



Dancing with Democracy:  
State intervention in the SA  
media, post 1994



5545

## TODAY'S PRESENTATION

- Theoretical basis
- What is state intervention?
- What is the state intervention likely?
- Has state intervention occurred in SA?
- So what?
- What comparative models say
- Conclusions

*'The more democratic a country becomes, the more television, radio and media will emanate out of that country. I call this the dance of democracy' – Primedia CEO Willie Kirsh*

## THEORETICAL BASIS

- Hallin & Mancini (2004):  
Comparing Media Systems –  
Three Models of Media and  
Politics
- Limitations
- State intervention = one of 4  
“dimensions” to id which model  
(Liberal, polarised pluralist,  
democratic corporatism)



## WHAT IS STATE INTERVENTION?

- Regulatory and legal environment (incl liberal & hate speech)
- Access to information (ease of)
- Social organisation: PLA V Pol Clientelism
- Subsidies & media diversity
- Balance of power: roles
- Media concentration
- ~~Trust (media)~~

## WHAT MAKES INTERVENTION LIKELY?

- Recent transition, authoritarian to democracy (culture clash)
- High concentration media ownership
- Type of democracy (maj v cons)
- High degree of political clientelism (judicial autonomy, jilistic press)

Small text at the bottom left: ...that makes a difference

# HAS INTERVENTION OCCURRED?

Raymond Louw says yes:

- More diff. to get info from govt. exploitation of legal process to censor media, threat of ad withdrawal, MAP
- ANO newspaper, COCS newspaper
- HRC & TRC
- SABC
- Labour policy (ee, affirm action)
- Public interest v national interest
- Community media relations

# So what?

- Not intervention, transformation
- **Should we be responsible for the people'?**
- **Accountability problem**
- **Communication problem (public sphere)**
- **H&M: location and trajectory**

## What comparative models say

- SA has features of other models
- But trajectory is toward polarised purists (Greece, Port, Spain)
- PP features: powerful state, constant intervention, antagonistic legal and regulatory environment, clientelism, collapse of journalistic press, intertwining of elites, limited watchdog role
- Not necess bad but is it what we want?



# CONCLUSIONS

- New comparative theory suggests SA heading down a particular path (pol)
- Need to decide if that is where we want to be going.
- Need for African and for S Afr perspective on contemporary theory
- Need to explore very real failures, eg print-media/state, accountability, xenophobia & public sphere

Science & Technology as a different

**THANK YOU**

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