

CHAPTER 3:RETHINKING MEDIA FOR DEVELOPMENT

In the previous chapter I discussed the complexities included in the issue of PMTCT and women's health in South Africa to lay the ground for analysis of news media coverage on this topic. Before this analysis can take place, it is important to frame the investigation in relevant media theory; as well as to understand the implications of news media as situated in democratic and commercial arenas. As I will discuss, the case can be made to say that news media as a profit oriented institution has no duty to critically engage in the development of women's health in the realm of PMTCT, as a marginalised concern. Nevertheless, in this chapter and throughout this report I argue that the requirement of financial stability for news media should not sacrifice the democratic commitment and social responsibility of presenting comprehensive discussions of women's health and their right to treatment and good health, in the realm of HIV/AIDS and PMTCT.

My overall intent in this chapter is to problematise and rethink the place of news media in contributing to the improvement of women's health, within the realm of PMTCT in South Africa. I will present an overview of the relevant theoretical frameworks and concepts as an interdisciplinary discussion of media for development, including:

- 'Development Communications' as a theoretical framework for the use of media for development;
- The portfolio of news media for the newly democratic South Africa;
- The context of a profit-oriented structure for news media and the challenges this presents in a developing country like South Africa; and

- A discussion of ‘news values’ and ‘media advocacy’ as journalistic ideals and how these principles appear in news coverage.

3.1 Development communications: Frameworks for media in development

Wilbur Schramm (1964, p.131), one of the earliest scholars on development communication suggests that,

The mass media can create a climate for development...mass media can contribute substantially to the amount and kinds of information available to the people of a developing country. They can widen horizons and thus help to build empathy; they can focus attention to problems and goals of development... This amounts to creating an informational “climate” in which development is stimulated.

The two fundamental perspectives of development communication that will enable my discussion on the prospective role of media in development are: the “modernisation framework” and the “participatory framework”. Srinivas R. Melkote (2003, p.141) describes the two dominant modes of development communication:

- (1) *Modernisation Framework*: Linear top-down transmission of information through big media. Focuses on macro settings with very little interest in the local culture and structures. It sees the change agent as the expert, benefactor, or non-participant. The primary goal is economic growth with political and infrastructure development. Its use of mass media is to spread standardised messages and entertainment; messages that are prescriptive, promotional

and/or persuasive. Examples of this framework are: diffusion of innovation, social marketing, and entertainment-education.

(2) *Empowerment (Participatory) Framework*: Non-linear, participatory structure with the use of small media. Focuses on local and community settings; understanding power inequities and systematic constraints on change. It sees the change agent as a collaborator, facilitator, participant, and advocate for individuals and communities. Its use of media and communications include facilitating critical awareness and community and organisational power. Examples of this framework include: participatory action research (PAR), and empowerment strategies

These are two broad frameworks of development communications that describe development in fundamentally different ways. Based on the orientation of media and understanding of media's place in development will lead to a preference of which paradigm to follow. Melkote (2002, p. 130) states that most media and development practitioners or scholars:

...tend to be split between those who view communication as an organisational delivery system and those who view communication more broadly, as inseparable from culture and from all facets of social change.

Also, it is difficult to define media as being either 'top-down' or 'bottom-up', because most media systems possess characteristics of both frameworks. Though these two frameworks are presented as in opposition to one another, it is important to highlight that

there are limitations to both models, particularly when it comes to gender, which will be discussed in the following sections. In addition, these two paradigms are notably the two primary conceptualisations of development communication; nevertheless they by no means exhaust the field of relevant frameworks. For the purposes of my research it is important to highlight that elements from both models could result in a more hybrid and inclusive model of development communication.

3.1.1 The Modernization thesis for development communication

Media as a mechanism to promote development became a theoretical discussion during the dominance of neoclassical economics of development theory, “promoting and supporting capitalistic economic development,” around the 1950s to 1960s (Melkote, 2003, p. 130). At this time, development had become the way forward for the newly independent states in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean (Mosco, 1996). In this period of decolonisation, mass media was used as a resource for securing the place of capitalism in the “Third World”, undermining communism, as well as encouraging “nation-building” for these transforming countries (ibid).

Schramm (1964) recommends that, “Mass media [are] the vehicles for transferring new ideas and models from the West to the Third World and from urban areas to rural countryside” (in Melkote, 2003, p. 134). Daniel Lerner, another influential American adviser of development communication, suggests attitudinal and behavioural change among developing societies and communities as a prerequisite to development (in

Kumar, 1994, p. 80). The mass media exposure would change the traditional values and beliefs of the embryonic societies into a developed populace with ideals to be “ambitious, competitive, [and] rational, with a desire to progress and consume” (ibid).

This process was supported by a proliferation of research and theories on development and the use of media. The significant study by UNESCO (1961) indicates strong correlations between per capita income, literacy, urbanisation, and industrialisation with well-developed media infrastructure (for instance a high daily circulation of newspapers per 100 persons) (in Mody, 1991, p. 22). There was not, however, a consensus on what comes first: developed media structures, or a developed society (ibid). All the same, Mody (1991, p. 23) states that the relationship between well developed media infrastructure, industrialisation and literacy was “positive enough” for communication professionals, academics and politicians to feel that media could in fact “carry mass mobilisation messages for national transformation”.

3.1.2 Critiques about the ‘top-down’ thesis

The modernisation paradigm began a new age of information. Schramm describes it as the “Communication Revolution;” a time when media became an agent for social change (1964, p.90). This era is seen, from a critical perspective, as an opportunity to extend the Western way of life, specifically concerning a market-driven economy, into these developing countries through modern means of communication (Mosco, 1996). A central

component to the critical perspective of the modernisation paradigm is that these interventions came from outside the control of the targeted nation or community, delivered through the top channels of government, international development institutions, or even non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (Riano, 1994, p.4) unto illiterate and unlearned citizens of the 'bottom' region of the society. In essence, critics view the modernisation theorists as seeing the West as an expert on contemporary lifestyle, whose rubric is universal, despite differences in political, social, and economic contexts.

Nevertheless, the developing countries were not simply passive receivers. Rather these nascent societies took these (Western) prescriptions somewhat readily because they were also anticipating bringing their peoples out of underdevelopment, poverty, unemployment and illiteracy creating a new developed and modernised society (Mody, 1991). However, Kumar (1994, p. 83) states that the effects of modernisation led to a "knowledge gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' [which has] widened as the elites have a greater access to the mass media". Further, Kumar mentions that the main beneficiaries of this era were the big industries, the multinational companies and the financing banks and institutions (ibid). The targeted beneficiaries, the most underdeveloped women and men and children in the developing countries, had little to show from the influx of media for development. Consequently, the socio-economic disparities within and between countries intensified (Mody, 1991).

It can be argued that for commercial news media this modernisation paradigm remains relevant. Commercial news media covers only mainstream issues that reflect a minority

of the population, including the economically powerful and literate, in developing countries. Even though the modernisation paradigm started in the 60s, the structure of media messages remains primarily top down, sourcing experts and officials. In the context of my research, the media messages do not highlight or tackle the context of PMTCT debates or the structural inequities of women that may make them more vulnerable to HIV infection. This may be a result of the fact that HIV-positive women's views and voices are predominantly left out of discussions that impact directly on their health and overall human development. The next paradigm addresses the challenge of women participating in such debates: the empowerment framework.

3.1.3 Participatory or empowerment framework for development communication

During the mid 70s-80s, the post-modernisation era, development scholars and practitioners suggested that participation from the grassroots level be included in any communication strategy for social change as a radical alternative to the modernisation theories of development communication (Melkote, 2003). Thus the rise of non-conventional approach to development communications was set in motion: the empowerment participatory framework. Shirley A. White (1994, p. 23) argues that usually empowerment is seen as reacting to deprivation or oppression, but empowerment can also be looked at as the “positive, holistic outcome of self-discovery, successful human interaction... [for] the confidence to engage in group processes is itself a liberating action”.

Pradip Thomas asserts that “participation primarily signifies sharing in an activity or process that was traditionally organised and implemented in hierarchical or exclusive ways” (1994, p.49). In other words, a process that allows people to define for themselves how they want to develop and what development means for them and media being an agent that encourages this participation and discussion. The participatory empowerment paradigm mainly refers to grassroots or community media as being this change agent. However, in this section I will examine whether or not such a paradigm can be incorporated into the structures of commercial print media.

A Brazilian scholar and educator, Paulo Freire (1970), coined the terminology “dialogical pedagogy” and his writings have been especially significant in this participative “bottom up” approach (in Waisbord, 2003, p. 152). White discusses Freire’s concept of “conscientisation” as significant to this framework: “To activate consciousness and critical awareness of one’s situation and environment, one’s identity, one’s talents, and one’s alternatives for freedom of action is an imperative to participatory action” (1994, p. 24). Conscientisation is valuable for human development and the betterment of one’s quality of life.

Freire’s pedagogy is based on horizontal discussion between media practitioners and the audience stimulating growth of awareness and consciousness for all participants. This dialogue creates an experience of authentic emancipation, development and liberation (Thomas, 1994, p. 51). Based on reciprocity and equality, the dialogue between media

producers and media audiences teach each other what are pertinent messages for their development and growth (Thomas, 1994; Mody, 1991). Media practitioners are to listen and observe what is relevant and critical to the development of its readers, then present the messages as they see fit with room for revision based on the validation of the communities response (Mody, 1991, p. 28).

Mody provides an illustration of how this can be appropriated in the print media by suggesting monthly newspapers that initiate group discussion by presenting questions and printing answers and responses on various crucial issues (1991, p. 29). In commercial print media there is often letters or responses from the public that imply public debate and dialogue.

3.1.4 Critical perspectives of the ‘bottom-up’ framework

While the participatory approach was created mainly to resist western ideas of development, it aims to use media to recapture the specific, indigenous knowledge of a community or society. However, ‘participation’ and ‘empowerment’ can be overused and abused terms because they tend to be defined in vague terms preventing such strategies from stimulating true empowerment and sustainable development. Some scholars call this ‘pseudo-participation’ (Melkote, 2003; White, 1994), where the decision making-power lies with planners, administrators, and the community’s elite. It is a challenge for media and developmental practitioners to create a genuine dialogue for development and

empowerment and not become manipulative or simply placate the needs of the people (White, 1994, p. 17).

Participation is important because it aims at including the voices of a community or society to inform on the dynamics and the needs of communities. The primary aim of the participatory approach is to discontinue the “culture of silence” that has befallen marginalised communities, like women (Thomas, 1994; Mody, 1991); however it is important to bear in mind the ever-present complexity of translating theory into practice. Without the daily experiences of HIV-positive women who visit antenatal clinics, and without including her concerns of disclosing to her partner and family because of the reality of stigma and ostracisation, newspaper stories will fail to speak directly to these women and their families.

The participation paradigm is conventionally used in community media that has a mandate to become immersed in the issues and concerns of a particular community. To ask a profit-oriented news media to report in this manner is not viable. Nevertheless, since news media are also situated in a developing society with massive social challenges such as HIV/AIDS, the space for such meaningful coverage is critical. I am suggesting a hybrid of both paradigms, for the news media to view the issues of women’s health as an opportunity to be a media for development.

3.1.5 De-silencing women: Feminist critiques of development communication frameworks

The question is how media can facilitate specifically the development of women's health in developing countries. In order for this to occur, women's access, representation, participation, and voices should be integrated in communication paradigms for development. From feminist perspectives, Liesbet van Zoonen (1991, p. 41) states "Media are perceived as the main instruments in conveying respectively stereotypical, patriarchal and hegemonic values about women". In other words, media messages maintain the status quo by not challenging the unequal power relations between men and women in society. Consequently, in the context of my research, this can prevent media from fostering critical awareness about women's health in the realm of PMTCT.

H. Leslie Steeves argues that the "liberal-capitalist" or modernisation framework has not produced substantial gender equality in development communication (2003, pp.230-233). In mass media content, women are stereotypically represented as homemakers, sex objects or victims as well as being targeted as the bearers of good health and nutrition (ibid). This moulds the way in which women are discussed in news, and it also has implications on what news values stories pertaining to women have: women's issues are not general news, rather they are discerned and sifted as "softer" issues or pertaining to concerns around children and healthcare ("SA media's blind spot," 2004).

Conversely, the empowerment framework insists on representation and participation at the local level: local residents (re)defining what development is for them. Which is why for many feminist media and development scholars, this alternative media discourse is appealing: women writing our own scripts. However, for significant amounts of women in the world that are excluded from accessing the media this representation is still lacking. The prerequisite of an increase in girl's literacy and greater use of indigenous communication is necessary (Steeves, 2003, p. 235).

Pilar Riano proposes a guiding question to development communication paradigms: "How do existing [communication] frameworks obscure or silence the experiences of women in the various life contexts of race, class, sexual orientation and ability?" (1994, p. 33). In the context of my research concerns this question is vital. Riano suggests that media "privilege[s] institutional, rationalistic (goal-based, time-lined, and preset), target oriented agendas (of the NGO, political group, or women's movement) over the participant's experience and goals" (ibid) Riano speaks to both the modernisation framework and the participatory paradigm. Both paradigms silence the voices of women by speaking (down) to or speaking on behalf of women (ibid). The subordination of a South African HIV-positive woman's voice in news text is the main challenge to a media for the development of women's health, in the realm of PMTCT.

Though this research specifically looks at the use of commercial, or privately owned, print media, Riano encourages participation that could be applicable to such media (1994, p. 6): "reducing the knowledge gap...[and] influence public policies..." For instance this

could take place as providing information on issues of PMTCT that challenge stigma (i.e. infant feeding options for HIV-positive mothers) , encourage policy change (i.e. better interventions for PMTCT) or discuss challenges of already existing policies (i.e. the present use of single-dose Nevirapine for PMTCT).

Development communication should be revisited and restructured to discontinue the culture of silence amongst women and women's issues in the media. True empowerment and human development for women essentially lies in their ability to acquire knowledge through various channels including media, as well as their ability to take control over her socio-economic and political situation ("Ch. 10 The Media," 2002). For commercial print media, I consider that using the voices of HIV-positive women to tell their own stories may not easily fall under their market-oriented portfolio. However, again, in the context of South Africa, with such a devastating issue concerning a large amount of the population, it is important to notice that news media can be an instrumental catalyst in providing a platform for these developmental issues.

3.2 News media in the context of the newly democratic South Africa

The participatory or empowerment paradigm of development communications has much appeal for currently developing nations like South Africa. The media is seen as a critical site for the transformation of the post-apartheid state from one of segregation and division to one that benefits and embraces all, regardless of race, gender, creed, ethnicity,

class, sexual orientation through democratic participation⁷. Keyan Tomaselli and Eric Louw (n.d., p. 2) argue that it is imperative that media be integrated among other political economic structures to further the democratic transition of South Africa:

In the South African context specifically, ‘participation’, ‘development’ and ‘media/communication’ need to be worked into a single programme for building a post-apartheid society with democratic (and more equally distributed) power-relationships

Tawana Kupe (2005, p. 195) states that participatory communication for Africa serve two major roles: “to provide the public with information and analysis; and to be an open forum for debate and discussion”. Thus, from this perspective, media should foster debate and discussion based on an exploratory, or in depth, analysis of the issues surrounding PMTCT for the betterment of women’s health in South Africa.

Democratic development is the path for the new South Africa and press freedom is strongly associated with political democratic societies (World Bank, 2002; Curran, 1996; McChesney, 2003). Gurevitch and Blumler (2000, p. 27) state, “free press can be said to embody the notion of citizen autonomy”: this describes the citizen’s “right to know.” Subsequently, this is seen as an essential human and socio-economic right of all citizens to be offered options and political choices that can lead to effective and meaningful participation in civic affairs (World Bank, 2002; Gurevitch & Blumler, 2000). Generally, the more democratic a country is the freer the press and vice versa; it is a mutually beneficial relationship (World Bank, 2002).

⁷ South African Media Charter (1992) states that media should include: “strong public media systems, controlled by communities and workers, organised to provide for the widest possible participation in the production, distribution, and exchange of communication and information (in Mosco, 1994, p. 127)

3.2.1 Portfolio for a democratic press

A pivotal role of the media in democracy is thus creating a politically literate and informed citizenry (Curran, 1996; Negrine, 1994; McChesney, 2003). In addition to being the “fourth estate” for the public sphere (Habermas, 1989 in Curran, 1996); Gurevitch and Blumler (2000, p. 25-26) suggest specific “expectations” that encapsulate a portfolio for media structures and practitioners in a democratic society, including:

- 1) Identifying and reporting on key socio-political issues that affect citizens, as well as the underlying forces that influence these issues and resolving them;
- 2) Stimulating dialogue across a range of views and providing a platform for specific interest groups to engage in advocacy around particular issues;
- 3) Holding public officials accountable for their actions and encouraging citizens to become involved in political processes;
- 4) Maintaining their own integrity and independence from the political process; and
- 5) Displaying respect for citizens/audience by providing incentives for citizens to choose to learn and make sense of his/her political and social environments; in other words encourage participation.

These are specific and challenging responsibilities of the media which are all imperative to media for development. This participative and democratic route is important in order for there to be an authentic free ‘media for development’ of all citizens. Thus, these

guidelines to a 'free press' and a democratic press are essential to combating the power structures that neglect marginalised voices (this will be discussed further in the subsequent section). Though the argument of this research is that news media should fulfil these roles, the present challenge for contemporary media is whose interests are key?

The rhetoric of democracy and press freedom states that everyone has a right to know and participate in development. The challenge lies in this to be translated into action. This issue, among others, is why some media and development theorists believe that the issue of ownership is the most critical factor for media in development, because those who *own* media also control the information flows, which has a major influence on whose interests are represented and who gets to speak (World Bank, 2002; Cottle, 2003). From this perspective "media industries are businesses, sites of investment and sources of employment" (Cottle, 2003, p. 3).

3.3 News media as a profit-driven enterprise

In my discussion of media in development it is important to contextualise media systems amongst the broader issues of the society and power relations within a society. Though it is not the primary aim of my research to do so, it is important to consider the wider political and economic forces that could influence newspaper coverage of women's health and the issues of PMTCT in South Africa. Media as a profit-driven enterprise is a

complex terrain and requires extensive investigation, in this section I will briefly discuss fields of thought concerning media as a business.

Press freedom includes autonomy from various forms of control, most notably government or political ties that could influence or censor news content or editorial choices; thus the distance between media houses and state control is critical (Coyne & Leeson, 2004, p. 40). Proponents of the liberal pluralist thesis believe the site that organises media to promote a healthy economy and democratic values is in the market place (McChesney, 2003, p. 8). From this perspective the media can fulfil their role as “watchdog” because there is no government restriction, the press is ultimately free, and speaks for the public.

The “libertarian” theory of the press also argues that commercial business is the best arena for the media because the press will be able to “give the people [consumers] what they want;” and if journalism becomes hyper-commercialised it is simply because the public want it (McChesney, 2003). Curran (1996, p. 91) states that those who endorse the liberal concept around the sovereign consumer firmly believe that,

Media-owners in a market-based system must give people what they want if they are to stay in business, and this ensures that the media as a whole reflect the views and values of the buying public and as a whole reflect the views and values of the buying public and act as a public mouthpiece

In this context, if the news media is not covering women's health, in the realm of PMTCT, in any meaningful way, it is simply because the consumers or readers are not interested. Consequently in order for print news media to be a viable business the news menu will consist of stories that will sell papers.

There are various perspectives on whether or not the market is the best regulator of the press (Cottle, 2003). The political economic perspective illustrates how economic dynamics of media production have “traceable consequences” on media coverage and the audience's ability to access media (Golding & Murdock, 2000, p.70). A neo-Marxist perspective argues that generally whoever owns and controls material production will also have control over the mental and symbolic production (media industries) in society—that of ideas, values and beliefs—can then justify and legitimise their position of socio-economic and even political dominance (Cottle, 2003, p. 7). From these perspectives media as a profit-driven enterprise is an elitist institution: catering to those who have disposable income to buy newspapers and are able to read English (the dominant language of newspapers within South Africa) and who live in the metropolitan areas (where most commercial newspapers are located).

Simon Cottle (2003, p.9) affirms that

Media corporations in pursuit of profits and continuing investor loyalty and /or advertising revenue will generally produce commodities for the largest possible market and for those with a disposable income which are thereby attractive to advertisers.

The advertisers seek potential consumers, while these media businesses are seeking profit-making opportunities with the use of particular advertisements in their newspapers (McChesney, 2003). However, McChesney (2003, p.31), says that media in the marketplace is not free to be what the public wants because advertisements plays a very influential role in determining the nature of a newspaper or the media in general. Advertisers are critical to the structure of media as a profit-making enterprise; conversely, this may be of little use to the needs of citizens.

Subsequently, the content, coverage and representation only cater for the buyers and consumers of media products, excluding citizens who do not have disposable income or who may hold minority or oppositional views, or have concerns that affect the economic minority (ibid). This perspective looks at potential consumers. In the context of my research, HIV-positive women are more likely to fall into the economic minority. Consequently, because of the lack of disposable income, these women's concerns with PMTCT and other critical issues will not be on the front page, or viewed as profitable content for media.

3.3.1 News media ownership in South Africa

McChesney argues that the continuous media concentration among a few giants worldwide results in increasing commodification of news content (2003). In many countries media corporations are owned by conglomerates that function as “oligopolies,”

or a handful of significant players (ibid). The trend of media oligopolies also exists in South Africa.

During the era of apartheid, print media was owned by two English language media groups: Argus Holdings Ltd, Times Media Ltd (TML); and two Afrikaans-language groups: Perksor and Nasionale Pers (National Newspapers) (MISA, 2004). During the first stages of transformation, the restructuring of the media industry attempted to bridge racial and class boundaries formed during apartheid. However, Ruth Teer-Tomaselli and Keyan G Tomaselli state that this reconstruction was “both a break from, and a continuation of, historical patterns” (2001, p. 135).

Presently in post-apartheid South Africa major media houses include:

- Independent Newspapers in South Africa: which owns fifteen publications, including *The Star*, *Sunday Independent*, and *The Argus*;
- Johnnic Communications: which has seven publications including high circulation *Sunday Times*, *The Sowetan* and *Business Day*;
- Media 24: which owns about ten publications, including a daily Afrikaans paper, *Beeld* and *City Press*;
- Alternative Media: *The Mail and Guardian*, a weekly newspaper in partnership with *The Guardian* (UK). Though there was a wave of anti-apartheid publications in 1980s, after instituting a democratic political regime, overseas funding and support dropped, leaving the *Mail and*

Guardian as the only remaining alternative newspaper (MISA, 2004, p.57).

In the context of the post-apartheid South Africa, this media ownership concentration can be a threat to the media's pluralism, diversity and independence, which James Curran (1996) states are all indispensable for a democratic society. The media are situated in a liberal democracy, which means that the audiences that can afford to buy a newspaper are still the ones that are more important than those who cannot (Teer-Tomaselli & Tomaselli, 2001). Concentration of ownership is an increasing threat to real public media because it limits the "reach" (penetration and circulation) of the media by focusing on only a selection of business and profit-oriented interests (World Bank, 2002).

3.3.2 Demands of consumers and citizens

Christopher J. Coyne and Peter T. Leeson (2004, p.33) importantly note that "consumer demand, although it may very well keep media sources in business, does not guarantee successful policy adoption and economic development". This suggests that while demand is very important to keep in mind for media actors, the interests of consumers cannot be the sole or principal factor dictating what type of issues are covered in a developmental society. The demands, or rights, of citizens in a democratic developing society, as discussed in the last section, require debate and discussion for an enlightened citizenry.

The market place may not be a sufficient terrain for news media to cover in-depth stories of citizens concerns and pertinent development issues. Cottle (2003, p. 10) states that this is because the market place is too “impersonal;” he states,

culture becomes defined in the terms of consumerism not citizenship, standardised products not expressions of cultural creativity, and audiences are position by income and technological access not citizenship rights or cultural needs.

It seems that media is once again using the top-down approach that modernisation theorists proposed in the 50s: creating consumers out of citizens through the promotion of standardised products is now the road to development while in the era of modernisation, producing civilised peasants through media messages was the path to progress.

Within the context of the newly democratic South Africa, where issues of development are of critical importance, this research argues that it would be inappropriate to absolve the news media of any responsibility towards covering developmental issues just because the media is situated in a market economy. The objective is to outline the possibility of the news media being a viable business while prioritising its social responsibility of reporting on developmental issues, such as women’s health. Further, the challenge is for print news media to generate new demands by introducing new products, or articles that are significant for the human development of women in the realm of PTMCT.

3.4 How to promote social change within the text

Media practitioners, in my research, are constructed as having the potential to be development practitioners with the ability to promote social change for the betterment of women's health in South Africa. However, the reality of news media as a profit-driven enterprise has expectations that could challenge this construction. In this section, the role of media practitioners (editors and journalists) in the moment of production of news texts will be discussed. Tony Harcup and Deidre O'Neill (2001) suggest that journalists go by unspoken or uncodified "ground rules" that exist in their daily practice of writing and deciding "what is news?" This section will describe two ideals that add to the discussion of news media coverage and the array of variables that construct media coverage and texts.

3.4.1 The Journalistic culture of news values

A market-driven classification of news views it as "a depletable consumer product that must be made fresh daily" (Tuchman, 1978, p. 179 in Schudson, 1997, p. 16). The concept of "news values" (Galtung & Ruge, 1981) which broadly describe the "value which a potential buyer/reader of news ascribes to any particular story" (Stein, 2002, p. 23) speaks to this market philosophy. The journalist must understand "what will strike [the] attention" of his/her readers (Galtung & Ruge, 1981, p. 52). In this subsection I will discuss news values as a journalistic ideal resulting from the profit-oriented structure of

mass media, as well as the significance to the topic at hand: news media's coverage of women's health in the realm of PMTCT.

Harcup and O'Neill's (2001) analysis of Johan Galtung and Mari Ruge's news values suggest that these values are very relevant and it is imperative to notice that the selection of stories is a methodology that all media practitioners and players exercise daily, whether consciously or subconsciously. Stein's (2002, p. 23) reports that HIV/AIDS has low newsworthiness because,

the epidemic was ... not considered to have major news value for readers of newspapers catering for a predominantly middle and upper class market who are perceived to be less severely affected by the epidemic.

This is what the critical political economic perspective says of media situated in a market place: if the story does not affect or appeal to the "elite" or the buyers of news, then it will not be regarded as priority for the news menu. Also, AIDS is not new— it is a massive pandemic without any cure in the near future, the bottom line is predictable "people die". This character of AIDS stories is not conventionally newsworthy. The need of unpredictability and unexpectedness is crucial to create high news values and appeal for readers (Galtung & Ruge, 1981; Harcup & O'Neill, 2001).

If there is news on HIV/AIDS it will often be overloaded with conflict and controversy, about well-known people, with status of 'celebrity' and will not go deep into personal stories, in order to sell papers. One journalist stated (Stein, 2002, p. 13)

The South African government's controversial response to HIV/AIDS, and the resultant politicisation of HIV/AIDS, has dominated HIV/AIDS coverage by the South African media and shaped the media's response to the epidemic.

This decision to use well-known people or experts is an illustration of the top-down approach of the modernisation framework. The experiences of HIV-positive pregnant women are not seen as being as valuable or credible as that of a 'celebrity' or personified activist, politician or medical doctor. Cottle (2003, p. 15) states that this dependency on 'official,' 'authoritative' sources gives journalist an ability to claim that their stories are factual and fulfilling the notorious news myth of 'objectivity.' This is apparent in newspaper stories about PMTCT and the Nevirapine debates, with approximately 46% of news sources being government officials and leaders of NGOs (Spurr, 2005). With frequent sound bites from the authorities of the National Health Department, the Treatment Action Campaign, the medical communities, or press releases from the international community. Consequently, stories that source HIV-positive women facing the births of their unborn children, and their queries and anticipation of such experiences hardly feature.

In the framework of a profit-oriented industry, the editor or journalist must understand the commercial interests and this is a major influence on what gets covered and how.

These constraints due to market regulation suggest that news media will always be loyal to news values because they drive the market, they compel the people to buy newspapers—events, conflict, excitement, newness. Walter Lippmann (2000, p. 38)

states that there is an “economic necessity” and responsibility that journalists must adhere to: to avoid economic risks of not interesting the reader quickly or at all. As aforementioned HIV/AIDS poses such risks (Stein, 2002).

In view of the fact that issues concerning HIV/AIDS and women do not have high news value for the buyers of newspapers within South Africa, to ask news media to meaningfully cover these issues is seemingly asking media houses to jeopardise their business. Nonetheless, one of the requirements in the portfolio of a media situated in a democracy is to identify, inform, and analyse socio-economic and political issues that affect citizens and to stimulate public participation through debate and discussion (Kupe, 2005; Gurevitch & Blumler, 2000). Thus the request for mainstream news media, positioned in a young democratic and developing country such as South Africa, is to negotiate the need to make profit as well as the social responsibility to cover pertinent developmental issues. The challenge is to increase the news value of women’s health in the realm of PMTCT. The next sub-section discusses a possible strategy media can utilise in order to mainstream these marginalised issues.

3.4.2 The use of media advocacy for development

Gurevitch and Blumler (2000, p. 31) say in the contemporary political communication systems there are two types of communicators: advocates and journalists. Journalists, from this perspective, are oriented heavily in news values, writing stories that will create

headlines and sell papers. Advocates, conversely, according to Lawrence Wallack would use media strategically:

To advance social or public policy initiatives... adopt[ing] a participatory approach that emphasises the need of communities to gain control and power to transform their environments (“Media Advocacy”, 2001)

For media practitioners “advocacy” is displayed using a continuum between “strong” and “weak” advocacy. Strong advocacy indicates that media has a strong influence on actions and course of events: “agenda setting” (Stein, 2002). It understands that micro or individual level issues are many times embodied in the socio-economic and political environments. This gives media a role of raising issues, particular about health, and putting pressure on decision-makers advocating for policy change. Stein (2002, p.12) states that journalists would often compare the moral commitment of strong advocacy in response to HIV/AIDS as was used in the anti-apartheid movement. This implies that media advocacy that urges for reform and policy implementation is possible and necessary, particularly in the face of such a devastating pandemic.

Weak advocacy, conversely, takes a soft approach through “information-giving,” also known as the “informational role” of the media (Curran, 1996) and is in accordance with the democratic portfolio suggested by Gurevitch and Blumler (2000). Curran (1996, p. 103-104) states three characteristics of this media function, including:

(1) *creating public access to a diversity of values and perspectives*- this will add to the society understanding itself as a collective and will be critical of what is understood as the dominant culture. The various experiences in society should include subordinate classes, which Curran (1996, p. 104) says is “likely to promote empathy and understanding” from other groups in society;

(2) *agency of representation* – this is connected to the first point, the media should have a representational role expressing alternative viewpoints of social groups and organisations, this can also be called a “civic media sector”. This includes organised groups in civil society, and social networks that use the media as a channel of communication;

(3) *conflict resolution*- media should facilitate in discussion between opposed groups in society, for instance between members of civil society and government; “the core media of society are also an important mechanism for collective reconciliation;

Depending on the internal environment, for example the news room, and the external expectations, for instance of advertisers, will influence how a journalist is able to negotiate between strong and weak advocacy. Nevertheless, this media advocacy perspective for news media is important. For it promotes empowerment by reaching and voicing the concerns of those who are normally marginalised in addition to influencing structural change, concurrently facilitating in the development that decreases the gaps

between “know” and “know-nots⁸” (UNDP, 1999, p. 57). The challenge is to negotiate room for media advocacy in a news room that is driven by the market.

These two concepts, news values and advocacy, appear to be in conflict with one another: one sees news as a product that must meet certain criteria for it to be consumed (market-strategy), while the other views news as having the capacity to advocate for social change (participatory and collective strategy). However, recognising that there may be space for both, the test is for journalists to meet the criteria of news values while still writing meaningful stories that advocate for women’s health and development. The requirement of financial sustainability for news media should not sacrifice the moral commitment and social responsibility of presenting critical discussions of women’s health and their right to treatment and good health, in the realm of HIV/AIDS and PMTCT.

This chapter provides the theoretical paradigms for the analysis of the news articles in this research. Throughout this chapter various paradigms and concepts are discussed as seemingly disparate frameworks for a media in development. For instance, the modernisation framework that has a predilection to expert opinions about how and what development should look like. While the participatory paradigm for development communications states that the process of development will not be empowering unless it involves the necessary indigenous voices. In addition, the concept of news values discussed in this last section demonstrates the environment of the marketplace and the demands of consumers as some of the forces that influence which issues are selected as

⁸ This disparity among and within nations of people’s access to media and information heavily influences one’s ability to attain to human development. See UNDP Human Development Report 1999. Ch. 2 “The Race for Knowledge” p. 57

news and how they are written. Conversely, the democratic requests outlined specifically by Gurevitch and Blumler (2000) represent the demands of citizens, which include the news media providing an arena for critical public discussion. However, these are paradigms that do not have to exclude one another. In other words, the need for the news media to be a viable business should not take away from the democratic and development needs of the news media to be a platform for participation and analytical debate. I suggest in this chapter and the remainder of this report that in a country like South Africa, with such development trajectories such as women's health and PMTCT, the media should report significantly on development issues that remain on the periphery of the news menu, such as women's health.