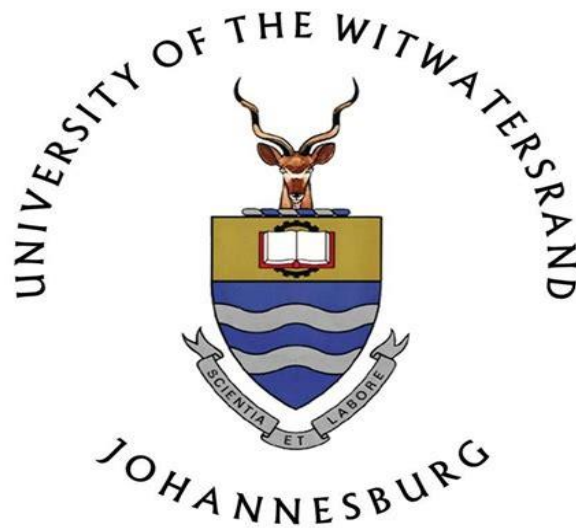


Token transformation? A critical political economy of the media analysis of ownership and content diversity in South Africa's print media

By

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**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Media Studies**

University of the Witwatersrand

Johannesburg

May 2019

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own original unaided work and it has not been previously submitted for a degree or diploma at any other university. Where other people's works have been used, this has been fully acknowledged. This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa.

Signed

.....

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the generations before me that were not born in privilege, but who worked extremely hard and persevered successfully in a system that prejudiced them.

To my grandparents

- Andhra Andrew (1935-2009) & Loyce Andrew (1939-2017)
- Paul Govender (1937 -1999) & Grace Govender

To my parents

- Larry Govenden & Ruth Govenden

I appreciate all your sacrifices and the privileges I have access to because of each of you.

To my granny Loyce Andrew who passed away during my PhD research, who valued education and worked overtime at her factory job to pay for my mother's University fees. It is strong women like you who are the pillars and unsung heroes of our families and society.

Thank you!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to first and foremost thank God for His wisdom and all sufficient grace that enabled me to complete this PhD. I extend a special thank you to my supervisor Prof. Sarah Chiumbu for her unwavering support, critical guidance and vast input into my PhD, and for not giving up on me. I consider it to have been an honour and privilege to have been supervised by an academic of your intellectual ability and talent. I have grown in academic leaps and bounds because of working with you. You are the best! Special gratitude goes to the NIHSS-SAHUDA Doctoral Scholarship for funding my PhD, thank you for this important contribution. Thank you to the HOD of the Wits Media Studies department, Prof. Dina Ligaga, for her support and kindness during my memorable time working for the department whilst completing my PhD studies, which marked the start of my academic career.

Thank you to Anesu Kuhudzai and Joshua Govenden for doing a sterling job of the statistics and data analysis of the study. Sincere gratitude to the panellists of the SLLM Media Transformation seminar: Lumko Mtimde, Prof. Jane Duncan, Dr Mashilo Boloka, Prof. Glenda Daniels and Sekoatlane Phamodi. Thank you for taking the time to contribute your valuable input into my research.

A heartfelt thank you to my people who are my pillars and rays of sunshine: Aaisha Dadi Patel, Merle Govind, Saaliha Ahmed, Vidhya Sana, Justin Jegels, Reshma Lakha-Singh, Shirona Patel, Pontsho Pilane, Sylvia Nomsa Skhosana, Charmaine Panganai, Najma Desai, Anisa Desai, and Viraj Suparsad. To the academics that I admire and aspire to be like: Prof. Pumla Gqola, Dr Ufuoma Akpojivi, Prof. Tommaso Milani, and Dr Cobus Van Staden. Thank you for believing in me, always making time for me, and impacting my academic career with your greatness and “fabulousness”. Thank you to Dr Anne Dou, Dr Dimitris Kitis, Dr Kate Skinner and Nadia Bulbulia for imparting your wisdom, for the many memorable conversations, and enriching my PhD journey. I would like to thank Dr Libby Meintjes, Prof. Ruksana Osman, Prof. Jackie Dugard, and Rejane Williams for their support during a very difficult time in my PhD journey.

I thank my family for their support and understanding: my parents Larry Govenden and Ruth Govenden, my siblings Joshua Govenden and Bernadette Govenden. Special mention to my sister bestie Jasmine Govenden for her support, love and care. I also thank my cousins Leo and Selina Naidoo, and Chrystall Vallen for being my people through thick and thin.

My visit to Norway as a Visiting Scholar in 2017 was a memorable part of my PhD journey and was a useful information exchange experience. I was hosted by The Center for Multilingualism in Society across the Lifespan (MultiLing) at the University of Oslo through the INTPART partnership. A heartfelt thank you to MutliLing's staff for their hospitality, inclusion, and kindness: Prof. Elizabeth Lanza, Prof. Unn Røyneland, Mari Otnes, Elisabeth F. Neuhaus, Malene Bøyum, André Nilsson Nannevig, Mina Finstad Berg, and Kristin Myklestu.

ABSTRACT

Print media transformation in South Africa has been an ongoing area of debate and contention in the first twenty years of democracy. Especially given the country's history of colonialism and apartheid, where racism was institutionalised and impacted the character and functioning of the print media. The attainment of true transformation in the press is critical to reverse the injustices of the past and to ensure today's print media is reflective of South African society and its many axes of diversity.

This study critically analyses the extent of print media transformation in the first twenty years of democracy to decipher whether it amounts to true transformation or token transformation. The study understands true transformation of the media as holistic and deep transformation, where the ownership, content and staffing of the media reflects the diversity of South African society in terms of race, socio-economic status (class), gender, religion, sexual orientation, region, and language (Boloka and Krabill 2000).

In the South African context, ownership diversity and content diversity are the key measures of transformation. This research contributes a holistic and empirical study to the transformation debate by analysing transformation across a long time period of the first twenty years of democracy, and focusing on both ownership and content diversity, as well as exploring the relationship between the two. Previously, the print media transformation debate and scholarship has focused narrowly on the ownership aspect.

In this regard, the study conducts a systemic critique of the broad transformation agenda from the vantage points of ownership, control and power. The study also explores the extent of print media diversity by analysing the coverage of three issues that have framed post-apartheid South Africa. Namely: socio-economics issues, labour issues and protests, government vs. big business.

The study adopts four theoretical frameworks – the revised role of the media in a liberal democracy; the public interest role of the media; critical political economy of the media; and theories of power. The research design of the study consisted of a triangulation of research methods with qualitative and quantitative paradigms. The research methods used are document analysis, expert opinions of a Media Transformation seminar panel and content analysis of a large sample of articles spanning in the first twenty years of democracy. The historically

English print media companies are the focus of analysis: Tiso Blackstar Group (formerly Times Media), Independent Media, as well as M&G Media.

The major findings of this thesis demonstrate that press transformation in the first twenty years of democracy to a great extent resembles token transformation. Tokenism in the regard that black people have replaced white people in some ownership and staffing aspects, but not in a meaningful way that disrupts elite class continuities, “inferential racism” of negative stereotypes of the black race, and white racial power at the top of the hierarchy of press institutions. Print media transformation is also significantly tainted by the overly neo-liberal nature of the press in a number of areas found by the study. The study also finds that transformation is a point of politization of the press.

The content findings of the study demonstrate that ownership matters to some extent. Apart from ownership, the following components also matter to print media transformation and need to be addressed: the media system as a whole; the neo-liberal architecture; journalism training; and a print media specific transformation policy. Thus, the broad agenda of press transformation requires a normative re-think. The study recommends that the press consider adopting the principles of developmental journalism that is based on the redeeming nature of the concept, to substantially address the content diversity and transformation shortcomings uncovered by the study. This requires a paradigm shift that would take a long time period to realize, in addition a review needs to be conducted to consider the feasibility of such a change. A feasible short term solution to solve the fundamental issue of media diversity in both ownership and content, is the return of alternative media to the post-apartheid media terrain to play a developmental role.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABASA	Association of Black Accountants of South Africa
ABC	Audit Bureau of Circulations
ANC	African National Congress
B-BBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
BEE	Black economic empowerment
BLA	Black Lawyers Association
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DA	Democratic Alliance
FXI	Freedom of Expression Institute
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy
GNU	Government of National Unity
IBA	Independent Broadcasting Authority
ICASA	Independent Communications Authority of South Africa
ISS	Institute of Security Studies
LSM	Living Standards Measure
MDDA	Media Development and Diversity Agency
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NP	National Party
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress
PDMTTT	Print and Digital Media Transformation Task Team
PDMSA	Print and Digital Media South Africa
PFC	Press Freedom Commission
PIC	Public Investment Corporation
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Plan
SAARF	South African Audience Research Foundation
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SACP	South African Communist Party
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SANEF	South African National Editors' Forum

SLLM	Wits, School of Literature, Language and the Media
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
UK	United Kingdom
USAASA	The Universal Service and Access Agency of South Africa

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND: THE PRINT MEDIA TRANSFORMATION CONTEXT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Chapter 1

Introducing the study

1.1 Introduction

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. Problem is when there is a discord between the aims of shareholders and the views of the publication as expressed by the editor (Cyril Ramaphosa, *Financial Mail*, 14 May 1999).

In the citation above, Cyril Ramaphosa, now President of South Africa¹, speaks here in his capacity as a media mogul in 1999, arguing that ownership is amongst the chief influencers of media content. He highlights an assumed universal understanding of the power of ownership as a central determinant of the interests and perspectives served in the media. In the South African print media context, ownership and content diversity are key indicators of transformation. Similar to Ramaphosa's articulation of the influence of ownership on content, the press in South Africa adopted an ownership-focused approach to transformation (see B-BBEE Act No. 53 of 2003). Clearly based on the premise that black and diverse ownership will result in transformed content.

This thesis analyses whether print media transformation in the first twenty years of democracy can be regarded as "Token transformation" or "True transformation". In the South African context, token transformation is widely understood as racial substitution where white people are replaced with black people in an exercise of numbers, for the purpose of window dressing of racial diversity. True transformation on the other hand goes beyond this kind of surface level transformation, and invokes deep and meaningful transformation. Boloka and Krabill's (2000: 76) conceptualisation of successful transformation is instructive,

For the record, then, we define the successful transformation of South African media as being achieved when it reflects, in its ownership, staffing, and product, the society within which it operates, not only in terms of race, but also socio-economic status, gender, religion, sexual orientation, region, language, etc. This is only possible if access is opened – again in ownership, staffing, and product – not only to the emerging black elite, but also to grassroots communities of all colours.

¹ Since February 2018, see: <https://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2018-02-15-cyril-ramaphosa-has-been-elected-president-of-south-africa/>

Boloka and Krabill (2000) capture a holistic understanding of transformation as encompassing both ownership and content, and also speak to the need for the media to reflect the diversity and differences of South African society. This holistic vantage point of media transformation will be adopted as the study's measure of true transformation.

In this regard, the study investigates the levels of diversity in ownership and content as key components of media transformation. It also empirically engages with the question of whether ownership matters, based on the extent of content diversity found by the study. Whether the racial changes of ownership in the first twenty years of democracy, facilitated by the black economic empowerment system, has resulted in true and meaningful transformation in both ownership and content is the subject of inquiry of this research.

The study contributes an in-depth analytic study of print media transformation to South African scholarship within the framework of diversity of ownership, content diversity, the media's role in democracy, the public interest, and power. The print media transformation debate and scholarship have thus far focused narrowly on ownership. The value of this thesis is that it provides an empirical picture of the extent of content diversity across a long time period of twenty years. It selects key issues that have framed the wider post-apartheid South African context and analyses these in terms of content diversity. These issues are: socio-economics issues; labour issues and protests; and government vs. big business. This thesis is also novel in that it does not analyse ownership in isolation, it conducts a systemic critique of the broad transformation agenda in terms of ownership, control and power.

The print media market in South Africa consists of the Big four: Independent Media, Tiso Blackstar Group (formerly Times Media²); Media 24 (Naspers is the parent company), and Caxton. The *Mail & Guardian* newspaper (owned by M&G Media), although holding a smaller share of the market, is also a significant player. Each of these print media companies were started in the apartheid-era and were demarcated into the English press and Afrikaans press, as will be discussed in this chapter. The *Mail & Guardian* newspaper was regarded as an "alternative" newspaper and published in the English language. This study analyses the historically English print media companies: Independent Media; Tiso Blackstar Group and M&G Media, as these have undergone far more ownership changes in comparison to the Afrikaans print media companies (to be discussed further in chapter 4).

² Times Media was renamed to Tiso Blackstar Group in June 2017
(<https://mybroadband.co.za/news/business/214976-times-media-renamed-to-tiso-blackstar-group.html>)

1.2 A background of press media diversity and transformation debates in South Africa

Print media diversity and transformation in South Africa have come under scrutiny and criticism. Throughout the first twenty years of democracy debates are ongoing about inadequate diversity and transformation in the press. A South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) (2000) report, *Fault lines, Inquiry into Racism in the Media*,³ found:

Most of the print publications are owned by a small and limited group of publishing houses. This concentration of ownership can stifle media diversity and prevent the media from properly reflecting the whole South African reality (SAHRC 2000: 92).

At the ushering in of the millennium and South Africa's six year-old democracy, the SAHRC flagged that the level of press concentration was an impediment to attaining content diversity that is reflective of the South African reality. The report also expressed concern about language diversity and noted that the challenge of diversity was to be seen within the broader challenge of transformation of the media. Amongst the recommendations of the SAHRC (2000) report was that the private sector and Government partner to promote and encourage greater diversity of ownership in the print sector.

Other research conducted in the same period also revealed a lack of diversity and transformation in the press. UNESCO-funded research conducted by Gogo (2000) of the University of Natal found, white men held 76% of the top and senior management positions and 49% of middle management positions in the media industry (cited in Boloka and Krabill 2000: 83). Whilst only 22% to 24% of these positions were held by people of colour (cited in Boloka and Krabill 2000: 83). Similarly, Jacobs (1999) posits that the print media system in the first five years of post-apartheid South Africa was still largely white in its ownership, management and editorial make up.

As democracy has progressed, little has changed. The Print and Digital Media South Africa (PDMSA) *Transformation Task Team report (2013)* found that transformation of the four traditional print media houses - Independent Media, Tiso Blackstar group, Media 24, Caxton - was inadequate. The report underscored the need for the print media industry to transform, flagging the poor ratings scored in transformation of ownership and control⁴. Similarly, the

³ <http://www.sahrc.org.za/home/21/files/Reports/Racismin%20the%20media.pdf2000.pdf>

⁴ *City Press* newspaper. 29 September 2013. "Print and Digital Media SA report on transformation in the media industry".

former President of South Africa Jacob Zuma, whilst in office, underscored the importance of addressing transformation and concentration of print media ownership, stating that transformation of the print media was lagging behind and cautioned the market domination of the Big four⁵.

Press content diversity remains an area that is constantly criticised. The main criticisms directed at media content are that it caters predominantly for an elite, urban and white male audience, is homogenous and hyper commercial (see for example, ANC conferences 2007, 2011, 2012; SAHRC 2000 report). One of the hot topics featured in the public domain is South Africa's "excessive media ownership and control at the hand of a very few players that is hurting democracy, stifling black voices"⁶ (Da Silva 2010). Reid (2015), in *Daily Maverick*⁷, contends that a widely mooted political argument about South African media, print media in particular, is that it is untransformed and offers little scope for access to a broad range of opinions and ideas.

The South African print media has made great strides to transform, diversify and democratise since the advent of democracy. However, print media and ownership content diversity within the broader theme of transformation has been identified as an ongoing challenge, despite the overhaul in 1994 of media systems, which were subjected to policy, regulatory and systematic changes forming part of the democracy and transformation project⁸.

In the pre-Apartheid period, print media content catered largely for the white minority, promoted racist ideologies that white people are superior and black people are inferior, and was not reflective of real South African society. Similarly, print media ownership was white and concentrated in the hands of a few entities. The press was divided into two groups: The English press and Afrikaner press. The English Press comprised of Times Media (now Tiso Blackstar Group) and the Argus Group (now Independent Media), whereas the Afrikaans group was made up of Naspers (now parent company of Media 24) and Perskor (now Caxton). There were high levels of concentration of ownership in the press up to the late 1980's. The newspaper sector has its roots in the mining industry, and later in Afrikaner Nationalism that amongst others, promoted the language of Afrikaans (Angelopulo and Potgieter 2013; Berger 2000).

⁵ <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/Politics/Print-media-must-transform-Zuma-20140227>

⁶ <http://www.bizcommunity.com/Article/196/15/45390.html>

⁷ <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2015-06-10-africas-worst-new-internet-censorship-law-everything-you-dont-want-to-know-but-need-to/#.VX2r6xOqqko>

⁸ In 1994 South Africa's held its first Multi-party elections and marked the transition from a rule of the Apartheid regime to a democratic dispensation in 1994

South Africa is twenty four years well into democracy and yet the narrative of white concentrated ownership patterns and lack of content diversity live on. There is a need for a holistic and in-depth study of print media transformation that goes further than a focus on ownership. A diverse media system, in terms of ownership and content, has long been conceptualised as a prerequisite in cultivating a healthy democracy⁹. Transformation in the South African context is an important prerequisite in cultivating a print media system that enables a true South African democracy and the public interest.

In addition, recent ownership changes in the print media landscape have triggered debates regarding transformation and political independence, as well as questions of whether some companies are moving backwards in their transformation progress. Significant ownership changes are apparent since the end of Apartheid in 1994 (Duncan 2000). In 2013, the media landscape underwent significant changes with the launch of the *New Age* newspaper, 24-hour news channel ANN7, and new local owners of media company Independent Media.¹⁰ In June 2013, the change of ownership from foreign to local of the Independent Media group gave rise to a furore of media attention and criticism, despite this being the biggest transformation milestone since the empowerment deals of the early 1990's¹¹. A complaint was submitted to the Competition Commission by a group of journalists and editors regarding the secrecy surrounding Sekunjalo's two-billion-rand purchase of Independent Media¹². In an open letter to the Competition Commission, the erstwhile Chairperson of the South African National Editors Forum (SANEF), Nic Dawes, expressed concern about the secrecy of the acquisition and security of staff jobs at Independent Media. However, Independent Media's new Chairman, Iqbal Surve, refused to reveal the identity of the shareholders until the official vote¹³. The Competition Commission approved the acquisition¹⁴, spurring a vast number of reactions to the takeover. The South African Communist Party (SACP) accused SANEF of racism at the heart of its criticism. Following this initial uproar, the identity of the main shareholders were finally revealed, notably the Sekunjalo consortium members have strong political ties to the ruling party ANC (to be discussed further in chapter 5).

⁹ <http://www.globalissues.org/article/158/corporate-influence-in-the-media>

¹⁰ *Mail & Guardian*. 30 August 2013. "South Africa's (political) media landscape"

¹¹ Media online. 3 June 2013. "Sekunjalo Independent Media consortium will reveal funders".

¹² *Business Day*. 17 June 2013. "Irish parent approves Independent News & Media SA sale".

¹³ IOL. 30 May 2103. "Sanef concerned about INMSA deal".

¹⁴ My Broadband online, 28 July 2013. "Sekunjalo acquisition of Independent News & Media approved"

As a result of this takeover, the issue of ownership power and its influence on content, was thrust into the spotlight following a series of actions by the new owner of the Independent Media, including the firing of *Cape Times* editor Alide Dasnois¹⁵. Two years after the change of ownership, changes in content were spotted by regular readers of its newspapers,

Reading the *Cape Times* every morning the last few months was like watching a huge train smash in slow motion. I have never in my long career in journalism seen such a deliberate attempt at destroying a newspaper. My suspicion is that the new owners are using the paper to fight the ANC's battles for the 2016 local elections for them, and afterwards it will be closed down and incorporated into the Cape Argus. The last few weeks the newspaper's main theme, dominating the front page, has been the middle-aged poo-chucking UCT student Chumani Maxwele's fight with the UCT administration. This morning's banner headline was again: 'Apartheid-style UCT lashed'. On several occasions the reporting on the matter completely twisted the UCT management's statements. The reporting is generally poor and the decisions on what to cover and what not and what to give prominence to are bizarre. What a tragedy to see such a once proud newspaper being killed off (Max Du Preez, in *Politics Web*, 30 September 2015)¹⁶.

Another notable change in the print media landscape occurred in 2012. The Avusa media group was bought by the Tiso Blackstar group¹⁷. After this ownership change, Tiso Blackstar group was accused of moving backwards in transformation as a result of it, in particular, appointing an all-male board with significant white racial representation¹⁸.

1.3 Research Problem

Although ownership transfers [in South Africa] meant a de-racialisation of the [print] industry at boardroom level, the market segmentation still displays continuities with the social polarisation of apartheid (Wasserman and De Beer 2005: 40).

The extent of print media transformation in South Africa after twenty years of democracy remains a continuum of contentious debates, culminating in 2000 when the country's respected media studies scholars disagreed over the extent of media transformation (see Duncan 2014b for a synopsis of these debates). In this debate, proponent of transformation, Berger (2000), contends that significant changes could be seen in the first six years of democracy: in legal context, ownership, staffing, race, gender, as well as class. Critics of transformation on the other hand posit that transformation of the industry was limited to class continuity in

¹⁵ See <http://mg.co.za/article/2014-09-26-ex-cape-times-editor-files-damning-allegations-against-surve>

¹⁶ Politics Web. 30 September 2015. "The Cape Times: From hero to zero"

¹⁷ *Business Day*. 23 September 2014. "Times Media Group swings back into profit".

¹⁸ *Business Day*. 23 September 2014. "Times Media Group swings back into profit".

ownership, control, as well as audiences (Tomaselli 1997; Memele 1999; Teer-Tomaselli and Tomaselli 2001; Boloka and Krabill 2000). Since then, the transformation dilemma has remained a pertinent topic of contention.

This research firstly, locates its pertinence and problem in the ongoing debate of whether true print media transformation has been achieved. Alternatively, are its critics correct in arguing South Africa's transformation is merely at the level of racial substitution, that has continued class dominance due to the neo-liberal system the industry adopted in 1994. Tomaselli (1997) and Memele (1999) argue that media changed in race, but not in class.

This research secondly, locates its pertinence and problem in the lack of empirical scholarship on print media content transformation. Berger (2000:8) theoretically links ownership with content, "diverse racial ownership is also arguably a more fertile foundation for more racially representative media content, even if the latter does not necessarily follow the former". This positionality, whilst theoretically correct, lacks in empirical evidence. This trend is seen in most literature about ownership and content in South Africa. It is precisely this gap in empirical scholarship that this study is attempting to fill. This study will contribute an empirical and full-scale study, speaking to the question of true transformation within the framework of diversity of both ownership and content diversity. The study empirically engages with the relationship between ownership and content. As Duncan (2014: 89) posits, "the fact that newsrooms have more black people and women has not automatically led to a transformation of content on these levels". This study contributes a contemporary, and holistic study to this debate – it looks at both ownership and content diversity in an approximately twenty-year time period of 1992-2014.

1.4 Gaps in Media studies scholarship

A paucity of studies has researched print media transformation in South Africa. Some earlier studies focus on ownership transformation developments in the immediate post-apartheid period. It should be noted however that there was generally a scarcity of media transformation research in the 1994-1999 period. Tomaselli (1997: 16) conducts a comprehensive political economy analysis of ownership changes, including empowerment deals in the print media between 1990-1997. He highlights the need for an in-depth study into the print media, "considerable comment has occurred on post-apartheid print media restructuring but little of

this work is of in-depth analytical nature”. Berger (2000), as well as Boloka and Krabill (2000), both discuss key developments of ownership changes. Berger (2000) is instructive in analysing the rate of transformation from the vantage point of race, democratisation and development in the first six years of democracy. He concludes, “overall there has been substantial transformation, and that the changes have been far greater than the continuities” (Berger 2000: 1). Boloka and Krabill (2000) differ with Berger’s viewpoint by taking the position that these ownership changes actually amount to racial tokenism, criticising Berger’s (2000) research as a superficial, face value analysis of transformation by failing to question whether true transformation is achieved in product and content.

Other studies similarly conduct a historical overview of media transformation more generally. Duncan (2000) looks at what constitutes transformation in Southern African media. She analyses transformation at the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) and print media, and is informative in giving a broad overview, as well as historical trajectory, of media transformation. These studies are instructive to this study, however, they are outdated, highlighting the need for a contemporary print media transformation study.

A few studies have engaged with media transformation debates, developments and discourses more deeply since the end of Apartheid. Duncan’s (2011) study on print media transformation dilemma examines earlier and recent transformation debates, the print media ownership concentration, the state of broad-based black economic empowerment, editorial and content transformation, and the extent to which the newspaper industry has transformed. Steenveld’s (2012: 125) study looks at media transformation and democracy after apartheid, and mainly examines critiques of the media “which argue that the contemporary structures of media ownership promote the reproduction of its history of news values, routines and practices, thereby compromising its ability to serve the interests of the new democracy”. In addition, the discourses of transformation that emerged after 1994 are examined in relation to the ANC’s formulations on transformation. Steenveld (2004) argues for a cultural approach to the study of media transformation that takes into account the interplay of economic structures, and the social discourses as shapers of the media. Since these early new millennium studies, there has been a scarcity of print media transformation research, which marks a considerable silence of scholarship in a period of over ten years.

There is also a lack of contemporary research about the impact of these ownership changes since 1994 and whether transformation has, in fact, resulted in truly transformed content. Friedman (2011:108) points to the need to examine the relationship between the racial changes in ownership and content,

While there has been racial change in the media since 1994, whites have retained significant decision making power in the press; whether it is used to perpetuate stereotypes which undermine democracy in a very direct way is an important question that deserves sustained debate.

There are a few studies about the influence of changing ownership patterns and resultant influences on content, but they do not directly speak to the transformation issue. For example, Jacobs (1999) study critically considers changing ownership patterns of the *Sowetan* and *City Press* on editorial change using coverage of Denel¹⁹ as a case study. Overall however there is a lack of South African scholarship regarding the relationship between ownership and media content.

It is also evident that a number of studies examine ownership changes and diversity in isolation. There are also a few studies that have examined ownership concentration in different areas of the South African media industry, benchmarked against the following concepts and theories: marketing, the flow of information, democracy, demographics of media employment, government relations, control and freedom of expression (Hunter et al. 2006, Pottinger 1992, Botma 2011, Tomaselli 2003, Leshin 2010, Wasserman 2005, Bussiek 2006). Angelopulo and Potgieter (2013) looked at media ownership patterns during a specified historical period in South Africa, aimed at assessing trends in ownership. They described conditions that led to ownership patterns using the Noam Index as the measurement tool. Wasserman and De Beer (2005: 29) motivate the pertinence of research into changes of ownership since democracy in 1994,

The changes of media ownership patterns since the advent of democracy have become a productive area of research for both critical and functionalist scholars interested in the South African Political economy.

¹⁹ Denel SOC Ltd is a state-owned commercially-driven company and strategic partner for innovative defence, security and related technology solutions (<http://www.denel.co.za/>)

This study examines the changes of ownership patterns within the broader transformation agenda and in relation to content diversity. It goes beyond an isolated ownership study, and is in-depth and examines print media transformation over a long time period.

1.5 Aims and research questions

This study aims to critically analyse the nature of print media transformation in the first twenty years of democracy. It firstly aims to critique print media transformation in terms of ownership patterns, control and power. Secondly, it aims to decipher the extent to which print media content exhibits levels of diversity that reflects transformation. In this regard, the research questions adopted by the study are:

1. To what extent are the ownership patterns, control and power mechanisms of Tiso Blackstar group, Independent Media, and the M&G Media Limited transformed?
2. To what extent does print content (front page, editorial page) exhibit levels of diversity that reflects transformation?

1.6 Research rationale

The author's interest in the democratic role of print media started at her first job at a South African human rights media NGO, that monitored the print media's reportage for quality and constitutional principles such as, coverage of minority groups (women, children, persons with disabilities), elections, political parties and African foreigners. Research revealed that print content in South Africa was not adequately adopting a human rights-based approach in its coverage. Research about national election periods revealed that, coverage was largely events based at the expense of citizen interests and lacked in-depth reporting. During elections, human rights issues were under reported, such as socio-economic challenges, service delivery, unemployment, housing, and crime. These trends were not only apparent during election periods but were reminiscent of the print media's coverage on a daily basis.

Subsequent to this tenure, the author worked as a Researcher for the SANEF and PDMSA formed Press Freedom Commission (PFC), established to re-cast a new South African print regulatory system. The PFC conducted public hearings, international research missions and

best practice research. Amongst the leading issues that surfaced in the public hearing process (besides regulatory issues), were of transformation, inordinate amounts of ownership concentration and a lack of media content diversity in South Africa. The PFC was formed in July 2011, which coincided with the UK's hacking scandal²⁰, which brought to the fore the negative effects of ownership power (Rupert Murdoch) on media products. The PFC's international research mission included a visit to the UK's disgraced self-regulatory Press Complaints Commission (PCC)²¹. It was during this process that the author became interested in the relationship between the decrease of diverse citizen-oriented content and commercial oligopolistic ownership trends.

This study also opted to focus on "print media" because the rate of transformation in the print media has been the subject of much criticism in comparison to broadcasting. As echoed in the following sentiments, "the transformation of broadcasting has been far more marked than in print media" (Duncan 2014b:88). Jacobs (1999) notes that in 1994 different traditions of regulation were applied to different mediums: state regulation for broadcasting and market regulation for print. Broadcasting is regulated by ICASA (the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa) that is mandated in policy and legislation to ensure significant black ownership and control of the sector, and further regulated for fairness and diversity of views.

The author is of the view that this area of study examining print media specifically is necessary because the rise of neo-liberalism globally has had implications for media ownership and content which is worthy of further investigation for the South African context. In addition, the print media transformation project in South Africa is critical to democracy and the Constitution²² (the supreme law of the land). The attainment of true transformation in print media is significantly important to attaining an equal, colour-blind and non-sexist democratic society. The following sub-sections extrapolate on these rationales of the study.

²⁰ In July 2011 a simmering Scandal erupted in the U.K., which led to the closure of the *News of the World* (NOTW), the country's best-selling newspaper; the resignation of Britain's most senior police officer; turmoil in one of the world's largest media empires; and the arrest of numerous people, including Prime Minister David Cameron's former communications director. The scandal centred on phone hacking by the NOTW, a tabloid Sunday newspaper that sold almost three million copies a week by uncovering the corrupt actions, sexual exploits, and personal trivia of politicians, celebrities, and sports stars.

²¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2012/mar/08/press-complaints-commission-close-phone-hacking>

²² The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, was approved by the Constitutional Court (CC) on 4 December 1996 and took effect on 4 February 1997. The Constitution is the supreme law of the land. No other law or government action can supersede the provisions of the Constitution. South Africa's Constitution is one of the most progressive in the world and enjoys high acclaim internationally (<https://www.gov.za/documents/constitution/Constitution-Republic-South-Africa-1996-1>)

1.6.1 The press and the rise of neo-liberalism

In the last three decades, ownership of the means of communication has given rise to heated debates (Rasul and Proffitt 2013). The neo-liberal turn in economics and society gave rise to the elimination of media restrictions and as a knock-on effect concentration of media ownership grew (Warf 2007). Neo-liberalism is largely responsible for the current ownership trends in media development, particularly: convergence, consolidation, cross ownership, cartels, cross border deals, mergers, as well as acquisitions at a global, continental, and national level. In this regard, it has been noted that the level of concentration [in the media industry] is so stunning, levels of which have only been seen in a few other industries (McChesney 2001). This emergence of commercial and profit driven ownership systems has been the subject of much criticism for its so called “anti-democratic” nature. The main argument is rooted in the belief that profit driven, oligopolistic media systems pose negative consequences for the healthy functioning of democracy and the preservation of an open, inclusive and diverse public sphere (Garnham 1995).

The rise of mass media ownership concentration is a global trend that has birthed uniform content and world views (Harcourt and Picard 2009). In the United Kingdom media scholars argue that the national press endorses the key tenets of the capitalist system (Curran and Seaton 1997). The United States of America has a small group of powerful owners of six to ten conglomerates that control 90% of the media in America²³.

The last decade witnessed mergers in the media industry that have warranted the need for examining patterns of ownership concentration and to assess overall whether an ownership structure is adequately diverse (Vizcarrondo 2013:178). The escalating growth of media concentration is a major focus of media studies research and critical discussion. It has become an intense topic of debate critical not only for media studies but also for researchers, policy makers, civil society, journalists, media economics, to name but a few.

The rise of consolidation in press media ownership continues to raise mixed reactions from scholars. Theoretical discussions and debates about monopoly of media ownership are multifaceted. On one side public interest advocates are not in favour of the capitalist system of media based on the market system of supply and demand inevitably dictating media production and output. These theorists are of the belief that core citizen and democratic values will be

²³ <http://www.businessinsider.com/these-6-corporations-control-90-of-the-media-in-america-2012-6>

compromised by commercial values and profit-making imperatives (see Habermas 2006; Castells 1998; Chomsky and Herman 2002; Horwitz 2005). On the flip side, the free market theorists in favour of the free-flowing liberal market system and its corporate ownership argue that it results in greater diversity and choice (Doyle 2002).

In this neo-liberal context, the untamed power of media owners has been criticised by many media scholars (see Habermas 2006; Castells 1998; Chomsky and Herman 2002), stating that the growth of giant multi-national media corporations has been accompanied by a growth of tycoons possessing inordinate amounts of power. Amongst the greatest threats to freedom of expression cited is the monopolisation of the market by media moguls leading to the monopolisation of the marketplace of ideas and private corporate power (Schiller 1996). Freedom of expression is a foundational human right needed for a healthy South African democracy (according to section 16 of the South Africa constitution), as citizens require access to a diverse range of information from media that are free to report in the public interest

The alarming rise of neo-liberalism globally and its possible effect on media ownership and content makes a study of this nature important. The print media in South Africa also operates in a neo-liberal context. Hence, print media transformation is tied to neo-liberalism and as such, the nature of this relationship warrants research.

1.6.2 Print media transformation is a cornerstone of democracy and the Constitution

The Media Charter adopted by the ANC in 1992²⁴, recognised diversity of media content as a cornerstone of democracy,

At the core of democracy lies the recognition of the right of all citizens to take part in society's decision-making process. This requires that individuals are armed with the necessary information and have access to the contesting options they require to make informed choices. An ignorant society cannot be democratic.²⁵

Hence, in South Africa, diverse media content is a cornerstone of democracy, important in equipping citizens with eclectic views and perspectives to exercise their citizenship in a participatory democracy. South African society is characterised by multiple layers of diversity and difference - including race, gender, cultural, language, economic, geographic, income,

²⁴ In 1992, the ANC adopted a Media Charter that set out the organisation's commitment to the creation of an environment that promotes media diversity and media freedom (<http://www.politicsweb.co.za/party/anc-conference-resolutions-on-communications-and-t>)

²⁵ <http://www.politicsweb.co.za/documents/sa-media-ownership-amongst-most-concentrated-in-wo>

literacy levels and education levels. It is also one of the most unequal societies in the world economically. According to an Oxfam report²⁶ (2014) *Even it up: Time to end extreme inequality*, inequality in South Africa is greater today than at the end of Apartheid in 1994. Wasserman (2013b) describes South Africa as a society characterised by continued economic inequalities, giving certain parts of the citizenry disproportionate power to make themselves heard in the public sphere. The media in South Africa is vested with the compelling task of catering for and reflecting these diverse citizens' perspectives and experiences so that democracy is strengthened.

Media diversity is also important to the Constitutional imperatives of South Africa. The SACP²⁷ has expressed that media ownership in South Africa is amongst the most concentrated in the world²⁸. The SACP identified ownership, as well as media content diversity, as two of six key priority areas²⁹ to target, so that transformation and the Constitutional goal of a prosperous South Africa can be attained³⁰. Media diversity and transformation is a cornerstone of democracy and critical for the Constitutional goals to be realised.

1.7 Principle theories underpinning the research study

The study analyses print media transformation in South African within the theoretical lens of the media's role in a liberal democracy, the public interest, media diversity, and equal power. As such, it adopts four theoretical frameworks - the media's role in a liberal democracy (Curran 2000); the public interest role of the media (McQuail 2005); critical political economy of the media approaches; and theories of power.

²⁶ https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/cr-even-it-up-extreme-inequality-291014-summ-en.pdf

²⁷ The Ruling Tripartite Alliance in South Africa comprised of the ANC, SACP, COSATU

²⁸ National Media Transformation summit hosted SACP at Kempton Park, Johannesburg, 2 and 3 October 2015

²⁹ The six key priorities in order: 1. Ownership 2. Management control 3. Media content diversity 4. Accountable media 5. Workplace transformation, skills and employment equity 6. Radical economic transformation

³⁰ <http://www.politicsweb.co.za/documents/sa-media-ownership-amongst-most-concentrated-in-wo>

1.7.1 The revised roles of the media in a liberal democracy

Print media in South Africa have adopted a mixed media system - libertarian and social responsibility. The South African Constitution became the foundation of the media's role and policies in the "new" South Africa. The social responsibility of the press emanates from the Constitution's human rights (section 7). Additionally, the Constitution enshrines freedom of expression which includes the principle of media freedom (section 16), that is a central principle of the libertarian model.

Significantly, however the print media dominantly operates according to a neo-liberal logic and free market ideology due to its location in the corporate sector. Curran's (2000) model of the revised role of the media in a liberal democracy is thus most suitable to this study. Curran (2000) is critical of the traditional libertarian model, as coined by Siebert et al. (1956), because of its articulation of the free market's ability to attain media diversity. Of relevance to this study is that Curran's (2000) critique is based on a number of reasons; one being that the media are no longer just compromised by their links to big business, but media *are* big business. The print media in South Africa are located in the corporate sector and *are* big business due to substantial big business stakes in the press since its inception. Curran's (2000) theory provides a useful theoretical lens to critique the South African print media's ability to deliver media diversity within this free market and big business context. The study parallels Curran (2000) critique of the libertarian and market model to deliver media diversity. The study is cognisant that Curran (2000) model is fundamentally steeped in a libertarian ethos despite its critiques, however it promotes media diversity and a public service principles which serves as a useful theoretical lens to analyse media diversity and transformation imperatives in South Africa.

Curran's (2000) theory thus enables this study to assess the extent of diverse and democratic natured media content. Curran (2000) coins three ideal revised roles the media should perform in a liberal democracy and elevates media diversity principles, which is in line with the focus of this study. The three revised roles are: (1) Be a watchdog of both public and private power; (2) Be an agency of information and debate; (3) Be a voice of the people.

1.7.2 The public interest role of the media

In adopting libertarian approaches to assess print media content diversity, the study is cognisant of its main critique being the media's inherent freedom of expression paradigm that is premised on the importance of the "free market" system (Siebert et al. 1956). Public interest advocates, for example, have pointed out that a capitalist media system based on the supply and demand of the market will dictate media production and output, causing a compromise of core citizen and democratic values as a result of commercial imperatives (see Habermas 2006; Castells 1998; Chomsky and Herman 2002).

In the context of this critique, the study also adopts McQuail's (2005) concept of the public interest to also assess the extent of content diversity in the media. This ensures that press transformation is also held up to public interest driven standards and not just libertarian "free market" theoretical standards. McQuail (2005) elevates media diversity as an important component of a media system that serves the public interest and understands media diversity as comprising both ownership and content. McQuail (2005) posits that content should reflect the diversity of a society, especially in region, politics, religion, ethnicity, culture etc. McQuail's (2000) articulation of the public interest largely parallels this study's conceptualisation of true transformation (Boloka and Krabill 2000).

1.7.3 Critical political economy of the media

Critical political economy of the media (CPE) provides the theoretical tools to analyse the extent of ownership diversity in the South African press. CPE is rooted in Marxist critiques of capitalism, hence the study adopts a Marxist view of communications as embedded on structures of class inequalities (Fuchs and Mosco 2012).

This theoretical approach is particularly relevant to this study because it links media content to the structure of the state, economy and economic foundation of a news organisation (Schudson 2002). Ownership is one component of the economic foundation of a news organisation. This study focuses on the diversity of ownership and content of the press. In addition, it engages with the question of whether ownership matters, based on the extent of content diversity found in the data. Hence, the relationship between print media content and ownership as it relates to transformation is explored by the study. According to Schudson (2002), the political and

economic context of the media is important, which is relevant to this study. Print media transformation in South Africa is a product of the political and economic context in the political economy of transition that took place in the early 1990's.

CPE as a holistic theory has many components of focus. This study adopts the following articulations: (1) "Critical" and power strands; (2) an ideal communication should be open, diverse and accessible; (3) the market system and capitalism; (4) ownership patterns and the media owner; and (5) diversity of content and ideas.

Firstly, the "critical" strand enables the study to analyse the constraints of the broad transformation agenda (Golding and Murdock 2000), and CPE's power strands allow the study to look at the power dynamics in the press (Golding and Murdock 2000). Secondly, critical political economy's definition of an ideal communication system enshrines the importance of diversity (Golding and Murdock 2000), which is relevant to this study and enables an analysis of ownership in relation to the ideal of diversity.

Thirdly, CPE's critical attitude to capitalism is based on its grounding in Marxism. Marxism argues that communication is embedded into the structures of inequality in class societies (Fuchs and Mosco 2012). CPE view of the market system is that mass media are increasingly under the control of capitalist corporations and media moguls, which results in a decline of media content diversity (Garnham 2011). The Marxist grounding within critical political economy of the media is especially applicable to the South African context, where inequality is rife due to apartheid policies of systemic racial discrimination (Seekings and Natrass: 2005). It enables the study to consider class inequalities in print media transformation. CPE's view of the negative effect of capitalist corporate control on content diversity enables the study to investigate the relationship between the print media's corporatisation and content diversity.

Fourthly, critical political economy of the media conducts an in-depth analysis of ownership patterns that examines trends in light of issues like democracy and diversity (Downing 2011). This includes implications of concentrated media ownership and the resultant impact of this on the interplay of perspectives (Downing 2011). This component of CPE looks at ownership, control and power which means non-traditional definitions of ownership are also considered, such as advertiser, funder or information subsidies through government advertising. CPE also acknowledges media owner's power (McNair 2008). This component allows the study to conduct an in-depth analysis of ownership, control and power within the ideal of diversity. In

addition, it enables the researcher to consider the implications of print media ownership concentration on content diversity.

Fifthly, critical political economy of the media argues that ownership patterns impact on the available range of discourses in content (Golding and Murdock 2000). CPE contends that structural components, including ownership, have traceable consequences for media content diversity (Golding and Murdock 2000). For example, capitalist ownership will result in capitalist friendly content (Garnham 2011). CPE's articulation of the causal link between ownership structure and content enables the study to analyse the relationship between press ownership structure and content diversity.

1.7.4 Theories of power

As discussed earlier, critical political economy of the media enables the analysis of power dynamics (Golding and Murdock 2000). This study, however, requires a more complex theoretical elucidation of power given the historical context of decades of white domination or white power in South Africa, that informed the functioning of the press. The study adopts Michel Foucault's theory of power and Pierre Bourdieu's articulation of power as "forms of capital", to delve deeper into the power dynamics in the modern day South African press.

Foucault (1975) conceptualises modern day power as more than sovereign repressive notions of power. In the South African context, Apartheid qualifies as a sovereign repressive power that institutionalised racism. Foucault (1990) opines that power is a set of mobile unequal force relations, power is everywhere and is not tangible. Foucault (1980) posits that freedom and power are mutually exclusive. Hence, according to Foucault (1982), power can be exercised over free subjects. Foucault's (1982) idea of the power relationship is central to his approach to modern power, "the other" being the one over whom power is exercised. Foucault provides the study with an instructive theoretical lens to decipher power in the South African press, cognisant of its racist history. It enables the recognition that the end of Apartheid's sovereign power does not signal an end to apartheid-era power dynamics.

Bourdieu (1985) posits that the social world is ordered according to types of capital or power, that also include those that are non-economic in nature. These are: economic capital, cultural capital and social capital. Capital is defined by Bourdieu (1985) as historically accumulated labour. Also, that capital is the currency that buys you a higher position in society and capital

is class dependent. Bourdieu's (1985) conceptualisation of power enables this study to identify forms of power in the press within its historical and present positions. The South African historical context saw unequal accumulation of labour or capital facilitated by colonial and apartheid racial capitalism. In addition, Bourdieu's (1985) premise that capital is class dependent speaks to the class fractions in the current South African context of severe inequality.

The study's theoretical framework includes a brief discussion of the concept of media power, in order to provide a picture of the details and dynamics of media power. It categorises a number of types of media power relevant to a press institution and the creation of content, namely: market power, owner power, funding and financial power, advertiser power, managerial power, and journalistic power.

1.8 Methodological approaches

The study adopts a triangulation of research methods with qualitative and quantitative paradigms. This enables the study to provide a nuanced analysis of the state of print media transformation, by drawing from both the open-ended and inductive exploration aspects of the qualitative approach (Blanche et al. 2006), as well as the measurement nature of the quantitative approach (Blanche et al. 2006). The research methods utilised enable a well-rounded understanding of ownership and content diversity within transformation imperatives, including: engagement with experts, document analysis and content analysis.

The focus of the study is the ownership of print media institutions and their content outputs. In this regard, the study uses the two kinds of key evidence traditionally employed to research media institutions: documents and people (Stokes 2003). The study conducted document analysis on two types of documents: internal documents produced by the print media institutions, as well as documents produced by outside sources, such as academic literature and research reports. This combination of internal and external documents enables the study to provide a holistic perspective of print media transformation.

Qualitative expert opinions were garnered through hosting a Media Transformation seminar with a five-person expert panel, based on the idea of a qualitative interview (Guion et al. 2001) and adopts the concept of the "respondent" (Lindlof and Taylor 2011). Jarvinen's (2000)

competence criterion was also applied to select the five-person seminar panel who gave presentations on the subject of this thesis, thereby giving valuable expert input into this study.

Content analysis is a leading research method to decipher trends in newspaper coverage (Prasad 2008). The study explores the extent of print media content diversity by examining the coverage of three issues that have been seminal in framing post-apartheid South Africa, namely, socio-economic issues, labour issues and protests, as well as government vs. big business. Content analysis is applied to front cover leading stories and editorial pages of a large sample of articles (N=684) spanning the first twenty years of democracy, selected through a purposive sampling method (Benoit 2010).

Quantitative content analysis is the most suitable research method to draw inferences from a large sample of articles (Krippendorff 1989) and enables the study to provide a quantitative picture of the extent of content diversity in the first twenty years of democracy. Qualitative content analysis is also utilised to a smaller extent and applied on a selected number of articles to provide a multiplex analysis of content diversity. Qualitative content analysis enables the unpacking of meanings and associations embedded in articles (Davies and Mosdell 2006). Qualitative content analysis, as a supplementary method to quantitative content analysis, is encouraged in research (Bos and Tarnai 1999). The measures of content diversity in this study are: topics, prominent voices and tone. Topics and sources are the leading measures of content diversity in extant literature (Graber 2003; Humprecht and Esser 2018; Mancini et al. 2017). The tone category was purposed to decipher the attitude of the print media in coverage (Ma et al. 2017), as well as to determine power dynamics in coverage (Radebe 2017).

The data interpretation of the study is mostly theoretically driven, utilising the following theories: critical political economy of the media, the theory of the public interest, theories of power, and the revised role of the media in a democracy. The study also uses the SPSS data software package to interpret the quantitative data garnered from the content analysis.

1.9 Structural overview of the thesis

This thesis is structured into three parts to achieve the research aims and answer the research questions.

Section 1 is “Introduction and Background: the print media transformation context in South Africa”. It consists of Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 of the study.

Chapter 1 introduces the research study. It explores the ongoing print media transformation debates in South Africa and flags gaps in print media transformation scholarship within Media Studies as particularly missing the empirical content question. In this regard, the chapter emphasises the need for a contemporary, empirical and in-depth study of print media transformation to contribute to the ongoing debates, as well as to fill scholarship gaps. The research problem that the study attempts to address and the research questions that the study answers is detailed. The rationale for the study is linked to: print media and the rise of neo-liberalism, as well as print media transformation being a cornerstone of democracy and the Constitution. The chapter introduces the theoretical framework of the study and research design.

Chapter 2 contextualises print media transformation in South Africa. It provides a political economy of print transformation through a political economy of transition in the early 1990’s. The chapter outlines the present political and economic context, with particular focus on the socio-economic crisis - in order to elevate the importance of attaining true print media transformation for the adequate reporting of these issues. The chapter then provides an overview of print media in South Africa - by historically locating the print media, giving its policy and regulatory context, and highlighting current trends. The chapter also provides an important outline of the media transformation trajectory in South Africa.

Section 2 is “The theoretical framework and methodology underpinning the study” consists of chapter 3 and chapter 4. Chapter 3 presents the study’s four-part theoretical framework thus exploring the theoretical premises of media and democracy, the public interest, media diversity and equal power. The chapter firstly discusses the relationship between media and democracy, including its early conceptions. Within this discussion, the chapter details Curran’s (2000) revised role of the media in a liberal democracy. Secondly, the chapter details McQuail’s (2005) notion of the media serving the public interest. Thirdly, critical political economy of the media articulations are discussed. Fourthly, the theories of power adopted by the study –

Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu - are explored, as well as media power. Chapter 4 maps out the study's methodology and research design. It details the need for the study's triangulation of methods, and the importance of using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The research methods of the study are discussed, which include: qualitative expert engagement in the form of hosting a Media Transformation seminar with a five-person expert panel; qualitative document analysis; as well as content analysis with mostly a quantitative approach and to a lesser extent qualitative. The data interpretation techniques adopted and research constraints are also presented.

Section 3 of the study is "Data analysis, conclusion and way forward" comprising of chapter 5, chapter 6, chapter 7 and chapter 8.

Chapter 5 is the first analysis chapter of the study and presents the findings from the document analysis and expert opinions. It broadly provides a critique of the print media transformation agenda. It explores the limitations of the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act 53 of 2003 (B-BBEE Act), as the main policy standard of print media transformation, from a media policy best practice approach. The chapter analyses elite continuity in the black economic empowerment deals of the early 1990's. The power dynamics in the press are explored in terms of ownership, control and power. This is applied to the ownership trajectory in the first twenty years of democracy and present ownership structures to decipher who the current allocative and operational controllers of the press are.

Chapter 6 is the second analysis chapter of the study and analyses the findings from the content analysis and includes expert opinions from the Media Transformation seminar panel. This chapter analyses the extent to which print content reflects transformation with a focus on three issues: socio-economics, labour issues and protests, as well as government vs. big business. The chapter provides a diversity overview of all stories in the sample, in terms of topics and prominent voices. The chapter presents the findings to explore the diversity of discourses in the coverage of these three issues. The chapter concludes by critically reflecting on whether ownership matters in light of the content findings.

Chapter 7 is the consolidation chapter of the study and advances the argument that ownership matters to some extent, and a re-think of print media transformation is needed. The chapter looks at what else matters to print media transformation based on the core findings of the analysis chapters. The chapter posits that key issues matter in print media transformation (1) The media system (2) Neo-liberal architecture (3) Journalism training (4) Policy. It

recommends that the print media consider adopting the principles of developmental journalism to address the diversity and transformation content inadequacies uncovered by the study, which would mark a paradigm shift that could only be realized over a long time period, and also requires a systemic review to extensively examine the feasibility of implementing such a change. A short term feasible solution is the return of alternative media to the post-apartheid media terrain to play a developmental role.

Chapter 8 concludes the thesis by outlining the major findings and arguments advanced by the thesis and provides pointers for future research. The major findings are: (1) a neo-liberal functioning press taints the transformation project in a number of areas; (2) “Inferential racism” is evident, where blackness in the press is based on racist assumptions; (3) white racial power dominates the top of the structural hierarchy of press institutions; and (4) press transformation is politicised in a number of areas. The relevance of the study is also outlined, including its gaps and limitations, as well as the benefits and advantages of the research study.

Chapter 2

Contextualising print media transformation in South Africa

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contextualises the research study by locating “media transformation” as emerging in the context of “transformations” within South African society at the helm of democracy. This chapter fundamentally locates print media transformation as a product of the political economy of transition that took place at the ushering in of democracy in 1994. The broad “transformation” agenda in South Africa was adopted as a result of the desire to rectify the ills and injustices of apartheid. Within this context, the “media transformation” agenda commenced. Hence, print media transformation cannot be understood in isolation from the country’s political and economic context.

In this regard, the chapter firstly historicises the negotiated transition, as well as the political economy of transition where the country moved from apartheid’s racial capitalism to an era of amplified neo-liberalism in democracy. I argue that print media transformation developed as a result of political changes, the termination of sanctions, the entry of foreign capital and the transfer of white capital to black capital. Print media transformation became tied to the newly adopted neo-liberal economic ideology and its market imperatives.

Secondly, the chapter discusses the political and economic situation in the first twenty years of democracy. It paints a picture of the core issues that have shaped democratic-era South Africa, namely: poverty, inequality, unemployment and, within this milieu, the emergence of the “rebellion of the poor” (Alexander 2010). I posit that the country faces a severe socio-economic crisis that is stratified along racial, class and gender lines thus manifesting many apartheid continuities. In this context, I argue that it is critical that the print media in their reporting reflect transformation of race, class and other key axes of diversity in South African society.

This chapter additionally presents an overview of the print media landscape as it relates to transformation by firstly, showing the differences in the historical eras of the print media in South Africa. Specifically historically locating the mainstream print media as born in “sin” in the epoch of British colonialism, and highlighting the development of alternative presses, as well as showing the print media as a conduit of apartheid propaganda. Secondly, the print media

regulatory context is outlined to flag the print media's market regulation and liberal legal context that is drawn from the South African Constitution, that was largely conceptualised on Western liberal ideas of democracy. Thirdly, the trajectory of media transformation is unpacked by discussing key policy developments and debates. Lastly, I emphasise key contemporary trends of the print media in order to capture the print media transformation issue within its wider media context.

2.2 The political economy of transition: from racial capitalism to neo-liberalism

South Africa underwent a negotiated transition from an apartheid system to a politically inclusive system (Shivambu 2015). The negotiated transition began in 1990 when FW De Klerk³¹ declared the unbanning of the ANC, PAC, SACP and other organisations, and committed his NP government to “negotiating a fully inclusive, non-racial, and democratic constitution” (Southall 1994: 630). The negotiated settlement period featured the ANC and NP as the main actors, trying to forge a constitutional compromise to marry the accession to black majority rule to the protection of the principally white minority rights (Southall 1994). A settlement was reached and the first democratic elections took place in 1994 which the ANC decisively won, the new democracy was negotiated with compromises on both sides³². The ANC conceded during negotiations that a Government of National Unity (GNU) would rule for five years (Orkin 1995: 525). This saw Nelson Mandela sworn in as president, and FW De Klerk as deputy president³³. Thus, elements of the old apartheid regime and interests were carried into the new democratic dispensation.

³¹ In February 1989, de Klerk was elected leader of the National Party and in September 1989 he was elected State President [of South Africa]. In his first speech after assuming the party leadership he called for a nonracist South Africa and for negotiations about the country's future. He lifted the ban on the ANC and released Nelson Mandela. He brought apartheid to an end and opened the way for the drafting of a new constitution for the country based on the principle of one person, one vote (<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1993/klerk/biographical/>).

³² <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/negotiations-toward-new-south-africa-grade-12>

³³ From 27 April 1994 to 3 February 1997, South Africa was governed by a Government of National Unity (GNU) under the leadership of African National Congress (ANC). Clause 88 of the interim Constitution of South Africa provided for the establishment of the Government of National Unity. After the first democratic election in 1994, 19,726,579 votes were counted and 193,081 were rejected as invalid. The African National Congress (ANC) in alliance with the labour confederation COSATU and the South African Communist Party fell slightly short of a two-thirds majority. The Government of National Unity was established and headed by Nelson Mandela as a president and FW De Klerk as his deputy president. Mandela's cabinet included ministers from other political

The transformations within South African society began after elections and was spearheaded by the ANC. “Transformation” was adopted as an inherently racial strategy to redress the ills and injustices of the past. This invoked undoing the inequalities of apartheid and integrating the previously segregated groupings into a non-racial, non-sexist democracy (Orkin 1995). In this context, media transformation commenced within the broader strategy of democratising and transforming South African society that suffered decades of white domination and institutionalised racism. A visit to South Africa’s past invokes decades of painful white domination that started with British colonialism, and was followed by apartheid’s legalised racism. Three hundred and forty years prior to the ushering in of democracy in 1994, the Dutch East India Company formed a settlement at the Cape of Good Hope which led to the importation of slaves from Asia and Tropical Africa and the conquest of its people (Monteath 2001: 264). The white minority of the country then legalised apartheid in 1908-9, the National Convention established the Union of South Africa out of four British colonies “with a flexible Constitution that enabled the white minority to establish a system of racial domination” (Monteath 2001: 252).

The South African economy under apartheid thrived on biased accumulation of wealth based on racial capitalism through the exploitation of black people by white people. Apartheid was underpinned by super exploitative capital-labour relations. Super exploitation was later understood by 20th century researchers as:

The idea of super exploitation was a way to understand an ongoing history of extremely biased accumulation, combining capitalism and non-capitalist sites of work, of life, of nature³⁴.

South Africa saw a period of relative capitalism from 1948 through to the early 1970’s³⁵. However, the legalisation of apartheid brought wide condemnation from the international community in the form of sanctions, which were to the detriment of economic growth. From the 1980’s, South Africa underwent a period of economic stagnation and financial crisis³⁶. The concept of “racial capitalism” emerged during the early 1980’s by new generations of political economists who link the political and the economic³⁷.

parties as well as members of the National Party and Inkatha Freedom Party (<https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/south-african-government-national-unity-gnu-1994-1999>).

³⁴ <http://ccs.ukzn.ac.za/files/Bond%20SA%20history%20poli%20econ.pdf>, page 14.

³⁵ <http://ccs.ukzn.ac.za/files/Bond%20SA%20history%20poli%20econ.pdf>

³⁶ <http://ccs.ukzn.ac.za/files/Bond%20SA%20history%20poli%20econ.pdf>

³⁷ <http://ccs.ukzn.ac.za/files/Bond%20SA%20history%20poli%20econ.pdf>

Colonialism and apartheid shared significant similarities in that both operated according to a racial hierarchy that deemed the white race superior and the black race inferior. Moreover, the colonial power of the British and political power of the Afrikaner Nationalists similarly, and significantly, dispossessed local black people of their humanity and rights. Both systems created a complex binary of racial division and inequality so deep and longitudinal that contemporary South Africa still faces its legacies.

In 1994, the peaceful political shift from the apartheid pariah to constitutional democracy meant, according to Hadland (2007), South Africa was set on a new path of political and economic development. The political systemic change from apartheid to democracy was formally enshrined in the South Africa Constitution, now widely praised as the best constitution in the world (Kende 2003). The ushering in of democracy was accompanied by a non-racial constitution, which saw the transfer of political power from the white minority to the black majority after experiencing over three hundred years of white domination (Monteath 2001:241). The Constitution was enshrined as the supreme law of the land and effected many political, socio-economic, human rights, legal, linguistic, media, as well geographic changes, to name but a few. It signalled a broad democratic paradigm shift within South Africa. The Constitution was a liberal democratic constitution and borrowed ideas from Western Europe and the United States (Monteath 2001:256). It divided South Africa into nine provinces and incorporated the former Homelands and former Provinces, as well as establishing eleven official languages (Monteath 2001:256).

In this transition period, the economic context within the country also began to change. The economic ideologies of the ANC underwent revisions after 1994, starting with the Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP), which formed the basis of its election campaign and was a broad commitment to redistribution. Central to the RDP was the belief in redistribution and reconstruction as the premise for economic growth based on the 1955 Freedom Charter³⁸. Monteath (2001) highlights that besides reconciliation, the Nelson Mandela government, at the start of democracy, also had the two major goals of creating growth and improving the lives of the majority of citizens, who were the victims of apartheid. In line with

³⁸ The Freedom Charter was the statement of core principles of the South African Congress Alliance, which consisted of the African National Congress (ANC) and its allies - the South African Indian Congress, the South African Congress of Democrats and the Coloured People's Congress. It is characterized by its opening demand; "The People Shall Govern!" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_Charter)

these goals, the Government of National Unity (GNU) issued the RDP plan in the run up to the 1994 elections, which became its official policy.

Government and the private sector were to cooperate in creating jobs through public works; three hundred thousand houses were to be built each year; all South Africans were to have access to clean water, sanitation, and electricity; health, education, and welfare services were to be improved; and 30 percent of the land was to be redistributed to Blacks. This ambitious program aroused great expectations that could not possibly be fulfilled (Monteath 2001: 265).

The ANC then moved in 1996 to adopting a new economic policy framework called GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy), which prioritised fiscal prudence and a clear commitment to reducing state involvement in the economy in order to reduce public expenditure. The policy expressed that redistribution is an outcome and not a condition of economic growth (Barnett 1999). In this regard, since 1994 the rise of neo-liberalism in South Africa has been considerable.

Amidst this wave of economic change, Barnett (1999:653) posits that one of the most dramatic and visible changes to the South Africa economy since 1994 was the “emergence of black owned companies”. In 1994 there were no black owned companies and two years later in 1996, about 10% (less than 20 companies out of the total of 600) of the companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange were black owned (Barnett 1999). There was a plethora of unbundling of white corporations to black owned shareholders and companies. Barnett (1999) notes that this included the politically inspired unbundling of white corporations, which saw the emergence of new black capitalist interests merge with established white capital to refashion a multi-racial capital. These new deals also saw the emergence of trade union investment groups; “Virtually every trade union grouping in the country has set up an investment arm to claim its share of the economy” (*Enterprise 2000*, cited in Barnett 1999: 654). Gevisser (1997) has described the trade union capital accumulation raised during apartheid, which was estimated at over R7 billion to facilitate black economic empowerment, as a form of “labour capitalism” (cited in Barnett 1999:654).

The media sector also underwent unbundling of a racial nature, which altered the face of its structure. Within this economic climate, Barnett (1999: 656) argues that “The sector in which both unbundling and privatization are most advanced is in the media industry”. Particularly noteworthy is the re-structuring of the ownership of the South African press through the entry of both international capital and domestic black empowerment groups (Barnett 1999).

In the run up to South Africa's first democratic elections on the 27th April 1994, Hadland (2007) speaks of the waves of change to hit the country, and notes that sanctions had eased and foreign investments had started to trickle in. Despite these economic changes taking place in the country and the new atmosphere of reconciliation and non-racialism, the legacies of apartheid remained. The GNU most notably inherited an unstable and stagnant economy. During the apartheid period, the World Bank indicated that South Africa's growth rate was among the lowest in the world (cited in Monteath 2001). In 1994, income inequality (understood as the gap between rich and poor) was one of the highest in the world, and to take this further, this gap highlighted a division between race, despite the formation of new multiracial classes (Monteath 2001). A detailed 1996 census showed that prior to the substantial change of the transfer of political power:

Most white South African were well-to-do, well educated, and well housed. Most Africans like most of tropical Africa, were poor, badly educated, and ill housed. The conditions of the Coloured and Indian members of the population were in between those of the Whites and Africans (Monteath 2001:265).

Since then, GEAR resulted in neoliberal economic growth for a period of thirteen years with uninterrupted growth, and significant infrastructural development (Tomaselli and Teer-Tomaselli 2008). Despite this impressive level of economic growth under the second democratically elected President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, a million jobs have been lost and there is a wide perception that government overemphasised macroeconomic stabilisation at the so-called expense of poverty reduction (Tomaselli and Teer-Tomaselli 2008).

2.3 The present political and economic context: a severe socio-economic crisis

There are core issues that have framed post-apartheid South Africa. This study selects some of these issues to analyse the extent of content diversity. Poverty, inequality and unemployment are widely believed to be the biggest challenges facing the country, Cilliers and Aucoin (2016) calls these the triple threat of development challenges facing South Africa. Terreblanche (2012: 124) in his book *Lost in Transformation*, coined the term "PIU problem" – which stands for abject poverty, high unemployment and growing inequality, noting from 1974-2012 the PIU problem worsened.

At the helm of a democratic country, the new government inherited one of the most unequal societies in the world as discussed in the previous section. Fast forward twenty years into

democracy and South Africa is still considered to be unequal, a World Bank 2018 report found that South Africa is the most unequal country in the world. The Institute of Security Studies (ISS) notes that “extreme forms of consumerism and wealth co-exist with widespread poverty” (Cilliers and Aucoin 2016: 5). This description is hardly different from the reality of inequality in 1994. Leading ANC intellectuals Thabo Mbeki and Joel Netshitenzhe argued in 2003 that at the start of democracy the ANC inherited and amplified neo-liberalism. They also argued that South Africa was suffering from “two economies” and for those left out, “of central and strategic importance is the fact that they are structurally disconnected from our country’s ‘first world economy’”³⁹. The ISS adopts a similar position, citing Stats SA figures that revealed that in 2011, 53% of the country are classified as “poor”, which is defined as an income below R779 per person per month (Cilliers and Aucoin 2016: 2).

The ANC’s neo-liberal economic policies adopted at the onset of democracy are widely believed to have deepened the economic divide between rich and poor. Post-apartheid South Africa’s economic phenomena of dangerous and costly transport, the production of low cost housing far below optimal capacity and extremely sparse basic needs industries has resulted in the country having a severe case of uneven socio-economic development⁴⁰.

The high levels of poverty and the gaps between the rich and poor means the racial divide is still present and is evidence of significant apartheid continuity. During the apartheid era, poverty was black and privilege was white. Cilliers and Aucoin (2016: 3) note that “...the majority of the white population continues to maintain substantial economic privilege”. In South Africa, black people make up the majority of the unemployed and of social grant recipients (Cilliers and Aucoin 2016). The representation of the plight of the poor in the media is important to the goal of a truly transformed media that reflects all social classes, as well as giving a voice to the poor so that their needs are visible to government and other power elites. The print media’s coverage of the socio-economic crisis will thus be examined in this thesis.

In the context of this severe socio-economic crisis that is, in essence, felt most by the majority black population, social protests have emerged. Another major issue that has framed post-apartheid South Africa is the frequency of protests which has seen the country dubbed the protest capital of the world (Chiumbu et al. 2016). The most common reason for police intervention of crowd management are protests for labour related demands for salaries or

³⁹ <http://ccs.ukzn.ac.za/files/Bond%20SA%20history%20poli%20econ.pdf>, page 16.

⁴⁰ <http://ccs.ukzn.ac.za/files/Bond%20SA%20history%20poli%20econ.pdf>, page 13.

wages, as well as service delivery protests (Alexander 2010). Alexander (2010: 37) calls this the “rebellion of the poor”,

From press reports and our own research, it is clear that although service-delivery demands provide the principal focus for unrest incidents, many other issues are being raised, notably a lack of jobs. As many commentators and activists now accept, service-delivery protests are part of a broader "rebellion of the poor". This rebellion is massive. I have not yet found any other country where there is a similar level of ongoing urban unrest.

Other research has shown there has been a rise in service delivery protests since the 1999 appointment of Thabo Mbeki as President (Cilliers and Aucoin 2016). Public data on political violence has indicated an increase since 1997 in the total number of instability events, and “riots and protests” are named as the most frequent type (Cilliers and Aucoin 2016: 11).

The ISS names economic inequality, frequency of protests, as well as trust in government as some of the drivers of South Africa’s social instability (Cilliers and Aucoin 2016). The ISS public violence monitor data showed that from 2013-2016 the majority of all protests have been motivated by⁴¹,

...frustrations with inadequate local government service delivery such as no or poor access to water and electricity, labour dispute matters and education (Cilliers and Aucoin 2016: 12).

Hence, the phenomena of protests in post-apartheid South Africa are directly related to issues of the poor, such as access to water and electricity, as well as issues of labour and education. The ISS provides a perspective on the service delivery protestors,

In the eyes of the protestors, violence is a tool through which to communicate frustration with service delivery and force a response from the government. Many instances of violent protests have followed protracted efforts at engaging with government using legitimate and non-violent methods (e.g. requests for meetings, petitions, writing letters, peaceful marches, etc. (Cilliers and Aucoin 2016: 12).

Research investigations further show the underperformance of government service delivery. In many local government bodies there has been a drop in the performance and the dwindling in quality of performance (Cilliers and Aucoin 2016: 12). A 2010 ad-hoc committee on coordinated oversight on service delivery found a notable weakness of local government being service delivery, stating “many communities had levels of service provision deemed unacceptable” (cited in Cilliers and Aucoin 2016: 12). Also, over 75% of local municipalities

⁴¹ ISS Public Violence Monitor, January 2013–March 2016 data shows that the breakdown for public violent events by main grievance/motivation is : Anti-crime 4%, Education 2%, Municipal service 94%.

do not receive clean audits, and mismanagement, maladministration and corruption are rife because they do not appoint qualified people as Chief Financial Officers (cited in Cilliers and Aucoin 2016: 12-13). The 2009 Local Government Turnaround Strategy blames public protest for exasperating poor local government performance, however, the independent body, Corruption Watch, says that 16% of corruption-related incidents reported in 2015 occurred at the local government level (cited in Cilliers and Aucoin 2016: 14).

This reality of government mismanagement, maladministration, corruption, and poor performance warrant the dissatisfaction of the protestors. Despite this, media coverage of protests in South Africa has widely been criticised. For example, the bias of the media in reporting violent protests is captured by the ISS:

An analysis of the ISS Public Violence Monitor data reveals that 55% of total incidents [protest] since January 2013 were violent, but this could be partially explained by the sourcing of the data – media – that are often biased in their reporting towards more violence (cited in Cilliers and Aucoin 2016: 17).

The ISS notes that labour protests⁴² are predominantly non-violent (Cilliers and Aucoin 2016: 14). It is a transformation imperative that the print media make prominent and fairly represent protest phenomena and more deeply the plight of protestors.

This study will delve deeper into the print content diversity and transformation discourses of these core issues that have framed post-apartheid South Africa.

2.4 An overview of the print media landscape in South Africa

This section paints a picture of the media terrain in South Africa as it pertains particularly to print media transformation. It commences by firstly outlining the colonial and apartheid historical roots of print media, and secondly proceeds to give the policy and regulatory framework that the print media currently operates in. The section thirdly presents the media transformation trajectory in South Africa, and lastly provides the unique characteristics of the print media landscape in South Africa.

⁴² Labour protests call into questions issues of wages and salary structures, maltreatment or abuse, unlawful dismissal. Afrobarometer data from April 2016 says that employers are perceived to be more racist than courts and landlords (cited in Cilliers and Aucoin 2016: 14).

2.4.1 Historically locating the print media

The print media in South Africa is informed by its historical moorings. The ruling party ANC states “South Africa's prevailing media environment cannot be understood outside of the specific set of conditions under which the media developed during apartheid”⁴³. The period of early European expansion saw the inception of print media in South Africa, that comprised of a mainstream press that was commercial, and an alternative press.

The mainstream print media in South Africa emerged initially under British colonialism. In John Mattison (2015) book *God, Spies and Lies: Finding South Africa's future through its past*, it is noted that the country's first newspaper was conceived in sin and published in Cape Town in the 1800's. Its publishers were a pair of Scottish slave traders, Alexander Walker and John Robertson. A corrupt British Governor, Sir George Yonge, granted the firm of Walker and Robertson the monopoly in both printing and newspaper publishing at the Cape. The governor and the company did business together and the newspaper was one of the early innovations of British colonial rule. Mattison (2015: 36) says about the first newspaper in South Africa:

Needless to say, the pages of Walker and Robertson's *The Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser*, and its Dutch version, the *Kaapsche Stads Courant en Afrikaansche Berigter* did not challenge the government. And advertisements for the sale of slaves were a regular feature.

Hence, the early role of the print media in South Africa was a tool of colonialists to further their business interests, including the selling of slaves.

Mattison (2015) also highlights that the first newspaper group, the Argus Printing and Publishing Company (now Independent Media), emerged following great economic expansion due to the discovery of diamonds and then gold in the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1881, journalist Francis Joseph Dormer bought the *Cape Argus* newspaper and under his helm built the biggest newspaper company in South Africa, the Argus Group, by improving its journalism and finances. Cape Colony Prime Minister Cecil John Rhodes⁴⁴ secretly funded the Argus Group and other newspaper companies. However, Rhodes cut off his funding from many of the newspapers who he secretly funded when they clashed with his imperial dream of a

⁴³ *Transformation of the Media*. 30 March 2007. ANC website, <http://www.anc.org.za/content/transformation-media>

⁴⁴ Cecil John Rhodes (5 July 1853 – 26 March 1902) was a British businessman, mining magnate and politician in southern Africa who served as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony from 1890 to 1896 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cecil_Rhodes).

united Southern Africa under the British flag. The early development of mainstream print media was thus closely linked to politics and was purposely used by the then Prime Minister to further his ideological and political aspirations.

Significantly the alternative press in South Africa also emerged in this period of colonialism, Switzer (1997) notes that publications intended for Africans were produced at the beginning of the European mission expansion. These publications were controlled by missionaries but later written and edited by African converts (Switzer 1997). From the early 1900s publications by other population groups – Asian mainly Indian and Coloured – were produced (Switzer 1997). These publications were targeted for different population groups but collectively were known as “South Africa’s pioneer black protest press” (Switzer 1997: 1).

Apartheid was then legalised in 1949 and the mainstream print media continued to be used as a political tool, and alternative media continued its existence. Tomaselli and Teer-Tomaselli (2008) offer an insightful account of the print media’s role during this period. The NP was the dominant political party, the second highest seats in the (White) Parliament was the Progressive Party (that went through various changes and today is known as the Democratic Alliance - DA). The “unofficial opposition” consisted of the then banned political and liberation movements. Tomaselli and Teer Tomaselli (2008) further posit that during apartheid, the media mirrored the political divides that were prevalent in society and outline the role of the English and Afrikaans press, as well as the alternative press.

The English language press was well disposed to the official opposition with sympathy for the banned political parties, particularly the English language newspapers that serviced the urban black majority in South Africa (Tomaselli and Teer Tomaselli 2008).

On the side-lines, was the anti-capitalist, anti-apartheid alternative press which comprised of a group of independent newspapers with vague socialist aspirations and that were funded by NGO’s and foreign funding (Tomaselli and Teer Tomaselli 2008). In addition, the alternative press of the apartheid period featured an early resistance press of the 1930s to 1960s, that was however bought out, closed down or depoliticized and merged with a new captive black commercial press controlled by white entrepreneurs (Switzer 1997). As well as a later resistance press of 1970s to 1980s that represented the Black Consciousness movement, and progressive community press (Switzer 1997).

While the Afrikaans language press was largely in favour of the NP, there was a divide in the sector in that historically the Afrikaans press consisted of two Afrikaans press houses

(Tomaselli and Teer Tomaselli 2008). Firstly, Perskor (Perskorporasie or “Press Corporation”) which was based in the Johannesburg-Pretoria and which was generally more conservative in its political stance in comparison to its rival – here the reactionary voice of the *verkramptes* and right-wing within the NP found a home (Tomaselli and Teer Tomaselli 2008). Secondly, the Nasionale Pers (National Press) was based in the Cape, where the political climate was known to be more tolerant and inclusive – and this was home to the *verligtes* and supported national, economic and political reform which was of the kind that culminated in 1990 (Tomaselli and Teer Tomaselli 2008). In its totality, the media in South Africa played a key role in spreading and sustaining Afrikaner nationalist ideas and ideologies in society. The SABC, for example, was the main Nationalist propaganda tool of the apartheid government.

The alternative press in this period clearly provided a counter narrative to the apartheid propaganda and white minority news in the mainstream media, which included anti-apartheid newspapers. Lloyd (2013:6) notes the following about anti-apartheid newspapers:

In the 1980s, independent anti-apartheid newspapers launched with the assistance of international donors contributed toward exposing the brutality of apartheid and to the eventual demise of the system. They played a critical role in informing South Africans and the international community about the government’s violent crackdown on any resistance to its racist policies. However, while these papers successfully defied attempts by the apartheid government to silence them under successive states of emergency, only one of them has survived the cuts in donor funding that accompanied the transition to democracy (Lloyd 2013: 6).

Thus the alternative press did not survive the transition to democracy, save for the *Weekly Mail* (now *Mail & Guardian*).

Despite the role of the alternative press and its anti-apartheid newspapers, the print media was largely used as the main tool to further the agenda of the apartheid government and unfairly excluded the black majority. Hadland (2007:10) notes the manner in which general news, socio-economic news and leaders pertaining to the black majority were omitted from the mainstream print media narrative through tight apartheid controls,

For more than a century, the print industry had enjoyed a tightly structured fraternity with barriers to entry as high as the barbed wire fences surrounding the country’s military establishments. In spite of the fact that 80% of South Africa’s population was black in 1994, a genuinely black press had not been allowed to develop. Indeed, laws had been framed during the apartheid era that expressly forbade newspapers and magazines from reporting on black political leaders or parties or even from covering important political and social developments if they occurred in zones designated as black living areas.

In the 1980's, Lloyd (2013: 8) further notes, that newspapers were banned: "newspapers could be arbitrarily suspended and stopped from publishing for up to six months". Therefore, the mainstream print media in South Africa mainly operated as a political agent and conduit for racist British colonialists and apartheid propaganda. Print media history in South Africa is also significantly characterised by the "ethnic presses" comprised of the Black press, English press, and Afrikaans press (Steenveld 2012: 125).

2.4.2 The print media policy and regulatory context

This section provides the wider policy and regulatory context of print media, including its ideal envisioned role in the "new South Africa". The role of the media in post-apartheid South Africa was to act as a tool for unification and democratisation. Barnett (1999: 649) highlights, "the role officially envisaged for the mass media in post-apartheid South Africa is to act as the medium of national unification and democratic citizenship".

The Constitution Act 1996 set the principles of all forms of the South African media. Mtshali (2009) notes in *PoliticsWeb* ⁴⁵ that the legislative framework of the media gives effect to the principles of Constitution through the Media Development and Diversity Act of 2002 (MDDA Act), Independent Communications Authority of South Africa Act of 2000 (ICASA Act), Electronic Communications Act of 2005, Broadcasting Act of 1999 and Access to Information Act of 2000. As mentioned earlier, the Constitution was a "liberal democratic constitution" that borrowed ideas from the West (Monteath 2001: 256). It is important to observe that Western liberalism informed and undergirded media policy and regulation in the "new South Africa".

In 1994, all forms of media underwent considerable policy and structural changes that meant a liberalisation of broadcasting and print media. The face of the South African media system changed to align with the newfound democratic dispensation. The discourse of media change can be traced back to the 1980's, where the debates on the future of the media began. Tomaselli and Teer-Tomaselli (2008) note that in 1990 the debate exploded and became an open public sphere, where all political parties published policy documents, manifestoes and position papers related to media transformation. During this period, the ANC media policy position changed

⁴⁵ <http://www.politicsweb.co.za/documents/print-media-ownership-needs-transformation--mdda>

from one of a post-Cold War democratic pluralism to a Marxist inspired communal control by the mid-1990's (Tomaselli and Teer-Tomaselli 2008).

The ANC's newfound media policy position led it to ensure government's arms-length relationship with the media, and the establishment of an independent statutory regulatory body - the IBA, known in the present day as the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA). Under apartheid rule, broadcasting and telecommunications was tightly controlled and regulated by the government. Barnett (1999: 650) describes the changes seen in the broadcasting environment as "a dramatic upheaval", which saw the transformation of the SABC from a state-controlled broadcaster to an independent public service broadcaster, the establishment of the IBA as the industry's independent regulatory body, as well as the entrance of new private sector interests. The Broadcasting Act 4 of 1999 established the new democratic broadcasting legislative framework as a three-tier system comprising public, private and community.

On the other hand, the press in South Africa is not governed by statutory regulation but by a self-regulating mechanism⁴⁶ administered by the Press Council of South Africa, which includes a Press Ombudsman. The Press Code of Conduct is the main regulatory enactment that guides reporting (Vilakati and Mavindidze 2014). The regulatory system of the press has been the object of much criticism. Vilakati and Mavindidze (2014: 15) name one of these gaps as the failure to regulate concentration of ownership, stating,

...the regulation of economic elements relating to control and ownership of media enterprises. This has enabled media company owners to procure as a large a stake in the industry as they can possibly contain, resulting in a few major participants or owners in the industry.

In the broadcasting sector, the ownership and control of broadcasting is regulated by the statutory regulator, ICASA. Vilakati and Mavindidze (2014) further highlights the lack of regulation of the press through its research which found that the print media is actually the largest section of media in South Africa in terms of the number of titles and ownership, but surprisingly it is the most unregulated.

⁴⁶ There is no state enacted regulation or legislation that regulates the press industry directly. The Press Code of Conduct is the main regulatory enactment that guides rules to which print media is to conform. Since the code is not state enacted or official legislation, it cannot be said to be the law of general application. It is an informal regulatory system set out by the media industry to regulate its own conduct (FXI 2014), hence the term "self-regulatory mechanism".

The policy and regulatory system of the press can be regarded as positive in terms of democratic imperatives in many ways. The MDDA (2009) research found that the press “legislative framework that exist promotes diversity in all spheres, from ownership, control, management, newsroom, sources of information and therefore diversity of views and opinions in order to enhance our democracy”.

The legislation that impacts the print media in South Africa are listed below (Vilakati and Mavindidze 2014):

- *The Constitution of South Africa Act 108 of 1996* - is the guiding document from which all rights emanate;
- *The Competition Act 39 of 2000* - refers to issues of ownership and control in general;
- *The MDDA Act 14 of 2002* - highlights the ideal of transformation in the media and seeks to promote diversity and development in line with the Constitution as well as encourages ownership and control by historically disadvantaged groups;
- *Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Act 53 of 2000* - established a national policy on broad based economic empowerment; it redresses the inequalities of the exclusion and marginalisation of disadvantaged communities from participating in the economy. The print media is not exempt from this Act and is required to strive to attain its provisions, the Act should be read alongside, *Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Strategy* which sets out a framework for the implementation of the BEE Act through a BEE scorecard; and *The BEE Codes of Good Practice of 2007* where the Codes provide a standard framework for the measurement of broad-based BEE across all sectors of the economy;
- *The Companies Act 71 of 2008* - allows all people to incorporate a company;
- *Skills Development Act 97 of 1998* - provides strategies to develop and improve the skills of the South African workforce as a whole;
- *Labour Relations Act 12 of 2002, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 76 of 1987, and the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998* - regulates the employer-employee relationship in South Africa.

The Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Act 53 of 2000, as well as the MDDA Act 14 of 2002 both mention “transformation”. The BEE Charter and the Transformation Charter are in place and aim to “promote racial transformation in the control and ownership of enterprises/companies such as print media companies” (Vilakati and Mavindidze 2014: 11).

The MDDA Act 14 of 2002, purposes to “promote the transformation of the ownership and control of companies in the print media sector to reflect the South African demographic”. Vilakati and Mavindidze (2014: 11) argue that the transformation related pieces of legislation “have had little impact on the sector”.

2.4.3 The media transformation trajectory in South Africa

In a broad sense, the term “transformation” is widely understood as “change”, and what counts as transformation or change is “widely contested” (Steenveld 2012: 129). Steenveld (2012: 125) argues regarding media transformation post-apartheid,

Post-apartheid discourses of ‘media transformation’ can best be understood in terms of the print media’s history of ‘ethnic presses’: the Black press, the English press, the Afrikaans press. Each had a particular agenda in relation to the group’s political status. Thus, the history of these presses is also a history of social, political and economic struggle in South Africa.

The inception of the transformation agenda is tied to apartheid inequalities. The ANC policies, including those promoted prior to democracy, have underscored the importance of media diversity and transformation to the attainment of a free and healthy democratic South African society. In 1992, the ANC adopted a Media Charter that recognised that diversity of media content is a cornerstone of democracy⁴⁷. The ANC produced the *Ready to Govern* document in 1992 as it prepared for the challenges that would follow the democratic breakthrough and emphasised, amongst other things, the importance of moving from a closed society to one based on the free flow of information and a culture of open debate⁴⁸. The ANC stated the belief that at the heart of democracy is the right of all citizens to take part in society’s decision making-processes, which requires individuals to be armed with information and have access to contesting opinions in order to make informed choices⁴⁹. This ANC document described South Africa as a closed society because,

South Africa has been a closed society, with many restrictions on the flow of information. Legislation, the structure of ownership of media resources, skills, language

⁴⁷ *Media Transformation Summit declaration*. 3 October 2015. SACP website. <http://www.sacp.org.za/main.php?ID=4895>

⁴⁸ *Transformation of the Media*. 30 March 2007. ANC website. <http://www.anc.org.za/content/transformation-media1>

⁴⁹ *Transformation of the Media*. 30 March 2007. ANC website, <http://www.anc.org.za/content/transformation-media1>

policy, and social deprivation have undermined access to information for the majority of the population (ANC 1992).

In order to achieve these citizen rights, the ANC further articulated that mere declarations of media freedom on their own are not enough. The ANC argued that these freedoms must be underpinned by the equitable distribution of media resources, development programmes and a deliberate effort to engender a culture of open debate⁵⁰. Important to the context of this thesis is that, the ANC states that this requires policies of affirmative action to redress the inequalities in our society⁵¹.

Lloyd (2013: 11) notes that in 1992 Nelson Mandela at a Press conference in Prague stated that the lack of transformation of the media in South Africa posed the biggest threat to freedom of expression:

I cannot overemphasise the value we place on a free, independent and outspoken press... Such a free press will temper the appetite of any government to amass power at the expense of the citizen ... The reality is that today ... conglomerates, drawn exclusively from the white racial group, dominate the print media of our country ... The senior editorial staffs of ... South Africa's daily newspapers are cast from the same racial mould. They are all white, they are all male, they are all from a middle class background and tend to share a very similar life experience. The ANC has no objection in principle to editors with such a profile. What is disturbing however, and in our view, harmful, is the threat of one dimensionality this poses for the media of our country as a whole. It is clearly unacceptable that a country ... is serviced by media whose principal players have no knowledge of the life experience of that majority (Nelson Mandela 1992).

Mandela's speech provides a useful context to the ANC's approach to print media transformation as important for freedom of expression and more broadly democracy. Mandela communicated the views of the ANC and stated that he found it disturbing and harmful that daily newspapers in the early 1990's were white in ownership; staffing was white, male and middle class; and content showed a one dimensionality in coverage given that its ownership and staffing were cast from the same racial mould. Mandela further spoke of the experiences of the majority, which in the South African context are black, who are not reflected in the press system. Therefore, since the early 1990's the ANC articulated the importance of media diversity, transformation, affirmative action policies, as well as media freedom to the attainment of democracy. In the mid-1990's, the ANC undertook "one of the most remarkable makeovers in international media history", where it led the way for media transformation, black

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

political and economic transformation, an inclusive range of languages, political opinions and populist genres (Tomaselli and Teer-Tomaselli 2008: 173).

As democracy progressed, the ANC continued to underscore the importance of media diversity and transformation, placing emphasis on racial diversity of ownership, staffing and content. Daniels (2010: 67) in her PhD thesis speaks of the ANC's and its alliance partner's understandings of post-apartheid media transformation:

Transformation of the media post-Apartheid meant to the ANC, and its alliance partners, deracialisation and diversification of ownership of the companies, of the newsroom (i.e. the journalist), and of content (i.e. who or what is written about).

Daniels (2010:69) moreover argues that the ANC's philosophy of media transformation has been in relation to the diversity of black owners and more representative staffing.

The theme of media transformation has featured as a hot topic of the ANC's national conferences. At the ANC's 51st national conference in Stellenbosch (2002), the ruling political party reaffirmed the importance of a free and diverse media to the democratic process and to the task of fundamental social transformation ⁵². The Stellenbosch Conference stated:

Communications play a major role in deepening our democracy, promoting a culture of human rights and as a key pillar in the transformation of our country. Valuable progress has been made in transforming the media and challenging the legacy of the apartheid media discourse, but a lot still has to be done. The media itself faces major challenges with regard to equity, skills development and improvement in working conditions. Media and communications are contested terrains and therefore not neutral, but reflect the ideological battle and power relations based on race, class and gender in our society... (ANC 2002)

In 2002, approximately eight years after democracy, the ANC remained invested in the importance of communication as a tool to deepen democracy and as a key pillar of the transformation of South Africa. The ANC was of the view that in the immediate post-apartheid period, great progress was made by the media to transform and change the apartheid media discourses. However, the ANC acknowledged that the media still reflected racial, class and gender ideological and broad power relations reminiscent of apartheid. Similarly, media transformation was a major theme in the ANC's 2007 national conference in Polokwane, as well as the 2012 national conference in Mangaung (De Waal 2013).

⁵² *Transformation of the Media*. 30 March 2007. ANC website, <http://www.anc.org.za/content/transformation-medial>

The ANC is joined by numerous others in its view regarding the lack of transformation of the media. MDDA (2009) research cited in *PoliticsWeb*⁵³ found,

...the print media landscape in the post 1994 South Africa has not transformed much in terms of ownership and control...The majority of print media in South Africa is still owned / dominated by a few companies and individuals in spite of various interventions by the state through promotion of transformation processes and BEE.

Despite the ANC's articulation of its commitment to media transformation, many are critical that this is often used as a ruse for politicisation and current policies disable, rather than enable, true transformation. The Right to Know Campaign (2015: 2) notes the recent renewed calls for media transformation from the ruling ANC party and others, however, the campaign posits, "Often this call uses the lack of transformation to justify proposals to limit media freedom". The Right to Know (2015) campaign further argues that government policy has encouraged media concentration rather than contain it.

De Waal (2013) notes that the debate on press transformation is one that has raged since the birth of South Africa's democracy and recalls that in November 1998 the Human Rights Commission of South Africa (SAHRC) launched an investigation of racism in the media following complaints that dealt with content. The complaints⁵⁴ accused the *Mail & Guardian* of being racist in the manner it exposed corruption. Additional complaints were made that the *Sunday Times* trivialised the death of black people by reducing them to statistics comparatively to white deaths, which were covered in great detail in a manner that invoked sympathy. Charges were also laid against David Bullard⁵⁵ for ridiculing victims of slave trade in his newspaper column (De Waal 2013). The SAHRC hearings then prompted an ongoing debate about race and transformation and De Waal (2013) argues that in many ways this culminated in the ANC's 2007 Polokwane declaration of the media, which made it clear that the ANC was going to ensure the industry transforms one way or another.

The print industry, by way of the Print and Digital Media South Africa (PDMSA) representing about 700 titles in the sector, only responded in 2013 to decades of debate by launching the PDMSA Transformation Task Team (De Waal 2013). The PDMSA's reasons for creating the

⁵³ <http://www.politicsweb.co.za/documents/print-media-ownership-needs-transformation--mdda>

⁵⁴ The complaints were brought to the SAHRC by the Black Lawyers Association (BLA) and Association of Black Accountants of South Africa (ABASA).

⁵⁵ A former *Sunday Times* columnist

Task Team were summed up by the head of the Task Team, Nkwenkwe Nkomo, in the following statement,

From the Human Rights Commission investigation into racism in the media, to the recent interactions between Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Communications, the accusation against print media in particular was that it was untransformed, did not reflect the diversity of SA voices, especially the rural and the poor, and was white-dominated both in ownership and issues covered. Further accusations have been of cartel-like behaviour where emergent community and small privately owned media were smothered through a variety of anti-competitive behaviour (cited in De Waal 2013).

Nkomo's criticism of the press as white dominated in ownership and content, as well as lacking in diversity of voices, especially the majority black and rural, were similar to Nelson Mandela's criticisms in 1992 as discussed earlier.

The most recent calls for media transformation have recognised that content transformation is lagging behind. The contemporary definition of print media transformation has moved from the emphasis in the early 1990's on transformation as the structural aspects of ownership and staffing, to now include the relationship between ownership and content transformation. The Right to Know Campaign (2013: 2) for example, notes:

Media transformation is imperative. South Africa needs media transformation that goes beyond changing the race and gender composition of boards and staff bodies; it should ensure that the media reflects society (especially the majority working class and poor) at the levels of ownership, staff, and product.

Similarly, Vilakati and Mavindidze (2014: 8) defines press transformation as control and ownership, and "Tied into this will be the effect it may have on the diversification of content in print media".

Steenveld notes (2012: 129) that the academic debates around media transformation focused on, "... whether changes in the media were economic/structural, or whether there were also changes in personnel and power within newsrooms which could effect changes in media content" (Steenveld 2012: 129). Therefore, in the South African print media, true transformation is presently understood as a change in economics, structure, personnel, power and media content.

2.4.4 Key contemporary trends of the print media

The 1994 democratic transition that took place not only had massive repercussions for the South African polity but also the print media (Hadland 2007: 10). Notably, only in 1993 was the print media market opened up to foreign investment, and Hadland (2007: 11) posits that apartheid's isolation meant no foreign investment within South Africa, which left a

...largely undisturbed a language- and race-based oligopolistic division of the spoils between two major Afrikaans newspaper companies, Nasionale Pers and Perskor, and two English ones, Times Media Limited (previously South African Associated Newspapers) and the Argus Publishing and Printing Company.

The press was heavily censored by the apartheid government during the 42 years of its rule, through legislation that prohibited reporting on an array of matters and that promoted their views and policies. In 1994, the print media became independent of state control (Vilakati and Mavindidze 2014).

Louw (2014), in *The Media Online*⁵⁶, states that most of the one hundred laws censoring the media during apartheid - which resulted in the suppression of the media and harassment, torture, jailing and beatings of journalists who tried to tell the truth - were removed after apartheid and press freedom was restored. Louw (2014) further notes the immediate changes seen in newspapers:

The English-language newspapers, which had battled against apartheid-era censorship, constantly consulting lawyers and devising tactics to avoid breaking the laws, found themselves in a new environment where their previous outright opposition to a vicious apartheid government had to be abruptly retuned into one where the new rulers were encouraged to introduce the freedoms they had promised...The change in the Afrikaans-language press was overwhelming and extremely dramatic. Through all the years of Nationalist Party domination, their newspapers had supported the government's apartheid policies and its attacks on press freedom and the English-language press. Though the restrictions applied to them equally, they had supported them as 'patriotic South Africans' and cheered on the government's accusations that their English counterparts were guilty of conduct verging on treason.

Thus, the development of the print media (and media alike) in post-apartheid South Africa took place in sync with the political changes unfolding in the country. For example, in the days after the first democratic elections in 1994, people stopped buying newspapers of every title. Hadland (2007) notes that total daily newspaper circulation fell by 11% between June 1994-

⁵⁶ <http://themedialonline.co.za/2014/04/the-evolution-of-african-media-over-20-years-south-africa/>

December 1995 and in most cases the majority of titles have been unable to reclaim this lost ground that took place in the early 1990's. Since 1994, the print media underwent significant changes, not only in the decline of circulation but also in journalistic skills and the race make-up of newsrooms (Hadland 2007: 14).

One of the major changes of the print media in post-apartheid society is its commercialisation. The media in South Africa relies primarily on advertising as its main source of livelihood; this has led to the commercialisation of the media in South Africa. In post-apartheid South Africa, Hadland (2007: 16) notes that "one of the most striking trends in the post-1994 period has been the commercialisation of the South African print media sector".

Despite the many changes in the print media, there are significant apartheid continuities. Steenveld (2012: 132) problematises the practices of the contemporary press as inherently embedded in its past, stating "it is evident from South Africa's press history that news routines and values are deeply embedded and thus pose a potential problem in a society in which issues and people have to be seen afresh". Lloyd (2013: 10) sheds insight into this issue, saying that "the apartheid history of systematic underdevelopment of the majority of South Africans is vital to understanding everything in the country - including the structure and reach of the different media". Access to the media in general is also unequal. Barnett (1999) says that access to radio and television signals are very uneven geographically, with rural areas poorly served and television being mainly an urban media form. Similar to the apartheid-era, the media in South Africa are characterised according to race and class.

Another significant development in the print media post-1994 is the arrival of what Hadland (2007) calls mass-market tabloid newspapers. ABC figures show that in 1994 the biggest selling newspaper was *The Star* and in 2006 the biggest selling newspaper was the tabloid *Daily Sun* (191,322 copies) (cited in Hadland 2007).

The realignment in the relationship between the media and the state is another significant trend which is described by Johnston (2005) as encompassing a few points of conflict that have emerged between the ANC and the print media,

At best, the ANC's relationship with the political press has been distant and neurotically suspicious; at worst, pathologically hostile (Johnston 2005, cited in Hadland 2007: 18).

To expand on this point, the contemporary print media has been accused of acting like the "official" opposition. The post-1994 period saw a new party political system which moved from white minority leaders to black majority leaders. It is important to critically analyse the

print media's representation of these new leaders given the print media's racist white supremacist roots and development. In post-apartheid South Africa, the relationship between the ANC and the press in South Africa certainly has been a contentious one. Lloyd (2013: 11) notes:

The relationship between the ANC and the print media in particular, however, has been tense for many, many years—with distrust from the ruling party and its allies perhaps rooted in the complicity of much of the mainstream press in covering up the brutality of apartheid.

The press coverage of the new black majority government is an issue that has framed post-apartheid South Africa and is worthy of further analysis in this thesis.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter contextualised print media transformation within the broader political and economic context, and wider media environment. The chapter firstly, painted a picture of the racist colonial and apartheid foundations of mainstream print media, and the development of the alternative press during these periods. It showed that print media transformation was birthed out of the broader political and economic changes that took place at the ushering in of democracy in South Africa. In this regard, the inception of print media transformation became rooted in the amplified neo-liberal ideology that favoured the market. The print media followed the broad wave of unbundling of white corporations to facilitate black capital accumulation, which kicked off press media transformation.

Secondly, the chapter posits that poverty, inequality, unemployment and social protests are the major issues that have framed post-apartheid South Africa. These issues are a manifestation of the neo-liberal ideologies adopted by government in 1994 and reveal apartheid continuities and racial inequalities. I argued that in the context of these issues, it is critical that the print media represent these issues in ways that show race and class transformation (Boloka and Krabill 2000).

Thirdly, the chapter painted a picture of the print media landscape, including its historical location in the racist systems of British colonialism and apartheid. It discussed the early role of the print media as mostly a conduit of British colonial business and political aspirations and apartheid propaganda, as well as to a lesser extent an opposition to apartheid and serving

various ethnic groups through the alternative press. Overall, the early print media in South Africa reflected the ruling politics of the day and its political divides. This chapter argued that the policy and regulatory framework of the print media is based on the Western liberalism of the South African Constitution. It also presented criticisms of the transformation related policies of the print media as not having a significant impact on the print sector, as well as the shortcomings in ownership and control of the regulatory model of the press.

The chapter contends that at the inception of democracy, media diversity was upheld by the ANC as key pillar of democracy (ANC Media Charter 1992). The media transformation trajectory presented in this chapter showed that the early conceptualisation of print transformation was informed by Nelson Mandela's, and the ANC more generally, main critique of newspapers as white in ownership, white and all male in staffing, as well exhibiting a one dimensionality in coverage - overall a system that was invisible to the majority black experience (Nelson Mandela 1992). Throughout the first twenty years of democracy, the ruling party ANC enshrined the importance and lack of media transformation at its national conferences, and flagged the communication space and media as reflective of power relations based on race, class and gender. The chapter argued that the Nelson Mandela (1992) critique about the shortcomings of newspapers, as it related to the lack of transformation in ownership, staffing and content, continued as characteristics of the press as democracy progressed. The chapter highlights the recent renewed calls for print media transformation as emphasising the content aspect, hence structural transformation must lead to content transformation.

The chapter posits that the contemporary press market is intertwined in its past and shows the apartheid continuities. It argued that amongst the key features of the post-apartheid press are: the commercialisation of the press; apartheid continuities of access and consumption based on race and class inequalities; the great growth of the tabloid market; and the contentious relationship between the press and the democratic-era black government which points to a possible race dynamic given the strong white supremacist hegemony that South Africa is founded upon.

This next chapter presents the theoretical framework of the study and conceptualises the terms central to this study, namely: media and democracy, the public interest role of the media, a critical political economy of the media articulations of media ownership and diversity, as well as theories of power.

SECTION II

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY UNDERPINNING THE STUDY

Chapter 3

Theoretical framework: Analysing print media transformation within the ideals of democracy, the public interest, media diversity and equal power

3.1 Introduction

Normative media theory ascribes universally accepted norms about how the media should perform and how each performance should be judged. This chapter details the normative media theory adopted as the frameworks through which to analyse the extent of print media transformation. This study adopts four theoretical frameworks – the media's role in a liberal democracy; the public interest role of the media; critical political economy of the media; and theories of power. The chapter posits that print media transformation in South Africa should be democratic, public interest driven, adhere to the ideals of media diversity, as well as display equal power relations.

Part 1 engages with the democracy and public interest elements of the study, mapping out the relationship between the media and both of these concepts. It commences by historically tracing the dominant school of thought (Siebert et al. 1956) that formed the original normative paradigm of the relationship between media and democracy. The chapter then discusses in detail Curran's (2000) revised framework of the role of media in liberal theory and espouses its main theoretical underpinnings. McQuail's (2005) conceptualisation of the media serving the public interest is also mapped out in this chapter in order to provide an understanding of the various interests the media can serve, and the functions of a press that serve the public interest well.

Part 2 of the chapter details the critical political economy of the media approach as the normative yardstick to assess the existing ownership patterns, control and power characteristics of the South African print media from a media diversity perspective.

Part 3 of the chapter provides the power component of the theoretical framework and elucidates Michel Foucault's (1975) notions of modern power, and Pierre Bourdieu's (1985) forms of capital. It includes a brief discussion of the concept of media power as it relates to the hierarchy of a press institution.

3.2 Media and Democracy

This section discusses the earliest conception of the relationship between media and democracy. It then maps out the revised role of the media in a liberal democracy as a core component of the theoretical framework.

3.2.1 Early conceptions of the relationship between media and democracy

The 1960's has been identified by Christians et al. (2010) as the period where a rich expansion of thought was birthed about normative theories and models of democracy, public communication and the roles of journalism in democratic societies. Throughout these early conceptions regarding the relationship between media and democracy, and the dangers of ownership concentration are extensively featured. The normative struggles over the feared consequences of press concentration have a long history in Europe and the USA (Christians et al. 2010: 9). The 1940's featured early Commissions into the press, such as the USA's Hutchins Commission of 1947 called *A Free and Responsible Press*, which built a philosophical and moral foundation for the media owing a responsibility to society. In 1947 the UK's Royal Commission on the press emphasised the need to restrict monopoly ownership and endorsed the press's public responsibility (Christians et al. 2010: 9).

The classic bestselling book, *The Four Theories of the Press* authored by Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm in 1956, was the first emergence of a conceptual framework to trace the relationship between media and society. The authors of *The Four Theories of the press* use the term "press" to encompass "all media of mass communication". Siebert et al. 1956:8). However, they acknowledge that they refer to the printed media more often than broadcast or film as it was an older form of media. The book was the first substantive reflection about the media's role in society. It argued that the characteristics of press systems are a result of the social and political structures they are operating within.

The Four Theories of the Press coins four normative media theories that each prescribe roles for the media. These are: libertarian, social responsibility, authoritarian, and communist. Nerone (1995) posits that *The Four Theories of the Press* had a tremendous impact on future thinking about the press and society. In a revisit of *The Four Theories of the Press*, Nerone (1995) described it as scholarship that represents a certain way of thinking about the

relationship between the communication system and the society in which it operates. The society usually comprises of: government, the judiciary, social welfare, education institutions, the military, economic institutions and cultural institutions (Fourie 2011). Several typologies were proposed by American theorists shortly after this book, in attempts to complement and revise the original four theories (see Merrill 1974; Hachten 1981; Picard 1985; Altschull 1984). For example, McQuail (1983) gave the first European based revision of the four theories, adding two more theories: the development media theory and the democratic-participant media theory.

This research adopts Curran's (2000) revised model of the media's role in a liberal democracy, which will be extensively discussed in the section that follows. Curran (2000) modifies one of *The Four Theories of the Press* - the libertarian theory. The libertarian theory subverts the top down functioning of the press and state, and in this regard the press is viewed as a partner in the search for truth (Siebert et al. 1956). The press is not a government instrument, but rather a device of evidence and arguments aimed at equipping citizens to be a check on government and to be able to establish positions on public policy (Siebert et al. 1956). Thus, it is imperative that the press can express opinions and information from a free market society (Siebert et al. 1956). Freedom and independence from governmental control and influence is seen as critical to the media playing this role. The libertarian theory's understanding of the role of the media is to be the watchdog in, of and over society (Fourie 2011). Additionally, to be the primary source of information and a platform for the expression of divergent opinions (Fourie 2011). The libertarian theory has been used for media performance in the USA and UK for over 200 years, in both these countries the media is encouraged to act as the Fourth Estate along with the legislative, executive and judicial authorities (Fourie 2011).

There were currents of change following the inception of the liberal approach to the media. Notably, it was observed that the press abused this freedom and became irresponsible, including practices of "yellow journalism", sensationalism, and character assassination (Uzuegbunam 2013: 2). As a result, there were resounding calls to revise the libertarian theory (Uzuegbunam 2013). In the 1940's the Hutchins Commission, comprising of a group of scholars, was commissioned to look into this issue and deliberated for four years (Uzuegbunam 2013). The commission settled in 1947 and produced guidelines for a socially responsible press (Uzuegbunam 2013). The Hutchins Commission stated,

...protection against government is not now enough to guarantee that a man whom has something to say shall have a chance to say it. The owners and managers of the press

determine which persons, which facts, which versions of these facts, shall reach the public (Hutchins Commission 1947, cited in Huberman 1968: 16).

The uneasiness expressed in the above statement formed the basis of developing the social responsibility theory, which invokes:

...that the power and near monopoly position of the media impose them an obligation to be socially responsible, to see that all sides are fairly presented and that the public has enough information to decide; and that if the media do not take on themselves such responsibility it may be necessary for some other agency of the public to enforce it Siebert et al. (1956: 5).

Within this context, the idea of the new libertarianism or social responsibility emerged, which was initially publicised in reports by the Hutchins Commission (Siebert et al. 1956). It was also reflected on prior to that by editors and publishers that recognised the demands of twentieth-century conditions requiring a new and different kind of social responsibility (Siebert et al. 1956).

According to Fourie (2011), the social responsibility theory reconciles the freedoms, autonomy and independence of the media that is expressed by the libertarian theory, but with a responsibility to society. The responsibility signifies supporting, upholding and furthering democratic principles by acknowledging different opinions and interests of, and in, society (Fourie 2011). As well as having the ethical and professional standards to protect and respect the interests of society (Fourie 2011).

Christians et al. (2010) recognised that the social responsibility theory has evolved with the building of popular democracies in the late nineteenth century. Media diversity is mentioned as one key element of social responsibility theory that characterises contemporary normative media theory. Christians et al. (2010: 70) opines the following about the ideal of diversity:

The ideal of diversity illustrates the sociocultural benefits of a public policy that prevents concentration of media ownership in the industry, while providing conditions that promote the diversity of media services. The theory of media diversity also legitimates a great variety of media skills and offers a basis for extending normative criteria to new media and new communication situations.

In *Beyond Four Theories of the Press*, Christians et al. (2010) unpack the emergence and development of the social responsibility tradition. In the nineteenth century, the libertarian solution elevated freedom of expression as the highest value ranking of the media, which typically became the approach adopted by many states (Christians et al. 2010). In this era, the negative results of entrepreneurial freedom became evident and the pressing need to balance freedom with responsibility emerged (Christians et al. 2010). The social responsibility tradition

regards the public or community as having rights and legitimate expectations of adequate service, similar to the libertarian tradition. Additionally, freedom is the basic principle for organising communication.

The emergence of the social responsibility tradition evolutionised normative theories, institutions of democracy and the understanding of the role of the media in a democracy. The new role of the media in this new era of the social responsibility of the press regards public communication as “...the personal responsibility to serve the needs of developing a democratic society with mass participation”, and has an ethos to “service the development of democracy” (Christians et al. 2010: 24).

The print media in South Africa have adopted a mixed media system, a mixture of libertarian and social responsibility. The social responsibility component emerges from the media in post-apartheid South Africa being vested with a critical democratic and public interest responsibility to society (as discussed in chapter 2). In this regard, as mentioned previously the media’s role and policies in the “new” South Africa was informed by the South African Constitution which enshrines human rights, such as equality, human dignity, labour relations, health care, food, water, social security, and children’s rights (section 7). The Constitution also enshrines freedom of expression which includes media freedom (section 16) - the central principle of the libertarian model. The South African Press Code⁵⁷ guides the print media’s reporting, and reflects the libertarian and social responsibility mixed media model. The South African Press Code takes its preamble from the South African Constitution, and draws from the International Federation of Journalists framework which is grounded in normative liberal theories of the news media, such as being free from statutory regulation (Rodny-Gumede 2015). The Press Code also elevates the social responsibility of the print media to South African citizens, “The media’s work is guided at all times by the public interest, understood to describe information of legitimate interest or importance to citizens” (Preamble, The Press Code of Ethics and Conduct for South African Print and Online Media 2019⁵⁸). The Press Code additionally enshrines Constitutional principles in reporting, such as the best interests of the child, human dignity, and condemning gender discrimination⁵⁹. The press system in South Africa however

⁵⁷ The Press Code of Conduct is the main regulatory enactment that guides rules to which print media is to conform. Since the code is not state enacted or official legislation, it cannot be said to be the law of general application. It is an informal regulatory system set out by the media industry to regulate its own conduct (FXI 2014)

⁵⁸ <https://www.presscouncil.org.za/sa-press-code/>

⁵⁹ For the full South African Press code 2019: <https://www.presscouncil.org.za/sa-press-code/>

is currently located in the corporate sector therefore dominantly operate according to neo-liberal logic and the free market. Hence the libertarian theory and revisions of it are most applicable to this study.

In order to provide a holistic background of the initial conceptualisation of the relationship between media and society, it is useful to delve deeper into the remaining two theories of the press as coined by Siebert et al. (1956).

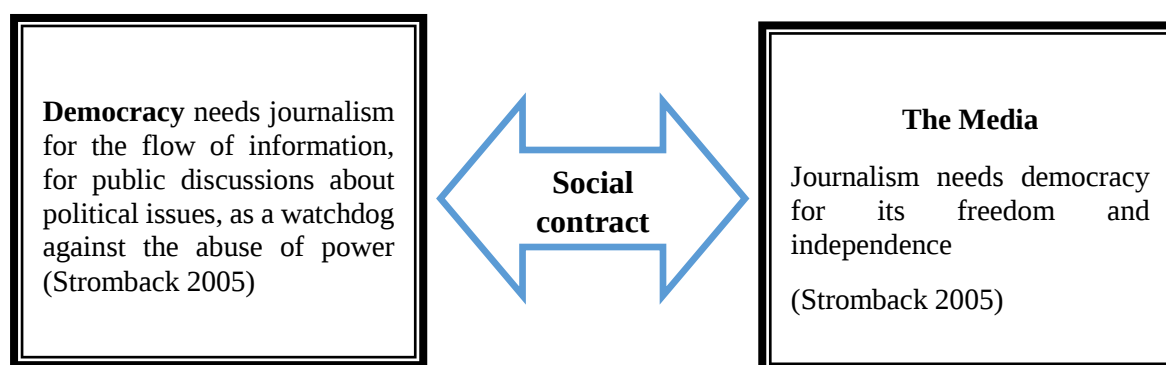
Siebert et al. (1956) describe the function of the press in the authoritarian theory as the servant of the state that functions from the top down. Its main function is to act as a mouthpiece, authority and propaganda tool of government and vested power structures (Fourie 2011). The Soviet communist theory prescribes that the media should serve the interests of the working class. The role of the Soviet press is as the tool for ruling power, is state owned and functions to communicate pre-established Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist truth (Siebert et al. 1956).

The *Four Theories of the press* has been criticised for its entrenchment in a one dimensional Western view of the world that was rooted in a very specific period in history. Post-colonial theoretical criticism for example, has called for the development of an indigenous approach to media ethics. One approach that has emerged is the concept of *ubuntuism*. It is summarised by Fourie (2011) as a moral philosophy, a collective African consciousness, a way of being, a code of ethics and behaviour that is deeply embedded in African culture. *Ubuntuism* aims to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, harmony and humanity - all in the interest of building and maintaining a community with justice and mutual caring. Ubuntu, as a foundation for normative media theory, ascribes the media as serving the public interest, primarily as the provider of information and knowledge for the community (Fourie 2011).

3.2.2 The revised role of the media in a liberal democracy

Since the ground-breaking work of Siebert et al. (1956) many theorists have contributed further to the discussion. Many theorists have described the relationship between the media and democracy as a social contract (see McQuail 1992; Stromback 2005). This concept usefully illuminates the interlocking and interdependent relationship of democracy and the media, as depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1- The relationship between democracy and the media is a social contract (Stromback 2005)



The social contract is based on the understanding that democracy needs a social system where information can flow, public discussion can take place and supports a watchdog function. The media is a conduit for this. The media in turn require democracy as the only form of government that respects freedom of speech, expression and information, as well as independence of media from the state. Democracy fulfils its end of the social contract by respecting and promoting these freedoms (Stromback 2005). The media delivers its part of the social contract by providing citizens with: information they require to be free and self-governing; government with information to make decisions that promote the common good and are sensitive to public sentiment; an arena for public discussion; and a watchdog function for abuses of power (Stromback 2005).

There are several models of democracy that have emerged as many countries have undergone significant political transitions for example, deliberative, radical, participatory, procedural, and developmental. These different models of democracy have normative standards by which the quality of news journalism can be evaluated (Stromback 2005). A universal understanding and expectation enshrined in contemporary media theory is that the media must strengthen democracy, whatever form the democracy may take. Christians et al. (2010) argue that the media have a normative purpose to further democracy and democratic institutions.

South Africa's press media system operates according to a neoliberal logic and free market system, as discussed earlier. As a result of this context, Curran's (2000) revised model of the role of the media in a liberal democracy is most suited to this study. He adopts a critical perspective toward the free market system's ability to guarantee diversity, and enable strengthening of democracy. This study adopts a critical stance towards the ability of South Africa's free market system to deliver media diversity. It seeks to uncover which interests are

being served, and whether its ownership system and content are a disservice or a cultivator of the public interest and democracy. It adopts Curran's (2000) revised framework for the media's roles in a liberal democracy to benchmark the democratic nature of the print content.

Curran (2000: 134) provides a critical exposition of traditional liberal theories of media and democracy, and notes that liberal theory,

...perceives the political system to be constituted primarily by government and individuals. In this theory the media protect, inform, gather together and represent private citizens, and enable them to supervise government through the agency of public opinion.

He criticises traditional liberal theory as conceptually flawed and argues its objectives cannot be realized in a free market system. Further, he espouses that it shows an archaic understanding of polity developed in the eighteenth century. Curran (2000) identifies the need to rethink media and democracy in new and critical ways in lieu of the political changes brought on by multi-party democracies given way by dictatorships, as well as technical changes of new communication technologies.

Curran (2000) revised the original liberal theory's articulation of the roles of the media. The original liberal theory argues for critical surveillance of government. Curran (2000: 122) argues for critical surveillance of both government and private corporates or shareholders, "a revised conception is needed in which the media are conceived as being a check on *both* public and private power". This expression is based on the premise that the media *are* big business and no longer merely compromised by their links to big business because of the rise of big business or private ownership of the media. He ascribes three revised normative roles the media should play in a democracy: free market watchdog, platform for information and debate, and be the voice of the people. These roles are depicted in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2- The media's revised role in a liberal democracy (Curran 2000)



This study applies Curran (2000) critical attitude of the free market's ability to guarantee media diversity, in this case the South African print media's free market. The study is aware that Curran (2000) model is fundamentally steeped in a libertarian ethos, of which this study critiques. However, Curran (2000) model upholds the principles of media diversity and public service which is particularly useful to the objectives of this study. This model thus provides a useful theoretical framework to assess the levels of democratically natured content evident in the print media, and the extent of content diversity in the press. Curran's (2000) model is adopted to inform the development of the content analysis framework (discussed in Chapter 4).

Curran (2000) based his criticisms of traditional liberal theory on various changes in the media market. These are identified as: the rise in media corruption that grew in the 1980s and 1990s when deregulatory policies were pursued, as well as tactical alliances formed between political parties and media entrepreneurs. He argues that various trends have emerged, for example, market corruption has now produced corporate mercenaries that adjust critical scrutiny to suite private interests. Hence, the market can no longer only produce independent watchdogs serving the public interest. Market suppression also takes place where the media collaborates with authoritarian states "because media owners were part of the national system of power" (Curran 2000: 124). Curran (2000) critiques the liberal theory arguing,

This theory ignores other influences that can shape the media, including political commitments and private interests of media shareholders, the influence exerted through news management and the ideological power of leading groups in society. In short, this

extremely simplistic theory fails to take into account the wider relationship of power in which the media are situated (Curran 2000: 125).

He argues that the best way to secure “fearless media watchdogs that serve democracy” is to take practical steps to shield the media from “the corruption generated by both political and economic system”, rather than an unthinking of the catechistic subscription to the free market (Curran 2000: 127). This thesis echoes Curran’s sentiments and is critical of the print media’s free market system to adequately serve democracy and media diversity in South Africa. The study adopts the three ideal roles of the media in a liberal democracy to rate the transformation performance of the print media in South Africa.

Firstly, the principle democratic role of the media according to liberal theory is to act as a check on the state. The media must monitor the full range of state activities and fearlessly expose abuses of official authority. This is known as the “watchdog role” of the media (Curran 2000: 121). Liberal theorists believe that the media can only play this role if it is grounded in a free market to ensure complete independence from the government. Curran (2000: 121) notes that, “once the media become subject to public regulation, it may lose its bite as a watchdog” and transform into a “snarling Rottweiler in the service of the state”. This orthodox liberal view is well entrenched in the United States. Curran (2000) revised this view by arguing that the media should be a watchdog of all powerful institutions in society, including the state and business.

Secondly, Curran (2000) engages with the liberal theory’s view of the media as “an agency of information and debate that facilitates the functioning of democracy” (Curran 2000: 127). He notes that this is based on the assumption that democracies need informed and participatory citizens to manage common affairs. Curran (2000: 128) notes that the liberal model underscores the importance of media diversity, “... believes public debate is more likely to produce rational and just outcomes if it takes account of different views and interests”.

Curran (2000) critiques the belief in the free market system to deliver diversity of views and interests and empower well informed citizens, based on four assertions. *First*, the free market restricts the effective freedom to publish, due to the high cost of market entry. *Second*, the free market reduces the amount of public information available and renders people less informed because market pressures to maximize sales result in human interest stories displacing public affairs. *Third*, the free market generates information-rich media for elites and information-poor media for the general public. Hence, participation in public debate is restricted. *Fourth*, the market undermines intelligent and rational debate as market-oriented media content tends to

be characterised as: simplified; personalised; decontextualised; with a stress on action rather than process; visualisation rather than abstraction; stereotypical rather than with an emphasis on human complexity. It is important to note that contemporary developments in new media and technology have somewhat challenged the power of the free market to govern media access and publication. Kim and Johnson (2009: 283) capture the impact of the internet on media access and availability since its exponential use and assess since the mid-1990s, “the Internet is now perceived as a more important source of information than traditional mass media and the World Internet Project revealed that online information is generally considered reliable and accurate by people worldwide”. There is now freedom to publish on the internet which is not stifled by “high cost of market entry”. As Chao-Chen (2013: 183) posits, “The proliferation of new media has allowed more people to take part in content creation, thus expanding the sources of news content”. People are also well informed through multiple information sites available on the internet. There is access to a wide range of news such as blogs, citizen journalism, online newspapers, social media sites, and there are multiple platforms of distribution available such as google, facebook, and twitter. Technology has thus provided a substantial alternative platform for news and information, that has changed the traditional media access and distribution space. It has effectively diluted the power of the free market to restrict freedom to publish and reduce information. Chao-Chen (2013: 184) opines that new technologies have revolutionised the concept of the publisher of mass content, “Due to the convenience of the new media technologies, however, the general public now also has the ability to create news content”.

The third key democratic function of the media in a liberal democracy is to represent people to authority. The media must, thus relay public consensus to government. It must speak for the people and represent their views and interests in the public domain. The press must respond in a competitive market place to what people want and express their views and interests.

Curran (2000) critiques this viewpoint, stating it exhibits an idealised view of market competition because most media markets have developed in ways that weaken consumer influence. Curran (2000) identifies that in the 1980s the press in most countries developed into oligopolies, in a highly monopolistic form. The stable-controlled media landscape was transformed, and in the 1980s and 1990s new communication technologies also emerged. He argues that there are various factors limiting consumer influence. *First*, the enormous increase in media concentration and the company resources limit competition and manage demand.

Second, high market entry costs resulting in a market system not open to all, which restricts groups with limited financial resources. *Third*, mass media markets are oriented towards majorities to maximize profits and increase economies of sales. Curran (2000) is critical of liberal theory's view that market expansion has led to more consumer choice. Choice is pre-structured by the conditions of competition and in the contemporary context this has meant unequal provision for consumers in oligopolistic markets where entry is restricted (Curran 2000).

By and large Curran (2000) argues that private media are not automatically the voice of people. Who they represent depends on the configuration of power to which the media are linked. He coins four ideal typologies that can shape media output: the economic elite; the political elite; parity between economic and political elite; and liberal corporatism. The first typology transpires when the economic elite is the leading group that exerts influence over the political system through its power base in the economy, control of private media, funding political candidates and informal channels of access to the state. Second, the political elite using state power, for example, awarding generous state loans, subsidies and government advertising to lubricate media goodwill, waiving monopoly controls to boost the growth of media friendly groups, state posts for top media people, and highly restrictive laws enabling the imprisonment of dissident journalists who stray outside systems of control. Third, a relationship of relative parity between economic and political elites that leads to an uneasy alliance between the two - which represents an elite consensus. The fourth typology is liberal corporatism, which is a three-way relationship between organised capital, labour and the state.

3.3 The media serving the "public interest"

McQuail (2005) theorised the idea that the media ought to behave in the wider public interest and coined a public interest criteria consisting of nine elements⁶⁰. Two of these can be applied to this study: plurality of ownership of media, as well as diversity of information, opinion and culture. McQuail (2005) identifies three sets of issues that have surfaced in debates about the relationship between media and society that correspond to the nine criteria. The first set of

⁶⁰ McQuail (2005) other public interest criteria are: freedom of publication; support for public order and the security of the state; extensive near universal reach; quality of information and culture available to the public, adequate support for the democratic political system (public sphere); respect for individual and general human rights; avoiding harm and offence to society and individuals.

issues centre around media freedom, plurality of ownership, diversity of information, opinions and cultural content. The second set of issues include support for the democratic process, quality of cultural provision, meeting international obligations, support for maintaining public order and the security of the State. The third level of issues suggest the media avoid various forms of harm, for example, respecting the rights of individuals, harm to society and harm to individuals.

Therefore, plurality of ownership and diversity of media content are key components of serving the public interest. A media system that is pluralistic in typology ideally serves the public interest. McQuail (2005) articulates that in order for the media to serve the public interest, plurality of ownership must exist. Plurality of ownership is a concept that stands in opposition to concentration of media ownership as well as monopoly of control by the state or private media industry. In this regard, he uses the following guiding principle,

...the media system should not be dominated by a few controlling interests and that citizens should have access as senders and receivers to media that reflect their ideas and meet their interests and needs. Different type of media (press, broadcasting) should be under different control (McQuail 2005: 168).

A public interest driven media ownership system must encompass a multiplicity of owners and controllers, where citizens also have access to media that are reflective of them and meet their needs. McQuail (2005: 166) further posits that in serving the public interest, a media system should exhibit a range of content that,

...reflects the diversity of the society, especially in the key dimensions of region, politics, religion ethnicity, culture and so on hence diversity of information, opinion and cultural content are key to the public interest being served... Public interest driven media content evokes representing the diversity of society in which it operates, for example, religion and ethnicity.

At the heart of McQuail's (2005) idea of the public interest is striving for the attainment of diversity and not being homogenous in ownership and content narrative. Drawing from this notion of a public interest driven ownership system and media content, this study argues that transformation of the print media must be in the public interest.

The concept of the public has evolved and no longer refers to one single public. Fourie (2011) contends that postmodern society is characterised by a new kind of public, which is not a coherent population with shared values. It is rather marked by hybridization, fragmentation, the rise of minorities and minority rights (Fourie 2011). A single Habermasian public sphere no longer exists, rather several public spheres claim legitimacy (Fourie 2011). Fourie adds that

the new conceptualisation of the public and multiple public spheres has changed the way that communication scholars deal with the concept of the public interest. This study is cognizant of which publics are being served by the print media in South Africa. This, for example, can encompass questions around: Which class of public? Which race of public? Which region of public? It is also important to consider that society often has contesting interests at play that potentially could stand in contrast to the attainment of the public interest. For example, commercial interests, political interests, advertiser interests, editor's interests, etc.

Christians et al. (2010: 30) recognise that there are a range of approaches prescribing the media's role in society, the media "can serve the interests of the sources of information and ideas, whether political or otherwise, as well as the interests of the public as receivers". Common metaphors to characterise media roles, as mentioned by Christians et al.(2010), are different kinds of dogs: watchdog controlling the power holders; a lapdog serving the master; or a guard dog looking after vested interests. Curran (2000) revised role of the media in a liberal democracy and McQuail (2005) notion of the public interest provide useful frameworks to assess the role the South African print media play in society and the interests it serves - and if this enables media diversity and true transformation.

3.4 Critical political economy of the media

This study adopts critical political economy of the media as a key component of its theoretical framework. This approach relates the content which is the outcome of the news processes to the "structure of the state and economy and to the economic foundation of the news organization" (Schudson 2002: 251). Ownership constitutes one economic element of a media organisation. This study critiques the broad transformation agenda of the media with the intention to analyse press ownership diversity as a core indicator of media transformation. Print media transformation in South Africa is a product of the political economy of transition that ushered in various changes, as discussed in chapter 2. The political and economic context surrounding the print media are important to this study. Few studies have conducted a recent critical political economy of the media in South Africa. Olorunnisola et al. (2010) study highlighted the need to conduct in depth research to chronicle various dimensions of the transformation of South African institutions, including media institutions, given the backdrop of the termination of apartheid.

Similar to critical political economy of the media, other theories seek to explicate media content and concur that news is a form of culture. One such theory is the cultural studies approach that focuses on the cultural dimensions of news including narrative, story-telling, linguistic presentation, as well as content (Schudson 2002: 262). The cultural approach dissects cultural symbols and images in media content within the cultural context that the media operate in (Schudson 2002: 261). A critical political economy of the media approach would be better suited to the nature of this study. The cultural studies approach focuses on the constraints of broad cultural traditions and symbolic systems, regardless of the structure of economic organisations (Schudson 2002: 251).

Other theories also study the external context that the media operate in. A case in point is media economics, which is firmly embedded in the belief that the mass media are economic institutions, therefore media content is linked to market economics (Albarran and Dimmick 1996). Media economics “is the study of how media industries use scarce resources to produce content that is distributed among consumers in a society to satisfy various wants and needs” (Albarran and Dimmick 1996: 5). The critical political economy of the media approach sounds the alarm to dangers faced by democracy as a result of ownership and control issues, whereas conventional economics focuses strictly on pricing issues and does not deal with threats to democracy (Downing 2011). This study critically analyses ownership diversity within the ideal framework of the media’s democratic and public interest roles in South Africa. It analyses ownership diversity and uses the democratic functioning of the media as a yardstick, while also suggesting interventions for enhancement. Media economics deals with the law of supply and demand of audiences and analyses the status quo without problematising it. Current ownership patterns are, thus, legitimised and their impact on democracy is not a focal point of analysis. Within the media economics approach, alternatives to better the public good are not considered. Albarran and Dimmick’s (1996) study is an example of a media economics approach that looked at the level and change of market concentration in the USA media, both within and across the industry over a five-year time interval - and analysed fourteen different communication industries. The study unpacked economic concepts like market concentration and monopolies, however, it did not sufficiently delve into the impact of ownership concentration and monopoly on society.

Media economics considers one impact factor on media content, which is economics, whilst critical political economy of the media provides a holistic analysis of the interplay between the media, culture, politics and economic factors such as ownership and control. To further

understand the media's role in a particular society, critical political economy of the media research has attempted to understand the relationship between the media's power and state power, as well as the media's relationship to economic sectors (Wasko 2004). This strand of critical political economy of the media will be useful for this study to track the relationship between political, economic and press power in order to understand its multi-faceted consequences.

Critical political economy of the media provides a critical and holistic insight into these issues and interventions to enhance diversity of print media ownership and broadly the transformation agenda in South Africa. This section discusses the specific aspects of critical political economy of the media that the study draws from, namely, its "critical" and power strand; articulations of an ideal communication system; its critique of the market system and capitalism; as well as its clarity regarding diversity of ownership factors and content.

3.4.1 The "critical" and power strand

The critical political economy of the media approach adopts a "critical" stance that is "centrally concerned with questions of action and structure, in an attempt to discern the real constraints that shape the lives and opportunities of real actors in the real world" (Golding and Murdock 2000: 72). This is useful to consider the constraints and opportunities in the broad transformation agenda to attain true transformation in terms of ownership diversity. The "critical" strand of this theory differentiates it from mainstream economics by being holistic, historical and "centrally concerned with the balance between capitalist enterprise and public intervention" (Golding and Murdock 2000: 72). It will enable an analysis that is holistic and historical, which considers the implications of capitalism and appropriate levels of intervention. Critical political economy of the media as a framework analyses with the purpose of uncovering contradictions, then suggesting strategies for resistance and intervention (Wasko 2004: 311). The study will, therefore, be positioned to suggest interventions that can improve the current press system.

Critical political economy of the media is also interested in the interplay of power and sets of social relations (Golding and Murdock 2000: 73). The study will attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the power dynamics in the ownership system and the broad transformation agenda. A necessary element of this analysis will involve considering power and social

relations between the print media, personnel of media organisations, owners, economic stakeholders and the state. According to Mosco (1996) one of the four central characteristics of critical political economy of the media is “social totality”, meaning that it is a holistic approach that explores the relationship “among commodities, institutions, social relations and hegemony” and also explores determination among these aspects (Wasko 2004: 310).

3.4.2 The ideal communication system in a democracy

Critical political economy of the media is premised on the overwhelming importance of the media in relation to the moral good and articulates fundamental requirements for an ideal communication system. The theory uses the basic yardstick of an ideal communication that is open, diverse and accessible, in order to measure the performance of existing systems and also formulates alternatives to the existing systems (Golding and Murdock 2000). It holds in high esteem the importance of the public good, “by moving beyond technical issues of efficiency to engage with basic moral questions of justice equity and the public good” (Golding and Murdock 2000: 73). As stated before, the major focus of this study is analysing the extent of media diversity in the print media. In line with this framework, the study identifies the media as a key public good that plays an important moral role in society. The media, acting as a public good with specific moral obligations contribute to an inclusive and diverse public sphere. A failure to adequately perform these functions will result in a weakened and elite public sphere. Another focal point of critical political economy of the media is to investigate how changes in the array of forces that exercise control of media institutions, specifically distribution and production, “liberate or limit the public sphere” (Golding and Murdock 2000: 78). This belief enables the study to consider issues and changes of ownership patterns and control in press institutions, and its consequences.

3.4.3 The market system and capitalism

Critical political economy of the media as a tradition is grounded in Marxism and posits that, “Capitalist mass media are increasingly concentrated on a global scale under the control of corporations and media moguls” (Garnham 2011: 42). This is argued to result in a decline in the diversity of a cultural nature and political views (Garnham 2011). This study of ownership

patterns will naturally involve examining capitalism, given its rapid growth within media systems worldwide. Marx was historicised as the greatest critic of capitalism in his time (Fuchs and Mosco 2012). A contemporary study argued that Marxist theory is of “enormous” importance for critical communications studies today, and in critically examining communication it is of great importance to “engage with the analysis and critique of capitalism” (Fuchs and Mosco 2012: 129). Critical political economy of the media is grounded in Marxist theory that views communication in relation to capitalism, thereby,

...placing in the foreground the analysis of capitalism, including the development of the forces and relations of production, commodification and the production of surplus value, social class divisions and struggles, contradictions and oppositional movements (Mosco 2009: 94).

A Marxist view of the media in the study of communications is still relevant in contemporary times because communication has been increasingly embedded in structures of inequalities in class societies (Fuchs and Mosco 2012). The study will adopt a Marxist view of the media by assessing ownership, concentration, control and power within this notion of continued class inequalities in communication.

The growth of capitalism in various markets is a concern of critical political economy of the media focused research, specifically determining the level of market concentration (Wasko 2004). Critical political economy of the media have included historical analysis, with a belief in the importance of documenting change and continuity, and many previous studies have focused on commercialisation and historical studies (Wasko 2004). In determining the ownership patterns and diversity of the South African print media system, market economics and concentration, as well as the change of ownership patterns, will be systematically considered. The critical political economy of the media framework enables the analyses of “the vertical and horizontal processes of integration and the resulting concentrations of corporate ownership” (Garnham 2011: 44). Using this theory will enable a detailed and systematic analysis of ownership diversity, control and power within the context of the rise of capitalism.

3.4.4 The terrain of ownership and the media owner

The evolution of ownership and control from political to private hands, and the subsequent global growth of corporate mergers have led political economists to focus on the cultural and political implications of concentrated media ownership (Downing 2011). Therefore, questions

are posed about whether media concentration risks or entails “a dangerous constriction of the interplay of perspectives and information on issues directly relevant to citizens of a democratic policy” (Downing 2011: 141).

Critical political economy of the media has a corporate focus which includes conducting in depth accounts of patterns of ownership. This involves examining trends of commodification, integration and diversification in ownership and control, and considering these developments in light of issues like cultural creativity, diversity, equity, access and democratic ideals (Wasko 2004). Traditionally, the political economy approach to the media has centred on the study of ownership and control, mergers, acquisitions, monopolisation, divestment and fracturing, cross-media ownership and transnational control, state ownership and privatisation, internationalisation, regionalisation, liberalisation and commercialisation (Olorunnisola et al. 2010). Utilising these elements of critical political economy of the media would enable further probing of the beneficiaries of policies, mechanisms of control that influence production and content, large stockholders and their relationship to managers, composition of the board of directors, and ties to other companies, including state and financial institutions (Wasko 2004). The corporate studies focus of critical political economy of the media would be useful in enabling the study to go further than identifying ownership patterns, control and power, but also to consider this in the context of the democratic ideals of diversity, equity, access and creativity.

Ownership is traditionally defined as legal in nature, specifically made up of “shareholders” which are further comprised of power blocs (Downing 2011: 140). There are two widely accepted forms of ownership; firstly, legal ownership means being a “member of an effective power bloc of shareowners”; secondly, economic ownership is being “one of a mass of petty shareholders” (Downing 2011: 140). Traditionally, there are a handful of direct forms of control exercised by owners. Firstly, “control over a corporation’s policy” known as allocative control, which means that the owner allocates resources at a strategic level (Downing 2011: 140). Secondly, “control of its day to day implementation” is referred to as operational control, which can include the power to hire and fire, specifically where the owner is immersed in the organisational routines and dynamics of the media production process (Downing 2011: 140).

Ownership dispersal, as opposed to concentration, has been favourably argued for safeguarding against media power abuse. This argument is rooted in democratic and economic theory (Baker 2006). The ascribed democratic roles of the media require journalists to provide a public service

with a shared sense of “doing it for the public”, to achieve this, journalists must enjoy editorial autonomy, freedom and independence (Deuze 2005: 447). Protection must be ensured from extra-journalistic forces that would compromise these, like marketing or corporate (Deuze 2005).

The power of ownership has possible effects on an organisation, its editorial policy and direction, editorial independence and editorial content. Theoretically, the ownership and control structure is important, “the person who pays the piper calls the tune” and media ownership [economic power] translates into cultural power (McNair 1998: 102). The nature and extent of this power differs on a case by case basis. In this argument, cultural power refers to the content itself. There are various forms of impact of this power on editorial independence and content. Some owners typically take a “hands off” editorial approach and leave the day to day management to professionals that do the decision making in relation to content (McNair 1998: 103). Other proprietors have been known to exercise control over editorial processes, for example journalists who disagree with editorial policy have had their copy “spiked” and/or have been fired from their positions (McNair 1998: 107). Some owners have resorted to phoning their editors, as reported by editors of British newspapers of the 1980’s and 1990’s in *The Sun* and *Sunday Times* (McNair 1998: 108). There is also the strategic hiring of staff, as seen in Rupert Murdoch’s *The Times* and *Sunday Times*, who replaced key editorial staff after he made life difficult for those he wished to leave, despite promises of editorial independence prior to the transfer of ownership (McNair 1998).

Shareholders of newspapers are increasingly using unconventional methods and commercial strategies that often narrow the diversity of content. Critical political economy of the media recognises the rise of communications conglomerates and the new debate as a result of the potential abuse of owner power. The debate has been extended from the traditional potential control of owners intervening in content decisions or firing staff to more recent commercial strategies built around “synergies” that exploit the overlaps of a company’s different media interests (Golding and Murdock 2000: 79). An example of this is the use of a newspaper for free publicity of television stations owned by the same company. This impacts the sum total of diversity of cultural goods. Major media moguls also exercise indirect power in addition to these direct forms. For example, exerting indirect power over smaller concerns in their markets or seeking to break them by, for example, establishing the rules that the competitive game will be played by. An example of this is using greater financial power to drive new entrants out of

the market by launching expensive promotional campaigns, offering discounts to advertisers and buying up key creative personnel (Golding and Murdock 2000).

Teer- Tomaselli and Tomaselli (2011) has added another dimension to ownership and control, namely: power. The terrain of ownership and control is a complex and multi-faceted one, as control in the print media does not simply pertain to shareholders and directors. Control and forms of non-direct ownership can be exercised by entities that hold the power to impact the operations, production and ultimately content of the newspaper. An example of this would be advertisers. It has become an increasing trend that governments become an indirect owner of a newspaper because of their massive advertising revenue, which has been dubbed by theorists as an “information subsidy” (Downing 2011).

A central concern of the critical political economy of the media theory is the commodification of cultural industries. A commodity has been described as “a good that is produced in order to be exchanged at a price” (Golding and Murdock 2000: 75). The economics of a commercially driven industry is that there is an exchange of audiences for advertising revenue because the price of an advertising slot is dependent upon the size and social composition of the audiences. This audience as a commodity reduces the overall diversity of programming and content (Golding and Murdock 2000). Political economists examine the impact of shifts in advertising support and ownership on changes on content and the resulting gaps (Golding and Murdock 2000). It has been argued that the link between the neo-liberal global capitalist economy and the global commercial media system is the role of advertising (McChesney 2004). The study considers media diversity in South Africa’s press system within critical political economy of the media articulations of ownership, control and power.

3.4.5 Diversity of content and ideas

Various critical political economy theorists recognise the profound impact of media ownership patterns on content and the diverse range of discourses. This approach sets out to show how “different ways of financing and organizing cultural production have traceable consequences for the range of discourses and representations in the public domain and for audience access to them” (Golding and Murdock 2000: 51). The theory identifies capitalism and concentration in ownership patterns as detrimental to diverse citizen-oriented content that is necessary for the safeguarding of the public interest and democratic role of the media. One of the beliefs of the critical political economy of the media is that capitalist corporate control contributes to a

dominant ideology of capitalist-friendly content, and a reduction in cultural and information diversity (Garnham 2011). There is a belief therefore that concentration results in a loss of diversity, hence issues of general ownership concentration, control, suppression of diversity and dominant ideology are considered within this approach (Garnham 2011: 48).

Critical political economy of the media research has historically conducted general media analyses concerned with the consequences of media concentration and its influence on the availability and quality of news, tabloidisation of news, as well as the homogenisation of content (Wasko 2004). These trends are thus analysed, for instance, with relation to capitalism and power, as well their impact as obstacles to a meaningful democracy.

Critical political economy of the media identifies negative trends in content as a result of excessive media concentration and commercialism. It has been argued that hyper commercialism and growing corporate control impact on content through, for example, consumerism and class inequality. Civic values and anti-market activities are marginalised and the best journalism is pitched to the needs and prejudices of the elite, only with a few exceptions (McChesney 2004: 17). Concentration has further resulted in the dominance of commercially driven low value content and it has been argued that “media conglomerates exist simply to make money by selling light escapist entertainment” (McChesney 2004: 19). Critical political economy of the media is “interested in the interplay between economic organization and political, social and cultural life” (Golding and Murdock 2000: 73). This includes “tracing the impact of economic dynamics on the range and diversity of public cultural expression and its availability to different social groups” (Golding and Murdock 2000: 73).

Commercially driven media content will result in more commodities and more content in quantitative terms, however, critical political economy of the media argues, that this does not necessarily result in content diversity of a qualitative democratic nature. Critical political economy of the media argues that diversity achieves a difference in the range of expression and ideas in the public arena. A key task for critical political economy of the media, which is relevant to this study, is charting the shifts in public and commercial enterprises, as well as tracing their impact on cultural diversity (Golding and Murdock 2000). A case in point is the continued worldwide dominance of the English language. Also, the history of the American press shows that since the latter part of the nineteenth century to the present day, one has seen the strength and dominance of English language newspapers that have demonstrated “almost disregard for sub-cultural practices” (Hardt 1992: 224).

In a study of this nature, analysis needs to go beyond the increase of content in the market according to quantitative terms, but also to the impact factors on the variety of discourses in qualitative terms.

3.5 Theorising power

The critical political economy of the media critique of capitalism, as discussed in the previous section, provides the study with a strong framework to critique the press transformation agenda within the context of ownership diversity. The first component of this thesis seeks to critically analyse the nature of ownership, control, as well as power within the levels of diversity needed for transformation in South Africa's democracy. Critical political economy of the media contends that the interplay of power dynamics impacts the media (Golding and Murdock 2000). This study seeks to provide a deeper analysis of power dynamics in the South African print media and thus adopts Michel Foucault's (1975) concept of modern power, and Pierre Bourdieu's (1985) forms of capital. This section details these theories and discusses the notion of media power.

3.5.1 Modern power as mobile unequal force relations - Michel Foucault

Foucault's conceptualisation of modern power is instructive to this thesis in that it seeks to critically analyse the power dynamics in the modern-day press, "Foucault argues that with the rise of the modern era, the exercise of power in the West takes new forms" (cited in Taylor 2014: 3). Foucault (1982: 779) in *Subject and Power* argues "what we need is a new economy of power relations". A Foucauldian perspective of power is rooted in the belief that modern power relations invoke more than the outdated historical conceptualisation of power as the sovereign "repressive" notion of power. Foucault's (1975) seminal work, *Discipline and Punish*, states, "...sovereign power, which is held or possessed and then wielded repressively by one individual over another or others" (cited in Taylor 2014: 3). Foucault (1975) uses Damians definition of regicide to illustrate the sovereign notion of power, likening it to an act of displaying the king's power and "discouraging criminal acts and ensuring social and political order" (Taylor 2014: 3). Foucault (1975: 90) argues that to navigate modern power relations effectively, "It is this [sovereign notion of power] that we must break free of" (cited in Taylor 2014: 3).

In conceptualising power, Foucault simultaneously makes reference to what power is not. In *History of Sexuality Volume I*, Foucault (1990) posits that power is not held and, therefore, power is not: state sovereignty, institutions and mechanisms to ensure citizen compliance, forms of law and rules, and the general system of domination of one group over others effectively used as instruments of coercion. “Power, with or without a capital letter, which is assumed to exist universally in a concentrated or diffused form, does not exist” (Foucault 1982: 788).

On the other hand, Foucault argues that power is everywhere. Foucault (1990: 9), in *History of Sexuality Volume I*, posits that power is,

...many immanent force relations, the processes which organize, support and isolate force relations, and the strategies these force relations embed in the state, law & social hegemonies. The condition of possibility of power is in mobile unequal force relations. Power is everywhere because it is produced at every point. Power is the complex strategical situation in a society.

A Foucauldian perspective of power is understood as unequal force relations that are not tangible. Power also emphasises the notion of networks and relations as opposed to structures and tangible mechanisms,

Foucault conceives of modern power as an interactive network of shifting and changing relations among and between individuals, groups, institutions and structures; it consists of social, political, economic and... even personal relationships (including our relationships to ourselves) (cited in Taylor 2014: 3).

This notion of a power relationship is central to Foucault’s idea of modern power. It is necessary to differentiate the “other” in the power relationship,

On the other hand, a power relationship can only be articulated on the basis of two elements which are each indispensable if it is really to be a power relationship: that “the other” (the one over whom power is exercised) be thoroughly recognized and maintained to the very end as a person who acts; and that, faced with a relationship of power, a whole field of responses, reactions, results, and possible inventions may open up (*Subject and Power*, Foucault 1982: 788).

“The other” is the one to whom power is exercised over in the practice of mobile unequal force relations. At the heart of maintaining power relations is insubordination. There is a possibility of escaping power relations through “insubordination”, which are also a “means of escape” and victory over the adversary (Foucault 1982: 793). “There is no relationship of power without the means of escape or possible flight” (Foucault 1982: 793-794). The concept of “domination”

takes place when the relationship of power is long term and cements into a general structure of power (Foucault 1982: 794).

Freedom is mutually exclusive to power. Power essentially shapes behaviour through unbalanced relations that becomes normative in nature,

It's clear that power should not be defined as a constraining act of violence that represses individuals, forcing them to do something or preventing them from doing some other thing. But it takes place when there is a relation between two free subjects, and this relation is unbalanced, so that one can act upon the other, and the other is acted upon, or allows himself to be acted upon (Foucault 1980, cited in Taylor 2014: 3).

Importantly, power can be exercised over free subjects,

When one defines the exercise of power as a mode of action upon the actions of others, when one characterizes these actions by the government of men by other men-in the broadest sense of the term-one includes an important element: freedom. Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free. By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments, may be realized (Foucault 1982: 790).

This thesis looks at power dynamics in terms of print media institutions. Foucault says the following about institutions and power relations,

This does not deny the importance of institutions on the establishment of power relations. Instead, I wish to suggest that one must analyze institutions from the standpoint of power relations, rather than vice versa, and that the fundamental point of anchorage of the relationships, even if they are embodied and crystallized in an institution, is to be found outside the institution (*Subject and Power*, Foucault 1982: 791).

Power relations are found outside institutions rather than institutions being establishers of power relations.

In *History of Sexuality Volume I*, Foucault (1990: 10) considers the question, "how is power exercised?", which invokes a certain approach on how to analyse power, and is helpful to inform this study's approach to analysing power dynamics in the South African press. By beginning with considering the local centres of power-knowledge,

Power, then, should be analyzed in terms of relations between forces and the strategies immanent in those relations. So don't ask re: sex, about states, laws or hegemonies. But ask: what were the local power relations? How did they make discourses possible? How did they support and modify power relations? How and by what strategies were these power relations linked so that they appear unitary and voluntary? (Foucault 1990: 10).

The Foucauldian approach to power includes the four rules of studying power: Rule of Immanence, Rule of continual variations, Rule of double conditioning, and Rule of tactical polyvalence of discourses (Foucault 1990). The Rule of continual variations is of particular relevance to the assessment of power dynamics in this study as it relates to transformation in the first twenty years of democracy,

Rule of continual variations: instead of looking at which elements of power relations occupy which positions at a time, assume that power-knowledge is a matrix of transformation and look for what changes over time (Foucault 1990: 10).

Taylor (2014: 8) contends that the emancipatory aspect of Foucault's works offers tools through which we must determine,

the use to which we will put those tools. We must critically analyse our present, identify oppressive norms and practices and figure out how we may counter those norms and practices: simply telling us what to think and do would undermine the emancipatory aspects of Foucault's work.

This thesis adopts the "emancipatory" nature of Foucault's work in order to identify oppressive norms and practices in the present press media system.

3.5.2 Power as forms of "capital" - Pierre Bourdieu

Pierre Bourdieu (1985) argues that the social world is ordered by types of "capital" referred to as "power",

And the structure of the distribution of the different types and subtypes of capital at a given moment in time represents the immanent structure of the social world (Bourdieu 1985: 46).

Bourdieu defines capital as "accumulated labour" (Bourdieu 1985: 46) and coins three forms of capital that go beyond the economic conceptualisation of capital. "It is in fact impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory" (Bourdieu 1985: 46). The structure of the social world is ordered according to labour that is historically accumulated,

The social world is accumulated history, and if it is not to be reduced to a discontinuous series of instantaneous mechanical equilibria between agents who are treated as interchangeable particles, one must reintroduce into it the notion of capital and with it, accumulation and all its effects (Bourdieu 1985: 46).

From this disposition it can be argued that those with historically accumulated capital are privileged as they have gained more capital over time. This scenario is applicable to the South African context where economic capital in the Bourdieu sense, accumulated from racial capitalism, hence white people are privileged in present day South Africa, as discussed in chapter 2. This idea of capital can be understood as white generational wealth accumulated whilst “black labour” was exploited.

Bourdieu (1985: 47) notes that capital can present itself in three fundamental guises: economic capital, cultural capital and social capital. According to Bourdieu (1985) capital is the currency that buys you a higher position in society, more capital also equates to more power, however, not all labour is equal. Economic capital is defined as “immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights” (Bourdieu 1985: 47). The two other forms of capital are non-economic in nature. However, economic capital is still at the root of the other types of capital, “The different types of capital can be derived from *economic capital*, but only at the cost of a more or less great effort of transformation” (Bourdieu 1985: 53).

“Cultural capital” can exist in three forms. Firstly, the embodied state, which is in the form of long lasting dispositions in the mind and body (Bourdieu 1985: 47). Secondly, the objectified state in the form of cultural goods (Bourdieu 1985: 47). Thirdly, the institutionalised state, which is a form of objectification that must be set apart (Bourdieu 1985: 47). Cultural capital also explains class fractions. Bourdieu (1985) argues that the higher the social class (profits), the higher the cultural capital (profits). He uses the case of unequal scholastic achievement to illustrate the relationship between cultural capital and class fractions,

The notion of cultural capital initially presented itself to me, in the course of research, as a theoretical hypothesis which made it possible to explain the unequal scholastic achievement of children originating from the different social classes by relating academic success, i.e., the specific profits which children from the different classes and class fractions can obtain in the academic market, to the distribution of cultural capital between the classes and class fractions (Bourdieu 1985: 47).

The degree of “cultural capital” is, thus, class dependant, as “cultural capital can be acquired, to a varying extent, depending on the period, the society, and the social class, in the absence of any deliberate inculcation, and therefore quite unconsciously” (Bourdieu 1985: 48-49). The “embodied capital” refers to the cultural capital embodied in the whole family which is described as the “initial accumulation of cultural capital” and covers the “whole period of

socialization” (Bourdieu 1985: 49). Cultural capital in the “objectified state” is the appropriation of material goods,

Cultural capital, in the objectified state, has a number of properties which are defined only in the relationship with cultural capital in its embodied form. The cultural capital objectified in material objects and media, such as writings, paintings, monuments, instruments, etc., is transmissible in its materiality” (Bourdieu 1985: 49-50).

The “institutionalised state” confers institutional recognition through academic qualifications or “academic capital” (Bourdieu 1985: 51).

The last type of capital is “social capital” which is understood as networks,

Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition--or in other words, to membership in a group-which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity - owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word (Bourdieu 1985: 51).

These relationships can be in the practical state, in material, and/or symbolic exchanges. The relationships can be “socially instituted and guaranteed by the application of a common name (the name of a family, a class, or a tribe or of a school, a party, etc.)” (Bourdieu 1985: 51). The magnitude of social capital,

... depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected.” (Bourdieu 1985: 51).

The mobilisation of social capital is often an unequal playing field in the form of “inherited social capital”,

...the possessors of an inherited social capital, symbolized by a great name, are able to transform all circumstantial relationships into lasting connections. They are sought after for their social capital and, because they are well known, are worthy of being known ('I know him well'); they do not need to 'make the acquaintance' of all their 'acquaintances'; they are known to more people than they know, and their work of sociability, when it is exerted, is highly productive” (Bourdieu 1985: 52-53).

Bourdieu (1985) notes that every group has a form of delegation,

Every group has its more or less institutionalized forms of delegation which enable it to concentrate the totality of the social capital, which is the basis of the existence of the group (a family or a nation, of course, but also an association or a party), in the hands

of a single agent or a small group of agents and to mandate this plenipotentiary, charged with *plenapotestas agendi et loquendi*, to represent the group to speak and act in its name and so, with the aid of this collectively owned capital, to exercise a power incommensurate with the agent's personal contribution (Bourdieu 1985: 53).

In representing and speaking for the group in both the theatrical and legal sense there contains seeds of “embezzlement or misappropriation of the capital which they assemble”, which invokes:

This embezzlement is latent in the fact that a group as a whole can be represented, in the various meanings of the word, by a subgroup, clearly delimited and perfectly visible to all, known to all, and recognized by all, that of the *nobiles*, the 'people who are known', the paradigm of whom is the nobility, and who may speak on behalf of the whole group, represent the whole group, and exercise authority in the name of the whole group. The noble is the group personified. He bears the name of the group to which he gives his name (the metonymy which links the noble to his group is clearly seen when Shakespeare calls Cleopatra 'Egypt' or the King of France 'France,' just as Racine calls Pyrrhus 'Epirus'). It is by him, his name, the difference it proclaims, that the members of his group, the liegemen, and also the land and castles, are known and recognized. Similarly, phenomena such as the 'personality cult' or the identification of parties, trade unions, or movements with their leader are latent in the very logic of representation. Everything combines to cause the signifier to take the place of the signified, the spokesmen that of the group he is supposed to express, not least because his distinction, his 'outstandingness,' his visibility constitute the essential part, if not the essence, of this power, which, being entirely set within the logic of knowledge and acknowledgment, is fundamentally a symbolic power; but also because the representative, the sign, the emblem, may be, and create, the whole reality of groups which receive effective social existence only in and through representation (Bourdieu 1985: 53).

Bourdieu (1985: 46) provides the study with a useful approach to “power” that enables the identification of “forms of capital”, and the unequal accumulation of power in the South African press system within its broader social class fractions.

3.5.3 Media power

This section identifies and attempts to categorise types of media power that are significant in the creation of content, to provide an understanding of internal power dynamics in the hierarchy of a press institution. Literature has revealed these significantly include: market power, owner power, funding and financial power, advertiser power, managerial power and journalistic power.

3.5.3.1 Market power

In recent times, media markets have been characterised by the dominance of a few players. The dominant articulation of many scholars (see Bagdikian 2004; Baker 2006; McChesney 2008), is that "market power of dominant media firms has only worsened" (Compaine and Hoag 2012: 28). Market power is derived from the percentage share that a company owns of the total market and in relation to the other companies.

High levels of market power pose negative consequences for diversification of the market, for example, by imposing a monopoly on the marketplace of ideas by these few firms. The 21st century media market has become problematic due to excessive market power and the conduct of few dominant companies, despite technological innovation like the internet reducing costs of entry (Compaine and Hoag 2012). Reducing barriers to entry into the market is important for the growth of healthy competition, as well as diversification of the market, thereby diluting the excessive market power of a few companies. Many scholars have adopted the position that the effect of ownership characteristics, such as concentration on content variety, must be viewed as an empirical question (George 2007). There is extensive literature about the effects of ownership concentration on product position and product variety, however, there has been little evidence documented in response to this question (George 2007).

3.5.3.2 Owner power

The magnitude of market power refers to the market share of the individual company and can range from excessive to fair. These companies have specific ownership forms. Debates about the effects and efficacy of different forms of ownership are increasing. Worldwide data shows that newspaper ownership is nearly 60% private ownership by families, 3% publicly traded and 4% employee owned, whilst of the majority the remainder is government owned (Picard and Weezel 2008).

The ownership of a print media company significantly contributes to the characteristics of the context in which content is produced. Press critic A.J. Liebling (1961) famously said that freedom of the press is only a guarantee to those that own the press (cited in Compaine and Hoag 2012). This popular adage highlights the media influence granted to a person or entity once they have sufficient capital to purchase stakes in the media and become a media owner.

In addition to the broad societal influence a media owner has, this influence also extends to the internal news organisation itself. A case in point is the following argument, "who owns the newspaper determines how much editorial freedom the newspaper can enjoy" (Zhang 2010: 207). A media owner can impact freedoms both in terms of the right of freedom of expression in society, as well as editorial freedoms exercised within the news organisation. A study that surveyed network news correspondents in the USA with the aim of determining feelings of influence on their stories, showed that 20% felt some ownership pressure to report or censor stories, whilst 7% reported advertiser pressure (Price 2003).

In terms of influence on actual content, previous research has shown mixed results about the influence of ownership on content. For example, a study on *Time* magazine before and after the Time-Warner merger revealed the magazine afforded more favourable and more frequent coverage to the new owner's interests (Price 2003). Another example, a newspaper owner that acquires another newspaper could either continue to operate both newspapers in their current form; or on the other hand, the owner could differentiate them by altering content; close one of the newspapers altogether; or could add content to the remaining product with the intention to prevent competitor entry and still maintain readers with specific preferences (George 2007).

A new owner could also implement differentiation which means eliminating duplicate content, with new material or even shifting emphasis on reporting topics (George 2007). Advertising could also impact content if the acquisition involved the owner increasing the revenue per reader; hence, new content would be introduced that was previously unavailable in the market (George 2007).

3.5.3.3 Funding and financial power

In studying the context of content creation and eventual output, it is important to remember that the media operates within a funding and financing model. Altschull (1995) argued "content of the media is often directly correlated with the interests of those who finance it" (Price 2003: 180). The possible influence of funders and financiers on the media is a pertinent area for this study. The following statement attests to the importance of funding to content output, "media are differentiated products produced with large fixed costs and advertiser finance" (George 2007: 286).

The output of a news organisation is content, this entity can be defined as "the social, formal usually economic entity that employs the media worker in order to produce media content" (Zhang 2010: 207). This reveals that a news organisation operates within the economics of supply (content) and demand (by audiences). A newspaper's operation model consists of ownership, readership and financing sources, it is argued that newspaper content is directly correlated with the interest of financiers (Zhang 2010). Hirsch (1977) argues that the primary goal for most news organisations is economic profit, thus one of the biggest influencers on journalists' decisions are economic constraints in addition to organisational structure and ownership (cited in Zhang 2010).

3.5.3.4 Advertiser power

It is important for the purposes of this study to differentiate between the ownership model, corporate strategies, as well as the business model of a news organisation. Corporate strategies refer to the news organisation as a business entity aspiring to develop into a media conglomerate via acquisitions, concentrations and convergences to cope with competition from the domestic newspaper market, internet and other news media (Zhang 2010). The business model entails advertising and circulation supporting the funding and financing of the news organisation (Zhang 2010). Traditional media business models have been based solely on advertising sales (Compaine and Hoag 2012).

Previous research has cemented advertisers as key influencers of media content, Weaver and Wilhout (1996) uncovered that 34% of journalists surveyed cited three main forces outside their organisations as great hindrances to their autonomy, one of these were powerful advertisers (cited in Price 2003). As the use of new media continues to increase, expectations of the decline of traditional media consumption are rife (Newell et al. 2008). This has possible implications for advertising revenue as an increase in audiences for a new medium means a reduction in audiences for old, and advertisers allocate resources based on estimates of audience size and composition (Newell et al. 2008). The power of advertisers still remains important despite new forms of print media. Advertisers remain large contributors to funding and financing of news organizations and are seen as a form of media power.

3.5.3.5 Managerial power

Ownership and management should, in essence, be separated, but this largely depends on the form of ownership of a company. Private ownership exists where individuals, partners, families or privately held corporations have the ownership rights, here owners exercise control by either acting as managers or even closely monitoring and directing the behaviour of hired managers (Picard and Weezel 2008: 25). A company can disperse ownership through traded shares: this form is defined as publicly traded ownership, and this form has long been understood as reducing the direct influence of owners, which creates new mechanisms and loci of control (Picard and Weezel 2008: 26). Here, the change of ownership in publicly owned firms is seen in managerial capitalism where management is separated from ownership (Picard and Weezel 2008: 25).

3.5.3.6 Journalistic power

Journalists as the ultimate creators of content operate within organisation pressures and influences. Skovsgaard (2014) argues that journalists share an occupational ideology and public service norm as key components of their professional ideology (Skovsgaard 2014: 203). The professional ideals of the journalistic field are not always compatible with the news organisation's goals. Scholars (for example Hallin and Mancini 2004) contend that professional values are under pressure from the profit goals of news organisation. Tensions are birthed with journalism as a public trust and service, and also as a commercial product (Skovsgaard 2014). Berkowitz (1993) argues that the field of journalism has "trade-offs between journalistic judgement and the imperatives from the business side of a media organisation" (Price 2003: 175). Different types of news organisations will see differences in the adherences to professional values by journalists, depending on how the context allows reinterpretation and renegotiation of professional ideology. Breed (1955) revealed in his classic study how news organisations can exercise social control in subtle and covert ways within a newsroom, as it is difficult to legitimately overrule journalists' professional judgements on a permanent basis. This form of control is enacted by socialising journalists into adjusting their professional ideals to the goals of the organisation, reflected in emphasising some values over others in line with organisational goals (Skovsgaard 2014).

Business factors have created conflicts within the journalist's role in the news provision landscape, ideally autonomy, objectivity and professionalism are fundamental requirements for a journalist or editor as they need to learn to be detached from a story and avoid conflicts of interests (Price 2003). The role of an executive involves ensuring the outputs of news divisions meet the allocated budget, quality and policy guidelines; on the other hand, a journalist is only responsible for the individual stories created (Price 2003). Tensions are then created between the news values of the journalist and the organisational values of the executive (Price 2003).

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that liberal pluralist theory operates on the assumption that ideal conditions must exist in order for the media to fulfil its normative roles in a democracy, and uphold the principles of equality and liberty - as described in Curran's (2000) ascribed roles for the media. In practice, the diversity of content and ideas seen in the press is the sum total of many contextual factors. It was shown that Curran (2000) model that essentially critiques the free market's ability to guarantee media diversity provides the study with a substantial theoretical basis, to analyse the extent of diversity and true transformation in the South African press that operates according to libertarianism and market logic. The chapter was cognisant that despite Curran (2000) critique, he fundamentally promotes a libertarian ethos whereas this study is critical of libertarianism and the free market. However the chapter recognised that Curran (2000) model promoted media diversity and public service principles which resonate with the study's understanding of media diversity and true transformation. The chapter additionally showed that ownership diversity and content are key components of a public interest driven press system (McQuail 2005).

Critical political economy of the media showed that cultural and political diversity is said to be on the decline due to the rise of capitalism and concentration. The impact of capitalism and media moguls on the market and content is a pertinent issue within the current landscape, which is characterised by greater availability of commodities in circulation, however, does not automatically equate to more diversity of products. As the popular adage goes "content is king", and ownership and control have an impact on the available range of views and discourses. This can either be positive for the public sphere and diversity, or on the other hand it can have negative consequences.

The development of ownership and control over the years has seen a transfer from the hands of mainly political players to big business. This change still leaves media ownership predominantly in the control of the “powerful”, i.e. the state and/or commercial entities. It is also important to look at how the changes in the array of forces that control the media liberate or limit the public sphere. A key component of social and power relations evident in the media, is that of media owners and the power they exercise. In the dynamics of content production, one must therefore consider the relations and interplay between media power, economic power, political power and citizen power.

The ideal role of the media is a normative position that liberal theory is premised upon. However, in practice ownership and control influences content and the media’s role in a democracy. The critical political economy of the media yardstick for an ideal communication system and the public sphere is useful in assessing the level of democratic-friendly ownership patterns existing in the South African print media.

In the study of power dynamics in the democratic-era press, it is important to be mindful that as Foucault articulates, “power is everywhere” and not tangible (Foucault 1990:9), and free subjects can be subjected to a “power relationship” (Foucault 1982:788). Hence, power does not start and stop with the “sovereign” notion of repressive power. In the South African context, this meant colonialism and apartheid’s legalised racism. Moreover, South Africa’s past racial capitalism is consistent with the unfair accumulation of capital alluded to by Bourdieu. Thus, the forms of capital in the study of power in the press are an important approach to this research. There are different forms of media power at play in the hierarchy of a press institution comprising market share, owner, funding and finances, advertisers, managerial system and journalist.

The chapter that follows discusses the research design of the study.

Chapter 4

Methodology and research design

4.1 Introduction

This study primarily seeks to determine the extent of ownership, as well as content diversity within transformation imperatives in the South African print media. The research questions of the study seek to firstly, establish the extent of transformation in the ownership patterns of the historically English print media institutions: Tiso Blackstar group, Independent Media, as well as M&G Media (owner of the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper). Secondly, the study seeks to decipher the extent of content diversity in the front page and editorial pages of their newspapers. This chapter paints a picture of the study's research design. The nature of the study and research questions prompt a triangulation of research methods with qualitative and quantitative approaches. The research methods utilised were: expert views drawn from a Media Transformation seminar five-person panel, content analysis, and document analysis.

The chapter firstly discusses the first research method which is a unique conceptualisation, in the form of a Media Transformation seminar panel to garner expert views, as well as solicit societal engagement on the topic of this thesis. Secondly, the content analysis method of the study is explained in great detail. This includes its sampling process in the selection of the historically English print media companies of the case study, the six newspapers and periods of analysis based on the major ownership changes of the print media houses. It also presents the reason for choosing the front pages and editorial pages as the sections of the newspaper that are analysed in the study. The study developed a coding schedule to gather data from the newspaper content, and its content analysis categories are detailed in this chapter. The content diversity measures adopted by the study are conceptualised as key measures of media diversity in extant research, namely: topics, prominent voices, as well as tones. Thirdly, the chapter presents the last research method of the study as document analysis of various categories of documents, namely: websites of the print media companies; annual reports of the print media companies; policy; research reports; and academic literature.

The chapter also outlines the data interpretation techniques adopted by the study as: critical political economy of the media, the theory of the public interest, theories of power, the revised

role of the media in a liberal democracy. The study also utilised SPSS data software package as an interpretation tool. The research constraints of the study are also discussed.

4.2 The research design: triangulated research methods

The study utilises both qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches. Qualitative methods enable engagement in an open ended, inductive exploration, as opposed to measurement by way of variables (Blanche et al. 2006). The interpretation approach of the qualitative methodology is humanistic, as opposed to the quantitative methodology that has a quantification approach (Blanche et al. 2006). The qualitative method is fundamentally based on deeper critical analysis (Davies and Mosdell 2006). The study provides a nuanced analysis encompassing quantification and critical exploration of the state of print media transformation in South Africa.

Ownership (structural elements) and content (output) of print media institutions in South Africa are the focal points of the study. There are two kinds of key evidence used in researching media institutions: documentary evidence and people (Stokes 2003: 107). A document is considered as, “the main information unit in an organization” (Salminen et al. 1997: 2). With regards to experts, many qualitative studies have been recorded to depend heavily on information garnered from informant interviews and are widely regarded as “sites of knowledge production” (Jarvinen 2000: 370). It can be said that documents provide sound anecdotal evidence, and interviews with informants provide rich data of the lived realities regarding these institutions. The expert opinions and documents used in this study were qualitative in nature. The content analysis of the newspapers was mainly quantitative and included to a smaller extent qualitative analysis. The triangulation of research methods enable a well-rounded understanding of the state of press transformation in South Africa. Triangulation is the process of combining multiple research methods (Yeasmin and Rahman 2012, cited in Radebe 2017: 23). Radebe (2017: 119) posits, “the process of combining both qualitative and quantitative methods, commonly referred to as triangulation, has become an accepted practice in social research”.

4.3 Qualitative expert opinions: the media transformation seminar panel

In many studies, interviews are coupled with other forms of research methods to provide a well-rounded collection of data for analysis (Turner 2010). In depth interviews are a useful qualitative data collection method that may be used for a variety of purposes, including issue identification (Guion et al. 2001). Qualitative interviews allow the researcher to deeply explore subject's feelings and perspectives on a matter (Guion et al. 2001). It is a highly useful research method, "the primary advantage of in depth interviews is that they provide much more detailed information than what is available through other data collection methods such as surveys" (Boyce and Neale 2006: 3).

In the early stages of this study qualitative interviews were envisioned to be a suitable research method. However, as the study progressed, I decided to adopt the expert opinion concept enshrined in in-depth interviews, and instead hosted a Media Transformation seminar five-person expert panel as a form of data collection. The public seminar event was conceptualised as an interactive form of data collection. It was hosted by the School of Literature, Language and the Media (SLLM), Wits University, on the 18 May 2016. The aim of the seminar was to garner expert opinion on whether South Africa's media can be regarded as having true transformation or racial tokenism? As well as broadly to decipher the state of media transformation in South Africa?

There are many distinctive types of qualitative interviews in the social sciences context, for example: respondent interviews, ethnographic interviews, informant interviews, narrative interviews and focus group interviews (Lindlof and Taylor 2011). This study adopted the concept of the "informant" used by the qualitative interview approach, which is considered as someone whose knowledge is valuable for achieving the research objectives and are well positioned to inform the researcher about the scene under study (Lindlof and Taylor 2011: 177). When conducting interviews, it is critical that informants are selected based on their competence, specific expertise or knowledge of the subject (Jarvinen 2000). In selecting panellists for the Media Transformation seminar, competence criterion was applied. Five panellists, who are in my view amongst the preeminent experts on issues of media diversity and transformation in South Africa, were invited to give a presentation. The experts were requested to give a presentation using the discussion points provided, namely,

- What are the major ownership, control, power and policy issues in media transformation in South Africa?
- Critically consider whether in twenty years of democracy media transformation can be regarded as true transformation or racial tokenism?
- Is media transformation used as a ruse for the politicisation of the media?

The discussion points given to panellists prior to the seminar is similar to the idea of the interview guide used in qualitative interviews. The interview guide is used as the tool to gather data in a focused issue driven manner, and it lists issues to be explored during the interview (Boyce and Neale 2006). Kvale (1996) identifies the seven stages of conducting in-depth interviews as: thematising, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, verifying, and reporting. The designing stage requires the development of an interview guide which serves as a formalised plan for collecting information that includes key topics and questions for discussion (Guion et al. 2001). An in-depth interview method typically relies on multiple sources to provide the most complete picture as possible, the sample must best represent the diverse stakeholders and opinions of stakeholders (Boyce and Neale 2006).

The five panellists and their biographies at the time of the seminar in 2016 are detailed below. The expert panel was chaired by PhD candidate, Prinola Govenden.

- Lumko Mtimde - incoming CEO USAASA⁶¹, former CEO of MDDA⁶², former Councillor at IBA and ICASA⁶³;

⁶¹ The Universal Service and Access Agency of South Africa (USAASA) is a State Owned Entity of government established through the Electronic Communications Act, No 36 of 2005, to ensure that "every man, woman and child whether living in the remote areas of the Kalahari or in urban areas of Gauteng can be able to connect, speak, explore and study using ICT's (<http://www.usaasa.org.za/>)

⁶² The Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) is a statutory development agency for promoting and ensuring media development and diversity. It is a partnership between the South African Government and major print and broadcasting companies to assist in, amongst others, developing community and small commercial media in South Africa. It was established in 2003, in terms of the MDDA Act No. 14 of 2002 and started providing grant funding to projects on 29 January 2004 (<http://www.mdda.org.za/about1>)

⁶³ The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) is an independent regulatory body of the South African government, established in 2000 by the ICASA Act to regulate both the telecommunications and broadcasting sectors in the public interest. Traditionally, telecommunications and broadcasting services operated separately and so has the regulation of the sectors. Broadcasting in South Africa was regulated by the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), whereas telecommunications was regulated by the South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (SATRA) (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independent_Communications_Authority_of_South_Africa)

- Prof. Jane Duncan - Professor of Journalism at University of Johannesburg, former Highway Africa Chair of Media and Society at School of Journalism and Media Studies Rhodes University, prominent activist, former Director of FXI⁶⁴;
- Sekoatlane Phamodi - Black feminist activist, coordinates SOS public broadcasting coalition⁶⁵ which advocates public broadcasting as a tool for social change, training in journalism and law;
- Dr. Mashilo Boloka - Director of the Department of Telecommunications and Postal services⁶⁶, former Director of Broadcasting policy at the Department of Communications⁶⁷, co-author *Debate Calling the glass half full: a response to Berger's' Towards an analysis of the South African media and transformation, 1994-1999*⁶⁸;
- Dr. Glenda Daniels - Senior Lecturer Wits Media Studies department, distinguished journalist, author *Fight for Democracy: the ANC and the Media in South Africa*, co-author Wits Journalism *State of the Newsroom SA (2013) and (2014)* reports.

Jointly, these experts possess knowledge of the subject matter and were chosen based on the criteria of being good informants, specifically: being veterans of the scene and reliable sources of institutional memory; inhabited many different roles and are knowledgeable about the scene; widely respected and plugged into key social networks; and savvy social actors (Lindlof and Taylor 2011: 177).

⁶⁴ The Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI) is a voluntary non-governmental organisation established in 1994 to promote and advance the rights to freedom of expression, access to information, and to oppose censorship (<https://www.fxioz.org.za/about-fxi>)

⁶⁵ SOS is a Civil Society Coalition engaged in a single-issue campaign. The Coalition is committed to, and campaigns for, public broadcasting in the public interest. While the SABC is its primary focus, the Coalition also looks at community media (<https://www.soscoalition.org.za/about-us/>)

⁶⁶ The Department of Telecommunications and Postal Services aims to develop ICT policies and legislations that create favourable conditions for accelerated and shared sustainable growth for the South African economy which positively impacts on the well being of all our people. The Department's objectives are in line with the country's National Development Plan, which recommends developing a co-ordinated and enabling ICT strategy and a plan that cuts across government departments and sectors to improve e-literacy, and provide clarity on the roles and functions of the state to prevent unintended policy outcomes (https://www.dtps.gov.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=132&Itemid=102)

⁶⁷ The mission of government's Department of Communications is to, "Create an enabling environment for the provision of inclusive communication services to all South Africans in a manner that promotes socio-economic development and investment through broadcasting, new media, print media and other new technologies, and brand the country locally and internationally" (<https://www.doc.gov.za/content/about-us>)

⁶⁸ Full reference: Boloka, G.M. and Krabill, R., *Debate Calling the glass half full: a response to Berger's' Towards an analysis of the South African media and transformation, 1994-1999'*. *Transformation*, (43).

The expert panellists together provided broad societal knowledge across six sets of knowledge areas: *academics and researchers* (Prof Jane Duncan, Dr. Glenda Daniels, Dr Mashilo Boloka), *independent experts* (Sekoatlane Phamodi), *journalists* (Dr. Glenda Daniels), *government, parliamentarians, political parties* (Lumko Mtimde, Dr. Mashilo Boloka), *regulators* (Lumko Mtimde), *civil society* (Sekoatlane Phamodi). An explanation of each set of actors and their unique contribution to the study follows:

- *Academics and researchers:* These actors possess valuable knowledge through their published academic papers, research reports and projects about ownership and print content issues, as well as transformation. They are widely esteemed as respected actors due to their theoretical and fieldwork experience.
- *Independent experts:* Media, business and economic experts that provide public commentary about media ownership, content and transformation provided a necessary element of perspective through their independent views.
- *Journalists:* Retired and veteran journalists possess valuable historical lived experiences, as well as key institutional memory of the print media industry, particularly those well versed on issues of ownership and diversity of content, as well as transformation.
- *Government, parliamentarians, political parties:* Government, members of Parliament and Parliamentary committees, and political parties effectively are the custodians of the citizen's interest and vested with the role of policy making affecting the media space, therefore, their input is critical. Government is essentially tasked with initiating policy making processes.
- *Regulators:* These are especially knowledgeable about the scene under study as the enforcers of the policy governing the print media, and also act as the main accountability bodies for media institutions and content.
- *Civil society:* Groupings, movements and coalitions from civil society focused on issues of media freedom, diversity, transformation and representation, and those who are plugged into key social networks are all useful to provide insights into the public interest and grassroots perspectives.

The seminar differed from qualitative interviews in that it did not allow two-way communication between the interviewer and informant. However, the seminar provided a question and answer plenary session after the completion of the presentations. The five

panellist's presentations were recorded and transcribed, and ethical clearance was obtained prior to the hosting of the seminar.

The seminar invitation sent to the public (below) and the poster for the event (Figure 3) follows.

SLLM Media Transformation seminar invite
18 May 2016, 16:30, Graduate Studies seminar Room

The School of Literature, Language and Media (SLLM) invites you to a critical debate around transformation in the South African media, discussing whether these vital changes have in fact taken place in any meaningful way, and if so how and where they can be seen, and what consequences they have had. Boloka and Krabill (2000) write,

“We define the successful transformation of South African media as being achieved when it reflects, in its ownership, staffing, and product, the society within which it operates, not only in terms of race, but also socio-economic status, gender, religion, sexual orientation, region, language, etc. This is only possible if access is opened – again in ownership, staffing, and product –not only to the emerging black elite, but also to grassroots communities of all colours.”

Taking their definition as a starting point, the seminar aims to discuss:

- Issues of ownership, control, power, staffing, control, and policy;
- Whether the media has undergone 'true' transformation or merely engages in acts of racial tokenism; and
- Whether and how the idea of transformation is used as a ruse for the politicisation of the media.

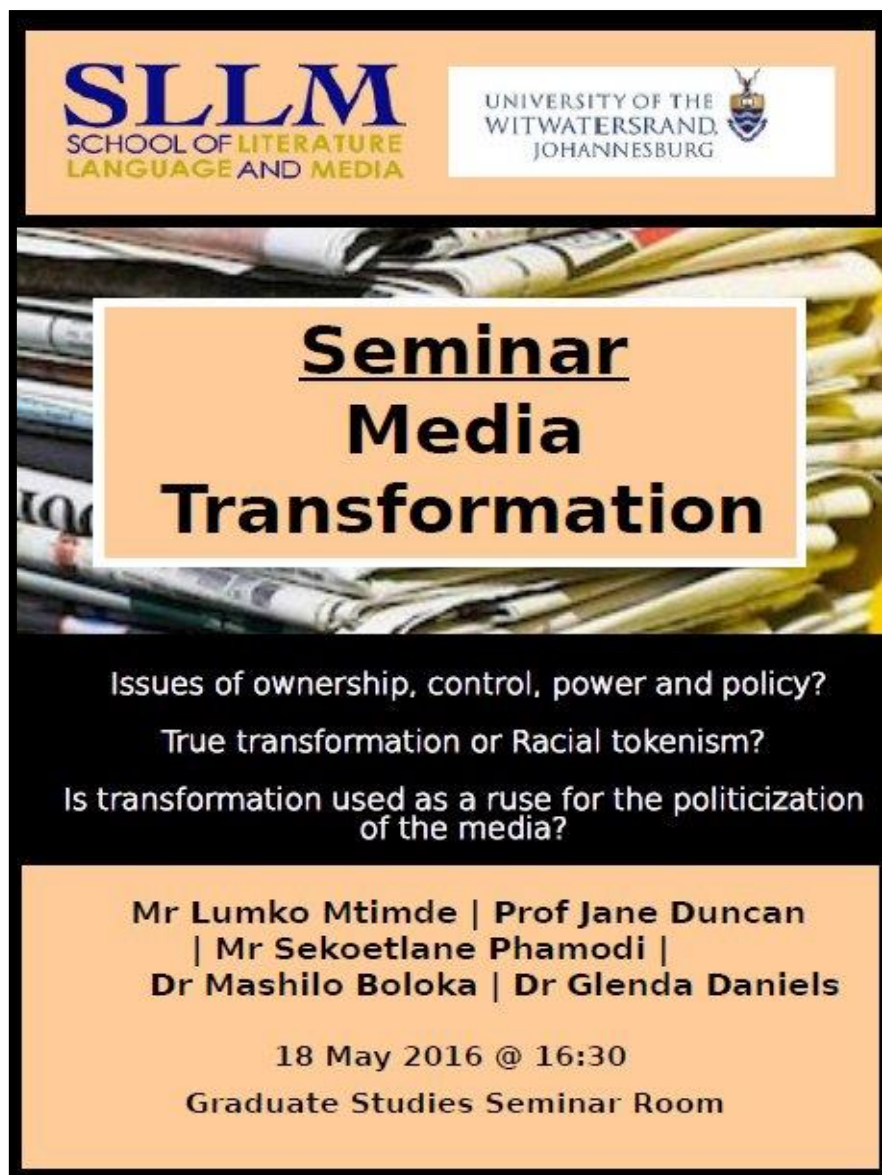
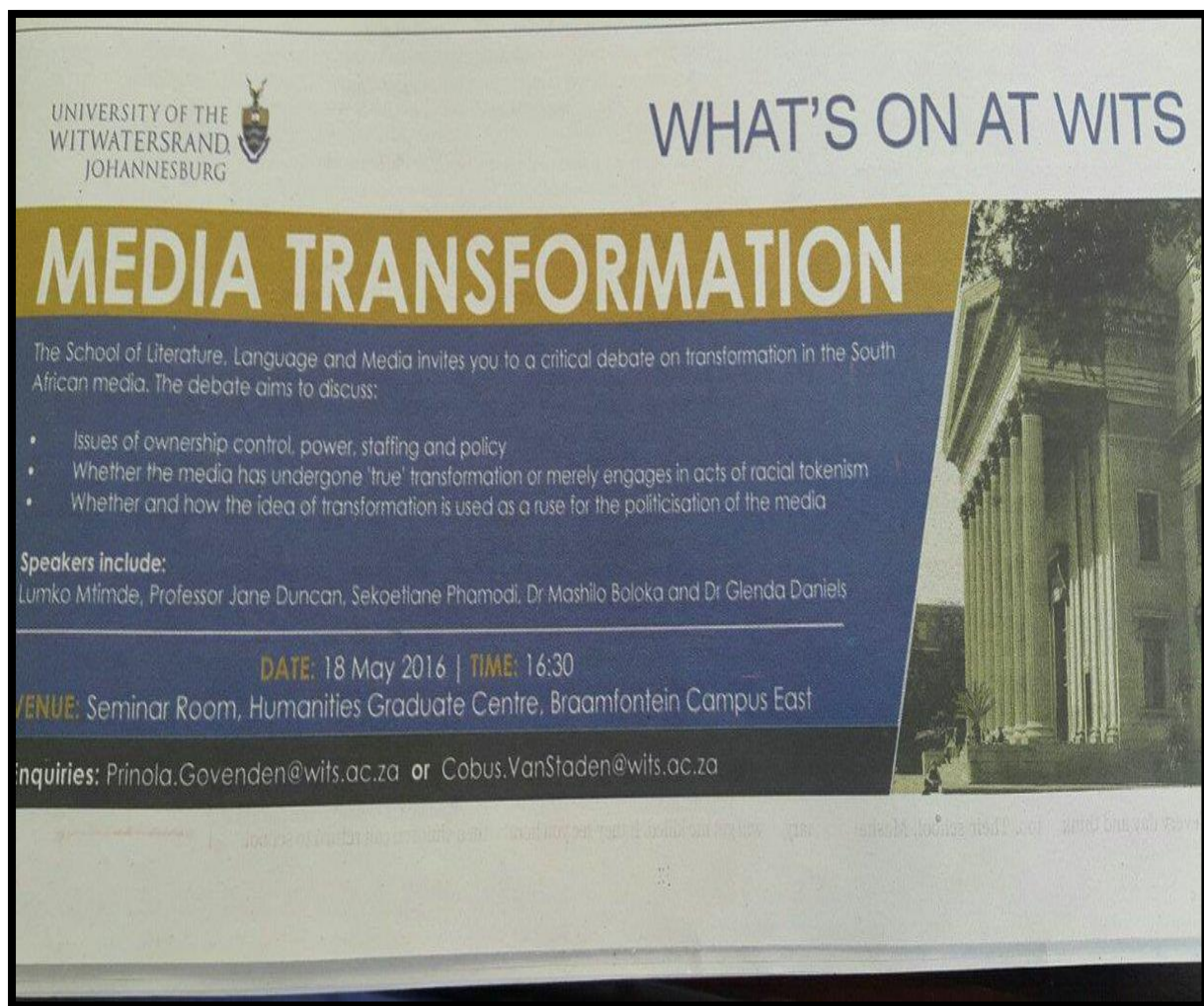


Figure 3- Media Transformation seminar poster

The seminar was supported by the Wits University central Communications Department. It was advertised in Wits University's weekly page 3 *Mail & Guardian* newspaper space and other Wits Communications publicity platforms. Figure 4 shows the *Mail & Guardian* publicity.



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JOHANNESBURG

WHAT'S ON AT WITS

MEDIA TRANSFORMATION

The School of Literature, Language and Media invites you to a critical debate on transformation in the South African media. The debate aims to discuss:

- Issues of ownership control, power, staffing and policy
- Whether the media has undergone 'true' transformation or merely engages in acts of racial tokenism
- Whether and how the idea of transformation is used as a ruse for the politicisation of the media

Speakers include:
Lumko Mtimde, Professor Jane Duncan, Sekoetlane Phamodl, Dr Mashilo Boloka and Dr Glenda Daniels

DATE: 18 May 2016 | **TIME:** 16:30

VENUE: Seminar Room, Humanities Graduate Centre, Braamfontein Campus East

inquiries: Prinola.Govenden@wits.ac.za or Cobus.VanStaden@wits.ac.za

Figure 4- Media Transformation seminar advert in the Mail & Guardian newspaper

The seminar was well attended by a diverse range of societal stakeholders, including representatives of the SOS public broadcasting coalition, Wits Business School, Government Communications and Information systems (GCIS), Wits Politics department staff and students, Wits Media studies department staff and students, Wits Journalism school, Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, #FeesMustFall members, Wits Transformation office, Institute for the Advancement of Journalism (IAJ), Wits Debating union, Victory Men's Bulletin, Mitumo Projects, Ndalo media, Fountains Media, Eagle, and students, to name but a few. The seminar was also a useful method to garner societal engagement on the topic of the thesis. Notably, one of the panellists, Lumko Mtimde, published an article in the *Daily Maverick* (dated 19 May

2016) based on the content of his seminar presentation entitled, “Media Freedom: SA needs a free and accountable transformed and diverse media”⁶⁹.

4.4 Content analysis

The study used quantitative content analysis with a lesser form of qualitative analysis to determine the trends of content diversity and transformation. Specifically, in the front page and editorial coverage of socio-economic issues, labour issues and protests, as well as government vs. big business.

Essentially, content analysis provides a means to analyse text (Bos and Tarnai 1999). The content analysis method is commonly used in the analysis of newspaper content. Prasad (2008: 7) notes, “content analysis has also been used to ascertain trends in the communication content of dailies, weeklies, cartoons, and coverage of development news, political news and crime news”. Early examples of these type of studies analysed how the “attention of newspapers to particular news categories has changed over time” (Krippendorff 1989: 404). Previous studies of content analysis have been useful in establishing newspaper attention to certain categories of content. For example, Murty’s (2002) comparative study on the coverage of development news analysed news items, letters to the editor and editorials of dailies published in 1995 in India (cited in Prasad 2008).

The study analyses the extent of diversity of print media content in the first twenty years of democracy, which necessitates a large sample of articles (N=684). Content analysis as a research method enables, “aggregate accounts of inferences from large bodies of data that reveal trends, patterns, and differences no longer obvious to the untrained individual” (Krippendorff 1989: 404). Hence, content analysis is the most suitable method to draw inferences from a large body of data. The aim of content analysis, according to Elo and Kyngas (2008: 108) is to, “... attain a condensed and broad description of the phenomenon, and the outcome of the analysis is concepts or categories describing the phenomenon”. Content analysis enables a broad description of content transformation.

⁶⁹ For Lumko Mtimde full *Daily Maverick* article visit: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2016-05-19-media-freedom-sa-needs-a-free-accountable-transformed-and-diverse-media/>

There are two forms of content analysis. Elo and Kyngas (2008) note that the content analysis method can be used with qualitative or quantitative data, which method is chosen depends on the purpose of the study. Quantitative content analysis can be defined as,

It goes beyond the impressionistic observations about the phenomena and can help you make a quantitative expression about the phenomenon i.e. express it in numbers, in percentages, which will be more specific, and objective” (Prasad 2008: 7).

Quantitative content analysis is selected as the main method to analyse media diversity as the figures will reveal a “quantitative expression” or picture of content transformation in twenty years of democracy. Quantitative content analysis enables the study to be practical and provide a twenty year period transformation picture of print media with the use of the SPSS software as an interpretation tool (discussed later). “It [content analysis] can deal with large volumes of data. Processing may be laborious but of late computers made the job fairly easy” (Prasad 2008: 8).

Kassarjien (1977) posits that the three distinguishing features of quantitative content analysis are that it is objective, systematic, and quantitative. Objective because, “the categories of analysis be defined so precisely that different analysts may apply them to the same body of content and secure the same results (Berelson 1952, cited in Kassarjien 1977: 9). Objectivity enables this study to apply the same set of defined rules across the same large body of 684 articles. Systemization refers to, “... the inclusion and exclusion of communications content or analysis categories is done according to consistently applied rules” (Holsti 1969, cited in Kassarjien 1977: 9). The rules applied to the analysis of content is consistent despite the twenty-year long time period. Systemization also eliminates selection bias in the study of content and provides the study with a holistic picture of content transformation, “This [Systemization] requirement is meant to eliminate partial or biased analysis in which only those elements in the content which fit the analyst's thesis are selected” (Kassarjien 1977: 9). Quantification is a distinguishing feature of quantitative content analysis,

This requirement is perhaps the most distinctive feature of content analysis. Quantification of judgements distinguishes content analysis from ordinary critical reading. A measurement of the extent of emphasis or omission of any given analytic category is what content analysis is all about (Kassarjien 1977: 9).

Content analysis essentially enables the study to quantify the extent of content diversity across twenty years of democracy - in an objective and systematic manner.

The quantitative aspect distinguishes itself from qualitative methods of content analysis by way of, “counting things - how many articles in a given time period; how many instances of a

particular word and so on” (Davies and Mosdell 2006: 99). For the purposes of this study, quantitative content analysis is used to aggregate the content categories, which will then be assessed for trends in diversity and transformation. Content analysis as a broad research method would serve to effectively identify topics and trends of coverage - and assess the overall prevalence of diversity in the sample of newspaper content.

The study objectives do not require engaging with the deep-seated meanings and associations embedded in the newspaper content, but rather a mainly holistic “quantitative expression” of content transformation in twenty years of democracy. However, quantitative content analysis or “empirical content analysis” has limitations. Bos and Tarnai (1999: 655, 666), drawing from Fuhlau (1982) and Kracauer (1952), detail its main limitation,

The main argument against the purely quantitative procedure is its limitation to the manifest part of content. The latency of text contents, the connotative character of language, the change in the indicators that carry meaning according to the sociocultural environment and current situation - none of these are taken into account. Quantification in principle, which alone is supposed to lead to valid and reliable results, is criticized as a positivist shortcut. Since there is no question that texts have a symbolic content alongside their manifest content, it is impossible to proceed - as in the natural sciences - on a purely quantifying basis, because quantifying selection abridges the entire context.

In order to remedy the limitations of only quantifying the figures, the study adopts qualitative content analysis as a supplementary method to provide a richer analysis. “However, for content analysis to be carried out in practice, it is necessary that qualitative interpretation supplements quantitative analysis” (Bos and Tarnai 1999: 666).

Qualitative content analysis uses visual and discourse analysis, techniques which aim to investigate subjective concepts of, “meaning and association and involve a great deal of attention being paid to each individual text” (Davies and Mosdell 2006: 99). The qualitative content analysis aspect of the study looks at the deeper meaning embedded in a selected number of articles to enrich the analysis and to take the study beyond just quantification of figures. The use of both quantitative and qualitative content analysis has been encouraged by scholars,

According to the basic conception of the Frankfurt School, findings from quantitative investigations must necessarily be qualitative; otherwise the results remain a dull presentation of figures (Bos and Tarnai 1999: 665)

Ritset (1972) envisions the use of both qualitative and quantitative procedures as working out, “...the ideological content of texts with the aid of rules, procedures, test criteria and a theory of society which guides interpretation, based on scientific theory a” (cited in Bos and Tarnai

1999: 666). This study also utilises theories to guide the interpretation of the figures which is a form of qualitative content analysis, for example, the democratic roles of the media as coined by Curran (2000). The newspaper content that would qualify as democratic and diverse are informed by Curran's (2000) revised role of the media in a liberal democracy. Firstly, to be a watchdog acting as a check on the state and the powerful in society; secondly, to be a platform for information and critical debate; and thirdly, to be a voice of the people. Drawing from this, the study understands this as content involving investigative news pieces as they relate to the watchdog role of the media; news and analysis as it relates to informing the public and giving them a voice; and opinion as it relates to debate and discussion.

Another limitation of content analysis is that it focuses on the content trends and does not tell us about causal connections between some of the other variables under study, for example, why there are changes in content (Prasad 2008). However Prasad (2008:17) notes that it is useful as a supplementary method, "... though a popular research method both in the Social sciences and Mass communications, it [content analysis] is still used as a technique to supplement the findings of mainstream research designs such as survey research". This study is cognisant of this limitation, and adopts documents analysis as well as engagement with experts as supplementary research methods to provide a holistic analysis of press media transformation that moves beyond just the analysis of the newspaper text.

The sampling and coding process of the content analysis is detailed in the sub-sections that follow. The six English-language newspapers analysed were: *Sowetan*, *Business Day*, *Sunday Times*, *The Star*, *Sunday Independent*, and *Mail & Guardian*. The sections of the newspapers that were analysed were the front cover leading story, editorial page (the editorial voice and main op-ed column). The year sample for analysis spanned from 1992 to 2014, and resulted in a total of 684 articles for analysis (made up of 228 front cover stories, 228 editorial voice articles, and 228 main op-ed column articles). The content analysis stopped at 2014, as this marked the twentieth year of South Africa's democracy.

4.4.1 The sample of English print media companies and the six newspapers

As discussed in chapter 1 and chapter 2, during apartheid the press was divided into the English press and Afrikaans press: Argus Group (now Independent Media), Times Media (now Tiso Blackstar Group). Notably the *Weekly Mail* (now *Mail & Guardian*) was an alternative

newspaper started by a group of journalists, known as a vocal apartheid critic⁷⁰. The Afrikaans press consisted of Naspers (now parent company of Media 24) and Perskors (now Caxton). The study includes the three historically English print media companies in South Africa, as they reflect significantly more ownership changes in comparison to the Afrikaans companies, Media 24 and Caxton. The print media companies analysed in the study are reflected in Table 1.

The six newspaper sample (shown in Table 1) are: Independent Media's *The Star* and *Sunday Independent*; Tiso Blackstar Group's *Sunday Times*, *Business Day*, *Sowetan*, as well as the *Mail and Guardian*.

Table 1: The print companies and newspaper sample of the study

Media House	Newspaper	Daily/weekly	Broadsheet/Tabloid/Hybrid
Independent Media	1. <i>The Star</i>	Daily	Broadsheet
Independent Media	2. <i>Sunday Independent</i>	Weekly	Broadsheet
Tiso Blackstar Group	3. <i>Sowetan</i>	Daily	Hybrid
Tiso Blackstar Group	4. <i>Business Day</i>	Weekly	Broadsheet
Tiso Blackstar Group	5. <i>Sunday Times</i>	Weekly	Broadsheet
M&G Media Ltd	6. <i>Mail & Guardian</i>	Weekly	Broadsheet

In assessing diversity of print content in the various daily, weekly and weekend newspapers available in the South African market, it was imperative that a representative and diverse sample was chosen. Four criteria were applied in selecting the six newspaper sample for the study. The newspapers were chosen to ensure that there was representation of: LSM (Living Standards Measure), circulation, literacy levels and size of newspaper.

4.4.1.1 Living Standards Measure (LSM)

The LSM categorises citizens in groups of between 1 to 10. The highest living standards measure is a 10 and the lowest living standards measure is 1. Hence, the highest earners would be in the upper scores closest to 10. The LSM 7 to 10 market in South Africa is about - 34.9 %

⁷⁰ <http://mg.co.za/page/about-us/>

of the adult (counted as over the age of 15 years) population, meaning these enjoy the best standards of living, earn the highest salaries and consume the most media due to their income and resulting available choices (SAARF 2012). About 48% of newspaper readers fall within this LSM group, the top 3 most popular newspapers of this LSM grouping in terms of circulation are *Sunday Times*, *Daily Sun*, and *Rapport* (SAARF 2012).

The study chose newspapers that cater for each LSM grouping, in particular considering the factors of affordability of cover prices for citizens which can also serve to hinder accessibility of certain newspapers. *Business Day* was chosen with a higher cover price that mostly the higher LSM's can access. *Sowetan* newspaper can be regarded as a middle priced newspaper, which can be accessed typically by both the higher and most of middle as well as lower LSM groupings.

4.4.1.2 Circulation

It is also important that the study include the most popular newspapers in terms of influence through circulation and readership reach. The daily newspaper with the highest circulation is the *Daily Sun* (283216) and the top circulation weekly newspaper is the *Sunday Times* (405458) according to the ABC statistics January to March 2014. The *Sunday Times* was included to ensure the sample included a newspaper that is amongst the top circulation newspapers in the country.

4.4.1.3 Language levels of newspapers

Each newspaper has its own level of language that in some cases is only accessible to certain literacy and education levels in a given population. For example, some newspapers are targeted at proficient first language English speakers and readers. Whilst others use a basic and simpler level of English.

In South Africa, for example, *Business Day* is targeted at citizens with proficient English speakers and readers, most likely with a formal educational qualification. *Daily Sun* and *Sowetan*, on the other hand, can be accessed by citizens with no formal qualification as the English language used is basic and regarded as simpler. South Africa's weekly *Mail & Guardian*, *Sunday Independent*, and daily *Business Day* cater for an intellectual and/or business

audience, thus for citizens possessing proficient English language levels. The *Sowetan* newspaper expresses simpler and basic English language levels. The sample of newspapers included newspapers with different language levels, namely, *Sunday Independent*, *Mail & Guardian*, *Business Day*, *The Star*, and *Sowetan*.

4.4.1.4 Type of newspaper (size)

Traditionally newspapers come in difference sizes. The most common sizes are a broadsheet (A1 size paper) and tabloid (half the size of broadsheet). The sample of the study included both broadsheet and tabloid sizes, namely *The Star* newspaper (broadsheet size) and *Sowetan* (tabloid size).

4.4.2 Purposive sampling of newspaper editions

Content analysis usually involves drawing representative samples and applying rules to measure difference in content (Daniel et al. 2014). An important question for content analysts of newspapers to ask is how many sampled editions are needed to provide adequate representation (Hester and Dougall 2007). Therefore, in adopting content analysis as a research method to analyse newspaper content, the question of sample selection of editions becomes a critical content analysis design decision. There is no single sampling technique used in conducting content analysis of newspapers over long periods. For example, a previous study only used the Monday editions of European newspapers (Earl et al. 2004). There are numerous sampling techniques used for different purposes, including constructed week sampling, simple random sampling and consecutive day sampling (Hester and Dougall 2007). Other sampling techniques involve small segments of time, such as weeks or months or randomly sampling days in a year (Earl et al. 2004).

The technique of purposive sampling was used for this study, defined as “the selection of texts for analysis with a particular goal or purpose in mind” (Benoit 2010: 272). An example of purposive sampling technique is Benoit’s (2010) study that only used the *New York Times* rather than all national newspapers - based on the premise that it is the single most influential newspaper in its context. The purpose of this study is to get a macro level picture of the extent of content diversity in twenty years of democracy. The year of a major ownership change was

used as the starting point for the sample period. The study analysed newspaper content that fell within the 1-year period before and 1-year period after major ownership changes of the print media companies. Table 2 below outlines the major ownership changes per media house in the first twenty years of democracy.

Table 2: Major ownership changes of English print media companies

Print media house	Major ownership change/s and nature of change
Independent Media	1994- change of controlling share from local (Anglo American) to foreign (Tony O'Reilly). 1999- Tony O'Reilly acquired remaining shares of 24%, after in 1995 acquiring a full control stake (58%) of newspapers and renaming of the newspapers. 2013- Irish Tony O'Reilly sold SA operations to Sekunjalo Consortium.
Tiso Blackstar Group	1993- The Johannesburg Consolidated Investments sold 34% of Johnnic Communications to the National Empowerment Consortium headed by Cyril Ramaphosa. 1996- The National Empowerment Consortium bought a controlling share in Johnnic Communications. 2008- Avusa Limited was established as a result of the unbundling of Johnnic Communications, the new company also purchased Johnnic Communications operating media and entertainment assets. Within this change the Mvelaphanda group purchased a 30% stake. 2012- There was a buy-out of Avusa by Tiso Blackstar Group up that resulted in restructuring changes including a new Board, leaner structure, and significant staffing changes.
M&G Media Limited	1995- <i>The Guardian</i> became the majority shareholder and renamed it the <i>Mail & Guardian</i>. 2002- <i>The Guardian</i> reduced its shareholding to 10% selling 87.5% to Newtrust company Botswana LTD.

Purposive sampling was also applied in the selection of editions of newspapers to be analysed. Therefore, not all editions that fell within the year prior to and the year after a major ownership change are analysed. For each year, the first six-month period from January to June was

targeted. Then the first edition of each month was included. However, in a few instances the first edition of the month was not available, in this case, the second edition of the month was analysed. This sampling process was purposed to ensure that a twenty year period sample of newspaper content was selected based on one set of consistent criteria of major ownership changes. In this way a biased analysis was eliminated. The detailed results of the sampling process are reflected in Table 8 (chapter 6). The study analysed 228 newspapers editions, and 684 articles in total.

4.4.3 The section of the newspaper: the front page and editorial page

The placement of an issue in a newspaper holds consequences for content diversity. Masini et al. (2017) distinguish six main article types: news reports, special reports, editorials, opinion articles, interviews and letters from readers. The authors further posit that each news type has a “primary purpose” that impacts content diversity, “We argue that differences in the ‘primary purpose’ of these news types might have an impact on content diversity” (Masini et al. 2017: 6). News reports making up front cover leading stories are argued to be “more informative types that mainly provide the reader with an account of facts. When writing articles of this kind, journalists are more likely to follow the principle of objectivity...” (Masini et al. 2017: 5). Whereas editorials and opinion pieces, “are more opinionated article types that have the primary aim of conveying a particular point of view (of the journalist or another agent) about the issue under discussion” (Masini et al. 2017: 5).

The section of a newspaper where a story appears reveals the importance a newspaper attaches to an issue, Radebe (2017: 54) contends,

Therefore, the location of a story in newspapers often indicates the importance associated with the issue. This further indicates the posture of the newspaper regarding on the event or issue, and its newsworthiness is mainly manifested by features like page number, section in which the articles are placed...

The issues appearing consistently as news stories on the front cover are the issues the newspaper regards as most important. The editorial page is also regarded as a key section of a newspaper, because despite its subjective nature it has the ability to frame reader’s views. Van Dijk (1995: 13) describes editorials as, “a genre that may be characterized both as a special type of media discourse, as well as belonging to the large class of opinion discourses”. Although editorials are opinionated and subjective in nature, they have the power to frame the

reader's views about recent news, Van Dijk (1995: 13) contends "...readers of newspapers expect editorials to formulate opinions about recent news events". Van Dijk (1995: 1) describes "one prominent and characteristic feature of editorials" as "the formulation of opinions and the expression of ideologies".

In order to provide the study with a holistic and strong analysis of the extent of content diversity - the most prominent and powerful framing sections of a newspaper were selected for analysis. The article types selected for analysis were: news reports (leading front cover story), editorials (editorial voice) and opinion articles (main op-ed). The study regarded the "main" op-ed in the newspaper as the most prominent op-ed on the top half of the editorial page.

4.4.4 The coding schedule and the measures of content diversity

The content analysis research method is, "the systematic assignment of communication content to categories according to rules, and the analyses of relationships involving those categories using statistical methods (Daniel et al. 2014: 3). The content analysis process requires, "Defining categories and preparing coding schedule for the analysis and coding of content" (Prasad 2008: 14). The content categories of this study are developed according to leading media content diversity measures used in scholarship.

Carpenter (2010: 1065) study on content diversity in online newspapers alludes to the concept of creating measures of content diversity. Media content diversity research traditionally does not follow a set formula to measure diversity, "...it is important to recognise that different understandings of diversity depend on the normative perspective taken, which in turn affects empirical measurements of diversity" (van Cuilenburg 2007, cited in Humprecht and Esser 2018: 3). Topic differentiation and source diversity are the leading measures featured in extant research. For example, Power and Benson (2014) assess news diversity in Web-based and printed news outlets in the United States, Denmark and France - based on an understanding of news diversity as actor and topic differentiation (Humprecht and Esser 2018: 5).

The measures of content diversity created for this study were: (1) the diversity of topics in the front cover story and on the editorial page; (2) the diversity of prominent voices in the front cover story; (3) tones in the front cover story and editorial page. The issues selected to analyse content diversity in the South African English press were socio-economic issues, labour issues and protests, and government vs. big business.

The creating of the coding schedule was also based on two theoretical benchmarks. Firstly, the media's revised role in a liberal democracy (Curran 2000) and secondly, Boloka and Krabill (2000) conceptualisation of true transformation of the media. To recap, Curran (2000) views the media roles in a liberal democracy as comprising three aspects: be a watchdog of the powerful, be a platform for information and debate, as well as be the voice of the people. South African scholars Boloka and Krabill (2000) espouse that true transformation of the media is attained when its ownership, staffing and output are reflective of the real society in which it operates, in terms of: race, socio-economic status [class], gender, religion, sexual orientation and region. The content categories for this study, which are based on the assertions above, are explained in the sub-sections that follow, these are: topics, tone and prominent voices (or source).

It should be noted that the coding schedule further captured the “demographics” of the journalist or columnist writing the article, which included where possible the name, race, gender, and any other important information relevant to the objectives of the study, including known ideologies or political loyalty. For the main op-ed column, the capacity in which the columnists are writing is further documented, for example, politician, academic, pastor, to name but a few. Moreover, for each article the coding schedule allocated space for qualitative comments which was intended to capture relevant findings that are not captured by the quantitative sections of the schedule. For example, if an example displayed overt bias against a particular grouping such as black people, or women. The details of the bias were quantitatively documented.

4.4.4.1 Topics

A diverse range of topics is an important component of content diversity. “People should have access to a broad array of stories because people are interested in different topics” (Graber 2003, cited in Carpenter 2010: 1067). Different topics means people have access to a “broad array of stories”. In discussing the primary topic of a news article, Carpenter (2010: 1067) cites the work of the Project for Excellence in Journalism (1999), whose authors claim “a diversity of topics better reflects a community in its entirety, and further argues “the more topics covered by the news organization, the better the news organization”.

The first category of the study's coding schedule was "topic". The topics of a front cover story, editorial and main op-ed in a single edition of a newspaper collectively are good indicators of the issues that a particular newspaper (and media house) deem as important to its editorial strategy. The "topics" are focused on the South Africa context only, however the "other" category is where foreign news is categorised along with other news not falling within the six topics. News about South African party politics, government, socio-economic rights, labour, business, and human interest were categorised in the first six topics defined below.

- *Party Politics* - coverage deemed as a superficial type of reporting involving political parties and does not benefit the public interest and public good. For example, political party spats, suspensions, name calling, accusations, party campaigns, voter lobbying, scandals, and defamation.
- *Government* - news about local, provincial, and national government that in particular engages with its service delivery, performance, failings, corruption, scandals, misdemeanours, policy positions, and actions. Parliamentary news was also recorded in this topic, however, was presented separately in the analysis chapters of the study.
- *Socio economic rights* - the South African Constitution stipulates socio economic rights as including, education, food, health, land, water, environmental health, social security, children, the economy, and housing. Globally, these rights ensure the socio-economic development of people, as well as protection of the basic needs of the poor. Hence, in addition to coverage about the South African socio-economic rights, poverty and inequality are included in this category. Also falling within this category were important citizen related stories relevant to the socio-economics rights, such as crime, racism, safety and security, as well as government service delivery as it related to basic human rights.
- *Labour* - this category captures labour issues in South Africa, such as labour protests and worker's rights.
- *Business*- any coverage that pertains to business related coverage. For example, corruption, conglomerates, malpractice, mergers, and acquisitions in the private sector.
- *Human interest/Celebrity/Arts/Entertainment* - these are "soft news" stories with the sole purpose to be sensational and invoke emotions purely for entertainment purposes. It focuses on a human element. This category also includes coverage about celebrity news, arts and entertainment.

- *Other* - coverage that cannot be categorised in the other topics. For example, news about Africa.

The coding schedule also allowed space for “theme” - this category is closely linked to the topic category, however, it allows qualitatively greater detail about the story. It allows for a short description of what the story is about, for example, the UCT Poo chucking student, President Zuma’s Nkandla debacle, Oscar Pistorius’ appeal case, and #FeesMustFall protests. Similar to the topic category it is indicative of a newspaper’s editorial strategy and is useful in identifying the specific issues a newspaper regards as important.

4.4.4.2 Tone

Tone in news broadly fits into framing theory, which is defined as, “...how the mass media organize stories to help the public understand events and issues” (Tankard 2001, cited in Liu 2010: 30). Bichard (2006) coined a five dimensional framework to conceptualise frames as comprising of: time, space, tone, topic, and mechanisms (cited in Liu 2010).

This study recorded the “tone” of each article. Content analysis is a common method used to decipher the tone in news.

The context-sensitivity of the method [content analysis] will be useful in articulating the qualitative dimensions such as for example, the direction of coverage of news items as favorable or unfavorable.” (cited in Prasad 2008: 7-8).

A news story can either be positive, negative or neutral in tone (Dunaway 2013). Tone in the news is also referred to as the evaluative tone of media coverage which is, “...the affective attributes attached to objects (candidates, issues, events) (Sheafer 2006: 21). Tone can impact the way the public thinks about events and issues by assigning negative or positive attributes. On another level, the tone can reflect the media’s stance on an issue or event. “Tone of a news report is intimately related to the topic of the article, and therefore can reflect the attitude of journalists or media” (Ma et al. 2017: 1).

The tone of a news story is not only effected by the overt attitude or attributes attached to issues. Eshbaugh-Soha (2010: 126), using the example of tone in local presidential news coverage in the USA, posits,

Journalists are also encouraged to present multiple perspectives in a story. A story on the presidency should include some variation in political perspective, including from both supporters and opponents of the president. Yet, if the story leans more on one perspective or another, this may have an impact on the tone of that story.

Tone in the news is a reflection of power dynamics. Radebe (2017: 126) posits that “...tone of news is not accidental but an indication of the orientation of news in line with the issues that concern the elites” (Hall et al. 1978, cited in Radebe 2017: 126). Radebe (2017: 126) further postulates that tone is “a reflection of societal power relations which thus translate to media power”. In the media sense, the neutral tone is not value laden. Radebe (2017: 149) contends “In reality, however, neutrality often suggests an element of bias against a particular position”.

The coding schedule of this study recorded the dominant “tone” present in each article – positive, negative or neutral. A positive tone represents a grouping in favourable terms and a negative tone has unfavourable sentiments.

The tone category was used to delve deeper into the representations of groupings as it relates to “successful transformation” (Boloka and Krabill 2000). These are: “racial”, “socio-economic” or class, “gender”, “sexual orientation”, “religion”, “regional” and “other”. True transformation also encapsulates the nature of press content. For example, whether the coverage signals true transformation with diversity or promotes stereotypical representations of the historically disadvantaged groupings, such as black people. In the process of data collection, the “other” category became inundated with “government” due to the high number of stories coded with a negative tone displayed towards government.

4.4.4.3. Prominent Voices

Who speaks in the news or “media sources” is conceptually linked to diversity of media content (see Humprecht and Esser 2018:2; Mancini et al. 2017: 2). A variety of media sources is a longstanding pillar of content diversity. Extant research adopts media sources as a measure of media diversity. For example, Voakes et al. (1996) examine content diversity as “the variety of news sources and the dispersion of viewpoints in the news.” (cited in Mancini et al. 2017: 2). This study analysed the prominent voices in the press as a measure of content diversity.

The coding schedule recorded the “prominent voice” or source featured in each front cover story in the sample according to nine categories: “government”, “business”, “political party”, “NGO”, “civil society”, “trade union”, “expert in the field” (for example, academic, author,

researcher), “multiple”, and “other”. The “multiple” category was for stories that used multiple sources in a balanced manner and one source did not dominate the story. Curran’s (2000) ideal roles of the media in a liberal democracy require the media to be a voice of the people. This category provides insight into whose voices are heard in the press? And do these voices signal a diversity of voices as it relates to transformation?

4.5 Qualitative document analysis

In a study on media industries, a researcher is required “to investigate decision making processes from the inside” and investigate data sources of the institution that are publicly available (Stokes 2003: 107). This study utilised document analysis for two types of documents. Firstly, those produced by the media institutions themselves in order to access key internal information. These company documents produced by print media institutions will provide key internal information for example about its history, ownership structure, staffing and transformation.

Secondly, research reports and academic literature produced by outside sources will be analysed to gauge an external research perspective about media diversity and transformation. Documents about the print media companies in the public sphere and not produced by the institutions that extensively cover issues of ownership and diversity of content was included.

This exercise is to decipher the levels of structural transformation in print media ownership, as well as broadly critique the print media transformation agenda. The documents analysed for the study are detailed below, and fall within five categories: online websites, annual reports, policy, research reports and academic literature:

- *Online* - websites of the print media companies;
- *Annual reports* –Tiso Blackstar group, Independent Media, M&G Media;
- *Policy* – B-BBEE Act 53/2003
- *Research reports* -
 - The Print and Digital media transformation task team (PDMTTT) report 2013 titled *Report on the Transformation of Print and Digital Media*⁷¹.

⁷¹ The Print and Digital media transformation task team (PDMTTT) was formed by Print and Digital media SA (PDMSA) to investigate the state of transformation in the industry and recommend new mechanisms to advance the cause of changing the face and heart of the industry. The (PDMTTT) followed on the successful conclusion of the press Freedom Commission (PFC),

- Wits Journalism *State of the Newsroom SA (2013) and (2014)* reports. The 2013 report: *Disruptions and transitions*⁷². The title of the 2014 report is *Disruptions Accelerated*.⁷³
- MDDA 2009 report: *Trends of Ownership and Control of Media in South Africa*.⁷⁴
- *Academic Literature* – published by South African scholars in the areas of media ownership, control and transformation.

4.6 Data interpretation methods

The study gathered both quantitative and qualitative data. The data interpretation methods utilised for the qualitative expert opinion and document data of the study is theoretical in nature, namely, critical political economy of the media, the theory of public interest, as well as theories of power. The data collected from the documents and expert opinions was interpreted using these theoretical frameworks.

Critical political economy of the media approach to ownership patterns and forms, control, power and media diversity was used as a method of interpretation for the data garnered from the content analysis. Critical political economy of the media relates media content to the economic foundations of a news organisation, including its ownership and funding. This study goes beyond a media economics analysis of ownership by problematising ownership patterns

which had looked at content issues in the print and digital media. the PDMTTT was thus not concerned with content of media but instead with the key pillars of transformation according to the broad-based black economic empowerment Act. these are: equity ownership, management control, employment equity, skills development, preferential procurement, enterprise development and socio-economic development. Following research, submissions and presentations from about 56 institutions, and a host of other industry players sharing their knowledge and insights, the team concludes that whilst the industry has committed itself to fulfilling the bbbbee codes of good practice, it has failed to transform itself sufficiently in a number of key areas (page 7 of PDMTT report).

⁷² The 2013 report, titled *Disruptions and Transitions*, was a pilot ...the pilot was very well received by the industry, as well as the peer reviewers. Newsrooms are going through massive change and this was a ground breaking effort to catalogue and critique it. We ensured the research had a strong academic base, but presented it in a way that was useful to our media industry. As a result, it has been widely used and quoted. It has drawn praise from the World Association of Editors (<http://journalism.co.za/resources/state-of-the-newsroom/>).

⁷³ Wits Journalism launched its second State of the Newsroom, South Africa, 2014: *Disruptions Accelerated* at a Media Freedom Day celebration co-hosted with the South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef) on October 17. The State of the Newsroom research, led by Glenda Daniels, documents a time of major transitions in the journalism industry. It is of industrial and social value, and is the first of its kind from any Journalism school in SA (<http://journalism.co.za/resources/state-of-the-newsroom/>).

⁷⁴ The MDDA commissioned Z-Coms to conduct a research study into trends of the existing ownership and control of media in South Africa, with particular focus on categorising trends by province and where possible by district municipality (page 7 of MDDA 2009 report).

that pose a danger to democracy, for example trends of commercial ownership and inordinate levels of owner control and power.

The quantitative content analysis research method involves the analysis of categories using statistical methods (Daniel et al. 2014). In this regard, the SPSS statistics software data package was used as the interpretation tool to analyse the quantitative data collected from the content analysis of newspaper articles and present numerical trends in the data. The coding schedule, data quality assurance, as well data analysis was conducted in consultation with the approval of Anesu Kuhudzai, a Chartered Statistician⁷⁵. Curran's (2000) revised roles of the media in democracy and McQuail's (2005) public interest theory were utilised to provide a deeper qualitative assessment of the levels of content diversity in the newspaper sample.

4.7 Research constraints

The main research constraint of the study pertains to the number of articles analysed. The study adopted "purposive sampling" to select a certain number of articles per year falling within the first twenty years of democracy (Benoit 2010: 272). Ideally, more articles could have been analysed to make up a bigger sample, however, time constraints restricted this. I am satisfied, however, that the sample of articles provided a representative picture of the extent of content diversity in the first twenty years of democracy because of the large body of articles (N=684) the sampling process yielded.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter mapped out the study's triangulation approach and multi-method, well-rounded research design made up of three research methods. In this regard, the study utilised the two kinds of key evidence of documents and experts in studying institutions (Stokes 2003) and used content analysis to investigate the extent of the content diversity. The qualitative components of the study enable "...engagement in open ended, inductive exploration" (Blanche et al. 2006: 19) and "...deeper critical analysis" (Davies and Mosdell 2006: 12) of print media

⁷⁵ Anesu Kuhudzai, Chartered Statistician registration number ICCSSA-14ChM002.

transformation in South Africa. The quantitative approach permits a quantification of print content diversity.

The chapter showed that the Media Transformation seminar panel was a unique, interactive, and effective research method to garner expert views, as well as critical engagement. It was conceptualised from the idea of the qualitative interview “informant” and the criteria of what makes a “good informant” (Lindlof and Taylor 2011).

Content analysis was evaluated in this chapter as the most suitable research method to investigate the extent of content diversity in the first twenty years of democracy. It enables trends to be drawn and aggregated from the large sample of articles (Krippendorff 1989: 404).

The sampling and coding process of the content analysis were outlined. The historically English print companies were chosen as they have undergone more ownership changes than the Afrikaans media companies. The six newspaper sample was selected based on specific criteria to ensure representation of a number of factors, namely: LSMs, circulation, English language levels, and type of newspaper. A “purposive sampling” technique was applied in selecting the newspaper editions for the content analysis, based on the major ownership changes of the print media houses, allowing the selection to be based on a “particular goal” (Benoit 2010: 272), of providing a “representative” (Daniel et al. 2014) sample of content from the first twenty years of democracy. The chapter underscored the importance of the placement of an issue in a newspaper and its consequences for media diversity (Masini et al. 2017). The front page and editorial pages of the newspapers were shown as important sections of the newspaper because the front page is the most prominent section of the newspaper (Radebe 2017) and the editorial page has the power to shape reader’s views on an issues despite its subjective nature (Van Dijk 1995).

An important component of content diversity is the topics (Carpenter 2010) and sources in the stories (Humprecht and Esser 2018). The measures of content diversity adopted by the study that formed the content categories are topics, tones and prominent voices. The tone category was used to delve deeper into the representations of groupings as it relates to successful transformation (Boloka and Krabill 2000).

The chapter showed that the document analysis research method adhered to Stokes’ (2003) approach to studying media industries and thus provided a holistic perspective to press transformation. It investigated decision-making processes from the organisation’s perspective through the company websites and annual reports and data sources about the institutions that

are publicly available (Stokes 2003) by analysing policy, research reports and academic literature.

The chapter outlined the data interpretation methods of the study as theoretically driven. The ownership aspect of the study used, firstly, critical political economy of the media articulation of ownership, control and power from the vantage point of a critique of capitalism, and media diversity. Secondly, it used the public interest role of the media as encompassing ownership pluralism and content diversity (McQuail 2005). Thirdly, theories of power were applied to the data to uncover deeper dynamics of power in the press. The content diversity aspect drew on the SPSS software data package interpretation tool; and used data interpretation techniques at a more theoretical level, namely the revised role of the media in a liberal democracy (Curran 2000).

The next section of the thesis analyses the data collected by the study.

SECTION III

DATA ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION AND THE WAY FORWARD

Chapter 5

A critique of South Africa's print media transformation agenda

5.1 Introduction

This chapter critiques the South African print media transformation agenda in terms of ownership patterns, control and power. It specifically critiques the transformation agenda of the historically English print media companies (as discussed in chapter 1) in the first twenty years of democracy namely: Tiso Blackstar Group, Independent Media, as well as M&G Media. This thesis conceptualises true press transformation in South Africa as invoking deep seated societal diversity and difference in ownership, staffing, as well as content that reflects the intersectionalities of South African society, which includes, but is not limited to, race.

This chapter adopts critical political economy of the media as its main theoretical framework to assess the extent of ownership diversity, and more broadly whether the transformation agenda has been meaningful or merely amounts to an exercise of token transformation as articulated in the title of this thesis. Tokenism in the South African context is widely regarded as “racial substitution”, where transformation merely means whites are replaced with blacks in an exercise of numbers or “window dressing”. This chapter further illuminates specific issues and shortcomings in the transformation agenda with an awareness of the critical political economy of the media's recognition of the rapid growth of capitalism in media systems worldwide, which has resulted in a decline of content diversity. Moreover, Michel Foucault's theories of modern power, as well as Pierre Bourdieu's “forms of capital” or “power” are also adopted as theoretical frameworks to locate the power holders in the press system.

Critical political economy of the media as a theoretical framework is interested in ownership and control issues from the vantage point of serving or hindering democracy (Downing 2011). I adopt critical political economy of the media's departure point of an ideal communication system which encompasses openness, diversity and accessibility and holding the importance of the public good in high esteem (Golding and Murdock 2000). Thus, I adopt a democratic approach to the transformation agenda, in particular an ownership system rooted in the importance of the public good with specific moral obligations. The theoretical framework in chapter 3 states that for the media to be a public good it is required to play an important moral role in society that will foster an inclusive and diverse public sphere. The chapter argues that

in twenty years of democracy, press ownership has been open to the powerful elites, which critical political economy of the media believes results in a weakened and elite public sphere. These powerful players are big business, government, local and international media moguls of which some are ANC linked. Hence, the changes in the array of forces that exercise control in the first twenty years of democracy built an elite press public sphere. I also argue, in line with critical political economy of the media that the interplay of economic, political, as well as historical power dynamics in society dictates the edifice of the print media.

This chapter presents the findings drawn from the documentary evidence and interaction with people (experts). Stokes (2003) identifies these as two kinds of evidence are key in researching media institutions. As detailed in the methodology chapter, a number of documents were analysed and grouped into the five categories: online sources, annual reports, policy documents, research reports and academic literature. Firstly, documents produced by the media institutions were assessed to investigate key internal information, namely annual reports and websites of the three print media companies. Secondly, seminal external documents on ownership and transformation published by sources outside of the press institutions were analysed, these were the policies, research reports and academic literature documents.

As stated in chapter 4, in adopting experts as a data set for this institutional analysis the study was cognisant of Lindlof and Taylor's (2011) articulation of the importance in selecting a knowledgeable cohort of informants that each play a different role in society. The study gauged the expert views of a five-informant panel through hosting a Media Transformation seminar, as detailed in the methodology chapter. These informants collectively provided diverse narratives of societal knowledge. They were: Lumko Mtimde (government); Jane Duncan (academic and researcher); Glenda Daniels (journalist, academic and researcher); Mashilo Boloka (government policy maker, however, spoke in his private capacity); and Sekoatlane Phamodi (civil society activist).

Scholarship in the area of print media ownership transformation mostly approaches transformation in relation to the key developments and trajectory of ownership changes and patterns (see Tomaselli 1997; Berger 2000; Boloka and Krabill 2000). Tomaselli (1997: 16) conducted a political economy analysis of ownership changes between 1990 and 1997 and expresses concern that, "considerable comment has occurred on post-apartheid print media restructuring but little of in-depth analytical nature". Insufficient attention has been paid to the transformation agenda and approach adopted by the country since democracy in 1994. This

study is a response to this analytical gap and offers a systemic analysis by problematising the overall transformation agenda that played itself out in the first two decades of democracy.

The chapter is organised according to several themes that were developed from issues identified in the data collection process aimed at critiquing the transformation agenda. The chapter begins by conducting a policy and practice analysis of the B-BBEE Act No. 53 of 2003, to paint a picture of the limitations of the main standard used to measure print media transformation. Second, I argue that despite the political change from apartheid to democracy, the white elite and emergence of a black elite due to black economic empowerment have joined forces to rule in a form of neo-elite continuity in the print media system. Third, the chapter takes a contemporary look at the various layers of ownership, control and power in the print media, specifically in terms of who the owners, controllers and power holders are.

5.2 Limitations of the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act

In order to achieve a diverse press system that reflects transformation, it is imperative that the policy governing transformation enshrines certain democratic principles. In democratic societies the concept of media diversity substantiates media regulation,

The fundamental, democratic principle that justifies or legitimates media regulation [is] the objective of ensuring that a diverse, high-quality range of media are made available to all citizens in the interests of avoiding social exclusion (Feintuck 1999, cited in Van Cuilenburg and McQuail 2003: 204).

This section takes a critical look at the transformation policy agenda based fundamentally on the system of broad based black economic empowerment (B-BBEE). The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act, 2003 No 53 establishes the legislative framework for the promotion of black economic empowerment⁷⁶, which measures the transformation performance of different sized companies in the corporate sector according to weightings and calculations. The print media sector in South Africa operates as a corporate sector; hence, the

⁷⁶ South Africa's first democratic government was elected in 1994, with a clear mandate to redress the inequalities of the past in every sphere: political, social and economic. Since then, government has embarked on a comprehensive programme to provide a legislative framework for the transformation of South Africa's economy. In 2003, the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Strategy was published as a precursor to the B-BBEE Act, No. 53 of 2003. The fundamental objective of the Act is to advance economic transformation and enhance the economic participation of black people in the South African economy. The Act provides a legislative framework for the promotion of BEE, empowering the Minister of Trade and Industry to issue Codes of Good Practice and publish Transformation Charters, and paving the way for the establishment of the B-BBEE Advisory Council (http://www.dti.gov.za/economic_empowerment/bee.jsp).

Act is adopted as the industry's transformation policy standard. This section assesses the B-BBEE policy against Media Studies key concepts that are regarded as central to attaining a democratic media policy driven by the public interest, namely: media diversity, the public interest, access, pluralism and freedom of communication. The B-BBEE Act is broadly applied to the corporate sector in South Africa and is not a media-specific policy, however, as the main print industry transformation standard it is necessary to apply normative democratic media policy and regulation standards to uncover the limitations of the B-BBEE policy from a media diversity and public interest approach.

5.2.1 The neo-liberal policy framing of media transformation falls short of media diversity in the public interest

The introductory chapter of this thesis established that in the South African print media context transformation essentially equals diversity. The concept of diversity is central to communications policies in a democratic society,

...the main goal of any communications policy can be described as that of securing the free and equal access to a social communications system that diversely provides for the information and communication needs in society (Van Cuilenburg and McQuail 2003: 205).

As discussed in the theoretical chapter, McQuail (2005) regards media diversity as a key component of the public interest being served and conceptualises media diversity as the sum of diversity of media content coupled with plurality of ownership. The B-BBEE Act makes it explicit that print media is subject to mainly economic and ownership approaches to transformation. Broad-based black economic empowerment is defined by the Act as:

the economic empowerment of all black people including women, workers, youth, people with disabilities and people living in rural areas through diverse but integrated socio-economic strategies that include but are not limited to – (a) increasing the number of black people that manage, own and control; enterprises and productive assets; (b) facilitating ownership and management; of enterprises and productive assets by communities, workers, cooperatives, and other collective enterprises; (c) human resource and skills development; (d) achieving equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce; (e) preferential procurement and; (f) investment in enterprises that are owned or managed; by black people (B-BBEE Act, 2003 No 53).

The Act equates transformation with economically empowering “black people”, including other previously disadvantaged groupings⁷⁷, with opportunities to gain access to various enterprise structures and thereby diversifying these structures to reflect South African society in terms of race, gender, the working class, the youth, disabled and rural. The Act defines “black people” as Africans, Coloureds and Indians who are citizens of South Africa by birth or descent, or by naturalisation; this definition also informs the term “black languages”. The structures and components of the enterprise targeted for black economic empowerment are: management, ownership, control, human resources, skills development, preferential procurement and investments.

The objective of the Act sheds insight as to how black economic empowerment should be achieved. The objective of the B-BBEE Act 53/2003 is to facilitate the definition of broad-based economic empowerment by,

- a) Promoting economic transformation in order to enable meaningful participation of black people in the economy;
- b) Achieving a substantial change in the racial composition of ownership and management structures; and in the skilled occupations of existing and new enterprises;
- c) Increasing the extent to which communities, workers’ cooperatives and other collective enterprises own and manage existing and new enterprises and increasing their access to economic activities, infrastructure; and skills training;
- d) Increasing the extent to which black women own and manage existing and new enterprises, and increasing their access to economic activities, infrastructure and skills training;
- e) Promoting investment programmes that lead to broad-based and meaningful participation in the economy; by black people in order to achieve sustainable development and general prosperity;
- f) Empowering rural and local communities by enabling access to economic activities. land, infrastructure, ownership and skills; and
- g) Promoting access to finance for black economic empowerment.

(B-BBEE Act, 2003 No 53)

Transformation is thus conceptualised as economic benefits and capital accumulation for black and historically disadvantaged people. The BEE system emerged, “to redress the inequalities

⁷⁷ An Historically Disadvantaged Individual (HDI) is defined as: “a South African citizen who, due to the apartheid policy that had been in place, had no franchise in national elections prior to the introduction of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1983 (Act 110 of 1983) or the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993 (Act 200 of 1993); and/or who is a female; and/or who has a disability, provided that a person who obtained South African citizenship on or after the coming into effect of the interim Constitution, is deemed not to be an HDI” (<http://www.kznhealth.gov.za/TED/office.pdf>). Thus, Previously disadvantaged is the term used to mean Belonging or relating to the previously disenfranchised population groups in South Africa, i.e. blacks, coloureds, and Indians (https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/previously_disadvantaged).

of apartheid by giving certain previously disadvantaged groups of South African citizens economic privileges previously not available to them” (Business Tech 2015).

It is evident that the transformation language of the B-BBEE Act limits the print media to a member of the corporate sector holding promise for economic benefits such as “sustainable development” and “general prosperity”. The role of the business or corporate sector in South Africa, which includes the media, in the economy is to create wealth and contribute to economic growth through profit maximisation. This is not surprising given that the media has become central to modern capitalist societies. McChesney and Schiller (2003: 1) posit, “the communication system has emerged as a central area for profit making in modern capitalist societies”.⁷⁸

The Act’s corporate conceptualisation of transformation is a significant shortcoming given that the print media’s democratic role extensively relates to its standing as a material good and part of the consciousness industry. Freedman (2008: 6) highlights that media policy is justified by the premise that the media are more than economic commodities,

Policy initiatives are also justified by the argument that media products are not ordinary commodities but systems and networks endowed with special political and cultural significance: that the symbolic transactions facilitated through the media play a key role in the production of social relations,

The Act restricts the print media to a member of an economic market that produces “commodities” primarily for profit making purposes. The media in fact operates according to two markets,

Media, as producers and suppliers of ‘culture products’, basically operate on two different markets at the same time; that is, on the economic market and on the market of ideas, or as Lacy and Simon (1993:5) labelled this market: ‘the intellectual market’. The concept of ‘intellectual market’ or ‘marketplace of ideas’ holds that ideas compete for attention and acceptance by the public. Just as the consumers in an economic market will buy the commodity that best meets their demands, citizens, media consumers, voters and officials will favour the ideas that work best for society. In transplanting the logic of the economic market into the model of the marketplace of ideas, we have to operate with comparable assumptions. Diversity will only result from a marketplace of ideas if the number of different providers is large and competition between them is full and fair, so that power dominance does not exist (Van Cuilenburg 1999: 192-193).

This argument expresses that media diversity emanates from the media’s market of ideas or “intellectual market”, rather than an economic market.

⁷⁸ <https://businesstech.co.za/news/business/94401/how-many-black-south-africans-benefit-from-bee/>

The B-BBEE Act recognises the print media's "economic market" as a member of the corporate sector however is silent on its "intellectual market", which hampers the realisation of media diversity. The Act further adopts a neo-liberal framing of transformation in two ways, thus favouring the print media's "economic market". To clarify, neo-liberalism is an economic ideology that favours the free market where private companies rule and where government plays a secondary role.

Firstly, the B-BBEE Act subscribes to neo-liberalism's belief in the importance of the free market. Birch (2015) argues that neo-liberal thinking is centred around creating markets for anything and everything in life, for example: for education, for work, for relationships and for crime. A case in point is that "street lighting, often presented as the quintessential public good, could be marketized"⁷⁹. To unpack this point further, street lighting is regarded an essential non-profit public good expected be supplied government or the private sector, however it can become marketized by making it a profit making good. In this regard, print media transformation is a public good that has been "marketized" primarily for economic benefits. The Act uses terms synonymous with the "economic market", namely, "economic transformation", "the economy", "economic activities", "infrastructure", "own and manage", "sustainable development", "general prosperity" and "access to finance". Print media transformation is a public good that should play a democratic and diversity function to address the ownership, staffing and content inequalities of the past. It can be argued, therefore that transformation is fundamentally framed on the print media functioning as a neo-liberal conduit for black capital accumulation and redistribution. Critical political economy of the media's critical attitude towards capitalism is useful to illuminate this finding. Garnham (2011) contends that capitalist mass media is argued to effectively result in a decline of diversity of content of a cultural and political nature. Therefore, the B-BBEE Act's neo-liberal framing of print media transformation holds dire consequences for media content diversity.

Secondly, the B-BBEE Act can be located in neo-liberalism's effect on policy, and its incumbent "revival of free market economic policy",

We live in an age of neo-liberal globalisation – by which I mean the revival of free market economic policy and its rapid diffusion around the world with enormous social structural and cultural consequences (McGuigan 2005: 229).

⁷⁹ Kean Birch is an associate professor in the Business and Society Programme at York University, Canada. And author of the book, *We Have Never Been Neoliberal: A Manifesto for a Doomed Youth* (<https://discoversociety.org/2015/07/01/how-to-think-like-a-neoliberal/>).

The Act's framing of transformation in economic terms deems it a "free market economic policy". Freedman (2008: 47) posits that neo-liberalism, as a contemporary form of economic restructuring, has emerged recently as a dominant frame for progressive critiques of current media and communications policies. The present age of neo-liberalism has impacted the transformation policy edifice of the print media in South Africa.

Therefore, the B-BBEE Act does not serve McQuail's (2005) notion of the public interest because it overlooks content diversity. Additionally, the Act does not show cognisance for the print media's "intellectual market", which is needed to foster media diversity. The neo-liberal and capitalist driven nature of the B-BBEE Act effectively marketizes print media transformation. Print media transformation means more than the economic commodities enshrined in the B-BBEE Act because of its position in relation to public good and democracy,

5.2.2 Media policy and content access: B-BBEE elevates ownership score

Media access, along with diversity and openness, are fundamental components of an ideal communication system (Golding and Murdock 2000). Media access to ownership, staffing and product or content is central to successful transformation of South African media,

For the record, then, we define the successful transformation of South African media as being achieved when it reflects, in its ownership, staffing, and product, the society within which it operates, not only in terms of race, but also socio-economic status, gender, religion, sexual orientation, region, language, etc. This is only possible if access is opened – again in ownership, staffing and product – not only to the emerging black elite, but also to grassroots communities of all colours (Boloka and Krabill 2000: 76).

The authors approach to access within the media encompassing the elements of "ownership, staffing and product [content]", is in-sync with the "access to communications" approach that conceptualises access as encompassing both structure and content,

The concept of 'access to communications' applies to structure, content, and audiences and it can in general be defined as the possibility for individuals, groups of individuals, organizations and institutions to share society's communications resources; that is, to participate in the market of distribution services (communications infrastructure and transport), and in the market of content and communication services, both as senders and receivers" (Van Cuilenberg and McQuail 2003: 204).

The concept of "access" articulated in the B-BBEE Act captures "structural access" in the communications context however omits "content access". The previous section revealed that South Africa has adopted a broad based transformation paradigm that defines transformation

as an increase in black capital as well as diversified enterprise structures which count as “structural access”.

In addition, the measurement of transformation is based on structural measurements, especially ownership. Broad based black economic empowerment is measured by seven pillars according to specific weightings, referred to as the “generic scorecard”⁸⁰. Ownership is elevated as the first pillar of transformation and allocates a minimum black ownership target of (25%+1) to achieve the full 20 points, followed by the management requirement of 10%. The seven pillars are:

Direct Empowerment

1. Ownership 20%
2. Management 10%

Human Resources Empowerment

3. Employment Equity 15%
4. Skills development 15%

Indirect empowerment

5. Preferential Procurement 20%
6. Enterprise development 15%
7. Socio-economic development 5%

(BBBEE Act 53/2003)

The “generic scorecard” enshrines black ownership as the most important aspect of transformation; however, ownership in the media is more complex than mere measurement of ownership scores. Freedman (2008) highlights that ownership and control of media has the power to shape individual identities and networks of power where content is circulated,

The struggles to own and control media outlets, to have a range of perspectives aired, to have access to media technologies and to have the right to answer back – in other words, the struggle to talk to and be heard by others on a mass scale – shape not just individual identities but the broader networks of power in which we circulate (Freedman 2008: 6).

Ownership in print media transformation is more complex than facilitating access for black owners and black managers to the structures of the media. There is a paradigm clash in the Act’s definition of transformation as rooted in a “structural access” definition of black economic empowerment, and the media’s transformation project rooted in diversity of both structural and content access. As a result, it could be easy to limit the media’s definition of transformation to structural transformation.

⁸⁰ This study used the 2013 scorecard which is most relevant to this study give the time period of content analysis being 1992-2014, the weightings have been subsequently updated in 2013.

Moreover, the Act fails to holistically address the multiple aspects of the print media that were impacted by apartheid. The Act targets certain aspects of a media institution, namely: ownership, staffing, as well as human resources empowerment and indirect empowerment. The ecology of a print media system encompasses various aspects, such as the economic and political context, funding and financing, ownership, staffing, and importantly its output - that is content. Other important aspects of the print media, that apartheid effected, are not addressed. For instance, the news values and value systems of newsrooms and its content processes were rooted in apartheid ideologies. During apartheid, the print media was owned by white capital and content representations of white people were made hyper visible, whilst black people and their everyday realities of racism, oppression and poverty were on the peripheries of the mainstream press agenda. The print media was a key propaganda machine of apartheid's Afrikaner Nationalism. Within this historical backdrop of colonialism and then apartheid, it is imperative that print media transformation transcend structural racial transformation. Critical political economy of the media emphasises the importance of historical context in the study of a media system (Golding and Murdock 2000). Apartheid's ideologies seeped into the whole system of the print media, however the BEE "generic scorecard" measures transformation only according to "structural access". Transformation is limited to race and structural components of a print media institution, therefore racial substitution is evident – replacing whites with blacks and other previously disadvantaged groupings in structures. However, content remains a critical component of print media transformation.

5.2.3 Media regulation and freedom of communication: politically tied and toothless B-BBEE

Independent media policy and regulation is central to a democratic media system and invokes maintaining an "arms-length" relationship from the politically and economically powerful in society. Van Cuilenberg and McQuail (2003: 203) refer to this approach as the "freedom of communication",

Freedom of communication should remain the main objective of any communications policy to be designed...it refers to the independence of communication participants from government (no censorship), from economic and other forces hindering exchange of messages (e.g. economic monopolies and other dominant market positions) as well as from social and political pressure groups.

This concept of "freedom of communication" is closely linked to the political independence called for by the discourse of "pluralism". Curran's (2002) liberal approach to the media

introduced in the theoretical chapter is based on the importance of the free market, which in turn is connected to the powerful discourse of pluralism, that has underpinned the development of media policies:

If we take Curran's use of the term 'liberal' in terms of its European meaning that privileges the dynamism of market forces and the principle of individual freedom from the state (as opposed to the American definition that emphasizes 'progressive' or critical ideas), then we can agree that pluralism is a powerful discourse underpinning not just popular conceptions of the role of the media but the development of media policies as well. Pluralist media policy should, in theory, assist the functioning of democratic life... (cited in Freedman 2008: 30).

Pluralism and diversity are associated concepts. Freedman (2008: 71) argues that pluralism and diversity are important components of media policy in a democratic society and further posits, "the desire to foster a wide variety of voices, opinions and outlets in the media is a long-standing policy commitment".

The concepts of pluralism and diversity in the media policy sphere, as alluded to by Freedman (2008), are intertwined however signify different meanings. The relation between these two terms is aptly discussed by McQuail (1992), who argues that pluralism means independence from the state combined with vigorous competition for the allocation of resources and refers to the wider political context in which the media operates (cited in Freedman 2008). McQuail (1992) further highlights that a structurally pluralistic media system is a prerequisite for media diversity, which is the media's ability to acknowledge and express social differences.

This section applies the concepts of "freedom of communication" and "pluralism" to the BBEE policy, as these are important prerequisites to a diverse media system that conforms to transformation standards. It is important to unpack the media policy processes at play in the BBEE Act. A media policymaking process is conceptualised in multiple ways; one approach is that it is a deeply political phenomenon, and another is that it is an impartial application with the public interest in mind,

Media policy, the systematic attempt to foster certain types of media structure and behaviour and to suppress alternative modes of structure and behaviour, is a deeply political phenomenon. This is not a widely accepted assertion. For many participants and commentators, media policy – like many other areas of public policy – refers to a disinterested process where problems are solved in the interest of the public through the impartial application of specific mechanisms to changing situations. Policymaking, in this view, is a rather technical procedure where policy changes emerge in response to, for example, technological developments that necessitate a re-formulation of current approaches and a new way of 'doing things' (Freedman 2008: 1).

The Minister of Trade and Industry is entrusted with ensuring the compliance of the B-BBEE Act and with issuing good codes of practice in fulfilment of this legislation, as well as publishing transformation charters. The codes of good practice for black economic empowerment that the Minister may publish according to Section 9 include qualification criteria, indicators to measure, the weightings to be attached, guidelines for stakeholders and any other matters necessary to achieve the Act. Additionally, Section 14 is entitled “Regulations” and states,

The Minister may make regulations with regard to any matter that it is necessary to prescribe in order to ensure the proper implementation of the Act (Section 14, BBBEE Act 53/2003).

The Act also establishes a black economic empowerment Advisory council to play an advisory role. Section 5 details the functions of this Council:

The Council must – (a) Advise government on black economic empowerment; (b) review progress in achieving black economic empowerment; (c) advise on draft codes of good practice which the Minister intends publishing for comment in terms of section 9(5); (d) advise on the development, amendment or replacement of the strategy referred to in section 11; (e) if requested to do so, advise on draft transformation charters and; (f) facilitate partnerships between organs of state and the private sector that will advance the objectives of this Act (Section 5, BBBEE Act 53/2003).

Section 6 of the Act states that the Council comprises of the President, the Minister of Trade and Industry, and three other Cabinet Ministers. The other remaining 10 to 15 members are to be appointed by the President and are required to have appropriate expertise and be representative of different constituencies such as trade unions, business, community based organisations and academics. Section 5 outlines the important role of the Advisory council in the attainment of black economic empowerment.

The regulatory model of the B-BBEE Act is a “political phenomena”, where power lies mainly with government; hence, falling short of the state independence required for a “pluralist” media policy. In summary, it enshrines the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)⁸¹ as the custodian of the Act, and the Minister of Trade and Industry as the regulator. Further, the appointment process of the Advisory Council is political as the President of South Africa is bestowed with

⁸¹ The DTI is a government department whose vision is "A dynamic industrial, globally competitive South African economy, characterised by inclusive growth and development, decent employment and equity, built on the full potential of all citizens", amongst its mission is to “Promote structural transformation, towards a dynamic industrial and globally competitive economy” (http://www.thedti.gov.za/about_dti.jsp)

appointing power despite the membership of diverse societal stakeholders. This process lacks “impartiality” and is laden with political representation.

The previous section revealed that the B-BBEE Act ascribes to the tenets of a neo-liberal economic policy with an emphasis on the economic market; however, the political nature of the B-BBEE transformation regulatory model is also now evident. It can be deduced that the B-BBEE transformation policy agenda has government join hands with neo-liberalism. This finding is characteristic of the effects of neo-liberalism. Birch (2017) contends that the transformation of the state from a provider of public welfare to a promoter of markets and competition helps to enable this shift to neo-liberalism⁸². The promotion of markets by the state in the Act reiterates the composite neo-liberal nature of the print media transformation project in South Africa. Leading neo-liberal figure, Milton Friedman, in his work *Capitalism and Freedom*, points out that markets enable a freedom from external constraints of government,

Markets are the only mechanism that enables us to act freely because they enable us to choose what we really want without some external constraint (e.g. government). We can, therefore, choose freely whatever is in our own interests (cited in Birch 2015)⁸³.

Friedman further notes that society is not currently ordered via markets because markets are distorted by an external force i.e. government, hence there is no such thing as a perfect working market⁸⁴ (cited in Birch 2015).

Therefore, the print media transformation regulatory model is constrained by inordinate government involvement, which taints its “freedom of communication” and “pluralism” principles. Comparatively, ICASA⁸⁵ monitors and enforces compliance of diversity of ownership and control in the broadcasting sector and its independence is enshrined in the South African Constitution as a Chapter 9 institution. “ICASA has a mandate in terms of its enabling statutes, to promote and encourage the ownership and control of telecommunication and

⁸² <https://theconversation.com/what-exactly-is-neoliberalism-84755>

⁸³ <https://discoversociety.org/2015/07/01/how-to-think-like-a-neoliberal/>

⁸⁴ <https://discoversociety.org/2015/07/01/how-to-think-like-a-neoliberal/>

⁸⁵ The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) is the regulator of telecommunications and the broadcasting sectors. It was established in July 2000 in terms of the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa Act, no. 13 of 2000. It took over the functions of two previous regulators, the South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (SATRA) and the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA). The two bodies were merged into ICASA to facilitate effective and seamless regulation of telecommunications and broadcasting and to accommodate the convergence of technologies. ICASA derives its mandate from four statutes. These are the ICASA Act of 2000, The Independent Broadcasting Act of 1993, the Broadcasting Act of 1999 and the Telecommunications Authority Act No. 103 of 1996 (https://ossafrica.com/esst/index.php?title=The_Independent_Communications_Authority_of_South_Africa).

broadcasting services by people from historically disadvantaged groups”⁸⁶. The B-BBEE policy model lacks the political independence articulated by “pluralist” notions of media policy. In this regard, since media policy which promotes pluralism is a prerequisite for media diversity it can be said that the B-BBEE Act impedes media diversity.

The politically laden policy model of the B-BBEE Act is also “toothless” as it fails to mention effective independent regulatory and compliance mechanisms to enforce the policy. Boloka (2016) emphasises the failure to enforce the B-BBEE policy through, for example setting targets,

The question is why is media transformation such a difficult enterprise, because first of all we never set targets, Lumko said the policies are there but we never set the targets and by merely having the policy everything would be hunky dory, and transformation would automatically be achieved, and how wrong could be on that (Mashilo Boloka, SLLM seminar, 18.05.2016).

Policy that is not practiced is a futile exercise. Boloka (2016) highlights the regulatory monitoring gap in the B-BBEE policy agenda and critiques its broad and scorecard nature:

The last one is poor monitoring mechanisms, I don’t think we have done enough in terms of monitoring how much we do for transformation we just talk about it broadly. What are the categories we put to ensure what is being done and we monitor those, at the moment we only have the B-BBEE scorecards, people are just doing that to tick their boxes, and say we have done this therefore we will get a government tender we are seen to be compliant, if we get deeper we realise we have not transformed, the content has not transformed, and so forth (Mashilo Boloka, SLLM seminar, 18.05.2016).

The B-BBEE scores of the print industry buttress Boloka’s (2016) argument and reveal a transformation policy that failed to be implemented. The PDMSA *Transformation Task Team report (2013)* discloses that the print industry has failed to transform itself in a number of key areas, despite showing commitment to the B-BBEE Act and code of good practice. The failures flagged by the Task team are in the areas of: direct empowerment areas of ownership and management, as well as control; skills development; and employment equity with particular reference to women and the disabled. The report further states that the industry has done well with regards to: socio-economic development; preferential procurement; and in some instances enterprise development.

⁸⁶ [https://ossafrica.com/esst/index.php?title=The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa](https://ossafrica.com/esst/index.php?title=The_Independent_Communications_Authority_of_South_Africa)

5.3 Elite continuity in the empowerment deals: from the white elite to the neo-elite

The previous section examined the policy component of the press transformation agenda. This section applies critical political economy analysis of the media to the early 1990's series of ownership changes, especially the black economic empowerment deals. Critical political economy of the media theorists investigate how changes in the array of forces that exercise control of media institutions liberate or limit the public sphere (Golding and Murdock 2000).

This section also identifies the dangers to democracy posed by the print media ownership typology based on critical political economy of the media theory. Critical political economy of the media's grounding on Marxism is of particular relevance to the South African context, where inequality is rife and therefore pertinent to the study of communications. "Apartheid policies of systematic racial discrimination and segregation had a deep and enduring influence on inequality in South Africa" (Seekings and Nattrass 2005: 49). Fuchs and Mosco (2012) posit that a Marxist view is still relevant in the study of contemporary communications systems because communication has increasingly been imbedded into structures of inequalities in class societies. Given the inequalities present in South African society it is necessary to consider the question of class continuities and the press.

South African society has severe class inequalities stratified along racial lines which stem from the apartheid-era, as discussed in chapter 2. Decades of systemic racial discrimination resulted in economic privilege for the white race and economic poverty for the black race,

By the end of the apartheid era, South African households were rich or poor according primarily to the number and earnings of wage earners, and earnings in turn depended overwhelmingly on education and skill. The affluence of white South Africans was based not on continuing racial discrimination but rather on the enduring legacy of past discrimination, especially in public education. White South Africans were reaping the benefits of the skills and credentials they had acquired in the past and that they could pass onto their children even when public education was deracialised (Seekings and Nattrass 2005: 300).

At the onset on democracy in 1994, the "elite" or wealthiest class comprised of the white race, mainly attributed to cumulative wealth. This white elite controlled every component of the press during the apartheid-era through government regulation and capture, as well as big business ownership.

As mentioned in previous chapters, during apartheid the media market consisted of four white-owned print media companies that also owned M-Net⁸⁷, these were: Times Media (English), Argus Group (English), Naspers (Afrikaans) and Perskor (Afrikaans)⁸⁸. A critical political economy of the media perspective would deduce that there was cross-media ownership, with a few white players dominating the overall media market. A government communications task team described the print media prior to democracy as having high degrees of concentration due to the duopoly in respect of the English and Afrikaans press⁸⁹. There was vertical and horizontal integration, where the white print media companies owned and controlled the various stages of the newspaper production process, which conforms to Garnham's (2011) characteristics of a concentrated print market with little competition. A critical political economy of the media analysis would describe the media ownership patterns in the apartheid-era as lacking in diversity for being concentrated, as well as unequal due to it giving access mostly to the white elite, whilst excluding the black majority.

The 1990's termination of sanctions⁹⁰ impacted the media. Tomaselli (2002) notes that there were significant shifts seen in a previously stable South African media industry, including a series of ownership changes. In describing this period of early press transformation at the ushering in of democracy, Boloka (2016) highlights an agenda dominantly driven by the idea of black economic empowerment,

Indeed we saw that South Africa was on a transformative path, but we went on a regressive mode. The first thing is that the transformation that we were looking at, at that time, was being driven by black economic empowerment, in other words, that was the focus. Most of transformation for us was driven by black economic empowerment that could really characterise that period for that time (Mashilo Boloka, SLLM seminar, 18.05.2016).

With regards to these early empowerment deals, Teer-Tomaselli and Tomaselli (2011) notes the major re-organisation of ownership arrangements. There was the coming together and

⁸⁷ M-Net is a subscription based television station that was started by Naspers in 1986

(<https://mnetcorporate.dstv.com/about/timeline/>)

⁸⁸ In December 1993, few companies dominated South Africa's media holdings: SABC, Argus Holdings LTD, Times Media, Perskor, Nasionale Pers, and M-Net (Tomaselli 2002).

⁸⁹ In the year 2000 a Task Team was tasked with improving government communication by way of putting forward recommendations. It was appointed in 1996 by the deputy President to commission expert studies. The Task team stated that it was optimistic that after the empowerment deals the monopolistic ownership of media during apartheid was diminishing and progressing towards diversity of media ownership.

⁹⁰ In 1986 – about 40 years after the beginning of Apartheid – South Africa's most important trading partners (the USA, the EC, and Japan) imposed economic sanctions

(http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/nfp/nfp42p/nfp42p_staehelin-e.pdf).

disbanding of enterprises; making of and breaking up of horizontal and vertical integration (Teer-Tomaselli and Tomaselli 2011). Most notably, the *Sowetan* newspaper was sold to the New Africa Investment Limited group (NAIL) and the *Ilanga* was acquired by the Mandla Matla group⁹¹. Argus shareholders, Anglo America and Johannesburg Consolidated Investments re-deployed capital in response to the political and economic changes taking place, including selective unbundling in allocative control to black economic empowerment groups (Tomaselli 2002).

Phase 1 of the unbundling process saw Argus selling 52% of the black targeted *Sowetan* newspaper, which was the largest selling newspaper of that time (Tomaselli 1997). This 52% majority shareholding was acquired by the black owned Corporate Africa Symposium consortium headed by Nthatho Motlana, leader of the Soweto Committee of Ten⁹² during the 1970's and also Mandela's personal physician (Tomaselli 1997). Despite this significant white to black ownership change, Argus retained allocative control of the *Sowetan* newspaper by still owning 20% of NAIL, which was also 72% owned by Corporate Africa⁹³, and still holding 42% in the *Sowetan* newspaper printing, advertising and management contracts (Tomaselli 1997). It should be noted that Corporate Africa was 17% funded by Sanlam, an Afrikaner-owned insurance giant (Tomaselli 1997). In discussing the main transformation events of the 1990's, Boloka (2016) highlights the significance of the *Sowetan* deal and the proliferation of black owned companies,

The first one was major, which many people thought was marking the transformation of the media industry, was when the *Sowetan* was purchased by New Africa investment LTD (the black owned company) from the Argus. Everyone thought it was a major milestone. We saw at that time was the emergence of a lot of black owned companies like Kagiso, quite a number of them were coming on the scene and purchasing media, whether getting media licenses, whether broadcasting or print (Mashilo Boloka, SLLM seminar, 18.05.2016).

The change of ownership at the *Sowetan* was deemed as one of the major empowerment deals of that era, however the apartheid-era white elite owners still held power at these institutions through: allocative control; shareholding; funding; printing; advertising; management and contracts. Critical political economy of the media attributes a funder or financier as a significant form of media ownership. McNair (1998: 102) underscores the importance of the funding and

⁹¹ PDMSA *Transformation Task Team report* (2013).

⁹² See here for The Soweto Committee of Ten formation and activities:
<http://sabctrc.saha.org.za/reports/volume3/chapter6/subsection32.htm>

⁹³ New African publishers LTD

financing of a media institutions and contends, “the person who pays the piper calls the tune”. The white owned companies kept funding and financial power after democracy, which is a significant form of ownership and the white apartheid- era elite interests remained in various forms.

Overall, this period birthed a new press typology crafted by vertical and horizontal integration which was deemed as positive for racial ownership diversity. However, critical political economy of the media considers vertical and horizontal processes of integration and the results for concentration (Garnham 2011). Following the series of ownership changes, the print market remained concentrated by four groups with little competition. Most notably, Naspers (parent company of Media 24) still had media ownership across multiple industries, including broadcasting and print⁹⁴. This period also saw the ushering in of the internationalisation of the press, with the Irish Tony O’Reilly’s Independent Media group acquiring shares in the Argus. After the ownership changes in early 1990’s, the type of ownership remained private, though featuring new black local elite and international players.

A Marxist analysis of the early ownership changes would focus on the importance of class inequalities in communications systems. The early transformation agenda showed a racial shift in ownership, however this did not effect a significant class shift. The black elite joined the remaining white elite (who still had significant power after the empowerment deals) to rule the press media system in a neo-liberal form of white and black elitism.

The new black players were members of the black elite and politically powerful, including: New Africa Investment Limited group (NAIL); the Mandla Matla group; National Empowerment Consortium (NEC) headed by Cyril Ramaphosa (now President of South Africa) who at the time was a key ANC negotiator; Corporate Africa Symposium headed by Nthato Motlana who played a political role in the 1970’s as leader of the Soweto Ten. The theoretical chapter discussed owner power and argued, freedom of the press is only a guarantee to those who own the press (Compaine and Hoag 2012). In the case of South Africa, press media ownership access was a privilege open to the black politically aligned elite, which also included trade unions, which were powerful political players in the struggle history⁹⁵. Boloka (2016) highlights trade union ownership in discussing the significant events of the 1990’s:

⁹⁴ <https://www.naspers.com/companies>

⁹⁵ COSATU, as a member of the Tripartite alliance with the ANC and SACP, provided material support in the form of strikes and both political and economic unrest, which eventually led to the displacement of the National

We saw a lot of black editors being appointed to be the editors of various newspapers. The other trend at that time we saw and that never happened before, was the investment by the unions. For me we should look at this because when we talk transformation we should look at this. To a large extent most of the unions in South Africa in every sector were investing in the media, National Union of mineworkers (NUM) invested in Primedia, NUMSA investment company, SADTU and Hosken consolidated became a major investor in the ETV project, and Cosatu. We also saw the emergence of women as investors in the media, and lastly the former political prisoners on Robben Island, most of them were becoming investors, union allies (Mashilo Boloka, SLLM seminar, 18.05.2016).

The early ownership changes and empowerment deals effectively built an elite press public sphere that was accessible to the black political elite, international media moguls and apartheid-era white elite.

The contemporary print market reveals that the neo-elite nature of the early transformation agenda built a print media system that caters primarily for the elite, whilst growing the market racially and quantitatively in some ways. Current trends show that there has been a considerable quantitative growth in the number of dailies, weeklies, as well in black readership since the end of apartheid. The print media market has grown considerably since apartheid, Daniels (2016) highlights the expansion of newsrooms, stating that it is flawed to talk about the state of the newsroom in South Africa because,

We have over 259 community newspapers in the country, we have over 256 community radios, 26 dailies, nevermind the SABC's of the world. Each newsroom is actually different, bringing different things to the public space (Glenda Daniels, SLLM seminar, 18.05.2016).

Equally, as of October 2013 there were a total of 22 daily newspapers and 28 major weeklies (SA and SADC Media facts edition 2014). In particular, the tabloid market has shown phenomenal growth, however the traditional print media market growth is static (MDDA 2009). The readership statistics of daily newspapers shows a trend in black readership in excess of 50% (SA and SADC Media facts edition 2014).

Despite the growth of titles and black readership, the sector is still elite driven. Research shows that newspapers primarily favour an urban English and Afrikaans speaking audience. Traditionally, each major urban centre (Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban) has its own set of competing English and/or Afrikaans dailies. The weekly newspaper market shows that most

Party, and the majority victory of the ANC in the 1994 political elections (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trade_unions_in_South_Africa).

large urban centres have a Saturday/Sunday edition of relevant dailies (SA and SADC Media facts edition 2014).

The upsurge of media titles and black readership is a marked difference from the newspaper market prior to democracy, which was characterised by fewer titles that predominantly catered for the white minority. However, the concentrated contemporary press caters primarily for a minority elite, urban, English and Afrikaans speaking audience and as such created an elite press public sphere that lacks in audience transformation. Thus, displacing and constricting the perspectives of the majority vernacular-speaking population, which does not conform to language diversity.

5.4 Power dynamics in the democratic-era press: owners, controllers, and power holders

The complex South Africa context discussed in the previous section prompted the study to adopt a nuanced theoretical framework. This section critically answers two main questions: What are the power dynamics in the ownership trajectory of the first twenty years of democracy? Who owns and controls the modern day press? Critical political economy of the media, and Foucault as well as Bourdieu's perspectives of power are applied to this analysis.

Critical political economy of the media has a corporate studies focus that examines in depth patterns of ownership (Downing 2011), and of relevance to this thesis is its focus on ownership diversity. This approach considers ownership and control trends in light of issues such as diversity, equity, access and democratic ideals (Wasko 2004). Critical political economy of the media traditionally defines ownership as legal in nature, where owners are known as shareholders with two types identified as legal and economic (Downing 2011). However, the concept of media ownership and control has evolved to also signify more than a shareowner. The concept of control is understood as the control exercised by the shareowner such as "allocative" control and "operational" control (Downing 2011).

Teer-Tomaselli and Tomaselli (2011) adds another dimension to traditional political economy approaches to the media which have centred on the study of ownership and control, namely power. Teer-Tomaselli and Tomaselli (2011) contends that control does not merely pertain to shareholders, stating that control and other forms of non-direct ownership can be exercised by players that hold immense power to impact operations, production and content, for example

advertisers. Tomaselli's (1997: 66-67) concept of "action/power" as it relates to "allocative" and "operational" ownership that he applied to his research on black economic empowerment deals (1990-1997) is instructive, and can be applied to the modern day press ownership structure. This is presented as the last sub-section.

South Africa's colonial and apartheid history of institutionalised racism makes the study of power dynamics in the modern day press multifarious. In this regard, a Foucauldian perspective of power and Bourdieu's (1985) forms of capital or power theory are adopted to provide the study with a well-rounded framework to identify and unpack the power dynamics at play in the press. Foucault argues that power has taken new forms in modern day and adopts an emancipatory approach to the study of power (Taylor 2014). Foucault's approach is utilised to decipher oppressive norms and practices in the structures of the modern day South African press system with cognisance of its past colonial and apartheid systems and oppressions. Bourdieu (1985) argues that the social world is ordered according to "types of capital" or "power" and defines capital as "accumulated labour". Bourdieu's (1985) approach to "power" is instructive to the South African context, where racial capitalism allowed white people to accumulate capital over decades at the expense of black labour, through "superexploitation" of black labour (as discussed in chapter 2).

5.4.1 Neo-liberalism and the power of the free market

The apartheid-era print market fundamentally operated as a state run press. As mentioned previously, despite being owned by private big business, the Nationalist Party government acted as the main gatekeeper of newspaper content and heavily stifled the free flow of ideas and ideologies. Newspaper content, particularly articles and comments about activities regarded as opposing the apartheid system, was controlled by the apartheid government through a barrage of laws and regulations (MDDA 2009). For example, newspapers were required to apply for registration if they published more than eleven times a year (MDDA 2009).

As stated earlier, at the ushering in of democracy neo-liberalism entered the economic landscape, which meant that the print market followed a free market model characterised by no official government involvement. New forms of private ownership emerged. The Independent Media is a case in point. In 1994, Irishman Tony O'Reilly acquired a controlling

share of Independent Media from local owners Anglo American. In 1999 O'Reilly acquired the remaining 24% of shares following the acquisition of the 58% full control stake. Another case in point is the ownership trajectory of the *Mail & Guardian*, as depicted in Table 2. The newspaper changed from local ownership, to foreign UK ownership (European), to then African ownership. The UK's *The Guardian* became the majority shareholder of the *Weekly Mail* (now the *Mail & Guardian*) in 1995⁹⁶. In 2002 *The Guardian* reduced its shareholding to 10% selling 87.5% to New Trust Company Botswana LTD, owned by Zimbabwean publisher and entrepreneur Trevor Ncube who also took over as CEO of the company⁹⁷. In 2008 Trevor Ncube acquired 65% of the *Mail & Guardian* online that was sold from internet service provider Mweb.

Table 2: Major ownership changes of M&G Media in 20 years of democracy

Year of major ownership change	Nature of ownership change that took place
1995	<i>The Guardian</i> became the majority shareholder and renamed it <i>Mail & Guardian</i> .
2002	<i>The Guardian</i> reduced its shareholding to 10% selling 87.5% to Newtrust company Botswana LTD.

A critical political economy of the media perspective would contend that the Independent Media, and M&G Media in twenty years of democracy portrayed ownership patterns of “liberalization”, “internationalization” and “regionalization” (Olorunnisola et al. 2010), which diversified the overall print media market through opening access to the European and African players.

It is important to locate the press transformation agenda within neo-liberalism. The power of neo-liberalism and its knock on effects for the media is immense. Neo-liberalism has been described as “the most successful ideology in world history” (Anderson 2000, cited in Venugopal 2015: 1). The global rise of neo-liberalism has birthed media markets characterised by concentrated ownership and as Compaine and Hoag (2012: 28) note, “market power of dominant media firms has only worsened”. The consequences of neo-liberalism in South Africa can be seen in the contemporary press market. In the first two decades of democracy, press ownership concentration has been a consistent continuity and evolved into a neo-liberal era of

⁹⁶ www.mg.co.za

⁹⁷ www.mg.co.za

concentration with new players. Duncan's (2016) research revealed that the contemporary print media system is one that is "moderately concentrated", lacks in diversity and according to the HHI (Herfindahl-Hirschman Index) economics index:

Our print media system is what could be characterised as what is moderately concentrated, not too concentrated, but not too diverse. As the media policy and democracy project we commissioned a group of economists to do a study on levels of concentration in the media using the HHI index which is an index used in economics generally but does not necessarily refer to the media, they applied the HHI index to different sections of the media. They actually found that the broadcast media was more concentrated than the print media (Jane Duncan, SLLM seminar, 18.05.2016).

Mtimde (2016) articulates a similar view and highlights the issues stifling ownership diversity, specifically the great concentration challenge,

Concentration of ownership and control remains a challenge in South Africa, this concentration is reflected across the value chain, publishing, printing, distribution, circulation, research, advertising, you can name of the value chain aspects. There has now been some changes in the sectors, including changes of ownership in print, introduction of the New Age, changes in the Independent newspaper, and numerous licenses awarded by the Broadcasting Authority ICASA... (Lumko Mtimde, SLLM seminar, 18.05.2016).

Other research, for example, such as conducted by the MDDA (2009), PDMSA *Transformation Task Team report (2013)*, and *State of the Newsroom report SA (2013)* echo these findings. They found that print media in South Africa is highly concentrated with the Big four companies dominating the market by controlling 90% of the market share.

The PDMSA *Transformation Task Team report (2013)* found that the print industry is highly vertically integrated, which means that most stages of the product's creation are under a common ownership. This essentially implies that all the major print companies are vertically integrated with ownership across the supply chain which comprises of content production, printing plants, advertising sales agencies, as well as newspaper and magazine distributors. Similarly, the *State of the Newsroom SA report (2013)* notes that the ruling party ANC has criticised the print media for its high concentration that lacks in diversity for the entire value chain, including ownership and control, race, language and gender.

These findings concur with Angelopulo and Potgieter's (2013) study on media ownership patterns, which applied the Noam index from 1984-2008 (a 24-year period). The study found that that all media sectors, besides magazines, showed fairly high barriers to entry. This was

especially true of newspapers. In addition, newspaper holding companies showed a trend towards increasing concentration. Critical political economy of the media underscores the importance of documenting change and continuity through conducting a historical analysis (Wasko 2004). Concentration in the press has continued and been on the rise since the 1980's and has failed to decrease at the advent of democracy, despite the B-BBEE policy and broader transformation agenda in place. The high levels of press concentration seen in the apartheid period were uninterrupted and fundamentally cultivated by the power of neo-liberalism.

The rise of commercial and profit-making imperatives that accompany the economic ideology of neo-liberalism is evident in the print market. In discussing the state of the newsroom, Daniels (2016) highlights the huge commercial pressures facing journalists and journalism in the country today,

Over 100 retrenchments in just one year, journalists are managing more tasks, than they have managed before, because of the cuts in newsroom, and the reason for that is because owners cut budgets for salaries, whereas a journalist before would write one or two stories in a week, they are now having to write six in a week, they are now having to write for online, to do videos on their phone, to sub their own stories. A very different environment from where Jonny and I were at the *Daily Mail* days. So we have had a continued steady decline of circulation of print, retrenchments, but also the increase in number of broadcast media, surely that is an optimistic finding for both television and radio stations since 1994 (Glenda Daniels, SLLM seminar, 18.05.2016).

Daniels (2016) draws attention to the change from her journalism days at the *Rand Daily Mail* during apartheid, to the environment two decades later - which points to the escalating rise of commercial imperatives since apartheid. The cuts in newsroom size and retrenchments are due to the rise of neo-liberalism and its market imperatives, which deem the bottom line as being paramount.

Daniels (2016) description of the commercial nature of the contemporary South African press market buttresses Garnham (2011: 42) argument that. "capitalist mass media are increasingly concentrated on a global scale under the control of corporations and media moguls". The economics of a commercially driven industry is that an industry's profitability and sustainability is dependent on the exchange of audiences for advertising revenue. Golding and Murdock (2000) posit that the audience as a commodity process reduces the diversity of content. A commodity is defined by Golding and Murdock (2000: 75) as "a good that is produced in order to be exchanged at a price".

Daniels (2016) reference to the commercial pressure of the press exemplifies Hallin and Mancini's (2004) argument that that professional values of journalists are under pressure from

the profit goals of news organisations. Indeed, as Berkowitz (1993) opines, there are trade-offs between journalistic principles and the imperatives from the business side of a media organisation (cited in Price 2003). The press in South Africa reflects the power of the neo-liberal system that consists of concentration and commercial imperatives rather than diversity imperatives.

5.4.2 Token transformation in the power hierarchy of press institutions

This study conceptualises true transformation as more than structural racial diversity. Apartheid’s institutionalised racism bred an unequal press power system, where the minority white people unfairly held powerful positions in press institutions. The crux of the transformation issue therefore is whether the new press typology affected a power shift that dismantled unfair power systems to reflect transformation in press institutions? Otherwise, press transformation is limited to racial tokenism. South Africa and its press system were liberated from the “sovereign” notion of power articulated by Foucault, who argues “it is this [sovereign notion of power] that we must break free of” (Foucault 1975, cited in Taylor 2014: 3). Drawing from Foucault’s modern era power form that contends power does not begin and end with this tangible notion of “sovereign” power (Taylor 2014), it is imperative to delve deeper into the power dynamics still present in the print media today. This section identifies the forms of modern power in the hierarchy of South Africa’s press institutions.

The B-BBEE scores of the English print media companies reveal that, in ownership and staffing white people have retained significant power in the press institutions. These scores are summarised in Table 3 which reflect the level of black ownership and Table 4 which refers to scores related to staffing.

Table 3: English print companies BBBEE ownership scores as of 2013

Company	Ownership score
Tiso Blackstar Group	Scored 18.95 out of 20 for ownership.
Independent Media	Scored 0 due to foreign ownership which was prior to the Sekunjalo consortium takeover in 2013. After the 2013 takeover making it black-controlled, it would score a full 20 points.
M&G Media Limited	Scored 0 as a result of its 100% foreign ownership.

Source: Table populated from information in PDMSA *Transformation Task Team report (2013)*

The PDMSA *Transformation Task Team report (2013)* notes that overall, the level of black ownership in the industry is below the threshold proposed in the B-BBEE guidelines⁹⁸. Wasko (2004) states that critical political economy of the media as a framework conducts an analysis with the purpose of uncovering contradictions. Table 3 shows that Tiso Blackstar Group scored well for black ownership with 18.95 out of 20; however, a contradiction is evident. The PDMSA *Transformation Task Team report (2013)* notes about Tiso Blackstar Group,

Although their [Tiso Blackstar Group] scores is high, it is important to note that the company has in fact been regressing. Recent transactions resulted in a dilution of black ownership within TMG [Tiso Blackstar Group] (PDMTT report 2013: 18).

This finding shows a contradiction in the high B-BBEE ownership score of Tiso Blackstar Group and the reality of the recent dilution of black ownership. Fundamentally, this points to the shortcoming of the B-BBEE scoring system to reflect transformation in reality.

The theoretical framework's discussion of media power revealed that in the institutional hierarchy of press institutions, the board and executive management holds more power than the journalist. Price (2003) captures this position and argues that tensions are created between the news values of the journalist and organisational values of the executive. In terms of journalistic power, the public interest imperatives and occupational ideologies of a journalist are not always compatible with the news organisation's goals. As already mentioned, the B-BBEE has a scoring system for "management control" and "employment equity" in enterprises. "Management control" in the B-BBEE context is understood as:

The effective control of an enterprise by black people and the employment of black people in positions that are core to the operations of the company. It aims to address certain key issues surrounding black management and control of enterprises. These issues include the representation of black people at executive board level, particularly as executive directors, and the inclusion of black people in driving the implementation of operational and strategic decisions⁹⁹ (PDMTT report 2013: 33).

Conversely, "employment equity" aims to transform the racial and gender composition of management, and addresses the representation of black employees, female employees and employees with disabilities in the workplace (PDMTT report 2013: 33). Table 4 presents the "management control" and "employment equity" scores.

⁹⁸ PDMSA Transformation Task Team (2013)

⁹⁹ Print and Digital Media Transformation Task Team (2013: 33)

Table 4: English print companies B-BBEE staffing scores as of 2013

	Management control score	Employment score
Tiso Blackstar Group	Achieved slightly less than 50% of the targets set for management control. In 2013 four out of eight board members were black which made them one of the most representative Boards among the big media companies.	Over 50% of the employment equity target.
Independent Media	Prior to the 2013 Sekunjalo takeover Independent Media has the lowest rating amongst the print companies for management control, only achieving one third of the required score. This was due to its 100% foreign ownership and foreign Board. This changed after the Sekunjalo buy out.	Prior to the Sekunjalo Consortium takeover, Independent Media scored almost 11 out of 15 points.
M&G Media	Fared well in management and control with a score of 80%.	Noted as successful, scored 9 out of 15 points. Possibly because they put in place their employment equity back in 1998.

Source: Table populated by information drawn from PDMSA *Transformation Task Team report (2013)*

The findings reveal that black management and control of the enterprises were effectively taking place only at the M&G Media (80%), whilst Tiso Blackstar Group (less than 50%) and Independent Media prior to the Sekunjalo takeover (one third of target, 33%) were underperforming. In terms of employment equity, Tiso Blackstar Group (over 50% target) and M&G Media (9 out of 15 points, 60%) are performing at around 50% in having diverse racial and gender composition of their employees, whilst Independent Media (11 out of 15 points, 73%) is the only English print media company performing well.

The PDMSA *Transformation Task Team report (2013)* further reveals that there is a lack of black people and women occupying powerful positions in boardrooms and management,

The position of blacks generally and black women in particular in the management and control of companies as well as the boardroom is dismal (PDMTT 2013: 8).

Daniels (2016) highlights that gender representation of editors and in the boardroom is on the decrease,

In terms of race and gender transformation, even though both of these are not everything and does not conflate with transformation, blacks and women nonetheless are important. Majority of newsrooms have editors who are black male that is like 75%. The number of

women however have decreased over the last few years, I would say that 5 years ago we had more black women editors which is a sad finding. Another sad finding from the PDMSA 2013 report is that there are only 4% of women on boards, there is no reason why that should be the case (Glenda Daniels, SLLM seminar, 18.05.2016).

Equally, during the PDMSA *Transformation Task Team (2013)* hearings it was noted that in the last decade, emphasis was placed on the recruitment and grooming of black and female print editors rather than attracting black and female managerial talent. In this regard, at Tiso Blackstar Group one sees the following trends: eight out of twelve publications have black editors, of which three are women; 58% of the total editorial staff are black; and 60% of the editorial staff are women. In the case of Independent Media: ten out of seventeen titles have black editors, of which three are women; almost 60% of editorial staff are black; and about half of these are women. In all five print media companies and pertaining to all main commercial newspapers: out of 42 editors, 23 were white (55%) and 19 black (45%). Additionally, the gender breakdown of these editors are: 29 (69%) male editors and 13 (31%) female¹⁰⁰. These findings suggest that print media companies prioritise black and female representation in editor positions rather than the more powerful positions of management. Another significant finding is that, the majority of journalists in the print industry are black and female¹⁰¹.

Therefore, white people hold the higher positions in the democratic-era print institutions mainly through ownership, board, executive and managerial power, whereas black people occupy the lower positions of editor and journalist. This finding signifies that in the hierarchy of press institutions, token transformation abounds where black people do not hold significant control and power. Thus, the power dynamics evident are reminiscent of the apartheid-era. These findings concur with Friedman's (2011) view that whilst there has been racial change in the media since 1994, whites have retained significant decision-making power in the press.

Foucault's articulation of power relationships exercised over free subjects illuminates this finding,

Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free. By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments, may be realized (Foucault 1982: 790).

The end of apartheid rule meant "sovereign" freedom for black people, however this did not equate to freedom for black people from unequal and unfair power dynamics in print

¹⁰⁰ The State of the Newsroom SA report (2013)

¹⁰¹ PDMSA *Transformation Task Team report* (2013), pg. 36

institutions. The “power relationship” of the apartheid-era continued, where black people and historically disadvantaged groups, especially women, still occupy the position of less powerful or “the other”.

Moreover, Foucault (1982:791) captures that institutions should be analysed from the “standpoint of power relations” rather than approaching the importance of institutions on the establishment of power relations,

...that the fundamental point of anchorage of the relationships, even if they are embodied and crystallized in an institution, is to be found outside the institution. (Foucault 1982: 791)

It is important to locate the power relationship found in the print institutions within the continued manifestation of white supremacy as the founding hegemony of South African society, regardless of the end of apartheid’s “sovereign rule”. Leonardo (2004) encapsulates the recreation of white supremacy in contemporary South Africa,

Whites today did not participate in slavery but they surely recreate white supremacy on a daily basis. They may not have supported South African apartheid, but many whites refuse interracial marriage, housing integration, and fully desegregated schools. (Leonardo 2004: 141).

Foucault (1990: 10) further posits that an analysis of power should proceed with the question of “what were the local power relations?”. In this regard, a Foucauldian analysis of power reveals that South Africa is historically rooted in a local power centre of “white supremacy” that developed a racial hierarchy, where black people became the “other” over which power was exercised in an unfair “power relationship”. Radebe (2017) refers to the concept of “colonialism of a special type” in South Africa emanating from a 1960’s thesis developed by the South Africa Communist Party (SACP)¹⁰²,

Colonialism – and in South Africa’s case, colonialism of a special type – refers to the total domination of the indigenous population, including political, economic and cultural activities under colonial institutions (cited in Radebe 2017: 102).

This continuation of unfair power dynamics can be explained by Foucault’s (1990:10) rule of continual variations,

¹⁰² Radebe (2017) states “Colonialism of a special type (CST) is a thesis developed by the SACP in the early 1960s. It held that South African society was a form of colonialism where the colonial power occupied the same territory as the people it colonised. It argued that, in the South Africa context, white nationalism was a unique form of colonialism in which the colonial seat of government was not in a parent country in Europe but inside South Africa itself (Holiday, 1988 cited in Satgar and Williams, 2013).

Rule of continual variations: instead of looking at which elements of power relations occupy which positions at a time, assume that power-knowledge is a matrix of transformation and look for what changes over time (Foucault 1990: 10).

The press transformation agenda is devoid of the realities of South Africa's colonial and apartheid history. The press transformation agenda in the form of the B-BBEE Act, empowerment deals, racial substitution in ownership and management, neo-liberal ideology; therefore fails to capture the nuances of the continuities of colonial and apartheid power dynamics.

5.4.3 Transformation as a ruse for politicization of the press?

Critical political economy of the media contends that the political context of the media frames the role of the media in society (Wasko 2004). This section discusses the role of politics in the press transformation agenda and the question of politically independent black economic empowerment.

The role of the print media in South Africa as it relates to transformation, has been a consistently contested issue. Daniels (2016) highlights the nature of this contestation,

I think we have a fantastically transformed media, irrespective of what my other colleagues have said. And I will tell you why. I think great journalism is what will save journalism today. The problem we have here is that we don't know what great journalism is, for some media it is about having a patriotic media, and for others for instance in Sanef¹⁰³, it is about having a watchdog media. For others it is about a developmental state media, so there are a lot of different conceptions. This is not to say, that this is a bad thing, to have so many different conceptions about what a good media is. I think there is a flawed misconception on what is the role of a media in a democracy? (Glenda Daniels, SLLM seminar, 18.05.2016)

In discussing transformation, Daniels (2016) highlight some of the differing understandings of the role of the print media in South Africa, namely, being patriotic, being a watchdog and playing the role of development state media. These roles allude to the political disposition of the print media in South Africa.

¹⁰³ The South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef) is a non-profit organisation whose members are editors, senior journalists and journalism trainers from all areas of the South African media (<https://www.sanef.org.za/about-us/>).

The historical context of the country moreover locates the role of the print media as political in nature. In the apartheid period the press functioned as an uncontested political sphere more than a public sphere inclusive to all, as required by critical political economy of the media. As mentioned previously, the mainstream newspapers were used as a conduit for Afrikaner Nationalism and the ideology of white supremacy. Even those deemed alternative newspapers played a political role, mainly as the official opposition. The *Mail & Guardian* newspaper is a case in point. It was known at that time as the *Weekly Mail*. The *Weekly Mail* newspaper was started as an alternative newspaper by a group of retrenched journalists from the closure of two leading liberal newspapers, namely the *Rand Daily Mail* and *Sunday Express*. It produced brave investigative journalism and was widely regarded as an alternative public sphere to the mainstream apartheid propaganda. In the 1980's the newspaper became known as a vocal apartheid critic that led to a number of clashes with government¹⁰⁴. The newspaper was suspended in 1988 by then State President P.W Botha for criticising the government and its apartheid policies¹⁰⁵. Its investigative journalism effected change, including leading to two Cabinet Ministers falling from grace.

Following the early 1990's ownership changes discussed earlier, the print media remained politically tied through their new politically linked owners. The new black elite owners had ties to the ruling party ANC, as detailed in the previous section. A case in point is Tiso Blackstar Group; Table 5 summaries its major ownership changes over two decades.

Table 5: Major ownership changes of Tiso Blackstar Group in 20 years of democracy

Year of major ownership change	Nature of ownership change that took place
1993	The Johannesburg Consolidated Investments sold 34% of Johnnic Communications to the National Empowerment Consortium headed by Cyril Ramaphosa.
1996	The National Empowerment Consortium bought a controlling share in Johnnic Communications.
2008	Avusa Limited was established as a result of the unbundling of Johnnic Communications, the new company also purchased Johnnic Communications operating media and entertainment assets. Within this change the Mvelaphanda group purchased a 30% stake.
2012	There was a buy-out of Avusa by the Tiso Blackstar group that resulted in restructuring changes including a new Board, leaner structure, and significant staffing changes.

¹⁰⁴ <http://mg.co.za/page/about-us/>

¹⁰⁵ <http://print.media.co.za/mail-guardian/>

Tiso Blackstar Group was started in 1906 by Jim Bailey, a capitalist who made his wealth in mining. It was known as the Sunday Express Company¹⁰⁶, with the *Rand Daily Mail*, as well as *Sunday Times* under its helm¹⁰⁷. In 1996, Tiso Blackstar group became South Africa's first major black-controlled publishing house when the NEC bought a controlling share in Johnnic Communications, Cyril Ramaphosa then became Chairman and seven of the eleven Directors appointed were black¹⁰⁸. In 2008, Avusa Limited was established as a result of the Johnnic Communications unbundling (MDDA 2009). As stated in Table 5, the Mvelaphanda group was prominent in this deal and was owned by Tokyo Sexwale¹⁰⁹, an ANC apartheid-struggle stalwart. In 2012 there was a buyout of Avusa by Tiso Blackstar group (State of the Newsroom SA report 2014). In 2013 publishing house Caxton bought Mvelaphande's 7.3% holding in Tiso Blackstar group, marking the end of Mvelaphande's shareholding in Tiso Blackstar Group¹¹⁰.

Tiso Blackstar Group politically linked owners are evident in this trajectory. The National Empowerment Consortium (NEC) was headed by Cyril Ramaphosa, consisting of a consortium of NAIL, black business and labour interests - including 13% stake by the National Union of Mineworkers and 10% by the SA Railway and Harbour Workers Union (Berger 2000). The NAIL consortium had links to Kagiso and Thebe Investments and was headed by Montlana, a black capitalist who allegedly lacked credibility amongst the working class¹¹¹.

The Independent Media also demonstrates the politically linked ownership patterns of the democratic-era press. Table 6 reflects its major ownership changes in twenty years of democracy.

¹⁰⁶ www.pdmedia.org.za/pdf/history.doc

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.und.ac.za/und/ccms/articles/mpofu.htm>

¹⁰⁸ <http://guyberger.ru.ac.za/Research/Racism%20in%20the%20media/derace.htm>

¹⁰⁹ Tokyo Sexwale is a South African businessman, politician, anti-apartheid activist, and former political prisoner. Sexwale was imprisoned on Robben Island for his anti-apartheid activities, alongside figures such as Nelson Mandela. After the 1994 general election—the first fully democratic election in South Africa—Sexwale became the Premier of Gauteng Province. He served in the government of South Africa as Minister of Human Settlements from 2009 to 2013 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tokyo_Sexwale).

¹¹⁰ <http://www.bdlive.co.za/national/media/2013/01/16/mvelaphanda-cuts-losses-exits-times-media>

¹¹¹ <http://www.und.ac.za/und/ccms/articles/mpofu.htm>

Table 6: Major ownership changes of Independent Media in 20 years of democracy

Year of major ownership change	Nature of ownership change that took place
1994	Change of controlling share from local (Anglo American) to foreign (Tony O'Reilly).
1999	Tony O'Reilly acquired remaining shares of 24%, after in 1995 acquiring a full control stake (58%) of newspapers and renaming of the newspapers.
2013	Irish Tony O'Reilly sold SA operations to Sekunjalo Consortium.

From 1994 to 2013, Irishman Tony O'Reilly¹¹² owned the Independent Media. In 1994 Tony O'Reilly acquired a stake in the Argus Newspapers from Johannesburg Consolidated Investments and renamed it Independent Newspapers (MDDA 2009). Tony O'Reilly was said to be handpicked by ANC President Nelson Mandela and re-positioned the titles editorially from their liberal political stance to a far more pro-ANC one¹¹³. O'Reilly was also infamous for his radical cost-cutting measures, where he would replace senior journalists with junior ones which led to the diminishment of editorial quality¹¹⁴.

Table 6 further reflects the biggest transformation milestone for the South African print media since the early 1990's empowerment deals. In 2013, The Irish group sold its South African operations to the Sekunjalo-led consortium, which made the Independent Media locally black owned and "fully" transformed in terms of the standards set in the B-BBEE scorecard as discussed earlier. However, the Sekunjalo consortium members have strong political ties to the ruling party ANC, namely: trade union investment companies like COSATU'S¹¹⁵ investment company Kopano Ke Matla, SACTWU Investment Group (Proprietary) Limited, the Food and Allied Workers Union represented by Basebenzi Investments (Proprietary) Limited. Other politically linked consortium members are: the state-owned Public Investment Corporation, the Mvezo Development Trust represented by Mandla Mandela¹¹⁶ (Nelson Mandela's grandson),

¹¹² The Independent news and media group is a leading international newspaper and media group founded by William Martin Murphy in Dublin in 1904, its main interests are currently in Ireland, Northern Ireland and South Africa, In 1973 Sir Anthony O'Reilly bought into the company as the principal shareholder from the Murphy family, who still held a controlling share at that time, Independent newspapers then expanded into other markets including South Africa (Independent news and media Annual report 2012)

¹¹³ www.hsrc.ac.za/en/research-data/ktree-doc/1339

¹¹⁴ www.hsrc.ac.za/en/research-data/ktree-doc/1339

¹¹⁵ The Congress of South African Trade Unions

¹¹⁶ Zwelivelile "Mandla" Mandela is the grandson of Nelson Mandela (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandla_Mandela)

the Umkhonto Wesizwe¹¹⁷ Military Association through the Military Veterans Trust. The Chairman of Sekunjalo, Iqbal Surve,¹¹⁸ worked as a medical doctor during apartheid, including treating ANC stalwarts on Robben Island.

Controversy followed the Sekunjalo consortium takeover. Independent Media's *Cape Times* editor Alide Dasnois was fired for publishing a front cover story of then public protector Thuli Madonsela's report findings. Madonsela found that the then Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Tina Joemat-Pettersson was guilty of "improper and unethical conduct in the irregular awarding of an R800-million tender to a Sekunjalo subsidiary to manage the state's fishery vessels"¹¹⁹. While Surve claimed Dasnois was fired for not meeting targets¹²⁰, the axing coincided with the front page story which led many to believe that the new owners acted in favour of their business and political interests. Duncan (2016) argues that following the Sekunjalo takeover, an erosion of editorial independence was evident, especially in the Alide Dasnois incident,

We have seen Independent newspapers being bought out by local owners, as it should, this is a necessary and welcome development. But I think we are also seeing a worrying erosion of editorial independence in the group and a shifting out of critical voices in their newsrooms. The Alide Dasnois (former editor of Cape Times who was dismissed under controversial circumstances) settlement that took place recently between Dasnois and Independent reinforced the principle of editorial independence and was welcomed. The settlement was contradicted by Iqbal Surve crowing in the media that Independent newspapers had been vindicated in its decision to fire Dasnois, which was unfortunate but not surprising re-writing of what the settlement said. There have also been some very embarrassing puff pieces, singing the praises of the Independent newspapers owner, in the paper. And this cannot possibly be what transformation should actually be, because this amounts to a repeated violation of the repeated precepts of journalism. I think this is what transformation that occurs only within the seven elements of the scorecard can lead to meaning, the substituting of one set of elite interests for another, and that is certainly a danger. That doesn't mean to say that the seven elements of the B-BBEE scorecards aren't important, they absolutely are, but if we are going to arrive at a

¹¹⁷ uMkhonto we Sizwe (abbreviated as MK, Xhosa pronunciation: [u'mk'honto we 'sizwe], meaning "Spear of the Nation") was the armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC), co-founded by Nelson Mandela in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre. Its mission was to fight against the South African government (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umkhonto_we_Sizwe)

¹¹⁸ Iqbal Surve known as the "Struggle Doctor" because of his provision of medical care towards victims of apartheid brutality, including some of those imprisoned on the infamous Robben Island. Survé had both a personal and/or a professional relationship with many former Island prisoners including Nelson Mandela, Ahmed Kathrada, Andrew Mlangeni and Govan Mbeki on their release from Robben Island (<https://www.independentmedia.co.za/en/executive-chairman/dr-iqbal-surve/>)

¹¹⁹ <https://mg.co.za/article/2013-12-09-dasnois-fired-for-not-meeting-targets-says-surve/>

¹²⁰ <https://mg.co.za/article/2013-12-09-dasnois-fired-for-not-meeting-targets-says-surve/>

more substantive understanding of transformation, it needs to move beyond those seven elements (Jane Duncan, SLLM seminar, 18.05.2016).

Duncan (2016) describes the Sekunjalo takeover as “the substituting of one set of elite interests for another”. Drawing from this point, it can be argued that the takeover substituted foreign elite interests with politically linked interests.

The issue of transformation used as a ruse for the politicization of the press is important to consider at this point. Drawing on critical political economy of the media, it can be surmised that the actions and structures of the print media in South Africa is shaped by the political context of the day. In the apartheid period the press was controlled, regulated and constrained by the government. In the democratic period the new press owners have close ties to the ruling ANC. Thus, it can be said that transformation is a point of politisation of the press. The political nature of the press transformation project is perpetuated by a considerable “information subsidy” through the South African government being the biggest advertiser in newspapers. The theoretical framework noted the increasing trend of governments being indirect owners of newspapers through massive advertising revenue, dubbed by theorists as an “information subsidy” (Downing 2011). Thus, the biggest benefactors of black economic empowerment are political elites.

The print media industry is regarded as a great contributor to black economic empowerment in South Africa. A study done by Print Media South Africa (PMSA)¹²¹ found, “the print media industry presents as a Level 5 BEE contributor to broad based BEE with a score of 62.92 points.”¹²². A Level 5 is an 80% BEE recognition level¹²³. Other research found that the benefits of black economic empowerment are limited to the elite. In a *PoliticsWeb*¹²⁴ column, Jeffrey (2015)¹²⁵ posits,

the current system of BEE benefits only a small elite: roughly the top 15% within the black population. The remaining 85% have very little prospect of ever gaining BEE ownership deals, management posts, preferential tenders, or new small businesses to run”.

¹²¹ Print and Digital Media South Africa is an umbrella body incorporating print and digital media. The PDMSA is a natural progression from the long-established Print Media South Africa (PMSA) (<http://www.pdmedia.org.za/>).

¹²² <http://themediainline.co.za/2011/11/print-media-industry-commits-itself-to-transformation-targets/>

¹²³ <http://www.bbbee.com/Scorecard.aspx>

¹²⁴ <http://www.politicsweb.co.za/news-and-analysis/bee-this-extortion-racket-should-stop>

¹²⁵ Anthea Jeffrey is also author of *BEE: Helping or Hurting?*, and Head of Policy Research at the Institute of Race Relations (IRR)

Black economic empowerment of print media signifies “black elite empowerment”. A majority 85% of the black population find themselves on the peripheries of the benefits of black economic empowerment, which points to a significant class inequality in reaping the rewards of black economic empowerment in the press.

This finding can be situated within Bourdieu’s (1985) conceptualisation of “power” as “forms of capital”. The politically linked black elite, consisting of prominent ANC leaders, trade unions and ANC aligned media moguls, possessed a high magnitude of “social capital”. In particular, “of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu 1985: 51). This process of “social capital” gain is inherently unequal as a “good name” gives an unfair advantage,

...the possessors of an inherited social capital, symbolized by a great name, are able to transform all circumstantial relationships into lasting connections. They are sought after for their social capital and, because they are well known, are worthy of being known (‘I know him well’) ... (Bourdieu 1985: 52-53).

The political elite that gained press ownership after democracy had a “great name” attributed to their role in the successful struggle against apartheid. These ANC stalwarts, including trade union members, capitalised on the party’s “great name” and subsequently represented the entire black majority in the system of black economic empowerment. This displays an unfair class inequality in the benefit system of black economic empowerment being primarily enjoyed by only the 15% black elite.

The emergence of the political black elites as representatives of the black majority in the black economic empowerment system is not surprising given the historical context of South Africa and the ANC’s role in the liberation struggle. The ANC has historically represented the black majority grouping. A Bourdieu analysis would describe this as “delegation”. Bourdieu (1985: 53) refers to “delegation” as every group having “more or less institutionalized forms of delegation... to represent the group to speak and act in its name”.

Bourdieu (1985) cautions the “embezzlement or misappropriation of the capital which they assemble” in this concept of “representation”,

This embezzlement is latent in the fact that a group as a whole can be represented, in the various meanings of the word, by a subgroup, clearly delimited and perfectly visible to all, known to all, and recognized by all...Similarly, phenomena such as the ‘personality cult’ or the identification of parties, trade unions, or movements with their leader are latent in the very logic of representation. Everything combines to cause the signifier to take the place of the signified, the spokesmen that of the group he is supposed to express, not least because his distinction, his ‘outstandingness,’ his

visibility constitute the essential part, if not the essence, of this power, which, being entirely set within the logic of knowledge and acknowledgment, is fundamentally a symbolic power; but also because the representative, the sign, the emblem, may be, and create, the whole reality of groups which receive effective social existence only in and through representation (Bourdieu 1985: 53).

The black political elite became the “signifier” of the black majority as the historically disadvantaged “signified”, which resulted in the “misappropriation of capital” of black economic empowerment in the press, at the expense of the majority black population that do not fall within the political elite class.

5.4.4 Role of big business

The critical political economy of the media approach expresses concern about the increasing trend of mass media being owned by big business or corporate control and its consequence for the decline in political and cultural diversity (Garnham 2011). Drawing from this approach, the role of big business in press ownership has consequences for diversity and press transformation. McChesney (2004) posits that growing corporate control impacts media content through, for example, consumerism and class inequality. Thus, civic values and anti-market activities are marginalised and the best journalism, with few exceptions, pitched to the elite with its needs and prejudices (McChesney 2004). This section explores the consistent and unregulated role of big business as a major media owner in the press.

The power of big business remained in the democratic-era ownership patterns of the Independent Media, Tiso Blackstar Group, and M&G Media. The Independent Media is a case in point. It was known as the Argus printing and publishing company founded in 1889 by Joseph Francis Dormer¹²⁶. Dormer was an acknowledged admirer of the then Prime Minister Cecil John Rhodes and was said to have founded the group to promote Rhodes’ interests and aspirations¹²⁷. The key shareholders of the media group were eminent mining magnates: Anglo-American, Johannesburg Consolidated Investments and the Barnato Brothers¹²⁸. The acquiring of the local Argus Group by the Irish Independent Group in the early 1990’s contributed to dismantling the stronghold of white apartheid-linked ownership. However, the unmonitored role of big business and of media moguls was evident. O’Reilly was said to be infamous for

¹²⁶ <http://www.und.ac.za/und/ccms/articles/mpofu.htm>

¹²⁷ <http://www.und.ac.za/und/ccms/articles/mpofu.htm>

¹²⁸ <http://www.und.ac.za/und/ccms/articles/mpofu.htm>

his radical cost-cutting measures where he would replace senior journalists with junior ones which led to diminishment of editorial quality¹²⁹, as stated above. Hence an infamous media mogul with a reputation of running media institutions with commercially driven imperatives entered the South African market unmonitored. Similarly, big businesses Anglo American and Johannesburg Consolidated Investments kept power after democracy. In 1994 O'Reilly bought 31% of Argus from Anglo American, neither Anglo or Johannesburg Consolidated retained direct shareholding in Independent newspapers but both kept indirect interests by having minority ownership of the groups pension fund (Tomaselli 2003).

Another case in point is the 2013 Sekunjalo Consortium takeover, which observed the entry of a number of big businesses as members of the Consortium including, the Interacom investment holding Limited, China International Television corporation (CITVC), China-Africa Development Fund (CADFUND)¹³⁰, and the Black business chamber Western Cape.

In the case of the *Mail and Guardian* ownership patterns (Table 1), the entry of African (Zimbabwean) media mogul Trevor Ncube through the Botswana New Trust Company Botswana LTD positively promoted African, “regional” representation (Olorunnisola et al. 2010). Tiso Blackstar Group is another case in point. As already mentioned, during apartheid its ownership patterns included mining companies as major shareholders, including Anglo American¹³¹. This has continued as the big business owners of Tiso Blackstar Group in the democratic era include: The Allan Gray Fund; Coronation Fund Managers and UK's Pearson. The new big business additions to the print media market went unmonitored.

It should be noted that the black owned big business companies that have stakes in Tiso Blackstar Group as well the Independent Media are positive for black economic empowerment, economic transformation, and ownership transformation. However, it must be acknowledged that a big business, regardless of its empowerment status, will still operate with the profit-making bottom line as paramount.

The significant role of big business in the press ownership structures is not surprising, given the profit-making imperatives of the business sector and the opportunity the media hold for economic benefit. “The media is a key economic sector, and are significant economic entities that are responsible for an increasing amount of domestic and world trade” (Freedman 2008:

¹²⁹ www.hsrc.ac.za/en/research-data/ktree-doc/1339

¹³⁰ <http://www.independentmedia.co.za/en/our-company/about-us/>

¹³¹ www.pdmedia.org.za/pdf/history.doc

5). However, the unmonitored role of big business in the print media is a danger to democracy, diversity, as well as press transformation. Critical political economy of the media posits that economic power in the media becomes cultural power. McNair (1998) contends that media ownership [economic power] translates to cultural power. The economic power of big business and its inherent profit-making imperatives pose consequences for cultural power within media content.

Equally, Bourdieu's conceptualisation of the power of economic capital can be applied to the magnitude of economic capital that big business holds in the South African press. Bourdieu (1985:46) contends that society is structured according to types of capital, defined as "accumulated labour". Moreover, capital can present itself in three fundamental guises: economic capital, cultural capital and social capital. The two latter types of capital are non-economic in nature, however Bourdieu (1985) argues that economic capital is at the root of all the other types of capital. "The different types of capital can be derived from economic capital, but only at the cost of a more or less great effort of transformation" (Bourdieu 1985: 53). Fundamentally, economic capital or "power" provides the means by which to gain the other types of capital. Thus, big business is a powerful player in the print media and holds the opportunity to "transform" its economic capital to "cultural power" and other types of capital. The unregulated role of big business in press ownership is a hindrance to media diversity. Talk of press transformation cannot progress until the power of big business in the press is monitored.

5.4.5. Allocative and operational control: the present press media ownership structure

The previous sections detailed the power holders in the press within the time period of the study. It revealed the neo-liberal, white racial, political and big business power of the press, in the first twenty years of democracy. This section focuses on the current ownership structure of the press. It analyses the ownership structure and transformation status of the English print media companies in terms of the "action/power questions" of allocative and operational control, as coined by Tomaselli (1997). In a study about the ownership and control of the South African print media, specifically focusing on black economic empowerment between 1990-1997, Tomaselli (1997: 66-67) posits,

Two kinds of questions about corporate control need to be asked in an analysis of political economy. The first are 'action/power questions'. These identify 'key allocative controllers'. Allocative controllers exercise 'the power to define the overall goals and scope of the corporation and determines the general way it deploys its productive resources. Second are 'structure/determination questions'. Such questions identify the economic and political determinants constraining both allocative and operational controllers. Operational control is 'confined to decisions about resources already decided upon at the allocative level. A full analysis of control, therefore, needs to examine the complex interplay between intentional action and structural constraint.

Tomaselli (1997) understands the allocative owners to be the major shareholders, for example, during apartheid this was Anglo American and in the empowerment deals, Cyril Ramaphosa through the National Empowerment Consortium (NEC). The operational owners are the Board.

Table 7 below depicts the major shareholders of Independent Media, Tiso Blackstar Group and M&G Media in the recent years.

Table 7: The ownership structure of the English print media companies

Media house	Major shareholders in 2014	Major shareholders In 2016	Major shareholders in 2018
Independent Media	Sekunjalo Media Consortium (55%) The Government Employees Pension Fund managed through PIC - 25% Interacom Investment Holding Limited – China International Television Corporation (CITVC) and China- Africa Development Fund (CADFUND) – 20%	Sekunjalo Media Consortium (55%) The Government Employees Pension Fund PIC -25% Interacom Investment Holding Limited – shareholders are China International Television Corporation (CITVC) and China- Africa Development Fund (CADFUND) – 20%	Sekunjalo Media Consortium (55%) The Government Employees Pension Fund PIC -25% Interacom Investment Holding Limited – shareholders are China International Television Corporation (CITVC) and China- Africa Development Fund (CADFUND) – 20%
Tiso Blackstar Group	Tiso Blackstar group - 100%	Tiso Blackstar group - 100%	Tiso Investment Holdings Proprietary Limited – 20.1% ¹³² Kagiso Asset Management Proprietary Limited – 16.1% Tiso Foundation Charitable Trust – 14.5% Public Investment Corporation SOC Limited – 10.3%
M&G Media	Newtrust Co Botswana (78%) M&G share trust 10% Other 12 %	Newtrust Co Botswana (78%) M&G share trust 10% Other 12 %	Media Development Investment Fund (MDIF)- majority shareholder CEO M&G Hoosain Karjiekier– minority shareholder

*Table adapted from: *Intellidex research report 2016: Who owns the news media*¹³³, Tiso Blackstar Group Integrated Annual report 2017, www.independenttmedia.co.za

¹³² Times Blackstar Group Integrated Annual report 2017, page 182.

¹³³ <http://www.intellidex.co.za/wpcontent/uploads/2016/07/IntellidexWhoOwnsTheMediaFinal.pdf>

From Table 7 it can be seen that the allocative controllers of Independent Media comprise: big business, political interests and labour interests through the Sekunjalo Media Consortium, which is “a South African consortium of investors including trade unions and veterans’ retirement funds with close connections to the ruling ANC”¹³⁴. It also includes government interests because of the Public Investment Corporation (PIC), the government employee pension fund¹³⁵. Additionally, Chinese business interests through the Interacom Investment Holdings¹³⁶, which has raised questions about its level of interest and interference. According to the Competition Commission, Interacom Investment Holding’s 20% shareholding allows them to materially influence the company (York 2018). In a paper entitled *China’s ‘soft power’ and on Editorial Agendas in South Africa*, Wasserman (2013a) notes the growing influence of China in the media sector in Africa¹³⁷. The Chinese ownership in the South African print media market could also point to China’s “soft power” interests,

China is investing heavily in African media. It's part of a long-term campaign to bolster Beijing's "soft power" – not just through diplomacy, but also through foreign aid, business links, scholarships, training programs, academic institutes and the media. Its investments have allowed China to promote its own media agenda in Africa, using a formula of upbeat business and cultural stories and a deferential pro-government tone, while ignoring human-rights issues and the backlash against China's own growing power. The formula is a familiar one used widely in China's domestic media (York 2018).

In terms of the current transformation score status, the black ownership B-BBEE score of Independent Media in 2013 is 0% and in 2016 is 55%¹³⁸.

Tiso Blackstar Group allocative controllers are business interests because of Tiso Investment Holdings Proprietary Limited. The Blackstar Group SE has other business interests, it is “a holding company which owns and operates companies in the media and related services sector”¹³⁹. Kagiso Asset Management Proprietary Limited also signify business interests, it is a financial services provider¹⁴⁰. Tiso Foundation Charitable Trust is a self-sustaining

¹³⁴ <https://newafricanmagazine.com/latest-and-current-affairs/current-posts/south-africas-media-pays-piper-calls-tune/2/>

¹³⁵ <https://newafricanmagazine.com/latest-and-current-affairs/current-posts/south-africas-media-pays-piper-calls-tune/2/>

¹³⁶ China’s state-owned China International Television Corporation (CITVC) and the China Africa Development Fund (CADFund), through their Mauritius-incorporated investment vehicle Newco, which trades under the name Interacom Investment Holdings (<https://newafricanmagazine.com/latest-and-current-affairs/current-posts/south-africas-media-pays-piper-calls-tune/2/>)

¹³⁷ <https://hermanwasserman.wordpress.com/2013/09/17/the-media-as-a-vehicle-for-chinas-soft-power/>

¹³⁸ <http://www.intellidex.co.za/wpcontent/uploads/2016/07/IntellidexWhoOwnsTheMediaFinal.pdf>

¹³⁹ <https://www.tisoblackstar.com/tbg/investors/group-companies/>

¹⁴⁰ <https://www.kagisoam.com/legal/>

organisation which has invested over R100 million in the educational development of South African youth ¹⁴¹. Government interests are seen in the Public Investment Corporation (PIC) shares. Black ownership of Tiso Blackstar Group in 2013 was 18.95 out of 20 points and in 2016 is 58.5%¹⁴². In June 2017, Times Media changed its name to Tiso Blackstar group ¹⁴³. At the time of writing, as a result of the ownership change the most recent ownership and board structure were yet to be verified¹⁴⁴.

M&G Media's most recent allocative owners are American interests via the Media Development Investment Fund (MDIF), a New York-based non-profit organisation which has invested over R2.2 billion in over 113 publications across 39 countries¹⁴⁵. Although the MDIF is a not-for-profit corporation with a public charity status¹⁴⁶, it is business and profit focused. The MDIF website states, "Our dedicated team of highly skilled professionals help clients build financially viable businesses, while providing real financial and social returns to a wide range of impact investors"¹⁴⁷. A new minority shareholder is the current CEO of the *Mail and Guardian*, Hoosain Karjieker¹⁴⁸, who has extensive experience in the media. In 2013 the BBEE black ownership score was 0%, and in 2016 it was 0% ¹⁴⁹.

Therefore, the allocative controllers of the press currently are business interests with close ties to big capital; political interests through shareholders with close ties to the ANC; government interests; labour interests; Chinese interests; and American business interests.

The analysis now shifts to operational controllers of the press. The details of the Independent Media board members were not available publicly and attempts were made to obtain this information from Independent Media. The Executive Team is pictured below, and led by the Executive Chairman Iqbal Surve ¹⁵⁰. The Executive team is mixed race with mostly males.

¹⁴¹ <http://tisofoundation.co.za/>

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2017-06-12-times-media-changes-its-name-to-become-tiso-blackstar-group/>

¹⁴⁴ Telephonic with Tiso BlackStar Group. 11 October 2018.

¹⁴⁵ <https://www.iol.co.za/business-report/mail-and-guardian-assumes-new-ownership-12394023>

¹⁴⁶ <https://www.mdif.org/about-us/>

¹⁴⁷ <https://www.mdif.org/about-us/>

¹⁴⁸ Extensive media experience as President of Print Media South Africa (PMSA), President NASA (Newspaper association of SA), Board of PMSA and NASA, Member PMSA regulatory sub-committee, represents print media various platforms, Financial manager Multichoice SA, Financial director M&G Media, Chief Operating Officer M&G Media (<http://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/sunday-times/20110828/282621734418733>)

¹⁴⁹ <http://www.intellidex.co.za/wpcontent/uploads/2016/07/IntellidexWhoOwnsTheMediaFinal.pdf>

¹⁵⁰ <https://www.independentmedia.co.za/our-people/executive-team/>

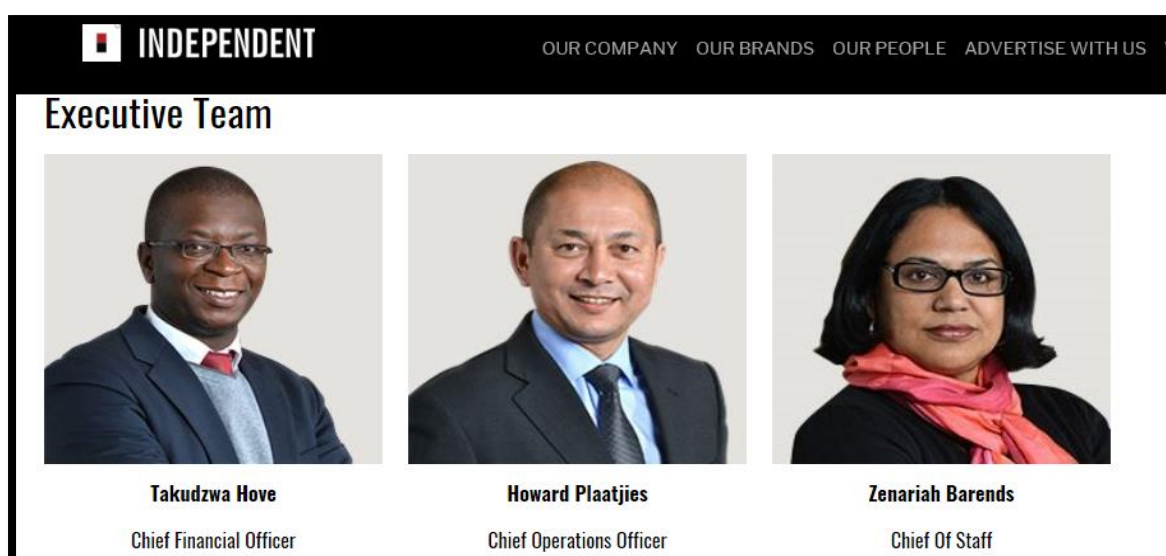


Figure 5: Independent Media top Executive team (www.independentmedia.co.za)

The operational controllers, board members, of Tiso Blackstar Group are mixed-race, with half being white male and most being male. As shown in Figure 6 below. There are 4 white males, 2 African males, 1 Indian male and 1 Indian female.

Board participation							
Total board members							7
Black males							3
Black females							0
	Board participation	Senior management	Middle management	Junior management	Semi-skilled employees	Unskilled employees	Total
African males	2	6	28	202	266	85	589
Coloured males	0	1	14	75	72	23	185
Indian males	1	15	48	231	219	14	528
White males	4	40	85	131	16	2	278
African females	0	2	17	160	244	56	479
Coloured females	0	1	20	59	80	8	168
Indian females	1^	5	20	77	72	2	177
White females	0	18	98	179	57	0	352
Total	8	88	330	1,114	1,026	190	2,756

Figure 6: Breakdown of Tiso Blackstar Group Board, executive and staff as of 2017 (Tiso Blackstar Group Integrated Annual report, pg. 20)

The operational controllers of the M&G Media most recently comprised a mixed-race and all male board. The Directors are all male. In 2017, the *Mail & Guardian* was acquired by the MDIF¹⁵¹. At the time of writing, the new M&G Media board had not been constituted, the current directors are Hoosain Karjieker (M&G) and Rashid Malik (MDIF)¹⁵². The previous board listed below was in place until 2017/early 2018¹⁵³,

1. Mr Peter Vundla
2. Mr Trevor Ncube
3. Mr Hoosain Karjieker
4. Mr Dave Duarte
5. Mr Rashid Malik
6. Mr Phibion Gwatidzo

Overall, the operational controllers of the English print media companies are dominated by males. The Executive Heads are dominated by males – Andrew Bonamour CEO of Tiso Blackstar Group, and Hoosain Karjieker CEO of M&G Media. The Independent Media is an interesting case as it does not mention a CEO on its website. Its Executive Head is a male, Iqbal Surve, and two out of three of its top Executive team are male (Figure 5). Notably, Tiso Blackstar Group has a predominantly male board (5 out of 6) and white males constitute half of this (Figure 6). The M&G Media has an all-male board. Thus, on a primary level the operational owners are mostly males and mixed in race (the board), except for the Tiso Blackstar Group. On a secondary level, the day to day running of the company is done mostly by males (Executives).

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has critiqued the press transformation agenda within the prisms of ownership, control and power dynamics. It utilised critical political economy of the media, Foucault's theories of modern power, as well as Pierre Bourdieu's (1985: 46) "forms of capital" as the main theoretical frameworks. This chapter provided an in-depth analysis of post-apartheid press restructuring.

¹⁵¹ <https://www.iol.co.za/business-report/mail-and-guardian-assumes-new-ownership-12394023>

¹⁵² Email correspondence with *Mail & Guardian*. 18 October 2018.

¹⁵³ Email correspondence with *Mail & Guardian*. 22 October 2018.

It has demonstrated that B-BBEE policy as the transformation policy standard falls short of democratic media policy principles that show due regard for media diversity. Firstly, the neo-liberal framing of transformation is an impediment to print media diversity. The media's "intellectual market" is the main conduit to achieve media diversity (Van Cuilenburg 1999). However, the Act privileges the press "economic market" benefits by marketising transformation. This in effect limits press transformation to a corporate exercise of economic privileges and racial substitution of replacing white people with black people in the structures of the enterprises. Essentially, a neo-liberal economic policy is adopted to measure press transformation, which is an inherent public good. Secondly, the B-BBEE policy does not cater for media content access. The Act elevates ownership, management and other structural aspects as its transformation measures. Colonialism and apartheid damaged the media system as a whole, including content provision. Thirdly, the regulatory model of the B-BBEE Act lacks in "freedom of communications" through the vast involvement of government (Van Cuilenburg and McQuail (2003: 203). As a result, the "pluralism" required to foster media diversity is not promoted in the B-BBEE Act (McQuail 1992). Overall, the B-BBEE policy bestows power to neo-liberalism and government.

This chapter argued that the empowerment deals of the early 1990's created elite class continuities through the emergence of a neo-elite form of press ownership consisting of the white apartheid-era elite and black elite owners. The elite driven nature of the press transformation agenda is visible in the contemporary press that caters for an elite urban, English and Afrikaans speaking audience.

The chapter then identified the owners, controllers and power holders in the first twenty years of democracy. It argued that the power of neo-liberalism can be seen in the cultivation of concentrated ownership patterns and the rise of commercial imperatives in newsrooms. The press transformation agenda did not break the cycle of apartheid-era press ownership concentration.

A significant power shift was not seen in the hierarchy of press institutions, evident in the B-BBEE ownership, management control and employment equity scores. The B-BBEE scores confirmed that white people are major owners, controllers and power holders in the press through shareholding, board membership and executive management positions. Whereas black people occupy lower positions of editors and especially journalists. The apartheid-era "power relationship", where white people exercised power over "the other" (Foucault 1982:788),

namely black people, remains in the democratic-era. This marks a continuation of the “local power centre” of white supremacy (Foucault 1990:10).

The press in South Africa has historically played a significant political role, most notably as a propaganda tool for the apartheid government. In the first twenty years of democracy, the ownership patterns of the English press manifested ANC-aligned political elite owners. I argue that this is attributed to this group gaining “social capital” through their “good name” in the liberation struggle, which caused the political elite to be the “representatives” of the black majority (Bourdieu 1985: 52-53). However, the main benefactors of black economic empowerment are the elites therefore the “misappropriation of capital” has transpired (Bourdieu 1985: 53). This opens up the possibility of transformation being used as a ruse for politicisation.

Big business is a significant owner, controller and power holder in the press. This rise of big business since the end of apartheid is unmonitored, which poses consequences for cultural power in the press. Overall, the powerful effect of big business’ “economic capital” in press transformation is underestimated (Bourdieu 1985: 47).

The chapter then identified “action/power” of allocative and operational controllers in the current ownership structures (Tomaselli 1997: 66-67). The allocative owners of the press comprise the following interests: big business, political, government, labour, China and American. The operational owners (Board and Executive) are mixed race and male dominated.

To sum up, this chapter has problematised the press transformation agenda for its elite driven nature manifested in the main power holders revealed as: neo-liberal i.e. the market, government, ANC-aligned political elite, wealthy media moguls, white people through shareholding, board membership and executive management, as well as big business. Critical political economy of the media would infer that the interplay of the new-found economic and political power dynamics, as well as the historical power dynamics of apartheid, dictated the elite disposition of press transformation. The next chapter tackles the media content diversity aspect of press transformation. It critically analyses the extent of content diversity to answer the question, does ownership matter?

Chapter 6

Does ownership matter? Analysing the extent to which print media content is diverse and reflects transformation

6.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the extent of content diversity and transformation with a focus on the coverage of socio-economic issues; labour issues and protests; and government vs. big business. It critically analyses the findings of the content analysis that was applied to 684 articles from the front page articles and editorial pages of the English print media companies. This thesis is based on the premise that true transformation is attained when ownership and content reflects the diversity and difference of South African society. The previous chapter focused on the ownership aspect of print media transformation; the content aspect is equally pertinent. As the popular media studies adage states, “Content is King”.

As stated before, previous studies address the structural components of print media transformation such as ownership transformation and black economic empowerment. Few studies empirically speak to the content question on a long term basis since the start of democracy, although a few research studies look at time specific case studies, such as labour protests and police brutality against the poor black (see Duncan 2014c; Wasserman 2013b; Friedman 2011). Scholars have alluded to the pressing need for a holistic print media transformation study that goes beyond a superficial and face value analysis that has omitted the content element (see Boloka and Krabill’s 2000 critique of Berger 2000). Recently, scholars and other societal stakeholders such as civil society have noted that successful transformation importantly encompasses content diversity (see Boloka and Krabill 2000: 76; Duncan 2014b). Duncan and Reid (2013: 484) posit that content is missing in the transformation debate, the focus is on “lack of racial representativity at the level of ownership in the print sector”.

Despite the inclusion of content in recent conceptualisations and calls for true media transformation, it remains an under-researched area. “While there has been racial change in the media since 1994, whites have retained significant decision making power in the press; whether it is used to perpetuate stereotypes which undermine democracy in a very direct way is an important question that deserves sustained debate” (Friedman 2011: 108). This study locates itself in the recent debates regarding diversity of print media content. It is an empirical and

nuanced response to the critiques levelled at print media coverage for its so called poor, inaccurate, oppositionist, elite, urban and white reportage that lacks diversity (see for example, ANC conferences 2007, 2011, 2012; SAHRC 2000 report).

The chapter utilises Curran's (2000) revised model of the media in a liberal democracy to illuminate the extent of diversity in the selected newspapers. I argue that a diverse print media system must *firstly*, be the watchdog of both the powerful elite government and big business. *Secondly*, be the voice of all South African people, including those on the peripheries of economic and employment privilege. *Thirdly*, diverse media should be a platform for information and debate taking into account different views and interests regardless of race, socio-economic status, class and geographic location.

The media's role in a liberal democracy is adopted as a normative framework to assess the extent of content diversity. I am cognisant of the main critique levelled against its inherent freedom of expression principle that places importance in the free market place (Siebert et al. 1956). Public interest advocates, for example, adopt this position and surmise that a capitalist media based on the market system of supply and demand inevitably dictate media production and output. This causes a compromise of core citizen and democratic values for commercial values and profit-making imperatives (see Habermas 2006; Castells 1998; Chomsky and Herman 2002). In order to address this critique, I argue that diverse print media content, as a reflection of transformation, must also be public interest driven (McQuail 2005). I also adopt McQuail's (2005) conceptualisation of diversity of media content as an important element of public interest content that services citizens. In discussing the public interest, McQuail (2005: 166) posits that a media system should overall exhibit a range of content that "reflects the diversity of the society, especially in the key dimensions of region, politics, religion, ethnicity, culture and so on".

Curran's (2000) model adopts a critical attitude towards the free market system's ability to guarantee diversity. His underpinnings are a revision of the libertarian theory first originating in the *Four Theories of the Press* (Siebert et al. 1956). Conceptions of the media's role in a liberal democracy articulate that a free flowing liberal market system will facilitate greater diversity and choice in media outputs (Doyle 2002). I adopt these Western theories (Curran 2000; McQuail 2005), in the absence of a substantive theoretical media content transformation framework cognisant of the African and South African experiences. Drawing from this point, this chapter reveals the limitations of adopting Western paradigms to assess transformation of

an essentially African press system which has experienced decades of white dominance that had a ripple effect on the print media.

The chapter follows a quantitative data-driven approach (Daniel et al. 2014: 3). It is supplemented by qualitative content analysis that is applied to a selected number of articles. Quantitative content analysis provides a quantitative expression (Prasad 2008) of content transformation in the first twenty years of democracy. Qualitative content analysis enables an investigation of subjective concepts (Davies and Mosdell 2006) and thus a deeper analysis of the print coverage. The chapter additionally engages with the expert views from the SLLM Media Transformation seminar panel to provide an added dimension of perspectives.

The focus areas of socio-economic, labour issues and protest; government vs. big business were chosen because these are amongst the issues that have framed post-apartheid South Africa, which also embody race and class elements.

The first issue analysed is socio-economic issues. South Africa has a severe case of socio-economic development divided along a racial stratum, as discussed in chapter 2. According to an Oxfam (2015: 4) report *Is South Africa operating in a safe and just space?* “South Africa faces the ‘triple challenge’ of poverty, inequality and unemployment”. Contemporary South African society is more unequal than it was in 1994. Privilege is white and poverty is still black despite the growth of the black elite and an emerging black middle class. Similarly, the South African Human Rights Commission (2008) notes an increase in the number of people living in poverty, with high poverty linked to high unemployment¹⁵⁴. South Africa in 2016 is described as having “extreme forms of consumerism and wealth co-exist with widespread poverty” (Cilliers and Aucoin 2016: 5).

The second issue analysed in this chapter is that of labour issues and protests. During apartheid, racial capitalism facilitated the super-exploitation of black labour by white capital. The media coverage of labour issues must be diverse to reflect race and class transformation. Thirdly, the coverage of government vs. big business is important to press transformation. Colonialism typically viewed black people and their leaders as incompetent, primitive and in need of a white saviour. The apartheid press omitted news pertinent to the black majority, notably about its leaders. The present print media have been criticised for displaying an obsession with black state corruption, which has been labelled as an extended form of racism, whilst overlooking an

¹⁵⁴ <https://mg.co.za/article/2008-05-22-sahrc-increase-in-people-living-poverty>

equally powerful player: big business or white economic elite (see Radebe 2017). It is important to print media content transformation that legacies of colonialism and apartheid be considered in the coverage of the powerful.

The chapter proceeds with a diversity and transformation overview of all stories in the sample, which spanned from 1992 to 2014. The overview pays particular attention to the overall breakdown of topics of all the articles and prominent voices in the front page stories. The chapter then works with a smaller sample of articles and analyses the discourses around the three specific issues. The tones of labour issues and protests, government, big business coverage are also analysed to delve deeper into the representation of these groupings, given their race and class elements.

6.2 The extent of diversity in the English print media

This section provides a quantitative picture of print media content diversity in the first twenty years of democracy. It presents an overview of the extent of the topics and sources in the content, which are key measures of content diversity (Graber 2003; Humprecht and Esser 2018; Mancini et al. 2017).

6.2.1 A diversity overview of all stories

The sampling process for article selection is detailed in Chapter 4. In summary, content analysis was conducted a year before and a year after a significant ownership change. A total of 18 articles were analysed for each sample year (6 front covers, 6 editorial voices, 6 op-eds) through a purposive sampling technique. The outcome of the sampling process is reflected in Table 8 below. In total, the study analysed 684 articles which were made up of: 228 front cover stories, 228 editorial voice pieces and 228 op-ed pieces.

Table 8: Sample years and articles per newspaper

Newspaper	Sample years	Total articles in the sample	Front cover articles	Editorial voice articles	Op-ed articles
<i>Business Day</i>	1992,1994,1995,1997, 2007,2009,2011,2013	144	48	48	48
<i>Sowetan</i>	1992,1994,1995,1997, 2007,2009,2011,2013	144	48	48	48
<i>Sunday Times</i>	1992,1994,1995,1997, 2007,2009,2011,2013	144	48	48	48
<i>The Star</i>	1993,1995,1998, 2000,2012,2014	108	36	36	36
<i>Sunday Independent</i>	1998,2000,2012,2014	72	24	24	24
<i>Mail and Guardian</i>	1994,1996, 2001,2003	72	24	24	24

Note: Total articles N=684

6.2.2 Politically related topics dominate the press

A diverse range of topics is a key measure of content diversity in the media (Carpenter 2010). This section provides a quantitative picture of the extent of topic diversity in the first twenty years of democracy. Table 9 presents the topic breakdown of all articles in the sample (N=684). The topic content categories are defined in Chapter 4. The topics are focused on news about South Africa. The “other category” is reserved for foreign news and other news not falling within the six topics.

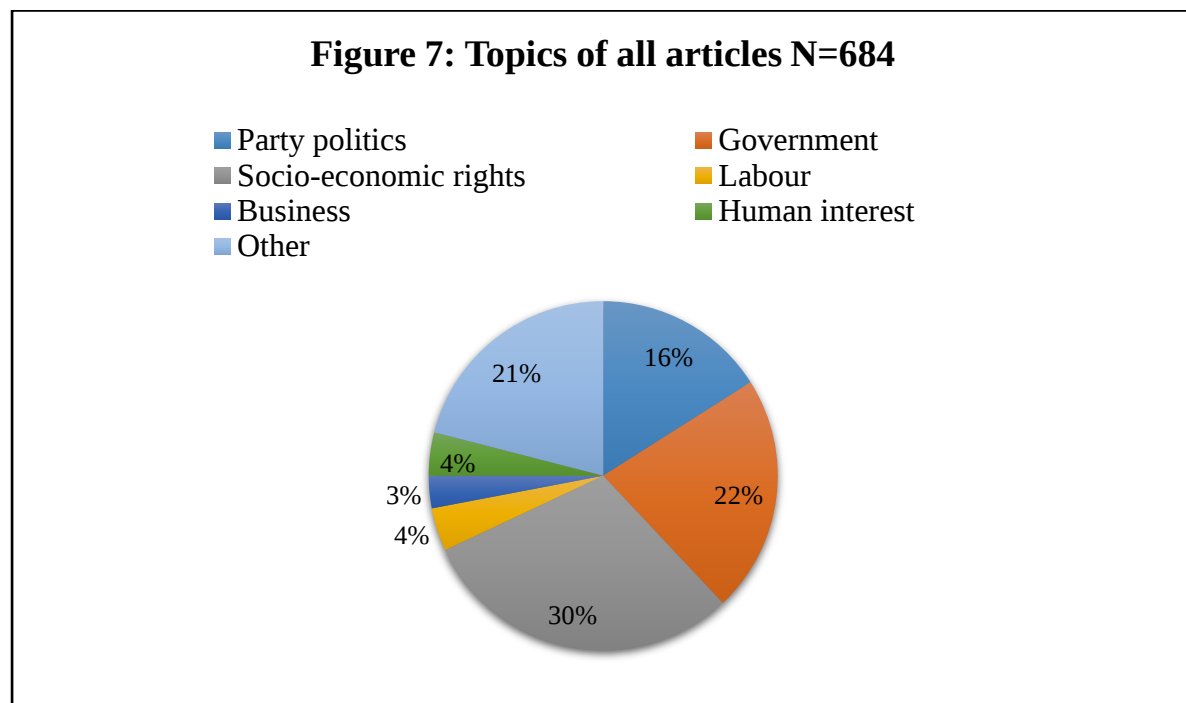
Table 9: All articles topic breakdown

Topics	%	
Party politics	16	N ₁ = 108
Government	22	N ₂ = 154
Socio-economic rights	30	N ₃ 191
Labour	4	N ₄ = 32
Business	3	N ₅ = 25
Human interest	4	N ₆ = 29
Other	21	N ₇ = 145

Note: Total articles N=684

A significant finding is that an inordinate amount of stories in the sample were about politically related issues 38% - made up of “government” with 22%, and “party politics” at 16%. “Government” is categorised as a politically related issue because politics is defined as including the activities of government¹⁵⁵. This inclination does not point towards diversity or broadly transformation in the topics. The print media falls short of the diversity ideal as a platform for diverse information and debate that facilitates the functioning of democracy (Curran 2000). Politically related information dominates the coverage. The citizenry is informed on a large scale about government and political issues, which hinders democracy and harnesses a political press narrative.

Figure 7 paints a picture of the dominance of “government” and “party politics” topics. Socio-economics issues also scored high, garnering 30% of the coverage - the nature of this coverage is unpacked in the section that follows. News about other topics which are important to an active citizenry are neglected, such as “labour” with 4% and other major powerful sector of society “business” which only scored 3% of coverage. The “other” category (which garnered 21%) was for news that did not fall within the party politics, government, socio-economics rights, labour, business, human interest categories. For example, foreign news about Africa, the USA, Britain.



¹⁵⁵ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/politics>

Table 10 shows the topic breakdown per newspaper. In terms of the topic breakdown per newspaper, there was not a major difference across the newspapers, which indicates sameness of content across newspapers.

Table 10: Topic breakdown per newspaper of all articles

	<i>Business Day</i>	<i>Sowetan</i>	<i>Sunday Times</i>	<i>The Star</i>	<i>Sunday Independent</i>	<i>Mail and Guardian</i>
Total articles in the sample	N=144	N=144	N=144	N=108	N=72	N=72
Party politics	10 %	20 %	19 %	12 %	15 %	18 %
Government	20 %	23 %	23 %	16 %	30 %	27 %
Socio-economic rights	29 %	25 %	29 %	32 %	19 %	31 %
Labour	7 %	6 %	3 %	7 %	3 %	1 %
Business	6 %	1 %	3 %	1 %	1 %	0 %
Human interest	2 %	10 %	5 %	10 %	2 %	1 %
Other	26 %	15 %	18 %	22 %	30 %	22 %

Overall, politically related issues (government, party politics) and socio-economic issues received the most prominent attention, whilst labour and business garnered the least coverage. This sameness of content can be attributed to the rise of neo-liberalism and consolidation in the South African print media market. Carpenter (2010) notes that consolidation has led to sameness of content. “The consolidation of traditional news media outlets has been said to have led to a similarity in the presentation of content across media outlets... newspapers typically narrow their coverage to retain readers when faced with a threat of competition (Carpenter 2010: 1065).

The prominence of politically related issues in the press is to the detriment of other important topics. For example, the parent company of *Business Day* is Tiso Blackstar Group, which underwent a major ownership change in 2012. Table 11 and Table 12 demonstrate that an increase from 2012 to 2013 of government coverage meant a decrease in socio-economic news. In 2011 three stories were about socio-economic rights and this dropped to one story in 2013.

Table 11: Front cover topics of Business Day 2011

Topic	Frequency
Government	1
Socio-economic rights	3
Business	1
Other – foreign killing of Bin Laden	1
Total front cover articles in the sample	6

Note: Total front cover articles 2011 *Business Day* N=6

Table 12: Front cover topics of Business Day 2013

Topic	Frequency
Government	5
Socio-economic rights	1
Total front cover articles in the sample	6

Note: Total front cover articles 2013 *Business Day* N=6

6.2.3 Placement of topics: the front page and the editorial page

The section of a newspaper where a story appears shows the importance a newspaper attaches to an issue (Radebe 2017). The placement of an issue impacts the overall content diversity because each article type has a different primary purpose (Masini et al. 2017). The placement of certain topics then becomes an important media diversity issue. It reveals which topics the newspaper deems most important. The study selected the front page leading story as a sample criterion as this is the most prominent section of the newspaper. The editorial page was selected for its potential power to formulate opinions and express ideologies (Van Dijk 1995). These sections of the newspaper are considered fundamental sections of a newspaper and provide a holistic indication of topic diversity. Table 13 depicts the front cover topics of all stories in the sample.

Table 13: Front cover topic breakdown

Topic	%	
Party politics	17	N ₁ =39
Government	30	N ₂ =69
Socio-economic rights	20	N ₃ =45
Labour	4	N ₄ =10
Business	3	N ₅ =7
Human interest	12	N ₆ =27
Other	14	N ₇ =31

Note: Subsample front cover articles N=228

The front cover topic breakdown nearly mirrors the overall topic breakdown seen in Table 2 in terms of high politically related coverage, high socio-economic coverage, as well as low labour and business coverage. Politically related topics made up almost half of the total front page stories at 47% - “party politics” at 17%, “government” with 30%. “Government” issues scored 8% higher on the front page leading stories (Table 13) than the overall topic breakdown of all stories (Table 9). The print media places government issues as its most important topic. The political nature of press content is seen in the data showing that politically related issues (47%) garnered about half of the front page stories. Table 14 presents the topic breakdown within the editorial voice and Table 15 shows the op-ed topics.

Table 14: Editorial voice topic breakdown

Topics	%	
Party politics	14	N ₁ =32
Government	23	N ₂ =54
Socio-economic rights	34	N ₃ =78
Labour	6	N ₄ =14
Business	3	N ₅ =6
Human interest	2	N ₆ =4
Other	18	N ₇ =40

Note: Subsample front cover articles N=228

Table 15: Op-ed topic breakdown

Topic	%	
Party politics	16	N ₁ =37
Government	14	N ₂ =31
Socio-economic rights	30	N ₃ =68
Labour	3	N ₄ =8
Business	1	N ₅ =2
Human interest	4	N ₆ =8
Other	32	N ₇ =74

Note: Subsample front cover articles N=228

The editorial page mostly featured socio-economic news (editorial voice with 34%, op-ed at 30%). Government follows with 23% of editorial voice coverage, and 14% of op-ed coverage. Politically related topics garnered high coverage – editorial voice with 37% and op-ed at 30%. In all three sections of the newspaper analysed, labour garners more coverage than business. This is surprising because big business counts as a powerful grouping of “private power” (Curran 2000: 122); as such it would be expected that it would garner far more coverage than labour. The editorial page findings are similar to the topics of the front page coverage. However, government topics were more frequent in the front cover leading story than editorial page.

Politically related topics dominate the front cover pages and editorial pages which is problematic for content diversity. The *Sunday Times* op-eds in 2011 show the dominant political nature of the editorial pages of the print media, as three out of the total six op-eds analysed were political in nature. Two of these op-eds were written by political figures and two depicted the ANC negatively. The political stories were about: ethical principles of Parliament¹⁵⁶ written by Ben Turok¹⁵⁷; the ANC being more concerned about the vote than the education and training system in post-apartheid South Africa¹⁵⁸ written by Mamphela Ramphele¹⁵⁹; the contribution of the ANC values to the Constitution¹⁶⁰, written by Paul Hoffman. The remaining three op-eds were about: government’s incompetence in dealing with citizen issues of climate change, food security and national security; how China won the West which looks at a Chinese project that built a dam in Botswana; and the May 18th elections. This example was indicative of the larger trend in press reportage of political as well as government

¹⁵⁶ 6 February 2011, *Sunday Times*, “‘Aid, don’t hurt’ wavering MPs”.

¹⁵⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ben_Turok

¹⁵⁸ 6 March 2011, *Sunday Times*, “Destroying seeds of our future”.

¹⁵⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mamphela_Ramphela

¹⁶⁰ June 2011, *Sunday Times*, “ANC values vs. Bill of Rights”.

issues dominating op-eds. This trend is far from the diverse coverage needed to cultivate an informed citizenry and reveals that politically related issues drive the print media's agenda in South Africa. It is significant that political figures are afforded space on the editorial pages. Editorials and opinion pieces are considered as opinion type article (Masini et al. 2017). However, these article types can be manipulated to suite the views of the newspaper. Radebe (2017: 146) captures this process, noting "The newspaper process often give space to people who share similar views on a major topic to express these views under the guise of independent or expert opinion" (Radebe 2017: 146). In the sample of op-ed articles, political figures were consistently given more frequent space than other voices such as academics and civil society which point to the politicised nature of the print media in South Africa.

6.2.4 Elite prominent voices displace counter-hegemonic voices

Who is given a voice or sources in the press affects media content diversity. The media must be the voice of people in order for democracy to be strengthened (Curran 2000). In terms of content diversity, this means that the media must give a voice to a diverse range of voices. For each front cover story the prominent voice was recorded. Table 16 presents the prominent voices of all front cover stories in the sample (N=228). The definition of each source is detailed in Chapter 4. A "multiple" prominent voice means one grouping's voice did not dominate the article and refers to a balance of diverse sources.

Table 16: Prominent voices of all front cover stories

Prominent voices	%	N=228
Government	18	N ₁ =41
Business	8	N ₂ =19
Political party	13	N ₃ =30
Citizen	12	N ₄ =26
NGO	1	N ₅ =2
Civil society	0	N ₅ =0
Trade union	2	N ₆ =4
Academic/expert in the field	3	N ₇ =7
Multiple	31	N ₈ =71
Other	12	N ₉ =28

Note: Subsample of front cover articles N=228

A noteworthy finding is that 39% of prominent voices were elite sources comprising of: government at 18%; political party with 13%; and business at 8%. This finding concurs with Radebe's (2017) study on the representation of nationalisation of mines debate by the South African English corporate press in 2011, that found capitalist elite sources define the nationalisation discourse.

Another significant finding is that 31% of prominent voices were recorded as "multiple", suggesting that the print media seek balance and diversity in sources of front cover stories. Table 16 discloses that the counter hegemonic voices in society made up only 13% of prominent voices, namely citizens at 12% plus NGOs 1%. Surprisingly, no prominent civil society voice was recorded in the 228 front cover stories. Only 3% of stories provided the prominent voice of an "academic/expert in the field", which is a crucial source category for independent, educated and diverse voices in the press. Trade unions only got 2% of prominent voices.

Table 17 outlines the prominent voices per newspaper and indicates sameness of sources across the newspapers. The elite and "multiple" sources dominate, while alternative and counter hegemonic voices were sparse.

Table 17: Prominent voices of front cover articles per newspaper

	<i>Business Day</i>	<i>Sowetan</i>	<i>Sunday Times</i>	<i>The Star</i>	<i>Sunday Independent</i>	<i>Mail and Guardian</i>
Total articles in the sample	N=48	N=48	N=48	N=36	N=24	N=24
Government	17 %	19 %	25 %	20 %	12 %	9 %
Business	27%	0%	4%	3%	12%	0%
Political party	10%	15%	8%	11%	17%	25%
Citizen	0%	29%	11%	14%	0%	8%
NGO	0%	2%	0%	3%	0%	0%
Civil society	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Trade union	0%	4%	2%	0%	4%	0%
Academic/expert in the field	11%	0%	2%	0%	0%	4%
Multiple	35%	25%	27%	41%	34%	29%
Other	0%	6%	21%	8%	21%	25%

Curran (2000) contends that the media must fulfil the expansive role of being an agency of information and debate. This involves the media taking into account different views and interests in the attainment of this role. An over-reliance on government and elite sources limits diversity. Brown et al. (1987: 54) argue, "Continued reliance on governmental and other elite

sources necessarily limit the diversity of information available to the public”. Table 16 suggests that the print media mostly took account of views and interests of the “elite” grouping - government, political parties and business. Curran (2000) posits that the media in a liberal democracy must be the voice of the people where the media speak for the people, and represent their views and interests in the public domain. A diverse press must include the voices and perspectives from various sectors such as: the NGO sector; academics; independent experts; civil society; trade unions; civil society and not be elite driven.

Brown et al. (1987: 46) argue that elites meet the two criteria for source selection coined by Gans (1979), namely the availability criterion and suitability criterion. The authors further argue that elites meet the suitability criterion because of “their centrality in power systems” (Brown et al. 1987: 46). Thus, they can supply great information with little cost to their organisation or the resources of journalists and are more likely to “meet standard definitions of reliability, trustworthiness, authoritativeness and articulateness” (Brown et al. 1987: 46). This approach to elite sources highlights the power dynamics of media sources. The dominance of elite sources immensely perpetuates “power systems” in society. The findings related to elite sources confirms that the press perpetuates the elite power system in South African society, which is contrary to the imperatives of diversity and transformation.

A case in point of the dominance of elite sources in the press is the *Sunday Independent* sample of articles in 2012 and 2014, which are outlined in Table 18. In 2012 all prominent voices of the six front cover stories were “political parties” and in 2014 all stories used political related and business sources. The “other” category included government related sources: the NPA report and former Police Commissioner. This finding is indicative of a larger trend found in the overall sample of front cover articles.

Table 18: Sunday Independent front cover dominance of elite sources, 2012, 2014

	2012	2014
Total articles in year sample	N=6	N=6
Government	0	2
Business	0	1
Politics	6	1
Other -NPA draft report, -Former Police Commissioner Bheki Cele	0	2

The commercial logic of the corporate media in South Africa illuminates this finding. Chiumbu (2016: 423) argues that,

the corporate media in South Africa, due to structural factors such as its location within market forces, funding model and continuation of the apartheid legacy, reproduces and reinforces neo-liberal ideology which privileges capitalism and marginalises alternative and counter-hegemonic voices... South African corporate media operates fully within the framework of commercial logic which inevitably favours elite discourse (cited in Radebe 2017: 51).

The findings of the study show that alternative and counter-hegemonic voices are marginalised in the press whilst elite voices dominate, which is to the disservice of content diversity. This leaves the press wide open to manipulation by the elite. “A diversity of information prevents sources from manipulating policy and the news media for their economic and social gain” (Gans 1992, cited in Carpenter 2010: 1067).

The findings presented in this section show that overall the English print media lacks in topic and source diversity. Political and elite interests trump diversity imperatives.

6.3 Socio-economic coverage

This category is for South African socio-economic coverage. The classification of socio-economic coverage adopted by this study was mostly drawn from the South African Constitution as set out in the Bill of Rights¹⁶¹. “Following the end of apartheid, South Africa adopted a constitution which entrenches a range of socioeconomic rights alongside civil, political, and cultural rights in Chapter 2, the Bill of Rights” (Chiumbu et al. 2016: 3). In this regard, articles about basic human rights such as education, food, health, land, water, health, social security, children, housing and the economy were included in this category. Also falling within this category were important citizen related news stories were relevant to the socio-economics rights, such as crime, racism, safety and security, as well as government service delivery as it related to basic human rights.

The coverage of socio-economic issues is critical for making visible the plight of the poor, as socio-economic rights globally refer to the protection and the basic needs of the poor, as discussed in chapter 2. Hence, issues of poverty and inequality are a key aspect of this category, especially given the socio-economic crisis in South Africa. Research conducted by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung names poverty and inequality amongst the six key socio-economic challenges¹⁶² facing 21st century South Africa (Pillay 2000).

6.3.1 Substantial prominence given to socio-economic issues: deep seated or superficial?

The results of the topic breakdown of all articles shown in Table 9 illustrate that the print media dedicated a substantial amount of prominence to the topic of socio-economic rights (30%). The issue of socio-economic rights was the leading topic of coverage in the editorial voice with 20% (Table 14). Similarly, socio-economic rights were the second highest topic in the op-ed articles with 30%, whilst the “other” category was the highest topic with 32% (Table 15). It placed second in the front page topics with 20% (Table 13), whilst “government” scored the highest coverage with 30%. In terms of the topic breakdown per newspaper (Table 10), five newspapers out of the total six newspapers placed “socio-economic rights” as the leading topic. These figures are: *Business Day* 29%; *Sowetan* 25%; *Sunday Times* 29%; *The Star* 32%; and

¹⁶¹ See <https://www.westerncape.gov.za/legislation/bill-rights-chapter-2-constitution-republic-south-africa>

¹⁶² The other five challenges named were: Macroeconomic Policy; The Labour Market; The Social Sector; Globalisation and the South African economy; as well as Fiscal Decentralisation.

Mail and Guardian 31%. The *Sunday Independent* had “socio-economic rights” as its second highest topic category with 19%, with both “government” (30%) and “other” (30%) as the highest.

These findings reveal that the prominence attached to the issue of socio-economic rights is considerable, which suggests that the print media shows cognisance for human rights and citizen related news. However, in the South African context the issue of media coverage of socio-economic issues is complex and it does not suffice to simply count the prominence of the “socio-economic rights” topics.

Since the dawn of democracy, the media in South Africa has displayed a propensity to downplay socio-economic issues, particularly poverty and inequality. Jacobs (2004) posits that the South African media post-1994 displayed an ideological stance to marginalise deep rooted social problems and alludes to one particular print media group (cited in Radebe 2017: 60). “Independent group of newspapers celebrated the ‘Rainbow Nation’ while downplaying deep-seated racialised and gendered socio-economic inequality tensions” (cited in Radebe 2017: 60). This stance by the Independent Group of newspapers was “...reflective of the broader corporate media’s overall ideological stance post-apartheid” (Jacobs 2004, cited in Radebe 2017: 59-60). Jacobs (2004) notes that other print media titles echoed the coverage of the Independent newspapers,

the same conclusions can be reached about *Business Day* or the *Citizen’s* coverage during this period. They represent different poles of the white social strata: *Business Day* acts as mouthpiece for the business community and the *Citizen* for white, working-class and rightwing concerns (Jacobs 2004, cited in Radebe 2017: 60).

Radebe (2017: 60) alludes to Jacobs (2004) term of “racial-economic tensions at the holy grail of reconciliation and nation building” understood as, “the decision to ignore the fundamental and underlying factors of deep-rooted social problems such as poverty and inequality”.

As a consequence of this complex nature of socio-economic reporting in South Africa, the socio-economic front page articles (N=42) were further coded into subtopics drawn from Jacobs (2004) and Rabede’s (2017) arguments, as well as in tandem with themes identified in the article, which are outlined and explained in Table 19. The process of developing sub-topics was only conducted on news coverage regarded as the most prominent in a newspaper, namely the front cover leading article (see Masini et al. 2017). The second level analysis was to ultimately gain deeper insights on whether the high level of socio-economic news coverage was superficial or addressed the deep seated socio-economic challenges facing South Africa.

Table 19: Front cover socio-economic sub-topics

Theme	%
(1) Economics news for the ‘elite’ - economics news crafted for the economically privileged e.g. investors, wealthy, figures.	29% (N=13)
(2) Economics news for ‘ordinary citizens’ - the effects of economic base for poor and working class, citizen framed coverage of economic issues.	2% (N=1)
(3) Poverty and inequality - news about poverty and inequality. Deep seated coverage is regarded as reflecting the harsh realities of poverty, addresses socio-economic issues and effects of the past, cumulative socio-economic neglect, and structural violence and poverty.	2% (N=1)
(4) Rural – news about rural communities.	2% (N=1)
(5) Government and socio economic - reporting on socio-economic issues as it relates to government e.g. housing, education, higher education.	27% (N=12)
(6) Drama, crime, disaster - Sensational reporting that has a socio-economic component e.g. child abuse, murder, road fatalities.	18% (N=8)
(7) Racism and transformation - reporting on incidence of racism, transformation issues.	7% (N=3)
(8) General citizenry news and updates - basic coverage (surface level) of socio-economic issues, missing deeper coverage, citizen related news that has a basic socio-economic angle e.g. matric results, road safety.	13% (N=6)
(9) Special events - events based coverage related to socio-economic issues e.g. budget speech, State of the Nation address, annual, episodic and sporadic coverage.	0 % (N=0)
(10) Other	0% (N=0)

Note: Total socio-economic rights front cover articles N=45

The number of socio-economics front cover articles per newspaper is: *Sowetan* (N=9); *Business Day* (N=17); *Sunday Times* (N=5); *The Star* (N=7); *The Sunday Independent* (N=2); and *Mail and Guardian* (N=5).

Table 19 confirms that 31% (N=14) of the front cover socio-economic articles were about economics news. Significantly, 13 out of these 14 articles were deemed as “elite” economics news” and 12 of these articles were published in the *Business Day* (the remaining article was published in *The Star*). Only 1 article was categorised as “economic news for the ordinary citizen”, which was published in the *Sunday Independent*. This finding insinuates that economics news gets prominent attention on the front cover of an “elite” and business-focused newspaper such as the *Business Day*, which is a newspaper targeted at the upper and educated classes. This leaves a sizeable gap in economics news for the “ordinary” citizen.

These findings can be explained by market ideology. Jacobs (2004) argues that due to the market ideology that drives corporate media in South Africa, economics and business news is “mainly limited to figures with little emphasis on the political and ideological nature of these

figures” (Jacobs 2004, cited in Radebe 2017: 63). Jacobs (2004) further contends that business newspaper coverage overall reads like directors’ report for shareholders (Radebe 2017: 63). In this regard, “the publication or broadcast of information that relates to inequality and poverty is “avoided and in some quarters actively resisted” (Radebe 2017: 63). This can be seen in Table 19, where “poverty and inequality” (2%) as well as “rural” (2%) news respectively recorded 1 article each.

The *Mail and Guardian* front cover “Killer drought grips Limpopo Province” of 4-10 April 2003 was the sole story about rural people in the socio-economic category. It reported on a Limpopo drought from an entirely rural perspective and two rural citizens were sourced. The impact of the drought on rural people is highlighted as serious and the humanity of rural people is represented as important. This is a departure from the stereotypical depiction of rural people. Overall, the study found that the media rarely report on the poor and rural in a manner that is humanising, especially when they are victims - this point will be discussed further in section 6.3.3.

The “poverty” story appeared in the *Sowetan* “Kids beg for used bath soaps” on 1 March 2013, about the Rebaona community care and support centre and how the disabled, sick and poor share blankets and used soaps. The article highlights the plight of poverty faced by children in Brits, and other socio-economic issues such as HIV and teenage pregnancy. The head of the centre was the prominent voice or source in the story. Although the reporting makes visible the plight of kids in Brits, the sensational factor (in the headline) displaces the seriousness of the poverty issue at hand and there is a missed opportunity to provide deep analytical coverage through, for example, citing statistics. The location of the South African press in market ideology, as alluded to by Jacobs (2004), is evident in this example. Humprecht and Esser (2018: 4) posit that news diversity is hampered by profit motives, causing media organisations to seek maximum readership, which is to the detriment of in-depth and perspective-rich reporting,

Moreover, reporting that relies on personalization, simplification, and polarization seem to attract larger audiences and thus more advertisers than in depth and perspective-rich reporting does (McManus 2009, cited in Humprecht and Esser 2018: 4).

The majority of South African people are poor; Statistics South Africa’s Poverty Trends Report for 2006 to 2015 states that 30.4 million people (55.5% of the population) are living in

poverty¹⁶³. Yet, an insignificant number of articles covered the “poor” and when the “poor” were covered it was reported in a simplified and sensational manner. The 18% of coverage attributed to the sensational areas of drama, crime and disaster further signifies the press’ propensity to maximise attracting audiences at the expense of perspective-rich reporting.

Table 19 also shows that 27% of socio-economic coverage amounted to simplified reportage of government and socio-economic issues. Most of the coverage in this category included updates on government policies such as housing, schooling, drugs at schools, education and pharmaceutical policies. The nature of the coverage in this category amounted to updates on government actions rather than critical and pro-poor coverage.

Market ideology could be the factor that causes the simplification of important issues such as the government’s role in the socio-economic crisis. The previous section flagged the political nature of the press in South Africa through the significant amount of politically related topics and sources (Table 9, Table 16). This finding suggests that the print media has, to some extent, politicised its socio-economic reporting in favour of giving simple government updates, which is a disservice to “poor” people of South Africa who require proactive deep-seated coverage. The dire socio-economic situation in post-apartheid South Africa, discussed in Chapter 2, can be attributed in part to government. Alexander (2010) asserts that many socio-economic problems are attributed to post-apartheid neo-liberal policies that, for example, caused inadequate investment in public goods and underfunding in key areas, in particular housing. Mottiar and Bond (2011: 11) concur with this position and argue “The ANC government’s neoliberal economic policies have amplified poverty and inequality”. Consequently, the press should vigorously be holding government to account for its failures of socio-economic service delivery, yet findings confirm that the press is mostly giving basic updates on government news as they pertain to socio-economic rights.

6.3.2 Prominent voices in socio-economic coverage

Table 20 reflects the primary definers used to portray the socio-economic discourse. Sources drawn from “multiple” prominent voice leads with 31%. This suggests that the press seeks balanced and diverse sources in its front page socio-economic coverage. The “citizen” category was second at 18%, followed by “business” with 16%. The “citizen” as a prominent source is

¹⁶³ <https://www.fin24.com/Economy/more-than-50-of-sas-population-is-living-in-poverty-20170822>

not surprising because the “drama, crime, disaster” subtopic scored 18% and many of these stories sourced the crime victims and/or family members. It became evident during the course of the content analysis that “citizens” were mostly the prominent voice in stories about crime. The “business” as a prominent voice is due to the high number of front cover stories about “elite economic news” published in the *Business Day*.

Table 20: Prominent voices in front cover stories about socio-economic issues

	<i>Business Day</i> (N=17)	<i>Sowetan</i> (N=9)	<i>Sunday Times</i> (N=5)	<i>The Star</i> (N=7)	<i>Sunday Independent</i> (N=2)	<i>Mail & Guardian</i> (N=5)	Total (N=45)
Government	3	2	0	0	0	0	5 (11%)
Business	6	0	0	1	0	0	7(16%)
Political party	0	1	0	0	0	0	1 (2%)
Citizen	0	4	1	2	0	1	8 (18%)
NGO	0	1	0	0	0	0	1 (2%)
Civil society	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0%)
Trade Union	0	0	0	0	1	0	1 (2%)
Academic/expert in the field	3	0	1	0	0	1	5 (11%)
Multiple	5	0	3	4	0	2	14 (31%)
Other	0	1	0	0	1	1	3 (7%)

Table 20 also shows that “elite” sources were 29% - “business” with 16%, “government” at 11%, and “political” with 2%. The counter-hegemonic voices of citizens (8%), NGOs (2%) and civil society (0%) were scarce as prominent voices in socio-economic coverage. Trade unions garnered 2% of prominent voices. This is surprising given the grassroots experience and expertise of the NGO, civil society and trade union sectors with the poor, unemployed, working class who are most hit by the socio-economic crisis in South Africa. The 11% attributed to academics/experts in the field refer to the experts sourced in the “elite” economic news from the *Business Day*. It is positive that the voices of independent and knowledgeable experts are included, however these experts should not solely be used for economics news crafted for the elite.

6.3.3 Social protests: the stereotypical depiction of “poor” and “rural” people

This section explores the discourses around social protests in the press. It is expected that the print media’s socio-economic coverage includes extensive coverage on social protests. The phenomenon of social protests in South Africa is fundamentally linked to the socio-economic crisis in South Africa, mostly facing poor and rural people. There are different reasons for social protests in South Africa. Mottiar and Bond (2011) identify these reasons as: service delivery; demanding justice; highlighting a cause; student protest; worker strike; political accountability; and xenophobia. Mottiar and Bond (2011: 11-12) flag the rate of social protests in South Africa as one of the highest in the world per person, citing South African Police Service (SAPS) stats, “an average of more than 8000 ‘Gatherings Act’ incidents per year since the mid-2000s...”.

Social protests garnered a meagre 2% of the total socio-economics coverage, which is a disservice to the cause of social protests. A total of 15 articles were on the issue of social protests - 5 appeared on the front page, 8 in the editorial voice and 2 in an op-ed. The breakdown of the reasons for protests per article type is depicted in Table 21.

Table 21: Social protest coverage breakdown per article type

	Front cover (N=5)	Editorial voice (N=8)	Op-ed (N=2)
Service delivery protest	0	1	1
Justice protest	1	2	0
Labour protest	4	5	1

Note: Social protest article total N=15

Service delivery protests in particular speak to the socio-economic struggle of “poor” and “rural” people. In classifying service delivery protests in South Africa, Alexander (2010: 37) describes this type of protest as “locally organised protests” that have emanated from “poorer neighbourhoods (shack settlements and townships rather than suburbs)”. Alexander (2010: 37) moreover observes that since 2004 South Africa has witnessed a massive movement of militant local political protests, which he describes as the “rebellion of the poor”. The Mbeki-era and Zuma-era protests both raised issues of inadequate service delivery and lack of accountability by local councillors (Alexander 2010).

The previous section uncovered that rural people were hardly seen in socio-economic coverage. It was found, however, that where rural communities were made visible in print media coverage was as violent and voiceless protestors that caused havoc in social protests. Significantly, the press coverage of social protests missed a structural violence and pro-poor socio-economic narrative. For example, *The Star* coverage of a justice protest in the front cover story “Muti¹⁶⁴ Revolt” of the 31 January 2014, describes protestors from a village in Limpopo as a “mob” and at fault for blocking the road. As a result, a woman with ovarian cancer could not get treatment. The protest was due to alleged muti-killings¹⁶⁵ of children in the village. The villagers are depicted in the images and headline of the story as violent people that are causing a violent frenzy and destroying properties and burning cars. The protestors are framed as barbaric and out of control. The article does not attribute equal blame and prominence to the police gunning down protestors, the child muti-killings, or the failure of the police to act on the child muti-killings.

There was also the trend of a government narrative embedded in social protest coverage. A case in point is *The Sunday Independent* editorial voice “Cops must quell riots without deadly force” of 2 February 2014. It held the SAPS accountable for their brute deadly force in service delivery protests by condemning the use of force and shootings by police as symptomatic of the brutality of apartheid. The article states that the police should have learnt from the mass killings of Marikana and humanises the lost lives of miners at the hands of the police. The second half of the article shows sensitivity towards the difficult job of policing during protests and makes reference to the Tzaneen protests where 29 policemen were under siege by the community and the Limpopo protests where petrol bombs were used. The article primarily adopts the vantage point of the wellbeing of the protestors and calls on the Police Commissioner to step in and concludes:

¹⁶⁴ “Muti is a term for traditional medicine in Southern Africa as far north as Lake Tanganyika. In South African English, the word “muti” is derived from the Zulu word *umuthi*, meaning “tree,” whose root is *-thi*. In Southern Africa, “muti” and cognates of *umuthi* are in widespread use in most indigenous African languages as well as in South African English and Afrikaans, which sometimes use “muti” as a slang word for medicine in general” (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muti>).

¹⁶⁵ “Muti killings is a way of life in rural areas. One in five people in South Africa's rural areas has had first-hand experience of a human body part being trafficked after a muti killing. And, of the body parts mentioned in their accounts, male genitals, breasts, hearts, fingers and tongues are the most commonly listed, according to research undertaken by the Human Rights League in Mozambique and supported by Childline in South Africa.” (<https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/muti-killings-is-a-way-of-life-in-rural-areas-470603>)

“...But what we cannot wait for is for more killings at the hands of police without a comprehensive plan in how to teach policemen how to quell such situations without having to resort to pumping bullets into crowds. This is a time for a leadership, from General Phiyega and her political masters, to get the message across and the training implemented so that police are seen to be not only the custodians of law and order, but also as respected figures in their communities”

Similarly, *The Star* op-ed “Lives at stake as suburb burns” of 31 January 2014 about Durban’s deeply violent service delivery protests. The picture caption states: “Residents flee after police fire stun grenades during protests”. The story is reported from a socio-economic angle of poverty and unemployment. It also includes primarily the perspective of residents and exposes the malfeasance of police and the company conducting the evictions, against which residents were protesting. This type of coverage is unusual and considers the socio-economic plight of the working class and humanises the struggle of the protestors. However, in the government narrative coverage, the poor are reported in relation to the press performing their watchdog role of government. The press should be holding government accountable for service delivery issues affecting the poor in its everyday narrative and not just during the spectacle of a social protest. This finding does not point to a fair and diverse representation of poor and rural people.

A few stories departed from the dominant trend of stereotypical protest coverage of rural communities causing trouble. For example, the *Sowetan* front cover of a justice protest, “Cops kill 2 protesters” of 1 June 2011. The article is about a protest in Tlokweng, North West, against ritual killings and the police indifference towards them. The main framing of the story holds government, in this case the police, to account and exposes the unfair power dynamics at play. The article states that police used live ammunition against the protestors and the wrongdoing of the police is given prominence in the article, especially in the headlines. The article marks a departure from the dominant discourse of depicting the rural black communities as causing trouble and havoc. The officials (police) were demonised and not the protestors. The article made prominent the voices of the villagers: the family of the ritual killing victim and the family of the protester shot dead by police were directly sourced. The article also amounts to balanced coverage for including the views of officials: North West department of public safety and North West Premier Thandi Modise. However, the deep-seated structural violence aspect is missed in the coverage, whilst the failure of government (policy brutality) is once again made prominent.

On the whole, rural people were hardly represented positively. Prior to democracy in 1994, the *Sowetan* in April 1992 published an editorial voice “Responsible newspapers” about train killings. It states that the poor handling of the train killings show that black lives do not matter

and if the victims were white more action would have been taken. The National Party (NP) government and security is represented negatively for not decisively dealing with train killings. Township workers are represented positively and the piece states that township workers are key to the workforce and the functioning of Johannesburg. This type of coverage represents township workers as valuable and as an asset to the healthy functioning of society. It depicts their humanity as important. It conforms to Curran's (2000) ideal of being the voice of the people; in this instance the coverage speaks for and represents township workers as an asset which is narrative hardly seen in the coverage of township protests in the democratic-era.

The socio-economic plight of "poor" and "rural" people is found on the peripheries of the main press news agenda, except in the eruptions of the "rebellion of the poor". A successfully transformed print media system must be regionally representative of South Africa's vast geographic communities and representative of its "poor" people. This section buttresses the *State of the Newsroom SA report (2013)* findings on the effect of funding on rural towns and print media service. The report noted that rural towns are the first to be poorly serviced due to cost-cutting and rising distribution costs that force print companies to constantly review distribution routes, and uneconomical routes have to be reduced. This is because they become less important to newsrooms as news coverage focuses on the urban areas. When this happens, there is a marginalisation of the poor, rural and mainly black communities from the flow of information¹⁶⁶.

These findings concur with Chiumbu et al. (2016) study on the framing of socio-economic rights in three South African newspapers - *City Press*, *Mail & Guardian*, and *Sunday Times* in 2000-2014. It analysed 70 articles using quantitative and qualitative content analysis according to tone and dominant framing categories. It found that newspapers foregrounded the importance of socio-economic rights, however the majority of stories were devoid of the structural causes of inequality and poverty. And, grassroots social movements fighting for social justice were poorly contextualised. Similarly, Pointer (2015) study on how South African newspaper coverage framed service delivery protests in 2013 analysed 55 articles and found: coverage was not advantageous to protestors, newspapers mainly used elite sources rarely using protestors as sources, local government and police sources define and explain service delivery protests in a way that suggests the protests are illegitimate, and protestors are framed as irrational, emotional or criminal.

¹⁶⁶ PDMSA *Transformation Task team report*, 2013, pg 57

6.4 Labour issues and protests

The “labour” topic results signify the articles that focused on labour issues in South Africa, such as unemployment, labour protests and worker’s rights.

6.4.1 Labour issues afforded little attention in the press

A paltry 4% of coverage focused on labour issues (Table 9). The study of media content diversity also encompasses the missing and underrepresented areas in media content. Humprecht and Esser (2018: 2) posit, “A lack of diversity is usually established by identifying types of news content that are missing from or underrepresented in a particular news outlet”. The prominence attached to labour issues was sparse. Labour issues are significantly underrepresented in press coverage.

Table 21 shows that labour protests garnered 31% of the total labour coverage. A significant amount of labour coverage was attributed to the spectacle of a labour protest. The remaining articles were primarily about labour law (with relation to government and unions), COSATU, union plans and shaping policy, unions and policy amendments, skills shortage in South Africa and May Day commemorations. Only 1 article was about unemployment: a *Business Day* editorial voice “Job for youth are needed” of 3 June 2013. This is surprising since unemployment is amongst the biggest issues facing post-apartheid South Africa, as discussed in chapter 2.

6.4.2 Prominent voices in labour issues

Table 22 reflects the primary sources used to portray the discourse of labour issues on the front cover. It shows that half of the labour front cover stories had “multiple” prominent voice (50%). The remaining prominent voices were government (20%), trade unions (20%), and political party (10%).

Table 22: Prominent voices in front cover stories about labour issues

	<i>Business Day</i> (N=2)	<i>Sowetan</i> (N=4)	<i>Sunday Times</i> (N=0)	<i>The Star</i> (N=2)	<i>Sunday Independent</i> (N=2)	<i>Mail & Guardian</i> (N=0)	Total (N=10)
Government	1	0	0	0	1	0	2 (20%)
Business	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0%)
Political party	0	1	0	0	0	0	1 (10%)
Citizen	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0%)
NGO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0%)
Civil society	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0%)
Trade Union	0	2	0	0	0	0	2 (20%)
Academic/expert in the field	0	0	0	0		0	0 (0%)
Multiple	1	1	0	2	1	0	5 (50%)
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0%)

Note: Total front cover labour articles N=10

The sparse number of labour articles made it difficult to draw sizeable conclusions for prominent voices. However, some observations could be drawn. A paucity of articles featured the voice of the ordinary worker outside of the trade unions. More voices of the ordinary worker should be included in labour protest coverage. For example, the *Sowetan* front cover article “Taxi industry chaos looms” of 1 June 1994. The article is about taxi drivers threatening to go on strike due to poor working conditions and amidst severe taxi violence. A number of trade unions and associations¹⁶⁷ were featured as the prominent voices in the article. It also sourced a taxi driver directly (outside of the unions), which serves to provide a direct and first hand sense of the concerns and grievances of the taxi drivers. The article makes it explicit that the taxi drivers are demanding security from hijackings, job security, as well as better pay. Overall the article paints a balanced sense of the plight of labour.

Another case in point is a front cover article in the *Sowetan*, “Pay hikes an insult” of 4 May 2009, about state doctors demanding a 50% increase and rejecting government’s salary increase offer. The prominent source is “multiple”, namely the South African Medical Association, the Health Department spokesperson and a doctor was sourced outside of the unions. These examples of ordinary worker voices were rare occurrences. A diverse South African press must provide a platform to be the voice of all people (Curran 2000). In the South African context, this should include ordinary workers given its history of the “superexploitation” of labour, as

¹⁶⁷ Trade unions and associations mentioned in the article: National African Federated Transport organisation, Venda Long distance Association, Pretoria United Taxi Association, and South African Long Distance Association.

discussed in chapter 2. It is also important that workers are sourced outside of trade unions because trade unions in South Africa are politicised¹⁶⁸.

6.4.3 The negative tone towards labour

Tone is an indication of societal power dynamics (Radebe 2017). Table 23 presents the tone breakdown of the 32 labour articles.

Table 23: Tones in stories about labour issues

Neutral tone	Negative tone	Positive tone
13 stories	11 stories= labour	1 story=government
	3 stories = government	1 story=socio-economic class
	2 stories=ANC	
	1 story=Philippines President	

Note: Total labour articles N=32

Almost half of the labour coverage recorded “neutral” tones (41%). Neutrality suggests an element of bias against a particular position (Radebe 2017). Indeed, the study found that in many instances neutral coverage missed opportunities for the press to exercise its “watchdog role” of government on behalf of labour (Curran 2000). For example, the *Sunday Times* editorial voice “More at stake than pay slips” of 3 June 2007, profiling the 2007 public service strike. The article apportions equal blame on both parties. The Minister and public service strikers were represented negatively as anti-productive. It argues that both parties’ actions will not result in retaining skilled workers and bringing out the best in staff productivity,

Both sides need to negotiate in good faith towards a remuneration structure that will motivate everyone to offer his or her best, knowing that the effort will be reasonably rewarded in today’s salary and tomorrow’s security. Neither Fraser-Moleketi’s notorious “Iron Lady” style, not labour’s grandstanding will move us in that direction”. Victory might be useful for some at this decisive phase of our political history, but it would make losers of all the rest of us

¹⁶⁸ The Tripartite Alliance is an alliance between the African National Congress (ANC), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). The ANC holds a majority in the South African parliament, while the SACP and COSATU have not contested any democratic election in South Africa. The Alliance was forged in 1990 after the movements opposed to white minority rule by the apartheid government (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tripartite_Alliance).

These sentiments infer that both parties are caught up in a power battle, whilst the loser stands to be “all the rest of us”. There is a clear deadlock between government and labour. It is the press’ responsibility to delve deeper into the context of the public service strike, such as by investigating the remuneration structure and then weigh both sides of the conflict. The press adopts a “neutral” stance amidst many unanswered questions.

Another case in point, a front cover article “Show of public force” in the *Sowetan* of 1 June 2007, about the deadlock in wage negotiations in the 2007 public service strike. The article gave the voices and views of all sides of the conflict fair space in the article, however the voice of the labour unions dominated. The context and reason for the strike action was emphasised as important by appearing at the outset of the article. It states that the reason for the protest was due to wage negotiations and amidst the accusation that the Minister lied to Parliament and the public. Direct quotes were included from the following parties: National Education and Health Workers Union; Public Servants Association; Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union; South African Policing Union; and South African Democratic Teacher’s Union. In addition, the government spokesperson was sourced and Cabinet’s position was mentioned in the article. Hence, this article was categorised as “multiple” for prominent voice. This type of coverage considerably diverged from the dominant trend of the official government position and voice getting preference in labour protests (to be discussed below). However, the Minister lying to Parliament and the public is a serious form of state abuse, yet the media adopts a “neutral” stance failing to exercise its much needed watchdog role in this scenario (Curran 2000). The Minister should have been overtly held to account by the press on behalf of workers.

No stories represented labour in a favourable light, as can be seen in Table 23. A few instances of coverage provided diverse representation of the plight and voice of labour in South Africa. This type of coverage was mostly published during periods marking the annual commemoration of Worker’s Day¹⁶⁹ in South Africa. Labour should not only be given diverse representation during the annual Workers Day celebrations, it should be incorporated in the everyday press narratives of how workers are represented. For example, an op-ed article “Much to celebrate” in the *Sowetan* of 1 May 1997, celebrates the worker’s victory back in 1989 and worker’s achievements since 1994. The article represents labour as an asset to South African society and to the economy, which is a departure from the dominant narrative of labour

¹⁶⁹ Workers Day is a national public holiday in South Africa observed on 1 May, much like May Day, where it serves to pay homage to the working class of the nation (<https://www.capetownmagazine.com/public-holiday-workers-day>).

represented as a threat to the economy during times of protests. Another case in point, is an op-ed article “The battle continues for workers” in *The Star* of 2 May 2012. The photo caption reads “Violent clashes: a protestor points to his rubber bullet wounds after he was shot during a protest...Life is a battle for the working class”. The piece eloquently captures the hard reality of the working class in South Africa and the battleground they work in.

Another noteworthy finding is that 34% of the labour coverage depicted “labour” in negative sentiments (Table 23). The specific subgroups depicted negatively within labour were: protests/protestors (3 stories), trade unions (4 stories) and general labour (4 stories). The 11 negative labour stories appeared mostly in the editorial pages: 5 stories in the editorial voice, 3 main op-ed and 3 front cover stories. Most articles about labour favoured the official position. For example, a front cover article “Our policies have failed us” in the *Sunday Independent* of 9 January 2000. The article is a near verbatim account of an interview conducted with the then Finance Minister Trevor Manuel as most of the article contains direct quotes from the interview. The reporting is unbalanced as the story is a critique of the ANC and its trade union allies yet neither of these parties’ voices or perspectives are heard. The article states that in the interview the Minister was particularly “scathing of Cosatu for its attempts to launch job creation marches against government”. This front cover story reads like an opinion piece written by a government representative, however its placement as the front cover story of the *Sunday Independent* is misleading as an objective news piece. Another example of negative labour tone in the coverage is *Business Day* editorial voice “Reality check” of the 5 January 2009 edition, about South Africa’s local economy and COSATU’s proposals to amend the labour laws. It represents COSATU and therefore labour negatively. The story adopts a primarily business perspective and displays bias against labour’s (COSATU) position.

The significant negative and neutral tones in comparison to no positive tone in the coverage of labour issues and protests marks a one-dimensional attitude towards labour. Tone in the news is a reflection of power dynamics. Radebe (2017: 126) further postulates that tone is “a reflection of societal power relations which thus translate to media power”. This finding reflects the powerlessness of labour in the press.

6.4.4 The “protest paradigm” of labour protests

The sparse number of labour articles made it difficult to draw sizeable quantitative inferences. The labour coverage, however, displayed a propensity to follow the “protest paradigm” defined as, “a pattern of news coverage that expresses disapproval toward protests and dissent” (Lee, 2014, cited in Leopold and Bell 2017: 721). It is thus worth delving deeper into the “protest” paradigm displayed in the 32 articles.

There are five characteristics of the “protest” paradigm used by researchers to identify negative news pattern in protest coverage: firstly, negative news frames; secondly, reliance on official sources and official definitions; thirdly, invocation of uninformed public opinion; fourthly, delegitimisation through a lack of information that would give context to the protest; and lastly, demonisation by representing protestors as social deviants.

The first characteristic pertains to news frames, which set the tone of the article and can offer an incomplete vision of an issue. For example, riot frames which “overemphasize any lawlessness, danger, destruction, and disorder occurring because of the protests (Leopold and Bell 2017: 721). A few articles in the sample represented labour protestors in a single stereotypical narrative as infuriatingly angry, lawless, disorderly and the dangerous “other”.

The fourth characteristic was also seen in the sample of articles. Delegitimisation abounds in coverage “when those covering the protests fail to adequately explain the reasons behind the protests and the goals or objectives of the protesters...” (Leopold and Bell 2017: 722). A lack of information can result in readers judging the protest as pointless. The “information” refers to information about why protestors are staging a protest, the social issue behind their actions, proposed changes or solution to the problem (Leopold and Bell 2017: 722). The sample of articles displayed a propensity to omit key contextual information about the protest, as well as overemphasising the anger and danger posed by the protestors.

Negative news frames and delegitimisation can be seen in the following examples. In 1995, South Africa witnessed a spate of protests by the SAPS taking a stand against alleged racism in the police force. *The Star’s* front cover article “Police rebellion spreads” in the 1 February 1995 edition describes police protestors in stereotypical ways, as “trouble” and “rebellious”. The article does not communicate support for the protest saying “wrest condemned”. The protestors are depicted as disrupting the normal functioning of society. The discourse of the

article is both oppressive and undemocratic as it is insensitive to the racism experienced by black people as a result of apartheid's institutionalised racism, including in the workplace.

In the same 1 February 1995 edition, the editorial voice article "Disciplining the police" also builds a negative discourse depicting lawless and extremely angry protestors. The headline of the piece implies that the protesting members of the police embarking on strike action are in need of discipline. The sub-headline says "Toyi-Toyi policemen who break the law cannot be tolerated, and protestors described as 'scores of angry and armed policemen'". The article describes both sides of the conflict in extreme binaries. The trade union POPCRU (Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union) is described as "voraciously militant", whereas the Police Commissioner is described as the only "sane voice" in the debacle. The *Business Day* editorial voice article "Police management" of 1 February 1995, continued displaying workers embarking in protest action in stereotypical ways. An anti-worker narrative is emphasised by a negative description of POPCRU, which is described as a "Militant trade union of questionable professionalism and competence". The article argues for severe punishment for strike action by labour, "...an unconditional need to be put in place that the price of a policeman or policewoman going on strike in their instant dismissal".

These negative depictions were reminiscent of apartheid-era stereotypical representations of black labour. For example, during apartheid a front cover article "Chaos as taxis block streets" in *The Star* of 1 February 1993 reports taxi drivers embarking on protests against excessive fines and inadequate facilities. The protestors are described as "angry" and "furious drivers" and overall displaying extreme levels of anger. The main headline implies that the taxi driver protestors are causing havoc and hampering the normal functioning of traffic routes. The sub-headlines ("Drivers try to storm traffic department") further crafts the protestors as harmful, the threatening "other" and likens the protestors to an animal that "storm[s]". The article does not sufficiently report the struggle of the drivers and possible reasons for their anger. It therefore provided a one-sided perspective of drivers as extremely angry workers scribbling crude demands. An important point that is not seriously emphasised in the coverage is that the main reason for the protests are against abuse of authority and excessive traffic fines. The article seems to have sought balanced coverage by including a section entitled "Drivers demands", but the reportage undermines the plight of drivers by opting to emphasise the anger of the protestors and not contextualise the protest. It states: "Furious drivers from taxi associations around the Reef handed out crudely scribbled and photocopied list of their

demands...”. Both the 1993 and 1995 coverage depicts protestors as lawless and disorderly, as well as adopting a dismissive tone towards the reasons for the protest action.

Delegitimisation was also seen in other coverage that provided some context to labour protests but still undermined the labour position through a dismissive tone. An example, “Labour’s travails” in *The Star* of 3 April 2000, was about a stay-away by thousands of members in the North West province as part of the Labour Federation’s protest against job losses. The piece argues that the country is on the verge of instability due to unemployment and overall the piece is critical of labour protests, it states,

We have previously questioned the value of strikes and protests against disappearing labour opportunities. At face value those are the very actions that will speed up the decisions by managements to cut back on the number of people employed. But if the tactic is questionable, the grounds for using it are not.

The article goes on to state that official statistics continued to show job losses and that the government accounted for a majority of these. This COSATU protest was due to job losses and its seriousness was buttressed by statistics in the article. However, *The Star* questions the value of the strike, hence labour’s position in the conflict is painted as the transgressor. Equally, the *Business Day* op-ed “Our violent disposition hurts our economic prospects” of 2 May 2013 reports on the COSATU and SADTU march to the union buildings from a gender rights perspective. It calls the use of sticks and women’s underwear in the march an affront to women’s rights. It is positive that the article advocates for gender equality but other important issues of education and worker’s rights are overlooked. Overall labour and the protest is represented negatively.

The second characteristic of the “protest paradigm” is reliance on official sources and official definitions, further supporting that “the use of quotes and statements from those impositions of power are often counterproductive to protest goals because protests are generally in opposition to the dominant power structures” (McLeod 2007, cited in Leopold and Bell 2017: 721). When journalists allow those in power to define protests, the result is protestors characterised by their deviance from societal norms rather than by their struggle for a cause (Leopold and Bell 2017: 721). The fifth characteristic is demonisation, which presents protestors as social deviants. It is episodic in nature where actions are reported without contextualisation, as a result protestors are characterised by actions (Leopold and Bell 2017). For example, common forms of demonisation are: extensive coverage of destruction by protestors; listing of arrests; and highlighting altercations with the police (Leopold and Bell 2017). Demonisation shifts focus from the reason the protest took place to the damage to property caused by the protest or arrests

as a result of the protest. They highlight the acts of social deviance “like burning buildings, blocking traffic, and clashing with police” (Leopold and Bell 2017: 722).

The elevation of the official position and demonisation were seen in the following examples. A trend in the sample of articles was the good government and bad labour binary built in the narrative of labour protest coverage. Protestors were demonised as social deviants for embarking on strike action and represented as unruly and unmannerly. For example, the editorial voice “First we had teachers acting” in the *Sowetan* of 1 February 1995 about the protests by black policemen taking a stand against racism in the police force. The article opens with condemnation of recent strikes by public service workers, namely teachers, nurses and hospital workers, and describes the strike action as “madness”. The article concludes with a scathing depiction of the striking policemen,

It is not a sight to gladden the eye for policemen and women to be toyi-toying and behaving like yobbos. Most problems can be solved without bringing the public service into disrepute. We are encouraged to see new national police commissioner George Fivaz attacking such behavior. Strong disciplinary action is needed to bring such malfeasance to an end.

The police commissioner, George Fivaz, is painted as the saviour that will remedy the unruly behaviour of the black working class protestors. The government is good and orderly and are the victims of the unruly protestors, whilst on at the opposite extreme the protestors are represented as the villains. The protestors are described with negative descriptions of “madness”, “malfeasance” and “yobbos”. These descriptions connotatively signify the protestors as wild, unruly, unmannerly and whose behaviour needed to be punished in the strongest means by the police commissioner, despite the serious racist allegations.

In addition, issues involving labour versus government predominantly saw the print media privilege the government position. For example, a front cover article “Mbeki takes aim at public sector unions” in the *Sunday Independent* of 6 February 2001. It reports on the ongoing public sector strike from a largely government position and perspective. The first three paragraphs start by privileging government’s voice and views about the public service strike, mostly regarding their discontentment with organised labour. The third paragraph states:

While the government is anxious to avoid a showdown movement with the union movement, it is also determined not to allow unions to derail its macro-economic policy or its plans to free funds used for wages to increase spending on infrastructure.

The discourse of the article frames labour’s protest action as a threat to economic growth and the infrastructure development of the country. The majority of the article is reported on from the government’s position. Both the views of the President at that time Thabo Mbeki, as well

as the Minister of public service and administration, Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi (who is directly quoted), are presented in the first half of the article as prominent voices. The demands of the trade unions as well as their planned strike action are mentioned, albeit as secondary to the perspective of the government. The Confederation is only directly quoted in the fifth paragraph and the article has nine paragraphs in total. The last paragraph states:

Last year, with the backing of Mbeki, Fraser-Moleketi made the unpopular decision to implement the government's wage offer in the absence of an agreement with the unions

This action by the Minister, backed by the President of South Africa, is a serious affront to the rights of labour and their place in the South African workforce, economy and society. The actions of the Minister and President are draconian and undemocratic, yet this key piece of information that gives important context to the protest action is mentioned in the last paragraph of the article and, therefore presented as the most unimportant information.

Also, coverage of labour protests that was critical of government was rare and an uncommon counter narrative. For example, "Government accused of ditching free education" in the *Sunday Independent* of 4 January 1998. The article is about the Teacher's Union plans to take the Education Minister to the Constitutional Court for free education. The voice of labour is made prominent through the labour trade union NAPTOSA (National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa) and its affiliate, the Cape Teachers' Professional Association. Another surprising departure from the dominant trend was that government was not sourced and legal advisors were sourced, which provided independent opinion away from the usual government sources.

The trends discussed illustrate that the press showed a propensity to follow four out of five characteristics of the "protest paradigm". Namely, the riot frame, privileging the official sources and position, delegitimisation through a lack of information in explaining the reasons for the protests and adopting a dismissive tone even when some context is given, and demonisation of protestors as unruly and unmannerly. Previous research has found protest coverage "displays varying levels of the paradigm characteristics—with some characteristics showing up in a majority of the articles, and other characteristics being virtually or completely absent from the coverage" (Leopold and Bell 2017: 722-723). It can be concluded that the South African press displays high levels of the protest paradigm in the few articles about labour protests. Leopold and Bell (2017: 723) further argue, "adherence to just one or two of the tenets can result in coverage that negatively portrays the protest, obscures the social issues spurring the protests, and demonizes those participating in the protests."

This section examined the diversity of discourses in the coverage of labour issues and protests. Overall labour issues were hardly seen in the press agenda. Of those that were reported on, a noteworthy number of stories depicted labour negatively, which speaks to the critical attitude of the print media towards labour, whilst few stories were equally critical of government (Table 23). A deeper analysis revealed that the position of the press became synonymous with that of government, which does not fulfil the “watchdog role” (Curran 2000). The voice of government was privileged. A diverse media must be the “voice” of its people and not privilege the voice of government (Curran 2000).

The perspective of labour was undermined, side-lined and omitted in most instances. The dismissive tone in the coverage displayed an indifference to labour issues and painted the working class as the problem. Despite the small sample of articles due to the press under-representation of labour, the findings are consistent with Duncan’s (2014) findings about press coverage of the Marikana massacre ¹⁷⁰. Duncan (2014) found that workers were subjected to Gerbner’s “symbolic annihilation” through the under-representation and non-representation of workers. It is evident that the working class occupy a very small and stereotypical place in the press.

The press perpetuate the power of the elite class, especially political power. Davis (2003: 670) posits,

...mass communication is central to notions of power. Whether the mass media are a means of upholding or undermining the democratic process, a means of maintaining class dominance or ensuring the continued circulation of powerful elites and dominant culture, elite–mass communications is key.

The misrepresentation of workers as mostly the transgressors in protests builds class continuities seen in the press during apartheid. The stereotyping and silencing of the working class feeds into the media distortion of black labour started during the apartheid era. In the South African context, the intersecting issues of race and class come into play due to racial capitalism and its “superexploitation” of black labour during apartheid (as discussed in Chapter 2). The apartheid government was premised on white supremacist ideologies that built racial power dynamics. South African society has a strong foundation in racism that deemed the black person as inferior to the white person, built by decades of colonialism and apartheid. Leopold

¹⁷⁰ The Marikana massacre which took place on 16 August 2012, was the most lethal use of force by South African security forces against civilians since 1960. The shootings have been described as a massacre in the South African media and have been compared to the Sharpeville massacre in 1960. The incident took place on the 25-year anniversary of a nationwide South African miners' strike (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marikana_killings).

and Bell (2017: 721), in a study on the coverage of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement in USA newspapers, contend “...in a society permeated by anti-black racism, even regular news about blacks is likely to contain inaccurate and damaging representation (van Dijk, 2015, cited Leopold and Bell 2017: 75). In this scenario,

Journalists and editors, embedded in an entrenched discrimination system (Reskin, 2012), can act as “agents of racialization, defining social reality, rather than solely reflecting it (Reskin, 2012, cited in Leopold and Bell 2017:721).

Press reportage of labour in the democratic-era South Africa is still embedded in the racial power dynamics of the apartheid-era, where racism in the coverage of the black working class was rife. These findings suggest that transformation is merely at the level of structural racial substitution. The neo-liberal system adopted by the press in 1994 built class continuities seen during apartheid. The coverage of labour and its protest actions need to be improved considerably to ensure transformation of race and class.

6.5 Black government vs. white economic elite coverage

This section analyses the coverage of government vs. big business. Articles about Local, Provincial and National South African government were coded as a “government” topic. For example, coverage that dealt with service delivery, performance, failings, corruption, scandals, misdemeanours, policies and actions. The “business” topic consisted of articles that pertain to South African business related coverage, such as, conglomerates, corruption, misdemeanours, malpractice and acquisitions.

6.5.1 Dominant government vs. under-represented business coverage

Curran (2000) expands the definition of the powerful that the media should “watch” to include business, which is regarded as “private power”. “A revised conception is needed in which the media are conceived as being a check on both public and private power” (Curran 2000: 122).

The study found that the print media attach great prominence to the issue of government or “public power” noted as 22% (Table 9). Whereas business coverage or “private power” garnered a meagre 4% (Table 9). In terms of the placement, government issues made up a

significant portion of the front cover stories with 30% (Table 13), 23% of editorial voices (Table 14) and 14% of op-eds (Table 15).

The dominance of government topics in the most prominent section of the newspaper points to the elite character of the press in South Africa. Government topics have been found to be associated with elite newspapers, “Government, military/national security and crime topics dominated US elite newspaper front pages” (Shim 2006, cited in Carpenter 2010: 1067).

Also significant is the under-representation of big business topics. As Humprecht and Esser 2018 posit, under-representation impacts overall content diversity. The under-representation of “private power” and the dominance of “public power” coverage skews the overall content diversity, as well as the media’s democratic watchdog role.

In South Africa the “powerful” as coined by Curran (2000) are demarcated across racial lines. Since 1994 the government in South Africa shifted from white minority rule (apartheid government) to black leadership (ANC majority). The ANC holds a 62.5% of the votes as of the 7 May 2014 election¹⁷¹. Big business is also stratified along racial lines. Anwar (2017), in *The Conversation*, argues “White people in South Africa still hold the lion’s share of all forms of capital. The legacies of colonialism persist with white people still controlling a large chunk of the South African economy”¹⁷². Anwar (2017) defines “all forms of capital” as the JSE stock market shares, land, home ownership, human capital in the form of knowledge, skills and education. Drawing from this definition of capital, Anwar (2017) concludes, “A multifaceted enquiry into the state of South African economy that includes all these forms of capital leaves no doubt that white capital continues to dominate the economy”. Big business in South Africa is owned by the white economic elite and black owners are generally small players. According to a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2014 report, black ownership of the Top 100 companies listed on the JSE is 21%¹⁷³. Therefore, public power is majority black through the ruling party ANC and private power is mostly made up of the white economic elite.

The racialised nature of government and big business is useful to illuminate the findings more deeply. The findings indicate a form of “selection bias” in covering issues concerning the powerful in society. Print and electronic media select a limited number of events to observe and report, which has led to allegations of “selection bias” in how editors and reporters decide

¹⁷¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Assembly_of_South_Africa

¹⁷² <https://theconversation.com/white-people-in-south-africa-still-hold-the-lions-share-of-all-forms-of-capital-75510>

¹⁷³ Page 23 of report.

what events are newsworthy (Herman & Chomsky 1988, cited in Smith et al. 2001: 1399). The press considers news about the black powerful more newsworthy than news about the white powerful. It would be unfair to deduce, without further evidence, that this points to deliberate “selection bias” based on racial dynamics. It can be said that the “selection bias” mimics an embedded or unconscious racial news selection criteria rooted in colonial and apartheid’s unfair racial dynamics, as the press over-scrutinize the black elite and severely neglect the white economic elite (big business).

6.5.2 The powerful speak in their own coverage

The primary definers of government and business front cover articles are shown in Table 24 and Table 25. In government coverage, the leading prominent voices are “government” (35%), then “multiple” (32%). This is followed by business with 6%, and political party at 3%. The “academic/expert in the field” source only appeared in 1 story (1%). Alternative and counter-hegemonic voices were sparse in government coverage: citizen (6%); NGO (0%); and civil society (0%). Trade unions garnered 1%.

Table 24: Prominent voices in front cover stories about government issues

	<i>Business Day</i> (N=14)	<i>Sowetan</i> (N=14)	<i>Sunday Times</i> (N=18)	<i>The Star</i> (N=7)	<i>Sunday Independent</i> (N=10)	<i>Mail & Guardian</i> (N=8)	<i>Total</i> (N=71)
Government	4	4	10	4	2	1	25 (35%)
Business	3	0	0	0	1	0	4 (6%)
Political party	0	0	0	1	0	1	2 (3%)
Citizen	0	2	1	0	0	1	4 (6%)
NGO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0%)
Civil society	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0%)
Trade Union	0	0	1	0	0	0	1 (1%)
Academic/expert in the field	1	0	0	0	0	0	1 (1%)
Multiple	6	8	3	1	3	2	23 (32%)
Other	0	0	3	1	4	3	11 (16%)

Note: Total front cover articles N=71

In terms of business coverage, “business” (57%) and “multiple” (43%) were the leading prominent voices. There were no voices of government, political parties, trade unions or academic/expert in the field. There were also no alternative and counter hegemonic voices in business coverage – citizen, NGO or civil society.

Table 25: Prominent voices in front cover stories about business issues

	<i>Business Day</i> (N=4)	<i>Sowetan</i> (N=0)	<i>Sunday Times</i> (N=2)	<i>The Star</i> (N=0)	<i>Sunday Independent</i> (N=1)	<i>Mail & Guardian</i> (N=0)	Total (N=7)
Government	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0%)
Business	2	0	1	0	1	0	4 (57%)
Political party	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0%)
Citizen	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0%)
NGO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0%)
Civil society	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0%)
Trade Union	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0%)
Academic/expert in the field	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0%)
Multiple	2	0	1	0	0	0	3 (43%)
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0%)

Note: Total front cover articles N=7

The findings express that the powerful, government and big business, are afforded great opportunity to speak in their own coverage. The same opportunity is not afforded to alternative and counter-hegemonic groups. For example, as shown earlier, the official government voice dominates the coverage of social protests. The voice of the poor and rural protestors was scarce in their own coverage. Davis (2003) position on media as a conduit for class dominance is instructive. He notes, “Mass communication is central to notions of power... Whether the mass media are a means of upholding or undermining the democratic process, a means of maintaining class dominance or ensuring the continued circulation of powerful elites and dominant culture, elite–mass communications is key” (Davis 2003: 67). The print media perpetuate the power of the political and economic elite class by privileging their voice in their own coverage and not affording the same privilege in the coverage of alternative and counter-hegemonic groupings.

6.5.3 Over scrutinising the black elite: negative government vs. neutral big business tone

Tone is an important element in the framing of news, it helps the public understand issues (Entman, 2003, cited in Liu 2010: 30). The “evaluative tone” of coverage refers to the attributes attached to an issue (Sheafer 2006: 21). Tone can also reflect the attitude of the journalist or media towards an issue (Ma et al. 2017). This section explores the attributes associated and attitudes displayed in the press reporting of government and big business.

The tone breakdown of the 154 government articles is reflected in Table 26. It is revealed that 28% of articles recorded a “neutral” tone, 66% “negative” tone, and 6% “positive” tone.

Significantly, 46% of government coverage represented “government” negatively. In stark contrast, 3% represented “government” positively. Parliament was represented negatively in 2 articles (1%).

Table 26: Tones in stories about government

Neutral (28%)	Negative (66%)	Positive (6%)
43 stories	71 stories=government	5 stories= government
	9 stories =ANC	1 story=ANC
	6 stories=NP government	1 story=NP
	2 stories=*Racial	1 story =Philippines President
	2 stories=Parliament	1 story=Racial
	2 stories=Nelson Mandela	
	2 stories labour=labour/protests	
	1 story=The Left	
	1 story=Mail & Guardian journalist	
	1 story=former Democratic leader	
	1 story=IBA	
	1 story=Thuli Madonsela	
	1 story=DA	
	1 story=IFP	
	1 story=Glynnis Breytenbach	

The business coverage tones are outlined in Table 27. It shows that 68% recorded “neutral” tones, 20% showed “negative” tones and 12% of stories showed “positive” tones.

Table 27: Tones in stories about Business

Neutral (68%)	Negative (20%)	Positive (12%)
17 stories	3 stories=business	2 stories = business (business, big 4 banks)
	2 stories=government	1 story =Patrice Motsepe

Note: Total Business articles N= 25

A significant finding is that in government coverage, “government” tones were 45% (negative) vs. 3% (positive). With regards to business coverage, “business” tones were 12% (negative) vs. 12% (positive). Smith et al. (2001: 1401) discuss the concept of ongoing media issue cycles, “both print and electronic media regularly focus upon selected issues for intensive and continuous coverage over a sequence of days and sometimes longer, creating the phenomena of ‘issue attention cycles’”. The “issue attention cycle” of print media is characterised by negative representations of “government” in coverage of the government. Whereas, the negative tone (12%) towards “business” equates to the positive tone (12%), which indicates

that the press adopts a neutral attitude towards the “business” grouping. Radebe (2017: 149) posits that, “...neutrality often suggests an element of bias against a particular position”. In reporting on the powerful, there is an element of bias displayed in favour of big business. The neutral tone of business coverage means that the press does not perform its “watchdog role” of the “private” power in South African society. On the other hand, the high negative “government” tones can cause the public to think of government and its service delivery in a negative light.

A deeper analysis of the articles further reveals that the print media exhibit a bias in performing its watchdog role of government and big business. In the sample of articles, only 1 article covered business corruption. *The Star* editorial voice “The Iranian connection” of 2 April 2012, about possible misdemeanours by MTN (big business) in acquiring the Iran cellphone license. In the article, MTN is the prominent voice. A few articles held big business accountable for misdemeanours. For example, the *Sunday Times* op-ed article “Moguls morally bankrupt” of the 7 May 1995, written by the General Secretary of COSATU, about big business failure to grasp nettle change.

However, in business coverage blame was often shifted to government. A case in point is the *Sunday Times* front cover expose “BUST! Two years later those toxic foods are back on our shelves” of the 2 March 2007, about contaminated toxic food on supermarket shelves. It depicts government and big business (Pick n’ Pay) negatively for food safety, specifically the second Sudan dye scandal in supermarkets. The article comprises of multiple sources of business, consumer, watchdogs and NGOs, but the voice of business dominates amidst this. In the same edition, the editorial voice article “Lack of concern about food safety” takes an about turn from the front cover that places blame on both government and business. The editorial voice is mostly critical of government and blames the scandal on government. Hence, in the editorial voice government is portrayed negatively and business (Pick n’ Pay) positively. This article unfairly shifts blame to government, thus acquitting business of responsibility. Another case in point was seen in the *Sowetan* editorial voice “Mines are not human sinkholes” of 1 June 2007, about villagers displaced by platinum mines. Government is represented negatively in how it dealt with Platinum mining companies. The article exposes government incompetence in dealing with business, however unfairly places primary blame on government yet business is responsible.

A deeper analysis of government coverage reveals that there was a marked rise in negative depictions of the ruling ANC government since democracy. Specifically, its actions, policies and especially ANC leaders. The *Business Day* is a case in point, as reflected in Figure 8. In 2009, three out of eighteen articles in the total sample portrayed government negatively, in 2011 this number rose to six out of eighteen articles and in 2013 it rose to 10 out of the total eighteen stories.

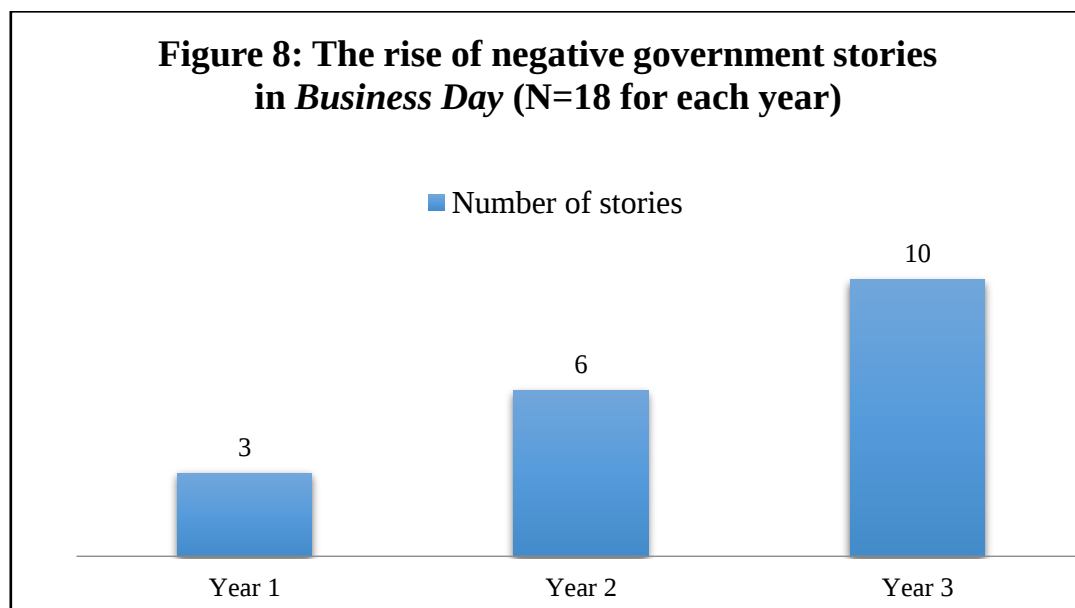


Figure Note: Year 1=2009; Year 2=2011; Year 3=2013

Overall, the undue negative depiction of government was consistently evident in the sample of articles. For example, in the sample of *The Star* articles from 2012 (eighteen articles), six articles (33%) depicted government negatively; government service delivery was painted as shoddy. Of these six articles, half appeared on the front page (3 articles) and the other 3 articles on the editorial page (1 editorial voice and 2 op-eds). The front cover stories were about: unresponsive MP's regarding the Lesotho Parliamentary elections; the government Rhino poaching strategy; Johannesburg Roads Agency (JRA) failure in granting a primary school traffic light request; and the Department of Correctional Services decision to hand out remissions to prisoners. The editorial voice was about: the government's participation in the African Union (AU) election process. The two op-eds were about: government's ongoing contempt towards NGOs; and the alleged sloppiness of Parliament's legislators and advisors. The *Sunday Independent* is another case in point. Government was represented consistently negatively in 2012 (28%, 5 out of 18 articles), and 2014 (28%, 5 out of 18 articles).

This trend of rising negative depictions of government in the coverage during the democratic period is in stark contrast to the apartheid era, where few stories represented the apartheid government negatively. For example, in the *Business Day* 1992 sample of articles, only 3 out of 18 articles depicted the National Party (NP) government negatively. These stories were about policy related issues: The Finance Minister's VAT indecision, new international aviation policy and the apartheid government's Gambling Amendment Bill.

Another observation in government coverage shows the print media in South Africa has conflated critical watchdog coverage of government with undue rising negative coverage of the ANC government. This points to a political oppositionist agenda.

Coverage of government must be in the public interest and not political interest. In the sample of articles, print media exhibited a few examples of cutting-edge investigative journalism in the public interest. In these instances, it showed fulfilment of the watchdog role as envisioned by Curran (2000). These instances of coverage were clearly in the public interest of citizens. For example, the *Sunday Times* exposure uncovered the dodgy leasing of buildings by then Police Commissioner Bheki Cele ¹⁷⁴. This led to a Public Protector investigation that found "Cele guilty of improper conduct and maladministration"¹⁷⁵. It is imperative that the media act as a watchdog of the powerful government, however they should not over-perform this role and neglect other equally important roles. The print media displayed an over eagerness of the watchdog role of government, which is to the detriment of two other key roles of the media in a liberal democracy espoused by Curran (2000). Duncan (2016) captures how the print media in South Africa has strengthened democracy through instances of excellent fulfilment of its watchdog role:

I think we will continue to have a media system that on some levels does an excellent job in performing its classic watchdog role, the media's reporting of the Nkandla scandal that I think may well prove to be the undoing of the President, I think is an example of the best of South African journalism has to offer. I think we have seen more dubious reporting to the so called rogue spy unit, and the tendency on the part of sections of the media to allow themselves to be manipulated by different political factions. But let that not detract from the fact that we have areas of absolute excellence in our media, protected from attack, and expose who want to silence voices, this shows the strength of the media that we have (Jane Duncan, SLLM seminar, 18.05.2016).

¹⁷⁴ See <https://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2011-09-25-d-day-for-bheki-cele/>

¹⁷⁵ See here for timeline of Bheki Cele story <https://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2011-09-25-what-happened-when-and-who-was-involved/>

Findings further demonstrate the coverage of the ANC as a political party exhibited mostly negative tones, which re-enforces the political oppositional nature of print media in South Africa.

For example, at the outset of democracy the *Sowetan* editorial voice “Apart from some work” of 1 March 1995 discusses the election race between the ANC, IFP and NP. It represents the ANC negatively, stating it is “tardy and inefficient”. Fast forward years later into democracy and the negative ANC narrative has increased. For example, in 2011 the *Sowetan* published a series of stories about the DA-run municipality and its racist evictions of black families. The story shifts blame from the DA to the ANC. It mentions “Tomorrow - How the ANC and the government let down the residents of Midvaal”. In these series of articles, an editorial voice piece titled “Strength of a nation” blames the ANC for waking up too late to the evictions in the DA-run municipality. In this scenario, the guilty party is solely the DA-run municipality for the racist evictions, yet blame is shifted to the ANC. This does not show fairness in coverage of political parties. This is also seen in the finding that of all the government stories, only 1 article represented the DA negatively. Mtimde (2016) similarly alludes to the unfair political coverage in the press, in reference to the views of the editor of *The Citizen* newspaper Steven Mohale on the 12th August 2015:

The media has long played the role of unelected opposition to government in South Africa, taking its constitutional duty of being a watchdog to levels beyond what the Fourth Estate is meant. One hears numerous justifications from editors and journalists for why they give the DA a soft ride and focus all their efforts on discrediting the ANC but it that’s what we’re about, then we should admit upfront that we’re DA newsletters. Then people would know (cited in Lumko Mtimde, SLLM seminar, 18.05.2016).

The print media is required to primarily play a public interest role in all aspects of reporting. On the contrary, as articulated by Mtimde (2016) in reference to Mohale (2015), it is operating in the political interest. Hence the over performance of one ideal role will displace adequate attention to other equally important roles, ultimately resulting in an information-poor and underserved print public sphere which is substantially lacking in diversity.

Another case in point, the *Sunday Independent* in 2000 showed a clear anti-ANC government tone, in particular an anti-Mbeki narrative. Five out of eighteen articles (30%) sampled in this year expressed negative tones concerning the ANC government and its leaders. The negative tone towards government in 2000 was regarding: government’s quiet diplomacy position regarding Zimbabwe; honouring famous South Africans; economic policy choices; the arms

bid for the third cellphone license; as well as government department's service delivery. In the 4 June 2000 *Sunday Independent* edition, all three articles analysed for this edition (front cover, editorial voice, op-ed) depict the President at that time, Thabo Mbeki, negatively. The front cover communicates disapproval of Mbeki's quiet diplomacy position in Zimbabwe (headline: "Oppenheimers contest Mugabe land grab"). The editorial voice was about a Sasol series that honours famous South Africans and describes Mbeki as "shameful" (headline: "Honouring those who contributed"). The op-ed story headlines "Mbeki hope and economic despair" about Mbeki's economic policy and also paints a negative picture of Mbeki.

This section has revealed that the print media have provided considerably more government than big business coverage. The tone of the relationship between print media and government is negative and oppositional in nature. The print media excessively watches over government; thus fulfilling its watchdog role in line with libertarian imperatives (Curran 2000). However, in the coverage of labour issues and protests there is a collusion between the print media and government, both express an anti-labour stance. The government is represented favourably only in issues that are a threat to capital. Chiumbu (2016: 425) posits that labour power is a threat to capitalism,

Capitalism is hostile to workers' unions and the last two decades has seen the destruction of unionised labour in most western countries. Therefore, it is not surprising that the marketised news media always undermine unions because, as Harper argues, most corporate media are intimately linked to capitalist ideology and organised withdrawal of labour power is a great threat to capitalism.

This points to a capitalist and neo-liberal agenda in the South African press. In issues of government corruption, the print media is eagerly "watchful", but in issues of big business corruption it turns an almost "blind eye". On a broader level, exempting big business from scrutiny means that capitalist and neo-liberal interests are safeguarded. The anti-labour narrative effectively demonises capitalist and neo-liberal threats.

In addition, the findings in this section and the previous sections on socio-economic and labour coverage point to subtle racial stereotypes of blackness in the press. Hall's (1981) concept of inferential racism is useful to illuminate this finding. Hall (1981) posits that in modern societies the media are important sites for the production, reproduction and transformation of ideologies. Hall (1981: 20), in discussing racist ideologies and the media, distinguishes between "overt" racism and "inferential" racism,

By *overt* racism, I mean those many occasions with open and favourable coverage is given to arguments, positions and spokespersons who are in the business of elaborating

an openly racist argument or advancing a racist policy or view; *By inferential racism* I mean those apparently naturalised of events and situations relating to race, whether ‘factual’ or ‘fictional’, which have racist premises and propositions inscribed in them as a set of *unquestioned assumptions*. These enable racist statements to be formulated without ever bringing into awareness the racist predicates on which the statements are grounded...

In South Africa, the discourse of overt racism was removed from the public domain in 1976 in the interests of economic growth and investments, which invoked,

Western libertarian terms like 'protection of minorities' and 'multiculturalism' appeared, linguistically eliding the material reality of 'white' political control. 'Power sharing without domination', an NP slogan, was inserted into the discourse with the impending unbanning of the ANC in the late 1980s. This discursivity encoded the idea of 'minority (white racial) protection', but in a less overt way than had occurred until then. This modified emerging multi-racialism was also reflected on television adverts and series, where blacks and whites could now inhabit the same frame without the one being subordinate to the other. The linguistically reformed apartheid ideology of the 1980s served the material interests of white bureaucrats and the middle classes (Tomaselli 1997:16).

The overt racism prior to 1979 is described by Tomaselli (1997: 16) as, “Apartheid discourse was legitimised to whites initially on the basis of racial superiority” Tomaselli (1997: 16).

The sample of articles display inferential racism. In line with Hall’s (1981) idea that the media is a conduit of ideologies, the South African print media has produced inferential racism by naturalising negative stereotypes of the black race that started in the colonial and apartheid eras. The demonisation and danger narrative of service delivery and labour protestors is based on the racist ideological assumption that black people are the problem and are threatening figures. Similarly, the inordinately negative coverage of black government is based on the racist ideological assumption that black leadership is incompetent. Overall, the findings show a negative representation of blackness in the press that is not class specific, the elite black government were not exempted. Similarly, Dimitris Kitis et al. (2018) study that examined the representation of the “black middle class” between 2008-2014, found coverage conveyed a predominantly negative image of wealthy black people. The study encoded the nexus of “blackness” and “middle class-ness” in a large corpus of over 700,000 articles from 20 South African mainstream English-language newspapers.

It appears that press reportage has naturalised racist stereotypes of blackness and whiteness. Rodny-Gumede (2014: 3) adopts a similar stance, “such has been the devastating legacy of apartheid that even black South Africans, including black journalists may internalize white

racial negativity about blackness, and report issues through that lens also”. This was seen in the reporting of the powerful being limited to the incompetency, corruption and poor service delivery of black ANC elites. This finding parallels the view of Nelson Mandela and other ANC leaders who believed “the press seemed to delight in stories of black incompetence with an eagerness that betrayed a continuing racism” (Horwitz 2001, cited in Radebe 2017: 59). Similarly, many scholars have criticised the press for exercising its watchdog role in a biased manner by scrutinising black elites and neglecting the white economic elite, which has led to accusations of racist practices in the media (Duncan 2009, cited in Radebe 2017: 61).

6.6 Conclusion: Does ownership matter?

The previous chapter revealed that the print media has adopted an ownership approach to transformation. It also showed that the power players in the first twenty years of democracy are the neo-liberal market, white racial power, political players tied to the ANC and big business. Based on the current ownership structures, the press allocative controllers are: business interests with ties to big capital, political interests tied to the ANC, labour interests, Chinese interests, American interest and government interests. The operational controllers are mixed race Boards and Executives that are male dominated. The ownership approach has succeeded in racially diversifying the ownership structures; however, elite interests dominate. Gender transformation is considerably lacking in the allocative and operational control of the press.

This chapter has demonstrated the extent of content diversity in the English press on the following: socio-economic issues, labour issues and protests, as well as government vs. big business. It adopted topics, sources and tones as measures of content diversity. Overall, the content trends show sameness of content across newspapers, a high number of politically related topics, a dominance of elite voices, sparse alternative and counter-hegemonic voices. Socio-economics coverage lacked in deep-seated coverage required for a country facing a major socio-economics crisis. Coverage of social protests represented “poor” and “rural” people negatively. Labour issues was under-represented. Labour protest coverage favoured the official government position and demonised the working class. In the coverage of government vs. big business, the press was biased in its watchdog role – as an overeager watchdog of the “public power” of the black elite (Curran 2000: 122). The press coverage of social protests,

labour protests and government show “inferential racism” (Hall 1981: 20), based on the racial ideological assumption that black people are the problem and incompetent.

Therefore, according to the content findings, the ownership approach to print media transformation has failed to facilitate media content diversity and transformation. Transformation of race, class and region is lacking in press content; despite the B-BBEE policy having facilitated more black ownership, mixed race boards, and more black staffing.

From the overall diversity overview it emerged that the press “issue attention cycle” favours politically related topics, simplistic socio-economic news and marginalises labour and business news (Smith et al. 2001: 1401). The topic breakdown of the six newspapers indicates sameness of content, which is a knock on effect of the rise of neo-liberalism. The voices heard in the press are mostly elite – government, political and business. The voices hardly heard in the press are alternative and counter-hegemonic voices of citizens, NGOs and civil society. Trade union voices were also sparse. The reliance on elite prominent voices perpetuates political and economic power structures in society.

The socio-economic discourse was characterised by simplistic and sensational coverage, as well as economic news for the elite. This signifies the neo-liberal and elite-driven nature of the press in reporting on socio-economic issues. Poverty is amongst the biggest socio-economic issue facing South Africa, yet garnered only one story. Economics news for the ordinary citizen was mostly invisible on the front page stories. Social protests garnered a minimal amount of coverage, especially given the phenomena of the “rebellion of the poor” (Alexander 2010), in South Africa. Social protests portrayed the “poor” and “rural” people as mostly causing havoc, which is to the detriment of class and regional transformation.

It emerged that labour issues are significantly under-represented in the press narrative and labour protests make up a large chunk of this coverage. Unemployment only garnered one story, which is disproportionate to the magnitude of the issue as one of the major issues facing post-apartheid South Africa. The voice of ordinary workers was sparse as prominent voices, which is important for diversity given the politicised nature of trade unions in South Africa. The neutral tone in labour issues showed a failure of the press to take a position and hold the government to account for clear transgressions and no stories represented labour positively. Only during coverage of Worker’s Day commemoration was labour given diverse portrayal. The “protest paradigm” in labour protests uncovered coverage reminiscent of apartheid-era depictions of the black working class (Leopold and Bell 2017: 721).

The diversity discourse in government vs. big business showed “selection bias” as coverage of public power far exceeded private power in the overall topic measure (Smith et al. 2001: 1399). The high level of unfavourable coverage of the ANC government is disproportionate to the scarce business coverage where the press shows a neutral attitude towards business. This proves a bias in the media’s watchdog role. The findings uncovered rising negative depictions since 1994 of the new democratic-era black leadership. Overlooking the misdemeanours of business shows a press “issue-attention cycle” (Smith et al. 2001: 1401), of negative coverage of public black power and overlooking of private white economic power, perpetuating stereotypes that black leadership is incompetent.

In the coverage of powerful government and business, the press allowed the powerful to speak in their own coverage. However, the press maintain class dominance of the political and economic elite by not allowing the same privilege to alternative and counter-hegemonic groups speaking in their own coverage.

The next chapter argues for a rethinking of print media transformation in South Africa, and looks at what else matters to print media transformation.

Chapter 7

Rethinking print media transformation in South Africa

7.1 Introduction

This chapter consolidates the research findings presented in chapter 5 and chapter 6 in order to argue for a rethink of print media transformation in South Africa. Chapter 5 found that the B-BBEE Act 2003 makes ownership the highest measure of print media transformation. Chapter 6 showed the lack of media content diversity and transformation. Academic and policy discourses have mostly focused on the ownership problem and attributed the lack of print media content diversity to untransformed ownership patterns (as discussed in chapter 1). This chapter argues that ownership matters to some extent. Apart from ownership other components also matter to print media transformation. The study found that true print media transformation is hindered by a number of issues, for example, apartheid continuities and the neo-liberal context. Hence, if the print media would reach a point where its ownership and structures fully adhere to the requirement of the B-BBEE scores, the media diversity and transformation situation would not necessarily change because other key issues matter in print media transformation.

This chapter critically reflects on what else matters to print media transformation based on the findings of the study, namely: (1) The media system matters; (2) Neo-liberal architecture matters; (3) Journalist training matters; and (4) Policy matters. I fundamentally advance the position that a re-think of print transformation that targets these issues is crucial. The chapter recommends that a print media specific transformation be developed. It also recommends that the principles of the developmental journalism approach would address the content diversity and transformation shortcomings uncovered by the study, and considers the suitability of this approach to a neo-liberal economic context like South Africa. It recognises that incorporating developmental journalism in the current mainstream print media system would mark a paradigm shift that can only be realized in the long term. It then advocates the return of alternative media to play a developmental role as a short term solution to foster media diversity in both ownership and content.

The chapter firstly discusses why these issues also matter to print media transformation. Secondly, it recommends that a print media specific transformation be crafted, and outlines the

principles that this new policy should embody. Thirdly, it explores the principles of the developmental journalism model as a way to foster content diversity and transformation, and considers its suitability for a post-colonial and neo-liberal economic context such as South Africa. It argues that a short term and feasible solution to solve the fundamental issue of media diversity in both ownership and content is the return of the alternative press to the post-apartheid media terrain.

7.2 What else matters to print media transformation?

South Africa has adopted an ownership approach to print media transformation which has not achieved true transformation. The study empirically showed the shortcomings of the ownership approach to facilitate true transformation in ownership patterns, the hierarchies of the press institutions, readership and content.

The B-BBEE scores showed an increase in black ownership but that it is still below the threshold proposed in the guidelines. The ownership approach has not dismantled the “power relationship” started in the apartheid-era, where white people occupied the most powerful positions in the hierarchy of press institutions and black people the lower positions, and thus “the other”, over whom power was exercised (Foucault 1982: 788). Readership transformation is found wanting as the print media perpetuate apartheid continuities by catering primarily for an English, Afrikaans and elite market. The ownership approach has not facilitated diverse and transformed content. The content analysis revealed that ownership does not necessarily have a causal link to media content. For example, the labour interests in the Independent Media did not translate to labour friendly content or a greater focus on pressing labour issues. The labour issues only garnered 4% of coverage and within this limited sample positive labour coverage was a rarity. Another example is that the ownership approach to transformation has not enabled diversity of sources, which is a key measure of media content diversity. In all articles analysed, politically related topics (38%) dominate the English press, which is to the detriment of other topics. The prominent voices in the front cover stories analysed were elite sources (39%) from the politically and economically powerful (government, political parties and big business), whilst counter hegemonic voices only made up 13%.

Ownership is an important component of print media transformation as it addresses the structural ills of the past that privileged ownership access to the minority white people of the

country. However, focusing on ownership amounts to a limited one-dimensional approach to facilitating print media transformation. In addition, replacing white people with black people in ownership to achieve print media transformation is fundamentally flawed. Firstly, it does not problematise the business imperatives of black capitalists as contrary to the imperatives of media diversity. Tomaselli (1997: 96) highlights the self-seeking goals of both black and white capitalists,

Capitalists - whether black or white - use media organisations to further their own class interests to secure and enhance their personal strategic positions in the socio-economic order.

The proliferation of black capitalists in the print media sector is pertinent for economic transformation; however, their presence does not necessarily guarantee media diversity. Secondly, the diverse and intersectional nature of the black experience in South Africa is overlooked by a B-BBEE system that defines all black people as one grouping without acknowledging any axes of difference. Tomaselli (1997) posits that the “black” experience in South Africa is fragmented in terms of class, gender, ethnicity, language, geography, etc.

The print media transformation project therefore needs to be multi-faceted. Especially given the magnitude effects of decades of white domination on the various aspects of the print media. Colonialism and apartheid did not just have a damaging effect on ownership. There are thus other issues that also matter to print media transformation, and will be discussed in the subsections that follow.

7.2.1 The media system matters

The media system matters to print media transformation. As discussed previously, South Africa has adopted a mixture of a libertarian and social responsibility media system. However, the study found that libertarian values dominantly drive the print media, which is not surprising since liberalism has formed the foundational and contemporary role of the press in South Africa. The English press in South Africa was founded on Western philosophies of libertarian values. In discussing the historical philosophies of the press in South Africa, Tomaselli (1997: 68) notes,

19th century English-language South African publishers had advocated libertarian values generally, and press freedom in particular. This philosophy had originated in British and European politico-economic developments: legalisation of a political public

sphere had released the press, as a forum of rational-critical debate, from the pressure to take sides ideologically.

Habermas adds, “This enabled the press to abandon polemics and concentrate on profit opportunities” (cited in Tomaselli 1997: 68).

A consequence of the print media’s libertarian values is that it has caused the print media to overly focus on political issues whilst underplaying serious socio-economic issues facing South Africa. The 22% of government coverage vs. 4% of business coverage speaks to the inordinately political focus of the press and its over emphasis on the watchdog role of government. The watchdog role of the media is essentially a liberal ethos (Rodny-Gumede 2014). *The Four Theories of the Press* as coined by Siebert et al (1956) showed that the type of media system informs the role that the media plays in a country. As can be seen by the findings of the study, the libertarian approach emanating from Western paradigms of the role of media in a democracy does not harness media diversity and more broadly transformation for a unique South African and African context. Hence, the media system matters to print media transformation. Thus, the type of media system is critical to the attainment of true print media transformation. The current libertarian media system adopted by the press in South Africa is problematic and cannot achieve a meaningful transformation agenda.

7.2.2 The neo-liberal architecture matters

The neo-liberal economic framework has meant that the print media operates according to a business model with commercial imperatives. The neo-liberal economic system adopted at the advent of democracy by the ruling party ANC has had a powerful effect on the post-apartheid press and propagated negative consequences for media diversity. Most notably, cultivating an era of neo-liberal press concentration. The study found that in-depth and perspective-rich socio-economics reporting was largely found wanting and near invisible from the press coverage. Socio-economics coverage garnered 30% of the press coverage in all the articles analysed. However, a deeper analysis of the socio-economics news on the front cover stories disclosed the nature of this coverage as mostly: elite economics news; simplified and sensationally geared; and simplified government socio-economics news. Coverage about “economics news for the ordinary citizen” and “poverty and inequality” was insignificant garnering 2% each of the front cover articles analysed. Therefore, the press reportage of socio-economics news was

simplified and under-represented the serious issues of the poor. This is not surprising because neo-liberalism marginalises the poor and disadvantaged,

Scholars have argued that neo-liberalism is implicated in the perpetuation of the marginalisation of the world's poor and disadvantaged (Harvey 2005, cited in Dube 2013: 209).

Also significant is that the poor and disadvantaged whom are the hardest hit by the socio-economic crisis were largely voiceless in socio-economics coverage. Overall, socio-economics coverage lacked the voices of ordinary citizens, such as workers, unemployed, and poor communities. Further, in the coverage of social protests, such as justice protests and service delivery protests, communities especially townships and rural were represented as violent and voiceless. The voice of the ordinary worker (outside of the trade unions) in the coverage of labour protests was sparse. As long as the neo-liberal architecture and its business model is in place, the press will continue downplaying serious socio-economics issues effecting the poor and disadvantaged. Neo-liberalism and its profit-making imperatives stand in contrast to media diversity values and its transformation imperatives. Even if ownership becomes diversified and transformed, and South African adopts an egalitarian system – it will still operate in a commercially driven manner because of the neo-liberal architecture. The neo-liberal architecture matters to print media transformation.

7.2.3 Journalism training matters

Journalism training also matters to print media transformation. Training is the platform where journalists learn and construct their individual professional values and ethics. It is thus also the platform where deep seated and naturalised “inferential racism” (Hall 1981) of blackness, as found by the study, can be deconstructed. Gumede (2016: 1) says of the media and systemic racism,

The challenge for South Africa is how to overcome the legacy of deep-seated individual, institutional and everyday racism that persists long after official apartheid was scrapped from the statute books. It is often disguised in the supposedly ‘standard’ operating procedures, practices and behaviour of institutions and organisations which everyone has to follow – but which is skewed against blacks. Day-to-day casual racism, entrenched from the legacy of slavery, colonialism and apartheid still abounds. Blackness continues to be associated with negativity – crime, rape and failure.

The study found that regular news about majority black groupings in the print media is inaccurate and damaging. Journalism training presents an opportunity to emancipate “inferential racism”, and other problematic news roles and values. “It is important that the post-apartheid media move away from apartheid-era stereotypes of black people in their everyday reporting” (Rodny-Gumede 2014: 3).

In a study about South African journalists’ conceptions about professionalism and their own role in society, Rodny-Gumede (2014) interviewed journalists. It was found that most interviewees’ responses reflected a traditional liberal normative idea of the role of news media in society, with a particular emphasis on the centrality of democratic processes. Rodny-Gumede (2014: 61) further notes that in this regard “a clear emphasis on a watchdog role aligned to normative liberal conceptualisations of the role of the news media in democracy...”. In terms of values the study found, “...a strong articulation of journalistic values aligned to normative liberal ideas of the role of the news media in society” (Rodny-Gumede 2014: 65). Rodny-Gumede’s (2014) study parallels this study’s findings regarding the libertarian ethos of the media in South Africa. Hence, journalism training is an important platform to de-westernise the role and values of news media.

Additionally, tertiary education is the initial training ground for a young journalist. Dube’s (2013) study buttresses the need for de-Westernising tertiary education journalism training in South Africa. She analysed whether journalism education and training curricula in three selected tertiary institutions (Rhodes University, Stellenbosch University and Tshwane University of Technology known as TUT) addressed the challenges in a transforming post-1994 South Africa and found,

The findings show that all three programmes teach theory of practice and critical theory, though TUT focuses more on the former than the latter. The findings also show that the selected programmes rely heavily on Western published books to teach theory of practice, thus showing that they are rooted in Western epistemologies (Dube 2013: 206-207).

Another interesting finding is that “With regards to indigenous language reporting, none of the selected programmes taught students to report in these languages” (Dube 2013: 207). Amongst Dube’s (2013) conclusions are,

The findings also lead the researcher to conclude that the heavy dependency on Western published textbooks and research, as well as the dominance of Western-trained educators and trainers in these programmes, stand in the way of de-Westernising the programmes in the selected tertiary institutions. (Dube 2013: 208).

Thus, according to Dube's (2013) study, journalism education and training is heavily Westernised by relying on Western epistemologies, not teaching to report in indigenous languages and Western-trained educators and trainers. Journalism education and training received at the level of tertiary education needs to be transformed, which is in line with the broader call to decolonise higher education curricula, which was made prominent in the #FeesMustFall protests in 2015 and 2016. A #FeesMustFall statement¹⁷⁶ in 2016 made it clear that the movement is a clear call for a free decolonised, Afrocentric education, and stated,

This call is rooted in the liberation of black people and the total dismantling of the anti-black system that maintains black oppression...Fees Must Fall is an intersectional movement within the black community that aims to bring about a decolonised education. This means that the Fees Must Fall movement is located as a part of the larger struggle to eradicate the western imperialist, colonial, capitalist patriarchal culture.

The Afrocentric education and training of journalists matters to print media transformation. Journalists are the ultimate content creators and the training imparted to them is important. The study is aware that a change in journalism training of this nature would require a training paradigm shift that can only be protracted in the long term, this change however is necessary for true print media transformation to be realised.

7.3 Towards a print media transformation policy that facilitates media diversity

Policy also matters to print media transformation, this section thus advocates for a new print media transformation policy framework in South Africa and outlines the type of policy the country should adopt. The limitations of the B-BBEE Act, to adhere to principles espoused for a media policy that strengthens democracy, as well as to facilitate transformation in practice was clearly shown in the findings of the study. These shortcomings call for the need for a print media specific transformation policy that enshrines the conceptual principles of the public interest, media diversity, content access, pluralism, as well as freedom of communications. The media policy must guide print media transformation, rather than expecting a sectoral policy to promote transformation without understanding the nuances of the specific industry.

¹⁷⁶ <https://businesstech.co.za/news/general/141333/feesmustfall-leaders-explain-what-decolonised-education-means/>

The first step would be to conceptualise true transformation as ownership and content in the prelude of the new policy. Currently, as stated earlier the B-BBEE Act narrowly conceptualises transformation as economic transformation as well as ownership transformation. The prelude of the new Act should also cement a holistic and intersectional definition of transformation as invoking the elements of race along with the intersections of class, region, language, religion, etc. Moreover, be cognisant of South Africa's historical context of colonialism and apartheid and express a commitment to end their legacies. The principles that the new policy should promote are discussed in the sub-sections that follow.

7.3.1 The media's "intellectual market"

Ownership speaks to the media's "economic market", as coined by Van Cuilenburg (1999), however, it is not the only market of the print media. The new print media transformation policy should recognise that the print media is more than an economic commodity (Freedman 2008). The print media's "intellectual market" or content must be included in this new policy, as this is fundamentally where diversity takes place (Van Cuilenburg 1999: 192-193). In addition, the concept of media diversity, as it relates to the public interest as encompassing both ownership and content (McQuail 2005), should be central to this new policy. In doing so, it would undercut the neo-liberal framing of transformation and its emphasis on free market benefits. The new print media transformation policy must be cognisant of both commodity and content.

7.3.2 Freedom of communications and pluralism in regulation

The new policy should safeguard the concept of freedom of communications and pluralism or political independence, especially as it relates to regulation. Freedom of communications is supposed to be central to a democratic communications policy. As Van Cuilenburg and McQuail (2003: 203) posit, "Freedom of communication should remain the main objective of any communication policy to be designed...". Pluralism is especially important to the cultivation of media diversity. An important prerequisite to media diversity is the attainment of a structurally pluralistic media system (McQuail 1992).

Independent regulation is required for print media transformation. An independent regulator means maintaining an "arms-length" relationship from the politically and economically

powerful in society. The policy and regulatory custodian of print media transformation should be independent and move away from its current governmental nature to adhere to the political independence required by “pluralism”. The media policy-making process of the new policy must be characterised by openness and accountability. The regulatory model of the new transformation policy must change from it being a “political phenomena” (Freedman 2008) comprising of the DTI and Minister of Trade and Industry, to a public interest driven phenomena. A print media regulatory model could draw from the ICASA regulatory model of a Chapter 9 institution whose independence is enshrined in the South African Constitution and whose mandate includes diversity of ownership and control of broadcasting. The print media needs a proactive independent regulator overseeing print media ownership diversity and transformation.

7.3.3 Beyond the BEE “generic scorecard”: meaningful monitoring of the new policy

Effective regulatory and enforcement mechanisms need to be developed as the findings of the study revealed a failure to set transformation targets and poor monitoring mechanisms (Boloka 2016). The 2013 B-BBEE scores showed the print industry failed to transform itself in a number of key areas.

The new policy requires a regulatory model that goes beyond the current quantitative “generic scorecard” that elevates black ownership as most important. The “generic scorecard” system limits print media transformation to an exercise of numbers, which does not capture the complexity of the diversity and transformation in the South African context. For example, the B-BBEE system does not address the question of transformation as a facilitator for politicisation of the press. A case in point is the Sekunjalo consortium takeover of Independent Media in 2013. This takeover scored 100% in terms of the B-BBEE score, however the Sekunjalo consortium members were mostly politically aligned. Moreover, the takeover was followed by the controversy of the dismissal of the then *Cape Times* editor Alide Dasnois, which led many to believe the new owners acted in favour of their business and political interests above editorial independence. As theorised previously, pluralism or political independence is a prerequisite for media diversity (Freedman 2008). The B-BBEE measurement of transformation does not show cognisance to the complexity of transformation as it relates to pluralism or political independence. The issue of B-BBEE policy replacing one

set of elite interests for another, as seen in the Sekunjalo takeover where foreign elite interests were replaced with political and business interests, should be remedied in the new policy.

Another example illustrating the limited nature of the “generic scorecard” is the finding that the print industry is a Level 5 BEE contributor and yet white ownership continuities remain. This speaks to the inadequacy of the B-BBEE policy to facilitate a truly transformed and changed print media system. The new policy and regulatory model need to go beyond the seven elements of the B-BBEE scorecard as it is clearly does not count as a deep and meaningful measure of transformation.

7.4 A case for developmental journalism and the return of the alternative press

True print media content transformation can only take place through a systemic review of the current normative journalistic model of the South African press, such that it is cognisant of the African and South African context. The dominance of libertarian media system found by the study is based on Western values of the media, which is not suitable to the South African print media transformation context. The libertarian model regards press freedom as the most important value in a media system (Siebert et al.1956). As shown by this study, the current South African libertarian print media system with its Constitutionally protected press freedom (see section 16 of the South African Constitution) has failed to facilitate media diversity. Print media transformation requires more than a libertarian free press.

The systemic change of the South African press regulatory system from self-regulation to voluntary independent co-regulation in 2012 is instructive and showed that a systemic shift is possible. Following hard hitting criticisms of the press regulatory system, including from the ruling party ANC, a revamped Press Council was launched in 2012 which meant sweeping reforms to the press regulatory system¹⁷⁷. Reid (2012) summarises this criticism in a *Mail & Guardian* opinion piece,

But the ANC has in recent years complained that South Africa’s system of self-regulation, embodied in the Press Council, is not working properly. As evidence of this, the ruling party refers to what it calls continuing “shoddy journalism” and argues that the Press Council is a “toothless” mechanism because it does not impose harsh “sentences” on offending newspapers who get the facts of a story wrong. Since the middle of 2010 this debate has heated up (and down, and up again) and fairly emotive

¹⁷⁷ <http://www.presscouncil.org.za/News/View/south-africas-press--a-new-start-for-old-values-72>

arguments have been bandied about from many corners, both in favour of and sharply against self-regulation as a mechanism for press accountability.¹⁷⁸

The revamped Press Council was a product of months of work by an independent and eminent Task Team called the Press Freedom Commission (PFC), chaired by former Chief Justice Pius Langa. The PFC was formed by press owners and editors, and conducted best practice research, held country wide public hearings, as well international research missions. The mandate of the Press Freedom Commission was, "... to look at the current press regulatory system and create a better model through public consultation"¹⁷⁹. There are four main types of press regulation: self-regulation; independent regulation; co-regulation; and statutory regulation. The recommendations of the Press Freedom Commission were described by Mondli Makhanya, speaking in his capacity as chairperson of the South African National Editors' Forum¹⁸⁰ as,

...the recommendations were a "radical departure" from the way print media had regulated itself in the past but that because journalists had "shortcomings", there is a need for "strong accountability mechanisms."¹⁸¹

It should be noted that I worked as the Researcher for the Press Freedom Commission and based on my experience and the eventual outcome of the process, I strongly recommend a similar process be undertaken to review the media system of the press.

There are various models suited for a South African context that can be incorporated in the current system, for example, the Ubuntu framework. In analysing whether *Ubuntuism* could work as a framework for South African media practice and performance, Fourie (2008) posits that,

the 'old theories of the press' are no longer appropriate as a yardstick for measuring media practice and/or the description of media systems. In light of this, new and/or alternative normative frameworks need to be considered. In postcolonial criticism, a case is made for indigenous frameworks based on indigenous epistemologies. One such possible indigenous framework could be the African moral philosophy of ubuntuism. (Fourie 2008: 73).

¹⁷⁸ <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2012-01-26-press-freedom-in-south-africa-and-why-self-regulation-is-best/>

¹⁷⁹ <https://mg.co.za/article/2012-04-25-press-freedom-commission-regulation-report-welcomed/>

¹⁸⁰ "The South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF) is a non-profit organisation whose members are editors, senior journalists and journalism trainers from all areas of the South African media. We are committed to championing South Africa's hard-won freedom of expression and promoting quality, ethics and diversity in the South African media. Sanef promotes excellence in journalism through fighting for media freedom, writing policy submissions, research, education and training programmes." (<http://www.sanef.org.za/>)

¹⁸¹ <https://mg.co.za/article/2012-04-25-press-freedom-commission-regulation-report-welcomed/>

Ubuntuism would essentially implore the media to honour its values of humanness, the public good, dialogue and consensus (Fourie 2008).

Another suitable journalistic framework for the South African print media could be “ethics of listening”, where the concept of listening as an ethical alternative to the current dominant South African normative journalistic framework is advanced (Wasserman 2013b). The point of departure of the “ethics of listening” concept is the problematic media coverage of the Marikana massacre (Wasserman 2013b). This framework could improve the print media’s inadequate coverage of the socio-economic crisis and social protests found by the study. Journalist’s listening to protestors and people most hit by the socio-economic crisis could provide a grassroots perspective and result in diversity and class transformation in coverage.

Additionally, a framework that could be considered is solutions journalism, understood as “solutions-based reporting” (Curry and Hammond 2014: 1), There is a growing interest in this practice,

Solutions journalism is critical reporting that investigates and explains the credible responses to social problems. It delves into the how-to’s of problem solving, often structuring stories as puzzles or mysteries that investigate questions like: What models are having success reducing the high school dropout rate and how do they actually work? (Curry and Hammond 2014: 5).

Solutions journalism could be useful to remedy the print media’s under-reporting and simplistic coverage of the socio-economic crisis in South Africa found by the study, and contribute towards solving this crisis. To further demonstrate this form of journalism, coverage that focuses extensively on the problem is a “non-solution version” whereas solutions journalism includes added reporting about potential solutions to mitigate the problem hence the “solution-version” (Curry and Hammonds 2014: 1).

My call for a revised normative journalistic model for the South African press to advance true transformation echoes other calls for the Africanisation of the media system in South Africa,

Whichever models are adopted, and whether the news media take heed of calls for an Africanisation or ideas of serving the public or national interest, the demands on the media to transform are necessitated by the fact that journalists must take cognisance of diverse audiences in terms of language, culture and socio-economic background. In their daily work, journalists face the issues of race and racism, poverty, illiteracy, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the social and political reality of these problems. This is a reality that necessitates a new role for journalism and the media organisation as a whole (Rodny-Gumede 2014: 60).

With this said and based on the findings of this study, the normative philosophy of developmental journalism would best address the sub-par content diversity and transformation found by the study.

Developmental journalism is prescribed for journalists in a Global South context and is based on the recognition that the context of post-colonial societies is unique and the norms of Western media systems are not suitable. Musa and Domatob (2007) capture the departure point of developmental journalism,

The phenomenon of development journalism or development media philosophy arises from the belief that journalists in Third World , anticolonial, and post-colonial societies operate with unique sets of realities and are expected to play certain roles that are alien to the norms of Western media systems (Rao & Lee 2005, cited in Musa and Domatob 2007: 326).

I am cognisant that developmental journalism has been associated with negative meanings and triggers great fears for journalistic freedom from government. Banda (2007) highlights the demonisation of development journalism,

The concept of ‘development journalism’ has, over time, become possessed by demons of all sorts of confusion. If we want to wrest any useful principles from the concept, it is important that we exorcise the demons it has come to be associated with, not least the demon of the post-colonial state’s blatant interference in the practising of journalism (Wong 2004, cited in Banda 2007: 154).

Developmental journalism was first introduced on the African continent in 1963 by Kwame Nkrumah (first president and prime minister of Ghana), espousing the revolutionary theory of the press and “revolutionary journalism”, stating:

the truly African revolutionary press’ existed in order to present and carry forward our revolutionary purpose’ and ‘establish a progressive political and economic system upon our continent that will free men from want and every form of injustice (Ainslie 1966, cited in Banda 2007: 156).

Julius Nyerere (former Prime Minister and President of Tanzania) and Kenneth Kaunda (first President of Zambia) also espoused this “revolutionary theory” of the press, which invoked more state control of the media and a departure from the private ownership of media (Banda 2007: 156-157).

Clearly the concept of “developmental journalism” was initially misused on the African continent for political interests. Early concepts were however linked to independent journalism and deep-seated developmental news,

...in the early 1960s the idea of development journalism was associated with 'independent journalism that provided constructive criticism of government and its agencies, informed readers how the development process was affecting them, and highlighted local self-help projects' (Shah 1996, cited in Banda 2007: 157).

Banda (2007: 154) goes on to posit that the concept of developmental journalism needs to be reconceptualised because, "deliberations about its validity and usefulness have been bogged down in arguments structured by Western notions of press freedom". The author further extrapolates that this debate has, "diverted attention from important questions about how journalism can contribute to participatory democracy, security, peace and other humanistic values" (Shah 1996, cited in Banda 2007: 154). Hence, much of the criticism and discomfort regarding developmental journalism is based on Western vantage points of journalism and press freedom. It is worth rehashing the benefits of developmental journalism for the purposes of refining print media content diversity and transformation in South Africa. The following sub-sections present five core reasons motivating that the principles of development journalism would significantly serve the print media diversity and transformation project in South Africa.

7.4.1 The redeeming qualities of developmental journalism is evident on the Africa continent

Developmental journalism if applied in its redeeming form will greatly benefit press diversity and transformation imperatives. The model of developmental journalism I put forward is not the kind suggested by the ruling party ANC. Daniels (2010) notes that the ANC government "has often asked that the news media take a more developmental stance on journalism, urging journalists to be more supportive of the ruling party's policy agenda and achievements" (cited in Rodny-Gumede 2014: 55). The redeeming principles of developmental journalism can be applied to print media in South Africa to address the shortcomings found in its media content transformation. Developmental journalists are committed to political independence and not the kind of patriotic journalism alluded to by the ANC. Musa and Domatob (2007: 319) underscore the independence ascribed by developmental journalism,

Political leaders and citizens alike will respect development journalists if they are seen as credible. They must have the moral courage required to pursue truth and the discernment to tell it in way that serves the common good. They must differentiate between partnering with political leaders to promote national development and becoming praise singers and instruments of political manipulation.

In order for developmental journalism to succeed in the South African press context, it must fundamentally serve the common good, whilst maintaining its political independence.

In the words of Banda (2007: 157), in reference to the early distorted emergence of development journalism on the African continent and general demonisation of the concept, “one cannot throw the baby out with the bath water”. In agreement with this position, there are examples of excellent developmental journalism on the African continent that speak to the redeeming nature of the concept and its suitability to an African context.

A case in point is the *Mail & Guardian’s* Bhekisisa¹⁸² health journalism centre that has produced award winning investigative journalism¹⁸³. It was established to provide in-depth coverage of health issues facing South Africa, such as HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria, etc. Bhekisisa journalist Pontsho Pilane recently won multiple awards at the 2017 Discovery Health Journalist of the year Awards¹⁸⁴ for two articles. The first “Free to Bleed”,¹⁸⁵ which “lay bare the daily struggle countless young women face across South Africa to get access to sanitary pads”¹⁸⁶, and secondly, “ABC’s of Autism”,¹⁸⁷ which was described as “offering an intimate look inside the world of autistic children”¹⁸⁸.

The multi-award winning Cameroonian journalist Arison Tomfu has publically urged Cameroonian journalists to embrace developmental journalism in an interview¹⁸⁹ with Globewatch’s Charles Ebune from the Cameroon radio and television. Tomfu clarified that developmental journalism is about advancing the individual development of a country and is well researched journalism that looks at both the good and bad in government policies, thus it is willing to criticise government. Tomfu notably won the 2015 Lorenzo Natali prize for “outstanding reporting on development issues and eradicating violence against women and girls”¹⁹⁰, beating journalists from other continents for his article “Cameroon’s Forests at the Mercy of Charcoal Makers”, published in the *Cameroon Journal*¹⁹¹.

¹⁸² See <https://bhekisisa.org/article/2013-04-18-bhekisisa-our-health-journalism-centre-is-here>

¹⁸³ See <https://bhekisisa.org/page/about-us/>

¹⁸⁴ See here for award details, <https://mg.co.za/article/2018-05-31-mg-bags-top-prize-at-discovery-health-awards/>

¹⁸⁵ See here for full article, <https://bhekisisa.org/article/2017-03-03-00-freetoblead-the-struggle-of-being-too-poor-to-afford-pads>

¹⁸⁶ <https://mg.co.za/article/2018-05-31-mg-bags-top-prize-at-discovery-health-awards/>

¹⁸⁷ See here for full article, <https://bhekisisa.org/article/2017-10-05-00-the-abcs-of-autism-in-the-classroom-he-only-wants-to-eat-sandwiches-with-cheese>

¹⁸⁸ <https://mg.co.za/article/2018-05-31-mg-bags-top-prize-at-discovery-health-awards/>

¹⁸⁹ See here for the full interview, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NUMrEPL7jZ0&t=14s>

¹⁹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/lnp/2015_en

¹⁹¹ <https://www.camerounweb.com/CameroonHomePage/NewsArchive/Cameroon-Journal-s-Arison-Tamfu-wins-ACCER-awards-in-Kenya-304498>

An example of commendable developmental broadcasting journalism is NTVUganda's award winning developmental journalism programme segment aired in 2014 called "Hunger looms in Karamoja"¹⁹²,

The story tells the plight of the Karamajong people especially the children who suffer from malnutrition and related disease. At the time of shooting, about 4 people had been reported dead due to hunger. The story also explores an in depth look at hunger and malnutrition in the area and need for action to save the situation. This story put to question whether Uganda will indeed beat the 2015 millennium development goal deadline on ensuring food security to its population. After airing, government sent 5 trucks of food to Karamoja to save the situation. Disaster Minister Musa Ecweru and Karamoja junior minister Barbara Nekesa was summoned before parliament to explain the crisis in the region (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZW4X06vfPY>)

These examples show that development journalism has been used on the African continent to make visible the socio-economic struggles of African people through in-depth reporting, for award winning investigative journalism, to offer solutions, hold government accountable, as well as be change agents. In this vein, it can be used to advance print media content transformation in South Africa.

7.4.2 Developmental journalism articulates the importance of media diversity in reporting

The emancipatory approach to journalism coined by Shah (2006) enshrines the principle of diversity in reporting. Referring to Shah's (1996) conceptualisation of developmental journalism as "emancipatory journalism", Banda (2007) posits,

It is more complex because it incorporates principles of diversity and fluidity in the process of building cultural identities and communities, and because it challenges journalistic practice by abandoning the idea of objectivity (Banda 2007: 158).

Shah's (1996) "emancipatory journalism" perspective of development journalism invokes that news is cognisant of cultural diversity,

should examine critically, evaluate and interpret the relevance of development plans, projects, policies, problems, and issues. It should indicate the disparities between plans and actual accomplishments, and include comparisons with how development is progressing in other countries and regions. It also should provide contextual and background information about the development process, discuss the impact of plans, projects, policies, problems, and issues on people, and speculate about the future of development. And development news should refer to the needs of people, which may vary from country to

¹⁹² See here for programme segment, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZW4X06vfPY>

country or from region to region, but generally include primary needs such as food, housing, employment; secondary needs such as transportation, energy sources and electricity; and tertiary needs such as cultural diversity, recognition and dignity (Wimmer & Wolf 2005, cited in Banda 2007: 159).

Importantly, developmental journalism dictates that news should be based on the needs of the people, such as food, housing and employment, which in the South African context fall within the major socio-economics issues facing the country. Developmental journalism enshrines the importance of the developmental needs of people, which would go far in rectifying the underperformance of socio-economics reporting within a media diversity framework. This was clear in the sparse in-depth and perceptive-rich socio economics coverage found by the study, as well as the overlooking of poverty, inequality and unemployment coverage. In order for transformation to be attained, it is important that advancing the principle of media diversity undergirds print reporting, which is a premise of developmental journalism.

7.4.3 In-depth and perspective-rich socio economics reporting

The study's definition of socio-economic rights is informed by the South African Constitution as set out in the Bill of Rights, as discussed in chapter 4. Most of these rights fall within the development indicators of a country¹⁹³. The UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) is used as the main tool to measure development in a country. The HDI index ranks each country based on three categories: income, health and education. South Africa placed 113 (out of 189 countries) in the HDI 2018 rankings and is categorised as having “medium human development”¹⁹⁴. A model of developmental journalism is suggested to guide print reporting and remedy the under-reporting and over-simplification of socio-economic issues. The under-par levels of socio-economics reporting found by the study can be rectified through developmental journalism's belief that journalism shall improve the lives of people and have a social responsibility to promote development with sustained attention. Edeani (1993) contends,

development journalism is the kind of journalism which pays sustained attention to the coverage of ideas, policies, programs, activities and events dealing with the improvement of the life of a people... it takes the stand that the media have a social responsibility to promote development (cited in Musa and Domatob 2007: 317).

¹⁹³ <http://globalsherpa.org/development-developing-countries-developed/>

¹⁹⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_Human_Development_Index

It appears that the press in South Africa do not regard deep-seated socio-economic coverage as important to its agenda, which can be attributed to its libertarian principles. Developmental journalism on the other hand is a normative framework that would encourage socially responsible developmental news to be high on the press agenda.

7.4.4 Playing the watchdog role as socially responsible and not oppositional

A developmental journalist can still play the watchdog role, despite its Western originations. Musa and Domatob (2007: 325) articulate that developmental journalists in Africa hold in high esteem the watchdog function of the press as many of them were educated in Western journalism curricula, which invokes,

That means they hold to the ideal of the journalist as watchdog. This commitment is so strong, in fact, that many development journalists are willing to go prison, and some lose their lives, for questioning authorities. This investigative role is seen as legitimate and consistent with the commitment to seeking the good of the community over that of the individual.

In conceptualising a development journalist as an investigative watchdog, Musa and Domatob (2007: 325) posit,

Journalists in democratizing societies feel they have a social responsibility to hold their leaders accountable in order for true democracy to thrive.

Developmental journalism encourages the media to play the watchdog role but in the interest of social responsibility and seeking the good of the community. The study found that of the total government coverage, 45% showed a negative tone towards “government” and was mostly oppositional in framing. It is important that the print media in South Africa continue to hold powerful government accountable on behalf of its citizens. However, this needs to take place within a socially responsibility narrative called for by developmental journalism and not as the unofficial opposition which effectively politicises the role of the print media.

7.4.5 The voices of the people are heard including communities

The study found that elite voices dominated the front cover stories of the English press. The counter-hegemonic voices, including community voices were sparse which is detrimental for media source diversity. Developmental journalism goes further than the Western ideal that the

media in a liberal democracy must be the voice of the people, by requiring the media to give a voice to people as citizens and not consumers. Banda (2007: 165) opines,

A significant part of implementing development journalism is recognising that people are not consumers of media products. They are, first and foremost, citizens whose voices must be heard. They are the subject of development...

The study found that the citizens that are the subject of the socio-economics crisis and “rebellion of the poor” uprisings were unheard in the press (Alexander 2010). Developmental journalism articulates the importance of being inclusive to unheard voices, including minorities - on a range of issues (Banda 2007). Developmental journalism would elevate the importance of the voices of people as citizens in the everyday narrative of print reporting.

In summary, incorporating the redeeming principles of developmental journalism in the current print media system would significantly facilitate media diversity and transformation in a post-colonial setting such as South Africa, however this approach brings to the fore various issues that need to be carefully examined and investigated. This magnitude of change requires a paradigm shift and even a revolution that could only be realised in the long term. The case of the radical systemic review of the Press Council discussed earlier is a case in point. Additionally, adopting developmental journalism in neo-liberal economic context must be considered. A neo-liberal economic context requires the print media to operate commercially to survive. Development journalism is risky because it is not commercially attractive and thus viable for the market. It is recommended that a systemic review be conducted to consider the complexities of incorporating developmental journalism principles into the print media system.

With this said, it would be more feasible in the short term to re-introduce the alternative press to the post-apartheid media terrain, to play a developmental role. Chapter 2 showed that the alternative press of the colonial and apartheid periods was lost in the democratic transition. The alternative press played a seminal role in catering for a diversity of South African ethnic groups, and its donor funding undergirded its anti-capitalist nature. Significantly, the only alternative press to survive the transition was the *Weekly Mail* (now *Mail & Guardian*), which was flagged earlier as producing noteworthy and award-winning examples of developmental journalism through Bhekisisa. The *Mail and Guardian* is currently primarily funded by donors. This speaks to the importance of bringing back the alternative press funded by donors, it presents a possible short-term solution for the sub-par content diversity and transformation revealed by the study. Alternative media could solve the fundamental issue of media diversity in content,

as well as ownership because new ownership players independent of the Big 4 would enter the print media market.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that ownership matters to some extent, and other issues are also important to print media transformation. The ownership approach to transformation has not truly transformed the ownership patterns, print readership, content, as well as the inordinate institutional power of white people in the English print companies. The ownership transformation facilitated by B-BBEE is flawed because it is not cognisant of the intersectional realities of the black experience in South Africa. As well as the business imperatives of a black capitalist being contrary to the public interest imperatives of media diversity.

A rethink of print media transformation is thus needed. A systemic power shift needs to take place where the print media transformation project become multi-faceted and holistic. A power shift will only be enabled by: firstly, reviewing the current print media; secondly, addressing the inordinately neo-liberal architecture of the press; thirdly, transforming the training of journalists by de-Westernizing training; and fourthly, developing a print media specific transformation policy and regulation model. Firstly, Liberalism has been the Western normative journalistic framework in place since the inception of the English press in South Africa which is not suitable to a South African and African context. Secondly, the hindering effects of neo-liberalism to the attainment of ownership diversity and content transformation, especially pertaining to socio-economics reporting, is striking. The third component I argue is important to print media transformation is training. Journalism training needs to be transformed to de-Westernise the “Inferential racism” (Hall 1981), as well as the libertarian news values found by this study and echoed by other research. Afrocentric journalism training at the level of tertiary education and workplace training matters to print media transformation and fits into the wider call to decolonise education in South Africa. Fourthly, policy matters to print media transformation. A print media specific transformation is needed as the study has revealed the B-BBEE policy falls short of democratic media policy standards and has furthermore failed to facilitate true transformation in practice. I advance the recommendation that the new print media specific transformation policy firstly, enshrine the principle of media diversity as it relates to the media’s “intellectual market”, as well encompassing both ownership and content

(Van Cuilenburg 1999: 192-193). Secondly, ensure freedom of communication and pluralism in the regulatory model through the establishment on an independent and proactive regulator. Thirdly, the complexity of transformation as it relates to political and elite interests is not considered in the B-BBEE scores. Effective and meaningful monitoring and evaluation of the new policy that goes beyond the seven-area generic scorecard must be developed.

The chapter recommends that the redeeming principles of developmental journalism would rectify the sub-par print media content diversity and transformation found by the study, which also responds to the calls for an Africanisation of the print media system in South Africa (Rodny-Gumede 2014). I am cognisant of the negative associations of the concept of developmental journalism due to African leaders misusing it for political aspirations. And it being incorrectly conflated with patriotic journalism. The model of developmental journalism I recommend is based on the redeeming quality of the concept as advancing the common good through deep-seated developmental news, whilst maintaining integrity and political independence.

Drawing from the findings of the study, I put forward five core reasons to motivate for incorporating developmental journalism principles to enhance the print media transformation project. Firstly, there are various examples of excellent developmental journalism that have emerged on the African continent that illustrate the redeeming nature of the concept and the potential it holds for the print media transformation project. Secondly, Shah's (1996) emancipatory approach to developmental journalism upholds the advancement of diversity including cultural diversity in reporting, which is critical to facilitate true transformation. Thirdly, the neo-liberal architecture of the South African press has resulted in the simplification and under-representation of important socio-economics news. Developmental journalism as a normative journalistic framework would encourage deep-seated socio-economic reporting to get sustained attention on the press agenda. Fourthly, the study found that the large amount of negative coverage about government was oppositional in nature, which effectively politicises the role of the print media in South Africa. Developmental journalism on the other hand ascribes to the importance of exercising the watchdog role so that leaders are held accountable and democracy is ultimately strengthened. The South African press needs to exercise its watchdog role in a socially responsible manner, as required by developmental journalism. Fifthly, the study found that elite voices dominate the press, which is contrary to the requirement of source diversity needed to cultivate media diversity. With this said, adopting the principles of developmental journalism for the mainstream print media would require a

paradigm shift that could only be realised over a long time period, and a review would need to be conducted to investigate the feasibility of such a change. The chapter argued that bringing back the alternative press to play a developmental role, presents a short-term solution to produce media diversity in content and ownership, that is also anti-capitalist. The next chapter concludes the thesis and provides pointers for future research.

Chapter 8

Conclusion and future research

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis was to analyse the state of print media transformation in South Africa and whether it can be regarded as “True transformation” or “Token transformation”. It contributed an in-depth analytic study of print media transformation to South African scholarship within the framework of diversity of ownership and content diversity. The value of this thesis lies in its holistic and systemic approach to critiquing the broad press transformation agenda, as well as its twenty year period empirical content analysis.

The study is based on the assumption that true transformation is achieved when ownership and content reflect the axes of diversity and difference in South African society (Boloka and Krabill 2000). In a nutshell, the study engages with the question of whether print media ownership and content has transformed to reflect the diversity of South African society in its first twenty years of democracy. The following research questions were adopted by the study:

1. To what extent are the ownership patterns, control and power mechanisms of Tiso Blackstar Group, Independent Media, M&G Media Limited transformed?
2. To what extent does print content (front cover page, editorial page) exhibit levels of diversity that reflects transformation?

The first research question was answered in chapter 5 and the second research question in chapter 6. This chapter proceeds by responding to the research questions by presenting the major findings and arguments advanced by the study. This thesis found that the nature of print media transformation reflected in its ownership and content is fundamentally characterised and dictated by: neo-liberalism; “inferential racism” where blackness is represented negatively; white racial power; and politicisation. These four major themes intersect both the ownership and content aspects of the press. Secondly, the relevance of the study is presented. The chapter concludes with pointers for future research.

The study engaged with the following theoretical terms: democracy, the public interest, media transformation, ownership diversity, content diversity and power. I adopted Western theories -

in the absence of a substantive media-specific transformation theory that could be applied to the South African press context, cognisant of its past decades of white domination.

This thesis elevates the importance of the democratic role of print media in South Africa and is based on the assumption that press transformation must enhance democracy and primarily be public interest driven. A universal expectation enshrined in contemporary media theory is that the media must strengthen democracy, whatever the form of democracy. Christians et al. (2010) posits that the media have a normative purpose to further democracy and democratic institutions. Curran's (2000) revised roles of the media in a liberal democracy and his scepticism of the free market to guarantee diversity was a useful theory to critically reflect on the press performance against broad liberal paradigms of the press. McQuail's (2005) articulations of the public interest role of the media as it related to ownership and content diversity were utilised to uncover the shortcomings of the South African press from the prism of the public interest role of the press. Critical political economy of the media provided a historical and holistic theoretical framework that enabled an informative "critical" analysis of media diversity from the vantage points of: an ideal communication system in a democracy as encompassing openness, diversity and accessibility; the public good role of the media; Marxist critiques of the capitalist functioning of the media; political and economic context of the media; ownership patterns and diversity; control and power mechanism; funding and financing; as well as action and structural constraints. The study adopted Michel Foucault's (1975) notions of modern power and Pierre Bourdieu's (1985) forms of capital as power, which provided a deeper illumination of the power dynamics evident in the present day press.

The content analysis, experts, and documentary analysis research methods adopted by the study yielded a nuanced and novel understanding of the nature of structural and content print media transformation in South Africa. Indeed, the documentary evidence and experts proved to be key sites of rich information (Stokes 2003). The SLLM Media transformation seminar I hosted was a creative and interactive qualitative research method that garnered the perspectives of a diverse pool of key experts and simultaneously achieved societal engagement on the topic of the thesis. The qualitative documentary evidence consisting of internal company documents produced by the print institutions; B-BBEE Act 53/2003; and the seminal research reports and academic literature - jointly presented an informative and anecdotal perspective of print media transformation.

The study contributes to the wider scholarship areas of media diversity, ownership diversity, content diversity, media power, as well as the democratic and public interest roles of the press. Some of the findings uncovered in this study have been shown by other studies. The novelty and major contribution of this thesis to scholarship lies in it showing the empirical evidence of transformation in a twenty year period, the study is holistic and provides a long term investigation of the extent of print media diversity. The extent of content diversity was explored by looking at the coverage of the issues of socio-economics, labour issues and protests, government vs. big business. The quantitative content analysis was a practical expedient way to make aggregate accounts (Krippendorff 1989), of diversity trends on the longitudinal and large body of 684 articles selected through a “purposive sampling” technique (Daniel et al. 2014: 3). The measures of content diversity as topics, prominent voices and tones drew interesting and solid trends that allowed the study to make inferences about the extent of content diversity as it related to transformation (Krippendorff 1989). In addition, the qualitative element of the content analyses enabled the investigation of deeper meanings and associations in the press content (Davies and Mosdell 2006).

8.2 Major findings and arguments

This section unpacks the four emerging findings mentioned earlier regarding the nature of print media transformation in the first twenty years of democracy, and the “real constraints” (Golding and Murdock 2000: 72) to the attainment of true media transformation in the press (Boloka and Krabill 2000).

8.2.1 A neo-liberal functioning press

At the advent of democracy, the “new” South Africa adopted a “newfound” economic ideology of neo-liberalism. Indeed, the study found that the economic context of the media is critical in forming the media’s role (Golding and Murdock 2000). In the case of South Africa, its neo-liberal economic context substantially informs the nature of press transformation, namely its: transformation policy, black economic empowerment benefactors, ownership, content and readership.

Given the significant effects of neo-liberalism on press transformation found by this study, this section is presented according to six sub-themes. To argue that the press displays a neo-liberal identity in the following ways:

- Neo-liberalism and concentrated ownership patterns;
- Neo-liberal framing of the main transformation policy standard (B-BBEE Act);
- Neo-elite class continuities;
- A neo-liberal agenda: government favoured only in labour coverage;
- Neo-liberal market logic: market-oriented content;
- The power and privilege of big business in ownership and content.

8.2.1.1 Neo-liberalism and concentrated ownership patterns: public interest and media diversity obstacles

McQuail (2005) advanced the idea that the media must behave in the public interest, of which plurality of ownership is a key component. McQuail (2005) cautions that concentration of media ownership and a monopoly of control by the state or the private sector is in opposition to the attainment of a public interest driven ownership system. “The media system should not be dominated by a few controlling interests and that citizens should have access as senders and receivers to media that reflect their ideas and meet their interests and needs. Different type of media (press, broadcasting) should be under different control” (McQuail 2005: 168).

The press in South Africa functions according to the newfound neo-liberal ideology adopted at the advent of democracy, as discussed in chapter 2. The study argues that neo-liberalism built on the print media ownership concentration started in the apartheid-era. Press ownership concentration in South Africa has been constant and on the uptake since the 1980’s according to the Noam index (Angelopulo and Potgieter 2013). The press ownership concentration seen in the apartheid-era continued in the first twenty years of democracy and according to the HHI index is “moderately concentrated” (Duncan 2016). The media ownership concentration findings of the study parallel global trends of the effect of neo-liberalism on the media industry. The significant growth of concentration in media ownership globally can be traced to the neo-liberal turn in economics and society, which gave rise to the elimination of media restrictions (Warf 2007). McChesney (2001) captures the impact of neo-liberalism on the media industry

and contends, the level of concentration [in the media industry] is so stunning as has only been seen in a few other industries.

Press ownership concentration in South Africa illustrates the effects of neo-liberalism and is a disservice to the public interest. Critical political economy of the media flags the dangers of media concentration for media diversity. Garnham (2011) contends that concentration results in a loss of diversity. Similarly, Wasko (2004) articulates that media concentration ought to be considered for possible influences on content, such as, availability and quality of news, tabloidization of news, and the homogenisation of content. Therefore, press ownership concentration poses an impediment to a public interest driven press that caters for content diversity.

8.2.1.2 A neo-liberal policy standard guides print media transformation: policy and power

It is imperative to dissect media policy for embedded power dynamics. Chiumbu (2013: 66) posits, “...ideas framing media policy documents are not neutral, but operate in a context of power”. The study contends that the main press transformation policy, the B-BBEE Act, favours the economic free market and stands in contrast to the articulations of media content diversity.

The age of neo-liberal globalisation essentially means the “revival of the free market economic policy” (McGuigan 2005: 229). The study posits that the B-BBEE Act is fundamentally a “free market economic policy” (McGuigan 2005: 229), that locates and limits the role of the print media to its “economic market” (Van Cuilenburg 1999: 192-193). The Act emphasises the economic privileges of the media as an economic entity, thereby overlooking the press’ “intellectual market”, which is the market where content diversity is enabled (Van Cuilenburg 1999: 192-193). Neo-liberal thinking is centred around creating markets for anything and everything (Birch 2015). The B-BBBEE Act marketises transformation as “economic transformation”; “general prosperity”; and “sustainable development” (objective of the B-BBEE Act 53/2003). The power of neo-liberalism and its corporate free market ideology trumps the democratic role of the print media as a purveyor of democratic ideas and ideologies found in its “intellectual market”. This finding parallels other contemporary critiques of media policies. Freedman (2008) posits that neo-liberalism has emerged as a dominant frame for critiques of current media policies.

In practice, the B-BBEE policy facilitated economic transformation for the elite and a more racially diverse ownership structure. The allocative controllers of the English press are the elite interests of big business, political, labour, China, America and government. The allocative controllers are mixed race boards and Executives that are male dominated. The B-BBEE policy perpetuates the power of the elite. The neo-liberal standard of transformation emphasises the economic market and overlooks other important fault lines in South African society, such as class and gender.

8.2.1.3 Neo-elitism and class continuities

Critical economy of the media investigates how changes in the array of forces that exercise control of media institutions “liberate or limit the public sphere” (Golding and Murdock 2000: 78). Critical political economy posits that excessive media concentration and commercialism impacts content through, for example consumerism and class inequality. In this regard, McChesney (2004) opines that excessive media concentration and commercialism results in the best journalism pitched to the elite’s needs and prejudices, and civic values and anti-market activities are marginalised. The press transformation agenda premised on an ownership approach to transformation built an elite press public sphere.

This study found that print media transformation in South Africa is elite-driven marking the emergence of neo-elite class continuities in eight areas: 1) elite owners; 2) elite black economic empowerment benefactors; 3) politically elite topics garner the highest coverage; 4) elite prominent voices dominate whilst alternative and counter-hegemonic voices are sparse; 5) underrepresentation and simplistic coverage of issues affecting the poor and classes hardest hit by severe socio-economic crisis; 6) underrepresentation and negative depiction of working class issues; 7) economic news for the elite is catered for whilst economics news for the ordinary citizen is rare; 8) the press readership market is elite. This section unpacks these neo-elite class continuities found in the press. The study found that print media content is fundamentally pitched to the elite and marginalises the issues and representation of the lower classes. This finding is linked to the media concentration built by neo-liberalism discussed in the previous section (McChesney 2004: 17). The press shifted from being a white minority elite driven press in the apartheid epoch to a neo-elite driven press. The unbundling of white corporations saw the emergence of new black capitalist interests merge with established white

capital to refashion a multi-racial capital (Barnett 1999). In Marxist terms (Fuchs and Mosco 2012), the press in South Africa continues to be stratified along the structures of class inequality.

Firstly, the ownership trajectory in the first twenty years of democracy of Tiso Blackstar Group, Independent Media, as well as M&G Media, show that ownership is elite. Print ownership is homogenous and remains a privilege afforded to: apartheid-era elite owners; the political elite, including trade union investment companies and government; black elite; big business elite; and international media moguls. The current allocative owners are big business elite with ties to big capital, political elite with ties to the ANC, labour elite, Chinese elite, American elite and government elite.

Secondly, the 15% of black elite benefactors of black economic empowerment (Jeffrey 2015), proliferates the elite driven nature of print media transformation.

Thirdly, the study found that the press was dominated by politically related topics which are essentially coverage about the politically elite - with 38% (N=684). The 30% of socio-economic news was found to be simplistic in nature and the economics news was primarily for the elite (Table 19). Socio-economic is the topic category where the plight of the lower classes and underclasses, such as the poor and rural, should feature prominently. The plight of labour, which is made up of the working class, only garnered 4% of topics.

Fourthly, the prominent voice findings showed that “elite” related and “multiple” dominated the voices in the content (Table 16). A significant 39% of prominent voices were “elite” – “government” with 18%, “political parties” at 13% and “business” with 8%. There was the sparse use of alternative and counter-hegemonic voices at 13% - citizen 12%, NGO 1%, and no civil society voices were recorded. Trade unions are representatives of the working class and only garnered 2% of prominent voices. This underscores the dominance of the elite class as prominent voices in the print media. The elite voices in the press erodes important voices needed for source diversity, for example, “academic/expert in the field” voices only made up 3%. The continued reliance on “elite” government sources limits overall content diversity (Brown et al. 1987) and perpetuates the power of the elites (Brown et al. 1987). The elite discourse in the South African press is caused by neo-liberalism. Chiumbu (2016) posits, neo-liberalism has caused the press to operate fully according to a commercial logic that favours “elite discourse” (Chiumbu 2016, cited in Radebe 2017: 70). In addition, the rare use of alternative and counter-hegemonic voices speaks to the reproduction of neo-liberal ideologies

in the press. Chiumbu (2016) contends that the corporate media's location in market forces reproduces neo-liberal ideology and thus privileges capitalism, whilst marginalising alternative and counter-hegemonic voices (Chiumbu 2016, cited in Radebe 2017).

Fifthly, the near invisibility in front cover coverage (N=228), of socio-economic issues affecting the lower classes and under classes also speaks to class inequalities. Print media content maintains class dominance of the elite (Davis 2003) by placing the biggest socio-economic issues facing the lower classes on the peripheries of its front page "issue-attention cycle" (Smith et al. 2001: 1401). This includes issues such as poverty, inequality and unemployment. This was evident in the severe under-representation in the topics of poverty and inequality (1 story), rural (1 story), and unemployment (1 story) on the front page. The under-representation of these issues reveals the lack of diversity of the press (Humphrecht and Esser 2018). Moreover, the 1 article about poverty and inequality was sensational and alludes to the profit motives of the press. News diversity is hampered by profit motives that aim to maximise audiences to the detriment of in-depth and perspective-rich reporting (Humphrecht and Esser 2018). Equally, 18% of front page socio-economic stories centred around the sensational areas of drama, crime and disaster, which aims at attracting audiences through a human interest angle and illustrates the underlying commercial imperatives of the press. The socio-economic crisis in South Africa is widely attributed to the neo-liberal policies adopted by the ANC government (Alexander 2010). Yet 27% of socio-economic front page coverage was about simplistic updates on government actions and policies as they related to socio-economic issues. The coverage included no critical reporting about the government's role in the socio-economic crisis. Also, the prominent voices of socio-economic front page news were dominated by "elite" sources - business at 16%, government with 11%, and political parties at 2% (Table 20). The alternative and counter-hegemonic voices in socio-economic news were sparse: citizen 18%, NGO 2%, and civil society 0%.

The press coverage of socio-economic issues also falls short of class and regional transformation (Boloka and Krabill 2000), in the coverage of "poor" and "rural" people; who are mostly made visible in press coverage during the time of social protests or "rebellion of the poor" (Alexander 2010). The neglect of socio-economic issues effecting "rural" people is a direct knock-on effect of neo-liberalism and its incumbent commercial imperatives in South African newsrooms. *The State of the Newsroom Report SA (2013)* found that when cost-cutting and rising distribution costs occur, print companies constantly review distribution costs and uneconomical routes are reduced. Rural towns are the first to be poorly serviced and they

become less important, leading to a news focus on urban areas. Neo-liberalism and its associated commercial imperatives essentially privilege the most “economical” audiences.

Sixth, the South African press perpetuate the power of the elite class (Davis 2003), in its under-representation of labour issues that essentially affect the working class (4%). The tone of the labour grouping and coverage of labour protests maintain the elite class dominance in the press, and the “continued circulation of powerful elites” (Davis 2003: 670). The tone breakdown of labour issues disclosed that no stories depicted labour positively, and 34% negatively. The neutral tones (41%) amounted to an element of bias against “labour” as these were missed opportunities to act on behalf of labour injustices. The working class is significantly seen in the press in the spectacle of a labour protest. Equally, labour protests made up 31% of the sparse labour coverage. The coverage of labour protests followed the “protest paradigm” that expressed “disapproval” of protests (Lee 2014, cited in Leopold and Bell 2017: 721).

Seventh, the market ideology that drives corporate media in South Africa was evident in economics news (Jacobs 2004, cited in Radebe 2017). A total of 13 stories out of the 14 economics front cover stories were categorised as “elite economics news”. And 12 out of these 14 economics stories appeared in the elite newspaper, *Business Day*, which targets the upper and educated classes.

Eighth, the contemporary press market primarily caters for an elite readership - white, urban, English and Afrikaans speaking people, despite the rise of black readership (SA and SADC Media facts edition 2014). This largely mimics the press readership of the apartheid era.

Thus, the rise of mass media ownership concentration in the South African press has indeed birthed uniform content, that in this instance caters for the elite class. The development of an open, inclusive and diverse press public sphere in South Africa is hindered by its profit-driven and oligopoly typology, which is consistent with the articulations of critical political economy of the media.

8.2.1.4 A neo-liberal agenda: government favoured only in labour coverage

In the shift to neoliberalism, the state has transformed from a provider of public welfare to promoter of markets and competition (Birch 2015). In the coverage of labour issues and protests there is a collusion between government and the print media – both display an anti-

labour narrative. In its coverage of labour protests, the press follows a “protest paradigm” that favoured the official government position (Leopold and Bell 2017: 721). The government position was only portrayed favourably in issues regarded as a threat to capitalism. Organised labour power has long been a threat to capitalism (Chiumbu 2016). The study found that press in South Africa rarely advance the official government position except in its coverage of labour protests. This points to a neo-liberal agenda in the press. The dominant trend in government press coverage is a negative tone towards government, which amounts to an over obsession with its libertarian role of watchdog of “public power” (Curran 2000: 122), and in this way the print media act as the unofficial opposition.

In the coverage of labour and overall press coverage of government the libertarian paradigm is favoured. Another case in point is that given the press’ over-obsessive government watchdog role, it is surprising that the press dismally failed to hold government accountable for its major role in the socio-economic crisis facing South Africa. Particularly, adopting neo-liberal policies that favoured economic growth at the expense of key service delivery areas, as discussed in chapter 2. Once again, the press protected the neo-liberal agenda and its policies.

8.2.1.5 Neo-liberal market logic: market-oriented content

The commercialisation of media markets effect diversity of content in that news becomes shaped by market logic (McManus 2009, cited in Humprecht and Esser 2018). The study contends that neo-liberal ideology and its free market articulations has given rise to market driven trends in the South African press, namely a rise of commercial imperatives in the newsroom and sameness in content across newspapers.

Firstly, Daniels (2016) alluded to the rise of commercial imperatives in the press since the inception of democracy, including the exodus as a result of yearly retrenchments, budget cuts in staff salaries and pressure to produce more weekly stories. The study posits that the commercial imperative of newsrooms in the democratic-era taints transformation, as commercial interests cater primarily for consumers whereas transformation requires the “public interest” to reign supreme (McQuail 2005). The commercialisation of the media in democratic-era South Africa is striking and can be attributed to the neo-liberal ideology. Hadland (2007: 16) notes, “one of the most striking trends in the post-1994 period has been the commercialisation of the South African print media sector”.

Secondly, the study's finding of trends of sameness of content in topics (Table 10), and prominent voices (Table 17) across the six newspapers in the sample indicates a lack of diversity in issues covered, as well as prominent voices heard in the English press. Sameness of content across news outlets is a knock-on effect of concentration of media ownership patterns (Carpenter 2010), cultivated by neo-liberalism (Warf 2007).

There are two main positions to the rise of the free market liberal system as discussed in chapter 2 – public interest advocates and free market theorists. Public interest advocates are critical of the capitalist system based on the market system of supply and demand dictating media production and output (see Habermas 2006; Castells 1998; Chomsky and Herman 2002; Horwitz 2005). The critique is based on the belief that core citizen and democratic values will be compromised by commercial values and profit-making imperatives. This study parallels the argument of these public interest advocates. The striking rise of commercial imperatives of the press in South Africa compromises diversity of content and, for example, led to sameness of content across newspapers.

The study finds that free market theorists who argue that a free flowing liberal system and its corporate ownership results in a greater diversity of choice (Doyle 2002), are overambitious in their belief that the free market facilitates greater media diversity. The neo-liberal free market system in South Africa built sameness of content across newspapers. This thesis confirms Curran's (2000) critique of the free market system in the libertarian model to deliver diversity. He argues that the market undermines intelligent and rational debate because market oriented content generates content that is characterised by: simplified, personalised, decontextualised, stress on action rather process, visualisation rather than abstraction, stereotypically rather than human complexity.

8.2.1.6 The power and privilege of big business in ownership and content

The previous sections illustrated the elite, market and commercial nature of press content which can be linked to the capitalist control of the press. Critical political economy of the media contends that capitalist control of the media contributes to a dominant ideology of capitalist friendly content and a reduction in cultural and informational diversity (Garnham 2011). McQuail's (2005) conception of the public interest states that monopoly control by the private media industry stands in opposition to plurality of media ownership needed to serve the public

interest. Big business or corporate companies hold vast power in the South African press through ownership and “escaping” press watchdog accountability.

Firstly, in the democratic period big business remains an unregulated major press owner in the Independent Media, M&G Media, as well as Tiso Blackstar Group, including the black economic empowerment big business companies. McChesney (2004) cautions that growing corporate control results in adverse effects for content including consumerism, class inequality, marginalisation of civic values and anti-market activities, and pitching the best journalism to the elite. Moreover, the profit making imperatives of big business pose negative consequences for media content diversity, the public interest and democracy. Hallin and Mancini (2004) assert that professional values of journalists are under pressure from the profit goals of news organisations. Berkowitz (1993) argues, the field of journalism has "trade-offs between journalistic judgement and the imperatives from the business side of a media organisation" (cited in Price 2003: 175). Business factors have created conflicts of a journalist's role in the news landscape - ideally autonomy, objectivity and professionalism are fundamental requirements for a journalist or editor to possess as they need to learn to be detached from a story in order to avoid conflicts of interests (Price 2003: 177).

Secondly, the press adopts a largely indifferent and “neutral” approach in holding big business accountable as an economically powerful player in society on behalf of citizens. The content analysis only found 1 story on business corruption. Overall, “business” topics only garnered 3% of topic coverage vs. government with 22%. Curran (2000) argues that media *are* big business and are no longer compromised by their links to big business, and therefore underscores the importance of critical surveillance of both government and private corporate/shareholders. “A revised conception is needed in which the media are conceived as being a check on *both* public and private power” (Curran 2000: 122). The press in South Africa *is* big business due to vast business ownership, as well its location in the corporate market. Yet, the press is mostly tacit on being a check of private power, which effectively turns a blind eye to the wrongdoings committed by big business.

The power of big business hinders the public interest performance and democratic linked professional journalistic values in the South African press. Citing Williams and Taylor (2000), Chiumbu (2016: 421) posits, the transition from racialised capitalism to neoliberalism did not “transform the fundamental market logic of capitalism and the business elites ensured that a break with apartheid did not threaten its ability to profit from a severely exploitative labour

system”. Big business and its market logic continues to rule the press in South Africa, in both economic epochs of racial capitalism and neoliberalism, the bottom line has reigned supreme, which is to the detriment of the public interest.

8.2.2 “Inferential racism”: blackness in the press is based on racist assumptions

During the apartheid period the stories, experiences and faces of the minority white population dominated the pages of newspapers. During the data collection stage of this study, in paging through newspapers published after democracy in 1994, it was revealed that white people were no longer the dominant race in the coverage and accompanying visuals. In the sample of articles after 1994, it was clear that the faces and representations of black people as well as other races increased considerably. On a quantitative level black people have increased their ownership shares, staffing representation in the media industry, as well as visibility in coverage. However, given the historical overt racism in South Africa, where the “Apartheid discourse was legitimised to whites initially on the basis of racial superiority” (Tomaselli 1997: 16), it is imperative to delve deeper into the representation of blackness in print media. Otherwise, press transformation is limited to increased visibility of the black race and token blackness in press content.

The study found that the press transformation agenda addresses the race question by formulating it as structural racial substitution, which to a large extent resembles “token transformation”. This approach to race transformation of the press scratches the surface of remedying the deep-seated racist ideologies that South African society and its press has been built upon through decades of white domination.

A deeper race transformation strategy for the press is needed that disrupts and dismantles the racist ideologies rooted in colonial and apartheid notions of blackness. Leopold and Bell (2017: 721) research on the coverage of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement in USA newspapers is instructive to the South African press context, “...in a society permeated by anti-black racism, even regular news about blacks is likely to contain inaccurate and damaging representation (van Dijk, 2015, cited in Leopold and Bell 2017: 75). It is important to consider the compound effect of racist ideologies in the South Africa press and substituting white people with black people in the structures of the press does not suffice. The study found that regular news about black people in the South African press, namely: black social protestors, black labour, black

poor people, black rural people “contain inaccurate and damaging representation” (van Dijk, 2015, cited in Leopold and Bell 2017: 75). It follows that, South African print journalists and editors are embedded in an entrenched discrimination system and act of “agents of racialization” (Reskin 2012, cited in Leopold and Bell 2017: 721).

It was found that the press content display negative stereotypes of blackness in the coverage of service delivery protests, labour protests and government. The press display subtle racial stereotypes that are based on racist assumptions founded in colonialism and apartheid times. In this regard, the press parallels the notion of “inferential racism” coined by Hall (1981: 20), where “those apparently naturalised of events and situations relating to race, whether ‘factual’ or ‘fictional’, which have racist premises and propositions inscribed in them as a set of unquestioned assumptions”. The racist ideological assumptions that undergird the representation of black protestors are that black people are dangerous, social deviants and are the problem. The depiction of the black government is based on the racist premise that black leadership is incompetent. As a result, there is a racial negativity of blackness that subtly pervades the press narrative.

Another case in point, the excessive negative representation of black government (46% negative vs. 3% positive tones) in comparison to the underrepresentation of issues and misdemeanours of big business or the “white economic elite” (20% negative vs. 12% positive tones). The press performs its watchdog role by perpetuating colonial and apartheid stereotypes of black leadership as being incompetent, whilst entrenching the white privilege of the big business or the white economic elite.

An article in the sample demonstrates this colonial and apartheid narrative, and the South African press reproducing colonial representations of Africa and black leadership. The *Business Day* op-ed of 3 May 2011 titled “Are Britain and France trying to colonise Africa again” written by Paul Moorcraft, a former senior instructor of the Royal Military Academy. It is sourced from Reuters about Britain and France interventions in Africa (Libya). The article states “...only Western forces have the capability and perhaps will to organize the Libyan rebels. The American’s can’t so that leaves the British and French”. The article furthermore states that Britain and France interventions in Libya have raised accusations of colonialism

Meanwhile, France has been criticized throughout Africa for resuming its role of continental ‘gendarme’, especially in Cote d’Ivoire. Britain has also been lambasted for a so called return to a colonial rule. This suits paranoid African despots who prefer to

shadow box with long-dead white men in baggy shorts and pitch helmets than resolve problems of their own making.

The article depicts Africa, and African leaders as incompetent, in need of “saving” from the West and the superior white man, which is reminiscent of a colonial narrative. The article is largely dismissive of African leadership and displays white supremacist thinking that only the white man, as a superior being, has the will and solutions to help an inferior and primitive African continent. The story portrays Britain and France’s interventions in Africa and Western leaders positively, while the African continent and Africa leaders, President Jacob Zuma and President Muammar Gaddafi, are represented negatively. The article concludes,

African leaders keep pledging that want African solutions to African problems but they rarely provide any. When an African crisis threatens another Rwanda, as Libya possibly and Cote d’Ivoire probably did, then African leaders will have to tolerate prompt Western intervention...

It is noted that this article is an opinion piece, therefore does not represent the newspaper’s formal position and news coverage on an issue. However, the voices and viewpoints that are given a platform in the print media effects the extent of media diversity (Curran 2000). Overall it was found that the press exhibits “selection bias” (Smith et al. 2001: 1399), that is unfavourable of the black race. The incompetence of the black government is regarded as far more newsworthy than the incompetence of big business or the “white economic elite”. The under-representation of labour issues and simplistic socio-economic coverage suggests that the plight and severe struggle of the majority black people are not newsworthy. Black people on the other hand, are highly visible in coverage about the incompetence of black leadership. The representation of blackness in press content suggests a propensity of “continuing racism”, as coined by Horwitz 2001 (cited in Radebe 2017: 59), as political issues involving the black majority were excessively negative and socio-economics issues faced primarily by the black majority were severely underrepresented.

8.2.3 White racial power in the democratic epoch press

Kwame Nkrumah, the first Prime Minister of Ghana, envisioned Africa as a dominant industrial power in the world and recognised this could only go hand in hand with decolonised minds. In 1982, Nkrumah gave the opening addresses to the First International Congress of Africanists in Accra, Ghana. His speech strongly emphasised the need for an African-centred view of itself,

its history and culture. And the important common endeavour of using African languages to present African history as a history of an African people and not as a history written by Europeans about African people ¹⁹⁵. Nkrumah envisioned a need for an African centred view of itself, this argument can be applied to the South African press.

An important component of transformation in South Africa is ensuring that the press advocate for a black-centred and black-driven view of black people and stories in South Africa. A black-centred view of itself can only be cultivated in the South African press if stories are not reported on through a primarily white perspective and gaze. The representation and voices of whiteness in print media institutions should not unduly and unfairly dominate. In the Kwame Nkrumah sense, this results in a white-centred view.

Press transformation in the first twenty years of democracy is characterised by sizeable white racial power in the press. White racial power remains a significant component of the press, seen in ownership and the hierarchy of press institutions. The B-BBEE scores for ownership, management control and employment equity reveal the presence of significant undue white racial power reminiscent of the apartheid-era power relationships (Foucault 1982). Drawing from Foucault's (1990) rule of continual variations in the study of modern power, the inordinate levels of white racial power in the press has not changed. The great magnitude of white racial power in ownership and positions of influence in press institutions results in a white-driven press with black people operating as the cogs on the wheels of press institutions – in the lower positions.

8.2.4 A politicised press transformation project

The study correlates with critical political economy of the media expression that political context dictates the form of a media system (Wasko 2004). The study found that press transformation in South Africa is politicised in a number of key areas affecting diversity. Namely: ownership; B-BBEE policy and regulation; excessive negative government coverage; and advertising. In this regard, transformation works as a point of politicisation of the press. This section outlines each of these areas.

¹⁹⁵ <http://www.cambridge-africa.cam.ac.uk/news/african-languages-lifting-the-mask-of-invisibility/>

Firstly, the empowerment deals of the early 1990's and ownership changes in the first twenty years of democracy afforded great ownership access to politically linked owners - evident in the Independent Media and Tiso Blackstar Group. The access granted to ANC linked press owners can be explained by Bourdieu's (1985: 53) "social capital", where the ANC elite were the "signifier" of the black majority through their "good name" attained in the liberation struggle. This resulted in the "misappropriation of capital". Thus, black economic empowerment was politicised and capital was misappropriated in favour of the political black elite.

Secondly, the transformation of the press through the B-BBEE regulatory model is a "political phenomenon" (Freedman 2008: 1), falling short of "freedom of communications" (Van Cuilenburg and McQuail 2003: 203) and "pluralism" (McQuail 1992). It grants inordinate power to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Minister of Trade and Industry and the President of the country. The pluralism required to foster diversity is not enshrined in the B-BBEE Act (McQuail 1992). The B-BBEE Act is politically laden. Thirdly, the press operates as the (un)official opposition in affording large amounts of negative coverage of the government in its "issue-attention cycle" (Smith et al. 2001:1401). The press plays an excessively political role.

Fourthly, the large chunk of politically related topics in the press suggests that the press operates in the political interest. The topics results revealed that 38% were politically related topics - made up of "government" with 22% and "party politics" at 16%. Moreover, politically related topics garnered 47% of front page leading stories, which is the most prominent section of the newspaper - made up of government with 30% and party politics at 17%. Fifth, government is the biggest advertiser in the press, thus is a significant press owner according to critical political economy understandings of ownership.

Tomaselli and Teer-Tomaselli (2008) note that during apartheid, newspapers mirrored the political divides of the country. This study revealed that newspapers in the first two decades of democracy continue to play an inordinately political role.

8.3 Relevance of the study

This section reflects on the gaps and limitations of the study, and considers the benefits, as well as advantages of this thesis.

8.3.1 Gaps and limitations of the research study

The limitations of this study primarily pertain to time constraints and bigger sample sizes. Firstly, the study analysed the extent of transformation in the historically South African English print media companies and excluded the historically Afrikaans companies (Media 24 whose parent company is Naspers, and Caxton) due to time limits of a PhD. I opted for the English print media companies as this group underwent far more significant ownership changes and black economic empowerment deals than these Afrikaans companies in the first twenty of democracy. It would have been interesting to include both the English and Afrikaans companies in the sample. It would have yielded a richer study, especially given the role of the Afrikaans press as a purveyor of the conservative Afrikaans nationalist ideologies and the continued power of apartheid-era Afrikaans owners, such as Naspers. Moreover, the Afrikaans owned newspapers have formidable circulation numbers, most notably *Daily Sun* being the biggest selling newspaper in South Africa, and *Rapport* being amongst the most read newspapers by the higher LSM groupings. If time permitted, analysing their extent of ownership and content diversity would have provided an added dimension to this study.

Secondly, this study analysed the pertinent and hotly debated issue of media transformation that has garnered hefty attention in scholarly debates, the public domain, policy arenas, Parliament, etc. Due to time constraints I focused on “print media” transformation as it is a widely held view that broadcasting has transformed at a more progressive rate than the print media in South Africa. Applying the methodology of this study to broadcast media in South Africa would provide an interesting comparison of the mediums, as well as provide a holistic depiction of media transformation in South Africa.

Thirdly, the article sample size of each year selected through the “purposive sampling” technique (Benoit 2010: 272) could have ideally been larger. However, I am satisfied that the sample size of articles were an indication of the print coverage consumed by regular readers of

each newspaper, in that I selected the first newspaper edition of each month, in the first 6 months of the year.

The major limitation of the study was the absence of a media transformation theory to assess print media transformation. To remedy this, I adopted Western media ownership, and media diversity, media power, and societal power theoretical frameworks as a starting point to elucidate the nature of print media transformation in South Africa. And to contribute towards the development of a much needed African-centred media transformation framework.

8.3.2 The benefits and advantages of the research study

This thesis has made an immense contribution to societal media transformation debates in South Africa, transformation scholarship in South Africa, diversity of ownership and content global scholarship.

In the absence of a media-specific and methodological transformation theoretical framework to analyse print media transformation in South Africa, I developed a unique theoretical framework and methodology drawing from Western theory, as well as South Africa scholarship. The study crafted a content analysis framework methodology suited to the South African context to analyse the extent of content diversity. I also drew on Western theories of media ownership and content diversity, as well as theories of power to solidify a theoretical framework to analyse and problematise print media transformation. My theoretical framework was employed as a starting point to re-think print media transformation in South Africa. The study also conceptualised a seminar style research method as an innovative way to garner societal engagement and collect data.

This study also filled an empirical gap in societal media transformation debates and scholarship in South Africa, which lacks an empirical basis to determine the extent of content diversity within the prism of transformation. It provides a holistic research study of print media transformation that goes beyond ownership studies.

8.4 Pointers for future research

This study has unearthed areas for future research, in this regard this section offers guidelines.

Firstly, the print media transformation debate in South Africa must move beyond Western enunciations of media diversity because of its libertarian footing. The broad press transformation agenda requires a normative re-think that tackles the historical matrices of power. There is a body of scholarship still emerging that can be applied to the press transformation debate, namely, decolonial perspectives. To summarise, the decolonial position contends that there are continued operations of colonial power after the end of colonial administration referred to as “coloniality” (Grosfoguel 2007: 219). Chiumbu (2016: 417) adopts a decolonial approach and posits, “the media in South Africa operates in a global ‘colonial matrix of power’ that (re)produce dominant discourses and ideologies that favour elite interests”. Indeed, this study found that the print media are heavily elite driven in a number of areas in the ownership, content and readership of the press. Chiumbu (2016) locates the elite driven nature to the decolonial perspective of the “colonial matrix of power”. In addition, the subtle negative racial stereotypes of blackness found in press coverage coincides with the decolonial theory concept of the “coloniality of being” and its enunciation of the colonised subject as damned of the earth (Fanon 1965) and non-being (Maldonado-Torres 2007:266). A decolonial perspective of print media transformation and media diversity is a worthy area of future research.

Secondly, the study found that the libertarian normative journalistic framework of the press is an impediment to media diversity and transformation – because of its Eurocentric grounding and free market ideologies. The South African press transformation project is rooted in the Western libertarian articulations that a free market will yield more diversity. It was assumed that a neo-liberal functioning free market press is better than an apartheid captured press. The study revealed that there is a need to de-Westernise South Africa’s normative framework. I recommend the model of developmental journalism be incorporated, based on the findings of this study. A worthy area of research would be a focused and comprehensive study on investigating a revised normative journalistic framework suited for the South African and African context, for example, developmental journalism and the Ubuntu framework. Chiumbu (2016) notes, liberal-pluralism is derived from Western Enlightenment and as such promotes liberalism’s journalistic norms and values. In order to truly transform the press, a normative framework derived from the South African experience is needed.

Thirdly, there is a general need to decolonise higher education curricula in South Africa. Dube's (2013) study found that journalism education and training is based on Western epistemologies. As Chiumbu (2016: 431) observes, citing the work of Cox (1996: 87), theory is for some purpose and should respond to a particular set of conditions "as such, when thinking about how we analyse media in a postcolonial or neo-apartheid context such as South Africa, western-centric political economy of the media approaches are likely to be completely satisfactory or adequate". There is a paucity of African and South African media theories to rate the performance of African media systems. In the spirit of decolonising education and curricula, these theories need to be developed. Hence, a research study developing and putting forward a media transformation and media diversity theory suited for the South Africa and African contexts would be beneficial.

Fourthly, this study opted for a dominantly quantitative content analysis with some supplementing of qualitative content analysis to decipher the extent of content diversity. This combination of research methods was chosen due to the twenty year time period and large size of the sample of articles. This was in line with the study's objective to determine the state of content transformation in the first twenty years of democracy. It is worth conducting a purely qualitative approach on a smaller sample of articles to assess content diversity, for example, framing and discourse analysis of the coverage of issues or specific case studies.

Fifthly, the China interests (through Interacom Investment Holdings) in Independent Media since 2013 has been called questionable and, thus, a worthwhile area to research. Specifically conducting a comparative analysis of Independent Media newspaper content before and after Interacom Investment Holdings purchase of shares – to lookout for pro-government tones, pro-China tones, ignoring human-rights issues, ignoring China backlashes. It would be useful in order to decipher if in fact China is investing in Africa to boost its soft power. A study of this nature would also engage further with the issue of the influence of ownership change on content.

Sixthly, the role of audiences in print media transformation is an area that has not been considered in the debates and scholarship of this hotly contested issue. In a neo-liberal context such as South Africa the audiences are "consumers" and hence speak with their hard-earned rand. The tabloid newspaper *Daily Sun* is the biggest selling newspaper in post-apartheid South Africa (as discussed in chapter 3). Wasserman (2008) notes the remarkable rise and demand of tabloid newspapers in South Africa since their introduction almost a decade after the start of

democracy. Wasserman (2008: 786) links the issue of tabloids and transformation shortcomings in the press, “These tabloids speak to a section of the South African public that remain largely out of focus in the mainstream commercial media outlets which, despite far-reaching changes in ownership structures and editorial changes to bring about racial transformation in the media industry after apartheid, are still beholden to those sections of the public conventionally thought to be favoured by advertisers”. The high circulation of the *Daily Sun* deserves further research investigation, as to what gap this newspaper is filling for audiences left out of the mainstream press agenda that is driven by commercial imperatives, and broadly the role of audiences in realising true print media transformation.

9. Bibliography

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MEDIA TRANSFORMATION SEMINAR PANELLIST EXPERTS

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2. Daniels, Glenda. 2016. Senior Lecturer Wits Media Studies department, distinguished journalist, author *Fight for Democracy: the ANC and the Media in South Africa*, co-author Wits Journalism's reports *State of the Newsroom report: (2013) Disruptions and Transitions and (2014) Disruptions Accelerated* (SLLM Media Transformation seminar, 18.05.2016).
3. Duncan, Jane. 2016. Professor of Journalism at University of Johannesburg, former Highway Africa Chair of Media and Society at School of Journalism and Media Studies Rhodes University, prominent activist, former Director of FXI (SLLM Media Transformation seminar, 18.05.2016).
4. Mtimde, Lumko. 2016. Incoming CEO Universal Service and Access Agency of South Africa (USASSA), former CEO of MDDA, former Councillor at IBA and ICASA (SLLM Media Transformation seminar, 18.05.2016).
5. Phamodi, Sekoetlane. 2016. Black feminist activist, coordinates SOS public broadcasting coalition which advocates public broadcasting as a tool for social change, training in journalism and law (SLLM Media Transformation seminar, 18.05.2016).