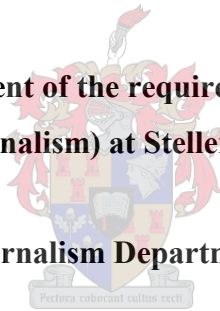**The Political Role of Black Journalists in Post-Apartheid South Africa:**

The Case of the *City Press* – 1994 to 2004

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Dissertation presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Journalism) at Stellenbosch University

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Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

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Declaration

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Date: December 2011

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Abstract

This study investigated the political role of the *City Press*' black journalists in post-apartheid South Africa. Taking into consideration its ownership by a white media company, the study investigated the role played by African cultural values in the execution of their tasks with a particular focus on the period 1994 to 2004.

The interest in the role played by African cultural values in the execution of the *City Press*' black journalists' tasks, and in the issue of the newspaper's white ownership, was driven by an observation that historically, the trajectory of black newspapers was to a great extent influenced by the interests and values of the owners. The issue of ownership was of interest also because the black political elite frequently accused black journalists in South Africa of undermining the ANC government so as to please the white owners of the newspapers they worked for.

Also, taking into consideration that the *City Press* played a conscious role in the struggle against apartheid, the study sought to investigate the role the *City Press* defined for its journalists in post-apartheid South Africa, specifically in the first decade after 1994.

Three theoretical frameworks were deemed applicable in this study, namely Liberal-Pluralism, Political Economy, and Afrocentric theories on the media's political role in society. The first was chosen on the basis of its theorisation on the political role of the media. The second was chosen on the basis of its analysis of the link between the performance of the media and ownership, although that is not the only issue Political Economy deals with. The third was chosen on the basis of its focus on African historical and cultural issues. The study has employed qualitative research methods, namely content analysis and interviews. It has a quantitative aspect in that it involved the counting of the *City Press*' editorials, columns and opinion pieces, as an indication of how many journalistic pieces were analysed.

The period of this study ends in 2004 in the year that the *City Press* was re-launched as a "Distinctly African" newspaper. The "Distinctly African" concept had both cultural and political implications for the *City Press*' journalists. This study covers some of these aspects in a limited way since the research period ends in the year 2004.

The research found that in post-apartheid South Africa, the *City Press*' black journalists' political role was to make sure that the objectives of the anti-apartheid struggle were achieved. It also established that the *City Press*' black journalists executed their tasks independently without interference from their newspaper's white owners. The study also established that some of the newspaper's black journalists experienced tensions between what they perceived as expectations of journalism and what they perceived as the prescriptions of African culture.

Opsomming

Hierdie studie het die volgende ondersoek: die politieke rol van die *City Press* se swart joernaliste in post-apartheid Suid-Afrika, die rol van Afrika-kulturele waardes in die uitvoering van hul taak met 'n spesifieke fokus op die periode 1994 tot 2004, en die konteks van die koerant as eiendom van 'n tradisionele wit media maatskappy.

Die belangstelling in die rol van Afrika-kulturele waardes in die uitvoering van die taak van die *City Press* se swart joernaliste en die kwessie van die koerant se wit eienaarskap is gedryf deur die waarneming dat, histories, swart koerante grotendeels beïnvloed is deur die belange en waardes van die eienaars. Die kwessie van eienaarskap was ook van belang omdat die politieke elite gereeld swart joernaliste beskuldig het dat hulle die ANC-regering ondermyn om sodoende die wit eienaars van die publikasies vir wie hulle werk, tevrede te stel.

In ag geneem die feit dat die *City Press* 'n bewustelike rol in die struggle teen apartheid gespeel het, het die studie ook die rol ondersoek wat die *City Press* vir sy joernaliste in post-apartheid Suid-Afrika gedefinieer het, spesifiek in die eerste dekade ná 1994.

Drie teoretiese raamwerke is beskou as van belang vir hierdie studie, naamlik die Liberale-Pluralisme, die Politieke Ekonomie en Afrosentriese teorieë oor die media se politieke rol in die samelewing. Die studie het twee kwalitatiewe navorsingsmetodologieë gebruik, by name inhoudsanalise en onderhoude. Daar was 'n kwantitatiewe aspek deurdat die *City Press* se hoofartikels, rubrieke en meningstukke getel is as 'n aanduiding van hoeveel stukke geanaliseer is.

Die navorsing het bevind dat die *City Press* se swart joernaliste hul politieke rol in post-apartheid Suid-Afrika gesien het as om onder meer seker te maak dat die doelwitte van die vryheidstryd bereik word. Die studie het ook vasgestel dat die *City Press* se swart joernaliste hul taak onafhanklik en sonder inmenging van die koerant se wit eienaars kon doen. Ook is bevind dat sommige van die koerant se swart joernaliste spanning ervaar tussen eise van die joernalistiek en wat hulle beskou as voorskriftelikheid van Afrika-kulturele waardes.

Die tydperk van die studie eindig in 2004, die jaar waarin die *City Press* geloods is as 'n "Distinctly African"-koerant. Die "Distinctly African"-konsep het beide kulturele en politieke implikasies vir die *City Press* se joernaliste. Hierdie studie dek sommige van hierdie aspekte in 'n beperkte mate aangesien die navorsingstydperk in 2004 eindig. Dit word voorgestel dat meer navorsing gedoen word met spesifieke verwysing na die tydperk tussen 2004 en 2009, die volgende vyf jaar van demokrasie in Suid-Afrika. In die politieke diskoers verwys die swart politieke elite gereeld na Afrika-kultuur. Dit is nog 'n aspek wat toekomstige studies kan ondersoek, naamlik die verhouding tussen joernalistieke waardes en praktyke aan die een kant, en Afrika-kultuur aan die ander.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Motivation for the Study

The period 1994 to 2004 is a significant period in the history of South Africa. That is because it marks the first decade of democracy since the first non-racial democratic elections were held on April 27, 1994. The media played a role in ushering in the democratic dispensation (Harber, 2004:86; Raubenheimer, 1991:102; Mazwai, 1990:203). In the struggle against apartheid, black journalists, in particular, believed that it was incumbent upon themselves, as part of the black community, to fight for the destruction of apartheid (Raubenheimer, 1991:102). Historically, the concept "black journalism" had a generic connotation in South Africa. It was associated with what was referred to as the "black press" or the "black-oriented press" (Tomaselli & Tomaselli, 1989:39; 41), which was defined in terms of what Africans, Coloureds, and Asians read (Hachten & Giffard, 1984:133; Switzer & Switzer, 1979:1). While the concept of the "black press" refers to both magazines and newspapers, the focus of this research is specifically on the political role of black journalists who worked for a black-oriented newspaper, the *City Press*, in the period 1994 to 2004.

While, initially, the concept of "black journalism" in South Africa had a generic connotation, later, conceptually, a more political connotation developed which was influenced by the Black Consciousness philosophy. Black journalists, under the influence of Black Consciousness, asserted that they were "blacks first and journalists second" (Raubenheimer, 1991:102). This means that they saw themselves primarily as articulators of the black struggle. They rejected the traditional concept of liberal objectivity of white English language newspapers and saw nothing wrong in being revolutionary propagandists (Raubenheimer, 1991:102; Hachten & Giffard, 1984:133). But, rejecting "objectivity" did not mean, for these journalists, twisting facts and distorting reality (Raubenheimer, 1991:118). Rather, because they were black, they felt they were bound to have a different political interpretation and social analysis from that of their white counterparts. The white liberal press was viewed with suspicion by black journalists, in that it was seen as being "pretentious" in the struggle against apartheid (Manganyi, 2004:111). On this point Tomaselli and Tomaselli (1989:61) argue that during the apartheid era, since the English press was owned by white capital, which had vested interests in maintaining the conditions conducive to the continued accumulation of capital based on an exploitative division of labour, its opposition to apartheid was structurally limited.

But when signs emerged that South Africa was on the path to democracy, black journalists saw a need to re-examine their role (Mazwai, 1990:203). Since black journalists supported the liberation movements during the struggle against apartheid, the question that confronted them was: would they be expected to continue a role of supporting the liberation movement which would form a government later? While the study focuses specifically on the *City Press*, the remark by the *Sowetan*'s former editor, Aggrey Klaaste, contributed in stimulating interest in researching the role of black journalists in post-apartheid South Africa (Manganyi, 2004:112). Noting that the *Sowetan* had played "the role of flying the anti-apartheid flag…[w]ith liberation in 1994, the paper had to find its feet. We frankly did not know what to do next." One can similarly ask: In what state did the *City Press* find itself considering that the *Sowetan* was confused about its role in post-apartheid South Africa? The *City Press* was chosen as a focus of study because it is a historically white-owned newspaper operated by black journalists, and in the light of former South African president, Nelson Mandela's claim that black journalists were used by their publications' owners to undermine a black government, as will be discussed later.

Whilst the term "black" in South Africa still refers to Africans, Coloureds and Indians, this research's focus is particularly on indigenous black African journalists, the interest being in the role that African culture played, if at all, in the execution of the *City Press*' black journalists' political role during the research period. The concept of "blackness" in reference to the *City Press*' journalists in this study does not imply or assume that the subjects of this study subscribe to the Black Consciousness philosophy. Their ideological orientation did not constitute part of the interest and focus of this study. While it is acknowledged that the Black Consciousness philosophy had an impact on and contribution to black journalism, conceptually, in the context of this study, black journalism is understood in the generic sense – journalism practised by black African journalists irrespective of their partisan or ideological orientations.

1.2 Preliminary Study

Research into the history of the black press in South Africa, in the larger African continent and the United States, where black people were subjected to racial oppression, indicates that Africans (including African-Americans) were galvanised towards independence and freedom by the media (Ziegler & Asante, 1992:11 – 12). Ziegler and Asante further note that African-Americans and Africans influenced one another in their use of the media. There are parallels

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in the history of the black press between African countries (including South Africa), and the USA that lend credence to this.

Similar to the South African situation, black journalists in countries such as Sierra Leone, Ghana and Nigeria, among others, used the press as a platform for the struggle against European colonialism (Banda, 2007:65). After independence, Hydén and Okigbo (2002:39) observe that while the media

> "had played a role of promoting democratisation in the years before independence, it did not take long thereafter for the same media to become strangled by the very masters they had helped to power".

Similarly, in South Africa, after 1994, tensions developed between the government and some black journalists because the African National Congress (ANC), the ruling party in South Africa since 1994 to date, had a perception that "certain black journalists and commentators who criticise the ANC get promoted quicker, because the media is desperate to have these names on their pages, regardless of the quality of their analysis" (Calland, 2006:200).

In the case of the USA, black journalists there played the same role as that of black journalists in South Africa in that the black press was regarded as a "fighting press" inspired by the belief that it was useless complaining about the way white newspapers distorted black life by over-emphasising crime (Stevens, 1980:109). The reason that led to the establishment of newspapers such as *Imvo Zabantsundu* in South Africa, and the *Freedom Journal* in the USA, was that black people needed to speak for themselves instead of being spoken for (Wilson II & Gutierrez, 1995:181; Ziegler & Asante, 1992:12; Barrow Jr., 1977 – 78:118). Through the *Freedom Journal*, black journalists sought not only to plead their own cause but to establish their own identity in the white world (La Brie III, 1977 – 78:111). In South Africa, more than just reporting on events in black communities, black journalists in the apartheid era brought new (black) perspectives to the newsrooms (Sparks, 2003:69), challenging tendencies in the white-owned and white-managed media which predominantly represented the white population's Western history, culture, economic and political interests, where, to a great extent, the citizens were uninformed about the condition of the majority of the black population who lived under the apartheid rule (Fourie, 2002:20).

Similar to the South African situation where at white-oriented newspapers, a moderate story by black standards was considered radical by white editors (Hachten & Giffard, 1984:142), in the USA black journalists have had to contend with the meaning of terms such as "radical" and "extremist" when used in reference to black revolutionaries on issues that white power holders mostly strongly opposed (O' Kelly, 1977 – 78:115).

Following the abolishing of racist legislations in the USA that discriminated against black people, it has been observed that black journalists in the USA had lost their sweeping influence, with some observers noting that this was because black newspapers had ceased being "tough-minded" and "plugged" into their communities as they used to be in the past (Strader, 1995:359; 361). This means that black-oriented newspapers had ceased being both the moulders and mirrors of black opinion and building a sense of Black Consciousness and community identity among blacks in the United States (Domke, 1994:136; Wilson II & Gutierrez, 1995:181; Krieling, 1977 – 78:132). Similarly, in South Africa, it has been observed that since the emergence of the democratic dispensation the "presence of more black faces… in news rooms" has not resulted in more or better coverage of black reality (Nyamnjoh, 2005a:64). It has been observed that the black press is "less influential" in the democratic South Africa's political scene (Jacobs & Calland, 2002:12).

1.3 Rationale

The *City Press* newspaper was launched in 1982 under the name *Golden City Press* (Whitehead, 2007:6). The newspaper consciously played a role in the struggle against apartheid (Tsedu, 2007:4). Taking this fact into consideration, this researcher is interested in establishing the role the *City Press* defined for its black journalists in post-apartheid South Africa, and the role played by African cultural values in the execution of their task with particular focus on the period 1994 to 2004.

While more attention will be given to the definition "culture" and "African culture" and consequent problems arising out of the definitions of these concepts in Chapter 4 (Theoretical Frameworks), for now "culture" is understood as a "product of a people's history", embodying "a whole set of values by which a people view themselves and their place in time and space" (Wa Thiong'o, 1993:42).

While not suggesting that indigenous black Africans throughout the continent are homogeneous, Asante (2003:4) and Davidson (1994:18) allude to a "unity of culture"

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manifested in diversities. One of the distinguishing features of African culture is its insistence on the prioritisation of the community over the individual (Kasoma, 1994a:27). A model of journalism infused with African culture would be, according to Kareithi (2005:13), that of "the press that…emphasizes community values over individualism". Another distinguishing feature of African culture, which Moemeka and Kasoma (1994:41) refer to as "another key quality in African life" is "respect".

Rooney (2007:213) observes that this "respect and deference does [sic] not encourage a questioning attitude" on the part of the young to the community's elders. This is one quality that has been contentious in as far as journalism practice is concerned. Wilcox (in Banda, 2007:73) observes that although constructive criticism is located in the traditional African value of respect for authority, it can be argued that this value has been used as a pretext for disregarding the freedom of the media.

It is against this background that the research is interested in the relationship between African culture and black journalism. Did the *City Press*' black journalists have to deal with the challenge to reconcile "belong[ing] to their society first" and being "journalists second" during the research period (Moemeka & Kasoma, 1994:40)? Therefore, in terms of this study, the aspect of African cultural values that will inform this study's research into the *City Press*' black journalists' political role, is the notion of "respect" in African culture in the context of journalism practice.

The *City Press*' black journalists' political role in the period 1994 to 2004 is of research interest for the following reasons:

- The period 1994 to 2004 marked the first decade of South Africa's democratic dispensation.
- This decade was characterised by tensions between the media and the ANC-led government, whose then deputy president, Thabo Mbeki, accused the media of having a "European mindset" (Jacobs & Calland, 2002:12).
- In 2001 the ANC accused the white-owned media of pushing an anti-government agenda (Fourie, 2002:29). In the light of this claim, the *City Press* is of research interest because it is owned by Naspers, a company that supported the National Party, the political party behind the apartheid government (Muller, 1989:134).

- The *City Press* is further of research interest because it is perceived as one of the "most influential newspapers" in political journalism in South Africa (Calland, 2006:194 – 195).

1.4 Problem Statement and Focus

This research seeks to establish the political role that the *City Press* defined for its black journalists in post-apartheid South Africa, and the role played by African cultural values in the execution of their task with particular focus on the period 1994 to 2004. Taking into consideration the historical role played by white ownership of black-oriented newspapers, this research also seeks to investigate how white ownership of the *City Press* impacted on the newspapers' black journalists' execution of their tasks. The tasks refer to the newspaper's *editorials*, the *City Press*' individual black journalists' *columns* and the *City Press*' black journalists' *opinion pieces*.

1.5 Research Question

The central research question of this study is:

> What was the political role that the *City Press* defined for its black journalists in post-1994 democratic South Africa in the period 1994 to 2004 within the context of African culture and white ownership?

The central research question will help answer and give clarity to the sub-questions, which are the same questions that constitute the interview questions attached as Addendum A.

Interviews and content analysis are employed in this study as a method of investigation. This will be discussed in section 1.7 and extensively in Chapter 5.

Bennett (1982b:294) observes that to speak of the political role of the media is not an abstract undertaking. He argues that this can be done only through a study of the role played by the media in concrete, historically determined political conjunctures. To study these, it is necessary to deal not only with the media but the political issues at stake in those conjunctures. In post-apartheid South Africa, political analysts (Calland, 2006:190 – 191; Sparks, 2003:85; Jacobs & Calland, 2002:2 – 4) have identified crime, the Zimbabwean crisis and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and how the former South African president Thabo Mbeki handled the latter two issues, as major political issues during the period 1994 to 2004.

Against this background, this researcher has selected and studied the *City Press*' editorials, the *City Press*' black journalists' columns and opinion pieces specifically dealing with crime, the Zimbabwean crisis and HIV/AIDS. Editorials refer to statements and views expressed on behalf of a publication. Columns refer to journalists' or other experts' opinion pieces that appear on a regular basis (daily, weekly, bi-weekly or monthly). Opinion pieces refer to individual or shared journalists' or other writers' writings that do not appear on a regular basis.

The choice of editorials is informed by the observation that they serve as guidelines to publications' norms (Breed, 1997:109; Bennett, 1982b:303). This assertion is not the same as suggesting that publications' editorials represent the views of all journalists working at a particular publication. Rather, one can state that regardless of the existent heterogeneity, the editorial represents an *official* view which is not necessarily a *collective* view of a publication's staff. The choice of columns and opinion pieces by the *City Press*' black journalists is informed by the same observation made by Breed (1997:109) and Bennett (1982b:303) about editorials, the difference with the columns and opinion pieces being that in the latter cases they serve as guidelines to individual black journalists' perspectives on issues.

This study seeks to investigate the political role of the *City Press*' black journalists by, asking them whether they had consciously defined such for themselves. For this the interview method was employed. Some questions specifically sought to find out from the *City Press*' black journalists how they dealt with specific political issues identified during the research period. Combining the interviews and content analysis (studying the editorials, columns and opinion pieces that dealt with the identified political issues of the day during the research period) was informed by a view that it would be inadequate simply to rely on the interviewees' responses without actually examining what they wrote. Therefore, this study, in investigating the political role of the *City Press*' black journalists, sought to investigate the political role they defined for themselves (through interviews), and whether or not they succeeded in accomplishing such (through content analysis). The combined use of these two research methods, together with the relevant literature review helped in enabling the researcher to assess whether or not there was consistency in what was written by the *City Press*' black journalists and what they said during the interview sessions.

In the Research Methodology Chapter (Chapter 5), this researcher points out that crime, the Zimbabwean crisis and HIV/AIDS have been identified as three of the major political challenges in post-apartheid South Africa. It would be expected, therefore, that if in the interview questions the research inquired about the *City Press'* stance on the Zimbabwean crisis and HIV and AIDS, the issue of crime should arise as well in the interviews. This is not the case, because, firstly, the last two questions about Zimbabwe and HIV and AIDS were not initially, part of the interview questions. They were added after the researcher, analysing the *City Press'* editorials, realised that the stance of the *City Press* on Zimbabwe and HIV/AIDS appeared to be inconsistent and self-contradictory. With this realisation the researcher decided to add the last two questions to the interview questions to establish why there was inconsistency. On the issue of crime, the *City Press'* editorials were consistent and clear. That explains why there is no question in the interview questions asking about the *City Press'* position on the issue of crime.

1.6 Theoretical Points of Departure

The subject of this research – the political role of black journalists in South Africa from 1994 to 2004: the case of the *City Press* – will be analysed according to the Liberal-Pluralist, Political Economy and Afrocentric theories on the media's role in society. These will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

1.7 Research Design and Methodology

In seeking to investigate the political role of the *City Press'* black journalists, this study did not to seek to prove any hypothesis. A hypothesis is a statement about how concepts relate and are "likely to arise during line-by-line analysis" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:68). According to Strauss and Corbin, a hypothesis is a statement that asserts that "[u]nder such a condition, such and such will happen or this and that outcome will occur". A hypothesis is a "conjectural statement or assertion about the relation between two or more properties" (Gobo, 2007:418). It is, according to Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1996:62), a "tentative answer to a research problem". Similarly, Punch (1998:39) defines a hypothesis as a "predicted answer to a research question".

This study did not depart from a premise of a tentative or predicted answer. Rather, this study has sought to establish what its subjects have defined for themselves what their political role was during the research period. Hypotheses are generally associated with the quantitative research methodology because such studies are interested in "predicting and controlling

numbers" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006:11). In qualitative research participants are the "origin" of the data, and are the ones who "to a large extent influence where the emphasis will be placed during data collection" (Hesse-Biber, 2006:7). This is not the same as saying that there are no hypotheses in qualitative research. Rather, as Silverman (2005:99) notes "[i]n many qualitative research studies, there is no specific hypothesis at the outset. Instead, hypotheses are produced (or induced) during the early stages of research."

To achieve the objective of researching the political role that the *City Press* defined for its black journalists in the period 1994 to 2004, the research design chosen is a case study. The methodology chosen is, to a large extent, the qualitative research methodology, and to a little extent, involved counting. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

The spelling style according to which this thesis is written, is South African English. Where a source is quoted directly, and the spelling style is different, the source's style is adhered to. The same applies to, for example, titles that will be in italics, except where a source did not write them in italics. The acronyms HIV and AIDS are written in capital letters, except where a source writes them differently.

1.8 Chapter Outline

This thesis will be presented according to the following outline:

Chapter 2 − Context: Developments in the History of Black Journalism in South Africa − this chapter discusses the major events in the history of black journalism that had political significance in the history of South Africa before and after the emergence of the democratic dispensation in 1994 to provide the necessary context or foundation for this study.

Chapter 3 − Literature Review − this chapter reviews literature focusing on the political role of the media in general, and black journalism in particular.

Chapter 4 − Theoretical Frameworks − this chapter discusses the theoretical frameworks chosen for this study and the reasons for their choice.

Chapter 5 − Research Design and Methodology − this chapter discusses the research design and methods believed to be best suitable to achieve the objectives of this research.

Chapter 6 − Research Findings − this chapter tables findings based on the *City Press'* editorials and the *City Press'* black journalists' columns and opinion pieces.

Chapter 7 − Data Analysis

Chapter 8 − Conclusion and Recommendations.

1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the research topic, discussed the rationale for the study, explained the problem statement and focus and formulated a central research question and sub-questions. The applicable theories and methodologies were introduced and, finally, a chapter outline was provided.

The next chapter discusses developments in the history of black journalism in South Africa.

Chapter 2

Context: Developments in the History of Black Journalism in South Africa

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is not a comprehensive history of black journalism in South Africa, but captures certain developments in the history of black journalism in South Africa. While some black newspapers that will be mentioned below are now defunct, there are two newspapers which operated during apartheid which survived to present – the *City Press* and the *Sowetan*.

Special attention will be given to these newspapers, firstly, because of their survival; secondly, much has been written about them; thirdly, they played a significant role in the history of journalism opposing apartheid; and fourthly, the *City Press* in particular is the focus of this research. The *New Nation*, a newspaper run by blacks, which was established in 1986 and folded in 1997 (Tomaselli, 2000:378; 381) does not receive the same treatment accorded to the *City Press* and the *Sowetan*. That is because though the *New Nation* was staffed by black journalists, it targeted "a multiracial, mainly urban-based, trade union readership". The focus of this research is on newspapers whose product was by black journalists and targeted specifically to a black readership.

Attention is given to the formation of journalists' organisations formed after 1994 in which black journalists participated as members and the role these organisations played during the research period. The organisations are the South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF) and the Forum of Black Journalists (FBJ). The formation of the FBJ in 1997, an organisation whose membership is exclusively black, three years after the democratic elections, is significant for this study. It reveals that even after a non-racial order was ushered in in 1994, black journalists still believed that there were issues that affected them as blacks and needed to be confronted as such. As will be shown in this narrative, the evolution of SANEF revealed that black journalists within a non-racial organisation operated as a black block at a particular juncture. These developments within both the FBJ and SANEF are significant for this study.

Attention is also given to important events such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the South African Human Rights Commission's (SAHRC) hearings into claims about racism in the media. An examination of the TRC hearings gives insight into the experiences of black journalists in the apartheid era and exposes the constraints they experienced during that period. The SAHRC hearings revealed that even in post-apartheid

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South Africa black journalists felt that white journalists carried out their duties in a way that suggested that their judgment was clouded by racial attitudes.

The history of black journalism in South Africa has gone through five phases (Wigston, 2007:36; Diederichs & de Beer, 1998:90; Johnson, 1991:16; Switzer & Switzer, 1979:4). The phases are: The missionary-owned black newspapers' phase, the black-owned newspapers' phase, the white capital phase, the multi-racial phase and the black empowerment phase. These phases are discussed because they reveal the role that ownership patterns played in the trajectory of black journalism in South Africa before and after the demise of apartheid.

2.2 First Phase – Missionary Beginnings: 1830s – 1880s

The first newspaper published by the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary was *Umshumayeli Wendaba*, which was published in isiXhosa between July 1837 and April 1841, in Grahamstown and later in Peddie – both towns being in the Eastern Cape (Switzer & Switzer, 1979:1). In 1862, another publication, *Indaba*, was published in isiXhosa and English by the Glasgow Missionary Society, a Presbyterian mission at Lovedale, between August 1862 and February 1865. In January 1876, the Presbyterians, through the Lovedale Mission Press, published yet another newspaper, *Isigidimi SamaXosa*. This was the first African newspaper edited by Africans in Southern Africa (Switzer & Switzer, 1979:3).

Under the editorship – from 1881 to 1884 – of John Tengo Jabavu, and William Wellington Gqoba from 1884 to 1888, the newspaper's content reflected an emphasis on news of general interest to an African audience, including political news and opinion (Switzer & Switzer, 1979:3). *Isigidimi SamaXosa*, during both the tenures of Jabavu and Gqoba, was used to "express…views on what [was] considered to be the black man's[1] point of view" (Johnson, 1991:16).

While these publications served the interests of the Africans, Johnson (1991:16) observes that the "influence of the missions on black journalism cannot be overemphasised". The implication here is that not only were the missionaries the suppliers of the skills and technical tools of journalism, but under their influence progress for Africans was defined in terms of the assimilation of Western civilisation, and as such, the black newspapers reflected this

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[1] During this time and much later, including the period of the Black Consciousness Movement activities, the term "man" was used in a gender-insensitive way as if women were not part of and participating in the struggle.

conception. What this means is that the missionary-owned newspapers promoted a Eurocentric interpretation of Christianity which denounced African traditional spirituality.

This had the effect of undermining African cultural traditions which resulted in the denudation of cultural confidence among black Africans (Rukuni, 2007:146; Biko, 2005:76; Mbennah, Hooyberg & Mersham, 1998:20; Prah, 1995:54). The emphasis on, and the elevation of Christian values at the expense of African indigenous values by the missionary-owned publications, conflicted with African traditionalists who upheld their African values. This paved the way for Africans breaking away from missionary control, leading to the second phase of black journalism.

2.3 Second Phase – Black-Owned Press: 1880s – 1920s

Prominent in this phase was John Tengo Jabavu who made a significant break from mission control when he established in November 1884 *Imvo Zabantsundu*, the first black-owned and controlled newspaper in South Africa (Switzer & Switzer, 1979:4). While *Imvo Zabantsundu* was black-owned and controlled, its financial support came from Jabavu's white liberal friends, Messrs James Weir and RW Rose-Innes (Ndletyana, 2008:35). *Imvo Zabantsundu*'s objective was "to inform the African population about public issues, and promote their participation in the electoral process" (Ndletyana, 2008:35).

The newspaper quickly became the most influential organ of African opinion in the Cape colony. *Imvo Zabantsundu*'s growing influence gave birth to "competition" that was "resented" by *Isigidimi SamaXosa*, which Jabavu previously edited (Johnson, 1991:17). Under the editorship of Jabavu, *Imvo Zabantsundu* advocated the principles of non-violence and the necessity of working together with liberal whites in order to try to reform white domination in South Africa (Johnson, 1991:17 – 18).

Within thirteen years of its establishment, Jabavu's newspaper's claim of being representative of the "African Opinion" was challenged. In 1897, a new newspaper, *Izwi Labantu*, was established by Walter Benson Rubusana in the Eastern Cape (Ngqongqo, 2008:48). The newspaper was aimed at giving a clear and independent African voice as opposed to Jabavu's *Imvo Zabantsundu* that was perceived to be guided by Jabavu's white liberal friends (Ngqongqo, 2008:50; 54). Rubusana's journalistic involvement began when he started writing for *Isigidimi SamaXosa* and the *Christian Express* (Ngqongqo, 2008:48). At the time he was

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simultaneously acting as an agent for Jabavu's newspaper, *Imvo Zabantsundu*, by corresponding for and selling the newspaper.

Political differences between Jabavu, on the one hand, and, on the other, Rubusana and a host of other African leaders emerged when Jabavu supported liberal politicians known as "Friends of the Natives" who supported legislation that introduced restrictions designed to limit the number of eligible African voters (Ngqongqo, 2008:48). Rubusana and his peers felt betrayed by Jabavu's support for the "Friends of the Natives". According to Ngqongqo they attributed his support for the "Friends of the Natives" to his indebtedness to white liberals for having financed his newspaper.

While the founders of *Izwi Labantu*, including Rubusana, supported and participated in the initiatives that led to the formation of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC – later renamed the African National Congress [ANC]) in 1912, *Imvo Zabantsundu*'s Jabavu refused to associate himself with the SANNC, his objection being that the SANNC was racially exclusive (Ndletyana, 2008:39). Instead, Jabavu formed his own non-racial organisation, the South African Races Congress.

The issue about the restrictions designed to limit the number of eligible African voters (Ngqongqo, 2008:48) was not the only point about which *Imvo Zabantsundu* found itself in conflict with the African elite and fellow African journalists. The newspaper's support for the Grobler-Sauer Bill, which eventually became the Land Act of 1913, generated an acrimonious exchange between Jabavu and Solomon (Sol) Plaatjie, a journalist and founding member of the ANC (Ndletyana, 2008:39). Jabavu reported that a meeting of Africans in King William's Town was in favour of the Grobler-Sauer Bill, a claim that was vigorously contested by Plaatjie.

Consequently, Plaatjie challenged *Imvo Zabantsundu*'s Jabavu to call a series of three public meetings, anywhere in the district of King William's Town, to put Jabavu's claim to the test (Ndletyana, 2008:40). Jabavu responded in the negative to Plaatjie's challenge, provoking the latter to declare that Jabavu was "fabricating the mess out of imaginary native votes of confidence for his masters' delectation…because his paper is native only in language". In today's language, one can state that Plaatjie was calling Jabavu a "coconut" – black outside and white inside.

Besides *Imvo Zabantsundu* and *Izwi Labantu*, there were other black newspapers that were established. *Koranta ya Becoana*, a Tswana/English weekly, was founded by Silas Molema and Solomon Plaatjie (mentioned above) in 1901 but folded "within a few years of its establishment" due to lack of finance and low readership (Johnson, 1991:18). In 1903, John Langalibalele Dube founded *Ilanga laseNatal*, a Zulu/English weekly which became politically involved, but cautiously so, projecting an image of "responsibility" and "moderation" (Johnson, 1991:18).

Another significant event in this period under discussion was the move by the ANC to establish its own mouthpiece, *Abantu-Batho*, in 1913 (Johnson, 1991:19). While black newspapers took political positions that sometimes conflicted, as pointed out above, *Abantu-Batho* clearly articulated the concerns of the ANC. After seven years of its existence, *Abantu-Batho* faced a serious threat from another newspaper, *Umteteli Wa Bantu*, that was established by the Chamber of Mines in 1920 (Johnson, 1991:20).

Due to its economic muscle, *Umteteli Wa Bantu* drew talented journalists away from *Abantu-Batho*. *Umteteli Wa Bantu* sought to "defuse native passions" aroused by the "miners' passions" reflected in such newspapers as *Abantu-Batho*. Its wide and free distribution, combined with its capturing of talented black journalists, posed a threat to black-owned newspapers (Johnson, 1991:20). This new development set the stage for the next stage of black journalism: black newspapers' ownership by white business.

2.4 Third Phase: Black Newspapers, White Capital: 1931 – 1977

The establishment of the Bantu Press (Pty) Ltd in 1932 by Bertram F.G. Paver, an ex-farmer and itinerant salesman, marked the third entry of the third phase in black journalism (Switzer & Switzer, 1979:7). Through the Bantu Press, Paver founded the *Bantu World* in April 1932 with the objective to "provide the Native people with a platform for fair comment and the presentation of their needs and aspirations". In this venture Paver attracted black investors amongst whom was Richard V. Selope Thema, a veteran black journalist.

Due to a lack of sufficient capital, 14 months after its establishment, the Bantu Press was taken over by the Argus Printing and Publishing Company (Switzer & Switzer, 1979:7). Paver's efforts of attracting black investors which numbered half of 38 shareholders before the takeover by the Argus company were reversed within three years of the takeover. Thema, the last African on the board, was ousted as a director in 1936 (Switzer & Switzer, 1979:7).

Not only did changes reflect in the make-up of personnel. This phase saw a change in the style of black journalism. Black journalists were gradually weaned away from the colourful, rhetorical style of the older, protest press, and made "to conform to the more prosaic, non-partisan „objective' prose style of modern conventional journalism" (Switzer & Switzer, 1979:8). News and opinion were separated, and focus was on event-oriented rather than issue-oriented news. In 1954 the *Bantu World* became a bi-weekly and was renamed the *World* (Switzer & Switzer, 1979:10). During this period one-third interest in the Bantu Press (Switzer & Switzer, 1979:9) belonged to the Anglo-American Corporation which had bought its share in 1952. But in 1962 the Argus Company once more regained formal control over the Bantu Press.

Coinciding with the third phase of black journalism was the rise of political consciousness in South Africa in the late 1960s in the form of the Black Consciousness philosophy which was spearheaded by Bantu Steve Biko. In 1972 black journalists formed the Union of Black Journalists (UBJ) whose bulk membership worked at the *World* newspaper (Raubenheimer, 1991:95; Hachten & Giffard, 1984:139). The thinking and approach of the UBJ was influenced by Biko's Black Consciousness creed.

Biko (2005:53) defined Black Consciousness as

> "the realisation by the black man of the need to rally together with his brothers[2] around the cause of their operation – the blackness of their skin – and to operate as a group in order to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude".

Biko further pointed out that Black Consciousness sought to demonstrate the lie that "black" is an aberration from the "normal" – which is white. The Black Consciousness creed went beyond pigmentation in its consideration of blackness. In the case of the Black Consciousness Movement, "being black is a reflection of a mental attitude" (Biko, 2005:52). Biko emphasised that the term black was not "all-inclusive", the point made being that the "the fact [that] we are all *not white* does not necessarily mean that we are all *black*". In Biko's book,

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[2] This is the point made earlier about the gender-insensitive use of language in liberation politics. Here, Biko speaks about "brothers" to the exclusion of "sisters", yet there were women, like Mamphele Ramphele, in the forefront of the Black Consciousness Movement.

being "black" was not synonymous with being "non-whites". Non-whites, according to Biko (2005:52) were those whose aspirations were whiteness but whose pigmentation made such attainment impossible.

Biko (2005:52) further observed that by

> "[m]erely describing yourself as black you have started on a road towards emancipation, you have committed yourself to fight against all forces that seek to use your blackness as a stamp that marks you as being subservient".

 The Black Consciousness creed, therefore, was a call to black people to be active agents against their oppression. The activism of the UBJ needs to be understood against this background.

While the birth of the UBJ was greeted with enthusiasm by young black journalists, some of the older journalists – among them Leslie Sethume and M Maswai, both working at the *World* – were not happy with this new development (Raubenheimer, 1991:95). They objected to its racial exclusiveness – only black journalists were allowed to join the UBJ.

The UBJ went on to develop political and organisational links with Black Consciousness-oriented movements like the South African Students' Organisation (SASO) and the Black People's Convention (BPC). This direction was not acceptable to some black journalists who argued that black journalists should focus purely on professional matters (Raubenheimer, 1991:98). The view that prevailed was that black journalists "had a role to play in making newspapers more relevant to black people". At one UBJ congress a motion that the term "black" be dropped from the UBJ's constitution was "heavily defeated". This position was informed by a strong belief by UBJ members that they were "blacks first and journalists second" (Raubenheimer, 1991:102). What this meant was that these journalists saw their duty as giving loyalty to their community first, and then their profession.

With the rise of black militancy within the black communities, led by the Black Consciousness Movement, in the seventies, although not actively supporting black political aims, the *World* broke "out of the straitjacket of non-political, pseudo-news sensationalism placed on it by the Argus Company" (Switzer & Switzer, 1979:18). It embarked on reporting concerns and problems of urban blacks, especially those living in Soweto (Hachten & Giffard,

1984:149). With the appointment of Percy Qoboza as editor of both the *World* and *Weekend World* in 1976, the *World* took a step further than just reporting blacks' concerns – it went on to "identify with the urban African and reflected his or her fears, hopes, and frustrations" (Hachten & Giffard, 1984:136). This stance did not go unnoticed by the government of the day.

The then Justice Minister Jimmy Kruger warned Qoboza several times to tone down the newspaper's coverage, but Qoboza ignored the warnings (Hachten & Giffard, 1984:135). When on October 19, 1977, the government banned 17 Black Consciousness organisations, the *World* and *Weekend World* were also banned, and Qoboza, together with his news editor, Aggrey Klaaste, were detained for "contributing to a subversive situation" (Hachten & Giffard, 1984:135). After the banning of the *World* in 1977, Thloloe (2006:15) observes that the *World*

> "rose from the ashes as Post Transvaal – same journalists still led by the same Percy and pushing the same agenda. And when the government shut down Post Transvaal in 1981, it resurfaced as Sowetan".

The *Sowetan*, which will be discussed next, carried the anti-apartheid tradition of its predecessors.

2.4.1 The launch of the *Sowetan*

The *Sowetan* was launched on February 2, 1981, with Joe Letakgomo as its first editor (Molefe, 2001:16). From its inception, the newspaper "plunged head-long into the pertinent issues affecting the black community it sought to serve" (Molefe, 2001:16). Within a few years of its launch, the country was thrown into a political turmoil that was characterised by state violence on black communities and violence within the black communities themselves. As a newspaper reporting on these issues, the *Sowetan* found itself on the receiving end. The government, under the presidency of Pieter Willem Botha, imposed a state of emergency in 1985 and renewed it in 1986. Under the emergency rules, newspapers were not allowed at the scenes of unrest and to report on these (Molefe, 2001:16).

In protest against these measures, the *Sowetan* left blank spaces where pictures of unrest were supposed to be placed and some sentences hanging, and wrote explanations to its readership that the material was censored as to comply with emergency regulations (Molefe, 2001:16).

The government was not happy with the *Sowetan*'s stance and sent senior police officers to the newspaper's offices to express the government's displeasure at what was perceived as a "mockery of the law" (Molefe, 2001:16). Copies of the newspaper were seized by the government twice shortly after the declaration of the state of emergency in June 1986 (Tomaselli, 2000:386).

Not only did the *Sowetan* suffer from state repression, but it also came under pressure from black political organisations (Mazwai, 1990:207). As the struggle against apartheid intensified, the *Sowetan* journalists were called upon to "ignore news concerning certain organisations while highlighting those of others" (Mazwai, 1990:207). Secondly, they were expected to publish the atrocities of the one and ignore those of the other when black political organisations were killing one another's members. This resulted in the *Sowetan*'s journalists refraining from quoting names of organisations when one member of one organisation was killed by a member of another (Mazwai, 1990:209). Lastly, the *Sowetan*'s criticism of what was called "necklacing" (the method of killing those suspected of being informers/sell-outs by putting tyres around their necks and setting them alight) by ANC supporters, did not go down well with those who came under criticism (Mazwai, 1990:207).

In reaction, the *Sowetan* was accused of being anti-ANC, a charge denied by the *Sowetan*'s former Business Section editor, Thami Mazwai (Mazwai, 1990:207). According to Mazwai (1990:207), the *Sowetan* had "never been anti-ANC". Instead, Mazwai further points out, the *Sowetan* had supporters of the ANC, the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) on its staff. Tomaselli (2000:387) observes that though the *Sowetan* covered the activities of both the United Democratic Front (UDF) and Black Consciousness-aligned organisations, "its editorials clearly revealed a BC position".

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) called for the boycott of the *Sowetan* and placard-wielding affiliates marched to the newspaper's headquarters (Molefe, 2001:16). Trucks carrying copies of the *Sowetan* "were barred from entering one or two townships" (Mazwai, 1990:207). At one funeral in Soweto, a group of youngsters "all armed to the teeth and carrying the „trusted tyre', came looking for any reporter from the *Sowetan*" (Mazwai, 1990:208). However, pressures on the *Sowetan* did not come from only pro-ANC organisations, but also from the PAC and the BCM supporters as well (Mazwai, 1990:209). These setbacks did not, however, deter the *Sowetan* from its determination to be involved in solving black people's problems.

When Aggrey Klaaste succeeded Letakgomo and assumed editorship in 1988, he launched the newspaper's new campaign known as "Nation Building". In the words of Tissong (2001:15), who was a *Sowetan* journalist at the time, the Nation Building concept defined *Sowetan* as "more than a newspaper carrying news", and more of a newspaper dedicated to uplifting the South African society from the devastating legacy of apartheid. The Nation Building project entailed writing stories about people who were doing things to help the community (Tsedu, 2004a:4).

Black professionals such as psychologists and career guidance experts were called upon to be part of the project by holding symposiums around the country helping people to deal with issues from alcoholism and drugs to teenage problems and search for jobs (Tsedu, 2004a:4). Through the Nation Building project, Klaaste "wanted to disprove the notion that townships were all about gore and blood".

While the idea was welcomed by some, other journalists felt that Klaaste's approach was "too tame", and preferred an approach that would inspire them "to toyi-toyi and fight" (Tissong, 2001:15). The dissenters felt that "the demands of the revolution were not to rebuild but to destroy the structures of the regime of the time" (Tsedu, 2004a:4). Outside the *Sowetan* staff, some black community organisations responded with a dismissive attitude to the Nation Building concept. While the Azanian People's Organisation (Azapo) "denounced it as unrevolutionary and part of the liberal agenda" the United Democratic Front (UDF) treated it with disdain (Mazwai, 2004:17). For its part, the security police viewed the project with deep suspicion (Mazwai, 2004:17). Just over a year after the *Sowetan* was launched, another black-oriented newspaper, the *City Press*, which played an anti-apartheid role, was launched.

2.4.2 The launch of the *City Press*

The *City Press* was established as a Friday weekly on March 28, 1982, originally under the name *Golden City Press* (Whitehead, 2007:6). It was initially owned jointly by the South African Associated Newspapers (SAAN) and Jim Bailey, the publisher of *Drum* magazine (Hachten & Giffard, 1984:132; Tomaselli & Tomaselli, 1989:49). In December 1982 the two joint owners split up, and Bailey continued as the sole proprietor, with the name *City Press*. The newspaper's first editor was a white man, Phillip Selwyn-Smith (Whitehead, 2007:6). A year later, in 1983, Selwyn-Smith was succeeded by Percy Qoboza, a position he held until his death in 1988.

From its inception, the *City Press* was greeted with expectations by the black people it sought to serve. Anti-apartheid campaigner Archbishop Desmond Tutu "expressed the hope that City Press would interpret reality as blacks know it and express their aspirations" (Mbhele, 2003:8). In response to such calls, the newspaper identified itself with the struggle of the oppressed by positioning itself as "the voice of the voteless masses" in South Africa (Sibiya, 1992:1).

It "fought for the poor and the underdog" and "fearlessly" took up cudgels against governments, the military and the police when it warranted it, as well as "exposing those who made themselves wealthy at the expense of the poor and gullible" (Blow, 1992:6). The *City Press'* participation in the anti-apartheid struggle was not just about striving "to promote the aims of blacks in order to create a just society, but our front page could easily be transformed into a protest poster" (Mngadi, 1992:7).

For taking this stance the newspaper was "harassed, threatened with censorship and on numerous occasions…faced closure by the authorities" (Sibiya, 1992:1). But the support for the struggle did not mean, for the *City Press*, alignment to any black liberation movement. The newspaper "chose the only winning strategy for any newspaper that means business – and that is political independence, non-alignment, objectivity and a studious refusal to be turned into a party-political rag" (Dhlomo, 1992:7). A year after Qoboza assumed the reigns as editor, the newspaper changed hands in ownership. The then Nasionale Pers (now Naspers) bought the newspaper from Bailey in 1984 (Kudlak, 2007:153).

The takeover was received with "apprehension by most of the surprised staffers" (Kalane, 1992:4). Naspers, a historically "pro-government Afrikaans press group" (Kudlak, 2007:153) and "a militant black newspaper and Percy Qoboza as its associate editor, nogal…made strange bedfellows" (Kalane, 1992:4). Many "eyebrows were raised" and observers were "startled" by this "unlikely association of black and Afrikaner" (Vosloo, 2003:2; Vosloo, 1997:3). Some staffers "muttered that Afrikaner ownership of a newspaper for black people would put the final nail in the coffin" (Selwyn-Smith, 1997:6). As a result of the apprehension felt by the staff, a meeting between Naspers and the staff was held "to seek clarification on matters that deeply affect[ed] us and our readership" (Qoboza, 1992:2).

The meeting resolved that black journalists working at the *City Press* "will maintain our highest journalistic integrity and interpret our people's aspirations the way they expect us to" (Qoboza, 1992:2). This stance reflected the *City Press*' black journalists' determination "to reflect the aspirations of black people at all costs" (Sibiya, 1997a:1). It was also agreed that the *City Press*' journalists would enjoy "the same degree of freedom of expression they have enjoyed over the years" (Qoboza, 1992:2). To this effect a charter guaranteeing these agreements was signed by Naspers (Qoboza, 1992:2). According to Vosloo (1997:3), despite the upheavals that greeted the partnership between black journalists and Naspers, the professional partnership endured and grew stronger. The newspaper's editorial integrity and independence were upheld (Vosloo, 1997:3).

While this may have been the case, it appears that Naspers did make an attempt to interfere with the *City Press*' black journalists' execution of their task (Tomaselli & Tomaselli, 1989:57). According to Tomaselli and Tomaselli, in 1985 a "managerial directive from Nasionale Pers to the editorial staff of *City Press* a few weeks *before* the declaration of the state of emergency…instructed that unrest reporting had to be reduced by 50 per cent". However, Tomaselli and Tomaselli further observe that a "content analysis of the paper at the time suggests…that this instruction was largely ignored by the editor and staffers".

An examination of political developments in South Africa, particularly in Afrikaner politics, offers an insight into Naspers' approach to the *City Press* and its black journalists. In 1982, the then ruling party, the National Party (NP), experienced a split when the then leader of the then Transvaal NP, Dr A Treurnicht, led 21 Members of Parliament to give a vote of no-confidence to the then state president, Pieter Willem Botha (Muller, 1989:134). Treurnicht, who represented the conservative elements within the NP, went on to form the Conservative Party (CP), and was opposed to Botha's move to take the party on the path towards reforming apartheid in South Africa. At that time the NP had the support of both Afrikaner media companies, Perskorporasie van Suid Afrika (Perskor) and Nasionale Pers (Naspers).

The divisions within the NP were characterised by the then Transvaal conservative element and the liberal Cape element. To a large degree − which saw vacillation on its part, Perskor was sympathetic to the conservative element in the NP, while Naspers was pro the liberal element (Muller, 1989:131 − 132). So, when Naspers acquired the *City Press*, it was decidedly in favour of the NP programme to gradually do away with apartheid, and in that sense a newspaper whose journalists were opposed to apartheid was not inimical to the

objectives of Naspers. More discussion on the *City Press* will follow later in this chapter (2.7). For now, attention will be given to the fourth phase of black journalism.

2.5 The Fourth Phase: The Multi-Racial Focus: 1980 – 1996

This phase of black journalism refers to a trend where in the mid-1960s the white press found itself increasingly dependent for economic survival on the cultivation of its own black readers, even though it already owned and controlled the black press (Wigston, 2007:40; Switzer & Switzer, 1979:14). This new trajectory was an outcome of a survey conducted in South Africa that "revealed the growing dependency of the English-language White press on its black audience" (Switzer & Switzer, 1979:14 – 15). Consequently, the white media owners sought to acquire a multi-racial image (Switzer & Switzer, 1979:15). Switzer and Switzer (1979:16) identify a number of factors that contributed to this phase. They observe that the success of regular "township" editions, which entailed a few pages in traditionally white newspapers dedicated to "black news" had led to this phase. The few pages increasingly resulted in fully-fledged supplements.

Though these supplements were maligned for entrenching a "ghetto" press mentality, Switzer and Switzer (1979:16) observe that these supplements were "remarkably successful nevertheless in drawing black readers to white newspapers". As a result of this success, Switzer and Switzer further observe that black journalists originally hired for "township" editions became permanent employees on many English and Afrikaans-language newspapers. More specifically, Switzer and Switzer (1979:16) identify the *Rand Daily Mail* and *Daily Dispatch* as newspapers that took a lead in integrating their news and opinion, sports, women's, society and financial pages. Sparks (2003:67) observes that the *Evening Post*, a small (now defunct) daily in Port Elizabeth, and the Cape Town-based *Cape Times*, both then edited by white editors, John Sutherland and Anthony Heard respectively, reported vigorously on black issues during the period mentioned by Switzer and Switzer.

After the 1994 elections, the non-racial dispensation strove to deracialise its institutions, both public and private. These endeavours affected the media as well. This deracialisation of the media is referred to as the fifth phase of black journalism and will be discussed next.

2.6 The Fifth Phase: Black Economic Empowerment: 1994 onwards

This phase refers to the selling of shares in the media by historically white companies to black business and community organisations (Diederichs & de Beer, 1998:100; Mabote, 1996a:320). Newspapers that fall in the discussion of this chapter which were affected by this change were the *Sowetan* and the *City Press*. In 1993 the Argus company sold 52% of its stake in the *Sowetan* to Ntatho Motlana's New Africa Investment Limited (NAIL) (Mabote, 1996a:320). On its part, Naspers announced plans to sell 51% of its shares to a black business consortium, Ukhozi Investments (Diederichs & de Beer, 1998:101). According to Naspers' chairperson Ton Vosloo (Vosloo, 2010), Naspers sold 20% shares to Ukhozi Investments, but since Ukhozi Investments could not raise the necessary funds, Naspers got its shares back and owned the *City Press* 100%. This means then that the fifth phase of black journalism in South Africa had no implications for the *City Press*. For the *Sowetan*, this phase had implications which will be discussed next.

2.6.1 Black ownership implications for the *Sowetan*

Mabote (1996a:323) observes that these acquisitions were not without controversies. The first issue that confronted the new owners was editorial independence. Not long after the acquisition, the *Sowetan* journalists complained that Motlana was interfering in editorial matters, taking orders from the then country's president, Nelson Mandela. Though Motlana denied that Mandela suggested or implied that he should do anything about editorial matters, he is on record admitting that Mandela called him to complain about a story that featured the ANC's rival – the PAC – on the front page, while the ANC was on the fourth page (Mabote, 1996a:323).

Mandela was reportedly not happy that the story about the PAC rally, which attracted 5 000 people, should feature more prominently than his organisation's rally, which had attracted more people on the same day. It was also suggested that the ANC had recommended to the NAIL the removal of Joe Thloloe as managing editor of the *Sowetan* because of his PAC links. Shortly after the rumour started, Thloloe, one of the founder journalists at the *Sowetan*, left and joined the SABC as editor-in-chief of television news (Mabote, 1996a:323).

When Aggrey Klaaste died in 2004 after being in a coma in hospital, some in the journalism fraternity pointed to the NAIL as partly responsible for his death (Tissong, 2004:26). In a tribute to Klaaste published in the *Sowetan*, the *Sowetan*'s then managing editor, Mike Tissong, pointed out that Klaaste "died as much from heartache as from the illness that took

his life". Tissong traced Klaaste's "heartache" to the year 2002 when he was told by the new bosses that he would have to leave the *Sowetan* and relocate to the NAIL's offices in Bryanston. Confiding in Tissong three days after being told of the new developments, Tissong wrote that Klaaste "was so shocked" that he said nothing. His concern was not only for himself but for his Nation Building programme which he felt had to be run from the *Sowetan* and not from a distant Bryanston. Klaaste believed that the Nation Building programme was about people and that it needed a voice and a life through the *Sowetan*.

What emerges from this narrative about the black ownership of the *Sowetan* is that instead of ameliorating the conditions of black journalists, black ownership disrupted the trajectory of black journalism. In stating that Klaaste died of "heartache", one can deduce that Tissong is partly blaming the NAIL as being responsible for Klaaste's death.

After Klaaste moved to the NAIL's office, he continued being in touch with his readers through his column, *On the Line*. Tissong observes that Klaaste "was broken when his column was moved off the page opposite the editor's opinion". When his photograph was removed from his column, his "heart hurt again, because he saw that other writers' photos were still being used with their columns". Klaaste's final blow came when he was told months later that he should not write every week, but when requested to do so. Tissong observes that the effect of this move was as if "his umbilical cord to his beloved readers" was "painfully hacked off". According to the NAIL's chief executive officer, Saki Macozoma, there was no malice intended in relocating Klaaste (Masungwini, 2004). Macozoma said that it was because of a R10 million budget the NAIL had for social projects which they felt only Klaaste "could properly execute" that informed their decision to relocate him.

2.6.2 Black Journalism Phases: Summary

This section discussed the five phases that black journalism has gone through. These were identified as: the missionary-owned black newspapers' phase; the black-owned newspapers' phase; the white capital phase; the multi-racial phase and the black empowerment phase. It was pointed out that in the first phase (missionary-owned newpapers' phase), owners sought to impose a Eurocentric version of Christianity that undermined African traditional culture. This led to black journalists seeking to have their own newspapers (black-owned newspapers' phase) and articulating Africans' concerns. The third phase (white capital phase) sought to wean black journalists away from radical positions, orientating them into being neutral journalists who take no political positions.

Black journalists, in this period, influenced by Black Consciousness, rebelled and identified their journalism with the struggle against apartheid. In the fourth phase (multi-racial phase), black journalists became employed at traditionally white newspapers and issues of interest to black people were given more space and attention. In the fifth phase (black empowerment phase), black businesspeople bought a stake in the media and had control. According to some observers the fifth phase had serious political implications for the *Sowetan* in that the ANC, through its connections to the NAIL's Motlana, sought to influence the newspaper to be pro-ANC. Though the fifth phase had no implications for the *City Press*, the newspaper had its own political challenges in post-apartheid South Africa. Those challenges are discussed next.

2.7 Post-apartheid political challenges for the *City Press*' Black Journalists

Soon after taking over as the *City Press*' editor, reflecting on the role of this newspaper, Mona (2001a:8) noted that the *City Press* was a "quality, serious black newspaper which tries to reflect on issues of substance". In line with that position, Mona (2001a:8) pointed out that the menu on the *City Press* was "more than just sex, scandal and gossip". Identifying the *City Press* with the country and the society it served, Mona (2001a:8) committed the newspaper to the task of running stories "largely to inspire courage and determination" and to "inspire readers to do good and to improving the quality of life for all".

While committing the *City Press* to providing a platform for diverse opinions, and to resisting "pushing a particular political line", Mona (2001a:8) simultaneously pledged editorials and columns that would "stimulate rededication to our country and the welfare of its people". Mona (2002:18) believed that "Black people – who are our predominant audience – deserve better than a diet of comics, agony columns and such like fluff". He observed that while there was a widely held belief that

> "the public is bored by anything important and is only interested in a news formula of love, lust and lucre…history tells it is usually the serious though still entertaining, thoughtful and penetrating newspaper that shows the best gains in circulation, advertising and influence".

Against this background, Mona (2002:18) observed, the *City Press* wanted to be a newspaper that would be serious, yet entertaining.

On September 7, 2003, the *City Press* ran a front-page lead story about an allegation that the head of the National Directorate of Public Prosecutions (NDPP), Bulelani Ngcuka, had been investigated by the then exiled ANC in the 1980s as an apartheid spy (Maluleke & *City Press* Correspondent, 2003:1).

2.7.1 The *City Press* and the Ngcuka saga

The *City Press* (Maluleke & *City Press* Correspondent, 2003:1) reported that documents leaked to the newspaper, which formed the basis of the story which was said to have been sourced from the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) database, identified Ngcuka as "possibly, but not conclusively, an apartheid police spy nicknamed „Agent RS452'". The story was accompanied by a front-page comment explaining why the *City Press* took a "not…easy editorial decision" (*City Press* Comment, 2003a:1).

The *City Press* further said that the decision to publish a story speculating that the head of the National Prosecuting Authority was accused of being a spy was an "issue of public concern and national interest". That was because, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2003a:1) pointed out, the public had a right to know whether the spy claims against Ngcuka were "part of an intricate power play within the ANC" or whether "Ngcuka's investigation of [Jacob] Zuma [was] itself about power political games".

The claims emerged at a time when Ngcuka had announced to the public that the NPA had prima facie evidence that the then deputy president of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, was involved in corrupt activities. The *City Press*' report (Maluleke & *City Press* Correspondent, 2003:1) also revealed that the person who was handling the investigations into Ngcuka's spy allegations in the 1980s was the same Zuma that Ngcuka was investigating for corruption. At the time the ANC was allegedly investigating Ngcuka, Zuma was the ANC's head of intelligence structures, and Ngcuka's case was "directly supervised by…Zuma".

In reaction to the story, Ngcuka, through his spokesperson, Sipho Ngwema, rejected the report as "lies and fabrications" and threatened to serve summons to the *City Press* (Petros, 2003:3). Reacting to the story, former Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) researcher, John Daniel (2003:31), pointed out that the report was "not serious investigative reporting but a smear, in which innuendo and suspicion are used as the basis for character assassination". Daniel further argued that the "City Press of all papers should know that…the mere suggestion that someone collaborated in apartheid is problematic". This was not the only

negative reaction that the report received. More was to come from within the media fraternity itself.

In its editorial, the *Business Day* (*Business Day* Comment, 2003:10) said that the *City Press* story was "so patently devious, ethically corrupt and politically self-serving that it is a wonder it was paid the slightest heed". The *Business Day* editorial further pointed out that the

> "story was clearly promoted either directly or by associates of Deputy President Jacob Zuma and former transport minister Mac Maharaj – both of whom are being or have been investigated by Ngcuka's Scorpions – and is designed to discredit the man personally in order to divert attention from the work his people are doing on serious corruption issues in the country".

Columnist and Wits University journalism professor, Anton Harber (2003:22), described the report as an "astounding story" with "little evidence to justify the allegation, except the word of some of Ngcuka's bitter political enemies".

Harber further argued that the story was "self-evidently a crude attempt to discredit Ngcuka in his battle with Deputy President Jacob Zuma and former minister Mac Maharaj". The comment that was run along with the story by the *City Press*, Harber added, "seemed to do little more than show that they knew that they were sticking their necks out – legally and ethically – in doing what other newspapers had declined to do". Harber noted that there were other newspapers that had had the story for weeks but had felt that it was safe to only report that there were attempts afoot to discredit Ngcuka through leaks and innuendos. Harber's assertion was confirmed later by the *Sunday Times*' editor, Mathatha Tsedu (2003:1), in a front-page editorial comment outlining the reasons for his newspaper not running the story.

Tsedu pointed out that since July 2003, the *Sunday Times*' journalist, Ranjeni Munusamy, had been investigating the claims about Ngcuka. The ANC Intelligence unit's investigation which involved Mo Shaik, Mac Maharaj and Jacob Zuma had found that agent RS452 "could be BN" – Ngcuka's initials. It emerged in the *Sunday Times*' newsroom discussions that the investigation file on Ngcuka had been given to Zuma more than ten years prior to the revelation regarding Ngcuka. According to Tsedu, as a result of this background, a question arose: Why was this information emerging only now, at a time when Ngcuka was

investigating Zuma, Maharaj and Shaik's brother, Schabir? Munusamy was urged to carry out more investigations.

According to Tsedu (2003:1), although Munusamy did not bring sufficient information, she was adamant that her story should be run, whereupon Tsedu set three conditions before the story could be run:

- That the initial ANC investigators should give the *Sunday Times* all the information that was at their disposal at the time so that the newspaper could see what made them reach their conclusion;
- Having looked at the information, the *Sunday Times'* journalists be satisfied that they would come to the same conclusion; and
- The intelligence unit that had shown her the database give the *Sunday Times* 200 names so that they all, or as many of them be subjected to an investigation.

According to Tsedu (2003:1), Munusamy said that she would not be able to meet the conditions. A few weeks later "she gave her information to another paper, which ran the story". Subsequent investigations, Tsedu pointed out, suggested that RS452 was a white woman. Tsedu further noted that he remained convinced that the publication of the story, with the information at the disposal of the *Sunday Times*, would have "served interests other than those of the public". Stories published by the *Sunday Times* had to pass a number of tests, including accuracy, public interest, balance and fairness (Tsedu, 2003:1).

Criticisms that followed the *City Press'* revelations did not discourage the *City Press* from pursuing the Ngcuka story. The following week the newspaper ran another front-page lead story that reported that Ngcuka "was granted a passport by the former apartheid government in 1981, despite being in detention on suspicion of high treason at the time" (Maluleke & *City Press* Correspondents, 2003:1). This piece of information, like the previous report, was attributed to the ANC's Intelligence unit's investigation of Ngcuka. In the same issue that carried the follow-up story, the *City Press* used its entire editorial comment to respond to the criticisms that followed its initial story on the spy allegations (*City Press* Comment, 2003b:18).

In this editorial, the *City Press* charged that in "their absurd attack on *City Press*, our detractors have among other things, alleged we are being used to assassinate Ngcuka's

character". The newspaper wanted to "put it on record that these allegations are all drivel" which "come mainly from people who themselves have lost the sense of impartiality as shown by their lame analysis which provided good context to the Ngcuka/Jacob Zuma debacle". The editorial (*City Press* Comment, 2003b:18) further argued that its decision was

> "guided by a universally accepted ethical conduct which requires of journalists to identify sources and question their motives as the public is entitled to as much information as possible about sources' identity".

Despite the *City Press'* protestations, the newspaper was not let off the hook. *Financial Mail*'s columnist, Peter Honey (2003:26) pointed out that the "*City Press*'s [sic] portrayal of the chief prosecutor as an apartheid mole plotting to split the ANC was no more than a malignant press release" which "does to journalism what crime does to the country".

Almost three weeks after the Ngcuka story was exposed by the *City Press*, Mona, found himself an object of journalistic investigation (Altenroxel, 2003:1). *The Star* newspaper reported that Mona was "linked to a company that is being paid millions to rectify Mpumalanga's scandal-ridden image" (Altenroxel, 2003:1). The report stated that Mona was a director in one of three companies trading as Rainbow Communications and Rainbow Kwanda Communications, which had placed "a controversial advertisement in his own newspaper earlier this month". The advertisement had "accused the media of lying, bribery, intimidation and theft of three damning reports that outlined corruption in the province's Health Department".

Responding to these allegations, Mona suggested that the claims had been brought up because of his editorial stance on spy claims directed at Ngcuka (Mabena & Sapa, 2003:4). Consequently, Mona stepped down voluntarily to allow his employers to carry out an investigation into a possibility of conflict of interest. According to *This Day* newspaper, Mona resigned as the editor of the *City Press* early in November 2003 after his employers determined that his involvement with Rainbow Communication constituted a conflict of interest (Jepson & Burger, 2003:2). Mona's image and journalistic integrity suffered another blow when he appeared before the Hefer Commission on November 27, 2003 (Waldner, 2003:5).

2.7.2 The Hefer Commission

The Hefer Commission was set up by the then country's president, Thabo Mbeki, to investigate allegations that Ngcuka was an apartheid spy (Tabane, 2003:4). Evidence leader, Kessie Naidu, at the Hefer Commission hearings held in Bloemfontein, told Mona that he had committed his newspaper, "a widely read and respected newspaper, to smut" (Waldner, 2003:5). Naidu's "disgusted tone" followed a vigorous cross-examination during which Mona "conceded that his handling" of the Ngcuka report, "as well as follow-ups, had been an exercise in recklessness". Legal council for Ngcuka, Marumo Moerane, called Mona "a disgrace to journalism".

Mona's decision to testify "despite strong objections from his industry peers and his former colleagues at *City Press*" at the Hefer Commission about an off-the-record meeting he had attended together with a number of black editors, provoked a public criticism by the South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF) (Msomi, 2003:4). In fact, according to Msomi (2003:4), Mona did not resign from the *City Press* because he was found guilty by the commission that investigated his conflict of interest. According to Msomi, Mona was forced to resign from the *City Press* when members of his staff submitted a memorandum to the newspaper's management accusing him of tarnishing the newspaper's image by "taking sides in the political battle between Ngcuka and Deputy President Jacob Zuma". The memorandum noted that Mona's violation of the principle of respecting the off-the-record briefings meant that he could no longer be trusted by the reading public. Therefore, the *City Press*' journalists felt that in future, news sources would not be comfortable holding off-the-record meetings with the *City Press*' journalists.

The off-the-record session referred to above took place in a hotel in Sandton on July 24, 2003 (Gleason, 2003:10). Invited by Ngcuka at this briefing were the then editors of the *City Press*, Vusi Mona, together with his then political editor, Jimmy Seepe, the *Sunday Times*' Mathatha Tsedu, the *Mail&Guardian*'s Mondli Makhanya, the *Sunday Independent*'s Jovial Rantao and the *Sunday Sun*'s Phalane Motale. The purpose of the meeting was to provide background on the investigation on Zuma by Ngcuka with special reference to an anonymous e-mail doing the rounds in the media containing accusations against Ngcuka. Ngcuka wanted to give his perspective on the accusations.

According to Gleason's source at the meeting, Ngcuka said that Zuma "surrounded himself with Indians" and that this was the reason he was "now in such hot water". The source also

said that Zuma could not meet his monthly expenses and was being "bankrolled" by Schabir Shaik and Vivian Reddy, a Newcastle casino owner. The other problem was that in this relationship, according to the report (Gleason, 2003:10) Zuma took orders from Shaik. At this meeting Ngcuka "asked the editors to help him" at which point the editors present began to feel "uncomfortable" because they felt that "their editorial integrity might be at stake" (Gleason, 2003:10).

2.7.3 Displeasure about the black-journalists-only-off-the-record-briefing

That Ngcuka had invited black journalists only to his off-the-record session did not go down well with some white journalists. *Business Day*'s editor, Peter Bruce (2003:6), noted that having "already divided the ruling African National Congress" the Zuma-Ngcuka "saga…it seems…is going to work its toxic way among the journalistic fraternity, setting editors against each other and dividing the nation's newsrooms". Bruce also noted that Zuma, too, had been wooing black journalists like this for years:

> "Now why would these high officials brief only black journalists? In the laughable belief that there might be some racial solidarity between them, that's why."

Bruce's remark was not taken lying down by some black editors who had attended the briefing. In its editorial comment, the *Sowetan* (*Sowetan* Comment, 2003:20) noted that the meeting had now "become an issue, with mostly white editors questioning why only black counterparts were invited". The editorial argued that there was "nothing sinister in this" because it was "Ngcuka's right to invite whoever he wished". It also noted that "history is littered with examples of briefings where black editors were routinely excluded even by prominent black decision makers".

In a defiant note, the editorial further pointed out that in future the *Sowetan* would continue to send its journalists to confidential briefings. That was because, according to the editorial, such briefings "tend to be useful in providing us, as practitioners, with a context of breaking news and unfolding events". The *Sowetan* also further stated that such a stance was informed by a commitment to the public interest. On the same day that the *Sowetan* issued this response, Rantao, one of the attendees of the off-the-record session, penned a response in *The Star* newspaper.

Having noted that "[o]ur reporters will continue to accept invitations to off-the-record meetings", Rantao (2003:14), like the *Sowetan* editorial, defiantly declared that he "will not apologise for that". Similar to the *Sowetan*'s editorial argument, Rantao noted that "[i]n fact, one of the complaining editors and his reporters have, separately, held confidential briefings with senior people in government".

2.7.4 The Ngcuka saga and its implications for South African journalism
Reflecting on the implications that the Ngcuka saga had for journalism, Msomi (2003:4) noted that just as in

> "the same way that neither Ngcuka nor his chief accusers, Mac Maharaj and Mo Shaik, will come out of the battle without major scars, South African journalism will not escape unscathed".

Msomi further observed that the

> "activist role played by Mona and a few other journalists in the Ngcuka spy saga, make it difficult for media organisations to claim impartiality in a fight that looks set to rage beyond next year's general elections".

The significance of this analysis by Msomi (2003:4) is that the *City Press* at this juncture found itself playing a political role, not independently, as expected of journalism, but in a way that suggested that the newspaper's editor and some of its journalists were manipulated by members of the ruling party, namely the ANC.

Yet the media, Msomi argued further, could have stayed out of the conflict by just sticking to the basics of journalism. Whatever the outcome of the Hefer Commission, Msomi concluded, "the events of the past few months call for serious soul-searching by journalists". Prior to Msomi's observation, the *City Press* had realised as much. In an earlier editorial (*City Press* Comment, 2003c:18) the newspaper had observed:

> "As much as we journalists expect African political leaders to subject
> themselves to Nepad's peer review mechanism, we think it is
> probably about time we ourselves in this profession be subjected to
> a similar peer review mechanism."

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If the *Sunday Times'* (Msomi, 2003:4) report is accurate that Mona was forced out of his job by a memorandum presented to the *City Press* management by his peers, then the recommendation above, written by the *City Press*, came true for Mona and cost him his job. Ironically, he was succeeded by Mathatha Tsedu, the man who refused to publish the story that alleged that Ngcuka was a spy, while Mona accepted it from Tsedu's staff member. When Tsedu took over from Mona he redefined the mission and the image of the *City Press*.

2.7.5 The *City Press* becomes "Distinctly African"

From October 2004 the newspaper's motto changed from "The People's Paper" to "Distinctly African" (Tsedu, 2004b:1). In launching the "Distinctly African" *City Press*, Tsedu (2004b:1) noted that amongst the challenges facing South Africa in its first decade of democracy was the country's relationship with the rest of the continent. Tsedu noted that South Africans, in having been "indoctrinated with the belief" that they were different from the rest of the Africans of the continent, internalised this belief and saw themselves "not as Africans, but as South Africans".

The challenge, therefore, for South Africans, was how to integrate themselves with the rest of the continent's African family. In order to address these challenges, according to Tsedu, a "Distinctly African" approach would mean that in South Africa the issues that enhanced and threatened the African identity would drive the *City Press'* coverage. "Distinctly African" also meant that the *City Press* would commit itself to covering the African continent thoroughly and in a distinct way.

While the newspaper was designed to appeal to the tastes of a discerning middle-to-upper-income market, Tsedu noted that the *City Press* would not neglect issues of the poor. Tsedu further noted that the reason for the existence of the *City Press* was to be the voice of the voiceless, of the poor and the powerless, "a responsibility we have carried out with typical African distinctiveness and which we commit ourselves here to continue doing" (Tsedu, 2004b:1).

2.7.6 Summary: The *City Press'* post-apartheid challenges

This section discussed the political challenges faced by the *City Press* in a post-apartheid dispensation. Particular attention was given to the *City Press'* story that involved allegations that Ngcuka was an apartheid spy. The story was condemned as journalistically unethical and

contributed to Mona vacating his editorship at the *City Press*. This episode also saw black and white journalists pitted against one another over the off-the-record briefing by Ngcuka exclusively for black journalists.

So far, this chapter has highlighted the roles played by black-oriented newspapers and black journalists up to the year 2004. What has not been given attention to are journalists' organisations that were formed in post-apartheid South Africa which sought to influence the role played by South African journalists – including the subjects of this study, black journalists – during the research period. The next section pays attention to these organisations.

2.8 Journalists' organisations in post-apartheid South Africa

In post-apartheid South Africa, journalists saw a need to form organisations that would unite them around a common purpose. After 1994 – during the research period – two journalists' organisations were formed. The first was the South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF) and the Forum of Black Journalists (FBJ). Next these organisations' genesis and their role will be traced.

2.8.1 The South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF)

SANEF was formed on October 20, 1996 at the Breakwater Lodge in Cape Town (Tissong, 1996:5; SANEF, 1996:6). Its formation marked an act of unity between the Black Editors Forum (BEF) – a black editors' body – and the Conference of Editors (COE) – a forum of predominantly white editors. Also present at the launch of SANEF were journalism trainers from South African universities and technikons. In its Declaration of Intent, SANEF (1996:6) committed itself to the following goals:

- To nurture and deepen media freedom as a democratic value in all our communities and at all levels of our society;

- To foster solidarity among journalists and to promote co-operation in all matters of common concern;

- To address and redress inappropriate racial and gender imbalances prevalent in journalism and news organisations and encourage corrective action and a transformation of culture within industry;

- To promote media diversity in the interests of fostering maximum expression of opinion;

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

What emerges from this Declaration is a clear intention on the part of SANEF to play a political role in the public affairs of South Africa. This is reflected in the organisation's quest to "deepen media freedom as a democratic value". This is also reflected in SANEF's consciousness of the racist legacy of South Africa and the organisation's commitment to address these. It sought to deal with the legacy of racism by "address[ing] and redress[ing] inappropriate racial and gender imbalances prevalent in journalism and news organisations and encourage corrective action and a transformation of culture within industry".

In a somewhat anticipatory note, Tissong (1996:6) having noted that editors "are typically individualistic people with strong opinions", warned that "uniform responses to the commitments can be excluded". He also observed that such individualism and strong opinions "will probably be the source of a lot of infighting in the future". Almost a year since SANEF was established, its chairperson, Thami Mazwai, resigned (Seepe, 1997a) "following a string of disagreements with his colleagues" within the organisation. Mazwai said that the reason for his resignation was due to attempts made to prevent him from making public statements on a wide range of issues in the forum's meetings. He noted that white editors still did not see the media as an integral part of South Africa, and therefore as part of the country's national objectives. His experiences with his white colleagues within SANEF had left him with the conclusion that "no black journalist can survive in these non-racial organisations unless he becomes a „œconut'" (Seepe, 1997a).

Mazwai's resignation came barely two months before SANEF's second conference where both the BEF and the COE were to cease to exist and completely merge as one organisation. But following his resignation, Mazwai warned that it would be "premature" for the BEF to consider terminating its operations "when the white editors have not lived up to the spirit of Cape Town when Sanef was formed". Commenting on Mazwai's resignation, the then *City Press* editor, Khulu Sibiya (*City Press* Comment, 1997:16) said that the reasons for Mazwai's

move sounded "familiar". Sibiya noted that when he "resigned as chairman of the mainly white Conference of Editors, it was precisely for the same reasons".

Sibiya (1995a:14) resigned as chairperson of the COE in 1995. In resigning, Sibiya cited the predominantly white editors' organisation's "lack of urgency to transform itself to meet the needs of the entire population today". When Sibiya, with the assistance of Moegsien Williams and Aggrey Klaaste, tried to bring the BEF and COE together, "there were editors – with influential voices within the Conference of Editors – who were sceptical about this move". These editors, in Sibiya's view, were people who did "not want to upset their comfort zones". By that Sibiya meant that for the white editors who resisted the integration of black and white editors' bodies, it was "all very well to have a handful of blacks in their midst – but not to be swallowed up by them".

When it emerged that there was an "initiative by the chairman of the Black Editors Forum and *Cape Times* Editor Moegsien Williams…to form a new editors' association that [would] bring together black and white editors", Sibiya was "glad". He hoped that SANEF would fulfil the task of uniting black and white editors, but Mazwai's resignation, according to Sibiya, deferred the dream:

> "Mazwai had good intentions when he accepted the position at SANEF. He wanted black and white editors to work together towards a unified new democratic South Africa. He has been sadly let down. I recall asking him after he was elected chairman of SANEF what faith he had in the white editors. He replied „all the faith'. I hate to say I told you so…For SANEF to survive, the replacement of Mazwai by another black face is no solution. Attitudes in the body have to change" (*City Press* Comment, 1997:16).

While the BEF pledged to remain a separate identity, black editors within SANEF decided to remain within the organisation conscious of the insinuation from Mazwai that doing so would imply that they were "coconuts" – black outside and white inside (Haffajee, 1997:10). Mazwai's position was filled by the then *Cape Argus* editor, Moegsien Williams. In January 1998, SANEF was officially launched with the then *Sowetan* editor, Mike Siluma, elected as its chairperson (Berger, 1998a:11). After Siluma, SANEF was headed by more black editors within the research period, namely former *Evening Post* editor, Lakela Kaunda, and former *City Press* editor, Mathatha Tsedu, among others (Barratt, 2006:28).

After Mazwai's departure, racial tension reared its head again. When the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) issued subpoenas to some editors to appear before the organisation's hearings into racism (to be discussed in detail later) in the media, SANEF deputy chairperson, Ryland Fisher, said that he was "convinced that some editors would attend if there is an unconditional withdrawal of the subpoenas" (Bhengu & Khangale, 2000:3). Subsequent to Fisher's statement, "five black editors in an open letter said they would attend the hearings whether subpoenas were withdrawn or not" (Barratt, 2006:28).

The editors were then SANEF chairperson, Lakela Kaunda, the *Daily News*' Kaizer Nyatsumba, the *Sowetan*'s Mike Siluma, the *Independent On Saturday*'s Cyril Madlala and the *Sowetan Sunday World*'s Charles Mogale. According to Barratt, the five black editors "said they were expressing themselves as black editors as it seemed black editors had no problem with taking part in the hearings: they were more concerned about the media's reputation than the subpoenas" (Barratt, 2006:28).

Barratt (2006:29) notes that although Kaunda did not make the statement in her capacity as SANEF chairperson, but in her personal capacity, in the media it was reported as if she had spoken as SANEF chairperson. This created such problems for SANEF – since the organisation's members held a variety of opinions – to an extent that the "divisions threatened to split Sanef permanently" (Barratt, 2006:29). The tensions in SANEF were an indication that the effects of apartheid continued to haunt the media industry into the new dispensation. These effects manifested themselves in 1997 when black journalists decided to form a black journalists' body that came to be known as the Forum of Black Journalists (FBJ). The organisation excluded white membership.

2.8.2 The Forum of Black Journalists (FBJ)

The FBJ was launched in January 1997 with Abbey Makoe as its first chairperson (Dube, 1997:13). The founding goal of the FBJ was to seek

> "to make black journalists become the authorities of their own experience; acquit themselves with utmost professionalism that adheres to governing codes and ethics of journalism and yet tackle issues confronting our country and the world head on, and to take a public position as may be dictated upon by circumstances without fear or favour" (FBJ, 1999).

On the "intellectual front" the FBJ sought to "navigate a presence and voice of black journalists on the country's policy landscape, especially as it pertains to the media".

The navigation of "this path [was] based on the belief that black people are as much a source of knowledge, whose worldview, the South African public deserves to contend with" (FBJ, 1999). Remarking on the FBJ's assertion on the need for a prominent presence and voice of black journalists, Seepe (1997b:11) noted that the claim that "black journalists have not been in the forefront in defining the agenda for the transformation of this country is unfortunately true". Seepe further pointed out that these "concerns have surfaced time and again during meetings of black intellectuals and journalists alike". One of the reasons for the formation of the FBJ was informed by "[r]epeated remarks by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, President Nelson Mandela and other leading figures that black journalists were ill-informed" (Dube, 1997:13).

In fact, in November 1996, Mandela had singled out – without naming them – certain senior black journalists and accused them of having a secret agenda of undermining his government (Sapa, 1996:2). Mandela pointed out that the unnamed black journalists regretted the destruction of white supremacy in South Africa and were "taking out their venom on the one organisation that has brought about radical changes in this country". Mandela further stated that the unnamed black senior journalists had "no conception of the problems facing the country", falsely thinking and assuming that whites were "defeated…on the battlefield and that the whites are now lying on the floor helpless and begging for mercy". Mandela further stated that he was not prepared to be dictated to by people with secret agendas.

A few days after making this statement, Mandela reiterated his attacks on the unnamed black journalists at an ANC-hosted business meeting (Jenvey, 1996:1). This time around Mandela said that the "white-controlled conservative media" had co-opted senior black journalists to do "their dirty work". He further pointed out that in order to protect their jobs and ensure promotion, the unnamed senior black journalists were forced to report negatively on successes achieved by the ANC government. As a result of these confrontations, the then SANEF chairperson, Thami Mazwai, requested a meeting between Mandela and senior South African black journalists in an attempt to defuse tensions (Dlamini, 1996:2).

On the same day (November 18, 1996) that Mandela was going to meet black journalists, the *Sowetan* (*Sowetan* Comment, 1996:10) issued an editorial in which it expressed "surprise" at Mandela's

> "tirade of unsubstantiated accusations at unnamed senior black journalists whom he claimed had been co-opted by the „conservative' newspaper establishments to discredit the African National Congress-led Government".

The *Sowetan* editorial made it clear that the *Sowetan* did not believe that

- there are black journalists who can stoop so low as to allow themselves to be abused in the way Mandela suggests;
- there are black journalists who are pursuing secret agendas for personal aggrandisement;
- there are black journalists who want to see the return of white supremacy (*Sowetan* Comment, 1996:10).

The *Sowetan* further pointed out that to black journalists, many of whom made personal sacrifices during years of repression, and who unselfishly worked for the creation of the new order, Mandela's suggestion that they could be "bought for a few pieces of silver to undermine the cause they fought for", was an insult. The *Sowetan* further pointed out that its defence of black journalists was not synonymous with the assertion that black journalists were entirely without blemish. The editorial acknowledged that at times black journalists' criticisms of the ANC-led government were unfair and not entirely constructive (*Sowetan* Comment, 1996:10).

After Mandela and 22 black journalists – comprising of senior journalists and editors – met, it was reported that the differences between the two parties had been resolved (O'Grady, 1996:2). While according to the report Mandela undertook not to repeat allegations that black journalists were being used by their bosses to undermine the ANC-led government, the undertaking was made with the provision that journalists would not "overstretch the limit". What the "limit" was, the report did not state. It was also reported that in that meeting Mandela explained that he saw writings by some senior black journalists as questioning his integrity and that of the ANC. The report also stated that the "journalists in question

responded that their writings were the result of „how they saw the situation at the time'". The report did not name the journalists but simply referred to them as the "journalists in question".

But a *Sunday Times*' report (Dlamini, 1996:2), published a day before the meeting, gave a clue about the identity of the "journalists in question". The *Sunday Times* revealed that Mandela had insisted on the attendance of three prominent black journalists without whom there would be no point in meeting. The journalists were: Jon Qwelane (then a columnist for Independent Newspapers), Kaizer Nyatsumba (*The Star*'s then political editor), and Khulu Sibiya (the *City Press*' then managing editor). Though Mandela's spokesperson, Parks Mankahlana, pleaded ignorance about this, Qwelane confirmed that he had been informed that Mandela had insisted that the three senior black journalists should attend (Dlamini, 1996:2). Further credence to reports that Mandela had summoned Qwelane, Nyatsumba and Sibiya, was given by Sibiya (1996a:14) in his column, *My Way*, when he pointed out that "three days after the *bruising no-holds-barred fight*, *three of the culprits* he (Mandela) singled out for his scathing attack were invited to the presidential guest house to welcome the president of Gabon" (researcher's italics).

Apparently, this was not the first time Sibiya was summoned by Mandela. According to Nyatsumba (1996:10) Sibiya was summoned to Shell House (the ANC headquarters, now known as Luthuli House) where a "very upset" Mandela told Sibiya that as a black journalist he should be more understanding of the political situation in which the ANC found itself. Sibiya apparently disclosed this encounter with Mandela prior to Mandela's attack on unnamed senior black journalists. But Joel Netshitenzhe, the then head of communications in the President's Office, recalled the meeting differently. Netshitenzhe (1996:8) asserted that Mandela invited "the City Press editor to brief him on a matter that the president felt had been overlooked in his editorial". Mandela, according to Netshitenzhe,

> "did so precisely because he respects the editor, and did not want him to labour under a wrong impression, and they both agreed the discussion was useful. There were definitely no „summons' and „remonstrations'."

Remarking on this episode, Qwelane (1996:26), who was one of the journalists reportedly summoned by Mandela, felt that the cause of the tension between Mandela and black journalists was that of "identity". He pointed out that the ruling party could not come to terms with the fact that gone were the days when liberation movements and black journalists

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occupied the same trenches in the struggle against apartheid. The reality, according to Qwelane, was that the ANC government was faced with the challenge of playing the role for which they were chosen – to govern – and the media to "continue, in exactly the same way they did in the past – to keep a vigilant watch on the government".

The formation of the FBJ must be understood against this background. Furthermore, its formation was an acknowledgement "that they [black journalists] indeed have a problem, and feel that only they can reverse the situation themselves" (Dube, 1997:13). While black journalists acknowledged that they indeed had a problem, there were, according to Seepe (1997b:11),

> "concerns often expressed among black journalists that government bureaucrats and ministers are generally more obsessed with what appears in white run [sic] newspapers than they are with what is printed in black publications".

The "overriding mentality in the black majority government", Seepe further noted, "seems to be that the only opinions that matter are those printed in white newspapers".

Seepe further observed that there was a common feeling among black journalists that since the democratic elections, journalists working for black-oriented newspapers found "it more difficult to gain access to government ministers than do their black and white colleagues working on white publications". Whilst ministers preferred to leak information to "white publications whenever important policy matters have to be tabled…black newspapers are the first to be invited by government when it is confronted with a major crisis" (Seepe, 1997b:11). Seepe's sentiment was echoed by Sibiya (1997b:16) who pointed out that more often than not the ruling party (the ANC) had a tendency of reminding black journalists of their "blackness and the role expected from us…but when it comes to scoops and leakages of information, we are expected to take a back seat to the white media".

This tendency on the part of the ANC government, according to Sibiya, was objectionable. Black journalists, Sibiya argued, should "not be called upon when chips are down, or to clean up the mess". Black journalists believed, "and rightly so", Sibiya further pointed out, that "the ANC's constituency and our readers are one and the same – and if they want to address them, it should be done through the black press". The ANC, Sibiya asserted, should not "expect

black publications to write follow-ups of stories that first appeared in the white media". In clearer terms, Sibiya pointed out that for black publications "to remain credible and believable in the eyes of our community, they cannot now play second fiddle to the white media". In demanding this recognition, Sibiya (1997b:16) felt that black journalists had earned it because black journalists "were locked up and tortured for taking a stand against an evil system [apartheid]", while on the other hand "the white media…was sympathetic to the past government".

Against this background, the FBJ's membership was open to black journalists only, a move that was seen by critics as "racist" (Dube, 1997:13). The FBJ committed itself to the "upliftment of black journalists in general and the African in particular…with emphasis on African leadership" (FBJ, 1999). Those opposed to the exclusive nature of the FBJ argued it had "no place in a new South Africa where reconciliation should be the order of the day" (Golding-Duffy, 1997:B4). Challenging this argument, Makoe (in Golding-Duffy, 1997:B4) countered that "reconciliation can only take place when black journalists are on an equal footing with their white colleagues". Backing his argument, Makoe pointed out that while black journalists were

> "respected in the township…once in the newsroom we are merely told what to do by our white editors and are often influenced by them. That all has to change and change it will…"

Makoe acknowledged, though, that white journalists, more often than not, deserved their positions in the newsrooms because of their qualifications. On the other hand, Makoe further pointed out, among black journalists a lot needed to be improved starting with their use of the English language which for some was not up to standard as a result of the low quality of education given to black people.

Criticism towards the FBJ was not confined to allegations of racism. The organisation was criticised for its off-the-record sessions with South African politicians (Mabote, 1996b:B8). In its effort to get insider information into the goings-on of South African politics, the FBJ invited certain black politicians – among them, the ANC's Thabo Mbeki and the expelled ANC member, Bantu Holomisa – and requested them to give their perspectives off the record. In Mabote's view, the FBJ had, by creating this opportunity for itself and the politicians, allowed itself to be "an unofficial platform for the powers that be to cleanse their tarnished

images". Mabote further pointed out that the "forum allowed itself to be used by discredited politicians and personalities bogged by controversies".

In an indirect response to this criticism, the FBJ's then Secretary General, Oupa Ngwenya (Ngwenya, 1999:15) observed that while the FBJ was

> "unmistakably a black platform, it is nevertheless mindful of the hazards of power…Consistent with this, the FBJ is not sworn to being the hush puppy of black mischief and failure, nor to being sycophantic lapdogs that pander to powerful forces, be they private or public."

In fact, Ngwenya (1999:15) further argued, "black journalists must be the most ruthless in dealing with wrongdoing and should not turn a blind eye or deaf ear to any evil, from whatever quarter it emanates". Further, Ngwenya argued that black journalists should be "weary of blacks who forget that they are black in prosperity but only remember their blackness when caught up in adversity".

2.8.3 Summary: Journalists' organisations in post-apartheid South Africa

In this section the discussion was about the genesis, the objectives and trajectory of two journalists' organisations that sought to consciously determine their political role in advancing the democratic project of post-apartheid South Africa. The first organisation discussed was the non-racial SANEF and the Black Consciousness-inspired FBJ. It was pointed out that even as it committed itself to a non-racial character, SANEF was haunted and assailed by racial tensions which threatened to disintegrate the organisation. The formation of a blacks-only FBJ gave a clear indication that some black journalists believed that the remnants of apartheid in post-apartheid South Africa were still felt and that black journalists needed to fight this legacy as a separate and independent entity. Eight months after the FBJ was formed, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) conducted hearings into racism in the media as part of its hearings into human rights violations in apartheid South Africa between 1960 and 1994. Next, attention is given to the TRC's hearings into racism to further provide context for this study.

2.9 The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) hearings on the media

The TRC was conceived as part of a bridge-building process in South Africa to help lead South Africans away from a deeply divided past to a future founded on the recognition of

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human rights and democracy (TRC Report, 1998a:48). It was established within the framework of the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act No 34 of 1995. One of its main tasks was to uncover as much as possible of the truth about past violations of human rights committed in the period 1960 to 1994 (TRC Report, 1998a:24; 48). The TRC hearings on the media took place from September 17 to 19, 1997 at the offices of the SABC in Johannesburg (TRC Report, 1998b:166). The hearings covered both the print and the broadcasting sectors (Krabill, 2001:568; Skjerdal, 1997). Since, as it was pointed out in Chapter One, that the focus of this research is on the print sector, this section on the TRC discusses the hearings on print journalism.

Late in 1996, the chairperson of the Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI), Raymond Louw, approached the TRC to suggest that the media under apartheid should be investigated (Skjerdal, 1997). This suggestion was informed by the view that a thorough investigation of South Africa's past would be incomplete without an inquiry into the role of the media in maintaining apartheid. The suggestion was that an independent body, free from the government and the TRC, should conduct a preliminary research. The body suggested was the FXI. The suggestion that the FXI do the preliminary research for the TRC was rejected by some black journalists (TRC Report, 1998b:165).

Mazwai argued that Louw was an executive at SAAN (South African Associated Newspapers), a company that "hardly raised a sweat in opposition to the then government's stranglehold on the media" (Mazwai, 1997:9). Instead, Mazwai argued further, the SAAN was among the media companies that "implemented apartheid with vigour – separate toilets, eating facilities, differing salaries, inferior working conditions for blacks, and so on". Mazwai further pointed out that Louw was the editor of the *Rand Daily Mail* when "black journalists revolted against being served tea in enamel mugs while their white colleagues were given cups". While Mazwai conceded that Louw was not responsible for policies that discriminated against black journalists, he argued that Louw was "part of the system that applied them".

It was for these reasons that Mazwai objected to Louw being involved in preliminary investigations. However, Mazwai went further than just objecting to Louw's involvement, but objected to the involvement in a preliminary investigation of all "people who were in the media during the apartheid days, or their organisations, whether it be the Black Editors' [sic] Forum or the FXI". Echoing Mazwai in rejecting a preliminary investigation by the FXI, Thloloe argued that such a process would usher a sanitised version or distorted evidence

(Zaina, 1997:8). While these black journalists objected only to the FXI's role, the very idea of conducting a hearing into the media by the TRC received mixed reactions.

Former *Rand Daily Mail* editor, Allister Sparks, believed that an investigation by the TRC would be valuable, "not only for establishing the degree of media collaboration with the government…but for probing a whole range of issues" (Zaina, 1997:8). Among these, according to Sparks, was the extent to which newspapers and broadcasters were used as bases for the security force espionage through the planting of false stories for propaganda purposes. While another former *Rand Daily Mail* editor, Rex Gibson, had no problem participating in an investigation into the media by the commission, he feared that there was "a risk that an investigation of this nature could turn into a witch-hunt" and that it was "more likely to become a platform for dealing with newsroom grievances". *The Star*'s former editor, Harvey Tyson, believed that far from being helpful, the proposed investigation would "trivialise the process of truth and reconciliation" (Zaina, 1997:8). In Tyson's view, the "mistakes, both of commission and omission, on the part of the media – Afrikaans, English and all political bents – are apparent on their pages".

At the TRC hearings black journalists spoke about the discrimination they experienced at the hands of white media owners (O'Grady, 1997a:4). Representing the FBJ at the TRC hearings were Thami Mazwai, Jon Qwelane, Don Mattera, Mike Tissong and Mondli Makhanya (Zwane, 1997a:2). Mattera told the TRC that the white media facilitated "a holocaust of the truth". Qwelane noted that black journalists were denied training and promotion and that as late as 1976, canteen and toilet facilities at the SAAN were segregated (O'Grady, 1997a:4). Qwelane also accused the white-owned media of being "guilty of gross human rights abuse" by excluding finance and business reports from the black editions of their newspapers (Zwane, 1997a:2). Makhanya corroborated Qwelane's statement by pointing out that the white-owned media failed to inform the population about the "evil" that was going on around them and victimised those in their employ who were actively opposing apartheid.

Tissong stated that black journalists were denied promotions and that "the long term effect of starting careers at newspapers like *The Star* was that our careers were held back" (Zwane, 1997a:2). The TRC also heard that some journalists worked as police informers and manipulated news reporting to suit the interests of the apartheid government (Zwane, 1997b:2). This was revealed by a former *Rand Daily Mail* journalist, John Horak, who was also a ranking police officer. Horak claimed that a number of editors, whom he did not

mention by name, knew that he was working for the police, and that they used him when they ran into difficulties with the law. This was confirmed at the TRC hearing by Vic McPherson who commanded the apartheid state's covert Strategic Communications (Stratcom), who also revealed that there were about 40 journalists he regarded as his contacts in the media (O'Grady, 1997b:1).

Mattera told the TRC that Horak had "hounded and vilified" him through "whispering campaigns and dirty tricks" (Brand, 1997:6). As a result of the information supplied by Horak, Mattera told the TRC hearing that his house was raided several times by the police. Another black journalist who was on the receiving end of police spies who also practised as journalists was Tissong (Zwane, 1997a:2). Tissong spoke about the pain he felt when he was removed from the story that was originally his that involved policemen booby-trapping hand grenades which were passed on to freedom fighters in Duduza, Nigel. The grenades exploded when the pin was released, resulting in the death of the freedom fighters. Tissong was removed from the story and it was given to a police spy, Craig Kotze, and Chris Steyn, who gave a watered-down version of the story. For the sanitised version, Tissong blamed the then news editor of *The Star*, Andrew Walker (Zwane, 1997a:2). That Kotze was a police spy doubling as a journalist was confirmed by himself at the TCR hearings (Zwane, 1997b:2).

Black journalists also made written submissions to the TRC prior to the hearings, which noted the following (TRC Report, 1998b:175 – 176):

- That newspapers used terms such as "terrorists" instead of "guerillas" to describe those who were waging an armed struggle against apartheid.
- That stories featuring whites were given preference to those that involved blacks, even if the latter were more newsworthy.
- That two days leave or pay was deducted when black journalists went on a march while white journalists were never penalised for protesting.
- That there was a lack of training for black journalists, and a denial of promotion because of lack of training.

While conceding that black journalists in general suffered in the newsroom, Mathiane (1997:31) argued that the condition of female black journalists was worse than their male black counterparts. While male black journalists and female black journalists entered the world of journalism with the same qualifications, Mathiane pointed out that for years, editors

and news editors relegated female black journalists to fill up women's pages. She further noted that while Sam Nzima, the photographer who took the pictures of the Soweto 1976 uprisings, was given an award for his pictures, the female journalist Sophie Tema, who was with him on that day, was not mentioned by her newspaper. Mathiane also stated that while all male black journalists – "even stringers" – working at the *Rand Daily Mail* had typewriters, female black journalists did not have them and were compelled to wait until their male counterparts had finished their tasks.

Reflecting on the proceedings of the TRC hearings on the media, the *Sunday Times*' editorial comment (*Sunday Time*s Editorial, 1997:24) noted that while there was truth in the claim of black journalists that the English-language press in the apartheid years lacked courage, such was "only part of a larger truth". The other part of the larger truth, according to the *Sunday Times*, was that there were "many honourable journalists and editors who succeeded against great odds, in setting before the public the dark side of the apartheid state". The *Sunday Times* also lamented the failure on the part of black journalists to credit the print media's contribution in persuading the majority of white South Africans to accept democracy – "a process that led in the end to a relatively peaceful transition".

2.10 Summary: TRC

This section dealt with black journalists' submissions to the TRC where they narrated the discrimination they experienced at the hands of white media owners. They also revealed that the newsrooms were infiltrated by police agents who sought to manipulate news in such a way that they represented the apartheid state in a positive light. The infiltration by the police also led to a containment and distortion of stories that exposed apartheid brutalities. The TRC hearing into racism in the media was not the only hearing that was conducted on this issue. The TRC's was followed by another hearing conducted by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), which is discussed next.

2.11 The South African Human Rights Commission Hearings (SAHRC) into claims of racism in the media in post-apartheid South Africa

In 1998, the SAHRC, an independent state institution established by law, as provided in the South African Constitution for the protection and promotion of human rights, received a complaint from the Black Lawyers Association (BLA) and the Association of Black Accountants of South Africa (ABASA), to investigate allegations of racism against two Johannesburg-based newspapers, the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Times* (Glaser,

2000:374; Pityana, 2000:525 – 526). When the SAHRC received the two organisations' complaints, it decided not to "accede to the request as put…because it was concerned about the arbitrary nature of the selection of the newspapers" (Pityana, 2000:526). Rather than focusing only on the two newspapers, the Commission decided to conduct an investigation into racism in the media in general.

The purpose of the Commission's hearings was to "monitor the representation and treatment of racism, sensitivity to equality as pertains race, ethnic or social origin, colour, culture, language or birth" (Pityana, 2000:526). By conducting the investigation, the Commission hoped that the inquiry would generate debate and dialogue among South Africans about the nature, meaning and incidence of racism in South Africa, in the belief that South Africans needed to be informed about racism if they were to be able to address it (Pityana, 2000:527). Having considered the dossier of the allegation against the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Times*, the Commission forwarded them to the newspapers concerned for their response (Pityana, 2000:525). According to Pityana, the newspapers' responses were a refutation of the allegations together with a challenge to the jurisdiction of the Commission and the *locus standi* of the authors of the communication.

In response to the refutations, the Commission cited the Preamble to the Act which states that the Commission shall be "competent and obliged" to investigate any allegations of human rights (Pityana, 2000:526). The Commission also rejected the suggestion that the authors of the dossier had no *locus standi*, arguing that the BLA and ABASA were professional bodies representing the interests of black people and that the two organisations had a legitimate interest in the issue of racism in the media. In November 1998, the SAHRC announced to the public that it was going to embark on an exercise of investigating racism in the media. Reactions to the announcement were mixed (Banda, 1998:2).

The *Sunday Times*, one of the two newspapers singled out by the BLA and ABASA, said that the move by the SAHRC was an "anti-thesis to democracy" and "akin to a regime of censorship" (Banda, 1998:2). In the *Business Day*'s (*Business Day* Comment, 1998:15) view, a considered and balanced research into the state of the media, including an analysis to the extent to which racial prejudice remained relevant, was "not a bad idea". Simultaneously, the *Business Day* recognised that a call to the media to look more closely into the mirror might not be comfortable for many, and that "the findings would certainly not please everyone". But the *Business Day* doubted that the Human Rights Commission under the leadership of

Barney Pityana was the right body to conduct the investigation. That was because, the *Business Day* argued, Pityana carried "far too much ideological baggage" to be the person to lead the kind of project he was proposing.

The *Business Day*'s observation was based on its observation that the BLA and ABASA,

> "two racially exclusive associations, are part of a small but vocal and hardline Black Consciousness community of which – surprise, surprise – Pityana has been a leader for about 30 years".

On the basis of this observation, in the *Business Day*'s view, there was "a not-so-hidden agenda at work". The *Business Day*'s disqualification of Pityana on the basis of his link to the Black Consciousness creed was echoed by *The Citizen* newspaper (*The Citizen* Comment, 1998:6) a day after the *Business Day*'s editorial comment.

Before dealing with Pityana, *The Citizen* pointed out that racism was not a one-way traffic, adding that any person, "black, white, or technicolour", could be a racist. Racist prejudices, *The Citizen* argued, could be vented by formations of "racially exclusive" organisations such as the BLA, ABASA and the FBJ. The coming together of the BLA and ABASA to tackle racism in the media was, in *The Citizen*'s view, "a case of the pot casting dubious aspersions on the kettle". *The Citizen* further noted that for the two organisations' campaign to be "taken up by a bitter Black Consciousness (BC) exponent, we enter the realms of the absurd". Observing that Pityana "is an excitable former activist, and…not a judge", *The Citizen* further argued that Pityana was not "temperamentally or professionally equipped to assess how the scales are tipped". On the same day that *The Citizen*'s editorial supported the *Business Day*'s observation, *The Star* newspaper (*The Star* Comment, 1998:12) countered the *Business Day*'s argument.

Though *The Star* did not directly refer to the *Business Day*'s editorial comment, it criticised the latter's stance. *The Star* noted the "media's general response – accusing the two complainants of being racist, by their very existence – has been of the knee-jerk variety, and quite unfortunate". Unequivocally, *The Star* asserted that there was "nothing racist about the objectives of the two organisations". *The Star* argued that the probe was not about freedom of expression but racism. In defence of the SAHRC's move, *The Star* further argued that the

"enemy [was] not the HRC, but racism which keeps reconciliation beyond reach. If we are to move forward as a nation, the media should take seriously the perception that it violates the rights of a section of the population".

The *Sowetan* (*Sowetan* Comment, 1998:8) agreed with *The Star*'s observations. The newspaper's editorial, like *The Star*'s, argued that it was "simplistic" to argue, like the *Sunday Times* did, that "by embarking on this investigation, the HRC has placed the freedom of the media at risk". Like *The Star*, the *Sowetan* further argued that what could not be denied in the new democracy was that "despite the political change that has occurred in the country, racism continues to be a factor in our lives" and that it "permeates every aspect of our society – including the media". However, the *Sowetan* cautioned the SAHRC by pointing out that in its investigation of alleged racism in the media, it would also have to take into account the commercial and professional realities faced by the media, such as issues of focus, specialisation and that the media audiences were still in many ways separated according to race.

The *Sowetan*'s point about taking into cognisance the constraints imposed by specialisation and focus driven by race was echoed by Berger (1998b:13). Berger noted that in conducting its investigation, the SAHRC would have to recognise that most black and white reporters had different experiences which found their way into their journalism. Likewise, Berger further noted, readers, viewers and listeners were often interested in different things along racial lines. The question that the SAHRC would have to answer, Berger pointed out, was: When do these racial differences become racism? Against this background, Berger asserted that any probe into racism in the media, would have to be informed by a clear definition of racism.

In the *Mail&Guardian*'s view (*Mail&Guardian* Comment&Analysis, 1998:24), "the lack of confidence in Pityana's ability to conduct the investigation in a non-partisan manner, was admirably articulated by *The Citizen*". While the *Mail&Guardian* admired *The Citizen*'s position, it tore into *The Star*'s editorial comment and dismissed it as "pusillanimous". The *Mail&Guardian* also noted that *The Star*'s position was "a reminder of how attuned to current orthodoxy the country's largest newspaper group has become, presumably with a view to Tony O'Reilly's profit margins". In other words, what the *Mail&Guardian* implied was that *The Star*'s position was unprincipled but convenient.

The *Mail&Guardian* stated that it had no objection to an investigation into racism in the media as such since its "record fighting racism is well known". But it made clear its displeasure about the SAHRC investigation because, in the newspaper's view, "the racism complaint is no less than a feebly disguised assault on freedom of expression". In the *Mail&Guardian*'s perspective the investigation was an "encroachment of censorship" which the newspaper was "determined to fight".

The *Mail&Guardian*'s argument was not convincing according to Tsedu (1998:10). Its invocation of "its so-called struggle credentials in an effort to convince us that because it was once banned by the apartheid regime it is incapable of being racist" was insufficient for Tsedu. To Tsedu, the *Mail&Guardian*'s argument was "like arguing that because Winnie Madikizela-Mandela is a social worker who has fought for people, she could not have treated Stompie Seipei in the way she did". Tsedu also dismissed as a "flawed rationale" the argument disqualifying Pityana's fitness to chair the inquiry on the basis of his "ideological baggage" – a term used by the *Business Day*. That was because, according to Tsedu, Pityana had cut ties with the Black Consciousness Movement in the 1980s when he left it to join the ANC.

Taking into consideration the dissatisfaction by some sections of the media with the intentions of the SAHRC, the latter "held continuous consultations with editors and journalists", the purpose being "to explain the inquiry and the process undertaken by the Commission" (Pityana, 2000:528). Pityana further notes that during this period of consultations, members of the Commission received countless calls from journalists encouraging the inquiry, adding that what was "significant about this was that almost all of them were black" and "wished to remain anonymous although they disclosed their names and identities to the Commission". Many of the journalists who supported the inquiry, according to Pityana "were employed by the very newspapers that objected so vociferously to the inquiry".

To carry out its mandate, the SAHRC employed Claudia Braude to undertake its research into racism in the media (Pityana, 2000:528). The SAHRC also engaged the Media Monitoring Project, an independent media research and monitoring unit. The SAHRC rationale in this approach was that Braude would analyse news reports over a set period of time using acknowledged race analysis methodologies, and that the MMP would track stories in the media and show how race had been treated by different media. Following this process, the SAHRC published its Interim Report on 22 November 1999 (Pityana, 2000:529). The reports

were given to the parties mentioned in the report. But according to Pityana, it soon became apparent that a number of editors and journalists were determined to obstruct the process of the inquiry. Against this background a decision was taken to issue subpoenas to all the parties perceived by the SAHRC as having information that could assist the Commission in conducting the inquiry.

The subpoenas were withdrawn by the SAHRC after the Commission held talks with SANEF in which it agreed to withdraw the subpoenas while the editors agreed to participate voluntarily (Brand, 2000:5; Naidu, 2000:3). But before this agreement was reached between SANEF and the SAHRC, five black editors (the *Sowetan*'s Mike Siluma, the *Evening Post*'s Lakela Kaunda, the *Daily News*' Kaizer Nyatsumba, *The Independent on Saturday*'s Cyril Madlala and the *Sowetan Sunday World*'s Charles Mogale) had broken ranks, and pledged to cooperate with the SAHRC after SANEF had stated that it would participate only if there were an unconditional withdrawal of subpoenas to editors and journalists (Bhengu & Khangale, 2000:13).

It must be noted that although the five black editors pledged to cooperate with the SAHRC, they noted that

> "the approach taken by the HRC, of issuing subpoenas to editors and others involved in media work, is ill-advised because serving subpoenas assumes that those served with them would otherwise have refused to take part in the inquiry" (Bhengu & Khangale, 2000:13).

With the subpoenas withdrawn, the editors and journalists who were implicated in the interim report on racism asked the SAHRC for time to prepare written submissions for the hearings that were scheduled for March 6, 2000 (Bhengu, 2000a:4).

When the hearings commenced, the then *Sowetan* editor, Siluma, representing himself and four other black editors, Mogale, Nyatsumba, Phillip Molefe and Madlala, told the SAHRC that the white-controlled media continued giving priority to white people's voices at the expense of the black majority (Mathiane & ka Manzi, 2000:3). Siluma further stated that although some white editors genuinely believed that there was no racism in the media, in his view racism still prevailed in the democratic South Africa. He said that white racism manifested itself in a subliminal way, citing the attitude of white journalists who behaved in a

way that suggested that they believed that "black people were incompetent until they proved themselves otherwise".

Siluma's sentiments were echoed by the then *Evening Post* editor and the then SANEF chairperson, Lakela Kaunda (Sapa, 2000a:5). Kaunda noted that the situation where the media continued to be controlled by the white minority, enabling the minority to set the agenda for debate in the country, could not be allowed to continue. She asserted that the lack of black ownership of the media explained the kind of "white liberal slant" prevalent "in the media as well as the racism that manifests itself".

Kaunda also protested against what she referred to as a trend to portray blacks in the media as perpetrators of crime and whites as victims of crime (ka Manzi, 2000:4). On top of that, Kaunda asserted that black people were often featured as victims of disasters dying in large numbers and not deserving sympathy. While she emphasised her subscription to the watchdog role of the media of exposing maladministration where it reared its ugly head in the government, Kaunda argued that such should "not mean government must not be given credit when due". The then *City Press* editor, Khulu Sibiya, endorsed Siluma's presentation on racism and ownership of the media (Bhengu & Molefe, 2000:7). He noted that among white publications themselves, there continued to be a different approach to news, and further noted that black newspapers also approached issues differently from white newspapers.

White editors also had the opportunity to state their case. The then *Business Day* editor, Jim Jones, whose publication was accused by the Media Monitoring Project (MMP) of depersonalising the death of black people, said that an attempt to perpetuate racism would be a commercial suicide because it would contribute to a loss of readership (Bhengu, 2000b:3; Sapa, 2000b:5). Jones dismissed as flawed the MMP's example of citing a headline in the *Business Day* that reported about 60 Nigerians that had died in clashes, saying that it would have been impossible to name all the people who died in the clashes reported on. Driving his point home about how flawed the methodology of the MMP report was, Jones noted that while the *Business Day* ran hundreds of articles weekly, the MMP had only highlighted three perceived wrongs (Sapa, 2000b:5). The then *Financial Mail* editor, Peter Bruce, observed that considering that racism was law for more than 50 years, it could not simply be legislated away (Sapa, 2000c:5). Bruce suggested that one of the ways to ensure fair racial representation would be through the increase of the number of black sub-editors, since it was this section of the newsroom that finally shaped what went into print.

The then *Die Burger* editor, Ebbe Dommisse, took offence at "the Media Monitoring Project for accusing my newspaper of suffering from xenophobia on the basis of a „half-baked' report" (Bhengu & Molefe, 2000:7). Dommisse further noted that *Die Burger* had changed, and that, in fact, "our predecessors will turn in their graves to see that we cover areas of people who are not white". The then *Beeld* editor, Arrie Rossouw, told the Commission that while his newspaper did "not support any form of racism" that did "not mean that at times racial undertones" were not present in reports and leader articles or that such did not slip through unintentionally (Bhengu & Molefe, 2000:7). Rossouw also revealed at the hearing that he was sympathetic to black editors, noting that their position made him recall the British colonial period when the Afrikaners were disempowered and discriminated against (ka Manzi, 2000:4).

While Rossouw expressed sympathy for black editors, the *Rapport* editor, Johann de Wet, was critical of black editors who had presented to the Commission complaining about marginalisation in the newsrooms (ka Manzi, 2000:4). De Wet felt that the right place to take such complaints to were the employing companies, not the Commission. On the issue of racism, De Wet noted that racism was everywhere, adding that his newspaper condemned racism wherever it occurred. De Wet could not understand why black editors made "such a fuss about white control of the press" while the "*Sowetan* is the biggest circulating daily newspaper in the country and it is black-owned" (Bhengu & Molefe, 2000:7). He was "offended" that there was a claim of "conspiracy to keep the media in white hands" and that he was part of that conspiracy.

Presenting his newspaper's case before the Commission, the *Mail&Guardian* editor, Phillip van Niekerk, observed that allegations of racism against his newspaper presented a dilemma as to whether or not the *Mail&Guardian* should continue telling "the unsweetened truth" of the South African story (Bhengu & Molefe, 2000:7). He told the Commission that the critical question that had always faced the newspaper since 1994 was how to relate to those who were now in power since there was no longer a white minority government. He observed that the *Mail&Guardian* stood accused of racism for "being upfront, in-your-face, hard-hitting and fiercely independent".

The hearings resumed on April 3 and lasted until April 5, 2000. Making his presentation before the Commission, the then *Sunday Independent* editor, John Battersby, said that South

Africans were in denial of their racist attitudes, and that the South African society was dishonest about conversations they held in private (Mathiane, 2000a:4). Noting that the SAHRC hearings had changed his outlook on racism, Battersby observed that though he was not consciously racist, he realised that he was "in an internalised way" because he still found himself doing things that could be viewed as racist. He also expressed empathy for black journalists who saw press freedom as a secondary issue to the SAHRC inquiry, while white editors tended to view the inquiry as an infringement on press freedom.

In Battersby's view the "reality" was that press freedom and the issue of racism in the media were "two sides of the same coin". Battersby's observation was echoed by *The Star* editor, Peter Sullivan, who noted that freedom of expression existed side-by-side with the right to human dignity and equality (Warby & Sapa, 2000:3). But Battersby disapproved of the move by black editors to make a submission to the SAHRC at the exclusion of white editors.

Representing the ANC, the then Minister of Public Enterprise, Jeff Radebe, accused the media of stereotyping black people, particularly Africans (Mathiane, 2000b:4). In his offensive against the media, Radebe frequently singled out the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Times*, as having editorials which pitted Mandela against his successor, Mbeki, the former being exalted as a "saint" and the latter as "inspiring great nervousness" among whites. Referring to the *Mail&Guardian* in particular, Radebe alleged that its then white editor, Phillip van Niekerk, had written an article which criticised Mbeki but had it appear with the by-line of a black woman journalist, Lizeka Mda.

According to Radebe these stereotypes affirmed the mainstream media's beliefs that Africans, with the exception of Mandela, were corrupt and anti-democratic. In response to these allegations, the *Mail&Guardian* issued a statement, dismissing Radebe's claim and charging that his allegations carried the implications that Mda, as a black woman journalist, was not capable of expressing her own opinions and was prepared to be crudely manipulated by her editor. Responding to the accusations, Mda (2000:1) reiterated the *Mail&Guardian's* response, adding that she could not "imagine a worse insult" to her professional integrity. Considerlng that the ANC "sidelined every member who has dared not to toe the line", Mda pointed out that "the idea of a black woman who can think for herself may be a novel one".

According to Mda, this was not the first time she had been attacked for writing the article. The then spokesperson of Nelson Mandela, Parks Mankahlana, had reacted by saying that Mda

had projected herself in a manner "worse than the most conservative liberal". An African-American writer, Robert Suresh Roberts, had remarked that Mda was contributing "to a rainbow-nation brand of Afro-pessimism". All this was a result of Mda alleging that there were "alarming signs that Mbeki's backroom maneouvres" were making a mockery of the country's democratic institutions (Mda, 2000:1).

Not only was it the *Mail&Guardian* that came to Mda's defence, but also the *City Press*. Noting that "Mda is lividly mad and justifiably so", the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2000a:10) added that considering that Radebe was a senior member of the ANC, it would have been hoped that he would have "checked his facts before making such a damning submission". Mona (2000c:10) noted that Radebe's accusation against Mda was the "[most] depressing feature of this week's Human Rights Commission hearings on racism" and a "below-the-belt blow" dealt on Mda.

2.12 Summary: Chapter 2
This chapter named and discussed the history of the five phases that black journalism went through in South Africa and the implications thereof. It also paid attention to journalists' organisations formed in post-apartheid South Africa and the reasons for their formation. The chapter also covered the hearings into racism in the media conducted by the TRC and HRC.

The next chapter discusses theoretical frameworks with regard to the role of the media selected for this study.

Chapter 3
Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

A review of literature is defined as a process of "reading whatever has been published that appears relevant to the research topic" (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:19). Having read what has been published about the research topic, the researcher contextualises in such body of scientific knowledge her/his own research (Babbie, Mouton, Vorster & Prozesky, 2007:565). Literature review also assists a researcher in ensuring that one does not duplicate a study already made (Mouton, 2006:6). Mouton further notes that a literature review enables a researcher to discover what the most recent and authoritative theorising about the subject is, and to find out what the most widely accepted empirical findings in the field of study are.

A search done on the political role of black journalists in post-apartheid South Africa in books and peer-reviewed academic journals and research engines such as Libraries in Africa (Africat), South African National Bibliography (SANB) and Libraries in Southern Africa (SA Cat) did not yield anything specifically on the subject matter of this study. Much of what is available is on the political role of black journalists during the apartheid era which was covered in Chapter 2 of this study.

The period 1994 to 2004 marked the first decade of democracy in South Africa. Taking that into cognisance means that in this study, literature review will refer to the examination of literature covering the "political role of the media" in a "democracy", since this study deals with a democratic epoch. It will also review literature that examines "African culture" in relation to the media. And lastly, it will review literature that deals with the impact of media ownership on the media. The issue of ownership of the media and its implications for journalism practice will be given more attention in Chapter 4 – Theoretical Frameworks – since one of the theoretical frameworks chosen for this study, Political Economy, deals with that. In this chapter, focus will be given more specifically to literature dealing with this issue on the African continent.

A number of studies have been undertaken on the role of the media in a democracy (Wasserman & de Beer, 2006:68 – 70; Fourie, 2002:34; Berger, 2002:81; Berger, 2000:21; Megwa, 2002:12; Scammell & Semetko, 2000:xi; Blankenberg, 1999:42; McQuail, 1995:11; Ungar, 1995:371; Rønning, 1994:1; Ansah, 1988:13; Blumler, 1981:121). It has been observed that in many studies examining the role of the media in a democracy, in the main,

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most of the literature is focused on Western societies (Berger, 2000:21; Scammell & Semetko, 2000:xi). While there is a large body of literature on the role of the media focusing on Western societies, Kareithi (2005:3) observes that "[l]iterature on the African press is scant compared to that focusing on the media in other parts of the world".

While recognising Kareithi's observation on the limitedness of literature on the political role of the media in Africa, one can state that there is a reasonable body of literature that can be referred to on this topic (Nyamnjoh, 2005b:40; Kareithi, 2005:14; Mphahlele, 2004:331; Kasoma, 1996:102; Moemeka & Kasoma, 1994:40; Ansah, 1990:34). This literature, conscious of the preponderance of the Western focus on media discourse, calls for the cognisance of "African consciousness" on the political role of the media. What this entails will constitute part of the literature review in this chapter. A review of literature that discusses "African consciousness" will, at the same time, be addressing one of the central themes of this study, namely the role played by African cultural values in the execution of black journalists' political role in a democratic South Africa. The literature examining issues of "African consciousness" is mainly written from an Afrocentric perspective. Afrocentricity will be defined and discussed in Chapter 4, the chapter that deals with Theoretical Frameworks.

Rønning (1994:1) observes that the early nineties may be characterised as a period when the "interest in the debate over the freedom of the press and the role of the media in the democratic process suddenly burst into the open in Africa". In the case of South Africa, Blankenberg (1999:42) observes that this was a period during which "the role of the media became subject to soul-searching, as did the question of national identity". When apartheid was dismantled in South Africa, the new government headed by the ANC expected the media to play a role in "national development", "nation-building" and "national interest" (Wasserman & de Beer, 2006:68 – 70; Fourie, 2002:34). These concepts mean different things to different people. Their relationship with the media and how the media were expected to play a role in advancing them will be examined as part of the literature review in this chapter.

For purposes of clarity the first task will be that of giving working definitions for the terms "politics" and "democracy".

3.2 Defining politics and democracy

There is no single definition for the term "politics" or what constitutes the "political". This is so because, according to Leftwich (2004:2), politics is "a highly contested subject". The term "politics", Held (1991:3) notes, "denotes an activity about which many people feel a combination of cynicism, scepticism and mistrust". The negative attitude towards politics, Held further notes, is informed by a perception that politics is "associated frequently with self-seeking behaviour, hypocrisy and the manipulation of attitudes".

Louw (2005:14) defines politics as "the processes of legitimating and or enforcing decisions" which involves "a struggle over gaining access to the decision-making positions". Along similar lines, Chilton (in   -   ŋigo-Mora, 2009:1) defines politics as "a struggle for power between those who seek to maintain their power and those who seek to resist it". It is the "process through which classes with antagonistic interests struggle to obtain, retain or influence state power" (Callinicos, 2004:60). It refers, according to Peters (2004:25)

> "fundamentally to the relations of power and influence between states and their societies…and in particular to that complex set of processes whereby governments come to choose between a variety of collective goals for society and seek to implement them".

Schumaker (2010:1) observes that "[p]olitics concerns how we live in community with others, how we cooperate to achieve benefits, how we engage in conflict for greater shares of the things value, and how people are governed". Ordeshook (1992:7) asserts that "politics concerns the actions of people whose fates are interdependent, where the nature of that interdependency is determined in significant part by institutions we choose to call political". Similarly, Chilton (in   -   ŋigo-Mora, 2009:1) defines politics as "cooperation, as the practices and institutions that a society has for resolving clashes of interest over money influence, liberty and the like". Gyekye (1997:193) defines the word "political" as that which refers to "public affairs: the official goods, affairs, fortunes, agencies, resources, and institutions of the state".

The common theme in all the definitions given above is that politics is a constestation for power among state institutions. The approach that limits politics or associates politics only with the institutions of government creates, according to Squires (2004:119) "a very particular boundary between the public, as the apparatus of government, and the private, as civil

society". Arguing from a feminist perspective, Squires (2004:120) points out that "the narrow association of politics with the institutions of state and government excludes the „private' sphere of domesticity and sexuality from political sight". Squires argues for a broader conception of politics which sees politics "as those processes concerned with the struggle over the control and distribution of power across a whole range of sites" which "opens up space for considering issues of gender as central to the study of politics" Squires' (2004:119) central argument is that there is no single "site of politics". Rather, as she points out, "[p]olitics is everywhere". While this study is cognisant of Squires' intervention, for the purpose of this study, politics refers to "public affairs" and "public institutions". Having defined "politics", the next term to define is "democracy".

As is the case with the definition of politics, defining democracy is not an easy task (Dahl, 1998:40). Among the factors that make this task difficult is that, as Dahl (1989:2) observes, "[t]he very notion of democracy has always provided a field day for its critics". Dahl identifies three categories of critics that pose a "number of problems for which no definitive solution seems to exist". The critics comprise those

- who are opposed to democracy because they believe that while it may be possible it is inherently undesirable;
- who argue that while it might be desirable if it were possible, in actuality it is inherently impossible; and those
- who are sympathetic to the idea and wishing to maintain it but critical of it in some important regard.

Before an attempt is made to define democracy, it is worth noting Carter and Stokes' (2002:1) observations about democracy. They note that since the end of the Cold War, "few have queried the ideal of liberal democracy". They (Carter & Stokes, 2002:1) note that its values and institutions are "accepted throughout the world as providing the only framework for achieving or maintaining genuine democracy". This study is conscious of Carter and Stokes' observations and is not confined by a limiting and limited understanding of democracy pointed as out by Carter and Stokes. Instead, there is awareness, as pointed out by Megwa (2002:12), that democracy is a "complex, contested and problematic concept". That is because, Megwa further notes, the concept is open to different interpretations because of the gap between what it means in theory and how it is being practised. One of the contributing factors to the contestation of this concept is that, as Kareithi (2005:6) observes, "discourses on

democracy are…framed in Western perceptions and concepts, emphasising competition for public office, efficiency in the public sector and respect for human rights".

The features identified by Kareithi above, are that of liberal democracy, as attested to by Carter and Stokes (2002:1) who list them as, among others, "popular choice and governmental accountability to citizens through regular and fair elections that are contested by a number of parties". Carter and Stokes further observe that "liberal democracy requires strong parliaments that can exercise control over governments and a framework of the rule of law". Kareithi further argues that even definitions of concepts such as "human rights" are discussed in the "narrow sense of an individual right to free expression, association, movement, a fair trial and freedom from torture and arbitrary detention". In protest against this "narrow" reduction of the definition of the concept of democracy, Kareithi (2005:6) notes that

> "[o]ther than the underlying philosophy of private property, economic and social rights are clearly not on this agenda. These would include the right to decent food and shelter, the right to healthcare and education opportunities, and the right to work."

Similarly to Kareithi, in criticising the Western model of democracy, with particular reference to the United States of America (USA), Blum (2002:169) notes that

> "numerous pronouncements emanating from Washington officialdom over the years make plain that „democracy', at best, or at most, is equated solely with elections and civil liberties. Not even jobs, food and shelter are part of that equation."

Similarly, Carter and Stokes (2002:2) note that despite the general agreement on the political benefits of liberal democracy, "there is a widespread sense that its present institutions are not operating satisfactorily", this being based on the argument that liberal democracy's institutions "are unable to deliver reliably what citizens expect from any government, namely, a reasonable degree of social stability and economic security".

One major strand of liberalism is its regarding of "governing as the prerogative of an elite, with citizens playing a primarily passive role as voters" (Carter & Stokes, 2002: 1 – 2). This

strand is regarded by other theorists of democracy as inadequate. This came with the realisation that democratic political equality or extension of the franchise in Europe did not address "drastic inequalities" (Plant, 2002:250). There are a number of different types of democracy that will be briefly discussed next.

An alternative theory, the social democracy theory, which emerged in the latter part of the 19th century, advanced the view that

> "it is possible to extend democratic values into the social and economic domain to ensure that the economy and society actually serve democratic purposes such as greater social and economic equality, social justice and individual security" (Plant, 2002:249).

Another key idea informing social democracy is that "it is possible to use the power of government to achieve these goals" (Plant, 2002:249).

Another theory that argues that political representation is insuffiecient as a guarantee of democracy is "deliberative democracy". Deliberative democracy is informed by a view that while voting results in a decision, voting by itself provides no link between the decision and what each individual wants, either for oneself or for the collective (Warren, 2002:173). Theories of deliberative democracy emphasise that participation, not just by the elites, but all stakeholders, is as crucial as voting is.

Warren (2002:174) argues, for instance, that "democracy requires not only equality of votes, but also equal and effective opportunity to participate in processes of collective judgement". What this means, as Warren further points out, is that

> "deliberation about matters of common concern should not be restricted to political representatives, judges, media pundits, technocrats, and other elites, but should infuse a society so structured that it underwrites ongoing processes of public opinion-formation and judgement".

Also arguing for measures beyond the central institutions of liberal democracy is the theory of associative democracy (Carter, 2002:228). According to Carter, associative democracy seeks to promote individual freedom, social justice and political participation, which according to

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the theory of associative democracy is undermined by excessive reliance either on the state or on the market. Associative democracy advances the notion of decentralisation of state power, a transfer of state functions to citizen bodies and an extension of democracy to non-political spheres, in particular the workplace (Carter, 2002:228).

While arguing that organised groups can build associative democracy through providing policy-makers with necessary information on the interests of their members, and that voluntary bodies can be instruments of alternative governance by playing a role in developing and implementing policies and creating processes of communication and collaboration, associative democracy theorists recognise that "organised interest groups have often been seen as a threat both to democratic norms and the public welfare" (Carter, 2002: 232 – 233).

The discussion above about different types of democracy attests to Megwa's assertion that democracy is a contested term that is complex to define. The discussion also shows that this concept can be defined in ways that serve sectional interests, particularly those of the powerful elites. What emerges from the discussion about different types of democracy is a quest that seeks more than just "representation" by the elite, but "accountability" on the part of political representatives. Democratic accountability, as Dunn (1999:335) observes, is "best seen as a relation between the past acts of those who exercise power and their future liabilities". Its "core site", Dunn further observes, "is the degree to which our rulers, in a democracy, are effectively compelled to describe what they are doing while ruling us, and why they take this to be appropriate". As will be discussed later, one of the roles of the media is to help to keep the ruling elites accountable to the electorate.

Adding his voice against a "reductionist" approach to democracy, and with particular reference to the Western world, Pilger (2002:2) notes that the

> "undermining of the Bill of Rights in the United States and the further dismantling of trial by jury in Britain and a plethora of related civil liberties are part of the reduction of democracy to electoral ritual: that is, competition between indistinguishable parties for the management of a single-ideology state".

With regards to the discussion about democracy in isolation from the economic realm, Rønning (Berger, 2002:82) notes that the concept of democracy should, of necessity, include an economic component, and that discussion about this concept should have wider reference than solely a focus on the suffrage.

Adding his voice against the confinement and reduction of democracy to the Western model, Berger (2000:21) observes that

> "many writers (but not enough) have sounded warnings about lifting concepts like media and democracy from western conditions and applying them unthinkingly to Africa".

He further observes that the caveat against this reduction is informed by a "quest…for universally applicable concepts, which are relevant and explanatory for media and democracy in Africa".

Having noted that the concept of democracy is one which has a wide diversity of interpretations, Ansah (1988:13) points out that however democracy is defined, it implies accountability which is established through periodic elections. Meyer and Hinchman (2002:3) define democracy as "a system of institutions, a set of procedures for discussion and decision-making, and, in some cases, a path to certain outcomes". Roemer (1999:57) defines democracy as "a set of institutions and practices whose intention is to implement a certain kind of equal participation of citizens in the political process". Van Parijs (1999:193) defines democracy "not as government by the people (collectively) but as contestibility by the people (distributively) and therefore as intrinsically freedom-friendly if freedom is defined as the absence of arbitrary power". Dahl (1989:5) defines democracy as "a distinctive set of political institutions and practices, a particular body of rights, a social and economic order, a system that ensures certain desirable results, or a unique process of making collective and binding decisions". Recognising, as Dahl does, that democracy is a "process", not an event, Kasoma (1994b:11) notes that "genuine democracy is never ‚achieved', it is a constant struggle."

For the purposes of this study, the term "politics" will be understood as, though not limited to, a contestation for power between individuals or parties so as to exercise influence in societies.

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Democracy will be understood as processes that involve discussion, decision-making and accountability in public life.

Having defined the terms "politics" and "democracy", the next step is to review literature examining the political role of the media in general.

3.3 The political role of the media

Having noted that the "political" aspect of journalism is "probably the most critical", Berger (2002:81 – 82) defines journalism as "communication done on behalf of the public interest, by people who are relatively independent of special interests". This definition, according to Berger (2002:82) assumes, therefore, that "at root, journalism has a democratic thrust". The term "role" in this context is understood as referring to "a composite of occupational tasks and purposes that is widely recognizable and has a stable and enduring form" (Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng & White, 2009:119). The relationship between the media and politics is as old as when the print media came into being in the West and in Africa as well (McNair, 2000:19; Berkman & Kitch, 1986:1; Ainslie, 1966:21).

Some media scholars (Larsson, 2002:21; Tettey, 2001:5; 8; Berger, 2002:81; McNair, 2000:47; Traber, 1989:89; Ansah, 1988:12; Blumler, 1981:121) are of the view that politics and the media are two sides of the same coin. Larsson (2002:21) observes that one of the "central components of a functioning democracy is the reporting of politics and institutions by the news media". Tettey (2001:5; 8) regards the media and democracy as "symbiotically related" in that while in a democratic environment the press provides for citizens opportunities to influence the political process, democratic media also enable political leaders to be aware of the mood of society so that they can respond immediately.

McNair (2000:47) notes that the media are "important political actors themselves" and observes that the "media make statements about politics in their own right, in the form of commentaries, editorials and interview questions". Recognising as McNair does, that the media are political actors themselves, this role is welcomed by some and resented by others. Lilleker (2006:4) notes that the media's "role in society has been both attacked and defended by academics, politicians and journalists alike," these positions being informed by the view that the media are "too powerful" and promote agendas that can be contrary to pluralist democracy. Those who attack the media, Lilleker further points out, argue that "the media can fall under political control, and so weaken pluralism through offering a biased perspective".

Traber (1989:89) observes that news is – both nationally and internationally – "part of the political process". Ansah (1988:12) captures this point by noting that "it is pointless to isolate the issue of the media and discuss it outside the general political framework". The role of the media in democracy consists of "making appropriate political information and evaluation possible for all citizens" by depicting the political process "in all its diverse dimensions and facets" (Meyer & Hinchman, 2002:9). This means, therefore, that the media are expected to be catalysts in the democratic process (Traber, 1987:68). This role entails, according to Ungar (1995:371), providing "an effective forum for public debate, a mechanism for precious two-way communication between the people and their leaders". Ungar further points out that the press can, in fact, be "more effective than an opposition party in achieving change in an oppressive system".

At this point a question needs to be asked: Do mass media inherently serve democracy? Addressing himself to this question, Bogart (1995:1) observes that the fast and conventional answer to this question is in the affirmative. However, Bogart (1995:10) argues that the media do not inherently serve democracy but can play that role "only when those who manage them feel a passionate responsibility to create and maintain it".

He (Bogart, 1995:1 – 2) points out that a sober scrutinisation reveals that the media are vulnerable to manipulation by political authorities motivated by ideological zeal or crude self-interest, or by economic forces that limit the media's resources, variety and integrity. The media's quest to serve democracy can get compromised when politicians and media owners use their power to suppress the media in order to fulfil their personal gains (Bogart, 1995:5). This point – media ownership – will be returned to later in this chapter.

In as much as there is no single definition of the term "democracy", there is also no single type of democracy. Christians *et al* (2009:95 – 104) mention four models of democracy and the role the media are expected to play in such democracies. Next, these models will be mentioned, defined and the expectations of the roles of the media in such democracies stated.

- **The Pluralist Model of Democracy** – Pluralist democracy holds the view that individuals can most effectively assert their interests and preferences by coming together in the form of groups, small and large, that compete against one another in an

effort to find or forge mutually satisfying policies and programmes (Christians *et al*, 2009:96). In this set-up

> "journalism…promotes negotiation and facilitates the process of bargaining by amplifying agendas and by providing platforms for specialized analyses and commentaries" (Christians *et al*, 2009:98).

- **The Administrative Model of Democracy** – This model holds the view that ordinary citizens lack the interest and expertise to effectively govern themselves and, therefore, need an elite corps of popularly elected leaders whose dedication to public service ensures that matters of legislation and administration receive the serious and sustained attention they deserve (Christians *et al*, 2009:99). In this model of democracy, Christians *et al* (2009:100) observe that

> "rather than inform citizens about issues over which they have no direct and immediate control, journalism serves an administrative democracy by alerting the community to crises, especially ones involving corrupt or incompetent leaders".

Further, journalists, in an administrative democracy, are also expected to provide detailed accounts of campaign promises and platforms, especially during the months preceding a contested election.

- **The Civic Model of Democracy** – This model holds the view that citizens convey consent in a civic democracy through a distinctively "public judgment" that may or may not coincide with the sum of the private choices individuals make in a pluralist or administrative democracy (Christians *et al*, 2009:101). Known also as "public reasoning", "public judgment" denotes a political process through which citizens "defend and criticize institutions and programs in terms of considerations that others have reason to accept". In this model the role of journalism is to "find better ways of engaging readers…as citizens with a stake in the issues of the day" (Christians *et al*, 2009:102). The role of journalism is further seen as that of "promoting and indeed improving the quality of public life – and not merely reporting on and complaining about it".

- **The Direct Model of Democracy** – This model "takes self-government literally by accentuating unmediated involvement in public affairs" (Christians *et al*, 2009:103). In a direct democracy the role of journalism is to

> "serve the interests of the community, not the interests of journalists and their managers. The community, rather than market forces or even the newsroom itself, needs to be the final arbiter of journalism's quality and value."

The mentioning of the above four types of democracy does not mean that this study is bound by and confined to them. They are mentioned because they exist, and also because the role of journalism is described in written form. This study is conscious of Wiredu's (in Nyamnjoh, 2005a:35) call for the need to take into consideration traditional African democracy in political discourse. This type of democracy is referred to as "consensual democracy" (Nyamnjoh, 2005a:35). Adding his support for the examination of indigenous Africans' notion of democracy, Nyamnjoh (2005a: 27 – 28) notes that liberal democracy is inadequate in that, in its insistence on individualism, and African culture's emphasis on communalism, those Africans who subscribe to the communal aspect of African culture

> "are bound to be torn between serving their communities and serving the „imagined' rights-bearing, autonomous individual „citizen' of the liberal democratic model".

Nyamnjoh (2005a:26) asserts that the "future direction of democracy" may well be in a "marriage" of coexistence between individual aspirations and community interests. That is so, Nyamnjoh further argues, because "Africans continue to emphasise relationships and solidarities over the illusion of autonomy", and that, therefore,

> "[f]or democracy to succeed in this context, it must recognise the fact that most Africans are primarily patriotic to their home village, to which state and country in the modern sense are only secondary".

One can conclude that what Nyamnjoh is calling for, is a recognition of Africans' world-views.

3.4 Summary: Contextualising the political role of the media in a democracy

This section was concerned with reviewing the political role of the media in a democracy. It was pointed out that the term "politics" and "democracy" needed to be defined for contextual purposes. Democracy is a complex and contested term, and its definition has been to a great extent sensitive to the interests of the Western world. What democracy means and should mean to Africans was discussed. Next, attention is given to literature that examines the role of the media in a democracy informed by Afrocentric perspectives.

3.5 The role of African journalism in developing "African Consciousness"

There are a number of academics who, in reflecting on the role of the media in Africa, have called for taking into consideration African cultural values (Kareithi, 2005:14; Nyamnjoh, 2005b:40; Mphahlele, 2004:331; Moemeka & Kasoma, 1994:40; Kasoma, 1994b:9). This researcher (Sesanti, 2010:343; Sesanti, 2009a:221; Sesanti, 2009b:132) has also argued for this in a few articles.

Writing on the status of the media in South Africa ten years after the first democratic elections, Nyamnjoh (2005b:40) noted that although it was relatively too early to use the same yardsticks employed for the bulk of Africa in judging South Africa, whose freedom was only a decade old, it was worth noting that there was "concern about the slow pace of reform in media relations with the black majority in the „so-called *new* South Africa'". One of the "concerns" raised by Nyamnjoh was that increased black ownership and partnership in the media industry had not necessarily made newspapers "more representative of the concerns, interests and aspirations of Africans as cultural communities". In particular, Nyamnjoh (2005b:40) observed that the

> "ideas of *ubuntu* and Africanisation have yet to capture the creative imagination of the media and cultural industries beyond the tokenism with which we are all too familiar".

Arguing that greater presence of blacks in the media had not moved beyond "tokenism", Nyamnjoh pointed out that black faces in boardrooms and news had not resulted "in more or better coverage of black realities informed by their experiences, predicaments and philosophies of life". In other words, Nyamnjoh was arguing that in the first decade of democracy in South Africa, a distinctly Black or African Consciousness was missing in the content of the media. The quest for "Africanness" found expression beyond the confines of

journalism into the world of African writing. In the 1960s and early 1970s it was an "impulse to resist the cultural incorporation of African writing" and "has continued in projects aimed at the „decolonization' of African culture" (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2002:126). This quest rejected a "Eurocentric" thrust perceived as seeking to make African writers as "apprentice European[s] with no canons other than western ones to emulate" (Ashcroft *et al*, 2002:127). In calling for African consciousness in African literature, African writers "stressed the need to see African literature in relationship to the society which produced it, and to understand the unique characteristics and function of art in Africa" (Ashcroft *et al*, 2002:125).

In reflecting on the role of black journalists in a democratic South Africa, Mphahlele (2004:331) shares Nyamnjoh's concerns. According to Mphahlele, the role of black journalists should be to "[c]reate a cultural vision" and "help to develop an African consciousness". The creation of a "cultural vision" for Mphahlele means inculcating into the minds of black people that

> "although we have adopted Western systems of education, of technology, even the religion brought by our colonizers – in spite of this, we owe it to our sanity of mind to develop African ways of perceiving".

The development of "African consciousness", according to Mphahlele (2004:331) means that black journalists have a responsibility of "educating the reader about historical actions and discourse":

> "We should remind ourselves that several African countries were single vast tracts of land before the colonial masters carved up the continent, that in establishing boundaries they succeeded in cutting across unilingual populations."

What Mphahlele is advocating for is that black journalists in a democratic society have a responsibility of promoting African solidarity and a spirit of pan-Africanism. In echoing the importance of "African consciousness" on the part of African journalists, Moemeka and Kasoma (1994:40) argue that

> "African journalists…should strive to attain the virtuous life of a good man and woman according to African society before they try that of a good

journalist. After all, they belong to their society first and are journalists second."

What this means, according to Moemeka and Kasoma, is that African journalists' actions should be informed by their "customs, traditions, cultural norms and practices". It is worth noting that Moemeka and Kasoma's (1994:40) assertion that African journalists "belong to their society first and are journalists second" echoes a declaration by black journalists who, in the 1970s, inspired by the Black Consciousness philosophy, declared that they were "blacks first and journalists second" (Raubenheimer, 1991:102).

In post-apartheid South Africa, the "African first, and journalist second" discourse was revisited by Mbeki (2003a) in his address at a SANEF conference in 2003. Proceeding "from the assumption that you were African before you became journalists and that despite your profession, you were still Africans", Mbeki echoes Mphahlele about what "African consciousness" on the part of journalists should mean, and how this consciousness should influence the role of journalists in post-apartheid South Africa. Mbeki asserts that African consciousness on the part of journalists means that journalism should promote interconnectedness among Africans, that is, journalists should get Africans to know one another so as to promote "African unity".

This assertion comes against Mbeki's observation that when South African exiles returned in 1990 after the unbanning of liberation movements,

> "we realised how little many of our people knew about the rest of our continent. Over many years we had absorbed an image of the African continent projected by a media that was relentlessly contemptuous of many things African."

As a result of this "contemptuous" media, Mbeki (2003a) observes that "a feeling of superiority towards other Africans even among the oppressed in our country" was "encouraged".

For Kareithi (2005:14), African consciousness means "a departure from the kind of news values common in the Western tradition which routinely privilege economic, political and intellectual elites". Instead, Kareithi further argues,

>"the African press should train future journalists to emphasise stories of interest to their community of audiences rather than those that promote the financial interest of the institutions for which the journalists work".

There are two points made by Kareithi that need further interrogation. The first is his call for a "departure from the kind of news values common in the Western tradition". The second is his call for journalists to serve "community". These questions arise as a result of his assertion: What is the alternative to "news values common in the Western tradition", and what is meant by "community" in the African traditional sense?

3.5.1 An alternative to Western news values

Before exploring Kareithi's alternative model, it is appropriate to first re-visit the Western news values that Kareithi opposes. According to the Western tradition newsworthiness is, among other things, determined by the following: timeliness, proximity – both geographical and psychological – prominence, peculiarity, conflict and human interest. Determining newsworthiness in the Western traditional approach can be inappropriate for Africa (Ansah, 1990:35). In particular, Ansah (1990:33) identifies three news values that he regards as inappropriate for African development. These are: timeliness, prominence and negativity.

- **Timeliness** – the emphasis on timeliness reveals an approach to news as a perishable merchandise with a monetary value (Ansah, 1990:34). According to Ansah (1990:35) the problem with this approach is that news become an event-driven exercise, as opposed to a process-driven one. For developing countries like those of Africa, over-emphasis on events deprives consumers of an opportunity to make sense of complex political issues.

- **Prominence** – the emphasis on prominence means the privileging of the political, social and economic elites of societies in the media (Ansah, 1990:33). Martin and Chaudhary (1983:3) note that "News of the elite (i.e., of important people) is generally given preference by all editors". In the Western context, such selection is based on the assumption that the elite are known to larger segments of the audience, and therefore news about them is of more general interest (Martin & Chaudhary, 1983:3 – 4).

On the African continent, where many people are poor, this means the negligence of their stories by the media. Such negligence, Traber (1987:69) argues, gives focus on prominence an anti-democratic edge, in that the poor are marginalised while the elite of society are given attention. It is against this background that Kareithi (2005:14) argues for an approach which "calls for a departure from the kind of news values common in the Western tradition which routinely privilege economic, political and intellectual elites". Kareithi's assertion is echoed by Nyamnjoh (2005b:47) who argues that the "duty" of African journalists is "not to lecture fellow Africans from the insensitive pulpits of power and prejudice". Rather, Nyamnjoh points out, the role of African journalists should be to be the eyes and noses of the people, "carefully observing and documenting the lives of ordinary people in ways that are really of service to them and their priorities in life". This might call, Nyamnjoh further observes, from time to time, for "breaks with traditions and received wisdom on how journalism should or should not be practised".

Nyamnjoh's call for breaks with "traditions and received wisdom" is a rejection of a Western-inspired approach to journalism and a call to African journalists to infuse their journalism with African cultural values.

- **Negativity** – The emphasis on negative news in "the West… is thought to be of greater interest than positive news", the rationale being that "the West expects progress; hence failure is newsworthy because it is an aberration, an unusual situation" (Martin & Chaudhary, 1983:5). Martin and Chaudhary (1983:6) further point out that the press' interest in negative news is motivated by the belief that publication of negative news by the press "promotes dissatisfaction and therefore interest in more news (i.e., reports of change) in the hope that there will be a change for the better".

For those who advocate a developmental role for the media in Africa, "negative news" means "information that may tend to undermine national integration and solidarity or retard economic and social progress" (Ansah, 1990:34). Boateng (1999:388 – 9) protests against a "dominating culture of news processing in the Western media, in which good news has very little value". Boateng further observes that while such negative news may not be inaccurate, the lack of positive news "has resulted in the indelibly negative projection of a depraved continent and masses of various national citizens with a very low self-esteem".

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Having made the above observations, the next point to consider is Kareithi's proposed alternative. Kareithi (2005:12) asserts that "[w]hat Africa needs is an „articulation model' of the press". Such a model, he further points out, "would combine the ethical journalistic considerations of accuracy and fairness and the right of the public to know". Its difference from other models is that it would be "linked to the institutions of civil society – not outside of them, but an intrinsic part of their functioning". Kareithi's (2005:12) articulation model "emphasises group and societal values rather than focusing on the individualisms promoted by a fetishistic market-led press". His proposed model of the press "de-emphasises the packaging of public information as a commodity for sale" and "calls for an approach to journalism that emphasises community values over individualism". The latter assertion leads to the second issue: the meaning of the concept of "community" from an African traditional perspective and its implications for journalism.

3.5.2 The meaning of "community" in the African traditional sense and its implications for journalism

The concept "community values" according to Kareithi (2005:13) refers to Africans' traditional beliefs in the importance of "social units like family, clan and ethnic groups from which many Africans still draw their identities". The belief in the unity of these units means, for Kareithi (2005:13), a rejection of "individualism". In order to be able to understand Kareithi's strong opposition, it is necessary to understand what is meant by the concept of "community" according to African traditional beliefs. In African culture, the concept of community consists of the living, the dead, and those yet unborn (Kasoma, 1996:102; Richards, 1996:212; Kamalu, 1990:157). Those who have passed on are regarded as an integral part of the community in the belief that "the spirits of the dead have bodies too but that these bodies are spiritual and not physical" (Kasoma, 1996:103).

Reflecting on the meaning of the "community" in the context of African culture, Kasoma (1994a:26 – 27) observes that "a good action is one that is performed for the benefit or service of other persons". That is because

> "[f]or the African, it is the survival of the family, clan and community that matters more than that of the individual. The individual is important only in so far as he or she is part of the family, clan or community. A good person is one who gears all his or her actions to the preservation and well-being of the

family, clan and community…A bad person is one whose actions are motivated by personal gain to the exclusion of or, worse still, elimination of the family or ethnic group."

Kasoma (1994a:27) is conscious that the above assertion could be misconstrued or misunderstood as a suggestion that "Africans do not hold individual rights dear". On the "contrary", he argues that "there are many practices in African society which attest to the very high regard Africans have for the individual". Among these is the "almost godly reverence for the dead" that Africans have. The "elaborate funeral rites" that Africans conduct "are intended to show that the living hold the departed person as a valued member of their community, one whose worth does not end with their [sic] death" (Kasoma, 1997:27).

Conceptualising this African approach as the "philosophy of collectivism", Kamalu (1990:26) notes that

> "[t]his form of collectivism recognises individuality. The individual in African society, being aware of the African notion of collective moral responsibility takes his individual moral responsibility all the more seriously; for his actions will have consequences not only for himself but for his community."

What this means, therefore, is that while African culture recognises and embraces individuality (uniqueness of the individual), it rejects individualism – the notion that an individual is responsible for him/herself and does what s/he wishes irrespective of the concerns of his/her community. Against this background, Kasoma (1994b:9) argues that

> "African journalists must look to their moral philosophy for those principles and values which will raise African journalism to a more acceptable ethical or moral level than has been the case during much of the post-colonial era."

3.6 Summary: African Cultural Consciousness

This section has reviewed literature discussing the role of African culture in journalism, and the role of journalism in African culture. Scholars argued that African values such as communalism, as opposed to Western individualism, should inform the approach of African journalists to their profession. What this means is that the scholars argued that African journalism should be driven by African consciousness. Among other things "African

consciousness" means that African journalists should consider themselves Africans first, and journalists second. It was observed that this call was reminiscent of the 1970s in South Africa when black journalists imbued with Black Consciousness asserted that they were blacks first, and journalists second (Raubenheimer, 1991:102). Calls for the infusion of African cultural values have posed challenges of their own for journalism practice. These challenges are discussed next.

3.7 African culture and journalism – negative implications

While some African scholars have called for African consciousness in journalism practice, other media scholars' writings (Rooney, 2007:213; Tomaselli, 2009:6; Tomaselli, 2003:432; Musalika, 1994:155; Okigbo, 1994:77; Wilcox, 1977:35 – 36) on journalism practice in Africa have noted that calls for infusing journalism with African culture have had negative implications for journalism on the continent.

The scholars argue that the concept of "respect" in African culture promotes an obeisant and acquiescent behaviour among its practitioners, in general, and an uncritical attitude in journalists, in particular (Rooney, 2007:213; Tomaselli, 2003:432; Wilcox, 1977:35 – 36). In line with this assumption, Musalika (1994:155) asserts that "[p]robably one of the worst practices of African culture is the excessive respect without questioning bestowed on elders and those holding power". Noting that "[t]raditionally, it would be grossly indecent and unpardonably rude to show disrespect to an elder statesman in the name of „joumalistic objectivity'", Okigbo (1994:77) contends that

> "[s]uch a cultural practice can lead to serious ethical problems as young reporters battle with their consciences on how to present negative news reports about community elders".

Rooney (2007:213) observes that in a society like Swaziland, where informal education "centres on the home and community where children are taught to respect and recognise their elders", this African emphasis on "respect and deference does not encourage a questioning attitude in people". Consequently, critical thinking – a necessary tool for all journalists –

> "is a difficult task as Swazi journalism does not engage with power or confront established thinkers and yet it is journalists who challenge the people who produce and reproduce conventional wisdom" (Rooney, 2007:218).

In his interaction with Swazi journalism students, Tomaselli (2003:432) encountered the same experience where students argued that to question authorities is alien to African culture.

The claim that African culture frowns upon dissent towards authority is disputed by Ansah (1988: 4 – 5). Ansah contends that "[e]ven the king or chief was subject to laws, and failure to abide by them could entail his de-stoolment or removal from office". According to Ansah (1988:5), if Africa's record in terms of respect for human rights is a

> "dismal one, this cannot be properly attributed to the assumption that Africans have a completely different conception of human rights from that of the Western societies".

Ansah further points out that reasons for poor performance on human rights in Africa have to be sought "elsewhere, but certainly not in African cultural and political traditions". Ansah further points out that in traditional African society, freedom of expression is recognised as a "fundamental right where consensus was given a high premium, and this was based on the free expression of opinion". Similar to Ansah's assertion, Williams (1987:168) notes that being a "king" or "chief" in African societies meant being "the mouthpiece of the people and the instrument for carrying out their will".

William's assertion is confirmed by Davidson (1994:36) who observes that among the people known as the Zanj, on the East African coast, the Africans gave the title "Waqlimi" which means "supreme lord" to their king "because he has been chosen to govern them with equity". Significantly, Davidson further observes that

> "once he [the king] becomes tyrannical and departs from the rules of justice, they cause him to die and exclude his posterity from succession to the throne, for they claim that in behaving thus he ceases to be the son of the Master, that is to say, of the king of heaven and earth."

These accounts by Willliams and Davidson are an indication that Africans were intolerant to injustice. Not even a king was spared from the sword if he deviated from principles of justice. That is because, as Davidson (1994:21 – 22) notes, in the inner African tradition, kings

"could not be divine no matter how much ordinary mortals might humble themselves in the dust when approaching the royal presence. What was divine in African belief was their spiritual authority. They would die but that could not."

Reflecting on the Akan experience in Ghana, Busia (in Ansah, 1988:5) observes that the

"members of a traditional council allowed discussion, and free and frank discussion of opinions, and if there was disagreement, they spent hours, even days if necessary, to argue and exchange ideas till they reached unanimity."

Busia's observation is not uniquely Akan but a traditional African practice. As Kasoma (1994a:28) for instance notes, "the reason why Africans often hold what appear to be endless discussions until they reach agreement" is that the long discussions are meant to give each member of the community a say, even if it means merely repeating what others have already said. If there is disagreement, Kasoma further notes, Africans are known to spend hours and even days in reaching consensus. Sachs (1996:155), has accurately observed that "consensus seeking…is very powerful in African culture".

One can thus state that African consensus did not and does not mean absence of criticism or disagreement. Rather, as Sachs (1996:154) correctly observes,

"the African style would be to acknowledge the right of the person you are going to criticize to express their point of view, to acknowledge the good points of what they have to say, and only then to continue with the critique".

Those entrusted with alerting the nation to the rulers' deviation were iimbongi (in isiXhosa) or izimbongi (in isiZulu). These Nguni terms have been loosely and misleadingly translated into English as "praise-singers". Imibongo, which Kunene (1984:xxix – xxx) notes "have been wrongly described as praise poems," have in traditional African societies done "more than praise" and are more complex…

"Rather, they project an ethical system beyond the individual. Thus, individuals are heroes so long as they fulfil the roles defined for them by society. If they become arrogant and disrespectful of elders (guardians of

social order) they are mercilessly lampooned and demoted…The greatest exponents of this social doctrine are the poets whose freedom of speech is jealously guarded by society."

As Chinweizu (1999:364) notes, in traditional African societies, poets "informed, advised, admonished" prince and populace alike, inviting them to righteous living. In traditional African societies, as Dandala (1996:76) observes, iimbongi, were "accountable not to the incumbent chief, but to the ancestors". The ancestors' wisdom stressed the importance of justice, as pointed out above. Significantly, Dandala (1996:77) notes that iimbongi's role "is to be the official reader of the context of the governance of the chief, similar to today's journalists". Taking a cue from Dandala, the interpretation of this observation can be that journalists, from an African cultural perspective, are expected to be critical of power.

Williams (1987:165) notes that the African philosophy that accorded deference to elders was based upon the assumption that "all other things being equal, those who were living in the world and experiencing life before others were born should know more than these others". Echoing this point, Kasoma (1996:104) notes that in African communities counselling is usually done by elders, who, because of their wide experience in life, are looked up to as being wiser than the younger members of the community. However, this attitude and approach was not absolute. As Mthembu (1996:224) correctly observes, "[a]dults and children respect each other". As Kasoma (1996:104) further observes,

> "[w]hen it is elders who are going wrong and there are no age mates to advise them, there is also room for young people to advise elders provided proper etiquette is followed".

What this means, therefore, is that if adults deviated from communal norms, young ones could sensitise them to this.

African traditions demanded respect for the young ones of the society in the belief that since they are "physically weak and vulnerable", they needed "special attention, care, and indeed respect" (Traber, 1987:67). Therefore, historically, in African culture, respect was not exclusively reserved for the powerful elders – it was also accorded to the physically weak and vulnerable.

Hence, "children are taught from young age that they must refer to anyone who is the same age as their father/mother as <u>father</u>/<u>mother</u>, and never to call such people by their names as this would be considered disrespectful" (Kamwangamalu, 1999:28). What this means, as Sachs (1996:148) observes, is that traditional African society placed a great emphasis on "community interaction, on mutual solidarity and support, and on trying to achieve consensus wherever possible". If a person refused to conform to the prescribed standards, s/he would be referred to as "*akamntu wamntu*", a Nguni expression meaning "not part of the community/not human" (Mthembu, 1996:220).

Cognisant of this background, this researcher (Sesanti, 2010:344) argues that the concept of respect in the context of African culture has been misconstrued by the African elite, and consequently misunderstood by both academics and students who have commented on it. Elsewhere, this researcher (Sesanti, 2009:14) also points out that years of colonial rule in South Africa ensured that to a great extent black Africans were alienated from their culture, and as a result became ignorant of its tenets. This condition rendered open an environment where many could make claims in the name of African culture without facing a challenge.

3.8 Summary – negative implications for African culture in the context of journalism practice

In this section it was pointed out that some scholars have argued that the concept of respect in African culture is inimical to journalism practice. That is because, the scholars argued, African culture promotes acquiescence in the face of power. However, it was also argued by this researcher that years of colonial rule ensured that African culture was distorted by the African elite for their own selfish ends.

The next session considers recommendations made that African journalism should play a role in promoting a consciousness of African history through the media.

3.9 The need for the media to promote a consciousness of African history

There are at least two roles that the media have played in Africa – aiding colonialism and resisting colonialism (Ainslie, 1966:19; Banda, 2007:73; Musa, 2009:35 – 37). In the first instance, the "media were seen as direct accomplices" of the European colonialists in the same way as "other dominant contemporary societal institutions, such as the colonial police, judiciary and civil service" were perceived by oppressed Africans (Musa, 2009:37). In the

second instance, the media were used by African nationalists in their struggle against colonialism (Musa, 2009:38).

Against this background, Netshitenzhe (1999:382) asserts that it is critical in the democratic South Africa for the media "to ensure that the ideas and values which inspired the forces that brought about the liberation become the dominant ideas in each of our countries and on the continent". This sentiment is shared by Ngwenya (1999:15) who notes that black journalists' agenda in the democratic South Africa "is very much influenced by the liberation project, along with its deviations, setbacks and breakthroughs". Ngwenya's continuation of "the liberation project" means "a transition from armed conflict to an arena of policy warfare". In this arena, Ngwenya observes, "many black people appeared disinterested or ill-equipped, if not too politically fatigued to fight on". What Ngwenya envisages in this regard is that the role of black journalists should be to help black people understand the critical need to engage with policy formulation exercises.

Black journalists, according to Ngwenya (1999:15), need to make black people aware of the "avenues and platforms where the country's national agenda is being contested and settled, and become factors rather than eternally aggrieved absentees". For Netshitenzhe, the liberation project entails that "African journalists, whatever their political affiliation, should become passionate advocates of Africa's renewal". Here, Netshitenzhe is referring to the African Renaissance project which had defined the trajectory of the democratic government led by Nelson Mandela's successor, Thabo Mbeki. There was a feeling in government circles that the media was apathetic towards "being part of the African Renaissance" (Ngwenya, 2001:8).

Nyamnjoh (2005b:32) argues that in dealing with post-colonial issues, African journalists must "put things in historical context, even when speaking as journalists whose focus is usually the current situation and events". Nyamnjoh (2005b:33) advances this argument against the observation that "former colonial masters" tend

> "to wipe clean the colonial blackboard of excesses and high-handedness, not through reparations but by sheer rhetoric and exaggeration of the degree to which African states are really independent actors, nationally and in global affairs".

The point that Nyamnjoh is making is that African journalists, while not defending dictatorial tendencies pushed by post-colonial governments must not embrace former colonial masters' self-exoneration. That is because, Nyamnjoh further argues, post-colonial African leaders inherited oppressive laws and systems from their colonialists. In arguing that "Africans cannot afford to ignore their histories of collective devaluation and deprivation", Nyamnjoh points out that this is a "call for journalists and scholars to put things into historical context" and "indeed for critical attention to the convergences and divergences between the past and present in media-state relations". Historical context is important to Nyamnjoh (2005b:33 because "[j]ust as it is dangerous to blame everything on the past, it is equally dangerous to deny the power of the past in shaping the present". In this regard, Mphahlele (2004:331) notes that the duty of black journalists is to "remind one another that independence was not a gift from heaven. It was the result of purposeful struggle..." What this means is that black journalists should inculcate in the minds of black people that they should be assertive in their newly-found state of freedom and not behave as if they are grateful to anyone for their freedom.

3.10 Summary: Media's role in promoting consciousness of African history

This section reviewed media scholars', intellectuals' and journalists' writings on the role of the media in promoting consciousness of African history. In dealing with the successes and failures of the African continent, journalists must situate their analysis in a historical context. A point was made also that since journalists are not apart from but part of society, they must play their role in advancing the aspirations of the African continent.

The next point to be discussed is media ownership in Africa.

3.11 Media ownership and its enabling and constraining factor on the media's role in democracy

In Chapter 4 – on Theoretical Frameworks – this study will discuss the assertions of Political Economy of the media, which argues that the contents and meanings carried by the media reflect the interests of those who finance the production of the media contents – not just media owners, but advertisers as well (Boyd-Barrett, 2006:186; McChesney, 2004:3; 1998:3; Curran, 2000:73; MacGregor, 1997:48; Altschull, 1997:259; Curran, Gurevitch, & Woollacott, 1982:19). The Political Economy theories of the media oppose the Liberal-Pluralists' assertions observing that the "marketplace model is a truly democratic approach to accountability" in the assumption that "the people, speaking clearly through the market,

determine to a great degree the content of the media" (Merrill, 1989:15). The issue addressed in this section – media ownership – will also be given attention to as part of theoretical frameworks in Chapter 4.

This study does not just discuss theoretical issues in relation to media ownership and media content in Chapter 4, but in Chapter 2 it also discusses concrete examples such as the implications media ownership have had in the operations of the South African media. This was done with particular reference to the *Sowetan* and the *City Press* (Vosloo, 2010; Diederichs & de Beer, 1998:101; Mabote, 1996a:323).

This section reviews literature examining media ownership implications for the political role of the media in democracy in Africa (Nyamnjoh, 2004:129; Hydén & Okigbo, 2002:49; Tomaselli, 2002:129; Rønning & Kupe, 2000:157; Kasoma, 1996:101; Rønning, 1994:3). The dominant perspective that emerges from this review is that neither government nor capital ownership of the media is a guarantor of a democratic role for the media. Nyamnjoh (2004:128), for instance, in arguing that neither the African states nor the market ownership of the media has afforded Africans democracy, points out that "the media in Africa are effectively controlled by government and capital, who are both keen to feed the public with nothing subversive to their interests and power".

Rønning (1994:3) observes that the problem with the debate over the role of the media in the democratic process in Africa is that too much emphasis has been put on the role of the state. This is a result of many years of strict government control of the media, "often in the form of direct ownership". As a result of this over-emphasis on government control of the media, Rønning notes that the "problematic role of the market in relation to the media has been underplayed". The consequence of the underplaying of the role of the market, Rønning asserts, is that "too little attention has been paid to a discussion of the media in relation to citizens' rights". Citizens' rights, in the context discussed by Rønning, become, as Nyamnjoh (2004:129) also observes, "peripheral". While to a great extent the media in the greater part of the African continent are owned and controlled by governments, in South Africa the most "significant aspect of the media sector is the dominance of corporate capital" (Tomaselli, 2002:129).

By the end of the 1990s, after (not necessarily because) blacks had bought some stake in the media, Tomaselli (2002:148) observes that "all English-language papers, some now with

black editors, began to reinvigorate themselves". This was in terms of broader "political, economic, and identity issues". Tomaselli notes that news was indeed becoming "national", that is, addressing all the country's citizens, in a way that was "non-racial" and "multi-cultural". Specifically, Tomaselli (2002:148) notes that

> "[f]or the first time black people and stories about blacks began to appear with regularity and with much greater representativity than had previously occurred in mainly white-read news media".

Nyamnjoh (2004:125), however, does not share Tomaselli's optimism. He notes that in South Africa, where freedom was achieved in 1994, "the press is yet to break free of its past record of black debasement". He further notes that although

> "the end of apartheid has led to some degree of black ownership and partnership in the press, this has not made the newspapers more representative of South African society".

Nyamnjoh (2004:125) further observes that newspapers "are yet to develop a more comprehensive news formula that articulates mainstream black interests and aspirations".

While in South Africa media ownership is characterised by private ownership, in other African countries media ownership is both private and public, that is, state-owned (Rønning & Kupe, 2000:157). The consequences of post-colonial government takeover of the media, with particular reference to Zimbabwe, according to Rønning and Kupe (2000:158), was that

> "the news media developed into praise-singers for the party and their leader in the name of national unity, and their agenda consisted of an emphasis on development journalism in its most uncritical form".

Hydén and Okigbo (2002:49) note that the ownership of the media by individual tycoons directly involved in political life contributed to the media's failure in promoting democracy. This ownership pattern, Hydén and Okigbo further note, resulted in the media becoming the "mouthpieces of the agenda of these particular individuals rather than serving the interests of a wider public". In Kasoma's (1996:101) observation, such acts by journalists are misuse of press freedom and abuse of democracy. Onadipe and Lord (in Tettey, 2006:240) echoes

Hydén and Okigbo's observation by noting that some African journalists are on record as having stated that "if your paper is owned by a politician then you are expected to toe the line". This is alluded to by Rønning (2009:164) as well in noting that the media's efforts in entrenching democracy and fighting corruption can be impeded when the media are controlled by "strong and often fraudulent business interests".

3.12 Summary: Media Ownership

This section reviewed literature examining the implications of media ownership for journalism practice. It was pointed out that in the South African case the print media is privately owned and that ownership implications in the South African case were discussed in Chapter 2. While this is the case, implications of black ownership of the media in South Africa were discussed. Bearing in mind that Chapter 4 discusses ownership of the media widely, this chapter discussed ownership of the media with specific reference to Africa. It was pointed out that both state-owned and privately-owned media were compelled to live up to the expectations of their owners.

In the next section attention is given to the roles expected of the media in post-apartheid South Africa and the rest of the African continent.

3.13 The role of the media in "nation building", "national development" and the "national interest"

As pointed out above, when apartheid was dismantled in South Africa, the new government, headed by the ANC, expected the media to play a role in "nation-building", "national development", and "national interest" (Wasserman & de Beer, 2006:68 – 70; Fourie, 2002:34). These concepts have different meanings for different people. Their relationship with the media and how the media were expected to play a role in advancing them will be examined as part of the literature review in this section.

3.13.1 Nation Building

The concept "nation-building" means different things to different people and can, therefore, be defined in different ways. Brinkel (2006:18) defines nation-building as a "project of establishing ties among the citizens of a state oriented towards the relations between state and citizens". These citizens, Brinkel further observes, "may belong to one or sometimes more cultural communites…but they all share citizenship of one state". Nation-building can also be

defined as a process that is "undertaken either to bring peace or to reconstruct a society badly damaged by internal conflict" (Jenkins & Plowden, 2006:1).

The need for media support for African governments has been identified in cases where newly independent African countries inherited bitter feelings and hatred as a result of wars during the struggle for freedom (Ziegler & Asante, 1992:36). In such cases the media were called upon to play the role of supporting what has been referred to in some African countries as "nation-building" and "national reconciliation". When South Africa attained democracy in 1994, one of the government's first prioritised objectives was to reconcile blacks and whites and fuse the two into one South African non-racial nation. In the new South Africa, the government expected black journalists to play a role in nation-building (Media on the menu, 1996:8).

It appears, though, that the South African government, or at least, the Head of State, Nelson Mandela, did not expect criticism in this regard. When criticism emerged from amongst senior black journalists, Mandela singled out some for, in his words, "making it difficult for us in promoting reconciliation without which we would not have had peaceful transformation" (Media on the menu, 1996:47). The appeal to the media in Africa to play a role in nation-building is not uniquely South African. Such calls have been made in other African countries as well. On this point, Ziegler and Asante (1992:35) point out that such calls were made against the legacy of colonialism. Citing Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique and Namibia, Ziegler and Asante note that at independence in these countries there was "no concept of nation".

The wars of independence in these countries "left bitter feelings of hatred in the hearts of some people" (Musarurwa in Ziegler & Asante, 1992:35). In other African countries ethnic consciousness dominated national consciousness. According to Ziegler and Asante (1992:36) in this regard African journalists were required to be "sensitive and responsive" to "national problems". Without nation-building, African politicians saw little hope of national development. There was an expectation that the media should play a role in national development which is discussed next.

3.13.2 National Development

The concept "development" is, according to Prah (2006:178) "generally understood to embrace the idea of advancement in all areas of social life, but particularly in an economic

sense". It also means, "in the minds of the general citizenry, that choice and desired consumer items are not only available, but within the purchasing power of the larger classes" (Prah, 2006: 177 – 178). According to Rodney (1982:3) at the level of the individual, development "implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility, and material well-being". At the level of social groups, Rodney further points out, it "implies an increasing capacity to regulate both internal and external relationships".

The 1960s, a period that saw the gaining of independence from colonial powers, was for many a period of "great hope and expectation in Africa" (Odhiambo, 1991:20). During that period, the path of Africa's "bright future seemed clear and well-defined", the objective being to "regain lost glory and enter a new age of restoration and cultural Renaissance" (Odhiambo, 1991:21).

At this point in history, Odhiambo notes that the continent's intellectual and political leadership was in agreement that Africa's emancipation was predicated on rapid socio-economic development. Thus, Odhiambo further observes, "development became the historical organic ideology, or the organising principle, for social policy and programmes". Against this background, development "was historically necessary given the prevailing structures of post-colonial backwardness and poverty". The media was expected to play a role in the development project.

Considering that some former colonialists left some African countries "woefully illiterate", Ziegler and Asante (1992:35 – 36) argue that the political role of the press in post-colonial Africa should be to assist new African governments in meeting challenges that arose following the attainment of independence. They note, for instance, that when the Belgians left Zaire, they left a nation in which no more than twenty individuals had a college education. In the case of Mozambique, the Portuguese "dismantled infra-structure of Mozambique as rapidly as they could, taking with them even the design of the sewerage of Maputo". However, Ziegler and Asante (1992:39) point out that support for the "government does not mean absolute agreement with all policies of the government" but that such support does "include criticism of the state".

Development journalism designates the journalistic activity of gathering news with a view to satisfying the needs of a country's population with specific reference to development and is "invariably positive in its disclosure" (Ngugi, 1995:8). In defining "development news",

Ansah (1990:34) observes that such entails information on how to achieve specific development objectives and actual achievements. These reports may entail the building of new schools, hospitals, bridges and roads as well as political education and agricultural development (Ziegler & Asante, 1992:37).   Qualifying news as "developmental" is an indication that developmental journalism sets it apart from other forms of journalism.

The birth of developmental journalism was the recognition of a nation's need for economic development and as such "required reporters and editors capable of understanding and transmitting increasingly complex economic, scientific, and related information" (Sussman, 1978:76). While Sussman (1978:77) concedes that developmental journalism "began as an inspiration of professional journalists, not government information directors", he contends that for developmental journalism to succeed, "governments must control the mass media in the name of economic development". That is because, Sussman argues, "[o]nly the government is responsible for, and can assure [sic], the proper use of communication for this purpose".

Sussman's contention indicates that there was no uniformity of approach in developmental journalism's school of thought. His approach, as he himself notes, was "distinct from the earlier development journalism, which was essentially non-governmental in origin and practice".

Against this background, some believe that given the developmental role of information dissemination, and in the light of Africa's political and social problems, positive news should be stressed and negative news played down or not reported at all (Ansah, 1990:34). While Ansah does not reject the aspect of "positiveness" as a characteristic of developmental journalism or news, he warns that the stressing of positive news should not be confused with or mean the playing down or complete concealment of negative news. Ansah (1990:34) observes that development is not the same as turning a blind eye on African governments' failures in the achievement of national objectives. He contends that failure to expose governments' shortcomings will "breed cynicism in the audience…and undermine the credibility of the media". While recognising the need for exposing governments' wrongs, Ansah (1990:34) issues a caveat:

> "Failures and setbacks should surely not be played up in the way it is
> done by the foreign media which thrive on coups, earthquakes and

crises in Third World countries as their regular stock-in-trade, but they should not be glossed over either."

Other than playing a role in national development, the media in Africa have been expected to play a role in promoting the national interest, an issue that is discussed next.

3.13.4 The National Interest

The concept "national interest" is according to Adar (2002:102) used in at least two different senses. It refers, in the first usage, to "the goals or objectives of a state's foreign policy". In the second usage, "national interest can be used as a justification for any state policy" (Adar, 2002:103). Similarly, Burchill (2005:26) notes that the concept "national interest" is employed in two related ways, the first being "to describe, justify or oppose foreign policy, and secondly, as an analytical tool for assessing and explaining the external behaviour of nation-states". The debate regarding whether or not the media in South Africa should serve the national interest surfaced between the years 2000 and 2003 (Mak'Ochieng, 2006:1; Fourie, 2002:18). Fourie (2002:28) notes that in the year 2000 government officials and cabinet ministers increasingly claimed that the media did not support development plans and ideals, and thus were not serving the national interest.

While the government saw the need for the media to serve the national interest, there was no consensus in the media fraternity, firstly about what the concept meant, and secondly, on whether or not the media should serve the national interest (Mak'Ochieng, 2006:14). Those who opposed the notion of the media serving the national interest cited the following reasons (Mak'Ochieng, 2006:5 – 6):

- In apartheid South Africa the government invoked the national interest in pursuit of its apartheid policies.
- Governments do not necessarily serve the national interest but sectional interests.
- The interests of the state can be presented as being in the national interest but not in the public interest.

Those in favour of the media serving the national interest – but in a critical manner – argued that the national interest entailed:

- Fighting poverty and the instability that poverty entailed.

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- Building people's capacity to know their rights and to exercise them as the country's citizens (Mak'Ochieng, 2006:5 – 6).

Recognising the need for the media to serve the public interest in a democratic society, Netshitenzhe (2002a) argues that the media have a role in defining and promoting the national interest, further pointing out that a genuine national interest in a democracy cannot of necessity be contradictory to the public interest. Recognising that national and public interest are distinguishable, Netshitenzhe (2002a) further points out that the two "can and do coincide; they can and should be in fact be complementary, specifically under conditions of abiding democracy and a culture of human rights". The reason that Netshitenzhe (2002a) puts forward for the convergence of national and public interest is that democratic governments do not exist for themselves but to serve society which gave them the mandate to rule.

While legitimate [democratic] states have been given the mandate to define the national interest, Netshitenzhe (2002b) argues that the governed have a right to contribute on how they should be governed – and that is where the media come in – to serve as platforms in engaging the government.

In response to those who argue that it could be in the public interest to expose corruption in the government, but not in the national interest, Netshitenzhe (2002a) argues that "there is no reason why it should not be in the national interest or even a truly democratic government's interest to expose corruption". For the record, Netshitenzhe (2002b) understands that "public interest" means to "represent the interests of the aggregate collective of citizens – independent of state institutions". On the other hand, Netshitenzhe (2002b) defines the national interest as a "sixth sense" of the state which "cannot be decreed in statutes" but whose starting point, in the South African context, is the constitution.

Tsedu (in Mak'Ochieng, 2006:7) echoes Netshitenzhe when he notes that the serving of the public interest by the media does not always mean serving everyone's interest, but those of well-organised and vociferous groups of people. In a similar vein to Tsedu's point, Tettey (2006:233) notes that the notion of the media serving the public interest implies "the responsibility of protecting and upholding the values on which the society is built". Tettey elucidates this assertion by noting that this "assignment of responsibility comes with expectations that the media will go about performing their functions in a manner that is consistent with the ideals and values of societies in which they operate". Even the serving of

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what is understood as the public is not without being problematic. Tettey (2006:233) asks, for instance, what happens when the "ideals and values of society in which (the media) operate" are not consistent with democratic ideals?

In cases such as when publics served by the media have anti-democratic inclinations, Haas and Steiner's (2003:39) observation give a sense of direction. They note that journalists should be "required to expose…specific articulations of racism, homophobia, sexism, and religious intolerance as such, *even if these apparently represent dominant community values*" (researcher's italics). This means that the notion of serving the public interest should neither be confused with nor reduced to the media playing a conformist role but a critical one.

Discussing the question of "who decides whether news is, or is not, in the national interest", Moemeka and Kasoma (1994:48) point out that such "power should belong to journalists and not politicians", adding that when "journalists surrender this right, the press is not free". Kasoma (1994a:30) further observes that the issue of the national interest had been used in other parts of the African continent by politicians whose agenda had been to protect their own interest. A "good example of imposed journalistic duty" is when politicians often call on African journalists, directly or indirectly, to have a sense of responsibility for national unity by not reporting on "sensitive" issues which might divide the people", and these "sensitive" issues being decided by politicians (Kasoma, 1994a:30).

In having noted that politicians in Africa have used the "national interest" for selfish ends, Kasoma (1994b:20) views

> "the national interest as the highest level of community representation. This national interest, however, should be representative of the common good rather than merely the interests of those in power."

3.14 Summary: The media's role in "nation building", "national development" and "national interest"

This section reviewed literature examining the media's role in "nation building", "national development" and "national interest". It was pointed out that governments in Africa, including South Africa, expected the media to assist the governments to achieve the goals of nation building, national development and national interest. In the name of these objectives

the government expected the media to be uncritical towards the government. This was not welcomed by journalists and media scholars in Africa.

3.15 Summary: Chapter 3

This chapter reviewed literature dealing with the political role of the media in a democracy, starting with a generic discussion and thereafter dealing specifically with Africa. The terms "politics" and "democracy" were defined for contextual purposes. As part of literature review, the concept of "respect", according to African culture, and in the context of journalism practice, was interrogated. Concepts such as "African consciousness" within the context of journalism practice in Africa were also examined. Literature examining the implications of media ownership for journalism practice was reviewed. Lastly, this chapter also examined literature discussing the media's role in "nation building", "national development" and "national interest".

The next chapter discusses the theoretical frameworks chosen for this study.

Chapter 4
Theoretical Frameworks

4.1 Introduction

In investigating the political role that the *City Press* defined for its black journalists in post-apartheid South Africa in the period 1994 to 2004, this researcher chose three theoretical frameworks: The Liberal-Pluralist, the Political Economy and Afrocentric theories on the political role of the media.

The Liberal-Pluralist theory is chosen on the basis of it being a normative theory dealing with the "political" role of the media. The Political Economy theory is appropriate since it examines, among other issues, how media ownership influences the manner in which the media execute their task of serving the public. The *City Press'* white ownership is of research interest in the light of the ANC's claim that the white-owned media pushed an anti-government agenda against the ANC government during the research period (Fourie, 2002:29). Afrocentricity is chosen on the basis of the researcher's interest in the role, if any, played by African cultural values in the *City Press'* black journalists' execution of their political role with particular focus in the period 1994 to 2004.

In this chapter the author will define these theories and explain their particular positions in relation to the political role of the media. Next the theories will be explained in the order outlined above.

4.2 Liberal-Pluralist theories on the role of the media

In understanding the Liberal-Pluralist theory on the role of the media, it has to be clarified that the term "liberalism" instead of "libertarianism" is employed in this study. That is because "libertarianism" is one "species" of liberalism among others, while liberalism is the broader term (Berry, Braman, Christians, Guback, Helle, Liebovich, Nerone & Rotzoll, 1995:42). The principles of liberalism gradually evolved from the theoretical explorations of a large number of individual thinkers such as John Milton, Alexis de Tocqueville, James Madison, John Stuart Mill and many others who were directly influenced in their speculations by the social, political, and economic events of their times (Berry *et al*, 1995:37; Siebert, 1963:40).

Criticisms notwithstanding, Siebert's 1963 work is cited here because, as Curran and Park (2003:3 – 4) note, his work on the four theories of the press has been "viewed as a landmark

study for the next forty years [since its first appearance in the 1950s]". Siebert also observes that although libertarian philosophers differ widely in some respects, they share a number of common bonds which identify them as belonging to a general school or system of philosophy.

Known also as the "market model", the Liberal-Pluralist theory is based on the original free press (libertarian) theory, which identifies press freedom with the freedom to own and operate the means of publication without permission or interference from the state (McQuail, 2007:185). In order for the media to carry out their watchdog role and report in an "objective" way, the Liberal-Pluralist theory contends that the state should not be in control of the media but should operate in a capitalistic environment, that is, they should be privately owned and compete in an open market (Siebert, 1963:51 – 52). It is against this background that the Liberal-Pluralist theory of the media is known as the market model.

4.2.1 The Market Model

Libertarians opposed government support for the media in the belief that it would lead to domination by the government (Siebert, 1963:52). In the view of the Liberal-Pluralists, the media that operate in a free market provide the greatest chance to reach the truth and the best way to get a full range of ideas, information and opinions (Merrill, 1989:12). That is because, according to this theory, the audience of the media control the media and keep them accountable for their actions (Merrill, 1989:13). This accountability, it is assumed in the market model, is ensured by the audience's reward or punishment of the media through increased or decreased circulation.

Due to the public's power to reward or punish, Liberal-Pluralist theorists believe that the public could be trusted to define what is and what is not in the public interest (McQuail, 2007:185; Siebert, 1963:52). Against this background, Merrill (1989:15) argues that the "marketplace model is a truly democratic approach to accountability" because "the people, speaking clearly through the market, determine to a great degree the content of the media". Liberal-pluralists regard the media as the "Fourth Estate", a concept which will next be discussed.

4.2.2 The Fourth Estate

According to Liberal-Pluralists, the media, functioning as the "Fourth Estate" (the other three estates being the legislature, the judiciary and the executive) should play an important part in the democratic process in constituting a source of information that is independent of the government (Schultz, 1998:13; Bennett, 1982a:31). Being the "Fourth Estate" entails not just being a source of information, but "watching, questioning, analysing" as well (Schultz, 1998:6). It is against this background that the media, as the "Fourth Estate" are referred to as the "watchdogs", their role being to expose wrong done and monitoring the full range of state activity (Curran, 2000:121).

Being the Fourth Estate entails providing a plurality of clashing and diverse viewpoints through which governing elites could be pressurised and reminded of their dependency on majority opinion (Schultz, 1998: 23; Bennett, 1982a:40; Siebert, 1963:52). It is in the presentation of all manner of evidence – or diversification of information, viewpoints and opinions to the best of their ability – that according to the Liberal-Pluralist theory, the media can play a "pluralistic" role (Merrill, 1989:13). This role also entails involvement in initiating discussion on government policies and criticising their application (Boyce, 1978:28). In playing the Fourth Estate role, the media, according to Liberal-Pluralists, are expected to be "objective". What this entails will be discussed next.

4.2.3 "Objective" journalism

The media are expected, from a Liberal-Pluralist perspective, to carry out their duty of reporting in an objective way (Siebert, 1963:62). The theory of "objective reporting" entails elimination as far as possible of any bias in the news. Objective journalism is a concept of which the origins are traced to the West, particularly English-speaking countries, but most popular to and invoked by American journalists (Lichtenberg, 2000:238; Martin & Chaudhary, 1983:8).

The concept of objectivity in the West came about as a result of the disgruntlement of newspaper readers who observed that newspapers were not factual but partisan in their delivery of news and reflecting the perspectives of their owners (McChesney, 2004:6). It was against this background that the concept of "professional journalism" emerged, emphasising the need for journalism to be produced by trained professionals who would not allow their own values to cloud their professional trained judgment. Instead, they would be non-partisan and objective. Objectivity in journalism meant that journalism practice would distinguish

between fact and opinion (McNair, 2000:50; Martin & Chaudhary, 1983:8). This means that in carrying out reporting assignments, journalists are expected not to adorn their reports with value-laden adjectives and adverbs.

Criticism of objectivity in journalism has taken many forms, with some saying that journalism *is not* objective; others that it *cannot* be objective; and still others that it *should not* be objective (Lichtenberg, 2000:238; Smith, 1978:153). Some journalists have, themselves, rejected the concept as an "illusion" (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001:74). These charges come from individuals and groups, who, as Lichtenberg notes, believe that journalists have misrepresented, been unfair or biased against them. Linked to these claims are the charges that journalists cannot be objective because no one "can totally escape his or her biases" which can be based on beliefs or cultures (Lichtenberg, 2000:239). Such charges against objective journalism, Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001:41) argue, completely miss the point.

Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001:72) argue that this is because when the concept was originally evolved, it was not meant to imply that journalists were free of bias. On the contrary, the concept emerged in the 20th century "out of a growing recognition that journalists were full of bias, often unconsciously". The call for objectivity, therefore, was a method conceptualised for journalists to develop a consistent way of testing information "precisely so that personal and cultural biases would not undermine the accuracy of their work". The point of objective journalism "originally…was *not the journalist* who was imagined to be objective. It was his *method* (researcher's italics)" (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001:42).

Fourie (2007a:188) summarises Liberal-Pluralist theories' expectations of the media's political functions thus: To inform about political developments; to guide public opinion about political decisions; to express different views about political developments and decisions; and to criticise political developments and decisions.

It is against these functions as finally outlined and summarised by Fourie that the political role of the *City Press*' black journalists will be assessed from a Liberal-Pluralist theoretical framework.

4.2.4 Summary: Liberal-Pluralist theories on the role of the media
This section has focused on the political role of the media from a Liberal-Pluralist perspective. According to this theory the role of the media entails not just being a source of

information, but watching, questioning and analysing the activities of the state as well. The media are expected to expose the wrong done and monitoring the full range of state activity. The media are also expected to provide a plurality of clashing and diverse viewpoints through which governing elites could be pressurised and reminded of their dependency on majority opinion. It is in the presentation of all manner of evidence – or diversification of information, viewpoints and opinions to the best of their ability – that according to the Liberal-Pluralist theory, the media can play a "pluralistic" role. In doing so, it will be borne in mind that journalists do not operate in a vacuum, but in environments that can be either enabling or constraining. Political Economy perspectives on the role of the media help in analysing the enabling and constraining factors, and will therefore be discussed next.

4.3 Political Economy theories on the role of the media

The Political Economy theory on the media is a perspective which searches for the answers to the question of the power of the media in the analysis of ownership and control (Boyd-Barrett, 2006:186; McChesney, 1998:3; MacGregor, 1997:48; Herman & Chomsky, 1994:xii; Curran *et al*, 1982:19). Golding and Murdock (2000:72-73) observe that critical Political Economy differs from mainstream economics in four main respects: firstly, critical Political Economy is holistic; secondly, it is historical; thirdly, it is centrally concerned with the balance between capitalist enterprise and public intervention, and, fourthly, it goes beyond technical issues of efficiency to engage with basic moral questions of justice, equity and the public good.

Elucidating their point, Golding and Murdock further point out that whereas mainstream economics see economy as a separate and specialised domain, critical Political Economy is interested in the interplay between economic organisation and political, social and cultural life. According to the Political Economy theory of the media, the contents and meanings carried by the media reflect the interests of those who finance the production of the media's contents – not just media owners, but advertisers, as well (Altschull, 1997:259). This argument holds the view that the financiers will not allow their media to publish material that frustrates their vital interests. Altschull (1997:262) further points out that even though the media may enjoy certain levels of political autonomy, "[n]o newspaper, magazine or broadcasting outlet exceeds the boundaries of autonomy acceptable to the paymasters".

The Political Economy theory serves as a critique of Liberal-Pluralists' assumptions about the role of the media. This theory enables a researcher to examine the claim that trained professional editors and reporters provide neutral, trustworthy journalism uninfluenced by

media owners, advertisers, or the biases of journalists themselves (McChesney, 1998:6). It seeks to examine how much and what type of autonomy is afforded journalism from owners and advertisers.

4.3.1 Critique of the market-anchored media

Cognisant of the fact that "[i]n political terms" the media "may serve to enhance democracy or deny it" the question of who owns the media is a critical issue for the Political Economy theory on the role of the media (McChesney, 2004:3). That is because, as Hale (2003:140) observes, media ownership has major consequences for political debate and, therefore, for democracy since the media are the major sources of information about state and local governments.

In critiquing and criticising Liberal-Pluralists' advocacy for privately-owned media, political economists argue that "private ownership and control does not necessarily guarantee media of public service" (Nyamnjoh, 2004:122). Private ownership of the media can contribute to the undermining of democracy when owners have a direct interest in political processes. In some African countries, as Hydén and Okigbo (2002:49) observe, where the media are owned by individual tycoons, "some of whom are directly involved in political life", the "media…often become the mouthpieces of the agenda of these particular individuals rather than serving the interests of the wider public". Instead of serving democracy, Hydén and Okigbo further point out, the media tend to become undisguised apologists for individual politicians with an axe to grind.

Political Economists further point out that the Liberal-Pluralists' stringent opposition to state-owned media ignore the reality that, unlike in the 18th century when Liberal-Pluralists developed their theories, the relationships between governments and profit-oriented media organisations have not remained the same (Curran, 2000:123). Research reveals that in cases where media organisations found it convenient, they developed tactical alliances with governments in order to secure their selfish interests. Curran (2000:124) identifies three cases where corrupt relationships between repressive governments and private owners of the media undermined democracy:

- A privately-owned newspaper, *El Mercurio*, backed a military coup in Chile and "loyally supported the Pinochet dictatorship and largely overlooked its violation of human rights";

- In Argentina, privately-owned media failed to investigate "state-sponsored" disappearances during the period of military rule;

- In Taiwan, privately owned media not only accepted authoritarian rule but also helped to "rationalise" it.

In all these cases, Curran points out that the collaboration between the media and the repressive governments occurred because "media owners were part of the national system of power". Political Economists point out that not only do media owners tend to ignore governments' violations of democracy, but do so as well where corporate corruption takes place. The tendency to ignore corporate corruption is motivated by media owners' dependence on the corporate world for revenue accruing from advertising. Against this background, Boyce (1978:27) argues that the

> "paradox of the Fourth Estate, with its head in politics and its feet in commerce, can, however, only be understood if it is appreciated that the whole idea of the Fourth Estate was a myth".

This assertion is based on observations that the history of the media has revealed that as concentration of media ownership became the order of the day, editors lost their independence and followed the dictates of managers whose preoccupation was profit maximisation (Boyce, 1978:37). This preoccupation with profit reduced the media from an "estate" to an "industry" that resorted to trivialisation and sensationalisation of news so as to attract mass readership (Boyce, 1978:37 – 38).

Herman and McChesney (1997:6) observe that preoccupation with profit results in preference for entertainment at the expense of "serious political debate, and discussions of documentaries that dig deeply, inform, and challenge conventional opinion". Consequently, the preoccupation with trivialisation and sensationalism weakens journalism and undermines the very commitment to the watchdog role highly prized by Liberal-Pluralists. Political Economy theorists argue that the watchdog role of the media is inadequate when it fails to take into account the ways in which the market is a source of corruption (Curran, 2000:123).

Opposed to the Liberal-Pluralists' contention that the media anchored in capitalism is a guarantee of democracy, Political Economy theory asserts that the working of capitalism, with its invariable push toward strong class inequality and possessive individualism, has a

distinctly anti-democratic edge (McChesney, 1998:8). This "anti-democratic edge" manifests itself, according to Herman and McChesney (1997:6), in the tendency of media owners to represent narrow class interests – specifically those of the rich.

Emphasising Herman and McChesney's argument, Curran (2000:128) points out that anchoring the media in the free market – as Liberal-Pluralist theorists insist – hinders people's access to information because, he notes, free market generates information-rich media for elites and information-poor media for the general public. The advertisers' bias towards courting the affluent privileges the rich at the expense of the poor in terms of information in that, as McChesney (1998:18) points out, quality journalism is afforded the affluent and directed to their needs and interests, while the masses get poor journalism. The result, Curran (2000:128) further notes, is a polarisation between prestige and mass newspapers.

Political Economy theorists, as pointed out above, believe that journalists' professional ideologies can be compromised and constrained by the interests of owners. The basis of these claims will be discussed next.

4.3.2 Professional ideologies and the work practices of the media

According to Political Economy theorists, the links between the economic determinants of the media and the contents of the media must be sought in the professional ideologies and the work practices of media, "since these are the only channels through which organisational controls can be brought to bear on the output of the media" (Curran *et al*, 1982:18-19). Studying news organisations and journalists' professional ideologies means paying attention to organisational culture. Bantz (1997:126) defines organisational culture as patterns of meanings that define appropriate action. Understanding of organisational culture enables a researcher to understand the world of its members, which would include knowing how news workers define words and actions, what they value and devalue, what constitutes a good reason and a bad reason for acting (Bantz, 1997:124).

The assumption here is that "news professionalism is an efficient and effective means for both controlling and rewarding journalists" (Soloski, 1997:146). Professionalism is understood in this case to be referring to journalists' expertise, how they rationalise their approach to their work, and the values and norms that govern them in the news organisations they work for (Gallagher, 1982:162). Media organisations apply "control" on journalists in two related ways: (i) setting standards and norms of behaviour, and (ii) determining the professional

reward system (Soloski, 1997:142). Norms and behaviour of journalists in media organisations are implemented through policies. Breed (1997:108) defines policy as the more or less consistent orientation shown by a newspaper, not only in its editorial, but in its news columns and headings as well, concerning selected issues and events.

Media owners, having the prerogative to determine their newspapers' policies, exercise this right in determining the orientation of their newspapers and seeing to it that their staff activities are coordinated in such a way that their newspapers' policies are enforced (Breed, 1997:107). Editors apply these policies in editorial meetings, through story assignments or reprimanding journalists when they do not conform to the companies' policies (Soloski, 1997:148). Guided by the editorial policies, the "editor ensures that the more important stories, which are more likely to have policy implications, are covered by the more trustworthy reporters" (Soloski, 1997:149). This is the "reward system" referred to earlier by Soloski (1997:142).

4.3.3 Summary: Political Economy theories on the role of the media

This section has explored the Political Economy theory on the political role of the media. It was pointed out that the Political Economy theory on the media is a perspective which searches for the answers to the question of the power of the media in the analysis of ownership and control. According to the Political Economy theory of the media, the contents and meanings carried by the media reflect the interests of those who finance the production of the media's contents – not just media owners, but advertisers as well. This argument holds the view that the financiers will not allow their media to publish material that frustrates their vital interests.

The Political Economy perspective on the media will be applied in this research on the political role of the *City Press*' black journalists, with particular reference to the white ownership of a newspaper produced by black journalists. Next is the discussion on Afrocentricity.

4.4 Afrocentric theories on the role of the media

Some commentators and media academics (Kareithi, 2005:14; Mphahlele, 2004:331; Kasoma, 1994c:xvii) have argued that African journalists, in carrying out their duties, must be cognisant of indigenous African cultural values. Such perspectives are termed Afrocentric. Before offering a definition of "Afrocentricity" it is crucial to make two observations for the

sake of clarity. Firstly, a distinction must be drawn between "Afrocentricity" and "Afrocentrism". As Asante (2007:17) cautions, "Afrocentricity should not be confused with the variant of Afrocentrism" because the term "Afrocentrism" was first used by the "opponents of Afrocentricity who in their zeal saw it as an obverse of Eurocentrism".

Secondly, there needs to be a clarification on the relationship between Afrocentricity and Eurocentrism. This is important because there is a tendency to regard the concepts as two sides of the same coin. Shepperson and Tomaselli (1993:169) commit this error in observing that "[i]n the Afrocentric approach, nothing radically new is taking place conceptually, since the process involves little more than an inversion of categories within the same logical framework", and that framework being that "the dominant boot should be on the Other foot, and all problems are thereafter solved". Similarly, Mbembe (2001:8; 12), who refers to Afrocentricity as "Afrocentrism" notes that Eurocentrism and Afrocentricity "look like the two sterile sides of the same coin". Asante (2007:17) cautions against making the assumption that "Afrocentricity is the opposite of Eurocentricity".

Afrocentricity is a mode of analysis that insists that when African issues are discussed, this should be done within the context of African history and culture (Asante, 2007:16; Karenga, 2003:77; Okafor, 1993:200-201; Hoskins, 1992:251). Afrocentricity seeks to uncover and use codes, paradigms, symbols, motifs, myths and circles of discussion that reinforce the centrality of African ideas and values as a valid frame of reference for acquiring and examining data (Winters, 1994:170). It is a paradigm dedicated to validating, regenerating, creating, and perpetuating African life and living – informed by African perspective or world outlook (Bekerie, 1994:131). Afrocentricity seeks to unshackle African studies from Eurocentric hegemony on scholarship, and thus assert a worldview through which Africa can be studied independently (Obeyade, 1990:234).

The unshackling of African studies should be understood as what Ashcroft (2001:1) refers to as transformation, which he defines as that which "describes the ways in which colonized societies have taken dominant discourses, transformed them and used them in the service of their own self-empowerment". The central strategy in transformation of colonial culture, Ashcroft (2001:2) further points out, is the "seizing of self-representation". Aschroft (2001:2) defines representation as the process of giving concrete form to ideological concepts. Self-representation is an act of resisting what Comaroff and Comaroff (1992:235) refer to as the "colonization of…consciousness", spurred by "consciousness of colonization".

Eurocentrism is understood here as a phenomenon that "claims that imitation of the Western model by all peoples is the only solution to the challenges of our time" (Amin, 1989:vii). It is the idea that "Europe is the standard and nothing exists in the same category anywhere" (Asante, 2007:111). It is a European tradition which, as Mbembe (2001:2) observes, when "dealing with Africa or with other non-European worlds…denied the existence of any „self‟ but its own". It is a tradition that treats anything different from itself as "being nothing" (Mbembe, 2001:4). Imbued with Eurocentrism, the European colonising powers regarded and treated Africans as the child race and themselves as the adult race (Ashcroft, 2001:39; 42). In this scheme, as Comaroff and Comaroff (1992:5) observe, "the Western eye frequently overlooks important similarities in the ways in which societies everywhere are made and remade". In this scheme of things, the Africans are "presented…as the human obverse of the European, the „link‟ between man and animal" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1992:218). Africans were presented as creatures with "dim minds" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1992:4; 218) whose way of life was superstitious and primitive, while on the other side the European's is associated with modernism. While human civilisation is seen as Western from this perspective, Africans are seen as "not quite human" (Mudimbe, 1988:68).

While Eurocentrism projects itself as "universalist" (Amin, 1989:vii), Afrocentricity on the other hand "does not seek African hegemony; it seeks [cultural] pluralism without hierarchy" (Asante, 2007:111). To this end, Karenga (2003:73), arguing from an Afrocentric perspective, notes that not only must human diversity be tolerated but that it must be embraced and built upon.

In the discipline of communication studies, the Afrocentric paradigm encourages awareness of the particular ways that African communication differs from the Western modes of communication and how issues of the representation of Africans in the mass media are emphasised (Fourie, 2007b:177). This approach, Kareithi (2005:14) argues, calls for a departure from the kind of news in the Western tradition which routinely privilege economic, political and intellectual elites.

One of the distinguishing features of African culture is its insistence on the prioritisation of the community over the individual (Kasoma, 1994a:27). A model of journalism infused with African culture would be, according to Kareithi (2005:13), that of "the press that…emphasizes community values over individualism". Another distinguishing feature of

African culture, which Moemeka and Kasoma (1994:41) refer to as "another key quality in African life" is "respect". Rooney (2007:213) observes that this "respect and deference does [sic] not encourage a questioning attitude" on the part of the young to the community's elders. This is one quality that has been contentious in as far as journalism practice is concerned.

While journalism is a universal profession with many common principles and values which are shared worldwide, in line with Afrocentricity, Kasoma (1994b:9) argues that African journalists must look to their moral philosophy for those principles and values that will elevate African journalism. That is because, as Kasoma (1994c:xvii) argues, every society is characterised by social values and that it is these values that predispose journalists to act in a certain manner under certain conditions.

Mogekwu (2005:15) observes that a cursory look at the different curricula of various media programmes on the African continent gives the impression that many African institutions are striving to produce clones of American or Western journalists in many parts of Africa. It is significant to note, as Kasoma (1994a:29) points out, that the journalism values that Europeans and Americans brought to Africa were embedded in the West's cultural history and traditions. One such value is individualism. Kasoma (1994b:19) observes that to a great extent the post-colonial period in Africa has been marked by a syndrome of do-what-the-authorities-tell-you-and-behave-like-Western journalists. As an alternative to this approach, Kasoma (1994c:xvii) recommends that African culture should set the boundaries of what the media can do and with what effects. For Mphahlele (2004:331) this means that the role of black journalists is to help develop an African consciousness and African ways of perceiving which expand to the outer reaches of the world from a position of self-knowledge.

A view exists that whenever criticism is raised with regards to African culture, Afrocentrists tend to be defensive (Sesanti, 2010:345). There is an element of truth in this. But equally true is that this is often a reaction to what is perceived by Afrocentrists as an unfair attack on African culture (Sesanti, 2010:345). Yet this must not be misconstrued as a rejection of criticism on African culture when this is warranted. Not only do Afrocentrists welcome critical engagement with African culture – they encourage it and, in fact, exercise it (Asante, 2007:41). As Asante notes, "[t]here are no closed systems; that is, there are no ideas that are absolutely seen as off limits for discussion". Thus, Asante (2007:41) further points out, that "when Afrocentricity is employed in analysis or criticism, it opens the way for examination of all issues related to the African world". If, as Kasoma and Mphahlele argue, that African

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culture should set the boundaries of what the media can do and with what effects, it is important to understand what is meant by "culture" in general, and "African culture" in particular.

4.4.1 African culture defined

The term "culture" is defined in various ways. Maathai (2009:161) defines culture as "the means by which a people express itself through language, traditional wisdom, politics, religion, architecture, music, tools, greetings, symbols, festivals, ethics, values and collective identity". Wa Thiong'o (1993:42) defines culture as a "product of people's history" embodying "a whole set of values by which people view themselves and their place in time and space". Asante (2003:134) defines it as "the totalization of the historical, artistic, economic, and spiritual aspects of a people's lifestyle". Cabral (1979:141) defines culture as

> "the fruit of a people's history and a determinant of history, by the positive or negative influence it exerts on the evolution of relations between man and his environment and among men or human groups within a society, as well as between different societies".

From the four definitions above, two characteristics of culture are significant – traditional wisdom and history. That is because in order to understand a people's present, reference must be made to their history and what they believed in – traditional wisdom (Nhlapho, 2000:141; Kunene, 1982:xii). This is so whether or not people cling on to traditional ways or adopt new ways.

The term "African" also has many meanings attached to it, but for the purposes of this study, "African" will refer to the indigenous people of the African continent. This is not intended to exclude anyone but simply to achieve lucidity in terms of reference. African culture, in the context of this study, should be understood as the "sum total of African philosophy, ideas, and artifacts" (Asante, 1996:4). In discussing culture in general, and African culture in particular, this researcher is not oblivious to the fact that culture is dynamic and not static or frozen in time. This point is alluded to in Biko's (2005:106) definition of culture about which he observes that it is "essentially the society's composite answer to the varied problems of life". This definition makes the point that culture is the way in which people deal with their everyday challenges, meaning that as time moves, and new challenges arise, people must have new ideas and approaches to such challenges.

It is against this background that Wiredu (1980:10) notes that the

> "culture of a people is their total way of life, and this is seen as well in their work and recreation as in their worship and courtship; it is seen also in their ways of investigating nature and utilizing its possibilities and in their way of viewing themselves and interpreting their place in nature".

This study appreciates Mudimbe's (1994:206) observation that African culture is not based on "fixed traditions, even in the precolonial period" but that traditions "are, indeed, continuities, but also discontinuities". While recognising the dynamism of culture, this study is premised on the view that changes in culture do not preclude continuity (Karenga, 2004:24). Also, this researcher is conscious of the caveat, as pointed out by Tomaselli (2003:428) that in discussing African culture, caution must be exercised against the reductive assumption that all practices on the continent can be reduced to homogeneous sets of continent-wide social and African cultural values.

In discussing African culture in this study, there is sensitivity to and familiarity with problems that arise when one "generalizes the traditions of one or two communities in Africa as „African culture'" (Boateng, 1996:111). In appreciation of Tomaselli's caveat, Gakwandi (1996:182 – 183) observes that "[a]lthough Africa's cultures and languages overlap and enjoy certain commonalities, especially at sub-regional level, the differences cannot be wished away or ignored". Similarly, Williams (1987:162) cautions that "[t]his distinction is important here, for too often things are characterized as „African' which apply only to certain societies".

However, while not denying the ethnic and cultural diversities in Africa, this researcher subscribes to Asante and Asante's (1996:x) and Soyinka's (1996:30) observations that cultural commonalities throughout the African continent constitute "African culture". This point is echoed by Gyekye (cited in Kamwangamalu, 1999:26) who observes that despite Africa's cultural diversity, threads of underlying affinity do run through the beliefs, customs, value systems, and sociopolitical institutions and practices of the various African societies. However, this assertion is not the same as denying ethnic cultural differences among Africans. Such differences are acknowledged here. But the point is, as Dove (2003:167) points out, that this "diversity does not preclude sameness".

Since in his definition of African culture, Asante (1996:4) says it is the "sum total of African philosophy, ideas, and artifacts", there is a need for a brief discussion about "African philosophy", since, as in the case of African culture, there are conflicting positions.

As in the case of African culture, there are those who argue, on the one hand, like Hountondji (1996:53) that "African philosophy, like any other philosophy, cannot possibly be a collective world-view" but "can exist as a philosophy only in the form of a confrontation between individual thoughts, a discussion, a debate". Emphasising his assertion, Hountondji (1996:76) observes that there

> "*is* no philosophy that would be a system of implicit propositions or beliefs to which all individuals of a given society, past, present and future, would adhere. Such a philosophy does not exist, has never existed."

Hountondji (1996:62) defines African philosophy as "a literature produced by Africans and dealing with philosophical problems". Remarking on Hountondji's stance on philosophy, Mudimbe (1988:160) observes that "Hountondji's critique displays the superiority of a critical conception of philosophy". Mudimbe (1994:203) defines philosophy as "an explicit, critical, autocritical, systematic discourse bearing on the language and experience" of "the level of discourses and interpretations of the founding events of a culture" and "the level of experts' discourses which actualize disciplinary practices or, put simply, what one might consider scientific discourses".

There are those, on the other hand, who argue, contrary to Hountondji's assertion, that philosophy, and African philosophy in particular, can both be an individual and a collective enterprise (Wiredu, 1980:16). In this regard, Wiredu observes that a "fact about philosophy in a traditional society, particularly worthy of emphasis, is that it is alive in day-to-day existence". Wiredu's assertion finds expression in Obenga's (2004:220) observation about the ancient Egyptian society in relation to that society's guiding philosophy known as *Maat*. *Maat* is defined as "justice, a way of intelligent, conscious living, a concept at once ethical and speculative, a *logos*". In line with Wiredu's argument, Obenga (2004:220) points out that "ancient Egyptians, whether they were kings or ordinary persons, lived under the imprint of Maat, Justice-Truth, the one way to true happiness, peace, beauty and the intelligible life". It could be, as Hountondji asserts, that there may have been and continue to be dissidents in

African societies, who deviate from the norm, but that does not discount the existence of such a norm.

While Hountondji (1996:75 – 76) emphatically argues that "there cannot be a collective philosophy" and that to speak of African philosophy in the collective sense is a "huge misconception", Wiredu (1980:37), though recognising the collectiveness of African philosophy, simultaneously recognises

> "a class of individuals in traditional African societies who, though unaffected by modern intellectual influences, are capable of critical and original philosophical reflections as distinct from repetitions of the folk ideas of their peoples".

What this implies is an appreciation of individual Africans' embrace of their heritage while simultaneously being critical of unacceptable or obsolete aspects of the very same culture. Wiredu (1980:21) clarifies this point by noting that

> "[t]hose who seem to think that the criticism of African traditional philosophy by an African is something akin to betrayal are actually more conservative than those among our elders who are real thinkers as distinct from mere repositories of traditional ideas. If you talk to some of them you soon discover that they are not afraid to criticise, reject, modify or add to traditional philosophical ideas."

4.4.4 Summary: Afrocentric theories on the role of the media

This section has examined the Afrocentric theory in relation to the political role of the media. It was pointed out that Afrocentricity posits that the media in Africa must take into cognisance African culture when dealing with African issues, and that in fact journalism must be informed by African values. This assertion necessitated that a definition of African culture be given. It was stated that while there is recognition that Africa has many heterogeneous ethnic groups, there are also unifying beliefs and practices that are universal in Africa: the concept of the community, the concept of respect and the rules of political engagement in African traditional settings. Against these concepts, the *City Press'* black journalists' political role will be examined, to determine whether or not in executing their political tasks, the *City Press'* black journalists were conscious of, and influenced by African cultural beliefs.

4.5 Summary: Chapter 4

This chapter defined and discussed three theoretical frameworks chosen for this study, namely: the Liberal-Pluralist, the Political Economy and Afrocentric theories on the political role of the media. It was observed that the Liberal-Pluralist theory was chosen on the basis of it being a normative theory dealing with the political role of the media. The Political Economy theory was chosen on the basis of its examination of, among other things, how media ownership influences the manner in which the media execute their task of serving the public. Afrocentricity was chosen on the basis of its examination of how African cultural values are taken into cognisance when African issues are engaged by the media.

The next chapter deals with the Research Design and Methodology chosen for this study.

Chapter 5
Research Design and Methodology

5.1 Introduction

The central research question of this study is:

> What was the political role that the *City Press* defined for its black journalists in a post-1994 democratic South Africa in the period 1994 to 2004 within the context of African culture and white ownership?

This question will help answer and give clarity to the following questions which also serve as interview questions:

- How did the concept of "black journalism" evolve from a colonial and apartheid South Africa into post-apartheid democratic dispensation?
- What was the political role that the *City Press* defined for its black journalists in the period 1994 to 2004?
- Did the ownership of the *City Press* by a white company impact on the political role of the *City Press*' black journalists in the period 1994 to 2004?
- What role did African cultural values play in the *City Press*' political black journalists' approach to their work in the period 1994 to 2004?
- How have African and Western cultural differences impacted upon the mandate of the *City Press*' political black journalists?
- How do African cultural values link to the *City Press*' concept of "Distinctly African"?
- On the issue of the Zimbabwean crisis, the media, nationally and internationally, have condemned what they have termed Mbeki's "quiet diplomacy". What has been the *City Press*'s position on this issue?
- Nationally and internationally, the media have generally criticised President Thabo Mbeki's handling of HIV and AIDS and have labelled him an AIDS Denialist. What has been the *City Press*' position on this issue?

5.2 Research Methodology

Generally, there are two major research methodologies used in scientific research, these being the quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Before stating which research

methodology this study employs, both methodologies will be defined and their differences briefly explained in order to be clear about why one was chosen as opposed to the other.

The qualitative research methodology is a scientific inquiry that is interpretive and naturalistic to its subject matter (Babbie *et al*, 2007:270; Denzin & Ryan, 2000:578). Research is naturalistic when it is carried out in natural settings, with the objective of attempting to make sense of, and interpret issues in terms of the meanings subjects bring to them. Research is interpretive when methods make use of the thoughts, feelings, and reactions of the researcher rather than trying to eliminate them entirely (Priest, 1996:4). The qualitative research methodology's focus on subtle aspects of human life and its reliance on the interpretation of what people do and say, distinguishes it from the quantitative research methodology (Iorio, 2004:6).

Quantitative research refers to scientific inquiry that uses numerical measures to investigate social phenomena (Priest, 1996:4). In quantitative research, reality is "objective", meaning that reality exists apart from the researcher and is capable of being seen by all (Wimmer & Dominick, 1991:139). Wimmer and Dominick further observe that in quantitative research there is an assumption that reality can be divided into component parts with the observer gaining knowledge of the whole by looking at these parts.

The assumption in quantitative research is that all human beings are basically similar and that the researcher's role is to look for general categories to summarise human behaviours or feelings. The objective of this research is to investigate the political role that the *City Press* defined for its black journalists in a democratic South Africa in the period 1994 to 2004. It is aimed at finding out what the *City Press*' black journalists' defined role was during the period in question. In other words, the researcher is interested in the *meaning* of black journalism to *City Press*' black journalists in the period 1994 to 2004.

The concept of "meaning" in this context refers to the researcher's attempt to see social reality "through the eyes of the subject studied" (Corbetta, 2003:40). This enables the researcher to learn about subjects from their own perspectives (Denscombe, 2003:267; Esterberg, 2002:2; Silverman, 1997:12). Against this background, the qualitative research methodology is deemed as the appropriate approach for this exercise. That is because, as Jensen (2002:236) observes, the qualitative research methodology is distinguishable by at least three distinctive features that are useful for this research. These are: *meaning*, *naturalistic context* and the

interpretive subject. These features have already been explained above. The first two sub-questions are specifically addressing the issue of "meaning". In asking how the concept of black journalism "evolved" from a colonial and apartheid South Africa, the first sub-question sought to establish the meaning of "black journalism" in the democratic dispensation in comparison to its meaning during the apartheid era. In asking how the *City Press* defined its political role for its black journalists during the period 1994 to 2004, the second sub-question sought to investigate what the *City Press* meant its political role to be during the research period.

The study has, to a great extent, employed qualitative research methods, namely content analysis and interviews. Counting was done so as to show the number of editorials, columns and opinion pieces analysed on crime, the Zimbabwean crisis and HIV/AIDS.

Two research techniques, interviews and content analysis, to be discussed next, were employed.

5.2.1 Interviews

There are a number of interview techniques, namely: basic individual interviewing, in-depth individual interviews and focus group interviews (Babbie *et al*, 2007:289 – 292). For this study the researcher has chosen the basic individual interviewing. This type of interview allows the subject of study to speak for him/herself rather than to provide a respondent with a battery of predetermined hypotheses-based questions (Babbie *et al*, 2007:289). It allows a researcher to be "flexible, iterative, and continuous, rather than prepared in advance and locked in stone" (Hebert & Rubin, in Babbie *et al*, 2007:289). This researcher has employed semi-structured interview questions (see Addendum A) because they allow interviewees greater freedom to express their opinions and ideas in their own words (Esterberg, 2002:87).

Bernard (2000:191) notes that in situations where a researcher will not get more than one chance to interview his/her subject, semi-structured interview questions are the "best". That is because though semi-structured interview questions have, like unstructured interviews, a freewheeling quality, they have an "interview guide". An interview guide is a written list of questions and topics that need to be covered in a particular order. Even though an interviewer may make use of discretion to follow leads, the interview guide is a set of clear instructions (Bernard, 2000:191).

The interviews took place over a period of a year and two months – the first being in August 2008 and the last being in October 2009. Arrangements were made telephonically and through e-mails. All the interviews with the *City Press*' black journalists who were working for the newspaper during the research period, and who were identified as key role players, were carried out face-to-face. The eight questions were uniform and were posed in a question and answer form. The researcher took notes during the interview and did not use a recorder. Therefore, for the purposes of accuracy the questions with answers were e-mailed to the respondents so that they could give feedback. This was done due to ethical considerations – to ensure that the research reflected an accurate recording of the interviewees' responses. All the interviewees confirmed, through e-mails, that the answers were a true reflection. In some cases some interviewees made some factual corrections. These were very few.

For ethical purposes, the interviewees were informed in advance that if, during the interview, they were uncomfortable, they were free to recuse themselves. It was made clear to them that the interview contents were going to be published and, therefore, they were entitled not to respond to questions they felt uncomfortable with. The interview questions were sent to them in advance, prior to physical contact between the researcher and the interviewees. The correspondence between the researcher and the interviewees to this effect is available.

The options given to the interviewees are in accordance with the requirements of the Stellenbosch University's Ethics Committee which gave permission for this study to proceed, provided that the researcher remained within the procedures and protocols indicated in the research proposal. The Ethics Committee also recommended that the researcher obtain consent from the *City Press* to carry out the study. This was done.

The verbal responses obtained through interviews are to be analysed together with the *City Press*' editorials and the *City Press*' black journalists' columns and opinion pieces. The analysis of the *City Press*' editorials and the newspaper's black journalists' columns and opinion pieces is what is referred to as "content analysis". Content analysis will be defined in the next section that focuses specifically on the research method. The use of two or more forms of evidence (in the case of this study, content analysis and interviews) is known as "triangulation" (Lindlof *&* Taylor, 2002:240). In other words, triangulation is a research approach that asks "different questions, seeking different sources, and using different methods" (Babbie *et al*, 2007:277). Among the advantages of using the triangulation method are the following:

- It enables a researcher to address varied questions that cannot be addressed by a single research approach or strategy (Brannen, 2007: 283).

- It enhances the validity of findings in that it enables a researcher to check the results of a qualitative investigation against those of a quantitative study if the researcher combines qualitative and quantitative research (Babbie *et al*, 2007:275; Punch, 1998:247).

- It raises the quality of data, interpretations and results (Flick, 2000:91).

- Use of a combination of methods in one study can partially overcome the deficiencies that flow from employing one method (Frankfort-Nachmias, 1996:206).

While triangulation has the advantages cited above, Gaskell and Bauer (2000:344) observe that "[a]pproaching a problem from two perspectives or with two methods will inevitably lead to inconsistencies and contradictions". This was not experienced in this study. Rather, studying the content of the *City Press'* editorials, columns and opinion pieces, and interviewing the *City Press'* black journalists during the research period enabled this researcher to compare what was said verbally and what was expressed in writing in the *City Press'* editorials, columns and opinion pieces. The findings are discussed in the findings chapter.

It can be said though, that findings revealed that there was no homogeneity of thought and outlook among not only the *City Press'* black journalists, but also among the editors at their different periods of service. The theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter 4 were also employed to analyse the research findings. Next, content analysis is defined.

5.2.2 Content Analysis

Content analysis can be defined as "a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (Hansen, Cottle, Negrine & Newbold, 1998:94). It is also defined as "a method of studying and analysing communication in a systematic, objective and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables" (Wimmer & Dominick, 1991:157). It can also be defined as a "methodology by which the researcher seeks to determine the manifest content of the written,

spoken, or published communications by *systematic*, *objective*, and *quantitative* analysis" (Berger, 1998:23). In all these three definitions, there is a common assertion among them, namely that content analysis is systematic, objective and quantitative. Elaborating on all these concepts, Wimmer and Dominick (1991:137 – 138) make the following observations:

Systematic – this means that the content to be analysed is selected according to explicit and consistently applied rules. Each item must have an equal chance of being included in the analysis.

Objectivity – this means that the personal idiosyncrasies and biases of the investigator should not enter into the findings; if replicated by another researcher, the analysis should yield the same results.

Quantitative – this means that the objective of content analysis is "the accurate representation of a body of messages". The aim is "precision".

The assertions above are made in the conviction, as Hansen *et al* (1998:95) observe, that "[c]ontent analysis is by definition a quantitative method". This assertion is informed by researchers who are grounded in quantitative research methodology. It fails to acknowledge that content analysis is applicable in both quantitative and qualitative research (Babbie *et al*, 2007:491; Wigston, 1997:152). In noting the differences between quantitative content analysis and qualitative content analysis, Wigston (1997:152) notes that the quantitative content analysis approach "involves some form of counting, and applies the scientific method rigorously", while the qualitative content analysis approach involves "no physical counting of data" but tends to be "more critical in nature and can be used when we need to penetrate the deeper layers of a message".

Content analysis methods are used to analyse mass media contents and transcripts (Du Plooy, 2002:191). Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008:295) observe that content analysis provides social scientists with a "systematic methodology for analyzing the data obtained from archival records, documents, and the mass media". Content analysis is, also, as Berger (1991:25) notes "a means of trying to learn something about people by examining what they write". A basic assumption implicit in content analysis is that, as Berger (1991:27) further notes, "an investigation of messages and communication gives insights into the people who create the messeages and communication".

In choosing content analysis as a technique, this researcher is aware of its strengths and weaknesses as noted by Bauer (2000:147). The strengths of content analysis are that this method

- mainly uses naturally occurring raw data;
- it can deal with large amounts of data; and
- it lends itself to historical data.

Among some of its weakenesses, Bauer (2000:148) identifies the following:

- citations out of context can easily be misunderstood;
- content analysis tends to focus on frequencies, and so neglects the rare and the absent.

In order to avoid the first cited weakness above, this study made a conscious effort to analyse not only what was said but also when and why it was said. The second weakness was not applicable because this study's focus was not on frequency but on the *meaning* of the message.

By choosing to study the *City Press*' editorials, as well as the newspaper's black journalists' columns and opinion pieces, the research sought to get the "insights [of] the people who create the messages and communication" (Berger, 1991:27) – in this case the *City Press*' black journalists' insights.

The word "content" refers to words, concepts, meanings, pictures, symbols, themes or any message that can be communicated (Mouton, 2006:165; Burns, 2000:432). These elements can be counted numerically, but they can also be examined for meaning (Burns, 2000:432). Babbie *et al* (2007:384) note that content analysis is particularly well suited to the study of communication science and to answering the classic question of communication research regarding who says what to whom, why, how and with what effect.

As pointed out above, this study makes use of qualitative content analysis. The *City Press*' political black journalists' understandings and the stances articulated in the editorials, columns and opinion pieces on the identified issues will give an indication of the meanings

attached to these issues by the *City Press*' political black journalists. The *meanings* refer to their understanding/s of the issues.

In the period 1994 to 2004, prominent political commentators in South Africa (Calland, 2006:190-191; Sparks, 2003:85; Jacobs & Calland, 2002:2-4) identified crime, the Zimbabwean crisis, and how Mbeki handled it through what was termed „quiet diplomacy', and HIV/AIDS as the major political issues. Against this background this researcher has chosen to study the *City Press*' editorials, columns and opinion pieces written by *City Press*' political black journalists from 1994 to 2004, dealing with these issues.

Editorials of the *City Press* were selected because Breed (1997:109) and Bennett (1982b:303) assert that generally editorials give an idea about the norms or orientation of the publication. The columns and opinion pieces written by the *City Press*' political black journalists were studied in order to establish what their takes were on the issues identified above. This search for meanings by making use of content analysis is "coding".

Coding is defined as the classification of material into themes, issues, topics, concepts and propositions so as to investigate manifest and latent content (Babbie, 2002:317; Burns, 2000:432). Codes are tags, names or labels, and this being the case, "coding is therefore the process of putting tags, names or labels against pieces of the data" (Punch, 1998:204). The point of assigning labels, as Punch (1998:204 – 205) further observes, is to attach meaning to the pieces of data so that the researcher may be able to index and summarise the data by pulling together themes and identifying patterns. In this study's case the issues and themes that the researcher sought out and categorised were "crime", "Zimbabwe" and "HIV/AIDS". With reference to crime, the researcher sought out sub-themes such as "corruption" and the "death penalty". These were specifically selected because they were recurring sub-themes under the theme "crime". With reference to the Zimbabwean crisis, the researcher sought out discussions relating to the theme "quiet diplomacy" which was perceived as Mbeki's approach to the Zimbabwean crisis. With reference to "HIV/AIDS", the researcher sought out discussions around "denialism" and "dissidence" associated with Mbeki's approach to HIV/AIDS issues.

The material analysed is selected from 35 copies of the *City Press* published from May 10, 1994 to December 31, 2004. That is because since the democratic elections were held on April 27, 1994 and the government sworn in on May 10, 1994, it was only then that a

democratically elected government commenced its mandate. Thereafter, from 1995 to 2004, the *City Press*' selected editorials and *City Press* black journalists' selected columns and opinion pieces were taken from 52 copies of the *City Press* per year. The researcher selected editorials, columns and opinion pieces that specifically dealt wih crime, the Zimbabwean crisis and HIV/AIDS in the period 1994 to 2004. This means that a total of 555 copies of the *City Press* newspaper were consulted and relevant material selected from the copies.

In the crime category editorials analysed amounted to 28. Out of these, 22 editorials focused on common crime and 6 on corruption.

Editorials on common crime were as follows:
City Press Comments, 2004a:18; 2004c:18; 2000b:10; 2000c:14; 1999a:6; 1999b:6; 1998a:16; 1998b:14; 1998c:14; 1998d:16; 1996a:16; 1996b:16; 1996c:14; 1996d:14; 1995a:14; 1995b:16; 1995c:16; 1995d:16; 1995e:16; 1995f:16; 1995g:16; 1994:16.

Editorials on corruption were as follows: *City Press* Comments, 2004c:18; 2003d:22; 2000d:12; 2001a:8; 1996e:16; 1996f:16.

There were 5 columns on common crime, and were as follows: Kalane, 1998a:16; Sibiya, 1996b:16; Sibiya, 1996c:14; Mogale, 1995:16; Sello, 1995b:16).

There were 3 opinion pieces on common crime, and were as follows: Makele, 1996:17; Sello, 1995a:16; Sello, 1994:16.

There were 2 columns on corruption, and were as follows: Mona, 2000b:10; Sibiya, 1995b:14).

There were 4 opinion pieces on corruption, and were as follows: Mamaila, 2004a:18; Memela, 1996:17; Sello, 1995c:17; Sello, 1995d:15.

On the Zimbabwean crisis there were 11 editorials, and were as follows: *City Press* Comments, 2004d:18; 2003e:18; 2003f:18; 2000g:8; 2003g:18; 2003i:18; 2002a:8; 2002b:8; 2001h:8; 2000e:14; 2000f:12.

There were 3 columns on the Zimbabwean crisis, and were as follows: Mamaila, 2004:18; Maseko, 2001:9; Mona, 2000a:12.

There were no opinion pieces on the Zimbabwean crisis.

On HIV/AIDS there were 16 editorials, and were as follows: *City Press* Comments, 2004e:18; 2004f:18; 2003h:18; 2002c:8; 2002d:8; 2002e:18; 2001b:8; 2001c:8; 2001d:8; 2001e:8; 2001f:8; 2001g:8; 2000i:8; 2000h:6; 1996g:16; 1996h:16; 1995h:16.

There were 6 columns on HIV/AIDS, and were as follows: Mamaila, 2004c:18; Maseko, 2002:9; Maseko, 2000a:8; Maseko, 2000b:8; Memela, 2001:9; Mona, 2001b:8.

There were 2 opinion pieces on HIV/AIDS, and were as follows: Tsedu, 2004c:18; Mahlangu, 2000:14.

Having outlined the research methodologies employed in this study and the reasons thereof, the researcher now proceeds to state the research design chosen.

5.3 Research Design

A research design is defined by Kumar (2005:84) as a procedural plan that is adopted by the researcher to answer questions validly, objectively, accurately and economically. Kumar further notes that the function of a research design is to enable a researcher to "conceptualise an operational plan to undertake the various procedures and tasks required to complete [a] study". In order to achieve this research's objective, the researcher chose a case study as an appropriate research design.

A "case study" is defined as an intensive investigation of a single unit, which could be an individual person, family, community, society, a team or any other unit of social life (Babbie *et al* 2007:280). A case study can also be defined as an empirical inquiry that uses multiple sources of evidence to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context (Wimmer & Dominick, 1991:150; Kumar, 2005:112). A case study enables a researcher to understand the influences of multilevel social systems on subjects' perspectives and behaviours (Babbie *et al*, 2007:281). A case study aims "to understand the case in depth, and in its natural setting, recognising its complexity and its context" (Punch, 1998:150). There are different types of case study which will be briefly discussed below (Punch, 1998:152):

- The intrinsic case study – in this case the study is undertaken in order for the researcher to gain a better understanding of a particular case;
- The instrumental case study – in this case a particular case is examined to give insight into an issue, or to refine a theory;
- The collective case study – in this case the instrumental case study is extended to cover several cases, to learn more about the phenomenon, population or general condition.

In the case of this research both the intrinsic and instrumental types of case study fit. However, while this study seeks to give insight on the case studied, as is the case with the instrumental case study, it is not the purpose of this research to "refine theory".

There are a number of criticisms leveled against the case study research design. Among these criticisms are the assertions that where a case study is based on only one case, its generalisability becomes questionable; a case study may be well suited for pilot studies, but not for fully-fledged research schemes; a case study is subjective (Flyvbjerg, 2007: 390; Punch, 1998:153). Addressing the issue of generalisability, Punch (1998:154) observes that "whether a case study should even seek to generalize, and claim to be representative, depends on the context and purposes of the particular project". Punch further points out that "[g]eneralization should not necessarily be the objective of all research projects, whether case studies or not". Punch further argues that a "case may be so important, interesting, or misunderstood that it deserves study in its own right". Advancing these arguments, however, is not the same as saying that case studies cannot or should not produce studies that are generalisable.

Punch (1998:154) points out that there are two ways in which a case study can be generalisable. The first is by conceptualising and the second is by developing propositions. Conceptualisation in this regard means that

> "on the basis of the disciplined study of a case, and using methods for analysis which focus on conceptualizing rather than on describing…the researcher develops one or more new concepts to explain some aspect of what has been studied".

Developing propositions, Punch further points out, "means that, based on the case studied, the researcher puts forward one or more propositions…which link concepts or factors within the case". These can be assessed for their applicability and transferability to other situations (Punch, 1998:154).

Flyvbjerg (2007:391) observes that criticisms against a case study can be summarised in five misunderstandings or oversimplifications:

- The first is that theoretical (context-independent) knowledge is more valuable than concrete, practical (context-dependent) knowledge;
- The second is that one cannot generalise on the basis of an individual case, and that, therefore, the case study cannot contribute to scientific development;
- The third is that the case study is most useful for generating hypotheses, that is, in the first stage, while other methods are more suitable for hypotheses testing and theory building;
- The fourth is that the case study contains a bias towards verification, that is, a tendency to confirm the researcher's preconceived notions;
- The fifth is that it is often difficult to summarise and develop propositions and theories on the basis of specific case studies.

This study is aware of criticisms against a case study. However, this researcher is persuaded by Flyvbjerg's (2007:392) argument that "[c]oncrete experiences can be achieved via continued proximity to the studied reality and via feedback from those under study". Flyvbjerg further argues that

> "[g]reat distance to the object of study and lack of feedback easily lead to a stultified learning process, which in research can lead to ritual academic blind alleys, where the effect and usefulness of research becomes unclear and untested".

This study has chosen the case study, convinced by Eysenck's (in Flyvbjerg, 2007:391) argument that "sometimes we simply have to keep our eyes open and look carefully at individual cases – not in the hope of proving anything, but rather in the hope of learning something". This study did not set out to prove anything, but to learn something, namely to

understand how the *City Press*' black journalists defined their political role in the period 1994 to 2004.

Considering Wimmer and Dominick's (1991:150 – 152) observation that the case study method is most valuable when a researcher wants a wealth of information in that it enables the researcher to make use of documents such as memos, agendas and historical records, a case study research design is appropriate for this study. In using this research design, the researcher needs to identify the unit of analysis. The unit of analysis refers to the "what" of the study, that is, the object, the phenomenon, process or event that the researcher is interested in investigating (Mouton *et al*, 2007:84; Mouton, 2006:51). Since this study is interested in the political role of the *City Press*' political black journalists, and this is established through interviews and content analysis of the *City Press*' black journalists, the unit of analysis in this study refers to the interviews and the writings of the *City Press*' political black journalists. Speaking of a unit of analysis leads to the issue of sampling.

5.3.1 Sampling

Gobo (2007:405) observes that sampling in qualitative research has experienced difficulties because on the one hand qualitative researchers dismiss it as a "mere positivistic worry". On the other hand, Gobo further notes it has been undervalued by survey researchers because of the use of non-probability methods. Arguments such as these lead to the idea, Gobo further argues, that thinking about issues of sampling, representativeness and generalisability is a waste of time. To the contrary, Gobo argues, "defining sampling units clearly before choosing cases is essential in order to avoid messy and empirical shallow research".

Kumar (2005:164) defines sampling as

> "the process of selecting a few (a sample) from a bigger group (the sampling population) to become the basis for estimating or predicting the prevalence of an unknown piece of information, situation or outcome regarding the bigger group".

The concept of "population" is understood here as the "entire set of relevant units of analysis, or data" (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996:179). It is "the total target group who would, in the ideal world, be the subject of the research" (Punch, 1998:105). The "sample" refers to the "subset" or the "subgroup of the population the researcher is interested in

(Kumar, 2005:164; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996:179). In other words, as Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008:63) note, a "sample" is the "data serving as the basis for generalizations…collected from a subset of the population". It is the "actual group" which is included in the study, and from whom the data are collected (Punch, 1998:105). The "overriding consideration" in sampling is the "representativeness of that sample or how much it resembles that population in terms of specified characteristics" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:214). Strauss and Corbin further observe that while an effort is made to achieve representativeness, there is a recognition and an acknowledgment that in "reality [a researcher can] never be certain that a sample is completely representative". There are three categories of sampling, namely, the random/probability sampling designs, the non-random/non-probability designs, and the "mixed sampling" designs (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996:183; Kumar, 2005:169).

The distinguishing characteristic of probability sampling is that for each sampling unit of the population a researcher can specify the probability that the unit will be included in the sample (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996:183; Kumar, 2008:177). The distinguishing character of non-probability sampling, on the other hand, is that the probability of each unit's inclusion in the sample cannot be specified, meaning that there is no assurance that every unit has some chance of being included (Frankfort-Nachmias, 1996:183; Kumar, 2008:177). This study employs non-probability sampling.

Non-probability sampling is categorised into four designs namely the convenience samples, the quota samples, the snowball samples and the purposive samples and all of which will be briefly explained next (Gobo, 2007:419; Punch, 1998:105, 193; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996: 184 – 185):

- Convenience samples – in this case a researcher obtains a convenience sample by selecting whatever sampling units are conveniently available. A researcher takes advantage of an accessible situation which may fit the research context and purposes.

- Quota samples – in this case a researcher selects a sample that is as similar as possible to the sampling population. If for instance a researcher is aware that the population researched has equal numbers of males and females, the researcher selects an equal number of males and females in the sample.

- Snowball samples – in this case a researcher selects some subjects who feature the necessary characteristics, and through their recommendations, finds other subjects with the same characteristics.

- Purposive samples – in this case a researcher selects sampling units subjectively in an attempt to obtain a sample that appears to be representative of the population. What this means is that a chance that a particular sampling unit will be selected for the sample depends on the subjective judgment of the researcher. This type of sampling is done in a deliberate way, with some purpose or focus in mind.

In this case the researcher employed purposive samples.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher selected 12 *City Press*' black journalists associated with the political beat in the period 1994 to 2004. All the interviewees were selected on the basis of their involvement with the political beat of the *City Press*. In that sense they individually stood a chance of being selected for the study. Their names are listed below, and the reasons for their selection stated:

- Len Kalane – former editor from 1995 to 2001. He was also a columnist.
- Khathu Mamaila – he first started working for the *City Press* from February 1992 to February 1994. He returned to the *City Press* as its deputy editor in 2004. He was also a columnist.
- Shalo Mbatha – she joined the *City Press* as a Consumer Editor from 1996 to 1997 and left the newspaper in 1997. She returned to the *City Press* in 2003 as Features' Editor until her departure in 2005.
- Sandile Memela – he joined the *City Press* as a general reporter in 1984 until 1986. After leaving the newspaper in 1986 he re-joined it in 1987 and was appointed as a Labour and Politics Reporter. He left the *City Press* before the end of 1987 and returned in 1989, becoming a senior political correspondent. From 1992 to 1997 he became the newspaper's Arts Editor. He left in 1997 and returned in 2001 and became the Insight and Features' Editor until his departure in 2003.
- Mpumelelo Mkhabela – he joined the *City Press* as a general reporter in 1999 and worked for the newspaper until 2007. In 2001 he became the newspaper's Specialist Writer.

- Charles Mogale – he joined the *City Press* in 1988 as a reporter. In 1991 he became the news editor. In 1997 he became the assistant editor.
- Vusi Mona – former editor from 2000 to 2003. He was also a columnist.
- Andile Noganta – he joined the *City Press* as a junior reporter in 1995. From 1997 to 1998 he was a Bureau Chief in East London. From 1998 to 1999 he became the *City Press'* Senior Features' Writer. He left the newspaper in 2001.
- Zoli Nqayi – he joined the *City Press* in 1997 and worked as a political correspondent from then until 2001.
- Mapula Sibanda – she joined the *City Press* in 1997 but left in the same year. She re-joined the newspaper in 1998 until 2008. In 2005 she became Features' Editor.
- Khulu Sibiya – former editor from 1988 to 1995. He was also a columnist.
- Mathatha Tsedu – he joined the *City Press* as the editor in 2004.

All these journalists were connected to the newspaper's political beat during the research period, taking into consideration that the main interest of this research is the political role of the *City Press'* black journalists' political role.

5.4 Summary: Chapter 5

The focus of this chapter was on the Research Design and Methodology for this study. Both the qualitative and quantitative research methodologies were defined and the choice was explained. It was pointed out that the research methodology chosen for this study is the qualitative research methodology. It was also pointed out that the qualitative content analysis technique was used for this study. While this is the case, both the qualitative and quantitative content analysis techniques were defined and it was explained why one was chosen instead of the other. Together with content analysis, it was pointed out that this study employed the interview technique, particularly the basic individual interview, and it was explained why. The research design used is that which is referred to as a case study. This was defined, and it was explained why it is the appropriate research design for this studies. This chapter also provided a list of interviewees and motivated why they were chosen. Interview research questions were also provided.

The next chapter discusses the research findings of this study.

Chapter 6
Research Findings

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section consists of data from the *City Press* published after May 10, 1994 until December 31 2004. These are the *City Press'* editorials, the *City Press'* black journalists' columns and the *City Press'* black journalists' individual opinion pieces.

In order to appreciate the issues at hand and how the *City Press* newspaper dealt with them, this researcher holds the view that a brief background about how the identified issues posed a challenge to the post-apartheid administration is important. Therefore, as a point of departure, the researcher starts off with giving a background of these issues, and thereafter the findings on the *City Press'* editorials and the *City Press'* black journalists' perspectives articulated in columns and opinion pieces.

It will be noted that the *Mail&Guardian* newspaper has been significantly used to give background information on HIV/AIDS. There are two reasons for this approach. Firstly, the *Mail&Guardian* gave extensive coverage and held strong views on HIV/AIDS. Secondly, the *Mail&Guardian* is a newspaper of record in South Africa.

6.2 Background

In this section, the author presents background information about the issues that posed political challenges for post-apartheid South Africa's Governments led by the ANC's Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki. The issues have been identified as crime, the Zimbabwean crisis and HIV/AIDS. These will be dealt with in the order outlined above.

6.2.1 Crime

In this study there are two types of crime that have received attention due to coverage given and focused upon by the *City Press*: common crime and political corruption. Crime can be defined as "an act capable of being followed by criminal proceedings having one of the types of outcome (punishment, and so on) known to follow these proceedings" (Molan, Bloy & Lanser, 2003:16). Political corruption refers to the "unsanctioned or unscheduled use of public resources for private ends" (Lodge, 2002:129). Attention will first be paid to common crime, followed by political corruption.

6.2.1.1 Common crime

It has been observed that (Sparks, 2003:226; Terreblanche, 2002:114;121) the crime wave that engulfed the new South Africa almost from its inception had its roots in the old apartheid order. Sparks attributes the failure on the part of the apartheid government to take note to its massive preoccupation with trying to repress the black uprisings of the 1980s.

According to Sparks, there were two things that were happening that the apartheid government failed to notice. The first was that in the 1980s there was a swift increase in the use of narcotics in South Africa, which meant that profits from the drug trade were increasing dramatically. The second was that at the same time that the use of narcotics was increasing, there was a sharp rise in the number of fortune hunters from various parts of Europe as well as Lebanon, Israel and India who were moving into resource-rich countries such as Zaire (now called the Democratic Republic of Congo), Angola and Zambia, where they were able to take advantage of corrupt governments and poor policing to establish lucrative smuggling operations in commodities such as gold, diamonds, emeralds, cobalt, ivory, rhino horn and drugs in particular. South Africa, according to Sparks, did not escape, as huge quantities of drugs, particularly Mandrax, were smuggled into the country.

The rise in the drug trade gave birth to serious problems in terms of crime. Sparks (2003:227) notes that as crime gangs ran into cash-flow problems in their dealings with their suppliers, they resorted to barter transactions. Motor vehicles, especially luxury cars, became key items in this barter trade. This is what gave birth to an explosion of vehicle hijackings, where motorists were held at gunpoint, sometimes in broad daylight.

Throughout that critical time in the 1980s, while the criminals were running havoc on citizens' lives, Sparks (2003:228) observes that the apartheid government channelled more funds to the Special Branch, the political police who spearheaded counter-revolutionary operations. On the other hand, regular detectives, who were tasked with fighting crime were largely ignored and neglected. Instead of being encouraged to do their duty, some of the regular detectives were seconded to border duty where war was raging in the border separating Angola and South West Africa (now known as Namibia). It was not until 1990, Sparks observes, that the South African authorities woke up to what was happening inside South Africa. Alluding to Sparks' assertions, Terreblanche (2002:43) notes that

"[d]uring the heyday of apartheid only one in ten members of the police was engaged in crime detection and investigation; the other nine were engaged in efforts to protect the apartheid regime".

In 1994 the ANC gained political power and headed the Government of National Unity (GNU). The police who were once called upon to fight against the ANC and black people in general, were expected to serve a country governed by the same party they fought against, and the very people who were said to be enemies. Sparks (2003:229) describes this change for the police as a "bewildering experience". He further observes that it was

"[s]mall wonder they felt disillusioned, demotivated and demoralized, and that in their disillusionment many simply crossed the line to become criminals themselves. While some left the police service to join the criminal syndicates or form new ones of their own, others remained in the service but provided crucial services to the criminal syndicates in the form of documents for forging and changing the serial numbers of stolen vehicles, and even the destruction of police investigation dockets to abort prosecutions." (Sparks, 2003:229).

This assertion by Sparks is also alluded to by the *City Press*, as will be seen later in this chapter. Next, the focus turns to political corruption.

6.2.1.2 Political Corruption

Lodge (2002:133) points out that a large proportion of the corruption reports which have appeared in newspapers since 1994 reflect behavioural patterns inherited from the old apartheid regime. One example relates to the apartheid government's Department of Defence. Lodge (2002:133) notes that during the 1980s the Department of Defence spent around R4 billion per annum on secret projects. Lodge observes that although much of this money would have been expended on arms procurement, this in itself supplied plenty of opportunity for private profit, with officials setting up ostensibly private companies in foreign countries and awarding themselves comfortable salaries. Lodge further observes that in Namibia, the Military Intellligence set up a company, Inter Frama, purportedly to generate income for Jonas Savimbi, the leader of the National Union for Total Independence (UNITA). The company became a conduit for ivory and mandrax smuggling, the profits landing into the pockets of UNITA and the South African Defence Force (SADF) commanders (Lodge, 2002:133).

One of the major scandals – if not the major – that shook the new South Africa involved arms dealings (Gevisser, 2007:676; Feinstein, 2007:218 – 219). In June 2005, the then South African president, Thabo Mbeki, fired his deputy, Jacob Zuma, after Judge Hilary Squires found Schabir Shaik guilty of facilitating an annual bribe of R500 000 for Zuma from Thomson-CSF, a French arms company that sought Zuma's support in securing a slice in a £5.2 billion arms deal (Gevisser, 2007:676; Feinstein, 2007:218 – 219). Tracing the genesis of the arms deal controversy in South Africa, Feinstein (2007:155) points out that in the early years of the democratic government, the South African parliament had conducted a Defence Review proposing a modernisation of the country's defence force.

During this period – in 1998 to be specific – Feinstein further points out that as competition for the lucrative arms contracts intensified, British Aerospace, now known as BAE Systems, made a generous donation of R5 million to Umkhonto WeSizwe Military Veterans Association (MKMVA), whose Life President was Joe Modise, and also South Africa's Minister of Defence. Modise reportedly also received between R10 million and R35 million in cash from a variety of the bidders (Feinstein, 2007:155).

Following revelations by Patricia de Lille, the then Pan Africanist Congress' (PAC) Member of Parliament, in the year 2000, that the ruling party (the ANC) had fraudulently benefitted from an arms deal involving foreign companies, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA) launched an inquiry (Gevisser, 2007:679). An Auditor-General's report which SCOPA also made use of, found out that there had been a litany of irregularities in the procurement of the armaments and weapons (Feinstein, 2007:158). The Auditor-General's report, Feinstein further asserts, revealed that by far the most expensive of the contracts, the decision was taken to exclude cost as a criterion. This assertion emerged on the basis of an observation that a contract was awarded to BAE/SAAB, whose tender was almost twice as expensive as that by an Italian company, Aeromachi. It is worth noting at this point that BAE was the same company that reportedly gave money to MKMVA, an association associated with Joe Modise.

Another irregularity related to a conflict of interest which involved Chippy Shaik, the Director of Procurement in the Defence Force, who allegedly favoured his brother, Schabir, in the awarding of a contract. Schabir Shaik was a director of the African Defence Systems (ADS), a

company that was involved in the bidding for sub-contracts (Feinstein, 2007:164). Fifty per cent of ADS was owned by Thomson-CSF.

It also emerged that the former ANC chief whip, Tony Yengeni, had been a recipient of a Mercedes 4X4 from the European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company (EADS) which had been ordered by EADS from the manufacturers as a "staff car" (Lodge, 2002:147). Yengeni resigned as chief whip in October 2001 after being charged with corruption and perjury over his acceptance of the car from EADS.

6.2.1.3 Summary: Background to the crime problem in post-apartheid South Africa

This section gave a background to the challenge of crime that confronted the democratic South Africa since its inception in 1994. It was indicated that both common crime and political corruption had their genesis in the apartheid administration and spilled over into the democratic dispensation.

Discussed next is the Zimbabwean crisis.

6.2.2 The Zimbabwean Crisis

Close to two years after ascending to the office of the presidency, and being involved in efforts to bring about political stability in Zimbabwe, the *Mail&Guardian* newspaper (*Mail&Guardian* Comment&Analysis, 2001:26) asserted that the then President Thabo Mbeki's "quiet diplomacy" had been a singular failure. Its editorial argued that instead of confronting Robert Mugabe's "crude, brutal and idiotic" rule, Mbeki had shown a timid approach. The newspaper expected him to pursue a more "robust policy towards Mugabe". The *Mail&Guardian (Mail&Guardian* Comment&Analysis, 2000a:20) held the view that since South Africa supplied "most of Zimbabwe's electricity and fuel", Mbeki's government could close Zimbabwe down in a month. At this point it would be helpful to retrace the events that gave birth to the Zimbabwean crisis.

In March 2000, ex-combatants forcibly entered and took over about 70 white-owned commercial farms (Makunike, 2000:11). Iden Wetherell (2000:12), the *Zimbabwe Independent* editor whose writings regularly appeared in the *Mail&Guardian*, observed that this development was Mugabe's "move to unleash ex-combatants of the liberation war on to productive farms to punish their white owners for helping to reject his constitutional proposals". The constitutional proposals referred to by Wetherell were contained in a draft

constitution prepared by a commission appointed by Zimbabwe's government aimed at being adopted before elections scheduled for April 2000 (Hartnack, 1999:8). Among the proposals entailed in the draft constitution was the Zimbabwean government's intention to redistribute "millions of hectares of white-owned land" (Sapa-AFP, 1999:4).

The draft constitution "adopted a clause, likely to spark an outcry, allowing the government to seize land for resettlement without paying compensation", the compensation to be paid being only for buildings and other structural improvements (Mandizvidza, 1999:4). Before the draft constitution was presented to the public, critics argued that the process was flawed and open to manipulation by the ruling party whose final product would misrepresent the opinions voiced by Zimbabweans from all walks of life (Sayagues, 1999:5). When objections were raised to the draft constitution, the government promised to offer Zimbabweans a chance to reject the draft in a referendum to be held early in the year 2000 (Sapa-AFP, 1999:4).

True to its promise, the government held a referendum in February 2000. The government's draft constitution was rejected – 55% voted against, while 45% voted for it (Sayagues, 2000:6). The "No vote", according to Sayagues, was an indication of "the end of Zanu-PF's yoke over the country" and that "people are no longer open to populist promises, deceit and manipulation". The results of the referendum were "hailed by many as the beginning of the end of Mugabe" (Pretorius, 2000:11). Makunike (2000:11) observes that on the day of the referendum white Zimbabweans, who had "always stayed aloof of political involvement since independence in 1980 – thronged the polling stations to protect their interests and property". That was because, according to Makunike, for white Zimbabweans a "No" vote was the only way they could protect their privileges.

Not only did Mugabe unleash the ex-combatants against his opponents, but also, according to his critics, the armed forces as well (Sayagues, 2001:13). When the privately-owned newspaper, the *Daily News*, was bombed, Sayagues (2001:13) wrote that "State terrorism has escalated in Zimbabwe with Sunday's bomb attack on the independent newspaper, the *Daily News*". The bombing, according to Sayagues, showed "a qualitative jump in army involvement, coupled with arrogant disregard for self-incrimination – a signature bombing".

The Zimbabwean referendum was followed by the presidential elections which were also contested by the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) led by Morgan Tsvangirai. The elections were won by Mugabe. The *Mail&Guardian* newspaper was livid, as

reflected in its editorial (*Mail&Guardian* Comment&Analysis, 2002a:22). It noted that Mbeki's response to the outcome of the elections had to "confront the reality that Robert Mugabe is back in power and should not be there".

The *Mail&Guardian* (*Mail&Guardian* Comment&Analysis, 2002a:22) expected Mbeki to "appreciate that it is vital that Mugabe absent himself, or be removed, from government in Zimbabwe as quickly as possible". But Mbeki did not subscribe to this view. Instead, after a week of silence, his acceptance of Mugabe's victory was announced by his cabinet's statement which stated that "President Mbeki has noted and accepted the report of the South African parliamentary observer mission" (Forrest & Pressly, 2002:07).

In May 2003, Mbeki along with Obasanjo and Malawian president Bakili Muluzi went to meet Mugabe and Tsvangirai, in a bid to resolve the Zimbabwean crisis (Kindra & Masunda, 2003:2). The *Mail&Guardian* (Kindra & Masunda, 2003:2) reported that while the country was "agog" that the visit would result in an announcement of a transitional government run by Zanu-PF and the MDC, the "three leaders issued a lukewarm statement after the talks, stating that Mugabe and MDC president Morgan Tsvangirai were ready to meet" without stating a firm date or venue. Remarking on Mbeki's continued efforts on Zimbabwe, Wetherell (2003:15) noted that the visit "failed to shift Mugabe from entrenched positions, thus exposing the much-vaunted New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) as a toothless totem".

In response to charges that his mission to Zimbabwe was a failure, Mbeki (2003b:31) charged that his "detractors" were "firm in their conviction that we have some divine right to dictate to the people of Zimbabwe". He also pointed out that his "detractors" believed that if South Africa issued some "instructions" to the political leaders of Zimbabwe, this leadership would obey what the "baas" (Afrikaans word for "boss") across the Limpopo would have told them. In unequivocal terms, Mbeki rejected such a position, stating that South Africa "will never treat Zimbabwe as the 10th province of South Africa".

When the Zimbabwean government refused to grant the *Daily News* a licence to publish following the newspaper's refusal to register with the state and to have its journalists accredited, according to the government's new law known as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), Mbeki's "quiet diplomacy" was condemned by the

Mail&Guardian (*Mail&Guardian* Comment&Analysis, 2003:32), and dismissed as "a national disgrace" by the *Sunday Times* (*Sunday Times* Editorial, 2003:20).

The condemnatory tone of the *Sunday Times* was echoed by Bill Saidi, *The Daily News on Sunday*'s editor in an opinion piece published in the *Mail&Guardian* entitled "The curse of quiet diplomacy" (Saidi, 2003:14). Saidi pointed out that "most of what was happening to ANZ (Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe – the publishers of the *Daily News*) was a result of the „quiet diplomacy' launched by Mbeki to help the people of Zimbabwe to find real meaning in their hard-fought independence".

6.2.3 Summary: Background to the Zimbabwean crisis

This section dealt with the background to the crisis of Zimbabwe and Mbeki's efforts in playing a mediating role. This section showed that Mbeki's mediation role was condemned as a failure by newspapers such as the *Mail&Guardian* and *Sunday Times* which expected him to take strong measures against Mugabe. The *Mail&Guardian*, in particular, expected South Africa to impose economic strangulation against Zimbabwe so that the latter could stop the forceful takeover of white-owned land. Mbeki disagreed with that approach and insisted on dialogue with Mugabe.

HIV/AIDS and the challenges they posed in the democratic dispensation are discussed next.

6.2.4 HIV/AIDS in South Africa

Twenty two months after former president Thabo Mbeki took over the reigns from Nelson Mandela in June 1999, the *Mail&Guardian* (*Mail&Guardian* Comment&Analysis, 2001:26) declared Mbeki's period in power a "disastrous reign". According to the newspaper, Mbeki's disasters were glaring in his handling of HIV/AIDS, his "timidity over Zimbabwe" and his "attempts to re-racialise" South African politics. The *Mail&Guardian*'s comment came about as a result of Mbeki's statement, televised on e.tv in June 2001 that it was irrelevant for him to take an AIDS test because such would set an example "within the context of a particular paradigm". In the *Mail&Guardian*'s view, Mbeki's "statement on e.tv sounded like someone who does not believe the link between HIV and Aids". Against this background, in the *Mail&Guardian*'s view, Mbeki sounded like "a dissident without the courage of his convictions".

The term "AIDS dissident" was used in reference to those, who, in the early days of AIDS science differed from mainstream scientists who claimed that one virus could cause many diseases (Nattrass, 2007:24). While dissent and critique are central to science, Nattrass (2007:24 – 25) argues that

> "once it was shown that HIV worked by undermining the immune system, thereby rendering the body vulnerable to a host of opportunistic infections, their [dissidents] concerns should have been put to rest".

Nattrass further points out that those who resisted even after "all evidence" was given to address their concerns, were "aptly referred to as AIDS denialists".

While some "denialists" reject the existence of HIV and others do not, Nattrass (2007:22 – 23) points out that what "unites them all is their unshakable belief that the existing canon on AIDS science is wrong and that AIDS deaths are caused by malnutrition, narcotics and ARV drugs themselves". Adding his voice to the "dissidence/denialism" discourse on Mbeki, former University of Cape Town's (UCT) Vice Chancellor, Njabulo Ndebele (2004:76) notes that upon searching "for the definite statement by Mbeki in which he denies the link between HIV and AIDS …I have not found it" (Ndebele, 2004:76). In a direct response to Ndebele's observation, Nattrass (2007:35) notes that

> "AIDS denialists, however, rarely make categorical statements to the effect that HIV does not cause AIDS, but rather claim that there is genuine scientific „debate' on the matter while insinuating that the body of science is corrupt and incorrect".

Nattrass further points out that "Mbeki's AIDS denialism can be gleaned from the fact that he questioned rather than affirmed the link between HIV and AIDS".

Before getting deeper into the AIDS controversy in South Africa that surrounded Mbeki, it is necessary to examine how HIV/AIDS was dealt with before Mbeki became South Africa's president in 1999.

6.2.4.1 HIV/AIDS in Mandela's era as South Africa's president

Nattrass (2007:40) observes that AIDS did not appear to be a priority in the early years of the post-apartheid democratic state. It took Mandela almost three years to make his first major statement against AIDS – at an international audience in Davos. Gevisser (2007:732) observes that Mandela, "who was awkward" talking about sex matters, passed responsibility for AIDS to his deputy – Mbeki. Mbeki was given an inter-ministerial committee on AIDS to chair. During Mandela's period as president, the government was involved in two exercises that received negative response. The first was the government's support for an AIDS awareness play, *Sarafina II*, and a home-grown anti-retroviral known as Virodene (Nattrass, 2007:41; Gevisser, 2007:732). Since the *Sarafina II* project is dealt with later in this chapter, attention will now be given to the Virodene saga.

6.2.4.1.1 The Virodene Saga

The Virodene saga is traced back to 1997 when the University of Pretoria scientists, Ziggy Visser and Olga Visser, approached the then Minister of Health, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, about an unofficial trial they were conducting on AIDS patients (Nattrass, 2007:42). The Vissers informed Dlamini-Zuma that an antifreeze solution, which they called Virodene, was an effective antiviral medication. Subsequently, Dlamini-Zuma invited the Vissers to present their results to the Cabinet. They did so, bringing along several of the people they were treating. When those living with AIDS testified how Virodene was helping them recover, the "cabinet gave the Vissers a standing ovation" and committed to supporting the Virodene research up to the completion of the Medicine Control Council (MCC) process (Natrass, 2007:42).

The MCC, a body that operates through a network of committees drawing on independent scientists, usually based at universities, whose task is to manage the registration of medicines and ongoing assurance of the quality of medicines on the market, refused permission to the Vissers to continue with the Virodene after finding a range of scientific problems with the medication (Nattrass, 2007:42-43). When the MCC rejected the Virodene, Mbeki and Dlamini-Zuma were reportedly unhappy with the MCC, with Mbeki accusing the MCC of sacrificing the lives of those who lived with HIV/AIDS (Nattrass, 2007:43; Sparks, 2003:285).

Dlamini-Zuma further accused the MCC of being in league with big drug companies (Gumede, 2005:154). Subsequent to this, an independent review panel led by the South

African Medical Research Council found that Virodene "was in fact highly toxic" and caused severe liver damage. Not only did Dlamini-Zuma experience conflict between herself and the MCC, but she soon found herself on a collision course with the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC).

The TAC was formed as an independent organisation in 1999 after having been part of the government-sponsored National Association of People Living With HIV/AIDS (NAPWA) after its formation in December 1998 (Nattrass, 2007:45). The dissatisfaction was due to the TAC's perception of the inability of NAPWA to effectively pressurise the government to use a medication called AZT for mother-to-child transmission prevention (MTCTP). This was after trials on a short course of AZT reduced maternal transmission from 18.9% to 9.4%. In October 1998 Dlamini-Zuma suspended MTCTP sites that had been set up by the Ministry of Health citing unaffordability as a reason (Nattrass, 2007:45). As will be shown later in this chapter, the TAC took it upon itself to wage public and court battles with the government to provide AZT to those who needed it.

6.2.4.2 HIV/AIDS in Mbeki's era as South Africa's president

In 1999 Mandela handed over the reigns of government to Mbeki. While Dlamini-Zuma cited unaffordability as the reason for the government not providing AZT, Mbeki (1999) announced that his government was concerned about two issues relating to AZT: the first was that there were legal cases pending in South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States against AZT on the basis that AZT was harmful to health; the second was that there existed a large volume of scientific literature alleging that, among other things, the toxicity of AZT.

The statement by Mbeki (1999) in his address to the National Council of Provinces on October 28, 1999, on the toxicity of AZT, was not received kindly. A Stellenbosch University zoology lecturer, Michael Cherry (2000:9), observed that Mbeki's assertion was based on "uncertain and perhaps misguided grounds of safety". Cherry pointed out that Mbeki's claims of legal cases against AZT in SA, the USA and UK were denied by Peter Moore, the medical director for Sub-Saharan Africa for Glaxo Wellcome, the drug's manufacturer. While conceding that AZT had some potentially negative side effects, Cherry argued that the benefits of the drug were considered to outweigh substantially its risks in the management and prevention of HIV infection, particularly in the early stages of the disease.

Refuting Mbeki's claim about the existence of a large volume of scientific literature alleging the toxicity of AZT, Cherry further pointed out that the Medical Research Council president, Malegapuru Makgoba, had pointed out that he had "read nothing in the scientific or medical literature that indicates that AZT should not be provided". Mbeki, in return, did not take kindly to Cherry's criticism. In an interview with the *Sunday Times* (Robertson, Hartley & Paton, 2000:5), reacting to Cherry's piece which had appeared in the *Business Day*, Mbeki pointed out that Cherry's point about Makgoba not having read anything in literature discouraging the use of AZT, exposed "university people, professors and scientists" who comment on issues they have not read about.

Mbeki's statement on the toxicity of AZT, it has been suggested, was influenced by an AIDS dissident, Anthony Brink, who had given Mbeki and senior health officials copies of his book "which argued that the so-called life-giving drug was highly toxic" (Gumede, 2005:158). Sparks (2003:286) asserts that Mbeki "confirmed" to him (Sparks) that Brink was responsible for Mbeki's awareness of an "alternative viewpoint" about HIV and AIDS. This new information, according to Gumede (2005:158), caused Mbeki to surf into the internet for more information, accessing more dissidents' views which led Mbeki "to question whether HIV caused AIDS and whether the virus was sexually transmitted".

It was in the context of these incidents that Mbeki was labelled an AIDS dissident and denialist. This was especially the case when Mbeki, in his effort to understand the conflicting standpoints on HIV/AIDS and the treatment thereof, set up a Presidential AIDS Advisory Panel "with equal representation of AIDS denialists and scientists" (Nattrass, 2007:54). Reflecting on this move by Mbeki, Gevisser (2007:748) observes that "[t]here was certainly enough evidence, in his appointment of his panel, that Mbeki questioned the link between HIV and AIDS". But Ndebele (2004:77) disagrees with Gevisser's reasoning.

In Ndebele's (2004:77) view, Mbeki's act of establishing an AIDS Advisory panel was "painfully scientific" in that if a person seeks to understand an issue as fully as possible, the inquirer must bring together people with contrasting views. Aware that by bringing together "those declared dissidents with discredited views, he was declared a dissident or a person who gives credence to dissidents", Ndebele (2004:77 – 78) insists that he "did not see Mbeki as expressing a preference for the dissident view" but exhibited "only a desire to better understand its possible implications for a broader strategy".

These developments led to the *Mail&Guardian* (*Mail&Guardian* Comment&Analysis, 2001:26) moving from saying that Mbeki "sounded like someone who does not believe the link between HIV and Aids". The newspaper later categorically labelled his stance as a "denialist position on HIV/Aids" from which it was "difficult to draw any comfort from the cruel and arrogant stupidity" (*Mail&Guardian* Comment&Analysis, 2002b:24). The *Mail&Guardian* (2000b:26) had a clear position on the causal link between HIV and AIDS, and "need[ed] the president simply to say: Yes, HIV causes Aids". The *Mail&Guardian*'s call to Mbeki to endorse its view was provoked by Mbeki's response to the *Time* magazine regarding HIV/AIDS. Asked whether he would acknowledge the link between HIV and AIDS, Mbeki responded thus: "No, I am saying that you cannot attribute immune deficiency solely and exclusively to a virus" (Beresford, Kindra & Deane, 2000:4; Redman & Hawthorne, 2000).

6.2.4.3 Summary: HIV/AIDS' challenges during Mandela and Mbeki's presidency

This section traced challenges post-apartheid South Africa faced with regards to HIV and AIDS during the presidencies of Mandela and Mbeki. During Mandela's presidency, the government came in for criticism for its support for an AIDS awareness play, *Sarafina II*, and a home-grown anti-retroviral known as Virodene. During Mbeki's presidency, Mbeki was singled out as an AIDS denialist and dissident when he raised concerns about the toxicity of AZT, and his establishment of an AIDS Advisory panel which included AIDS "dissidents".

6.2.5 Summary: Background

This section began by pointing out that crime, the Zimbabwean crisis, and HIV/AIDS and Mbeki's approach to the latter two issues have been identified as major political challenges in the first ten years of democracy in South Africa – the period which is the focus of this research. It has been observed that both common crime and political corruption, which emerged as challenges of the post-apartheid government, have their genesis in the apartheid era.

Mbeki's handling of the Zimbabwean crisis was met with condemnation and criticism. On the issue of HIV/AIDS, the background section showed that the manner in which Mbeki handled HIV/AIDS both during Mandela's and Mbeki's own presidency invited public condemnation from the media and the scientific community.

Next, the researcher is presenting the responses recorded in the *City Press* newspaper, represented in the newspaper's editorials, and the *City Press*' black journalists' columns and opinion pieces. The same order – crime, the Zimbabwean crisis and HIV/AIDS – is followed.

6.3 Section One
Research Findings drawn from the *City Press*' editorials, the *City Press*' black journalists' columns and opinion pieces

6.3.1 Introduction

In this section editorials, which do not carry by-lines, will be referenced as "*City Press* Comment", whereas individual *City Press* black journalists' columns and opinion pieces will be referenced according to the authors' names. In some cases, for the purpose of clarity, other reports which appeared in the *City Press* and other newspapers are used as a context. The first issue to be dealt with next is crime, divided into common crime and political corruption.

6.3.1.1 Common Crime

Within three months after the inauguration of the Government of National Unity, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1994:16) sensitised the government about crime, pointing out that crime was "[o]ne of the gravest problems facing the new government". In this editorial comment the newspaper pointed out that the effects were felt across communities.

The editorial pointed out that the "psychology which runs rampant in the streets and in the hearts and minds of the criminals, is a merciless beast" which "must be fought with all we have at our disposal. Philosophising, glib explanations and community forums might work to an extent." Unequivocally, the editorial pointed out that what the newspaper was "saying, or rather advocating, is that the crime problems that confront our society and police everyday in the streets and our homes, demand hard answers".

A week later, the newspaper's journalist, Sekola Sello (1994:16) reiterated the sentiments expressed in the previous week's editorial. Sello noted that

> "[i]f there are divisions between blacks and whites about what the government's priorities should be or how to approach these problems, there is common ground on one issue – crime".

Failure to deal with crime decisively, the newspaper (*City Press* Comment, 1995a:14) warned, could have "serious social, political and economic implications". These implications could be the further soaring of crime, resulting in foreign investors fleeing, something the country could ill afford, the newspaper argued.

The editorial went further than just identifying the problem. It diagnosed some contributing factors and prescribed some cures. It pointed out that something drastic needed to be done about young black people without a sense of purpose, and their education. Their lack of purpose and direction, the editorial pointed out, resulted in them wasting their lives and treating criminal acts like car hijackings, drug dealing, gangsterism and a host of other destructive forms of behaviour as the norm (*City Press* Comment, 1995a:14).

Close to the first anniversary of South Africa's first democratic elections, the newspaper felt vindicated in its predictions that crime would hurt the country's economy. The *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1995b:16) pointed out that in April 1995, Gauteng's Primrose Gold Mine had closed down due to violence. More frightening, the editorial further pointed out, "was the SA Chamber of Business' statement that our country's frightening crime rate and lawless image is deterring foreign investment and forcing some local companies to close down".

In May 1995 the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1995c:16) boldly asserted that the problem facing the country was not just lawlessness but lunacy as well, and warned that unless this was confronted, "our country will soon be reduced to a state of lunacy". In protest, its editorial argued that

> "[u]nlike the bad old days of apartheid, where many crime-related incidents were politically motivated, what we experience these days is nothing but lawlessness and lunacy".

The editorial further argued that freedom "should not only lie on the political front but in our daily movements as well". What this meant was that it was not enough to vote for a democratic government. What was needed was that the democratic government should exercise its duty of protecting its citizens.

Not content with just protesting, the editorial challenged the then Minister of Safety and Security, Sydney Mufumadi, by pointing out that the *City Press*' (*City Press* Comment, 1995c:16)

> "understanding is that many carjackings are instrumented by a syndicate of druglords – some of them well-known even to the police – who sell the cars in African countries for drugs".

The editorial further warned that unless Mufamadi did something, "[h]istory will judge Mufamadi harshly."

The editorial further expressed a belief that if there were some form of severe deterrent – like a death penalty, or many years in prison – "these youngsters would not be causing the havoc they are presently doing".

6.3.1.2 The *City Press* for the death penalty

On the issue of the death penalty, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1995d:16) was out of step with the government. In June 1995, the Constitutional Court did away with capital punishment (*City Press* Comment, 1995d:16). Reacting to this development, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1995d:16) expressed discomfort with the decision, observing that

> "[f]rankly speaking, we do not believe that there is any concrete evidence in support of either position. But claims that judicial killings are barbaric and have no place in a modern society are less than convincing."

The editorial further argued that there "are certain crimes which are so revolting and brutal that society must ask whether the lives of perpetrators of such evil deserve to be spared". In an opinion piece written the same day, while emphasising that his opinion was "a personal opinion and doesn't necessarily reflect the position of *City Press* on this issue", Sello (1995a:16) unequivocally declared that he was "in favour of capital punishment for certain crimes" and further declared that he believed that "abolishing the death penalty was the first blunder by this government". Taking such a stance, Sello further noted, was not easy for him, considering that he had had acquaintances and friends executed by the apartheid regime. But similar to the *City Press*' editorial published on the same day as his opinion piece, Sello was convinced that there were "certain crimes which are so repulsive that the only fitting

punishment is to pass the death penalty". He argued that the repeal of the death penalty would make criminals more bold in the future, "knowing that they will not pay with their lives".

While on the one hand South Africans had to deal with the reality of the repeal of the death penalty, violence in the form of "[t]axi killings in our township" went on "unabated" (*City Press* Comment, 1995e:16). The *City Press'* editorial (*City Press* Comment, 1995e:16) further protested that "this government and the one before it have done little to deter those who commit these dastardly acts". In an open letter to Mufamadi, the *City Press'* journalist Charles Mogale (1995:16) pointed out that Mufamadi's "threats to clamp down, and President Mandela's alleged declaration of war against crime, have all come down to naught". Mogale demanded to know:

> "What happened to all the pre-election talk that ex-president FW de Klerk did not have the „political will' to stop the violence? One assumes that you and the president have the political will to do what FW would or could not do. What's up?"

The *City Press* was not just challenging the government alone, but citizens as well. Remarking on reported rampant cases of child abuses, involving "raping [of] children as young as three and even younger," in an editorial, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1995f:16) remarked that it was "not just strangers or neighbours who are guilty of these brutalities; in some cases parents are said to be responsible for abusing their own children". Such acts flew "against the grain of ubuntu/botho". The editorial warned that "[u]ntil parents and various organs of civil society show collective anger and say enough is enough, the abuse of our children will continue". This sentiment was echoed later by Sello (1995b:16) who observed that "it was about time the communities stood up to say enough is enough".

When some citizens rose to the *City Press'* call to take responsibility in combating crime, Sello (1995b:16) openly acknowledged the initiative. This happened when some young people in Sebokeng township called a rally where they outlined their plans in fighting against crime. However, in the same piece, Sello noted that the low turnout to the youth's call was a clear indication in his view that "our communities are not taking this scourge of child abuse seriously". He also lamented the politicians' lack of interest, noting that "one has since realised that most of them are too busy trying to get onto the gravy train".

While the *City Press* gave the politicians a tongue lashing for what the newspaper perceived as failure to deal with crime decisively, it gave praise when it recognised some effort in combating crime. After a meeting with Mufamadi, the then *City Press* editor, Khulu Sibiya, left the meeting convinced that Mufamadi was committed to getting the job of fighting crime done (Sibiya, 1996b:16). A month after commending Mufamadi for his efforts in fighting crime, the *City Press'* editorial welcomed the national crime prevention strategy unveiled by the government towards the end of May in 1996 (*City Press* Comment, 1996a:16). While the editorial said that the government's intentions should be lauded, it also cautioned against "any illusion that fighting criminals in whatever guise…is going to be easy".

In the week following the welcoming of the government's strategy to combat crime, noting that the team was "excited" when the strategy was unveiled, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1996b:16) now observed that "the ink had hardly dried on the white paper when criminals struck again and in fact stepped up their activities". The editorial was in reaction to the slaying of Piet and Pietman van Rensburg, father and brother of the Transvaal rugby flyhalf, Louis van Rensburg. In the attack Louis van Rensburg sustained a gunshot wound in the neck that landed him in hospital. Outraged, the *City Press* editorial called on the government to "bring back the death penalty" (*City Press* Comment, 1996b:16). It strongly argued that because of the government's concern for human rights, some criminals were now getting first class-treatment in jail where they received good food and watched their favourite sports on colour TV. The editorial called for an end to these amenities to "make them realise that crime does not pay".

Failure on the part of the government to bring back the death penalty, Sibiya (1996c:14) noted, was an act of ignoring a "strong enough message to the government about the feelings of ordinary people who want to go about with their lives in a peaceful manner". This negligence, Sibiya further pointed out, could very soon see some people calling for the resignation of the government. In other words, Sibiya was saying that some citizens were losing faith in the government and would soon declare their vote of no confidence. For the *City Press* it was not enough just to call on the government to reinstate the death penalty or to claim that this was a popular view. In its first edition in September 1996, the newspaper "devoted most of our editorial space to highlight the unprecedented levels of crime" (*City Press* Comment, 1996c:14).

6.3.1.3 The *City Press* calls for a referendum on the death penalty

The newspaper pledged to do the same with subsequent editions so as to give a platform to its "readers to be involved in telling us, and the government, what must be done". This move was an indication that the *City Press* was no longer content with asking the government to call a referendum on the death penalty, but was taking the initiative to do so. In carrying out the survey, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1996c:14) believed that "[w]hat the readers say should be an indication enough for the government to know how its citizens feel about the death penalty". Boldly, the editorial comment (*City Press* Comment, 1996c:14) pointed out that "[w]e cannot just accept the views of President Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, neither can we simply accept what the ANC Youth League or Nafcoc have to say about the matter".

What the editorial comment was saying was that prominent leaders' opinions on the death penalty were neither final nor sacrosanct. More significant for the *City Press* was a

> "growing concern in our communities that those passive about crime are so because they have bodyguards night and day and are protected in their safe houses and in the streets by taxpayers' money" (*City Press* Comment, 1996c:14).

While the *City Press*' official position advocated the return of the death penalty, this was not a sentiment shared by all its journalists.

6.3.1.4 A *City Press*' journalist opposes the newspaper's call for the death penalty

In particular, one staff member, Benison Makele (1996:17) strongly opposed capital punishment. In his argument, Makele noted that it was not insignificant that many of the gruesome crimes committed were carried out by teenagers. He argued that it needed to be remembered that those who stood accused of crime were the very people who, at the height of the anti-apartheid struggle, were involved in using violent ways in pursuit of the objectives of the struggle. The struggle, Makele further argued

> "had been the cauldron in which the youth were hardened by experience, the circumcision school which had initiated them into manhood – but the

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superficial end of that struggle left them in a void, with their lives stripped of all meaning".

Left unemployed and without any education, Makele further pointed out, these youths had now turned to using their war skills they had learnt during the anti-apartheid struggle to give their lives meaning and purpose – to the detriment of the very same communities they had striven to liberate.

Instead of the gallows, Makele noted that what was needed by the country were massive youth development projects to fill the void in the youths' lives. In a clear opposition to his newspaper's stance, Makele asserted that

> "the government does not have to budge…and pander to the whims of the pro-death penalty lobby by allowing such a referendum – because, should such a plebiscite be held, chances are that people, inspired by emotion and revulsion and not rational considerations, will vote overwhelmingly in favour of the hangman".

He expressed a belief that hanging criminals "won't help and would tend to promote the view that one becomes a criminal out of conscious choice – which is not true". In the week in which Makele expressed a view that the government should not hold a referendum on the death penalty, Mandela "rejected calls for a review of the death penalty and said public concern over the matter was due to lack of information" (*City Press* Comment, 1996d:14). Mandela reportedly went on to say that he would not ask the ANC's National Executive Committee to discuss the matter.

6.3.1.5 The *City Press* challenges Mandela on the death penalty

The *City Press* was incensed by these remarks. In its editorial comment (*City Press* Comment, 1996d:14) the newspaper unequivocally declared that Mandela was "wrong" to say that those calling for the return of the death penalty were clamouring for this due to lack of information about the strategies the government was applying to eradicate crime. If the populace was ignorant, the *City Press* further charged, the fault lay with the government in not making the citizens aware of such measures. What the people certainly experienced, the *City Press* further asserted, was the lawlessness that prevailed in the country, police failure to apprehend the

criminals, how easy it was for suspects to get bail "even in serious cases", and how lenient the courts were towards criminals.

This editorial observed that South Africans should "accept that as long as President Nelson Mandela is still head of state, there is no likelihood of the government changing its position on the question of the death penalty" and that statements by other leading ANC members "also indicated that as long as the party was still in power, the return of the death penalty was out of question". What this meant was that for as long as the ANC government was in power, the people's wish – the return of the death penalty – would not be respected. The *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1996d:14) believed strongly that the "cries of these people (expressing their support for the death penalty) need to be heeded if our government claims that it represented the feelings of the masses" (*City Press* Comment, 1996d:14). The implication here was that the ANC government's claim to representing the will of the people was false.

Not only was the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1998a:16) contented with charging that the government was not heeding the people's voices, but the newspaper went further to ask why it was that "under a democratic dispensation criminals could get away with murder when they could not under a totalitarian regime". In a direct reference to the then president, Nelson Mandela, and his government, the editorial comment argued further that

> "[t]hese are the questions President Nelson Mandela and his government should be seriously considering, because come 1999 the electorate will remind them".

The statement could be read as a veiled threat that failure on the part of the government to address the death penalty question in an expected manner would result in the rejection of the government by the people because people vote for a government that protects them and their families. Inversely, a government that does not protect people and their families – which in this case the *City Press* believed the government did not – would not be voted for by the people.

The following week the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1998b:14) revisited the issue of the perception about the democratic government's inability to protect the citizens from crime. Its editorial comment recalled that in apartheid days the police were an efficient lot who, when it

suited the apartheid government, could surround whole townships, where "each house and person [were] searched thoroughly". The editorial proceeded:

> "Today we have a democracy that we should all be proud of. Where are those policemen now? For now is the time to police the nation – the democracy – with zeal and dedication."

Two weeks after the *City Press* raised the question about the whereabouts of the police when they were needed, the newspaper's then editor, Len Kalane (1998a:16), offered an answer. Kalane argued that the South African military and police forces consisted of people who could not reconcile themselves with the reality of a post-apartheid and non-racial government. They were the ones, argued Kalane, who were behind the masterminding of heists and "whose agenda, shall we say, seems to be driven purely by political motives". Kalane pointed out that their "aim is to give a feeling of intense criminal activity" and to portray the ANC government as dismally failing to contain crime. Three months later, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1998c:14) echoed this sentiment in an editorial, emphasising that

> "there are people out there in the military bases who still yearn for the return of apartheid. These are people who would do anything to undermine President Nelson Mandela's democratic government."

While Kalane's claim was based on conjecture, the editorial comment's claim was based on information that the police had apprehended three soldiers connected to the theft of weapons from a Bloemfontein military base (*City Press* Comment, 1998c:14). Commenting on the arrest later, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1998d:16) pointed out that "[u]nless proved otherwise, we strongly believe those stolen arms were not for personal use by the thieves but were meant to be used to destabilise the country". This stance on the part of the *City Press* revealed that while the newspaper had harsh words for perceived failure on the part of the government to deal decisively with crime, it recognised that the task faced by the government was not an easy one, but one fraught with complexities.

In indicating its appreciation for these complexities, in an editorial comment (*City Press* Comment, 1999a:6) following a revelation by the then National Police Commissioner, George Fivaz, that almost one in four South African policemen were functionally illiterate, the newspaper said that "[t]this shocking revelation by Fivaz, especially in the light of the high

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crime rate in South Africa, has given us clear insight about the workings of the police force."
It went on to say:

> "Now we know why many cases have gone unsolved, even though ordinary citizens knew who the culprits were. We now have a better understanding as to why dockets go missing. We also know why it takes a police officer hours to take down a statement, which is then full of unpardonable errors…Indeed, it was not for lack of trying from the police – they simply did not have the skills or the training to do a proper job!"

The editorial comment further noted that considering that some police officers' highest qualifications were standard six (now grade eight), the situation could not have been different.

This acknowledgment did not mean an acceptance of the situation on the part of the *City Press*. Rather, the newspaper challenged the government to deal with the problem. Now that the problem was on the surface, the editorial comment (*City Press* Comment, 1999a:6) further pointed out that the "government should move quickly to address this matter, because as long as this state of affairs continues, serious criminal cases will remain unsolved". Not only did the *City Press* show an indication of sympathy for the government's difficulties in fighting crime, but the newspaper also applauded efforts made to fight crime.

When the late Steve Tshwete became the Minister of Safety and Security and issued a tough warning that criminals were going to be given a taste of their medicine by being dealt with harshly, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1999b:6) noted that it was "a pleasure to listen to those sweet-sounding words that inspire confidence and restore our lost dignity". The editorial comment further noted that

> "[f]rankly, this is the language we ordinary freedom-loving citizens of this country want to hear from a minister entrusted with our safety and security – and if the criminals hate it, that's tough".

When the then president Thabo Mbeki told senior correctional services managers in March 2000 that government officials were aiding criminals to continue the criminal acts from jail, the *City Press* commended him (*City Press* Comment, 2000b:10). The newspaper noted that

South Africans had "been waiting a long time for a senior politician to concede that this is taking place":

> "We are glad that the president is taking an interest in what is going on in our prisons. There was no point in us complaining about never-ending crime when criminals were simply „freed' by corrupt officials before serving their full sentences."

In further pointing out that it was common knowledge that the business of selling dagga and other drugs in prison was aided by warders, the *City Press* editorial comment (*City Press* Comment, 2000b:10) further expressed hope that "Mbeki's address was not just lip service. His ministers must follow-up and root out corruption." In less than a month after the *City Press* cautioned against prison official's corrupt activities in prison, the newspaper expressed disapproval at the release of a convicted drug dealer, Sipho Ndzeku, who had served only 83 days of a four-year jail term (*City Press* Comment, 2000c:14). The release of Ndzeku, who reportedly was well connected in political circles, meant, according to the *City Press*' editorial comment (*City Press* Comment, 2000c:14), that criminals would continue doing crime and nothing would happen to them. The *City Press* argued that such should not be the case:

> "Criminals must know that no matter how powerful their business, political and other connections, there is still a power above them that will not allow the country's criminal justice system to be undermined. Ndzeku must be returned to prison where he belongs as speedily as possible."

Two days after the *City Press* called for the re-arrest of Ndzeku, the convict was back in jail. Commenting on the move, the *City Press* "could not help but pat ourselves on the back this week after exposing a stinking miscarriage of justice within the Correctional Services Department" (*City Press* Comment, 2000d:12). In a celebratory mood, the *City Press* further noted that had the newspaper not exposed the incident, it "could have gone unnoticed and swept under the carpet".

In February 2003, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2003d:22) was moved to note that

> "[c]riminal syndicates appear to be running amok within our government departments. With the help of civil servants, these syndicates appear to have their hands firmly gripped on the public purse."

The editorial comment was remarking on the wake of the arrest of more than 50 health workers in Mpumalanga on various charges of fraud and corruption relating to the theft of medicine and hospital equipment. The editorial comment further noted that the *City Press* was informed that "apart from the hospital medicine, these crooks were also stealing equipment like x-ray machines before selling them in neighbouring countries, like Mozambique". Among those arrested, the editorial comment revealed, were senior health officials, hospital managers and government pharmacists. What was even more tragic, the *City Press* remarked, was that all the arrested doctors were serving mostly rural communities on the fringes of Mpumalanga.

As the criminal system was getting more sophisticated, the police were also doubling their effort in fighting the upsurge of crime. When in the last week of February 2004, the police arrested 15 men who were allegedly involved in a cash-in-transit robbery on the Golden Highway outside Johannesburg, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2004a:18) remarked that the move was "surely further proof that the police are now winning the battle against these criminal syndicates". This remark was made in the light of the arrest of 10 heavily armed gangsters the previous week who were on their way to attack a van transporting millions of rands (*City Press* Comment, 2004a:18). Against this background the

> "City Press [was] convinced that the police intelligence work which has been infiltrating these gangs is finally bearing fruit as evidenced by the latest arrests as well as several foiled attempted heists in the past few weeks".

These victories were not permanent though. One can state that violent crime continued its determined march. So much so that the *City Press* was moved to say that South Africans had become prisoners in their homes and "hostage to criminals" (*City Press* Comment, 2004a:18). No one was safe, including law-abiding citizens who had acquired guns for personal protection. The daring criminals stole these and continued using the guns for their reign of terror (*City Press* Comment, 2004b:18). But while common crime assaulted South African citizens, political corruption was an equal threat in the new dispensation, as will be discussed in the next session.

6.3.2 Political Corruption

The ANC, observed Sello (1995c:17), came to power on a massive popular bandwagon. Besides its ticket to power as a movement that fought against apartheid, the ruling party endeared itself to its voters on promises of "clean administration, a government closer to the people and one which is transparent and accountable". Yet, less than a year in power, Sello further observed that "[s]ad to say, even at this early stage…recent events do not inspire confidence".

Sello's comments were informed by claims of corruption against ANC leaders that were in government. These claims, some of them contained in readers' letters sent to the *City Press*, included corruption, nepotism and jobs for pals in government structures controlled by the ANC (Sello, 1995c:17). The tendency on the part of former liberation movement cadres to get into government in order to access power so as to accumulate wealth for selfish interests was coined the "gravy train" by the media, as will be shown next.

6.3.2.1 Opposing the "gravy train"

In opposing this tendency, Sibiya (1995b:14) argued that while

> "it is true that the previous government and those who surrounded it were also on the gravy train, hence the imbalances of the resources and the economy in this country in favour of most whites…this should not give the present government the same license to climb on this train".

Echoing Sibiya's sentiments, Sello (1995d:15) remarked that "[f]ailure to demonstrate that there's no gravy train will harm the ANC's case and poison future relations between labour and government". Sello's comment was made against the background of a strike by nurses in October 1995. The strike was an expression of disenchantment with salaries. In what was an expression of frustration with the ANC's gospel of patience, while there was a

> "growing perception that senior government officials who are former comrades in the struggle are now living high on the hog…some nurses carried placards demanding that the government stop the gravy train so that they too can get on board" (Sello, 1995d:15).

Towards the first local government elections in November 1995, the *City Press* editorial comment (*City Press* Comment, 1995g:16) noted that the culture of the "gravy train" was becoming so widespread that there was concern that some local government candidates, "probably taking a cue from those in the national and provincial assemblies…seem to think that this is the route to the gravy train".

While not linking the growing apathy on the part of black people towards the local government elections to the gravy train tendency, Memela (1996:17) observed that there was a sense of disillusionment on the part of black people informed by a perception that the fruits of freedom had "come for some people". These privileged few, Memela further pointed out, were referred to by ordinary township folk as "fat-cats on the gravy train". The ANC did not take kindly to the criticism that they were riding on a gravy train (Maharaj, 1996:17).

6.3.2.2 Government Minister asserts that *City Press* stance on the "gravy train" is baseless

The Minister of Transport and ANC leader, Mac Maharaj, dismissed Memela's assertions as "fallacy", baseless, and an indulgence "in another theme: those elected to represent the majority care only for what they can get from the gravy train" (Maharaj, 1996:17). Not only did Maharaj criticise Memela but also the *City Press* as a whole, claiming that the *City Press* was dishing out a usual fare which was a repetition of a theme that did not stand up to scrutiny. That "persistent theme" was that the ANC had done little or nothing to change the lives of the majority of ordinary people.

The *City Press* did not take Maharaj's criticism lying down. Its whole editorial comment (*City Press* Comment, 1996e:16) published the same day that Maharaj's piece appeared, was dedicated to a response to Maharaj. The editorial comment pointed out that the ANC could easily put up a long list of what had been done in the past two years – but that no amount of arguing could hide the fact that the government had "failed rather dismally to build those houses which were promised to our people". Furthermore, the editorial comment pointed out that the "perception that the ANC members are on the gravy train is not a media fabrication" but an issue people were complaining about daily.

The editorial further told the ANC that it "must face up these challenges instead of blaming the press or burying their heads in the sand – hoping complaints against the government will go away". The editorial comment further noted that the *City Press* was not prepared to

practise sunshine journalism by being "the government's praise singers" and keeping quiet when things were going wrong. The editorial comment further noted that the *City Press* believed that "the press must continue to be the public's watchdog," adding that "[i]f our leaders are wallowing in the gravy train, these things must be reported without fear or favour".

True to its promise to be the government's watchdog, when the government spoke of increasing parliamentarians' salaries, the *City Press* protested. In its editorial comment (*City Press* Comment, 1996f:16) the *City Press* argued that the move was wrong in light of repeated government's statements that the economy was going through a difficult time and that workers in the public and private sectors must make sacrifices and accept low increments – or none in some cases. In a frank tone, the editorial comment pointed out that after all, "the ANC has failed to deliver on many of its election promises" and therefore "[t]here is just no justification for our fat cats getting these increments amid so much poverty in the land". Unlike Memela who said that it was the ordinary people who called government officials "fat cats", the editorial took responsibility for such a label by referring to the politicians as such. When occasion necessitated, it singled them out, named and shamed them as will be shown next. A case in point was that of the former defence minister, Joe Modise.

It emerged that Modise had his house built by Denel, a parastatal (*City Press* Comment, 2001a:8). The *City Press* argued that even though it was said that Modise was repaying the parastatal, in the first place "he was not supposed to use the parastatal to improperly benefit himself". The *City Press* further reminded the government that "[p]arastatals are not the personal fiefdoms of the ruling elite; they belong to the people". In a direct reference to the ruling party, the editorial comment further asserted that it was not enough for the ANC to declare that it was against corruption when headlines exposing crime pointed an accusing finger at "ANC bigwigs" (*City Press* Comment, 2001a:8). The newspaper further pointed out that

> "[c]ynics could justifiably argue that such rhetoric is part of the ruling party's political agenda, aimed specifically at neutralising public outrage against corruption and securing the ANC government's tenure in office".

When it emerged that some parliamentarians had exchanged their travel vouchers meant for constituency work for luxuries like bookings in five-star hotels and car hire, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2004b:18) noted that this was the kind of

> "stuff that feeds into the stereotype of Africans as people who can't say no to temptation. For how long was SA going to be different to other corrupt African governments, the sceptics will ask."

The editorial comment reminded the parliamentarians that their duty in government was to "carry a responsibility, on behalf of the country's citizens, to keep government in check: to ensure that government acts in the interest of the country and its citizens".

It further noted that "if those who are to check on government to ensure it does the right thing are themselves caught with their hands in the cookie jar, then we must all be worried". Adding his voice, the then *City Press*' deputy editor, Khathu Mamaila (2004a:18), emphasised that "Members of Parliament are supposed to be above reproach". Mamaila further argued that parliamentarians should not "break the laws they make" and are "supposed to be honourable" because they "even address each other as „honourable so and so'".

6.3.3 Summary: the *City Press* editorials and the *City Press*' black journalists' perspectives on crime as expressed in their columns and opinion pieces

This section has given an account of the *City Press*' and its journalists' perspectives on both common crime and political corruption in South Africa. The newspaper's view was that crime was undermining the newly found freedom in South Africa. While in some cases the newspaper and its journalists appreciated the government's difficulties in dealing with crime, the newspaper and its senior journalist, Sekolla Sello, opposed the abolishment of the capital punishment or death penalty. However, one of the *City Press*' journalists, Benison Makele, broke ranks with his newspaper on this issue.

On the issue of corrupt tendencies by former freedom fighters who later constituted part of the government, the newspaper condemned them. On this, there was no difference between the official position of the *City Press* and its individual journalists.

6.3.4 The Zimbabwean Crisis

In this section the researcher presents findings on the *City Press*' official position and individual black journalists' positions on the Zimbabwean crisis, and how former South African President Thabo Mbeki handled the crisis. Mbeki's diplomatic initiatives between the ruling party and the opposition were generally referred to as "quiet diplomacy" by the media.

6.3.4.1 The *City Press* blaming Mugabe

After noting that Mugabe had supported the war veterans, and also arguing that their action was a justifiable protest against the unfair ownership of land by the country's minority whites, the *City Press* editorial comment (*City Press* Comment, 2000e:14) observed that the "auguries for stability and peace in Zimbabwe did not look good when its president encouraged lawlessness". The editorial comment further noted that though Mugabe was blaming white land owners for the lack of equity in land ownership, Mugabe himself was partly to blame. That was because, the editorial comment argued, it was an indictment against Mugabe that it took twenty years after Zimbabwe attained independence that he, as head of government, had still not resolved the land question. The *City Press* felt that Mugabe and his Zanu-PF had the legislative wherewithal to address the issue in a manner consistent with justice. The editorial comment did not place the blame solely on Mugabe's shoulders, though, but on white Zimbabweans as well for failing to cooperate with the Zimbabwean president.

6.3.4.2 The *City Press* blaming white Zimbabweans

The editorial (*City Press* Comment, 2000e:14) further noted that white Zimbabweans had "made little effort to reciprocate his outstretched arm of friendship" and added that

> "[i]n fact, some of them still think of themselves as Europeans first and Zimbabweans second. This had generated a lot of disappointment and resentment on the part of black Zimbabweans."

The then *City Press* editor, Vusi Mona, saw the forceful ejection of white landowners not just as a reflection of resentment on the part of black Zimbabweans, but "as chickens coming home to roost" (Mona, 2000a:12).

6.3.4.3 The Zimbabwean crisis: a historical context

Mona argued that the Zimbabwean case had to be viewed within a historical context. His sense being that "commentary about the current land invasions in Zimbabwe is informed by an arrogant and pathetically ill-informed understanding of the history of that country", Mona

felt that "a reflection of where Zimbabwe has come from becomes necessary". He argued that this became even more necessary "when an impression is created that the black Zimbabweans who have invaded white-owned farms have sunk to the lowest level of human existence – and this in a manner unique to indigenous Africans". Going the historical route for Mona (2000a:12) meant taking into cognisance that as "[o]utrageous as the invasions are, the truth is that similar or worse incursions happened in that country a century ago".

Mona was referring to the land dispossession of Zimbabweans by British settlers led by Cecil Rhodes. When the Zimbabweans resisted, Mona pointed out, the leaders who hid in caves were dynamited and others caught and hanged. Mona (2000a:12) also noted that at the Lancaster House Conference in 1979, in negotiations between the then Rhodesia's rulers and the Zimbabwean freedom fighters, Britain

> "undertook among other things, to raise money to buy white-owned farms which were to be used for land redistribution once the new government came into power. Seemingly, Britain now has a dim recollection of this undertaking. But Mugabe has not forgotten."

Following in the footsteps of its editor's opinion piece, the *City Press* invoked history to justify its support for Mbeki's diplomatic approach to the Zimbabwean crisis. Its editorial comment (*City Press* Comment, 2000f:12) argued that it was hypocritical of organisations like the Democratic Party (forerunner of the Democratic Alliance) to advocate putting economic pressure on Zimbabwe when the very same "were in the forefront of those opposing calls for economic pressure and sanctions against SA in the dark days of apartheid". This was especially so, the editorial comment further observed, considering that in the apartheid days "Blacks were going through „hell‟, far worse than in Zimbabwe". Welcoming the decision by the South African Development Community (SADC) not to publicly condemn Mugabe for allowing war veterans to occupy white farms, the editorial comment further argued that the problems in Zimbabwe "would require great diplomatic skills".

The editorial comment further pointed out that any pressure from the SADC leadership would have been the surest way to end the summit prematurely. The *City Press* felt that this could not be afforded because any political instability in Zimbabwe "has a direct impact on other economies", adding that Botswana was "already reeling from Zimbabwean refugees because of its weakening economy".

Against this background, echoing its support for Mbeki's diplomatic approach four months down the line, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2000g:8) argued that the African continent had its "own unique problems, different from those of Europe" and added that "Mbeki understands his continent much better than those who have one foot in Africa and another in Europe". What the *City Press* seemed to be suggesting here was that Zimbabwe was an African problem that needed an African solution. In a later editorial, the *City Press* made it explicit that it indeed subscribed to a view that Zimbabwe was an African problem needing an African solution (*City Press* Comment, 2002a:8).

6.3.4.4 Zimbabwe: an African problem requiring African solutions

This view was expressed on the occasion of a deal brokered by the then Nigerian president, Olusegun Obasanjo, between Zimbabwe on the one hand and, Britain and other unspecified European countries on the other (Seepe, 2001:2). The agreement reached in September 2001 entailed a commitment from the Zimbabwean government to halt the land invasions whilst Britain and other European countries committed themselves to undertake to pay the cost of compensating white farmers for farms taken over by the state (*City Press* Comment, 2002a:8).

Commenting on this development, the *City Press*' editorial (*City Press* Comment, 2002a:8) remarked that "Obasanjo, mandated by other African governments to enter into discussion with Britain in an effort to halt the land invasions, has done Africa proud". This was because, the editorial comment further noted, Obasanjo had "shown the rest of the world the commitment of African leaders to bring about lasting peace". In the *City Press*' view, the editorial comment further pointed out, "[t]he Zimbabwean accord clearly shows that African leaders can work towards providing African solutions to African problems".

The African leaders' approach to the Zimbabwean crisis was given further endorsement by the *City Press* when Nigeria and South Africa opposed punitive measures against Zimbabwe during a meeting of Commonwealth countries late in February in 2002 in Australia (*City Press* Comment, 2002a:8). In the same vein, the *City Press*' editorial comment condemned Western countries for practising double standards when dealing with the issue of Zimbabwe. Singling out the USA and Britain, the editorial comment further pointed out that Swaziland and Uganda did not practise democracy and yet these were "acceptable in London and Washington. Where is the fairness in all this?"

Almost two years later, the then *City Press* deputy editor, Khathu Mamaila echoed the sentiments expressed in this editorial. Mamaila (2004b:18) recalled that the "west conspired to overthrow former Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba and imposed a despot Mobutu Sese Seko", a man who was "corrupt and plundered the wealth of the Congo, but he remained in power for almost three decades because his puppet regime did not threaten the interests of the west". Mamaila further pointed out that the Angolan president Jose Eduardo dos Santos was running a corrupt and undemocratic regime, milking the country dry while "enjoy[ing] his millions in America" with no negative reaction from the USA because Western interests were not threatened.

It was for these reasons, Mamaila noted, that the readers of the *New African*, a London-published magazine, had voted Mugabe "the third greatest African of all time". It was for these reasons, Mamaila further noted, that Mugabe received a thunderous welcome at Orlando Stadium in South Africa when he attended the funeral of the ANC leader Walter Sisulu. Mamaila pointed out that Mugabe represented "the anger of many Africans against the west, in particular colonialism in all its forms". He represented "tenacity, the undying and unconquered spirit of those willing to die on their feet rather than live on their knees".

The view expressed by Mamaila had been expressed three years earlier by the *City Press*' columnist, Sonti Maseko (Maseko, 2001:9) who had noted that

> "Mugabe has certainly struck a chord among people and gained the recognition as the icon and champion of the struggle for land rights. And as an African leader who can stand up to western influence and interests."

The support for Mbeki's diplomatic approach in Zimbabwe on the part of the *City Press* was, however, not synonymous with the support for Mugabe's tactics.

6.3.4.5 Support for Mbeki not synonymous with support for Mugabe

When Mugabe's Zanu-PF party won the national elections in March 2002, and South Africa accepted the outcomes, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2002b:8) declared Mugabe's victory as "problematic". The *City Press* made this point against the observation of intimidation and violence in the country. But unlike "some western leaders like Britain's Tony Blair" who laid all the blame on Mugabe, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment,

2002a:8) had noted that the violence had emanated both from Mugabe's and Tsvangirai's parties, but stating this was not the same as condoning Mugabe's reported acts of violence.

Though supportive of Mbeki's approach, the newspaper (*City Press* Comment, 2001h:8) felt that "[o]ur approach to the Zimbabwean crisis – that of quiet diplomacy – sometimes creates a perception that we apply double standards". That was because, the editorial further point out, South Africa had a "tendency to denounce Mugabe's dictatorial grip on power and later we heap praises on the man for „the perfect way he handles the controversial land issue'". According to the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2001h:8) "[t]his perception was reinforced by statements from the SADC – of which we are a part – who visited that country to assess the state of affairs". The editorial further stated that South Africa "cannot afford to be seen to be propping up dictators when we…are a shining example of true democracy".

When the SADC objected to the Commonwealth Heads of Government's decision to extend the suspension of Zimbabwe, the *City Press* (*City Press Comment*, 2003i:18) criticised the SADC, arguing that the Southern African body gave the "impression that it is a regional „boys' club' in which its members are intent on defending each other and, at all costs, will avoid rebuking the conduct of one of their own". The editorial further argued that "[w]hile Mbeki has in the past few months pursued a policy of quiet diplomacy in an effort to steer Mugabe towards a path of democracy, there is nothing to suggest that this policy has worked". The editorial further noted that while "Mbeki's frustration that the land issue has disappeared from the global discourse, except when it is mentioned to highlight the plight of landowners, may be valid", it pointed out that "this unfortunate situation was brought about by Mugabe himself because he allowed thugs loyal to him to conduct a reign of terror against the farming community".

In yet another editorial, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2003e:18) asserted that "[q]uiet diplomacy seemed to be playing into Mugabe's hands". What the *City Press* meant by this was that "[o]ur strategy of quiet diplomacy appeared to have been misunderstood – rightly or wrongly – by Mugabe to mean support for his political excesses".

The editorial comment further expressed displeasure at what it regarded as the South African government's denunciation of the Zimbabwean opposition and an embrace of Mugabe "even when opposition politicians were put in jail and tortured". The newspaper was unhappy with the government's perceived dithering "when media freedom and freedom of speech were

undermined and journalists harassed by Mugabe's secret agents and militia" (*City Press* Comment, 2003e:18).

The editorial comment further expressed displeasure at seeing the people of Zimbabwe living in "abject poverty and hunger while Mugabe and his fatcat [sic] ministers enjoy holidays in South Africa". Two months down the line the *City Press* revisited the "fat cats" theme in relation to Zimbabwe's ruling elite. Its editorial comment (*City Press* Comment, 2003f:18) asserted that

> "[w]hat hurts most is the ruling political elite becoming richer, while the conditions of the poor are worsening. Mugabe and his cohorts are fat cats, constantly and unashamedly awarding themselves salary increments way above inflation".

Three months after making the latter comment, the *City Press* took off its gloves and called Mugabe a "dictator" and a "clown" with a "cold conscience" (*City Press* Comment, 2003g:18).

6.3.4.6 The *City Press*: Mugabe a "dictator" and a "clown"

What irked the newspaper were reports that Mugabe was building a mansion worth R72 million "when the majority of Zimbabweans are starving – a direct result of the dictator's misrule". This time around the *City Press* did not only condemn Mugabe but African leaders on the continent as well for not intervening. The *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2003g:18) remarked that it was

> "unfortunate that Mugabe's comrades in leadership positions across Africa, who are expected to knock sense into him, are shirking their responsibility and treating him like a hero".

That African leaders "warmly welcomed" Mugabe when attending their gatherings gave the impression that they "embrace[d] his dictatorial mismanagement of Zimbabwe and its economy". These remarks revealed that African leaders' approach to Zimbabwe was not the "African solution to African problems" that the newspaper advocated and hoped for as expressed in an earlier editorial (*City Press* Comment, 2002a:8). Unequivocally, the *City*

Press declared that the "African leaders are failing the people of Zimbabwe". Among the African leaders that the *City Press* accused of failing Zimbabweans, Mbeki was not left out.

Revisiting Mbeki's approach to the Zimbabwean crisis, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2004d:18) noted that while it was "fine" for South Africa to choose "the path of quiet diplomacy – or non-megaphone diplomacy – in its dealings with the increasingly dictatorial regime of Robert Mugabe", this approach "however, cannot be an excuse to obfuscate when wrongs are being done". The editorial comment was referring to the deportation of a Cosatu delegation that visited Zimbabwe on a fact-finding mission. The delegation had met the Zimbabwean government's opposition. The *City Press* asserted that the expulsion of the Cosatu delegation was "tantamount to saying those Zimbabweans that they are not free to meet with whoever they wish to" and that the move should be seen in the light "of a government hell-bent on oppressing its own citizens".

6.3.4.7 Summary: The *City Press*' official position, and individual black journalists' positions on Zimbabwe's crisis

This section has given a record of the official position of the *City Press*, together with individual black journalists' positions on the Zimbabwean crisis. While the *City Press* criticised Mugabe for taking twenty years to address the land question, it did not spare white Zimbabweans for failing to reciprocate Mugabe's efforts in reconciling black and white Zimbabweans after the attainment of independence. While the newspaper gave support to Mbeki's diplomatic initiatives, it made clear that such was not the same as supporting Mugabe's approach in addressing the land question. Individual journalists were in agreement that Mugabe was a heroic figure to black Africans inside and outside Zimbabwe because he represented black people's collective anger, for whom nothing or little has changed on attaining political freedom.

6.3.5 The HIV/AIDS Issue

This section gives an account of the *City Press*' and its black journalists' commentaries on HIV/AIDS during both Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki's administration.

6.3.5.1 The *City Press* on HIV/AIDS in Mandela's era

Nineteen months after the democratic government was elected, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1995h:16) asserted that the "role of the government" in the "fight against Aids must not be exaggerated". The newspaper's position was that the government "could do so

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much and no more" and that the "onus lies with individuals to ensure that this scourge is defeated". Three months after this declaration by the *City Press*, the government was caught in a storm about its allocation of R14 million to the musical *Sarafina II*, penned by playwright Mbongeni Ngema, to spread the message about the dangers of AIDS.

6.3.5.1.1 The *City Press* on *Sarafina II*

While the *City Press* did not question the efficacy of a musical in combating AIDS, it questioned the lack of transparency in how the tender was given to Ngema (*City Press* Comment, 1996g:16). The newspaper (*City Press* Comment, 1996g:16) was perturbed by conflicting statements from senior officials claiming that state tender procedures had been followed while on the other hand there were claims that since the money came from the European Union, the state tender had not been involved. What incensed the *City Press* more was the ANC's defence in parliament of the then Health Minister, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma's department, considering "the inadequate explanations by the minister and the contradictory statements by her senior officials".

Six months later, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1996h:16) echoed this criticism against the ANC. It warned that the ruling party's "tendency to protect its members at all cost – sometimes before it even gets all sides of the story, as it was the case with Dlamini-Zuma – could backfire". The revisiting of this issue, six months later, was brought about by the report of the public protector, Selby Baqwa, which, while it exonerated Dlamini-Zuma, delivered a "scathing attack" on her senior officials "for gross misconduct". Dlamini-Zuma's department, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1996h:16) argued, "did not follow certain procedures for acquiring tenders". The editorial further observed that Dlamini-Zuma "did not even fully inform the European Union – funders of the Aids programme in South Africa – as to how the money was spent". Against this background, the editorial argued that it was "silly" of the ANC to defend Dlamini-Zuma when she appeared before Parliament in June 1996.

While six months earlier the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1996g:16) was willing to concede and "laud" the Minister of Health if the tender was given fairly, in the light of the Public Protector's report six months later, the newspaper took a tough stance. Its editorial (*City Press* Comment, 1996h:16) unequivocally asserted that

> "Zuma made an unforgivable blunder in allocating R14, 2 million of Aids funds to Mbongeni Ngema's play, which according to many who saw it, fell far short and does not justify the expense".

The media's criticism of Dlamini-Zuma and the ANC on the handling of the European Union's funding was not taken lying down by the ruling party.

6.3.5.1.2 Mandela attacks white-owned media

The party's and the country's then president, Nelson Mandela, retaliated, claiming that "the predominantly white-owned mass media" covered the *Sarafina II* saga with a bias against Dlamini- Zuma (Rantao & Bulger, 1996:1). Mandela argued that while the Public Protector had "exonerated Zuma and blamed irregularities on two white officials coming from the previous regime, [the] mass media did not say anything about the two officials". Contrary to Mandela's claim, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1996h:16) had made specific reference to the two officials (Hugo Badenhorst and Johnny Angelo) that Mandela made reference to. The newspaper (*City Press* Comment, 1996h:16) had noted that

> "the serious implications regarding Badenhorst and Angelo once more highlight the urgent need for the ANC to get rid of old wood within the civil service and start employing efficient people".

Mandela's criticism of the media on this issue was not taken kindly by the *City Press*.

6.3.5.1.3 The *City Press* retaliates

Reacting to Mandela's criticism, the *City Press* (City Press Comment, 1996h:14) pointed out that it found it

> "disturbing when noble and well respected leaders like President Nelson Mandela and some of his senior people, in the wake of the *Sarafina II* debacle, have the temerity to bash the media for highlighting what we believe was mismanagement in the health department. President Mandela should have been happy that his Ministers are kept under check."

While the government felt that the coverage of the *Sarafina II* issue was a smokescreen for motives to undermine the ANC-led government, former *City Press* editor, Len Kalane

(1998b:16), argued that the real issue was that there was a perception in South Africa that the AIDS issue was shrouded in "silence and secrecy" which made many "feel totally hopeless". Kalane further pointed out that if South Africa wanted to have any success in dealing with the complexities of the AIDS epidemic, it should take lessons from Uganda which had a reputation of having successes in its fight against AIDS. Whether or not the government's move was influenced by the *City Press*' then editor's advice, plans were put in place for Zuma's successor as Health Minister, Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, to travel to Uganda in July 1999 to study the methods the country employed in its battle against HIV/AIDS (*City Press* Comment, 1999a:6).

6.3.5.2 The *City Press* on HIV/AIDS in Mbeki's era

Tshabalala-Msimang's travel to Uganda was received with acclamation by the *City Press*. Its editorial (*City Press* Comment, 1999c:6) noted that it was

> "clear that the government has begun a total overhaul of its measures against the HIV/AIDS epidemic…The new government has shown a fresh resolve in the fight against HIV/AIDS that was largely absent in the past."

The editorial also noted, approvingly, that prior to Tshabalala-Msimang's move, "President Thabo Mbeki ordered a review of the state's HIV/AIDS policy at all levels of government".

In May 2000, Mbeki convened a two-day conference of mainstream scientists together with those who challenged the view that HIV caused AIDS (*City Press* Comment, 2000h:6). This, together with reports that Mbeki appointed to his 30-member presidential AIDS advisory panel scientists such as David Rasnick and Peter Duesberg, provoked widespread public criticism. What upset Duesberg's critics was his theory that the anti-HIV treatment, AZT, caused AIDS (Hofstatter, 2000:7). Mbeki's extension of invitation to the "dissident" scientists led to his critics suggesting that he himself questioned the causal relationship between HIV and AIDS, an allegation "emphatically denied" by the Office of the President (*City Press* Comment, 2000h:6).

The *City Press* journalist, Dominic Mahlangu (2000:14), believed that by entertaining the debate on whether or not HIV caused AIDS, Mbeki was sending confusing signals. He asserted that

"the manner in which our president is handling this issue may have adverse effects, not only on HIV-positive people, but also on ordinary people who may begin to doubt the link between HIV and AIDS".

If the perception that HIV did not cause AIDS took root, Mahlangu (2000:14) asserted, unprotected sex could become the norm. Mahlangu further asserted that if any doubt existed about the link between HIV and AIDS, the issue should have been raised with scientists "behind closed doors to avoid confusion among the public". The matter should "only have been taken into the public domain when certainty was established". The *City Press*, however, disagreed with Mahlangu's criticism against Mbeki.

6.3.5.2.1 The *City Press* defends Mbeki

The newspaper (*City Press* Comment, 2000h:6) defended Mbeki saying he had helped to "create a climate in which scientists from different backgrounds can come together in the fight against HIV/Aids". The editorial further pointed out that "any debate that can lead to a solution is most welcome". Regarding criticism that "Mbeki has no medical training and, therefore, cannot make any pronouncements on issues such as this one", the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2000h:6) argued that such claims "are as unfair as they are unhelpful in dealing with this scourge, which is annihilating Africa".

Having noted that "Mbeki has never pretended to be a medical scientist", the editorial further defended Mbeki's intervention by arguing that "as president, he is eminently placed to create a climate in which scientists from different backgrounds can come together in the fight against HIV/Aids". Even though the *City Press* defended Mbeki's stance, the question on whether Mbeki believed or not that HIV caused AIDS was a recurring one that haunted not only the Mbeki administration but the *City Press* itself.

6.3.5.2.2 The *City Press* challenges Mbeki

The *City Press* columnist and journalist, Sonti Maseko (2000a:8), observed that the question about whether HIV caused AIDS kept on resurfacing "in news headlines, and everywhere" Mbeki made a public appearance.

The *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2000i:8) expressed concern that the "minister [Tshabalala-Msimang] and President Mbeki have been ambiguous on this matter and in the process have sent confusing signals to the public". The editorial further noted that the "sooner

they [Tshabalala-Msimang and Mbeki] clarify their position, the better for our fight against HIV/AIDS".

Four months after calling on Mbeki to clarify his position on the question of whether HIV caused AIDS, the *City Press* was forthright in criticising Mbeki on this issue. The newspaper (*City Press* Comment, 2001b:8) noted that "[h]is handling of the AIDS debate last year, during which he questioned the link between HIV and AIDS was a disaster". After the delivery of his State of the Nation address in February 2001, emphasising its disapproval of Mbeki's stance on the debate about whether HIV caused AIDS, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2001c:8) "applaud[ed] him for steering away from the…HIV/AIDS debate." The praises did not last for long.

6.3.5.2.3 The *City Press*: Mbeki is presiding over genocide

Eight months later the then *City Press* editor, Vusi Mona (2001b:8), accused Mbeki's government of "unwittingly presiding over a genocide" over which "posterity will judge them harshly". What had moved Mona to utter such strong words was a *Mail&Guardian* report (Barrel & Kindra, 2001:1) which had stated that the government had suppressed the Medical Research Council's (MRC) report revealing that the HIV/AIDS epidemic accounted for one-in-four of all deaths in South Africa. According to the *Mail&Guardian*, the MRC's report predicted that by 2010 AIDS would have killed between five and seven million people.

The *Mail&Guardian* report further revealed that in his preface to the report, the "MRC president Malekgapuru Makgoba, confronts those, like Mbeki, who question the causal link between HIV and Aids". The *Mail&Guardian* also reported that the government had announced that it would not avail the MRC's report until after two months of its release. The *Mail&Guardian* (Barrel & Kindra, 2001:1) also revealed that the ANC had rejected the MRC's report as being "not credible". The government's and the ANC's reactions did not go down well with Mona.

6.3.5.2.4 The *City Press*: It is not about statistics

Mona (2001b:8) protested that Mbeki had already caused confusion in the year 2000 when he "cast doubt on whether HIV causes AIDS". Mbeki's position, according to Mona, "caused a lot of uncertainty in people's minds and set back years of education and awareness regarding HIV/AIDS". In Mona's view the rejection of the MRC's report by the ANC was an act of usurping scientists' role by politicians.

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The ANC's action gave Mona the sense that "politicians in South Africa, especially from the ruling party, equate ignorance about the HIV/AIDS epidemic with stupidity on their part". While Mbeki, according to Mona (2001b:8), was pontificating about whether HIV caused AIDS, "the sad thing is people *are* dying of AIDS-related diseases". Mona's sentiment was echoed in the following week's editorial of the *City Press*.

The *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2001d:8) argued that the "real task" was not about finding out how many people died of AIDS but preventing those who did not have HIV from getting it. This assertion was in reaction to the government's move of pulling in Statistics South Africa to verify the MRC's report' accuracy (*City Press* Comment, 2001d:8). The *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2001d:8) emphasised that the issue was not about numbers but about the reality of people dying from AIDS, further noting that those who had "seen relatives wiped out by the pandemic think that the MRC's 40 percent is too conservative".

What was urgently needed, the *City Press* journalist and columnist, Sandile Memela (Memela, 2001:9), argued, was that "Mbeki and his government must do something about AIDS. It is already too late!" What Memela was suggesting was that the government was failing in providing leadership in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

This perception was echoed by the *City Press* on World Aids Day in 2001. Noting that South Africans were "crying for decisive leadership in the fight against HIV/AIDS" and that the "government must lead the way", the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2001e:8) further pointed out that the government was "not doing so at the moment". This statement was made in the light of a court battle between the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) and the government, in which the TAC was struggling to get the government to provide anti-HIV drugs to all HIV positive pregnant women (Ngcai & Mkhabela, 2001:01 – 02). The *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2001e:08) asserted that it was a "scandalous" situation where citizens were compelled to take court action against their own government in a "desperate" attempt to have their plight addressed. When the TAC emerged victorious in its court case against the government, the *City Press* celebrated.

6.3.5.2.5 The *City Press* celebrates the TAC's victory

The *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2001f:8) noted that the TAC's "victory" was not only for HIV-positive pregnant women and their offsprings, but also an example of how ordinary

citizens could use the law to enforce rights enshrined in the Constitution. The victory sent "a message to the powers that be" that a government elected by the people should align policies to cater for basic needs of voters. The editorial further observed that the government's "inflexible policy of refusing to intervene meaningfully in HIV-prevention", was a "cause for much concern". The government appealed against the court ruling.

6.3.5.2.6 The *City Press* condemns Mbeki and Tshabalala-Msimang

Not only was the *City Press* "appalled" by the government's appeal, but was also "outraged" (*City Press* Comment, 2001g:8). Lashing out at the government, the newspaper observed that "[n]o amount of verbal gymnastics or sophistry to justify government's position can take away the simple fact that refusal to provide the drugs is ill-informed and ultimately callous". The editorial further demanded to know "[h]ow many thousands of graves" should be dug before "our own Pharoah can be made to realise that this is too much?" In the *City Press'* view, it was "apparent" that the government's refusal to provide these drugs was not based on "scientific reasons but purely on the whims of a president whose ego has been bruised and who refuses to accept that his views on HIV/AIDS are wrong". This editorial (*City Press* Comment, 2001g:8) further labelled Mbeki's approach as "madness".

Labelling Mbeki's approach to HIV/AIDS as madness by the *City Press* was not the first on the part of the media. Over just a year prior this comment, the *City Press'* journalist and columnist, Sonti Maseko (Maseko, 2000b:8), disapprovingly noted that freelance journalist, RW Johnson had written for an international publication questioning "the sanity of our president". In Maseko's view, such a stance was aimed at "discrediting" the image of South Africa. In Mbeki's defence, Maseko (2000b:8) argued that Mbeki could be criticised for many things, but "one thing that must be conceded to him is his mental capability: a clear, logical thinker and one of the finest minds on this continent".

6.3.5.2.7 The *City Press* calls for Tshabalala-Msimang's resignation

The following week the newspaper (*City Press* Comment, 2001h:8) called for Tshabalala-Msimang's resignation. The editorial further pointed out that the government's reluctance and resistance to provide Nevirapine was an intransigent move that defied logic. The *City Press* was convinced that the provision of anti-retroviral drugs such as Nevirapine to pregnant HIV-infected mothers could reduce the possibility of their children being born with the virus (*City Press* Comment, 2002c:8).

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Two months after the *City Press* called for Tshabalala-Msimang to resign, the newspaper echoed its call (*City Press* Comment, 2002d:8). This time around its call had to do with Tshabalala-Msimang's criticism of the then Gauteng Premier, Mbhazima Shilowa's decision to expand the provision of anti-HIV/AIDS drugs. In calling for Tshabalala-Msimang's resignation, the *City Press* also condemned the ANC for sharing Tshabalala-Msimang's criticism of Shilowa. While the *City Press*' official position was that the government's refusal to provide Nevirapine defied logic, this was not a position held by every journalist working for the newspaper.

In her column, Maseko (2002:9) recognised that Mbeki risked "going down in history as the man who denied people nevirapine and other AIDS drugs", but in her opinion "Mbeki is a very brave man". Observing that Mbeki had "risked international ridicule for his stance, been bashed by the media and been the object of such public hostility that it could cost him dearly in the future", Maseko further argued that Mbeki "ought to be respected" because "he has shown something else – that he would lead from the front rather than give in to pressure".

Maseko believed that rather than "let loose on his subjects drugs that he considers less than satisfied with in terms of their efficacy, side effects or benefits to the country", Mbeki "resigned himself to being remembered some years down the line, as the president who refused to yield to the seemingly popular demand for drug treatment". In clearer terms, Maseko held the view that Mbeki stuck to a principled position than yielding to popular sentiments. However, seven months after Maseko expressed admiration for what she perceived as Mbeki's principled stance, Mbeki's government gave in to the popular demand for anti-retrovirals.

6.3.5.2.8 The *City Press* welcomes the roll-out of anti-retrovirals

In October 2002, the Cabinet issued a statement announcing that the government was considering cost implications of providing anti-retrovirals to all sectors of society (Kindra, 2002:2). The Cabinet also announced that all provinces would be expanding the programme to provide nevirapine to all HIV-positive pregnant women. The government's new move was received with enthusiasm by the *City Press*. The newspaper (*City Press* Comment, 2002e:18) noted that the announcement heralded an "important shift in government's policy and thinking". While the newspaper was enthusiastic about the new developments, it was, at the same time, also cautious.

The *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2002e:18) further pointed out that considering that "it took two court rulings (from the highest courts) before government finally conceded to the importance of providing anti-retrovirals" such could still leave people suspicious about whether it would deliver on its promise. Commenting on the move three months later, the then *City Press*' political editor, Jimmy Seepe (2002:25), observed that there was "no doubt" that Mbeki's administration had now committed itself towards improving the conditions of people living with AIDS through its commitment to providing anti-retroviral drugs.

Eleven months after Seepe's observation, the government announced it would, within a year, provide free anti-retrovirals to those in need (Misbach, 2003:1). The government had set aside R12 billion to fund the roll-out. The *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2003h:18) noted that the decision to authorise the roll-out of anti-retrovirals to people with HIV/AIDS was "commendable". The editorial did not just commend the government's move, but criticised the state for having "taken so long to do the right thing". It further noted that the delay in the roll-out called "into question the integrity of those who have been voted into power".

As the newspaper did in earlier editorials, it singled out Mbeki and Tshabalala-Msimang's "intransigence" as having "resulted in the death of thousands of people whose lives could have been prolonged if the drugs had been available earlier in Mbeki's presidency" (*City Press* Comment, 2003h:18). The editorial further argued that "HIV/AIDS had become Mbeki's political liability and it eroded whatever good he was trying to achieve for the country and the continent". In a later editorial (*City Press* Comment, 2004e:18), the *City Press* hailed the government's roll-out as "a major step forward and evidence that the government is coming to grips with this scourge…even if belatedly".

Adding his praise to the government's roll-out, the then *City Press* editor, Mathatha Tsedu, (Tsedu, 2004c:18) observed that the roll-out was "the final nail in the coffin of the half-hearted and grudging acceptance of a need to give people the best of what science can offer today". Unlike his newspaper's earlier harsh tone towards Mbeki, Tsedu had kind words for the then president. Noting that "Mbeki's image was shackled to that of an Aids dissident", Tsedu pointed out that "the shackles fell off with the ARV roll-out". In a softer tone compared to the *City Press*' editorials which earlier called for the resignation of Tshabalala-Msimang, Tsedu further noted that though he would not argue for Tshabalala-Msimang's dismissal from her office, Mbeki would be well-advised to shift her to another post.

Two months after Tsedu's editorial, the *City Press* revisited the government's reluctance to provide anti-retrovirals, Nevirapine, in particular (*City Press* Comment, 2004f:18). There were three interrelated events that led the *City Press* to revisit the issue of Nevirapine. In no order of importance, the first had to do with the announcement by the Actuarial Society of South Africa (ASSA) that the formula they were using to calculate the rate of HIV infections was wrong (Molefe, 2004:19). ASSA had reduced its earlier number of projected infections by a third (*City Press* Comment, 2004f:18). The second had to do with the announcement by the Medicines Control Council (MCC) that the MCC had reconsidered the merits of Nevirapine when used as a monotherapy to reduce the risk of transmission of HIV from mother-to-child during labour (Molefe, 2004:19).

The MCC had discovered that Nevirapine led to significant resistance in mothers and babies when used as a monotherapy. Following this announcement, the third was Tshabala-Msimang's address at the 15th International AIDS Conference, where she reminded the world that when the South African government showed reluctance and urged caution about the use of Nevirapine, it was pressurised by AIDS activists, and ultimately by court rulings to roll out Nevirapine (Valentine, 2004:03).

Commenting on these developments, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2004f:18) noted that the latest events called for a new relationship between the government, professionals in the sciences and HIV/AIDS activists. The editorial recalled that when the government cautioned about the toxicity and efficacy of some drugs, AIDS activists had said that science had already proven what the government still wanted to research. The government was told not to try to invent the wheel when the world was already driving. The editorial further called to attention the fact that when Mbeki challenged the statistics relating to HIV infections, "he was not seen as genuinely concerned, but bolstering his „dissident' view".

Commenting on this issue, the then *City Press*' deputy editor, Khathu Mamaila (2004c:18), argued that even though there was an element of truth that lack of leadership on the part of the government contributed to the spread of HIV/AIDS, "the responsibility to protect oneself from HIV must remain with the individual". Mamaila's assertion was informed by what he perceived as "victim mentality" by those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. He observed that in the spread of HIV/AIDS there was too much focus on what the government was doing

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or not doing, and less on what people were doing or not doing against the spread of HIV/AIDS.

As an indication that the "victim mentality has led us to exaggerate the role and influence of our leaders", Mamaila further pointed out that the "reported surge in teenage pregnancies, especially in schools, is proof that the young are not practising safe sex". Against this background, Mamaila (2004c:18) cautioned that as "a people and a nation, we must stop blaming others for everything that happens to us". In making these assertions, however, Mamaila made clear that he did "not mean that the government should be exonerated from its responsibility to provide medical assistance to those already infected by HIV/Aids".

6.3.5.3 Summary: The *City Press'* official position, and individual black journalists' positions on HIV/AIDS

This section has given an account of the *City Press'* version and the newspaper's individuals' perspectives on the Mandela and Mbeki's governments' handling of HIV/AIDS. The newspaper was critical of Mandela's Health Minister, Nkosazana Zuma-Dlamini's initiatives. While initially, the newspaper acclaimed Mbeki's and his Health Minister, Manto Tshabalala-Msimang's initiatives, later the newspaper was critical. While one journalist was critical of Mbeki, another expressed admiration for Mbeki's courageous opposition to popular views supported by the media.

The next section gives an account of interviews held with the *City Press'* black journalists.

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6.3.6 Section Two – Interviews

6.3.6.1 Discussion

In this section an account of interviews with the *City Press*' black journalists is given. The interview questions, written in full in Chapter 5 (5.1), are attached as Addendum A. The interviewees' names, written in an alphabetic order, according to surnames, and the reasons they were selected, are also listed in Chapter 5 (5.4.1).

On the evolution of the concept of "black journalism" from a colonial and apartheid order into post-apartheid South Africa:

The concept of black journalism as a political concept was consciously developed in the 1970s under the influence of Black Consciousness. Black journalists regarded themselves as blacks first and journalists second. This meant that they gave priority to the anti-apartheid struggle and their journalism was shaped by this commitment. This is the collective understanding that the interviewees expressed regarding black journalism prior to 1994 (Kalane, 2009; Mamaila, 2008; Mbatha, 2008; Memela, 2008; Mkhabela, 2008; Mogale, 2009; Mona, 2009; Noganta, 2009; Nqayi, 2009; Sibanda, 2008; Sibiya, 2009; Tsedu, 2008).

The meaning of black journalism in post-apartheid South Africa was an issue that preoccupied many black journalists (Noganta, 2009). The challenge for some black journalists was that this role was not clearly defined, and this absence of clarity was a cause of confusion for some black journalists (Noganta, 2009). The debate about the meaning of black journalism in post-apartheid society saw some black journalists "hankering after the old form of [black] journalism as if we are still fighting against an oppressive government" (Mkhabela, 2008).

In spite of the absence of this clarity, many black journalists held strong views about what black journalism meant in post-apartheid South Africa. They believed that there continued to be an agenda followed by black journalists and another followed by white journalists. Sibiya (2009) believed that black journalists continued, in post-apartheid South Africa, to have a "responsibility to articulate" black people's fears and plight, adding that white journalists could not be expected to go to black people's areas and claim to want to articulate black people's frustrations. Arguing along similar lines, Mona (2009) asserted that black journalism continued to have relevance in post-apartheid South Africa because white journalists continued being authoritative in terms of reporting and analysis due to their access to people with influence and power. Mona added that black journalism in post-apartheid South Africa

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continued to be relevant because, in his view, the same material conditions that black people lived in under apartheid still remained.

For Mamaila (2008) the perception that post-apartheid South Africa was totally transformed between 1994 and 2004 was self-deluding. While in the pre-1994 era the struggle was against institutionalised racism, the post-1994 struggle was about dealing with the legacy of that institutionalised racism: the continuing landlessness of black people and continued dwelling of black people in shacks, and added to that, joblessness. Against this background, both Mamaila (2008) and Sibiya (2009) asserted that the role of black journalists, therefore, was to continue to fight for the realisation of the objectives of the struggle.

Also noting that in the "new era black journalists have to ensure that the objectives of the struggle do not disappear", Tsedu (2008) also asserted that the "role of black journalists should be to make sure that the marginalisation of the poor does not happen". In Tsedu's book, black journalists should make a conscious decision not to forget the condition of those living in the townships. This should apply even to those black journalists who no longer lived in the townships. Tsedu pointed out that in their interaction with the rich and powerful, black journalists needed to be the representatives of the poor. The question that a journalist should pose to a president should reflect and represent the concerns of the poor (Tsedu, 2008). In Tsedu's view, the challenge that faced black journalists in the post-apartheid era was "how to avoid being swallowed by the elite of our societies". This means, in Tsedu's view, that "black journalists have a responsibility to hold authority to account, especially in the interest of the poor".

Tsedu's view was shared by Mkhabela (2008) who observed that the relationship between black journalists and former liberation movements in the post-1994 had to be different from what it was in the pre-1994 undemocratic dispensation. For Mkhabela this meant that this "relationship must be characterised by a professional distance – that of holding politicians to accountability and scrutinising their actions".

While during the anti-apartheid era it was easier to expose the wrongs of apartheid, exposing the wrongs of a black-headed government was not so easy (Noganta, 2008; Nqayi, 2009). The difficulty facing black journalists, particularly at the *City Press*, was how to resist both being over-complimentary and being over-critical in assessing the performance of a black-headed government. Black journalists found themselves having to fend off accusations that they were

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anti-black when they exposed failures of the black government (Noganta, 2009). For Mamaila (2008) to hear voices emanating from some individuals in the government justifying corruption in the democratic government on the basis that the apartheid government was corrupt, too, was "morally unambitious" and "irritating". Since the new government was a black government, Mamaila believed that black journalists needed to be "more radical" and should "set better standards for our government".

For Mbatha (2008) black journalists during the post-apartheid order did the opposite of what was hoped for by many, that is, defending and advancing the gains of the struggle. In Mbatha's observation "black journalism has become seriously compromised in the new South Africa". That is because, Mbatha noted, certain stories "became untouchables because journalists wanted to make business deals with those that are in power. Vested interests became elevated above duty." Mbatha noted that instead of white journalists breaking stories about the arms deal, this should have been done by black journalists. In her view, on corruption-related issues, black journalists "should have been more vociferous so as to defend the gains of the revolution because they fought for this order".

In the new dispensation, publications like the *City Press* that traditionally catered for black people took a dip in sales (Mogale, 2009). This reality compelled a few black-oriented publications to "smell the coffee" and thus to shift their focus to mainstream journalism, that is, preoccupation with the "man in the blue collar, fun and celebrities" (Mogale, 2009).

In Sibanda's (2008) view, in the new dispensation the role of journalists had become more of individual agency than group agency. For her it was hard to pinpoint a voice of a group. Where in the past black journalists were identifiable with Black Consciousness, in the new dispensation Black Consciousness was replaced with "humanist consciousness". Sibanda asserted that even though there was an emergence of the Forum of Black Journalists in 1997, the organisation existed in name and exhibited no clear ideological articulation. Sibanda (2008) noted that what made a good journalist in the post-1994 era was adherence to values such as accuracy and objectivity. In her view, "[e]ven those black journalists who were members of the FBJ" adhered to these values. Unequivocally, Sibanda asserted that in the post-apartheid order, in journalism there was "was no platform for Black Consciousness".

In a similar echo to that of Sibanda's view, Mkhabela (2008) asserted that black journalism's "activism of the pre-1994 era is no longer relevant". In Mkhabela's view, new activism

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should be directed at defending the new constitution where "[p]art of the victory won by activist journalists is reflected – the freedom of the media and expression, for instance".

In asserting that "the whole notion of black journalism seems to be fading in the post-apartheid democratic dispensation" and that "[t]his paradigm shift, slow as it is, is to be welcomed", Memela seemed to be in agreement with the positions articulated by both Sibanda and Mkhabela. Memela was of the view that journalists were now "scrutinising what people do in a way that shatters the race myth" with the realisation that "race or skin colour does not make a difference when it comes to corruption, crime, poverty or any other human condition". In Memela's view the direction of journalism is "moving into a post-racial society that is enshrined as non-racism in our Constitution".

On the political role that the *City Press* defined for its black journalists in the period 1994 to 2004:

Responses from the editors of the *City Press* during the research period suggest that they were clear about what they sought to achieve through the newspaper they edited.

Khulu Sibiya (2009), the second black editor of the *City Press*, said that he "repeatedly drummed" into his staff members that "they had to be the voice of the voiceless". That, he said, was "critical" to him. He said it was for this reason that the *City Press* launched campaigns to "encourage our people to vote". His successor, Len Kalane (2009), emphatically stated that the *City Press* did not, during the research period, deviate from the newspaper's historical role – "that of championing the black cause". The two editors' answers suggested that they carried on the historical role championed by their predecessor, Percy Qoboza. However, the year 1994 and beyond posed new challenges. Holding the reigns was no longer the unrepresentative government, but a democratically elected government that had a "black face". Kalane's successor, Vusi Mona (2009), was very aware of this and had clear views about what the relationship between the government and the *City Press* had to be.

Unequivocally, Mona (2009) states that he was "unapologetic about our support for the black-led government". He "supported the Mbeki administration to the extent where some people said I was used as a pawn". Mona's support for the Mbeki administration was informed by a belief that the *City Press*' black journalists "had a responsibility to help this government to articulate its visions and programmes". Mona said that while he did not frown on dissent, he encouraged his staff to be sympathetic to the ANC government. While he believed that

"different political views could exist…the orientation of the newspaper should be clear. The reality was that there was a dominant political view" – and that view was a pro-ANC view. It is against this background that Mona "would not be ashamed to say vote ANC". While Mona's focus was to give support to the ANC to consolidate its position as South Africa's ruling party, his successor, Mathatha Tsedu (2008) took the reigns at a period when the South African government was playing a pivotal role in African affairs, and this is what he believed the media, particularly the *City Press*, should focus upon.

Tsedu (2008) believed that while the *City Press'* historical role "was to act as a voice of a people who had no voice", what the *City Press'* black journalists needed was the "same vigour and energy we had in fighting apartheid to give coverage to the African continent". The task for the *City Press* in Tsedu's book was to go "beyond what is usually done by the wires, that is, covering war and famine as if that is all there is in and about Africa". This task entailed "covering the good and the bad; to report on the culture and lifestyle of the continent's people".

Before he became the *City Press'* deputy editor, Mamaila (2008) worked for the *City Press* for two years between 1992 and 1994. He recalled that during that period the "*City Press'* journalists were encouraged to make sure that the democratic project worked". He was not at ease with the *City Press'* editorial call on South Africans to vote for the ANC, his reason being that the "role of the media is to enable people to make independent decisions that reflect maturity". Looking back, he said that the media – including the *City Press* – were "[s]o eager …to make sure that the democratic project succeeded that to an extent we failed to exercise our critical faculty sufficiently".

Memela (2008), who served as a Labour and Politics correspondent for almost a year, and later as a senior political correspondent for three years, noted that he was "not aware of any well-defined political strategy or programme" on the part of the *City Press* during the research period. He further points out that "[i]f it existed, it was vague, haphazard and very casual". Memela is of the opinion that the political role of the *City Press* – which was to be the voice of the voiceless African majority through articulating their aspirations and highlighting their struggle – ended with the death of Percy Qoboza. Qoboza's successor, Khulu Sibiya, according to Memela, "had no political background or grounding". Things were compounded, in Memela's (2008) view, by an appointment of former *Drum* magazine's sports editor, Sekolla Sello, to head the political desk. Memela pointed out that though Sello learned fast

and revealed an understanding of political dynamics, "political coverage was confined to a superficial analysis of what was obvious to everyone with eyes to see. In fact, it would be untrue to say that there was a political agenda."

Memela (2008) also noted that "a brief spell of hope and political relevance" shone when Chiara Carta and Wally Mbhele led the political coverage at the *City Press*. But even then he pointed out that "it was more news than analysis and commentary that informed and educated on the state of the nation".

In no uncertain terms, Nqayi (2009) said that "[t]here was no political role" that defined the *City Press* when he was working for the newspaper as a Political Correspondent (1997 – 2001). Nqayi further pointed out that there was a possibility that since journalists working at the *City Press* were black, it was assumed that "we should know and need not be told". Reflecting on personal experience, Nqayi pointed out that as a young journalist assigned to Parliament he needed guidance. According to him this guidance was not provided and that disappointed him. As a Political Correspondent, he said that there was no policy given to him to guide him about how to cover politics. Policy "was lacking – if it existed, it was not articulated".

Nqayi (2009) held a strong view that a policy about how to cover post-1994 politics would have helped. He said that he got a sense of direction by looking at what white parliamentary journalists from other publications were doing. Nqayi felt that there was little space dedicated to politics in the *City Press* – "it was only one page while entertainment was given more space. Much more could have been done politically." Though he was not as scathing as Memela was of Sibiya, Nqayi said that to be "frank, our editor-in-chief, Khulu Sibiya, was hands off". Unlike Memela, he had kind words for Sello, about whom Nqayi (2009) observed that he (Sello) took him under his wing and urged his journalists to distinguish the *City Press* from other publications by reflecting the good done by the government and the changes that were taking place.

Like Nqayi, Noganta (2009) felt that "there was so much [the] *City Press* could do" but did not do. Like Memela and Nqayi, Noganta pointed out that "there was no clearly stated political role for the *City Press*' black journalists". Like Memela, Noganta held the view that if the *City Press* in the period 1994 to 2004 "had been led by a person of the calibre of Percy Qoboza, you would probably have had some kind of a charter reflecting a position on this

issue". Like Memela, Noganta (2009) said that "Khulu Sibiya was not that kind of an editor". There was a feeling among the *City Press'* black journalists that the newspaper could do more than it was doing, but did not, because decision-making senior journalists, according to Noganta (2009), shot down ideas coming from junior staff. Noganta further pointed out that the *City Press'* leadership did not seem to realise the "unique position" the newspaper occupied. The way things were, in Noganta's view, the *City Press* "could not have been a newspaper of reference at the time".

Mkhabela (2008) held the view that an accurate answer to this question should be situated in four historical contexts which are interlinked: the history of the newspaper, editorial thinking, economics of the newspaper and its leadership. Historically speaking, he said that the *City Press* in a post-1994 period believed that even though the struggle was over, the ideals that informed the struggle were not completely lost. Because of this history, Mkhabela (2008) noted that the *City Press* positioned itself "towards a particular niche market: the black market". Consciousness of this market, Mkhabela pointed out, "shaped your reporting: you had to be relevant to the market". Though this exercise was not carried out in a "static" but "dynamic" fashion, Mkhabela said that "others were still suffering from the unchanging condition". He believed that personal leadership styles and convictions of individual editors impacted on the direction of the newspaper: Khulu Sibiya identified himself with an anti-apartheid cause; Vusi Mona tried to transcend the African market and to "woo" the white market; Mathatha Tsedu was unapologetically African.

Mogale's (2009) response suggests that he shared Mkhabela's views. Mogale stated that though soon after 1994 "our role was a carry-over of the sentiment we had before 1994, that is, to support organisations deemed to be people's organisations…gradually we moved away from struggle journalism" and "began to interview leaders of right wing organisations in an effort to understand the thinking that informed the things they were doing".

Though, like Mogale, Sibanda (2008) believed that the *City Press* played a "carry-over" role of "represent[ing] black people's interests, their concerns and their ills", there was another equally important challenge in the post-1994 era.

Since blacks were now in power, this role involved dealing with black people's mistakes as they were experimenting with their new role and challenges that went with it. In the research period, Sibanda believed that the *City Press'* black journalists "tried very hard to be educative

to the black population regarding the mandate of their political representatives in government". Sibanda's response was shared by Mbatha (2008) who said that during the research period the *City Press* "wanted to make it right for black people: to inform them about their rights; to educate them". Like Sibanda, Mbatha noted that the feeling at the *City Press* was that while "[p]eople knew that they were free…they did not know what this freedom meant". The political role that the *City Press* played, according to Mbatha, was that the newspaper "sought to make sure that it helped black people to be conscious of their rights so that they could regain their dignity which had been trampled upon through the course of apartheid". In order to do this, Mbatha said that the "*City Press* assigned its journalists not just to look at the negative or the positive that the government was doing but to give context to the stories".

On the ownership of the *City Press* by a white company and its impact on the political role of the *City Press*' black journalists in the period 1994 to 2004:

Without exception, all the editors (Kalane, 2009; Mona, 2009; Sibiya, 2009; Mamaila, 2008; Tsedu, 2008) of the *City Press* during the research period stated that Naspers, a historically white Afrikaans company, did not interfere in the editorial of the newspaper run by black editors. Kalane and Sibiya expressed belief that this was possible because of the non-interference charter signed between Naspers and Percy Qoboza. Sibiya noted that the owners did not try to interfere with the editorial material "because they knew that black journalists would walk away". He also noted that the Afrikaner owners were "sensitive to the fact that we saw them as oppressors". As a result, according to Sibiya, "they did not want to rock the boat", considering also that black journalists at the *City Press* had "made it known to them [Naspers company] we would monitor the situation to ensure that there was no interference".

While Mona (2009) said that the *City Press*' owners did not interfere with editorial positions, he also noted that the "Afrikaners used the newspaper to get closer to the ruling party". He said they did this "in a sophisticated way by omission". By omission Mona meant that the owners "never raised an eyebrow when the *City Press* took a pro-government stance".

Mamaila (2008) noted that the "irony in the ownership of the *City Press* is that it gives black journalists a good space". He thought that this was possible because the *City Press*' "owners have no political ambitions". Mamaila also pointed out that when a media organ is controlled by people with political ambitions, it becomes problematic. He cited the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) as a typical case where interference by ruling party

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members has been blamed for the SABC's inability to exercise independent journalism. Tsedu (2008), who had previously served as the SABC's Deputy Head of News, attested to this interference, pointing out that he sometimes got calls in the middle of the bulletin from his bosses.

Tsedu (2008) recalled that once, when the SABC was covering the Zimbabwean 2002 elections, he received a telephone call informing him that the SABC's Group CEO, Peter Matlare, was sitting in the news conference. When Tsedu spoke to Matlare, the latter told him that the then Minister of Home Affairs, Nosiviwe Maphisa-Nqakula, was complaining about the SABC's coverage of the Zimbabwean elections. Tsedu noted that he objected to this interference. Comparing his experience at the SABC and the *City Press*, he said that he did not get calls from the white owners of the *City Press* "seeking to influence the content of the newspaper".

While there was unanimity among the editors on this issue, in the newsroom perceptions were varied. Mkhabela (2008) noted that while there may have been some differences between the managers and the editors, he did not think that the "white ownership tempered in any way with the African agenda". However, Mkhabela also pointed out that while "ownership did not tamper with the editorial stance of the newspaper", he "would assume that as people who invested to maximise profit, they would want the newspaper to focus on the emerging market". In Mkhabela's observation, the perception around the interference by the owners was informed by role expectations. By this he meant that the government, the owners and black journalists themselves had each their own expectations about the role of black journalists in South African politics.

Mkhabela (2008) noted that black politicians' criticism of black journalists were misplaced and ignored the fact that their roles had changed – they were no longer leading liberation movements but a government, and as such had to expect and accept criticism from black journalists. While Mkhabela recognised Mandela's right to criticise Sibiya, he also noted that Mandela's criticism was misplaced. His view was shared by Sibanda (2008).

Sibanda (2008) observed that Mandela's criticism was unfair. That was because, Sibanda further pointed out, the *City Press* was the first newspaper that had called on the people to vote for the ANC. She further observed that even though the *City Press* was Afrikaner-owned, black journalists wrote against the grain of Afrikaner nationalism. Sibanda also noted that the

Afrikaners could have used their ownership to frustrate black journalists at the *City Press* if they wanted to. In her view they did not. This view was shared by Mbatha (2008). The *City Press*, Mbatha observed, even though it was white-owned, allowed her to write and publish stories that other newspapers "did not want me to touch". Mbatha's examples were the stories of former MK soldiers Andrew Zondo and Robert McBride, who bombed buildings in South Africa that cost some white people's lives.

Noganta (2009) noted that some *City Press*' journalists perceived the leadership of the *City Press* "as being weak at the time…kowtowing to the Naspers' bosses in Cape Town". Noganta pointed out that the *City Press*' editors "were so comfortable and happy in their positions, and did not seem to be prepared to rock the boat". In his recollection, Noganta noted that the black journalists at the *City Press* were bursting with ideas, wanting to do things differently, seeking a newspaper that would go deeply into issues, reflecting the mood of the country and the state of the economy without being sensational. To their disappointment, Noganta (2009) noted that their "editors could not take independent decisions to effect these ideas…This fed our perception that there was an invisible hand controlling the newsroom".

Noganta's view that the *City Press* could have done more was echoed by Nqayi (2009). Nqayi suspected that "the *City Press*' emphasis on entertainment and less focus on politics was a way of treading softly so as not to offend" the owners. Nqayi felt that the *City Press* "did not really make an effort to know the black government". He also said that when he "was covering labour, the workers laughed at the *City Press*' reporters, saying that they did not expect much because we were owned by Afrikaners". Echoing the view among black journalists that there was an invisible hand controlling the newsroom, Memela (2008) noted that there were "a few instances where stories would be spiked for no good reason because perhaps someone at the top did not agree with the political slant".

Memela (2008) conceded though that this "could be attributed to how newsrooms functioned in terms of hierarchy". But he emphasised that "the suspicion lingered that it could have been done for political reasons". Memela recalled that an incident occurred that consolidated this suspicion in the newsroom. Under the leadership of Mona, according to Memela, senior journalists threatened to quit *en masse* because of perceived editorial interference when an advertiser threatened to pull out if a certain story about rotten chickens sold to blacks was printed. While the event soon petered out, Memela's view was that it was "these sorts of

incidents that not only highlight the inherent tensions, but give cynics intellectual fodder that there was no absolute editorial independence but interference".

On role of African cultural values in the *City Press*' political black journalists' approach to their work:

Sibiya (2009) was emphatic that African cultural values were observed in his newsroom. He said this began with instructions to younger journalists that they were not to be on first name terms with older members of the staff – whether the staff members were journalists or not. When carrying out their journalistic duties, Sibiya said that journalists were sensitised about the importance of handling people with sensitivity. This sensitivity entailed teaching journalists

> "not to go to a bereaved family and just start clicking away their cameras without giving notice. That is invasion. It is disrespectful to do so in our culture. That is what sets us apart from white people."

But Sibiya's successor, Kalane (2009), said that there was no outlet for African cultural values. He pointed out that one "cannot uphold cultural and traditional values in the house of a stranger". The "house of the stranger" in this case refered to the *City Press*' white ownership. The initial response of Kalane's successor, Mona (2009) was that to be "brutally honest", while there was a consciousness about *City Press*' journalists' blackness, "cultural consciousness was non-existent". But in an afterthought, he observed that at the "*City Press* our values did to an extent play a role in influencing our direction, but I think we could have done more".

While this may sound as self-contradictory on Mona's part, when contextualised, it is not. The point made by Mona is that while at "an individual level African cultural consciousness existed…at a newspaper level there was no cultural consciousness". He noted that he was "pained" by some of the stories that were written by the *City Press* in his time. As an example, he cited an incident when his staff member suggested that they should bring former president Thabo Mbeki down by publishing allegations that he had "girlfriends". Mona's response to the journalist was that he should be factual and discreet in approaching the story.

Following the approach by his staff member, Mona (2009) noted that he received calls from the ANC's headquarters asking about the "embarrassing" questions that the *City Press*'

journalist had forwarded to the ANC's office. Mona's "immediate reaction" was that he would not run the story. The "African in me" said that the president was like his father and that his personal life was not impacting on service delivery. It is against this background that Mona observed that at an individual level African cultural consciousness existed but that at a newspaper level it was non-existent. Mona's point was shared by Nqayi (2009) who emphasised that the "African cultural influence was at an individual level – not at the company level".

This was not the only point that Nqayi shared with Mona. Nqayi (2009), like Mona, expressed a sense of apprehension when the *City Press* had to deal with sex scandals involving "adult politicians". He observed that he felt "awkward about posing certain questions to adult politicians" because he is an "African child [who] came from a cultural background that emphasised respect for adults". Nqayi further observed that this "dilemma of being expected to ask tough questions made it difficult for me to practise as a journalist with an African cultural background". Mogale (2009) could relate to the awkwardness that was experienced by Nqayi. The story that Mogale wrote about "Winnie Mandela slapping Madiba [Nelson Mandela]…is one of those stories one would have rather not have written, looking back".

Mogale (2009) thought that the story was "culturally" repugnant. Such stories, according to Mogale, made it to print because black journalists "were basically driven by the desire to sell the publication, to make it acceptable to the market". Against this background, Mogale noted that he did not "honestly…think that African cultural values played any role in the way we did things…I do not recall culture being a driving or determining factor."

Mona's successor, Tsedu (2008), took a conscious decision to inculcate African cultural consciousness in the minds of the *City Press*' black journalists. Tsedu noted that the use of derogatory language in reference to anyone was disallowed. While criticism on anyone was allowed, this was done "in such a way that the dignity of the one criticised will be retained". This approach, Tsedu observed, was consciously taught to journalists in his time. However, Tsedu pointed out at the same time that respect in African culture "does not mean that someone younger or junior accepts everything and anything that someone older or senior says or does". He emphasised that "respect does not mean absence of criticism", adding that in this regard the "*City Press*' record speaks for itself". Commenting on the role of African cultural values or lack of, Mamaila (2008) expressed belief that the manner in which black journalists approached issues "has more to do with political orientation than with culture".

This is a view that was also shared by Memela (2008). Memela pointed out that even though African culture emphasised the importance of respect, "you would find that some black journalists exhibit a lack of respect for our leaders". At the same time, he pointed out that there are those who shy away from criticising leaders. Shying away from criticising leaders is not a right practice and not a teaching of African culture in Mkhabela's view. Mkhabela (2008) observed that "African culture does not conceal things". He cautioned that care should be taken to avoid the tendency of saying that just because a person is an African an individual should refrain from saying that if "an elderly person has done a wrong thing, because I am an African I must be respectful and not call him a criminal". He observed that it should be appreciated that among Africans there are "good and bad people".

Mkhabela expressed belief that the *City Press* reflected the good and the bad in African people and avoided selectiveness. He also noted that in the cultural arena, "the *City Press* was always in the forefront of celebrating values". He also observed that there was no need for black journalists to be taught African values at the *City Press* – for him it was a "natural thing". Mkhabela (2008) pointed out that in the *City Press'* environment he assumed that "there would be no need to say here we do it the African way, unlike when you are an African in a European environment".

In this regard, Sibanda (2008) shared Mkhabela's observation. Sibanda pointed out that although it was not "outrightly articulated, being African made black journalists empathetic when dealing with African issues". She noted that in cases where she had to interview a widow, she did so "with sensitivity" and did "not just budge in". She pointed out that "as an African you must respect the solemnity of bereavement". She also observed that working with white sub-editors at the *City Press*, "you would make a follow-up on your story to make sure that the necessary sensitivity is reflected". Sibanda also pointed out though, that in being aware of African cultural values as a black journalist there was a "constant balancing act between being empathetic and at the same time not allowing empathy to make you let your guard down".

The approach to stories involving bereavement narrated by Sibanda was echoed by Noganta (2009). What Noganta

"could certainly observe as far as African cultural beliefs and the *City Press* were concerned was the approach of our chief photographer, Felix Mdluli, towards using pictures of deceased persons".

Noganta noted that Mdluli guarded against the "unnecessary use of such pictures". Noganta further observed that he did not recall the *City Press* having a headline screaming the name of a government minister on a first name basis. He also recalled that senior black journalists like Benison Makele, who was coaching them, "instilled a sense of respect for elders". As a result of that, when writing feature articles, for instance, "we would prefix the name of an old lady with „Ma' so and so, in accordance with the teachings of African culture, instead of outrightly referring to her on first-name terms".

Noganta's assertion was endorsed by Mbatha (2008). Mbatha noted that where "normally a white journalist would be on first name terms or use an honorific (Mr/Mrs), I would go „sanibonani baba/mama (greetings father/mother)". In writing the story, Mbatha observed that she would "make sure that the kind of respect due to the elders is reflected in the story", so that the "story would have nuances that make it culture-appropriate".

On African and Western cultural differences' impact upon the mandate of the *City Press*' political black journalists:

In response to this question, Kalane's (2009) answer was one sentence: "Western cultural norms held sway." His answer was consistent with his response to the previous question to which his response was that one "cannot uphold cultural and traditional values in the house of a stranger". As pointed out above, the point he was making was that the *City Press* was a white-owned newspaper and therefore African cultural values could not be predominant.

Memela (2008) held a similar view to Kalane, though advancing different reasons. Having noted that "black journalists have always embraced the Western concept of journalism", and that black journalists have always "sought to be on the same wavelength with Western journalism", Memela went on to point out that this was due to urban blacks' harbouring "a secret wish to be equal to whites or their Western counterparts". Memela further asserted that "the fact that *City Press* journalists were largely urban blacks", meant that it became "very difficult even to suggest any strong connection with the rural or what can be considered authentic African culture, if there is such a thing".

While Sibiya (2009) conceded that the Western concept of journalism was pervasive at the *City Press*, he also pointed out that there was a conscious struggle, albeit a difficult one. Sibiya noted that reconciling what black journalists were taught in journalism schools and how they should carry themselves in real life was a difficult exercise. While in "journalism schools, journalists are taught to have an adversarial relationship with governments, to take no prisoners when dealing with government officials" and not to let them off the hook, Sibiya observed that at the *City Press*, journalists were taught that they could get answers without necessarily being aggressive.

Sibiya's claim was confirmed by Nqayi (2009). Nqayi noted that being a black journalist and wanting to uphold African traditions, "is one of those contradictions of being a product of a university journalism training that taught you that politicians lie, and lie always, and having a problem with that notion". Not being "comfortable with that idea" that politicians are perpetual liars, Nqayi noted that working at the *City Press* made things "easy" for him and "that dilemma was removed". That is because, Nqayi observed, at the *City Press* the main question was about "whether or not there was enough change" in the country

> "and not preoccupying ourselves with silly things like towns' name changes. Such were white journalists' preoccupation who found it hard to appreciate the changes the black government was making in black people's lives."

Sibanda (2008) concured with both Sibiya and Nqayi. Sibanda noted that while black journalists at the *City Press* "would not label someone as stupid", they would not shy away from reporting that someone had embezzled funds. But Sibanda's argument was that while the "cultural element is observed", this should not be done at the expense of sacrificing probing journalism. She pointed out that she found it curious that

> "an African elder [politician] would cut down to size a black journalist his junior for asking a question that is regarded culturally inappropriate and yet a white journalist of the same age asking the same question would get away with such".

She further noted that "African leaders are more emboldened to deal with fellow Africans than with others".

This attitude on the part of black politicians, according to Mkhabela (2008), is a ploy to get black journalists to relate to the politicians as "comrades". While Mkhabela acknowledged that some black politicians might be genuine in alleging that "black journalists are bowing to white masters, of not being developmental or patriotic", other politicians "use these concepts to block black journalists from doing their professional work". When faced with such challenges, Mkhabela noted that black journalists should not be afraid of asking difficult or even embarrassing questions to the political leadership. He further pointed out that the understanding of black journalists at the *City Press* was that while black politicians were not "inherently corrupt", they were, like other human beings, "prone to corruption". Accordingly, Mkhabela observed that being an African journalist "does not mean taking the concept of respect to the level where it impinges negatively on your work".

Mamaila (2008) shared Mkhabela's view on this point. As a black journalist operating in Africa, Mamaila rejected the "general view held by Western journalists that there should exist, as a matter of principle, an adversarial relationship between the government and the media". But rejecting such a view for Mamaila was not the same as asserting that there should be no tension between the media and the government. Contrary to that, Mamaila pointed out that a healthy tension between the government and the media was good. He observed that the responsibility of the media "is to expose the truth that some in the government may want to have hidden".

Mamaila asserted that such exposures would, in fact, help the government to do its job properly. Such an exercise on the part of journalists, Mamaila further pointed out, "is a patriotic duty on the part of journalists". However, he emphasised that journalists should not only focus on the negative about the political scene, but strike "a balance between negative and positive stories". He added that both the "extremes of showing only the positive and showing only the negative are wrong".

Mogale's (2009) observation on this issue suggested that what Mamaila refered to as "extremism" was prevalent at the *City Press* at some stage during the period 1994 to 2004. Mogale observed that when the democratic government was established, "there was a latent sympathy for the ruling ANC". Not wishing the ANC-led government to fail, Mogale further observed that the *City Press'* journalists "role as a watchdog was somehow compromised". He noted that in the first three to four months' period of the democratic government, the "*City Press* would not go out of its way to find government scandals and expose them". The "bigger

good seemed to be the preservation of the newfound dispensation". The prevalent sentiment was that exposés "would have flown against the spirit and sentiment of celebration" and the *City Press*' black journalists "did not want to flow against the tide".

Mona's (2009) observation about black journalists was that they "uncritically accepted Western frameworks". While acknowledging that he was trained according to the Western framework at the *Mail&Guardian*, Mona also observed that he was the *Mail&Guardian*'s "failed product" in that he "did not set out to carry out the liberal project": "What are we churning out if we train journalists to look at the government as a bunch of liars?" Mona raised this question after disapprovingly pointing out that a certain South African professor of journalism had recently written in a South African daily newspaper that at his institution he trained journalists not to believe what the government said.

In observing that the "tendency in Western journalism is to single out personalities", Mbatha (2008) echoed Mona in noting that "[s]ome black journalists buy into this as well". Tsedu (2008) was also critical of this tendency on the part of black journalists. According to Tsedu (2008), blackness and Africanness is more than just a question of skin colour – Africanness is about values. In Tsedu's view, for anyone to be acceptable as African has to "accept certain values that are accepted as African". This Africanness, Tsedu (2008) noted, "must be reflected in the approach of black journalists". To be African for a black journalist means, Tsedu further observed, "the rejection of the distortion of things African". Here Tsedu was paraphrasing Biko's definition of blackness about which Biko said that blackness is more than being about the colour of one's skin but more about the attitude of the mind, namely the rejection by blacks of all forms of oppression.

Tsedu's view of what it means to be a black journalist found an expression in the *City Press* of Noganta's day, according to Noganta. In his time at the *City Press*, Noganta (2009) could recall treating a story in a way that undermined African cultural values. In emphasising this point he recalled how at the *City Press*' newsroom "black journalists were horrified by a picture on the front page of a knock-and-drop (free newspaper) that showed a dismembered body of a person that had been knocked down by a train". Such a picture could not have found a space in the *City Press* Noganta worked for.

On the link between African cultural values and the *City Press'* concept of "Distinctly African"

Soon after Tsedu became the *City Press'* editor, he changed the newspaper's motto from "The People's Paper" to "Distinctly African" in October 2004 (Tsedu, 2004b:1). A number of the interviewees had already left the *City Press*. But even then, they had a view about this change, and, therefore commented. Only one interviewee, Sibiya (2009) offered a "no comment".

The conceptualisation of "Distinctly African", according to its architect, Tsedu (2008), was informed by indigenous African values in contact with other values. Tsedu further noted that for the *City Press*, the "Distinctly African" concept "meant not allowing practices like circumcision to be derided even if it is commercial for others to do so". Echoing Tsedu, Mamaila (2008) noted that through the "Distinctly African" concept, the newspaper "seeks to confront in its coverage the realities of Africa in a way that is contextual". By validating what is African, through the *City Press* coverage of the African continent, Mamaila further noted that the "Distinctly African" approach addressed practical issues such as Africans' lack of self-esteem and awe for things European.

Sibanda (2008) endorsed Tsedu and Mamaila's explanation of the concept. Sibanda observed that the "Distinctly African" concept was a call to Africans to respect fellow Africans. It served to remind Africans about their identity. She noted that it also served as a challenge to interrogate the meaning about what constituted being "African". This, Sibanda further pointed out, "makes you conscious of your African cultural values. It calls upon you, as a black journalist, to take into consideration the cultural context when you report African issues".

Nqayi (2009) agreed with Sibanda. He pointed out that Tsedu "had a vision of a black publication that was going to focus not only on negative things in Africa but the positives as well". He further argued that the move was "aimed at distinguishing the *City Press* from other publications that were only harping on African failures". All this, according to Nqayi, was meant to highlight the efforts that Africans were making in uplifting themselves. In order to fully appreciate the "Distinctly African" concept, Mkhabela (2008) noted that an observer should take into cognisance the political climate of the time in which the concept was launched.

Mkhabela noted that the concept was launched during former President Thabo Mbeki's era, who was at the forefront of championing the African Renaissance. According to Mkhabela, the *City Press* embraced Mbeki's broader political appeal of being proudly African. Hence, according to Mkhabela it was no coincidence that the *City Press'* billboards carried the faces of Tsedu along with the faces of Mbeki and Gertrude Mongella (former Pan African Parliament's chairperson).

Like Mkhabela, Memela (2008) located the *City Press'* "Distinctly African" concept within Mbeki's African Renaissance project. But he ws critical of this relationship. Memela asserted that the "Distinctly African" project "revealed an incestuous relationship between the newspaper and government, especially the Presidency of Thabo Mbeki". Memela further pointed out that as a result of this "incestuous" relationship, the "newspaper – which should be expected to be hands-off and independent – had grown too close to power and had become the mouthpiece of [the] African Renaissance". This for Memela "was a contradiction in terms". To Memela "the „Distinctly African' project was more of a marketing strategy than a political or cultural approach". Emphasising the assertion that the concept "is more of a marketing gimmick than anything rooted in African history, culture and heritage", Memela further observed that the concept "marked the new era of journalists and editors…too close to political power".

Though not dismissive in tone like Memela, Mbatha (2008) echoed Memela's viewpoint. She noted that the concept in her view "is a marketing tool…an identification of a niche" that "gives the *City Press* a competitive edge".

Against this background, Kalane's (2009) view of the "Distinctly African" concept was that the "move was more politically influenced than cultural. Maybe the cultural aspect will follow later." Mogale (2009), in noting that he "honestly" did not "see the [cultural] link except that the editor who initiated it was an Africanist", shared Kalane's observation. Mogale was not the only person who linked the "Distinctly African" concept to Mathatha Tsedu's personal political orientation. Noganta (2009) and Mona (2009) did, too. Noganta (2009) observed that Tsedu "is a kind of journalist that is interested in telling a story of how ordinary Africans live…the stories of suffering ordinary Africans…the human condition of Africans". Mona thought that Tsedu "brought an African consciousness into the *City Press* and I applaud him for that. We Africans must reflect that."

On the issue of Zimbabwe's crisis, the media, nationally and internationally, have condemned what they have termed Mbeki's "quiet diplomacy". What has been the *City Press*'s position on this issue?

Kalane (2009) and Noganta (2009) felt they were not qualified to respond to this question. Mbatha (2008) did not respond because she could not remember the *City Press'* position on this issue.

Though Sibiya (2009) noted that the problems in Zimbabwe arose during Tsedu's tenure, he observed that there was "little difference between Mbeki's handling of the HIV/AIDS issue and that of Zimbabwe". He further pointed out that Mbeki was a president with power and influence but one who "pussyfooted". Sibiya (2009) further asserted that HIV/AIDS and Zimbabwe "are two things that brought Mbeki down". Though Sibiya was dismissive of Mbeki on the Zimbabwean issue, Mona (2009) was "sympathetic to Mbeki's quiet diplomacy". At the editor's desk at the *City Press*, Mona was "outraged by the duplicity, the hypocrisy expressed by people having been quiet when black lives were destroyed in the DRC, and crying out in Zimbabwe".

Mona' successor, Tsedu (2008) observed that on the issue of Mbeki's handling of the Zimbabwean crisis, he "tried to be as understanding" as possible. However, he observed that information forthcoming was not sufficient, and the signals given by Mbeki were confusing. That is because, Tsedu noted, while there were signs that things were "deteriorating" in Zimbabwe, and people were being beaten by the police, "on the other hand Mbeki was saying that things were on track".

The understanding on the part of Tsedu was informed by an appreciation that Mbeki could not operate as if he was not a mediator – he could not mediate on the one hand, and castigate those involved in the negotiations on the other hand. While it was easy for Mandela to openly criticise Mugabe because the former was no longer in office, Tsedu noted that Mbeki did not have that luxury. Tsedu also pointed out that in private conversations with Mbeki, the former president admitted that it was not easy for him to get Mugabe to agree to anything.

Almost word for word, Mamaila (2008) echoed Tsedu's observations but also added his own analysis. Mamaila appreciated people's frustrations with Mbeki's handling of Zimbabwe. That is because, Mamaila noted, Mbeki "kept on saying that the situation was getting better while there was no sign that things were getting better". But at the same time, Mamaila

contended that "such a position is understandable considering that Mbeki is a mediator". He pointed out that had Mbeki taken a tough stance on Mugabe, the former South African president's "condemnation of Mugabe would have squandered any chance of negotiation".

Another issue that needed to be taken into context, according to Mamaila (2008), was the cultural factor that was at play in Mugabe's relationship with Mbeki. Mamaila pointed out that culturally, as Africans, Mbeki had to exercise respect in engaging Mugabe. Added to the cultural factor was the historical factor, Mamaila argued. Mamaila noted that it should be taken into consideration that when Mugabe wanted to address the land question in Zimbabwe, the ANC asked Mugabe to delay his move so as not to derail the negotiation process in South Africa. This was informed by fear that any move on land resettlement would have instilled panic among white South Africans. All in all, Mamaila observed that he thought that "Mbeki's approach to Zimbabwe was correct".

From her recollections, Sibanda (2008) was of the opinion that the *City Press*' editorials noted that Mbeki's approach to Zimbabwe should be given a chance, and further asserted that "[j]ournalistically, I think that is fair". She further observed that while this was the case, questions were raised about the extent to which "quiet diplomacy" could be pursued.

Nqayi's (2009) recollections were the same as Sibanda's (2008). Noting that the *City Press* "was not critical of Mbeki but supportive", Nqayi further observed that the "newspaper echoed Mbeki's sentiment that Zimbabwe was a sovereign state and that Mugabe was democratically elected". Nqayi also noted that the "*City Press* did not advocate the invasion of Zimbabwe and economic sanctions and blockades recommended by other newspapers".

While Mogale (2009) shared Nqayi's view that the *City Press* "sided with Mbeki", he also noted that this position "upset many people who perceived Mbeki to be an ally of Mugabe". The influx of Zimbabweans was "associated with crime, disease and job theft, and Mbeki's perceived alliance with Mugabe upset many".

Though Memela (2008) was "not too sure" about the *City Press*' position on Mbeki's "quiet diplomacy", he observed that because the newspaper espoused Mbeki's "notion of African solutions to African problems…the position boiled down to not rocking the boat or running anything that would embarrass the President".

Though like Memela, Mkhabela (2008) could not "remember well", he thought that the *City Press* was critical of "quiet diplomacy". That is because, according to Mkhabela, "the *City Press* was very vocal in criticising Mugabe".

Nationally and internationally, the media have generally criticised President Thabo Mbeki's handling of HIV/AIDS and have labelled him an AIDS Denialist. What has been the *City Press'* position on this issue?

Kalane (2009), Mbatha (2008), Mogale (2009) and Noganta (2009) did not comment on this question. Mbatha (2008) could not remember and doubted whether the newspaper had a position except for individual opinions, while Noganta said that he had not undertaken an analysis of the newspaper's position on this issue.

Answers given to this question seem to be summed up by two responses given by Mamaila (2008) and Nqayi (2009). Mamaila noted that the *City Press'* positions were informed by the editors' political orientations on the matter. Nqayi's (2009) sense was that what reflected were individual editors' views. Nqayi pointed out that while, initially, the newspaper was sympathetic to Mbeki on this question and gave him the "benefit of the doubt" and sought to understand his position on this issue, with changes at editor level, the positions shifted accordingly. To a degree, Sibiya's (2009) response confirmed Nqayi's observation.

In Sibiya's tenure as the editor of the *City Press*, the newspaper's official position "disagreed with Mbeki completely on the issue of HIV/AIDS". But before taking that position, Sibiya pointed out that he had made an effort to bring together scientists who were both for and against Mbeki's approach. Sibiya observed that he "even sat down with Mbeki to find out why he was sending wrong signals". In a critical tone he noted that Peter Mokaba and Parks Mankahlana, who were Mbeki's close comrades in the ANC, "died of Aids, yet Mbeki said he knew of no one who had died of AIDS". Tsedu (2008) was also in disagreement with Mbeki and pointed out that the *City Press* in his time was "quite clear that science is science" and that people "should get real".

Tsedu (2008) was emphatic that Mbeki "is a denialist". He also noted that the *City Press* had called on Mbeki to remove Tshabala-Msimang as Health Minister. Tsedu stateed that the *City Press* accepted that Mbeki's questioning the causal link between HIV and AIDS was his personal view as long as he did not interfere with the government's policy which was that HIV led to AIDS.

But Mamaila (2008) differed with Tsedu on Mbeki's "denialism". Mamaila observed that Mbeki "is no denialist but an engaging intellectual". Mamaila further noted that Mbeki was a "victim" of drug manufacturing companies who did not want intellectual engagement. He contended that Mbeki's stance of emphasising poverty as a priority over HIV/Aids was logical. That is because, Mamaila argued, once the issue of poverty was addressed, HIV/AIDS could be minimised. Arguing in favour of Mbeki's stance, Mamaila argued that once economic imbalances – that result in poverty – could be addressed, the need for prostitution would be minimised, and women who are submissive to men's demands for sex because of their financial dependence on men, would assert their right to refuse sexual intercourse.

In Mona's (2009) time the *City Press* was "sympathetic to Mbeki's views". But this sympathy was not synonymous with the approval of Mbeki's approach to HIV/AIDS. To the contrary, Mona's view as the editor of the *City Press* at the time was that "on economics, listen to Mbeki, but on science, listen to Makgoba". But even then, Mona insisted that Mbeki's views should be given space in his newspaper because Mona's "style of editorship was that we should not be afraid of contending views". Mona pointed out that the media need not just grow in terms of embracing diversity but should also teach society to embrace diversity.

Mkhabela (2008) and Sibanda (2008) supported Mona's contention about the *City Press*' endeavour to strike a balance between "orthodox" and "dissident" positions on HIV/AIDS. Mkhabela noted that the *City Press* did not "go all out campaigning for or against him [Mbeki] on the issue". Sometimes the *City Press* agreed with Mbeki and at other times "we criticised and disagreed with him". He recalled that when Mbeki called for a joint panel of AIDS orthodox and dissident scientists, the *City Press* supported Mbeki's initiative. Sibanda recalled that when Mbeki denied in an interview with the *City Press* ever stating that HIV did not cause AIDS, the *City Press* put that on record. When Tshabalala-Msimang wrote an article in defence of Mbeki against claims that he had said that HIV did not cause AIDS, Sibanda pointed out that the *City Press* gave space to Tshabalala-Msimang.

Though Memela (2008) did not recall the *City Press*' official stance on this issue, he asserted that the *City Press* "was one newspaper that attempted to project the „intellectualism' of former president Mbeki when he raised issues on the HIV and AIDS matter".

6.3.6.2 Summary: The *City Press*' black journalists' views

Eight questions were posed to all the interviewees listed above. Answers given reflect individual editors' and journalists' beliefs regarding the political role of the *City Press* and the *City Press*' black journalists' role in post-apartheid South Africa in the period 1994 to 2004. In some cases there are convergences in the responses, while in others there are divergences. Such responses were informed by individual journalists' expectations and experiences.

6.3.7 Summary: Chapter 6

This chapter has given an account of the newspaper's black journalists' role by studying the *City Press*' editorials, the newspaper's black journalists' columns and opinion pieces dealing with crime, the Zimbabwean crisis and HIV/AIDS. The next chapter focuses on the analysis of the *City Press*' editorials, the *City Press*' individual black journalists' columns, opinion pieces and responses given during the interviews.

Chapter 7
Analysis

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter the author analyses data based on the research findings presented in the previous chapter. This chapter is divided into two sections – the first is an analysis of the *City Press'* editorials and the *City Press'* black journalists' columns and opinion pieces; the second is an analysis of the interviews conducted with the *City Press'* black journalists.

Three theoretical frameworks, namely Liberal-Pluralism, Political Economy and Afrocentricity, are employed to analyse how the *City Press'* black journalists lived up to or failed to play their media role according to these theories. The point of departure will be the definitions of these theoretical frameworks and how they will be applied in analysing the *City Press'* black journalists' handling of the major challenges faced by South Africa in the research period, as defined by this researcher for the purposes of this study. The definitions will be followed with an analysis of the handling of the *City Press* of the major challenges in post-apartheid South Africa. The issues are crime, the Zimbabwean crisis and the HIV/AIDS issue and they will be analysed in that order.

7.2 Theoretical Frameworks Defined

An in-depth discussion of the theories employed here was presented in Chapter Four (Theoretical Frameworks) of this thesis. Here, only brief definitions and contextualisation will be given for the purposes of this chapter. The order in which they will be defined is Liberal-Pluralism, Political Economy and Afrocentricity.

7.2.1 The Liberal-Pluralist theories on the role of the media

Liberal-pluralism, with specific reference to the media, is based on the original free press (libertarian) theory, which identifies press freedom with the freedom to own and operate the means of publication without permission or interference from the state (McQuail, 2007:185). In order for the media to carry out their watchdog role and report in an objective way, the liberal-pluralist theory contends that the state should not be in control of the media but should operate in a capitalistic environment, that is, they should be privately owned and compete in an open market (Siebert, 1963:51 – 52). It is against this background that the liberal-pluralist theory of the media is known as the market model.

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Liberal-Pluralist theories' expectations of the media's political functions can be summarised as follows (Fourie, 2007a:188; Schultz, 1998:23; Bennett, 1982a:40; Siebert, 1963:52):

- To inform about political developments
- To guide public opinion about political decisions
- To express different views about political developments and decisions
- To criticise political developments and decisions
- To give a platform to diverse information, viewpoints and opinions.

In assessing the role of the *City Press*' black journalists during the research period 1994 to 2004, according to the Liberal-Pluralist theories, the five-bulleted points will be used as definition and therefore criteria.

7.2.2 Political Economy theories on the role of the media

The Political Economy theory on the media is a perspective which searches for the answers to the question of, but not limited to the power wielded by media owners (Boyd-Barrett, 2006:186; Curran, 2000:73; McChesney, 1998:3; MacGregor, 1997:48; Curran *et al* 1982:19). According to the Political Economy theory of the media, the contents and meanings carried by the media reflect the interests of those who finance the production of the media's contents – not just media owners, but advertisers, as well (Altschull, 1997:259). This argument holds the view that the financiers will not allow their media to publish material that frustrates their vital interests.

For the purposes of this study, the Political Economy theory of the media will be defined as a perspective which investigates the influence of media ownership in the execution of tasks in journalism practice.

7.2.3 Afrocentric theories on the role of the media

Afrocentricity is defined as a mode of analysis, a perspective where Africans seek to assert subject place within the context of African history and culture (Asante, 2007:16; Karenga, 2003:77; Okafor, 1993:200 – 201; Hoskins, 1992:251).

In the discipline of communication studies, the Afrocentric paradigm encourages awareness of the particular ways that African communication differs from the Western modes of

communication and how issues of the representation of Africans in the mass media are emphasised (Fourie, 2007b:177).

For the purposes of this study, the Afrocentric theory of the media is understood as a perspective that advocates taking into cognisance of African cultural values in the execution of journalism practice.

This chapter will now discuss the major political challenges in post-apartheid South Africa during the period 1994 to 2004, beginning with crime.

Section I

7.3 Analysis of the *City Press*' editorials, the *City Press*' black journalists' columns and opinion pieces

7.3.1 Crime – Liberal-Pluralist Analysis

One can state that within three months of the inauguration of the Government of National Unity, the *City Press* fulfilled the Liberal-Pluralist expectation of the role of the media of informing South African citizens about political developments, with particular reference to crime. It did so when the newspaper informed the government that one of the "gravest problems facing the new government" was crime (*City Press* Comment, 1994:16). By pointing out that the government's failure to deal with crime decisively could have "serious social, political and economic implications" in that there could be further soaring of crime resulting in the fleeing of foreign investment, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1995b:16) fulfilled the role of informing the newspaper's readership about the political developments in South Africa. Not only did the *City Press* inform about political developments in this regard, but contextualised the relationship between crime and politics.

The exercise of contextualisation was carried out by the *City Press*' journalist and columnist, Sekolla Sello (1995a:16), in his opposition to the government's decision to do away with the death penalty. Conscious that the death penalty during the apartheid era had affected black people more because of their resistance to apartheid, he acknowledged why those in power after apartheid would be against the death penalty since many freedom fighters had been executed because of their stance. While Sello could understand the government's position, he also articulated the frustration of those who were on the receiving end of crime. For them, as Sello (1995a:16) observes, "certain crimes are so repulsive that the only fitting punishment is

to pass the death penalty". Sello's position on the death penalty was also the official position of the *City Press*.

The *City Press* was uncomfortable with the abolishment of the death penalty (*City Press* Comment, 1995f:16). It believed that there were certain crimes which were so "revolting and brutal" that society should ask whether the lives of perpetrators of such evil deserved to be spared. In publicly expressing its disagreement with the government's position on the death penalty, the *City Press* fulfilled two roles of the media, according to the Liberal-Pluralist theory. Firstly, the newspaper served to guide public opinion about political decisions, and, secondly, it played the role of criticising political developments and decisions. The newspaper was not content with only enjoying the right of criticising others, but gave space to those who criticised its official position, and remarkably from within its own newsroom.

This was the case when the newspaper gave a platform to its journalist, Benison Makele. Makele (1996:17) called on the government "not…to budge…and pander to the whims of the pro-death penalty lobby" by allowing a referendum. In Makele's view, were such a referendum held, chances were that people "inspired by emotion and revulsion and not rational considerations" could vote overwhelmingly in favour of the executioner. In referring to people driven by a sense of "revulsion", Makele was aware that his newspaper's editorial comment had labelled the crime incidents in South Africa as "revolting" and his colleague, Sekolla Sello, had labelled crime as "repulsive". In giving space to Makele to express these views, the *City Press* gave Makele a platform to contradict the official position of the newspaper that he worked and wrote for. In doing this, the *City Press* fulfilled the Liberal-Pluralist role of the media of giving a platform to diverse information, viewpoints and opinions.

7.3.2 Crime – Political Economy Analysis

According to Calland (2006:200) a view existed in the ANC that

> "certain black journalists and commentators who criticize the ANC get promoted quicker, because the media is desperate to have these names on their pages, regardless of the quality of the analysis".

As pointed out in Chapter 2, Mandela is on record as having singled out certain unnamed senior black journalists and accused them of being co-opted by the "white-controlled

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conservative media" to do "their dirty work" (Jenvey, 1996:1). As pointed out in Chapter 2, it was reported (Dlamini, 1996:2) that one of the journalists singled out was the then *City Press*' editor, Khulu Sibiya. An examination of Sibiya's (1996c:14) writings reveals that on the crime issue he was impatient with the ANC government. Sibiya went as far as saying that failure on the part of the government to deal with crime decisively could very soon see some people calling for the resignation of the government. With particular reference to the ANC government's decision to abolish the capital punishment, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1996d:14) had noted that "as long as President Nelson Mandela is still a head of state, there is no likelihood of the government changing its position of the death penalty". This could be interpreted as a vote of no confidence in Mandela's leadership on the part of the *City Press*.

The ANC's view was that criticism from the media was influenced by white ownership (Calland, 2006:200). But an examination of the *City Press*' editorial (*City Press* Comment, 1998c:14) reveals a pro-ANC sentiment when it condemned members of the South African National Defence Force who were arrested for stealing arms from a military base in Bloemfontein. Disapprovingly, the editorial pointed out that the soldiers were "people who would do anything to undermine President Nelson Mandela's democratic government". The latter editorial (*City Press* Comment, 1998c:14) contradicts the claim that white-ownership of the media influenced the *City Press*' black journalists. By criticising the remnants of the apartheid order in the SANDF, and criticising the ANC when occasion demanded, the *City Press* fulfilled what is expected of the media: carrying out their duty without fear or favour.

7.3.3 Crime – An Afrocentric Analysis

The *City Press* did not treat crime in the black communities as an isolated issue outside a historical context. In pointing out that something drastic needed to be done about young black people's absence of a sense of purpose and education, resulting in them wasting their lives, and treating criminal acts like car hijacking, drug dealing and gangsterism as the norm, a *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1995b:14) editorial demonstrated a recognition of the historical deprivation of young people as a factor haunting post-apartheid South Africa. This consideration was also demonstrated by the *City Press*' journalist, Benison Makele (1996:17), who, in arguing against capital punishment advocated by the *City Press*, pointed out that left unemployed and without education, black young people had turned to using their fighting skills learnt during the struggle to give their lives meaning and purpose. Makele recognised that the violence used against the apartheid government – then accepted as revolutionary

violence – was now exercised for criminal purposes. In noting that the young people who waged a violent struggle against apartheid, were the same ones who were violent in post-apartheid South Africa, Makele (1996:17) appreciated the point made by Abrahams (2000:182) that "[w]here it requires great violence to attain freedom, violence may become part of the nature of that society in freedom".

In condemning cases of child abuse, involving raping of children three years old and younger, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1995g:16) invoked and appealed to the Africans' value of ubuntu, noting that criminal acts flew "against the grain of ubuntu/botho". In doing this, the *City Press* fulfilled the Afrocentric call to commentators to take into cognisance issues of African culture and history. In this particular case the *City Press* dealt with a problem in African societies against Africans' own cultural standards.

7.3.4 Political Corruption – Liberal Pluralist Analysis

One of the roles of the media, according to Liberal-Pluralism, is to give a platform to diverse information, viewpoints and opinions. This includes those views that may be contrary to the official position held by a particular medium. When the *City Press* criticised what it referred to as a "gravy train" tendency on the part of the government, it was joined by its journalist and columnist, Sandile Memela. Memela (1996:17) noted that there was a sense of disillusionment among ordinary people in the township, noting that politicians were being referred to as "fat-cats on the gravy train". The then Minister of Transport, Mac Maharaj (1996:17), wrote back and dismissed Memela's assertions as "fallacy". By giving space to Maharaj to criticise both the *City Press* and Memela, the *City Press* had fulfilled its media role of giving a platform to opposing opinions. While these concerns were dismissed as "fallacy" by Maharaj, for some black journalists, these were moral and ethical issues for black people.

7.3.5 Political Corruption – Political Economy Analysis

In the case of the *City Press*' black journalists' analysis of political corruption on the part of democratically elected representatives, there is nothing that is found to suggest that the white ownership of the *City Press* had anything to do with their criticism of the ANC government. For instance, while Sibiya (1995b:14) criticised corrupt acts in the democratically elected ANC government, he did not spare the ANC's predecessor, the National Party government. Sibiya (1995b:14) noted that "the previous government and those who surrounded it were also on the gravy train". While he acknowledged that, he stressed, however, that "this should not

give the present government the same license to climb on this train". Sibiya expected better from the ANC government.

It was in this spirit, as well, that Sello (1995c:17) criticised the ANC leaders' involvement in the "gravy train". His criticism was informed by the ruling party's promises of "clean administration, a government closer to the people and one which is transparent and accountable". The expectation was that the ANC would be different from the NP's regime. Such comments were not directed at undermining the ANC government, but rather at encouraging it to do better.

7.3.6 Political corruption – Afrocentric Analysis

The concept of blackness for Mona (2000b:10) is "not just a question of skin colour but…also a political and ethical construct". In the context and application of journalism, this means for Mona, that black people – those in power particularly – should be "subjected to the broader political objectives and ethical framework of black people". Mona made this observation following an encounter with a black public sector official who "accused the media in general, and the *City Press* in particular, of having a hidden agenda against blacks and of harbouring counter-revolutionary tendencies".

This denunciation of black journalists was informed by a perception that in the main black journalists were "not loyal to their race group, lack character and do less than enough to advance their own kind through positive stories in the media they work for". More specifically, the black civil servant was protesting against stories about corruption implicating top black people. In the public servant's view, the *City Press* and other media's exposés were evidence that black journalists had an agenda against a black government or were "unwittingly confirming the stereotypes which whites have created about blacks".

Mona did not subscribe to the public servant's reasoning. In his view the public servant advocated blind black solidarity, an attitude that encouraged turning a blind eye by black journalists to wrongs done by fellow blacks. In Mona's book a "wrong is a wrong irrespective of the colour of the perpetrator". Thus, in Mona's view, "black journalists have no obligation or limitation as to how they portray black characters, especially when the latter are involved in nefarious activities". Mona's definition of "blackness" as "a political and ethical construct" conforms to the Afrocentric definition of blackness. In this regard, Asante (2003:2) asserts that Afrocentricity seeks to enshrine the notion that blackness is a trope of ethics.

The ethical values advanced by Afrocentricity, and Mona's conceptualisation of blackness were met by the practice of the *City Press*' black journalists in their encounter with corrupt acts emanating from the government led by black people. This was the case when Sibiya (1995b:14) argued that the observation that the "previous government and those who surrounded it were on the gravy train" was no excuse for the ANC leaders in government "to climb on this train". The *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2004c:18) was not prepared to allow the ANC-led government's acts to feed into stereotypes that fed the view that Africans were corrupt, and as such that the South African government was going to be no "different to other corrupt governments". This latter observation was made with specific reference to the revelation parliamentarians had exchanged their travel vouchers meant for constituency work for luxuries like bookings in five-star hotels and car hires.

7.3.7 Summary: Crime Analysis

This section has analysed the *City Press*' and its black journalists' engagement with crime which was categorised into common crime and political corruption. The researcher employed three theoretical frameworks, namely Liberal-Pluralism, Political Economy and Afrocentricity. From a Liberal-Pluralist perspective, the researcher has argued that the *City Press* informed about and contextualised the crime situation in the years 1994 to 2004 for South African citizens. It created space for different opinions to be expressed including those that contradicted the official position of the newspaper, also from within the newspaper's own ranks. From a Political Economy perspective, the researcher argued that nothing in the analysis of the *City Press* revealed a biased position against the ANC, or an appeasement of whites to please white ownership. From an Afrocentric perspective the newspaper published pieces that showed recognition of the historical context of South Africa's history.

The next section will discuss the second focus of this study, namely the Zimbabwe crisis.

7.4 Zimbabwe

7.4.1 A Liberal-Pluralist Analysis

The role of the media, according to Liberal-Pluralism is to present a balanced view about issues. This means giving as many sides as possible about a single or number of issues.

The *City Press* fulfilled this in dealing with the Zimbabwean crisis on two occasions. When the newspaper noted that though the war veterans were justifiable in their protest against the unfair ownership of land by the country's minority whites, the *City Press*' editorial comment

(*City Press* Comment, 2000e:14) also observed that the "auguries for stability and peace in Zimbabwe did not look good when its president encouraged lawlessness". In this way the newspaper advanced an argument that sought to look at the same issue from different angles.

The *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2002b:8) did this as well when it pointed out that contrary to Britain's Tony Blair who laid all the blame on Mugabe for the violence taking place in the country, the violence had emanated both from Mugabe's and Tsvangirai's parties. But stating this was not the same as condoning Mugabe's reported acts of violence.

In line with the Liberal-Pluralist's prescription to the media to criticise political developments and decisions when the need arises, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2000e:14) noted that though Mugabe was blaming white land owners for the lack of equity in land ownership, Mugabe himself was partly to blame. That was because, the editorial comment argued, it was an indictment against Mugabe that it took twenty years after Zimbabwe attained independence to seek to resolve the land question. This was the case as well when Mugabe's Zanu-PF party won the national elections in March 2002, and South Africa accepted the outcomes. The *City Press* declared Mugabe's victory as "problematic". The *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2002b:8) made this point against the observation of intimidation and violence in the country.

7.4.2 A Political Economy Analysis

Nothing in the *City Press*' editorials (*City Press* Comment, 2000e:14; *City Press* Comment, 2000f:12) and the newspaper's black journalists' columns (Mamaila, 2004a:18; Maseko, 2001:9; Mona, 2000a:12) suggests that the white ownership of the newspaper had an influence on their writings. The views of the *City Press*' black journalists cited above reflected independence of thought.

While the *City Press* criticised Mugabe for delaying the land question, it also criticised white Zimbabweans for not co-operating with Mugabe, and for carrying themselves "as Europeans first and Zimbabweans second" (*City Press* Comment, 2000e:14). The newspaper (*City Press* Comment, 2000f:12) condemned the predominantly white Democratic Party (forerunner of the Democratic Alliance) for its calls for economic pressure on Zimbabwe when it opposed the same against South Africa during the "dark days of apartheid". Mona (2000a:12) recalled the cruelties inflicted on Zimbabweans when the land was taken by force from blacks and given to whites. Both Maseko (2001:9) and Mamaila (2004a:18) argued that while Mugabe was condemned by the Western world, he was a hero among the African masses.

7.4.3 An Afrocentric Analysis

The struggle for independence in Africa was a quest for self-determination (Gakwandi, 1996:182). This meant a rejection of the imposition of the Western world to impose its will on Africa. Africans sought to carve their path politically, economically and socially (Abdul-Raheem, 1996:4). It was in appreciation of this historical reality that in supporting Mbeki's diplomatic approach, the *City Press* argued that the African continent had its "own unique problems, different from those of Europe" and that "Mbeki understands his continent much better than those who have one foot in Africa and another in Europe" (*City Press* Comment, 2000g:8). The Zimbabwean crisis was, to the *City Press*, an African problem that needed an African solution, and as such the *City Press* believed that "African leaders can work towards providing African solutions to African problems" (*City Press* Comment, 2002a:8).

It was against this background that the *City Press* supported South Africa and Nigeria when the two opposed punitive measures against Zimbabwe during a meeting of Commonwealth countries in 2002 in Australia (*City Press* Comment, 2002a:8). The newspaper condemned what it perceived as the West's double standards in approaching the Zimbabwean crisis, noting that the invocation of the abuse of democracy by Zimbabwe was in fact a veiled excuse for Western countries' selfish interests. The *City Press* argued that the USA and Britain, in particular, did not apply the same measures on Uganda and Swaziland, yet the two countries did not practise democracy.

Two years after this editorial comment by the *City Press*, Mamaila (2004a:18) took the historical context further by pointing out that the late Zairean dictator Mobutu Sese Seko remained in power for almost three decades "because his puppet regime did not threaten the interests of the west". The unequivocal statement by the *City Press* was that the newspaper viewed Mbeki's involvement in Zimbabwe as a necessary intervention, while it perceived approaches from Western countries as an unwelcome interference.

While Afrocentricity advocates and advances African unity and African solutions to African problems, such unity must be for African progress. Blind and reactionary African unity is unacceptable to Afrocentricity. On this score, Asante (2003:63) points out that a "person who refuses to condemn mediocrity and reactionary attitudes among Africans for the sake of false unity neither honors nor practices Afrocentricity". It could be argued that when the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2003g:18) condemned Mugabe for reportedly building a mansion

worth R72 million, it fulfilled expectations of Afrocentricity. This also applies to the condemnation of African leaders who kept quiet in the face of such an act while, as the *City Press* pointed out, the "majority of Zimbabweans are starving".

In charging that it was "unfortunate that Mugabe's comrades in leadership positions across Africa, who are expected to knock sense into him, are shirking their responsibility and treating him like a hero", the *City Press* was cautioning African leaders against blind solidarity. This observation and its support for Mbeki's "quiet diplomacy" was not a contradictory position. Rather, as the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2004d:18) pointed out, while South Africa's diplomacy was fine, such "cannot not be an excuse to obfuscate when wrongs are being done". Afrocentricity requires that any issue that involves Africa must be examined within African historical and cultural contexts. The *City Press*, to an extent, met the requirement of Afrocentricity with reference to the conflict about land in Zimbabwe.

On the issue of the land, the then editor, Vusi Mona (2000c:10), argued that "commentary about the current land invasions in Zimbabwe is informed by an arrogant and pathetically ill-informed understanding of that country". Mona argued that "a reflection of where Zimbabwe has come from becomes necessary". What this meant, therefore, was that Mona was calling for a commentary on the Zimbabwean crisis that was based on a historical context. Not only did Mona call for such an approach, but led by example.

He reminded his readership that the 1979 Lancaster House Conference where negotiations between the Zimbabwean liberation forces and the Ian Smith government took place, concluded with an undertaking by the British government to raise money to buy white-owned farms which were to be used for land redistribution so that Zimbabwean blacks could get land. At the Lancaster House Conference, against the liberation movement's will, a provision stipulating that the land could be acquired by the government only on a "willing seller, willing buyer basis" was inserted into the new Zimbabwean constitution (Ankomah, 2000:15). That provision was to be in effect for ten years – from 1980 to 1990. This meant that the Zimbabwean government could only acquire land from the white farmers if they were willing to sell any piece of land.

While Mona, as a staff member, endorsed Mugabe, the *City Press* was cautious. The newspaper appreciated the land question as a legitimate issue around which Zimbabweans rallied, but it regarded the delay in addressing the land issue as Mugabe's fault, pointing out

that Mugabe waited for twenty years after independence (which was achieved in 1980) before addressing the issue. On this score, the *City Press* showed failure in appreciating the historical developments in Zimbabwe. A glance at the history (*New African*, 2000:20 – 21) of Zimbabwe indicates that there were a number of efforts that were made, legislatively, to address land imbalances. These developments, which were crucial in understanding the unfolding of the historical events in Zimbabwe, were missing in the *City Press*' editorials and the *City Press*' black journalists' columns and opinion pieces, and were reported by the *New African* (2000:20 – 21) magazine as follows.

- **The Land Act of 1985.** This Act – which was drawn in the spirit of the 1979 Lancaster House Conference's "willing seller, willing buyer" clause which could not be changed for 10 years after independence in 1980 – gave the government the first right to purchase excess land for redistribution to the landless. The Act was, however, constrained by the Zimbabwean government's lack of sufficient funds to compensate white landowners. Because of the "willing seller, willing buyer" clause, and the white farmers' prices, which the Zimbabwean government could not afford, the Zimbabwean government was powerless between 1980 and 1990 to speed up the programme. This resulted in the government being able to resettle 71 000 families instead of the 162 000 intended.

- **The Land Acquisition Act of 1992.** When this Act was introduced, the ten-year period stipulated by the Lancaster House negotiations had expired. This Act empowered the government to remove the "willing seller, willing buyer" clause and to buy land compulsorily for redistribution, with the government paying a fair compensation for the land acquired. The Act gave leave to landowners to appeal to the courts if they felt that the compensation was unfair. As part of the implementation of this Act, in November 1997, the government published a list of 1 471 farms it intended to buy compulsorily for redistribution.

- **June 1998**. The Zimbabwean government published a policy framework on the Land Reform and Resettlement Programme Phase II (LRRP II) whose objective was to compulsorily purchase 11, 2 million hectares owned by black and white commercial farmers, parastatal corporations, churches, NGOs, and multinational companies. This programme was to be carried out over a period of five years.

- **September 1998.** The government called a donors conference in Harare seeking to inform and involve the donor community in the programme.

Blaming Mugabe for failing to address the land question and not mentioning the issues stated above, exposes the *City Press'* failure to take into cognisance important aspects of Zimbabwe's history.

In 1999, in response to the government's moves, the Commercial Farmers' Union offered 1,5 million hectares for sale to the government (*New African*, 2000:21). At this stage there were tensions between the government and the white farmers, the latter being seen by the former as resisting land redistribution. This tension was increased by Britain's withdrawal of aid to the land programme, with the British government claiming that Mugabe was giving land to his "cronies and political allies" (Ankomah, 2000:15). As the tension increased, the government drafted a new constitution with a clause to acquire land for redistribution without paying for compensation. Since the drafting stage was largely boycotted by the opposition, the government called for a referendum on the new constitution. The opposition rallying behind the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) defeated the ruling Zanu-PF by 55% against Zanu-PF's 45%.

There is, according to the former African Union Secretary General, Amara Essy, another historical factor that played a significant role in the delay to resolve the land issue in Zimbabwe (Ankomah, 2002:27). According to Essy, when the ten-year period of the Lancaster House Conference agreement had expired, "it was African heads of state who told him [Mugabe] to be quiet, because we were fighting against apartheid in South Africa". According to Essy, the African heads of state prevailed on Mugabe to delay his land reforms so as not to "scare the white people of South Africa" since at the time there were serious negotiations taking place between the liberation movements and the South African government.

Former Mozambican president, and former African Union chairperson, Joaquim Chissano, lent credence to Essy's assertion in an interview with the *Sunday Times* (Munusamy, 2003:13). Though acknowledging that African heads of state were "critical" of Zimbabwe, Chissano noted that those critical "did not live their [Zimbabweans] history, their struggle". While many, including sections of the media, were critical of Mbeki's diplomatic approach to Zimbabwe, Chissano endorsed Mbeki, noting that "Mbeki belongs to a team, our team". The point made by Chissano was that Mbeki's approach was not a personal one, but that of a collective of African leaders who were mindful of Zimbabwe's history and the role the African heads of state played in that history.

In his biography *Thabo Mbeki – The Dream Deferred*, Mark Gevisser (2007:445) alludes to this historical reality. But in the book, unlike Essy who singles out African heads of state for asking Mugabe to delay dealing with the land question, Mbeki is quoted by Gevisser as singling out the ANC as having persuaded Mugabe "to defer land reform so as not to scare white South Africans away from agreeing to majority rule". Gevisser (2007:821) notes that Mbeki made this statement publicly in Abuja, Nigeria in 2003. The *City Press* failed to make this connection between Mbeki's approach to Zimbabwe and this historical background.

Stressing that Mugabe has "never said that white Africans cannot own land or property in their country", Osabu-Kle (2001:47) notes that what Mugabe has been saying is that "land ownership has to be compatible with African culture". Osabu-Kle further notes that Mugabe's move on the land question was an act of "only enforcing an African culture without which he cannot be accepted as an African".

The question then is: What does African culture say about land ownership? Mqhayi (1974:12-13) notes that land among Africans was never sold but belonged to the nation as its treasure. Williams (1987:171), having observed that according to African culture "the land…cannot be sold or given away", further notes that African culture held the view that the "land belongs to no one. It is God's gift to [hu]mankind for use and as a sacred heritage, transmitted by our forefathers [forebears] as a bond between the living and the dead to be held in trust by each generation for the unborn who will follow, and thus to the last generation."   Abrahams (2000:374 – 375) echoes this:

> "For Africans for instance, land will always be more special than for most other people: land is their life, given by God in trust to sustain the tribe and the community. Man [humankind] cannot own land in the way Europeans see ownership. If it mothers all who depend on it for life, how can anyone see it in terms of exclusive ownership?"

Remarking on the land question, Rodney (1981:41) points out that where

> "a few people owned the land and the majority were tenants, this injustice at a particular stage of history allowed a few to concentrate on improving their land. In contrast, under communalism every African was assured of sufficient land to meet his own needs by virtue of being a member of a family or community".

In calling upon his government to "go back to the African custom of land holding", former Tanzanian president, Julius Nyerere (in Shivji, 2000:42-43), argued against the sale of land, reasoning that

> "in a country such as this, where, generally speaking, the Africans are poor and the foreigners are rich, it is quite possible that, within eighty or hundred years, if the poor African were allowed to sell land, all land in Tanganyika would belong to wealthy immigrants and the local people would be tenants. But even if there were no rich foreigners in this country, there would emerge rich and clever Tanganyikans."

In other words, Nyerere was saying that the African law on land was to protect the poor against abuse by the rich. This African cultural perspective on the land was missing in the *City Press'* editorials, black journalists' columns and opinion pieces.

While the *City Press* showed an appreciation of the historical context on the Zimbabwean issue, it also exposed a lack of appreciation for the African cultural context in Mugabe and Mbeki's personal relationship which impacted on their political relationship. Afrocentricity insists that whenever African political issues are discussed, the cultural context must be taken into cognisance. This context was also absent in the *City Press'* editorials and the newspaper's columnists' pieces.

In his biography of Thabo Mbeki – *Thabo Mbeki: The Dream Deferred* – Mark Gevisser (2007:439) observes that Mugabe and Mbeki had a father-son relationship, the same way Mbeki had that kind of a relationship with Zambia's former head of state, Kenneth Kaunda. Mugabe, according to the biography, treated and cared for Mbeki as if he were his own son. This story was told by Mbeki himself to Gevisser, according to the author. Analysing Mbeki's revelation to him, Gevisser observes that the "context in which Mbeki was telling me this made its implications clear: his latter-day appeasement of Mugabe was rooted at least in part in an acute sense of the role the two men had played" in Mbeki's personal and political life.

While this aspect of Mbeki and Mugabe's relationship was absent in the editorial pages of the *City Press*, and that of the *City Press'* staff columnists, in the interview with Mamaila it emerged. Mamaila noted that since in African culture elders must be treated with respect by

young ones, "Mbeki had to exercise respect in engaging Mugabe". In order to appreciate Mamaila's appreciation of Mbeki's relationship with Mugabe, there needs to be an appreciation of how African journalists have grappled with the concept of "respect" in African culture within a political context, and with particular reference to journalism.

Interviews with *City Press* journalists were revealing on this aspect. This will be dealt with in full in the section discussing the findings in the interviews.

7.4.4 Summary: Zimbabwe Analysis

In this section it has been argued that the *City Press* has fulfilled, through its editorial comments, the Liberal-Pluralist expectations on the role of the media by seeking to highlight different sides of the Zimbabwean story. The newspaper's presentation of a balanced story was not the same as taking a neutral position on this issue. The newspaper criticised what it perceived as being wrong. From a Political Economy perspective, it was argued that nothing in the argument of the *City Press'* editorials and its individual journalists' writings suggested that their approach sought to appease the white owners of the newspaper. From an Afrocentric perspective, it has been argued that while the newspaper took cognisance of the historical context of the Zimbabwean crisis, the newspaper failed in engaging with African cultural nuances in the context of the Zimbabwean question. This is in reference to the land issue and the personal relationship between Mugabe and Mbeki. The next analysis will be on the third focus of this study, namely HIV/AIDS.

7.5 HIV/AIDS

In the previous chapter, the discussion on HIV/AIDS was divided into the Mandela and Mbeki eras as presidents of the country. In this chapter that order will be followed as well.

7.5.1 A Liberal-Pluralist Analysis: Mandela's era

The media's role according to the Liberal-Pluralist theory is to keep the government accountable to its citizens. On the HIV/AIDS issue, with particular reference to the Health Ministry's allocation of R14 million to Mbongeni Ngema's musical, *Sarafina II*, the *City Press* played this role (*City Press* Comment, 1996g:16). This was the case when it questioned the government's lack of transparency in giving the tender to Ngema. In the same editorial it also questioned the conflicting statements from senior officials claiming that the state's tender procedures had been followed while on the other hand there were claims that since the money came from the European Union, the state had not been involved. The newspaper did not

conceal its displeasure at what it perceived as the ANC's defence in parliament of the then Health Minister, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma's department, considering "the inadequate explanations by the minister and the contradictory statements by her senior officials".

The *City Press* demonstrated tenacity and consistency in criticism on this matter. Six months later, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1996h:16) warned that the ruling party's "tendency to protect its members at all cost – sometimes before it even gets all sides of the story, as it was the case with Zuma – could backfire". The revisiting of this issue came about as a result of the report of the public protector, Selby Baqwa, which, while it exonerated Zuma, delivered a "scathing attack" on her senior officials "for gross misconduct". The newspaper (*City Press* Comment, 1996h:16) argued that Dlamini-Zuma's office "did not follow certain procedures for acquiring tenders". The editorial further observed that the Minister of Health "did not even fully inform the European Union – funders of the Aids programme in South Africa – as to how the money was spent". Against this background, the editorial argued that it was "silly" of the ANC to defend Dlamini-Zuma when she appeared before Parliament in June 1996.

7.5.2 A Political Economy Analysis: Mandela's era

Among other things, the Political Economy theory argues that those who own the means of material production also control the means of mental production. In claiming that "the predominantly white-owned mass media" covered the *Sarafina II* saga with a bias against Zuma, Mandela (Rantao & Bulger, 1996:1) was speaking along the lines of political economists on the role of the media. In this particular case, Mandela was criticising the white-owned media of turning a blind eye to the fact that in its findings after the investigation about alleged irregularities on *Sarafina II*, the Public Protector, Selby Baqwa, exonerated Dlamini-Zuma and blamed two white officials coming from the previous regime.

It is outside the scope of this research to verify Mandela's generalisation on the white-owned media. But in the case of the *City Press*, Mandela's claim in this regard was not applicable. That is because the *City Press* had taken a clear stand on this issue. The newspaper (*City Press* Comment, 1996h:16) had noted that "the serious implications regarding Badenhorst and Angelo once more highlight the urgent need for the ANC to get rid of old wood within the civil service and start employing efficient people". The *City Press* took what it believed to be a principled stance regardless of its white ownership.

7.5.3 Liberal Pluralist Analysis: Mbeki's era

The *City Press* journalist Dominic Mahlangu (2000:14) argued that by entertaining the debate about the causal relationship between HIV and AIDS, Mbeki was sending confusing signals, which could have adverse effects "not only on HIV-positive people, but also on ordinary people who may begin to doubt the link between HIV and AIDS". What Mbeki should have done rather, according to Mahlangu, was to raise the issue with the scientists "behind closed doors to avoid confusion among the public" and brought the matter "into the public domain when certainty was established".

According to Sparks (2003:291), Mbeki invited AIDS "dissidents" to his presidential advisory panel, in the belief that it was important to explore all views on the subject, however deviant or unpopular. While acknowledging the plausibility of Mbeki's argument, Sparks shares Mahlangu's argument by pointing out that the problem with this position was that Mbeki, as the president of the country, was not just an intellectual, but a political leader in a world spotlight, and that as a result, anything he did sent out "political signals".

Sparks (2003:291-2) further argues that while Mbeki was correct in arguing that the majority is not always right, there is a problem if a political leader goes out of his way to seek counsel from a deviant figure because such a move could be interpreted as an act of association with those who held such deviant positions. By seeking the "dissidents'" views, Mbeki, in Sparks' view, "erred" because by becoming involved with the dissident scientists "he gave the group credibility…after their views had been roundly dismissed by the overwhelming majority of the world's top scientists working in this field".

The newspaper for which Mahlangu worked did not share his view. The *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2000h:6) argued that by bringing in different sides of the argument together, Mbeki had helped to "create a climate in which scientists from different backgrounds can come together in the fight against HIV/Aids". By allowing Mahlangu to express a different opinion from the official position of the newspaper he worked for, according to Liberal-Pluralism, the *City Press* had fulfilled the media's role of giving a platform to contending views. By arguing that it was unfair for Mbeki's critics to call on Mbeki not to make pronouncements on HIV/AIDS because he had no medical training, the *City Press* was upholding the Liberal-Pluralist view on the role of the media – that of promoting debate on contentious issues in society.

Liberal-Pluralism's insistence on creating a platform for debates between contesting views should not be isolated from its insistence on the role of the media to provide information to the public so that the latter could make informed decisions on issues. Against this background it should not be perceived as a contradiction that the *City Press* defended Mbeki's right to consult conflicting scientists' views on HIV/AIDS, while at the same time the *City Press* was impatient with Mbeki and Tshabalala-Msimang for being "ambiguous" and sending "confusing signals to the public" by not clearly stating their position on whether or not HIV caused AIDS (*City Press* Comment, 2000i:8). When the newspaper (*City Press* Comment, 2001b:8) applauded him for steering away from the HIV/AIDS debate, it was not jettisoning its subscription to the media's role of creating a platform for debate. Rather, the newspaper was expressing its disapproval for what appeared to be an equivocal stance on the part of Mbeki and Tshabalala-Msimang about an issue of life and death.

It was commitment to the right of the public to know, that Mona (2001b:8) accused Mbeki's government of "presiding over genocide" when it was revealed by the *Mail&Guardian* (Barrel & Kindra, 2001:1) that the government had suppressed the Medical Research Council's report revealing that HIV/AIDS accounted for one-in-four of all deaths in South Africa. In arguing that the rejection of the MRC's report by the ANC was usurpation of scientists' role by the ANC, Mona (2001b:8) was not saying that the ANC had no right to hold views on HIV/AIDS. The issue was about the suppression of information.

While Mona (2001b:8), according to Liberal-Pluralism, was correct in challenging Mbeki's government for withholding the MRC's report from the public, he gave the wrong impression that Mbeki's stance on HIV/AIDS was merely an ideological or political position. He did this by pointing out that the South African politicians "may be obsessed with proving their intelligence even on matters in which they are not experts". Having made this observation, Mona (2001b:8) goes on to say that on "scientific matters, I personally do not trust politicians", adding that "when it comes to HIV/AIDS I am better off listening to Makgoba and the MRC than to Mbeki and his cabinet".

Mona's statement gives the impression that Mbeki should not have been critical of scientists but simply accepted what was presented by them. Mona's argument seems to be oblivious to the fact that, as Mbeki (2000a) himself noted, his approach was informed by listening to "eminent scientists", some of whom "have specialised on the issue of HIV-AIDS for many years and differed bitterly among themselves about various matters". In his letter to world

leaders on AIDS in Africa, dated April 3, 2000, Mbeki (2000a) made clear his refusal to bow down to this pressure, likening such calls to apartheid acts that "killed, tortured, imprisoned and prohibited [some people] from being quoted in public because the established authority believed that their views were dangerous and discredited". Mbeki was not prepared to disassociate himself from AIDS "dissidents" because they were scientists among whom were "Nobel Prize Winners, Members of Academies of Science and Emeritus Professors of various disciplines of medicine". When Mona raised his criticism, Mbeki was on record as having already made this point.

When Mona says that Mbeki and his government's questioning is causing a lot of "uncertainty in people's minds" while the "sad thing is [that] people *are* dying of AIDS-related diseases" an impression is created that Mbeki is in denial and does not care. Yet, Mbeki (1998) is on record as having declared that "HIV/AIDS is among us. It is real. It is spreading…HIV/AIDS is not someone else's problem. It is my problem. It is your problem."

Six months after assuming the reigns as the president of the country, Mbeki (1999), addressing the country on World AIDS Day, observed that "[e]very day we are burying more young people than ever before who have died because of AIDS". Significantly, in this address, Mbeki noted that "[e]very day, more people die as a result of AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa than anywhere else in the world". While, according to Liberal-Pluralism the media are expected to play a critical and watchdog role towards the government, the expectation is that this must be done fairly by accurately representing the opposite view.

While the *City Press* (*City Press* Comments, 2001f:8; 2002e:18; 2003h:18; 2004e:18) clearly aligned itself with the Treatment Action Campaign's struggle for the roll-out of anti-retroviral drugs by the government, and its condemnation of the government's reluctance to do so, it provided space to those, on its staff, who saw otherwise. It allowed Maseko (2002:9) to air her view that Mbeki "ought to be respected" for taking the position that he would not "let loose on his subjects drugs that he considers less than satisfied with in terms of their efficacy, side effects or benefits to the country".

When the Actuarial Society of South Africa announced that the formula they were using to calculate the rate of HIV infections was wrong (Molefe, 2004:19), that the MCC had reconsidered the merits of Nevirapine when used as a monotherapy to reduce the risk of transmission of HIV from mother-to-child during labour, the *City Press* (Comment, 2004f:18)

boldly called for a new relationship between the government, professionals in the sciences and HIV/AIDS activists. The editorial comment further noted that when the government cautioned against use of drugs against HIV/AIDS, activists dismissed the government saying that "science had already proven what the government was wanting to still research", and that when Mbeki challenged the statistics relating to HIV infections, "he was not seen as genuinely concerned, but bolstering his „dissident view"".

The significance of this criticism was that it was not only implicating HIV/AIDS activists who dismissed Mbeki's cautionary stance towards drugs, but included the media which sided with the activists against Mbeki. In this case the *City Press* not only criticised the government, as Liberal-Pluralism advocates, but levelled this criticism against the media as well. Not only was Mbeki condemned for his association with AIDS "dissidence" but for his insistence on calling for a uniquely African approach to the HIV/AIDS challenge. This issue is explored in the Afrocentric analysis section.

7.5.4 Political Economy Analysis: Mbeki's era

Unlike in the Mandela era, where it was suggested (Rantao & Bulger, 1996:1) that the criticism of the *Sarafina II* saga was influenced by the white ownership of the media, in the Mbeki era, the white ownership of the media did not arise. As in the case with Mandela's era, nothing in the editorials of the *City Press* or its journalists' columns and opinion pieces suggested that they wrote in order to please the white owners of their publication.

7.5.5 HIV/AIDS: An Afrocentric Analysis

As stated in the previous chapter, in October 2001 after praising Mbeki for "steering away" from the HIV/AIDS debate, the then *City Press* editor, Vusi Mona (2001e:8), accused Mbeki's government of "unwittingly presiding over a genocide" for which "posterity will judge them harshly". What had moved Mona to utter such strong words was a *Mail&Guardian* report (Barrel & Kindra, 2001:1) which had stated that the government had suppressed the Medical Research Council's report revealing that the HIV/AIDS epidemic accounted one-in-four of all deaths in South Africa.

According to the *Mail&Guardian* the Medical Research Council's report predicted that by 2010 AIDS would have killed between five and seven million people. The *Mail&Guardian* report further revealed that in his preface to the report, the "MRC president Malekgapuru Makgoba, confronts those, like Mbeki, who question the causal link between HIV and Aids".

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The *Mail&Guardian* also reported that the government had announced that it would not release the MRC report until after two months of its release. The report also revealed that the ANC had rejected the MRC's report as being "not credible" (Barrel & Kindra, 2001:1).

Mona (2001b:8) argued that Mbeki had already caused confusion in the year 2000 when he "cast doubt on whether HIV causes AIDS". This, according to Mona, "caused a lot of uncertainty in people's minds and set back years of education and awareness regarding HIV/AIDS". Mona asserted that the rejection of the MRC's report by the ANC was an act of usurping the scientists' role by politicians. This, according to Mona, gave the impression that the that "politicians in South Africa, especially from the ruling party, equate ignorance about HIV/AIDS epidemic with stupidity on their part". While Mbeki was arguing about whether HIV caused AIDS, Mona (2001b:8) observed that "the sad thing is people *are* dying of AIDS-related diseases", adding that he had "seen people both within and outside my family succumbing to AIDS after testing HIV-positive". Mona's sentiment was echoed in the following week's editorial of the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2001d:8).

The editorial argued that the "real task today is not finding out how many people die of Aids. It is about preventing those who do not have HIV from getting it". This assertion was in reaction to the government's move of pulling in Statistics South Africa which, while it welcomed the MRC report as a good starting point, also pointed out that it was unrepresentative, incomplete and inaccurate (*City Press* Comment, 2001d:8). While the *City Press* emphasised that the issue was not about numbers but about the reality of people dying from AIDS, the newspaper's editorial (*City Press* Comment, 2001d:8) noted that those who had "seen relatives wiped out by the pandemic think that the MRC's 40 percent is too conservative".

Afrocentricity's premise is that when issues involving Africans are interrogated, the discussions must take into cognisance issues of African culture and history. While the *City Press* and its then editor, Vusi Mona, were entitled to challenge the ANC and Mbeki about their questioning of HIV/AIDS figures, the newspaper failed to interrogate, deeper, why Mbeki and the ANC were concerned about HIV/AIDS figures. The concern about HIV/AIDS figures was not just the ANC's and Mbeki's but also that of some African leaders and journalists on the African continent.

In January 1998, the then *New African* deputy editor, Baffour Ankomah (1998a:35) observed that the United Nations (UN) Programme on HIV/AIDS and the World Health Organisation (WHO), on December 1, 1997, jointly published a report that was to coincide with World AIDS Day. The report, according to Ankomah, stated that of the 30 million people living with HIV/AIDS then, 20.8 million were in sub-Saharan Africa. What was intriguing to Ankomah was that the report noted that 9 out of 10 of people living with HIV around the world, mostly in Africa, were not even aware that they were infected. The question then was that if those supposedly living with the disease were not aware of their status, how did the UN and WHO know? According to Ankomah (1998a:35), the UN report claimed that in 1997 the figures were based on data gathered by scientists who had visited the regions reported on. The report, according to Ankomah, revealed that figures previously published by the UN and WHO were based on "regional estimates".

While not denying that Africa had an AIDS problem, Ankomah (1998a:35) asserted that the releasing of "estimated" AIDS figures in Africa was a "ploy" by the Western researchers and the media "to keep Africa down perpetually by making us lose our self-confidence and self-worth through such denigration of our continent and race". Ankomah blamed the "numbers' game" and its effect on Africa on the WHO.

The questioning of HIV/AIDS figures by the ANC and Mbeki, as the account above shows, was not just an issue preoccupying South Africa's ruling party and its then leader, Mbeki. Rather, as the account above shows, it was a concern shared on the greater African continent. This historical narrative was missing in the *City Press*. So, from an Afrocentric perspective, the *City Press* failed in this regard to give an African historical context to the ANC's and Mbeki's concerns. To the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 2001d:8) the issue was not about numbers, but about the reality of people dying from AIDS. The *City Press* was contented with only arguing that the issue of numbers weighed less when compared to the reality of people dying from AIDS, failing to consider the bigger picture. To other Africans the numbers' issue had serious implications. In Ankomah's (1998a:35) view, the issue of numbers was central in determining the reality of Africans dying from AIDS.

That is because, in Ankomah's (1998b:37) view, to

> "Africans, the most troubling aspect is that the people around the world *do* take these figures at face value, and thus *believe* that almost every African is riddled with the HIV virus from head to toe and only waiting to die of Aids in ten years time or so if not dying now".

The AIDS figures, according to the *New African* Kenyan journalist, John Kamau (1999:30), had a negative psychological effect on Africans, provoking him to wonder "why" Africa should "suffer all the humiliation about Aids as unreliable figures are peddled around as truth and dangled before the entire world". The point that is being made here is that the ANC's and Mbeki's caution or suspicion about HIV/AIDS should not be treated in isolation but within this historical context as far as HIV/AIDS is concerned.

The sentiments expressed in the *New African* by the African journalists cited above are similar to Mbeki's (2000b) in his letter to Leon, in which Mbeki noted that the "estimates" of the incidence of HIV in South Africa and the greater sub-Saharan Africa made by some international organisations, coupled with the "earlier wild and insulting claims about the African and Haitian origins of HIV" were "hysterical" and "powerfully" reinforced dangerous and firmly entrenched prejudices. What this means is that Mbeki saw the publicised figures about HIV/AIDS as a political game against Africa and the Africans which was, as he described it, prejudicial.

For Mbeki (2000c), the number one problem, not only for Africa but for the world, was poverty. Mbeki made this point clear at the 13th International AIDS conference held in Durban, South Africa, on July 9, 2000. In making this assertion, Mbeki (2000c) also made it clear that he was not being inattentive to "stories being told about malaria, tuberculosis, hepatitis B, HIV-AIDS and other diseases". Yet, he insisted that poverty was the number one killer in the world. In backing up his argument, Mbeki referred to the WHO's 1995 World Health Report from which he quoted the following:

> "The world's biggest killer and the greatest cause of ill-health and suffering across the globe is listed almost at the end of the International Classification of Diseases. It is given the code Z59.5 – extreme poverty. Poverty is the main reason why babies are not vaccinated, why clean water and sanitation are not provided, why curative drugs and other treatments are unavailable and why mothers die in childbirth…Poverty is a major contributor to mental illness, stress, suicide, family disintegration and substance abuse."

7.6 Summary: HIV/AIDS Analysis

In this section it was pointed out that during Mandela's presidency, the *City Press* fulfilled the Liberal-Pluralist role of the media by criticising the intransparency surrounding Mbongeni Ngema's musical, *Sarafina II*. Using the Political Economy's theory on the role of the media to analyse Mandela's claim that the Ngema saga was reported in a prejudiced manner by the white-owned media, it is asserted that Mandela's claim, with specific reference to the white-owned *City Press*, did not apply. During Mbeki's presidency, the *City Press* gave space to contending views that even contradicted the *City Press*' official position on HIV/AIDS, thus fulfilling the Liberal-Pluralist role of the media. The *City Press*, from an Afrocentric perspective failed to engage Mbeki's call for a uniquely African approach to the uniquely African AIDS challenge.

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SECTION II

INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

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7.7.1 Introduction

This section analyses the answer given to the interview questions outlined in chapter 5 and also attached as Addendum A. The theoretical frameworks employed are Liberal-Pluralism, Political Economy and Afrocentric theories on the role of the media. The answers are not analysed separately but linked according to the relevance and connectedness of themes discussed.

7.7.2 Liberal-Pluralist Analysis

An inclination and subscription to aspects of the Liberal-Pluralist prescribed role of the media emerged during the interviews with the *City Press*' black journalists. This was particularly the case with the media's expected role of holding the government to account and being the voice of the voiceless (Memela, 2008; Sibiya, 2009; Tsedu, 2008). This was important to do for black journalists in post-apartheid South Africa so as to protect the interests of the poor (Tsedu, 2008). Black journalism needed to be "more radical" in carrying out the task of holding the government accountable in a quest to set better standards for post-apartheid government, if for no other reason, for the fact that it is black (Mamaila, 2008). Carrying out such a task, on the part of black journalism, would be a fulfilment of a historical role of "defending and advancing the gains of the liberation struggle" against corrupt elements in post-apartheid South Africa (Mbatha, 2008).

Adherence to values such as accuracy and objectivity and the educational role as prescribed by the Liberal-Pluralist role of the media was expressed by Mbatha (2008) and Sibanda (2008). Its application was informed by the consciousness that while "[p]eople knew that they were free…they did not know what this freedom meant" (Mbatha, 2008). Against this background, the Liberal-Pluralist role of the media was fulfilled when according to Mbatha, the *City Press* endeavoured "to make sure that it helped black people to be conscious of their rights so that they could regain their dignity which had been trampled upon through the course of apartheid".

7.7.3 Political Economy Analysis

It may have been an impression of both politicians outside the *City Press* and some journalists inside the newspaper that at times the Afrikaner owners of the newspaper dictated terms to the editors. However, all the editors interviewed, stressed that they acted independently as journalists. Available evidence speaks in their favour. The first, as attested to by Mamaila (2008) and Sibanda (2008), is that in the 1999 elections, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1999d:6) called on its readership to vote for the ANC, a party rooted in the history of anti-apartheid politics that wrestled power from an Afrikaner-led party, the National Party, which had deep historical ties with Naspers, the owners of the *City Press*. Secondly, as attested to by Mbatha (2008), the *City Press* gave her space to write about former MK soldiers, Andrew Zondo and Robert McBride, who bombed buildings in South Africa that claimed some white people's lives. Significantly, Mbatha says that other newspapers did not want her to touch the stories.

While the *City Press*' black journalists were not dictated to by the white owners of their publication, the need to fulfil the mandate of making profit for the owners had an influence in the direction the newspaper took (2008). Having observed that the media need advertising to survive, Tsedu admitted the need on his part to provide a product that would convince the advertisers that there are "rich people" to buy the product:

> "The need for rich people influences your content. Content decisions may marginalise the poor. In order to avoid this, as the editor I took a decision to apply affirmative action for the poor readership – to make sure that our newspaper remains the eyes and ears of the poor and the voiceless."

This statement can be interpreted as an indication that due to economic realities, in a post-apartheid era, when protest politics was no longer the major issue, the *City Press* had to re-position itself. Class consciousness or considerations became a defining feature. The bottom line – meeting profit imperatives – became a dominant factor. Content decision was greatly influenced by financial muscle. This means that the interests of those among black people with economic upward mobility became preponderant. The poor, to whom the *City Press* had historically committed itself to, were no longer the determinant factor. Yet, in a post-apartheid era a conscious decision had to be made to accommodate them, or in the words of Tsedu, "to apply affirmative action" for them.

There is another issue that came out during the interview with Nqayi (2009), which has relevance for a Political Economy analysis on the role of the media. Nqayi's observation that during his time there was lesser space dedicated to politics and more given for entertainment, is significant for Political Economy theory. Political Economy theorists hold the view that preoccupation with profit on the part of media owners tends to result in preference for entertainment at the expense of "serious political debate, and discussions of documentaries that dig deeply, inform, and challenge conventional opinion" (Herman & McChesney, 1997:6). Consequently, the preoccupation with trivialisation and sensationalism take the sting out of journalism and undermines the very commitment to the watchdog role highly prized by Liberal-Pluralists. Nqayi's observation confirms this position from his personal experience during his time at the *City Press*.

7.7.4 An Afrocentric Analysis

While the *City Press* was committed to the Liberal-Pluralist role of the media of keeping the government in check, it was mindful of the particular context in which it operated, namely the post-apartheid context of 1994 to 2004, where former liberation movement fighters were occupying the seat of government. Former *City Press* editor, Vusi Mona, cognisant of the fact that the new government was constituted of people who had no experience in running a government, held a strong view that black journalists "had a responsibility" to help the government "to articulate its visions and programmes". This support was so explicit for the Mbeki government to an extent where, according to Mona "some people said I was used as a pawn". But one can say that this is not true, as the support was not a blank cheque. Where Mona disagreed with Mbeki's government in particular, he made his disagreement as explicit as his support.

Kalane (2009), Mona (2009) and Sibiya (2009) expressed the view that the present (the democratic dispensation) had hallmarks of the past, and as such black journalists in post-apartheid South Africa had a responsibility to articulate black people's fears and plight. In Kalane's words, this meant that there was a continued need for black journalists to be in the forefront of "championing the black cause". Not only were the effects of apartheid still felt among the general black populace but also among the black elites, particularly black journalists. Mona (2009) elucidates this point by noting that the historical marginalisation of black journalists resulted in white journalists continuing being in the lead in agenda-setting, and against this background, a sentiment existed that black journalism still needed to assert itself and balance the scales.

In noting that in the new era black journalists had to ensure that the objectives of the struggle did not disappear, Tsedu (2008) was centering the Africans' struggle for self-determination – an affirmation of Afrocentricity. By declaring the *City Press* "Distinctly African", Tsedu's move needs to be seen as giving substance to a journalistic project that is Afrocentric. It was informed by a clear commitment to defend African values and, in the words of Tsedu (2008), not to allow "practices like circumcision to be derided even if it is commercial for others to do so". The "Distinctly African" concept was not just about the defence, but also the advancement of African interests. This, for Mamaila (2008), meant promoting Africans' self-esteem by inculcating pride in things African in an African environment where Africans held European things in awe.

While it may be an exaggeration to claim that the "Distinctly African" concept of the *City Press* was a government project that was driven by Mbeki's African Renaissance project, Mkhabela (2008) has a point in noting that the *City Press* in Tsedu's time embraced Mbeki's broader political appeal of being proudly African. Mkhabela is also correct to note that it was no coincidence that the *City Press*' billboards carried the faces of Tsedu along with those of Gertrude Mongella, the former Pan African Parliament's chairperson.

According to Mona (2009), prior to Tsedu declaring the *City Press* "Distinctly African", African cultural consciousness existed at an individual level. With Tsedu adopting a "Distinctly African" approach, African cultural consciousness was made official. Black journalists were officially being made to think about the implications of their journalism to the African continent and its people. Tsedu made possible what one of his predecessors, Len Kalane, said was impossible, when he noted that one "cannot uphold cultural and traditional

values in the house of a stranger". The "stranger" referred to was the *City Press*' white owners (Kalane, 2009).

African cultural consciousness was not taken for granted by the *City Press*' black journalists. There was a consciousness that culture could be misused by the powerful or the elderly, particularly among Africans. It is for this reason that Mkhabela (2008) cautions that care must be taken to avoid the tendency of saying that just because a person is an African, an individual should refrain from saying that if an "elderly person has done a wrong thing, because I am an African I must be respectful and not call him a criminal". Mkhabela was adamant that "African culture does not conceal things". The *City Press*' journalists did face this dilemma and experienced a conflict between what they understood African culture taught in relation to their journalism practice. That is why, when Mona (2009) was presented with a story alleging philandering on the part of Mbeki, his "immediate reaction" was that he would not run the story because the "African in me" said that Mbeki was like his father.

The experience was the same for Nqayi (2009) when he had to deal with sex scandals involving "adult politicians". He felt "awkward" about having to question them about such allegations because he is an "African child (who) came from a cultural background that emphasised respect for adults". After writing a story that revealed that Winnie Madikizela-Mandela slapped Nelson Mandela, Mogale (2009) was assailed by regrets. This difficulty experienced by *City Press* journalists was not unique to them. It was a dilemma faced by many African journalists in the African continent, as shown in the Literature Review Chapter.

7.7.5 Summary: Interview Analysis

In this section responses to the research questions were analysed against three theoretical frameworks: Liberal-Pluralism, Political Economy and Afrocentricity. The researcher argued that the *City Press*' black journalists indicated commitment to Liberal-Pluralism's role of the media such as keeping the government in check, educating readership and giving a platform to citizens to air their views. From a Political Economy perspective, it was pointed out that the white ownership of the *City Press* did not constrain the newspaper's journalists from carrying out their political reporting. From an Afrocentric perspective, it was pointed out that the *City Press*' journalists were aware of their African cultural values and their relationship with journalistic practice. They sought to project and to defend African values, but were vigilant against misuse and misinterpretation of African culture by the political elite to suit the latter's interests.

7.8 Summary: Chapter 7

This chapter is divided into two sections: the first section focuses on the analysis of the *City Press*' editorials, the *City Press*' black journalists' columns and opinion pieces; the second section focuses on the analysis of the *City Press*' black journalists responses to the research questions posed during interviews with them. In both cases the researcher employed three theoretical frameworks: Liberal-Pluralism, Political Economy and Afrocentricity. The political themes analysed were crime, the Zimbabwean crisis and HIV/AIDS.

The next chapter, the last, will provide a conclusion.

Chapter 8
Conclusion and Recommendations

8.1 Introduction

The major focus of this study was to establish the political role that the *City Press* defined for its black journalists in post-apartheid South Africa, and the role played by African cultural values in the execution of their task with a particular focus on the period 1994 to 2004. Taking into consideration the historical role played by white ownership of black-oriented newspapers, this research also sought to investigate how white ownership of the *City Press* impacted on the newspapers' black journalists' execution of their tasks. The tasks refer to the newspaper's editorials, the *City Press*' individual black journalists' columns and the *City Press*' black journalists' opinion pieces.

This study took a cue from Bennett (1982b:294) who observes that to speak of the political role of the media is not an abstract undertaking. Bennett argues that the task of studying the political role of the media can be executed only through a study of the role played by the media in concrete, historically determined political conjunctures. To study these, Bennett notes, it is necessary to deal not only with the media but the political issues at stake in those conjunctures. Against this background three major political issues in South Africa during the research period were identified, namely crime, the Zimbabwean crisis and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and how the former South African president Thabo Mbeki handled the latter two issues. These issues were selected on the basis of being identified by political commentators (Calland, 2006:190 – 191; Sparks, 2003:85; Jacobs & Calland, 2002:2 – 4) as major political issues during the research period.

Against this background, the *City Press*' editorials, the *City Press*' black journalists' columns and opinion pieces specifically dealing with crime, the Zimbabwean crisis and HIV/AIDS were studied. The data selected from the *City Press* was published after May 10, 1994 until December 31, 2004.

8.2 Literature Review

Since this study's focus was on the political role of the media in post-apartheid South Africa, the literature reviewed discussed the political role of the media in democracy. The literature reviewed was both generic and particular. It was generic in the sense that it covered the political role of the media in a general sense. It was also particular in that it specifically dealt

with these issues with particular reference to Africa, of which South Africa is an integral part. In the main, with specific reference to Africa, the argument in the literature review was that black journalists should play a role in establishing a clear link between African culture and politics.

8.3 Theoretical Frameworks

Three theoretical frameworks, namely Liberal-Pluralism, Political Economy and Afrocentricity, were employed to analyse how the *City Press'* black journalists lived up to or failed to play their media role according to these theories. The definitions of the theoretical frameworks were given.

From the Liberal-Pluralist perspective, this study sought to establish the extent to which the *City Press'* black journalists played the role of informing its readership about political developments; guided public opinion about political decisions; the extent to which the *City Press* provided a platform for the expression of different views about political developments and decisions, and whether or not the *City Press* critically examined political developments and decisions.

From the Political Economy perspectives this study sought to investigate this theory's assertions that the media's contents and meanings reflect the interests of those who finance the production of the media's contents. While Political Economy theorists deal with not just media ownership, but advertising as well, this study was limited to media ownership.

From the Afrocentric perspectives this study sought to investigate the role, if any, African cultural values played in the *City Press'* black journalists' execution of their political tasks.

8.4 Research Methodology

This study largely used the qualitative research methodology, specifically using content analysis and basic individual interview techniques.

Using the combination of content analysis together with interviews enabled this researcher to determine whether or not there was consistency between what the interviewees said during the interview and what they wrote. The finding of this research is that there was consistency.

Next are the conclusions reached by the researcher in this study.

8.5 Conclusions on the positions of the *City Press* on the identified key political issues

This section gives the researcher's conclusions on the positions taken by the *City Press* using the three theoretical frameworks mentioned above. The issues are crime, the Zimbabwean crisis and HIV/AIDS. This section is divided into two – editorial content and interviews.

8.5.1 Editorial Content

8.5.1. 1 Crime

Beginning with crime, this study concludes that the *City Press,* from a Liberal-Pluralist theoretical framework, created space for different opinions to be expressed including those that contradicted the official position of the newspaper, also from within the newspaper's own ranks. From a Political Economy perspective, this study concludes that nothing in the analysis of the *City Press* revealed a biased position against the ANC, or an appeasement of whites to please white ownership. From an Afrocentric perspective this study concludes that the *City Press* published pieces that showed recognition of African cultural values such as ubuntu/botho, and the historical context of South Africa's history.

8.5.1.2 The Zimbabwean Crisis

On the issue of Zimbabwe, this study concludes that the *City Press* has fulfilled, through its editorial comments, the Liberal-Pluralist expectations on the role of the media by seeking to highlight different sides of the Zimbabwean story. The newspaper's presentation of a balanced story was not the same as taking a neutral position on this issue. The newspaper criticised what it perceived as being wrong. From a Political Economy perspective, this study concludes that nothing in the argument of the *City Press*' editorials and its individual journalists' writings suggested that their approach sought to appease the white owners of the newspaper. From an Afrocentric perspective, this study concludes that while the newspaper took cognisance of the historical context of the Zimbabwean crisis, the newspaper failed in engaging with African cultural nuances in the context of the Zimbabwean crisis. This is in reference to the land issue and the personal relationship between Mugabe and Mbeki.

8.5.1.3 HIV/AIDS

On the issue of HIV/AIDS, this study concludes that the *City Press* fulfilled the Liberal-Pluralist role of the media by criticising the lack of transparency surrounding Mbongeni Ngema's musical, *Sarafina II*. Using the Political Economy's theory on the role of the media to analyse Mandela's claim that the Ngema saga was reported in a prejudiced manner by the white-owned media, it is asserted that Mandela's claim, with specific reference to the white-

owned *City Press* did not apply. During Mbeki's presidency, the *City Press* gave space to contending views that even contradicted the *City Press*' official position on HIV/AIDS, thus fulfilling the Liberal-Pluralist role of the media. The *City Press*, from an Afrocentric perspective, failed to engage Mbeki's call for a uniquely African approach to the uniquely African AIDS challenge.

8.6 Interviews

On the interviews, this study concludes that the *City Press*' black journalists indicated commitment to Liberal-Pluralism's role of the media such as keeping the government in check, educating readership and giving a platform to citizens to air their views. From a Political Economy perspective, this study concludes that the white ownership of the *City Press* did not constrain the newspaper's journalists from carrying out their political reporting. From an Afrocentric perspective, it was pointed out that the *City Press*' journalists were aware of their African cultural values and their relationship with journalistic practice. They sought to project and to defend African values, but were vigilant against misuse and misinterpretation of African culture by the political elite to suit the latter's interests.

8.7 Concluding arguments

The focus of this research was to establish the political role that the *City Press* defined for its black journalists in post-apartheid South Africa, and the role played by African cultural values in the execution of their task with particular focus on the period 1994 to 2004. What this means is that this study sought to establish whether or not the *City Press* "consciously" committed itself to a particular political role, and whether or not in executing that consciously decided role, its black journalists were taking into consideration their cultural values, with particular reference to the concept of respect in the context of African culture. Further, taking into consideration the historical role played by white ownership of black-oriented newspapers, this research also sought to investigate how white ownership of the *City Press* impacted on the newspapers' black journalists' execution of their tasks.

Next, the researcher presents concluding arguments on the *City Press*' conscious political role, African cultural consciousness, and the newspaper's political role in the context of the newspaper's white ownership.

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8.7.1 Conscious political role

On the basis of the interviews with the editors (Sibiya, 2009; Kalane, 2009; Mona, 2009; Tsedu, 2008; Mamaila, 2008) of the *City Press* during the research period, this study concludes that the *City Press* had a defined political role in post-apartheid South Africa. They all expressed the view that the political role of the *City Press*' black journalists was to continue the historical role of black journalism – championing the cause of the black people. In the belief that there was no substantial change in the material conditions of black people during the research period, the editors believed that the *City Press* newspaper should continue being the voice of the voiceless and fight for the realisation of the objectives of the anti-apartheid struggle.

It is against this background – commitment to furthering the objectives of the struggle – that in the 1999 elections the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1999d:6) endorsed the ANC's election campaign for the second term. Not only did the *City Press* support the ANC, but declared its opposition to the then Democratic Party and the National Party, asserting that these parties

> "and all other white parties do not qualify as credible opposition parties. Voters must send a strong signal to these parties that unless they urgently transform themselves to represent the interests of all South Africans, they are destined for the scrap heap."

The above stance was taken during Sibiya's tenure. During Sibiya's tenure, in 1994 to be specific, the *City Press*, as recalled by Mamaila (2008), made it its duty to encourage its black journalists to make sure that the "democratic project" worked. When Mona took over as editor, he steered the *City Press* in a pro-ANC direction in the belief that the *City Press* had a duty to help the ANC government to articulate its visions and programmes. But this was not the same as practicing "embedded journalism".

Loyalty to the objectives of the anti-apartheid struggle and support for the ANC government was not synonymous with ignoring the wrongs of the ANC government. When the government showed discomfort with what the *City Press* saw as corruption, the *City Press* (*City Press* Comment, 1996e:16) told the ANC that it "must face up these challenges instead of blaming the press or burying their heads in the sand – hoping complaints against the government will go away". The editorial comment further noted that the *City Press* was not

prepared to practise sunshine journalism by being "the government's praise singers" and keeping quiet when things were going wrong. The editorial comment further noted that the *City Press* believed that "the press must continue to be the public's watchdog", adding that "[i]f our leaders are wallowing in the gravy train, these things must be reported without fear or favour".

When accusations emerged that the media in general and the *City Press* in particular had "a hidden agenda against blacks and of harbouring counter-revolutionary tendencies" because the newspaper published stories of corruption implicating black people, Mona (2000a:10) made it clear that a "wrong is a wrong irrespective of the colour of the perpetrator". Thus, in Mona's view, "black journalists have no obligation or limitation as to how they portray black characters, especially when the latter are involved in nefarious activities".

While the newspaper was committed to supporting a black government, this support was critical in nature. It reserved its right to criticise a black government, not destructively, but constructively. It is against this background that the *City Press* in its criticism against parliamentarians' abuse of travel vouchers, argued that the parliamentarians' act was the kind of "stuff that feeds into the stereotype of Africans as people who can't say no to temptation". This editorial's observation was consistent with the view expressed by Sibiya nine years earlier in his column. In his column, Sibiya dismissed the defensive argument on the part of those who protested against the exposed corruption in government circles by the media claiming that the apartheid government was also corrupt. For Sibiya while this claim was true, such "should not give the present government the same license to climb on this train". Sibiya's comment was echoed later by Mamaila who noted that it was "irritating that when we condemn corruption we hear some voices within the government claiming that corruption was there before 1994". According to Mamaila, "[t]o make such statements is to be morally unambitious".

Criticism on the part of the *City Press* was not intended to embarrass a black government but aimed at sensitising African rulers against participating in exercises that would contribute to the denigration of the African image. The *City Press* wanted the ANC-led government to be better than its apartheid predecessor. The newspaper wanted the government to be one that the electorate would be proud of, not because it was headed by a black man, but because it was doing something that the electorate would be proud of. That is why the *City Press* wondered aloud why "under a democratic dispensation criminals could get away with murder when they

could not under a totalitarian regime". This was a clear and direct warning to the ANC-led government against complacency. The *City Press* was not prepared to allow the ANC-led government to take the people who put the ANC in power for granted. Hence the newspaper pointed out to the ANC, that, come the 1999 elections, the people would ask the ANC why they should return to power an organisation that exposed them to criminal elements.

When the *City Press* defended Mbeki's right to participate in the debate about HIV/AIDS against those who argued that he should refrain on the basis that he had no medical training, the newspaper argued that such claims were as unfair as they were unhelpful in dealing with a scourge "which is annihilating Africa". This, in this researcher's view, was an indication of African consciousness on the part of the *City Press*. It was an indication that it was sensitive to issues that had a major impact on Africa. The employment of the word "annihilating" was an indication that HIV/AIDS posed a major risk to Africans' lives, and as such believed that everyone, including Mbeki, should be afforded space to deal with a scourge threatening the survival of the African continent.

The hostile reaction of the ANC to media criticism, and their expectation that black journalists should continue acting as "comrades" in post-apartheid South Africa, as was the case during the anti-apartheid struggle days, is not a uniquely South African phenomenon. Megwa notes that this "syndrome of „Journalists-as-comrades' has for a long time pervaded African governments' perception of the role of the media in society". Yet, while African governments expected black journalists to be "comradely", the former were not. This was pointed out by Seepe who noted that concerns had been expressed by black journalists in the 1990s that "government bureaucrats and ministers are generally more obsessed with what appears in white run [sic] newspapers than they are with what is printed in black publications". Seepe's concern was echoed by Sibiya who noted that the ANC-led government in the first five years of its rule called upon black journalists when "chips are down, or to clean up the mess", expecting "black publications to write follow-ups of stories that first appeared in the white media".

This experience narrated by black journalists was not uniquely South African. Nyamnjoh (2005b:36) seems to suggest that this is the status of African journalism:

> "Some African governments would rather trust non-African foreign
> journalists and media with information about decisions concerning the

states over which they preside, and often at great cost, than honour their own local media with scoops."

This attitude on the part of African governments, Nyamnjoh further argues, "naturally implies that, in their opinion, local journalism is second rate". On the other hand, Nyamnjoh (2005b:36) further points out, "foreign journalists penetrate African corridors of power much more easily than African journalists, regardless of qualifications and competencies":

> "Little wonder, therefore, that a strange disease known as xenophilia is said to afflict Africans, who are often so negative about themselves that they would rather value things foreign and Western, „not for their efficacy but simply because of their foreignness'."

The act of declaring the *City Press* "Distinctly African" was a clear act of defining the political role of the *City Press*. In the words of Tsedu (2004b:1) the "Distinctly African" declaration was a "commitment to reflect the reality of our lives as Africans" which meant "being in the forefront of calling to attention problematic areas, and castigating leaders that oppress their people". The "Distinctly African" approach did not just have a political dimension, but a cultural dimension as well. It was informed by indigenous African values in contact with other values. The "Distinctly African" concept "meant not allowing practices like circumcision to be derided even if it is commercial for others to do so" (Tsedu, 2008). What this suggests, in the context of this study, is that the *City Press*' black journalists defined a political role for themselves and were also conscious of and committed to African cultural values.

The "Distinctly African" approach needs to be seen against a perception by Africans that the Western media vilify African culture and valorise Westernisation. On this score, Hawk (2002:167) observes that when analysing political conflicts in Africa, the Western media identifies them as a "tribal problem" and that "the news blames those who suffer and locates the source of Africa's difficulties within African culture, often ignoring the roles of others, especially foreign actors". Hawk (2002:168) further argues that a major problem with this form of thinking is that "identifying tribalism as a problem emphasizes the negative aspects of cultural pride, representing it as the most important social pathology in Africa whilst concealing the benefits of tribe". The consequence of this approach on the part of the Western

media, Hawk (2002:172) further argues, is that "these portrayals often define African culture as the problem and western institutions as the solution".

Focusing on tribalism as the problem, according to Hawk (2008:168), tends to mute other conflicts of interest between groups, and serves as a distraction from covert causes of many African conflicts. Thus, Hawk further notes

> "class conflicts become tribalism; regional conflicts become tribalism; responses to structural adjustment programs become tribalism".

This concern is echoed by wa Thiong'o (2008:1) who notes that the "study of African realities has for too long been seen in terms of tribes. Whatever happens in Kenya, Uganda, Malawi is because of Tribe A versus Tribe B." Wa Thiong'o further notes that this "misleading stock interpretation of the African realities has been popularised by the western media which likes to deflect people from seeing that imperialism is still the root cause of many problems in Africa". He (wa Thiong'o, 2008:1) laments that "some African intellectuals have fallen victims – a few incurably so – to that scheme". Tsedu's "Distinctly African" approach should be seen as a refusal to fall into the trap identified by wa Thiong'o. It is a stance informed by African Cultural Consciousness.

8.7.2 African Cultural Consciousness

The tensions experienced by the *City Press*' journalists like Mona (2009), Mogale (2009) and Nqayi (2009) when they were confronted with stories that projected elderly African politicians in a negative light were an indication of African cultural consciousness in the context of journalism practice. The same is the case when the *City Press*' black journalists like Mkhabela (2008) and Sibanda (2008) insisted that respect in African culture does not mean that when the elderly involve themselves in corrupt services these should be ignored by young African journalists. Tsedu (2008) emphasised as much when he stated that respect in African culture "does not mean that someone younger or junior accepts everything and anything that someone older or senior says or does". This study concludes that Tsedu's declaration of the *City Press*' "Distinctly African" motto is an indication that contrary to Kalane's assertion that African cultural values cannot be upheld in a white-owned media company, this is possible. African culture became an official approach in a white-owned newspaper. This leads to another key issue in this study – the *City Press*' black journalists' political role in the context of the *City Press*' white ownership.

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8.7.3 The *City Press'* black journalists' role in the context of the newspaper's white ownership

On the basis of the content analysis and interviews with the *City Press'* black journalists, this study concludes that the white ownership of the *City Press* did not impact on the editorial trajectory of the newspaper. As already indicated, in the 1999 national elections the *City Press* endorsed the ANC while opposing the then Democratic Party and National Party whose membership was predominantly white.

In saying that the white ownership of the *City Press* did not dictate the political direction of the *City Press'* black journalists, is not the same as saying that the assertion of Political Economy theorists on the relationship between media ownership and journalism practice is invalid. To the contrary, its validity was recognised by the *City Press'* black journalists from the moment Naspers acquired the *City Press* newspaper. As pointed out in Chapter 2 of this study, from the time that Naspers bought the newspaper from Jim Bailey, the *City Press'* black journalists feared that the historically pro-National Party government could seek to frustrate the anti-apartheid black journalists (Vosloo, 2003:2; Vosloo, 1997:3; Selwyn-Smith, 1997:6). In a move to pre-empt a potential frustration of their commitment to the anti-apartheid struggle using the media as a weapon, the *City Press'* black journalists sought and secured a charter guaranteeing editorial independence (Qoboza, 1992:2).

Sibiya believes that the charter played a great role in keeping Naspers from interfering "because they knew that black journalists would walk away". He also notes that the Afrikaner owners were "sensitive to the fact that we saw them as oppressors". As a result, according to Sibiya, "they did not want to rock the boat", considering also that black journalists at the *City Press* had "made it known to them [Naspers] we would monitor the situation to ensure that there was no interference".

8.8 Summary: Conclusions

In this chapter the researcher presented concluding remarks on the political role of the *City Press'* black journalists in post-apartheid South Africa. The newspaper's black journalists' execution of their political role was examined in the context of African culture and the newspaper's white ownership. Three theoretical frameworks, namely Liberal-Pluralism, Political Economy and Afrocentricity, on the role of the media, were employed. This study concluded that from a Liberal-Pluralist theory, the *City Press* fulfilled its mandate of giving a

platform to contending views and critically examining the political developments in post-apartheid South Africa. From a Political Economy perspective, this study concluded that the *City Press'* black journalists' role was not influenced by white ownership but acted independently. However, this study also stated that the *City Press'* black journalists recognised Political Economy's assertion of the influence of media ownership on the role of the media. It was for this reason that when Naspers bought the *City Press*, the newspaper's black journalists sought the drawing up of a charter that guaranteed their editorial independence from Naspers. From an Afrocentric perspective this study concluded that the *City Press'* black journalists were conscious of African cultural issues and grappled with how to balance these values with the demands of journalism.

This study used content analysis and interviews to establish the understanding of the "meaning" of black journalism to the *City Press'* black journalists in post-apartheid South Africa. The results yielded by these research methods revealed that while there was appreciation of African cultural values such as ubuntu/botho, some black journalists experienced tensions while grappling with African cultural values, with particular reference to the concept of "respect" in African culture within the context of journalism practice. The tensions articulated by the *City Press'* black journalists were issues that emerged in this study's literature review.

8.9 Recommendations for Future Study

8.9.1 Increased Study Period

While this study looked at the period 1994 to 2004, it would be interesting to study the *City Press'* black journalists' political role in the period 2004 to 2009. That is so because it would enable a researcher to get a better picture of what it meant for the *City Press* to be a "Distinctly African" newspaper within the context of its political role. The years between 2004 and 2009 would mark five years since the *City Press* became "Distinctly African". The end of this study period – 2004 – was the year in which the *City Press* became "Distinctly African".

8.9.2 Recommendations for Journalism education

The post-apartheid dispensation has seen political leaders in South Africa using culture to explain among other things, their sexual behaviour questioned by sections of the South African society (Sesanti, 2005:365; Sesanti, 2009a:209). These developments caught both black and white journalists unawares because of their ignorance of African culture (Sesanti,

2005:372). This researcher recommends that more research should be done on African culture in the context of journalism so that future generations of journalism students may be informed about undistorted versions of African culture. If knowledgeable, they will be able to challenge politicians who may attempt to manipulate them. As has been argued by this researcher (2009b:125) previously, journalists educated about diverse cultures will not just be able to challenge manipulative politicians, but are more likely to link and create a common understanding among culturally diverse communities than journalists who are ignorant of others' cultural norms.

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Addendum A: Interview Questions

How did the concept of "black journalism" evolve from a colonial and apartheid South Africa into post-apartheid democratic dispensation?

What was the political role that the *City Press* defined for its black journalists in the period 1994 to 2004?

Did the ownership of the *City Press* by a white company impact on the political role of the *City Press'* black journalists in the period 1994 to 2004?

What role did African cultural values play in the *City Press'* political black journalists' approach to their work in the period 1994 to 2004?

How have African and Western cultural differences impacted upon the mandate of the *City Press'* political black journalists?

How do African cultural values link to the *City Press'* concept of "Distinctly African"?

Nationally and internationally, the media have generally criticised President Thabo Mbeki's handling of HIV/AIDS and have labelled him an AIDS Denialist. What has been the *City Press'* position on this issue?

On the issue of Zimbabwe's crisis, the media, nationally and internationally, have condemned what they have termed Mbeki's "quiet diplomacy". What has been the *City Press'*s position on this issue?