupations of those appearing in articles in the six papers are filtered further as per Table 5, to reflect those who appeared as subjects, an interesting variation occurs. While male government officials still dominate, activists or community workers appear higher up, while residents in unspecified occupations move down the list (Table 14). In the government official and employee categories, males still feature the most.

Occupation	Female	Male	Total Result	
Government Official	13	32	<b>45</b>	35%
Not stated	20	2	<b>22</b>	17%
Activist or community / NGO worker	15	1	<b>16</b>	13%
Celebrity	7		<b>7</b>	5%
Resident in unspecified occupation	5	1	<b>6</b>	5%
Government employee	1	4	<b>5</b>	4%
Health professional /practitioner	3	2	<b>5</b>	4%
Homemaker or parent	1	3	<b>4</b>	3%
Child, young person (up to 18 years)	1	3	<b>4</b>	3%

*Table 14: Top 10 occupations of those who appeared as subjects in the six papers*

When looking at the subjects who were also directly quoted, then in the six newspapers, very few people outside government appear to be directly quoted in the papers (Table 15).

Occupation	Female		Male		Total Result
Government Official	4	25%	12	75%	<b>16</b>
Celebrity	3				<b>3</b>
Activist or community / NGO worker	2				<b>2</b>
Resident in unspecified occupation	1				<b>1</b>
Homemaker / parent	1				<b>1</b>

*Table 15: Those who were directly quoted in articles in the six papers*

## 6.5 What different subject areas are being reported on?

Each article, apart from the three topic codes, were also coded for a specific subject area which the article was dealing with outside the topic code. So for instance, where a paper perhaps reported on the launch of an HIV/AIDS support group in the town, the topic would be HIV/AIDS but the subject would be about services and projects. There were 18 subject codes covering six broad areas

[See Appendix: Newspaper Coding System].

It is not surprising that the main subject was municipal meetings and discussion on policy – it is in line with the fact the most articles monitored dealt with local government issues (Table 15 and Table 2). Profiles and personal features, which mainly fell under the topic of gender, reflects most likely the showcasing of women achievers in the local community. Reports on violence against women services and projects features very low (Table 16)

Subj	Gender	HIV	Local government	Total Result	
Municipal meetings and discussions on policy	1		33	34	32%
Profiles and personal feature	14	1		15	14%
Other	7		6	13	12%
Gender Based Violence	9			9	8%
Water & Sanitation			7	7	7%
Violence against Women Services and Projects	6			6	6%
Poverty			5	5	5%
Housing	1		3	4	4%
Human rights	3			3	3%
Health Care			2	2	2%

*Table 16: Breakdown of top-ten subject areas in the six papers*

In a similar breakdown of the 16 papers, even though the sub-set of 6 papers had a different proportion of local government and gender-related articles, the breakdown of subject areas is not very dissimilar to each other (Table 17). Particularly with respect to gender, in both instances the majority of stories under this topic fell under the category of “personal features or profiles” . In either case, there are very few stories dealing with violence against women services and projects.

Subject	Gender		HIV/AIDS	Local Government		Total Result	
Municipal meetings/discussion on policy	2	1%	2	76	66%	<b>80</b>	30%
Profiles and personal features	67	47%	1		0%	<b>68</b>	25%
Gender based violence	29	20%		1	1%	<b>30</b>	11%
Other	13	9%		6	5%	<b>19</b>	7%
Poverty	5	3%		7	6%	<b>12</b>	4%
Violence against women services and projects	10	7%		1	1%	<b>11</b>	4%
Housing		0%		10	9%	<b>10</b>	4%
Water & Sanitation	2	1%		8	7%	<b>10</b>	4%
Human Rights	4	3%		3	3%	<b>7</b>	3%
Hospitals and health services	5	3%	1	1	1%	<b>7</b>	3%

Table 17: breakdown of top ten subject areas in articles from the 16 papers

## 6.6 Victims and Survivors

Coders were required to code each person according to their status as either a survivor or victim. They were required to code accordingly if the word “survivor” or “victim” was explicitly used to describe the person, or if the story implied that the person was either a survivor or victim through its text or images. There were up to nine codes under each category (Appendix – Newspaper Coding System), including a code to indicate “not a survivor or victim” or “do not know, cannot decide”.

In the breakdown of those who appeared as subjects in the sixteen papers, the overwhelming majority of people were coded as neither being a victim nor a survivor (Tables 18 & 19).

Gender	Not a survivor	Survivor of an accident/natural disaster	Survivor of domestic violence	Survivor of non-domestic sexual violence	Survivor of other crime, robbery, assault or murder	Survivor of discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, age or religion	Total Result
Female	222	4	2	1	8	1	<b>238</b>
Male	116	2			4	1	<b>123</b>
<b>Total Result</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>361</b>

Table 18: Breakdown of those appearing as subjects in the 16 papers and coded according to a survivor status

Gender	Not a victim	Victim of an accident/natural disaster	Victim of domestic violence	Victim of non-domestic violence	Victim of other crime, robbery, assault or murder	Victim of war, terrorism or vigilantism	Victim of discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, age or religion	Total Result
Female	213	3	9	2	11			238
Male	112		5		4	1	1	123
<b>Total Result</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>361</b>

*Table 19: Breakdown of those appearing as subjects in the 16 papers and coded according to a victim status*

A very similar picture emerges from the count of the six papers, although here even fewer categories were coded (Tables 20 & 21). The overwhelming majority of subjects were not identified as either a victim or survivor, while the least number of people overall were identified as either a victim or survivor of domestic violence. There were no subjects who featured under non-domestic violence.

Gender	Not a victim	Victim of domestic violence	Victim of other crime, robbery, assault or murder	Total Result
Female	60	2	1	63
Male	42	1		43
<b>Total Result</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>106</b>

*Table 20: Breakdown of those appearing as subjects in the six papers and coded according to a victim status*

Gender	Not a survivor	Survivor of an accident/natural disaster	Survivor of domestic violence	Victim of other crime, robbery, assault or murder	Total Result
Female	59	2	1	1	63
Male	41	2			43
<b>Total Result</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>106</b>

*Table 21: Breakdown of those appearing in the six papers and coded according to a survivor status*

## 6.7 Overall Comparison of the Content Analysis of the Two Sets of Samples

The six Overberg newspapers represent a sub-set of the sample of 16 papers. The six papers are included in the bigger sample, but when they are examined apart, the data shows that the six papers differ in several unique ways from the overall trends in the 16 papers together. This is not dissimilar to other quantitative studies both at global and regional level where country sub-sets differed from the larger sample.

The aim of including the full the count of 16 papers in the study was owing to the dearth of any quantitative studies focusing on rural local media exclusively, thus the broader sample provides an anchor to compare the six papers to their peers in the immediate geographic region. In this way the study also sets the tone for bringing rural media more into the fold of debates around gender and HIV/AIDS in the media in South Africa.

The greater proportion of gender-related stories in the 16 papers do not make for a big contrast with that of the six papers, given that the *difference* in proportions between local government stories and gender stories are quite similar in the two samples (Tables 1 and 2). In both instances it is around 11%. In both instances too, the proportion is a marked difference to the 2006 GAP study, where in 600 stories that were monitored, 72% were local government-related and only 27% were gender-related (GAP, 2006:11).

The deeper meaning of this marked increase in specifically gender-related stories in the sample of rural papers lies perhaps in the subject areas that they dealt with, and here the larger sample and the subset of six Overberg papers bear a close correlation. Bearing in mind that the count of gender articles in the methodology involved a broad definition - dealing with violence against women [rape, domestic violence, sexual assault], reproductive health issues, women community leaders, women achievers, women in business, women politicians, or general debates around the role of men and women in society – it is noteworthy that the main subject area is not gender-based violence.

In both sets of analysis, the majority of gender-related stories fell under “profiles and personal features” (Tables 16 and 17). Articles were coded under this subject when they dealt with and showcased women achievers in the local community.

So for example, an article from the *Langeberg Bulletin* on June 27<sup>th</sup> that was coded under this category, reported on the appointment of a woman, Paula Gouws, as the President of the local branch of the Rotary Club. Another article coded under this category, from the *Overberg News* of August 1, reported on a women-owned and women-run business, Intshiba Crafts, that was chosen by the national business organisation, Proudly South African, to produce its official gift that it will present to former President Nelson Mandela on the occasion of his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. An article from the *Caledon Kontreinuus* of June 27<sup>th</sup>, in turn reported on the Caledon Dameskring [Calendon Women's Circle] who hosted a local journalist as a guest speaker at their monthly branch meeting. These random examples give an idea of the type of articles coded under this subject category, which featured the most when it came to gender-related stories.

Gender-based violence was the next highest subject category under the topic of gender in both samples, but no more than 21% (Tables 16 & 15) of the time. The classification under this was fairly straight forward (See Appendix – Newspaper Coding System), and ran the full gamut of types of violence experienced mainly by women and mentioned in Chapter One (Section 1.2).

The third highest subject category was “other” (Tables 16 & 15), which was an article identified by the coder as falling under gender, but which did not fit into any of the 17 given subject categories they could choose from. The seven articles falling under this category in the count of the six newspapers virtually all came from the same paper, the *Gansbaai Herald*, and concerned a column that appeared every issue entitled “Vroue Vandag” [Women Today] and which literally never once dealt with any of the 17 given subject codes. The subjects ranged from fashion advice, to hobbyist experiences and to just everyday domestic experiences the women columnist cared to muse upon [App – Article 4].

It was only in fourth place under gender across both sets of samples, that violence against women services and projects featured (Tables 16 & 15). Bringing this all together, the observation is that in the realm of the local rural media covered in this study, women achievers are being featured more than women's encounters with violence.

This is further borne out by the data on victim and survivor across the two samples (Tables 18, 19, 20 and 21). The overwhelming majority of people in the articles did not appear in category codes

relating to violence. It points to a comment from one of the government interviewees who called on the media to play a “motivational role for women by encouraging them to achieve and reach for goals” (Section 5.2.7). Similarly, among the common challenges under gender raised by the government interviewees were challenges facing women in leadership positions and the fact that women were still regarded as “not being capable of leading” (Section 5.2.5).

With respect to a role around gender equality and women's empowerment, none of the six editors were clear on any specific role they should play, beyond accepting and respecting gender equality (Section 5.4.5). None of the editors of the six papers said that they consciously chose or sought out stories dealing specifically with women (Section 5.4.5 & 5.4.7), however four out five said they had read various GAP materials on gender and media issues.

This becomes significant in the light of the data from the two samples around those appearing in the news. Hence in both the larger sample and the sub-set, women feature – except in two instances (Tables 4 & 5) – more than men either as simply having been mentioned in an article (Table 5); as subjects (Tables 8 & 9); as those directly quoted (Tables 7), or as those appearing both as subject and directly quoted (Tables 10 & 11). In the two instances where men feature more than women (Tables 4 & 5), the difference in proportion is less than 5% and hence shows a close parity.

The observation is that without any apparent bias on the part of editors to specifically advance and showcase women, gender parity between men and women in the news appears consistent across the three topic codes in the local papers. Generally, women's presence was slightly higher than that of men, although in one instance the proportion of women was significantly higher than that of men (Table 11).

Given the closed topics employed in the methodology of this study, it cannot be said that generally women are proving to be more interesting news subjects for local rural media. This would require the whole universe of articles to be coded in the sample of newspapers. The effect of exposure to the GAP materials does bring in the possibility of a heightened sense of gender sensitivity on the part of the news editors. However, in the broader picture any such effect peters out since gender parity is consistent across the sample of 16 papers as well. The further observation thus is that close gender parity across the three topic areas in the news is a routine occurrence in rural local media.

Once again, the methodology does not allow the researcher to infer that this routine occurrence is



applicable across the news spectrum in the media concerned. For the moment, the significance of this is that it differs from findings in South Africa's mainstream papers, where the Gender Media Baseline Study found that there were no topic categories in South Africa in which the voices of women predominate, not even in the topic code gender equality (Gender Links & MISA, 2003:33). Furthermore, the Global Media Monitoring Project found that men dominated as subjects in all topics represented in the media (WACC, 2005:5). The nature and significance of the occurrence of women in the articles monitored in this studied will be discussed further down with respect to the six newspapers.

When it comes to state and government, the observation is that the local rural media appears to mimic their mainstream counterparts in the proportion of female sources. Consistently over the larger sample and the subset, men's voices dominated significantly in the categories of government official/politician, government employee and police/military. In mainstream media it was found that despite the relatively high representation of women in South African government, as politicians they were sourced only 10% of the time in the media (Gender Links & MISA, 2003:12).

Across both the larger sample and the subset of six newspapers, the occurrence of articles dealing with HIV/AIDS was consistent and significantly low. In the count of the six papers, HIV/AIDS was mentioned under three subject codes, viz: profiles and personal features; HIV/AIDS services and projects and; safer sex information. The count was consistent with the perceptions of the editors around their performance on this topic.

## **6.8 The Presence of Women in the Six Papers**

Overall across the three topic areas, gender parity through several filters and with a difference of no more than 4%, is maintained in the six papers (Tables 4, 6 and 10). It is only in one instance, in the breakdown of those appearing as subjects, that women's presence surpass men by 11% (Table 8). Given the observation earlier that it was less likely women's encounters with violence that was being featured across the three categories, the assumption is that the majority of these women subjects appeared in the news in the context of a positive achievement. The majority of these women either had no stated or clear occupation or were activists or community/NGO workers (Table 14).

A important observation in the content analysis, is the drop in numbers as those appearing in the

news were filtered for those appearing as subjects, those who were directly quoted and then those who appeared as subjects and were directly quoted. It is impossible to say from the methodology if this drop occurs generally across all articles in the papers. However, the inclusion of local government as a topic code makes it clear that the drop from those appearing in the news to those actually quoted is not confined to articles related to gender. In the six papers, there were more local government stories monitored than gender-related stories.

The drop applied to both men and women and is perhaps characteristic of the style and nature of rural local media, where many people are mentioned and listed, most likely in photo-captions, but very few people are actually quoted. It may also be a characteristic of content contributions from the community, which may invariably be a descriptive report of an event with few quotes. At this stage it is useful to look at examples of articles that demonstrate this drop in numbers.

One article from the *Kontreinuus* June 27 (App – Article # ) is a report of the out-going District Mayor [a women], Maurencia Gillion, visiting several towns as part of Youth Day celebrations. Three other people are mentioned as accompanying her, but she is the only one quoted. She is coded as the subject and who is directly quoted, while a total of four people are coded as having appeared in the article. The article fell under local government.

An article falling under gender in the *Gansbaai Courant* of August 22, reports on the appointment of a new executive of a local women's club. All 20 executive members are listed and were hence coded as subjects, since the article was in fact about them. However, only one person was directly quoted. Their occupations were all coded as residents in no specific occupation.

These two examples show exactly how the drop in numbers of people occur following the application of the different filters. The observation thus is that while women do in fact suffer a significant drop in numbers from appearing in the media to appearing as subjects who are also quoted, it does not appear to be a sexist practice aimed at minimizing the voices of women. Rather, it appears to be symptomatic of the style and nature of rural local media.

The count of the occupations of those appearing in the six papers, is another means of gaining some insight into the weight of women's voices in the papers. At the outset, as observed earlier, as far as state and government is concerned, men dominate by far (Tables 12, 14 & 15). Given that the

analysis included local government articles, the observation is that when it comes to reporting on local government specifically, the voices of men dominate. Here is a note of serious concern since, on the one hand local government services have the potential to transform women's lives (DPLG, 2007:12), while on the other hand local government is among the major topic areas of news for rural local media.

Across the six papers and across the range of occupations coders could choose from, women were hardly represented in professional jobs (Tables 12 & 14). When appearing in the local media, in the overwhelming majority of instances they were in unstated occupations or as activists or community/ NGO workers. It is difficult to make a judgement on this since on the one hand, the presence of women professionals in the rural landscape may well be low, and on the other hand, the nature of small town news inevitably revolves around ordinary residents and their activities. However, given that the majority of gender-related stories fell within “profiles and features” (Table 16), here may well be an opportunity for rural editors to seek out and feature a greater number of women professionals in their localities.

The overall observation is that women are significantly visible in the pages of the six newspapers, and while their voices are in no less danger of being silenced than that of men, they suffer from a breadth of coverage that does not reflect a range of professional occupations.

## **SUMMARY**

This chapter presents a quantitative analysis of articles across three topic codes of gender, local government and HIV/AIDS, as they appeared in 16 rural-based newspapers and a sub-set of six newspapers in the Overberg. In large part, the trends emerging from the sub-set of six Overberg papers were consistent with those appearing in the larger sample of 16 papers. The data suggests that positive achievements of women are being featured more than women's encounters with violence. It shows that gender parity amongst those appearing in the media is generally consistent across the three topic codes. The number of people appearing in the media drops significantly when filtered down to those who were actually quoted, but the observation is that women are in no less danger than men from not being quoted in their local media. Across both the larger sample and the sub-set of six Overberg papers, the occurrence of HIV/AIDS-related articles were consistent and significantly low. Overall in the six papers, women enjoyed high visibility in articles across the three topics, but they suffered from a depth of coverage that failed to reflect a range of professional occupations. The findings from this data will be further analysed in the next chapter in conjunction with the responses from the 21 interview subjects.

## **Chapter Seven : A Qualitative Assessment**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents a qualitative assessment of the structured interviews and the quantitative content analysis presented in the two previous chapters. The assessment in this chapter focuses on four broad areas which are germane to rural local media, namely: (1) community connectedness, (2) the motivation for change, (3) the leverage for change and, (4) the depth of journalism. The discussion is based on further reflections on the two previous chapters, and references to relevant sections are given throughout. The chapter in some places also refers to specific articles from the sample of the six Overberg newspapers. This assessment considers the qualitative and quantitative data together in order to produce a more textured assessment of the role and value of rural local media in the four towns, and specifically in relation to HIV/AIDS and gender developmental concerns.

### **7.1 Connecting the community**

Among the broad goals of public journalism is for a media to both connect with the community and then to connect the community itself (Nip, 2006:14). Furthermore, how can this connectedness then motivate ordinary people to get involved in solutions to the community's problems, which also falls within the broad goals of public journalism (Nip, 2006:14)? The parameters of this study offers the researcher at least some clues around the media's relationship to community in the four towns in the Overberg, and specifically around the development issues of HIV/AIDS and gender.

The majority of the government and community interviewees indicated they read their paper “regularly, every week”, while several of the community interviewees were also active contributors of news content (Sections 5.2.1 & 5.3.1). Bearing in mind that except for one paper, the monthly *Overberg News*, all the papers have a cover price, implying there is some conscious effort in obtaining the paper every week. This may indicate a level of attachment, at least on the part of the interviewees, to their local weekly paper. However, it is clouded by the very media landscape itself since these rituals of attachment [buying, reading and contributing] happens in the context of no competition from any other paper or community broadcaster. So in other words, when it comes to a choice over very local news in the four towns, there is little choice.

The editors themselves cannot be judged over the lack of diversity in their environment, but it

certainly frustrates the local public sphere. In the context of the two development issues and community connectedness, the lack of competition in the local media environment may, on the one hand, lead to non-action on the part of the editors to explore new issues, and on the other hand, cause them to eschew any sense of community connections beyond their comfort zone.

With respect to the latter – community connections - the study brings up evidence both to support this and to the contrary. From the interviews with the editors, all the newspapers clearly have a strong link with their community in terms of content they receive and publish. They all rely on dedicated community correspondents for additional copy, or voluntary article contributions from the community (5.4.1). Most of the editors also had clear opinions on challenges facing their community. I have no hesitation in assuming that the editors themselves are inclined towards the traditional journalistic principles of reporting the truth and serving the public interest.

Overall, the community respondents were positive about the local media's coverage of community events in the sense that they came when invited (5.3.10). In the content analysis, a high proportion of the women that appeared in articles were activists or community/NGO workers (Table 12). Hence, at least with respect to the three topic codes, the papers provide reasonable space to people whom I assume would be closely linked to their local community and who [although not necessarily clear] would likely provide an important window on the development needs and concerns they are involved with.

Furthermore, among the interviewees, some of those in the NGO sector confirmed that they also contributed in some way to content in their local media (5.3.2). A few others also qualified responses on their perceptions of coverage, in ways that showed they were aware that they or others in the community could contribute content for publication. This is basic evidence from the study showing efforts on the part of editors to connect with their community.

Does it motivate the community towards any action, is of course the other pertinent question. The only tools within this study that can be used to explore this, are the articles from the content analysis. I will choose three examples of articles coded under the subject “gender-based violence services”.

An article from the *Gansbaai Herald* of June 25 reports on the annual Mayoress' Women's Day

Activity that will take the form of a march under the banner, “We will no longer be abused”. The article gives details on the starting points and times of the march, where people can meet to get busses for the event, as well as details of the speakers. The article further calls for nominations for the Overstand's Women of the Year award to be announced at the event. It gives postal, fax, email as well as telephone details at the end of the article.

An article in the *Suidernuus* of August 22, reports on an event held earlier that month also marking Women's Day, in which women marched under the theme of “Passport to Freedom – Banish Domestic Violence”. The article reports on and quotes various speakers at the event, and lists up to six organisations involved in the event.

In the third article, from the *Gansbaai Courant* of August 15, the paper reports on the march that was announced in the *Herald* two months earlier. The article, among others, quotes slogans printed on some of the placards, several speakers, as well as extracts from a petition handed to police about measures to deal with cases of rape.

In total there were six articles dealing with this subject across the six papers, and except for the one in the *Herald*, all of them appeared in August. My assumption thus is that the other articles were also reports on Women's Day events.

The articles have the potential to motivate for action on several levels. Obviously the first article is basically an advertisement for an event still to happen and which encourages people to join. The other two include pertinent quotes showing clear opposition to gender-based violence, while the last article additionally quotes specific demands being made by activists around how the police should be more gender sensitive in handling rape cases.

At its most basic level, the articles inform on activism in the local community against gender-based violence, and in the realm of the mediation metaphors, becomes a signpost for how people can or should be responding to this issue. At a higher level, the role is amplified by the inclusion of the quotes, which articulates the reasoning behind the activism. The inclusion of details from the petition informs readers on acceptable practices that should be expected and demanded from the police. In the second article, the listing of organisations involved in the event provides readers with a guide on who they can go to either for help or to join up with a campaign.

The content of these articles show potential towards motivating readers towards action specifically around gender-based violence. Their inclusion in the papers has to be seen as evidence of a political will on the part of editors to motivate with regard to this issue. The tools of this study does not allow the researcher to probe further whether the articles did in fact have a demonstrable effect, and the evidence thus remains at the level of potentiality.

The fact that these articles were drawn from a subject category in the content analysis that included only six articles out of the 106 that were monitored, does not detract from the potential nor the political will to motivate towards action. The baseline research from the GAP media monitoring exercise shows that this is a 100% increase in the occurrence of this subject category (GAP, 2006:15), and only follow-up media monitoring will show how this reporting will have been sustained.

## **7.2. The Instrumentality of Community**

The basis for any community action revolves around recognising and articulating the problems that require to be addressed and the actions that need to be taken. In this respect, Stramm et al (1997:99) point out that local media can identify problems that need community attention and make known their consequences for the individual and/or community. From the responses to the challenges around HIV/AIDS and gender and the media's performance in reporting on these, my observation is that the community connectedness of the editors wears thin.

Generally there was little convergence around what the challenges were around HIV/AIDS, although none of the issues raised across the three sets of interviews contradicted each other (5.2.3; 5.3.3 & 5.4.3). While all three groups of interviewees identified the need for more information, what information and whom to aim it at, varied considerably amongst the responses. Stigma was another challenge that cropped up in all three sets of interviews, but which was a dominant response only amongst the editors. The government interviewees responded with very specific challenges, while both the community interviewees and the editors largely raised [different] generalized challenges pertaining to attitudes and awareness. One editor responded that they didn't know what the challenges were.

The government and community interviewees were mainly negative about the performance of their



newspapers when it came to reporting on these challenges both around gender and HIV/AIDS (5.2.8 & 5.3.9). While several of them conceded that there was at least occasional coverage, in the main the majority in the two sets of interviews said their local media never reported on the challenges around these two issues. Here is a clear break in the community connection, where key informants with an apparent attachment to their local media, outline problems that require to be addressed in the community and which are not making it onto the agenda of their local media.

Most of the editors considered their coverage of HIV/AIDS to be poor (5.4.2). The content analysis of course confirmed this. The most common constraint the editors referred to was a lack of information, but this was not through lack of any “news”. The interviewees across government and community established that a whole range of programmes and initiatives pertaining to gender and HIV/AIDS were being undertaken in the four towns. There were also several non-governmental organisations [NGOs] doing work around these two issues. Moreover, the statistics point out to a burgeoning local crisis around the disease in the Overberg.

Most of the constraints identified by the editors – lack of information, reader resistance, lack of experience of the news team (5.4.2 & 5.4.4) – have long been identified by other researchers before and do not require to be reexamined here, suffice to say that the local rural media in this respect mimic their mainstream counterparts. But here the danger of non-action resulting from the media environment creates an added dimension, and probably a more tenacious constraint. The only hope for recovery out of this malaise in the media is in the community itself, based on the unique connectedness that exists between the two.

Hence, given the unique manner of newsroom operations in local rural media, where a significant part of content is received from the community, the envelope needs to be pushed from this level to expand both the platform for the presentation of information and ideas (McQuail, 1994:65) and the agenda of what needs to be tackled in the community around this issue. Unfortunately, it indulges the media in their non-action. However, considering that even though the editors did not clearly articulate a role around this issue, none of them shied away from the importance of dealing with it in their papers (5.4.2).

The editors in a sense have laid down a pipeline to receive the content. In reality, the best option now is for those in the community who are concerned about the media's coverage on HIV/AIDS, to

make effective use of this pipeline. Action by the community to generate more media content around HIV/AIDS, may well create a momentum of sustained coverage in their local media.

### **7.3 Leverage for Change**

Rural South Africa is racked by gender schisms that are exacerbated by poverty. The Overberg is no exception. With respect to the challenges around gender equality and women's empowerment, there appeared to be greater convergence over what was identified by the three sets of interviewees (5.2.5; 5.3.5 & 5.4.6). All three groups stressed job opportunities and the need for economic empowerment of women. Educating women about their rights was also a common challenge raised across the three groups. All three groups alluded to the persistence of gender inequality in their localities and the inability of women to effectively deal with issues of domestic and sexual violence.

The study so far has already found evidence of a potential to motivate for action specifically around gender-based violence. The content analysis has also shown that women are not rendered invisible in their local media and in fact are most likely to be portrayed in the context of a positive achievement. They also stood a virtually equal chance as men in not being quoted when they appeared in the news. Quite unlike their mainstream counterparts, gender parity was consistent across the three topic codes monitored, and even appeared to be a routine occurrence.

One note of concern emerging from the content analysis was the poor showing of women in government both as featuring and as speaking in the local media. It was also clear that the local media did not apply a breadth of coverage to women that showed them across a range of professional jobs. In both instances though it does not appear likely to be the result of sexist news practices that have the effect of undermining women. Rather, it may be symptomatic of the unique nature of small town news as well as the broader social landscape. These include questions around local government, and whether indeed gender transformation has taken root there through the appointment of more women serving as official spokespersons, and the presence of more women political officials dealing with the media.

Overall, the rural local media in this study appear primed to take on a role that can have a bearing on the transformation of women's lives in their localities. At this stage it is useful to quote what some of the interviewees said about gender roles in their localities, by way of illustrating what it is around women's lives that require change:

- Men are still dominant (5.2.5)
- women are still regarded as not being capable of leading (5.2.5)
- the belief that women should look after children; that their role is merely to be in the home (5.2.5)
- women were still scared and submissive to husbands (5.2.5 & 5.3.5)
- women were still financially dependent on men (5.3.5)
- women are viewed as less equal (5.4.5)
- a perception that women are a support mechanism and not the mainstream human being (5.4.6)

I have not used the word “patriarchy” up until this point in the study, largely for academic convenience since it will be required to be defined and unpacked. I will not define it here either, except to say that the term and concept is summed up by what is being said here by the interviewees. In short, the women in Swellendam, Caledon, Bredasdorp and Gansbaai remain locked in a battle with patriarchy. It is instructive too, that there was no need for the researcher to define this term, as well as that of “gender equality” and “women's empowerment”, to the interview subjects in order to reach the observations above, and confirm the notion of deep gender schisms in these towns.

The change required in women's lives is not unique to the four towns or the Overberg – it is a reality for many women around the country and indeed around the world. The attitudes above pertaining to gender roles are what contribute to real forms of oppression women face, including discrimination, prejudice and more than anything else, violence. Journalists and editors are no less susceptible to these notions of patriarchy as ordinary people, just as women are as capable as men of internalising these notions. At the same time it is more than just the media who are possible sources aiding in the construction of these attitudes.

The unique situation in the four Overberg towns of course is that each town has a successful weekly newspaper that enjoys and displays unique connectedness with its community. Herein lies the leverage for change that women may or may not be able to count on in these towns. Do they have to fear that even their local paper sustains and condones attitudes which contribute to their oppression? Or can they have hope in the fact that – notwithstanding the discrimination, violence or belittling social status they may experience because of their gender - at least they can depend on their local paper to actively challenge and counter attitudes contributing to their oppression?

While one editor appeared ignorant of any gender inequality in their town, most of the editors articulated a basic agenda of respecting gender equality (5.4.5 & 5.4.6). I would assume this agenda would discount any support for the gender attitudes noted above. The content research further gives some indication of the high visibility of women in the papers, sometimes even more so than would be the case in mainstream media. But the count of women appearing in their local papers does not amount to evidence that specific gender attitudes are actually being challenged. Here once again I have to look at articles in the papers. This time I will not choose randomly but will hone in specifically on the “Vroue Vandag” column in the *Gansbaai Herald*.

It is less the content than the title itself that is a harbinger of patriarchal attitudes. The column appears every week and amounts to one women's reflections on topics of her choice. The topics are invariably highly personal musings on life matters or domestic encounters as a housewife, wife and mother. Had it been any other title reflective of the personalised creative writing it contains, then its content would have been more accurately confined to the world of the columnist. As it is now, its import is that this is “Women Today” in our community, or what women must be in our community, or what they are encountering. At a media production level, the title may even be the classic patriarchal placebo that hereby are women represented in the pages of our newspaper, when in fact it is neither representative of women in the community nor reflecting critical issues they are dealing with.

It is pertinent to reflect on this column coming as it does from the newspaper that carried one of the articles I referred to earlier as having the potential to motivate for change around gender-based violence. The paper's editor is also editor of the *Courant*, which contained the other article in that earlier discussion. So here clearly is an editor with the political will to motivate for change around gender-based violence, but who is also promoting patriarchal notions of women as gossip-domestic-wives or mothers, by dint of this column's title. And then too a female journalist that sustains this. It demonstrates the pervasiveness of patriarchy.

A second article which I have purposely chosen, appeared in the *Caledon Kontreinuus* of June 27. Coded as a gender-based violence story, the Afrikaans article was headlined “Alcohol abuse a big role in rape incidents”. The angle of the story in the opening sentence is that the police's unit on Violence against Women and Children “is very concerned about the big role that alcohol abuse is

playing in the number of incidents of violence against these soft targets”. I quote further from the article [as translated]:

“A spokesperson for the unit says that very often it is alcohol abuse that plays a large part in incidents of rape. According to the spokesperson, women are sometimes so inebriated that they don't know what was done to them and by whom. An urgent call is thus being made on women not to consume alcohol excessively, and to avoid the company of strange men as well as dark places. 'Sometimes alcohol plays a big role in cases where children are molested. The parents are then so drunk they don't even realise or see that their children had been molested.' [report on a case of rape in Greyton] ... Detective Inspector Peter Present, head of the detective branch in Greyton, added too that most incidents of rape and sexual molestation can be attributed to alcohol abuse.[ends]”

If ever a small town story. Unfortunately, small town news in South Africa is also tinged with disturbing violence. The story is no advancement to either the fight against gender violence, or efforts to challenge harmful assumptions around gender roles. There is no doubt that the article is written out of genuine concern, and alcohol and drug abuse have been established in studies as factors increasing women's vulnerability to sexual violence. However, the import of the article is to absolve men of the criminality of their deed and to place the onus on women to avoid getting drunk so as to avoid being raped. The same type of inference arising when women are warned about what to wear or not to wear in order to avoid being raped. The attitude arising from such an article is that drunk women are fair game to be raped, after all they were warned not to get drunk.

The article quotes no women nor even an activist to give an opinion on gender-based violence. It shows that harmful gender attitudes can be as easily inscribed in the media's pages as efforts to motivate for change around it. The editor of this particular paper, is a woman.

Efforts to challenge patriarchal attitudes contributing to the oppression of women is commensurate to the dedication *not* to promote or condone such attitudes. Either way, it can only be a conscious commitment. So while the least effort then should be to ensure that no article in fact does promote or sustain harmful gender attitudes, the greater challenge lies in covering gender-related stories with a view to providing women with information and ideas that will concretely assist them in

confronting the various types of oppression they may face.

Herein lies the leverage for change. Checking against the harm a story does is the least bit of editorial routine employed in the newsroom. The conscious commitment to either of these undertakings – i.e. the greater challenge or the least effort – lies in the editor making efforts to gain more knowledge about what it means to be gender sensitive in newsroom practice, and then also opening up the pages to community activists to regularly counter perceptions that may be arising.

#### **7.4 The Depth of Journalism**

Across the three sets of interviews, the majority of respondents agreed that their local media had a role to play when it came to the issues of HIV/AIDS and gender in their communities (5.2.6; 5.2.7 & 5.4.2). Even the editors, although on either issue they were not clear in articulating a specific role, they all generally admitted to the importance of dealing with both issues in their paper.

The high calling of serving the public interest as a media practitioner is not the thing of graduating and oath-taking. It is simply contributing to the medium that gets distributed in the public domain. Journalism is a democratic craft, and the four newspapers in this study demonstrate unique instances of how this craft is practiced at a local level in rural towns.

While the dazzle of professionalism in mainstream media is in large part the gist of their success, here it is the relevance and inclusion of the very local that makes for the success of the paper. The way the editors of these paper do it, is through community connectedness. There is no claim to, and this research does not enquire if this connectedness is to the entire community in that locality. Considering that all the weeklies have a print run of not more than 5000, is sufficient to suggest that it is not. The questions therefore of who the women are that are appearing in the newspapers, and what they are achieving, is not relevant to this study and the answers of which to my mind will not detract from any of the findings.

When compared to only one previous study (GAP, 2006), the data suggests that women are proving to be more interesting news subjects than before. What is a pertinent question arising from this, and which will then put the previous questions to constructive benefit, is whether it points to the fact that women in these rural areas generally are breaking out of the domestic realm and genuinely heading into greater leadership roles? Furthermore, is the shift into greater achievement for ordinary women in rural areas really a matter of having to break from the domestic realm?

In the meantime, this study has shown the existence of unique pipelines that attach at least some members of the community in these towns to their local paper. These pipelines are journalistic in nature, and they have the effect or the potential effect – this study cannot say either way – to motivate for change in the lives of women. The potentiality inherent in here would apply then also to the community's response to HIV/AIDS and those living with HIV/AIDS.

Qualitative studies into gender and the news media, at some point place emphasis on the depth of the journalistic text itself. These include the nature of the gender-lense applied to the story itself; the level of probing done in researching the story; the context and balance applied in writing the story; and the expert sources used to anchor the story. These would lead to observations about sexist news framing, stereotypes, bias, perspective and such like in local media. It is my contention that in the context of this study, these questions are both unfair and impractical.

It is unfair, since it will appeal to standards that are drawn from the professional world of journalism practice. Here is the coalface of the democratic craft of journalism, and it is not the stuff of professionals. Yet it carries with it the hope of serving the public interest in more ways than many of the mainstream media do. The journalists, who in code language are most likely “resident without specified occupation” or “activist or community/NGO worker”, are doing their work with no lack of integrity. It will be a careless error to judge them according to conventional standards, which in some cases even in professional journalism practice are given short shrift.

It is impractical, since critical judgements from such gender textual analysis may have the effect of alienating editors from treading the route of a transformational media agenda. This is why my analysis of the "Vroue Vandag" column did not delve into the content, but was concerned mainly with the title. Editors need to be coaxed and welcomed into the fold of transformational journalism and not badgered into it. It will frustrate the movement of public journalism and the project of development communication.

## **Summary**

Deep gender schisms persist in the the four Overberg towns, in which the six newspapers show unique instances of the democratic craft of journalism in action. The papers enjoy unique journalistic pipelines that attach them to community. This connectedness is tenuous and as the study shows with respect to gender and HIV/AIDS, editors may at times converge with key informants on crucial challenges facing the community, or show a distance indicative of a break in connection. The pipelines of connectedness stand out as a vital opportunity for members of the community to feed their local media with relevant content on HIV/AIDS. There was demonstrable evidence from actual examples of content, that showed on the one hand the capacity to motivate for change in women's lives, but also on the other hand a danger of reinforcing patriarchal attitudes that compound women's oppression. The leverage for change implicit in this hinges on the editors' conscious efforts to embrace a gender-sensitive news practice. I contend that it is both unfair and impractical in the context of this study to delve into the depth of the textual content in order to mine for specific instances of framing, stereotypes, bias or perspective. Such analysis may have the effect of unfairly judging local journalists who are practicing a craft in the context of community involvement and not as professional work. It may further have an effect of drawing back editors away from the momentum of embracing transformational journalism in their newsroom.



## **Chapter 8 – Overall Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **8.1 Overall Conclusion**

The search for community IN community in South Africa, needs to be appreciated with all the many considerations of race and class. These are historical and fairly predictable. The overwhelming majority of poor in the whole country, are black or coloured. In the case of the six newspapers, the five editors, the four towns, and the one district [the Overberg]: all the editors are white middle class; two of them are woman; 80% of the Overberg's population is black and coloured; 70% earn less than R1 500 per month; close onto 30% of households are living on or even below the breadline; five of the newspapers are independent; in two of the towns there is a local media monopoly [Gansbaai and Caledon]; and all six newspapers are successful commercial entities.

This study has shown that the apparent disjuncture between commercial news media and development communication dissipates at local level. This is the case even if these media are owned and run by middle class white men.

Even though “community” has been used throughout this study, an appreciation of who that community actually is did not appear relevant to the study, and remains so now. The point is, and the bottom line is, the term does not require deep examination since the only claim to community that a commercial paper inevitably makes is its community of readers.

It is axiomatic in the media market business, that your readers are more than your actual print run, since a newspaper gets passed along in a house or office etc. This study suggests that the weekly newspapers in these four towns enjoy a readership that genuinely moves across race and gender and perhaps class [although not clear from the study]. The actual demographic, psychographic or Living Standards Measure dimensions of which, are beside the point in this study. The newspapers also have community connections – pipelines – that clearly extend, pertinent to this study, to the ranks of NGO and developmental workers in the towns.

Here is the point where development communication and journalism meet. It is a small area in the whole field of contacts, sources, correspondents and connections that an editor routinely has to maintain. It goes without saying too, that the content emerging from this point of meeting, is also

inevitably a small area in the content pages of the paper itself. There is an assortment of different news and information that an editor needs to fill his/her newspaper with in order to keep it a going concern. All this news and information then still needs to jostle for space with advertising.

The contention of this study throughout, has been that the notion of public journalism is the most appropriate means of conflating the area of journalism and development communication. This concept empowers the editor to move towards a practice that is less tied to a developmental agenda per se, and more open towards an integrative function in the community. The community of interest and concern to the editor in this respect is then not exclusively the papers' readers, but the broad geographic community in which the paper finds itself. The concern would be about the interests, well being, integration and continued upliftment of all the people in this locality.

The main features of the modus operandi of such a media operation, is connecting with the community in a demonstrable fashion. The extent of the integrative process the newspaper facilitates is contingent on the nature and openness of the pipelines of connectedness that the editor lays down within that community.

This study suggests that most of the local rural news media in the four towns have established organic connections with community in their towns. Moreover, the notion of public journalism is a concept this researcher is both applying to their current location in respect to the developmental context, and indeed proposing for their future direction as a journalism product. This on the basis of a methodology of field research conducted over several months. So in other words, the progression of these papers to a rubric of public journalism is of itself, organic.

The high calling of responding to community integration in South Africa, is no doubt a coalescence of race, class and gender. Cities, districts, towns, suburbs, localities, and communities in South Africa remain in vast need of integrative agents. The faultlines of wealth, poverty, racism, gender and disease extend into all these places without fail. Basically, an over-arching observation of developmental needs in South Africa, is that the country is sorely in need of more agents of community integration.

At this point it is useful to summarize the central integrative functions (Mahrt, 2008:244), mentioned in Chapter 2, which local media in other parts of the world have been found to perform:

- sustaining contact amongst individuals through providing local topics for conversation and informing about local events;
- fostering engagement in community life;
- facilitating ties to organisations and involvement in community activities;
- encouraging learning and deliberation about local events and issues even among non-readers; and
- fostering community involvement pertaining to the sustenance and greater good of addressing the problems facing the community.

There were no tools within this study to objectively measure any of these factors. But with respect to the six newspapers in the four towns, the study does suggest that these media, in however big or small a way, have a demonstrable capacity to reach across the social faultlines pervasive in their community, and to stand out in some measure as a leverage for change in the context of the two developmental concerns under focus.

For some of these papers, this is indeed an historical mindshift in the agency operating in the news room, as well as in the annals of their pages. Three of the papers - the *Kontreinuus*, the *Herald*, and the *Suidernuus* - are several decades old. The *Suidernuus* specifically has been around for over 50 years. The papers - although not necessarily the editors - have an historical location in their communities going back many years. As historical journalistic products, they have come through to this current period at the helm of agents - the editors - who have shown in this study to display a mentality that is in some measure removed from the structural integration - or non-integration - that was so ubiquitous of our past. For one the practice, pervasive in these newspapers of yore, of white news in front and black news at the back, is well and truly gone.

It is axiomatic in media research study, that the capacity to advance a transformative agenda in a media is contingent on agency. So in other words, the instances of community connectedness, motivating for change and serving the public interest that are evidenced in this study, do not naturally occur as a result of a newspaper being local. Moreover, the emergence of a public journalism rubric, and the dissipation of the disjuncture between development communication and journalism at local level, is not a structural occurrence but the result of individual agency. However, the tools to facilitate such agency is readily available to local rural newspapers.

The six individual editors in this study have shown instances of a commitment to employ progressive agency with respect to gender and HIV/AIDS in their news products, through available tools in their community. This commitment is tenuous, as much as this study has shown, and is also subject to the vicissitudes of the business of newspapers, and the pervasiveness of patriarchy and perhaps racism [although not obvious in this study], which snake through our society, and to which the editors are not immune.

It is a further tenuous arrangement for a movement towards journalism that is transformative and integrative to hinge on individuals. Such is the nature and freedom of private commercial media, and it cannot be changed. But the breadth and scope of this study holds out the hope that an organic movement towards journalism products that are transformative and integrative are both present and achievable in other local rural newspapers too. It is nothing short of a great opportunity to advance developmental goals, of which there are enough to list in South Africa's rural landscape.

## **8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are grouped under five broad headings. It will be a disservice to the efforts of this study not to list the specific suggestions around the role of the media and challengers in the community emanating from the interviews. These are listed last under the heading "Specific Media Content", and while relating specifically to conditions in the four different towns, may be instructive for other media in other rural towns.

### **8.2.1 Research**

The dearth of available academic research focusing on rural local media has been noted throughout this study, and is hence listed upfront as a priority area to move on from this study. The nature and type of research can include:

- audience research that measures the depth and scope of community integration facilitated by rural local media;
- research into the relationship between local papers and local government, a neglected area of focus in this study, notwithstanding the tools available to explore aspects of it. Local government content in local media lies at the nexus of "communicative action" around public decision making and policy in local districts. Overdue research in this regard pertain to the nature and scope of the deliberative public sphere emerging from the local media and how communicative action is being facilitated around specific local government issues.

Complimentary research to this will be the extent to which local authorities themselves are using their local commercial media beyond just placing notices, but to monitor, respond to and generate community deliberation around key issues; and finally,

- follow-up media monitoring research of the local papers to explore any evidence of sustained or improved content performance around the trends emerging from this study.

### **8.2.2 Media Diversity**

The situation around this has been raised in several instances throughout the study. It is an anomaly in several respects. Firstly, over the District there is mix of up to a dozen different local commercial papers, more than half of which are independent. However, there is no permanent community broadcaster serving any part of the region. In two of the towns under focus in this study, there is a monopoly situation, while in the other two, the competition for the weekly paper comes mainly in the form of a monthly publication. All the papers compete against the only district-wide weekly, the *Hermanus Times/Overberg Venster*, which is owned by Media-24. The negative impact of the lack of diversity with respect to advancing integrative functions in the media, have also been noted in this study. The onus for ensuring diversity in South Africa's media landscape, falls mainly on the statutory Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA). The following recommendations are directed mainly at the MDDA:

- to conduct a complete and thorough census of local rural media on South Africa;
- to provide support, in every conceivable way, to ensure the continued existence of these papers;
- to respond promptly for funding support to set up community radio facilities in the Overberg. Such efforts though should be organic, emanating from and at the pace of local communities;
- similarly, to respond promptly for funding support specifically to set-up black-owned newspapers in rural areas, a virtually non-existent phenomenon in this country. Unlike in the case of a broadcaster, here there is no imperative for the initiative to emanate from the collective community, it simply requires know-how and individual gumption.

### **8.2.3. Media Development and Rural Development**

The challengers around media development concern the ways in which existing media can be empowered and improved in both their product and service to the community. Here, the

recommendations are primarily directed at local media training organisations such as the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism and higher learning institutes; media activist organisations such as the National Community Media Forum and the Media Institute of South Africa (MISA); and then of course, rural-based or rural-focused developmental organisations. Based on observations from this study, I recommend that:

- the political and conceptual leap needs to be made to make small, commercial, independent, local newspapers more inclusive of the community media sector so as to open them up to more streams of funding, support and training;
- public journalism is a training priority. The concept is still very new to South Africa, and at a research level it still needs to be unpacked, tested, measured and further developed. At the coalface of its implementation, which as this study shows can happen organically and without any claim to it, support needs to come in the form of capacity building in improving the news product; an Institute for Public Journalism is a vision I state here as a recommendation for organisations mentioned so far to work towards by way of helping in the growth, maturity and more widespread practice of this concept; and finally
- The role of developmental organisations are crucial in the context of this study. Rural organisations focused on gender, HIV/AIDS, violence against women, young women and youth, need to effectively develop critical media awareness and capacity skills within their ranks to both feed content to their local media; and be able to monitor and respond to their media in the event of harmful perceptions arising. Basic training in writing letters to editors and news or feature articles would be much needed training here. Journalism training institutions need to link up with developmental organisations [as opposed to vice versa]; as well as rolling out training aimed at improving the pool of local community correspondents. Here once again, a vision of an Institute for Public Journalism becomes relevant.

### **8.2.5 Local Government**

In the realm of public journalism, local government politics and decision making enjoy high content priority. Local government's relationship to local media [and vice versa] is an under-researched area in South Africa, and I contend that it can only be of great benefit to the authority for some investment into such research across districts. It may even be at this level, where the local authority can fund regular and consistent media monitoring research to keep track of the trends in the local media's coverage of numerous issues. Nevertheless, the main recommendation for local government emerging from this study, is the development and promotion of more women spokespersons in the

authority. Furthermore, for the local authority to maintain open, honest and proactive dealings with the local media.

### **8.2.6 Specific Content**

These recommendations are based completely on the feedback from the sample group of interviewees in this study. The recommendations basically emerged from the four questions around challengers in their community pertaining to gender and HIV/AIDS, and their perceptions of the role of their local media around these two issues. In both instances broad challengers around attitudes were raised, along with specific concrete challengers - such as a place of care for AIDS sufferers for example - that need to be achieved in the community. The recommendations around broad attitudes, stand out as the opportunities and pitfalls that editors need to be aware of in their overall content. On the one hand, there may be an opportunity, whatever the story may be about, to challenge or counter one of these broad attitudes extant in the community. On the other hand, these may be specific pitfalls the editor should guard against that no content should reinforce or perpetuate any of these attitudes.

The specific challengers, represent opportunities for specific content. It could mean the editor taking time to investigate the feasibility, existence, or implications of an issue; giving publicity to an issue or simply highlighting who the roleplayers are that could bring a challenge to fruition.

It is a tall order to hold the local commercial media responsible for basic information on HIV/AIDS such as for example around prevention, understanding the disease, ARV treatment, mother-to-child infections etc. The scope for development communication in journalism is small, and this must be respected. Basic awareness raising and information inevitably needs to be produced by development organisations themselves. However, the challenge for development activists is to use to maximum benefit the windows of opportunity that arise in their local media, and encourage and develop more consistent opportunities such as those, whatever they may be. The pitfalls can include not being creative when responding to an opportunity in the media, and also not being consistent. A boring, uncreative article may turn-off readers and cause the editor not ask again for a contribution. Inconsistency causes the issue to die down and then be resurrected again and so forth. It is much better to maintain a consistent dialogue in the public domain to facilitate changes in attitude and approach to the disease. The recommendations below do not include the calls for general awareness raising information, since those suggestions are best for development organisations and not the

media.

**HIV/AIDS: Broad attitudes prevalent in the four towns.**

**These represent opportunities for the media to counter; as well as pitfalls they should guard against that their content does not reinforce.**

- Stigma - respondents were not specific on this at all, but the inference of the researcher is that this extends to stigma around being tested; stigma around being open about the disease if you are positive and; stigma against accepting and being supportive of those who are positive in the community
- People know about the dangers but they do nothing about it; ignorance and denial hence people are infecting others on purpose;
- Young people are not taking the disease seriously
- The perception that HIV/AIDS is a poor-man's disease

**HIV/AIDS: Specific challengers in the four towns, not pertaining to general attitudes**

**These represent opportunities for specific content. In the right-hand column, the researcher suggests ideas for specific content based on these responses. Given the nature of the local papers, this content can be generated by development workers or community correspondents, bearing in mind that the left column is not from the researcher but what is being desired by some members of the community and readers of the local paper.**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The need for a hospice to provide care for AIDS patients;</li> <li>● An orphanage for children left along due to death of parents;</li> </ul> | <p>Exploring the feasibility; how many people in the locality; why isn't current healthcare arrangement working; the costs for such a project; the possible location; who can possible fund this if not government; raising a call for funding support in the community;</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To get more people on ARV treatment and they remain on the treatment;</li> <li>● For people to come earlier for ARV treatment;</li> </ul>     | <p>Doing human interest features/profiles on those involved in ARV rollout; who are they; what are they doing; the nature of the service; the challenges they face; what do people need to do to access these services; the importance of ARV treatment and how it works;</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Building support networks;</li> <li>● link one organisation with another organisation</li> </ul>  | <p>Doing features on who is doing what in the community; setting up pro-formo form for community announcements [time, date, event, contacts etc] and distributing it amongst organisations; the newspaper itself could be responsible for setting a support group;</p>        |



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Involving the church</li> </ul>	Inviting different pastors to give a specific message, meditation, around HIV/AIDS for the general community, or specifically as a means of support/comfort for those living with HIV.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lack of resources to conduct awareness programmes;</li> </ul>	Who needs the resources; what work do they do; what work do they want to do; why is this of benefit to the town; what do they need; any funders in the town;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● the need for community gardens for people to get the right nutrition;</li> </ul>	what is right nutrition; who is talking about this and proposing it; what do they need; where is the land; how easy will it be to grow and harvest what is needed;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Statistics on HIV/AIDS in the region</li> </ul>	The clinics and nurses there are normally very well informed with respect to the statistics;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Getting more people to talk about the disease</li> </ul>	A suggestion from one of the interviewees was linking up with local counselors to facilitate people coming forward and being more open about the disease.

Once again, broad educational and awareness-raising challenges around gender have not been listed below, as these would be more appropriate for development organisations instead of the media.

### **Gender - Broad attitudes prevalent in the four towns.**

**These represent opportunities for the media to counter; as well as pitfalls they should guard against that their content does not reinforce. It may also just represent broad attitudes which the media can use a checklist against its stories on gender, to see if there is an opportunity to respond to any of these perceptions.**

- women are regarded as not being able to lead
- the view persists that women should only look after children
- women are still scared and submissive to husbands
- women are scared to speak up in the face of violence
- most of the youth are uninformed about gender issues
- women are not aware of their rights
- women need jobs
- parents are not educated enough on how to deal with teenage pregnancies

### **Specific challengers around gender**

**These represent opportunities for specific content. In the right-hand column, the researcher**

**suggests ideas for specific content based on these responses. Given the nature of the local papers, this content can be generated by development workers or community correspondents. The left column is what was suggested by interviewees and the right column consists of suggestions from researcher on content that can respond to these challenges.**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A need for more leadership amongst women.</li> <li>● a need for more women and gender organisations to give women an opportunity to speak out;</li> </ul>	<p>Pro-actively highlighting women leaders; prioritising women as sources or experts; doing profiles on individual women in different women's organisations, as opposed to profiling the whole organisation in one article;</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Women need financial support</li> <li>● Women need jobs</li> </ul>	<p>Exploring the needs of business women in the town, who are they, where are they, do they feel discriminated against, what help do they need;</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● more publicity around women's rights</li> <li>● more publicity around women's events</li> <li>● look more at the issue of abusive relationships in the community and name and shame abusive people in the community;</li> </ul>	<p>When incidents of domestic violence occur, name it as such and don't report it as a normal assault; when reporting for e.g. that a women took out a restraining order, try and add in small details on what rights a women has to take out such an order, and what she can gain by it;</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The need for roving justice officials to assist in maintenance issues;</li> </ul>	<p>Investigating the need for this; experiences of women around maintenance at the local court; the various locations where these matters can be sorted out.</p>

The final word in this study pertains to HIV/AIDS. By aiming to bring rural local media more into the fold of debates around news media and the developmental concerns of HIV/AIDS and gender, I have exposed an organic drift towards newsrooms characterised by community connectedness that seemingly stretch across social faultlines. There is certainly evidence though that some of the editors remain in social comfort zones that make them blind to some of the challenges facing their communities. This is no less illustrated by the occurrence of articles pertaining to HIV/AIDS.

To say that all six newspapers or even all 16 newspapers [since they had the same proportion], had failed with respect to all the possible roles for the media around HIV/AIDS listed in chapter 2, is harsh. This study did not analyse any of the four articles coded under this topic. Frankly, the sample was just too small. An analysis of an article would certainly have involved a cursory judgement against any of those roles proposed in Chapter 2. But by making such a judgement, it would have overstated something which is actually hardly there.

The usefulness of applying the mediation metaphors in the context of this study, is that they do not cease in the case of omission. In other words, the media in this study have not ceased to mediate around HIV/AIDS simply because the topic occurs so rarely. They are in fact mediating by screening their readers from a major reality in their midst. Not only are people in their communities affected, there is much work being carried out at a local level, which is not reflected in the papers. The local media's benign silence on the topic is a signpost for non-action and further secrecy or shame in being open or talking about the subject. The hope of this researcher is that the three special motivating forces in journalism - truth, the public interest, and the public sphere - will remain incentives for agents in local rural media to respond to community appeals for a greater role and more information on the topic. Only by keeping these media in sight through engagement and monitoring, will we ever know if this has happened.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Amfar Aids Research. 2005. Gender-based violence and HIV among women: assessing the evidence. In *Issue Brief* No.3:1-2.

Andersson, N., Ho-Foster, A., Matthis, J., Marokoane, N., Mashiane, V., Mhatre, S., Mitchell, S., Mokoena, T., Monasta, L, Ngxowa, N., Salcedo, M.P., and Sonnekus, H. 2004. National cross sectional study of views on sexual violence and risk of HIV infection and AIDS among South African school pupils. In *British Medical Journal* 2004 (329;952). Available online at [www.bmj.com](http://www.bmj.com). Accessed May 2009.

Arenstein, J. 2005. Between the Borg and the Big Bang. *Rhodes Journalism Review* 25 (November 2005):49-50.

Berger, G. 2000. Grave New World? Democratic Journalism Enters the Global Twenty-first Century. *Journalism Studies*, 1(1): 81-99.

Berger, G. 2004. *Media & AIDS: How we can do better*. Paper delivered at Asia Media Summit, Kuala Lumpur, April 2004. Available at [guyberger.ru.ac.za/fulltext/aidsmediaasia.doc](http://guyberger.ru.ac.za/fulltext/aidsmediaasia.doc) . Accessed February 2009.

Boafo, K. 2006. Participatory Development Communication: An African Perspective. In Bessette G. (Ed), *People, Land, and Water: Participatory Development Communication for Natural Resource Management* (pp 31-48). London: Earthscan/IDRC.

Compton, J. 2000. Communicative Politics and Public Journalism. *Journalism Studies* 1(1): 449-467.

Croteau, D. & Hoynes, W. 2001. *Media Society – Industries, Images, and Audiences*. California: Pine Forge Press.

Department of Health. 2008. *National HIV and Syphilis Antenatal Sero-prevalence Survey in South Africa 2007*. Pretoria: National Department of Health.

DPLG - Department of Provincial and Local Government. 2007. *Gender Policy Framework for Local Government*. Pretoria: Department of Provincial and Local Government.

Devin, B. and Huesca, R. 1999. The participatory communication for development narrative: An examination of meta-theoretic assumptions and their impacts. In Jacobson T. and Servaes J. (Eds). *Theoretical Approaches to Participatory Communication*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press

De Wet, G. 2004. Agenda setting and HIV/AIDS news sources, implications for journalism education: an exploratory study. *Ecquid Novi* 25(1):94-114.

Dueze, M. 2008. Understanding journalism as newswork: How it changes, and how it remains the same. *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture* 5(2): 4-23.

Du Plooy, G.M. 1997. *Introduction to Communication: Communication Research*. Cape Town: Juta.

Finlay, A. 2003. *Panos / JHU-HCP Health Media Audits, Country Report: South Africa*. Available at [www.openresearch.co.za](http://www.openresearch.co.za)

Gender Advocacy Programme (GAP). 2006. *Report on the Gender Advocacy Programme's 2<sup>nd</sup> Media Monitoring Survey of Rural-based Newspapers*. Cape Town: GAP. Available at: <http://www.gender.co.za/details.php?x=report%20on%202nd%20monitoring%20survey&category=WM>

Gender Links & Media Institute of Southern Africa. 2003. *Gender and Media Baseline Study*. Johannesburg: Gender Links.

Gender Links & Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA). 2006. *HIV and AIDS and Gender Baseline Study*. Johannesburg: Gender Links.

Golding, P., and Elliot, P. 2002. News values and news production. In Marris and Thornham (Eds). *Media Studies: A Reader* (pp 632-644). New York: New York University Press.

Groenewald, P., Bradshaw, D., Van Niekerk, M., Jefferies, D. and Van Der Merwe, W. 2007. *Report on Cause of Death and Premature Mortality in the Boland-Overberg Region 2004-2005*. Cape Town: South African Medical Research Council.

Hadland, A. 2007. *The South African Print Media, 1994-2004: An Application and Critique of Comparative Media Systems Theory*. Thesis presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Cape Town.

Hadland, A., & Thorne, K. 2004. *The People's Voice: The Development and Current State of the South African Small Media Sector*. Cape Town: HSRC Publishers.

Howitt, D. 1982. *Mass Media and Social Problems*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Huesca, R. 2006. From modernization to participation: The past and future of development communication in media studies. In Valdivia, A.N. (ed) 2006. *A Companion to Media Studies* (pp 50-71). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Inagaki, N. 2007. *Communicating the Impact of Communication for Development*. World Bank Working Paper No. 120. Washington: The World Bank.

Jacobs, S. & Johnson, K. 2007. Media, social movements and the state: competing images of HIV/AIDS in South Africa. *African Studies Quarterly* 9(4):1 to 28. Available at [web.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v9/v9i4a8.htm](http://web.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v9/v9i4a8.htm). Accessed November 2008.

Jeffres, L.W., Lee, J., Neuendorf, K. & Atkin, D. 2007. Newspaper reading supports community involvement. *Newspaper Research Journal* 28 (1): 6-23.

Jensen, B.J. 2005. The qualitative research process. In Jensen, B.J. (ed). *A Handbook of Media and Communication Research – Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies* (pp 235-253). Oxon, Uk: Routledge.

Jensen, K.B., & Rosengren, K.E. 2007. Five traditions in search of the audience. In McQuail, D., Golding, P., and De Bens, E. (eds) 2007. *Communication Theory and Research* (pp 53-70). London:

Sage.

Khan, F. 2003. *Intimate Experiences of Domestic Violence among Women in the Saldanha Bay Municipality*. Cape Town: Gender Advocacy Programme.

Koenderman, T. (ed). 2006. *South African Media Facts*. Johannesburg: OMD & Ad Review.

Kolmer, C. 2008. Methods of journalism research - Content analysis. In Loffelholz, M. & Weaver, D. (Eds). 2008. *Global Journalism Research - Theories, Methods, Findings, Future* (pp 117-130). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Lowe-Morna, C. 2001. *Whose News? Whose Views? Southern Africa: Gender in Media Handbook*. Johannesburg: Gender Links.

Lowe-Morna, C. 2006. Who makes the news in Southern Africa. *The Southern Africa Media Diversity Journal*, Issue 2:139-141.

M&G Online. 18 June 2009. *Quarter of Men in South Africa Admit Rape*. <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2009-06-18-quarter-of-men-in-south-africa-admit-rape>. Accessed August 2009.

Mahrt, M. 2008. Conversations about local media and their role in community integration. In *Communication* 33(2008): 233-246.

Mathews, S., Abrahams, N., Martin, L.J., Vetten, L. Van der Merwe, L., and Jewkes, R. 2004. *Every six hours a woman is killed by her intimate partner: A national study of female homicide in South Africa*. Cape Town: Media Research Council

McQuail D. 1994. *Mass Communication Theory*. London: Sage.

McQuail D. (ed) 2002. *McQuail's Reader in Mass Communication Theory*. London: Sage

Media Development and Diversity Agency – MDDA. 2005. *Print, Distribution, Circulation and Marketing of the Grassroots Press in South Africa*. Johannesburg: MDDA.

Media Monitoring Project (MMP). 2005. *Keeping an Eye on the Campaign: Monitoring of Media Coverage of the 16 Days of Activism*. Johannesburg:MMP.

Milne, C. & Taylor, A. 2006. *African Media Development Initiative – South Africa Report*. London: BBC World Service Trust.

Mtwana, M. & Bird, W. 2006. *Revealing Race: An Analysis of the Coverage of Race and Xenophobia in the South African Print Media*. Johannesburg: Media Monitoring Project.

Nip, J.Y.M. 2006. Exploring the second phase of public journalism. *Journalism Studies* 7(2):212-236.

Philo, G. 1993. Getting the message: Audience research in the Glasgow University Media Group. In Eldridge, J. (ed) 1993. *Getting the Message: News, Truth and Power* (pp 253-270). London: Routledge.

- ODM - Overberg District Municipality. 2008. *Revised Integrated Development Plan for the Council Cycle 2008-2009*. Bredasdorp: ODM.
- Paek, H., Yoon, S. & Shah, D.V. 2005. Local news, social integration, and community participation: Hierarchical linear modeling of contextual and cross-level effects. In *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 82(3): 587-606.
- Panos Institute of Southern Africa. 2004. *Lessons for Today and Tomorrow: An Analysis of HIV/AIDS Reporting in Southern Africa*. Lusaka: Panos.
- Peterson M.A. 2001. Getting to the Story: Unwriteable Discourse and Interpretative Practice in American Journalism. *Anthropological Quarterly* no. 74: 201-211.
- Rau, A., Milne, C., Du Toit, P., & Mdlongwe, F. 2008. Positioning independent community media: Findings from a case study of six small South African newspapers. *Communicatio* 34(1): 95-112
- Riffe, D., Lacy, S. and Fico, F.G. 1998. *Analysing Media Messages Using Quantitative Content Analysis Research*. Mahweh, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associate Publishers.
- SAARF AMPS. 2007. *South African Advertising Research Foundation's All Media and Products Survey*. Downloaded from [www.saarf.co.za](http://www.saarf.co.za). Accessed: August 2008.
- South African Police Services (SAPS). 2008.
- i. *Rape in the RSA per Province for April to DECEMBER 2001 to 2007*. Pretoria: SAPS.
  - ii. *Indecent assault in the RSA per Province for April to DECEMBER 2001 to 2007*. Pretoria: SAPS.
  - iii. *Neglect and ill-treatment of children in the RSA per Province between April and March: 2001/2002 to 2007/2008*. Pretoria: SAPS.
- Soul City. 1999. *Violence against Women in South Africa - A Resource for Journalists*. Johannesburg: Soul City.
- South African Government. 2000. *The Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy*. Office of the President: Pretoria.
- Stein, J. 2001. *HIV/AIDS and the Media: A Literature Review*. Johannesburg: CADRE.
- Stein, J. 2002. *What's News: Perspectives on HIV/AIDS in the South African Media*. Johannesburg: CADRE.
- Stramm, K.R., Emig, A.G. & Hesse, M.B. 1997. The contribution of local media to community involvement. In *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 74(1):97-107.
- Terry, G. 2004. Poverty reduction and violence against women: exploring the links, assessing impact. In *Development Practice* 14(4):469-480.
- Voakes, P. 2004. A Brief History of Public Journalism. *National Civic Review*, Fall 2004: 25-35.

Wasserman, H, & De Beer, A. 2004. Covering HIV/AIDS: towards a heuristic comparison between communitarian and utilitarian ethics. *Communicatio* 30(2): 84-97.

Western Cape Provincial Government. 2007. *Socio-Economic Profile: Overberg District 2007*. Cape Town: Western Cape Provincial Treasury.

Wood, A. & Barnes, J. 2007. *Making Poverty the Story: Time to Involve the Media in Poverty Reduction*. London: PANOS.

World Association of Christian Communication [WACC]. 2005. *Global Media Monitoring Project South Africa National Report*. London: WACC.



## Appendix one

### List of rural-based newspapers in the Western Cape Province

Action Ads	Weekly	Knysna
The Big Tree Bulletin	Monthly	Calitzdorp
De Poort	Monthly	De Rust
Free Ads	Weekly	Knysna
George Herald	Weekly	George
Die Hoorn	Weekly	Oudtshoorn
Cxpress	Fortnightly	Plettenberg Bay
The Edge	Fortnightly	Sedgefield
Gons	Weekly	Oudtshoorn
Bitou News	Weekly	Plettenberg Bay
Prince Albert Friend	Monthly	Prince Albert
The Courier	Monthly	Beaufort West
Valleir	Weekly	De Doorn
Caledon Kontreinuus	Weekly	Caledon
Swellendam Gazette	Monthly	Swellendam

Worcester Standard	Weekly	Worcester
Paarl Post	Weekly	Paarl
Montagu Herald	Monthly	Montagu
Eikestad Nuus	Weekly	Stellenbosch
Witzenberg Herald	Weekly	Ceres
Winelands Echo	Fortnightly	Paarl
Stellenbosch Gazette	Weekly	Stellenbosch
Breede River Gazette	Weekly	Robertson
Karoo Kloof	Monthly	Uniondale
Mossel Bay Advertisers	Weekly	Mossel Bay
Herrie	Weekly	Oudtshoorn
Knysna News	Monthly	Knysna
Knysna Plett Herald	Weekly	Knysna
Outeniqua Gazette	Weekly	George
South Cape Forum	Weekly	Riversdal
Wild News	Fortnightly	Sedgefield

Greyton Sentinel	Monthly	Greyton
Agulhus Tribune	Weekly	Struisbaai
Hermanus Times	Weekly	Hermanus
Two Oceans	Monthly	Cape Agulhas
Overstrand Herald	Weekly	Kleinmond
Overberg news / Nuus	Monthly	Overberg Region
Langeberg Bulletin	Weekly	Swellendam
Gansbaai Courant / Gansbaai Herald	Weekly	Gansbaai
Stanford River Talk	Monthly	Stanford
Southern Post / Suider Nuus	Weekly	Bredasdorp
Elgin Grabouwer	Weekly	Grabow
Die Piketberger	Weekly	Piketberg
Ons Kontrei	Weekly	Vredendal
Westlander	Weekly	Vredenberg
Moorreesburg Mail	Weekly	Moorreesburg

## Appendix two: Newspaper Coders Manual

# NEWSPAPER CODING SYSTEM

## A. BASIC INFORMATION

Enter this information **once** each newspaper – in the top right-hand corner of the newspaper coding sheet.

**Your name:**

**Name of the newspaper:** Identify the name of the newspaper, the date and the number of the article as you have marked it in the newspaper.

## B. STORY

Code this information once for each news story – on the first coding line for the story.

1. **Page number** write in the number of the page on which the story begins.

2. **Topic**

1. Gender e.g. Gender Based Violence, Domestic Violence, Rape, Women's Leadership, Women and Business, Women in the Workplace (domestic workers, sex workers, nurses) Gays and Lesbians
2. HIV/AIDS
3. Local Government

3. **Type**

1. News story
2. Letter to editor
3. Editorial column or opinion piece

4. **Subject**

**Politics and Government**

1. Safety and Security e.g. police, army, traffic
2. Municipal meetings e.g. discussions on policy, implementation, service delivery.

### Economy

3. Poverty e.g. feeding schemes, soup kitchens, government aid parcels, poverty statistics, shelters and havens
4. Housing e.g. rent subsidies, evictions, land claims, rates and taxes
5. Social Welfare e.g. access to grants, pensions, disability, child welfare
6. Corruption and fraud
7. Water and Sanitation e.g. supply, costs, access, disconnections, service delivery, refuse removal

### Health

8. Hospitals, clinics including community health offices e.g. nurses, doctors, all medical personnel, state of hospitals and services.
9. ARV roll out, e.g. access and distribution, debates, diet and ARV, provision to pregnant women, Post Exposure Prophylaxis
10. Safer sex e.g. information and education around STD's (sexually transmitted diseases), HIV/AIDS
11. HIV/AIDS services and projects e.g. projects and services by NGO's or Government training, events and awareness raising on HIV/AIDS e.g. condom distribution, Love Life, Aids Day, demonstrations and activism
12. Violence against Women, services and projects e.g. NGO's OR government training, events and awareness raising on VAW, Domestic Violence and Gender Based Violence, Women's Day, 16 Days of Activism
13. Reproductive Health e.g. termination of pregnancy, PAP smears, mammograms, access to birth control, ante natal clinics
14. Substance abuse e.g. drug and alcohol abuse

### Social and Legal

15. Human rights, xenophobia, minority rights, racism

### Crime and Violence

- 16. Gender Based Violence e.g. violence against women, children, gays, lesbians including violent crime, murder, abduction, kidnapping, assault, drug related violence.....
- Domestic Violence including arrests and court cases
- Rape including arrests and court cases
- Murder including femicide

### Celebrity, Arts and Media

- 17. Profiles and personal features e.g. election candidates profile, organisation profile, community personality profile

### 18. Other

## C. JOURNALISTS AND PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

For each newspaper story, you should code:

**Each journalists / Reporter** who wrote the story and whose name appears. **Do not** code unnamed journalists (e.g. Staff reporter, Our correspondent)

**Each person in the story who is interviewed**

**Each person in the story who is quoted**, either directly or indirectly\*

**Any person whom the story is about**, even if they are not interviewed or quoted

\*A person is **quoted directly** if their own words are printed in the story – e.g. 'I am disappointed and angry about the continued use of drugs in sport' said the President of the Olympic Committee.

A person **quoted indirectly** in their words are paraphrased or summarised in the story – e.g. The President of the Olympic Committee today expressed anger at the incidence of drug use.

Code **only** individual people. **Do not** code:

News agencies

Groups ( e.g. a group of nurses, a group of soldiers)

Organisation, companies, collectivities (e.g. political parties)

Character in novels or movies (**unless** the story is about them)

Deceased historical figures (**unless** the story is about them)

### 5. Role

- 1 **Reporter**: journalists, photograher

2. **Person in the news:** Interviewee, person who is quoted (directly or indirectly), person whom the story is about

3. Reporter not identified

6. **Gender**

1. Female
2. Male
3. Other, transgender, transsexual
4. Do not know

18. Other

JOURNALISTS AND PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

COMPLETE THE REMAINING CODES *ONLY* FOR PEOPLE IN THE NEWS. THESE CODES ARE *NOT* NEEDED FOR REPORTERS.

7. Age

Code the age of the person **only** if it is specifically mentioned in the newspaper story. A person's age is not always relevant to the news. We want to find out whether women and men are equally likely to be described in terms of their age.

Even if you know the age of the person concerned, you must code 0 if this person's age is not explicitly stated in the story. Similarly, although you might be able to guess the age of the person - e.g. because there is a photograph - you must code 0 unless their age is actually mentioned in print.

- |   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| 0 | Age not mentioned |
| 1 | 12 years or under |
| 2 | 13-18             |
| 3 | 19-34             |
| 4 | 35-49             |
| 5 | 50-64             |
| 6 | 65 years or more  |

8. Occupation or position

Code **one** occupation or position for each person in the news. If the person is described as having two occupations, you will have to make a choice - e.g. choose the occupation that seems most relevant in the context of the news item.

People who are self-employed should be coded in the category that corresponds to their area of work - e.g. a self-employed computer analyst is coded 7, a person who owns a small business is coded 10.

In the case of persons who are well-known to the general public - e.g. George W. Bush, Madonna, your country's president - code the occupation even if it is not apparent from the content of the news item.

In the case of persons who are not well-known to the general public, but who are known to you personally, code 0 if the occupation is not apparent from the content of the news item.



- 0 Not stated. Story does not describe the person's occupation or position.
- 
- 2 Government official, politician, president, government minister, political leader, political party staff, spokesperson ...
- 3 Government employee, public servant, bureaucrat, diplomat, intelligence officer ...
- 4 Police, military, para-military group, militia, prison officer, security officer, fire officer ...
- 5 Academic expert, education professional, teacher or university lecturer (all disciplines), nursery or kindergarten teacher, child care worker ...
- 6 Health or social service professional, doctor, nurse, laboratory technician, social worker, psychologist ...
- 7 Science or technology professional, engineer, technician, computer specialist ...
- 8 Media professional, journalist, video or film-maker, theatre director ...
- 9 Lawyer, judge, magistrate, legal advocate, legal expert, legal clerk ...
- 10 Business person, executive, manager, entrepreneur, economist, financial expert, stock broker ...
- 11 Office or service worker, non-management worker in office, store, restaurant, catering ...
- 12 Tradesperson, artisan, labourer, truck driver, construction, factory, domestic worker ...
- 13 Agriculture, mining, fishing, forestry worker ...
- 14 Religious figure, priest, monk, rabbi, mullah, nun ...
- 15 Activist or worker in civil society organisation, non-governmental organisation, trade union, human rights, consumer issues, environment, aid agency, peasant leader, United Nations
- 16 Sex worker, prostitute ...
- 17 Celebrity, artist, actor, writer, singer, radio or television personality ...
- 18 Sportsperson, athlete, player, coach, referee ...
- 19 Student, pupil, schoolchild
- 20 Homemaker, parent, either female or male. **Code this only if no other occupation is given**, e.g. a doctor who is also described as a mother is coded 6.
- 21 Child, young person (up to 18 years). **Code this only if no other occupation/position is given**, e.g. a schoolchild is coded 19; a child labourer is coded 12.
- 22 Villager or resident engaged in unspecified occupation. **Code this only if no other occupation is given**, e.g. a teacher who is also described as a villager is coded 5.
- 23 Retired person, pensioner. **Code this only if no other occupation is given**, e.g. a retired police officer is coded 4; a retired politician is coded 2.
- 24 Criminal, suspect. **Code this only if no other occupation is given**, e.g. a lawyer suspected of committing a crime is coded 9; a former politician who has committed a

- crime is coded 2.
- 25 Unemployed. **Code this only if no other occupation is given**, e.g. an unemployed actor is coded 17; an unemployed person who commits a crime is coded 24.
- 26 Other. **Use only as a last resort** (specify the occupation/position in 'Comments' section of coding sheet)

**9. Function in the news story** In what function or capacity is this person included in the story?

Choose **one** code only for each person in the story. If there are several people in the story, some of them may have the same function. E.g. the story might be about two people, in which case both of those people would be given code 1; the story might include three eye witnesses, in which case all three would be given code 5.

Code 1 takes precedence over other codes. E.g. if the person is both a subject and a spokesperson, choose code 1= Subject.

- 0 **Do not know:** the person's function is not clear.
- 1 **Subject:** the story is *about* this person, or about something the person has done, said etc.
- 2 **Spokesperson:** the person represents, or speaks on behalf of another person, a group or an organisation
- 3 **Expert or commentator:** the person provides additional information, opinion or comment, based on specialist knowledge or expertise
- 4 **Personal experience:** the person provides opinion or comment, based on individual personal experience; the opinion is not necessarily meant to reflect the views of a wider group
- 5 **Eye witness:** the person gives testimony or comment, based on direct observation (e.g. being present at an event)
- 6 **Popular opinion:** the person's opinion is assumed to reflect that of the 'ordinary citizen' (e.g., in a street interview, vox populi etc); it is implied that the person's point of view is shared by a wider group of people.
- 7 **Other. Use only as a last resort** (describe the function in 'Comments' section of coding sheet).

**10. Family relationships** Women are often defined in the news in terms of their familial relationships (wife of, daughter of etc.). Men are sometimes defined in this way too (husband of, son of etc).

Is this person described, at any point within the story, in terms of a family relationship (e.g. wife, husband, daughter, son, aunt, uncle, grandmother, grandfather etc)?

- 0 No
- 1 Yes. Code 'yes only if the word 'wife', 'husband' is actually used to describe the person.

**11. Victim** Does the story clearly identify this person as a victim?

You should code a person as a victim **either** if the word 'victim' is used to describe her/him, **or** if the story implies that the person is a victim - e.g. by using language or images that evoke particular emotions such as shock, horror, pity for the person.

Choose **one** of the codes below for each person in the news. Sometimes a person may be identified as being a victim of more than one event or circumstance - for instance, a person who was involved in a car accident and was then robbed. In such a case you will have to make a choice - e.g. choose the event or circumstance that is given most prominence in the news story.

**Note: A person may be identified as both a victim and a survivor within the same news item. Coding a person as a victim does not exclude the possibility of also coding the same person as a survivor.**

- 0 Not a victim
- 1 Victim of an accident, natural disaster, poverty, disease, illness ...
- 2 Victim of domestic violence (by husband/wife/partner/other family member), psychological violence, physical assault, marital rape, murder ...
- 3 Victim of non-domestic sexual violence or abuse, sexual harassment, rape, trafficking ...
- 4 Victim of other crime, robbery, assault, murder ...
- 5 Victim of violation based on religion, tradition, cultural belief, genital mutilation, bride-burning ...
- 6 Victim of war, terrorism, vigilantism, state-based violence ...
- 7 Victim of discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion ...
- 8 Other victim: describe in 'Comments' section of coding sheet ...
- 9 Do not know, cannot decide

12. **Survivor** Does the story clearly identify this person as a survivor?

You should code a person as a survivor either if the word 'survivor' is used to describe her/him, or if the story implies that the person is a survivor - e.g. by using language or images that evoke particular emotions such as admiration or respect for the person.

Choose **one** of the codes below for each person in the news. If someone is identified as being a survivor of more than one event or circumstance you will have to make a choice - e.g. choose the event or circumstance that is given most prominent in the news story.

**Note:** A person may be identified as both a victim and a survivor within the same news item. Coding a person as a survivor does not exclude the possibility of also coding the same person as a victim.

- 0 Not a survivor
- 1 Survivor of an accident, natural disaster, poverty, disease, illness ...
- 2 Survivor of domestic violence (by husband/wife/partner/other family member), psychological violence, physical assault, marital rape, murder ...
- 3 Survivor of non-domestic sexual violence or abuse, sexual harassment, rape, trafficking ...
- 4 Survivor of other crime, robbery, assault, murder ...
- 5 Survivor of violation based on religion, tradition, cultural belief, genital mutilation, bride-burning ...
- 6 Survivor of war, terrorism, vigilantism, state-based violence ...
- 7 Survivor of discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion ...
- 8 Other survivor: describe in 'Comments' section of coding sheet ...
- 9 Do not know, cannot decide

13. **Is this person directly quoted in the story?**

- 0 No
- 1 Yes

A person is **directly quoted** if their own words are printed, e.g. "The war against terror is our first priority" said President Bush. In this case, you would code 1 in column 12.

If the story paraphrases what the person said, that is **not a direct quote**, e.g. President Bush said that top priority would be given to fighting the war against terror. In this case, you would code 0 in column 12.

14. **Is there a photograph of this person?**

- 0 No
- 1 Yes
- 2 Don't know (e.g. there is a photo, but you are not sure if this person appears in it)

