

“DISTINCTLY AFRICAN”: THE
REPRESENTATION OF AFRICANS
IN *CITY PRESS*

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ABSTRACT

Distinctly African”: The
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This study examines the representation of Africans by fellow Africans in a South African Sunday paper, *City Press*, after the paper changed its motto from ‘The People's Paper’ to ‘Distinctly African’ in October 2004. This editorial repositioning of *City Press* coincided with some of the tenets of the African Renaissance and African nationalism. The representation of Africa in the media, both outside and inside the continent, has been problematic for centuries. This study examines whether the claim by *City Press*, of a representation that is “Distinctly African” is achieved or refuted. This is done through analysing the way in which Africa, Africans, and African issues are framed and represented over a period of two years. In analysing these representations of Africa, Africans and African issues, the study looks at whether or not the way in which *City Press* represents Africa conforms to the ideals of the African Renaissance and African nationalism.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In October 2004, *City Press* changed its slogan from ‘The People's Paper’ to ‘Distinctly African’. In addition, the appearance and format of the paper were redesigned. This change signalled an attempt to change not only the way that Africa is reported and represented internally, but also to change the way in which readers of *City Press* view and conceptualise Africa. Apart from re-orienting the *City Press* earlier in the year, the paper also got a new editor, Mathatha Tsedu, who earlier in 2004 had been dismissed from the *Sunday Times* for allegedly trying to ‘Africanise’ it. The study will critically analyse the claim by *City Press* that it is ‘Distinctly African’ by focusing on how it represents political events, issues and processes in Africa.

City Press is arguably the largest Sunday newspaper that caters mainly for a black, middle class readership (Giffard et al, 1997). According to the editor, Mathatha Tsedu, the paper caters for a middle to upper middle class readership with rising numbers of young, upwardly mobile readers. It is also one of the not more than eight Sunday newspapers in the South African market (these include Sunday papers such as *Sunday Times*, *Sunday Independent*, *Sunday Sun*, *Rapport*, *Sunday Argus*, *Sunday Tribune*, *Sunday World*). In addition, it is one of several newspapers, (such as *Daily Sun*, *Sowetan*, and *Isolezwe*) that have a largely black readership. Not only does this make *City Press* an important paper within the South African print media landscape, it also makes *City Press* a potentially influential paper because of its popularity with the Black market, which has a rising influence as a consumer group.

City Press was established in 1982 as *Golden City Press* and was the first national Sunday newspaper aimed at the Black market. The owners were Jim

Bailey and the South African Associated Newspapers (SAAN). In 1983, the name of the publication was changed to *City Press*. When SAAN withdrew, Jim Bailey became the sole proprietor of *City Press* and the magazines *Drum* and *True Love*. In 1984 financial problems developed and only Nasionale Pers was willing to guarantee sufficient funds to help with the development of the publication. On 1 April 1984, Nasionale Pers took over *City Press*, *Drum* and *True Love*. A charter, confirming that journalists would enjoy the same degree of freedom within the law, was signed between Nasionale Pers and *Drum* and *True Love*. *City Press* is the biggest English newspaper aimed at the Black market and the third biggest newspaper in the country, with a circulation of around 1,96 million (www.saarf.co.za). The newspaper is distributed nationally and regionally, especially Botswana. Nearly half of the paper's circulation is in Gauteng where there is the widest readership for the paper.

1.1 Media and Pan-Africanism

In its re-launch edition that carried a front-page editorial, one of the stated aims of the redesigned *City Press* was to help instigate a more Pan-African sentiment within *City Press*'s readership. The editorial states a need for South Africa to align itself with other African nations, to inculcate an 'African' identity versus one that is simply 'South African':

Having been indoctrinated with the belief that we, as a nation, are unlike the rest of our brothers and sisters on the continent, many of us have internalised this and see ourselves not as Africans, but as South Africans.

But the truth is we are Africans and the challenge facing us is how we reintegrate ourselves into what is

essentially our home. That starts with a clear and unambiguous assertion of our Africanness. (Tsedu, 3 October 2004)

In order to help facilitate this, *City Press* was to

...cover issues here at home, the things that enhance our identity, and those that threaten our identity are going to drive our coverage.

The identity that Tsedu is referring to can only be an assumed 'African' identity, indicated by the paper's motto, 'Distinctly African'. However, an African identity or African identities are first, difficult to define; second there are multiple identities based on varying criteria; and third, African identities cannot be formed without knowledge of what other Africans on the continent are doing, or how they are doing it. It could be argued that Africans know little about Africans who live in other countries, or what is happening beyond their nation's borders.

The attempt to re-position *City Press* could also be linked to other developments with regard to the conception of Africa within South Africa. South African President Thabo Mbeki is one of the leaders of an "African Renaissance", which seeks to broadly locate South Africa within Africa, just as *City Press*'s refocus on its editorial stance seeks to do. Further, Mbeki and South Africa have been at the forefront of a new political and economic programme called The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), as well as the transformation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) into the African Union (AU).

NEPAD and the AU can also be framed in terms of the African Renaissance. NEPAD was formulated by four African presidents: Olusegun Obasanjo of

Nigeria, Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal and Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria. In simple terms, NEPAD is an initiative to help strengthen Africa's influence in international politics and the global economy. In order to achieve this, African politics may have to make adjustments, both politically and economically in order to be compatible with neo-liberal and democratic systems of economics and governance.

In addition, NEPAD aims to create a platform from which African states within the partnership can help improve and grow the African economy by playing an active role in the global economy. An additional aim is to stimulate the growth of democracy and development. Consequently, this should create conducive investment opportunities for public and private, local and international investors. NEPAD also advocates African solutions to African problems, and less reliance on nations outside the continent. To improve the African economy NEPAD's primary objectives (www.nepad.org) are:

1. To eradicate poverty;
2. To place African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development;
3. To halt the marginalisation of Africa in the globalisation process and enhance its full and beneficial integration into the global economy;
4. To accelerate the empowerment of women

By seeking to re-establish itself as a 'Distinctly African' paper, *City Press* might also be aiming at being the paper that articulates these developments. If this assumption is true, *City Press* could then also act as a voice of African renewal and regeneration. It is interesting to note that as part of its marketing strategy and re-branding exercise, *City Press* had a billboard in Johannesburg

that featured Mathatha Tsedu the editor, President Thabo Mbeki, the first President of the African Union, and Gertrude Mongela, the first President of the African Parliament.

The juxtaposition of these personalities could be taken to mean that *City Press* sought to position itself more as a committed paper to African politics and issues. Moreover, this may position *City Press* as an arbiter or authority on African news and African decision-making processes. In addition, *City Press* has billboards proclaiming that they are “Eradicating ignorance one Sunday at a time” or that “The revolution against ignorance has begun”. These proclamations can be understood to mean that *City Press* has a political agenda, or at the very least, an ideological agenda.

1.2 Africa’s Media image and the role of African media in representing Africa to Africans

City Press appears to be attempting to shift the dominant view of Africa from one that is historically problematic, to one that recognises and acknowledges that Africa has its strengths as well as weaknesses. Dominant views of Africa are those that tend to consider Africa as a dependent continent, with little good governance and replete with conflicts, poverty, disease, hunger and other negatives. The front-page editorial stated that *City Press*, unlike dominant trends in the coverage of Africa, would cover Africa in ‘a distinctly informed way’. Tsedu goes on to add that although there would be feature pages that focus solely on Africa and African issues, Africa would be highlighted in other sections of the paper from business to sport to leisure sections, allowing perhaps, a more ‘African’ perspective.

In gaining a more ‘African’ perspective, it is important to understand where news about Africa will come from. Would it be from African news sources,

and not the established western news agencies that are accused by many Africans of representing Africa in stereotypical ways? Tsedu goes some way into answering where news about Africa would be sourced – “through our own correspondents in our own bureaus being established on the continent, as well as through our association with the Pan African News Agency (Pana)...” (*City Press*, October 3 2004).

The issue of sources of news about Africa is very important because it goes a long way in answering how Africans are perceived, what the dominant views about Africans are, and who sets the agenda on the understanding of Africa. Through establishing the sources of information about Africa, it is possible to understand and contextualise Africa’s media image. Understanding who represents Africa may lead to a greater understanding of the representation of African issues and the underlying context in which these issues take place. One would assume that if an African and a European write a news item, there would be differences in framing the same news item. The point of reference for an African and a European about Africa can be assumed to be divergent, hence the expected discrepancies on the same news material. There are many factors that influence news items; the source of the news is just one of many. However, the question that arises then is what is an ‘African perspective’ and how is it different from other perspectives? Moreover, how would *City Press* interpret this perspective?

The popular and sometimes clichéd representations of Africa in mainstream Western media, as well as mainstream African media, tend to focus only on the negative aspects, such as disease, war, and corruption. In the front-page editorial, Tsedu mentions a few other continental issues such as problematic governments, genocide and ethnic cleansing. Tsedu states that the aim of *City Press* is to highlight problems of this nature as well to put a spotlight on positive events on the continent. Examples of what Tsedu calls ‘positives’ are

events such as “the creation of semi-autonomous regions in Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo” (*City Press*, October 3 2004).

1.3 Media representations of Africa

There have been many studies that have analysed the representation of Africa in non-African media. There have however, been fewer studies looking at how Africans represent Africans in their own media. This kind of study is important because it will focus sharply on how Africans represent Africans to fellow Africans, as opposed to looking at how mainstream Western media represents Africa, important as the latter may be. The manner in which Africans discuss or represent Africans is as important as, if not more so, than looking at how Africa is represented across the world, especially given the aims of the African Renaissance. For this reason, it is crucial to critically analyse the ways in which the media represents Africa. African media, and Africans, may be reinforcing the very stereotypical representations of Africa and Africans they condemn in Western media.

1.4 Media in Africa

The colonial history of Africa has, and continues to exert immeasurable influence on the media in Africa today. The influence of Africa’s colonial past on its present cannot be overstated. The end of colonialism in Africa is an arguably recent occurrence, for some countries more than others.

From its inception, the press or media system in Africa, were intimately connected to politics on the continent because,

... Media content, unlike other commodities, is also a political product that attracts the attention and interest of political authority and, depending on the

nature of the content, the wrath of political power.

(M'Bayo, 2000: 27)

Many of the post-independence era leaders in Africa were connected to the press in some way or another. through ownership of media, as well as being editors and journalists.

At present, media in Africa are still undergoing many changes, from a state-owned and controlled media industry, to one that is becoming privately owned and commercially driven. In addition to a media system that has commercial imperatives, there are many private publications around the continent whose aim is to investigate social issues and to create a platform for public debate and discussion.

City Press' re-positioning can then be looked at from a political perspective because it calls for a change in how Africans perceive each other politically as well as culturally. This is reflected through *City Press'* advertising strategy in which billboards carry slogans such as “Liberating South Africa one Sunday at a Time” and “The revolution against ignorance has just begun”. This confirms and perpetuates the trend in which African media engages with political and cultural ideas in an attempt to bring about change or movement in the areas of culture and politics. Thus, the media in Africa play some part in highlighting issues of economic, infrastructural and other forms of development. It is also, what makes *City Press* such an interesting study.

1.5 Media and Identity

On the same front-page editorial marking the inception of *City Press* (3 October 2004) Tsedu claims that *City Press* is:

... A paper designed to appeal to the tastes of a discerning middle - to upper - income African reader who wants to know more about what is happening at home, on the continent and around the world. But our concern is unashamedly African. (*City Press*, October 3 2004).

The question of who is African, or what constitutes an African identity is complex and heavily contested. Since the question of 'Africanness' is difficult to answer, so is what is 'Distinctly African'. This entails answering questions of race, language, education, wealth (or lack thereof), as these values form part of identity creation and perpetuation. In effect, it is more accurate to state that there are various African *identities*, and not just a single African *identity*.

When looking at South Africa specifically, in order to examine the multiplicities of African identity, the question of who or what is African means considering which racial groups fall within and outside the label 'African'. At the continental level, the question of whether Arab countries within Africa are African or not is a source of heated debate. This means then, looking at race alone, there are multiple African identities, none more important or more relevant than another.

In a letter to the editor, a reader asks:

... who is an African? Do these billboards with pictures of the "darker-skinned" African achievers suggest that our other fellow Africans are not dark enough to be associated with a Distinctly African *City Press*? Perhaps *City Press* realised its readership is predominantly darker-skinned Africans, so they

had decided to feature personalities who hail from the same background as their readership. (*City Press*, February 20, 2005)

The new motto for *City Press* states that it is 'Distinctly African', and the meaning the paper has ascribed to this motto appears to refer to dark skinned Africans or black people. Yet in South Africa alone there are several racial groups that could argue that they are as African as any black African. Afrikaners for instance, could argue that because they no longer have strong ties with the Netherlands or any other European countries, they are African. Indian South Africans could also argue the same – that their ties to India are severed. However, each of these groups can claim an identity based on the occupation of a geographical space called Africa, as well as their ancestral homelands outside Africa. Coloureds in South Africa could argue that they are a product of miscegenation found nowhere else but in South Africa, and that there is no other home but Africa, and as such they are as African as any other African.

Tsedu, however, does not clarify who he considers African, and so the slogan is a highly ambiguous one. In fact, it could be said to be significant that he did not specify what 'African' means in terms of race. On the international scale, with so many Africans in the Diaspora, questions of African identity are equally important. When language, education and wealth are factored into the race 'issue' one can begin to appreciate the complexity of African identities.

The claim of being 'Distinctly African' raises questions about the 'Africaness' of middle to upper income Africans, when the majority of the people living on the continent do so below the poverty datum line. Following this line of thought, surely then, it is more 'African' to be poor than it is to be even moderately well off? Although poverty is not what defines African identity, it

is the reality of the majority of Africans. *City Press*'s focus on an audience that is well off enough to need a business section that focuses on investments and making money, and the statement that the paper is mainly targeted at the middle to upper income segment of the audience is tantamount to stating that this is the only desirable population group for the paper. However, because of the commercial nature of the newspaper business, this is also the demographic group that makes the most financial sense to target. There is then, a conflict between the realities of media as a business, and media as a means of reflecting the realities and concerns of the society in which media exists. The society in which the media exists may be mostly poor, but the poor do not pay the bills. In many ways, this means erasing part of society's reality and identity from the media product in order to satisfy business needs.

Tsedu then reassures readers that a commitment to middle and upper income concerns does not spell the neglect of our poorer relations of the continent. However, the focus on those better off economically raises questions about the ability of the paper to speak for poorer Africans. The danger of claiming to speak for the poor and voiceless is that instead of showing Africa as an economically, culturally and racially diverse continent, *City Press* may in fact do the opposite of what it claims to do, and reinforce stereotypes about Africa, just as Western news agencies do. This would happen because a distinctly middle class perspective informs the paper. A middle class perspective is not always sympathetic to, or cognisant of, the problems of those poorer than they are.

City Press appears to cover issues that are largely of concern to black Africans or seem to be framed from perspectives that could be perceived as black African. The paper appears to reflect this focus in a number of ways: the political pages focus on black politicians; the society pages focus on black socialites and social soirees and the lifestyle pages are more concerned with a

black African identity. The paper's columnists are for the most part black Africans, and seem to focus on issues of concern to black Africans. Even the sports pages focus more on sports that are enjoyed mostly by the Black segment of the audience. If *City Press* is a paper that seeks to include all Africans, should it not represent, at least in part, others who consider themselves African such as South African Afrikaners, white Africans, Coloured Africans, and Indian Africans, to name a few?

1.6 Editorial strategy and ownership

One possible explanation for the change of slogan or the re-branding of *City Press* could be market-related. This is especially important when one asks where this change of direction comes from. The *Sunday Times*, *City Press*' nearest competitor for readership, is a paper owned by Johnnic and attracts large audience numbers across the racial spectrum, including black South Africans. As of August 2007, *City Press* claimed that it had a circulation of around 1, 96 million with a readership of 2, 5 million, 97% of whom are black (www.citypress.co.za). The slogan for the *Sunday Times* is 'The People's Paper.' Interestingly, the *Sunday Times* re-branded and re-launched itself at the same time as *City Press*. By re-branding or re-positioning its editorial thrust, perhaps *City Press* was both charting a new and different editorial line as a newspaper in South Africa, as part of Africa, as well as distinguishing itself from the *Sunday Times* in order to gain have an edge over *The Sunday Times*.. By doing so, *City Press* would also, as Tsedu said, capture more black readers and compete for a black readership with the *Sunday Times*.

It is interesting to note that Media 24, an Afrikaner media company, owns *City Press*. This brings about questions of how 'African' a paper that is wholly owned by an Afrikaner company can be, especially when taking the country's history into account.

Although South Africa is thirteen years into democracy, South Africa's media industry history is important in understanding the media industry today. During the Apartheid era, newspapers and other media were organised along racial lines in addition to the language stratification that already existed (Switzer, 1979). The mainstream press at this time helped sustain the system of apartheid by either shutting out black newspapers as well as black journalists, or by closing off ownership of mainstream media in the country. In the current media market in South Africa, there are still echoes of this system, as the media industry is still very hard to break into. Today however, because of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) imperatives, more black people have shares in media companies. Much as that is the case, in Media 24, black people are employees, or they are audiences.

Media 24, Naspers' print division, owns thirteen newspapers. These include five dailies (*Beeld*, *Die Burger*, *Volksblad*, *Daily Sun* and *The Witness*) and eight weeklies (*Die Burger*, *Rapport*, *City Press*, *Naweek*, *Beeld*, *Sunday Sun*, *Kaapse Son*, *Soccer Laduma*, and *Volksblad*). In addition, Media 24 owns twenty-four magazines, which include titles such as *Drum*, *You*, *Fairlady*, *Sarie*, *SA Sports Illustrated*, *Men's Health*, which are some of the biggest titles in the South African magazine market.

Media 24 is a company that caters mostly for the English and Afrikaans market. It also has the largest market share of the black audience in South Africa. This is because of its ownership of most of the biggest newspaper and magazine titles for the black audience in South Africa. These include *City Press*, *Daily Sun*, *Soccer Laduma*, *Drum*, *True Love* and *Kick Off*. Thus, Media24 has a multi-lingual publishing strategy, publishing in English, Afrikaans, as well as African languages.

1.7 Research Questions

1. In what ways is *City Press*'s representation of Africa, Africans and African issues distinct from Western representations, or how does *City Press* make its representations of Africa and Africans specifically African?
2. Is *City Press* 'Distinctly African' in terms of content or representations of Africa or is *City Press* 'Distinctly African' in terms of its target audience?
3. Is *City Press*' claim to being 'Distinctly African' borne out in the way Africa/Africans are covered in news articles, and if so, how does *City Press* then represent Africans?

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework and Literature review

This study will use both a Cultural Studies and Critical Political Economy of the media as theoretical approaches to analysing representations of Africa, Africans and African issues. Representations in the media are a result of the political economy of the media or how media content is influenced by the complex interplay between the political and the economic, especially the political and economic factors which shape media production. This study will look at how representation works, as well as the way in which Africa and Africans are represented in the media by African media, specifically *City Press*.

A critical political economic framework will be used to analyse ownership, funding and financing, and organisational influences that affect *City Press*. In addition, the effect of audiences on content and their role in determining content will be explored. Critical political economy as a framework of analysing the media provides insight into the economic and political factors that influence the content of media as well as the ideological directions media choose to take. Newspapers are primarily businesses, but they also have to offer audiences content that relates to the latter's interests. Because of this need to offer audiences content they can relate to, it is vital to understand factors that can explain more than the economic and political factors. To achieve this aim, a Cultural Studies framework will be necessary.

Cultural Studies is useful in relating the power systems at work in creating a media product to the socio-economic factors that affect media production. The representation of groups of people in a society is intimately related to the power structures in society, both political and economic. Alone, neither an

entirely political economy framework nor a solely cultural studies analysis can unpack the mechanisms of representation in the media.

If this study were to use only a Cultural Studies framework which would explain how representations are formulated, perpetuated and maintained, it would not explain the strategic uses to which these representations further business, political and socio-cultural imperatives. Critical political economy of the media is concerned with the way in which the media influence and are influenced by power (McChesney 1998). Although critical political economy of the media can be used to analyse the media in any economic system, in this study the concern is more on the liberal, free enterprise system in which the media operate.

Golding and Murdock (2000) describe critical political economy of the media as being “holistic”, “historical”, and “concerned with the balance between capitalist enterprise and public intervention.” They further add that it looks further than the technical issues of efficiency and looks at the “moral questions of justice, equity and the public good” (2000: 72 - 73). Political economy of the media looks at the relationship between political, social, cultural and economic relationships and their effect on public forms of expression including the media (Golding & Murdock, 2000; McChesney 1998; Berger, 1998). McChesney (1998: 3) points out that while the analysis of the political economy of communication does not explain all the process that take place in media, political economy does provide a good explanation and context for questions about the media. The study of political economy is useful because “the system of production often determines what sort of artefacts will be produced, what structural limits there will be as to what can be said and shown and what sort of audience effects the text may generate” (Kellner, 1995b).

2.1 Media and the free market system

Critical political economy of the media is a historical framework of analysis because it investigates the way in which the media as a business has changed over long periods, from the growth of the media, to its present commercialised form, as well as the role of government throughout media's history (Golding and Murdock, 2000). This change means that:

Even though ... media present news as an objective and unbiased account of events in society, in reality news is a commodity, and like other commodities, is open to the impositions of commercial imperatives (Ebo, 1992: 16).

The business aspect of the media has led to significant trends in the last two to three decades. These trends include the merging of large media companies and the consolidation of media ownership. These trends have posed a challenge not only to the diversity of media, but also to the regulation and policy-making processes (Doyle, 2002).

Even in the free market system, media have a social responsibility towards the societies in which they exist. These responsibilities are part of what are referred to as institutional roles of the media. The institutional roles of the media could also be referred to as the public role of the media. Van Zoonen et al (1998) define 'public' as that which is accessible to all, regardless of where they are or who they are. These institutional or public roles include first, the dissemination of information. Second is the role of information analysis. The third role includes the maintenance and perpetuation of a forum for discussion and debate. The fourth role is that of the 'fourth estate' or watchdog role in the media where the actions of powerful institutions in society are analysed and

discussed; and lastly the role in which the media provide sources of entertainment (Curran, 2000, Westergaard, 1989, Golding and Murdock, 2000, Curran: 2000 Croteau and Hoynes, 2001 Siune, 1998, Fourie, 2001).

The institutional roles that the media play in society are intimately connected with the business imperatives of the media. Although these roles are 'altruistic' in nature, altruism does not yield profit, the media can re-strategise these roles to fit into a profitable business model. Media content, especially when concerned with the provision and dissemination of information looks to fulfil institutional obligations while making profit at the same time. This means that content has to reflect the concerns and image of a particular segment of the audience in a highly specific way in order to maximise profit from both audience and advertiser. As Shoemaker and Reese point out:

The more a media organisation promotes itself within a target audience, the more its content will reflect the interests of the audience (1996: 269).

Thus, media content represents the confluence between profit, responsibility to public needs, responsibilities to advertisers as well as to audiences themselves.

2.1.1 Media ownership

The ownership of media has an effect on all aspects of media production from content to distribution. Because of the far-reaching implications of media ownership, ownership is an integral part of the study of the political economy of media. Ramaphosa (1999), a media owner in South Africa writes,

It is an accepted fact around the world that a publication's ownership plays a central role in deciding the interests it serves and the perspectives it

presents. It may irk journalists and editors – it may be denied by owners- but media ownership is chief among those factors which influence media content.

The effect of ownership on a media product is therefore not incidental; rather, the effects of ownership are constant and have both a direct and indirect bearing on the content of the media product. For these reasons, a study that analyses a change of strategy in a media product would be incomplete without an analysis on how media ownership shapes the media product.

As is pointed out by McNair (1998), economic power leads to cultural power, and those who have economic power dictate the terms. The ownership of a media institution plays an important role in the production process of media content:

Proprietorial control of journalistic output is exercised, as in any other capitalistic organisation, through the appointment of like-minded personnel in key management positions who are delegated to carry out the boss's will (McNair, 1998: 107).

In addition, media owners and media company management have the power and ability to direct the editorial direction of the media product. Changing the editorial direction of a media product could simply be a matter of hiring editors who conform or firing those who do not.

Although economic viability is one of the primary concerns of any media company, other factors inform business strategy. For instance, the market has to have space for varying media products:

Within any free market economy, the level of resources available for the provision of media will be constrained principally by the size and wealth of that economy and the propensity of its inhabitants to consume media (Doyle, 2002: 15).

In other words, there has to be a viable audience for a media product to be viable in that market. Another factor of major importance for a media company is the availability and willingness of advertisers to support that media product. The willingness of advertisers to buy advertising space is directly linked to the existence of the appropriate audience for advertisers.

As is pointed out by Ebo (1992), the business imperatives of media production have a direct bearing on the content produced. This means that the media product has to be saleable, regardless of its socio-political or informational importance. If a media product has an audience that can no longer attract advertisers, it is no longer viable.

Westergaard (1989) discusses another facet of the business role of the media – the political implications of a business driven media. As Westergaard (1989) explains, throughout the western world, newspapers and journals, especially those that are commercial, are generally conservative in tone and lend their support to the bourgeoisie parties. As such, media controllers are most likely to support private enterprise values, and therefore the demands of the market. Even if someone with radical politics controlled a media publication, the fact is that they cannot escape the commercial nature of the media business (Westergaard, 1989).

Golding and Murdock (2000) also look at the way in which media as businesses commoditise cultural life. The commodification of cultural life has

moved from the direct consumption of media products through novels and films and newspapers, to the acquisition of products (televisions, computers, etc) in order to consume media products.

Commodification goes even further. Not only is the media product a commodity, but so too is the audience that consumes the media product. Audiences are the commodity that is sold to advertisers. Advertising is the single most important factor in the viability of a media business. Thus, the more of a particular type of consumer that a media product and business attract, the more money advertisers are willing to pay for that consumer. The commodification of the consumer “serves to reduce the overall diversity of programming and ensure that it confirms established mores and assumptions far more often than it challenges them” (Golding and Murdock, 2000: 75).

Newspapers must sell to readers, who are in turn supplied to advertisers, who in turn supply the revenue for the media business. The wealthier the audience, the more money the advertisers will pay for that audience. It is this business imperative that Westergaard (1989) asserts, disqualifies the media as a ‘fourth estate’, that is, a watchdog for society. As Westergaard (1989) sees it, this is proved by the fact that the lower down the money chain one goes, the fewer publications are available for consumption. There is more media on offer for the wealthy than there is for the poor. The media is further disqualified as a fourth estate according to Westergaard by the fact that even when media controllers are politically radical, they are still subject to market imperatives (Westergaard, 1989).

2.1.3 The role of advertising

Advertising is the life-blood through which media businesses survive. Croteau and Hoynes describe the system in which the media operate in relation to advertising in this way,

Media businesses ... operate in what is called a “dual product” market. They simultaneously sell two completely different “products” to two completely different sets of buyers (2001: 26).

Thus we can begin to understand that media is beholden both to its audience as well as those who provide media with funding – advertisers. This in turn means that audiences are not only an objective for media; audiences are also the commodity that is sold by the media to advertisers

Most audiences realise that advertisements sell a product to them. However, the relationship between the media, the audience, and the advertisers is one that is not quite as obvious. Media need audiences, but not exclusively for the money that they receive from the audience. Rather, media need audiences mainly because those audiences can be sold to advertisers. This situation may leave advertisers in a far stronger position than audiences. The imbalance in the revenue received from audiences and advertisers leaves advertisers with an upper hand when it comes to content negotiation compared to audiences. In this way, media respond more to the needs of the advertiser than those of the audience.

2.2 Factors influencing the creation of content

News as we see it everyday does not simply arrive in the newspaper or onto our television screens. Many factors affect the selection and production of

news, and though the reader may not be aware, these effects show up in the news products on a daily basis. Professional aspirations and organisational factors, economic factors, issues of technology and sources also greatly influence the final media product.

The factors that influence the production of media cannot be overlooked. The reason is that not only are there broad economic factors that influence media production but organisational factors have a heavy influence on the outcome of the media product as well. Organisational factors can change the way that the media worker understands the nature of their job, as well as how they understand others in order to fit into the media world. Once we understand how the organisation affects the media worker, we can then begin to understand how the representations of groups in society work.

2.2.1 Sourcing the news

One of the significant functions of the media is to provide its audience with information that they can use. As much as it is the role of the media to disseminate information, they also have to gather information to themselves in order to disseminate that information to audiences.

Gathering information locally, in the town, city, province, or state is easier than collecting news in the broader, national, regional or international arena. When gathering information from places far from an organisation's base, news organisations rely on news agencies as a source of extra local news.

In the international system, news about other countries is "organized and rationalized on behalf of media and non-media clients by a small group of powerful agencies, acting globally and as a cartel" (Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen, 1998: 2). News agencies play a very important role in newsgathering and dissemination in the international system. The cost of

collecting news as an individual company is too high, and so receiving news from agencies is more economical. Using news agencies for information gathering can be problematic. Individual publications select news from a preselected inventory, they do not have individual agency when defining what constitutes news.

The way that international news agencies choose what to cover and the manner in which to cover it, is based on the ideal of objectivity. With this idea in mind, news agencies “focus their news reports on those aspects of perceived reality that all relevant audiences would be able to agree upon, and set aside those aspects that relevant audiences might differ about” (van Ginneken, 1998:43).

When looking at how the media represents people, ideas, places, issues and so on, it is important to consider where the information comes from. If international news agencies include and exclude news based on a perceived consensus and reality and disregard all conflicting information, this will lead to incorrect or uninformed news that is not put into context, and is therefore damaging. A local reliance on international news agencies means that local news institutions could disseminate problematic information:

Given the global scope of media today, we must ask about the impact of powerful, wealthy nations and their media systems (the USA for example) on the audiences of less powerful nations, the poor and disenfranchised. This leads us to the heart of questions about the role of media in producing inequalities on an international scale, but also about whether the media are a force for democratisation (Gillespie, 2005: 3)

However, local institutions often do not have the resources to source information for themselves, perpetuating a problematic cycle.

This cycle is especially problematic when looking at issues of representation. International news is based on a perceived consensus of those who create the news, and those who are represented in the news are rarely asked how they should be represented. This means that those outside the consensus-forming groups are subject to misrepresentation or to representation as ‘other’.

2.3 Audiences

Media content is a commodity that is best traded in the free market when there are specific consumers for that commodity. The clients of the media industry are not just the audiences who consume media products, but also the advertisers whose preferred product is the audience that consumes media. Different segments of media audiences use and consume media in different ways, and as such, different things in the media attract these audiences. As audiences are to be sold to advertisers, it is important for the right content to reach the right audiences in order to maximise profit. The process of tailoring content to suit specific audiences is called audience segmentation (Gandy, 2000).

2.3.1 The social construction of audiences

To different participants in the media system, the purpose of audiences can mean one thing, and to others something else completely. Grossberg et al (2006) describe the audience, or the concept of the audience as a social construction. Although there are real people reading books, and newspapers and watching television programs, to say that there is an audience is to ignore the fact that the audience is defined by different groups for different purposes. In addition, Grossberg et al (2006) add that the way in which the audience is

constructed “determines how it can function and how the relationship between the media and their audiences can be described, measured and evaluated” (2006: 223).

In a media market that exists within a free market system, there is a reliance on advertising in order to make a profit. The best way to attract advertisers is by supplying them with the right audiences. Segmentation of audiences is economically driven and therefore limits media diversity. Segmenting audiences is one way for media businesses to maximise profit. Advertisers are always looking for the ‘right kind’ of audiences. Segmenting the audience into niche markets makes it easier for media producers to focus on the right kind of audience for advertisers. Niche marketing may seem contrary to the idea of selling as many media products to as many people as possible, however, “advertisers are interested in reaching...those with sufficient income in the demographic group most likely to purchase the advertisers’ products” (Croteau and Hoynes, 2001:123).

Audience segmentation or niche marketing is prevalent in all forms of media from television, radio and magazines. Newspapers are not immune to this either. Newspapers attract specific types of readers by including sections that will appeal to different members of the audience. Gandy (2000) describes the segmentation of audiences according to race. Using race as a method of segmentation is influenced by economic and political factors, and thus cannot be looked at outside the market and political structures that determine the production of media. However, race is not the only way in which the audience is segmented. Audiences are segmented by gender, age, income, interest and preferences, politics and so on. Thus, segmentation is an attempt to lure specific kinds of audiences, which are more easily saleable to advertising executives.

Segmenting audiences according to race or gender or age can be problematic in many ways because many presuppositions and prejudices come into play. For instance, in South Africa, although black people comprise the majority of the country's overall population, advertisers are more likely to focus on the white audience as the demographic group with more buying power. This is because the white South African middle class is longer established than the black middle class is. However, as the Black middle class grows, this group is becoming important economically, which means the media market will have to expand to include the black middle class as an audience and consumer base.

Using gender as a way of finding a niche market, in conjunction with race and age, is equally problematic when segmenting audiences. This is because, as Gandy mentions, "minority audiences remain invisible or poorly described because of the way they have been surveyed by the agencies responsible for estimating circulation and exposure to commercial messages" (Gandy 2000: 54). Although Gandy was writing specifically about racial minorities, the same could be said of any minority (or cultural minority) groups in society. Women and children are still presumed a minority in terms of economic power. This presupposes that they have no influence on those who are assumed to wield economic power.

By breaking down audiences into specific groups of people, it becomes simpler to analyse the impact of the media text. In addition to segmenting audiences by age or gender or race, audiences are also measured by numbers, in order to understand how audiences use the media. As Ross and Nightingale (2003) point out, finding out the numbers of the audiences, or audience ratings, is not solely for altruistic purposes such as social science research. Rather, it is a strategy based on a commercial need to have information for which broadcasters and advertisers are willing to pay.

The segmentation of audiences means that media institutions try to look for appropriate media texts in order to attract distinctly specified audiences:

This means that the advertiser is looking for particular types of audience vehicles for advert placement, but also that the audience is continuously segmented and differentiated in a search for the qualities sought by particular marketers (Ross and Nightingale, 2003: 65).

In other words, media institutions help to create a particular media audience so that they can attract advertisers who are looking for that particular kind of audience. Segmenting audiences is then a way of creating an audience identity because to do so means that that particular audience can be targeted continuously. Segmenting audiences can also keep certain audiences out of a particular kind of content:

Increasingly, programmers seeking niche audiences (because advertisers want to focus their messages where they think they'll be maximally effective) will look for content they believe will keep potential viewers out of the audience (Grossberg et al, 2006: 223).

An example of this could be the way Music Television (MTV) specifically targets its music at younger people so that adults will not be tempted to watch because advertisers want younger viewers.

The social construction of audiences means then that audiences are not necessarily a natural phenomenon. A public that can be identified easily can be concentrated on, and exclusively marketed to. In addition, an easily

identifiable public can be easily sold to advertisers. Once this public is identified, it is important to maintain and ensure the continued existence of that public, that audience. It is with this imperative in mind that media identities are created and maintained.

2.4 Cultural Studies

Political economy of the media is useful in understanding the structural socio-economic factors that affect the production of media content. Cultural studies is then useful in relating the 'business end' of the media – political economy - to the power and cultural systems at work in creating a media product. It is important to use both a political economy framework as well as a cultural studies framework, so that where one does not provide an analysis that answers some questions, the other framework will. Moreover, cultural studies looks closely at the structural factors that have enormous effect on the media (McChesney, 1998: 4). Cultural studies also aids in looking at the relationship between culture and identity:

Cultural studies insists that culture must be studied within the social relations and system through which culture is produced and consumed and that the study of culture is therefore intimately bound up with the study of society, politics and economics. Cultural studies shows how media culture articulates the dominant values, political ideologies and social developments and novelties of the day (Kellner, 1995b:7).

Cultural Studies, then, is helpful in analysing media content as socially constructed texts. These texts represent phenomena in particular ways that

have implications for how we understand our society. Texts also position and construct audiences, thus allowing a critical analysis of culture.

Media is a cultural industry in that media internalises, reforms, re-presents and ‘sells back’ culture. Kellner (1995a:16) describes the media thus:

Media culture in the United States and most capitalist countries is a largely commercial form of culture, produced for profit, and disseminated in the form of commodities. The commercialisation and commodification of culture has many important consequences.

The first of these consequences, according to Kellner (1995a) is that when culture is produced for profit, ‘artefacts’ are produced to sell to as large a number of people as possible. This means “production of lowest common denominator artefacts that will not offend mass audiences and that will attract a maximum of customers”. Thus, Kellner (1995a) adds, the media advances the interests of those who own media, and the products of such a system cause conflicts between groups by advancing the cause of some at the expense of others. Kellner (1995b) also sees British cultural studies as having situated culture in a position where cultural production can be seen as a form of resistance by subordinate classes against struggle and domination. Thus, media can be seen as a site for ideological and hegemonic struggle.

For Kellner, the culture that media produces has superseded other forms of high culture as the centre of culture and therefore impacts on large numbers of people:

Media culture has become a dominant force of socialisation, with media images replacing families,

schools, and churches as arbiters of taste, value, and thought, producing new models of identification and resonant images of style, fashion and behaviour (Kellner, 1995a: 17).

Media, as part of their role in society, are a place where identities are formed, perpetuated, negotiated and maintained. However, the media, as arbiters of identity often have motives that are shaped by the business imperatives that guide them. Thus, media audiences are identifiable as both citizens of the society that they are a part of, and they are also identifiable as consumers. Audiences are consumers of media content as well as political ideology.

Dahlgren (1997) explains that in the Cultural Studies framework, people and social institutions produce culture, which in turn produces society. Cultural Studies take the view that culture is the platform through which values and meaning are circulated. Dahlgren (1997) also describes culture as a bearer of social power in Cultural Studies. Cultural Studies opens up discussions of culture as a form of power, in that culture shapes relationships and ideas in society, and as such wields power.

In Cultural Studies, representation is understood to be a process that connects meaning and language to culture. It is necessary to understand first what is meant by the concepts of representation and framing (Hall, 1997). It follows that a discussion of representation includes a discussion about language and the use of language by the media to represent a system of meaning.

The representation of groups of people in a society is intimately related to the power structures in society, both political and economic:

... representation is acknowledged to be power.
Critical scholars have become acutely conscious of

the implications of who is controlling representation, and for what purposes (Hall, 1997: 75).

These relationships are reflected by the media in the way that media function as businesses and in the content of media products.

2.4.1 Representation

Gripsund (2002) provides a useful definition of representation, which suggests that representation is a construction of what is represented, but is not a reflection of the real thing. She also goes on to say:

It is worth noting here the interesting double meaning of the concept of representation. The word originally meant 'present again' but, in late Latin, acquired the meaning 'stand for', as a picture of a person 'stands for' the pictured person (Gripsund, 2002: 11).

Representations can then be said to be reflections of a part of a whole. As such, representations are highly contested and challenged. First, it is important to understand the mechanics, so to speak, of representation.

Hall (1997) describes two systems of representation: mental representation, and language. Mental representations help us interpret the world in a meaningful way. Mental representation gives us an idea that stands for something in a tangible and intangible way. The creation of a mental representation is a process that helps to organize concepts in a way that they may be more accessible.

Hall (1997) describes representation as made up of two different systems. The first system is that of mental representations, that is, ideas that we carry in our heads about particular concepts. Without these mental representations, we

would not be able to interpret information to make it understandable. Thus, when we say ‘I see what you mean’ we mean that we ‘see’ in our mind’s eye an idea of what is meant. However, we can also ‘see’ abstract concepts, or organise concepts – ‘mind map’ – in our minds so that we may understand them.

Hall’s second system of representation is language. Language, in this context, is meant loosely. Any system of signs that are intended to convey meaning are a language system. Thus language, in the context of systems of representation, can be spoken, visual, written, mechanical, electronic, body language, and clothing. All these things carry or convey meaning, for instance a smile could mean happiness or satisfaction. All-black clothing with black make-up could mean ‘gothic’ style. Meanings are usually agreed upon, so that the opportunity for confusion is minimized. Thus, we can have shared ‘mind maps’ or concepts of understanding:

Just as people who belong to the same culture must share a broadly similar conceptual map, so they must also share the same way of interpreting the signs of a language, for only in this way can meanings be effectively exchanged between people (Hall, 1997: 19).

With written language, or in fact any language system, meaning is ‘constructed by the system of representation’ through the construction and fixing of a code (Hall, 1997). Codes, as Hall (1997) explains, are the middle point between concepts and signs. Thus, codes tell us which language to use to convey ideas and conversely, codes tell us which concepts are being referred to when we hear or read signs.

Bourdieu (1999) understands language not only as a system that carries meaning, but also as a system that holds symbolic power. This symbolic power comes from the idea that language can be, and often is, a signifier of social relationships and social power, economic status and power, and political status and power. Thus language, and the use of language, reflects power dynamics.

Language is then an integral part of conveying meaning because it is through language that we gain an understanding of what concepts and ideas to attach to particular codes and systems. It is through the social construction of language and meanings that we can understand 'black' as a colour, a 'race' of people', as 'evil', or as the absence of light. Or 'African' as meaning the African continent – poor, underdeveloped, a 'country', and so on. Language and representation then go hand in hand, and the representation of issues and groups is done through the means of language.

Language helps us use our mental representations so that we can construct meaning out of them. The word language encompasses any system that produces meaning. This can include music, colour, and clothing. Thus, representations are polysemic and dependent on language systems in order to produce meaning. This is an important concept to understand because:

... The literature in media and cultural studies reminds us that representations are not reality, even if the media readers or audiences may sometimes be tempted to judge them as such. Representations ... are the result of processes of selection that invariably mean that certain aspects of reality are highlighted and others neglected. (Hoynes and Croteau, 1997: 134)

The issue of representation in the media is vital because of the cultural power that the media possesses. Although media does not necessarily create culture, media absorbs and reproduces images of society, thus maintaining, perpetuating and sometimes changing our ideas about ourselves. The media and the creators of media,

... have often reproduced the race, class and gender inequalities that exist in society. This is not to say that the media have acted as a mirror, passively reflecting the inequalities of society. Rather, white, middle and upper-class men have historically controlled the media industry, and media content has largely reflected their perspectives of the world (Croteau and Hoynes, 1997:133).

As Dimpleby and Burton (2001) point out, the media are neither a window to the world nor a mirror of reality. According to them, the media (as well as the news) reconstruct our ideas of the world and its ideas about it. If we take this understanding of the media, then we understand that the media has agency in the way they use and perpetuate stereotypes.

2.4.3 Stereotype

Representation and stereotyping lend meaning to each other. This is because in order to represent groups in the media, a measure of stereotyping will be used. Stereotyping is used to identify that which is not 'like us' – the other.

To understand why difference matters, we must first understand what stereotyping is. Stereotyping is an important component to creating the 'other'. When we understand how stereotyping works, we can then understand why

difference matters. In addition, we can understand how the concept of the 'other' ties in with race and gender.

Lacey asserts that stereotypes are "an invaluable aid to understanding the world, and all stereotypes must have 'a kernel of truth'; or they would not have such an influence on our lives" (1998: 135). The stereotypes that are represented in the media are stereotypes that exist in society. The media however, can be said to naturalise some stereotypes without questioning their value. This can be done with gender as well as race and class, age, and other systems of social categorisation. First, however, what stereotyping does must be understood.

According to Hall (1997), stereotyping is a way of identifying difference. All stereotypes, whether they are positive or negative, serve the purpose of helping people define people or concepts in relation to themselves so that they may be understood. This places people or concepts in a context in which they may be comprehended, and possibly acted upon.

Hall (1997) sees stereotypes as performing three main functions. The first is that stereotyping "reduces, essentializes, naturalizes and fixes difference". Thus, stereotypes reduce an idea into its simplest form. These ideas tend not to change, and so they are fixed, and become naturalized. Second, stereotyping "... deploys a strategy of 'splitting' in which there is a split between what is normal and acceptable and what is aberrant and unacceptable. All that falls under the category of unacceptable is rejected and excluded" And last, stereotypes "tend to occur where there are gross inequalities of power" (Hall, 1997: 258). Because inequalities exist, stereotyping tends to assume that one thing is superior to another, for instance, black is superior to white, male superior to female.

Hall (1997: 245) describes naturalisation as a way in which ideas become fixed. He describes the difference between cultural ideas of difference, and natural ideas of difference.

In perpetuating or disassembling stereotypes, the media is not without a vested interest and neither are they always unaware that they may be perpetuating stereotypes. “The media disassemble the extent to which they are aligned with the interests of powerful groups in society” (Carter and Steiner. 2004:2). Gaining the public’s consent by appearing to reflect society’s reality helps this alignment. However, the media can never be said to truly reflect society in the media content because to some extent, they use hegemonic constructions of reality. Hegemony can be described as the struggle to win the consent of other groups for ideological power. This ideological power then creates dominance in processes of thought as well as practice (Hall: 1997: 48).

Hegemony is intimately linked to the concept of ideology. Ideology is

“... a relationship of power and subordination/subjugation which is socially and historically situated and which is, within identifiable parameters, changeable” (Ferguson, 1998: 44 – 45).

The notions of race and ‘correct’ racial practices and norms are heavily influenced by hegemonic ideas of social norms and acceptable behaviours. These ideas are not permanent, but because they are embedded in the social consciousness in such a way that they are ‘common’ ideas, they are resistant to change.

2.4.4 The Nature of Difference

Difference, similar to representation, is a social construct. To understand the nature of difference, we could use race as an example. The differences between an English person and an American, or even a Russian are considered cultural. Cultural changes are open to change. Ideas of culture are not fixed, and these ideas can be changed according to the context. However, the difference between a European and an African is considered a racial difference, a 'natural' difference. This difference is not so open to change, and because of this, these differences become fixed and cannot be modified. They become naturalized. 'Naturalization' is therefore a strategy designed to fix 'difference', and thus secure it forever (Hall, 1997: 245).

Racial stereotypes also follow this idea. The difference between black people and white people is not considered a product of social determination, which in many ways it is, compared to the biological (Hall, 1997, Barker, 1999). The ideas assigned to black people and white people are ideas that have been determined by society for various reasons and not naturally determined.. We know this because the tensions between race relations are in a state of constant renegotiation, just as ideas about gender or sexuality are also continually renegotiated. The roles that society imposes on itself tend to, after extended periods of repetition and acceptance, become naturalized.

The differences between Black and White or Asian or Hispanic are seen as biological and therefore 'natural'. Because these differences are perceived as natural, they are not subject to change, and thus, they become fixed. The way that media reproduce stereotypes then has a definite impact on society. Media can be seen as a mirror which reflects, albeit selectively, the realities of society.

In his book, *Representing Race*, Ferguson (1998) discusses how naturalization may change over time. "... Newspapers can and often do change the modality of their judgments over time. In other words, the crassness of some racist reportage is superseded by a more measured reportage of 'race'" (1998: 154). As Ferguson points out, the difference in the mode of addressing the issue does not necessarily change, but is simply couched in more acceptable terms for the time in which the judgment is made. This change in manner of address simply allows the process of naturalizing or normalizing negative representations to continue in a more 'palatable' way.

That which is 'natural' in the media is natural to a particular segment of the population – those that hold the power to define 'normality'. This segment exerts the most control in terms of economics and therefore many major decisions – that of the white male.

This is why representation as a topic generates intense debate and discussion. Race, gender and sexuality are biological truths, and not subject to changes without extremely high personal and possibly health costs. As such, under-, or misrepresentations based on racial and gender differences which are more likely to be "naturalised" instead of "culturalised", are always issues of great import.

This is important in understanding how Africa has been represented in media outside the continent, out of the control of those who are represented negatively. The manner in which Africa has been and is still represented in media outside the continent is very relevant to the way in which Africans formulate an African identity or identities.

2.4.5 Reversing representations and stereotypes

Changing representations and stereotypes is not an easy process. Naturalized notions of how to perceive people who are different from one's self have been entrenched over very long periods of time. False or misrepresentations of groups of people also affect how that group sees itself, and part of that group's self-identity is shaped by how they are seen by others (Hall, 1997). This is why the ideas of representation and stereotypes are so important in understanding media as texts that convey meaning.

The African Renaissance is one of the ways in which Africa could start a re-representation of itself. This would mean examining Africa, Africans, and African issues differently by promoting an 'African' image/identity more in line with how Africans see themselves. However, this image, this "new" way of thinking about Africa is still in its early stages, and is challenged by entrenched ideas about the different identities that exist in African society as well as the socio-economic context in which discussions about gender, class and sexual orientation and race exist.

Hall (1997) stresses that it is possible to reverse stereotypical representations because meaning can never be permanently fixed. Stereotypes can have a temporary permanence.. The biological fact of difference cannot be changed, but the social construction of the concept of that difference can be changed. This is because meanings change over time, words which meant one thing at one time mean something else in another – the word 'gay' being an example. 'Gay' used to mean 'happy', today it usually means 'homosexual'. No one has complete control over a system of meaning, which allows for reversal of meaning

The reversal of meaning can be done in several ways (Hall, 1997): by reversing the stereotype, by using positive and negative images, or by contesting representation from within. By reworking negative representations in these ways, the negative meaning of representations or stereotypes can be undermined. By claiming to be 'Distinctly African', it can be said that *City Press* is attempting to reclaim the meaning of 'African' and making the meaning positive. *City Press* is attempting, in effect, to shift ideological beliefs about Africa, Africans and African issues.

2.4.1 Media and Identity

Cultural studies provides us with a bridge between an institutional understanding of media and the role of the media as a cultural mediator. The study of culture is concerned with the politics of identity, and thus incorporates discussions on collective identities, whether they are class, gender, sexuality, or nationhood (Mosco, 1996). The media is a place where conceptions of identity are represented back to the public that consumes media.

It is useful then, to understand how the free market system has a destabilizing effect on identities (in Mosco, 1996) and that destabilizing effect can be understood in the way cultures are represented in the media. This destabilising effect stems from the fact that communication does not exist in a vacuum, it exists within society and is therefore influenced by multiple societal factors. Duncan explains the social implications of media in this way:

If communication was social, and the social was communicative, something must be said about how communication determined social relationships, and, at the same time something pertinent must be said

about how social relationships affected communication. (Duncan in Hardt, 1996:125).

Media, as a communicative tool that communicates social relationships has to be understood as a social agent with ideological power and social power (Dahlgren, 1997). Media content is text that produces as well as interprets meaning – social and political meaning – and as such, media texts help shape and inform societal norms and practices. For these reasons, it is important to understand how representation and stereotyping help produce meaning in media texts.

2.4.1.1 Identity Formation

Before a discussion on the media's effect on identity, it is important to understand what identity is, and what it means. Media, along with parents, families, schools, churches and other social institutions help us understand who we are in relation to others around us, and media form part of the socialisation structures in our societies today. In fact, it could be said that the media today has more of an influence on identity formation than the traditional sources of this process. Media influences the way people dress, how they spend their free time, where they socialize with others, what they buy and when they buy it (Grossberg et al, 2006).

Gripsund (2002) identifies two main types of identity: social or collective identity and personal identity, both of which are related to each other, yet are not the same. Gripsund (2002) defines social identity as the identity we get through others' perceptions and our collective contexts. Others' perceptions and our collective contexts then form part of our self-perception and self-image, thus becoming part of our self-identity. Personal identity on the other hand, is that which is unique to the individual.

Grossberg (1996), on the other hand, identifies two models of identity. The first model

... assumes that there is some intrinsic and essential content to any identity which is defined by either a common origin or a common structure of experience or both (Grossberg et al, 1996: 3)

In this model, the representations of identity are distinct and separate. In the second model of identity, there is an emphasis on the idea that identity can never be separate and distinct. In this model the “existence of authentic and originary identities based in a universally shared origin or experience” (Grossberg, 1996: 2), is denied.

Identity can be linked to representation in the media because it is through seeing reflections of ourselves in the media that we can interpret and incorporate both a collective and personal identity. Segmenting audiences according to biological or even abstract distinctions can be useful in that one gets to see a reflection of a part of themselves and their chosen identity. However, in the same way that segmentation can help reflect identities, it can also restrict identities by showing only very particular parts of particular identities. An example of these restricted identities can be found on the South African television show *Generations*. This television show focuses on the black elite in South Africa while glossing over, until recently, issues of poverty and HIV/AIDS, issues that remain very relevant for black South Africans. In this way, media construct and reinforce identities in highly particular ways.

The construction of the “African identity”, in itself a problematic term, has been an ongoing process, developed over centuries. Mengara (2001) posits that as a product of the machinations of colonialism,

“Africa’s *identities* [sic] as plurally defined by indigenous Africans themselves were progressively replaced with a single monolithic *African identity* [sic] as specifically reformulated by the European empires (2001: 3).

Thus, the idea of an African identity is problematic not only because it assumes homogeneity in African identities, but also because it is not an identity initiated by those to whom it refers. Moreover, as Mengara (2001) posits, the expropriation of African identities had to be suppressed in order to accommodate the imposition of Western models of civilization.

It is through the use of media that definitions of African identities can be explored, as media is a forum for the negotiation of social, cultural and personal, and citizenship identities. This is the media in its institutional or public role.

2.4.1.2 Identity and profit

Media content produces and interprets meaning and helps orient audiences by shaping and influencing identities. These identities are then used to reflect back to the audience what it is they see of themselves in the media. In other words, different media and media genres cater to different segments of the audience. In addressing different audiences in different ways, it is possible to create or perpetuate certain ideas that appeal to that audience.

The identity formation aspect of the media is not wholly cultural or oriented specifically to an individual but is also geared to creating profit from those who fit into a particular identity profile. News producing media are faced with the balancing act of catering to the cultural needs of the collective (which would be its general audience) while also recognising the consumer identity of their audiences. In this way, even the concept of an audience depends on what a media producer has in mind for that audience. However,

The most common conception of the audience within the media industries is as a conglomeration of potential and potentially overlapping markets (Grossberg, 2006: 223).

When the media is exercising its public or institutional roles, they address individuals as citizens. Outside the media's public or institutional role, audiences are addressed as consumers. In either mode of address, there is a particular understanding of the audience that informs the way in which media address audiences. In addressing audiences at the 'audience as citizens' level, the media's public role comes into play. However, outside of addressing audiences as citizens, the media's public role comes into conflict with the economic factors that influence media production.

In this conflict between media's public and commercial role, the commercial role is so powerful that even when the media addresses the audience as citizens, the audiences are still subject to commercial strategies such as niche marketing and segmentation. Thus, media creates and maintains identities that are heavily influenced by matters of commerce. This means that media representations of society are problematic because in the business of media, profit overrides other considerations.

2.5 Africa in the Western Media

It is important to first understand how representations and stereotypes work in order to understand how these processes apply to “Western” or Eurocentric representations of Africa, and indeed, African representations of Africa. Western representations of Africa, Africans and African issues have always been problematic (Hawk, 1992). The reasons for this problematic coverage range from a lack of understanding of the continent and its issues, to ideological and political positions that affect the way in which the continent is covered. Coverage of Africa in the Western media is informed by Western ideas of Africa that are at times outdated. These include ideas of Africa as ‘the Dark Continent’ as Hawk (1992) explains:

Africa is special because there is little common understanding between Africans and Americans to provide context for interpretation. Further, unusual historical relations have shaped knowledge regarding Africa. These repertoires of knowledge, symbols, and prior structuring of Africa are a Western creation. Where African news is concerned, then, American readers are in special need of contextual information with which to interpret the meaning of reported events (Hawk, 1992: 4).

‘Old’ ways of understanding Africa are continuously recycled when reporting Africa and African events. What is even more disheartening is that we see little change in the way the Western press has been covering Africa and Africans in the last half century, the post-independence period for most African countries. Sometimes one even finds eerie similarities between today’s Western press attitude toward the continent and at the turn of the last

millennium, except that the expression of that attitude one hundred years later is a little more subtle (Hagos, 2000: 2).

The representations of Africa and its people in Western media is not a construction produced by Africans themselves. Rather, the images and ideas of Africa are founded on a perception of Africa that is coloured by centuries-old ideas of Africa that had been created in the colonial period (Mengara, 2001):

Clearly, the Africa we know or hear about today is, essentially, a European-made Africa. It is a world almost totally manufactured in image, molded [sic] in postcolonial chaos and dependence, and conditioned to be permanently perceived as a continent where nothing works because of the inherently chaotic, despotic and uncivilised nature of its peoples (Mengara, 2001: 8).

Mengara (2001) finds that colonial views of Africa were predicated on the European colonialists' need to justify the colonisation of Africa. The process of justifying the colonisation of Africa meant that Africa and its people had to be de-humanised or at the very least, sub-humanised in order for the colonisation to take place. Mengara (2001: 6) names six ideas that formulate a racist view of Africa:

1. That Africans had no history and therefore could not know themselves;
2. That Africans were culturally shaped by lust, immorality and degeneration;
3. That Africans could not rule themselves because they are primitive;

4. Africans could not claim ownership of Africa because they could not cultivate and manage the land;
5. That Africans had no right to human justice, as they were subhuman and
6. That Africans had no religion and needed Christianity to be freed from their state of ignorance.

This conception of Africa and Africans thus allowed and justified the occupation of Africa and the enslavement of Africans. This conception of Africa also allowed the use of images of Africa in international media that could perpetuate the occupation and ill-treatment of Africans. The colonial view of Africa is one that still remains strong and still informs the way in which Africa is conceived and constructed in the media. Africa's negative image can be damaging not only to how the rest of the world, but also how Africans see Africans:

Negative images of Africa undermine black people's self esteem in the diaspora and may inevitably contribute to racist stereotyping (Munslow, 1999: viii).

Indeed, Africa and its inhabitants are not even represented in international media as having agency on their own continent. As far as the way in which Africa is represented in the Western media, Hawk (1992) describes Africa as represented as if the continent did not exist before the first Europeans landed on the continent. From the way Africa is represented in the news, one could be led to think that African history only began with the colonisation of Africa, and that Africa's history was motivated by Western influence (Hawk, 1992). When the extent of under-contextualised reportage of Africa is looked at in

conjunction with the fact that Africa only appears in the Western media sporadically, one begins to recognise just how problematic ‘the African issue’ is.

Representing Africa as primitive, as Hawk (1992) asserts Africa is, includes an emphasis on poverty, famine and disease. These images and representations reinforce the idea of Africa as a dependent continent that is in constant need from its Western counterparts. The dominant paradigms have shifted from Africa being culturally under-developed to being economically under-developed. The re-representation of Africa as economically dependent have had a detrimental effect on the economic growth of the continent. Foreign investors as well as Africans themselves are discouraged by such coverage of the continent (Hunter-Gault, 2006).

Hawk (1992) sees the representation of Africa as being a variation on a particular theme: that of “Africa as the repository of our greatest fears”, as primitive and backward. This view of Africa means that the continent is covered from a very particular perspective. This viewpoint means that issues of nationalism get reduced to issues of tribalism; Africans get lumped together as though there are no separate African nations or ethnicities in the cultural sense of the word and Africa is shown as developmentally stagnant, if not actually moving backwards.

When discussing African nations in a cultural sense, it is meant that the Zulu, for instance, are a ‘nation’ – they have a royal family, most Zulus live in a geographically identifiable area, there is a common language and there are cultural icons. The term ‘Zulu’ can also be used to describe that culture. This can also be true for Scots, for example. The Scots, although part of the United Kingdom identify themselves as Scots, they have a history, traditions, and icons peculiar to them, and thus they are a ‘nation’. However, Africans are

hardly ever represented as being cultural nations living in a specific political and geographic state, and co-existing with other cultural 'nations' in the same state. They are more likely to be represented as 'tribes'. At issue here is the fact that Africans, and indeed other 'non-white' cultures, are viewed as having 'tribes' and ethnicities whereas white cultures are seen as having none (Barker, 1999). This then continues and entrenches the idea of Africans as 'others'. In 'othering' Africa and Africans, ideas of power come into play, and these are seen in the way Africa is represented in international news.

The existence of this view of primitive Africa is not new, nor is it limited to the press. In colonial times, this view of Africa justified intervention and cultural surgery. In those earlier times, it was a moral judgement and the antidote was religious intervention. Today's story is more likely to be couched in terms of economic degradation, and the envisioned cure is described as economic intervention. Like anthropologists and explorers of the colonial era, journalists are empowered to paint an image of Africa by listing its deficiencies with respect to Western norms (Hawk, 1992: 9).

Hunter-Gault (2006) points out that although there are many problems in Africa, there is "new news" about Africa. In other words, there can be and there is more to say about Africa other than disease, disaster, death, despair and corruption. Hunter-Gault (2006) adds that it is these "four Ds plus one C" as well as natural disasters which have been the basis of Western coverage of Africa. This 'new news' include the formation of the African Union, and of the African Union, the African Peer Review Mechanism where African countries allow a review of their political governance. Hunter-Gault (2006) also cites the end of war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the creation of a democratic state in Burundi, mediation of the Ivory Coast conflict, the successful but troubled Nigerian election and the end of the conflict in Liberia as examples of positive news

2.6 Africa Reporting and Representing Africa

The new wind blowing across the continent – a second wind if you will, holds the promise of an African Renaissance, and with it, a change in the way the continent is portrayed. Indeed, those in rebellion against the distortions of the past are generating “new news” on the continent, and many of them are African journalists” (Hunter-Gault, 2006: 107).

From its inception, the press or media systems in Africa were intimately connected to politics on the continent.

“Media content, unlike other commodities, is also a political product that attracts the attention and interest of political authority and, depending on the nature of the content, the wrath of political power” (M’Bayo, 2000: 27).

Many of the independence era leaders in Africa were connected to the press in some way or another, through owning media, as well as being editors and journalists.

Due to the control of official airwaves, it was, and in some parts of the continent it still is, the practice of those in opposition to broadcast from outside national borders in order to reach their audiences. State-owned media workers were then forced to disseminate information that was not necessarily predicated on the dictates of media’s institutional or public roles. In effect, media in these states were forced to forgo any liberal democratic notions of media reporting, such as the watchdog role, and a forum for public debate. The final media product was then subject to the approval of government ministries

and policies. The reporting of government in this climate was inevitably faulty in terms of the lack of service to the audiences of these media. The media were forced to focus only on the positive aspects, not the multitudes of problems nor the lack of freedoms experienced by many people in these

The effect of this type of system was that journalism became stagnant, either losing good journalists or eradicating any chance for media workers to find alternative ways of accessing, producing or presenting information and news. This is radically different from the role the press were expected to play during the struggle to break free from colonialism or apartheid. Then, media were expected to be oppositional to colonialist government. With the change to self-governance, media opposition was expected to change into media compliance.

This model of media control, although still prevalent on the continent, is giving way to more democratic practices. This move towards press freedom is stimulated by popular demand, as well as pressure from international donor countries as part of their conditions for economic support as well as from organisations such as the United Nations' UNESCO (Karikari, 2004). Democratisation on the African continent as well as South Africa has brought about changes in "the political economy of the media, new information and communication technologies and the re-conceptualisation of audiences" (Tomaselli in Wasserman, 2005: 75). These transformations are then called 'Africanisation' (Wasserman, 2005).

African media are still an important part of the political landscape of the continent. Lugalmi (2002/3: 262) raises an interesting question: "Is the practice of democracy as conceived in the West compatible with the reality in Africa?" If the model democracy in Africa is not consistent with the notions of democracy in the West, it is because Africa is not the West, and therefore politics cannot work in the same here as it does there. If the notions of

democracy are different in Africa, then so too will the notion of media freedom be different.

The media in Africa do not play the same role in the same way as the media in the West. This is not to say that the media's contribution to African society is not as important. However, media in Africa face challenges different to those faced in the West.

At present, media in Africa are still undergoing many changes, from a state-owned and controlled media industry, to one that is becoming increasingly privately owned and commercially driven. In addition to a media system that has commercial imperatives, there are many publications around the continent that, although private in nature, aim to investigate social issues and to create a platform for public debate and discussion. This means that coverage of politics and the activities of political leaders form an important part of what African media focus on.

In addition to a heavy focus on politics, African media also focus closely on issues of national development, such as education, health, infrastructure and the like. In this way, media can be linked to ideas of contributing to the development of the nation.

Another challenge for African media is that in many parts of the continent, infrastructure, development, and most importantly for the media, audiences, are located in urban areas. This means that there are groups that either do not have access, or have limited access to the media. Moreover, it is the audience in urban areas that can feed the commercial needs of media business, as rural or peri-urban audiences are generally poorer than their urban counterparts are. The rural or peri-urban audience is a challenge both in terms of commercial

needs and the need to stimulate development, education and other social issues because they are so hard to reach.

Another challenge for African media is the ownership structures under which many media institutions function in Africa. Although there is a growing segment of privately owned media in many countries on the continent, the media remain either state owned or state controlled. These media outlets often lack autonomy. This lack of autonomy is enforced through “judicial and extra-judicial barriers on journalists and media houses, in a manner which defeats the professed goal of democratic governance and the purposes behind constitutional provisions of a free press and freedom of expression” (Tettey, 2001). These extra-judicial barriers include intimidation, censorship, arrest, harassment, denial of access and many others. These forms of intimidation are not limited to state-owned media, but all media that exist within a restricted media environment.

Although the relationship between government and media is contentious, the media have played an important role in helping bring about democracy:

The media were and remain in the vanguard of these [democratic] changes. By constructing audiences for democratic change, setting the agenda for public debate and responding in general to an internationalistic ethic of open governance, the media, in the face of official persecution and intimidation, has provided impetus and direction to the governance and democratization ferment in their respective countries (Olokotun, 2000: 93).

The media then, are very important for the process of democratization because it puts an issue or an idea into the public sphere, and thereby creates a forum for debate.

Although Wasserman (2005) specifically discusses the South African media, his discussion about the way in which media engages with, and transforms debates can be applied to the continent as a whole. Wasserman sees the media in South Africa as meaning more than one thing, he sees the media as a

... repository for frustration with the tempo or character of larger scale changes in the country, a sign for the persistence of elite interests on the national agenda, a screen onto which allegations of societal stereotypes can be projected (2005: 76).

Wasserman (2005) sees the media's role as that of reflecting societal problems as well as suggesting solutions.

2.6.1 Representing and reporting African issues

Media perform various functions in society: informing, entertaining and analysing information. They also show audiences parts of themselves by supplying images and ideas that audiences can identify with. In re-representing ideas and images in a particular way, media help inform audiences' self-perception. It is also through representing ideas that media do more than merely inform and represent. The media can also help in efforts to democratise and encourage public engagement with issues. This is in line with Nyamjoh's ideas of what the media can do:

The media, conventional and alternative, old and new, traditional and modern, interpersonal and mass,

can, in principle, facilitate popular empowerment as a social project. If civil society is crucial for democracy ... communication is even more so ... (Nyamjoh, 2005: 2).

Nyamjoh (2005) however also recognises that as much as media can be a useful tool for galvanising positive action, media are also inherently faulty. This is because media can and do become vehicles for “uncritical assumptions, beliefs, stereotypes, ideologies and orthodoxies” that make democratisation and democratic participation more difficult (Nyamjoh, 2005: 2). This is as true for African media and journalism as it is for journalists from outside the continent writing about Africa.

As problematic as the Western representations of Africa are, African representations of Africa and African issues can be as problematic, if not more so. The way in which one views oneself determines one’s course of action. Constantly problematic representations of Africa by Africans could potentially be far more damaging than problematic Western representations.

In a speech to the South Africa National Editors Forum Conference in April 2003, South African President, Thabo Mbeki, called for African journalists to report Africa. He posited that South Africans in particular were very under-informed about the rest of the continent, to the extent that South Africans had the idea that they were superior to their fellow Africans in many ways. He added:

The South African media has a responsibility to report Africa to the South Africans, carrying this responsibility as Africans. I daresay this applies to all of us gathered here and therefore relates to all our

countries. I am, of course proceeding from the assumption that you were African before you became journalists and that despite your profession, you are still Africans (Mbeki, 2003).

Ostensibly, what Mbeki means by ‘responsibility as Africans’ is that journalists, as Africans should try to end the “dangerous state of unknowing which leads to prejudice and superstitions against and about one another, which makes the goal of African unity so difficult to achieve” (Mbeki, 2003). This idea again reiterates Nyamjoh’s (2005) that the media are crucial to the politics of belonging, and that it is with the co-operation of the media that African media can promote ideals of individual and community interests.

As separate African states on the continent, there are different issues that affect African nations in different ways. However, there are over-arching issues that affect more than one nation or one region. As such, these issues take on an aspect of “African-ness” in the sense that they are issues common throughout the continent. Thus in reporting Africa, it is important to report on issues common to all Africans, rather than issues that only affect South Africa directly.

2.6.1.1. Africa’s Problems

Political issues on the continent encompass a number of issues, such as democracy and democratic ‘progress’, national elections, political situations that affect the economy, societies and cultural practices in different nations on the continent. As is suggested by Hope and Chikulo (2000:1), when the political system degenerates into a state of poor governance, institutions that “are designed for the regulation of the relationship between citizens and the state are used for the personal enrichment of public officials ... and other

corrupt private agents”. In this way, political issues affect more than just the political environment. They also affect the development of nations politically, economically and socially (Hope and Chikulo, 2000).

Although corruption can be viewed as a separate issue, it is important to understand that corruption is a symptom of deeper political problems. These symptoms are, according to Hope (2000), a lack of accountability, lack of ethical leadership, the exercise of total power by the ruling elite, the expanded role of state activity, centralised economic decision-making and lack of administrative and legislative predictability and lastly, the socio-cultural norms.

Hope (2000) enumerates the negative effects of corruption in Africa: corruption raises the cost of doing business and activates capital flight. Corruption destabilises political development and stability. Lack of political stability can lead to problems such as increased levels of violence, power changes, and the misuse of aid funds. Corruption is then about politics, social development, and economic development. Thus, problems with social, political and economic aspects can be linked to corruption even while corruption itself is not under discussion. Corruption is then very much an African issue.

Issues of development and politics, especially when represented negatively have a wide-ranging impact:

Genocidal conflicts, civil war, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, economic stagnation and poverty would seem to characterise sub-Saharan Africa in the eyes of both the media and regional readers (Adésinà, 2005: 33).

“Africa negative” coverage of Africa is then shown to not only affect how the world sees Africa, but also how Africans see Africa. It is not possible for objective coverage to always be positive coverage. However, in covering Africa, ‘objective’ is often negative.

The HIV/AIDS ‘pandemic’ is one of Africa’s most pressing issues as it affects all sectors of society. Moreover, HIV/AIDS incorporates many different areas of social interaction, making it an issue that is hard to contain in one category. HIV/AIDS “constitutes a public health crisis and a threat to economic livelihood akin to no other illness” (Nattrass, 2004: 23).

2.6.1.2 The Rebirth of Africa

The democratisation of Africa is also an issue of great prominence on the continent. Democratisation on the continent has been an ongoing process for over a decade:

Since 1988, the people of Africa have risen to replace one-party and military dictatorships with multi-party democracy. From its violent outbreak in October 1988 in the streets of Algiers, this new social movement for democracy has manifested itself all over the continent, changing the rules of the political game and bringing about meaningful reforms in the institutions of the postcolonial state (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 1998: 9).

Democratisation is a political process that necessarily affects more than just the political environment of individual nations. In addition, issues of democratisation also encompass other processes and initiatives. These include the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and the African

Union (AU), initiatives and organisations that can be framed in terms of the African Renaissance. NEPAD aims to create a platform from which African states within the partnership can help lift and grow the African economy by joining in, and forming an important part in the global economy (www.nepad.org). An additional aim is to stimulate the growth of democracy and development. It is hoped that this will create a space where public and private, local and international investors can create wealth in a sustainable manner.

The African Renaissance, around which ideas such as the African Union, and NEPAD can be said to be built, comes from the idea that Africa needs a renaissance like that which Europe experienced approximately 800 hundred years ago. This African Renaissance would then go a long way in helping Africa solve its problems (Versfeld, 2003: 2).

Chapter 3

Methods

This study uses a predominantly qualitative content analysis to examine newspaper articles. However, there will also be use of some quantitative methods of analysis. The articles that will be analysed in this study are those that focus on Africa or Africans. A thematic approach is taken to critically analyse how African issues and Africans are framed and represented within *City Press*. In order to analyse the way in which Africans are represented in the paper, the use of language in articles concerning Africa and Africans were examined. In addition, interviews were used.

In the launch edition of the new ‘Distinctly African’ *City Press*, it was stated that the paper would be ‘distinctly African’ by covering issues that are important and pertinent to the African continent. The editor, Mathatha Tsedu identified key issues concerned with the coverage of Africa – African issues and Africans themselves. This study then, will not be a comparison of another weekly newspaper to the *City Press* because *City Press* has claimed that it will cover Africa(ns) in a specific way that is presumably not the same way that other papers cover Africa. Through a thematic content analysis, the study will critically analyse *City Press*’ representation of Africa and Africans by studying issues and themes that are concerned with the continent.

Since media content exists within a larger framework of a social context, it is important to analyse both the content and the institution that produces the content. Content is not created in a vacuum, neither is the media:

Ideally, the media should not be seen in isolation, but
as one set of social institutions, interacting with other

institutions within the wider social system. The failure to recognise the relevance of context and interaction between institutions has resulted in a neglect of the part played in the communication process by non-media institutions, and an underestimation of the importance of mediation, support factors, follow-up activities and the like. The other side of this coin is the problem of media centeredness. The media do not work in isolation, but in and through a nexus of mediating factors. (Halloran, 1998:19)

Media, as a social institution with multiple influences has to be analysed in ways that reflect the complexity of the media as a social institution. This method of analysing media validates the importance of studying the media as a cultural and social actor.

Halloran (1998) explains that a holistic approach in researching media is necessary because of the complexity of the field of communication. Halloran (1998) expatiates that quantitative and qualitative methods are equally important, and should be complementary.

3.1 Content analysis

The use of content analysis in the analysis of media texts is useful because as Hoynes and Croteau succinctly observe:

First ...the link between the external object of reference and the reference to it in the text will be reasonably clear and unambiguous. Secondly ... the frequency of occurrence of chosen references will

validly express the predominant ‘meaning’ of the text
in an objective way (1997: 326).

Content analysis is a good methodological process for studying representation (Golding, et al, 1999). It is a scientific method, meaning that data can be researched in a way that is reliable, valid, and replicable. Moreover, content analysis is not limited solely to the study of the media as it is applicable to all the social sciences (Neuendorf, 2002, Krippendorff, 2004: 5). In addition to these benefits, content analysis uses both quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis. Krippendorff (2004: 16) calls into question the need to distinguish between quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis, stating that the reading of all texts is qualitative, even if those findings are later reduced to numbers.

Quantitative content analysis on its own as a system of analysis in media studies can be problematic. When simply tabulating how many times a particular theme recurs in a text, there may be a lack of understanding of how that theme works. This could lead to a misconception about what the numbers say, and what the content actually says. Simply counting the number of recurrences does not take into account the relationship between the message, the sender of the message and the receiver of the message. Other positive aspects of content analysis are that it can be an inexpensive method of “analysing large amounts of data which can then be quantified and compared with statistics about the real world” (Bertrand & Hughes, 2005).

Because of the possibility of distortions between the text and the findings, for example when the numbers suggest a conclusion at variance with the text, a qualitative method of analysis is necessary. This study used a thematic analysis to study the text, in which themes and language are analysed. Golding, et al (1999) describes thematic structure as an overall concept that

runs throughout a media text. Themes tie together certain ideas, concepts and statements that are based on social knowledge and beliefs. Themes make media products easier to understand and give a lot of information about a media organisation, such as general beliefs within the organisation on particular ideas and notions.

When analysing use of language in a text, there is, to some extent, a use of semiotic analysis. The use of semiotics in media studies helps in “advancing certain concepts which can be applied to the analysis of media texts. In other words, they inform a particular approach to showing how such texts work and have implications for the broader culture in which they are produced and disseminated” (Deacon, et al, 1999). Semiotics looks at the relationship between a word, and the image of the word, in other words the relationship between denotative and connotative meaning. Semiotic analysis connects language systems to the cultural systems that surround language, making semiotics very important to the study of representation.

3.2 Analysis of themes and language

The study analyses the themes that the media select when reporting or representing Africa, Africans and African issues, events and processes. In this way, we can better understand the representation and framing of Africa and Africans in *City Press*. In an article, there is not usually just one theme in place but a combination of one or more selected themes that reinforce a particular kind of meaning.

Representation is a process that connects meaning and language to culture. It is the process through which society makes and circulates meaning. This process includes the use of language, signs and images (Hall, 1997). A discussion about representation then inevitably includes a discussion about

language and the use of language by the media to represent a system of meaning.

3.2.1. Themes

Themes are the issues, topics, events and processes that the media, in this case *City Press*, select when reporting. Themes can be defined as broad categories that manifest themselves in the use of language. It is through the use of themes that Africa(ns) are contextualised), and in that way, language frames and represents ideas in particular ways.

Neuendorf posits the following definition of thematic analysis:

“Thematic content analysis is the scoring of messages for content, style, or both for the purpose of assessing the characteristics or experiences of persons, groups, or historical periods” (Neuendorf, 2002).

The use of language is systematic, and language makes use of inferred meanings to get a meaning across in a multiplicity of ways.. Everyday language is not viewed as critically as academic or formal discourse. This leads to an underestimation of the ideological nature of everyday language, to the point that stereotypical ideas can be seen as ‘common sense’.

Thematic analysis is also described by Jensen (2002: 251) as

... an attempt to identify, compare, and contrast meaning elements, as they emerge from and recur in several different contexts. What distinguishes thematic coding from much quantitative content

analysis is the emphasis on defining each of the elements in relation to their context.

Mathatha Tsedu, as editor of *City Press* claimed that reporting on Africa would be re-positioned in *City Press*. He claimed that *City Press* would inculcate an African identity, link certain developments with regard to Africa and South Africa, be informative about Africa, and discuss African issues and processes in an informed manner (*City Press*, 3 October 2004). Articles are selected according to themes of African development, African political processes and issues, and African identity, NEPAD, the African Renaissance, and HIV/AIDS. For this to be facilitated, these themes have to be indicated in the title and the first three paragraphs of an article in *City Press*.

The ideas and concepts that are conceptualised in NEPAD and the African Renaissance are factors in the repositioning of *City Press* into a 'Distinctly African' paper. NEPAD and the African Renaissance seek to stimulate African development, politics and identity. In many ways, these two concepts appear to be the nexus around which the motto 'Distinctly African' revolves. NEPAD and the African Renaissance are 'high concept' ideas that must be unpacked very carefully in order to understand them. This is because NEPAD and the African Renaissance encompass many different aspects in the discussion of Africa at present, Africa's past and Africa's future. Together, NEPAD and the African Renaissance include discussions about development, politics, identities and HIV/AIDS. This study uses these issues as the thematic threads in the representation of Africa by *City Press*.

3.2.1.1 Africa's development

Africa's development or perceived or real lack thereof, is an important and recurrent issue in any discussion about Africa. This is because Africa's

development is considered a determining factor in the continent's position in global politics. African development encompasses factors such as technological advancement, economic development, political growth, as well as infrastructure development, issues of disease, poverty and socio-economic inequalities (Adésinà, 2005). All of the above are factors that can raise Africa's global standing should they improve.

3.2.1.2 African political processes and issues

Another theme is the constant state of flux in African politics. Conflicts or political unrest occur in all regions of the continent and as such, garner attention in African and international media. The coverage of conflict or political processes in Africa is difficult because of the large number of factors that come into play in investigating the causes of these conflicts. Conflicts and political unrest such as wars, dictatorships, corruption, elections, peace negotiations as well as governance, are some examples of these processes and issues. These issues are very relevant to Africa and account for the lack of development on the continent, as well as lack of political influence in global politics.

3.2.1.3 NEPAD

NEPAD is the other starting point for the 'Distinctly African' strategy. Broadly, it is an initiative to strengthen Africa's position in global politics and the global economy through a change in political or economic frameworks if need be (Adésinà, 2005, Taylor, 2005, Keet, 2005). However, the specific ways in which NEPAD intends to do this must be highlighted because NEPAD covers a broad range of issues and initiatives which impact not only on South Africa's position on the continent, but have broader implications for political, social and developmental issues (www.nepad.org).

3.2.1.4 African Renaissance

The African Renaissance encompasses ideas and discussions about African identity, politics and issues. In addition, it is one of the starting points for the 'Distinctly African' strategy. The African Renaissance is an intellectual movement that calls for discussion on how to 'rediscover' as well as revive African creativity, knowledge, cultures, and intellectuals (Munslow, 1999). It is a concept that needs explaining.

3.2.1.4 African identities

African identity is a very contested concept, not least because there are multiple African identities. The identification of, and explanation of African identity is highly problematic because it is so difficult to conceptualise. The discussion of African identity includes discussions about how to define Africa in relation to the rest of the world, how to define Africans in relation to each other, especially when considering issues such as migration and xenophobia. The problem also includes discussions about Africa's place in history and in the future.

3.2.1.6 HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS threatens not only the health of those who contract the virus, but also the society in which they live (Nattrass, 2004). HIV/AIDS also threatens all the goals for Africa's sustainable development. HIV/AIDS is a social, economic, political and cultural issue. The representation of the disease is also highly problematic in the media. It is misrepresented, underrepresented or not represented at all.

3.2.1.7 Other

Articles that do not fall into the previous six categories also occur. These articles would include stories of crime, notable births and deaths, stories of historical interest, and the like.

3.2.2. Language

In media, language is a system that produces meaning. Language systems do not assign meaning arbitrarily and because of this, the way in which language is used and organised has to be analysed in order to find the meaning behind the words (Hall, 1997). The use of language is very important when looking at issues of representation because of the way in which meanings can be inferred or deduced when language is ordered in certain ways.

Representation can be considered in terms of connotation and denotation. Connotation, as defined by Dimbleby and Burton is

“...image meaning. The idea is that one can take the content carefully described, and work out the meaning of the parts and the whole. The meaning will result from personal and cultural associations and experiences which we more or less share” (2001: 198).

In other words, there are explicit messages as well as implicit messages.

Connotation can also be described as a mechanism for signifying. Fiske explains connotation in this way: “It describes the interaction that occurs when the sign meets the feelings or emotions of the users and the values of their culture” (1990: 86). Thus, words used in any given sentence or phrase can evoke particular ideas or emotions in particular ways. These emotions will

vary from one society to another or from one culture to another. As Fiske explains, words that are chosen may also be chosen for their connotations. For example, the words ‘mob’ or ‘crowd’ or ‘war’ and ‘conflict’ evoke different ideas. Fiske (1990) also goes on to add that it is because of the subjectivity inherent in connotations that one is often unaware of the effects of connotation. Because of this lack of awareness, sometimes what is *connotative* can be seen as *denotative*.

Denotation is “the common-sense, obvious meaning of the sign” (Fiske, 1990: 85-86). According to Dimbleby and Burton (2000, 2001: 198), denotation is “the idea...that one should look very carefully at everything that is in the image and describe what it is and how it is treated”. Denotation is what the word or picture is, rather than what the meaning behind the word or picture is. An example of denotation involves who is being discussed, what he or she said, and who he or she is. According to Mills, language is a very complex communication system.

... It is clear there is a complex two-way dialectic process going on in language, whereby language items both affirm and contest the status quo, and changes in social structure necessitate the development of a new vocabulary (2003: 88 – 89).

Thus, language is not only a system of communication, but a system in which ideas and perceptions, by their very repetition, become so ‘normal’ that we sometimes miss the significance of the ideas and meanings. It is then important to understand how connotation and denotation work when looking at how representation functions. When writing about specific issues or themes, language is used to frame these in specific ways.

3.3 Time Frame

The study will analyse newspapers starting from the first edition that carried the ‘Distinctly African’ slogan in October 2004, through to October 2006, a two-year period. This period was chosen because it is a time when the concept of a ‘Distinctly African’ newspaper and method of reporting is still a fairly new concept, and therefore the concept of being ‘Distinctly African’ is one that is new for both readers and journalists at the paper.

3.4 Selection of articles

In this study, the focus will fall on three sections of the paper, the news, features and analysis sections. Letters to the editor will not be included. The reason for this omission is that this part of a newspaper comprises public opinion pieces. As such, they do not always conform to the general frames used in a paper. Although letters to the editor contribute to the public sphere function of the media, in the case of *City Press*, the editorial strategy is to create a ‘Distinctly African’ agenda and it is an agenda set by and maintained by the paper’s editors and contributing columnists. In addition, only articles that are longer than two hundred words or more will be part of the study. Articles that will be used in this study will be selected from actual newspaper editions that fall under the selected time period. These sections are the prime focus of this study.

3.5 Interviews

Open-ended interviews were conducted, as these manage to “... both address the need for comparable responses – that is, there are the same questions being asked of each interviewee – and the need for the interview to be developed by the conversation between interviewer and interviewee” (Wisker, 2001:168). In addition, interviews

“...allow for a better appreciation of the ways in which [the interviewees] perceive contemporary issues, the way in which they link up abstract ideas with concrete examples, and so on” (Hansen, et al. 1998:232).

Moreover, face-to-face interviews allow more space for investigation than questionnaires, for example. This is particularly useful for this study because this could lead to an understanding of how those who produce ‘Distinctly African’ content perceive the meaning of the strategy, as well their perception on how the strategy helps in re-presenting Africa and Africans.

In an open-ended interview, there are a series of set questions to be asked¹, while there is also room for a more open discussion. This kind of interview is preferable for this study, as closed questions can often limit the response the interviewee can give and do not enable them to think deeply or give their real opinions and feelings (Wisker, 2001). Interviewing “enables us to find out about people’s ideas, opinions and attitudes (Stoker, 2003: 114).

The interviewees were the editors and journalists at *City Press* as they have intimate knowledge about the journalistic, editorial and ownership strategies of the *City Press*. In addition, a media analyst was also interviewed. The journalists and editors at *City Press* were able to shed more light about what the ‘Distinctly African’ strategy hopes to achieve, as well as how they go about incorporating that strategy into their everyday work. Interviewing these groups of people at *City Press*, as well as those outside the immediate surrounds of *City Press*, will be a useful strategy to foreground ideas, opinions and attitudes of those involved in the production process at *City Press*.

¹ Interview Guides – Appendix 1

Chapter 4

Findings

In this study, the data was received from three sections of the paper – the news, features and analysis section. The date included 100 editions of the *City Press*, from 3 October 2006 to 29 October 2006, a two-year period. Articles were selected thematically. In analysing articles about Africa, it is important to remember that at any given time, or any given topic, issue or theme, there is an overlap between issues. No one issue is ever in isolation from other issues. As such, it is important to be able put articles in broad categories, as in the themes outlined in the last chapter before analysing them as part of a specific theme. This way, even though there is overlap, articles can be discussed in a broadly specific context – that of development or politics and other themes.

4.1 Origin of Articles

The chart below describes the origin of the articles that were studied in *City Press* that concern Africa. From this table we can see the number of articles written by *City Press* journalists, foreign press agencies or columnists who are not *City Press* editorial staff.

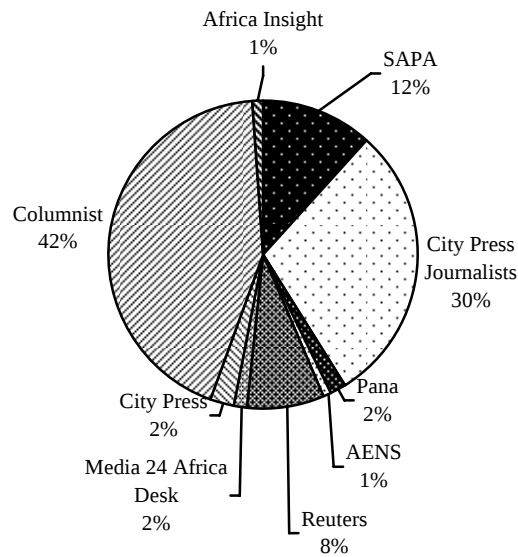


Figure 1 Origin of Articles

City Press' use of foreign or 'Western' news agency copy for their reports on Africa is low compared to the use of their own columnists and journalists. When reporting on Africa using foreign agency copy, *City Press* used Reuters, forty-one times in the two-year period in which the study was conducted.

South African Press Agency copy appeared sixty times in the two-year period. The use of copy from this agency rather than Reuters for African news could be justified by the idea that even though this is an agency, it is an agency situated on the continent, rather than one completely foreign to the African environment. African news agencies appear nineteen times in the period of study. This could be explained by the fact that African news agencies are notoriously unable to keep up with the demands to deliver newsworthy news on time.

City Press uses its own journalists over 150 times, and columnists over 200 times to write articles about Africa and African issues. At times, *City Press* journalists report from different African nations. Often, reporters who live in

specific regions and countries write for *City Press* either as columnists or as stringers for *City Press*. Articles by columnists ranged from factual reporting to opinion articles. Columnists also ranged from subject experts to general subject columnists.

4.2 The occurrence of themes

The most occurring theme in the study was the political processes and issues theme. The next most occurring was the African development theme, followed by the “Other” topics that were covered by the paper. African identity, NEPAD and the African Renaissance are comparatively under-reported.

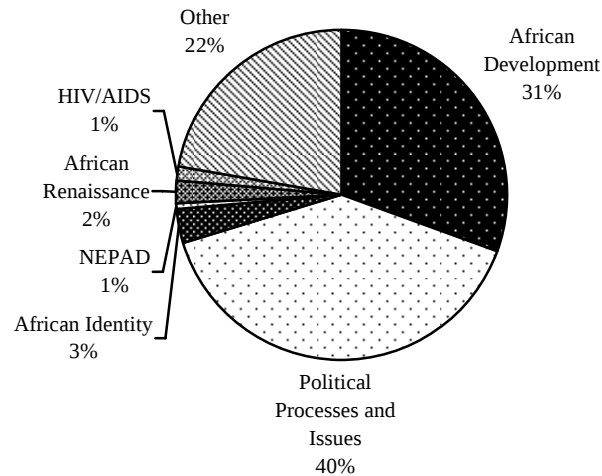


Figure 2 Occurrences of Themes

Below, Table 1 shows the number of occurrences of each theme for each month of the two-year period of study. In this table, it is shown that the theme that occurs most often is that of political process and issues. The theme of development comes second. NEPAD, HIV/AIDS, the African Renaissance and African identity are the least occurring themes.

Table 1 Occurrence of Themes

	Year	African Development	Political Processes and Issues	African Identity	NEPAD	African Renaissance	HIV/AIDS	Other
January	2004	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2005	8	11	1	0	0	0	3
	2006	4	8	0	0	0	0	4
February	2004	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2005	9	11	3	0	0	0	4
	2006	2	7	0	0	1	0	0
March	2004	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2005	16	13	0	0	0	0	6
	2006	0	0	1	2	0	0	0
April	2004	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2005	5	15	0	0	5	0	11
	2006	1	6	1	0	1	0	5
May	2004	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2005	11	9	1	0	0	0	3
	2006	6	6	0	0	0	0	2
June	2004	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2005	9	10	0	0	0	0	4
	2006	4	5	1	0	2	0	6
July	2004	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2005	19	19	2	0	1	0	5
	2006	11	28	0	0	0	0	7
August	2004	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2005	12	15	1	0	0	0	12
	2006	4	5	0	0	0	1	8
September	2004	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2005	5	4	0	0	0	1	8
	2006	2	8	0	0	0	0	4
October	2004	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2005	14	10	3	1	0	0	10
	2006	2	5	1	0	0	0	3
November	2004	9	8	1	0	1	6	2
	2005	9	11	1	1	1	0	11
	2006	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
December	2004	2	6	0	0	0	0	3
	2005	9	6	1	0	0	0	5
	2006	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		173	226	18	4	12	8	126

4.3 Africa and development

Theme	African Development
Total # of occurrences	173

African economic development is a very important issue for the African continent, and as such, it is often discussed in *City Press*. As a theme, African development includes issues such as aid, health issues, Africa's economic and political growth in the international context.

Economic development on the African continent is an issue that often revolves around questions of aid, globalisation, debt relief and poverty. African countries are more often than not in need of aid. They do receive the aid but the aid seems to entrench Africa's economic dependency.

4.3.1 Aid and debt relief

'Africa needs quality aid' (July 3, 2005) is an article that was written in anticipation of the African Union summit as well as the G8 summit in Glasgow in 2006. In this article, several issues pertinent to the summit and Africa's role in it were discussed. In this article, Landsberg writes that African leaders should go into the summit and insist that Africa receive 100 percent debt relief, that Africa receive more aid, and that there be trade reforms. However, Landsberg goes on to add that African leaders should be wary of conditions that could be imposed on debt relief:

Although the debt relief to 12 African countries is a major policy breakthrough, we have to watch out for conditionalities. The industrialised powers are likely

to link these concessions to tight spending and macro-economic conditionality around privatisation and user fees by the International Monetary Fund. Africans should, instead, insist that the increased revenue derived from aid should go to fighting poverty, education and health (p21).

In the article, it is acknowledged that Africans themselves have a responsibility towards debt relief. Landsberg writes that the AU and NEPAD should make available resources for social and economic interventions for women, children and poverty after debt relief and cancellation. In addition, Landsberg recommends that African nations and societies find ways to stay out of debt.

Although the article affirms Africa's need for aid and debt relief is affirmed, the need for good governance, peace and less corruption is also affirmed. While recognising that corruption is a problem Africa needs to deal with, it is also emphasised that quite often, international companies are complicit with the corruption, and so Western governments should help curb corruption from their end.

“At least this debt relief is to the IMF's credit” (1 January 2006), is concerned with, as indicated in the title, debt relief. Duodu, the article's author, starts by declaring:

December 21, 2005 will go down in history as one of the most significant days in relations between developing nations and the rich countries (pg 10).

This was the day that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced 100 percent debt relief to 19 nations, many of which were African nations. More

significant, according to Duodu, is the fact that “there were no “ifs” or “buts”” about the debt relief. In other words, there were no conditionalities to the debt relief.

As demonstrated in the title, the IMF’s decision is treated with some ambivalence and scorn:

... the IMF has proved itself to be the most pitiless hard-ball player. It has sent finance ministers (such as Dennis Healey, former British Chancellor of the Exchequer) scurrying off to hide behind their mothers’ skirts. The “medicine” the IMF prescribes for regimes that allow themselves to go broke is so bitter that the regimes are often sent packing (p 10)

In this quote, language is used to convey derision for the IMF’s tactics, first by referring to the IMF as a ‘hard-ball player’. In addition, the IMF is described as sending finance ministers “scurrying”, which could be taken to mean that the IMF is a ‘bully’ and the nations that they bully are child-like and are afraid.

It is also interesting to note that African nation states are referred to as “regimes” as opposed to “nations” or “states”. “Regime”, when used to refer to governments, has negative connotations that imply authoritarianism or militaristic governments. The irony here is that “regime” is used by an African to describe African governments.

Duodu goes on to describe how the IMF “helped” Ghana into an economic decline, and how the IMF’s aid comes with high priced provisos which often make aid-receiving nations’ situation worse. Duodu cautions: “It is important to note that debt relief is not an act of charity” and that the role of the IMF is

not to make bad financial situations worse though “the IMF has grown extremely rich doing just that”.

Duodu goes on to concede that the debt relief gives countries that receive the relief the opportunity to use funds that would have gone into paying back the debt, to focus on other areas of development. Duodu finishes the article by saying,

Of course, some stupid government may want to carry out silly prestige projects with the debt relief money. But it is up to the citizens of each country to put pressure on their government not to do this. The truth is: we deserve the governments we get (p10).

In this quote, Duodu acknowledges the fact that many nations have abused donations in the past, and some are likely to do so again. In addition, Duodu is implicitly arguing that citizens should take a more active role in ensuring that their governments do not misuse funds that have been made possible through debt relief. In effect, Duodu is asking that citizens empower themselves to ensure that democracy and good governance prevail.

4.3.2 Bad politics equal bad economics

In Africa, politics and political machinations can cause lack of development or regression. The article “Patience runs out as queues continue to grow in a nation of scarce commodities” (16 October 2005) is another article that straddles two themes. In this case, the political situation affects the economic one that sees this article categorized under development and politics.

This article describes how Zimbabweans are experiencing difficulties with getting basic commodities and the long queues that go with getting these

commodities. The tone of the article is ironic, describing serious situations humorously. As humorous as the article is, it is a critique of the Zimbabwean government and the economic situation in that country. The article describes how long the queues for commodities such as soap, rice, cooking oil, toothpaste, petrol and other basics are. In addition, the article describes how people buy items in stores and then resell the same items for five times the official price. The article begins with,

Patience is now the operative word for any Zimbabwean in search of any of the basic commodities whose availability fellow Southern African Development Community (SADC) citizens take for granted (pg 23).

This beginning implies that there is some culpability on the part of the SADC regarding the Zimbabwean situation. Citizens of the SADC, unlike Zimbabweans have access to soap, oil, rice, and other basic commodities. As for Zimbabweans however,

They get anywhere a bottle of cooking oil, a bag of rice, a tube of toothpaste, a carton of milk, a packet of sugar, a box of washing powder...you need a reliable rumour, an eye for a queue worth joining, and above all, patience (p 23).

...

Virtually everything now required queuing. If one is not keen on joining this or that line, then it's paying through the nose. And in the shops, the few goods on offer are beyond the reach of many (p 23).

The article uses language which, were the topic not so serious, could be mistaken as being light-hearted. The use of humorous language serves to throw the situation into relief and show the difficulties involved in getting what most people think very little about. Following an announcement about the availability of petrol, motorists are described to have “pushed or pulled their vehicles to service stations”. To emphasize the desperation of the situation, this description follows:

Some of the cars in the fuel queue last traversed Harare’s roads in the Ian Smith era. Ramshackle jalopies on four wheels with only one useful part – the fuel tank- were literally carried to queues. Some of the cars have been modified to house a gigantic fuel tank where passenger seats once sat (p 23).

The article is essentially descriptive, for the benefit of those who do not know how bad the situation in Zimbabwe is. It is only twenty paragraphs into the article that any allusion to the cause of the situation is made:

The talk in the fuel queue is about how Mugabe has failed. “I think it’s about high time he gives up power and retires to his rural home in Zvimba,” said one motorist (p23).

At no point does Barnabas Thondhlana, the journalist who wrote the article, mention his personal opinion of Mugabe. Rather, he lets the comments of others speak for him, as in the previous quote. Putting down what others say concerning Mugabe allows the journalist space for what may be viewed as objectivity, so that opinions cannot be said to be the journalists. Thus, Mugabe

can be described as power-hungry and unfeeling. In a quote immediately following the one above:

“And what do you think he [Mugabe] would do? Just wake up and say, guys my time is up, let someone else carry the baton? (p23)

That fact that the journalist never puts forward his own opinion allows him to distance himself from the opinions of others. However the inclusion of this comment raises the question of where this journalist stands on the issue.

4.3.3 Tourism doesn't pay

Wildlife and tourism are important issues for many parts of the African continent. As such, conflicts around these issues can expand to incorporate other issues. In the article, “Kenya faces growing resentment over huge estates reserved for wildlife” (October 2, 2005), the conflict between ranch owners and the Kenyan Rift Valley's local authority is discussed. This conflict, described as a “major row” is over the lack of substantive contributions to the local economy by white ranch and sanctuary owners.

The region in which this conflict takes place, Laikipia, is described as being one of the most visited wildlife areas in Kenya, and it is here that the county wants private landowners to pay a 10 percent tax on the income generated by tourists and scientific researchers to the area. These various international visitors are described thus:

... these tourists and wildlife researchers fly into Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta Airport, are transported to the nearby Wilson airfield and then flown by private jet to airstrips in the reserves (p 29).

This description portrays tourists and researchers as somewhat fickle in coming to Africa only to see a decidedly specificied 'Africa'. On top of that, the description implies that these tourists only get a passing and superficial idea of the place they have come to visit.

The article quotes a councillor in the area who points out that the amount landowners are being asked to pay is "peanuts when you consider they make hundreds of thousands of dollars a month from the huge parties of scientists and tourists they host all the time". The landowners are also described as "third generation immigrants from Britain".

It is pointed out that although the local council had taxed villagers and businesses, they had ignored protests about the reserves' lack of payment. The renewed energy for taxation from the council comes after a realisation by local authorities of the growing resentment from locals as conditions are generally worsening for the villagers in terms of crops, education and services.

The landowners are said to claim that they are self-sufficient and receive no services from the local council, while council is said to respond with the argument that in fact, these reserves or ranches provide very few jobs and "... the animals that are the attraction are, in law, owned by the Kenyan people, through the Kenya Wildlife Service". In addition, the landowners are described as having a negative impact in the surrounding villages:

For most villagers and, particularly the Masai, the issue of taxes is secondary to their need for land and water. They accuse big landowners of depriving them, their lands and cattle of water whenever there is a dry spell. It is certainly true that streams in the reserves have been dammed to provide convenient

waterholes for tourists in what are effectively, islands of affluent wildlife viewing (p29).

Landowners are thus positioned as “the bad guys” in this article, while indigenous Africans are positioned as innocent, helpless and under siege, benefitting little and losing a lot from this kind of tourism. A sort of racism, and certainly class prejudice against the landowners is exhibited in this article. The language is prejudicial; it is biased in favour of the Masai and villagers, and against landowners. In stressing that the taxes are ‘a secondary issue’ the implication is that the conflict, on the part of villagers, is altruistic and stems from a need for sustainable community development. Landowners on the other hand are positioned as money grabbing, and ‘not really African’ because they are “third generation immigrants”.

4.4 Africa and Politics

Theme	African Development
Total # of occurrences	226

Conflicts or political unrests occur in all regions of the continent, and as such, garner attention in African and international media. Conflicts and political unrest such as wars, dictatorships, corruption, elections and peace negotiations as well as governance are some examples of these processes and issues. These are issues that are very relevant to Africa and are another factor in the lack of development as well as lack of influence in global politics. Political processes and issues, as with all themes, incorporate more than one issue or theme in a single article.

4.4.1 African organisations

African governmental organisations receive negative coverage. Coverage of these organisations frames African organisations most often as ineffective and

barely functioning or as functioning in a problematic manner. When their positive aspects are covered, they are often covered grudgingly.

“I don’t want to smear PAP but...” (17 April 2005) is an article that covered the first week in which the Pan-African Parliament was in session in April 2005. This article is very critical of the Pan-African Parliament and essentially raises and analyses as many problems as the writer could find. This article is counted as following a political processes theme as well as an African Renaissance theme.

In this article, journalist Redi Direko writes a very negative article about the seeming lack of purpose of the PAP. In the article, Direko starts by saying that she has to pinch herself because “the two week punishment of covering the repetitious proceedings is truly over” (p21). Direko then goes on to say that the PAP passed ‘inconsequential’ resolutions and made ““groundbreaking recommendations”” before letting the reader know that she was sure that she was the only journalist who sat through every day of the session, because even *City Press*’ political editor Jimmy Seepe did not sit through the session.

Direko then goes into a discussion of the problems faced by the PAP, the first being the lack of resources. She writes that out of the fifty-three member states of the African Union, only twenty have paid their dues. If only twenty member states of the AU paid their dues, Direko asks, why would the non-payers pay the PAP? Directly linked to this question, she asks why the AU would ratify the establishment of the PAP when the AU cannot help the PAP function.

Next, the article compares the AU to the European Union (EU). Direko argues that the EU took decades to form the EU through incremental steps. She argues that the EU was ‘ready’ for the European Parliament because they took care of the “nuts and bolts” and the process was “gradual, precise” and had

“focus” (p210). She juxtaposes this view of the EP and its parliament by saying, “It makes me think though that the platitude – African solutions for African problems – is mere sophistry” (p21). In addition, she adds that it seems to her that Africans want to have the same institutions and processes as the West. She adds that creating many projects and schemes in order to be seen to be making progress without making real progress is confusing and essentially retrogressive. Direko points out that although it is the journalist’s job to give voice or cover events such as these lest the public never know these events take place, the PAP cannot simply reproduce AU material; the PAP must perform its functions.

The article “ECOWAS and the SADC: tale of two invalids?” (May 22 2005) describes problems that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) face when ECOWAS celebrated its 30 anniversary in 2005. The two organisations are described in strong and disparaging language and this is done from the title, so that even before the reader goes forward they understand that this is not an Africa-positive article. Further in the article Edebajo writes:

Both organisations are like weak invalids: weak and incapacitated and in need of crutches to walk. In Africa, such invalids are often beggars, and the ECOWAS and the SADC need international assistance to build their security mechanisms (p26).

Language such as this suggests that the two organisations are marginal as well as ineffectual, if not redundant. Moreover, saying that ECOWAS and SADC need international assistance suggests that Africans alone cannot make their organisations function effectively. The article goes on to add:

The two organisations have also struggled to achieve their purpose of economic development and integration, however African invalids are also extremely resourceful and resilient, as both have proved (p26).

The article goes on to enumerate the various challenges and obstacles that the two organisations have overcome and have yet to overcome. These challenges are listed as including South Africa and Nigeria's lack of legitimacy either in military terms or in political terms as leaders in the SADC and ECOWAS respectively. For instance, it is stated that apartheid did much to damage South Africa's political credibility in the SADC region using the military.

Nigeria, on the other hand, is said to be politically willing, but has little in the way of military capacity to back up its word. The article also lists possible contenders to South Africa and Nigeria's leadership in the two bodies, such as Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia in the SADC, and Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Liberia and Burkina Faso in the ECOWAS. The article states that although significant progress has been made by the two bodies such as a plan to implement security protocol in the SADC and to improve ECOWAS' security mechanisms, there are also problems such as the SADC secretariat's lack of power, and the SADC's lack of engagement with civil society. In addition, the failure to pay member's dues is seen as impediment in ECOWAS.

4.4.2 Elections on the continent

Elections and electoral processes make up a good portion of the political processes and issues theme. This is due to several reasons. Africa as a whole is embarking on a process of democratisation and good governance is becoming an issue not only due to pressure from Africa's aid donors, but also from

African nations themselves. Free and fair elections can be seen as a positive indicator of the political well-being or lack of democracy on the continent. Since 2004, there have been numerous elections on the continent in nations such as South Africa, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, as well as upcoming elections ²in Nigeria in 2007.

“Babangida bids to rule Nigeria once more” (June 23, 2005) is an article which covers General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida’s ambitions to the Nigerian presidency in the upcoming 2007 elections. The angle from which this article is written clearly indicates disapproval for Babangida’s bid to run for president. The article begins by describing Babangida:

He annulled Nigeria’s “fairest and freest” elections of 1993, created the atmosphere for his friend and successor General Sani Abacha to unleash the worst type of dictatorship on the country, aided President Olusegun Obasanjo’s return to power in 1999 and now, 13 years after he “stepped aside” as Nigeria’s military dictator, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida dreams of coming back as the country’s elected president in 2007 (p 27).

Babangida is also described as “the author of corruption” (p27) as well as current president Olusegun Obasanjo’s possible chosen successor.

Babangida’s commitment to running for the presidency is treated with scepticism, as is shown in the following:

² The Nigeria and Congo elections were still yet to be conducted

But the general has many odds stacked against his ambition, if truly he is running.

...

For now, however it is unclear what party Babangida, derisively described as Maradona after the Argentine player, plans to run. Analysts say this, however might just be part of the strategy of a man known for his ability to spring surprises (p 27).

The article goes on to describe President Obasanjo's relationship with Babangida, a relationship that in the article is said to have been good until "adversely affected these last few months by the third term plot which Babangida did not support" (p27).

In addition, Babangida's running for presidency in 2007 is said to be in doubt, as he is described as "unpredictable". Babangida is also held responsible for causing great political unrest after cancelling the 1993 election after which Abacha became dictator. Babangida is also described as a criminal linked to the misappropriation of several billion dollars. He is accused of having planted an advance fee fraud known as the 419 scam, and other crimes which are described as serving "not only to institutionalise corruption but also to elevate it to the position of virtue" (p27). The article also goes on to add that Babangida is "alleged" to have misappropriated \$12, 4 billion earned by Nigeria during the Gulf War when they supplied oil.

This article, using words that connote mostly negative meanings, positions General Babangida as doubtful, morally unfit, criminal and undesirable as a presidential candidate. In effect, the article presents a persuasive essay in

which it is argued that this particular candidate should not be president after the 2007 elections.

The elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) were another important event on the continent. Coverage included articles about election candidates, articles about the political situation in the DRC, as well as stories contextualising the history of the country.

“Today’s election in DRC should mark a new era” (30 July 2006), is an article written by Mathatha Tsedu in which the elections in the DRC are framed as a positive event, one that marks a beginning, as is indicated in the title of the article. First, the DRC’s history is recounted. Tsedu writes, “the Congolese have not lived in peace and harmony with themselves and their neighbours” since “the first and only democratically elected leader, Patrice Lumumba” was assassinated (p22).

Tsedu then proclaims:

And today is their day. It is South Africa’s day. It is
Africa’s day. It is a day that should mark a new
beginning (p22).

In these few sentences, the elections in the DRC are then positioned as an event that belongs not only to the Congolese, but to the whole continent as a continental achievement.

Tsedu proceeds in the same optimistic vein in the article. In the next paragraph, he compliments the Congolese for having reached this landmark. He also applauds South Africa, claiming that without South Africa’s help, the DRC may not have reached this point:

While the process that culminates in an election was primarily an initiative of the Congolese people, the South African government, and President Thabo Mbeki in particular, played a significant role in ensuring this day was realised (p22).

In this sentence, Tsedu has taken the credit for the elections from those who are holding them, and almost downplayed the Congolese's input leading to the elections. This is emphasised when Tsedu goes on to say that South Africans themselves questioned South Africa's involvement in the DRC and that President Mbeki was under pressure to stop South Africa's involvement.

Tsedu then goes on to list reasons for South Africa's involvement:

South African freedom fighters were the beneficiaries of the largesse of many countries on the continent during the difficult time of the struggle for freedom and justice. Secondly, South Africa cannot be an island of success in the sea of a conflict-riddled continent. So, in a very direct sense, the experiment to export peace is a self-serving exercise for South Africa (p22).

The above quote highlights two important issues. The first one is that South Africa has to 'pay back' for previous generosity and support during the apartheid era. The second one is, an issue not specifically in the article but that is alluded to in the above quote, that South Africa has to ensure peace on the continent. With less conflict on the continent, fewer refugees will come to South Africa and the less South Africa will have to provide economic and political aid.

Tsedu adds another reason that the elections in the DRC are a positive event, political growth:

It is also important in another sense. At last, Africans are solving their own problems – a key ingredient for real independence from the former colonial masters. This would also increase prospects for economic prosperity (p22).

4.4.3 “The Zimbabwe Issue”

Zimbabwe has been a sticky political issue for the continent for well over a decade and Zimbabwe is often a topic that encompasses more than one theme or theme at any given time. Zimbabwe has posed a challenge to the AU, NEPAD, diplomacy, economic stability and a host of other issues on the continent.

“Zimbabwe is no longer democratic” (31 October 2004) is an article by the paper’s editor, Mathatha Tsedu and it explores the South African government’s methods of dealing with the situation, namely, South Africa’s “quiet diplomacy” on the Zimbabwe crisis.

The article begins by stating that the South African government has chosen the path of quiet diplomacy in its dealings with the Zimbabwean government which, as the article claims are “... fine, as long as in the process the SA government does not negate its humanitarian obligations to the people of Zimbabwe” (p18). This is fine only if, states the article, quiet diplomacy does not mean the truth is obfuscated when wrongs are being perpetrated. The wrongs perpetrated in this instance refer to the way in which the Zimbabwean government treated South African trade union COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) members while on a fact-finding mission. The

COSATU delegates were in Zimbabwe on a fact-finding mission, when they were informed by the Zimbabwean government that they could not talk or meet with the people they were there to see. When the COSATU delegates ignored this, they were “bundled out of the country” (p18).

Zimbabwe is, as is pointed out in the article, a sovereign state with its own laws that govern it. The South African visitors, as the article supports, followed Zimbabwean laws by entering the country with passports that did not need visas. However, as the editor asserts, “...if Zimbabwe is a democracy that has nothing to hide”, who people visit once they are in Zimbabwe is “none of Mugabe or information minister Jonathan Moyo’s business” (p18). Second, the article proclaims, the act of throwing the COSATU members out of Zimbabwe means that those Zimbabweans who had wanted to meet with the COSATU members have been deprived of their democratic rights. This all means, according to the article, that Zimbabwe has become “increasingly dictatorial and intolerant of dissenting views. It has ceased to be a truly democratic state” (p18).

4.4.4 Power and Influence in Africa

Africa, as with other parts of the world has countries that are dominant, politically and economically, and in terms of influence. South Africa and Nigeria for instance, are two states that can be considered powerful in sub-Saharan politics, while Arab/Muslim states on the continent are not always considered in the discussion on African politics, or indeed, as “African”. Thus, power and influence on the continent make for an interesting debate, and one that has consequences for issues beyond power and influence – issues that include identity and belonging on the continent.

The possibility of one or two African nations gaining a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council sparked a lot of debate as to which country or countries would best represent Africa and her interests. “Reasons Nigeria ought not to get UN seat” (3 October 2004) is an article that argues that Nigeria should not get the seat. The article also looks at other countries that could serve African interests. The columnist, a researcher at the Centre for Policy Studies argues that Africa already has three contenders, the “usual continental candidates” – Nigeria, South Africa and Egypt (p19).

Nigeria is quickly dismissed as a contender for the UN seat citing:

Population is a compelling criterion. But political and economic governance, under-girded by economic and military muscle, must also be factored in this mix (p19).

The insurgency in the oil-rich southern delta, the threats of secession, “challenges to federal cohesion” as well as the alienation of the Igbo peoples are also listed as other reasons why Nigeria could not successfully bid for the UN seat.

The fact is, Nigeria remains, in essence, a de facto confederacy where the enormous talent and energy of its people have yet to translate into sufficient national cohesion that should be a precondition for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council (p19).

The article then goes on to look at the chances of the other “usual continental candidates” – South Africa and Egypt. South Africa is described thus:

“...by default, South Africa is the only credible African power with a compelling case for a permanent Security Council seat” (p19).

The article goes on to say that it is taking “cheap shots” to say that South Africa is too new or young a democracy, or “South Africa is not African enough – whatever that means”. South Africa is described as

...the continent’s overwhelming economic power and the vanguard of peace support initiatives throughout the continent as well as Africa’s leading champion in world forums” (p19).

The article then goes on to add that without South Africa’s participation, the AU’s transformation would not have occurred, although it was only with Nigeria’s help that the NEPAD initiatives were formalised.

Egypt is said not to be “a compelling African permanent seat candidate” as it appears “marginal in inter-African affairs”, being more important to Afro-Middle East geopolitical relations. However, Egypt is described as capable of helping stabilize the Sudan region and the Nile basin region as well as helping with Middle Eastern instabilities because Egypt has strong Arab/Muslim ties. In other words, the article says, Egypt can play an important role in the UN Security Council because of its ability to straddle Middle-East realities while able to exert pro-African influence at the same time.

4.5 NEPAD

Theme	NEPAD
Total # of occurrences	18

NEPAD is an issue that includes more than the outline of a plan for Africa's economic and political growth. Discussions about NEPAD also include issues of power and influence on the continent. NEPAD as an issue discussed in *City Press* is more often concerned with the way in which it affects and impacts on South Africa rather than what it means to the continent. In the discussions of NEPAD, South Africa is described as the cornerstone of the programme and thus, NEPAD is inevitably tied with discussions about South Africa. Considering that NEPAD is not often discussed in *City Press*, this South Africa-centred approach is problematic.

"SA should take heed of the harsh criticisms against NEPAD" (12 March 2006) analyses South Africa's position on the continent in relation to NEPAD. The article begins with a list of NEPAD's various attributes and concepts including the African Union's endorsement of NEPAD. The article also refers to the way in which NEPAD has lent a sense of purpose to African diplomacy, NEPAD's placement of governance and democracy on the continental agenda, NEPAD's linking of sound economics, politics, peace, security as interconnected agendas, and NEPAD's stress on the continent's domestic growth of the economy. The article goes on to state NEPAD's problems from pro and anti NEPAD positions. In dealing with NEPAD's negative issues, the article deals specifically with NEPAD and South Africa's position in the African Union.

The first problem pointed out is an argument that NEPAD is overstepping its boundaries:

For critics, that is the problem: while NEPAD has been endorsed as the AU's development blueprint, they argue NEPAD has long forgotten its original mandate and behaves like a law unto itself, apart

from the AU. There is thus irritation and growing unease with NEPAD and its processes (p28).

This follows a discussion that NEPAD as a developmental plan is, in itself, a contested idea. NEPAD is seen as a programme in which “leaders drive the process with much civil society involvement” (p28). Moreover, the article states that critics view NEPAD as not people-centred enough and as such does not promote poverty alleviation.

“But it is especially at the level of official diplomacy that South Africa should be worried. Within the AU and other continental actors, the view is sometimes openly expressed that NEPAD remains a “South African”, not a continental programme (p28)

In order to alleviate this problem, the article argues that the duplication between NEPAD and the AU be ended and be “harmonised” instead, so that NEPAD programmes become AU programmes. This is because:

There are many international policy meetings convened at which two African delegations would rock-up: an AU and a NEPAD delegation. They would often present separate, even conflicting strategies (p28).

This is said to be “not good enough” because the prevailing view is that NEPAD does not consult with the AU but instead, ideas are “foisted on” the AU.

All these issues are said to have caused “incredible damage and fallout for the AU-NEPAD relationship” (p28). This affects not only the way NEPAD

members perceive the organisation, but also threatens the position of those nations which are partners in NEPAD, such as Senegalese president Abudulaye Wade and Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo.

The article ends with the statement,

NEPAD has no doubt an indispensable role to play, but it must shed its image as being outside of the AU and a law unto itself. There should be no controversy around the fact that NEPAD programmes should be amalgamated with AU programmes. There is no need for South Africa to complicate its African environment around questions of the status, role and agenda of NEPAD (p28).

"Nepad may be whipping boy for SA's success on African and world stage" (26 March 2006) largely deals with issues threatening South Africa's leadership role on the continent and how South Africa's intentions seem to be suspect in the eyes of other African nations. The article starts with,

There is a substantial well of mistrust complicating the African Union (AU)-NEPAD relationship. South Africa's leadership in Africa is at risk. However, it could be that AU-NEPAD tensions are proxy for other dynamics in Africa on South Africa's leadership and vice versa (p27).

The columnist adds that there is a lot of jealousy of South Africa's role as a leader in the continent. This jealousy stems from South Africa's "sophisticated urban industrial, political and economic democracy" which makes it a threat to Africa's "status quo of authoritarian misgovernance" that prevails throughout

the continent, a status quo that NEPAD threatens, especially with its relationship with the AU (p27).

The article then goes on to list countries that could pose a threat to South Africa's dominance: Nigeria, Egypt, Algeria and Libya. However, Algeria and Egypt not viewed as influential players in promoting Nepad's interests nor as having undertaken the political transformation that South Africa, Nigeria and Senegal are said to have done. Egypt, Algeria and Libya are said to be "stuck in a conservative, reactionary position on issues of political, economic and corporate governance in Africa" (p27). However, it is their financial backing of the AU that provides them power, according to the article. But, according to the article, although North African states play a role in 'corralling Arab/Muslim collusion in undermining the cohesion of the G77+ China', the article claims that the blame for much of the Organisation for African Unity's (OAU) (now the African Union (AU) dysfunction must be laid at their door. Thus, the article claims, Arab/Muslim countries domination would have the effect of "subordinating Africa to a predominantly Arab/Muslim world agenda for which NEPAD is anathema" (p27).

However, looking at Sub-Saharan Africa, especially considering the tensions between South Africa and Nigeria, the situation is said to be in disarray in the face of North African unity. If Obasanjo were to win a third term in office, this would create a rift between South Africa and Nigeria, and would also leave South African President Thabo Mbeki isolated with NEPAD, making the programme a non-starter:

Much of the resistance to NEPAD, in terms of what it requires of leaders and in terms of its South African genesis, may have as much to do with other African political agendas as much as with the technicalities

and procedural issues of the AU-NEPAD relationship
(p27).

Thus, we are made to understand that NEPAD is not an easy agenda to follow both in terms of the required changes in the way states govern themselves and in the way that the political agendas and interests of some nations diverge from NEPAD's interests.

The article ends by asking whether or not the "coalition of the willing" can in fact mobilise to advance NEPAD's interests.

4.6 Africa and the its Renaissance

Theme	African Renaissance
Total # of occurrences	12

"China's continental safari a challenge to African Renaissance" (June 25, 2006) is an article that looks at threats posed to Africa's Renaissance by Africa's partnerships with other nations and regions across the world. This article points specifically to the threats posed by China and Russia.

The article posits that one of the major aims of what is called South Africa's African Renaissance is to renew and rejuvenate Africa's role in the global south as well as in the international system. This is to be done through partnerships with India, Brazil, China and Russia. This article points out that the inclusion of China, and to lesser extents India and Russia, can be dangerous. The fact that Africa needs aid and that the West is either unwilling or slow to give it, is pitted against China's need to grow its fast growing economy and China's willingness to give aid in order to get other benefits. The article first looks at the way in which the West has set pre-conditions on giving African nations aid, and moves on to look at the way in which China has a

non-interference policy. China's policy of non-interference is said to have come

... without any concern shown for promoting sustainable peace, security and democratic governance on the continent; peace and security being fundamental to Africa's renewal (p26).

The article also goes on to add that South Africa's diplomatic position is in an awkward place. South Africa has been the driving force behind ideas of democratising the continent as well as "challenging the entrenched tendencies towards authoritarian governance in most of Africa" (p26). An example of challenges cited in the article against authoritarianism are listed as the conflict in Sudan which is spreading to Chad that both China and Russia are supporting in order to feed their own needs.

4.6 Africa in the eyes of the world

"Use of ugly images to beg for funds not fair" (August 21, 2005) is an article written by a regular columnist about the way in which negative images of Africa and Africans are used to beg for money. In this article, Duodu specifically mentions campaigns by organisations such as Oxfam, the International Red Cross and World Vision as using negative images. Duodu argues that the use of negative images has several consequences. First, Duodu argues that the use of these images reinforces already present stereotypes of black people and Africa. In addition, Duodu argues that the use of these images can create feelings of self-loathing amongst black and African people, thus reinforcing a negative black self-esteem. Duodu goes on to say that it is not enough for these organisations to use the argument that these images are

used for the purpose of getting more money for Africa(n) causes as the end does not justify the means.

4.7 Who is African?

Theme	African Identity
Total # of occurrences	18

Not all articles concerning issues of identity are articles that call for, or even accept, an all-encompassing ‘Africanness’. In fact, some articles are almost racist in tone, and certainly prejudiced. One such article is “A divided Nigeria only way forward” (March 26, 2006). In this article, “riots” in Nigeria, especially in the northern regions are attributed to Nigerian Muslims. In the article, the ‘riots’ are traced back to February of 2006 when President Obasanjo bid for a third term in office where in two days of protesting, more than forty churches and 400 shops were burnt and 60 Christians killed. Other riots followed incidents of desecration of the Koran:

A school teacher seized a copy of the Koran from an inattentive student who was reading it during lessons. This so-called desecration of the Koran sparked a riot in which 50 Christians were killed and thousands were injured or rendered homeless (p26).

The word ‘riot’ is, in and of itself a highly suggestive and prejudicial word, and used in this context the word gives the idea that the protests were severely out of control. However, the way in which Muslims are described throughout the article and the way in which their presence in these riots is written about, suggests that Christians were unfortunate bystanders and the Muslims involved were the aggressors. In addition, offences against the Koran or Islam are belittled when incidents or allegations against them are termed ‘so-called’.

The article goes on to add that protests by Muslims are a ‘tradition’, as they have been occurring yearly since 1953:

That week of riots provoked by the Mohammed cartoons ³ – in which more people have died in Nigeria than anywhere in the heartlands of Islam – was the latest in a 50-year tradition of almost yearly riots in which Muslim mobs, on one religious pretext or another, kill Christians and burn churches. 107

Again, Muslim protests or issues are reduced to “pretexts”, suggesting non-validity of the issues. Again, also, Christians are presented as victims, and not aggressors or even co-aggressors.

The article then goes on to list the various Muslim protests that have occurred in Nigeria, from protests for Nigerian independence in 1956, to the ethnic cleansing programmes that led to the Nigerian-Biafra war, to the protests that were sparked by the Miss World contest in 2003. Citing these incidents, it is said,

They [Nigerians] are starting to acknowledge that a Nigeria composed of Muslims and non-Muslims is not viable, and are beginning to look towards “Pakistanisation” as the lasting solution (p26).

The article ends with

Now, looking back in the wake of the cartoon riots, many thoughtful Nigerians have come to agree with

³ In February 2006, a cartoon appeared in a Danish newspaper that ridiculed the Prophet Mohammed and which was offensive to Muslims the world over, causing riots and protests throughout the world.

Bello's diagnosis and are reluctantly converting to the view that Orkar's surgical excision of Shariyaland is the only lasting cure (p26).

This article then re-emphasizes the point made in the headline, that peaceful religious coexistence in Nigeria is the only option. The idea of peaceful coexistence is nullified through the insinuation that Muslim Nigerians spark arguments at every available incitement, and without due cause, thus Muslims in Nigeria are represented as brash, impulsive and quick to anger. This is in contrast with Christian Nigerians, who are represented as the victims in the situation.

The article does not attempt to suggest a way in which the tensions could be alleviated, other than to separate Nigeria into two mono-religious states. This "option" is tantamount to no option at all; such a separation would have enormous social, political and economic repercussions. It is also problematic that the article exhibits an "us vs. them" attitude in looking at religious differences in Nigeria.

"It's time for coloureds to forge new African identity" (27 November 2005) deals with issues of forging an identity in a space where identities had been manufactured for political purposes and without regard for the socio-cultural consequences of these identities. The columnist asks here for an assertion of a specific, African identity for Coloureds either by Coloureds or for Coloureds. The writer asks,

What of the state? Is the history of the South African state perhaps too interwoven and implicated in this power to impose name and ethnic-make of a people?
(p25)

The columnist points out that at no point were coloureds studied academically “as coloureds “ that connected the coloured identity to the Khoi-San identity and neither were there any investigations into the role of history in categorising Coloured identity. The columnist goes on to ask whether or not this was a deliberate omission in academics. The columnist further hints that the possibility of Coloureds missing the opportunity for self-definition:

The message of the racist South African regime has been that coloureds are disconnected from African history, have no recognisable culture and, therefore, possess no identity in any meaningful sense. Hence, the state had magnanimously provided an “identity”, a coloured identity” (p25).

The writer asserts that connecting the Khoi-San identity with that of the Coloured identity would be a restorative measure for the African identity of Coloureds, one that would be an

“... empowering one and critical to overcoming African alienation, restoring possession of self-respect, esteem and love for oneself and others. The basis for this process must be that of the African Renaissance” (p25).

The article ends with the statement that the Renaissance would fail if it neglects to acknowledge the “continuity of identity” between Coloureds and the Khoi-San. Recognition of the connection would allow coloureds to pro-actively explore and assert themselves, the article ends.

“The truth is: early Egypt was a Black civilisation” (October 2, 2005) is an article by monthly columnist Molefi Kete Asante in which he calls for the

recognition of Ancient Egyptians as Black Africans, as well as calling for the recognition of Ancient Egypt as part of Black history. This is an example of an article that encompasses both issues of identity as well as the African Renaissance theme, especially when considering the way in which it advocates a shift in the understanding of African history and new African studies. In this article, Asante discusses the way in which ancient Egyptians' race has been highly contested:

...we can get ready for an onslaught of racist interpretations about the "whiteness" of the ancient Egyptians (p25).

Asante also discusses how African history is demeaned both by Africans and by non-Africans:

The element of "disbelief" enters when anytime whites talk about African achievements...you can depend upon new interpretations of the boy king's racial or ethnic history...

Until Africans awake and retake the intellectual idea that ancient Egypt is directly related to African cultures we will not be able to write a proper history of the continent.

...I am appalled at the lack of intellectual and academic interest in this subject among African people (p25).

Asante goes on to call for more research about ancient Egyptians because, as Asante puts it, African history is dominated by books written by another race.

4.8 HIV/AIDS

Theme	HIV/AIDS
Total # of occurrences	8

The theme of HIV/AIDS occurs infrequently in the *City Press* as an African issue although it receives a lot of coverage in the South African context. When HIV/AIDS is discussed, the article is often short. For instance, “First Ladies gather to fight Aids” (June 5, 2005) is a very short article that explains that the first ladies of nine African nations would participate in a discussion about women’s economic development and AIDS. This article is less than two hundred words.

November 2004 saw a large number of HIV/AIDS articles because of a recently published United Nations survey on HIV/AIDS around the world. In the article “Aids exacerbated by lack of equality for women – UN” (November 28, 2004), the link between women’s empowerment and the spread of AIDS is discussed.

The epidemic is increasingly taking on a feminine face as it spreads globally. The lack of equality for women – manifest in poverty and stunted education to rape and the denial of women’s inheritance and property rights – is a major obstacle to victory over the virus, according to the latest global status report published this week (p27).

The article goes on to add that women’s empowerment movements have to come to grips with the AIDS pandemic, and link the two in order to achieve meaningful change in AIDS statistics among women. In Africa, the article goes on to say, younger married women are more likely to contract HIV

because they tend to be married to older men who are more likely to have been exposed to HIV. This article points out that HIV/AIDS is not simply a matter of the containment of disease, but that HIV/AIDS is a social issue as well.

Another article, “HIV/AIDS shrinks voter rolls – study” links HIV/AIDS to governance, and the threat that HIV/AIDS signifies to the governance of the continent. With large numbers of HIV/AIDS-infected people, this means fewer people are able to vote. This poses a problem with the proportional representation systems in place in many African nations. When there are fewer voters, this means that there are fewer parliamentarians. In addition, this leaves ruling parties in a much more secure position than opposition parties, which means that democracy is also threatened.

“It’s abstinence vs. condom use in Uganda’s fight against Aids” (September 25 2006) highlights an important issue in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Africa. Uganda’s fight against HIV/AIDS is seen as one of the more successful stories on the continent because Uganda had managed to lower the HIV infection from 30 percent in the 1990s to around 5 percent in 2006. This has been done through extensive use of the ABC strategy – “Abstinence, Be Faithful, Condomise”.

According to the article, Uganda’s fight against HIV/AIDS is being threatened by President George Bush’s Presidential Emergency Plan for Aids Relief. This programme provides treatment for many millions of people infected with HIV/AIDS. However, the aid comes with some very controversial conditions, the main one being that the funds must be used to emphasise abstinence and faithfulness over the use of condoms. The article goes on to state how Janet Museveni, Uganda’s first lady and one of the country’s biggest proponents in the fight against Aids, began advocating abstinence and faithfulness and the President Yoweri Museveni also started advocating the same. In addition,

Uganda is said to be facing a shortage of condoms, causing people to use makeshift condoms and the price of condoms trebled in some areas. The article reports:

Advocacy groups have reacted by issuing an ultimatum threatening to sue the government at the end of September if the government does not release millions of condoms they say are held in its stores. “Supplying condoms is not merely charity, it is an obligation of the government to ensure availability, accessibility and affordability of health care services,” Arthur Mpeirwe, legal advisor for human rights for the Coalition for Health Promotion and Social Development (HEPS) told journalists in Kampala (p29).

4.9 Other

Theme	Other
Total # of occurrences	126

Often-times there are articles in *City Press* that are about Africa, African and African issues that fall outside the themes established for this study. These articles range from stories about African personalities and events surrounding them, general news stories about other African nations, as well as stories of general interest.

An example of a general interest story is “Kabila finally ties the knot” (June 25, 2006). This article, as shown in the title, is about DRC president Joseph Kabila’s marriage to Marie-Olive Lembe di Sita. The article then goes on to list the various ceremony attendees.

Chapter 5

Analysis

5.1 Representation

This study focuses on *City Press*' representation of Africa and Africans. A study of this nature is interesting because *City Press* is a newspaper that targets itself specifically for a Black market in South Africa. Moreover, *City Press* considers itself a 'distinctly African' newspaper. This assertion that *City Press* is 'Distinctly African' raises interesting questions. One of the questions raised by this assertion is how a newspaper can be 'Distinctly African'. Another question is how does a paper that claims to be 'Distinctly Africa' then represent Africans.

Representation can be defined as the act of 'presenting again' or of allowing something to stand for something else (Gripsund, 2002). In the case of *City Press*' representation of Africa, we can understand representation as a means of creating for an audience, a way to conceptualize Africa, Africans and African issues.

Hall (1997) describes representation as made up of two different systems. The first of these systems is that of mental representation, that is, ideas that we carry in our heads about particular concepts. The second system is the language system. With written language, or in fact any language system, meaning is 'constructed by the system of representation' through the construction and fixing of a code (Hall, 1997).

Using Bourdieu's (1999) understanding of language, language is not only a system that carries meaning, but a language is also a system that holds

symbolic power. This symbolic power comes from the idea that language can be, and often is, a signifier of social relationships and social power, economic status and power, and political status and power. Thus, language, and the use of language, reflects power dynamics. Thus, we can understand that the representation of Africa in the *City Press* represents Africa in a manner that attempts to address the issues that have been prevalent in the representation of Africa for centuries.

The effects of bad representation are not fixed or permanent, negative representations are subject to change; however the speed at which negative representations can be displaced is slow. This is because representations, good or bad, take long periods to establish. Once they are established, however, these stereotypes become 'common sense' or become 'conventional wisdom'. This process is called naturalisation (Hall, 1997). Breaking down negative stereotypes often means breaking down ideas and concepts that have been deeply ingrained and internalised and are often uncomfortable to analyse.

The reversal of meaning can be done in several ways, as Hall (1997) posits. This reversal of stereotypes or negative representations can be negated by challenging negative representation through alternative representations, or by contesting representation from within. By reworking negative representations in these ways, the negative meaning of representations or stereotypes can be undermined. By claiming to be 'Distinctly African', it can be said that *City Press* is attempting to reclaim the meaning of 'African' and making the meaning positive. *City Press* is attempting, in effect, to shift ideological beliefs about Africa, Africans and African issues.

5.2 Critical political economy of the media

City Press operates in a liberal media market system. However, South Africa does not only function within a liberal framework. Other normative frameworks that South Africa operates under include the development framework and the social responsibility framework (Fourie, 2001). Within these frameworks, the media have a social responsibility towards the societies in which they exist. These responsibilities are part of what are referred to as institutional roles of the media. The institutional roles of the media could also be referred to as the public role of the media. Van Zoonen et al (1998) define 'public' as that which is accessible to all, regardless of where they are, or who they are.

Public roles that the media take on themselves, and are also expected to perform by society include providing information, creating a platform for discussion, a forum for analysis, a watchdog role, as well as an entertainment role (Curran, 2000, Westergaard, 1989, Golding and Murdock, 2000, Croteau and Hoynes, 2001, Siune, 1998, Fourie, 2001).

As important and relevant as the public role of the media is, these considerations are tempered by the economic interests of the media. The public roles that the media enact, although of importance, are performed within the context of the need for profit. Profit, in the media industry is generated through the sale of media audiences to advertisers, as well as the sale of content to audiences (Golding and Murdock, 2000; Croteau and Hoynes, 2001).

It is in this environment that media audience segmentation ensures that media producers provide the right audiences for advertisers to target. Audiences are segmented by gender, age, income, interests and preferences, politics and so

on. Thus, segmentation is an attempt to lure specific kinds of audiences, which are more easily saleable to advertising executives (Gandy, 2000; Ross and Nightingale, 2003). Thus, we understand *City Press* selects and caters for audiences differentiated by race as well as class as *City Press*' editor Mathatha Tsedu stated the desired audience in the front-page editorial where he outlines *City Press*' new direction (3 October, 2004).

5.3 *City Press*' representation of Africa

To understand how *City Press* is "Distinctly African", or how *City Press* aims to be 'Distinctly African', it is important to understand the position *City Press* comes from. As *City Press*' deputy editor Khathu Mamaila points out, 'Distinctly African',

... was a call to try to reaccept that indeed we are Africans. Not in a narrow sense of colour or ... its about people who live here and who also owe allegiance to the continent and who are making contributions to the development of the African continent. So in a way when you say distinctly African it is a positive statement to talk to ourselves and to relocate our minds back to the continent... Going forward it means that we need to move away from the coverage of Africans in a very stereotyped fashion where Africans are portrayed in newspapers and television screens as socially ... live very bad lives. You find children with big tummies, flies covering their faces and dying of Aids and all sorts of negative things. Every time Africans appear in newspapers, they are portrayed in a negative way...

So the idea is that we will reflect Africans in their positive ways and also their negative ways. (Mamaila, interview, 2006).

By defining 'Distinctly African' in this manner, we can see that the 'Distinctly African' concept is more about locating the mind in a certain framework of thinking rather than being a highly specific editorial style. Read this way, we can begin to understand that 'Distinctly African' means being informed about issues and events around the continent and being 'African' not merely 'South African'.

In defining the 'Distinctly African' concept in such a broad manner, *City Press* does not put itself under any obligation to change the writing or editorial style from the European or Western values that are in place for modern journalism. Rather, the framework is used to add more 'African' stories to ^ editorial. 'Distinctly African' is not about creating African journalism or African media, rather it can be seen as an attempt to redefine the politics of "Africaness" from a very South African point of view.

City Press' coverage of issues that concern Africa varies, depending on the theme or topic tends to be problematic. Some issues, such as political processes, development to a lesser extent, are covered with frequency while others, such as NEPAD and the African Renaissance and HIV/AIDS are under-reported. When considering the fact that one of the reasons for *City Press'* repositioning was to 'inculcate an African identity', this under-coverage of important African issues outside the bounds of politics and development is problematic.

The representation of Africa and Africans in *City Press* is done through the coverage of issues that are of concern to Africans. It is through ideas

envisioned in NEPAD and the African Renaissance that *City Press* repositioned itself as ‘Distinctly African’. In effect, what this means is that it is through the coverage of Africa and African issues that the representations of Africa can be redefined or maintained. Thus, knowledge of developments in other African nations, knowledge of key debates on the continent, knowledge of the ideas behind the African Renaissance and NEPAD are vital to developing a ‘Distinctly African’ newspaper.

The African Renaissance as a general concept captures all the themes analysed in this study. Issues of development, politics, identity, HIV/AIDS and NEPAD are all different pieces of the same puzzle – each is relevant to the other. For instance, development cannot progress very quickly if educators, health professionals, academics and politicians are dying in droves. Consequently, to help slow down the rates of infection as well as rates of death, aid is needed. Aid often comes with conditions, such as good governance, democratic practices, peace and stability, all of which are initiatives supported by the AU as well as NEPAD, which perpetuate the spirit of the African Renaissance.

5.4 The origins of African representation

The representation of Africa is an issue of sensitivity, especially as Africa has suffered gross misrepresentations for several centuries. More often than not, when African nations are represented in foreign media, it is through the voices and eyes of others, not Africans themselves. This is part of the “parachute journalism” that Tsedu, Mamaila and Msomi (Interviews, 2006, 2007) say that *City Press* is aiming to avoid by using stringers in different African regions to supply African news.

If we want to be different we have to have our own
reporters on the continent. We have reporters in

Nairobi, Kenya who does East Africa [sic], that is, Uganda, Kenya, sometimes Somalia. We have stringers in various parts of the continent. Some are based in Lagos, others in the Ivory Coast. The idea is to have people who are living there who will tell us and have a better understanding of the dynamics and nuances, something we might not actually understand if you have been there two weeks for the story (Tsedu interview, 2007).

City Press uses a number of sources for news about Africa. These sources range from foreign news agencies to various columnists, both African and non-African, South African and non-South African. The origin of news about Africa has implications on how Africa is represented. The assumption that the editors make is that there will be a difference in the manner Africa is represented if it is represented by Africans themselves.

The preponderance of African sources, ranging from Media24, *City Press*' parent company, to African news agencies and columnists, could be seen to be in line with *City Press*' idea that news about Africa should originate in Africa and be written by Africans. This infers that Africans are generating debate about their own nations and continent. Presumably, this means that non-African views about Africa are subordinated through lack of presence.

The minimal use of international news agencies such as Reuters, as sources for African stories can be seen as a deliberate attempt to construct African views of African people and issues. This indicates recognition on the part of *City Press* that international-based representation of Africa is subject to how 'others' see Africa, as opposed to how Africa sees Africa. As Gillespie (2005) points out, representation of nations outside the group of elite nations is

affected by, and subject to, as well as reproduces, notions of inequality on an international scale. *City Press*' use of their own staff, or Media24, can be interpreted as a conscious attempt to ensure that news about Africa is written by those who identify themselves as African, not looking at Africans as the 'Other'.

The success of the strategy of allowing Africans to write about Africa is uncertain. *City Press* represents Africa, Africans, and African issues in a problematic manner. It is beyond the scope of this study to compare *City Press*' representation of Africa to European and American representations. However, *City Press*' representation of Africa raises the question of whether or not *City Press*' problematic representation of African is of the same scope as European or American media. It can be said, then, that where *City Press* presents problematic representations of Africa, it cannot be said that Africa is being misrepresented by a foreign 'other'.

5.5 The representation of African Development

In the African context, development is a term that captures ideas of economics, at times politics, health, infrastructure development, education, and other ideas. Development on the continent is the second-most recurring theme in *City Press* after issues of political processes and issues. Development, or lack of development, is an issue that is of great importance to Africa because so many nations on the continent are developing nations with many obstacles to overcome, such as under-development, lack of infrastructure, lack of political development, health issues, and social issues.

5.5.1 Africa's development

Africa's development is framed in several ways: many parts of Africa are under-developed; development in some parts of Africa is moving backwards,

health issues are a threat to African development and Africa needs more aid in order to develop faster. Although there are articles that are concerned only with development, as an issue, development can never be truly separated from the political environment in which that development is expected to take place. For example, Zimbabwe's developmental backslide is intimately connected with the political situation in Zimbabwe and the political situation in turn affects the economic situation. Much the same could be said about Liberia, Sierra Leone and other nations that have experienced conflict.

An important issue concerned with development is whether Africa can afford to stimulate its own development, or if it needs help to stimulate and sustain development in the long term. Africa is often framed as in need of outside help in order to overcome its issues. The framing of Africa as in need of help is often centred on recognisable themes such as education, health, agriculture, politics and economics.

As much as development is a much sought after goal, there is a recognition shown in some articles such as "Africa's rate of urbanisation is bad news for the continent" (8 October 2006) where Africa's development is framed from an unusual perspective, that Africa should take more time to develop. This argument can be seen as an attempt to represent and frame Africa in a manner that is different to the way Africa is 'normally' represented in the media.

City Press' representation of Zimbabwe keeps readers informed of the situation in Zimbabwe. However, articles about Zimbabwe do not contextualise that country's situation in terms of history, the reasons behind the economic decline, or why Zimbabweans are "inactive" in fighting against their current situation. Development stalls or backtracks for a variety of reasons. One of the biggest reasons for negative development is bad governance or political mismanagement. Zimbabwe offers a good example of

how far a country's development can regress because of a bad political situation. Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe is often framed as a former bright star of African politics, but the disconnect between Mugabe in the eighties and Mugabe now is left unexplained.

Zimbabwe's representation in the *City Press* raises the question of how different *City Press'* representation of the situation in Zimbabwe is from that of Western representations. *City Press'* lack of contextualisation of the Zimbabwe issue exactly mirrors the complaints often laid against Western media – that the representations of African situations often do not explain the situation in ways that help readers understand the complexities, as discussed by Hawk (1992) and Munslow (1999). Thus in this instance, *City Press'* representation of Zimbabwe is problematic.

5.5.2 The representation of Africa and aid

Aid is an issue that is of great importance to Africa. As much as that is so, the issue is treated with ambivalence. On the one hand, many African nations have an urgent need for aid. On the other, the conditions imposed on aid, as well as Africa's history with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, make aid a difficult issue.

Aid is connected to other issues such as governance, political development and other sociological concerns. Of all the issues connected to aid, governance is the most contentious. Donor nations insist that there be good governance in order for African countries to receive aid. The contention lies in that this might be yet another ploy to control Africa.

This lends itself to the idea that Africa is bullied into 'acceptable' behaviour by wealthier nations. Implicitly, this represents Africa as weak and not in control of its own circumstances. This is line with Mengara (2001) and

Hawk's (1992) views that the way in which Africa is represented reinforces the notion that Africa is constantly in need of help, which in turn justifies the point of view that Africa needs to be taken in hand by the more powerful European and American economies.

Much as the idea of Africans being told how to govern their own nations can be ill perceived, there is recognition of the fact that good governance on the continent is of great importance. Corruption is, however, a very important factor in aid. Many African nations have a history of mismanaging funds given by donor nations. Although it may be true that African nations have mismanaged aid funds, it is important to remember that they have not always acted alone, but helped implicitly or explicitly, by members of donor and other nations.

It is also interesting to note that the idea of Africa receiving donor aid is not questioned. Africa's reliance on donor aid is not an issue often challenged in *City Press*, rather it is reinforced, with articles titles such as "Use of ugly images to beg for funds not fair" (August 21, 2005) and "Africa needs quality aid" (July 3 2005). Rather, aid can at times be seen as a given. In this way, Africa's dependency on other, more powerful economies is reinforced, and indeed asked for. Ideas for breaking away from a cycle of dependency are not put forward, even while it is acknowledged that at times asking for, and receiving donor aid has been to many African countries' detriment.

This reinforcement of Africa's need for aid stifles the imagination for alternatives to the current development solutions in Africa. This reinforces Hawk's (1992) assertion that Africa's negative representation perpetuates Africa's role as a dependent continent in constant need of aid from its Western counterparts. Considering *City Press'* implicit agenda for playing an important

role in African decision-making, this representation of Africa's (in)abilities is very problematic as it undermines exactly that which it claims to promote.

5.6 Africa's Politics

The political process and issues theme is one that occurs most often in articles about Africa in *City Press*. The political environment in Africa has an impact on the development, infrastructure and democratic practices on the continent. Because of Africa's long history of colonisation, conflict and lack of development, political processes that are successful and conducive to democratic practices are conducive to a feeling of achievement, a feeling that the continent is 'moving forward', thus contributing to a more positive self-image.

In *City Press*, political processes, whether the political processes are successful or not, democratic or otherwise, are reported very often. This focus on political processes and events is in line with *City Press*' vision of 'liberating' its readers by informing them of political occurrences. These political occurrences include elections, political transformations, democratic or undemocratic practices as well as other political developments or political backtracks. This is in line with Khathu Mamaila's assertion that,

The idea is that we will reflect Africans in their positive ways and also their negative ways. If you find that there's corruption, we will expose it. If there is fighting in Darfur, we will be the first ones to expose it (Mamaila interview, 2007)

As often as *City Press* covers this theme, sheer numbers do not necessarily mean that the articles were analytical in their outlook. Rather, the number of

articles denotes that space is given to these issues, thus fulfilling the role of supplying information.

Arguably, the hardest aspect about the role of informing the reader is giving the reader enough information about the background of political processes that occur in other African nations. Contextualising political processes and issues often means that the paper has to cover more than one aspect of a specific issue. This is in evidence with the representation of the elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). On top of the articles directly concerned with the election, there were also articles that gave general descriptions of the DRC. This was in evidence in articles such as “Artery of life for turbulent Congo” (July 2, 2006), an article which describes how important the Congo River is to commerce, tourism and travel in the region, as well as describing the various problems with regulating the use of the river so to that the poor benefit.

Contextualising events on the African continent, whether good or bad, has been a weakness of much representation of Africa, especially as concerning foreign representation of ethnic and political conflicts, poverty on the continent, the spread of HIV/AIDS and other problems. Part of the problem in properly contextualising events on the continent is the fact that many foreign news agencies practice ‘parachute journalism’, in which foreign journalists arrive in a foreign country, write a story, and then leave immediately. This style of news reporting leaves foreign journalists in the position of having too little context and background information to relay a complex issue in a short space of time. If it is also taken into consideration that Africans also use foreign news agencies as news sources, this means there is the possibility for a distorted view of the political environment in some parts of the continent.

Coverage of political processes on the continent by *City Press* is often problematic. SADC, the African Parliament, ECOWAS and the African Union are important structures on the African political map. SADC, ECPWAS and the African Union and Parliament are often discussed as though the readers has prior knowledge of what these bodies are, and their function in African governance. Because of this assumption, the machinations of these bodies are never fully explained, and neither are their roles fully unpacked for the reader to understand. Although the role and function of African governing bodies are never fully explained and contextualised, they are not exempt from heavy criticism.

In the discussions about these structures, *City Press* should provide some context to their readers about what these structures are, and what they are intended to do. Informing readers of what these governing bodies are, and what they do would be in line with the media's public role in society (Curran, 2000, Van Zoonen, 1998, Croteau and Hoynes, 2001, Golding and Murdock, 2000). Media should inform society about the doings of government so that as citizens, media audiences are informed enough to be able to make sound decisions.

In criticizing African continental government structures without informing readers what these structures are supposed to do, *City Press* is asking readers to take *City Press'* opinion at face value, without providing enough background. Moreover, readers cannot fully appreciate whether or not *City Press* is being fair and accurate in its descriptions of these structures.

When analysing the way in which *City Press* represents African politics, the question arises as to whether or not *City Press* is covering African governance in a way that is different to Western coverage of African governance. *City*

Press, when discussing politics on the continent, does not always inform as well as it could, and so understanding of the situation is flawed.

5.7 The representation of identity

Egypt presents an interesting dilemma in Africa, both in terms of politics and identity. In the article “Reasons Nigeria ought not to get UN seat” (3 October 2004), it can be observed how Egypt’s presence on the continent, together with its strong ties with the Arab/Muslim world, present all manner of conundrums. Egypt is African in terms of its geographical position and its history is regarded as African history, especially when considering Ancient Egypt. Because of Egypt’s, and indeed Morocco, Tunisia, Chad, Sudan and other North African countries’ ties with the Arab world, the connection to Africa and ‘Africaness’ is seen as tenuous. They are neither ‘fully African’ nor ‘fully Muslim’ or ‘Arab’, but they are all of those.

The theme of African identity is one that is comparatively underrepresented as compared to development and political process. This underrepresentation is probably partly because there are multiple African identities and it is therefore difficult to pinpoint a single African identity. However, when the issue of African identities is raised, the identity that is focussed on can be referred to as ‘generically African’. That is, it is suggested that by virtue of skin colour or one’s blackness, one can consider himself or herself African.

When discussing the issue of identity, *City Press* does not attempt to define the meaning of “African”. This lack of definition is highly problematic, especially when considering the fact that *City Press* refers to itself as ‘Distinctly African’. *City Press* asks audiences to believe in a concept that is undefined. At its most basic, the discussion around African identity has to examine who can or cannot be considered “African”. Is the notion of “African” based on

skin colour, race, religion? Can one still be considered African if one is black but does not live on the African continent?

In referring to itself as 'Distinctly African', *City Press* indicates that such an identity exists in a defined manner. This identifies *City Press* as an identity signifier to which audiences can relate. *City Press* is attempting to create a product in which audiences can see themselves and their ideas reflected. The attempt to create a media product in which audiences can see reflections of themselves and their realities is in line with Dahlgren's (1997) notion that media, as a communicative tool that communicates social relationships has to be understood as a social agent with ideological power and social power.

City Press' implies, through the slogan 'Distinctly African' that there is such a thing as an African identity. Yet Mengara (2001) posits that such identity does not exist. Moreover, the idea of a unified African identity was used to justify Africa's colonisation by Europe. Thus, the question that is raised when looking at *City Press*' assertion that it is 'Distinctly African' is whether or not *City Press* is conscious of the implication claiming it is 'Distinctly African', and is trying to redefine the meaning. Certainly, readers are aware of the inclusion and exclusion that 'Distinctly African' implies, as is demonstrated in a letter to the editor:

... who is an African? Do these billboards with pictures of the "darker-skinned" African achievers suggest that our other fellow Africans are not dark enough to be associated with a Distinctly African *City Press*? Perhaps *City Press* realised its readership is predominantly darker-skinned Africans, so they had decided to feature personalities who hail from the

same background as their readership. (*City Press*, February 20, 2005)

However, notions of 'Africaness' and identity are challenged in articles such as "A divided Nigeria only way forward" (March 26, 2006) where religious beliefs challenge notions of togetherness and unity. Here, because of a lack of unity, or possibly an inability to come to terms with a fundamental difference, it is suggested in the article that Nigeria should be split into two: a Muslim north and a Christian south. Again, the Muslim/Arab connection serves as a challenge to the notion of being African. The assumption, and certainly implication, is that although they are part of the continent, Northern African states, which are predominantly Muslim, are "not the same as us"; they are on the continent, but not necessarily of the continent. This disconnect with Muslim Africans as part of an African identity serves to strain and stretch the notion of how African Africans can be, and it certainly questions *City Press'* idea of what 'Distinctly African' means.

The exclusion of Arab/Muslim Africans from the 'African' definition highlights the issue that *City Press* itself has yet to define 'African'. The exclusion of Muslim/Arab also leads to the question of whether or not 'African' is a definition based on race. This leads to questions about how to define white people on the continent, Coloureds, Asians and others on the continent.

It is important to consider that *City Press* is aimed at the black middle-class segment of the audience and that therefore the assumption is that its readers are black Africans. This means that in discussions of Africans and African identity, the use of 'we' and 'us' refers to black Africans and not necessarily all Africans. This means that other population groups which may consider themselves black such as Coloureds and Indians, or those who consider

themselves African but are not black, such as Afrikaners, are not being addressed.

5.8 The representation of NEPAD

The African Renaissance and the initiatives that flow from it, such as NEPAD and at times the African Parliament are mentioned frequently, NEPAD itself as an initiative on its own is rarely mentioned. Even with this lack of specific coverage, certain conclusions can be drawn about *City Press*' representation of NEPAD.

First, the idea that South Africa is economically and politically more superior and more dominant than other African nations comes out strongly when dealing with issues concerning NEPAD, and indeed issues that concern governance on the continent. As much as South Africa's dominance is emphasised, it is also important to note that when this occurs, this dominance is nearly always connected with other African nations that are important to South Africa's dominance, or nations that pose a threat to that dominance.

For example, it is often repeated that NEPAD would not work nearly as well without Nigeria as a contributing partner; while North African states are routinely positioned as a threat to South Africa's political dominance on the continent. This emphasis on South Africa's dominance is likely to do with the fact that articles written about NEPAD are largely written from a South African perspective and are therefore framed from a South Africa-centric point of view. This emphasis on South Africa belied the fact that NEPAD is a programme of the African Union (AU), whose philosophy is the African Renaissance. What is interesting to note is that South Africa's dominance is for other African nations, a fact that is dealt with, with pragmatism. South Africa's lack of maturity or years since the end of apartheid are discussed as

part of South Africa's lack of credibility as the most politically dominant nation in Africa.

Second, NEPAD is often reported from a critical position or a position of analysis. The programme's positive and negative attributes are discussed at some length, whilst the idea the South Africa cannot push NEPAD through alone is also repeated. South Africa's position of reliance on states such as Nigeria to push through NEPAD's agendas causes ambivalence because South Africa's strengths are heavily emphasised.

The African Renaissance and its initiatives such as NEPAD, the African Union, the African Parliament and the African Renaissance are not unpacked in their contexts. *City Press* does not explain what NEPAD is, how it works, what NEPAD is supposed to do, and who is included in this initiatives.

When analysing the way in which *City Press* represents NEPAD, the question again arises as to whether or not *City Press* is representing NEPAD, the African Renaissance and other initiatives in a way that is different to Western coverage of African governance. *City Press*, when discussing politics on the continent, does not always inform as well as it could, and so understanding of the situation is flawed. Informing the reading public in a way that allows readers to participate in the political context that they live in is a vital part of the media's function. This allows readers to participate as citizens, and to discuss and analyse issues in their society (Curran, 2000, Westergaard, 1989, Golding and Murdock, 2000, Croteau and Hoynes, 2001, Siune, 1998, Fourie 2001.)

If taking into consideration South Africa's role in NEPAD, and NEPAD's role on the African agenda, *City Press*' public role of informing its audience about the governance of the continent is underperformed.

5.9 The representation of the African Renaissance

As a theme on its own, the African Renaissance can be considered under-reported. However, this could be explained by the fact that the African Renaissance can be regarded as more of a concept than an actual process that is taking place in Africa. The African Renaissance can thus be understood to be a “frame of mind” rather than a tangible and visible process. As a concept rather than an event, the African Renaissance is rendered less newsworthy than elections, coups, or even development issues.

In the same way as NEPAD is framed, the African Renaissance is also framed as a South African concept rather than an African one. As such, the expectation is that South Africa will drive the debate and steer the African Renaissance in some direction.

Also, as with the representation of NEPAD, the African Renaissance is not fully contextualized by *City Press*. *City Press* seems to assume that its readers know what the African Renaissance and what it aims to achieve.

This assumption makes sense when looking at *City Press*’ target market – the middle to upper middle class audience. This audience is assumed an educated one, and in touch with contemporary African issues. However, this assumption is dangerous as it absolves *City Press* of its duty to inform its audience in a manner that allows *City Press*’ audience to initiate debate and discussion and to analyse the news. These are the primary public functions of the media in a democratic political structure (Curran, 2000, Westergaard, 1989, Golding and Murdock, 2000, Curran: 2000 Croteau and Hoynes, 2001 Siune, 1998, Fourie, 2001).

5.10 HIV/AIDS

Although HIV/AIDS is an issue that affects all aspects of life on the continent, and as such is an extremely important theme, the number of articles dedicated to the discussion of HIV/AIDS is extremely low considering the importance of the issue. Given that HIV/AIDS also affects issues of governance, development, education, as well as issues of identity and the Renaissance, it would be expected that the issue of HIV/AIDS be incorporated into most articles. However, it is most likely that the very fact of HIV/AIDS's mutability that makes this issue such a problematic one. Because HIV/AIDS can be discussed in virtually every sense of political, economic and social reality, it can be a difficult issue to frame and discuss. As true as this is, it is *City Press*' public duty to inform its audience of issues that affects so many aspects of the African reality.

It is important to understand that although HIV/AIDS in South Africa itself is discussed frequently, HIV/AIDS as a continental issue is not covered as often. In this way, HIV/AIDS as an issue remains localized in the South African context, and is not contextualized as a continental issue.

HIV/AIDS, when discussed, is often discussed primarily as a health issue along with other major diseases that affect the African continent such as malaria and tuberculosis, and as such, HIV/AIDS is mentioned as an exacerbating factor especially when HIV/AIDS is mentioned in a developmental context. It is also interesting to note that the articles that discuss HIV/AIDS and its link to development and politics are agency copy, rather than the product of *City Press* columnists. *City Press*; lack of representation of the connection between HIV/AIDS to other issues is problematic because the lack of analysis short-changes the readers' understanding of the nature of HIV/AIDS in society.

City Press' problematic representation of HIV/AIDS could be attributed to *City Press*' notion of its audience. *City Press* targets itself to a middle-class audience. This, this audience can be considered an educated audience, an audience that is able to sift through news issues in a coherent manner. The presumption that audiences will be able to analyse the issue is counterproductive. This is contrary to the public role of the media, which is to inform its audience in a manner that allows analysis and discussion (Curran, 2000, Westergaard, 1989, Golding and Murdock, 2000, Curran: 2000 Croteau and Hoynes, 2001 Siune, 1998, Fourie, 2001).

Articles covering other topics are also part of *City Press*' representation of Africa. These issues range from the representation of famous personalities' deaths and weddings, to reports of crime in other parts of the continent. The representation of events that are not necessarily political or developmental in nature is a positive indication of *City Press*' coverage, especially as it occurs often. However the nature of the articles presents problematic representations.

What is notably missing or perhaps severely under-reported when writing about Africa are stories about daily life in other nations. For example, stories of events in the art, literary and performance arts are rare. This lack of attention to different cultures in Africa again speaks to a representation of Africa that is defined by political and economic matters, rather than a holistic approach to representing Africa.

The under-representation of culture, literature and performance arts emphasises *City Press*' focus on political issues and processes. The lack of balance between politics and culture could be interpreted as *City Press* defining and representing Africa, Africans, and African issues as political in nature. This is a problematic representation of Africa as it parallels international representation of Africa that focus largely on the political

processes in Africa, rather than the people who live on the continent, the different cultures on the continent, and African production of cultural artefacts.

City Press' focus on representing African political processes without balancing representations to include other aspects of African identities is not only contrary to *City Press*' stated intent in claiming itself to be 'Distinctly African', but it also fails to make use of issues outside of politics as points of discussion for other issues. For instance, a discussion on Africa's entertainment industry could lead to discussion on issues such as identity, development, HIV/AIDS. However, these issues are discussed as though they are independent of each other.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This study set out to analyse the representations of Africa, Africans and African issues. This study tried to establish whether the way in which *City Press* reports Africa is indeed ‘Distinctly African’ in representing Africa, Africans, and African issues. In addition, this study set out to analyse how the notion of ‘Distinctly African’ is used in the representation of Africa. This analysis was done by looking at the way in which *City Press* covered specific issues and themes relating to Africa. In these themes, language that contextualises Africa(ns), and language that frames and represents ideas in particular ways was analysed to investigate the way in which *City Press*’ representation was ‘Distinctly African’. African is in a state of constant change and redefinition. It is this constant state of change in the political, economic and cultural climate that makes the study of how African media represent Africa interesting and important.

Although *City Press* seems to aim for a more political agenda, as demonstrated by the slogans “Liberating South Africa one Sunday at a time”, *City Press* seems to document, more than analyse or suggest solutions, to African issues. In effect, *City Press* is attempting to engage with political, as well as cultural matters as opposed to simply reporting political and cultural events. *City Press* does not always succeed in engaging with African issues, events and ideas because *City Press*’ level of engagement is not substantive enough.

In leaning more towards documenting as opposed to analysing African issues, *City Press*’ claim to being ‘Distinctly African’ can be seen as problematic in some areas. What this means is that *City Press* should analyse and contextualise issues instead of only relaying the facts, something that Western

media are often accused of doing but that *City Press* does not necessarily change. Some issues, such as development and those concerning politics are given more attention than others. In comparison, issues of identity, the African Renaissance, NEPAD and HIV/AIDS are not reported on as frequently. This could indicate lack of clarity on the part of *City Press*' editors, about what African issues are, and how they should be reported.

City Press focuses heavily on politics and development, to the detriment of other issues. In focussing as heavily as *City Press* does on politics and development, it could be taken to mean that politics and development are the most important issues in Africa, that these are 'African' issues, and that Africa can be best understood in the context of these issues. Representing Africa in this context then raises the issue of how different the focus on these issues is to what non-Africans consider African issues. When Africa is discussed in international news, the focus is on Africa's political growth (or lack thereof) and development issues. The preponderance of political and developmental news stories in *City Press* does little to change the notion that Africa is only of interest in the discussion of political and economic development or backtracking. Thus, it could be said that *City Press*' representation is not as distinct as it could be. However, the fact that *City Press* covers and represents Africa as much as it does is indeed distinct. *City Press* representation is distinct because of the amount of coverage it receives; therefore, there is more room for representing Africa, African and African issues in more ways.

This study analysed only those articles that are broadly Africa, rather than South African articles. It is however important to note that analysing *City Press*' representation of Africa while focussing only on articles that are broadly African as opposed to South African creates the impression that some issues are under-reported. HIV/AIDS, for example, is an issue that is reported frequently in *City Press* when it concerns South Africa specifically, but is

under-reported as an African phenomenon. Again, this indicates a South Africa-centric point of view, a view from which Mathatha Tsedu claimed *City Press* was moving.

The South Africa-centricity of *City Press* also indicates that although *City Press* covers Africa, there is still a ‘them’ and ‘us’ mentality, marking South Africa as different and separate from the rest of the continent. Thus, *City Press* is distinctly South African, rather than distinctly African. This representation is likely unintentional. All the same, it points to a disconnect between Tsedu’s stated aims, and the reality of putting ‘Distinctly African’ to work. This is also contrary to Tsedu’s aim to “broadly South Africa within Africa” (3 October 2004).

Defining an African identity that connects all Africans is a difficult task. That the *City Press* is ‘African’ is contestable. To say that *City Press* is ‘distinctly’ African would be to say that something indisputably “African” exists. Because of the multiplicities of African identities, this would present a difficult task. One of the most consuming challenges that *City Press* faces is the definition of ‘African’. It would be interesting to see where *City Press*’ notion of ‘Africaness’ leads in the future. *City Press* should be commended for its attempt to be more ‘African’; however, ‘African’ is so broad as to render *City Press*’ assertion that it is distinctly African highly problematic.

City Press’ representation of Africa and the problems that it brings up could be taken to mean that the idea of reporting Africa in ways other than those that concern politics and development has yet to take hold. This may be dominant because thought is that more development and more democratisation will benefit Africa. However, this means that we as Africans still do not know how Africans live their daily lives. Life is not always about politics or other ‘serious’ issues, and possibly in this respect, *City Press* is ‘too serious’.

To define the content in *City Press* as ‘Distinctly African’ would be problematic as *City Press* has yet to define African issues in a manner that is set apart from “others” representations of Africa. The questioning of the meaning of ‘Distinctly African’ is especially pertinent because of the notion that even the idea of a single, unifying African identity has been imposed on Africa, not generated by Africa, as is discussed by Mengara (2001). The notion of a single African identity is one that has been imposed to fulfil the needs of colonialisation, and this notion has yet to be dispelled. Thus, we can understand that *City Press* may be propagating an idea or ideology that is problematic to being with, one that may not have been fully analysed before the repositioning of *City Press*.

Because *City Press*’ content cannot be said to have reached the stage where it represents African issues in an ‘African’ way, we are left to consider ‘Distinctly African’ as a strategy to grow the black middle class reading marker, or as a strategy to gain more black middle class readers. It must be considered, however, that this study looks at the first two years after the *City Press* slogan changed. During this time, it should be taken into account that *City Press* might be defining the concept of ‘Distinctly African’; it is not yet a well-established concept.

Because the concept of ‘Distinctly African’ is still being established, this means that the manner in which Africa, Africans, and African issues are covered is still under negotiation, and has yet to come into itself. With more time, a firmer idea of what constitutes the notion of ‘Africaness’ and African values will emerge. In time, the notion of an African media, not a media in Africa, will be better realised. This may mean that the way in which African news is conceived, understood, and written may change in time.

However, this leaves us with the question of the nature of *City Press*' representation. The study set out to answer the question of whether *City Press*' representation of Africa is 'distinct' in terms of content, or in terms of its audience. This study found that although *City Press* represents Africa very often, the nature of its representation leads to the conclusion that the audience is distinct, rather than the content. This can be seen in the manner in which *City Press* assumes that audiences have background knowledge on many issues, such as the African Renaissance, NEPAD, and identity, as well other issues. This manner of presenting issues is based on the assumption that the audience is middle to upper-middle class, an audience segment that is assumed educated, or has the resources to inform itself.

Another lack in *City Press* representation of Africa involves the near absence of articles about the different and varying cultures of Africa. The paper purports to be 'Distinctly African' and yet the 'Africaness' on display is more a matter of skin colour than that of investigating what constitutes the Africa, and indeed, what the African is outside of politics and development. Thus, there is little discussion of Africa's cultural industries, such as music and movies, and African literature. There is little discussion of the social aspect of African's lives. This is contrary to what the editors themselves conceive of how Africans should be represented.

This study set out to analyse the way in which Africa, Africans and African issues are represented in *City Press*. The study did not look at how others view *City Press*' representation of Africa. Nor did this study set out to find the impact of *City Press*' representation of Africa and Africans. This leaves a wide scope for further research into the manner in which Africans represent themselves, and the manner in which Africans represent other Africans.

This study could also be taken further by analysing the representations of Africans in more than one publication in order to do a comparative analysis. In this way, the study would look to find if other publications report Africa (ns) and the issues involved in a different way. This would also go some way in finding whether or not an African media is developing. This would include analysing papers such as *Sunday Times*, *Mail and Guardian*, *Sunday Independent*. In addition, a study could involve looking at other major papers around the continent.

A p p e n d i x

Interview Guides

***City Press* Journalists and editors**

1. What do you mean by ‘Distinctly African’?
2. What do you think this strategy will achieve?
3. How different is *City Press*’ new strategy from that of other, similar publications. Is there something different in your selection of news on Africa?
4. How does *City Press* incorporate a ‘Distinctly African’ style into everyday journalism?
5. Is the ‘Distinctly African’ strategy based on a concern with ideology, or a concern with revenue?
6. Is the ‘Distinctly African’ strategy contributing anything to the concept of Africa and African issues/people/news other than a new way of looking at newspaper-buying markets?
7. How does *City Press* source ‘Distinctly African’ news? Are there bureaus across Africa?
8. If *City Press* uses international news sources for international news, does that not mean that *City Press* is simply perpetuating the sort of information you find to be problematic?
9. Is a ‘Distinctly African’ strategy not merely an attempt to focus on good news about Africa and ignoring wars, conflict, diseases and corruption?

10. Which is more important, a 'distinctly African' paper that looks at Africa and its issues in a way other media don't, or a 'distinctly black' audience?
11. Isn't your advertising all encompassing and not 'Distinctly African'?
12. Are you seeking to develop a form of African journalism?

Owners/Management

1. What do you mean by 'Distinctly African'?
2. What do you think this strategy will achieve?
3. Who came up with the idea for a 'Distinctly African' *City Press* – management or editorial staff?
4. How does the strategy of a 'Distinctly African' paper fit into your vision for Media24?
5. Is this strategy viable in the long-term or is it a medium-term strategy to reposition *City Press*?
6. Has *City Press*' new strategy affected circulation and advertising?
7. How marketable is a black middle class audience to advertisers?
8. How different is *City Press*' new strategy from that of other, similar publications?
9. Is this strategy relevant only to *City Press*, or do the 'Distinctly African' strategies extend to all Media24 publications?

Advertisers and Advertisers

1. What do you think 'Distinctly African' means?
2. What do you think this strategy will achieve?
3. How does the strategy of a 'Distinctly African' paper fit into the South African media market?

4. Does this strategy help stratify South African newspaper audiences along racial, economic and political lines?
5. Has this new strategy changed *City Press*' place in the media industry or was it meant to?
6. Is the black upper middle class audience viable to advertisers?
7. How different is *City Press*' new strategy from that of other, similar publications?⁴

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