The South African print media, 1994-2004:

An application and critique of comparative media

systems theory

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ABSTRACT

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Daniel C Hallin and Paolo Mancini's *Comparing Media Systems* (2004) has been hailed as an important contribution to understanding the inter-relationship between the media and political systems. The work was, however, based on a study of 18 stable, mature and highly developed democracies either in Europe or in North America. As an emerging democracy that has recently undergone dramatic change in both its political system and its media, South Africa's inclusion poses particular challenges to Hallin and Mancini's Three Models paradigm. This thesis focuses on the South African print media and tests both the paradigm's theoretical underpinnings as well as its four principle dimensions of analysis: political parallelism, state intervention, development of a mass market and journalistic professionalisation. A range of insights and a number of modifications are proposed. This thesis is based on interviews with South Africa's most senior media executives and editors, a comprehensive study of the relevant literature and 15 years of personal experience as a political analyst, columnist and parliamentary correspondent covering South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy. The thesis sheds new light on the functioning and applicability of the Three Models comparative paradigm as well as on the development and future trajectory of South African print media journalism.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABC	Audit Bureau of Circulations
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AMPS	All Media and Products Survey
ANC	African National Congress
Codesa	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
COM	Campaign for Open Media
Comtask	Task Group on Government Communication
Cosatu	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DA	Democratic Alliance
DP	Democratic Party
DIP	Department of Information and Publicity (of the ANC)
ETT	Electoral Task Team
FAWO	Film and Allied Workers Organisation
Forex	Foreign Exchange
GCIS	Government Communication and Information System
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRC	Human Rights Commission
IBA	Independent Broadcasting Authority
Icasa	Independent Communications Authority of South Africa
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
LSM	Living Standards Measure
MAPPP	Media, Advertising, Publishing, Printing and Packaging
MDDA	Media Development and Diversity Agency
M&G	Mail and Guardian
MISA	Media Institute of South Africa
MWASA	Media Workers Association of South Africa
NAIL	New Africa Investments Limited
NEC	National Executive Committee (of the ANC)
Nedlac	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NNP	New National Party
POSA	Press Ombudsman of South Africa
ROI	Return on Investment (ratio)
SA	South Africa
SAARF	South African Advertising Research Foundation
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SACP	South African Communist Party
SACS	South African Communication Service
SATU	South African Typographical Union
SANEF	South African National Editors' Forum
SAUJ	South African Union of Journalists
SETA	Sectoral Education Training Authority
TEC	Transitional Executive Committee
TML	Times Media Limited
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UDM	United Democratic Movement

Chapter One:

INTRODUCTION

> *As different areas of the globe are drawn into inter-connection with one another, waves of social transformation crash across virtually the whole earth's surface (Giddens 1990, 6).*

South Africa: waves of change

There will be few years in South African history with as much significance as 1994, the year the country became a democratic state, held its first elections with universal franchise and elected its first black president. Though the world had begun to warm up to the idea of a new South Africa in the lead up to the election of April 27th 1994 – sanctions had eased and foreign investment had started to trickle in – the doors to the world were well and truly flung open in the heady days after the poll. The country's shift from global pariah to universal icon of hope and reconciliation was as rapid as it was largely peaceful.

Naturally and inevitably, the switch had massive repercussions on many aspects of the South African polity, not least on the purveyors of the country's newspapers and magazines. 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.

With television only arriving in the mid-1970s (very late by world standards) and the broadcast sector tied up in a state monopoly until the early 1990s, there was little opportunity for the convergence of technologies or for the amalgamation of multi-media empires that was in full force in the rest of the world by the beginning of the period. Apartheid isolation ensured no substantial foreign investment in the mainstream print sector until 1993, leaving 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 sector was clearly ready for a major overhaul. Change was looming fast.

Media Change

In the days following South Africa's first democratic election in April 1994, an extraordinary development occurred in the country's print media sector. People stopped buying newspapers. Across the board, virtually every title, whether daily, weekly, metropolitan or provincial, experienced a significant decline in circulation (see Table 1). Cape Town's major afternoon daily, the *Cape Argus*, lost almost 20% of its readership between mid-1994 and the end of 1995. Durban's *Daily News* dropped from just under 100,000 in the first half of 1993 to 75,960 in the last six months of 1995 and South Africa's flagship Johannesburg-based daily, *The Star*, fell from 216,684 for the period January to June 1993 to 165,171 for the last half of 1995 (ABC 2006).

Collectively these declines – total daily newspaper circulation fell by 11%, or 134,564 copies between June 1994 and December 1995 (ABC 2006) – signalled a huge loss of revenue and a dramatic shift within the market and its audience. In most cases, existing titles have been unable to reclaim the lost ground. Recent figures for the *Cape Argus*, for instance, indicate the paper was selling barely 74,000 a day for the period July to September 2006, still a long way from the 105,000 sold little more than 10 years ago (ABC 2006).

But it was not just the quantity of sales that fell in the wake of the birth of a new democracy. It was the quality of print media products too. In 2002, an investigation was launched into the diminishing quality of newspaper and magazine reportage. The South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef) commissioned a comprehensive skills audit of relatively senior (3 to 5 years of experience) local journalists. It was hoped the audit would provide important indicators concerning the state of South African journalism. It did, and the

result, according to the then Sanef chairman and *City Press* Editor Mathatha Tsedu, was "not a nice picture" (2002, 5).

Table 1: The ABC of declining Sales

Title	1994		1995	
	Jan-Jun	Jul-Dec	Jan-Jun	Jul-Dec
Cape Argus	106,574	97,996	89,014	82,774
Mercury	62,925	57,813	49,874	42,690
Sowetan	217,823	190,586	208,358	207,849
The Star	208,185	191,332	182,119	165,171
Daily News	93,247	87,814	81,032	75,960

Source: Audit Bureau of Circulations 2006

The poor skills' levels were worse than expected and pointed to deteriorating work force quality and thus outputs at key levels in the sector. Among the results of the Sanef audit: 82% of the South African journalists surveyed showed poor interviewing skills, many demonstrated a weak grasp of general knowledge (in the science category, 60% did not know who formulated the theory of relativity and 72% did not know who formulated the theory of evolution) while a low level of reporting skills in general was common (De Beer & Steyn 2002).

Sanef conducted a follow-up study into the skills of first-line managers in news organisations, dubbed Skills Audit 2, in 2004. The results this time showed substantial management skills' weaknesses. First-line (newsroom) managers felt less positive than their reporters about their working environments, particularly in relation to career development and remuneration, were aware they didn't communicate as well as they should and demonstrated significant

skills' gaps in self-management, teamwork, strategic initiative and in coping with multiculturalism and multilingualism (Barratt 2006, 46).

Neither were poor skills' levels the only evidence of a diminishing journalistic professionalism in this period. The major trade union for practicing journalists, the South African Union of Journalists (SAUJ), collapsed and was finally liquidated in 2005. Other trade unions, such as the Media Workers Association of South Africa (Mwasa) and the South African Typographical Union (SATU) continued in the sector, but accounted for only a small proportion of working journalists. Both Mwasa and SATU were intended primarily for the print shop employees working in the presses. By 2007, no genuine alternative association to the SAUJ had been established or seemed likely. Some newspaper houses, such as Independent Newspapers Cape retained the services of former SAUJ officers (such as Ronnie Morris) to represent their staff informally (McKay 2006).

But, in general terms, the support and regularisation of professionalism in the industry has now been left largely to the editors (who have traditionally and historically been antagonistic to the rights of journeymen journalists in South Africa), through their organisation Sanef. Sanef itself suffered various crises of division and disagreement from its inception in 1998 (Barratt 2006). Nor was it only poor skills and the collapsing state of the unions that indicated serious fault lines were appearing in journalistic organisation and reducing professionalism.

Repeated and public ethical blunders such as cases of plagiarism, biased reportage in support of political factions (as evidenced in the Hefer Commission of 2003-4, see below) and wide scale inaccuracy embarrassed the industry in the post-1994 period (see Chapter Six). The Sanef executive declared in a statement after its AGM in 2004: "It can be safely said that trust in the media and journalism among the broader public … and other key stakeholders is not what it should be" (Barratt 2006, 55).

Major cutbacks of staff and of training budgets by most media companies in the wake of a gathering recession in the sector from 1999 to 2002 further

undermined the professionalisation of South African journalists. This was worsened once more by the poor remuneration packages that still prevail in the industry (but for which there is no reliable data[1]) that made offers from the private or public sector particularly appealing to young, degreed journalists still serving their apprenticeship in the industry. The result of these trends was the "juniorisation" of newsrooms and the diminishment of the role of editors relative to management (see Chapter Six). A further significant factor in the development of these trends was government's urgent challenge to the media to transform the racial profiles of their organisations.

Clearly, a great deal of change has taken place in the media workplace in South Africa since 1994. This thesis includes within it an explanation for this change. It makes use of a theoretical framework, Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini's Three Models paradigm (2004), that is comparative by nature and which therefore does not leave analysts pondering the significance of these developments in isolation (as has been the case certainly in South African scholarship). Taken as a whole, the trends South Africa's media has experienced can be weighed up against the experiences of other nations' media. Indeed, it can be seen that diverse nations can be clustered according to the commonalities of their experiences. This comparability infers predictability, as similar systems experience similar paths of development. The Hallin-Mancini framework explains the features of a country's media system by matching them to the characteristics and history of the country's political system. In this way, the trends make holistic sense as they relate to occurrences in the broader political, social, economic and global environment. We will consider this in more detail below.

It was not only journalistic skills, circulation figures and the race of newsrooms that began to change in South Africa from 1994. The structure and dynamics of the media market itself started to shift. The alternative press, consisting of around a dozen foreign-funded or supported but influential anti-apartheid newspapers, was closed down in the face of funding and positioning problems

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[1] No data, but I can personally attest to the low scales. As the assistant editor and then acting editor of the Cape Argus from 1999 to 2002 I was privy to journalists' salary and benefit scales

(Opatrny 2007). Only one alternative title, the *Weekly Mail*, remains. The mainstream sector itself underwent a massive overhaul as black and foreign capital entered the marketplace for the first time seizing control of a variety of significant media enterprises, including Times Media Limited (TML) and the Argus Publishing and Printing Company. By contrast, Nasionale Pers (Naspers), a formerly unilingual and politically partisan newspaper group, expanded into an imposing, multi-platform, multilingual global presence with media activities in some 50 countries.

At present, in 2007, South Africa has 43 daily, weekly and bi-weekly commercial newspapers representing a wide range of different audiences and interests (Milne & Taylor 2006). They are owned by four media groups (Naspers[2], Johnnic Communications Ltd, Caxton & CTP Publishers and Printers Ltd, and Independent News & Media Plc[3]). In addition, the country has more than 50 "knock-and-drops", or local "free sheets", owned and distributed by the major media groups as vehicles for local advertising (Milne & Taylor 2006). According to the most recent survey, there are around 100 authentic community-run newspapers dotted around the country ranging from regular weekly papers to sporadic newsletters distributed by hand (Hadland & Thorne 2006).

The South African newspaper market has seen rapid growth since the year 2000, marked by new entrants into the market and rising overall circulation and readership (ABC 2006; SAARF 2006 cited by Milne & Taylor 2006). Between 2000 and 2005, total circulation of daily newspapers increased by 38.4% from 1.13 million per day to 1.57 million (ABC, 2006, cited by Milne & Taylor 2006, 39). Much of the circulation growth was due to newly launched titles, however, leaving the established mainstream papers in a steady downward curve, reflecting global trends.

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[2] Naspers reorganised its print media business in 2000 and renamed this part of the company Media24. With the date of the change falling in the middle of the research period, I have had to use whichever name is appropriate for the citation. This is more accurate, but possibly confusing.
[3] I will refer to Independent Newspapers & Media Plc for the rest of this thesis by the name by which it is commonly referred, Independent Newspapers.

Overall, circulation levels and market diversity are both at low levels in South Africa, in spite of the relatively sophisticated nature of the print media industry. By 2000, South Africa had the second-lowest number of print titles in the world relative to population and a circulation per capita that is the world's fifth-lowest (Duncan 2000, cited in Berger 2004, 59).

One of the most striking trends in the post-1994 period has been the commercialisation of the South African print media sector. This has been evident in the rapid development of the niche, client magazine or contract publishing sector. Circulation figures from ABC show unprecedented growth in the publishing and sales of magazines. By 2005, there were about 350 ABC-audited magazine titles (or 20 million magazines) being distributed in South Africa every month. Many of these were "custom" magazines published on behalf of corporate clients for distribution to their own customers (Milne & Taylor 2006, 39). While this thesis deals specifically with the mainstream news media[4] in South Africa, developments in associated sectors can have an impact. An important aspect of the upward trend in custom magazines, for instance, has been the challenge it has presented to ethical standards in the industry. The blurring of advertising material and editorial content has become endemic in the print sector as a whole with significant consequences for media status as well as for the industry's long-term financial health (Hadland et al, 2007).

According to All Media and Products Survey (AMPS) figures from the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF), 40.4% of the adult population read a newspaper at least once a week in 2000, rising only very fractionally to 40.6% by 2005 (cited in Milne & Taylor 2006, 39). This is of course low by developed world standards but is skewed by the large proportion of rural dwellers (almost half of the population) in South Africa, many of whom are beyond the reach of newspaper distribution chains, or who simply cannot afford to purchase regular newspapers. Poverty is also endemic in the rural areas.

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[4] By mainstream I use Jacobs' (2004) definition as follows: "national and regional commercial English and Afrikaans-language print media in South Africa".

But few developments have been more significant to the South African media marketplace in the post-1994 period than the arrival of mass-market tabloid newspapers. In 1994, the biggest selling daily newspaper – which sold an average of 191,322 copies per day in the first half of the year – was *The Star* of Johannesburg (ABC 2006). By 2006, South Africa's top-selling daily was a tabloid, the *Daily Sun*, currently selling about 450,000 copies a day. Indeed, a closer look at the rise in the circulation of South African newspapers between 2000 and 2005 reveals that the 38.4% increase is entirely accounted for by the *Daily Sun* and by the new Zulu language paper *Isolezwe* (which had an average daily circulation of 86,232 in 2006).

Excluding these two publications, there has been a decline of 10.8% in the total circulation of the remaining 17 dailies monitored by the ABC (Milne & Taylor 2006). Between them, the 11 major metropolitan daily newspapers lost 121,179 in daily sales over the period. The mainstream newspaper market is generally considered by media executives to be a mature market in which products are largely competing against each other for the same audience (Malherbe 2006). As the Naspers annual report stated in 2003, "most sectors of South Africa's magazine and newspaper markets are overtraded" (Naspers 2003, 10).

The success of the *Daily Sun* from its inception in 2003 spawned other similar tabloid titles such as the *Sunday Sun* and the *Son*, both owned by Naspers and publisher Deon Du Plessis, and the *Daily Voice* (Independent Newspapers). Similar to their British predecessors, the South African titles were all aimed at the blue-collar market: in this case, lower-middle class black and coloured readers. They are all largely apolitical in the party sense and rarely engage in national political analysis or partisan reportage. The figures and trends suggest that rather than cannibalise the readerships of other mainstream titles, the new titles reached many readers who previously did not buy a newspaper regularly (Du Plessis 2006). In this way, a mass newspaper market was genuinely constructed from scratch in South Africa's recent past[5].

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[5] It is worth noting that antecedents for South Africa's tabloids existed, according to some, in publications like *Bantu World* of the 1950s.

A final key trend during the period has been realignment in the relationship between the media and the state. This was inevitable with the regime change from apartheid state to democracy, but it is clear in retrospect that both sides have struggled to come to terms with their new roles and responsibilities (see Chapter Four). The consequence has been heightened tension between the majority party in government, the African National Congress (ANC), and the media. Johnston identifies a series of "points of conflict" that have developed between the ANC and the print media and characterises these as follows: "At best, the ANC's relationship with the political press has been distant and neurotically suspicious; at worst, pathologically hostile" (2005, 13). A number of developments serve to illustrate this shift of relations. They include the state's growing willingness to intervene in the media in various ways, its reluctance to reform legislation affecting the media, its entrée into mass newsletter publishing and the establishment of a variety of clientelist-type bonds between government and the nascent community media sector (see Chapter Four).

The shift is also evident from the challenge both to and within the media to revisit its traditional, liberal role of Fourth Estate watchdog in a favour of a more conciliatory, less adversarial voice. This has corresponded with an increasingly cosy relationship between majority party political leaders and media owners (see Chapter Three).

Clearly, wide-ranging and important changes have taken place in the South African media in the post-1994 period. And while few would dispute the broad themes of change – journalistic professionalisation, state-media relations, the proximity of the media to the political system and the structure of the market – it is no coincidence that these are the very dimensions singled out by Hallin and Mancini (2004) as the key indicators for comparative media system analysis. We will return to this below.

Political change

Of course, it is not merely South Africa's media that has undergone fundamental change in the last decade-and-a-half. Perhaps more evident to the world at large has been the seismic change in South Africa's political life. The

country's relatively peaceful and rapid transition from apartheid pariah to constitutional democracy was heralded around the world as a massively important moment of human achievement. The "miracle" of racial reconciliation delivered Nobel peace prizes to Nelson Mandela and his counterpart, then deputy president, F.W. De Klerk. It also set South Africa on a new path of political and economic development.

There were many hallmarks of this political journey. Some were clearly evident to the whole world, others only to the new breed of legislator who set about reforming three hundred years of statutory discrimination. As Calland observed after the country's first five years of democracy: "South Africa's Parliament is unrecognisable from the one that preceded it before 1994. The pictures on the wall are different, the atmosphere in the building is far less stuffy and the buildings are certainly far more lively. Not only does its membership comprise a majority of black people who suffered under apartheid, serving political parties a number of whom were banned until 1990, but its institutional construction has been almost entirely overhauled" (1999, 100).

Key among these statutory hallmarks were the adoption of an interim democratic constitution in 1993 and its finalisation in 1996. These two documents encompassed a total overhaul of the country's political culture and its political, social and judicial system encompassing a Bill of Rights, broad equality and universal suffrage. This new vision of political practice was embarked upon when Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) achieved its anticipated and substantial electoral majority in 1994 and began a systematic recreation of the country's entire legislative framework, abolishing, amending or creating hundreds of laws. In fact, South Africa's first democratic government passed 534 Acts of Parliament in its first five years, in itself a "huge achievement" (Calland 1999, 5). As Nelson Mandela said in his farewell speech to Parliament: "These have been no trivial laws or mere adjustments to an existing body of statutes. They have created a framework for the revolutionary transformation of society and of government itself" (cited in Calland 1999, 5). As we will see later (in Chapter Four), not all of the laws that contained anti-press freedom elements were abolished by the new democratic state.

Horwitz has surveyed the considerable volume of literature – particularly in the post-1990 period – that considers political transitions and the evolving architecture of new democratic institutions (2001). This "'transition theory', as it is loosely referred to, is the product of reflection upon, and abstraction from, the historically disparate paths to democracy followed in central and southern Europe and Latin America" (2001, 6). Horwitz identifies South Africa as an example of a "transplacement" transition, according to Huntingdon's classic 1991 analytical paradigm (*The Third Wave: Democratisation in the late 20th century*). This form of transition is usually ushered in as the result of negotiations between powerful groups and most frequently occurs in conditions of stalemate. A common factor is the consensual terrain enjoined by both reformers within the ruling regime and moderates in the opposition (2001, 6-7). I would concur with Horwitz that this does seem to encapsulate important features of South Africa's political transition. In addition, his observation that most successful transitions from this category "produce a dispensation that is economically and socially conservative, thus maintaining the central pillars of capitalist society" is cogent (2001, 7). The citation of the transition theory literature serves to underline a point made at various times within this thesis: Democracy has many different forms and encapsulates many different processes. For Hallin and Mancini's paradigm to gain universal acceptance, it needs to be able to absorb, and explain, these diverse and often divergent elements.

Comparative Media Systems theory

It is indisputable even from the brief sketch above that profound change affected the development both of South Africa's political system and of its media system in the post-1994 era. But can they be linked? And, if so, "which is the tail and which is the dog?" (Hallin & Mancini 2004, 267). These questions lie at the heart of Hallin and Mancini's *Three Models of Media and Politics* (2004). In the work, which I describe as comparative media systems theory, a new paradigm for understanding and critiquing the media is presented.

The Hallin and Mancini paradigm naturally has its antecedents, including the important pathfinding comparative analysis of Blumler and Gurevitch (1995). This was one of the first to present "a systems outlook" of the media in which "the interactions of various actors occur within an overarching framework of organising principles that are designed to regularise the relationships of media institutions to political institutions" (1995, 11). Hallin and Mancini lean heavily on the four "dimensions" identified by Blumler and Gurevitch as representing the key points of intersection between media and political systems and which in many ways preempt or overlap with the four dimensions of the Three Models theory. The Blumler and Gurevitch work, however, was principally America-Great Britain specific and also focused strongly on the important but narrowly literal inter-relationship between political journalists and politicians.

Also deeply influential to Hallin and Mancini's paradigm are Weber's work on rational legal authority, Lijphart's writings distinguishing consensual from majoritarian democracy, the differentiation theory of Parsons and Durkheim and its derivative interpretations by Habermas, Alexander and Bourdieu. The field theory of the latter, in which agents within a field[6] act with what Bourdieu terms fundamental complicity, provides an important theoretical corroboration of the Three Models paradigm. Habermas, too, with his deeply influential concept of the public sphere, is another key theoretical ally. According to Hallin, "Habermas's initial argument on the structural transformation of the public sphere was that the media, which were originally rooted in the emerging public sphere, were eventually absorbed into the market and the arena of political power" (2005, 236-7). This notion of the media's vulnerability to "colonisation" by social systems that concentrate economic and political resources "seems correct", according to Hallin (2005, 237).

A particularly influential predecessor in comparative media scholarship was the classic *Four Theories of the Press* by Siebert et al (1956). According to this work, the press "reflects the system of social control" evident in a country

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[6] Bourdieu defines a field as: "a field of forces within which the agents occupy positions that statistically determine the positions they take with respect to the field, these position-takings being aimed either at conserving or transforming the structure of relations of forces that is constitutive of the field" (2005, 29).

(Siebert et al 1956, 1). Thus, in an authoritarian state, the press is controlled in its functions and operations by organised society through the institution of government (1956, 10). While the Siebert text was the first of its kind, its comparative element was abstractly theoretical and somewhat limited. Its idea of social control being the key determinant was, for instance, just one of the four dimensions cited by Blumler and Gurevitch. *Four Theories* also assigned great import to the Soviet Communist theory of the press, a notion that crumbled for good at about the same time as the Berlin Wall.

Hallin and Mancini's work is not unaccompanied by other contemporary contributions on comparative media analysis. Indeed, three other major works of synthesis were produced within the last two or three years that form the peer group for *Comparing Media Systems*. These are the work of McChesney (2004), Hardt (2004) and Starr (2004). According to Mark Hampton, "a common thread of these four works is the assumption that the American media's development has a particular relevance as it represents the current and future trajectory of other nations' media" (2005, 240). All the works highlight tensions between capitalism and democracy and all allude to conflicts between media consumers and their responsibilities as citizens and all emphasise a new interest in media history (Hampton 2005, 240). None of the other works, however, attempt anything like the scale of Hallin and Mancini's enterprise (which uses data from 18 countries), nor do they present a whole, new theoretical framework with which to conduct comparative media systems analysis.

The primary focus of Hallin and Mancini's paradigm is the relationship between a country's media system and its political system while its underlying purpose is to answer the fundamental question, to paraphrase Siebert et al (1956), of "why is the press as it is?" (2004, 2). To find an answer to this critical question, Hallin and Mancini turned to comparative analysis, identifying three clusters of state-media inter-relationships that they call the three models. These are the Liberal model, typified by the US and Great Britain but also encompassing former colonies and territories such as Canada and Ireland; the Democratic Corporatist model that largely represents northern continental Europe (Scandinavia,

Germany, Holland); and the Polarised Pluralist model occupied by the Mediterranean states of southern Europe such as Italy, Portugal and Greece. The three clusters are represented as the three tips of a triangle with the various individual countries arrayed according to their proximity to one or the other cluster (see figure 1).

Polarised Pluralist

- Greece
- Spain • •
- Portugal
- I
- F
- Bel
- Ger
- Au
- Netherl
- United Kingdom
- Norway
- Denmark
- Fin
- Sw
- Switze
- Ireland
- Canada
- US

Democratic Corporatist   **Liberal**
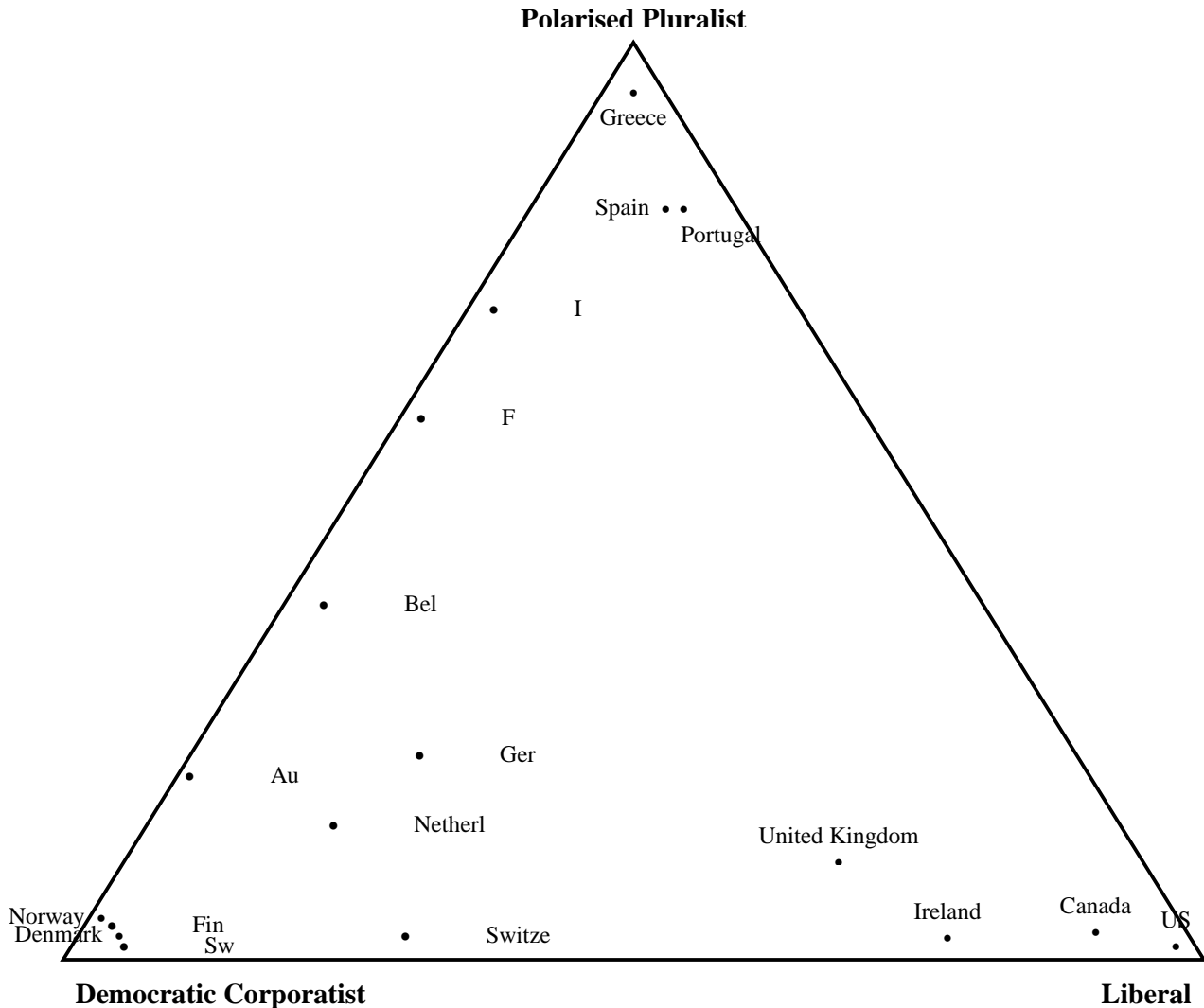
(figure 1: The Hallin-Mancini Matrix, or Relation of Individual Cases to the Three Models Source: Hallin and Mancini, 2004, 70)

It is immediately evident that the limited North American and European geographic spread of the 18 countries that populate the Three Models paradigm together with their collectively high degree of economic and social development, presents a substantive challenge to the applicability of comparative media systems theory. This is readily acknowledged by the authors who indeed

express their hope that their "models will be useful to scholars working on other regions as points of reference" (Hallin & Mancini 2004, 16). This thesis responds to this call and attempts to test the theory's plausibility by introducing its assumptions to South Africa's idiosyncratic political and media matrix. This is not a task undertaken lightly with even Hallin and Mancini urging that their work is not used "as a set of categories to be imposed on systems developed in very different contexts, in a way that would actually prevent us from analysing other systems on their own terms and understanding their distinctive logics" (2004, 305).

The authors do go on to say, however, that they suspect scholars working on media systems in other parts of the world (including in Africa) "will find much that is relevant" in their analysis and they express the expectation that "substantial modifications and perhaps new models" will be derived (Hallin & Mancini 2004, 306).

In the end, and with due attention to the warning against its misapplication, Hallin and Mancini's Three Models paradigm was simply too important not to apply to the media system of a key emerging democracy in Africa. All too often, contemporary theoretical and critical writing fails to take adequate cognisance of the experiences and knowledge of the developing world. This becomes all the more cogent when the "democratisation" literature that has developed to explain the recent wave of developing nations' transition to democracy, has largely failed to link the media and democratic processes (Jacobs 2004, 24). This situation has replicated itself in South African scholarship where, once again, "surprisingly little has been done by social scientists to connect the dots between media and democratic politics" (Jacobs 2004, 25).

Comparing Media Systems is a significant advance in media theory and it simply has to be stacked up against not only Africa's media and political environments, but also against the systems of other regions, not least the emerging democracies of formerly communist eastern Europe. Only by doing so, by testing the universality of its underlying principles when applied to diverse systems, will the true authority of the paradigm be assessed. Such an endeavour requires a degree of faith in the likelihood that the model will work.

There is, too, an inherent expectation that the Hallin-Mancini paradigm will generate new insights and understandings into the functioning of inter-related media and political systems and into the nature of change within them. Such expectations would not sit comfortably on a flimsy hypothesis that had been exposed critically. So what do the critics say about Hallin and Mancini's paradigm? How significant does it have the potential to be?

Since its publication in 2004, critics have hailed *Comparing Media Systems* as one of the most important theoretical contributions to comparative media studies in a generation. While a variety of reservations have been raised (see below), none who reviewed or cited the work (by early 2007) failed to appreciate its place at the cutting edge of comparative media studies. Writing in *Political Studies Review*, Nick Couldry describes Hallin and Mancini's *Comparing Media Systems* as a "remarkable work":

> The book's virtue lies not in formalism, but in its comparative analysis of how journalistic norms originated, and why they matter for politics. As a theoretically acute and historically precise account of what now drives the international commercialisation of journalism, this book has no rival (Couldry 2005, 308).

Some critics noted the work's resonance among not just media scholars but also those working in a number of related fields. In a review in the journal *Media History*, Hampton describes the work as "a pathbreaking book of great significance" (Hampton 2005, 245). The study, which is "deeply grounded" in communications, politics, sociology and Twentieth Century history, "will set the agenda for comparative scholarship" (Hampton 2005, 245).

Dennis McQuail, reviewing Hallin & Mancini in the *European Journal of Communication*, says there is no doubt the work presents "a useful set of tools for analysis" and adds that the Three Models paradigm amounts to "a valuable contribution to the comparative study" of media systems (2005, 266-268). In another review, this time in the *Journalism and Mass Communications Quarterly*, Robert L Stevenson calls *Comparing Media Systems* "a thoughtful

analysis, long in gestation, worth careful reading, full of useful insights" (2005, 985).

For Doris Graber, the Hallin and Mancini work is "an example of the tremendous insight that comparisons can produce when they clarify how the same tasks can be effectively performed in many different ways" (Graber 2006, 935). While the research within *Comparing Media Systems* is "imaginative, meticulous and theoretically sophisticated", the work itself provides "clear insights" into the many ways in which media systems emerge, develop and change over time, according to Graber (2006, 935-936). *Comparing Media Systems* is "a path-breaking volume that will serve as a model for today's comparative communication analyses" (Graber, 935).

Finally, in her work examining the extent of political parallelism between political parties and newspapers in Austria, Britain, Germany and France, Barbara Berkel found convincing evidence for the applicability of the *Comparing Media Systems'* Three Models paradigm (Berkel 2006). Patterns from each of the four countries she studied did indeed support Hallin and Mancini's understanding of political parallelism (2006, 99), one of the pillars of their hypothesis.

There is no question, then, even though a relatively short period of time has passed since the publication of *Comparing Media Systems* that Hallin and Mancini's paradigm has won the respect of media scholars around the world. In time, more detailed studies will further test its assumptions and conclusions.

Can South Africa be located in the Three Models paradigm? If so, how does its application alter or develop it? If the Three Models paradigm is relevant, what does this say about the future direction of the state, of the media and of their inter-relationship as inferred by the assumptions of the model? These are key questions in this thesis and each will be tackled in some depth during the course of the work.

It will be found that South Africa can indeed be located within the paradigm, though the inherent flexibility of the model facilitates the application. As the authors indicate, the Three Models are "ideal types" and the media systems of

individual countries fit them only roughly (Hallin and Mancini 2004, 11). In addition, the paradigm makes assumptions about media and political systems in general and more specifically about the nature of change within those systems that this thesis will challenge. Modernisation theory argues, for instance, that all media systems are caught up in an inevitable homogenisation and commercialisation process that leads to the ultimate triumph of the Liberal model. I call this "Liberal drift". This thesis will dispute that contention, as evident as the trend may be within the stable, developed world systems informing the Hallin-Mancini thesis. South Africa's experience would suggest that in some developing countries and possibly emerging democracies, media systems are indeed headed away from the Liberal model toward Polarised Pluralism. Whether or not they eventually backtrack once more and resume the path to Liberalism has particular implications for those societies.

Uniquely, South Africa brings to the Three Models theory the happenstance of a cataclysmic political event that occurs prior to any significant structural change within the country's media system. The first structural change of substance in the South African media, the liberalisation of the broadcast sector, took place only months before the 1994 election and was only realised properly over the course of another decade. The radical transformation of South Africa's media system that did begin in earnest from 1994 can then be considered a direct response to the revolution that took place within the political arena, as complex a process as that was. Hallin and Mancini ask, "is media system change simply one result of … changes in society and politics, or might it play some independent role?" (2004, 267). The answer, from the South African case study, would seem to suggest that media system change is very much the dependent variable in a context of rapid political and social realignment. This is not to say that a media system does not act upon its environment, accelerating or negating a range of social process including democratic consolidation, political participation, social cohesion and globalisation. This is indeed something with which Hallin and Mancini would agree.

Events in South Africa in the post-1994 period offer a number of further opportunities to respond to assumptions or questions posed by Hallin and

Mancini. They declare, for instance, that "so far as we know, no country that did not develop mass circulation newspapers in the late 19th century or early 20th century has ever subsequently developed them" (Hallin and Mancini 2004, 4). Well, welcome to the South African case study. Here, mass circulation newspapers replete with new and willing audiences exploded on to the scene for the first time in 2002, arguably the standout phenomenon of the country's print media sector over the past century.

It also becomes evident in using the Hallin-Mancini paradigm that South Africa's print media is headed in the wrong direction, if one supposes that the Liberal model has come to constitute a consensual position on the role and function of the press. Instead of groping its way, along with the other 18 countries cited, toward utopian media Liberalism, South Africa is slipping deeper in to the Polarised Pluralism cluster with its characteristic traits of rising state intervention, instrumentalism, political parallelism and falling journalistic professionalism. In addition, the Hallin-Mancini paradigm provides an interesting answer to a question that has vexed South African media studies practitioners and journalists for decades. This is the question surrounding the extent of the South African media's role in the consolidation of its pre-1994 political system, namely apartheid. I will consider this below.

It is necessary to say at the outset of this thesis that I will be focusing almost all my efforts on South Africa's print media sector. This is not to negate the importance of the broadcast sector nor of the new media forms that have arisen in recent years. The broadcast element of a country's media system certainly features frequently in Hallin and Mancini's model, often as an apparent tiebreaker when it comes to the task of clustering. However, while I will allude in passing to the development of the broadcasting sector in South Africa, I cannot hope to absorb its complexity and rapid evolution within the scope of this work. That must wait for a follow-up investigation. I can say that the indications certainly suggest a correlation with the findings of this thesis in regard to the print media and I will draw these connections where appropriate.

In addition, scholars have noted the paucity of literature and research concerning contemporary Afrikaans newspapers (Botma 2006). And while I have endeavoured at every opportunity to include these titles and their parent companies in the current work, it is unavoidable that there is an emphasis on the English-language mainstream press that reflects the topography of the available scholarship. I do mean by South Africa's media "system", however, all print media titles and their supporting organisations, including the growing community media sector, along with broadcast (television, radio and community radio) and new media outlets. I will largely narrow my focus on to the news-oriented print media within the South African media system and trust that this will serve as an opening gambit in the far greater task of grappling comparatively with the entire system and its myriad components and dynamics.

Along with reference to the considerable corpus of literature regarding the development of the South African media and of its political system, this thesis makes use of two unique resources. The first is the one-on-one interviews conducted with two dozen top-ranking South African media company executives and editors. This roots the thesis in practicality and cross-tabulates the often observational, qualitative nature of the research with the first-hand experience of top-level management. This aspect of the methodology reflects Hallin and Mancini's approach which is also pragmatic and interview-driven. The second resource is the intimate familiarity of the candidate with South Africa's political system and with the country's transition from apartheid to democracy. As a parliamentary and political correspondent for over 15 years, including periods as the parliamentary correspondent for *Business Day*, senior writer for the *Sunday Independent* and Political Editor of the *Cape Argus*, I have direct, personal experience of the development and functioning of political institutions, personalities and trends over the period.

This thesis has a number of tasks. It seeks, initially, to outline the Hallin-Mancini Three Models paradigm and to contrast this with alternate critical methodologies. It will then locate the South African media and political systems within the paradigm with a view to testing the framework's theoretical assumptions and practical inferences. Weaknesses will be identified where they

occur and a set of modifications will be proposed where appropriate with the aim of developing the paradigm further. The thesis, finally, will ponder what the model, and South Africa's location within it, means for the future of media and political systems in general but also for emerging democracies in particular.

Chapter Two

THEORETICAL PARADIGMS AND A DISCUSSION OF COMPARATIVE MEDIA SYSTEMS THEORY

Introduction

The study of the media began to constitute itself as a formal discipline in the years following the Second World War. Until then, there existed a "broad consensus … that the mass media exercised a powerful and pervasive influence" (Curran 1982, 22) on their social and political context. This consensus was derived in part from the work of the Frankfurt School who, from the mid-1930s, linked the rise of fascism in the world to the growing influence of the mass media. Rejecting what they saw as the manipulation of mass society by a vulgarising and corrupt mass media, the school's leading intellectuals, Adorno, Marcuse and Arendt, argued the new mass media was not merely a tool of totalitarianism, but a major reason for its existence (Mosco 1996, 12).

The Frankfurt-informed "mass society" consensus imagined newly-industrialised modern society to be deeply vulnerable to the propagandistic tools of the powerful. Urbanisation and industrialisation had created a "volatile, unstable, rootless, alienated, manipulable society" (Curran 1982, 12). No longer anchored in the stolid network of pre-industrial social relations, mass audiences had been gathered on an unprecedented scale through new technologies. Newspapers were thus powerful propaganda weapons to be used on a helpless, alienated urban community and media analysis was geared to measuring the "depth and size of penetration through modern scientific techniques"(Curran 1982, 12).

From the 1940s to the late 1960s, this position was reversed. The "mass society" model depicting helpless, alienated citizens was rejected (within several disciplines including politics, social-anthropology and psychology) in favour of stable networks of group, family and peer supports. People, it was argued, exposed themselves to and remembered information selectively and newspapers, therefore, had little direct influence or bearing (Curran 1982, 12).

Media theory since the 1960s has split essentially into two camps: Liberal and Marxist. However, "the conventional characterisation of Liberal and Marxist traditions in mass communications research as constituting two opposed schools tends to obscure both the internal differences within each of these traditions and the reciprocal influence which each has exerted upon the other" (Curran 1982, 15).

Liberal theory, deriving particularly from developments in positivist theories of political culture, has attempted to be more empirical in its investigation of the press. The major analytic tool utilised during the 1960s and 1970s by Liberal theoreticians has been the "effects theory" postulated by writers such as Melvin DeFleur, Joseph T Klapper, Wilbur Schramm and JD Halloran. As DeFleur explains: "The all-consuming question that has dominated research and the development of contemporary theory in the study of mass media … is 'what has been their effect?" (cited in Chimutengwende 1978, 11).

The difficulty with effects theory, however, is that in attempting to measure the political and social effects of the media through surveys and the collection of empirical data, many unquantifiable variables are excluded. How, for instance, does one measure the impact of media separately from the familial, cultural or social factors? It has simply proved impossible to isolate the variables of the "Effects" equation and thereby trace the direct impact of newspapers – to the exclusion of all else – on aspects of social and political life. This critical method also omits any analysis of the structure of newspaper and printing industries and their relation to broader social and economic systems. As Davis has argued: "Effects are difficult to isolate and establish, media texts are complex and contradictory, and audiences are active and influenced by other social and cultural factors … The vast majority of studies conclude that the evidence suggests no more than the occurrence of minimal effects" (Davis 2003, 254).

Some effects theory has managed to find its way into South African media analysis methodology. Chimutengwende, for instance, claimed the utility of DeFleur's maxim ("what has been their effect?") was a "major factor when

looking at the limitations and possibilities of the mass media as instruments of change in society" (Chimutengwende 1978, 125). Acknowledging the "tentative generalisations" of effects theory, Chimutengwende concluded "in short, the media are important but not decisive in influencing people"(1978, 10). Little else was possible given the theoretical framework utilised.

Marxist media analysis is essentially divided into three, not necessarily mutually exclusive, areas of concern. The Structuralist approach, founded upon the semiotics of Roland Barthes and Lacan's working of psychoanalytic theory, focuses on "the systems and processes of signification and representation" at work within the texts (newspaper discourse) themselves (Curran 1982, 23). The nature of ideology as a system of themes and representations through which people relate to the real world (as discussed initially by Althusser and the Frankfurt School) is of particular importance to the Structuralist approach (Curran 1982, 24).

The second method, the Culturalist approach of writers such as Raymond Williams, E.P. Thompson and Stuart Hall, investigates newspapers as a means, in Herman and Chomsky's words, of "manufacturing consent" (1989). For Hall, the important questions are: "How did a dominant discourse warrant itself as *the* account and sustain a limit, ban or proscription over alternative definitions? … How did the institutions which were responsible for describing and explaining the events of the world – in modern societies, the mass media, *par excellence* – succeed in maintaining a preferred or delimited range of meanings in the dominant systems of communication?" (Hall 1982, 67-68).

The final method, the political economy approach, attempts to consider the question of the power of the press in terms of a "concrete analysis of economic relations and the ways in which they structure both the processes and results of cultural production" (Curran 1982, 25). The ideological or cultural message, as evidenced by the existence and contents of a particular newspaper, is assumed to be a product of the underlying and complex patterns of ownership, control and economic location. The South African newspaper industry is thus depicted as an industry operating within a specific economic and political context. It is

argued that, more often than not, it is the economic decisions and 'relations' characteristic of the newspaper industry that have determined the shape and direction of its development.

I have found that political economy paradigm plays a potentially useful role when considering the development of South Africa's media market, in particular the rise of a mass press. This is the subject of Chapter Three in the course of which I will attempt to make use of the methodology and assumptions of political economy to prove this dimension of Hallin and Mancini's hypothesis. I will also present a more detailed consideration of the political economy method in Chapter Three and will discuss its relevance and applicability to the Three Models paradigm.

South African critiques

Until the early 1980s, South African critiques of the press were "few and far between", according to Keyan and Ruth Tomaselli and Muller in *The Press in South Africa* (1989, 39). The authors identified five broad categories of published studies in the pre-early 1980s period: "reminiscences of retired journalists and editors"; uncritical descriptions which by and large ignore the very existence of a black press; works within the "orthodox western Liberal framework" generally lacking analysis of structural conditions; the more rigorous works of writers such as Elaine Potter and Alex Hepple, which again exclude an analysis of the black-oriented press, while studies in the fifth category, incorporating structural analysis, "have only appeared since the late 1970s" and even then have been limited (1989: 39-42).

While these categories are useful in summarising the type of studies undertaken with regard to the South African press, they obscure more fundamental differences or similarities. Commentators are more generally split over the question, for instance, of whether the newspaper industry was helpful or harmful to the establishment or maintenance of the apartheid system. Most of the "reminiscences of retired journalists and editors" fall into the latter category. Ex-Sunday Times editor Joel Mervis, for example, in his work *The*

Fourth Estate (1989), writes that "even though statecraft and the craft of journalism have much in common, they are, like opposing barristers in court, basically adversaries" (Mervis 1989, ix). H Lindsay Smith's publication *Behind the Press in South Africa*, despite asserting that "it has been the policy of the daily press … that *ipso facto* whatever is best for the gold mines is best for South Africa as a whole, and that end is kept ever foremost in mind" concludes that capital exerts only a benign influence on the autonomous press (1945, 72-73). By not abusing its power, argues Smith, the press remains a responsible, free agent capable of opposing the state.

Elaine Potter sets out in considerable detail some of the structural links between the English-language press and mining capital. She classifies that sector of the press, though, as an "external opposition" that "uniformly opposes the government, its ideology and its supporters" (1975, 7). This stance is taken up by a range of writers including Hepple (1960), Neame (1956) and Richard Pollak: "Newspapers serve as the lone megaphone of dissent. Without the still moderately free press to promulgate news and unpopular ideas, the country's political lopsidedness would be near complete… More than any powerful force in the country these newspapers stand almost alone between the Afrikaans government and totalitarian darkness" (Pollak 1981, 2).

A number of writers take the opposite viewpoint. Chimutengwende, for instance, argues that newspapers "represent the forces of the status quo … None of the media can publish or broadcast material undermining the principles of their owners or the elements upon which they depend financially" (Chimutengwende 1978, 48). For Hachten and Giffard, the press "essentially serve the narrow class interests of the dominant whites" (1984, 97), while the Tomasellis state that "all sectors of the established (South African) media support one or more factions of the hegemonic alliance" (1989, 33).

On the question of where to locate the South African print media both in the apartheid era as well as in the current democratic dispensation, Guy Berger offers a useful "Four Perspectives" model (1999). At root, he argues that the choice of an analyst's political framework together with the chosen methodology

will have a profound impact on the conclusions one draws as to whether the media worked for or against apartheid and whether it does the same for democracy. In his model (Table 2), Berger identifies four perspectives: structural functionalism, abstract historicism, the media as vested instrument and the media/state partnership (my labels, based on his description).

Table 2: Berger's Four Perspectives

	Name	Historical nature
1:	**Structural functionalism**	Continuous
	Media reinforces ruling class power	
2:	**Abstract historicism**	Continuous
	Media as 4th Estate	
3:	**Vested instrument**	Discontinuous
	Media reflects control	
4:	**Media/state partnership**	Discontinuous
	No need to oppose government	

SOURCES: http://journ.ru.ac.za/staff/berger.html; http://journ.ru.ac.za/staff/guy/index.html;
Transformation (38)

In brief, the structural functionalism model is a class-based perspective suggesting little has changed or is likely to change concerning the media's role in society given its continuing structural bias in favour of the ruling, bourgeois class. The second perspective also remains unchanged whether in the pre- or post-apartheid periods. This perspective, Berger refers to it as "abstract historicism", is classic Liberal theory. Here the media is the Fourth Estate vital to the balance of powers in society and perpetually critical of government, whether racist or democratic.

In the third, "vested instrument" perspective, Berger suggests the media's role has changed fundamentally. Pre-1994, the print media were owned by white media and supported apartheid. Post-1994, there is a significant degree of

black-ownership and management and therefore support for the new democratic dispensation[7]. The media, in other words, has switched allegiances. This is probably the perspective that matches most closely the Hallin-Mancini paradigm which links change in the nature of political systems with change in media systems. The fit, however, is neither neat nor sufficient. The fourth perspective identifies the healing of a fundamental rift between the (apartheid) state and the (white) media and the creation of a new partnership between the (democratic) state and the (black) media. This perspective argues for a different set of rules to be put in place in which the media is more supportive of a new, representative state. Depending on which perspective one chooses, Berger suggests that "crazy and conflating conclusions" can be drawn (1999, 5).

Berger's model also involves a "fifth perspective", "the mix". This acknowledges the complexity of the media's role and the probability that it has played positive and negative roles in both the pre- and post-apartheid eras. "The media is integrated into the dominant social relations, but as a contested part," he argues (1999, 5). Berger's four perspectives model is certainly a useful analytical tool, in particular prompting consideration of the continuity or otherwise of the match between media and political systems. What the model does demand is the clear definition of one's theoretical paradigm together with an acknowledgment that this choice will have a significant bearing on the conclusions that are drawn from it.

Since the 1980s, there has been a steady growth in the quantity and range of South African critiques of the media. These correspond broadly with the different methodologies adopted globally. They include Lynette Steenveld's work using a culturalist approach (2004), Luthuli's support of textual and discourse analysis (2004) and the political economy research conducted by Grove (1996), Mabote (1996), Tomaselli (1997), Berger (1999), Krabill (2001), Boloka (2004), and Jacobs (2004). There has been no engagement with Hallin and Mancini's Three Models Theory by South African scholars and indeed only a handful of critiques in the global literature, mostly in the form of book reviews.

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[7] Some scholars (Tomaselli 1997, Boloka & Krabill 2000) have argued that due to the pyramidal nature of the South African corporate environment, the extent of genuine black ownership is debatable.

These are referred to in some detail below. Perhaps the closest any South African scholar has come has been in the work of Guy Berger (2002). In his essay on "Theorising the media-democracy relationship in Southern Africa", Berger finds that the hallmark of much of the scholarly writing on subject is its reliance "upon unreflective, conventional wisdoms about the way that 'media' is an important element in democracy" (2002, 22). Berger, along with several authors he cites such as Manyarara, Martin and Ngugi, warns too of the dangers of "lifting concepts like media and democracy from western conditions and applying them unthinkingly to Africa" (2002, 21). He goes on, however, to say that "what is needed, arguably, is a more wide-ranging conceptual framework" and bemoans the limited scope of Siebert et al's dated *Four Theories of the Press* (1956). "The quest is therefore for universally applicable concepts, which are relevant and explanatory in Africa and which designate broad processes and functions" (Berger 2002, 22). Hallin and Mancini's more contemporary and far-reaching paradigm, together with what is hopefully its thoughtful application within this work, may serve as a response both to Berger's concerns and his appeal for a more appropriate conceptual framework.

The Three Models Theory

The Hallin and Mancini Three Models paradigm is indeed founded on Siebert et al's landmark *Four Theories of the Press* (1956) which argued that a country's press always takes on the "form and coloration" of the social and political structures within which it operates (2004, 8). But while *Four Theories* "betrayed its Cold War origins" (Couldry 2005, 308) in the design of its press categories, Hallin and Mancini took comparative media system analysis a big step forward by stressing the need for empirical enquiry and also for the genuine comparative analysis that was lacking in *Four Theories* (McQuail 2006, 266).

The "primary focus" of Hallin and Mancini's *Comparing Media Systems* is the relationship between media systems and political systems (2004, 1). They ask whether it is possible to identify systematic connections between these two structures. They also seek to identify variations in the structure and political role of the news media, try to account for how these variations occurred and ponder

their implications for democratic political systems. They attempt, in brief, to answer the question Siebert et al posed in 1956: why is the press as it is?

Hallin and Mancini's answer, equally succinctly, is that the news media cannot be understood without understanding the nature of the state, the system of political parties, the pattern of relationships between economic and political interests and the development of civil society, among other elements of the social structure (2004, 8). Comparing the media and political systems of 18 countries in Europe and North America, Hallin and Mancini found these countries could be clustered into three broad groups, or 'ideal types'. These they called the Liberal model, the Democratic Corporatist model and the Polarised Pluralist model. Each ideal type had a pattern of historical development and displayed features of a media-political matrix that many of its often geographically proximate 'member' countries shared.

Thus, for example, the countries of the Polarised Pluralist model are to be found in the Mediterranean region (Greece, Italy, Spain, France), had similar, late, contested transitions from Catholic absolutist states into industrialised democracies and developed an environment in which party politics and the media were frequently closely integrated. The Democratic Corporatist model is made up of countries from north and central Europe (Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Germany) that tend to have a long tradition of limits on state power, strong social welfare policies and a history of Protestantism and Calvinism. This model is characterised by a historical coexistence of commercial media and media tied to organised social and political groups. The Liberal model is made up of the United States, the United Kingdom and various connected territories (Canada, Ireland) in or around the North Atlantic. In these countries, commercial newspapers developed early and expanded with little state involvement. The relative dominance of market mechanisms and of commercial media are common features.

Hallin and Mancini stress that these clusters are "ideal types" and are not meant to describe every trend and quirk of the countries that are clustered around them. Indeed, they sympathise broadly with McQuail's contention that "in most countries, the media do not constitute any single system with a single purpose

or philosophy, but are composed of many separate, overlapping, often inconsistent elements, with appropriate differences of normative expectation and actual regulation (McQuail 1994, 133). Hallin and Mancini contend, however, the primary purpose of the ideal types "is not classification of individual systems, but the identification of characteristic patterns of relationships between system characteristics" (2004, 11). They argue, furthermore, that the characteristics that define the models are interrelated, that they result from a meaningful pattern of historical development and "do not merely occur accidentally" (2004, 11).

Hallin and Mancini identify four "major dimensions", the tools by which they allocate different countries to the appropriate ideal type. These dimensions are:
1. The state of development of a country's mass media market;
2. The closeness of the links between political parties and the press (political parallelism);
3. The state and stage of journalistic professionalisation; and
4. The degree or level of state intervention in the media.

These four dimensions collectively constitute Hallin and Mancini's "attempt to make sense of the patterns of difference and similarity … and to link these patterns to the social and political context in which they evolved" (2004, 21).

In the course of this thesis, South Africa's media and political systems will be held up to the four major dimensions, each of which is the subject of a chapter. Hallin and Mancini found that very often, countries clustered into the same model had virtually interchangeable answers to the questions posed by the four dimensions. For instance, countries falling into the Polarised Pluralist cluster generally do not have mass circulation newspapers, have a high degree of political parallelism, have relatively low levels of journalistic professionalism and the state has historically played a central, interventionist role in the media. The countries of the Democratic Corporatist model also have a high degree of political parallelism but have a strongly developed mass circulation press. They also enjoy a high level of journalistic professionalism and strong limits on the extent to which the state is permitted to intervene in the media. The countries of the Liberal Model have high levels of journalistic professionalism, a limited state

role in regulating the media, highly developed mass circulation newspapers and varying attitudes on political parallelism.

Critics have seized on the heterogeneity of countries within the ideal-type clusters as a sign of weakness in the paradigm. The United States and Britain, for instance, have strongly contrasting attitudes to the political neutrality of the media. In the United States, party political neutrality is a lodestone of domestic political news coverage. In Britain, the major dailies are not only unabashed in their advocacy of political parties, they are often bought and read for that very reason. "When such large countries are problematic … one begins to doubt the usefulness of the models," writes Nick Couldry (2005, 308). Hallin and Mancini argue, however, that the models were not meant to describe a fixed set of characteristics, "but identify some of the underlying systemic relationships that help us to understand" the manner in which media systems change: "Media institutions evolve over time; at each step of their evolution, past events and institutional patterns inherited from earlier periods influence the direction they take" (2004, 12). In doing so, suggests Hampton, Hallin and Mancini have created a theoretical map of the contemporary European and American media systems (Hampton 2005, 243).

McQuail also expresses his concern at the many subjective judgements that are required in outlining the topography of the model. At what point do you conclude, for instance, that a particular country's state of journalistic professionalism falls into one category as opposed to another? McQuail raises his discomfiture that some countries, including major ones like Germany, have been placed in the wrong model. And while Hallin and Mancini go to some lengths to argue the non-specificity of the ideal-types and readily concede exceptions and contradictions even within individual country's systems, McQuail worries that "continually being cautioned on this point… does tend to undermine confidence in the viability of the classifications" (McQuail 2005, 268). McQuail argues, in addition, that Hallin and Mancini have neglected some important system-differentiating factors such as country size and the impact of regionalism.

It is true, however, that in spite of these limitations (many of which are dealt with below) and along with the other critics both McQuail and Couldry acknowledge the import of the *Comparing Media Systems* paradigm with McQuail calling it "useful" and "valuable" and Couldry giving the "remarkable" work a maximum five star rating in the *Political Studies Review* (McQuail, 268; Couldry, 308).

There is an additional, but fundamental caveat that Hallin and Mancini add to their own thesis. This is that, over time, the difference between the three models is gradually reducing. This process of homogenisation, or convergence, has as its pole an international media culture best represented by the Liberal model. It is a process driven by a number of factors such as technology, the global interaction of journalists, the free press agenda of powerful media organisations and by what Hallin and Mancini call secularisation, ie the decline of representative institutions such as political parties and churches and their replacement by a broad church mass media.

And while the reduction of all media systems to a Liberal model will never be perfect or complete (there are too many "counter-tendencies", according to Hallin and Mancini), this Americanisation of the media is the direction in which the global media is inexorably heading. Hallin and Mancini are quick to add that they believe changes in European media systems are driven "above all" by processes of changes internal to European society (2004, 255), thereby evading what Stevenson calls the "tired" explanation of American cultural imperialism (2005, 985). Nonetheless, they predict that the victorious cluster of global media systems will be the one currently occupied by the United States. This conclusion will also be addressed later on in this thesis.

 While some critics have pointed at the uncomfortable fit of major countries within their allocated clusters (such as Germany and France), and while Hallin and Mancini have not sought to extend their paradigm beyond North America and Western Europe, further limitations are evident. Hampton has identified the lack of any (formerly) authoritarian states within the paradigm (2005, 243). Couldry wonders that if even big countries like Germany fit uncomfortably into the paradigm, "what if one looked globally?" (2005, 308). This is a major understatement as indeed the vast majority of countries and media systems do

not form part of the Three Models scenario. Of particular interest to this candidate is the place of emerging democracies in the paradigm and, if a fit can be found, what the implications of the Three Models assumptions are for the consolidation of those new democratic systems?

Wisdom Tettey has described the recent rise in democratic fervour on the African continent as a result of the "third wave" of democratisation hailed by scholars such as Chabal (1998) and Ihonvbere (1996) (cited in Tettey, 2001, 5). "The media are among the forces that have shaped, and continue to define, the establishment of democracy in Africa," Tettey writes (ibid). The close connection between the media and democracy in Africa alluded to by many authors (Suarez 1996; Tettey 2001) further necessitates the continent's inclusion in comparative systems analysis.

Finally, Hallin and Mancini acknowledge that media systems are not static and evolve over time. They point out that the media systems that populate their paradigm, those of Western Europe and North America, have changed "very substantially in recent years" (2004, 12). Of the systems included in the paradigm, Greece, Spain and Portugal were presented as the countries that had most recently undergone a significant process of regime change from authoritarian to democratic state. These were all at least three or four decades ago now. It is true, however, that some of the countries, particularly from the southern Mediterranean region, are less mature democracies than those populating the other clusters. There is an irony in suggesting Greece falls into this camp given the origin of the concept of democracy, but there is cogency in specifying that "modern" democracy far beyond the city-state version is a more recent phenomenon in that country. I would suggest, nonetheless, that the change experienced by other media systems, such as those in new or emerging democracies, have often undergone far more dramatic change than that experienced in the developed North that predominates in *Comparing Media Systems*.

An objective of this thesis will be to explore whether the Three Models paradigm is adequately equipped to deal with rapid, dramatic media system change. Is it

possible that media systems that for years, decades or even generations operated in a context of authoritarian rule, run the risk of serious regression back toward their authoritarian practices once their host country has achieved democratic status? Such trends may amount to more than the 'countertendencies' identified by Hallin and Mancini, and may actually signal at best a dilution of democratic governance, at worst may herald the return of a new form of authoritarian control. This contradicts the modernisation thesis that all media systems are inexorably headed toward democratic Liberalism. We shall explore this assumption and the light thrown on it by at least one emerging democracy during the course of this thesis.

Chapter Three

'TACIT CONSENT': POLITICAL PARALLELISM AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN PRINT MEDIA

Introduction

Political parallelism is one of four 'major dimensions' used to categorise countries and their media systems into one or other of Hallin and Mancini's three models of media and politics; Liberal, Polarised Pluralist or Democratic Corporatist. The concept of political parallelism refers in essence to the closeness of the links between a political system and the media and examines the extent to which media systems reflect the major political trends and cleavages of the host country. Hallin and Mancini contend that a high degree of political parallelism, in which the media very directly reflect the spectrum and culture of a country's political life, is most often the hallmark of either the Polarised Pluralist model or, alternatively, of the Democratic Corporatist model. The dominance of market mechanisms and of the commercial media within the Liberal model suggests it is unlikely that a country falling in to the Liberal cluster – other than the 'exception', Britain – would have a media so neatly connected with formal or informal political organisation.

This chapter will spell out more precisely the concept of political parallelism as well as its theoretical and historical roots. It will set out the indicators of political parallelism, as described by Hallin and Mancini. It will then try to ascertain how South Africa's political and media system matches up to these benchmarks and therefore begin to plot where the country might sit within Hallin and Mancini's triangular comparative media system matrix (see Figure 1, page 20). It will need to do this both by analysing South Africa's political and media system prior to the advent of democracy and, in more detail, with events in the period since 1994.

Finally, it will consider whether the aggregated, post-1994 position is a more or less static one and therefore deduce where the first cross might be marked on the matrix. If there is perceived substantial movement, an indication of the

direction in which South Africa is shifting will be ascertained. The chapter will maintain constant critical vigilance concerning the appropriateness or otherwise of the concept of political parallelism in general and as it relates to the South African experience in particular. It will also interrogate the adequacy of the indicators as well as their applicability.

Political Parallelism: origins

Hallin and Mancini contend that from the beginning of the print era, and particularly from the time of the Reformation, political advocacy was a central function of the print media. Indeed, by the late 18th century and early 19th century, this was its principal function in every one of the 18 countries studied in *Comparing Media Systems* (2004, 26). According to Hallin and Mancini, a new and contrasting model of political journalism began to emerge in the late 19th century. According to this new trend, the journalist was seen as the neutral arbiter of political communications "standing apart from particular interests and causes" (2004, 26). Frequently, this was connected with the development of a commercial press whose purpose was to make money rather than serve a political cause. This commercial press was financed by advertisers, rather than subsidies from political actors and corresponded with the development of journalistic professionalisation (see Chapter Six). The "Whig" interpretation of Ango-American media history, recalls Hallin, is that the growing autonomy and independence of newspapers was based on their increasing value as an advertising medium (2005, 226). This counterposes the alternative view of critical.

Earlier work in the area focuses on the relationship between the press and political parties rather than the political system as a whole. This has been termed 'party-press parallelism' (Seymour-Ure, 1974, Blumler & Gurevitch 1975). A classic example of this form of party-press parallelism is Denmark. Until the early 20th century, each town in Denmark had four newspapers representing each of the country's four political parties (Hallin and Mancini 2004, 27). This would naturally indicate an extremely high form of party-press parallelism. But while Hallin and Mancini's predecessors focused their attention on political parties, the emphasis in *Comparing Media Systems* is on political

orientation. This matches the work's theoretical assumptions of secularisation and differentiation, both of which anticipate the declining importance of political parties.

The theoretical constructs of secularisation and differentiation are critical to Hallin and Mancini's comparative paradigm. Perhaps, to over-simplify, the differentiation theory espoused initially by Durkheim, then by Talcott Parsons, Jeffrey Alexander, Niklas Luhmann and others, envisages the increasingly specialised functions of a complex modern society being undertaken by increasingly specialised social bodies (cited in Hallin and Mancini 2004, 77). This requires an ever-greater role for an independent and effective communication system (the media).

By secularisation, Hallin and Mancini mean the separation of citizens from attachments to religious and ideological "faiths" and the decline of institutions based on these "faiths" such as churches, trade unions, interest groups, political parties and similar institutions (2004, 263). With the general decline of these institutions, the mass media become more autonomous and begin to take over many of the functions these goups once performed (2004, 263). Both differentiation and secularisation, modernisation theory contends, contribute to the process of convergence – or drift – of media systems toward the Liberal model. It is worth noting that in the final sections of the their chapter on homogenization that Hallin and Mancini do question whether it makes sense to project this trend, inevitably, into the future. The South African case study casts further doubt on this assumption.

Differentiation and secularisation both emphasise the increasingly important role of an autonomous, professionalised, "catch-all" mass media and the decline of other more traditional civic structures. According to Hallin, "The perspective of differentiation theory is implicit in much of the conventional wisdom about the relation of media to society … and in some sense lies behind the common assumption that the Anglo-American model of journalism is the norm to which media systems naturally tend to evolve" (2005, 224-226). This contention will be tested further below.

Barbara Berkel puts Hallin and Mancini's relatively new notion of political parallelism to the test in her work on the Haider conflict (2006). In the Spring of 2000, 14 member countries of the European Union decided to impose sanctions on Austria in response to the participation in that country's government of the rightwing populist party, the FPO. The conflict was primarily triggered by racist and xenophobic statements made by FPO chairman Jorg Haider (Berkel 2006, 89). In her comparative analysis of the Haider debate as conveyed by eight quality newspapers in four different European countries, Berkel found that all leftist newspapers advocated a position that was close to that of the leftist political parties, while the conservative newspapers positioned themselves similarly to the conservative party speakers. Without direct connections between newspapers and specific parties this, in Berkel's analysis, amounted to a corroboration of Hallin and Mancini's revised concept of a broader parallelism. "It appears that the Haider debate was characterised by a 'political parallelism' of the press in the sense Hallin and Mancini (2004, 28) re-defined the concept of 'party-press parallelism'. Very similar patterns of political parallelism were observed in each country under study" (Berkel 2006, 99).

At the time of writing, Berkel's was the only published peer-reviewed paper this candidate came across which critically reviewed Hallin and Mancini's notion of political parallelism and contrasted it with the Blumler and Gurevitch work on party-press pluralism that preceded it three decades ago (1975).

South African experience supports both the decline of political parties and the growing role of the mass media. A national public opinion survey conducted in 2006 by Markinor found that the number of people who supported South Africa's three biggest political parties, the ANC, the Democratic Alliance and the Inkatha Freedom Party, was decreasing over time. In a press release announcing the publication of the survey, Markinor reported that the fastest growing political group in South Africa was that of the ambivalent "undecided voters" (those who either did not know, would not vote, refused to respond or who spoiled their mock ballot paper). This group had grown to be the second largest political grouping behind the ANC and was bigger than any of the opposition parties. The 'undecideds' "grew substantially from 14.1% in

November 2005 … to 16.1% in November 2006," the press release said (Markinor, Press Release, 21 December 2006, page 2). Estimates suggest that as many as seven million eligible voters may not have even registered to vote in the last election, the majority being potential first time voters (Calland 2006, 266).

In spite of growing proportional majorities at national election time, ANC party membership figures have consistently fallen in the 13 years of democracy. According to a report from party secretary general Kgalema Motlanthe to the party's national general council in 2005, paid-up branch membership had steadily but slowly declined from 416,000 in 2002 to 401,000 by 2005 (cited in Calland 2006, 314). This decline has caused an interesting shift in party finances: "Such has been the change within the ANC that donations from corporate benefactors, black and white, now count for more than membership subscriptions. Inevitably this presents the danger of affluent donors having greater access to the party and its leaders than ordinary supporters" (Gumede 2005, 126). Party leaders have repeatedly worried about deteriorating organisational efficiency at branch level. At the same high-level council meeting in 2005, Motlanthe told his senior party colleagues:

> In many of our branches there are no sustainable political programmes and community campaigns. They are conflict-ridden and unstable and in many instances fraught with fights over leadership positions, selection and deployment of councilors, tendering and control of projects and recruitment of membership in order to serve factional or selfish interests (cited in Calland 2006, 129).

There have also been concerns voiced at important national occasions at the erosion of the ANC's traditional values (such as altruism and the supremacy of the collective) and of their usurpation by self-serving careerism and by party members' "lust for financial gain" (Paton 2007, 26).

In an article published recently in the *Financial Mail* and headlined "Soul for Sale", reporter Carol Paton wrote of the "rot" that is currently undermining the

ANC: "Fights over who should get what contract are happening with growing frequency countrywide. It is a matter of embarrassment to the ANC, a party many members proudly think of in terms of its struggle legacy. That legacy is now being severely undermined, and the party seems paralysed" (Paton 2007, 27).

In his research, Anthony Butler has also found that generational turnover and careerism have significantly weakened the ANC's organisational and intellectual character (Butler 2006, 41). He also recalls aspects of Motlanthe's landmark address on his 2005 organisational concerns:

> The central challenge facing the ANC is to address the problems that arise from our cadres' susceptibility to moral decay occasioned by the struggle for the control of and access to resources. All the paralysis in our programmes, all the divisions in our structures, are in one way or another, a consequence of this cancer in our midst (cited in Butler 2006, 41).

A revitalisation of the ANC's branches was undertaken in the lead-up to the 2004 election in a bid to improve the functioning of the party's organisational structures and this appeared to have been a successful intervention, at least in the short-term (Southall & Daniel 2005, 43). It points, however, to genuine anxiety within the majority party and the resulting urgent formulation of strategies to respond to leadership concerns.

With the ANC's political majority on the increase (in terms of the proportion of voters, rather than in overall numbers), it is natural that the "constellation of losers" that represents the country's other minority political parties are experiencing a gradual hemorrhaging of support (Southall & Daniel 2005, 43). There is no better example of this than the New National Party, formerly the political organisation that held unfettered power in South Africa for almost 50 years. Shortly after the 2004 election, the (New) National Party disappeared without trace. The other minority parties are faring marginally better but lurch from one crisis to the next. The opposition, writes Calland, is "in complete disarray and crisis" (2006, 268).

With such a powerful and increasing majority, it is commonly understood that the only challenge of significance to the continued dominance of the ANC lies from within: that one or more of the party's constituent parts (the party itself, the South African Communist party and a federation of sympathetic trade unions, Cosatu) will break away to establish a new, worker-based movement. Clearly, the political terrain has shifted during the era of democracy and the secularisation to which Hallin and Mancini allude, is very much in evidence in South Africa.

The media, by contrast, has experienced enormous expansion, diversity and growth in the post-1994 period. The best examples of this are the liberalisation of the broadcast sector (including the creation of almost 100 community radio stations) as well as the birth of a mass print market with the emergence of tabloid newspapers. Government has not missed the potential of the community media and has moved fast to establish links with the sector. The Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) was established in 2004 with the specific purpose of nurturing non-mainstream titles and outlets. A formalisation of the relationship between the state and the community has taken place with a growing and largely unregulated array of contractual and financial relationships between community newspapers, community radio stations and various government departments and agencies (Hadland & Thorne, 2004).

Nicola Jones et al have specifically argued that South Africa's new mass-market tabloid newspapers serve a range of social functions that perfectly matches Hallin and Mancini's notion of secularisation (Jones et al, 2007). Their research suggests the new tabloids are carving new terrain in the country's public sphere. They also appear to provide a new level of accountability and access to millions of people who, until recently, didn't buy or read newspapers. "By giving access to information [Tabloid newspapers provide] 'societal dialogues' and a 'marketplace of ideas' on common concerns essential for a working democracy" (Jones et al 2007, 37). They also argue that as well as serving as a forum for an extended public sphere, tabloids contribute directly to societal change:

While tabloid journalism may have many faults, it can also be seen as an alternative arena for public discourse, wherein criticism of both the privileged political elites and traditional types of public discourse play a central role. Tabloid journalism has the ability to broaden the public, giving news access to groups that previously have not been targeted, and to effect societal change by redefining issues" (Jones et al 2007, 43).

Media24, the holding company for the *Daily Sun*, acknowledged the newfound and growing influence it was deliberately trying to achieve with all of its titles in 2002: [Our] "newspapers now increasingly provide a forum for all the larger communities. The lively content reflects a dynamic community adapting to new situations, whilst rediscovering and reinventing itself. [Media24's] newspapers aim to be a mouthpiece for all opinions, being not only a messenger, but a companion" (Naspers 2002, 8).

In his work on media coverage of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), Ron Krabill has come across a similar process in which the role of the press is broadening out beyond the traditional liberal notion of the dispassionate eyewitness: "South African mass media have served as both essential actors in the TRC drama, as well as the stage on which much of the drama has been performed" (2001, 568). This is endorsed by Verdoolaege who argues in an article on media representations of the TRC that "the success and prestige of the TRC of South Africa can largely be attributed to the media attention" (2005, 181).

We referred earlier in the chapter to Hallin and Mancini's anticipation that the increasingly important role of an autonomous, professionalised, 'catch-all' mass media would lead to the decline of other more traditional civic structures. The notion of 'catch-all' mass media is something I wanted to dwell on briefly. The authors do not say in *Comparing Media Systems* whether they are suggesting that individual titles or broadcast outlets are becoming 'catch-all' or whether the media as a sector contains within it enough diversity to appeal to just about

anyone. There is an important difference, illustrated by the importance of 'nicheing' in the South African context.

Deon du Plessis, the publisher of South Africa's first tabloid, the *Daily Sun*, argues that the reason for the gradual decline of mainstream newspapers in South Africa is exactly their tendency to aim too widely. The path to growth, he suggests, lies not in providing a long banquet table of options for readers to pick and choose, but in targeting specialised information for particular people with specific interests:

> That's him [pointing at a manikin in the doorway dressed in a hard hat and overalls]. We're interested in him. The question we ask ourselves is: Is this guy going to talk about this today at the tea urns in his Alberton factory. If the answer is yes, we do it. If it's no, we don't. *The Star, the Argus* and the other dinosaurs use the shotgun blast as their approach to capturing an audience. They flap about and try to capture all the fish in this big net. All that went in 1994… The bulge in the demographics occurs in the 25-38 age group with Std 4/5 education, male, middle income (R5,000 a month), with a partner (not married), who owns their own house, has bought a cell phone and now a new car. That's the niche. News is a commodity. I'm not saying you fuck around with it. You just apply one sort here and one there. They try to print everything" (Du Plessis 2005).

The competition to Naspers, Independent Newspapers, agrees that while their titles retain their catch-all emphasis, "we are seeing now the fragmentation of the daily newspaper market" in South Africa (Williams 2005). This is a trend on which Vincent Mosco has pondered: "One of the major issues for political economy today is the significance of the tendency to organise production around specific rather than mass markets"(1996, 74). Similarly, Eric Louw has observed that "as mass industrial capitalism has mutated into post-Fordist network capitalism, mass markets have declined in importance, while niche markets have become more significant" (2001, 65). A complicating element in the South African context concerns language. While prior to 1994, language and political affinity were often closely attuned, in part due to the focus by

mainstream newspaper companies on white readers, this changed in the post-apartheid era. The emergence of a mass black audience together with the shift in political affiliation (see Chapter Four) has diminished the strength of language as a predictor of political allegiance.

While it may be true that the development of a 'catch-all' mass media may be an accurate description of media system trends in general, the term 'catch-all' itself requires a rather more nuanced treatment than is afforded in *Comparing Media Systems*. A media system that has been broken up into a thousand niches – thereby catering much more effectively for a mass public – may prove to be more legitimately 'catch-all' than the biggest, monopoly outlet. Developments both within South Africa's political party system and within its media do however suggest a broad corroboration of Hallin and Mancini's view of systemic change. Whether the end result of this change is the triumph of the Liberal model remains moot.

Political Parallelism: where South Africa fits in

Hallin and Mancini identify two environments which suggest the nature of particular media and political systems: external pluralism, in which different media reflect the different tendencies on display in the political arena, and internal pluralism, in which media organisations tend to avoid institutional ties to specific political groups and attempt to maintain neutrality and balance in their content (Hallin and Mancini 2004, 29). Internal pluralism tends to indicate a low level of political parallelism, while external pluralism suggests a high level, according to Hallin and Mancini (ibid). There is, furthermore, a connection between political parallelism and journalistic professionalism. Where political parallelism is high, journalistic professionalism tends to be low (2004, 38). This connection will be explored further in Chapter Six.

I contend that South Africa enjoys a state of internal pluralism stemming principally from the media system's strong historical ties to the liberal model system of the United Kingdom. While titles occasionally display partisan allegiances, such as at election time, on the whole South African newspapers do tend to avoid institutional ties with political parties and do attempt to maintain

neutrality and balance in their content. We will see that they are not always particularly successful in the latter endeavour. This is due to the powerful influence on political life and discourse that has been exerted by the dominant majority party, the African National Congress (ANC), in the post-1994 era.

The ANC has won all three elections in the democratic era, each with growing majorities[1]. In the last election in 2004, the party won in excess of two thirds of the electorate's support giving it effective and substantive power at all three levels of government. The two-thirds majority also gives the ANC the power to amend the country's Constitution. The distinction between party and state is not always evident in post-apartheid South Africa, even to senior party officials. Horwitz complains that from a policy perspective he has found it "essentially impossible to separate the ANC leadership's political or party positions from those of the government" (2001, 284). This is not an unusual refrain. There are indeed concerns, writes Johnston, that "South Africa is in danger of developing the pathologies of a one-party state" (2005, 29).

The ANC is a 'broad church' political party that comprises not only its own grassroots membership and national structures but also its 'allies', the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). While there is an official opposition, the Democratic Alliance, and some resistance from the Inkatha Freedom Party in the region of KwaZulu-Natal, there is little hope of any of these parties unseating the ANC nationally at any time in the foreseeable future.

Murmurings of single party 'dominance' were articulated soon after the ANC's overwhelming victory in the first democratic election of 1994, most particularly in the work of Giliomee and Simkins (1999), and Giliomee, Myburgh and Schlemmer (2001). Among the arguments they proposed was the existence of a fundamental tension between dominant-party rule and democracy, "for whilst party dominance can pave the way to competitive democracy, it can also lead to façade democracy or barely concealed authoritarianism" (Southall & Daniel

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[1] The ANC's proportion of the vote in national elections increased from 62.65% in 1994 to 66.35% in 1999 to 69.68% in 2004 (Southall & Daniel, 2005: 41)

2005, 35). And though the ANC has disputed allegations of party domination –
arguing that the concept of dominance is inherently conservative and serves as
a cover for white interests that have an inherent distrust of black governance –
few would question the scale or entrenchment of the party's position (ibid).
Indeed, following the most recent national election, analysts Roger Southall and
John Daniel concluded "there can be little doubt that the ANC has emerged
from the 2004 election as, in the immediate future, more rather than less
dominant" (2005, 54).

The only significant opposition to the ANC comes from within. This unassailable
political position has contributed to the party's ambivalent attitude toward the
press. As Johnston observes: "At best, the ANC's relationship with the political
press has been distant and neurotically suspicious; at worst, pathologically
hostile" (2005, 13). This relationship will be discussed at greater length in the
chapter dealing with state intervention in the media (Chapter Four). Suffice to
say at this point, that while there are a number of political parties and social
groupings, the state and its majority party exert overwhelming influence on the
South African polity. Sixteen political parties are currently represented in the
South African Parliament. At best, half a dozen find a voice on an ongoing basis
somewhere in the press, but coverage overall is dominated by the state, the
ANC and the official opposition, the Democratic Alliance.

Just as the ANC dominates political life, so it is increasingly resilient to the
demands of civil society. In spite of South Africa's large and diverse network of
civil society organisations, very few succeed in impacting with any authority on
state policy processes. Most of the time, the executive simply ignores them.
What looked at first like a very promising and consultative process around
media policy during the early 1990s (see Horwitz, 2001) soon fizzled out,
particularly in regard to print media (see Chapter Five). A study conducted by
the Open Democracy Advice Centre in 2004 found the overall level of
responsiveness by the executive to requests from non-governmental
organisations (NGOs) to be very poor: over 50% of requests were ignored,
despite the legal requirement to respond inside 30 days (cited in Calland 2006,
245). Occasionally, organisations like the Treatment Action Campaign break the

mould and succeed in generating enormous publicity for its work (in this instance, the free distribution of antiretroviral drugs for the treatment of HIV-Aids), but on the whole the civil society's sector is as limited on the state as it is on the press. "The structures of the bureaucracy remain hostile to public participation and pressure. Policy processes often remain secretive and closed to the influence of alliance partners and the broader public, leading to mistaken and unpopular measures in some cases. People's organisations have only limited routes to participate in governance" (Gumede 2005, 135).

While the South African print media can be categorised as internally pluralistic, the powerful position of the dominant party has constrained the scope of this pluralism. Reflecting the evident hegemony of the ANC, only a narrow range of political opinion is offered by a relatively small number of mainstream media organisations. The range of opinion emanating from the powerful ruling party itself is also relatively narrow, not least due to the party's emphasis on cadre discipline and adherence to the 'party line'. Collectively all the other political and social organisations enjoy only occasional moments of power. Indeed, the media's unwillingness to give these groupings much play in the press on an ongoing basis is a further indicator of the limits that have been imposed on what is essentially an internally pluralist, but distorted environment.

The South African print media is broadly supportive of the social contract imposed by a powerful state. This is founded on the emotive appeal of overturning the country's apartheid legacy and of embracing democracy, human rights and equality. These are all difficult notions to contest. The South African media, as demonstrated by the Human Rights Commission hearings into racism in the media, is deeply vulnerable to allegations of skewed news values, Afropessimism (racism), overstepping the bounds of personal privacy, professional incompetence and a lack of respect and due deference for a democratically-elected government (Johnston 2006, 13).

'Opposition', when it occurs within the media, has more often to do with the errors of individuals within government – such as corrupt members of parliament or errant members of the executive - than with the state, the party or

even policy as a whole. There is, therefore, a consensual position determined by the state and adopted by the media that reflects a poor level of internal pluralism. What might seem, or is projected as, neutrality and balance is, more often than not, tacit agreement with a status quo determined by the state and the ANC.

Few better examples of this are evident than the wholehearted embrace by the media of the Mandela administration's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in 1994. After little more than a year of massive media coverage and public support, during which the RDP became a household acronym, the ANC promptly dropped the programme and shifted Jay Naidoo, the minister responsible, elsewhere. "The ANC leadership was told by Mbeki that he feared the expansionist RDP was not inspiring market confidence. A new, market-friendly policy of growth before redistribution was needed" (Gumede 2005, 133). The development demonstrated both the power of the media to popularise policy but also its vulnerability and gullibility to the meaningless and soon jettisoned catchphrases of the powerful.

Johnston concurs: "the print media – in varying degrees – canvasses the danger of the ANC becoming a political elite, made remote by the distance and prerogatives of office from the direct concerns of ordinary people, for whom the newspapers have become champions. This kind of 'opposition' is characteristic of media that do not have major ideological or even policy differences with governments, but practice vigorous populist interrogation of mismanagement, corruption and other pathologies of political systems that do not feature genuine competition" (2005, 29).

The notion of a consensual contract between the media and a "dominant elite" was popularised by Herman and Chomsky's landmark work, *Manufacturing Consent* (1988, 1). It is a thesis that is certainly borne out by my understanding of developments within the South African polity. They argue, for instance, that "powerful sources regularly take advantage of media routines and dependency to manage the media, to manipulate them into following a special agenda and framework" (1988, 23). When newspapers, even those that consider

themselves independent, rely so heavily on the majority party and the state for information (see Chapter Three), it is hardly surprising the consent becomes so automatic, it's almost unconscious. This is something to which Stuart Hall has alluded in his work. The media, he suggests, "reproduce the definition of the powerful, without being in a simple sense in their pay" (cited in Curran & Seaton 1991, 269).

In the South African context, this is illustrated by the various efforts made by what used to be known as the Afrikaans press "to move closer to the new power elite" (Botma 2006, 3). Thus when the ANC held its party congress in Stellenbosch in December 2002, *Die Burger* published a special edition with an English-language front page to distribute to all the delegates (ibid). The same paper, together with the Kaapse Sakekamer (Cape Town Business Chamber) also awarded former President Nelson Mandela its prestigious 'Business leader of the Year' award in 2004. Neither was the move by the English-language mainstream press to 'cosy up' to the new regime something that happened easily. Indeed, the press as a whole was caught by surprise at the animosity displayed toward them by some important people, not least then President Nelson Mandela and his deputy, Thabo Mbeki. As former *Sunday Times* editor Ken Owen recalls: "It came as a special shock for journalists of what was called 'the opposition press' to discover, soon after liberation, that public hostility towards them was more widespread and more intense than they had imagined, and that it extended to key elites whose support was necessary to the survival and functioning of a free press" (1998, 175). The need to ingratiate or at least to accommodate, even for the 'opposition press', had evidently become a matter of life or death.

It was a need to which mainstream owners and management responded quickly and seemingly without compunction. "The cultivation of a warm relationship with government came before all else," commented Martin Williams of various media executives' "obsequious, ingratiating and approval-seeking" behaviour in the post-1994 period (1998, 194).

Ben Bagdikian, in his brilliant analysis of the American media's influence on social and political life, *The Media Monopoly*, describes how in the United States, the social contract between state and media is characterised by a conservative political viewpoint: "Major media news and commentary are heavily concentrated on center-to-right politics, with an almost total absence of progressive views…they (the news media) suffer from built-in biases that protect corporate power and consequently weaken the public's ability to understand forces that create the American scene (2000, 1)

South Africa, therefore, has a media system that is essentially internally pluralistic, though it exhibits strong contradictory forces as a consequence of the powerful single party state. Usually, according to the Hallin and Mancini model, this would indicate a low level of political parallelism. In South Africa's case, this is not necessarily the case. Indeed internal pluralism distorted by a democratic hegemony may well reflect a high degree of political parallelism. This is because a self-consciously neutral press may still depict little more than a political context that is overwhelmed by the discourse, personnel and policies of the dominant political party and its allies.

We will get a clearer picture by investigating the applicability of the indicators, as described by Hallin and Mancini, to determine where South Africa in the post-apartheid period might fit in terms of political parallelism. As interesting as apartheid South Africa's placement might be, I am more interested in the current state of affairs and in what the implications are of this for the future of the South African polity and of its media. We will start with a discussion of the political environment and will consider with whether external or internal pluralism is the defining characteristic. The extent of pluralism in the political environment provides, as Hallin and Mancini suggest, an important sympathetic background to the degree of political parallelism.

Hallin and Mancini identify five media system indicators that test the closeness of a country's media to its political system:
1. the degree to which newspaper content reflects the political orientation of the newspaper title or its parent company

2. the degree to which media personnel are active in political life, or where career paths are shaped by political affiliation
3. the partisanship of media audiences
4. the role or orientations of journalistic practice, and
5. the voice and writing style of journalistic culture.

I would like to take each indicator in turn to discuss its applicability to the South African media and political systems and then draw conclusions about the degree of parallelism and pluralism.

Does newspaper content reflect owner's political orientation?

Ton Vosloo, until recently the chairman of South Africa's biggest newspaper company, Naspers, described the newspapers in his stable as "independent, party politically-unshackled papers to serve the buying public" (Vosloo 2004, 152/3). But the data of political coverage paints another picture. Research company Media Tenor conducted a major collection and analysis of media data in the lead-up to South Africa's third democratic election in 2004 (Media Tenor, 2004). In a survey of 16 newspapers and 5 television channels over a period of four months (January 1 to April 1, 2004), Media Tenor found as follows:

- The ANC dominated political coverage in the South African media during the period. It received almost double the coverage received by the second most reported on party, the Democratic Alliance

- The political coverage given to the ANC (39.3% of all coverage) was just less than the total coverage received by the other three most popular parties (40.2%)

- Of all the political party leaders, ANC and national President Thabo Mbeki received the most favourable coverage and had the highest rating

- Both the Democratic Alliance and the Inkatha Freedom Party (the parties receiving the second and third most political coverage) were portrayed negatively overall by the media during the period, while the ANC coverage was neutral

- The Democratic Alliance chose to highlight the same issues as the ANC in its election campaign. While the ANC received balanced coverage on 'political system' and 'internal affairs', it was criticised on the economy. The DA received balanced coverage on the economy, but negative coverage on 'political system' and 'internal affairs'.

- 65% of the media's reportage of the ANC during the lead-up to the 2004 election concerned non-policy issues.

(Media Tenor 2004)

The South African media has become increasingly reluctant to nail its political colours to the mast in the post-1994 period. It is true that almost all newspapers declared their preferences in that first, historic election in April 1994. Most English-language titles supported the Democratic Party (Silke & Schrire 1994, 122) including all the titles of the biggest newspaper company in the country, Independent Newspapers. Some papers, such as *The Star* (which did have reservations), were more ambivalent than others, such as *Business Day* that declared that every vote for the DP was "a vote for the decent South Africa we all want" (Silke & Schrire 1994, 122). The two major Afrikaans-language newspapers, *Die Burger* and *Beeld*, both supported the National Party, as expected given their histories. *Rapport*, however, an influential Afrikaans-language Sunday newspaper, and the *Citizen* both refused to declare. The *Sowetan*, the newspaper read by most black readers at the time, urged its readers to vote for 'any' of the liberation movement parties (Silke & Schrire 1994, 124). The decision to announce political preferences in 1994 had probably been sparked by democratic 'election fever' and was also influenced by the ongoing example of the admired British press. For the long periods between national polls, however, newspapers seldom backed political parties per se.

By the follow-up election five years later, only a few titles boasted their allegiance, some of which were in support of eccentrically marginal parties, such as the *Financial Mail's* controversial backing of the United Democratic Movement (which secured barely 2% of the electorate). In the 2004 poll, most

newspapers in South Africa remained quietly non-committal choosing to focus on the election process rather than on support for a particular party. Thus, the *Saturday Star* said in its editorial: "While the demographics in this country do indeed favour the ruling party, democracy demands of us to voice our opinion – in favour or against the party in power" (April 10 2004,12). Similarly, the *Cape Times* pushed for a free and fair campaign that would boost investor confidence (January 20 2004, 8). *Business Day* indicated vague support for the Democratic Alliance (DA, formerly Democratic Party) but this was far from an enthusiastic endorsement: "It is up the DA to demonstrate whether there is any realistic chance of a multiparty democracy developing in SA any time soon … But if it cannot gain significant black support, its future role will be limited" (January 14 2004, 7). Certainly the broad and purposeful backing of opposition parties had all but vanished.

Few, if any, editors or publishers of South African mainstream newspapers would accept that their individual titles or groups carry transient allegiances to particular political parties through into their day-to-day editorial content. One might argue, then, that the South African press is largely politically neutral and therefore that its content doesn't reflect the political orientation of individual titles or companies. The Media Tenor data again demonstrates a rather more partisan alignment. Here is a selection of the bigger and more influential of the newspapers in the sample:

Figure 2

Newspaper	Political slant of coverage
The Star	ANC dominates coverage (1595:924 – this ratio reflects the number of statements concerning the ANC compared to the those concerning the second most covered party, in this case the DA); IFP and DA receive proportionally the most negative coverage
Beeld	ANC dominates coverage (1775:1040). ANC, DA and IFP all negatively received. The NNP and the FF, both traditionally Afrikaans parties, receive proportionally positive coverage

Sowetan	ANC dominates coverage (1876:885). DA "very critically received". Dominates coverage (1125: 386 – ANC almost three times as much as the DA) and positive in tone. DA and NNP received negatively.
Business Day	ANC dominates ANC and NNP received very favourably.
Mail & Guardian	ANC coverage (1888:1054). All four major parties receive negative coverage.
Sunday Times	ANC garners 80% more coverage than the official opposition (1008:280). ANC also more positively received than DA.
Rapport	ANC receives most coverage (406:332), but four major parties generally get balanced reception and more or less equitable coverage.
Sunday World	ANC dominates coverage (though low level, 146:24). All coverage of DA and NNP is totally negative.
City Press	ANC dominates coverage with IFP second (877:387). Overall, negative reception for both and positive for range of smaller parties

(Compiled from: Media Tenor, 2004)

The overwhelming proportion of coverage, frequently positive, given to the ANC by the South African print media reiterates the contention that the South African media has largely 'bought in' to the post-apartheid political status quo and the hegemony of the majority party. Any challenge to this position is either individual- or issue-based. It is rare indeed when a South African newspaper calls for the replacement of the ANC by another political party *in toto* or even calls for the scrapping of hallmark policies, such as those regarding the economy. Calland refers to the unwritten alliance of mainstream media and the government as "a substantial coalescence of interests" (2006, 204).

> The mainstream media in South Africa are influential not just because government does in fact care what is said about it, but because the media is such a useful ally" (Calland 2006, 204)

It is true that voices of dissent are aired in columns or on leader pages. But more often, demands are made in editorials for the shifting of policy objectives

or priorities or even in support of particular cliques or individuals that are more in keeping with an internal opposition than with one seeking wholesale, radical change. "The press is free," writes Gumede, "although at times it dangerously mimics the unstated economic policy consensus around which the ANC and the main opposition parties have seemingly coalesced" (2005, 237). It is also worth adding here that the ANC planned, in the early 1990s, to launch its own daily newspaper (see page 93). This soon fell by the wayside but has been replaced by a magazine that the government now distributes to more than a million people across the country (see page 111).

To what extent are media personnel active in political life? Are career paths shaped by political affiliation?

I have mentioned above how, prior to 1994, a very direct political connection between media personnel and politics has been evident in one tradition of the South African press (Afrikaner-black). I have also alluded to the fact that even the Liberal tradition had within its ranks (printer unions) elements of political careerism.

In the post-apartheid era, the direct connection continues. Several key media owners continue to hold senior executive positions in the ANC. Cyril Ramaphosa, chair of Johncom, is an elected member of the ANC's national executive council. So too is Saki Macozoma, who heads both New Africa Investments Limited (which sold off its media interests in 2005) but also owns a 30% stake in major media house Safika Highbury Monarch, one of the largest independent publishers in southern Africa. Marcel Golding, an influential former trade unionist and ANC parliamentarian, is currently acting CEO at South Africa's newest, independent free-to-air television station, e-tv. Political economy terms this the "integration between capital and the state" and identifies it as a source of important debate within political economy. Marxist sociologist William Robinson calls it the 'congealing of elites' (cited in Calland 2006, 268). A slightly different take on the issue, South African style, is the frequency with which the ruling party sends round the begging bowl to those on its membership or executive lists who have achieved super-riches:

When the ANC is really short of money, as it always is in the run-up to an election campaigns that routinely cost in the region of R120-million or more, it sends the begging bowl around to the Comrades in Business, such as Tokyo Sexwale, Cyril Ramphosa, Patrice Motsepe and Ntatho Motlana. According to one Luthuli House source, it is less of a begging bowl and more of a knife-at-the-throat approach: 'We have created the conditions for you to be so wealthy, so you owe us; write a cheque for R2-million please. Perhaps not surprisingly, according to the source, these individuals are beginning to weary of these unrelenting demands upon their wallets" (Calland 2006, 130).

This interconnection between media, business and political elites recalls Aeron Davis's work on mass media and power (2003). In his research, Davis makes use of elite theory to postulate quite perceptively that inter-elite communications and the culture of elites can be critical factors in sustaining political and economic forms of power in society (2003, 670). This would certainly seem to be supported by the South African case study. Jacobs argues that the media in post-apartheid South Africa "on balance serves the imperatives of factions in government that favour market-driven solutions to questions of inequality and poverty in South Africa (rather than favouring more interventionist models), as well as those of capital, both South African and international" (2004, 13).

 A whole cohort of newspaper reporters and editors, including the country's first black woman editor of a major daily title (Lakela Kaunda), have left the media in post-1994 period and joined government. They have usually taken up liaison or advisory positions within ministeries or departments or have been appointed spokespeople of parastatals. Connie Molusi, the CEO of Johncom, left journalism initially to become media liaison officer for the ministry of posts, telecommunications and broadcasting. He then went back into the media again. Rafiq Rohan, former parliamentary correspondent for the *Sowetan*, accepted the editorship of the government newsletter *Vuk'uzenzele.*

Ironically, this migration of mainly black staff exposed media houses to charges of sluggish racial transformation from the very structure that had denuded them

of their senior black staff. But it wasn't just black journalists who moved from the newsrooms to the party or state. Senior white staff moved too. The former editor of the Cape Times, Tony Heard, joined the staff of the Presidency. Senior Business Day political correspondent, Stephen Laufer, joined the department of housing as the minister's spokesman. Independent newspapers trainer Chris Vick became the head of communications in the Gauteng province and spokesman for Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale. In the 'opposition press' tradition, such actions would never have been contemplated during the apartheid era, even in retirement.

Johnston argues that there is a 'cultural basis' for collusion between journalists and politicians 'which does not exclude public hostility to each other' (Johnston 2005, 17). As both the political and media worlds have professionalised, 'they have drawn together', he argues, citing Osborne (1999). In addition, they share a common, insider's knowledge of the system's imperfections, wedded to the self-interested imperative of keeping that information to themselves: In this sense, media and political worlds to some extent constitute a single, closed world, apart from the audiences of voters and readers and viewers. It is an uneasy and compromised world of co-option and mutual exploitation" (Johnston 2005, 17).

The advent of democracy saw another trend that narrowed the gap between politics and the media. This was the movement of dozens of senior journalists and editors from the pro-struggle advocacy-driven 'alternative press' into equivalent posts in the mainstream media. The shift was sparked by the realisation in some quarters in the mainstream press that the adequate coverage of a liberation movement destined for power required journalists who both understood the dynamics of the movement and who knew the personnel:

> Richard Steyn, the then editor of *The Star*, started hiring some of the alternative media guys, people like myself, Moegsien Williams and John Perlman, and brought them over into the so-called mainstream. Steyn realized that the content and the audience was changing (Johnson 2006).

It was further consolidated by the rapid collapse of the alternative press post-1994 (see Opatrny 2007) and by the growing demand of government for more representative newsrooms. Many of the journalists who moved out of the alternative press and into the mainstream sector now hold editorships or management positions at South Africa's most influential titles (such as Moegsien Williams, editor of *The Star*, Mondli Makhanya, editor of the *Sunday Times*, and Mzimkulu Malunga, managing editor of *Business Day*). Not only did this new generation of progressive journalists take senior positions at newspapers (and in the broadcast sector too), they also took on the leadership of professional organisations such Sanef. Individually and collectively, a new group was shaping the political topography and news agenda of the country's media.

It can be seen quite clearly that media personnel have gone on to take on influential positions in political structures and also that political affiliation, in the sense of proximity to the liberation struggle, has been a key marker of career progress among senior South African journalists. This is especially true at the public broadcaster, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (see Green 2006). It is worth noting that some of the new generation of journalists fiercely defend their journalistic autonomy and political independence. Nonetheless, the trend supports the contention that, with the close connection between politics and media, that once again political parallelism can be seen to be high.

How partisan are media audiences?
By this Hallin and Mancini mean the degree to which supporters of different parties or tendencies buy different newspapers or watch different television channels. This is a problematic indicator in a situation of low internal pluralism and high external pluralism. Newspapers do reflect different parties and tendencies, but the majority party is so dominant in the South African scenario, that marginal or minority interests are not represented by specific titles or by particular television channels. This occurs to some extent in the community media sector, most especially in broadcasting (Radio Pretoria, for instance), but not to a degree that is significant. What is key, perhaps, is the general degree of partisanship of media audiences in general. Attitudinal studies indicate that

even in locations with extremely low levels of access to the media (such as in the rural, or 'tribal' areas of South Africa), levels of support for the ANC and the degree of trust in which people hold for formal political institutions are both very high (Pillay 2005). The audience, in other words, with or without media, is highly partisan and also overwhelmingly in favour of the majority party.

With mainstream newspapers (and the broadcast media) largely reflecting the interests and supporting the objectives of the majority party, there is no need for new titles or channels reflecting divergent political viewpoints. Instead, the media articulates and consolidates the political status quo. This suggests a high degree of audience partisanship, even though this is not demonstrated by a wide range of newspapers each read by groups with particular, diverging, political affiliations. Partisanship in South African media history is generally conceptualised on the basis of linguistic and racial difference. It is worth interrogating, and indeed modifying, this notion.

Just as Hallin and Mancini concede that in most countries, the media is not a single system (2004, 12), so South Africa bears this out with its own history. Scholars have identified three traditions that have evolved semi-autonomously of one another in the South African media. These traditions have been named the English-language press, the Afrikaans press and the black press. During the colonial and apartheid eras these categories provided reasonably useful means for differentiating the varying political cultures, languages and histories that lay behind each tradition. But what was once conceptually porous has now become obsolete.

There are, for instance, many newspapers and magazines published in Afrikaans, but these are by no means the sole domain of the ideologues formerly known as the Afrikaans press. In fact, the largest of what used to be the Afrikaans press houses, Nasionale Pers, is now a multi-billion rand, global media empire conducting business in several languages (including English) in more than 50 countries. Neither the black press, which in fact existed only as an indigenous language press, nor the English-language press can be confined any longer to the convenient but deeply flawed apartheid era categorisations.

In retrospect, it is probably more accurate to say there were only two media traditions in South Africa prior to 1994: one that embraced the principles and history of the Liberal tradition (most of which come from the group formerly known as the 'English-language press'), and one that sought to use the press to fulfill specific ideological, political and cultural objectives (Afrikaans press and black press). This is not to say that the Liberal press was not subject to non-Liberal practices, or that the black or Afrikaans press was not capable of publishing fine, independent journalism. But if the categories of English-language, Afrikaans and black press were leaking badly by 1994, in a few short years thereafter they were totally overwhelmed by new developments and new realities. Commercialism, globalisation, direct foreign investment, black ownership and rapid technological change ensured a new press was created for a new era. After 1994, and arguably for sometime prior to that, the terms English-language, Afrikaans and black press were totally redundant.

Nonetheless, the scholarship that analyses the South African press has gone along with the categorisations and it is difficult to unpick the evolution of newspaper development without referring to them. It is certainly true, regardless of the nomenclature, that a diversity of histories and values underpins the broad corpus that is South African newspaper publishing. It is evidently contested terrain. As such, there is no simple linear development unimpinged by competing ideologies or imperatives. Nor is there a future untouched by the trends and inclinations of the past. This, too, Hallin and Mancini have emphasised: "Media institutions evolve over time; at each step of their evolution, past events and institutional patterns inherited from earlier periods influence the direction they take" (2004, p12).

Let us delve briefly into the three 'streams of the South African press as identified by scholars in the pre-1994 period. We will do this not to concede their enduring value but to excavate the two true traditions upon which we will base our further analysis and commentary. English-language newspapers published in South Africa have largely adhered to a tradition of a press based on the principles of Liberal democracy going back hundreds of years. Thomas

Pringle and John Fairbairn, the editors of one of the country's first newspapers, the South African Commercial Advertiser, fought a prolonged and ultimately victorious battle for press freedom against the Cape authorities in the early 19th century. The moment of victory followed a visit by Pringle and Fairbairn to the English Parliament in 1828 that led to the issue of a royal proclamation protecting freedom of speech in the territory (Crwys-Williams, 1989, 16).

From that time on, mainstream English-language newspapers, owned largely by mining houses or wealthy businessmen throughout the period, built and cherished the classic liberal Fourth Estate duties and principles. This is not to say that many of these principles were not called into question. This was particularly the case in the last few decades of apartheid as the wide array of anti-press restrictions forced newspapers to publish shallow, biased, misleading and often self-censored information that was sold as news. In addition, various authors have argued how the ownership of the mainstream English language press by the mining houses was reflected in the attitudes, content and agendas of the individual titles (Smith, 1945). English language newspaper editors seldom, however, aspired to political office in keeping with their liberal inclinations. On the other hand, senior members of the craft printing unions that serviced the newspapers did take up parliamentary and even ministerial positions in various governments and had much to do with the drafting of key apartheid labour policies (Hadland, 2004). Overall, therefore, this was a flawed adherence to liberal values, but an allegiance nonetheless.

Newspapers in Afrikaans, by contrast, were first published in the 19th century with the very specific ideological task of formalising the language and of supporting and building Afrikanerdom's cultural and political values. "The explicit aim of … (Nasionale Pers) was the political and economic upliftment of white Afrikaners" (Botma 2006, 3). Newspaper editors from the Afrikaans press went on not to just political office, but to the highest office in the land with editors such as HF Verwoerd and DF Malan becoming prime ministers in the apartheid period. The newspaper *Die Burger* was the formal mouthpiece of the Cape National Party for many years. There was clearly, in this 'section' of the South African press, a high degree of party-political parallelism. Any genuine

affinity with Liberal press values only developed within the so-called Afrikaans press right at the end of the apartheid era. According to Botma, "Since (1994), both Naspers and *Die Burger* has not only turned away from racism and Afrikaner nationalism, but has embraced the new South African Constitution of 1996 and its nation-building programmes" (2006, 3).

The 'black press' in South Africa has its origins in the missionary presses of the 18th century. Constrained by apartheid laws on property, location and business ownership, under-served by a racially-skewed and politically conservative advertising industry and snapped up by an acquisitive concentration of mainly white, mining capital, the black press was never allowed to develop to its potential. As such, it never really existed. A few newspapers, such as *Imvo Zabantsundu, Bantu World* and, in the 1950s, *Drum* magazine, started to articulate the aspirations and interests of black South Africans but were soon banned, bought or shackled. Drum magazine, at its height, contained investigative journalism of the highest order. The publications that did emanate out of this tradition were, however, largely advocacy driven titles, such as the Guardian in the 1950s and the alternative press in the 1980s that reflected the imperatives and ideologies of the struggle against apartheid. Often written or edited by liberation organisation officials or by struggle sympathisers, they commonly and actively sought the end of apartheid. While their views and values reflected the beliefs and history of the liberation movement, they also produced journalism filled with classic, liberal qualities. But due to their suppression by the state, their marginal economic status or their shift toward a neutral consumerism, until the end of apartheid, there really was no press that was owned and published by black South Africans.

It can be seen that while the categories are far from adequate, it was true that the South African press contained within it at least two fundamentally different traditions: the Liberal outlook encapsulated primarily but not exclusively by the English-language press; and, the activist traditions both of the Afrikaans press and of the so-called black and alternative presses. Each tradition held differing perspectives on the rights and duties of newspapers.

Certainly, patterns were established that were to continue through into the democratic era. After 1994, there was massive, wholesale change (see Chapter Seven) in the industry. The state monopoly broadcast sector was liberalised, foreign capital bought up key print media organisations, and a black press was established with black capital and black editors – these were among many far-reaching changes and trends. Weighing up the 'answers' to the questions posed by Hallin and Mancini's indicators in this chapter and in those that follow, requires consideration both of the differing traditions within the South African media and of the differing dynamics of the pre- as opposed to the post-apartheid eras. Frequently, as Hallin and Mancini predict and as critics have complained, this demands responses that are both subjective and challengeable.

The extraordinarily high (and increasing) degree of national pride exhibited by all race groups in the post-1994 period would appear to support this contention of a broad, national political consensus underpinned by a sympathetic media. In 2003, just under a decade into the new democratic dispensation, 94.4% of South Africans (taken from a nationally representative sample), agreed with the phrase 'It makes me proud to be called South African', with almost 60% agreeing strongly (Pillay, 2003). South African newspaper content, in other words, certainly reflects the political orientation of individual titles and host companies, just as it contributes to a political, national consensus. This supports the view that political parallelism is evident within this particular media and political system.

What are the roles, orientations, voice and writing styles of journalistic practice and culture?

The fourth and fifth indicators of political parallelism are closely related and concern the role, orientations and voice of journalistic practice. Hallin and Mancini contend that systems in which there is a high degree of political parallelism will have journalists who tend toward influencing public opinion rather than being the providers of neutral information or entertainment (2004, 28-29). Two trends and a strong tradition of advocacy indicate a growing

inclination of the South African media to be proactive about influencing public opinion. We have talked already about the advocacy tradition according to which sections of the South African have media set out very specifically to pursue political, cultural and ideological objectives. This lives on in the post-apartheid era in a number of ways. With the political agenda already decided by the implicit consensual contract the mainstream media has entered into with the dominant party, this leaves the form of advocacy as the terrain of contest.

For several years, journalists have been debating within their community but also with (at times very senior) members of government whether their work should be guided by the public interest or by the national interest. This is the first trend. The public interest is a Liberal notion according to which citizens' right to know is paramount, even if it means damaging powerful, even legitimate, interests. The 'national interest' suggests that news agendas should be framed in a way that promotes democracy and the progress of the nation as a whole, even if this compromises the media's perception of its duties. As Government Communication and Information System head Joel Netshitenzhe describes it: "Media hold enormous economic, social and political power, so there must be accountability. National interest in the aggregate of things that guarantee the survival and flourishing of a nation-state and nation – and should not be subsumed by public mood swings… we need consensus on some issues so we can forge ahead as one – and not become unwitting tools of other countries' national interests or prey to the rumours they start" (Barratt 2006, 48-49).

A further dimension to the debate is the belief, largely on government's side, that the commercialisation of the media is both reinforcing the historic disparities in the media inherited from apartheid and leading inevitably to the marginalisation of the interests of the poor in South Africa. This view has been aired by many senior figures, not least by the minister of arts and culture Pallo Jordan, in a key ANC discussion document presented to the party's 51st national conference and even by President Mbeki (Duncan 2003, 3).

This attitude has its roots in the decades-old debate over 'development journalism' (sometimes referred to as 'sunshine' journalism) that played out in the 1980s. Proponents argued that for Third World countries to have time to develop economically, journalists should refrain from critical reporting (Barratt, 2006, 49). In practical terms the current debate hinges around the extent to which the media is 'supportive' and/or 'critical' of the state.

It is a debate that continues to have great resonance on the African continent. Tettey notes that African governments (along with state-owned media) frequently resort to appeals to ethnic or partisan sentiments among individual journalists in a bid to subordinate their professional journalistic ethics and standards (2001, 18).

> In response to the arrest of *The Post's* staff in March 1999, the state-owned *The Times of Zambia* ran an editorial in which it condemned the arrested journalists for their acts of irresponsibility and subterfuge. It reminded *The Post* that 'when national pride, posterity and heritage are at stake, newsmen and women stand by the government of the day for sake of the nation … nobody should sympathise with newsmen and women who themselves do not care about endangering their own country' (Tettey 2001, 18).

Just as is the case in Zambia, there are supporters of both views within South African journalism.

The second trend is the emergence of tabloid newspapers in South Africa. It is a sector of the mass media market that is unstintingly advocatory and for whom the stimulation of public opinion is a prime objective. Together, the history of advocacy, the political nature of journalism as demonstrated by current debates and the emergence of a fiercely public opinion-oriented mass media suggests a high degree of political parallelism.

A 'counter-tendency', in Hallin and Mancini's terms, might be the strong impact of commercialisation on the South African media. In many cases, this trend has apparently de-politicised publications, particularly magazines, by focusing them

more strongly on non-political, advertising-friendly subjects and themes. It is also true, however, that by using its financial muscle in the form of advertisements and paid-for content, government has intervened in this section of the market too.

A good example of state intervention in the market through advertisements was a furore that developed in late 2006 over the payment of hundreds of thousands of rands for the placement of a cover story about a government minister in what was once a reputable magazine (Leadership). Indeed, by 2004, government was spending almost R50-million a year on advertising. This outlay made it the sixth biggest advertiser in daily newspapers in that year after major retailers Shoprite/Checkers, Pick n Pay and Spar and communications companies e.tv and MTN (Nielsen Media Research cited in Milne & Taylor, 2006). Commercialisation, in other words, has not necessarily diminished the connection between the media and political structures. It has just changed it. A variation of this trend has been evident in other countries of the subcontinent where "many state-owned media in Southern Africa are also becoming increasingly commercialized without gaining any autonomy from government (Berger 2002, 37). It is indeed quite possible that commercialisation has strengthened the bonds between the two. This conclusion militates against Hallin and Mancini's notion of differentiation and will be discussed below.

On the question of writing style and journalistic culture, political commentary is generally not built into 'ordinary' news articles. A form of separation is maintained. News reports tend to be done in an informational style, and overt commentary saved for the columns, Op Ed page and for the editorial. However, commentary and reportage are often written by the same people while the tabloids have again blurred the lines somewhat with their unique style of presentation.

Conclusion

This chapter has tackled the first dimension of Hallin and Mancini's paradigm, the notion of political parallelism. It has been discovered that South Africa's media and political matrix indicates a high degree of political parallelism. This is

in spite of the fact that the media industry itself is internally pluralistic. The discrepancy is largely attributable to the existence of a dominant single party imposing its presence and discourse within a democratic system, a form of democracy that is not reflected in any of the other countries populating the Hallin and Mancini model.

While the South African print media is self-consciously 'neutral' and seeks to reflect all major political tendencies in the country, it remains nonetheless broadly supportive of the social contract imposed by a powerful state. This contract is founded on the emotive appeal of overturning the country's apartheid legacy and of embracing democracy, human rights and equality. Opposition, when it occurs within the media, has more often to do with the errors of individuals within government – such as corrupt members of parliament or errant members of the executive - than with the state, the party, policy or even the system as a whole. There is, therefore, a consensual position determined by the state and embraced by the media that reflects a poor adherence to internal pluralistic ambitions. What might seem, or is projected as, neutrality and balance is, more often than not, tacit agreement with a status quo determined by the state and the ANC.

On the other hand, the delineation and application of Hallin and Mancini's five indicators to the South African case study compel the view that political parallelism is a strong feature. Newspaper content does reflect the political inclination of newspapers, their editors and holding companies, whether they admit to it or not. While the data on election coverage is compelling in this respect, it is true that this partisanship is accentuated by the dominant one party nature of the South African political system. However, media personnel are active in political life and their political inclinations do often play a role in their career paths. Media audiences are partisan. And journalistic styles and practices do reflect the history and imperatives of a political, advocacy-oriented approach to the conveying of news and information.

The traditional, but demonstrably artificial division of the pre-1994 South African media into black, Afrikaans and English-speaking streams does little service to

the identification of the values that underpin the sector's history and development. Instead, an alternative and perhaps more useful approach is offered in which the South African media is reassembled into two media traditions, one that embraced the principles and history of the Liberal tradition (most of which come from the group formerly known as the 'English-language press'), and one that sought to use the press to fulfill specific ideological, political and cultural objectives ('Afrikaans' press and 'black' press). This is something of a departure from the standard manner in which the South African press has been conceptualised in the past.

Collectively the 'answers' posed to the questions implicit in the indicators confirm the ubiquity and depth of the connection between the media and political system in South Africa. In addition, the trends identified in the post-1994 period indicate a deepening of this political parallelism. This would suggest that the South African media system is anything but a classic, Liberal model example. There are too many aspects that are more appropriate in the Polarised Pluralist model where the interchangeability of media and political elites, the partisan nature of media audiences, the high levels of external pluralism and the low degree of internal pluralism are all common features. Evidently, the term "polarised pluralist" falls far short of capturing a media system characterised by single party dominance. This is especially the case in an essentially "post-revolutionary" moment when the pressures are strong for a media that is expected to aid in the process of social transformation. The discrepancy highlights a conceptual shortcoming in the Hallin and Mancini model: its lack of preparedness for democratic hegemony particularly as it appears in post-liberation or emerging states.

Hallin and Mancini place the dual processes of secularisation and differentiation at the core of their paradigm, and this chapter begins to grapple with these notions. The initial signs support the validity of both processes in the South African context. South African experience supports both the decline of political parties and the growing role of the mass media. Though this support is not without qualification. Hallin and Mancini suggest commercialism reduces the role and influence of political actors in the media. There is evidence here that

commercialism in some ways tightens the bond. This will be discussed in more detail below (see Chapter Four) together with further consideration of the applicability and validity of the secularisation and differentiation processes.

This chapter has spelled out the concept of political parallelism as well as its theoretical and historical roots. It has attempted to ascertain how South Africa's political and media system matches up to Hallin and Mancini's benchmarks. It has concluded, initially at least, that the South African media system has strong Liberal elements but that, on balance and in spite of the mismatched label, it probably lies nearer to the Polarised Pluralist cluster. This judgment is enhanced by the perceived movement of the system away from the Liberal pole and toward the Polarised Pluralist one, on the back of developments since 1994. It will be the task of the following chapters to test this initial assessment together with the theoretical frameworks that underpin it.

Chapter Four

'DANCING WITH DEMOCRACY': STATE INTERVENTION AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN PRINT MEDIA

> *My theory is that the more democratic a country becomes, the more television, radio and media will emanate out of that country. I call this the dance with democracy – Primedia CEO Willie Kirsh[8]*

Introduction

The regime change experienced by South Africa in 1994 was more like a revolution than a simple victory at the polls. It was not merely the policies or just the personnel of state that were overhauled, but the very ethos and political culture of a nation. Four hundred years of cultural and racial domination were exchanged for one of the most liberal, constitution-based democracies in the world. Racial oligarchy was replaced by universal franchise. The media system too underwent a period of dramatic transformation (see Chapter Six). Inevitably, this sea change left behind it a whole new terrain of state-media relations. And while the terrain looks alien compared to what existed before it, there is no shortage of complexity nor of contest.

The degree to which the state intervenes in the media is one of Hallin and Mancini's four major dimensions. They use it to categorise countries and their media systems into one of the three models of media and politics: Liberal, Polarised Pluralist or Democratic Corporatist. The notion of intervention is far broader than the establishment of a regulatory or legal framework. The state naturally plays a significant role in shaping any society's media system, argue Hallin and Mancini, "but there are considerable differences in the extent of state intervention as well as in the forms it takes" (2004, 41). These forms include the development of media policy, the provision of subsidies and funding to the media, the extent of libel and hate speech laws, the ease of access to and provision of information, the regulation of media concentration and secrecy laws. In addition, the role of social groups, the balance of power within political

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[8] From an interview with Kirsh, 2006.

systems, the development of rational-legal authority and the degree of political clientelism are all elements of what is broadly termed intervention.

Hallin and Mancini contend that the greater the degree of intervention by the state, the further away the media system is from the Liberal model. This is because high levels of intervention generally signal a lack of autonomy in public administration and the judicial system, a patron-based distribution system for social resources and a highly divided and contested political terrain served by an equally divided and partisan media. All of these occur less commonly in Liberal state-media systems than they do in either Polarised Pluralist or Democratic Corporatist models.

This chapter will spell out more precisely the concept of state intervention, as described by Hallin and Mancini. It will then try to ascertain how South Africa's political and media system matches up to it. The chapter will examine the development of South African media policy and chart the state's relationship with the print media. It will look at different forms of state intervention and the reasons for and implications of these interventions. It will assess the extent of social group representation, the balance of power within the political system, the extent of political clientelism and the development and current state of rational-legal authority. In concluding, the chapter will indicate, with regard to the degree and forms of state intervention, where South Africa might fit in Hallin and Mancini's comparative media system matrix.

State intervention: different forms

A frequent distinction between a Liberal media system and one that is either Polarised Pluralist or Democratic Corporatist concerns the degree of intervention by the state, according to Hallin and Mancini (2004, 44). Characterised by their highly developed social welfare programmes, Democratic Corporatist states such as Sweden, Holland and Denmark, have long traditions of active involvement of the state in a range of activities. This extends to the media sector where subsidies to ensure diversity are commonly used as an instrument of media policy. These subsidies are generally

distributed according to clearly established criteria while the media itself is subject to a significant level of regulation (Hallin & Mancini 2004, 163). There are often strong hate-speech laws in Democratic Corporatist systems as while the state may be interventionist, it also provides significant, often constitutional, protection for a range of press freedoms. There are, in other words, strong and longstanding limits on state power. There is also a common understanding, within Democratic Corporatist societies, that the media is more than simply a private business. It is, instead, a social institution providing a vital outlet for organised social groupings to articulate their needs and aspirations. These groupings, such as trade unions and interest groups, hold an important, even central role, in the polity. At the same time, and in spite of the highly partisan audiences and readerships, Democratic Corporatist countries tend to foster highly professionalised, autonomous journalists regulated by strong press councils.

The state has also played an historically important role in the Polarised Pluralist model populated by countries such as Greece, Portugal and Spain. Here, though, the role of the state is more complex, reflecting these countries' histories both of authoritarian regimes and of the more recent introduction of social welfare policies (Hallin & Mancini 2004, 119). But unlike with the Democratic Corporatist countries, "the state's grasp often exceeds its reach" in Polarised Pluralist systems, according to Hallin and Mancini (2004, 119).

> The capacity of (a Polarised Pluralist) state to intervene effectively is limited by a lack of resources, a lack of political consensus and by clientelist relations that diminish its capacity for unified action (2004, 119).

In these states, legal actions against journalists are relatively common and political alliances with media owners are usual. Powerful political officials frequently hold significant stakes in media companies. There is, therefore, an "intertwining of media and political elites", supported by a media subsidy system and supported by right of reply laws (Hallin & Mancini 2004, 122). The influential role of the Polarised Pluralist state in the development and

functioning of the media, according to Hallin and Mancini, "has limited the tendency of the media to play the 'watchdog' role so widely valued in the prevailing liberal theory" (2004, 122).

In countries making up the Liberal model, such as the United States, Britain and Canada, the role of the state is largely circumscribed by history and by law. State subsidies are minimal or non-existent as the market predominates. Regulation, by the state or even by industry bodies, is generally weak. The state seldom owns media shares but does often support a public broadcaster. An adversarial attitude between state and media is common while highly professionalised journalists are standard. As we will see below, South Africa has elements of each of these systems.

There are a number of indicators that serve to signal the likelihood of state interventionism, according to Hallin and Mancini. A high concentration of capital in media markets is one (2004, 48). Such an environment often suggests an intimate relationship between media owners and the state, "either through subsidy and regulation, or in the form of clientelist ties and partisan alliances and also … a tendency for media to be influenced by outside business interests" (2004, 48). See Chapter Five for a more detailed discussion of this issue.

A relatively recent shift from authoritarianism to democracy is a second indicator. This was true of most of the countries in the Polarised Pluralist cluster (Greece, Spain and Portugal). The recent transition tends to mean a blending of the paternalistic, authoritarian inclinations of an active state with more recent notions of participatory and pluralist elements, argue Hallin and Mancini (2004, 50).

Hallin and Mancini cite Lijphart's distinction between consensus and majoritarian democracy as a useful tool in understanding the relationships between media and political systems. The type of democracy is the third indicator. Majoritarian democracies tend to be associated with the development of catchall political parties with a catchall media reflecting this alignment.

Journalists are often considered neutral servants of the public and the media is characterised by internal pluralism. A breakdown of formal journalistic organisation is common (see Chapter Six) in keeping with the press's more limited role. Humphreys argues that a dominant political tendency is more likely to exert its power to intervene in the media sector, most particularly when it comes to publicly owned media (cited in Hallin & Mancini 2004, 52).

The basic feature of consensus democracies is power sharing, according to Lijphart (cited in Hallin & Mancini 2004, 51). These systems have multiparty political set-ups and therefore tend to encourage a media environment that is externally pluralist and diverse. This is a hallmark of political parallelism (see Chapter Three). Consensus systems are likely to make special concessions for the formal representation either of organised social groups ("organised pluralism") or of special interests ("individualised pluralism"). The former, also called corporatism, is a characteristic of the Democratic Corporatist cluster (Hallin & Mancini 2004, 53).

The fourth indicator is the pattern of social organisation seemingly arrayed along a spectrum. The two poles of the spectrum are: at one end, a rule-based adherence to formal, universal rules of procedure (what Weber termed rational-legal authority) and, at the other end, the distribution of resources as between patrons and clients in which deference, personal connections and the common good are the currency. This is the political clientelism defined and expanded upon by Mouzelis, Eisenstadt and Lemarchand, Hallin and Papathanassopoulos and others. Naturally, clientelism suggests a more interventionist state. Media owners will use their media properties as a vehicle for negotiations with other elites and for intervention in the political world (Hallin & Mancini 2004, 58). Where clientelism abounds, political parallelism is high and the development of rational-legal authority (such as the judiciary and journalistic professionalism) is weak.

The final indicator concerns the degree of pluralism in a society. Polarised Pluralist societies are characterised by sharp political conflicts often involving sudden changes of regime (Hallin & Mancini 2004, 61). The media are

frequently used as instruments of struggle in these conflicts, sometimes by dictatorships and by movements struggling against them, but also by contemporary parties in periods of democratic politics (Hallin & Mancini 2004, 61). Polarised Pluralist countries also, however, are host to "significant anti-system" political parties. This typifies a system with a wide spectrum of divergent, at times conflictual, ideologies (Hallin & Mancini 2004, 60).

In moderate pluralism, the media sector is subject both to commercialisation and professionalisation (which I understand as the process by which professionalism is attained). Hallin and Mancini argue this is indicative of a lower level of political parallelism (2004, 61). The historical roots of moderate pluralism states are likely to include an early triumph over feudalism, while Polarised Pluralist systems tend to have experienced conflict deep into the 20th Century. In the latter case, political factions continue to contend for power in a system marked by a high degree of political parallelism (2004, 63).

While Hallin and Mancini's indicators are meant to predict the likelihood of intervention *per se*, *Comparing Media Systems* does not devote much time to analysing different forms of intervention, particularly of the coercive type in young democracies. This is not surprising, perhaps, as governments in Denmark or Great Britain are unlikely to send paramilitary police in to newsrooms to sort out the editor. Sadly, as we will see below, this is a more common phenomenon in newer democracies, most particularly in Africa.

Tettey (2001) lists a number of different forms of coercive intervention often in blatant contravention of an African country's own legal or even Constitutional provisions. Thus in Burkina Faso, despite constitutional provisions of freedom of speech and the press, Moustapha Thiombiano, the president general of the country's first independent radio station, *Horizon-FM*,

> was attacked by four supporters of the ruling Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP) party … The attack followed the airing … of 'sharp' commentary on the station's call-in programmes, *'Sondage Democratique'*, where listeners are invited to call in and

voice their opinions on democracy in Burkina Faso (cited in Tettey 2001, 19).

Other unorthodox modes of intervention noted by Tettey include "various acts of silent or overt reciprocity" among African governments aimed at stifling the media, corporal punishment (as occurred recently on one editor in Ivory Coast), the use of state-owned media to discredit media critics, the passage of laws making insulting the president or members of parliament punishable offences, the withdrawal of government advertising (see below), and a number of "very indirect ways of hurting the media, by using the citizenry or their supporters as agents of intimidation and violence" (2001, 17-20).

We find in South Africa too a disconnection between Constitutional rights and actual state practice. Once South Africa had finalised a liberal democratic Constitution in 1996, it was commonly assumed the country had embarked on a new and more virtuous path. Freedom of the press, freedom of association, freedom of access to information and freedom of speech were all enshrined within the Constitution 's Bill of Rights fortifying the media's classic liberal democratic Fourth Estate function. No longer would the media be curtailed and circumscribed by an authoritarian regime. No longer would draconian laws determine what could be printed in the nation's newspapers and what could not. That, at least, was the intention of the Constitution's authors. In addition, key High Court judgments on press freedom, such as the Bogoshi ruling[9], eased once onerous libel and defamation laws. It seemed as if South Africa now had a framework in place that would make a cast-iron Liberal model for its media system inevitable.

Indeed, a great diversity of publications has arisen within the country with a significant degree of accessibility, rapid growth and an established mass appeal. At present, there are about 600 print media titles in South Africa compared to 20 that existed in 1910 (Hadland 1991, 8). But the reality is far less comfortable than the figures might suggest. Former *Sunday Times* editor Ken Owen recalls that South Africa's constitution-makers "baulked at entrenching

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[9] The Supreme Court of Appeal upheld the defence of "reasonable publication", also known as the Bogoshi defence, in 1998. Bogoshi was the plaintiff (Louw 2005).

free speech or giving it anything like the weight which it enjoys under the First Amendment of the American Constitution" (1998, 177). He adds, furthermore, that the constitution makers "did not trust either the newspapers or the idea of free speech, so they brushed aside the modest request of the Conference of Editors for full entrenchment of free speech, and instead assigned to that right a lesser status and a lesser protection than they gave to other rights. In effect, they put into the hands of legislators and judges the power to decide how much freedom would be 'reasonable' in the new democracy … This reluctance to relinquish control of discourse was, given the centrality of free speech to both democracy and to the wider search for truth, revealingly ominous" (ibid).

Within the deeply sympathetic framework of constitutional rights, many loopholes exist and countertendencies have apparently emerged. Old apartheid era legislation – such as the 1968 Armaments Development and Production Act and the 1982 Protection of Information Act – containing deeply anti-press restrictions have been used by the state repeatedly in the new democratic era (see Tomaselli 1997, 8). At times these archaic laws are used to demand the revelation of sources' identities, at others to prevent newspapers from publishing articles. This practice has sparked the ire of South African editors and a series of meetings have been held with the highest branches of the state, including the Presidency, in the as yet unsuccessful bid to resolve the issue (see Barratt 2006).

In 1998, the Western Cape Attorney General invoked an apartheid era law, section 205 of the Criminal Procedure Act of 1977, to force photographers to testify as state witnesses in a case about the mass killing of a gang leader, Rashaad Staggie. Section 205 had previously been used by the apartheid government to subpoena journalists to reveal the identities of confidential sources – in those days often linked to banned liberation groups (Barratt 2006, 22). A delegation from the South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef) met Justice Minister Dullah Omar and Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi in 1998 about the "old laws" problem and an interim proposal was drawn up. However, just days after the meeting three Cape Town editors were

issued with subpoenas in the Staggie case. They publicly refused to cooperate (Barratt 2006, 22).

On February 19, 1999 a Record of Understanding was signed between Sanef, Omar, Mufamadi and the National Director of Public Prosecutions, Bulelani Ngcuka. The understanding noted a need to continue to negotiate on Section 205. Despite the agreement, signed on Media Freedom Day 2000, various newspapers were raided without warning by the authorities looking for information on the Staggie case. Forty editors protested outside the Cape High Court in June 2001 when the editor of *Die Burger*, Arrie Rossouw, appeared with regard to his application for the withdrawal of a search warrant. "Sanef repeatedly argued that journalists should not be put in the role of police informers nor do police work, because this damaged their ability to gather information in the public interest" (Barratt 2006, 23).

In April 1999, Sanef contracted the Centre for Applied Legal Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand to compile a list of anti-media statutes still on the books. The work was completed by May 2000 and the justice ministry referred the document to the Law Commission to come up with proposals. By early 2007, no progress had been reported. In the meantime, Section 205 has been invoked several more times and various other old laws, such as the National Key Points Act, have been used to block journalists' access to information (Barratt 2006, 24).

Between 2000 and 2006, Sanef has made representations to Parliament or issued statements expressing criticism of various pieces of legislation containing anti-press measures. These have included: the Broadcast Amendment Bill, the Anti-Terrorism Bill, the Convergence Bill, the Interception of Electronic Communications Bill and the Film and Publications Amendment Bill.

Constitutional planners had never intended for the country's founding document to be immutable. They wanted a living Constitution that would breathe and change (Sachs 2007). They designed a Constitution that would provide

principles and codes rather than specific practices. They also anticipated new debates and new areas of consensus and expected that the Constitution would be adjusted to reflect these. But new practices do not necessarily follow formal Constitutional amendments, and indeed more often than not precede them.

Thus while the freedom of access to information is enshrined within the Constitution, the reality is often different. In January 2007, for instance, the major provincial government of Gauteng announced that reporters had been barred from contacting local police stations directly and would henceforth deal only with the police service's head office spokesmen. "This …. shows how fast the government is creating an information-starved state," according to Raymond Louw, a renowned advocate for freedom of expression and the deputy chairman of the South African branch of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (*Cape Times*, Thursday January 18 2007, page 3). Clearly this is a far cry from the kind of access to information envisaged by the drafters of the Constitution. It is fair to say, however, that the limitations on press freedom haven't been about political party partisanship or banning an opposition point of view. They have rather been classical liberal dilemmas about the trade-off, for instance, between national security and access to information.

The horns of the dilemma, at least from government's perspective, were put succinctly by Joel Netshitenzhe, a key person in state media policy and head of the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) at a speech delivered during a conference on "Transformation of the Media in a Society in Transition", in Johannesburg in late 2005:

> Access to information is the lifeblood of democracy … [but] you can't have media freedom in a vibrant democracy if there is a situation of conglomeration and homogenisation of news. You can't have media freedom where there is no diversity of ownership. This means the poor are not just consumers but producers of news. You can't have media freedom if commercial pressures limit editors' use of content or where editors are held on a leash to satisfy the dictates of advertisers… Freedom is not an amorphous concept without values… Is it possible where the media is an opium to dull the senses

and connives in the destruction of the very values that make media freedom possible? Media freedom should add value to the national endeavour, not support conspicuous consumption, greed and impel the people to live above their means (Netshitenzhe 2005).

Clearly, while the indicators are useful in identifying scenarios in which state intervention in the media is likely, they fall short of portraying the full range of interventions that even a democratic state is capable of utilising to enforce its political will.

With Hallin and Mancini's five indicators in mind, however, let us consider the South African case study. First, I will set out the development of two phases of South African media policy and will allude to relevant legislation. I will then discuss various elements of tension between the media and the state to signal the level of intervention. Finally I will locate the trends and dynamics of the South African state and media within the Three Models paradigm.

"There is a long history in South African of the combination of market forces and political interference wreaking havoc with our media and with the practice and quality of journalism," according to former editor and media professor Anton Harber (2002). We look now at how the latter developed by playing close attention to the evolution of media policy.

There were two periods of significant policy development in South Africa: from 1990 to 1994, as preparations were made for the commencement of the new, democratic dispensation; and, from 1994 to the present as these policies were implemented and refined. In the interests of keeping policy and regulation development digestible, and also on the basis that much of the information collected has been interview-based (owing to a lack of formal records, documentation or much scholarship), I have chosen to present this two-part section in a descriptive narrative.

The development of South African media policy, 1990 - 1994[1]

In April 1990, some two months after the historic release from prison of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC), a small team of ANC strategists arrived in South Africa. Returned from many years in exile, they had to begin the planning and preparation ahead of the formal negotiations soon to commence between the South African government and the liberation movement. Among the advance party group were two ANC officials, Gill Marcus and Joel Netshitenzhe, who had been assigned the specific task of engaging with the South African media establishment. The engagement was intended to be two-fold: to establish a channel of communication through which the ANC could disseminate its views, and to discuss the transformation of the media itself (Marcus 2006).

Marcus had been out of the country for 21 years. But, from the early 1970s, she had put together regular weekly briefing documents of press cuttings for the ANC's leadership and had developed a familiarity with the personalities and structure of the local media industry. Netshitenzhe went into exile following the Soweto Uprising in 1976 and went on to become director of the ANC's Lusaka-based radio station, Radio Freedom, but was also a highly regarded intellectual and confidant of the party's highest leadership. Netshitenzhe and Marcus began with virtually no infrastructure at all. They opened a small office in Johannesburg's Sauer Street, just down the road from the imposing edifice of the city's then biggest daily newspaper, *The Star*. Initially they had one telephone line and no computer. Netshitenzhe had been briefed to deal with the print media and Marcus was meant to be the party's media liaison contact point and was tasked with training and resource gathering. They were soon overwhelmed by demands from the local and international media for information, comment and analysis (Marcus 2005). Their office, named the

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[1] The narratives on South African media policy are based on interviews conducted specially for this thesis, but also make use of original work already published by the author, including: Hadland, A & Thorne, K (2004). *The People's Voice: the development and current state of the small media sector in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press; and, Hadland, A., Aldridge, M. & Ogada, J (2006). *Revisioning Television: Policy, strategy and models for the sustainable development of community television in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. See also Horwitz (2001) and Louw (1993) for important accounts of the policy process.

ANC's Department of Information and Publicity, expanded rapidly to include additional officials such Carl Niehaus, later ambassador to the Netherlands, and Saki Macozoma, currently a media and banking magnate.

Discussions around what to do about the South African media had taken place for several years in the ANC's principal exile offices in London and in Lusaka. Banned and exiled for four decades, the ANC had no formal media channels inside South Africa and its contact in particular with the mainstream print media had been minimal. Indeed, for three decades (1960s-1980s), no South African newspaper was allowed to quote banned or listed people, which included the entire ANC hierarchy. Discussion in exile centred on how the ANC would be able to put its views and opinions into the public domain when the media was largely controlled by forces not necessarily sympathetic to the party's wishes.

In 1992, recently released Nelson Mandela – by then president of the ANC but not yet of the country – said the party valued "a free, independent and outspoken press", but he made a number of criticisms that cut deep in South African media circles (Barratt 2006, 6). He said the lack of diversity in control and staffing of the print media led to one-dimensional journalism. He complained that many white journalists continued to be pessimistic about the country's future, in spite of indications to the contrary. He bemoaned the lack of excellence in South African journalism. And he strongly criticised black reporters, suggesting their allegiances lay with their white bosses rather than with the imperatives of the liberation struggle (Barratt 2006, 6). "These criticisms put pressure on all editors. White editors felt they were being told it was time to leave. For black journalists, being attacked like this was an added pressure. Even editors sympathetic to the ANC found that their journalistic independence was under question" (ibid).

This problem of getting its message across was especially acute when it came to broadcasting as the ANC soon pondered the prospects of contesting the country's first democratic election without the support of the national broadcasting monopoly, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). The drive to sever the apartheid government's grip on the national broadcaster

was to dominate media policy formulation between 1990 and the election in 1994. It is highly debatable whether this process has secured the impartiality of the public broadcaster. Indeed, repeated incidents of interference by the state in programming selection and content, the appointment of senior staff and management, the choice of commentators and in the restructuring of the SABC itself, strongly suggest that the public broadcaster remains very much at the whim of government and the majority party (see Green 2006). This has, though, fallen short of the government succeeding in securing mandatory broadcast time on the public broadcaster (see Horwitz 2001). This focus on broadcasting in the early 1990s, together with a general reluctance to interfere with the freedom of the press, left the mainstream print media largely untouched by specific regulatory constraints.

The ANC was, however, very keen to establish a foothold in the South African print media sector. One option mooted was to launch a party newspaper. Another was to acquire a local paper and convert it into a party organ. This debate was to absorb considerable energy within ANC structures during the early 1990s. At first, the debates were largely theoretical: "When we were in London, it was all very abstract. We had a particular focus on radio, and on radio training specially. Pallo [Jordan] was head of that. Our big focus was radio and print. But it was a big jump to owning a newspaper" (Marcus 2005). Gradually, the debate took on a more material form. An ANC working group was established to look into the issue of starting a party political newspaper and to start costing models. Moeletsi Mbeki, brother of current South African President Thabo Mbeki, was commissioned to undertake a feasibility study.

"It was intended to be a daily newspaper, but it never materialised," said Marcus. Just as the idea of an ANC daily paper was abandoned, so too were plans to acquire an already existing newspaper. Perhaps the strongest contender was the *New Nation*. Edited by the son of senior party leader Walter Sisulu, Zwelakhe, the *New Nation* was an alternative weekly newspaper that had served as an important conduit for ANC information during the late 1980s and early 1990s. But plans to take *New Nation* formally under the ANC's wing never came to pass either.

Reasons cited for the ANC's reluctance formally to enter the newspaper business are both financial and political. Financially, newspapers are enormously expensive to launch and sustain from scratch and without benefit of a distribution, printing or infrastructural capacity. Even acquiring already existing titles was an expensive endeavour. Politically, key party leaders harboured serious doubts about the wisdom of having a formal party mouthpiece at all. According to Macozoma: "I didn't believe political parties should own newspapers. You have journals for your own members. A party political newspaper doesn't make sense: who is going to believe it? I am fatalistic about a political party's ability to influence the media. In the end, the ANC is a big, important organisation with members all over the place. If the issue really is hegemony, this is established by being everywhere and not by having an ANC masthead" (Macozoma 2005). There was no question, however, that some powerful members of the party retained a keen interest in the newspaper option.

As Horwitz points out, with the prospects of an ANC newspaper closed off and the collapse of an initiative to secure mandatory time for the party on the SABC, the reform of the South African Communication Service (SACS) became one of the ANC leadership's few potential tools to influence press coverage (2001, 294). This was a process that began in earnest in 1995 with the Conference on Government Communications, which led, in turn, to the Communications Task Group (Comtask) being established in 1996 and the birth of the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) soon after.

But the ANC also had a history of supporting a free press that militated against direct intervention. As far back as 1943, the ANC annual conference unanimously adopted the "Africans' Claims in South Africa" document. This document included a Bill of Rights that called for the "right of Freedom of the Press". This constitutes the genesis of ANC media policy. It was drawn up initially as a response to the 1941 Atlantic Charter which expressed the wish of its signatories, US President Franklin D Roosevelt and British Prime Minister

Winston Churchill, "to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them".

Over the years, the ANC would develop much more specific views, and expectations, surrounding the development and role of the media in South Africa. These are to be found in party policy documents but are also framed in international law as well as being enshrined in South Africa's 1996 Constitution, Acts of Parliament, government policy directives, regulatory authority directives, licence conditions, self-regulatory structures and in corporate regulations. Some of the more noteworthy documents will be considered below.

The formation of media policy in South Africa began in earnest in 1990 and corresponded with the setting up of the ANC's Department of Information and Publicity (DIP) unit by Marcus and Netshitenzhe. It was from this time that a series of conferences, debates and even protest actions gave significant impetus to policy matters and focused attention on the importance of the media sector and its role in the transition to democracy, and beyond. Of course there were many laws and even policy to do with the media in South Africa prior to 1990, not least the 120 laws that the apartheid government put in place over decades to restrict the media and limit freedom of expression and association (Berger 1999). There were also moments in the period pre-1990 when media issues reached the public domain, such as former President PW Botha's infamous late night telephone calls to the national broadcaster with instructions to recast the news in a more favourable light.

This chapter will, however, not dwell on apartheid media restrictions nor on the policy that articulated these attitudes other than in passing. Instead, it will focus on the development of progressive media policy as this is relevant to the period under discussion in this thesis.

Not long after the African Claims document was adopted and in the wake of World War Two, one of the most important multinational pronouncements of human history was made with the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was unveiled on December 10, 1949. Article 19 has

become a landmark of media policy. The article reads as follows: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes the freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers." The article has been a lodestone for media activists ever since and continues to influence constitutional law and media policy both in South Africa and across the world.

The sentiments of Article 19 were adopted and expanded upon a few years later when South Africans came together to launch the Freedom Charter at Kliptown in 1955. The charter did not mention the media specifically but did declare that South Africa would one day be governed by a law that would "guarantee to all their right to speak, to organise, to meet together, to publish, to preach, to worship and to educate their children". It also called for the "free exchange of books and ideas", the right of all people to use their own languages and to develop their own folk culture and customs. These are all rights and guarantees that clearly set the tone for future media policy.

Though the years between the launching of the Freedom Charter in the mid-1950s and the late 1980s were important years for the development of the struggle against apartheid, media policy during this time in South Africa was principally about the imposition of censorship and repression. For almost three decades, little media policy of note or value emerged. By the end of the 1980s, however, things had begun to change. In 1989, the Congress of South African Trade Unions set up a national consultative process concerning media policy that "crystallised a rudimentary network of left-wingers interested in media policy work" (Louw 1993, 9). Sadly, the initiative floundered in the face of more pressing national priorities, but a seed had been planted. The increasing impetus of political negotiations at home reflected the rapid advances media policy was making abroad. Central to this was the growing belief that being able to communicate and the receiving and transmitting of information (rather than just the right to information) was as important to democracy and development as other more traditional human rights.

On August 25th 1990, two thousand people marched on the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) offices in Auckland Park, Johannesburg. The demonstration was a watershed moment in the evolution of media policy. It marked the galvanisation of progressive media workers to resist the top-down reform of broadcasting anticipated by a National Party government in its dying days. The march was principally a protest against the appointment of the Viljoen Task Group, a body headed by Christo Viljoen then chairman of the SABC, intended to investigate the future of broadcasting in South and southern Africa. The protest was led by the Campaign for Open Media (COM) that was established jointly by the Film and Allied Workers Organisation (FAWO) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions' (Cosatu) anti-privatisation committee. As it turned out, even the ANC was to concede that the Viljoen task group made some useful recommendations, including the establishment of an independent regulatory body, the framing of a new broadcasting Act, the devolution of political control from the public broadcaster and the improvement of the accessibility of the broadcast medium.

A series of influential conferences in the early 1990s brought in international experience and gave substance to early outlines of progressive media policy. Most important were the Jabulani! Freedom of the Airwaves conference of August 1991 in Amsterdam and the University of Boputhatswana media policy workshop of September 1991. Also important was the Patriotic Front Conference in Durban in October 1991 and the ANC department of information and publicity seminar in November 1991, at which the ANC circulated its draft Media Charter. The document drew heavily on earlier conference debates and highlighted issues like the equitable distribution of media resources, diversity, access, skills, ownership and affirmative action. The charter, described as a "crucial turning point within the ANC's approach to the media" (Louw 1993, 228) was adopted by the party's top decision-making body, the National Executive Committee, on January 13, 1992.

The ANC Media Charter, which was a "deliberately Utopian, statement of intent", included a clause stating: "All communities shall have access to the skills required to receive and disseminate information" (Teer-Tomaselli 1993,

231). The draft charter called for the democratisation of the South African media and stated that "the forms and methods of the media shall take account of the diversity of communities in respect of geography, language and interests" (Louw 1993, 330). The charter said diversity of ownership of media production and distribution facilities would be ensured while affirmative action would be implemented (Louw 1993, 331). But while the main pre-occupation of the seminar was what to do with the SABC and how to minimise its pro-NP impact in the looming first democratic election, it also focused its attention on the print media.

Three resolutions were adopted by the seminar with specific reference to the print media. These concerned, interestingly, the establishment of a national newspaper for the democratic movement, the monitoring and regulation of the print media and the implementation of a media development programme of action. The seminar was an important indicator of the broad democratic movement's attitude to the print media, though only the third resolution was ever to come to fruition.

On setting up an ANC national daily newspaper, the seminar called for more haste, urging the party to "finalise" its investigations "taking account of the political implications, the financial viability, the need for national availability and the question of language" (Louw 1993, 338). As we have indicated above, nothing was to come of this. The seminar called for the establishment of independent monitoring structure supported by the international community to assess the impact of the print media during the country's political transition and report its findings regularly. While this occurred with the broadcasting sector, it was done only temporarily with the print media sector. Indeed the very idea of it was vehemently rejected by several key figures in the print media sector including the Chairman of the Argus Group, Murray Hofmeyr, the Editor in Chief of *The Star*, Richard Steyn and Argus Director and former Editor of *The Star* Harvey Tyson, who jointly issued a statement in 1992 declaring: "We believe that the monitoring of the print media during the interim period period or after the election of the new government is an unacceptable principle which conflicts fundamentally with freedom of expression" (cited in Louw 1993, 327). Nor was

an "accord of journalistic practice" established, as called for by the ANC seminar, to ensure what it called a minimum of bias in the print media and to prevent distortions in the information process.

Finally, the seminar called for a media programme of action to be drawn up and implemented that would tackle issues like skills' shortages, illiteracy and that would seek to diversify the use of language. In the establishment of the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) more than ten years later, perhaps the most concrete outcome of the 1991 seminar can be discerned. The MDDA was the progeny of pre-1994 policy, as I have illustrated, but gained real impetus with the appointment of the Task Group on Government Communication (Comtask) in 1996. Among Comtask's recommendations was the very specific call for the establishment of a structure that would support diversity in the media industry. A number of policy predecessors for the establishment of the agency were referred to, including the National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, which was published in 1998 and which emphasised freedom of expression and media diversity, as well as the Bill of Rights in the Constitution.

The Media Development and Diversity Agency Act was eventually passed in 2002. It established an independent, statutory body funded by government, the media industry and by donors with the purpose of assisting the development of community media and promoting media diversity. The agency was assigned four main objectives and four methods of intervention. The main objectives were to:

- encourage ownership and control of, and access to, media by historically disadvantaged indigenous language and cultural groups;
- encourage the channeling of resources to community and small commercial media;
- encourage human resource development and capacity building in the media industry, especially among historically disadvantaged groups; and,

• encourage research regarding media development and diversity[10].

However, by the end of the period under discussion in this thesis (2004), the MDDA had only just commenced its work on a limited budget and had as yet made no significant impact. It is true the print media sector had collectively agreed to contribute several millions of rands toward supporting the work of the MDDA and had committed in principle to supporting it. But even now in early 2007, no one can honestly claim the MDDA has made a deep impression on the mainstream print media in South Africa. In its latest annual report, the MDDA says it disbursed close to R20-million by the end of March 2006. It concedes, however, that "it is too soon to judge the broader impact of the MDDA on media development and diversity. It would be simplistic to measure this by the number of grants allocated or the fact that grant funds are all committed. The real measure will be whether media projects supported by the Agency continue to thrive years after support has been concluded…" (MDDA, 2005/6, 9). It is therefore fair to argue that this policy initiative too, in the period under discussion, failed to generate a substantive response from the industry.

Discussions in the early 1990s in South Africa were certainly informed by happenings not only elsewhere in the world but elsewhere in Africa. In 1991, a statement of principles was drawn up by African journalists calling for a free, independent and pluralistic media on the continent and throughout the world. The Windhoek Declaration was to become a benchmark for the United Nations and for all organisations in the media field. In its preamble, the declaration noted that its lineage included Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and UN General Assembly Resolution 59(1) of 1946 (which declared that freedom of information is a fundamental human right) as well as UNESCO's Resolution on the free flow of ideas of 1989.

The Windhoek Declaration, which focused specifically on print media, included these important policy statements:

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[10] Media Development and Diversity Act of 2002.

- The establishment, maintenance and fostering of an independent, pluralistic and free press is essential to the development and maintenance of democracy in a nation and for economic development;

- An Independent press means independence from governments, politicians, economic control or from the control of materials or infrastructure essential for the dissemination of newspapers, magazines and periodicals;

- A Pluralistic Press means the end of monopolies of any kind and the existence of the greatest possible number of outlets reflecting the widest possible range of opinion;

- Direct funding is a priority to ensure the development and establishment of non-government publications that reflect society as a whole; and,

- All funding should aim to encourage pluralism as well as independence.

But it was the Free, Fair and Open Media Conference in Cape Town in early 1992 that tied many of the loose threads of progressive media policy discussions together. A formal proposal was drawn up which was presented and tabled at the multiparty political negotiations, known as Codesa (Convention for a Democratic South Africa) at Kempton Park.

The Codesa proposal argued for three actions:

- The establishment of an interim independent communications authority to regulate the airwaves during the transition period;

- A new, more diverse SABC board; and,

- The appointment of a task force to examine obstacles to diversity of opinion in the print media.

The conference resolutions were to have a major impact on policy and, in September 1993, the Transitional Executive Committee (TEC) – which was effectively ruling South Africa at the time – approved in principle the creation of the Independent Broadcasting Authority. The IBA was formally established on

30 March 1994 by an Act of Parliament. It was within the IBA Act that much of the preceding media policy debate was encapsulated and that definitions and roles were spelled out in law for the first time. Print media, naturally enough, were excluded from legislation directed at broadcasting. But other initiatives proposed during the development of progressive media policy, such as the task force on diversity, failed to materialise.

The development of media policy in South Africa, 1994-2004.

By 1994, a network of policies, laws and regulations relating to the South African media were either in place or were imminent. This included well over 100 statutory provisions left over from the apartheid era that remained largely intact together with a raft of new labour relations, freedom of information and monopoly laws that would all have some impact on the media industry at large. But perhaps the four most important components of this policy network were the ANC's Democratic Information Programme published in 1994, the South African Constitution which was finalised in 1996, the work of the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Icasa) which was established in 2000 and the IBA Act which underpinned it, and the creation in 2002 and proposed ambit of the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA). These four aspects represented the bedrock of South African media policy and its implementation during the period. They also form the measure by which the balance of power between the media and the state can be ascertained.

The Democratic Information Programme formed part of the heavily influential Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) "Base Document" that was published in 1994. The RDP was the policy clarion call of South Africa's first democratic government and gained rapid public acceptance with the frequently fulsome support of the national media. President Nelson Mandela created a full cabinet post for oversight of the RDP and assigned the charismatic and widely respected unionist Jay Naidoo to do the job. The Base Document was the RDP's policy platform. It spelt out in some detail the new government's attitude and expectations with regards to the South African media. Heavily informed by the draft media charter and the advocacy that

preceded it, the Democratic Information Programme considered open debate and transparency to be crucial elements in reconstruction and development. It called for the active exchange of information and opinion among all members of society, within and among communities and also between government and society[11].

The programme supported affirmative action in the media sector and called for resources to be set aside "to set up broadcasting and print enterprises at a range of levels" as well as training and education to ensure communities recognise and exercise their media rights. The programme proposed "strict limitations on cross media ownership to limit monopolies", the setting aside of funds for the "training of journalists and community-based media" and encouraged media institutions to do the same. It served notice that freedom of information legislation would be broadened and called for the restructuring of the government's information arm, the South African Communications Service.

The mainstream print media was largely unaffected by any of this policy. Calls for open debate and the exchange of opinion and information were easily enough accounted for in newspapers' usual *modus operandi*. The imperative to diversify the media was matched by the rapid expansion of the mainstream media's community newspaper divisions (see Chapter One). Affirmative action and equity in the workplace were more efficiently enforced by laws imposed in the mid- to late-1990s, such as the Labour Relations Act (1995), the Employment Equity Act (1998), the Skills Development Act (1998) and the Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment Act (2003). But these applied to all economic sectors and were implemented unevenly within the sector, at best. Motileng, Wagner and Cassimjee report that the success of affirmative action in the South African media industry, even from the point of view of black middle managers, has been "equivocal" with stress and demotivation common consequences (2006, 11).

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[11] see various media policy documents, including the Democratic Information Programme, in appendices to Louw 1993.

The next key pillar of ANC media policy was the 1996 Constitution itself. But this vital document actually conferred more rights on the print media than it imposed responsibilities. Importantly, the Constitution enshrined freedom of expression, a vital right for the media. According to American Founding Father James Madison, freedom of expression is the only effectual guardian of every other right and, "without it, tyranny can advance in silence" (Sparks 2003). Freedom of expression is enshrined in section 16(1) of the 1996 Constitution which states as follows:

"Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes
a) freedom of the press and other media
b) freedom to receive or impart information or ideas
c) freedom of artistic creativity
d) academic freedom and freedom of scientific research."[12]

The 1996 Constitution also guarantees the right to equality, the equality of all languages, the multi-cultural nature of South Africa and the right to promote cultures, choice and diversity. Jane Duncan notes that there were significant differences between the way that freedom of expression was spelled out in the interim Constitution of 1993 and its final delineation in the 1996 Constitution (Duncan 2003). One of the key differences concerns the treatment of hate speech. While unpopular and even offensive speech is protected by the 1996 Constitution, hate speech is not. This does not mean, however, that hate speech is banned, merely that it is not protected by the Constitution. This allows for a "harms test" to be conducted to determine limitations on hate speech rather than a "morality test" which would have been apposite to the Interim Constitution. This, argues Duncan, limits the potential for the abuse of a hate speech ban by people in power (Duncan 2003, 3).

The notions of equality and human dignity are also emphasised in the 1996 Constitution and both have relevance to media policy. A useful illustration of this was provided by the South African Human Rights Commission's investigation

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[12] Section 16(1) of the Constitution, Act 108 of 1996.

into racism in the media in 1999. The commission received a complaint from the Black Lawyers Association and the Association of Black Accountants of South Africa that two newspapers (the *Sunday Times* and the *Mail & Guardian*) were racist in the way they reported on what was happening in South Africa, particularly where black people were the subjects of stories. The commission decided to expand its approach to examine racism in the media more broadly. Hearings were held in March 2000. In its submission to the commission, the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA, now Icasa) argued that the Constitutional clauses on hate speech were "sufficient protection against racism or sexism in all media". The IBA reminded the commission that independent regulatory bodies, including itself, existed to field any complaints in this regard.

It is certainly true to say that the South African media was cognisant of the 1996 Constitution and its passage into law. Indeed few other institutions devoted as much energy or as many resources into covering, analysing, describing and popularising the Constitutional process. This is a further indication of the role the media played in consensus building, an issue dealt with in the previous chapter.

I have mentioned above that the print media was largely unaffected by the work of the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Icasa)[1]. But just like its predecessor, the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), Icasa deals almost exclusively with the broadcast media. It is in only one area, cross-media ownership that Icasa has made its presence felt in the strategic universe of South Africa's print media corporations. The converging of technologies has meant that several of the country's ostensibly print media establishments have embraced or wished to embrace new media, broadcast and other forms of information technology. As will be seen from the examples below, Icasa's limitations and rulings on cross-media ownership have had a profound impact on the print media landscape in South Africa. In several key cases, those

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[1] The Icasa Act of 2000 dissolved the Independent Broadcasting Authority and the South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority but absorbed substantive parts of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the IBA Act of 1993 and the Broadcasting Act of 1999. The Icasa Act combined the functions of the IBA and SATRA into one, independent, regulatory authority, Icasa.

involved consider the intervention to have been severely detrimental to the diversity, growth and development of the country's media as a whole and to their own organisations in particular. Of course, the intention for idealistic policy makers and stakeholders had been rather different: to avoid the worst features of the Liberal market model such as over-concentration and monopoly (see Horwitz 2001).

Perhaps the starkest example concerns New Africa Investments Limited (Nail), the first major black-controlled company to be listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. In 2001, Nail – which owned a controlling stake in the major black daily newspaper, the *Sowetan* – made a bid to buy black-owned broadcasting group Kagiso Media. The deal was initially approved by the Competition Commission but then, in January 2002, was rejected by Icasa. The merger had a price tag of R337-million and required Icasa to exempt Nail from regulations prohibiting a company from owning more than two FM radio licenses. Nail at that point held KFM radio station and Jacaranda FM among its assets while Kagiso Media housed Durban-based East Coast Radio.

Astonishingly, the principal reason cited for Icasa's decision not to grant Nail an exemption from the two FM license regulation was on the basis of Nail's insufficient black empowerment credentials (Berger 2004, 60). It was deemed by Icasa that the proportion of historically disadvantaged groups holding ownership of the company was too low. According to a newspaper report at the time: "Although Nail is widely regarded as the symbol of black economic empowerment, Icasa has expressed concerns about the group's ownership. In a letter to Nail summarising the reasons for blocking the merger, the regulator points out that historically disadvantaged groups own less than 5% of the company. It further argued that the merger would dilute Kagiso's empowerment credentials and lead to a 'reduction in the stake held by empowerment entities' in the industry" (Msomi 2002, 5).

Saki Macozoma, then CEO of Nail, remains bitter at the decision that eventually led to the collapse of his company. "Nail's media interests were killed by Icasa. When Nail bought Kagiso (our best acquisition) we were strengthened

completely on the radio side… If we'd been allowed to cross-subsidise, we would've been on a new platform. The Icasa decision killed it" (Macozoma 2005). Indeed Macozoma still alleges that it was precisely at the interface between government and the media that his bid to create a major, black-owned media conglomerate was stymied: "My own interpretation is that there was a political decision behind the Icasa ruling. If I hadn't been personally involved, it wouldn't have been stopped. There were elements of government involved and the question was asked: if he (Macozoma) pulls this media conglomerate together, what is he going to do with it? It's not just a question of who you are going to support, but who you are not" (Macozoma 2005). Nail sold its media interests in 2004, leaving Johnnic Communications as the only JSE-listed black-controlled media group in the country. The demise of Nail as a media player precipitated a measure of consolidation in the newspaper industry, concentrating ownership in the hands of four major groups, Johnnic Communications (which acquired *Sowetan* and *Sowetan Sunday World*), Caxtons, Naspers and Independent Newspapers.

It remains Macozoma's contention, even though he was personally involved in establishing the law and regulations governing the post-1994 media environment, that they had failed to foresee convergence nor did they allow for the cross-subsidisation necessary to safeguard the economic viability of most global media organisations in the 21st Century. "Radio makes a lot of money. It has such a low cost structure. Those who combine electronic and print have the best opportunity to survive" (Macozoma 2005).

Instead, the assets ended up largely at Primedia, still headed by CEO Willie Kirsh in 2007. He too bemoans the pervasive influence of the regulator on the media sector: "The most important factor in the commercial radio environment is Icasa. Our ability to grow is regulated by Icasa. Up to now, it's been very restrictive: two FM and two AM stations, though this is in the process of being changed to not more than 35% of the total" (Kirsh 2005).

By contrast, the Guardian of London, the majority shareholder in the *Mail & Guardian* – previously the *Weekly Mail* – might bemoan their reluctance to take

up an interest in the profitable South African radio sector. According to Kagiso Media board member and Caxton Professor of Journalism at Wits University Anton Harber: "It was clear the privatisation of the SABC offered enormous opportunities. I came from the *Weekly Mail* and was looking for opportunities to find media investments to subsidise the paper. We had secured 20% of the radio investment for the *Weekly Mail*, which totalled R44-million for East Coast Radio and R11-million for Radio Oranje. They were already worth R200-million. But the *Guardian* had its own cash and financial issues and wouldn't take part. It was a great opportunity for the *Weekly Mail* to stabilise itself" (Harber 2005). The opportunity to seize a share of a radio gold mine was instead lost, and the *Weekly Mail* was soon sold to Zimbabwean interests (Harber 2005). Clearly, when it comes to matters of cross-ownership regulation and constraints, strategic errors are not always the result simply of Icasa interference. The example is a reminder, too, that while I refer to broacast a more comprehensive examination of the sector's development is necessary before a complete picture of South Africa's place within the Three Models paradigm can be ascertained. That, however, is a self-acknowledged limitation of the current work and an opportunity for future investigation.

The MDDA, the fourth dimension of the regulatory environment, has been discussed above. Beyond the four pillars of the regulatory environment, a number of other laws and features are worth highlighting in brief before moving to the analysis section of this chapter. The Competition Commission, for instance, has been mentioned. This commission derives its existence from the passage of the Competition Act of 1998. The Act makes provisions concerning monopolistic behaviour, price collusion and access to general services. The commission is intended to ensure the prohibition of anti-competitive agreements and/or abuse of a dominant position. It also considers applications for the approval of mergers, as was the case with the proposed merger cited above of Nail and Kagiso Media. In South Africa, as in many other countries of the world, there are specific regulations intended to limit the ability of one private company or constituency to monopolise channels to public opinion. Some of the South African regulations restricting cross-media ownership (with particular reference to newspapers and broadcasting) are currently under review.

Other notable features of the regulatory environment include the Lotteries Act of 1997, which governs the holding of competitions and sets a number of regulations in this regard, and the Promotion of Access to Information Act (2000) which gives effect to the enshrined access to information clause in the Constitution (section 32(1)). The latter piece of legislation allows access to information held by public bodies or other persons or bodies which is required for the exercise or protection of rights. The rules are different, depending on whether a media organisation requires information from a public or a private body. If it is public, procedural requirements need to be fulfilled. Applications for information that are in the public interest override grounds for refusal of both private and public bodies. The overall intention of the Act is to provide for "a more open and trusting society". According to Calland, "despite a certain amount of predictable bureaucratic inertia, the law continues to be useful to organisations and citizens who wish to extract accountability from those in power" (Calland 2006, 32).

Media-state inter-relations

A range of controversies from the mid-1990s threw the relationship between the media and the state into stark relief. In 1995, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu examined the role of media under apartheid. It concluded that most of the media – with some important exceptions – had either deliberately promoted apartheid, or had implicitly complied with it. In both ways, media institutions had contributed to a climate of gross human rights violations (Barratt 2006, 4). Some newspapers and journalists chose to appear at the TRC hearings and several publicly apologised on behalf of their companies. This caused some tension among the journalistic fraternity. Former editors grumbled. On September 26, 127 journalists from Naspers, the Afrikaans publishing group, defied their employers by apologising for their actions and role during apartheid (Barratt 2006, 16).

I have also mentioned, in the previous chapter, some of the antagonism that has developed between the media and government concerning the use of

apartheid era legislation. This has been high on the agenda of several important discussions between editors and high state officials including President Thabo Mbeki. No resolution has been forthcoming and the state continues to use these laws to limit access of the media and prevent the publication of sensitive content.

In spite of a number of meetings between government officials and media editors and managers, "from about five years into the new South Africa, tensions increasingly plagued media-national government interaction, with mutual antagonism rising and a possible breakdown in communication looming," wrote Barratt (2006, 32-33). In March 2001, the Sanef executive met President Mbeki to discuss "this sense of disengagement" and a joint workshop was proposed. On June 29 and 30, 2001, a top-level meeting between the President, cabinet ministers and Sanef editors was held northwest of Johannesburg at Sun City. Its title was: "The role of the media in a changing society".

At the meeting, Sanef chair Mathatha Tsedu said the "present level of mistrust and animosity has gone beyond a tolerable and acceptable point". He added: "We concede there's too much shallowness, superficiality and unprofessionalism in the South African media. But on the other side, government was communicating inadequately, not properly articulating policies and resorting too easily to media bashing when failures were reported" (Barratt 2006, 35). Various activities were put in place following the meeting and a general easing of tensions was reported. One of these was the establishment of the Presidential Press Corps (PPC), in 2003, aimed at improving communications between the media and the presidency. Mired in a lack of will on both sides, the PPC never operated and, by mid-2006, Sanef noted it had probably died (ibid, 35).

Further examples of what Johnston calls "points of conflict" between state and media include the Human Rights Commission's issuing of subpoenas to editors to answer questions on racism in the media (2000), the bitter ANC reaction to press speculation about the Aids-related death of presidential spokesman Parks

Mankahlana (2000), a court action for defamation brought against the Mail & Guardian by cabinet minister Jeff Radebe (2001), and defensiveness from the ANC over criticism of President Thabo Mbeki's leadership and character in the course of coverage especially surrounding HIV-Aids and Zimbabwe (Johnston 2005, 13).

Taken together these flashpoints amount to "systematic hostility", argues Johnston, and the state's lack of effort to deal with it through improved professionalised communications has been noteworthy (Johnston 2005, 13). He argues that at the core of the clash is a dilemma over the form of democracy that is to be consolidated:

> The ANC prefers the political sphere to remain distinct and privileged, reported on by a media from the sidelines and, at the same time, to claim an authentic, unmediated relationship with what it variously calls the people, the masses, or the majority. The media are seen as unnecessary to this relationship and are unwelcome to it" (Johnston 2005, 19).

Overall, and in spite of the data on the level of support for it from virtually all branches of the media, government has consistently expressed its exasperation and frustration with the mainstream media and its role in the post-apartheid, democratic order.

It was little surprise when, in mid-2005, government launched *Vuk'uzenzele*, a regular bi-monthly magazine with a circulation of 1,1-million (going to up 2-million for the special President's State of the Nation Address in February) and an annual budget of R20-million (Milne & Taylor 2005, 53). The publication is perhaps the eventual realisation of the ANC's hopes in the early 1990s for a newspaper of its own. In a special message in the first edition, President Thabo Mbeki said: "One of the critical elements of the programme of change is to expand the platforms of government communication, so we can provide the majority of citizens with information they need to improve their lives" (*Business Day*, 30 September 2005, p19).

The launch of the magazine was testimony to ten years of frustration with the media industry and the failure of government policy to create a media environment that, in its view, matched the advances of the new, democratic dispensation. Specific problem areas have been identified as slow or inadequate transformation within media companies, sluggish linguistic or cultural diversification, poor penetration of rural and/or marginalised communities, concentrated ownership and a seemingly perpetually antagonistic attitude toward government and the ANC.

Writing in the ANC's online mouthpiece, *ANC Today*, Smuts Ngonyama, Head of the Presidency at ANC Headquarters, commented on the tricky relationship that is the subject of this chapter: "One aspect of the media's role which has proven difficult to effectively debate, not surprisingly given the country's history, is the relationship between the media and the government and the ruling party. Some people view this as a simple choice for the media: either be a watchdog keeping a beady eye on the ruling party or a lapdog which happily swallows anything the ANC might dish up. Neither dog is particularly desirable. What South Africa needs is a truly critical media. A truly critical media is not one which opposes the government at every turn…a 'critical media' is a media which thinks" (*ANC Today* 1(15), May 2001).

This frustration is reiterated by dozens of government and ANC statements during the period, some of which are mentioned here for illustrative purposes:
- "Mere declarations of media freedoms on their own are not enough. These freedoms must be underpinned by an equitable distribution of media resources, development programmes and a deliberate effort to engender a culture of open debate….ownership of media resources, production facilities and distribution outlets shall be subject to anti-monopoly, anti-trust and merger legislation" – *Ready to Govern*, ANC policy guidelines for a democratic South Africa adopted at the National Conference, 28-31 May 1992.
- "We believe that mass media institutions are lagging behind other sectors in transforming themselves to suit the new South African environment … it is precisely because we need a diversity of ideas

that we need diversity of ownership. And that principle extends both to the number of institutions which are able to publish and broadcast, and to the ownership structure of those individual institutions" – Tokyo Sexwale, former Gauteng Premier, in an opinion article entitled "SA needs a diversity of media ownership" *Mayibuye 6(6),* Journal of the ANC, October 1995.

• "To some extent, the media has been transformed. The public broadcaster, for example, is now free of government control. Major changes in ownership have taken place, and the media industry is starting to deal seriously with shortcomings in the field of skills development and black advancement. There is still a long way to go, however. Huge strides need to be made to talk about equality in the South African media, and in building the diversity and depth which a developing society such as ours so desperately needs". - From *The Role of the Media Under Apartheid,* ANC submission on Media to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, September 1997, 14.

• "Nor can any of us remain content while press freedom in its fullest sense remains in practice something enjoyed mainly by an elite – urban rather than rural, rich rather than poor, industrialised rather than developing" – President Thabo Mbeki, speech on World Press Freedom Day, 2001.

• "We need to ensure however that the media becomes more diverse in ownership terms, and that it does not remain the preserve of big business, black or white" – Smuts Ngonyama, Head of the Presidency at ANC Headquarters, in *ANC Today* 15(1), May 2001.

• "The political economy of the media places the interest of advertisers, and well-off South Africans above the interests of other citizens. Patronage by the advertisers skews the media landscape and consequently distorts the democratic process and debate" – ANC magazine *Umrabulo 16*, article on "Media in a Democratic South Africa", August 2002, 7.

• "There is therefore a need to continually engage with the media around their attitude towards the democratic movement and government, difficult though this may be. As we challenge the media

on its relationship with the progressive movement, care should be
exercised that criticism of the media and its particular behaviour
should not lead to a situation in which the ANC is perceived as
opposed to the freedom of the media in general … The ANC must put
media reform on the political agenda. This should be aimed at dealing
with anti-democratic tendencies within the media system" (ANC
magazine *Umrabulo 16*, article on "Media in a Democratic South
Africa", August 2002, 7).

It is evident from the narrative above that the South African state in the post-
apartheid era has expressed a particular interest in a range of possible
interventions in the country's print media. That these interventions have often
been frustrated does not signal the end of, nor even any particular strain on, the
consensual relationship between the media and the state. Indeed, the state's
antagonism is grounded in its demand for a media that is more efficient at
delivering on the state's agenda. The pressure it exerts is understandable as it
is dealing for the most part with a print media that believes it retains an
oppositional role.

The urgency stems in part, too, from the gradual concentration of power within
the state executive and its consequent anxiety to direct the polity. This
phenomenon has been widely noted by academics and authors in recent years.
Gumede refers to it as "democratic centralism", or "vanguardism" (2005, 305).
According to Butler, "power has drifted from society to state, from provincial to
national level, from the legislature to the executive, and within the national
executive from Cabinet to presidency" (2006, 44).

In his work *Anatomy of South Africa: Who Holds the Power?* Richard Calland
unhesitatingly zeroes in on the presidency as its key locus (2005). "The
presidency … is a centrifugal centre of influence in the new anatomy of the new
South Africa", Calland writes (2006, 41). He adds that following the 1998
recommendations of the Maphai Commission, which was established to reform
the public service, and having quashed internal dissent from within his party

and its allies, South African President Thabo Mbeki moved swiftly to centralise his authority:

> His hold on political power is complete in the sense that he has painstakingly sidelined all serious internal opposition within the ANC, whether individual or collective … (he) has defeated the left and, having taken control of the centre ground of South African politics, is busy imposing his own version of modern social democracy on government. Armed with an increasingly competent advisory team and the cabinet of men and women that he wants, he is the dominant pivot in government (2006, 40).

According to Gumede, "Mbeki's presidency and cabinet have been based on the three C's: control, coordination and centralisation" (2005, 129). This approach has seen the establishment of a "super-cabinet", a coordination unit and a stronger secretariat to facilitate the more efficient, and more centralised, administration of the country (Gumede 2005, 130).

A consequence of the greater degree of centralisation has been a diminishment in the rank-and-file's importance in determining policy. "According to SACP stalwart Jeremy Cronin, policies are now made mostly in government, meaning the ANC mass membership's ability to impact on policy-making has been severely curtailed" (Gumede 2005, 131). To reinforce this separation, the ANC conference adopted an Mbeki-inspired proposal to lengthen the period between party conferences from three to five years, in line with government's term of office. The Mbeki-ites argued that this would streamline policy-making. However, the implications are massive. Once policy has been decided on at the five yearly conference, it is all but impossible to change it. Lengthening the period between national conferences from three to five years removed a key mechanism for ordinary members to change or throw out policies they were unhappy with" (Gumede 2005, 131).

Furthermore, Gumede argues, even the legislative arm of government, Parliament, has had its hands tied in policy terms. "The ANC in Parliament is a virtual case study of how democratic institutions can increasingly be excluded from policy-making "(2005, 136).

With the exception of Mbeki's cheerleaders, MPs have been

marginalised or cowed by the executive, and democracy is the victim

(Gumede 2005, 141).

He adds that even party "leaders critical of central government policies … have been systematically neutralised, and since the ANC does not have a policy of competitive election of leaders, internal democracy has effectively been snuffed out … The climate of fear instilled by the party bosses, and the self-censorship it breeds, spills into broader society, because the ANC is such a dominant party. Thus is the quality of democracy undermined" (Gumede 2005, 143). This is a concern that other scholars have expressed with regard to democracy in Africa as a whole: "The continent, far from consolidating an African Renaissance, is in danger of backsliding democratically" (Berger 2002, 36).

At this point, you will recall that the matter of how power is dealt with in the Three Models paradigm was a self-perceived weakness, according to Hallin and Mancini. They do argue, however, that differentiation theory suggests "that power should be most diffused and least concentrated – therefore least significant – in the highly differentiated Liberal system" (2004, 82). In South Africa's experience, power is not diffusing, as one might expect in a democratic state, but as Butler and others suggest, it is concentrating. This, in turn, is enabling the state to become more interventionist in its attitude and also more resistant, for instance, to the urgent demands of editors and newspaper owners to rescind offensive legislation.

The concentration of power is inevitable in the South African political system in part because consensus decision-making (and therefore the post-decision suppression of minority opinion and disunity) was a hallmark of indigenous governing structures and, in part, because the country's political system has been set up in a way that accountability, the natural counterbalance to the concentration of power, is noticeably under strength in the country's new political architecture. As Gumede observes, "undemocratic tendencies in the ANC endanger the consolidation of South Africa's democracy and will leave footprints on the country's infant political system as a whole" (2005, 304).

South Africa has a proportional representation-based majoritarian system that emphasises other aspects of democratic rule often at the expense of accountability. An Electoral Task Team (ETT) appointed in 2002 to revisit the South African electoral system and make recommendations on its reform found accountability to be one of the thorniest yet most important issues. As ETT chair, Van Zyl Slabbert commented at the time: "no other principle has exercised the minds of the members of the task team more than the principle of accountability" (Slabbert 2002, 5).

It is true that there is a considerable degree of accountability already built-in to the South African polity and to its electoral system. Regular elections every five years or so, as demanded by the Constitution, provide the ultimate sanction. Cabinet ministers are individually and collectively accountable to the President, as well as to their party, while the executive as a whole is intended to be accountable to Parliament (Venter 1998, 88). The effectiveness of the latter arrangement, Cabinet's accountability to Parliament, remains moot (James & Hadland 2003).

But for many, this is not enough. As scholar Tom Lodge has pointed out, "South Africa's simple list system of proportional representation is chiefly criticised because it reduces the personal accountability of parliamentary representatives as well as encouraging the executive to adopt an authoritarian predisposition in its relations with the legislature" (Lodge 2002, 4). According to Ben Reilly: "A lack of accountability of elected members to voters… [can] undermine the legitimacy of the electoral system." (Reilly 2002, 37) While the ANC, along with a few other parties, has assigned constituencies on a voluntary basis, this has been functioning unevenly at best (Murray & Nijzink 2002). There is a widely held view too that party managers hold too much power under the closed list system. Ordinary MPs, even those belonging to a party holding an overwhelming majority in the National Assembly, simply have "little incentive to rebel" according to some (Venter 1994, 71). According to Jorgen Elklit, "Many of us feel that it should be possible to hold individual political personalities accountable for their actions. One should at least aim at a closer connection

than is now the case between geographical localities and representatives" (Elklit 2002, 28).

The ETT made a range of recommendations, including the creation of a number of constituency-based wards in the country's national parliament to bolster accountability. As things stand, ordinary members of the national parliament are highly constrained by party discipline and, collectively, are overawed by the power of the executive. This has been exacerbated by the redeployment of large numbers of senior ANC parliamentarians, a process that has led since around 1997 to a period of parliamentary degradation (Calland 2006, 94).

Diversity of opinion within the majority party is limited by the decision and decree of the party caucus, a throwback to the consensual politics treasured not only by the liberation movement but also by its forbears in indigenous South African pre-colonial communities. Mandela himself nostalgically recalls his first brushes with indigenous consensual democracy in his famous autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom:*

> "…soon the Great Place became alive with important visitors and travellers from all over Thembuland. The guests would gather in the courtyard in front of the regent's house and he would open the meeting by thanking everyone for coming and explaining why he had summoned them. From that point on, he would not utter another word until the meeting was nearing its end. Everyone who wanted to speak did so. It was democracy in its purest form. There may have been a hierarchy of importance among the speakers, but everyone was heard: chief and subject, warrior and medicine man, shopkeeper and farmer, landowner and labourer. People spoke without interruption and the meetings lasted for many hours. The foundation of self-government was that all men were free to voice their opinions and were equal in their value as citizens … The meetings would continue until some kind of consensus was reached. They ended in unanimity or not at all." (Mandela 1994, 20).

More recently, Gumede has written of how the ANC's past and its etiquette militate against open government: "In political organisations bonded by affection, friendship and solidarity, such as the ANC, members are often unwilling to be critical for fear that this will prove disruptive and violate the organisation's internal norms … Freedom of speech is a meaningless right if group pressure demands conformity" (2005, 306).

Collective decision-making is embedded in South Africa's past. Allister Sparks recalls that at the height of the turbulent 1980s, the United Democratic Front (a South African home-based anti-apartheid organisation) issued a policy statement concerning the country's constitutional future: "Drawing on the experience of its own modus operandi at the time, it advocated… collective decision making and a high degree of consultation with the community. The notion was so 'highly democratic' it was almost Grecian but it evolved, naturally enough, from the political culture of the townships" (Sparks 1990, 389).

The discussion above serves to highlight two points. The first point is that emerging democracies may be more vulnerable to the concentration of power and therefore to a higher level of state intervention. This may be exacerbated if a national political culture contains elements, either from its traditional indigenous past or from its authoritarian one, that support this process. The second point is that if the evident diffusion of political power is an indicator of the Liberal model, according to that criterion alone, South Africa is arguably not in this camp. On the whole, though, efforts at intervention in the South African context have been resisted, causing tension, frustration and counter-initiatives aimed at circumventing the power of the media.

Applying the Three Models paradigm

We have charted in considerable detail the development of media policy in South Africa and have characterised the current status and evolution of media-state inter-relations in the post-1994 period. But do the forms of this relationship measure up to a high or a low level of interventionism? We refer back now to Hallin and Mancini's indicators. The first of these indicators was the degree of

concentration of capital within the South African media. This is dealt with in detail in the next chapter, Chapter Five. In essence, though, South Africa's media industry is characterised by a high degree of concentration in which only a few media companies predominate. This has been the case historically for more than a century and while the form and ownership of the media companies may have changed, the market continues to be dominated by a handful of powerful media organisations.

We have seen from earlier discussion around the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and from the argument presented in the previous chapter on political parallelism, that dominant media companies do tend to support the social and political status quo. Examples of intimate relations between senior politicians and media barons are relatively commonplace. Few better examples exist than in the personal arrangement between Irish press baron Tony O'Reilly and Nelson Mandela.

> In 1993, Mandela was having a hard time, in particular over Winnie (his wife). O'Reilly called and said: "you're working too hard, I'm sending my plane to fetch you. You need a holiday." O'Reilly's G5 plane picks up Mandela and whips him off to the billionaire's exquisite holiday home in the Bahamas. There, in Lyford Cay, Mandela spent a week alone. [Soon] after that, there was a meeting in Switzerland. Mandela, accompanied by Pallo Jordan, meets O'Reilly in his hotel suite. There he asks them businessman questions. His most important one is this: If I put hundreds of millions of pounds into your country, will my bid meet with your favour? Are you okay with me buying in?". There were no guarantees given… [But] there was a tacit understanding, following the meeting, that Mandela knew about O'Reilly's intention to bid for the Argus Company and approved of it. He then got into negotiations with Anglo [Michael Spicer] and, in 1993, he buys a controlling stake [31%] in the company. The myth about the friendship is this: O'Reilly woos Mandela and says that if he approves the Argus purchase, he will make sure the group is pro-ANC for ever (Independent Newspapers senior executive who wished to remain anonymous 2005)

Myth or not, Mandela was hardly likely to support the O'Reilly bid if he suspected deep and perpetual animosity was on the cards. Moeletsi Mbeki, media consultant and brother of South Africa's current president, claims the arrangement between O'Reilly and Mandela had been endorsed by the ANC "on the understanding that some black shareholding would be facilitated. This did not occur" (cited in Tomaselli 1997, 37).

There remain strong doubts in some circles about the wisdom of allowing O'Reilly into the South African market. Says Macozoma: "Moeletsi (Mbeki) and Pallo (Jordan) were involved in the O'Reilly deal. Overall, that was a bad deal for South Africa. I wouldn't have done it, even at that time. There was no reason to court O'Reilly. There were sufficient resources inside South Africa. O'Reilly has extracted value" (2005). Macozoma, by his last remark, was repeating the oft-made charge that the Irish parent company had embarked on an asset-stripping strategy according to which excess profits were repatriated to Ireland (also see Ambekar's statement on page 161).

One might argue that the arrival of O'Reilly into South Africa would contribute to Liberal drift by importing practices, content and even staff from Ireland (one of the four countries populating Hallin and Mancini's Liberal model). Indeed, there is some truth to this. A couple of senior managers were brought over to South Africa to assist with Independent Newspapers' absorption into the company's global profile. But the company also made some terrible and costly misjudgements about the South African market by applying inappropriate strategies. One of these was the conceptualisation of the Cape Town readership market as being best represented by a pyramid: wealthy readers at the top and a sea of less affluent potential readers at the bottom.

With the pyramid in mind, the decision was then taken to pitch the *Cape Times* at the top end of the pyramid for the sophisticated reader and to dumb down the *Cape Argus* to feed readers at the bottom. It was realised eventually, as the readership figures for both the *Cape Times* and the *Cape Argus* deteriorated

rapidly, that perhaps this was not the case. The market was, in fact, shaped more like a diamond. Instead of allowing both titles to occupy the thick, middle band of reasonably wealthy, reasonably educated readers, the company pushed the Cape Times up into a space which it did not have the capacity or quality to exploit and the Cape Argus down into a heavily populated, but largely illiterate group who couldn't afford newspapers anyway. On the whole, the O'Reilly head office did not interfere much in the day-to-day running of their South African holdings. He himself spent a week a year thinking about South Africa, and that was when he was in the country for his annual visit, according to one senior staffer. There is similarly no evidence that a Zimbabwean's ownership of the *Mail & Guardian* has translated into any difference in the way that newspaper has related to the state. Foreign ownership, in other words, does not necessarily prove Liberal drift.

This all amounts to a strong affirmative response to Hallin and Mancini's first indicator. There is a high degree of concentration of capital in media markets in South Africa and this has created an environment in which cosy relationships have developed between senior political and media players.

Furthermore, South Africa has made a recent shift from authoritarianism to democracy – the second indicator – and this has indeed resulted in a blending of the system's paternalistic, authoritarian (and traditional) inclinations together with more pluralist elements. These elements exist in a state of tension. At root are a concentration of power and a diminishment of accountability that may exacerbate emerging democracies' vulnerability to heightened state intervention in the media.

In an environment of single-party dominance within a majoritarian system – the third indicator – with a weak level of accountability, this could lead (as it has in South Africa) to repeated bids by an active state to roll-back media power and autonomy. This does not mean that democracy itself is in jeopardy. It may mean, however, that the expansion of media freedom is less likely in a democracy that is dominated for long periods by a single political party.

South Africa has certainly experienced a breakdown in formal journalistic organisation, particularly at a relatively junior level (see Chapter Six). In a sense, though, it does have a consensus-based system in that key organised social groups (the biggest trade union federation in the country, for instance) are formally included in government. This corporatism and the lack of access afforded to individual, special interests might well have mingled with a penchant for a social welfare state to locate South Africa firmly in the Democratic Corporatist cluster. Unfortunately, as a developing country with massive inequity and high levels of poverty and unemployment, South Africa does not have the resources to provide an adequate social welfare system. This recalls Hallin and Mancini's observation cited earlier in the chapter that in Polarised Pluralist systems, "the state's grasp often exceeds its reach" due to lack of resources, political consensus and by clientelist relations that diminish its capacity for unified action (Hallin & Mancini 2004, 119).

If rational legal authority and clientelism occupy either end of a continuum, South Africa is probably placed halfway between the two. There are rule-based norms and procedures and a code (the Constitution) that is universally applicable. However, the country's apartheid legacy – in which non-compliance and ungovernability were hallmarks of the struggle – together with the state's lack of capacity and the challenges it faces even to provide basic services to the majority of its people, undermine the currency of rational legal authority. Clientelism, of the kind exposed by various corruption scandals (such as the arms deal scandal that saw the ANC's former Chief Whip, Tony Yengeni, imprisoned in 2006) continues to impact on the distribution of some social resources. Certainly deference is expected from the media in its relations with the state. Personal connections are important in generating news and uncovering inside information (see reference to journalist Ranjeni Munusamy in Chapter Six). And the common good is frequently cited by the state as a moderator of the press's liberal inclinations (see Netshitenzhe's remarks above, page 89).

The final indicator set out by Hallin and Mancini is the degree of pluralism in a society. They contend that "Polarised Pluralist societies are characterised by

sharp political conflicts often involving changes of regime" (2004, 61) and in which the media are often used as instruments of struggle. Both of these would certainly be true of South Africa, where sharp political conflict and regime change have been recent hallmarks. What South African doesn't really have, according to the *Comparing Media Systems* ledger, are "significant anti-system" political parties. In addition, it has degrees of commercialisation and professionalisation that might suggest a more moderate form of pluralism.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have fleshed out Hallin and Mancini's understanding of state intervention in the media and isolated the indicators that help to categorise media systems. The chapter has presented an account of the development of South African media policy, much of which is new material gleaned from the interviews conducted for this thesis. There is no other published account of the establishment of the ANC's Department of Information and Publicity, nor any other detailed discussion of the party's plans to launch a daily newspaper, nor even an account of how the deal between Mandela and O'Reilly was struck.

We have again found that emerging democracies may present a different category of democracy in which inherent or traditional values militate against the kind of Liberal drift described by Hallin and Mancini. In South Africa's case, this stems from the lack of accountability within South African's political architecture together with its consensual decision-making style rooted in ancient indigenous practice. The consequence is an increasing concentration of power that is by no means typical of the differentiated media and political systems populating the Liberal model. This lends credence, furthermore, to critics' concerns (as well as to Hallin and Mancini's own anxiety) that the dynamics of power is an under-represented concept within the Three Models paradigm.

It is clear from the narrative above and from South Africa's placement vis-à-vis Hallin and Mancini's indicators that in the terrain of state intervention the country constitutes a Polarised Pluralist media-state system. This is in spite of the vestiges of Liberal model values and inclinations. Certainly, the balance of

forces suggests an increasingly powerful, if democratic, majoritarian state. The media is under great pressure to resist a series of anti-press measures contained in proposed legislation, as well as a raft of old laws still resiliently inscribed in law and occasionally called upon by the authorities. The media has entered into a number of controversies and debates that have served to heighten tensions with the state, including over the role of the press in a developing democracy. The majority party itself appears ambivalent about this, in spite of its inclusion in party policy and its enshrinement in the Constitution, and is inclined to more forcibly harness its envied social, political and economic power. The media has, in any case, and perhaps unwittingly in many cases, bought into the ANC political contract.

With each of the indicators, South Africa's system corresponds largely to a Polarised Pluralist model with some notable Liberal and corporatist elements. Such contradictions are a common feature of all individual countries populating the Three Models, as Hallin and Mancini have conceded. The roots for South Africa's placement in the Polarised Pluralist cluster derive not only from the structures and dynamics of the new political dispensation but reach back through the apartheid, colonial and pre-colonial eras to long-standing patterns of social and political organisation.

It seems true that not only is South Africa located in the Polarised Pluralist cluster, but that it appears to be moving deeper into it. The vestiges of liberalism and democratic corporatism are being gradually but systematically reduced. This supports Hallin and Mancini's scepticism concerning Liberal drift and the argument that all systems must converge toward the Liberal model, at least in the middle- to long-term. It also begins to suggest a new model of media and politics in which Liberal elements are held in retreat and perhaps even in permanent abeyance by the power of a mass-based ruling political party in an environment of emerging, loosely-accountable majoritarian democracy.

Chapter Five

'TRIGGERS OF CHANGE': THE SOUTH AFRICAN MEDIA MARKET, POLITICAL ECONOMY AND THE RISE OF A MASS PRESS

Introduction

Unlike any of the 18 countries used to populate Hallin and Mancini's Three Models paradigm, South Africa has experienced recent, dramatic change both in its political system and in its media sector. Indeed, if there is one defining characteristic of the South African media market over the 13 years since the advent of democracy, change is probably it. Certainly, there are trends in place that were around before the 1994 election, indeed for decades prior to that. The country's media sector is still dominated by four or five companies and their products, just as it was a century ago. But in many key areas such as patterns of ownership, diversity, products, audience and even roles and functions, the South African media now is virtually unrecognisable compared to the early 1990s.

The extent, rapidity and contemporaneity of the transformation experienced in the South African media sector offers a very particular and rigorous challenge to the Three Models paradigm: how does it cope with change? After all, several other critical methodologies, such as political economy, do devote considerable attention to this aspect (see below). The short answer is that Hallin and Mancini's paradigm does not cope very well. *Comparative Media Systems* does offer an account of the process of media system change, and it does set out an understanding for the direction of that change, based on the theoretical underpinnings of the paradigm as a whole. The first part of this chapter will be devoted to elucidating this understanding of both the process and direction of media system change. But there are a number of key weaknesses within Hallin and Mancini's paradigm both in how change is defined and in understanding how and why change takes place.

Change in an emerging democracy may, for instance, be quite different from the shifts and transformations that older, more stable systems undergo. This

naturally has an impact on the degree and pace of change within corresponding media systems. Many post-colonial, democratic states in Africa, for example, are effectively one-party systems with many of the networks, structures and values of their authoritarian and even pre-colonial pasts still very much in evidence. This is a different kind of democracy to the versions that exist elsewhere, most particularly compared to the developed, western states that populate the Three Models paradigm.

Even though mature systems go through a process of constant change themselves, as Hallin and Mancini discern, they are likely to cope with the potential triggers of change more comfortably. They are unlikely, for example, to have to manage a dramatic swing in the value of their national currency or a massive sudden outflow of foreign investment. New market entrants with global connections are unlikely to shift the whole shape of the sector. Newer, smaller systems are more vulnerable. They are buffeted and transformed by phenomena that would cause only marginal shifts over the long-term in larger, more stable systems. And, with the legacy of pre-democratic values, alliances and systems pressing for adoption and even formalisation, change may also not be in the direction of Liberal drift.

This thesis is not the first work to consider the causes and consequences of change within the South African media system. The fullest body of work on the subject is to be found in political economy scholarship, the predominant critical method in South African media studies over the last two decades. Indeed, I believe a political economy approach does shed some interesting light on aspects of change - in particular concerning ownership structures, economic forces and in considering business strategy in the sector – and therefore constitutes a useful theoretical partner to the Three Models paradigm. Hallin and Mancini make repeated reference in *Comparing Media Systems* to the importance of the economic context of media and political systems, a fundamental concern of political economy. It is important, however, to acknowledge prior work and to sketch some of the perspectives emanating out of political economy scholarship as a means of understanding change in the

South African context. This will be done later in the chapter and as a prelude to a discussion on what I call the "triggers" of change.

This chapter will identify seven triggers that individually and collectively have had a significant impact on the South African media system. Some emanate from within the media sector, such as technological change or the framing of business strategy. The others stem from factors external to the sector, for instance from the global environment, from the state, from commercialisation or from the local economy. The notion of triggers of change introduces a much-needed modification to Hallin and Mancini's paradigm. It enables a clearer understanding of the dynamics and patterns of change and also introduces a useful tool for comparative purposes**.**

We will look at specific examples for each of the triggers of change and compare the evidence offered by the specific case study of South Africa with the broad principles and understandings identified by Hallin and Mancini from their study of 18 mature democracies. Some significant conceptual departures are offered from the Three Models approach that draw on the South African experience. It is hoped that by contrasting the development of South Africa's media market with the 18 markets populating the paradigm, new light will be thrown on to Hallin and Mancini's conceptualisation of media system change.

While various differences and weaknesses will be aired in relation to the paradigm offered in *Comparing Media Systems*, this thesis does still find the Three Models a useful, indeed important, tool of comparative analysis. The final task of this chapter will be to pick up once more on the three models of media and politics proffered by Hallin and Mancini. This will be done in an attempt to clarify still further whether South Africa might fit best into the Polarised Pluralist, Democratic Corporatist or Liberal model when it comes to the development of its media market and the existence of a mass press. A number of indicators have been identified and these will be measured against the South African experience. It will be demonstrated, once again, while South Africa has several characteristics of both the Liberal and Democratic Corporatist systems, that the Polarised Pluralist cluster is probably its most appropriate cluster.

Change in the Three Models paradigm

For Hallin and Mancini, change in media systems is frequently – though not exclusively – about a gradual shift toward a universalised media that is increasingly autonomous (differentiated from other social institutions), professionalised and self-assured. Modernisation theory suggests this results in an ultimate zone, if not point, of convergence in which all media systems become essentially Liberal by nature. This homogenisation, or liberal drift, occurs through the dual processes of secularisation and commercialisation.

Secularisation, according to Hallin and Mancini, has spawned key media system changes including the shift to catch-all media, the development of journalistic professionalism and a move toward media-oriented forms of political communication. These changes reflect the deterioration of mass political parties and group solidarity that secularisation implies.

Commercialisation, on the other hand, contributes to the widening of the media's function in society by blurring the traditional separation of current affairs, advertising and entertainment. The result is a media that performs a variety of functions in keeping with the catch-all media predicted by secularisation. Commercialisation, Hallin and Mancini argue, "has in general weakened the ties between the media and the world of organised political actors" (2004, 282). This thesis will challenge this particular assertion and will argue that far from weaken the ties between the media and the political system, commercialisation – in the South African case – has in several ways strengthened them.

Hallin and Mancini make certain concessions and acknowledge a number of weaknesses in their outlook. They concede, for instance, that there are "real problems" with differentiation theory and agree that modernisation theory is not convincing when it comes to "understanding media system change" (2004, 288). They also accept it is possible that while the media are becoming more differentiated from the political system, they may be becoming less differentiated from the economic system. This is an argument that has been

posited by Bourdieu with his notion of de-differentiation (cited in Hallin and Mancini 2004, 80-82). Indeed, Giddens casts doubt that differentiation is a plausible theory at all, arguing that it "does not satisfactorily address the issue of time-space distanciation", one of they key elements of Giddens's own theory of modernisation (1990, 21).

The Three Models paradigm also struggles to account for social and political power, a problem "endemic to the structural-functionalist perspective from which the notion of differentiation is taken" (Hallin & Mancini 2004, 253). We will grapple with each of these dimensions below.

Critiquing change in South Africa's media system

The 1990s witnessed significant shifts in the South African print media market. Newspaper companies underwent substantial changes in ownership, the racial re-composition of newsrooms and management, the competition of global media interests, a range of interventions by the state and the emergence of both mass-readership tabloid newspapers and of a new generation of local community newspapers. Steenveld, using a culturalist critical method, has pointed out the distinction, in the South African context, between change and transformation (2004). She argues that change, even significant change, does not necessarily amount to the fundamental shift represented by the notion of transformation (2004, 102). The point is perceptive. Indeed, Berger has argued that the question, "transformation from what, to what?" prompted by Steenveld's critical argument is essential for "anyone wanting to analyse the South Africa media and society using the term 'transformation'" (2000, 1).

As perceptive as the point is, the disjuncture between change and transformation is perhaps a peculiarly South African conundrum steeped, as it is, in broader, ongoing national debates around the efficacy of various agencies or forces to bring about change and/or transformation. As Teer-Tomaselli puts it, "in the post-apartheid parlance of South Africa, 'transformation 'has come to mean the adaptation and reformation of institutions, both in the public and private sectors, to accommodate the change in political culture and ethos

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following the first universal franchise election of 1994" (2004, 7). In the end, trying to assess the manner and extent of change is very much the purpose of this thesis without wanting necessarily to get bogged down in the nomenclature, particularly when it is so specific to the context. Indeed the distinction may make comparative studies more difficult.

Whether one calls it change or transformation, much of the critical response to these shifts has in any case come from the political economy school that, naturally, has understood the change in its own terms (Tomaselli and Dunn, 2001: 2). The two main protagonists have been media theorists Keyan Tomaselli (1989, 1997) and Guy Berger (1999, 2000, 2004) though a range of others, including Switzer & Switzer (1979), Louw (2001), Boloka (2004), Krabill (2001), Grové (1996), Teer-Tomaselli (2004), Mabote (1996), Memela (2004), Duncan (2003), Dunn (2001) and Jacobs (2004) have all taken part and made contributions of one kind or another.

One author, Sonja Laden (now Narunsky-Laden), has stated, "the dynamics of South Africa's media industry in general, and its print media in particular, have typically been analysed in terms of political economy frameworks that tend to focus largely on the economic role of the South African state and its institutions, the creation of state corporations and their joint ventures with private capital, and the ways in which these have set about monitoring and controlling the black press and other media" (Laden 2001, 181). Indeed, in arguing for a move away from "standard politico-economic factors" and toward a new focus on socio-cultural determinants, Laden notes the "scholarly preoccupation with the formal constraints imposed by and through South Africa's political economy, and their role in shaping the country's socio-political history" (ibid).

We have discussed in some detail the development of various critical methodologies for analysing the media and its role in society (see Chapters One and Two). But it has only really been since the 1960s, when it emerged as a serious modern discipline, that political economy developed into a broad but popular critical framework. A short narrative on the roots of political economy is appropriate as we develop its compatibility with comparative media systems

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theory. There are aspects of political economy theory with which I am uncomfortable and elements that I believe are useful. I will allude to both.

Development of the Political Economy critical method

According to Vincent Mosco, classical political economy was founded on two of the pillars of the Enlightenment: Cartesian rationality and Baconian empiricism. In general it sought to extend the 17th Century revolution in the physical sciences by applying the principles of Galilean and Newtonian mechanics to the world of 18th and 19th Century capitalism (Mosco 1996, 39). It began, in essence, as a study of the science of wealth and even before a radical Marxian critique developed, political economy concerned itself – through the writings of Adam Smith, David Ricardo and JS Mill – with understanding social change and historical transformation (Mosco 1996).

While Karl Marx failed to engage with communications and the media as vigorously as he did with many other aspects of the shift from agrarian to industrial economy, he did provide a toolbox with which to get to grips with these phenomena. These tools, which include class analysis, the identification of patterns and cycles in capitalist development, social relations and their link to the production of goods and services and an interest in the locus and perpetuation of power, form the foundation of neo-Marxian political economy analysis. One can already see how, in the roots of political economy as a critical method, key similarities exist with comparative media systems analysis: the focus on patterns and cycles (differentiation and de-differentiation, for instance) and the emphasis on social relations as a determinant of production.

The political economy approach gained new impetus in the 1930s and 1940s with the focus of the Frankfurt School on the cultural industries' role in sustaining totalitarianism. Adorno, for instance, insisted that the process of cultural domination had its roots in the economic dynamics of the "culture industry" (Mosco 1996, 102). Murdock and Golding argue "a critical reading of the Frankfurt School's analysis of the cultural industries provides one of the

primary links between the Marxian legacy and their application of it to communication studies" (ibid).

Since the 1960s and 1970s when American commentators Dallas Smythe and Herbert I Schiller were the "trailblazers" of a modern political economy approach, the discipline has developed in a number of ways. It now resembles a broad school rather than a narrow critical method and encapsulates a diversity of interests, concepts and methodologies. According to Smythe, "in its broadest sense, political economy is concerned with how mankind arranges to allocate … scarce resources" (Smythe 1960, 564). But many other components live comfortably within political economy. Mattelart (1979), another key contributor, contends "the manner in which the communications apparatus functions, which determines the elaboration and exchange of messages, corresponds to the general mechanisms of production and exchange conditioning all human activity in capitalist society" (cited in Mosco 1996, 104).

By the 1980s, the leadership of the political economy approach had shifted across the Atlantic to various British schools. James Curran, Nicholas Garnham, Graham Murdock and Peter Golding "established a sophisticated political economy approach to media and cultural questions that remains unrivalled" (McChesney 2000, 113). More recently, political economy has grown in the developing world, in particular in work from Latin America and from Africa. While Frantz Fanon and Paulo Freire were the early pathfinders and considered the media and literacy to be tools of revolutionary activity, more contemporary developing world scholars (Baran, Emmanuel, Amin) have explored aspects of dependency theory, the transnationalisation of consumption, the homogenisation of demand and transnational culture from a political economy perspective (Mosco 1996, 119-125). Oliveira, for instance, argues that national media systems are controlled by national elites with close ties to western capital who depend on them for technology, support them through programming and promote consumerist values (Mosco 1996, 128).

South African critic Eric Louw contends that the political economy method "focuses on how meaning is made by people within a productive process. This

involves exploring the social positions people occupy, the relations between them and struggles over meaning-production within organisations" (2001, 2). But definitions and foci abound. McChesney argues that political economy is about how media reinforces, challenges or influences existing class and social relations (2000, 110). Saunders suggests that "inherent in capitalism and the institutional structures that develop to support it, are 'rules' that restrict equitable access to the productive potential of market economies" (2000, 3-4). Political economy, then, is about understanding those rules.

There is no single, correct approach that by itself constitutes a definitive political economy of communication, argues Vincent Mosco: It is "a starting point, a gateway" (1996, 3). But as varied and as textured as political economy is as a field, it has as its basis an understanding of the connections between the political and the economic. In essence, political economy treats the media as a business with the content and impact a product of the industrial, political and structural dynamics in which it is anchored. The method embraces a neo-Marxian perspective on social relations and encourages the examination of issues such as the distribution of power (a weakness of the Hallin and Mancini paradigm), the structure and operation of capital, the labour process, globalisation and the development of modern (South African) capitalism.

Vincent Mosco, arguably the doyen of current political economy, has identified four cornerstones of the discipline: social change, social totality, moral philosophy and praxis (1996, 27). The question of social change is one with which several of political economy's "founders" have concerned themselves, including the classical economists Smith, Ricardo and Mill but also Marx who looked for patterns that signalled fundamental change. Social totality is important, according to Mosco, as it implies an understanding of the connections between the political and the economic. The moral philosophy dimension of political economy provides a means of engaging with social values such as justice, equity and the public good (Mosco 1996, 36). Praxis, finally, roots the paradigm in the real world. Praxis is about "human activity and specifically the free and creative activity by which people produce and change the world and themselves" (ibid).

"The Marxian tradition continues to inspire a wide variety of positions in political economy," writes Mosco. "In spite of their numerous differences, they are generally alike in their commitment to history, the social totality, moral philosophy and praxis" (1996, 59).

But political economy is far from uncontroversial. It has been called mechanistic, deterministic and even outmoded by critics. During the 1990s, purveyors of political economy and supporters of the culturalist approach traded fierce ideological and methodological blows that dominated discourse in the field throughout the decade. Arguably, the result was a draw with both sides having taken the opportunity to develop and strengthen their critical tools.

However, a number of key "charges" have been made about the weakness of the political economy approach that require consideration. These include that the tradition is "overly concerned with structure of production rather than with content, meaning and the symbolic" (Steenveld 2004, 93). Garnham, too, has bemoaned the lack of a consideration of the symbolic in political economy: "No study of the media can bypass the complex and difficult questions posed by their content, by the symbolic forms they create and circulate" (Garnham 2000, 138).

Also, according to Mouffe (1988), political economy "implies a conception of the economy as a world of objects and relations that exist prior to any ideological and political conditions of existence. This view assumes that the economy is able to function on its own and follow its own logic, a logic absolutely independent of the relations it would allegedly determine" (cited in Steenveld 2004, 93).

In addition, the paradigm is accused of being "too mechanistic" and of "obscuring a series of complex relationships which have yet to be explained" (Curran and Seaton 1991, 274). The base/superstructure dichotomy is unrealistic and ahistoric and fails to take account of the audience, according to

Smythe: "no audience, no message, no medium, no advertiser: mass communications theory begins and ends with audiences" (1981, xiv).

For advocates of political economy, charges of being mechanistic and deterministic ring hollow. They are "caricatures" of a paradigm that fail to appreciate the complexity and inter-relatedness of the approach, argues Mosco. Political economy is "not mechanistic but foregrounds social change: No social actor, social relation or social institution is essential. Each is involved in manifold, ubiquitous and multiply-determined processes of mutual constitution" (Mosco 1996, 10).

Louw maintains that "a great strength of the political economy method is that it stresses the need to analyse communications contextually … meanings need to be seen as inextricably bound to the (physical/temporal) sites in which they are made/used (Louw 2001, 3-4). McChesney jibes that "to approach communication without political economy is similar to playing the piano with mittens" (McChesney 2000, 115). "If scholars are to move beyond description to explanation, political economy must be at the centre of the enterprise" (ibid).

Robin Mansell noted in 2004 that the current revitalisation of political economy in media and communications followed a renewed "interest in the analysis of the specific historical circumstances under which (new) media and communications products and services are produced under capitalism, and with the influence of these circumstances over their consumption" (Mansell 2004, 98).

It is certainly true, as Mosco points out, that political economy "covers a wide intellectual expanse including diverse standpoints, emphases and interests which belie charges of essentialism that, in the extreme, dismiss the approach as economistic" (Mosco 1996, 20).

My belief is that the media is a tremendously complex phenomenon that can be viewed and critiqued from a wide variety of perspectives, each legitimate and useful to a certain extent. I don't deny that the symbolism carried by texts within

the media can be important and even influential. I also appreciate that the media does have a cultural role that can be unpicked by deconstructing texts and by unearthing coding systems. However, I feel that an overemphasis on the texts and the isolation of the media as a cultural phenomenon, fails to get to grips with the vital symbiotic relationship between the media and its political and social context. Luthuli has indeed described the "wave of discontent" that has affected textual analysis over the past few decades and cites Stuart Hall as writing: "Textuality is never enough. Textual analysis alone fails to provide a sufficiently balanced account of the phenomena that it is used to analyse" (Luthuli 2004, 50).

I am uncomfortable, too, with the emphasis on class analysis within critical political economy. I am not convinced that political economy's class-based approach to the analysis of media systems is the most useful approach. Indeed the question of which exerts more influence, class or race, has characterised much South African historical and sociological scholarship since the 1980s[13]. Class analysis can certainly be useful. Hallin has acknowledged its potential even within comparative media systems theory (2005). He specifically cites its relevance when considering the various impacts of commercialisation: the "link between media and social class that is central to the political economy perspective may become increasingly important" (2005, 237-8).

My concern is that class analysis fails to take into account the complex and varied racial, identity-oriented, linguistic, regional, technological and historical aspects of modern life. Neither does it get to grips with the dynamics within classes, or even within subclasses (such as the black middle class, for instance) that turn out to have such an impact on the media system in South Africa. Political economy also struggles to address changes within capital, in particular with the 'unbundling' of historically white (either mining-based or Afrikaner) capital and the introduction of black capital together with the dynamic between them. These are all important dimensions of the South African media

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[13] The field is extensive but major texts inclue E. Webster (1985), S. Marks (1987), H. Wolpe (1988), B. Bozzoli (1996), J. Simons & R. Simons (1983), C. Saunders (1988), O. Crankshaw (1997) and J. Seekings & N. Nattrass (2005).

system. I believe, however, that the compatibility of political economy with comparative media systems analysis offers the opportunity to extract its more useful elements but in a context of a more realistic and comparative paradigm. In my view, the much more fundamental question is the one posed initially by Siebert et al and reiterated by Hallin and Mancini: why is the press as it is? And, following on from that, what implications does this have for the future both of the media and of the political system in which it resides.

While political economy has its shortcomings, it does have value in gaining a realistic understanding of the functioning, role and importance of the print media. Political economy is about much more than ownership. It acknowledges the question of capital's decision-making processes – which I refer to below as business strategy – around, for instance, product targeting and the dynamics and developments that take place (or don't take place) within a media organisation.

Consider Independent Newspapers chairman Tony O'Reilly's observation that the "central question is not whether there are gaps in the market, but whether there are viable markets in the gaps" (cited in Steenveld 2004, 93). This says a great deal about the positioning of titles in the South African print media sector, about which this thesis will concern itself. O'Reilly's words are of no value to textual analysis as they don't appear in newsprint. But, in reality, and coming as it does from one of the most powerful media magnates in South Africa, it is a perspective that is critical to understanding the strategic positioning and direction of the industry. Political economy encourages acknowledgement of this strategic thinking and comparative media systems theory would be weaker without it.

Based on the interviews with media executives and on my understanding of developments within the media sector, it seems evident to me that the South African print media sector is happy to accept a consensual status quo with the new democratic state (see Chapter Four). This enables it to focus its energies on profitability issues such as return on investment, cost cutting and the importing of new technologies. The catch is that the South African state,

perhaps like other emerging democratic, one party states, is intent on redefining the role of the media. It is busy picking at the edges of the media's legal, Constitutional and ethical framework. In the media's conciliatory and submissive mode, this will contribute not to liberal drift, but to the unravelling of the media's liberal functions and duties and their realignment with the state's social agenda. This may be exacerbated by various forces including deteriorating professionalism (see Chapter Six), the undermining of editors' roles relative to corporate management and also by the ethics-shredding and controversy-averse impact of commercialisation.

This thesis takes a long hard look behind the scenes of the South African print media sector to determine the forces at play within the context of a new and emerging democracy, ever mindful of the philosophical and moral question of the role of the media in undermining or building a new social and political order. This is a question with which many authors have grappled over the years and which has generated different answers.

A number of published works emanating from retired or former editors tend to support the view that the mainstream (non-Afrikaans) newspaper industry in South Africa was a consistent thorn in the apartheid state's side. H. Lindsay Smith's publication, *Behind the Press in South Africa* (1945), argues that the press declines to abuse its power and therefore remains a responsible, free agent capable of opposing the state. Elaine Potter classified the English-language press during apartheid as an external opposition that "uniformly opposes the government, its ideology and its supporters" (1975, 7). This stance is taken up by a number of other writers, including Hepple (1960), Neame (1956) and Richard Pollak:

> Newspapers serve as the lone megaphone of dissent. Without the still moderately free press to promulgate news and un-popular ideas, the country's political lopsidedness would be near complete … More than any powerful force in the country, these newspapers stand almost alone between the Afrikaans government and totalitarian darkness (1981, 2).

A growing group of critics take the opposite view. Chimutengwende, for instance, argues that newspapers "represent the forces of status quo… none of the media can publish or broadcast material undermining the principles of their owners or the elements upon which they depend financially" (1978, 48). For Hachten and Giffard, the South African press "essentially serve the narrow class interests of the dominant whites" (1984, 97), while the Tomasellis state that "all sectors of the established (South African) media support one or more factions of the hegemonic alliance" (1989, 33). In one of the most recent works, Jacobs argues that the "media played a more pivotal and complicated role in South Africa's democratic transition than the democratisation literature would lead us to expect" (2004, 4). The debate continues. It is apparent, however, that *Comparing Media Systems* throws new light on this question, as we will discover during the course of this thesis.

A large portion of contemporary South African critical analysis that claims for itself the label of political economy, focuses on the notion of change, or transformation. At root is an interest in the ways, means and effectiveness with which the South African media has changed to reflect more closely the demography as well as the political and social values that underpin the new, post-apartheid society.

Some authors are sceptical about not so much the appearance of change as they are about its meaning. Keyan Tomaselli's main contention in his work on political economy is that a change in the colour of ownership of the South African media has not made a difference to the media's role as it pertains to the development of capitalism and the inevitable inequities and contradictions therein (Steenveld 2004, 102). While Tomaselli concedes that the working class has been included to some extent as investors in media ownership post-1994, he argues that this has not precipitated a new social order or even fundamental change in the sector (Steenveld 2004, 103).

Berger on the other hand, again according to Steenveld's useful comparative essay, argues that the colour of ownership does indeed have a symbolic social

impact and provides possible space for change in media management, staffing and thus content (Steenveld 2004, 103). Duncan, by contrast, challenges Tomaselli and Berger: "Both arguments miss the point that labour itself is being restructured and stratified; so workers inside the productive economy probably will be able to … make the media serve their interests more faithfully … Changes will probably trickle down to management and editorial levels. However the structural barriers that frustrate greater media access may well remain" (ibid).

In his own words, Tomaselli offers "an historical materialist analysis of shifts in ownership" and focuses in particular on the notion of corporate control (1997, 21). Using Murdock's model, he argues that two types of questions about corporate control need to be asked in order to produce an effective analysis of political economy. I summarise them as follows:

- Action/power questions: these concern the identification of 'key allocative controllers' who exercise the power to define the overall goals and scope of the corporation and determine the general way it deploys productive resources;
- Structure/determination questions: these identify the economic and political determinants constraining both allocative and operational controllers (1997, 28).

"A full analysis of control therefore needs to examine the complex interplay between international action and structural constraint," Tomaselli argues (1997, 28). As an illustration, he cites the media interests of "allocative controllers" Anglo-American and JCI, two of South Africa's premier mining houses: "These companies were redeploying capital in response to structurally determined local political and global economic changes … The result was a redeployment in allocative control as a means of shaping structural processes" (1997, 29).

For Berger, "there were limits to democratisation and socio-economic transformation in post-1994 South Africa as a negotiated polity with a capitalist economy located in a global network of relations after the Cold War. But within these parameters, many meaningful alternatives were possible. Thus while

media in such a society was unlikely to really provide the access or appropriate information resources for grassroots participation in governance, it could play a range of democratic functions" (Berger 1999, 6).

Boloka and Krabill raise questions around whether any substantive transformation has taken place at all within the South African print media in the ten years since democracy: "Successful transformation of the South African media (will have been) achieved when it reflects in ownership, staffing and the product, the society within which it operates – [we] question to what degree media have made substantive transformative changes rather than superficial ones aimed at maintaining privilege among an elite (Boloka and Krabill 2000, cited in Steenveld 2004, 103).

Despite mergers and acquisitions that took place in the first ten years of democracy, "consolidation has continued to elude the industry", argues Boloka (2004, 31). "Those companies which emerged under the rubric of black economic empowerment are companies which are subsidiaries of vertically or multi-sectorally integrated conglomerates. As a result, apart from lacking focus, media assets are not their major revenue-generating streams. It means that conglomerates are willing to dispose of their media assets at any time they want to raise capital (e.g. Kagiso Trust Investments' unsuccessful attempts to sell its media assets to NAIL, the reverse move by Johnnic Holdings to sell Johnnic Communications and the ultimate sale of Nail's media assets" (Boloka 2004, 31).

Boloka also argues that while black economic empowerment has shaped post-apartheid media and continues to influence policy, transformation has not always been in the interests of a diverse media (Boloka 2004, 31): "The globalisation-shaped transformation process in the South African media industry has helped in terms of creating and enhancing a competitive media environment, access and diversity, [but] it has shed many non-performers and annihilated small media corporations, creating an environment in which only conglomerates thrive" (Boloka 2004, 31).

While Grové (1996) and Mabote (1996) limit themselves to describing the rapid changes in ownership and control of the South African media in the mid- to late-1990s, Sandile Memela sees not only unsubstantial change but also lasting damage: "The media are still largely in white hands. Young, gifted and black professionals, who pay allegiance to capitalism, are promoted and sponsored in and through the media to serve their interests…Ten years into freedom and democracy, the twin forces of racism and capitalism not only dish out high profile positions to inexperienced but articulate 30-somethings indiscriminately and as quickly as possible, but they are unleashing them to the so-called black market to destroy everything that stands for black pride" (2004, 10).

Jacobs also falls back on the use of political economy as his chosen paradigm, if reluctantly: "while none (of the other interpretative approaches) offers a completely satisfactory account, analyses of the transition from a political economy perspective provide a basis for interrogating media's role" (2004, 4).

This then is a sketch of the current state of South African work on political economy. It is an environment in which unpacking the notion of change (or transformation) is central and in which the key elements of analysis are: ownership, corporate control, staffing, access, content, competition and audiences. In addition, the economic role of the South African state and its institutions, the creation of state corporations and their joint ventures with private capital are also characteristic of contemporary critiques.

From this list of elements, all of which grapple with change of one kind or another, it is possible to isolate a list of key change agents, or triggers, that have forced or necessitated significant shifts in the media market. They are drawn from a paradigm (political economy) that has a particular interest in change in spite of its core understanding that the media always functions in support of capitalism. They also locate the discussion on the unusual, at times unique, idiosyncrasies of the South African context. Furthermore, political economy has a direct interest in the notion of power, its source and application – an acknowledged weakness in comparative media systems theory. The injection of a political economy perspective, particularly in relation to an analysis

of the media market, gives Hallin and Mancini's Three Models paradigm greater depth and a better understanding of media system change in general. We will now consider the triggers of change more closely.

Triggers of change

With the debate over the extent of change in the South African media market having been aired in some detail in recent work, it is necessary to set out my own perspective. The evidence clearly indicates to me that there has been profound change since the democratic election in 1994. The features of this change include:

- The emergence of a mass press (tabloids) reaching mainly a new audience of first time newspaper buyers;
- The disappearance of two of the four largest media conglomerates in the country, Perskor and Times Media Limited . The former is realigned with a black publishing house, Kagiso Trust Investments, but print media interests are sold off. TML is broken up, part bought by Johnnic Communications (Johncom) and part by Pearsons, owners of the Financial Times of London;
- Significant entrance of black capital (for instance through the National Empowerment Consortium, New Africa Investments Limited and, more recently, Media24) into the sector including trade union investment vehicles such as that belonging to the Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers' Union;
- The purchase of the country's biggest newspaper group, the Argus Company by the Irish Independent Newspaper group;
- Foreign investment in several South African print enterprises including *Business Day*, the *Financial Mail*, the *Mail & Guardian* and *ThisDay;*
- The growth of Naspers from a unilingual newspaper business into a multinational, multilingual, multi-billion rand business, now by far the biggest player in the South African media market;
- The rise of local newspapers, now accounting for 30% of the country's newsprint;

- The racial transformation of newspaper company editors and management;

- The deregulation and liberalisation of the country's broadcast system, with implications for cross-ownership and synergies with print media titles and companies; and,

- Growing state support for diversification and subsidisation of community newspapers (up to R20-million by end March 2005)(MDDA, 2006).

From these examples alone, it is clear that change has been substantial and far-reaching. Even Tomaselli, who supports the contention there has been little material change in the sector, agrees that "the post-apartheid restructuring of the Argus company … the later acquisitions by black-dominated capital of TML, and the share offerings to black investors by M-Net and Nasionale Pers in 1996, emerge as a significant departure from the pattern of concentration of ownership that historically characterised the South African print media" (1996, 49).

In the context of the Hallin and Mancini paradigm, however, it is necessary to consider not only the hallmarks or end-point of change but the process. In this regard, I have identified what I call triggers of change. In discussing these triggers, and in giving examples of their operation, I hope to expand further Hallin and Mancini's conceptualisation of change, and its causes, in comparative media system theory.

Perhaps the closest precursor to the notion of triggers can be found in Blumler and Gurevitch (1995), who talk about the "motors" of political communications development (204). These motors are changes in technology, changes in the surrounding social and political system, the relationship between journalists and politicians and the nature and interests of the would-be audience (1995, 204-5). While I would certainly agree, and indeed have included, changes in technology as a trigger, "changes in the surrounding social and political system" is much too broad to be a useful analytical tool. The interpersonal relationship between

journalists and politicians (on which Blumler and Gurevitch focus their attention), on the contrary, is too narrow without the debates and forces that inhabit its context. Limiting the interface to journalists, for instance, excludes the vital dimension of owners and also of media managers, both of whom – certainly in the South African case – have made important interventions in the space between state and press. I have divided the sharper notions of triggers into factors that emanate out of newspaper organisations themselves and those that are the consequence of external, audience- or environment-driven factors. I suggest that in order to more clearly understand the causes and forces of change, rather than just the direction and end-result, one needs to isolate the specific zones in which change arises. These zones contain the potential, as they have already demonstrated, to trigger change in media institutions and quite possibly in society at large. Let us look at my proposed triggers of change.

These triggers are consistent with the position I set out above which argued that the media system is the dependent variable in relation to the political system. The change generated by each trigger may either enhance or diminish the degree of dependence. This bears a conceptual resemblance to the agents within Bourdieu's fields wrestling for dominance. The difference, perhaps, is that these triggers cross "fields" and that change in one field triggers change in another. In the process of discussing each of these triggers, I will discuss how they help to define to this relationship.

1. The state

While Hallin and Mancini agree on more than one occasion in *Comparing Media Systems* that the state has "always played a large role" in media systems, particularly those in southern Europe (2004, 119), they do not consign adequate agency to the state in terms of its power to initiate and shape media system change. They certainly do not contend that change with a political system largely determines change within its media system. Hallin and Mancini argue that as a country modernises, the process of differentiation sees the media system and organised political groups and social institutions diverge: "Differentiation means… that the media system increasingly operates according

to a distinctive logic of its own, displacing to a significant extent the logic of party politics and bargaining among organised social interests, to which it was once connected" (2004, 253). As this differentiation becomes more advanced, the structure of the political system affects the media system less and less deeply, because the mass media have become differentiated from it (2004, 283). The more advanced a media system is, in other words, the less the political system will influence it. Conversely, the less advanced a media system is, the higher degree of political parallelism, the more impact the state will possibly have. It is this aspect that Hallin and Mancini have de-emphasised.

The South African experience – and perhaps that of other emerging democracies – is that the political system, including the parties and actors within it, continues to impact in a profound way on the structure of the media system. In the apartheid era, it was the state that determined who could publish, what could be published and for whom. More than a hundred laws underpinned this process including deeply restrictive regulations which applied, for instance during states of emergency.

Developments in the political system sparked equally dramatic change in the media sector. The advent of democracy itself created an ideological confusion of purpose within the alternative media sector but also dried up funding from sympathetic, anti-apartheid sources (Opatrny 2007). The end of South Africa's political and economic isolation, accomplished largely within the domain of the political system, also exposed the entire media sector, after decades of glorious and uncompetitive isolation, to the forces and interests of the global media marketplace.

In the post-apartheid era, state intervention continues to shape the industry in a direct way. As Teer-Tomaselli has argued, "the nation-state, far from becoming irrelevant, has become a key player in driving the project of neo-liberalism, reform and restructuring" (2004, 7). Many of the apartheid era press laws remain on the statutes, in spite of repeated requests to the contrary. New, post-1994 laws on employment practice, racial transformation, cross-media ownership, black economic empowerment and foreign exchange controls

continue to regulate newspaper company development. This is symptomatic, as I have argued, of a state that has been persistently interested in harnessing the power of the mass media to consolidate its own. Even though this may ostensibly be for the furthering of democratic objectives, such as greater social equity and the consolidation of the political system, it nonetheless signals not greater differentiation between the media and the state, but indeed the opposite.

It is worth mentioning, in passing, that the nature of the state has shifted somewhat even in the years since 1994. Initially, the government consisted of three political parties, the Inkatha Freedom Party, the New National Party and the African National Congress. This alliance was called the Government of National Unity and, naturally, emphasised the compact it required all citizens, including the media, to join. Within a couple of years, the GNU collapsed once the New National Party realised it had no real say in the determination of policy. While the IFP still remains within the government coalition, the departure of the NNP ushered in a new phase of ANC-dominance. It is likely, however, that the GNU period made the broad co-option of the media easier (as demonstrated by the media's immediate embrace of the Reconstruction and Development Programme). It was an arrangement that soon tested boundaries and brought into question the role of the media in the new democratic dispensation.

In July 1997, South African arms parastatal Denel was granted a High Court interdict preventing newspapers from naming Saudi Arabia's involvement in a major arms deal. Apartheid-era legislation was used to persuade the High Court to grant the interdict, but a number of editors went ahead and published the information anyway (Barratt 2006, 16). On August 29, 1997, Thami Mazwai, the chair of the South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef), undoubtedly the most powerful association of senior journalists in South Africa during the period, publicly denounced the editors who had flaunted the interdict suggesting they were being unpatriotic and unsupportive of the new, democratic state.

The incident serves to indicate how even the most senior editors are unable or unwilling to differentiate the interests of the state from the traditional Liberal functions and responsibilities of the press. If anything, and contrary to what Hallin and Mancini argue, the state is attempting to impose its own distinctive logic on the media rather than allowing the media to develop one for itself. South African journalists have become collectively less assertive with state elites – a Three Models indicator of shrinking media autonomy – though there are individual and occasionally high-profile examples where the contrary has been the case.

A range of further policy interventions by the state also have the potential to impact on the media market and possibly to tighten the links between them, including the establishment of the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA), charged with funding and promoting diversification in the media. Recent research indicates a relationship of growing depth and complexity between various levels of government and the community media sector (Hadland & Thorne 2004). In addition, a raft of legislation attempting to empower government to intervene in electronic communications, the internet, convergence-related processes and in connection with mobile-cellular telephony is currently in the pipeline or has already been passed into law.

While the political system has seen the establishment of a constitutional and legal framework that includes fundamental protection for a free press, as we have seen above a powerful democratic state is also more than capable of stalling, if not reversing, the process of differentiation to ensure its own narrative is the one that predominates in the mass media. In this way, it continues to act as a key catalyst for change in the media marketplace. It also seeks continually to intervene in and shape the media system and to deepen its dependence on the political system.

2. Sentiment

Between the lead-up to Mandela's release from prison in Feburary 1990 and the swearing-in of the first democratic cabinet in May of 1994, there was a thirst

for news perhaps unrivalled in South Africa. Comparatively only the Boer War at the turn of the Twentieth Century and the two World Wars that followed elicited the kind of sustained interest in newspapers that was evoked in the halcyon days of the early 1990s. While readers in South Africa soaked up newspapers during the Second World War, a newsprint (paper) famine meant these were kept short, some titles were closed and full opportunity could not be taken by news producers (Hadland 2004).

By 1994, there was such a desire for information in and about South Africa, and such ubiquitous fear of political instability in the country, that newspapers simply couldn't print enough copies. *The Star* held a big party in Johannesburg in 1994 and printed special t-shirts with the number '275,000' on them. Circulation was higher than it had ever been and people were in a mood to celebrate. Newspaper managers and staffs believed they were riding the crest of a wave that would keep on growing and gathering momentum. They were mistaken. After the election, there was a collective sigh of relief – and people stopped buying newspapers. "We were producing the best papers ever, but still the numbers fell, "according to one Independent Newspapers editor. "I wanted to give the people politics but all they wanted was a normal life" (Johnson 2006).

Certainly media executives agree that transition fatigue, or reader exhaustion with the political process and with the messengers who described its rollercoaster ride, was a key component of plunging sales (Williams 2005, Robertson 2005). According to the chief executive of Media24's newspaper division, Jan Malherbe: "The main reason the circulations dropped in 1994-95 was that people's interest in politics waned. People grew tired" (2005).

Indeed all things heavy, such as politics, crime and judicial system reportage, were toned down in the post-1994 period in an endeavour to keep exhausted South Africans buying newspapers. Entertainment and positive lifestyle stories were emphasised. Headlines were quietened, brought down in size, made less bold and a more discreet feel was sought in the design and content of most broadsheet titles. Critics said newspapers were dumbing down. But it was reader sentiment that was leading the way.

Reader attitudes were picked up from the surveys and questionnaires regularly commissioned by newspaper companies – and they indicated that change was required in order to sustain loyalty. One research study, for instance, showed that 77% of South Africans said they agreed with the statement: "I am more interested in development and justice issues than party politics" (Futurefact 2004). Reader sentiments do often have a key impact on the positioning and content balance of titles as well as on the launching of new products and the withdrawal of ones that are not working (Robertson 2005). Sentiment clearly represents a powerful trigger of change. This sentiment is far more complex than readers' responses to media content. It derives from the connection or disjuncture between media content and readers' response to their own political and social environment. Thus, total overkill of political content (transition fatigue) leads directly to falling circulation levels.

3. The Economic System

Economic pressures are becoming the primary forces shaping the behaviour of American newspaper companies, according to Robert Picard (2004, 1). And what appears true in the United States certainly has applicability in South Africa (indeed, it is one of Hallin and Mancini's underlying assumptions). What Picard alludes to, political economy theory as a whole embraces. Few other critical paradigms stress more the importance of the underlying economic system in the structuring of the media sector. Neither has the role of the economy been lost on senior media executives in South Africa. "The economic environment ha(s) a big role," according to Malherbe. "The size of the advertising cake is determined by what is happening in the economy" (Malherbe 2005).

The entire South African economy was distorted during the colonial and apartheid eras and this affected every single sector. The massive and growing wealth of the mining houses from the turn of the 19th century together with the economic isolation enforced during the apartheid era nurtured a process of economic cannibalisation in South Africa from 1948 until 1990. In this process, mining houses consumed all other sectors on the stock exchange, from

insurance and paper production to beer brewing and pharmaceuticals. By the late 1980s, the stock of the South African economy was concentrated largely into half a dozen mine-based corporations. At its height in the late 1980s, the most powerful of these establishments, Anglo-American Corporation, had a controlling share of more than half the companies in the economy. This included diamond mines, retailers, manufacturers – and the newspaper houses.

The two companies that monopolised the English language newspaper industry until the early 1990s, the Argus Publishing and Printing company and South African Associated Newspapers (SAAN) – later Times Media Limited (TML) – were both owned by Anglo-American. The lack of competition enabled by the concentration of capital together with the deep pockets of the media houses' mining benefactors allowed gross inefficiencies to creep into the South African newspaper market.

By the time Irish media magnate Tony O'Reilly acquired the Argus company in 1993, it carried with it a burden of enormous inefficiency. The weak 4% operating margin on turnover (compared to the standard global benchmark of 15-20%) was symptomatic of the structural problems (Wilson 2005). But the poor margin was only one indicator of the scale of the wastage. In 1994, the Independent Newspapers group had 14 parliamentary correspondents representing each of the company's individual titles. Each correspondent was paid not only a handsome salary – relative to other journalists at the time – but the company was obliged to pay a government-approved tax free parliamentary allowance which virtually doubled correspondents' packages. This allowance was a relic from the days when the South African government shifted its seat during the year from Cape Town to Pretoria and imitated the grant parliamentarians received for the upkeep of a home in each city.

The intention of employing 14 correspondents was that each newspaper in the Independent Newspapers group, from the Cape Times and the Cape Argus to the Port Elizabeth Herald and the Pretoria News, would be serviced by a dedicated reporter ready and willing to shape the news from Parliament to fit each title's unique regional interests. The reality was that 14 people were

employed at great cost for a job that was effectively done by one person. It was a common practice for the group's correspondents to copy each other's stories and put their own names on them, a practice reminiscent of cheating schoolchildren known as "disking"[14]. This practice would entail one correspondent writing up an article and then handing-over the material to his colleagues. They would change the byline and perhaps a few words in the first paragraph and then pass it off as their own. In return for his or her efforts, the original writer would receive a similar service next time round. It was evident inefficiencies of this kind, identified by the team O'Reilly sent to look over the Argus Group's financials and organograms prior to the acquisition in 1993 that persuaded the Irish magnate to buy-in in the first place. "The wastage was quite staggering," one editor recalls (Williams 2005).

The rise of the middle class in South Africa since the end of apartheid is typically considered one of the key engines of the country's rapid economic growth rate. The increase in the numbers of consumers with cash has fuelled a retail, housing and travel boom in the post-2000 period, and with it a strong surge in adspend, that has created a great deal of profit in the media business. Independent Newspapers' flagship daily, *The Star*, for instance, quadrupled its profitability between 1999 and 2005 (Williams 2005).

Key to the more equitable distribution of adspend was in part the increased spending power of the black community, but also the substantial political pressure on the advertising industry which, in 2002, was called to account for its racial placement practices (Berger 2004, 57). This led to a rapid growth in adspend targeting black readers, underpinning further growth in this sector of the media (ibid). Indeed, adspend in the South African media sector climbed by 20% a year between 2002 and 2005, according to media analyst Rajay Ambekar (2005).

> "Normally adspend tracks GDP (gross domestic product), but GDP
> has been only 4% so adspend has been very strong. What's caused
> the growth? There have been some cyclical elements but of the

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[14] The practice of "disking" was never carried out by the candidate, though I was witness to its occurrence.

structural elements, the most important has been black economic
empowerment, employment and equity and the emerging black
middle class. These are what are driving consumer spending and
growth in adspend" (Ambekar 2005).

The survey enterprise Futurefact surmised that "the ANC government's
commitment to redressing past inequities and ensuring the entry of increasing
numbers of black South Africans to the skilled workforce has shifted the
balance of the purchasing power to the black market, led to a growing 'middle
class' and broadened the market for houses, cars, furniture, appliances,
clothing" (Futurefact 2004, 32). This has been accompanied by other
infrastructural improvements, such as the electrification of 3,8-million homes
between 1994 and 2004 (SouthAfricainfo.com 2004) that has further contributed
to growing media consumption.

In addition, recent research commissioned by the *Financial Mail* shows that
almost 300,000 black South Africans climbed up the socio-economic ladder to
join the ranks of the middle class between 2002 and 2004 with another 500,000
achieving lower middle-income earnings levels in the same period
(SouthAfrica.com 2004). The categories are drawn according to average
household income with middle-income group earning between R6,455 and
R11,566 per month. The survey Futurefact shows that the top priority for
virtually every new member of the middle class is securing a decent education
for their children (Futurefact 2004). Clearly, a rapidly expanding group of
potential readers with cash to spend who emphasise education (and with it,
literacy) is going to make media planners and managers sit up and pay
attention.

As Malherbe put it: "In 1997 at a Naspers management conference, a slide was
put up showing projections of readers. It indicated a huge growth of black
readers while the others stayed more or less the same. This made an
impression on us and we thought, so this is where the growth is" (Malherbe
2005). Indeed it is this new, emerging middle class that now comprises the
backbone of the country's best-selling daily newspaper (the *Daily Sun*), as well

as the best-selling weekend newspaper (the *Sunday Times*). The emergence of tabloid newspapers in South Africa was based precisely on the growing economic power of the emerging middle classes.

According to Connie Molusi, the former CEO of Johncom: "The political stability and change has led to the growth of the black middle class. There have been two aspects to this: redistribution, in which this new sector is buying cars at entry level almost as soon as they leave university (for my generation it took us 3-5 years to afford to buy a car. Currently, even without a subsidy the youngsters can afford them); economically – transformation has opened up a ray of hope, of access to careers, skills, equality of access and the establishment of a meritocratic system which underpins value. At a political level, a society that was deeply skewed has started to deracialise. There is dignity and pride. But you can't democratise accumulation. You can't put ceilings on consumption. We do need the development of a strong, black middle class (politically as well as economically). A deracialised economy and society provides a platform for equality of access. If you leave intact a race-skewed process and access, your political settlement will remain fragile" (Molusi 2005).

While the growth of the black middle class was a symptom of change within the economic sector, it is also true that macro-economic shifts also play a critical role in shaping media system change. A recession, for instance, will inevitably impact on adspend as well as on circulation, as both advertisers and readers tighten their belts. For newspapers, cost cutting, searches for synergy and efficiency planning will result. Conversely, economic boom times will also act as a catalyst for change.

It is more than apparent from these general principles as well as from the few examples offered that macro- and micro-economic factors, from local interest rates and tax policy to the international economic environment, act as vital triggers of change in the media market. The economic trigger can either enhance or diminish dependency depending on its composition and direction.

4. Globalisation

We have mentioned above how South Africa's doors to the outside world were flung open in the early 1990s as international isolation ended and the new democratic state resumed its place in the world. That indeed was a powerful moment in political and media terms as the country was exposed virtually overnight to the converging technologies, powerful interests and the professional practices of a global media community. Though Boloka has observed that "the appearance of global players completely transformed the way South African industry operates" (2004, 30), this is not true without reservation. As we have seen above, globalisation did impact on the way in which Media24 conducted its business by giving it the springboard to leap into the global marketplace. But a global parent did also not make much difference to local journalistic practice at the *Mail & Guardian.* At Independent Newspapers, some argue the cost-cutting and asset-stripping that took place in the wake of global investment severely damaged not just the company but South African journalism in general (see below).

It is true that the opportunity for making money in the closed but relatively mature market that was South Africa raised the interest of major global media companies. And when Anglo-American started unbundling its diverse interests in the early 1990s, including its newspaper holdings, an assortment of teams representing media magnates such as Conrad Black and Rupert Murdoch arrived in South Africa to assess the profit potential of the country's largest newspaper house, the Argus Company:

> Anglo American put the word out around then that they wanted to offload the Argus Company. Conrad Black and Rupert Murdoch were sounded out, as well as O'Reilly. Both Black and Murdoch sent out emissaries to look over the books. They both decided the South African market was too small. They also didn't know what was going to happen after the election (Johnson 2005).

It was Tony O'Reilly, the Irish billionaire businessman, who took the plunge. At the time, he told the Mercury newspaper that the Argus company was "one of

the most under-cultivated assets in the world of print anywhere" (cited in Tomaselli 1997, 33). It was also the first time in a century that mining capital had relinquished newspapers it previously regarded as so strategically important in ensuring its dominant role in the economy and the security of capitalism (Tomaselli 1997, 49). Keyan Tomaselli argues convincingly that the sale by Anglo-American of its substantial media holdings in South Africa in the mid-1990s was intended as a means of protecting the company's diamond monopoly (1997, 66). But it may also be true that the mining proprietor was acknowledging the diminishing role of capital in the protection of capitalism as well as in its stewardship of oppositional politics.

O'Reilly's influence on the Argus company in particular and on newspapers in South Africa (and elsewhere) in general has been marked. Indeed, it is difficult to talk of newspapers in the new South Africa without bumping up against the formidable presence of O'Reilly. Head now of a global processed food empire, HJ Heinz, with annual sales in the region of US$10-billion and a newspaper empire that reaches from Ireland to India, O'Reilly initially acquired a controlling interest (31%) of Argus newspapers from Anglo and JCI but later expanded his interest to full ownership (and the name was changed to Independent Newspapers).

Even before he arrived on South African shores as a media baron – he first came over as a brilliant 19-year old rugby player representing the Irish and British Lions in 1955 – O'Reilly was known for his ability to cut costs. Perhaps his most famous cut was his idea to remove the little black label on the back of HJ Heinz's flagship tomato sauce. The cut, which halved the product's use of paper and adhesive, saved the company US$4-million a year (O'Toole 1996). O'Reilly prided himself on being able to turn around a company by chopping out the inefficiencies and flab. That was exactly what he intended to do in 1994 with his newest acquisition, Argus Newspapers.

Now, just over ten year's later, opinions are very much divided over whether this strategy was good either for the company or indeed for journalism in the new South Africa. Sympathisers say the company has never been more

profitable or efficient as a consequence of those deep cuts and continues to grow from strength to strength. Antagonists argue that the diminishment of editorial quality in one of the country's most important media companies, the maltreatment and loss of experienced staff and the asset stripping carried out by the company's foreign owner amount to little more than an exercise in pillaging, the dark side of globalisation.

Ryland Fisher was appointed deputy editor of the Cape Times, an Independent Newspapers morning title, on January 1, 1995, only a year after O'Reilly had acquired a controlling interest in the group. Eighteen months later, Fisher was promoted to the Editor's chair, a position he held for three-and-a-half years. Reflecting back over the period, the drive to cut costs was one of the most difficult and counter-productive activities imaginable: "Every year we had to cut staff, every year. When I started in 1995 we had 75 staff members. Go and count how many they have now. I felt incredibly uncomfortable with cutting staff every time. We were losing good people" (Fisher 2005).

At root was an O'Reilly interdict that the company as a whole succeeds in achieving a 15% annual return on investment (ROI). This was a common benchmark, particularly in the global business and media environment, heavy pressure was placed on individual titles and their editors to deliver on the all-pervasive ratio. At that time, the Argus company as a whole was functioning on a 4% margin (Williams 2005). Fisher says the 15% ROI benchmark and the ultimate target of 20% across the group has "been the guiding principle at Independent (newspapers) since (O'Reilly's arrival). People no longer talked about superior journalism, intelligent journalism or even vaguely good journalism. They only talked about the 15%".

The conundrum, as Fisher saw it, was this: With the salary bill the largest cost centre in the business; trimming the salary bill was the most efficient means of achieving the benchmark. The reduction of labour costs was done in two ways: by offering generous retrenchment packages to senior staffers and by replacing leaving seniors with juniors. "The people who took [the retrenchment packages] up were people who knew they could make it. Useless people stuck to their

guns and never took the packages…this way, we ended up with the dead wood and got rid of the good people" (Fisher 2005).

Few Independent Newspapers staffers who endured this period recall it with any nostalgia. "O'Reilly flew out, cut costs and had a condescending attitude to the editors," says Rory Wilson, a General Manager of Independent Newspapers Cape at the time. "'We managers will make the money, let the editors go off and do their thing' was his attitude". There are generally two strategies to improve return-on-investment ratios: either push up revenue and hold costs stable, or hold revenue and cut costs. "In the O'Reilly era, everything was about the ratios" (Wilson 2005). In the post-1994 period, revenue was far from stable. In fact, with the rapid decline in circulations, revenue too was falling. The more quickly income fell, the more cuts were required. The more cuts were needed to meet the margin, the wider and deeper they were felt. "It was fine to cut costs if they weren't core, but everything was purely statistical. 'Ten percent of editorial must go', they would say. But it was more efficient to ask questions than to make cuts" (Wilson 2005).

Along with the reduction of labour costs, a range of strategies was employed to bring the 15% benchmark into reach. Restrictions were placed on internet access by reporters, regional libraries were shutdown and centralised, the national payroll and some administrative duties were consolidated and efficiencies were pursued in the distribution of newspapers by hiving-off that section of the business to private contractors. Newsfloor2000, an ambitious project to consolidate staff and costs (see below), was launched.

The culture of Independent Newspapers is very bottom-line driven because this is the motivating force at its global parent Heinz. "O'Reilly is a brilliant cost-cutter. Look how he turned Heinz around. His famous ketchup brand was in the doldrums and his cost cutting saved the company $100-million. His maxim is that he is a 'low-cost quality operator'." Says the Irish writer Fintan O'Toole: "(Tony O'Reilly) is part of an age of capitalism in which the idea of the entrepreneur as inventor is long past. As a multinational manager, he does two things – he cuts costs and he buys companies" (O'Toole 2001, 65). Looking at

O'Reilly's well-documented record, neither should have come as a surprise to South African media employees or employers. "Tony O'Reilly brought international media practice to South Africa," says one former manager who wished to remain anonymous. "We all learned a thing or two when we saw how he operated".

Among the lessons: a 15-20% return-on-investment is a standard benchmark in the newspaper industry worldwide; owners are entitled to siphon profits and use these, among other things, to re-invest or to leverage capital; inefficiency is the bread-and-butter of management teams seeking to improve profitability; and, cost-cutting is a painful, legitimate and largely unavoidable corporate strategy.

For Moegsien Williams, current editor of the major South African daily *The Star* (an Independent Newspapers title), and a first-hand observer and participant in the post-1994 management of the Independent Newspapers group, anger and finger pointing at O'Reilly's methods have missed three vital points. First, three of the Argus group's flagship titles – the *Cape Times, Pretoria News* and *The Mercury* – had been running at a loss prior to the O'Reilly buy-in and faced the very real prospect of bankruptcy and closure. All three of these survived and were placed on a firm financial footing as a result of the cost cutting. Second, the cost-cutting measures implemented group-wide during the 1994 to 2003 period served to guarantee the financial stability and profitability not only of the South African arm of the Irish-based company but underpinned its expansion elsewhere. Third, far from concentrate on siphoning capital out of the business, the Independent Newspapers group launched three new titles including the first new newspaper in the post-1994 era (the *Sunday Independent*).

> There's been much bleating about the Independent group. But the *Sunday Independent* was the first new title in the new South Africa and it was followed by *Business Report* and by *Isolezwe*. Three daily titles were also brought back from the brink of bankruptcy. The *Cape Times, Pretoria News* and the *Mercury* were all brought back to

profitability and those papers now making a significant contribution to the company's bottom line (Williams 2005).

On his arrival, O'Reilly vowed never to close any titles, and he has kept to this assurance. The *Sunday Independent*, in fact, remains a loss maker – just as the initial projections suggested – but O'Reilly continues to absorb annual losses of around R7-million. This, says Williams, constitutes an "investment in South African journalism" and to diversity in the local marketplace (2005).

Independent Newspapers' synergy and consolidation strategy, in which resources were shared – various parts of the newspapers including the motoring, travel and *Tonight* entertainment sections are prepared centrally and then distributed to regional titles – was a vital component to the survival of the three titles and enabled the company to expand by launching new products. "These titles had to be moved from close to bankruptcy without closure or sale of titles. Today, the company is profitable, a jewel in the crown of O'Reilly's empire. Independent Newspapers itself is also a hugely successful company, listed in London" (Williams 2005).

The company's cost-cutting methods together with the prominence of the high ROI margins have not, however, instilled much confidence in the marketplace or in the investment community. According to African Harvest media analyst Rajay Ambekar, "They are milking it until it's dry, then they will pull out… You can see it in the quality of the newspapers. They can't keep doing it forever. In the next two or three years, there will be changes in the offing" (Ambekar 2005).

But it wasn't just the former Argus Company that was the subject of piqued interest from the international media community. Times Media Limited was broken up with the *Financial Times* of London buying into the quality daily *Business Day* and the weekly *Financial Mail* magazine. The last remaining alternative newspaper of any significance, the *Mail & Guardian*, shed its London-based backing in exchange for Zimbabwean ownership. Clearly, global interests had settled on the South African media market and the change was marked.

Nigerian interests started a new, quality daily newspaper, *ThisDay*, in South Africa in 2002 that survived for almost two years. One of its biggest obstacles was a classic difficulty associated with trade involving the developing world – the problem of moving cash resources across international borders: "(Publisher Nduka Obaigbena) had great schemes but he never listened and he never got the money on time. Foreign exchange (Forex) regulations were an issue, but from the Nigerian side. As the Central Bank explained, Nigeria has a shortage of Forex and therefore it was not a priority to permit money for investing in business to leave the country, especially when it was needed to pay for necessities in Nigeria" (Matisonn 2005).

Neither was it just foreign companies arriving in South Africa that were to change the complexion of the newspaper and media industry. Media24's transformation from a small local enterprise, Naspers, into "an integrated, multinational media business" (Media4, 2000) with an annual budget of close to R3-billion was achieved largely on the back of its international acquisitions and business. By the end of March 2004, 28% of Media24's revenues were generated from outside South Africa (Media24 2005, 2). These revenue sources included Tencent, a Chinese Internet platform, Irdeto, a new technology development company, satellite television service PayTV, Entriq, a content protection and subscription management company and magazines in Kenya, Angola and Hungary. From an exclusively print-based business in 1994, Media24 had developed into a very different company by 2004. Of the company's R2,7-billion in operating profit for the 2003/4 financial year, R701-million came from its print division, the rest from its electronic media interests (Media24 2005, 2).

Many other cross-national partnerships have been established in the 13 years since South Africa entered the international community of nations. These include Johncom's buy-out of the Nigerian newspaper *Business Day* and Zimbabwean businessman Trevor Ncube's purchase of a controlling stake in the *Mail & Guardian.*

Hallin and Mancini have written about the exposure of local journalists to the international media corps as being a powerful agent promoting convergence to a Liberal model (2004, 253-260). The free press agenda of organisations like the World Association of Newspapers and the interaction of journalists worldwide has led, they argue, to "a diffusion of techniques, practices and values" (2004, 258). This is a process that has been assisted by the content sharing implicit in many technological advances over the past few decades, a further contributor to the creation of "common cultures of practice" (2004, 260). Mark Alleyne and Janet Wagner argue that a global information structure has come about through the consolidation of news agencies into "the big five": "The old notion of news imperialism complained about by the south could be expanded to include the notion of a global information structure as these countries find that Reuters, AP, UPI, AFP and TASS are not only their sole sources of international news but also of financial data and historical information coming to them via high-speed telematics from databases in the north" (1993, 50).

This intermingling of journalistic practice, techniques and values has certainly been the case in South Africa not only in the recent past but also stretching back a hundred years and more. A huge international media contingent of several hundred senior correspondents was based in South Africa for much of the transition period (from the late 1980s through to the mid-1990s), though important, influential figures were around earlier and for much longer (such as the *Independent* of London's John Carlin, the *New York Times's* Joseph Lelyveld, the London *Guardian's* David Beresford and *Newsday* New York's Vivienne Walt).

The high degree of interaction between South Africa's journalistic community and the world's is reminiscent too of the Boer War. During this period at the turn of the century, many well-known correspondents also spent time in South Africa, including Winston Churchill, Rudyard Kipling, Edgar Wallace and others. It is inevitable that a certain degree of "diffusion" took place with particular cogency at these times. The connection was bolstered, over the years, by the

close links between the South African journalistic community and institutions such as the Poynter Institute in Florida, Harvard University (Nieman fellowships), Oxford University (Rhodes scholars) and other international centres and programmes. It is a further reminder, acknowledged by Hallin and Mancini, of the power of global practices and values to impact on the local media. It is clear too that the degree and form of global influence will differ from system to system, thereby impacting on the speed and direction of the change experienced. Evidently globalisation has the power to trigger change in a way that impacts on the degree of media-political system dependency.

5. Technology

Over the years, indeed over the centuries, the rapid evolution of printing and newspaper technology has had direct, often fundamental impacts on the structure and functioning of media markets and of the societies in which they are located (see the work of Benedict Anderson and Marshall McLuhan). The arrival of desktop publishing in South Africa in the mid-1980s was just such a moment. Getting rid of hot-lead typesetting and the need for expensive editorial systems, desktop publishing was a key element in the birth of South Africa's alternative press. "Desktop publishing made it possible to run the newspaper at one third of the cost of a normal press operation," wrote Louw (1991, 23). *Weekly Mail* co-editor Irwin Manoim's account of the arrival of desktop publishing in 1985 and its consequences for the print media in South Africa and beyond is an important (and rarely reported) historic recollection worth recalling at some length:

> One lunchtime, I was browsing the stacks at CNA, when I chanced upon a magazine cover announcing an amazing new device, a laser printer. Inside were sample printouts that looked plausibly as if they'd come from a commercial print shop. It dawned on me that if a laser printer could produce text that looked 'printed', it might eliminate the need for typesetting equipment, darkrooms, chemicals and skilled technicians. It might make it possible for people with almost no money to produce a newspaper. And that, give or take a few matters

of detail, is what happened. The first purchase by the nascent Weekly Mail was an Apple Laser Writer. It was flown in especially from Holland, arriving ten days before liftoff. I became rather fond of that squat little box. It was, in many ways, the reason the Weekly Mail became more than just a dream … the laser printer's legacy went beyond the Weekly Mail. It brought newspaper publishing within the budgets of communities around the country. Within a few months, an 'alternative' weekly press had mushroomed, based on the Weekly Mail's production techniques (Manoim 2005, 4).

In South Africa in 1996/7, an industry-wide shift in technology had massive repercussions for the newspaper industry. The arrival of full-page pagination and the simultaneous loss of several classes of employees engaged in traditional typographical tasks, led to a centralisation of journalistic functions. At Independent Newspapers, this centralisation with a particular eye on cutting costs, was commonly described as the search for synergy.

A programme to share production facilities, photographic services and content, known in the Cape office as NewsFloor2000, was introduced. Within the company, the buzzword was "synergy". But concerns were soon raised about the impact of synergy on the quality of the company's products, in particular on the quality of the editorial content.

"In 1998 we discovered a word that has become the curse of South African journalism: synergy. The idea was to synergise as much as possible: pay one salary instead of 3 or 4. You can already see it now: the international news page is the same in the *Pretoria News* as it is in *The Star*; the *Tonight* section of *The Star* is also in the *Cape Argus* and the *Daily News.* The only difference is the advertising. Some sub-editor up in Johannesburg is designing everybody's pages. That's the way they were thinking then already: Squeeze as much as possible out of each individual in the company" (Fisher 2005).

Former management employees claim the consequence of this ratio-driven method of cost cutting undermined the company's capacity to provide quality

content thereby endangering its long-term viability and credibility. By forcing newspapers within the same group, even though they were technically competitors, to share news services, photographs and production facilities, Newsfloor 2000 had a direct impact, argues Wilson, on the independence of editors and therefore on freedom of the press itself: "Editorial independence is about an editor being able to scan the environment and choose what is important to him or her. Narrowing the environment was very damaging" (Wilson 2005).

More sympathetic voices concede that while cost cutting at Independent Newspapers had been fierce during a large part of the period, inefficiencies were widespread and the sacrifices made placed the company on a much stronger footing come the upturn. At the time the Argus company was acquired, management consisted of dozens of grey-shoed white men in what was known as mahogany row, explains one former manager. "Even after 1990, the pace of change was glacial. When someone was promoted, the joke was you would ask 'who died?'. It was an old-fashioned, patriarchal industry. Clearly a seismic shift had to happen" (interview with anonymous Independent Newspaper manager, 2005).

Elsewhere in the world, the impact of the new generation of global media executives were changing things dramatically. The days of the old press lords, where proprietors in the mould of Lord Beaverbrook owned and manipulated newspapers as an amusing pastime, were gone (Greenslade 2004). Now, newspapers were a big, bottom-line, global business. For years South African newspapers had been protected. The English-language press had enjoyed a cosy relationship with the major mining group Anglo-American while the Afrikaans press, principally Naspers and Perskor, had been created as an instrument of the volk and had never been intended to be a business. Suddenly, in the early 1990s, as the country itself crawled out of apartheid isolation, the South African mainstream press entered a new realm. Virtually overnight, it became a large, commercial enterprise in which the rapid evolution of technology was a common and powerful force.

Technological change also played a key role in the advancing fortunes of South Africa's biggest media house, Media24. Afrikaans media companies Naspers and Perskor, developed intimate ties with the political establishment over the years (see above). As apartheid failed and pressures seemed to mount even on the future of Afrikaans as a language, decisions had to be made about how best to proceed. Should the Afrikaans media keep to itself, eke out a pretty good living from mainly white, Afrikaans-speaking South Africans and stay out of the way of the black political juggernaut? Or should it take the aggressive route, expand into new terrain, publish in different languages and grow wherever possible? This was the conundrum faced the editors and board of Naspers (and Perskor) in the early 1990s (Malherbe 2005). "One of the most important conferences in our existence took place at Klein Drakenstein in December 1993," the company's 1994 annual report told shareholders. "The board discussed our future role and mission. Far-reaching proposals for the regeneration of our activities were approved" (Naspers 1994).

The decisions included the listing of Naspers on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange in 1994, the racial transformation of the company and of its Board and the commencement of a period of major investment in state-of-the-art printing technology, presses and equipment. "We invested in the future on an unprecedented scale," Naspers chairman Ton Vosloo told investors in the company's 1995 annual report. It was announced the company had decided to spend R215-million on new presses, "the largest capital project undertaken by the group" (Naspers 1995, 12). But this was only the first installment in a massive recapitalisation programme that would catapult Naspers into a dominant position in the South African print market.

Between 1998 and 2001, the company invested R1-billion in its traditional print media business, both in renewal of infrastructure and in the acquisition of new titles (Naspers 2001, 5). This enabled Naspers to produce not only the best quality reproduction in the business (as the endless reproduction awards during the period testify), but also created the excess printing capacity it needed to try new magazine and newspaper ventures (such as the *Daily Sun*). Naspers grew from a R1-billion business (turnover) in 1994 to one that brought in almost R14-

billion in group revenue by 2005 (Naspers 2005, 1)[15]. From a roughly equal contender in the market, it is now three times the size of its nearest rival.

> In 1994, we had old presses, mature products (with limited capacity for growth), the internet had arrived and there was uncertainty about our political future and about the future of the Afrikaans language. But we agreed we believed in the future and decided to invest and upgrade our infrastructure and technology. This gave us a platform for growth (Malherbe 2005).

In this case, as in so many, technology was a prime trigger and its acquisition had a fundamental impact on the media market.

The benefits of investing in technology were not entirely missed by the other big players in the South African newspaper business. According to Anton Harber, Caxton chairman Terry Moolman also "noticed that every time they spent money on presses, profits went up" (Harber 2005). Caxton executive Nick Holdsworth recalls his boss Terry Moolman "put a lot of money into new presses and achieved more efficiency. This trimmed prices. Caxton invested steadily in technology, unlike Johnnic and Independent Newspapers who kept on using creaky old plants" (Holdsworth 2005).

Independent Newspapers did not, as Holdsworth suggests, invest vast amounts of money into new presses in the wake of 1994. This was because the presses the company owned were still in pretty good shape, according to the current editor of *The Star*, Moegsien Williams: "We've remained a newspaper company and our presses are set to last for another 13 years. Why throw them out? We're a newspaper company. [Naspers and Caxton] are into commercial printing, magazines and books – 99,9% of our products are newspapers. We've spent hundreds of millions of rands maintaining and refurbishing our presses. We even launched the *Daily Voice* (45-50,000) in the new South Africa along with a number of freesheets and community newspapers" (Williams 2005).

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[15] Naspers changed its accounting method in the 1999/2000 financial year from a measurement of turnover to revenue/earnings making a direct contrast impossible. Turnover and revenue are however close enough to give a good indication of the change.

Only Johncom was left ruing its total lack of printing facilities and its reliance on the other companies to publish its titles. Johncom CEO Connie Molusi told me: "I do regret not having printing presses, though we are constantly evaluating our major input costs which are newsprint, printing, production and distribution. Our margins are lower than for the industry as a whole because we pay market-related costs for printing" (Molusi 2005).

Neither is technological change likely to be something that becomes less important in the years ahead. As Irwin Manoim writes:

> "Can technology shape the news? Most journalists affect a professional indifference to the grubby technical processes that transform their musings into products called newspapers…newspapers didn't exist until moveable type was invented, and mass-circulation newspapers required the invention of high-speed rotary presses. The cell phone-like news devices of the not-too-distant future may prove demanding taskmasters. This is a medium that will always need to be first with the news, around the clock, 365 days a year. Hollow-eyed journalists will find themselves filing at all kinds of strange hours. Those over 35 will, on doctor's orders, downscale to less stressful occupations. Electronic journalists may have to rediscover some of the skills of yesteryear's Fleet Street evening tabloids. They will need to specialize in the rapid delivery of short, breaking news stories, no more than three or four paragraphs long, and updated frequently. The ink on the page just sits there, but the ink on an electronic page can jive from margin to margin and sing in stereo" (Manoim 2005, 233-4).

6. Commercialisation

Hallin and Mancini argue that commercialism has led to greater separation of the political world from the media one. As small-scale newspapers have been transformed into highly capitalised and highly profitable businesses, they gain greater autonomy from organised political and social groupings. The consequence of this shift, according to traditional interpretations, is that the

increased value of newspapers as advertising mediums has allowed them gradually to shake off government and/or political party control and to become independent voices of public sentiment (Hallin & Mancini 2004, 203 citing Altick). The revisionist view is that commercialisation undermines democratic life by shifting the purpose of the press from the expression of political viewpoints to the promotion of rank consumerism (Hallin & Mancini 2004, 215).

My understanding from my own research conducted into the area is that the blurring of advertising and editorial that is the common feature of commercialisation does indeed threaten to damage democratic life (Hadland, Cowling and Tabe, 2007). It does this by undermining the self-regulation of the media (by not adhering to its own codes), by breaking the trust of the public (by concealing paid-for content) and by decapacitating the media from the effective performance of its Fourth Estate functions. As Ryland Fisher, the former editor of the Cape Times pointed out: "I've always said that when people talk about political interference that commercial interference is more of a threat" (Fisher 2005).

It is certainly true that commercialisation has had a major impact on the South African media market. In the post-1994 environment, there were suddenly new rules and new ways of doing things. It was no longer acceptable for an editor to have no grasp whatever of budgeting or of managing the financials. "Harvey (Tyson, a former editor of *The Star*) always maintained he never had seen or done a real budget. This was left to the financial guys," says one former colleague. "Even in 1990, if a manager wanted to come on to the newsfloor at the Argus company, he had to make an appointment". Obviously, there were soon to be increasing tensions between the commercial imperative and the old style. This was to prove very stressful within the company, and was at its strongest in the period between 1990 and 1994.

But I would also argue that commercialism does not necessarily, as Hallin and Mancini suggest, lead inexorably toward a differentiation of media and politics. Evidence from the South African market indicates that commercialism has actually served as a trigger for a closer relationship between the media and the

state. By allowing the state to pay for content, often without signalling that this constitutes advertising, the new climate of commercialisation allows for a new opportunity for indirect intervention in the print media.

The supposition is supported by analyses emanating from other countries and regions, including central America and Africa. In his work on *Gacetilla* – advertising disguised as news – Jose Luis Benavides describes this form of content as a central feature in the finances of contemporary Mexican print news media (2000, 85). He also argues that it is a "key ingredient in a system of governmental press subsidy, essential in explaining the way in which the Mexican press has served as a propaganda tool for both the Mexican government and the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (Benavides 2000, 85). Benavides concludes in his work that government advertising (particularly *gacetillas*) is an important element of "press control" in Mexico (2000, 86).

Tettey notes the common occurrence in African democracies of the withdrawal of government advertising to starve critical media outlets of income. Commercial advertisers are also cajoled into pulling their own advertisements in newspapers considered to be at loggerheads with government:

> The advertising revenue of the critical private Ugandan newspaper, *The Monitor*, for example, was slashed by almost half as a result of a cabinet order in July 1993 banning state institutions from advertising in the paper (2001, 20).

In late 2006, a story along these lines made front page news in South Africa when it transpired that a cabinet minister, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, had paid tens of thousands of rands to have herself as the cover story of a hitherto well-respected financial weekly, *Leadership*. The magazine had just changed ownership and the controversy focused new attention on the frequency and consequences of disguised paid-for content, particularly when it was from politicians. Subsequently, towards the end of 2006, the South African National Editors Forum (Sanef) appointed a subcommittee to investigate improved self-regulation of paid-for content.

Virtually every newspaper, including free drop titles and community papers, carries some form of government advertising. Commercialism, in the South African context, has thus lead to a subtle subsidisation of the media by the state. This is creating a dependence on advertising revenue from the state for many titles but is also contributing to the deterioration of ethical values that commercialism and dependence naturally brings with it (see Hadland, Cowling & Tabe, 2007).

Ironically, commercialism has made the connection with political life and with political actors stronger as new opportunities arise to use the media commercially for the state, without appearing to be exerting influence that is too close. As media companies themselves diversify into different media and different forms, the ties with regulating agencies, government departments and state institutions grows. A good international example is the massive increase in election advertising expenditure in recent times both in the United States and in Great Britain (see, for instance, Magleby, Corrado & Patterson 2006, or UK data at: http://www.electoralcommission.gov.uk), and the cosy ties with the media establishment that this necessarily creates. It is little wonder no American newspaper is calling for an overhaul of the country's political system, in spite of the very recent and serious electoral system problems. While this countertendency doesn't necessarily disprove differentiation, or even de-differentiation, it is a reminder nonetheless that as an agent of change, few are more powerful than commercialism.

There is another aspect of commercialism I'd like to highlight which also has an impact on the notion of differentiation. This is the fact that it is not only the media that is affected by commercialism, but so too is the political world. Indeed the South African experience suggests that commercialism is not only contributing to the breakdown of political organisation, it is also bringing the worlds of politics and of business even closer together. "Commercialism has driven a profound change in the nature of the ANC," Paton wrote in a recent in-depth article on the majority party (2007, 27). "Once local ANC meetings were all about policies and strategies – the transformation of South Africa's society according to the ideals the party championed for decades. Now these

gatherings are frequently preoccupied with business opportunities and who should have access to them. It's a transformation that wasn't expected. Rather than 'transforming the state', as the party describes its goals in official rhetoric, the economy has transformed the ANC" (Paton 2007, 27). This is a point Gumede takes up as he argues that a new intimacy between business and government threatens the "soul" of the majority party (2005, 217).

The point is that differentiation and de-differentiation may well involve the separation of politics from the media and the narrowing of the divide between the media and business, as Hallin and Mancini argue. But it may also spark an increasingly close proximity of politics to business. Certainly in South Africa in 2007, getting ahead in business is about politics. "It was only when politicians moved into the world of business that the competition for commercial opportunities began to dominate ANC dynamics … In parliament, 40% of ANC MPs are directors of companies, many owning them outright" (Paton 2007, 27). Commercialism, in other words, appears to be a particularly strong agent of change affecting, among other things, the very process of convergence of the media, business and politics. This is a slightly different, but not disharmonious, take on Hallin and Mancini's understanding of convergence. It supports the power of the Liberal model, the cluster within which commercial and business interests are traditionally most comfortable.

7. Business Strategy

The final trigger of media change is another process that is internal to the sector: the definition and implementation of business strategies or models. As Picard has argued, changes in the business model constitute "a critical factor in the environment of the newspaper industry" and few elements are more influential either within individual companies or within the sector as a whole (2004, 2). The launching or closing of titles, the emphasis on local or international products, the targeting of particular audiences and the alignment of these products within the market are all vital factors in determining the topography and composition of the news media. Occasionally, this strategy encompasses non-media specific dimensions. Tomaselli's argument, for

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instance, that the sale by Anglo-American of its media holdings was intended as to protect its diamond monopoly (see Tomaselli's comments on page 157) is not a contention that is easily explained by Liberal drift or by differentiation. Indeed, it became politically essential for the over-concentrated South African mining houses to initiate a process of fundamental and rapid differentiation of its media interests from its resource-based interests. The deliberate and systematic separation of the media system from the economic system for political reasons is hardly an equation that sits comfortably within modernisation theory.

Mostly, while reflecting historical trends, business strategies look forward attempting to make best use of demographic, political and social opportunities. Individually, business strategies focus on areas of competition and on the products that will perform best. Collectively, they have a very real impact in determining not just the local media universe but the global one too. It is for this reason that political economy stresses the significance of business strategy in evaluating the importance of influencing factors.

We have seen above how global business strategy – Independent Newspapers' attitude to cost cutting – came to play a role in influencing the South African media system. Let us look too at a local example.

The literature from business studies indicates that other than direct competition, product for product, companies operating in mature industries – such as South Africa's print media sector – have various options to consider in search of growth and expansion. These include mergers and acquisitions (locally and internationally) as well as responses to export or other international business opportunities (Thompson and Strickland 2003). In addition, companies can seek out horizontal or vertical integration strategies. The former applies when a firm's long-term strategy is based on growth through the acquisition of one or more similar firms operating at the same stage of the production-marketing chain (thereby eliminating the competition), the latter applies when a firm's strategy is to acquire, or closely align with, firms that supply it with inputs (such as raw

materials) or/are customers for its outputs (such as warehouses for finished products (Pearce & Robinson 1997, 227).

These were the options facing Johncom in 2003/4 as it contemplated the expansion of its newspaper business. An attractive proposition was the purchase of the *Sowetan*, a national daily newspaper in a circulation slump, and its sister title, already 50% owned by Johncom, the *Sowetan Sunday World*. The strategy was a typical horizontal integration approach by which Johncom's current holdings, most particularly the leading national Sunday newspaper the *Sunday Times*, could be protected from new entrants while exploiting the new opportunities and market offered by the daily and by full ownership of the *Sowetan Sunday World* (Emslie et al 2005).

At the time the Competition Tribunal approved the acquisition, in July 2004, the *Sowetan* was owned by New African Publications Limited. It catered mainly for a black readership primarily located in Gauteng, KwaZulu- Natal, the Northern Cape, Mpumalanga and Free State. The *Sowetan* had a strong brand with a proud history. It appeared, however, as if the paper's original readers had outgrown its content. Much of what was being printed in the paper was of no real interest to its target market (LSM 4-7). This was reflected in the steady decline of readership and circulation. The Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) figures at the time indicated *Sowetan's* circulation declined from 123 590 (July to December 2003) to 118 261 (Jan – Jun 2004). The AMPS results also showed a dramatic slump in appeal, from a penetration of 6.2% to 5.1% (Emslie et al 2005).

Johncom management believed the *Sowetan* was losing out primarily to the hugely successful tabloid, the *Daily Sun*, owned by rivals Naspers. This combined with a failed attempt by the *Sowetan* to appeal to upwardly mobile black executives meant the title had become "a paper without a people" (Emslie et al 2005). After the acquisition, Johncom management immediately set about repositioning the paper to cater for LSM 4 to 7. The strategy proposed:
- To establish an agreed role and personality for the newspaper;

- To clearly define the target readership;
- To determine the precise needs of the target readership;
- To optimise the paper through investment in world-class production and back-end operations; and,
- To identify the parts of the newspaper that are not read by the target readership group.

(Emslie et al 2005)

In acquiring the *Sowetan*, Johncom realised a number of important cost savings that helped their other businesses. They strengthened their negotiating position with suppliers of paper and printing services, appointed one cost-effective national sales team, provided a full pre-press support services to all of its titles without any additional capital cost and with some re-organisation and reduction in staff costs. All titles reported to one circulation director, thus reducing cost and enabling Johncom to strike a more favourable deal with sub-contractors by offering them more newspapers at a lower cost per unit. (Emslie et al 2006).

The example, as narrowly specific as it is in this instance, serves as a reminder that the strategic decision-making of individual media companies can also act as a significant trigger for change in the marketplace. It is the kind of change that is hard to evaluate from texts alone. This is particularly the case when individual corporate strategies cohere into industry changing shifts. An upsurge of interest, acquisitions and repositioning of titles to match anticipated growth in the middle class black market, for instance, clearly has implications for the structure of the media system. It also has consequences for the relationship between the media system and the political system, both of which anticipate key shifts in their emphases and appeal to co-opt this rapidly growing and increasingly powerful group.

A further example concerns the impact of black economic empowerment on corporate media strategy and therefore on the topography of the sector. According to former editor and Caxton professor of Journalism Anton Harber:

One of the great ironies of BEE is that empowerment owners as media owners are more conservative. They tend to owe money (e.g. Johnnic), they had to be focused on the bottom line and this made them incredibly cautious and risk averse (like Kagiso). New BEE owners were also under scrutiny from shareholders. Many of them had trade union money behind them, real people's money in other words. Deals were proposed to (Kagiso chairman) Eric Molobi three times a day. Everyone wanted Kagiso Trust involved. He wanted investments that would be safe, including politically. Radio was politically safe and had high returns. Newspapers had lower margins and were a higher political risk. That's one of the ironies of empowerment: It sped up transformation of the media, but actually created cautious and conservative management attitudes (Harber 2005).

Where does South Africa fit in?

The South African media market is a mature one. Radio is accessible to 88% of the population, principally in the form of the public broadcaster, the SABC – and close to 70% of the population have access to television, also overwhelmingly provided by the SABC (Duncan 2000, 1, cited in Johnston 2004). This makes for extensive coverage: "The SABC controls 19 radio stations, attracting 20 million listeners daily. Radio news produces 2,000 programmes a week with a combined airtime of close to 300 hours. The SABC's television service consists of three channels … attracting a daily audience of about 12 million viewers" (*World Press Review Online* 2001, cited in Johnston 2004). The broadcast sector is also now populated by close to 100 community radio stations and the arrival of community television is widely anticipated during 2007 (Hadland, Aldridge & Ogada, 2006).

By contrast, the circulation of daily and weekly newspapers is limited. Comparatively speaking in the global context, the consumption of print media is not high. Calculations based on figures produced by the SA Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) suggest a readership for daily papers in South

Africa of just over 8-million. This is 31% of the population over 20 years of age, or 26% of the population aged over 15 years (Johnston 2004, 25). According to the *World Press Review 2001*, only 36% of South Africans use the print media as a source of information. But close to 7 million people are not catered for at all by the print media while apartheid legacies continue to perpetuate information inequality (Johnston 2004, 27).

For Hallin and Mancini, it is not so much the size of the market as its "relationship to its audience and its role in the wider process of social and political communication" that locates that market within the comparative systems matrix. The media markets of the north European (Liberal and Democratic Corporatist) countries do have high circulations, but they also address a mass public. They are not necessarily engaged in the political world, but rather take part in a vertical process of communication. This entails mediating between political elites and the ordinary citizen. The press in these models may also have a horizontal communication dimension, though not to the same degree as the Polarised Pluralist countries. In these countries, newspapers are frequently addressed to a small elite. This elite is mainly urban, well educated and politically active and the press is engaged in a process of debate and negotiation among elite factions.

The South African press has a history of appealing to political and social elites. This was true of the missionary press right back at its origins in the 1880s when various titles (such as *Izwi la Bantu*) were produced by and aimed at missionary-educated black South Africans. Johnson writes that the establishment of *Bantu World* in 1932 "spearheaded the shift from a local to a mass black press" (Johnson 1991, 21). But, like other attempts to develop the black newspaper market, this too failed. Tim Couzens identifies three reasons that consistently led to the constrainment of a mass, black press in South Africa: financial difficulties, a fear of political militancy (by the state and by advertisers) and the intervention of white entrepreneurs (cited in Johnson 1991, 20). The combination of these factors, together with the powerful monopoly held by the Argus company, Naspers, Perskor and South African Associated Newspapers (SAAN, later Times Media Limited) and close state vigilance and

intervention, ensured no mass press developed in South Africa until 2002. In a few short years, the mass press has sprung up from nothing to a powerful dominance of the newspaper market.

Hallin and Mancini state: "So far as we know, no country that did not develop mass circulation newspapers in the late 19th to early 20th century has ever subsequently developed them." This is clearly not the case in South Africa where a brand new, mass circulation newspaper sector has sprung up within the last five years. There now is a clear separation between quality (elite) and a mass press. Hallin and Mancini argue this has great significance for the development of media as political institutions. This may prove to be the case.

For Deon du Plessis, publisher of the *Daily Sun* and the person who thought up the idea of launching a tabloid newspaper in South Africa, the tabloid press ushered in a whole new way of looking at the newspaper business: "Previously newspaper owners never thought of their papers as a brand. We understand that both the *Daily Sun* and *Nova*[16] are not newspapers, they are brands. We market them as brands, *the Star* doesn't. After three years the *Daily Sun* is one of the best-known brands in South Africa (like Coke). You must recognise that this is a helluva thing and something we've worked very hard at. That's one of the imperatives of the post-94 era. After 1994, there's been an explosion of choice, that's what it's meant to me. In 1994, if you lived in the townships, you had no choice" (Du Plessis 2005).

Media24 acknowledged as early as 1996 that its margins were coming under pressure in the magazine market due to the growing appreciation internationally of the worth of a brand: "Overseas publishers are showing an increased interest in the South African market … The interest is related to the increasing realisation amongst large magazine publishers abroad that their trademarks have international worth" (Naspers 1996, 13).

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[16] *Nova*, a daily newspaper aimed at wealthy young urban readers, was launched in 2005 by Naspers and Deon du Plessis but was subsequently closed down in 2006.

It was also true that while branding could make a newspaper a success, handled wrongly or inappropriately, it could lead to disaster. According to John Matisonn, editorial director of the now-defunct Nigerian-owned daily newspaper *ThisDay:*

> The biggest flaw was thinking about prestige in the way they do in Nigeria. We had to have a fancy address. Flashy was what counted. This was how we were positioned. I wanted cheap, modest quarters, like a building in Newtown or Braamfontein, that we could have transformed into something with value. He wanted somewhere across from the Stock Exchange in Sandton. This was symptomatic of other extravagances. These included pay. Nduka (the publisher, Nduka Obaigbena) would double what people asked for… He spent huge amounts on changing the logo. He commissioned two ad agencies to come up with books full of logos. I thought the Nigerian one was better anyway, but the ad agencies saw him coming. They wasted his money and I believe that what they did was basically steal from us. They called him on a Saturday and went around me. They came up with all these projects and gimmicks that he went for, but which didn't help us. I often wouldn't even know about them until they appeared in the paper (Matisonn 2005).

A further benchmark for evaluating a media system's location in the matrix is its balance of local, regional and national newspapers. Hallin and Mancini suggest that the more significant the national newspaper sector is, the more likely a country is to have a politically differentiated press. Once again, until fairly recently, South Africa had strong regional newspapers, some national titles and a paucity of local papers. However, this balance has changed dramatically. According to Malherbe: "Thirty years ago, community newspapers didn't exist, but only a few mainstream titles. Now there are many more community newspapers than mainstream. In South Africa, about 70% of newsprint is used on mainstream titles while the rest is community papers" (Malherbe 2006).

Perhaps of all the key dimensions considered so far, locating South Africa's media market into the Hallin and Mancini paradigm has proven the least

comfortable fit. This is because the South African media market has changed so radically and so quickly that assumptions that could have been made about it five or six years ago are simply no longer valid. Indeed flux has probably been the most noteworthy characteristic of the print media sector over the last decade and more. What this has demonstrated is that the Three Models paradigm is ill-equipped to deal with such wholesale and radical change within media systems. It is not that different systems contradict each other while occupying the same model, as in the Liberal model of the press. It is that change defines South Africa's media market; change in ownership, products, audiences and even in functions. And with change such a key element, it becomes even more important to note in this and in the other dimensions the direction and pace of change as it pertains to the various sets of indicators.

The key characteristics of the Polarised Pluralist model, say Hallin and Mancini, are to be found in the closeness of political actors to the media, in the heavy focus of the media on political life and on the relatively elitist nature of journalism. All of these would suggest South Africa falls close to, if not in, the Polarised Pluralist cluster. Political actors and the media can hardly have been closer than during the transition period when political reporters fulfilled, almost to the letter, the classic function of a Polarised Pluralist media system to signal positions, commitments and the agendas of party elites to one another. The heavy focus on political life indeed threatened to undermine the print media itself, as we have discussed. And, until the arrival of the tabloids, the South African media was very much geared to the country's elite.

In common with the Democratic Corporatist model, the South African media market has a high degree of political parallelism, a strong interventionist state with traditional limits on state power and a sophisticated pattern of civic life. However, this corporatism does not find its way into the print media in any systematic way and neither does a wide variation in political tendencies. Horwitz has lauded the deeply democratic and accountable process fuelled by civil society activism by which South Africa framed its communications policy in the post-1994 period (2001). And while this has been influential with regard to broadcasting and, to some extent, in the community print media field, it has not

made a deep impression on the mainstream print media. Indeed, one would be hard-pressed to argue that the replacement of South Africa's ministry of information (later, the South African Communication Service) by a new interactive, participatory agency (the Government Communication and Information System, GCIS) had been a successfully achieved process. There is much in the new GCIS that is reminiscent of its predecessor.

South Africa's multiplicity of forums and stakeholder involvement in policy processes might also have indicated its leaning toward the Democratic Corporatist cluster. But while some of these forums remain important (such as the National Economic Development and Labour Council, Nedlac), there is also evidence that as the state concentrates power in the presidency, the impact of these civil society structures is diminishing just as they slide further out of the reach of ordinary citizens:

> Although the executive seems committed to empowering the poor, improving participation is hampered by a lack of capacity on the part of those whose participation is most necessary. The extreme inequalities in South Africa could pose problems to increasing public participation. Although public participation is constantly advocated in the name of empowerment, it may be that only those already empowered are able to take advantage of this principle … In South Africa, two important factors affect the relationship between the public and the government. The sheer size of the nation, coupled with socio-economic realities, make meaningful participation difficult. Secondly, the lack of a clear relationship between the electorate and the elected due to the pure proportional list system makes contact harder (Calland 1999, 65-66).

This is a process Horwitz also concedes when he acknowledges that in the post-1994 period, the political meaning and import of the stakeholder processes became more complicated as far as the ANC was concerned:

> The forums had evolved into pluralistic, non-statutory, quasi-corporatist bodies whose authority to make policy was perceived by

some as treading upon, even compromising, the government's policy-making authority (Horwitz 2001, 280).

The South African media market also exhibits clientelism, significant shortfalls in mass literacy and inadequacies in access to the media together with an emphasis on a regional and national press that prevent it from being a convincing member of the Democratic Corporatist cluster.

Similarly, South Africa has the mature commercial element of the market and the sharp separation of quality from sensational press that would signal it may form part of the Liberal media cluster. But, it also lacks the predominance of local titles, the limited state role and the informal regulation that are the hallmarks of the liberal press.

Conclusion

For all its strengths, the Hallin and Mancini Three Models paradigm does not cope very well with media system change. This is mainly because the study compares 18 countries that have enjoyed decades – and, in some cases, centuries – of relative political and media system stability. When one introduces countries that have endured far more rapid, more recent, more comprehensive change, the model struggles to cope. It generalises the causes of change, assumes that change leads to greater differentiation and calls further into question the power of Liberal drift. However, the application of the model suggests routes for its modification. In this respect several new aspects have been touted.

We have seen how commercialism does not always lead to greater differentiation between state and media, even if it is accompanied by the party-degrading process of secularisation. Indeed, this chapter argues that far from weakening the ties between the media and the political system, commercialisation – in the South African case, at least – has in several ways strengthened them. This is because commercialisation offers new opportunities for the state to influence, subsidise or create dependence in the media. This is particularly the case in systems where self-regulation is weak.

This also suggests, contrary to Hallin and Mancini's argument, that the state in some cases is attempting to impose its own distinctive logic on the media rather than allowing the media to develop one for itself. This is symptomatic, as I have argued above, of an emerging, democratic state with authoritarian roots that has been persistently interested in harnessing the power of the mass media to consolidate its own power. Even though this may ostensibly be for the furthering of social democratic objectives, such as greater social equity and the consolidation of a constitution-based political system, it nonetheless signals not greater differentiation between the media and the state, but indeed less.

While an emerging democracy's political system may have seen the establishment of a constitutional and legal framework that includes fundamental protection for a free press, a powerful democratic state is also more than capable of stalling, if not reversing, the process of differentiation to ensure its own narrative is the one that predominates in the mass media. In this way, it continues to act as a key catalyst for change in the media marketplace. This ongoing capacity of the state to impact (negatively) on the media system, most especially in systems where political parallelism is high and where democratic institutions are new, is underplayed in Hallin and Mancini's paradigm.

The chapter has suggested that media system change may be understood better and more easily compared with change in other systems when the notion of triggers is introduced. Gleanings and insights from the political economy paradigm, a useful adjunct especially when it comes to analysis of media markets, underpin this consideration of triggers. There are indeed many areas of overlap and compatibility between political economy as a critical method and comparative media systems analysis. The injection of a political economy perspective, particularly in relation to an analysis of the media market, gives Hallin and Mancini's Three Models paradigm greater depth and a better understanding of media system change in general. This perspective is again a new one offered by this chapter.

A range of specific examples from the South African case study that is the subject of this thesis has illustrated these various trends and characteristics of change. There are elements that may be uniquely South African, such as the very recent emergence of a mass press. But there is also plenty of reason to suspect that these experiences, and the modifications they infer, may well be applicable not only to emerging democracies in Africa but elsewhere in the world too. Naturally, further comparative research involving other new democracies, particularly those emerging from authoritarian pasts, would allow the usefulness of the modifications I have suggested to be tested further.

Finally, the chapter discussed the Three Models of media and politics that Hallin and Mancini propose. And while elements of both the Liberal model and the Democratic Corporatist model are evident in the South African case, it is clear that it largely conforms to the Polarised Pluralist cluster. This supports the findings of previous chapters concerned with the other key dimensions of comparative media systems theory, political parallelism and the degree of state intervention. The final dimension of the theory, journalistic professionalism, follows in the next chapter.

Chapter Six

JOURNALISTIC PROFESSIONALISATION AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN PRINT MEDIA

Introduction

South Africa has a long and proud history of journalistic excellence in the print media. Examples include the hard-fought winning of press freedom from the colonial authorities by Thomas Pringle and John Fairbairn in 1828, Edgar Wallace's "scoop of the century" when he broke news of the Boer War armistice before the British Parliament had been informed in 1902, the vibrancy and talent of the writers of *Drum* magazine as they articulated black South African urban culture for the first time in the 1950s (anticipating in the process the techniques of New Journalism) and the government-toppling exposés of what became known as the Muldergate scandal in the 1970s. In addition, the many South African (and international) journalists who were jailed, shot, harassed or who even lost their lives in pursuit of the truth during the dangerous transition period from the early 1980s to the mid-1990s – such as photographer Ken Oosterbroek – bear testimony to a long legacy of quality, dedication and professionalism.

Since 1994 and the introduction of democracy, the rules and requirements of journalistic professionalism in South Africa have, however, changed. With apartheid gone, the Fourth Estate no longer had a clear enemy. The relationship between the media and the state shifted. The arrival of global investors, tabloids, client magazines and accelerated commercialism threw traditional practices into question and introduced new forms of journalism. The formal organisation of South African journalists collapsed and self-regulating codes and structures have been found wanting. The poor handling of racial transformation at newspaper companies, the 'juniorisation' of newsrooms, the downgrading of training, the undermining of editors' authority and the poaching by government and the corporate world of key black staff have all contributed to dwindling journalistic standards. By 2003, South African journalism was experiencing what one analyst called its "worst year" (Bird 2004, 58).

For Hallin and Mancini, journalistic professionalisation is a key indicator characterising the relationship between the media and the state. It is also useful in assessing the degree of political parallelism and facilitates the location, within the comparative systems matrix, of a particular media system (such as South Africa's). The state of journalistic professionalism is informative, they argue, regarding the maturity of a country's system of rational legal authority and is also illustrative of the degree within society to which journalists can be persuaded to perform political tasks (instrumentalism). It is, therefore, an important indicator of the overall autonomy of the press.

This chapter sets out Hallin and Mancini's description of the origins and definition of the characteristics of journalistic professionalisation. A number of indicators, such as degree of autonomy and public service orientation, are presented. The chapter then goes on to South Africa and attempts to map journalistic professionalisation to Hallin and Mancini's template, as experienced by this country's media and as influenced by its state system. Conclusions will then be drawn about the current state of South African journalistic professionalism, its direction and the consequences of its delineation for the country's placement in the comparative systems matrix.

Journalistic professionalisation: origins and indicators

For Hallin and Mancini, the process of journalistic professionalisation began when newspapers first started hiring reporters on a fulltime basis and paid them a salary (2004, 218). At first, wages were low, there was little job security or autonomy and journalists were easily tempted into corruption. They occupied, in any case, a low status in social terms and could apparently be relied on to do unethical things for paltry incentives. Since then a gradual process of professionalisation has taken place in which journalists have won growing autonomy and independence, have acquired greater levels of job security, have set higher standards of ethical behaviour and have, therefore, garnered improved social standing.

This rising status together with advances in technology have allowed the mass media to take on functions and duties, such as information gathering and information sharing, that were formerly the responsibility of other social institutions, such as political parties, trade unions and churches. This correlates with Hallin and Mancini's understanding of secularisation and of the growing role of the mass media in modern society.

There are four dimensions, or indicators, of journalistic professionalism, according to *Comparing Media Systems:* autonomy, the development of distinct professional norms, public service orientation and the degree of instrumentalism (2004, 36). Autonomy encompasses job security, the extent of interference in reporting, the amount of pressure applied by senior managers and editors and the role which journalists occupy in decision-making within media organisations. The development of professional norms reflects the maturity of a media system's ethical framework, the efficiency of journalist organisations and the effectiveness and extent of self-regulation. The notion of public service orientation has a number of meanings in the South African context. It could describe a state-funded initiative to provide information or content, as is performed by the state broadcasting body in the classic Liberal model sense. Or, it could refer to the notion of a developmental media aimed at generating responsible coverage of emerging democratic states. In this thesis, particularly as I am not focusing on the broadcast sector, I mean the latter. Instrumentalisation attempts to evaluate the extent to which the media can be used by various actors as tools to intervene in the political world (2004, 36). Together these indicators outline an important dimension of a media system that has key consequences for the functioning and development of that system.

Journalistic professionalisation in South Africa

Journalists in South Africa have achieved a significant degree of autonomy within their news organisations. Their work process is largely collegial, as Hallin and Mancini put it, in the sense that authority over journalists is exercised primarily by fellow journalists (2004, 35). There is a formal and hierarchical structure in most newspaper newsrooms by which almost all material is subject

to review and revision by people at several different levels. Unlike in southern Europe, it is commonplace for editors or senior editorial journalists to dictate to reporters what the general gist of their stories might, for news agendas to be set with their approval and for stories to be guided through the gathering and production process. It is less usual, but by no means unheard of, for senior management (non-editorial) to put pressure on newsrooms to cover particular events or stories. Any South African newsroom has anecdotes about this kind of intervention.

At South Africa's national daily *Business Day* during my tenure there as a senior reporter (1987-8; 1991-94), it was implicitly understood that no article could be written about the newspaper's parent company, associated companies or board without the explicit approval of the editor. As Bagdikian has observed, "when their most sensitive economic interests are at stake, the parent corporations seldom refrain from using their power over public information" (2000, vii).

Similarly, at Independent Newspapers frequent interventions by management were experienced. One senior executive at the company "interfered in editorial from the day he arrived. He thought nothing of calling the editor to have some story or other changed or redone. Some of the other managers also never knew where the line was," according to the former managing director of Independent Newspapers Cape Rory Wilson (2005). One example was the order from above to the newsroom staff in 2003 to ensure the opening of a new pottery shop was given prominent placement in Independent Newspapers Cape's group newspapers, the *Cape Argus* and the *Cape Times*. The pottery shop, Wedgewood, was owned by the wife of Independent Newspaper proprietor Tony O'Reilly. The opening of the establishment had no apparent news value but still gained prominent placement. There are many, many other examples of such interventions, and not only at Independent Newspapers or at *Business Day*.

Of course, Hallin and Mancini's intention is that a lack of autonomy should apply primarily to the political world and that interventions in which the media are

made pawns for political purposes are more indicative of the trend than commercial interference. My experience, and research, indicates that while it is extremely rare for corporate management to dictate the political content of South African newspapers on a day-to-day basis, there is more often than not an unwritten consensus among senior staff that determines a title's attitude to different political players (see Chapter Four). Usually, this consensus consists of a broad sympathy with the ruling party and a disregard bordering on subtle ridicule of the opposition parties. The findings of the Media Tenor study into pre-election coverage of political parties in 2004 (see Chapter Three) supports this perception. However, it is important to state that there are many examples of exceptions to this rule, of newspapers or individual journalists who exhibit moments of determined and effective autonomy. These would include the *Mail & Guardian's* popular (among readers, not among ministers) Cabinet score-card, the satirical cartoons of Zapiro and the *Sunday Time*s's frequent identification of important political office bearers as the "mampara of the week".

It is the case in the post-1994 period that South African journalists have less job security than was the case in the apartheid era when entrenched monopolies and inefficiency characterised the mainstream press. Post-apartheid job uncertainty has come about partly because the racial transformation of newsrooms and management – demanded by the state – has been handled poorly and often randomly (Fisher interview 2006, Motileng et al 2006). It is also because of the high turnover of senior journalists, particularly black ones, due to the demand for their services from national, provincial and local government as well as from the parastatal and corporate sectors. It was this persistent loss of newly-qualified staff that also persuaded Independent Newspapers to close its cadet school in the early 1990s.

Hallin and Mancini support the common-sense dictum that skills levels among journalists are indicative of the state of professionalism in the sector. High skills are a pre-requisite for journalistic quality. Sadly, both the quality and skills[17] of

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[17] It is noteworthy that in recent years several South African media companies report increasing attention on and funding of journalist training including Naspers and Johncom. According to the editor of *The Star*,

South African journalists are currently of a poor general standard. Indeed, former *Sunday Times* editor Ken Owen suggests that even by 1994, the level of journalism was "quite appalling" (1998, 179):

> For decades, the 'fight against apartheid' had served as a justification for every kind of malpractice, including reckless use of 'sources', manufactured 'quotes', refusal to hear the other side if that side was politically hostile … and so forth (ibid).

Things were not to improve. If anything, they deteriorated further[18]. This is clearly demonstrated by the findings of the two skills surveys conducted on behalf of the South African National Editors Forum (Sanef). The first survey of senior journalists conducted in 2002 found low levels of important skills with many journalists demonstrating poor interviewing skills, a weak grasp of general knowledge, mediocre reporting skills and an inadequate understanding of ethics or the law (De Beer & Steyn, 2002). Little has changed in the intervening years, according to former Independent Newspapers executive Rory Wilson: "What has happened to editorial quality is very unsatisfying. The editors were extremely ill-prepared for political change. Proper leadership would have asked: 'What are we going to do?' They would have thought about it. Being the critics and writing exposés was no longer appropriate. There were no signs we were adequately prepared. Now we are whingers, it is still with us" (2005).

A follow-up study into the skills of first-line journalist managers in news organisations, dubbed Skills Audit 2, was conducted on Sanef's behalf in 2004. The results again showed substantial management skills weaknesses (Barratt 2006, 46). This was also evident from the generally weak grasp of ethics held by my junior colleagues at the *Cape Argus* (2000-2002), where as assistant editor I held ethics classes in attempt to bolster understanding. This is not to say there are no individuals in the sector who have world-class skills. There most certainly are. Only that, on average and across the sector, the general standard of skills and quality is relatively low and demonstrably worsening.

Moegsien Williams, Independent Newspapers has also introduced "a massive training and retention exercise" (Williams 2005).

[18] Without a comparative pre-1994 study it is nonetheless difficult to assess accurately or quantitatively the decline in skills levels

The poor maintenance of skills levels in the sector has been matched by the painfully slow progress toward standardising and formalising professional journalistic qualifications. The National Qualifications Framework was established by the National Skills Act in 1998 and envisages a system of sectoral education and training authorities (SETAs) overseeing the appropriate implementation of standardised training. All companies in South Africa pay 1% of annual turnover to their relevant SETA and can claim a portion of this back if they can demonstrate that it has been spent on approved training. Newspapers and magazines fall under the Media, Advertising, Printing, Publishing and Packaging (MAPPP) SETA, which itself has been struggling with leadership and capacity problems.

Work on unit standards describing the skills and knowledge that journalists need to do their jobs well, and how to assess this capacity, started in 2000. By the end of 2001, the first unit standard was written: editing text. By mid-2004, a range of standards had been written and the first journalism qualification was complete. The national certificate: journalism level 5 (matric plus one year) was approved for registration and set as the basis for all future journalism qualifications. The "slow work" of drawing up further unit standards was still continuing by early 2007 (Barratt 2006, 43).

The lack of participation by ordinary journalists in strategic decision-making at newspaper companies also demonstrates a general lack of autonomy in the sector. Since the collapse of the South African Union of Journalists (SAUJ) in 2002, there is some staff representation at most media houses in forums like pension fund trustee committees but seldom do they participate at a strategically significant level. At Johncom, a staff association took over from the SAUJ, which lost its majority at the company some time before it went into liquidation (Robertson 2005). Some media companies, such as Independent Newspapers, include non-executive journalists in occasional policy-related decision-making forums, but these generally consider human resources-oriented policy, such as absenteeism or sexual harassment, rather than strategic issues (Morris 2007). Indeed South African media company labour

relations have been characterised over the years by the systematic quashing of journalistic demands and aspirations. The last successful industrial action of journeymen journalists against editors took place in 1912 and concerned the use of bylines (Hadland 1991).

According to former SAUJ branch organiser Ronnie Morris: "Journalistic organisation is practically non-existent in 2007, it's not happening anywhere" (2007). Morris says that organising journalists was more difficult in some companies than in others. "[The SAUJ] never succeeded in unionising at Naspers (Media24). There was an historic hostility to unions in that company" (Morris 2007). He recalls that membership of the main journalist union, the SAUJ, began to tail off after the new, democratic state came into being in 1994. It wasn't long after then that dwindling subscriptions from members fell short of the union's day-to-day costs: "The changing of the political order had something to do with it. We went from an oppressive system to a democratic, constitutional state. The irony is that journalists didn't feel the need to belong to a trade union anymore. There was a lot of apathy and membership eventually dried up" (Morris, 2007). He adds that some journalists joined other unions, such as Mwasa, when the SAUJ collapsed, but estimates overall that 5% or less of working journalists are currently unionised (Morris 2007).

Journalists working within the Democratic Corporatist model reportedly enjoy considerable ownership rights and responsibilities representing a high degree of professionalisation. In South Africa, there have been few examples of this trend. Perhaps the closest journalists have come to owning a stake in their businesses was with the alternative press in the 1980s. The *Weekly Mail*, for instance, was started with pooled retrenchment money and the staff journalists retained a high degree of participation and ownership until the mid-1990s. This has since changed and the company (now called the *Mail & Guardian*) is predominantly owned by Zimbabwean magnate Trevor Ncube.

The only other example of journalist ownership that I have come across in South Africa was the issuing of phantom shares by Times Media Limited to its journalists for a period during the 1990s. This scheme, which was incentive-

oriented rather than a form of ownership, was also phased out. According to the scheme, journalists were assigned pretend (hence phantom) shares for joining the company, in lieu of bonuses and once long-service benchmarks were met. The journalists could cash in the difference between the share price at which the phantom shares were issued (which matched the actual share price at the time) and the current ruling price. The idea was that if the business was growing, the share price was increasing and this would allow long-serving or senior members to share in the benefits.

Perhaps the only reason why editors are inclined to be less antagonistic toward their staff in the post-apartheid era is due more to the declining importance of editors in corporate hierarchies and their collective slide into middle management than it is due to any gains by the rank and file. This devaluation of editors' status is also due to the fact that there are many more of them in media organisations these days. Naspers, for instance, had only half a dozen editors in its stable pre-1994 all holding high status in the company. Nowadays, there are dozens of editors, many of them working on small, one-client magazines and reporting to more senior publishers within the company (Malherbe 2005). It is inevitable that the collective power of editors has diminished in these circumstances.

> It's true in general that editors are less powerful than they used to be.
> The main reason is that there are more and more titles and editors
> are now part of bigger groups. Newspapers aren't freestanding as
> they used to be. We have 50 editors in one company. As a result, in
> the new corporate structure, editors are lower down in the hierarchy
> (Malherbe 2005).

It is also arguably the case, however, that the fast-track promotion of black editors to meet racial transformation quotas and/or to respond to political pressure – often before they have served their time and collected the appropriate skills – has also undermined the standing of editors within South African media companies. In addition, the growing demands of commercialisation in the post-1994 period has exacerbated this process with

increasing power devolving upwards to corporate management and, with it, a growing emphasis on the enhancing the profitability of the industry and its titles.

> Like the mining men who controlled them, the managers of the industry judged themselves entirely by the speed and ruthlessness with which they could exact profit … As the demand for profit grew relentlessly, year after year, the search for ways to maximise profit grew (Owen 1998, 181).

In the years before 1994, corporate management had to ask permission to visit the newsfloor (Johnson 2006). Nowadays, editors occupy a much less lofty position and are rarely held in awe by management. As former *Sunday Times* editor Ken Owen put it: "During the apartheid era, the status of editors had steadily declined; the end of apartheid saw that status all but demolished" (1998, 178). It can be seen that the level of professional journalistic autonomy has been dwindling in South Africa since 1994. It is no surprise, perhaps, that charges of instrumentalism have been on the increase.

Over the last three or four years senior South African journalists have repeatedly got themselves into difficulty over the issue of instrumentalism. The most glaring example took place in 2003 when a story was published in *City Press* by journalist Ranjeni Munusamy. The story, later the subject of a judicial enquiry known as the Hefer Commission, was proven to have been planted by supporters of the then deputy president Jacob Zuma. The story was specifically aimed at discrediting Bulelani Ngcuka, the director-general of prosecutions, who was busy preparing a probe into allegedly corrupt activities by Zuma. In the article, abusive allegations were made against Ngcuka including the accusation that he had been a spy for the apartheid government, a permanently damning allegation in the South African context.

Evidence presented to the Hefer Commission by *City Press* editor Vusi Mona into the manner in which the information was authenticated "brought broad disgrace on the profession", according to Barratt (2006, 55). Examples of poor journalism have proliferated in the post-1994 period and have included repeated violations of privacy and of people's right to dignity. These excesses include the widely reported death of pop star Brenda Fassie (when she was still

alive) and the common naming of children involved in abuse cases (Bird 2004, 58). A South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef) statement in 2004 conceded that the status of journalists had suffered as a result of the Munusamy story together with a number of other high-profile incidents of plagiarism and factual botchups: "It can be safely said that trust in the media and journalism among the broader public (our core constituency) and other key stakeholders is not what it should be" (Barratt 2006, 55).

While there is a considerable degree of political instrumentalism in the post-1994 period, it is worth pointing out that this was the case in the apartheid era too. In its publication of pro-apartheid propaganda, the Afrikaans press was a living monument to instrumentalism in the pre-1994 era. *Die Burger* was indeed known as the "mother of Afrikaner nationalism" (Tomaselli 1997, 60). In 1936, Prime Minister DF Malan described the Afrikaans press in these terms:

> Our newspapers were created by Nationalists for [National Party]
> purposes and are understood thereby to struggle for a national cause
> in accordance with the policy as stipulated by the representatives and
> official bodies of the party (cited in Stemmet & Barnard 2004, 154).

Stemmet and Barnard contend 50 years later, the attitude remained unchanged (ibid). "Traditionally and historically regarded, these papers had a very cosy relationship with successive NP governments" (2004, 155). Though this had started to cool by the mid-1980s, the bond remained strong right up until the collapse of apartheid (ibid). As Max du Preez has argued: "Until the very last few months of PW Botha's term as State President (in 1989), Afrikaner newspapers never opposed the NP or their security forces on any important issue" (cited in Stemmet & Barnard 2004, 164).

In the transition period, too, the cadre of senior political journalists serving the mainstream media were the forum through which a political settlement in South Africa was largely conducted. In their efforts to secure the 'inside track' on multiparty, often behind-the-scenes negotiations, stories were published which tested ideas mooted by political figures, that felt out alliances and that operated as a chat-room and clearing-house through which elite political groupings could communicate.

It is also true, however, that Hallin and Mancini's most decisive example of instrumentalism, the use of media by commercial owners "to wield influence in the political world" has not been the case in South Africa. There have been some examples of this, for instance in the publishing of his statement in early 2007 that media owner Cyril Ramaphosa was not interested in pursuing the presidency of the ANC (and therefore of the country). But I think it would be unfair to characterise proprietor manipulation of their titles with political intent as a feature of the current media system.

Hallin and Mancini cite the operation and functioning of distinct professional norms as being another strong indicator of journalistic professionalism. There are important variations, they note, in the degree to which distinctively journalistic norms have evolved, the degree of consensus they enjoy among those who practice journalism, and their relative influence on news-making practices (2004, 36). While it is self-regulating, South African journalism is underpinned by an ethical framework, the principles of which are commonly adhered to in day-to-day practice. All newspaper companies, and in many cases individual titles (such as *Die Burger* and *The Star*), have ethical codes of conduct. Some titles have appointed Ombudsmen to hear complaints. All newspapers and magazines fall under the ambit of the Press Ombudsman of South Africa whose professional code of practice regulates the industry. The Ombudsman's office was previously the press council (until 1963), and then the media council (until 1983) before its establishment in 1996 (Motloung 2007, 14). The Ombudsman is appointed by the sector itself and an independent appeal process is available to challenge the Ombudsman's decisions and rulings. All newspapers and magazines are also signatories to the Advertising Standards Authority's code of conduct.

The intensely legal dimension to journalists' rights and duties during the apartheid era, in which newspaper content was affected by a raft of often-repressive laws, ensured a strong grasp of ethical and legal conduct among many journalists during this period. As the former editor of the *Weekly Mail* newspaper Anton Harber described it: "We were journalists acting as lawyers.

We studied statutes; we spent a great deal of time with lawyers … we carved out a whole niche for ourselves simply by re-interpreting the law in an aggressive and pro-active way" (Louw 1991, 3). This was, of course, not true of all journalists, some of whom were in the employ of the state (such as *The Star's* crime reporter, later police Captain Craig Kotze). But the environment was such that there was a high awareness of the ethical and legal dimensions to reporting.

In the post-1994 period there has been a marked deterioration in journalists' understanding and implementation of ethical guidelines. Problems caused by inaccurate reporting grew from being an irritation to the Press Ombudsman in 1999 to constituting the majority of his work by 2004 (Barratt 2006, 56). In 2005, the Ombudsman received 200 complaints, up by 26% over the previous year and constituting the highest number of complaints received in the history of the office (Motloung 2007, 14). There have been allegations of plagiarism levelled at several senior South African journalists in recent years including columnist Darrell Bristow-Bovey, editor Cynthia Vongai and authors William Mervin Gumede and Antjie Krog. Journalists have further undermined their status in the community by repeatedly failing to turn up to events to which they had been invited to speak at or cover. In 2004, this had reached such crisis proportions that Sanef wrote an appeal to all journalists in South Africa urging them to address this problem.

While the Press Ombudsman of South Africa has been leading the self-regulation of the press for many years, it is clear that the authority and scope of the Ombudsman's powers have been challenged from a number of quarters and has therefore come under review. With the current Ombudsman, Ed Linnington about to retire, Sanef decided at an Editors' Summit in December 2006 to establish a sub-committee to review the functioning and roles of the office. Several challenges have, however, been aired in recent years over these functions including calls for the improvement of the outdated professional code of conduct. The word "gender" was only included in the code's classes of discrimination clause in 2006, following a complaint from the appeal panel, and the emergence of tabloid journalism has caught the self-regulator short

repeatedly. Individual titles have also shown a growing disrespect for the rulings of the Ombudsman.

In early 2006, the *Daily Voice* was ruled to have been in breach of the Professional Code by publishing pictures of the dead, naked, face-down bodies of two young men on its front page under the banner headline of "Kalgaat Killers". While awaiting the commencement of the appeal process, the *Daily Voice* again published the pictures on the front page, sparking great dismay from the general public (leading to a petition signed by hundreds of people), from the family of the deceased and from the Press Ombudsman[19]. In fact, it has not been the relatively new phenomenon of the tabloids that have dominated complaints made to the Ombudsman. In 2006, 93 complaints were laid against urban daily newspapers, 41 against Sunday papers and only 21 in connection with tabloids (Motloung 2007, 14)[20].

The decline of effective self-regulation in an environment of rapid change has been noted, not just in South Africa but also internationally. As Frank Morgan has pointed out, "questions arise when the relaxation of regulation leaves the media – and their individual practitioners – to their own devices… Journalism's benefits … turn to harms, unless moderated by an internalised value system" (2004, 17). In their important book, *Power without Responsibility*, James Curran and Jean Seaton argue that "a rapidly changing industry needs to be guided … something which daily intrudes into our lives in ever more sophisticated ways needs to be, itself, the subject of continual public surveillance" (1991, 4).

But it's not just the Ombudsman and the Press Code that are under pressure. Recent research indicates a total disregard among South African journalists for key elements of the Advertising Standards Authority's code, in particular the sections on the blurring of advertising and editorial content (Hadland, Cowling and Tabe, 2006). Public service orientation is, I believe, about more than the

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[19] I am a serving member of the Appeal Panel of the Press Ombudsman of South Africa and I was part of the appeal process for the *Daily Voice* hearing cited here.
[20] 185 complaints were laid with the Ombudsman in total in 2006, but several of these were multiple complaints bringing the overall total to the previously cited figure of 200 (see Motloung 2007, 14)

efficacy or autonomy of the regulator. It is also intimately connected with political parallelism and with a media model's history in this respect.

As I mentioned in the chapter on political parallelism (Chapter Four), South Africa has two distinct traditions of political journalism: the neutral, objective Liberal stream and the advocacy-oriented, subjective one. The question of which of the two has more currency becomes important for deciding on the public service orientation of the South African press. It is certainly true that the Afrikaans press – formerly a bastion of advocacy, subjective journalism – has switched allegiance over the last decade and a half. This was probably inevitable as there was little to be gained by continuing to support a defunct, racially-based and globally-castigated movement. The change was, however, significant. As Max du Preez, the former editor of the alternative Afrikaans newspaper *Vrye Weekblad* told Opatrny about the post-1990 mainstream Afrikaans press: "A new generation of progressive young editors have taken over at *Rapport*, *Beeld* and *Die Burger* and dragged these publications into the New South Africa. They have become professional, modern newspapers in tune with the new society, and the differences between them and the *Vrye Weekblad* of today wouldn't have been that big" (Du Preez 2003, 211, cited in Opatrny 2007, 81).

It is clear that while journalistic norms have evolved in South Africa over the years and that these are held consensually by many working journalists, there is a creeping trend in the sector according to which ethical principles and practices along with the structures that police them are on the wane. This, for Berger, is a critical test of how effectively the media has performed its Fourth Estate duties in the post-1994 era: the question is "whether the media stayed true to liberal pluralist values – or whether it withered and bowed under illiberal pressures of a new government and newly-empowered society" (1999, 2).

The final indicator suggested by Hallin and Mancini concerns public service orientation. This orientation, they argue, has important consequences for the practice of journalism and for the relationship of the media to other social institutions. The mainstream press in South Africa publicly embraces the

principles and practices of the Liberal model in terms of public service orientation. But it is also evident that close connections exist between the media and the political world and that these are being developed perhaps closer and more rapidly than this model would traditionally allow. I have demonstrated these connections in Chapter Four. In the community media sector, South Africa has a history of public service activism. This continues to be the case, for instance in the imminent establishment of community television in South Africa (see Hadland, Aldridge & Ogada 2004), but the advocacy lobby remains marginalised from mainstream media power. It has, however, since 2000, begun to find strength in the political sphere and the lobby certainly holds sway in the state's main lever of intervention in the media sector, the MDDA.

The mainstream press has also felt growing pressure from the state to adopt an orientation that is more in line with public service objectives and less adversarial to the democratic state. This harks back to the fierce debate between proponents of the national interest and those who support the public interest that has so often characterised relations between the mainstream media and the state (see Chapter Four). But there has been consistent and strong pressure applied by the state executive to ensure the South African print media withdraw from their traditionally Liberal antagonistic stance.

In the late 1990s, President Thabo Mbeki (who was the deputy president at the time) stated that an anti-system attitude was no longer appropriate in the media and argued that this sector could best serve the country by practicing "'responsible journalism' rather than adversarial criticism" (Horwitz 2001, 290). According to Horwitz, "the culture of intense partisanship and secrecy that is necessary to sustain a liberation movement under armed attack makes it difficult to support the principle of a nonpartisan, adversarial press – even after the revolutionary struggle is over" (2001, 283). Indeed, argues Opatrny, "an adversarial role of the press was seen by many in the new dispensation as contrary to the developmental goals of the post-revolutionary government, which expected the press to participate in the transformation" (2007, 86). "Social reconstruction, economic development and political changes would

entail enormous shifts in both large policy matters and in the everyday understandings and expectations of the people on the ground. And government officials were concerned that this information and the government's intentions were not getting out to the public" (Horwitz 2001, 285). Concerns along these lines have seen the state pay R200-million rands to publish its own magazine, exceeding by ten times the R20-million set aside to bolster diversity in the media.

It would seem that under pressure from the state, from advocacy activists within the community media and governmental sector, from the weight of journalists' own ignorance and lack of skills and also from the struggling self-regulatory authority and codes, that a public service orientation is growing in South Africa at the expense of autonomous, Liberal professional journalistic values.

Hallin and Mancini remind us that, historically, the development of journalistic professionalisation has eroded political parallelism (2004, 38). It has done this by diminishing control of the press by political parties or by other political organisations. It has also created common practices, such as accuracy and the presentation of context in reportage that has blurred the political distinctions between newspapers. Where political parallelism is high, professionalisation is likely to be low. South Africa's experience is that political parallelism is in fact eroding journalistic professionalism. Party control is on the rise and common professional practices are losing their currency. In this way, South Africa in the post-1994 period has experienced a loss of journalistic professionalism and an increase in political parallelism. The final question to be considered in this chapter concerns the classification of South Africa within the comparative media system matrix. Does it fit best in the Democratic Corporatist, Liberal or Polarised Pluralist cluster?

Applying the Three Models Paradigm

South Africa has little in common with the Democratic Corporatist model when it comes to journalistic professionalisation. The Democratic Corporatist countries of northern continental Europe (Sweden, Denmark, Holland, among others)

have high levels of journalistic professionalism including common consensus on standards and a high level of autonomy. They have strong, formalised systems of self-regulation, including influential press councils, as well as established journalistic qualifications and accreditation. Journalism is considered a public trust in the Democratic Corporatist models and the state intervenes strongly with subsidies to ensure diversity. Journalists are frequently involved in decision-making as well as in the ownership and management of media titles. Media content is frequently partisan and opinionated.

Few of these elements apply to contemporary South Africa. There are pockets of journalistic professionalism, and a history of its nurturing, but also clear evidence of its deterioration. A formalised system of self-regulation is in place, suggesting a democratic corporatist inclination, but generally the system is weak, lacks teeth and, in some cases, is ignored altogether by industry players. The state intervenes, but not to inject substantial subsidies or to materially affect diversity, particularly in the mainstream. Journalist involvement in ownership or in strategic decision-making is rare. Media content is usually portrayed in the 'informational style' (neutral, objective Liberal) rather in the opinionated style of more overtly partisan titles.

The Liberal model frequently has strong commercial papers that have developed with little interference from the state. Journalistic professionalism is high with strong traditions of political neutrality and a common informational writing style. Regulation of the print media is largely informal, in spite of the occasional state attempt to intervene with more formal structures, with peer culture usually being the determining factor. Journalists from the Liberal model are a "distinct occupational community and social activity with a value system and standards of practice of its own, rooted in an ideology of public service and with significant autonomy" (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). While levels of professionalism have been declining for some years, journalistic professionalism is still relatively strong. Journalists generally possess their own set of criteria for the selection and presentation of news. The gradual withdrawal of owners from the day-to-day management of newspapers together with the rising importance of advertising income has seen a decline in

instrumentalism. Editors in the Liberal model have grown in stature, a trend that has frequently been synonymous with the development of independent journalism. An adversarial attitude toward state officials is a common part of culture of journalism in Liberal model countries.

South Africa has much in common with this model though it also has some clear deviations. South Africa has commercial papers that have developed with relatively little interference (commercially at least) from the state. Journalistic professionalism has a long history though this is declining. Political neutrality has only been the hallmark of one of the two journalistic traditions. Journalists still do possess their own news selection and presentation criteria and do occupy a "distinct occupational community". However, self-regulation is much more formal in South Africa than in most Liberal model systems. Editors are diminishing in stature and, with them arguably, the extent of independent journalism. The adversarial attitude toward state officials still exists, though this too is under pressure as we have seen. Overall, though, there are strong similarities between South Africa and the Liberal cluster including the perceived, gradual diminishment of journalistic professionalism.

Finally, South Africa does have a number of commonalities with the journalistic professionalism that is evident in the Polarised Pluralist model. The media in this model is frequently used as a tool to intervene in the political world. We have seen above how this is the case, increasingly, in South Africa. Polarised Pluralist systems have weak consensus on journalistic standards and limited develop of professional self-regulation. In South Africa, there is consensus on journalistic standards, but there is a marked deterioration of this consensus to the point where many senior journalists are commonly unaware of it. In general, the level of journalistic autonomy is lower in the countries populating the Polarised Pluralist cluster. South Africa's experience is certainly that its journalistic autonomy is under threat and instrumentalism is on the rise.

Overall, and measuring South Africa's experience up against Hallin and Mancini's indicators of autonomy, it would seem evident that South Africa falls closest to the Liberal model in terms of its journalistic professionalism.

However, there are clear signs of a deterioration of many of these qualities and a certain drift toward the Polarised Pluralist model. Indeed, South Africa already has much in common with this latter model.

Conclusion

South Africa has a long and proud history of journalistic excellence in the print media. But since 1994 and the introduction of democracy, the rules and requirements of journalistic professionalism have changed. The relationship between the media and the state has shifted. The arrival of global investors, tabloids, client magazines and accelerated commercialism has thrown traditional practices into question and introduced new forms of journalism. The collapse of the major professional organisation for journalists only exacerbated the dwindling of journalistic standards.

According to Hallin and Mancini's Three Models paradigm, the extent and quality of journalistic professionalisation has key consequences for the functioning and development of a country's media system. During the course of this chapter we have defined Hallin and Mancini's four dimensions of journalistic professionalism: autonomy, the development of distinct professional norms, public service orientation and the degree of instrumentalism. We then applied these dimensions to the South African case study that is at the core of this thesis, comparing its characteristics to the main features of the three models, Democratic Corporatist, Liberal and Polarised Pluralist.

We have heard how journalists in South Africa have achieved a significant degree of autonomy within their news organisations. Their work process is largely collegial and there is a formal and hierarchical structure in most newspaper newsrooms by which almost all material is subject to review. While it is extremely rare for corporate management to dictate the political content of South African newspapers on a day-to-day basis, there exists an unwritten consensus among senior staff of the print sector that determines attitudes to different political players.

In the post-1994 period South African journalists have less job security while the quality and skills of South African journalists are currently of an unsatisfactory general standard. The poor maintenance of skills levels in the sector has been matched by the painfully slowly progress within the sector as a whole toward standardising and formalising professional journalistic qualifications.

The lack of participation by ordinary journalists in strategic decision-making at newspaper companies demonstrates a general lack of autonomy in the sector. This is highlighted by the decreasing importance and autonomy of editors who have been marginalised for commercial and political reasons.

Over the last three or four years senior South African journalists have repeatedly got themselves into difficulty with a series of high-profile incidents of political instrumentalism, plagiarism and poor ethical conduct which collectively have brought disgrace to the profession and diminished its social standing. It is clear that while journalistic norms have evolved in South Africa over the years and that these are held consensually by many working journalists, adherence to - and enforcement of - ethical principles and practices are declining.

While the Press Ombudsman of South Africa has been leading the self-regulation of the press for many years, it is clear that the authority and scope of the Ombudsman's powers have been challenged from a number of quarters. The mainstream press in South Africa publicly embraces the principles and practices of the Liberal model in terms of public service orientation. But it is also evident that close connections exist between the media and the political world and these are being developed rapidly in an environment that is sympathetic to this trend. The mainstream press has felt growing pressure from the state to adopt an orientation that is more in line with its public service objectives and less adversarial to the democratic state. And while Hallin and Mancini suggest that the development of journalistic professionalisation has historically eroded political parallelism (2004, 38), South Africa's experience is that political parallelism is in fact eroding journalistic professionalism. This is perhaps one

more example of the way in which the development of newly emerging democracies is qualitatively different from more established, stable states.

Finally, in considering the question of where South Africa might fit within Hallin and Mancini's comparative media system matrix, this chapter found that the country's media system had little in common with the Democratic Corporatist model when it comes to journalistic professionalisation. By contrast, many of the characteristics associated with the other two models, in particular the Liberal one, can be found in South Africa's current media system topography. Journalistic professionalism has a long history and journalists still do possess their own news selection and presentation criteria. They do form part of a "distinct occupational community", do self-regulate and do maintain a frequently adversarial attitude toward the state. However, in common with media systems populating the Polarised Pluralist model, journalistic autonomy is under threat and instrumentalism is on the rise in South Africa. This all indicates that in terms of journalistic professionalisation, South Africa remains within the Liberal model, but only just. It is clear in which direction it is headed.

Chapter Seven

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The application of Hallin and Mancini's Three Models paradigm to South Africa produces a worrying and perhaps controversial set of conclusions. One might have expected that democracy would be the midwife of a media that is increasingly robust, diverse and professional: one that is growing in confidence and increasingly autonomous from political life. That has been the experience of many countries that have enjoyed decades of stable democracy. Instead, the trends and inter-relationships highlighted by comparative media systems analysis suggest that South Africa's media is on a path that is far less agreeable. This is in spite of the country's deeply Liberal constitutional framework with its powerful set of clauses protecting the rights and duties of a free press. How is this possible?

As Hallin and Mancini contend, every country's media system is the product of its particular and often complex history. Trends and attitudes that were in evidence decades or even centuries ago have a tendency to influence current circumstances. Technological, economic and political advances do not always reverse these underlying factors. Instead, they shape and adapt what follows. In this way, the future direction of the most Liberal constitutional democracy in the world can be changed by its history, and by the values and beliefs that it encompasses.

Modernisation theory suggests that all media systems are on the same path. The forces of secularisation, differentiation, modernisation and globalisation all determine that the media, over time, will become more autonomous and more professional. Journalists will be less inclined to accept direction or favours from political players. Regulatory structures, supported by the maturation of rational legal authority, will in any case soon expose and punish such practices. As a result of journalism's improved status and standing, society will rely on it to provide a wider range of information-related functions and will therefore

demand of it a broad, catch-all appeal. The concurrent, technological process of convergence facilitates this dual requirement.

There is a great deal that is compelling about this scenario. But there are also grave dangers in accepting its logic and simplicity without circumspection. Philip Meyer, for instance, in his insightful work *The Vanishing Newspaper*, argues persuasively that the erosion of professional values is an inevitable consequence of the commercialisation of the press (2004). It is possible, in other words that what Hallin and Mancini call counter-tendencies, may be more fundamental and more permanent. These counter-tendencies may not only stall the convergence of all media systems into the Liberal model, they may even reverse the process – and all this within authentic, if immature, democratic systems.

Democracy, after all, is a deeply diverse notion. This is clear even from the systems that populate the Three Models paradigm. While based on similar principles, democracy is practiced very differently in the United States compared to Great Britain, or Germany, or Portugal. The heterogeneity of countries even within the same cluster has indeed been the subject of some criticism of the paradigm. The introduction into the model of newly emerging democracies, especially ones that experienced long periods of authoritarianism prior to their conversion, poses particular challenges to the Three Models paradigm.

Hallin and Mancini claim only that their model has been derived from comparing the media and political systems of 18 developed countries. They not only limit their findings and methods to considering these countries but urge caution surrounding attempts to broaden the model to include other systems. However, the diversity of the democracies already included in the Three Models paradigm together with the importance of analysing more recent additions to the democracy club, makes it valid, indeed imperative, that Hallin and Mancini's framework is broadened.

All too often, contemporary theoretical and critical writing fails to take adequate cognisance of the experiences and knowledge of the developing world. *Comparing Media Systems* is a significant advance in media theory and it is imperative that it is applied more broadly than only to highly developed, wealthy, powerful and stable nations. If anything, the need is more pressing among new democracies. They have often sacrificed much to achieve their new political systems and may be more vulnerable to regression and more susceptible to change. Only by testing the universality of the Three Models' underlying principles by applying them to diverse systems, can the true authority of the paradigm be assessed.

At the outset, this thesis set itself a number of tasks. It sought, initially, to outline the Hallin-Mancini Three Models paradigm and to contrast this with alternate critical methodologies. It then proposed to take the four major dimensions of the paradigm, namely the extent of political parallelism, the degree and forms of state intervention, the development of a mass media market and the state of journalistic professionalisation, and reflect on the South African experience of each. The thesis then hoped, by locating South Africa within the model, to make a contribution to the further extrapolation, and possibly modification, of the paradigm. Each of these tasks has been achieved within this thesis and will be reflected on below.

In addition, I have posed a number of questions during the course of the work that will test the relevance, applicability and universality of the paradigm. These include: How neatly do South Africa and other emerging democracies fit the Three Model theory? What light is thrown on the paradigm by South Africa's inclusion? What are the noticeable deviations, explained and unexplained? What does the theory not account for? How are the mechanisms (of change) explained? I will tackle these questions, and their answers, in the last section of the thesis below.

In concluding this thesis, I will first of all consider the theoretical value of the Three Models paradigm. I will then locate South Africa into the model before highlighting the conclusions and modifications that this thesis has generated.

Theoretical Frameworks and Underpinnings

South African media scholarship has not considered the applicability nor usefulness of the Hallin and Mancini paradigm, mainly because of its newness as a perspective. Instead, it has relied upon more traditional methodologies – political economy, culturalist and text-oriented – to understand the change the South African media sector has undoubtedly undergone over the last decade-and-a-half. The result has been a corpus of work that presents a useful understanding of the dynamics and symptoms of change. But there has been little appreciation of the broader context. For this, there needs to a comparative dimension. There is no other way to consider whether the patterns of change experienced in South Africa are unique, or whether they match the experience of other countries and their systems.

There is indeed much that South Africa holds in common with other countries about the manner in which its media and political worlds have developed and in the way they inter-relate. This is clear from the Three Models paradigm. Comparability also suggests predictability, a vital element when analysing a new and possibly fragile democratic system.

This thesis has noted some theoretical weaknesses offered in recent critical reviews of *Comparing Media Systems* (see Chapter Two). These included problems surrounding the heterogeneity of countries within the three model clusters, around the subjectivity of decisions made about how to categorise countries and about the limited geographic and developmental range of the 18 countries used in the model. Hallin and Mancini have attempted to preempt these problems by dealing with them in their work. On heterogeneity, Hallin and Mancini argue that the models were not meant to describe a fixed set of characteristics, but identify some of the underlying systemic relationships. The clusters, they suggest, are ideal types rather than specific categorisations. On the limited range of countries, Hallin and Mancini acknowledge this and call for scholarship that considers other nations in other regions. Finally, they have attempted to diminish the subjectivity of the categorisations by using as much quantitative, comparative data as possible.

I find these responses largely sufficient. Indeed the call to broaden the study is a major reason for the focus of this thesis. I did encounter the need for subjective decisions on how to categorise South Africa. But this was a task made easier both by the range of indicators contained in the paradigm as well as by the model's inherent capacity to crosscheck with the use of its four main dimensions. Hallin and Mancini point out some further difficulties with the paradigm to do with its inadequacy in dealing with power and also in the manner in which it defines and grapples with change. I will expand on these below.

I did also uncover some weaknesses within the Three Models paradigm that I have pointed out in the thesis and to which I will allude below. Overall, however, I found it a useful framework within which to consider the development, state and future of a country's media and its relationship with its host political system.

In concluding this thesis, I will undertake two more tasks. First, I will make a final decision on South Africa's precise placement within the comparative matrix. In doing so, I will weigh up the contending claims of the three ideal types. Finally, I will draw out the key conclusions and modifications that I have arrived at or sketched that will hopefully serve to strengthen and broaden the paradigm.

Three Models: Where does South Africa fit in?

There is much that is unusual and perhaps that is unexpected about the development of South Africa's political and media systems in recent times. Certainly, in the early 1990s, few expected the relatively peaceful removal of apartheid and its replacement with a constitutional democracy. But the existence of a mature, highly-developed and relatively diverse media industry makes South Africa an interesting prospect for inclusion in Hallin and Mancini's Three Models paradigm.

Let us first consider where South Africa might fit in the model before considering what this location says about the future direction of the state, of the media and of their inter-relationship as inferred by the assumptions of the model.

In common with the Democratic Corporatist model populated by countries like Sweden and Denmark, South Africa has an electoral system based on proportional representation, a pattern of strong civic life and an interventionist state keen on supporting social welfare policies. It also has a Constitution in place that guarantees freedom of the press as well as a variety of connected liberties including freedom of association, freedom of expression and freedom of access to information. While its formal, democratic Constitution is new (1996), the values it reflects go deep into South African history and are evident in declarations and charters going back to the turn of the 19th Century. Aspects of consensual, community decision-making can also be found in traditional, pre-colonial governing systems. These elements had a strong influence on leaders, such as Mandela, who took part in the framing of South Africa's modern democratic dispensation. In addition, some social groups – such as the major trade union and the Communist Party – have been formally integrated into the policy-making and governing process and a high degree of political parallelism can be found in South Africa and in the countries occupying the Democratic Corporatist cluster. There have also been clear moments of deeply participative policy-formation involving a wide range of stakeholders and interested parties, not least in the realm of broadcast regulation and policy.

Contemporary South Africa is, however, not part of the Democratic Corporatist ideal type. The electoral system does cater for a broad range of political interests, but the entire system is overwhelmed by the heavy two-thirds majority dominance of the biggest party, the African National Congress. There are no other serious contenders for power and the influence on policy of even the official opposition is marginal. South Africa does have a mass press, but it is a recent phenomenon. There is little public sector involvement in the print media, unlike in the countries that form part of the Democratic Corporatist cluster. What

subsidies are available are only paid to community newspapers through a statutory agency.

South Africa does not possess the mass literacy of the Democratic Corporatist cluster nor is the local press dominant. The strong urban-rural divide that South Africa exhibits is not evident in Sweden, Denmark or in the other countries that populate the model. The level of journalistic professionalism is extremely high in the Democratic Corporatist states and strong protection is offered against state intervention. Press councils are active and powerful. Politically, compromise politics decides the day, religious cleavages are evident and powerful social groups have easy access to the media and indeed to all structures of social, political and cultural life. Media content is partisan and opinionated. Few, if any, of these features are applicable to South Africa with any consistency. It therefore cannot be considered to be part of this cluster.

The South African media has always had a strong connection to the press of Great Britain. Many of its traditions and practices as well as a considerable part of its personnel have been drawn from its former colonial metropole over the years. South Africa's second newspaper, the *South African Commercial Advertiser*, was founded in January 1824 by George Greig, an English emigrant printer (Crwys-Williams 1989, 9). Indeed by 1921, 60% of South Africa's skilled printing craftsmen were British nationals who had emigrated to warmer climes (Hadland 1991, 26). In July 1828, editor John Fairbairn succeeded in securing a declaration announcing the freedom of the South African press guaranteed by the British government (Crwys-Williams 1989, 17).

A connection that was established early on in the life of South Africa's newspaper history was strengthened over the centuries, not least during the two South Africa (Boer) Wars when a contingent of English correspondents were resident in the country for some years. South Africa's agreement to join Great Britain in both World Wars and its continuing membership of the Commonwealth (after a period of suspension during apartheid) is further evidence of the deep historical ties between the two nations.

Like Britain, South Africa developed its commercial press first and, initially, it kept at arms length from politics and the state. Fact-centred reporting and objectivity remain key touchstones of professional journalists. Like Britain, South Africa now has a quality press aimed at the elite, and a sensational tabloid press aimed at the working and middle class. Government's formal role in the press is limited in both countries and the history of journalistic professionalism is relatively strong.

But there are also many dissimilarities between South Africa and the countries populating the Liberal model. South Africa's system of self-regulation is far more organised than the Liberal countries generally. The domination of local papers (that is also a feature of the Democratic Corporatist model) is not true of the South African market, thought this element grows by the year. The state is more interventionist in South Africa in terms of subsidies, exchange of personnel and in the advertising and media products it sponsors. The high degree of political parallelism between the media and the political world is not as evident in the US, Canada, Ireland and Britain as it is in South Africa. Finally the high degree of differentiation that characterises the Liberal country, in which the media is highly autonomous and in which social power is widely disseminated, is also arguably not true of South Africa. So while there are close connections and some shared characteristics, it is also clear that South Africa does not sit in the Liberal cluster either, at least not comfortably.

This leaves the Polarised Pluralist model. Populated by countries like Portugal, Spain and Greece, the Mediterranean style of media system features a high degree of political parallelism, low literacy and readership rates, a late and contested transition to democracy and an authoritarian tradition of intervention by the state. These characteristics are all shared by South Africa. In addition, the media is used as a tool to intervene in the political world, there exists the political will and basic structure of a welfare state, legal actions against journalists are common and the state's grasp often exceeds its reach due to a lack of either resources or consensus.

In addition, there are close personal relations between politicians and media owners and often intertwining of elites. There is a heavy focus on politics in South African newspapers and the mainstream print media in particular is aimed at elites and political insiders rather than a broad, mass public. The local press is underdeveloped. The South African media has also historically served and participated in the process of national bargaining (most particularly during the transition period from 1985 to 1995) and is an important means by which elites exchange information, set agendas and test alliances. The history of conflict in South Africa, like in the other Polarised Pluralist countries, encourages high voter turnouts at elections and affiliational rather than issue-driven ballot placing.

There are a number of features that South Africa does not hold in common with the Polarised Pluralist cluster. There is no strong party political press in South Africa (though as I have argued most newspapers support the majority party). Unlike countries like Spain and Portugal, South Africa has strong commercial media markets and a tabloid press. The typical Polarised Pluralist political system which is made up of many contending parties often themselves made up of factions, does not describe South Africa's political topography. Furthermore, newspaper circulations are generally low and journalistic professionalism is much less developed than in other models.

Hallin and Mancini have stressed the ideal type nature of the models so the odd discrepancy is allowable. In fact substantial inconsistencies are also permitted by the Three Models paradigm, directed as it is at the patterns and trends underlying the actual characteristics of each system.

There is, however, enough data and material to indicate that of all the models, the Polarised Pluralist one is the model that most closely resembles South Africa's current media system. This, in turn, becomes the "explanation" for many of the features discerned in South Africa's media right at the beginning of this thesis: the deterioration of journalistic professionalism (quality and skills levels), the collapse of journalist trade union organisation, the growing incidence of ethical blunders, the shifting relationship between media and state,

the rising trend of state intervention and court actions, the interconnection between state and media elites and the development of a mass, non-political press: these are all hallmarks of media systems populating the Polarised Pluralist model. The features of South Africa's media system that do not match this model perhaps indicate the direction of change. Thus the strong Liberal elements are vestiges of the South African media's past (and, with intervention, perhaps its future). But the deeper South Africa sinks into the Polarised Pluralist cluster, the more predictable are the features of its media and political systems.

What the Polarised Pluralist model did not predict, however, was the sudden collapse of newspaper sales in the months following South Africa's first democratic election in 1994. This was due in large measure to the transition fatigue experienced by many South African readers following the emotional roller coaster that was the political negotiations preceding the election (see Chapter Three). While the model does predict a gentle decline in the mainstream media, this is true across all three models and indeed in all mainstream newspaper sectors around the world.

South Africa's media system certainly has features from the Liberal model, and for this reason I would locate it closest to the Polarised Pluralist cluster but with strong Liberal model influences. There is little South Africa has in common with the Democratic Corporatist model that is significant, so I would largely discount the third corner of Hallin and Mancini's triangular matrix. The resulting position is marked in Figure 3 below.
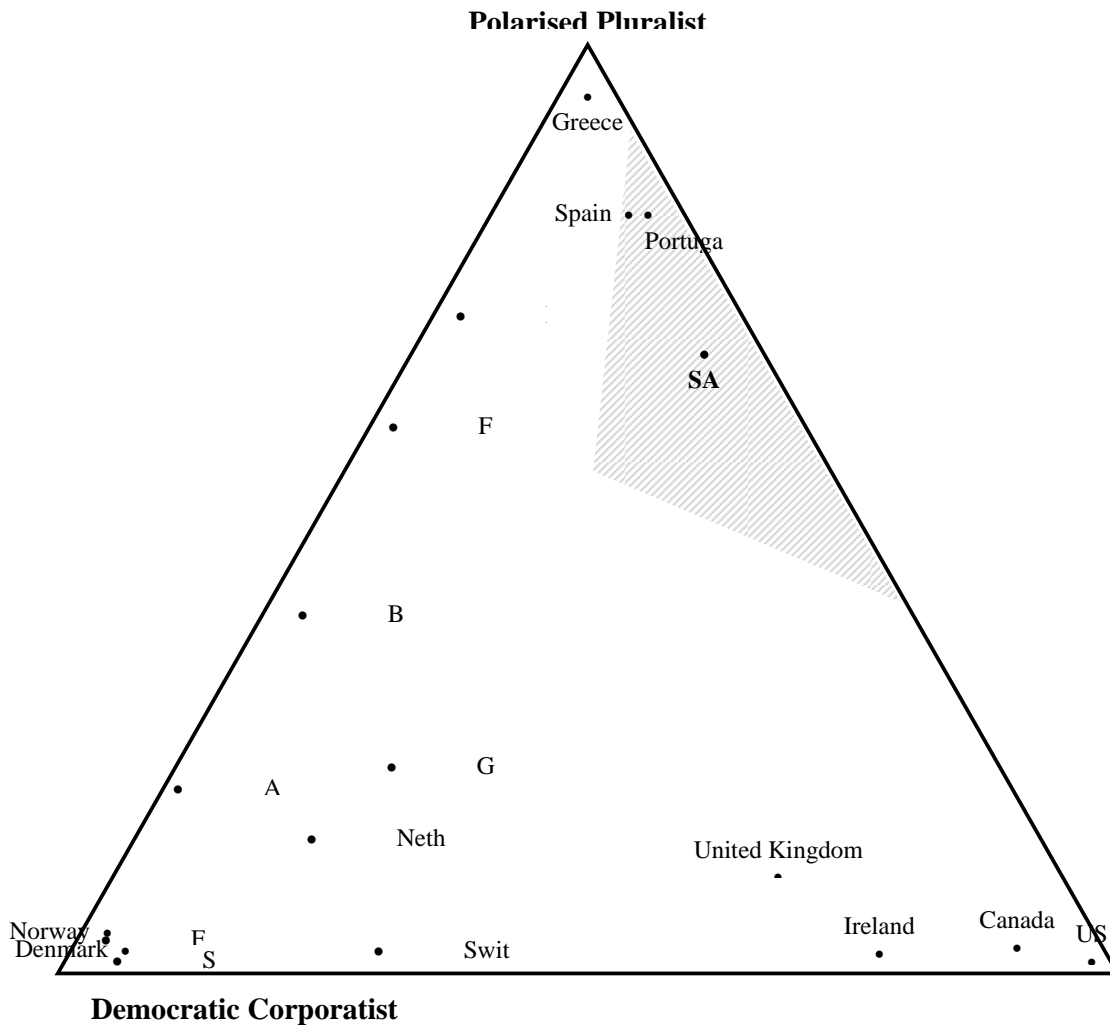
Figure 3: Modified Hallin-Mancini matrix (based on Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 70)

South Africa is contained in a shaded area within the matrix that I believe, on closer study, would probably include most of the newly emerged democracies. Many post-colonial independent states have embraced a form of democracy that allows a single, majority party to dominate the country's political life, often for decades at a time. This is certainly true in southern Africa and in many regions to the north. It is likely, too, that other countries with a history of authoritarianism and recent conversion to democracy might also occupy this emerging democracy zone. I have not placed South Africa up against the righthand side of the triangular matrix as it does have some aspects that reflect a democratic corporatist inclination. Similarly, it lies some way from the

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Polarised Pluralist apex as there are strong Liberal characteristics to which I have alluded above.

Let me reiterate, too, that I have focused in particular on the South African print news media. The broadcast sector now contains in excess of 200 outlets including 100 community radio stations, three public broadcast channels, a free-to-air commercial channel and dozens of satellite outlets. There is the likelihood that local television will be introduced during the course of 2007 with the imminent award of multi-year local television licenses in at least three or four regions. The story of the broadcast sector, which only developed in South Africa in the 1970s, is a rich and complex one. The connection between this diverse sector and the political world is also multilayered and has certainly changed over the 13 years since the advent of democracy.

For a full and comprehensive assessment of how South Africa's total media system fits in to the Hallin and Mancini paradigm it would be important to assess the full extent and colouration of the broadcast sphere. I have not attempted to do this here, nor could I hope to do the broadcast and print sector full justice within the limitations of the current work. I have certainly alluded to the broadcast sector, in particular the public broadcaster, over the course of this thesis and I remain convinced that, in the end, its inclusion would not fundamentally alter the conclusions reached or the modifications proposed. The print news media, even with its scholarly over-emphasis on the English-language media and its under-emphasis on magazines, still presents a good yardstick for measuring the depth and strength of important, underlying relational trends. We are able to assess to a considerable extent, by the shape and development of the print media sector and by its shifting connection to the body politic, why the South media system "is as it is".

With this caveat in mind, it can be seen that South Africa can indeed be located within the Three Models paradigm, though the inherent flexibility of the model facilitates the application. Its placement also allows for a number of assumptions to be tested, conclusions to be drawn and modifications to be suggested. I will do this in the following, final section of this thesis.

Assumptions, conclusions and modifications

The Hallin and Mancini Three Models paradigm is grounded in the concurrent processes of secularisation, differentiation, commercialisation and, to a lesser degree, homogenisation. It has been seen from the case study that these processes are demonstrably active in the South African context. They do not necessarily, however, match perfectly the anticipated trajectory posited by Hallin and Mancini.

The process of secularisation is evident in South Africa and can be seen in the declining electoral turn-out, in the collapse of political parties and in the growing mass appeal of the media (see Chapter Three). However, the extremely powerful position of the majority party, the African National Congress (ANC), acts as a counter-measure to this trend. The ANC "has become a very broad church indeed" (Calland 2006, 114) and its largely antagonistic attitude to the media signals its reluctance to allow its traditional functions to migrate out of its ambit. As Johnston writes, the ANC "is caught uncomfortably between the demands and imperatives of popular and mediated democracy" (2005, 20).

> On the one hand [the ANC] prefers the political sphere to remain distinct and privileged, reported on by the media from the sidelines. On the other hand, it claims an authentic relationship with 'the people' and the media is seen as unnecessary to this relationship and are unwelcome in it (Johnston 2005, 19).

Thus in one-party democracies, it may well prove – as is the case in South Africa – that a brake is applied to the secularisation process that impedes the media's inheritance of more traditional structures of organisation and information dissemination.

Differentiation marks the maturation of rational legal authority and implies the development of a more autonomous press freed from political (but not necessarily from economic) determination. This is a process that is oiled by commercialisation, argue Hallin and Mancini, pulling the media's agency and role further from the political world. But, as we have seen from Chapter Five, commercialisation can have the reverse effect. Instead of closing off

opportunities for the state to build ties and influence with the media, commercialisation can provide the opposite. Indeed commercialisation offers a form of hidden subsidy without the political baggage but often with all the power to shape print media content and presentation. We saw in Chapter Five how the South African government is now the economy's sixth biggest advertiser. It has also established contractual, funding and content-based agreements with a range of local media. The deterioration of ethical practice and unraveling of self-regulation that accompanies commercialisation (see Hadland et al, 2005), further invites state co-option of the media and the predominance of its own agenda.

The homogenisation, or Liberal drift, that is expected by modernisation theory to guide the direction and velocity of change within media systems is again challenged by the inclusion of South Africa in the matrix. I demonstrate in the thesis how ill-equipped the Three Models paradigm is to deal with media systems that have undergone dramatic, recent transformation. This in particular applies to countries emerging from authoritarian pasts.

The Hallin and Mancini Three Models paradigm simply does not cope very well with media system change. This is mainly because the study compares 18 countries that have enjoyed decades – and, in some cases, centuries – of relative political and media system stability. When one introduces countries that have endured far more rapid, more recent, more comprehensive change, the model struggles to cope. It generalises the causes of change, assumes that change leads to greater differentiation and overestimates the power of Liberal drift. It is possible that the combination of these counter-tendencies in any one system will be sufficient to constrain, or at best permanently distort, the powerful forces of homogenisation and differentiation that underpin the model.

This thesis suggests that media system change may be understood better and more easily compared with change in other systems when the notion of triggers is introduced. These triggers have been identified as the ongoing and profound influence of the state, the shifting priorities and structural change associated with globalisation, the powerful force of the economic system, the market-

defining importance of business strategy, the consequences of commercialism and the fundamental impact of technology change. I argue in the thesis that each of these dimensions is underplayed by Hallin and Mancini and, furthermore, that the definition of triggers creates tools that are useful for comparative purposes. Gleanings and insights from the broadly sympathetic political economy paradigm support this notion of triggers. This school of scholarship, which has been a powerful influence on research in the South African context, has traditionally focused on change and is evidently a useful adjunct to comparative media systems theory in particular when it comes to the analysis of media markets.

While it is not uniform across the models, Hallin and Mancini do argue that geographic proximity is often a relevant factor in assembling media system clusters. Related to this, some critics have pointed at the lack of consideration of issues such as regionalism and language as being weaknesses of the Three Models paradigm (Hampton 2005). This issue stems, in my analysis, from the limitations the authors pose in terms of the model's geographic and developmental status. Once the model is populated by a broader range of systems, and once a more diverse range of determining factors is inevitably employed, the full applicability and universality of the model will be more clearly determined.

There are elements of this analysis that may – at this stage – be uniquely South African, such as the very recent development of a mass press. But there is also plenty of reason to suspect that these experiences, and the modifications they infer, may well be applicable not only to emerging democracies in Africa but elsewhere in the world too. The work of Tettey (2001), Suarez (1999) Chabal (1998) and Ihonvbere (1996) would certainly support this. Naturally, further comparative research involving other new democracies, particularly those emerging with authoritarian pasts and fragile presents, would allow the usefulness of the modifications I have suggested to be tested further. Certainly, scholars have expressed their anxiety that Africa "is in danger of backsliding democratically" (Berger 2002, 36) and this confers a certain urgency on the task.

Hallin and Mancini ask, "is media system change simply one result of ..
changes in society and politics, or might it play some independent role?" (2004,
267). The answer, from the South African case study, would seem to suggest
that media system change is very much the dependent variable in a context of
rapid political and social realignment. This was indeed the argument in *Four
Theories of the Press* (Siebert et al 1956), the predecessor to *Comparing Media
Systems*. Just as it posed the question, "why is the media like it is?", *Four
Theories* continues to challenge comparative media analysis, though perhaps
not altogether in the pejorative sense (stalking the landscape "like a horror-
movie zombie") that Hallin and Mancini describe (2004, 10).

It also becomes evident in using the Hallin-Mancini paradigm that South Africa's
print media is headed in the wrong direction, if one supposes that the Liberal
model has come to constitute a consensual position on the ideal role and
function of the press. This is the worrying and perhaps controversial aspect to
this thesis's conclusions to which I alluded in the first sentence of this
concluding chapter. The evidence in this thesis suggests that instead of groping
its way toward utopian media Liberalism, South Africa is slipping toward
polarised pluralism. This can be gleaned from many traits that characterise
South Africa's media system and its inter-relationship with the world of politics.

It would seem that political parallelism in South Africa is on the rise (see
Chapter Three), that state intervention is increasing (see Chapter Four), that
journalistic professionalism is declining (see Chapter Six) and that the media
system is shifting in a manner that will heed, and possibly reverse, the
processes of differentiation and indeed of democratisation. This is a very
different tale from the inexorable convergence on a homogenised Liberal model
that modernisation theory anticipates. Even though factors are evident that
would support this, including technological and global journalistic trends, these
may not be enough to propel a new democracy far across the matrix. Indeed,
polarised pluralism beckons. Hallin and Mancini refuse to rank the models
normatively in terms of their democratic purity. But it is evident that predictions
of the Liberal model's eventual triumph as the natural and indeed inevitable

end-point of a global, democratic media may be wishful thinking given the great power of historical trends and legacies and the new form of democracy represented by the latest generation of adherents.

There has been much new information contained in this thesis that has been used to populate the Hallin-Mancini paradigm with the data it requires to work. In collecting and evaluating this information, I would like to suggest that in addition to the Three Models paradigm being refined, South African scholarship has been advanced. I have revisited the traditional race-based categorisation of the South African media and proposed an alternative that more accurately reflects the two main Liberal-oriented and advocacy-based traditions. I have demonstrated the political and social contract that the South African press has bought into in the post-1994 era and described the parlous state of internal pluralism that has been the result. I have started to address the paucity of scholarship addressing the interconnection between politics and the media as well as redress the overly-subscribed use of political economy as a critical method. From the range of interviews and the primary research undertaken, I have been able – in many cases for the first time – to describe important historical moments of policy and media industry development.

Finally, the Hallin-Mancini paradigm provides an interesting take on a question that has vexed South African media studies practitioners and journalists for decades. This is the question surrounding the extent of the South African media's role in the consolidation of its pre-1994 political system, namely apartheid. The Three Models paradigm and my development of it, indicates that media systems are the progeny of political systems. Yes, they are symbiotic in the sense that change on the one side may cause change on the other. And, yes, there are triggers of change that are not inherently political, such as commercialisation and the framing of business strategy. Hallin and Mancini acknowledge the power of precedent: "Media institutions evolve over time; at each step of their evolution, past events and institutional patterns inherited from earlier periods influence the direction they take" (2004, 12).

But South Africa's experience in the early 1990s, in which massive change in the political system provoked equally far-reaching and rapid change in the media system, indicates a decisive allocation of causality. This is not to understate the great complexity of both political and media systems nor the great variety of factors that can influence either or both. It does, however, serve to illustrate that the relationship between the media and the political system is not a union of equals. This perhaps explains why the Three Models theory fails to attend adequately to the question of power: because power may be transmitted, reflected or even utilised by the media but its source probably lies elsewhere.

At the outset of their important work, Hallin and Mancini argued that they didn't wish their analysis "simply to be applied to other systems without modification" (2004, xiv). In addition they appealed for some consideration to be given about the "consequences for democratic politics" that their paradigm might infer. This thesis has performed both of these tasks. It has taken a new, theoretical framework and tested its assumptions and its mechanics. In so doing, a range of conclusions and a set of modifications have been proposed. In the end, the exercise has sought to illuminate South Africa's own location in the comparative matrix. This has been done with a view to appreciating the forces under which its political and media systems operate, and to understanding the implications of this for the future. The model infers that for single-party, emerging democracies, the consequences for democratic politics may be a cause for concern.

(Word count, text only: 72,144;
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INTERVIEWS

1. **Connie Molusi**, former Group CEO, Johnnic Communications, at his offices on Wednesday 19 October, 2005.
2. **Jan Malherbe**, Chief Executive (Newspaper division), Media24 at Naspers Building, Cape Town, August 3, 2005.
3. **Willie Kirsh**, CEO, Primedia, at Primedia House, Sandton on Tuesday 15 August 2005.
4. **Moegsien Williams**, Editor, *The Star*, in his office in Johannesburg on October 25, 2005.
5. **Ryland Fisher**, former Editor, the *Cape Times,* at the HSRC offices on 14 October 2005.
6. **Saki Macozoma**, former official with ANC Department of Information and Publicity, also former CEO of New Africa Investments (NAIL), currently Chief Executive, StanLib Asset Management, interviewed at the StanLib office on October 25, 2005.
7. **Gill Marcus**, former head of ANC's Department of Information and Publicity, currently director of the Gordon Institute for Business Sciences, University of Pretoria at her office on October 24, 2005.
8. **Rory Wilson**, former MD of Independent Newspapers Cape (Jan 1995-Aug, 1999), GM of the Sowetan and GM of SAAN and currently Chief Executive of Juta & Co at their offices, Cape Town, 18 July 2005.
9. **Mike Robertson**, Publisher of the Sunday Times, at the Johncom management office in Rosebank, Johannesburg on October 25, 2005.
10. **John Matisonn**, former Editorial Director of ThisDay newspaper, conducted in Newlands on December 07, 2005.
11. **Deon du Plessis**, Publisher and co-owner, *Die Son*, on Wednesday 19 October, 2005 at the Media24 building in Auckland Park.
12. **Shaun Johnson**, former Editorial Director, Independent Newspapers in Camps Bay on Wednesday 26 October, 2005 at Summerville.
13. A former senior manager and editor at Independent Newspapers who preferred to remain anonymous.
14. **Anton Harber**, Caxton Professor of Journalism and Board member of Kagiso Media, at the Journalism Department, Wits University, Johannesburg on Wednesday 24 August, 2005.
15. **Rajay Ambekar**, Media Analyst, African Harvest asset management company at the African Harvest Head Office, Newlands, Cape Town on Monday 29 August, 2005.
16. **Abdul Davids**, Chief analyst for Allan Gray Ltd at the V&A Waterfront offices of Allan Gray, 11 August 2005.
17. **Wayne McKay**, regional plant chair of the Media Workers Association of South Africa (Mwasa), November 2006 (telephonic interview).
18. **Nick Holdsworth**, manager, Caxton-CTP at the Print Media SA Offices, 5th Floor, Nedbank Gardens, Rosebank, Bath Avenue, Johannesburg on Wednesday 24 August, 2005.
19. **Natasha Volans**, General Manager, Print Media SA at the Print Media SA Offices, 5th Floor, Nedbank Gardens, Rosebank, Bath Avenue, Johannesburg on Wednesday 24 August, 2005.

20. **Elitha van der Zandt**, Director, Print Industries Cluster Council Director at her offices at 7 Old Paarl Road, Bellville on Wednesday 21 September 2005.
21. **Jos Kuper**, Media Analyst, at her home/office in Johannesburg, Monday 4th October, 2005.
22. **Ronnie Morris**, former branch organiser, South African Union of Journalists (SAUJ), current editorial representative, interviewed in St George's Mall, 26 January 26, 2007.